

Three Realms 1821

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

Chapter 1821: Return of the Divine Cultivators

"Your Grace, a large group of experts have gathered at the southwestern formation nexus. It seems they are going to mount a full-scale assault. Please send reinforcements."

"Your Grace, House Beigong and House Feng's experts are attacking the formation in the northwest. We've never seen such numbers before!"

"Your Grace, the northeastern corner..."

Bad news fluttered in from all over. Everyone in House Xiahou's headquarters was ashen with despair, the Cloudwave Sect head and Tian patriarch included. They had the extremely bad feeling that the incoming wave was only the beginning of the sacred land's comprehensive counterattack. The most frenzied battles were yet to come.

When one formation nexus was broken, the entire formation that protected the fortress would be affected. This was a serious problem that would quickly lead to cascading effects.

It was impossible for House Xiahou to defend every corner for the formation by itself. Even with the additional manpower from House Tian and the Cloudwave Sect, it was a bit of a stretch.

Duke Xiaoyao was beleaguered with problems all over.

It was at this time that a cultivator in charge of the communication formation ran over, anxiety written all over his face.

"Your Grace, Your Grace! Just now, the forefather returned the message to ask how we were doing. He knows about our circumstances and has left the sealing formation. He asks us to keep faith and defend our fort until his return."

"The forefather is returning?" Duke Xiaoyao's eyes lit up. "What about the imperial forefather? Is he coming back as well?"

The cultivator shook his head in ignorance. "The forefather didn't mention his imperial colleague. Maybe he's coming back while the other forefather watches over the formation?"

That explanation made sense enough. Duke Xiaoyao was most interested in what House Xiahou's forefather was up to.

"Good, good! The divine forefather is about to return to us. What are you worried about, friends? Things may be a bit tough now, but the forefather's return will turn it all around!" The duke was overjoyed.

"My two brothers, you've been so good as to stay loyal to House Xiahou all this time. When the forefather returns, House Xiahou will have the upper hand once again."

"The forefather is coming back? Wonderful!" The Cloudwave Sect head exhaled in relief. He wasn't sure how long he would be able to last without that himself. Was he really supposed to die alongside House Xiahou?

Obviously, he wanted to avoid that at any cost. He didn't want to betray House Xiahou, but neither did he want to throw his life away. The return of the Xiahou forefather was a ray of sunshine in these troubled times.

A divine forefather was one of the most convincing tools in the nation. The warfare of these factions had been changed by the appearance the Vermilion Bird, which was as strong as a god, had it not?

Couldn't the Xiahou forefather counteract the Vermilion Bird's effects, turning things back in House Xiahou's favor?

Of course he could!

The news of the Xiahou forefather's return very quickly spread through the entire house into every corner.

Even a small tidbit of positivity was a booster shot that served to unconditionally raise the morale of everyone in the fortress. The low fighting spirit of the combatants was quickly remedied.

Everyone had thought their situation hopeless, hence the prior despair. The return of the Xiahou forefather gave them renewed confidence.

The Eternal Sacred Land had its spies within House Xiahou as well, of course. It heard about the Xiahou forefather's return shortly afterward. The first prime was supremely astonished.

"House Xiahou's divine forefather is about to return?"

"What's up with that? Wasn't he locked in a standstill with our venerated forefather? Why is he coming back ahead of time? Does he know that House Xiahou is on the brink of collapse, and is trying his best to rescue it from the jaws of death?"

"This is a difficult situation. A divine master without an appropriate opponent can't be fended off by empyrean experts alone."

The sacred land felt the fallout from this new development. A shadow was cast over its current momentum. Was the war of attrition between the sacred land and House Xiahou going to continue? A tug-of-war that was fated to swing back and forth?

Ziju Min's eyes involuntarily turned toward Jiang Chen. When a problem arose that was too complicated to solve, he had formed the habit of looking to the miracle worker of a youth for a better answer.

Jiang Chen could feel the anticipation in everyone else's gazes on him.

The first prime's tone became very serious. "Shao Yuan, the sacred land has no problem taking down House Xiahou. However, if their divine forefather returns, we will find it difficult to fight him head on. Can you ask the Vermilion Bird if that senior has a way to deal with the problem?"

Everyone had witnessed the incredible combat ability of the divine spirit creature.

If even the bird couldn't take on a divine realm expert, the first prime and the rest of the empyrean experts added up would definitely be unable to.

Jiang Chen smiled. "No need to ask. Old Brother Vermilion has told me already that he can take on most divine experts, no problem. Whether he can kill his opponent is another matter – that's down to luck and opportunity. After all, it is hard to kill a god in general, especially if he's determined to escape. I doubt that will be the case for House Xiahou's forefather, however."

"Excellent!" the first prime slammed the table in excitement. "If the Xiahou forefather can be stalled, even he will be powerless after we take down House Xiahou's fortress."

"Don't worry, first prime. Old Brother Vermilion will have no issues fighting the Xiahou forefather. That means it will have to withdraw from the general fighting though."

The Vermilion Bird couldn't be in two places at the same time.

"Acceptable. The divine forefather is key."

"Alright. I will accompany Old Brother Vermilion in confronting this Xiahou forefather. How come the imperial family's forefather isn't with him?"

"There's no news at all from the imperial family's forefather. Perhaps he's there to maintain the sealing formation, and only the Xiahou forefather has returned."

"Hmph, if they're not together, their strength is divided. All that's left for us to do is conquer them!"

If the two forefathers fought side by side, even the Vermilion Bird couldn't guarantee victory. Apart, it was a perfect opportunity for the bird to strike.

It was on the verge of reaching divine realm. As such, it desired intense battles like these most of all. Jiang Chen related the task to the Vermilion Bird in a straightforward fashion, then left the capital astride its back.

According to reports, the Xiahou forefather would return from the southeast. It was the route the sacred land's venerated forefather was accustomed to taking toward the offworld battlefield.

Jiang Chen guessed that the Xiahou forefather had caught onto that habit, hence the sealing formation's location. The venerated forefather was far too strong for just the Xiahou forefather to deal with otherwise.

As man and bird flew, Jiang Chen sought inspiration for the coming battle. Both were veterans of more than a hundred battles, although Jiang Chen's current cultivation level meant he could barely participate in the coming fight.

However, that didn't dampen his enthusiasm. He knew that even if he couldn't take part, simply observing and taking in the atmosphere of the conflict would be a wonderful experience.

It would certainly be very conducive to increasing his martial cultivation.

He set up a few tricks and traps based on the terrain along the way as well. They weren't particularly threatening to a divine realm cultivator, but they would serve to momentarily disrupt his tempo.

In a bout between two gods, the smallest detail might very well decide the outcome of the battle.

“When the fighting begins, young master Chen, you should keep your distance. The powers of divine experts are beyond your imagining.” The Vermilion Bird uttered a helpful reminder.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, laughing helplessly internally to himself. He had been the son of the Celestial Emperor in his past life, honored by countless gods. How would he be ignorant about their abilities?

Still, he wanted to witness the strength of the divine experts in this world. He had never seen real gods duke it out before.

Of course, the Vermilion Bird wasn’t yet a god in theory: its proof of divinity was yet unformed. The intense battle heat might well be the catalyst to do so.

Suddenly, Jiang Chen sensed the approach of a boundlessly powerful aura approaching from the southeast.

“Is he here?” His eyes brightened with anticipation.

The Vermilion Bird chuckled. “Young master Chen, you just stay far away in the audience. I don’t want to be distracted by a need to protect you.”

Jiang Chen chuckled as well. “I don’t need your protection. Do your best to get rid of this eyesore of a divine forefather, alright?”

“Killing a god isn’t an easy thing. I will do my best!”

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

Chapter 1822: The Vermilion Bird Fights a God

The Vermilion Bird was a rather composed divine creature. As it had lived and relived the long stretch of time from the ancient era to the present, its patience was perfectly understandable.

Moreover, the bird didn't know enough about the abilities of its divine opponent. In light of this, it didn't want to make promises it couldn't fulfill.

The Xiahou forefather was desperate to return. He rushed back to the capital with almost suicidal speed.

As he sped along, he frowned. His consciousness and vision tipped him off to a forest of thin, silken threads that scintillated in the light. They covered almost every patch of the nearby empty space.

Though they didn’t look particularly special, the Xiahou forefather felt a pressing sense of danger. Not the lethal kind, but danger nevertheless.

“Has someone set up an ambush for me here?” A scary thought jumped into his mind. He swept the environment; the terrain was harsh and unsuitable for a sneak attack.

Nevertheless, peril hung in the air.

As a divine realm cultivator, the forefather’s senses were extremely sharp. Ordinarily, he would’ve scouted out his surroundings to find the root of the problem. Since he was in a hurry, he eschewed this course of action.

Harrumphing, he turned to bypass this area. He couldn't make heads or tails of the threads with a single glance, but they were evidently here to hinder him. The prospect of being waylaid instantly filled him with caution.

"The venerated forefather aside, the sacred land's three primes are only peak empyrean or demigods. They wouldn't possibly dare attack me here."

This was the confidence unique to a divine expert. Handling at least three to five demigods at the same time was easy enough for a full-fledged one.

Attaining godhood and the recognition of the heavenly dao lent a cultivator a special strength that was utterly incomprehensible to those below his realm. It was a power that drew from the very essence of heaven and earth itself.

However, the Xiahou forefather wanted to get back to his house more than anything. He wasn't interested in potential delays. No matter how he tried to go around though, the threads seemed unavoidable. They were absolutely everywhere!

The Xiahou forefather furrowed his brow deeper and harrumphed once more. He hadn't wanted to waste time, but that didn't mean he couldn't cut through these threads. He believed these colorful strands were woven with poison. This was why he'd been careful in the first place.

"Petty trickery. Out of my way!" The Xiahou forefather fired balls of lightning from his palm in fury. They exploded midair in a series of pops.

The detonation of these electric spheres caused currents of air to blast in every direction. The threads splintered and broke accordingly, their fragments tossed into the wind.

The Xiahou forefather clasped both hands together, causing the currents rampaging about to gradually cluster. In no time at all, the prismatic strings were sucked into a ball above the forefather's head.

"Hmph. Using poison before me? Pathetic!" The Xiahou forefather was livid. He dusted his sleeves before continuing.

It was at this moment that the scenery shifted before his eyes; he was transported in a trancelike state into an otherworldly realm. A pocket of space that seemed almost like nirvana, filled with the same kind of fiery lotus in every corner. They glowed with a burning radiance, almost indistinguishable from real flames.

The Xiahou forefather was very serious now. He instinctively believed he had entered a formation.

It was extraordinary in that it divided him from the outside world. Even a divine expert like him had ventured in unknowingly. As an experienced cultivator, the forefather didn't panic because of his newfound location.

In his opinion, no formation could be perfect. This specific one that had trapped him was no different. If he could find the flaw, he would be able to walk out with impunity.

The Xiahou forefather cast his eyes before him. Through careful observation, he noticed a few secrets hidden in the formation. It appeared to be an interjoining of countless extradimensional spaces, their layers both piling atop and connected to each other.

Without guidance, someone lost within could only wander like a headless fly, forever doomed to be directionless within the maze.

Naturally, he wasn't so foolish. His divine eye revealed to him all the connections between the spaces. As it did so, the lotuses beneath his feet opened their petals, opening their brutish maws upon him.

"How childish!" The forefather grunted. It was absurd to think an attack of this caliber could hurt a god!

He knew that he was trapped in a formation with an intrinsically complex structure, but the lotuses posed little threat to his personal safety. He flew back and forth freely through the lotuses like a bird. Regardless of the ferocity and agility of the plants, the forefather remained untouchable.

"Hmm, I've been here before." Having looked for clues as to the exit for quite a while, he finally managed to trace something down.

Mid-jump, the lobes of his ears wiggled. A hitherto unfelt sense of emergency struck him in a flash.

"Hmm? What?" A divine expert had quick reactions. He disappeared on the spot in a wisp of blue smoke. At the same time, the air was cut apart by the shrill sounds of crimson feathers in flight.

The Vermilion Bird's feathers blinked into existence like keen knives, ignoring the laws of physics in the process. If not for the Xiahou forefather's reflexes, he would've been riddled with holes already.

The forefather paused before perching on an opposite corner. There was no more arrogance in his eyes. Inexhaustible prudence replaced it. There was life around that could threaten his own!

He took a closer look at the feathers that had nearly taken his life. His heart was shaken. "Vermilion feathers? Do they belong to that vermilion bird?"

Duke Xiaoyao had informed him in his message about the sacred fowl responsible for smashing House Xiahou into the dirt. A vermilion bird, straight out of the ancient era. Was the bird active here as well?

The Xiahou forefather took a lot more care now that an opponent was around.

It was at this time that an ocean of red clouds swept toward him from every direction. Sky and earth were swallowed up in a sea of crimson. The silhouette of a bird was barely visible behind the haze. The Xiahou forefather felt his heart tense at the sight.

"So it is the Vermilion Bird!" he murmured. He was anxious rather than scared; the energies the bird gave off indicated that it wouldn't be an easy enemy to defeat. If he couldn't break free from the Vermilion Bird's deterrence and assist House Xiahou, his house would be in even greater danger.

The Xiahou forefather began to hate the imperial one. If that man hadn't left at such a crucial time, wouldn't things have turned out better?

No amount of complaining was going to do any good, though. He knew he needed to break through the Vermilion Bird's blockade as quickly as possible.

It was ideal if he could tame the bird for himself, but that was probably even more difficult than defeating it.

The Xiahou forefather sank into deep thought, attempting to come up with a strategy. He wasn't a high level god – only second level divine, in fact.

He might be a level higher than the imperial forefather, but initial divine realm nevertheless.

He didn't have an absolute advantage against a creature of an ancient bloodline like the Vermilion Bird. Moreover, the bird was clearly much more prepared than he, which added to his concerns.

“Daoist Vermilion Bird,” the Xiahou forefather spoke, “Eternal Divine Nation has never had ancient beasts residing here before. Your appearance is a sign of fortune for us. House Xiahou has never had any ideas of opposing ancient sacred beasts. Why are you blocking my way here?”

The Vermilion Bird could understand the human tongue, but it didn't know how to speak it. Not that it would have deigned to reply to the Xiahou forefather, at any rate. Snorting, it cast a meteoric swarm of countless fireballs toward the Xiahou forefather.

The area of effect of this attack covered nearly every visible inch of ground. Even a god would be seriously injured without defending himself.

The Xiahou forefather didn't dare take the attack lightly. With a swish of his robes, he vanished into space once more on the breeze, reappearing in a safer place.

Unfortunately, he was also stuck in a formation that prevented him from escaping its boundaries regardless of his attempts to escape. This cramped his style somewhat.

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

Chapter 1823: Encircled On All Sides

Jiang Chen was having a good time chilling on the sides as the battle was way above his level. He therefore retreated far out of the way once he'd paved the road to victory for the Vermillion Bird.

He was certain Senior Vermillion would gain the upper hand, but whether it'd be able to kill the forefather would depend on luck. After all, the forefather was a divine cultivator. A god's rise and fall were both monumental on the Divine Abyss Continent.

His speculation was proven right. The Vermilion Bird held the upper hand, but the forefather was strong enough to stay alive.

Three days passed...

The bird had no troubles with the prolonged fight, while the forefather struggled to keep up. Him being kept from his clan was the worst thing that could happen to House Xiahou.

Another three days passed...

The forefather had exhausted all options, but still wasn't able to escape from his opponent.

On the sixth day, the sacred land finally broke into House Xiahou's fortress.

At first, the clan members had fought with great conviction since they were told their forefather was already on his way back. They believed everything would be fine as soon as he returned.

Day after day, however, the forefather was still nowhere to be seen.

The sacred land recognized that the forefather was House Xiahou's only remaining hope. Therefore, they turned to psychological warfare, claiming that the forefather had been trapped and would soon die.

In the beginning, House Xiahou denied and even scoffed at the claim. They didn't think anyone from the sacred land would be able to trap their forefather.

However, the sacred land boasted that the Vermilion Bird had led the attack itself. The forefather was on his own and had fallen into their trap. He was on the brink of his death and could die anytime.

Such statements might not work if made only once or twice. However, after a few days of repeats, on top of the fact that the forefather still hadn't shown up, House Xiahou started to waver.

On the fifth day, morale in House Xiahou had plummeted despite the senior executives' effort to maintain it. Even without the sacred land's further prompting, the clan members had come to believe that their forefather was trapped and dying.

Otherwise, why hadn't he returned long after Duke Xiaoyao's claim that he would soon? The only explanation was that he couldn't.

House Xiahou was able to hang on for so long mainly because of their drive.

The head of the Cloudwave Sect and House Tian had come to heavily doubt House Xiahou's ability to turn things around. The thought of defecting briefly crossed their minds a few times.

If Duke Xiaoyao hadn't told them that Forefather Xiahou was going to return soon, they wouldn't stay put and keep fighting for the house at the risk of their own lives.

They were fighting for a spark of hope, for a winning chance.

The longer it was since the forefather's promised arrival, the ansier they became.

On the fifth day, even House Xiahou's two most devoted supporters had lost their hope. As despair spread through the alliance, their defenses cracked.

Meanwhile, every wave of sacred land's attack was more powerful than the last.

On the sixth day, House Tian finally lost all confidence in the alliance. Their senior executives made the radical decision to defect and give up their post, welcoming the sacred land army with open arms.

The area they were stationed at wasn't particularly important, but their action had opened the floodgates, which struck a serious blow at House Xiahou's defenses.

The sacred land's army swarmed to the opening House Tian made. The fort's great formation cracked and inched to collapsing.

As soon as House Tian betrayed the alliance, the Cloudwave Sect followed suit. The war was lost already. There was no reason for them to stick with House Xiahou and get themselves killed as well.

The sacred land had promised to execute only members of the imperial family and House Xiahou - the two main culprits. The other factions could surrender and have the red wiped out from their ledger.

As a result, members of House Xiahou were left to defend themselves while their will dwindled.

Like wind sweeping away the clouds, the sacred land army charged into the fortress, eliminating everything and everyone in their way.

Duke Xiaoyao barely had any time to prepare himself mentally before he came face to face with the three primes. Other top empyrean experts in the capital followed after the primes, including the head of the Starlight Sect and the patriarch of House Beigong.

Large swathes of House Xiahou experts were crushed like ants. Duke Xiaoyao felt a sharp pain in his chest. He knew his house was going to fall.

Their multiple attempts to break out of the siege failed, having been met by aggressive counterattack and besiegement from the factions re-defected to the sacred land. They fought recklessly and mercilessly in order to prove their worth to their new masters.

It wasn't so much a battle as a one-sided slaughter. Each of House Xiahou's members was pitted against several enemies equal to or above their level. One after another, Duke Xiaoyao's confidantes died in battle.

He had no way to retreat, himself. The three primes pursued him like hounds. In their eyes, House Xiahou was the real force and foundation behind the uprising, and Duke Xiaoyao the head of the usurpers. The emperor had been executed, which left the patriarch of House Xiahou the only evil they must exterminate.

Duke Xiaoyao lost his air of superiority as he surveyed his surroundings. Experts within the family who were powerful enough to help him were either trapped, surrounded, or killed. He was truly on his own.

"House Xiahou was still basking in our glory a few months ago. To think that we would fall from grace in such a short period of time and end up on the brink of destruction! Is it the heaven's will for us to be eliminated??"

His expression was dejected and sorrowful. The abruptness of the clan's fall made it impossible for him to calmly face cruel reality. How could a powerful and prospering family fell apart in only a few months?

He couldn't identify the reason. Was it chance, perhaps?

He thought carefully and traced their decline to the death of Xiahou Zong. The family fortunes had gone downhill ever since.

At first, it seemed impossible that the uprising could fail, but that was only an illusion. The tide turned immediately after Shao Yuan and the Vermilion Bird showed up.

Duke Xiaoyao had started out as a patriarch who would go down in history as a great leader, but was now one of the biggest failures among all of House Xiahou's patriarchs.

"There's no way for you to go, Duke Xiaoyao." The three primes had left him with no option.

“Who would’ve thought that the sacred land would have the last laugh?” Duke Xiaoyao sighed. “I won’t accept this!”

“House Xiahou deserves your fate for the atrocities you’ve committed. You’re a prominent figure in the capital, Duke Xiaoyao. This seat will give you a chance to take your own life and die with dignity.”

Duke Xiaoyao flew into rage. “Take my own life? I’ll rather die in battle than kill myself! Come at me together! I’ll fight back with all I’ve got. I’ll consider it a fair trade if I can get one of you. It’s a great bargain if I get two!”

The first prime’s expression darkened. “Then be prepared! My fellow daoists, House Xiahou is a millipede. Even after its death, the legs continue to move. We must eliminate the house once and for all this time!”

The second prime was just as furious, if not more so. He’d been severely injured and almost died. If the sacred land hadn’t reclaimed the vault of spirit herbs and treated him in time, his injury would have left him permanently crippled.

His resentment to House Xiahou ran deepest out of the three primes.

Duke Xiaoyao felt overwhelmed as soon as the three primes attacked him. Moreover, a few other figureheads who could almost rival the three primes were watching the fight closely, ready to join at anytime. Duke Xiaoyao was essentially facing seven opponents at his level at the same time.

He was about as powerful as the first prime, but with the other two primes joining the fray, it was only a matter of time before he was defeated.

.....

While House Xiahou engaged in intense warfare, House Yan was embroiled in another one of their endless arguments.

The patriarch had changed his tune and rejoined the sacred land’s side. But, not every one of House Yan’s most powerful members had joined the assault against House Xiahou. There wasn’t even an overall consensus within the family yet.

Yan Wanjun wasn’t there to give advice, and Yan Wanchong had had a falling out with the patriarch after receiving his punishment. Without the two venerated forefathers’ guidance, House Yan had trouble coming to an agreement.

“Patriarch, the sacred land is now neck and neck with House Xiahou. In this subordinate’s opinion, the battle will end in less than three days. If we don’t seize the opportunity to prove ourselves to the sacred land, there may be no House Yan in the future. The other factions are atoning for their wrongdoings with real action, while we stay here and do nothing. How are we going to earn the sacred land’s forgiveness this way?”

“Hmph, House Xiahou is no easy prey. Besides, I hear that their forefather is going to return.”

“That’s right. Once the divine forefather returns and reclaims the battle, it’s not impossible for them to strike back at the sacred land. Who knows how it will end for us after rejoining the sacred land’s side?”

House Yan was now split into three groups. One supported the patriarch in his decision to defect to the sacred land for the house's survival, which accounted for about forty percent of all of House Yan.

A small group of people remained neutral.

The rest were on friendly terms with House Xiahou and stubbornly insisted on supporting the house.

Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

Chapter 1824: House Yan Trembles

The argument between the three sides raged on and on.

One of their venerated elders had left, while the other cared nothing for clan affairs. As a result, members of lower ranks suddenly had more of a voice, one of whom was Elder Xi, the one sent to the human domain. He was a devoted supporter of House Xiahou.

He'd visited the human domain to curry favor with House Xiahou. Afterwards, the house had approached him and promised to make him one of House Yan's venerated elders.

Before Yan Wanjun's departure and Yan Wanchong's change of attitude, Elder Xi hadn't been experienced or well-respected enough to become a venerated elder. However, after the uprising broke out, he was promoted as a special case via instructions from House Xiahou.

The house argued that while Elder Xi wasn't advanced enough in martial dao, he was a competent and efficient man. He could always take time to improve his strength, while his problem-solving ability was something that couldn't be learned.

Elder Xi thus became House Yan's venerated elder - well, a probationary one for the time being. It'd take some time before he became an official venerated elder, but in practice, he was one already.

Elder Xi declared with shining confidence, "You shouldn't have pulled away from the alliance because of Shao Yuan's alluring words, Patriarch. Things may very well change again after Forefather Xiahou returns. House Xiahou is unhappy with us enough as it is. What if..."

He sighed, putting on a heavily disappointed expression. In reality, he wasn't that affected.

Of course, he still wanted House Xiahou to make a comeback and come out on top. Then they would settle the score, which wasn't a good thing for House Yan, but could end up benefiting him.

The patriarch would be the first to come in for his share of blame. Then a few senior executives who'd been in their positions for years would be made an example of. In that case, it was possible that House Xiahou would make him the patriarch of House Yan.

That was his dream scenario.

His words were met with immediate rebuttal from others. "Elder Xi, House Xiahou is clearly doomed. Only you would put your hopes in them."

The look in Yan Wanxi's eyes grew sharp. "What? Are you mocking me, a venerated elder?"

He hadn't acquired the title for long, but had taken to parading around his rank like a duck to water.

The man scoffed. “Don’t try to be something you’re not, venerated elder! We all know how you got the title. You’re merely a fox flaunting the borrowed might of a tiger. Does that make you feel good? We feel embarrassed for you even if you don’t yourself!”

Yan Wanxi raged. “How dare you?! Is the hierarchy within the family a joke to you? Are you blatantly disregarding the family rules? Patriarch, what is the punishment for those who offend their superiors?”

The patriarch didn’t even blink. The family was in shambles. He had no time for such petty arguments. One of their scouts suddenly returned, interrupting the escalating argument.

“Patriarch! Great news, enormous news! House Tian suddenly gave up defending their post and let the sacred land army pass through without resistance. After that, the Cloudwave Sect followed suit.

“House Xiahou’s fort has fallen! Apparently most of their experts have been killed. Only a select few are still resisting. The three primes, along with a few other heavyweights, are now attacking Duke Xiaoyao, who is in great danger of being overcome at any time...”

The news dropped a bomb within House Yan. Senior executives who’d supported the sacred land cheered and applauded in delight.

“Fantastic, absolutely wonderful! Fate is indeed in favor of the sacred land. House Xiahou is nothing but a petty villain. Fortune isn’t on their side!”

“Even the so-called top genius Xiahou Zong was slaughtered by Shao Yuan. That tells us House Xiahou doesn’t even have a solid enough foundation!”

“House Xiahou is doomed! What fantastic news!”

“We’re too late again, Patriarch. We didn’t join the sacred land’s army in time. We should send our elites to attack House Xiahou now. Better late than never.”

“That’s right. Otherwise, how are we going to face the sacred land in the future? How will they look at us flip-flopping like this?”

“It’s all because of certain people who just had to flirt with House Xiahou! We used to be on friendly terms with the sacred land, and could’ve become their closest ally through Shao Yuan and Yan Qingsang. House Yan has been ruined by a few black sheep!”

Those who supported allying with the sacred land now possessed the clear upper hand. Even neutral members had turned into supporters as well.

Executives close to House Xiahou gaped in stunned silence.

Elder Xi scowled and muttered in a low voice, “Everyone, perhaps this is false information from the sacred land in order to attract support. Besides, House Xiahou’s divine forefather still lives. The war is not settled yet. I believe we should stay put.”

“Stay put my ass! This is no time for us to do nothing! Once the sacred land eliminates the alliance, it’ll be our turn to pay the price! Even if the sacred land spares us, we’ll end up being marginalized. Just wait and see. House Yan will fall from a top-tier faction to a second-tier and even third-tier one!”

“How much has House Xiahou paid you, Yan Wanxi? Why are you still speaking for them?”

“House Xiahou has their ambitions, but not the ability to back it up. What a bunch of vermin they are! They should die already before they harm even more!”

“You mustn’t hesitate, Patriarch, or House Yan is going to fall.”

The patriarch sighed, his voice filled with regret. He’d made a series of terrible mistakes since he’d taken the position. Every time, he picked the worst possible option.

“Patriarch, maybe we can try to mend our relationship with the sacred land through Shao Yuan. He’s a sentimental man. If he’s willing to put in some few words for us, the sacred land will pardon us. He’s made a great contribution to the sacred land now, and his opinions is second to only the three primes.”

“Agreed. Shao Yuan is a man of integrity, and he’s our son-in-law. He’ll at least show us some mercy.”

“Son-in-law? Then pray tell, where is his father-in-law?”

The blunt retort rendered everyone speechless. That was right. Shao Yuan’s father-in-law, Yan Qinghuang’s father, was still suffering in the Boundless Prison.

Expressions clouded over.

“Don’t worry, we can still seek out venerated elder Yan Wanjun. As long as we change his mind, he’ll be able to convince Shao Yuan.”

Though Yan Wanjun had left House Yan in a rage because of the patriarch’s assassination attempt, few knew of this inside story. Although some senior executives had guessed the truth, most didn’t know what had really happened.

The patriarch’s heart clenched. Huang’er’s father and grandfather... he’d offended both deeply. How was he going to change House Yan’s fate? There was nothing he could do.

He slumped, wanting nothing but to slap himself.

“Patriarch, Shao Yuan is an extraordinary man. I don’t think he’s as petty as we worry. As long as we show him enough deference, he won’t make things difficult for us. After all, he’s been in House Yan for a while. He won’t add insult to our injury, will he?”

“No, no he won’t. Shao Yuan isn’t a petty man.”

It was ironic how everyone in House Yan was now praising Shao Yuan.

“Shao Yuan is indeed remarkable. It’s difficult to believe he started out as a wandering cultivator!”

“Since when have there been extraordinary wandering cultivators like him in Myriad Abyss?”

“Wait, everyone, there’s something we’ve been overlooking,” someone piped up.

“What is it?”

“Something big. Something about Shao Yuan and Huang’er is unusual!” The man frowned. “Elder Xi must remember, don’t you?”

Yan Wanxi rolled his eyes. "What does it have to do with this venerated elder?"

"Have you forgotten, Elder Xi? You were the one who brought Huang'er back from the human domain. Didn't you say she was madly in love with a man called Jiang Chen and wouldn't part with him on pain of death? Why would she throw herself at Shao Yuan then? They have no history together. They rarely crossed paths when they were in House Yan. Huang'er isn't the kind of person who would fall for another man for no reason."

Glances were exchanged with odd expressions. Those who knew Huang'er frowned.

Yan Wanxi's heart skipped. He suddenly recalled the stubborn young man he'd run into in the human domain.

The young man's cultivation was nothing to write home about, yet he'd been able to shrug off the elder's mental attack. It didn't exactly make the elder doubt himself, but it did leave an impression. He had a foreboding feeling he couldn't explain.

Huang'er then had warned him to not push the young man too far. Otherwise, the young man would make him regret his actions.

He'd thought it was merely an angry rebuttal, but now there seemed to be more to it.

He thought back to the young man's sharp gaze, iron will, and the mysterious force protecting his consciousness - all signs now pointed to something big, something he'd overlooked.

The way Huang'er and the young man had looked at each other clearly suggested that they'd lay their lives down for each other. Huang'er couldn't possibly have such a sudden change of heart.

Can it be...

A shudder ran down Yan Wanxi's spine. A sense of deep apprehension rose from his heart.

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

Chapter 1825: The Dust About to Settle

An alarming possibility occurred to Yan Wanxi. He was paralyzed with dismay; the more he thought about it, the stranger things seemed.

The person who'd voiced his suspicions murmured as well. "Can this be true? Is Shao Yuan really Jiang Chen from the human domain?"

"What did you say?" The Yan patriarch was just as astonished as his kinsman. Everyone in House Yan knew what had happened to Yan Qinghuang. They were aware that her Generation Binding Curse had been lifted by a youth in the human domain called Jiang Chen.

Furthermore, she had fallen deeply in love with that youth. This was the reason for her intense sadness upon her return. But to say that Shao Yuan was one and the same was far too crazy.

The inhabitants of Myriad Abyss knew what level the human domain was at right now. No one would deign to visit it in the first place.

According to rumor, there were barely any empyrean experts there, and they all lived in seclusion. Most young folk there believed great emperor to be the peak of martial dao. Thus, the human domain was thought to be a desolate wilderness that held little of value.

Elder Xi had believed the same on his visit there a few years ago. His view was shared by the majority of those who lived in Myriad Abyss: they felt an inherent superiority to those who lived in such a backwater.

That was why he'd been so rude to Jiang Chen. Though he knew the young man was the young lord of Sacred Peafowl Mountain and a rare genius of his realm, the elder didn't find it noteworthy at all.

It was public knowledge that even a third-rate genius in Myriad Abyss could be considered the best of the best in the human domain. The reverse wasn't quite true: a genius from the human domain would struggle to be counted a third-rate one here.

"Impossible! I'm sure everyone knows what level the human domain is at. How could Shao Yuan come from there? How could that place have fostered a genius like him?"

"Yes, yes, that doesn't make sense. We'd believe it in ancient times, but the current human domain isn't even a tenth of what it was back then. The spirit veins and heritages there can't possibly cultivate a genius that matches Myriad Abyss Island's."

"Don't overthink things. Shao Yuan's heritage is definitely from Myriad Abyss. The human domain can't possibly have nurtured a once-in-ten-millennia genius like him."

"But don't you think Huang'er's attitude is strange? Don't you know what kind of person she is? How many times do you think they met before she accepted Shao Yuan's marriage proposal so easily? Conversely, how did Shao Yuan take an interest in Huang'er for seemingly no reason? Myriad Abyss has the sixteen golden hairpins, and Huang'er isn't unique."

"Exactly! If I was Shao Yuan, why would I court a girl who's been cursed by fate when there's so many more to choose from?"

"Plus, don't you think Shao Yuan's inclusion into House Yan in the first place was odd too? How did he manage to join us?"

"Yan Qingsang introduced him, yes?" someone asked doubtfully.

"Yes, precisely."

"Shao Yuan had ulterior motives for approaching House Yan, then?"

"Enough!" someone shouted in frustration. "What's there to analyze right now? Huang'er feels no sense of belonging to House Yan anymore. Venerated elder Yan Wanjun is nowhere to be found. Yan Qingsang revels his successes in the sacred land. Which of them cares about House Yan's survival? Is there a point in figuring out why Shao Yuan picked Huang'er?"

"Yes, there really isn't a point to looking into this. Let's discuss how to repair our relationship with the sacred land instead. We should avoid being hated for our stance, at least." House Yan's members were as lost as cats on a hot tin roof.

Someone stood up. "There's a chance. Let me go to the sacred land and take a look."

It was House Yan's foremost genius, Yan Zhenhuai. His stepping forward relieved the hearts of everyone else. He had somewhat more authority in this crisis than House Yan's executives as he had maintained reasonable, undamaged relationships with both Shao Yuan and Yan Qingsang.

Perhaps it was easier for young people to communicate with each other.

The Yan patriarch was elated. "If you're willing to go, Zhenhuai, I believe that even Shao Yuan will show you some respect."

Yan Zhenhuai nodded somberly. "I will do all that I can."

"Patriarch," someone else suggested, "House Yan should do a few other things to rescue ourselves in this time of need. What if we make an exception and promote Yan Zhenhuai to be an elder? Have him lead a group of elites to support the sacred land. It might not need our help, but we should still make our attitude and intentions clear."

Promote Yan Zhenhuai to be a house elder?

Yan Zhenhuai was still a young genius. Additionally, the house had strict rules that only those over a hundred could be actual elders. Those with significant contributions could receive equal treatment, but no more than that.

There was no precedent for this proposition in the house at all. However, House Yan had no other choice. Rules were made to be broken.

The Yan patriarch's eyes darted about before he came to a decision. "Alright. We're at a crucial juncture: talent should be promoted. Zhenhuai, are you confident you'll rise to the occasion?"

Yan Zhenhuai wasn't the reluctant type. He knew that his house was in danger. As the foremost genius of his house, he would gain a great advantage for his own future if he did well here.

"Patriarch, elders," he replied gravely, "I am thankful for your trust. Though I may be insufficient, I am willing to try. Whether I fail or succeed, I will give it my all so I may rest easy."

.....

Within House Xiahou's fallen fortress, the battle was nearing its end. House Xiahou's bloodline had been all been but uprooted. Aside from a few stragglers, not many were left alive.

Furthermore, the capital's high alert status meant that they would find it nearly impossible to escape.

Within the palace, Duke Xiaoyao had exhausted his strength entirely under the concerted effort of several other leaders. He fought on futilely, hoping for a stroke of luck to bring the Xiahou forefather back.

But that hope was doomed to be a luxury.

"Should you not admit defeat, Duke Xiaoyao?"

Duke Xiaoyao raved like a madman. “Admit defeat?” he roared, “Why should I? In what way am I inferior to you?! Which of you three primes can claim to be stronger than me? I can crush any one of you one on one! What defense do you have for yourself? You were just born to be loftier above the rest of us. Why should I be lower than you?!”

“Why should the Eternal Sacred Land rule this nation? Why do you get to decide all its important affairs? House Xiahou has been blessed by heaven with generations upon generations of geniuses. Why are we not allowed to replace you?”

He struggled to free himself with the remainder of his strength as he shrieked.

The first prime’s tone was cool. “How many generations of heritage has the sacred land experienced? How much blood has it poured out, how many sacrifices has it made for Myriad Abyss? Where was House Xiahou then? You have countless generations of geniuses, blessed by heaven? If that was the case, why did House Xiahou’s rebellion end in failure? Why was Xiahou Zong slain by Shao Yuan? At the end of the day, House Xiahou didn’t possess the fortunes required to carry out its ambitions. Your actions opposed heaven! That’s why you were punished by it.”

“Ridiculous! Unless heaven is blind, House Xiahou is destined to become great someday. Even if you kill me, the Xiahou forefather remains. As long as he lives, our bloodline will not be extinguished. One day, House Xiahou will rise above the Eternal Sacred Land again! We will destroy you!” Duke Xiaoyao was completely imbalanced. The rapid approach of death had entirely taken away his usual grace.

Mocking laughter rang from a distance. “The Xiahou forefather will be right behind you, if nothing goes awry. You can go on ahead without worry.”

Jiang Chen was the speaker, of course.

“Shao Yuan?” the first prime blinked. Hadn’t Shao Yuan gone with the Vermilion Bird to fend off the Xiahou forefather? Why had he come back now?

“Good news, First Prime. The venerated forefather has freed himself and returned! Old Brother Vermilion is currently assisting him in putting down the Xiahou forefather. I’m sure good news will arrive soon.”

“What, the venerated forefather is free as well?” Everyone on the sacred land’s side was overjoyed.

“Thank heavens!”

“The nation will know peace once more!”

The heads of the first-rate factions were secretly relieved. They were grateful for their own wisdom in choosing the correct side. If they hadn’t turned to the light and repaired their relations to the sacred land, they would be in an incredibly bad spot now, especially considering House Xiahou...

The consequences were almost too terrible to imagine.

The reappearance of the venerated forefather shattered House Xiahou’s last ray of hope. What of the Xiahou forefather? He had to know his place before the sacred land’s venerated forefather!

Duke Xiaoyao's eyes rolled around in their sockets. Clearly, he couldn't accept what he had heard. His heart sank into the depths of despair.

Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

Chapter 1826: Shao Yuan, Jiang Chen!

News of the venerated forefather breaking free was powerful impetus for the sacred land army. Though its members were already in high spirits, they felt the last vestige of their worries melt away.

Now that the venerated forefather was back, what could House Xiahou's divine forefather do?

Only the venerated forefather was the true foremost expert in Eternal Divine Nation. An undisputed totem and god of protection!

"Duke Xiaoyao, meet your maker!" Saying this, the first prime touched a point in space with a weapon that looked like a willow branch. In the next instant, it turned into thousands of twirling tendrils that filled the air.

Duke Xiaoyao was as still as an inanimate statue. It was as if his soul had been sucked out. He made no move to resist the first prime's attack.

Jiang Chen's news was the straw that broke the camel's back. It utterly crushed any remaining will he had left to fight. There was no question as to the battle's conclusion now.

The tendrils transformed into streaks of light that wrapped around the duke. He was soon ensnared inside a glowing cocoon. The three primes struck in decisive unison, landing three blows upon Duke Xiaoyao's vitals. His qi ocean was utterly destroyed, among other injuries.

The duke's body crumpled like a ragdoll onto the ground. There was barely any breath left in him. The loss of Duke Xiaoyao meant that there was no bite left in House Xiahou's continued resistance.

The three primes refrained from taking to the field themselves, instead delegating their men to a few final sweeps.

"First Prime, the capital is in fearful unrest. Excessive scrutiny isn't conducive to calming the citizens. We can't add more fuel to the fire." Jiang Chen had paid close attention to the situation in the capital the last few days, so voiced his advice.

"House Xiahou's forces have largely been defeated," the first prime mused. "The survivors are incapable of causing much more trouble. The capital needs peace."

"From this day forth, any efforts at hunting down the Xiahou and imperial family sympathizers should take special care to avoid harming innocents! Anyone who disobeys will be punished as a rebel himself!"

After weathering the rebellion, Eternal Divine Nation was somewhat restless. It needed some pacification to reduce the collective stress of the capital's inhabitants. The prevailing fear was that the sacred land would punish it severely for its past allegiances. The order allowed most to rest easy, making most safe from retribution.

After the matter of the capital, next came the factions.

Various factions had first rebelled alongside House Xiahou, then turned back to the light. The sacred land had agreed it would pardon crimes based on meritorious conduct. They needed to be placated as well. Eternal Divine Nation couldn't bear a fresh rebellion.

The factions that had resisted rather than followed House Xiahou needed to be praised and supported, of course.

As the number one hero of quelling the rebellion, Jiang Chen was chosen as an ambassador to foster his personal growth and connections.

"Shao Yuan, you have a history with House Yan. Do you have an opinion on how to deal with them?" The first prime cared a lot about the young man's opinion.

In the final hours of battle, Yan Zhenhuai had led a group of House Yan troops into the fray. Their presence offered a minuscule amount of assistance that was better than nothing.

But Jiang Chen didn't actually think that this last-minute posturing was particularly wise.

If they'd sent their men earlier, the sacred land might have taken notice. Reinforcements near the very end of the battle were obviously too late.

Still, he needed to make a trip to House Yan regardless. He wanted to ask them about several things. The exact fate and whereabouts of Huang'er's parents, for example.

The second day after the vanquishing of House Xiahou, the venerated forefather and the Vermilion Bird made their triumphant return. Under the coordinated onslaught of two experts, the Xiahou forefather had been utterly annihilated.

The venerated forefather didn't fight the Vermilion Bird for spoils; the Xiahou forefather's divine decree went to the bird.

Now, the dust had finally settled on Eternal Divine Nation's insurrection.

The imperial family and House Xiahou had been utterly destroyed in the revolution, but the other first-rate factions had suffered losses to varying degrees as well. The nation's overall strength had taken a significant hit.

Thankfully, long-term confrontation had been broken wide open. Because of this, the war hadn't lasted particularly long. The divine nation's foundations were largely intact. A bit scuffed, but nothing some repairs couldn't fix.

.....

For the sacred land, the victory had been pyrrhic at best.

It had its gains, of course: it had discovered Shao Yuan's incredible talent and ability. Even those who'd been the most envious of Shao Yuan before had nothing bad to say about him now.

Without Shao Yuan, the Eternal Sacred Land wouldn't have won. He was the deciding factor in their supremacy.

The venerated forefather was very excited to find Jiang Chen upon his return. He had nothing but good things to say both to and about the young man.

"You've done the sacred land a great service, kid. Indeed, you saved my life." The venerated forefather clapped Jiang Chen on the shoulder.

"Ah, not at all," Jiang Chen evaded humbly.

"Not directly, but you turned the sacred land's situation around. The Xiahou and imperial forefathers were forced to abandon the sealing formation, giving me room to rest and recuperate. You were the reason I could free myself!"

"The sacred land is a blessed place. Even if I wasn't around, someone else would've come forward to save it." Jiang Chen was unwilling to take too much credit before the venerated forefather.

"You're an interesting kid. What? You still want to keep your real identity a secret? What name should I call you? Shao Yuan, or Jiang Chen?"

Aside from Yan Qingsang, the venerated forefather was the only other who knew who Jiang Chen was.

"Now that House Xiahou is no more, I see no reason to hide my identity." Jiang Chen had used the pseudonym Shao Yuan largely because of House Xiahou. The old bounty on his head from Polylore had been only a tangential reason.

He didn't want to be targeted before he had a chance to grow, but hadn't expected House Xiahou to collapse this soon.

"Hmm, it is as you say." The venerated forefather chuckled. "Let's use this opportunity announce your true name to the world!"

Jiang Chen nodded. "Alright."

Rumors about Shao Yuan's actual identity spread fast in the Eternal Sacred Land.

The three primes were astonished. They had never imagined the brilliant Shao Yuan to have come from the human domain. Wasn't the human domain a barren wilderness? How could a place as crude as that foster a genius like this?

Questions and surprise filled the sacred land's every corner. Still, no one suspected the veracity of the forefather's words.

Ziju Min was the first to seek out Jiang Chen to seek the veracity of the rumors, and the young man admitted the truth readily.

The elder was quite for a long time before sighing. "Shao Yuan... ah, that's right, I should call you Jiang Chen instead."

"Elder Ziju, I know what you want to say. My origins aren't important. I've always been grateful to you for your recommendation, and I share that feeling still."

Ziju Min became thoughtful. "Yes, yes!" he nodded. "The things you've done for the sacred land are proof enough. No matter what, Jiang Chen, recommending you joining the sacred land was my biggest success in this life. The conclusion of this rebellion shows that quite clearly."

After seeing the senior off, Jiang Chen took the more direct approach of finding and explaining to the three primes the course of his history.

The three primes had gathered the same from the venerated forefather already. Rather than give him the cold shoulder, they heaped him with acclaim and commendation.

"Haha, it doesn't matter who you are, Jiang Chen. We all know you as a genius the sacred land can be proud of. House Yan sent more messengers today, but they were denied an audience. We'd like you to take care of House Yan as you see fit. How about it? Are you confident you'll do well?" The first prime looked at Jiang Chen with anticipation.

Jiang Chen thought about it for a moment, then nodded. "Sure."

"Don't feel weighed down with baggage. We've given you all authority to act as you like. No matter what you say or do, we will not interfere. We are laying the way for you, do you understand?"

Jiang Chen knew that the sacred land wanted to raise him up. Right now, he didn't have a good reason to refuse. "I will do my best."

Saying farewell to the three primes, he returned to his residence. The Vermilion Bird had closed its doors once more after the battle to cultivate. It had been the biggest beneficiary of the Xiahou forefather's death, having acquired a large portion of the old man's life essence. As always, this was an enormously helpful tonic to the bird.

The Xiahou forefather's divine decree, on the other hand, was given to Jiang Chen.

After making the necessary preparations, Jiang Chen led a group of sacred land experts to House Yan. As the designated heir of the sacred land, he had no shortage of underlings.

House Yan had lived for the past few days in utter turmoil. Each day was a struggle for survival. There was an invisible sword atop the house's head that could crash down in judgment at any moment.

The house had sent messengers to the sacred land several times to seek a meeting with the three primes, but they were refused every time without fail. The three primes simply weren't interested.

House Yan was almost in despair when an unexpected guest made his visit. The house instantly began to panic.

The current Shao Yuan wasn't the same youth as the one who had stayed at House Yan.

They weren't yet aware of Shao Yuan's real identity though, since the rumor hadn't made its way to them just yet. Its members did know, however, that the biggest contributor to the sacred land's victory would surely be its heir.

That made him an existence that everyone else had to look up to.

Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

Chapter 1827: Harsh Blowback

The news of Shao Yuan's visit on the Eternal Sacred Land's behalf conflicted all the hearts within House Yan. A sense of impending judgment filled the air.

Many remembered their neglect of the young genius during his stay. Now, the young man was completely out of their league. He was received with all due pomp and ostentation. After all, he could very well decide their continued survival.

Jiang Chen had thought about a lot before coming to House Yan. He arrived at his current decision after some serious consideration. He needed to maintain a perfectly upright posture before House Yan, to inject as much arrogance as possible.

Naturally, the Yan patriarch and several dozens of the house's executives stood outside House Yan's estate to receive him personally, giving him the grandest welcome possible.

Jiang Chen and the sacred land's men made a grand, triumphant return to his former place of stay. He didn't particularly enjoy the feeling though. That wasn't why he was here.

"House Yan is honored by your illustrious visit, Sir Shao Yuan."

"Our humblest greetings, Sir Shao Yuan!"

There was no doubt about House Yan's sincerity. Fear and unease was written over everyone's faces.

There were plenty of people higher level than Jiang Chen in House Yan, but all of the experts – the patriarch included – were as docile as a flock of lambs. They didn't even dare twitch their eyebrows, lest he mistake the act for hostility.

"Who are you calling Sir Shao Yuan? The young sir's name is Jiang Chen. Shao Yuan was merely his pseudonym!" a subordinate from the sacred land shouted with gusto.

Clearly, Jiang Chen's followers were pleased to be here themselves. The young man's display of force and ability had made him the idol of many of the sacred land's young men and women. His followers today felt privileged just for being here.

Every member of House Yan within hearing range felt their heads buzz with consternation.

Jiang Chen!

So, it really is him!

Elder Xi especially felt his world spin. He wanted to pass out on the ground. The details of his trip to Sacred Peafowl Mountain rose to the top of his mind.

Jiang Chen swept his gaze dispassionately across the crowd. The corner of his mouth curled with a smile when he saw Yan Wanxi behind the patriarch.

"My, my, my. Elder Xi, our reunion is rather sooner than I expected. You've certainly climbed up quickly. You've replaced Yan Wanjun's position as venerated elder, have you?"

Yan Wanxi was embarrassed to no end. His face froze with indecision, unsure whether to laugh or cry.

“At our last meeting in the human domain, your... dominance gave me a very deep impression.” Jiang Chen’s tone was cool, but the mockery in it was plainly audible to all. “If I remember correctly, you said something like House Yan was the heaven to my earth. I was as low as an ant to you, is that correct?”

Yan Wanxi had nothing to say. History was written by the victors. His attitude had been decidedly horrible during his business visit to the human domain because he hadn’t cared at all about anyone who lived there.

“Do you remember what I said to you back then? I said that one day, you would pay for your ignorance and conceit.

“I came to Myriad Abyss Island after all these years not to deliver a face-slapping, but to tell you that Huang’er belongs to me. You took her away, but I can take her back from you.

“Whether you, Xiahou Zong, or anyone else, none of you will wrest her from me. Absolutely no one!”

Yan Wanxi was ashen. In addition to the house’s orders, he had gone to personally appease House Xiahou as well.

The entirety of House Yan remained silent. Now that House Xiahou was ruined, House Yan had gained nothing from its thoroughly shameful conduct throughout the process.

The Yan patriarch sighed. “Sir Jiang Chen, we have been foolish in our past dealings. Yan Wanxi wasn’t the only one who was wrong about Huang’er. As the patriarch, I bear a great part of the responsibility as well.”

“Enough. As long as Huang’er doesn’t mind, I’m willing to allow bygones to be bygones. However, I came to verify House Yan’s sincerity,” Jiang Chen replied evenly.

The Yan patriarch hastened to reply. “After all House Yan has been through, we have a much more profound understanding of the necessity in following in the sacred land’s footsteps. We pledge eternal loyalty to the sacred land forevermore, and to lend our strength to the nation whenever possible.”

Jiang Chen waved a hand dismissively. “I’m not interested in that.

“I have only two things to ask you. First, what do you plan on doing with Huang’er’s parents? Second, who was the one responsible for reducing Elder Shun to his current state? Give him up. I’d like to hear what Elder Shun wants with him.”

Elder Shun?

The Yan patriarch had almost forgotten about the man named. Only after Jiang Chen mentioned him did he remember that Elder Shun had been the one in charge of taking care of Huang’er.

“Quickly, bring Elder Shun here.”

Everyone came to the sudden realization that Elder Shun had likely been on good terms with Jiang Chen. Several elders offered themselves up for the task. “I will, sir!”

The proposition to bring someone Jiang Chen was well acquainted was met with remarkable enthusiasm.

Elder Shun was brought before the youth before long.

The old man was dressed in robes of blue hemp cloth, and his figure looked skinny and lean in it. He seemed used to despondence and sorrow, though right now he was more confused than anything. Why had several elders suddenly come to fetch him with such eagerness? Their uncharacteristic courtesy was almost off-putting.

Having lost the majority of his cultivation, the elder had been looked down upon ever since his return. Barely anyone spoke to him at all. He was used to a solitary existence, and cared little for House Yan's affairs.

However, he had worried about Huang'er recently. News from her had suddenly stopped, for whatever reason. He wasn't used to so much unexpected attention.

"Long time no see, Elder Shun. How've you been these past years?" Jiang Chen revealed his true guise.

Elder Shun's pupils dilated. "Jiang Chen!"

Huang'er had mentioned to him that Shao Yuan and Jiang Chen were the same before this.

"Good kid, good kid. You're finally here!" A smile of joy crept over the elder's face.

"You've endured a lot of hardship the last few years, Elder Shun." Jiang Chen knew that the elder had sacrificed a great deal for Huang'er's sake.

Elder Shun swatted at the air. "As long as Huang'er's alright, what's wrong with an old man like me toughing some things out? Speaking of Huang'er, where is she? Why didn't she come today?"

"She's in a safer place right now. I sent her off before the start of the rebellion."

"Very good! A lover as dedicated as you is hard to come by. Huang'er was fortunate to have met you, Jiang Chen. You and her are a couple blessed by heaven!" Elder Shun was in a very good mood.

"Elder Shun, the house has let you down in the past. From today, your title of elder will be restored. What the house owes you will be repaid many times over. As the patriarch, I would like to personally apologize to you as well." It was rare to see the Yan patriarch prostrate himself so.

Elder Shun was unfazed. "Never mind that. After so many years of not being tied down, I'm not that interested in house matters anymore. Give the title to the young ones. I'd simply like my freedom to be restored to me, that I might spend my days in leisure!"

The patriarch was somewhat helpless before the elder's perceived tone. "Elder Shun, the house really is at fault. Please don't be so fixated on what happened in the past."

"Patriarch, I've long since let go of the past. Technically, I did break the house's rules. But enough about those burdensome things. I don't particularly hate anyone from back then, nor do I want an elder's responsibilities once more." Having experienced so much, Elder Shun really didn't want to be an elder again.

“Alright. As long as you’re with the house, you will receive treatment equal to an elder’s. There’s no need to involve yourself in the house’s affairs. The house owes you this much, at least.”

Elder Shun was clever enough to know why the patriarch was so obliging. He smiled carelessly, but didn’t affirm the statement.

“Do you remember the one who crippled your cultivation, Elder Shun?” Jiang Chen asked.

The old man shook his head. “The past is in the past. I don’t care much for remembering it.”

He was much more carefree than expected. It seemed that he really didn’t wish to pursue any grudges. Some of the more stubborn characters of the house also breathed sighs of relief at this. If the elder had really wanted to take things to the bitter end, those who’d advocated punishing him before would come in for their share of pain.

“Elder Shun is magnanimous enough not to seek restitution, but the other question remains. What answer do you have for me, Patriarch Yan?” Jiang Chen was speaking of Huang’er’s parents.

“That, ah,” the patriarch added hastily, “you can leave it up to us. We’ll send people into the Boundless Prison within three months. We will do everything in our power to rescue Huang’er’s parents. House Yan was responsible for this crime, and House Yan will make reparations for it.”

Jiang Chen harrumphed. “Huang’er is willing to forgive everyone else, but she will never relent about this. If you can’t accomplish what you’ve promised, I will channel her outrage upon you. Consider the matter yourself!”

He had heard of the Boundless Prison as an exceptionally dangerous place.

Since House Yan was responsible for sticking Huang’er’s parents in, it should also be responsible for their deliverance. In light of recent events, its members wouldn’t dare slack off.

Right now, the house was like a miscreant child who feared being punished. Everyone within would jump at the attempt to earn clemency.

“Don’t worry, Sir Jiang Chen,” the Yan patriarch guaranteed promptly. “House Yan will treat this as its top priority for the immediate future.”

Jiang Chen snickered. “You should pray for your own fortune. You better hope that Huang’er’s parents are alright within the Boundless Prison. If something’s happened to them... I can’t imagine what I will do, myself.”

Given the objective of hammering the house somewhat, he wasn’t going to show them any cordiality. He needed to keep up the pressure.

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

Chapter 1828: A Magnanimous Elder Shun

Jiang Chen had no qualms about putting some pressure on House Yan. He trusted that even Yan Wanjun and his grandchildren would support him in this.

The House Yan of today wasn't the same as it'd been in the distant past. It needed discipline and correction to teach it penitence and remorse for its past follies and ignorance.

Having made his demands, he had no plans to stay. The Yan patriarch tried his best to keep Jiang Chen, inviting him to a banquet shortly thereafter.

For what reason would he accept though? He knew what House Yan wanted. The banquet's only purpose was an attempt at repairing their relations and express contrition.

Jiang Chen didn't intend to accept their apology so quickly. What House Yan needed was a good thrashing. Maybe then they would remember the mistakes they'd once made.

Why had House Yan been so loyal to House Xiahou in the past? Because the latter had been vicious in its strikes against the former.

Why else had House Yan been so dogged? They'd had plenty of chances to join the sacred land's side, but ended up an accomplice to House Xiahou's crimes in the end.

Jiang Chen's desire to depart was met with no resistance from the Yan patriarch. Instead, the senior continually expressed his conciliatory attitude.

"If you want to apologize, Patriarch Yan, use your actions to do so. House Yan has a bad habit of being all talk and no action. The sacred land has given me the authority to handle House Yan. You be the judge of what that means." After leaving this parting comment, Jiang Chen left without hesitation.

"Sir Jiang Chen," Elder Shun suddenly interjected. "I find my life here in the house rather mundane. Where have you settled Huang'er down, if I may ask? I'd like to keep her company. Only when I'm near her to protect her can I rest at ease."

Jiang Chen laughed. "Please come with me then, Elder Shun."

The old man nodded, then unceremoniously strode into the ranks of Jiang Chen's retinue. He spared no glances towards House Yan.

His heart had been thoroughly wounded by the people in it already. He didn't bear a grudge against them, but neither could he accept them once more. He merely wanted to completely say goodbye to his past.

The assembled members of House Yan were utterly forlorn. They were at once both apprehensive and anxious. The young man who'd departed would tower above their house for the long-term foreseeable future. Perhaps they would never be able to reach him again.

Once upon a time, he'd lived so close to them. Once upon a time, they had a chance to achieve greatness. And yet, House Yan had stupidly cast off this genius. Furthermore, it had alienated him altogether.

"What can we do, Patriarch? That kid seems to still be very hostile to us!"

"Shut up!" The Yan patriarch's anger flared up. "Who do you think you are? How dare you call him 'kid'? Why don't you take a piss and take a look at yourself in the reflection?"

The patriarch fumed with frustration. Times were different now, yet there were still people who foolishly dared disrespect Jiang Chen. Did they want to destroy House Yan?

Everyone else was scared into silence. Nobody ventured another word.

The Yan patriarch glared at Yan Wanxi coldly. "Elder Xi, your position as venerated elder owes a large part to House Xiahou's influence. Now that House Xiahou is no more, your continued occupancy is an eyesore. Do you understand me?"

"No, I don't understand." Yan Wanxi was blue in the face.

"You don't understand? Is that really the case, or are you pretending?" the patriarch shot back icily.

"The council of elders passed the motion for me to become venerated elder!" Yan Wanxi protested loudly. "According to the house's rules, a similar motion must pass to depose of me. I've done nothing wrong or against the house's interests, nor have I betrayed the house. Why should I leave my position? I absolutely disagree!"

Yan Wanxi was a man that lusted after authority. Having enjoyed time as a venerated elder, he couldn't accept losing his prominence. The current sense of superiority he maintained was too addicting to toss away. Compared to Elder Shun, he was far less broad-minded and genteel. He wouldn't possibly abandon the position on his own.

The Yan patriarch was livid. "Elder Xi, some things are better left unsaid. House Xiahou has been overthrown. You were one of the proponents for maintaining an intimate relationship with that house, weren't you? How can you say you haven't done anything against the house's interests in light of that? Can't you consider the house's good above your own? Do you want the sacred land to crush House Yan too, before you're satisfied?"

What would Jiang Chen and the sacred land think if Yan Wanxi continued to be a venerated elder?

Regardless of perspective, Elder Xi was no longer suited for his current role. He hadn't enough experience to become one in the first place, and the house's circumstances necessitated his complete demotion.

If Jiang Chen still secretly resented Elder Xi's smugness at Sacred Peafowl Mountain, the culprit needed to be held to account.

"Why should I consider the house's good above my own?" Yan Wanxi was riled up. "Why don't you do the same? Is it entirely my fault that the house is at this point? As the patriarch, isn't your responsibility greater than my own? You want me to step down as venerated elder, eh? First, ask yourself whether you're still qualified to be the patriarch!"

He was so indignant that he held nothing back.

"Blasphemy, Yan Wanxi, utter blasphemy!"

"How dare you speak so presumptuously to the patriarch, Yan Wanxi? Do you still think House Xiahou is in power?!"

“Don’t you know yourself how you became venerated elder in the first place? You should’ve resigned long ago if you knew what’s good for you. Why does the patriarch need to remind you? You’re truly shameless!”

“If I were you, Yan Wanxi, I would’ve fled into seclusion already. You don’t feel ashamed, but we feel it on your behalf!” Yan Wanxi’s critics no longer saw fit to leave his dignity intact.

They hadn’t supported House Xiahou in the first place, and possessed an animosity to the true believers that wholeheartedly did. In fact, they stubbornly believed that the Xiahou sympathizers were wholly responsible for the fall of the house to this point.

Without their support for House Xiahou, how would House Yan have sunk so low?

If the house had taken the opportunity to get on the sacred land’s good side and stand unerringly with the greater faction, House Yan would have received significant recognition in this rebellion for their loyalty.

Alas, things right now were quite the opposite. Because of the sycophants’ mendacity, House Yan had a black mark that could never be washed away.

Thus, the verbal assault against Yan Wanxi was relentless.

Barely anyone dared speak on Yan Wanxi’s behalf. The allegiances formed by mutual support for House Xiahou had all but crumbled. No one wanted to come forward to risk becoming the house’s public enemy.

“Alright. As the patriarch, I’ve brought the motion forward, but the council of elders must decide whether it passes or not. Since all the elders are present here, let’s have a quick vote. Those who agree with the dismissal of Yan Wanxi as a venerated elder, do not raise your hands!” The Yan patriarch decided to meet tit for tat.

“What do you mean by that, patriarch?” Yan Wanxi declared angrily. “Why is it that those who agree aren’t raising their hands? That’s unfair!”

“Hmph, the vote is part of the rules, but the patriarch is free to decide the method of voting. Yan Wanxi, if the house really supported you, the method wouldn’t matter. Alas, you have far less support than you think. No one actually believes you should continue as a venerated elder.”

Yan Wanxi despaired. He swept his gaze around the council, but barely anyone raised their hands in opposition to the motion. The only ones that did were his most loyal henchmen.

In other words, almost everyone agreed with the decision to remove him from his current position.

“Elder Xi,” the patriarch proclaimed, “the will of the council is manifest. Do not blame the others. From this day forth, you are no longer a venerated elder of the house.”

It was Yan Wanxi’s turn to burn with rage, but there was absolutely nothing he could do. He couldn’t possibly take issue with the process; he had indeed received minimal support on the council. What did that mean? That no one agreed with or was impressed by him.

“Hmph, so what! If I’m not wanted here, I’ll just go elsewhere. House Yan isn’t for me anymore. From now on, consider our ties severed!” In a fit of rashness, Yan Wanxi brandished his sleeves and began to walk out.

“Why do you say that, Elder Xi? It’s just a title, isn’t it?”

“Why is a title so important to you, Elder Xi? Do you really not care about the house?”

Some tried to convince the old man to stay, but most chose to watch dispassionately. The house itself was not yet safe, and many of its members were uninterested in minding someone else’s business.

.....

Elder Shun was extraordinarily pleased to return with Jiang Chen to the Eternal Sacred Land.

“Huang’er’s not here, is she?” the elder couldn’t resist asking.

“How did you know?” Jiang Chen smiled.

“If you thought the sacred land unsafe, you would’ve sent her off. I’m guessing she’s in the human domain right now?”

Jiang Chen applauded with laughter. “An astute observation, Elder Shun.”

“Not a difficult one, to tell you the truth. I assumed Huang’er actually likes the place, so it wasn’t a big leap from there. Ah, I remember the days we spent vividly still. Jiang Chen, Huang’er has had a hard life. Only after your appearance has her bitter fate begun to turn sweet. I hope you can take care of her. Most of all, don’t hurt her.” Elder Shun sighed softly.

“Of course,” Jiang Chen nodded. “Elder Shun, where did the young man you brought away from Eternal Spirit Mountain end up? Chu Xinghan, I believe his name was.”

The elder was a bit sad upon the mention of the name. “I haven’t seen him in a long time. When I was pursued by the house, I sent him away to fend for himself. I wonder if he’s still alive. I have failed him, as I have your trust.”

“Don’t be so hard on yourself, Elder Shun. A lot of things don’t go the way we want in life. There wasn’t much you could do. You were forced into your decision.”

“Mm. I was thinking of traveling the world and making a few inquiries. With some luck, Xinghan can become a real genius in his own right – though he won’t astound the world to the same degree as you have. The human domain has plenty of talent, but the heritages and resources available to that shattered realm are too few. How could Myriad Abyss match up otherwise, considering the human domain’s former glory?”

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

Chapter 1829: Fifth Level Empyrean

Jiang Chen didn’t have Elder Shun depart immediately. Instead, he checked on the elder’s crippled meridians. They still had a chance to be restored. He decided to keep the elder here for a while to fix the latter’s meridians and restore his power. Strength in martial dao was crucial to survival in Myriad Abyss.

Hope sparked up in Elder Shun's ashen heart upon hearing that he could be treated.

Through perseverance, Jiang Chen ended up achieving the improbable feat of repairing Elder Shun's meridians. Although he couldn't restore the elder's cultivation instantaneously, the elder would be able to find his way back to his peak in a year or two.

"Elder Shun, this is a Crowning Empyrean Pill. It can unconditionally advance an empyrean cultivator up a level."

"Crowning Empyrean Pill?" Elder Shun started. "Didn't the sacred land say it's still in development?"

Jiang Chen smiled. "I can refine it anytime."

"You're a miracle maker, young man. I'm curious what's going on with you. I don't believe there's anyone who's qualified enough to be your teacher."

Jiang Chen sighed softly. There were many qualified to mentor him, but they were all from his past life. No such person existed on the Divine Abyss Continent.

Elder Shun accepted the pill readily. There was no way he could turn it down at this stage. It'd been years since he last cultivated. He had to catch up quickly. The pill could save him decades or even centuries of hard work.

Jiang Chen brought up the fact that Yan Wanjun was on Winterdraw Island.

"Alright, I'll go search for Chu Xinghan. As soon as I find him, I'll take him to Winterdraw and see if we can teleport to the human domain to meet up with Huang'er."

"Good! That'll be ideal." Jiang Chen approved of his plan. There was no love left to lose between Elder Shun and House Yan. It wasn't a bad idea for the elder to move to the human domain.

The elder looked at Jiang Chen with a smile, his gaze filled with appreciation. "Shao Yuan, did you restore Winterdraw island to make it your territory?"

"I did. There's a portal leading to the human domain there, which makes the island a valuable strategic node. Besides, the great formation there is under my control. Not even Rejuvenation Isles will be able to break in."

"Right, the human domain is threatened by the demons. It's bound to become a main battlefield sooner or later. It's smart of you to build your own force and establish a hub for both offensive and defensive purposes." Elder Shun admired Jiang Chen for his strategic thinking. "When do you plan on returning to the human domain?"

"I'll return after I finish with my business in the sacred land. Unfortunately, I haven't found anything useful about the Great Formation of Heavenly Soul Confinement, which is crucial to human domain's effort in deterring the demons."

Elder Shun thought for a moment before responding. "You are a rare once every ten thousand years genius for the human race, Jiang Chen. There must be a reason for your appearance. I admire you for what you've done for the human domain. However, the formation can only stop humans from being attacked by demons, through directing the enemies elsewhere.

“The demons will filter into other races’ territories through other channels. Once they conquer those places, they’ll keep attacking and invade the human domain through different entrances. As long as the demons exist, there will be no peace on this continent. Not even in Myriad Abyss.”

Jiang Chen smiled ruefully. “Myriad Abyss Island was never a peaceful land.”

Elder Shun paused. “What do you mean?”

“The illusion of peace is only maintained through the sacrifice that the ten sacred lands have been secretly making. It’s said that the nightmare plaguing the continent started from Myriad Abyss in the ancient times...”

Jiang Chen explained how Myriad Abyss had been keeping the plane’s coordinates a secret and defending the realm from outside invaders.

Elder Shun gaped. “Does this mean the ten sacred lands have been protecting the island since old? That they have been and still are risking their lives to fend off foreign invaders?”

“That’s right. We’re fortunate that there hasn’t been a large-scale invasion like the demons launched in the ancient times. Otherwise, the ten sacred lands won’t be able to keep everything under control. I speculate that they’ve only been met with adventurers passing through the plane since then. Or Myriad Abyss would’ve been ravaged by war already.”

Elder Shun fell silent with a grave expression.

“Now it all makes sense, Jiang Chen. I used to think the sacred land was too pushy, but now it seems it hasn’t been forceful enough. All of them have done so much for Myriad Abyss. It’s only reasonable for them to claim most of the resources and rule over the nations.”

He was speaking from the bottom of his heart. Many factions here were composed of descendents of deserters from the ancient demonic war, but that didn’t mean the island was populated with only cowards. There were still some hot-blooded individuals, such as Elder Shun, Huang’er, and Yan Qingsang.

“Elder Shun, this is a serious matter. Please keep the information to yourself before the sacred lands make the collective announcement. There could be serious repercussions if this is leaked beforehand. The sacred land keep it a secret because they fear it’ll bring instability and further undermine the sacred lands. Since the uprising has been squashed, I believe they will soon expose the secret they’ve been keeping.”

Elder Shun was puzzled. “Jiang Chen, if the sacred lands always intended to let the public know the truth, why haven’t they done so to this day?”

“The ten sacred lands could stand against the incursions in the ancient times. It wasn’t until a few hundred years ago that they started having troubles. The fight outside the realm took too heavy a toll and depleted their resources and manpower, which led to their decline. They weren’t going downhill for no reason. The sacrifice they’ve made is simply too great.”

“I understand now. I understand everything. With that said, those usurers are indeed sick bastards. The sacred lands were forced to shed blood both on the inside and outside.”

Elder Shun always admired those who were both competent and responsible. The burden that the sacred lands impressed and won him over.

He clapped Jiang Chen's shoulder. "I can tell the Eternal Sacred Land has high hopes for you. You're irreplaceable to the human domain now, and you're going to be irreplaceable to Myriad Abyss one day. Perhaps you're here to save the Divine Abyss Continent. I look forward to seeing what you accomplish in the future!"

Elder Shun left the sacred land once he'd mostly recovered. His conversation with Jiang Chen gave him hope and a sense of duty. He had to persist and pick himself up.

Jiang Chen started cultivating after the elder's departure. He'd accumulated a great deal of energy from the countless battles he'd fought in the uprising. He was close to reaching fifth level empyrean.

As long as nothing in the sacred land required his attention after his breakthrough, he'd return to the human domain and visit the Six Palaces of Heritage. They topped the list of locations he wanted to visit.

Every palace had brought Jiang Chen a great many surprises, and each was more exciting than the previous. The palaces had obviously been established for the heir of Veluriyam Capital. Jiang Chen had every right to the heritage since he'd inherited Veluriyam's dao.

Jiang Chen had killed many empyrean experts during the uprising, each of whom possessed an empyrean decree, which was of great value. The decrees could greatly strengthen the human domain.

His biggest gain was the divine decree he acquired from the Xiahou forefather.

Its value would've been unimaginable even in the ancient times. Every divine cultivator had overcome countless challenges in order to reach godhood. Every one of their deaths meant a great loss.

After three months, Jiang Chen entered the next stage of martial dao and ascended to fifth level empyrean. Long Xiaoxuan made a breakthrough as well not long after, ascending to sixth level empyrean, still keeping one level ahead of Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen wasn't surprised by the dragon's diligence in cultivation. He knew it'd been driven by the Astral White Tiger. He missed the tiger a little. It'd stayed in Cloud Camel mountain for a long time. What progress has it made, I wonder?

But the tiger had started out late. No matter how quickly it improved its cultivation, it'd be hard pressed to catch up with the dragon anytime soon.

Of course, Jiang Chen couldn't rival any of the four beasts in cultivation efficiency. The bloodlines of the divine beasts were formidable. Although he had incorporated some divine bloodline in him as well, he was no match to direct descendents like them.

Still, he was satisfied with the speed at which he progressed.

It was a miracle in itself for someone his age to reach fifth level empyrean. If he hadn't possessed memories from his past life and had grown up like all other geniuses, the best he could've done was reaching great emperor, and even that wasn't a guarantee.

Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

Chapter 1830: A New Mission

The Vermilion Bird was still in closed door cultivation. It was determined to ascend to godhood. Jiang Chen speculated that it wouldn't end its cultivation until then.

To his surprise, the bird emerged on the second day after Jiang Chen's breakthrough. It hadn't reached divinity yet.

"Young Master Chen, I've improved myself in all aspects to the best of my ability. Now I just need the final push. The sacred land is a great cultivation ground with abundant spirit energy, but it doesn't suit my purpose. I want to return to Hell King Island, which will be most conducive to my ascension."

Jiang Chen readily agreed. "Attaining godhood is a crucial matter. I wholeheartedly support any decisions you make."

The more powerful the bird was, the better. After all, the divine beasts were his closest and mightiest companions. Their strength was his asset.

"The sacred land is about done with tying up loose ends, isn't it?"

"It is. Lately, they've devoted themselves to restoring Eternal Divine Nation. While things have settled down here, the other nations in Myriad Abyss are still unstable. The uprising was pre-planned. Factions from each nation conspired to launch an attack simultaneously. However, due to issues in coordination of manpower, rebels in some nations were subdued before they could stage a proper uprising. Meanwhile, some nations are still trying to eliminate the uprisers. The Ten Divine Nations have suffered a great blow."

The Vermilion Bird wasn't at all surprised. It smiled faintly. "If the human race could remain united, you'd be able to gain a foothold even among the heavenly planes. However, it seems to be human nature to fight among yourselves no matter the occasion, as if the short-term gain of an individual always outweighs the greater good."

Jiang Chen couldn't argue with that. The bird was right about their biggest weakness.

"Sir Jiang Chen, the venerated forefather requires your presence," a voice called out, interrupting the conversation.

The venerated forefather?

Jiang Chen didn't expect to hear from the old man. The forefather had been recovering lately. He'd been tricked and trapped in a formation by the two forefathers from the rebel alliance, which had taken a great toll on and weakened him. Thus, he'd entered closed door cultivation to restore his power. Why had he emerged so quickly?

Jiang Chen didn't waste any time before visiting the forefather. He respected the old man who had been quietly, selflessly defending Myriad Abyss and Eternal Divine Nation in battles outside the plane. Jiang Chen would have made the same sacrifice, but he might not have been able to persist as long as the forefather had.

The forefather seemed close to making a full recovery.

“Jiang Chen, I hear that you’ve progressed another level in cultivation? You’re breaking the sacred land’s record with your efficiency! Who would’ve thought a super genius like you would grace the sacred land! You won’t be upset with us for not officially commending your deeds this time, will you?”

Jiang Chen snorted. “Why would I be?”

“Haha, I feared that you would think too much. It’s natural for young people to let their pride get the better of them. However, you don’t seem at all like most of your peers.”

“Haha, if the sacred land wants to award me, I’ll be happy with actual resources. I don’t care much about rank and status. That’s all window dressing. What I need are practical rewards.”

They’d met once already, so Jiang Chen wasn’t as formal as he’d been before.

“Go to the first prime for resources you need, kid. She won’t turn you down.” The forefather chuckled. “The sacred land is a home to you now. Whatever you want, you’ll receive. You don’t need me to give you the permission.”

Jiang Chen shrugged, changing the subject. “Venerated Forefather, what is the situation in Myriad Abyss like now?”

“Difficult. Very difficult! Among the ten nations, seven were hit by an uprising, while the other three managed to suppress unrest before anything could really happen. Out of the seven nations, we eliminated the usurpers the fastest and therefore suffered the least damage. Three of the other six are close to vanquishing the rebels, while the other three are still in the heat of civil war with no end in sight. There’s no telling if they’ll emerge victorious. They’ve issued a request for aid, which we received as well.” The forefather gave Jiang Chen a meaningful look.

Jiang Chen smiled wryly and rubbed his nose. “What are you looking at me for, Venerated Forefather?”

“What do you think?” The forefather quirked his lips into a half smile. “It’s too harsh for you to go to the offworld battlefield for now. It suits you more to take on a mission to help.”

“Where to?” A jolt of curiosity hit Jiang Chen.

“Radiance Divine Nation, Martial Divine Nation, and Sunrise Divine Nation. The rebels are unstoppable and dominate the sacred lands in these three nations. Without outside help, it’s unlikely the rebellion will be resolved successfully.” The forefather threw an expectant glance at Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen scratched his head. “Venerated Forefather, it’s a stroke of luck that I was able to help the Eternal Sacred Land win the civil war. You don’t really believe that I can easily do the same for other nations, do you? That’s beyond my ability.”

Truthfully, he wasn’t that interested in the task. He was the sacred land’s disciple, but he didn’t want to be its pawn and be sent to wherever it needed him to be. “Oh, I forgot to mention that Martial Divine Nation produces an abundance of Taiyi Dragonscale Fruit,” the forefather added out of the blue.

Taiyi Dragonscale Fruit was the main ingredient for the Taiyi Skymender Pill, and was rare even in the Ten Divine Nations.

“Ah, the holy girl of Radiance Divine Nation is the famous Yao Guang from the sixteen golden hairpins.”

Jiang Chen shrugged. "What does that have to do with me?"

Beautiful women didn't appeal to Jiang Chen. He cared more about material resources. Therefore, the Taiyi Dragonscale Fruit alone wasn't enough to change his mind.

The forefather clapped his own forehead with a coy smile. "I forgot you're a loyal one who loves only one. Alright, I don't want Miss Huang'er to come after me. How about this. I'll let you choose between Martial and Sunrise."

"Sunrise Divine Nation has nothing but resources. If you can help them put down the rebellion, you can ask for anything you want. They'll gladly satisfy your requests."

Jiang Chen shook his head. "Venerated Forefather, can I not go?"

The forefather shook his head. "No, you can't. Actually, I suggest you pick Martial Divine Nation. Formations are very popular there. Maybe you'll be able to find the clues you've been looking for!"

The old man shamelessly hit Jiang Chen over the head with repeated incentives, clearly trying to lure him into taking on the task.

Jiang Chen smiled wryly. "Venerated Forefather, it's all part of your plan, isn't it? Do you really trust me to take on this task? Any divine realm forefathers will be able to easily kill me."

"There aren't that many divine realm experts. Besides, don't you have the Vermilion Bird acting as your bodyguard? Don't fret, I'll compensate you for your troubles and give you the means to protect yourself. This is an easy mission that will win you great glory. You aren't going to encounter much difficulty. I'm not sending you to your death knowing you won't be able to succeed," the forefather spoke earnestly.

Jiang Chen watched him questioningly. "Really?"

"Boy, if you don't trust even me, who are you going to trust? Besides, you're the future leader of the sacred land. It'll help you build connections in the future to make appearances now."

That Jiang Chen had to admit, but it still wasn't a good enough reason for him to take the risk.

"Fine, you aren't going to move without any benefits, are you? You may take anything you want from the spirit herbs vault, until your arms are sore. Happy now?" The forefather pulled a face at him like someone had taken an enormous bite out of him.

Jiang Chen snickered. "I'll think about it. However, can you guarantee that they'll reward me for helping them put down the rebellion?"

"Don't worry. If they dare refuse to reward you, I'll personally teach them a lesson. Besides, they're the ones seeking help. They won't disobey our will. You're a smart one. You don't need me to teach you how to 'bargain', do you?" The forefather smirked.

Jiang Chen looked at the forefather thoughtfully, his lips quirked up.

The more he talked to the forefather, the more he realized how mischievous the old man was. He had an interesting personality. The old man was his kind of people.

The forefather handed him a written order. "This is special permission from me. You may take anything you want from the vault, anytime."

"Anything I want?"

"Yes." The forefather's facial muscles twitched.

Jiang Chen grinned. "Alright, I'll have a good look at the wares."

"Wait, when do you plan on departing?" The forefather wasn't going to let him slip away without a concrete answer.

"In three to five days," Jiang Chen said agreeably. "Does that work?"