

## Three Realms 1981

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

#### Chapter 1981: Final Preparations

The rules were indeed unconventional. Teamwork was particularly emphasized.

The difference in strength between top geniuses of the ten sacred lands wasn't that great. Even if someone was powerful enough to face three opponents at the same time, they wouldn't necessarily be able to persist against wave after wave of attack, giving that robbing others was allowed under the rules.

As a result, many would be plotting, attacking, and scheming against one another.

Under the circumstances, one's teammates were not only an additional pair of hands, but also psychological reinforcement. It would be difficult for lone wolves to do well in the competition.

"Teamwork is crucial for the group match. I hope you'll understand the organizers' painstaking intentions and work together for a good score. Lastly, the competition will last for fifteen days. You'll be separated and sent to the island one by one, far away from the others. Don't think that you'll be lucky. This round requires intelligence, strength, patience, and cooperation. The team leaders will play an important role as well."

They had half a month! It wasn't that long a period of time, but it wasn't short, either.

"I must also remind you not to assume the trial orbs will be placed in plain sight. We've carefully considered where we're putting the orbs. They'll be hidden away and require some effort to discover. You're not only facing down other young geniuses, but fortune itself and the challenges of finding the hidden orbs!"

The rules had been explained. If evenly distributed, every participant would get ten orbs out of the six hundred. Since each orb was one point, that meant ten was the average score for the participants.

Of course, one would have to earn much more than that to rank among the top. Every participant had to do their best to win.

"Teams will have an hour for discussion before the first round begins. After an hour, all participants will be separated and sent to the island."

One hour wasn't short, but it was limited given the tasks at hand.

Each team had to formulate strategies and settle on a plan to accommodate teammates of different levels of power. That was a serious challenge to the participants' wisdom.

Wu You and Gan Ning huddled close to Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen took them to an unoccupied corner and activated a quarantine glyph. That way, no one would be able to overhear their conversation.

"Speak your mind, gentlemen." Jiang Chen smiled.

Wu You thought for a moment. "Competition is going to be fierce. Many will do whatever it takes to earn points. Therefore, our priority is to find each other and avoid being alone. Otherwise, it'll be easy for people to pick us off."

"Brother Wu is right." Gan Ning nodded. "I've been wondering what I'd do if I encounter opponents who are weaker than I am. The best strategy is to knock them out and hide them. That'll ensure I have one less competitor without breaking the rule against killing."

Gan Ning was among the weaker participants. It was typical for people like him to consider themselves the underdogs and calculate the risks.

There was no denying that he had a point. Geniuses who cared about their reputation might think that such a strategy was beneath them, but there would be plenty more petty-minded or insidious participants who wouldn't shy away from doing so.

If they could take out the teammates of their main rivals, it'd be a serious blow against the competition.

A team was composed of only three people. One person less was one less pair of hands.

Jiang Chen agreed with Gan Ning's analysis. He was also very certain that he would become the prime target for many teams.

It was time to face reality.

"Gentlemen, many in Myriad Abyss are eager to knock me down. I can't tell you if it's a blessing or a curse for you to be on the same team as me. However, since you're my teammates and you've picked me as your leader, I will take responsibility for your score," promised Jiang Chen.

Wu You flashed a faint smile. "I'm not afraid. Besides, I know my place in Myriad Abyss. I don't intend to get first place in the grand competition. Whether I get a good score doesn't matter that much to me."

Gan Ning chuckled and touched his nose. "I'm at the bottom of the participating geniuses. I don't have to care much about my score, do I?"

Jiang Chen waved a hand in the air. "As long as you're in the competition, your score matters. Don't worry. I have a plan. Let me explain."

The two were all ears.

"Once you enter the island, keep a low profile. If you have a way to hide yourself, do so. I'll do all I can to locate you and contact you."

"I'm sure they won't let us use any communication tools," Gan Ning cut in.

Wu You nodded. "They won't."

"It doesn't matter. We may not be allowed to use communication tools, but I have many alternatives. Listen carefully. I've come up with three plans with different orders of priority. We'll change our execution as the situation calls for it."

Jiang Chen explained his three plans in order of priority.

Gan Ning and Wu You's excitement was visible. They had faith in the plans. It was encouraging that Jiang Chen had come up with so many tricks in such a short period of time.

His confidence was contagious and some newfound conviction sprang forth in their previously empty hopes.

Jiang Chen gave them a few more pointers. The three of them worked well together.

However, he could also feel the glances the other teams were casting his way. Some were hostile, some casual, and some amused and unreadable.

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

#### **Chapter 1982: Springing Into Action**

"Listen carefully, all communication items and their usage are prohibited during the competition. Any violations will be considered cheating! Also, you're required to stay where you land for half an hour. Only after that are you allowed to move. Understand?"

The representatives from the sacred lands responsible for mediating the match emphasized this particular rule more heavily than the others.

This was to prevent participants from running into each other during the deployment process. They had to wait until everyone was in position before moving.

Every participant took the words to heart. They had to abide by the rules. Those who had wished to get lucky left their communication tools behind.

With messaging glyphs, it'd be easy to communicate on the island. If tools weren't forbidden, the match wouldn't be able to test teamwork at all.

The organizer banned the use of any tools so that every participant had to rely on their intelligence.

The deployment process thus began. Sixty geniuses entered one after another.

Jiang Chen knew that this kind of deployment must've been carefully calculated.

He stood under an ancient tree tall enough to reach the sky, surveying the dense forest. All around him were trees, tall grass, messy vines, and thorny bushes. There was almost no place for him to stand.

The environment greatly obstructed Jiang Chen's God's Eye. He focused his mind and couldn't detect anyone within a few miles' radius.

Given that he had to wait for half an hour, he wasn't in a rush to move. Instead, he carefully considered his surroundings.

"The ancient tree is several arm's lengths in circumference. I wonder how old it is. Perhaps the island has been here since the ancient times."

Jiang Chen could tell the island was on the primitive side, undisturbed by human activities.

He climbed onto a lofty tree and perched on a branch with his back to the tree trunk, closing his eyes to rest. He also summoned the Goldbiter rat king and had it command the other rats to stand on guard, on the look-out for any unknown beings.

There wasn't any rule against employing the Goldbiter Rats.

Jiang Chen would do anything within the rules to win. The rats were undoubtedly his best helpers on such an island.

As soon as half an hour passed, he started moving.

"Wu You's mastery is in speed. He can protect himself better. Gan Ning doesn't have any particular strengths compared to the other participants. Thus, he's in the most danger. I have to find him first. Of course, I'll take whatever trial orbs I run into as well."

There were six hundred orbs in total, which weren't that many. The island was more than big enough to hide the orbs.

It might not be as difficult as finding a needle in a haystack, but one wouldn't be able to just stumble upon the orbs. Some careful consideration was required.

Fortune favored hard workers. After half an hour, Jiang Chen found an orb hidden under a leaf.

That was well-hidden. If I hadn't utilized my consciousness to the fullest, I wouldn't have found it.

The orbs were hidden better than Jiang Chen had expected. He suspected that some of the six hundred orbs would be left undiscovered in the end.

"Old Gold, do you know what the dominant vegetation on the island is?" Jiang Chen asked apropos of nothing.

The Goldbiter rat king chuckled. "There's a great variety of plants on the island, but the one that's particularly abundant is the wallowing tree. It's everywhere."

wallowing trees could be identified by their unique leaves. They were thin and dense like droplets of tears, which gave the tree its name.

"Right, the wallowing trees." Jiang Chen smiled. "Please tell your descendants to pay attention to any cultivators who smell strongly of the trees. Have them immediately report back when they find anything."

"Why?" The Goldbiter King was puzzled.

"Just do it." Jiang Chen didn't want to waste his time explaining.

"Alright." The rat king was sharp enough to recognize that Jiang Chen didn't have the time to spare.

This was Jiang Chen's first and most prioritized plan. He had told Wu You and Gan Ning to identify the most common vegetation on the island after entering and extract the essence to apply on their bodies. Then, Jiang Chen would be able to locate them quickly.

He had two other contingencies.

Plan B was for them to leave clues as they moved. He would follow the breadcrumbs and figure out their approximate locations.

That wasn't as ideal a plan. A trail was easy to spot and even more easily destroyed.

Plan C was the least practical one. It was merely for backup, and ideally shouldn't be of use.

Jiang Chen wasn't going to waste the rats' mobility on only locating his teammates. He had some of them look for the trial orbs, but not before warning them to exercise the highest of caution.

There were dozens of Myriad Abyss' finest geniuses looking for the orbs. If the rats ran into them by accident, the spirit creatures would meet a terrible fate.

The rats' strengths didn't lie in individual fighting skills. A rat wouldn't be able to survive an encounter with genius cultivator.

Nevertheless, Jiang Chen wasn't too worried. The Goldbiter Rats were naturally cautious. They weren't going to take unnecessary risks.

It was a wise move to mobilize the rats to look for orbs. In half a day, Jiang Chen had collected four orbs, two of which had been his find, the other two the rats'.

However, it worried him that he still hadn't heard anything about Wu You and Gan Ning. He wondered if his two teammates had run into strong opponents already, thanks to bad luck.

A faint sound disrupted his train of thought. He cast his God's Eye to the right and noticed a branch moving slightly behind an ancient tree.

He rushed over and found nothing.

"Oh? Was someone spying me? Or was it merely a beast passing by?" Jiang Chen wasn't sure. He hadn't been entirely focused on his surroundings.

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

#### **Chapter 1983: In Difficult Straits**

Jiang Chen looked around and cast out his senses for a moment. He became briefly thoughtful, but didn't point anything out. Perhaps someone was watching him in secret.

Given there were several dozen opponents trialing on the very same island, that was rather normal. He couldn't possibly bother pursuing every voyeur. If he did, what time and energy would he have left to find the orbs?

He refocused on what he was going to do in the time ahead.

Evening arrived rather quickly, the colors of dusk cast a dimming gloom over all that the eye could see. Jiang Chen frowned slightly as he glanced towards the setting sun.

Nightfall was no big deal to him. He didn't think any genius of the ten sacred lands could possibly threaten him. He was much more worried about Wu You and Gan Ning.

If he couldn't make contact with them, the night would be a long one. Darkness was the best cover for the cloak and dagger.

Gan Ning was one of the weaker geniuses. If he wasn't careful at every turn, he could very well fall to a sudden sneak attack.

Right now, the genius in question was doing what Jiang Chen had instructed him to do beforehand. He had taken many leaves of the wallowing tree and boiled juices out of them, rubbing the liquid all over himself.

It had been more than half a day since entering, and Gan Ning hadn't yet moved ten miles. Each time he moved, he crept along with utmost caution. Wherever he went, his first concern was hiding himself.

He was lucky enough to find a fallen orb in the process of his journey.

When night fell, Gan Ning felt his heart waver in uncertainty. He knew that he would suffer a great deal in the darkness, given his cultivation.

His safety could no longer be assured even if he stayed in one spot.

However, there was nothing for it except proceed with the plan. He himself couldn't last a fortnight on the island, much less get his hands on many orbs. Each person had to get at least ten orbs to pass.

Gan Ning didn't believe for a second he was capable of beating the competition to that number.

"Never mind. Why worry about it now? I can just hide here and lay low. I'm scared of others, but they might be scared of me as well. No one can be sure of their own safety here on this island, except maybe geniuses as amazing as senior brother Jiang Chen," he comforted himself.

He knew that every sacred land had a number of geniuses who were its pride and joy. How strong has senior brother Jiang Chen become?

There were several sacred land geniuses who were near or at advanced empyrean.

Those geniuses had always stood at the peak of Myriad Abyss' younger generation. Even the likes of the late Xiahou Zong had to bow down to them.

Xiahou Zong had always boasted he was the strongest among Myriad Abyss' youth, but House Xiahou had never truly understood the extent of the ten sacred lands' concealed strength.

It was unrealistic to expect a genius from a mere first-rank faction to be better than every genius from the sacred lands.

As Gan Ning mulled over his circumstances, he suddenly sensed the barest hint of activity in the distance.

His hairs stood alertly on end. He instinctively knew he was being tracked, despite his best efforts at hiding himself. He hadn't necessarily been targeted specifically, but he was within his hunter's sights.

He immediately dashed toward an ancient tree.

Whoosh!

A whip lashed against the ground where he'd stood a moment ago. Bits of grass and leaves flew everywhere. If he hadn't been quick about it, he would have been seriously injured on the spot.

"Do you think you can run away, kid?" A cool voice sounded nearby. "On my watch?"

Gan Ning didn't recognize it, but the decisiveness within was obvious. He wasn't going to get out of this easily.

The young gentleman cursed to himself. This wasn't the kind of situation he wanted to be in. He had hoped to unite with senior brother Jiang Chen sooner rather than later, but reality had proven harsh.

"Give up your orbs, kid. If you surrender, you won't have to suffer much." The cool voice rang out once more.

Gan Ning almost wanted to immediately give up the sole orb he had on him.

However, he instantly realized that doing so would make him a detriment to his team. What if they ended up losing by a single orb?

Plus, was this hidden person really going to just let him go? The assailant might not kill him, but a good thrashing was more than likely, then him being tossed into some shadowy corner to fend for himself.

Gan Ning's scalp tingled just thinking about it.

No. Even if I can't beat him, I have to at least try. Gan Ning didn't know this opponent's strength, but he was confident in his own defenses.

As a water-attribute cultivator, he had command over a number of associated abilities. In his battle against Jiang Chen, the other young man had allowed him to lose with grace.

It was at that time that Gan Ning had realized exactly how commanding Jiang Chen was.

Myriad Abyss geniuses couldn't all be Jiang Chen, though. What did he have to lose by resisting?

Gan Ning focused. Watery ripples radiated off his person, spreading into the space all around him.

His Water God's Arm was an amazing asset. It allowed him to attack and defend with equal ease. During his sparring match against Jiang Chen, he had been third level empyrean.

Years later, he had attained an important breakthrough to reach fourth level.

Perhaps he was in the bottom half of the sixty geniuses gathered here, but he firmly believed it wasn't going to be easy to beat him.

"Come out into the open, kid." The voice sounded again. "Do you think I can't do anything to you, just because you're hiding behind a tree?"

The voice was incredibly proud, as if it already had him under control.

Gan Ning was unmoved by this. He began to build up his Enclosure of Rippling Water as a shield around himself.

Once the battle was engaged, his opponent was sure to try for a quick victory. To drag things out would be disadvantageous for both of them.

### Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

#### **Chapter 1984: A Terrifying Opponen**

Whoosh!

A viper-like whip latched madly onto the tree behind Gan Ning. The frenzied violet flickering upon its surface shocked the youth. "That's the Whip of Violet Thunder!"

Gan Ning wasn't a particularly strong genius, but he had paid some attention to his fellow contestants. He knew who the owner of this weapon was: one of Polylore's top geniuses, Hu Lei.

Hu Lei was one of the strongest geniuses in the Polylore Sacred Land, though he did have a peer who was his equal. It was hard to say which of them was stronger. Still, he was undoubtedly leagues above Gan Ning himself.

Hu Lei's whip uprooted the ancient tree with a single motion, sending it flying into the air. The tree slammed into the forest quite a distance away, causing a terrified flurry of squawking birds to fly up from the point of impact.

Gan Ning reflexively dodged away from the attack, but now that the tree was gone, there was nothing between him and his enemy anymore.

He could almost see the scars on Hu Lei's face. The Polylore genius had sinister eyes and an evil grin. "I don't know who you are, kid," he laughed, "but I remember you being from Eternal. Are you with that Jiang Chen?"

Despite the lack of natural light, Hu Lei's vision was completely unhindered. A sidelong glance was enough for him to identify his target.

Gan Ning was one of the more low-profile geniuses among the sixty.

However, every participant in the competition was competent in many ways. Hu Lei, being one of the best, recognized him immediately regardless.

Hu Lei licked his lips. A hungry light radiated from his eyes. Polylore Divine Nation had lost to Jiang Chen in the past. It would be a lie to declare they had no grudge with Jiang Chen.

The sacred land's geniuses were especially dissatisfied. They wanted to take whatever opportunities they could to cause some trouble and get back at him.

Hu Lei didn't expect to encounter one of Jiang Chen's underlings here. Yes, this weakling was average at best, but he was on Jiang Chen's team! If he could capture him and use him as bait, that could prove to be quite useful.

The Polylore genius smirked. "It's your unlucky day, kid!"



Gan Ning braced himself. Hu Lei was almost at advanced empyrean realm. He could take on at least three Gan Nings.

What could he do, though? He had to fight back. He couldn't lose face for Eternal here.

It didn't take long at all for Hu Lei to fill the environment with afterimages of himself. He'd only flourished his whip a single time, but Gan Ning saw thousands of echoes. Even the sound seemed to have multiplied in every direction.

Gan Ning set up an Enclosure of Rippling Water all about himself. He charged up his Water God's Arm in order to defend himself from the impending assault.

Hmph!

Hu Lei harrumphed. "Do you think a few bubbles can stop my Whip of Violet Thunder?"

He brandished his whip continually as he said this, smashing it against Gan Ning's defenses again and again. The Enclosure began to collapse under the storm of attacks.

Boom!

The ripples of water broke, splashing liquid and runic fragments everywhere.

Gan Ning paled. He hadn't expected his vaunted Enclosure to be destroyed in a single blow! Hu Lei was fearsome indeed.

The Eternal young genius winced with sadness when he saw the insurmountable gap between his opponent and himself.

However, he had no way out except forward. His body surged a few dozen yards back like a wave, conjuring another surf of ripples as he did so. His Enclosure this time was more powerful than ever before.

"Hmph, do you think the same attack is going to work on me a second time?" Hu Lei roared. "All will be torn to shreds under my Whip of Violet Thunder!"

Whoosh!

As if on cue, the whip in question ripped a vicious gash in space.

Pop, pop, pop!

The defensive ripples of water were reduced to insubstantial mist. The whip hurtled with unrelenting speed toward Gan Ning.

The young gentleman couldn't possibly conjure up another Enclosure on such short notice. He could only keep backing away, blocking with his Water God's Arm as he did so.

Aquamarine ripples appeared upon his arm. Oddly enough, the whip slipped off its mark.

Hu Lei was mildly taken aback. "Not bad, kid!" he cackled. "I underestimated you a little."

He glanced thoughtfully at Gan Ning's arm. There was something up with that strange limb.

Something clicked inside his head immediately. Guffawing, he raised his whip high again. This time however, violet electricity crackled along the weapon.

Gan Ning paled when he saw what his opponent had done.

Without skipping a beat, Hu Lei whirled his whip toward Gan Ning once more in a coiling motion. The thunder imbued in the whip hissed menacingly as he did so.

If Gan Ning used his Water God's Arm to block again, the lightning in the whip would only be made fiercer for it. In fact, his arm might be disabled permanently.

He dared not do something so grievously foolish.

His body moved to leap toward the sky, but this was obviously not the best option to take.

Hu Lei's whip was still in the fullness of its strength. Gan Ning was already slightly slow on the uptake, and jumping meant that he was assuredly behind his opponent's blow.

His feet were the first to be paralyzed by the bolt of electricity coursing through his body. He yelped in pain; his calves already entangled by the whip.

Hu Lei chortled contemptuously. He knew he was significantly stronger than Gan Ning and toyed with his prey as disrespectfully as he could. He especially enjoyed the other genius's fear and despair, as well as the anguished shrieking.

He threw Gan Ning into the air, then spun him around ceaselessly like an airborne kite. Hu Lei guffawed recklessly as he did so, forcing Gan Ning to revolve faster and faster until the latter felt immensely ill.

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

#### **Chapter 1985: Jiang Chen Arrives**

Hu Lei obviously enjoyed torturing opponents.

After some time spinning, he shook Gan Ning's body loose from his whip's grasp. The young man's body slammed into a nearby tree.

Bang!

Gan Ning collided with the crown of the tree face first.

Hu Lei cackled once more. His prey no longer had any energy to resist. After being struck by his violet thunder, it would take at least several hours to fully recover. Gan Ning was like a lamb to the slaughter.

Hu Lei sidled over leisurely.

However, something unexpected happened. Gan Ning, supposedly amid the leaves, had disappeared into thin air.

"Hmm? That kid ran away?" The Polylore genius didn't believe it. He was very confident in his violet thunder.

Even a ninth level empyrean cultivator would be stunned by a head-on attack from it. For Gan Ning to have escaped of his own volition was impossible!

He looked all around him, but Gan Ning was nowhere to be found. Furious, Hu Lei swept a large radius around him clean with his whip.

Trees and foliage were levelled and reduced to fragments and dust. But still, there was no Gan Ning in sight!

Where was he? Was Hu Lei dreaming?

“How can this be?!” Hu Lei exploded with rage. He couldn’t accept what had taken place before his eyes.

“I don’t believe you can get away from me, kid!” He refused to accept something that defied so much common sense.

Was Gan Ning naturally resistant to lightning?

But even if he hadn’t gotten seriously hurt, where had he gone after being thrown about?

Shouldn’t he have had some path to fly in or a tunnel to burrow into?

“Tunneling?” Hu Lei suddenly became thoughtful. Maybe the kid had fled through the earth.

It was impossible for him to have flown away. Hu Lei had eyes enough to catch Gan Ning’s trail of flight. From where he’d been among the branches, into the ground seemed far more realistic.

Unfortunately, he had totally demolished the surroundings himself. It was going to be hard to find evidence of that.

However, he did manage to find a small hole near where the tree had been after a while. The burrowing spot – if it was one – was very small, to the point of being nearly imperceptible.

“Is that kid capable of transforming his size? This hole is rat-sized!” Hu Lei was incredulous.

He wasn’t going to let his prey get away from him.

So what if Gan Ning had dug down? Hu Lei cast out his consciousness in search of a residual aura. Finding that would allow him to pinpoint where Gan Ning was.

In truth, Gan Ning hadn’t gotten far. He wouldn’t have been able to get anywhere by himself. A Goldbiter Rat had saved him.

In terms of seniority, this rat was in the generation directly below the king. Its cultivation was reasonably good in light of this, but obviously couldn’t compare even to Gan Ning, much less Hu Lei.

It had come to Gan Ning’s rescue upon discovering that young master Chen’s companion was seriously injured. It couldn’t just well leave the human to die.

Because of this, it had exhibited daring uncommon for its race, dragging Gan Ning into the ground. Gan Ning’s adult mass meant that the rat, only half his size, couldn’t get far.

It became pretty exhausted after only a short distance. Not that it wasn't strong enough, but it couldn't tunnel quickly with Gan Ning in tow.

Though Gan Ning had been incapacitated physically by the Violet Thunderbolt, his consciousness was still intact. He was astonished to see that a rat had saved him.

He knew himself that he couldn't possibly escape.

"Brother rat," he said apologetically, "thanks for saving me. You can leave me here, alright? Don't worry about me. Hu Lei wouldn't dare kill me, but he wouldn't think twice about killing you."

Since they were both competing geniuses, Hu Lei was absolutely forbidden from killing Gan Ning. But that protection didn't extend to this rat. If Hu Lei knew it was responsible, he would cut it down without hesitation.

The Goldbiter Rat was clever enough to understand human language. Its eyes darted here and there thoughtfully.

"Hurry up and go. I'm safer here than aboveground, at least." Gan Ning was a kind-hearted youth. It was odd that this rat had shown up at all, but he wasn't going to let it get caught in the crossfire.

The rat pondered a moment, then dragged Gan Ning away to a slightly more discreet location. It squeaked a few times to tell Gan Ning to stay put so that it could go call for help.

As Gan Ning wasn't fluent in ancient beast language, he had no idea what the rat was communicating. Still, the fact it meant well was obvious enough.

"Go, don't stay with me anymore." Gan Ning patted the Goldbiter Rat's sleek fur.

"Heh, you think you can get away now?" A voice came from overhead like a thunderclap.

There was a loud boom!

The earth was cleft open by a sundering blade. Starlight flooded into the darkness of the underground.

Where Gan Ning hid was ten yards below the earth, but Hu Lei had cut that deep with a single stroke. The injured genius sprawled helplessly before his hunter.

Hu Lei glanced at Gan Ning coldly. "Are you struggling with the dregs of your strength, kid? Tch. Is that small rat brave enough to oppose me, too? Just die!"

Saying this, he swept his whip at the Goldbiter Rat.

His weapon came to a screeching halt mid-trajectory.

Countless vines had risen up from all around to intercept it. These vines had a rather exotic coloration: they were split between icy blue and fiery crimson. They latched onto the Whip of Violet Thunder, locking it in place.

What the hell?!

Hu Lei was met with an unexpected development. He jerked his arm upward, attempting to push the vines out of the way, but was only disappointed. The whip refused to budge, while more and more vines entangled themselves around it all the while.

He was quite bewildered now.

“Who is it?!” Even the most stupid of cultivators would know that another opponent had arrived. An expert, at that.

Gan Ning’s eyes lit up when he saw the vines. He recognized them; they were from senior brother Jiang Chen’s Bewitching Lotus of Ice and Fire.

“Hahaha, karma has arrived, Hu Lei!” He was filled with confidence in his stronger friend.

Now that senior brother Jiang Chen was here, he was going to make Hu Lei pay double for what he had done!

### Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

#### **Chapter 1986: You’re Jiang Chen?**

Hu Lei tried to yank his whip back, but it wouldn’t budge. This was when the realization dawned that he was facing a formidable opponent.

However, he wasn’t intimidated. He’d always been the competitive sort. The stronger his opponent was, the fiercer he became. Moreover, all the contestants on the island were young cultivators. He’d always fancied himself the top genius among the youths.

Even Eternal’s Jiang Chen, who had achieved the impossible, didn’t shake that perception. He’d studied the fight that resulted in Jiang Chen’s fame.

Like others, he recognized that Jiang Chen was a remarkable genius who had some great achievements, but believed that due credit should go to the Vermilion Bird.

Without it, Jiang Chen couldn’t have done what he’d done.

In truth, many acknowledged Jiang Chen’s luck, wisdom, and cunning, but their impression of his strength was still based on his fight with Xiahou Zong.

Jiang Chen had indeed won the fight, but only by a small margin. Most of the top geniuses from the ten sacred lands, Hu Lei included, believed they were much better than Xiahou Zong. They also believed what little heritage Jiang Chen had gained couldn’t be that powerful since he’d only just joined the Eternal Sacred Land.

The top geniuses participating in the competition had all received the best inheritance from their sects. They were sure that they stood a chance to defeat Jiang Chen in a head-on fight.

Therefore, Hu Lei was eager to fight Jiang Chen. His crushing victory would make him a household name.

He wasn’t the only one who thought this way.

So although Hu Lei was surprised, he wasn't panicked. Jiang Chen must've come to Gan Ning's rescue. The young genius wouldn't have been so excited otherwise.

With a scoff, Hu Lei cracked his whip at the Lotus. Sawtooth serrations emerged over the surface of the whip and began sawing off the vines.

The Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice was a powerful restraining force. It could regenerate even after being severed.

However, the Whip of Violet Thunder was no simple weapon either. Once the vines were cut, black fog emitted from the whip and rushed into the fresh cut, preventing the Lotus from regenerating.

More and more vines were sliced to pieces. The whip gradually broke out of the Lotus' restraint.

Hu Lei suddenly flashed forward and reached out for the whip, but an enormous golden hand rammed at him, like a burning mountain with tremendous ferocity.

Hu Lei's eyes widened. If the golden hand had hit him, even the most sturdy of constitutions wouldn't have saved him from serious injury.

He moved away in a violet flash, but before he could soar into the sky, an aureate mountain came down from above.

Hu Lei was caught off guard. He hadn't expected the attack to be so relentless. Muscles taut under the terrifying might of the golden mountain, with a roll, he dodged to the side.

Unfortunately, when he next looked up, his whip had become a pale shadow, restrained by a mysterious force and keening pitifully.

The whip was seized in the blink of an eye.

Hu Lei looked up in shock to see a young face sneering at him from afar. He recognized the young man immediately. It was Eternal's Jiang Chen!

"I knew it was you!" Hu Lei's eyes were bloodshot as he leveled Jiang Chen with a venomous stare like a bloodthirsty beast. His resentment of the Eternal genius was visible.

"You're from the Polylore Sacred Land, aren't you?" Jiang Chen's smile was slight, but confident.

"He's Hu Lei from Polylore, senior brother Jiang Chen," Gan Ning piped up as he approached Jiang Chen. "He and another genius are considered the finest talent of their sacred land."

Gan Ning had suffered serious injury from the Whip of Violet Thunder, but it wasn't life-threatening. With some rest, he'd recover.

"Hu Lei?" Jiang Chen nodded. He'd heard about the geniuses from the other sacred lands, but he hadn't cared enough to find out more about them.

The name Hu Lei was familiar, but that was all he knew.

"I've been waiting a long time for you, Jiang Chen." Hu Lei grinned. "Do you know how often everyone in Myriad Abyss talk about you? I'm getting calluses in my ears from hearing your name. I've always

wondered how powerful the genius everyone has been praising is. I hope you don't disappoint me today."

Hu Lei's weapon had been captured, but he didn't seem nervous.

Jiang Chen smiled and looked around. "Are you sure you want to fight me here?"

"Of course," Hu Lei responded without hesitation.

Jiang Chen quirked his lips. "Even when there are several pairs of unwanted eyes around?"

"Unwanted eyes?" Hu Lei frowned and expanded his consciousness. He laughed. "I'll be disappointed if you're boasting. There's people watching us? Just drive them away."

Hu Lei's voice rang through the area like a crack of thunder. "I am Hu Lei from the Polylore Sacred Land. Get out of here no matter who you are! If you stay and watch us from the dark, you'll be making an enemy out of me!"

Hu Lei's name wasn't as intimidating as he'd imagined. Only two participants left after his threat.

There were many more lurking in the dark. It might be they were more confident in their skills in stealth, or perhaps they simply weren't afraid of Hu Lei.

Hu Lei cackled. "Alright, they're all gone now."

Jiang Chen shook his head. "Are you sure?"

Hu Lei paused. "Are there still foolish bastards who refuse to leave?"

Jiang Chen clucked his tongue. "If this is all you've got, I'm disappointed."

Hu Lei's face flushed red with mortification. He expanded his consciousness to search again. He raged, "Bastards, there's still someone there!"

Hu Lei raised his hand. A shock of violet light shot toward a patch of shadow in the west.

Boom! An explosion hit the area.

"Hu Lei, you fool!" a voice cried out. "You just used up a trump card by using the Violet Thunderbolt now! I'm just a spectator. I didn't plan to interfere!"

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

#### **Chapter 1987: A Bet and A Duel**

The voice's exasperation was infectious. Hu Lei's heart twinged with regret as soon as it was pointed out.

He had indeed been too impulsive. The Violet Thunderbolt was one of his trump cards, exceptionally effective as a surprise attack during a protracted fight. Having shown it off already, he wouldn't be able to employ it nearly as efficiently or effectively in a bout with Jiang Chen later.

The other youth would be on his guard against it, for starters.

The thought of this prompted him to glance frustratedly at Jiang Chen.

“What can your Violet Thunderbolt do to me?” Jiang Chen smiled coolly. “Even if I stood still and took the full brunt of it, do you think it would injure me?”

This annoyed Hu Lei to no end. He raised a questioning brow. “You’re pretty ignorant to say that, kid. My Violet Thunderbolt is powerful and explosively destructive. It’s as strong as a robust attack from a peak empyrean expert!”

Jiang Chen chuckled. A peak empyrean expert?

So what? Just a short while ago, he had traded blows with Divine Kasyapa’s servant, the demigod First Wind.

If he wasn’t scared of taking on a demigod, why would he be concerned with a peak ninth level empyrean attack?

Moreover, his gold cicada bloodline granted him immunity to thunder and lightning, as well as poisons. The Violet Thunderbolt was unlikely to do him any harm at all.

Jiang Chen didn’t really want to be held up here by this Hu Lei. Alas, he had beaten up Gan Ning pretty severely, and the young victim was his friend. If he simply left, he might give off the impression he was scared of the Polylore genius.

Inspiration struck. “Why don’t we make a bet, Hu Lei?” he declared coolly.

“What kind of bet?” Hu Lei shot back. He believed Jiang Chen to be someone with a myriad of tricks up his sleeve. Thus, he was instinctively on his guard at the mention of a bet.

“Easy. I’ll stand here and take a hit from your Violet Thunderbolt. Then, you can stand in one place and let me hit you once. How about it?” Jiang Chen chuckled.

“Are you sure?” Hu Lei was astounded. Had the other youth suffered some sort of brain damage in his life? Would he even be alive after a thunderbolt like that?

“Absolutely,” Jiang Chen nodded, then looked around. “More and more people are gathering to watch us. I want to give you a good thrashing, but it is no doubt embarrassing to lose in front of so many prying eyes.”

Hu Lei laughed in spite of his fury. “Give me a good thrashing? Are you making things up on the spot, kid?”

He didn’t believe for a moment what Jiang Chen claimed. There had to be an ulterior motive behind this proposition. Wasn’t the Eternal genius rumored to be a master of stratagems? Was there something about this bet he hadn’t noticed?

But no amount of consideration yielded any possibilities.

Jiang Chen snickered. “What, you don’t even have enough courage to attack me? How are you prepared to meet me in the field of battle then? Is this what the strongest of Polylore are like, Hu Lei?”



Hu Lei instantly ignited. "I didn't want to take advantage of you, kid, but if you want to commit suicide, then so be it!"

He was beyond incensed.

Gan Ning looked at Jiang Chen worriedly. "Senior brother," he took a step forward, "his Violet Thunderbolt..."

"Don't sweat it. If I were scared of that, I wouldn't have said what I just did. Just take a break and watch my methods, Gan Ning," Jiang Chen comforted him.

There was nothing more for Gan Ning to say. He knew how strong senior brother Jiang Chen was. He couldn't quite understand the reason for his senior brother's actions right now, but the thunderbolt may very well be trivial.

"You mentioned it's a bet, yes?" Hu Lei interjected. "What are we betting on?"

"Anything you have in mind?" Jiang Chen retorted.

"If my Violet Thunderbolt knocks you out, you need to give me back my Whip of Violet Thunder. That, and give up all your orbs." Hu Lei stated his conditions.

"No problem. What if you lose then?" asked an indifferent Jiang Chen.

"If there's anything you want, just say the word."

"Easy enough. You give me all your orbs, then apologize and offer compensation to my brother here. Oh, and do us a favor by avoiding us in the future." Jiang Chen didn't make unreasonable demands. "Anything you want to add?" he asked Gan Ning.

The young gentleman was grateful that his senior brother was sticking up for him. No one else would have cared, and to such a degree.

Hu Lei roared with laughter. "An equitable man, I see. But do you really think that you'll be able to fight back after being hit by my Violet Thunderbolt?"

Jiang Chen smiled serenely. "Then your victory is guaranteed, is it not?"

"Very good. You're looking to lose today, so don't blame me for stepping on your head." Hu Lei wasn't so rigid as to refuse an advantage.

Someone overly principled might feel that winning in such a way was unfair. However, Hu Lei believed that the ends justified the means.

As long as he won in the end, it didn't matter how he did it.

"Step aside, Brother Gan Ning," Jiang Chen smiled a little.

Gan Ning hadn't quite given up yet. In his opinion, senior brother Jiang Chen was being exceedingly honorable by taking on unnecessary risk. If senior brother won, he would only gain in renown. If he were seriously hurt instead though, there would be a big problem.

This was only the first day of the trial!

Although he was secretly concerned, he didn't dare suggest otherwise. All he could do was back far away.

"Let's begin." Jiang Chen stood at ease, leisurely crossing his arms in anticipation of being hit. He looked like he was relaxing, not readying for a fight.

His attitude infuriated Hu Lei.

"You're heading to your doom, fool!" An aggravated Hu Lei gathered a Violet Thunderbolt in his hand.

"Take this!" he raised his arm, throwing an amethyst flash toward Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen deployed his God's Eye to the maximum. He could see the trail of the radiance as clearly as the trajectory of an insect in slow motion.

"Hmm?" There was nothing within. It was a ruse!

Jiang Chen found this rather amusing. Hu Lei appeared brusque on the surface, but was actually pretty wily. This was a feint rather than an actual attack.

Because he saw the reality of the situation, he aimed to overwhelm his opponent psychologically. He walked forward rather than back as the light approached him.

Inhaling a little, he spat out a breath of true qi with a soft sound.

All the witnesses to this fight were astonished. Was Jiang Chen using a breath of air to fight against Hu Lei's Violet Thunderbolt? Such disdain and disregard for his opponent!

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

#### **Chapter 1988: Completely Unscathed**

But there were more shocking things to come. When the violet light came into contact with Jiang Chen's breath, it dissipated on the spot without an explosion.

A fake?

The recognition of what they had just seen was late in coming.

There were two amazing things they'd witnessed: that the Violet Thunderbolt had been a decoy, and that Jiang Chen had seen through and instantly disposed of it with disdain.

It was almost like he'd played a parlor trick.

Was Jiang Chen really not scared of Hu Lei whatsoever?

Everyone knew how strong the Violet Thunderbolt was. It deserved every bit of its fame. The thunderbolt had a mind of its own and a nearly imperceptible trajectory. Just because one dodged the first strike didn't guarantee safety from the subsequent ones. Before the lightning made contact with its mark, it pursued with a relentless spirit.

Unless a more powerful method was used to destroy the thunderbolt, it would detonate on its intended target without fail.

A robust piece of protective armor might be able to guard against the explosion, but the same wasn't true for the coursing lightning that the thunderbolt contained.

The Violet Thunderbolt attacked its enemies via two discrete angles.

Hu Lei was even more bewildered than the audience. It didn't look like Jiang Chen cared at all about his Violet Thunderbolt. Defending against it with a single breath was the most humiliating insult that could be delivered.

He seethed with fury, but calmed down thanks to the gravity of the situation. His prior battle experience told him that reason was necessary if he wanted to win here.

He flicked his fingers continually, sending out a seemingly endless stream of violet.

The entire sky was lit up with luminance. It was impossible to distinguish which was the real one. A meteoric shower of magenta turned the night as bright as day.

"You're really despicable, Hu Lei!" Gan Ning cursed. "You agreed to only launch one Violet Thunderbolt. What is this??"

Hu Lei sneered. I did only launch one Violet Thunderbolt. The others are totally harmless, just a light show.

The storm of violet darted toward Jiang Chen like a cloud of hornets.

A strange smile curled at the corner of the young man's mouth. In the next instant, he moved to intercept it.

"Huff, huff, huff, huff..." Jiang Chen blew out countless times, as easily as breathing upon candles. The purple before him dimmed one by one.

But a single light among the crowd refused to halt and headed for his face.

His God's Eye locked onto it. His right hand opened suddenly, fingers clutching at empty space. Incredibly, the thunderbolt landed happily upon his palm.

Boom!

It exploded in a cloud of dust and smoke.

Hu Lei beamed, then cackled with pleasure. This Jiang Chen had been overconfident after all. It was utterly stupid to try to grasp his Violet Thunderbolt with bare hands!

Even if he wasn't dead, he would be severely crippled by now.

After a moment, the dust cleared. Jiang Chen stood right where he was, in the same pose he had been in – palm outstretched toward the sky.

A ball of violet electricity danced in the center of his hand, almost like it was cavorting with joy.

Jiang Chen was completely unscathed, right down to the details of his clothes and hair. Though the Violet Thunderbolt had apparently exploded, it had done absolutely nothing to him.

Hu Lei was blindsided by this development. Had his thunderbolt detonated at all?

The disastrous state the surroundings were in told him that, yes, it had.

But then why was Jiang Chen completely alright? Were he and the thunderbolt relatives or what?

Even a gust of wind would have messed up his hair, wouldn't it?

He felt common sense leave his mind. In fact, he was on the verge of going crazy.

Watching from nearby, Gan Ning felt his heart settle back down. He had looked on with considerable consternation, in fear that something might've gone wrong.

He had tried to guess many versions of what would happen, but what had actually transpired hadn't been one of them.

The expression on Hu Lei's face was a frozen grin, but he looked like he very much wanted to cry.

The other geniuses who observed from a distance furrowed their brows tightly when they saw the Violet Thunderbolt's ineffectiveness as well. Some of them were just like Hu Lei: unconvinced that Jiang Chen was worthy of his present fame, desirous of trampling him underfoot.

Seeing Hu Lei's powerlessness before their goal filled them with self-doubt. Could they really do any better?

"My turn, then?" Jiang Chen's smile was as smooth and easy as it had been when all this began.

Hu Lei had thought the Eternal genius was just feigning it before to mask his dread, but he believed this no longer. The more he looked at it, the more it seemed to hide the limitless unknown.

He became rather anxious. Given how capable Jiang Chen had been on the defense, if he was just as good on the offense, then...

And this from someone who was usually foreign to fear!

Jiang Chen flipped his hand over, materializing and expanding a great bell.

He couldn't control his other methods of attack very well. Using excessive force was a real possibility, and Hu Lei might not be able to survive.

If he only used his golden bell to suppress his opponent rather than activating its more powerful attacks, Hu Lei would probably be able to endure.

This was a trial, so killing was out of the question. Even accidentally killing his opponents was against the rules. Such was Jiang Chen's plan: to restrict Hu Lei's movements only.

"If you can escape from my golden bell's influence, then we'll call it a tie. If you can't, then you lose."

Hu Lei was surprised to see Jiang Chen use a great bell rather than a more lethal attack.

This was probably a restrictive treasure of some sort. As long as the attack wasn't too life-threatening, he was confident he could withstand it.

His tenseness relaxed somewhat.

"Alright. Let's see what this bell of yours can do." Hu Lei's tone had more bark than bite to it.

Jiang Chen nodded, then pushed the bell forward. It hummed loudly, shimmering with aureate light that enveloped where Hu Lei stood.

Hu Lei grinned, leering provocatively toward his opponent. Clearly, he considered Jiang Chen's use of the bell to be a gross underestimation of what the Polylore genius could do.

"Has it started yet?" Cackling, he made to jump out of the light's area of effect.

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

#### **Chapter 1989: Accepting One's Loss**

Hu Lei's high confidence stemmed from his abilities. As the characters of his name might suggest, he was as quick as thunder and lightning. This was another reason he'd dared challenge Jiang Chen in order to stomp on the Eternal genius.

Unfortunately, he was just beginning to discover the extent of his mistake.

He was fast, yes, but the golden light was even faster. As soon as it locked onto him, he realized that he couldn't elude its rays no matter how he moved. The bell loomed over him like an inexorable shadow.

Moreover, the light multiplied to make his body heavier and heavier. He could no longer move with any speed.

"This isn't good. There's something up with that golden bell!" Cold sweat dripped down Hu Lei's brow. He gritted his teeth, then slammed his body outwards once more in a last-ditch attempt to brute force his way out.

Alas, he underrated the restrictive powers of the golden bell. Once locked onto by its light, even a ninth level empyrean expert wouldn't necessarily be able to escape. Hu Lei wasn't anywhere close to that level.

Regardless of how strong his Violet Thunderbolt was, his true cultivation was near rather than at advanced empyrean. In other words, he was technically lower level than Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen could already crush any equal-level opponent. Hu Lei, his inferior, would be a pushover.

In fact, he was accustomed to taking on cultivators several levels stronger than him. In other words, he could probably handle four to five Hu Leis added together.

The bell descended closer and closer to the ground, intensifying its binding force all the while.

Clang!

It landed with a resounding thud, enclosing Hu Lei completely within.

The geniuses watching from all around paled, their hearts sinking in apprehension.

Before this, many of them had hoped to defeat Jiang Chen in order to make a name for themselves. They were abandoning that idea in droves now.

Someone like this wasn't remotely viable to challenge.

Hu Lei was worthy of being ranked among the ten sacred lands' best. And what had happened to him? A face full of dust and extremely convincing defeat.

The bell raised up a little bit, allowing a disheveled Hu Lei to get back up.

"So, what do you think?" Jiang Chen asked evenly.

Though Hu Lei tended to be a bit obnoxious, he knew he had to surrender here. If Jiang Chen didn't take the bell away, he couldn't do much more than curl up inside and take a nap.

A little miffed, he admitted his loss with some chagrin. "You win this time. Still, I'm not entirely satisfied that you're better than me. I feel like I've been tricked. If we fought for real, I'm not so sure I'd lose."

He didn't want to yield, despite his failure.

Jiang Chen laughed. There wasn't much point in arguing. "Well, a bet's a bet. You going to make good on your promise?"

If Hu Lei wanted to insist his own competence, who was Jiang Chen to forbid him?

Jiang Chen was fine with just getting results. Starting a dispute over the small details was senseless. The bell loosened, releasing its grip on Hu Lei's body.

It took a while for the Polylore genius to snap out of his reverie. He took out two orbs from among his belongings with some annoyance. "This is all I have. Take it."

Jiang Chen happily accepted. He wasn't going to let Hu Lei go just yet though. He affixed him with a scrutinizing look.

Hu Lei stared back with some dissatisfaction, but there was nothing for it. He walked up to Gan Ning. "Sorry about that."

His apology was clearly insincere, but Jiang Chen had wanted only token acknowledgment.

Aside from this, material compensation was required as well. Hu Lei took out a storage ring. "Here's something for your trouble."

He had a lot of pent-up anger inside, but what could he do? He had lost a bet, fair and square.

Gan Ning looked at Jiang Chen with some embarrassment.

Jiang Chen smiled coolly. "Take it. I doubt the Polylore Sacred Land's geniuses are so poor they can't spare one gift."

Reassured, Gan Ning accepted the ring without ceremony.

Hu Lei harrumphed. "Remember, I only apologized because of your senior brother. You're nothing special yourself."

He snuck a furtive look at Jiang Chen once more as he said this, irritated by what he had just done. He stamped his foot down hard, then turned his back.

"Hold on," Jiang Chen exclaimed suddenly.

"What else do you want?" Hu Lei scowled.

Jiang Chen tossed him the Whip of Violet Thunder with a flourish. "It's a waste for me to keep what's yours. You can have it back. You obviously spent a lot of time on this treasure, and I think it'll be best if you take it. Why should I rob another of his favorite item?"

Mildly taken aback, Hu Lei caught his whip almost without thinking. He had thought of asking for it, but wasn't thick-skinned enough to do so after losing the bet.

That Jiang Chen returned it to him of his own volition was really quite generous. Much of his residual resentment was abruptly mollified.

He looked at Jiang Chen once more with some confusion, then cupped a fist and turned to depart.

"We should leave as well." Jiang Chen called out to Gan Ning.

The other youth nodded, then followed his senior brother by exiting the scene.

The geniuses watching from afar had dispersed already. Many of them were even more wary of Jiang Chen now, apprehensive of the possibility that they might run into him and have their orbs confiscated.

What were they going to do if they fell into his hands? Refuse a request for their orbs? Hu Lei was plenty strong, but had capitulated easily before Jiang Chen's might.

Gan Ning and Jiang Chen headed out a lengthy distance before they slowed their footsteps.

"Thanks a lot for the help, senior brother Jiang Chen." Gan Ning was genuinely grateful.

"I was a bit late, honestly. You wouldn't have suffered if I had come earlier. Our present priority though, is to find Wu You."

The third member of their team was nowhere to be found. However, Wu You's speed meant that he was probably in better shape.

Seeing that Gan Ning was still a bit downcast, Jiang Chen consoled him. "Hu Lei is very capable among the ten sacred lands' younger generation. There's no shame for having lost to him. Work hard on your cultivation so you can beat him at some point in the future. There's no progress without realizing one's own insufficiency."

"I'm not ashamed of losing to Hu Lei," Gan Ning sighed. "Rather, I feel like my weakness is dragging you down."

## Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

### **Chapter 1990: A Blissful Gan Ning**

Gan Ning had a bellyful of questions he wanted to blurt out. For example, was the golden rat that had saved him a spirit creature under Jiang Chen's command?

In addition, the senior brother had dealt swiftly with Hu Lei like an adult punishing a child. The power gap between them was substantial. What amazing heights had the senior brother reached with his cultivation?

Jiang Chen hadn't even ascended to empyrean when Gan Ning had sparred with him back in the Eternal Sacred Land. It hadn't been that many years. This rate of progress was simply unbelievable!

Jiang Chen had defeated the arrogant Xiahou Zong in the sword competition, but it hadn't been an easy fight. He hadn't always had the upper hand.

This time though, Jiang Chen hadn't even broken a sweat when facing Hu Lei. He'd toyed with the Polylore genius like a cat would a mouse. Anyone with eyes could identify the large gap between the two contestants, even if Hu Lei didn't care to admit it.

Nevertheless, Gan Ning was clever enough to know there were questions he shouldn't ask.

Jiang Chen brought Gan Ning to a relatively remote area.

"We'll stay put here for the night. Tomorrow, we'll meet up with Wu You."

"You have word from senior brother Wu You?" Gan Ning asked curiously.

"Not yet," muttered Jiang Chen, almost to himself. "But I should soon?"

Gan Ning could now almost guarantee that the golden rat was under Jiang Chen's command. It was probably how his senior brother had found him so quickly.

Jiang Chen laid down on a thick tree branch with his eyes closed, radiating leisureness. Gan Ning had difficulty quieting his mind. He kept standing up to look around.

In the end, he stayed on his feet, intending to keep watch.

Jiang Chen opened his eyes when he heard the noise that Gan Ning was making.

"Aren't you going to get some rest? We'll be here for half a month. There's no need for you to stay alert twenty-four hours a day. Conserve your energy."

"I'm not powerful enough to be of help," Gan Ning admitted guiltily. "At least I can stay on guard for you."

Jiang Chen waved a dismissive hand. "There's no need. Rest well. No one will come near us. Even if they do, I'll know beforehand. You don't have to worry too much."

"By the way, did you get any orbs?" he added.

Gan Ning nodded dejectedly. "I got lucky and found one."



“That’s good. We’ve only been here for a day.” Jiang Chen hadn’t expected Gan Ning to have found any.

“How many do you have, senior brother?”

Jiang Chen smiled. “Six.”

“What? Six??” Gan Ning was surprised. “You took two from Hu Lei, which means you’ve collected four in only a day?”

That was indeed the case, but Jiang Chen wasn’t satisfied yet with his findings.

He felt that after half a month, the orbs wouldn’t be evenly distributed, but concentrated in a few individuals’ possession.

The most powerful cultivators would have a disproportionately large number of orbs, while the weaker ones were left with none.

After all, competitions were cruel. The rules prohibited murder and looting, but anything else was allowed. Most of the orbs would be monopolized by a few cultivators, and they would be the fiercest of contestants.

There were six hundred orbs in total. If the orbs did end up falling into the hands of a few, it’d be next to impossible to win the first place as a team with only dozens of orbs.

This was the highest ranking competition for the ten sacred lands. Too many remarkable geniuses were gathered here.

The night was uneventful, which Gan Ning found hard to believe. Night time was perfect for evils to strike. He hadn’t expected it to be so peaceful. If he hadn’t met up with Jiang Chen, he wouldn’t have had near such a pleasant time.

“Senior brother Jiang Chen, what’s the plan for today?” Gan Ning now had the utmost respect for Jiang Chen. He sounded unusually deferential.

“Follow me.” Jiang Chen didn’t explain. “If you find any orbs, they’re yours. I’m not going to take them from you.”

“What?” Gan Ning hurriedly explained, “You should get priority over the orbs, senior brother. I don’t care about my ranking. As long as our total score is among the top three, we’ll get the extra points, which is good enough for me.”

Jiang Chen grinned. “Don’t be so polite with me. I can get orbs myself. I don’t need to take anything from you.”

It dawned on Gan Ning that Jiang Chen was being completely honest. He was overwhelmed by a myriad of emotions.

He’d always been the rebellious sort, but he couldn’t not respect Jiang Chen.

It was the Eternal Sacred Land’s great fortune to have a leading figure like Jiang Chen. Back when the sacred land’s youths were led by the Five Great Gentlemen, not even Sui Chen had been able to garner the others’ submission. Therefore, the Five Great Gentlemen had never been a united team.

Now that Jiang Chen had become the 'boss' of the youths, he'd do not only a decent job, but a great job given his character and approach.

Over time, Gan Ning realized with great surprise that Jiang Chen could always find orbs hidden in the most obscure of places. Since the morning, they'd already found two orbs from hidden corners.

As promised, Jiang Chen let Gan Ning have the orbs, which rather embarrassed the latter.

However, it was clear that his senior brother didn't intend to take them.

When noon came, Gan Ning was in noticeable high spirits. Out of the blue, Jiang Chen said, "Let's change directions. Trouble await us up north."

Gan Ning was flabbergasted. How did Jiang Chen knew there were troubles ahead on such an undeveloped island? Could he predict the future? Or was he sensitive enough to detect the enemies?

Jiang Chen didn't explain, and Gan Ning didn't need him to. He believed Jiang Chen must have based his decision on solid reasoning.

He followed Jiang Chen to the west.

.....

"Damn it, does he have the nose of a hound? How can he be so sensitive? Did he know we've set up an ambush for him?"

Not far to the north, a few cultivators looked into the distance with venomous eyes. They'd set up a trap for their prey, but their prey had taken a turn right before setting foot into it!