

Three Realms 1381

Chapter 1381: Jiang Chens Requests

Faced with no response, Tallpeak added, "Young lord, we're at fault for underestimating your strength and charisma. We know now that fighting against Veluriyam would be detrimental to the human domain. Surely, you too realize the chaos it'd create? The flames of war would destroy the entire domain overnight. Senior Peafowl was a peace-loving man. Will you betray his legacy as soon as you inherit his seat?"

Alas, he shouldn't have mentioned Emperor Peafowl. Jiang Chen bristled with rage.

"Emperor Peafowl? Have you no shame? Pillzenith, if you hadn't plotted against him with Shura, would we be here today?" he rebuked.

Pillzenith was indifferent.

"The strong prey on the weak. It's the way of cultivators. His style of martyring himself and bemoaning the fate of mankind was no longer fit for the times. If I hadn't gotten rid of him, would you be Veluriyam's young lord? Jiang Chen, you should be grateful to me. Under his rule, Veluriyam was riddled with internal strife and wallowed in mediocrity. Isn't your city more united now? Aren't you stronger? A ferocious leader like you is better for the region. The process notwithstanding, the result was favorable for you."

The twisted argument angered Jiang Chen so much he laughed. Pillzenith's shamelessness knew no bounds. For him, the ends justified the means. Perhaps he believed everyone to be like him. A man like him was very dangerous.

"Should this young lord thank you then?" Jiang Chen replied with a cold smile.

"No need for thanks. I merely thought to take advantage of your city's momentary weakness. But since you've assumed power, Veluriyam is stronger than ever. The best choice for us both here is to bury the hatchet."

"Hehe, Pillzenith, what a glib tongue. You plot against Veluriyam's riches, scheme against Emperor Peafowl, and think you can bury everything with a few words?"

"Jiang Chen, don't forget you've killed three of my great emperors. That makes us even." If not for his son, Pillzenith would never have tried to placate his enemy.

"Even? Even ten of your great emperors couldn't hold a candle to Emperor Peafowl. He's both a teacher and a friend. You can't begin to fathom the relationship between us. You better pray he's fine, or I will never let this end!" The young man had no desire to trade nonsense back and forth.

"Jiang Chen, do you really want to fight to the bitter end? Do you think I'm powerless simply because my son is in your hands?"

Jiang Chen calmly responded, "Feel free to do whatever you like. I can tell you clearly that you won't be getting him back for now. The moment you take up arms, he dies!"

If not for the palace's powerful restriction, Pillzenith would have charged in regardless of the consequences. He wanted Jiang Chen cut into a thousand pieces! To be so helpless in front of a youngster... This was his life's greatest humiliation. He smoldered with rage.

Tallpeak quietly advised, "Your Majesty, he's purposely provoking you. Please rein in your anger. Allow this subordinate to speak with him on your behalf."

Be calm, keep your composure, Pillzenith continuously reminded himself. However, how could he when his most beloved son was in enemy hands?

Tallpeak cupped his fist. "Young lord Jiang Chen, I'm certain you're ready for battle, but the human domain truly can't bear a clash between us. Are we to forever cling to the past? Let bygones be bygones. What will it take to make peace?"

Jiang Chen had little desire for peace, but now wasn't the right time for all-out war. He replied with a faint smile, "I'm too angry to think of that for now. I can consider the issue once I calm down, depending on your sincerity of course."

"Then, can you release Sir Tian Lin?" Tallpeak couldn't help but ask.

"How naive." Jiang Chen smiled coldly. "Why would you be so humble, if not for him? Should I release him so you can stab me back?"

His stubborn refusal left Tallpeak helpless.

"Jiang Chen, what would it take for you to let him go?" Tallpeak also had some trouble keeping his anger in check.

"It'll depend on my mood. For now, get lost unless you want to fight!" These fellows are afraid of the palace's defenses. No fight is to be had today, it seems.

Tallpeak refused to give up. "Young lord, as long as you release him, we vow never to seek revenge against Veluriyam again. Everything that happened before will be water under the bridge. You're also welcome to any material compensation you want. Gems or pills, it's yours for the asking."

He had obtained Pillzenith's agreement for this offer beforehand.

"Gems and pills. How generous of you. Too bad, these toys interest me very little."

"What do you want then? You have but to ask. Everything's on the table as long as you release Sir Tian Lin."

"Everything?" Jiang Chen's eyes shone, feigning interest.

"Everything, as long as it's within our power," Tallpeak hurriedly added.

"I have but to ask?" Jiang Chen blinked innocently with a teasing smile.

"Please do. We'll do everything we can."

"Fine. I do have some requests, as it happens. And it's also within Pillfire's power." His lips curved in a lazy smile.

“What is it? We’re all ears.”

“Very simple. You must be aware of my enmity with the Eternal Celestial Capital? Eradicate them and I promise I’ll send back Tian Lin unharmed. I won’t touch a single hair on his head,” Jiang Chen responded in all earnestness.

The holy emperor paled. He looked at Pillzenith, shouting, “Your Majesty, he’s trying to drive a wedge between us! Please don’t listen to the bastard’s malicious drive!”

The kid’s ploy wasn’t the most subtle one, but it was extremely difficult to counter. It would be child’s play for Pillfire to eradicate his sect. He was deathly afraid Pillzenith would agree on the spot for the sake of his cherished son. If that was the case, his sect was in grave danger. With Pillfire’s strength, the Capital would be easily wiped out.

Pillzenith smoldered. “Jiang Chen, are you playing me for a fool? The Eternal Celestial Capital is a first rank sect with deep roots and inheritances dating back to ancient times. Each of the eight first rank sects is a pillar of Upper Eight Regions. The collapse of a single one would send the entire region reeling. Do you want Pillfire to be forever reviled?”

“Hahaha.” Jiang Chen smiled contemptuously. “Pillzenith, don’t be so self-righteous at the drop of a hat. This isn’t like you. Veluriyam is also a pillar of Upper Eight Regions. Why didn’t that cross your mind when you plotted against us? Why didn’t you fear being reviled then?”

The reply rendered Pillzenith speechless.

Tallpeak came to his rescue. “Young lord, please make a more realistic request. The Eternal Celestial Capital is our friend. Would you attack the Celestial Cicada Court if I asked you to?”

“Friend, hmm?” Jiang Chen smiled, looking very accommodating. “What about the Heavenly Dragon Sect then? There’s little friendship there, correct? I saw Long Baxiang bicker with you lot repeatedly. Who knows what he’s scheming? You must be quite put-out with his sect. After Veluriyam, they must be next on your agenda. See, I’m even giving you a legitimate reason to destroy them. If you do, I swear to the heavens I’ll return your son unharmed.”

It was Long Baxiang’s turn to blanch. He shouted, “Kid, using someone else to do your dirty work? Aren’t you afraid of heavens’ wrath?”

“Haha. Long Baxiang, is it any nobler killing and robbing in broad daylight like you? At most, I’m simply giving you a taste of your own medicine!”

Flustered, Long Baxiang turned to Pillzenith. “Your Majesty, this kid is sowing dissension among allies! He’s as vile and poisonous as a viper.”

Everybody knew what the young lord was doing, but no one could stop him.

However, Pillzenith was a giant of his time. He knew Jiang Chen was simply making things difficult for him with unrealistic demands. Destroying a first rank sect would wreck Pillfire’s status and reputation in Upper Eight Regions. More importantly, it would result in unacceptable losses for his city.

Three of his great emperors had already fallen. If more were to die against the Heavenly Dragon Sect, it would harm Pillfire's fundamental strength. Hence, it was impossible for him to accede to Jiang Chen's demands.

Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

Chapter 1382: Back In Veluriyam

"The Eternal Celestial Capital is your friend and you're afraid of the Heavenly Dragon Sect. Fine then. The Emyrean River Palace and the Sublime Chord Temple, I'll let you pick either one." Jiang Chen sensed Pillzenith's hesitation and continued making fun of the great emperor.

Everytime Jiang Chen named a sect, its great emperors twitched and their hearts pounded. Although Pillzenith couldn't possibly agree in public, they all knew how much he loved this son. What if the two parties reached a secret agreement?

Their fear was well founded. For Pillzenith, Tian Lin was worth the destruction of any sect. *Why did the damn kid have to ask in front of everyone?* The humiliation of today was greater than the shame he'd suffered in his entire life. If not for his son and the palace restriction, he'd have attacked the damn brat long ago.

He took a deep breath and nailed the young lord with a look. "Jiang Chen, I have many sons. It's impossible for me to abandon a cultivator's righteousness for even one of them. Enough with trying to sow dissension. I won't agree to a single demand."

Jiang Chen clapped with a bark of laughter. "Haha, if I didn't know you any better, I'd admire your uprightness. Oh well, I'll raise your son for you in that case. Don't you have many of them? Just pretend you never had this one."

Pillzenith almost spat blood at Jiang Chen's casualness, but he could do nothing but scowl.

"Your Majesty, the kid is clearly afraid of all-out conflict. He won't dare kill Sir Tian Lin. We might as well retreat for now. We can capture one of his people in the future and make a trade," Tallpeak offered.

It's the only option left to rescue Tian Lin. It's impossible to take him back with me today. Pillzenith eased up a little when he came to terms with the idea.

However, he still didn't dare be too rude. He arched his hands. "Jiang Chen, I've lived for several thousand years, but you're the greatest opponent I've ever met, even more so than Emperor Peafowl. The student indeed has surpassed the master. I admit defeat today. However, if you harm a single of my son's hair, I vow to slaughter all million of Veluriyam's citizens. If you endanger his life, I won't spare a single soul in your territory!

"Let's go." He left with a wave of his hand, his great emperors following behind.

Long Baxian shot a cold, conflicted glare at Jiang Chen, his tone treacherous. "Quite a good trump card you've got today. I hope you can hold onto it tight!"

Jiang Chen glanced back, unconcerned. "Just remember, I'm one to hold a grudge."

Long Baxiang left with a snort.

A little fretful, the holy emperor didn't even have the courage to make eye contact before leaving.

The young lord fixed his departing figure with narrowed eyes but made no move to stop him. He naturally couldn't cope with the Eternal Celestial Capital all by himself.

When all of his enemies had left, he sat down cross-legged, meditated, sorted his thoughts, then finally took a peek outside. He was in no hurry to leave. Pillzenith might not have given up hope and could've set up additional traps.

He observed the surroundings carefully, only retracting the palace after being certain that Pillfire's men had truly left. Why hadn't they tried to ambush him? This was a bit odd. Pillzenith he could understand, but what of the Eternal Celestial Capital? Why weren't they trying to steal a march on him?

They shouldn't have let him off so easily, given the depth of their enmity. But Jiang Chen soon understood. Pillzenith must have stopped them.

Indeed, the holy emperor was incomparably depressed. He'd wanted to rally all his sect's powerhouses and kill Jiang Chen while the latter was still in his domain, no matter the risks or losses. Letting this tiger return to his den would spell his sect's future doom.

Alas, Pillzenith had harshly forbidden the plan. The latter hadn't wanted to interfere in the grudge between Veluriyam and the Eternal Celestial Capital, but what if Jiang Chen used his son as a shield? It'd be too late for regrets then.

He'd likewise warned the Heavenly Dragon Sect, but their two great emperors hadn't been confident they could kill Jiang Chen on foreign soil in the first place. Pillzenith's warning extinguished their ambitions completely.

Still, that didn't stop them from resenting Pillfire's master. He'd been the one to suggest killing the kid, but was also the reason why they'd retreated with their tails between their legs.

Jiang Chen had a smooth trip back to Veluriyam.

The city stood as one, ready for war. After he'd dismissed the great emperors, they'd brought word back to the city. From top to bottom, the entire place was on tenterhooks because of the young lord's predicament. Quite a few people wanted to dispatch troops to his rescue.

However, none were ever sent in the end. The young lord certainly had his own plan, or else he wouldn't have sent the great emperors back. The most important was to protect the city well and wait for him to come back.

And come back he did.

The entire city sighed in relief at his safe return. Unknowingly, he'd become Veluriyam's backbone.

Jiang Feng and Xu Meng had returned to the young lord residence quite some time ago. Even their escort had returned to the Moon God Sect. As to Xu Qingxuan, she'd taken up residence with her parents a few days ago.

Her arrival had reassured the city's force. So Jiang Chen hadn't been trapped. Instead, he'd snuck to Pillfire and captured Pillzenith's son!

The young lord hadn't been afraid of these great emperors at all! He'd slipped away despite their siege! No wonder he'd been confident enough to send his men away.

"Father, mother, forgive your unfilial son for causing you worry." Affection welled in Jiang Chen when he saw his parents' concern. His past memories were merged with his current life. For him, these parents were genuine blood kin.

"Chen'er, for our safe return, you've assumed all the risks by yourself. Your mother has been worried sick. Now that you're safe and sound, she'll finally have a good night's sleep." Jiang Feng sighed.

Xu Meng stroked her son's head. "It's my fault. You grew up without your mother's love, yet I made you toil for my sake and brave untold dangers..."

"Mother, it's nothing more than proper filial piety. Stinky brother, don't you think so?" Xu Qingxuan winked at him, making him smile.

"She's right. As a son, how could I face the heavens if I didn't rescue my parents? Mother, don't worry. Few in Upper Eight Regions can corner me."

His mother nodded. "Right, right. To think my beloved son would be so formidable! You bring me so many surprises. But you should thank your father properly. He's spared no effort raising you by himself during all these years..."

Jiang Feng blushed. In truth, he'd play little part in his son's success. In fact, his son's success was just as much a surprise to him. He would have been content to let his son stay a wastrel, as long as he lived ignorant and worry-free.

However, things didn't always turn out as one might expect. To this day, he was bewildered by the young man's transformation. Sometimes, he even wondered whether someone had replaced his child.

However, no one could fake the intimacy between blood relations. Perhaps, when his son had been beaten by Eastern Kingdom's king, the heavens had taken pity on him and enlightened Jiang Chen?

"That reminds me. Father, mother, Qingxuan, you better stay in the residence for now. I've captured Pillzenith's son, so he might send experts to strike at those close to me."

Xu Qingxuan fumed, "Hmph, let them come. I'm not afraid!"

Aware of his sister's aggressive nature, Jiang Chen merely smiled. A curfew or grounding was out of the question. He could only stay vigilant around the city. Fortunately, he could deploy the Goldbiter Rats and detect anyone suspicious within several hundred miles.

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

Chapter 1383: The Balance Of Power in the Upper Eight Regions

That evening, Jiang Chen enjoyed a happy family reunion with Dan Fei, Nian'er, his parents, and his sister.

"Chen'er, we couldn't be prouder of you and your sister." Xu Meng tried valiantly to keep her husband in check, but he felt compelled to broach the subject. "I have nothing to be dissatisfied with as a father.

Only, your mother gave birth to two children in the Moon God Sect. Apart from Qingxuan, you also have a younger brother. Ai, I wonder where he is now!"

His heart ached everytime he thought of his second son. How could a parent not be distressed by the unknown whereabouts of their own flesh and blood, thrown out by the Moon God Sect to wander to the world, perhaps even to die?

Many times, he'd almost left the residence in search of his offspring. The chances were dim after so many years, but Jiang Feng refused to give up. After all, hadn't he reunited with his wife in the end?

An unwavering conviction fueled his own belief, just like when he'd searched for Xu Meng.

"Don't worry, father. I haven't forgotten. Provided he's... I'll find him one day, as long as he's alive." Jiang Chen reiterated the vow he'd made on the day of his parents' reunion.

Xu Qingxuan had grown under the second sectmaster's wing. She knew of her twin brother, but had had few dealings with him. She held no deep feelings for her twin, but her parents' longing stirred her own emotions. She felt somewhat guilty, not for her own actions, but for her master's.

If not for her master's willfulness, her brother could have lived under the sect's protection. He'd been exiled out of her master's stubbornness, and perhaps she'd even secretly sent assassins after him? Knowing the second sectmaster, it wasn't out of the question.

She couldn't speak of her worries out of consideration for her parents' feelings. But she swore to herself she'd find him for her family's happiness and to redeem her master.

The next morning, Jiang Chen summoned all of Veluriyam's great emperors. He explained their current relationship with Pillfire, as well as the broader state of Upper Eight Regions.

Emperor Coiling Dragon seethed. "Insufferable! We haven't repaid them yet for Emperor Peafowl. How dare they scheme against the young lord? Do they really want to fight to the bitter end?"

"Young lord, we need to stay vigilant. Emperor Pillzenith is a spiteful man who always gets his revenge. Even Daoist Peafowl used to be wary of him. He won't take this loss lying down," Emperor Void warned.

"Young lord, should we make the first move and catch them off guard?" Emperor Coiling Dragon offered a radical suggestion.

"Absolutely not, my friend. Up north, Pillfire is protected by a ring of first rank sects at their beck and call. And when it comes to great emperors, we can't match them in quantity." The experienced Emperor Petalpluck immediately opposed the risky endeavor.

Emperor Skysplitter said after a moment of reflection, "War will come one day, but now's not the right time." He glanced at Jiang Chen. "With Pillzenith's son in the young lord's hands, we're the ones to decide when to open hostilities."

Out of Veluriyam's great emperors, Vastsea was in Great Scarlet supervising the three great sects while Peerless supported Dan Chi at the Regal Pill Palace. The Jiao brothers were Jiang Chen's bodyguards and rarely expressed their opinions. But this time, they couldn't restrain their anger.

“Young lord, we brothers have had many dealings with Pillzenith. I guarantee he won’t forget this grudge. He might shy away from war for now, but he’ll attempt to capture those dear to you. You must be careful.”

Jiang Chen nodded. “Don’t worry, I’ll be on my guard.”

“That being said, going to Pillfire City to capture Sir Tian Lin? We bow to your skill and boldness, young lord. It would have been impossible for us.” The two of them were gobsmacked by Jiang Chen’s intrepidity.

The daring plan had afford Jiang Chen a perfect trump card and stopped Pillzenith dead in its tracks. Otherwise, Veluriyam might soon have had to face the combined attack of Pillfire and four first rank sects.

Emperor Void advised after some reflection, “Young lord, four first rank sects seem to be siding with Pillfire. That’s bad news for us. To curb their ambition, we must rope in the rest as fast as possible, even the Ninesuns Sky Sect.”

Among the other four sects, the Skysword Sect and the Celestial Cicada Court were Veluriyam’s allies and wouldn’t jump ship.

Thanks to Xu Qingxuan, the Moon God Sect would also steer away from Pillfire. However, demanding outright allegiance to Veluriyam would be far more difficult.

Lastly, the Ninesuns Sky Sect wasn’t so easy to deal with. Like the Heavenly Dragon Sect and the Skysword Sect, it was one of the strongest first rank sects.

Veluriyam would benefit enormously from their assistance. That would make the layout of Veluriyam against Pillfire evenly matched. But if the Ninesuns Sky Sect were to lean the other way, Veluriyam’s position could be immensely weakened.

Thankfully, that was unlikely to happen. They were mortal enemies with the Eternal Celestial Capital and wouldn’t join the same camp. Moreover, Jiang Chen had reached a deal with them and mended their fences. At the very least, Sect Head Clearsky wouldn’t stand against him, an extremely important detail as the Ninesuns Sky Sect tipped the scales of whichever side they chose.

Of course, this was just the situation for now. As long as Jiang Chen continued growing, he wouldn’t need to fear the entire human domain one day, to say nothing of a single Ninesuns Sky Sect.

“Young lord, can we rope in the Ninesuns Sky Sect?” Coiling Dragon couldn’t help but ask.

“That won’t be easy. They don’t lack for ambition,” Petalpluck interjected, his words true.

Jiang Chen smiled. “A little ambition is normal. They already stand at the peak of the first rank sects, how would they not aspire to greater heights?”

In Upper Eight Regions, Veluriyam and Pillfire stood above the first rank sects. The latter naturally dreamed of superseding the two. However, dreams alone were useless. They had to be backed by strength.

“Young lord, you clashed with them back in Myriad Domain, but Shangguan Yanqing clearly tried to mend fences during the Dragon and Tiger Meet. I think we can win them over.”

“Indeed. They’re located right at the center of Upper Eight Regions. It’s a strategic position. A good relationship with them is vital.” The great emperors shared their own views.

“It’s almost impossible to make them submit wholeheartedly, but they won’t be our enemy for at least ten years,” the young lord asserted.

He’d made a deal with Sect Head Clearsky to borrow their refining formation in exchange for a Pinecrane Pill to be provided within ten years. Hence, he was confident they would never become enemies in that time frame. “That reminds me. Where are Emperor Wellspring and the other wandering great emperors? Are they still in the city?”

“They are,” replied the Jiao brothers. “They’d never leave without the Pinecrane Pill. Hmph, when you need these fellows...”

Jiang Chen interrupted with a wave of the hand. “Jiao Yun, Jiao Feng, don’t blame them. I’m the one who asked them to leave. It was unfair to expect them to risk their lives for a pill they haven’t obtained yet.”

After all, their tenuous relationship was solely based on the Pinecrane Pill. It was nowhere solid enough for them to put their lives on the line.

Jiang Chen left his residence after the meeting in search of Emperor Inferno and the others. They were also delighted by Jiang Chen’s safe return.

“Everyone, I apologize for the long delay. Thankfully, you’re all hale and hearty. Today, I’ve come to honor my promise.”

The wandering great emperors beamed with excitement. Was the Pinecrane Pill finally close at hand? They’d waited so long for this moment.

Chapter 1384: Emperor Wellsprings Worry

The wandering great emperors were all smiles after receiving their Pinecrane Pills.

“Young lord Jiang Chen, you have gained my eternal friendship!” Emperor Inferno was elated.

Emperor Reliance giggled. “Young lord Jiang Chen, sometimes I’m truly convinced that Old Brother Peerless made the right choice. One can truly reach great heights if they follow you. I heard that Old Brother Peerless has achieved another breakthrough while in Myriad Domain? He’s surpassed the advanced realm into the supreme realm, and is only one step away from the very pinnacle.”

The crowd was taken aback.

The realm of great emperor was different from other cultivation levels and consisted of only six levels: half-step, initial, mid, advanced, supreme, and the peak.

Emperor Peerless was at the very boundary of advanced realm and one step away from supreme. It was why he was ranked fourth amongst the great titans of the wandering world and placed with the likes of Emperors Inferno and Reliance.

But after his breakthrough, the rankings were due for a reshuffling. The top three amongst the great titans were supreme great emperors, including Emperors Wellspring, Sabledeep, and Everviolet.

Emperor Pillzenith had convinced Emperor Everviolet to join the operation this time, but the latter had become a lot more reserved after entering the palace. He positioned himself at the very back of Emperor Pillzenith's camp and rarely expressed anything. In fact, he didn't show a hint of strength even when the group left.

However, Jiang Chen knew full well that Everviolet wasn't to be underestimated.

This wandering great emperor was widely regarded as the strongest amongst the six titans and Jiang Chen had personally witnessed his strength as well. Everviolet wasn't as strong as Emperor Pillzenith, but he was extremely close.

Jiang Chen was extremely glad when he heard that Old Brother Mo had achieved a breakthrough. But he also knew that Mo Wushuang no longer pursued breakthroughs just within the confines of the great emperor realm. As a recipient of the Kunpeng bloodline, he aimed for far higher pursuits.

Wellspring laughed. "Daoist Peerless strives to better himself in spite of his already impressive success. The rankings between us six titans will only become a lot more complicated. For all we know, I might no longer have the upper hand against Daoist Peerless the next time we spar. Come to think of it, it's been a while since any of us titans have sparred. I really wanted to exchange a few moves with Emperor Everviolet during our previous encounter... but it hadn't exactly been an opportune moment for such things."

Jiang Chen laughed. "Emperor Wellspring, don't sell yourself short. You're just as strong as Emperor Everviolet."

Wellspring sighed. "It's not that simple. Emperor Everviolet cultivates eye and martial techniques that are both vicious and dominating. My techniques are tame and gentle in comparison. In a direct clash, my winning chances are significantly lower."

"Not necessarily." Jiang Chen shook his head. "The martial dao path you've chosen isn't a problem. In the martial dao world, there are plenty of cases in which hard and unyielding techniques are defeated by soft and gentle techniques."

The crowd nodded in agreement. They were quite supportive of Jiang Chen after everything they've been through. The young lord had always treated them with utmost sincerity and straightforwardness. When previously ambushed, he'd generously allowed them to leave and didn't involve them in the conflict with Pillfire City.

This action had earned him a great amount of respect. They became even more convinced that he was someone worth befriending. Moreover, now that they'd received their Pinecrane Pills, they naturally became even more biased towards him and Veluriyam Capital.

Wellspring roared with laughter. "Since young lord Jiang Chen has given me such encouragement, I have to exchange a few moves with Emperor Everviolet next time we meet!"

"Haha! That'll be a sight to behold!" Jiang Chen exclaimed.

"Young lord Jiang Chen, my stay in Veluriyam Capital has been quite enjoyable. I'm thinking about extending my stay for a little longer. Will this be an inconvenience to you?" Emperor Wellspring grew serious with his earnest question.

Jiang Chen was mildly taken aback, but he quickly regained his composure and smiled. "An esteemed senior like you is more than welcome here. In fact, it'd be even better if you can make your stay permanent!"

"I have thought about it." Emperor Wellspring answered truthfully.

"Oh?" Jiang Chen was taken by surprise yet again. "I'm immensely flattered. Your fondness of my city has come quite unexpected."

"Young lord Jiang Chen, I've arrived at this decision after much deliberation." Emperor Wellspring declared earnestly with a look at the other wandering cultivators. "Everyone, I've been a recluse with very few worldly desires in my life, but that doesn't mean that I'm a heartless and uncaring person. For the past few days, I've put much thought into the Upper Eight Regions' current state of affairs and I've realized that we are in much greater danger than I'd initially thought."

This startled the crowd. Bewilderment was written all over their face as they stared at Emperor Wellspring.

"Everyone must think that I'm being an alarmist. How can there be danger when the Upper Eight Regions are so prosperous? But I'd recommend that you don't treat my warning as false tales. A great danger is lurks beneath, one possibly aimed at the entire human domain."

"One example of said danger is Pillfire City. Their control over the Upper Eight Regions grows more apparent with each passing day. The Emyrean River Palace and Sublime Chord Temple, both neighboring first rank sects to the city, have been reduced to puppet factions. The Moon God Sect has stubbornly resisted their influence, but their geographical location means they will never escape Pillfire's grasp. Even the Eternal Celestial Capital is on the verge of falling to their influence. The Heavenly Dragon Sect still possesses independence, but they won't be spared from the same fate once Pillfire City decides to stretch their tentacles west. Of the remaining, the Ninesuns Sky Sect is located in the center of the region and a distance away from Pillfire City, but they will most certainly be the next target after the Eternal Celestial Capital.

"With that, the Great Yu Skysword Sect and the Celestial Cicada Court are the only first rank sects spared from such a fate as they're located in Veluriyam Capital's vicinity. However, the balance of power in the Upper Eight Regions will be tipped once Pillfire conquers the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect. Can anyone say for certain that the Skysword Sect and the Celestial Cicada Court will remain safe then? Will even Veluriyam be safe?"

Wellspring warned solemnly. "If you think that the conflict between these superpowers has nothing to do with us, and that our freedom isn't in jeopardy, then you're gravely mistaken."

“Emperor Pillzenith is an extremely ambitious man. His ultimate goal is to conquer the entire human domain and lay claim to every expert and resource. If he succeeds, the world will truly become a place where those who submit to him prosper, and those who oppose him die.”

Wellspring sighed gently. “Perhaps I may be over exaggerating a little, but based on Emperor Pillzenith’s actions over the past years, I can assure you that he’s inching towards this direction. His attempt on Emperor Peafowl’s life is an indication that his ambitions have crawled into the light from the shadows.”

The room filled with silence.

“Old Brother Wellspring, is Emperor Pillzenith’s appetite really that big?” A great emperor couldn’t resist asking.

“Indeed. It’s far larger than any of our imaginations.” Wellspring stared meaningfully at Jiang Chen.

“Young lord Zhen, before you appeared, I really didn’t believe that anyone could go up against Emperor Pillzenith’s ambition. On several occasions, I’ve even thought that his ambitions might not be a such a bad thing for the human domain.”

“We need a great ruler who’ll spur us into motion in the face of great danger.” Wellspring sighed gently. “However, after careful consideration, I realized that Emperor Pillzenith isn’t the right person for the task.”

“Oh? Why is that?” Emperor Inferno broke his silence.

“The reason is simple. Emperor Pillzenith is a man with a capability for such things, but he doesn’t possess the heart to rule. Unlike Emperor Peafowl, he lacks compassion. The human domain will be a cruel and harsh place under his rule. Unfortunately, Emperor Peafowl possesses the heart, but lacks the ambition.”

Jiang Chen nodded in agreement with Wellspring’s analysis. “Emperor Wellspring speaks wisely. Emperor Peafowl is a compassionate and caring person, but conquering the human domain has never crossed his mind..

“Old Brother Wellspring, what do you mean by danger? We’ll face some adversity if Emperor Pillzenith conquers the human domain, yes, but calling it great danger is surely an exaggeration?” a wandering great emperor inquired.

“Ai. Do you really believe that Emperor Pillzenith will be able to smoothly realize his ambitions, that the various great sects won’t fight to the bitter end? Do you think young lord Jiang Chen will let him swallow Veluriyam Capital whole? Oppression will always be met with resistance. Once the conflict begins, the human domain will fall into endless war and slaughter. It’ll be a true calamity. Once the cogs have been set into motion, nothing will stop the conflict.”

A grim and forbidding atmosphere descended onto the crowd as they digested Emperor Wellspring’s words.

“Of course, this is merely conjecture. The true source of danger doesn’t lie here.” Emperor Wellspring sighed. “The dangers of internal conflict, no matter how convoluted and chaotic, will dissipate with the passage of time. But the same cannot be said if the source of the danger comes from a foreign entity. The ancient demons have begun to grow restless. The races beyond the Boundary Stele are already

watching intently. If the status quo breaks, can the human race really survive the plight, especially when the human domain is a pile of loose sand? I'm extremely worried." This was Emperor Wellspring's greatest concern.

Jiang Chen was rather surprised. As expected of a great titan of the wandering world, his concerns and views have a greater depth than normal.

Chapter 1385: Immense Support For Jiang Chen

The wandering great emperors present were typically a solitary bunch. The only interest they had was in how to increase their own strength.

Emperor Wellspring's perspective was one that most of them couldn't appreciate. A few idle thoughts here and there, sure, but they never dwelt long upon them.

In their opinion, the direction of the human domain was a topic of consideration only for the leaders of large factions and sects. The tall should bear the burden when the sky falls.

Emperor Wellspring's words shook these great emperors to the core.

"Old Brother Wellspring, is the human domain going to be in a lot of trouble?" One of the them frowned.

"You're an honored senior, Old Brother Wellspring. We aren't good at thinking about such difficult topics. We get headaches whenever we try. Can you tell the rest of us what to do in this situation?"

"Yes, Old Brother Wellspring. Show us the way." The wandering great emperors respected their fellow titan's morals and authority a great deal.

Emperor Wellspring glanced at Jiang Chen, then sighed. "I've been thinking about an important topic recently. Given our present circumstances, perhaps the only hope for the human domain lies with young lord Jiang Chen."

Everyone looked at the mentioned youth.

The young man himself was pleasantly surprised. He hadn't expected Emperor Wellspring to support him so readily.

Wellspring motioned to Jiang Chen. "Young lord Jiang Chen, don't be too quick to rebut me either. Hear me out first."

"Everyone, think along with me. Why not see for yourself whether I'm right or not? We wandering great emperors are the elite among our fellows. We should have our own ideas about things. I'm just presenting my own as a reference, not trying to force you into agreeing with me.

"Old Brother Wellspring, it's our honor to hear your guidance. No one bears you any ill will for it."

"That's right. My brain certainly isn't as well-developed as yours, old brother."

Wellspring nodded at the mass anticipation from the crowd. "From what I see of the human domain right now, I firmly believe that our only hope and only possible factor for change is young lord Jiang Chen. This isn't an exaggeration at all.

"If the young lord and Veluriyam are suppressed by Emperor Pillzenith and his cronies, the future of the human domain will be dim indeed. Neither Pillzenith nor any other man of ambition has the ability or ethics to lead the human race out of the swamp of fate before us.

"If a demonic invasion breaks out or the boundary steles are broken, alien races will invade our lands. Emperor Pillzenith won't be the best choice for leading humanity. In fact, his very hands will bury our race's hopes." Wellspring was very serious.

"I don't mean to disparage or praise anyone by saying these things. I just don't think highly of Emperor Pillzenith because he's too narrow-minded and ambitious. He doesn't have a heart that can encompass an entire world like Emperor Peafowl des. A man like that can't possibly lead humanity. We don't have much information remaining from the ancient war against demons, but we still know that we survived only under the leadership of a group of honorable and moral men. Only with that kind of character can one transform the impossible into the possible."

The emperor was filled with reverence as he mentioned the ancients. "In today's age, it will be a much more painful test to suffer another demonic invasion. In ancient times, humans were a powerful race with matching heritages. But the cream of the crop has departed from the human domain, and less than a tenth of their heritages remain. In terms of strength and resourcefulness, we are less than a fraction of our ancestors.

"That's not the most worrisome. The human race of today no longer possesses the faith of our forebears. We don't have a leader or a common belief. Instead, there's conspiracy and sedition. If I may ask, are you optimistic still about our chances against a foreign invasion, demonic or otherwise?" Wellspring's hypothetical was very thought-provoking.

The current human domain was as he had said. Its various sects competed against one another with schemes and plots for the sake of insignificant profit. Ambitious men like Emperor Pillzenith lit fires of chaos everywhere in the Upper Eight Regions, desiring anarchy more than anything.

How could men like that possibly lead the human race?

That was the core reason Wellspring held the leader of Pillfire in such disdain.

A man of Pillzenith's position and fame should have been a prime candidate for leadership. He should have been a logical beacon of respect and worship among his fellow cultivators.

"Old Brother Wellspring, you're absolutely right. However, we wandering cultivators can't dictate the way of the world."

"Isn't that right? Emperor Pillzenith has too much authority, and he's overbearing to boot. Are we supposed to change him as wandering cultivator experts?"

"Ah, if the world ends up in trouble, the important guys should take responsibility. We wandering cultivators should spend our days however we'd like. We won't get any more, after all."

Wellspring snickered. "Is that what you think? You bunch of hard-earned great emperor realm cultivators are actually huge pessimists?"

“We’re not pessimists, Old Brother Wellspring. There’s just nothing we wandering cultivators can possibly do.”

“Exactly. Like you said, old brother, someone like young lord Jiang Chen should be the protagonist.”

Wellspring sighed softly. “It seems that my words are wasted on you. We wandering cultivators cannot effect change ourselves, but we are more than able to assist those who can.”

Jiang Chen’s heart quavered when he heard Emperor Wellspring utter those words. Was Wellspring expressing implicit support? Was the great emperor standing on his side – on Veluriyam’s side?

Serendipity itself, indeed. A most grateful surprise. If he could receive the support of these wandering great emperors, he could control the perception of the entire wandering cultivator world.

His Dragon and Tiger Meet prior had been instituted for that exact purpose. He’d wanted to craft a good reputation for himself with the wandering cultivators, winning their hearts in the process. His investment was reaping returns after all.

“Why not speak more plainly, Old Brother Wellspring?” One of the wandering experts laughed. “You want us to support young lord Jiang Chen, right?”

“We’ve all gotten Pinecrane Pills from young lord Jiang Chen. Of course we’re going to support him. You don’t need to tell us twice!”

“That’s right. We didn’t do much to get those pills in the first place. If the young lord has a use for us, why would we refuse his request? Isn’t that right, everyone?”

“Right, right, right. We wandering cultivators always pay our debts. Young lord Jiang Chen has been perfectly forthright with us. We aren’t going to be heartless wolves to him.” The wandering great emperors piped up amongst themselves.

Emperor Wellspring pushed downward with both hands, smiling. “My meaning may not be transparent enough yet. I don’t mean helping the young lord on any specific matter. I mean that we should help him in all the sweeping changes that follow to the world. We must stand firmly behind him to support him. Sometimes, it may even be necessary to lead the wandering cultivator world to do so.”

Jiang Chen felt rather embarrassed. He hadn’t expected such stalwart support from Emperor Wellspring.

It looked like his friendly gestures towards the wandering great emperor titan had been wise choices.

“We will listen to you without question, Old Brother Wellspring. Why would we possibly support Pillfire over Veluriyam? Emperor Pillzenith is a tyrant and few in our community like him. Young lord Jiang Chen is young, capable, and friendly. There’s no reason for us to look anywhere else!”

“That’s right. Absolutely none.”

Emperor Wellspring sighed. “Young lord Jiang Chen, I can’t influence the decisions of others, but I will stand by your side firmly from now on. I will support your fight against Emperor Pillzenith and your gathering together of the entire domain. I support your claim to rule over the entire realm!”

The emperor's eyes radiated sincerity. "I don't particularly enjoy flattery, young lord, but I do think that you are best suited for the role. You have both the compassion of Emperor Peafowl and charisma and ability surpassing Emperor Pillzenith. Given these two facts, the human domain's future will be yours alone."

The evaluation wouldn't have been worth very much from an ordinary cultivator, but Emperor Wellspring's status as one of the wandering cultivator world's six titans gave it significantly more weight.

Jiang Chen felt obliged to speak up at this juncture.

"I'm undeserving of such commendation, Emperor Wellspring, or being held in such high regard. As you said, the human domain is in great danger. I can clearly tell everyone that the demonic invasion isn't just an idea lingering in the back of people's minds, but a threat that can occur any time. The strength of ancient demons and their various branches will be more tenfold terrifying than anything you can imagine right now.

"If the human domain is left defenseless, humanity will suffer potentially terminal losses in the demonic invasion. Over ninety percent will die in the calamity to come!" His words had basis in fact.

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

Chapter 1386: Secrets of the Demon Race

Since all the other cultivators present were great emperors, Jiang Chen wasn't worried about scaring anyone with the gravity of his words. Nor did he want to make anything up – he really didn't have to.

"In fact, I've fought a demon expert in the human domain already. A demon great emperor that hadn't fully awakened, to be precise." Jiang Chen swept his eyes across each and every wandering great emperor's face, his tone grave.

"I can guarantee that, one on one, only Old Brother Wellspring can possibly challenge that demon great emperor to a degree. And that's assuming that the demon expert only recovers about sixty to seventy percent of his strength... as for the rest, you may be able to escape with your life if you're lucky. Otherwise..."

Jiang Chen was absolutely right. Emperor Bloodmalva had beat him into a swift retreat with only twenty to thirty percent of his full strength. Without the young man's plethora of lifesaving methods, perhaps he would have died during the battle in the Cloudshatter Mountains.

Therefore, a Bloodmalva with sixty to seventy percent of his full strength was a force to be reckoned with. The average great emperor human cultivator wouldn't be a match at all.

A demon emperor at a hundred percent of their full power would have scarcely any contenders among humanity. That was a most worrisome prospect for the young lord.

If demon great emperors awakened in droves, breaking through the seals into the human domain, then the latter would be subjected to a great disaster heretofore unseen. It was something that the human domain – first rank sects included – had no power to resist.

"Young lord Jiang Chen, you've exchanged blows with a demon great emperor before?" Emperor Wellspring drew a sharp breath. "In the desolate wildlands?"

"No, in the human domain. Great Scarlet Mid Region. The master of the Resplendent Emerald Veranda was brainwashed into a faithful lackey for a demon emperor. He purposefully misled many cultivators there for his master to feast upon them. Moreover, the flesh and blood of many women were prepared as sacrifice. Luckily, the demon great emperor managed to recover only twenty to thirty percent of his strength in the end. If he had managed the full measure, the entire human domain would be in utter chaos right now."

Everyone drew a sharp breath at that. They could definitely believe what Jiang Chen had said. The fact that the young lord rarely ran his mouth won him plausibility in times of trouble.

"Young lord Jiang Chen, were you alright after fighting that demon great emperor?" Emperor Wellspring couldn't resist asking. "Did you have Daoist Peerless with you?"

"No, no, no," Jiang Chen shook his head. "That didn't happen recently. It was quite a bit before the Dragon and Tiger Meet. I went to Great Scarlet Mid Region quite alone, I assure you. I just chanced upon those momentous events. I didn't quite expect to venture into the site of an ancient demonic seal... or encounter a race traitor like that."

"That... that demon emperor. Did you exterminate him?" someone asked in a hushed tone.

Jiang Chen shook his head, regretful. "I struggled to deal with him at the time. He wanted to kill me at the cost of his own lifeforce using a secret method, but I managed to escape through luck. He fled with severe wounds to who knows where. It should take three to five decades for him to awaken once more. Full recovery? I'd give him at least a century."

There was a collective sigh of relief.

"Ah, wonderful, wonderful. You've done the human race a big favor, young lord Jiang Chen."

"A demon great emperor only at twenty or thirty percent of his strength can cause such trouble for young lord Jiang Chen! Even Emperor Shura didn't ever manage to force our young lord to flee, eh? Demons are quite the mighty race."

"In ancient times, they were a nightmare for humanity."

"Ah, I hope the demonic invasion doesn't come to pass. They're a savage race indeed."

The great emperors felt their scalps tingle at the ferocity of demonkind. It was a most thorny problem.

"Demons are fearsome, and yet humans are busy with infighting," sighed Emperor Wellspring. "Emperor Pillzenith's actions are a crime against his own race."

"With the overwhelming loss of ancient heritages, humans don't have anything to resist the demons in our current state. What do we do when they break free of their seals?"

"Yes, it sounds like they're much stronger than us. Is a gap that large possible to overcome?"

The general pessimism in the air elicited a smile from Veluriyam's young lord. "Don't worry too much," he advised. "The demon race is fearsome, but it's not perfect or without weakness. Otherwise, they wouldn't have been sealed away by our ancestors long ago."

His words sounded reasonable enough. That was right! If the demons really were indomitable, they would've conquered the whole world in ancient times already. Unfortunately for them, history ended up with the demons defeated and sealed away.

"From what you say, young lord Jiang Chen, you should have a deep understanding of the demon race. Why not tell us more about what you know? We wandering cultivators are often alone on our journeys across the realm, making us prime targets for any predatory demons."

"That's right, young lord, please enlighten us."

Knowledge was crucial to victory in any circumstance. These wandering great emperors were wary of demons, and thus wanted more knowledge to defend themselves with.

"The demon race has many advantages that guarantee them a place in the heavenly planes. They are all masters of battle, for example, with deeply rooted heritages and particularly invasive bloodlines. They can conquer tracts of territory through bloodline corruption alone, transforming that land's inhabitants into demons or slaves.

"Of course, they have weaknesses too. They're not perfect beings, and there's no need for fear when fighting them." Jiang Chen didn't want to loudly announce demon invincibility.

If these great emperors' confidence was destroyed, that would truly be disastrous for the human domain.

"Young lord Jiang Chen, what weaknesses do they have, specifically?"

"Their bloodline is invasive, but their reproduction abilities are very poor. The purer a demon's bloodline is, the more difficult it is for them to have offspring. Therefore, a demon army sorely lacks in numbers when compared to a human one. The human race scores a total victory in this regard. We have no issue with procreation at all.

"Apart from that, though their bloodline is invasive, it's also easily noticed. Normal demons without peak cultivation reveal their presences through the explosive, invasive aura they exude. This makes it hard for them to hide. Because of this, demons enjoy controlling human puppets instead, which makes it a lot more convenient for them to get things done. Alas, there is no shortage whatsoever of humans willing to be puppets.

"Aside from that, they have yet another fatal flaw. Demons tend to be full of themselves, presumptuous, and vain. They won't listen to one another without a very powerful leader to forge an alliance. Quite often, they engage in infighting of their own accord.

"The only reason to fear them is their tremendous dominance in one-on-one situations where both parties are at equal cultivation level. Only when two or three humans gang up on one demon is there a chance of winning. Moreover, the strength in their blood ensures that demons don't die easily."

"It seems that you've done a lot of research about ancient demons, young lord Jiang Chen. We've learned a great deal today, thanks to you," sighed Wellspring.

"Yes, we do feel a bit more relieved after this discussion. Demons are formidable, but they have weaknesses too."

“And as long as they have weaknesses, they can be defeated.”

Emperor Wellspring suddenly recalled something. “Young lord,” he asked, “I remember you specifically refined some antidote pills targeting demons back when you first started out at Veluriyam Capital. Have you been weaving a web for this development all along?”

“That was just a coincidence,” Jiang Chen smiled wryly. “The wood demon parasites are hideous indeed. Having that antidote simply happens to alleviate most of their danger.”

Next, he told stories and gave examples of the demon race’s exploits and how they tended to operate. Though Jiang Chen wasn’t a true expert on the subject, he knew far more than everyone else present added together because of his previous life.

Finally, Wellspring sighed. “I feel that my prior choice was overwhelmingly correct, young lord. Out of the entire human domain, only Veluriyam – nay, only you are fit to lead the human race. I will make it clear to the world that if Pillfire acts against Veluriyam, I will spare no effort in supporting both your city and you.”

Emperor Inferno nodded as well. “The world can go on without Emperor Pillzenith, but it cannot do without you. I haven’t respected anyone else in my entire life as much as I do you!”

The attitudes of the two titans were echoed by the others.

“My friends,” Jiang Chen presented his cupped fist, “there’s no end to my thanks for your appreciation and support. Still, I have to remind you that no matter how attractive a place with a sealed demon may seem, don’t venture inside. It is quite possible that once you do, you will end up as food for their strongest experts, hastening their awakening in the process.”

“I maintain my decision from before,” Emperor Wellspring chuckled. “I’ll stay at Veluriyam from now on. This place is nice and the people are nicer. Living here long-term is much more comfortable than wandering the world.”

“Heheh, if Old Brother Wellspring is staying, then I am too.”

“With how complicated the human domain is right now, maybe staying here in Veluriyam is the safest thing to do.”

“I think we’ll all be staying here for a time, young lord Jiang Chen. I just hope you don’t feel too inconvenienced by this, eh?” The wandering great emperors were seriously considering what they should do.

Chapter 1387: Jiang Tong And Jiang Yu

More than half of the wandering great emperors decided to stay in Veluriyam for the time being. Some had been inspired by Emperor Wellspring. Some were worried about the unpredictable situation, and some outright refused to roam the world at such a dangerous time.

Three of them expressed their regrets and left, but they made clear promises that if open war were to break out between Veluriyam and Pillfire, they’d take the former’s side.

The Pinecrane Pill had brought Jiang Chen unexpected benefits, including a newfound respect for Emperor Wellspring thanks to the latter's wholehearted assistance.

Wellspring was a figure to match Emperor Peerless. He had wisdom and spirit in spades, compared to the latter's forthrightness. After arranging quarters for his guests, Jiang Chen returned to his residence.

As it so happened, the men he'd dispatched to Phoenix Cry Lower Region returned that day.

"Young lord, the symbol is from a third rank sect called the Purple Smoke Sect."

"Phoenix Cry's Purple Smoke Sect?" Jiang Chen frowned. "What else did you find?"

"Young lord, here's all the information we've gathered on the sect and the region, down to the smallest detail. Please peruse it at your leisure."

Jiang Chen read it for a moment, nodding. "Phoenix Cry is much stronger than Myriad Domain, and the Purple Smoke Sect is more powerful than Myriad Domain's six great sects used to be."

The sect in question was one of the three greatest sects in Phoenix Cry. Its strongest cultivator seemed to be a hidden forefather with a cultivation at advanced emperor realm. Such an existence was a giant for a third rank sect in a lower region.

Jiang Chen put away the data and ordered, "Jiao Yun, Jiao Feng, which one of you wants to take a trip to Phoenix Cry?"

"I will," Jiao Yun volunteered.

"Go to the Purple Smoke Sect. No need for carnage, just bring back my uncle and my cousin. If something's happened to them, do as you see fit." Jiang Chen disliked senseless killing, but leniency was out of the question when it came to his family.

Jiao Yun left for Phoenix Cry without delay. The Purple Smoke Sect was a local tyrant. Even the Phoenix Cry Empire's royal clan had to show some respect.

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Jiang Yu sat atop a cliff somewhere in the Purple Smoke Sect's mountains. Despite the gorgeous landscape of peaks and ravines, his mood was at its lowest. His life had been an ordeal ever since he'd been brought to the sect by force, many moons ago.

The girl who'd been interested and used to harass him was the granddaughter of an esteemed elder, a little gangster with a terrible temper. It hadn't been so bad at first, thanks to her curiosity. However, the novelty had soon worn off. His situation had deteriorated throughout the years with her waning interest.

'Yu'er, why are you here all by yourself again?' Jiang Tong's voice sounded from behind. There were many new white spots on his temples after these many years. Obviously, his life hadn't been any easier.

"Father, why are you here?"

"It's your favorite spot when you seek solitude. You come here whenever you can, so I naturally knew where to find you." Jiang Tong sighed.

Seeing the worry in his father's eyes, Jiang Yu squeezed out a smile despite of his mood. "Father, I'm just enjoying the quiet. There's nothing to worry about."

"Yu'er, I've heard they're publishing the list for Agarwood Valley tomorrow." Jiang Tong's tone was filled with anxiety. "I've kept an ear out for rumors. Both our names seem likely to be on the list."

Jiang Yu smiled wryly. "Father, I've long since grown tired of this sect. What's wrong with leaving?"

"Idiot!" Jiang Tong suddenly exploded. "Do you know what it means to go to Agarwood Valley? The sect's already sent two expeditions there, but not a single man ever came back. It'll be the same this time!"

"So what?" Jiang Yu shook his head dispiritedly. "I'd rather go there than waste my time here and suffer people's contempt. Who knows, maybe it'll be an opportunity to sneak back to Myriad Domain."

Jiang Tong stood silent for a long while before heaving a soft sigh. "Who knows what's become of Myriad Domain now?"

When the young lady had grown tired of his son, she'd gradually forgotten all about them. Left to fend for themselves, they'd become marginalized in the sect.

"Yu'er..." he murmured. "Why don't you go and beg her? She hasn't seen you in a while. If you whisper sweet nothings to her, you might make her happy enough to remove our names from the list. She might even let us leave."

Jiang Yu shook his head. "I'd rather die than beg that witch!"

Jiang Tong sighed. Given his son's character and how much he loathed the girl, it was impossible to persuade him any further

"Yu'er, my life doesn't matter, but I can't let you go to Agarwood Valley no matter what. You're still young, you have a bright future"

"Father, we only have each other now. We need to stick together even in death. No matter how fearsome, the valley's better than staying in this prison."

Jiang Tong sighed after a long silence. "The Precious Tree Sect's Master Ye knows we're trapped here. If he ends up reuniting with your cousin Jiang Chen, maybe..."

Jiang Yu smiled wryly. "Father, cousin Chen might be a genius, but how much could he have grown in a mere decade?"

Jiang Tong laughed. "Hehe, I've always thought he'd be the one to come to our rescue one day."

Jiang Yu nodded. "He'd certainly try if he knew, but I'd rather not drag him down."

No matter his cousin's talent or how great a sect he might have joined, it was unreasonable to expect him to take on a mighty third rank sect populated with innumerable experts.

Furthermore, all they knew was that Myriad Domain had been occupied by enemy forces. Hence, they held little delusion about Jiang Chen showing up to save the day. Of course, due to their marginalization,

they hadn't heard about the latest news either. Neither did they want to inquire, lest they met with refusal and embarrassment.

Inside an esteemed elder's residence, the graceful figure of a girl in her mid-twenties hacked ruthlessly at a tree with a longsword, as if taking out her anger on it.

Her fiery sable robe couldn't constrain the magnificent surge of her chest each time she slashed. The soft, white skin below her neck drew perfect curves down to the deep gully between her mounds. Together with her fierce motions, she made for a captivating sight.

"Not so arrogant now are we? How dare you ignore me!" Had some young man offended this miss? She took it out on the innocent tree, wishing she could chop him into a thousand pieces.

She was the esteemed elder's granddaughter, Yin Hongxue, the girl who'd taken a fancy to Jiang Yu and hauled him back to the sect.

Perhaps she'd been brainwashed during her childhood? In any event, she'd always thought romantic affairs shouldn't be reserved for men. Women too ought to enjoy them. So, voluntarily or not, untold sect members had shared her bed. She'd committed more than her fair share of ludicrous actions over the years.

However, she was fickle and quickly lost interest. When she tired of someone, she threw them away like used socks. Some also conjectured that apart from playing around, she cultivated a strange technique that required absorbing male essence.

No matter the reason, her dalliances were famous across the entire Phoenix Cry Lower Region. Many young men loathed her, but were hopelessly attracted to her beauty. After hacking the wood into sawdust, she viciously sheathed her sword.

"My lady, someone requires an audience," a maid shyly reported.

"Who?"

"Something like Jiang Tong? He says his son Jiang Yu and milady have..."

"Jiang Yu?" She finally remembered after racking her brains. "The kid isn't dead yet? He's tougher than I thought."

She'd lost count of the men she'd slept with, but she still had a vague recollection of this Jiang Yu.

"Let him in." She smiled grimly. The man had come right on time. She hadn't released all of her anger yet and could use a live target.

Unaware of the danger, the excited Jiang Tong deliberated over the best way to broach the subject when he heard the miss was willing to see him.

"This humble Jiang Tong pays his respects to the miss. May you be blessed with good health and eternal youth."

Yin Hongxue burst out in cold laughter. "You must be the kid Jiang Yu's father? Not dead yet after so many years? Both of you are pretty resilient."

Her cruel and overbearing tone cut him short.

“What request do you have? Did Jiang Yu send you?” She was in full throes of a dominating temper.

“Nonono. I came on my own initiative. I heard Yu’er has been included on the list for Agarwood Valley... I-in the name of your past relationship, I came to beg the lady to remove his name,” Jiang Tong stammered.

Yin Hongxue’s eyebrows shot up. She suddenly clutched the air. A long whip appeared in her hand, ruthlessly lashing his face.

“Beg? And are you worthy to beg me?” Fueled by her pent-up fury, the whip rained down on the poor man.

Chapter 1388: An Uninvited Guest

Jiang Tong is quite the whipping post. Yin Hongxue’s frenzied lashes landed nonstop on her victim, but the latter made not a single noise of protest, as if his body didn’t belong to him.

He only hoped she’d show some compassion and accede to his request once her anger abated. However, he’d overestimated her benevolence. Blows fell one after another as if he were a beast of burden.

Why don’t you make a sound? Why don’t you beg for mercy? His stoic attitude fed her rage. What pleasure was there if her victim didn’t cry in pain? How could she ease her foul mood then?

“Yin Hongxue, stop!” An anxious shout suddenly interrupted the flogging. The next moment, a figure shot up from below.

Jiang Tong blanched.

Naturally, the newcomer was Jiang Yu. His father’s expression had been fishy before departing. Suspicious, he’d followed behind. When he arrived, his blood had run cold at the scene. No man could tolerate his father taking a beating. Seeing red, he’d lunged forward.

Yin Hongxue snorted. “Did you come for your share of the thrashing?”

She aimed her whip at him. He wasn’t weak, but they weren’t on the same level. He tried to grab the leather, but with a shake of the hand, the young miss landed a burning blow on his face, drawing a long bloody mark.

Disregarding the pain, Jiang Yu yelled at his father, “Hurry up and leave!”

Jiang Tong was covered in bruises. He’d have died already if not for the strong constitution of a cultivator. He made no move to leave. Instead, he pounced on Yin Hongxue and tried to wrest away her whip.

“Yu’er, go, go!” he shouted hysterically.

The young lady lifted her whip high in the air and looked mockingly at the pair. “You good-for-nothings are surprisingly brave. Very well. I’m in a good mood today, so I’ll give you a chance. As long as one of you dies under my flogging, I’ll let the other one go.”

Jiang Tong shouted without hesitation. "Me! I won't resist, just let Yu'er leave!"

Jiang Yu bellowed, "You demon, hit me if you dare! Do you think a real man like me is afraid of you?"

Yin Hongxue smiled coldly. For her, they were nothing but bugs, toys to lighten her mood.

Jiang Tong implored, "Miss Hongxue, please think of your past friendship with Yu'er. You can hit me or kill me, you won't hear any complaint from me."

The miss' face was indifferent as she brandished her whip. "You have ten breaths. Decide before then, or else it means both of you want to die together!"

Jiang Yu roared, his eyes bloodshot, "Yin Hongxue, you crazy witch! Why did you force me to come here? Why are you torturing us now? Are you deranged?"

The girl giggled. "You're right, I'm deranged. You see, I like teasing ants like you and giving you some hope before I crush you beneath my foot. Kid, did you think you're special? That I'd fall for your charms?" She beamed widely.

Jiang Yu erupted, "You monster! Demon, insane harlot!"

Yin Hongxue seemed to enjoy her victim's agitation. Far from becoming angry, she laughed even more cheerfully.

"Kid, you're no better at swearing after all these years." Her face suddenly darkened. "Your ten breaths are almost over. Since you haven't chosen, it's time to bid both of you farewell."

Jiang Tong paled with horror. "We've chosen! I'll stay, Yu'er will leave."

"I'll stay. Spare my father. Yin Hongxue, didn't you capture me to embarrass and torment me? It has nothing to do with my father. I don't care how you torture me, just let him leave!"

The back-and-forth irritated the miss to no end. For some reason, their resolve to sacrifice themselves for the other was unbearable.

"In that case, both of you can die!" She clenched her teeth and lashed her whip at the pair.

Just then, an earth-shattering sound boomed outside the mountain gates. Almost at the same time, the entire sect shook down to its foundations, as if a god had shaken the mountains, spreading shockwaves to the surrounding terrain.

Yin Hongxue had never experienced such a phenomenon. Jumping in fright, she wrapped her whip around a thick pillar and tried to steady herself.

Taking advantage of the situation, Jiang Yu rolled next to his father and took the man in his arms. He choked back his grief when he saw the man's wounds. "Father, my ineptitude has harmed you."

Jiang Tong shook his head, shouting, "Yu'er, why didn't you leave? Your freedom is well worth my lousy life!"

On the verge of tears, Jing Yu shook his head. "During all these years, we've only had each other to depend on. I love you more than anything. If you die, what meaning would there be to my survival? I might as well also die..."

"Idiot! You could look for your cousin Jiang Chen after you leave. With such a genius, our clan will never die!"

Jiang Tong held a strong sense of belonging toward his clan. He didn't want to see the death of his son. House Jiang had to live on!

The shaking became more and more violent.

Carrying his father, Jiang Yu tried to sneak away, but she spotted him and shouted, "Kid, if you dare run away, I'll tear both of you to shreds!"

Jiang Yu trembled. How can she be so ruthless!

Just then, another sound exploded in the air, so loud it could rip a man's heart apart. Filled with doubt and even some panic, Yin Hongxue gazed into the distance. She didn't know what had transpired, but such frightening vibrations didn't bode well.

Was a powerful enemy invading them?

In Phoenix Cry, very few were strong enough to be dubbed a strong enemy for the Purple Smoke Sect. Although bewildered, she didn't lose her composure.

"Listen up, people of Purple Smoke Sect!" A voice rumbled in the air like rolling thunder, creating a frightening sound wave that engulfed the entire sect. "This great emperor came to fetch some people. Know your place and bring them out. Otherwise, I might create a bloodbath today!"

All the cultivators in the sect blanched in fright, as if they'd suddenly fallen into an endless abyss. The person called himself "this great emperor." What did it mean? The enemy was a great emperor!

Heavens! There wasn't a single great emperor in the entire Purple Smoke Sect!

In fact, there wasn't any in the entire Phoenix Cry Lower Region. But one had suddenly come today. This would've been an unprecedented event, but it clearly wasn't a courtesy call. His tone was nothing if not belligerent!

The sect's hidden forefather could also feel the great emperor's formidable pressure and the clear difference between them. However, he was the highest power in the sect. If he didn't step forward, who else would?

He rushed out and cupped his fist. "Dare I ask which senior is gracing us with his presence? What brings you here?"

He was merely ninth level emperor realm. This sort of cultivation made him a colossus in Phoenix Cry, but he could only lower himself in front of this sudden guest, like a junior paying homage to a senior.

"What brings me here?" The newcomer laughed coldly. "Am I to repeat myself? Be thankful for my good mood today, or I'd dye your sect in blood!"

The forefather stiffened. He hurried to say, "Yes, I remember, the senior is looking for some people. Who might they be? As long as they're in the sect, we'll respectfully bring them forward!"

He stood on the Purple Smoke Sect's domain, with the force of the entire sect behind him. But what of it? He still deferred to the newcomer like the great emperor's grandson. As the saying went, might makes right!

Chapter 1389: The Entire Sect Shakes

The Purple Smoke Sect's head and elders swarmed out from their hiding places. None of them could sit tight any more; they congregated behind the forefather. Though they were uniformly terrified and apprehensive that something grave had happened, they could do little else but present themselves.

"Hmph. A few years ago, a girl and her retinue of brutish servants kidnapped a father and son pair on the road. Does anyone remember anything like that?" The unwelcome guest was none other than Jiao Yun, whom Jiang Chen had sent to the sect as an escort.

Almost all eyes of the Purple Smoke Sect's elite glanced towards one specific old man. This elder in question had a large build and a head of monochrome hair. He was one of the sect's venerated elders, Yin Tianchou.

The old man blushed at the collective gaze of his peers. He knew what their furtive looks meant. The girl that the unwelcome guest had mentioned was more than likely his granddaughter, Yin Hongxue.

Drops of sweat ran down the old man's back. "D-don't look at me like that, everyone," he stuttered, "the Purple Smoke Sect is a big place. Y-you can't say for sure it was my granddaughter."

The forefather frowned. "Tianchou, call for your troublesome granddaughter first. Why not let this senior verify in person and see if there's a misunderstanding? Of course we'll check first if this has anything to do with her. If she was actually the culprit, we can't just let her go either."

Yin Tianchou tasted bitterness in his mouth. The Purple Smoke Sect had plenty of troublemakers, but most of them were men.

The female disciples generally tended to shy away from unruliness. He hurriedly muttered a few sentences to a nearby retainer, his expression extremely serious.

Upon his instructions, his retainer shot to the back of the mountain, his mission of retrieving Yin Hongxue clear.

If there was someone at their door, there must've been considerable investigation beforehand. If Yin Hongxue really was the culprit, there was no point in trying to deflect blame. If it wasn't her, things should be perfectly fine.

Yin Hongxue stood uncertainly in the yard of her residence when she saw her grandfather's retainer rush in.

"Young miss, milord would like you to go to him."

The girl was a bit surprised. "Where's grandpa? Where can I find him?"

The retainer saw Jiang Tong and Jiang Yu out of the corner of his eye. His face colored a little. "Young miss, who are these two?" he asked without reservation.

Yin Hongxue had done many absurd things in the past few years, capturing countless people from the outside world. Yin Tianchou's guards and retainers didn't have the authority to ask after what she did.

However, this retainer in particular suddenly remembered something when he saw this father and son pair. A sense of foreboding came over him.

Yin Hongxue made her displeasure clear. "What's it to you? It's not your place to speak!"

She saw Yin Tianchou's guards as servants and subordinates. What right did they have to inquire her, a young miss, of anything?

Ordinarily, the retainer would have laughed it off and stopped talking. However, the answer to this question was very important. "Young miss, did you take these two from the outside world?"

Yin Hongxue's pretty face darkened. "You talk too much. You think I won't tell grandpa to pull out your tongue?"

A subordinate questioning a young miss! Didn't he know he was speaking above his station? Of course Yin Hongxue was upset. But this time, the retainer wouldn't relent. He needed to get to the bottom of this. "Young miss, you need to explain where these two people came from."

Yin Hongxue was furious. "You think you can tell me what to do? Get out, right now!"

The retainer's face colored with concern. He examined Jiang Tong and his son with unease. "Young miss, there's a great emperor senior outside. He says he's looking for a father and son pair who were captured a few years ago by a young female cultivator."

As soon as he said this, Yin Hongxue's pretty face drained of color.

A great emperor realm expert?

Looking for a father and son?

She couldn't help looking at Jiang Tong and Jiang Yu, her mind clouded with doubt. Immediately, she tried to deny this possibility.

Those two had been accompanied by only normal sage realm cultivators. Weaklings, the lot of them. None of them could have reached emperor realm, much less great emperor. Was she supposed to believe that great emperors would associate with people like that? The very prospect sounded ridiculous to her. Absolutely absurd.

Jiang Tong and Jiang Yu looked at each other when they heard the conversation. A great emperor realm expert, looking for a father and son pair?

The timeframe and involved individuals made sense, but neither father nor son thought that they were the ones sought for. After all, they barely knew any sage realm cultivators in the first place, much less great emperors.

As the weakest region in the human domain, Myriad Domain didn't even have a single emperor realm cultivator all those years ago. How could a great emperor be looking for them?

Though their hearts throbbed at the prospect, they didn't get their hopes up. A sage realm or emperor realm cultivator was possible, perhaps. But great emperor was the highest level in the human domain! An expert at that level couldn't conceivably be related to the Jiang family. The Precious Tree Sect's Ye Chonglou was miles away from that kind of cultivation.

Yin Hongxue tossed the father and son pair in front of her a look of disdain. Their confusion cemented her belief that they weren't the ones the senior was looking for.

Brandishing her whip, she pointed it toward Jiang Tong and his son. "If you two dare try to escape, I'll make you suffer!" Saying this, she looked back toward the retainer. "Lead the way." Her voice was stiff.

The retainer was still somewhat concerned. "Let's take these two with us."

"They're my slaves. What are we bringing them for?" Yin Hongxue's displeasure was palpable.

The retainer smiled wryly. "Young miss, they're father and son, are they not? Perhaps the senior is looking for them?"

After all, the duo fit the guest's description perfectly. Their filial relationship was evident at a glance. Their strength and station was far inferior to the guest, but stranger things happened in the world.

Yin Hongxue wanted to refuse, but the retainer spoke once more. "Now isn't the time for a temper tantrum, young miss. Milord has been singled out by the senior. If you delay now, I am worried the senior will take his anger out on..."

Regardless of her natural insolence, Yin Hongxue knew that she was worthless without her grandfather. Therefore, she cared a great deal for the man who enabled her indulgence and affluence.

She waved a hand impatiently. "Fine. Don't get ahead of yourself, though! These two pieces of trash are too weak to be related to anyone important. There's no way the senior knows them!"

Understanding the situation her grandfather was in, she didn't dare waste any more time. Yin Hongxue propelled herself outside the mountain gate.

The retainer saluted Jiang Tong and Jiang Yu with cupped fist. "Gentlemen, I understand that the young miss might have been a bit too reckless there. I apologize sincerely on her behalf."

Jiang Tong's expression was blank.

"There's no need for your present pretentiousness, sir," Jiang Yu retorted coolly. "You're a retainer of the venerated elder, Yin Tianchou, and thus quite important. Your politeness exists only out of worry that we're the ones the great emperor senior is looking for."

The retainer was a bit embarrassed. That was exactly what he was thinking. Their frankness didn't anger him, however. "I'm thankful that the two of you are alright. The Purple Smoke Sect would have committed a real gaffe otherwise."

The lack of polity from Jiang Tong and Jiang Feng prompted him to continue. "Since you're father and son, maybe the senior really is looking for you? Why not go and take a look?"

Jiang Yu harrumphed quietly. He didn't think it possible for them to be related to any great emperor expert.

"If I may ask, how many did the great emperor senior come with? What does he look like, or they?" Jiang Tong asked feebly.

"You'll find out if you go see, right?" The retainer was in a rush, but didn't want to risk rushing them on. If something unexpected were to happen, there could be a lot more unwanted trouble.

Jiang Tong nodded. "Yu'er, let's go take a look. We won't lose anything by doing so."

Jiang Yu treated his father's will as paramount. Jiang Tong's wounds necessitated taking advantage of this opportunity, anyways. If they didn't, the consequences later would be disastrous.

Bearing his father on his back, he stated emotionlessly to the retainer, "Please lead the way."

Yin Hongxue arrived early outside the sect's gate. She ignored the gravity of the situation, nudging her grandfather affectionately. "Grandpa, what did you want from me?"

Yin Tianchou spoiled his granddaughter beyond belief. However, now was not the time for public displays of affection. He forced his expression into a scowl.

"Xue'er, do you have any impression of capturing people from the outside world? Especially a father and son pair? Don't be too quick to answer. Think about it first."

Jiao Yun snickered. "Are you hinting something to her? Don't be too quick to answer? Is she supposed to make something up, then come clean with her version of events?"

Despite what he'd just said, Yin Tianchou was in more of a hurry than anyone. He knew intimately how capricious his granddaughter was.

Yin Hongxue took the topic and ran with it. "Grandpa," she crooned, "I've captured a few people over the years, but they were mostly wandering cultivators and lowborn talents. I took them here so they could cultivate and have a chance to enter our sect..."

She was a crafty girl. Her answer was detailed, but it made no mention of any father or son. She had intentionally avoided the most important part of the topic while whitewashing what she had done.

"Elder Tianchou, this is your granddaughter?" The Purple Smoke Sect's forefather scrutinized the proud girl coldly. "So you're Yin Hongxue, hmm? Answer the question plainly! Did you take a father and son duo several years ago? I need the truth, and only the truth!"

The forefather was impatient. He could feel the smoldering anger of the great emperor expert opposite him. If he didn't put forward the correct attitude, he was sure to receive thunderous rage!

Chapter 1390: Standing With Pride

Yin Hongxue was known for her dominance and condescension in the Purple Smoke Sect. However, she was discerning enough not to take out her temper on specific people within the sect. Those were too important for her to do so.

The elder before her was one of them. He was the Purple Smoke Sect's forefather, more prominent and respected than even the sect head himself. According to rumor, he was close to two thousand years old.

She didn't dare offend such a pillar of the sect. Moreover, the forefather was bearing down on her with an invisible pressure. Because of whom the pressure came from, her grandfather couldn't intervene.

Yin Hongxue wanted to lie in order to brush past the question, but the forefather's crushing aura was like mountains repeatedly crashing down on her. She could barely stand upright under the blows. Her body shivered, and her teeth clattered.

"Well? Was there?" A sharp glint entered the forefather's eye. He was riled up in earnest.

In truth, the forefather disliked this girl a great deal even though she was venerated elder Yin Tianchou's granddaughter. If every disciple behaved like her, the sect would be done for in no time at all!

Yin Tianchou's retainer finally arrived with Jiang Tong and Jiang Feng in tow.

Yin Hongxue was ashen when she saw them land. "These two slaves," she murmured, "I... I caught them many, many years ago. They're low-born filth and there's nothing special about them. The great emperor senior couldn't possibly be looking for..."

She was so upset she was about to cry. No one had ever been so mean to her before. So what if it was the forefather taking the attitude? That didn't make her any less upset. She was the young miss of the venerated elder's family! Why was she being taken so lightly?

Jiao Yun glanced at Jiang Tong and his son. A cursory examination was enough to make his eyes light up.

He hadn't met them before, but Jiang Chen had described their appearances and characteristics. More importantly, these two men bore similarity to Jiang Feng and Jiang Chen. Particularly, brothers Jiang Tong and Jiang Feng were at least thirty percent alike. For strong cultivators, that kind of similarity didn't need close scrutiny.

Jiao Yun was almost certain that the father and son before him was the young lord's uncle and cousin.

His expression remained impassive even as he messaged them. "Are you two Jiang Tong and Jiang Yu? Don't make noise or be surprised. I was sent by young lord Jiang Chen to come receive you. If you are, simply blink once each."

He didn't speak openly because of Jiang Chen's instructions to be careful and not cause a disturbance. There was no need to leave an opening for potential hostiles.

Pillfire City and its allies were looking all over the world for Jiang Chen's family, intent on taking them hostage to trade for young master Tian Lin. That was why Jiang Chen had sent Jiao Yun instead of coming himself. The repeated command not to cause a ruckus was evidence enough.

The bigger the commotion, the more likely a surprise could occur.

Jiang Tong and Jiang Yu were both taken aback by the message. They traded a look, their hearts moved a great deal by this development.

A great emperor expert, come at the behest of young lord Jiang Chen?

They thought that they'd misheard something. Was someone playing tricks on them?

Both father and son knew that Jiang Chen was a genius, but it'd only been ten years. Even if Jiang Chen had been allowed to grow unhindered, it was quite unlikely he would have been able to command great emperors at this point.

There wasn't a single great emperor in the entirety of Phoenix Cry Lower Region. Such experts were rarer in the human domain than gemstones. How could an expert of that level be sent by Jiang Chen?

The father and son pair's uncertainty made Jiao Yun smile.

He understood that they'd been trapped here for very a long time, and thus didn't know much about the outside world. Their reaction was understandable.

He patiently messaged once more. "Don't be afraid. Young lord Jiang Chen is famous throughout the realm as the leader of Veluriyam Capital in the Upper Eight Regions. He found out where you went from Ye Chonglou, then specifically sent people to investigate. After he was sure you were still around, he sent me. If you are concerned about my trustworthiness, I'll have to return and ask the young lord to send someone else."

The name Ye Chonglou finally won Jiang Tong and Jiang Yu over. They blinked to verify their identity.

Jiao Yun formed his own conclusion based on this, turning to look dispassionately upon the Purple Smoke Sect's forefather. "No need to play-act any more. These two are precisely the ones I'm looking for."

The forefather's expression darkened at that statement. He glared viciously at Yin Hongxue, then cupped a fist to Jiao Yun. "Senior, we Purple Smoke Sect are indeed at fault here. This girl is spoiled far too much by her grandfather, and now she's done something so patently ridiculous... we will accept any punishment."

The old man was decisive and resolute. At this point, both deflection and explanation were ineffective. The best solution was to admit fault.

That, coupled with a bit of sincerity, introduced a ray of hope to the situation. If they refused to confess to the bitter end, then the senior could simply demolish the entire sect in his anger.

Jiao Yun returned a dispassionate look, then considered Yin Hongxue for a brief moment.

The culprit in question could barely hide her dissatisfaction. She hadn't yet realized the scope of her error. She didn't believe that a great emperor expert could possibly be looking for such insignificant ants. How could there be a relation at all between them?

"Senior, is there a mistake? These two are so worthless and unimportant. How can they possibly match up to your majesty?" Her brain was clever enough to resort to underhanded flattery.

Jiao Yun snickered, his eyes icy. "Girl, spare me your petty little tricks."

His gaze lingered upon Jiang Tong and Jiang Yu. "As for the girl kidnapping you... the Purple Smoke Sect is culpable for its lack of oversight in this matter. How do you plan on dealing with them? I am beholden to my orders, and will do whatever you ask."

The entire Purple Smoke Sect blanched at this declaration.

The forefather's heart positively quavered with fear. If the great emperor was going to take the father and son's anger on anyone, he'd be at the top of the list.

Jiang Yu peered at Yin Hongxue hatefully. "Witch! Crazy harlot! Tell me, how many innocent cultivators have you killed over the years. I want to rip out your heart and see its color! Is it red, or black?"

Jiao Yun cackled. "That's easy enough. Shall I do the honors for you?"

Yin Hongxue was scared out of her wits. Shrieking, she hid behind the Purple Smoke Sect's forefather, shivering with fear. "Save me, forefather! Save me!"

The forefather wanted to curse out loud. The girl was only making trouble by hiding behind him!

"Yin Tianchou, your terrible upbringing of this girl is the root of all this trouble. Deal with it yourself!" The forefather pointed the spear of the conflict towards venerated elder Yin Tianchou.

Yin Tianchou was thoroughly depressed. "Senior," he spoke with a pleading tone, "I have poorly educated my granddaughter. That's why she's committed such a grave crime. I must bear the entire burden of the punishment. Please, consider her youthfulness and spare her life!"

The old man really did spoil his granddaughter to no end.

Jiao Yun smiled faintly. Such tactics didn't work on him. He looked back at Jiang Yu. He had come at Jiang Chen's instruction specifically to avoid killing if possible. Reducing the gravity of the situation was ideal. Therefore, he sought Jiang Tong and his son's opinion for the most part.

If they weren't interested in severe retribution, neither would he do anything too drastic.

Jiang Yu strode up to Yin Hongxue, his eyes red. He suddenly delivered a resounding slap to her face. "Bitch, this is for my father! You've wounded him all over and it's my duty to take revenge as his son!"

Slap!

There was another swing. "This one's for me. These past ten years, you've made me taste all kinds of suffering and humiliation. Today, I'm returning that shame and agony in front of everyone in the Purple Smoke Sect!" Jiang Yu delivered a flurry of slaps with both hands.

"These are for the poor lost souls that've died at your hands. You hellion of a woman! Heaven will take you one day. I don't kill women, otherwise I'd cut you down on the spot!"

At the end of this storm of blows, Yin Hongxue's pretty face had swelled up like a pig's. Her heart swirled with vitriol. She couldn't accept being hit by someone she was accustomed to treating as a slave. Several times, she wanted to hit him back, but resisted the instinct to.

If she did that, she'd be dead for sure. None of the experts from the Purple Smoke Sect would be able to save her!

The recurring blows against her face were irritating, then humiliating. Finally, Jiang Yu's indignant expression inspired her with a nonsensical, utterly shameless thought. She felt that the man before her was more handsome and manly than he'd ever been!

Yin Hongxue was just this kind of backwards person. When she'd thought Jiang Yu to be unimportant, she'd heaped abuse upon him. Discovering his close relationship with a great emperor senior on the other hand, made her happy to be hit.

However, Jiang Yu was loath to spare her another glance after he was done with her. Instead, he took his father upon his back once more, sweeping his gaze over all the elites of the Purple Smoke Sect.

"I'm taking my father away from the Purple Smoke Sect. We will have no ties henceforth with you. Is there anyone who disagrees with this?" He stared at them viciously.

The sect's elites were uniformly emperor realm experts, but they felt strangely guilty when locking eyes with a mere origin realm cultivator.

"No, no, not at all. There's been a misunderstanding, is all. We can't stop you from heading to a much brighter future."

"Please, go ahead."