

Three Realms 131

Chapter 131: Rampant Disciples of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace

Tang Long was actually also a bit hesitant. If it wasn't for the fact that the border missions lately had been quite important, hence resulting in a sheer lack of time to make a trip back home, he absolutely wouldn't have asked a group of strangers to courier some items for him.

However, his family was urgently waiting to use these items. If the most apt timing was missed, it'd be quite a regretful affair.

Tang Long had been debating over the past couple of days whether or not to make a trip home and suffer the punishment for doing so. But he knew that if he snuck home without receiving approval, it would count as leave without notice. The lightest punishment he would face would be a loss of this honorable position, and the heaviest was the death penalty!

Tang Long wasn't afraid of death for his family, but he knew that if his family didn't have him and his job, they wouldn't be able to continue surviving at all.

Tang Long was the pillar of the family. If he fell, his family would be done for.

Thus, Tang Long had kept a firm grip on his impulse to abandon his station and go home these days. He'd thought of asking others to take the items back for him, but as a border Wyvern Knight, his status was low and he hadn't netted any profits in the ten or so li of land that he patrolled.

Therefore, although this job looked flashy and glamorous, it was only a way to put food on the table and barely maintain the lives of the entire family. His position in society was still quite low.

As a result, he basically couldn't find anyone he could entrust to take the items back home for him.

It was either people disdained running an errand for him, or he didn't trust strangers.

But Jiang Chen's group all looked kind and affable. Moreover, they were generous and the honored guest of the fourth prince Ye Rong.

Tang Long had gathered up his courage in making this request. The reason that he had explained so enthusiastically to Jiang Chen's group before was partially to lay down the groundwork for this matter.

In addition, Tang Long was at least at ease because this group of people was quite generous. Although the items that he was entrusting to them were quite valuable to him, this wouldn't be the case in these people's eyes. The value of the items that he'd entrusted to them paled far beneath the bottle of qi replenishing pills, the Vast Ocean Pill.

The only thing he was worried about was that this group's equipment was too flashy and was likely to get them into trouble when they passed through the territories of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace and the Qingyang Valley.

The items that he was entrusting had to be delivered within seven days. If delivered late, there was no point in sending them back at all.

All sorts of conflicting thoughts made Tang Long give repeated exhortations.

Jiang Chen patted Tang Long's shoulder, "Don't worry, I know how important these items are to your family. I promise not to tarry."

Tang Long was a bit touched. He was an ordinary practitioner and had always been looked down upon for his profession.

The fourth prince's honored guests were so easily approachable. Not only had they agreed to take things home for him, but had even clapped his shoulder with such familiarity.

"This young master is truly a kindhearted person. I, Old Tang, would like to inquire the young master's honored name."

"My surname is Jiang, I'm sure we will meet again someday. I'll treat you to drinks whenever you return to the capital." Jiang Chen laughed, waved his hand and the group left after saying their goodbyes.

According to the route that Tang Long had pointed out, their travel was indeed free and unobstructed. Add that to the Goldwing Swordbirds' speed, and they had flown out roughly one thousand li after two hours.

"Everyone decrease your speed. We should have already entered the boundaries of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace. According to Tang Long's words, we must be careful here to not trespass into their territory." Jiang Feng was experienced and steady.

He knew that his son Jiang Chen and his personal guards all had the temperament of youth. They would surely be enjoying themselves in this flight, and he was worried that they would be too high profile and attract trouble.

Jiang Chen actually didn't possess a flamboyant personality as he restrained his troops to fly within the laid out path. He still rather enjoyed himself on a slow flight.

"Young master Chen, this Skylareel Kingdom is quite vast and there's such varied terrain." It was Qiao Baishi's first visit to the Skylareel Kingdom.

All sorts of new sights and sounds had greatly expanded his worldview.

"As expected, the Skylareel Kingdom has a well deserved reputation in the outside world." Even someone as proud as Gouyu couldn't help but sigh with appreciation.

When the Eastern Kingdom was compared with the Skylareel Kingdom, it truly did pale far in comparison.

Jiang Chen smiled but didn't say much. In terms of breadth of vision, he hadn't been to many places in this life, but he'd observed the heavens and seen all sorts of realms and levels of existence in his previous life.

This Skylareel Kingdom was just a bit bigger than the Eastern Kingdom with a bit more resources. At the heart of it all, it was just an ordinary kingdom as well.

The differences came from the disparity between a large kingdom and a small kingdom.

Fortunately, Qiao Baishi and the others held high statuses in the Eastern Kingdom, and they didn't lose their heads.

If Fatty Xuan was beside him, he surely would've shouted and yelled, wantonly venting his emotions.

However, Fatty Xuan hadn't followed Jiang Chen. It wasn't that he wasn't willing; he was actually more than willing to.

But at the end of the day, Fatty Xuan was the son of the Duke of Jinshan and the heir to Jinshan. His old man would never have let him go.

The current Duke of Jinshan was one of the four great dukes of the Eastern Kingdom, and Fatty Xuan the future heir to one of the four great dukes. If he left, that would throw things into great disarray.

Therefore, even if Fatty Xuan was unwilling to, he had to stay docilely and remain the heir.

Hubing Yue was also the same, but his aspirations were much more resolute than Fatty Xuan's. Although he greatly admired Jiang Chen, his personal ambitions had always been to rank first.

Of course, neither had Jiang Chen thought that he had to bring the two along. Ultimately, those two were just lingering remnants from the vulgar life of the previous Jiang Chen.

The group of people were flying leisurely along when Jiang Chen's ears suddenly twitched. The Ear of the Zephyr had caught the sounds of pulses of true qi in the distance. It was currents that originated from flight and was moving at an extremely rapid pace, headed in their direction.

Jiang Chen's lips moved as he commanded all the Goldwing Swordbirds to slow down and retreat midair to two sides.

He didn't want the reckless people flying helter skelter to ram and collide into him.

Although Jiang Chen wasn't afraid of taking care of matters, he also didn't wish to deliberately create new troubles.

"The Dragonteeth Guard is handling a case. Everyone in front, move!"

A strong shout traveled to them from the fore as two light yellow streaks broke through the air. Two light yellow fowl were piercing through the clouds and shooting through the mists like sharp arrows with their wings outstretched, hurtling directly towards Jiang Chen's group.

Jiang Chen commanded the Goldwing Swordbirds to make way.

The two beams of light flashed by and those on the back of the light yellow fowl barely caught a fleeting glance of the people to the side. They were both slightly surprised to see Jiang Chen's group.

One of them went, "eh?" but didn't stop, flying hurriedly past and didn't linger at all.

The two beams of light had disappeared within a mountain of clouds and sea of mist in the time it took to exhale one breath of vapor, vanishing without a trace.

“The Dragonteeth Guard?” Jiang Chen faintly recalled that Ye Rong had once said that the Dragonteeth Guard were the royal guards of the Skylareel Kingdom, similar to the Tiandu army of the Eastern Kingdom.

Except, the duties and authority of the Dragonteeth Guard were much greater than that of the Tiandu army.

At least, within the Eastern Kingdom, the Tiandu army rarely left the capital to pursue a case, whereas the Dragonteeth Guard seemed to spread throughout the entire nation.

Whenever they went, the local authorities had to surrender certain power to them.

The Dragonteeth Guard represented the royal family of the Skylareel Kingdom. To voice a blunt truth, they were answerable only to the king of Skylareel Kingdom.

For all others, no matter if they were a mighty duke of the Skylareel Kingdom, they all had to weigh the consequences before offending the Dragonteeth Guard.

“This Dragonteeth Guard is quite strong.” Gouyu also clucked her tongue privately. “Can it be that even the ordinary Dragonteeth Guard is equipped with flying spirit beasts within the Skylareel Kingdom?”

There were a few traces of surprise within Princess Gouyu’s tone.

Even the royal family of the Eastern Kingdom didn’t possess flying spirit beasts. It wasn’t that the Eastern Kingdom didn’t have these sorts of spirit beasts, but that no one within the Eastern Kingdom had the ability to tame them.

Jiang Chen was an anomaly within the Eastern Kingdom. Gouyu didn’t know how Jiang Chen did it either. This was his personal secret and Gouyu didn’t ask about it.

“Forget it, let’s go.” Although Jiang Chen was a bit surprised, he didn’t pay too much attention to it.

The group set off on their way again, but hadn’t been traveling for fifteen minutes when another wave of true qi pulses came from the front. This time’s wave carried more than twice the power of the previous wave.

Seven or eight streams of light coalesced into a ball of bright haze and came tearing through the air.

Holding to their principle of not getting into trouble, Jiang Chen and the group gave way again, thinking that this group of people would also swiftly fly by.

However, they hadn’t thought that the seven or eight beams of light would suddenly halt.

There were eight grimacing, green wyverns that flexed their claws and flashed their fangs, appearing extremely ferocious. They made gruesome faces at the Goldwing Swordbirds, as though provoking them.

These wyverns seemed to be of higher quality than the one Tang Long rode.

“Eh? What are they riding?” A young man on the back of a wyvern asked when he saw the Goldwing Swordbirds that Jiang Chen’s group was riding.

Jiang Chen, Gouyu, and the others glanced at each other, full of resignation. It truly seemed that whatever they didn't wish to meet would come knocking at their doorstep.

There were eight people in total in this group, and they all wore red robes with blue lines embroidered on the outside.

They were obviously people from the Azure Heaven Northern Palace, and the people that Tang Long had reminded them again and again to not trifle with.

Jiang Chen and his group were already keeping a low profile and giving way whenever they saw someone, trying very hard not to be embroiled in trouble. But when these eight people stopped, Jiang Chen knew that this would likely be truly unavoidable.

"All of you look unfamiliar. Where are you from and where are you going?" A tall, bulky, twenty year old young man within the group asked.

This person looked to be the leader of this crew. Judging from his style, he seemed to be used to lording over everyone with others looking up at him, and used to interrogating other people.

"The capital." Jiang Chen responded with these two words.

"No shit. My senior brother is asking where you come from."

Jiang Chen flicked a glance at the crowd. "Is that important?"

"What's with your bullshit? Answer when someone asks you a question!" Another bulky man with slanted eyes yelled out loudly.

Gouyu's beautiful face flickered slightly. Her personality wouldn't allow others to heckle her to their hearts' content. Even if the Azure Blue Northern Palace were people they shouldn't offend, how could she be frightened with the fiery character that she had cultivated over twenty years?

She was about to erupt when Jiang Chen waved his hand and stopped her.

"Everyone, we're all passersby traveling past each other on the road. The great road travels to the heavens and everyone travels on their respective sides. Questions will delay the journey. Why don't we take our leave here?"

Jiang Chen didn't want to cause trouble, but he wouldn't continue to humble himself because of this mindset or even give up the bottom line of being a person.

"Eh? This group of idiots doesn't look citizens of our Skylaurel Kingdom!"

"Could they be spies from another country? Judging from their steeds, our Skylaurel Kingdom doesn't have these. Who cares, let's arrest them and then interrogate them closely."

"I say, let's chase after those two frauds instead. Those two guys dared forge the identities of the Dragonteeth Guard and were audacious to the extreme. The most damnable thing was that they dared cheat us out of two of our Yellow Feathered Divine Eagles."

Not everyone in the Azure Heaven Northern Palace liked to create trouble. This person was of the opinion that their business was more important than picking a fight with passersby.

Chapter 132: It's So Hard to Keep a Low Profile

The opinions of this group clearly conflicted and everyone gazes finally rested on the tall, stocky youth with a high nose bridge.

This person was obviously the leader.

"Senior brother Kuang, what do you say? Do we arrest this group of rampantly cocky people?"

"Senior brother Kuang, according to what this little brother thinks, those two frauds have long since made their escape. It will be hard to find them amidst the mountain of clouds and sea of mist."

"Yes, this group of people swaggered and strutted as they flew over our heads, and the presence of their steeds will surely cover the presence of those two frauds. How then, will we chase after them?"

"Indeed, if we can't catch those two frauds at the end of the day, it'll largely have to do with this bunch of bastards. If it wasn't for them passing by and washing away the frauds' presence, it wouldn't have made our search so difficult!"

The band of people actually transferred their anger onto Jiang Chen's group, completely pushing off their own incompetencies in the search operation onto the latter's head.

The tall and stalwart senior brother Kuang smiled amusedly, sizing up Jiang Chen's group with an unfriendly gaze, as if a butcher measuring sheep for slaughter.

"You there, who are you? I'll give you one last chance. If you don't answer immediately, then don't blame us of the Azure Blue Northern Palace for not giving you face." Senior brother Kuang finally opened his mouth.

He'd actually wanted to take action long before this, but he'd had to find an acceptable reason for taking action.

Jiang Chen flicked a diffident glance at this senior brother Kuang and laughed coldly, completely indifferent as he waved his hand. "Let's go."

"You want to leave?" Senior brother Kuang was incensed upon seeing Jiang Chen disregard him. "You're in Palace territory, and you want to leave without giving me a full report of who you are?"

Jiang Chen's body suddenly halted as he shot a piercingly cold look at senior brother Kuang. "Just who the hell are you? Are you part of the Dragonteeth Guard? Or are you perhaps a royal expert? What right do you have to interrogate me?"

"Ho, brat, you're quite cocky?"

"Senior brother Kuang, don't continue on blathering with this kid, let's capture him first. No one dares act so wildly in the territory of our Azure Heaven Northern Palace."

"Yes, he needs to die just because of his attitude!"

Senior brother Kuang received support from his comrades and felt even more emboldened. "Brothers, you are right. This band of people has unknown origins and are likely the accomplices of those two frauds. Take them!"

Within this group, each person was a true qi master, and although they could not be counted amongst the most elite existence in the Azure Heaven Northern Palace, they still had it in the bag when bullying outsiders within their territory.

Besides, there was the mammoth Azure Heaven Northern Palace backing them up.

Jiang Chen didn't want to start a fight in someone else's territory either and he transmitted his voice to Gouyu, "You and my father lead the way and take the group away first. I'll hold off these people and follow you shortly."

Princess Gouyu swept her gaze across these people and displayed a contemptuous cold smile in her eyes. Even without Jiang Chen, she, Gouyu, wouldn't have been afraid of these people.

Since Jiang Chen was going to restrain these people, that was great as well.

They were ultimately still at a disadvantage when they picked fights in other people's territory. Gouyu understood this and waved her hand, silently exchanging an understanding with Jiang Feng. They led the group and flew away swiftly without another word.

"Eh? You really want to leave?"

"Don't leave, halt!"

Jiang Chen blocked the way by himself as he raised the Da Yu bow he was holding. He did not touch the arrows that came as a set with the Da Yu bow and instead, took out three ordinary arrows.

"What's the rush? I haven't left yet. Since you want to play, I'll play with you." Jiang Chen's aura suddenly flared and strong vast waves of true qi surged forth into great true qi torrents, embroiling the nearby clouds around the mountains and sea of mist. It appeared truly impressive and gave off the feeling that one man could hold out against ten thousand.

That bow was not one to be underestimated. With this bow in hand, those Azure Heaven Northern Palace disciples who wanted to rush over and stop the group all halted in their tracks.

They weren't fools. They were all true qi masters and had seen many battle setups.

It was apparent from just one move whether one had true skill.

When the aura of Jiang Chen and his bow was released, the presence was that of swallowing the heavens and taking the earth. This kind of aura was not empty bluster, but one that had been honed again and again through blood-soaked battles.

It was the aura of someone who'd once killed a spirit dao practitioner!

None of them doubted that if they rashly rushed over, they'd become ghosts beneath the other's arrows!

Senior brother Kuang stared coldly at Jiang Chen. He hadn't anticipated either that such an expert would be concealed amidst this unassuming group of people.

'You're also a true qi master!' Senior brother Kuang's tone was awe-inspiring. "You dare draw your weapon first within my Palace's territory. Very good, you're dead meat!"

“If I recall correctly, your Azure Heaven Northern Palace is merely one of the Precious Tree Sect’s ritual sites in the Skylareal Kingdom. But it sounds like you’ve more rules than the Precious Tree Sect?”

Jiang Chen smiled coldly, how would he not know the vain personality of someone like senior brother Kuang?

People like this had a bit of strength but were absolutely not amongst the top within the sect. Nevertheless, they liked to seek out the limelight and cause trouble, swaggering about with borrowed influence from the sect’s name.

Jiang Chen disdained this type of people. They’d initially been chasing after two enemies, but when they suddenly saw others along the way, they could actually abandon their mission and plan to rob someone else halfway through.

To put it nicely, these people were sect disciples. To put it in a not so nice manner, they were buffoons, bandits, and evil scoundrels. Even if you clearly and thoroughly answered all their questions, they would still find some excuse to create trouble for you.

Jiang Chen couldn’t be bothered to waste empty blather with him as he locked on with his Da Yu bow. He would shoot whoever dared to venture a step forward.

Even if it was Azure Heaven Northern Palace territory, Jiang Chen couldn’t be confined by so many reservations. He’d never been someone who meekly accepted insults and absolutely couldn’t become someone who placed himself at the mercy of others.

Since the thought of highway robbery had occurred to the other party, they naturally would’ve had the urge to kill. Killing and looting were always connected to each other.

To only rob and not kill, Jiang Chen didn’t think the people of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace were that benevolent.

“Whoever crosses this line, dies!” A hint of a faint smile spilled out from Jiang Chen’s lips.

This wasn’t an empty boast. Out of this group of people, the most powerful was senior brother Kuang. Although this senior brother Kuang was strong, he was only a bit stronger than Long Yinye and absolutely not on par with Long Yi.

Jiang Chen had been able to kill Long Yi previously.

Now that his training had already advanced two levels and joined the ranks of eleven meridians true qi masters, leveraging that to the advantage provided by the Da Yu bow, there was no difference between killing someone of his own level and slaughtering chickens.

Senior brother Kuang stared intently at Jiang Chen with the eyes of a hungry wolf. He didn’t suspect Jiang Chen’s words. He could also sniff out the feeling of danger from Jiang Chen.

Although senior brother Kuang had committed a considerable amount of murder and banditry, he truly didn’t dare take the risk today.

If he did run the risk and charge in, what welcomed him would very possibly be a fatal arrow.

Senior brother Kuang had experienced multiple battles and exchanged blows with many true qi masters, winning and losing his fair share. He had accumulated innumerable real battle experiences over the many years.

But he had never once met an opponent before whom he dared not make the slightest move against.

The instinct of a wolf caused him to clearly understand that if he rushed past that line, his opponent would surely shoot him to death!

Senior brother Kuang threw a glance at his comrade. The comrade understood and didn't charge past the line, starting a descent instead and prepared to call for reinforcement on the ground.

"Take another step and die!"

Jiang Chen's arrowhead locked onto that descending disciple.

Senior brother Kuang called out raspily, "Brat, looks like you want to thoroughly offend our Azure Heaven Northern Palace."

"Cut the blather! Stay there obediently and don't move. The tables have turned, whoever moves, dies!" How could Jiang Chen not know what plans they were cooking up?

They couldn't win in a fight here and couldn't split off in hot pursuit to rob the others. Thus they wanted to call in reinforcements instead.

Although these folks looked fierce, but each of them knew their place better than anyone else when it came to moments of life or death. They all froze carefully, deathly afraid that they would be shot and killed if they moved.

This impasse continued for roughly fifteen minutes before Jiang Chen laughed heartily and estimated that Gouyu and the others should be quite a distance away.

This group of people wouldn't be able to catch them even if they tried.

He flicked a glance at senior brother Kuang that contained a few hints of mockery, "Well, aren't you being nicely behaved. I don't want to kill anyone, and you don't want to go rushing to your deaths either, alright?"

Jiang Chen urged the Goldwing Swordbird onwards when he'd finished speaking. He turned into a stream of golden colored light, heading in the direction that Gouyu and the others had taken.

Senior brother Kuang and the eight total people in the party heaved a long sigh after this. That senior brother Kuang's expression was dark and ruthless, "Number five, go notify senior brother Yi. The rest of you, follow me and chase after them!"

"Alright!" One of them descended below the cloud layer and flew off to notify his companions.

Senior brother Kuang grit his teeth. "Not matter where this fellow is from and who he is, the humiliation of today won't be forgiven just like this."

"Yes, he can't be left off the hook this easily."

“Their steeds seem to be of even higher quality than our green wyverns. The golden colored feathers look as sharp as the blade of a sword and exuded such glow. Tsk tsk, not bad at all.”

“And there’s so many of them. If we can seize them, even one of those creatures would fetch a whopping price. Our Skylarell Kingdom doesn’t have those beasts, a thing is valued if it is rare!”

“Cut your blather, after them!” Senior brother Kuang spurred on his green wyvern and grit his teeth as he rushed to the very front.

“Heh heh, it looks like you guys didn’t give up after all!”

A cold laugh suddenly traveled from the clouds.

A frightening sound broke through the air at almost the exact same time, piercing through the clouds and penetrated the mist, turning into a terrifying curve and shooting straight for senior brother Kuang’s head.

This arrow came exceptionally suddenly and swiftly, practically a shooting star.

Senior brother Kuang didn’t even have time to react in his panic.

Bam!

The arrow connected unerringly with his head!

“Ah!” Senior brother Kuang gave a ghastly cry, but he immediately discovered that his head hadn’t gone flying. The thing that had flown off his head was the simple helm on his head.

“This arrow was a warning, if you keep chasing me, the next arrow will definitely kill you!” Jiang Chen snorted coldly.

If it hadn’t been for the fact that he’d just entered the Skylarell Kingdom for the first time and didn’t wish to randomly kill people, with senior brother Kuang’s actions, Jiang Chen would’ve killed him three or five times over by now!

Senior brother Kuang was frightened out of his wits as he ran his hand over his head again and again, confirming that his head hadn’t moved house. He finally exhaled a long sigh as cold sweat poured out on his head, neck, and back.

This arrow had been too fast and too fierce; it had been impossible to guard against.

If the other hadn’t restrained himself a bit, it would likely be a foregone conclusion that his head would’ve long been pierced and made into a meat paste. How would he still be alive?

“Senior brother Kuang, do we still chase after him?”

Senior brother Kuang’s gaze was ferocious as the viciousness in his bones was utterly aroused. He clamped down on his teeth and said, “Let’s head down first and wait for senior brother Yi so we can pursue this person together! If we don’t kill him, I will never be able to stomach this insult!”

Chapter 133: Battling a Half Step Spirit Dao Realm

In terms of speed, the lines of the feathered wings of the Goldwing Swordbirds were quite perfect. They were basically uncontested in speed when bursting through short distances.

In terms of stamina, however, the Goldwing Swordbird's body wasn't big and the construction of their feathered wings determined that their stamina wouldn't hold out for long distance flight.

Jiang Chen spurred on the Goldwing Swordbirds and flew at max speed for half an hour before catching up to Gouyu and the others. The entire crew was excited to see Jiang Chen return safely.

"We need to pick up our speed and leave the Azure Heaven Northern Palace territory as fast as possible. That band of people are all desperados that have been spoiled by the Palace and they won't be willing to let us off that easily."

Jiang Chen was also quite resigned. Many things could not be done according to his will when he was in someone else's territory.

If anyone had dared to block the way and attempt to rob him within the Eastern Kingdom, Jiang Chen would've long since shot him dead with one arrow.

Of course, it wasn't that Jiang Chen was afraid of the Palace, but that he'd considered the fact that the entire group had just arrived and he didn't wish to cause trouble and embroil others.

However, Jiang Chen hadn't thought that even though he'd exercised such forbearance and self restraint it still hadn't been enough to make senior brother Kuang aware of the overwhelming odds against him. When the latter had seen others from his camp, he'd immediately embellished with highly colorful details and won over many senior brothers who were much stronger than him. He'd gathered a hundred or so of these compatriots and split them up into four or five different teams, starting the search for Jiang Chen's group in the manner of casting a net.

Within the northwestern territory of the Skylaurel Kingdom, the Azure Heaven Northern Palace held absolute dominion.

Upon hearing that their junior had been bullied by a bunch of strangers, the senior brothers that were on good terms with senior brother Kuang were all greatly infuriated.

When they further heard that the crowd of strangers had brought a large number of steeds with them and that they all looked superior to the green wyverns, those senior brothers with middling relations with senior brother Kuang also joined in on the search teams.

"Let's take advantage of this rare opportunity!"

"Let's go out and grab our share!"

The disciples of the Azure Blue Northern Palace held quite an advantage within their area of influence; they could fly anywhere they wished to shorten the travel.

For them, there were no restrictions within the Palace territory. They didn't need to ask for permission whenever they passed through any government offices or any dukedoms. They could come and go as they wished.

In this regard, a search and capture operation naturally held a great advantage.

As for Jiang Chen's group, they naturally couldn't fly around randomly given that it was their first visit to a foreign land. They had to follow the flight path.

In this regard, their flight path was long since mapped out by the others.

A big net that came from all quarters closed tighter and tighter around them.

After roughly two hours, Jiang Chen's party was more than a thousand li away from the place of conflict. They would begin to slowly leave the Palace's territory after another four to five hundred li.

They wouldn't have to worry about trouble much as long as they left the the Palace's sphere of influence.

As domineering as the Palace was, they wouldn't cross their own borders on a mere manhunt. Even if they acted recklessly and cared for nobody, they wouldn't be able to cross into other territories to kill as wilfully as they could in their own territory.

Jiang Chen felt a baffling sense of pressure in his heart the longer they flew.

His "Boulder's Heart" had already been trained to the peak of the third level by now, and it wasn't too far off from the fourth realm.

This was to say, his instincts were much greater than they were in the trials of the Boundless Catacombs.

"Everyone be careful, the Azure Heaven Northern Palace will surely not have given up. I suspect that they are still pursuing us. Everyone, be on your guard."

"Come if they dare, who's afraid of them!" Princess Gouyu fondled the handle of her sword as a proud curve appeared her sexy lips.

Jiang Chen looked at his eight personal guards and then looked to his father's side.

On this trip, their band of twenty or two they had only brought twenty Goldwing Swordbirds with them. The rest of the Goldwing Swordbirds had been situated in desolate areas and temporarily hadn't followed them.

This was also a strategy that Jiang Chen had created. After all, the might and presence of several hundred, almost a thousand Goldwing Swordbirds crossing the borders would be overly frightening.

They would definitely become a target if they held such a high profile.

Events proved that Jiang Chen's concerns had been right. Forget about almost a thousand Goldwing Swordbirds, their band had been targeted by others when each person rode a Goldwing Swordbird.

"Damn it, is there no end with this Azure Heaven Northern Palace?" Jiang Chen's Ear of the Zephyr had already caught traces of the enemy's movement.

"Everyone on guard and continue on our way. Maintain battle formation," ordered Jiang Chen.

The Jiang Chen of now wasn't the same person above the Second Crossing and the person who'd ate quite a defeat at the hands of a spirit dao practitioner. He had been training the Goldwing Swordbirds all these months in the Eight Trigrams Assimilation Formation.

The formation could now be broken apart into many smaller formations and could even be reassembled into mid-sized formations. Large numbers of Goldwing Swordbirds could also be formed into big formations.

Without a doubt, the individual fighting strength of his eight personal guards were the lowest of those by Jiang Chen's side right now. Apart from Xue Tong, they were all practitioners of eight meridians true qi. His potential was a bit greater, and he'd already entered nine meridians true qi.

However, the eight of them also had an advantage, and that was familiarity with the formation. After the exposure of several months, their mastery over this formation had already allowed them to grasp seventy to eighty percent of the formation.

Now, combined with the battle strength of the Goldwing Swordbirds, eight people riding on their eight Swordbirds could at least face more than ten true qi masters without being at a disadvantage.

If their training broke through to the true qi master realm, then they'd even be able to exchange a few passes with a spirit dao practitioner.

Jiang Feng's batch of personal guards with Jiang Ying at the head were stronger overall, particularly as Jiang Ying had even entered the ranks of true qi masters.

Of course, the one with the strongest fighting ability within their group was still Jiang Chen.

Apart from Jiang Chen, Princess Gouyu and his father Jiang Feng would be the next strongest.

"Gouyu, you're in charge of leading the eight personal guards and I'll take care of my father's side. Closely defend the left and right flanks, and don't let them scatter our front line." Jiang Chen reminded her.

Gouyu lifted her exquisite chin as her neck, pink as jade, also lifted. "Don't worry, I won't be a burden to you!"

The group proceeded at an even pace whilst maintaining the formation. Although they knew full well that pursuit was coming, they still didn't fly randomly or change their flight path.

They hadn't even resolved the troubles at hand. If they blundered into another forbidden zone and caused even more trouble, that would only serve to bring on more headaches.

"Senior brother Yi, do you see them? They're in front!" Senior brother Kuang's tone grew quite agitated when he discovered Jiang Chen's group.

This time, senior brother Kuang's posturing was noticeably lower as he accompanied another youth. This youth's expression was cold, and his lean face appeared quite frosty. There was a scar from a knife beneath the corner of his eye, one that resembled a crawling worm, giving this youth a few more hints of viciousness.

This person was the person that senior brother Kuang wished to kiss up to – senior brother Yi.

“Go and stop them!” This senior brother Yi’s voice was as cold as a blade’s.

“Let’s go!”

A band of more than ten spurred on the green wyverns and charged down at great speed.

“Brat, still want to escape?” Senior brother Kuang yelled out loudly.

“You want to die?” Jiang Chen had actually discovered this group of behind them, and saw that this Kuang surnamed fellow still hadn’t changed his mind and was actually rushing out in front.

He no longer hesitated and shot an arrow back as he turned his head.

This arrow was incredibly sudden and exceptionally fast. Senior brother Kuang was rushing forward quite quickly, but senior brother Yi was even faster. One couldn’t even see how he made a move, when suddenly a sudden streak of silver white light furled into existence and a silver chain caught the arrow when it was ten meters away from senior brother Kuang.

The person manipulating the chain was the scar-faced senior brother Yi.

This person laughed coldly, “What kind of skill do you have in ambushing with a hidden arrow?”

The silver chain flung out with a shake of his arm and the arrow reflected back towards Jiang Chen, turning into a current of air.

Jiang Chen was also slightly surprised to see this person make a move.

“Is this person a spirit dao practitioner?”

This strength had noticeably exceeded the level of a true qi master. But it seemed to be missing something to be labeled the spirit realm.

Jiang Chen had personally witnessed the power of a spirit dao practitioner. Even the weaker Xu Zhen had had far great battle capabilities than this person in front of him.

If he had to measure this person’s strength, then he’d be roughly between the peak of the true qi realm and spirit dao.

Jiang Chen still didn’t dare underestimate this person, however. It was a good thing that the four times refined spirit weapon, the Da Yu bow, was in his hand. He waved the longbow in his hand and brushed away the reflected arrow.

“This will be a bit tricky!” Jiang Chen thought privately.

“Senior brother Yi, thank you for your helping hand!” That senior brother Kuang had become conceited with satisfaction and had almost repeated his prior mistakes. If senior brother Yi hadn’t made a move with this arrow, it would’ve boded more ill than well for him.

“Don’t talk nonsense. I’ll restrain this person. You handle the others.”

Senior brother Yi had locked onto Jiang Chen from a far distance away.

The two practitioners stared at each other through the air, the auras locked onto each other. They were at an impasse for the moment. No one seemed to want to make the first move, as if whoever made the first move would lose the initiative.

“Your strength is not that bad. It’s a pity that you’re still in the true qi realm and not my opponent!” The voice of senior brother Yi was as sharp as metal, piercing and irritating.

“As if you’re a spirit dao practitioner.” Jiang Chen was contemptuous.

“Even though I’m not a true spirit dao practitioner, I still have half a step in the spirit dao realm. It’s enough to crush someone like you, who is merely at the peak of the true qi realm!”

Senior brother Yi’s aura abruptly rose after he finished speaking.

His entire being was like a tempest, full of the mysteries of power.

“Three moves!” Senior brother Yi said coolly. “I will dispose of you within three moves!”

The wind rose and the clouds moved.

The air current in the void next to senior brother Yi suddenly pulsed with no forewarning whatsoever. The currents of air seemed to form a rhythm that moved to the same tempo.

This wasn’t true qi and was full of more mysteries than true qi.

“Chain of cloud and wind, lock on!”

Senior brother Yi seemed to turn into a magician when a silver white chain suddenly crawled out of the air around him. It abruptly started spiraling towards Jiang Chen according to the rhythm of the air currents.

“A spirit qi air current!”

Jiang Chen was greatly surprised. This senior brother Yi wasn’t boasting emptily when he called himself a “half step in the spirit dao realm”. Although his control over spirit power wasn’t that practiced, but this truly was an air current formed from spirit qi.

Accompanied by the attacks of the chain, the air around Jiang Chen was immediately sealed off in the span of a moment!

Jiang Chen’s gaze was deep as he’d grasped the nameless saber in his hand at the very moment that senior brother Yi had started his attack. Using the incantation of the blade as a conduit, vast waves of true qi surged through like the tidewaters.

The Goldwing Swordbird beneath him was Jiang Chen’s old partner by now. It knew that Jiang Chen was going to make a move and so matched the rhythm of his true qi, matching its strength to a perfect peak.

“The vast ocean rages and the great billows surge... cleave!”

The Goldwing Swordbird shot to the forefront as a golden colored light drew out a beautiful curve and the peerless glint of a blade shot out within that cleave.

It was the third form of the Vast Ocean Current Splitter – Wave Surge!

Chapter 134: A Disadvantaged Half Step Spirit Dao Practitioner

Jiang Chen, eleven meridians true qi master.

Senior brother Yi, half step spirit realm.

Logically speaking, the two weren't on the same level at all with regards to the differences in their actual strength.

However, as this stunning Wave Surge was cleaved out, the gleam of the blade activated by the majestic true qi was exquisite from its peak down to its most minute details as it cleaved through the empty air.

The strong true qi current immediately scattered the currents within the empty air.

The six chains formed by the air currents were dispersed as those air currents scattered chaotically.

The sound of metal clashing against metal rang piercingly through the air.

It was a draw after one move!

"Mm?" Senior brother Yi was a bit surprised. "The true qi realm can actually disturb the currents of my spirit power and break the restraints of my chains of wind and cloud?"

Jiang Chen had forced back the other's attack with a single flourish of his blade and compelled the Goldwing Swordbird to move swiftly backward when the other was still dumbfounded.

Golden light broke through the air as Jiang Chen's Da Yu bow was already in his hand.

"Die!"

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!

Three arrows shot mercilessly in quick succession towards the Palace disciples.

The Palace disciples had been besieging Jiang Feng and the others, and thus had not predicted this shift in battle situation. They hadn't thought that Jiang Chen could still spare effort in attacking them when he was being suppressed by senior brother Yi.

The arrows had arrived at their target as soon as their sounds had broken through the air.

Three cries of agony sounded at almost the same time from the disciples when the three arrows shot through their throats.

Of course, Jiang Chen had only used ordinary arrows on these ordinary true qi practitioners. They weren't worthy of the arrows that came as a set with the Da Yu bow.

Senior brother Yi had lost his concentration, allowing Jiang Chen to strike during the window of opportunity and now three of his peers were dead.

Although senior brother Yi didn't care that much about the life and death of his peers, but the fact that his opponent had killed his peers right in front of him was undoubtedly a slap in his face.

Jiang Chen snorted coldly as he wielded the nameless saber, blocking the way in midair and keeping his distance from the ring of battle in front.

Senior brother Yi's eyes glinted with a violent light as he snarled viciously, "That stroke was not too bad. However, if you think you can fight against a spirit dao practitioner by relying on your training in the true qi realm, you are incredibly wrong."

"Hah. As if I haven't seen a spirit dao practitioner before." Jiang Chen smiled coldly.

Not only had he seen a spirit dao practitioner before, but he'd also exchanged blows with one. Although this senior brother Yi was a half step in the spirit realm, in terms of power, he was far weaker than even Xu Zhen. How dared he sound his own trumpet in front of Jiang Chen?

The air currents once again trembled in movement around senior brother Yi as an enormous tempest suddenly swirled into being. An azure whirlwind coalesced into a current as thick as a bucket.

Senior brother Yi's chains churned continuously within this whirlwind and actually condensed into an air current in the shape of a black dragon. It rushed towards Jiang Chen like an enormous drill.

"Impressive in appearance only!"

Jiang Chen had already thoroughly sussed out senior brother Yi with the latter's first attack. Jiang Chen didn't even bother using the nameless saber this time.

He abruptly spurred the Goldwing Swordbird onwards, shooting up into the sky.

His two hands curled into fists as one was like the moon and the other held up the sun.

"Divine Aeons Fist, Yin Yang Obliteration!"

Two currents of true qi were as if the moon and sun had fused together. They alternately combined and separated, condensing into a frightening trail behind a punch that crashed towards the other's air current!

The "Divine Aeons Fist" was a boxing method that manipulated yin and yang qi. With Jiang Chen's current strength, he'd only understood up to the peak of four cycles of wilting and blooming.

However, the mysteries of four cycles of wilting and blooming were equivalent to the layered effect of three levels of true qi. Adding that to the mysteries of the yin and yang, the combined strength of these two punches were equal to ten times the effect of layered true qi.

The punch embodied an imposing aura and the cycle of blooming and wilting. The alternation of the four seasons could be experienced within it.

Bam! The punch's aura crashed into the air current and dispersed it with a roar. Following that, the mighty aura of the punch was also shattered to bits as it returned to the void.

The first collision had also ended in a draw.

"What?" Senior brother Yi found this hard to believe. After all, he was an expert who'd cleaved open his spirit ocean. With his employment of spirit power in his blow, it had already been a blow at the peak of a half step spirit realm.

If it was any other true qi practitioner, he would've long since been swallowed by the attack and churned to meat scraps.

Just where did this youth hail from to be able to go head to head with him twice when he was a half step into the spirit realm!

This had surpassed the bounds of reason and violated the rules of martial dao!

“Heh heh, it looks like at the end of the day, the so-called half step spirit realm is still not being in the spirit realm!” Jiang Chen’s tone held a few hints of mockery.

His hand flexed as he once again grasped the Da Yu bow. “I’ve already taken two of your moves, now you take one of mine!”

The Da Yu bow, a four times refined spirit weapon.

Jiang Chen had been displaying only a small part of his talent just now when he shot at those three with ordinary arrows.

But now, Jiang Chen was well aware that no matter how strong ordinary arrows were, they were not enough to pose a threat to this scar faced youth.

Then, let him taste the true might of the Da Yu bow!

Resolute killing intent flashed through Jiang Chen’s stony face. He had become truly angry. This Azure Heaven Northern Palace had challenged his bottom line again and again!

Even if representatives of the Palace came looking for him tomorrow after he killed these people, Jiang Chen would still absolutely not regret his current decision.

One who walked the path of martial could endure, but could not continue to endure forever.

When one reached the end of one’s forbearance, there was no more need to put up with it anymore.

Enduring something too long could possibly result in internal demons, and that would be the worst outcome of all.

“Mm? A spirit weapon?” Senior brother Yi finally had an opportunity to thoroughly observe the Da Yu bow in Jiang Chen’s hand. Once the Da Yu bow was combined with the accompanying arrows, the solemn killing force it formed came surging towards him.

“Indeed, a spirit weapon!”

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, “You call yourself a half step into the spirit realm, if I don’t kill you with at least a spirit weapon, you likely won’t be able to die in peace!”

Waves of shock broiled in senior brother Yi’s heart. The chains he were using was but a quasi spirit weapon.

Only true spirit dao practitioners were worthy of using true spirit weapons.

Those who could use spirit weapons were either noble sons who were also disciples of enormous power and influence, or sect disciples with astounding potential.

Although senior brother Yi was a disciple of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace, the Palace was only a secular place for the Precious Tree Sect to perform its rites.

To put things bluntly, it was still unknown if he could pass the Precious Tree Sect's tests and become a true disciple of the Sect.

To him, spirit weapons were a luxurious dream.

One had to know that this could only happen in the Skylareland Kingdom. If Jiang Chen had revealed the spirit weapon in the Eastern Kingdom, it was likely that most practitioners wouldn't even recognize it.

Spirit weapons were a rare commodity. Jiang Chen had only seen Long Juxue and Long Yinye use spirit weapons once in the Eastern Kingdom.

But those spirit weapons were clearly the most ordinary of spirit weapons. It must've been something that Master Shuiyue had left in the Long family for the two to protect themselves with.

Apart from that, even Princess Gouyu of royal descent hadn't had a spirit weapon.

Although senior brother Yi was a disciple of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace and counted amongst the more exemplary of them, he was still a bit of a ways off from using a spirit weapon.

"Kill him and seize the spirit weapon!" A surge of greed burned furiously within senior brother Yi like a blazing flame.

His eyes shone with bloodthirsty light as senior brother Yi sought to strike first to gain the initiative.

The wyvern pressed forward urgently as strong spirit power formed a wall of air, descending straight onto Jiang Chen.

This time, it looked like senior brother Yi was intending on using his spirit power to crush Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen smirked coldly. This scar faced youth wanted to use brute force to crush him?

The Goldwing Swordbird retreated suddenly and withdrew to a suitable distance away from the scar faced youth's pouncing attack.

The Da Yu bow bloomed with stunning splendor, becoming even more resplendent than the stars in the sky.

An arrow with the unique presence of the Da Yu bow shot towards the scar faced youth in an arc of indescribable beauty.

A beam of cold light drew out a long trail like a burning meteorite.

What happened next was unthinkable. The scar faced youth knew full well that this strong arrow was aimed straight at him, but he didn't retreat. Instead, he came at it with increased speed.

Quicker than words could tell... pfft!

The might of a four times refined spirit weapon was frighteningly powerful. It had transformed into a ball of wind as it shot into the wyvern's thick neck, spraying forth a rain of blood.

At this moment, the scar faced youth suddenly leapt up and glided through the air. With a flip of his body, he leveraged the strength of the wyvern and pounced towards Jiang Chen.

At the same moment, the six chains in his hand churned down towards Jiang Chen as though they were dragons emerging from the sea.

The scar faced youth had actually sacrificed the life of his steed to decrease the distance between him and Jiang Chen. He wanted to seize the Da Yu bow with his bare hands.

“Humph. Small trifling tricks!”

Jiang Chen seemed to have seen through the other’s intention as the second arrow concealed behind the first shot out with almost no hesitation. Whoosh!

The second arrow flew directly and boldly towards the scar faced youth.

“What? Another arrow?” The scar faced youth was hugely surprised.

He was only a half step into the spirit realm and wasn’t able to support himself in flight through the sky at all. He could only maintain this gliding posture for the span of one breath.

The chains in his hand shook as they wanted to curl around the Da Yu bow in Jiang Chen’s hand and yank it away!

However, the speed of Jiang Chen’s arrow far exceeded what he had imagined. In the moment his chains unfurled, the second arrow had already come gunning for him.

Senior brother Yi was faced with two decisions in that moment.

Either save himself, or take the hit!

He was still that tiny bit short. Senior brother Yi’s very gums itched with his hate. He twisted his body, landing on the corpse of the wyvern below him and pushed off it to descend gently towards the ground.

He also knew that he didn’t have the ability to fly in this battle in the skies. If he didn’t land by the time he had used up this breath, he’d fall to his death!

One had to admit, this fellow was exceedingly cruel. He had sacrificed his steed just like that and even stepped on it after it was dead.

“Tsk tsk. Yi Qiansui, what are you doing? You seem quite beat up huh!”

At this moment, a mocking and jeering voice traveled lazily through the air.

Jiang Chen’s face changed as he no longer paused, he spun around and attacked the back of the group with the nameless saber in his hand.

The light from the blade poured forth, bringing with it the most terrifying of Jiang Chen’s true qi.

Pssht, pssht!

Four or five people were chopped in half by the aura of Jiang Chen’s stroke as though he was chopping up vegetables. Their heads separated from their bodies as they plunged down from the air.

“Head south, don’t stop, hurry and leave! I’ll stay behind!” Jiang Chen’s voice was a bit anxious because his Ear of the Zephyr had captured the endless sound of enemy footsteps. There were actually four or five bands seeking to surround them on all sides!

Chapter 135: Facing Off Against Four Practitioners Half a Step into the Spirit Dao Realm Alone

He’d told his companions to head south because the group of people to the south had a relatively weaker aura, and didn’t have a fierce practitioner half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm, like senior brother Yi, holding down the fort.

Heading south was possibly their only chance of life.

As for what awaited them to the south — whether or not they would possibly barge into other forbidden areas — Jiang Chen couldn’t pay heed to at this moment.

It was a good thing that those in his party were well trained. No one hesitated after hearing his words, and they all steered towards the south.

Jiang Chen operated his Ear of the Zephyr to its maximum, listening in all directions. The information of all aspects continuously gathered in his mind.

There were five groups of people in total, including senior brother Yi’s group.

There were people coming from the east and west. There were also people coming from the northeast and the northwest.

The last group was coming from the south, and would run into Gouyu and the others very quickly.

Of the five groups, the one to the south was the weakest. The strongest of their individuals, was at most on par with Gouyu, and wasn’t someone to fear.

Jiang Chen only hoped that Gouyu and the others could break through the barricade to the south. As long as they were able to charge through the resistance, it would signify that they’d broken free of the encirclement, and gotten clear of Palace territory.

Of course, of these five groups, senior brother Yi’s from the east basically had no fighting strength left.

The Goldwing Swordbird moved as Jiang Chen suddenly stopped. The position that he’d chosen was one that, after all sorts of calculations, was the most centered.

If anyone wanted to pass through this area, they’d have to go through him first because he’d occupied this position.

As long as he tied them down for a little bit and let Gouyu and the others break through, with the short distance speed of the Goldwing Swordbirds, it’d be very difficult for many of these people to catch on.

However, Jiang Chen somewhat regretted things a bit right now. If he’d known it’d be like this, he would’ve had Ye Rong send people to meet him at the border.

He’d turned down Ye Rong’s suggestion back then because he had wanted to gain an understanding of the local customs and practices of the Skyl Laurel Kingdom through his own observations.

Besides, he'd felt that if they didn't go looking for trouble, nothing untoward would happen to them.

Who would've thought that the atmosphere of martial dao within the Skylaurel Kingdom would be even more fierce than the Eastern Kingdom. They killed and looted, or stopped others on the road for highway robbery, at the drop of a hat.

"If I'd known this was the case, I might as well not have kept a low profile; I should've brought all one thousand Goldwing Swordbirds with me, and just directly crushed this band of thieves!" Jiang Chen was quite depressed.

However, he also knew that this was just a random thought. Their presence would've truly been too massive if he'd brought a thousand Goldwing Swordbirds with him.

They might have attracted the attention of a group that was even more powerful than this bunch.

Several groups of people made their way to the location within the span of a moment. They were all rather bemused to see only Jiang Chen hover below the vault of heavens. One man, one steed.

What was going on? This kid hadn't run off or fled? He had struck up the posture of single handedly facing down their groups of warriors? Did this kid plan to fight against their four crews with his power alone?

At that moment, senior brother Yi had also changed to another steed. He looked ruthlessly at Jiang Chen, a thick sense of killing intent permeating his gaze.

However, he knew that with just his personal strength alone, he'd be unable to kill the youth in front of him who possessed the four times refined spirit weapon.

"Yi Qiansui, where does this kid come from? Have you received a thorough understanding of his background yet?" A youth with triangular shaped eyes from another group of people laughed in cold inquiry.

"Humph. Why don't you ask him yourself if you want to know about him?" Yi Qiansui was in a bad temper. He hadn't gleaned any benefits from Jiang Chen, and this made him feel that he'd lost a great amount of face.

"Tsk tsk. You're still half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm. To think that you're in such a bad shape, what an affront to those of us that are also half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm!" The triangular eyed youth jeered.

"You go take a crack if you're that good!" Yi Qiansui laughed coldly.

The leaders of these four groups were all practitioners who were half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm, and thus none of them were stronger than another. Yi Qiansui had had bad luck with Jiang Chen, thus he didn't mind these folks having a try as well.

Perhaps these guys would be caught off guard and end up even worse than him!

"To try just because you tell me to, don't think I'm useless trash like you!" The triangular eyed youth urged on his steed and brought himself brashly forward.

The sinister triangular eyes measured up Jiang Chen like a venomous snake.

“Kid, I quite admire your guts. However, don’t try to put on a front before us spirit dao practitioners, it’s completely useless. True qi currents cover your body — you’re on a completely different level than our spirit qi.”

“Another waste of space who only knows how to flap his lips?” Jiang Chen broke out into a chilly laugh.

“Yo! Kid, you’re rather nobly aloof huh? Can it be that you really think that, as a true qi practitioner, that ten thousand will be unable to get buy while you guard the pass?” The triangular eyed youth poked fun at Jiang Chen like he was toying with prey.

However, his moves weren’t to purposefully waste time in idle chatter. He wanted to beat around the bush and test Jiang Chen’s reactions.

The triangular eyed youth had retracted his earlier disdain after their verbal exchanges, and he secretly felt slightly impressed. No wonder Yi Qiansui had had bad luck.

This kid had no flicker of emotion at all when faced with four practitioners half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm practitioners.

Logically speaking, true qi practitioners would instinctively feel a bit panicked when they met those of the Spirit Dao Realm. They would feel fear and maybe, even involuntarily, wish to escape.

But the triangular eyed youth couldn’t discover any hint of this at all in Jiang Chen.

“This kid must’ve trained himself mentally, there’s no way he could be so calm otherwise.” A thought struck the triangular eyed youth’s mind as a sword appeared in his hand.

“Everyone, I’ll play with him for a bit. But I’ll say this first, if I capture him, all his equipment belongs to me!” The triangular eyed youth’s tone was a bit domineering.

“In your dreams!” The other three practitioners half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm protested at the same time.

The triangular eyed youth was incensed. “I’m leading the charge. Do you guys want to profit off my efforts?”

“No one’s forcing you to lead the charge.” Another chubby practitioner a half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm said bad temperedly.

Jiang Chen was privately pleased to see internal conflict arise in the others. The more time these people wasted, the better it was for him.

As long as Gouyu and the others broke through that line of defense, he would immediately dust himself off and depart, leaving this group of idiots to play amongst themselves.

Jiang Chen secretly observed them. The other ten or twenty practitioners were here to round out the numbers. Jiang Chen basically ignored those within the true qi realm.

These people would pose no threat to Jiang Chen, whether it was in terms of attack, or in defense.

The only thing was that the four practitioners half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm would be an extreme hardship. If any two of them cooperated sincerely, then it would be enough to cause great trouble for Jiang Chen.

If three of them cooperated, then Jiang Chen would have no place to escape to.

If all four of them worked together, with no unpleasantries between them, then Jiang Chen would be dead for sure.

However, this was built on the foundation of being surrounded by them. In actuality, Jiang Chen had been on his guard until even now. He would immediately retreat if they sought to encircle him.

And, the direction of his retreat would have to avoid Gouyu and the others.

It was obvious that these four practitioners half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm all had their own motives. This was the only advantage Jiang Chen had.

There was the scarfaced youth Yi Qiansui, the triangular eyed youth, the chubby youth, and the last one, whose appearance looked like a woman's — making it difficult to discern their gender.

This person hadn't spoken at all, but still gave Jiang Chen the feeling that they were the most frightening.

It was said that barking dogs seldom bite.

This person with the hard to discern gender was absolutely the most shrewd and poised of them all.

"How about this, the four of us will combine our efforts and take down this kid first. Afterwards, we'll split his equipment, how about it?" The triangular eyed youth proposed.

"Alright, I only want the bow. You guys can have the rest." Yi Qiansui said.

"Heh heh, I want the bow too. Yi Qiansui, ask for something else." The fatty narrowed his eyes and laughed craftily.

"First come first served, I was here first, so of course I'll take my pick first." Yi Qiansui was incensed.

"You were here first alright, but you would've fallen to your death had we not gotten here. What right do you have to argue with us?" The triangular eyed youth jeered once again.

Yi Qiansui was greatly ashamed. This was the truth.

However much he was ashamed though, he wouldn't give way in the face of profit. "Anything you say is pointless. I only want that bow. This kid is bizarre, he's got to have a lot of valuables. His blade is also very odd. I suspect that it's a spirit weapon. My chain of wind and cloud actually cracked when he slashed down at it."

"What? Yi Qiansui, are you speaking truly?" The fatty was surprised. He knew that Yi Qiansui's chain of wind and cloud was a quasi spirit weapon.

With Yi Qiansui's cultivation of half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm, and him manipulating a quasi spirit weapon to fight against a true qi practitioner... to think that his weapon had been chipped by his opponent!

What did this mean? This meant that the blade of the true practitioner was absolutely stronger than the quasi spirit weapon. It was also one hundred percent certain to be a spirit weapon, and it was very likely to be a high leveled one.

"Absolutely certain. If my words are false, may I be struck by lightning and split into two halves." Yi Qiansui swore.

"Alright then, I'll take a step back. I want that blade." The fatty pouted. "Then it's settled, no one can fight with me."

The triangular eyed chuckled coolly. "You two, one wants the bow, and the other wants the blade. Do you guys take senior brother Liu and me to be dead?"

Senior brother Liu was the indistinct gendered youth who hadn't spoken until now.

The youth's face was quite pale, and his eyebrow arched slightly when he heard triangular eyes refer to him, as he displayed a bizarre smile.

He suddenly took a few steps forward, and swept his gaze over the other three.

"I'll say one thing." Senior brother Liu looked like a woman, and even his voice was sweet and girlish, making listeners feel quite uncomfortable.

The three others looked at senior brother Liu with spurious smiles.

"You three can all go back now." Senior brother Liu's tone was diffident, and no emotions surged over into his expressions, as if he was uttering an extremely ordinary string of words.

"What do you mean 'Go back'?" Triangular eyes started.

"Senior brother Liu, are you still dreaming?" The chubby one joked.

"Stop joking! Things might change the more we drag things out. Let's grab this kid first. We'll have all the time in the world to discuss how to split up the goods afterwards." Yi Qiansui was of the mind to grab the target first, and then discuss how to split things.

Senior brother Liu's eyelids lifted slightly, "I said, you can all go back — now. Immediately. Scram! I want all of this kid's equipment!"

"You're mad."

"You with the Liu surname, you've lost your mind!"

"Heh heh, who do you think you are? There's no place for you to act like you're awesome here!"

The other three immediately formed a battlefront and started heckling this senior brother Liu. Everyone was half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm, how could they let this senior brother Liu throw his weight around in front of them?

Senior brother Liu chuckled and said nothing. He lifted his finger and tapped it downwards slightly, tapping it in quick succession with unsurpassed speed, in the direction of those three.

Chapter 136: Bunch of Dumb Birds, Have Fun

“Stardrop Point!”

“Humph. It’s not like we haven’t seen that before!”

“Showing off your techniques? Bring it on!”

The other three laughed coldly. This Stardrop Point was senior brother Liu’s signature move. They all knew it and thus didn’t pay much attention to it.

Except, their gazes suddenly changed in the next moment and their facial expressions became bitter as well.

That careless point had coalesced into a formless air current and directly ignited into a ball of flame, burning its way directly in front of them in the span of a moment.

“The formation of the spirit sea and the spirit region, you... you broke through? You’ve truly entered the first level of the spirit realm?”

“This... to coalesce spirit energy into a technique, you’ve indeed broken through!”

“Senior brother Liu, you...”

Senior brother Liu’s tone was indifferent as he wore a slight smile on his face, “Now can you get the hell out?”

The three of them looked at each other, their expressions were reluctant but they had no choice. They also knew that once someone in the half step spirit realm truly broke through to the first level of the spirit realm, their strength would increase by many times over.

Even if the three of them worked together, they would likely not be able to fight against someone in the first level of the spirit realm. That was to say that senior brother Liu hadn’t gone crazy; he absolutely had the right to tell them to leave!

The strongest became the king. Even if they were of the same faction, no one would give way in the fight for resources.

“Senior brother Liu, don’t be this way! The bow is yours and the blade is also yours, we’ll only split the other items! How about that?” The triangular eyed youth reacted quickly.

“Right, senior brother Liu, although you’ve ascended, but two heads are better than one. You’ll need helpers too. We’re willing to be your assistants. This kid has companions and they’re all fat sheep. Senior brother Liu, you’ll eat the meat and we’ll drink a little soup. That works too right?” Yi Qiansui also reacted.

“Senior brother Liu, we’re all brothers and peers here. There will be plenty of opportunities to help each other in the future. We admit that you’re the strongest. You take the biggest one and we’ll split the smaller ones. Not to mention this kid is slippery and he’s alone. He might get away.”

Senior brother Liu laughed coldly, "You guys can tag along if you want, but I'll say this first. You guys can receive one each of the animals they're riding. Don't think of getting anything else."

"Only one?" Yi Qiansui shook his head. "Three each. There's three of us and that'll only take out nine. They have twenty to thirty in total!"

"Senior brother Liu, the biggest share is already yours, don't be too harsh." The chubby one also begged.

"Senior brother Liu, I have another request. We can forgo weapons and whatever, but if there's any martial methods or inheritances, we must have a copy as well." The triangular eyed youth also made his request.

Senior brother Liu thought for a while and nodded, "Alright, then each of you can have two of the animals and a copy of any martial methods and secret arts if there are any. Don't haggle any further. You can get the hell out if you don't want to do this!"

Although the three of them felt a bit humiliated, their strength truly was inferior and so they could only pinch their noses and bear with it.

"Alright! Then it's settled!"

"Everyone attack together, don't let this brat get away!" Yi Qiansui hated Jiang Chen the most.

Jiang Chen had privately thought that it was comical when they started haggling. Senior brother Liu had just broken through to the first level of the spirit realm and was at the lowest level of the spirit realm.

He was far inferior to that Xu Zhen when it came down to it.

But who would've thought that the other three would docilely submit to senior brother Liu? Jiang Chen reflected with emotion that this world of martial dao was indeed one where the strong preyed on the weak.

Except, Jiang Chen didn't want to be the weak for the others to divvy up.

Seeing that they had concluded their discussions, Jiang Chen whistled sharply, "Bunch of dumb birds, have fun playing. I won't stick around!"

Actually, while they were still discussing how to split up the goods, he'd used the Ear of the Zephyr to detect that Gouyu and the others had already created an opening and rushed through the blockade.

Since Gouyu and the others had broken through the line of defense, what desire did Jiang Chen have to stay and play this boring game with these idiots?

He patted the Goldwing Swordbird and compelled it to its maximum speed. A beam of golden colored light flashed through the air and vanished beyond the clouds.

"After him!" Yi Qiansui was incensed to see Jiang Chen escape.

The chubby one and triangular eyed youth also followed after.

As for senior brother Liu, he unhurriedly sensed around for a while and then finally spurred on his mount, chasing in Jiang Chen's direction.

The methods in which a spirit realm practitioner rode spirit animals were indeed much stronger than those of a half step spirit realm. Although senior brother Liu was the last to set out, he'd caught up to the other three within the span of a few breaths.

He'd left the other three behind after a few more breaths.

The speed of those in the true qi realm was even slower. They were easily left behind by Yi Qiansui and the others.

"Tsk tsk, senior brother Liu has plenty to be cocky about now." The chubby one mumbled.

"Heh heh, if you were to break through, you'd probably be cockier than him." The triangular eyed youth laughed coldly.

"Bullshit, I, chubby, am the friendliest around. Even if I break through, I wouldn't put on airs like he did. Blech. What's with his arrogance and him eating meat, us drinking soup."

"Stop talking nonsense. If you have the means to eat meat, we'd be happy to drink soup as well." Yi Qiansui muttered disinterestedly behind the chubby one.

He only wanted to catch up to Jiang Chen right now and torture and kill him to dispel his anger from earlier. He also sighed internally. If he had been just a bit stronger, he could've taken down the other before senior brother Liu arrived, and then the equipment would have been his!

"What a pity that the fatty meat so close to my mouth has flown away just like this." Yi Qiansui was quite depressed.

Jiang Chen sprinted forward at maximum speed. After roughly fifteen minutes, he could see Gouyu and the others far in the distance. With the aid of the "Eight Trigrams Assimilation Matrix", their band of people had cleaned house in the south through various methods.

Creating this opening meant they had broken through the encirclement.

Jiang Chen sped up again to catch up to Gouyu and the others. He also threw out a few Vast Ocean Pills. "Give these to your steeds. Don't linger, continue forward with all speed!"

The Goldwing Swordbirds were quite fast in short distance sprints, at least twice as fast as the green wyverns, but their stamina wasn't that great. This was also one of their disadvantages.

But with the Vast Ocean Pill to replenish their qi, the problem of a lack of strength to continue wouldn't exist. At least, they wouldn't have to worry about running out of strength within the next two to three thousand li.

Everyone knew that the pursuers behind them weren't simple characters when they saw Jiang Chen like this. They gave the Vast Ocean Pills to their steeds after receiving them.

With the medicinal effects of the Vast Ocean Pills, the Goldwing Swordbirds recovered noticeably and then resumed their earlier speed.

They continued the chase in this manner.

Senior brother Liu was definitely a spirit dao practitioner to be able to always trail Jiang Chen and the others.

Fortunately, senior brother Liu seemed to be at the limits of his speed as well. He seemed to be unable to decrease the distance of the last couple of li between them.

As for Yi Qiansui and the others, they had been left in the dust a hundred or two hundred li ago.

Although this distance seemed far, it was but the span of a few breaths for spirit animals capable of flight.

This was to say that the distance between them hadn't truly widened.

"Stop! You can't escape!" Senior brother Liu infused his tone with spirit power, his voice piercing through the air like rolling thunder, landing in everyone's eardrums.

This spirit power transformed into sound waves that rumbled like thunder, causing all of their eardrums to tremble. Xue Tong and the others who were a bit weaker almost fell off their mounts.

"Cover your ears and don't listen to his bullshit." The sound waves had almost no effect on Jiang Chen given his training of "Boulder's Heart".

The sound waves from more than ten li away could only attack practitioners whose cultivation levels were below true qi masters. True qi masters could basically hold up against them.

"Humph. Another two hundred li and you'll be in Qingyang Valley territory. You're heading for your own deaths if you continue on this road!"

Senior brother Liu's voice was neither rushed nor slow, as if he was certain that he had Jiang Chen and the others in the bag. Obviously, his boundless enthusiasm about his recent breakthrough to the spirit dao gave him a great deal of confidence.

He felt that this group of people was already in his grasp.

"I'm different from Yi Qiansui and the others. I only want your items and not your lives. Leave behind your items and I can let you go!"

"Otherwise, not only will you be unable to keep your belongings in Qingyang Valley territory, but you'll lose your lives as well. You'll become fertilizer if you're lucky, a slave for Qingyang Valley forever if not. You'll be worse than dead!"

Senior brother Liu voiced his threats.

Qingyang Valley?

Jiang Chen was a bit depressed. Judging from the flight path, it was indeed impossible to avoid Qingyang Valley territory if he continued flying from here.

Tang Long had reminded him that two places were very dangerous. One of them was Azure Heaven Northern Palace, and the other was Qingyang Valley.

Jiang Chen had wanted to avoid them, but discovered in the end that he hadn't avoided a single one. He'd bumped into the Palace's disciples first and became their target. Now that he'd finally discovered a way out, he was about to trespass into Qingyang Valley territory.

This trip to the Skylaurel Kingdom was truly a worrisome affair.

Even so, Jiang Chen wouldn't listen to senior brother Liu's nonsense at this point. It looked like the Palace often killed and looted people.

Letting them go if they left their belongings behind? These were words to deceive a three year old. How could Jiang Chen believe him?

Besides, how could Jiang Chen leave their items behind?

From Tang Long's words, the people of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace were unreasonable bandits.

As for the Qingyang Valley it was said that they didn't kill people and would only kidnap people to be medicine servants for ten, twenty years.

Becoming a medicine servant was still better than killing someone and looting their belongings.

When he looked at it this way, he'd rather bump into those of the Qingyang Valley than fall into the hands of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace.

"If you continue forward another one hundred li, you'll be in Qingyang Valley territory. Do you want to be hacked into meat paste and become fertilizer, or are you willing to give up your possessions?"

"You're sticking with the wrong ideas and will be dead without a doubt." Senior brother Liu was a bit irritated that Jiang Chen and the others were pretending they didn't hear him.

He took out a pill and threw it into his steed's mouth, commanding, "Rush forward, you must stop them and don't let them into Qingyang Valley territory!"

Only, while he had pills, so did Jiang Chen. The speed of the Goldwing Swordbirds was must faster than his steed.

He was a spirit dao practitioner and was a bit more adept at controlling spirit animals, and thus their speed was relatively on par.

If he wanted to be faster, then the spirit animal would have to sacrifice its lifeblood.

When the spirit animal received his master's order, it knew that it was one for him to use his lifeblood. It took the pill and then immediately started burning his lifeblood to raise speed.

His speed nearly doubled immediately!

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!

Jiang Chen was greatly astonished. Judging from this sound, the other's speed had increased by nearly onefold instantly! How in the world did the other have the ability to increase his speed after chasing them for so long?

Chapter 137: Senior Brother Liu Almost Smacked to Death

Jiang Chen had no time to think. His Goldwing Swordbird was already flying at top speed at this point and there was no possibility raising its speed any further.

Judging from the speed of his pursuers, they would quickly close the gap within only a couple dozen li.

“Don’t hesitate, keep going forward. If he catches up, I’ll hold him back for a while.”

Jiang Chen had no other choice but to pull out the same ploy. It was a good thing that senior brother Liu was alone in chasing him and that the others were still quite a ways off.

Although Jiang Chen couldn’t win against even senior brother Liu, there should be no issues with delaying him for a moment.

Besides, he suspected that the other party must be using some secret art, otherwise the others would’ve raised their speed the moment they had the chance to do so.

Why would he speed up only in this last little bit of distance?

“They must have to pay a price when they raise their speed, otherwise they wouldn’t have waited until now!” Jiang Chen felt somewhat reassured when he thought of this.

Speed that came at a cost couldn’t be maintained for very long. It was the same as a short distance sprint. Speed could be raised to the utmost, but it definitely couldn’t be retained for a prolonged period of time.

It actually wouldn’t take much time to cover the distance of a hundred li when proceeding at maximum speed.

According to Jiang Chen’s estimations, they should have just about entered Qingyang Valley territory by now. In reality, the territories of the Qingyang Valley and the Azure Heaven Northern Palace didn’t actually border each other, but the disciples of the Palace had always been overbearing and had gotten into the habit of overstepping their boundaries.

At this moment, senior brother Liu drove his spirit beast forward and finally made it within five li of Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen suddenly halted and pointed at senior brother Liu with the Da Yu bow in his hand.

Jiang Chen’s vision was extraordinary and his experience was vast. When he saw that the eye sockets of the steed beneath senior brother Liu were sunken in, he knew that the steed must have used some secret art just now, sacrificing its own lifeblood and harming its own being.

“As expected, the disciples of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace will resort to anything. They are so cruel even to their own spirit animals for the sake of profit. These people definitely place personal gain above all else and have not the slightest bit of human emotion.”

When Jiang Chen saw this scene, a few more traces of disgust and contempt for senior brother Liu grew within his heart.

Many practitioners were cruel to their enemies but treated their comrades exceptionally well, especially their steeds.

The kind of person who could sacrifice an intimate partner like a steed was absolutely a person blinded by greed, ruthless and heartless.

Even if this kind of person gave his word for something, he would still be completely untrustable. He would absolutely be the type to commit betrayal.

“Go ahead and run, why aren’t you running anymore?” Senior brother Liu was also quite irritated having chased Jiang Chen for so long.

“What a pity that you’ve spared not even the lifeblood of your animal to increase your speed. You Palace disciples are all cut from the same cloth, eh?” Jiang Chen mocked.

“Trying to enrage me?” Senior brother Liu snorted in contempt. “I’m not the trash that Yi Qiansui is. Kid, I don’t want to waste words with you. Surrender voluntarily and I can grant you a quick death. If you wait for me to capture you, I’ll let you taste all sorts of torture and make it so that even if you beg for death, you are still denied it.”

Jiang Chen laughed heartily. “I’ve heard a lot of grand talk like that just now, four idiots discussing how to split up loot as though taking me for granted. Look at me now, aren’t I perfectly fine?”

“Since this is the case, then...” Senior brother Liu hadn’t even finished his sentence when Jiang Chen drew back on his Da Yu bow, whoosh!

Senior brother Liu didn’t dare treat it lightly when the bow twanged, as he concentrated to prepare to counter the arrow.

But where his eyes focused, there was no arrow shooting towards him. It was just an arrow full of empty posturing.

Jiang Chen laughed loudly, “Idiots are still idiots even after breaking through to the spirit realm!”

Laughing loudly, Jiang Chen spurred the Goldwing Swordbird forward once more and then left swiftly, not wanting to collide head on with senior brother Liu.

That pause just now had just been to obtain a bit more time for Gouyu and the others. Now that his goal had been accomplished, Jiang Chen naturally wouldn’t stick around any longer.

Besides, he could tell that senior brother Liu was burning the spirit animal’s lifeblood to increase his speed. He definitely wouldn’t be able to maintain that for too long.

As such, he grew even more confident.

“Trying to escape? You’re still trying to escape?” Senior brother Liu was greatly enraged as he dug his heels into the spirit animal and chased rapidly.

“Watch my arrows!”

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!

It was real arrows this time. Although they weren’t the arrows that came as a set with the Da Yu bow, they were still first class arrows.

Three arrows in succession aimed straight for senior brother Liu's vital parts.

Jiang Chen also knew that it was almost impossible for ordinary arrows to kill a spirit dao practitioner. He hadn't held out for this hope. He only had one goal, and that was to restrain this fellow and decrease his speed to the greatest of his abilities, and restrain his footsteps.

A practitioner in the spirit realm may be strong, but he wasn't strong to the point of ignoring the attacks from a spirit weapon.

He swept the three arrows away with a wave of his hand, the arrows causing his qi ocean to tremble slightly. Senior brother Liu was also internally astonished, "That ordinary attack can vibrate my qi ocean, just what kind of perverse existence is the bow in his hand? It's probably not an ordinary once or twice refined spirit weapon!"

His speed had decreased once again after this small halt, widening the gap between him and Jiang Chen.

Senior brother Liu was also depressed. He too knew that they had already entered the Qingyang Valley territory. Although he wasn't afraid of much because there weren't that many Qingyang experts in this region, the chase would be less smooth to pursue someone in another group's territory.

However, he was caught between a rock and a hard place now that he had reached this step. He couldn't possibly give up. He'd expended so much that if he gave up now, he would suffer incredible losses.

Not to mention that this person was outfitted from head to toe with fantastic items that were all things that senior brother Liu needed.

Particularly that bow, it was surely a thrice refined spirit weapon. Only the nobles of the Skylaurel Kingdom or disciples of the Precious Tree Sect would have such a fine item like this.

When senior brother Liu's thoughts traveled down this path, he suddenly started as he realized that he'd seemed to ignore a very important question. Just what kind of background did this person have that he could wield this sort of spirit weapon?

"Yi Qiansui that useless trash! He didn't even suss out a person's background before trying to kill them and loot their belongings. We've stirred a hornet's nest now and picked a fight with someone we couldn't afford to offend!" Some doubt grew in senior brother Liu's mind, but then he immediately thought, "No, this kid shouldn't have any great background. Otherwise, he would hardly conceal his identity. If he was from a great noble family or the disciple of a sect, there would be no reason for him to not identify himself."

Who would be so foolish in the world of martial dao to hide the presence of a great backer, and fail to haul them out even when facing life and death?

"Right, this kid must be a noble from one of those small kingdoms. He must've been a bit spoiled and brought his treasures for a pleasure trip into the Skylaurel Kingdom."

Senior brother Liu felt that this was the only possibility the more he thought about it.

When his thoughts traveled here, he no longer hesitated. He had decided that no matter the cost, this time he must kill everyone in this group.

Seize the good equipment, pass the Precious Tree Sect test, and enter the sect!

This was senior brother Liu's ambition.

As long as he entered the Sect, it wouldn't matter even if he killed a few noble disciples. Within the sixteen kingdoms, even the nobles of these mundane kingdoms would have to make way for the disciples of sects such as the Precious tree Sect.

"Kill that kid and steal his treasure!" Senior brother Liu's rational thought had been completely overcome by greed.

He raised his speed to his limits and could already see Jiang Chen's figure towards the front. Although the speed of the golden colored light was fast, it was still a bit slower compared to his current speed.

Ten li, eight li, five li...

Senior brother Liu's emotions became more and more agitated the closer he was to catching up. This fat sheep was almost at the edge of his mouth. He would have to eat it as quickly as possible to prevent long nights of sleepless dreams.

Just as he was posturing, a sudden wave of movement pulsed through the air. Immediately following that, an enormous air current in the shape of a flower formed overhead.

This air current started pressing down on him after forming a flower of spirit qi.

Senior brother Liu was greatly alarmed as he felt a suffocating presence of despair surge directly towards him.

"This is bad!"

He crouched and flipped directly off his steed, hurtling straight for the ground. He also knew that if that attack truly came crashing down on him, he'd be slapped into meat paste.

He'd rather take a fall than be crushed into meat paste.

At least he wouldn't die from falling from this height. Some injuries of flesh and skin were nothing to a spirit dao practitioner. He'd be fine with some spirit medicine.

Bam!

Senior brother Liu's spirit animal didn't have time to react before being hit by this mighty flower shaped air current.

The flower shaped air current crushed it directly into a cloud of blood as its internal organs all exploded, turning into a bloody wind and rain, scattering down towards the ground.

"Those of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace have become more and more bold huh!" A wizened and cold voice sounded coolly from thin air.

Having landed on the ground, senior brother Liu had snatched his life from the jaws of death and had yet to recover his wits. He said hurriedly, "Senior, the fault is mine, I'll get out of here right away!"

Senior brother Liu completely ignored Jiang Chen and the others after he spoke and thought no further of the spirit weapons and treasures. He suddenly turned around and ran, not daring to look back even once.

The person who'd made his move didn't kill senior brother Liu with his hit, but didn't make another move again.

"Go back and tell the Azure Heaven Northern Palace that whoever violates the boundaries again will all die!"

Senior brother Liu covered his head and scurried away like a rat to its hole, the very epitome of being bedraggled.

He also knew that the strength behind that blow was absolutely not something that he could take. The wise choice now was to get the hell away and avoid angering the other as much as possible.

Jiang Chen out in front actually hadn't made it too far before a mysterious power had stopped him and forced him to land.

When he landed, Jiang Chen discovered that he was in a valley and his father, Gouyu, and the others had long since landed.

There were strange ropes that shimmered in and out of existence on all of them, preventing them from moving a single muscle. When Jiang Chen landed, Jiang Feng, Gouyu, and the others were also incredibly anxious.

Jiang Chen smiled wryly, he knew that this must be Qingyang Valley territory and that Valley experts must surely live here.

Otherwise, that senior brother Liu wouldn't have scrambled so obligingly.

"Tsk tsk tsk, these people's training seem to be quite ordinary. However, their steeds look quite nice. Just where are they from?"

"Heh heh, who cares where they're from. Trespassing into our Qingyang Valley means either becoming fertilizer or medicine servants. Tie them all up and wait for Elder Fei to make his judgment."

Those speaking were two medicine boys, and were actually younger than Jiang Chen by three or four years old.

Chapter 138: Time for Jiang Chen to Put on a Front

This Elder Fei that the two medicine boys had mentioned was an extremely odd looking old man. His skinny body was accompanied by a bizarre looking head. As a result, he rather looked quite comical.

The old man's body was as slender and thin as a stalk of ginseng, whereas his head was as flat as an old pumpkin.

This kind of strange head and body combination made this old fellow look weird no matter how he was viewed.

That pumpkin-esque head had almost no chin, but where the chin should have been was a tuft of a very long goatee.

“Greetings to Elder Fei.” The two medicine boys hastened to pay their respects when they saw the old fellow.

“The people of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace are acting more and more brazenly.” Elder Fei was quite infuriated. “How dare they throw their weight around in my Qingyang Valley!”

“Please calm your anger Elder Fei, those idiots probably thought that Elder Fei was sure to be within the palace in Qingyang Valley and wouldn’t appear here. That’s why they behaved so horrendously.”

“Mm. This explanation makes sense. But the mere fact that they dare to act wildly in my Qingyang Valley territory means that, I, this old man, am still too benevolent usually. Sigh.”

Qingyang Valley was also one of the Precious Tree Sect’s secular places for holding rites within the Skylaurel Kingdom, and it was on the same standing as the Palace. When it came down to it, they were actually from the same faction.

The old man’s thin eyes darted to and fro over Jiang Chen and the other’s bodies. “Who are you, and why are the people from the Palace chasing after you?”

Jiang Chen knew this old man had to have great power to be able to suppress senior brother Liu with just one move. He estimated that this old man’s training would not be less than that of Chu Xinghan’s of the Purple Sun Sect.

“Senior, to be honest we’re really quite innocent. We were just traveling on our way when those from the Palace lost their minds and insisted on chasing us to the death.”

Elder Fei cackled, “Isn’t that an easy question to answer? Those of the Palace are the greediest. Your spirit animals are clearly of a higher level than their green wyverns. It’d be an odd thing if they weren’t green-eyed with jealousy.”

“So this was the case. The senior’s words have brought spontaneous enlightenment to me.” Jiang Chen was also one to tailor his words for the situation.

This old man seemed to be easier to talk to than those of the Palace, and thus Jiang Chen modified his tone to go along with the other’s.

“Spare me the sycophantic words. Although I don’t like to kill and rob people, but you must be punished for trespassing onto my territory.”

“Senior, we didn’t mean to, see...”

“Nonsense. I would’ve directly made you into fertilizer if you’d meant to trespass. How about this, I won’t bully you. 20 years. You can leave Qingyang Valley after you’ve been medicine servants for 20 years.”

Elder Fei spread out his hands, speaking with a tone of not letting personal considerations affect one’s execution of public duty.

Jiang Chen had a rueful expression on his face. Qingyang Valley's actions were exactly as Tang Long had described previously. They really didn't kill people, but instead made them serve as medicine servants for twenty years!

Jiang Chen couldn't find it within himself to stay for two years, let alone twenty.

Not to mention, he'd thumped his chest and promised Tang Long earlier that he would bring the items back for him. He would've broken his word after seven days had passed, let alone twenty years.

However, judging from Elder Fei's posture, he didn't seem to be saying this just for show.

The circumstances were greater than the person.

"Kid, I see a look of shrewdness on your face. Don't try plotting anything. Even one day less than twenty years won't do. If you dare to run away, heh heh! Big Egg, Second Egg, tell them the rules."

"We'll capture you if you run away and chop you up for fertilizer." The two boys answered in unison.

Jiang Chen's face was full of black lines. Come on! I was a renowned pill master in my previous life, and now I'm forced to be a medicine servant for this crazy old man? What a shame!

"Alright senior, we'll be medicine servants then. What chores will you be allocating to us?"

"Allocate what chores?" The old man rolled his eyes. "You amateurs start with hauling water. Spend ten hours everyday on learning spirit medicine knowledge and only then can you start learning how to handle medicine three months later."

"Hauling water?" Jiang Chen almost blew up.

"What, you don't want to?" The old man chuckled. "Then haul feces."

"That's alright! Haul water is it? I'll haul water!" Jiang Chen gritted his teeth.

Qiao Baishi, who'd been quiet all along during this time, suddenly plucked up his courage at this moment. "Senior, can this junior say a few words?"

"If you've got something to fart, hurry up and let it out." The old man was a bit impatient.

"Senior, junior has once learned some knowledge of pill medicines and has some foundational knowledge of pill medicines. We have twenty people here and twenty years each. How about I stay here and become a medicine servant for you for four hundred years, whereas you let them go? What do you say?"

Even Jiang Chen was greatly astonished by Qiao Baishi's words. He knew that Qiao Baishi was loyal to him, but hadn't thought that he'd be loyal to this extent.

"You know of pills?" The old man was a bit surprised. "You're not lying to this old geezer, are you?"

"Senior, you are an expert, how would I be able to hoodwink you with this little bit of thought? Besides, retaining one specialist such as I for four hundred years of work should benefit you a lot more than keeping amateurs. They say that a year of work from a specialist is worth ten years from an amateur. Elder Fei, you're still the one gaining from this arrangement at the end of the day."

“Heh heh, you’re a loyal one alright. I’ll consider this matter. If I discover that you truly do have spirit medicine potential one day, then we’ll proceed as you’ve proposed.”

“Please no! Senior, I can wait, but my young master has urgent business in the capital and he can’t afford to wait. How about you test me now?”

The old man snorted, “I don’t have time right now. Damn it, I’ve traveled over the greater half of the Skylarell Kingdom and haven’t found a single blade of the Mystic Ruler Grass. Damn it, damn it, damn it!”

Mystic Ruler Grass?

Qiao Baishi hadn’t even heard of this before. He wanted to demonstrate his abilities, but was at a loss of what to say.

Jiang Chen suddenly spoke up at this moment and said, “Senior, do you seek the Mystic Ruler Grass to refine the Peaceful Ruler Pill, or to refine the Profound Celestial Pill?”

“Mm?” The old man’s originally dim and darkened face suddenly changed when he heard Jiang Chen’s question. His murky eyes shot out a beam of light that swept over Jiang Chen’s face.

“Kid, you’ve heard of the Peaceful Ruler Pill?” Elder Fei planted himself in front of Jiang Chen with a swift step and broke the magical rope on Jiang Chen’s body with a squeeze of his fingers.

“Heh heh, what a coincidence. I truly have heard of it before.”

The old man’s eyes gleamed, but then sighed with depression immediately afterwards. “So what if you’ve heard of it. Even this old man know of the pill recipe, but it’s a pity that I can’t refine it because I can’t find the Mystic Ruler Grass. It’s all in vain.”

The Peaceful Ruler Pill was actually an ancient recipe for calming qi as well as calming the mind. At the end of the day, it was in the same series as the One Buddha Powder.

Except, the Peaceful Ruler Pill was on a much higher level. It was many times higher than the One Buddha Powder, and those of the true qi realm wouldn’t even be able to use this sophisticated pill.

“Oh yes, the Mystic Ruler Grass is very picky about its environment and is quite, quite difficult to find. It’s something that may only come by luck and not by merely searching for it.” Jiang Chen was also purposefully putting on a show now.

In actuality, within the memories of his past life, this Mystic Ruler Grass was the equivalent of a weed to the identity of his prior self. If it grew in his garden, it would be treated as a weed and pulled out.

This was to say that in the eyes of a divine level pill master, the Mystic Ruler Grass didn’t even have the right to be a house plant and enter their personal gardens.

Of course, in a mundane kingdom, this sort of spirit herb was truly something that could very well only come by luck.

“Kid, don’t put on this act with me. You heard the pill name somewhere and now you are putting on a show in front of me. Hold your plotting. Don’t even think of reducing the twenty years by a day.”

“Heh heh, I once heard a senior speak of something saying that the original ingredients for pills like the Peaceful Ruler Pill were too difficult to find. There are actually many pills with the same effects as it. He seemed to have mentioned the ‘Renewal Purity Pill’ or something along those lines. It’s said that the ingredients are easier to find, and have effects better than or on par with the Peaceful Ruler Pill I wonder if he was bluffing or not.”

“Renewal Purity Pill?? You.. you’ve also heard of the Renewal Purity Pill ? ?” It was like a spring in which a hundred flowers bloomed had suddenly appeared on the old man’s lean face.

“Of course I have, what’s so surprising about that?” Jiang Chen purposefully played dumb.

“What’s so surprising?” The old man hopped off one foot. “You say what’s so surprising? Do you know how much I paid just to beg someone to refine one Peaceful Ruler Pill for me? I paid the price, but even then I still have to search for ingredients like the Mystic Ruler Grass myself. The ancient pill recipes are all exclusive secrets, would you say this is surprising or not?”

Jiang Chen was delighted, this meant that the old man didn’t even have the recipe for the Peaceful Ruler Pill.

“If you want to call it surprising, then it’s surprising. If you want to say it’s ordinary, then it’s also ordinary. If you know how to handle it, it will not be difficult. If you think it’s difficult, then you don’t know how to handle it. “

“If you know how to handle it, it will not be difficult?” The old man hopped up again and grabbed Jiang Chen’s sleeve. “Kid, show me someone who knows! If you can find someone, I’ll be willing to pay whatever the price may be.”

“I’d love to find someone, but how can I go looking if I’m stuck here for twenty years?” Jiang Chen chuckled, knowing that this old man had taken the bait, hook, line, and sinker.

“Don’t give me this kind of foolish nonsense.” The old man waved his hand. “If you can find me someone who knows the Renewal Purity Pill, then you’ll be my senior. I’ll bow down to you and even call you daddy dearest. Twenty years? There’s no problem if I become your medicine servant for twenty years.”

“Do you mean that?” Jiang Chen was secretly delighted that this old man had come knocking at the door.

“What a dumb question. Does this old man look like someone who makes irresponsible remarks?”

“No, you don’t look like it.” Jiang Chen shook his head.

The old man’s small eyes spun madly. He’d thought that Jiang Chen had been bullshitting in the beginning, but now he seemed to have gleaned a bit of the truth as he listened. This kid seemed to possibly know what he was talking about?

The old man had spent the efforts of almost twenty to thirty years on the Peaceful Ruler Pill and had worked himself to the bone for it.

He’d tried everything, but always turned up empty-handed in the end.

Even if it was the slightest of chances from Jiang Chen that sounded quite unrealistic, he was still tempted. After all, this matter had become one of his internal demons.

“Kid, think carefully, don’t think of trying any tricks with this old fellow! If I find out that you’re pulling the wool over my eyes and want to take the advantage to run away, you’ll know the consequences!” The old man tried hard to keep a stern face and project a mean demeanor, wanting to use this to awe Jiang Chen.

“Elder Fei, your strength and abilities exceed mine. I don’t think I can get up to any tricks in front of you? Although your eyes are small, they’re extremely sharp! Do you think I don’t know? You look like the typical man of great wisdom who purposefully appears dim-witted.” Jiang Chen started fawning over him.

“Heh heh, you saw through even this? And to think I spent so much effort on concealing it.” The old man puffed his chest up as he stroked his goatee, indulging in self-admiration. “Kid, since you’re not up to some trick, then tell me, has someone truly grasped the Renewal Purity Pill in our Skylaurel Kingdom?”

“It’s nothing to do with the Skylaurel Kingdom, but a good friend I’ve had since young. He’s the one who knows. He appears every three or five years and I can always hear much of the matters of pill medicines from him every time he appears.”

“Oh? Such a wondrous person exists?” Elder Fei was somewhat skeptical.

“Yes, to be honest, I’m headed to the capital of the Skylaurel Kingdom this time because I’ve heard that his elderly self will be taking care of some business within the Skylaurel Kingdom. This is why I’ve come hurrying to pay my respects to him.”

“Can there be such a coincidence?” The old man felt even more baffled.

Chapter 139: An Old Man Who Plays Dumb, Acts Cute, and Has No Principles

Jiang Chen knew that the old man had thoroughly taken the bait now that the old man had said such words.

Qiao Baishi found it privately hilarious on the side. He also knew that they were finally out of the woods this time. With his honored master’s eloquence, they’d have this old man turning in circles.

“Coincidence? This is something ordained by heaven. Of course it’s coincidence.”

“Ordained by heaven?” Elder Fei muttered to himself, his gaze a bit far away and lost. “I’ve heard of the Renewal Purity Pill, but no one knows of the pill recipe within the Skylaurel Kingdom. It’s said that the cost of this pill is indeed much cheaper than the Peaceful Ruler Pill, and that the ingredients are easy to find. It’s also easier to refine.”

Suddenly, Elder Fei’s eyes moved as if he’d decided something.

“Kid, this old fellow will trust you this once. I can avoid pursuing the matter of you trespassing in the Qingyang Valley, but you must introduce me to this mysterious expert.”

Jiang Chen purposefully made things difficult, "I can't agree to this brashly. Besides, what's the use of meeting him? This senior has long since paid no interest to the common affairs of the mundane world. I think that it'll be difficult for you to ask him."

The old fellow chuckled, "It's difficult for me to ask him, but what if you asked?"

"I... why would I ask?" Jiang Chen purposefully played dumb.

"Eh... well!" The old fellow smiled a bit awkwardly. True, why would someone make this request for him? This had nothing to do with them.

Wringing his hands where he stood, he cautiously smiled obsequiously. "Uh, eh, little brother. Tell me, what should I do so that you'll go ask for me?"

Jiang Chen had a darkened face. "I'm not doing it. I was scared by you just now. Twenty years as a medicine servant, so awe inspiring, peh!"

"Heh heh, don't be mad, don't be mad." The old fellow toadied up to Jiang Chen, raising a hand to tap his shoulder in a fawning manner. "Come, come, come. Let this old fellow massage your back for you. What silly twenty years of a medicine servant? I think that you've misheard. I meant that I'll be a medicine servant for twenty years to whoever can resolve the issue of the Peaceful Ruler Pill for me!"

Jiang Chen found it privately hilarious, and couldn't help but want to laugh when he saw this old fellow acting the buffoon. When it came down to it, this old fellow was eccentric and a bit crusty, but he wasn't of the bad sort.

If it were those from the Azure Heaven Northern Palace, they definitely would be threatening him with life and death, and would have no scruples about using any sort of means to force Jiang Chen to come to terms and submit.

This old man was a pill master and seemed to consider those crooked means behind his notice, holding himself pure and lofty, away from all that.

Even if this kind of person had an eccentric temperament, his natural character wouldn't be crooked.

"I misheard?" Jiang Chen said purposefully.

"Absolutely misheard." The old man nodded his head quite seriously.

"This means that I can leave and go to the capital?"

"Of course! Why can't you?" The old man put on an air as if this was a very strange question — as if Jiang Chen was utterly crazy for asking this question.

One had to say, the old man's personality was quite a bit like an old naughty child. He would play dumb, act cute, and would throw his temper around.

Jiang Chen had had his fun teasing him and laughed, "Elder Fei is it? How about this, come find me in the capital after a while."

"Really?" Elder Fei's eyes shot out a great amount of sparks.

“Do I look like a liar?”

“Not at all, not at all!” The old man shook his head as if he was beating a drum. “When this old man first saw you, I felt that you were extremely tall and handsome, of a striking appearance and bearing, a dragon or a phoenix amongst men, an immortal that had descended to the earth... it made it such that this old man couldn’t help but want to become close to you, and even made me yearn to immediately swear the oaths and go through the ritual of slaughtering a chicken and burning yellow paper in order to become blood brothers.”

Fawning words came rolling over him in waves, and flattery billowed — this was the epitome of skilled adeptness.

Jiang Chen discovered that this old man was a bit like him, with no principles whatsoever.

It was as if the old man was sending off his own kin when he saw them off at the road. He waved his hand, “Go well and be careful on the road. If anything happens, just say my name.”

These words were as intimate as they could be.

Apart from Jiang Chen, Gouyu, and Jiang Feng, the others all felt as if they were dreaming. They’d thought that they’d be unable to avoid twenty years of serving as a medicine servant.

Who would’ve thought that Jiang Chen’s few words of bluster and distraction would completely turn the old man around, and would have him send them off as he was sending off his old kin, departing from his usual behavior.

“Chen’er, you...” Jiang Feng wanted to say something.

“Father, let’s go, this old man is one of ours in the future.” Jiang Chen chuckled. He’d dug a hole just now, and the old man had jumped straight in, leaping in headfirst full of joy.

Twenty years as a medicine servant... Jiang Chen smiled. It would be quite interesting with such an old man as his medicine servant.

...

Within the Qingyang Valley, the two medicine boys, Big Egg and Second Egg, were tongue tied and their eyes were bugging out. They had on faces of confusion, and their mouths were wide open — enough to shove in a chicken leg.

“Elder Fei, that kid looks like he’s full of complete nonsense. We’re letting him go just like this?” Big Egg found this incredible.

“Indeed, I feel like that kid isn’t anything good.” Second Egg was equally unable to comprehend.

“Heh heh.” Elder Fei smiled meaningfully, stretching out leisurely on his chair. “What do you two know? I’ve lived hundreds of years, and have seen all sorts of people. This kid is full of both truths and falsehood, a person the same as me. He plays dumb when he should play dumb, pretends to be helpless when he should, and isn’t shy about putting on airs when he should.”

“The same person as you, Elder?” Big Egg and Second Egg were even more confused.

“Yes, the same person.” The old man closed his eyes in intoxication, and started humming a small tune. He’d been probing with his act of playing dumb and acting cute just now as well.

The old man had ended up discovering that young kid that spoke with both ease and fluency, was even better at playing dumb than he was. This was right up the old man’s alley.

The old man was quite a narcissistic person, and felt that Jiang Chen was the same as him. Therefore, he absolutely wouldn’t be a bad person, or someone who wagged his tongue too freely.

In addition, after analyzing the details, the kid’s eyes hadn’t even blinked when he’d mentioned the names of those pills. This wasn’t an act that an ordinary person could put on.

How would he have such knowledge without pointers from a pill master?

How many within the entire Skylaurel Kingdom had heard of the Renewal Purity Pill, to say nothing of anything else?

Therefore, although elder Fei looked muddled, he was actually quite astute. He had at least made some preliminary deductions that Jiang Chen wasn’t making empty promises.

Not to mention that the capital wasn’t too far from here. Even if this kid was up to something, Elder Fei could go any time if he wanted to make trouble for him.

However, Elder Fei’s instincts had been honed quite sharply after living for hundreds of years. This time, his instincts told him that maybe this kid really wasn’t pulling the wool over his eyes.

He wasn’t short on medicine servants or the like anyways.

He had made such a frightening rule because he didn’t want too many idle trespassers swinging through the Qingyang Valley, disturbing the peace of the Valley in cultivating spirit medicine.

It wasn’t that the old man was truly malicious.

There truly was a fundamental difference between the Qingyang Valley, and the Azure Heaven Northern Palace.

It was as Tang Long had said; they didn’t run into any trouble worth mentioning after leaving the territory of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace and Qingyang Valley.

They arrived at the capital of Skylaurel Kingdom early in the morning on the second day.

As they flew high up in the sky and gazed down at it from afar, the capital of the Skylaurel Kingdom was quite an impressive sight. An enormous city wall and moat were as if they were a brilliant pearl embedded into the earth, presenting a splendid sight.

The tall and mighty sturdy city doors, extensive architecture, capital soldiers bristling with armor and weaponry — every detail was testament to the awe inspiring position of the Skylaurel Kingdom.

“The reputation of the four great kingdoms is well deserved. It looks like we were really frogs at the bottom of a well inside the Eastern Kingdom before.”

Gouyu felt quite a mix of emotions as she stood in front of the Skylareel Kingdom capital and looked at the enormous city walls and moat.

With Tang Long's warning, Jiang Chen and them naturally didn't fly into the capital on the back of the Goldwing Swordbirds. They landed outside the city doors instead, and lead the Goldwing Swordbirds through the city doors.

With Prince Ye's medallion, their entrance through the city doors was smooth and unobstructed.

The guard at the city gates smiled, "You have the medallion of the prince, and won't have to be inspected when you enter and leave the city gates in the future."

The presence of a bustling city life greeted them as they entered the capital.

Going by the map that Ye Rong had left Jiang Chen, the group ambled along their way and finally made it to Ye Rong's 'Prince Rong Manor' after roughly two hours.

A group of practitioners clad in red armor surged out out from both sides before they'd made it to the front door, as they openly brandished their weapons at the group.

"Idle bypassers may not linger in front of the prince's manor!"

"We are friends of the fourth prince, and have been invited to come visit him." Jiang Chen displayed the medallion.

The red armored practitioners looked at the medallion for a while, after which the captain waved his hand and all the red armored practitioners put away their weapons.

"Please wait, I'll go notify the fourth prince."

Hearty laughter came from the manor's interior after a short while.

"Hahaha, I heard the magpies chattering on the branches after waking up this morning. I made some small calculations and knew that some honored guests were coming to visit. Can it be that my younger brother has come to visit?"

The owner of the hearty voice was Prince Ye Rong.

A red shadow quickly ran out from the door before the sound had even finished echoing. Ye Rong made directly for Jiang Chen, giving him a bearhug filled with burning passion.

"Younger brother, I've missed you! I've been waiting for your arrival, and have finally seen you arrive." Ye Rong grabbed Jiang Chen's shoulders after the bear hug, and looked him up and down, "Heh. Looks like many stories have happened to you along the way."

Jiang Chen smiled ruefully. "Had you told me that when travelling to the capital that it would be filled with such twists and turns, I definitely wouldn't have turned down your idea to meet me at the border."

"What happened?" Prince Ye Rong's face darkened. "Did some blind idiot make trouble for my younger brother?"

Jiang Chen sighed, "It's a long story, I'll tell you later."

“Alright, let’s go in, let’s go in. Let’s all come inside to talk. I’ll throw a banquet immediately to welcome you and wash the road dust off your feet. Today is a day of great joy and we must drink. Heh heh, I hadn’t found it within myself to break open the wine I had begged from the Precious Tree Sect. Today, we’re going to get drunk!”

As a prince, Ye Rong’s personality may not have been the most desirable.

But as a friend, Ye Rong’s straightforwardness rather increased Jiang Chen’s good impression of him. At least Ye Rong didn’t put on airs in front of him or make a fuss about a superior facing his junior.

In addition, Ye Rong toed the line very carefully. Although sexy ladies such as Gouyu and innocent beauties such as Wen Ziqi were in Jiang Chen’s entourage, Ye Rong always looked at them with urbane politeness when his eyes passed over them, with not the slightest hint of depravity.

This point, at least, was quite rare to find in someone in a superior position.

Chapter 140: The Difficult Problem of Settling Within the Capital

Bam! Ye Rong slammed his wine cup down viciously. “The Azure Heaven Northern Palace? I’ve long since heard that they behave incredibly atrociously. Supposedly, the disciples beneath their banner often commit acts like killing people and looting them. I’d always thought that the rumors were a bit of an exaggeration, but it seems like not only were the rumors not exaggerations, but they were actually quite conservative.”

“Younger brother, don’t be mad. These iniquities are all adding up and I’ve already noted these fellows. There will be a day in which I will make them pay a price with interest.”

Jiang Chen smiled, “They’re all a bunch of minor characters and clowns, unable to make it onto the main stage. Brother Ye, you don’t need to worry about this. I can handle a small thing like this.”

“Haha, that’s right! Younger brother, with your potential, if you can enter the Precious Tree Sect, then you’ll be able to stomp on these bastards however you’d like in the future.”

Jiang Chen nodded noncommittally, raising his glass to say, “Come, Brother Ye, let’s drink.”

After drinking and eating their fill, Ye Rong said, “Brother, since you’ve just arrived at the capital, there are many things that I must now detail clearly to you.”

“Go ahead.”

“First, you are my guest and not my follower. Because of this, you can’t live within the manor. In order to live within the manor, you must be someone in the manor’s household or a servant. At the heart of it all, guests are still outsiders and thus you must arrange for accommodations elsewhere.”

Jiang Chen truly hadn’t thought of staying at the manor. With so many in his party, it was obviously an inconvenience, and there wasn’t much point in seeking shelter underneath someone else’s roof.

“That’s easy, I’ll go arrange for a house and a yard in someplace quiet.” Jiang Chen’s monetary ability was astonishing, and although this was the Skylaurel Kingdom, he didn’t think that he would be unable to purchase a house.

Ye Rong rubbed his nose and smiled ruefully, "It's actually not that simple. You can't buy a house just because you want to buy one."

"Oh? Can it be that an inch of land within the Skylaurel Kingdom is equal to an ounce of gold? The land is so valuable that even houses are selling at astronomical prices?"

"It's not that the land is at an astronomical price. I believe that wouldn't be a problem with your financial capability. It's more that you can't buy a house or manor within the Skylaurel Kingdom just because you want to. A certain level of status is needed for certain levels of houses. Your status was vaunted in the Eastern Kingdom, but here, within the Skylaurel Kingdom, you're still a blank piece of paper."

Jiang Chen finally understood after Ye Rong's explanations.

There was a clear hierarchy of status and rank when doing business within the Skylaurel Kingdom. One wouldn't be able to buy a luxurious house without a corresponding status.

Jiang Chen understood matters when put this way.

This was actually similar to the Eastern Kingdom. Ordinary people wouldn't be able to take up residence within luxurious locales. Even movers and shakers within business were absolutely barred from entering the areas reserved for nobles unless they had a corresponding status or awe inspiring achievements.

This wasn't a defined rule within the Eastern Kingdom, but cliques were formed on the basis of these unspoken rules.

The Skylaurel Kingdom had taken things one step further than the Eastern Kingdom had and had written it clearly into law.

Your status dictated what kind of house you could live in in, with no way for anyone to overstep this boundary. You wouldn't be able to buy another house with all the money in the world.

At the heart of it, the Skylaurel Kingdom was indeed different from ordinary, common kingdoms. With Jiang Chen's reputation, the Darkmoon Kingdom had directly promised a position of duke of first rank to him.

After arriving at the Skylaurel Kingdom, not even a prince could help him cheat.

It seemed like the operating machine of the Skylaurel Kingdom was much more rational than that of the Eastern Kingdom and the Darkmoon Kingdom. The rules here were also much more cruel.

"Brother Ye, then what avenues exist to obtain status?"

"There are quite a few ways. Holding civil or military office goes without saying. It's faster to advance through these two methods, but the level of competition there is also the fiercest."

"Apart from civil and military office, the next fastest way would be organizations associated with sects. Pill medicine for instance, or forging weapons. Any topic having to do with training have large amounts of quotas for nobles. The Precious Tree Sect has the four great sites within the Skylaurel Kingdom and thus also holds a large numbers of quotas for nobles."

“The four great sites?”

“Yes, you’ve already met the Azure Heaven Northern Palace, they’re one of the four. There’s also the Azure Heaven Southern Palace, the Qingyang Palace, and the Myriad Treasures Palace that make up the four great sites.”

“The Azure Heaven Northern Palace, and there’s also the Azure Heaven Southern Palace?”

“Yes, the Northern Palace controls the western region, the Southern Palace controls the southern region. The Qingyang Valley exercises control over the central region of the kingdom and the Myriad Treasures Palace directly set up shop within the capital.”

Ye Rong explained patiently, “How about this, I have some personal connections within the Azure Heaven Southern Palace and can get a noble’s position for you. However, I can, at most, obtain one of the eighth rank for you through personal connections. It’ll be harder to obtain any rank higher than that.”

The nobles of the Skylareland Kingdom were divided into nine ranks.

The ninth rank was the lowest and the first rank the highest.

A prince like Ye Rong was naturally at the level of first rank. If he could become the crown prince, then he would break free from the hierarchy of ranks and would instead become of the royal rank.

“The Azure Heaven Southern Palace?” Although Jiang Chen knew that the Azure Heaven Southern Palace and the Azure Heaven Northern Palace were two different forces, he still felt slightly ticked off when he heard this name.

“Let’s forget about using your connections. I’ll talk a walk in the capital tomorrow and understand the situation. In the meantime, I’ll take some time to familiarize myself with this new area and find a tavern for lodgings.”

Ye Rong was a bit shamefaced. He was a prince, but in many matters, there was no room for the princes of Skylareland Kingdom to play favorites and commit irregularities.

In addition, the most important thing was that the king had also included this in his observation of all his sons. If a prince often used the banner of the royal family to demand special treatment and play favorites, then his standing would surely be greatly decreased within the king’s heart.

Jiang Chen was rather opened-minded about all this.

Although his treatment since arriving in the Skylareland Kingdom had been rather ordinary and had been worlds apart from the position at the apex of all other nobles that had been promised by the Darkmoon Kingdom and the Eastern Kingdom, Jiang Chen rather liked this feeling more.

This kind of new challenge gave him more drive and motivation. Besides, he didn’t think that he’d been unable to obtain even a noble’s status within the capital.

Under Ye Rong’s arrangements that night, their group checked into a hotel with wonderful surroundings. After settling down comfortably after the hardships of the road, the night passed peacefully.

The next morning, Jiang Chen summoned his eight personal guards and delegated some missions to them. He had them collect all sorts of intelligence regarding the sect organizations and what qualifications were needed to gain which particular noble status.

He naturally didn't want to undertake such trivial matters himself.

Sending his subordinates to do this was also a test of their competence and a form of training.

Jiang Chen himself brought Gouyu and Qiao Baishi along with him as he followed the address that Tang Long had given, planning on making a trip to Tang Long's family.

Although Jiang Chen didn't know what it was that Tang Long had asked them to courier, he could judge from Tang Long's tone that these items were very important to Tang Long's family.

Tang Long's house was located in the slums of the northwestern part of the capital. Jiang Chen finally found this small alley after threading through many side streets and alleyways.

The dirty alley made Gouyu, a girl born in a royal family, feel a bit uncomfortable.

However, when she saw Jiang Chen's cool and composed face, she took a few steps forward and let go of her inhibitions. When she stepped down, she didn't find the dirty alleyway that dirty anymore.

Tang Long's family lived in a one story house that appeared quite run down, but was neatly cleaned up both inside and out.

Jiang Chen's group of three knocked on the door, which was answered by a seventeen or eighteen-year old girl. The young girl's dainty face blushed faintly red when she saw the strangers.

She stuttered, "Who... who... are you... looking for?"

"Is this Tang Long's house?" Jiang Chen smiled.

"Y... yes? You are?" The young girl was a bit wary.

A voice traveled out from within, "Sister-in-law, is it my brother? Has my brother come back with that item?"

The owner of the voice didn't sound too old, he seemed to be roughly the same age as Jiang Chen.

"Tang Long asked us to come by with this package. Please take an inventory." Jiang Chen handed the package to the young girl.

The young girl wiped her hands a few times on her clothing with a reddened face before reaching out with her hands and blushing, walked back into the house.

After a while, an excited voice came from within, "Haha, it really is the Black Spirit Wood! Sister-in-law, it's Black Spirit Wood! Haha, this means I am qualified to sign up for the free clinic that the Azure Heaven Southern Palace is holding a few days later. Sister-in-law, I... I can walk on my two feet in the future! Brother, you really are my big brother!"

The young man within the house seemed to be quite agitated as he kept pounding the boards of the bed and crowing. He seemed to have been repressing himself for quite some time and finally unleashed his steam at this time.

The young girl in the rough hemp walked out again and asked in a timid voice, "You're friends of Tang Long? Would you like to come inside for some water?"

Jiang Chen looked around the house and saw that this family's life was quite simple. It looked that their life wasn't that easy.

Jiang Chen didn't want to be a burden to them. Since he had delivered the items, he'd completed Tang Long's request.

"We'll forgo the water. We'll be taking our leave now that the item has been delivered."

The young girl also heaved a sigh of relief when she heard that they wouldn't be coming inside. It was obvious that she didn't know how to treat these guests since her house was in such shambles and these people should be quite noble based off their outfits.

"Uh... um, how is Tang Long?" The young girl gathered up her courage to ask.

"Heh heh, he's doing quite well, but he's been a bit busy lately. It seems that it'll be a while before he can come home. You're his wife right? I hadn't thought that this fellow would have a wife, haha!" Jiang Chen laughed, waved his hands, and left.

After departing from Tang Long's house, Jiang Chen was in no hurry to go back to the hotel. He took a spin around the capital. The capital was quite large, one wouldn't cover it fully without ten days or half a month.

The three of them were walking when they suddenly saw two people hurriedly turn into another alley in front of them.

"Heh heh, hurry up, hurry up. Apparently the Wishing Tower has been opened. This time, up to the eleventh layer of the Wishing Tower has been opened, with only the last couple still sealed. Let's go try our luck."

"Cut your blather and let's go!"

"Damn it, I'm going all out this time. I must pull out a wish above the ninth level. I've heard that if you help manifest the wishes above that, you can at least obtain the status of a sixth rank noble!"

"Pfft. Stop dreaming! Would someone put such a wish into the Wishing Tower if you can manifest such a wish? Stop dreaming in broad daylight!"

"That's not necessarily the case. Have you forgotten what happened two years ago? A wandering practitioner from a small kingdom came to our Skylareland Kingdom to broaden his worldview and happened to bump into the day of the Wishing Tower opening. He came from some remote backwater land and didn't know the rules of the Wishing Tower, pulling out a wish of the eleventh level. By some stroke of luck, he could resolve that wish and had his fortunes changed immediately. I think he's a noble of the fifth rank now! This really was an example of accomplishing an astonishing feat in one night and changing his destiny instantaneously, walking amongst the clouds!"

“That sort of thing only happens once in a hundred years. I’ll be a bit more practical and wish for pulling out a wish that lets me make a bit of money.”

Once Jiang Chen and the others heard the words “Wishing Tower” and the conversation of the two people their interested was stoked..

“Wishing Tower eh? This Skylaurel Kingdom has a lot of curious aspects. How about we go have some fun too?” They had nothing to do anyways. Jiang Chen wanted to take a look at this Wishing Tower and see just what it was all about. It seemed quite interesting.