

Three Realms 1391

Chapter 1391: A Terrified Purple Smoke Sect

At this juncture, no one from the Purple Smoke Sect would oppose him. Only a brainless fool would. Every elite treated the departing group with only smiles.

They hadn't known who Jiang Yu was before this, but he demanded respect from them at present. They could tell that he'd suffered a great deal over these years at Yin Hongxue's hand. Not slicing her head clean off was already very gentlemanly of him.

With a great emperor backing him up, a more vengeful youth would demand a river of blood. It was precisely because of this worry that the elites spared no courtesy for either the great emperor or his charges.

Yin Hongxue clutched at her stinging face, weeping incessantly. There was a positive tsunami roiling in her heart. She tasted agonizing regret on her tongue. She'd found joy in toying with men all these years, perpetually seeking one who could conquer her heart.

Someone like that had never been found. There was no man that she was forced to kneel in worship or respect. The proud Jiang Yu before her however, gave her an odd and rather different sensation. There was a vague impression of having lost a great deal.

The graceful man looked somewhat anemic and was only average in terms of cultivation, but he had a noble heart. He never begged mercy nor tried to butter her up all these years.

And though he had a great emperor behind him now, he didn't forget himself.

A man like that could shoulder the burdens when the odds were against him, and suppress any hubris during the reverse. With the support of a great emperor behind him, Jiang Yu had the capacity of becoming someone great!

Yin Hongxue was lost and anguished with remorse. She truly realized that she'd been utterly wrong about this man. Her fate was to lack the fortune to possess a man like this.

Her heart was in disarray. She'd been humiliated and slapped in public, but she couldn't bring herself to hate him. She deserved all of this due to her past mistakes.

Jiao Yun was a bit surprised that after Jiang Yu's years of adversity, he didn't erupt in an anguished outburst. This relatively calm solution was pleasantly astonishing.

The Jiang family's sons are all broad-minded people. Young lord Jiang Chen's genius aside, his cousin from an ordinary kingdom has a big heart, too. His martial cultivation is very weak, but he is also young. Something can be made of him!

The great emperor found the youth much more respectable after this display. He smiled coolly, sweeping his eyes toward the Purple Smoke Sect's collected elites. "You're lucky that you wronged someone who isn't particularly vengeful. Otherwise, there would be a pile of bodies here today."

The Purple Smoke Sect's leadership jointly blanched. None of them dared to utter a word in reply. They knew the great emperor senior was telling the truth.

After saying this, Jiao Yun turned back to Jiang Tong and Jiang Yu. "My friends," he smiled, "do you have anything left undone here?"

Jiang Tong was still pale from his injuries. "No," he shook his head.

Jiang Yu pressed his lips together, then turned away. "Let's be off, senior."

Jiao Yun nodded, wrapping both father and son in a beam of light. The next moment, the three of them disappeared in the blink of an eye.

The entire Purple Smoke Sect let out a sigh of relief. The boulder upon their chest was finally gone. Thank heavens they'd finally survived this potentially disastrous encounter.

The Purple Smoke Sect's forefather frigidly glanced at the venerated elder. "Tianchou, it's the older generation's responsibility to teach their younger descendants well. Who's responsible for your granddaughter's education and attitude? If you aren't good at teaching, I don't mind asking some of the fellows from the hall of law enforcement to help."

Yin Tianchou's head beaded over with sweat. "Ancestor, it's all my fault. I am willing to take full blame. I've spoiled Hongxue far too much, and will appropriately punish and discipline her. I guarantee she'll cause no more trouble for the sect."

The elites were all quite annoyed by the unexpected visit. The situation just now had been extremely risky. If a great emperor unleashed his fury, the Purple Smoke Sect would have posed zero resistance. It wasn't an exaggeration to say that the sect had narrowly escaped total destruction.

The sect head saluted the forefather with a cupped fist. "Forefather, I'm partially to blame as well as the sect head. This event has reminded all of us that the rules for our sect are too lax and arbitrary. We must draft a new set of stricter rules to regulate our disciples with."

"It's good that you think so," the forefather nodded. "We Purple Smoke may walk freely about Phoenix Cry, but as a third rank sect, we're as significant as a fart in the human domain. There are three to five thousand fellow sects at our level. To put it bluntly, even a fourth rank sect in the Upper Eight Regions is stronger than us!"

The forefather held an elevated position in the Purple Smoke Sect. Having traveled the world in his youth, he was experienced both by virtue of age and encounter. The entire sect, venerated elders included, was junior before the forefather. Which of them could talk back to him?

Venerated elder Yin Tianchou was particularly submissive before the old man, his back perpetually bent in an effort to apologize.

"Forefather, that great emperor senior had such incredible pressure," one of the other elders commented. "Who was that, if I may ask?"

Phoenix Cry Lower Region was a remote place, and the Purple Smoke Sect was only relevant within its own corner of the world. In the wider human domain, it amounted to very little.

Moreover, those that lived here rarely left. A majority of the time, rumor rather than fact made its way to the ears of the region's inhabitants. The question piqued everyone else's curiosity. Great emperors were exceedingly rare in Phoenix Cry. One could go several decades without seeing one here.

The forefather sank into thought for a while before shaking his head. "The great emperors I know are very limited. That senior's cultivation elevates him above his weaker fellows, though. Perhaps he's a mid or advanced great emperor."

For the Purple Smoke Sect, great emperors were the stuff of legends. Even initial or half-step great emperors were men that they'd have to look up to. Ordinarily, they would go lifetimes without seeing seniors at that level.

That the chance to finally meet one was in this kind of circumstance... the Purple Smoke Sect was both grateful and mollified that the problem was resolved in such a peaceful way.

"I wonder how that father and son pair is related to the great emperor senior?" One person declared their wonderment aloud.

The interest in that topic was universal. Why was their cultivation level so low if they knew a great emperor? More importantly, how did they come to be captured by Yin Hongxue in Phoenix Cry?

"Elder Tianchou, do you know where those two came from?"

Yin Tianchou was somewhat disconcerted. He knew of his granddaughter's bad behavior, but typically paid no attention to what she was doing. He hadn't even met Jiang Tong and Jiang Yu, much less known where they were from.

"Hongxue, do you know where they're from?" Yin Tianchou asked.

Yin Hongxue wiped away her tears, clutching her face still. "I didn't hear them say for sure. I interrogated them before, but nothing came of it. I only know his name was Jiang Yu, and his father called him 'Yu'er'..."

"Where and when did you take them?" Yin Tianchou inquired.

Yin Hongxue tried her best to remember. It had been many years and she'd forgotten many of the details. She only remembered a rough outline.

She recounted some of what she recalled to them. The tidbits of information she had weren't at all elucidating. A single name wasn't enough to form a conclusion off of.

"Ah, never mind. Thankfully, there wasn't too much trouble. I shudder to think of what could have happened."

"Elder Tianchou, you seriously must educate your dear granddaughter."

The elites bemoaned and groaned about what had happened. As they did so, two figures flew toward the sect's entrance from the distance. They landed shortly thereafter, their identities known.

These two newcomers belonged to another large sect in Phoenix Cry, the Spirit Crow Lodge. The one in the front had long, flowing white hair and a healthy complexion; titled Ancestor Ninecrows, he was the forefather of his sect, a well-known individual in the entire region.

"Fellow Daoist Purple, how do you do?" Ancestor Ninecrows beckoned to Purple Smoke's forefather from a distance.

“Daoist Ninecrows, you look as well as you did a century ago,” the Purple Smoke Sect’s forefather chuckled politely. Clearly, they were old acquaintances.

“Tsk tsk, has something really wonderful happened? Why is your entire sect outside the mountain doors? Daoist Purple, please do tell about anything remarkable that’s happened as of late.” Ancestor Ninecrows spoke jokingly.

“Nothing wonderful at all! Quite the opposite, in fact.” The Purple Smoke Sect’s forefather waved both hands. “What wind carries you here, Daoist Ninecrows?” he asked casually.

Ancestor Ninecrows had originally come for something important. However, he was more curious about what had gone on at the Purple Smoke Sect.

The forefather’s unwillingness to speak about the subject only intensified his nosiness.

“That’s not very nice, Daoist Purple. Cozying up to a great emperor, eh? Why keep something good like that from me?” Ancestor Ninecrows chuckled, a meaningful grin upon his face.

“Where did you hear all that hogwash from?” the Purple Smoke Sect’s forefather retorted nonchalantly.

“Haha, I didn’t need to hear about it. Wasn’t a great emperor senior just leaving when I came to your door? What, is there anything you can’t talk about publicly?” Ancestor Ninecrows shot back with a half-smile.

Though he appeared to be joking, he actually cared about this a great deal. There was a hint of jealousy in the mix as well. After all, it was a huge blessing for a third rank sect like theirs to make connections with a great emperor senior.

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

Chapter 1392: Related to Veluriyam Capital?

Ancestor Ninecrows smiled, refusing to give up despite the Purple Mist Sect forefather’s silence. “Come on now, say something.”

Purple Mist’s forefather snapped, “Old man, did you come here for gossip?”

Ancestor Ninecrows smiled, “Hehe, of course not. But how can I not be curious? A great emperor is a rare sight in our region. To think your sect’s managed to invite one of them! Are you hiding something about Agarwood Valley?”

“What now? Trying to sound me out?” Purple Mist’s forefather retorted indifferently.

“Don’t misunderstand. My sect wants no part of the valley. It’s just, my imagination can’t help but run wild. I never thought your sect could become friend with this particular senior!”

Purple Mist’s forefather froze. “Do you know him?”

Ancestor Ninecrows blinked. “Don’t you know him?”

“Hmph, how would I be so lucky? Fine, I’ll tell you since you’re dying to know. He came to cause trouble. Thankfully, we cleared the misunderstanding, so everything ended well.”

“What?” Bemused, Ancestor Ninecrows stared for a long while. “Old friend, old man, is that a joke? Does your sect dare offend great emperors now? I really admire your luck. That senior’s famous for his violent temper!”

“Alright, don’t leave me hanging. Who is he?”

“Hehe, in fact, I’ve only seen him once before, and from far away at that. He wouldn’t know me at all, I’m ashamed to say,” Ancestor Ninecrows explained with self-derision. “Why did he come alone though? It’s rare to see him away from his brother.”

“His brother? Don’t tell me his brother’s also a great emperor?” Purple Mist’s forefather jumped in fright.

“Duh. The Jiao brothers of Mount Huai are famous wandering cultivators, second only to the six titans. Look at you, you’re bold enough to offend one of the most brutal seniors. It’s a miracle your sect’s still standing.”

Purple Mist’s forefather blanched. He’d naturally heard of the Jiao brothers. Apart from the six titans, they were undoubtedly among the most famous wandering cultivators. More importantly, the two of them had each other’s back. When fighting together, even the strongest wandering titans wouldn’t be assured of victory.

Their reputation resounded far and wide across the human domain. Their vindictiveness and ferocity knew no bounds. They never forgot the most trivial of offenses.

The entire Purple Mist Sect froze in shock. Had such an ominous character really come to their doorstep?

It would have been his style to eradicate the sect without saying a word. It would’ve taken mere minutes.

“Old friend, it’s one thing to throw your weight around Phoenix Cry. Why did you have to put on airs elsewhere?” Ancestor Ninecrows was puzzled. How had the Purple Mist Sect offended mighty figures like the Jiao brothers?

Purple Mist’s forefather wanted to cry. How could he even explain?

“Don’t even mention it, my friend. How would we ever dare? It was all a misunderstanding.”

“Misunderstanding? Do you think he’d care? In the past, he’d have smashed your sect to dust already. What a close call!”

“What do you mean?” A shiver ran through the crowd.

“Don’t tell me you don’t even know that. Ever heard of Veluriyam Capital?” Ancestor Ninecrows chuckled.

“Of course. It’s the strongest faction in the human domain, everyone’s heard of them.”

“The Jiao brothers have joined Veluriyam. You know that, right?” Ancestor Ninecrows smiled. “They used to be close to Pillfire’s Pillzenith, but for some reason, they ended up surrendering to young lord

Jiang Chen. I hear the young lord's fair and benevolent. Maybe it's thanks to his influence that the brothers aren't as wild as they used to be."

As it so happened, he'd left Phoenix Cry not long ago and participated in the Dragon and Tiger Meet. He simply hadn't stood out. He'd tagged along with the wandering cultivators and heard many things about the Jiao brothers. He'd even seen them in person.

The Purple Mist Sect's members suddenly understood. The senior hadn't become more merciful. Instead, Veluriyam's young lord was keeping him in check.

Purple Mist's forefather smiled wryly. "To think there would be so many twists and turns. We were fortunate indeed."

However, a certain elder suddenly realized something. "Forefather, Veluriyam's young lord is named Jiang?"

The forefather nodded, but then caught his meaning and paled.

"Ninecrows, wasn't the young lord named Zhen before? Now he calls himself Jiang Chen. Is Jiang Chen his real name?" The forefather been cultivating in seclusion, paying no attention to the outside world. He'd exited not long ago, but the news hadn't reached the sect yet. Hence, he'd only heard vague hearsay about Veluriyam.

"Nonsense! Of course Jiang Chen is his real name. You don't know even that? When did you become so ignorant, my friend?"

Purple Mist's forefather turned grave. Instead of answering the teasing, he merely murmured to himself with a rueful smile, "Jiang Chen, young lord Jiang Chen... Perhaps it's truly so!"

Many sect members had already made the connection.

Like the young lord, Jiang Tong and Jiang Yu were surnamed Jiang. One of the Jiao brothers had come in person to escort them away. Even a child could tell the father and the son were related to Jiang Chen. They might clansmen, or even close relatives.

Purple Mist's forefather trembled at the thought. If so, his sect would be in enormous trouble! They might have captured the young lord's clansmen and imprisoned them for ten years!

These ten years were crucial for the development of a young cultivator. No one dared continue down this line of thought. They might faint with further contemplation, or their legs might give out.

The terrifying possibility dazed the entire sect. They both were both glad and worried. The senior hadn't slaughtered them down to the last. But when young lord Jiang Chen learned of their actions, would he forgive the sect?

No one knew for certain.

After all, someone of his standing certainly cared about reputation. Their preposterous behavior was tantamount to a slap to his face. No one would blame him if he sent men to exterminate them!

A shadow seemed to veil their future, obscuring their vision. They'd already forgotten all about Ancestor Ninecrows' visit. They could only beg for benevolence from the young lord. Otherwise, they were all dead.

Their arrogance and swagger only applied inside Phoenix Cry. Outside the region, they were insignificant characters. Jiang Chen could decide their fate with a few words.

They sent off the delegation from the Spirit Crow Lodge. A heavy atmosphere permeated the sect, as if the end of days were upon them.

The stifling mood made Yin Hongxue uneasy. She now understood the disaster she'd caused and how powerful a man she'd offended. And most ludicrous of all was that Jiang Yu and his father had been lowly ants to her.

How ironic was that? If the bloodline of Veluriyam's young lord was lowly, then who could be called noble in this world?

At the same time, if Jiang Yu truly was the young lord's relative, it made him one of the most influential men in the human domain. Even currying favor with a second rank sect was out of her sect's reach, to say nothing of a faction that stood above first rank sects.

How could I have let this golden opportunity slip through my fingers? She was so filled with regret that she wanted to drown herself.

"Everyone, how should we proceed? Please share your opinion." The forefather broached the subject amidst the suffocating atmosphere.

They'd never dreamed they'd offend Veluriyam's young lord. Not just a small offense, but an outright slap to the face. The sky was caving in on them.

Chapter 1393: Knocking On Doors To Apologize

"Let me say a few things first." The Purple Smoke sect head was the first to break the stifling silence. "Hongxue, are you sure that young man was called Jiang Yu?"

"No question about it," Yi Hongxue sobbed. "He really was called Jiang Yu. His father always called him 'Yu'er'."

"Ah, that should be it then. The Jiao brothers of Mount Huai joined up with young lord Jiang Chen, so it's understandable that he sent one of them on that errand. The young lord should know about all this, then.

"Given that that's the case, the fact that Senior Jiao refrained from going on a killing spree means that the young lord didn't give him permission to do so." The sect head's analysis was reasonable.

His captive audience felt their hearts settle down a bit.

"That father and son pair is definitely very close to young lord Jiang Chen. Otherwise, he wouldn't have sent a great emperor to personally pick them up!

“Another point: the young lord Jiang Chen has no intention of destroying our sect. Otherwise, he would have given instructions to Senior Jiao to do so. The rumors are true; young lord Jiang Chen is a principled man, not just some brutish lout.

“Finally, young lord Jiang Chen is unlikely to pursue a grudge against us at a future date. To us, the matter is something to lose the entire sect over, but the young lord is concerned with far more important things. He has no energy to waste on people like us! There’s no need to wait. If he wanted to destroy us, he would’ve done so already.”

The summation was almost too rational to listen to.

One of the elders breathed a sigh of relief. “You’re absolutely correct, Sect Head. We’re shrimp and small fry to him. He’s not interested in stooping to our level.”

“Quite so. That father and son suffered a bit, but at least they’re still alive and intact. The only regret is that Jiang Yu’s father was rather beaten up when he left. Still, the injuries weren’t anywhere close to being fatal. Perhaps young lord Jiang Chen meant to see what Jiang Yu thought was best. If Jiang Yu wanted to take revenge, Senior Jiao would’ve acted upon it. Otherwise, they would just depart and turn over a new leaf.”

“Makes sense. Good thing Jiang Yu wasn’t the petty type...” The discussion became quickly heated.

The Purple Smoke Sect’s forefather remained silent. Only after everyone finished speaking did he let out a soft sigh. “Yes, let bygones be bygones, but we can’t rest easy yet.”

“Forefather, fortune and misfortune are often intertwined with one another. What has happened may have been a lot of trouble for the Purple Smoke Sect, but there’s opportunity here as well.”

“Oh? How so?”

“If Jiang Yu is truly young lord Jiang Chen’s relative, we can take this chance to head to Veluriyam to apologize. At the same time, we can bring Agarwood Valley to the young lord’s attention as a means of building a relationship. No faction in Phoenix Cry can do anything about the valley, but perhaps Veluriyam has a solution? If we can use this as a chance to bring us closer to a prominent faction, this may turn out to be an amazing blessing for the Purple Smoke Sect after all.”

Everyone’s eyes lit up at the suggestion. If all that could come to pass, the whole situation would be turned on its head.

The Purple Smoke forefather beamed. “A wonderful approach. Phoenix Cry doesn’t have the ability to investigate Agarwood Valley. Asking Veluriyam’s assistance may turn out to be a very wise decision.”

.....

Jiao Yun didn’t let Jiang Chen down. He took Jiang Tong and Jiang Yu back to Veluriyam Capital in perfect safety.

On the way, father and son couldn’t shake themselves free of a dreamlike feeling. They were both anxious and excited.

Jiao Yun had spoken clearly to them, but they found it difficult to fully accept their newfound happiness for the moment. The memories of captivity were still too fresh in their minds.

Only after entering the city proper and seeing Jiang Chen within the young lord residence did their hearts settle down. Jiang Feng was tremendously pleased by the sight of his lost brother.

After the ordeal he'd been through, Jiang Tong felt similarly about their reunion. That, on top of discovering his brother was back together with his wife, made him happy enough to cry.

Jiang Tong had always respected Jiang Feng a great deal. What had happened to his marriage and family had always saddened him. Now that his brother's family was whole once more, he was wholeheartedly delighted for him. Similarly, Jiang Yu was overjoyed to see Jiang Chen again.

"Brother Chen, you saved me yet again," sighed the young man. "It's only been ten years, but you're Veluriyam Capital's young lord now, huh? You're respected the world over!"

"My brother. It seems that your decade of trial has matured you a fair bit. Very good. I thought you would ask Jiao Yun to slaughter them. As expected of a Jiang son! Your benevolence will serve you well. Once you settle down here in the young lord residence, we can start catching up on your ten years of wasted cultivation."

Jiang Yu's throat quavered. He couldn't do much more than nod, forcing down his tears that were about to burst forth at any second.

Jiang Chen gave him a pat on the shoulder. "There, there. All that trouble is behind you now. Xue Tong, please accompany Jiang Yu for the next while."

Xue Tong and Jiang Chen were both Jiang Chen's cousins. Though they weren't directly related, they knew each other well nevertheless. The company was completely appropriate.

Having received Jiang Tong and Jiang Yu back into the fold, Jiang Chen was finally done with another important matter.

"The only one who's not with me right now is Huang'er..." Jiang Chen felt pain strike his heart whenever he thought of her. His reunion with Dan Fei, his parents, his other relatives... all these were good things. But his time and vows with Huang'er were similarly invaluable and irreplaceable.

A gathering like this without Huang'er made him feel somewhat empty. He wanted to sprout wings and head for Myriad Abyss Island immediately. Alas, he had promised her that he wouldn't before he attained peak emperor realm.

She wasn't the type to run her mouth.

There was a definite reason for her in saying that he had to reach peak emperor realm. A place like Myriad Abyss Island was incomparable to the human domain.

Emperor realm cultivators were reasonably high level in the human domain, but perhaps they were only middling on Myriad Abyss Island. Regardless, no amount of mystery and fear relating to that isle could curb the enthusiasm in Jiang Chen's heart.

He couldn't sit tight whenever he remembered that Huang'er was there, waiting for him with nervous tension. He had to cultivate ceaselessly, as quickly as he could. He couldn't make her wait too long. Time was of the essence. He didn't want to reach Myriad Abyss Island only to find her corpse.

She'd promised him that if he didn't come in time, she wouldn't serve as a cultivation cauldron for the genius from House Xiahou. She'd commit suicide instead. However, he couldn't accept either outcome.

"I have to hurry up in my cultivation."

Unfortunately, he didn't feel confident enough to challenge the third of the Six Palaces of Heritage without reaching mid emperor realm first. Still, he was immensely self-assured as he was already at peak second level emperor realm.

If he hadn't been forced to leave to combat Emperor Pillzenith's kidnapping during his time in the Eternal Celestial Capital's territory, he would've broken through to third level in that residence.

Now that his affairs were taken care of, Jiang Chen was more than happy to spend some time in closed door cultivation to make up for lost time.

When he broke through to third level, he could use an Emperor Ascension Pill to get to fourth level. That would make him mid emperor realm, qualifying him for the third palace. The short-term action plan bolstered his determination even more.

Having spent a few days doing the city's paperwork, Jiang Chen was ready to announce closed door cultivation the next day.

On the day of his announcement though, there was an uninvited guest outside Sacred Peafowl Mountain's gates.

"Phoenix Cry Lower Region? The Purple Smoke Sect?" Jiang Chen was mildly taken aback at the identification on the visitor's card. Wasn't this the sect the one responsible for kidnapping Jiang Yu?

Why had this person come? Did they feel excessively guilty, perhaps?

Despite his surprise, Jiang Chen also realized that the sect might have guessed closer to the truth. That was eminently the most likely reason for their follow-up apology.

He didn't feel there to be much bad blood between them and was initially set on having Xue Tong dismiss the man. But this guest in particular was very stubborn. He would see no one but Jiang Chen, reportedly because he had important news to personally inform the young lord.

"Show him in." His extraordinary obstinacy surprised Jiang Chen, spurring a change of heart.

It was none other than the Purple Smoke Sect's forefather.

"Greetings, young lord Jiang Chen. I am Zi Tan of the Purple Smoke Sect." The forefather's attitude was one of utmost respect. He didn't dare put on any airs before Veluriyam's de facto ruler.

Nearby, Jiao Yun snickered. "What? I didn't annihilate the Purple Smoke Sect on my visit, so you came asking for a beating?"

“Not at all, not at all. Truly, I am grateful to your mercy last time, senior. I apologize for not recognizing someone as famous as you. Thankfully, a friend came by who did, and that’s when I learned how much trouble our sect was actually in. I was quite worried, as was the entire sect...”

“Is that all you came to say, Zi Tan? After coming so far?” Jiang Chen cut him off coolly.

The forefather’s heartbeat skyrocketed. He felt an inexplicable pressure before Jiang Chen, one that persons in authority customarily exerted. Its power drew cold sweat from his entire body.

“Young lord Jiang Chen, I didn’t come just to apologize. I also have very important information to report. This matter has troubled Phoenix Cry Lower Region for many years, but our region’s sects aren’t strong enough to deal with....” The Purple Smoke Sect’s forefather stepped forward reverentially, leading into the next topic.

Chapter 1394: The Astral White Tiger Awakens

Jiang Chen furrowed his brow slightly when the Purple Smoke Sect forefather finished speaking, considering what had been said. The forefather stood deferentially nearby, out of fear that he’d interrupt the youth’s train of thought.

“So you’re saying that there’s a secret realm in Agarwood Valley, but whenever you send people inside, they don’t come back.”

“Yes,” the forefather confirmed hurriedly. “We discovered this secret realm many years ago. There’s an unspoken agreement between our local sects to not give away information to the outside world. We’ve sent in countless teams over the years, but never received a single peep in return. Our men were like rocks tossed into the ocean.”

Jiang Chen nodded slightly. He knew much more about secret realms than the Purple Smoke Sect’s forefather. In general, these were hidden and mysterious places. It was very important to grasp the right method whether entering or leaving. Not doing so posed serious risks for one’s health or life.

From what the forefather was describing, this secret realm was much more mysterious and complex compared to its fellows. Otherwise, why hadn’t a single person managed to leave out of so many?

“Zi Tan, did you come here specifically to tell me about this secret realm?”

The forefather’s lack of a direct response was tacit confirmation. “That secret realm is a problem hanging over every Phoenix Cry sect’s head. I assume that the other sects are looking for outside help as well, now.”

“Is that why you came to petition Veluriyam? Is there any other reason?” Jiang Chen smiled faintly.

“Yes!” The Purple Smoke Sect forefather nodded firmly. “Because you didn’t fly into a thunderous rage with regards to the Jiang Yu incident, we know that Veluriyam is a forthright faction. Similarly, you are a fair and just man. You are deserving of us lower region cultivators’ respect!”

These words erred a bit far on the side of flattery, but there was some rationale behind them. The forefather was voicing empty adoration.

“Approximately when will the secret realm open next?” Jiang Chen thought a moment before replying.

“About six months. Five, if it decides to be quicker than usual.” The forefather replied truthfully.

Jiang Chen inclined his head. “Alright. I will think about going to the Purple Smoke Sect in five months’ time.”

The Purple Smoke Sect’s forefather was very pleased. Though the youth before him was less than him in terms of cultivation level, he nevertheless adopted the stance of a junior before Veluriyam’s young lord.

“Many thanks, young lord. I will await your gracious presence at my sect.” Having received Jiang Chen’s promise, the forefather knew that he’d officially made connections with Veluriyam. Moreover, it seemed that the young lord had no interest in pursuing Jiang Yu’s plight further. The sword that hung above the Purple Smoke Sect’s head was no more.

After the forefather departed, Jiang Chen sank into deep thought. Tidbits about secret realms and their properties floated to the top of his consciousness.

“There’s about five to six months until then. I have plenty of time. I need to use it to break through to mid emperor realm!”

Jiang Chen’s cultivation speed was brisk enough already, but he wasn’t fully satisfied despite that.

Mid-thought, a roar sounded in the air above the young lord residence. The dignity it embodied affected the heavens and the earth, shaking the foundations of the residence itself. It’d come from outside — the mountains to the rear of the young lord residence, to be precise.

Jiang Chen’s thoughts were moved by the sound. He immediately shot toward its origin, having remembered something that he’d forgotten about.

On a high peak in the back of the residence, there was a burly, ferocious colossus of a beast. The stripes upon it added a few degrees of savagery and ascendancy.

Jiang Chen was very happy to see the animal’s size increase. “Has it awakened once more? It looks all grown up!” The spirit beast didn’t at all look like when he’d gotten it.

It was an Astral White Tiger, the very one that Jiang Chen had extorted out of House Nangong’s young master, from Pillfire City. That kid had thought his pet was just a normal Cloud Devouring Tiger.

Astral White Tigers were divine beasts of old. Their bloodlines were exceedingly sacred, among the top five even in spirit beast rankings of the heavenly planes.

The first time Jiang Chen laid his eyes upon the beast, he realized how different it was from the pack. That was why he had procured it at any cost. Even now the poor sap probably didn’t understand what kind of opportunity he’d missed.

That was partially hypothetical, though. If the Astral White Tiger hadn’t made it into Jiang Chen’s hands, would it have grown so swiftly and become so strong?

It was responsible for the roar in question. The growth spurt had made it increase tenfold in size. Its aura intensified from a babe’s to a robust, vigorous man’s. To sum it up, the tiger had finally grown up. Now that its ancient memories were awakened, it looked like an ancient divine beast in both form and essence.

Long Xiaoxuan couldn't resist joining in the roaring.

Dragons and tigers were fated to be roaring buddies since ancient times. Jiang Chen didn't quite want something as fearsome as that to occur in his backyard, though. The ordinary people that lived in the residence wouldn't be able to bear it.

"Brother Long, we can find a more secluded place for you to express your singing. I definitely won't stop you then. In exchange, do you mind not doing that today? It's fun for the two of you, I know, but the rest of the residence didn't exactly sign up to be your willing audience."

Long Xiaoxuan's enthusiasm was rapidly curbed by Jiang Chen's hard stance.

"White Tiger, my boy, you need to chill." Laughing, Jiang Chen hurtled up the peak, landing near the tiger in an instant.

The tiger was just as happy to see the human. It shrunk itself instantly, its sizable body returning to the size pre-growth. A little fat, lazy, and cute...

"White Tiger, did you awaken more of your ancient memories?" Jiang Chen asked with a smile. As an expert in ancient beast language, he could communicate with his feline friend even without the tiger learning human language.

"Young master Chen, my memories seem to say that I have a noble bloodline! There's a lot of other clues that I just can't access yet."

"There's no hurry at all. It takes more than a day to awaken ancient memories. You've awakened several times recently already. Your latent memories are a treasure that you can excavate any time you'd like."

Though the Astral White Tiger had awakened ancient memories multiple times already, it didn't compare to Long Xiaoxuan in absolute strength.

The dragon had stormed into emperor realm with incredible momentum. Moreover, he had the transformation incantation that allowed him to swap between human form and dragon form.

Though the Astral White Tiger was explosively powerful at present, it hadn't yet reached the peak of what its kind could achieve. It also couldn't transform into human form yet. Still, Jiang Chen firmly believed that there was a transformation incantation in the Astral White Tiger's memories somewhere.

Even Long Xiaoxuan hadn't managed to turn into human form through his own inherited memories. Credit for that was squarely assigned to Jiang Chen, using the memories from his previous life to help.

He gave his whiskered sidekick a pat on the head. "I don't think I should just call you 'White Tiger'. Shall I come up with a name for you?"

The tiger yawned languidly. "Call me whatever you wa-a-ant, young master Chen."

"You're an Astral White Tiger, one of the four ancient divine beasts. Your bloodline is supposed to be the most warring and savage out of the four. Still, your current shape is most natural for you. Let me take one word from your name and add something to it. How about 'Little White'?"

Though the tiger was internally happy about receiving a name, it sneezed with pretend indifference.

“If you don’t speak up now, that means you agree. Grow up soon, Little White, so you can be my stalwart companion.” That was Jiang Chen’s dearest wish.

It was thrilling thought to have a future dragon and tiger duo as back up in a fight. The presence these two divine beasts exuded alone was enough to render an opponent out of breath.

The Astral White Tiger was awakening its ancient memories at an accelerated speed. It was very different now from when Jiang Chen had first found it. In particular, its strength had shot straight upwards.

Divine beasts with heritages had this benefit. When their memories awakened – even if only a small chunk had – the benefits for doing so were insurmountable.

“Little White, I’m going to close my doors for cultivation. You can stay here and cultivate, and can leave the residence to find a place to roar in if the urge really hits you. However, you can’t do that inside again, alright? I don’t want to scare anyone. Indoor voice, please.”

Jiang Chen was expectant about the true dragon and the Astral White Tiger that were now his companions. Once grown up, these two divine beasts would be truly terrifying.

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

Chapter 1395: Closed Door Cultivation, Breakthrough

Long Xiaoxuan’s inherited memories were one step ahead of the tiger’s. Because of how excellent his bloodline was, it cultivated even more quickly than Jiang Chen.

However, the Astral White Tiger was considered the equal of true dragons in the heavenly planes. Its gradual awakening of ancestral memories, Jiang Chen’s assistive methods, and a bath in the wood spirit spring allowed the feline to swiftly climb the cultivation ladder and awaken more parts of its heritage.

The same was true with the Goldbiter Rats. After a dip in the wood spirit spring, the king of the Goldbiter Rats felt more of its own bloodline heritage. Because of this, his tribe received a similar power boost.

The strength of these ancient races fired up Jiang Chen’s own blood.

“Among the ancient beast bloodlines, the four great divine beasts take the crown. The Azure Dragon, White Tiger, Vermilion Bird, and Black Tortoise... if all four can be gathered together, the heavenly planes would tremble at the combined strength.”

Jiang Chen had researched a fair amount into these ancient divine beast bloodlines. These four in particular embodied the laws of heaven and nature. When they congregated, the combined might was enough to rise to the top of the heavenly planes.

He now had two out of the four. He was truly fortunate to be in his current situation.

“The Azure Dragon and the White Tiger... I’m missing the Vermilion Bird and Black Tortoise.” Jiang Chen pondered to himself. “If I do get my hands on those, then I’ll have all four divine beast bloodlines. I can assume the mantle of the heavenly dao then and reforge myself with the five elements. I will become the dao that surmounts the heavenly planes. The human domain will be of no issue, even the Divine Abyss Continent will no longer hold me back!”

Jiang Chen had exalted goals.

Rather than being limited to the human domain, his goal had always been clear and true. He needed to break through great emperor realm into empyrean or even higher. He needed to investigate why the cataclysm of the heavenly planes in his previous life had come to pass and find where his father was.

After hearing the Purple Smoke Sect forefather's proposition, Jiang Chen was also deeply curious about Phoenix Cry Lower Region's Agarwood Valley.

Anything that was so far out of the ordinary must hold something of great importance. If Agarwood Valley wasn't like any other secret realm, then the secrets it held within must share that characteristic. It was absolutely necessary for Jiang Chen to make his way there.

The Divine Abyss Continent was a wondrous place. Many things had changed after the ancient war. What counted as lower regions now may not have been so in the distant past.

For example, he'd been fortunate enough to obtain the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice and magnetic golden mountain in a place as unimportant as the sixteen kingdoms alliance.

At Mt. Mirage in the Myriad Domain, he was the recipient of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's heritage. In the Paramount Realm, he inherited the legacy of both Emperor Featherflight and empyrean expert Guo Ran.

Therefore, though the Upper Eight Regions formed the human domain's core presently, more derelict places potentially held archaic, but nevertheless potent, heritages. Therefore, he had no intention of missing out on Agarwood Valley.

His trip to the Moon God Sect and ambush midway on his return made him realize that he wasn't powerful enough. Without the empyrean expert Guo Ran's residence and its corresponding restriction, he would've been done for.

Alas, he had only one use of the restriction remaining. Once that was spent, what then? What was he supposed to do against powerful great emperors? What about when he inevitably ventured into Myriad Abyss Island?

These considerations pressed down upon Veluriyam's young lord.

"In the end, personal prowess matters the most. Without great fortune and my previous life's memories, it would be much too difficult for me to maneuver around those millennia-old monsters. The aces up my sleeve are an exhaustible resource. Aside from the restriction in the ancient residence, the other cards I have are completely useless against any top great emperor. My cultivation is the biggest culprit here."

Breaking through – ideally repeatedly – was at the top of his agenda.

It was impossible to build a city in a day, but cultivation required some sense of urgency. He needed to make some progress every day. Closing his doors to cultivate...

Having tied up the loose ends in the young lord residence, Jiang Chen entered closed door cultivation immediately. With his previous life's memories, he found it easy to see results during serious cultivation.

In the first month behind closed doors, he successfully broke through peak second level to third level. He wasn't satisfied with just that much progress though.

That was his initial goal. His final goal for this session was to break through to fourth level emperor realm. It was typically very difficult to do so because of the difference in rank between the two levels. Third level emperor realm was initial rank, while fourth was mid rank. It was more than just a level's difference: it was a large step up between the two.

Normal cultivators needed decades in order to possibly progress from one to the other. For geniuses, it might take three to five years.

Not so for Jiang Chen; he wasn't just the average genius. He had the Emperor Ascension Pill.

He'd managed to refine a huge batch of the stuff owing to the purchase of a tremendous number of Eight Treasure Cordyceps. That was what had given him the opportunity to attempt fourth level emperor realm in the first place.

The Emperor Ascension Pill allowed its user to unequivocally increase one's level by one in emperor realm, which was why he'd wanted to purchase the spirit herb during the Dragon and Tiger Summit. He didn't need any Emperor Supremacy Pills just yet, but Emperor Ascension Pills were absolutely appropriate for the current him.

Placing one of the pills into his mouth, Jiang Chen began to refine its medicinal properties into his body. Because he'd created it himself, he knew everything about its effects. His attempt to infuse its power into every fiber of his being was a resounding success.

The Emperor Ascension Pill's effects revealed themselves instantly. There was an explosive force within his body, like a volcano on the verge of erupting. The young man felt his entire body burning up.

It was an uncomfortable sensation, but it drove him to surge relentlessly towards fourth level emperor realm.

"Come on!" Jiang Chen gritted his teeth, extracting every ounce of energy from his meridians in order to push onward.

The pill's assistance and protection practically guaranteed the process a success. As long as one consumed the miracle pill, there was over a ninety percent chance of succeeding. Since Jiang Chen was the pill's refiner, he had an even larger assurance of making the pill work.

Another month passed.

During that time, he was drenched with sweat countless times. All kinds of impurities were expelled through his pores. After undergoing purification time and again, his body and bloodline transcended once more.

Suddenly, the ball of flame in Jiang Chen's chest swirled into his qi ocean with a bang. In the next moment, a flowing current of warmth washed over his entire body. All his organs, meridians, and blood were raised to a higher level!

"Amazing! So it's this kind of feeling! Going from third to fourth level... I didn't know it was going to be anything as pleasurable as this!"

Jiang Chen slowly opened his eyes. His lustrous eyes gleamed with wisdom like a pearl in the darkness, full of spirit and resolve. It had taken him two months for him to go from peak second level to fourth level emperor realm. He was finally a real mid emperor realm expert!

He had a lot to go compared to the great emperor monstrosities still, but it was a big breakthrough for him. The two-level increase wasn't particularly significant, but any increase in his level meant that his overall power increased multiplicatively. His martial methods, techniques, and treasures powered up accordingly.

"There are still three to four months remaining before my trip to Agarwood Valley. Just because I've reached fourth level emperor realm doesn't mean I can open my doors just yet."

Jiang Chen already had ideas for what he was going to do. It was very difficult for him to increase in level again in such a short time, and unrealistic to boot. But his martial methods, techniques, and equipment had plenty of room for improvement.

Refining the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice was at the top of his to-do list. Treasures needed to be continually refined, developed, and communicated with in order to make full use of their capabilities. Any treasure that couldn't advance alongside its owner was subject to falling into eventual disuse.

The Bewitching Lotus wasn't that kind of treasure. Having accompanied the human for so long, the Lotus had undergone its own series of improvements, both to form and life.

It was a species worthy to rank in the heavenly planes. Jiang Chen hadn't excavated even a third of its true potential. Given its superiority of origin, its current form was definitely not its ultimate one.

As an ancient species, the Bewitching Lotus' claims to fame didn't only include its dual-attributes and able to constrict people. It had the power of transformation. The 'Bewitching' part of its name was sufficiently descriptive of a part of its characteristics.

Jiang Chen had delved into its transformative mysteries before, but his prior excursions had been very shallow. If he could dig deeply into this area, the results were certainly worth anticipating.

Additionally, it had incredible regenerative ability. Its vines could restore themselves even if sliced in half, as long as the plant proper was undamaged. This was one of its strongest features.

The stronger Jiang Chen got, the more he could access the Bewitching Lotus's latent abilities.

"Right now, the Bewitching Lotus can ensnare careless great emperors. Thousands of tendrils are more than enough to restrict movement for a time, at least." He had successfully used against Pillfire City's Emperor Heartcloud, back in the palace residence in Eternal Celestial Capital territory.

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

Chapter 1396: A Perfect Conclusion

The magnetic golden mountain was a treasury in the same way. Jiang Chen had received more than its fair share of benefits even when compared to the Bewitching Lotus of Ice and Fire. The mountain's magnetic storms, defensive prowess, and the Lord of the Golden Seal's offensive strength were all matched by his own increase in cultivation.

As for the mint ginseng creature, it was close in function with the Bewitching Lotus of Ice and Fire, albeit simpler in its vectors of attack. It could only entangle and unleash toxic smoke; rather excessive given his ownership of the Lotus. Therefore, Jiang Chen gave the mint ginseng as a present to his sister.

Xu Qingxuan was delighted with the ginseng. Because she was a holy maiden of the Moon God Sect, she had a few treasures on hand fitting with her position. However, she'd never held a treasure like the spirit creature before.

The eight statues Jiang Chen had taken from the Prince of Shangping back in the desolate wildlands remained mostly a mystery. Currently, he was using them to aid his Eight Trigram Boulder Formation as a defensive tool. It was surely a waste of their abilities.

Unfortunately, he couldn't make use of their deeper potential. His senses told him that the statues were imbued with a powerful will within. Something like that wasn't common to just any eight statues. This had surprised him when he'd first found out. He thought them appropriate as his next major goal of investigation.

The Earth Bodhisattva Orb was the crowning treasure of a prominent formation sect in ancient times. This title alone made its strength evident. The Earth Bodhisattva Sect had the claim to fame of being number one amongst all formation sects, and the Orb was a big component of its power.

The ancient era of gods and demons was completely incomparable to today's Divine Abyss Continent. Back then, empyrean experts were more common than today's great emperors. Considering its environment, the number one sect couldn't possibly be anything less than extraordinary. Neither could its crowning treasure, the Earth Bodhisattva Orb!

Similar to the statues, Jiang Chen hadn't made very good use of the Orb's potential yet. Though he'd forced the remarkable item to acknowledge his ownership by imprinting it with blood, he had only superficial access to its spectrum of power.

If he could make total use of the Orb's abilities, no one on Divine Abyss would be able to challenge him. Even if all the boundary steles were shattered, he was confident enough to stand alone against a horde of alien races. Myriad Abyss Island would be a cinch too, naturally. Alas, doing so would take much more than the short time he had available.

"All five of these elemental treasures I have now are inherited from the ancients. For metal, I have the magnetic golden mountain. For wood, I have the Wood Spirit Spring. For water and fire, the Bewitching Lotus of Ice and Fire. For earth, the Earth Bodhisattva Orb. Who under the heavens is more fortunate than me?"

The first step to cultivating the Bodhisattva Orb was using it to create earth pulses. Jiang Chen had personal experience with the potency of these pulses. He hadn't the misfortune of being struck at its peak. In its strongest form, a cultivator that was caught up would be smashed to a pulp.

Because he was in the initial stages of cultivating the Orb, Jiang Chen wasn't going to reach that kind of power overnight. Once he managed to create an earth pulse however, he could use it to surprise his opponents in battle. The panic of the opponent being trapped by a pulse-generated vortex would increase the effectiveness of the sneak attack.

The earth pulse was quite similar to great emperor domains. Domains were generated by the cultivation of the experts themselves, while the pulse was created by the Orb's magnetic field-distorting power. The ensuing waves affected cultivators in a meaningful way, hence the offensive portion of the ability.

Jiang Chen anticipated that a combination of the Orb and a formation that could make use of it would be an unbreakable mix of offense and defense. Being able to pull out something like that would be a great boon to his fighting ability.

Currently, his cultivation was sufficient to fight against most emperor realm experts – even the ones at peak ninth level.

In other words, he was unafraid of his emperor realm peers. Additionally, he could maneuver around all but the most elite of the great emperors. Jiang Chen had been able to fight Emperor Shura to a standstill when he'd been still initial emperor realm. This showed the extent of his combat power.

But it'd costed him resources to do so, like charges of his Imperial Advent Defense and Onslaught Talisman. He was a considerable threat only through his incredible equipment and methods.

To his chagrin, he hadn't received the Earth Bodhisattva Sect's associated formations along with their treasure. Otherwise, it would've been a most effective composition. It would have been equivalent to him receiving the essence of sect's heritage. He would be unafraid of even the strongest great emperors in the world then.

Still, he had the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's formations. In terms of ingenuity, Ancient Crimson's formations more than rivaled the Earth Bodhisattva Sect's. The only reason the latter was number one was because of the Orb. Ancient Crimson had a plethora of treasures, but none was as superb as the Earth Bodhisattva Orb.

Because the Earth Bodhisattva Sect had been built around the Orb, compatibility was best between the sect's treasure and its corresponding formations. Further refinement and experimentation would be required for it to achieve the same type of harmony with Ancient Crimson's formations.

Ancient Crimson had a smattering of different formations. Great Dream of Spring and Autumn, Eight Trigram Boulder, Major Artifice, Ancient Slaughter of Seven...

Currently, his strongest formation was the Heavenly Chalice Sword Formation. He had the requisite swords forged for it and was on his way to improving his mastery. Though he had only reached minor achievement with it, its raw offensive force nevertheless surprised him.

Even with the advantage of the palace's suppressive ability, it was undeniably partially to the formation's credit that he'd been able to strike down Emperor Heartcloud with a single strike.

It wasn't at all easy for a second level emperor realm to kill a great emperor head on. His momentary control over Heartcloud hadn't made it much easier. A stationary high-level expert wasn't exactly a sitting duck against someone that much lower in cultivation.

It was the same way that a seven- or eight-year-old child might have difficulty killing a hulk of a man. Jiang Chen was a child when compared against Emperor Heartcloud. However, the Heavenly Chalice Formation was a razor-sharp edge in his hands. He'd managed to kill the man during a lapse of concentration thanks to the sharpness of this blade.

Jiang Chen couldn't imagine how powerful it would become once he reached supremacy with it.

.....

Four or five months passed in the blink of an eye.

Despite his time spent in cultivation, Jiang Chen didn't forget completely about the passage of time. He opened his eyes on a day like any other, taking great pleasure in re-examining the fruits of his months-long labor, his heart swelling with confidence.

"My combat strength has at least doubled thanks to this closed door session. It's time for me to go stretch my legs." Stretching, he stood up and strode outside.

"Are you done with closed door cultivation, young lord?"

"Congratulations for completing your closed door cultivation!" There was mass enthusiasm across the young lord residence at his emergence.

Nian'er was particularly enthusiastic. She hadn't cried per se, but she'd asked for her father every night before bed. She was doubtless the happiest to see him once more. In her heart, her father was the strongest and tallest man in the world.

The first thing Jiang Chen did upon emerging was to spend a few days wholly with his daughter.

Nian'er was a discerning girl. She knew her father was a busy man and didn't want to occupy all of his time.

"Daddy, Nian'er knows you have a lot of things to do... I can't steal all your time." The little girl pursed her lips.

Jiang Chen touched his daughter's delicate face, his heart filled with compassion. After spending a little bit of family time, he departed once more for distant lands.

This time, he intended to go to Agarwood Valley. He wasn't going to bring a large retinue with him. Three people were enough: Emperor Peerless and the Jiao brothers.

The Jiao brothers had made Veluriyam Capital their long-term home, so they could come along any time.

Emperor Peerless on the other hand, was currently overseeing Regal Pill Palace's affairs at Palace Head Dan Chi's side. Jiang Chen delegated Emperor Vastsea to replace him temporarily for the duration of the trip.

Emperor Vastsea was originally responsible for gathering together Great Scarlet's factions and managing the region's geopolitical environment. Now that things had relatively settled down, it was perfectly possible for him to tend to both his old and new responsibilities simultaneously. After all, Great Scarlet and Myriad Domain neighbored each other.

Emperor Peerless returned to Veluriyam Capital as soon as he heard the call. Emperor Wellspring was his first visitor upon hearing the news. The visiting emperor had come due to reports of Emperor Peerless breaking through into the ranks of the top great emperors. He had a fighting itch to scratch and wanted to engage in a friendly bout with his old acquaintance.

Emperor Peerless had a similar sensation. His recent increase in strength was dampened by the lack of a suitable opponent to test it on. He was raring to go as much as Emperor Wellspring.

In order to create a buzz, Jiang Chen arranged for the two friendly great emperors to have a public duel. Veluriyam Capital became alive once more.

The two men were both among the wandering cultivator six titans. Among those six, Emperor Wellspring was originally in the top three and Peerless, bottom three.

There was a minute but true difference in their strengths in the past. However, Emperor Peerless' incredible breakthrough meant that he was able to stand on even footing with any of the former three positions of the six titans!

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

Chapter 1397: Sparring Between Great Emperors

That Emperor Peerless was able to break through at his age was exceptional. The outside world saw him as simply lucky. He'd received a gift from Jiang Chen after joining up, perhaps the Emperor Supremacy Pill... or so most people thought.

In actuality, Jiang Chen hadn't even had the time to refine the pill in question. How could he have given it to the great emperor?

The latter's breakthrough hadn't been due to pills, but a perfect increase in martial dao understanding and physical body enhancement. The catalyst for these changes was the kunpeng bloodline.

The three drops of kunpeng blood Jiang Chen had received from the first of the Six Palaces had been distributed twice already: one to Emperor Peafowl and one to Emperor Peerless.

The remaining drop was kept with the young lord. He couldn't give away this last one willy-nilly. In theory, he should have given one to the Jiao brothers as thanks for their staunch support. Alas, he only had one drop remaining, and it was inappropriate to give it to either brother in light of that.

Jiang Chen's plans to reward his subordinates were currently on hold. The Jiao brothers of Mount Huai were presently his capable assistants. He appreciated their efficient and methodical way of doing things.

Every mission he tasked them with was done to perfection. Though he couldn't give them the kunpeng blood, Jiang Chen wasn't going to be miserly about other rewards.

That was the primary reason they'd decided to follow him in the first place, after all. His earlier lesson in martial dao had taught them that the young lord had real knowledge and talent.

The Jiao brothers sought great things on their path of martial dao. They also knew that they couldn't achieve significant breakthroughs by themselves. That was why they'd been so close with Emperor Pillzenith before. The Pillfire leader was expert at using the two brothers' psychologies to control them.

The brothers wanted desperately to get some miracle pills from Pillzenith, but after meeting Jiang Chen, they realized how foolish and ridiculous their connection with Pillzenith had been. They'd been taken along for a complete ride.

Though Pillzenith had made his fame thousands of years ago, he couldn't compare at all to the young lord in terms of pill dao knowledge.

Jiang Chen kept pushing out pill after astounding pill. The Longevity Pill had been unimportant to the brothers since that pill was only useful for sage realm cultivators. The Pinecrane Pill, Emperor Ascension Pill, and Emperor Supremacy Pill that came after were far more attractive.

"Old Brother Mo, how do you feel about your chances?" As fellow wandering cultivators, the Jiao brothers knew that Mo Wushuang was at a slight disadvantage compared to Emperor Wellspring.

It wasn't easy for a duel between the two parties to have a decisive winner, but a drawn-out bout was more advantageous for the higher-ranked emperor. Of course, the rankings were dated and not necessarily reliable any longer.

Mo Wushuang's tremendous breakthrough made things a lot more uncertain, hence the brothers' intense curiosity.

"In the past, I can't say I would've had much of a chance at winning," smiled Emperor Peerless. "Now? I think it's fifty-fifty. And in decades or a century, I am sure that I'll have a ninety-plus chance of winning."

The great emperor wasn't a man that liked misrepresenting himself. Thus, his words shocked the Jiao brothers a great deal.

"Old Brother Mo," chuckled Jiao Yun, "I know you're the type of guy to say thirty when you actually mean seventy. Fifty-fifty means you're extremely confident in yourself, do I have things right? Eighty percent, maybe?"

Emperor Peerless roared with laughter. "If my opponent were anyone else, I would speak more cautiously. With Old Brother Wellspring? No, no. Fifty-fifty is what I really think."

"Fifty-fifty is really good still, right? After all, he's in the top half and you're in the bottom half of the six titans." Jiao Yun sighed.

"Heheh, perhaps you'll rise into the top half after this fight," Jiao Feng chorused.

The largest arena in Veluriyam Capital was the one at the foot of the Veluriyam Pagoda. It was a sacred place for every martial event that took place in the city. Countless experts and geniuses had clashed against each other in that ring.

It was hard to say exactly how many geniuses had made a name for themselves in it. Arenas like this could build up and tear down people's reputations in moments. Many geniuses had gotten their starts by distinguishing themselves in one-on-one public duels.

Having received the agreement of Emperor Wellspring and Mo Wushuang, the fight was open to every emperor realm cultivator in the city and above.

Each great emperor could bring up to three of his disciples to observe. Emperor realm cultivators could only bring themselves. Those who weren't citizens of the city were heavily restricted from spectating.

Any wandering cultivator could only observe with the mutual agreement of both combatants. Any sect cultivator needed the personal approval of Veluriyam's young lord.

Jiang Chen had done plenty of homework and propaganda to create sufficient hype and attention around this event. Veluriyam Capital was once more the talk of the realm.

“My friends, this upcoming fight is only a friendly duel. The emphasis should be on teaching and learning, not victory. If both of you can use all the techniques you’ve learned in your lives, I’m sure you’ll receive a great deal of wisdom by doing so. Moreover, the observers will receive just as much benefit. In particular, the cleverest of geniuses may receive a lifelong gift from watching the fight. Therefore, Veluriyam thanks you regardless of the result! Your willingness to be present is already a fact we should be grateful for.”

Jiang Chen and the other great emperors of Veluriyam were positioned before the arena as judges. Not missing a single beat, the young lord had brought a full retinue of his underlings.

The youths under his hand were increasing swiftly in martial dao cultivation as well. Though they couldn’t necessarily understand every blow that was traded between the two great emperors, simply taking in the atmosphere of the place was more than valuable enough.

There were a fair few wandering cultivators that managed to get the permission of both emperors to view the proceedings too.

“Do you see the expectant looks in your audience? Without further ado, let the fight begin!”

The protagonists of this duel were Emperors Wellspring and Peerless. Jiang Chen wasn’t going to steal their thunder. The Jiao brothers flanked the young lord left and right. They weren’t just his subordinates, but also his personal bodyguards.

Upon the arena, the two emperors were calling upon their fighting spirits. One’s presence was like a towering mountain, grand and austere. This was Emperor Peerless.

Another was as deep as the sea. Though the surface was calm, there were innumerable currents beneath. That was Emperor Wellspring.

Though the two men’s auras were different, the clash between their spirits set the atmosphere around the arena aflame.

“After you, Daoist Peerless!” Without further delay, Emperor Wellspring created a burst of ripples around his body. His figure was wreathed in wind and rain, dream and illusion. Amid tumultuous wave, it began to meld with nothingness.

The sensation itself seemed like a hallucination. It was difficult to distinguish the emperor from his surroundings.

Chuckling, Emperor Peerless snatched at the air. A weapon appeared in his hands.

“Daoist Wellspring, I received this blade a while back but haven’t practiced with it yet. During my last breakthrough, I managed to communicate once with the weapon. I can wield it as my own arm now. Shall we test a new blade technique I’ve created?”

Hearing that Emperor Peerless had invented his own blade techniques moved Emperor Wellspring’s heart. “Alright, my friend. Let me admire the mysteries of your new technique!”

Emperor Peerless drawing his blade awed Jiang Chen as well. "Old Brother Mo's martial dao did improve in quality. This is more than worthy of congratulations!"

He and the emperor were old friends by now. He had a rough estimate of what Emperor Peerless had been capable of before. As soon as Mo Wushuang produced his weapon, Jiang Chen knew that the Peerless of today and the Peerless of yesteryear weren't the same man.

The blade carried a potent momentum like crashing peaks. Even Emperor Wellspring was taken aback.

Amid the chaos, a flurry of exchanges had already occurred.

"Tsk tsk, there's a remarkable difference post-breakthrough. Without Emperor Wellspring noticing it, Old Brother Mo's blade-strokes are imbued with the truth of blade dao."

If one had to pick a specific emperor realm cultivator who'd completely understood everything about the duel so far, it would be Jiang Chen.

Though Emperor Wellspring was the challenger in name, he maintained a conservative strategy. In the beginning, he didn't follow Emperor Peerless' brisk rhythm.

His opponent didn't seem to pursue a reserved playstyle, either. He began to attack with incredible furor as soon as he entered the ring. As the most expert of everyone present, Jiang Chen instantly saw where Emperor Peerless's confidence in doing so came from.

After assimilating the kungpeng bloodline, his speed became more pronounced. Additionally, the offensive prowess that he was displaying forced the higher-ranked Emperor Wellspring into fatigued defense.

Wellspring wasn't necessarily at a disadvantage, but he definitely looked somewhat worse for wear.

Chapter 1398: Emperor Peerless Stunning All

Like an iron fist in a velvet glove, Emperor Wellspring's martial style seemed gentle, but sometimes showed glints of steel. However, the fight hadn't gone as he'd imagined. He tensed at the unexpectedly difficult situation.

He started to feel some regret. Why had a usually level-headed man like himself challenged Emperor Peerless? His opponent's cultivation used to be slightly below his own. How had the man's battle prowess become so frightening after a breakthrough?

Wellspring himself wasn't known for his offensive power, but his defense reigned supreme among all six wandering titans. It was his greatest weapon. It often wore out his opponents before an opportune counterattack sealed his victory.

However, Peerless' overwhelming attack had stifled his defense, leaving little room for a comeback.

Wellspring had known his opponent's strength would increase substantially after a breakthrough. He'd taken the worst scenario into account, but reality proved he'd underestimated his opponent even so.

As they fought, Peerless could sense his new increased power. Never had his duels with Wellspring gone so smoothly. Victory wasn't in his grasp yet, but the rhythm of the bout laid entirely in his hands.

“The kunpeng blood’s effects are indeed comprehensive. My speed’s far greater, to say nothing of my cultivation and bloodline power... This fight is the best test run!” He couldn’t repress his excitement.

The six wandering titans often challenged each other, and he’d been always been confident against Emperor Inferno and Emperor Reliance, but not so much against the three others,

Emperor Everviolet, Emperor Sabledeep, and Emperor Wellspring.

None of these three were stronger than the others. Simply put, Everviolet was the most overbearing, Sabledeep somewhat mysterious, and Wellspring the steadiest.

Each had their own specific style, but they’d all been a cut above his former self. However, he was vaguely dominating Wellspring at this moment.

Perhaps the spectators around the stage didn’t comprehend all of the fight’s subtleties, but Jiang Chen didn’t miss them.

“Old Brother Mo’s turned from a fish into a dragon. Even a figure like Emperor Wellspring is being suppressed. The kunpeng blood is marvelous indeed!”

He naturally knew the reason for Peerless’ change, but the other spectators were puzzled. Most of them would have ranked Emperor Wellspring slightly above Emperor Peerless. However, contrary to expectations, the latter now held the upper hand. How could that be?

“How is Emperor Peerless so strong after his breakthrough?”

“Is Emperor Wellspring going easy on him? Or pretending to be weak?”

“Stop reaching. Emperor Wellspring relies on his dependable defense. He’s never been one for trickery.”

“Maybe, but look at how cornered he is! Is Emperor Peerless going to replace his ranking among the six titans?”

“Who knows? Can you feel Emperor Peerless’ aura? His entire person seems so much loftier than before. Perhaps even Emperor Everviolet and Emperor Sabledeep aren’t his match now.”

“You’re right. If Emperor Wellspring isn’t, why would the others be? I’m speechless at Emperor Peerless’ improvement.”

“Does young lord Jiang Chen truly turn everything he touches into gold?”

The spectators each offered their own thoughts. Some of them admired Wellspring, while some were partial to Peerless. Each had his own supporters.

On the stage.

Although surprised by Peerless’ newfound prowess, Wellspring didn’t panic. He might be losing some ground, but he hadn’t lived millennia in vain. Thanks to his steadfast defense, he withstood his opponent without being immediately routed.

Peerless also knew a clear victory was impossible. Despite his progress, his barrage had failed to produce tangible results, no matter how fierce and spectacular it had been. After all, unlike him, his opponent had reached peak great emperor three thousand years ago.

At their level, an easy victory was but a pipe dream. One had to stake one's life and use trump cards to claim victory. Theirs was only a friendly spar. On top of that, they got along well.

After his initial burst, he slowed his tempo, trading blow for blow with his opponent. Neither of them could immediately wear out the other.

With a sweep of his longsword, Peerless turned into a ray of light and flew somewhere else on the stage, laughing wholeheartedly. "How liberating! Old Brother Wellspring, it's been a wonderful fight. But we might not decide a winner even if we continue for another decade. Why don't we call it a draw?"

Wellspring agreed with the proposal. The longer the duel went on, the longer he'd stay on the defensive, making for a disgraceful scene for a man of his caliber.

It was fortunate his opponent's earlier onslaught had eased off. A draw was satisfactory to both sides. No one won, but no one lost either.

Peerless' truce hadn't been motivated by fear. Instead, he didn't want to hurt his friend's feelings. Despite the result, their fight caused a stir.

Everyone was deeply admirable of Peerless' shocking fighting prowess.

Tales of the duel immediately spread across the entire human domain, turning Emperor Peerless into the latest sensation. Everyone knew he'd sworn allegiance out of gratitude for Jiang Chen rescuing him and his dao partner. In retrospect, that decision had proved to be oh so wise.

It seemed he'd surpassed Emperor Wellspring in a short time thanks to resources obtained from the young lord. He might even be first amongst the wandering titans now.

Wellspring may have become a springboard for his friend, but it was a source of motivation for him. The moment he'd decided to stay behind and help Jiang Chen, he'd discarded all thoughts of personal gains. He cared little for fleeting reputation.

True, he'd wanted to measure Peerless' progress, but it'd also been the best opportunity to polish his own skills. In comparison, what did a little gossip matter?

A hundred miles away, astonishment flashed in Emperor Everviolet's eyes. "Mo Wushuang's suppressed Emperor Wellspring in a public duel?"

This greatly took him aback. He'd duelled both of them in the past. Emperor Wellspring had proved a sturdy wall even against his ferocious strength, while Peerless hadn't been his match. However, the situation had undergone a dramatic turn after just a short while. Had Peerless improved so much he'd surpassed Wellspring?

His first instinct was to dismiss it as exaggeration, perhaps propaganda from Veluriyam to promote Peerless.

“Hmph, Mo Wushuang is nothing more than a speedster. His tactics and martial techniques are rather ordinary. I’m more than ninety percent certain of besting him. How can a breakthrough be so drastic? Did it turn him into a brand new man?”

For some reason, he felt a sudden urgency, and even a strange sense of threat. He didn’t want to believe the rumor. Wellspring was tied with him, yet couldn’t match Peerless? If true, wouldn’t his own chances against Peerless be slim?

Inexorable changes had come upon the six wandering titans.

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

Chapter 1399: Expending Much Thought and Care

In a deep valley somewhere in the human domain, Emperor Sabledeep received the news as well. His stary, wisdom-filled eyes looked thoughtful. “It was hard for Daoist Peerless to reach the ranks of the top great emperors. He can push back someone like Emperor Wellspring just after his breakthrough? Will Mo Wushuang overturn the current six titan rankings?”

Considering this for a few more moments, he sighed. “The Mo Wushuang many years ago was troubled by love and emotion, and veered away from the path of true dao. But now it seems that we were the short-sighted ones. All roads can lead to the same destination, after all. His allegiance to Sacred Peafowl Mountain was an astute decision. His life before was at a bottleneck... he’s a different man after only a few years. Does that young lord Jiang Chen of Veluriyam Capital really have a golden touch?”

Different from Emperor Everviolet and his worries, Emperor Sabledeep was neither disappointed nor anxious.

.....

The hibernating Pillzenith was positively aghast from his throne in Pillfire City. He was stuck there thanks to his young son’s captivity. Emperor Peerless’ improvement was a severe blow to the man. Mo Wushuang was an old rival of his, in love as well as martial dao.

For a long time, the wandering great emperor had been beneath him in almost every aspect. Without their particular special circumstances, Pillzenith would have long ordered his execution a long time ago.

Therefore, the leader of Pillfire tasted venom on his tongue when he heard that Mo Wushuang had advanced in strength. This was worsened by Mo Wushuang joining Jiang Chen and Sacred Peafowl Mountain. Pillzenith’s heart was bursting with anger.

Jiang Chen was almost his internal demon at this point.

After returning to Pillfire City and doing some research into the matter, Pillzenith realized that the Temple of Cleansing Fire and young master Tian Lin’s guards had all been completely fooled by his mortal enemy.

It completely bewildered him. Jiang Chen was supposed to have been trapped in Eternal Celestial Capital! How could that dastardly young man come to Pillfire City to kidnap Tian Lin?

Though the battle between Emperors Peerless and Wellspring appeared to be a friendly round at first glance, it had an odd effect on the human domain at large.

Almost every cultivator believed that Emperor Peerless' massive short-term advancement had been due to Jiang Chen's assistance. The only catalyst they could think of was the Emperor Supremacy Pill that the young lord had once mentioned.

No one had seen the miracle pill in person before. Jiang Chen had simply mentioned it in passing back at the Dragon and Tiger Meet.

Emperor Peerless was extremely strong evidence that said pill was a real product! That young lord Jiang Chen's marvels was hardly limited to the Pinecrane Pill alone!

Cognitive inertia was a potent effect.

In the weeks and months after the duel, wandering cultivators began to congregate to Veluriyam Capital once more. They all had a common thought: they wanted to join Jiang Chen and Sacred Peafowl Mountain.

The young lord was very happy to see his city gain such influence. All of his hard work and setup earlier had been meant to achieve the results he was now seeing.

In the initial stages of his plan, no great emperor in Veluriyam had been optimistic about his chances. Even Mo Wushuang, his staunchest supporter, had taken that stance. However, it now seemed that he was becoming ever closer to his goal.

Never in history had anyone been able to gather the wandering cultivator world to their side before. But Jiang Chen had indubitably taken a solid first step in that direction.

Currently, Veluriyam not only had Emperor Peerless and the Jiao brothers as its wandering cultivator representatives, but Emperors Wellspring, Inferno, and Reliance were also present. More shockingly, wandering cultivators were expressing their newfound interest in Veluriyam in droves. The activity level as a whole in the city was rising.

The human domain itself was being changed by these differences.

Originally, Veluriyam had been a core of the human domain without much wider influence. It had jurisdiction in the southern cities and not much else. For wandering cultivators, Pillfire had proudly worn the crown of being the heart of the human domain for a very long time.

After gradual changes in the world and Veluriyam Capital's ascension, that was no longer as true. The southern city was gaining prominence and momentum, replacing its northern rival.

It had been public opinion that it was virtually impossible for young lord Jiang Chen to challenge Pillfire's dominance, regardless of his genius and mastery. He needed to mature and grow before doing so.

Truth and trend both showed that that was nothing further from the truth. Veluriyam was well on its way to replacing Pillfire as a matter of fact.

Public opinion was a terrifying thing. When more and more people changed their hearts and allowed the scales to tip toward Veluriyam, many intangibles also changed. Unless Pillfire could overwhelm Veluriyam in zeal and spirit, a shift in the reins of power was pretty much set in stone.

That wasn't to say the northern city had given up, however. It had made several attempts at attracting attention to moderate success. But when compared to Veluriyam's impetus, those efforts amounted to little in the grand scheme of things.

Regardless of Pillfire City's mundane excellence, it couldn't put something like the Pinecrane Pill or the Emperor Supremacy Pill on the table. Nothing it had was sufficiently eye-catching or sublime.

Jiang Chen witnessed all the changes in his city with his own eyes. Things were taking shape exactly as he had hoped.

"We're doing very well lately, young lord. Many wandering cultivators have come through our gates and the city is bustling with activity."

"That's nice, but Pillfire isn't going to roll over and surrender." Jiang Chen was completely composed. "It's not time to celebrate yet." Smiling, he looked at Emperor Peerless. "Old Brother Mo, I do apologize for what the commotion around this duel has done to Emperor Wellspring. Is he upset?"

"Daoist Wellspring is a broad-minded man. He would never be bothered by something as minor as this." Emperor Peerless was absolutely certain of this.

Among the wandering six titans, Emperor Wellspring was probably one of the most unprejudiced, if not the fairest outright.

Jiang Chen nodded. He had perceived the emperor's visionary nature firsthand. Emperor Wellspring wasn't a short-sighted man focused only on personal gain. He'd taken the initiative to stay here in Veluriyam, calling upon his fellow emperors to do so as well.

Jiang Chen respected him a great deal for having done that.

He'd given Wellspring a Pinecrane Pill sure, but only as a part of a transaction. The great emperor had done something so selfless solely out of consideration for the goodness of the world. Such magnanimity in the wandering cultivator world truly astounded the young lord.

Jiang Chen had to admit that even Old Brother Mo couldn't compare to this man's tolerance and wisdom. Someone like him was a world's difference from crude experts like the Jiao brothers. Therefore, he was presently wondering whether to gift the final drop of kungpeng blood to Emperor Wellspring.

Should he attempt to draw this astute and prophetic wandering cultivator under his own banner?

Having been by Jiang Chen's side for several years now, Emperor Peerless was able to predict his friend's thoughts to a certain degree. He guessed part of what the silent Jiang Chen was pondering.

"Young lord, let me summarize the wandering cultivator world's six titans. Emperor Everviolet is proud and domineering; Emperor Sabledeep, mysterious and unpredictable; Daoist Wellspring, altruistic and honest; Emperor Inferno, devoted to martial dao; Emperor Reliance, opportunistic and practical. As for me, I've always gone with the flow without much of a loftier goal. Daoist Wellspring is definitely the most contemplative among us and also the most permissive."

These words were nothing short of a recommendation from Mo Wushuang himself.

Peerless had heard of Wellspring's stalwart support of Jiang Chen after returning to Veluriyam. As someone who knew the man well, he understood that his friend hadn't made the choice out of greed or gain. What had compelled him was justice, the justice that existed in every man's heart!

A man like that was truly worthy of respect.

Peerless suspected that the other man's request for a fight and the permission to announce the duel to the world had both intentionally been given.

It wasn't because Wellspring was some kind of masochist. He had wanted to use it as an opportunity to create influential momentum for young lord Jiang Chen. If that was the case, Wellspring was that much more admirable.

Jiang Chen smiled gently. "No need to be so humble, Old Brother Mo. Emperor Wellspring possesses numerous commendable characteristics, but you're not a bad hand yourself. You are honest and clean-cut with your preferences, both superb traits to have."

The young lord hadn't exaggerated in his evaluation. Mo Wushuang cared a lot about loyalty and chivalry. He was the ideal friend and brother.

But in terms of leadership? Truthfully, he was slightly lacking. Someone like Emperor Wellspring surpassed him in vision quite a bit.

"There's no need for you to praise me like that, young lord," laughed Emperor Peerless. "We're very close acquaintances, no? Out of the wandering six titans, I respect Daoist Wellspring the most. In fact, I suspect that he intentionally made the commotion around his challenge to me. It certainly seems that he's expended a lot of effort in attempting to spread your fame and Veluriyam's fame."

Jiang Chen was extremely shocked upon hearing this. He hadn't considered that possibility before. Was Wellspring that self-sacrificial of a man?

"There's no need to be suspicious, young lord. Not many wandering cultivators have the same kind of foresight as Daoist Wellspring. He didn't do that to butter you up or anything. He really does think highly of you."

Emperor Peerless's words made huge waves in Jiang Chen's heart. He couldn't calm himself for quite a while. In that moment, he solidified his previous idea.

He had someone he was going to give the last drop of kungpeng bloodline to. The Jiao brothers were inappropriate and the same was true with every other great emperor in the city. As of right now, Emperor Wellspring was the best and most fitting candidate for the drop of blood!

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

Chapter 1400: An Emphyrean Opportunity

Among the great emperors originally belonging to Veluriyam Capital proper, Emperor Petalpluck had the highest level of cultivation. He was comparable to the late Emperor Shura in terms of sheer endowment.

Emperor Vastsea took second place after that.

Emperors Void, Mountaincrush, Skysplitter, and Coiling Dragon were slightly inferior compared to the previous two. Of those, Emperor Coiling Dragon was only initial great emperor.

In theory, the sole drop of kunpeng blood should have been left to the strongest of Veluriyam's emperors. That was the resolution that made the most sense.

But prolonged observation of Emperor Petalpluck gave Jiang Chen the feeling that the man's nature made him unsuitable for the kunpeng blood.

To put it kindly, Petalpluck was a pacifist. In other words, he put self-preservation above public good. He was irresponsible, without a strong sense of duty that encompassed the rest of the world.

Jiang Chen was none too pleased about that.

The Emperor Peafowl of yesteryear considered the fate of the realm in addition to Veluriyam Capital's own. His heart had enveloped the whole of the human domain.

Jiang Chen didn't expect Emperor Petalpluck to possess the same kind of nobility, but he had to be selfless enough to maintain justice in an hour of need, at least.

Evidence showed that the emperor couldn't manage such a thing. When Shura had convened the Vassal Meeting, Petalpluck had been the one most qualified to oppose the motion. But he'd done no such thing, choosing instead to go with the flow in silence. His inaction was no different from condoning what Shura had done.

Jiang Chen wasn't going to take him to account over it after the fact, but that'd enabled him to get a better understanding of what kind of person the emperor was. Petalpluck could be a solid supporter while the situation was advantageous, but it was difficult to rely on him in a time of need.

As for the others, only Jiang Chen's direct allies, Emperors Void and Coiling Dragon, were worthy of consideration.

Void was adroit enough about current affairs, but his martial dao talent was somewhat lacking. He couldn't compare to the abilities that Wellspring and Peerless had as the wandering six titans.

Coiling Dragon was quite talented, but he was descended from a dragon bloodline. There was no reason for Jiang Chen to give him kunpeng blood instead. He could consider giving the great emperor a drop of true dragon blood after Long Xiaoxuan broke through to empyrean realm instead. That would be several times better than what kunpeng blood could do!

Of course, that was a long-term plan. Coiling Dragon was only initial great emperor at the moment. His cultivation was miles away from what was necessary to benefit from the gift.

.....

Emperor Wellspring had heard a few rumors on the wind the past few days. Some said that he had been used by Jiang Chen and Veluriyam as a stepping stone for Emperor Peerless and the city.

The emperor ignored this wholesale. The truth of the matter was exactly as Peerless had guessed. Wellspring had intentionally issued the challenge to help the young lord.

It had been part of his thinking ever since he chose to stay at Veluriyam Capital in full support of the youth.

In Wellspring's opinion, the human domain was currently a pile of loose sand. Only Jiang Chen could unify it under one banner. He saw infinite potential in the young lord. Given this, he had no problem sacrificing a little bit of his reputation in order to increase Jiang Chen's fame. Veluriyam Capital would surely benefit.

At this moment, he received an invitation to Sacred Peafowl Mountain.

"I almost missed your good intentions for the battle with Peerless, Emperor Wellspring. I would've without your friend's reminder." Jiang Chen smiled serenely after a soft sigh.

Wellspring blinked, then laughed. "What did Daoist Peerless say about me?"

"Emperor Wellspring, you used that battle to make both my name and Veluriyam Capital's name renowned in the human domain. Your noble, selfless spirit is admirable and commendable." Saying this, the young lord stood to bow to the emperor.

Emperor Wellspring hastily returned the gesture. "Young lord Jiang Chen, you are the ruler of Veluriyam. I don't deserve such honor."

"Your integrity is unparalleled, senior," Jiang Chen replied seriously. "If I pretended not to see it, how then could I deserve your kindness?"

"Ah, what I did wasn't all that important," Wellspring chuckled. "Plus, my hands were a bit itchy. The fight against Daoist Peerless was quite enjoyable. Multiple birds with one stone, as it were."

It was obvious that he had no intention of taking great credit.

Emperor Wellspring truly is worthy of Emperor Peerless' praise! In terms of disposition and heart, he was an exception to the wandering cultivator world's rule.

Jiang Chen found the man rather similar to Emperor Peafowl. If the emperor had had the same kind of status and resources of the other man, he would have undoubtedly done similar things for the world.

Regardless of one's relationship with a man like that, he was worthy of deep respect.

Looking thoughtfully at Wellspring, Jiang Chen opened his mouth once more. "Emperor Wellspring, I remember that Old Brother Mo likes to call you Old Brother Hui."

"Haha, that's right. I like that nickname rather more in private settings. Typically, we also call each other fellow daoists." Wellspring's name was Jing Zhonghui, hence the origin of 'Old Brother Hui'.

"Then if you'll excuse me, I too shall call you Old Brother Hui," smiled Jiang Chen. "I have an opportunity here that I'd like to give you, old brother."

"Oh?" Wellspring blinked, a little unsure what he meant.

"Before I tell you more about it, I must warn you of a few things beforehand. You must keep secret about everything the opportunity involves, and moreover use what you receive for only good. Of course, I trust that you will be able to do both of these, but it's still good to mention this beforehand."

The young man's solemnity piqued Wellspring's curiosity.

"Don't tantalize me so, young lord. My heart is bursting to know what you're talking about." Wellspring's tone was a little exaggerated, but he was sincere.

The Pinecrane Pill Jiang Chen had given him was a top rank pill he'd never seen the likes of before in his entire life. Therefore, his first thought was related to the Emperor Supremacy Pill. The reason perhaps, for Emperor Peerless's rapid growth!

"Hoho, if I might venture a guess, are you going to give me a pill? The legendary level-increasing Emperor Supremacy Pill, to be exact?" Wellspring was a bit agitated.

Any martial expert had wants and pursuits, even those that stood at the very top. They always wanted to become stronger.

Jiang Chen smiled and shook his head. "Gains from pills are largely temporary. The opportunity I am about to give you has much more widely applicable effects."

"Oh? There's something more attractive than the Emperor Supremacy Pill?" Wellspring's eyes lit up. "You've successfully stoked my appetite, young lord. What kind of opportunity are you talking about? Don't keep me guessing." He laughed, rubbing his hands together.

"This is an opportunity that surpasses great emperor realm." Jiang Chen grinned coolly.

What? Wellspring's mind exploded with shock. He almost thought he had misheard. What kind of an opportunity could transcend great emperor realm? An empyrean opportunity?

His age couldn't save the emperor from paling. He lost his composure for a time, stammering. "Young lord Jiang Chen, you... you mean... you mean an empyrean opportunity?"

"Quite so," Jiang Chen nodded pleasantly.

Wellspring's head rang with disorientation. An empyrean opportunity? An empyrean opportunity? How many years had it been since the human domain had an empyrean cultivator?

How could there be an empyrean opportunity?

Anyone else saying this to the emperor would have been laughed off, taken as a passing joke. There was a certain magic when Jiang Chen said it though, one that almost forced him into believing it.

The young man before him had produced far too many miracles and surprises for the world at large.

The reason that Wellspring was staying at Veluriyam still was precisely because of this trait. The emperor couldn't resist his desire to help the youth out. Without further ado, Jiang Chen took out the bottle with the last drop of kumpeng blood.

"Old Brother Hui, here is a drop of blood that belongs to the ancient kumpeng bloodline. Kumpeng blood is the very definition of extraordinary. Once you assimilate it, you will have no problems breaking through to empyrean realm, given enough time." Jiang Chen placed the bottle before the emperor.

Wellspring was stupefied. He gazed intently at the bottle, his eyes glassy. As soon as the bottle was brought out, a potent and fierce aura had blasted him in the face.

“What terrifying power!” The emperor blinked, waves of astonishment rippling through his heart. That a single drop of bottled-up blood was able to evoke such a fearsome aura...

The bloodline was anything but ordinary!

“Young lord Jiang Chen, are you really giving this to me?” Wellspring couldn’t stay calm any more. The draw of the bloodline wasn’t something that most cultivators could resist. That was true even in the face of the great emperor’s seniority!

“Old Brother Hui, your kindness and support towards both Veluriyam and myself is unprecedented. I would be supremely rude not to return the favor. Your graciousness and goodwill deserves that much, at least!” Jiang Chen smiled.

“But... this is too valuable to give.” Wellspring took a deep breath. His eyes were fixated on the bottle, unable to move in either direction.

Truthfully, his courtesy and what he actually thought were completely disparate. No one could remain nonchalant before a chance like this. But this opportunity was too weighty for him to receive just like this.

Emperor Wellspring was exactly this kind of man. Jiang Chen’s prepayment of the Pinecrane Pill had made him feel that he owed the young lord, hence his staunch support of the young man’s subsequent endeavors. The price of this opportunity far surpassed the Pinecrane Pill. Because of this, Wellspring was extremely conflicted.