

## Three Realms 1741

### Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

#### Chapter 1741: The Gauntlet Thrown For the Sword Competition

Xiahou Zong spoke with an intimidating and emotionless tone, gazing at Jiang Chen like he was sizing up a dead man. The youths present shuddered in response, dread settling in their bellies.

Jiang Chen stood his ground and calmly met Xiahou Zong's gaze.

"I'm not interested in taking anything from you, Xiahou Zong, but Huang'er has never been and never will be yours! Listen carefully, I don't care if you style yourself some bullshit top genius. If you dare stand in my way, I won't hesitate to send you to hell."

Xiahou Zong broke into hearty laughter. "You sure talk big, kid. People would think you're an advanced empyrean expert with the way you talk. You're going to send me to hell?"

"I am," Jiang Chen said plainly. "I hope you'll participate in the sword competition. I hope you aren't as weak as the other one-hit trash from House Xiahou."

House Xiahou was thoroughly his enemy. There would be no love lost between them no matter what he said. The moment he decided to come to Eternal Divine Nation, he'd already declared war against House Xiahou. There was no need to be tactful or shy away from what he really meant.

A violent light exploded in Xiahou Zong's eyes. "You're the one who mentioned the competition, kid. I hope you don't lose before we fight, or I'll consider you unworthy of my attention!"

"Pray for good luck yourself," Jiang Chen calmly responded. "Don't end up dead in the streets before I can do you the favor."

The patriarch found no joy in seeing the two geniuses fighting over a young woman from his house. He knew he'd failed to please either side. House Xiahou would continue to sneer at him with contempt, while Shao Yuan must have been disappointed by his indecisiveness.

His mood grew heavy. When Shao Yuan had been in House Yan, he'd been friendly with the young man. Now however, he'd offended both the young genius and House Xiahou.

The Xiahou elder who'd spoken earlier scoffed. "First Prime, it'd be inappropriate for us old men to get involved in the conflict between young men. Considering the situation, why don't we let their fight over Yan Qinghuang run its course? The outcome of the sword competition will decide her fate. If Shao Yuan wins, Yan Qinghuang will be his, and Xiahou Zong won't trouble her again. If Xiahou Zong wins, the Eternal Sacred Land mustn't bring up the marriage proposal again. What do you say?"

The first prime responded with a faint smile, "The Eternal Sacred Land stands by our geniuses. What matters is Shao Yuan's opinion. We support whatever decisions he makes. If he agrees to let their fight determine the girl's fate, this seat will not intervene."

It was clear from her words that Jiang Chen had their full support.

Jiang Chen nodded. "We'll fight in the sword competition. However, I won't give up on her even if I lose."

“What if the battle ends in a tie?” someone asked curiously.

“Impossible!” Jiang Chen and Xiahou Zong shouted in unison. There was no chance that the fight would end in a tie. They’d be giving it their all.

“Young Shao Yuan, we in the martial dao world must be gracious even in conflict,” the elder from House Xiahou disapproved. “You just said you wouldn’t give up no matter the outcome of the competition. That’s against the rules!”

“The rules?” Jiang Chen scoffed. “When has House Xiahou ever cared about rules? Would a rules-abiding faction force Huang’er to be a cultivation vessel? She’s a human being, not a cat or a dog.”

“We’re giving you a fair chance,” Xiahou Zong snapped frigidly. “Are you going to admit to being a coward with all these remarkable heroes as your witnesses?”

“I’m going to fight you because I dislike you and want to eliminate you,” Jiang Chen responded calmly. “It has nothing to do with Huang’er. Huang’er and I are in love. We don’t need House Xiahou’s approval to be together.”

Jiang Chen was the epitome of being unreasonable when he set his mind to it. He left House Xiahou with no room to argue.

Xiahou Ying stuck her hands on her hip and lashed out. “How can a man like you be so shameless, Shao Yuan? My brother’s giving you a fair shot, yet you refuse to follow the rules. What a poor excuse of a genius!”

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. “It’s better than being a phony like you.”

“Enough!” exclaimed Ziju Min. “Stop wasting your breath. The decision has been made.”

He didn’t want the pointless argument to continue. Xiahou Ying was one of his named disciples. It’d reflect poorly on him for her to make a scene. The Eternal Sacred Land had finally recovered their reputation in the festival. They mustn’t give the others any reasons to mock them.

Xiahou Zong didn’t want to stay a second longer. He threw Jiang Chen a cold glance and tapped his thumb and forefinger at his opponent. It was an insulting hand gesture in Eternal Divine Nation.

Jiang Chen ignored him with a derisive smile.

The Skymender Festival was at an end.

“You should stay here for a few days rather than returning to House Yan, sis.” Yan Qingsang went up to Huang’er. As a genius from the sacred land, it was within his right to invite his cousin to stay for some time. “You aren’t against the idea, are you, grandpa?” he added deliberately.

Yan Wanjun nodded seriously. “You should spend a few days here, Huang’er. Get some fresh air. You’ve suffered the most over the years. It’s my weakness that put you through this pain. Stay as long as you want. If anyone in the family is against that, have them come to me!”

Yan Wanjun had grown assertive after his change of perspective.

The patriarch smiled wryly. "Elder Wanjun, you know I've always valued you greatly. What happened today... well, let the young men fight it out. House Yan can't afford to offend neither of these colossal factions."

"You can't afford to offend either, but ended up offending both." Yan Wanjun huffed. "Patriarch, please forgive me for my recklessness today."

"There's nothing to forgive." The patriarch seemed to understand that they wouldn't be able to take Huang'er with them today. He might as well play the generous leader.

Jiang Chen saw the guests off with Ziju Min. Each of them exchanged pleasantries with him and issued invitations with great enthusiasm. He responded in a friendly manner. He didn't turn them down, but didn't promise them anything either.

The delegates from Flora Divine Nation left with rage and resignation. They'd come with three pill dao sovereigns, yet returned with only two.

To make things worse, that news would soon reach every part of the Myriad Abyss Island. For months, everyone would be talking about how the once domineering master Shi Xuan had suffered a terrible defeat at the hands of a genius from the Eternal Sacred Land.

Shao Yuan would be the name on everyone's lips.

The world was this cruel at times. For every young genius who shot to fame, numerous people fell from grace as a result. It was how Shi Xuan had made a name for himself, and now he'd become fodder for the young man's success.

Shi Xuan seemed to have resigned himself to his fate. He didn't bid his compatriots farewell, but stood motionless near Jiang Chen like a mannequin.

Jiang Chen turned to Shi Xuan once the guests had all left.

He wasn't actually interested in taking Shi Xuan on as his pill slave. He simply wanted to humiliate the pill sovereign. He had no use for a pill slave or a helper. Shi Xuan would only be a burden. He was getting a headache thinking about how he should deal with his new acquisition.

He turned to Ziju Min for advice, who smiled. "He's your prize. You can do whatever you want with him. No one will say anything even if you hack him in two right now. He's a pill slave, which isn't any different from a regular slave."

The muscles in Shi Xuan's face spasmed. He'd submitted to this shameful fate because he wanted to conserve his strength and strike back one day. If Jiang Chen killed him, then his hopes to rise again would be nothing but a pipe dream.

Jiang Chen waved a hand in the air. "Lock him up for now to dull his sharp edges. I'll consider using him once he's tamed."

He knew that Shi Xuan was unlikely to wholly submit. Since he had no need for the pill master, the best solution for the time being was to tuck him out of the way.

Shi Xuan relaxed when he heard he wouldn't be executed. As long as he lived, there was a chance for him to make a comeback.

The three primes returned after sending the guests off and looked at Jiang Chen with great appreciation. He was pleasing to the eye no matter how one looked at him right now.

"Shao Yuan, you shouldn't so recklessly agree to fight Xiahou Zong in the sword competition. You haven't reached his level in martial dao yet."

"Isn't it odd that Xiahou Zong has shown such extraordinary talent young and remained undefeated among his peers? I wonder what heritage he's gained or what good fortune he's encountered."

Jiang Chen had a good grasp on Xiahou Zong's ability. When they'd clashed via eye techniques, he'd noticed that Xiahou Zong was miles ahead of other young geniuses in both presence and power.

Nonetheless, Jiang Chen had confidence in himself. There were still a few months before the sword competition. He believed that he had full chances of winning.

### Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

#### **Chapter 1742: The Festival Ends**

The biggest winner of the Skymender Festival was Jiang Chen, rather than the Eternal Sacred Land. He had won reputation and fame in Myriad Abyss as a whole, as well as the sacred land's support. More importantly, the danger looming over Huang'er was momentarily abated.

Yan Qingsang had used his status as a disciple of the sacred land to invite Huang'er to stay awhile. This was a completely reasonable request that served a twofold purpose: it would get rid of House Yan's surveillance as well as the risk of House Xiahou's interference.

In other words, it assuaged all of Jiang Chen's concerns.

After the conclusion of the Skymender Festival, Jiang Chen visited the Hall of Merit once more and received a warm welcome.

"Congratulations, young Shao Yuan. You've completed the sovereign mission 'Flames of Vengeance'. I certainly didn't expect it the first time I laid my eyes upon you." Gu Yunjin clucked his tongue. "Heroes certainly do distinguish themselves in their youth—that much has been made clear to me today."

There was some exaggeration in his tone, but his intentions were completely sincere.

"I had some luck on my side." Jiang Chen smiled.

"So what if you did? Your genius isn't diminished by it. How come other people don't get lucky, eh? Everyone knows how skillful Shi Xuan is."

"Haha, thank you, Elder Gu. If you praise me any more, I'll be too embarrassed to stay. I came to register the completion of my mission."

Now that the job was done, Jiang Chen wanted to cash in his contribution points. The mission could be considered successful only after the final paperwork was completed.

Gu Yunjin swiftly completed the documentation on the young man's behalf.

Seeing that he had no desire to stay, the older man couldn't resist interjecting, "Young Jiang Chen, the Hall of Merit has many more sovereign missions that are pill dao-related. Do you..."

"Elder Gu," Jiang Chen cut him off hastily. "Please let me go for today. The tournament of geniuses is at hand. I don't have much more time in the coming days to think about an unrelated mission."

Gu Yunjin roared with laughter. "Yes, yes, I suppose I'm being thoughtless. You have to put on a good show on the sacred land's behalf, young man! Tell the other factions in this nation that we are the rulers, and that we always will be!"

"I will do my best," Jiang Chen replied humbly. "Just like I did at the Skymender Festival. Heaven knows how it'll play out." There was a great deal of insinuation in his words.

After leaving the Hall of Merit, Jiang Chen visited the three primes to express his gratitude. Without their staunch support, he wouldn't have had such success at the festival, nor would Huang'er be able to remain as a guest of the sacred land.

It was because of the sacred land's influence that the Yan patriarch hadn't dared force Huang'er to go home. In fact, no one from House Yan had expressed any dissent.

House Yan had been cowardly to the extreme for many years. They feared House Xiahou, which meant they didn't want to anger the Eternal Sacred Land either. The latter was likely more fearsome than the former once riled up.

"There's no need for thanks, Shao Yuan. As a genius of the sacred land, you are worthy of unconditional support when you display sufficient strength and talent."

"The tournament is soon," the first prime encouraged, "and Xiahou Zong perceives you as his rival. You must be cautious. His martial dao talent is remarkable. Don't underestimate him."

The three primes knew Shao Yuan could defeat opponents higher than his level, but Xiahou Zong was on an entirely different one himself.

Xiahou Zong was the cream of the crop. Shao Yuan did fine against ordinary opponents, but he necessarily have a good time against the Xiahou genius even at the same level.

Xiahou Zong had never been defeated by anyone with the same cultivation level as him before, which included a few experienced elders. This was why there was such a big gap between him and the rest of the nation's geniuses and why they felt powerless before him. His martial fame had been acquired through battle after battle of hard work.

Jiang Chen wasn't in the habit of underestimating any opponent, and Xiahou Zong—an actually skilled one—was no different.

"Don't worry, honored primes. I will approach my fight with him with utmost discretion."

"Just so. We've witnessed your pill dao talent, and we've gotten a taste of your martial dao potential in the Nine Winding Caves as well. However, we hope that you'll be able to develop the latter over time, and astound the world with your incredible prowess, just like you did here at the Skymender Festival." The first prime lavished Jiang Chen with splendid praise.

Jiang Chen smiled. "I will give it my all."

After saying farewell to the three primes, he finally had a quiet moment to himself. Back at his residence, Yan Qingsang, Huang'er, and others had been long awaiting him.

There was no need for the two lovebirds to restrain themselves for the sake of public decorum.

Yan Qingsang coughed softly, signaling for them to tone it down.

Jiang Chen frowned, a little upset. "Brother Yan, if your throat is sore, you can go back to your place to rest."

Yan Qingsang was dismayed. "Brother, you can't ditch me after I'm no longer useful! My sister wouldn't be able to stay in the sacred land without my invitation.

"Plus, Princess Bi is here as well. You should think about other people's feelings!" he cackled.

He was actually perfectly fine with the romance between Jiang Chen and Huang'er, but his tongue was as acerbic as ever.

"You always have something to say, huh," Jiang Chen laughed. "I guess I'll let this one slide. You did contribute somewhat."

"What do you mean, somewhat? I contributed a lot!" Yan Qingsang raised his voice with melodrama. Everyone burst into laughter.

The atmosphere became very harmonious for a time. Ling Bi'er stood to the side cooperatively, quietly watching Jiang Chen and Huang'er's reunion. There was only happiness in her heart for them.

The fact that only young people were present made Yan Qingsang even more enthusiastic in their ensuing conversation.

"Brother, I have to admit that you were pretty cool back there at the Skymender Festival. I understand why my cousin will only marry you now. If I were a girl, I might very well fall for you myself!" Yan Qingsang sighed.

"Good thing you aren't," Jiang Chen retorted with mock disgust.

Yan Qingsang rolled his eyes. "Still, I'm thankful that you're the only outlier of your kind in this world. If there were too many copies of you, how are we mortals supposed to pick up girls? They'd all swoon over them instead."

Jiang Chen rubbed his nose. His friend was saying more and more crazy things. "Enough of your banter. Have you taken the Taiyi Skymender Pill yet?"

"Not yet. I was just about to ask you if it was okay to take it now?"

"Duh! Take it now and go for empyrean realm as soon as possible. You don't want to have a bad performance at the tournament of geniuses, do you?"

"Not at all!" Yan Qingsang replied without hesitation, his answer loud and clear.

Jiang Chen took out two more Taiyi Skymender Pills; one for Huang'er, and the other for Ling Bi'er.

"I kept some of these pills back. It's a good time for you to use them, I think. The best part about these pills is that they have no side effects while boosting your chance of breaking through. Future cultivation progress won't be hampered."

The Taiyi Skymender Pill lacked the drawbacks that its fellows often contained, hence his choice of the pill in the first place.

Giggling, Huang'er took the proffered pills and stuffed one into Ling Bi'er's hand. "Take it, Sister Bi'er."

Ling Bi'er smiled gratefully at Jiang Chen as well.

Jiang Chen was pleased to see the girl brighten. "You're very pretty when you smile, senior sister. It's the melting of a glacier."

"Senior sister?" Yan Qingsang blinked. "Brother, you can't call people nonsensical things. Since when was she your senior sister?"

Huang'er smiled slightly. "Ever slow on the uptake, Brother Qingsang. If Sister Bi'er had no history with us, why would we have gone to all the trouble of bringing her here? You know, Bluesmoke's imperial family has been rushing us for quite a while now."

Yan Qingsang was truly stunned.

His intellect wasn't capable enough to have come to this conclusion. "So I was the only fool in the dark, eh." He rubbed his head awkwardly.

"You'll find out everything in due time," Jiang Chen remarked coolly. "You weren't dedicated enough before, so I couldn't tell you much."

The corner of Yan Qingsang's mouth twitched, but he understood. He'd opposed Jiang Chen and Huang'er's relationship for quite a while before. Now that they were all on the same page, there was no longer much need to keep things from him.

"Fine, fine, I admit that I wasn't great before. But I'm a new man now. The old me won't appear anymore. From now on, I'll be strong! I will make those who looked down on me look up instead!"

There was a hidden indignation suppressed in his heart. At the end of the Skymender Festival, Xiahou Zong had glanced at him with utter disdain. The emotion had been inherent, rather than feigned.

He didn't like being dismissed. The snubbing stimulated him and served as a new impetus.

"That's right, brother. My grandfather is of firmly supportive stance. I know you have some strong opinions about House Yan, but I do hope you won't end up taking your anger out on the house. I don't think Huang'er would like that either." There were notes of entreaty in Yan Qingsang's voice.

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

#### **Chapter 1743: Sudden Visitation From the Venerated Forefather**

Huang'er nodded a little at Yan Qingsang's words. Her limpid eyes looked pleadingly at Jiang Chen.

The object of her gaze sighed softly. "I was full of irritation with House Yan before I came to Myriad Abyss. That Elder Xi was especially rude back at Sacred Peafowl Mountain, throwing his weight around in front of everyone. At the time, I thought everyone in your house was the same kind of jerk. But now I see that's not the case. For example, Yan Qingsang and your grandfather Yan Wanjun are fine people."

Both grandchildren of the old man let out a sigh of relief. They knew that this meant Jiang Chen was no longer so biased against House Yan as he once was.

"It's not my place to criticize House Yan any further, but I'm sure of one thing: the patriarch would make an acceptable leader in peaceful times, but is completely unable to reverse the house's decline. His indecisive nature will actually bury the house's future. I'm not in a position to say these things, but since there are no outsiders here, I don't wish to hide my personal judgment. After all, I hope for your sakes that House Yan will rise rather than fall."

Yan Qingsang sighed. "There's no way to solve that problem. After our forefather died, the entire house became a kite with its string snapped."

Huang'er became silent as well.

A moment of silence was followed by a deep breath. "That's right, brother," said Yan Qingsang, "when are you planning to reveal your actual identity? I don't see much of a problem anymore. Being from the human domain isn't much of an issue in Myriad Abyss—we're not that xenophobic."

Jiang Chen laughed. "I don't want to cause too much unnecessary trouble. Plus, I did anger quite a few factions back at Winterdraw. If they connect the dots, I'd be the maker of my own problems."

He didn't exactly enjoy mystery, but it was more convenient to be 'Shao Yuan' rather than 'Jiang Chen' right now.

Ling Bi'er chose this moment to break her silence. "Junior brother, when are you returning to the human domain?"

She missed her homeland, her father, and her sister. The news that they were alive and well had only amplified her wistfulness. Disregarding the current situation, she wanted to throw away everything in Myriad Abyss and be reunited with her father and sister, back in the human domain.

She wasn't interested in her newfound status as a princess here, nor the prosperity that came with it. A peaceful, even plain life was enough for her. A simple kind of existence that she'd once led back at the old Regal Pill Palace, filled with quiet tranquility.

"It'll take a bit more time before we can go back to the human domain. There are at least two things that remain to be done."

"Which two?" Yan Qingsang asked curiously ahead of the others.

"First, House Xiahou must be stamped out to remove the possibility of any future trouble. Second, the heritage relating to the Great Formation of Heavenly Soul Confinement must be found. Only when the formation is reactivated can the demons be sealed away once more."

"Demons?" Yan Qingsang was flabbergasted. As a descendant of Myriad Abyss's settlers, his understanding of the demon race was limited to hearsay.



There was a ban on discussion of the demon race, and in fact the human domain and Divine Abyss Continent in general. As such, the young man found mention of them to be quite fresh.

“Does Myriad Abyss Island not know of the demon race?” Jiang Chen harrumphed.

“Not quite, but we only know that name. What are some characteristics of the race?”

“The demons?” Jiang Chen sighed softly. “A race that can easily destroy Divine Abyss entirely. If they are allowed to conquer the mainland, they will arrive in Myriad Abyss too one day. After conquering the entirety of Divine Abyss, they will subjugate us all as their slaves.”

The appearance of the demon race meant the beginning of a neverending nightmare for any other race that lived here.

“Are they really that strong?” Yan Qingsang was stunned.

“Far more than I can hope to describe. Myriad Abyss...” Jiang Chen wanted to go on, but Huang’er interrupted him with a wry smile.

“Brother Chen, that’s enough about Myriad Abyss’s ancient history. That topic is totally off-limits here because no one wants to admit they were descended from ancient deserters. Myriad Abyss’s historical records tell an entirely different story.”

It was a deceptive practice that fooled no one, not even fully themselves. Myriad Abyss had chosen to selectively forget about the past because of their shame.

“Ah right. Do you know if there’s a faction in Myriad Abyss that’s especially expert with formations?” Jiang Chen asked.

In the ancient times, the Great Formation of Heavenly Soul Containment hadn’t been an effort from a single faction. Many had cooperated to set it up and activate it.

Jiang Chen knew the portion that the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect had been responsible for, but not the parts that the Earth Bodhisattva Sect and others were in charge of. He knew nothing about the diagram and function of the formation, so he couldn’t even interpret and speculate anything.

That he had zero clues was the biggest tragedy of all. Therefore, he wanted to gather some information.

“Factions good with formations? Ninedark Divine Nation comes to mind first. According to the rumors, the Ninedark Sacred Land is one of the most complicated places in Myriad Abyss to navigate. Countless experts have gone inside, only to lose their way and be unable to return.”

“Ninedark Divine Nation?” Jiang Chen nodded. “I see. Were any representatives at the Skymender Festival?”

“Sure. Everyone from that nation tends to keep a low profile, though. They’re not that interested in pill dao as a rule. It would’ve been hard for you to notice them at all.”

Jiang Chen had an impression of a group that fit that description, and was about to mention it when the smooth slab of stone wall in front of his residence glowed brightly once more.

In the next moment, a powerful consciousness pressed down. The venerated forefather's image appeared on the slab.

"Not bad, Shao Yuan. You've achieved two out of the three goals I set for you. Only one test remains." The forefather went right for the throat.

A single sweep of his potent consciousness was enough to render everyone else unconscious.

"Now that they're out of the way, don't feel too pressured. I once promised you I would personally test you, and the right time for that draws near."

Jiang Chen was curious as to the forefather's intentions. He couldn't understand why a divine cultivator wouldn't rule over the sacred land himself. Why had he delegated his authority to the three primes? Was the forefather simply uninterested in worldly influence?

"A few questions first. I'd like to see how you answer them." The image of the forefather's consciousness retained its usual might.

"Please feel free, Venerated Forefather," Jiang Chen replied even-handedly.

"First question. Where are you really from? Remember, the test has already begun. I advise you to speak truth over falsehood," the forefather reminded.

Jiang Chen was a little taken aback. They'd discussed the human domain earlier. Did the forefather already know? Then, he remembered that the consciousness of a god could encompass hundreds of miles with a single thought. Perhaps the forefather already knew the details of their conversation here?

He needed to come clean. "I come from the human domain."

The forefather's eyes were as serene as ever. He didn't seem surprised by Jiang Chen's answer at all. After a while, he cracked a roguish smile. "Congratulations. In telling the truth, you've passed the first question.

"Second question."

Jiang Chen was shaken. The forefather really had perceived his origins. So he really was a divine cultivator! Only a god had such widespread reach with his consciousness.

"Do you feel that the residents of Myriad Abyss Island are descended from deserters in the ancient war? Is there great bias in your heart as to the inherited factions here?"

This question was just as pointed as the first. Jiang Chen found it very difficult to answer something so ingrained in his heart.

Gritting his teeth after a moment, he nodded. "The information I discovered back in the human domain tells me so, yes."

"Third question. Did you acquire many ancient heritages in the human domain?"

"Yes." Jiang Chen saw no reason to deny this.

The forefather stopped with his questioning here. "Alright," he sighed softly, "that's enough for now."

Jiang Chen let out a breath of relief, but his heart remained anxious. Was the forefather satisfied with his answers? The second especially could have potentially angered him.

The forefather mused for a long time before exhaling. "Is Jiang Chen your true name? You removed the Generation Binding Curse upon that House Yan girl, yes? There wasn't a heritage as impressive as yours even in ancient times. I wonder if you really are a reincarnated god?"

This was a subject of keen interest for the old man. Gossip had circulated to that effect; apparently, at least part of Jiang Chen's skill came from his awakening memories.

The young man himself was unsure how to reply.

### Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

#### **Chapter 1744: Staggering Secret Intelligence**

The venerated forefather smiled slightly. "You don't have to answer. True god incarnates are rare, but they do exist in Myriad Abyss. One such example is... Xiahou Zong."

"What?!" exclaimed Jiang Chen.

He'd wondered about Xiahou Zong's unnatural talents, but the possibility that the young genius was a reincarnated god had never crossed his mind.

"Don't worry. Xiahou Zong is touchy and proud because he's an incarnation of a divine being, but his memory hasn't awakened completely yet. What's more, there exists a critical flaw in his character. You may not be able to defeat him in the sword competition, but in the long term, you'll surpass him sooner or later."

The forefather's tone was casual, like he didn't think much of Xiahou Zong, which made Jiang Chen curious.

The young man was the top genius of the younger generation in Eternal Divine Nation. Why was the forefather so dismissive of him?

The forefather seemed to read Jiang Chen's doubt. "I recognize the value of god incarnates due to their scarcity. However, Xiahou Zong isn't the type that deserve my appreciation. Besides, there are geniuses in the sacred land who are more powerful than he."

"Are there?" wondered Jiang Chen.

"Yes, there are, but many, including you, don't know about them." The forefather smiled. "And now we have another disciple who's stronger than Xiahou Zong—you."

"There are others?"

The forefather laughed. "Of course. It's not simply a matter of natural talents. It's about mental fortitude and character as well. Xiahou Zong is among the most talented youths, but he doesn't possess the traits of a great man. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

Jiang Chen didn't fully understand it. The forefather's words contained a wealth of meaning to which he could grasp part of, but not the whole picture.

Noting his confusion, the forefather smiled. "Let's go back to my second question. You hold biases against Myriad Abyss Island, do you not? I'm not surprised by your misconceptions. The decisions by our ancestors in the ancient times made it our fate to shoulder a certain duty, a lonely one misunderstood and misinterpreted by all."

"A duty?"

"Yes, our duty," repeated the forefather, his tone deep with traces of sorrow, frustration, and even resignation. "During the ancient war against the demon race, cultivators of all realms on the Divine Abyss Continent fought demons at the cost of their wealth and lives. Sects were destroyed and legacies forgotten. Those who fought in the war died honorably, respected by generations to come. What we've been doing is just as important, and yet we're forced to shoulder blame we don't deserve, thought by all to be cowardly deserters."

Jiang Chen frowned, puzzled. The forefather seemed to be implying that their ancestors had come to Myriad Abyss Island for an unknown reason.

"I've only heard rumors about the war, Venerated Forefather. I don't know a great deal about it. Please tell me the truth about what happened."

"Alright. I came to you because I have high hopes for you. You'll know these secrets sooner or later.

"A precursor to the ancient demon race invaded and the heavenly axis also happened to shift at the same time, revealing the coordinates of Divine Abyss Continent to the other planes. Powerful foes from outside our plane noticed our existence and invaded in droves. Finally, the demon race came and caused a great catastrophe."

It wasn't the first time Jiang Chen had heard about something like that. As the son of the Celestial Emperor in his past life, he knew about deviating heavenly axis like the back of his hand.

"In the ancient times, there were many self-sacrificing cultivators from different sects and factions. Some argued that they should fight the demons in a war to end all wars. Others argued they should restore the heavenly axis to its original position and defend the portal to the continent. In the end, a consensus was reached. The majority of the human race would stay in the domain and fight, while a small number of elite cultivators brought their heritage to the axis deviation point and defended the portal from invaders."

Jiang Chen blurted out, "Is Myriad Abyss Island the deviation point?"

"You're a sharp one," the forefather said with a sigh. "Those powerful cultivators came to the island with a mission and slowly established a prosperous civilization, which then became the Ten Divine Nations. Each nation has a sacred land, populated by descendents of those ancient cultivators. Only the second or third tier factions in Myriad Abyss, and ones other than the sacred land in each nation, are descended from the deserters."

Jiang Chen froze. The forefather's words had proven all his preconceived notions wrong.

“Now you know why the sacred lands exist, and why we seem so set apart from the other factions. We have to remain free of any tainted or inferior bloodlines and souls. We shoulder a heavier burden than people perceive. On the surface, the sacred lands are in charge of maintaining order in each nation, but the reality is that we’ve been holding true to our duty ever since the ancient times, and will continue to do so for an end that may never come.

“Each realm paid a heavy price during the war, but once the demon race was sealed, the fight came to an end. The axis deviation point, however, will always be a battlefield. No one can predict when the next battle will break out.” The forefather spoke bleakly.

“Countless powerful men and women from the sacred lands have died since the ancient times. Generations after generations have devoted themselves to the cause. The duty has become a heritage. Only those with the potential of greatness are allowed to join the rank of defenders. Therefore, I said that Xiahou Zong lacked the traits that would make him great. Men like him only see and think of the interests of himself and his family. Are things clear to you now?”

Jiang Chen struggled to sort through his thoughts.

“I didn’t know that Myriad Abyss Island has such a turbulent history,” he lamented in the end. “So, are the real geniuses from the sacred lands sent to the battlefield outside the plane? Are they staying at the deviation point, standing in defense and ready to face an invasion?”

“Yes, they are. Thankfully, not every invader we face is that strong. Since the ancient times, we’ve yet to encounter enemies as powerful as the demons. What’s more, we’ve done some restoration work to the heavenly axis, masking part of the energy radiating from the continent so that outside forces will see us as an impoverished plane. Perhaps we’re deceiving no one but ourselves, but it may be enough to divert the adventurers from outside our realm.”

Anyone other than Jiang Chen may not have been able to fully understand the forefather’s words. He knew that there was never a lack of adventurers in the heavenly planes. They ventured into whatever plane that may benefit them. Their purpose in life was to kill and loot their way through different planes and conquer the weak.

As the forefather had said, the duty of the ten sacred lands was to terminate intruders at the fringe of the plane, preventing them from invading the continent. It was undeniably a great responsibility that required great faith to shoulder.

The ten sacred lands had persevered for countless years since the ancient war. That alone warranted Jiang Chen’s respect.

The war against the demon race had taken a great toll, but it had ended. However, defending the realm from outside forces was an uphill battle that demanded and demanded with no end in sight. As long as the heavenly axis hadn’t been restored and the coordinates of the continent remained exposed, there would always be dangers and casualties.

It was difficult to say which side bore the greater responsibility, but of one thing Jiang Chen was sure of—Myriad Abyss Island had been judged unfairly.

Many of its residents were descended from deserters of the ancient war, but there was still a secret group of elite cultivators who were shouldering great duty that demanded great sacrifice.

Jiang Chen respected them immensely for that.

"Venerated spoke, I'd like to apologize to you for my ignorance and misunderstanding," Jiang Chen spoke earnestly.

"There's no need for that. I only hope that one day, you may join the group of defenders. Even if you don't, I hope you'll keep it a secret."

"I will join the team if I can spare the effort in the future," responded Jiang Chen seriously. "However, I have a more important mission to complete at the moment."

"Oh?" The forefather smiled. "Do you mean the Great Formation of Heavenly Soul Confinement?"

"How do you know?"

The forefather chuckled. "You talked about many things earlier with your companions. I'm old, but my ears are keen. I happened to overhear your conversation."

Jiang Chen smiled wryly. "Well, since the senior knows already, I'll be frank. There are signs of demonic activities in many domains, the human one especially. In less than a century, the demons will invade and the world will fall into chaos. There's a possibility that the Divine Abyss Continent will collapse from both outside invasion and inner turmoil."

This was no exaggeration. If the demonic cataclysm happened, the different domains wouldn't be able to organize resistance as large as the one in the past. Without a force that could deter them, the demonic army would become more and more powerful.

The ten sacred lands from Myriad Abyss wouldn't be able to do much no matter how hard they fought the invaders. In either case, some demons had already crept into this world.

The forefather nodded. "You have an important duty as well, young man. Though the human realm isn't as it was before, some heritages have been passed down and foundations remain solid. I believe that you will succeed in re-sealing the demonic race. Otherwise, all the sweat and blood we've shed outside the plane would be for nothing."

He meant what he said. If the demons broke out of the formation and conquered the different domains before invading Myriad Abyss Island, the demon race would be able to break through the portal and make the entire continent their territory.

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

#### **Chapter 1745: The Danger To the Sacred Land**

Jiang Chen hadn't expected his cover to be blown so soon. Moreover, the secret the forefather had revealed was even more shocking. His perception of Myriad Abyss Island was completely overturned.

He'd always thought that the residents of Myriad Abyss were like the legends, descended from ancient deserters, a pack of cowards, one and all. He'd been gravely mistaken.

"I cannot help you with the human domain right now, but I will support you unconditionally while you remain in Myriad Abyss. However, our present circumstances are difficult and in flux..."

"Difficult?" Jiang Chen blinked. "Are the offworld invaders gathering in great numbers again?"

"Not quite. The Ten Divine Nations' most pressing problem is internal, rather than external."

"Internal?" Jiang Chen didn't understand.

"Yes." The forefather sighed softly, his tone somber. "Perhaps you haven't been here for too long, so you can't feel it just yet. The more you stay here, the more you'll realize that our control over the nation has severely diminished. The same is true in every other nation. The other factions are all rising silently, and the situation is getting more dire by the day."

"Like House Xiahou here, for example?" Jiang Chen asked thoughtfully.

"Yes." The forefather agreed. "So you've noticed it too."

"Just a hint of what seems to brew below the surface. I didn't dare imagine this to be the case, but I've been curious as to why Xiahou Zong was allowed to flaunt his arrogance for so long, unchecked. The neutral, rather than supportive attitudes of the other factions in this nation merit consideration as well." Jiang Chen voiced his concerns.

Despite the momentum he'd garnered in his victory over Shi Xuan, House Yan's patriarch hadn't dared take a decisive stand with the marriage proposal. Even that hadn't been enough to make the patriarch firmly come out on the sacred land's behalf.

The patriarch's faltering nature certainly played a part, but there was likely more to the story as well. In theory, the choice would've been a no-brainer; and yet, House Yan hadn't done the obvious.

Had that solely been because of the patriarch's personality?

House Yan aside, the other factions didn't openly show their support for the Eternal Sacred Land either. It was obvious no one wanted to anger House Xiahou over the issue.

Though this detail couldn't explain everything, it did show that House Xiahou was a serious contender. Enough for the other factions to be wary of it, in spite of the sacred land's intervention.

"Forefather, are things the same way everywhere else in the divine nations?"

"To certain degree, yes." The forefather nodded.

"This problem should be easy enough to solve."

"A solution necessitates internal strife, which means significant attrition of resources and manpower. For example, if House Xiahou were to challenge the Eternal Sacred Land, we'd be able to quash them—but at serious cost. It's the same with the other divine nations. When the sacred land weakens, reinforcements to the offworld battlefield will diminish as well."

This was a dilemma that had no easy solution.

The various sacred lands had always possessed a certain advantage over the factions they ruled over. However, the number of people they committed to the offworld battlefield was equally excessive.

Many geniuses and heroes had perished there, making it difficult for the sacred lands to gain appreciably in strength over time. In fact, the opposite was far more likely to happen.

When the sacred lands became weak enough, they wouldn't have enough force of arms to defend their rule. This led to a natural weakening of their authorities. Overly ambitious factions would jump at a chance to fill in the void.

When a king's ability to punish came into question, his lieges became natural threats to the throne. This was how usurpers often came about.

The Eternal Sacred Land wasn't in such a grave position just yet. However, deterioration in that direction was quite possible if House Xiahou's ambitions weren't kept in check. The sacred land was rather empty from its expenditures in the offworld battlefield.

House Xiahou also had spies within the Eternal Sacred Land, which made it privy to a lot of information.

Though the matter of the offworld battlefield was kept extremely well-hidden, the weakening of the ten sacred lands was felt to some degree by the outside world.

This was why the forefather had sounded so exasperated. He needed to deal with civil unrest as well as the relentless threat the offworld battlefield posed. The sacred land couldn't currently sustain an offensive on both fronts, hence its incredible thirst for exceptional geniuses.

"Young man, your appearance here means that the Eternal Sacred Land's fortunes remain strong. So too, will Divine Abyss be preserved!" The forefather was quite serious. "I've observed you all this time. Among all the young geniuses I've ever seen, your luck is unrivaled. Though you haven't shown off all your talents, I am sure that you will become a great personage someday!"

Jiang Chen saw no reason to be humble. "Forefather," he asked directly, "why haven't the sacred lands educated the public about the offworld battlefield? Why not introduce new blood to the war effort? It's difficult for the ten sacred lands to fight on alone."

"Ah, we've debated this problem for a long time. It always has been, and continues to be, inconclusive. We're worried that such a drastic change would cause the situation to spiral out of control and destroy the sacred lands' grasp over Myriad Abyss. It's possible that the announcement would have the opposite of the desired effect."

That kind of cautious reasoning was understandable. After all, all the other factions were descended from Divine Abyss' deserters.

Though the children of deserters weren't necessarily cowardly themselves, heritage was a strange thing. It was unrealistic to expect a group of people, who'd never known about the offworld battles, to make drastic sacrifices on the basis of conviction alone.

The ten sacred lands had lasted as long as they did because they had a clear mission inherited from ancient times. Duty was engraved in their blood and bone.

In contrast, the other factions were selfish and profiteering to the bitter end.



Clearly, the two parties' principles didn't align.

"Change is difficult," Jiang Chen sighed, "but I believe it to be unavoidable at the end of the day. The Ten Divine Nations cannot expect only its line of disciples to suffice forever."

"Yes. Alas, no one dares undertake this effort lightly. The potential consequences are much too high for anyone to take charge."

Upon failure, Myriad Abyss would be plunged into chaos and impossible to predict what would happen then. What if there was endless war after that?

How would stability be reintroduced?

Jiang Chen didn't doubt House Xiahou's willingness to supplant a weakened Eternal Sacred Land for a moment. In fact, they would be exceptionally eager for it.

"Maybe the situation cannot be changed by just one person or faction. However, the way of the world will shift eventually. The wheel of history is inexorable, crushing all beneath its weight." The forefather spoke gravely. "Young man, I can only hope that your noble heart remains unchanged in the winds of change that are about to blow."

"You overestimate my nobility, sir," Jiang Chen replied seriously. "Still, I will not wantonly disregard the rest of the world for the sake of selfish gain."

"Good. I've chosen the right man, it seems. That's the end of our talk today. I hope to hear good news from you for the tournament of geniuses."

The forefather smiled a little before disappearing gradually from the stone slab.

Jiang Chen's heart grew heavier after the old man disappeared. Though he had a much better understanding of Myriad Abyss now, he felt a very real sense of danger looming on the horizon.

Myriad Abyss wasn't entirely peaceful, either. It was a barrel of gunpowder that could ignite at any moment. When it did so, there would be widespread calamity.

The limitation over traveling to the various domains had been set by the ten sacred lands. If the sacred lands' rule over Myriad Abyss was invalidated, that rule would be voided. Would Myriad Abyss' factions rush into the human domain, then?

"Ah, I hope that the ten sacred lands can keep things under control." After the conversation with the venerated forefather, Jiang Chen had realized that the Eternal Sacred Land didn't have a tight enough grasp over the divine nation.

There was no one in the young generation that could compare to Xiahou Zong, for starters! That alone was embarrassing enough.

The Eternal Sacred Land was the ruler of Eternal Divine Nation, and should have led in every field by a far stretch. However, there was no evidence of that right now.

Most concerningly, none of the other factions feared the sacred land. There should have been far more open support for it than there had been at the Skymender Festival, which was explanatory enough.

## Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

### **Chapter 1746: Upheaval in House Yan**

But Jiang Chen didn't dwell on that. No matter what the future entailed, he'd stay true to himself and his principles.

I can't determine the fates of the Eternal Sacred Land and Myriad Abyss Island. I can only do my best to grow stronger, to become powerful enough to not only weather the oncoming storm, but also dictate the future!

He knew that he had to stand by the Eternal Sacred Land no matter what. House Xiahou must never replace the sacred land. Otherwise, things wouldn't end well for him.

To make sure that both he and Huang'er could gain a foothold in Myriad Abyss, House Xiahou was an enemy he must eliminate. With his mind made up, he eliminated all unnecessary thought.

Huang'er and the others slowly came to.

"What happened?" Yan Qingsang muttered. "Why did I black out all of a sudden?"

Huang'er, being more clever than Yan Qingsang, quickly figured out that the venerated forefather of the sacred land must have paid a visit. The three of them had been knocked unconscious due to the confidential nature of the conversation.

"Brother Qingsang, didn't you say we were going to Cloud Camel Mountain?" Huang'er asked, changing the subject on purpose. "When are we going?"

"That's right, brother." Yan Qingsang turned to Jiang Chen, his eyes shining with anticipation. "Didn't you say you wanted to go as well?"

"Sure I did. Anytime before the sword competition works for me."

"Great! Let's go in the next two days then." Yan Qingsang snickered. "But I can wait if you want some time alone with my sister."

Huang'er rolled her eyes at him. "Shut it, Brother Qingsang."

Jiang Chen smiled. "We'll have plenty of time in the future. Given the difficult circumstances we're in, my primary goal now is to defeat Xiahou Zong and knock House Xiahou down a peg."

"Hear hear!" Yan Qingsang tightened his fist. "If you can destroy them, brother, I'll personally give my sister's hand to you."

Jiang Chen snorted. Even Ling Bi'er was amused by Yan Qingsang's antics.

"Don't give yourself too much pressure, Brother Chen," said Huang'er. "No matter how your fight with Xiahou Zong pans out, you know you have my heart."

She had confidence in Jiang Chen, but she didn't want her beloved to shoulder too heavy a burden for her. He already had too many responsibilities and too much weight throughout his journey. She didn't want him to exhaust himself.

Jiang Chen chuckled. "I can take a little pressure. Besides, Xiahou Zong is merely a small rock in my path. He's not going to give me that much trouble."

He didn't feel all that threatened by Xiahou Zong. He didn't believe that the man could kill him at all. What worried him more was House Xiahou. He didn't know enough about them in general. He didn't know how powerful they were or how ambitious they were.

Had their ambition reached a tipping point? If they were to replace the Eternal Sacred Land, they would become a real problem he'd have trouble facing, no matter how brightly his genius shone.

Xiahou Zong alone was nothing to fear no matter how much heaven-defying he was. Jiang Chen had met all manners of geniuses in his past life.

It didn't matter that Xiahou Zong was a reincarnated god. Though he possessed the memories from a past life, he was merely a regular deity, plus his heritage hadn't fully awakened yet. Jiang Chen, on the other hand, had reincarnated with all his memory intact. That made him one of a kind in this regard.

The next day, Jiang Chen and Yan Qingsang met up to inform the sacred land that they were leaving for Cloud Camel Mountain.

The mountain was part of House Yan territory, but there had been tension around the area. Under Yan Wanjun's leadership, house troops had made camp and dug in for the long term at the mountain.

However, House Feng had done the same as well. That house was one of the top factions in Eternal Divine Nation, and slightly more powerful than House Yan for the time being.

Both houses claimed that the mountain was theirs.

In truth, most of the mountain was within House Yan territory, but one of the branches meandered into House Feng territory, which gave the latter an excuse to claim full ownership of the mountain.

Their argument was that Cloud Camel Mountain was a single entity with feng shui that formed the core of House Feng. Therefore, House Yan wasn't allowed to lay a hand on the mountain.

The absurd reasoning prompted them to further argue that if House Yan fought them for the mountain, they'd essentially be destroying House Feng's fortunes.

House Feng was blatantly distorting the facts, but in the end, House Yan couldn't rival the other. Even though they were in the right, the conflict remained unresolved.

Ever since Yan Wanjun had openly defied the patriarch for his granddaughter's sake during the Skymender Festival, he'd attracted a lot of backlash within the family.

Over the past two days, many elders had criticized him for choosing personal interests over the family, thus disregarding his duty as an elder. They believed that he was no longer fit for the job of a venerated elder, and shouldn't be the one leading the army into Cloud Camel Mountain.

All sorts of demands for action resounded within the house these days.

The patriarch himself agonized over what he should do. He was displeased with Yan Wanjun as well. When even the patriarch had refrained from taking a stand, it was inappropriate for Yan Wanjun to do

so, despite being a venerated elder. And the elder had been so determined to protect his own! His attitude would undoubtedly anger House Xiahou.

"Patriarch, Elder Wanjun must be punished for selfishly ignoring the family's interests. Otherwise, the house's law and profits will mean nothing."

"I concur! Elder Wanjun has crossed a line. It's shameful for him to go above his station and speak up when the patriarch hadn't said anything."

"If he goes unpunished, the house won't be able to maintain its authority." Many elders spoke up, urging for Yan Wanjun to be punished.

Yan Wanyou added coolly, "It's clear that Yan Wanjun selfishly put the house at risk for his granddaughter. His son was the one who sparked the conflict between us and House Xiahou in the first place. His descendants should naturally bear the responsibility. He agreed to the arrangement without hesitation, but he's changed his mind now. He's not only digging his own grave, but dooming the entire house!"

Yan Wanyou had never liked Yan Wanjun and viewed the latter as an enemy. He wasn't going to go easy on his rival when the opportunity presented itself.

Yan Wanchong retorted, "That's unfair, Elder Wanyou. Elder Wanjun has sacrificed enough for the family over the years. We all bear witness to the contributions he's made. If you were in his place, would you be able to sacrifice your family without hesitation? Besides, there's an opportunity now for us to turn things around. Why don't we seize it?"

"Opportunity? What opportunity?" Yan Wanyou scoffed. "Do you mean Shao Yuan and his marriage proposal? It sounds grand and all, but he's going to die in his match against Xiahou Zong in the sword competition. What's he going to do with his oh-so-amazing pill dao talent then? Once he dies, the proposal will be nothing more than an empty promise."

From his derisive tone, it was clear that Yan Wanyou was as hostile to Shao Yuan as he was to Yan Wanjun. Nothing had gone his way ever since the young man joined House Yan.

"You don't know for sure, Elder Wanyou. Shao Yuan now represents the Eternal Sacred Land. Do you think he'd have the audacity to propose marriage without the confidence to win? He was confident and he has the sacred land's support. I think he stands a chance of winning."

"If we have the choice, why should we sacrifice Huang'er? Why can't we support the young couple? Why don't we use this opportunity to get close to the sacred land? Are we so afraid of House Xiahou that we're going to oppose the sacred land? Don't forget, they're the ones governing the nation, not House Xiahou." Yan Wanchong vehemently argued for Yan Wanjun.

Yan Wanyou sneered. "You're close to Yan Wanjun, Yan Wanchong. Of course you're going to support him. But you have to recognize that Xiahou Zong is the top genius of the younger generation. Once Shao Yuan goes head to head with him in the sword competition, there's only one possible outcome—his death! There's no reason to be happy about a promise made by a dead man!"

“The sacred land is home to many geniuses. How can you be sure that Shao Yuan will be the one killed? Before he challenged Shi Xuan, no one believed that he’d win either! The young man is the chosen one. He’s created miracles. Maybe even Xiahou Zong will pale in comparison to him.”

“Hahaha, what a bold statement. You think someone will outshine Xiahou Zong?” Yan Wanyou cackled. “In your dreams! No geniuses from the sacred land have been able to surpass Xiahou Zong in the past five thousand years, and no geniuses will in the next five thousand!”

“Yan Wanyou!” Yan Wanjun exclaimed. He’d refrained from saying anything, but he had had enough. “You keep bringing up Xiahou Zong like he’s the best thing to grace this world. Do you still remember that you’re a member of House Yan? House Xiahou has been bullying us for so many years, but you cling to them without any shame or dignity. Our ancestors in the underworld would be ashamed of you!”

Yan Wanjun was absolutely furious. He could take Yan Wanyou’s insults. He knew he’d undermined the patriarch’s authority in the Skymender Festival, and he’d willingly accept any criticism for his action. However, he couldn’t stand listening to Yan Wanyou praising Xiahou Zong anymore.

### **Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)**

#### **Chapter 1747: Undercurrents Surge and Ebb**

Yan Wanyou didn’t take that as criticism. He scoffed. “I know the value of discretion. We are lesser than House Xiahou. Do you think we should provoke them despite our inferiority? That’s not courage, but courting humiliation and trouble!”

Yan Wanjun sighed with resignation and didn’t continue the argument. He turned to the patriarch. “It seems I’m losing my physical and mental faculties in my old age, Patriarch. I can no longer contribute to the family. Please remove my title as a venerated elder. I will lead a secluded life from now on.”

Yan Wanchong hurriedly interjected, “Elder Wanjun, you mustn’t lose your drive. You’re still hale and hearty. Your age hasn’t affected you at all! Besides, the house is in a difficult position. We need someone dependable like you to shoulder our burden. If you abandon us now, we’ll be further weakened.”

Many elders echoed his sentiment. “Elder Wanjun, you can’t leave us yet. The family needs your stalwart support! You leaving would leave us crippled.”

“Patriarch, Elder Wanjun made a mistake, but it’s an understandable one. This subordinate believes that we should consider the issues separately. If we insist on punishing him, the family will become unstable, benefitting only our enemies.”

“Patriarch, we must keep Elder Wanjun. We need people of integrity like him in the family, or we’ll be in even more dire straits!”

The patriarch carefully considered his options before making a decision. He sighed. “Elder Wanjun, you went overboard in the Skymender Festival. However, considering your contributions over the years and our personal relationship, I forgive your transgressions. Still, you are to be punished to maintain order in the clan. You will be fined ten years of your stipend.”

Ten years worth of stipend was a considerable figure for a venerated elder. For someone at Yan Wanjun's level however, it wasn't that severe a punishment at all.

Yan Wanjun wasn't grateful at all. In fact, he was disappointed in both the patriarch and House Yan. He truly wanted to resign and spend the remainder of his life in nature's embrace. The only thing stopping him was his sense of duty as a venerated elder.

After a pause, he sighed. "The patriarch has been forgiving. It would be inappropriate of me to turn you away."

The patriarch nodded. "I entrust Cloud Camel Mountain to you, Elder Wanjun. This is a difficult time. The family needs you."

Yan Wanjun nodded. His mood lightened a little, his sense of duty taking precedence over his pessimism.

The meeting ended in the midst of arguments. The patriarch had handled the matter, but his thoughts were a tangled mess. He was conflicted and lost about the situation House Yan was in.

Things were getting out of hand.

Shao Yuan's sudden proposal put House Yan in a difficult position, and House Xiahou clearly held House Yan responsible for everything. So should he choose House Xiahou or Shao Yuan?

Just how much support did the young man have from the Eternal Sacred Land?

Or rather, which faction would make for the worse enemy, House Xiahou or the Eternal Sacred Land?

If they got on the sacred land's bad side, the sacred land may not care enough to strike back at House Yan. If they offended House Xiahou, on the other hand, House Xiahou would retaliate with the intention to destroy them.

Therefore, deep inside his heart, he'd rather face the sacred land's ire. He was still conflicted when he returned to his residence.

Once inside, his brows furrowed and his heart pounded. There was a silhouette in a corner of the garden, a part of the world itself and giving off a mysterious energy.

"Patriarch Yan," said the man without turning around.

"Who... who are you?" The patriarch frowned.

The man slowly turned around, his figure of moderate height and his features graceful and delicate, striking a stark contrast with his long beard. He imposed a domineering presence that was unique and inherent to one of high status.

"I am Xiahou Zhen, a venerated elder of House Xiahou," the man introduced himself in a faint but highly intimidating tone.

A venerated elder from House Xiahou?

The patriarch's heart sank. It defied logic that a venerated elder could pose a fatal threat to a patriarch, and yet he had a feeling that this elder could.

The patriarch wasn't among the strongest of all faction leaders, but he was far from weak. Otherwise, he wouldn't be able to lead a house. Yet, he had a deep sense of foreboding that his life hung in the balance in front of Xiahou Zhen.

A heavy weight settled in his heart.

"Welcome, Elder Xiahou." The patriarch forced himself to greet him. "What can I do for you?"

"What do you think?" Xiahou Zhen continued in a faint tone. "Though House Yan is weak, we've always commended you for knowing your place. Now though, it seems that you've lost your only strength."

"Elder Xiahou, there are some things beyond our control," the patriarch responded in a deferential tone.

"Beyond your control?" Xiahou Zhen snapped. "Everyone in the jianghu can say the same. Don't you think that's a crude excuse?"

The patriarch broke into cold sweat, at a loss of what to say.

"Before I came, our patriarch and venerated forefather granted me full authorization for any action. This means that I won't be blamed even if I go on a killing spree in House Yan."

Shock and fury charged into the patriarch's heart.

House Xiahou had truly gotten out of control! Within Eternal Divine Nation, likely they were the only ones shameless enough to make such a despicable threat and follow it through.

"Are you threatening me, Elder Xiahou?" the patriarch asked in a low voice.

"You're free to take it as such." Xiahou Zhen didn't deny it.

The patriarch frowned deeply. "Are you saying that House Xiahou can do whatever you want in the Eternal Divine Nation?"

"Not necessarily. However, I guarantee you that we'll be able to get away with killing a few of your clan. I'll make it clean and leave no evidence. You have three sons, seven grandsons, and a good number of descendants, don't you?"

"You've gone through a lot to make it to your current position. A large chunk of House Yan's resources go to your descendants. Do you believe that I'll be able to erase all your achievements in the blink of an eye?" Xiahou Zhen spoke in an unhurried tone, but his remarks were clearly a threat.

The patriarch broke out in cold sweat. Xiahou Zhen had obviously done his homework.

If it'd been a regular cultivator who threatened him, he'd have laughed in their face or even order the trespasser killed. However, this was a venerated elder from House Xiahou he was faced with. He didn't dare make a move.

He knew the elder meant what he said, throwing the patriarch into quite a dilemma.

“Elder Xiahou, I’m confused,” the patriarch responded in a wry tone. “What exactly do we have to do to appease House Xiahou?”

“It’s simple. Anyone who challenges and offends House Xiahou must die!”

“Who exactly?” asked the patriarch.

“Yan Wanjun. Also, Yan Qinghuang must also become Xiahou Zong’s cultivation vessel. If that doesn’t happen, we can’t promise to spare House Yan.”

The patriarch interrupted gloomily, “Elder Xiahou, Yan Qinghuang’s fate is beyond our control. She’s kept in the sacred land under the pretense of a vacation, but it’s clear that the sacred land and Shao Yuan aren’t going to let her return to House Yan.”

“That’s for you to worry about. We only care that House Yan has promised us Yan Qinghuang. If you fail to deliver her to us, we’ll consider the promise broken and House Yan our enemy.” His logic was unreasonable to the point of shamelessness.

“We can’t possibly kidnap her, can we? We don’t even have the strength to do that.” The patriarch sighed. “There’s still the sword competition. If Xiahou Zong kills Shao Yuan then, won’t everything be resolved?”

“Nonsense!” snapped Xiahou Zhen. “It’s completely different for you to deliver her to us and for Xiahou Zong to take her.”

He wasn’t wrong.

If House Yan handed Huang’er to House Xiahou, that’d be a sign of their dread and submission to the latter.

If Xiahou Zong took her with his own power, House Yan would’ve done nothing in the process, signifying that they weren’t on House Xiahou’s side.

That made for a big difference.

The patriarch was silent for a long time. Eventually, he sighed. “I may be able to fulfill your first demand. As for Huang’er, I’ll need some time to come up with a solution. Please excuse the delay, Elder Xiahou.”

Xiahou Zhen huffed coldly. “Our patience is limited. We’ll wait and see what you’ll do.”

His form wavered and disappeared from the garden, leaving the patriarch lost and aimless. The world was vast, yet he felt as if he’d been forced to the edge of a cliff with nowhere to escape to.

### **Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)**

#### **Chapter 1748: Convening at Cloud Camel Mountain**

The patriarch knew that House Xiahou was ruthless and made for a formidable foe, yet he was still taken aback by their boldness.

Though House Yan had been in decline, they were still among the first tier factions in Eternal Divine Nation. They weren’t at House Xiahou’s level, but should still have some confidence when facing the former.



And yet, House Xiahou had boldly sent a venerated elder to House Yan to threaten the patriarch! Their complete lack of hesitation shocked and terrified him. They'd also done so without the slightest bit of psychological pressure.

Weren't they worried that House Yan would report the transgression to the Eternal Sacred Land?

What happened left a bitter taste in the patriarch's mouth. A shudder ran down his spine when he thought about Xiahou Zhen's threat. The foreign elder even knew how many sons and grandsons the patriarch had. Clearly, the man was prepared to eliminate his bloodline once and for all.

In House Yan's heyday, the patriarch wouldn't have been fazed by such a threat, but House Yan wasn't what it'd been, and House Xiahou was at its peak. House Yan was absolutely helpless.

What should he do?

House Xiahou has made themselves clear. If I don't follow their instructions, the clan will be at the mercy of their ire.

Conflict roiled within the patriarch. It was either Yan Wanjun, or all his own descendants. Someone had to die!

He relied heavily enough on Yan Wanjun and knew that the elder was one of the few pillars of the family, but that didn't mean much when House Xiahou had painted a target on the elder's back. As long as Yan Wanjun lived, House Xiahou would never be appeased.

Therefore, he couldn't be allowed to survive.

The patriarch wavered for a long time. Finally, he hardened his heart and came to a decision. "It didn't have to be this way, Yan Wanjun. You were the one who insisted on protecting your granddaughter. Now you're losing both her and your life. For House Yan, I can only sacrifice you for the greater good!"

His reluctance gave way to determination. His mind was made up.

.....

Yan Wanjun's mood recovered a little after returning to his residence. Although he'd been attacked by many elders during the meeting, there were still those who supported him. And the patriarch still trusted him enough to task him with the defense of Cloud Camel Mountain.

There was still use for him. He would do his best to secure the mountain and protect the family's industry.

He'd be able to win the family's approval if he made a grand enough achievement in the mountain. Then, he'd have more leverage to protect his granddaughter. This rekindled his motivation.

Early the next morning, Yan Wanjun brought his confidantes back to Cloud Camel Mountain to secure it. The trip went very smoothly.

Less than two days later, he received a delightful letter from his grandson saying that both him and Shao Yuan were coming to the mountain.

The letter also stated that the two youths would be keeping their identities a secret, which Yan Wanjun understood. After all, Shao Yuan wasn't the nobody he'd once been. After his amazing performance in the Skymender Festival, many had set their eyes on the young genius. House Xiahou especially saw him as a threat that must be eliminated.

It was smart of them to keep a low profile.

That afternoon, Yan Qingsang and Jiang Chen entered Cloud Camel Mountain. They were greeted with the magnificent visage of endless, towering mountain ranges covered with lush vegetation.

As Jiang Chen flew over the mountain, he felt the awe-inspiring presence filling the air and marveled, "The mountain sure is impressive, Brother Yan."

Yan Qingsang smiled wryly. "However, many feng shui masters said that it's filled with too much murderous intent, which will hinder excavation. Therefore, the house never considered the mountain a valuable asset. Still, we defend it at a high cost because it's part of our territory. For House Yan, it's a useless plot of land that we'd love to give up but can't."

Jiang Chen smiled. "It would be a great loss if House Yan loses the mountain."

He hadn't conducted an in-depth survey yet, but his knowledge from his past life gave him a deep understanding of landscape and spirit veins.

The way the series of mountains intersected and connected in the area created a vein. He didn't yet know what it meant, but it was impossible for the mountain to be completely without value.

As Yan Qingsang had said, the place was filled with murderous intent, but the implications were many. For example, this place might be an ancient battlefield. The lingering killing intent was gathered and trapped by the mountains, creating a land of great aggression.

Since Jiang Chen had come with Yan Qingsang in secret, he didn't want to attract any attention. Once they landed, they made their way to the meeting spot and were soon met by Yan Wanjun's personal guards.

It didn't take long for them to arrive at Yan Wanjun's temporary residence. House Yan had established a base of operations in the mountain, which could rival a second or third tier sect in Myriad Abyss.

As the commander of defense for the mountain, Yan Wanjun's residence was hidden away and more sophisticatedly constructed. He was very excited by their arrival.

"Qingsang, Shao Yuan, you came sooner than I expected." Yan Wanjun had been in a bad mood ever since he returned to the mountain, but most of the heavy weight in his heart lifted when he saw his grandson.

He was glad to see Shao Yuan as well. The young man was likely to become his grandson-in-law in the near future, which meant he was pleasing to the eye no matter how the elder looked at him. The genius had made a name for himself in the Skymender Festival. It would've been a great shame for House Yan to lose him.

"Grandfather, has the family made things difficult for you?" asked Yan Qingsang, worried about House Yan's internal situation.

"Hmph, there have always been some despicable lowlifes who insist on badgering me, but a clean hand wants no washing. I'm not afraid of them." Yan Wanjun's tone was determined and proud.

Jiang Chen sighed. "Elder Wanjun, you must stay on your guard even if you've done nothing wrong. House Yan is a tangled mess. As an outsider, I'm in no place to offer advice. However, it's imperative for you to exert caution at this critical juncture."

Yan Wanjun paused. "What should I be cautious about? The family isn't going to hurt me now. If they are, they'd have done it already, and I wouldn't have resisted at all."

His logic was simple: the patriarch had had the perfect opportunity to take him out when he was in the house, yet he was still alive. Why would the patriarch do anything now?

Since this was a familial matter, it'd be inappropriate for Jiang Chen to keep pushing. If he did, it would seem like he was trying to drive a wedge between the elder and the family. He smiled with resignation in lieu of a response.

Yan Qingsang spoke up, "Grandfather, Brother Shao is right. You must be careful. The house is riddled with problems, and it's impossible to predict what the clan will or will not do. You should stay alert."

"Hahaha, I'm glad to hear that. It seems that you've made some significant progress in the sacred land, Qingsang."

There was nothing that could make him happier than to see his grandson's continuous growth, especially since Yan Qingsang hadn't been the most dependable sort in the past.

Yan Qingsang still cared greatly about how his family viewed him. He smiled upon hearing his grandfather's praise. "I can't grow complacent when I have such a monstrous grother making such ridiculous progress, urging me to work harder. If I get left behind, I won't know how to face him as his future brother-in-law!"

In the past, Yan Wanjun would've reprimanded or even punished the boy for the remark. Now, though, Jiang Chen had made his intentions clear, and Yan Wanjun had agreed to the marriage proposal. The elder only smiled in response to Yan Qingsang's joking.

Yan Wanjun's eyes turned thoughtful when they landed on Yan Qingsang. "Qingsang... are you about to ascend to empyrean realm?"

Yan Qingsang grinned from ear to ear. "You finally notice, grandfather. I've made a lot of discoveries lately. With the help of the Taiyi Skymender Pill, I'm only a step away from reaching empyrean realm. It's possible that I'll make the breakthrough in only half a month!"

Yan Wanjun stilled, a look of delight on his wrinkled face. He was overwhelmed with great contentment.

His grandson was the main reason he kept going. A large part of his happiness and worries was attributed to his grandson as well.

How could he not be delighted to hear that Yan Qingsang was going to break through?

"The Taiyi Skymender Pill?" muttered Yan Wanjun, his eyes lighting up with wonder. "This pill is as magical as it's said to be?"

Yan Qingsang nodded. "Even more so, grandfather. To me, the pill is a divine miracle!"

### Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

#### **Chapter 1749: Authorization Pass**

Yan Wanjun was overjoyed. He stared at Yan Qingsang for a long moment before shifting his focus to Jiang Chen. "You really are the lucky star for House Yan and my family branch, young Shao Yuan," he said earnestly. "I can see the amazing transformation Qingsang's gone through since he met you. It's no exaggeration to say that his fate has changed for the better after you appeared on the scene. Perhaps you'll be able to change Huang'er's fate as well..."

He continued emotionally, "We owe you a great debt for that, Shao Yuan. I'm not good with words, but I can promise that I'll do all I can to help you and Huang'er, even at the cost of my life. I don't care who it is that tries to force you two apart, be it House Xiahou or members of House Yan. They'll have to get through me first!"

He declared with steel in his voice. He'd come to consider the talented young man one of his own.

He'd refrained from taking a stand before because Yan Qingsang was young and not yet come into his strength; he'd needed the family's protection and resources. The elder therefore went against his nature and even grit his teeth when the family sacrificed his son and granddaughter.

Yan Qingsang had been the shackles stopping him from acting.

Now though, his grandson had earned the sacred land's approval and protection. He continued to grow day by day. There was nothing holding Yan Wanjun back anymore, and it was all because of Shao Yuan.

Yan Wanjun had no hesitation when it came to viewing the young genius as his family's savior. He'd not only changed Yan Qingsang's life; he might even also save Yan Qinghuang.

If there had ever been a choice, sacrificing his granddaughter would've never been an option. Yes, he did care about House Yan's future and was willing to sweat for it, but what had the family done for him in return? They continued to demand compromises and rarely empathized with his pain.

During the meeting of elders, many members of the family had accused and censured him, judging presumed crimes. That had been the precise moment he'd realized there wasn't much worth caring for in House Yan.

He'd continue to help the family and wouldn't forget that his roots, but he wouldn't be sacrificing all he had anymore.

It was human nature to seek reciprocation. House Yan had disappointed Yan Wanjun. Despite the lingering affection he had for the family, realization had finally arrived that many of its members didn't deserve his protection.

He'd sweated and bled to keep the family together. It pained him to see that so many just wanted him punished in the end. His eyes had been opened, which was why he was coming out in clear support of Jiang Chen.

The youth sighed inwardly at Yan Wanjun's serious expression. He had indeed judged the elder prematurely, considering the latter cold-blooded for blatantly disregarding his granddaughter's life.

Now it seemed that Yan Wanjun had his reasons after all.

"I will fight my hardest for my future with Huang'er, Elder Wanjun," Jiang Chen said honestly. "Not even House Xiahou can stop me from fighting for her. I didn't want to drag you into this."

He appreciated Yan Wanjun's support, but it was enough for the elder to keep Huang'er in mind. He didn't have to show his concern, or he risked putting himself in danger. If something was to happen to Yan Wanjun, Huang'er would feel guilty about it.

Yan Wanjun laughed heartily. "Dragged in? This is my granddaughter we're talking about. Why should I fear getting involved? Is House Xiahou going to hack at me?"

Yan Wanjun hadn't mellowed with age. Instead, he'd dug his heels in even more and wouldn't be swayed once he'd made up his mind.

Yan Qingsang laughed and piped up, "Don't be too worried, grandfather. Brother Shao knows what he's doing. When doesn't he have a plan? No one believed that he'd succeed when he joined House Yan, competed with the Jade Lake Sect, and went head to head with Shi Xuan, but he always came out on top."

"Then it seems that young Shao Yuan has planned every part of his move. Your shrewdness is admirable." Yan Wanjun chuckled. "By the way, Qingsang, what do you plan to do during your visit?"

Yan Qingsang shrugged. "I came to see if there's anything I can help with."

"Foolish!" Yan Wanjun reprimanded with a stoic face. "You should be cultivating for the sword competition right now, not trying to help. Don't forget that you're now a disciple of the sacred land! You don't have to worry about the family just yet."

He turned to Jiang Chen with a smile. "Shao Yuan, you're likely to clash with Xiahou Zong in the competition. You should be preparing for the fight rather than wandering about."

He was speaking from the bottom of his heart. Although he didn't believe that Jiang Chen would be able to defeat Xiahou Zong, he didn't want the fight to be completely one-sided.

Jiang Chen smiled. "I can't make a significant breakthrough in such a short period of time by staying in the sacred land, so I came to seek inspiration. Perhaps the trip will help my cultivation."

One couldn't force a breakthrough. That was why many young cultivators and older ones preferred to live a nomadic life, roving about the jianghu to encounter different people and events, and to gain different experiences.

Real life experiences could often inspire a cultivator in meaningful way.

"It seems that your understanding in martial dao is no less than in pill dao, Shao Yuan," Yan Wanjun remarked appreciatively. "It's become more and more apparent to me what a great loss House Yan has suffered in driving you away."

"Grandfather, House Yan wouldn't be able to keep a genius like Brother Shao in the long term anyways," said Yan Qingsang. "I'm just glad that I'm his friend rather than his enemy."

Yan Wanjun couldn't agree more.

"Elder Wanjun, Elder Liang invited me to Cloud Camel Mountain before. I've always kept this in the back of my mind," Jiang Chen added suddenly. "I also came to look around and see what I can find. May I have your permission to do so?"

He was very curious as he believed that something of great value lay hidden away in the area. Why did House Yan pay so little attention to the mountain?

However, since he was no longer a member of House Yan, he needed Yan Wanjun's permission to explore the area.

Yan Wanjun smiled. "You're my future grandson-in-law. Of course you can look around. However, there are many elders here at the moment. Although I'm the leader of the operation, I have to strike a balance between conflicting voices. You may disguise yourself as a expert surveyor here to survey the landscape and spirit veins."

The prospect of being able to come and go freely appealed immensely to Jiang Chen.

"Do I need to apply for a pass of some sort?" he asked.

"No, I'll get you a pass. You may go anywhere you wish. I promise you that no one from the family will stop you. However, there's been great tension around the area lately. House Feng claims that the mountain is theirs and their troops are inching towards our territory. I worry that a great conflict is going to break out."

"Alright, I'll be careful." Jiang Chen was pleased by Yan Wanjun's offer. He had many ways to sneak around the mountain on his own despite it being heavily guarded, but that would slow him down. With a pass, he could go anywhere he wanted without restriction.

He wasn't worried about running into House Feng. He'd be able to solve whatever troubles that came knocking.

Yan Wanjun was highly efficient. He soon presented Jiang Chen and Yan Qingsang each with an extremely high-level clearance pass.

Yan Qingsang had come to the mountain with the goal to understand the heavenly law and ascend to empyrean realm as quickly as possible. Therefore, he wouldn't be accompanying Jiang Chen for the time being.

Jiang Chen too made his preparations after receiving the pass. After a night of rest, he set his mind to surveying the mountain. The mountain range spanned tens of thousands of miles. He wouldn't be able to find much if he flitted around here and there.

He decided to put some time and effort into conducting an in-depth survey. The region where even House Yan's defense troops wouldn't venture into might be the best place to start.

As Yan Qingsang had said, the mountain was filled with a ferocious energy, but the energy wasn't wild or bloodthirsty. There was an edge to it that was difficult to understand.

The deeper Jiang Chen looked, the more he felt like the mountain itself resembled a legendary weapon containing the power to destroy heaven and earth. The power was merely temporarily dormant.

“Man, no wonder those from House Yan dislike the mountain. Most would be creeped out by the dense, murderous intent in the area.”

Jiang Chen had trained in Boulder’s Heart, making his mind as steady and strong as the mountain, but even he quavered slightly in face of the aggressive energy.

“What’s going on here?” The more he investigated, the more confused he became. He tried to understand the mountain as an entity, but to no avail.

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

#### **Chapter 1750: A Frightening Earthen Vein**

If not for the Boulder’s Heart and especially robust consciousness, Jiang Chen would’ve retreated from the depths of Cloud Camel Mountain like any other.

The atmosphere was cloying and uncomfortable here, possessing an edge that made him anxious and on edge just for spending a bit of time here.

“Now I know why House Yan has that kind of attitude towards this place. The simple act of living nearby is an endeavor in itself.” The further Jiang Chen walked, the more his scalp tingled.

There should have been many malevolent beings living in a place with such densely terrifying killing intent. However, he didn’t see a single living thing on his way in.

Not even one. Even the smallest rabbit or squirrel was absent. Each plant that grew embodied the murderous atmosphere hanging in the air. Not that they presented any lethal threat, but rather, they’d melded into the environment around them. The entire mountain seemed to be a world of its own.

Suddenly, Jiang Chen felt something near him eager for action. It was the Astral White Tiger that had followed him all this time.

When Long Xiaoxuan and the Vermilion Bird stayed on the island to cultivate, the tiger had stayed by his side. Because of its late start, it was a bit lower level than Long Xiaoxuan right now.

Still, Jiang Chen wasn’t worried about the tiger’s cultivation at all.

In ancient times, the four sacred beasts had been known for the rapidity and ferocity of their cultivation. It had only been several years since he’d picked up the tiger, yet it had already grown from a cub to nearly empyrean realm.

For these sacred beasts, empyrean realm was just a stepping stone on their long path of cultivation. They were born with silver spoons in their mouths.

The tiger’s current hyperactivity however, did put Jiang Chen a little off. It had remained on him by transforming into something as small as a mustard seed, and now expanded to reveal its rippling body.

It was no longer the fuzzy furball it had once been as a child; it looked more and more like a regal lord of the beasts. Intimidating savagery radiated off its wild form.

“Little White, you must’ve been bored for quite a while.” Jiang Chen greeted his companion in ancient beast language.

“Young master Chen, what is this place? It feels... familiar.” The tiger stretched languidly, but the words that came out of its mouth were astonishing.

“Familiar?” Jiang Chen was confused. “You say this place is familiar, Little White?”

“Yeah.” Though the tiger had begun to mature physically, it was actually still very young. It failed to notice Jiang Chen’s surprise because of its immaturity.

“Do you really think so?” the young man inquired curiously of his companion.

Little White sniffed at the air exaggeratedly, as if basking in the pleasure of everything around him. “All this is super familiar to me! The air, the plant life, and everything else. Young master Chen, I hear humans have places they call their homes. Maybe this is my home?”

Jiang Chen didn’t know how to respond to that. His home?

Suddenly, the young man remembered something. Little White is an Astral White Tiger. His attribute is metal and massacre – a perfect fit with Cloud Camel Mountain’s atmosphere.

The realization made perfect sense.

Once fully grown and awakened, Astral White Tigers were the most bloodthirsty out of the four sacred beasts. An adult tiger could cause most normal people to faint with only its killing aura.

Jiang Chen smacked his forehead with a smile. “This place could unexpectedly be a treasure for you, Little White.”

He wasn’t quite sure yet, but the tiger had tipped him off to the possibility that Cloud Camel Mountain could be an area where slaughter had prevailed. Such areas were either past battlefields or contained huge veins of killing-attribute metal ore.

Are there really veins of ore in these mountains??

“Try to feel out the world around you a bit more.”

The tiger nodded in an intoxicated stupor. “Can I walk around a bit, young master Chen?”

“Sure,” Jiang Chen smiled, “but don’t go too far or get spotted by human cultivators. They’ll want to catch you no matter what.”

Little White was still immature due to his age. It had a natural fear of the outside world.

“I’ll just take a stroll nearby.” Saying this, the tiger disappeared in a whirlwind of white. Astral White Tigers favored haste and decisiveness.

Jiang Chen awaited the return of the tiger on the spot. The intense killing aura pervading the air served as a kind of trial for him.

It took an hour or so for the tiger to appear once more. Just as he was beginning to be concerned, the feline friend darted out from around a corner. Little White was overjoyed.



“Young master Chen, this place, it...” the tiger stumbled over its own words in its excitement. “There’s a huge earthen vein beneath this mountain. Its beat is really clear. This must be a divine vein from the ancient times! I’ve got to stay and cultivate here.”

The tiger was very enthusiastic about finding a place that had apparently been tailor-made for it. Was it a stroke of destiny?

Jiang Chen was moved by the news as well. A huge earthen vein? That perfectly confirmed his speculations.

“Take me to it straightaway.”

To tell the truth, he had been very cautious earlier because the killing aura in the air implied this place was very dangerous. Because of this, he hadn’t sent out any Goldbiter Rats either.

But the news from Little White was too explosive to ignore. Temptation overcame his initial prudence.

The tiger shook its furry head. “I shan’t take you, young master Chen. It’s pretty scary close to the vein. The environment is very dangerous there – life-threatening, even. I’m naturally immune to it, for some reason, but I don’t know if you’ll be the same way.”

“Dangerous environment? How so?”

“The vein is very well-hidden. There are sharp things everywhere. They’re sharp enough to cut through ground, rock, everything living. There are companion beasts as well.”

“Companion beasts?” Jiang Chen was shocked. “But... how did you?”

“I’m not scared of ‘em,” Little White replied carelessly.

“I’ll come with you, and if I really can’t get in there, I’ll come back out. Is that better?” The young man hadn’t given up on his plans just yet.

The tiger tilted its head for a second, then nodded after some deliberation. “I’ll protect you, but you can’t run around everywhere yourself. Don’t want you to trigger the sharp things.”

Jiang Chen was curious as to what these ‘sharp things’ actually were. He very badly wanted to see them for himself.

“Lie on my back, young master Chen, and keep low.”

Once Jiang Chen was in place, the Astral White Tiger charged ahead. They sped up until a dark region loomed ahead, as if it was an entrance of some sort. Little White shot inside like an arrow.

In no time at all, Jiang Chen felt that he had descended deep underground.

“Do you see, young master Chen? The strange lights all around mark the edges of the earthen vein. They’re rare metal ores that can cut through rocks across air. If you tread on their fields of influence, they’ll attack you without hesitation.”

These were evidently an innate part of the Astral White Tiger’s memories. It spoke eloquently about them like its knowledge was perfectly natural.

Jiang Chen grew stern. Though he wasn't familiar with this place yet, he could see that Little White spoke the truth. There was no pattern to the layout of the lights, but they presented an omnipresent threat.

He felt like he had been dropped into the eighteen hells, so bone-chilling was the sensation.

The Astral White Tiger, on the other hand, was perfectly comfortable in what seemed to be its natural environment. Every step it took avoided the light fields with ease. This allowed Jiang Chen to proceed safely further in.

He recalled only a few details about environments like these from the memories of his previous life. However, he was sure of one thing. The lights could inflict incredible damage. They could be lethal weapons if excavated and refined. If they were fused into blades, the keenness of the blades would be multiplied several times over.

If they were polished into a mirror, a more clandestine means of assassination would be created. A single flash would be enough to kill.

There was definitely treasure here, valuable enough for him to drool over. Alas, the treasure was like a poisonous flower; useful, but difficult to acquire. It could rather easily hurt him in the process.