

## Three Realms 1531

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

#### Chapter 1531: An Aggressive Choice

The old man could do nothing despite his fury.

“I’ll let your impudence slide today, kid. You’re on home turf, after all. Don’t go falling into my hands one day now.” He had little actual face remaining before Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. “Shu Wanqing said something like that too, but he ended joining the Order. Are you planning to copy him? Who are you going to join, the Embittered Savages? That’s not a bad choice. Your cultivation means that those barbarians might toss you a few bones.”

The young man had lost all hope in these so-called secluded empyrean experts. Had all of them been cast from the same mold?

Meanwhile, the old man was almost angry enough to cough up blood. Jiang Chen was comparing him to a dog!

“Jiang Chen, you will suffer my wrath!” He found it impossible to trade witticisms with the younger man. The frustration alone was enough to hurt him in an almost tangible way. He left as fast as he had come.

Seeing him disappear into the sky caused the Vermilion Bird to breathe a sigh of relief. Because it hadn’t come on the campaign against the Order, it didn’t know about Jiang Chen’s Nine Labyrinth Formation and Confounding Puppets. Out of everyone present, its nerves had been the tensest.

It had been most concerned about the possibility of a fight breaking out.

“There’s more to that old man than meets the eye, Jiang Chen. He’s much stronger than Shu Wanqing. I estimate him to be above minor empyrean realm.”

“Mid empyrean realm, then?” Jiang Chen had sensed it as well, coming to a similar conclusion.

“Yes. He should be around fourth level.” The bird’s appraisal came from its experience. “If I were at my peak, fourth level empyrean would be a piece of cake, but ah...”

In ancient times, the Vermilion Bird was a sacred fowl fit to reign over a great territory. Its parity with the head of the Primosanct Sect reflected this fact. Naturally, its cultivation had been far above fourth level empyrean realm.

However, in the human domain today, fourth level empyrean was an extremely rare sight. That was after the domain had doubted the existence of empyrean experts in the first place. The appearance of a fourth level one was astonishing.

Jiang Chen was upset as well.

“Why were these empyrean experts nowhere to be seen in times of danger, and yet first in line when it comes to profit?” This was the strong reason for his disgust of these experts.

They couldn’t be found when they were actually needed, but were perfectly happy to exert their cultivational clout outside of conflicts.

“Never mind. Sorry to trouble you, Senior Vermilion. Please go back to the wood spirit spring and rest there. There’s no need to worry” Jiang Chen was very satisfied with what the bird had done on his behalf.

Its willingness to protect him in his time of need showed its morality and loyalty. As expected of an ancient friend of humanity!

The entirety of Sacred Peafowl Mountain felt the pressure disappear the moment the glacial old man left. Their hearts, stuck at their throats a moment prior, could finally settle back down.

“Alright. No need to be concerned, everybody. The sky isn’t going to fall any time soon. As a place with ancient heritage, Veluriyam’s fortunes will stretch on for a long time yet. One or two empyrean experts won’t be able to shake our foundations.” Jiang Chen encouraged his subordinates in an attempt to alleviate their fears.

Wellspring smiled as well. “See everyone, that old empyrean master was stronger than any opponent we’ve seen before. However, he didn’t dare cause any trouble. Why? Because this is Veluriyam Capital! This is Sacred Peafowl Mountain. There isn’t just heritage here, but young lord Jiang Chen. An overwhelming fortune protects this place.”

His words were very convincing. Everyone nodded in spirited agreement.

“Okay, don’t overreact. Each man should go back to his station. The sky isn’t going to fall any time soon. Secluded experts are plentiful, and possibly not all of them are as crude as that old fool. I believe there will be other experts more amenable to our cause.”

In fact, Jiang Chen had no doubt about this. It would be positively strange if every hermit expert was as idiotic as this. It was impossible for only the buffoons of humanity to have reached empyrean rank. Other, more understanding, experts had to exist.

Jiang Chen couldn’t let down his guard after the recent turmoil. The old man’s appearance rang an internal alarm.

“I have many experts beneath my banner and Veluriyam is steadily improving. But all of this is built on the precondition that we don’t encounter more difficult trials. I would have a hard time dealing with two or three experts like that old man. A group of them can easily crush Sacred Peafowl Mountain!” He felt a very real, looming threat.

Jiang Chen didn’t actually think that the human domain had so many mid empyrean realm experts. Even if there were, they wouldn’t all be so brainless enough as to band together against a youth like him.

He had never enjoyed the feeling of his destiny in another’s hand.

“I must increase my strength. Without absolute strength, I don’t have absolute freedom to steer my future!” Jiang Chen remarked to himself. “I must break through to great emperor with all of my abilities. Getting there as early as possible is imperative. When I do, my martial dao level will soar beyond the firmament.”

Once he was a great emperor, Jiang Chen felt he was guaranteed to hit empyrean rank in a short amount of time. This hunch wasn’t just born out of blind faith.

“My path is destined to be vastly different than other cultivators’. My fate bears countless hopes and dreams absent in others. I come from the heavenly planes, and each and every one of my opportunities and fortunes is a hundredfold better than those of others. My cultivation speed then, must be faster as well. The same is true with my potential. My responsibility is heavier than most can bear...”

Time was of the essence. He had to make use of every minute and second before the Embittered Savages’ army embarked. He threw himself deep into cultivation.

“I should think about taking a more accelerated, ambitious approach.” Jiang Chen took out a lotus seed-sized pill object from his storage ring. It shimmered with a faint, golden hue.

“The Ming Tuo relic,” he murmured. “I unsuspectingly came upon your corpse in the Paramount Realm. After I buried it, I found the relic there. I haven’t refined the relic at all before now, but it may be time to if I want to hasten my breakthroughs.”

He’d gotten the relic back when venturing into the Paramount Realm during the Myriad Grand Ceremony. It predated Guo Ran’s palace.

Jiang Chen had kept the relic all this time, and it seemed now to be the right time for him to refine it and absorb the martial dao essence within.

He guessed this was a martial relic that a peak emperor cultivator had left behind; or perhaps a half-step great emperor. Once it was completely refined, it could cause explosive growth in hi’s martial cultivation level.

The young man was currently advanced emperor realm, close to eighth level. After the relic, he had a good chance to instantly ascend to ninth level emperor realm or even peak emperor realm.

Any other young genius pursuing such a radical method of cultivation risked backlash. For them, this was engaging in long-term gluttony. It was a strategy liable to damage one’s own fundamentals.

Jiang Chen’s biggest advantage was that his fundamentals were more stable than most, and he had the ability and methodology required to speed up his proverbial metabolism.

Other geniuses might have needed to consider their endurance in refining such a relic. It was crucial for most people to take the process slowly, taking in the power of the relic one chunk at a time.

Though Jiang Chen couldn’t refine the entire thing in one go, he could do so quicker and more efficiently than just about anyone else.

This was the greatest advantage his previous life’s memory provided. From the beginning of his cultivation, he had paid significant attention to his fundamentals. They were ten times better than those of any other genius that existed in the human domain.

When he had been at the cusp of spirit realm all those years ago, he avoided breaking through until he could get his hands on the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill.

Why was that?

Because he wanted to do everything in his power to improve his base. Doing so would lay down the framework for his future martial dao endeavors, which meant he could take the straightest path and never worry about sustaining the pace.

Ordinary people could only see one step ahead of their own cultivation. Geniuses, ten or a hundred. Jiang Chen, however, could plan out absolutely everything about his cultivation. He could see thousands of steps ahead thanks to his experience.

In a secret room, he sat cross-legged, greedily consuming the Ming Tuo relic's essence.

The relic did contain potent martial essence. It had been formed from its previous master's martial energy, distilled from an entire lifetime's worth. A normal cultivator rashly refining it would have very likely have suffered serious injury from the powerful energy backfiring. Damage to one's meridians and ocean of qi was highly impossible.

The best outcome in case of accident would be a grave injury.

On the other hand, Jiang Chen found refining the relic trivial. He chipped away at the relic little by little, controlling the rhythm of refinement perfectly.

"The previous master of this Ming Tuo relic was definitely a genius when alive. He wouldn't have been able to so flawlessly crystallize his martial dao essence otherwise. Alas, he met with misfortune and death in the Paramount Realm."

As Jiang Chen refined the relic, he kept careful tabs on its energy and purity. In that process, he sensed and resonated a little with the emotions its master imbued. It was a wondrous kind of communication, surpassing the boundaries of life and death.

In the last moments of the expert's life, his emotions had transitioned from anguish, despair, to accepting his fate, and understanding. Jiang Chen immersed himself in those emotions.

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#### **Chapter 1532: Enormous Gains**

The process through which he refined the Ming Tuo relic brought Jiang Chen on a rollercoaster of emotions, repeating the cycle of reincarnation. This invisibly, but noticeably increased Jiang Chen's martial comprehension.

It took three days for Jiang Chen to fully refine everything of value in the relic. The Ming Tuo relic itself transformed into faint, iridescent light as he completed the final steps, dissipating in the young man's palm.

This marked the final ending of one life and the renewed evolution of another.

Jiang Chen gradually opened his eyes, relishing the martial dao increase the relic had granted him. He didn't lose himself in exuberance; he had become more collected and composed.

"A martial dao relic is an extraordinary thing. Absorbing a peak emperor's true energy would only bring about a limited increase. But receiving it through something as concentrated as a relic... I was able to take in almost everything." The difference between the two modes deeply stunned Jiang Chen.

This was the first time he refined a martial dao relic. He now understood why many experts preferred to refine the essence of their own martial dao into relics before their deaths.

They had done so in order for their martial cultivation not to go to waste. Generally, these relics were given to their cherished juniors.

The juniors lucky enough to become recipients of these relics were fortunate indeed. In general, all of them were able to follow the path of their genius forebears, eventually making their own names in the world.

Of course, not every cultivator chose to create a martial dao relic. It was a complicated science to be able to do so at all. Moreover, some selfish cultivators were unwilling to benefit others with their legacy. Both these factors contributed to the scarcity of the relics.

The drastic change the Ming Tuo relic had imparted him informed Jiang Chen that he had broken through to ninth level emperor realm without even knowing it.

“A martial dao relic is a marvel of natural artifice.” Jiang Chen was very certainly pleased with the change it had affected in him.

He was just as pleased with his own foundations. Any other genius wouldn’t have been able to refine the relic within the short span of three days. Six months, a year, or even a decade or two: all were possible.

Jiang Chen had dared to refine the relic in three days for two reasons. One, because he had been seventh level emperor realm in the first place, bordering on eighth.

Two, he had the memories from his previous life as well as distinct foundations to rely on.

These advantages added together created the three-day miracle.

Jiang Chen wasn’t happy enough with his current progress. He wanted very much to charge into great emperor realm with his remaining momentum. However, preliminary attempts showed that his grasp over his own strength was somewhat immature. Further consolidation was needed first.

Jiang Chen wasn’t single-minded or stubborn enough to insist on doing things his way. He turned back in the face of impracticality. Cultivation required time and steady progress. Compared to others, his cultivation speed was already incredible.

“Never mind. I am only a step away from great emperor realm, so I see no point to be too hasty.” After giving up on his impulse, Jiang Chen took out two storage rings from another storage ring.

“Heh heh... Shu Wanqing and Xiahou Jing. One of them was a secluded expert, the other a scion of a Myriad Abyss Island house. Their storage rings are sure to have many treasures.”

When he’d first gotten the rings, he had tried brute forcing them open. However, it turned out that he was a bit lacking despite his secret methods. The rings hadn’t wanted to oblige.

He wanted to give it another try after breaking through with his cultivation. He was at peak emperor realm now. Perhaps the small gap that had been lacking before was now bridged?

Jiang Chen used a secret art to call upon his consciousness, slowly unlocking Shu Wanqing's storage ring slowly.

Each storage ring bore its master's seal. When its master died, more than half of it would disappear, but the seal that remained was nevertheless hard to break. Thankfully, he had many secret methods to deal with such locks.

"Hmm? I couldn't continue past this point last time. Shu Wanqing put a large obstacle here. That old man was annoyingly cautious. Does he want to keep his fingers closed from beyond the grave?" Jiang Chen wasn't discouraged. He kept noodling at the problem.

Click!

A flash of inspiration led Jiang Chen to the sudden opening of the seal.

"Alright. Now that this level is open, the storage ring shouldn't be far behind." Jiang Chen was a bit anxious. He wanted to know very badly whether that old fool had anything amazing stashed away.

The storage ring of an empyrean hermit was still something very much to look forward to.

These empyrean experts were generally over ten thousand years old. They had lived for much longer than the current generation of human experts. Their treasures must contain many more shockingly rare things than one would expect.

Though Jiang Chen was already fabulously wealthy, especially after the raid on the Order, the more quality treasure the better.

Clack!

Jiang Chen was pleased to hear the opening of the final lock. Shu Wanqing's storage ring was laid bare before his eyes.

Rather excited, he immediately scanned the ring with his consciousness. He needed to eliminate any hidden dangers first.

Many experts were wily enough to leave a few traps and snares within their storage rings. These measures were instituted to avoid having their treasures fall into the hands of their mortal enemies after death.

Jiang Chen wasn't some kind of foolhardy brute. He didn't forget himself in happiness. His consciousness did a perfunctory scan, then paused in surprise. "Old man Shu did leave a trap!"

On the edge of the ring were several thin needles invisible to the naked eye. Each was tipped with deadly toxin!

It was unlikely for them to pain the person they pricked, but the toxins could drop a cultivator in moments should they spread.

"An underhanded old bastard." Jiang Chen remarked to himself, then sucked these poison-tipped needles out using special methods. After dealing with them – and checking for the absence of other traps – he began to tally the spoils.

“Alright, alright!” He drew a sharp breath with only a single sweep of his eyes.

Jiang Chen had seen more than his fair share of wealth. He was the master of Veluriyam Capital, and Sacred Peafowl Mountain’s vaults were shockingly well-stocked in their own right. But Emperor Peafowl’s remnant riches could not compare to Shu Wanqing’s hoard.

One had been the ruler of something as prominent as Veluriyam, and the other, simply some old wandering hermit!

“Living so long has its advantages. He’s managed to save up a lot of fortune within his lifetime.” Jiang Chen let out a long sigh as he looked over the treasure piled up everywhere within the ring.

The spirit stones could not be counted.

Most importantly, the old man’s spirit stones weren’t ordinary saint spirit stones, but the highest rank of sky spirit stones.

Just like there were sky rank spirit herbs, so too did sky spirit stones exist. Naturally, sky spirit stones corresponded to great emperors rather than empyrean experts.

One sky spirit stone could be exchanged for ten thousand saint spirit stones, and the old man had tens to hundreds of millions of them.

“Empyrean experts are fabulously rich, alright!” Jiang Chen didn’t know what to say. As the son of a celestial emperor in his previous life, he’d seen and owned much more than this.

He was surprised at the fact that the riches of an empyrean expert far outpaced that of an ordinary cultivator in the human domain. The difference was night and day!

“Haha, killing an empyrean expert is risky, but quite profitable!” Jiang Chen smiled self-deprecatingly, then kept tallying his spoils.

“Hmm? Is this a weapon?” He saw a dagger that didn’t appear very sharp at first glance, but it emitted a heart-pounding aura. The demureness of its killing intent was a crouching savage beast, pulsating with murder.

“This dagger is definitely an empyrean rank weapon,” Jiang Chen exclaimed in praise as he held it in hand. “The old man has quite the collection!”

He had a use in mind for the weapon already. Not for himself, but Dan Fei. Jiang Chen remembered that Dan Fei was an expert with shorter blades. The dagger would be a massive boost to her combat prowess.

“There are talismans here too?”

There was a shelf with several talismans. Four in total, with two of them being identical. The other two were different.

Jiang Chen identified them one by one.

“Tsk tsk, empyrean experts really do only have treasures and no trash. The two talismans that are the same are empyrean equivalents of Imperial Advent Defense Talismans.”

These talismans were able to instantly increase one's defense to empyrean realm once activated. It could allow someone to take a full power empyrean attack unharmed!

"Hahaha, old man Shu Wanqing was quite the selfish sort. These treasures weren't particularly useful to him, but he still didn't give them to his juniors." Taking ownership of these empyrean defense talismans both delighted and lamented Jiang Chen.

He couldn't create such special talismans himself for now, but the old man had two of them. They could be used three to five times each. A cultivator would find them deadly efficient in battle against same-level opponents, like growing wings for a tiger.

"Let's see what the other two are!" Jiang Chen was in high spirits. He was discovering how counting the spoils could be. Out of the other two talismans, one had a sharper light.

He laughed after identifying it. "As I expected, there were offensive talismans too. This talisman behaves like the Imperial Advent Onslaught Talisman, but it's empyrean realm. It allows great emperors to temporarily attack with empyrean might. Not bad, not bad!"

What were the talismans left over?

Jiang Chen was even more expectant about the last, picking it up.

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#### **Chapter 1533: I'm Rich!**

The last talisman shook Jiang Chen to the core. It was a rare specimen of a concealing talisman.

Concealing talismans were incredible in that they concealed every trace of one's presence. Invisible to eyes, inaudible to ears, undetectable to consciousness, completely melded into the song of the void. Only those with the sharpest consciousnesses could notice that something was awry through the tiniest of disturbances.

Concealing talismans were favored by assassins, but they were also extremely difficult to make. Very few of them existed in the world.

The value of a concealing talisman far surpassed an offensive or defensive talisman of the same level. Its uses for sneak attacks aside, it could also be used to aid one's flight in case of danger.

The talisman was perfect for both offense and defense. But of course, it was of questionable effectiveness against especially powerful opponents. However, one could say the same for other talismans too. That still gave the advantage to concealing talismans.

"No wonder Shu Wanqing was able to infiltrate the Moon God Sect's former lands and assassinate Gunuo Village's prince. He had this incredible talisman to help him!" Jiang Chen shuddered at what could have been.

What would've happened if Shu Wanqing had used this concealing talisman to visit Sacred Peafowl Mountain? Thankfully, the Nine Sparks Petalstorm Formation was present here. Though it couldn't have kept him out, it would have forced him to make a racket.



“Shu Wanqing must’ve come, but found it impossible to break the formation undetected. That’s probably why he didn’t risk it, hmm?”

This was his best guess.

If Shu Wanqing wanted to get rid of Jiang Chen, the easiest and best way was to just assassinate him. What was the point of feigning an attack on a savage prince?

“Talismans can create remarkable opportunities. Thankfully, I was able to trap him within the Nine Labyrinth Formation. Otherwise, it would’ve been quite difficult to kill someone using this talisman.”

Conflicts tested whether the advantages of one side were sufficient to overcome the disadvantages of another.

The Nine Labyrinth Formation had been powerful enough to ensnare Shu Wanqing, disabling the expert’s ability to use the talisman. Not that using it would have done him much good in that circumstance. Within the formation, the talisman wouldn’t be able to function at its full strength.

It was far more likely, though, that Shu Wanqing had simply underestimated him.

The old man’s temperament meant that he hadn’t considered it possible for Jiang Chen to kill him despite trapping him. Thus, it was likely he had never seriously thought of using the talisman.

When Jiang Chen ambushed him, he hadn’t had the time to react to the sudden developments. And after his serious injury, he could no longer get the most out of the talisman. From beginning to end, Shu Wanqing hadn’t been given any real opportunity to use it.

“But it’s good that he never pulled it out. That means all the more uses for me!” Jiang Chen looked at the talisman. It had clearly been used at least twice, but three or four uses remained yet.

“I’m going to keep this for myself.” Jiang Chen carefully put the talisman, alongside an Emphyrean Onslaught Talisman and an Emphyrean Defense Talisman, into his storage ring. These three talismans would be standard issue for him from now on. He would always carry them in order to have a chance against real experts in a difficult fight.

The remaining Emphyrean Defense Talisman could be a potential gift. The utility of each and every treasure had to be maximized, no matter what.

The four talismans were only the tip of Shu Wanqing’s iceberg of wealth. Most people would find most of the items here unbelievably wonderful, but Jiang Chen didn’t consider much of it worth anything. Things intended for great emperors especially, Jiang Chen gathered up and set aside. He planned to give all of it out as rewards to his subordinates.

Shu Wanqing had owned many valuables and seemed to have had a penchant for being a pack rat. The ring was brimming with treasures. Even a hundred great emperors added together would not be able to compare to an emphyrean expert in terms of possessions.

“Emphyrean experts are very good at accruing wealth.” Jiang Chen had to concede this fact.

He ignored everything pill-related in the ring, sparing a passing glance at the other treasures, but refined pills were neither interesting nor worth his time. He gave them a single sweep, then put all of them away.

Still, the pills were extraordinary by worldly standards. The pills provided amazing opportunities for almost any great emperor. He would give these away when appropriate; Jiang Chen trusted only his own pills.

As a master of pills in his previous life, this was a sticking point.

He did like the spirit herbs a lot better, though. Spirit herbs were creations of nature rather than works of artifice. They were much more beautiful to him through their pure origin. He loved these natural, unprocessed specimens.

Shu Wanqing had plenty of spirit herbs in his collection. Regrettably, even an empyrean expert like him had only managed to collect largely sky rank spirit herbs. However, there were many more trees than the average great emperor would have possessed.

The old man's sky rank spirit herbs numbered in the thousands. Many things Jiang Chen had dreamed about were present here. The Heavencloud Ganoderma, for example! A required material for the Emperor Supremacy Pill, and Shu Wanqing had ten of it!

"What a rich old man!" Jiang Chen observed. He had tried to buy these for several years with only limited success.

But here they were, ten of them neatly beside each other, sitting in the old man's storage ring. Moreover, it was obvious that spirit herbs of this level held little benefit for the third level empyrean Shu Wanqing.

Even so, he had greedily clung to them. He preferred to let them gather dust inside his storage ring rather than allow them to benefit the world.

"Are all these empyrean experts complete misers?" It wasn't Jiang Chen's place to speak though. He had enriched himself through exploiting Shu Wanqing's miserly nature.

He inventoried these sky rank spirit herbs excitedly. He wasn't going to distribute these as part of the spoils. Only in his hands could the herbs' values be maximized.

"Hmm? These two spirit herbs are separately contained in high-quality spirit containers. Is there something different about them?" Jiang Chen's eyes lingered on two boxes that distinguished themselves above the rest.

He drew a sharp breath when the boxes were opened.

"Heaven rank spirit herbs?"

Spirit herbs had ranks too. For mortal cultivators, sky rank was the highest they could hope to see in their lifetime. In actuality, sky rank spirit herbs were only so named because they were above earth rank. They corresponded to great emperors rather than empyrean ones.

Sky rank spirit herbs in other words, had not stood the test of the heavenly dao. Ones that did manage to weather the storm were classified as heaven rank spirit herbs.

A catch-all name to be sure, but a necessary one to characterize them as being effective for empyrean experts.

Jiang Chen was filled with familiarity upon seeing the two spirit herbs. These were the kind he'd come in contact with the most in his previous life. Though they were comparatively lower quality compared to their fellow heaven rank brethren, he found their sight comforting nevertheless.

"Not bad, not bad." Jiang Chen toyed with the two heaven rank spirit herbs, lost for a moment in memories of his proud past. He found it difficult to maintain control of himself.

"I must work hard to comprehend and surpass the heavenly dao, so that I can enter and explore the heavenly planes." Remembrance of his former life caused all his repressed emotions to swell up.

It took quite a while before he quelled his emotions. He put away the heaven rank spirit herbs in a safe place; he didn't have a use for them right now, but he was sure to in the future.

One could never have too many of such amazing treasures.

After taking stock of the pills and spirit herbs, Jiang Chen selectively kept back a few other items, leaving most to be set aside for others.

Shu Wanqing had collected methods most extensively of all.

There were tens of thousands of tomes within the storage ring, detailing rare methods of every variety. The old man had been an astute collector. He had sorted his library into bookshelves, organized by level.

"Tut tut, that old man has been robbing and pillaging all his life huh? It's hard for a regular person to gather all these together, even if he lived for ten thousand years." Jiang Chen found this to be rather remarkable.

He had negligible interest in the books themselves, but they were indubitably quite valuable.

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

#### **Chapter 1534: The Mysterious Chain Seal**

The ancient scriptures didn't interest Jiang Chen one bit. He'd already committed to memory a vault's worth of scriptures that were much more profound in every aspect. However, the scriptures belonged to the human race and should percolate back to society.

He flipped through them briefly, a rough plan already in mind.

After that, he went through the rest of the items in Shu Wanqing's storage ring but found nothing else of use. Just as he was about to conclude his findings, a box hidden in a corner caught his eye.

*Hmm? Why's a box wedged into this tiny crevice?*

His curiosity was piqued; he was taken by the box that'd appeared after everything else had been accounted for.

He picked it up but didn't open it in a hurry. He placed it far away and tapped a concealed weapon on the box's lock. *Kerchunk!* The lock snapped opened, revealing the contents inside.

Contrary to his expectation, there was no trap. Just to be sure, he activated God's Eye to check if there were any hidden dangers before drawing close to the box.

It was decorated very exquisitely on the inside and was divided into three partitions.

Each partition contained pill-like objects. Jiang Chen shook when he saw them. They were too familiar!

"Martial dao relics?" He couldn't believe his eyes!

These martial dao relics were quite similar to the one he'd just refined, except they were of much higher quality. These were clearly great emperor level relics!

"How in the world did that old man get his hands on these?" Questions flooded his mind as empyrean masters typically didn't have much use for great emperor relics.

But avid collectors wouldn't care about that. Any treasure, as long as it was valuable, had a place in their collection. However, collecting three martial dao relics of great emperor quality was still a very impressive feat.

They were extremely rare after all. Most cultivators nearing the end of their lifespan would still bear some hope for a miracle to happen. Not everyone had the courage to give up on their dreams and distill their martial dao essence into a relic. It simply wasn't realistic.

Even if they did have the courage, it'd be a waste of effort if they didn't possess the secret arts to do so.

"Haha! Why's the old man so much more likeable all of a sudden?" Jiang Chen cast away all negative thoughts upon setting his sights on the relics. A pleasant surprise had been waiting at the end after all!

These would be extremely useful. He could hardly think of anything better!

*These relics will truly speed up my cultivation once I've broken through to great emperor. It's not like the empyrean realm will be a hop, jump, and a skip away, but it will greatly decrease the time I need to breakthrough.*

His heart fluttered. It was the first time he'd felt that life was so exciting and worth looking forward to. He'd taken another step closer to the heavenly planes!

They'd be almost within reach once he'd entered empyrean realm. The thought alone was enough to cause his lips to curl up involuntarily.

Even though it'd been decades since he reincarnated in the Divine Abyss Continent, his memories hadn't diminished one bit. In fact, they only became clearer with each passing moment. He cherished his family, friends, and peers in his current life, but his father from the life before would always remain in his heart.

The love between father and son could never be replaced.

*Father, wait for me. You're celestial emperor of the Taiyuan Realm. Even the destruction of the heavenly planes would not kill you. I don't know if you have anything to do with my reincarnation, but I do know*

*that you're the reason why my previous life was filled with a million years of wonderful memories despite my yin constitution. I will always remember the sacrifices you've made to concoct the Sun Moon Pill...*

*Father, I'll find you soon!*

Jiang Chen was filled with indomitable resolve. The droplet-shaped chain seal in his consciousness sensed his resolve and trickled a few drops of clear liquid. The tear-like liquid was vividly radiant as the ancient cosmos and seemed to contain indescribable power.

A chill ran down his spine.

"What's going on? The chain seal reacted to my resolve?" He was thrilled by seal's sudden reaction.

*Father must've planted his will into my consciousness in the form of the seal! The water droplets... they have such depth and power to them...*

His instincts told him that the water droplets contained enough power to destroy the entire world over if released. Not even the strongest of empyrean masters could exude that much power. In fact, they'd instantly turn into dust before such immense strength.

*The seal is simply too profound. It seems that father definitely had a hand in my reincarnation. Perhaps the seal is some kind of safety charm or crystallization of father's hopes?*

His heart squeezed tightly when he recalled his father's love. It took a while before he finally collected himself. The seal had returned to its dormant state, a silent guardian in his consciousness.

His heart brimmed with warmth. His father had doted on him greatly in his previous life. Even though they'd been torn apart, his love and care was still ever present.

*Perhaps father is why I've been able to thrive in this world like a fish in water? Without his blessing, would my memories be enough to bring me so much success?*

Jiang Chen had always thought that his meteoric rise to the top in the Divine Abyss Continent had solely been due to his massive vault of knowledge. But it was now apparent that he was giving himself too much credit.

The higher he climbed, the more complicated everything became. Things could no longer be taken at face value. His success must all be due to the fortune that his father had bestowed upon him!

This cheered him up greatly. He set Shu Wanqing's ring aside and moved on to Xiahou Jing's ring. He sighed after messing around with it a little. *Storage rings from Myriad Abyss Island are protected by a much more sophisticated seal. Even at my current cultivation level, I'm still unable to open it. Oh well, I'll put it aside and try again after I've broken through to great emperor.*

He wasn't in a hurry. Xiahou Jing was a genius from House Xiahou, but he wasn't the most talented and was still very young. There was no guarantee that his ring would have better loot than Shu Wanqing's. In fact, it was more likely to be inferior.

Of course, Jiang Chen's main priority wasn't to loot the treasures inside, but to find clues or hints about the situation at Myriad Abyss Island was. By analyzing these treasures, he could find out just how powerful House Xiahou really was.

After sorting out his emotions, he exited closed door cultivation.

“Eh? Young lord, you...” The Jiao brothers immediately noticed the change in Jiang Chen’s aura. However, their reaction was within the young lord’s expectations.

“It’s merely a small breakthrough, nothing to write home about. I’ve already imparted the secret art needed to refine the empyrean decrees to you, make good use of it and remember that time is of the essence.” Jiang Chen advised solemnly.

The brothers exchanged wry glances. They considered themselves geniuses in the cultivation world, but compared to Jiang Chen, their speed was that of a snail’s.

Breakthroughs seemed as mundane as eating and drinking to their young lord. He was made one almost every other day, rendering everyone speechless.

Judging by his aura, it was likely that he was now only a step away from great emperor. He was already such a frightening being in the emperor realm, one could only imagine how scary he’d be once he’d broke through!

The two were filled with shock and reverence. Following a young lord like him was probably their greatest fortune and guarantee as the world descended into chaos.

The Embittered Savages were Jiang Chen’s immediate concern upon exiting.

He couldn’t understand why their army had remained motionless and refrained from moving out. It almost seemed like the war-hungry tribe was content with only conquering the northwestern corner of the human domain.

“Young lord, this is extremely suspicious. War and pillaging is in their blood. Like locusts, they’re born to be warmongers. There’s no way they’d be content with just the remote bit of land they’ve gotten. The longer they remain motionless, the more concerned I become.” Emperor Wellspring had become Jiang Chen’s most trusted advisor. His ability to see the big picture and judgement were both extremely sharp.

Jiang Chen nodded in agreement. “Agreed. I can only imagine that they’re concocting some kind of grand scheme.” Of this, he had no doubt. However, what exactly was the nature of their plotting? He pondered long and hard, but to no avail. Perhaps they planned to recruit the secluded experts?

But that didn’t make much sense either. Which respectable human would willingly be a dog for an alien race?

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

#### **Chapter 1535: The Embittered Savages’ Holy Land**

Jiang Chen pondered for a moment, but to no avail. He waved his hand. “Oh well, let’s maintain the status quo in that case. Rather than keep guessing at their plans, we’ll continue improving our strength and be ready for no matter what they throw at us.”

“Understood.” Wellspring smiled.

That was why he admired the young lord. Despite Jiang Chen's age, he didn't panic in the face of all of these strange events. It spoke volumes about his courage, his broadness of vision, and his confidence. Such a leader was born to achieve great things.

Peerless laughed. "I was convinced the moment I laid my eyes on the young lord I should be friends with him and not enemies. Hahaha!"

Indeed, he'd favored the young man ever since their first meeting in Pillfire, when Jiang Chen had posed as Shao Yuan.

"Gentlemen, don't worry and continue cultivating diligently. In the troubled times to come, there will be ample opportunities for leading figures such as yourselves to contribute."

The two great emperors nodded. Indeed, the greatest help they could provide at present was to break through to empyrean realm as soon as possible. The presence of empyrean masters would be the greatest deterrence and morale boost.

"I need to make a trip to deal with some issues." He did so without any fanfare, departing alone without disturbing anyone.

He soon reached Coiling Dragon Retreat, Emperor Coiling Dragon's domain.

"Young lord, weren't you in seclusion? What wind's blown you my way?" Coiling Dragon asked with a happy smile.

"Coiling Dragon, I came to bestow an opportunity onto you."

"Oh?" The great emperor rubbed his hands in eagerness. The young lord wasn't one to disappoint.

"Hehe, young lord, don't leave me hanging. What opportunity?"

Without further ado, Jiang Chen produced a great emperor relic in his palm. "This relic contains the martial dao essence of a peak-stage great emperor."

"Ah? A great emperor relic?" Coiling Dragon flushed with excitement.

"You've heard of them?" Jiang Chen said in surprise. These items were seldom seen. How did Coiling Dragon know of them?

The great emperor scratched his head with a chuckle. "Hehe, I've heard His Majesty Peafowl mention them once upon a time. They're apparently hard to refine? And most cultivators are reluctant to create such relics."

Jiang Chen smiled. "You're right, that's why you're fortunate."

Coiling Dragon laughed heartily. "Definitely, but my greatest fortune was for my clan to meet you, young lord!"

Back then, he'd been stuck at peak-stage emperor realm. His life had been near its end, so frail even a breeze could've blown it away. It'd been extended thanks to a Pinecrane Pill granted by Jiang Chen, allowing him to smoothly reach great emperor realm.

He'd obtained the young man's guidance once more afterwards. Together with the assistance of the Emperor Supremacy Pill, he'd broken through again. Although his cultivation still trailed behind most great emperors in Veluriyam, his progress had been lightning fast.

The relic was certain to sharply increase his strength even further in a short time!

"The Coiling Dragon bloodline flows in your veins, so I have high hopes for you. You'll reach peak stage soon with this relic and will be ready to challenge the empyrean realm. Remember, that realm holds an entirely different meaning for you. You'll be a dragon grown wings, soaring to the heavens!"

Coiling Dragon felt his blood boil. "Young lord! Be assured I'll spare no effort to repay your trust!"

Jiang Chen nodded. "This relic is most suitable for you. No one else has one."

The great emperor grinned. "Hehe, I reached great emperor realm not long ago, so I have a great deal of room for improvement, right? Don't worry young lord, my lips are sealed."

Such a matter truly needed to stay a secret, or it might cause envy.

"If you break through in the future, just tell the others it's because heritage in your bloodline awakened. There's no need to mention the relic."

"Understood." Coiling Dragon well knew the importance of the matter.

"How's Ji San been of late?" Jiang Chen suddenly remembered he hadn't seen this companion-in-arms of his for a long time.

"He left the city to gain experience in the outside world soon after reaching emperor realm."

"Oh?" Interest sparkled in Jiang Chen's eyes. Such a move at such a time was daring indeed.

"Ole Third is more talented than me. He said that in our chaotic times, a man of character ought to leave his mark and make a name for himself."

Jiang Chen laughed and exhorted patiently. "Haha, great. His ambition is commendable. Alas, I would do the same were it not for my heavy responsibilities. Apart from the relic, there's also this jade token. I've stored some of my refining methods inside. Just follow them. Remember, don't be rash or fearful. Proceed as you ordinarily would,"

There was some risk involved with refining the relic, but with enough control and lack of undue haste, the issues wouldn't be too severe. At Coiling Dragon's age, he wouldn't strive recklessly for quick results like a young man.

.....

The Savages' domain was about only a tenth the size of the human domain, equal at best to the smallest region in Upper Eight Regions. Their lands were also far less fertile in comparison.

Only, they were fierce and resilient folks, their character forged by the poor environment. Hence, they could survive no matter the crises they faced. Even the ancient demon-sealing war had left few scars.



Of course, it was partly because their lands were too barren that no demons had been stationed there, sparing them from a great calamity. Without too much threat from the demons, the Savages' gap with the greatly wounded humans shrank further and further, to the point they'd almost caught up.

Inside their holy land, inside an ancient temple.

A sacrifice was currently drawing to a close. Countless warriors had received the ritual's baptism, their sharp blades ready for a brand new campaign.

"Greetings to Forefather Embittered Bamboo and the Holy Beast! Our tribe will be ever victorious!" The warriors lifted their bone spears aloft, exposing their sinewy muscles, tall frames, and explosive bodies.

Smoke clouded the sky above the temple. A hazy red light faintly flickered within.

In the next moment, a strange, thin as a match man walked out with a disproportionately big head. A beast followed in his wake from the smoke, looking like a lion yet not a lion. Its mouth was filled with malevolent fangs that still seemed to drip with the blood of its prey.

An equally malevolent necklace made from bones rested on the old man's chest. Added to his skeletal body, he made for an incomparably strange sight.

"Children, my Embittered Savage graves, you are invincible with the blessing of the Savage God!" he suddenly said in a hoarse voice.

Like the world's holiest gospel, his voice sent the gathered warriors into a frenzy. He was clearly a supreme ancestor-level figure, the reverence from the sturdy warriors proof of his godlike status.

He squinted slightly, basking in the feverish atmosphere of an army before battle. But radiant light suddenly flared in his seemingly drowsy eyes as he gazed at a certain spot in the sky.

"Who goes there!" As soon as his voice fell, the beast at his side pounced at the sky like an arrow springing from its bow. The flawless coordination between voice and action demonstrated the old man's perfect control over his beast.

"Long live the Holy Beast, long live!" Rather than being surprised by the sudden turn of events, the warriors became even more fervent, inspired by the beast's grand, heroic outburst.

Streaking through the air like a meteor, the Holy Spirit reached the sky in the blink of an eye and opened its maws wide, its fangs pervading the air with the stench of blood.

"Back down you go, filthy animal!"

A stern shout resounded from the air. In the next moment, alternating purple and white lightning clapped down from the clouds, faster than the eye could see, and smacked the Holy Beast on the top of its head.

The spirit creature twitched fled with a roar and its tail between its legs. In its eyes, dread had replaced the previously ferocious glint. Whimpering, it scuttled back to the forefather.

Bitter Bamboo frowned in surprise. The beast was contracted to him. Though its strength couldn't match his, ordinary empyrean cultivators were nothing in front of it.

Who on earth was the invader to scare it away in one move? He narrowed his eyes, his expression reluctant. "Who is it that trespasses my tribe's forbidden temple? Don't you understand the rules?"

An indifferent voice descended from the clouds, "Forbidden? It's only forbidden for your kind. As an outsider, I have no obligation to abide by your rules."

Anger swelled in the forefather's chest. He cackled through clenched teeth. "So does that mean you're not simply passing by, but here to stir up trouble?"

"I guess so," the voice replied languidly.

Such a frank answer struck Forefather Bamboo speechless. He brayed laughter at the sky, but his tone suddenly darkened. "So you intend on being unreasonable!"

"Why should I be reasonable? Am I not allowed to come to your holy land?"

The forefather fumed. "Nonsense! How dare you sound so self-righteous when you're the trespasser?"

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

#### **Chapter 1536: The Disheartened Forefather Bamboo**

Forefather Bamboo and the Savages had never been ones for appropriate conduct, but like anyone else, they were harsher on others than on themselves. It was fine enough oppressing others, but they would never stand for being toyed with!

Sure enough, the voice chuckled remotely. "Isn't trespassing on another race's lands a specialty of yours? What, are you the only ones allowed to? Can't I come and take a stroll in your domain?"

"Oh?" Looking pensive, Forefather Bamboo's eyes suddenly lit up. "I understand now. Human?" He broke out into hearty laughter. "It's hard to imagine. Humans have always been weak and timid as a mouse, but you must be a powerful one to dare make trouble in my holy land."

"You're right. And what of it?"

The clouds suddenly roiled downwards, as if some sort of power was pressing down on the entire sky. Countless bolts of purple lightning snaked amongst the clouds like snakes and dragons as they rained down in a furious torrent.

Seeming to possess aiming ability of their own, the fearsome bolts struck the group of Savage warriors dead center. There were at least several thousand warriors in front of the temple, all of them helpless against the deluge of lightning. Naked torsos toppled one after another as they lay on the ground, twitching.

Those most critically hit were instantly scorched into lumps of coal.

Forefather Bamboo stared, dumbstruck. "Bastard, I'm going to kill you!"

To think this human would attack without warning! And rather than the forefather himself, his target was his fighters instead. The lightning-wielding human was obviously an empyrean master, someone the gathered warriors couldn't compare to individually.

Though shrewd beyond comparison, the forefather had been caught off-guard.

“Die!” The old man’s skinny figure turned into a faint blue blur that shot at the sky. At the same time, his fingers gripped the air, creating enormous bone claws encircling half of the sky.

These claws could capture anyone slightly lacking in cultivation. It was incredibly difficult to escape from their clutches.

But with a flash of light, the figure in the clouds turned into a trail of light that vanished in the sky.

“Don’t think you can run away!” Seething, Forefather Bamboo chased tightly behind, afterimages trailing behind as he gained speed and punctured the clouds.

However, the fleeing figure in front of him was equally fast. It seemed that after all that talk, the interloper would avoid a direct confrontation!

The Holy Beast followed behind the forefather, man and spirit creature united in hot pursuit.

The temple was a mess after the strange events. The earlier strike had killed more than half the warriors, while the survivors lay on the ground and wailed with grief.

A terrible glint shone in the forefather’s eyes, but he was secretly alarmed. “They say humans are weak, but this man is clearly different. Even if he’s not my match, he can’t be that much worse judging by his speed.”

He’d previously imagined he’d quickly catch up. Then he’d capture the man and beat him into submission, and then parade him around in the human domain and strike a lethal blow to their morale. However, his plan sounded lovely, but it wasn’t so easy to achieve in practice.

One retreated and one chased behind. The show went on for one hour, then two hours...

One day, two days, three days...

A month went by in the blink of an eye. Many times, the forefather had thought he’d finally caught his prey, only to be thwarted at the last second.

At the beginning, he’d considered calling it quits, but his anger wouldn’t let him. Near the end, this determination had almost become a form of torture.

He’d left his domain to lead his kin to great glory. The armies of the four great villages were gathered northwest of the human domain, waiting for his command. But a surprise foe had appeared before he could set off.

On the third day, he’d begun to suspect the human was intentionally leading him on a merry chase. But he couldn’t give up now even if this was the case. Every time he thought of doing so, the man would swagger in front of him like a ghost, threatening to flatten his temple and destroy the Savages’ faith.

The temple was the tribe’s pillar of spiritual support. It was a totem, the fulcrum of their beliefs. Its destruction would be a catastrophe for the entire tribe.

Hence, though the forefather burned with impatience and yearned to fly to the human domain, he had no choice but to stay the course. He summoned various Savage powerhouses in the meantime, urging them to pursue this trespasser.

Only, his target was far more slippery than he'd imagined.

Most importantly, the human was always on his guard. He accurately predicted each time the experts blocking his path and deftly avoided their traps, leaving the forefather and his empyrean reinforcements powerless. Crestfallen, they could only hurl abuse his way.

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In the dead of the night, inside a deep valley somewhere in Savages territory,

Inside a secluded cave, Forefather Bamboo and four other empyrean masters were tensely debating the best plan. These four new elders were the guardians of the four great villages who'd come at his call, respectful of his status of a totem to the tribe as a whole.

"Forefather, the bastard is cunning. He's wasting your time on purpose. Our armies are waiting in the northwest, and the more we delay, the greater the blow to their morale."

"I agree. The humans have a saying that one needs to strike the iron when it's hot. We can't make our warriors wait any longer."

"Despicable humans, how dare they use such a cheap trick!"

"Forefather, why don't you go ahead and lead the invasion? Leave the chase to us. We can protect the temple even if we can't kill him," an elder with angular eyes suggested.

The forefather sighed. "Do you think I don't want to? But what if the bastard goes to your villages and attacks your lands while you're guarding the temple? Is there anyone back home who can withstand that guy?"

The Savages had four great villages, each of them powerful enough to count several empyrean masters in their ranks. However, most had left for the campaign against the humans, ready to sweep away everything in their path like a tornado.

The four elders paled, their expressions turning stiff.

After trying to catch up to the human powerhouse for this long, they'd personally experienced how troublesome the man was. It would truly be an issue if he raided their homes as the forefather had said.

The atmosphere grew heavy.

A slightly chubby elder gnashed his teeth. "How can our plans of a grand, holy war be halted by a single man?"

The group was at its wits' end. If the forefather couldn't go to the northwestern lands, the results would be easy enough to imagine.

Left to their own devices, each village had its own selfish goals. They seldom acted in concert. If they were to fight without a leader, the elders would thank the heavens if the forces weren't all picked off one by one, to say nothing of wiping out the humans. It was the reason they'd been waiting for the forefather.

The latter was the villages' common ancestor. No one could contest his prestige or his power. He was a supreme figure towering above them all. His presence would keep the army under control.

Without him, the army might achieve a few easy victories, but to make deep inroads into enemy territory was another kettle of fish.

The ancestor asked darkly, "This old man has a mission for you. Can you complete it?"

"What is it?"

"You don't need to kill him. Just keep him busy. Can you do that?" He now had no choice but to compromise. He couldn't waste his time any further.

All four elders mumbled indecisively. No one answered outright. They were weary after a month-long chase and had no confidence they could handle the human.

"There are four of you and only one of him. If you can't deal with a single human, we might as well give up the invasion and go back home. Revitalizing our tribe would be impossible." Displeasure laced the forefather's voice.

He'd hoped these four fellows would agree decisively. But none of them possessed any courage, it would seem. They hemmed and hawed, shirking their responsibilities.

Intimidated by the forefather's scowl, the elder with the angular eyes responded weakly, "Keeping him busy might be possible. How long do we need to?"

The forefather thought for a moment. "A month at best, three at most. I'm roughly aware of the humans' general situation. There's only a Veluriyam Capital who can weather the storm. The other factions are worthless rabble. Of course, there must be some hidden masters as well, which is worrisome. Taking all the elements into account, three months is a reasonable estimate!"

Three months. The four elders looked at each other and nodded. "Forefather, we'll do our best. In worst comes to worst, we'd rather leave our villages vulnerable than let him destroy the temple. This we swear to you!"

They knew the temple was the forefather's main worry. As to their villages, he might not particularly care.

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

#### **Chapter 1537: A Plan of Splitting Troops**

In the northwestern lands, the four great Savage armies occupying Moon God Sect territory teemed with impatience. Forefather Bamboo ought to have arrived a month ago, but he was still nowhere to be seen.

They'd received word that he'd been held up by something. Meanwhile, the villages weren't to act rashly, but to stay put and wait. But their patience had worn thin.

On this day, the upper echelons had gathered together.

“Everyone, we don’t know when the forefather will grace us with his presence. By waiting here, we’re giving the humans more time to prepare. This really... goes against our fast and furious style!”

“Definitely? We come and go like the wind. That’s our main advantage. If we give the humans enough time to prepare, that’s shooting ourselves in the foot. All of their factions have been scared stiff and have taken refuge in Veluriyam. They’ve taken all the good stuff with them. Even if we go loot them one by one, there’s little profit to be made. So what are we supposed to do, let off steam on some commoners?”

The Savages loved massacre, but in principle, the martial dao world left the commoners alone. Only the deranged would slaughter them. Such actions went against the heavenly dao. It damaged the cultivators’ own fate, and to be more dramatic, it could endanger the race as a whole.

“Gentlemen, this king has a bold suggestion,” a chieftain offered with a smile.

“Chieftain Flowerback, what’s your brilliant plan? We’re all ears.”

“I don’t know how brilliant it is, but according to my analysis, almost all of the human experts are currently in Veluriyam. So what are we staying here for? We can absolutely press forward and lay siege to the city.”

“Isn’t it too rash to march before the forefather arrives?” someone countered skeptically.

“Hmph! We can wait for him before starting the battle, but why can’t we surround them first? We’ll weaken their resolve and scare them witless. Once the forefather arrives, we’ll cut into their panicked ranks like a hot knife through butter. We have nothing to lose.” The man who’d spoken was the chieftain and foremost powerhouse of Flowerback Village, one of the four great villages. He was also one of the greatest heavyweights in the entire race.

The other three villages fell into quiet contemplation.

Another chieftain wore a headband with a green plume inserted in the back, a combination sported by all the tribe’s upper echelons behind him. Known as King Greenplume, he was the chieftain of Greenplume Village, another of the four great villages.

“King Flowerback’s proposal is bold but feasible. Extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures. As long as we’re careful and cooperate sincerely, we can make the best use of time!”

For the Savages, time was money. Their one concern on this campaign was the faster the better. Compared to the humans, they were far too few in numbers. They couldn’t afford a protracted war.

Otherwise, no matter how ferocious their warriors were on the battlefield, they wouldn’t be able to trade life for life against the enemy’s tide of numbers.

“King Gunuo, King Yuanqiang, what do you think?” King Greenplume smiled faintly at the two other chieftains.

Among the four chieftains, the bronze-skinned King Gunuo was the only handsome one, yet it didn’t diminish his manly, virile image in the least. He was father to Gunuo’s prince.

King Gunuo had been nursing quite the grudge. As firstcomers, his village should have been first to the loot, but the punk Jiang Chen had disrupted their plans, even ambushing his son by surprise. His son still hadn't fully recovered from his wounds!

So he nodded as well. "I agree. Time is of the essence. I'm sure the forefather won't blame us for our showing of initiative."

Out of the four great chieftains, only the chieftain of Yuanqiang Village had yet to declare his stance. His golden-brown hair rippled like a lion's mane, imparting a ferocious and untamed air.

He grinned from ear to ear. "Since no one objects, of course I'll go along with the plan." This fellow seemed the straightforward type, but was in fact slick and evasive, never offending anyone.

"But how should we proceed? We can't have all four villages marching together. It'd attract too much attention and we'd easily fall prey to an ambush." His eyes shifted left and right as he voiced his worries.

"You're right. I've considered this issue as well." King Flowerback nodded. "Our warriors are temperamental. Traveling together will harm our march's efficiency. We should divide our forces into four instead."

"Split up? Is that right?" King Greenplume looked skeptical.

"What's inappropriate about it? The main human force is in Veluriyam. The first rank sects are all empty shells." King Flowerback's tone was firm. "Look at this map. There are too many sects between us and Veluriyam.

"Here's Pillfire, once their most flourishing city. And here's the Sublime Chord Temple and Eternal Celestial City domains. There, the Skysword Sect. A bit further to the northwest is the Empyrean River Palace. To the west and southwest lie the Heavenly Dragon Sect and the Ninesuns Sky Sect. We can reach Veluriyam from any of them! By splitting into four, we might even reap some unexpected gains along the way. First rank sects are the fattest sheep in the human domain. Their people might have run away, but they can't take their houses with them, can they?"

His suggestion excited all of the other chieftains. All had benefited quite a lot from occupying the Moon God Sect. The women had taken a large portion of their treasures with them, but it had been impossible to stow everything away.

The looting of a first rank sect was a temptation hard to resist. They looked at each other, their eyes brimming with eagerness, clearly moved by the proposal.

"Alright. King Flowerback, you're full of strategies. I can't refute your reasoning." King Gunuo sighed softly.

King Greenplum chuckled. "What are we waiting for then? Let's plan our routes at once!"

The route partitioning was in fact tricky as well. All four chieftains were shrewd beings. They knew that even among first rank sects, some were wealthier than others. Everyone naturally wanted the richest itinerary.

King Yuanqiang cackled. "Hehe, the routes need to be fair. We can't afford internal conflict. Otherwise, we'll have to face the forefather's wrath!"

This was no exaggeration.

King Flowerback turned grave. "I've highlighted four routes. Please examine them in detail. We'll need to come to an agreement in advance, so if you come to regret your choice later, you only have yourselves to blame!"

Everyone pricked their ears and solemnly looked in his direction as he unfurled a map. "Look. This route goes straight south across many mountains. You'll need to endure the bitter cold to reach the Heavenly Dragon Sect and the Ninesuns Sky Sect. It's the most rewarding route, but also the one most fraught with hardship because humans haven't settled the areas in-between. It's completely barren land.

"The second route goes through Pillfire. After wiping it out, you can march towards the Eternal Celestial Capital or Skysword Sect before the final destination.

"The third one goes through the Sublime Chord Temple and Eternal Celestial Capital. Afterwards, you need to head south to reach Veluriyam."

"The fourth one makes a long detour towards the Emyrean River Palace, then goes down south through the Skysword Sect before arriving in Veluriyam. Does anyone have objections?"

"No objection. They all seem clear and reasonable and there's no conflict between them. But how do we allocate them?"

The choices were relatively fair, but a slight difference still existed. However, the difference was within their margin of tolerance.

"That's not for this king to decide alone. For the sake of fairness, I suggest drawing lots!"

Drawing lots?

The three other chieftains beamed at the idea. "That's right, let's decide on that. We'll swear an oath to not change our minds after the results!"

No contradiction had arisen between the villages this time. No one had sung a different tune as everyone had the greater plan in mind.

The results were quickly delivered.

Gunuo Village was given the route toward the Heavenly Dragon Sect. It might be the richest route, but it was also the most arduous one. Of course, arduous didn't mean the great factions, but rather many natural obstacles.

Yuanqing Village drew the northeastern route toward the Emyrean River Palace, then south to the Skysword Sect.

As the ones to suggest the plan, Gunuo Village drew the one through the Sublime Chord Temple and the Eternal Celestial Capital, while Greenplume Village was the one to go through Pillfire.

King Flowerback announced, "Gentlemen, to avoid disputes, let's swear in the name of the temple never to complain about our marching orders!"

"Certainly!"



After the chieftains swore the oath, the villages began their preparations, full of eagerness for the upcoming journey. They headed in four different directions the next day.

Countless Goldbiter Rats were disseminated through the northwestern lands. Although they didn't understand the Savages' plans, they continuously kept Veluriyam abreast of the latest developments.

### Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

#### **Chapter 1538: Counterplans**

News steadily passed on to Jiang Chan through the Goldbiter Rat King.

"Taking four different routes?" Jiang Chen was truly dumbstruck this time. Was this what the four great armies had finally come up with after biding their time for so long?

The Savages were isolated in enemy territory. Weakening their forces by dividing them was a cardinal military sin. The young lord was shocked by the enemy's decision. Not out of fear, but stupefied by the sheer idiocy.

"These Savages must have mush for brains. Don't they have any fear? What do they take us for?" He smiled wryly despite himself.

Wellspring muttered, "They've always been known for bravery rather than intricate schemes. I'd be dubious if they could come up with any profound war plans." To tell the truth, despite the great emperor's wisdom, he couldn't fathom the enemy's intentions.

Peerless shook his head with a wry smile. "I don't understand this either."

Jiang Chen laughed. "No matter what, judging by their different itineraries, it'll be difficult for them to coordinate their efforts. This is an opportunity for us."

Peerless' eyes lit up. "Do you have an idea, young lord?"

Jiang Chen smiled. "I do, as a matter of fact. But I still need more information to be certain it's not a trap."

But in fact, he'd already devoted significant thought to it and felt that the Savages didn't seem ones to come out with new tricks. Without question, they'd made a major blunder.

But he was in no hurry. He sat down and waited for news.

By splitting their forces and marching in different directions, it would take them some time before reaching Veluriyam, not to mention they planned on wiping out stray forces along the way. It would take half a month at the very least, giving for the young lord ample time for his arrangements.

So, he waited to consolidate the stream of information from the Goldbiter Rats. His instincts told him this was a chance. Sure enough, news arrived one after another.

"The four villages really have split up! It seems they're headed for the various first rank sects." He was flabbergasted when he realized their pathing.

Wellspring slapped the table with a shout. "Young lord, what a chance! They're true to their nature alright. Their wildness is bone-deep. They lack any semblance of discipline and can only see immediate gains. It looks like they're planning to loot the deserted first rank sects. They're nothing but bandits!"

Jiang Chen nodded in agreement and slapped his thigh. "Great! I was worried they'd hole up in the Moon God Sect. Since they took the initiative to leave and even split up, it'd be a pity to refuse such a gift. What do you think?"

Wellspring smiled. "One shouldn't refuse a heaven-sent present. Young lord, what are your plans?"

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. "I need to crush only one of the four villages. If I can eradicate it completely, it'll terrify the other three."

He didn't have enough men to split his own forces. It was impossible to head for a second village after dealing with the first, so he had to pick his target carefully.

Wellspring unfurled the map and analyzed the four routes. "Young lord, which group is your goal?"

Lost in thought, Jiang Chen stayed silent for a moment. "This one. They're isolated and their itinerary is full of danger. The conditions are ripe for an ambush."

"It's the one chosen by Gunuo Village." This route headed straight south from the Moon God Sect through countless barren areas en route to the Heavenly Dragon Sect.

Perhaps the Savages thought they were experts in this kind of terrain, hence they didn't particularly mind the route.

"Gunuo Village, what a coincidence!" Jiang Chen's mind was set. "Gentlemen, I leave Veluriyam in your hands while I'm gone. If these secluded masters come to cause trouble, just delay them. They won't be too reckless with the Vermillion Bird here."

He was most worried about the threat posed by the hermits when he was gone. Fortunately, he wasn't so short in manpower at the moment. He even had Senior Vermillion guarding the city.

As usual, he left four golem brothers on Sacred Peafowl Mountain as a guarantee against any possibilities.

He secretly left on that day with the other four brothers, on his way to lay a trap for Gunuo Village. On the whole, their route was crystal clear to him. The question was where to ambush them.

In the end, he set his sights on a large mountain valley sitting just before Heavenly Dragon Sect territory. Gunuo Village was sure to pass through there; they'd have to take a detour that would last a couple days otherwise. That was an impossible choice for a group pressed for time.

Not to mention, the valley was rather safe. There was little reason to avoid it, especially when the Heavenly Dragon Sect would be almost within reach once outside.

"Here will do." After an on-site inspection, the place seemed simply perfect.

The valley wasn't difficult to traverse, but it wasn't particularly wide. There was a razor-thin line in the middle, sandwiched between two mountains.

“Young lord, are we going to fight head to head with the Gunuo here?” Big Stone eagerly rubbed his hands.

“There’s just a few of us against a whole bunch of elites. It’d be a gratifying fight, but do you think we’re likely to win?”

Big Stone scratched his head with a chuckle. “Hehe, not likely.”

Jiang Chen nodded. “In that case, why should we do so? We’d play straight into their favorite style.”

With a smile, he started looking for the best spot. The final choice had to be perfect. He couldn’t grant the enemy any chance to sniff out any clues. Once done, he announced with a smile, “This place.”

He fished out big bundles from his clothes. Those were spoils he’d seized from the Order after killing Elder Mo and Elder Peng.

They contained one of the Order’s two most fearsome poisons, namely the Soulless Powder. It was transparent and odorless. Once blended into the terrain, it was more terrifying than any miasma, a silent killer in the night that struck without warning.

Jiang Chen disseminated the powder in every direction.

Big Stone chuckled. “Hehe, isn’t that the stuff the Order used against us last time? Savior, you’re so good at taking advantage of everything.”

Jiang Chen patted his hands with a smile. “It’s free, so it’d be waste not to use it.”

“Yeah. You’re not a moron like that Order. You put that stuff to good use. Then again, the Savages are braindead musclemen, how could they match your intelligence?”

Young lord this, savior that, Big Stone spewed flatteries nonstop, highly excited.

Jiang Chen did indeed put the Soulless Powder to good use. This was the most efficient method he could think of right now. More importantly, he could avoid unneeded fighting. If lucky enough, he could even subdue his foes without sounding the alarm.

If violent fighting were to erupt here, the battle would probably alert the other villages. Attacking a second village wasn’t in the plans, but if everything proceeded without a hitch, there was no reason not to give it a try, was there?

After setting up everything, he relaxed and told the four brothers, “Let’s take cover for now.”

With Goldbiter Rats leading the way, they hid underground, entirely concealing their presence.

All they needed to do now was wait. Gunuo Village’s men should be arriving soon, on their way to the Heavenly Dragon Sect.

Meanwhile, the village was regretting their draw. They’d suffered untold hardships en route, encountering many crises as they trudged along: poisonous miasma, extreme weather, poisonous insects or animals, violent spirit creatures...

They'd already lost a tenth of their troops, quite an alarming number. Their so-called army was composed entirely of elites. There were a few thousand of them at most. Losing several hundred men in one go was a great blow for the village.

At long last they left the dreadful area behind them.

"Screw it, I get why humans haven't laid down a road here. It's simply impassable!" a Gunuo fighter swore.

King Gunuo walked among his men, his charismatic face unreadable. Hearing someone complain, he replied mildly, "Stay sharp. If you can't endure this little bit of suffering, how will you subdue the humans, gain wealth and status, drink their wine and enjoy their women?"

An elder at his side encouraged, "Stop complaining. We'll soon reach Heavenly Dragon Sect territory. Think of the loot! Isn't that the reason we've come this far?"

Sure enough, the ranks brightened at his words.

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

#### **Chapter 1539: The Gunuo King's Anxieties**

After bringing out the map to analyze their current progress, the Gunuo army livened up. The Heavenly Dragon Sect was indeed very near.

"Past this river is a valley. Beyond that are the sect's sacred grounds. That sect styles itself the third strongest sect in the human domain and is rumored to have an ancient dragon heritage. We won't be going home empty-handed today!" The elder rained encouragement.

"Great. Let's go now, we don't need to rest! It's just a valley!"

"There won't be that many dangers in that valley, right?"

"Haha, do you think dangers will be allowed to remain in a valley near the sect's home base?"

"That's true. So the valley should be safe then!"

"Come on. We'll see if it's safe or not. The chieftain is leading us and we have many elders with us. Do you think they'll miss anything?"

The Gunuo warriors shone with greed for the Heavenly Dragon Sect's goods. Their cleanout of the Moon God Sect had given them a taste of the spoils of war. The potential winnings from a first rank sect stronger than the Moon God Sect could only be more than what they'd gotten so far.

"Don't rush," King Gunuo ordered. "Everyone is tired from traversing the hills and mountains. Rest for a night and we'll set out tomorrow morning."

The king's orders had to be obeyed regardless of willingness. The army rested on the spot. After some well-deserved sleep, it recuperated much of its energy and spirit.

The king was pleased with his people's enthusiasm. "According to our information, the Heavenly Dragon Sect joined the Order of Wind and Cloud at first. After that Order's defeat, it was shut down by

Veluriyam Capital. Most of its experts are dead and it's a husk of its former self. My sons, this is the time for us to pillage their wealth. Are you willing to put your blood and lives on the line?"

"We are!" These Gunuo warriors were uniformly ardent.

"We embark!" The king was roused by the exuberance of his subjects. He had ordered last night's rest to allow some time to think. They were deep into human territory now with no possible outside help or backup. Additional caution and consideration was needed for their every move.

The Gunuo king was a bit different from the other chieftains. He liked to think before doing, though the Savages weren't exactly known for their wisdom.

Past the river was a winding mountain range. There was a valley before them; beyond that was the border of the Heavenly Dragon Sect's headquarters. The valley didn't appear to be particularly dangerous.

King Gunuo observed the valley for a long while. "Gu Qi, do you think there's something strange about this valley?" he asked the old man near him.

Gu Qi considered the sight for a moment before shaking his head. "I can't tell," he cracked a crooked grin. "It's... different from the wastelands we were in?"

King Gunuo sighed after a long look. "I don't know why I chose to rest rather than proceed yesterday. I felt uneasy for some reason."

Gu Qi's eyes shifted around. "Shall we prepare a bit more, my chieftain? Or take a detour?"

The king laughed. "Am I supposed to back out of the plan because of some emotional disturbance? Do you know how long a detour would take?"

"Two or three days," Gu Qi coughed out a dry chuckle.

"Yes. We don't have that much time to waste. The other three villages have easier and straighter paths to their goals than us. We can't lag behind them in our conquest."

"Not too much, at least." Gu Qi nodded.

"Come. We've covered harder and more arduous roads than this. What can this harmless valley possibly do to me?" King Gunuo's tone carried the timbre of superiority and authority.

Prominent leaders like him tended to be a confident bunch. He wasn't going to be scared off by insubstantial internal warnings, nor was he going to shy away from the task at hand.

Savages didn't balk in the face of danger. If the Heavenly Dragon Sect was going to attempt a foolish resistance, all the better. Razing an entire first rank sect could make them fabulously rich overnight. For them, the human domain was heaven!

Unlike humanity, the Savages' leaders were more responsible. Right now, King Gunuo was at his army's vanguard. Several of the tribe's experts followed closely behind. Two others shored up the rear. The distribution overall was quite reasonable.

Unlike usual times, the king didn't take large strides forward. Instead, he slowly proceeded with care and discretion.

The valley was very quiet. There were a few bestial cries, but those didn't affect the cultivators' mentality. Everything appeared quite safe.

However, King Gunuo was more bothered the further in he went. There was a niggling in his mind that it'd been unwise to take this route. There was no evidence to prove that his premonition was correct, however. Not a hint of danger appeared.

"Am I overthinking things?" Doubt flickered through his mind. He usually placed great trust in his intuition.

"My intuition has rarely failed me through all these years. Is there really someone waiting in the valley?" King Gunuo slowed down a bit more. At the same time, he transmitted to his people: "Keep your wits about you. Prepare for battle."

Though everyone else had no idea why their king was being so prudent, his strength and ability was enough to give credence to his instructions. The army's relaxed nerves drew taut.

The troops continued onward. Each step was taken with excruciating care, as if the ground would sink in the very next moment.

Everyone was on edge, but the calm journey didn't seem to warrant their reaction. The battle they'd been anticipating didn't arrive.

They were almost at the valley's exit. They could see it with their own eyes.

There was a collective sigh of relief. Perhaps their chieftain had overreacted. There didn't seem to be much danger after all. If they were at the end already, what could an ambush really do at this point?

"Gu Qi, do you feel anything wrong?" King Gunuo still wasn't completely at ease. He turned to his trusted advisor.

"My chieftain," Gu Qi smiled wryly, "I'm afraid I was too slow to have noticed anything."

"Maybe I'm being too paranoid," King Gunuo sighed. "We're almost at the exit. Don't let go! Outside this valley is the sect's border. On flatter land, that sect can't hope to ambush us successfully."

"Yes, sir!"

The king waved. The army advanced without delay.

As it did so, King Gunuo's face suddenly fell. His brow furrowed heavily, his consciousness experiencing a bizarre shock. Dread coursed through his heart. In the next moment, he felt a vague emptiness in his empyrean qi ocean. It was hard to maintain focus.

What was happening?

This inexplicable condition sent beads of cold sweat down the king's back.

"Stop, stop!" the king waved, his voice terse.

“What is it, chief?” The nearby elders gathered to his side.

“Sense your qi oceans. Is there something odd about them?” King Gunuo was grim, clearly somewhat agitated.

One of the elders immediately yelped. “My qi ocean is blocked off. My head is spinning...”

“Mine... mine as well!”

“Not good!” The Gunuo king was in full panic mode. “Everyone charge! Hold nothing back. We must get out of here!”

The chief of Gunuo village led the charge by blasting off toward the valley’s exit.

The others didn’t dare defy the king given his reaction. They followed close behind using every ounce of their remaining strength.

The army’s formation started to crumble. Some of the ones with weaker cultivation stumbled, their feet leaden.

Thump, thump!

More and more fell to the ground, moaning for their companions to help them up.

But who was going to rescue his fellow at this time? The terror of death chased the Savages, clogging their chests with a primal instinct to flee. None of them would help even someone at their feet.

A few seconds might mean the difference between their own life and death.

“Ignore the others. Charge out!”

“Charge!” Though the formation was now in complete shambles, many did manage to reach the valley’s exit. The Gunuo king’s dashing figure stood upon some empty space nearby, his eyes gazing into the distance. He was looking for something.

“Come on out!” The king’s voice was cold. “You humans are cowardly and shameless. You only know how to use tricks and schemes! I’m not afraid of you!”

His voice rang out like a great bell, grand and majestic. From the sound, it certainly did not sound like he was weakened at all.

A mocking laugh echoed from the void. “The Gunuo Village, isn’t it? You’re the king, then. A word of advice, don’t try to pretend you’re fine. The more you resist, the faster the toxin will act. Be a good boy and sit down. With your cultivation, you might still have a chance at eliminating it from your system.”

Every tribesman was wide-eyed and slack-jawed at the message. Apprehension was plain upon their faces. They’d been poisoned?

This scary thought drilled into every man’s bone. The Embittered Savages were barbaric and fearless, but they did fear death. This kind of bloodless death without any battle was utterly shameful to them.

King Gunuo’s handsome face contorted. “You bastard, do you think I can’t pluck you from your hiding place?”

The voice roared with laughter. “Very good. The angrier you are, the deeper the poison will spread. King Gunuo, why are you even here? Aren’t you a chieftain back home? Why must you deliver yourself into the jaws of death here in the human domain?” The derision came from none other than Jiang Chen, of course.

As he spoke, he appeared not far from the king. The Holy Dragon Bow was slung across his back and four stone golem brothers stood in a line behind him.

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

#### **Chapter 1540: Taking Them All**

“You... you are the young lord of Veluriyam Capital?” King Gunuo wasn’t slow on the uptake. He immediately reacted to the youth’s age and bearing. This couldn’t be someone from the Heavenly Dragon Sect!

Jiang Chen smiled placidly. “You have a keen eye. What a shame you came to the human domain to forfeit your life. Shall I oblige you?”

The king paled. He finally realized that his intuition had been warning him about this poison formation rather than an ambush!

The formation had been cleverly set up to obscure all traces of its existence. When he’d finally noticed, the poison had already invaded his consciousness.

King Gunuo squinted at Jiang Chen through half-closed eyes. If I can take him down, maybe I can force him to give me the antidote! This is my last chance!

He knew that his current condition was awful. If he started a fight, the poison would only act quicker. But he had little choice otherwise.

He pounced like a shadow in Jiang Chen’s vicinity.

The four stone golem brothers stepped up without another word. They swung their enormous weapons at King Gunuo with a practiced hand.

King Gunuo was extremely strong at fourth level empyrean realm. Two or even three cultivators at Shu Wanqing’s level wouldn’t have been able to stop him. But he needed to be at peak performance to be unstoppable.

Currently, the king could barely exert a third of his strength, and that fraction was quickly decreasing. This was why he had taken the risk to catch Jiang Chen.

“Out of my way!” King Gunuo instinctively believed that these four brutish guards had little combat ability. His shoulders shook, his empyrean aura slamming into the four giants.

The total ineffectiveness of the attack surprised him.

“How can this be?” Among the warriors of the village, four other empyrean experts came rushing in from the back, howling with fury. They understood what the king intended to do.



Jiang Chen chuckled. "Come on, then." He arched his back, raising the Holy Dragon Bow at the oncoming enemies. "Strike!"

He was a half-step great emperor now. The Holy Dragon Bow's power had been amplified greatly thanks to the increase in cultivation. Each arrow it fired had the power to bring about death.

Normally, he wouldn't have been able to kill empyrean experts with single arrows. But these ones were severely debilitated.

Missiles that normally would've been able to be dodged found its mark by half a beat's difference. A bloody hole appeared in the Savage expert's head, his body exploding in gory finale shortly thereafter.

"Again!"

Roaring loudly, Jiang Chen grabbed three more arrows, pointing them at the three other empyrean experts. They halted in their step when they saw the fearsome sight of their companion's corpse. They were afraid.

King Gunuo was utterly exasperated at their reaction. Why were they worried about personal safety at a time like this?

If the four of them had swarmed Jiang Chen, they would've had a very good chance at capturing him. Even if they'd killed him, it was possible to find the antidote on his body somewhere!

A moment's delay due to terror changed the circumstances entirely. The opportunity had been lost.

In their moment of hesitation, Jiang Chen tossed forth his Nine Labyrinth Formation. The three experts were swept within. They didn't have time to recover from being caught off guard, and scurried about fearfully like lost dogs.

Jiang Chen didn't want to waste energy attacking them. His goal was to trap them and leave them to live or die as they would.

King Gunuo was his only prey today. He was the formidable enemy. Though the king was poisoned, he was able to suppress its effects. This distinguished him far beyond his fellow tribesmen.

Thankfully, the four stone golem brothers were quite strong too. They put everything they had to prevent the king from escaping.

Snearing, Jiang Chen materialized two Confounding Puppets in the air. The puppets pounced upon King Gunuo with reckless speed.

The king was already gasping for breath in the one-against-four brawl. The two deathless puppets made the battle significantly harder for him.

Jiang Chen locked onto the king from afar, three arrows nocked upon his Holy Dragon Bow.

"Go!"

One, two, three. The linked arrows formed a perfect arc through the air towards the king.

King Gunuo was busy enough with his brawl. He couldn't respond in a reasonable manner to the three arrows.

Thump! A hammering blow from one of the stone golems slammed into the king's back.

King Gunuo stumbled forward, attempting to disperse into fleeing light.

However, Jiang Chen didn't give him any respite. The three linked arrows arrived at his face.

King Gunuo gasped, then flipped backward, barely managing to avoid the attack.

Jiang Chen's Confounding Puppets weren't far behind. They pounced on the king's legs, grabbing one leg per puppet.

The king was slack-jawed from what'd happened. He'd seen many fighting styles, but shameless clinging onto thighs like this was a first since childhood. Wasn't this something only kids did in spats?

It was exactly because he hadn't expected it that he had been caught off guard by the puppets. He was trapped now.

"Well done!" Jiang Chen shouted. An arrow was nocked once more. Whoosh! It hurtled in the direction of the king's knee.

The Gunuo king could use a variety of postures to avoid other points of attack. But his lower body was trapped, so he couldn't move his knee very much.

Boom!

The arrow turned into a ray of light, sinking itself deep within the king's knee. There was a cracking sound.

In the next moment, the bottom half of the leg disappeared. Only a bloody stump remained.

"Huh?" King Gunuo hadn't expected something so catastrophic. His leg was as good as useless. He fell over dejectedly, defanged and declawed. The Soulless Powder of Wind and Cloud had taken full effect now.

"Jiang Chen!" Loathing was writ all over the king's face. In the end, it transformed into intense supplication. "Jiang Chen, give me the antidote. I will exchange key intelligence for it!"

Antidote?

Jiang Chen smiled wryly. "I got this poison from someone else. I don't have the antidote for it. Even if it exists, I'm not interested. As for key intelligence, why not trade it for your son's life?"

Someone dragged over the village's prince, Gu Tianqing. The younger Savage glared hatefully at Veluriyam's young lord. Clearly, he was still hung up on being injured in the assassination attempt.

"Is underhanded the only way you know how to fight, Jiang Chen? Trying to assassinate me and ambushing Gunuo's army. Why not fight face to face instead? Aren't you the young lord of Veluriyam? Dare you fight me fairly?!" Gu Tianqing shrieked.

Jiang Chen smiled mockingly. "Do you think yourself worthy to fight me?"

He had fought enemies far stronger than Gu Tianqing before. A fair fight? Jiang Chen wanted to bray with laughter. These bastards of bandits, these invaders of the human domain, wanted fairness and justice?

Gu Tianqing was too naïve.

The disdain at the corner of Jiang Chen's mouth burned Gu Tianqing with indescribable shame. Only one on high like him was fit to make that kind of expression! He seethed with anger.

"Oh that's right, about that attempted assassination. You should thank me! The person responsible was actually Shu Wanqing. I've already dealt with him."

Gu Tianqing's steps faltered, his face shifting between red and purple with blistering emotion.

"I have a lot of time, King of Gunuo, but your son doesn't look the same way. You should know how strong the poison is, hmm?" Jiang Chen had no words to waste with the Savage king. Unless he wanted to see his son die in front of his eyes, he had to divulge all he knew. King Gunuo blanched, looking a decade older.

"Ah, it's all over. I've lost completely. Jiang Chen, are you sure you'll let my son go? You won't kill him?"

"I don't particularly enjoy releasing predators back into the wild," Jiang Chen retorted coolly, "but since you're willing to make such a huge sacrifice for your son, I'll make an exception. Tell me your secrets. After you're done, I'll send you on your way. Tell me, why did the four villages' armies remain in the Moon God Sect's former territory without setting out?"

He desperately wanted to know the answer to this question. What kind of strange and stupid answer did the Gunuo Village have for him?

"Alas, if not for delaying there, how would things have come to this? I shouldn't have listened to King Flowerback's boasting!" However, the Gunuo king recalled their mutual agreement. No one could renege or vent their regret on anyone else.

"So you had no special reason for staying at the Moon God Sect for so long?"

"Of course not. Hmph, we were all waiting for Forefather Embittered Bamboo. He's a pillar of the Embittered Savages and his word is law. We couldn't come to any consensus without him, much less plan our attack."

"Then why did you split your armies four ways?"

"That was King Flowerback's suggestion. He said that the forefather would come at some point anyways. He said it was better for us to advance on Veluriyam Capital first, taking out a few other sects on the way."

The king had tossed aside his regal pride. He knew that his life was as good as over. But perhaps he could keep his son alive to visit vengeance upon his foe.

Jiang Chen burst into laughter. He shook his head inwardly. The Embittered Savages were destined to remain uncivilized and barbaric; their intelligence could not be overestimated. There were many ways to divide up the forces, but they'd chosen one of the dumbest.

Jiang Chen almost wanted to thank King Flowerback, despite having never met the Savage. How idiotic would one have to be to come up with such a crazy proposition?

Heading deep into enemy domain after splitting limited troops up into four groups... Jiang Chen wouldn't have ever made such a rookie mistake.