

Three Realms 1491

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

Chapter 1491: Jiang Chen Returns

It hadn't taken long for Jiang Chen to eradicate the enemy's shock troops, even accounting for his breakthrough to seventh level emperor realm.

Meanwhile, the supreme lord, also known as Seventh Master Xiahou Jing of Myriad Abyss Island, was mired in a deadlock against the Vermillion Bird. He hadn't ordered the assault yet, wary as he was of the ancient beast. His threatening confidence was nothing but bravado.

The bird hadn't provoked him any further, as if aware of his intentions. The standoff suited it fine. It had little desire for an all-out fight given its physical condition.

"Senior Vermillion, give way and I promise to find a place suitable for your rebirth." Xiahou Jing tested the bird's resolve once more.

However, it was immune to his tricks and merely circled the sky above Sacred Peafowl Mountain in silent disdain.

In truth, the supreme lord was stalling for time as well, calculating how long it would take Elder Mo and Elder Peng to capture Jiang Chen and bring the boy back alive. With the young lord in his hands, the city would crumble without a fight.

But it'd been a long time already. No matter how slow Jiang Chen was traveling, he should be back soon. Why had there been no word yet?

Xiahou Jing stayed staunch despite the sneaking suspicion, but as time trickled by, his doubts slowly morphed into anxiety.

It's been too long. Did he abandon Veluriyam after hearing of our attack to start afresh somewhere else? The possibility wormed its way in his mind. If so, it would bode ill for his plans.

Impossible. Isn't the kid supposed to be loyal to his friends and true to his loved ones? How could he leave so many of them to die?

It seemed hard to believe. Nothing he knew of the young lord suggested he would make such a choice. But if not, there should've been news already. What was taking so long at the border?

Meanwhile, all great emperors were assembled in Sacred Peafowl Mountain.

The siege was a sharp sword looming over their heads, but the passage of time had slowly eased their anxiety. In particular, the return of Emperor Peerless and the Jiao brothers had greatly boosted their morale.

"Brother Mo, playing the undercover agent must have been rough on you. Do you know where the supreme lord comes from?" Coiling Dragon voiced a question everyone was curious about.

Mo Wushuang's face was grim. "He probably isn't from the human domain."

"Oh? How can you tell?"

"It's very simple. If he were, he would at least somewhat consider mankind's future. But personal schemes and ambitions are the only things on his mind. His every deed exposes his origins. He must be an outsider here with some ultimate motives!"

Sadly, that was merely a guess. Even as a lofty protector king, Peerless had learned very little about the supreme lord in all these years.

"An outsider?" Coiling Dragon frowned. "Is he a demon?"

Peerless muttered, "That was my first guess as well, but that shouldn't be the case. For one thing, he would have used demonic arts to control us and not poison. Not to mention, his highest priority would've been to free fellow demons rather than single mindedly strive for rule over the human domain."

"Poison? Is that how he controls you? Then..." Coiling Dragon froze. "He spoke the truth about the violent poison inside you?"

Peerless remained impassive. "Yes, that's true. It's imperceptible once dormant, but extremely virulent once it erupts. Even so, how can we betray our own? Jiao Yun, Jiao Feng, do you have any regrets?"

Jiao Yun cackled. "Regrets my ass! I'm not an upright man, but I have little desire to help them ruin our domain! Their Order is the scourge of humanity!"

Jiao Feng nodded. "That supreme lord acts so jumpy when it comes to the young lord. He's definitely afraid! And I'm sure the young lord will find a way to remove the poison."

Everyone nodded in agreement as if it was obvious. Anyone else might be stumped, but they had blind faith that the young lord was omnipotent when it came to pill-making.

Coiling Dragon nodded. "There's no poison in the world he can't cure."

Emperor Void sighed softly. "Despite his aggressive posturing, the supreme lord doesn't seem anxious to storm the city. He seems to be waiting for an opportunity, even playing for time. Gentlemen, shouldn't we be worried?"

"Why so?" Coiling Dragon puzzled.

"What's the reason behind his patience? He must be plotting against young lord Jiang Chen! Just think about it. The young lord will certainly rush back if he hears of our situation. If the enemy has an ambush set up along the way..." Emperor Void didn't dare contemplate the consequences.

The great emperors turned grave. Without Jiang Chen, everything was meaningless.

Mountaincrush chuckled. "The young lord isn't easy prey. With the stone golems by his side, even the Order will find him a tough bone to chew."

"True, he has nothing to fear in an open fight. But Daoist Peerless just mentioned they are adept with poison..." That was the core of Emperor Void's worries.

The atmosphere suddenly turned stifling. Clearly, even these great emperors were in the dark about Jiang Chen's secret return. But just then, Dan Fei offered leisurely, "It should be soon."

Soon?

The crowd froze. What did she mean? Was the young lord coming back soon? Why did Madam Dan Fei sound so at ease? Wasn't she worried at all?

Dan Fei suddenly stood up and addressed them. "Gentlemen, young lord Jiang Chen should be back soon. Everyone get ready. You might be in for a pleasant surprise in the battle to come"

As if on cue, the Vermillion Bird crowed with happiness in the sky. Startled, the crowd rushed outside.

Xiahou Jing stiffened. He could perceive the strangeness of the bird's cry. Was it merely illusion? Or was that elation he heard? What was the bird so happy for?

"Hm?" His cold gaze suddenly fell somewhere afar. His consciousness could feel a new powerful force coming closer. He secretly beamed with delight. *Are Elder Mo and Elder Peng finally triumphantly back?*

The prospect galvanized him.

However, his joy didn't last long. His expression soon turned into a frown, because he couldn't spot the two elders' familiar figures.

"Jiang Chen!" His heart palpitated when he discovered the newcomers' identity. How could that be? How had Jiang Chen returned safely from the elders' trap?

Had the brat made a detour?

The supreme lord immediately saw red. The plan had been perfect! He'd never considered the possibility that the ambush could fail. So why was Jiang Chen fine and dandy?! Moreover, the eight massive golems at his side seemed full of vigor and eager for a rumble.

"Jiang Chen? You?! How is this possible??" His low, fuming voice almost turned into a roar.

Jiang Chen flew in the sky above Veluriyam, his soaring figure prompting jubilant celebration in the entire city.

"The young lord is back!"

"Haha, we're saved!"

"I knew it. The young lord would never discard the city or abandon its people!"

"Long live young lord Jiang Chen, long live!"

The young lord's appearance breathed new life into the city, instantly dispelling the morose atmosphere and infusing new hope into the inhabitants.

Jiang Chen took in the supreme lord's figure beneath a fluttering cloak and snickered at the pretentious posturing. "Supreme Lord, you don't even have the courage to show your true face, how dare you try to rule over the entire domain? What a joke!"

The supreme lord snorted. Jiang Chen's return left him full of doubts, but in his heart of hearts, he didn't take the young man too seriously.

The ones he feared were the golems standing behind the young man. Without the shock troops led by the elders, it would be difficult for him to withstand all eight brothers by himself, even with all the men at his disposal.

“Jiang Chen, shouldn’t you be at the Ninesuns Sky Sect? What, did you miss Veluriyam so much you rushed back to die?” Uncertain of the situation’s ins and outs, the supreme lord tried to pry information out of his opponent.

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Chapter 1492: The Start Of The Counterattack

“To die?” Jiang Chen laughed despite himself, derision seeping from his voice. “Are you that confident you can kill me and conquer my city?”

Xiahou Jing proudly said, “Why wouldn’t I be? You’re just a mundane brat with better luck than most.”

“True, I come from the mundane world. And what about you? What noble identity lies beneath your mask and cloak? Too bad you’re a coward afraid of revealing his face.” Jiang Chen mocked to his heart’s content. “I know where your sense of superiority comes from! Sadly, it’s a mere joke in front of me.”

“You’ll see very soon who’s the real joke!” Xiahou Jing sneered.

“Oh? Do you still have an ace in the hole?” Jiang Chen smiled faintly. “I have eight great golem warriors. If all of them attack you at the same time, how likely are you to win?”

Despite his brave front, Xiahou Jing paled imperceptibly. With Elder Peng and Elder Mo back, he was confident he could cope with the golems. But to fight eight golems all by his lonesome? That was asking for trouble. Even his life might be forfeit!

With a wave of the hand, Jiang Chen ordered, “Big Stone, this supreme lord seems to be looking down on us. You brothers teach him a lesson!”

Big Stone grinned. “Hehe, let’s do this!”

The eight golems turning into streams of light locked down an area several dozen miles around Xiahou Jing.

The latter gasped. Jiang Chen’s presence had thrown all his plans into disarray. He’d planned on delaying until the elders came back. But the brat just had to order the golems to attack so decisively without leaving him any leeway. Even retreat was no longer an option now.

As one of the greatest geniuses of Myriad Abyss Island, his reserve of energy and fighting capability surpassed Elder Mo and Elder Peng, even if his cultivation was below theirs. After all, he held many trump cards from his clan.

So, though startled, he showed no fear. He threw Jiang Chen a withering glance. “Kid, remember, this is the difference between us. You’ll forever be an ant relying on his subordinates, while I’m a true genius. I’ve built everything from scratch with my own hands!”

Jiang Chen replied indifferently, “Trying to show off? From scratch? Then what about the empyrean masters at your side?”

Xiahou Jing stiffened. "What do you mean?"

Jiang Chen smiled mysteriously. "And what of the dozens of great emperors? Do these elites not count either? Doesn't your superiority stem from these men?"

Xiahou Jing blanched, shocked to the core. This was his greatest secret, one that even the protector kings and elders weren't aware of. This was the ultimate trump card he'd brought from Myriad Abyss Island.

So how did Jiang Chen know them? If he'd taken a detour on the way back, how would he know about Elder Peng and the others?

Unless...

A terrifying possibility suddenly crossed his mind. Had the two elders been defeated?

But even so, they should have returned ahead of Jiang Chen. Why were they late when Jiang Chen and the golems were already back?

"Xiahou Jing, stop daydreaming. You won't be seeing your shock troops again anytime soon." Jiang Chen's words smashed into the supreme lord's chest like a giant hammer.

The face behind the mask turned pallid. Won't be seeing them any time soon? What did that mean? Were the two elders... dead?

Impossible!

No, no! With the elders' strength and the Soulless Powder, it was impossible for Jiang Chen to escape unscathed! What on earth had happened?

Xiahou Jing turned frantic. Secure in the knowledge he'd planned for every possibility before coming, he'd enjoyed the feeling of holding everything in his grasp. He'd been confident he could conquer Veluriyam without shedding a drop of blood.

But nothing had gone as expected.

Not only had Elder Mo and Peng's elites been of no threat to Jiang Chen, but they might even have been wiped out!

It was enough to drive a man mad if true. He'd created the Order of Wind and Cloud by himself and made it the unparalleled existence it'd become. However, using enslaved human cultivators might have been a shortcut to power and fame, but carried with it inherent dangers.

He needed a personal force he could trust and build on, and that precisely the elites led by Elder Mo and Elder Peng.

"Jiang Chen, don't ever forget you're a mundane dog! I don't know what kind of luck allowed you to escape safe and sound, but you've used it all up now!" Xiahou Jing was a tad hysterical.

Jiang Chen smiled contemptuously. "You better worry about your own luck. You barely made it from that place. If you're to return utterly routed, what do you think will be the fate awaiting even if you do survive? Remember, you'll be less than a dog's fart if your surname isn't Xiahou!"

The young lord added viciously, "But your name doesn't bloody matter today! Xiahou Jing's bleached bones will be buried in Veluriyam!"

The supreme lord shook all over when he heard his name uttered in public. His eyes brimmed with incredulity. How had Jiang Chen so easily discovered the identity he'd worked so hard to keep secret?

Disorientated, his head swam. Jiang Chen even seemed to know much more about him than his name.

Are Elder Peng and Elder Mo... Xiahou Jing finally panicked. Did his most relied-upon elites die just like this?

How on earth did Jiang Chen do this? Xiahou Jing stared in utter disbelief. Had the brat killed them all despite the elders' power and the Soulless Powder? Impossible!

But when facing Jiang Chen's confident smile, he could no longer scrounge up a single shred of confidence.

Seeing that events had taken a turn for the worse, he shouted decisively, "Listen up, men of the Order! Attack Veluriyam! When we're the city's masters, all the secret arts and pill recipes are yours to plunder. All the treasures and women are waiting for you to take! Make Veluriyam's cultivators your slaves! Attack! Show them what you're made of!"

In fact, he cared nothing about Veluriyam. He'd only inflamed his men to create enough chaos to shield his exit. But how would Jiang Chen give him such an opportunity? He pulled the Holy Dragon Bow taut.

Streaks of light shot forward. Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

They struck three Celestial Stars in quick succession. The elders' bodies spontaneously exploded, becoming fleshly paste that sprayed everywhere.

All three elders had been great emperors, even if they had been mere initial stage ones. The crowd burst out in raucous cheers at the instant kills.

"So amazing! Long live young lord Jiang Chen!"

"Young lord Jiang Chen, young lord Jiang Chen!"

Even Jiang Chen himself was stunned. The bow was displaying more and more of its potential as it bonded with its master.

After reaching seventh level emperor realm, perhaps he could've injured or killed a great emperor with an ambush.

But with the leap forward in his strength and cultivation after his breakthrough, added to a greater understanding of the bow, allowed him to feel how much more formidable the weapon had become. He'd felled three great emperors in three shots!

The Order's followers, including the Celestial Stars and Earthly Fiends, were a ragtag bunch of misfits. Apart from a minority of zealots, very few had joined the Order voluntarily. They were brave when they held an overwhelming advantage, but their morale was easily broken, especially in such a situation.

Three great emperors had been killed instantly. And the eight golems hadn't even attacked yet! Anyone who preserved their fighting spirit still was either the supreme lord's die-hard supporter or brain-damaged.

Of course, these cultivators' brains still functioned!

Under the Holy Dragon Bow's threat, most had already slowed their advance, even hiding in the crowd, unwilling to lead the charge.

Xiahou Jing shouted in exasperation, "What are you hesitating for? Charge, damn it! He only has so many arrows, how many total do you think he can kill? Charge, conquer Veluriyam, you'll be heroes! Those who cower, do you still want the antidote? Do you still want a better future?"

Smiling faintly, Jiang Chen watched the man mix promises with threats. "Xiahou Jing, what are you shouting for? Are you expecting anything out of this mob? Future? Do you think you still have the luxury of talking about the future?"

As his words fell, he leisurely aimed the bow straight at Xiahou Jing.

The latter froze. Despite all his skills and power, his consciousness shrank back as the might of the Evil Golden Eye landed on him, trembling as the terrifying invasiveness rippled across his mind.

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Chapter 1493: Continued Unexpectedness

As an expatriate from Myriad Abyss Island and a genius of House Xiahou, the seventh master had never taken the human domain's cultivators particularly seriously. His elite entourage, led by Elders Peng and Mo, far surpassed them in quality. Even Jiang Chen was just an unreasonably lucky brat to him.

In truth, Xiahou Jing fundamentally despised Veluriyam's young lord. However, his consciousness was being disrupted by a glare from the youth's Evil Golden Eye.

Cold sweat beaded down his back.

Being targeted from afar by the Holy Dragon Bow made his hair stand on end. In that moment, an incomprehensible thought popped into his mind: Jiang Chen was able to threaten his life!

It was a possibility only because of the stone golem brothers' encirclement, but even that should have been a far stretch.

In Xiahou Jing's understanding, Jiang Chen was only some emperor realm expert. The difference between them was night and day.

He went so far as to believe that if Jiang Chen were a native of Myriad Abyss Island, the brat wouldn't be worthy to tie the young master's shoes. But his conceptions were being shaken by reality.

"I need to get out of here!" Xiahou Jing felt his thoughts slip deeper into absurdity by the minute.

It was at this time that Jiang Chen gave the command. "What are you waiting around for, Big Stone? Take him out!"

Anyone else from Myriad Abyss Island might have been spared. Jiang Chen was no extremist on most days after all. But an opponent from House Xiahou was destined to be his mortal enemy. There was no need to hold anything back. The more of them that died, the better!

The eight stone golem brothers cooperated to form a terrifying stony field. It was as invincible as a fortress of solid rock.

Xiahou Jing's repeated attempts to break out met with continuous failure.

"How can this be?" He knew how strong the Primordial Stone Golem Tribe was supposed to be, but actual combat revealed the extent of their true strength.

Perhaps a single one of the stone golems was weaker than him. Indeed, they were probably weaker than Elders Mo and Peng. But a combined attack of multiple golem brothers changed the game completely.

Becoming one with his spear, Xiahou Jing drilled his weapon again and again, but spirals of demolishing air blasted in every direction in complete vain.

The stony field had been set up by eight brothers of the Primordial Stone Golem Tribe as a unified entity. Because of this, the defense was one unified system as well. Once formed, it required someone twice as strong as the eight brothers combined to break.

"Water-Rending Strike!" Xiahou Jing's ferocious attacks pounded upon the field. Unfortunately, nothing he did seemed to be of any use against the bind he was in.

"Star-Shattering Pierce!" He changed his tactics, continuing to press the attack. It was no use!

The stone golems' stony field was far stronger than he had anticipated. No matter what method Xiahou Jing resorted to, he failed to make a dent in it.

Jiang Chen stood aloft, Holy Dragon Bow brimming with aggressive intent. His Evil Golden Eye charged up, locking onto Xiahou Jing with unmistakable intensity. He was waiting for a chance to inflict a fatal blow on his enemy.

The stone golem brothers brandished their heavy weapons about, landing blow after blow upon Xiahou Jing. In theory, the latter would have had a hard time remaining unscathed against the former's powerful attacks.

Alas, the young master from Myriad Abyss Island seemed to have activated some sort of talisman, increasing his defense by several levels. He was hit again and again by the stone golem brothers, but a strange force allowed the blows to slide right off with minimal harm.

"As expected of a genius from House Xiahou. He has some pretty remarkable treasures." Jiang Chen had fought many people since becoming a cultivator, but all his previous opponents paled before his current one – the once-domineering Emperor Pillzenith included.

Xiahou Jing was unmistakably the strongest of them all.

Jiang Chen had witnessed the golem brothers' fighting ability before. Against Elders Peng and Mo, they hadn't even mobilized as all eight. Both elders had fallen under reasonably ignoble conditions.

The fact that all eight brothers working in tandem wasn't able to defeat Xiahou Jing was telling in itself. He was pressed, but far from beaten.

The eight stone golem brothers had terrifying battle presence. Every attack was imbued earth-moving impetus that showcased the golems' brutality.

Still, Xiahou Jing was able to maintain relative safety in the situation. He was a far cry from being severely hurt.

"Xiahou Jing isn't necessarily much stronger than Elders Peng and Mo were, but his treasures and trump cards allow his combat prowess to surpass his subordinates." Jiang Chen now had a better understanding of his enemy's capabilities. But he didn't despair. Treasures that increased one's fighting ability were temporary.

As long as the eight golem brothers kept up the attack, Xiahou Jing would go down sooner or later.

As for Jiang Chen himself, he stimulated his consciousness constantly in search of a breakthrough.

He was searching for the sensation he'd felt when killing Elder Mo. If he could find that inspiration once more, this next attack would be even more fearsome than the one that had slain the elder.

He hadn't yet achieved seventh level emperor realm when killing the elder. Because he had stepped over an important threshold, his harmony with the Holy Dragon Bow had also been drastically improved.

This was helpful both to his offensive potential and his search for that spark of inspiration.

This arrow would certainly surpass his last. But actually getting there was easier said than done.

Jiang Chen's consciousness whirled without stopping. The chain seal within was reacting a little with each prod.

Suddenly, a potent power burst forth from the seal. It manifested itself as an unnameable will, granting Jiang Chen a burst of insight.

Whoosh!

The arrow was as fast as a comet, bearing down its target in the blink of an eye!

Jiang Chen felt emptied after firing the shot, but his mind was extremely satisfied. He had a hunch that Xiahou Jing was sure to be hit if everything went well.

Moreover, it was sure to shatter the runic defenses on his body. Those talismans were the only reason the eight stone golem brothers' heavy blows weren't able to finish the fight.

Everyone from Sacred Peafowl Mountain held their breath when they saw the fearsome missile.

Some were surprised, others overjoyed, yet others disbelieving. However, all of their expressions morphed into shock in the next moment.

Just as the arrow was about to arrive at its mark, a storm of violet bolts materialized in the air. They snaked about like electric serpents in the clouds, bizarrely tethering onto the arrow.

The arrow tried its best to charge forward, but the violet lightning did the same to force it to remain under their control.

Jiang Chen had scarcely recovered from his own surprise when a giant hand came out of the clouds as well. It slammed down upon the stony field's exterior with baffling momentum.

Boom!

Both field and surrounding space were ruptured by the mysterious force despite their resilience.

Xiahou Jing's reflexes were quick enough for him to transform into a streak of escaping light, slipping through the cracks of the fractured aura.

Jiang Chen's heart sank. Though another arrow was nocked on his bow, he could no longer find the same frame of mind to fire it.

Before the eight stone golem brothers had time to react, Xiahou Jing had activated a glyph and fled far, far away.

With that, the giant hand that had inexplicably materialized slowly disintegrated.

This precipitous change in circumstances had taken place in the span of a few breaths. When everyone realized what had happened, Xiahou Jing was nowhere to be found. As for the giant hand that had disrupted Jiang Chen's plans, who knew what was behind it?

Jiang Chen's Evil Golden Eye was wide open and alertly searching. "Who was responsible for that?!" He was blue in the face. "Disrupting Veluriyam business on Veluriyam land... are you brave enough to show yourself?!"

He was beside himself with fury. If not for this unexpected intervention, the arrow would have at minimum severely wounded Xiahou Jing. With any remotely serious injury, there would be no escape for him from the eight stone golem brothers.

The violet lightning and disembodied palm had clearly come from the same person. What was more, his energy signature didn't seem demonic. Who exactly was this interloper?

It couldn't have been an expert from House Xiahou. If it was, such an expert would've shown himself a long time ago. Why would he have waited until the present?

Given the newcomer's lack of affiliation in that regard, Jiang Chen was all the more enraged by the unwanted interference. He was irreconcilable enemies with the entirety of House Xiahou. He couldn't accept Xiahou Jing's escape from under his nose!

But there was no one that appeared in the air.

As Jiang Chen sulked, an aged voice came from the ether. "Young man, learn some mercy."

The voice's was imposing and full-bodied, as if it came from someone in a superior position.

"Who are you?" Jiang Chen retorted coldly. "Do you understand that the fortunes of humanity hinged on today's battle? Don't you think you went too far with your ignorant meddling?"

“Calm yourself, young man. If you care about the fate of humanity, then you should know that killing someone from Myriad Abyss Island will only bring disaster to the human domain!” There was a hint of reprimand to the voice. It seemed to be taking Myriad Abyss’s side.

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Chapter 1494: Berating an Empyrean Cultivator

Jiang Chen was incensed.

The voice sounded well advanced in years, but the young man was indescribably disgusted with the self-satisfaction in its seniority.

“If I don’t kill him, do you not think a foreign hyena like him will bring disaster to the human domain? The Order of Wind and Cloud’s ambitions are quite peaceful, I’m sure!” Jiang Chen’s tone carried plenty of righteous passion. “If you have the power to interfere, then you are no ordinary person. Why not show yourself? Let me know who you are.”

Though he didn’t know where this interloper had come from, Jiang Chen’s rage wasn’t likely to subside. He hated people who didn’t mind their business, especially when they interrupted at the most inopportune times.

“You have quite a temper for one so young. There’s no need to ask where I’ve come from. I’ve lived in the human domain for more than ten thousand years. I think I know ten times more about the human domain’s affairs than you.”

Ten thousand years?

Jiang Chen’s heart beat a bit faster. The expressions of the great emperors from Veluriyam Capital changed greatly.

A secluded expert? One that lived in the human domain? An empyrean expert?

There had always been rumors that the human domain did have its own empyrean experts, though they preferred to remain hidden rather than conduct business in public.

Some said that the experts were uninterested in mundane affairs. Others claimed that this was because spirit qi was scarce in the human domain. Yet others said that the experts were unwilling to expend their mortal lifespans on trivial matters.

There was a large variety of conjecture about the topic. However, no one had seen a real, live empyrean expert in the human domain for at least three thousand years.

The voice’s existence hinted at its identity as a secluded expert of the human domain. Any existence that had lived for more than ten thousand years was sure to have surpassed great emperor realm into a higher form.

It was the first time these great emperors had ever come into contact with someone like that.

Jiang Chen paused a little, then snickered. “From your tone, you sound like an empyrean senior of the human domain, hmm?”

“What? Junior, do you still think you can call the shots here? Do you think your actions represent the fortune and future of humanity? I can tell you that you think too much of yourself!” The aged voice was somewhat mocking. It appeared that its owner had a bit of attitude toward Jiang Chen.

Veluriyam’s young lord was far from pleased to be treated with condescension. He responded with raucous laughter.

“What are you laughing about, junior?” The voice reprimanded with some annoyance.

“What am I laughing about?” Jiang Chen turned frosty instantly. “Is that what you’re asking about? I’m laughing about the fact that you lack wisdom in your old age! All you know is to use your age to your benefit!”

“You’re courting death!” The disembodied voice’s volume intensified. The wind picked up and the clouds roiled.

The eight stone golem brothers rushed to Jiang Chen’s side and surrounded him to protect their savior.

Jiang Chen was unafraid of the sudden weather change. He’d seen all kinds of turbulence in his previous life and he wasn’t going to let a mere empyrean expert scare him.

“Such an awe-inspiring show from an empyrean expert!” Jiang Chen sneered. “Alas, it appears you were absent when Demon Emperor Bloodmalva of the blood demons was rampaging about. You were also absent from the scene when the celestial demon lord broke free of his seal. And if I may ask, where were you when the Southern Celestial Tribe smashed past the Boundary Stele? What about the devastation that the Order of Wind and Cloud has wrought upon the people? Have you done anything about the danger that the Boundary Stele in the northwestern wastes is in right now?”

Jiang Chen was absolutely furious. He had no inborn hostility to the voice, but he was enraged by the foolishness of the speaker’s actions. He was actually disgusted more by this voice than by Xiahou Jing.

Xiahou Jing was a locust from Myriad Abyss Island, come to the human domain to ransack and destroy it.

But this supposed empyrean senior of the human domain had appeared at the wrong time for all the wrong reasons. He’d ruined Jiang Chen’s perfect plans. Most irritating of all was that he was abusing his old age to rebuke Jiang Chen from a self-satisfied position!

If the voice really was an honorable senior with morals as polished as Emperor Peafowl’s, Jiang Chen would give him plenty of respect. But he was far from the shining example he considered himself to be, but he was quite affecting the tone and posture of a great senior.

This utterly disgusted Jiang Chen. Moreover, the young lord had missed an opportunity to kill Xiahou Jing because of the voice’s interference. How could Jiang Chen simply accept the situation?

He had worked very hard for humanity’s fortune and future, expending every effort for others’ sake. This so-called empyrean senior had done absolutely nothing in several of humanity’s crises, but chose to come out swinging with his cane at the most inopportune time.

If he did dare come forth, Jiang Chen wouldn’t hesitate to spit on him.

The voice was noticeably exasperated by the young man's words. It went silent for a long while before it could muster up a resentful reply. "Alright, brat. Alright! How many years has it been? I didn't expect that a few thousand years later, there would be such a high-achieving human junior who dares talk like this to me!"

"If you've hid yourself for a few thousand years," Jiang Chen retorted with some frustration. "Shouldn't you have freed yourself from the shackles of mortal affairs? Why are you meddling and sticking your nose where it doesn't belong? You didn't come out when responsibility was required, so don't come out and pretend to be a savior now. At least figure out what's happening before you try to save the world."

The voice was clearly agitated. "Good, good, very good! I'll remember what's happened today, brat. One day I'll teach you the consequences of not respecting your seniors!"

Jiang Chen shrugged. Insubstantial threats didn't bother him one bit.

"Why one day? Today's perfect. Do your worst and I'll take the brunt of it. What else are you scared of if you help even invaders escape?" He didn't know why, but Jiang Chen had the urgent need to pull the old codger out of his hiding hole and give him a good beating. He wanted to cut the voice's pride down a notch.

"Hmph. I have more important matters to attend to. I'll let you live for a few more days." The voice disappeared into the distance like rolling thunder.

Jiang Chen's Evil Golden Eye pierced the remote skies, his eyes full of killing intent.

It was at this time that the others swarmed out from Sacred Peafowl Mountain.

"Members of the Order of Wind and Cloud, kneel! Those who don't will die on the spot!" Jiang Chen glared coldly at the now listless grunts.

These ordinary Order members were largely human domain cultivators. Now that their supreme lord had fled in panic, anyone that had the ability and mind to run had already fled. Those that hadn't lacked the sufficient spirit to fight to the death.

As such, there was a wave of kneeling at Jiang Chen's command. There was no room for modesty or egoism before the grimness of death. They'd already lost all sense of self-respect when they joined the Order.

"Jiao Yun, Jiao Feng, tell me which of these joined the Order of their own volition and which were coerced into it. The former is to be executed on the spot and the latter let go, depending on circumstances." Jiang Chen had no desire to execute every former Order member.

Many had been strong-armed into their ranks. Those left at Agarwood Valley's entrance a few years ago, for example: Emperor Peerless, the Jiao brothers, and others.

There was no need to seek any kind of reckoning against these people. Their hearts had never been to the Order in the first place. They were just victims of the circumstances.

It was at this time that Madame Yun approached him with reddened eyes. "Sage brother Jiang Chen, I've never asked anything much of anyone. But this time, I have to make a desperate request. Please, save my dearest Mo!"

Jiang Chen was shocked. He hurriedly took the lady's arms. "Madame, please relax. As my good brother's wife, you are free to ask anything of me at your leisure."

But Madame Yun was inconsolable.

To the side, Emperor Peerless was a little embarrassed. "Excuse the lack of decorum, young lord Jiang Chen. Women are sometimes a bit more emotional than polite."

"Ah, please explain what is exactly wrong, Old Brother Mo." Jiang Chen quickly replied. "Your wife's sadness means this is no small matter."

"The supreme lord of the Order of Wind and Cloud fed the Order's members a certain 'Exultation Pill of Wind and Cloud'," Coiling Dragon followed up. "It's a potent poison, and victims may be hard to save after it acts."

Jiang Chen tensed when he heard this. "Old Brother Mo." He glanced at the man. "And what happened to your face?"

Emperor Peerless chuckled. "Nothing much. There's no need to mention it."

"Young lord, Brother Mo is a righteous man," Coiling Dragon advised. "His loyalty to humanity and Sacred Peafowl Mountain are well-tested. He did that himself to avoid detection from those familiar with him, so that he could stay hidden within the Order."

"It was something that couldn't be helped, really," Emperor Peerless smiled wryly. "The Order gathered many human experts together. Even wandering cultivator giants like Emperors Everviolet and Sabledeep joined up. Many of them know me, hence this unfortunate plan. Plus, the special bloodline abilities I've been cultivating lately masked much of my original martial dao. The two combined meant that I was able to successfully fool them."

Jiang Chen was both affected and respectful when he heard what the emperor had relayed.

"Old Brother Mo, Madame Yun. Don't worry. I'll find an antidote for the Exultation Pill. I may not have full confidence in other areas, but I can cure pretty much any removable poison!"

Emperor Peerless wouldn't have believed this of anyone else. After all, he knew firsthand how fearsome the Exultation Pill was. However, the fact that Jiang Chen was the speaker convinced him a great deal.

"My friends, the impression I got from the voice before was that it belonged to an empyrean expert in the human domain. Do any of you know what secluded experts we have?" Jiang Chen hadn't forgotten about the events that had just happened.

The appearance of secluded expert made him even more anxious than before. The situation in the human domain was becoming more and more complicated.

After crushing the northern alliance and slaying Pillzenith, Jiang Chen had thought the situation here to be within his grasp. It seemed that he had been too naïve.

The rise of the Order and the appearance of a hermit empyrean expert... all signs pointed toward things in the human domain gradually coming to a boil.

Jiang Chen swept his eyes across everyone before him. Unfortunately, he gleaned no useful information from what he saw. Evidently, most of the human domain thought hermit experts to be too far beyond their own realms of expertise...

Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

Chapter 1495: Antidote

The turning point of the battle had been when Emperor Peerless passed crucial information to a certain Goldbiter Rat.

Everything had proceeded virtually perfectly from that point on. Alas, the disruption of the supposed human empyrean expert had ruined everything. What should have been a bang-up ending turned into a questionable whimper.

“On my orders, all who joined the Order must renounce their allegiances. If any are set in their erroneous ways, they will be branded traitors to the human race!

“Moreover, make it known in the entire human domain what happened in the battle here. Especially the fact that the supreme lord of the Order fled with his tail between his legs. The bulk of the Order is no more. Let the world know that the presumptuous Order of Wind and Cloud has nothing more than the illusion of strength!”

Though Jiang Chen hadn’t managed to kill Xiahou Jing, Veluriyam Capital was undisputedly the winner today.

Xiahou Jing had gotten out alive at the end of the day, but his most valued accomplices had been exterminated. Because of the Order’s catastrophic loss, it would be significantly harder for him to gather a new group of human cultivators together under his banner.

Jiang Chen wanted to avoid the possibility altogether. That was why he had to warn the human cultivators who lacked a bottom line by announcing his victory to the world.

To tell the truth, Jiang Chen despised those who willingly joined the Order. If Xiahou Jing had been a human senior expert, it was understandable that others would join him.

But it was ridiculous to thoughtlessly worship someone with unknown origins and a penchant for delusion. Jiang Chen wondered whether they had any brains at all.

The Order’s defeat had taken Xiahou Jing’s personal subordinates out of the equation, but it did have many auxiliary main forces remaining.

Out of the eight Protector Kings, the six that hadn’t come with him had been busy with other tasks at the time. In theory, these key members of the Order were still alive without much injury. Moreover, these people were under the control of the Exultation Pill. They would likely be forced to comply with the supreme lord’s further orders.

“Old Brother Mo, come with me for a moment.” Jiang Chen picked out his sworn brother and took him toward a secret room. “Old Brother Mo, you’ve suffered quite a bit for the past few years. I have many ways to restore your original appearance with no side effects, of course. However, I do need to research the Exultation Pill of Wind and Cloud. I might need a sample of your blood...”

Mo Wushuang chuckled. "No need for all that trouble. I have a bit of the pill with me." Saying this, he produced a quarter of a pill like performing a magic trick.

The Exultation Pill of Wind and Pill was as large as a lychee, so the quarter-pill that the emperor possessed was reasonably sizable.

"The Order periodically gives out antidotes as well as new Exultation Pills. I found an opportunity to keep behind a quarter of a pill. Because of the amount, I wasn't detected."

The sect was perpetually kept on high alert. Typically, any sort of under-the-table behavior was forbidden.

However, Emperor Peerless had been skillful enough to receive this risky payoff. Hiding a quarter of an Exultation Pill had certainly been quite dangerous.

Jiang Chen was overjoyed. "Very well done, Old Brother Mo. This will make everything much easier. I'm even more sure of my success than I was before!"

He hadn't done that many serious things in his previous life of a million years. The most he had accomplished was learning pill dao. He learned every kind of pill dao heritage there was, regardless of its perceived social status or faction origin. His scholarly talents from back then had allowed him to navigate pill dao with ease.

The young man was confident that the Exultation Pill would pose no challenge to him in light of his studious nature.

"Young lord," Emperor Peerless sighed. "I can't remember how many times you've saved my life. This is quite embarrassing."

"Not at all, Old Brother Mo. Without the huge risk you took in passing the news onto me, Veluriyam Capital would have been faced with a life and death situation. My gesture to you is minor compared to the grace in your actions. Who else could've done what you did? Who can destroy their own face and lie in wait behind enemy lines for another's sake?"

Jiang Chen had already a deep appreciation of his sworn brother's integrity before this. The matter of the Order had only proven all the more that Mo Wushuang was someone extremely trustworthy, with robust morals that withstood trial.

Emperor Peerless didn't think as much of it. "Many cultivators could've done the same, I'm sure. Destroying one's face did require a bit more courage and cleverness though."

"Regardless, you are a great hero of humanity, Old Brother Mo. There would've been grave consequences if Veluriyam had been taken by the Order."

Jiang Chen wasn't being humble. He was grateful to the great emperor from the bottom of his heart. His family and foundations lay within the city's walls. If anything had happened to them during his absence, he would've regretted it for the rest of his life.

Having a fragment of the Exultation Pill on hand lightened much of Jiang Chen's workload. He was able to forgo a multitude of complex procedures because of it. Instead, he could directly analyze the pill's contents.

Jiang Chen had his unique methodology when it came to analyzing pills. He knew of a plethora of ways and applied what he felt was the most appropriate to his circumstances.

Time waited for no man.

Jiang Chen was in a very big hurry to figure out the characteristics of the pill in order to formulate an antidote. The antidote wasn't only useful for saving Emperor Peerless and the Jiao brothers; but had another use as well.

His reliability when applying his skills was as remarkable as ever. After four days in seclusion, Jiang Chen was able to decipher the Exultation Pill's medicinal properties and find a recipe that applied appropriate countermeasures. Even Emperor Peerless hadn't expected such rapid research and development from the young lord.

The Jiao brothers were overjoyed. "I've always said that young lord Jiang Chen could remove our poison!" Jiao Feng exclaimed.

The trio were much happier after being freed of the Exultation Pill's shackles.

The return of the three great emperors increased the strength of Jiang Chen's forces as well. Veluriyam's young lord was in need of any and all manpower. The timing for Emperor Peerless and the Jiao brothers' restoration was impeccable.

"Old Brother Mo, do you think that the people who followed the Order were pressured into it by the supreme lord's aura, or because of the toxicity of the pill?"

Jiang Chen wanted to know the answer to this very badly.

Emperor Peerless thought about it for a moment. "Well, it depends. Some people must have felt compelled by the effects of the pill, but others went with the supreme lord willingly, lured by promises of an empyrean opportunity.

"Of course, most were pressured into it as you said. Coercion was sadly an effective tool."

"What if I announced my antidote to the world? What kind of effect would that have then?" Jiang Chen asked.

Emperor Peerless's expression froze. He furrowed his brow in thought for a moment before slapping his thigh. "That would be a wonderful thing! If the antidote is made available to the public, I think that many stuck with the Order would leave!"

Jiang Chen nodded. "The ones coerced into it in the first place are the only ones who'd be given the pill. The die-hard loyalists wouldn't need them anyway."

He'd already considered the topic when developing the antidote. Hearing Emperor Peerless's conclusion only assured him.

Antidotes were only difficult during the development stage. Mass production was trivial once that was over with.

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Xiahou Jing was lucky to have escaped alive. Filled with anger and hatred, he took it out on many of his current subordinates. Without his most loyal retainers and the Elders Peng and Mo, his future in the human domain looked much dimmer than before.

“That petty, vile thief Jiang Chen! That bastard! As long as I still draw breath, killing you will be my goal!” Xiahou Jing couldn’t control his rage whenever he remembered his shameful loss.

“Pass on my order. All Protector Kings in the outside world should return to headquarters without delay!” Xiahou Jing was quite anxious. Without his trump cards, he was unsure what the future held.

Without his subordinates from Myriad Abyss Island, he could only rely on followers from the human domain. If he couldn’t steady the hearts of these people, the Order would crumble in an even shorter time than it had risen in.

However, trouble always came in pairs.

“Supreme Lord, Veluriyam Capital has spread the news about the Order’s crushing defeat. They claim that our forces were almost entirely wiped out and that you...”

“What about me?” Xiahou Jing’s face darkened.

“You... you ran away with your tail between your legs...”

Xiahou Jing was irate enough to cough up blood. He forced himself to calm down and continued on.

“Tell me, what other terrible news is there?”

“There’s... there’s more. The young lord of Veluriyam says that all the cultivators under heaven will be branded as traitors if they stay loyal to the Order. Those who wish to renege on their mistaken allegiance can receive an antidote to the Exultation Pill.”

“What?!” Xiahou Jing couldn’t sit tight any more. Where had Jiang Chen gotten an antidote from?

His exclusivity to the antidote was key to his current control over the Order!

If the antidote was disseminated into the world, he would have no more cards available to play. He couldn’t even maintain a semblance of calm now. His brows were furrowed deeply. “It’s only been a few days. That brat must be making things up! He has to be!”

Still, Xiahou Jing couldn’t stay cool despite knowing that.

The Order wasn’t in the best of shape after its painful defeat. Xiahou Jing could just imagine the numerous executives that would take this as an opportunity to leave him behind!

Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

Chapter 1496: Like-minded Villains

Just as Xiahou Jing feared, the entire Order collapsed once news from Veluriyam reached it.

Other than a small core of high-level, die-hard followers, most members became restless. The boldest among them surreptitiously left Unbounded Mid Region to head for Veluriyam. And of the protector kings and elders still at large, more than half went underground, never to return.

However, Emperor Everviolet wasn't one of them. He wasn't that dedicated to the supreme lord, but he'd already burned all his bridges with Jiang Chen.

Others might seek a better future away from the Order. But if he were to leave, could he go to Veluriyam and beg the young lord for an antidote? That would be inviting humiliation onto himself. Not to mention, he'd joined the Order on his own initiative.

"There's no need for distress, my lord. Most people are fairweather friends in the martial world. We can't count on them for the sect to grow!" In fact, Everviolet was rather excited. He had his doubts about Xiahou Jing himself, but he was willing to stake all his chips on the young man after learning of his origins.

This supreme lord comes from Myriad Abyss Island. Even if he's failed this time, who's to say he can't turn things around? That was now Everviolet's fond wish.

His spirit at its lowest, Xiahou Jing was comforted by Everviolet's words.

"Protector King Shockcloud, they say only the strongest grass can withstand the storm. It seems that you're the one most deserving of my trust." Xiahou Jing generously doled some encouragement of his own.

This was the right move to make! Everviolet burst with joy.

"Supreme Lord, we didn't fail not due to lack of strength, but because of strategy. We underestimated Jiang Chen. That bastard Mo Wushuang was a determining factor as well." He gnashed his teeth at the mention of Peerless.

After several days of analysis, he'd come to the conclusion Peerless had been the one to create a chink in their armor and light the fuse of their defeat. Xiahou Jing also fumed when he heard the two words "Mo Wushuang."

"That bastard's always done as he pleased. He pulled a fast one even on me. To think he was Jiang Chen's man all along!"

Everviolet snorted coldly. "I have no idea what he was thinking. Flocking to Jiang Chen? He even looks quite the loyal dog. That said, he's a strange one to have stayed under our noses for so many years without exposing his identity. To think he changed his martial path! I'm familiar with his martial style, but even I was completely duped."

Xiahou Jing exclaimed, "More frighteningly, he didn't hesitate to disfigure himself. It speaks volumes about his resolve!"

Despite his anger, he couldn't but admire Peerless in that aspect.

A grim, murderous glint flashed in Everviolet's eyes. Back in the day, he'd ranked far above Mo Wushuang among the six wandering titans, overshadowing the latter in both strength and prestige. There'd be no question about it.

But now, Peerless was well on his way to eclipsing Everviolet! He couldn't accept that the outcome of the battle had been influenced by someone who used to be inferior to him in every respect.

“Shockcloud, we’ve suffered a great deal this time, so I need to consider our future plans carefully. In the meantime, you’ll be in charge of the consolidation effort.”

“Consolidation?”

“Just as you’ve said, we don’t need those fairweather followers. Those left will form our true, most reliable core! We need to make every single one of them feel like they belong. How will we prosper without cohesion?”

Xiahou Jing remained rational despite the crushing defeat. Confront Jiang Chen head-on was no longer an option for the foreseeable future. Lying dormant was the wisest course to take.

Someone outside suddenly reported, “Supreme Lord, there’s a visitor who wants a word with you. He calls himself your savior.”

Savior? Xiahou Jing immediately thought of the person who’d intervened in the battle and created a small gap in the golems’ stone field, giving him a chance to escape.

It wasn’t wrong to call the man his lifesaver.

In fact, Xiahou Jing had been puzzling over the matter. Who had it been? Many possibilities had crossed his mind. It might’ve even been an esteemed senior from Myriad Abyss Island. If so, would the senior bring tales of his disgrace back home?

He’d fretted over the possibility. Now that the “savior” had come to find him, he could no longer postpone the face-to-face. The time for reckoning had come.

“Invite him in!”

Xiahou Jing composed himself and remarked to Everviolet, “Shockcloud, I have high hopes for you. If some of you can become empyrean masters, you might be the first among them.”

In spite of his delight, Everviolet remained outwardly humble. “It’s my honor to be of use to my lord. Your subordinate has few abilities, but thanks my eye arts, I’m rarely wrong about people. Supreme Lord, you’re destined for great things. Your future is limitless.”

With silver hair and a white beard, the guest seemed old but exuded an unfathomable aura. After taking place in the seat of honor and sipping the proffered tea, he sighed with emotion. “The Order’s supreme lord, a guest from Myriad Abyss Island... Heh, it can’t have been easy establishing such a foothold at your young age. Sure enough, Myriad Abyss Island is this continent’s true holy land.”

Not batting an eye, Xiahou Jing cupped his fist and asked, “Friend, words aren’t enough to express my thanks, but you’ll have to excuse my shamelessness. May I know your honorable name and background?”

“This old man is named Shu, given name Wanqing,” the guest casually introduced himself.

“I am honored to make your acquaintance.” Xiahou Jing cupped his fist again. “Daoist Shu, do you have any advice?”

Shu Wanqing stroked his long beard with a faint smile. “I merely came for confirmation.”

“Oh?” Xiahou Jing blinked but refrained from inquiring.

“I’ve heard that the supreme lord is a young man from Myriad Abyss Island?” Curiosity and indifference seeped from the old man’s voice in equal measure. Not too eager and not too tepid, he spoke with just the perfect tone.

“Is that very important to you?” Xiahou Jing asked calmly in response.

“You could say it’s important, or you could say it isn’t.” Shu Wanqing chuckled. “Tell me, you must have exhausted all your cards in this defeat?”

“What of it? Fellow daoist, did you come to mock me?” Xiahou Jing suddenly turned frosty.

The old man chuckled leisurely. “Why would I have helped you if so? I could’ve helped the bastard Jiang Chen subdue you. He’d even have owed me a favor then, don’t you think so?”

Xiahou Jing’s expression eased. “Fellow daoist, there’s no need to beat around the bush. Please say your piece.”

Shu Wanqing knocked on his chair’s armrest and thought deeply for a long time before responding, “I came to propose cooperation.”

“Cooperation?” Xiahou Jing blinked, taken aback. “What kind? Pardon my wariness, but I don’t even know where you come from.”

“That’s no great secret. I was born and bred in the human domain. When I ran free in the world seven thousand years ago, those so-called peak experts in Veluriyam hadn’t been born yet!” His voice brimmed with ambition, a tone often belonging to those possessing unbridled arrogance and unrestrained by mundane morals or ethics.

“So you’re from the human domain?” A possibility came to Xiahou Jing.

“Correct. What? Do you think I’m not qualified to work with you since I’m not from Myriad Abyss Island?” Shu Wanqing’s tone also turned cool.

Xiahou Jing didn’t grow angry. He laughed instead. “Of course not. I’ve just never envisioned a day I’d happily cooperate with someone from the human domain.”

“Everything is relative. Should people at our level be bound by mundane bias? I’ve always done as I pleased. Every man for himself, and the devil take the rest!”

Xiahou Jing slapped the table and laughed heartily. “Well said! Daoist Shu, let’s hear what kind of cooperation you have in mind!”

Every man for himself, and the devil take the rest!

This was the cruelest yet bluntest truth of the martial world. Untold cultivators lived by these words, possessing no bottom line and no morality whatsoever. As it turned out, both Xiahou Jing and Shu Wanqing were cut from the same cloth.

“Myriad Abyss Island is the holiest of holies for cultivators like me. But you, Supreme Lord, left it for the human domain. Pardon my rudeness, but they say a man doesn’t get out of bed without benefits at

stake. You must have your own reason for coming here. As for me, I've become indifferent to mundane affairs after living for so long. What I seek is the supreme dao."

"Alas, the human domain is too weak for the supreme dao of a man of your caliber. Myriad Abyss Island is the place you seek." Xiahou Jing surmised.

Shu Wanqing nodded solemnly. "Correct. I have no desire to involve myself in whatever you're after. However, I can help you against Veluriyam. As payment, I require a pass to Myriad Abyss Island!"

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

Chapter 1497: The Northwestern Wastes

It was plain to see that Shu Wanqing had tossed aside all notion of morality and decorum in his age. When that occurred, a man like him would become a terrifying presence.

He was willing to ignore all that happened in the human domain to conserve his lifespan and energy. No matter what disaster or calamity befell it, he felt absolutely no emotional disturbance.

A faint smile hung on Xiahou Jing's face as he unabashedly observed Shu Wanqing's expression. Their gazes clashed, each attempting to probe something out of the other.

Shu Wanqing's was perpetually calm. He reacted very little to the hatred towards Veluriyam emitting from the younger man.

"Your heart is steadfast, Daoist Shu. Why should the path to the supreme dao be denied you?" Xiahou Jing's comment was an unknown mixture of mockery and politeness.

"Thank you for the undeserved praise," Shu Wanqing smiled.

"You are a straightforward man, Daoist Shu. I won't beat around the bush then. It's a crime for someone of your talents to remain in the human domain. Myriad Abyss Island would make a much better home for you. It's not that I'm throwing my clout around or anything, but I can guarantee your admission there. You may find it possible to enter with your own strength, but Myriad Abyss is a bit too mysterious for the human domain in general. Usually, there are only instances of people from the former visiting the latter. The reverse is essentially impossible without having the coordinates."

Shu Wanqing sighed in deep agreement. "I've tried it before, but each of my previous attempts ended in failure. There were a few times I came quite close to death, so my desire to do so faded after a while. If you hadn't appeared, I wouldn't have shown myself in the world once more at all."

For empyrean experts, taking even a single step into the mortal world cost them a great deal.

They had to live cowardly and conservative lives in order to guarantee they could preserve their lives, wasting no energy on what was unnecessary.

"How many more secluded masters are there in the human domain, daoist? Ones like you, I mean," Xiahou Jing mused.

He had always known that there were sure to be secluded experts in the human domain. The exact number though, was much more up in the air.

“How many exactly? It’s hard for me to answer that myself,” Shu Wanqing sighed. “Every year yields a different answer. I knew of six a few thousand years ago. Now? Who knows how many are still alive now?”

In the human domain, someone who had broken into empyrean realm were limited by available resources – both material and spirit energy. As such, their lives were only double that of great emperor realm experts here. This was one of the reasons that empyrean experts had been nonexistent for many years.

Xiahou Jing laughed, quickly following up. “Is there any way to contact them?”

Shu Wanqing’s reply was cool. “Did you want to recruit them, Supreme Lord?”

Xiahou Jing made no attempt to deny it. “I don’t want to see empyrean experts languish in this coarse environment,” he laughed.

“There is no need to make those plans. Just because I’m willing to cooperate with you doesn’t mean they will do the same. Perhaps some are contrary enough to be angered by your attempts to stir things up here in the human domain. They will then attempt to thwart your plans at every quarter. If you are not worried about that, you go ahead and try.”

Not all empyrean experts had the same nature.

“Hahaha, you are a direct man indeed, Daoist Shu.” Xiahou Jing roared with laughter, but no longer brought up the matter of other empyrean experts. He turned to something different. “Do you have any ideas about the cooperation you mentioned earlier?”

“I will lend only my strength. It is up to you to craft any stratagems required.” Shu Wanqing was as straightforward as ever.

The death of Xiahou Jing’s retainers, Elders Peng and Mo, meant that there was a void of power he desperately needed to fill. Shu Wanqing’s appearance shored that up perfectly. He would be a fool to not grasp this opportunity. After all, he didn’t have the shamelessness to return to Myriad Abyss Island to ask aid.

If House Xiahou knew how poorly he had done here in the human domain, his lofty status within the house would crash into the ground. As such, there was no reason for him to miss out an empyrean expert like Shu Wanqing at this time.

Moreover, the fact that Shu Wanqing had been able to break the stony field alone showed his immense strength. He was probably stronger than the elders had been.

Xiahou Jing thought about things for a moment before coming up with an idea.

“Daoist Shu, if you are an empyrean expert of the human domain, cultivators all over the realm will surely flock to you if you send out the call. Even if they don’t do so immediately, at least they won’t support Veluriyam instead. If we pair that with a bit of brutality, every faction will fall beneath our boot. Once Veluriyam Capital’s arms and legs are cut off, it will be trivial to take Jiang Chen on.”

“Why make it so complicated?” Shu Wanqing frowned. “On a larger scale, it seems to be a fight between the Order and Veluriyam. But really, it’s just a spat between you and Jiang Chen. As long as we can deal with the city’s leader, everything else will follow.”

In his age, Shu Wanqing preferred to head directly for the goal rather than engage in anything too complex. Dealing with Jiang Chen was a precise, efficient maneuver. Without him, Veluriyam Capital would no longer be a problem.

“It’s not that easy to deal with him,” Xiahou Jing smiled wryly. “Do you think I haven’t thought of doing that? I’ve already assigned him sufficient importance, but what did I get in the end? The deaths of my two closest empyrean retainers!”

He clenched his teeth as he said this. Sparks of anger flew out of his eyes. Clearly, he still held the loss of the two elders very dear.

“That scoundrel himself isn’t very strong. He has eight Primordial Stone Golem Tribe warriors, which is probably his strongest asset. He has a Vermilion Bird as well, but it’s at the end of its rope. I assume it’ll be dead before long.”

Xiahou Jing was filled with resentment for the bird as well. He’d lured it with many promises and gifts, but it had remained totally impassive toward him. It was a thoroughly dishonorable experience.

“According to what I know,” Shu Wanqing suddenly intoned emotionlessly, “this isn’t the first time you’ve fiddled with Boundary Steles. The one broken at Agarwood, the one in the northwestern wastes this time... the Order of Wind and Cloud is behind this, is it not?”

He appeared to have complete knowledge of these things.

Xiahou Jing was a bit surprised. “You know so much despite being a hermit?”

“Your line of thought is correct,” Shu Wanqing stated. “Once the Boundary Stele in the northwestern wastes is shattered, the Embittered Savage Tribe will invade with an army. Veluriyam Capital will be hindered by the new distraction and there will be increased opportunities to deal with Jiang Chen!”

There was no hint of compassion or guilt in Shu Wanqing’s voice. Xiahou Jing marveled at his lack of empathy. It seemed odd. He had made contact with many other human domain experts, and those people had harbored a degree of care for the land even after joining the Order. Most cultivators especially couldn’t accept the breaking of the Boundary Steles.

As an empyrean expert, Shu Wanqing should have been a leader and elder among humanity. Why was he so uncaring in this regard?

Did he have no sense of belonging to this domain, to his race?

How much enmity did he harbor in his heart to reach this level?

“Daoist Shu, if I may ask, will you really be able to stand by and idly watch while the Embittered Savage Tribe invades?” Xiahou Jing couldn’t resist inquiring.

“And why not?” Shu Wanqing replied even-handedly. “Every step I’ve taken thus far has been over a mound of bones. The heavenly dao was never prepared for those with extraneous things like

compassion. Only those with a heart of stone is fit to receive it. Who cares who lives and who dies, be they human or otherwise? What grace have I received from them, that I should worry over their lives?"

Xiahou Jing clapped, laughing. "Good, good! No wonder Daoist Shu was able to reach empyrean realm, while those pursuers of false dao in the human domain languish as great emperors unto their deaths. Everything has a reason behind it. That means that Jiang Chen will only be able to get to great emperor at most. I wonder what the Primordial Stone Golem Tribe sees in him?"

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In the northwestern wastes, the head of the Moon God Sect was at her limit. Her pretty eyes were bloodshot and her elegant face pale.

"Sectmaster, rest for a while. I'll fill in for a bit." The second sectmaster wasn't as fatigued as the main sect head, but she was plenty tired in her own right.

She cursed as she said this. "Those bastards of the Upper Eight Regions... are they really men?! We sisters have held this place down for so long. Where are our reinforcements? Are they going to let us die here?"

The main sect head sighed softly. "Don't complain, sister. The Order of the Wind and Cloud is set on harming the entire human domain. Perhaps it has already fallen into a great war. The lack of reinforcements is understandable."

Because they were in the northwestern wastes, their knowledge of what had happened in the outside world was delayed. It was difficult just to survive here, not to mention repair the Boundary Stele. They lacked Jiang Chen's methods to do so, so they were finding it quite taxing to perform the same task.

As time went on, they felt their strengths falter. If there was no change to their situation, the Boundary Stele would crumble within three to five days at most.

Once it did, the human domain would no longer have any defense against the Embittered Savage Tribe. Sensing the blood in the water, that bestial tribe would come rushing in.

Or perhaps they were already mobilizing on the other side.

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

Chapter 1498: A Change In Mindse

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The battle between Veluriyam and the Order increased the former's fame to even greater heights. The announcement of the antidote to the Exultation Pill meant that many who had capitulated to the Order surged into the capital instead.

Jiang Chen didn't absorb these defectors into Veluriyam's own forces, but those that wanted the antidote were required to make a vehement oath not to work for the Order ever again.

These hadn't felt much of a sense of belonging to the sect in the first place. They had only bent their knee due to being captured. As such, they didn't oppose this oath at all. Everybody was a winner in the end.

“Young lord, these cultivators are the elites that remain of the human race. Why not make them part of Veluriyam to strengthen our forces?” Coiling Dragon was perplexed. This was the perfect time to attract talent and open up recruitment.

“How many cultivators did we deploy in the fight against Emperor Pillzenith? What of our sortie against the Order?” Jiang Chen smiled.

Coiling Dragon considered this before cracking a wry smile. “That’s true. With the Goldbiter Rats, we’re not at all pressed for manpower.”

“That’s not my consideration. Veluriyam doesn’t need these fairweather troops. In the world of martial dao, many are placed in harsh conditions and go where the wind blows. I sympathize with their plight, as long as they retained some sort of bottom line. That’s why I gave them antidotes in the first place. Ruthless criminals like Emperors Pillzenith and Shura are the ones truly beyond redemption.”

“However, just because I can forgive them does not mean I’m happy to share the same air with them, much less trust them with any important tasks.” This was Jiang Chen’s principle.

He didn’t kill innocents and he was able to commiserate with them, but he wasn’t going to be friends with them. The cultivators that had joined the Order weren’t at all suitable for Veluriyam.

Veluriyam was strong not because it had some kind of advantage in numbers. Compared to the Pillfire of yesteryear, it was actually disadvantaged in both resources and great emperors.

But it came on top in the end, easily crushing Pillfire and the northern alliance’s conspiracy in the process.

Had that been because of numbers? Not at all.

Elite soldiers were better than a horde of untrained peasants. Every person Veluriyam took in had to pass Jiang Chen’s rigorous testing before he allowed them into his inner circle.

Currently, people like Petalpluck were being gradually sidelined in favor of newcomers like Coiling Dragon.

Time and time again, tribulations had proven that though Emperor Petalpluck wouldn’t betray Veluriyam Capital, he didn’t possess the kind of resolution needed to suffer through turbulent situations. At the end of the day, people like him had different ideals than Jiang Chen.

Thus, though Emperor Petalpluck was nominally the second great emperor after Emperor Peafowl, Jiang Chen’s esteem of him had sunk lower and lower.

Against Pillfire’s northern alliance, Petalpluck had expressed pessimistic thoughts and belittled Veluriyam.

Against the Order of Wind and Cloud, he hadn’t taken sufficient responsibility. In terms of contribution, he could not be compared to Emperors Peerless and Wellspring.

Peerless had gone undercover and disfigured himself to deliver crucial news at a key moment, allowing Jiang Chen to deliver a brutal counterattack. Wellspring had served to distract the Order’s forces elsewhere.

Jiang Chen's philosophy with subordinates was thus: in order to become a member of Sacred Peafowl Mountain's inner circle, one had to be of the same mind with him. Emperors Peerless, Wellspring, Coiling Dragon, and Void all exemplified this fact. The Jiao brothers were included as well.

Though Sacred Peafowl Mountain could definitely use a few more experts, he wasn't going to relax his personal standards for them. He preferred frugal expertise to an excess of incompetence.

"Young lord, Miss Qingxuan is here." Xue Tong came in from outside the door.

Jiang Chen knew instantly what she had come for. He'd been making arrangements for it these past few days.

Xu Qingxuan entered with worry on her face. "Brother," she said with some concern. "It's been quite a while and there's no news from the northwestern wastes. I'm worried about master and..."

Jiang Chen was conflicted himself. Should he go to the northwestern wastes himself?

If he'd managed to successfully kill Xiahou Jing prior without the interference of the mysterious human hermit, Jiang Chen would've had no hesitation whatsoever.

But Xiahou Jing had fled with his life intact, and the mysterious hermit expert only added to his concern. If the Order made a renewed attack during his departure, what was he supposed to do then? Veluriyam couldn't sustain continuous damage.

Most importantly, Jiang Chen suspected that the northwestern wastes' Boundary Stele was beyond repair.

It wasn't so easy to fix one. The one in Agarwood Valley had been bolstered by the Primosanct Sect's resources. The spirit stones and other miscellany had guaranteed that the process would be successful.

Would the same be present in the northwestern wastes? Jiang Chen was doubtful about that. The realm around a Boundary Stele wasn't a simple formation or restriction.

As the demarcation of the boundaries between the races, it cost an insurmountable amount of work and resources to construct.

The Nine Sparks Petalstorm Formation around the young lord residence had already cost him an astronomical sum. But compared to what a Boundary Stele expended, it was virtually nothing. Due to Jiang Chen's previous repairs on another Boundary Stele, he knew very well what it required.

"Brother, say something." Xu Qingxuan stomped her feet anxiously. Just like Jiang Chen, she valued relationships very much so. Both the Moon God Sect and her master were dear to her.

"I respect the Moon God Sect's responsibility in this time of trouble, Qingxuan. However, the battle cost us a lot of time. I assume the situation has only gotten worse in the northwestern wastes. I don't know if it is possible to repair the Boundary Stele there, and we must prepare for the contingency that it's not."

"Impossible to repair?" Xu Qingxuan's face became pale. "Then... the Embittered Savage Tribe..."

Her eyes radiated despair when she thought of the coming eternal nightmare with the Embittered Savage Tribe. The Moon God Sect lay foremost in the path of the invaders.

“Fortune and misfortune are both fated, and the latter sometimes can’t be avoided. I’ve thought about a great deal these past few days, Qingxuan. I’ve worked tirelessly for the sake of the human race and its future, but what did I receive in return? The primary troublemakers haven’t been the demons I was most worried about.”

Xu Qingxuan looked puzzled. She couldn’t quite understand what Jiang Chen meant.

“In the secret realm in Agarwood Valley, human experts joined the celestial demon lord without hesitation. When I came out from there, Pillfire had organized the northern alliance to wage war upon me. After that was done, a so-called Order of Wind and Cloud rose up from nowhere. When the Order was about to be destroyed, a human hermit expert showed up to save it... I can’t deal with being led around like that! They’ve practically got me by my nose.”

Xu Qingxuan began to understand now.

“In the end, these troubles are being caused by humans and our internal struggles! I’ve been wondering whether I’ve done too much. Most people in the human domain have no sense of danger, and are completely irresponsible and spineless in these trying times. Perhaps the arrival of the Embittered Savage Tribe will be a good thing for humanity!”

Jiang Chen’s words were filled with indignation. These were the conclusions he’d drawn from mulling things over recently.

The human race had enjoyed peace and quiet for far too long. The hot-bloodedness of its ancient ancestors had all but disappeared. A race like this required baptism through fire and blood in order for it to come to its senses. Otherwise, it would be stuck forever in its current muddled state.

He’d acted as a caretaker for the past few years, dealing with trouble wherever it arose. But the human domain was like a straw hut. It leaked everywhere, and worsened rather than improved over time despite his efforts.

He doubted whether his efforts had any point to it at all, given the direction things were going on a grand scale.

To the side, Wellspring suddenly spoke up. “Young lord, your words have reminded me of a quote from an ancient master, recorded in an equally ancient text.”

“What is it?” Jiang Chen asked curiously.

“That ancient master participated in the demon-sealing war in his day. He said that war has the power to both raise up or destroy a race. He made a comparison too. Even a flock of sheep on a prairie is made more hot-blooded and wary by the appearance of a wolf pack. War is not what usually destroys a race, but peace and ignorance.”

Jiang Chen slapped his thigh when he heard this. “Well said!” his eyes brightened. “This ancient master was a wise man. He and I think the same.”

He’d been toying with that idea in his head for a while now. He’d been worried about the demons and other factions’ invasion of the human domain and a massive loss of life. However, if the people he was

fussing over were unconcerned and oblivious themselves, did they deserve his protection and exertion in the first place?

Emperor Peafowl's influence had directed his thoughts before; a man who was more powerful should shoulder more responsibility.

But his mindset was beginning to change these days. For the current incarnation of the human race, a war could stir up this stagnant puddle of water.

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

Chapter 1499: The Boundary Stele is Shattered?

Xu Qingxuan had a lost look in her eyes.

"Brother," she murmured, "do you mean that you've given up on defending the northwestern wastes' Boundary Stele? Then the work that my master and the rest is doing... is wasted? Was it wrong to risk their lives to fix it?"

"It's hard to assign right and wrong to many things in the world," Jiang Chen sighed. "Qingxuan, I won't ignore what's happening in the northwestern wastes. I simply said what I was thinking about the matter. I also wanted to let you know that it may be wise for humanity to prepare for war – a single one, or multiple. The human domain is approaching dusk, and a period of darkness is yet to come."

He wasn't applying any pessimism to the matter. Instead, he was speaking from a higher perspective. The current human race was riddled with holes and problems. Even if he were ten times stronger, he wouldn't be able to patch everything up.

Wellspring, the man most closely aligned with Peafowl's ideals, sighed. "I must say that my thoughts are changing as well after all these changes. In the past, I've always thought that us cultivators at the top must bear the burden of the rest of the world. We are the only ones that can, really. But if the rest of our people has not yet awakened to the danger around us, can we really fight with only the strength of a few?"

"We must at least preserve our own strength. Only then do we have a hope of turning the tide." This was Peerless' opinion. He had learned quite a bit from his experience lying low in the Order. The sight of so many human cultivators pressed into loyal service without knowing the origins of their supreme lord shocked him. They hadn't seemed to care if he was evil or not.

Jiang Chen nodded. "As the leader of the human race, Veluriyam will take up the mantle when necessary. However, we must also preserve our own forces and heritages. Only then can we think about saving the rest of the world."

This was his biggest takeaway from the fight against the Order.

Without Peerless' communication, Veluriyam would've very likely suffered a catastrophic loss it could never recovered from. If something like that did happen to his family and friends, what good was vengeance later?

Revenge wouldn't restore his loved ones.

Having said this, Jiang Chen went on. "I know what I'm going to do for the northwestern wastes. I'll make a trip myself. If the Boundary Stele there can be repaired, I'll do my best to do so. If not, I won't force anything. My primary directive will be to save any survivors."

"Yes. Where there is life, there is hope." Peerless nodded in agreement.

"I will make haste without delay and set off today. Old Brother Hui and Mo, Emperors Coiling Dragon and Void, please keep things here in Veluriyam under control. If anyone intentionally spreads damaging rumors, punish him severely. In times of chaos, harsher measures are required. Don't hesitate to apply them when necessary," Jiang Chen instructed his friends. "I will ask our good senior the Vermilion Bird to hold down the fort. Four of the stone golem brothers will also remain."

After fighting the Order of Wind and Cloud, Jiang Chen placed greater value in keeping Veluriyam secure.

Going to the northwestern wastes wasn't as easy as returning to Veluriyam. The spacetime seal could only be used for a one-way trip, and moreover it only had a single usage remaining. The next time back to the Pagoda would be his last.

After making the required arrangements, Jiang Chen left quietly once again without informing anyone. His actions were under the scrutiny of all. No one was benefited by him being too public about his goals.

Thankfully, the human domain didn't pose much of a threat to him aside from the Order's remnants. Every hostile faction in the northern Upper Eight Regions had been destroyed.

The ones that remained were in an alliance with Veluriyam. Therefore, Jiang Chen didn't need to be concerned with much aside from local Order members. Plus, his veneer of secrecy helped to avoid problems as well.

Secrecy aside though, if the destruction of the northwestern wastes' Boundary Stele had something to do with the Order, then his trip would be within their expectations too. But presently, the Order didn't necessarily have the ability to ambush him even if its members knew about his itinerary. It would cost them a great deal to do so.

The removal of Elders Peng and Mo from the equation meant that Xiahou Jing had no manpower available, at any rate.

Jiang Chen's journey was entirely smooth. He reached the territory of Tilted Moon Upper Region in three days. The northwestern wastes were a wide patch of desolate, infertile land.

After entering the region, he could feel the tangible pressure in the atmosphere. A sense of impending war filled the air. A small spark would be enough to ignite the place.

"The threat of the Embittered Savage Tribe is quite intimidating indeed." He remembered how he'd appreciated the region's culture on his first visit. The region's residents had brimmed with optimism, enjoying life to the fullest.

This time, he noticed that even the most optimistic of people smiled a great deal less. While he was here, Jiang Chen found it natural to go visit an old friend. The Third Master Jing he had met all those

years ago – alongside Emperor Peerless' foster son, Gu Xintang – were now important members of Tilted Moon's society.

The third master was overjoyed to see Jiang Chen at his door.

"There's no need for too much fuss. I'm here on a secret operation," Jiang Chen instructed.

Third Master Jing held back his overflowing joy. "Young lord Jiang Chen, I've been tremendously worried about you during this time. I was relieved by the news that you had defeated the Order and came close to killing its supreme lord. I was guessing that you'd come around now."

"You guessed I would come?" Jiang Chen was a bit surprised.

"Heheh, you are a very loyal person. There's no way you would abandon Tilted Moon and the Moon God Sect for Holy Maiden Qingxuan's sake."

Jiang Chen sighed softly. "How are things in the northwestern wastes?" he asked.

The third master put away his smile. "Things are getting worse over there," he related somberly.

"Contact from the Moon God Sect there has all but ceased. It seems that nothing living can survive over there." He then realized the error in his speech and quickly rectified, "Of course, the sectmaster and the others are capable enough to be fine, I think!".

Jiang Chen nodded. "Time is of the essence. I won't bother you any longer. I'll head to the northwestern wastes right now. I just hope that I can make it in time."

Third Master Jing stood up, solemnly bowing to Jiang Chen thrice. "Young lord, I would like to thank you for your righteous actions on behalf of everyone living in Tilted Moon."

"That's a little too much to say, my friend." Jiang Chen hurriedly helped him up.

Third Master Jing shook his head, his tone firm. "Not at all. Perhaps the rest of the world is used to you saving them, young lord, but you don't actually owe them anything. All that you've done is for the public good! In the current human domain, there are very few men who can say the same. We of Tilted Moon won't take your hard work for granted."

Jiang Chen's lips quivered, but he said nothing further on the subject. Instead, he patted Third Master Jing on the shoulder. "Take care of yourself, and prepare for the worst."

Third Master Jing shook when he heard this. He wanted to ask more, but Jiang Chen had already drifted off.

The young man found his way to the northwestern wastes with the help of a map.

The wasteland was an endless desert, full of sand and not much else. As appropriate of a desert and other such things of that nature, there was very little spirit qi in the air, nor were there any signs of life nearby.

"The northwestern wastes are indeed quite desolate." Jiang Chen and company were having a hard time moving forward because of the conditions. Their pace was noticeably affected.

Any energy they expended couldn't be replenished through drawing on the surrounding environment. Instead, they had to rely on herbs and pills.

"This is a lot of trouble for you four, Big Stone." Jiang Chen felt some distress when he saw the panting golems. Because of the lack of energy in the air, those with a higher level of cultivation required more upkeep to stay fit. That was why Jiang Chen had brought more than enough pills for them to recover.

"The ancestors were immensely daring to have constructed a Boundary Stele in these wastes." The poverty and bleakness of these wastes was teaching Jiang Chen a lesson in the hardships the ancients had had to endure to build a defense here.

As he said this, the young man felt the earth shake a little. He thought that he was hallucinating at first, but the earth shook once more after a few more steps, a bit more vigorously than the last.

The shaking turned into a recurring event, cascading in intensity.

Jiang Chen hastily sent a few Goldbiter Rats out. "Go on and scout ahead. See what's happening in front of us."

Because there was no spirit qi here, Jiang Chen couldn't send out a swarm of Goldbiter Rats. He sent out only a few of the particularly clever ones. A few moments was enough for them to return.

"Young lord, there's enormous shaking a hundred plus miles out from here. Something related to a restriction. It should be the fabled realm around a Boundary Stele, a real impressive sight to behold. But..."

"But what? Say it straight." Jiang Chen frowned.

"But..."

Before the rat could finish, Jiang Chen stumbled almost to his knees. A string of rumbling echoed at his ears — a series of destructive thunderclaps that caused the air to explode.

In the next moment, the ground shook like the tides, wavering in intensifying succession. It was as if the order of heaven and earth in this area had been thrown into disarray. A frightening thought flickered into Jiang Chen's mind.

"This isn't good. The Moon God Sect's people are in danger!" Aside from Xu Qingxuan, there were only a few that Jiang Chen admired from that sect: the main sectmaster and Holy Maiden Xu Shan.

He didn't know the others and cared even less about them. However, they were risking their lives to repair the Boundary Stele. Jiang Chen couldn't simply abandon them to their fates.

"Big Stone, we have to hurry." Jiang Chen rushed ahead, anxiety fueling his step.

Though the lack of energy here meant that it was extremely taxing on picking up speed, Veluriyam's young lord unreservedly charged ahead nevertheless.

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

Chapter 1500: The Embittered Savage Tribe

"Hahaha! Finally! We're through!"

“How many years has it been? We’ve finally broken through the damn border! Will this be a new age for our tribe?”

“My brothers! The succulent pigs in the human domain have grown fat and are waiting to be slaughtered! Hahaha!”

“Tsk tsk! Is this the human domain our ancestors told us about?”

“Humans! Tremble in fear. Your masters have arrived!”

With the breaking of the Stele, the realm that emanated from it collapsed at a speed visible to the naked eye. Like mountain ranges continuously collapsing, the despairing sight ground on.

Color drained from the faces of those of the Moon God Sect. Horror and anxiety flooded their beautiful eyes. Even the head sectmaster was stunned despite her usual calm demeanor.

Countless shadows swarmed furiously through the collapsed rubble like a school of carp leaping over the waters. There seemed to be no end in sight. It was as if the place beyond the boundary was hell, while the human domain was heaven.

There were clear physiological differences between them and humans.

Their shoulders were broad and burly, paired with a waist that was as thick as a bear’s. They were a head taller than most humans and naked from the waist up. Their muscles seemed to have been poured from bronze, well-defined and filled with explosive strength.

From the waist down, they either wore kilts made out of animal skin or odd-looking wraps of leaves, branches, or bizarre ornaments. Moreover, tattoos covered their faces, making them seem even more foreign. Even the shapes of their heads were completely different.

Some were bald, some had shoulder length hair or braided hair, while others wore strange ornaments on top. However, the biggest difference was without a doubt their skin tone. Perhaps due to geographical and environmental reasons, their skin was mostly bronze or darker in color.

Their noses were also an eye-catching characteristic. It was extremely big and seemed to take up a third of their faces. They were an extremely recognizable race.

They were the invaders! There was no doubt of it!

Their chiseled muscles, maddened eyes, and brazen actions were clear indications that they were war-hungry barbarians. Batch upon batch of them followed.

The Moon God Sect was surrounded in the blink of an eye. The three sectmasters had only brought a few trusted disciples to the border. Their numbers didn’t exceed thirty.

In comparison, over tens of thousands of savages from the Embittered Savage Tribe had swarmed through the border in a few breaths. The Moon God Sect was completely surrounded before they even had time to escape.

“Haha! Such fortune! To think that so many beauties were waiting for us just beyond the Boundary Stele!”

“Tsk tsk! Our ancestors didn’t lie! The women of the human race do seem soft and tender!”

“Hahaha! I finally understand why our ancestors are so obsessed with the human domain! Just look at them! There’s nothing to complain about!”

“They all seem so exquisite! We’re in for a treat!”

At least a dozen layers of the barbarians had surrounded them. Lust and desire was written all over their faces. They would've pounced on the women already if their leaders hadn't stopped them. Even still, they were aching to make a move.

“Ooo! Ooo! Ooo!” The warriors of the tribe stood shoulder to shoulder and danced while muttering strange chants. They were clearly celebrating with song and dance. The more excited ones even stroked their crotch and leered.

From the Moon God Sect’s point of view, there seemed to be no end to the savages. The younger and more timid disciples were thoroughly terrified and hid behind the sectmasters. Unfortunately, they were surrounded from all sides. No matter where they hid, ran, or scampered, lascivious grimaces greeted them.

The warriors howled ceaselessly and made various lewd gestures at the women. Some even tore apart the scant cloth at their waist and swung their private parts at the humans. They were as vulgar as one could be.

The female disciples could only respond with endless shrieks. They covered their eyes, humiliated and terrified. The head sectmaster was an experienced warrior. “What are you panicking for?! Maintain your composure!” She yelled.

The exhortations from their leader helped the shrieks slowly die out. However, the disciples were still white as ghosts. Clearly, their fear hadn’t lessened one bit.

The three sectmasters exchanged glances and transmitted silently to all of the sect members present. “We will cover you while you retreat. Remember, try your best to escape, but if you don’t...” The head sectmaster shifted her gaze at the leering barbarians. “You know what to do!” She warned coldly.

The disciples trembled. They understood what the sectmaster was implying. They were to take their own lives if they couldn’t escape. Death was better than being ravaged by the beastly barbarians!

The second sectmaster was next to speak. “As cultivators, why are you acting like the common womenfolk? What was the purpose of all your training if all you do is tremble in the face of danger?”

The second sectmaster had always had a short temper. She feared absolutely nothing and was the calmest in their current precarious situation.

“I will lead by example! If I’m defeated, I’d rather implode than be tarnished by these savage beasts!” Her voice was filled resolve and integrity.

The head sectmaster nodded. “That’s how it should be. I will do the same!”

Their conversation calmed the disciples down. Calm prevailed and the girls looked at their current predicament in a new light.

However, Holy Maiden Xi Yuan burst into an angry tirade. “Isn’t junior sister Qingxuan smart?! She’s having the time of her life at Veluriyam Capital. How can she be at peace living like a princess while our lives are threatened? The second sectmaster’s love for her has gone down the drain!”

She felt the world so very unfair.

Xu Qingxuan ordinarily received the highest treatment among all of the youth in the sect and was widely regarded as the foremost holy maiden. Many worshipped her as a goddess.

And yet, she was swanning around in Veluriyam while the sect was risking their lives in the harshness of the northwestern wastes. The disgusting faces of the Embittered Savage Tribe made Xi Yuan want to throw up. It was no wonder that she was filled with hate and resentment.

The second sectmaster’s visage turned ice-cold. “Are you stirring up trouble? And now, of all times?”

On the brink of death, Holy Maiden Xi Yuan no longer felt the need to hold herself back. “Second sectmaster, this junior isn’t stirring up anything! These are merely my heartfelt words. If junior sister Qingxuan truly cares about the sect, why doesn’t she come to our aid when she clearly knows the northwestern wastes are endangered? Isn’t her brother the young lord of Veluriyam Capital? Why doesn’t she ask him for help?”

Her complaints did make some sense and riled up many of the younger disciples, making them consider Xu Qingxuan a traitor.

The second sectmaster flew into a rage. “You’ve always been jealous of Qingxuan and afraid to express it! So you no longer see the need to hide your true feelings, is it? How do you know that Qingxuan didn’t ask Jiang Chen for help? Do you know who won the war between Veluriyam and the Order of Wind and Cloud? Are you even aware of the current state of affairs in the human domain?”

She might’ve not been a highly educated and cultured person, but she knew very well that her disciple was anything but an ingrate. Thus, she couldn’t stand to let her true disciple be slandered by Xi Yuan.

Xi Yuan had more to say, but she was disrupted by the head sectmaster. “Shut up! How can you afford to think about that given current circumstances? Do you think we don’t know what kind of person Qingxuan is? If it weren’t for her, do you think Veluriyam would’ve cared to propose a polite alliance with us?”

This was the unbridled truth. If it weren’t for Xu Qingxuan, Jiang Chen could very well have led an army and taken his mother by force. In fact, he could’ve destroy the sect with a flick of a finger, given his strength and resources!

Not even Pillfire City was a match for him, let alone the Moon God Sect.

“Qingxuan isn’t like that! Nor is young lord Jiang Chen! They must have their reasons for not coming to our help!” Holy Maiden Xu Shan rebutted.

While they were talking, the Embittered Savages suddenly opened a path to allow a few figures to walk in.

One of them was very tall and stocky. He was dressed differently from the others and had on much more luxurious tattoos and accessories. The armor on his shoulders, chest, and waist was exquisitely crafted. One could easily tell that he was a noble.

He didn't share the same crude brutishness as the other members of his tribe. He had neatly braided hair, an enormous pair of dangling earrings, and didn't have any overly conspicuous tattoos on his face. It was clear that he was of a different status than the others. Moreover, he didn't seem very old.

He was escorted by four cultivators, two middle-aged and two even more elderly. The entourage seemed to have a different status from the others as well. Their attire was leagues better than the common barbarians. However, they were all protecting the young noble and extremely respectful towards him.