

Three Realms 1301

Chapter 1301: An Unwelcome Guest

"Huang'er, what's making you so sad? You and I have weathered life and death. No one can tear us apart in this life. Now that your Generation Binding Curse is undone, I can handle whatever comes, even if the skies cave in..." Jiang Chen stretched out a hand and clumsily wiped away the tears at the girl's eyes.

Warmth suffused Huang'er's heart when she took note of Jiang Chen's ungainly motions. She valiantly got her emotions back under control and smiled. "Brother Chen, I just thought of the tragic parts of my background, is all, and couldn't help myself all of a sudden. Don't think less of me!"

Jiang Chen's mood took a turn for the better when he saw the girl smile. He cupped her cheeks and planted a moving kiss on her forehead.

"Don't you worry. The skies can't really cave in, but even if they do, I'll be right there to hold them up for you. This isn't an empty bluff, but a promise from me to you." Jiang Chen grasped Huang'er's hands and looked deep into her eyes with his solemn vow.

The fiery passion in his eyes would melt even the hardest ice, much less a couple madly in love. Huang'er was filled with boundless joy at these words. She nodded rapidly, wanting to fully preserve this happiness in her heart.

"Brother Chen... I..." The normally coolly composed Huang'er was overcome with emotion. Her heart pounded frantically in the face of such ardent declarations, and a bright flush crept up her neck.

Their eyes met, their lips inexorably attracted to each other like two ends of a magnet. In this moment, even the bright moon ducked behind a patch of clouds and refused to peek out. Languid feelings of love flowed in the courtyard.

An exceedingly discordant sound cut through the perfect atmosphere.

It was... a cough. An extremely sudden, perplexing, mood-killing cough...

Jiang Chen didn't make out who it'd come from, but he really wanted to smack whichever idiot it was to death.

"Ai. Huang'er. Once is bad enough, must it happen a second time?" A clear voice cut through the air.

Hmm? Jiang Chen froze when he heard the voice. It was very foreign, absolutely the first time he'd ever heard of it. Who is it?

He moved Huang'er behind him and deployed God's Eye to the utmost. "Who is it?!"

It would be a lie to say that he wasn't alarmed at the moment. Security around the young lord residence was high and not just anyone could enter the Nine Sparks Petalstorm Formation. But here the voice was just in front of them!

No matter who the other was, he'd been able to make it past the formation and into the residence. It was a most apprehensive development!

However, Huang'er grasped Jiang Chen's hand tightly with an indifferent expression. "Elder Xi, you seemed to have gone back on your word. Don't forget what you promised me!"

The sky was quiet for a long moment. Jiang Chen couldn't detect any ripples no matter how he deployed his consciousness. The void around them seemed to have sunk into unending emptiness, as if the residence had disconnected from the rest of Sacred Peafowl Mountain.

A soft sigh travelled from the air after a long time.

"I don't wish to do anything that ruins the mood, but Miss Huang'er, it would be a mistake upon a mistake if you took another step forward. Spilt water can't be gathered up, what's done wouldn't be able to be undone afterwards. Have you considered the consequences?" The one who Huang'er called Elder Xi finally spoke.

Jiang Chen snorted coldly. "Who might you be? What kind of person are you to hide and cower like this? Show yourself, no matter who you are!"

He'd perceived that the other wasn't a simple character. It was obvious that it must be someone from Myriad Abyss Island. Huang'er didn't stop him, only tightened her grasp on Jiang Chen's arm, as if deathly afraid that he would suddenly disappear.

"You're quite bold, young man, to falsely use the name of Myriad Abyss Island. Aren't you afraid that your lawless actions will bring down an extinction event on your Sacred Peafowl Mountain?"

Jiang Chen chuckled softly. "Myriad Abyss Island doesn't belong to one particular person. Don't you find your threat rather bizarre?"

Strange ripples suddenly emanated from the air, like an air current swirling through the void. It coalesced in the next second, revealing an elder not too far from Jiang Chen.

It was an ethereal-looking elder dressed in apricot yellow robes. He looked older than Elder Shun, but his eyes were uncommonly radiant. There seemed to be the infinite mysteries of the world hidden within.

"Huang'er, is the young man the person who cured your poison?"

Huang'er pulled on Jiang Chen's arm proudly. "That's him, Elder Xi. I've already pledged myself to him. Whether in life or death, I, Yan Qinghuang, am his woman."

Yan Qinghuang? Jiang Chen started. It was the first time he'd heard Huang'er's real name. The girl murmured, "Brother Chen, I didn't tell you before not because I wanted to lie or hide things from you. I was afraid that if I suddenly left you one day, you'd look for me everywhere. That would only drag you down..."

Elder Xi frowned slightly. His woman whether in life or death? This brat?!

"Impossible!" Although Elder Xi's tone was tough, his heart softened under Huang'er's forceful gaze. "Huang'er, you've always been smart. You should know that had your illness not been treated, there might've been a chance for you two. But since you've been cured, any possibility for the two of you is no longer. I admit that this child is different from normal mundane youths. But Huang'er, you know what will happen to Sacred Peafowl Mountain if you stubbornly continue on your path."

Huang'er had nothing to say to that. An exceedingly pained look appeared in her clear eyes, as if her heart had been broken into pieces by someone else's bare hands.

"Elder Xi, is it?" Anger surged in Jiang Chen's heart when he saw his woman this saddened and despairing. "I don't care who you are and what relationship you have with Huang'er. I only want to tell you that the skies won't fall in when I'm here. And even if they do, I can hold them up!"

Elder Xi sniffed derisively, but there seemed to be a hint of admiration within. It was drowned out by mockery and his expression suddenly sank. "And if you no longer existed?"

Huang'er panicked when she heard this. "Elder Xi, I'll die right here in front of you if you dare do anything!"

Jiang Chen's anger exploded into fury and he seemed willing to do anything. He wrapped his arms around his woman. "Huang'er, don't be afraid! Who is he?! Is he the evil family who cast the curse on your parents and wants to use you as a cultivation cauldron?"

Frosty killing intent shot out from Jiang Chen's eyes as he pieced together a plan. If the other really was a Myriad Abyss Island expert, then he was very likely stronger than a great emperor. Sacred Peafowl Mountain had no way to resist a personage like this.

The strongest trump card Jiang Chen had in his hand was the restriction in the abode that mid-empyrean expert Guo Ran had left behind. He wouldn't hesitate to use it if they really did erupt in open hostilities.

Huang'er quickly called out when she felt killing intent surge in her lover. "Don't misunderstand, Brother Chen. Elder Xi's not from that family. He's... from my Yan family."

"What?" Jiang Chen was thoroughly taken aback. Someone on their side?

"Brother Chen, Elder Xi is an elder of my family and has an even higher position than Elder Shun. He's one of the great elders of my family."

Elder Xi frowned again. "Huang'er, there's no need to tell an outsider so many family secrets. Don't force me to destroy our agreement and kill him."

Huang'er snorted lightly. "I won't live on if anything happens to him!"

The elder was displeased and snorted dismissively. "Brat, stop making faces at me. No matter how strong you are, you're still relying on a woman to protect you today."

"Enough, Elder Xi!" Huang'er wouldn't bear any insults to her beloved man. Normally placid to both insult and compliment, she roared like a leopard. "Brother Chen is the foremost beneath the heavens! Elder Xi, if he'd been born on Myriad Abyss Island, he would stomp on both Yan and Xiahou descendants! They wouldn't be fit to carry his shoes!"

"Heh heh, Miss Huang'er, I understand that beauty is in the eye of the beholder." Elder Xi thought nothing of Huang'er's words. "This kid has a bit of skill and enough courage. However, a lowly birth is his original sin. What can he do in this life? So what if he trains to peak great emperor and can sweep the human domain? Compared to those in our world, we're the heavens and he the earth, and a tiny ant on the ground at that."

Elder Xi highly valued bloodlines. How would a lowly peon in the human domain compare to the noble bloodlines of Myriad Abyss Island? So what if one was monstrous in the human domain? How many heroes in the human domain commanded the skies and rain? But they couldn't even get to Myriad Abyss Island.

And even if they were so lucky as to make it, they'd find out that a lowly birth was just a lowly birth in the end. They were nothing.

Huang'er's face was as white as a sheet. She was highly infuriated by this response. "Elder Xi, Brother Chen isn't the ant you think of. You..."

"That's enough. I don't care if he's an ant or not. You should be rejoicing that it's me here this time and not anyone else from the family. This place would be a mountain of corpses and blood by now if so. If someone from House Xiahou came, then the entire Veluriyam Capital would be destroyed. To House Xiahou, taking you in is the greatest sacrilege! Would they care about a bunch of ants in their anger?"

Chapter 1302: Are You Worthy of Representing the Heavenly Law?

Huang'er was silent. She knew that Elder Xi wasn't voicing empty words. If anyone else from her family came, they might really make a move against Jiang Chen. If someone from the Xiahou clan was here, they would certainly slaughter all of Veluriyam Capital! The city wouldn't be able to resist at all if House Xiahou made a move. Even a monstrous genius like Brother Chen might not make it out alive from the assault.

Having grown up in Myriad Abyss Island, she knew that the island was so much stronger than the human domain. House Xiahou in particular was an undeniably vicious clan. Why else would they have put this curse on her otherwise and make her the cultivation cauldron of their family?

Elder Xi seemed to have an innate disdain for those of the human domain. He flicked a mocking look at Jiang Chen. "Young man, if you're smart enough, you should recognize the situation you're in and come to your senses. You should at least loosen the dirty hand you have around Miss Huang'er.

"No need to glare at me. Your fury in my eyes is the tragic wails of a trash. Remember, don't borrow Myriad Abyss Island's name in the future. The island is heaven and represents the paramount heavenly law. It's not a place where an ant in the dust like you can take its name in vain!"

A mocking mirth shone in the elder's eyes and he pointed carelessly at the sky. "I've sealed off this area and can undo it any anytime. You may summon all of your followers and I can teach you a lesson if you don't accept this. I'll teach you the difference between heaven and earth..."

Jiang Chen balled up his fists tightly. He could feel the elder's hostility and strength, and could even vaguely sense that the old man was purposefully trying to provoke him so that the elder would have an excuse to commence a slaughter.

And yet, this wasn't what irked Jiang Chen the most.

What irritated him the most was that the old man dared shamelessly talk of heavenly dao in front of him, as if he were the heavens!

“Brother Chen, promise me, don’t do anything, promise me!” Huang’er maintained a death grip on Jiang Chen’s arm as anguish and pleading filled her eyes.

Jiang Chen’s overflowing wrath dissolved into a light sigh at the end. He hugged Huang’er lightly, his fury slowly quieting down. He knew that she was doing this to protect him and Sacred Peafowl Mountain. Except, was he the sort to roll over and play dead?

He stared coolly at Elder Xi. “Even if you’re Huang’er’s elder, I can tell you clearly that you! Do not! Represent the heavens! The heavenly dao is boundless, how much of it do you know? How dare you shamelessly speak of it? The heavens will come claim you after you’ve committed sacrilege against it today. Remember, I’ll let you know one day just how ignorant you are in talking of the heavens, and how ludicrous you are!”

Jiang Chen’s every word was crystal clear and as sharp as a frosty dagger.

Elder Xi was an exceedingly noble personage. Although he was largely dismissive of Jiang Chen’s response, he was also somewhat irritated. He snorted coldly and sent a spear of aura towards the young man.

“Little brat running his mouth.” Elder Xi didn’t think much of Jiang Chen’s words. He’d promised Huang’er that he wouldn’t kill anyone, but that didn’t mean he couldn’t use his aura to injure. This aura flare was a bullying move. Mountains would collapse and earth crack if they came in contact with it!

This twitch of consciousness was faster than lightning and travelled to Jiang Chen in the blink of an eye.

“No!” Huang’er flew into a panic and pounced to stop the elder.

Alas, she was too late. The consciousness was formless but more frightening than any sharp knife. It shot straight into Jiang Chen’s sea of consciousness, obviously to churn it to pieces. In this way, he would become a drooling idiot even if he didn’t die!

A twitch crossed Jiang Chen’s mind as a heretofore unfelt sense of danger surged inside of him. By the time he reacted, the frightening mind attack had roiled into his consciousness like ill winds from hell.

This is bad! An inborn sense of resistance flared within him.

“Heh heh... you know not your limits!” Elder Xi smirked coldly when he saw that the young man wanted to resist. He obviously didn’t think it was possible. A mental attack from an empyrean cultivator was stronger than anything. The kid was dead without a doubt even if he was ten times stronger!

Ringling explosions went off in Jiang Chen’s mind, feeling like it would explode and crumble at any moment. The silent seal in his consciousness, a chain link circling nine droplets of water, suddenly shuddered violently.

It rotated at a high speed in the next instant, forming a starry vortex that was an unending, celestial river from the primordial depths. It sucked in the mental attack like a hungry man slurping up noodles, leaving nothing behind. A second later, it reverted back to its inert state.

The seal again... The thought flew across Jiang Chen’s mind. The seal circled in his sea of consciousness like a cloud of skies. It wasn’t the first time that he’d felt its existence. It was ancient, mysterious, strong, unfathomable, and hid boundless possibility.

It had been the culprit behind the stunning natural phenomenon when he'd broken through in the Precious Tree Sect, making it seem like an emperor realm cultivator had broken through. Later on in the tests of the nine obelisks with the Veluriyam Pagoda, it had been this seal that'd saved his almost collapsing consciousness. And it'd been the seal again that had protected him this time.

In this moment, Jiang Chen was even more certain that an enormous secret was hidden within this seal, one having to do with the cycles of life between his current and past life.

When he thought of his past life, untempered confidence soared in Jiang Chen's heart. So what of Myriad Abyss Island? As strong as it was, the island was just composed of refugees from the ancient times! They were descendants of the cowards who ran away from the ancient demon war, their origins questionable to begin with!

So what if these people were stronger than those in the human domain? What was there worthy to boast about? What right did they have to represent the heavenly law?

"Brother Chen, how are you? Brother Chen... Brother Chen, wake up!" Huang'er was highly frantic. Her world had spun and darkened when Elder Xi fired off his attack. Jiang Chen staring blankly and then laughing was making her very fearful that her lover's consciousness had been destroyed.

Jiang Chen came back to his senses when hearing Huang'er's voice. He smiled faintly and patted her back. "Don't be startled, Huang'er. I said before that the skies won't cave in. Even if they do, I can hold them up for you. Don't forget, I'm born of the heavenly dao. No one knows the heavens better than I do!"

Huang'er brimmed with joy and flung her arms around Jiang Chen, her eyes red again. In that moment, she'd experienced how it truly felt to lost everything in the world. She'd only wanted to die.

But, her lover had once again proven what it meant to be a genius and pulled her back from the depths of despair. He was fine!

Yes, he was fine!

She suddenly recalled what he'd once said to her, something that was a secret between the two of them. Her lover wasn't an ordinary person. After being beaten in Eastern Kingdom, he'd awoken a heritage that exceeded the level of the Divine Abyss Continent!

This was a white lie that Jiang Chen had told Huang'er, but it wasn't too far away from the truth.

She gained some more confidence when she thought of this. That's right, her lover had awoken his heritage and so his level might be even higher than Myriad Abyss Island! He might even be at the heavenly planes!

"Hmm?" Elder Xi was flabbergasted to see Jiang Chen laughing and chatting, completely at ease. How could this be? Had he missed?

But, how was that possible? How could an empyrean realm cultivator have missed with a mental attack on an emperor realm youth? He was lost in a perplexed haze for a moment.

“Elder Xi, do you really want to break your word and force Huang’er to lose her life here?” Huang’er hectored when she saw that Elder Xi’s expression was unfriendly, seemingly wanting to stir up more trouble.

“Don’t be scared of him, Huang’er. As a family elder, he’s supposed to look after the juniors of the clan. This kind of elder commands no respect and will never protect the family in critical moments.” Jiang Chen smirked coldly at Elder Xi. “Do your worst! Mental attacks can’t kill me and physical attacks won’t end me either! You won’t be taking Huang’er away today unless it’s over my dead body!”

Although the old man hadn’t mentioned his purpose in coming here, it was obvious that he was here to take away Huang’er. After all, he’d mentioned that there was hope for the two of them if Huang’er’s illness had never been cured, but none at all now that it had. He was going to take her back and hand her over to be House Xiahou’s cultivation cauldron!

Elder Xi was indeed losing his reason due to anger. He’d never thought that he’d lose so much face in front of an emperor realm kid. He itched to start a slaughter in this moment and wipe Sacred Peafowl Mountain clean!

Huang’er was of House Yan after all, she was quite familiar with the house elders’ personalities. She interjected remotely, “Elder Xi, you can do whatever you’d like if you want to end up destroying the clan.”

Her tone was indifferent, but full of threat.

Elder Xi’s heart trembled. Huang’er was protecting this kid so fully that if he really did start a slaughter, she would answer with her death. If she died, House Xiahou’s fury would descend on their family and it might even be their ends!

The possibility of losing something great for something small was highly possible!

Elder Xi was a well versed old monster and cackled. “Huang’er, am I really that type of person? Although I may not care as much about you as Elder Shun, I watched you grow up after all. Would I do all this if it wasn’t for the circumstances?”

So the old fox was submitting.

“If this is the case, then please depart the premises. I know what I’m doing. My Brother Chen will be inviting an expert from the island to answer some questions tomorrow. You might as well fulfill the role.”

“What? Me?” Elder Xi was gape mouthed, completely stunned.

Jiang Chen however, shook his head. “No need, Huang’er. I can handle it!”

Chapter 1303: Ties of Fate

Jiang Chen couldn’t do it. He would never ask help from a person that had just made an attempt on his life. Moreover, the old fool was simply too overweening. His deep-rooted contempt for the human domain was obvious. Jiang Chen would never seek help from such a conceited and obnoxious person.

"Brother Chen, trust me just this once. Alright?" Jiang Chen's anger evaporated into thin air when he met Huang'er's sincere gaze.

"Huang'er..." Jiang Chen didn't have the strength to refuse.

"Jiang Chen... just this once. Let me handle everything."

Jiang Chen could only sigh gently, for he had no words to say. His mind was all over the place. The sincerity behind Huang'er's pleading left him speechless.

Huang'er knew that her lover's silence was an indication that he'd come to an understanding.

"Elder Xi, I promise to fulfill our deal if you cooperate. However, if you insist on doing things your way, I'd sooner die than carry out my promise, even if it means the downfall of the the entire Yan clan."

Huang'er warned through her consciousness.

Elder Xi was enraged. He was an esteemed elder of the Yan clan! He wouldn't have been so courteous if Huang'er hadn't been a direct daughter of House Yan and a key character to boot.

"Huang'er, I truly hope that you'll fulfill your promise because I can destroy Sacred Peafowl Mountain with just a flick of my finger. Surely you don't doubt my abilities?" Elder Xi threatened.

Huang'er wasn't going to argue with Elder Xi. "Elder, I'm more than aware of your capabilities, but you can't say the same for Brother Chen's skills and potential. You'll regret it if you push him too far. In fact, I can't guarantee that you'll walk out of this alive." She answered blandly.

Elder Xi was taken aback. Unconvinced, he threw a sharp glare at Jiang Chen and snorted coldly. "I'll not waste my breath. If that brat is really as powerful as you say he is, he'll come to Myriad Abyss Island to slap my face. If that day ever comes, I'll not retaliate!"

Elder Xi laughed coldly as mysterious runes enveloped him. The space around him rippled incessantly, and he disappeared into thin air within a blink of an eye. His ruthless voice echoed through the air.

"Huang'er, you'd best not give me a reason to decimate this land."

The surrounding area was enveloped by a blanket of silence once he was gone. It was almost as if what happened earlier was nothing but a dream.

Jiang Chen pondered silently in the void without uttering a single word.

"Brother Chen, I've burdened you and made you unhappy again..." Huang'er's voice contained hints of guilt. She'd been causing Jiang Chen endless trouble from the very first day they met.

"Silly girl, How could you possibly be a burden?" Jiang Chen smiled. "Tell me. Is that old man trying to take you back to Myriad Abyss Island?"

Huang'er kept silent.

"Answer me." Jiang Chen pursued further.

"Brother Chen, Sacred Peafowl Mountain is simply no match for Myriad Abyss Island. House Yan and House Xiahou will not let you off easy." Tears welled up in Huang'er's eyes as she spoke.

"Enough. Huang'er, I understand that they are powerful, but do you really think that I'd let them take you away?" Jiang Chen became extremely agitated. "I'll kill every single person who tries!"

Huang'er's heart was bleeding. She rested her head gently on Jiang Chen's shoulder and emptied her mind. All she wanted to do was lie in her lover's arms and take in his fragrance.

"Huang'er, promise me."

"...I can't, Brother Chen." Huang'er murmured sorrowfully. "Until the ties of fate that bind me to the island are severed, I'll have to return. I simply never imagined that the day would come so soon..."

"Brother Chen..." Huang'er looked at Jiang Chen earnestly and pleaded while holding back her tears. "Huang'er will always be your woman, no matter in life or death. But this time, I must ask that you listen to me. Alright?"

Jiang Chen felt helpless, but it wasn't because of Elder Yi or some destiny to do with Myriad Abyss Island. He didn't fear them one bit.

No. What made him feel most helpless was Huang'er's sorrowful eyes and her most earnest pleading. If he refused to listen to Huang'er and stubbornly approached the matter his way, things would quickly get out of hand. It was something she desperately wanted to avoid.

"Huang'er... I can't. I'm worried for you." Jiang Chen answered sincerely.

"Don't worry, Brother Chen. I'll take good care of myself when I return to the island and await your arrival. Ten years, twenty years, fifty years, or even one hundred years, I'll keep on waiting for you. If House Xiahou wants me to be their cauldron, they'll have to wait until I'm a half-step empyrean expert. I've just barely reached advanced emperor realm. Even if they throw all of their resources at me, it'll take me at least fifty to one hundred years to reach that level." Huang'er immediately dispelled his fears.

"Huang'er, is there really no way for you to stay?" Jiang Chen had never felt so helpless ever since he reincarnated into this world. He'd faced all kinds of danger and difficulties, but none of them were able to make him feel so much anguish and pain. In the end, it was his own inadequacies that had caused this situation.

"Jiang Chen, I'll wait for you at Myriad Abyss Island. Promise me that you won't come until you've broken through to great emperor." Huang'er pleaded as she held Jiang Chen's hands.

"I promise. I've already promised you, but I'll do it again." Jiang Chen acted tough, but his heart was dripping blood.

When Huang'er had told him about her background, he'd been incredibly taken aback but hadn't known what it'd truly implied. It was only today that he realized how incredibly insurmountable the island was compared to the human domain.

"Brother Chen, please try to understand why I'm doing this. Elder Xi isn't here just to take me away. He also informed me that Elder Shun was apprehended when he returned to the island. The elder abducted me from the island and brought me into the secular world. It's a sin of utmost severity. They won't let him live if I don't return. Like my parents, he'll be thrown into a terrible prison of torture. Jiang Chen..."

I've never had the chance to experience love from my parents. Before I met you, Elder Shun was the only person who sincerely loved me..."

Jiang Chen's heart throbbed with pain. This girl had been born into nobility, yet she'd suffered through so much pain and adversity. One by one, the people who loved her the most had fallen victim to fate.

"Elder Shun was apprehended..." Jiang Chen could taste bitterness in his mouth. Even a powerful figure like him had been captured by the island.

"So this is why Huang'er must return. Brother Chen, I'll wait for you at the island. If you don't ever come, I'll just keep waiting until the end of time..." Huang'er said nonchalantly like it was completely normal. However, there was also hints of unfaltering determination in her voice

Jiang Chen had thousands of reason for not wanting Huang'er to leave, and thousands of ways to kill Elder Xi, but not a single one was viable.

Elder Xi was Huang'er's clansman. Killing him would permanently separate Huang'er from her clan. Moreover, it would also be a direct cause of Elder Shun's death and destroy any of her hopes to rescue her parents from their suffering. He simply couldn't be so selfish.

"Huang'er, wait for me." He had millions of words to say, but he compressed those feelings into four simple words which contained his most sincere promise.

"Jiang Chen, please be happy when I'm not around. Don't give up the entire forest for a single tree. You're loved not only by me, but your parents, sister, brother, relatives, and your beloved subordinates as well..." Huang'er was extremely empathetic. She was still worried about Jiang Chen and tried her best to console him even during such times.

Jiang Chen was extremely touched. They silently embraced beneath the soft moonlight. Words were no longer sufficient to convey their feelings.

Elder Xi was surprisingly cooperative on the following day. He was incredibly annoyed but attended the Dragon and Tiger Meet. His presence alone was enough to shock every single expert present. Emptyrean experts exuded an aura of immense strength without even trying.

Jiang Chen watched the scene unfold emotionlessly. He had no expectations for Elder Xi. He wouldn't care even if the old man hadn't appeared at all.

But since Huang'er had insisted on this, he couldn't decline even though he hated Elder Xi to the bones. Truth be told, the old man's presence had saved him a lot of trouble.

Elder Xi was a very proud and arrogant person, but he seemed to gain perverse enjoyment from a group of great emperors feting him. Those who'd received a chance to ask a question came up humbly. They were subjected to a round of jeers and mockery, but the elder still unwillingly gave a few pointers between Huang'er's watchful eye.

Jiang Chen watched the proceedings dispassionately, revealing neither joy nor dissatisfaction.

The six great emperors who'd received answers were delighted beyond belief and felt that this trip had been more than worth it.

When the proceedings were over, the old man left in a streak of light, leaving no trace of him behind.

“Huang’er, I’ve kept my word. We leave tomorrow. I hope you don’t play any tricks.” The elder transmitted to the girl.

“Young lord Zhen, you’re really something! The senior is so mysterious, how did you invite him here?”

“Indeed, to think the young lord’s network is this vast that it encompasses even the legendary Myriad Abyss Island!”

The crowd marvelled with astonishment, but the elder of Empyrean River Palace was frowning slightly. This development had caught him off guard.

Chapter 1304: Peak Second Level Emperor Realm!

“Is the young lord still in closed door cultivation?”

“Yes.”

“Ah, it’s been half a year. He’s had many visitors since then.”

“What can we do? The young lord closed his doors when the Dragon and Tiger Meet ended. Can we subordinates change his decision?” The two conversing parties were Emperor Peerless and the Jiao brothers.

When the Dragon and Tiger Meet first concluded, Jiang Chen had declared that he would cultivate behind closed doors for a time. At first, the others at Sacred Peafowl Mountain thought it would only be several days. Then, they thought it would be a month or two.

But it’d been half a year without any news whatsoever.

“Old Brother Mo, we brothers are new here. The young lord, is he...” Jiao Yun wanted to know more. He too felt the strangeness in the young lord’s behavior.

Mo Wushuang sighed softly. “I haven’t been here much longer than you two. However, I think that Miss Huang’er’s departure is a key factor in why the young lord has closed his doors.”

“I didn’t think that Miss Huang’er would be a lady from Myriad Abyss Island. Our young lord is truly incredible, hooking up with someone like that.” Mentioning this made Jiao Yun rather animated.

“Remember not to act so flippantly in front of the young lord, Jiao Yun.” Mo Wushuang frowned.

“Ah, not at all.” Jiao Yun chuckled. “The young lord has my wholehearted admiration. Old Brother Mo, we two brothers have lived half of our lives in a haze. Our recent time here at Sacred Peafowl Mountain have opened our eyes and minds, and we now defer fully to the young lord.”

“That’s right. If there had been a sect or faction willing to treat us like this before, why would we be wandering cultivators in the first place? The Dragon and Tiger Meet was evidence enough. Wandering great emperors seem carefree and important on the surface, but barely break the poverty line when compared to our peers in sects!” Jiao Feng spoke in a low, muffled voice.

Mo Wushuang deeply sympathized with this sentiment. He too hadn't realized the difference between wandering great emperors and sect heavyweights before now. The unprecedentedly prominent and well-attended auction had helped him realize that even more ordinary members of large sects had wealth that far surpassed what a wandering cultivator could gather.

"I've said this to you already, my friends. You will only gain by following in his footsteps. There's a long road ahead of us." Mo Wushuang laughed.

"Indeed. We two brothers have found a permanent home. From now on, we serve young lord Zhen. There is much promise in what he's doing!" The Jiao brothers said this sincerely.

"You must take care of us from now on too, Old Brother Mo," Jiao Yun chuckled ingratiatingly.

"We're one family here. I for one, consider you my brothers. It's natural for us to take care of each other. You've seen young lord Zhen's abilities and connections. We cultivators in the human domain have long been frogs at the bottom of our well. We thought that dominance over the Upper Eight Regions was the top of the world. The appearance of that senior from Myriad Abyss Island is going to make waves across our sphere. It'll be breath of fresh air in our stagnant situation."

"That's right. We brothers have always heard rumors about a group of old codgers here in the human domain who were potentially empyrean realm, but there hasn't been much proof until now. The appearance of this senior from Myriad Abyss Island might be able to draw his hermit friends out, so that we can at least have something to aspire to."

If peak great emperor was the limit of the human domain's martial dao, that would be far too boring. After all, they were all already great emperors. The presence of empyrean experts in the world would spice things up a great deal.

"It's hard to say how many empyrean experts there really are here. Only a few can potentially exist at one time, I feel." Mo Wushuang had his own point of view regarding this.

The human domain had only so much resources to develop its cultivators. Because of the restriction of the boundary steles, the cultivators here had extremely narrow horizons. They couldn't view the Divine Abyss Continent in a more holistic light, nor could they taste any of the grander state of affairs in the ancient past when countless races mingled together in the same space.

The door to the secret room suddenly opened mid-conversation.

"Young lord, have you emerged from seclusion?"

"Congratulations, young lord." Mo Wushuang and the Jiao brothers paused before they approached the youth.

Faintly smiling, the young man looked back at the three great emperors. "Unfortunately for you gentlemen, I heard everything you were talking about just now. You're lucky you didn't say anything bad about me, huh?"

His relaxed tone eased the hearts of the trio as well. It seemed that the young lord was free of his emotional ties and had defeated his inner demons for now.

“Heh heh, we’ll only say nice and flattering things to you from now on, young lord. We’d rather have our tongues pulled out than badmouth someone as generous as you.” The Jiao brothers were comparatively smooth talkers – one of the reason why they’d survived out in the world for so long.

Emperor Peerless however, looked intently at Jiang Chen for another moment before smiling. “My compliments to you, young lord. You’ve improved a great deal during your closed door cultivation.”

“A little bit of a breakthrough, yes.” Jiang Chen smiled back. “I’m at peak second level emperor realm now. I need only a bit more to reach third level.”

All three great emperors found this shocking. They were great emperors now, but their personal experiences in emperor realm had given them firsthand experience about how difficult it was to break through in the emperor realm.

Eight to ten years was considered short. Sometimes it took decades or a century.

Young lord Zhen wasn’t yet thirty years old. Had he broken through to peak second level emperor realm already? And to be third level any day now! His cultivation was proceeding at an incredible speed.

Jiang Chen didn’t make a point of showing off how quick his ascension speed was. Instead, he shifted the topic. “I’m sure many things have happened while I was occupied. Shall we chat at length about them?”

The three men here were now Jiang Chen’s most capable lieutenants. Mo Wushuang especially, had been in charge of managing the young lord residence’s affairs after Huang’er’s departure, along with Madame Yun. Because of his part in this, it wasn’t a stretch to say that he was one of the biggest contributors to Sacred Peafowl Mountain as a whole.

The great emperor launched into a report of all the major events in the half year the young lord had been cultivating.

“Young lord, preparations for the pill dao academy are complete. Emperors Void and Coiling Dragon are in charge of them and the others are helping them. Many have applied to enter. They’re still sorting through the applicants.

“The aftereffects of the Tiger and Dragon Meet are still very positive. All wandering cultivators have been talking about it nonstop in the past half year. Everyone’s very much looking forward to the next one. Our reputation is now greater than Pillfire City’s!”

“What do the other sects and factions think of it?” Jiang Chen asked with a faint smile.

“The sects have more concerns on their mind, and many of them are close to Pillfire City as well. They won’t advertise anything on our behalf. Apart from the Great Yu Skysword Sect and Celestial Cicada Court, none of the others have expressed anything.”

“And the Ninesuns Sky Sect?”

“They’ve been mostly quiet. It appears they do not want to get caught in Veluriyam Capital and Pillfire City’s crossfire.”

“What about the Eternal Celestial Capital?” Jiang Chen asked again.

“The Eternal Celestial Capital...” Mo Wushuang smiled wryly. “I was going to leave that for last. They’re related to one of the most important things that has happened in the last six months.”

“How so?”

“Eternal Celestial Capital has spread the news that Sacred Peafowl Mountain’s young lord Zhen is some ruffian from Myriad Domain and therefore not at all Emperor Peafowl’s true heir. They say that you’re an usurper, having obtained your throne by improper means. Because of this, you’re actually not related to the city at all... According to them, you’ve fooled both Emperor Peafowl and the entire city...” Mo Wushuang spoke in a rather dubious tone, but went into detail anyway.

The Jiao brothers’ expressions were equally odd. Clearly, they’d heard the news as well, but it wasn’t their place to share their opinions, given their subordinate status.

Jiang Chen’s smile remained cool. “What has been the reaction from Veluriyam Capital’s various factions?”

Mo Wushuang breathed a sigh of relief. He was scared of the possibility that Jiang Chen would explode in anger. The young lord’s calmness hinted that he had expected such a development.

“All of the city’s factions have declared that young lord Zhen is indeed Emperor Peafowl’s chosen heir. No matter where he’s originally from, his right of succession is unquestioned. They are all fully supportive of the young lord’s rule over the faction.”

“Yesterday, Emperor Coiling Dragon made a public announcement that Emperor Peafowl knew of that fact in the first place – as did he. Moreover, he stated that young lord Zhen’s true name is Jiang Chen, and the two people are one and the same. He has also said that you were a piece that Emperor Peafowl planted long ago!”

Jiang Chen coughed softly upon hearing the last part. Emperor Coiling Dragon was really good at making things up. Still, he knew the old man wasn’t being malicious, per se. The rumor would only benefit him.

There was no chance for reconciliation with Eternal Celestial Capital, now. Therefore, he hadn’t planned to hide his identity for much longer. He didn’t expect it to be particularly possible, after all. But it was quite surprising that this revelation had circulated in the outside world during his six months behind closed doors.

He suddenly frowned. “Has the news travelled through the human domain? Or is it limited to Veluriyam Capital?”

“It is limited to Veluriyam Capital still. However, I believe that the human domain will know with time. You are one of the most popular individuals in the domain right now, young lord. More well-publicized than even the strongest great emperors.”

Jiang Chen didn’t gloat about the compliment. Instead, he sunk into thought. “Now that my identity is revealed, it’s time to deal with Myriad Domain.”

The Jiao brothers’ eyes darted around. “Are you going to move against Myriad Domain, young lord? Do we have a chance to repay your kindness?”

“What do you mean, move against Myriad Domain? Once upon a time, it was my former home. Even at the top of the world, I would be ashamed to let my homeland wallow in adversity.” Jiang Chen sighed softly, but a resolute light shone out of his eyes.

Recovering Myriad Domain and rebuilding Regal Pill Palace wasn’t only Jiang Chen’s wish. The first half was a wish common among everyone that had belonged to the domain once upon a time.

Palace Head Dan Chi, Elder Yun Nie, Mu Gaoqi, the other disciples from the Palace, and the Domain’s various scattered survivors elsewhere besides...

It was a shared desire amongst all of those people.

Chapter 1305: Discussion of Rebuilding the Regal Pill Palace

The news about Jiang Chen concluding his closed door cultivation didn’t spread. The young lord had many things to prepare for and found it imprudent to do so for the moment.

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Palace Head Dan Chi, Elder Yun Nie, Mu Gaoqi, Ling Hui’er, Shen Trifire... and more from Regal Pill Palace were congregated within a hall in the young lord residence.

Seated at the head position, Jiang Chen scanned the room. “My friends, we’re fortunate to gather here after the destruction of our sect and Myriad Domain. I only have two questions for all of you today: Does hot blood still beat through your hearts? Do you remember the sights of our homeland?”

His words moved the emotions of all present.

“Brother Chen, you...” Mu Gaoqi was so happy he could barely contain himself. “Are you planning to take back Myriad Domain?”

Jiang Chen nodded coolly. “Veluriyam Capital sits at the core of the Upper Eight Regions. I was slightly concerned that you had forgotten our shared past. The reason I’ve gathered everyone here today is to see whether you still possess the steely resolve needed to rebuild our sect.”

Palace Head Dan Chi stood up suddenly. “No matter how nice this place is, it’s not our homeland. After I survived the catastrophe, my heart has been fixated on rebuilding Regal Pill Palace. Jiang Chen, you are the young lord of Veluriyam Capital now. You’ve grown from a lowly carp into a magnificent dragon. That you haven’t forgotten your origins is respectable indeed. As the head of Regal Pill Palace, I hereby formally request your assistance in taking everyone here back to our homeland – and retaking it once and for all!”

Elder Yun Nie was excited as well. “This place is nice, but I would like to return to the Regal Pill Palace even on risk of death. Young lord Zhen, you are the lord of Veluriyam Capital now. We can’t ask you to return to Regal Pill Palace with us, especially since you have so much you’d have to leave behind. It’d be unrealistic and frankly impossible. Veluriyam Capital is a momentous undertaking, ten or a hundred times more important than the Palace. Without this faction’s support, rebuilding our sect would be a fool’s errand anyway.”

“Yes. The Regal Pill Palace’s former backers were entirely useless in our time of need. Senior brother Jiang Chen’s position as the young lord of Veluriyam Capital is an unprecedented stroke of fortune for

us. We must use this chance to rebuild the sect. With his help, there is no way we will stop at being just a fourth rank sect."

"Exactly! We have to rise to the occasion. Who made the rules about the first rank sects having to stay the same. It's our turn to shine! With senior brother Jiang Chen's help, the Regal Pill Palace can become a first rank sect for sure." Ling Hui'er was one of the most excited people present.

Palace Head Dan Chi, however, kept his cool. He waved a hand to quiet his disciples down. "Everyone, please behave yourselves. There is no need to add pressure to senior brother Jiang Chen."

Jiang Chen smiled. "What pressure do I have? Junior sister Ling Hui'er is entirely correct. None of the first rank sects today were born into their status. The 'Regal' of 'Regal Pill Palace' represents a heavenly right to rule – similar to how many of the other first rank sects distinguish themselves. So, we're rather well-equipped in that department." Jiang Chen said jokingly.

It was a novel way of looking at things that made everybody laugh.

Elder Yun Nie chuckled. "Young lord Zhen. Or maybe I should call you young lord Jiang. Ah, I'm conflicted.... What should I call you?"

"Jiang Chen is fine." Jiang Chen smiled faintly. "My old acquaintances from Regal Pill Palaces are my family. Any nickname makes me happy."

Palace Head Dan Chi nodded. "All my life, I've attempted to raise the sect up to third rank with my meager talents. Alas, my failure to do that resulted in our destruction and almost losing my own life. If not for my keenness all those years ago in bringing you from the Precious Tree Sect to us, our sect would have perished utterly in that disaster like the rest. What chance would we have had in congregating here today to discuss its rebuilding?"

These words came from the heart. Elder Yun Nie, Mu Gaoqi, and the others all nodded in agreement. Without Jiang Chen, no one else would be here, much less be able to rebuild the sect.

Perhaps other sects had survivors as well, individuals who'd kept to the shadows with thoughts about their homeland and lost sect. But it was impossible for anyone from the Myriad Domain's sects to face such a powerful enemy as the Eternal Celestial Capital. Their lack of resources made even Great Scarlet Mid Region an insurmountable enemy.

The Regal Pill Palace was different. It had not only the capital necessary for rebuilding the sect, but a surplus for pursuing loftier goals. All this was thanks to Jiang Chen as their sole benefactor. The one and only young lord of Veluriyam himself!

Jiang Chen laughed. "You were instrumental in discovering and elevating me all those years ago, Palace Head Dan Chi. Moreover, Mu Gaoqi is like a brother to me, and Elder Yun Nie my senior. I spent a short amount of time at the Regal Pill Palace, but I did so with great happiness. Perhaps everyone thought thought junior sister Hui'er's words were a joke?"

They all nodded smilingly. Of course they'd taken her words to be a joke. Given its available resources and manpower, Regal Pill Palace was lucky to be restored as a fourth rank sect. Veluriyam Capital's backing might raise it up to third rank at most.

Second rank was a too-large stretch of imagination, much less first rank. What first rank sect didn't have at least several millennia of history behind it? Some had accumulated wealth and heritage over thousands of years.

"You might think it over the top, but I think differently." Jiang Chen gazed at his captive audience seriously. "I can't deny that Regal Pill Palace has never had the resources and heritage as fitting of a first rank sect before. I'm sure the palace head and Elder Yun Nie will agree. However..."

The young man paused before continuing, his tone even more sincere than before. "As of now, the Regal Pill Palace has a sliver of hope. This sliver comes not only from my status as Veluriyam Capital's young lord, but also from the palace's possession of something noteworthy as its heritage. Plus, it has several once-in-a-millennium geniuses."

"Palace Head Dan Chi, I've already told you that the jade token you obtained as a wandering cultivator has an ancient method recorded inside. Its potency rivals that of a first rank sect's strongest signature methods, likely surpassing them in several aspects.

"That's not an empty claim. If this ancient method is used effectively, then Regal Pill Palace will become a sect to be reckoned with given sufficient time. With enough time, talent, and timely help from myself, there is no ruling out the Regal Pill Palace's potential ascension to a first rank sect!"

Jiang Chen's words sounded at his friends' ears like a thunderclap, shaking them to the core.

Palace Head Dan Chi and Elder Yun Nie had both heard Jiang Chen talk about the jade token's ancient method before. However, the prophecy about the sect's advancement to first rank someday was unheard-of.

The youngsters weren't the only shocked ones. The palace head and the elder traded awed glances in an attempt to recover their composure. Becoming a first rank sect was something they had never dreamed of doing.

"Perhaps something like that is a bit far off. We are only a few dozen strong and a single jade token isn't particularly transformative in that regard. We still lack a great deal in knowledge and resources. Thus, accomplishing this goal requires a concerted effort and iron-clad resolve from everyone here. With the palace head's shrewdness, charisma, as well as geniuses like Mu Gaoqi, what reason is there for the Regal Pill Palace to not flourish?"

"Senior brother Jiang Chen is right."

"We must rebuild our sect!"

"We shall retake our homeland!"

The disciples felt their passions ignite at Jiang Chen's speech. This hadn't been the young man's intent, per se. He'd only wanted to provide a degree of motivation to help them overcome possible lethargy. The pleasant conditions in Veluriyam Capital was a breeding ground for complacency.

"Good. This is what I want to hear from Regal Pill Palace's good people. No matter how comfortable and sublime life here may be, you are still refugees from a broken homeland. To regain your dignity, you must one day return there to retake it. Conquest and reconstruction are goals that a real cultivator

should pursue with gusto. If you can last until the day when the Regal Pill Palace becomes a first rank sect, how exalted will you be then? Your ancestors and descendants will share in that glory for ages to come!” Jiang Chen spurred his former peers on.

Nodding to himself internally, Palace Head Dan Chi spoke up as well. “Jiang Chen is perfectly right. We have powerful methods, a powerful backer, and powerful geniuses. We are far luckier than most other sects from Myriad Domain. We must return to our homeland and fulfill the lost sects’ unfulfilled wishes. Myriad Domain is our real home, and the place where we ultimately belong. The Eternal Celestial Capital and Great Scarlet Mid Region invaded our homeland, killed our loved ones, and slew our peers. I’ve had enough of letting their crimes sit unpunished!

“Jiang Chen.” The palace head turned to the youth, his eyes clear and candid.

“My cultivation is insufficient at present, and the same is true with all of the other disciples here. We can’t restore peace to Myriad Domain by ourselves. Therefore, we would like to ask for a reasonable plan of action that we can proceed from.”

“I have some ideas for that already,” Jiang Chen inclined his head. “The Eternal Celestial Capital is a first rank sect, so I don’t want to head into an all-out war with them just yet. Still, all of the factions squatting in Myriad Domain should be utterly destroyed or failing that, their remnants exiled. Regardless of whether the Eternal Celestial Capital or Great Scarlet Mid Region is behind them.

“One more thing. We can’t let Great Scarlet Mid Region sit next to us with a sharpened blade. Myriad Domain has suffered twice at the region’s hands, and it’s high time we repay our debts with interest. Before we war against the Eternal Celestial Capital, we can use Great Scarlet Mid Region as an appetizer – a sacrifice to demonstrate our dedication!”

Everyone brightened at this prospect.

The Eternal Celestial Capital was the puppeteer behind the scenes, and therefore not the direct target of their hatred. Great Scarlet Mid Region was a much closer enemy. Innate hostility and a desire to hurt Myriad Domain had been ingrained into their heads since childhood,. There was that incursion several centuries ago in addition to the one ten years ago...

The two successive assaults had taken countless lives and destroyed countless sects. The latter had been several times crueler than the former, its inflicted damage devastating enough to uproot the entire domain entirely. How could the gathered survivors not be pleased about a counterattack on their most hated nemesis?

Chapter 1306: Setup and Visitors

The young disciples of Regal Pill Palace had shot to their feet with excitement.

“Senior brother Jiang Chen, when shall we make our move?”

The martial world was full of hot-blooded people. Nobody was willing to suffer slaps to the face and be derided a loser. Who wouldn’t want revenge after suffering such a tremendous loss? Who wouldn’t want to wash their prior shame away and watch enemies weep beneath their feet?

“Senior brother, have you set an auspicious day to begin?” Ling Hui’er asked excitedly with a cupped fist salute.

“Everyone, stay calm and stop trying to rush your senior brother! I have no doubt that he already has a plan.” Palace Head Dan Chi pressed his hands downwards to calm the crowd down.

“Palace Head, Elder Yun Nie, Great Scarlet Mid Region has the Eternal Celestial Capital’s backing. We must take on the latter as well if we wish to seek revenge on the former.”

“Indeed.” Palace Head Dan Chi nodded. “The Eternal Celestial Capital is the true perpetrator behind all of this. However, Great Scarlet Mid Region cannot go unpunished for the sins they’ve wrought either.”

“The Eternal Celestial Capital is a first rank sect. We aren’t ready to take them on yet based on our current strength. The Capital’s citizens have finally just settled down after Emperor Peafowl’s disappearance, but our unity still has much room to improve. Moreover, we still lack the guidance of a peerless expert. Once we make our move on the Eternal Celestial Capital, they’ll surely join forces with the Emyrean River Palace and Sublime Chord Temple. They’ll cozen up to Pillfire City to present a front against us. It’s best that we avoid this situation for now.”

The crowd nodded with agreement. Rebuilding the Regal Pill Palace was important, but it shouldn’t negatively affect Veluriyam Capital’s future. It would be most inappropriate if it did.

“Jiang Chen, please give us your orders. You’re our greatest hope of rebuilding the sect. Anything you say, we’ll do.” Palace Head Dan Chi had a very proper attitude towards this situation.

“We’ll attack Great Scarlet Mid Region and wrest both their territory and Myriad Domain from their hands. The two will be combined. As for the Eternal Celestial Capital, I have my own plans to deal with them.”

“What plans?” The crowd was curious.

“The Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect had a huge falling out after the incident with Myriad Domain. The latter has contacted me privately and we’ve reconciled. My plan isn’t complicated. I’ll have the Ninesuns Sky Sect get involved in the fight. Their strength is slightly above that of the Eternal Celestial Capital.”

The Heavenly Dragon Sect, Skysword Sect, and the Ninesuns Sky Sect were widely recognized as the strongest first rank sects in the Upper Eight Regions. The Eternal Celestial Capital and Sublime Chord Temple were somewhere in the middle of the pack, while the Celestial Cicada Court, Emyrean River Palace, and the Moon God Sect were the weaker three.

Of course, there wasn’t too much of a discrepancy between the strongest and the weakest sects. They were all first rank sects after all. Their discrepancies were largely due to a moment’s difference in fortune and strength.

Palace Head Dan Chi pondered deeply. “Jiang Chen, the Ninesuns Sky Sect isn’t exactly a reputable faction either. Can we really trust them?”

Palace Head Dan Chi had seen the faction’s methods first hand. Before Myriad Domain had fallen into ruins, he’d always believed that they were the biggest threat to the domain. Everyone was widely aware

of the threat they imposed. Because of that, a bigger and more well-hidden threat like the Eternal Celestial Capital had managed to slip past unnoticed.

“That’s true. The Ninesuns Sky Sect is unbridled and cruel. They tyrannized our domain back in the day as well. Surely asking them for help is like asking a tiger for its skin?” Elder Yun Nie was worried.

Jiang Chen smiled blandly. “Asking a tiger for its skin? It’s hard to say who’s a tiger and who’s a pig in the Upper Eight Regions. Don’t worry. Since I was the one who wanted to make a deal with them, I naturally have something that they can’t refuse.” His confidence eased the crowd’s minds like a calming pill.

“Great Scarlet Mid Region will be so much easier to deal with if the Eternal Celestial Capital isn’t involved.” Palace Head Dan Chi murmured. “Jiang Chen, what is your strategy?”

“Great Scarlet Mid Region’s most powerful faction is none other than the imperial family. Their abilities and heritage are comparable to second rank sects. There are also three third rank sects whose abilities are second only to the royal family, and over a dozen fourth rank sects. The army that invaded us back consisted mostly of fourth rank sects. However, I also slew most of their sectmasters and elders with native Miasma when they were hunting me. I gifted their heads to their emperor. I’ve no doubt that these fourth rank sects are still licking their wounds.”

Jiang Chen had never shared these details to them before. There were only a few who knew about the incident as the Regal Pill Palace’s disciples have been hiding all over the world.

Palace Head Dan Chi’s eyes lit up. “I heard similar rumors back in the day and thought it nonsense. To think they were actually real!”

“This is beyond wonderful!” Elder Yun Nie roared into laughter. “Now that’s karma! Jiang Chen, I’m truly astounded by you!”

However, Jiang Chen didn’t think much of it. They were mere fourth rank sects after all.

“Great Scarlet Mid Region’s fourth rank sects are a little different from our domain’s fourth rank sects. They have emperor realm experts to guide them, but only one to three at the very most. Moreover, none of them have exceeded fourth level emperor realm. Those sects won’t impose too much of a threat.”

“Mm. Especially not when you slew all of their leaders. They won’t be able to kick up too much of a storm. Our primary target will be the imperial family and the three third rank sects.” Dan Chi nodded in agreement. “I’ve briefly crossed paths with all four factions before. Every single one of them lost a group of powerful experts at Cloudshatter Mountain Range. It’s most definitely affected their strength one way or another.”

During the trip to the mountain range, the Veranda master had lured various experts into the demonic blood formation. Imperial Prince Shao and a few other experts from the third rank sects died during the battle.

“Everyone, please attend to your duties for now and await my good news. We’ll not be making our move yet, but the moment we do, we’ll obliterate them in one strike. We won’t just take back Myriad Domain, Great Scarlet Mid Region will also be our spoils of war! There can’t be any mistakes. We need

to prepare a strategy, hire enough fighters, and plan for every contingency! We'll be an unstoppable force that leaves devastation at its wake!"

"Alright, we await your good news."

"Senior brother Jiang Chen, don't make us wait too long alright?" Ling Hui'er was raring for a fight.

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Jiang Chen returned to his residence after the discussion with the Regal Pill Palace. The flora in his courtyard were thriving, but the person who'd planted them was now oceans away, on a foreign island at an unknown location.

Huang'er... wait for me! He roared heartrendingly.

"Young lord, Elder Luo Tianshu and the sectmaster of the Nirvana Sect have arrived and is requesting an audience." Xue Tong suddenly arrived with news.

"The Nirvana Sect?" Jiang Chen immediately thought of the elder from the Dragon and Tiger Meet.

Have they really brought the True Heavensfall Iron? He was elated. "Have the Geng brothers escort them here."

The Nirvana Sect was a third rank sect. Their sectmaster was most likely just advanced realm emperor. Jiang Chen was already showing them a lot of face by sending the Geng brothers meet them.

It wasn't long before the Geng brothers returned with the Nirvana Sect's entourage in tow.

"Sectmaster, that man over there is the world-renowned young lord Zhen." Luo Tianshu immediately whispered to Wei Lang when they caught sight of Jiang Chen.

Sectmaster Wei Lang was dressed very elegantly with a coronet perched on his head. He exuded a very scholarly air.

"This commoner pays his respect to young lord Zhen." Although Wei Lang was a sectmaster of a third rank sect, his status was far below that of Jiang Chen's. Thus, he felt a need to show great respect and reverence towards the young lord.

Jiang Chen smiled blandly. "Sectmaster Wei needn't be too courteous. Men, show them to their seats!"

Tea was served after everyone was seated. Jiang Chen leisurely raised his tea cup. "Please have some tea. This is the best tea available in our capital."

"Definitely. It's an honor for us commoners to be able to taste Sacred Peafowl Mountain's tea." Wei Lang was being extremely modest.

Jiang Chen raised his cup of tea and smiled without saying anything else. The atmosphere quickly became awkward. Elder Luo faked a few coughs. "Young lord Zhen, do you still remember the matter we talked about before?"

The young lord squeezed his temples, seemingly deep in thought. "Ah, yes. Your name is Luo Tianshu. If I'm not mistaken, you were here to trade your True Heavensfall Iron right?"

"That's correct." Luo Tianshu was elated. He was just wondering how he should bring up the topic.

"Things will be much easier since the young lord still remembers the deal. When my sectmaster heard that you were in desperate need for the True Heavensfall Iron, he immediately decided to deliver this item to you himself." Luo Tianshu had worded his sentence better than a song. It almost sounded like he was a son showing filial piety to his father.

Jiang Chen was mildly taken aback. "Ah? Elder Luo still remembers this?"

"Young lord Zhen, not in a million years would I dare forget about it. I've spent countless days and nights just pondering the matter."

Jiang Chen smiled wryly and sighed. "Elder Luo, I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I've already purchased the amount of True Heavensfall Iron that I needed. I still have some use for it, but my need is no longer what it was."

Luo Tianshu was so dumbfounded that his jaw nearly touched the ground.

Chapter 1307: Jiang Chen Pushes the Price Down

Luo Tianshu felt the carpet pulled out from beneath his feet and that he was free falling down an endless abyss. How could this be? For the past half year, the young lord's promised Pinecrane Pill had been at the foremost of his mind. Fifty kilograms of True Heavensfall Iron was good for one Pinecrane Pill — well, they had two hundred kilograms worth! That represented four Pinecrane Pills!

Luo Tianshu felt his blood froth whenever he thought about this. When he took the news back to his sectmaster, Wei Lang had been so surprised that he hardly knew how to react. Once he finally got over his agitation, he decided to pay a personal visit with the material.

But the sad pity was that this round trip ended up costing them half a year. They were a step too slow, young lord Zhen no longer needed it. Both Nirvana Sect representatives looked downcast, finding it difficult to hide the disappointment in their eyes.

"Young lord Zhen, my specimen is really quite different. Please take a look at it, no matter what. Perhaps you might find it extraordinary?" Wei Lang decided to take the initiative and hauled out a hunk of iron, about the size of a watermelon, from his storage ring.

It really was an impressive piece of True Heavensfall Iron. Jiang Chen maintained a bland smile on his face and flicked a look at the hunk that Wei Lang was offering. His eyes almost popped out of his head when he did so.

It was indeed what he was looking for, but the size and purity of the specimen completely exceeded his expectations!

Thankfully he had a good grip on his emotions. Although he was shocked beyond belief, he still maintained a completely indifferent demeanor. He hefted the chunk of iron for a bit. What a good site, this is really a good item! This True Heavensfall Iron is exceedingly high quality. This luster, this purity... two hundred kilograms of this is worth five hundred of typical quality!

Jiang Chen fell in love with the iron as soon as he looked at it. In actuality, he hadn't gotten his hands on any iron. It was all a negotiating tactic. The Nirvana Sect had come knocking on his door, proving that

they dearly wished to conclude the transaction. Since he knew of their ardent desire, he was in much less of a hurry.

He had a feeling that this chunk of iron would still end up in his hands, and that he wouldn't need to pay such a high price to obtain it.

He admired it for a moment and then smiled, putting it down. "It's a fine item alright. I would've bought it without hesitation during the Dragon and Tiger Meet. But money is spent when there's a need. Now that I already have it, my need for it has greatly decreased and so has the price I'm willing to pay for it. Gentlemen, perhaps you can consider selling it to someone else who needs it?" Jiang Chen smiled faintly and flicked a glance at Wei Lang.

The sectmaster was incredibly depressed. He exchanged a regretful look with Luo Tianshu.

"Young lord Zhen, how much do you think this True Heavensfall Iron is worth?" To be honest, the Nirvana Sect might have this chunk of metal, but they hadn't known what it was before and what it could be used for.

They only had a vague guess that it was material for refining weapons, and high level material at that. It was probably sky rank, but they had no idea what its true value was. If it hadn't been for Jiang Chen mentioning it during the Dragon and Tiger Meet, they never would've thought that their sect would have something so valuable.

If the transaction concluded at the rate that the young lord had promised before, four Pinecrane Pills were a sky high price! One pill had gone for 1.61 billion saint spirit stones during the auction, so four would be almost 7 billion stones!

The Nirvana Sect was a second rank sect, so their wealth would certainly amount to that much, but they still couldn't easily take out so much money at one time. That was the same for most second rank sects as well. Only a first rank sect or a paramount faction like the Veluriyam Capital would be able to afford this level of spending!

Jiang Chen almost burst out laughing when he heard such a clueless question. This sect head is so naively cute. The silly question almost imparted a sense of guilt to Jiang Chen, as if he would be bullying a fool if he kept the price too low.

"Young lord Zhen..." Wei Lang sighed softly. "Just like you say, money is spent when there's a need. This is priceless to someone who needs it, but a rock to someone who doesn't know it. I wouldn't want to trouble two people for the same matter. Since we've come, we'd like to trade this item to you. I feel that it will show its truest value in your hands and turn the ordinary into the ethereal. Please give a price if you will. I won't turn it down no matter what it is."

Jiang Chen hadn't expected Wei Lang to be so straightforward. He'd thought the sectmaster was a bit of a fool, but that didn't seem to be the case after all. The sectmaster may not be the smartest, but he was advancing through retreating and kicking the difficult question to Jiang Chen.

Wei Lang had a general understanding of Jiang Chen's personality thanks to Luo Tianshu. He knew that the young lord wasn't a blackhearted person. This was why he'd had the inclination to have the young lord set the price instead.

“That’s right, young lord Zhen. My sectmaster greatly admires you after hearing of your exploits. Our relationship will still stand even if the transaction doesn’t go through. My sectmaster really does hold you in high regard and would like to strike up a friendship with you. But perhaps our sect isn’t at a high enough level...”

Jiang Chen waved a hand. “Gentlemen, I don’t consider status and backgrounds when making friends. I care only for sincerity and mutuality.”

Wei Lang hastened to agree. “Right, right. The young lord is generous and not overly caught up in the details. One can tell that the young lord has vast ambitions after observing your treatment of wandering cultivators. You’re not one to get overly caught up in unnecessary and overelaborate formalities.”

Jiang Chen smiled. “Sectmaster Wei, though you compliment me and this True Heavensfall Item is indeed wonderful, I can’t give you the original price.”

Four Pinecrane Pills? Jiang Chen naturally didn’t want to pay that. He was short on the pills and even though he had a few left, he still owed a few pills to the wandering great emperors. Without the Goldencrown Cloudcrane, he had no way of refining more. He was coasting off of the original cauldron of nine he’d refined.

Wei Lang offered a cupped fist salute. “Young lord Zhen, I’m not the type to hem and haw and be unable to make up my mind. I’d like to be friends! So please name your price.”

Jiang Chen didn’t hold back any longer, seeing how resolute the sectmaster was. “Since this is the case, I’ll make an offer. I know Sectmaster Wei must have had a Pinecrane Pill in mind during this long trip.”

The sectmaster blushed but still nodded.

“Then let’s do it this way. I’ll trade your True Heavensfall Iron in return for a Pinecrane Pill and two Emperor Ascension Pills. What say you?”

“Emperor Ascension Pills? What are those?” Wei Lang drew a blank. He was born of Swordfield Mid Region after all, not a core Upper Eight Region. He did indeed lack a bit of knowledge.

“The Emperor Ascension Pill will unequivocally grant you one higher level in the emperor realm. How do you think its value compares to the Pinecrane Pill?”

“Ah?!” Both Wei Lang and Luo Tianshu couldn’t sit still. They jumped up as if there were pins on their chairs.

“Young lord Zhen, you mean a guaranteed level in the emperor realm? Does such a pill exist in the world?” Wei Lang was a notable person in his region, being at seventh level emperor realm. He might not command in the wind and rains in his region, but no one dared defy him apart from some secluded old monsters.

And now, a great figure in the Swordfield Mid Region was jumping up and down like a three year old.

Luo Tianshu was also trembling all over. Their voices thundered and set off explosions in his mind, filling his thoughts with daydreams.

“Well, gentlemen? Do we have a deal?” Jiang Chen smiled.

Wei Lang and Luo Tianshu looked at each other and chorused without another moment of thought. "Yes, absolutely! Young lord Zhen, are you joking with us?"

"I never joke about business."

The two were delighted, and Wei Lang pushed the hunk of metal over. "Young lord Zhen, this is yours from now on."

Jiang Chen smiled. "Please wait a moment."

He went inside to make some preparations and came back out with two pill bottles. "Gentlemen, this is one Pinecrane Pill and two Emperor Ascension Pills. You may check the goods first."

During this half year of seclusion, he'd had the time to refine some pills as well as achieve cultivation breakthrough. He hadn't had time to refine Emperor Supremacy Pills, but had time to produce two cauldronfuls of the somewhat easier Emperor Ascension Pills. He had twenty some Eight Treasure Cordyceps after all, there was no fear of failure.

The two cauldronfuls had given him quite a haul at thirty pills, which allowed him to easily offer some to others. The Emperor Supremacy Pill was higher level and he had two of the Heavencloud Ganoderma. He wasn't in a rush to try anything before he was ready.

Wei Lang and Luo Tianshu were beside themselves. The hands clutching the pill bottles shook slightly. They were different from the Upper Eight Region heavyweights. Although they'd seen some fine items in this life, they'd never seen anything at the peak. And now, they were holding some of the best pills in the world that even Pillfire City couldn't refine! How could they not be excited?!

Grandfather of wuxia, Jin Yong, passes away at 94 years old [Close](#)

A titan, forefather, and legend of the wuxia scene passed away today. Jin Yong, author of The Legend of the Condor Heroes, The Deer and the Cauldron, Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils, to name just a few, has gone off in search of new adventures in the jianghu.

He's one of the most popular wuxia authors out there, with 15 works written between 1955 and 1972 that've sold over 100 million copies worldwide. Considering that his books were written half a century ago, it's stunning to think that they're still spawning adaptations,...

Chapter 1308: Enormous Gains

Jiang Chen wasn't particularly surprised by Wei Lang and Luo Tianshu's reaction. Even a first rank sect from the Upper Eight Regions would salivate at the items he was offering, let alone a second rank sect from the mid regions.

"Young lord Zhen, are these pills really ours after the trade?" Wei Lang was still in the throes of disbelief.

"Naturally. They're all yours." Jiang Chen smiled.

Wei Lang slapped his thigh. "Excellent! The young lord is just as generous as the rumors! I'm completely and utterly convinced by your greatness!"

When Jiang Chen said that he no longer had much demand for the True Heavensfall Iron, Wei Lang had been worried that the young lord would slash the price mercilessly. To think that he was still able to get such a great payout from of the deal!

“Young lord, can the Emperor Ascension Pill be taken directly or do we have to adhere to certain taboos and rules?” Luo Tianshu asked excitedly.

“No need. After entering closed cultivation, you need only adjust your body to its best state. It’s best taken when you’re at the advanced stage so you may transcend to the next level effortlessly. There are no taboos, nor do you have to worry about side effects.” Jiang Chen was very detailed with his explanations.

“Excellent!” Wei Lang was thrilled. “Young lord Zhen, I’ve not met many eminent figures in my life, but there have been a few. I must say, none of them are comparable to you!” Wei Lang wasn’t exaggerating.

He’d dealt with many powerful factions and eminent figures in his life. Many of them had been extremely stingy and miserly. Firstly, they might not even recognize the True Heavensfall Iron. Even if they did, they would most likely trade no more than 300 million saint spirit stones for it. What was 300 million spirit stones when compared to the three pills from young lord Zhen?

One Pinecrane Pill alone was worth billions. Although the true value of the Emperor Ascension Pill was still unknown, an emperor realm expert wouldn’t hesitate to fork out 500 million to purchase it if they had the ability to.

In other words, they’d traded a useless hunk of metal for items worth over 2 billion in total! It was an insanely huge fortune for a second rank sect! Moreover, these were extremely rare pills that couldn’t even be bought!

Jiang Chen wore a faint smile and watched Wei Lang and Luo Tianshu celebrate without disturbing them. It took the pair a while before they realized the inappropriate levity of their actions.

“Cough. Young lord, please forgive us for being rude. We commoners have never seen treasures of such magnitude and lost our composure for the moment.” Wei Lang was a very excellent speaker. He combined flattering Jiang Chen with clawing his way out of an unflattering situation.

Jiang Chen nodded slightly and suddenly shifted his tone. “Dear guests, shall we speak about other matters since we’ve already reached a deal?”

Wei Lang immediately nodded. “We are more than willing to. It’s our honor to be able to speak with you, young lord.”

Luo Tianshu nodded as well. The sectmaster and sect elder was playing the roles of obedient grandchildren for Jiang Chen.

“Years ago, I once travelled to the region that you’re from, the Swordfield Mid Region.” Jiang Chen smiled blandly.

Wei Lang and Luo Tianshu ‘displayed’ looks of surprise, but they were sweating buckets on the inside. The young lord had finally gotten to the point.

Jiang Chen had seemed a little hostile towards Swordfield Mid Region back when the young lord and Luo Tianshu first met. The latter had attempted to ask why, but he didn't receive an answer. Wei Lang had heard about the incident from Luo Tianshu as well. Their hearts were pounded furiously.

"Why do you seem surprised?" Jiang Chen smiled. "I thought we already discussed this."

Wei Lang and Luo Tianshu exchanged glances. They feigned innocence and shook their heads. "To think that young lord Zhen once visited our territory! We deserve death for being so ignorant and ill-informed!"

Jiang Chen smiled blandly. "The Nirvana Sect is one of the most eminent sects in Swordfield Mid Region, but I wonder which faction your allegiances lie with?"

Wei Lang and Luo Tianshu found the question extremely difficult to answer and were at a loss for words.

"Alright. Allow me to be a little more direct. Is the Eternal Celestial Capital the ruler of Swordfield Mid Region? Do they hold authority over your sect?" Jiang Chen cut straight to the point.

Wei Lang's heart sank. Are the rumors true? Is the young lord really the young boy from Myriad Domain back then? T-this has taken a turn for the worst!

"Young lord, Swordfield is one of the more neutral factions in the human domain, a rare existence in the mid regions. While the Eternal Celestial Capital does hold some power in our region, they are definitely not our sole benefactor. Also, the Nirvana Sect has very little attachment to our region." Wei Lang responded honestly.

"Very little attachment?" Jiang Chen grinned devilishly.

"Young lord, please don't misunderstand. That was merely a conservative statement. To be honest, we've never once leaned towards the Eternal Celestial Capital. In fact, we're closer to the Ninesuns Sky Sect than any other faction..." Wei Lang was drenched in cold sweat.

The presence of young lord Zhen felt like Mount Tai bearing down on the sectmaster, even though his cultivation level was beneath Wei Lang's. The latter didn't dare withhold any information and came clean with the truth. Luo Tianshu voiced his support for Wei Lang as well.

Jiang Chen knocked on his armrest gently. "The Ninesuns Sky Sect and Eternal Celestial Capital... These two factions are more active than I'd expected! No wonder the Ninesuns Sky Sect is allowed to do as they please in Swordfield Mid Region. How could they if someone hadn't given them the means to do so?"

Wei Lang was on the verge of soiling his pants. He was almost certain that young lord Zhen was the same Regal Pill Palace disciple that the Ninesuns Sky Sect and Eternal Celestial Capital had pursued back in the day.

Worst of all, Wei Lang had indeed offered some assistance to the Ninesuns Sky Sect. He felt a chill down his spine and his scalp prickle with numbness. Young lord Zhen's volcanic rage could befall him any moment now...

“You two needn’t worry. The Ninesuns Sky Sect and I have already resolved our differences.” Jiang Chen’s words were a refreshing pail of ice-cold water in the middle of summer. Their worries and anxiety were immediately sluiced away.

“Young lord Zhen, we...” Wei Lang wanted to explain.

“Sectmaster Wei, how many factions are like yours in Swordfield Mid Region?”

Swordfield wasn’t the same as the Great Scarlet. They were stronger than the latter and wasn’t ruled by a single imperial faction. Multiple great factions ruled over the entire region and split the profits accordingly.

“In response to the young lord, Swordfield Mid Region is mostly ruled by three second rank factions. We are one of those sects, along with Tai’ah City and Wildstar Mountain. There are no third rank factions in our region. Our second rank factions rule over dozens of fourth rank sects and all those below.”

“Then Swordfield Mid Region is split into three ruling parties?”

“Indeed. The three of us have formed an equilibrium to keep each other in check. None of us have the ability to unite the entire region. This has been the state of affairs ever since the ancient times.” Wei Lang sighed.

Jiang Chen pondered deeply and inquired more. “What about the Wildstar Mountain? What can you tell me about them?”

“The Wildstar Mountain is very close with the Heavenly Dragon Sect. There are many who say that the Wildstar Mountain is a subsidiary of the Heavenly Dragon Sect.”

“The Heavenly Dragon Sect?” Jiang Chen frowned. That was a sect infamous for their overbearing style.

“Mm. The Wildstar Mountain is widely regarded as the most overbearing faction in our region. If we sum up the three factions’ strength as a ten, the Wildstar Mountain would occupy four parts, while we and Tai’ah City would be a three each.”

The Swordfield Mid Region was an incredibly vast territory comparable to the Great Scarlet Mid Region. It was sandwiched between Great Scarlet and Veluriyam Capital. One had to traverse the region to travel between the two.

It was also a region that linked Veluriyam Capital to Myriad Domain. Gaining control over the region meant gaining control over the passage from the upper regions all the way to the lower regions.

Jiang Chen pondered deeply and asked nothing else. “Thank you for the information. I have something else to attend to, so I’ll have to excuse myself for a moment. Do spend a few more days in our capital if you wish. If you need someone to accompany you during your stay, let me know and I’ll make the appropriate arrangements.”

“We wouldn’t dare.” Wei Lang smiled. “After obtaining such an incredible pill, I wish to return home to enter closed cultivation and refine this pill into true gains.”

Wei Lang could stay in his seat no longer. His hunger for the Emperor Ascension Pill's heaven-defying properties was getting unbearable. Luo Tianshu was even more anxious than his sectmaster. Even though his abilities were more inferior, his desire for strength was much stronger.

Jiang Chen didn't retain them after seeing their reactions, issuing only a warning. "Surely you both know to keep the contents of today's discussion a secret?"

"Yes. Definitely." Wei Lang and Luo Tianshu immediately nodded.

"If so, I bid you a smooth journey." Jiang Chen didn't stand on further ceremony. They would never tell anyone about this as long as they had brains. A good amount of people would covet their Pinecrane Pill and Emperor Ascension Pills. They'd be courting death if they did such a thing.

Jiang Chen picked up the True Heavensfall Iron and broke into hearty laughter after the two had left. His harvest this time was almost too great to be true. Wei Lang and Luo Tianshu seemed to think that they'd received a good deal, and perhaps they really had. But to Jiang Chen, it was the deal of a century!

This True Heavensfall Iron specimen was most definitely of superior grade. Two hundred kilograms was akin to five hundred kilograms of normal grade True Heavensfall Iron! This was absolutely enough to forge the flying swords he needed.

The flying swords would need to be infused with five kilograms of True Heavensfall Iron to reach perfection. Only three hundred fifty kilograms of iron was needed to forge eighty-one swords. The superior grade True Heavensfall Iron was worth at least double of a normal grade one.

"Mm. This is definitely more than enough." Jiang Chen was elated. He'd struck luck in his time of need!

"The Heavenly Chalice Sword Formation is sect's ultimate formation capable of slaughtering those above one's level. I'm truly blessed." Jiang Chen was elated. He was making various preparations for the game of chess ahead. His strength would play a pivotal role in his preparations. The True Heavensfall Iron had come at the most appropriate of timings!

Chapter 1309: A Sincere Announcement

All the great emperors of Veluriyam Capital were gathered within the young lord residence. Jiang Chen had prepared a banquet and invited them in secret. They were surprised to hear that the young lord had opened his doors once more, but even more so at the secrecy he was employing. They glanced at each other inquisitively once seated, curious as to each other's thoughts.

"Young lord Zhen has arrived!"

As they sat in mild wonder, Jiang Chen entered from the front door with Emperor Peerless and the Jiao brothers.

"Haha, I do apologize for any inconvenience in calling all of you here." Jiang Chen politely saluted with cupped fist. The seated emperors stood to return the gesture.

"Please, take your seats." He ushered his guests into their seats. Everyone was smiling; the atmosphere was very pleasant.

The young lord raised his glass in a toast to the room as the banquet began. "My friends, after the battle at the Vassal Meeting, Veluriyam Capital is finally enjoying a moment of stability. I am blessed that all of you think highly enough of me to elevate me so. Without your coordinated efforts, our wandering cultivator meet wouldn't have met with nearly the success that it did. A toast and my gratitude for your efforts!"

Everyone raised their cups. "Ah, young lord Zhen, you praise us too much. We are all great emperors of Veluriyam Capital and its business is our business!"

"We lent you only our brute strengths at the Dragon and Tiger Meet. Without your strategic planning, there would've been no success. It's us who should drink a toast to you."

"That's right. We admire Daoist Peafowl's foresight and keen eye, young lord Zhen. It was a miracle that he was able to find someone as capable as you to stand in for him. Let this cup of wine represent our compliments to you."

The emperors all raised their goblets to the young man. Smiling, Jiang Chen drained his cup.

"I've never been interested in idle boasting, but I did have something I would like to tell everyone today."

This elicited a mass clattering of cups upon the table. The guests looked intently at Jiang Chen, awaiting his elaboration.

"I'm sure you've heard some rumors these past few days about my origins and background. I don't care to explain these things to outsiders, but all of you here are pillars of the city. I can't in good conscience withhold the truth from you.

"Yes, my surname is not Zhen, but Jiang. I come from Myriad Domain. A few years back, I was the target of the Eternal Celestial Capital's relentless pursuit, so you may have heard of me." Jiang Chen's eyes were completely forthright, meeting the surprised gazes of the emperors head on. He was willing to be sincere about the matter. After all, it was going to be revealed to the world sooner or later.

The atmosphere became a little tense.

Emperor Coiling Dragon chuckled, breaking the silence. "Young lord, we've been mentally prepared for something like this. We came to a consensus a while ago that heroes should not be constrained by their origins. Emperor Peafowl certainly was not when he chose you. Young lord Fan wasn't a native of Veluriyam Capital either, but he was made young lord all the same. As long as you're fully devoted to the city's cause, that's still a blessing for the rest of us."

"Yes, yes, yes. Veluriyam Capital isn't some elite sect that focuses overly on the bloodline of its members. We've always emphasized bringing in talent from all over. We only want the best of the best, no? As long as you're a real genius, you're more than welcome to join us. And you, young lord Zhen, you're the best proof of the success of our strategy!" The first to support Emperor Coiling Dragon wasn't Emperor Void, surprisingly. It was Emperor Vastsea. Having joined up with Jiang Chen, he was now a loyal dog.

“Emperor Peafowl has a unique way of assessing people. He’s never made a mistake about anyone,” Emperor Void mused. “I don’t care what others think. I shall maintain my ever-reliable support of young lord Zhen. Ah, I should say young lord Jiang Chen.”

“Hohoho, I don’t mind either. Veluriyam Capital cares not for birthrights. It would be a dreadful loss for us all to allow young lord Zhen’s talent to drift away from here.” Emperor Mountaincrush grinned.

After Emperor Peafowl’s disappearance and Emperor Shura’s death, only six out of the city’s eight titled great emperors remained. Of these, four had made their opinions clear.

Emperor Petalpluck smiled serenely. “A man of young lord Zhen’s talents would do well anywhere in the world. Veluriyam Capital, on the other hand, would be completely lost without him. I’m too old and I don’t have the confidence to deal with the ensuing chaos. Therefore, I am firmly behind either young lord Zhen or young lord Jiang Chen.”

Emperor Skysplitter was the only one left.

“I am one of the newer great emperors,” he sighed softly. “So I’ve always thought myself to be a genius beyond comparison. Seeing young lord Jiang Chen has informed me of how foolish my pride was. I too, support the young lord.”

All six great emperors had made their stances clear. Emperor Peerless and the Jiao brothers were Sacred Peafowl Mountain’s subordinates and naturally aligned with Jiang Chen.

The universal support prompted Jiang Chen to raise his cup once more. “I’m touched that you’ve chosen to back me. From today onwards as ever, I shall use all my strength to lead the city to greater heights! I shall repay your trust in me a hundredfold!”

“Cheers to young lord Jiang Chen! Another toast, gentlemen!” Emperor Peerless led the drinking.

“Absolutely. Young lord Jiang Chen is so capable, yet so young. His future is brighter than we could ever imagine. Here’s to a generous toast!” Emperor Coiling Dragon chuckled.

The atmosphere became more lively after a few drinks.

During the banquet, Jiang Chen relayed a few interesting and odd stories about the world and his experiences before the conversation shifted to the Dragon and Tiger Meet. Even the elderly, conservative Emperor Petalpluck lavished the event with praise.

The Dragon and Tiger Meet and its ripples had taken the entire human domain by storm. A marketplace, an auction, treasure identification, pill and martial dao lectures... each and every segment was recounted favorably by countless wandering cultivators all over the world.

“A single Pinecrane Pill easily countered Pillfire City’s Pill-Martial Summit. I hear that a lot of wandering cultivators went there too, but only twelve great emperor wandering cultivators were in attendance. We had way more than that!”

“Heheh, we crushed them despite this being our first time!”

“Pillfire City has oppressed the world for too long. They deserve a good beating!”

“We haven’t fully defeated Pillfire City yet, but their position of authority is definitely shaken.”

“Of course, of course. Young lord Jiang Chen’s Pinecrane Pill and Emperor Supremacy Pill are totally impossible for Pillfire City. Simply having these two is more than enough to loom over them.” Having said this, everyone looked inquisitively at Jiang Chen.

He smiled coolly back. He knew what they were thinking.

“Unfortunately, I don’t have any Pinecrane Pills left at the moment. Neither have I refined the Emperor Supremacy Pill just yet. When you need them in the future however, I will make sure to reserve them for you. Because of the scarcity of the materials, I can’t guarantee when the pills will be available. Still, you’ll have priority for sure.”

A wave of joy surged through the room. Emperor Coiling Dragon smiled. “I’m only interested in the Emperor Supremacy Pill. I’ve used a Pinecrane Pill already.”

“The Emperor Supremacy Pill’s main material is the Heavencloud Ganoderma,” Emperor Petalpluck spoke. “After the Dragon and Tiger Meet, I would think that this spirit herb’s price will be on the rise. It is already exceedingly rare, and future demand will only make it more difficult to find.”

The other emperors inclined their heads in agreement.

Jiang Chen remained carefree. “The price of the Ganoderma will increase, yes. But difficult to find? Not necessarily.”

“Oh?”

“Without me, the Heavencloud Ganoderma is just another regular sky rank spirit herb. There’s no one else in the human domain capable of turning the herb into the pill. The seller won’t find many other willing buyers for his merchandise, and I’m the only person willing to pay the corresponding price.” Jiang Chen explained calmly.

“Haha, you’re right. If they don’t sell to young lord Jiang Chen, they won’t have anyone else to sell to!” Emperor Coiling Dragon slapped his thigh.

“Not necessarily. If Pillfire City is willing to pay a high price for them simply to keep them from us, what then?” Emperor Skysplitter raised a concern.

“That’s not a possibility but a certainty.” Jiang Chen shook his head. “However, even if he does, they won’t be able to buy up all of the specimens. A good reputation requires careful buildup and maintenance. As long as Veluriyam Capital is better regarded than Pillfire City, there will be people willing to sell to us over them. Not everyone is interested in doing business with Pillfire City, after all.”

“I suppose you’re right. Now that young lord Jiang Chen is on the scene, Pillfire City cannot dominate any longer.”

Smiling, the young lord continued. “As I’m sure you’ve already seen from the Dragon and Tiger Meet last time, the wandering cultivator community has plenty of treasures, too. They are held back only by an inability to find an appropriate and trustworthy buyer. We at Veluriyam Capital must present ourselves as an open channel, so that wandering cultivators are receptive to doing business with us. As time

passes and our good reputation spreads, Pillfire City's experience and knowledge will be rendered pointless. My own far outpaces theirs, in any case."

Jiang Chen's confidence shook everyone's hearts. Admiration and respect flashed in their eyes. When it came to pill dao, the youthful young lord was second to none. He had incredible knowledge and experience in that area.

"Alright, let's put pill dao matters aside. I have a question I'd like to ask all of you." Jiang Chen changed the topic. "Does the Upper Eight Regions have any master weapon refiners? Top of the class, at that?"

"Master weapon refiners?" Emperor Peerless blinked. "I hear that the Ninesuns Sky Sect has such a master, though he's usually removed from the outside world."

"Yes, the Ninesuns Sky Sect is the most renowned for its weapons refinement. They have a long-standing heritage in that subject."

"The Ninesuns Sky Sect, was it?" Jiang Chen was moved by the thought.

Chapter 1310: The Ninesuns Sky Sect

"Young lord, are you really headed to the Ninesuns Sky Sect?" Xue Tong was worried despite himself when he heard Jiang Chen wanted to pay a visit.

As Xue Tong recalled, the Ninesuns Sky Sect was a very vicious sect that held a grudge against the young lord. Back in the Precious Tree Sect, the Ninesuns Sky Sect's inspector had clashed with them because his sect backed the Purple Sun Sect. And after that, the young lord had even killed Ninesuns' disciples.

"Xue Tong, you're my little brother so you don't need to call me young lord. I'm going to the Ninesuns Sky Sect together with four great emperors, what's there to worry about? Ah, there will be many things in the young lord residence for you to handle in my absence. Make sure you consult with the various seniors, especially Madame Yun and the four monarchs. Alright?"

Xue Tong bowed. "Don't worry, Brother Chen. I'll take care of things here well."

"Chen'er, are you going on another journey?" In the residence's rear courtyard, Jiang Feng was also deeply worried when he heard his son was about to make another long trip.

"Father, be at ease cultivating inside the residence whilst I'm away. Also, visit our friends from the Regal Pill Palace, as well as Liu Zhen and the others."

"Haha, you're worried about this dad of yours, hmm? Don't worry, your old man won't leave without saying goodbye this time. I'm not setting a foot outside the young lord residence! I know there are countless pairs of eyes on you and Sacred Peafowl Mountain. This old man may not be much help, but I won't hinder you or cause trouble for you either!"

Jiang Feng was a straightforward man. Since he'd obtained news of his wife and daughter, his anxiety about their safety were greatly diminished from before. His worries had now morphed into anticipation. Even so, Jiang Feng knew they couldn't hurry the matter.

“Chen’er, as a father, I’m very proud of what you’ve done in those past few years. Logically speaking, I shouldn’t ask anything more from you. Only... don’t forget your missing brother, inquire about him if you can. I’m worried about him the most now.”

As parents, the more children one had meant the more worries that came along. Back in the day, Jiang Feng had only Jiang Chen in the Jiang Han province, so he doted very much on the latter. And now, he was likewise deeply concerned about the younger son he’d never met.

When Jiang Chen read the sadness in his father’s eyes, he knew this was a deeply-seated paternal love. For a moment, the old scenes from the Eastern Kingdom rushed to his mind, and along with them, warmth.

“Don’t worry, father. I’ll do everything possible to find my younger brother.” This was Jiang Chen’s pledge to his father.

Jiang Feng squeezed out a smile. “I only hope the heavens have eyes, that he’s still alive among us, that he’s still in good health.”

Jiang Chen comforted his father. “Don’t worry, father. The Jiang sons are blessed with good fortune. The heavens will certainly help him.”

Jiang Feng sighed softly and looked at his son’s face. It was becoming ever more well defined. His fatherly love overflowed again at the sight of his steady, resolute son.

“Chen’er, Huang’er is a good girl. I’m aware of what’s happened to her. Don’t be downcast. A real man should never let his woman suffer, no matter how difficult the circumstances are. I was useless in the past and let your mother be taken from me. I didn’t have the strength to bring her back. I hope the same thing doesn’t happen to you.”

Jiang Chen rubbed his head. Although he didn’t say anything, the determination in his eyes was answer enough.

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Two days later, Jiang Chen quietly left Sacred Peafowl Mountain for the Ninesuns Sky Sect, taking with him Emperor Peerless, the Jiao brothers, as well as Emperor Vastsea.

The Ninesuns Sky Sect was located in the midwest of the Upper Eight Regions, placing it in the core interior region. Although it was far from Sacred Peafowl Mountain, it was still closer compared to a trip to Pillfire City.

Jiang Chen kept a very low profile on the way, avoided all trouble, and arrived at the sect’s mountain gates in less than a day. As a first rank sect, the Ninesuns Sky Sect was located on a land with an extremely dense concentration of spirit energy.

“Young lord, is this your first time at the Ninesuns Sky Sect?” Emperor Peerless asked with a smile.

“Yes. Have you visited before?” Jiang Chen was curious.

“I came here once.” Emperor Peerless sighed softly. “I came to request a legendary weapon. It was a pity that I failed.”

“The Ninesuns Sky Sect is a first rank sect that usually looks down on us wandering cultivators,” Jiao Yun remarked. “When it comes to arrogance, if the Heavenly Dragon Sect is ranked first among first rank sects, then this Ninesuns Sky Sect comes at least second.”

It was easy to sense his dissatisfaction with the sect.

The group’s presence in front of the mountain gates, pointing here and there, alarmed the sect’s patrolling disciples. Several of them blurred into streams of light to evaluate the newcomers.

“Who goes there, skulking around in Ninesuns Sky Sect private property?” A middle aged swordsman clad in apricot robes stormed up to Jiang Chen’s group with an overbearing air, six younger disciples in tow.

“Go inform your sectmaster that noble guests have come from Veluriyam Capital.” With a cold snort, Emperor Peerless slightly flared his formidable aura, blasting the sect members several dozen meters away.

Immensely frightened, the sect disciples wanted to summon reinforcements, but were stopped in their tracks when they heard these words.

“Noble guests from Veluriyam Capital?”

“May I ask who you might be, gracious seniors?” The leader instantly dropped the haughty act and was the picture of docile courtesy.

“There’s no need for you to ask anything, just tell your sectmaster to come out and greet his guests.” On the contrary, the impatient Jiao Yun wasn’t polite at all. “If you don’t want to go, then we can go inside ourselves. It’s all the same.”

Jiang Chen hectored, “Jiao Yun, don’t be rude!”

Jiao Yun scratched his head with a mischievous smile, but wasn’t greatly chastised.

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Inside the Ninesuns Sky Sect, below the sectmaster, four esteemed elders, twelfth rank inspectors, and the upper ranks of the council of elders were gathered together.

The sect held a meeting every half year. Everyone had to attend as long as they weren’t venturing outside or cultivating behind closed doors. The Ninesuns Sky Sect’s sectmaster was called Zuo Qiuhaohao. His title was Clearsky, and people usually called him Emperor Clearsky.

“Everyone, apart from examining everyone’s achievements during this half year, I also wish to discuss the layout of the human domain. Everyone may speak freely.” Emperor Clearsky spread his hands, indicating a forum of free speech.

Someone in the crowd shot to his feet. The man was greatly advanced in age, his head matted with white hair. Added to his tall and sturdy body, he seemed strong and bold.

“Sectmaster, this old man requests you to open the Hall of Punishment and execute Shangguang Yanqing.” Astonishing words emitted as soon as he opened his mouth.

All of the upper ranks recoiled with shock and horrors. They didn't understand why. These were rare semi-annual meetings. Why would someone's first words be to demand someone else's death? And one of their own at that?

Shangguan Yanqing was a twelfth rank inspector who'd participated in Veluriyam Capital's Dragon and Tiger Meet. His status was second only to the sectmaster, a personage that stood side by side with the four esteemed elders. Someone calling for his head was a great matter that would shake the whole sect.

"Esteemed Elder Chen Lei, why are you so angry?" Emperor Clearsky chuckled. "Explain things slowly. I will naturally bring forth justice."

As the master of a sect, he couldn't kill someone simply because someone wanted to, especially a pillar of the sect like Shangguan Yanqing. A deed like that would rock the foundations of the sect. Not to mention, the old man who'd just spoken was also an esteemed elder of the sect. His status wasn't any lower than Shangguan Yanqing's.

Esteemed Chen Lei snorted, full of anger. "Let's not even mention Shangguan Yanqing fawning over outsiders, currying favor with them and downplaying our own. He throws away face for our Ninesuns Sky Sect and colludes with our enemies! Someone who conspires with outsiders must be killed to appease the masses!"

Awkwardness descended. Everyone looked at Shangguan Yanqing. He rose and coldly met Esteemed Chen Lei head-on.

"Sectmaster, Esteemed Chen Lie is getting on in years. He's become brash with his words and actions. Your subordinate has spared no effort for the sake of the sect and never asked for great rewards. But it's hard for me to accept someone yelling for my death after all this. I won't accept it no matter how high the elder's status is!"

Wu Gong, another esteemed elder, also stood up and cupped a salute to Emperor Clearsky.

"Sectmaster, your subordinate Wu Gong seconds Esteemed Chen Lei. Shangguan Yanqing, an inspector of the highest rank, has sought favor with Veluriyam Capital and lost great face for us. He has completely forgotten the old enmity and hatred our sect has with Veluriyam's young lord. If we can tolerate this, what else can't we tolerate?"

Esteemed Chen Lie's words might not carry enough weight by themselves. But now that two esteemed elders had spoken in concert, the crowd couldn't help but worry when they looked at Shangguan Yanqing. To be targeted by two esteemed elders at the same time was a very dangerous situation, even for a twelfth rank inspector.

Shangguan Yanqing exploded in laughter. "Esteemed Elders, such murderous intent! Crying foul and calling to murder your fellows at the drop of a hat, is that all you can do? You say I curry favor with Veluriyam Capital? Correct, I did indeed chat with its young lord on my previous visit. It was even a very deep conversation. But what I want to say is, how much do either of you know of the situation in the outside world, given how long you've spent cloistered inside?"

"Anyone can mouth empty platitudes within the sect. I know that one of you is doing this because your disciple Cao Jin was killed, and the other because your grandson Wu Xingyun's cultivation cauldron was

killed. In the end, both of you are acting out of selfishness rather than out of righteousness. Do either of you have any issue about what I've just said?"

As someone who could become a twelfth rank inspector, Shangguan Yanqing wasn't someone easy to deal with either. How would he allow the two elders to simply stomp all over him?

"Hmph, have you forgotten our peers at Infant Shriek?" Chen Lie snorted.

"A large number of our powerhouses died in Infant Shriek. Even the team leader, Elder Hao, died there. Have you forgotten all this?!" Esteemed Wu Gong coldly asked.

There wasn't any fear to be seen in Shangguan Yanqing's eyes. "Then for both of you, what should we have done? Unsheath our swords and fight Veluriyam Capital?"

Esteemed Chen Lie coldly said, "Not once has our Ninesuns Sky Sect ever suffered this great of a shame. If we can disregard even this sort of humiliation, were would our reputation as a first rank sect be?"

"Indeed, Shangguan Yanqing. You side with the enemy and betray the sect. This is an unpardonable crime! Stop quibbling." Esteemed Wu Gong clapped some severe crimes on the inspector in order to discredit him.