

Three Realms 1321

Chapter 1321: Killing With A Borrowed Knife

“Your Majesty, Your Majesty!”

An advance emperor cultivator coughing out blood before trading blows with the enemy?! At this rate, wouldn't they collapse before the first sword was drawn? The meeting dissolved into shambles.

“My condolences, Your Majesty, please take care of your august self!”

“Your Majesty, the fate of the empire rests on your shoulders!”

The officials were panicking. They normally enjoyed the greatest wealth and most eminent status thanks to the imperial system. The imperial family was the core of that system, and the emperor the pillar of the imperial family. Without the emperor, they would lose everything.

But now, thoughts of self-gain were flying out of heads. The enemy was at the gate, and if the emperor toppled over, all would fall with him like dominoes, leaving the ministers helpless wheat to be reaped by the enemy's scythe.

They didn't mind invading someone else and plundering riches for their own selfish desires, but they absolutely couldn't accept the same thing happening to them.

Old Guo scrambled over to the emperor, almost tripping. “Your Majesty...”

The emperor kicked him away again, shouting, “What the hell are you all doing?! I'm not dead yet and I won't die!”

He was pale, but a murderous light glinted in his eyes. That mouthful of blood had actually cleared his mind. The anguish of losing a son had only caused a brief loss of self-control.

“Hear my orders. Activate the defense formations, guard the palace with your lives! We can rise again as long as we weather this crisis!” He stared at the empty sky, his eyes shining venomously into the sky like a viper.

“Little bastard, I'll make you pay a hundred times for the death of my son!” The flames of hatred burned hot in his chest.

Now that he was lucid again, he realized charging out would be suicide. The defense formation and his superiority in manpower were his only advantages.

He could only gamble on House Yan's forefather successfully ambushing Jiang Chen and a rescue from Pillfire and the Eternal Celestial Capital when they received the news.

The Eternal Celestial Capital must have gotten word for quite some time already, but a resounding silence seemed to be their only reply. Thus obviously, no matter how strong they were, they still cowered in front of Veluriyam Capital. Therefore, as long as he could live through this, the emperor was determined to switch allegiances to Pillfire City. Even being their dog would be better than having a weak backer.

“Old fart of a emperor...” Jiao Yun’s irreverent voice came from the sky. “They say rulers have hearts of stone. Maybe you can sit still even after watching your own son die in front of you, but I have eight other scions of your imperial family here. Let’s kill them one by one and see just how hard-hearted you are, hehe!”

He flourished his blade with a devilish grin.

Another body fell from the clouds, its head landing inside the palace’s inner yard. Then another. Each of these imperial sons were of noble birth, so seeing them tumble ignobly down from the clouds, their heads separated from their bodies, made the imperial family restless.

“Your Majesty, those are House Yan’s cream of the crop. You can’t sit here and do nothing!”

“We have to attack now, or House Yan will face extinction!”

“Your Majesty...” Inside the palace, members of House Yan resorted to any and all sentiments in order to sway their liege. Even the emperor found the emotional pressure from his own kinsmen difficult to bear.

“Silence, all of you! My crown prince and two other princes have already died for the sake of the empire. As members of the imperial clan, don’t you have any sense of sacrifice?” the emperor angrily shot back. “What do you want me to do? Trade my life for theirs? Do you want me to die?”

The emperor’s anger cowed his clansmen into silence, but they clearly remained recalcitrant.

In the sky above, Jiao Yun could only speechlessly report back to Jiang Chen. He’d killed eight princes by now, but hadn’t received a flicker of reaction from Great Scarlet royalty.

“Young lord, this Great Scarlet emperor seems determined to cower and hide. It seems we need to storm the palace.” Jiao Yun felt that the easiest way was to just crush the enemy with brute force. He was someone who never failed to avenge a wrong. As a wandering great emperor, he’d always favored the most blunt and straightforward method.

“Jiao Yun, don’t look down on them. Great Scarlet is nothing to speak of, but you can tell the palace has a long history and a rich legacy. It has two formations, one inner and one outer. If we rush in blindly, we’ll fall prey to them and be forced into a difficult, bloody clash that’ll cost us countless lives.”

Jiang Chen shook his head after momentary thought, responding after he noted the heavy guard around the palace. “Each one of the Peafowl guardsmen is a brother of mine. Since I brought them here with me, I must bring them back. I would never casually sacrifice my men.”

In war, the best strategy was to unravel the enemy’s plan. Lives were too heavy a price to pay against a trivial Great Scarlet Mid Region.

Above the clouds, Jiang Chen studied the two formations of the palace. Both were well hidden, crafted with skill and cunning.

“These formations show a clear ancient design. They’re too complex for a current formation master to etch. However, simply relying on them won’t be enough, and it looks like later descendants haven’t maintained them well. Judging from the structures, these formidable formations more than meet the

standard for sky rank, but how much of their power these later generations can deploy is another story,” Jiang Chen said as he simulated battle outcomes.

“Young lord, why don’t you summon the other great emperors in Veluriyam Capital? If they bring their own troops, it’ll be easy enough to steamroll them together with Emperor Peerless and Emperor Coiling Dragon,” Jiao Yun proposed. He’d also realized they wouldn’t be guaranteed of victory if they charged in headfirst.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. “No need. These formations are good, but they have many holes. I can unravel them, I just need to make some calculations. Does the imperial family think they can escape from my palm with mere formations? Don’t worry. I’ll let them experience the dread and despair of someone helplessly waiting for death first.”

Jiang Chen sent a secret order to the Goldbiter Rat King. “Ole Gold, have your kin launch a full assault on the city gates. Slaughter anyone who resists!”

He was finally displaying some of his loftiness.

A subordinate reported in, “Young lord, people calling themselves representatives of the Great Scarlet three great sects are requesting an audience.”

“The three great sects?” Jiang Chen frowned. He wasn’t unfamiliar with them. Those were the three sects he’d run into back on Cloudshatter Mountain.

The three sects were Great Scarlet Mid Region’s main pillars. Jiang Chen had already sent Emperor Vastsea and his men to pin them down.

“Let them come.” Jiang Chen was about to refuse but changed his mind in the end.

The three great sects hadn’t sent their leaders this time, but an elder each instead. These were three crafty persons. Their attitude was exceedingly humble and they offered a grand gesture of greeting at once, kowtowing to the young man. “Young lord Jiang Chen, these unworthy sinners pay their respect.”

Jiang Chen nonchalantly sized them up, secretly surprised. All three of them were emperor realm cultivators, albeit initial stage ones. With their age and cultivation, why were they behaving like meek juniors in front of him?

“Have the three of you must have come to sue for peace? Go back and tell the Great Scarlet emperor that only his own life can atone for the destruction of my sect, the death of my sect’s disciples, and the ruin of my homeland. Tell him to forget about peace!” Jiang Chen didn’t plan on wasting time with them and straightaway rejected their overtures.

“Young lord, you’re mistaken. We don’t represent the Great Scarlet emperor, only our own sects. We sent no soldiers in the invasion of Myriad Domain. Today, young lord Jiang comes for just retribution in accordance with heavens’ laws, so we naturally wouldn’t overreach ourselves and try to stand in your way. Our three sects decided a few days ago to seal off our gates, break all ties with the imperial family, and stay out of this dispute. We merely came to beg the young lord not to spread the flames of war to our innocent sects and to spare the common folk.”

Beneath the veneer of their dignified words lay nothing more than an appeal to spare them, to not vent his anger on their sects. As to the common people, it was a casual remark that cost them nothing.

“You sealed off your gates?” Jiang Chen suddenly smiled. “Are you burying your heads in the sand?”

The three elders froze. “Young lord Jiang Chen, our sects had nothing to do with the invasion. My lord, please show leniency. We have no other wish but to cultivate in seclusion. We wouldn’t dream of biding our time and taking revenge on you in the future.”

“You didn’t participate directly, but you still bear some of the imperial family’s sins. How dare you say you had nothing to do with it?! However, since you want to turn over a new leaf, I can give you a chance. Go back and tell your sect heads to send out all of your elites and attack the palace. This is the only way for you to demonstrate your sincere determination to cut ties with Great Scarlet’s imperial house!”

Chapter 1322: The Three Great Sects

“Attack the palace?” The three elders blinked.

Not in a million years would they have imagined this requirement. Since they’d played no part in the invasion, they’d assumed a show of humility would be sufficient to obtain Jiang Chen’s understanding and preserve their status in Great Scarlet.

If the imperial clan was ousted, the three sects would still be the greatest sects in the region. If the emperor stayed on the throne, he would be too wary of the sects’ power to fall out with them. Either way, the results didn’t matter.

It was quite a good plan. Only, the young lord had shattered their beautiful dream with a few words, leaving them without a single inch to maneuver!

“Is there a problem?” Jiang Chen’s tone grew sharp as an indifferent smile floated on his lips. Trying to be fence-sitters? Dream on!

“Nonono! In fact...”

“This isn’t a negotiation. I’m already showing mercy by giving all of you a chance. I came here to kill and exact revenge. Do you think a cheap trick like sealing off your gates would be enough to keep you safe?”

The three elders couldn’t repress shudders when they sensed the cold menace in Jiang Chen’s tone. How could a young man reportedly not even thirty exude such a terrifying aura?

“Young lord Jiang Chen... You’re picking on the wrong target! We had no part in the invasion, so your enmity with the imperial family has nothing to do with us.”

“That’s right, young lord Jiang Chen. You can ask anyone, they’ll tell you we’re innocent and didn’t send any troops.”

Jiang Chen barked a laugh, but his face remained hard. “Innocent? Aren’t you factions of Great Scarlet? Even if you didn’t participate in the invasion, have you not obtained any indirect benefits? No resources allocated by Great Scarlet? Don’t go thinking you can wash your hands of this simply because you sent no troops! If you had, you wouldn’t even be standing here right now.”

Seeing Jiang Chen's fury, the Jiao brothers also shouted, "The three of you must be blind! Our young lord is already doing you a favor by giving you a way out! It seems you don't treasure his benevolence! You must still be holding some delusions about the imperial family, so you want to sit on the fence without offending either side. Isn't that right?"

"Young lord, no need to waste words with them. Didn't you order Emperor Vastsea to keep an eye on the three great sects? We might as well wipe them out!"

"Agreed. Great Scarlet killed off every sect when they invaded Myriad Domain. They never bothered to ask who did what, so we should copy them, young lord. Why waste your time?"

The three elders paled, but they didn't dare make a squeak. They could only keep their grievances to themselves.

Jiang Chen waved a hand. "I give you half a day. If you don't show me your sincerity in half a day, I'll deem you accomplices of the imperial family!"

His words scared the three elders witless. They could tell Jiang Chen wasn't bluffing randomly. He meant every word he said.

"Young lord Jiang, in that case we'll take our leave and notify our sects."

"Young lord Jiang, please show mercy. We'll convince our sect heads to lay siege to the imperial family, you have our guarantee!"

"Yes! House Yan has oppressed Great Scarlet for too long. They're guilty of untold crimes, it's time to do away with them."

The three sects might be unrivalled in the region, but they were mere babes who'd barely learned to walk in front of Veluriyam Capital. Young men were rash and impulsive. What if the young lord ordered them eradicated in a fit of anger? The prospect was too terrifying for the three elders to contemplate.

The crestfallen three scuttled back to their sects as fast as they could, only to find their territory completely blockaded by Emperor Vastsea's army. People were allowed in, but not out.

"What? He wants us to attack the imperial family?" Sky Eagle's sect head was already frustrated enough by the encirclement. This shocking request added insult to injury.

"Yes, Sectmaster. He said that we can either attack the imperial family and prove our sincerity, or be suppressed."

"How can young lord Jiang be so unreasonable?" the indignant sectmaster complained. "We didn't participate in Myriad Domain's invasion, why is he forcing our hand?"

"Sectmaster, it's too late for that. To be one of the three great sects of Great Scarlet is crime enough. Jiang Chen gave us only half a day. If we don't act by then, he'll order an assault on the three sects."

Sky Eagle's sect head gnashed his teeth. The decision to seal the gates was in fact self-preservation. No matter what happened to the region in the days to come, they could happily wallow in their status of craven cowards. But it seemed young lord Jiang Chen had no intention of letting them do that.

The same news reached the Myriad Buddha Sect and the Scarlet Parting Sect at the same time.

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Surrounded by his subordinates and blockading the three great sects, Emperor Vastsea was in high spirits. He'd spent a lifetime fawning over Emperor Shura and all he had to show for it was a narrow escape from death. He was still a sycophant, but just look at his accomplishments now!

"The young lord is truly merciful. I would've destroyed the three sects myself. Why waste time with them?"

He knew that the young lord planned to make the two greatest Great Scarlet factions clash against each other. But it seemed too much of a bother to him. The force he'd brought was more than enough to flatten the sects.

"Great Emperor, there are people here to see you."

Emperor Vastsea was presently stationed near the Sky Eagle Sect. His war plan had been to raze this sect before moving onto the other two. The ones who'd come were Sky Eagle's sect head and several sect elders.

"The sinners of the Sky Eagle Sect are here to pay respect to the great emperor." Circumstances were stronger than men. In front of Emperor Vastsea, the sect head could only be as well-behaved as he could be.

"Senior, my sect is willing to obey young lord Jiang Chen's command and mount an expedition against the cruel tyrant in the name of righteousness!"

He and his men were no fools. They knew that, put bluntly, it was treason for subjects like them to march against the imperial family. It wasn't a reputation they wanted to shoulder, no matter the pressure they were under. They needed a lofty pretext, and what better pretext could they ask for than to rise against a despot?

The indifferent Emperor Vastsea responded, "Our young lord is magnanimous enough to give you a chance. Remember, I can level your sect whenever I see fit, so don't try to hoodwink the young lord and give it your all. I'll be watching you."

Emperor Vastsea was submissive in Jiang Chen's presence, but as one ranked fourth amongst the seven great emperors of Sacred Peafowl Mountain, he was a mythical existence to a trivial Great Scarlet Mid Region.

"We wouldn't dream of it. Please be at ease, Great Emperor. We'll accomplish our mission no matter what it takes."

The other two sects also followed suit in declaring their intentions. In the face of such formidable pressure, their only choice was to attack the imperial family. Fortunately enough, the imperial house had never treated them all that well, making promises by the dozen but never delivering on them, so the sects didn't feel much guilt.

Each sect dispatched three thousand elites who made haste for the capital at Emperor Vastsea's prompting. But when they neared their destination, their blood ran cold when they took in the ocean of Goldbiter Rats. The almost ten thousand cultivators wouldn't even qualify as a snack to these beasts.

But the most shocking was yet to come. The ocean of rats split apart when the three great sects' army appeared, creating a path for them.

Emperor Vastsea snorted. "The time has come for you three sects to show your worth. Follow me into the city and pay your respects to the young lord."

The Goldbiter Rats had occupied the four gates. They were ready to flood into the capital as soon as Jiang Chen gave the word. The capital would be a paradise for them.

"Young lord, your subordinate Vastsea has brought the three sects to meet with your august self," Emperor Vastsea piled on the flattery in an obsequious greeting.

Jiang Chen glanced at the men from the three sects with a small smile. It seems they sent all of their elites this time.

"These crude ones pay their respects to young lord Jiang Chen," the three sect heads greeted.

Jiang Chen waved a hand. "You came right on time. The imperial family refuses to budge even with their backs against the wall. If you want to prove your sincerity, you can be the vanguard. What do you say?"

"We hear and obey, young lord Jiang Chen!" The three sect heads knew they couldn't refuse.

"Go on then. I await your good news," Jiang Chen responded mildly.

The three sect heads shouted, "All of you, look sharp! The imperial house's corrupt tyranny will plunge the region into the abyss. As Great Scarlet's greatest sects, we can't sit by and do nothing. It's our duty to declare loud and clear that we'll excise the malignant House Yan for the sake of our homeland!"

"Understood!"

Chapter 1323: A Terrifying Formation

Great Scarlet Palace was the most well-defended place in all of Great Scarlet Mid Region. It was better fortified than any of the three great sects.

Under the leadership of their heads, the elites of the three sects led a furious assault upon the palace. Unfortunately, their repeated charges against the outer defensive formation failed to make a scratch. In fact, the attacking party suffered multiple casualties due to the traps within the formation instead.

Time passed as the three sects whaled fruitlessly on the high-level formation. As their offense increased, the defense seemed to match. There was a standstill for a brief time.

The three sects had originally intended to attack half-heartedly rather than use their full strength. But when more and more of their elite members died to the restrictions and traps in the formation, their tempers flared as well.

Regardless of the extremes that they went to in their attacks, the defense held. It was as if there were countless palace walls around them; no matter how much they blasted the structure, they couldn't find a way further in.

The restrictions, gouts of flame, and ice arrows dealt a severe blow to the combined disciples' ranks. The three sect heads convened a temporary meeting when they saw that this was so.

"My fellow daoists, we cannot keep going like this. Our elite disciples won't last much longer with this battle of attrition," the Scarlet Parting Sect's head wailed.

"Ah. House Yan has ruled Great Scarlet for several thousand years now. They've surely extorted countless riches from the people. The formation is backed by untold sums of spirit stones." The Sky Eagle Sect's head was also quite upset.

"Not so," the Myriad Buddha Sect's head shook his head. "I'm sure that the formation is a drain on spirit stones, but its strength does not solely come from raw expenditure. There is something ancient and mysterious about it. I'm guessing that young lord Jiang Chen finds it a rather laborious task to deal with it as well. Why were we sent as the vanguard otherwise? At the end of the day, he's using us as cannon fodder to save his own men."

"Shh, quiet down. It'll be big trouble if they hear what you're saying."

"Hmph, what am I scared of?! But it's not like the Great Scarlet imperial family isn't a shining example of honor either. All the trouble we're in is entirely their fault."

"Yes. If they hadn't stooped to becoming the Eternal Celestial Capital's dogs in the attack on Myriad Domain, none of this would have happened."

The three sect heads were huddled in discussion. Thanks to the deafening din of the battlefield, they were certain that the young lord wouldn't hear anything about their conversation. However, they still did not dare to utter a bad word about Jiang Chen. The youth was sufficiently intimidating enough in their hearts to garner unspoken respect.

"That dog of an emperor... is he trying to take a bunch of people with him? His death is assured without a doubt." Huffing, the head of the Sky Eagle Sect grabbed at thin air. A black saber materialized in his hand. "My friends, it may be time for us to join the fray ourselves."

The wounding and loss of their best disciples was making their hearts bleed.

"Alright, let us work in tandem to break apart this outside formation. We'll rip out that tyrannical emperor out and hand him over to young lord Jiang Chen."

"Quite so. Let's get in there!"

The personal participation of the sect heads won them a round of adulation. The morale boost encouraged the three sects' executives to join the fray using a variety of methods as well.

Weapons flew, light dazzled, and radiance blinded everywhere. The immense redoubling of effort created enormous ripples between formation and attacks. The air in the vicinity shook and trembled continuously.

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Within the imperial palace's inner court, Commander He of the imperial guard stood at the core of the outer formation, observing the crazed offensive from the three sects outside. The commander felt a tinge of wariness when he saw the sect heads join the fight.

A single one of the three great sects couldn't match up to the imperial family. That was an unquestionable truth. The three of them united, however, presented a huge threat to the outer formation given enough time and momentum.

The three sects' concerted strike created a steady stream of minor flaws and holes. Such issues required a continuous supply of spirit stones to repair. The toll on spirit stone stores began to ramp up.

As the force of the attacks intensified, so too did the frequency and size of the damage. The real danger would be when the formation reached a point where spirit stones alone would not be able to sustain the repairs.

Commander He grit his teeth. He squinted at the frenzied sect heads outside, stomping a foot in frustration. "Keep an eye out for me here. I will go report to His Majesty."

"What?" Because the emperor was in the inner courtyard, he was within the inner formation and needed reports from messengers in order to know what was going on outside.

But who would've thought that Commander He would rush back with horrendous news.

"My good Commander He, are you sure that the three great sects are the ones attacking? Not Veluriyam Capital's men in disguise?" Great Scarlet couldn't accept that fact straight off the bat.

"There is no mistake at all, Your Majesty. The three sect heads are energetically leading the charge. They seem to have universally gone mad. We must plan for the worst, sire. I think it's best to send a group of our strongest experts to skirmish with them for a bit. Ideally, we should take one of the three sect heads out for good. How will we scare them off otherwise?" Commander He's face was the very expression of hate.

"I don't think I've ever done wrong by any of them. Why have they gone to the enemy in our time of need? Traitors, cowards, vipers!" Great Scarlet's emperor could barely contain his anger. "Old Guo, take a few royal experts and go with Commander He. Look for a chance to kill them!"

"Yes!"

Old Guo came forward unceremoniously, kneeling to his old master. "Your Majesty, I'm not sure if I will survive this battle. I pray that you keep yourself safe. If I cannot return to serve you, my only wish is for you to keep calm and act in the best interests of the nation." Having said this, he touched his forehead to the ground several times before standing and waving. "We royal experts have ever received a great deal of imperial grace. It's our hour to give up our lives to repay the emperor. Who is willing to come with this old man?"

"I'm willing!"

"I am!"

As the minister of chambers, Old Guo had a plethora of experts under his command. His team was the most intimate, loyal, and powerful group of men who served Great Scarlet's emperor. They'd been brainwashed since birth into their role as the emperor's royal guard. Serving and protecting the emperor was their one and only purpose in life.

Seeing Old Guo and the royal experts leaving so resolutely made even the hardhearted emperor feel a bit guilty. Loyalty was proven only in times of crisis. Adversity was the best flame for testing the devotion of one's retainers.

Aside from Old Guo and Commander He, the rest of his officials were essentially useless. Despite the imperial family's sheltering of so many, a precious few had been able to step forward to give aid.

Great Scarlet's emperor tasted bitterness inside his mouth. He'd always thought that his empire was superbly strong and he himself a capable monarch. That was the reason for his expansionist ambitions, accomplished with an utter disregard for reputation. 'At any cost' – that was his motto!

Therefore, he felt no regret whatsoever for destroying Myriad Domain. Survival of the fittest was the law of nature. Only when he was the prey did he come to realize how cruel that law was.

The once-arrogant Great Scarlet emperor had become a sitting duck. It was his turn to be hunted down at others' leisure.

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Outside the formation, it had already been more than two hours since Jiang Chen began studying it. He suddenly waved a hand at the Jiao brothers. "Jiao Yun, Jiao Feng, come here. I will teach you a secret method to attack the core of this formation. If you manage to do that, the entire thing will crumble."

Formations were remarkably wondrous things. If one could not penetrate their secrets, a breakthrough would be impossible no matter what. With that precondition however, the threat of the formation itself dropped like a rock.

Jiang Chen wasn't as capable with formations as he was with pill dao. Because of this, he didn't initially have an optimal way to break through the formation at the beginning. Only after watching the three sects' attacks did he manage to gradually figure out its mysteries. Now, he'd finally identified where the core was.

Having found it, he considered the remainder a piece of cake. After all, the Jiao brothers were around. He told the brothers a few things of note about the operation, brightening their eyes in the process.

"Go, but do be careful. Don't make foolish mistakes," Jiang Chen instructed.

The Jiao brothers charged fiercely into the outer part of the formation, orders in hand.

Their descent brought the three sects' heads hurriedly forth. "Great emperor seniors, the palace's defensive formation is extremely difficult for us. We're pouring our all into the assault already, so there's no need for concern. Regardless of how strong it is, we'll find a way to..."

Jiao Yun snickered. "There's no need."

“The young lord gave you a chance merely to test your mettle. It seems that the ‘three great sects’ aren’t really all that impressive. He’s not interested in waiting any longer, so that’s why we’re here. You can bring your men inside after we break through the formation.”

“Huh?” The three sect heads glanced at each other, the relief of freedom evident on their faces. They hadn’t staked their entire livelihoods on the fight per se, but they had given their all already.

Unfortunately, the results didn’t match up to their efforts. They’d managed to damage the formation time and time again, but each flaw was repaired without much strain. Were the two great emperors going to break the formation personally? It would save many of their own from becoming casualties.

Chapter 1324: The Frightening Strength of Great Emperors

“Seniors, this formation is very odd indeed. Terrifying attacks come from it from time to time. Please take care.” These words were intended to curry favor with the Jiao brothers, but wandering great emperors such as they hated the most when others doubted their strength.

Harrumphing, Jiao Yun cackled. “You think we brothers are comparable to you wastes of space? Take notes on how we break through the formation.”

Having received the secrets of the formation from Jiang Chen as well as a method to break it, the Jiao brothers didn’t think much of the obstacle ahead of them. They were plenty strong enough to take care of the roadblock. Even without Jiang Chen’s method, there was no question that they had more than enough strength to throw themselves at the formation and brute-force it.

“I’ll take the right, brother. You take the left.” Jiao Yun called out to Jiao Feng.

The duo transformed themselves into streaks of light, darting toward the formation’s flanks. Two masses of burning light, akin to comets, disappeared into the depths of the formation.

Grabbing at the air, Jiao Yun materialized an enormous golden hammer in his hand. He waved the round-headed weapon around like it was a toy. As he turned the handle over in his palm, the weapon glowed with a vivid radiance. It caught the eye like a drift of luminous clouds, marvelous and divine.

“Out of my way!”

The glowing hammer crashed into a certain spot in the empty space with mountainous might.

At the same time, Jiao Feng brandished a similarly blossoming broadsword at another gap in space. The steel carried a light that was almost celestial in nature. He struck with heavenly strength.

“Open up!”

The two brothers guided hammer and sword into the same direction. One was as ferocious as a tiger, the other vigorous as a dragon.

Boom!

The weapons collided upon an invisible, gigantic wall. The impact resounded through the sphere.

In the next moment, reality began to tremble violently. The fabric of space seemed on the verge of collapsing. A powerful turbulence swept about aimlessly, having found an outlet of spreading release.

The wind rampaged and howled. Remnants of runes hung in the air, as if rent from a tapestry. They scattered downwards before vanishing.

The runes belonged to the outer formation. The two brothers' robust destruction of the formation's core had demolished the structure entirely. Because of this, the formation was uprooted. Without the foundation, the formation collapsed instantly. The tadpole-like runes dimmed unto nothingness in great swathes.

When the spatial chaos cleared, everyone from the three sects outside the formation was amazed. From the sect heads to the ordinary disciples, everyone watched with mouth agape.

Was this the power of great emperor seniors?

The cultivators in Great Scarlet had heard of great emperor exploits before, but none of them had actually seen such an expert use a powerful method in person.

That was true even with these three sect heads. They'd met great emperors in person before, but they hadn't had the chance to see any in action. They were at a loss for words for very a long time.

"Is an attack from a great emperor truly this powerful?" The three sect heads traded uneasy glances, an indescribable fear creeping into their hearts.

All three men were emperor realm cultivators. Though they didn't seem far from great emperor, the small gap represented the insurmountable difference of a lifetime. Seeing great emperors in action was enough for them to realize that the discrepancy between their two realms was far greater than they'd thought.

Those within the outer formations were even more astonished. Old Guo and Commander He had just been about to launch a sortie against the three sect heads outside when the formations fell.

The offensive formation was attacked just as they were about to charge. They hadn't thought much of it, given the power behind the formation, but the results proved them dreadfully wrong.

The royal experts stood a short distance in from the border of the formation, completely revealed to the Jiao brothers' line of sight. It was an odd and hilarious sight.

The odd part was the discovery that the distance between the two parties was so short. The hilarious part was that all of the martial experts were dumbstruck despite their prowess.

"What are you three sects waiting for? The formation is broken. It's time for you to fight!" Jiao Yun shouted.

The three sect heads snapped out of their reverie. They'd fought before solely out of compulsion from Jiang Chen. Now, the hatred from suffering casualties at the imperial family's hands was a much stronger motivator.

"Disciples of the three sects, listen up! Follow us in when the order is given. Let us slay the faithless emperor and restore justice to Great Scarlet! The tumor of House Yan must be removed!"

"Remove House Yan from Great Scarlet Mid Region! We must brighten the skies of our region once more!"

“House Yan is the puppet of the Eternal Celestial Capital. Utter fools, every last one of them! They were the criminals responsible for bringing such catastrophe upon Great Scarlet. Our troubles will persist if the house is allowed to live!”

The three sects had thought of these battle-cries long before. These words weren’t intended for the imperial family, but rather Great Scarlet’s populace. They didn’t want to be branded as traitors after toppling the imperial family. Therefore, they had to raise reasonably upright banners to the public.

Commander He’s eyes bulged. He brandished the weapon in his hand. “Brave warriors, His Majesty has fed us for many, many years. Today is the day to repay his kindness and defend our nation. Kill these traitors!” Confident in his own expertise, the commander led the charge toward the three sect heads. His cultivation was more than a match for any of the trio.

Old Guo and the royal experts shadowed them, keeping themselves in the proximity of the commander’s spearhead to reinforce the charge. The easiest way to rout an army was to take out its generals.

The three sects were led by their three heads. Commander He and Old Guo knew exactly how strong those specific three men were. The commander and the minister had a slight edge over any individual man out of those three.

Though a brawl like this usually went by slightly different rules, they felt that the imperial family had a clear advantage nevertheless. The royal guards were all well-trained, disciplined troops. They were professional soldiers, loyal to the emperor unto death.

Sect experts were strong to be sure, but they lacked the same kind of military expertise. In a large-scale chaotic battle such as this, it put them at a disadvantage.

“Commander He, keep close tabs on the three sect heads. We must take out their leaders first,” Old Guo reminded.

Commander He growled fiercely, his eyes radiating a killing aura. “Anyone who kills one of the three sect heads will be rewarded with thirty million spirit stones!”

The heads of the three sect heads were worth more than thirty million for sure. Still, the dangled prize was enough to incentivize the royal guards and experts.

The two swathes of men rammed into each other in pitched battle.

The airborne Jiao brothers crowed from above, trading a meaningful glance. They raised their weapons once more. The round-headed hammer fell like a trailing meteor, drawing a glittering path behind it. It smashed toward Commander He who was in the lead.

“Be careful, Commander He!”

This sudden attack from above panicked the commander. It was a testament to the man’s resolve that he quickly realized he wasn’t going to be able to evade the attack and so raised his blade to block it. He swiped several streaks of light as a barrier.

“Hmph, a rash attempt to stop the inevitable.” Jiao Yun harrumphed, diving down like an arrow. His wraithlike form shot into the commander’s close vicinity. With a single grab, he found the other man’s chest.

“Piss off!” Commander He was as ignorant as a young ox. He swept his blade toward Jiao Yun.

Steel clashed against hammer, creating a shower of blinding sparks. It was like he’d slashed against solid rock. The other weapon would not budge. In the next instant, the blade shattered into a thousand pieces.

His hilt clattered to the ground. An unarmed Commander He was rendered helpless before Jiao Yun.

“Too weak.” Jiao Yun smiled faintly, raising his hand in a casual swatting motion.

Commander He’s head went flying from its former perch upon his neck. Like ripened fruit falling from a branch, so too did his head.

A ker-chunk sound was all it took to make the arrogant commander was no more.

All of this took place in the blink of an eye.

Both belligerent parties felt their hairs stand on end. Commander He was one of the top ten experts in the Great Scarlet Empire. How had he lost his head so easily?

“Commander, sir!” The royal guards under his command felt their hearts burst in pain. Their eyes were bloodshot and their lungs burned.

“Avenge the commander!”

“He’s too strong. Let’s attack him all at once and kill him together!”

“Come on, let’s kill him!”

The several thousand royal guards were all proficient cultivators. Their grief at seeing Commander He’s death ignited their fighting and killing spirit.

Jiao Yun’s eyes were filled with scorn. He didn’t bother with a serious response. An mighty backswing brought a mountain of pressure down upon the throng of guards. A smash from the hammer could shatter space itself. These weakling cultivators couldn’t survive being clipped by even the edge of such an attack!

Thump. Within a twenty-meter radius of wherever the hammer swept, every royal guard was smashed to smithereens by the weapon’s radiance. Blood and gore flew everywhere. They didn’t have time to so much as scream before the hundred-odd cultivators at the front perished. No corpse was left intact.

“Leave some for me, brother!” Jiao Feng was not to be outdone. He swooped down as well, pouncing toward Old Guo’s direction. His eyes were keen enough to tell him that the old man was the other leader.

Chapter 1325: Inside And Outside the Formations

Jiao Feng's strength wasn't any lower than Jiao Yun's, so he was keen for a piece of action when he saw his brother slaughter to a heart's content.

A formidable aura suddenly assaulted Old Guo, locking him tightly in place.

Apart from House Yan's forefather, no other imperial expert would dare say they could be assured of victory against Old Guo. In fact, he might be a little stronger than both Commander He and the emperor. But even so, the minister's entire body was spasming uncontrollably like a rabbit caught in a hunter's trap.

The formidable aura of a great emperor imprisoned him like an invisible cage, leaving him powerless to resist. He couldn't break free no matter how hard he tried.

"Jiao Feng, keep this old man alive!" Jiang Chen suddenly transmitted from far away.

Old Guo's head was moments away from being squeezed into paste, but Jiao Feng immediately stopped at Jiang Chen's order. He lifted Old Guo like an eagle grasping a chick.

At Jiang Chen's side, Emperor Vastsea rubbed his hands together, eagerness written all over his face.

"Young lord, let this subordinate charge in and kill them all. What do you say?" He was a little jealous of the Jiao brothers showing off their might. He was confident neither of the two could match him in strength, so he wanted to use this opportunity and score some merit before the young lord.

"Don't be anxious." Jiang Chen surveyed the situation with keen eyes, his mind alert.

How many wars between planes had he seen in his previous life? No one could question his level of discernment. Judging by the clear layering of the palace's defense formations, he could see they weren't as weak as he'd imagined. Hence, he was in no hurry to show his hand.

Emperor Vastsea had trouble holding back his impatience, but since Jiang Chen told him not to be anxious, he dared not be rash.

"Young lord, I've brought the old man. How do you want to deal with him?" Jiao Feng dragged Old Guo in front of Jiang Chen, a wide grin eating his face.

Despair flashed through the minister's face. He shook his head with helplessness and closed his eyes to wait for death.

"Old man, why are you playing dead? Do you think it will protect you from the young lord?" Jiao Feng shouted.

Old Guo sighed dejectedly. "The victor is king. Now that I've fallen into your hands, what's there for me to say? Simply keep in mind that while you might extinguish Great Scarlet's imperial family today, someone stronger than you will extinguish your Veluriyam Capital in the future. The heavens are fair, they will deliver just retribution for your sins."

"Tsk tsk, you have quite a tough mouth on you, old dog!" Jiao Feng sent a small amount of force inside Old Guo's body, making the minister feel the pain of a million bugs gnawing at him. Old Guo couldn't help but groan with pain.

“Jiao Feng, don’t bother. There’s no need to torture him,” Jiang Chen calmly said.

Jiao Feng gave an uncanny chortle. “Hehe, young lord, he’s one of those self-conceited types who think they can look down on others just because they’ve lived longer. He’ll keep on babbling if we don’t smack him some.”

Old Guo shouted in pain. “Kill me if you must. Don’t think for an instant you’ll make me kneel or beg for mercy!”

Jiang Chen applauded with a smile. “Not bad. Who knew I’d find someone with a backbone in Great Scarlet? I thought everyone in your empire was a coward who can’t face his responsibilities, just like your emperor. Old man, you have some mettle.”

Old Guo snorted.

“What was it you said earlier? The heavens will deliver just retribution? Brilliant words. Sadly, you’re a frog in a well and know nothing about the laws of the heavens.” Jiang Chen’s tone was cool and detached. “So-called retribution is punishment against those who have sinned. Destroying Myriad Domain, slaughtering countless cultivators, ruining their legacies... all those are things that go against the heavenly principles. Just retribution is what’s happening right now to your empire. This campaign of mine is a righteous one to exact revenge, eliminate evil, and administer justice. Everything is in accordance with the ways of the heavens. Not only I won’t incur their wrath, they will even bless my undertaking!”

On Divine Abyss Continent, no one was more qualified to remark on the heavens than Jiang Chen.

“So start talking, what trump cards are your emperor hiding?” the young lord calmly asked.

Old Guo laughed like a madman. “Jiang, you’re too naive. Do you think I’d be afraid of you at a time like this? Want to pry information from this old man’s mouth? Keep dreaming!”

Jiang Chen couldn’t help but laugh when he saw the old man’s earnest appearance. He threw a leisurely glance at the palace, a lazy smile on his lips. “Old man, do you think I’m powerless against this insignificant imperial palace of yours?”

Old Guo stayed silent as if he hadn’t heard anything, his face unyielding, his eyes tightly shut.

“Jiao Feng, pass on my command. Have Emperor Peerless make haste and come here. Emperor Coiling Dragon is to personally handle the borders in his stead.”

“Understood.” Jiao Feng immediately left to handle the business.

Hearing the two words “Emperor Peerless,” Old Guo’s hunched body shuddered in spite of himself. He knew that Emperor Peerless, one of the six titans among wandering cultivators, was a formidable cultivator in his own right.

“Young lord, this old man’s temperament is like a stone in a latrine, hard and stinky. Why don’t we just kill him?” Emperor Vastsea suggested.

“There’s no rush.” Jiang Chen chuckled leisurely. “This old man must be one of the emperor’s confidantes. I’ll give him an opportunity to witness firsthand how insignificant their formations are in front of me.”

“Hehe, how could these trivial Great Scarlet formations be an obstacle for a wise formation master like the young lord? Is Great Scarlet relying on these formations to safeguard their miserable lives? What wishful thinking!” Emperor Vastsea laughed out loud. “A mere formation can never shoulder the fate of an empire!”

Most of the experts Commander He and Old Guo had brought out of the palace had already fallen to the siege and Jiao Yun’s rampage. Surrounded on all sides, the surviving force was in a dire predicament, their demise imminent.

Jiao Yun was staying out of the fight now and had his hands together behind his back. As a great emperor, it was beneath his dignity to participate in a chaotic melee like this.

The shrieks of pain gradually receded. Troops from the three sects gnawed away at the remaining pockets of resistance, wiping them almost to the last.

Inside the palace, the court was caught up in utter chaos. A simple slap had sent Commander He’s head flying. Old Guo couldn’t withstand a single bout and was now captured. One blow had been all it took to break the outer formation. Most of the officials were scared stiff.

“Your Majesty, Commander He died in combat while Old Guo has fallen into enemy hands. Your Majesty, the imperial guards and palace experts we sent out have been almost entirely exterminated by the three sects!”

“Your Majesty, the enemy is on the verge of attacking the inner formation. Please issue your orders!”

“Your Majesty...”

The emperor swayed on his feet at the barrage of bad news. Both Commander He and Old Guo were amongst the most powerful cultivators in the empire, but they’d stood no chance whatsoever against the Veluriyam powerhouses. Such a wide disparity frightened the emperor greatly.

He hurried to the rear yard and stopped in front of a door. “Forefather, Commander He and Old Guo have been killed in combat and the outer formation is broken. The enemy is unstoppable!”

The forefather’s voice filtered through from the secret chamber. “Keep your composure! I’m almost done with my preparations. I’ve already taken a look at Jiang Chen. His cultivation might be high, but it’s only emperor realm. The genuine threat isn’t that kid, but the great emperors at his side.”

The forefather’s voice was cold. “I must make certain I can capture him before acting. Any failure would spell doom for the Great Scarlet Empire and House Yan.”

The emperor was on tenterhooks, a cat on a hot tin roof. The outer formation had crumpled easily like a sheet of paper. How long could the inner formation resist? Could it really withstand the enemy’s assault? These questions were too frightening for the emperor to contemplate.

“What are you panicking about? I really wonder how you’ve stayed on the imperial throne for so long given how easily you lose your composure.” The forefather’s tone carried a hint of dissatisfaction.

“Yes.” The emperor didn’t dare say anything. The forefather was the only remaining hope.

Just then, the stone doors to the secret chamber opened. The forefather walked outside.

“Come with me, we’ll go to the edge of the formation and take a look at how the battle is going.” Worthy of a man who’d accumulated sharp wisdom throughout his long years, the forefather’s impassive face was a picture of serenity. It was impossible to guess from his expression the imminent peril they were under.

Standing close to the formation’s border, the ancestor gazed at the situation at large. It was one of the advantages of the formation. One could observe what happened outside, while those on the outside couldn’t distinguish the circumstances inside. The emperor stood beside his senior, looking like a stooge.

“Forefather, these three sects are turncoats. The food they ate, the resources they used, everything came from us. How dare they help outsiders against the imperial family!” the emperor complained, his teeth clenched with anger.

“Hmph, most sects are ungrateful and disloyal things, they can’t be relied on. It’s one of the reasons that we of House Yan have always looked to consolidate our own power. Strength is the only thing that matters in this world.” The forefather quietly snorted.

“Forefather, these two men over there are incredibly strong. When the outer formation fell, Commander He and Old Guo died in their hands.”

“Hmph, the Jiao brothers.” The elder sneered. “This Jiang Chen is quite something. What trick did he use that wandering great emperors like the Jiao brothers and Mo Wushuang show such unfaltering obedience?”

“The enemy brought a bunch of great emperors, isn’t that bad for us?” It seemed near impossible to ambush Jiang Chen with so many masters present.

“Hmph, what are you worried for? I have my own plans. The only thing you need to worry about is how to delay these people. Leave the rest to me.”

The emperor’s face burned hot at the admonishment, yet he didn’t dare show any temper in front of the forefather.

“Go, increase the inner formation to its highest level,” the old man ordered.

“Understood.” The emperor could only obey.

“Other than that, did you find anything good when you invaded Myriad Domain? Maybe keepsakes? Keepsakes belonging to the dead would be best. Use them to provoke that Jiang Chen and disturb his mentality,” the ancestor ordered again.

Chapter 1326: The Four Great Emperors Assembled

“Young lord, why do we need to wait for Emperor Peerless?” Outside the palace, Emperor Vastsea fidgeted left and right, eager as he was to lead his elites and raid the imperial clan.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. “What do you think about this formation?”

“Your subordinate thinks that with the strength of us great emperors, sheer force will be enough even if there are some gimmicks to it. Wouldn’t that be easier and more satisfying?”

Jiang Chen responded with a small smile, “If that’s what you think, then the imperial clan will probably be delighted. This formation is special, you see. Even great emperors might be trapped if they try to force it open. It won’t be lethal, but it’d still be dangerous.”

“Oh?” Emperor Vastsea was a tad skeptical. Could a trivial region have such a mighty formation? As a long exalted powerhouse in Veluriyam, even an Upper Eight Regions first rank sect wasn’t much to him, to say nothing of the trivial Great Scarlet.

“Young master, is this formation really so peculiar?” Vastsea couldn’t help asking again as he carefully studied the design.

“I’m certain it’s an inheritance from ancient times. The imperial palace itself must also have been rebuilt on top of ancient ruins, so its layout enhances the formation. Its effect isn’t limited to simple confusion, it can also trap and kill. This is an ancient composite formation of remarkable power. If you make careless use of brute force, there might really be something hidden in its depths to make you great emperors suffer.”

Jiang Chen might not fear Great Scarlet’s cultivators, but he dared not look down on its ancient legacies. Ancient formations, ancient methods, and anything involving the ancient times was to be taken seriously, because things had been quite different during the ancient era.

Upper Eight Regions might not have been mankind’s core area back then, and Great Scarlet might not have been a backwater region. And even if Great Scarlet had been a comparatively remote area, inheritances from that era were strong enough to be a menace for current experts.

Vastsea’s contempt vanished somewhat when he heard Jiang Chen’s words. The young lord already inspired deep veneration in Vastsea, but that veneration was nowadays combined with great trust in his judgment.

Even Emperor Shura had been forced to yield in front of young lord Jiang Chen. It was impossible for Vastsea not to have faith in someone like this.

The outer formation’s battle finally abated an hour later. With their superiority in troops, the three sects slaughtered the last of the imperial guards and palace experts.

“Young lord, everything’s settled here. Should we storm the palace ourselves now, or should the three sects continue to be the vanguard?” Jiao Yun came back to report, the three sects’ sect heads in tow.

Pained expressions appeared on the three sectmasters’ faces when they heard Jiao Yun. It wasn’t that their sects had suffered disastrous losses, but they were exhausted from the fighting and had indeed lost quite a few men. If they continued as the vanguard, it wasn’t out of the question that they might be annihilated during the assault against the inner palace’s formation.

“Heh, the arduous fighting has made the three sects weary. To have them charge the formation now would be no better than sending them to their own death.” Jiang Chen glanced at the three sect heads with a smile. “Don’t worry, I’ve seen your sincerity.”

The three leaders were comforted by Jiang Chen's words. A strange idea even flashed through their minds, that this young lord wasn't as frightening and unreasonable as they'd imagined. At the very least, he was showing some consideration for them instead of forcing them to their demise.

"Take a breather. I'm still counting on your sects to handle the mopping up after we break the inner formation."

The sect heads nodded, beaming with delight. The breaking of the formation was the part they dreaded, not the killing. A fight pitting man against man, the glint of blades and the shadows of swords, the cutting of flesh and the spraying of blood, those were things they could see.

What they feared were formations. They had no experience dealing with formations and could only batter with brute force, a method that was both ineffective and certain to require a heavy cost in lives. Hence, all three of them sighed in relief when they heard they would only be required for the mop up.

The imperial clan was an arrow at the end of its flight. As long as the formation broke, the combined force from the three sects was certain to wipe it out.

A ripple suddenly appeared in the void inside the formation at this moment.

Someone shouted. "Jiang Chen, you little lowlife from the Regal Pill Palace! I have no idea what underhanded tricks you used to latch onto Veluriyam. But no matter what airs you put on, you're nothing more than a stray dog, so why do you come and bark at our doors?" The voice was filled with exaggerated derision.

Jiang Chen frowned while Vastsea and the Jiao brothers seethed with anger.

"Young lord, these scum have no manners. Let this subordinate of yours lead a group of elites and storm them. I'll cut off that dog emperor's head!" Emperor Vastsea once again urged Jiang Chen to battle.

"Young lord, I'll go!" Jiao Yun was even more direct.

"Hmph, do they think they can anger this young lord with these clumsy methods?" Jiang Chen smiled with indifference. "The more they act like this, the firmer my determination to induce a bloodbath." His tone was impassive, but a foreboding, murderous aura exuded from his entire being.

"Jiang Chen you little whelp! Take a good look, these are things we looted from the Regal Pill Palace. We robbed this from the Regal Pill cultivators we killed. Aren't you quite the wild thing? Then why don't you keep at it? Come here and take those things back if you dare!"

"Also, your Regal Pill Palace had quite a few female disciples. Hehehe, we turned all of them into slaves for our imperial family. I can't begin to describe how amazing it feels to enjoy them... Hahaha, I wonder if there's a relative of yours among them?"

There was unexpectedly more than one voice provoking Jiang Chen. Their tone was incomparably vulgar and impertinent, like street gangsters hurling abuse at each other.

The Regal Pill Survivors couldn't endure it any longer. Fists were clenched, eyes glowering with anger.

Jiang Chen had no relatives in the Regal Pill Palace, but these survivors did. For that reason, the provocation didn't anger the young lord, but it fanned the rage of those survivors as they recalled their past grief.

"Senior brother Jiang Chen, these bastards are truly lawless. What are we waiting for? Let's charge in and capture all of them, then crush them into a thousand pieces!"

"Right, these scum are worse than pigs. Our anger can't be appeased if we don't rip them to pieces!"

"Senior brother, just give the order! We'll have no regrets even if we die in battle!"

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. "The one they're provoking is me. I'm not angry at all, so why are you all getting worked up?"

Palace Head Dan Chi added, "Shut your mouth, all of you. Your senior brother has always acted prudently. He knows what to do, why are you so anxious?"

All sorts of provocation sounded from inside the formation in an unending stream, the voices using every trick in the book.

Old Guo also sneered. "It turns out the young lord Zhen whose prestige shakes the entire world is nothing more than a coward without balls!"

Jiang Chen glanced at the old man with a contemptuous smile. "Are men of the imperial clan all so idiotic?"

Two figures then quickly approached from the rear at this time. Jiao Feng had finally arrived with Mo Wushuang.

"Young lord, am I late to the party?" Emperor Peerless asked.

"Not at all." Jiang Chen smiled and pointed at the formation. "You four great emperors, take a look at this formation. It can't appear any more ordinary, but it's been crafted according to techniques inherited from ancient times. Drawing support from the local terrain, this combination of heavenly order, earthly layout, and human formation is a rare sight.

"The four of you must attack from all four directions. You need to coordinate your efforts and disrupt the formation's internal cohesion together. To break it open, you must break all four of its gates. Otherwise, breaking one gate, two gates, or even three gates will be futile, because this formation has an incomparable ability to regenerate itself. That's already brilliant in itself, but it becomes astonishing and when combined with the terrain.

"Emperor Peerless, take some elites and raid the eastern side.

"Emperor Vastsea, take some men and batter the formation from the west.

"Jiao Yun and Jiao Feng, you're in charge of the north and the south.

"I'll coordinate the four of you. Listen to my orders, I'll communicate with you through my consciousness. All of you must obey my words without hesitation and act in tandem. There are four

gates inside this formation linked with each other. The only way to break through is to destroy all four gates at the same time and prevent them from reinforcing each other.”

Jiang Chen wasn't being an alarmist.

He hadn't thought much of the formation at first, but he became more apprehensive the longer he studied it. He didn't have the slightest doubt that a single great emperor blindly charging in would more likely than not be trapped inside. Without special means of survival, they might even perish inside.

When Old Guo heard Jiang Chen's plan, his indifferent face instantly became deathly pale. He naturally knew where the crux of the palace's inner formation lay. Judging from Jiang Chen's method to cope with it, it seemed the young lord had entirely seen through its core as well. It meant the palace's final barrier was in grave danger.

Old Guo panicked. If not for his whole body being restricted, he would already have shouted at the top of his lungs and warned the men inside the palace to be careful and to make contingency plans. Unfortunately for him, he was restricted and powerless to disclose any information.

“These four sub-formations follow the principles of water, fire, wind, and lightning. All of you need to be careful. Don't let your focus waver for even a second,” Jiang Chen admonished again.

“Understood.” The four great emperors grew grave when they heard Jiang Chen's repeated warnings.

“Brother Dragon, provide support for me from the shadows. Don't reveal yourself, act as my eyes and ears. Does that sound good?” Jiang Chen transmitted silently to Long Xiaoxuan.

“Hmph. Kid, you're pulling all the stops for a trivial Great Scarlet. If you'd taken all the great emperors in Veluriyam with you, you could have spared yourself the effort and just rolled right over them,” Long Xiaoxuan lazily mocked.

“Haha, Brother Long, who will defend Veluriyam if every great emperor came here? Just get ready, we're breaking the formation soon!”

In fact, Jiang Chen had no desire to drag things out. He wanted to finish things as soon as possible. But he had to exert every last precaution when facing this formation of surprising might.

Chapter 1327: Ambush From the Forefather

All four of the great emperors were battle-hardened veterans. With Jiang Chen's orders, they led their elites to each of their assigned positions outside the formation. The young lord remained in the center to oversee the affair.

“Old Brother Mo, attack the eastern gate first. Beware of lightning strikes.

“Vastsea, take the western gate. Watch out for chaotic astral winds!

“Jiao Yun, Jiao Feng, ready yourselves to attack the north and south gates at any time. Listen for my command, and note well that these two gates conceal threats of water and fire.”

With a thunderous rumble, Emperor Peerless led the attack. He pushed both fists in a single stretching motion, sending two aureate peaks towards the eastern gate.

The emperor kept Jiang Chen's reminder about the lightning strikes at the forefront of his mind. That was why he had elected to forgo metallic weaponry, choosing to attack great emperor level boxing auras instead.

Emperor Vastsea was determined not to be outdone. This was the first time he had a chance to do anything for Jiang Chen! He poured a hundred twenty percent into the effort and rained a storm of blows upon the western gate.

The Jiao brothers followed suit at the northern and southern gates.

The palace's inner courtyard was plunged into hysterics. The agitations from the attacks on the formation made those inside feel like they were on a vessel in a turbulent sea. The possibility of capsizing at any moment was panicking everyone.

They knew that the inner formation was very powerful, but the posturing behind the attacks seemed even more impressive. No one was sure that the formation would hold against such phenomenal blows.

"Forefather, have... have they seen through the secrets of our formation? How can they know that they're supposed to attack all four gates at once? Is that Jiang Chen kid really some ridiculous formation master?" Great Scarlet's emperor felt his heart twist in a knot. His face was bloodless and pale.

"Hmph, so what if he has? The formation will hold for a while yet! Take over operating the formation and try to draw their attentions this way. I'll look for an opportunity to attack that Jiang Chen kid. I'll take him out in a single swing!" House Yan's forefather was grim.

"Be careful, forefather." The family's forefather was the emperor's only bulwark. He didn't want anything to happen to his last bastion of defense.

"Hmph! Since we're at this point already, we can only charge forward the face of adversity. This is our only option, regardless of how slim the chance. I think we have a fifty percent chance of coming out of this alive anyways." The forefather was confident.

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Outside the palace, Jiang Chen oversaw the four battling great emperors from a high vantage point. He marveled at the remarkability of the inner palace's formation. Despite a concerted strike from four great emperors and his superb leadership, destroying the formation still proved difficult.

As more and more attacks pounded into the formation, so too did more and more of its hidden features come to light.

Lightning crackled, thunder rumbled, and electricity snaked across the firmament.

An ocean of flames roiled, fiery tongues licking the sky.

A crashing wave threatened to swallow up all in its wake.

A roaring tempest sent currents of turbid air in every direction.

The four-attribute formation would be significantly more fearsome without the four great emperors suppressing its strength from all four directions.

The great emperors in question respected Jiang Chen all the more for his foresight. They'd been a bit confused about the young lord's caution a few moments prior, but personal experience now informed them of the formation's hidden potency. They realized that the young lord's eye was keener than theirs after all.

If they'd charged headlong into the formation and triggered its restrictions, they would've suffered rather painful injuries – if not outright death.

“The formation is strong, but it costs a lot of spirit stones to maintain. Great Scarlet doesn't have stones that are particularly pure, which is an intrinsic flaw they cannot overcome. They won't be able to utilize the formation's power to its fullest. Make sure to put your own safety first. We will break the formation apart bit by bit!”

Jiang Chen uttered a reminder to the great emperors. He didn't want them to act in haste. As he concentrated on the battle, his Psychic's Head triggered an uncomfortable notion. In the next moment, he felt a piercing pain in the ring seal located in the ocean of his consciousness. Was it warning him of something?

“Hmm?” Though Jiang Chen was still curious about what the restriction actually was, he always trusted the seal's premonitions implicitly. There was always something afoot when he received one.

The Great Scarlet capital was already under his control. The imperial family was presenting some futile resistance still, but Jiang Chen believed that they had no chance of escaping. The entire capital had been surrounded by Goldbiter Rats. Everything was proceeding as he had expected. So why then, had he received a warning?

His considerations didn't delay his physical actions. He grabbed at his Crimson Heavens formation disk without hesitation, concealing himself within an Eight Trigram Boulder Formation. Simultaneously, he opened up his senses and probed for any slight differences in the fabric of space.

He felt a faint current beneath him, almost imperceptibly so.

“Who's there?” Jiang Chen glared downward, golden rays blasting out of his Evil Golden Eye. The aureate light expanded to fill the surrounding place, revealing all concealed objects and persons.

“Hehehe, lie down, kid!” There was a snicker from the middle of nothingness. A person tunneled out from a patch of thin air immediately beneath Jiang Chen, as if he had torn through space to get there.

It was a white-haired man with an impressive presence. His outstretched, wrinkled palm projected an enormous version of itself in a grasping motion toward Jiang Chen. The momentum behind it was as stupefying as a thunderclap.

“A great emperor domain?” A bit shocked, Jiang Chen called upon his Eight Trigram Boulder Formation for aid.

Boom!

Everything happened in only an instant. If Jiang Chen had been half a second slower, the assailant would've grasped a hole in the middle of his chest. As the grasp clutched towards the young man, the formation rumbled into motion.

Ker-chunk!

A wave of cracking sounded all around the formation. Rifts appeared in its runes, created by the forcefulness of the hand alone. Thankfully, the latter was stopped in its tracks in the process. The hand clattered to a halt just one yard away from Jiang Chen. The assailant was none other than House Yan's forefather!

He had borrowed the wind and lightning of the formation to conceal himself and sneak out. The four great emperors hadn't detected his presence because of this. Drifting here on the chaotic currents of the formation, he had hidden himself like a gust between the spaces. His sole objective was to land a lethal blow upon Jiang Chen.

As he delivered his attack, the old man thought that he had already succeeded. Alas, he had underestimated Jiang Chen's alertness and reflexes in the end. The Eight Trigram Boulder Formation had managed to block his grasp.

The forefather was stunned, but knew that he couldn't lose the opportunity by delaying. He pushed forward aggressively, pouncing upon Jiang Chen like a huge eagle. A sizable pair of shears appeared in his hands.

Like an enormous, bestial maw, the shears carried rows of jagged teeth upon its edges. It swept through space toward the young lord's position. The shears moved with frightening speed and ferocity. They could seemingly cut up even a mountain that stood in their way.

But how would Jiang Chen be hit by the second attack after neutralizing the first? He instantly dove into the Kungpeng Meteoric Escape, disappearing from his original location.

As he did so, he tossed something into the air. It turned into a stream of golden light, expanding almost instantaneously. It was his magnetic golden mountain!

"Down with you!" Though Jiang Chen hadn't tapped into all the powers of his magnetic golden mountain, he could use it to good effect to hinder the old man's attack.

Deep down, Jiang Chen was astounded. He hadn't thought that Great Scarlet would have a great emperor in his wildest dreams.

Even the three sect heads hadn't heard of such a thing.

However, there was no reason for him to panic. This expert of the imperial family was plenty strong, but not nearly to the same degree that Emperor Shura had been. Having successfully dealt with the latter, Jiang Chen wasn't scared at all of the former.

The mountain's crushing weight bore down furiously upon the old man, who was glaring daggers at it. He swept his sleeves at the mountain in an attempt to swat it aside, foregoing everything to propel himself closer to his young target.

Unfortunately, he found that a strange force had slowed his sweep. In the next moment, currents of invisible, turbid magnetic forces made his entire person sluggish.

"Hmm? What the hell is this?" The old man was astonished. Finally, he understood why such a young kid had been able to become Veluriyam Capital's young lord. That someone of his age had been able to

evade a great emperor expert's repeated attacks without breaking a sweat... this was truly appalling news!

"I must kill that kid. House Yan faces certain destruction with him around!" The forefather became even more determined to kill Jiang Chen after his shock.

Not that he had much chance of succeeding; his initial strike had had the highest likelihood of success. It was all downhill from there.

The old man twisted free of the magnetic golden mountain's restrictions, only to be met with a giant claw from space. Five finger-talons, sharp as knives, shot toward the top half of his head.

A true dragon was behind the claw!

House Yan's forefather felt his blood run cold.

Emperor Peerless was the first to react. He abandoned the formation, leaping to the young lord's aid.

"I am here, young lord."

Emperor Vastsea instantly dropped everything to arrive at Jiang Chen's side as well.

"Excellent timing," Jiang Chen smiled coolly. "Capture this old man. If you can't, kill him on the spot!"

Emperor Peerless looked meaningfully toward Emperor Vastsea. With a tacit understanding between the two, they both activated their great emperor domains, locking down the nearby space.

The Jiao brothers blocked the two remaining directions, taking the front and rear respectively. Their own great emperor domains were deployed to the maximum as well. The four great emperors acting in unison created a harmonizing effect between their domains. The amazing presence exerted obstructed any possibility of escape for House Yan's forefather.

Chapter 1328: Fall of the Forefather

House Yan's forefather was almost a legendary character in Great Scarlet Mid Region. None of the region's three great sects knew that he was still living. However, his resources were still limited by the scope of his location. He'd managed to break through to great emperor, but his level was mediocre. He was inferior to any one of the Jiao brothers, which put him far below Mo Wushuang.

Being surrounded by four great emperors put him in a state of alarm. He accelerated as much as possible in order to make an attempt at a full-speed escape. He knew intimately the danger that he was currently in. He wasn't sure if he could get out of here alive, much less kill Jiang Chen.

As a decisive man, the forefather was single minded in his pursuits. There was no need to consider anything aside from his current plan of fleeing.

He drew his fingers across empty space, materializing a powerful talisman that illuminated its surroundings like a golden sun. In the blink of an eye, the forefather was swallowed up by the sun's rays, turning himself into a fleeing streak of light.

"Hmph!" Emperor Peerless seemed to have known about the forefather's plans beforehand. He rubbed his hands together, creating two enormous palms that crushed inward like two icebergs.

Emperor Vastsea sniggered. "Leaving so soon? I don't think so!"

The emperor raised both arms, sending wave-like ripples into space. The beautiful ripples created a watery veil that stretched around several dozen yards of surrounding space, enclosing the area within.

Jiang Chen was astonished at Emperor Vastsea's ability. The young man had had the wrong impression of the emperor given the penchant for flattery and a weak spine, but the man was actually quite strong.

The Jiao brothers traded a look with similar sentiments. They hadn't thought much of Emperor Vastsea either. But from the looks of this, the great emperor's prowess was definitely above either one of the brothers!

Emperors Peerless and Vastsea's simultaneous attacks rendered House Yan's forefather's escape attempt futile. His streak of golden light collided with walls left and right, but was unable to clear a path out.

The forefather's face paled, anxiety rising in his mind. Once the space was fully locked down, he would be a sitting duck. Someone of his strength would struggle against even a single one of the Jiao brothers, which meant he had no chance whatsoever against four great emperors together.

Emperor Vastsea had a vested interest in showing off his strength before his new master. He showed off a wide variety of methods, sending House Yan's forefather scurrying every which way.

"There's nowhere for you to run! Give up already!" Snickering, Emperor Vastsea sent wave after wave towards the old man.

The forefather was already tired from evading the prior barrage of attacks and could only continuously retreat from Emperor Vastsea's new wave of merciless attacks.

Emperor Peerless was content to sit back and watch. He wasn't going to take the spotlight from someone who clearly wanted to put on a good performance before the young lord. He was more than fine with simply backing Emperor Vastsea up for the moment.

The Jiao brothers on the other hand, watched with predatory eyes. They wanted desperately to put themselves in there, but were unwilling to join Emperor Vastsea's relentless pursuit. They didn't want a reputation of ganging up on their opponents. Therefore, they refrained from participating in the fight.

One on one, House Yan's forefather wouldn't have fared nearly so poorly against Emperor Vastsea despite his inferiority. Unfortunately, because he wanted to escape very badly, the difference in their strengths made it harder for him to weather Emperor Vastsea's attacks.

Thump!

There was a collision of forces. The forefather's body was sent flying. Emperor Vastsea kept up the attack, sending forth a one-two punch. His boxing aura created a horrifying wringing force, like two azure dragons forming two watery twisters. Every path of retreat for the forefather was cut off. He was swept involuntarily into the enormous vortex by the twisters.

Once he was dragged inside, he was within Emperor Vastsea's domain of influence. His fate was now in the emperor's hands.

Thump, thump, thump!

Emperor Vastsea moved as quickly as lightning. He landed a flurry of lethal blows upon House Yan's forefather. The old man couldn't move to evade them; his movements were forcibly restricted by the twisters.

"Pfft!" The forefather spewed blood everywhere. The golden light about him evaporated almost instantly, and his entire person exploded like an overfilled balloon. Emperor Vastsea's attacks had destroyed the old man's ocean of qi and shattered his meridians.

Thud!

The forefather's body fell hopelessly down, his limbs twitching like a near-dead dog's. His body curled up, and he tried to struggle to his feet, but the flow of blood from his mouth was unceasing.

His natural survival instincts fueled a half-hearted crawl. Unfortunately for him, a great emperor who'd his ocean of qi destroyed was effectively crippled. The severity of his wounds meant that he had very little life left in him, if he wasn't about to die outright.

"Haha, congratulations, Daoist Vastsea." Emperor Peerless smiled serenely. "This man must be an forefather-level character in Great Scarlet. You've done valuable work today."

Emperor Vastsea chuckled. He didn't dare put on airs before Emperor Peerless. "I know that the three of you held back for my benefit. I do appreciate it plenty. I'll be sure to remember the favor next time!"

"Let's go down and take a look, shall we?" Emperor Peerless smiled.

The captured minister, Old Guo, felt his face utterly pale. The sight of House Yan's forefather being defeated so swiftly had deadened his heart. If the forefather died, House Yan would have no more cards up its sleeve.

"It's all over!" Old Guo was despondent.

"Young lord, my job is done." Emperor Vastsea dashed excitedly to Jiang Chen's side, like a child who'd just won a prize.

"Yes, you've done good work today." Jiang Chen frowned at the House Yan forefather still struggling on the ground. "End his misery," he said coldly.

"Please don't," Old Guo pleaded mournfully. "Young lord Jiang Chen, this old man is House Yan's forefather. He didn't participate in Great Scarlet's incursion into Myriad Domain. In fact, I'm sure he had no knowledge of it in the first place. You've rendered him useless already. Why kill him?"

Those from Regal Pill Palace were furious when they heard this.

"Why are we not supposed to kill him? What gives you the right to say that? Did you think of showing mercy back in Myriad Domain?" Shen Trifire couldn't resist jumping out.

"That's right. Crimes must be punished. We won't kill innocents for no reason, but these people from the Great Scarlet Empire must be destroyed!" Every disciple of the Palace was filled with righteous fervor.

"I'll do the honors," Palace Head Dan Chi cupped his fist to Jiang Chen. Walking over, the palace head cut off the old man's head with a single flashing stroke.

House Yan's forefather died with his eyes open. The look in his lifeless orbs resembled a dead fish's, full of despair and tinged with regret.

Old Guo wailed, his entire body shivering. "Jiang Chen, you petty thief! You deserve a cruel death!"

"Silence!" Jiao Yun swatted the old man into unconsciousness.

"Young lord, this is House Yan's forefather. He is the imperial family's last bastion of reliance. Showing his head off to the public will shatter any lingering thoughts of resistance," Emperor Vastsea advised.

"There's no need." Jiang Chen's tone was cool. "The forefather is already dead. The formation should be trivial. Continue breaking through the it."

With the death of the forefather, the imperial family's last trump card was done for.

Great Scarlet's emperor had seen the proceedings from beginning to end. He'd felt uneasy when the forefather's preemptive strike failed, and trouble when the old man was encircled by four other experts.

Alas, his knowledge made no difference. A man like him had no strength or courage to rescue his relative, and there was little he could do but watch as his forefather was smacked down to earth and decapitated.

"Emperor of House Yan, this is your forefather's head! Take it home with you and wail!"

"House Yan's forefather is dead. The remnant of House Yan should come out to their deaths!"

Dread spread through the palace upon House Yan's forefather's death. The emperor in particular became like a soulless corpse. The din outside elicited no reaction from him.

"You must take hold of yourself, Your Majesty!"

"The future of the empire rests in your hands, Your Majesty."

But the emperor reacted as if he hadn't heard any of those words. His face was emotionless as a paralyzed man. How could he collect himself in such a situation? The death of his house's forefather had torn his last sliver of hope to shreds.

Veluriyam Capital's army waited watchfully outside, and four great emperors were tearing into the palace's formation. It was a powerful one, but its destruction was inevitable under the great emperors' combined strengths.

Everything was over!

Great Scarlet's emperor dragged himself toward the inner courtyard with heavy steps.

"Your Majesty, Your Majesty, you can't abandon us now!"

"Your Majesty, we still need you to maintain order here. Your Majesty..."

Anarchy filled the entire palace. Everyone knew that this was the end. This really was the end!

“Stop shouting, everyone!” A man in the robes of a military officer stepped forward. “This empire belongs to House Yan,” he said indignantly. “The invasion of Myriad Domain all those years ago was due to that family’s willingness to act as the Eternal Celestial Capital’s dogs. We didn’t participate in their crimes, so why should we pay for them?”

“Yes, Grand Commandant Huo is right. We’ve all been working hard on the empire’s domestic affairs. None of us has ever laid a hand on anyone or anything from Myriad Domain. Why should we die for House Yan?”

“Yes, let’s arrest all the members of that clan. We shall deliver them unto young lord Jiang Chen!”

“Come on, everyone! Don’t let a single one from House Yan escape. They are a helpful layer of protection in these troubled times!” One person’s incitement was enough to evoke a tide of responses. Like a boiling-over pot of soup, the palace became more chaotic by the minute.

Chapter 1329: The End of the Road

Multiple hands come together to push a wall down. It was a scene of kicking a man on his way down. The imperial clan had ruled for countless years over Great Scarlet. The emperor’s word was law and his prestige radiated like the sun.

However, his decisions during this series of momentous events had incurred his subjects’ disappointment, causing them to lose all hope. And at this moment, the accumulation of all these negative emotions finally broke the camel’s back.

When people lost all hope, they could lash out with a crazed violence difficult to imagine. Unlike some mundane empires, loyalty and patriotism weren’t paramount in the world of cultivators. Self interest and benefits reigned supreme.

Great Scarlet’s emperor wasn’t truly beloved to begin with. Now that his people also blamed him for leading the empire to its ruin, the tensions finally exploded. A stubborn, brainwashed minority tried to stop the crowd’s impulsiveness, but was drowned by a human tide in no time at all.

“Capture him, seize that vermin and hand him over to young lord Jiang Chen!”

“House Yan’s cruel and unjust rule should have been ended long ago. If not for them, how would Great Scarlet be backed into such a corner today?”

“Indeed, they happily did the Eternal Celestial Capital’s bidding and ended up dragging all of us down. Why should we pay for their sins? What gives them that right? Everyone, let’s charge together.”

“Charge!”

Like a tumultuous torrent, the crowd crashed toward the harem, startling the palace guards who shouted in panic, “Protect the emperor, protect the emperor!”

Palace guards were brainwashed from birth. Their whole existence revolved around the emperor. They lived and died for him. Every one of the guards was an elite. Despite their few numbers, each of them was a force to be reckoned with.

Hearing news of the turmoil inside the palace, they had no choice but to abandon the perimeter defense and group together to suppress internal strife. The palace was turned upside down in a hubbub, a chaotic bloodbath in which dogs howled and ghosts wailed before Jiang Chen's forces even stormed the place.

Under siege from civil officials and military officers alike, the emperor's humiliation turned into rage. He shouted like a madman, "Kill them, slaughter all of these deserters!"

"Don't leave any of them alive. These renegades are harming our nation, I want all of them butchered! They were dogs in the manger to begin with, and now instead of sharing my burdens in times of life and death, they even dare rebel?"

The emperor bristled with rage. He couldn't win against Jiang Chen out there, but was he also going to let these traitors step on him? His anger instantly turned the palace into a river of blood.

"Your Majesty, it's enough to make an example of some. Who will the empire rely on if we kill everyone?" A vice-captain of the palace guards advised quietly.

The emperor responded with a punch and sent the vice-captain flying through the air.

"You animal, who the hell do you think you are? Do I need you to teach me what to do? Do you have what it takes? The empire? What bloody empire? All of us are dead once the formation breaks!"

"Rather than dying to these outsiders, I might as well relieve them of their suffering myself! Hahaha. The food they eat, the water they drink, the wealth they enjoy, everything belongs to me. They live if I say they're to live, they're dead if I say they're to die. All of them is to die!" Gone insane, the emperor looked incomparably malevolent, his messy hair floating in disarray, his head and face covered in bloodstains.

Holding a longsword, he hacked at anyone he saw. Other than House Yan's forefather, almost no one in Great Scarlet was his match cultivation-wise. Now that he had his eyes on slaughter, who was his match?

As the lively massacre took place inside, an enormous rumble suddenly sounded from the formation outside. The entire palace trembled as if struck by an earthquake.

The emperor's body stiffened. He narrowed his eyes, staring fixedly at a direction outside as a despairing thought flashed through his mind. "Is the formation broken?"

He suddenly remembered something and ran madly towards his harem. This was where the imperial family lived. Other than grown princes who had to leave to establish their own princely mansions, all the women and children of the clan lived there.

Of course, with the emperor's advanced age, he had no young sons. As soon as he rushed inside the harem, he chanced upon a group of concubines gathered together, panic and trepidation written all over their faces. Seeing the emperor, the women ran to him shouting, "Your Majesty, Your Majesty, what's going on?"

Insanity glinting in his eyes, the emperor suddenly slashed wildly.

The flash of the naked blade cleaved into two the concubines running at the front, felling them into a pool of blood. Split in two, the women didn't die right away. They propped their hands on the ground in desperation, trying to stand up, only to find there was nothing left below their waist...

Incomprehension and desperation flashed through their eyes.

"Don't blame me! When those vicious bastards storm this place, all of you will be dirtied. I would rather see my women die at my own hands than to let you be tarnished by that scum!" He lifted his sword and charged inside.

There were countless beauties in his harem. The killing moments ago was merely the beginning. When the concubines saw him rushing at them with murderous intent, they shrieked and ran away.

Was this still the emperor they yearned for day and night? No! This was a demon king escaped from hell and bent on massacre!

"His Majesty has gone mad, everyone flee for your life!"

"Your Majesty, one night as husband and wife is worth a hundred years of devotion. Please spare your loving concubine!"

"Your Majesty, don't kill your humble servant. Ah!"

How strong was Great Scarlet's emperor? What could be easier for him than to kill a few defenseless women? In his frenzy, he hacked down the hundreds of concubines with just a few charges, leaving none of them alive.

Studying the ground coated in blood and limbs, the emperor murmured to himself, his eyes rife with madness, "That's right, there's still the descendants of House Yan left. If they have to die, they then should die beneath my sword. I can't let them perish at these bastards' hands."

Insanity had taken hold of his entire being.

Right when he was about to step out of the door, a blinding light flashed in front of him, followed by a voice shouting, "Young lord, I found Great Scarlet's emperor. This old guy's gone mad, he killed all of his women."

Following that voice, countless people quickly rushed in, including the heads of the three great sects.

Great Scarlet's emperor had quite a delinquent streak in him. Realizing he was surrounded, he simply stayed put and dropped his butt onto a chair with a strange giggle.

"Where's Jiang Chen? Have him come and see me!" He looked entirely unfazed in the face of death.

"Tsk tsk, this idiot must still think he's the mighty emperor." Jiao Feng looked at him in disbelief.

"No need for nonsense. Let's cripple him first, then let the young lord handle him. We can't kill this scumbag, we need to wait for the young lord's decision," Jiao Yun reminded.

Just then, Jiang Chen arrived at the scene, accompanied by Emperor Peerless. The Regal Pill Palace's survivors followed in their wake.

Great Scarlet's emperor sat on his chair without the slightest concern in the midst of enemies. Since he knew he couldn't escape from death's clutches, he feigned an undaunted confidence, looking very much like a hooligan. He glanced at Jiang Chen. "You're that little scoundrel Jiang Chen?"

Blazes erupted from Palace Head Dan Chi's eyes. "Yan, you heartless wretch, after invading our Myriad Domain twice and destroying our lives, how dare you still be so insolent with so many crimes on your conscience?"

"Hahaha, who do you think you are?" The emperor laughed heartily as he threw a contemptuous glance at Dan Chi. "If I'm not mistaken, you must be the so-called palace head of the Regal Pill Palace? Why are you running your mouth here? Without Jiang Chen, what could your Regal Pill Palace do against me? What could ten Regal Pill Palaces do against me?"

That was the naked truth, but Dan Chi graced him with a mere grim smile. "Now that things have come so far, what use are your little tricks? Trying to drive a wedge between allies? Correct, my Regal Pill Palace relies on Jiang Chen, just like your Great Scarlet is the Eternal Celestial Capital's lackey. And what of it? All that matters is that your death is at hand. Your bloodline is going to be exterminated, your house eradicated. From today on, Great Scarlet's House Yan will disappear from this world!"

Great Scarlet's emperor's face drained of all color. His gaze swept through the three great sect's sect heads, his whole being burning with anger. "House Yan being erased by Myriad Domain is retribution from the heavens. But what of you three sects? You enjoyed the most honored status in my nation, yet collude with my enemies when push came to shove. Do you have any face left to be standing in front of me?"

"Pfft. Yan, aren't you ashamed to mention this? Great Scarlet was already driven to the brink by your clan. Resources? Correct, our three sects did indeed get some. However, everyone knows that your clan hoards at least more than half of the resources from Great Scarlet. You also offer a portion as tribute to the Eternal Celestial Capital. The sects are only thrown some scraps. Otherwise, why isn't there a single second rank sect in Great Scarlet?"

"That's right. Almost every mid region has a second rank sect. Only Great Scarlet has been monopolized by your House Yan, yet you still want to make us believe you hold sects in high regard. The origin of Great Scarlet's destruction is none other than House Yan!"

"Our region will never see a better tomorrow if House Yan doesn't die!"

For some reason, Jiang Chen felt utter disgust for the bickering between the emperor and the three sect heads.

"Yan, there's only one road left for you no matter what you say today. Will you travel down this road on your own, or will this young lord have to send you off on this journey?" He had no desire to waste time in nonsense.

"Hmph!" the emperor sneered. "You want to send me off? Do you dare fight against me one on one?"

Jiang Chen smiled impassively. "Stop putting up a front. Killing you would be as easy as slaughtering a pig. Do you think you're worth a duel?"

The emperor wanted to goad Jiang Chen into single combat and use that opportunity to seek a lifeline. But seeing Jiang Chen's sheer disdain, he realized how vain his hopes were. He howled with laughter. "So much for that young lord bullshit! Jiang Chen, you might destroy my empire, but the great powers in Upper Eight Regions won't take this lying down!

"Just you wait. Pillfire City, the Eternal Celestial Capital, they won't let you get away with it!" He shouted himself hoarse, as if the anger in his heart could kill Jiang Chen and destroy the entire world.

The final whimpers of a defeated dog was beneath Jiang Chen's contempt. He merely ordered with an indifferent smile, "Jiao Yun, kill him!"

The emperor's face became as pale as death. He suddenly activated an escape glyph in hand, wanting to borrow its power to flee.

However, even House Yan's forefather couldn't run from the inescapable siege. How could a mere emperor realm like him slip away in front of so many great emperors?

Jiao Yun sent the fleeing light crashing down from the sky with a single slap.

Thump! Great Scarlet's emperor dropped on the ground like a dead dog. When he opened his eyes, his vision chanced upon the face of a concubine he'd cut in half. Her eyes full of bitter rancor seemed to be cursing and mocking him.

Chapter 1330: The Scene is Set

The death of Great Scarlet's emperor marked the end of House Yan.

Emperor Vastsea led his men into the palace and exterminated the entire imperial lineage, leaving none alive. With the assistance of the three great sects, another purge was conducted in the capital, completely uprooting House Yan's foundation.

The extensive slaughter caused a great amount of anxiety amongst the citizens, but Jiang Chen was quick to ease their fears.

"The imperial family colluded with the Eternal Celestial Capital to invade Myriad Domain and slaughter all that I held dear. My vengeance today is only directed towards House Yan and their collaborators. Those who have nothing to do with them can rest easy. There's no need for panic."

These words eased the public's anxiety a little.

"Young lord, we've done all we can here. What should we do about the fourth rank sects that also invaded Myriad Domain?" Emperor Vastsea smiled.

"Those sects are no longer a cause for concern. They're sitting ducks now that we've taken over Great Scarlet." Jiang Chen smiled blandly. "Vastsea, split your men into four groups and stamp out the Qitian Sect, Bamboo Sect, Golden Glyph Sect, Zither Sect..."

"Jiao Yun, you shall lead two more groups of men to deal with the Four Quadrant Sect, Cloud and Wind Palace..."

"Jiao Feng, lead two groups as well and deal with the Mystic Fire Sect, Nine Waves Sect..."

“Old Brother Mo, accompany me to the Thunder Note Hall and the Great Roc Sect!”

It was only natural that Jiang Chen would want to destroy those two sects out himself as they were the ones who'd personally invaded the Regal Pill Palace.

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He quickly graced the two sects with his presence, arriving when they were still contemplating if they should flee after hearing about the purge. These fourth rank sects all suffered major losses when they attempted hunting down Jiang Chen, so much so that they were no longer any better than the fourth rank sects from Myriad Domain.

They could never withstand a series of onslaught by the Peafowl Guards, especially when overseen by Jiang Chen himself and with Emperor Peerless here in support.

Palace Head Dan Chi and Elder Yun Nie was finally able to vent their grievances after so many years. They showed the two sects no mercy and slaughtered the high level executives like pigs. This was especially true for Palace Head Dan Chi. A half-step emperor like him was now a mammoth-like existence to them. Fueled by seething hatred, he personally disposed of at least a dozen of them.

Having trained in Veluriyam Capital for many years, the Regal Pill Palace disciples quickly realized how mediocre Great Scarlet fourth rank sects were now. Since widening their horizons, these sects that were once deemed too gargantuan to overcome had become a small nuisance at the very most. They were now far stronger than the geniuses from these fourth rank sects. In fact, the geniuses from Regal Pill Palace consistently flattened their peers.

Three days later, the slaughter in Great Scarlet finally stopped. House Yan and their collaborators were completely purged from the face of the earth. Those who managed to escape the catastrophe would eventually be captured as well. There was nowhere to hide from an all-encompassing net.

The fourth rank sects had been uprooted from their very foundation. A complete and utter shift had occurred in Great Scarlet after the dust had settled. The region was now advancing towards a new tomorrow.

“Young lord, we've completely taken over the region. The only factions left are the third rank sects and the weaker fifth to sixth rank sects. All collaborators of the imperial family have been cleansed from the realm.”

“Young lord, this region is quite vast.”

“Why don't we take over the reins and turn it into Veluriyam Capital's rear garden?” The crowd voiced various suggestions.

Jiang Chen smiled. “You needn't worry as I've already made plans. For now, let's leave them to their own devices.”

The crowd didn't understand what Jiang Chen was thinking.

“Young lord, now is a great time to take over Great Scarlet. The imperial family has fallen and there's a void to fill. Wouldn't it be a pity if we don't strike while the iron's hot?”

Jiang Chen waved his hands. "We'll take over the region one day, but now isn't the time. Eliminating them was only the first step. Now, we need to move onto the next step and restore my homeland back to its former glory. Everyone, care to take a trip with me to Myriad Domain?"

"We are more than willing." The crowd answered willingly.

"But young lord, why aren't we taking over the region now?" Emperor Peerless asked curiously.

Jiang Chen smiled. "If we leave the three great sects to their own devices, they'll start a power struggle to fill the void of authority. After they're done clawing at each other's throats and the region has fallen into utter chaos, we'll come back and take over the place in one fell swoop."

Emperor Peerless' eyes glimmered after a moment's thought. "How brilliant!"

The Jiao brothers simply couldn't fathom the reasoning behind all of this. What difference did that make? Were they supposed to fear the three great sects? These lowly peasants posed no threat! One could easily obliterate them with a swat of a hand!

Emperor Vastsea also slapped his thighs after pondering about it briefly. "Such brilliance! Young lord, I'm thoroughly impressed by your foresight."

Jiao Yun scratched his head with puzzlement. "Everyone is singing the young lord praises, but this brute still has no idea why."

"Hehe. If the young lord takes over the region now, the outside world will denounce him for commencing conquest under the guise of revenge. This will reflect badly on the young lord.

"If the region falls into chaos by itself, the young lord can assume control of the region under the guise of keeping peace. By then, the citizens would have grown weary of the chaos inflicted by the three sects. They'll be begging for a powerful faction to intervene, stabilize the situation, and return peace to their home. Moreover, they'll be more than happy to welcome the young lord due to his reputation and status.

"Any naysayers from the outside world would be wasting their breath as long as the citizens supports the young lord's reign. They will willingly let the young lord take power as he is the only one who can return peace, stability, and prosperity to the region."

The Jiao brothers finally understood what was going on. Jiao Yun scratched his head. "Heh! To think that there's so many intricacies to this situation! A brute like me only knows how to fight and kill! I'm not very good with my brain."

Jiang Chen laughed. "Alright, since most of House Yan's stragglers have already been eliminated, let's head to Myriad Domain."

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The senior executives of the three great sects had been under a great deal of stress lately. What were they going to do if the young lord chose to stay? However, their worries quickly faded away when they heard that young lord Jiang Chen was leaving for Myriad Domain with his men.

The news made the three sects beyond excited. The young lord was a lot more honorable than they'd initially thought. Was he really going to leave right after taking his revenge, leaving behind the entire region? Anyone with even the slightest ambition would've taken the area for themselves.

"Are they really leaving?" The Sky Eagle sect head thought that it was a hoax when he first heard the news.

"Sectmaster, Veluriyam Capital's army is already preparing to depart."

"Report!" Someone immediately rushed into the room. "Sectmaster, great news! Young lord Jiang Chen and his cohort of experts have left the Great Scarlet capital! Half of Veluriyam's men have already departed!"

"What?" The sect head surged to his feet. "Quickly, summon the sect executives! I have plans to arrange!"

The Myriad Buddha Sect and the Scarlet Parting Sect had received news of Jiang Chen's departure as well. The sect heads of the two sects were already excitedly plotting for the future. Jiang Chen's departure meant that Great Scarlet was now without a ruler, and that they were the most powerful factions here! This was an opportunity of a lifetime!

Their ambitions instantly blossomed to extreme proportions.

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Jiang Chen led his army to the borders of Myriad Domain. The land was still in tatters and a downcast pallor still clung to everything. It was apparent that the region hadn't recovered from the invasion yet. The four emperors in charge of overseeing Myriad Domain immediately came to greet Jiang Chen when they learned he was here.

"You've worked hard. All four of you." Jiang Chen commended.

Palace Head Dan Chi and the others were overwhelmed by various emotions after stepping foot on Myriad Domain soil. It was a mix of excitement, melancholy, anticipation, as well as endless painful memories.

Tears streaked down Elder Yun Nie's face. "To think that an old man like me would set foot on Myriad Domain soil once again. The heavens have eyes! The Regal Pill Palace will finally see the day once more after all these years because of young lord Jiang Chen!"

Elder Yun Nie suddenly faced Jiang Chen and went on his knees. "Young lord Jiang Chen, please accept this kowtow from me."

Thump! Thump!

The young disciples of the Regal Pill Palace followed suit and got on their knees too.

"Everyone please get up! I may be the young lord of Veluriyam Capital, but I'm also a member of the Regal Pill Palace! How can I accept your bows when it is also my responsibility to restore our sect to glory and reclaim our homeland? Come, let us head to the sect!"

Jiang Chen helped everyone up.

The crowd grew more and more cheerful as they made their way towards their home. They'd finally returned, not discreetly, but proudly. No matter how much tragedy they'd faced, the worst had already come to past. A new dawn was finally rising for the Regal Pill Palace.