

Three Realms 1721

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

Chapter 1721: Full Support

Ziju Min was rather surprised to hear the stone door to the secret room open. It couldn't have been more than ten hours since Shao Yuan started. Had he finished refining the pills? Or had he failed?

It defied logic for a pill of such importance to be refined in less than a day. It had to take more than a couple days, surely!

It didn't bode well for the process to end so soon. Ziju Min shot to his feet and hurried to the door.

Jiang Chen walked out after refocusing his mind. He was met by a concerned Ziju Min.

"Why have you come out already, Shao Yuan?" the pill sovereign asked without ceremony, his tone anxious. "Did something go wrong?"

Jiang Chen smiled. "No, everything went very smoothly, which is exactly why I came out earlier than expected."

His words sounded as an explosion in Ziju Min's head. He felt almost woozy. That was it? The pill had been refined successfully just like that?

The time it took was so short that it surprised and befuddled him.

Seeing was believing. Jiang Chen placed an exquisite pill bottle on a table nearby.

"Please take a look, Elder Ziju. It's my first attempt, so the efficiency wasn't particularly high. Only nine pills were yielded."

Ziju Min was ecstatic. "That's more than enough. The yield exceeds my expectations! I thought you'd failed when you came out after such a short period of time."

Jiang Chen smiled slightly, covering his satisfaction. In truth, the refining process had gone unusually well, yielding fifteen pills, but he felt that he deserved some reward for his hard work. He kept six for himself and handed Ziju Min nine. But even that was more than Ziju Min could've hope for.

Jiang Chen wondered if he'd been too generous when he saw the wide smile on Ziju Min's face. The pill sovereign would probably be just as happy presented with five or six pills. He wasn't going to become greedy, though.

Six pills were more than enough for him. This wouldn't be the last time he refined the Taiyi Skymender Pill. There had been three Taiyi Dragonscale Fruits in the sacred land.

The other two would be delivered to him sooner or later. He could keep some for himself then. He was partial to the Taiyi Skymender Pill, but he didn't have the resources to refine any in the human domain.

Aside from the Taiyi Dragonscale Fruit, even the supplemental ingredients would take great effort to collect, and there was no guarantee he would find them.

Such were the perks of staying on Myriad Abyss Island. There were a lot of resources, and they fell into his lap without much work on his part. It's actually quite nice to let my pill dao talent shine every once in a while, huh!

If he'd kept his talents hidden, he wouldn't be given the opportunities to refine and keep so many pills.

Ziju Min considered the Taiyi Skymender Pill, his expression growing increasingly serious. The more he looked, the more he believed that the pill was close to perfection.

He sighed. "I didn't believe that the two pills you mentioned existed, Shao Yuan, but it seems I was the oblivious one here. This pill far surpasses anything I've seen in my life. It's not a scam. Its energy alone is awe-inspiring."

Even without knowledge of how the pill was refined, he was able to appraise it. The color, runework, and presence it brimmed with were more than enough to convince him that the pill would live up to its name.

Jiang Chen smiled. "I wasn't exaggerating when I talked about its effects, Elder Ziju. For some geniuses, the effects may turn out even more impressive than what I described."

Ziju Min's face lit up in joy. "Good, good. If you don't mind, Shao Yuan, I'm going to take the pill to the three primes. With their help, it'll be easier to collect the ingredients for the Crowning Empyrean Pill. They have more connections and resources than I do."

Jiang Chen chuckled. "Of course I don't mind. I'm honored that the first prime has been so supportive of me. It's only right that I should give her something to earn her trust."

Ziju Min was pleased with Jiang Chen's tactful response. Without hesitation, he took the pill to the three primes.

The three primes were also surprised that the Taiyi Skymender Pill had been finished in such a short time. Shao Yuan was more efficient than they had ever expected.

The first prime laughed. "That young man sure is driven," she said before taking the pill from Ziju Min. "What a surprise that the pill's refined already! Elder Ziju, you've seen the pill yourself. What's are impressions?"

Ziju Min responded honestly, "This subordinate wouldn't claim to be observant, but in my opinion, the pill's more remarkable than I expected. Please have a look yourselves, Your Excellencies."

He presented the pill respectfully to three expectant primes. Their merry eyes turned surprised and thoughtful once they took the pill. Its appearance alone was enough to win their approval.

"Good," complimented the first prime. "I can see immediately that it's a fine pill."

"You'll be even more surprised when you inspect it closely," Ziju Min prompted, subtly praising the pill. He could, on good conscience, talk the pill up to his heart's content. It deserved any praise he could think of.

The three primes reacted the same way Ziju Min had. Solemnity descended and their eyes lit up more and more.

At the end, the first prime slapped the table and exclaimed, "Extraordinary! My pill dao is mediocre at best, but I know a good pill when I see it. This one is flawless, truly flawless. What say you, gentlemen?" added the first prime.

"It's indeed a remarkable achievement," said the second prime. "But how could Shao Yuan refine a pill of such energy in such a short time? Isn't that a little hard to believe?"

"That's right." The third prime echoed his worry. "Elder Ziju, are you sure that Shao Yuan was the one who refined the pill?"

"This subordinate can guarantee that it was him. There is a trace of the Taiyi Dragonscale Fruit's energy left in the pill. I left my unique mark on the fruit. So yes, I am sure. Moreover, I can feel that the pill has just been refined. That's something no one can fake."

Ziju Min was an authority figure in pill dao after all. He wasn't old or decrepit enough that he'd be tricked by a preexisting pill.

The three primes nodded earnestly.

The first prime couldn't be more pleased. "Elder Ziju, Shao Yuan keeps on surprising us. We can't possibly not support him now, can we?"

Ziju Min smiled. "I dare not say so, but Shao Yuan's talent in pill dao is beyond my imagination. Even if I knew the recipe and method for refining the Taiyi Skymender Pill, it would be almost impossible for me to refine it in only a few hours. His foundation in pill dao is much more solid than I expected."

"Are you confident that he'll be able to complete the mission?"

"I've been confident in him since he took the mission," admitted Ziju Min. "However, as an elder of the sacred land, I couldn't show my support too enthusiastically, or my objectivity may be questioned."

The three primes broke into laughter.

"You don't have to restrain yourself anymore, Elder Ziju," the first prime said with a smile, her tone relaxed. "This seat hereby authorizes you to provide any support Shao Yuan asks for. We'll also spare no effort in holding a pill dao festival. The Taiyi Skymender Pill more than justifies it. Everyone in the Myriad Abyss pill dao community is greedy. Once they see the pill for themselves, it's impossible for them to turn us down."

Ziju Min perked up. "What do you mean exactly, First Prime?"

"Give Shao Yuan the remaining two Taiyi Dragonscale Fruits and ask him to refine more pills, Elder Ziju. The more, the better. In two days, I will send out my confidantes to the other divine nations with the pills. Do you think our friends from different nations will be willing to trade a pill with a Taiyi Dragonscale Fruit?"

Ziju Min smiled. "Of course they will. The pill is a gamechanger. They won't be able to resist their curiosity."

"Yes, we want them curious," the first prime responded confidently. "Only then will they put aside their pride and come to the pill dao festival. Wouldn't you agree?"

Ziju Min nodded emphatically. The first prime was being much more thorough than he had been. Her plan was well thought out. They'd be able to promote the pill and attract people's attention at the same time, making them curious.

No pill dao figureheads from the greatest factions of the Ten Divine Nations could resist such a perfect pill. They'd all come to the festival.

There was one thing the first prime was worried about. "Elder Ziju, I have a concern. If we trade them the pill, will they be able to figure out the recipe?"

Ziju Min contemplated for a short while before shaking his head decisively. "That's impossible. If people could figure out the recipe of any pill simply by studying it, everyone would be a pill god."

He was an expert in the field and knew the possibility of that happening was slim. Even if someone did figure out the recipe, it would most likely take them a lifetime to successfully refine it.

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Chapter 1722: The World is Collectively Stunned

With the support of the three primes, the other two Taiyi Dragonscale Fruits were quickly delivered to Jiang Chen. He refined another two cauldrons of Taiyi Skymender Pills with ease and great efficiency.

For each batch, he handed Ziju Min nine or ten pills and kept six for himself. In total, he'd accumulated eighteen pills, a result which he was greatly pleased with.

He didn't need any himself, but he had a lot of friends in the human domain whose talent in martial dao was limited. The Taiyi Skymender Pill could greatly benefit the domain as a whole and create a few more empyrean experts.

The first prime had a decisive nature. She sent out messengers to the other sacred lands, each of them with a Taiyi Skymender Pill, an invitation, and a message. She strictly specified to the messengers that the pill could only be traded for a Taiyi Dragonscale Fruit.

One fruit could produce around ten pills. The trade was massively to their benefit, and the profit tremendous.

In half a month, all of the messengers reached their respective destinations and presented the Taiyi Skymender Pill to their audience. Shock respectively rippled through the pill dao community in each sacred land. The pill was perfect in its color, shape, and character.

All the pill dao figureheads had keen observation skills and couldn't mask their surprise and appreciation when they saw the pill. They asked about the pill's origins insistently, but the messengers were more than clever enough to know what they could and could not say. Their embellished descriptions painted the pills in a mythical light.

Of course, the pill dao figureheads weren't going to be deceived by pretty words. The pill itself, however, was convincing enough.

The Eternal Sacred Land purposefully handed the invitation letter over with the pill. Their intention was clear: A celebration was to be held for the development of a new pill, and their pill dao counterparts from the Ten Divine Nations were invited.

Any new pill, especially one of this level, would take the ten nations by storm. No sacred land would be able to turn it down. They beat around the bush and finally discovered that they could buy the pill with a Taiyi Dragonscale Fruit.

Almost every sacred land had a couple and could afford to spare one. However, everyone immediately connected the dots and wondered if the fruit was an ingredient in the recipe.

Still, there was no arguing that the trade had to be made. The pill was magical in its effects. They had to get their hands on one so that they could study it.

The early birds would end up taking the lead. No factions were willing to be left behind. Even though they knew that they were being taken advantage of, they had no choice but to pay the price willingly.

The collection of ingredients for the Crowning Empyrean Pill also went smoothly. In half a month, Ziju Min was able to acquire all the ingredients from different sources. He delivered them to Jiang Chen with great excitement as he'd come to trust the young man unconditionally.

Jiang Chen was thrilled as well. The Taiyi Skymender Pill wasn't that important to him; he'd already ascended to empyrean realm. But the Crowning Empyrean Pill was another case entirely.

He wasn't going to let slip any opportunities to improve his cultivation at this critical juncture. Therefore he was much more excited about refining this pill than he was about the Taiyi Skymender Pill.

Even from a pill dao standpoint, the Crowning Empyrean Pill was better and of a higher level than the latter. The former was a true empyrean pill, while the latter was of a slightly lower level.

As usual, Jiang Chen didn't immediately start refining after receiving the ingredients. He had a sufficient amount of ingredients, but they were so rare that he didn't want to waste even a little.

He couldn't recover ingredients he'd used. He couldn't be careless with them.

Refining the Crowning Empyrean Pill was much more difficult in comparison. There were more details to pay attention to, and the process itself was more complicated. Fortunately, since he had reached empyrean realm, the challenging refining process wouldn't be difficult enough for his concentration to falter.

This time, it took him a night and a day to finish refinement. However, two thirds of the time was actually spent on meditating.

Once he started, he did everything with practiced ease and brooked no disruptions. One after another, the pills leapt out of the cauldron like little sprites, full of life and spirit. Pills of such level could be considered quasi-sentient.

Jiang Chen placed the pills in his palm, feeling the energy radiating from them. He felt at peace and a sense of achievement from the bottom of his heart. These pills were the finest work of nature, and also his best to date.

These were the highest level pills he'd refined since arriving on Divine Abyss Continent. There was nothing more satisfying than seeing the pills emerge exactly as he expected.

The cauldron had yielded quite a good number of Crowning Empyrean Pills. He unceremoniously kept four for himself and gave the other seven to Ziju Min.

Ziju Min almost teared up when he held the pills. Before the success of the Taiyi Skymender Pill, he wouldn't have ever believed that there could exist a magical pill to increase an empyrean expert's cultivation by one level at no cost. Not even in his dreams could such pill exist.

And yet the young genius had accomplished the unimaginable while he bore witness. He stared at the pill with great concentration, like a man meeting his first love.

He gently handled the pills, worried that he'd hurt them, his eyes filled with adoration. Someone oblivious would have assumed that he was in a relationship with the pills.

Jiang Chen could understand the reaction. There were many pill fanatics in the world of pill dao whose obsession with masterful pills befuddled regular folks. Ziju Min was a prime example.

It took some time for him to come back to himself. He turned to Jiang Chen with an indiscernible expression. "I don't know what to say, Shao Yuan, so I'll just say this: we are fortunate to have you. Bringing you here is one of the greatest achievements of my life. Though I can be considered a pill dao master, my greatest contribution to pill dao is none other than bringing you here from House Yan."

His words were the greatest compliment possible to Jiang Chen. He couldn't admire the young man more.

Before, he'd recruited Jiang Chen out of appreciation of the young man's talent. He'd wanted to take the young man in as his disciple. Now though, he'd thrown the plan out of the window.

He knew his limits. He wasn't good enough to teach a genius like Jiang Chen. In truth, Jiang Chen was the one who should teach him. Perhaps no one on the entire Myriad Abyss Island was qualified to teach the young man.

Ziju Min was both thrilled and pleased.

The Crowning Empyrean Pill made everything felt like a daydream. He could anticipate that the Taiyi Skymender Pill and Crowning Empyrean Pill would turn the Eternal Sacred Land from a faction negligible in pill dao to one of the greatest powers in Myriad Abyss.

Fate could be such an interesting beast sometimes.

No matter how little recognition they had received before, the two pills would turn things around completely. Many would hold them in high regard, and those who used to look down on them would have to treat them as equals.

Either of the two was enough to astound the world. They were one of a kind and disrupted the market in their own ways. And the Eternal Sacred Land was the sole supplier! Who would dare look down on them then?

The Crowning Empyrean Pill was especially groundbreaking. Ziju Min could foresee that the whole of Myriad Abyss Island would lose their mind over it. Every empyrean expert would covet it day and night. It was an extraordinary pill that had no alternatives.

The exclusivity would enable the Eternal Sacred Land to set the price however they wanted. They'd have neither competition nor rivals.

"Shao Yuan, do you know how the Crowning Empyrean Pill will impact the pill dao world?" Ziju Min couldn't help but ask.

How could Jiang Chen not know? He responded with a smile, "The demand will far exceed the supply, I think. However, Elder Ziju, the ingredients for the pills are difficult to acquire, and the refining process arduous. I don't want to end up becoming a pill refining machine for the sacred land. You have to be ready that I will decide when and how much to refine. No one can force me to do anything against my will."

"Of course." Ziju Min didn't want Jiang Chen to misunderstand him. The young man was a valued treasure to the sacred land. They mustn't let him feel any discomfort.

Ziju Min wanted nothing but to ask the three primes to give the young man full, open support and help him save Yan Qinghuang!

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Chapter 1723: Reaching a Consensus

The Crowning Empyrean Pill was much more convincing than the Taiyi Skymender Pill. When Ziju Min brought the finished product to the three primes, their few remaining doubts were completely assuaged.

The pill sovereign took the opportunity to intercede. "Honored primes, I don't see the reason why we shouldn't fully support Shao Yuan. He is gifted beyond belief."

The primes traded looks, then slowly nodded in unison.

Even if Shao Yuan had no martial dao talent whatsoever, they should still support him unconditionally. That he was amazing in martial dao was just icing on the cake. He was among the very best in both categories in the entire faction.

Of course, there were also the Five Great Gentlemen. But would Shao Yuan be inferior to them given enough time? The primes couldn't be so intellectually dishonest.

The potential Shao Yuan had exhibited thus far was already historically unprecedented. This was hardly an exaggeration; there had never been a genius so skilled with both pill and martial dao in the Eternal Sacred Land's past.

"We can't hesitate anymore, First Prime. I hear that Xiahou Zong has opened his doors already. Perhaps..." The third prime paused.

The first prime's expression turned serious as well. "Yes, indeed. We must decide whether we will stand with Shao Yuan."

Ziju Min was shaken by the news of Xiahou Zong's emergence as well.

"Xiahou Zong... he's exited closed door cultivation?" His tone was colored with surprise.

The senior had been entirely devoted to pill-related affairs for the past few days and hadn't had the time to pay attention to the outside world. At the same time, he was also mildly concerned for his disciple. If Xiahou Zong had come out of cultivation, would he take away Yan Qinghuang immediately?

His worries weren't unfounded. Recent contact with Shao Yuan had impressed upon him the young man's stubbornness in this matter.

If Xiahou Zong were allowed to take away Yan Qinghuang without his knowledge, the young man would be severely disappointed in the sacred land. He might very well leave immediately, or even bear a grudge against the entire divine nation for the rest of his life.

"Elder Ziju, you don't need to tell Shao Yuan about it yet. He shouldn't be distracted from refining pills," the third prime ventured.

Ziju Min shook his head. "I can't keep it from him. On the topic of refining pills, I have something to report."

"What is it?"

"After refining the Crowning Empyrean Pill, Shao Yuan told me that it was a very difficult task. He doesn't wish to be treated as a tool for refining pills. He wants to decide how many he will refine, and when."

A pill dao genius normally wouldn't have the right or courage to say something like this. If the sacred land wanted someone to refine pills, what room was there to refuse? A young man should be satisfied with the exposure and reputation alone!

But Jiang Chen was far from the average pill dao genius. He had his own principles.

The third prime wasn't happy to hear the demand. Wasn't this young man thinking too highly of himself? He'd only just joined the sacred land, but he was already negotiating on the small stuff?

However, the first prime smiled and nodded. "Real geniuses are always somewhat strange in their temperaments. Shao Yuan's genius entitles him to negotiating with us. Elder Ziju, do you think that the Crowning Empyrean Pill is as difficult as he claims?"

"Yes, I believe so. The time and energy Shao Yuan spent on it indicates that it is significantly more difficult than the Taiyi Skymender Pill," Ziju Min replied truthfully.

"Hmm. Elder Ziju, go tell Shao Yuan that we will back him fully on the matter of Yan Qinghuang. If there is any disturbance whatsoever, we will mobilize immediately. However, it would be ideal for him to help the sacred land by refining a few more pills in his spare time. We can discuss how much of a cut he gets in the profits. Any distribution is on the table."

The third prime frowned a little. "First Prime, aren't we making too many concessions? At the end of the day, he's just one young man."

The first prime shook her head in disagreement. "We must plan for the future, number three. I daresay that if we limit or coerce him in any way, it is highly doubtful he will align himself with our values. We must spoil and flatter such a genius in order to keep him around. Moreover, Shao Yuan doesn't seem to

be an unreasonable youth. If we can help him accomplish his heart's desire, he will repay us in kind. I trust him." The leader of the Eternal Sacred Land had a keen eye for people.

"What do you think, Elder Ziju? Are you satisfied with our treatment of him?" Chuckling, she turned to the elder.

Ziju Min took a moment to think. "First Prime," he responded with sincerity, "I don't think it's enough to merely mouth support. What if Xiahou Zong goes to House Yan to take Yan Qinghuang away? Our words will not satisfy our young friend."

"Are... are we supposed to help him take the girl by force? Or forcefully stop Xiahou Zong from taking Yan Qinghuang? We might have the power, but doing so might be perceived as being too domineering. This is a private matter between Xiahou Zong and House Yan, and it's unbecoming for us to intercede so barbarically."

"First Prime, we can help him bring his marriage proposal to House Yan. If he completes 'the Flames of Vengeance' in the upcoming pill dao festival, he will be made famous overnight. His name will be more than enough to ask for House Yan's daughter then. In fact, the house would not be worthy of someone like him." Ziju Min gave his own suggestion.

The three primes traded meaningful looks. This solution was the most appropriate, though it would anger House Xiahou regardless.

After all, the entire world knew of the enmity between House Xiahou and House Yan.

Yan Qinghuang had been fated to be Xiahou Zong's cultivation vessel at a young age. This was public knowledge to just about anybody in Eternal Divine Nation. If someone butted in to ask for Yan Qinghuang in marriage now, it would be a resounding slap to Xiahou Zong's face.

Well, impulsive acts were common among young people for the sake of love. And what was so wrong with upsetting House Xiahou?

Hadn't the Eternal Sacred Land been looking for a genius who could beat Xiahou Zong for a long time? The Five Great Gentlemen had been raised up as potential challengers for quite a while now, their somewhat lackluster performance notwithstanding.

Though Xiahou Zong had made his name known throughout the world, the Eternal Sacred Land had also unexpectedly gotten its hands on a new exceptional genius.

It was a serendipitous surprise indeed.

Would this genius surpass their wildest hopes and dreams? Would he usurp Xiahou Zong's so-called throne as the foremost genius?

The Eternal Sacred Land was willing to devote itself to the attempt. The young man deserved unconditional support for his pill dao talent alone.

The first prime nodded with sobriety. "It's settled, then. Elder Ziju, if Shao Yuan can defeat Shi Xuan and complete 'the Flames of Vengeance', he is approved to ask House Yan for their daughter's hand in marriage. We will back him up utterly, no questions asked!"

The speaker was weighty enough for this answer to be conclusive. After all, the first prime was the ruler of the Eternal Sacred Land in name. Furthermore, the venerated forefather had promised that he would give the go-ahead if the young man could fulfill his part of the deal.

Opinions from the two most important individuals in the Eternal Sacred Land meant that Shao Yuan was more than qualified to compete with Xiahou Zong.

At the end of the day though, the competition required his own strength.

“Elder Ziju, you know too that the tournament of geniuses is in a few months. If Shao Yuan wants to compete with Xiahou Zong, he will inevitably meet his rival in that tournament. What should he do then? The arena is fair to its combatants, regardless of their relative status. Shao Yuan’s martial dao is on the shallow side. Does he have a way to deal with the commanding Xiahou Zong?”

“That’s not something we need to worry about, First Prime. Shao Yuan doesn’t seem to care much about Xiahou Zong.”

Ziju Min found this somewhat odd as well. Where did Shao Yuan’s courage come from? Why didn’t he care about Xiahou Zong, the foremost genius of the Eternal Sacred Land? And yet, there seemed to be a reason for Shao Yuan’s confidence. It didn’t appear to be blind.

Having received the first prime’s guarantee, the senior returned to Jiang Chen to inform him of the good news.

Jiang Chen was unsurprised by the development. The three primes had taken a completely sensible course of action. If they had remained indecisive, he would’ve suspected their sincerity and wisdom.

Ziju Min marveled at the young man’s lack of a reaction. Had he predicted this would be the case? He really was extraordinary.

It was difficult for anyone not to be overwhelmed with joy at this juncture, especially someone so young. Calmness in the face of great change was a valuable trait.

“Shao Yuan,” he reminded, “the first prime’s meaning is very clear. If you can defeat Shi Xuan, then the sacred land will openly support you. But you also have to remember another thing: winning over Yan Qinghuang will require your own strength. You must clear away Xiahou Zong yourself before you can bring your love home. Do you understand?”

“Yes.” Jiang Chen smiled faintly. “I don’t need the sacred land to cheat for me. I just need public and moral support, just like how Xiahou Zong is backed by his house.”

“There’s no problem, then. The first prime and the venerated forefather are in agreement on this. Don’t worry about House Xiahou. We will not allow such an overreach.”

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Chapter 1724: Flora Sacred Land

The Eternal Sacred Land's stance was more than enough for Jiang Chen. He didn't actually want the faction to help him raid House Yan for his girl; that would be far too crude. As long as the sacred land took a hardline attitude in front of outsiders, that was enough for his purposes.

The lack of disagreement from Jiang Chen prompted a follow-up from Ziju Min. "There's another important thing I have to tell you. Xiahou Zong has emerged from closed door cultivation!"

"He's out?" Jiang Chen's eyes grew keen. "Has he made any moves?"

"Not for now. Don't worry, House Xiahou isn't the sort to keep things on the down low. Even if Xiahou Zong was going to fetch your girl, many other preparations would need to be made. The tournament of geniuses for Eternal Divine Nation is in only a few months' time. Since he's just finished closed door cultivation, there's no way he'll go right back to it. He can't make use of a cultivation vessel anyway, so your beloved is safe for now, and we will keep abreast of any developments."

Jiang Chen became both serious and thoughtful.

"Don't worry too much for now, Shao Yuan," Ziju Min consoled. "If you can defeat Shi Xuan, none of this will be a problem. Do you understand what I mean?"

The corner of the young man's mouth curled, revealing a proud smile. "Shi Xuan... Xiahou Zong..." he muttered quietly.

These two were nothing more than obstacles in Jiang Chen's way. His objective—pulverize everything that hindered him!

"How goes the preparation for the festival, Elder Ziju? Is Shi Xuan coming or not? It won't mean anything if he's not present."

"Don't worry, unless Shi Xuan has closed his doors to the world on pain of death, he has no reason not to come when faced with such attractive bait. He's probably the furthest thing from an ascetic you'll find. Are you still going to insult him as planned?"

"If he'll come out of greed, why dirty my mouth over it?" Jiang Chen smiled coolly. "Plus, insulting him isn't as interesting as crushing him outright. Sadly, he's not likely to be the kind of person to commit suicide over a loss. His heart seems more steadfast than that."

Ziju Min sighed softly. "I suppose you're right. He's not the kind of person to be easily swayed by his emotions. He wouldn't die over being upset."

"Regardless, I'll try my best," Jiang Chen laughed.

He was absolutely sure he would win against Shi Xuan, but he wouldn't necessarily be able to replicate how the man had driven Elder Zimu nuts. Someone without a personality flaw wouldn't drop dead over something as mundane as a loss.

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The Eternal Sacred Land was hosting a pill dao festival of grand proportions. Called the 'Skymender Festival', it was named for the Taiyi Skymender Pill.

Invitations from the faction alone wouldn't command much of an attendance, given its lack of expertise in pill dao. But the presence of a single Taiyi Skymender Pill with the messengers was more convincing than any paper could be.

When they got wind that this miraculous pill was the product of the sacred land's private research, the recipients' tunes changed completely. Furthermore, there was to be an demonstration at the festival of the pill's origins!

Everyone was astonished and curious about the Taiyi Skymender Pill. They wanted badly to find out what the Eternal Sacred Land, a faction that was historically weak in pill dao, had in store. Was this amazing pill really the product of the sacred land's secret research?

The very prospect of it sounded incomprehensible.

The Ten Divine Nations knew the level of the Eternal Sacred Land's pill dao. It didn't make sense for such explosive news to come from there. Moreover, the messenger had insinuated that the Taiyi Skymender Pill wouldn't be the only feature at the festival.

Any inquiries were met with the rather response that those interested would find out more at the festival itself. A wave of interest swept up the Ten Divine Nations' pill dao experts without them realizing it.

The various divine nations and sacred lands were exceptionally courteous to the Eternal messengers. Hand-written letters were drafted in return, stating the parties' certain attendance.

Moreover, the other sacred lands were exceedingly generous. They traded the pills the messengers had brought for Taiyi Dragonscale Fruit from their own stock. The name of the Taiyi Skymender Pill overtook Myriad Abyss almost overnight. It was the hottest talk of the pill dao world across the realm.

Nearly everybody wondered how the Taiyi Skymender Pill had been researched in the first place. Who had come up with this remarkable pill? Was it an ancient pill recipe that had been lost to some corner of history?

Regardless of its origin, the Taiyi Skymender Pill was to be a source of fortune for the Eternal Sacred Land.

Pills with this kind of effect were a completely unexplored territory in Myriad Abyss. If the pill could pass the test of time, it would be enormously beneficial to the sole manufacturer.

Within Flora Divine Nation's Sacred Flora Mountain, its sacred land's pill dao giants were gathered together.

As the sacred land with the highest pill dao level among the ten, Flora Sacred Land had a plethora of pill dao masters. Each person in attendance here could take charge of a faction's pill dao business in the outside world.

Though the Flora Sacred Land wasn't among the best in martial dao, it was the undisputed best in pill dao. It benefited from both the divine nation's traditions and geographical location. Furthermore, it cared about raising pill dao geniuses more than any other faction.

It occupied a unique position in Myriad Abyss. Its climate and ground were especially suitable for the growth of spirit herbs—a natural garden. Many spirit herbs unable to grow anywhere else were happy to take root in Flora Divine Nation's soil. Still, others that yielded average crops elsewhere grew with exceptional vigor here.

The superior land and water gave the divine nation an undeniable advantage in procuring spirit herbs, which translated directly to proficiency in pill dao.

It occupied the same state of importance in Flora Sacred Nation as the Eternal Sacred Land did in its own. Within it, Shi Xuan was considered equivalent to a forefather.

The other two pill dao forefathers who'd lived for several millennia or more had raised the hundred-year-old pill dao master to their own level. In fact, they'd intentionally given up a portion of their authority to Shi Xuan in hopes that he would improve the sacred land's pill dao through his oversight.

After all, Shi Xuan's youthfulness afforded him a huge advantage. He was less than a hundred, practically a young man in the pill dao world. They tried their best to cultivate Shi Xuan in every way—reputation, skill, and status.

For his part, Shi Xuan was clever enough to cooperate wherever he could. On the surface, he showed commensurate respect to his elders. Thus, he had quickly risen up through the ranks without making many enemies.

A single Taiyi Skymender Pill was placed within a jade plate upon a table before the crowd. Its color and aura were both exceptionally tempting.

"Honored forefathers, what do you think of this Taiyi Skymender Pill?"

The forefathers traded a look, then chorused in unison. "One look is enough to tell the pill is obviously extraordinary. The man behind it is clearly no lightweight."

"Absolutely. The pill has been refined with impeccable splendor." The two forefathers had only the highest of compliments for the pill.

"What do you think, Shi Xuan?" They were curious as to what their young charge thought.

Though Shi Xuan was only a hundred years old, he dressed like an otherworldly immortal. Right now, his gaze was concentrated upon the Taiyi Skymender Pill. After a long while, a conflicted look made its way into his narrowed eyes.

He sighed softly. "Sharp eyes as always, venerated forefathers. I can't find a flaw with the pill from any angle. It seems completely natural. This is the work of a true master."

"Flawless? Entirely natural? The work of a true master?" The two forefathers were both shocked. Shi Xuan was known for his incredible haughtiness and general aloofness. And yet, he was defying expectation by praising the pill.

If Shi Xuan couldn't find any problems with the pill, then it really was flawless.

"This is odd," one of the forefathers blurted out. "We all know what kind of skill the Eternal Sacred Land has in pill dao. How can a faction of their resources come up with a pill of this level? I just don't understand."

"Perhaps they were lucky enough to dredge up an ancient pill recipe somewhere," the lankier forefather speculated. Neither believed such incredible skill possible from the Eternal Sacred Land.

Shi Xuan shook his head gently. "The pill recipe can be the product of fortune, but the method of refinement is even more fearsome. I've never seen such a perfect masterpiece in all my years," he praised. "Since when did the Eternal Sacred Land have such a prodigious master?"

"After Elder Zimu dropped dead, Ziju Min apparently took his leadership post. That man is inferior to his predecessor, so I don't think this pill comes from his hands. We wouldn't be ignorant of him otherwise."

Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

Chapter 1725: Huang'er in the Throes of Despair

The Taiyi Skymender Pill had appeared in a strange way indeed. There'd been nothing to suggest its emergence before now. The Eternal Sacred Land had announced it without rhyme or reason. Did it have a contingent of capable pill masters who had been conducting secret research?

As mentioned before, Shi Xuan was astonished by the method of the pill's refinement even more than by the pill itself. The technique had been beyond perfect. He was more curious about whose hands the pill had come about.

"Hmph. What does the Eternal Sacred Land mean by this pill and invitation? Is it flaunting its new acquisition before us?" one of the forefathers declared with displeasure.

"Haha, they're probably still upset about Elder Zimu," the other forefather remarked with off-handed contempt.

Shi Xuan smiled faintly. "Flaunting the new acquisition? I doubt they have the courage to do so. Still, this pill is rather startling in its own right. Apparently, there'll be more surprises at the festival itself. Have they obtained multiple pill recipes through sheer, dumb luck? That doesn't explain everything, though. There is definitely a master behind the Taiyi Skymender Pill."

The two forefathers traded a look. Shi Xuan's musings had only increased the amount of mystery around the matter.

"Are you going to the Skymender Festival, Shi Xuan?" one of them asked.

Shi Xuan smiled slightly. "Why shan't I go? I don't believe the Eternal Sacred Land can cause much of a commotion. Elder Zimu fell before me, is Ziju Min somehow going to surpass him? I don't think so."

"They might bear a grudge, haha. Are you sure, Shi Xuan?"

"I certainly am," Shi Xuan responded smoothly. "I didn't lay a finger on Elder Zimu. He died because he was too narrow-minded to accept his loss gracefully. How am I supposed to be held responsible for that? Plus, I don't think the Eternal Sacred Land has any pill dao talents worth mentioning."

“Right. Do you remember the affair around Ziju Min last time? About the Mirage Introspection Pill’s materials?”

One forefather’s response prompted the other to nod. “Yes, yes, there was something like that. The Mirage Introspection Pill is nothing important, so we didn’t pay much mind to it at the time... but it was a hot topic for a bit.”

The Mirage Introspection Pill wasn’t exactly a high-rank pill. Thus, any attention attracted had been temporary. At the time, it had been public opinion that the Eternal Sacred Land had lucked into the discovery.

The appearance of the Taiyi Skymender Pill however, made the forefathers to recall what had happened back then.

“I hear a young genius was the one who caused that ruckus. Maybe this Taiyi Skymender Pill is related to him as well?”

“Impossible. How could a young genius know this much? There’s no way his technique is so refined either.”

Shi Xuan sighed softly. “Never mind. It’s pointless to guess at the truth when the festival is so soon. I think a personal look will yield the most accurate observation.”

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Despite being on bad terms with Eternal Divine Nation, Flora Divine Nation couldn’t resist the Taiyi Skymender Pill’s allure. The other factions were no different.

The returning messengers carried good news with them from all over Myriad Abyss. Responses took many forms: some communicated goodwill; others, verbal promises; and still others, handwritten letters.

For the most part, almost every important faction had agreed to attend the Skymender Festival. Great praise and curiosity were expressed in the letters.

The steady stream of successes invigorated the three primes. At the same time, they felt pressure bearing down on them. The festival was set in stone now.

“Elder Ziju, all of the factions have expressed their willingness to attend the Skymender Festival. Shi Xuan is included in the list of attendees from Flora Divine Nation!”

Ziju Min’s eyelids fluttered when he heard the name. So Shi Xuan was coming after all.

The battle between his young disciple and the pill dao giant was unavoidable. The prospect of it made his heart race uncontrollably. Could Shao Yuan win?

Though Jiang Chen was one of the combatants, he remained profoundly calm. Since he had no missions to refine pills, he spent his days in cultivation and meditation within the sacred land. This continued until Ziju Min told him of the certainty of the battle ahead.

“So, it’s confirmed that Shi Xuan will come?” Jiang Chen’s eyes lit up.

“Yes, we’ve confirmed that already. You have no avenue of retreat, Shao Yuan. Shi Xuan is a vicious character. You must prepare yourself for the confrontation.”

Jiang Chen smiled coolly. He knew Ziju Min was still worried, but he saw no reason to console the senior with niceties. The immediate future would prove him correct soon enough.

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News of the Taiyi Skymender Pill and the Skymender Festival spread through Eternal Divine Nation like wildfire.

As a first-rate faction within the divine nation, House Yan received an invitation despite its current state of decline. This had been done as a favor from Ziju Min, of course. The patriarch was stunned into silence after hearing of it.

Elder Ziju had sent someone here with an invitation that specially outlined Yan Qingsang’s relatives should be brought alongside the other representatives. Yan Wanjun and Yan Qinghuang were both identified by name.

The patriarch didn’t know what Elder Ziju was getting at and found it odd indeed. Why had someone of Master Ziju’s stature point these specifics out? Had Yan Qingsang received a warm welcome at the sacred land?

He simply couldn’t understand it. However, the invitation was clear enough. Because Yan Wanjun had been sent to Mt. Cloud Camel, a messenger was delegated to bring him back.

Yan Qinghuang was at home, but the patriarch really didn’t want her to be seen out and about. Could he just brush off Master Ziju though?

After much thought, the patriarch decided it was best to bring her after all. He was concerned that they would encounter Xiahou Zong at the festival. If Xiahou Zong openly disgraced Yan Qinghuang, what then? What face would remain for House Yan?

Perhaps others would stay put at a convention hosted by the sacred land, but a genius like Xiahou Zong dared to do what others did not.

Ever since Jiang Chen’s departure for the Eternal Sacred Land, Huang’er had lived a reclusive lifestyle. Her life with Ling Bi’er was relatively peaceful and quiet.

A few days ago, she had found out through Elder Shun that Xiahou Zong had emerged from closed door cultivation. The news made her rather uneasy.

Xiahou Zong’s reappearance meant that misfortune marched ever closer to her.

She didn’t want to succumb to it, but fate was a cruel mistress.

“Don’t worry, Sister Huang’er. You need to believe in junior brother Jiang Chen.” Ling Bi’er wasn’t very good at consoling people. She too felt Huang’er’s pain keenly.

“Sister Bi’er, do you remember what you promised me? If I can’t escape my destiny, you must take care of Brother Chen, alright?” Huang’er’s voice sounded hollow, tinged with sorrow and tenderness.

“You... you’ll definitely be okay. Junior brother Jiang Chen is making his name known in the Eternal Sacred Land right now. He will defeat Xiahou Zong for sure and protect you.”

As the two girls spoke, a voice sounded from outside. “Miss Huang’er, the patriarch has sent me to inform you that the Eternal Sacred Land is hosting the Skymender Festival. House Yan is invited, and the patriarch wishes for you to attend and gain more worldly experience.”

The Skymender Festival?

Huang’er was astonished. What kind of convention was that? The sacred land had no such tradition. She wanted to make further inquiry, but the messenger had already departed.

In the midst of her confusion, Elder Shun arrived from outside in a hurry as well. Joy was plain upon his face. “Excellent news, Huang’er. The Eternal Sacred Land is hosting a Skymender Festival, and House Yan has been invited. I believe the patriarch has given you a spot.”

“So you’ve heard as well, Elder Shun? Do you know what’s going on with this convention?” Huang’er was perplexed by the suddenness of the event.

“I hear the Skymender Festival is being hosted because of a single kind of pill—the Taiyi Skymender Pill.”

“They’re hosting a meeting just for one kind of pill?”

“Yes. Apparently, the sacred land has managed to come up with a kind of pill that no one’s seen before. Moreover... Shao Yuan is the man behind it.” There was excitement in the elder’s voice.

“Ah. But of course.” Rather than surprise, Huang’er felt the relief of recognition.

She understood Jiang Chen and his pill dao talent very well. The Eternal Sacred Land would’ve shown off their genius long ago—if they had it in the first place. Why would they wait until now?

Any miraculous medicines would undoubtedly be related to Jiang Chen. Huang’er firmly believed this.

Now she knew why the patriarch had asked her to go to the Skymender Festival. The invitation had likely requested her presence outright. Her gloomy mood began to brighten thanks to the good news. Jiang Chen’s accomplishment had reversed that which Xiahou Zong’s emergence had dampened.

Her beloved had not let her down. He’d only gotten to the sacred land a short while ago, and yet he was already causing such a huge commotion. Perhaps the Eternal Sacred Land really would throw their whole support behind him?

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

Chapter 1726: The Gift of A Pill

As time went on, the day of the Skymender Festival came closer and closer. Pill dao giants from all over the divine nations streamed into Eternal Divine Nation with their entourages.

Though Eternal Divine Nation was a lightweight in pill dao among its fellows, the nation itself was quite strong amongst the Ten. Therefore, the pill dao giants who’d come didn’t dare cause too much of a

disturbance. They maintained the necessary respect accorded to a divine nation of Eternal's strength, while Eternal Sacred Land occupied a lofty position that couldn't be scorned.

Ziju Min visited Jiang Chen's residence frequently over the past few days. His mood swung up and down like a pendulum as the festival and guests of all stripes approached. The man was enthusiastic one moment and anxious the next.

Jiang Chen remained a reflect of perfect placidity. Ziju Min couldn't see any emotional disturbance whatsoever on the young man's face.

"Elder Ziju, why do you look more distressed than me?" Jiang Chen chuckled.

Ziju Min laughed with some embarrassment. "Shao Yuan, you didn't live through the affair with Elder Zimu, so you might not understand our current mood. I daresay that even the three primes have mixed feelings right now."

"There's no need to be concerned," Jiang Chen replied smoothly. His confidence bolstered Ziju Min's own, but it was unrealistic to demand the senior to become as calm as the youth.

"Is Shi Xuan here yet?" the young genius asked suddenly.

"I think he'll be here soon. He's definitely coming." Ziju Min sounded very sure. "If not tomorrow, then the day after."

"So, Shao Yuan, have you thought of how to challenge him yet?"

"Don't worry. Leave it all to me. I need to reciprocate the sacred land's support with a wonderful surprise." Jiang Chen appeared to have a well-thought-out plan.

Though Ziju Min wasn't at the age to allow blood to easily rush to his head, he nevertheless felt a heady surge of recklessness.

"Ah, yes. I've also invited House Yan to attend this meeting, Shao Yuan, including Miss Yan Qinghuang." Ziju Min carried on the conversation for the sake of spurring Jiang Chen on.

"Very good. Did you also invite Xiahou Zong?" asked Jiang Chen.

"I invited House Xiahou, though no one was specifically named. Xiahou Zong is undeniably important enough to attend though," Ziju Min declared.

Jiang Chen nodded slightly, his eyes finally lighting up with anticipation. Was he finally going to meet his mortal enemy? In what way was this universally praised foremost genius excellent?

"Alright. Take the last three days to prepare as you like, Shao Yuan. I won't disturb you anymore." Ziju Min bid his farewell.

"If you're at all bothered, Elder Ziju, you can come chat with me anytime," Jiang Chen laughed. The young man knew that Ziju Min wasn't here for anything in particular. He was just here to assuage his own misgivings.

Jiang Chen was very grateful for all of the senior's help up to this point. The pill sovereign had worked hard to allow the young man to enter the sacred land and garner its support.

Not long after Ziju Min departed, the long-unseen Yan Qingsang snuck in. The young man from House Yan had cultivated behind closed doors for a while now. He was clearly exuberant at the sight of his friend, plopping down in front of him unceremoniously.

“Brother, you’ve done a lot of impressive stuff while I was cultivating. I opened my doors to hear discussions all over the sacred land about you. Even House Yan’s people are sending letters, asking about you all the time.” Yan Qingsang was extremely animated, spittle flying everywhere.

Jiang Chen gazed at his friend for a moment. “Do you want to break through to empyrean realm?” he asked suddenly.

“What do you mean?” Yan Qingsang brightened.

“The Taiyi Skymender Pill may not have much of an effect on the average great emperor, but you’re only a whisper from breaking through. The pill will help you rip that thin layer to shreds, vastly increasing your chances of ascension.”

Yan Qingsang had heard of the Taiyi Skymender Pill as soon as he’d come out of closed door cultivation. This was one of the reasons he had come to find Jiang Chen with so much excitement.

He knew that Jiang Chen had refined a batch of the pill, but had handed them all to the sacred land. As a new disciple, Yan Qingsang wasn't important enough to receive one yet—hence his presence here. Perhaps his future brother-in-law would give him an unexpected gift?

He hadn’t expect Jiang Chen to be so blunt and straightforward though, and was overjoyed that he would get a Taiyi Skymender Pill.

“That, uh... haha...” Yan Qingsang rubbed his hands on his clothes. Despite his thick skin, he was at a loss for words.

“Take it. I kept this pill back for you. It’s a supreme rank specimen.”

“I can’t very well let your goodwill go to waste then.” Chuckling, Yan Qingsang took it and cradled it like a treasure. He was a child who’d gotten his hands on a precious toy.

“I only have this one. If anyone in the house wants to borrow your connection, don’t promise anything too hastily on my behalf,” Jiang Chen reminded.

“Of course, of course. I don’t like anyone else in the younger generation in the house aside from Brother Zhenhuai, anyways. He’s long past the point of needing it though. Oh yes, and Huang’er...”

“Don’t worry about her.” Jiang Chen frowned.

“Okay, okay. She’s like a sister to me, but you’re going to be my brother-in-law. Of course you’re the one that needs to worry about it.” Yan Qingsang was now unabashedly supporting Jiang Chen’s bid for his sister.

He understood that Jiang Chen didn’t have many Taiyi Skymender Pills on hand. After all, his brother was just the refiner; most of the pills had been turned over to the sacred land. And of course, he had no plans to ask for a pill for anyone else.

He wasn't on good enough terms with any of them, and he didn't want to unduly trouble Jiang Chen either. Requests like these were a bottomless hole. If he accepted one, he would be obligated to do so for an endless stream of them.

House Yan had countless young geniuses who would leap for the chance at a pill to help them reach empyrean realm, but these pills were destined to remain rare and scarce.

Putting the pill carefully away, Yan Qingsang wondered, "Brother, will the Taiyi Skymender Pill be brought to market in the future?"

"Not necessarily." Jiang Chen shook his head. "The pill is too expensive to refine. The materials are hard to get, which makes each cauldron precious. There won't be very many of these anytime soon. I'm not sure if the sacred land even has enough for internal use, much less external sales. Even if a couple do make it out, they'll be exorbitantly expensive and impossible to procure for the average person."

The Taiyi Skymender Pill wasn't as limited as the Crowning Empyrean Pill, but the Taiyi Dragonscale Fruit used as the primary ingredient wasn't something easy to get one's hands on. It was impossible to mass produce the pill, much less sell it on the open markets.

"Ah, that's fine then." Yan Qingsang grinned.

His line of thought was a bit childish. The fewer people that got the Taiyi Skymender Pill, the better! That would make his own more exclusive.

Jiang Chen knew what his friend was thinking, but changed the subject. "Any news from House Yan?"

Yan Qingsang had remained connected with his own house all this time.

"Nothing too big. Xiahou Zong has come out of closed door cultivation, but he hasn't mentioned wanting to take Huang'er yet. Don't worry, the house will try its best to delay him as much as possible."

Yan Qingsang followed up his encouragement with a digression. "Right, my grandfather is back from Cloud Camel Mountain. I think he's coming with Huang'er to the festival."

"How are things over there?" Jiang Chen was rather curious about the mountain. The elder who'd been in charge of it within House Yan had invited him over, but he had refused at the time.

There'd been news of a huge dispatch from House Feng afterward as well. An apparent invading force, which was more than enough cause for Yan Wanjun to reinforce the mountain with a contingent of elite clansmen.

He hadn't heard the conclusion to the affair since he'd entered the Eternal Sacred Land, though. He wanted to go there to see what was up for himself. His intuition told him that Cloud Camel Mountain hid a secret that hadn't yet been uncovered.

"It's the same as before. The house doesn't have any ways of excavating the place. House Feng seems to want to take the fight to us, but they're clearly unprepared too. My grandfather served as a strong deterrent, so there should be a standstill right now."

"If your grandfather comes, will House Feng take the opportunity to invade?"

“They wouldn’t dare. A large-scale war bears no benefit for House Feng. Plus, they know that the Eternal Sacred Land owes House Yan a favor. They will only lose if they irreparably break our relationship.”

Jiang Chen nodded. “I need to go check Cloud Camel Mountain out, if I have the chance.”

His words excited the Yan youth. “I want to go with you. Elder Liang always says that Cloud Camel Mountain is a treasure trove. I’ve heard him repeat it so often that I’m curious too.”

“Sure, we can go together.”

The next few days were spent in further calm repeats of meditation and cultivation. A boring schedule, to be sure, but a fulfilling one.

It was finally opening day for the Skymender Festival, an event that had taken the outside world by storm for the past month and a half. Jiang Chen didn’t know that 'Shao Yuan' had become one of the hottest topics within the Ten Divine Nations.

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

Chapter 1727: A Duel of Eye Techniques

The Eternal Sacred Land was more than qualified to hold the pill dao festival with the strength and foundation they possessed.

One of the most secluded secret realms in the sacred land was selected as the event ground. The guests invited had to go through a series of careful checkups to verify their identities before entering.

It was called a festival, but only a few selected factions could participate. Every nation was given twenty to thirty spots. Only a few from the ones in Eternal Divine Nation had been invited. The rest came from pill dao figureheads located in second tier islands and nations in Myriad Abyss, but limited to those who had a friendly relationship with the sacred land.

In total, the participants amounted to less than five hundred people. The exclusivity was exactly what signified the festival’s prestige.

The three primes personally led the contingent from the Eternal Sacred Land. Jiang Chen had a place after Ziju Min and a few other pill dao seniors, a low profile and calm demeanor his modus operandi for the festival. With him was Yan Qingsang, his assistant for the event’s duration.

Considering Yan Qingsang’s status in the sacred land, he wouldn’t have been allowed to participate. There were many young geniuses more remarkable than he, and he was a recent addition to boot. Jiang Chen had requested a spot to allow him to make an appearance. It was a great opportunity for the young man to show his face.

The festival was clearly divided into different regions, with strict rules regarding where each faction and guest should go. Once the guests entered, they were led to their seats in an orderly fashion by disciples of the Eternal Sacred Land.

Everyone arrived after a while. Their curiosity was piqued when they saw how the Eternal Sacred Land had organized the festival.

During this period of time, they'd devoted themselves to studying the Taiyi Skymender Pill. They were all amazed by it and wanted to gain some more insight.

However, the pill was more complicated than they anticipated. No matter how hard they tried, they couldn't find out more about it.

They knew Taiyi Dragonscale Fruit was the main ingredient, but that alone wasn't enough for them to find out more. Thus, the pill dao heavyweights came to the festival with great curiosity and a desire to learn.

The three primes walked out of the host's area with an entourage trailing after them. Jiang Chen stayed behind Ziju Min with a relaxed and almost meditative expression, paying no heed to the hundreds of guests present.

Suddenly, his eyebrow twitched. He could feel a highly invasive consciousness targeting him, coming from some corner. He opened his eyes and cast them to the source.

A young man and lady whispered among themselves. The man was elegantly handsome, his eyes bright like the stars. He considered Jiang Chen with an icy gaze. The lady was Xiahou Ying.

The man bore some resemblance to her. His lips quirked slightly, an air of superiority and roguishness to him. It was as if no one in the entire world was worthy of his attention.

A name came to Jiang Chen's mind. Xiahou Zong.

Jiang Chen looked back and assessed his opponent with indifferent eyes.

When Xiahou Zong noticed that Jiang Chen was sizing him up, he was surprised by the vaguely provocative glint in the latter's eyes.

He was highly put out. As the top genius of the younger generation, he was unrivaled in Eternal Divine Nation. No geniuses even dared look at him wrong, to say nothing of meeting his eyes in a challenging manner.

Not even the Five Great Gentlemen from the sacred land might be bold enough to do so.

The Xiahou genius' star-like eyes shone brightly, shooting out a violent beam of light, accompanied by a harsh crush of consciousness.

How dare the young man challenge his authority?! Offended, Xiahou Zong decided to teach Jiang Chen a lesson. This wilfulness had always marked his character. The fact that he was in sacred land territory didn't even give him pause.

His eye techniques were well known throughout the nation. They contained the powerful scorching consciousness of the sun that he'd been born with, making the attack as explosive as a supernova. His eye and consciousness combined made for a formidable force.

That was why his lips twisted into an angry smile when he noticed Jiang Chen's taunting look. The kid's obviously courting death.

His explosive attack was highly aggressive. Once it landed, it'd penetrate into the target's consciousness and burn it. It wouldn't be fatal, but absolutely enough to inflict some serious damage.

However, things didn't go as expected. When his gaze shot through the air, a powerful force of consciousness shot from Jiang Chen's eyes as well, its energy just as powerful.

Boom!

The two rays of consciousness clashed in the air and dispersed. To both their surprise, neither of them came out on top.

Even Jiang Chen was startled. He'd never considered Xiahou Zong much of a threat, but here he was, meeting an equal in eye arts for the first time.

Xiahou Zong's trained in eye techniques as well, and his are as powerful as my Evil Golden Eye!

It was their first face off. Neither had said a word, and the opening round of an intense duel already carried out through a single glance.

The result startled Xiahou Zong even more so. Not only had his art been ineffectual, but it'd been dispersed by a countering gaze!

He'd never failed in a match of eye techniques before. Anything less than winning was essentially a defeat in his book.

His Scorching Sun Eye rivaled many of the arts displayed by his seniors, and in fact surpassed them. It was unstoppable. Even opponents more powerful than he sometimes fell victim to it.

And yet, a young nobody from the Eternal Sacred Land had proven him wrong today.

Xiahou Ying whispered by his side, "That's the one I was talking to you about, brother. Look at how cocky he is! He think he's better than anyone else! Hmph, how dare a former wandering cultivator be as reckless as him?"

Xiahou Zong stayed uncharacteristically quiet, a trace of surprise flashing through his eyes. He threw Jiang Chen another glance and was met with a meaningful smile—one tinted with derision and mockery.

Xiahou Zong burned with rage. Everything from Jiang Chen's eyes to his expression seemed to be taunting him.

"This is the Eternal Sacred Land, Zong'er!" one of the Xiaohou elders snapped in a low voice. He'd noticed something was amiss with Xiahou Zong. "Don't get into petty conflicts."

Xiahou Zong huffed, but managed to suppress his emotions. He knew he mustn't go overboard here. It wouldn't end well for him if he angered the three primes.

"Brother, that guy..."

"That guy's an interesting one, Ying'er." Xiahou Zong smiled, his anger controlled and contained. "He's also trained in eye techniques, and his gaze almost rivals mine. How unusual... Since when was there a talent like him in the sacred land?"

“Hmph, so what? He should pray he doesn’t meet you during the sword competition, or he’ll suffer a terrible defeat!” Xiahou Ying scrunched up her nose and pursed her lips, her tone bitingly angry. “Aren’t I right, brother?”

“Of course,” Xiahou Zong responded coolly.

Ziju Min was right beside Jiang Chen. Naturally, he’d felt the conflict between two youths. He was shocked by the outcome as well.

Shao Yuan had daringly taunted Xiahou Zong and come out undefeated! The short match ending in a draw was a startlingly impressive feat.

Before Shao Yuan, no one in the sacred land could even tie with Xiahou Zong. None of the Five were able to go against him either. This had always been a great source of concern and shame for the sacred land.

As the proclaimed wielder of authority in the Eternal Divine Nation, the sacred land should’ve, in theory, produced the best and most geniuses. And yet House Xiahou was an exception, causing all of the young geniuses in the sacred land to lose their confidence.

Xiahou Zong made every genius in the sacred land pale in comparison, making them unremarkable. In some sense, he was dulling and suppressing their shine. Naturally, the sacred land wanted the situation to change.

Therefore, the three primes had high hopes for Jiang Chen. They had sensed the clash between Jiang Chen and Xiahou Zong as well, but as seniors, they weren’t going to mention the fight between the young folks.

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

Chapter 1728: Verbal Sparring

The ocular duel between the two young men was a minor scuffle at best. After testing the waters, Jiang Chen leisurely shifted his eyes away from Xiahou Zong. He ignored the Xiahou genius completely.

Instead, he gazed at the nearby section that belonged to House Yan. Six people were present there: the patriarch, Yan Wanjun, Yan Zhenhuai, Yan Qinghuang, an elder who was a pill dao specialist—and surprisingly, even Ling Bi’er.

Dressed in light-blue clothes, Huang’er gave off an elegant and exquisite aura. Jiang Chen’s eyes radiated a faint sheen of gentleness as they settled upon her.

It was a gaze imperceptible to most. However, there was someone who’d been paying attention ever since Jiang Chen’s appearance. Xiahou Ying’s intuition immediately told her everything she wanted to know.

There was something awry about Shao Yuan’s gaze. Had Shao Yuan fallen in love with that girl from House Yan during his time there?

She had discovered unexplored frontier. Xiahou Ying elbowed her brother. “Hey brother, you’ve got trouble in front of you.”

There was a hint of laziness in Xiahou Zong's smile. "Trouble? Don't exaggerate, Ying'er."

"I'm not lying. I've noticed something I'm sure you'll care about." Xiahou Ying delivered her words with the maximum amount of melodrama possible.

"What?" Xiahou Zong smiled coolly. "Don't try to scare me. I've seen plenty of that tactic from you since we were young."

"I'm not just trying to scare you, honest! Haven't you noticed?" Xiahou Ying leered. "Someone's trying to steal something from you."

"Oh? How so?" Xiahou Zong arched an eyebrow.

"That Shao Yuan snuck a look at Yan Qinghuang just now. His gaze didn't look right. I recognize that kind of look from a mile away." Xiahou Ying smacked her lips, quite indignant. "No wonder that arrogant idiot ignored me all this time. His heart was on another girl all along! What's so good about her, huh? How does she compare to me?"

Xiahou Zong furrowed his brow. "Did you really see it clearly, Ying'er?"

"I make stuff up about other things, brother, but why would I do that about this?" Xiahou Ying was vehement in her assertion. "I swear I saw him sneak a look at Yan Qinghuang with sweetness in his eyes. There's no way he could feign that kind of thing."

Xiahou Ying was furious. Shao Yuan was seriously blind! She was a young lady of House Xiahou with impeccable looks, figure, and status. What part of her was inferior to that House Yan chit?

Yan Qinghuang could only pretend to be pitifully frosty. What else was she good for?

To Xiahou Ying, Yan Qinghuang was a hypocrite. She merely pretended to be icy to stave off anyone approaching her, so that she could appease House Xiahou and her brother.

Therefore, the Xiahou miss was furious about Jiang Chen's tenderness. She added fuel to the flame as she recounted the incident to her brother.

Xiahou Zong felt nothing towards Huang'er, but he had always seen her as his private property. No one else was allowed to touch her or even think about her.

In Eternal Divine Nation, anyone who did, that he found out about, was made to pay a painful price. For Xiahou Zong, anyone that dared think about Yan Qinghuang showed him great disrespect. Thus, he was incited to anger once more by his sister's words.

The causes of his outbursts both times had been a single look. The only difference was that instead of provoking him directly this time, it touched upon what he considered his exclusive property.

"That bastard!" Xiahou Zong gritted his teeth, cold killing intent filling his eyes. "One day, I'll make him regret being born!"

Xiahou Ying giggled. "Brother, don't you have a sense of danger? That House Yan girl has been free for so long. Get her to come to the house in a bit. Otherwise, someone in a closer position than you might..."

“Shut up.” Xiahou Zong knew what she was getting at. He wouldn’t allow even his own sister to insinuate such a thing. To him, it was the vilest of blasphemies.

Xiahou Ying stuck out her tongue for a brief moment, but didn’t go on. Her brother’s ire had been successfully ignited already. Both Yan Qinghuang and that Shao Yuan kid were going to suffer!

This brief interlude didn’t affect the progress of the festival. When the three primes appeared, all the other guests rose.

“We are honored with everyone’s presence here today.” The first prime smiled. “Almost every pill dao giant is gathered here for the festival. Aside from hospitality, all I can offer is our best effort in making your trip worthwhile.

“Please seat yourselves, and excuse any sparseness in our accommodations. Since this festival is related to pill dao, I’d like to give the floor to Elder Ziju for the rest of the event.”

The first prime handed the matter over to Ziju Min after only a few brief words. The elder had made ample preparations for the festival.

He wasn’t especially prominent in the pill dao world of the divine nations, but he had the advantage of being on home turf. Furthermore, Shao Yuan served as the bulwark that bolstered his confidence.

Clearing his throat, his voice rang out. “I believe everyone seated here today has already seen the Taiyi Skymender Pill. Even if that isn’t the case, surely you’ve heard of it. This festival is being held in commemoration of the pill’s unveiling before the world. We wanted every party in attendance here today to share our joy in embracing this momentous occasion.”

Ziju Min was relatively proficient at making speeches. There was no end to his eloquence once begun. Even Jiang Chen was secretly impressed.

“Though we have never been much of a frontrunner among the Ten in pill dao, I believe that the Taiyi Skymender Pill heralds the fact that we will become a faction not to be ignored in pill dao. I trust that our own improvement will also translate to our peers here in Myriad Abyss as a whole. Only through healthy competition will pill dao thrive. Don’t you agree, friends?”

There was an overwhelming response from the audience. Of course, most of it came from factions within and close to the Eternal Sacred Land.

Those who were on lukewarm terms with the sacred land only offered perfunctory smiles. They didn’t put much credence in Ziju Min’s grand words.

“Elder Ziju, was it?” someone piped up. “This is the first time I’ve heard of your name. What is your relation to the Elder Zimu of yesteryear, if I may ask?”

The tone of this interloper was nothing less than arrogant. It came from a pill dao forefather from Nirvana Divine Nation, a decrepit old man who sported a shock of white hair and a matching beard.

The statement was truthfully, quite rude.

Ziju Min smiled faintly. “Elder Ziju was a senior that I respected.”

“Haha, you’re not related to him by blood then? I wonder how much you’ve learned from him?”
Another pointed question, delivered in the same surly manner.

Unfortunately, old men in the world of pill dao had a seniority that they could leverage to reasonable effect over their juniors.

Sensing Ziju Min in a tight spot, Jiang Chen interjected coolly from the side. “Elder Ziju was very clear. Elder Zimu was a respected senior of the Eternal Sacred Land, and thus only Elder Ziju’s peer. There’s no teacher-student relationship between the two. Are you playing the fool, or are your brains not up to the task? What a shame that you can’t even put two and two together.”

It was high time for him to defend the senior who’d helped him so much. Jiang Chen knew that he was destined to make enemies of a portion of people here, so he wasn’t afraid of doing so in the slightest.

As expected, the forefather jumped with furor at his words. “You brat of a kid, I bet you’re still wet behind the ears! Do you know what courtesy is? What right do you have to speak?”

“Courtesy is relative. You’re supposed to be a guest, but you’ve gone and asked something that proves your senility. How are we supposed to respect you? For that matter, what right do you have to speak? Your hair is whiter and your beard longer, but what else are you good for?”

Jiang Chen struck back with twice the edge.

He had observed the old man secretly communicating with the pill dao giants from Flora Divine Nation. They’d traded several meaningful looks with each other. It was obvious that they’d already become temporary allies.

Predictably, someone from Flora Divine Nation snickered almost immediately. “These times are strange indeed. The late Elder Zimu had a quick temper, but he was overall a pretty upstanding gentleman. The standards are certainly declining with each generation.”

This new speaker was a middle-aged man near Shi Xuan, perhaps his disciple or follower. His sinister comment darkened the atmosphere instantly.

The three primes remained completely calm, apparently determined not to interfere in the festival’s proceedings. They knew that verbal conflicts were unavoidable, but these skirmishes were never deciders of the final victory.

Pill dao skill would be the most influential factor in the end. This was only the warm-up stage. What was a little banter to the event?

Jiang Chen glanced coldly at the middle-aged man from Flora Divine Nation.

“It looks like the Flora Sacred Land has no problem with declining standards,” he chuckled suddenly.

“Of course not. In the pill dao world, we always have the highest standards. Our geniuses are perennially top-notch.”

“Oh, is that so? Why do they look like they were fished out from the bargain bin? Of course there’s no problem with declining standards. If every generation is trash, you can’t exactly go lower than that,” Jiang Chen sneered.

Ziju Min gawked. He hadn't expected Shao Yuan to be so cutting. The young man had saved him from the awkward situation. Despite the pill sovereign's eloquence, he lacked the rapier wit required to lay down the hurt in arguments.

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

Chapter 1729: Increasing Provocation

Everyone from the Eternal Sacred Land was heavily taken aback, to say nothing of Ziju Min. They had thought that Shao Yuan was a calm and mild-mannered genius. Who would've thought that he'd be so electrifying when doling out the insults?

To Jiang Chen, the logic was simple. He needed to do all that he could to prove himself in the festival, to show the Eternal Sacred Land that he was worthy of their full support.

The middle-aged man hadn't expected the young man to dare talk back, and even publicly jeer that the Flora Divine Nations produced nothing but trash! How foolish must he be to do so??

The man scoffed sharply and snapped back in a frigid tone, "Your foolishness sure makes you bold. If we truly are so useless, what does that make you losers from the Eternal Sacred Land?"

"If I remember correctly, one of your own lost to Master Shi Xuan in a pill dao match, which resulted in an inner demon leading to death. That wasn't so long ago." He shook his head mockingly as he spoke. "I suppose that's only to be expected. You're young and inexperienced. Ignorance is bliss."

That was a personal attack.

Those of the Eternal Sacred Land fumed at his words. This was a festival that they were hosting, and those of the Flora Sacred Land had truly crossed a line.

Jiang Chen smiled lazily, unaffected by the riposte. "I heard about what happened to Elder Zimu, but I was told that a certain someone cheated and defeated the elder by a hair. Afterwards, he used the incident to gain fame he didn't deserve and lied to the world for decades."

He speculated wildly, punting the blame to Shi Xuan. He didn't know if Shi Xuan really had cheated in his match with Elder Zimu, and neither did he care. He simply wanted to provoke Shi Xuan and his compatriots.

As expected, Shi Xuan's closed eyes snapped open, shooting daggers at Jiang Chen. The target smiled faintly, meeting the gaze directly.

"Have I said something wrong, Master Shi Xuan?" Jiang Chen said with a half smile. "You know very well what I'm talking about, don't you?"

Shi Xuan had never been the tolerant sort. His expression darkened as he turned to Ziju Min. "Even though you aren't among the top in Myriad Abyss, Ziju Min, you do have some level of recognition. How can you let a immature brat spout nonsense in such a festival? Aren't you worried about becoming a laughingstock?"

Ziju Min smiled calmly and shook his head, perfectly composed. "No one will laugh at him, and no one is in any place to laugh at him."

“Oh?” Shi Xuan brayed with unrestrained laughter. “Since when has the Eternal Sacred Land become so untouchable that no one is allowed to call you out?”

“If you knew how to refine the Taiyi Skymender Pill, Daoist Shi Xuan, then you’d be entitled to your pride as well,” Ziju Min responded coolly. “But alas, you don’t.”

What? Everyone turned to Jiang Chen in shock.

They’d heard that the pill was invented by a young man, but had been doubtful. They’d assumed that the Eternal Sacred Land had spread the false information to obfuscate the truth. The name Shao Yuan was on everyone’s lips, but no one knew who he was and what he looked like.

So this sharp-tongued young man was the one they’d been obsessing over?

The area fell silent. Several pairs of curious eyes flicked to Jiang Chen, trying to discern what was so special about the young man. At first glance, he seemed unremarkable.

After careful consideration however, they realized that his composure alone was something that many young men didn’t have. He could be viewed as bold and courageous type in facing so many pill dao figureheads and seniors with dignity and grace. He’d dared even mock Shi Xuan!

Shi Xuan considered Jiang Chen with a smirk and cackled derisively. “Since Elder Zimu’s death, the Eternal Sacred Land’s pill dao has really been in decline. How dare you tell such a crude lie? Do you take us all for idiots?”

There was a natural order to the pill dao world. A young man couldn’t have refined a pill that required such high level of skills like the Taiyi Skymender Pill, let alone produce such a perfect end product with flawless technique.

“There are many geniuses in the pill dao world,” Ziju Min retorted. “Daoist Shi Xuan once claimed to be a young genius as well. Are you in denial that a young man has surpassed you? Do you think no one can do what you can’t? Are you so confident that your pill dao talent has been and always will be the best?”

Ziju Min’s arguments were clearly directed at Shi Xuan personally.

Shi Xuan scoffed in the face of his anger. “Even Elder Zimu wasn’t good enough to talk to me like that back then, Ziju Min. You? You’re not even on his level. Do you think you can provoke me with this little trick? Not at all.”

“Provoke you?” Jiang Chen laughed. “You think too much, Shi Xuan. But of one thing I’m sure of, and that you must have cheated to win over Elder Zimu. The truth will be known one day.”

“How dare you!” Shi Xuan shot to his feet with a loud slam of the table. He placed his hands behind his back to proclaim haughtily, “The Eternal Sacred Land has produced no one on the same level as me over the past ten thousand years, and will not for the next ten thousand!”

Jiang Chen remarked pointedly with a laugh, “Oh? Then why don’t you show us with a Taiyi Skymender Pill?”

“A pill dao master’s ability isn’t measured by one pill,” Shi Xuan responded coolly. “Who knows if the pill really is your work? Even if it is, you may have picked up an ancient recipe by accident, which tells us only how lucky you are, but nothing about your abilities.”

Shi Xuan was convinced that the young man must have found a recipe, if he’d really been the one to refine it in the first place. He couldn’t have developed the pill himself.

Acquiring a recipe was simply a matter of luck; it had nothing to do with one’s foundation and ability in pill dao.

Jiang Chen hid a smile at this development. He’s right where I want him.

“You don’t have to worry where the Taiyi Skymender Pill comes from, Shi Xuan. The truth is, you don’t know how to refine it.”

“Ha, so what? Of all the pills you know, the Taiyi Skymender Pill may be the only one I don’t. But of all the pills I know, ten generations worth of the Eternal Sacred Land might not be able to grasp them. That’s the difference between our ability and foundations in pill dao. Got it?”

Shi Xuan was derisive, and suddenly felt that it was beneath himself to argue with a young man. He normally had better control over his emotions. However, something about the damn brat made it difficult for him to manage his anger.

“Foundations?” Jiang Chen chortled. “Shi Xuan, do you think Flora Divine Nation is the only faction in Myriad Abyss who has a basis in pill dao? Do you really think you’re better than anyone from the Eternal Sacred Land? Are you sure the Taiyi Skymender Pill is your only blindspot?”

“Do you disagree?” Shi Xuan scoffed.

Jiang Chen grinned ever more radiantly. “It’s a little too kind to say you’ve sought bliss in ignorance. You obviously don’t use your brain at all.” The young man snorted. “You’ve been building an illustrious name for decades. Since you’re so confident, why don’t we solve this issue once and for all?”

“Ha, are you next going to say that the Eternal Sacred Land will rewrite history? That you’re going to challenge me to avenge Elder Zimu?” Shi Xuan sneered. “If so, I’m afraid you’ll be disappointed. I don’t care enough to accept your challenge. Do you know why? Your pill dao isn’t good enough to deserve my time.”

Jiang Chen stared at him mockingly. “Don’t mistake bravado for real courage, Shi Xuan. Others may not be able to tell, but I can see the insecurities in your heart. You talk the talk, but can you walk the walk? Why don’t you show us your true talent?”

“With you as my opponent?” Shi Xuan shook his head haughtily. “I’m not interested in bullying a mewling brat.”

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. “What if I bet the recipe for the Taiyi Skymender Pill?”

Shi Xuan perked up. “What do you mean?”

As Jiang Chen expected, no one could resist the Taiyi Skymender Pill, not even Shi Xuan. His appetite had obviously been whetted as soon as the recipe was mentioned.

“We’ll have a match with the pill recipe as the prize. You win, you take the recipe. You lose, you admit you cheated in your match against Elder Zimu.”

“Kid, are you sure you speak for the Eternal Sacred Land?” Shi Xuan pointed out coldly.

Jiang Chen shrugged. “The pill is my invention. Of course I have the right to decide how it’s used. Elder Ziju and the three primes will understand my decision.”

Shi Xuan laughed, his gaze shifting to Ziju Min. “Is this reckless young man authorized to make such a decision, Ziju Min?”

“Every pill dao figurehead has gathered here today to bear witness. We always keep our promises. What do you have to fear?” came the indifferent response.

Shi Xuan broke into laughter. “Good, good. I’ve underestimated the Eternal Sacred Land! You may be ignorant, but you are bold. That much is admirable. Since you refuse to give up until hell itself is staring you down, I’ll make an exception and teach you another lesson!”

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

Chapter 1730: Rules of the Wager

The Taiyi Skymender Pill was the sole reason Shi Xuan had come to the festival. In his eyes, all of the Eternal Sacred Land was beneath him. It was self-degradation to even attend the event.

He was here to fish in troubled waters, and hadn’t expected the Eternal Sacred Land to become so full of bluff and bluster all of a sudden. They’d sent a young man to provoke him again and again, even challenging him to a match like a mad dog!

In his opinion, no one in this sacred land was worthy enough to even be his disciple, let alone be his opponent. Only a fool would challenge him in pill dao.

The one thing all geniuses had in common was unlimited self-confidence. However, it was odd that a young man would insist on antagonizing Shi Xuan to these ends. Something wasn’t as it seemed.

Though Shi Xuan felt there must be a catch, he wasn’t worried. He was confident that the Eternal Sacred Land wasn’t good enough to make him fall into one of their traps. In the end, the only thing that mattered was one’s understanding of pill dao.

He was in enemy territory though, and wasn’t about to be careless because of hubris. He smiled and raised cupped fist salutes at the guests around him.

“Most Myriad Abyss pill dao masters have gathered here today. I didn’t intend to steal anyone’s thunder, but the Eternal Sacred Land has been overly arrogant. I’d like all of you to bear witness to this match. I don’t want people to accuse me of bullying a junior.”

Before anyone could utter a word, Jiang Chen objected with a faint smile. “There’s no need to justify yourself or worry that I’ll cheat. The Taiyi Skymender Pill is my invention. I can do as I wish with it. If you lose though, you must admit to winning against Elder Zimu with unseemingly tricks.”

In truth, Shi Xuan had intentionally provoked the elder at the time, but he really hadn't cheated. However, he was too proud to defend himself. He sneered. "I don't care enough to argue with you. How about you? Dare you make an oath that you won't deceive me with a false recipe?"

"Of course," remarked Jiang Chen coolly.

Shi Xuan nodded. "Alright, go on then."

"Just me? Aren't you going to swear an oath as well?" Jiang Chen scoffed. "Do you think there's no chance of you losing?"

Shi Xuan threw his head back and roared with laughter. "You really think you'll be able to defeat me?"

"It's a bet," retorted Jiang Chen. He wasn't going to let Shi Xuan off the hook. "Of course we have to be on equal grounds. Or are you so morally corrupted that you can't do even that?"

Shi Xuan paused and responded coolly, "I won fair and square against Elder Zimu. It'll be ridiculous to use that as my stake."

"Then what are you betting on?" Jiang Chen drawled.

"Hmph, ignorant brat. If you can defeat me, you can ask for anything."

"Anything?" Jiang Chen smiled lazily. "What about you becoming my pill slave for eternity, with no chance of liberation?"

"How dare you!" Behind Shi Xuan, the others from Flora Divine Nation widened their eyes in fury.

Shi Xuan leveled Jiang Chen with a frigid stare. "That's bold of you to say, young man. Aren't you worried that you'll die prematurely thanks to your big talk? Don't you fear being smited by celestial thunder for your impertinence?"

Jiang Chen broke into laughter. "You scared?"

Shi Xuan's expression darkened. "If you want to enrage me, kid, consider yourself highly successful. However, anyone who offends me in pill dao tends to suffer miserably."

"Is that so? Are you going to take the bet or not?"

"And what if I do?" Shi Xuan scowled. "Do you think you can win?"

"Swear your oath!" Jiang Chen stated coldly.

"Wait!" The middle-aged man following Shi Xuan interjected. "You're betting only a pill recipe, and yet you want my master to bet with his whole life? What a bargain this is!"

Jiang Chen smirked. "Shi Xuan, it seems that your men aren't particularly confident in you. If your victory is a guarantee, then the bet's only going to bring you great profit."

"Stand down," Shi Xuan said calmly to the middle-aged man. "This brat's cunning, but he isn't good enough to play tricks with me."

He was highly confident. The Eternal Sacred Land wouldn't be able to defeat him by sending a random young man.

Unlike other fields, in the world of pill dao, even a young man who'd encountered a bit of opportunity wouldn't become an expert overnight. He needed time to digest the knowledge and to accumulate experience. This young man looked to be in his thirties. There couldn't be all that much to him.

Shi Xuan wasn't at all worried that he'd lose.

Jiang Chen took the initiative and swore an oath, looking at Shi Xun afterwards, pressure mounting with the gaze. At this point, Shi Xuan would be considered a coward if he showed even a trace of regret or caution. Someone of his status would never allow that.

He swore an oath in a cool tone, not going easy on himself. "If I lose the match, I'll be your pill slave for the entirety of my life without complaint. If I go back on my word, I'll take my life immediately. Otherwise, may the heavens and earth punish me with death."

Jiang Chen threw a bizarre smile at Shi Xuan and murmured, seemingly to himself, "Congratulations to me for getting a good pill slave."

Shi Xuan huffed frostily. The young man was still trying to antagonize him. He wasn't going to pay it any mind anymore. He didn't know why the young man was so confident, but that wasn't important. He would win as long as he performed at his usual level. "What are the rules, brat?"

"Let's make the rules according to what you said. How about it?"

Shi Xuan paused. "What I said?"

"Didn't you say that out of all the pills I know, the Taiyi Skymender Pill is the only one you can't refine, while everyone from the sacred land doesn't know what you know? Let's make that the framework. We'll take turns proposing a question for the other over three rounds and see who knows more. Whoever knows the more answers wins the bet. What do you say?"

Everyone's attention was caught. The match was going to be very challenging.

Every pill expert had their trade secrets - recipes that only they themselves knew. If both sides knew nothing about the subject that the other posed, that round would be a tie. The overall bet might end with no winner.

Shi Xuan paused to go over the rules, surprised. He had thought that Jiang Chen would propose something unorthodox. He'd been ready to turn the boy down and amend the rules to make the match an honest one.

Jiang Chen's proposal however, allowed no room for cheating. The only thing that mattered was their foundation and skillset. Shi Xuan couldn't argue with that. If he did, it'd be as good as admitting that he was wary of the young man.

What was more, he believed that the rules were in his favor. He was confident in the basis of their competition. Jiang Chen was young and couldn't be all that knowledgeable. There was absolutely no reason for Shi Xuan to refuse.

He nodded. "That works. But have you considered the possibility that neither of us are able to answer any of the questions the other poses, or the opposite? Isn't it going to be a tie then?"

"Easy. We'll each propose another three questions. We'll continue the process until there's a winner."

Jiang Chen's boldness appeared incredulous to Shi Xuan. Just why was the young man so confident? Even now, did he still think that he could win?

Shi Xuan tried to calm down and not let the young man get to him. Perhaps that was exactly what the young man wanted: to put on a front to distract him. Having regained his calm, he nodded. "We'll do as you said. However, this is a match between gentlemen. I've admitted to not knowing the Taiyi Skymender Pill. You aren't going to make that one of your questions, are you?"

Jiang Chen laughed. "Don't worry, I'm not going to use that pill as my challenge when it's my forfeit. I'm going to defeat you fairly and leave no room for debate."

Shi Xuan sniffed. "Enough with your posturing."

Jiang Chen shrugged. "You'll change your perceptions soon enough."

The two of them exchanged a look without a word and fell into deep thought. The game was on.

The participants hotly anticipated the proceedings. In the beginning, they'd thought that the Eternal Sacred Land was simply running their mouth to vent their anger about what had happened to Elder Zimu.

Now though, they'd changed their mind. They'd realized that this was a trap the Eternal Sacred Land had designed with great care. Why was the sacred land so confident in the young man that they were letting him challenge Shi Xuan with the Taiyi Skymender Pill as the forfeit?

Weren't they worried that he'd lose? It'd be a farce if the recipe fell into Shi Xuan's hands as a result.

The other factions in the Eternal Divine Nations were just as confused as the guests. On top of that, they couldn't be more concerned. Why would Shao Yuan so recklessly challenge Shi Xuan?

Shi Xuan ranked among the top ten, or even top five in Myriad Abyss in pill dao. Shao Yuan might be talented, but he was only a young man who'd just begun to make a name for himself.