

## Three Realms 1771

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

#### Chapter 1771: Battle of the Eye Arts, Again

Having been the foremost genius for a long time in this nation, Xiahou Zong's pride and confidence was at an indescribable peak. But, the general public had to admit that he had a good reason for his stance.

The ant and tree analogy, well...

Before now, no one had thought much of Jiang Chen – the sacred land's first prime included. The only exception was Jiang Chen himself.

"A great tree can be felled by only an axe, Xiahou Zong. Perhaps you're a great tree among the geniuses of this nation, but I will be the edge that cuts you down! Your absurd ego and vanity must be destroyed. Only then can the rest of the geniuses enjoy a clear sky, free from your cloying canopy."

As he concluded, Jiang Chen shot a potent ray out of his Evil Golden Eye. The radiant strike burst forth thickly with commanding sharpness. He had chosen to use his eye arts from the outset.

"I hear that you use an ocular skill as well. The 'Scorching Sun Eye', was it? Shall we have a little contest of the eyes, then?"

Jiang Chen's impassive voice was scattered all about Xiahou Zong with no sense of directionality. The fabric of the world shook as he projected his speech in a manner no less impressive than Xiahou Zong's.

This strange sight astounded the crowd once more. The most they had hoped out of Jiang Chen was to be able to fend off several of Xiahou Zong's assaults. Even the most imaginative hadn't expected Shao Yuan to match his opponent in terms of presence.

The momentum, poise, and accompanying tone of ease showed very well that the fight wasn't necessarily going to be a one-sided slaughter. Shao Yuan had been grossly underestimated!

How many years had it been since there was a youth capable of remotely holding his own against Xiahou Zong? In fact, who had ever witnessed anyone brave enough to challenge Xiahou Zong before?

Today, that record had been broken.

This young man before them had not only confronted Xiahou Zong head on, but hadn't lost even in the pre-battle details. Even the pressure-based tactics the latter was most adept at didn't bring about an advantage. Xiahou Zong hadn't managed to gain an upper hand at all in the beginning.

Xiahou Zong was surprised himself. He had said so much to work up a momentum of his own. His consciousness and aura had begun to expand quite a while ago.

But to his chagrin, his enemy was both resourceful and daring enough to match his pace. Moreover, Shao Yuan was aggressive indeed – he seemed to want to fight toe-to-toe.

Arts of the eye?

Xiahou Zong snickered. "Kid," he snorted, "it's rare for me to see another cultivator who can deploy any eye art. You're far too inferior to duel me, though!"

His consciousness flared up with scorching heat, burning like the midday sun. Solar energy gathered in his eyes, blinding like two miniature orbs of the noblest fire.

Whoosh, whoosh!

Terrifyingly fiery beams blasted forth from his eyes like gouts of potent flame.

“An inconsequential trick.” Sneering in turn, Jiang Chen parried with two impossibly sharp rays that cut into the scorching ones from his opponent.

Boom!

Two equally domineering ocular skills collided in midair, much like two mortal enemies at berserk odds with each other. Each pair worked hard to cut through or melt the other. For a time, there was a terrifying standstill.

In that same instant, both cultivators moved to launch additional missiles in unspoken consensus. Deadly light sprayed indiscriminately into the air. There was an impromptu battle with the arts of the eye occurring in the airspace above the arena.

A single scratch would be enough to reduce a man to dust and ashes, and the ring was filled with the fatal attacks.

Barely anywhere safe was left to stand. Every inch of room was hellishly dangerous. However, the dueling opponents seemed to have come to an agreement about the mode of their contest. They both pushed their ocular skills to their utmost lethality.

Up until now, Jiang Chen had never met his match in ocular skills before. The two young man were at an unprecedented standoff.

Those watching below from the sacred land grew more hopeful. Yan Qingsang especially clenched his fists even more tightly, his eyes becoming ever more intense.

“I knew he could do it,” his lips trembled.

“What’re you muttering about, Brother Qingsang?” Wu You asked curiously.

“Ah, nothing much,” the young man waved a hand. “I didn’t say anything.”

Wu You smiled, then looked around. “Oh, yes, did your cousin Yan Qinghuang not come to the tournament?”

Yan Qingsang shook his head. “She didn’t want to put too much pressure on Brother Shao Yuan.”

Wu You sighed softly, then glanced at the first prime. “First Prime, do you think Brother Shao Yuan has a shot at winning?” he asked in a low voice.

The first prime was still recovering from the throes of amazement. She had never thought Shao Yuan would really rise to meet the challenge. The two youths were just as evenly matched as they had been earlier. She couldn’t predict where the fight would go from now on, but this was a good start.

“Shao Yuan’s ocular skill is rather astonishing. I think his is actually more piercing than Xiahou Zong’s, objectively speaking,” Ziju Min remarked in commentary.

“Indeed, Shao Yuan’s technique is superior,” the first prime nodded. “Xiahou Zong’s art is fueled more by his own cultivation. He seems considerably stronger than before his closed door cultivation.”

Ziju Min drew a sharp breath. “Did you notice that it’s the same way with Shao Yuan?”

“It looks like their cultivation levels aren’t far apart. What’s with Shao Yuan? Does he have some secret art to temporarily increase his cultivation?” The first prime found the short-term change frankly impossible. After all, everyone knew that Shao Yuan hadn’t broken through to empyrean realm yet when he joined the sacred land.

It had been less than two years since his ascension. There was no way he could’ve broken through multiple times in a single year to reach mid empyrean realm, was there?

That completely defied common sense.

However, the ease with which Shao Yuan was fighting implied that he was probably mid empyrean.

The first prime was utterly confused. The fact that the two young cultivators were still trading ocular blows meant that it was difficult to judge their cultivation levels, which further compounded the problem.

It made sense for Xiahou Zong to have reached mid empyrean realm. He had the talent and the resources to do so. Though Shao Yuan did have the talent, he lacked the reasonable timeframe required to advance so quickly in so short a period of time.

“Come here, Qingsang.” The first prime glanced at the named youth.

Yan Qingsang complied with the command. “What are your orders, First Prime?”

“You’re close to Shao Yuan. Has he said anything to you recently?”

“Sure. He’s said a lot to me about this tournament.”

“Anything about Xiahou Zong?” The first prime furrowed her brow.

“Yes, I believe so. I don’t think he was particular anxious about this fight – in fact, he seemed quite matter-of-fact about it. I sometimes had the impression that he really was capable of taking down Xiahou Zong.” Yan Qingsang was totally truthful.

“Did he really say that?”

“Yes indeed. He treated Xiahou Zong with an inherent cool disdain, rather than the fear and wariness common to others in our generation,” Yan Qingsang vowed.

The first prime was comforted a great deal upon hearing this.

“Good, good, good! A true genius, hmm? I finally believe it myself. Shao Yuan is destined to be an even brighter star than Xiahou Zong. That’s why he doesn’t care about him, I suppose.”

“Ah, that’s right! He also said that Xiahou Zong was just a minor obstacle, someone he could easily kick aside,” recalled Yan Qingsang.

A wide smile crept across the first prime’s face. “Alright, then. Let’s pay attention to the fight. Shao Yuan might not be able to win today, but he definitely won’t lose badly.”

She had the reassurance she wanted.

As long as Shao Yuan could remain graceful in defeat, that was a win. After all, how long had Shao Yuan come to the sacred land for?

It was very encouraging for a genius who had barely been in the sacred land for two years to nearly tie with Xiahou Zong. With some time and growth, Shao Yuan would have another opportunity to challenge Xiahou Zong in the international tournament of geniuses.

The contest of ocular skill wasn’t over yet. Energy and light ricocheted everywhere.

It seems that Xiahou Zong is adept with the eye arts as well. Unless I can crush him utterly through cultivation alone, I will have a hard time winning with my Evil Golden Eye.

Jiang Chen hadn’t expected to win with just this alone, anyways.

The two young men came to an unspoken consensus once more, taking several steps back in near-unison to draw back their ocular skills.

Resentment burned in Xiahou Zong’s heart, but his head became ever calmer. His opponent was much more difficult and fearsome than he had anticipated. How many years had it been since he had used the fullness of his strength in a match?

No opponent had been strong enough to allow him to do so here in Eternal Divine Nation before!

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#### **Chapter 1772: To Give Tit for Ta**

Truth be told, most hadn’t anticipated the parity of the two competitors’ eye arts.

Xiahou Ying’s pout was pronounced enough to hang a coat on. She’d wanted to admire her brother making mincemeat out of Shao Yuan, but the familiar sight of his victory hadn’t come.

The Scorching Sun Eye was one of Xiahou Zong’s most proficient arts. Who would’ve expected Xiahou Zong not to gain an inch in a contest involving it?

Eye arts were one of the most technical and involved of all martial skills. They required not only the arts themselves, but strength of cultivation and consciousness as well. They needed all three components to deploy at peak power. When perfected, an ocular skill used the cultivator’s consciousness to strike down their enemy.

What was up with Shao Yuan? Tying with Xiahou Zong was no easy feat.

Xiahou Ying almost wanted to head into the ring to help her brother.

Nearby, Duke Xiaoyao and Xiahou Zhen traded surprised looks. The two giants of House Xiahou were as astonished as the rest.

Xiahou Zong had never encountered such a tough opponent before in his life. Perhaps they had been too used to him stomping the competition, which made them somewhat discomfited by the current situation.

“Kid, your true dragon bloodline and your ocular skill would’ve made you a good candidate for being the strongest genius of this generation. Unfortunately for you, that’ll never happen because you met me.” Xiahou Zong smiled coolly.

He was no longer interested in underestimating his opponent after the battle of the eye arts. He despised Jiang Chen’s guts, but he also knew that he needed to put some of his other skills into action.

“I don’t remember that being your tune when I first entered the ring, Xiahou Zong.” Jiang Chen raised an eyebrow. “Didn’t you say you’d kill me within a single breath? Ah, I see. Your breath is simply far longer than everyone else’s.”

Though jeering was hardly likely to be effective, Jiang Chen didn’t believe that Xiahou Zong’s dao heart was free of weaknesses.

He going in at every opportunity he saw, hoping to use any window to demolish his opponent with a single, decisive blow. Jiang Chen had been able to tell from the exchange of eye arts that Xiahou Zong had a higher cultivation level – at least fifth level empyrean, or perhaps sixth.

Jiang Chen himself was only new to the fourth level, and had matched Xiahou Zong thanks to different reasons.

Xiahou Zong was certainly the most exacting of opponents among Jiang Chen’s generation that he’d met so far. Up until now, Jiang Chen had always obviously held every advantage after commanding his full strength. He could typically crush his peers trivially.

Therefore, this bout was special to both Xiahou Zong and Jiang Chen. For the first time in their lives, the two young men had found a worthy adversary.

“What are you so proud of? You merely managed to match my ocular skill.” Xiahou Zong sneered. “It’s just one out of many of my abilities. How can an ant like you know even a fraction of what I’m capable of?”

The source of his pride was his status as a reincarnated divine cultivator. Though he hadn’t yet fully awakened, he considered himself practically a god already. He’d always felt an inherent superiority when it came to anyone else in his generation.

“Oh, is that so? Blowing yourself and your ego up, are you? I hope you live after it pops,” jeered Jiang Chen.

“Perhaps one day I will meet a deserving rival,” Xiahou Zong retorted with nonchalance. “But that person is not you, and that day is not today.”

Jiang Chen chuckled. “You haven’t ever come down from your high horse in your life, have you? But today, your judgment is inevitable.”

“Then... die!” Xiahou Zong’s eyes suddenly burned with radiance. In the next moment, he raised both hands to produce a huge disk of light atop his head. It shone like a real fiery sun.

Countless vines surged forth from around him, each bearing a sunflower upon its tip. They turned towards the burning sun above Xiahou Zong, charging up with vitality.

The spirit herbs were obviously much fiercer and more resilient than the typical sunflower. The maws at the center of the sunflowers’ heads made their aggressiveness evident. Their bloody cavities made them appear as ghouls from hell, intent on consuming the world around them.

“An Infernal Sunflower?” Data about the plant leapt into Jiang Chen’s mind.

It was a heavenly rank spirit herb for sure. Though it hadn't evolved to the crux of its potential, it appeared quite mature already.

The Infernal Sunflower had the suppleness and regeneration of a plant, the bloodthirst of an animal, and specialized in eating others. Most formidable was the Sunflower’s noxious scent, able to invade a cultivator’s consciousness undetected.

Most cultivators were defenseless before the olfactory ambush, even if they knew about how deadly the Sunflower’s smell really was.

In an intense fight, it was difficult to defend against the Infernal Sunflower’s multiple vectors of attack. Its poisonous miasma, constricting vines, and consuming maw formed three angles with which it approached any given fight.

The petals of the Sunflower possessed incredibly strong suction, enough to change the tide of the battle. Even if it couldn't draw in more capable cultivators, it would serve sufficient interference. All of the above often made the Sunflower’s summoning often fatal.

“To force me to call upon the Infernal Sunflower... you can congratulate yourself on a worthy death, Shao Yuan.”

Jiang Chen’s focused expression was slowly replaced by a smile. “An Infernal Sunflower is an aberrant plant, Xiahou Zong. Still, I’m game if you want to play with your toys.”

His interest had only grown upon spotting the Infernal Sunflower. Showing off manipulation of plants? Well then, bring it!

Flexing both arms, he produced a mass of vines from himself as well. It was naturally the Bewitching Lotus of Ice and Fire.

The lotus had evolved alongside his cultivation, and now that he was fourth level empyrean, it neared great perfection. Furthermore, it was valuable and powerful enough in the heavenly planes to be ranked among the top ten. It claimed superiority to the Infernal Sunflower in its genealogy.

In any case, his plant was also better grown than Xiahou Zong’s. There was nothing to be concerned about.

The Infernal Sunflower did have the advantage of a poison that affected the consciousness, but the Bewitching Lotus was uniquely dual attribute and adept at illusion in its own right.

There was another wave of surprised gasps from the crowd. There was intense interest in Jiang Chen's spectacular performance. Current events were almost too incredible to behold.

Everyone had thought Shao Yuan would suffer at the tendrils of Xiahou Zong's new treasure. Its properties were widely known by many, and a cultivator with insufficient strength would be easily crushed.

Even those who were higher level than Xiahou Zong didn't enjoy going up against the Sunflower. The plant was simply too dangerous to deal with. It was hard to handle both on the attack and defense. Unless one was significantly higher level, avoiding the plant was far superior.

But if Shao Yuan were to retreat from the plant in the arena, that would be tantamount to surrender.

Public opinion had previously been uniform about Shao Yuan's eventual loss in the near future – though there was some disagreement about exactly how. And yet, he'd defied common expectations in a very good way once again. What would he do next?

"How cool. I know Xiahou Zong's plant is the Infernal Sunflower, but what is Shao Yuan's? Are both young men spirit creature controllers? That's real genius for you!"

"Indeed. We've all known about Xiahou Zong's genius for a long time, but there's plenty to discover about Shao Yuan."

"Everyone has underestimated Shao Yuan. Looks like he held back in the fights against Wu You and Shen Fan. If he hadn't, those two wouldn't have lasted a second against him."

"Amazing, amazing. This fight will go down in history as a classic!"

"How many years has it been since a fight like this between youngsters of Eternal Divine Nation? Is Xiahou Zong's arrogant era over?"

"Impossible! Xiahou Zong has been established for too long. Shao Yuan has the genius to match, but not the time and experience. He won't be able to win in the end without those other necessary factors." Most favored Xiahou Zong still.

In fact, very few actually favored Jiang Chen to win despite his defiance of expectations time and time again. Still, most were hopeful he could hold Xiahou Zong up for awhile longer and cause him some more trouble. Learning about the best genius of the generation's special attacks was useful in itself.

Only some from Eternal Divine Nation had the beautiful dream of Jiang Chen's triumph.

Xiahou Zong glanced at the Bewitching Lotus disdainfully. "I wouldn't be able to tell from just looking at you that you had something like this. But do you think you'll be able to stop my sunflower's attacks using those pathetic vines?"

"The Infernal Sunflower is just a second rate spirit herb. Only a third rate cultivator like you would treat it like his treasure. What would your little sunflower do if I simply... stood here?" Jiang Chen matched with equal scorn.

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

#### **Chapter 1773: Who's Stronger**

Having long since erupted in open hostilities, there was no courtesy at all in their exchange.

Xiahou Zong hated Jiang Chen's contemptuous tone and demeanor the most. Only he was allowed to throw that kind of attitude around!

Who had ever dared publicly disrespect him and his treasures and abilities before?

Moreover, he considered the Infernal Sunflower one of his trump cards. In his usual matches against young geniuses of his generation, he typically refrained from using it.

He'd brought it out in order to utterly crush his opponent through its intimidation and bloodlust, but nothing had gone according to plan at all. Instead, he had been ridiculed by the young man that he bitterly hated.

Xiahou Zong was truly frustrated now.

"You're a master at smack talking, kid. But do you think you'll escape the reach of the Infernal Sunflower with just talk?"

He couldn't hold his anger back for much longer. Deep down, he was also mildly shocked. He hadn't been able to identify the plant his opponent controlled, yet his own had been named instantaneously.

It wasn't a feeling that he enjoyed. Xiahou Zong had the vague feeling that he was on the back foot. He was too proud to take the issue particularly seriously though.

A loud whistle and a hand seal accompanied a roar. "Floral bloom summoned from hell, consume the base and crude souls in this world!"

Like demonic soldiers receiving their orders from the king of hell, the Infernal Sunflower's tendrils flew like hungry ghouls in their prey's direction.

A strange smile appeared on Jiang Chen's face.

His body vanished into thin air with a sudden shift. The Bewitching Lotus' vines transformed into dozens and hundreds of copies of him, the remaining blossoms gathering together with great unity.

Countless fire lotuses formed up into lines, spewing frenzied flame at their enemy. The ice lotuses formed ring upon ring of frigid blue walls that generated and regenerated in midair without cease. The splendid sight was nearly perfect in both attack and defense.

Xiahou Zong was taken aback at the production of so many of his opponent's images. But then he smiled impassively. "A petty trick. You think you're far cleverer than you actually are!"

He knew the copies were all fake. He only had one actual enemy.

The Infernal Sunflower's attacks ignored the distinction between illusion and reality. Its onslaught was as singular as it was destructive. Whether its target was existent or not hardly mattered.

For a time, the scene of battle was positively awe-inspiring. The Infernal Sunflower was unfettered in its frenzied movements, each flower weaving through the air on a hot chase for food.



A sea of bloody crimson stretched as far as the eye can see. Much like the chains of hell's guardsmen, they seemed willing to hunt down their mark regardless of distance.

Hmm?

Suddenly, Xiahou Zong's expression changed. He discovered that his Sunflower had been slowing down; in the next moment, it ground to a halt.

What he noticed with a sweep of his consciousness startled him. The vines from his opponent's lotuses were constricting the movements of his Infernal Sunflower!

The ice and fire lotuses appeared almost sacred in their purity. The sunflower was unable to devour them; instead, the plants' tendrils were now locked in a melee.

Xiahou Zong was furious. "Do you think your endless delay will protect you from the Infernal Sunflower, kid? Your naïvete knows no bounds! Infernal Sunflower, scatter!" he incanted with a hand seal.

The petals of the sunflower dispersed into the wind, becoming strange curls of diffusing mist.

In the next moment, the scent of the sunflower permeated the entire arena.

"You've nowhere to hide, kid. Enjoy this fragrance in your last moments, because it'll take you to hell!" Xiahou Zong cackled. "I said that you were a bit better than the other geniuses, but ants will be ants before me, the great Xiahou Zong. What does a slight increase in the size of an insect matter?"

Now that the sunflower's poison was deployed, he considered the battle essentially over. It was time to clean up.

However, his satisfaction had barely left him when an ominous voice snaked forth from midair.

"You always get ahead of yourself, Xiahou Zong. You like to boast, but you don't deliver results."

Xiahou Zong was shaken to the core. Before he could react, a golden light suddenly appeared overhead. A set of swords hovered over Jiang Chen.

"Seven sevens is forty-nine. Let the heavenly chalices pronounce judgment!"

The Heavenly Chalice Sword Formation was currently one of Jiang Chen's finest combat-related ones. This was especially true after he'd reached empyrean realm. He was at the skill level of forty-nine swords and great perfection, which meant only one or two steps from the fabled eighty-one swords of the legendary realm.

Countless lights stormed down recklessly from the cosmos like a shower of meteors.

Cut, cut, cut!

The sword lights cut mercilessly into the Infernal Sunflower. As a naturally powerful spirit herb, it was plenty resilient on its own. It was largely immune to most actual weapons to boot.

Alas, the Heavenly Chalice Sword Formation excelled in its unrivaled offense. The rain of swords overcame their target in a blind, mob-like assault.

The tendrils of the sunflower couldn't survive frenetic slicing. The majority was left in pieces after the sword formation's dicing session. The dismemberment of the majority of its living matter caused the Infernal Sunflower to lose its vigor almost entirely.

Jiang Chen saw this as the perfect time to follow up with a second strike.

"Entangle, Bewitching Lotus!" he called out with a hand seal.

The Lotus changed forms once more, flying toward Xiahou Zong in a mass of thick ropes.

The Bewitching Lotus was significantly more resilient than the Infernal Sunflower. Though the latter could heal itself, it regenerated very slowly over time. The Lotus, on the other hand, regrew any damage in a matter of seconds.

More importantly, Xiahou Zong's Infernal Sunflower had sustained irreparable damage to its root structure. It was nearly impossible for it to recover from so devastating a blow.

Jiang Chen's memories from his previous life had told him where the Sunflower was most vulnerable. Thus, his attack had been targeted at the plant's weakness. There was barely a tenth left of the Sunflower after the pruning.

Xiahou Zong was livid when he saw the extent of the destruction. At the same time, he felt incredulous – but before he had time to think any further, the Lotus' attack was already at his door.

"Bloody hell!" His bristling hair nearly stood up on its own. "Blaze, Scorching Sun Shield!" he roared.

An array of flaming shields appeared all around him, protecting him within a defensive barricade – one that the Lotus failed to pierce through.

Jiang Chen chuckled. "Looks like your Infernal Sunflower wasn't as amazing as you bragged about after all!"

It was clear to just about everyone that he had taken the upper hand in the battle of mystical plants.

Xiahou Zong tasted iron on his tongue; he barely managed to keep himself from coughing out blood. The Infernal Sunflower had been one of his most prized offensive treasures. How... how could it have been destroyed at this bastard's hands?

"Damn it... damn you!" His heart was bleeding. He couldn't understand where the Sunflower's typical dominance had gone.

None of the traits that made the plant incredibly potent had been displayed today. The poisonous mist of scattered flower powder should've taken down Shao Yuan immediately.

As long as a sliver of the Sunflower's scent made its way in, his enemy should've been toast. Its poison was capable of disintegrating a cultivator's consciousness within seconds, taking with it his ability to fight or stand.

Unfortunately, what he'd seen transpire provided no evidence that that was the case. His opponent's spirit herb looked like it was just a simple dual attribute plant. Ice and fire. How could it have won out over his Sunflower?

Xiahou Zong simply couldn't understand. Why had things turned out this way?

There was abject silence all around the arena as well.

Many members of the audience were slack-jawed by this inconceivable turnabout. They hadn't come back to their senses yet, and sat staring at the battle before them in paralyzed shock.

Xiahou Zong is a little panicked. No one had seen that emotion in him before.

Shao Yuan had scored a crushing victory in controlling plants over Xiahou Zong. Furthermore, he had done so over a treasure that was known to be powerful – the Infernal Sunflower. How could this be?

What they'd witnessed seemed almost hallucinatory.

Even those allied with the Eternal Sacred Land were flabbergasted by what they were watching. It was exactly the opposite of what they'd expected.

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

#### **Chapter 1774: Better By a Marked Margin**

"Amazing. Simply amazing!" Yan Qingsang punched the chair beside him in excitement.

It was cathartic to see Xiahou Zong taken down a notch. No one had ever fathomed something like this could happen, but deep in his heart, Yan Qingsang had always been hopeful.

Jiang Chen had indeed created a miracle!

Though Xiahou Zong wasn't yet defeated, he'd been proven to be not as invincible as the stories made him out to be. Maybe he'll end up like his Infernal Sunflower!

The first prime's eyes shone brightly. Even someone as experienced as she couldn't fully contain her excitement.

Anyone with eyes could see the Eternal Sacred Land had been treated unfairly in the competition. She had remained silent for the greater good, but wasn't about to just let this blow over.

It was a wondrous surprise that Shao Yuan could go head to head with Xiahou Zong to this extent. It renewed her hopes and spirit. She saw a future that was more than a tie between the two youths. There was a possibility that Shao Yuan could achieve something no one had thought possible until now.

Is Shao Yuan a divine gift to us? Anticipation bloomed. She'd been worried that Xiahou Zong would dominate and easily defeat Shao Yuan. Shao Yuan might be even crippled or killed.

She'd considered all possibilities, but never had she expected that Shao Yuan would exceed her expectations to this extent.

Maybe the question isn't how long he can stand against Xiahou Zong, but if he can put an end to the unbeatable genius' undying legend!

Contrary to the first prime, Duke Xiaoyao and Xiahou Zhen couldn't fully mask their anxiety, despite the calm front they put up. Xiahou Ying was stamping her foot in agitation, cursing under her breath.

Meanwhile, the emperor of the nation wore a severely stern look on his face. What was happening greatly shocked and dampened his mood. His paranoid nature kicked in.

Shao Yuan has held back more than anyone expected. Was this all part of the sacred land's plan?

Geniuses from the other major factions stared at the stage with their mouths agape. If they'd been in Shao Yuan's place, they'd have broken under Xiahou Zong's eye art alone. They wouldn't last long enough for the spirit herb to be deployed.

Even with the endless methods Xiahou Zong had brought out, he'd completely failed to harm Shao Yuan. Moreover, his Sunflower had been obliterated. No youth in the nation had ever struck such a serious blow to Xiahou Zong's ego before!

Even in the entirety of Myriad Abyss Island, very few in the younger generation could achieve such a feat. Xiahou Zong was the unequivocal top genius in the local hegemony! Was his crown finally going to go to someone else?

Hit with a turbulence of emotions, Xiahou Zong put up layers after layers of Scorching Sun Shields to keep the Bewitching Lotus of Ice and Fire at bay. He tried to push aside his shock and calm himself.

"How dare you destroy my spirit plant! Its poison is potent. You can't possibly take it!" His tone furiously irritated, Xiahou Zong's face contorted into a scowl.

He was powerful, and his talent and techniques unparalleled. However, he had one weakness: he'd never known the taste of failure. Those like him had never encountered a major challenge. Naturally, they reacted more strongly to frustration than regular folk.

Xiahou Zong struggled to control his emotions as this was his first ever setback. Despite his ability to, he had a hard time adjusting himself.

Jiang Chen smiled lazily. "You think the world of the poison from your Sunflower, but it's not at all a threat in my eyes!"

Being immune to all poisons, the plant wouldn't be able to hurt him even if the powder had hit. Besides, he'd long since used the Lotus to create projections of himself and pulled away from the battlezone to set up a Heavenly Chalice Sword Formation. He was out of the poison's area of effect.

"What did you say?" demanded Xiahou Zong in a harsh tone. "Talk all you want, kid. You can't possibly be immune to it."

Jiang Chen shrugged. "Are you out of tricks already?" He gestured with his hand to prepare the formation for activation and announced coldly, "If you have nothing else up your sleeve, Xiahou Zong, then it's time that I take your life!"

The Heavenly Chalice Sword Formation ranked on the heavenly level. Even in the ancient times, it'd been lauded for the damage it was capable of inflicting.

Xiahou Zong might be a great genius, but only in this current time period. If he'd been from the ancient times, he'd still be considered a genius, but definitely not among the top. Moreover, any one of Jiang Chen's numerous past disciples could rival Xiahou Zong in talent.

Golden currents rippled through the stage as Jiang Chen readied himself for an attack.

Xiahou Zong huffed coldly. "You have some unusual tricks, kid, but do you think I've depleted all my techniques? That'd be far too naive!"

His eyes blazed as he placed his hands together before his chest and moved them outward. He spread his right hand out, upright, and poked at the air above it with his left. Illusive pictographs rose from his palm like smoke.

"Divine demons, answer my call. Wind and thunder bend at my will..." As he incanted, a strong ray of light shot from his eyes. The shapes flickered and slowly turned concrete.

"A demon god summons?" Jiang Chen sucked in a breath. That was a remarkable technique by all standards. Xiahou Zong couldn't have known the method if he wasn't a god incarnate.

Normally, the entities one summoned wouldn't surpass one in cultivation. They were merely projections formed by demon gods' consciousness.

But once a projection gained physical form, its power grew formidable, and its cultivation would approach the summoner's, if not reaching the same level. A couple projections wasn't much of a threat, yet a group of them? That was difficult to deal with.

The top genius does a lot of unusual tricks alright. Most geniuses would be nothing but sitting ducks given the demons he summoned.

Jiang Chen kept his surprise to himself. From Xiahou Zong's bloodshot eyes and murderous expression, he speculated that this was his opponent's ultimate move.

Xiahou Zong knew more techniques than the ones he'd utilized, but since the fight started, he'd been using his most powerful techniques - namely the Scorching Sun Eye, Infernal Sunflower, and demon summoning - and forgone his more regular skills. And now, he'd summoned four demon gods at once!

It was clear that the summons had depleted most of his consciousness. He was weakened, but his grimace deepened even further.

"The demons will send you on your way, Shao Yuan," Xiahou Zong spat resentfully. "I have to admit you're the most difficult foe I've ever faced. That's why I'll give you a painful death!"

Jiang Chen sniffed, maintaining the formation but refraining from activating it. He backed away swiftly, a faint smile tugging his lips.

"You do know a lot of tricks, Xiahou Zong," he sneered. "However, you've yet to master the summoning. Do you think a few demon gods will be able to defeat me?"

"There's no use in running your mouth off, kid," Xiahou Zong responded with great confidence. "Do you think four great demons won't be able to crush you? What do you think you are? A god?"

"Wind gather!" one of the demons intoned. A strong gust of wind swept through the arena, churning dust and rocks into the air.

"Clouds roil!" An ominous layer of dark clouds descended and settled heavily above the stage.

“Lightning strike!” Another demon smashed the stage floor with the hammer of the thunder god, sending sparks flying. Countless threads of lightning snaked through the air.

“Now die!” The last demon brandished his terrifyingly enormous sickle, ready to reap Jiang Chen’s life.

Jiang Chen snorted as he threw the magnetic mountain into the air, covering the entire ring with a series of magnetic storms, filling the space with turbulent air.

Without hesitation, he summoned the diagrams for the Nine Labyrinth Formation and expanded it with a flick of his wrists, fully opening his treasure box of techniques.

At the same time, he snapped his fingers and deployed one... two... three... four Confounding Puppets to face the demons. He had seven in total, but for now, it was too difficult for him to manipulate them all at once. Four he could manage with ease.

What? Once more, shock rippled through the audience. It had already been ludicrous when Xiahou Zong summoned demons to the stage. And yet Shao Yuan was able to retaliate in kind!

Had he been sent by heaven itself to defeat Xiahou Zong?

Shao Yuan always seemed to counter Xiahou Zong with a similar method and in fact, come out on top!

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

#### **Chapter 1775: The Situation Changes**

Everyone was transfixed by the fight. Even the densest mind could tell things weren’t going as expected.

The battle wasn’t at all a one-sided slaughter. Xiahou Zong hadn’t gain the upper hand a single time since the match had started. The top genius was in unprecedented trouble. How were things unfolding like this?

Even Xiahou Zong’s most devoted supporters began to waver. These observations were a stark contrast from their expectations. Given the circumstances, what were the odds that Xiahou Zong would be able to defeat Shao Yuan?

They weren’t as powerful as Xiahou Zong, but their eyes were keen enough to tell that Xiahou Zong had given up on his usual tactics and opted for techniques he’d never showed in public before. The summons was a most powerful move that had clearly taken a toll on him.

When they’d first felt the formidable presence of the four demon gods, they’d thought that Shao Yuan would be torn to pieces, but he’d riposted with four puppets of his own. Although the puppets didn’t seem as mighty as the demons, they were clearly more agile.

More surprisingly, as soon as Shao Yuan had brought out a labyrinthine diagram, it completely devoured all of the natural elements that Xiahou Zong’s demon gods had created. The void over the stage folded and distorted severely. Space itself was twisted and divided into countless smaller subspaces, creating a complicated sub-dimensional combination. It was disorienting to even look at it.

What was going on?

Experts focused on the techniques at play, while amateurs cared only about the spectacle. Figureheads from all of the various major factions were captivated.

The first prime's eyes lit up with gleeful delight. She could hardly believe what she was seeing. Shao Yuan was full of incredible surprises!

"Xiahou Zong has called upon his past memories to communicate with evil gods and form these projections. They are merely strands of consciousness—mighty, but not invincible. On the other hand, what looks like battle puppets under Shao Yuan's control are more than simple summons. Puppets like those can be as powerful as beings of flesh and bones once given their own consciousness."

The first prime spoke from a position of knowledge. Although the sacred land had been in decline these years, its foundations were still solid. Her experience was naturally a cut above the rest.

Yan Qingsang shook his fist in the air and could barely stop himself from roaring at the top of his lungs, "Great fucking job, brother! Fuck yeah! Destroy Xiahou Zong and my cousin is yours!"

His eyes were bloodshot. He was more thrilled than being in a fight himself.

Wu You looked at the stage, shocked surprise in his eyes, and sighed. "It only makes sense that I lost to Shao Yuan. We all underestimated him."

"Shao Yuan, Shao Yuan..." The geniuses from the sacred land uttered his name with mixed feelings.

Sui Chen's expression was the darkest. As the top of the Five Great Gentlemen, he'd yielded to Xiahou Zong before the fight even started. Not only had Shao Yuan not done so, but he'd managed to go neck and neck with Xiahou Zong. He even seemed to be gaining the upper hand.

He couldn't be more embarrassed.

"First Prime, what are the odds of Brother Shao Yuan winning?" Wu You couldn't help but ask.

Even Elder Ziju Min turned to the first prime with a hopeful expression. He wasn't any less excited than Yan Qingsang. He was the one who'd brought Shao Yuan into the sacred land's fold. If Shao Yuan could achieve the miraculous feat of defeating Xiahou Zong, much of the credit would go to the elder, as he'd insisted on taking in Shao Yuan despite everyone's disapproval.

The first prime responded in a low voice, "The four demon gods can't be underestimated. If Shao Yuan's puppets can go toe-to-toe with them, Xiahou Zong is bound to lose. If they can't, there's no telling who will win in the end."

The first prime's estimation was credible. She had a feeling that Shao Yuan's odds of winning exceeded seventy percent, but was erring on the side of conservatism.

Xiahou Zong hadn't run out of options, but he was starting to cut things close.

Shao Yuan, on the other hand, was a bottomless pit that no one could plumb the depths of. Geniuses like him were the most formidable. It was impossible to tell how many tricks he still had up his sleeve.

“You must win, Brother Shao Yuan.” Wu You sighed faintly. “You’re our last hope. You must show the entire nation that the sacred land hasn’t fallen. No one can challenge our authority! We will always be the Eternal Sacred Land!”

Wu You was a devoted disciple. He’d been disappointed when he lost to Shao Yuan, but for the sake of his faction, he hoped Shao Yuan would succeed and salvage the sacred land’s reputation.

If Shao Yuan defeated Xiahou Zong, he’d essentially have claimed the top spot. There were still three more rounds after that, but who would dare go against a genius who had triumphed over Xiahou Zong?

Jiang Chen’s victory would be burned into everyone’s memory and make him all the more formidable. No one would be able to reverse the impression.

Xiahou Zong had already instilled a gut instinct of fear in everyone. No one was going to provoke a man who was even more powerful and menacing.

Duke Xiaoyao and Xiahou Zhen exchanged a look. Things were getting out of control.

How had the fight arrived this point? Where had Shao Yuan even pop out from? Had this been the sacred land’s plan all along? Was Shao Yuan a pawn the sacred land had planted to defeat Xiahou Zong in this moment?

“Shao Yuan is able to counter every of Xiahou Zong’s attacks,” Xiahou Zhen whispered. “It’s like he’s a weapon specifically designed to eliminate Xiahou Zong.”

Duke Xiaoyao frowned, noncommittal to the elder’s speculation.

Unease grew in his heart. He had a bad feeling about the fight. How long had Xiahou Zong maintained his dominance over the youths in the nation? Why was there suddenly be a kid who could render the great Xiahou genius helpless?

Xiahou Ying’s brows knit together in agitation as she cursed under her breath, “Where did this bastard come from? You have to do better and defeat him, brother. Doom him to eternity in hell!”

Despite her frustration, she could tell her brother was in unprecedented trouble. Her brother had always been better than any of his peers. There was nothing he couldn’t do. What was going on today?

“Patriarch, if Xiahou Zong loses, our plans... will be greatly impacted,” transmitted Xiahou Zhen.

The Xiaohou patriarch narrowed his ferocious eyes. “Let’s wait and see. Xiahou Zong was a god and has yet to encounter any setbacks since his reincarnation. He has to find a solution himself this time. If he can overcome this crisis, it will result in a great leap in his martial dao and he will become truly unstoppable. Shao Yuan is his first real trial in this path.”

He was calmer than Xiahou Zhen. From his perspective, smooth travels on the path of martial dao meant that an actual challenge was a change for great ascension. This fight might was away some of Xiahou Zong’s youthful impatience and help him learn the virtue of patience.

A mature and dependable Xiahou Zong would be the heir the house needed. Only then would he be able to lead the family into a more glorious future.



Xiahou Zhen sighed, concerns lingering in his heart.

“Don’t be too worried, Elder Zhen. As a god incarnate, it’s possible Xiahou Zong might breakthrough during the battle. Fights at this level are exactly what he needs. He hasn’t recovered all of his memories. The fight might prompt him into further awakening.”

Cultivators often encountered bottlenecks. There were many ways to break through them, and the most optimal was through fighting, the more intense the better. Battles that pushed cultivators to the brink of death were the most effective. The experience would drive them beyond their limits and allow them to tap further into their potential.

So far, Xiahou Zong had only accessed a small part of his strength. He still had a long ways to go before reaching his full potential. If he awakened completely, reaching the divine realm would be a simple matter of quickly retreading the path he’d been through once before.

Shao Yuan was unusually talented and had disguised his true strength, but he would be nothing against a fully awakened Xiahou Zong.

That was why Duke Xiaoyao could maintain his composure despite his nervousness. He was hopeful that Xiahou Zong would be able to recover his memories and make a breakthrough in the fight.

The possibility that Xiahou Zong would still lose even with his advantages had likely never occurred to him.

Jiang Chen was the son of a celestial emperor in his past life. Despite his inability to cultivate, he’d spent millions of years on studying martial dao theories and pill dao. The depth of his understanding far exceeded that of any regular gods. He could rival even his father in knowledge.

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

#### **Chapter 1776: Struggles of a Cornered Beas**

The four demons and the four puppets joined in battle.

The former were clearly superior in battle ferocity. As vessels of a demon god’s consciousness, they were superior to puppets whose full potentials were yet untapped.

When Jiang Chen controlled four puppets in tandem, he could only deploy initial empyrean realm fighting ability. This put the puppets at a disadvantage against the four demons.

Still, he had his own unique strength in the Nine Labyrinth Formation. Activating meant taking control of this entire space.

Xiahou Zong was too drunken with gratification to realize the danger he was in, and Jiang Chen found no reason to remind his opponent. Instead, he continued to set up the field with magnetic storms. The Earth Bodhisattva Orb was delegated to a subterranean offense, while the Heavenly Chalice Sword Formation was ready to attack both land and air.

By preparing a three-pronged attack, he was going to wipe Xiahou Zong off the face of this world. He could not allow a reincarnated god to escape. Once Xiahou Zong's memories awakened once more, he would only create more trouble.

A man who does not slay a serpent is sure to be afflicted by it.

Even though the four puppets appeared to be at a disadvantage right now, Jiang Chen had no problem with the way things were going. He was after results, not appearances. Moreover, the puppets weren't so badly off that they were going to lose in the next instant.

When Jiang Chen was finished setting up, he could join the fray himself. What was there to fear about the four demon gods then? In the Nine Labyrinth Formation, anything that failed to break out could only be a sitting duck.

Increasing numbers of magnetic storms were sent into the formation.

"Magnetic soldiers, golden monster, go!"

Hand seal after hand seal heralded the swelling of energies from his magnetic golden mountain. Its soldiers and horrors, rushed into battle with reckless abandon.

The magnetic soldiers were far from powerful, but they were exceedingly numerous. Like a swarm of ants, they could annoy the demons, if not harm them.

The Earth Bodhisattva Orb had finished locking down the earth's surface. Even if Xiahou Zong escaped via tunneling, he would fall under the influence of the orb and die by its earthen pulse.

In the air, innumerable magnetic storms reigned supreme. The Heavenly Chalice Formation backed them up as a formation strong enough to slay gods. If Jiang Chen was able to attain a level of legendary perfection with it, he would be able to kill opponents far above his level.

The multi-layered arrangement used the majority of the methods and resources at his disposal.

However, the outside world couldn't exactly tell what was remarkable about it. Only a few experts as strong as the first prime were able to guess at the truth. But even she found it difficult to ascertain Jiang Chen's intentions before seeing them for herself.

On the surface, it seemed that the four demons were winning. The four puppets could fend off their attacks from time to time, but had almost no room to respond in kind.

Xiahou Zong cackled when he saw Jiang Chen's magnetic soldiers. "Do you think these puny pawns will stand against my demon gods? Ridiculous!"

A faint smile played at the corner of Jiang Chen's mouth. "Your doom is nigh, Xiahou Zong, but you barely know it yourself. Let me rip the last bit of your delusion to shreds!"

Crowing loudly, he produced the Holy Dragon Bow. The bow was a treasure of the ancient Primosanct Sect, a famous sect that found itself among the top ten sects of its own era.

As such, it was much more powerful than the ten sacred lands of the divine nations. The sacred lands had been founded by scions of various ancient sects to preserve their heritages, but the Primosanct Sect had been one of the largest ancient sects.

The differences between the two were obvious.

As the crowning treasure of the Primosanct Sect, the Holy Dragon Bow's ancient aura was immediately identifiable. It stunned and dazzled everyone who beheld it.

"This is..." the first prime was astonished. She was experienced enough in appraisal to instantly perceive the ancient aura.

"This is an ancient relic, not a replica. It's a bona fide treasure of an ancient sect!" Her expressions became incredibly vivid.

Duke Xiaoyao colored rapidly as well. "Monster, monster! Where did this monster come from?" he muttered. "That bow is an ancient relic. It must've been some important sect's prized treasure. The aura of antiquity upon it is unthinkable intense!"

"What should we do, Patriarch?"

"What can we do? This match must come to a natural conclusion. We can't intercede. We can only hope for a spontaneous awakening from Xiahou Zong himself!"

Things had become rather odd on the battlefield.

Xiahou Zong frowned when he saw Jiang Chen take out his bow and arrow. "Do you think those pathetic arrows will be enough to deal with my summoned demons, kid?"

"Your demons are an insignificant trick. My target is you, Xiahou Zong!" Jiang Chen drew his bow to full as he said this. It pointed at Xiahou Zong from afar, beginning to lock onto its mark.

Xiahou Zong's eyes grew cold and he cursed to himself. He was at his weakest after the summons. If he were attacked by arrows now, he could very well risk getting hit.

He gathered flames around himself without hesitation, forming the Scorching Sun Shield once more. At the same time, he began to consider the very real possibility of whether he might call back one of the demons to defend himself?

The tempest demon was the most appropriate one for that purpose. Alas, as soon as he was about to act on his notion, a stream of magnetic storms poured out of spontaneous fissures in space.

The fabric of existence within the labyrinth formation became extremely chaotic. A terrifying restrictive force swept across it, slowing down everything it touched. Demon and puppet alike were affected by the wave.

The advantage of the magnetic soldiers and golden monsters were on full display now. Since they were from the magnetic mountain, they were completely unaffected by its storms. In fact, it visibly improved their combat capabilities.

Just as how two groups of warriors on a riverbank would inevitably be affected by rising waters, so too were the puppets and demons. Because of this, the battlefield changed drastically.

With a loud laugh, Jiang Chen vanished into thin air before Xiahou Zong's eyes.

The latter felt his heart twinge and his scalp tingle. A hitherto unexperienced sense of danger filled his entire being. There was absolutely something wrong here.

"Today is your doomsday, Xiahou Zong."

"This arena will be your grave."

"Surrender your life, Xiahou Zong."

"Stand and die, Xiahou Zong!"

Countless images of Jiang Chen appeared everywhere, each taking aim at Xiahou Zong with his own bow.

Xiahou Zong's hairs stood on end. He glanced all around him, his consciousness expanding to maximize his sensory capabilities. Alas, he could only perceive the endless tempest all around him; his enemy's infinite copies seemed to be unaffected by the harsh weather.

His brain turned into mush from all the chaos. Despite his confusion, there was a clear, lingering thought. The instincts of a reincarnated god told him that he needed to be calm, be calm!

His basic desire to live and survive prompted him to think of a solution.

"Right, my demons!" Xiahou Zong attempted to call back his demons for a defensive maneuver. It no longer seemed realistic for him to defeat his opponent. If his demons were by his side, self-preservation should be no problem.

"You're out of time, Xiahou Zong!" It was as if Jiang Chen could see right through him. The cool voice of Xiahou Zong's adversary rang through the air once more.

Whoosh!

An arrow broke through the air.

Xiahou Zong made a face, then cried out, "Scorching Sun Shield, to me!"

The arrow smashed into the fiery shield in a blast of golden light. The collision caused the missile to return to its true form – a single fire lotus. Jiang Chen had used a fire lotus to trick his opponent.

Xiahou Zong was stunned. "Another stupid trick!"

He grit his teeth, absolutely fuming. He'd never been so humiliated since first making his way out into the world. He'd always been the one to crush his opposition and play with his food. To be on the receiving end of that was entirely brand new.

However, he couldn't do much despite being at his wit's end. He was heavily mired in trouble already, and would only sink in deeper if he didn't break free.

“That kid locked down and controls this patch of space. Was the thing he was holding a formation diagram? Is this a spatial ability?” The knowledge of a reincarnated god helped Xiahou Zong come to the truth.

He shivered once he realized what kind of predicament he was really in. In the world of martial dao, all kinds of abilities and attributes had their unique advantages.

Spatial abilities were especially difficult to handle. They weren’t particularly damaging by themselves, but they allowed the user to completely dominate his enemy. Someone under the shackles of such an ability could only perish in the lengthy throes of despair.

Spatial abilities were far from the most destructive, but they crushed people’s hopes like no other. The struggle before death was much scarier than the actual end.

“No, I have to get out. I can’t be cornered like this! That bastard Shao Yuan is trying to destroy me!” Xiahou Zong’s heart frosted over with apprehension for perhaps the first time in his life.

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

#### **Chapter 1777: Exterminating Xiahou Zong**

Surprisingly, Xiahou Zong was a bit slow on the uptake. His status as the foremost genius of his generation had given him an inborn superiority when facing cultivators around his age.

This pride helped nurture a robust self-confidence in normal situations. But when it flared up in a situation that didn’t warrant it, the disadvantage it offered was equally fatal.

When the arrogant genius did react, it was already too late. His four demons were completely locked down by the Confounding Puppets, while more and more magnetic soldiers and golden monsters rushed into the field to assist.

The four demons couldn’t deal with a situation like this despite their raw power.

A magnetic storm was an impeding force to be reckoned with. Under normal conditions, the soldiers and monsters wouldn’t last a single sortie from the demons.

Even the four puppets would have a hard time preventing them from retreating. Perhaps the projections wouldn’t be able to destroy the puppets right away—or completely at all, really—but withdrawing should’ve been no problem.

However, the conditions right now were far from normal.

The intensification of the storms and the addition of more monsters and soldiers meant that it was almost impossible to find an opportunity to break free. Everything was according to Jiang Chen’s calculations.

Without the assistance of the four demons, Xiahou Zong was a tiger who had been defanged and declawed. Now was the best chance for Jiang Chen to kill him.

“Xiahou Zong, know your place!” Suddenly, the countless images of Jiang Chen soared into the air in unison, all of them nocking and aiming at their common enemy.

“I’m not scared of your illusions, kid!” Xiahou Zong roared through bloodshot eyes. “Come at me if you dare!” His throat was hoarse from the shouting.

Clearly, being backed into a corner had caused his pent-up frustration to explode.

Jiang Chen glanced at his opponent with pitying eyes, then sent another wave of monsters and soldiers with a hand seal. Xiahou Zong was weakened, but far from being unable to deal with a few measly golden monsters.

Unfortunately for him, both the monsters and the soldiers were endless and unafraid of destruction. A swarm of ants sizable enough could take down an elephant.

Group after group rushed at Xiahou Zong without fail. Regardless of his abilities, he couldn’t fend off their ferocious attacks forever. He hadn’t crumbled, but he was harried and distressed.

Jiang Chen locked onto Xiahou Zong with his Evil Golden Eye, then focused his consciousness.

“The time is now!”

He poured the energy of his true dragon bloodline into the Holy Dragon Bow. The air resounded with dragon roars, making for a superb spectacle.

Everyone watching the fight paled. Had they finally come to the moment of truth?

Duke Xiaoyao stood up suddenly, his cheeks flushing.

The first prime squinted a little, her consciousness monitoring the duke’s movements. Any interference from the latter was going to be interrupted by the former without question. She radiated an aura of pressure all around the arena stands, daunting everyone present.

“The battle in the ring belongs to the young geniuses, Duke Xiaoyao. Us older folk should stay put.” Her words were directed at Duke Xiaoyao, but they were intimidation for everyone else as well. Deceit wasn’t going to be tolerated by the leader of the sacred land today.

It was obvious to even Xiahou Ying that her brother was in grave danger.

“Patriarch, Elder Zhen, what should we do? Is there anything we can do?” She was anxious. Her brother and protector was in trouble, and she couldn’t imagine what would happen to her own status in the house should he be gone. Xiahou Zong was almost entirely the reason for her relative importance.

Without him, she would be nothing!

Yan Qingsang widened his eyes. He glared at the arena with a ferocious grimace. “Kill him, brother! Kill him now! It’s time to pay back all the dishonor that Huang’er has suffered over these years!”

He left his own grievances unsaid; at this moment, he was more excited than any other.

House Yan collectively dimmed when they saw Yan Qingsang's excited gesticulations. Once upon a time, Shao Yuan had belonged to them. It had been only two years since then, and he was already on the verge of smashing Xiahou Zong into smithereens.

Xiahou Zong's legend was about to be broken!

Misery was written all over the Yan patriarch's face. He suddenly felt an indescribable sense of defeatism and regret. It seemed that his choice had been wrong in the end. Perhaps Shao Yuan really was going to change the landscape of the nation? The future no longer seemed quite the same. Regardless, House Yan had missed out forever.

Yan Zhenhuai's feelings were similarly mixed on the subject. He was reasonably acquainted with Jiang Chen, though not particularly deeply. He was both pleased at and mildly envious of the youth's dazzling performance. Far from being a narrow-minded man, on many topics, he was more accepting than the majority of his house's executives.

He had been of the opinion that Jiang Chen and Yan Qingsang's entrance into the sacred land was an opportunity for them. In fact, he had fancied such an opportunity for himself. Unfortunately, his status as the foremost genius of his house meant that he couldn't abandon it to join another faction.

Still, Yan Zhenhuai wanted to see Jiang Chen crush Xiahou Zong. He would rather see a genius who had come out of House Yan dethrone the tyrannical genius and sit in his place. He had no love for the party currently losing in this fight.

Upon the stage, Xiahou Zong was in his last struggles. He tried once more to burn his consciousness in order to summon another demon god.

Alas, the golden monsters and magnetic soldiers didn't allow him the distraction. They piled upon him in an unstoppable herd.

At the same time, Jiang Chen's Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice transformed into countless images of him in order to threaten him from afar.

Draconic roaring filled the firmament.

Jiang Chen's Holy Dragon Bow finally moved.

A lethal missile sailed into Xiahou Zong's vicinity amid a hail of illusory copies.

The young man's exceptional combat instincts kicked in. He opened his eyes, sensing where the real arrow was. He shook both arms, slamming the true arrow aside.

However, the Holy Dragon Bow wouldn't shoot just one arrow once deployed. Jiang Chen typically used the first shot as a test. The repeating fire he deployed afterwards was the real killing blow.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!

Three more arrows sailed at Xiahou Zong from three separate sides, each targeting a different vital spot. They covered a much greater area and took much odder trajectories than the previous attack.

Xiahou Zong only had two hands. He noticed the arrow heading straight for his face, but couldn't evade the two more at his back and scalp.

Dismayed, he roared despairingly. His evasive maneuver was hampered by the magnetic storms and the labyrinth around him; he could barely reach a third of his normal speed.

The Holy Dragon Bow, on the other hand, moved with alarming alacrity.

In the next instant, Xiahou Zong slapped aside the arrows at his head, only for the one aimed at his back to pierce him entirely.

Jiang Chen's aim was true. It had scored a direct hit upon the heart, erupting back out the front.

A bloody hole appeared on Xiahou Zong's body. Arrows of blood shot out of it. He seemed to be frozen still.

"Stop!" House Xiahou's collective scream of panic came from the stands.

Jiang Chen ignored it totally. A sword seal guided his Heavenly Chalice Sword Formation's blades to descend upon his foe like a swarm of locusts. The harsh sword lights sliced Xiahou Zong into tiny bits. Blood and gore flew everywhere.

His soul didn't have a chance to escape before being obliterated by the swords. Neither did anyone in the audience have time to intervene, so quick were the weapons' work.

When Duke Xiaoyao's angry shout reached him, Jiang Chen had already finished dismembering his opponent.

Xiahou Zong had been erased from existence. Without the guidance of his consciousness, the four demon gods collapsed and turned into mist.

Performing a hand seal, Jiang Chen withdrew both his Nine Labyrinth Formation and his Confounding Puppets. The arena turned calm once more. Only grisly bits and pieces remained as a reminder of the other genius who had been there moments before.

"Shao Yuan!" Duke Xiaoyao shrieked into the sky. He glared at Jiang Chen viciously, as savage as an angry beast who wanted to pounce at any minute.

The first prime smiled coolly. "Duke Xiaoyao, I advised you awhile back that you shouldn't be too saddened by Xiahou Zong's loss. Did you not take it to heart?"

This was insult to injury.

Duke Xiaoyao shook with rage. Xiahou Zhen was completely ashen. Xiahou Ying wept bitterly. "Brother, brother! Shao Yuan, you're too cruel! How could you kill your opponent in the arena!"

Barely anyone sympathised with her. After all, the brother and sister had been far too pretentious and rude in their interactions with others. Many were shocked that Xiahou Zong was dead, but most were quite pleased!



Jiang Chen was as impassive as ever, as if he'd done something insignificant. "I'm hardly cruel. You should blame Xiahou Zong for being weak and useless. If he and I switched positions, do you think he would show mercy?"

To the victor went the right of explanation. There was no justice for the losing party in a deathmatch. Like Jiang Chen said, it had come down to personal ability.

### Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

#### **Chapter 1778: A Hero's Welcome**

Even now, many had yet to recover from their shock. What had just transpired was rather difficult to accept. How could Xiahou Zong - god incarnate, genius extraordinaire - die just like that?

It had all happened too quickly.

If they hadn't witnessed his gory death themselves, they wouldn't have believed it had actually happened. As it was, they still questioned if they were hallucinating.

Who had thought the arrogant top genius would die in the fight?

He was the best of the best in the nation, always miles ahead of his peers. How could he be killed so easily?

They disbelieved what their eyes told them, but everything about his death was undeniable.

Only when Jiang Chen walked offstage with killing intent still lingering did everyone actually believe that yes, Xiahou Zong was dead!

All of the participants fixed their gazes on Jiang Chen, their eyes brimming with fearful respect. The unbeatable genius had fallen. In his place was an even more legendary figure - Shao Yuan!

Willing or not, every genius in attendance was overwhelmed with a sense of helplessness and inferiority.

Geniuses who'd pledged loyalty to Xiahou Zong and been determined to go after Jiang Chen still had racing hearts. What a relief that they hadn't encountered the young man in the competition!

Shen Fan, Xiahou Zong... all household names paled in comparison to Shao Yuan.

"Damn straight, Shao Yuan!" exclaimed Yan Qingsang in uncontainable ecstasy, which prompted the other geniuses from the sacred land to follow suit.

"Yeah, Shao Yuan!"

"Shao Yuan, the number one genius!"

At first, only those from the sacred land were cheering for Jiang Chen. Then similar cries erupted from factions dependent on the sacred land.

Rowdy cheers reverberated among the clouds, followed by thunderous applause. The thrilling fight had won over many of the audience members. Even those who had been indifferent or even hostile to Jiang Chen before didn't shy away from showing their appreciation.

The young genius deserved to be applauded for eliminating Xiahou Zong in a head-on fight, and the ovation was no doubt the worst humiliation to House Xiahou.

Duke Xiaoyao seemed to have spontaneously aged by several decades, his face as pale as a sheet. Venerated Elder Xiahou Zhen muttered a constant barrage of curses with quivering lips.

Xiahou Ying wept and shrieked for her brother's death.

The emperor mused pensively with a grave expression. The imperial family had essentially declared the sacred land their enemy with the competition. They'd planned to gravely undermine the sacred land's dignity.

However, unexpected happenings lurked around every corner.

Their careful planning had turned out to be all for naught. They'd failed to eliminate all geniuses from the sacred land before the fourth round. Shao Yuan had secured improbable wins again and again.

He'd completely defied everyone's expectations, staging a powerful comeback against the imperial family in response to their unfair treatment.

Xiahou Zong was supposed to be the ultimate opponent no one could surpass, and yet this milestone lay crumbled in the dust. Many people's perception of the world order had been reconstructed as a result.

There were three more rounds of matches, but if even Xiahou Zong couldn't defeat Shao Yuan, who could?

Jiang Chen had effectively secured the position of champion. No matter what the imperial family did, they wouldn't be able to stop him from coming out on top. They had no choice but to admit their failure in toppling the sacred land.

Jiang Chen received a hero's welcome when he returned to his faction.

His fight with Xiahou Zong had lasted the longest among all fights in the fourth round, and it was the most thrilling in the history of the competition. He would be remembered for generations to come.

The geniuses from the sacred land revelled in his victory. They'd been weighed down by loss and frustration for long enough. Only a selected few like Sui Chen were displeased. Everyone else was genuinely happy for Jiang Chen and offered their congratulations.

Most of them recognized that the victory wasn't only about the personal conflict between Shao Yuan and Xiahou Zong; it had a broader impact on the sacred land's status and in turn, all of their future prospects.

If everyone from the sacred land had been eliminated in the competition, their authority would be greatly diminished. Once they lost their absolute reign over the nation and their unchallenged authority, their geniuses would lose their worth. They would be deprived of their pride and superiority.

Shao Yuan's victory wasn't only his, but the sacred land's and its geniuses'.

The first prime didn't even attempt to mask her joy. She turned to Ziju Min. "Elder Ziju, who would have thought that Shao Yuan would bring us so many surprises? Not even you foresaw his victory today when you first recruited him, did you?"

Ziju Min smiled wryly. "In the beginning, what this subordinate valued was his pill dao talent. I didn't expect his martial dao to be even more astounding. Perhaps Xiahou Zong was destined to die today?"

The sacred land jubilated in Xiahou Zong's death. The man had dueled many of its geniuses since he was young, and the duels were not so much friendly sparrings as one-sided bullying.

Xiahou Zong had dominated all of the other young geniuses and, in doing so, hindered the cultivation of youths in the sacred land. His death lifted a great weight from all of them. Of course they were highly pleased.

"After the fight, Shao Yuan's name will spread through every part of the Myriad Abyss Island. Top geniuses from the other nations will be forced to take him seriously in the geniuses competition two years later." The first prime expressed her wholehearted delight.

Jiang Chen joined them, flanked by a large crowd.

The first prime smiled and looked at him with appreciation in her eyes.

"Over the long years of this seat's life, Shao Yuan, I can count on one hand the number of geniuses I've praised in person. I have to acknowledge that you are a one in a hundred thousand years genius. We are fortunate to have you."

It was a high praise indeed. The first prime rarely complimented anyone, let alone in public.

Of course, she was speaking from the bottom of her heart. She did think it was their luck to have Jiang Chen on their side. Without his astounding performance, all geniuses from the sacred land would've been eliminated in the fourth round. Jiang Chen had created a miracle.

The first prime liked miracles. A miraculous victory was more appealing to the public than anything. It was the most efficient way to restore a damaged reputation.

Many had been bad-mouthing the sacred land, claiming they had been in decline. Shao Yuan was the perfect rebuttal. They were finally able to prove themselves after all the oppression they'd suffered! The goddess of fortune had smiled upon them.

If Shao Yuan had fought for House Yan rather than the sacred land, or worse, if he'd been recruited by House Xiahou, what would the competition be like then?

Two monstrous geniuses would be working in tandem to secure wins for House Xiahou. Even if the geniuses from the sacred land were given a chance to fight fairly, they would have no hope of winning the championship.

Xiahou Zong was unstoppable, but Shao Yuan even more so.

It might have seemed that Shao Yuan and Wu You was neck and neck, but now the first prime realized that Shao Yuan had held back on purpose to preserve Wu You's pride.

If he'd fought as hard as he'd done in his battle with Xiahou Zong, neither Wu You and Shen Fan would last for more than a couple attacks. It wasn't that his performance was dependent on the strength of his foes. He simply didn't use his full strength when he faced weaker opponents.

Everyone from the Eternal Sacred Land was still in high spirits even after returning to their temporary residence. It was clear that the victory had lifted morale. The championship was already in Jiang Chen's grasp at this point.

Meanwhile, the emperor and his confidantes were going over the fight between Shao Yuan and Xiahou Zong again and again. They had been caught completely off guard. For years, Xiahou Zong had been unchallenged and unrivaled. It was an ingrained belief that no youth could ever surpass him.

But someone had today.

"Your Majesty, Xiahou Zong's incompetence means the failure of our plot against the sacred land. I believe that the first prime has noticed something amiss. She's simply keeping it to herself for the time being."

The emperor scoffed. "So what if she has? We were careful when we manipulated the matchmaking. No one will be able to bring any evidence against us. Besides, after Xiahou Zong's death at the hands of one of their own, the first prime must be rejoicing in her victory."

"Your Majesty, Xiahou Zong's death has greatly impacted our overall plan. Will House Xiahou be able to renew their drive?"

The emperor huffed. "House Xiahou's ambitions have festered for many years. They aren't going to step away so easily. The plan will be executed as scheduled!"

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

#### **Chapter 1779: Just Letting You Know**

Xiahou Zong's death had a bigger impact than many expected. Everyone from House Xiahou was reeling from the loss and couldn't pick themselves up.

"What should we do, Patriarch? Xiahou Zong is a reincarnated god. Can he be revived?" Xiahou Zhen was still clinging to his last shred of hope.

Duke Xiaoyao croaked out, "If there's even a wisp of his soul left, a god incarnate can be resurrected. However, Shao Yuan seemed to know that as well. He was thorough when killing Xiahou Zong and decimated his soul completely. Clearly, he's adept at killing. He has more practical experience in battle than Xiahou Zong."

Duke Xiaoyao sighed with melancholy.

Xiahou Zong was the pillar of the family. He was their future, the driver of everything the family was pursuing. Everyone was united behind the goal of laying down foundations for Xiahou Zong. Once he'd matured, he'd be given the reigns to the family and lead them to prosperity.

He was a reincarnation of a god. No one doubted his ability to do so.

However, all that was now nothing but a pipe dream. He was dead, ending with him all the hopes he'd brought to the family.

Xiahou Ying hadn't stopped sobbing. "Patriarch, Elder Zhen, my brother died a horrible death! Are you all going to let the bastard who killed him get off scot free?"

Annoyed, Duke Xiaoyao beckoned a few of his personal guards over. "Take her away and keep an eye on her. Stop her from embarrassing herself."

What was the use of crying now? No amount of tears could bring Xiahou Zong back. With her brother dead, Xiahou Ying was suddenly a lot less useful to the family.

House Xiahou had planned to recruit geniuses from around the nation through Xiahou Zong's martial dao talent and Xiahou Ying's ability to manipulate men. It'd served them well in the past, but the method was rendered obsolete now that Xiahou Zong was dead.

Without him, none of the geniuses were going to care about Xiahou Ying.

After she was dragged away, Xiahou Zhen turned to the patriarch with a vicious look. "Are we going to go through with our plan, Patriarch?"

"There's no turning back for us now. How can we possibly give up?"

"But with Xiahou Zong's death, will we be able to intimidate and compel the other factions like we did before?" Xiahou Zhen asked worriedly.

"We'll cross that bridge when we come to it," Duke Xiaoyao said through grit teeth. "The house isn't going to fall apart just because we lost Xiahou Zong."

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The news of Xiahou Zong's death reached the Eternal Sacred Land in no time at all and spread throughout the entire nation.

Huang'er and Ling Bi'er knew that Jiang Chen was going against his fated rival today. They were anxiously waiting for the outcome inside Jiang Chen's abode.

Ling Bi'er had always admired Huang'er for her strength and composure, and it was the first time that she was seeing Huang'er this agitated. It wasn't obvious, but the minute changes in the girl betrayed her nervousness.

"Don't worry, Sister Huang'er. Junior brother Jiang Chen has achieved so many impossible feats over the years. He'll be able to do the same this time." Ling Bi'er knew these were empty platitudes, but she shared the same feelings as Huang'er. They both wanted Jiang Chen to win.

"Sister Bi'er, if Brother Chen were going against any other man, I wouldn't be worried for him. Xiahou Zong... he's really different. As a reincarnated god, his potential can rival that of Brother Chen's, and he's been cultivating for longer. His only weakness is never having weathered any setbacks. He also doesn't have as much practical experience as Brother Chen."

Despite her concern, Huang'er hadn't lost her judgement. Although she couldn't watch the fight in person, she had a good grasp on both men's strengths and weaknesses.

The fight meant too much for both of them.

She prayed that Jiang Chen would win so that she could accept his proposal openly and justifiably. Only then would her entanglement with Xiahou Zong be resolved.

Time passed at an excruciatingly slow speed. Every hour felt as long as a year.

Footsteps suddenly approached and a voice called out, "Miss Huang'er, this servant has been ordered to deliver the good news. Just now, Shao Yuan has demonstrated amazing strength and successfully vanquished Xiahou Zong!"

Huang'er trembled and burst into tears. She and Ling Bi'er held each other as they sobbed in relief. Jiang Chen was victorious! He'd created another miracle.

"Congratulation, Sister Huang'er," murmured Ling Bi'er.

Huang'er was overwhelmed by happiness. All of her worries and pain were completely swept away.

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Back in the sacred land's rest area, the first prime left after offering Jiang Chen some words of encouragement. The youths became even more enthusiastic in her absence.

"Brother Shao Yuan, there are still three rounds to go. You must persevere and bring home the championship for the sacred land. Don't let others have it!"

"Of course he's gonna win! He defeated Shen Fan so easily and even killed Xiahou Zong. Anyone with a functional brain should know what the smart thing to do is!"

"Haha, let's congratulate Brother Shao Yuan in advance for becoming the champion!"

"Nice work, Brother Shao Yuan. You've done a great service for the sacred land."

The geniuses were eager to talk to him. Some asked how Jiang Chen had felt in the fight. Others wondered how he seemed to never run out of tricks to use.

Jiang Chen explained everything with one word: heritage.

Heritage was endlessly expansive. All seemingly unbelievable abilities could be attributed to it, including bloodlines, magical items, and methods.

It was impossible to disprove his explanation. There were countless wandering cultivators in the world. No one could find out everything about an individual. Besides, Shao Yuan had been a nobody before.

As everyone predicted, no one dared challenge Jiang Chen for the remainder of the competition. His next opponents all surrendered with rueful smiles as soon as they realized who they were going against.

No one participating was a fool. All of them knew the genius who had killed Xiahou Zong would also be able to take them out without lifting a finger. If anyone stubbornly resisted and angered Shao Yuan, they would be torn to pieces.

So it was no surprise that his opponents all forfeit. Jiang Chen showed them mercy and let them be.

After Xiahou Zong's death, there was no doubt that Jiang Chen would win. He took home the championship without so much as a struggle. Despite their reluctance, the imperial family had no choice but to give him the prize.

Jiang Chen's winning streak had prevented many geniuses from gaining a better rank, but at the same time, he'd taken out a good number of strong contenders and paved the road for others.

Yan Zhenhuai, for example, benefitted from Jiang Chen's victory over the unbeatable Shen Fan and Xiahou Zong. He ended up taking the third spot, a record high for House Yan.

Who would've thought that House Yan, suffering under House Xiahou's oppression, would raise a genius who could take the third spot?

On the contrary, the other geniuses from House Xiahou failed to perform to their usual standards after Xiahou Zong fell. Only one of them was among the top eight. Without their top genius, the other members of House Xiahou didn't garner a lot of attention. No one cared that much about their performance.

Jiang Chen was as calm as ever when he received first place. It was merely the most natural outcome after his victory. He stood on the elevated stage looking over at House Yan, a meaningful look in his eyes.

"Patriarch Yan, I proposed marriage to House Yan during the Skymender Festival. At the time, Xiahou Zong agreed that it could be arranged as long as I defeated him in the sword competition. An elder from House Xiahou also promised to let me have Yan Qinghuang if I won. Of course, House Xiahou's opinion isn't that important in this marriage proposal. What matters is House Yan's decision."

The patriarch of House Yan was both resentful and remorseful to Jiang Chen.

He'd received a harsh warning from House Xiahou before this stating that even though Xiahou Zong had died, House Xiahou wouldn't show House Yan any mercy if they dared marry Yan Qinghuang off to Shao Yuan.

Deep down, the patriarch was hated Jiang Chen. The young man had brought too many troubles for House Yan ever since he showed up on their doorstep.

"Young Shao Yuan, although House Yan isn't what it once was, we honor our promises," Patriarch Yan responded faintly. "We promised to deliver Yan Qinghuang to House Xiahou. Only that house has the right to determine her fate. I can't give you any guarantee. I'm not going to go back on my word."

The patriarch was openly playing dead!

Jiang Chen didn't seem at all surprised. He nodded with a cool smile. "As I expected, you have taken a side. That's fine. I wasn't actually asking for your permission. I was just notifying you that from now on, Yan Qinghuang is mine and has nothing to do with House Yan."

There was no room for argument.

The air grew tense. Shao Yuan just brusquely made a demand to the patriarch of a first tier faction and blatantly disregarded his authority!

### Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

#### **Chapter 1780: Just That Domineering**

However, it was undeniable that in killing Xiahou Zong, Shao Yuan had more than proven himself an undeniable existence not only among the youths, but in the entire divine nation.

He may be too young to rival the true figureheads yet, and was far from the level of advanced empyrean experts. But given the astounding speed at which he progressed, it was possible he'd be on the same level as the masters in a few years.

Thus, It wasn't that inappropriate for him to speak to the patriarch of House Yan in this manner.

Patriarch Yan trembled in fury and snapped, "Shao Yuan, you're the champion of the sword competition, but you're not yet the foremost of the nation. It's too arrogant for you to talk to me like that. Aren't you afraid that your cockiness is going to get you killed?"

He rarely showed any flashes of temper, and wouldn't have said that if he hadn't lost control of his emotions.

The first prime's expression turned frosty. "Patriarch Yan, none of our geniuses are arrogant. They appear to be so only because some have gone much too overboard. As the patriarch of a major family, aren't you afraid of the world mocking for going back on our agreement?"

The patriarch didn't dare talk back to the first prime. He muttered, "First Prime, I only know that one woman can't be given to two men. Since Yan Qinghuang has been promised to House Xiahou as a cultivation vessel, we can't possibly renege on our words."

The first prime smiled coolly. "Stop wasting my time. We made a deal during the Skymender Festival about Yan Qinghuang's future. It's unbecoming of you to try to get around that."

Jiang Chen scoffed. "Thank you for taking a stand for what is just, First Prime, but there's no need to waste your breath on them. Elder Wanjun has given me his word. As Huang'er's grandfather, it's reasonable that he decides who she should be with. No one else has any right to intervene."

He excised any relationship between Huang'er and House Yan, leaving no room for the patriarch to argue.

The patriarch trembled in fury, but there was nothing he could do. The first prime had openly shown her support for Shao Yuan. He couldn't possibly publicly go against her and the sacred land.

Even if House Xiahou supported them, House Yan still didn't want to make an enemy out of the sacred land. They would only become cannon fodder in the resulting conflict. The patriarch would never let that happen.

"House Yan has been struck with a series of misfortunes," said the patriarch. "Yan Wanjun has betrayed the family and vanished without a trace. Naturally he and his descendents shall be excommunicated from the family. From now on, Yan Qinghuang has nothing to do with House Yan. She is but a regular woman in jianghu."



The patriarch was smart enough to cut his losses once he realized he'd lost the argument. He immediately cut ties with Yan Qinghuang and removed his house from the situation.

Many of the young geniuses from House Xiahou were indignant. To them, this was a blow to their ego. Although Xiahou Zong was dead, it didn't mean Shao Yuan could just take Huang'er away! They would never allow that!

"You're the champion of the competition, Shao Yuan, but that doesn't give you the right to be this arrogant! Yan Qinghuang was promised to our family. It's against the rules of propriety for you to take what's rightfully ours!"

"Don't be ridiculous," Jiang Chen scoffed. He wasn't afraid of either a verbal duel or a physical fight. "Yan Qinghuang didn't promise you anything. Patriarch Yan was the one who did. Now that he's announced she's not part of House Yan anymore, what does his promise have anything to do with her? Go to the patriarch if you have any complaints."

He swept his Evil Golden Eye across them. "You're welcome to fight me if any of you refuse to accept things as they are. You can also come at me together if you're so inclined."

He was giving them permission to gang up on him. However, the youths from House Xiahou exchanged a look and didn't make a move. There were a lot of geniuses in the family, but quite a few had died. Shao Yuan alone had killed Xiahou Jing, Xiahou Xi, and the most powerful Xiahou Zong!

His remarks were humiliating, but none of the geniuses dared respond with a challenge. What could they do when even Xiahou Zong had failed? Strength in numbers wouldn't be enough against Shao Yuan's skills.

The sword competition of Eternal Divine Nation came to an end, leaving some in high spirits and others dejected. The sacred land wasn't entirely triumphant, but at least the championship was theirs.

Other factions varied in the way they felt about their performances. House Xiahou was naturally the most dissatisfied. They'd planned to sweep the floor, but ended up suffering a catastrophic defeat.

News about the competition and its outcome spread to every part of Eternal Divine Nation. Soon, people throughout the nation had heard how Shao Yuan, a genius from the sacred land, had made an amazing debut. He had been the ultimate dark horse and demonstrated extraordinary skills in vanquishing Xiahou Zong and taking home the championship.

Even those who'd never heard of him knew of him now. His name was at the forefront of everyone's minds and they furiously dug for his information.

The more they looked, the more astounded they were by his amazing talent. Not only had Shao Yuan killed the invincible Xiahou Zong, he'd also defeated pill sovereign Shi Xuan from Flora Divine Nation in the Skymender Festival.

He was a genius in both pill dao and martial dao. This rising star couldn't be stopped.

Shao Yuan was the hot topic in all parts in the nation. His fight with Xiahou Zong, especially, was spread with great embellishment. Many people didn't care how exaggerated the story they heard was. A mythical tale was exactly what they wanted.

Jiang Chen's victory was celebrated in the sacred land as well. Xiahou Zong's death roused the faction into a great reaction. Even those who didn't care about the outside world were thrilled. Xiahou Zong had been too famous for too long. He'd always been considered unbeatable.

And yet, he'd been defeated by one of their own!

Jiang Chen was treated like a hero upon his return. But he didn't care about this at all. He wanted nothing but to return to his residence as soon as possible and share the good news with Huang'er and Ling Bi'er.

With Xiahou Zong dead, Huang'er's inner demons could finally be eliminated.

"Huang'er!" Jiang Chen spotted her at the entrance from afar. They rushed to clasp each other tightly like the opposite poles of two magnets, inseparable by any outside forces.

"I'm so happy, Brother Chen." Huang'er's eyes brimmed with happy tears. Memories about their shared history flashed through her mind.

When she'd first seen the Heavenly Karma Pill, Jiang Chen had still been a stranger to her. She'd only heard of the ludicrous story of a duke's son beaten to death during the Rites of Heavenly Worship.

A variety of innovative pills appeared after that, drawing Elder Shun's attention. Jiang Chen was unstoppable after that, partaking in the civil unrest within the Eastern Kingdom, then the four trials at the Skylaurel Kingdom.

It wasn't until the trial in Eternal Spirit Mountain that Elder Shun and Huang'er had finally come face-to-face with Jiang Chen. It was during their first meeting that Huang'er had known her ailment was the Generation Binding Curse. The two songs Jiang Chen gifted her had cracked the ice encasing her heart.

After Elder Shun left, Huang'er followed Jiang Chen to the Precious Tree Sect, then the Regal Pill Palace. When the latter fell, they two stuck together through thick and thin and went to hell and back together. Slowly, they fell in love. They confessed their feelings and swore to a lifetime of companionship.

Then there was the Veluriyam Capital. Jiang Chen slowly ascended in rank, and Huang'er was taken back to House Yan by Elder Xi. Thus began the years of longing and yearning.

In recent years, Elder Shun had brought news of a man called Jiang Huang, shining a ray of hope into Huang'er's desolate heart.

She'd managed to meet up with her love in Bluesmoke Isles. Later, Jiang Chen first joined House Yan, then the sacred land, erupting in open hostilities and killing Xiahou Zong...

It all seemed too good to be true.

Many times she'd been helpless and lost. She'd cried alone in the dark and woke up from nightmares about Xiahou Zong. She'd been tortured to within an inch of her life by the curse...

It was all over.

What awaited her was her lover's strong arms.

She felt like the happiest woman in the world. Only through suffering would one understand how precious happiness was.

Ling Bi'er watched the couple hold each other tight, her heart filled with a myriad of emotions. She realized suddenly how much more sentimental and sensitive she'd become after she left Regal Pill Palace, but she just couldn't control herself.

"Hahaha, should I be calling you my brother-in-law?" Yan Qingsang cut in with his signature voice, interrupting the moment.

Huang'er pulled away from Jiang Chen and glared at her cousin. "You call him your brother-in-law, cousin Qingsang. So, what dowry have you prepared for me?"

Yan Qingsang paused and came to a halt with an awkward smile. "My brother-in-law knows all and has seen all. He doesn't need a poor man like me to prepare your dowry, does he?"

He was still the buffoon of the group.