

Three Realms 1351

[Sovereign of the Three Realms \(WN\)](#)

Chapter 1351: Taking Over Great Scarle

The old man's face reddened at the mention of Jiang Tong and Jiang Yu. After a long while, he sighed.

"Jiang Chen, I've let you down. I didn't take good enough care of them."

"What happened to them?" Jiang Chen paled. The response was a punch to his chest. He had been close with his uncle's family ever since young. Though he was only paternal cousins with Jiang Yu, they were as close as real brothers.

His heart chilled when he heard the old master's words. Had something happened to his uncle and cousin?

"Old master... are they... gone?" The young lord asked with bitterness in his mouth.

"Gone? No, no." The old man became thoughtful. He was considering how best to explain, it seemed.

"Rather, I think it likely that they're fine."

"What do you mean, 'likely'?" Jiang Chen was rather confused.

"It happened like this. When I led the first group out of the Precious Tree Sect, we brought your uncle and cousin along. Great Scarlet hadn't attacked Myriad Domain yet, so our journey was relatively peaceful. We left Myriad Domain for Phoenix Cry Lower Region. It's a comparatively remote place, so we thought that we'd find peace there. We wanted to find a good place to live out our days in hiding, but one day... we met a group of people out hunting. There was a girl among those hunters who was very interested in your cousin Jiang Yu. She kept bothering him that day..."

Wasn't it a good thing for Jiang Yu to draw a girl's interest? Jiang Chen found himself even foggier than before.

"I thought about it for a bit afterwards. The girl probably did that because she was especially interested in Jiang Yu and wanted to attract his attention - or should I say, her attention had been attracted by him? After the hunt, the girl sent a group to abduct both your cousin and your uncle. I gave chase, but they were much stronger than me. Even a normal man among their ranks was only slightly weaker than me, and their leader was significantly stronger!" The old man sighed. "My abilities were too limited to protect them." His tone was full of self-blame.

"The old master chased them for quite a while. There were a couple skirmishes too," interjected Tang Hong. "He had to pull back after several wounds."

Jiang Chen became silent. The old man's retelling illustrated a rather absurd occurrence. The old master wasn't to blame. His cousin was a handsome gentleman. It was definitely true that he posed an immense threat to any girl's heart.

However, that girl's curiosity was also startling. Had she really abducted two people just to sate a passing interest?

That seemed too incredible for words. Such actions were nothing short of lawless! The girl must be some kind of privileged blueblood. Both men and women from prominent factions or houses preferred to exert unchecked dominance in daily life.

"Phoenix Cry Lower Region? Do you know that place, Old Brother Mo?"

"Sure, but I haven't been there. Many wandering cultivators choose to avoid such distant lands. Unless amazing resources surface there, or perhaps a secret realm opens, powerful cultivators generally don't go to a lower region of their own volition."

Jiang Chen nodded. It had been ten years since the old man's withdrawal from the world. Who knew what had happened during that time?

"Old master, have you found anything about that girl's origins during the past decade?" Jiang Chen asked again.

"We haven't been in Phoenix Cry at all in the last ten years," sighed Ye Chonglou. "After that affair with Jiang Yu, the girl's subordinates warned us that we'll all die if we appear there again."

The old man didn't fear death, but neither would he walk straight into its jaws. If he didn't know what faction he was dealing with, looking for clues became rather difficult.

"Wait, I do remember something. That girl and the cultivators she had with her... there was an insignia on their sable-fur hats." Lordmaster Ye Chonglou remembered a key detail and drew a vague impression of what it'd looked like. "It should be something like that. I assume it's related to the faction she's from."

Jiang Chen tossed the insignia a glance, then nodded to himself.

Even a small clue made things much easier. Phoenix Cry was only a lower region at the end of the day. Not every lower region was as weak as Myriad Domain had once been, but its number of strong experts was limited by its status nonetheless.

It was very possible that the girl was from a prominent background in Phoenix Cry. There was no chance she would kidnap people so brazenly otherwise.

Recklessness without sponsorship was generally rare and short-lived. However, the young lord wasn't in much of a rush to search. It had been ten years and a few more days or months wasn't going to hurt.

"Old master, Old Tang, do you have any plans after returning?" Jiang Chen asked.

Tang Hong scratched his head blankly. He was a man focused on cultivation and little else. He didn't much have the room to consider far-out things like future plans.

"Do you have any ideas, old master?" Jiang Chen respected Ye Chonglou a great deal. The old man wasn't to blame for Jiang Yu's predicament. His strength limited what he could have done in that unexpected situation.

"I thought that I could live out my old age at the Precious Tree Sect, but I assume it's mostly destroyed now. There's not much to return to. Meeting Dan Fei here was a pleasant surprise. I think I'll go where she goes."

“Come to Veluriyam Capital, then.” Jiang Chen made the decision for them with a broad stroke.

“The Precious Tree Sect still exists in a sense, lordmaster. Unfortunately, a bunch of wandering cultivators have pretty much ruined it. The damage is hard to repair, and honestly, I don’t see much of a point.” Dan Fei didn’t have particularly deep feelings for the Precious Tree Sect.

However, the old man thought differently. He shook his head at Dan Fei’s comments. “You can’t say that. Regardless of how ruined it is, that place is where our roots are. Even if the Precious Tree Sect is no longer, as long as the Precious Tree of Rosy Dawn lives on, it can be re-established anywhere.”

Jiang Chen approved of the old man’s attitude. “That’s right. The Precious Tree is a treasure that carries with it a heritage. The Precious Tree Sect can be rebuilt elsewhere, but not without that tree.”

The Precious Tree wasn’t very remarkable for a man of Jiang Chen’s current stature. Heritage-wise, however, it carried with it inestimable value. More importantly, Jiang Chen’s breakthrough beneath it to origin realm had evoked impressive natural phenomena. He had a very good impression of the plant.

The reunion with two more past acquaintances energized the young man. After a time, news arrived from Great Scarlet that its three sects had entered prolonged warfare against each other. The chaos in the region had reached a boiling point.

Assembling his experts, Jiang Chen declared that he was officially intervening in the region’s affairs. They were preparing to take over Great Scarlet anytime. When word of this got out, there was another enormous reaction from the human domain. The factions who were typically antagonistic to the city were tremendously surprised.

Alas, the Veluriyam Capital of today burned as brightly as the noonday sun. Plus, Jiang Chen had a vendetta with Great Scarlet in the first place. What shocked the outside world the most however, was the welcoming attitude of most of the region’s residents.

With the dethroning of House Yan, the region required a power that could dominate and unify the entire realm. The anarchy brought about by the power struggle-related daily skirmishes was too much for the common people.

The first order of affairs in Jiang Chen’s intervention was to take the region’s three great sects down a peg. He didn’t need to decimate their numbers, because their ranks had already been exhausted by the prior conflict.

His scouring of the sects tamed them to his will. Immediately following this, Jiang Chen announced to the rest of the world that Veluriyam Capital was temporarily taking over Great Scarlet Mid Region. The reason he gave was that he wanted to assure its integrity and well-being.

When he did so, the entire human domain realized that Great Scarlet’s past was fully history. From this moment onwards, the region had Jiang Chen’s indelible mark upon it.

Though there were occasional voices of dissent, no one openly presented resistance to him. Veluriyam Capital was at the peak of its prominence. Anyone who angered them would be subjected to certain misfortune.

Even Pillfire City stayed oddly quiet after repeated loss. There was no usual loud proclamation of opposition. Jiang Chen found this quite strange.

Pillfire saw Veluriyam as its mortal enemy; the city hated him to the bone. This was especially true after his recent destruction of two of their great emperor experts. Silence from them could only be hiding a fomenting conspiracy. Calm before a storm, as it were.

Jiang Chen dared not let down his guard.

After exerting full control over Great Scarlet, he handed the reins of the region to Emperor Vastsea. This entrustment of heavy responsibility flattered the emperor.

As time passed, things in Great Scarlet began ticking upwards once more under Jiang Chen's simultaneous application of coercion and reward. Everything proceeded as planned in a deliberate and measured manner.

One day, Jiang Chen gathered the wandering great emperors together. "My friends, the situation in Myriad and Great Scarlet have settled down for the time being. I'm sure you feel plenty caged up after your time here at the Regal Pill Palace. Today, we return to Veluriyam Capital. Shall we prepare a little before departing?"

All of the great emperors were overjoyed when they heard this. They had waited for this day for quite a while.

Jiang Chen returned to Veluriyam Capital in secret. Emperor Peerless remained at the Palace, lending his prestige to help Palace Head Dan Chi. Emperor Vastsea remained in Great Scarlet to further stabilize the region. Jiang Chen took the Jiao brothers with him.

After they returned to Veluriyam Capital, the young lord lodged the wandering great emperors. He needed a bit more time to prepare and told them as much. The great emperors were no rush. They had finally come back to Veluriyam Capital, after all.

Chapter 1352: Jiang Chens Daughter, Nianer

Jiang Chen's first order of business after returning to Veluriyam was an urgent visit to Plumscore Retreat. Seeing his daughter couldn't come a second too soon.

Dan Fei's mood upon her return was poles apart from when she'd left. Confusion and helplessness had been replaced by contentment and gratification. All the worries gnawing at her had been swept away.

That Emperor Peafowl's adopted daughter and the young lord were old friends from Myriad Domain flabbergasted the mountain's residents. They sighed at fate's bizarre twists and turns. Sacred Peafowl Mountain, it seemed, shared an inextricable bond with Myriad Domain.

The young lord came from Myriad Domain. So did Miss Dan'er. The two of them had even had a daughter together.

Even the young lord's followers were taken aback, to say nothing of everyone else.

Eastern Gouyu had been in a jubilant mood lately, thanks to her niece Eastern Zhiruo's arrival. But she felt disquieted when she learned that Emperor Peafowl's adopted daughter and the Dan Fei she'd met in Skylare were one and the same.

She and Dan Fei had had their bickerings in the past. Their relationship wasn't an irreconcilable one, but she couldn't deny a slight lingering resentment.

Gouyu had long since let go of the hopes she once held about Jiang Chen because she'd come to realize the chasm between herself and Huang'er. She'd understood how distant a dream it had been, and had instead immersed herself in her role as an attendant in the young lord residence.

Of course, Jiang Chen's place in her heart was as unshakable as ever. He was her faith. She wouldn't refuse any request from him.

"Auntie, is there something making you unhappy?" Eastern Zhiruo had lived a secluded life in Eastern Kingdom and had almost no dealings with the outside world. Her character was as pure as a twelve year old's. She could sense Gouyu's mood, but didn't know the reason behind it.

Gouyu steadied herself, squeezed out a smile, and carressed her niece's lovely face. "I'm fine. Zhiruo, do you remember? I used to force you to practice martial arts every day to improve your health. In the end, I almost hurt you. Do you hate me for that?"

"Auntie, why would I hate you?" Bafflement was plain on Zhiruo's face. "You did that for my sake."

Gouyu's guilt and affection deepened when she saw her niece was as kind-hearted as she used to be.

"Zhiruo, I was selfish in leaving you behind. I can only imagine how dull it must have been living by yourself in the depths of the palace." Like a blank page, her niece was as innocent as she had been ten years ago.

"Auntie, it was a little boring sometimes. I missed you very much, and father, and older brother Jiang Chen. You three are the only ones who were good to me in the entire world." Zhiruo became a little glum when she thought of her deceased father. "Sometimes, I'd talk to the flowers and the trees, pretending they were you, or father, or older brother Jiang Chen."

Gouyu's heart ached for her niece. How lonely it must have been to only have flowers and trees as companions for ten years. Zhiruo seemed to enjoy untold fortunes as a princess, but she'd lived the life of a prisoner.

Plumscore Retreat was as tranquil and beautiful as ever, a haven separate from the outside world. Rather than vulgar, mundane gaudiness, the year-long snow gave it an otherworldly charm.

"Brother Chen, did you meet Nian'er when you came here before?" Standing at the entrance, Dan Fei looked at the mouth of the valley, urgent expectation sparkling in her graceful eyes.

"I came once to call on Plumscore Monarch. Nian'er has a mount she calls Whitey, a very ferocious snow eagle. But it's very obedient after she tamed it." Everything still felt like a dream to Jiang Chen. The little girl pretty as a flower who'd somehow felt so familiar to him, a child he'd felt drawn to despite himself, was his own daughter!

Chirp! Chirp! Chirp chirp!

Sharp cries suddenly pierced through the tranquil sky, to Jiang Chen's and Dan Fei's delight.

"She's here!" Both of them exchanged a glance full of excitement.

With a flap of great wings, a flash of white shot down into the valley like a bolt of lightning, sweeping raging gusts of wind in its wake. It landed not far away in front of Jiang Chen and Dan Fei.

A face as exquisite as a porcelain doll's, skin so delicate that a mere breeze would leave marks, and eyes brimming with life. Nian'er was still as lovely as Jiang Chen remembered her, but she'd gained a few inches in the years he hadn't seen her.

"Nian'er!" Dan Fei could no longer repress her own emotions. The guilt and longing she'd felt for so many years suddenly surged in her chest.

At the call, Nian'er turned her vibrant eyes their way. Plumscore Monarch had told her to go alone to the mouth of the valley after returning. Some people were waiting there for her.

She'd been trying to guess who it was. Her eyes shone with the fresh innocence unique to her age. Her pure gaze landed on Dan Fei. She froze at first glance, her memories seeming to tell her something. The bone-deep bond between blood kin made her eyes redden. "Mommy?"

Dan Fei's feelings gushed out of her like a flood through a broken dike. She ran forward and held her daughter tightly in her arms.

"Nian'er, it's mother, it's mother. I missed you so much..." Maternal love, accumulated for all these years, gushed out of her.

Nian'er shed big tears of happiness as she sobbed like a wronged child. "Mommy, Nian'er misses you everyday. Boohoo..."

She was a ten-year-old child finally seeing her mother after a long parting. Her emotions erupted as she basked in the sudden warmth of the beloved mother she'd missed day and night.

Mother and daughter embraced each other for a long time. Dan Fei finally cupped Nian'er's cheeks with her gentle hands, carefully scrutinizing her daughter, engraving every line of the child's face into her mind. "Nian'er, do you blame me for being heartless?"

Nian'er shook her head. "Nian'er knows you did it for my own good."

Dan Fei's eyes reddened again. She hugged her daughter with a promise. "Nian'er, mother will never leave you again. Never!"

Nian'er froze. "Mommy, are you taking me away?"

"Yes. But I'm not the only one taking you away. Look, see who else is there?" Dan Fei pointed at Jiang Chen.

"Young lord Zhen?" The little girl immediately recognized him. She'd met him once when she was around six.

He'd left a deep impression on her. She knew he was the most powerful big brother on Sacred Peafowl Mountain, the most outstanding genius. He'd always been her idol.

Jiang Chen approached them with an involuntary smile.

Dan Fei was solemn. "Nian'er, let mother formally introduce him to you. He's not called young lord Zhen. His real name is Jiang Chen, and he's also your father."

Nian'er blinked, a pout on her small lips. "Mother, are you with young lord Zhen? I only think of young lord Zhen as a big brother, not..."

Dan Fei grew anxious when she realized her daughter's misunderstanding. The little girl thought her mother and Jiang Chen were in an affair, that Jiang Chen was going to be her stepfather!

"Nian'er, listen to me. He's your daddy. He's the one your mother's been searching all along."

Nian'er was stumped for words. That beautiful, pure pair of eyes stared at Jiang Chen. "Daddy? Young lord Zhen, are you really Nian'er's daddy?"

Jiang Chen heaved a soft sigh. There was nothing he wanted more than to cuddle and cherish her.

"Nian'er, I'm your daddy. Only, neither I nor your mother knew we were both on Sacred Peafowl Mountain. I never knew before I had such a beautiful and adorable daughter. Tell daddy, do you want me to be your father?"

Nian'er tilted her head to the side and nodded after some consideration. "I do."

Jiang Chen beamed with joy. "Great! Nian'er, come with daddy. We won't be coming back to Plumscore Retreat in the future. We'll live in the young lord residence instead. Do you want that?"

"Is mommy coming with us?" the little girl asked in earnest.

"We're a family. Of course we should be together. Let's go," Jiang Chen promised with a nod.

Nian'er cheered immediately. She ran to give Dan Fei a loud kiss on the cheek, then ran to plant a loud smack on Jiang Chen's forehead.

She held her mother's hand in her left and her father's hand in her right, happily jumping in the snow. "Whitey, Whitey, did you hear? Nian'er has a mother and a father now!"

Parents would always be the most important figures in a child's life. Nian'er had always been a good girl during her stay at Plumscore Retreat, but it was the nature of a young child to miss her parents.

Now that her father and her mother were taking her away and never leaving her again, she longed to share her excitement with the whole world.

Whitey chirped, maybe out of jealousy, or perhaps out of happiness for her.

Jiang Chen brought them back to the young lord residence. Gouyu had a firm grasp on her emotions by now and had buried her melancholy deep in her heart, ready to welcome the young mistress.

Dan Fei's expression flickered when she saw Gouyu from afar. All her past memories resurfaced. However, now ten years more mature, she was no longer as belligerent as her younger self used to be.

Instead, she wrapped her arms around Goyou and gave her a sincere hug. "Elder sister Gouyu, to think we never met face to face even though we were so close here on Sacred Peafowl Mountain! You've grown even more beautiful."

She showered Goyou with cordial affection. She was well aware their past quarrels had been nothing more than the naughtiness of youth. Both of them were grown women now. She naturally wouldn't hold a grudge over trivial squabbles.

Chapter 1353: A Womans Heart Is Unfathomable

With her change in attitude, Dan Fei instantly gained the sincere acceptance of Jiang Chen's guards and followers, particularly when everyone learned she'd sacrificed her virtue to help him in his time of need.

After she'd learned of her pregnancy, she'd made the resolute decision to leave Skylarell as to not affect him. As a result, she'd suffered countless hardships during her wanderings.

"Sister Goyou, I was an ignorant little girl back then. Please forgive me if I ever offended you. You're my good sister, so I'll need your help in the future if anything happens."

Gouyu had been somewhat on her guard against Dan Fei, but she was now won over. Perhaps a girl only gained true maturity after motherhood.

"Dan Fei, I was also in the wrong. Let's forget the past. The residence is going to be livelier with you around." Gouyu was a candid and magnanimous woman. Now that Dan Fei had softened her stance, Gouyu welcomed her with open arms. As for Nian'er, Eastern Zhiruo had already taken her away to play.

Walking side by side, Gouyu and Dan Fei strode to the rear garden. Jiang Chen knew they needed to chat privately, so he didn't butt in. Some things were best left for them to resolve alone.

"Dan Fei, I admire what you did for the young lord. However, I need to say something up front."

With a serious face, Dan Fei nodded. "Sister Gouyu, I await your words."

"The road to happiness for you two was strewn with hardship. But all's well that ends well. To be honest, I'm rather envious. But, the young lord must have been previously in the dark about this matter?"

Dan Fei nodded. "Yes, he didn't know. I didn't want to be a burden and I didn't want him to think of me as cheap and wanton. That's why I decided to leave Skylarell once I learned I carried his child. I only wanted to find somewhere peaceful to give birth and raise my daughter by myself."

Gouyu nodded. She was pensive and suddenly added, "Then you must know that the young lord has had a dao partner for the past ten years. They went through fire and water together, sharing much joy and sorrow. She left a few days ago, but she's won everyone's goodwill here. Everyone loves her very much."

Jiang Chen hadn't mentioned this, but Dan Fei had already guessed something from the crowd's gaze. With the sharp intuition of a woman, she'd faintly sensed a strange atmosphere.

"She... she must be a remarkable woman?" Although Dan Fei was ready, she still felt a faint twinge of jealousy. But then, when seen from another angle, how could an exceptional genius like Jiang Chen not attract outstanding girls?

The green-eyed monster would have consumed her younger self whole, but her current self could maintain a rational point of view. For a prodigy like Jiang Chen, countless women across the world would naturally be willing to line up to await his attention.

Dan Fei knew that such a man would never belong to her alone. It wouldn't become her to be a jealous hag.

Gouyu nodded calmly. "She's extraordinary, more so than you and I can imagine. Even now, the young lord might not be her equal when it comes to martial cultivation. And despite being Veluriyam's young lord, his status perhaps isn't as exalted as hers..."

"Is she that incredible?" Dan Fei didn't know anything about Huang'er. Gouyu's description left her stumped for words.

"She is. She comes from the legendary Myriad Abyss Island. Her beauty is out of this world and she's also frank and generous. She never plays off the airs of a noble lady, but there's an aura seeping from her every word and move. You can't but acknowledge her superior bearing.

"Everyone calls her Miss Huang'er. Those close to her also address her as younger sister Huang'er."

"Huang'er?" Dan Fei quietly repeated. "The name itself is so ethereal and full of artistry. I can tell how remarkable she is just from her name."

Gouyu smiled faintly. "She's remarkable indeed. However, you have your advantages as well. Your feelings for him are as deep as the sea. Well, let's change the subject. Sister Huang'er is generous and easy-mannered, I'm sure you two will get along just fine."

Gouyu wasn't trying to scare Dan Fei. Since she'd accepted Dan Fei from the bottom of her heart, there was no reason to put a spoke in the new mistress' wheel.

Women were strange creatures. If they discarded the ill-feelings between them, they could become bosom friends with a few words. The two of them came back from the back garden like long-lost friends, all giggles and laughter, making for an harmonious picture.

Since Jiang Chen had already acknowledged Dan Fei and she'd even given birth to his daughter, he naturally had to take her to formally call on his father.

Jiang Feng was an easy-going man. Although he was single-mindedly loyal to his own wife, he was very tolerant when it came to his son.

"Good kid, you're quite the lucky one! You have to cherish a loyal and devoted girl like her." Jiang Feng was full of praise for his son's taste in women.

Both Huang'er and Dan Fei were stunning beauties with extraordinary temperament. There was no reason for Jiang Feng not to be happy with daughters-in-law like them, especially when Dan Fei had even brought him a granddaughter.

Jiang Feng swept up Nian'er in his arms and laughed merrily. "Chen'er, this girl's nose and her chin are from the same mold as yours. Kid, aren't your eyes usually quite sharp? What happened this time? Your daughter was on Sacred Peafowl Mountain all along, why didn't you recognize her?"

Jiang Chen rubbed his nose, at a loss how to explain. How would he know a girl was his own with a simple glance? Was he supposed to read it in the tea leaves?

It would have required an inhuman amount of associative ability.

Listening to Jiang Feng, Dan Fei understood her father-in-law had already accepted her. A feeling as sweet as honey welled up in her.

"Nian'er, greet your grandpa."

Like the cute and obedient girl she was, Nian'er rubbed her little cheek against Jiang Feng, to the latter's glee.

"Grandpa, you're as handsome as daddy," Nian'er complimented.

Jiang Feng laughed out loud. "Haha, am I? Look at how glib her tongue is. Chen'er, your daughter is smarter than you at the same age!"

Jiang Chen didn't know whether to laugh or cry. At the same age? This body hadn't been his back then, so he didn't have any memories of it. But given his predecessor's intelligence level, no one in their right mind would have called him smart.

"Everyone says that if you have a grandpa, you must also have a grandma. Grandpa, where's Nian'er's grandma?" Nian'er suddenly asked a naive question amidst of the happy atmosphere.

Jiang Chen's face instantly turned green. "Nian'er, don't spout nonsense."

Nian'er froze. She wonder why her daddy's reaction was so extreme.

Jiang Feng rolled his eyes at his son. "Why're you so harsh? Nian'er is innocent and means no harm. Is that how a father should act? I used to be quite indulgent with you."

Jiang Feng had truly spoiled Jiang Chen so much so the latter had become a useless womanizer. However, Jiang Feng had his own difficult circumstances. He wouldn't have minded Jiang Chen spending a lifetime as a skirt-chaser, as long as his son stayed far away from certain matters.

Jiang Chen took Nian'er from his father's arms and relayed to Dan Fei, "Dan'er, take out Nian'er for a stroll. I have a few things I need to tell my father."

Dan Fei made a noise of assent. She took Nian'er by the hand and led her outside.

Jiang Feng complained, "Kid, why are you being so secretive? I was having a good time with my granddaughter."

"Father, there's something I need to discuss with you."

"What is it? I'm listening," Jiang Feng said, rather distracted.

"I think we should go to the Moon God Sect sometime soon. I'm going to propose marriage in Veluriyam's name. I'll make them hand mother over and give both of you a triumphant reunion!"

Jiang Feng's unconcerned expression suddenly turned to excitement. "Chen'er, are you serious?"

"Of course. The preparations are almost done. We can set off as soon as some friends arrive." This time, apart from the wandering great emperors, Jiang Chen had also invited the Great Yu Skysword Sect's Han Qianzhan, as well as the Celestial Cicada Court's Su Huanzhen.

"Chen'er, do you think the Moon God Sect will agree?" Jiang Feng felt some apprehension.

He'd suffered all kinds of hardships during recent years. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say he'd been a hair's breadth away from losing his life, but he'd never felt fear even staring into death's abyss. However, he couldn't help but feel some trepidation at this moment.

Jiang Chen offered a serene smile. He proudly said, "Not agree? The Moon God Sect has received many of my favors. If they don't agree, that'd make them ungrateful bastards. I'm Veluriyam's young lord now. My status is loftier than their sect. For them to refuse would be sheer idiocy. As long as they aren't mentally disabled, I promise they'll agree.

"However, mother belongs to their second sectmaster's Blue Moon faction. The second sectmaster is as stubborn as a mule. She's set in her ways and will fight tooth and nail. That's why I've made some preparations. When the time comes, they'll have to agree whether they want to or not!"

Jiang Chen had a no-holds-barred attitude when it came to his parents' reunion. If the Moon God Sect truly couldn't distinguish good from bad, then he wouldn't mind having them feel the full force of his displeasure.

"Chen'er, this matters has great ramifications. It doesn't only concern your mother, but also your younger sister. So if possible, it'd be better not to fall out with them. We should stay as friendly as possible and talk things over."

Jiang Feng was more cool-headed than his son. Although he longed for his wife, his daughter was also in the same sect. So, no matter how much he used to loathe the Moon God Sect, he'd generously forgiven them for the sake of his daughter. After all, the Moon God Sect were bastards, but they'd raised an outstanding girl for him.

Thinking about his sister Xu Qingxuan, a smile floated on Jiang Chen's lips. "Qingxuan hasn't been brainwashed by the second sectmaster after so many years. She must have been born with smarts and perception."

Although they'd only met a few times, he admired his sister and cherished her. Apart from her, he also had a younger brother wandering somewhere out there. Jiang Chen didn't know yet whether he was dead or alive. The worry weighed heavily on him.

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Chapter 1354: The Stunning Marriage Proposal Procession

After settling in Dan Fei and Nian'er, Jiang Chen declared he would go into seclusion, not for cultivation, but to refine Pillcrane Pills. Acquiring two Goldencrown Cloudcranes had eased the pressing issues of ingredient shortage.

Two of the spirit creatures were enough for three cauldrons of Pinecrane Pills. A total of twenty-five pills was a conservative estimate; more than thirty wasn't out of the question. The final amount depended on refining skill and heat control.

Jiang Chen possessed utmost confidence when it came to pill-refining. The last time he'd refined this pill had been the first time since his reincarnation that he'd tackled such a difficult pill, hence his technique hadn't been perfect.

But this second attempt was different. With the experience garnered from his first attempt, he was even more confident in his success, as well as in the quantity he could produce. More importantly, the Goldencrown Cloudcranes were adult ones, unlike the young one from last time.

As for the Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine, he had enough to spare.

Jiang Chen took longer for the refinement, since he was going to manage two in a row. When he opened the lid, spirits seemed to be prancing and dancing inside the pills. He smiled with satisfaction at the result.

"This batch's quality is higher. It seems I've already grasped the essence of the Pinecrane Pill." Jiang Chen admired his pills, pleased with his handiwork. He even flirted with the idea of continuing on with the Emperor Supremacy Pill. But this was an equally difficult pill, so he decided to wait until his return from the Moon God Sect before tackling this task.

Of course, it was also because he only had two stalks of Heavencloud Ganoderma, or else he might have attempted it before leaving.

"Forget it. As long as these things don't grow legs and run away, it doesn't matter when I refine them. Mother's had a long and arduous time under house arrest. As her son, I can't delay any further. A man has to follow his instincts. To have too many reservations is to miss life's opportunities."

Jiang Chen didn't want to make the wandering great emperors wait any longer either, else they run out of patience. He received word about Han Qianzhan and Su Huanzhen's arrival that day as well. They agreed on a gathering place and that those who arrived first would wait for the others.

He secretly summoned every great emperor in Veluriyam and told them about his departure. He left Veluriyam in their hands and asked them not to give a hint of an opening for their enemies to stir trouble.

Nowadays, almost no one dared make waves in Veluriyam when Jiang Chen was present. Pillfire's Emperor Pillzenith had been miserably chased away when he'd tried it. His sorry example was a lesson for others. However, some people might secretly try to cause chaos in Veluriyam if they learned of the young lord's absence.

So Jiang Chen warned the great emperors to stay on their guard and pay attention to any suspicious activity. That being done, he set off with his father. He brought only the Jiao brothers and left the others to guard the young lord residence.

“Lady and gentlemen, our procession will be too eye-catching if we leave together. It’s better to travel separately and meet up once we’re at Tilted Moon Region’s border.” Jiang Chen summoned all of the wandering great emperors to give an overview of his plan.

“No problem. We’ll attract less attention if we split up,” everyone agreed.

Jiang Chen’s party left the city in secret. On the way, they sensed subtle undercurrents running through the Upper Eight Regions, but the situation hadn’t reached overt tension yet.

On this day, they smoothly detoured around Pillfire’s borders and entered Tilted Moon Region. The wandering great emperors also appeared at the border and assembled at the scene.

Jiang Chen’s last trip to Tilted Moon Region hadn’t been that long ago, but it felt like an eternity to him.

He’d made friends in the sect last time, Third Master Jing and Gu Xintang for example. Thus, he wasn’t worried in case he needed contacts, but he wanted to propose marriage for his father without playing any tricks.

The notable figures he’d invited finally congregated inside Frostmoon City. Jiang Chen called everyone together and shared the details of his plan. Since everyone had come for his sake, they naturally followed his lead.

The Moon God Sect hadn’t been entirely at peace as of late. After the third sectmaster had taken a few geniuses to participate in the Dragon and Tiger Meet, Pillfire had reacted with clear hostility. Their colossus of a neighbor seemed faintly intent on blacklisting them.

It gave the senior sectmaster an enormous headache.

As the main leader of the sect, she had to consider her sect’s interest above all. So, she had to show restraint in front of Pillfire’s suppression, whether it was deliberate or not.

On this day, she was in the middle of sect affairs when she received a calling card.

“Senior sectmaster, someone outside the sect is requesting an audience. He says he’s the Great Yu Skysword Sect’s Han Qianzhan here to pay a visit.”

“The Great Yu Skysword Sect? Han Qianzhan?” The senior sectmaster was grave as she scanned the card. Her figure shook as a conflicted expression appeared on her face. “What is he doing here? Between first rank sects, visits rarely involve figures of our level. Even if it’s not unheard of, it wouldn’t be so casual.”

Uncertainty gnawed at her. After all, the two sects were separated by a vast distance and rarely interacted with each other. What was the meaning behind this sudden visit?

Another subordinate came in as she puzzled over the question. “Senior sectmaster, here’s another calling card. It says it’s from the Celestial Cicada Court’s head, Su Huanzhen.”

She frowned even harder. What was going on? Were all the first rank sects of Upper Eight Regions going to visit together?

Before she could make sense of it, she received a third card. It was one of the six titans of the wandering cultivators this time, Emperor Wellspring.

Like snowflakes blown in by the wind, more than a dozen visit cards flurried inside in quick succession. She'd been at the helm of the Moon God Sect for a long time and had experienced great things in her life. Nevertheless, her heart started pounding when she saw this strange phenomenon.

Why had more than a dozen great emperors sent their calling cards on the same day? Was it all planned? What were they here for?

Her heart trembled in faint anxiety as questions whirled in her mind. With so many great emperors at her doorstep, both sect giants and wandering cultivator titans, it was difficult to stay perfectly calm.

This gathering of powerhouses was strong enough a force to raze two Moon God Sects to the ground. Just as she wavered with indecision, she received the last and also the most ostentatious card.

"Jiang Chen? Veluriyam's young lord?" An epiphany suddenly struck her. The mystery was finally solved. "So it's young lord Jiang Chen. He's probably the only one with this sort of influence." She herself could never gather so many great emperors.

"What's his intention? Why did he bring so many here? Did he come to raid my sect?" Her first reaction was a notion of incoming danger. But then she carefully thought it over.

While her sect had benefited considerably from him, she couldn't say that they'd offended him.

"What's this fellow up to? Our sect will be even more of a laughingstock if I turn them away now." She was a decisive person. She knew she couldn't put on airs in this situation. After all, Jiang Chen was Veluriyam's young lord. True, he was on the young side, but his status and influence were unquestioned.

Free and confident, Jiang Chen stood amidst a crowd of great emperors outside the sect's gates, waiting for a reply. Just as he'd expected, the mountain gate opened, revealing the senior sectmaster's figure come to welcome them in person, along with the third sectmaster and a few holy maidens.

"Young lord Jiang Chen, you helped us cure the Moon God Precious Tree's issue and also unearthed a Ying Yang Reverse bloodline talent for us. I haven't had the pleasure of thanking you in person yet. I'm very grateful to see you grace my sect again."

These were mere courtesies, so Jiang Chen didn't pay them much heed. He simply replied with a smile and polite greetings.

"Senior sectmaster, I came here for an important matter. Should we go inside and discuss at our leisure?"

The senior sectmaster smiled unhurriedly. "Those who come from afar are guests. My humble sect is honored by the presence of so many great emperors."

Jiang Chen smiled and abstained from further trite courtesies. He fixed her with an earnest stare and said quietly, "The worthy doesn't beat around the bush, so allow me to be frank. I came here today to propose marriage. I invited Sectmaster Han and Pagoda Master Su Huanzhen as my guarantors, while Emperor Wellspring and the other wandering great emperors are my matchmakers."

“Marriage?” Clear disgust marred her face. *Did so many great emperors come to my sect to propose marriage?*

Why don’t you call it by the proper name of carrying off the bride?

“Young lord Jiang Chen, it’s the tradition of my sect that our holy maidens are future sectmaster candidates. They don’t marry outsiders. I beg your forgiveness. I also heard you have a dao partner? Why would you pay any attention to my holy maidens?”

The baffled Jiang Chen suddenly realized the senior sectmaster thought he’d come to find a wife of his own. He slapped his forehead and laughed despite himself. “Sectmaster, you’re mistaken. I didn’t come for myself, but for someone else’s sake.”

Jiang Chen’s eyes swept through the women by her side. The second sectmaster hadn’t shown herself, enough though everyone else was here. She was clearly reticent toward the young lord of Veluriyam.

Holy Maiden Xu Shan’s eyes flashed with imperceptible disappointment when she heard Jiang Chen hadn’t come for himself.

The senior sectmaster blinked. Jiang Chen wasn’t looking for a wife? Who was he here for then?

Her eyes swept through Jiang Chen’s party. She could recognize each of them at first glance. Did those great emperors with longstanding fame need to come to her sect to find a woman? She racked her brains but couldn’t find an explanation.

Chapter 1355: Marriage Discussions

The senior sectmaster took in a deep breath, puzzlement coloring her eyes. “Young lord, please forgive me if I don’t understand. If not you, who’s looking to wed?”

Jiang Chen smiled. “I’m here for my father’s sake.”

Father? Those of the Moon God Sect were even more confused. Wasn’t that too bizarre? A son proposing marriage for his father? It was usually the other way around! This was incredibly absurd!

“I’m perplexed, young lord Jiang Chen. Who might your honored father be? Is your honored mother still in good health?”

“My mother is naturally in good health. In fact, I came to welcome her on behalf of my father.” Jiang Chen’s smile was serene.

“How ridiculous!” Behind the senior sectmaster, Holy Maiden Xi Yuan could no longer restrain herself. When she’d attended the Dragon and Tiger Meet, the young lord had seemed more interested in Holy Maiden Xu Shan, while she herself had been met with a cold shoulder. That had been enough to foment some resentment. His preposterous words were an occasion for her to express her sentiments.

The senior sectmaster heaved a soft sigh. “Young lord Jiang Chen traveled untold miles to my Moon God Sect for a mere prank. Welcome your esteemed mother? Please forgive me if I can’t understand.”

Jiang Chen smiled with equanimity. “It does sound a little far-fetched indeed. It seems you’re in the dark about the truth of this matter?”

She frowned. "What truth?"

"It's a long story." He sighed. "However, my mother really is part of your sect. She's even been put under arrest for thirty years. My parents have been forced apart for all these years, so I came to prevail upon your compassion. They say that marriage is sacred, that no one should come between husband and wife. My parents love each other dearly..."

Her brows knitted increasingly tighter. "Young lord, I'm even more confused. How could your mother be in my sect?"

"Are you truly unaware? Or is this a mere excuse?" Jiang Chen's voice was heavy.

"I really don't know." The senior sectmaster shook her head. "Tell us, who is your mother?"

She took a deep breath, her voice equally heavy, "Did one of our disciples take a lover when journeying in the outside world?" She was now wading in the dark.

"Not so. My mother grew up in Myriad Domain. But she carries the Moon God Sect's bloodline. If you want to get to the bottom of this affair, we need the second sectmaster here," he patiently explained. He could see her confusion was no pretense.

"The second sectmaster?" Slight nuances flickered through her expression as something occurred to her. She turned to the third sectmaster. "Number Three, ask Number Two to come here."

The third sectmaster nodded slightly and was about to walk off when the senior sectmaster added, "Don't tell her about this yet. Just say I need to discuss something with her."

The senior sectmaster was well aware that the second sectmaster's temperament veered to the extreme. If it truly involved her Blue Moon faction, she might well find an excuse and stay away.

If the young man in front of her had been someone from an ordinary sect, the senior sectmaster would have sent him away without hearing him out. But his was an existence that could shake the human territory with a mere stomp.

She naturally didn't want to offend such a genius. More importantly, she couldn't afford to do so.

With the momentum Veluriyam had displayed as of late, the Moon God Sect couldn't withstand his wrath, no matter the distance between the two factions.

More importantly, Jiang Chen had so many helpers present. On the surface, they'd come as Jiang Chen's moral support and go-betweens for his father. If the two parties fell out, these guys might not continue to be so friendly.

With their overwhelming cultivation, these great emperors could flatten her sect.

Although she didn't think Jiang Chen would be that brutal, she still had to walk on eggshells. Things might become hairy if the young man ever became impulsive.

"Young lord, I think I have a vague impression of the matter you raised. An internal struggle happened in the Blue Moon faction then. I seem to remember a baby lost in the mundane world. Could she be..."

Jiang Chen nodded. "That baby is my mother, Xu Meng."

Pensive, she fell silent. Judging from his serious expression, this matter was likely real.

The atmosphere froze stiffly.

Jiang Chen remarked faintly, "There are three things a gentleman rejoices in. The first is that his parents are alive and his brothers well. Though in good health, my parents have been forced apart like the Cowherd and the Weaver Girl of the ancient myths, separated by the Milky Way. They at least can meet once a year on Valentine's Day, but my parents have been separated from each other for thirty years. Their blood flows in my veins, so how could I stand by and do nothing? Sectmaster, can you blame me at all for this?"

Neither Jiang Chen's voice nor his attitude was urgent, but his words alone could move the hearts of the listeners.

Everyone was born of a father and a mother. To watch them forced apart was an impossible proposition for any cultivator with a hint of righteousness. And, what would become of Jiang Chen's reputation if he couldn't reunite his parents with his current status?

Seeing his attitude, listening to his tone, the senior sectmaster realized he was determined to get his way. If the Moon God Sect opposed him, he might become hostile on the spot.

Lost in her thoughts, she wondered how best to handle the situation. She knew how extreme the second sectmaster was. The latter had always thought of Xu Meng as an affront to the Blue Moon faction, so the senior sectmaster had stayed out this particular bit of business. She'd merely heard some talk now and then. She was worried that Number Two's character would be an obstacle, or even deteriorate the entire situation and make Jiang Chen turn hostile.

The third sectmaster came back with her colleague a moment later. Holy Maiden Xu Qingxuan trailed behind them.

The holy maiden seemed unconcerned, the typically precocious rich daughter at first. However, her heart pounded when she spotted Jiang Chen in the group sitting in the great hall.

Hm? Why's he here? She looked at the men beside him, each of them more imposing than the last, all of them evidently top-level experts. Her father Jiang Feng was also there, occupying the seat of honor. Her heart jumped wildly. Is he here to demand justice for mother?

Her eyes fell on her brother sitting in the center, surrounded by experts like stars revolving around the moon. It seemed her elder brother really was very incredible!

Ever since she'd learned they were siblings from the same parents, she'd paid close attention to every tidbit concerning him. She'd scoured all the rumors coming from Veluriyam of late. Although she very much wanted to compete with him, she had to concede her elder brother's achievements were far above hers for now.

Her heart shook, but she kept her face impassive and meekly followed after the second sectmaster like an obedient girl.

"Number Two, here you are. Have a seat," the senior sectmaster greeted.

The second sectmaster was nonplussed when she saw the imposing assembly gathered in the hall. Her eyes fell on Jiang Chen, seeming to take his measure. With a grave voice, she asked, "This genius is somewhat unfamiliar. I wonder..." She paused, a thought occurring to her. "Could it be Veluriyam's young lord Jiang Chen?"

Jiang Chen cupped his hands without batting an eye. "Second sectmaster, I trust you've been well."

She responded indifferently. "The former Sir Shao Yuan, the former young lord Zhen, and now the young lord Jiang Chen. I have to admit you have quite the number of identities. I don't even know how I should address your esteemed self."

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. "Please call me as you deem fit."

She didn't reply. With a nod, she plopped into her chair. Judging from her demeanor, she still had no clue as to the reason for his presence.

She hadn't connected that Jiang Chen was Xu Meng's son because she hadn't been the one to bring Xu Meng back from the mundane world. The disciples from her faction had taken care of that. Hence, she stayed calm, blissfully unaware of what lay in store.

"Senior sectmaster, why did you summon me?"

The senior sectmaster smiled, pondering how she should phrase her reply. She was truly at a loss how to approach the matter. "Number Two, there's something I've never asked you about, but it seems very important now. In the past, was there a baby from your faction abandoned in the mundane world?"

It was an open wound for Blue Moon to this day and a taboo for the second sectmaster. Even the senior sectmaster had shied away from the subject before.

Her face twisted. "This is an old story we shouldn't mention in front of guests."

The senior sectmaster smiled wryly. "But it's of supreme importance."

Jiang Chen sighed gently and patted his father sitting beside him. He could feel Jiang Feng on the verge of erupting. "Second sectmaster, allow me to explain. The baby from your Blue Moon faction happens to be my birth mother."

His words stunned her, a bolt of lightning from the blue.

"What did you say?" She rolled her eyes at him, her tone solemn. "Young lord Jiang Chen, I've heard many ridiculous things in my time, but it's a first for someone to go around randomly acknowledging people as his parents."

The senior sectmaster quavered. She threw a meaningful look over, indicating for the second sectmaster to not be so reckless.

Indeed, Jiang Chen's mood darkened. "Second sectmaster, you're a senior of notable renown. How can you speak so rashly? Perhaps you think that someone like me needs to curry favor with your faction?" His heavy tone turned the atmosphere oppressive.

The second sectmaster hadn't thought her words through. Regret percolated as soon as they departed her mouth, aware she'd acted impetuously. After all, the one sitting in front of her wasn't an ordinary junior, but the illustrious young lord of Veluriyam. However, Jiang Chen's reply didn't sit well with her unyielding character. Her lips twitched, readying cutting words for a counterattack.

Chapter 1356: Husband And Wife Reunited

The senior sectmaster couldn't be more familiar with the second sectmaster's character. She could tell from the look on the latter's face that her fiery temper was about to explode.

"Number Two, stay calm. Since young lord Jiang Chen's made his request, we ought to investigate as repayment for what he did for the Moon God Precious Tree. If a misunderstanding indeed exists between us, then we should let bygones be bygones and allow husband and wife to reunite." The senior sectmaster hurried to extinguish the fire.

But the second sectmaster was truly short-tempered. She sneered. "Senior Sectmaster, do you believe him simply because he threw out a few random sentences? How can such a coincidence exist in this world? That abandoned child tainted my Blue Moon bloodline, so I had her killed when my disciples brought her back. How could I possibly hand her over now?" She decided to simply deny everything outright.

Behind her, Xu Qingxuan paled, clearly stung by the words. A shiver coursed through her lovely figure.

Jiang Chen might have believed the deception if he hadn't learned in advance his mother was alive and well. However, he did know, so he saw right through the lie.

"Second Sectmaster, I simply lent a passing hand for the Moon God Precious Tree. I don't expect any sort of repayment." His voice was serene. "However, don't look down on my resolve to bring my mother back, and don't underestimate my father's feelings for her."

The second sectmaster smiled coldly. "Young lord, are you trying to frighten me? Although Veluriyam is mighty, I'm not scared of you. Kindly take your grand prestige somewhere else."

"Number Two, that's enough!" The senior sectmaster frowned. Everything had gone as she'd feared. The second sectmaster had talked them into a deadlock.

"Senior Sectmaster, are you really going to side with their nonsense?" The matter was taboo for the second sectmaster, hence she'd adopted an obstinate approach and wouldn't listen to reason.

Anyone else would have investigated the issue and seized the chance to step back gracefully, easing the tension. However, she thought of nothing else but the extraordinary humiliation of her bloodline's tainting. Everything else was negligible.

Beside Jiang Chen, Jiao Yun smiled grimly. "The Moon God Sect is putting on quite some arrogant airs! You must be the second sectmaster? My young lord's been polite with you, but you can't seem to distinguish good from bad. Perhaps you'd like to force him to change his attitude?"

"Indeed. This is supposed to be a happy occasion. Second sectmaster, are you trying to sour the mood? Do you think you can stop our young lord?" Jiao Feng cracked a devilish grin.

Jiang Chen waved them silent, calming the two brothers down.

“Second sectmaster, why don’t we both take a step back? Your Blue Moon’s Holy Maiden Xu Meng is my mother. If I wasn’t reasonably confident of that, I wouldn’t have mustered so many people here. Wouldn’t it be unfilial of me to watch my mother be detained and do nothing? If someone from your sect were in my shoes, I’m confident they wouldn’t be able to turn a blind eye either.”

Jiang Chen’s tone was unhurried. “Let me repeat myself. Don’t look down on my determination to take back my mother. A man owes everything to his parents. For them, I could rend the sky asunder and shatter the earth!”

The senior sectmaster sighed. “Number Two, I know you’ve always thought of it as a humiliation for Blue Moon. Have I butted in all these years? The present is different from the past. If Xu Meng truly is young lord Jiang Chen’s mother, then rather a disgrace, it would be Blue Moon’s blessing. Just think about it. Xu Meng was lost in the mundane world, but still gave birth to such a colossus of our time. Furthermore...”

She glanced meaningfully at Xu Qingxuan but spoke no further. It wasn’t Xu Meng’s fault for being abandoned. She’d only been an infant. What did a baby know? She’d committed no crime and shouldn’t have borne any punishment. Not to mention, she’d also given birth to a genius like Xu Qingxuan.

If young lord Jiang Chen also happened to be her son, then that woman was blessed by the heavens.

More importantly, the Moon God Sect was powerless to obstruct young lord Jiang Chen’s momentum and resolve. The situation could become unsalvageable if it worsened any further.

As the senior sectmaster, she couldn’t allow the Moon God Sect to be backed into that impasse, so she had to take responsibility and make a forceful decision, even if it meant overriding her peer.

The second sectmaster was displeased, but she couldn’t deny the truth. Like a sharp blade, the words slashed deep into her thoughts and showed her a new way of thinking.

Shame? Was it still shameful if Xu Meng had given birth to a genius like Jiang Chen?

A tearful Xu Qianxuan suddenly thumped to her knees.

“Mercy, master, please show benevolence. I already know everything about my mother. Please renounce your prejudice and allow my parents to reunite. Your disciple will remember your kindness until death. I will repay your grace for a lifetime.” The young girl shed anguished tears.

Whether love or hatred, the second sectmaster had always been single-track minded. She was very strict with Xu Qingxuan, but that was an expression of harsh love. She doted on her genius disciple from the bottom of her heart.

Even if she had a heart made of stone, the sight of the young girl on her knees and begging her in tears moved her.

Jiang Chen stared coldly at her. Everything hinged on her attitude now. If she was determined to hold to her position until the bitter end, then perhaps he’d have no choice but to resort to open hostility.

One way led to paradise, and the other led to hell.

The senior sectmaster sighed. "Number Two, Qingxuan is a sensible child. For her sake, you should exorcise the demons in your heart. Even if Xu Meng committed a little wrong, Qingxuan's existence more than makes up for it. Why don't you call Xu Meng here and let them meet? If true, it would be a beautiful tale."

Anger had been brewing beneath Jiang Chen's skin. Only when he saw the senior sectmaster's friendly and pacifying attitude did he rein in his emotions. At least she had her head on straight at this critical juncture.

He handed her a list. "I'm determined to see through the marriage of my father. These are the gifts I've prepared. Please take a look, sectmasters. I hope you can witness my sincerity and won't back me into a difficult corner. My parents already spoke their vows long ago. I didn't come to carry off the bride. In fact, I mentioned a marriage proposal purely out of respect for the Moon God Sect."

Jiang Chen's words were reason itself. His parents were a lawful couple to begin with. No justification was truly needed. He could have taken a tough stance and taken his mother by force.

The so-called marriage proposal and betrothal gifts were mere gestures of goodwill to salvage the Moon God Sect's reputation. Jiang Chen wanted to leave an elegant way out for the sect. And if he could avoid violence, he would naturally do so.

The senior sectmaster dared not take the list directly. She offered him a polite smile instead. "Young lord Jiang Chen, let's obtain confirmation first before we proceed with further discussion. Otherwise, if a mishap happens, wouldn't we become the laughingstock of the entire world?"

To identify the wrong mother would be a ludicrous joke! Hence, cautiousness was required.

Jiang Chen nodded with a faint smile. "In that case, please bring Holy Maiden Xu Meng here."

The senior sectmaster glanced at the second sectmaster. "Number Two, let's proceed. Give the young lord some face. Let it not be said that we of the Moon God Sect don't know gratitude."

The second sectmaster responded, crestfallen, "Ah well. Since you've made your decision, there's nothing left for me to say. Qingxuan, let your mother come here."

Xu Qingxuan finally stopped sobbing. She wiped away her tears and dashed away.

Not long after, she reappeared in the hall with her mother. Xu Meng sparkled with a happiness impossible to describe with words. Day after day, she'd wished on the stars, the moon, hoping ardently for her husband and her son to come and take her away.

Today, her wish was finally coming true.

When her daughter had come for her, she'd broken down in tears.

"Meng'er!" How could Jiang Feng keep his composure? When he saw her from afar, he jumped up from his seat and rushed her way.

"Husband!" Xu Meng's tender figure crashed into his arms, tears of happiness showering them both like the rain. No words were needed. Proof? What more proof was required?

There were many women in the Moon God Sect. Many female disciples sported reddened eyes at the scene, with some crying in secret. They were baffled. They'd heard of Holy Maiden Xu Meng's story. Brainwashed as they were, they'd always thought of her as a stain on the sect's bloodline, as a disgrace. They'd even viewed Xu Qingxuan with some hostility.

But in this moment, when they understood Xu Meng was Veluriyam's young lord Jiang Chen's mother, they suddenly felt envious of her and of her daughter.

The status of Veluriyam's young lord was already a lofty one. Together with Jiang Chen's unbelievable achievements during these past few years, he'd become the hottest topic in the human domain bar none.

Emperor Wellspring chuckled. "The road was long and twisty, but the story concludes on a beautiful note. How wonderful! A holy maiden stranded in the mundane world gives birth to a genius son who goes on to become the greatest genius of the human domain. When this tale spreads, it'll be a song for the ages."

"Indeed. The darkest hour is just before dawn. I'm really quite jealous!"

"Haha. With a good son like young lord Jiang Chen, who wouldn't be envious?" One after another, the great emperors sighed with admiration.

Han Qianzhan smiled. "Senior Sectmaster, allow me to congratulate the Moon God Sect."

The Celestial Cicada Court's Su Huanzhen also heaved a quiet sigh. "We cultivators strive bitterly for the peak of the martial dao. For us, to be stranded in the mundane world would be the height of failure. But perhaps, sometimes true happiness isn't found on at the end of the

[Sovereign of the Three Realms \(WN\)](#)

Chapter 1357: All's Well That Ends Well

Xu Meng and Jiang Feng held each other in a sobbing embrace. Seeing them, the senior sectmaster was seized by contradictory feelings. As a sectmaster, her chastity was still intact to this day. She'd previously held little interest for the feelings between husband and wife. But at the sight of Xu Meng, of her husband who loved her so very much, of her oh-so-outstanding son and remarkable daughter...

Despite her lofty status as sectmaster, perhaps she wasn't as successful in life, comparatively speaking!

Jiang Chen shared in the happiness of his parents' reunion. With a smile, he handed a list of gifts to the senior sectmaster. "Senior Sectmaster, you can accept these betrothal gifts now, right?"

The senior sectmaster glanced at the second sectmaster. Seeing the latter pale but showing no signs of active opposition, she realized with delight that her peer had finally swallowed her prejudice.

With a polite smile, she accepted Jiang Chen's list. Astonishment flickered on her face when she glanced at it. The items written on it almost made sent her into a faint. The first was a pair of Pinecrane Pills.

Pinecrane Pills!

Was there anyone in the human domain who didn't know of this pill? Without contest, it was currently the number one pill under the heavens, whether in price or actual value. The third sectmaster had told her that one of them had been auctioned for more than ten billion during the Dragon and Tiger Meet.

The Moon God Sect dreamed of that pill. It was a wonderful guarantee for someone near the end of their life.

The second was a pair of Emperor Ascension Pills. The list also made note of the pill's use. A cultivator could unconditionally gain a level in the emperor realm. The list specified that one of the two pills was reserved for Holy Maiden Xu Qingxuan.

The third item...

The fourth...

Reading the list made her dizzy. It seemed to scorch her hand when she realized the value of the gifts.

Veluriyam's young lord was famous for his generosity. Experiencing it personally today, she finally realized exactly how lavish the kid was. Even great emperors at the very peak of Upper Eight Regions might not be as generous. But for this young man, it was mere trifles he dispensed with a wave of the hand.

She very much wanted to present a calm and dignified front, or she and her sect might be mocked for being inexperienced in the ways of the world, scared by simple gifts. She sifted through the items back and forth several times before finally realizing she'd forgotten her manners. She handed the list over to the second sectmaster.

"Number Two, take a look."

The second sectmaster was still peeved, but she'd at least realized the Moon God Sect might be brought to ruin if this matter was handled badly. Although she was reluctant, she had to admit they would be the ones to suffer if Jiang Chen turned hostile.

But if everything ended well, then rather than shame, her Blue Moon could boast of having a holy maiden with a son as celebrated as Jiang Chen.

After weighing the pros and the cons, she'd finally come to see reason. Only, her great sense of pride wouldn't allow her to discard her indifferent facade. But when she saw the gifts, her almond-shaped eyes twitched with amazement.

Pillcrane Pills?

Two of them at that?

Just like the senior sectmaster, the list instantly subdued her. No matter how obstinate, she couldn't refute his sincerity when she took in his generosity. The list even noted that some pills were a special gift for Xu Qingxuan. Naturally, this was favorable to her faction.

Her thoughts whirled at top speed.

This Jiang Chen is rich and ostentatious. These gifts are enough to express his sincerity. Even the senior sectmaster might run out of patience if I keep protesting. Qingxuan must also be aware of the truth. If I alienate her, won't I waste the painstaking efforts of half a lifetime?

Pondering back and forth, she finally decided not to oppose any further. Xu Meng's matter had indeed once been her greatest taboo and her greatest shame. If not for Xu Qingxuan, she would have executed her after bringing her back.

But when Xu Qingxuan became a holy maiden of Blue Moon, the young girl's talent had won her over. She'd pinned all her hopes on this disciple.

She'd planned on brainwashing Qingxuan and make her reject Xu Meng. However, no matter how obedient the girl was otherwise, she remained stubborn as a mule when it came to her mother.

Qingxuan never clashed with her head-on, but the girl always plied her with soft words, acted like a spoiled child, or perhaps threw a small fit and stopped cultivating properly. The second sectmaster was helpless when the girl reacted like this.

It was fortunate the matter wasn't irreversible yet. If she'd truly killed Xu Meng, Jiang Chen wouldn't have left things alone with his current position. She heaved a soft sigh.

"Young lord Jiang Chen, this list is worth its weight in gold. I won't be unreasonable. I've always seen your mother's matter as a personal affront. I've never been able to see past this prejudice of mine. If not for Qingxuan, I might have ordered your mother executed."

For some reason, she suddenly confessed her inner feelings. "I must admit it's partly out of personal bias, and partly out of the sect's longstanding rules. Fortunately, no lasting regrets have been created. With a son like you, Xu Meng's gained unparalleled karma in the mundane world. Is that what they called mixed blessings? It's a profound lesson for me..."

With everyone's eyes fixed on her, she suddenly thought her lengthy monologue was a little inopportune.

She nodded. "I will no longer involve myself with your mother. From today on, she is a married woman and no longer part of Blue Moon. You and your father should take her back to Veluriyam." After a pause, she added, "However, Qingxuan is Blue Moon's holy maiden. I won't back down on that front. If you want to take her away, you'll have to go over my dead body!"

Despite making some concessions, this old woman's attitude was as tough as ever.

Jiang Chen smiled. As long as she didn't oppose his parents' reunion, he didn't mind a little impetuosity.

As for Qingxuan, she followed the Moon God Sect's martial dao. It would be detrimental for her cultivation to take her away. And judging from the little girl's attitude, severing the relationship between master and disciple seemed out of the question.

"Young lord Jiang Chen, it seems the conclusion is to everyone's satisfaction. What do you think?" A faint smile clung to the senior sectmaster's lips.

"Qingxuan, what do you say?" Jiang Chen looked at his sister. If she didn't have any affection for her sect, he'd also take her away, no matter the hurdles.

Xu Qingxuan bit her lower lip, forcing back her tears. She walked up to Jiang Feng and Xu Meng. "Father, Mother, I swear I will repay you for giving birth to me. But I can't simply cut the bonds between me and the Blue Moon faction, or forget my master's kindness. I would like to keep sides happy. I don't want to turn my back on either my parents or my master."

After reuniting with his wife and seeing Qingxuan's beauty and talent, Jiang Feng only felt tender affection for his daughter. How could he force her to do anything?

"Qingxuan, stay here. Although I'm no cultivation expert, I still know it's the best choice for you. You're our daughter. No matter how high the sky or how vast the earth, you'll always be our daughter."

Xu Meng gently stroked her child's cheek. "Qingxuan, you've stayed by my side all these years. I know you're a kind and good-hearted girl. I do bear resentment towards your master, but it's gone now that I'm reunited with your father. Although the Moon God Sect drove away my son, it raised my daughter. The kindness and resentment cancel each other out. I won't hinder your future path. Stay here and cultivate well with your master. If you ever miss your parents or your elder brother, you're welcome in Veluriyam at any time. Your daddy, your brother... everyone cherishes you very much."

Xu Qingxuan could no longer fight back her tears no matter how strong she tried to act. Sobs racked her body.

"Silly, why are you crying? You should be happy for your parents." Xu Meng softly stroked her daughter with boundless tenderness.

Jiang Chen cupped a fist at the senior sectmaster and the second sectmaster. "Qingxuan is my younger sister and a holy maiden of the Moon God Sect. It is indeed more suitable for her to remain here. However, I also hope she will be happy in the sect and won't suffer anything, or else I might take her away one day. Sectmasters, please take this as your warning."

Afraid of her master's short fuse, Qingxuan hurried to clarify, "My master is very good to me. I won't suffer here."

Jiang Chen smiled gently. "Little sister, it's true your master values you. However, you can also rely on me from today onwards. If one day a bastard or some skirt-chaser makes you unhappy, just say the word and I'll teach him a lesson."

His sister laughed despite her tears. "Who needs your help? I can beat them off by myself."

Xu Meng berated, "Qingxuan, don't be so cheeky. Chen'er is your big brother, why do you talk to him like this?"

Xu Qingxuan knew her mother was feigning anger, but she still murmured, "I've already said he needs to beat me if he wants me to call him big brother. Otherwise, I'll call him stinky brother."

The crowd roared with laughter at her adorable words. Those present sighed with emotion at the warmth of their family. The senior sectmaster, in particular, felt a twinge of yearning.

Xu Qingxuan rolled up her sleeves, exposing arms as white as jade to challenge Jiang Chen. “Want to give it a go? I want to see if Veluriyam’s young lord is stronger than a holy maiden of the Moon God Sect!”

Even the second sectmaster had trouble sitting still at these words. Xu Qingxuan was a little too spoiled!

“Qingxuan, don’t cause trouble. Even Emperor Shura was helpless against young lord Jiang Chen’s talent. How dare you challenge him with your little bit cultivation?” Despite her short temper and her pig-headed character, the second sectmaster wasn’t entirely blind yet.

[Sovereign of the Three Realms \(WN\)](#)

Chapter 1358: Discussion of the Greater Picture

Xu Qingxuan was one of the Moon God Sect’s best geniuses. She was the cream of the true disciples’ crop, an extremely hot contender for the next senior sectmaster. She still couldn’t compare to Jiang Chen’s radiance, but she wasn’t really intent on beating him in actuality. It was merely a bit of girlish mischief, enjoyment of arguing with her brother.

It took a bit of verbal effort to win his mother, but the entire process was much smoother than Jiang Chen had expected. He was able to see the senior sectmaster alone that day and handed the listed betrothal presents to her.

The senior sectmaster was more pleased with Jiang Chen the more she looked at him. She was mildly embarrassed to receive his gifts. After all, Jiang Feng and Xu Meng were husband and wife to begin with. The Moon God Sect was the party responsible for breaking them up, yet it ended up becoming the recipient of a set of extravagant wedding presents.

But as a leader of a major sect, she knew that Jiang Chen’s gifts were for his parents’ marriage in name only. They had a more important purpose as an olive branch towards her sect.

The entire human domain was now split into two parts: Pillfire City represented the north while Veluriyam Capital led the remainder of the political powers.

In theory, the Moon God Sect was better off allying themselves with the geographically closer Pillfire City. However, they couldn’t just ignore the immense value of Jiang Chen’s offered gifts.

“Young lord Jiang Chen, the Moon God Sect feels these presents to be undeserving. I’m sure that you mean something more by them, yes?” she ventured.

Jiang Chen smiled slightly, not in a hurry to reply. After a moment, he tossed out a question in return. “Senior Sectmaster, there are eight first rank sects in the Upper Eight Regions. Have you analyzed their relationships?”

The senior sectmaster paused. Relationships? The situation in the Upper Eight Regions hadn’t changed for at least a thousand years. The relationships between the first rank sects seemed stable and unchanging.

She couldn’t quite understand what he was getting at. “The situation between first rank sects has been stable for at least the past millennium. Do you have a different opinion, young lord Jiang Chen?”

The young man drew a few lines upon the wall, delineating a rough map of the Upper Eight Regions and its incumbent factions' territories.

"Senior Sectmaster, please take a look." Jiang Chen pointed toward the map. "The Heavenly Dragon Sect is here, the Ninesuns Sky Sect is here, and the Skysword Sect is here."

"Mmm." The senior sectmaster nodded, but still wasn't quite sure what he wanted to say.

"These three are the strongest among the first rank ones in terms of fighting power, correct?"

The sectmaster pondered this assertion for a moment before agreeing begrudgingly. "They're a cut above the rest in terms of martial fundamentals, yes. What are you trying to point out here, young lord Jiang Chen?"

"Of these three first rank sects, the Heavenly Dragon Sect is located in the midwest of the upper regions. It is also the most independent of its peers. The Ninesuns Sky Sect is in the central region. And finally, the Skysword Sect is quite close to Veluriyam Capital."

These facts were clear enough at a glance of the map. There was no need for Jiang Chen to remind the senior sectmaster of these things. She was still entirely foggy on what he wanted to communicate.

"Let's look at the north. The Moon God Sect is in a remote corner in the northwest. Pillfire City has you by the throat. As long as that city dictates as such, the Moon God Sect will not easily be able to strengthen itself. That's why your sect is the weakest among the eight first rank sects and has been for many years. I hope my bluntness doesn't anger you, sectmaster."

"Your youth doesn't hinder your incisive insight, young lord Jiang Chen. You've a clear view of the Upper Eight Regions' affairs." The senior sectmaster smiled self-deprecatingly.

"It's clear enough to anybody that bothers to look. If we examine it more closely, we can notice that around Pillfire City, both the northwestern Moon God Sect and the northeastern Empyrean River Palace are comparatively weak among the eight first rank sects.

"The Sublime Chord Temple controls territory a bit south of Pillfire City. They too, are one of the weaker sects among the first rank ones.

"There is an ancient saying that's very applicable here. One cannot allow others to sleep soundly next to them. Pillfire City's stance and method are a perfect illustration of this principle in action."

The senior sectmaster finally colored a little. She knew what Jiang Chen was getting at now. She had considered the problem in depth as well, though not as deeply as Jiang Chen had done. Visualizing the information on the map made things quite evident.

The first rank sects near Pillfire City were uniformly on the weaker side. The senior sectmaster didn't know much about the other two sects, but the Moon God Sect was restricted by Pillfire City at every turn. Though it expended a great deal of effort on breaking free of the city's influence, Pillfire's tendrils crept in through a plethora of details nevertheless.

As a first rank sect, the Moon God Sect was not willing to be relegated to the status of being a puppet of its neighboring city. Its members had tried their best to avoid Pillfire City's grasp.

Alas, Pillfire City's gradual infiltration of the Moon God Sect meant that many of the two factions' cultivators were intricately connected in terms of profit and gain. It wasn't yet a puppet of Pillfire City, but neither was it particularly far off.

Any sudden offensive from Pillfire's part against the Moon God Sect would put the latter in a passive position. If a first rank sect relied on another for both technology and resources, then it wasn't in the best of places in terms of autonomy.

The senior sectmaster was lost in thought for a moment before smiling wryly. "It seems that your appetite is as grand as your actions are, young lord Jiang Chen."

"Why do you say that?" Jiang Chen asked back with a smile.

"Aren't you insinuating these things to force the Moon God Sect to express our allegiance to Veluriyam Capital? Hmm?" The senior sectmaster was a smart woman.

"That's the way of the world, Senior Sectmaster," smiled Jiang Chen. "I'm not forcing you to do anything. Rather, your wisdom is pushing you towards making the right choice."

"Veluriyam Capital has dealt a great blow to Pillfire City's prominence in recent years," the senior sectmaster sighed softly. "But..." She paused for effect before continuing. "The Moon God Sect is directly adjacent to Pillfire City. Our route to the outside world can be blocked off at any time. A public display of support for Veluriyam Capital will mean swift and overt retribution. We're not scared of anyone per se, but getting into a fight with Pillfire City is hardly beneficial for us."

This was one of her primary topics of concern. Pillfire City was a heavy-handed faction with regards to its oppression of surrounding factions. The Moon God Sect would be in a different place right now without Pillfire's covert meddling. But even if she knew that, what could she do to combat it?

The Moon God Sect was a first rank sect, but Pillfire City was still far too large to resist or overcome.

"Senior Sectmaster," Jiang Chen smiled faintly. "The circumstances are still rather ambiguous and there isn't yet open strife. You can ride the fence and watch how either side does. But when the dust clears, it may be too late to pick."

The senior sectmaster's heart tensed.

Jiang Chen didn't follow up with anything. "Now that my mother is with me," he saluted with cupped fist, "I won't bother you by staying any longer. Until we meet again."

He had both analyzed the state of political affairs for the senior sectmaster and given her a hint. If the Moon God Sect really wasn't willing to ally with Veluriyam Capital out of fear for Pillfire City, there was an extent to his patience as well.

Jiang Chen's next goal was to uproot Pillfire City altogether. The situation was very obvious. Pillfire City was an obstacle in Veluriyam Capital's way. The two cities were two ferocious tigers battling for territory; one of them was sure to end up defeated.

The human domain could not house two superpowers.

Of course, Jiang Chen didn't take Pillfire City lightly at all. The ability to remain as the top faction in the Upper Eight Regions for such a long time meant that it was far more resourceful than anyone would expect. Its past preeminence over Veluriyam Capital was living proof of that. Emperor Pillzenith, moreover, was a villainous mastermind who fought for power and gain at any cost. He would be difficult to deal with.

Jiang Chen had no choice but to overcome this obstacle. The best way to do so was to turn it into a stepping stone, a springboard for his meteoric rise!

His entourage was planning to depart from the Moon God Sect for Veluriyam Capital the very next day. Their host had no inclinations to stop them from leaving. That night, Jiang Chen met Third Master Jing and Gu Xintang. He took good care of his pawns wherever they were, and the Moon God Sect was no different.

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The relationship between the Moon God Sect and Pillfire City was rather delicate. The Moon God Sect poured everything it had into struggling free of Pillfire's fetters, but the latter's permeation only grew deeper by the day.

News about Jiang Chen's wedding escort team arrived that evening at Pillfire City. Emperor Pillzenith's eyes glinted with displeasure when he heard of the development.

"That brat dares do such a thing?" The emperor was not having a good time as of late. A chain of incidents had forced Pillfire City onto the back foot.

Ever since the Vassal Meeting at Veluriyam Capital, he had suffered loss after loss at Jiang Chen's hands. The Dragon and Tiger Meet at Veluriyam had crushed Pillfire's Pill-Martial Summit in both momentum and prestige.

Only a few days prior, the secret team Emperor Pillzenith had sent to Myriad Domain had suddenly evaporated overnight. It was absolutely maddening!

Pillfire City was wealthy and resourceful, but two great emperors and three emperors were still a significant loss.

He'd had enough. He'd been thinking of how to get revenge. His string of failures had wisened him up, however. He'd realized that Jiang Chen was not to be trifled with. If he didn't have a perfect plan that could gain decisive victory, he couldn't afford to blunder into another conflict.

[Sovereign of the Three Realms \(WN\)](#)

Chapter 1359: Great Emperors Convene at Pillfire City

As the largest leading faction in the Upper Eight Regions for the last three thousand years, Pillfire City had a shocking stockpile of both raw strength and resources.

In stark contrast to Emperor Peafowl's visionary outlook, Emperor Pillzenith was a man of pure ambition. He lusted after power and authority and above all else, supremacy over others. It was difficult to say which of the two emperors was stronger.

But in terms of character and aura, Emperor Peafowl was widely recognized as a gentleman in the Upper Eight Regions. Even his enemies respected and admired his honor.

Emperor Pillzenith lacked equivalent compassion and morals. He didn't have the noble spirit of putting the world before himself, nor did he hold any feelings for the misfortunes of the world.

In summary, Emperor Peafowl was empathic while Emperor Pillzenith was ambitious.

Under the compulsion of his ambition, Emperor Pillzenith took Pillfire City to greater and greater heights. The city's visible assets placed it in a publicly acknowledged first place position.

Even though the southern Veluriyam Capital was often held to be its parallel, the city never expanded in nearly the same fervent way under Emperor Peafowl.

Therefore, the past three millennia of expansionism and growth had put Pillfire solidly ahead of its rival. Though they were still competitors in the open, Pillfire had secretly surpassed Veluriyam in most respects.

Most importantly, Pillfire played almost perfect politics with its surrounding factions. Therefore, Emperor Pillzenith held many more cards than Veluriyam Capital did.

When the emperor heard the news, he immediately summoned all of his city's great emperors.

Pillfire City originally possessed thirteen great emperors under its name. The thirteen represented discrete factions, each with its own heritage.

Aside from these, Emperor Pillzenith had two more great emperor retainers under his personal command. Moreover, the emperor had close relations with quite a few wandering cultivator great emperors as well. They had a close working relationship.

Much of the time, he used this to his advantage by asking them to act in situations where it would be inconvenient for himself. They were paid accordingly, of course. Because of how wealthy Pillfire City was, it had plenty of benefits that wandering great emperors were interested in. The nature of these transactions was roughly the same as what Jiang Chen was doing now with his group of recruited great emperors.

Not counting the two great emperors who had died in Skylaurel Kingdom, the eleven great emperors – Emperor Pillzenith included – were gathered together in the same room.

"My friends, I'm sure you've already heard the news from Myriad Domain." Emperor Pillzenith was very grave.

"Your Majesty, that news is nothing more than a baseless rumor from wandering cultivators. There's no proof yet, is there? Our investigating disciples don't work that fast."

"I sent disciples to investigate as a last-ditch effort. Both Old Ma and Big Horn have had their soul lamps snuffed out."

Many prominent figures of large factions had soul lamps forged for themselves. If those lamps shattered on their own, that meant their owners were dead. With these words, the great emperors present could no longer sit still.

"Your Majesty, Old Ma and Big Horn... did their lamps really break?" A great emperor with a lion's mane of golden hair looked incredulous.

"I'm the master of Pillfire City. Why would I lie on a matter as important as this?" frowned Emperor Pillzenith.

"Your Majesty, Veluriyam Capital no longer has Emperor Peafowl. Even with the addition of Mo Wushuang helping them, they shouldn't have such incredible combat power. Old Ma and Big Horn were middling proficiency amongst us, but they weren't exactly weaklings. Old Ma in particular was definitely above average. How could Veluriyam Capital have killed them? Even if they couldn't win, couldn't they have run for it?"

"Yes, I find it hard to believe that Veluriyam Capital has anyone strong enough to prevent them from escaping."

"Plus, their excursion was very well-hidden. No one from Veluriyam Capital should know about it. That means an ambush was unlikely to have been waiting for them. Killing Old Ma and Big Horn at the same time in an incidental encounter... I find that hard to imagine."

"Is it possible that Emperor Peafowl hasn't died? Did they meet Veluriyam's leader in their misfortune?" A particularly imaginative emperor voiced the idea.

"Don't be ridiculous," Emperor Pillzenith rebuked. "Peafowl can't possibly appear again. There is a less than one percent chance that he's alive. Even if he is, he'd be crippled."

Emperor Pillzenith had led the sortie for the ambush of Emperor Peafowl. He was sure that the wounds his enemy had suffered couldn't be recovered from. If he had suffered the same kind of injury, it would be impossible for him to save himself.

Moreover, Emperor Peafowl had fled into the desolate wildlands where many demons were sealed away. Even if he had been lucky enough to live, the wildlands were an untamed and dangerous place. Countless demons made their homes there. A tiny bit of trouble was tantamount to mortal peril.

"Your Majesty, far-fetched ideas aside... if Old Ma and Big Horn are dead, the culprit surely is Veluriyam Capital. Since when did we allow Veluriyam Capital to trample over us like this?"

"Yes, Your Majesty. If we do not respond in kind, how are we supposed to strike fear into the hearts of the rest of the world?"

"Your Majesty, Pillfire City's limelight has been stolen away quite a bit by that kid. If this keeps happening, our influence over pill dao will be obliterated over time. We can't take this lying down any longer. If this persists, he'll become an even more fearsome threat!"

"Yes, we should declare open war on Veluriyam Capital with this opportunity. We can overwhelm their erroneous ways through crushing force!"

"If Pillfire City doesn't bare its fangs now, the entire world will believe that we are afraid of Veluriyam Capital. We need to show the bystanders that we aren't afraid of Veluriyam one bit!"

“What do we have to be scared of? It’s preposterous to fear a Veluriyam Capital without Emperor Peafowl. They’re led by a brat who’s still wet behind the ear! How can they stand up to a veteran faction like us?”

“Everyone, calm down. Veluriyam Capital’s young lord is rather peculiar. Aren’t there rumors he’s backed by Myriad Abyss Island? I think that it’s important for us to be careful.”

A patron from Myriad Abyss Island was a matter of serious consideration. The merest mention of the place was enough to douse the heated meeting with a bucket of cold water. Everyone quieted down instantly. They had all forgotten that Jiang Chen was able to mobilize even a senior from Myriad Abyss Island.

All eyes settled on Emperor Pillzenith. After all, the leader of Pillfire City was supposed to come up with the plans.

“From ancient times, Myriad Abyss Island has scorned connections with our continent. Therefore, information about it has existed only in legends. That means it’s not as easy to come and go from the island to our continent.” Emperor Pillzenith spoke with measured tones. “If Myriad Abyss Island really was as powerful as rumors say, its experts wouldn’t possibly stay long in the human domain. The senior from Myriad Abyss Island has clearly already left after the Dragon and Tiger Meet. Whether or when he’s going to come again, who knows? As long as he – and the rest of the island’s experts – are far from us, a Peafowl-less Veluriyam isn’t much different from the average first rank sect.”

A first rank sect wasn’t comparable to Veluriyam Capital in terms of raw strength. After all, the latter had always had seven titled emperors. In recent days, the addition of several more great emperors was a significant consideration as well.

Still, Pillfire City didn’t much care exactly how many great emperors its rival city had. Veluriyam’s potential connection to Myriad Abyss Island was its only concern.

“If so, Your Majesty, then we should take a harder stance. We can’t keep going on like this. Veluriyam Capital’s reputation is growing more and more every day. If left unchecked, Pillfire will be replaced in only one or two decades.”

“Your Majesty, if two ride on a horse, one must ride behind. It’s high time for the human domain to see a shift in power, especially the Upper Eight Regions. If we act now, we have plenty of just cause for war.”

“What cause?” A confused emperor piped up hurriedly.

“Veluriyam Capital stamped out Great Scarlet Mid Region’s imperial family, House Yan. After a while, they ended up taking over the entire region. If we seize on this misstep, we can use it to start a war with Veluriyam Capital. Plus, they’ve killed several of our men. It’s a chance to publicly get revenge.”

“Your Majesty, Emperor Heartcloud has summarized it well. Why should we let a kid sit on top of our heads?”

“Your Majesty, that kid is an oddball. He has a seemingly infinite supply of amazing pill recipes. Pinecrane Pill, Emperor Supremacy Pill... the entire human domain is abuzz about them. This is a big blow to our city’s reputation.”

Pillfire City styled itself as the foremost faction in pill dao. If it continually lost to Jiang Chen in pill dao, its difficulty of further expansion would increase drastically.

Such was the power of reputation. Building up a good one required a slow buildup. Destroying it on the other hand, could occur with the slightest mishap.

Pillfire City was in a miserably awkward position. Many cultivators, wandering ones especially, had announced their intent to participate in only Veluriyam's meets from now on. The Dragon and Tiger Meet had been too spectacular and rewarding for them to miss.

Though many valuable things and events were present at the Pill-Martial Summit as well, comparison with Veluriyam made the event lose its luster. Attention was drawn away almost instantly from Pillfire because of it.

Now every cultivator in the human domain was discussing the Pinecrane Pill, the Emperor Supremacy Pill, and other miraculous pills they hadn't even heard of before.

In the world of martial dao, it was typical for the weak to blindly follow the strong. Furthermore, those without much power often followed their peers in the idolization of an individual. Right now, Jiang Chen fit all the criteria of a good idol.

Chapter 1360: Making Plans

The whole of Pillfire shared Pillzenith's indignation. The city hadn't been this frustrated in several millennia. It had always stood tall even against a towering figure like Emperor Peafowl. However, a mere decade had been enough for the Jiang Chen brat to crimp their style in the human domain.

Were they to tolerate that??

Noting the great emperors' restlessness, Pillzenith knew his time had come. He would be able to push them over the edge with just a little more. A cold smile on his lips, he swept a meaningful gaze across them.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I have to admit, much to my chagrin, that the kid will steal our limelight if we allow him to grow. He and Veluriyam will be the first thing that comes to mind when cultivators mention pill-refining. What of us then?"

For a great faction, especially its direct beneficiaries, it was human nature to view with hostility those poised to supplant them.

"Your Majesty, we have to act first."

"We need to nip him in the bud. It'll be too late once he fully spreads his wings."

"Indeed. He might have Myriad Abyss Island behind him, but so what? He's only a fledgling. If he were to die an obscure death tomorrow, their powerhouses won't pay it too much heed. After all, compared to the human domain, such a legendary place must have its own geniuses in spades."

Pillzenith smiled mysteriously. "Are we all of one mind then? Are we agreed he must be stopped?"

“Your Majesty, it’s our only choice, else he’ll most certainly become a future calamity.”

“I agree. Without Emperor Peafowl, Veluriyam has no supreme expert to stop us.”

Pillzenith grinned. “Hehe, very good. We’re in luck, the heavens have sent us an unparalleled opportunity.”

“Oh? What opportunity?” The listeners’ eyes shone.

“According to my intelligence, he snuck into the Moon God Sect a few days ago. He’s still there as we speak!”

“The Moon God Sect?”

“What’s he doing there? Are those fickle wenches switching allegiance to Veluriyam?”

“Those hags really don’t know what’s good for them. Your Majesty, they’re always dragging their feet and never showing proper respect for your goodwill. Are they really flirting with the distant Veluriyam now?”

“It seems we’ve been too kind to them.” The news rattled the great emperors. By right, that sect ought to belong in Pillfire’s sphere of influence since it bordered the city on the northwest.

Pillfire couldn’t tolerate a disloyal neighbor. Someone was suddenly struck by a possibility.

“Your Majesty, the opportunity you spoke of, could it be...?”

“He’s in the Moon God Sect? The kid’s handing us his life on a silver platter. What are we waiting for?”

“That’s right. He killed Greathorn and Old Ma when they trespassed on his domain. Since he’s slipped into ours, it’s time to pay him back.”

“Let’s go the whole hog and kill him!”

“Your Majesty, please issue your order. His death will stop Veluriyam dead in its tracks!”

Pillzenith’s tone was solemn. “It’s an easy decision for me. But please keep in mind, there’s some risk involved. Don’t shy away from your responsibilities if it comes back to bite us.”

“Your Majesty, what risk could there be?” “The experts from Myriad Abyss Island? No matter how close they are to Jiang Chen, it’s impossible for them to stay for long. Aren’t they gone already? Who’s to say they’ll come back? Even if they do, it might be centuries later.”

“Indeed. They’ll have long forgotten this tenuous friendship by then.”

“Your Majesty, we await your command. Whatever happens, we’ll face it together. If we can kill the kid, the advantages outweigh the risks.”

They despised Jiang Chen, but they had to concede that he was a mighty thorn in their side. The Longevity Pill in the past, the Pinecrane Pill now, and mentions of the Emperor Supremacy Pill and also the Emperor Ascension Pill...

Even for a faction like Pillfire with an inheritance unrivalled in the human domain, these pills were unheard of. It would be a lie to say they weren't jealous.

A great emperor clad in daoist robes and sporting a top knot stood in the crowd. He'd kept his own counsel until then but suddenly voiced, "Your Majesty, may this poor monk say a few words?"

"Tallpeak, share your wise opinion with us." Pillzenith smiled.

Tallpeak's cultivation wasn't the highest in Pillfire, but his intelligence set him apart. For that reason, Pillzenith sometimes lent him a ear.

"Your Majesty, from his beginnings in the mundane world until today, Jiang Chen's made his share of enemies over the years. We might not be the ones who most want him dead."

"Oh?" Pillzenith stirred in his seat, waiting for Tallpeak to elaborate.

"There's the Eternal Celestial Capital, for one. They prodded Great Scarlet into destroying Myriad Domain. There's little love lost between them and Jiang Chen. There's also the Ninesuns Sky Sect... Their presence in Myriad Domain has also prompted the kid's enmity. In Swordfield Mid Region's Infant Shriek Valley, Jiang Chen killed many eminent figures from both sects. I doubt they would bury the hatchet."

Pillzenith debated with himself for a moment. "From what I know, It's likely the Ninesuns Sky Sect's already reached a compromise with him. But his enmity with the Eternal Celestial Capital runs too deep. They were the only ones excluded among all eight first rank sects in the Dragon and Tiger Meet. Even a blind man can see they're at daggers drawn."

Tallpeak nodded. "They must be quite anxious nowadays about a possible attack from Veluriyam. They're at their most vulnerable. Won't they be desperate for a backer? We can make good use of them."

"Tallpeak, do you mean for them to assume to be the vanguard?"

Tallpeak nodded. "Precisely."

Pillzenith smiled wryly. "You don't know everything. Jiang Chen is slippery as an eel. He's invited a mighty parade of powerhouses on his trip. There's the Great Yu Skysword Sect's Han Qianzhan, the Celestial Cicada Court's Su Huanzhen, as well as Emperor Wellspring, Inferno, and others from the six wandering titans. Even if we came out in full force, can you say for certain we'd win? To say nothing of the trivial Eternal Celestial Capital."

As a first-rank sect, the Eternal Celestial Capital was only second-tier in Upper Eight Regions. Withstanding Jiang Chen was a pipe dream for them.

Tallpeak gasped. "How can he gather so many people? Why are these wandering great emperors at his beck and call?"

What an inconceivable thought. Why were these proud men running errands for a youngster?

"The Pinecrane Pill, of course." Pillzenith snorted. "Do you think they're lofty and aloof? These wandering great emperors are nothing but poor bums! People like them are easy to buy off. They'd think nothing of murder to get their hands on a pill, to say nothing of an errand."

A wisp of envy colored his tone.

He'd overseen Pillfire for three thousand years. He too had tried to win their loyalty during the many grand gatherings he'd held in the city. Only, his bargaining chips hadn't proved tempting enough.

In contrast, Jiang Chen had attracted many of them in a very short time. Even if it were a simple scheme for the sake of Pinecrane Pills, it was indirect proof of the kid's skill in bribery.

"Your Majesty, the situation's a little delicate in that case. On top of the wandering great emperors, Han Qianzhan and Su Huanzhen aren't to be trifled with either."

Pillzenith snorted. "How the mighty have fallen. Why are two heads of first rank sects doing the kid's bidding instead of attending to their duties? ."

"Your Majesty, I think we should summon a few more sects. I've hear that the Heavenly Dragon Sect's Long Baxiang argued with Jiang Chen at the Dragon and Tiger Meet. Perhaps we can get his sect involved?"

The Heavenly Dragon Sect was one of the greatest first rank sects.

"Them, the Eternal Celestial Capital, the Sublime Chord Temple and the Empyrean River Palace. With four first-rank sects and us, how will the kid escape from our clutches?" someone jeered.

"Your Majesty, the Empyrean River Palace and the Sublime Chord Temple will obey us, but the Heavenly Dragon Sect has always been independent. Will they follow our lead?"

Pillzenith snorted. "With enough benefits on the line, they won't say no. I've hear that Jiang Chen has a true dragon. If we grant it to the Heavenly Dragon Sect, do you think they'd refuse?"

Tallpeak shook. "Your Majesty, I fear giving them a true dragon would be letting the fox in the chicken coop."

The heavy-handed Heavenly Dragon Sect would become an even greater threat than Veluriyam if allowed to grow.

Tallpeak's concern was met with an indifferent smile. "It's a temporary strategy. There's no eternal enemies in the world and no eternal friends. Do you think I won't curb them once we're done with Jiang Chen?"

The crowd looked at him with respect and awe.

"Your Majesty, it's so decided. Time waits for no one. Shall we immediately get in touch with the different sects?"

The great emperors rubbed their hands with eagerness, ready for action.