

Three Realms 1511

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

Chapter 1511: Honghou Palace

The atmosphere was a bit stifling. The guardian of the third palace was purposefully causing difficulties by not breaking the silence.

Well, Jiang Chen assumed as much, anyways. “Senior,” he saluted with a cupped fist. “I am the current head of Veluriyam Capital. May I know your name?”

According to the rules, the guardians of the palaces had to be fair to any challenging heirs...

Allowing for one’s specific tastes and interests, of course.

There was one basic matter that couldn’t be concealed — the guardian’s name. They were forced to answer this kind of query.

“You can call me Grand Marquis, young man.” The guardian of the third palace harrumphed.

“Senior Marquis.” Jiang Chen saluted once more. “Senior, I’ve found a few things out about the Six Palaces of Heritage during my journey so far. I’ve had good relationships with seniors Master P’eng and Venerated Skysoarer. I hope the same will be for the two of us. Please do excuse me for any discourtesy when I last came through.”

Jiang Chen knew that any issue Senior Marquis had with him would be because of what he’d done last time he was here. As a junior, there was nothing to be embarrassed about in offering a humble apology.

“Senior, things were pretty sudden last time. Myriad Abyss Island’s descendants attacked Veluriyam Capital. In ancient times, deserting cowards from the war populated the island. And now, their children’s children have come back to make trouble and stir up chaos. The past few years have seen the breaking of several Boundary Steles and the unrest of alien races around the human domain. Of greatest concern is that the ancient demons are attempting to make their way back into the world. The human domain is boiling over, so to speak.”

Jiang Chen sighed softly. “If that hadn’t been the case, I wouldn’t have come through in such a hurry. I’m finding myself a bit powerless in the outside world. I’ve also come to get some possible advice on how to deal with the present problems.”

Regardless of whether the other man enjoyed flattery, laying it on thick was never a bad idea.

Grand Marquis felt slightly mollified after hearing Jiang Chen’s explanation. He hadn’t actually been particularly angry about Jiang Chen passing through last time. He’d merely wanted to use it as an opportunity to test this young man.

How will he handle a difficult situation?

His even-tempered performance, serene and cadenced, was reasonably respectable. Thus, the picky Grand Marquis had his impression of Jiang Chen quite improved from their last meeting.

The young man no longer looked like an eyesore. He wasn't just another one of those young geniuses that liked to embellish his strengths and deflect from his weaknesses.

"You said you're called Jiang Chen?" Grand Marquis asked.

"Yes, indeed." Jiang Chen bowed.

"You look like you're only thirty. Someone of your age should be counted among your fellow young geniuses. How come you're ruling over Veluriyam Capital? Has Veluriyam stooped so low that it needs youths to lead it?" Grand Marquis was beginning to wonder about the city's current strength as a whole.

"I came upon the throne of this city by chance, senior..." Jiang Chen related the basics of the relationship between Emperor Peerless and himself, as well as their mutual promise.

Grand Marquis's tone softened once more when he was finished. "If you haven't lied to me, kid, then you're a pretty responsible guy. Not bad, making it to the third palace."

His mood was clearly a lot brighter.

"Alright, the third palace is named after me. It's called Palace of the Grand Marquis. Remember, you only have the right to receive the heritage here and pass on ahead if you pass my test. Are you ready?"

Jiang Chen knew that the third palace's test wasn't going to be simple. But since he was already here, he was long past being mentally prepared.

"Senior Marquis, I have no other way out. Veluriyam Capital is teetering on the brink between life and death, and the human domain is in a time of revolution. Give me victory, or give me death!" Jiang Chen's tone was resolute.

"Very good." Grand Marquis's voice showed the briefest hint of admiration. "Keep in mind that the palace contains both trials and dangers. You may not have encountered anything life-threatening at the Skykun and Crimson Heavens Palaces, but that's no longer true for this one. I can tell you clearly that geniuses have lost their lives here in the past."

Jiang Chen's heart beat a bit faster, then calmed. "I am willing to suffer any and all consequences for coming here. Please give me your test."

"Honored Master Peng and Venerated Skysoarer may not have mentioned me to you, kid. But you have the right to know this, since you're here.

"I don't intend to give you some kind of obstacle course. I only have two tests. One of them is for your consciousness. Your current level of cultivation means that it's disadvantageous for you to be tested on the basis of raw strength alone.

"However, I only care about finding a genius with the best potential. I don't care about what ultimate cultivation level you can reach. It's fine if you're a bit lower level as long as your potential is there. If you can convince me of that, you'll pass. The second test... will come after."

Jiang Chen nodded slightly. "I'm ready, Senior Marquis."

A test for one's consciousness?

He was very pleased as this was his strong suit. The strength of his consciousness far exceeded his cultivation level. He had the confidence to pass whether the senior tested for raw strength or available potential.

Grand Marquis noticed that spirit in the smile and found it mildly odd. The confidence to be found in the young man was a trait that the guardian quite admired. The old senior saw a bull-like tenacity in the young man before him, and it being backed up by genuine sureness was even more remarkable.

Many young men liked to pretend that they had courage and calmness in the face of calamity. True experts could largely see through any such facades presented to them.

Though the guardian marveled at it, he didn't point it out. This young man is either destined for greatness or to be an absolute fool. May he be given a trial through the refiner's fire. Will he turn out to be gold or pyrite, I wonder?

His consciousness created strange runes in the air. Suspended in space like a big screen, they created an unraveling veil. Once the process was complete, a number of images appeared on the surrounding walls. They appeared identical, as if formed from the same mold.

"Do you see these nine images, young man?"

Jiang Chen's eyes looked keenly at the mysterious images. He took a deep breath and nodded. "I see them."

"Very good. These nine images are a set, meant to be studied. However, only one is actually perfect. The other eight look close enough, but are all flawed in minor, different ways. So much so that some of the flaws are almost imperceptible. What you must do is find the perfect one and also identify where the other eight's problems are."

This was an insanely difficult problem to solve.

A quick glance from Jiang Chen revealed no differences whatsoever. Despite his sharp eyes, he found it hard to spot any telling flaws.

"Alright, then. You have two hours to accomplish that task. If you fail within that time, then that's it." There was no sympathy in Grand Marquis's voice.

Jiang Chen braced himself, then nodded again. "I understand."

If there really were differences between these images – with one and only one being perfect – he was sure he could find that one, wherever it was. He deployed the God's Eye alongside the Evil Golden Eye, examining the images one by one with a focused eye.

It was obvious that there were profound mysteries imbued within these images. Jiang Chen felt his head spin upon looking closely at them.

These images are very potent! There's something terrifying about their disorienting effects. Are they designed to confuse their viewers?

If his consciousness hadn't been sufficiently strong, Jiang Chen's mind would've been sent spinning by a single oscillation of the mystifying images. This barrier to entry cooled his head and spurred his patience.

He proceeded from there with more steadily. The chain seal in his consciousness ocean was coming to life like an awakening volcano.

This seal had been very helpful for Jiang Chen. It'd enabled him to achieve breakthroughs in his usage of the Holy Dragon Bow during several battles and inspired him with archery skills in general. The fact that it was roaring to life was a good sign. The seal was activating itself without conscious command.

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Chapter 1512: A Tale of Two Trials

As the chain seal in Jiang Chen's mental sea stirred, his consciousness instantly grew fivefold more. Things previously fuzzy became crystal clear. The same applied to the nine diagrams.

When Jiang Chen had first inspected them, it felt that understanding was just within reach. He had a grasp of them, or maybe he didn't.

But thanks to the chain seal's formidable assistance, his mental acuity spontaneously reached an entirely new level.

As... I thought, this set of diagrams depicts a maze. It's a Nine Labyrinth Formation.

Jiang Chen had finally set foot on the right track. The diagrams had seemed ordinary at first, but in fact they seamlessly came together to form a whole.

One amongst the nine wasn't like the others simply because it had a way out, while the other eight led to dead ends. Once the diagrams were placed together, they formed a labyrinth. Challengers could be stranded forever in eight of them, whereas hope for life was present in only one.

"I see, I see!" Relying on his immense consciousness, Jiang Chen finally deciphered the core principle of the diagrams. His confidence soared.

Due to the high similarity between the diagrams, attempts made to differentiate their intrinsic natures based on observation alone would be made in vain. All were cast from the same mold. But now that he'd understood the profound mystery behind the whole, the diagrams took on a whole new meaning in his eyes. He was no longer flailing in the dark. The dead ends were now readily apparent to him; he simply needed to exclude them.

"Eight dead ends, one chance of salvation... These diagrams are really something else." He wasn't relying on simple observation anymore. Instead, he combined his active perusal with logical deductions.

Inspiration abruptly flashed through his mind. The Evil Golden Eye latched onto a diagram filled with penetrating and abstruse principles.

"That's the one!"

The sudden insight filled him with an indescribable, mysterious sensation. In fact, such spontaneous enlightenment were also a kind of comprehension on the path of martial dao.

"Senior, I have the answer." Turning into a stream of light, he rushed towards his choice, passing through it in the blink of an eye.

The scene in front of him blurred. The nine diagrams had vanished from sight, replaced by what'd greeted him when first stepping into the third palace, as if nothing had happened.

Looking around him, he exclaimed in silent awe. Everything had seemed so real, but it was all illusion! The Nine Labyrinth Formation is extraordinary indeed. I can't help but wonder if it exists in truth.

At a realm at the crossroad of dream and reality; he couldn't help but admire Senior Marquis' astonishing accomplishment in this domain. There was a subset of cultivators that specialized in illusory arts. Their mastery in that domain was hard to fathom.

The so-called illusory arts weren't always entirely imaginary. They manipulated the intersection of illusion and reality to confound their targets. Without a doubt, the senior was an expert in these arts.

The guardian's astonished voice appeared from thin air. "Jiang Chen, this marquis now understands how you managed to reach the third palace."

Jiang Chen remained modest. "My luck hasn't deserted me yet."

"Hmph, just accept my compliments. What's this false modesty for?" The marquis snorted coldly. "You can count on one hand the number of people I've praised in my lifetime."

Jiang Chen laughed, no longer so humble. "Senior, I've already passed the first trial. Can you tell me about the second?"

The first hadn't been child's play, but it hadn't been all that arduous either. In fact, this was what had most surprised the marquis.

He knew well the diagrams' ingenuity. If the challenger was really foolish enough to meticulously compare them one by one, he might not find the answer even after a decade.

In the ancient era, more than one of marquis' enemies had fallen prey to the diagrams' labyrinth, stranded inside until the hour of their deaths. If one couldn't decipher their underlying principle, it would be no exaggeration to say one would be a victim a hundred times over out of a hundred attempts.

However, it hadn't taken long for the young man in front of him to solve them.

This Jiang Chen might truly possess genuine potential. However, the marquis didn't lose his composure despite his astonishment. The first trial was the easier one out of the two, just a mere appetizer. There would've been no need for the second if the first had been enough to foil the young man.

But after seeing Jiang Chen succeed so easily once, some anticipation crept in for the second trial's outcome. Could this youngster truly succeed?

He hadn't been very optimistic before, but he'd slowly become more and more fascinated.

Honored Master P'eng and Venerated Skysoarer both admire him and acknowledged his qualifications to challenge the third palace, so there must be something to this kid, right?

"Jiang Chen, you should prepare yourself. The second trial will be much more difficult." The warning was a marked difference from his usual style.

Neither servile nor arrogant, Jiang Chen faced the senior, his eyes shining with intelligence. "I'm completely ready. I wouldn't be here in the first place otherwise. Please begin."

In truth, he was a little impatient.

Wasn't this a little too easy? Testing his consciousness? The third palace seemed simply tailor-made for him.

The Skykun Palace had tested his speed instead. He wasn't lacking in that area either, but it'd been somewhat of a challenge, more than the third palace at least.

"Pay attention now." As the guardian's voice rang faintly in his ears, the scenery in front of him changed abruptly once more in a dazzling light.

A tall rampart filled his vision in every direction. To be more precise, sculptures of every expression sat atop the high wall. The sculptures varied between majestic, dignified, teasing, solemn, eccentric, contemplative, furious, or gleeful...

The expressions were so vivid that it seemed the sculptures would come to life at any moment.

"Young man, do you see the Wall of Life before you? I've collected all of the human emotions, desires, and sins and placed them here as the masterpiece of my lifetime. I can be found within, as can everyone in the world..."

Indeed, the sculptures were so lifelike that nature itself seemed to have carved their miens.

"Jiang Chen, this wall contains Confounding Puppets. I can't tell you the number for now. The Confounding Puppets are creations into which I've poured the essence of my lifelong study in the illusory arts. Each of them possesses thirty to seventy percent of my own powers.

"You need to find the puppets within limited time. Remember, you can scry and contact them with your consciousness, but you can't touch them. You'll pass if you can find three, but more would be a testament to the strength of your mind. The more you find, the greater your rewards might be," the marquis faintly said.

There was little to differentiate the puppets from ordinary sculptures at first glance. The puppets contained a spark of their creator's will and possessed certain intelligence and awareness. Ordinary statues also held a trace of their creator's will, but they were devoid of self-awareness. Therein lay the key difference between them.

Jiang Chen nodded, keeping the senior's instructions firmly in mind.

"You have only two hours." The senior fell utterly silent after announcing the time limit.

Jiang Chen sat down cross legged. The space around him seemed sealed off, restricting the scope of his movements. He couldn't approach the wall nor leave the area.

"Two hours, Confounding Puppets."

His deep gaze locked onto the wall. He slowly extended his consciousness, looking for clues.

There were at least a hundred thousand carvings of every shape and form. For one with ordinary consciousness, finding the puppets out of the myriad of statues was as impossible as finding a needle in a haystack.

But Jiang Chen was no ordinary cultivator.

He was the reincarnated son of a celestial emperor, carrying with him a chain seal in his consciousness that perhaps housed the will and might of a celestial emperor. And the seal seemed to be reawakening as of late.

His mind was clearer than it had ever been. Through God's Eye and the Golden Evil Eye, his consciousness shot towards the wall like a soul-piercing beam.

"Not this one... Not this one either..."

One by one, he excluded carvings as his gaze skipped over them. He had no choice but to use this simplest and most primitive method. However, he did so at a mind-boggling speed. With the power of the Evil Golden Eye and his consciousness, he could pass judgment the instant his gaze swept across a sculpture.

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Chapter 1513: Confounding Puppets

It was a stupid method, but the only one presently available. No other method was reliable enough; plus, Jiang Chen didn't have the time to try them out.

As dumb as it might've been, the method also happened to be the most suitable because the chain seal in his consciousness slowly came to life in the process, flooding his mind with an astounding, formidable power.

He could clearly feel the intensity and clarity of his mind surpass its normal limits. His consciousness far exceeded that of his peers even in ordinary times, but the chain seal amplified it considerably. His consciousness had now fully reached empyrean realm. In fact, ordinary empyrean experts might not have anything on him.

The seal was just barely awake. But even not fully active, it had easily neutralized the mental attack from Elder Xi, Huang'er's clansman. When he'd comprehended the nine Veluriyam Obelisks, he'd also relied on the chain seal's spiritual protection.

Thankfully, Jiang Chen had some experience in the arena of detecting mental awareness. In the past, he'd faintly felt the life and will hidden deep within the stone carvings housing the golems' souls.

Although the puppets were different, he could use the same approach today. Both had been hidden in the guise of stone carvings, and he likewise had to use his consciousness to scan for traces of sentience.

Suddenly, his eyes widened. A flash of light clamored in his consciousness, a hint standing out with fanfare.

"Got one." He stared fixedly at a sculpture and left his personal mark on it before continuing the search.

Second after second, time trickled by as he proceeded methodically and solemnly. After the first came a second, then a third...

He successfully located three puppets after an hour, fulfilling the senior's most basic requirement. But the guardian had mentioned the more the better. Anything above and beyond likely had a direct impact on his rewards from the third palace.

The first goal met, his state of mind steadied from there on. Everything else was an added bonus. More relaxed, his mood improved progressively as well. Under such conditions, half the effort brought double the results.

After two hours, he'd left marks on seven statues.

"Alright, time's up." The marquis' detached voice sounded. "Kid, how many did you manage to find?"

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, replying leisurely, "My luck seems to have held. I found seven."

"What?" the marquis froze at the answer. "Seven, you say?" Disbelief tinged his tone.

Without further explanations, Jiang Chen nodded in confirmation.

"Good, very good." The marquis nodded. "Now activate your marks and let me confirm your words."

In actuality, the marquis was rather taken aback. There were only seven puppets hidden on the wall among a myriad of sculptures. But Jiang Chen had spoken of finding all of them. How was that even possible?

Without further ado, the young lord activated the marks.

Ding, ding, ding!

Crisp tinkles sounded in their ears like a sweet melody. With a slight yank from Jiang Chen's consciousness, seven puppets released blinding light, exuding a dazzling brilliance.

The marquis stared, dumbstruck, reduced to silent shock despite his proud seniority. The young man really has located all seven. A hundred percent accuracy! If he weren't the trial's supervisor, he would've suspected someone was helping the young man cheat.

But like he'd previously explained, he was the lone guardian of the palace. Everything inside was under his control, so he was the only one who could've helped the young man cheat.

Incredible, simply incredible. He marvelled privately. I've never seen such a peerless monster even among all the ancient heroes. Is it a simple coincidence? Or is the brat truly that much of a genius?

Indescribably stunned, words failed him for a long while.

Jiang Chen stood calmly at the center. He wasn't privy to the marquis' inner thoughts, but the current atmosphere gave him a good feeling.

I must have found all seven puppets. Otherwise, wouldn't the senior have jumped at the chance to taunt me?

There could be only one reason for the prolonged silence: there was nothing to nitpick about.

Indeed, the guardian finally sighed after a long while. "Fine. Young man, I must admit you're indeed entitled to your arrogance."

A figure like the marquis wouldn't soften his tone so casually. There was only one reason for his change of attitude: he was now sincerely convinced. The young man had thoroughly won him over.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. "Senior, I was simply lucky. I happen to be more confident when it comes to matters of the consciousness. I must have been fated to come here."

He wasn't complacent despite his success.

The marquis nodded, his tone conflicted. "You're right. Perhaps fate truly has a hand in it. In fact, perhaps there's a shared destiny between you and all six Palaces of Heritage. With your cultivation, I'm surprised you were able to pass Skykun Palace. But three palaces in succession... I now understand why Venerated Skysoarer and Honored Master P'eng have taken a fancy to you."

He no longer sounded as irritable as before. He still wasn't as friendly as Venerated Skysoarer, but his instinctive dislike of the young man had disappeared. Jiang Chen's attitude had earned his acknowledgment.

"Kid, it was actually a gentleman's agreement when the Pagodas' master asked me to guard the palace. No matter the reason, you've gained my approval by completing my trials. These diagrams for the Nine Labyrinth Formation and the seven Confounding Puppets are yours."

The marquis was fair and impartial. The subjects of his trials were also the rewards in case of success.

Jiang Chen beamed. "Senior, isn't that too great of a prize?"

The marquis snorted, his snappy tone from earlier returning. "Feel free to leave them behind if you think you're undeserving. I won't force you to accept them."

Jiang Chen hurriedly lifted his hands and begged for forgiveness, afraid the senior would have a change of heart. "Please don't. I didn't say I don't want them. The situation in the human domain is complex right now, I can definitely put these items to good use."

The marquis snickered. "Alright, I've offered my congratulations and given you the rewards. Kid, you're more interesting than the previous challengers. Perhaps I should keep an eye on you."

His voice possessed a strange commanding power, turning the nine diagrams into incorporeal marks that landed on Jiang Chen's sea of consciousness. The seven puppets also followed suit in the next moment.

Jiang Chen sighed with emotion. Each guardian for the Six Palaces of Heritage had their own temperament. This marquis seemed unreasonable, but stuck firmly to his principles.

"Alright, there's nothing left here for you, so you can get lost. Oh, here's the fourth palace's spacetime seal. Same old applies!" He added an unprecedented remark. "There's no big difference between the fourth palace and the third, but you better wait until you're great emperor."

Why had the marquis added such a sentence? It was impossible for Jiang Chen to pry the specifics from the senior for now, but from the latter's tone, it seemed the fourth palace might be harder than the third.

Jiang Chen casually caught the spacetime seal. He'd become fond of these gadgets by now. Each of them represented a second chance of life, a gold medal of immunity from a death sentence.

As soon as he encountered a perilous situation, he could unconditionally teleport back to Veluriyam. The ancient senior who'd built the Veluriyam Pagodas was truly an extraordinary figure. Such incredible teleportation required a very high degree of skill and power.

"Alright kid, scram. I need my beauty sleep. Hahaha, I'm finally free of my obligations after all this time! Good luck kid, it's up to you whether I can leave this place and feel the sun on my face again." His mission was complete, the obstacle he'd guarded had been surmounted and his rewards doled out.

A force pushed Jiang Chen toward the transportation formation before he could react. He vanished from the palace in a flash of light, reappearing outside. Used to the Six Palaces' style, he returned to the young lord residence under the cover of the night.

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Chapter 1514: A New Developmen

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Jiang Chen had no issue evading the public eye in his own home.

Returning to his secret chamber, he sat down to peruse the diagrams resting in his mind. Different illusion techniques were depicted in each diagram, each symbolic of an incorporeal wall. They were a compendium of the Grand Marquis' lifetime knowledge in the illusory arts. The senior's faith in and encouragement towards his juniors was plain to see.

Heh. The Grand Marquis is such an interesting person. It's obvious that he ardently wants someone to pass his test, but he puts on such a detached and disinterested facade...

Jiang Chen studied the diagrams meticulously and slowly digested their teachings. Indeed, they were the essence of what the marquis had learned over the years.

He was equally as fond of the seven Confounding Puppets. The senior had meticulously crafted them with every fiber of his being. Every one of them exuded an immensely powerful aura and embodied great battle strength.

It reminded Jiang Chen of the Soldier Rosary Beads, two different items with similar usages. Countless salivated over the beads, and yet the puppets were plainly far superior to the beads. The Confounding Puppets must be one of the marquis' greatest creations. I must make good use of them. They will serve me well.

The third palace trials had gone a lot smoother than expected. The rewards were so bountiful that it would take him some time to digest them all.

He entered closed door cultivation for a few days to consolidate his cultivation and further assimilate his new treasures. When that was done, he spent a few days in meditation.

His consciousness was in overdrive. The chain seal in his mind constantly fluctuated between dormant and active. This wasn't exactly a bad thing, but it still prompted some wariness since Jiang Chen had no control over it.

The power and potential contained within the seal was simply too frightening. Even he didn't dare forcefully investigate at this stage. The best thing he could do right now was follow his heart and let things run their natural course.

If the seal offered him assistance in times of need, he'd accept it with open arms. But if it lay dormant, he wasn't going to force it into action.

Father, what secrets did you plant into my consciousness when destruction visited the heavenly planes? Is the seal truly a heritage from my past life?

Jiang Chen was filled with questions and a healthy respect of this unknown helper in his mind.

All in all, it took him fifteen days before he was finally ready to exit closed cultivation. Just as he'd promised, he spent as little time as he could in here.

"Young lord! You're back already?!" The servants of the manor were surprised and elated to see that Jiang Chen had returned.

He swept his gaze across the crowd and saw nothing but worry and fret between their brows. "It's only been half a month. What's happened?"

Wellspring sighed. "Let me bring you up to speed."

The others nodded in agreement. The wandering titan likely had the clearest grasp of the entire situation.

Jiang Chen's re-emergence was a great source of morale and motivation, as each period of seclusion always resulted in enormous martial dao breakthroughs. The crowd assessed Jiang Chen to determine his cultivation gains, but they couldn't see anything. It was like staring into the bottomless sea!

This dumbfounded them. They knew that Jiang Chen was powerful, but not to the extent where they couldn't even size up his cultivation level! He'd surpassed all of them!?

"Let's take things one at a time, everyone. Old Brother Hui, take as much time as you need." Jiang Chen was a lot calmer and composed than before.

Emperor Wellspring sighed. "Young lord, you've only been gone for half a month, but someone snuck into Moon God Sect territory during this time and ambushed the prince of the Embittered Savages. According to the rumors, the prince suffered heavy injuries. It's unclear whether he's dead or alive."

"Oh? Which hero was so brave and valiant?" Jiang Chen was confused. Wasn't this good news? Why was everyone so anxious and worried? Or had the incident riled the invaders up and made them more aggressive in their conquest?

If that was the case, wasn't it just a simple matter of fighting fire with fire? Veluriyam was now a battle-hardened city. What was there to be afraid of?

“It would be good news if that was the only thing that happened. Unfortunately, the assassin declared your name and claimed that Veluriyam would uphold justice by defending every piece of human territory to the death. He even vowed full out war with the Embittered Savages!” Wellspring sighed.

Jiang Chen’s expression snapped to solemn attention. With his sharp wits, he’d instantly grasped the severity of the situation. Someone was framing him!

Worst of all, the ploy had been extremely effective!

Fueled by their hatred of Jiang Chen, the Embittered Savages 丐 deployed all of their main forces and marched towards Veluriyam. A fearsome enemy had set their sights on the human faction.

Also, by claiming that Jiang Chen was going to defend every city in the human domain, the culprit was able to hold the young lord’s strategies hostage. There had been in fact, quite a few territories that Jiang Chen had planned on giving up.

It wasn’t the cleverest of ploys, but effective all the same.

Jiang Chen didn’t have the military strength necessary to protect every city in the human domain. Even if he did, he would never do such a brash thing. The look in his eyes was frosty. “The culprit is truly a sly one, but do they really think that we will fall so easily?”

“The Order must be behind this!” Emperor Peerless grumbled angrily.

“That’s right. They are the only faction in the human domain that’s capable of such a thing!”

The Gunuo village had taken over Moon God Sect territory and established their headquarters there. Not even Jiang Chen was confident or daring enough to sneak into the sect’s former holy lands to ambush the prince.

He’d traded a few moves with the prince and understood just how powerful and disciplined the foreign prince’s bodyguards were. Their loyalty and competency were unrivalled. Assassinating the prince was actually an almost impossible undertaking!

Even with the help of the golem brothers, Jiang Chen's chances of succeeding were close to none. The real culprit must've been quite the master.

The crowd was righteously indignant, and the young lord too suspected the Order was the culprit. However, the current human was filled with all manner of aliens and foreign factions. Who could say for certain that the Order was the true culprit?

Perhaps another faction had emerged out of nowhere yet again?

The human domain was no longer isolated from the outside world. It was entirely possible that there was more to this.

“Who can it be?” Jiang Chen was filled with uncertainty.

The only thing he was certain of was the culprit’s motives. They were clearly manipulating the Embittered Savages into launching an all out attack on Veluriyam. It was a dastardly plan.

The Jiao brothers could hold their temper no longer. “Young lord, the Order has gone way too far this time. We need to swiftly get rid of them before the Gunuo army arrives, or they’ll surely become a thorn on our side.”

“Agreed. Young lord, the Order is a source of instability. How can two opposing factions exist in the same domain? It’d be perfectly fine if they were on the side of justice, but they’re not! They’re just as evil, if not more, than alien races!”

Indeed, the Order’s biggest threat was the fact that they were insiders. Humans. It was easier to fend against a thousand outsiders than a single person inside the home.

Jiang Chen was swayed by the suggestion.

Exterminate the Order of Wind and Cloud?

He simulated the possibility in his mind. The Order had suffered an enormous setback after the previous battle. Unless backup had already arrived from Myriad Abyss Island, their forces should still be rather lacking.

The mysterious hermit of the human domain was the only outlier to worry about. However, Jiang Chen simply couldn’t understand why the hermit had sided with the Order.

While he was deep in contemplation, news broke in from outside. “Young lord, breaking news from the northwestern wastes! Three armies from other Embittered Savage villages have arrived. Each carry a different flag!”

“Three other villages?” Jiang Chen was taken aback.

One Gunuo village was already enough to deal with. The arrival of three more armies meant that there was now four great armies in total! If they joined forces, they’d be more than enough to steamroll the entire human domain!

Veluriyam in its current state would have a very hard time defending against four combined armies. If the Order were to take this opportunity and add to the trouble, there’d be complete and utter chaos.

“Young lord, we can’t afford anymore delays. We need to make our move before the armies finish consolidating. This’ll be our only chance to eliminate the Order!”

“Indeed. Once the four armies have arrived at a common consensus, they’ll sweep through the entire human domain like a storm!”

“We can use this opportunity to eliminate the Order!”

“Agreed! They’re definitely the ones behind the assassination attempt. Those bastards! Why couldn’t they just kill the prince decisively? Leaving him half dead is such a low move!” The crowd was riled up. They were waiting for Jiang Chen to give the order!

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

Chapter 1515: Discussion of a Punitive Expedition

Everyone's indignation at the Order also kindled Jiang Chen's own fury. Though the human domain was in poor shape already, the Order had been so blind as to contribute further to the mess. He could bear its existence no longer.

"Friends." Jiang Chen motioned downward with both hands, indicating for calm. "The Order has gone insane. It's a blight upon the human domain. If I continue to allow it to exist, its activities will only grow more damaging with time. This is why I hereby announce today that we will launch a campaign against the Order of Wind and Cloud!"

There was mass excitement at his words. His audience positively glowed. Clearly, they were at the end of their patience with the Order as well.

"Young lord, the human domain is already in a rough spot. We shouldn't create more problems for ourselves. If we become engaged in a bitter war with the Order and the Embittered Savages take advantage of that, then we'll be fighting on two fronts..." Petalpluck was as conservative and old-fashioned as ever. His mandate was always to reduce the number of problems by avoiding involvement in everything.

However, no one agreed with him this time. Even Skysplitter, who was quite close to him, had stayed quiet.

Coiling Dragon snickered. "If not wanting to get stepped on counts as creating problems for ourselves, let's just be doormats instead of people then! We're not the ones looking for trouble here! The human domain won't have peace as long as the Order is around!"

Petalpluck responded. "Their supreme lord comes from Myriad Abyss Island. He has a powerful background and equally powerful backers. It's easy to crush the Order now, but what of the trouble that results from it?"

He was one step ahead.

"If we don't get rid of the Order, the human domain won't have a future at all," Coiling Dragon fired back. "It's hard to say whether Veluriyam will have one, either. Compared to this, what's trouble down the line worth, hmm?"

Wellspring sighed as well. "Daoist Coiling Dragon is right. We are choosing the lesser of two evils. The Order has become a cancerous tumor upon the human domain. If we don't remove it, it will even grow more malignant. As for the future..."

The wandering emperor went on coolly. "Myriad Abyss Island is not owned by House Xiahou alone. Justice will be served in the end!"

"That's right. Are we supposed to allow him to do whatever he wishes just because he has some connections?"

"Uh huh! This is no laughing or trivial matter. If it were, we could simply steer clear of him. He's trying to destroy our homeland and our heritage. That's a grudge bitter enough to die for!"

"I support the campaign on the Order of Wind and Cloud!"

“And I!” General emotion in the room ran high. Those wishing for peace and diplomacy were almost entirely drowned out.

Jiang Chen inclined his head. “It looks like none of you can bear the Order’s antics any more. If that’s the case, prepare yourselves for battle. We march soon on my orders!”

Some preparations were naturally required for a campaign. Veluriyam’s experts were exceedingly numerous now. Setting aside empyrean realm, it had a shocking number of great emperors.

Its lineup consisted of the ones it’d originally had, plus the ones that had come from various major sects, and the ones who’d formerly been wandering cultivators. In fact, the city now had over a hundred of them, with that number increasing by the day.

Because these experts came from all over the world, a unified command was even more imperative.

After everyone else left, Jiang Chen kept back a few of his closest confidantes.

Wellspring smiled. “Young lord, I feel that the campaign against the Order doesn’t require any trumpeted announcements. Making such a big fuss over this will only allow them to put up defenses ahead of time.”

Currently, the Order was badly hurt. Without reinforcements, it lacked the ability to take on Veluriyam head on. If it used terrain to its advantage and turtled in a war of attrition though, it could drag things out for an undesirably long period of time.

Veluriyam wanted a swift, decisive victory. If forced to drag out the campaign and the Embittered Savage army arrived, it would be at an immense disadvantage.

Peerless thought for a moment before adding, “I feel the same way as Old Brother Hui. The few years I spent at the Order gives me an understanding that if we ambush them, we can exploit the many holes in its defenses. The apparent strength of the Order was entirely due to the momentum it had. Fundamentally speaking, it has many flaws.”

The viewpoints of the two men were quite similar.

Jiang Chen smiled slightly, glancing at Coiling Dragon. “What do you think, Coiling Dragon?”

The emperor chuckled, scratching his head. “Haha, I agree with my fellow daoists. It may not be optimal to announce our attack so publicly.”

Jiang Chen burst into laughter. “So your agreement earlier wasn’t heartfelt, huh? It was just to back me up?”

“Of course it was heartfelt!” Coiling Dragon hastened to explain. “I’m just beginning to see things in a different light thanks to my friends’ opinions here. Maybe a frontal assault wouldn’t be as good as an ambush.”

This was also true.

Jiang Chen returned his casual smile. “I entirely agree with you. I did that to hide my true intentions from my enemy!”

“Oh?” Wellspring’s eyes lit up. “Do you have another plan in mind, young lord?”

Jiang Chen nodded. “I will make a public announcement and openly prepare for a campaign. But discreetly, we shall take the Order by surprise!”

“Who will you send, young lord?” Coiling Dragon brightened.

“I won’t send very many. The main force is solely a diversion. I am planning to take the field myself!”

Jiang Chen’s daring suggestion elicited simultaneous cries of “no!” from Peerless and Wellspring. It was inappropriate for Veluriyam’s young lord to personally infiltrate deep behind enemy lines.

Veluriyam had plenty of soldiers and combatants. Jiang Chen’s hands-on participation didn’t seem necessary.

Jiang Chen had expected their opposition. “Old Brother Mo,” he smiled faintly, “do you think it’ll be possible to defeat the Order in a short amount of time using a more common and ordinary method?”

Peerless considered this for a second, then shook his head. “Maybe, but it would be very difficult. The supreme lord is from Myriad Abyss Island and has some methods available to him even I can’t fathom.”

“The Order’s main force has already been crushed. That organization now is nothing to be concerned about. I suspect the one responsible for the attack on the Embittered Savage Tribe is the human empyrean expert that came out of nowhere, rather than Xiahou Jing himself,” the young lord mused.

Jiang Chen grew solemn. “My goal this time is twofold. I want to not only take out Xiahou Jing, but the mysterious empyrean expert as well.”

The declaration rocked the group back on their heels.

“Empyrean expert? If he’s a human senior, why is he doing such despicable things?” Peerless was a little perplexed.

Wellspring sighed. “A senior cultivator with the talent to attain empyrean realm... and yet he is so selfish. He’s destroying his own roots and homeland. He’s not fit for his cultivation level!”

The wandering cultivator titan rarely criticized others, but he was truly angered this time.

He completely agreed with Jiang Chen’s hypothesis. As the supreme lord of the Order, Xiahou Jing couldn’t possibly have risked himself on the venture. It was highly likely that the empyrean expert had done it.

At least, the expert had more than enough motive to be in cahoots with Xiahou Jing given the current way of things. If they had indeed formed a pact of some sort, the Order was sure to cause more trouble for the human domain.

“Why does this expert debase himself so?” Coiling Dragon still couldn’t accept it.

He considered an empyrean expert to be someone above the pettiness of the world. A veritable immortal who worked and worried for the sake of the world. But this empyrean expert in particular completely defied his expectations.

Jiang Chen waved a hand. "I don't care what his motives are. The fact of the matter is, he's hostile to Veluriyam and doesn't have a sense of belonging to his race. These two points are obvious."

"If he's found responsible, he cannot be forgiven despite being an empyrean senior." Jiang Chen's tone was uncommonly stern.

Everyone else nodded in assent. "Absolutely not. A human senior who stoops so low is much more harmful than most!"

Jiang Chen nodded slightly, then changed the subject. "Veluriyam currently has many great emperors. I can hardly count the number of ordinary emperors we have any more. Unfortunately, we are a pile of loose sand right now. Our strength is scattered and incoherent. If we're engaged in a bitter battle, we'll only be able to have each man fight for himself. This means we are easy to defeat. I do have an idea that we can consider though."

"What ideas do you have, young lord?" As one of the foremost supporters of Jiang Chen's every idea, Wellspring couldn't resist asking about it.

"I know a few formations suitable for pitched battles. These formations will be able to induce increased harmony and synchronicity between the cultivators using them. Their battle strength will also be increased a great deal. For example, great emperors are essentially helpless before an empyrean expert. However, that won't necessarily be true after harnessing the power of formations."

These formations weren't from the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, but ones that Jiang Chen carried in his own memory. He had trained a flock of Goldwing Swordbids to use such a formation back in a mundane kingdom. His eight followers then had also studied it.

The name of the particular formation was the Eight Trigram Assimilation Formation. Its largest advantage was that it was appropriate for cultivators of all levels, its strength depending on the composite of its users.

Back then, eight true qi realm cultivators had been able to fight against a spirit realm cultivator with it. The same applied here.

Great emperors who refined this formation to the fullest were able to fight evenly against an empyrean expert and were even capable of winning.

Veluriyam currently had no lack of manpower. It needed a proper battle plan instead. Jiang Chen knew that the cultivators gathered here came from all over the realm, which meant that all of them had their own habits and ideas. It was unrealistic to command them as if they came from a single sect and banner. How then was their fighting power to be maximized?

Thus, the Eight Trigram Assimilation Formation was essential.

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

Chapter 1516: Pretending to Advance Along One Path While Secretly Going Down Another

Jiang Chen apprised Peerless and Wellspring of the formation as well as his own thoughts.

Wellspring was complimentary of the idea overall. "Exquisite! It'll make us all the stronger on the battlefield. Our current force is somewhat of a motley crew, but this will shape us into a focused and coherent whole."

No one would turn down such a formation.

Peerless nodded in agreement. "Not bad indeed. It seems very feasible. But since it organizes people in groups of eight, we need to be meticulous about the assignments. How they complement each other and level of mutual understanding will be key. Otherwise, the formation will become a weak spot instead."

Indeed, fighting alone would be better than bad cooperation. The formation's greatest nemesis was the presence of a weak link, or worse, several of them.

"Old Brother Hui, you have undisputed status and prestige among wandering cultivators. Are you willing to divide them into groups?"

Wellspring responded firmly, "Naturally. I won't shirk my duties!"

"I'll handle the sects myself. Wandering cultivators are one thing, but sects are the real issue."

Sect powerhouses were many, each of them a figure of import with great authority in their own sect. Whether they could be tolerant and adapt to each other was up in the air. The many elements of uncertainty in such a coalition were much more of a headache.

Peerless nodded. "There are definitely many things to take into consideration when it comes to the sects."

"We need to thoroughly think it over. That reminds me. Are either of you starting to vaguely perceive the principles of heaven and earth?"

The Kunpeng blood both great emperors had obtained from the young lord was genuinely a possible gateway to the empyrean realm.

Wellspring had been close to peak great emperor to begin with; thanks to his progress in the last few years, he was now only half a step away from empyrean realm.

Of course, countless peak great emperors in the human domain had failed to cross this mere half a step in their entire lifetimes.

Peerless' cultivation used to be slightly lower, but he'd obtained the Kunpeng blood earlier and was ahead of Wellspring in comprehending the bloodline. This compensated for his disadvantage in cultivation, so both had progressed roughly at the same pace.

They should now be close to reaching the heavenly principles. One step further and they might break through to empyrean realm in a flash of enlightenment, reaching a whole new level of existence. It would also be of momentous significance for the human domain.

After all, no new empyrean master had publicly appeared in the domain for many years. That the domain couldn't foster any empyrean masters had become the general consensus.

But if it were to be proven false, it would launch the domain into a new craze of cultivation.

Peerless murmured, "Insight indeed seems to come much faster of late. Between heaven and earth, each flower, each tree, and each blade of grass seems filled with abstruse and profound principles."

Peerless agreed. "Old brother, you feel that way as well?"

Jiang Chen's eyes shone with delight. "It's a sign that you're close to the heavenly principles. This is good news. You need to latch onto such inspiration the moment it appears. Soon, it will multiply and converge with the momentum of a torrent, breaking your shackles and ushering you into a new level of existence!"

Upon comprehending the principles of heaven and earth, empyrean masters gained the acknowledgement of the heavens and an empyrean decree.

If one were to reach empyrean realm by refining someone else's decree, he would forever be a cheap imitation. Whether in potential or real strength, they could never rival self-enlightened powerhouses.

The two great emperors had never experienced this process and seldom had any interactions with empyrean masters. For them, the empyrean concept was hazy at best.

But Jiang Chen was different. As the son of a celestial emperor, empyrean cultivators had only been fit to lace his shoes. All his servants, even his pill-refining pageboys, had been at that level.

Empyrean realm was the most basic prerequisite in the heavenly planes. Otherwise, one was just a babe who hadn't learned to walk yet. Therefore, Jiang Chen wasn't unfamiliar with it.

For some reason, both Peerless and Wellspring accepted his guidance as the most natural thing in the world. Neither found it suspicious.

"Gentlemen, persevere but don't be impatient. Let nature take its course." Jiang Chen offered but one piece of advice.

Preparations to subdue the Order of Wind and Cloud were in full swing when Jiang Chen secretly summoned the eight golem brothers. As usual, four brothers were to stay behind while the other four were to follow him to the Order.

When Veluriyam's army was set to march, Jiang Chen had already left ahead of time with four stone golem brothers. He had two clear goals. First, eradicate the seed of future trouble that was Xiahou Jing. Second, find the human empyrean master.

Truth be told, Jiang Chen loathed the latter even more than the former.

Xiahou Jing came from Myriad Abyss Island, a descendant of deserters from the ancient demons-sealing war. He had little attachment to the human domain, so his villainous conduct was at least understandable.

But the human master had been born and raised in the domain. Instead of using his power for his homeland when things came to a head, he'd secretly wrecked destruction instead. How could that be tolerated?

Jiang Chen had conducted deep investigations of the Order, but once inside its territory, he could still feel the great changes that Xiahou Jing had brought to the bunch of misfits in a few scant years.

With more time and stable foundations, he truly might have gone on to achieve great things.

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On this day, Jiang Chen had slipped inside the Order via borrowing the identity of an Earth Fiend elder to observe the sect.

Thanks to his adept skills, he'd found an opportunity to kill an elder and take his place. An elder-in-waiting had low status and didn't know many secrets, so there were fewer chances for the young lord to blow his cover.

The Order had been gravely wounded, but Xiahou Jing was a master when it came to controlling his followers. Despite the crushing defeat, his position was as unassailable as ever.

Jiang Chen combed the sect as he made inquiries about the supreme lord. His borrowed identity made his activities inconspicuous, but also gave him few opportunities to approach his target without a direct summons, to say nothing of killing the sect leader.

The man truly is a wiley fox.

He had been on the lookout ever since slipping inside, but Xiahou Jing was still nowhere to be found. Thankfully, the young lord was in no hurry.

If Xiahou Jing hadn't left the human domain yet, he'd show himself sooner or later. More importantly, Veluriyam's army was already in motion, ready to march on the Order and assault its stronghold!

Let's see this supreme lord hide once the army arrives!

Sure enough, Veluriyam's main force crossed into Unbounded Mid Region two days later, heralding a great storm to come!

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Back from the northwest, Shu Wanqing was currently in Xiahou Jing's secret chamber.

"Elder Shu, your trip was a great success. Veluriyam's gone mad! They've mobilized the bulk of their troops and bark about eradicating us. I fear nothing and no one, but our forces have suffered too much lately to prevail in a frontal clash. What do you think? Do you have a good plan to extract us from their siege?" Xiahou Jing was as fearless as they came, but the opponent this time was the greatest of threats.

Shu Wanqing spat, "That Jiang Chen punk is bold enough. The Embittered Savages will soon put the domain to fire and sword, but he's in the mood to deal with us?"

Of course he mentioned nothing about his ambush in the northwest, the one that'd caused all this trouble for Veluriyam.

"Daoist Shu, there's no sense dwelling on this question. Jiang Chen is a decisive man. He seems determined to destroy the Order before facing the Savages! Hmph, does he really think a brat of his caliber can subdue us?"

Xiahou Jing thought little of the young lord still. The kid was merely an upstart, not even worth a second look were it not for the golems.

Shu Wanqing's eyes lit up. "Supreme Lord, do you perhaps have a good plan in mind? Or an ace in the hole you haven't used yet? I'm looking forward to it now."

Xiahou Jing shook his head. "There's simply no need for a direct confrontation. We merely need to delay them for ten days to half a month. The Savages will do the rest!" He was a smart man with a keen grasp of the broader situation.

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Chapter 1517: Each With Their Own Methods

"This is an order of the utmost importance. Hearken to me, Order executives. I have important news to announce. All executives at headquarters must report immediately."

After the heavy losses in the last battle, only thirty percent of its original strength remained. The ranks of the eight Protector Kings, thirty-six Celestial Stars, and seventy-two Earthly Fiends had been measurably thinned.

Disguised among the Earthly Fiends, Jiang Chen was both excited and a bit expectant.

He had even split up with the four stone golem brothers. After some cosmetic efforts on his part, the brothers were hiding elsewhere in the Order's headquarters. Only executives were allowed to attend a meeting of this nature, which meant that any followers were expressly barred.

Jiang Chen sat in his spot, completely silent and introspective. He didn't make any small talk with the other Earthly Fiends.

Thankfully, there was enough pressure in the air to justify this. None of the executives dared display much excitement, lest the supreme lord be angered.

Jiang Chen observed the supreme lord with a sidelong glance. There was an old man near him with an oddly familiar aura.

I knew it. This so-called human hermit expert is in cahoots with the Order. Why is it so attractive to him? How can a human expert deign to align himself with such an ignoble faction?

Xiahou Jing's eyes swept sternly across the congregation. "Everyone, Veluriyam Capital has overstepped its bounds. Its announcement of a campaign against us is living proof that it doesn't know what's good for itself, especially at this juncture. It's heaven's will that that city be destroyed. If you have any ideas to deploy against the enemy, feel free to speak your mind."

Emperor Everviolet was the first to speak. "Supreme Lord, Veluriyam is at the apex of its power. I think we should take a more measured approach rather than facing them head on."

"But how?" Everyone knew that, but was uncertain about how exactly it could be done.

"The key to Veluriyam lies with Jiang Chen. If that kid can be taken out, its army will crumble without a fight. The members of that rag-tag coalition will be virtually useless, and no one will be able to stop your plans of unifying the human race."

At the end of the day, getting rid of Jiang Chen was top priority. However, this was also the most difficult thing to do. In the attack on Veluriyam last time, a perfect plan and opportunity had been squandered by a single mishap.

Jiang Chen waited in complete silence. It's almost time.

In the midst of his thoughts, the chair under him shook violently, with the entire hall following soon thereafter.

"What?!" This tumultuous quake caused most to shoot to their feet in shock.

"Has Veluriyam Capital attacked?"

"Impossible! There's no way its army is this quick!"

Boom!

The executives' unsettled moods were worsened when the Order's headquarters was wracked by another series of explosive sounds. Those were followed by screams and cries from all over.

The shaking beneath their feet intensified.

Not good! The supreme lord paled. A frightening suspicion had dawned as to what was happening. Someone was destroying the headquarters' foundations!

How would the complex remain intact if its foundations were upended?

Boom, boom, boom!

Thunderous bangs echoed, each louder and more terrifying than the last. The same was true with the floor's shaking.

Xiahou Jing himself could barely sit still. Even if they could relocate elsewhere, this would still be a tremendous blow to the Order.

"Shockcloud, go with a few others to scout things out!" he commanded.

Everviolet saluted with cupped fist and picked a few men. "Come with me, you lot."

Jiang Chen snickered to himself when he saw the great emperor's group leave. A mere handful like that was just cake for the stone golem brothers. He showed no outward signs of doing so, but showered praise upon the brothers in his heart.

When the Order's fortress was besieged from the inside, its members would definitely panic. Once that happened, opportunities were sure to arise. Actually, Jiang Chen had an impulse to act immediately.

However, too many experts of the Order remained for him to move on instinct. It was better to wait a bit more. He had to repress his urges before the ideal window arose.

From the supreme lord all the way down to ordinary elders-in-waiting, every person of the Order had sobriety written on their faces. Their eyes radiated anxiety.

This completely unpredicted shaking had applied even more pressure on an already stressed Order. The atmosphere became even drier. The smallest spark could cause the whole place to burst into flame.

Everyone awaiting Everviolet's report was greeted by the return sight of a disheveled great emperor charging in recklessly. He gasped out in horror. "Supreme Lord, this is terrible... terrible... Jiang Chen, he..."

"Jiang Chen's here?" Xiahou Jing tensed.

"N-no... Jiang Chen's giants... that kid, he hasn't shown himself. His golems are destroying the foundations!" Everviolet's bedraggled appearance struck everyone with a flash of unease.

The disruption in the great emperor's typically dauntless behavior meant that the situation must be extremely bad.

"That scoundrel Jiang Chen is vicious indeed!"

The Order headquarters in Unbounded Mid Region wasn't a long-term solution. However, a new location hadn't yet been decided upon. This meant that the headquarters couldn't be allowed to fall just yet.

"Xiahou Jing, you are a cowardly turtle. The young lord says that you hiding in your shell is fine. He's not interested in poking you. But your low ways make the young lord very angry. There will be very serious consequences!"

"Veluriam Capital will think you're brave if you attack the Embittered Savages because you hate them. But you ambush their prince and direct the problem to Veluriam. You deserve to die!" The stone golem brothers' voices were uniformly coarse, but was incredibly penetrating with a magnetic quality to them. They didn't have the linguistic intelligence to say all of that, but Jiang Chen had taught them what to recite beforehand.

Xiahou Jing's eyes flared. Jiang Chen has gone too far!

"Daoist Shu..." he glanced toward Shu Wanqing.

The old empyrean expert was perfectly calm. "Supreme Lord, have you thought of this? If Jiang Chen's golems are here in the Order's headquarters, where could that kid be? If you head over now, you may be walking into a trap." Shu Wanqing was wise enough to convince Xiahou Jing with his advice.

"Daoist Shu, what do you think we should do now?" The young man from Myriad Abyss Island mused.

"If we'd been planning to move elsewhere in the first place, this place being trashed would be of no consequence. However, if we show our lack of preparation in the face of Jiang Chen's attack... you should know better than I what the consequences will be, hmm?" Shu Wanqing's age contributed to a wealth of experience.

It was quite possible that if taken unawares by Jiang Chen, the Order would instantly shatter.

There was more news from the foot of the mountain at this time.

“Supreme lord, Veluriyam Capital’s army is three hundred miles from here. The city’s young lord, Jiang Chen, has sent a message.”

“What?!” Xiahou Jing was greatly upset.

“Veluriyam’s people say that they’re not interested in old grudges today. They only want the criminal responsible for ambushing the Embittered Savages and pinning it on them. And...”

The messenger glanced at Shu Wanqing fearfully, mumbling in his unwillingness to continue.

“It’s fine. Say what you have to say,” Shu Wanqing commented coolly.

“Go ahead. Daoist Shu is an understanding and straightforward man.”

The messenger nodded and worked up some courage. “Veluriyam knows that the one responsible for the strike isn’t someone of the Order. Rather, it’s Senior Shu here. Your name isn’t known to them, senior, only the fact that you are a human secluded expert.”

“What else?” Xiahou Jing pressed.

“Jiang Chen says that as long as we give up the culprit, he will depart immediately. He promises not to account for our past crimes!”

The messenger didn’t dare look at Shu Wanqing as he said this.

Shu Wanqing cackled malevolently. “What a weak and despicable attempt to sow distrust. If you think me extraneous, Supreme Lord, I shall leave now. That is perfectly acceptable.”

Clearly, he was more than confident in his own abilities to not care about Veluriyam’s hunt.

“Despicable indeed,” Xiahou Jing sighed. “How could our relationship be so easily broken? Come. If Veluriyam’s men are here, how can I leave them alone? I must respond with a present in kind, no?”

Having said this, the supreme lord grinned strangely. “Protector King Gentlewind, bring forth those people that I told you to capture!”

“Yes, Supreme Lord.”

It didn’t take long for Gentlewind to return with prisoners in tow. They were none other than Ye Chonglou from Skylaurel Kingdom’s Precious Tree Sect, Tang Hong, and the rest.

“Daoist Shu, these people are all old acquaintances of Jiang Chen. If we sacrifice them on the field of battle, how do you think that kid will react?” Xiahou Jing sneered evilly.

“Contemptible knaves!” Though Tang Hong was bound, he was free to curse. “You villainous devils. You can’t beat Jiang Chen, so you’re resorting to these underhanded methods to give yourself an upper hand. Even if I have to commit suicide, I won’t let you use me as hostage against my senior brother!”

Ye Chonglou was thoroughly morose. Regret suffused his heart. “This is all my fault. If I’d withdrawn a bit earlier, we wouldn’t have been captured in the first place. Now, we’re being used as tools against Jiang Chen. Ah...”

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Chapter 1518: A Stroke of Brilliance

Given his position amongst the Earthly Fiend elders, Jiang Chen smoldered with rage when Gentlewind returned with the Precious Tree Sect captives.

The Order has no bottom line alright!

He'd already foreseen this issue and informed the Regal Pill Palace beforehand, but the Precious Tree Sect was in a mundane kingdom. Such factions were rarely ever dragged into the conflicts of the martial dao world.

But obviously, the Order didn't have a whit of morals and laid their hands on the Precious Tree Sect anyways.

It was most likely one of Xiahou Jing's subordinates who'd come up with the idea, because a man of his stature would never think to exploit a mundane sect. Moreover, the cunning foxes had targeted those closest to Jiang Chen, such as Ye Chonglou and Tang Hong! There was no way he could turn a blind eye to them!

The angrier he grew, the calmer he became.

Four Stone Golems were pummeling the Order's foundations whilst Veluriyam's army slowly encroached. The Order members were all anxious and jittery. There was no saying what they might do under these circumstances, and as such, no room for risky antics.

"Daoist Shu, care to join me for a walk?" Xiahou Jing smiled leisurely.

Shu Wanqing couldn't wait for a good show. "Naturally."

"Protector King Gentlewind, bring them along and keep your eyes on them. They're so very precious to me right now." Xiahou Jing ordered jokingly.

"Understood." Gentlewind made a sweeping gesture and had his men take the prisoners away.

Jiang Chen followed the crowd without a break in cover, but a new plan was brewing inside of him. He'd wanted to take advantage of the disturbance to eliminate Xiahou Jing and Shu Wanqing, but his plans had been thrown into disarray when the captives appeared.

Veluriyam's army had made camp at a distant three hundred miles away, but the Order was already on high alert.

Xiahou Jing and Shu Wanqing soon arrived at the frontlines.

"Greetings to the Supreme Lord." The senior executives in charge of defenses filtered up to pay their respects.

"Let us forgo the formalities. Good work, everyone. I know that all of you are worried about Veluriyam's army, but please believe in me and put your hearts to ease. Their army might seem large and intimidating, but their stay will not be for long as they cannot afford a drawn out battle. Unless they

wish the Embittered Savages to raze their home, they will have to retreat without a fight if we hold out half a month!" Xiahou Jing smiled blandly.

"Moreover, I hold a few bargaining chips. Jiang Chen is the kind of person who refrains from shooting at the rat for fear of breaking the vases. He won't act rashly."

Xiahou Jing waved a hand and had Gentlewind bring over the captives.

"The people you see here are all from the same sect as Jiang Chen. That brat has always stuck to his loyalty. He won't turn a blind eye to them if he doesn't wish to become the object of scorn."

The crowd's apprehension was alleviated when they saw the captives.

"Alright, that's all I have to say. Continue the hard work until Veluriyam's army arrives. Make sure that the defenses are laid down perfectly. Remember, our pain is only temporary. We are destined to be the rulers of the human domain, because I am the one true lord of this land!" Xiahou Jing boomed with confidence.

His natural talent for theatrics was truly worthy of praise. The fact that he was from Myriad Abyss Island further added to his credibility.

The Order was much easier to control because of these reasons. Even though the faction was on the verge of collapse, there were still a lot of devotees that would listen to his every command. His background and origin were advantages that Jiang Chen lacked.

"Protector King Gentlewind, take your most trusted men and keep a close eye on them. They will be most useful when Veluriyam's army arrives." Xiahou Jing didn't want to reveal the captives just yet. They were of utmost importance and there was no room for error.

The situation at the front was stable for now, but the golems' siege on the Order's foundations was still ongoing. Pieces of bad news continuously streamed in.

Xiahou Jing finally flew into rage. "That bastard Jiang Chen! His army stands three hundred miles away, yet he sends his golems to attack my foundations? Does he really think that I can't deal with those enormous fools?!"

"Daoist Shu, those stone fools are Jiang Chen's greatest trump card. If we eliminate them, Veluriyam will be a declawed tiger. Why don't we join forces to take them out?"

Shu Wanqing smiled blandly. "As you wish."

He'd already witnessed the tribe's might with his own eyes and knew that they were still far from peak condition. Going up against one or two wouldn't be an issue. But his chances of getting away were close to nil against all eight. However, it was clear that only four had come this time. The others must be defending the Capital.

There wasn't much to fear in that case, so he accepted Xiahou Jing's invitation without any hesitation.

Xiahou Jing ordered three protector kings and a dozen elders to accompany them. The rest were left at the forefront of the battleground.

Though Jiang Chen had disguised himself as an elder, he wasn't selected because of his low rank. This was without doubt the best scenario that could've happened.

After Xiahou Jing and the others left, he immediately excused himself in the name of patrolling. He headed in the direction that Gentlewind had disappeared in.

It only took him a moment to track down the protector king. The captives were being held in Gentlewind's abode, a highly secure location.

Jiang Chen might have located his target, but didn't rush in headlong to save them. This was Order territory. Brash actions should only be a last resort. If the sect was alerted of his presence, he could easily make it out alive, but the same couldn't be said of the Precious Tree Sect captives.

A stroke of brilliance suddenly flashed across his mind.

He found a remote corner and disguised himself as Emperor Everviolet, also known as Protector King Shockcloud.

Jiang Chen had encountered Everviolet multiple times before and was rather familiar with the emperor's bearing. Moreover, he could also imitate the Everviolet Eye Technique very convincingly thanks to his mastery in other eye techniques.

After putting the finishing touches on his disguise, he swaggered into Gentlewind's abode.

"Who goes there?!" When Jiang Chen showed himself, Gentlewind's subordinates alertly blocked the path. They were extremely cautious, even towards Everviolet.

"Protector King Shockcloud? What noble errand brings you here?" one of them asked warily.

It made no sense for Shockcloud to visit so soon after they'd gone their separate ways.

Jiang Chen was naturally prepared for this since he'd been so daring as to disguise himself as Everviolet. An authoritative golden light appeared in his gaze.

Hearts raced when the crowd met his eyes, and they grew short of breath as well. Those who met his gaze were immediately flustered and short of breath.

"The supreme lord ordered me to. Need I explain more? Where is Daoist Gentlewind?" Jiang Chen answered blandly, imitating Everviolet's tone.

It was easy enough for a cultivator to imitate another's speech, and even more so for Jiang Chen, who had a natural talent when it came to imitation.

As expected, the guards were overawed by Jiang Chen's aura. Shockcloud wasn't someone they could afford to offend.

"P-please wait a moment, Sir Shockcloud. We will inform Protector King Gentlewind of your visit immediately."

Low-level subordinates like them naturally wouldn't dare delay a protector king's errand.

Gentlewind found Shockcloud's unwarranted visit a little surprising, but immediately strode out to receive his guest.

"Daoist Shockcloud, we just parted ways! What brings you here?" Suspicion tinged Gentlewind's tone.

"Hmph! It's because the Veluriyam rats are causing too much disturbance! The supreme lord is worried that they might come for the captives, so I was ordered to help you!" Jiang Chen added a bit of contempt. "My eye techniques have always been used in combat, but I've been assigned guard duty! That's just my luck, huh!"

Alarm bells in Gentlewind's heart stopped clanging with this response. Jiang Chen's behavior and manner of speech was completely in-line.

He chuckled amiably. "Heh. With Daoist Shockcloud's help, nobody can hope to approach us. The supreme lord is wise."

He was more than happy for another helping hand, especially someone like Shockcloud who could share some of his burden.

Shockcloud grasped various heaven-defying eye techniques. There was nothing in the vicinity that could possibly escape his eye! Gentlewind thanked his lucky stars

"Daoist Shockcloud, please do come in!" He was the epitome of hospitality.

"Hmph!" Jiang Chen didn't break character. Based on his analysis of Everviolet, high irritation was the most appropriate way to react in this situation.

Gentlewind's abode was immensely opulent and luxurious, but the defense systems were quite mediocre. This was the clearest illustration of the Order's shallow foundations.

The more Jiang Chen observed, the more elated he was. The more flaws there were, the more opportunities he'd have!

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

Chapter 1519: Another Unexpected Turn Of Events

Gentlewind's residence wasn't without its defenses, but they seemed average at best. The defenses could serve as an early warning system or delay ordinary enemies, but were far too lacking to subdue anyone.

However, the supreme lord had dispatched several Celestial Stars and Earthly Fiends in assistance, making the place secure enough.

"Daoist Shockcloud, I've always valued your keen observations. Since the supreme lord's sent you here, please feel free to point out the deficiencies in my layout." Gentlewind offered a warm welcome.

Jiang Chen feigned indifference as he asked, "Where are the prisoners?"

Gentlewind smiled. "Follow me."

Without batting an eye, Jiang Chen followed the protector king past several detours before reaching a dim area.

“They’re in there. The energy of the surroundings is completely sealed off, so no matter how great Jiang Chen’s powers are, he won’t be able to locate them,” Gentlewind chuckled.

Jiang Chen nodded. “Well done. The supreme lord was right to leave the matter in your hands.”

He mouthed endless praise, but his mind searched urgently for a solution. He was no longer so impatient now that he’d found the captives. His cover would hold as long as Shockcloud didn’t show himself.

“Daoist Shockcloud, please take a look and see if there’s anything’s lacking. I heard the brat is as slippery as the devil. Like a fly, he can smell the faintest stink from miles away.” Gentlewind seemed very admiring of Shockcloud, his goodwill audible in his voice.

Jiang Chen’s eyes shone inwardly. What a good opportunity! But he also swore. Bastard, how dare you compare this young lord to a fly??

Though anxious, he remained outwardly impassive, else he would arouse the other’s suspicions.

“Let me see. This place is fine indeed. There’s no need for groundless fears. Hasn’t Jiang Chen only dispatched a few giants? These oafs might be good in a reckless fight, but they’re useless with more subtle tasks. Not to mention, the supreme lord and Senior Shu have already gone to suppress them.” Jiang Chen’s voice and manners were strikingly similar to Everviolet’s own.

Gentlewind nodded. “I’ll take a look outside first while you investigate. We must make sure everything’s in order.”

Jiang Chen repressed his delight. Is this fellow going to leave me here all by myself?

The Order’s foundations were indeed still shaky. Most protector kings came from the wandering world and lacked the discipline of true great factions. Otherwise, no matter how trusting he was, Gentlewind wouldn’t have left someone else alone with captives he was responsible for overseeing.

Jiang Chen barely kept his joy in check and nodded curtly. “Alright, you do you, don’t mind me.”

Glance at the lightly closed gates, he knew the prison lay beyond. But he didn’t jump into action. Instead, he crossed his arms and feigned a casual inspection of the area.

Gentlewind had left, but who was to say he wasn’t hanging around in the shadows? This was the enemy’s domain. It wouldn’t be difficult for them to monitor every area.

Jiang Chen silently weighed up all of the possibilities.

What should I do first? Rescue them or kill Gentlewind and his group?

He could easily dispose of the protector king and his men thanks to the Nine Labyrinth Formation and the Confounding Puppets. Each puppet was empyrean realm. After a period of exploration, he’d gradually acquainted himself with their uses.

He was almost guaranteed to kill these men, but the odds of doing so without sounding the alarm became a measly sixty percent. He was in someone’s territory after all. Who was to say there was no trump card hidden within?

Would the supreme lord assign Gentlewind to this important mission if the protector king was incompetent?

Time elapsed minute after minute as Jiang Chen pretended to observe the place, slowly inching towards the gates.

But just as he was ready to push them open, his heart throbbed inexplicably. The sudden sensation caused the chain seal in his consciousness to blaze with a sudden, intense sense of danger.

Strong and abrupt, this strange sense of crisis had come when success had seemed so close at hand. The hand that'd almost reached the gates stilled as his figure turned into a beam of light that shot outside.

However, he suddenly screeched to a halt halfway through, his feet seemingly rooted in place.

Whoosh, whoosh! The next moment, countless restrictions emerged one after another all around him. Countless runes from a formation wriggled in the air like so many locusts.

Jiang Chen felt as though he'd plunged into a frozen lake.

"Hahaha, this is what they call bringing about your own ruin." A proud laugh suddenly reached his ears. He immediately recognized Xiahou Jing's tone.

Why is he here?

Jiang Chen's heart sank. Had he been played?

Many figures followed each other inside the palace: Xiahou Jing, Shu Wanqing, Shockcloud, as well as many powerhouses of the Order. Almost half the sect's elites were gathered inside.

Two Shockclouds, one true and one fake, came face to face without warning.

Everviolet's violet gaze shot at Jiang Chen, trying to pierce the latter's disguise with the power of his eyes.

Responding tit for tat, the Evil Golden Eye's formidable light shot forward.

The clash of the two eye arts created vortexes of energy shocking the very air. Everviolet's entire body tensed. The great emperor felt ill at ease by the powerful attack, as if almost frozen by the Evil Golden Eye's riposte.

"Tsk tsk, is that what they call the final struggle of a trapped beast?" The supreme lord brayed with laughter. "Jiang Chen, you actually snuck inside my sect. Everything went according to my plan! Tsk tsk, do you think your small tricks can fool me?"

Jiang Chen's chest tightened when he saw his opponent's pleased face. He had indeed fallen into a trap.

Everything had been an act from the beginning. To be more precise, interlinked ploys had followed one another until he'd jumped in with both feet into their trap!

Yet, despite precarious situation, he became strangely more coolheaded. True, he was dismayed at being duped, but not the point of being scared stiff.

Jiang Chen nodded, his face serene. "Xiahou Jing, this young lord's underestimated you. That said, did you arrange so many ploys simply to corner me?"

The proud Xiahou Jing laughed boisterously. "You finally understand, but it's a bit too late. How else would I have caught a sly fox like you?"

"Does that mean the Precious Tree Sect's captives are also impostors?"

Xiahou Jing smiled lazily. "I know you want to test me and find out whether I've truly captured these Precious Tree fellows. But too bad, do you think I'll tell you?" He flashed an infuriating smile, "But I have to admit you have some skills. Your talent for disguise is out of this world. If not for our earlier schemes to lead you here, you might truly have fooled me."

Gentlecloud also had to commend the young lord. "Your disguise was truly perfect. I knew from the start you were a fake, but there were times when I wondered, is it the true Protector King Shockcloud? Did the supreme lord really send him?"

The crowd laughed uproariously. They worshipped Xiahou Jing even more so. With such a supreme lord, the Order had no need to confront Veluriyam's main force.

Jiang Chen was nothing in comparison to such a leader. Hadn't he been easily defeated by a simple scheme?

Shu Wanqing cackled evilly. "Kid, do you remember your foul mouth and lack of respect for your elders back in Veluriyam? Who has the last laugh now?"

The old man had forcibly interfered and ruined Jiang Chen's plans to kill Xiahou Jing. In the throes of rage, the young lord had cursed him to his heart's content. The specifics didn't matter, but the old man had always kept the grudge close to heart. How could he let a human junior scold him so?

He'd thought long and hard how to erase this extraordinary disgrace, and the opportunity was finally in front of him today.

Jiang Cheng's ice-cold eyes bore into him. "You must be the cowardly human hermit? I heard them call you Daoist Shu? Someone who's forgotten his roots like you will never be more than a shitty, cowardly turtle even if you live to be ten thousand years old. So let me ask you, what gives you the right to show off in front of me?"

He was pulling no punches. The fellow had obviously submitted to the Order. Lackey was written all over his face. The mere sight of him was enough to infuriate the young lord.

His face red, Shu Wanqing almost blew his top despite his seniority.

"What? You know to be angry? What gives you the right to be? You have no shame despite your age, are you going to feign pride and self-respect now?" Jiang Chen swore roundly.

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

Chapter 1520: Jiang Chen's Displays His Migh

The fuming Shu Wanqing snickered cruelly. "Kid, is this you giving up all hope and saying to hell with everything? Are you trying to make me mad enough to kill you outright and spare you further torture? How naive! Do you think I'll let you off so easily?"

He bristled with vicious venom. There should've been no irreconcilable hatred between them, but he just hated the young man. The mere sight of Jiang Chen prompted unspeakable disgust.

For that reason, he'd lowered himself and assisted the supreme lord of the Order, even risking an ambush on the Gunuo village's prince to incite an invasion.

In fact, though he'd never admit it, he was simply jealous of a brat becoming mankind's leader and shining brighter than him. An empyrean master like him ought to be the one acclaimed as humanity's leader!

He was indifferent to mankind's fortunes, but since he'd come out of seclusion, the domain ought to naturally have revolved around him. He didn't want to shoulder humanity's future, but Jiang Chen wasn't allowed to either.

A youngster taking on the role when an empyrean master wasn't? What would the whole world think? It was simply a slap to the face for empyrean powerhouses everywhere.

One had to say, the empyrean expert was truly a twisted state of mind. He himself refused the responsibility, but no one else could steal his thunder and stand in the limelight.

Jiang Chen stayed indifferent, but his lips curved in a small contemptuous smile. This so-called hidden human expert was a thorough disappointment.

He'd been hopeful. A domain so vast ought to have a few hidden masters. But Shu Wanqing had instantly doused all of his hopes. If every hidden master was like him, then Jiang Chen hoped for all of them to quickly enter the cycle of reincarnation.

Xiahou Jing stepped forward and fixed the young lord with a deep stare.

"Jiang Chen, you defeated me last time. Today, it's my turn to defeat you in my own territory. That makes us even, but you owe me the lives of many close aides. We need to carefully settle this account."

When it came to hatred for Jiang Chen, he felt much more strongly than Shu Wanqing. Rather than simple loathing and ostracism, his was a true blood feud.

"And how exactly do you plan on doing that?" Jiang Chen was the picture of serenity.

"How about I put your head on a pike and parade it in front of your army?" Xiahou Jing snickered.

"You wouldn't dare." Jiang Chen shook his head. "How is your mob going to contend with the Embittered Savages with me gone?"

Xiahou Jing laughed out loud. "The Savages? Who says I have to face them?"

Jiang Chen's eyes slowly narrowed into slits. "So you've come from Myriad Abyss Island simply to destroy the human domain without a care for mankind's survival."

“Right on the money. As a descendant of glorious forebears, I represent mankind’s true lineage. You’re just sons of ancient rejects. How will humanity right itself and flourish once more if you don’t die off?” Xiahou Jing flushed with excitement.

“True lineage? Is that what you call a bunch of cowards and deserters? What a joke.” Jiang Chen shook his head. “Drop the nonsense. Show me what you’ve got.” The young lord’s eyelids drooped as if his situation wasn’t all that precarious.

Xiahou Jing almost exploded at the sight.

“Brat, looks like you don’t know to repent even when at death’s doorstep!” In fact, he hadn’t intended on bickering. His goal was to capture Jiang Chen. It would have been child’s play to kill him, but he was far more valuable alive.

Xiahou Jing threw Shu Wanqing a glance. The latter immediately caught his drift and stepped forward. With a slight shake of the foot, his figure blurred into eight Shu Wanqings in the blink of an eye.

“Brutal Mirror Image?” Jiang Chen saw straight through the old man’s tricks with the Evil Golden Eye. Even so, the mighty aura of an empyrean master suddenly pressed on him with the weight of a mountain. He could barely breathe.

“Kid, time to learn how weak you are!” Shu Wanqing’s voice seemed to echo from every direction. An empyrean aura was as if a profound force of heaven and earth in full control of all matter.

Strands of consciousness shot at Jiang Chen’s mind. Shu Wanqing clearly wanted to assault both his target’s body and his soul, destroying the junior without a fight.

But would Jiang Chen succumb so easily?

He was fully prepared. When Shu Wanqing launched his mirror images, he’d raised his hands and spewed forth odd beams of light from his palms that became the unrolling of magnificent painting scrolls the next moment.

The mysterious scrolls opened in the air, growing boundlessly, infinitely, creating layer upon layer of intersecting space.

“What’s going on?”

The scene blurred. When the Order’s men came to their senses, they found themselves in a strange nothingness. They’d been drawn into a staggered space formed by the scrolls and built into the superposition of many labyrinths. The alien space had become a dimension of its own with no entrance or exit, seeming to extend to the end of the universe.

Like lost lambs, the crowd paled, their eyes flashing with inexplicable fear.

Shu Wanqing had been no exception, but he’d quickly quashed his alarm thanks to his experience. Now calm once again, he shouted in warning, “Don’t panic! This is a space formation, an illusion that confuses our senses!”

Xiahou Jing remained collected as well. He ordered, “Stay calm, all of you. Don’t wander off on your own or you might be ambushed by the kid!”

In an entirely unfamiliar dimension, what other outcomes could there be if they were to run all over the place? He was too clever to give in to fear and play into his opponent's hands.

Everyone gathered together around Xiahou Jing and Shu Wanqing as if by tacit accord, forming a protective ring around them.

His eyes sharp, Shu Wanqing spread his consciousness outwards, searching for the slightest flaw that could offer an escape road.

"Daoist Shu, what's with this formation? Can you figure anything out?" Xiahou Jing was at his wits' end despite his vast knowledge.

Shu Wanqing responded lowly, "The scrolls create dimensional labyrinths. They all seem identical and it's impossible to tell them apart. Tut if we don't, we'll be trapped inside forever."

"Is there no other way? For example, can we break out by force?" Xiahou Jiang champed at the bit. He'd planned on capturing Jiang Chen moments ago, but the situation had been overturned faster than he could blink. The hunters had become the prey. This sudden reversal was impossible for him to endure.

Standing outside the formation, Jiang Chen didn't allow them any respite.

Holy Dragon Bow in hand, he deployed his own consciousness. A ray of light surged from the chain seal in his mind, guiding his arrow as it whistled through the air like the roar of a dragon and punctured a Celestial Star's head in a geyser of blood!

The man died before he could react.

Several elders nearby paled with fright as the body toppled down with a thump. The elder's death was an enormous psychological blow, making them realize in despair just how fragile human life was, and how easily it could be snuffed away.

"Next!" Jiang Chen's voice rumbled in the air. The Holy Dragon Bow fired again.

Arrows shot forward like meteors. Whoosh whoosh whoosh!

Three of them flew in succession this time, like waves propelling each other forward with increasing momentum and tremendous firepower.

The Order had been prepared, but the premises was truly too narrow for all them crowded together. Those caught in the middle had no leeway to move out of the way!

Pfft, pfft!

A protector king dodged an arrow out of pure luck, but the two elders at his side were struck at almost the same time. Just like the previous elder, one arrow was all it'd taken to reap their lives!

Four arrows had harvested three lives. Seeing such a terrifying development, the elders scattered in every direction like frightened birds.

Even Shu Wanqing shouted, "Everyone spread out. Create some space! The closer you clump, the more targets you're giving him and the more likely you are to be hit!"

With so many gathered together, even a blind shot would easily find a mark. The logic was easy enough to understand.

Even without his warning, the elders had already begun to scatter outwards on their own initiative. Clever people sought shelter with their neighbors to use as meat shields, while fools ran into each other like headless chickens.

Panic and chaos engulfed the scene.

Xiahou Jing seethed while Shu Wanqing's face darkened. How could either of them endure being made fools of by a young man?

"Supreme Lord, this can't go on or the kid will pick them off one by one!" Shu Wanqing cared little about these people's survival, but the arrows seemed powerful enough to threaten his own life. The specter of death might close in on him if this were to go on.

He wouldn't have been afraid of a few arrows under normal circumstances. But they were now trapped like caged beasts. The conditions and terrain were both to their disadvantage.

They would truly be done for if they didn't find a way to escape, and fast!