

Three Realms 1831

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

Chapter 1831: Signs of Internal Demons

Having received a clean answer from Jiang Chen, the venerated forefather willingly handed him the written order.

The young man put it away into his belongings without much ceremony. He hadn't seen the spirit herb vault here yet; it was sure to be one of the best in Myriad Abyss, with a commensurately rich store of materials. Jiang Chen rather looked forward to it.

Returning to his residence, he beckoned to his companions excitedly. "Old Brother Vermilion, Brother Dragon, are you interested in raiding some supplies?"

"Raiding what supplies, exactly?" the Vermilion Bird asked lazily.

"The spirit herb vault here in the Eternal Sacred Land. How about it? Are you interested?" Jiang Chen tossed the order into the air, his tone enticing like he was luring little children.

Long Xiaoxuan's eyes lit up. "The spirit herb vault? The one here? I want to go. Why would I not?"

The Vermilion Bird chuckled. It glanced at Long Xiaoxuan with a look that belied its opinion: the dragon was still too young and simple.

Long Xiaoxuan voiced its mild displeasure. "Just tell me what you're thinking, Old Brother Vermilion. Why look like you're constipated?"

The Vermilion Bird clucked as it shook its head. "Where has your grace gone, Xiaolong? You are a member of a noble lineage, yet your behavior is so crude."

Long Xiaoxuan shrugged. "You two are a bad influence."

"Not I," the Vermilion Bird chuckled. "I am the most elegant of birds."

"What do you mean by that, eh?" Jiang Chen interjected in a huff. "Are you implying it's my fault? I see you're not interested. Alright, I'll go get rich on my own. Why're you throwing away my goodwill like that, huh?"

The Vermilion Bird chuckled. "Gifts are often accompanied by difficult requests. Young master Chen, the Eternal Sacred Land's generosity is no doubt coupled with a mission."

"Very perceptive. I'm not getting the herbs for free, no." Jiang Chen repeated the gist of what the venerated forefather had said to him. "Old brother, look. I have to go on the missions the sacred land sends me on anyway. This way, I can extract something extra to sweeten the deal. This is a rare opportunity for acquisitions – I wouldn't miss it if I were you."

"Normally, I'd go even without anything to get out of it," the Vermilion Bird snapped, "but breaking through to divine realm is my top priority right now. Don't you know how long I've waited for this day? Can you bear to see me stew like this?"

"You'll break through sooner or later," Jiang Chen grinned. "That you haven't yet just means the timing hasn't arrived. Maybe a few more fights or experts eaten will get you there without any work at all. Brother Long needs to increase his strength just as much as you need to break through, no? Xiaoxuan needs chances to fight in practical combat. It'll be a waste of the dragon bloodline otherwise!"

Long Xiaoxuan nodded several times in succession. "Yes, yes, of course I'll go. There's food and fighting to be had. No reason for me to refuse!"

The dragon never passed up chances to improve its cultivation.

"Brother Vermilion, what difference will a few months make for your trip to Hell King Island? Plus, you can't just sit around to cultivate all day and expect to get anywhere fast."

"Ah, kid!" the Vermilion Bird was vexed. "Alright, fine. I'll go on another of your wild escapades. But this is the last one! After that, I'm definitely going back to Hell King Island."

"Don't worry. You may break through to divine realm already by then. You won't want to go there anymore."

"I hope so."

Man and beasts were eager to raid the spirit herb vault when another visitor was announced. House Yan's Yan Zhenhuai, apparently.

"Yan Zhenhuai?" Jiang Chen blinked, then nodded to himself. That young man was worth seeing. He had a pretty good impression of the young genius. House Yan was wising up at last.

"Show him in," he waved a hand.

Yan Zhenhuai was quickly escorted in. He was reasonably at ease as he came in. "I still instinctively want to call you Shao Yuan, but I reminded myself to call you 'Brother Jiang Chen' from now on," he smiled wryly.

"Haha, you can use whichever name you like. Did you have something to tell me, Brother Zhenhuai?" Jiang Chen cut straight to the chase. He had raiding to do!

"It's like this. The house has sent a group of experts into the Boundless Prison. However, they've encountered a bit of a problem."

Jiang Chen furrowed his brow. "The three months your house promised are up, aren't they? I haven't gone to House Yan because I was waiting for you to finish the task. Now you tell me there's a bit of a problem? House Yan's failed, then?"

Yan Zhenhuai was somewhat helpless. "The Boundless Prison is a complicated place. The house made a promise it couldn't necessarily fulfill because it was pressed at the time. It's very difficult to find two people and bring them out from the Boundless Prison in three months. Even the experts themselves might not be able to return in that time."

"So there's no need to save Huang'er's parents, is that what you mean?" Jiang Chen's tone turned icy.

“Not at all. The house is trying its best. I came for two reasons: first, at the behest of the patriarch, to request a small extension. Second, to privately request you to forgive House Yan for this small misstep. I’m sure Huang’er is kind enough to hope that you give House Yan some leniency, even though she’s broken with the house already.”

“You’re certainly right on that count,” Jiang Chen nodded. “If I wasn’t taking Huang’er’s feelings into account, House Yan would not deserve mercy. I don’t mean to offend you, Brother Zhenhuai, but that’s the truth.”

Yan Zhenhuai’s expression was wry. “Indeed,” he sighed. “House Yan bears almost all of the blame. A single mistake has blossomed into a chain of blunders. Several opportunities were offered and missed. Not just the patriarch, but all of the other members are culpable as well.”

“Huang’er included?” Jiang Chen frowned.

“Oh, no! Huang’er did nothing wrong. Meeting you was the first step towards normality.”

Jiang Chen smiled a little. “Never mind all that. An extension is reasonable enough, but how long should it be? I can’t just let House Yan’s efforts go on indefinitely. If the house can’t even do this much to redeem itself, that proves it doesn’t have the right to remain in the capital. There are many other factions stronger and more loyal, aren’t there? They wait for the sacred land’s support.”

Yan Zhenhuai had nothing to say. Yes, there were many houses stronger than House Yan right now. If the sacred land was unsatisfied with the house’s attempt at atonement, it was quite possible it would be pushed aside for another.

There was nothing he could really do, given his position. He gestured toward the door. At his signal, several burly men brought in several chests.

“Brother Jiang Chen, these are a token of House Yan’s contrition. There are three chests in total for your records.” Yan Zhenhuai was just straight up offering gifts.

Jiang Chen perused them through a half-smile, but didn’t move. Was House Yan resorting to bribery?

Seeing his host’s impassivity, Yan Zhenhuai clapped. “Open them up for Sir Jiang to see.”

The chests were opened to reveal empyrean spirit stones, resources, spirit herbs, and other valuables.

“Is House Yan willing to pay such an expensive cost?” Jiang Chen was mildly astonished.

“Brother Jiang Chen, the patriarch means to ask for three more months. Each month of additional delay after that will mean another chest owed... as compensation for your frustration.”

Jiang Chen swept his gaze across the three chests. “I’ll accept these gifts,” he stated coolly, “but these three extra months are final. Do not test my patience. I’m only giving this one chance.”

Though it was rude to answer a smile with a slap, Jiang Chen did feel rather annoyed. How could he not? Despite taking three months, House Yan had completely failed in their task.

He liked the gifts objectively, but couldn’t forget himself because of them.

After the verbal warning, Jiang Chen sent Yan Zhenhuai off.

He knew that his own strength was somewhat insufficient to venture into the Boundless Prison just yet. If House Yan couldn't pull it off in the end, though, he would have to head in himself.

"I hope House Yan won't disappoint me too much." Jiang Chen wanted to forgive House Yan. That was why he'd given it the chance to redeem itself. If the house couldn't grasp that chance, though, there was nothing he could do.

Yan Zhenhuai's visit had dampened his cheery mood.

The three boxes of goods had involved a reasonable amount of effort. Jiang Chen toyed with their contents for a few moments, then smiled faintly. "Take whatever you want, Brother Dragon. Don't be too modest."

The dragon snickered. "Oh, I won't."

The Vermilion Bird lacked interest in items of this caliber. "Young master Chen," it asked, "the Taiyi Skymender Pill exists for ascension from great emperor to empyrean. Is there something for empyrean to divine?"

Jiang Chen glanced toward the bird. "What're you trying to ask, Old Brother Vermilion?"

"Haha, I just wanted to know whether something like that exists."

"It does," the young man nodded readily. "However, I don't think Divine Abyss has the requisite materials."

"What materials? Tell me. I might've heard of them." The Vermilion Bird's eyes lit up.

"Old Brother Vermilion, you don't need pills to help you break through to divine realm. Trust me, don't overthink things. You've been stuck on your breakthrough for awhile now. The act of doing so has become an inner demon. If you keep on going like this, it will only be harmful to your cultivation," Jiang Chen gently reminded.

He had felt the sacred fowl's clear restlessness as of late. Perhaps godhood was too great of an attraction, a fixation for countless millennia. Now that the bird had the chance to get there, it thought about it every waking moment. As time went on, an inner demon began to form.

This was not a good sign.

The Vermilion Bird's expression froze in thought.

"Young master Chen, do you really think I can break through to divine realm with no problem?" it asked once more out of concern.

"If you let your inner demon get the best of you, you can forget about achieving divinity for the rest of your life. A shadow of it is already beginning to appear. You must control yourself and destroy it, lest it trouble you in the future," Jiang Chen warned.

The Vermilion Bird had indeed changed somewhat over the past few days. It had become a little harder to understand. Jiang Chen hadn't paid it much mind at first, but the bird seemed to be developing an inner demon.

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Chapter 1832: Extraordinary Gains

The Vermilion Bird would've scoffed at another human youth, but Jiang Chen's words rang in its ears. The bird couldn't help but take them seriously.

"I agree with young master Chen, Old Brother Vermilion," Long Xiaoxuan observed from the side. "I also think your behavior's been a bit abnormal lately."

The divine spirit creature broke out in a cold sweat. "I have been too hasty, then," it nodded.

Jiang Chen chuckled, then snapped a finger. "Don't let that get you down, friend. We have a vault to raid. Come on, let's see what goodies there are for us to take."

The Eternal Sacred Land's vaults were incredibly well stocked. Their splendor was almost dizzying to the eye.

Having seen spirit herb vaults ten times richer in his previous life, Jiang Chen was the calmest of the trio. Conversely, Long Xiaoxuan was the most excited. The dragon's eyes lit up. "Young master Chen, can we really take anything here?"

Dragons were naturally inclined to hoard treasure. It was an instinct down to their bones. Long Xiaoxuan was no different: his blood told him to take everything he saw.

"Brother Long, I know you're a true dragon, but you can't just indiscriminately grab everything."

The Vermilion Bird laughed. "You dragons really do get fixated on treasure, huh!"

Long Xiaoxuan snorted softly, but didn't answer. The bright glint in his eyes signified his significant interest in the cache before him.

Jiang Chen was much pickier than that. Though he was in the best vault in Eternal Divine Nation, not everything was enough to catch his eye. Some was worthy enough to be in his collection, but he didn't move to take them. His one rule was to be not greedy; he would grab only what he needed the most.

Things of only ordinary usefulness were ignored.

A stroll through the vault found Long Xiaoxuan burdened with a plethora of miscellaneous valuables. The Vermilion Bird took advantage as well, but Jiang Chen hadn't taken a single thing just yet. None of the items he'd seen were particularly necessary.

However, when he came to another area, a pile of a certain substance piqued his interest. It was a kind of sand.

Jiang Chen knew of it from his previous life: Moon Lake Silversand, and a premium material for etching formations. It unconditionally increased the strength of any formation it was used in by thirty percent. If the formation in question was perfectly drawn and infused, it would be amplified by as much as a hundred percent.

Moon Lake Silversand was a wonderful substance, something he had dreamed of getting his hands on.

The True Spirit Post that Jiang Chen had acquired from the Primosanct Sect had lain unused all this time. The brush was one of the best tools in the world for drawing up formations.

Combined, the True Spirit Post and the Moon Lake Silversand could improve the power of the most ordinary of formations by a minimum of eighty percent. Used effectively, they could multiply a formation's strength several times over.

Jiang Chen was a bit surprised at the sheer volume of the sand in the vault. The glistening grains piled up into small hills. He unceremoniously filled several flasks with the thing. When it came to real treasures, there was no such thing as too much of them.

However, the young man was far from insatiable. He took less than a hundredth of the hills of silvery sand. The Moon Lake Silversand itself made his entire trip worthwhile.

Jiang Chen didn't leave just yet, though. The venerated forefather had personally promised him free access to anything in the vault. Technically, he could take as much as he wished.

Though he wasn't haphazard about his acquisitions, he'd only been through half the vault.

Jiang Chen picked several more items up in the latter half of the vault, most of them cultivation related. He also pulled a set of talismans which were rather practical for combat usage. Everything else, he left untouched.

Under several pointed suggestions from his human friend, Long Xiaoxuan finally managed to repress his desire to thoroughly plunder the vault. He returned with a vast pile of treasure, but most were cultivation related and non-unique. The Eternal Sacred Land wouldn't see much of a real loss.

The Vermilion Bird's standards were much higher. Even the stores of the Eternal Sacred Land were largely uninteresting to it. The items it took away were extremely limited by their excellence.

All in all, each raider was pleased with his hefty haul.

Not long after Jiang Chen and company left, the venerated forefather came to visit the vault. The guard there reported the details of the youth's visit to him.

The venerated forefather smiled. "I thought that kid would ransack the place, but he has much more restraint than I expected. A young man who is both courteous and adroit, I see. Interesting young people like him are becoming harder and harder to find."

"Forefather, Sir Jiang Chen didn't take much, but he brought two companions with him. One of them took quite a few spirit herbs for cultivation."

The forefather smiled faintly. "If you knew who they were, perhaps you wouldn't mention that. Anyway, the things they took won't hurt us."

The forefather had much more vision than his underlings. He knew that Jiang Chen had with him a vermilion bird and a true dragon.

A combination like that was impossible to find anywhere, even if one searched high and low. The Eternal Sacred Land was fortunate to be graced with their presences.

Were they supposed to be faulted with taking too much in light of that? Rather, the forefather hoped they would take even more.

The more the sacred beasts received, the more they would remember the favor owed. The help they offered in the future would far outweigh what they had taken.

Even if the true dragon and the vermilion bird weren't grateful to the Eternal Sacred Land, they would be grateful to Jiang Chen. Would they refuse a request for help from the youth?

It was a worthwhile investment in the end.

The venerated forefather was all the more impressed with the young man.

After returning to his residence, he decided to make for Martial Divine Nation after only a brief respite. The trip was necessary; he'd given his promise.

He didn't expect the venerated forefather to make such a visit so soon, though.

"Jiang Chen, it seems you're planning to leave soon?"

"Tomorrow, I think," Jiang Chen answered briskly.

"Alright. I haven't forgotten my part of the bargain. Here are a few talismans that may be useful in saving your life. These are offensive and defensive talismans, as well as escape glyphs. The offensive talismans will allow you to use attacks that are seventy to eighty percent of my strength for a short time, and the defensive ones will help you deal with many unforeseen circumstances."

The venerated forefather was banking a lot on this venture.

Jiang Chen accepted every gift that was given. What the forefather saw worthy to give was undoubtedly valuable. He didn't want to waste the goodwill.

"Jiang Chen, I haven't had such high hopes for a young man in a very long time. I look forward to hearing the reports of your success," the venerated forefather encouraged.

"Venerated forefather, I can only promise to give it my all. If the task seems impossible, I won't place myself into extreme danger. After all, I owe my allegiance to the Eternal Sacred Land. It would be irresponsible for me to put my life on the line for the Martial one."

The venerated forefather waved a hand. "I've never cared for empty words of courtesy. I want to mention only one thing. If your trip succeeds, you will have won the goodwill of the Martial Sacred Land. That sacred land is known for its great generosity."

"I see. I'll take that to heart," Jiang Chen smiled.

He rested in his own residence that night. The second morning, he sought out his disciple, Hua Ming. The boy had been established in the capital, and Jiang Chen had always had precious little time to teach him.

Thankfully, Hua Ming was talented enough to understand the essence of Jiang Chen's tutelage with only a little guiding. He was a natural for cultivation, and had improved at incredible speed.

“Hua Ming, the entire divine nation knows who I am now. There’s no need to hide our relationship anymore. I am now a disciple of the sacred land, with a personal residence there. I’d like to take you in as well. You can cultivate inside my residence to break through that much quicker.”

Hua Ming was bizarrely ecstatic. He rarely saw his master, and knew even less about his master’s identity. However, he had witnessed Jiang Chen’s incredible performance in the rebellion. He was proud that he had such a great master from the bottom of his heart – the greatest, in fact!

Because of this, he was very anxious of this all turning out to be a dream.

Only when Jiang Chen brought him back to his own residence did Hua Ming feel relieved once more. His master was as pleased with his behavior as ever.

“Where are you going now, master?”

“My destination is a secret, don’t ask. If someone comes to look for trouble or pick a fight, go find Elder Ziju... or the three primes themselves, if you prefer. Our residence will not suffer the misbehavior of another!”

“Yes, master!” Hua Ming’s eyes brightened. The uncertainty in his heart mostly faded away.

After settling Hua Ming in, Jiang Chen departed the Eternal Sacred Land quietly. His destination: Martial Divine Nation.

There was an ongoing rebellion there as well. The nation was still being ravaged by the fires of war. It had faced the worst of the ten sacred lands’ respective rebellions.

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Chapter 1833: A Base of Spirit Herbs

Taking Starfate, it took roughly three days for Jiang Chen to arrive at Martial Divine Nation. According to the venerated forefather, Martial Divine Nation was on friendly terms with Eternal Divine Nation. The two sacred lands often held exchanges or even arranged marriages with each other.

Martial Divine Nation respected Eternal Divine Nation like an older brother. That was why the forefather had suggested Jiang Chen pick it as his destination.

The political order in Martial Divine Nation was similar to that of Eternal Divine Nation. The sacred land held the reigns of power, and there were many subordinate sects and aristocratic families.

There was a divine realm forefather in the Martial Sacred Land, but the same went for the rebellion. The two forefathers were neck and neck, and their duel was gridlocked.

However, things were different on the lower levels. The rebellion army was quite formidable and dominated the sacred land, putting them in a more difficult place than the Eternal Sacred Land had been in.

Jiang Chen didn’t announce his arrival upon entering a completely foreign land. Tens of thousands of miles from Martial territory, he and his companions alighted from the airboat and flew on their own.

The forefather had said his first mission was to aid the sacred land's spirit herb mountain, their secret base for cultivating spirit herbs.

They'd excavated a spirit vein, which enabled them to cultivate a great variety of herbs and make the mountain a general garden. Its development was the sacred land's greatest achievement over the past few decades and crucial to the sacred land. Its loss would be a serious blow to them.

For the time being, the rebels hadn't seem to have discovered the base yet and therefore hadn't sent their most powerful force to it. But information had somehow been leaked. No one knew if that was because the rebels were adept at gathering intel, or if there was a mole inside the sacred land.

Whatever the truth was, the spirit herb base was close to being exposed. Fortunately, the sacred land had set up a great number of disorienting, trapping, and defensive formations around the base. When activated, they were enough to keep the place safe.

Jiang Chen's first mission was to help the base overcome its current challenges. It was even better if he could destroy the rebel army that aimed to take the mountain.

The base was led by the only female prime of the sacred land - Prime Purplestar, a prominent cultivator in the Ten Divine Nations. Other than the divine forefather, she was one of the most important leading figures of the sacred land.

"What do you plan to do, young master Chen?" asked the Vermilion Bird.

Jiang Chen thought for a moment. "This is Martial Divine Nation. We can't do much of what we did in Eternal Divine Nation."

"Naturally. I'll follow your lead." The Vermilion Bird had spent some time thinking on their way here, which gave it a newfound respect for Jiang Chen. Over the past couple of days, it'd suppressed its inner demons and all intrusive thoughts, which calmed its mind and slowly eliminated its obsession.

With the knot in its heart resolved, the bird recovered its noble spirit as well. Moreover, the recent series of battles and breakthroughs had pushed its strength further. It'd made great progress since its fight with the Xiahou forefather.

"First, we need a map of the area. Then we can figure out how much defense the base has relative to the rebels. Only then do we formulate strategies and come up with a battle plan. Again, patience is a virtue. We either vanquish the enemies in one attempt, or we stay put, waiting for the opportunity to present itself."

He didn't have a concrete plan yet, but he had a general idea of what he'd do. In a fight at such a level and scale, a swift, fatal strike was the only solution. Prolonging the battle would only make things worse since the rebels greatly outnumbered the sacred land.

The sacred land couldn't afford the toll that would take, while the rebels simply numbered too many. They could keep replenishing their forces, making it seem as if the rebels had an unlimited number of supporters. If they all came to the same conclusion, they'd become much more strong-willed and hit harder.

A soldier's will and power was often determined by the impetus driving their side.

That was what happened at the beginning of the uprising in Eternal Divine Nation. The rebels had been in high spirits and managed to keep the sacred land pinned down, making it a difficult fight.

In the final assault, the alliance had fallen apart and never recovered their original momentum. The Vermilion Bird's attack was the last straw that broke them. Their failure could be partly attributed to their infighting, but also to the general trend of the war.

Therefore, Jiang Chen didn't think it'd be worthwhile to just kill a few enemies or launch a few ambushes. Instead, the sacred land had to make a move that would determine the direction of the war, or even straight-up turn things around.

Such opportunities didn't come by often, but he believed that was the right path to pursue.

Skirmishes raged near the spirit herbs base, taking him back to the days of war ravaging the Eternal Sacred Land. The fight in the Martial Sacred Land was much more intense by comparison.

The uprising against the Eternal Sacred Land had been kept a secret in the beginning. Thus, the rebels had been the only force surrounding the sacred land. The war in Martial Divine Nation was much more devastating and covered a significantly larger area.

Scouting wouldn't pose much of a challenge to Jiang Chen since he had the Goldbiter Rats. Nonetheless, in order to keep them safe, he didn't send a big group and deployed a smaller team of the most clever that were adept at gathering information.

The operation was risky, but the higher the risk, the greater the return.

Many intense conflicts had broken out around the base. Since the battlefield hadn't been cleaned up yet, the rats would be able to acquire some loot.

Through observing the rebels on the outskirts, Jiang Chen came to some deductions.

The rebels were gathering their troops, but their elites hadn't found the right way to break into the base. Therefore, attacks hadn't been launched in recent days.

The rebellion was led by a demigod forefather, under whom were a group of ninth level empyrean figureheads from major sects and aristocratic families.

The importance they placed on the base after its exposure was evident. They clearly had decided to conquer and gain control of the spirit herb base. They would then be essentially holding the sacred land's lifeline in their grip, severely undermining the sacred land's war effort.

"Young master Chen, the sacred land's defense army is less than one fifth of the rebels," reported the Goldbiter Kingrat. "They wouldn't have been able to defend the base if not for the terrain and their formations and restrictions. My estimation is a conservative one. The ratio of their number may even be as high as one to six."

The rat didn't give an accurate figure, but he was confident in his estimate.

Jiang Chen frowned. "Which means it's only a matter of time before the rebels break in."

“That’s right,” the Goldbiter King agreed without hesitation. “The sacred land is even secretly planning on destroying the base if they fail to deter the rebels. They’d rather do that than to let the spirit herbs fall into rebel hands.”

“They have backbone,” Jiang Chen praised. “How about the rebels? Any recent movement?”

“They’ve been studying and trying to break the formations outside the base. Once they succeed, they’ll be able to enter without much resistance. Without the formations, the sacred land can only rely on the terrain, but that won’t be of much help. After all, this is a battle between cultivators, not mortals.”

In the mortal world, terrain gave army a significant advantage. In a fight between cultivators who could soar into the sky and go underground though, it was all too easy to destroy such advantages.

In other words, the only thing keeping the base safe was the formations outside, which were also the sacred land’s strong suit.

“Brother Chen, there’s a simple enough solution,” said Long Xiaoxuan. “The three of us can just charge into the rebellion army and kill the demigod forefather. Then the enemies will fall apart. Why make things so complicated?”

The Vermilion Bird shook its head. “Xiaolong, there will always be someone better than you somewhere. Your solution may work once, but it can end up making things worse in the long term.”

Without the obsession plaguing its mind, the bird was much more clear-headed than it’d been. Once it had a good grasp of the situation, it recognized that they’d be vulnerable to ambushes if they launched a frontal attack.

The rebels had a demigod and a group of peak ninth level empyrean experts after all. If they formed a battle formation and lured the bird in, it was possible for them to trap the bird, or even kill it.

Hubris would be a cultivator’s downfall. There were plenty of such examples in the martial dao world.

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Chapter 1834: Jiang Chen’s Plan

Long Xiaoxuan was a bit upset to hear his idea struck down. His strength had increased again recently and he thirsted for battle. The heat of battle was the perfect environment for him to take in nutrition and insight to stimulate new breakthroughs.

Though Long Xiaoxuan was only sixth level empyrean realm, he could hold his own against even ninth level cultivators. The higher level a true dragon was, the more of an advantage in battle he gained over other experts.

The gradual awakening of his heritage only sped up that process. His understanding of martial dao deepened more and more. This was accompanied by an evolution of his physical body.

Since entering empyrean realm, Long Xiaoxuan could clearly feel the elements within his flesh changing with time. There was a new discovery almost every day; he wanted to tangibly test the exact amount of his advancement.

Jiang Chen noticed Long Xiaoxuan's expression. "Brother Long." He smiled suddenly. "I've come up with a different idea for your keenness to fight."

"What is it? Hurry up and tell me. I don't want to be held up." Long Xiaoxuan was beyond curious.

"It involves you as bait. Because of that, it's pretty dangerous."

"What danger would I be scared of? True dragons like me aren't easy to handle. You might think of something risky, but it'll hardly threaten me." The dragon sounded very proud.

"Old Brother Vermilion, I need your help for the plan, too. It's pointless otherwise," Jiang Chen flattered the sacred bird.

"Young master Chen, please lay out whatever new plan you have. I'm here to work with you as best I can." The Vermilion Bird was easy to talk to.

"It's like this..." Jiang Chen detailed. "The matter of the Eternal Sacred Land should be public knowledge now. You and I are no longer secret weapons, but only a few sacred land executives know about Brother Long. Just think—if a true dragon appears in the vicinity, would the rebel leaders be lured by the sighting?"

Long understood immediately. He was to be bait.

"True dragons are definitely the most desirable of the four sacred beasts," the Vermilion Bird affirmed. "I think it'll work."

The sacred bird wasn't unduly putting itself down. The sacred beasts' bloodlines were unique to each other. However, the true dragon one was definitely the most potent and therefore attractive.

"Tell me what you'd like me to do, young master Chen. I'm in." The Vermilion Bird's interest was piqued as well; it wanted to fight as much as the dragon.

Improvement through battle was the most distinct kind. The Vermilion Bird was a sliver of progress from breaking through to divine realm. A thread of inspiration would be enough to trigger an eruption.

It awaited only natural progression from one realm to the other. How exactly it could trigger that was the bird's foremost concern right now. Looking for the inspiration in battle was probably the most practical idea.

Jiang Chen became more animated upon joint support from the Vermilion Bird and Long Xiaoxuan. Man and the beasts engaged in heated conference.

In about an hour, an arrangement that all three parties were pleased with was formed.

"Let's make it tomorrow. Whether it works or not is up to your acting, Brother Long," Jiang Chen laughed.

That night, they set the trap. Jiang Chen's job was to lay down the foundations and formations.

The plan was hardly the most clever, and generally wouldn't work in normal situations.

However, the hearts of men were restless at the moment. That made it more likely the plan would succeed. As long as the rebel leaders were ensnared by the trap, Jiang Chen was sure he would strike them down in a single blow.

Once the leaders were gone, the rebels would collapse under the weight of their lost commanders. He and the two beasts would be able to slaughter almost everything they saw.

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The rays of morning sunlight scattered into the quiet, secluded valley, brightening it ever so slightly. However, the normally peaceful locale was disturbed by a strong aura of murder.

The rebel army's troops had gathered together to completely surround this place in a siege.

A demigod forefather was the highest on the rebels' chain of command. His name was Goldenbell, an old man who garnered considerable respect.

He ran a tight ship that kept all the different factions in the army under his control. No dissent was permitted. As a result, the army was much better organized than the anti-sacred-land alliance back in Eternal Divine Nation.

Eternal's alliance had been divided even in the best of times. Each faction refused to yield to the instructions of their peers. Though they feigned obeisance on the surface, their hands tended to be contrary and perverse. There had been nonstop conflict since day one.

The core reason was because no leader existed that commanded any modicum of respect or admiration. The man who led the anti-sacred-land alliance had been a self-interested man himself.

He had allowed politics to influence his delegation of tasks. Some factions incurred horrible losses, while others were kept largely unscathed. This kind of injustice meant that there was no basis for solidarity for the rebel alliance from the start.

Martial Divine Nation's rebel army, however, had no such problem—at least on the surface.

Forefather Goldenbell had ample authority over his men. He gathered the leaders of the army's various factions to discuss strategy and sound off ideas every day.

On the surface, the delegation of tasks was also candid and impartial. In a rebel army composed of so many factions, that was an amazing accomplishment.

This morning, the forefather was calling together the factions' leaders as usual for the debriefing before the battle.

There were seven factions among the rebel army that had come to the Martial Sacred Land's spirit herb base. Each was led by an important giant.

These giants were at minimum vice sect heads, venerated elders, or second-in-command of the houses. All in all, a remarkably high-profile lineup.

Forefather Goldenbell's eyes glinted with a keen light. "Friends." He swept his gaze across every man. "Our army has stagnated here for more than three days. That's not a long time, and it might not even affect the grand scheme of things, but we must consider a serious problem.

"The fighting spirits of people are cyclical. When we lose the high we currently have, the result may be drastically different. We need to launch an attack within the next three days. We must break through the defensive formation. If we do that, we can do whatever we like!"

"Forefather Goldenbell, the Martial Sacred Land has always been extremely proficient with formations. How powerful is the formation around its spirit herb base, really? Can't we launch a frontal assault and smash it open using brute force?"

"Quite so. From what I see, there's barely any forces here from the sacred land. Their so-called formations and restrictions are an empty threat."

"Forefather, why don't we organize an attack to test the setup here?"

Forefather Goldenbell was silent. He had thought of that before himself, but was concerned about the hit to morale if it failed.

That wasn't the biggest worry, though. If casualties were high, the participating factions would indubitably have second thoughts. The rebel army had never been a unified whole in the first place. It was quite possible it would crumble.

The forefather's extended silence made some anxious. "Forefather, we can't keep stalling like this. I don't trust those formation masters. How much will they be able to understand about the Martial Sacred Land's formation? If they had that ability, they would be inside already."

"Yes. It will take them years to figure out anything."

Forefather Goldenbell pushed down both hands when he saw the intense desire of those gathered to fight.

"I understand your feelings, my friends. Still, I must consider a great deal more as the commander. Any potential risks must be eliminated."

"Ah right, has the scouting out there revealed any changes?" the forefather asked suddenly.

"Not much," several of the leaders responsible for reconnaissance responded. "There's very little going on out there. The sacred land's own headquarters are being threatened right now. How could it have any reinforcements?"

Forefather Goldenbell shook his head coolly. "You will feel the pain of having thought that way sooner or later. The Martial Sacred Land doesn't have any of its own men available, but classified sources tell me that it has sent out a request for help to the other sacred lands."

"What? To the other sacred lands?"

"I thought the rebellions were started simultaneously in all ten divine nations? The other sacred lands should be busy themselves, shouldn't they?"

“No, no, no. Three of the divine nations’ rebellions were quashed before they began. Two or three more have been quelled by now. Only a few of us are left in a slightly favorable position over our sacred lands. Martial Divine Nation is one such case. I should emphasize that we only have a slight edge.”

The simultaneous initiation of ten rebellions at once had been a calamitous event. The relative calm now belied how shortly in the past that momentous occurrence had been.

Some sacred lands had been dominant enough to nip their problems in the bud. Others had applied fortune and resource alike to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

“Forefather, even if some of the divine nations have put down their rebellions, civil strife like that does significant harm. They should be worrying about self-preservation rather than minding other people’s business.”

“Exactly. The ten sacred lands have all been injured to varying degrees. Why would they come to the support of an ally when their own house is on fire? Plus, the Martial Sacred Land doesn’t necessarily have strong allies in the first place.”

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

Chapter 1835: Forefather Goldenbell’s Selfish Motives

The rebel leaders seemed to absolutely hate the Martial Sacred Land. There was no hint of fear or respect in their words. Forefather Goldenbell was all the more exasperated for it, however.

His sources had informed him over the past few days that the Martial Sacred Land had already sent out various requests for help.

Though the ten divine nations’ sacred lands openly competed with each other in various ways, they were also intimately interconnected in some ways. The Martial Sacred Land, for example, was on very good terms with several other sacred lands: one of them the Eternal Sacred Land.

“If this is how all of you think,” the forefather intoned in a low voice, “you’ll be in for a big surprise.”

“Come on, Forefather. I think we shouldn’t worry so much about such unlikely events. Our army is obviously at an advantage, and the spirit herb fields will be ours before long. I don’t believe a few formations will be enough to stop our iron march!”

“There haven’t been any factions blind enough to oppose us from the outside, have there, Forefather?”

Forefather Goldenbell sighed. “Do you know that the Martial and Eternal Sacred Lands have an vow of brotherhood? If one is attacked, the other is obligated to help.”

“A vow of brotherhood? Is something like that even reliable? It’s been quite a while since we rebelled. I don’t see any help from Eternal.”

“That’s because they had to fight their own rebels. The rebellions started at almost the same time. How could anyone have come from there? It had its own trouble to contend with.”

“And what about now? The Eternal Sacred Land seems to have resolved its little situation, though everyone says it was lucky to do so. I don’t believe that it would dare meddle in Martial Divine Nation’s affairs after suffering such a serious injury.”

“You’re right. Eternal won’t be able to interfere. They can’t even fully mind their own business.”

“Here’s something you don’t know. The quelling of the rebellion in Eternal Divine Nation didn’t involve a significant loss in the sacred land’s main force. Moreover, the sacred land commands much more authority than before as a result.”

“So what? The fact stands that they need to get their own house in order. Are they brave enough to intrude on us?”

“I doubt the Eternal Sacred Land thinks the same. If its venerated forefather comes in person, he can dictate the tide of battle.”

“Exactly. That’s why we need to finish this quickly. We can’t waste our strength here for no reason.” Everyone was itching for a fight.

Forefather Goldenbell grew pensive. His ears suddenly twitched; he turned his eye towards the distant part of the valley. Terrifying energy signatures emanated from there. Everyone could sense the drastic change.

“What’s happening?” It was a common observation now that ripples of natural energy had reached the earth underfoot. The assembled rebels could feel the trembling of the ground. Everyone looked in that direction together.

Ripple after fluid ripple disturbed the integrity of space, breathtaking in their spurring grandeur.

In the next moment, the surrounding wildlife fled as one. Birds, beasts, and all manner of other living things departed the area with panicked rapidity.

“What’s this now?” Everyone was very confused.

Forefather Goldenbell was the only one who stayed calm. “Stay where you are, don’t be alarmed. There must be a powerful spirit beast who’s either wandered nearby or recently awakened. There’s no cause for concern.”

His consciousness was stronger than everyone else’s, which allowed him to pick up just a little more information than the rest.

Amid the chaos, a shape rose out of the ripples and soared into the sky like a crowning halo.

A dragon in flight!

No one could believe their eyes. There was a wave of confused blinking and squinting. All attention was on the airborne creature. It had twin horns, limbs, talons, and scales...

These characteristics matched up exactly to the dragons of legend.

Forefather Goldenbell’s breathing grew ragged. The appearance of a true dragon here was beyond his wildest dreams.

“This... is this a true dragon from the myths?” someone asked weakly.

“Definitely! Look, it has five talons on each of its four limbs. Only the purest of dragons, the true dragons, sport that unique identifier.”

“Yes. The scales are pure as well. This is no cross-breed!”

Everyone knew how miraculous dragon blood was. A single drop could transform a cultivator’s fate.

As long as a cultivator could assimilate a drop of dragon blood, he would be destined for eventual greatness. His fighting prowess and potential would both be improved beyond his natural peers’ capabilities.

True dragon blood was extremely rare.

Everyone’s breathing shortened. Their minds wandered through a variety of possibilities. Even Forefather Goldenbell couldn’t control his unbridled joy.

He was observing the true dragon in question. It was clear that the dragon was of some ability; sixth or seventh level empyrean, to be exact. As a demigod himself, he could definitely tame such a creature.

The thought of taming a dragon and receiving its allegiance was a thought that couldn’t be repressed. A rebellion and authority were much less worthwhile compared to getting his hands on a true dragon for the long term!

True dragon blood could very well propel him into divine realm straightaway, and would enhance his potential by leaps and bounds besides. If he could control this true dragon, he could even become the strongest cultivator in all Myriad Abyss.

What authority or position would be closed off to him then? What would the Martial Sacred Land mean in comparison?

He didn’t stand to gain very much even if the sacred land were entirely crushed. After all, there was a divine forefather above him. Regardless of his own contributions, he would be forever second place. The opportunity before him was one that he could very well never see again in this lifetime.

Forefather Goldenbell waved a hand. “Don’t go anywhere,” he commanded, “Make sure to stop the people inside from trying to break through the encirclement. I’ll go take a closer look!”

He didn’t want to be accompanied by the others. His own abilities were more than sufficient for taming a sixth or seventh level empyrean true dragon. The additional people might’ve been able to help, but they would also make things more complicated, without question.

Most importantly, they would potentially want something for themselves out of the deal.

The various factions’ leaders traded strange looks with each other as they watched the forefather disappear into the distance as a golden streak. What was going on here?

Before the true dragon had appeared, Forefather Goldenbell had instructed everyone to stay put and not overreact. Why had the forefather now ditched the rest of them and gone to investigate all on his own?

They were no fools. The old man’s motives were sure to be selfish!

No one wanted to point that out outright, however.

There was a moment of awkwardness before someone couldn't resist breaking the silence. "This is unfair," he muttered. "Forefather Goldenbell is the commander. He should've stayed put here, but he's gone off on his own. What if there's an emergency? Who'll be responsible?"

"You're right. We shouldn't be without our leader for long."

"Forefather Goldenbell wants to go provoke that true dragon, eh? If he can't take it down shortly, he might just cause a lot of trouble for us in the future. I think we should go and help him."

"Yes, yes, we should help. The quicker it's dealt with, the better! Plus, we witnessed it too. We deserve a share! We won't get a share if we don't follow the forefather."

"Come on, let's go take a look."

"Hold on, if we go over there, what are we going to do about things here? What if..."

"The army is stationed here. We're only leaving for a short while. Nothing bad will happen. If you want to stay behind though, we don't mind."

"Absurd! I don't want to stay. I need a share of the spoils, too. If we're going, we're all going together!"

"Well, let's go then. Let's make this clear: one person from each faction should go, and the rest will stay behind to hold down the fort. Every faction has more than one leader here anyway. We'll decide who goes according to relative importance."

"It's decided, then!"

These people lusted after the true dragon bloodline with great keenness. Everyone knew a true dragon was a treasure, and no one wanted it to be an exclusive one.

They couldn't take on Forefather Goldenbell one on one, but six or seven ninth level empyrean experts added together would give them a good fighting chance, even if the forefather turned on them.

After all, Goldenbell was only a demigod, not a full-fledged one!

A demigod could take on three or four ninth level empyrean experts no problem, but six or seven required much more wariness and caution.

Forefather Goldenbell hadn't expected the others to be just as selfish as he. Moments after his departure, the others caught up. He was furious when he noticed the unwanted, surreptitious sidekicks at his back.

"What are you all doing here? Are you shirking your duties?" he reprimanded sullenly.

One of them chuckled. "We just wanted to see if we could help."

"I don't need your help. I can deal with it myself. Go back quickly!" the forefather bristled with anger.

"Heheh, Forefather, there's strength in numbers."

“Exactly. Forefather, did you take an interest in the true dragon? We’re not as strong as you, but we can help block its path, can’t we?”

“Shouldn’t we be entitled to a finder’s portion as well, Forefather?”

Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

Chapter 1836: Prey Approaches

“How dare you!” Forefather Goldenbell raged, glaring hotly and aiming his demigod aura at the cultivators coming his way.

He was no pushover. He wouldn’t allow anyone to lay a finger on or get a share of what he’d set his eyes on. The dragon was his, and his alone!

The others had come to an understanding beforehand. It infuriated them that the forefather would threaten them with his aura. They shouldered the force between themselves without missing a beat and quietly persevered.

The forefather was caught off guard. He’d thought they’d lose their composure and scatter once he struck, getting some of them to flee and leaving the others behind, but they’d already formed a united front, aiming to challenge his authority!

The forefather levelled them with a cool stare. “What is this? Are you openly defying me?”

“Don’t say that, forefather. We followed you out of goodwill. We’re in the same boat and should work together.”

“That’s right. If we get selfish, we’ll repeat the mistakes of the rebels in Eternal Divine Nation. We have to be a team. You said so yourself.”

The forefather fumed. He really had just said that. He couldn’t come up with a counter-argument when they used his own words against him.

He managed to keep a level head despite his fury. They’d come prepared with an understanding and were determined to stick their fingers in the pie.

Forefather Goldenbell wasn’t a reckless man. After some deliberation, he concluded that it’d be too difficult for him to deal with them on his own. What was more, as soon as a fight broke out, his plans would be rendered obsolete.

He’d cooled down after a moment. Brute force wasn’t the answer here. He had to be smart about things.

“How wonderful of you all to offer your help,” he said with a faint smile. “Let us have an open conversation. We must capture the dragon alive. If you help me subdue it, you will be rewarded in the future.”

“Future reward is a little too nebulous, forefather. I think it’ll be better for us to kill it and split the gain immediately.”

“Bullshit!” snapped the forefather, infuriated. “Don’t you know a living true dragon is more than ten times the value of a dead one?!”

“Haha, then how are we going to split the gains, Forefather?”

“That’s right. It isn’t right for you to have a living dragon while we get nothing.” They were becoming increasingly forward.

The forefather scoffed. “Then what do you suggest?”

“We’ll defer to you, Forefather. We’ll accept any reasonable arrangement.”

“Reasonable?” The forefather huffed and paused for a thoughtful moment. “How about I promise each of you three drops of the dragon’s blood? I’ll give it to you in batches. In addition, we’ll negotiate an additional deal on stones and spirit herbs. The total value will be no less than a billion stones. What do you say?”

That was a generous offer; a billion stones was a considerable sum. However, it wasn’t that appealing to figureheads from major sects and families like them.

Noting their disinterest, the forefather growled, “Don’t get too greedy. I can deal with the dragon without you.”

“Haha, your offer is generous, I guess, but it’s not enough compared to a true dragon’s bloodline.”

“Then what do you want?” The forefather could barely contain his rage.

“If we help you capture the dragon and you ascend to godhood, you owe us three favors. You have to help whether we or our descendents seek you out.”

“Three favors for each of you?” the forefather asked incredulously.

“Yes.”

“There are seven of you. That makes it twenty-one favors. Am I to be your slave in the future?”

“That’s nothing compared to the true dragon, right?”

“What if you make some unreasonable requests?” asked the forefather in a cool voice. “Am I to fulfill them as well? That’s not how the world works.”

“Don’t worry. Our requests won’t hurt your interests or violate fundamental morality.”

The forefather thought pensively, weighing his options.

These bastards are clearly trying to take advantage. I can’t possibly let them! I might as well agree first. I’ll deal with them one by one later.

With his mind made up, the forefather accepted with feign reluctance, “Alright, I agree to your conditions. However, you better not play tricks on me. No unreasonable requests are allowed or I’ll turn you away!”

“Don’t worry, we won’t cross a line,” they promised.

“But you have to swear an oath, forefather. How can we trust you to honor the deal otherwise?”

The forefather gritted his teeth. They sure were being careful.

“Fine, I’ll do as you say. But if anyone has any ideas otherwise, don’t blame me for turning on you!” He went on to make an oath. “If the seven of you help me tame the dragon, I promise to give you three drops of dragon blood, three favors, and a billion worth of fortunes. If I go back on my word, may heaven smite me with destruction!”

The oath had serious consequences, but he’d left some wiggle room. You have to be alive to enjoy what I give you. If you die, it doesn’t count as me breaking my oath.

However, the forefather had underestimated the figureheads’ intelligence.

After he made the oath, someone cackled and piped up, “There’s something missing still. We’ve offended you today. What if you get us back in the future? All seven of us together are able to shoulder your ire, but divided, it’ll be easy for you to kill us.”

“Right, right, right. We don’t want to end up dead without getting what we’re promised.”

“Forefather, please swear another oath that you won’t get back at us or instigate or hire other experts to come after us.”

There were seven of them. Not even the smallest detail escaped their attention.

The forefather wanted nothing but to turn on them right then and there. He didn’t expect them to be so thorough, leaving him with no room to get out of the deal. However, there was nothing he could do now. If he wanted the true dragon, he had to make compromises.

He nodded. “I, Forefather Goldenbell, hereby swear to...”

They listened carefully to every word out of the forefather’s mouth. Only after they made sure nothing was amiss did they nod contently.

“Brothers, let’s work together to help the forefather tame this dragon and enjoy the benefits together.”

“Agreed. The forefather has been open and honest with us. We mustn’t disappoint him.”

“Come on. Let’s go.”

The forefather was furious, but he didn’t lose his calm. Once he weighed the pros and cons, he concluded that it was still a worthwhile deal despite the trickery. As long as he acquired the dragon, the promised rewards would be trivial in comparison.

He waved a hand. “I’ve accepted your requests. We’re now truly on the same boat and should work as a team. Listen to my orders and split up to attack from different directions. You must trap it so that I can subdue it.”

It’d be helpful to have these seven men obstruct the dragon’s escape route. He wouldn’t have to worry about it rampaging wildly then.

If he was alone and the dragon determined to run away, he wasn't a hundred percent certain that he'd be able to capture it. With seven helpers though, he was confident in his success.

"Take a look at this map. We have to guard the locations where anyone exiting would have to pass through. You each take a spot and form a circle."

"There are five locations and seven of us, forefather."

"That's right. The remaining two can be on standby. Go wherever requires help and be on your guard. You have an important responsibility. You will be the glue that maintains the concerted effort and responds to any unforeseen events."

"Yes, we have to be cautious."

"Don't worry. I won't hesitate to help if a problem arises. As long as you keep watch at these locations, I'll tame the dragon as quickly as I can."

The demigod forefather was at least confident enough to promise that.

After they'd divided their work, the forefather motioned at them to get going. "Alright, go to your posts. Remember not to push yourself or take unnecessary risks. I'm here. You only have to fulfill your duty. Don't do anything else without my order."

The forefather worried that someone might get reckless out of greed and disrupt his plan.

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While the eight men were plotting to seize the dragon, Jiang Chen and the Vermilion Bird exchanged a knowing smile from a short distance. As they expected, these men couldn't resist such a prize.

"Senior Vermilion, in what order should we take out these eight?" The bird was still their main attacker.

"Are you sure the Soulless Powder of Wind and Cloud will come into effect as soon as you activate the formation?"

"The powder may not be able to debilitate cultivators at their level, but they'll be weakened to some degree. However, it'll have no effect on the demigod."

"That's fine. I can trap even the divine forefather from House Xiahou. The demigod is only a third as strong as the divine forefather. With me striking from the dark, I'm seventy to eighty percent sure I'll be able to take him down with one hit!" The bird brimmed with confidence.

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

Chapter 1837: The Vermilion Bird Charges Into the Fray

Long Xiaoxuan was eager to fight, but his job was to bait these men, not engage them.

He was confident in his ability to go against every one of them except the demigod forefather. However, if all of them charged at him together, he'd have no choice but to flee.

Thus, he wasn't going to make a move now.

Dragons weren't the fastest species, but that was relative to the fastest races of the heavenly planes. Compared to humans, dragons held a great advantage.

When Long Xiaoxuan traveled at his peak speed, only Forefather Goldenbell was able to surpass him. The other seven men were having difficulty catching up.

The forefather was surprised by the dragon's reaction. It'd clearly noticed them.

"It's discovered us. After it!" He was a little antsy. They'd alerted their prey before even reaching their spots, which would undoubtedly make capturing the dragon more difficult.

Fortunately, he was fast and could overtake the dragon by a small margin.

He took the lead while his seven companions struggled to keep up. Their plan depended on them catching up with the forefather and getting at least a few hits in. He wouldn't have to honor his oath if they didn't help at all.

Their hearts raced anxiously, worried that they wouldn't get anything in the end.

Long Xiaoxuan had drawn up a detailed plan with Jiang Chen and the Vermilion Bird beforehand. He turned to see that the forefather was indeed on his own. The other seven were lagging far behind.

The time was about right.

He suddenly dove for the ground. Forefather Goldenbell cackled and raised his arms. Suddenly, an enormous golden bell materialized behind him and flew at the dragon with tremendous might and speed. It radiated terrifying power and threatened to burn the air as it fell.

Long Xiaoxuan started. The forefather was indeed extraordinary.

Even he felt his blood boil under the bell's might. If it'd been a little closer, the bell could've trapped him successfully.

The bell was the forefather's most prized treasure. The magical item could devour the air and consume heaven and earth. Its power was terrifying.

The dragon didn't dare get careless. With a flash, he transformed himself into the size of a mustard seed and vanished from thin air.

This concealment method was unique to dragons, but the bell was very powerful. Although he'd turned himself infinitely smaller, it was still able to detect him and chase him doggedly.

The forefather broke into a feral grin, impressed by the dragon's ability. This is indeed a descendent of the true dragons. What an amazing technique of stealth! However, that's not enough for it to lose me. I'll trap and overpower it!

The forefather was eager to capture the dragon before the others caught up. Then the oath would be rendered obsolete.

His rewards were only promised to those who helped. If he captured the dragon on his own, he didn't have to give them a single stone.

“Surrender! No matter how you try to hide, you can’t escape.” The forefather strengthened his consciousness further, tapping into the full tracking power of the bell.

It rang and made a series of ear-piercing notes, threatening to cover the entire area.

Suddenly, something registered on the forefather’s consciousness, a trace of apprehension flashed through his mind. He steadied himself, surveying his surroundings cautiously.

Unexpectedly, the area around him burst into flames, as if the air was filled with oil. An ocean of fire circled around him.

The forefather started, caught off guard by the unnatural phenomenon. How could the air combust on its own?!

“What’s going on?” His hackles raised.

As he anxiously scan for dangers, the air cracked and out came an enormous claw. It slashed at the forefather’s face aggressively.

Its destructive power reached the forefather in the blink of an eye.

“Piss off!” The forefather threw two punches, sending strong torrents of boxing air at the enormous claw.

He’d thought his full might would be able to knock the strange claw awry, but to his shock, the claw wasn’t even delayed for long before it came at him again.

The next hit was even more powerful than the last.

The forefather broke into a cold sweat. He hadn’t expected the bizarre claw to contain such terrifying power!

He threw many more punches trying to deter it, but every attempt ended in disappointment. Despite the great force he put into the punches, he couldn’t knock the claw off its trajectory at all.

To make things worse, another claw split through the air and slashed at him with enough might to destroy heaven and earth.

The slashes from both directions left him with no way to escape. Even he lost his composure in the face of such relentless attacks.

From the blazing sea of fire emerged the Vermilion Bird. It rose from the flames, radiating the might of its bloodline.

The forefather’s heart sank and he sweated so profusely that he drenched his clothes. Could it be a vermilion bird?!

He was experienced enough to readily recognize the burning divine spirit as the mythical vermilion bird.

Among the four divine beasts, he’d seen both a true dragon and vermilion bird today. Naturally he was more than a little shocked.

More importantly, the Vermilion Bird wasn’t an unknown quantity.

He immediately recalled the rumors about Eternal Divine Nation and how their sacred land had emerged victorious. Was this the divine beast that had helped them turn the tide?

Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

Chapter 1838: Destroying Forefather Goldenbell

Forefather Goldenbell instantly felt an indescribable pressure. It transformed into an intense sense of danger, as if he straddling the border between life and death.

An expert's instincts were very sharp. As soon as the forefather saw the Vermilion Bird cut in suddenly, he realized that there might be a trap involved. Rather than attempting to catch the dragon, he tried to retract his enormous golden bell with hand seals to shore up his defenses.

However, Long Xiaoxuan reappeared once more as he tried to do so. This time, the dragon's body was several times bigger. He encircled the golden bell relentlessly, trapping it with his coiling ability.

Forefather Goldenbell's summons were met with dull thuds. Though the bell tried to move in the direction of its master, it did so at a snail's pace. It would be of zero help in defending him.

The Vermilion Bird wouldn't pass up such a golden opportunity. It blasted a firestorm of feathers in Goldenbell's direction, blanketing the space several miles around the human in a meteoric shower.

The bird's feathers burned with a heat that threatened to set the very air afire, and moved with a sharpness that could cut the fabric of space itself.

Without the golden bell, Forefather Goldenbell's defenses were lowered by at least two-thirds. He didn't expect the Vermilion Bird to mobilize such a lightning-fast offense.

He had only barely fended off the bird's talons with his physical defenses before. The feathers were several degrees of magnitude more dangerous.

His rhythm having been interrupted, the forefather began to feel out of his element. In his haste, he tossed several defensive talismans into the air to fend off the vermilion feathers' crazed onslaught.

However, the Vermilion Bird wouldn't give him a chance to come back. Before the talismans could even activate, the bird swept them away with a flap of its wings.

Forefather Goldenbell paled in fear. He finally moved himself to try to evade the attack, but it was already too late. He was swept into the vortex of fiery feathers in the blink of an eye.

The forefather clearly had no intention of giving up. Despite his predicament, he tried his best to avoid certain death. What surprised him was that despite the feathers' density, he could just barely stay alive within the vortex.

Are these vermilion feathers just for show? A hint of joy crept into his heart.

He had been ready to succumb to despair. The blanket bombardment of the feathers made it look like he was a goner for sure. Survival was unexpected! Truly, a stroke of fortune. He felt the barest glimmer of hope.

"I have to live! I want to live!" The desire to survive hardened Forefather Goldenbell's resolve. He continued dodging the razor-sharp feathers within the firestorm. At the same time, he called for his seven companions to assist him.

"You lot, hurry up!" he demanded out angrily.

The cultivators behind him had been speeding up as they approached. When they saw the heart-stopping intervention of the Vermilion Bird though, a natural fear slowed their pace.

The forefather's shout eliminated any excuses they might have had for delaying. What they had encountered far exceeded their imaginations.

If they hesitated out of fear and Forefather Goldenbell died, they would be indirectly held responsible. If they hadn't been nearby, that wouldn't be the case, but they couldn't use such a reason now.

"Friends, that Vermilion Bird is a terrifying fowl. We must fight and retreat as a unit. If we act selfishly, we'll be easily defeated!"

"You're right. Let's help Forefather Goldenbell out of his bind first. Then, we'll have a real chance!"

"What should we do? Shall we attack it together?"

"Are you confident you'll be able to withstand those feathers?"

The seven weren't in consensus. In particular, they were quite wary of the Vermilion Bird's devastating attacks.

"Friends, hear me out," a man in white spoke.

"Do you have an idea?"

"Look, the forefather's golden bell is a powerful defensive treasure. That dragon is coiled around it to prevent it from returning. If we send two people to attack it so the bell can return, the forefather will be in a much better spot. Isn't that a better plan than attacking the Vermilion Bird?"

Evidently, there was serious wariness of facing a powerful divine spirit creature. Thus, this suggestion was met with unanimous approval.

"You're right. It's decided then. That dragon is far weaker than the Vermilion Bird. It seems its strength is not yet perfected. We can take it out with no problems!"

"I mean to say that only two should take on the true dragon. The remaining five can distract the Vermilion Bird and take the pressure off of Forefather Goldenbell."

"Who would like to volunteer for that?"

"I think we should focus our efforts on the dragon. The Vermilion Bird will hesitate to take further action against us once we capture it."

"Hmm, if the true dragon and the Vermilion Bird are in cahoots with each other, that will be a good strategy."

"We should move together. Let's take down that dragon!"

The seven cultivators had decided their plan of action. They avoided confronting the Vermilion Bird head on, transforming into seven streaks of light toward the true dragon instead.

They'd underestimated the bird's capabilities, however.

The maw of the Vermilion Bird opened to unleash a crimson ball of energy. It blasted across the air, scorching a long trail behind it that blocked the seven's path. The sea of flames was a barricade that prevented them from crossing. They were caught between a fire and a hard place.

Forefather Goldenbell was furious. "You lot, what're you standing around for?" he yelled. "Hurry up and attack the Vermilion Bird! Hurry!"

The seven cultivators had wanted to pick on an easier target. But alas, the Vermilion Bird didn't give them that chance. Their way forward was completely cut off. The only option left was to face the bird.

Suddenly, the sacred fowl uttered a piercing cry. The feathers on its wings and tail bristled into full blooms of fire, becoming blindingly radiant before suddenly vanishing into thin air.

Forefather Goldenbell hadn't yet fully recovered when the fabric of reality nearby began to ripple slightly.

The patch of space opened to reveal the wave-riding Vermilion Bird, now in close proximity. In fact, it was so close that the forefather could see the runes and patterns all over the bird's feathers.

Goldenbell felt his wits leave him. He instinctively wanted to flee, but his fate was already sealed. The gigantic fowl picked him up by the torso like an eagle would a small rabbit.

The forefather could no longer move. His body was locked into place, and no amount of struggling would get him free again.

The Vermilion Bird shrieked once more before consuming the forefather in a single gulp.

There was a snap; the bird's beak clamping together.

Blood gushed from the cracks between its teeth. The forefather didn't even have a chance to make a noise before disappearing into the abyss of death.

The Vermilion Bird unfurled its wings in another fluid motion. Another wave of feathers assaulted the group that remained.

The cultivators in question were far weaker than Forefather Goldenbell. They were horrified enough after witnessing the forefather being eaten. The sight of new feathers in the sky prompted them to make a break for it.

Was it really possible for them to get away now, though?

The answer was a decisive no. They were trapped within the sea of flames from before. Countless vermilion feathers rained down from the sky like comets, heralding their demise.

For another moment or so, howls of pain preceded the seven cultivators' consumption.

After Goldenbell's death, his eponymous treasure had lost its light. It now descended to the ground with a muffled honk.

Someone darted out from the side, then shoved the bell into his sleeves.

"This golden bell is pretty remarkable. I'll take it!"

It was none other than Jiang Chen. He had lain in wait to lend a hand at a potentially crucial moment, but his presence had clearly been unnecessary. The ambush had been basically perfect. All the rebel leaders had been slain in one fell swoop, and treasure had literally fallen into his lap!

But Long Xiaoxuan was a bit upset. "Old Brother Vermilion, why didn't you leave one or two for me?"

The Vermilion Bird chuckled. "Sorry, sorry. I couldn't help myself. Don't worry, I'll leave the rest for you. I won't intervene there unless you specifically ask for it, alright?"

The bird was quite friendly to the young dragon. It didn't use its seniority as a cudgel. The four sacred beasts generally didn't differentiate their associations based on age.

Long Xiaoxuan nodded without much fuss. "Young master Chen," he glanced over to the young man, "the leaders are dead. We can rampage through the rest of the rebels now, right?"

Indeed, the Martial Divine Nation rebels around here were now leaderless. It was time for a slaughter!

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

Chapter 1839: The Prime and the Holy Girl

In the valley outside the spirit herb fields, the rebel army was assembled like an impenetrable matrix. No entrance or exit was permitted.

Though Forefather Goldenbell and the seven most important leaders had left temporarily, their lieutenants yet remained. The army's morale was very high. They plainly didn't know about their leaders' demises yet.

The Martial Sacred Land only had roughly two thousand stationed at the spirit herb base. Though they were all elites, their absolute numbers disadvantage meant that they didn't have the forces to spare on a breakout effort.

However, they weren't going to try to escape even if they could.

Their only mission was to protect these spirit herbs. If this place fell to the rebels, what good was their safety?

Relying on the terrain and formation to defend to the last was the common understanding of all the cultivators who remained here.

But the army outside pressed down on their nerves as much as it did on their borders. No one could predict when the attack would come, despite its certainty.

And when it did, there would be a bloodbath.

The rebels had manpower on their side. They could send wave after wave of soldiers to push an offensive. The two thousand-odd elites on the sacred land's side didn't have room for any error; each person that died was a soldier permanently lost on the battlefield.

Under these circumstances, the feeling of tremendous pressure was understandable.

Thankfully, the powerful defensive formation around the base covered all the main pathways in. The rebels would need to pay a hefty price to attempt brute entry.

Two slender figures stood in the passage to the nexus of the formation.

They shared a floral elegance, like orchids blooming in the stillness of the night. There was a unique aura that made them difficult to ignore.

The older of the duo was a more mature woman, her expression carrying the weight of authority. It was the Martial Sacred Land's only female prime, Puresmoke.

Though not quite the strongest in the sacred land, she was a contender for that title.

At her side was a much younger girl, radiant with the exuberance of youth. Her complexion was pretty in its purity, but she conducted herself with an exceptional nobility as well.

The girl was the Martial Sacred Land's holy girl, Yu Ling. Upon Myriad Abyss's famous list of sixteen beauties, she ranked in the top five. Miss Yu Ling was the student of Prime Puresmoke.

Master and pupil were studying each and every connection of the formation, to prevent any flaws from being taken advantage of.

"Ling'er, the sacred land's recent disaster is one we've never encountered in history before. In your heart of hearts, are you afraid of what may happen?" Prime Puresmoke asked unhurriedly.

Yu Ling stuck her pert nose into the air. "Master, I'm not scared of anything as long as you're here. We've been together for so many years."

"What if I'm not?" Prime Puresmoke sighed softly.

Miss Yu Ling froze a little. "Your abilities are sublime, master," she ventured. "The rebels' petty tricks won't faze you."

"Not necessarily," the prime's tone grew somber. "This time, the leader of the rebels is Forefather Goldenbell. My cultivation level is slightly inferior to his. If we fight, I may be able to keep myself safe, but I can't say the same for everyone else."

"Of course, I'm to protect this base. Even that forefather won't be allowed to take a single step inside. As long as I live, it will remain intact. If they intend to invade, it'll be over my dead body."

Though Prime Puresmoke was a woman, her speech and mannerisms embodied an uncommon sort of fortitude and gallantry.

"It's the same for me, master. I'll protect the base with my life too. I won't leave you to this fate alone!"

"Silly girl. You have to do no such thing." A hint of softness shone through Puresmoke's lucent eyes. "You're still young. You have a bright future ahead of you. If we can't survive this calamity intact, you younglings have to be preserved. As long as you inherit our heritage, the sacred land's light will not be snuffed out. Conversely, if the younger generation is lost too... then the sacred land will really be done for."

Miss Yu Ling shook her head stubbornly. "The sacred land has many geniuses, but I only have one teacher. Master, I want to stay with you."

"Childish!" Puresmoke's expression darkened. "Don't be so headstrong, Ling'er. You must listen to me in this. Your delusions cannot be tolerated!"

The holy girl's cherry lips trembled, but she couldn't break the silence against her master's humorless look. More like a parent, her master had raised her from childhood. She had never imagined wanting to disobey before.

Still, she couldn't just abandon her master and leave herself. Both student and pupil were beset with their own set of troubles.

As they passed through another passage, a scout came in from the outside in a hurry.

"Madam Prime, Forefather Goldenbell and seven rebel leaders departed just now. We don't know what they're up to."

"Departed? For what reason?" Prime Puresmoke was mildly surprised.

"I'm not sure. I was observing the enemy near the edge of the formation, so I saw what might've been abnormal weather. I didn't dare go investigate it myself. After that, the forefather and the other rebel leaders took their leave. Maybe there's some kind of disturbance even further out? Perhaps our reinforcements have arrived?"

There was some serendipitous surprise in the scout's tone.

"Reinforcements?" Puresmoke furrowed her slender brow. "The sacred land is tight on manpower as it is. Headquarters is understaffed, and the various strongholds have been siloed apart from each other. Even if some of the factions that didn't join the rebellion want to help us, they can't break through the blockades. Plus... what factions are left in this nation that can rescue us from our troubles?"

She leaned toward pessimism. As a prime of the sacred land, she knew the situation in Martial Divine Nation better than many others. She didn't believe every faction in the nation had rebelled, but neither did she believe in the remnants' ability to come to their aid.

"Master, could the reinforcements be from elsewhere?" Miss Yu Ling suddenly suggested. "Didn't headquarters send out a request to the other sacred lands nearby?"

Puresmoke glanced at the hope on her beloved pupil's face, then sighed. "Ling'er, rebellions were launched almost in tandem in all ten of the divine nations. Their synchronicity was premeditated. Therefore, many of the ten sacred lands are in serious trouble themselves."

"I don't believe that all ten of the sacred lands will fall at once," Yu Ling replied. "There's sure to be some sacred lands quicker at quelling their rebels than others."

The cultivators stationed in this base knew little about recent events in the outside world. A lot of news didn't make their way here in the first place.

Prime Puresmoke had heard about Eternal Divine Nation's return to civil peace, but she hadn't dared for too much anticipation. The higher the hopes, the more disappointment there was when they were dashed.

However, she didn't want to take away her cherished disciple's ability to dream. "We've received news that the Eternal Sacred Land has taken care of its rebels," she nodded.

As expected, Yu Ling was immediately overjoyed. "Isn't Eternal on the best of terms with us, master? They're sure to help after they've settled things, right?"

"That would be ideal. Nonetheless, they're sure to be in considerable turmoil right now. I wonder how long it'll take them to stabilize and send out a team?"

Puresmoke was worried that the Martial Sacred Land wouldn't last that long. Even if it did, how much good the reinforcements would do was still up in the air. If the Eternal Sacred Land offered only symbolic assistance, the overall situation wouldn't be much different.

She took a few moments to sort out her thoughts. "Continue your observations. Report back if there are any new developments," she instructed the scout.

"Yes, ma'am." The scout inclined his head before leaving.

The two women went back the direction they'd come from, their minds no less troubled than before.

"Come here, Ling'er," Puresmoke called out to her student.

"Honored master." Yu Ling approached, her voice low.

"I don't know what this Forefather Goldenbell is trying to pull, Ling'er. If the rebels launch an attack, I'm going to find a chance to send you out. If you can get away with it, retreat quickly without a glance back, got it?"

The holy girl stammered without agreeing. Instead, she tugged at the hems of her clothes.

"What, you don't listen to your master anymore?" Prime Puresmoke demanded icily.

"It's not that!" Yu Ling shook her head several times in succession. "We'll definitely be fine, master. I've been thinking just now... if Forefather Goldenbell was going to launch an attack, he wouldn't have a reason to leave. Something must've happened to make him leave."

Yu Ling's words were a helpful reminder. This new line of thought put Prime Puresmoke deep into thought once more.

Her disciple was right. What then, had pulled Goldenbell away? Was it a tactic to lure the sacred land's troops out, maybe?

As a rather conservative person, Puresmoke's first instinct was that this was a possible trap.

However, that didn't seem quite correct. Goldenbell could see just that they relied on the defensive formation and lacked in manpower.

The old man wouldn't take such a stupid approach.

Mid-conversation, the scout came scurrying back. There was great excitement on his face. "Madam Prime, they've started fighting out there!"

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

Chapter 1840: Reinforcements?

Prime Puresmoke's heart skipped a beat and her brows furrowed. "What fighting? Have the rebels launched their attack?"

Concern flashed through Holy Girl Yu Ling's exquisite features. Had the rebels finally attacked? Would they be able to hold the base?

She wasn't afraid. She was more worried that her master would force her to flee. She'd been raised by and had never thought about being apart from her master, especially not when her master's life was in danger.

She had made up her mind to defend the sacred land until its fall, but she would never be prepared for her master's death.

Prime Puresmoke didn't notice the girl's expression. She waved a hand in the air. "Come on, let's go have a look."

The scout recovered enough from his excitement to shook his head and hands. "No, you've misunderstood, Madam Prime. The rebels haven't launched an attack. They're the ones being attacked!"

"Really? Have reinforcements finally come?" Yu Ling's eyes lit up. "Master, help has come for us!"

The prime remained calm and collected. "Don't celebrate just yet. Perhaps this is all Forefather Goldenbell's ploy to lure us out. We have to stay cautious."

Despite what she said, Prime Puresmoke took her disciple to the fringe of the formation. She wanted to see for herself if the cavalry really had come. It'd be cause for celebration if true.

They stood at the edge of the formation, looking out over the outskirts of the steep valley.

Droves of rebels from different factions had surrounded it, blocking almost every escape route from the base.

Prime Puresmoke's chest tightened. She didn't fear death, but she wanted to help her beloved disciple escape before that. Given the heavy forces circling the base, it'd be a very difficult task.

After a more careful look though, Prime Puresmoke realized that the rebels outside the valley were rattled. The further they were from the base, the more obvious the commotion.

Standing at the edge of the formation, she couldn't get a good enough look at what was happening. After a while, the commotion grew even more intense.

Red clouds rolled over from a distance, devouring the air and dying the sky. They moved slowly and deliberately, but bringing with them a mighty presence and a heavy air of intimidation.

Invaders were traditionally likened to looming dark clouds. In this case, the clouds were a fiery red, but their presence and destructive power were just as strong.

The previously tightly organized rebels panicked and scattered.

A penetrating shriek suddenly split the air.

A man emerged out of nowhere and hovered high in the air. With a wave of his hand, he dropped something round into the fray. "Listen carefully, rebels! Forefather Goldenbell has been killed and his body destroyed. All seven of your commanders have been executed as well. Here are their heads..."

It was Jiang Chen. One by one, he dropped the seven blood-stained heads, strewing chaos in their wake.

One of them caught a head. It did belong to one of the seven commanders who had left earlier! All of the decapitated heads had eyes open wide, signifying a death that was far from peaceful. It seemed as if they'd experienced the worst horror in the world before they died.

"Agh! It really is their heads!"

"What's going on? Heavens, what happened?!"

"Even Forefather Goldenbell is dead? How is that possible?!"

The rebels panicked when they saw their commanders' heads, their faces contorted with horror. Both their bodies and minds were paralyzed by fear of the unknown.

The commanders' aides pushed past the crowds and picked the heads up, taking a careful look. It was clear they couldn't just yet accept what had happened.

However, after careful inspection, they couldn't deny that the heads did indeed belong to their commanders. Their leaders had been killed during the short time they were away!

The aides exchanged a look, their arms shaking as they held their commanders' heads. The sudden turn of events disrupted the rebels' original strategies and hammered at their will.

"What's going on? Who is it that killed the commanders? No demigod would've been able to do that. Can it be a full fledged god?"

The possibility that a god had joined their enemy's side took root in their hearts and weighed them down. In that case, the odds were great that they would all die without even a body to bury.

A god was too powerful for them to fight. No matter how many of them there were, an advantage in numbers wouldn't save them. A god could easily defeat an army on their own.

"See this bell? It's Forefather Goldenbell's signature treasure, but now it's my toy." Jiang Chen hit the bell hard, his face splitting into a sardonic grin.

The aides gaped at the floating bell. Of course they recognized the magical item that bore the same name as the forefather. Even the bell had fallen into the young man's hands! The shock left them sweating with fear.

"Who's that kid?" The aides exchanged questioning looks and shook their heads. None of them recognized the unwanted guest.

"He looks young. Could he really have killed the forefather?"

"It's unlikely. He seems capable, but he hasn't yet reached divinity. How could he have killed the forefather?"

The aides were completely lost. They kept the army together on autopilot, keeping everyone in line to stop the group from falling apart.

Prime Puresmoke was confused as well. She didn't understand what was happening.

Holy Girl Yu Ling asked in a quiet voice, "Who is he, master? I haven't seen him around the sacred land. Is he from outside the nation?"

The prime had no clue. She didn't know the young man either. She'd thought this was part of Forefather Goldenbell's plan, but the heads the young man had dropped did indeed belong to the rebel commanders. She could at least judge that much.

It was a forgone conclusion that he was here to help the Martial Sacred Land.

"Is Forefather Goldenbell really dead?" Prime Puresmoke wondered. That would alleviate at least half of her concerns. With both the forefather and the seven commanders dead, the rebels wouldn't pose much of a threat, even if their numbers doubled.

They had no leaders!

In the martial dao world, oftentimes what determined the result of a battle wasn't sheer numbers. That didn't matter when the difference in might was great enough.

"What's that, master?" Yu Ling asked hurriedly, derailing her master's train of thought.

"What?" The prime turned around to look outside the formation.

Red clouds flooded from behind the young man. From the ocean of red emerged an enormous spirit that obscured the sun. It flapped its wings, covering half of the sky.

It tilted its head proudly and shrieked, the sound sending mental shockwaves through the cultivators below. The humans toppled one after another like barley bending in a strong gale. Some lesser cultivators spat up mouthfuls of blood and collapsed to the ground, never to rise again.

The aides hurriedly covered their ears, their expression panicked as they zipped around in flashes to escape. They could tell that their lives were in danger.

"Is that... a vermilion bird?" Realization dawned on the prime. She recalled many rumors about such a divine creature.

The spirit looked mighty from a distance. It seemed capable of devouring heaven and earth.

"The Vermilion Bird?" Holy Girl Yu Ling marveled. "Is it one of the mythical four divine beasts?"

"Are they from the Eternal Sacred Land?" muttered the prime, her eyes lighting up with hope.

It made the holy girl feel a little more at ease seeing her master's expression clear. She could tell her master's mood was recovering.

"Master, are they from the Eternal Sacred Land?" Holy Girl Yu Ling looked up at the spirit hovering in the air, then at the man on the spirit's back. "Who is he? How can he ride on a vermilion bird?"

She was curious. To her knowledge, all descendents of the four divine beasts were very prideful. Why would one of them let a human ride it? Was the bird willingly surrendering control to a human cultivator?

"It seems that the rumors are true," Prime Puresmoke said in a conflicted tone. "Our intel told us that the Eternal Sacred Land started out in a similar situation as we did, but a young genius came out of nowhere with a vermilion bird and turned the tide of the war. He broke apart the rebels with intelligence and power.

"After that, he destroyed the imperial family and then House Xiahou, who led the uprising, putting an end to the rebellion. I thought the Eternal Sacred Land had spread the rumors to create a heroic figure, but it seems they were telling the truth."

On one hand, the prime was thrilled that reinforcement had come. On the other, she worried that such a genius would widen the gap between the Martial and Eternal Sacred Lands.

Moreover, if the young man ended up helping them overcome this challenge, they'd owe the Eternal Sacred Land another great favor.

Of course, there was no use agonizing over that now. Their top priority was to pick themselves up and vanquish the rebellion. The Eternal Sacred Land had been generous to send both the young genius and the Vermilion Bird to the rescue.

It was a demonstration of the friendship between the two sacred lands!