

Three Realms 1411

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

Chapter 1411: Entering The Secret Realm

The two seemed fated to follow the footsteps of the previous three scouts, when suddenly—the seven enormous light pillars fired terrifying rays that streaked through the air like shooting stars. As sharp as an ax, they lacerated the incorporeal barrier, covering it in cracks.

Cracks appearing in the restriction seemed to make it temporarily lose control.

Like birds with suddenly freed wings, the two cultivators flew towards the opposite shore. The strange scene left the onlookers speechless.

By the time they came back to themselves, the two men had already reached their destination. “Hahaha, we’ve made it!” they gushed, crowing with laughter like madmen.

Long Baxian stiffened. He ordered, “Listen up, Heavenly Dragon Sect! Follow them!”

He took the lead himself. How could he let this opportunity pass him by?

However, another drastic change occurred the next moment.

A violent wave surged through the restriction, like a ripple across a pond. When it disappeared, the surface was as tranquil as it’d ever been.

If the crowd had been surprised before, they were now completely stumped.

What was going on?

Self-regeneration?

How many ancient secrets was Agarwood Valley hiding that a simple barrier could make such a fool out of them? Breached one moment and repaired the next... It was maddeningly difficult to wrap one’s mind around the flip-flopping.

His eyes inscrutable, Jiang Chen looked pensive. He’d had a few guesses, but after what had just happened, he now had a rough understanding of the situation, however vague it was.

More than one entity controls the secret realm.

Indeed. Inside Agarwood, two distinct powers seemed at odds with each other. One was doing its utmost to deny them access, while the other did everything possible to lure them inside. There was no other way to explain the strange duality.

There’s a deep mystery at play. Why are there two opposing forces with diverging goals? Lost in thought, he hunted for every detail that corroborated his theory.

Jiang Chen was certain he was on the right path. The restriction, the blazing heat, as well as the lava likely belonged to the side that rejected their presence. Meanwhile, the seven pillars belonged to the other side, as well as that glass-like water screen.

Which was good and which one evil? Or perhaps both had equally nefarious plans? It was impossible to tell.

Other than the obstacles, Jiang Chen had little hints as to their motivations.

Like fish back in the sea, the two emperor realm cultivators cheerfully vanished from their sight after reaching the other shore. They casted aside all fear and despair after making it through the restriction on a fluke. Didn't an incredible chance lie in front of them? They no longer begrudged Long Baxiang for using them as guinea pigs.

They even had the urge to thank the sect representative. If not for him, they might still be stuck with everyone else.

Long Baxiang had grazed the barrier just now. Fortunately, he'd halted in time and stopped his men, saving them from a grim fate.

Gnashing his teeth, his face was ashen and his heart pounding like a drum. He fixed the restriction's chaotic fluctuations with a conflicted glare.

Unresolvable anger welled up in his chest. His two hapless victims had successfully entered the secret realm. All of the treasures inside were now theirs for the taking!

He hadn't anything wrong! So why had events taken such a disgusting turn? How could he remain calm when his actions had benefited someone else?

He whipped his head back, a chilly glint in his sinister gaze as it swept over the crowd.

The cultivators behind him blanched and backed up, deeply wary of his tyrannical ways.

He sniggered. "Why are all of you so afraid? The other two reached the other side in one piece. How can you be so cowardly when so many riches are right in front of you?"

In fact, he was tempted to go himself.

But what if it'd only been a coincidence earlier? Would the pillars help a second time? He'd also deduced that the restriction had been momentarily ineffectual earlier because of the strong rays from the light pillars.

But to think the restriction would recover so easily! It was now pristine and unharmed, as if nothing had occurred. How frightening! He repressed a shudder.

The more powerful the man, the more he was afraid of death. Rather than risking himself, he preferred using a couple meat shields and wait for another window of opportunity to present itself.

However, everyone retreated beneath his stare. No one wanted to be the sacrificial lamb.

With a cruel snicker, he flashed into the crowd like a coiling dragon and grabbed two emperor realm cultivators. His great emperor domain restrained them, leaving them no chance to escape.

"Good luck!" Without hesitation, he tossed them into the restriction.

How could a noble first rank sect act so outrageously at this crucial juncture? First threats, and now directly resorting to force! The other factions were flabbergasted. However, despite the mixture of shock and anger, none dared utter the slightest complaint to the domineering Long Baxiang.

They were caught between a rock and a hard place. They didn't want to continue cowering under Long Baxiang's yoke, but could they bear to leave at this stage?

The secret realm was almost within reach. They might never have such a fortuitous opportunity in the rest of their lives. So many great emperors were powerless in front of the restriction, but if they could overcome it, their gains would be unimaginable.

This enticement won over their dread, defeating their urge to flee.

The two cultivators didn't rush forward headfirst. Instead, the safest and most sensible way was to wait for the pillars to cut another path through.

Through unplanned accord, powerhouses from Pillfire and the Ninesuns Sky Sect also stood in front of the restriction, waiting without blinking. As long as the pillars struck, it would create a short-lived gap they could take advantage of.

Jiang Chen threw a meaningful look to Zi Tan. Weren't two entities vying for control of the secret realm? He could use it to his advantage and charge through when the restriction was rendered ineffective once more. He'd reached the same decision as Upper Eight Regions' great emperors.

The forefather immediately positioned himself behind Upper Eight factions.

"Zi Tan, once the pillars strike, rush through the opening," the young lord ordered.

The old man couldn't resist asking, "Are we finally going to reach the secret realm? I wonder what's inside."

"Ask again after we cross the lava. Don't put the cart before the horse. The only thing I can say is that the secret realm's much more complicated than they can imagine."

Jiang Chen didn't go into too many details.

As he'd guessed, the pillars stayed motionless for a spell, gathering and concentrating strength for their next assault.

They flared less than an hour later, firing terrifying, eye-piercing beams of light onto the barrier like meteors.

"Let's go!"

Like a school of carp, numerous cultivators bounded forward. Some were faster than others, but everyone scurried to the other shore.

Jiang Chen didn't use the Kunpeng Meteoric Escape, but even so, he was faster than average. He hid in the crowd, avoiding attention but didn't sacrifice too much speed either.

By the time the barrier healed itself, more than half the cultivators had reached to the other side! They now stood upon the secret realm's soil. A whole new world unfolded in front of their eyes!

Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

Chapter 1412: An Ancient Sect?

“Hahaha, we really made it!”

“What’s with this secret realm? It prevents us from entering one moment, then lets us in the next. It must be toying with us.”

Those who’d overcome the restriction beamed with exhilaration. Even great emperors grinned from ear to ear.

Only Jiang Chen remained impassive. He was actually more vigilant than ever. They hadn’t truly passed the barrier. Rather, a certain entity inside had let them through. While everyone basked in their excitement, he observed the surroundings, taking in the tiniest detail.

This area was night and day compared to the previous ones.

Had they entered the land of the immortals? Clouds and fog wreathed the distance where a magnificent palace was located. Seven divine pillars of light piercing the sky extended from it.

“It’s right in front of us!”

Even cultivators from Pillfire and the Heavenly Dragon Sect had trouble staying collected. Their burning gazes landed on the faraway palace as if they could already touch the riches inside.

“Let’s go!”

“Hurry up, don’t fall behind!”

“We can’t miss this opportunity no matter what!”

Apart from Jiang Chen, the secret realm had blinded them all with avarice. In their fertile imaginations, this place was the greatest holy land from times immemorial, hiding inconceivable inheritances and treasures. How could they not lose their minds at the prospect of this fortune awaiting them with open arms?

Ding.

Suddenly, the faint ring of a bell chimed in the distance.

Simple yet melodious, it seemed a sound from antiquity, reaching their ears after crossing through space and time.

It erased their fears and worries, delivering ease and comfort instead, as if they’d returned to the safety and well-being of their mother’s arms. Unconsciously, doubt and confusion faded from their eyes, replaced with peace amidst fervor.

Jian Cheng’s hackles rose at the spectacle. The seal in his ocean of consciousness fought back fiercely against the bell’s emotional influence, as if loathing its mere tinkle.

He dared not be careless. The wondrous seal had saved him too many times to count and he trusted it with no reservations at all. Almost everyone seemed under the bell's bizarre spell. Only a handful had maintained their lucidity, while he most likely was the only one fully aware of the danger.

It truly sounds ethereal and otherworldly, so why do I have this ominous premonition? Am I being overly paranoid?

This fearful thought sometimes crept in his mind, but he instantly squashed it every single time. The chain seal had never been wrong. Since it rejected the sound, so would he.

Ring after ring, the bell slowly sang a perfect tune. The rhythm was as slow as a napping old man, but its charm was impossible to resist. Go, yonder palace is waiting for you.

As the saying went, never mistake a clear view for a short distance.

The palace seemed within arm's reach, but no matter how fast the crowd sped at top speed, the palace always remained distant.

Though they made substantial inroads into the distance, but the way was much longer than their eyes perceived.

"Damn it, we've traveled for so long, why aren't we there yet?"

"It looks a couple hours away at most, but it's almost nightfall and we don't seem to have made any headway."

"Is it playing tricks on us?"

"What nonsense. You can leave if you want, but stop grumbling if you're staying!"

"That's right, do you ever hear of people complaining in the legends?"

"I know, right? Do you think ancient inheritances are to be plucked like cucumbers in a market?"

Some became impatient while others kept their cool. But without exception, none could hide the greed in their eyes.

"It must be a test. There'll be many trials to overcome along the way as ancient treasures aren't so easy to obtain. But the prize will be well worth it!" Many shared this opinion.

The restriction they'd encountered was one such trial. Many others likely awaited them, as ancient secret realms were wont to do. For example, everyone could see the misty palace and feel the distance shorten. Yet, a long, tenuous road still lay ahead.

But without warning, they suddenly arrived in front of a tall mountain with many transparent lazurite mirrors standing before it.

"Dear juniors, congratulations on making it this far!" A weathered, venerable voice suddenly emerged on the mountain road. It also seemed to echo from antiquity across time and space.

The cultivators froze, halting despite of themselves. They looked at each other, shaken by this new presence.

“Since you’re here, this realm must have acknowledged your right to enter. However, if you want my personal approval, you must challenge the trial of the Gate of Life.

“What is the Gate of Life, you might ask?” the voice continued confidently. “It sees through you and me, and through all things living. You may enter the palace if you can pass through it. Treasure and knowledge will be yours. You might even... become my sect’s disciple and perpetuate the sect’s former glory. You better think your decision through.”

The Gate of Life?

“Who does the voice belong to?” Jiang Chen puzzled. “Is it the creator of this realm? Does this place truly hide extraordinary ancient heritages?”

This thought spiraled in his mind. He suddenly realized the others were almost fully brainwashed. He had to bow to the voice’s magnetism. If the man had truly created this place by himself, he’d prove a formidable opponent.

“Let me tell you a few more things before you make a decision. This sacred land belongs to the strongest sect during antiquity, the Primosanct Sect. Fairness, integrity, and justice are the sect’s tenets! The creed of the leader of the ancient righteous sects!”

The leader of the righteous sects in the ancient times! The cultivators felt their blood boil.

“Moreover, the palace is the Primosanct Sect’s most unfathomable mansion. It contains copies of almost all the sect’s martial techniques, as well as many treasures. Some of you, I’m sure, are destined to obtain them and become unparalleled heroes!”

A fevered shiver coursed through the crowd. Even the great emperors weren’t immune. They strained their ears, afraid of missing a single word.

“Whether you’re a great emperor, emperor or sage realm, you’ll automatically become my sect’s disciple as soon as you obtain the inheritance from the forbidden area. From there onwards, you must discard your previous identity and sever all ties. Or else, the grand dao will be forever out of your reach!”

Forsake their factions?

Everyone hesitated. Stealing and mugging was one thing, but to betray their sect would be a hard pill to swallow. No one could easily take the plunge.

The ancient Primosanct Sect? Fairness? Integrity? Honesty? It sounds great and all, but why should we sever all ties? Is it true fairness to spurn one’s own? Jiang Chen’s eyes narrowed at the contradiction.

It would be delightful news if they truly were on the Primosanct Sect’s ground. However, would the ancient leader of the just sects have someone to abandon their beloved ones, using almost threatening methods?

Jiang Chen had been the son of the celestial emperor in his past life. In all the heavenly planes, few people understood the grand dao and heavenly dao better than him. He’d never heard his imperial father mention anything of the sort.

Dao followed the course of nature. To discard attachment went against heavenly principles. Such dao couldn't possibly be the genuine grand dao!

With the wisdom from his past life, the seemingly profound words abruptly filled with strange aberrations. Of course, his insight was second to none. He could stay clear-minded, but the others hadn't noticed the issue therein.

"Remember, be true to yourselves. When you pass through the Gate of Life, your deepest thoughts will be like an open book to me." The voice continued impassively, "Very well. You have fifteen minutes. If you can't decide by then, you'll be expelled from the secret realm!"

The crowd rustled uneasily at this ultimatum.

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

Chapter 1413: A Series Of Tests

Fifteen minutes was far too short for such an important decision. The crowd was caught between a rock and a hard place. Only a firm and unfaltering person could make such a decision under these circumstances.

Jiang Chen however, didn't take everything at face value and scrutinized the details.

How could anyone be alive if this heritage really did come from the ancient era? But of course, he didn't shoot down the idea immediately.

There was a living, breathing example in the form of the Veluriyam Pagoda. Figures from the ancient era had been sealed and kept alive through a series of unorthodox methods. However, they were no different from practically being dead.

They couldn't move, undo the seals, or do anything in general. All that remained was a fragment of their consciousness. So what exactly was going on here?

He didn't understand the underlying mechanisms, but when in doubt, observation was called for.

The incredibly difficult choice stumped many.

This was a test of one's loyalty. To obtain the secret realm's heritage, they would have to sever all previous attachments. The commitment couldn't be half-hearted.

Wandering cultivators were few and far between in the crowd. A large majority of them were heavyweights of great sects and factions.

It was an incredibly ironic twist of fate. They'd come to hunt treasures for their sects. Severing ties with their factions was an extremely ridiculous prerequisite.

Jiang Chen remained unfazed. He wanted to see how these heavyweights would react under these circumstances.

Long Baxiang of the Heavenly Dragon Sect cackled derisively. "You can all continue dawdling! I'll be first to make a move!"

He transformed into a beam of light and was instantly swept away by a transparent, ripple of a whirlpool after diving into one of the gates. The mirrors weren't real objects, but illusory images.

Others scrambled to follow after the first die was cast. The other members of the Heavenly Dragon Sect dashed for the mirrors without hesitation.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

One by one, they disappeared like rocks thrown in the sea, never to be heard from again. Nobody could know for sure where they'd gone.

One, two, three...

It wasn't long before a large group had followed suit. They remained resolute despite the difficult choice. The temptation was too great to just give up now!

Emperor Cloudbillow was left in a predicament. He could tell that his companions, including those from Empyrean River Palace, Sublime Chord Temple, and Eternal Celestial Capital, were itching to dive into the mirror after Long Baxiang's demonstration. Eagerness lapped at their heels.

This was an ancient sacred land! What would they stand to gain by remaining loyal to their factions and returning empty-handed? Would they ever get this chance again if they passed up this once in a lifetime opportunity?

"Daoist Cloudbillow, what do we do?" An expert from the Empyrean River Palace asked with furrowed brows. They were clearly waiting on Cloudbillow to make the final decision. Unfortunately, the person in question was in a deep dilemma.

There was too much at stake here. He couldn't make up his mind in such a short span of time. Pillfire was the most powerful and one-of-a-kind existences in the human domain. Only the true heritage from this secret realm could make up for the regret he'd feel once cutting ties with his faction. There was no going back after he'd taken the first step!

"Daoist Cloudbillow, one must harden one's heart in order to gain a firm footing in this world. The human domain is already in shambles. Your loyalty will not pay off!"

"Daoist Cloudbillow, if this place is really is an ancient heritage, after cutting ties with our factions, we can simply establish another sect with the knowledge we gain!"

"For all we know, this sect of ours might actually become the strongest in the human domain!"

Humans were inherently ambitious and often driven to insanity because of them.

The great emperors from varying sects could no longer sit still; all spoke up to try to convince Emperor Cloudbillow. Anxiety was written clearly on their faces after seeing that Long Baxiang had made the first move.

Cloudbillow was actually longing to jump into action as well. All he lacked was a final push. Moved by their proposition, he decided to move with the current.

“Fine, since this is the common consensus. Just because we’ve cut all ties with our roots doesn’t mean that we can’t repay our debt in another way. Absolute strength is all that matters in the martial dao world! Only then can one do as one pleases!”

“Let’s go!” With a sweeping gesture, he led the group through the illusory gates.

One by one, they were swallowed by the ripples and disappeared without a trace. Even though many were still loudly cursing on the scene, a majority had chosen to enter!

Jiang Chen looked at the Purple Smoke Sect’s forefather meaningfully and smiled. “Do you wish to enter as well?”

The forefather sighed dejectedly and nodded. His feelings and memories for the sect ran incredibly deep, but the temptation before him was simply too great to resist.

“Then do as you please. Don’t worry about cutting ties with your sect. It’s all a pile of bullshit!” Jiang Chen advised through his consciousness with a cold smile.

A pile of bullshit? The forefather was taken aback. So many great emperors had racked their brains over the matter and finally walked through a gate after much contemplation. How could they have failed to see that it was nonsense?

Jiang Chen didn’t care to explain anything. Based on his observations, the so-called ‘Gate of Life’ was merely a hoax. The voice was definitely not telling the whole truth. He didn’t believe that everyone present was so resolute as to cut ties with their own sects. Moreover, he hadn’t felt any powerful ripples of consciousness coming from the gates during this entire time.

It was likely just a trick.

He wouldn’t fear it even if it was real. As someone who’d already been through the wheel of reincarnation, why would he be afraid of a measly contraption?

Not even reincarnation could sever his ties from his previous life. A measly Gate of Life would never be powerful enough to succeed. The act of severing attachments was completely up to oneself. A firm and unwavering heart could never be overcome.

Jiang Chen no longer hesitated after arriving at that conclusion. He turned into a flash of light and launched himself towards the gates.

The Purple Smoke Sect’s forefather stopped hesitating too after the young lord made his move. If the young lord of Veluriyam Capital could be so resolute in his decisions, what excuse did the forefather have to be hesitant?

Jiang Chen was instantly carried away by a wave of energy after stepping through the gate. It felt as though he was being swept away by the sea’s tide. It wasn’t long before he felt solid ground again.

Upon finding his footing, all he could hear was a series of complaints.

“What sever all ties? What Gate of Life? Nothing’s changed!”

“Damn it. Were we tricked?”

“Why are you all so anxious? We’ve yet to receive the heritage. Perhaps it’s not yet time for us to make the choice. For all we know, we might have to swear a poisonous vow for it!”

His ears were assaulted by complaints and speculation. Cultivators that passed through the gates were amassed in a common area.

“Hahaha! Congratulations to all! You've passed yet another test! Those who are destined for great things will not be caught up with trifling matters. That trial was merely to test how decisive you are! The fact that you’re standing here means you’ve passed the test! Those who didn’t pass through the gates are indecisive cowards who will never achieve great things! They will not be missed!” The voice sounded once again.

The crowd felt wordlessly disgusted with themselves, as though they’d swallowed a fly. Pangs of guilt struck them hard. Even though they hadn’t truly betrayed their factions, in a way, their decision just now was a stain on their loyalty.

The Purple Smoke Sect’s forefather was even more impressed with Jiang Chen. So many experts failed to notice the intricacies behind the Gate of Life, yet the young lord could tell that it was a hoax!

One couldn’t help but commend him for his extraordinary insight and wit.

“Continue down this path and you shall arrive in front of the main hall of the Primosanct Palace. You will receive your next test there.” The voice disappeared into the void once again after the announcement.

Why would the crowd hesitate after hearing that? At this stage, they no longer had a reason to stop. Moreover, Long Baxiang had sent two emperors through the gate, but they were nowhere to be found.

The crowd could only pray that those two didn’t rise to the top first, or the rest of the group would become the biggest laughing stock in the world. They couldn’t allow someone else to enjoy the fruits of their pain and hard work.

The voice didn’t lie this time. After a long sprint, the faraway palace was finally within reach. One could only realize how vast and monumental the palace was when standing directly in front of it. Even the most powerful of great emperors were flabbergasted by its sheer size.

They’d even begun to suspect that they were in the celestial realm of the legends.

“The leading faction of the ancient era is quite extraordinary alright! Tsk tsk, look at the scale of this! How many treasures and ancient heritages must lay within the palace?”

“Yeah! I can’t wait!” The crowd whispered feverishly amongst themselves.

Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

Chapter 1414: On The Tip of One’s Tongue

Jiang Chen sighed to himself. The voice had clearly taken control of the situation. Even the great emperors were dancing to his tune. Or bluntly put, they were being led about by the nose.

If an ancient sect’s inheritance truly was at hand, then playing along might not be a bad idea. However, Jiang Chen didn’t believe that tall tale, not even for a second. But now wasn’t the time to stand out. To wait and see had been his plan from the start.

Primosanct Sect or not, he stuck to his goal of unearthing all of the realm's secrets and acquiring the greatest benefits.

He wasn't so different from the others in that regard, but unlike them, he hadn't been blinded by greed. He hadn't fallen prey to the voice, his every step manipulated like a puppet.

"Dear juniors, it's too early to rejoice. Perhaps you've made ninety nine strides forward, or maybe you've made just the first. None of it matters unless you make the hundredth one! Don't be complacent, for you can easily stumble in the next trial."

The voice dumped cold water on the cultivators, as if it could hear the greedy whispers flaring up.

"Open your eyes wide and take a good look around. There are seven pillars around the palace in accordance with the Big Dipper. Together, they form a seal. You'll have to break it in order to enter the palace. Otherwise, you aren't deserving of my sect's inheritance!"

No matter how august and indifferent, there was a certain magic to the voice, as if one couldn't help prostrate oneself in front of its loftiness.

"The main gate is on the southern side. Break the seal there and the entire restriction will crumble. You will then be annointed as my sect's successors, ushering mankind into a grand new era!"

Young and old, the blood of the cultivators boiled at the irresistible enticement within the voice. To inherit the strongest sect in antiquity and lead mankind into a new era? Who could resist such temptation?

Loyalty to one's sect? Righteousness? Such considerations had long collapsed in front of domineering temptation.

Like bees, the crowd swarmed towards the southern gate. An enormous board was mounted there, three words written in a calligraphy style of old: The Primosanct Sect!

Like kings haughtily surveying the world from high above, the majesty of only three words awed the crowd.

The Primosanct Sect? Jiang Chen blinked. Against all expectations, was this truly the ancient sect's sacred land? Not necessarily! Bizarreness and traps pervade every corner of this realm. After encountering so many illusions, am I to simply believe everything I see? He held firm to his first conclusion.

The words hadn't shaken his conviction, but he was the exception to the rule.

Almost everyone else had rushed to the southern gate. The huge pillar there towered over them like an ancient guardian. A golden layer of light spiraled around it, sparkling with the brilliance of a thousand stars.

Indeed, it was one of the pillars of light they'd seen outside.

Jiang Chen stood behind the crowd, his face inscrutable. Having reached the palace doors, he had a strong hunch that the truth would soon be revealed. Would the so-called "Primosanct Sect" truly bring them happy surprises?

He rather doubted it. His intuition remained staunch and unyielding.

At the front, Long Baxiang cackle. "Emperor Cloudbillow, I was the first to challenge the Gate of Life. I trust you won't object if I go first again."

Emperor Cloudbillow snorted. "Suit yourself. I simply fear you'll prove insufficient to the task and embarrass yourself."

Long Baxiang sniggered. "If I fail, you won't succeed either. What's there to be afraid of?"

He gathered all the Heavenly Dragon Sect's elites. "On my command, attack the seal!"

His momentum swelling, he ordered an all-out assault.

Even if he wasn't number one in his sect, he still ranked in the top three. Added to that his sect's superb martial skills and the exceptional strength of his bloodline, that placed him on par with Cloudbillow.

His figure spun furiously, churning up a dragon-shaped whirlwind. His sect members also merged with it, wholeheartedly pouring their energy in to strengthen his strike.

With extraordinary speed, the breathtaking attack crashed heavily into the enormous pillar.

Boom!

Terrifying vibration rumbled continuously in the air like fearsome claps of thunder. Golden light spilled everywhere, rippling outward from the pillar.

Struck by the light, Long Baxiang's figure swiftly rebounded a thousand feet away before he finally steadied himself. His mouth bleeding, he scowled malevolently. He'd clearly sustained considerable damage.

How did such a monumental attack suffer such a crushing defeat? The powerhouses from the other factions stared in abject disbelief.

The fearsome seal had withstood the combined might of the Heaven Dragon elites. Could anyone else break it?

Not in the mood for sarcasm, Cloudbillow fixed the seal with a meaningful stare. Inside the golden haze, innumerable tadpole-like runes were engraved on the pillar, abstruse and indecipherable. How can a seal from eons past retain so much power? Our cultivation is far too lacking compared to ancient times. How do we break it?

All of the other great emperors shared the same thought.

Long Baxiang's failure was a tremendous blow to their confidence. No one even had the desire to mock him.

"Cloudbillow, aren't you going to try?" Still frustrated, Long Baxiang tried to goad his rival into action, wanting to bring the latter down to distract from his own shame. If Cloudbillow also failed, no one would think much of the earlier fiasco.

Cloudbillow paid him no heed. As if in a trance, he stared intently at the runes on the pillar. One might even be tricked into thinking he could understand them.

“Heh, you later generations are ignorant indeed. Do you think you can solve the problem by yourselves? If you could, then you wouldn’t need my sect’s inheritance to begin with.” Derision tinged the indifferent voice.

“Perhaps it’s time to take a stand. Your only hope is to work as one.” The voice continued, utterly uncaring. “United you stand, divided you fall. The decision is yours.

“However, this sacred land only suits the strong. Now is time to discard your preconceptions and work together. Remember, after entering the palace, all of you will become the Primosanct Sect’s heirs! As peers of the same sect, perhaps you will forget all prior grudges.”

The notion sounded preposterous.

However, no one could retort otherwise. If they truly completed this trial, they would indeed become members of the same sect whether they wanted to or not.

Uniting against the seal was their only hope of success!

The more they thought about it, the more reasonable it seemed.

“Ladies and gentlemen, I must admit that Emperor Dragontyrant is right” Cloudbillow finally took the initiative. “If he can’t break through it, neither can any of us. Why don’t we set aside past prejudices and work together without ulterior motives? The glory of the ancient holy land is waiting for us!”

“I agree. It’s a life-changing opportunity for all of us. Do you want to cling to your old lifestyle and wallow in mediocrity for the rest of your lives?”

“Let’s do it! As long as we succeed, our names will resound throughout the ages! We will become heroes of the human domain!” More and more supported Cloudbillow’s suggestion.

Of course, it was still only first rank sects had the right to speak. The second and third tier factions had been mostly marginalized, even though quite a few of them were present. The Upper Eight Regions had the final say.

Only the Heavenly Dragon Sect and the Ninesuns Sky Sect were holdouts.

Long Baxiang smiled coldly. “Emperor Cloudbillow, I’m not one to beat around the bush, so let’s get the unpleasant parts sorted out first. Let’s agree on the division of spoils. Otherwise, it might cause unwarranted conflicts and mutual losses later!”

Getting the unpleasant parts out of the way first was his style of doing things.

Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

Chapter 1415: Division of Profits

Long Baxiang’s words represented the opinions of most. Pillfire’s Cloudbillow had with him the experts of the Empyrean River Palace, Sublime Chord Temple, and Eternal Celestial Capital. They represented a much more potent force than the rest. The absence of an agreement beforehand would inevitably lead

to much bickering later, which meant that Pillfire would likely win out in the end as the strongest coalition.

The Ninesuns Sky Sect's representative spoke up. "Emperor Dragontyrant spoke crudely but correctly. We should come to an agreement right now. Otherwise, it will be hard to deal with poor division of the spoils."

If Emperor Cloudbillow didn't make a showing of some sort at this point, no one else would lend him their strength. Any notion of cooperation would go out the window.

The emperor fell briefly silent before speaking coolly. "We can divide the profits into ten portions. Pillfire and its allied factions will take seventy percent of the total. The Ninesuns Sky Sect and Heavenly Dragon Sect can take ten percent each. The remainder will go to the rest of the factions."

In Cloudbillow's opinion, this arrangement was more than reasonable enough for the others. He hadn't taken all of the spoils in his great generosity, no? As for the fact that the Upper Eight Regions was taking home the majority, that was set in stone from the outset.

The second and third-rate factions were a bit upset by Emperor Cloudbillow's words, but they didn't dare voice any opposition. Ten percent was grace enough. They couldn't do anything to the emperor if he gave them nothing. Perhaps the ten percent had only been allotted in order to make use of their strength!

However, the Heavenly Dragon Sect and Ninesuns Sky Sect weren't about to agree so readily. Emperor Dragontyrant turned blue in the face as soon as he heard this.

"Cloudbillow, you're nothing short of insatiable! Your appetite is too unreasonably large! If that's how Pillfire is going to be, we're never going to reach an agreement!"

The Ninesuns Sky Sect's great emperor shook his head as well. "Ridiculous! Absurd! You can't claim that your lion's share is because you have multiple factions under your wing. Your alliance means that you're the same faction. How come you're so intent on taking seventy percent, and we're only allowed ten?"

The two sects had reason to be upset. They were the strongest amongst their peers even in the Upper Eight Regions. They deserved more than a tenth each!

The absurdity of Emperor Cloudbillow's division had been partially intentional. How else was he going to get the other parties to settle at an actual middle price?

Negotiations had to begin with unreasonable requests until a compromise was reached. If one began by naming what their expectation was, then there was no further room to maneuver.

"Long Baxiang, you call our appetite big? I think the Heavenly Dragon Sect is exactly the same. Are you telling me that you want the biggest piece?"

"Of the ninety percent allocated to us three, the Heavenly Dragon Sect must receive at least a third. Otherwise, you can forget about any cooperation!" declared Long Baxiang angrily.

"The Ninesuns Sky Sect similarly expects a third," the great emperor from that sect smiled. "Count us out for anything less as well."

The demands of these two were no less bizarre than Emperor Cloudbillow's. Thirty percent was far too much.

Since negotiations were underway though, this was actually a reasonable counter. There was no need to be reserved or shy. It was better to raise the terms as high as could be and see where they ended up eventually.

"You two gentlemen are the real jokers around here," an expert from the Emyrean River Palace smirked. "You want two-thirds of ninety percent between the two of you? We're composed of many factions. Thirty percent isn't nearly enough. Are you talking in your sleep?"

"That's right, be sincere for once! You can't just make up numbers as you like."

"I think that we have a pretty good shot at the restriction even without you two."

"Just because the Heavenly Dragon Sect can't do it doesn't mean the others can't!"

Long Baxiang sneered at what he was hearing. "You think the Emyrean River Palace is fit to be called a faction?" he glared at the expert from the Palace. "You can say that when you stop being Pillfire's lackey. Right now? You have no right!"

"The Sublime Chord Temple should shut up too! A puppet faction wants to call itself equal to the Heavenly Dragon Sect? Don't make me laugh!"

"As for the Eternal Celestial Capital, heh... has the holy emperor of the Capital been scared witless by Veluriyam already? I suppose that's the best explanation for your status as Pillfire City's newest follower!"

Long Baxiang's tongue was painfully barbed, and a verbal lashing from it was too painful for most.

Because Ninesuns was on perpetually bad terms with the Eternal Celestial Capital, its representative was quick to mock the other sect. "The Eternal Celestial Capital is growing backwards. It used to have a spine in the past, however crooked it was. But now it's become the stooge of another? In light of that, equality with the other first rank sects elsewhere is patently ridiculous. You don't have the right to count yourself our peer in dividing the spoils!"

The Ninesuns Sky Sect and the Heavenly Dragon Sect were very proud existences amongst the first rank sects of the Upper Eight Regions. They hadn't been on good terms before, but their current positions overlapped. This made a temporary alliance of convenience quite useful. The situation was otherwise very much against them.

Emperor Cloudbillow was quite put out. "Friends, I advise you to give up on trying to provoke conflict between Pillfire and its friendly factions. We are comrades-in-arms. We invited them here to explore and they are entitled to a share of the loot. You can't hope to devour all the goods."

What the two first rank sects were demanding was frankly impossible.

Emperor Cloudbillow would be working for free, according to their demands. His large entourage required considerable expenditure in terms of logistics. Furthermore, dividing part of his spoils amongst his allied factions was inevitable. However, he had to sweeten the deal for these two uncooperative sects in order to hasten the compromise.

Emperor Cloudbillow spoke once more. "Friends, I'm happy to take a step back. As a four-faction coalition, we will take sixty percent. You two can have fifteen percent each. The remainder will obviously keep their ten percent. That's as far as I'm willing to go!"

If one considered Pillfire and its allies as four separate factions, then the ninety percent was divided perfectly equally. Each faction would receive fifteen percent. It looked very fair.

"I know you want to name a few more exorbitant sums, but this is my final offer. I'm not going to increase it further."

Fifteen percent was a quite sizable share for the Heavenly Dragon Sect and the Ninesuns Sky Sect. They might call the Eternal Celestial Capital, Emyrean River Palace, and Sublime Chord Temple puppet factions, but lackeys still needed a cut.

If fifteen percent went to the Heavenly Dragon Sect and the Ninesuns Sky Sect, that was reasonably worth their while. Emperor Cloudbillow appeared unwilling to maintain the standstill, which was why he'd suddenly given way so much.

Long Baxiang was still not satisfied and wanted to bargain further. However, Cloudbillow was very resolute and wouldn't budge an inch.

In the end, Ninesuns and Heavenly Dragon were the ones to concede. They accepted fifteen percent of the spoils. Truthfully, neither sect particularly wanted to leave the secret realm. It had been difficult enough for them to come this far; it would be an absolute shame if they had to depart now.

Their threats of non-participation had been made out of spite alone, tokens to be used on the bargaining table. Purely oral promises had little effect. Everyone involved swore oaths to heaven and earth that they would not renege on their agreement.

From beginning to end, the only participants were the Upper Eight Regions' largest factions. The less prominent factions could do little more than follow in their wake.

At the back of the crowd, Jiang Chen snickered internally as he watched the disgusting way in which the Upper Eight Regions' factions divided up their portions.

These fools thought that there was treasure behind the restriction! He didn't think that it would be remotely that simple.

After the factions came to an agreement, Emperor Cloudbillow spoke once more. "My friends, it's impossible to satisfy everyone when it comes to splitting up valuables. However, that's always been the law of the martial dao world. The weak must obey the strong, and the strong set the laws. My blueprint for wealth distribution has taken care of the rest of you to an extent as well. Don't underestimate how much ten percent means! But you'll have to spend some effort to earn it, of course. There's no such thing as a free lunch."

Having said this, he looked thoughtfully at the giant pillar. The mysterious sealing force rippled with indescribable power.

"Prepare yourselves, everyone. After we break through this seal, an ancient, sacred land will be open to us! I'm going to repeat this one more time: everyone must put in some effort. When the seal is broken,

you can't simply swarm inside. The Upper Eight Regions is in charge now. You must behave according to our rules!"

Emperor Cloudbillow was reasonably principled in his own way. He was in a rush, but there were certain rules that had to be laid down. He didn't want everyone to jam themselves into a throng. If that happened, then the agreement between the Upper Eight Regions' forces would be difficult to enforce.

"Anyone who dares run ahead after the seal is broken will be struck down on the spot!" Pillfire finally bared its vicious fangs.

Jiang Chen had no reaction but a prolonged sneer. He was curious even now; hadn't Long Baxiang tossed two emperor realm cultivators inside? Where were they now?

He couldn't sense their presences anywhere with a cursory scan.

The two men had seemingly vanished into thin air. Because of this, Jiang Chen kept an eye out and his mind alert. After all, the inexplicable disappearance of two souls was quite alarming. Hadn't those two passed through the restriction? Why weren't they here?

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

Chapter 1416: Crimson Clouds Looming Overhead, An Ancient Vermilion

The frenzied atmosphere made it difficult for most to consider the same question. It had popped into the minds of many, but an instinctual conclusion that the first two had probably gotten lost or died somewhere mitigated potential concerns.

"Everyone ready? On my orders! We must all put in effort to break this seal. Remember, this sacred place is a chance to change our destinies. Anyone who doesn't earn their keep has no right to the Primosanct Sect's ancient heritage!"

"One, two, three... go!" A single command from Emperor Cloudbillow elicited a rush of cultivators and attacks forward. Force and energy formed a stormy tempest, breaking against the enormous pillar.

Boom!

A combined attack from several hundred was earth-shakingly loud. Long Baxiang's singular attack had only sent himself flying. This joint assault on the other hand, had made the pillar's golden runes quiver. There was a series of loud popping noises, an ear-piercing shriek of spatial collapse.

"One more!"

Seeing that one blow wasn't enough, Cloudbillow immediately arranged for a second sortie.

Then a third...

Each attack was as momentous as the one that preceded it. Standing at the back of the crowd, Jiang Chen contributed virtually no strength to the attack. He only went through the motions. Such a stunt was virtually undetectable, given his cultivation level.

In actuality, he was suspicious about the usefulness of this gesture. He had a feeling throughout that the seal over the Primosanct Sect's grand palace wasn't only a test to outsiders. There had to be more to it. The more he thought about it, the more worried he became.

If the seal really were broken, it could potentially open a demonic box. Was this beginning of disaster for the human domain?

That terrifying possibility couldn't be ruled out.

However, this was no place for him to voice any open opposition. His solitary status made his words rather weightless, but he wouldn't even if Emperor Peerless and the others were with him.

If he did, he'd be a public enemy. These fanatics wouldn't hesitate to turn on a cool-headed person in a time like this. Jiang Chen naturally wasn't going to do anything nearly that foolish.

Moreover, that was only a hazarded guess. He couldn't guarantee whether breaking the restriction would be a blessing or a curse at the end of the day.

The chain seal in his consciousness was on high alert, but he couldn't say for sure why it was. Perhaps it was because of the restrictions and seals scattered everywhere, or maybe there was some hidden danger within the Primosanct Sect's grounds?

Anything was possible.

Therefore, the only thing currently for him to do was maintain a healthy sense of opportunism.

Under the combined attack of several hundred cultivators, more than a dozen great emperors, and two or three hundred emperor realm cultivators, the enormous pillar began to dim. Though it stood mightily against the assault, its golden ripples weakened.

The tadpole-shaped runes blurred and disintegrated continually. Clearly, the repeated offensives was slowly chipping away at its fortitude.

Countless years had passed since the ancient era. The seal's effect had surely weakened with the years. Even the strongest seal would one day be defeated by the sands of time.

All the while, Jiang Chen reserved most of his strength. With each new attack, the pillar visibly fell apart a bit more.

Nevertheless, he still felt something gravely amiss. The combined attacks were certainly mighty, but the sealing pillar broke apart more readily than the might of the attacks would suggest.

That meant that the pillar's sealing force was partially being destroyed by itself. Or rather, there was another invisible force cooperating with everyone's efforts in the pillar's destruction.

Cloudbillow looked very pleased at the gradual dissolution of the pillar. "A bit more work and victory is ours!" he encouraged.

Everyone could see the truth behind those words. It was only a matter of time before the sealing pillar was destroyed once and for all.

"Three more hits and the seal will be done for!"

“Come on!”

The piecemeal shattering of the seal excited the spirits of all present. The Primosanct Sect’s sacred place was soon going to be revealed before them!

At this time, a shrill chirp suddenly sounded through the air. The sound seemed to be coming from the other side of a wide temporal gap, piercing countless years and eras into the cultivators’ eardrums.

“What’s that sound?”

“Hmm? Is it a bird?”

“Where? Where?”

This greatly surprised the crowd and many scanned their surroundings. The bird cry had been so mournful that it chilled the bones of half its audience.

Chirp, chirp!

A chain of incessant cries sounded, each more mournful and pressing than the last. It was as if apocalypse had come, so desperate was the tone.

Jiang Chen furrowed his brow when he heard the shrieks. He had a very bad feeling about this.

Cloudbillow paused a few moments to listen, but failed to gain any useful information from doing so. “Ignore that!” he shouted, frowning. “Keep attacking!”

The great emperor’s instructions allowed the other cultivators to refocus for the final stretch. It was obvious that the sealing pillar was going to break very soon. Three more attacks at most would crush it for sure. A new world for the taking would be opened to them then!

“Come!” Cloudbillow led the charge, drawing upon all the strength in his body as he launched himself in a mad frenzy at the seal.

Boom!

Another painful clang rent the air. The sealing pillar’s runes dimmed even more.

“Come on, put your backs into it! Come on!”

It was right then that the flow of the air stood still. In the next moment, a red cloud slammed down, tearing itself into existence from nothingness. The cloud was large enough to conceal the original sky, painting the firmament a bloody crimson.

The fiery red color was very familiar. It was the infernal sea that the cultivators had seen before entering the secret realm.

The temperature in the air rose instantly. Frightening heat waves crisped the air, producing a burning sensation on the skins of those beneath.

Jiang Chen stared wide-eyed at the odd sight, his heart as shaken as the rest.

The voice echoed forth from thin air once more. “Juniors, be careful. That’s an ancient demonic bird trapped within the Primosanct Realm’s sacred place. It’s trying to stop you from coming in. The faster you break the seal and come inside, the safer you’ll be.”

An ancient demonic bird?

Jiang Chen used his God’s Eye to look past the red cloud. There was an enormous crimson fowl hidden within, seemingly being reborn in flame.

Reborn in flame? Is that a phoenix? A Vermilion Bird?

In the heavenly planes, the phoenix and the Vermilion Bird were one and the same. As one of the four sacred beasts, it was equal to the Azure Dragon and the White Tiger in ferocity. It was the foremost fire-attribute species.

Though Jiang Chen couldn’t exactly make the creature out with his God’s Eye, the swirling shadow within the red cloud looked quite similar to an ancient Vermilion Bird.

An elongated tail and wings large enough to blot out the sun, it cycled through life and death in a world of conflagration, rebirthing through flame.

Vermilion Birds were most renowned for the ability to renew their lives rather than the strength of their bloodlines. A fiery rebirth wasn’t quite the same thing as immortality, but it did signify a metamorphosis from death into new life. Once successful, a Vermilion Bird could receive a new life.

In ancient times, powerful sacred beasts were uniformly long-lived. It wasn’t a stretch to say they were as old as the world. Vermilion Birds in particular were touted as sacred immortal birds.

Jiang Chen hadn’t expected Agarwood Valley’s secret realm to contain an ancient creature at all. If the bird really was a Vermilion Bird, then there was no way it was a beast cub like Long Xiaoxuan and Little White.

The bird had likely survived until now through the ages!

An ancient sacred fowl had unfathomably alarming levels of cultivation and strength. Even Jiang Chen found it hard to estimate such a creature. The pressure from the red cloud above was enough to tell him that any fire rained down could annihilate over ninety percent of the cultivators beneath!

“What are you waiting for? Do you want to be snacks for that demon? When it fully awakens, all of you added together won’t be enough to sate a tenth of its appetite! Hurry, break the seal and enter the palace!” The voice grew curt even as it ushered them in.

Cloudbillow could perceive the weight of the red cloud quite viscerally, enough to threaten his life. “Life and riches are before us!” he called out. “Why hold back any strength? This is the last push. If we don’t succeed, we’ll all die. Feel free to choose death if you’d like!”

The great emperor clearly knew that the attacks before now had involved a great deal of conservatism from many of its participants. The blade hanging over his head however, made him intolerant of any further behavior of that kind.

Time was of the essence.

Cloudbillow didn't doubt that the existence within the red cloud could kill everyone here. It was an existence that they could not defy. He wasn't willing to expose himself under the influence of something like that.

Even without Cloudbillow's solicitation, everyone brought out all they had in the next attack.

Boom, boom, boom!

An unprecedented discharge pushed the pillar over the precipice of disintegration. In the next moment, all the runes of the seal became countless motes of translucent gold dust, disappearing into the ether.

"Come, let's go inside!" Cloudbillow, Long Baxiang, and the other great emperors were all wily codgers. They led the charge into the palace. All of them were fearful of being swallowed up by the creature in the red cloud if they were a step behind!

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

Chapter 1417: Catastrophic Disaster

The powerful aura of the seal still lingered, yet a rush of bodies was already rapidly filtering into the palace. Past a set frosted jade stairs were the open doors of the Primosanct Sect's sacred palace.

Before the palace were eight statues, each sculpted from ancient jade of the highest quality. They were approximately ten times the size of normal people, and appeared to be eight brutish giants from a distance, defending the palace from intrusion.

Jiang Chen felt something tug in his chest. He couldn't move his eyes or feet away from the eight statues. The eight statues of white jade were identical to the stone statues he'd taken from the Prince of Shangping.

The actual size of the statues was obviously vastly different, but they were otherwise carbon copies of each other. One could almost say that they had been crafted from the same mold. Even the statues' expressions and other minor details didn't differ.

How can this be? Is this really the sacred place of the ancient Primosanct Sect? Jiang Chen found this difficult to doubt.

He'd questioned and suspected that this supposed sacred sect grounds was actually a trap, an illusion created by malevolent actors. That belief was viscerally shaken now by this new revelation.

The eight jade statues absolutely astounded him. He was sure that they were no illusions.

He knew that some experts could use others' inner demons to mirror their deepest desires and interests into reality, so as to create scenes of interest. However, what he saw before him wasn't nearly as trivial as that.

The chain seal in his mind pierced all illusions. The scenery before him elicited no reaction in his subconscious. It was quite the opposite: the chain seal was unchanged from its state of constant alertness.

Jiang Chen slowed down his footsteps without realizing it. He almost wanted to stop and observe a few moments. Alas, the momentum of the crowd meant that it would be very odd of him to linger here for

any length of time. It was also unwise to attract unwanted suspicion by doing so. Therefore, he suppressed his curiosity in the end.

If the Primosanct Sect's sacred grounds are truly here, no one will be interested in these eight jade statues. Let me go inside to check things out first. A hunter cannot unduly disturb his prey.

In spite of his excitement, Jiang Chen didn't lose control. His mind was much clearer than those of Cloudbillow and company, at least.

If he lost himself and earned the vigilance of Cloudbillow and his compatriots, he would be in a very bad spot. Even though he had the spacetime seal to exit this place and enter Veluriyam Capital, he hadn't made the trip just to run away.

The eight enormous jade statues made him extremely unwilling for him to depart any time soon.

But past the doors, the fastest of the lot was already in the grand palace proper. Jiang Chen had been reasonably quick. He'd entered the palace with a large swathe of others still behind him.

At this moment, the airborne red cloud seemed to have finally finished brewing its storm. The cloud diffused itself into a hail of fiery meteors, blasting into the earth beneath.

The storm of meteors painted a crimson shower across the heavens, breathtaking in its grandeur.

A sea of fire burst into being outside the palace.

The cultivators that hadn't yet made inside were instantly reduced to ash by the fire raining down from heaven. Not even their bones remained.

Even emperor realm cultivators couldn't resist the fearsome flame. The barest touch was enough to make anyone unfortunate enough to make contact with it disappear.

The cultivators that'd already escaped uniformly felt the pangs of lingering fear. Their hair stood up at the terrible sight.

All of them instinctively backed a few steps deeper into the palace.

Chirp, chirp!

The red cloud dispersed, revealing the sacred fowl's body within. It was several dozens of yards wide, and its spread wings could hide every celestial body behind its plumage.

The sacred fowl had two elongated tails that spread out in proud arcs. It was the very image of a noble ruler amongst its fellows. Its feathers were as colorful as brilliant fire, well-kept and smooth as mirrors.

"It really is a Vermilion Bird!"

Jiang Chen was indescribably shocked. He fixated on the rampaging bird in midair, at the spirit creature fabled as one of the four ancient sacred beasts.

Among the four sacred beasts, the Azure Dragon and the White Tiger are mine already. Is this Vermilion Bird an opportunity granted by heaven? Jiang Chen was highly tempted. He also felt a tinge of relief as well.

If he'd paused any longer earlier, perhaps he would've burned to ash like the rest in the meteor swarm.

He was uncertain whether the chain seal would protect him with regards to mere physical attacks. Attacks on his consciousness were perpetually doomed to fail, but more material offenses hadn't been tested to the same degree.

It wasn't good to take that kind of risk, regardless.

Though he was dearly attracted to the creature, the Vermilion Bird was no cub like Long Xiaoxuan and Little White. This was definitely a spirit fowl that had existed since the ancient times. Having experienced such a long span of years, it wasn't nearly as naïve and easy to tame as his draconic and tigrine friends.

There had been many experts in ancient times who'd been tremendously proud of their own abilities, yet died accidental deaths in the pursuit of taming a powerful sacred or evil beast.

The more grown an ancient spirit beast was, the fiercer and more arrogant it was. Naturally, the difficulty of taming such a specimen increased exponentially. Because of this, a lot of the ancient masters preferred to collect spirit beast cubs and rear them themselves. Only then could harmony between master and pet be easily attained.

Of course, it wasn't good to speak in absolutes.

The most elite of experts could beat spirit creatures into submission through martial prowess alone. That was perhaps the most efficient way of gaining such a proud animal's loyalty.

The Vermilion Bird furiously rained hailfire down on the cultivators who hadn't been able to hide inside the palace in time, reducing them to dust and ashes.

By Jiang Chen's rough estimates, the conflagration had killed at least a third of all the cultivators in the expedition team.

"Ancient sacred beasts are something else alright! There were at least one or two hundred of those cultivators, many emperor realm experts among them. Yet they;d all died instantly, every single one!"

Killing so many experts in so short a time was no easy feat.

This kind of fearsome power differential made the great emperors pale in cowardice. They finally realized that even their level didn't reign supreme even in the human domain.

There were living things that inhabited realms far more powerful than great emperor in places they didn't even know about.

They had encountered one of them today, in fact.

"Daoist Cloudbillow, was... was that an ancient sacred beast, a Vermilion Bird?"

The Divine Abyss Continent had records of sacred beast bloodlines. It'd flourished during the ancient era after all, and said bloodlines weren't too uncommon back then. It was the gradual dissipation of martial dao heritages in the last dozens of thousands of years that'd pushed things that used to exist into legend and lore.

Cloudbillow had been as shocked as everyone else. He took a deep breath, his eyes filled with apprehension as he looked up into the sky outside the palace. The sacred fowl there didn't seem satisfied.

Deep down, he was slightly worried. If the sacred fowl wasn't satisfied, it could very well enter the palace to carry on the fight. They would be trapped if that happened. There was no way out.

In this hour of uncertainty, the voice sounded once more. "Don't worry. You're safe inside this palace. That was the ancient sacred beast, a Vermilion Bird. It innately carries the embers of celestial flame within it, the kind that can incinerate an entire world.

"But there's no cause for concern. It's an ancient creature, and little of its former strength remains. That attack cost the strength it's been saving for years. It won't come for another round."

The voice was seemingly cognizant of people's thoughts. It touched on the topic that concerned them the most.

They'd traversed numerous trials to get to this point, but the ancient sacred fowl's fearsome display had kindled an unquenchable horror. Any viciousness from it was unstoppable.

"Senior, you... are you a lingering consciousness from an ancient senior, or do you still remain in this sacred place?" Emperor Cloudbillow with a bow.

This was a question on everyone's mind.

The voice was silent for a moment, then sighed softly. "Don't worry. I'm personally located within this palace. As long as you listen to my instructions, you will both guarantee your own safety and receive an unparalleled opportunity. Let bygones be bygones. The dead were not fortunate enough in the end. In the world of martial dao, those less fortunate are destined to be the stepping stones of others. You are very lucky to have had many on your road here. Now that you're in the Primosanct Sect's palace, your chance to rewrite your own destiny is here!"

The words brimmed with contagious fervor that magically brought the blood of everyone present to a boiling point.

Rewriting their own destinies!

That was a lifelong dream for almost everyone.

Truthfully, Jiang Chen wasn't able to find many flaws in the speech. However, his instincts told him that things weren't as simple as they seemed. He had nursed one thought from beginning to end: Agarwood Valley's secret realm had two forces controlling it that were fighting for dominance. That notion was only further cemented now.

The ancient Vermilion Bird was the force that had set up the sea of fire outside. It didn't want human cultivators to come here, thus its repeated efforts to thwart entrance.

The other force was the voice within the Primosanct Sect's palace. Its owner was unknown, but undoubtedly desired these cultivators' presence. After all, it'd led them here step by step!

Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

Chapter 1418: Treasure Storage

One of the two had to be malicious. But which one was? Jiang Chen had thought about it for a long time now, but he still couldn't arrive at a definite conclusion.

"What are you waiting for? Hurry into the palace to locate your fortunes. The second floor has countless opportunities for those with luck on their side. Still, I advise you to err on the side of caution. That feathered beast won't let you go so easily. You should find all the treasure before it recovers its strength, then come to the third floor. I'm there to protect you then. You can be sure that that chicken won't hurt you!" The voice issued incessant reminders.

Everyone who heard this flocked upwards, each worried that he would lose out compared to the others.

Past the opulent main hall was a long staircase that seemed to stretch into the mystery of the ancient past.

"Let's go!" A whirlwind of bodies teemed onto the second floor in a maddened frenzy.

Jiang Chen was completely unhurried. He knew that because of so many great emperors and preset division rules, he would have a hard time getting anything valuable.

Since he wouldn't get any loot through above board means, he wasn't in a rush to get up there any time soon. The palace was too strange. It was dubious where any treasure would end up in the end. Who would have the last laugh?

It wasn't necessarily a good idea to beeline for the spoils now. Just possessing something valuable was a crime in many places. It was too risky to attract anyone's attention at this stage of the proceedings.

Jiang Chen slowly ascended to the second floor.

It really was a level dedicated to storing treasure. Blocked spaces were clearly designed to store prized possessions and were largely still filled with their original contents. There were weapons, scrolls containing methods, mysterious pills and their recipes, amazing talismans, and various other unnameable items.

Stands scattered everywhere contained hundreds of treasures. Some looked so attractive that they glowed with desirability.

Cloudbillow led the charge, his tall figure at the front of the group. "Friends, do you remember our agreement earlier? Everyone swore to it and now is the time to make good. If anyone tries to stir up trouble, they will no longer be eligible for their cut. Does anyone have a different opinion?"

Cloudbillow made a certain amount of sense. The plan from earlier had to be executed; otherwise, their lengthy argument would have been meaningless.

Pillfire City and its allies were to receive sixty percent, and the Heavenly Dragon Sect and Ninesuns Sky Sect, fifteen percent each. The last ten belonged collectively to the remaining factions.

It was just as well that not many had managed to enter. Even so, it was unlikely that every person would get even one treasure in the end.

Jiang Chen's eyes swept across a stand. He wasn't interested in the weapons stored there. Though a good weapon could make a cultivator, so could it break one. An indomitable blade often led to mental slacking, the variety that wasn't ordinarily seen.

The other treasures were the same way. They were unique enough, but that didn't make them attractive to Jiang Chen. Talismans and pills invaluable to normal people were quite boring to Veluriyam's young lord. Most importantly, a minor character from the Purple Smoke Sect didn't have the right to make a grab for any treasure.

Jiang Chen was more than happy to stand in a corner and observe calmly. He was thoroughly confused now. The palace still felt odd to him, but this place of storage and the treasures here were very much real.

Any of these in the human domain would be extremely expensive. Some could be described as unrivaled, even.

Am I just paranoid? Is this secret realm a normal ancient holy place after all, and there's no danger like I imagined? Jiang Chen began to doubt his own judgment.

However, the seal in his consciousness had never lied to him. As long as it was still on high alert, he couldn't bring himself to relax.

Any of these treasures could be called a rarity in their own right. For my part though, not getting them is no big loss. Safety is my priority on this trip. If there's no treasure that pops out at me, I'll be as conservative as I can.

He'd resolved himself on what to do. Having done so, Jiang Chen examined his surroundings with excruciating detail. The treasure storage level was quite extraordinary in its own right, and he spared it maybe a tenth of the focus it deserved.

The treasures on the stands though, he did analyze carefully. His eye and experience meant that he could boast ninety-nine percent accuracy when doing so.

Meanwhile, the great emperors finally came to a consensus.

"Friends, there's three hundred sixty treasures on these stands. We will rank them according to their worth, then divide them accordingly to our earlier agreement." Cloudbillow's words filled everyone with expectation.

Their trials and travails on the way here had been almost entirely devoted to this moment. How could they not be attracted to the treasures that stretched as far as the eye could see?

Ranking the treasures was very difficult. The great emperors endlessly bickered among themselves about the perceived value of each item, coming to difficult final decisions after lengthy discussions. Various rankings were drawn after great effort.

Jiang Chen nodded to himself when he saw the split. So these great emperors aren't totally useless. These rankings are mostly right, and there's barely anything missed.

I'm just a junior disciple of the Purple Smoke Sect. He smiled self-deprecatingly. Good treasures won't reach me any time soon

That was still no reason for him to give up though. He swept his own eyes across a nearby table.

There was a brush pot upon it that contained a dozen brushes of various sizes. It was a bit worn after innumerable years, as were the writing implements it contained.

Several cultivators had come to the table during the interim, rummaging through the things on it. A few picked up the brush pot and looked it over a few times before tossing it aside in derision.

They were uniformly sure that the brush pot was absolutely normal. There was nothing special about it at all. The brushes were the run-of-the-mill haired ink brushes too.

Of course, there were bound to be others willing to pick up what some threw away given the volume of people here. Still, no one took an interest in the end.

After the Upper Eight Regions' experts picked through everything, the brush pot and its brushes within ended up scattered and unknown.

A few of the cultivators from second and third-rate factions were interested in sifting through the trash left behind by the Upper Eight Regions' experts. After careful consideration however, the brush pot turned out to be a normal object.

"Son of a... it's garbage. There's garbage like this in treasure storage?" A cultivator swore, tossing pot and brushes to the ground.

The brush pot was cylindrical, so it rolled to where Jiang Chen was.

He picked the pot up impassively, blowing off dust. "No one wants this?" he laughed. "Even if it's not treasure, it's something from an ancient sacred place. Not bad as a souvenir, right?"

His tone was somewhat self-deprecating. Several around him sneered upon hearing what he'd said, unimpressed by his scavenging behavior.

Jiang Chen didn't care about what others thought. With a casual motion, he put the brush pot into his storage ring.

As trash that'd been tossed aside numerous times, the brush pot was extremely unlikely to attract further interest. Therefore, his act drew no suspicion whatsoever. Rather, there were a few whose ridicule was evident on their faces.

The lack of attention allowed Jiang Chen to breathe a sigh of relief. He'd been a bit concerned that someone would try to take it away from him, but people's attentions were thankfully on the stands. The brush pot had no spirit energy, which meant it was just a normal item. Aside from its excellent material, it had little merit.

"What did you just do, kid?"

Even as Jiang Chen relaxed, someone's gaze locked onto him. At the same time, a cool voice cut in from a distance.

It was Long Baxiang who'd spoken just now!

The great emperor of the Heavenly Dragon Sect was perpetually observant despite his surroundings. He had been in the middle of dividing the stands' spoils, but detecting the activity near Jiang Chen had been within his purview as well.

He was looking at Jiang Chen with curiosity and suspicion. His observation skills were incredible; though he hadn't recognized Jiang Chen's true identity, he instinctively felt that there was something wrong about the youth's actions.

"I... not much, I think," Jiang Chen gasped, feigning lack of awareness. "No... no one wanted that brush pot, s-so I wanted it as a souvenir. I won't get the other treasures, any... anyway..."

His pretend anxiety didn't fully manage to fool Long Baxiang.

The emperor glared at Jiang Chen. "Give me that souvenir," he interjected suddenly. "I'm taking a look first."

As one of the most paranoid around, he was very sensitive to Jiang Chen's pick up of anything. He hadn't seen what the brush pot was like himself, after all.

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

Chapter 1419: The Crafty Jiang Chen

How did Long Baxiang spot me? I thought I was discreet enough. Indeed, his strength isn't for show. Under the great emperor's pressure, Jiang Chen "had no choice" but to yield. He carefully took out the brush pot.

Long Baxiang snatched the item and examined it from top to bottom, methodically examining every brush as well. However, he came up empty-handed.

"Why did you take such a lousy thing?" he asked coldly.

"I-I'm too weak for the good stuff." Jiang Chen feigned a stutter.

Long Baxiang glared at him for a long while, then with a snort, destroyed the pot and the brushes with a twist of his hands.

Jiang Chen paled. To think the man would be so overbearing against a third rank sect's "disciple"!

Forefather Zi almost bit his tongue.

Long Baxiang glanced at the latter and cackled. "What, have something to say? Feel free to come at me anytime if you're dissatisfied."

His shamelessness knew no bounds. He was clearly poised to oppress the old man.

The forefather shook his head subconsciously. Not in a million years would he dare challenge the great emperor.

With a callous smile, Long Baxiang finally walked away. The brief, minor interlude had brought to light his paranoid and tyrannical nature.

The second and third tier factions had all witnessed the scene. Some people were secretly amused, others indignant, and some indifferent. In any case, no one stood up for Jiang Chen.

“Why did the idiot pick up that useless brush pot? All it brought to him was humiliation from Emperor Dragontyrant’s displeasure.”

“Right? I’ve rarely seen such a pitiable scene.”

The young lord remained impassive despite the mockery. It could be seen from the details just how petty Long Baxiang was. He’d rather make a scene than tolerate someone else standing to benefit, no matter how trivial the item. Destroying everything was preferable to entertaining the possibility of something slipping through the cracks.

His arrogance and narrow-mindedness were unparalleled!

Thankfully, I reacted fast enough. Jiang Chen glanced at his storage ring, his heart still drumming. A brush quietly lay inside.

Out of the twelve brushes in the pot, he’d kept this single one and offered up all the rest instead. How would Long Baxiang have known how many brushes there’d been? The tyrant hadn’t paid any attention to the pot beforehand. No matter how paranoid he was, he didn’t expect a young man to react so fast and had entirely missed the Jiang Chen’s sleight of hand.

Just as the crowd thought, the other pots and brushes were useless trash for cultivators. Only this one brush was different. It wasn’t quite head and shoulders above the others, but it was close enough.

Jiang Chen felt that the treasures on the shelves couldn’t compare to it, even when all put together. It had been hidden amongst all the other mundane brushes, sitting in plain sight in an ordinary brush pot. It’d been gold buried amongst dross, and hence no one had paid it attention.

The great factions were currently engaged in an intense dispute over the division of spoils.

They’d formerly agreed on a fair, peaceful division, but few were willing to abide by that now.

However, the Heavenly Dragon Sect and the Ninesuns Sky Sect turned a deaf ear to all complaints. Thus, the other factions had no way to oppose this bandit behavior.

In the end, Upper Eight Regions hoarded ninety percent of the stash. They’d already agreed on a distribution between themselves, hence they remained civil, despite some tension.

But how to allot the ten percent left? Loud complaints and insults soon filled the air, turning the scene into chaos.

Some of the powerful second rank sects wanted to imitate the Upper Eight Regions and grab most of the leftovers for themselves, but were met with stiff resistance from the other factions. In the end, the situation didn’t degenerate any further, thanks to Upper Eight Regions’ mediation.

“Very well, everyone. It’s time to pack up and leave. The despicable chicken is headed your way.” The voice instantly dampened the crowd’s greed and excitement.

Whoosh! Outside, the mighty Vermillion Bird suddenly curled in itself, shrinking its size down by ten times. Then it shot inside the palace.

“Make haste, climb to the third floor!” the voice shouted, full of urgency.

Still thrilled by the treasures they’d gained, the cultivators immediately rushed for the stairs. Sadly, the weaker factions had to retreat before divvying up the spoils.

Thanks to his status, Forefather Zi had obtained an item. He’d been on tenterhooks all the while, but Jiang Chen had silently suggested that he calm down. They followed the crowd up the jade stairs to the third floor.

The vast palace was divided into countless floors. The spacious hall on the third was much wider than on the previous floor. It was divided into seven corners, each displaying a different sight.

Jiang Chen shook inwardly when he set foot in the hall. The intense atmosphere here was tinted with the aura of ancient gods and demons, brimming with august power. Standing here, one could feel one’s blood burn with passion.

A spire sat in each of the seven corners, around which floated mystical runes and talismans. Like tadpoles swimming through the void, the runes brimmed with mystery, as if waiting for later generations to decipher them.

Shock prickled Jiang Chen. “This is an extraordinary formation.”

That wasn’t a wild guess.

Different runes mapped to each of the seven corners; all of them flowing in tandem held up an enormous formation. Seven mystical rays of light gathered in the center, radiating golden and silvery brilliance that leapt through the air, filling it with mystical beauty of light and shadow.

The light formed and continuously poured into an enormous lock, which contained an enormous vortex inside.

“What’s this?” Using the Evil Golden Eye, Jiang Chen peered right through the rippling light.

And saw a coffin. Yes, a golden coffin.

The others were dazzled by the shifting golden and silvery radiance. They wouldn’t be able to spot the coffin without eye techniques.

“Is this the Primosanct Sect’s hall of martial learning?” The majestic sight filled some with puzzlement, and even a dash of jealousy.

“It must be. These seven divine lights must be the sect’s light of heritage. It can purify our bodies and enhance our innate talent.”

“Shut your mouths!” Emperor Cloudbillow swore.

Long Baxiang and a few others continued to chat and laugh, but everyone else trembled fearfully and immediately fell silent.

Cloudbillow cupped his hands. “Honored senior, we’ve come as you asked. That evil bird also barged inside the palace.”

“You’re here?” The voice warned faintly, “Now then, all of you slowly approach the central vortex. I’ve personally deployed the Seven Stars Heaven-Sealing Formation here to defend the area. You don’t need fear the sacred fowl once inside. However, don’t blame me for not warning you if you stay outside and end up dying.”

A chirp sounded once again, this time from the second floor. The ancient Vermillion Bird hadn’t given up. Not yet fully recovered, it struggled to climb upwards, seemingly determined to kill them all.

The oncoming scorching aura seemed to portend the end of days.

“Hurry, enter the formation’s protective area!” A hint of steel pierced through the voice’s indifference.

Even Cloudbillow felt stifled by the divine bird’s might. He shouted, “Everyone, gather in the vortex! Don’t be afraid, the ancient senior is watching over us.”

He headed inside first. Not to be outdone, the heavyweights in his alliance followed closely behind.

Long Baxiang and Ninesuns’ representative looked at each other. Neither was confident they could withstand the Vermilion Bird.

“Young lord Jiang Chen, we should follow them,” Forefather Zi couldn’t resist transmitting when he saw Jiang Chen rooted in place.

“Go if you want. I’ll stay here for now.” Jiang Chen had his own plans. The closer he approached the vortex, the stronger the disquiet in his sea of consciousness.

The crowd scrambled towards the vortex.

One, two... ten... a hundred...

Soon, only the two of them stood outside, their lonely figures cutting a sharp contrast.

“Daoist Zi, why are you lagging behind? Hurry up and come inside!”

“Is he so scared by the bird he can’t even run?”

Sweat beaded Zi Tan’s forehead. The bird’s fiery aura crept ever closer while countless pairs of eyes observed them like spectators in a circus.

However, he was a determined man. He’d pledged allegiance to Jiang Chen. His liege hadn’t taken shelter, so how could he? He clenched his fists, having come to a difficult decision. *This is it! The gamble of a lifetime! Since I’ve chosen to follow the young lord, I’ll stick to him come hell or high water!*

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

Chapter 1420: The Ancient Language of the Beasts

Jiang Chen was rather surprised. He hadn’t thought that the Purple Smoke Sect’s forefather would remain so calm in such a crucial moment. The man hadn’t fled for the safety of the formation.

“Why didn’t you run to safety, Zi Tan?” Jiang Chen asked with his consciousness.

The forefather smiled wryly. "I'm taking my chances."

He was putting a lot on the line!

The Vermilion Bird's impending heat waves made him just as afraid as anyone else. He was was afraid of death and could feel the heat eating away at his life force.

Jiang Chen looked over at the formation vortex once more with internal conflict. All of the other cultivators were enveloped within the seven sacred lights, their figures obscured.

He didn't know himself why he hadn't gone in. There was just a resolute voice inside his heart that told him he definitely could not!

Chirp!

The heart-rending birdsong echoed forth once more. The Vermilion Bird was a crimson sun with tides of heat swirling all around. The third floor was completely subsumed.

The red light of the heat waves slammed across the space, almost suffocating the Purple Smoke forefather. Despite his cultivation level, he felt the blood in his entire body approaching the boiling point.

It was a feeling worse than death.

"Daoist Zi, come inside quickly!" some cultivators from Phoenix Cry yelled.

The Purple Smoke Sect's forefather looked at Jiang Chen thoughtfully, his eyes uncertain. The young man was still immobile like a statue, but in this moment, suddenly raised both hands and summoned blue lotuses that blossomed in every corner. They formed a defensive encirclement around both himself and the forefather.

These blue lotus blooms were precisely his Bewitching Lotus of Ice and Fire.

At this moment, he was only calling upon the ice portion of the flower. The appearance of the ice lotuses instantly lowered the temperature of the surroundings. The once-shaky forefather felt his strength return.

The people within cried out with surprise.

"What's happening? Who... who is that kid?"

"How could the Purple Smoke Sect have such a strange guy?"

"Does the Purple Smoke forefather need protection from a young man? This is very strange!"

Even Emperor Cloudbillow frowned slightly, looking at the new development outside with confusion.

"Those blue lotuses... he... maybe he's..." the Eternal Celestial Capital expert beside him blurted out.

"Who?" Emperor Cloudbillow asked in a low voice.

“Jiang Chen... that kid could be Jiang Chen!” The Eternal Celestial Capital had always been on hostile terms with Jiang Chen and thus had done the most research into his capabilities. That was why the expert was the first to react.

Jiang Chen?

Emperor Cloudbillow gasped in shock, his eyes flaring with killing intent. “Did you say that that kid is Jiang Chen?!”

Pillfire had sent several great emperors along with Emperor Cloudbillow. All of them hated Jiang Chen with every fiber of their being. After all, Emperor Pillzenith’s son, young master Tian Lin, was still in the brat’s hands!

“More than likely, Daoist Cloudbillow!” An expert from the Empyrean River Palace spoke up in reminder. “Phoenix Cry isn’t far from Veluriyam. Pillfire is further out in comparison, and look where we are. What reason does our enemy have for not coming?”

“Sure, but who’s seen anyone else from Veluriyam here?”

“That kid is a real scoundrel. He hides his identity every time to land an ambush!” In these people’s minds, the mysterious kid outside seemed more and more like Jiang Chen.

Emperor Cloudbillow locked onto what he could see outside the light, muttering to himself. “Jiang Chen, Jiang Chen! That kid and Pillfire are mortal enemies. Who is with me to take his head?”

“I will!” The great emperor from the Eternal Celestial Capital was the first to volunteer. Another was here in Sect Head Luo Jue’s place.

Clearly, the Eternal Celestial Capital intended to subjugate itself to Pillfire. Before now, it had been a solitary sect unwilling to bow to any faction. They were a first rank sect themselves, and possessed sufficient authority and status to reflect that fact.

Unfortunately, its opposition and grudge against Veluriyam made it a growing threat in Jiang Chen’s eyes. The Eternal Celestial Capital had no way out from its difficult position except to request Pillfire’s assistance, uniting the two factions against their common opponent.

“I’ll come, too.” Another initial rank great emperor from Pillfire piped up.

The two volunteers pleased Emperor Cloudbillow very much. “Good,” he nodded. “Be careful out there. If you succeed, I will give a full account of it to Emperor Pillzenith. He will reward you handsomely for sure! It would be for the best if you can capture him alive.”

Young master Tianlin was still in Veluriyam’s hands. If Jiang Chen were to die now, then Veluriyam could potentially dispense with all civility. Taking Jiang Chen alive made everything easier.

The duo nodded, then attempted to step out of the formation, but their movement was stopped by a collision with a light veil. Its translucence rippled with waves that flowed about a while before dispersing.

Hmm?

Everyone blinked at this weird sight. They all thought they were seeing things.

The two great emperors in question paled. As first hand witnesses, they knew what had happened the best.

An invisible light veil that had flickered into being before them at some unknown point. They were stuck inside, repelled despite their great emperor cultivation.

“What’s this?” Both great emperors were greatly disquieted.

Emperor Cloudbillow was extremely startled. He hurried forward, his expression growing serious after a cursory examination.

“Fools!” The voice could be heard once more. “The formation has been activated already to protect you. Are you delivering yourselves as food to that feathered brute?”

The stern voice pierced people’s hearts.

Emperor Cloudbillow was hesitant and somewhat doubtful. “Senior, is this a formation restriction? How do we leave it?”

“Hmph! You want to go to your death? If so, I can take away the restriction and send you out right now! Is that what you’d like?” The voice asked coolly.

Emperor Cloudbillow had no answer. In fact, no one else present did either.

“Don’t be so paranoid,” someone called out. “This formation restriction is protecting us all. Isn’t opening it up leaping into the jaws of death?”

“Anyone that wants to die should die alone. We don’t want to die with you.”

Most preferred the safety of the formation. Why open things up? If that happened, the Vermilion Bird would return to being a threat.

The rain of meteors outside the palace akin to heavenly judgment had scared the living daylights out of its observers. A repeat of that kind of disaster meant that maybe even great emperors only had a small chance of surviving. As for the rest? None whatsoever.

“What do you two sects say?” Emperor Cloudbillow glared at Long Baxiang and Ninesuns’ great representative.

The latter was the first to express his opinion. “The Ninesuns Sky Sect does not wish to leave. We will not participate in your grudge against Veluriyam Capital.”

“I may hate that brat,” Long Baxiang mused, “but there’s no point muddying the waters at this juncture.”

If even the Heavenly Dragon Sect didn’t want to go, Emperor Cloudbillow could do little else than acquiesce.

“If so,” he sighed softly, “then we’ll leave the kid to his own fate. I don’t believe that the Vermilion Bird can’t tear apart his feeble tricks!”

As an ancient sacred fowl, the Vermilion Bird had strength and power far surpassing these great emperors without question. It was on an entirely different level.

If the bird was completely healthy, it could kill everyone here in a single instant without a doubt. It was an empyrean rank existence at a minimum! Alas, this Vermilion Bird had lost the vast majority of its strength due to the passage of time. Less than a tenth of its cultivation remained. Otherwise, the number of casualties outside the palace would have been much higher.

Emperor Cloudbillow didn't want to think about what fighting an empyrean sacred fowl at peak strength was like.

A battle like that would be completely unequal.

So what if the Jiang Chen kid had a few skills? Could he possibly escape from the clutches from an ancient empyrean divine creature with them?

Emperor Cloudbillow waved a hand to the two great emperors. "Don't bother going out. The Vermilion Bird will take care of that kid."

The duo nodded and retreated.

Many within looked ponderously at what was happening outside, unwilling to miss the display of Jiang Chen's grisly murder.

"Young lord Jiang Chen, we... we... shouldn't we go inside to weather the storm as well?" The Purple Smoke Sect's forefather transmitted, unable to hold his fear back. The Vermilion Bird drew closer and closer. The forefather's soul shivered from the intense pressure, as if it would be shattered at any minute.

At this time, Jiang Chen suddenly opened his eyes and sent a streak of consciousness shooting toward the Vermilion Bird. He was using the ancient beast language, a language that had long been lost to the ravages of time. Only Jiang Chen knew it in the entire world.

The Vermilion Bird's potent pressure made his own scalp tingle simply because he was nearby. He had the spacetime seal, sure. But if he couldn't make contact with the Vermilion Bird, there was no way he was staying to his death.

A murderous aura rose from the bird as it approached. Its frenzied flames were hot enough to reduce the entire palace to ash. It was obviously on a furious rampage.

"Caw!!" Raising its noble head, it let out a long screech that shook the entire building. Even the formation formed by the seven sacred lights convulsed in a moment of weakness.

Jiang Chen pretended not to notice. He allowed the overwhelming aura to wash over him, gritting his teeth against it.

In the next moment, the bird suddenly fell silent. Two ember-bright eyes glared at Jiang Chen, seemingly considering something important.

"Senior, you are an ancient sacred beast, a noble bloodline of the heavenly planes. But even the greatest of lives experience moments of downfall... are you going to give up on yourself like this?" Jiang Chen

tried to communicate with the Vermilion Bird through his consciousness, using ancient beast language as a conduit.