

Three Realms 2071

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

Chapter 2071: Stalemate

Divine Kasyapa was astonished to hear Jiang Chen's voice. He didn't expect his grandson-in-law's appearance here. Shouldn't Jiang Chen be in some secret realm at the competition of geniuses? Was this some kind of doppelganger?

The sad end the fallow cultivator had met however, reassured him that Jiang Chen had returned with considerable aid.

He immediately felt much more at ease. If Jiang Chen could hold up the bald god, he was confident he could hold both enforcers off at once.

Daylight had suddenly broken through sinister clouds.

Jiang Chen smiled at Divine Kasyapa as he circled back. "Honored divine, how have you been?"

Divine Kasyapa considered the young man with brilliant eyes. "How unexpected." He chuckled.

"What didn't you expect, senior?" Jiang Chen grinned in reply.

"How unexpected that the dimwit Lightford would be so generous as to let you out." Divine Kasyapa's expression was full of mirthful derision.

Jiang Chen chuckled as well. "He was far from generous. But the tricks he tried to pull were too low-level. A so-called Prismatic Convergence Formation, some mist, and a completely insincere ambush. In what world can they possibly hold up the ten sacred lands' best experts?"

The two enforcers felt their heart rates rise rapidly. Both men flushed deeply.

Something as strong as the Prismatic Convergence Formation was being called 'low-level'? Since when were the ten sacred lands that strong?

That didn't sound right.

Both enforcers began to hesitate. They wanted to rush back and report this news immediately to their master. After all, Lightford was probably still in the dark about the fact that the ten sacred lands' people had escaped from Sandplain.

He had certainly been unaware when they'd first left. Perhaps the information had reached him by now?

Still, they'd carefully researched the sacred lands' capabilities and had come to the consensus that the Prismatic Convergence Formation was sufficient to completely foil them, to say nothing of the complex toxins in the roiling mist behind it.

And yet, the ten sacred lands had gotten out with an almost trivial ease!

How trustworthy were this Jiang Chen's words? Was he merely feigning confidence?

But if he was, why was he even here in the first place? How would he know of their arrangements near Sandplain?

The enforcers traded ponderous looks. Both men were uncertain about a great many things.

Divine Kasyapa was very pleased to hear what Jiang Chen had to say. He was happy with anything that would upset old fart Lightford.

“Good, good, good. I assume that dullard Lightford knows about it by now. I’d really like to see his frustration for myself.”

Divine Kasyapa intentionally exaggerated his tone as he swept his gaze across the two enforcers.

“Jiang Chen.” He laughed. “Enforcers Goldie and Silver here are old bastard Lightford’s loyal hounds. If you can get rid of them, you’ll have dealt a serious blow to him.”

“Oh? The Eternal Sacred Land has much more clout than I thought. This ‘old bastard Lightford’ you mention... where is he from?”

Jiang Chen didn’t mind using the same nickname Kasyapa did. This was an enemy of his for sure, and angering his lackeys was of no consequence.

The enforcer in gold scowled. “Are you disrespecting Master Lightford, kid? Are you courting death?”

Jiang Chen shrugged, then turned to his dao partner’s grandfather. “So what’s his story, exactly?”

“Heh, old bastard Lightford has spent countless years in the Boundless Prison. He’s always lorded it over the others there. These two dogs of his have helped him gather a number of people to his side. Most of the escapees from the prison are likely the same way by now. He invited me in the past as well, but I’ve no interest in being anyone’s dog.”

“How many gods does he have under his command?” Jiang Chen transmitted.

“I’m not sure, exactly. No one knows how many prisoners managed to escape. However, there’s barely any left who haven’t joined old Lightford. Apart, they’re not much of a threat to the ten sacred lands, but that’s not the case right now—especially if Lightford is brewing some conspiracy or another.”

Jiang Chen nodded. From what the divine was saying, the cultivators who had joined Master Lightford were superior to the ten sacred lands in terms of raw strength.

What they lacked were resources and a foundation. If they defeated the ten sacred lands, both would be theirs in due time.

This meant that even Divine Kasyapa’s hiding place wasn’t necessarily safe anymore. An ambitious man like Lightford would plunge Myriad Abyss into chaos once again.

Why was the old bastard mucking up already murky waters? Couldn’t he see there was already enough trouble?

Myriad Abyss Island barely had any time left to waste. It couldn’t afford further strife; expending its energies on civil war rather than reinforcing the precarious situation in the offworld battlefields spelled doom for the archipelago’s future.

He tossed a nasty look toward the enforcers.

“I’m letting you two lapdogs return to your master to inform him that Myriad Abyss Island is besieged from both the inside and out,” he declared icily. “If you insist on opposing the ten sacred lands, you will only benefit your enemies.”

“Hmph. When the master rules over the entirety of Myriad Abyss, he will crush those outside enemies in turn. What do you have to worry about, brat?”

“Your master, rule over the whole of Myriad Abyss? Does he have the ability to do such a thing?” Jiang Chen snickered.

“Our master is a mid divine realm cultivator. Does the ten sacred lands have anyone that can rival him?” the enforcer in gold cackled. “You’re prancing about now, but when he arrives on the scene, you’ll all fall in a single flourish. The master is simply busy with cultivation right now.”

Evidently, the two enforcers worshiped their master with an almost blind fervor.

Jiang Chen laughed. “Mid divine realm is remarkable, sure, but to think himself invincible is utterly foolish. If your master really is that strong, why did your trap on Sandplain fall apart so easily? Shouldn’t your plans have gone through both there and here?”

There was still a dim hope that Myriad Abyss could be spared from warfare.

Once the fighting began, the situation would spiral more and more out of control.

Unfortunately, the enemy’s tone sounded like such a thing was completely out of question.

Divine Kasyapa sighed softly. “Jiang Chen, your preaching won’t work on Lightford, that old, deaf bastard. All his life, he’s only ever taken and taken, without giving an inch to anyone!”

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Chapter 2072: No Way Ou

An Kasyapa had crossed paths several times with Lightford in the Boundless Prison. He knew the man well. Lightford wasn’t a benevolent man. He couldn’t be reasoned with.

As long as he could achieve his ambitions, he wouldn’t hesitate to sacrifice everyone else in the world.

Therefore, Kasyapa didn’t agree with Jiang Chen’s idea. If the young man intended to negotiate with Lightford, it wouldn’t end well for him.

Noting his reaction, Jiang Chen gave Kasyapa a questioning look.

“Don’t think about negotiating for peace and don’t expect him to care about humanity. No one even knows if he’s human.”

Those words hit Jiang Chen over the head. His heart sank.

That’s right. Lightford escaped from the Boundless Prison, which imprisons other races and even offworld captives as well. Who knows what Lightford is?

Given the circumstances, it was impossible to change Lightford's mind by bringing up the big picture of Myriad Abyss.

"Is Lightford going to be the ten sacred lands' worst enemy no matter what, Divine Kasyapa?" transmitted Jiang Chen.

"From my understanding of Lightford, he'll launch an all out attack on the ten sacred lands after exiting closed door cultivation. In fact, I believe many sacred lands have fallen into his hands already. It's said that he's sent out all his elites in this attack. None of the divine forefathers were in their respective territory. The ten sacred lands are in real trouble."

"The ten forefathers broke out a few days ago," Jiang Chen reminded him.

"And then? They haven't returned to their own sacred lands, have they?" pressed Kasyapa.

"No, they haven't. I didn't think we should split up, neither did many of the forefathers. They'd reached a consensus to fight as a collective."

Kasyapa nodded. "You made the right decision. If you'd split up, you'll be picked off one by one. Then you won't be able to win no matter how powerful you are."

"Is Lightford really that powerful, Divine Kasyapa?" Jiang Chen couldn't help but ask.

"Three of me are only enough to rival him. To win, we'll need five cultivators at my level."

Jiang Chen knew how powerful Divine Kasyapa was. Not even Eternal's forefather was his match. And yet the divine master said they could only defeat Lightford with five cultivators at his level!

Their enemy was indeed much more powerful than they'd expected. Even Jiang Chen felt a bit of pressure.

Nonetheless, the Vermilion Bird and the Black Tortoise were both divine realm creatures, while the dragon and the Astral White Tiger had reached empyrean realm. Jiang Chen wasn't intimidated by Lightford.

He'd be even less concerned if the dragon ascended to divinity earlier.

Once the White Tiger broke through as well, Jiang Chen would be unrivaled in Myriad Abyss, nay, the entire Divine Abyss Continent!

Once all four of the sacred spirit creatures had ascended to divinity, their combined power would rival an advanced divine cultivator. A mid-level divine would pose no threat.

Long Xiaoxuan was at advanced empyrean realm. It wouldn't take long for him to reach ninth level empyrean. In comparison, Little White was at a lower level, but as he awakened, his power would only continue to rise.

According to Jiang Chen's estimates, the two spirit creatures would be able to reach divinity not too long after with his help. He hoped their ascension would happen before the demons attacked and the offworld invaders entered.

But it seemed that they wouldn't ascend in time to deal with Lightford.

That didn't disappoint Jiang Chen too much. He knew Lightford was strong, but he wasn't that much of a threat faced with two divine sacred beasts.

If they could strike a serious blow on Lightford's forces, it'd impact Lightford as well.

Lightford's subordinates were all from the Boundless Prison. Once they died, they couldn't be replenished.

That was the fugitives' biggest weakness. They had no roots here, no way to produce descendants or cultivate talents.

Jiang Chen threw the two guards a glance.

"Divine Kasyapa, what are the odds of us taking down the two enforcers in a fight?"

"Take them down?" Divine Kasyapa lowered his eyes in contemplation. The idea appealed to him very much. He knew there would be no peace between him and Lightford.

Given the opportunity, Lightford wouldn't hesitate to come after Kasyapa first. Therefore, he didn't want to forgo this chance.

Giving the idea a second thought though, he recognized how difficult it would be. He knew Jiang Chen had a divine sacred beast as his companion, which was equivalent to one and a half of a divine cultivator.

An Kasyapa could rival one and a half of them, as well.

That made their combined power the equivalent of three divine cultivators.

With one of their enemies dead, three remained. Under the circumstances, they would be able to rival the enemies, but capturing them or killing them was another story.

Divine Kasyapa wasn't so confident that he'd blatantly disregard reality. He shared his analysis with Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen smiled. "What if I have two divine sacred beasts on my side? Would that be enough?"

"Two? At the same level?" Intrigued, Divine Kasyapa stared at Jiang Chen in disbelief.

"About the same level, and they work well together." Jiang Chen chuckled. "Of course, I can contribute my power as well. If it's only about stopping them from leaving, I can contribute as much as a divine cultivator."

According to Jiang Chen's estimation, he, Long Xiaoxuan, and Little White combined was enough to rival a divine cultivator.

In total, their side could take on at least five divine cultivators, more than enough for the enemy.

To better grasp the situation, Divine Kasyapa said, "Your true dragon was only advanced empyrean when I last saw it. Has it ascended to divinity already?"

The true dragons were a formidable bunch, but that was too quick even for their kind. This went completely beyond Kasyapa's expectations.

“No, not the true dragon. The dragon and I combined can act like a divine cultivator. I was talking about another sacred beast.”

Kasyapa was rendered speechless. He gaped at Jiang Chen with wide eyes. Just how many sacred beasts had his grandson-in-law recruited?

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Chapter 2073: Fighting Flares Anew

Divine Kasyapa knew that Jiang Chen never spoke lightly about this kind of thing. The god considered the situation, then transmitted back, “If we have as much fighting power as you say, I’m eighty percent sure we can keep all three from leaving. Killing two is even easier.”

The old man couldn’t guarantee killing all three. After all, there were many coincidental factors to take into account as well.

On the field of battle, a lot of unexpected things could and would happen, such as unforeseen battle strength or the enemy’s sudden retreat.

Taking them into account, Kasyapa believed that an eighty percent chance was more reasonable. It wasn’t the first time he’d dealt with these cultivators.

As it happened, both sides were embroiled in strategy.

The bald cultivator was rather apprehensive after seeing his companion captured. However, the two enforcers gave him no room for compromise.

His opinion was of no value whatsoever here. Though if he could have his way, he’d rather make a run for it.

In truth, the bald cultivator rather admired Divine Kasyapa. Compared to Master Lightford, the former was a much more honorable man.

He had joined Lightford almost entirely due to intimidation and threat. As such, he didn’t particularly want to fight.

This was a key difference between him and the sallow cultivator. The latter had always spearheaded the initiative against the Eternal Sacred Land, while he was much more of a follower out of necessity.

“Daoist Yu, when the fighting starts again, you should feint against young Jiang Chen. Beware of his feathered friend. We will take on An Kasyapa. When we have him at a standstill, you come help us. We’ll kill him as quickly as possible. Once that happens, Jiang Chen and his bird are nothing to be afraid of!”

The gold enforcer was a man that hungered for battle. How could he return to Master Lightford as things were after such a loss?

They needed to turn this battle around. If the two enforcers themselves couldn’t take down a single sacred land, their influence would surely suffer for it.

Master Lightford had relied on fear to command his subordinates from the start. If they couldn't sufficiently awe their followers into future action, their thoughts would wander elsewhere.

"Why aren't you talking, Daoist Yu?" the silver enforcer glared at the bald man.

"Venerated enforcers," the bald cultivator sputtered, "I have no problem with the plan. It's just... my comrade died in a rather strange way. I wonder whether our enemy has other underhanded methods up his sleeve?"

"Who cares about that? Listen to our orders and we'll get it done. The faster An Kasyapa dies, the faster we'll win." The gold enforcer clearly didn't want to talk about it any more.

"What if that bird comes to help?" asked the bald cultivator.

"Hmph. We have so many other subordinates here that we can simply fend it off for a bit. Are these demigods all trash? Why can't they do some work when we need them?" snapped the silver enforcer with displeasure.

The bald cultivator sighed softly. The two enforcers were so bent on fighting that nothing he said would get through to them. "I will do my best." He nodded.

Despite saying so, he already had other plans. If things began to go south, there was no way he would embroil himself in the duo's foolish ideas.

He wasn't about to pony up his life for the sake of Lightford's ambition. After witnessing his companion's death firsthand, he wasn't about to follow in the other man's footsteps.

"Alright, get ready," the gold enforcer commanded. "Daoist Yu, if you do well here, we will offer great praise for you before Master Lightford. He will definitely promote you because of your contribution. Don't you want to rule over a sacred land of your own?"

This was a tempting offer.

Still, the bald cultivator was moved for only an instant. However attractive that delusion was, he discarded it immediately.

This was an attempt to boost morale before battle. Only a fool would believe an empty promise like this.

The ten sacred lands were all extremely crucial. Master Lightford would only place his most trusted lieutenants over them. His turn would never come.

The bald cultivator didn't think he was either strong or appropriate enough for the role.

He became warier of the enforcers because of this. If they could pretend to give him this kind of carte blanche, they certainly wouldn't hesitate to use him as cannon fodder when it came time.

Yes, he definitely needed to have an escape plan.

Divine Kasyapa laughed from the other side suddenly. "You three, I only need a single word for war or peace. If you want to get out of here, do so immediately. If you want to fight, then come on."

The gold enforcer sneered, “An Kasyapa, don’t pretend such calm in front of me. We have three gods. You and the bird make only two. Furthermore, we have many demigods on our side. Do you really think you can possibly win?”

Divine Kasyapa roared with laughter. “If you truly believed I can’t win, you would’ve come at me a long time ago. Why are you there muttering still? Is that cowardice I taste?”

The enforcer in gold grew furious. “An Kasyapa, you’ve always disrespected Master Lightford. Do you dare take us brothers on?”

The divine snickered. “Do you think I’m afraid of you?” He pointed his trident at the three gods. “Even if all three of you attacked me, what do I have to be concerned about?”

The two enforcers lunged toward Divine Kasyapa without further ado.

They were slightly inferior to Divine Kasyapa in terms of cultivation, and absolutely no match individually against him.

However, they were excellent at teamwork. Their synchronicity was a big help in battle, greatly increasing their actual fighting strength.

The three gods met in midair, form jumbling against form.

Their sweeping attacks whipped up air currents and dimmed the celestial light. Space was ripped and torn all around them with such volume, it was as if apocalypse had come.

The bald cultivator didn’t forget his responsibility. His broad body charged toward Jiang Chen.

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Chapter 2074: Continual Schemes

Jiang Chen wasn’t the least intimidated by the bald cultivator. With the Kunpeng Meteoric Escape, he flashed out of the way.

The bald cultivator hadn’t forgotten that his job was to keep the sacred beast occupied. He blinked when Jiang Chen backed away and didn’t give chase. Instead, he stared doggedly at the Vermilion Bird.

He expected the bird to follow Jiang Chen’s footsteps as a contracted spirit. Yet it didn’t move at all, its eyes locking with his. It was as if the bird didn’t care that Jiang Chen had fled and wasn’t interested in protecting the human at all.

This took the bald cultivator by surprise.

Before he could find an explanation, Jiang Chen had drawn his Holy Dragon Bow and emitted a dragon howl. “Take this, Baldy!”

Jiang Chen wasn’t the man he’d once been. In battles, he could now rival an initial divine.

His cultivation might fall short, but his experience and agile mind enabled him to make judgements as well as any regular divine cultivator.

The bald man wasn't a particularly powerful god, or he wouldn't have played an assistive role to his fallow companion.

The sound of splitting air foretold the might of the arrow. He took the threat seriously and dodged the arrow with a flash of his form.

A flap of the Vermilion Bird's wings made its tail feathers stand on end. Its body radiated intense light like a blazing sun. A terrifying wave of heat rolled outward, with it as the center.

The bald cultivator suddenly felt too warm.

Even without a real fight, he sensed how much more powerful the sacred beast was compared to him. He was a man who knew when to cut his losses.

Flipping backwards, he landed a good distance away instead of fighting the bird head-on. He tightened his hands around his heavy weapon, staring at the bird warily, dreading it.

The bald cultivator was strongly built, but his reluctance to fight was clear. One could even say that he was afraid of dying.

Jiang Chen was observant enough to tell from the man's reaction that he wasn't devoted to this fight. At least, he wasn't ready to fight to the death at the moment.

As for the reasons why, Jiang Chen didn't really care.

Making a hand seal, Jiang Chen manifested the Taiji Pisces Swords over his head. The yin and yang swords seemed to create a world of their own. They roamed and twisted in the air like fish of opposite colors.

Suddenly, the swords crossed and formed two intersecting slashes, splitting the air and striking at the bald cultivator.

The swords were divine weapons, and this yin yang sword method the most sophisticated in the world, incorporating the most profound of mysteries into it.

The swords were unstoppable. The bald cultivator sucked in a breath at the sight of such terrifying might. With a whip of his heavy weapon, he glided through the sky and dove down.

He knew he couldn't fall into the circle formed by Jiang Chen and the sacred beast. Things wouldn't end well for him otherwise.

Terror overwhelmed him. He'd thought that Jiang Chen wouldn't be that much of a threat, and that the real danger would be from the Vermilion Bird.

How wrong he'd been! Jiang Chen was more than powerful enough to kill him. Even though he was a divine cultivator, the twin swords could casually bisect him if he wasn't careful.

"This young man is something else! His attack can rival a divine cultivator when he himself is but an advanced empyrean cultivator. How does he do that?"

He was curious, but this wasn't the time for such curiosity.

A misstep here might mean the difference between life and death. He didn't dare grow careless.

Neither forwards nor backwards was an option.

Going down was the only way out. He'd forgotten about the two guards' plan, nor did he remember their orders.

He could barely keep himself alive. How could he possibly help the two enforcers take on Divine Kasyapa? Besides, Jiang Chen and the sacred beast wouldn't let him go easily either.

He cursed under his breath. The two enforcers had said they would order the demigod cultivators to keep Jiang Chen and the Vermilion Bird occupied, but the demigods hadn't followed the order. He was the young man and the sacred beast's only target.

The bald cultivator was a big, bulky man. Speed wasn't his forte. As he dove down, he noticed that neither Jiang Chen or the bird were advancing on him.

That ignited a spark of hope in his heart, but very quickly, his excitement gave way to an indescribable fear. His body was becoming heavier and heavier. In the end, his plunge downwards wasn't under his own control anymore.

"Damn it, what's going on?" He was reminded of what had happened to the sallow cultivator. Alarm bells went off in his head.

However, his body already seemed to weigh tens of thousands of kilograms once he realized the problem. When he tried to move up or to the side, he realized with shock that his speed had dropped to one tenth of normal.

The discovery overwhelmed him with horrified fear.

He noticed then that the Vermilion Bird and Jiang Chen had stopped approaching him and instead gone in the opposite direction.

Before he could say anything, a tall wave of angry heat came out of nowhere and devoured him.

The enforcers in gold and silver robes were engaged in an intense fight with Divine Kasyapa. The two brothers had gained the upper hand. If the bald cultivator joined the fight, the three of them would be able to defeat An Kasyapa.

But baldy never showed up. The brothers were furious. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity!

Wondering what was going on, they snuck glances at the direction the bald cultivator should be in. However, they could see nothing but a sea of red waves of terrifying heat. They couldn't even detect anything with their consciousness. It was as if the bald cultivator was fighting in a completely separate world, out of the range of their senses.

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Chapter 2075: The Tragic Enforcers

"Damn it, is that bald man trustworthy or not?" The gold-clad enforcer began to doubt.

This was the perfect chance for the man to come to their aid, but no matter how long they waited, nothing was forthcoming. Moreover, the crimson heat wave seemed to be growing ever more intense.

In only a few breaths of time, red clouds had expanded to cover every inch of the sky. Waves of scorching heat rolled and slammed toward them. It felt as if they were thrown into a kiln and enveloped by the heat.

The sudden turn of events made them lose their composure.

“Why is this happening?”

When they finally recovered enough to look up, the Vermilion Bird had morphed into a behemoth in the sky, its presence as tremendous as a blazing sun. Terrifying waves of heat scorched toward the two brothers with increasing velocity and density, interweaving into a web of fire.

Divine Kasyapa knew Jiang Chen must have taken care of the bald cultivator. He laughed heartily and flashed out of the battlefield.

The two enforcers could barely stay alive. They couldn’t even spare a glance for Kasyapa. They struggled mightily to defend against the bird’s relentless attacks.

“We’ve been played, big brother! That bald bastard didn’t do his job!” spat out the silver-clad enforcer through gritted teeth. Not only hadn’t the Vermilion Bird been delayed, it’d come and trapped them.

Jiang Chen hovered in the air and laughed. “Discretion is the better part of valor, folks. Your companion has surrendered to the Eternal Sacred Land. The heavens look favorably upon preserving life. If you two choose the right side of history and pledge to be my faithful servants, not only will I let you live, I promise you’ll have a better future than you do serving the old bastard Lightford.”

His tone was both casual and mocking.

The two enforcers raged and snapped, “Who do you think you are, brat?! You think you’re good enough to turn us? My brother and I are loyal only to Master Lightford. Our devotion has stood the test of heaven and earth.”

Jiang Chen snorted. “I wonder what he’s given you to win your undying loyalty. What’s the point though? Your lives are in danger. Is he coming to save you?”

“Talk all you want! Do you think a sacred beast will be enough to take us down?” The enforcer in gold looked serious, but not afraid.

It was clear that he wasn’t yet intimidated.

The brothers exchanged a glance and reached an unspoken understanding. They crossed their hands and made several hand seals, deploying a secret method.

Divine Kasyapa’s eyes glinted as he shouted, “Watch out! They’re going to escape with a secret method. We’ll each seal off a cardinal direction and stop them!”

The powerful divine flourished his arms and manifested layers of barriers in the air, continuously reinforcing the barricade.

The Vermilion Bird put everything it had into spewing scorching air torrents, forcing the two enforcers to spare more effort to deal with its attacks.

Jiang Chen repeatedly jabbed at the air, creating suspended runes in all directions as another layer of defense.

Simultaneously, he summoned the golden bell with a wave of his hand, bringing about layers of golden clouds as it dropped down.

The ancient glyphs on the golden bell danced and leapt, radiating a strange, disorienting energy. The presence of a primordial aura made the bell seem even more sacred and holy.

“Ancient golden bell imbued with the might of the heavens, suppress them!” Jiang Chen sent the bell to capture the two brothers with incredible speed, interrupting their attempt to deploy the secret method.

“Celestial fire set the aeons aflame and reduce the world to char! Burn! Burn! Burn!” The Vermilion Bird continuously spat fire, creating tidal wave upon tidal wave of flame.

After fully deploying the secret method, the two men slowly changed form into two streaks of light with an edge as keen as a blade. They were sharp and unstoppable.

They shot into the sky.

“Hmph! You want to leave!?” Jiang Chen could see them well. He sent the bell ramming towards the light.

The extraordinary bell wouldn't be broken by any sharp edge. The gold and silver blades scored a direct hit and filled the air with sparks and an agonizing explosion of light. The bell rumbled at the impact. The sound rolled and echoed, sending shockwaves outwards.

The two enforcers failed to penetrate the bell and the counter force sent them flying backwards. They morphed back into human forms, their secret method dispelled.

The scene took even Divine Kasyapa by surprise. The bell's defenses were shocking!

No wonder Jiang Chen had reached such heights at such a young age! His offensive and defensive power absolutely rivaled an initial divine cultivator!

The two enforcers scowled, their eyes glinting with defiance. Shooting the bell a glare, they exchanged a nod and activated the secret method again. The two blades dived down toward the earth.

Obviously the sky wasn't the way to go. Their enemies had sealed off that escape route and could overpower them. It'd be unwise to try flying away.

However, their secret method allowed them to escape through the earth without slowing down.

The brothers didn't hesitate to execute their plan.

It was imperative for them to take the initiative. Their enemies wouldn't expect them to go down, and it'd be too late to stop them when it became apparent what they wanted to do.

They were confident that they'd be able to escape. Though they were reluctant to just flee, they had no other choices.

The two of them weren't enough to turn the tide. With An Kasyapa's help, the Eternal Sacred Land was now a big enough threat that only Master Lightford himself could eliminate.

Therefore, they had to flee and report back, having their master make the decision and lead them.

The two blades dived down at a speed that was double that of the bald cultivator's. This speed was the source of their confidence in a successful escape.

However, they met the same fate as their companion. As they drew closer and closer to the earth, their bodies grew heavier and heavier.

Clink!

They hit an invisible force with two ghastly collisions, sending sparks flying again. The impact left them completely disoriented.

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Chapter 2076: No Suspense At All

The brothers had thought they'd stand a good chance of escaping underground as long as they seized the initiative.

They didn't expect the earth to be so impenetrable. The impact left them completely disoriented. It felt as if their brains had been knocked clean out of their skulls.

The delay made them lose all hope of escaping. All possible routes were now sealed off.

The double collisions had also greatly injured their physical bodies. They could at least see the golden bell the first time. This time around however, they didn't even know what had happened.

Had the dirt been turned into gold with some secret method? Why was it so impenetrable that even their keenly sharp escape method had failed?

Once the mist covering the area dissipated and their eyesight cleared, they realized that they'd dove into a giant obstacle. It lay on the ground, resembling an oval shield from afar.

Bizarre patterns covered the surface. It seemed to burst with vitality.

Suddenly, the strange shield moved. Something emerged from the top, bottom, and both sides of the shield. It was a living creature!

The two enforcers gaped. It suddenly dawned on them that they'd been blocked by a living being! It looked like a turtle, but there was something different about it.

Its tail sprouted seemingly endlessly, looking explosively powerful like a steel whip. Its four limbs were thick and mighty as well. Its head looked not unlike that of a true dragon, but it didn't have the requisite whiskers.

With a push of its limbs, it reared to its feet. The thick limbs and behemoth body made it look like an ancient giant emerging from the ground. Its shell was the spirit creature's most recognizable feature.

Divine Kasyapa looked down at it with shock and disbelief. He'd seen descriptions about such a creature in ancient texts. This was the Black Tortoise!

His breathing quickened and his eyes flashed with unidentifiable emotions as they settled on Jiang Chen. There was something unusual about the young man that he couldn't quite put his finger on.

The Vermilion Bird, the True Dragon, and now, the Black Tortoise. Jiang Chen had collected almost all of the four divine beasts!

Was that his intention?

As far as Kasyapa knew, Jiang Chen had only the Astral White Tiger left to locate.

He laughed. Finally, he understood why Jiang Chen was so confident and why the young man had said he could call on the battle strength of two gods.

The Black Tortoise's defensive abilities were heaven-defying.

On the defensive front alone, the tortoise had exceeded An Kasyapa. Not even Lightford himself would necessarily be able to break through its defenses.

The Black Tortoise was a divine beast particularly specialized in defense. It might fall short on the offensive side compared to the other divine beasts, but it ranked top in defense. Its tortoise-like shell alone was almost impenetrable.

The two enforcers were completely clueless. They had never seen or heard of a sacred beast like the Black Tortoise.

Still, shock was clear in their eyes. Neither could believe that they'd lost to a spirit creature. The beast's defenses must be beyond their imagination!

More importantly, all their escape routes had been sealed off. Resistance was futile under the circumstances.

Divine Kasyapa smiled faintly. "You were so full of yourselves. You didn't expect to fail so spectacularly now, did you?"

The two enforcers' eyes shone with fury, glaring at Kasyapa. "Don't celebrate yet, An. Even though you've defeated us with your trickery, it means nothing! Once our master ends his closed door cultivation, he'll crush you without lifting a finger."

"You've overestimated that old bastard," Kasyapa said coolly. "However, his fate has nothing to do with you. You've become Eternal Sacred Land's captives. You have no choice but to surrender."

"Hmph! We'd rather die than surrender! If you want to capture us alive, be prepared for mutual destruction!" The brothers were determined to stay loyal to their master to the bitter end.

Jiang Chen smiled derisively. "Mutual destruction? Ha, I'd like to see you try."

He'd gained a basic understanding of the two enforcers' strength. Without another word, he activated the golden bell and trapped the brothers with terrifying restraining force.

The Vermilion Bird and Divine Kasyapa pulled no punches and deployed their most powerful move against the brothers. There was no need to further drag this out. It was time to deal with them swiftly.

The Vermilion Bird and the Black Tortoise both poured in all of their strength, as did Divine Kasyapa. When Jiang Chen and Long Xiaoxuan's combined powers were added to the group, the Eternal defenders were at least two times stronger than the two enforcers.

The duo didn't stand a chance.

The two enforcers stubbornly resisted despite their impending doom. However, Jiang Chen and the others weren't foolish enough to give them a chance to mount a final strike.

With the Black Tortoise's defenses, the two brothers might not be able to hurt it even if they self-detonated. No matter how they struggled, their resistance continued to weaken.

In less than half an hour, the relentless attacks had exhausted the brothers. Jiang Chen captured them with the golden bell.

Divine Kasyapa politely didn't claim any credit. He knew most of the credit went to Jiang Chen and his sacred beast companions.

With the two enforcers captured, all four of the enemy divine cultivators were Jiang Chen's captives.

Given that even the divine cultivators had failed, the other demigods didn't even have a chance to escape. They were apprehended one by one.

Eternal's cultivators had been caught up in panic when the sudden and complete turn of events caught them by surprise. They rejoiced to see the two enforcers taken down.

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

Chapter 2077: Discussions of Aftermath

Once again, Jiang Chen had saved the day.

It was far from the first time that Eternal's cultivators had experienced such an event. Every time crisis erupted or when the sacred land fell into despair, it was Jiang Chen who showed up with the force of a heavenly army and turned the tides around.

Wreathed in smiles, they flooded out of the establishment to welcome Jiang Chen. The two primes holding down the fort in the sacred land also showed great enthusiasm for his arrival.

The second prime, once biased against Jiang Chen, didn't dare bring up past grievances. Their power dynamic had been reversed, with the prime now occupying the lower ground.

Jiang Chen's status, power, and influence made even the first prime pale in comparison, let alone the second prime. To take it one step further, even the venerated forefather had to keep Jiang Chen happy.

The genius' performance just now far exceeded their imaginations. Even the venerated forefather would've had trouble wrenching the situation around, and yet, the young man had succeeded!

Seeing a smiling Huang'er emerge from the sacred land, Jiang Chen finally allowed himself to relax. She was the one he'd been most worried about, and why he'd charged back in such a rush.

The others considerately gave them some privacy.

Even Divine Kasyapa kept his distance with a smile, watching over his granddaughter reunite with Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen didn't lose himself in expressing affection. After spending some time with Huang'er, he sought out Divine Kasyapa.

"Tsk, so you're the reason why they escaped from Sandplain," marvelled Kasyapa.

"I only did what I had to do," Jiang Chen said humbly. "The ten forefathers were the ones who fought our enemies off at the exit of the Sandplain secret realm."

"Hmph, they've received enough benefit from you. It's only right that they do the dirty work. Besides, they weren't just fighting to protect you, but also to protect themselves. I recognize your strength, Jiang Chen, but if you weren't so important to my granddaughter, I wouldn't lay everything out for you. Since Huang'er considers you as her one and only, I treat you as family as well and tell you only the truth."

"You can be frank with me, senior." Jiang Chen might not be willing to step down on the hierarchy for anyone else, but Divine Kasyapa was undeniably his senior, and one who was generations older than he was.

"You've taken down the two enforcers. Lightford would've gotten the news immediately, which can be a good or a bad thing. If Lightford grows furious and comes for you himself, do you think you and the sacred land can take him?"

There was no love lost between Divine Kasyapa and Lightford. The two had been hostile towards each other back in the Boundless Prison.

Lightford had arrived at Myriad Abyss after breaking out because he wished to accomplish something for himself. He wanted to create an empire of his own.

Kasyapa didn't like the way Lightford did things at all. He had nothing but contempt for the old man for stirring up trouble at this critical time in the grand picture of things.

Kasyapa might not be attached to Myriad Abyss, but he believed that everyone had to keep the big picture in mind for the sake of the human race.

All of Lightford's actions proved that he didn't care about the big picture at all. He was just an opportunist.

Jiang Chen knew Kasyapa must have asked the question for a reason. It made sense that Lightford would be able to tell immediately when his two confidants had been captured.

If it'd been Jiang Chen, he wouldn't have stayed idle either. He would've taken matters into his own hands.

Ziju Min and the others met up with the two primes and came their way. The elder couldn't help but ask, "Divine Kasyapa, Lightford had been brought up many times on our way here. Just how powerful is he?"

"More powerful than I am! It's believed that he's at fourth level divine realm, entering mid divinity. That's my speculation as well and why I can't rival him at the moment."

Divine Kasyapa wasn't someone for needless humility. If he said so, Lightford's cultivation was indeed terrifying.

Jiang Chen didn't respond with anything as he contemplated Kasyapa's words.

He still remembered Kasyapa estimating that three of him was required to rival Lightford, and five of him for a chance to win.

The Vermilion Bird and the Black Tortoise were as powerful as Kasyapa, and Jiang Chen could rival an initial divine realm cultivator with the help of Long Xiaoxuan and Little White. All of them combined had a chance to defeat Lightford.

Once Eternal's forefather returned, their chances would be even better.

Of course, Lightford wouldn't come on his own. It would be troublesome if he attacked with a team of divine cultivators.

At the moment, Jiang Chen could only pray that the ten forefathers could work together and win some battles, weakening their enemies.

Anyone could end up tipping the scales between the two opposing forces. It would be a close fight. Therefore, it was imperative to weaken the enemies at any possible opportunity.

"What do you plan to do with the four captives?" Kasyapa asked Jiang Chen.

After some consideration, Jiang Chen shook his head, admitting that he hadn't made up his mind yet.

He'd tamed a group of empyrean cultivators before, but that was because he exercised full control over them with his consciousness. He could kill them with a single thought, making them submit.

However, his manipulations might not be effective on divine cultivators. The key issue was that Jiang Chen himself was an advanced empyrean cultivator. Although his consciousness could rival a divine cultivator's, it was risky for him to attempt to mentally control the four.

If they struck back with their minds and caught him by surprise, it could end badly for him.

He was confident in the strength of his mind, but he didn't want to purposefully put himself in danger. He couldn't afford the risk.

With some difficulty, Jiang Chen would be able to manipulate a couple divine cultivators. With four of them though, if they'd agreed to resist together, if they were willing to risk their lives to fight back, they might seriously injure Jiang Chen, if not kill him outright.

The two enforcers were especially tricky. They were very likely to be under Lightford's control. Jiang Chen would have to pay an even higher price to turn them.

He had to first wipe Lightford's mental brands. Then he had to enter the enforcers' minds with his consciousness. Every step involved was fraught with danger.

Jiang Chen didn't want to take on such a risk before ascending to divinity. Once he did, his consciousness would be incredibly more powerful. It'd then be a piece of cake for him to control the divine realm captives.

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

Chapter 2078: The Life Essence of Gods

Finally, Jiang Chen came up with a division of spoils.

The sallow god would be given to Divine Kasyapa, who needed a divine servant in his own right.

He had a secret method with which to command the sallow cultivator, since his consciousness was much stronger. Once the link was in place, the other god wouldn't be able to resist.

The gold and silver enforcers were extremely difficult to tame in comparison. Jiang Chen didn't think himself capable of breaking their slavishness toward Lightford.

If he couldn't enslave or convert them, there wasn't much point in keeping them around. Better to refine them into usable materials to help the four sacred beasts ascend further.

Long Xiaoxuan and the Astral White Tiger would especially benefit. Jiang Chen believed that the dragon would break through to divine realm all the quicker, and the tiger wouldn't be far behind.

The two primes were a little unhappy that Jiang Chen wasn't planning on giving them anything, but Ziju Min thoroughly supported this gesture. Eternal had been baggage, rather than a contributor to the victory.

If the sacred land had been just a bit more useful, things wouldn't have gotten nearly so out of hand.

To put it bluntly, without Huang'er's presence and Kasyapa's desire to protect his granddaughter, Eternal might very well be Lightford's already.

What spoils could it ask for in this circumstance? What had it done to deserve anything?

Jiang Chen ignored the two primes' dejection. He didn't need to mind their opinion now.

Among the four prisoner gods, the only man who was worth talking to—who was worth convincing—was the bald cultivator.

He had essentially jogged in place from beginning to end. There was minimal loyalty to Lightford here.

"Jiang Chen." Divine Kasyapa advised, "Daoist Yu Gong looks rather fierce, but he's soft at heart. If you can win his allegiance, he will be a very capable helper. He won't be able to handle a situation on his own, but he's more than capable of helping you as a follower."

Jiang Chen was hesitant. He felt like the bald cultivator had used only a fraction of his strength when fighting earlier, and said as much to his grandfather-in-law.

The divine laughed. "That's due to his nature. That old cur Lightford misused him. He can only threaten him into service, but threats are of little effect when the one making them is so far away. The old bastard has acted unwisely in this respect. Though Yu Gong can sometimes seem pliable, he wouldn't slack off like that otherwise."

"Do you mean that I should earn this Yu Gong's respect?"

"Of course, but a little coercion might be necessary as well. It's hard to expect him to put his own life on the line, but he might very well be moved with the right motivation."

Jiang Chen nodded. He had an idea of what to do.

Just as Kasyapa had said, Yu Gong was a fierce-looking but rather soft-hearted cultivator. Through both his own and the divine's persuasions, the bald cultivator surrendered to Jiang Chen after some indecision. He was willing to accept Jiang Chen's control over his consciousness.

Jiang Chen unscrupulously seeded Yu Gong's mind with his commands. However, he made a promise with it.

"Yu Gong, you are a divine cultivator, and should be treated with the according respect. I'm seeding your consciousness only for a short probation period. Once you pass my evaluation, the seal in your consciousness will be removed. I recommend you not to overthink things and remain loyal. My consciousness is significantly stronger than you might think. If you harbor any ill will, I can crush you in a single instant."

For someone like Yu Gong, it was better to outline both good and bad as clearly as possible.

The bald cultivator thought for a moment, then nodded. "Don't worry, young lord. I don't hold many people in high regard, but Divine Kasyapa is one of them. He views old man Lightford with no regard, yet has high hopes for you. That means you must be exceptional in some way. Plus, I've lost to you once already. Those enforcers were so arrogant before, but they were crushed in due time. It's obvious that you are a much superior master."

In a world at war, even an ordinary god wouldn't necessarily be able to preserve himself. The assembly of cultivators into larger groups was a necessary direction.

A wise bird chose a good tree to roost in.

Yu Gong had originally hoped to do great things under Lightford, but the passage of time proved it to be a mere pipe dream.

Lightford's methods were thoroughly underhanded, but even if Yu Gong stooped so low as to accept them, the old man wouldn't give him any opportunities regardless.

The old man had many more subordinates closer to him. In terms of seniority, Yu Gong was near the end of the line to receive any benefits. To put it bluntly, he was little better than cannon fodder.

Rather than waste his life in that way, Yu Gong would rather join Jiang Chen instead. At least the young man reasonably accorded him dignity and material rewards, as well as a number of future promises with weight to them.

Despite Jiang Chen's youth, Yu Gong felt like he'd met a wonderful master.

The two enforcers had a much grimmer fate before them. Jiang Chen wanted to refine them into life essence for his sacred beast friends to gorge on.

If these divine realm cultivators would make themselves into relics, they would be all the more nourishing. Alas, doing so required the cultivators' active participation in the process.

The enforcers patently didn't want to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their enemies. They were far too loyal to Lightford for that.

Even if they did surrender here, the old man could kill them in the next second from a dozen million miles out. So, if reusing was out of the option, recycling was the next order of affairs.

Jiang Chen was hardly a cruel man, but neither would he feel compassion toward the two enforcers. He would've suffered a miserable end if he had lost today.

As it was, he would forcibly extract life essence from the two enforcers. A considerable amount would go to waste, but there would still be a great deal left over.

These two gods were at the height of their vitality. Compared to gods who were at the point of decline in their lifespans, they carried much more energy and vigor.

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

Chapter 2079: Old Man Lightford

Within a secret realm in Myriad Abyss, an old man's closed door cultivation was interrupted. His eyes snapped open, the look in them sinister and ruthless.

He was Old Man Lightford, the subject of many a conversation. His gaze sharp as lightning, his brows brimmed with character. Add to that his deep eyes and tall hook nose, it made for a face with striking features. He looked old, but spirited.

He made calculations off his fingers and arched a long eyebrow, his forehead creased.

"What? My two enforcers are dead?" He'd been in closed door cultivation, but the two enforcers each harbored a strand of his consciousness in their minds, which allowed him to keep track of their vitals.

Their deaths impacted his consciousness, jerking him out of his cultivation-induced trance.

If not for certain precautions he'd taken, the shock would've affected him greatly if he'd reached a critical point in his cultivation.

Still, a detonation had hit his consciousness. It took some time for him to recover.

“Didn’t they go to the Eternal Sacred Land as reinforcement?” wondered Lightford. “Intelligence said that An Kasyapa showed up. Could he have killed my enforcers?”

Giving the notion second thought, Lightford didn’t think his speculations were right.

While the two enforcers might not be as strong as An Kasyapa, and could very well be taken out when separated, the two of them together should be able to rival or even overpower him.

Moreover, there were two other divines already sent to Eternal. How could four divines lose to An Kasyapa?

He was trying to puzzle out an answer when footsteps came his way. They were hesitant, like the person was faced with a difficult decision.

“Enter!” Lightford transmitted, feeling impatient.

The man was delighted to receive a response. He called out, “Are you finally exiting cultivation, milord?”

“Get to the point,” Lightford snapped with a frown.

His closed door cultivation hadn’t gone that well. Even before the interruption, his progress had failed to meet expectations. The deaths of his enforcers struck a further blow to his will. He lamented that the closed door cultivation had all been for nothing.

The man outside shuddered. His master didn’t sound pleased. Had he come at an unfortunate time and interrupted the master’s cultivation?

Nevertheless, this wasn’t time for him to play coy. He spoke up. “Milord, we’ve received news over the past few days that there’s been changes on Sandplain...”

“What? What’s gone wrong?” Lightford could no longer sit still.

He’d personally formulated their plan for Sandplain and put his most trusted men in charge. Everything should’ve been perfect.

The messenger’s heart sank, but he continued honestly. “Before today, we received only relayed messages. Today however, some cultivators have returned from Sandplain with concrete reports. The siege on the island is a complete failure!”

“A complete failure?” Lightford’s voice turned frigid, but he managed to control his temper. In a purposefully neutral voice, he inquired, “The ten sacred lands are stronger than I expected. Even if we failed to trap them, we’ve at least taken out some of their members, haven’t we? The Prismatic Convergence Formation is powerful. Combined with the mist and our ambushes along the way, they should’ve suffered some casualties even though they succeeded in breaking out.”

He was confident in his abilities.

However, the messenger didn’t give him the expected answer, but instead responded in a dejected tone. “Milord, according to our spies, the ten sacred lands suffered almost no casualties. None of their main fighting force died.”

“Bullshit!” snapped Lightford.

He didn't believe that his masterful formation had failed to kill even one enemy. He'd put great effort and thought into the plan!

The messenger was on pins and needles. He knew the truth would bruise his lord's ego, and he didn't want to face Lightford's ire. However, the truth was the truth. He didn't dare give his lord false information, the consequences of which he couldn't bear.

He had no choice but to be honest.

The air pulsed with tension.

Lightford was both furious and befuddled, but he couldn't vent his emotions. He snapped, "How many divine cultivators are left in the base?"

"Our elites have been sent to each of the ten sacred lands, master. The two enforcers have gone to the Eternal Sacred Land as well. That leaves only the divine cultivators fleeing from Sandplain in the base. Other than that..."

"They dared return?!" Lightford said sharply, but he was strong-willed enough to suppress his anger. "Tell them to wait for me in the main hall. I have questions for them."

Lightford had sent a good number of divine cultivators to Sandplain—six, to be exact. Jiang Chen and the others had killed two when they broke out.

That left four divine cultivators, but only two had returned.

The other two seemed to know Lightford's temper and hadn't even bothered to come back.

The two remaining gods lowered their heads like roosters that had lost a fight. There was a depressed air about them.

Their nervousness intensified when they caught sight of Lightford; blood drained from their faces. They wondered what punishment awaited them.

"Tsk tsk, how impressive of you to survive the ten sacred lands' attack. It mustn't have been easy. Where are the others?" Lightford's voice was slow and deliberate. It was difficult to tell how he felt. Was he pleased, or angry?

"Master... There were six of us. Two were killed. Two went missing in the chaos. We don't know if they died or got lost."

"Lost?" Lightford scoffed. "They're simply too scared to see me. Fine. You've proven your loyalty by coming back. The loss we suffered isn't your fault. Tell me what happened on Sandplain Island. I'll make my judgement then."

The two cultivators couldn't be more relieved. It seemed that Lightford wasn't going to hold them accountable at the moment. They weren't going to be killed.

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

Chapter 2080: Shock and Fury

These gods sent to Sandplain had occupied various different posts. Because of this, details varied from those who came back.

However, a few key points were the same.

For example, the Prismatic Convergence Formation had failed to trap the ten sacred lands. It had been effective at the beginning, but was then attacked several times until it was inexplicably destroyed.

After that, the spies within the sacred lands' ranks went completely silent.

Without these spies, they couldn't grasp the exact whereabouts of their enemy, which lost them control over the remainder of the battle. In fact, they couldn't even say how the sacred lands had penetrated the mists.

Lightford was enraged.

How could six gods be so stupid? How could they not have seen the way their enemy had navigated through the mists?

How could the Prismatic Convergence Formation be broken in the first place? Lightford became sober and contemplative. He hadn't supposed the sacred lands capable of such a feat.

"Do you know who broke the formation? Who spearheaded the effort?"

"We don't know, sir. When we found out the formation's failure, it was already too late. It seems that the enemy knew the trick to breaking it very quickly. They destroyed two nodes simultaneously, which rendered half or more of the formation instantly useless.

"Plus, I think they knew about our spies beforehand and thoroughly cleaned them out before they embarked through the mists. We've heard absolutely nothing back since, which means our spies have all been uprooted."

Old Lightford felt his heart grew colder and colder.

A little more thought revealed some hypotheticals. The old man harrumphed. "The ten sacred lands are ancient factions after all. They must've guessed the existence of spies, cutting off everyone whom they don't implicitly trust from outside communication. It's not like we can buy the hearts of their best."

Indeed, the elite of the sacred lands were immune to bribery. To make the attempt would reveal their conspiracy to the light and their efforts, fruitless.

The most they could do was seed the second and third rate factions around Myriad Abyss, hence Bluesmoke's large-scale participation in the competition of geniuses. The objective was naturally to plant spies in the sacred lands.

Alas, all of their designs had come to naught. Their initial successes yielded much fruit, but their line of information was ultimately cut off later on.

The ten sacred lands weren't as incompetent as the prison escapees initially expected.

“Even if they broke the Prismatic Convergence Formation, the mists contain many well-refined and esoteric poisons. Why were the ten sacred lands completely unharmed by them? Their travel should’ve taken more than long enough for the poison to make it into at least some of them.”

“That’s what I’d like to know as well, sir. They seemed to have known about the toxic mists and took measures accordingly. Moreover, I believe that they took almost no time to exit Sandplain, which allowed them to remain unscathed.”

“How can that be?” Despite Lightford’s wealth of life experience, he couldn’t believe what he was hearing.

Under the misty conditions around Sandplain, even flying would be rather directionless. It should have taken one or two days, getting lost notwithstanding, to navigate to the exit.

But to avoid being afflicted by the toxins in the mists, one had to break free of them in only a handful of hours. Such were the facts.

“How did they manage to break through your encirclement? Did you not notice anything awry? Did they fly in airboats or themselves?” Lightford began to seethe with anger.

He felt that he had lost in a rather inexplicable and pathetic way.

“Maybe... I don’t think they flew out?” The person who replied didn’t sound confident.

“They didn’t fly? Did they walk out with their feet then?” Old Lightford was incensed.

“I hear they swam out!”

They... swam?

Lightford almost coughed up blood. It would take a day or two to swim out in those vast seas, even without the obscuring mists. Considering the haze upon the waters, swimming should have taken a fortnight or more!

Moreover, what about the ferocious sea creatures teeming beneath the surface? Would they have let so much food simply pass them by?

Lightford didn’t know what to say. If he didn’t need as many subordinates as he could get, he would have swatted both fools before him into oblivion. Only then would his rage be satiated.

“Alright, I won’t press too much about Sandplain. Tell me, what happened at the Eternal Sacred Land? Did all ten sacred lands go there immediately after leaving Sandplain?” This was the old man’s next concern.

“Milord,” someone reported from below, “our scouts don’t report any large-scale movement of sacred land cultivators toward Eternal. There’s no reason we wouldn’t notice something so obvious.”

“Then how did my enforcers die?” Old Lightford was almost delirious. He realized now that conquering Myriad Abyss was a somewhat more difficult task than he’d surmised. A group of gods wasn’t all that was needed to pull off such a feat.

Yes, these gods were capable individually, but they lacked discipline and motivation to band together. Moreover, many of them were subordinate to him only out of fear and greed.

Everyone was shocked to hear the enforcers' deaths and grew restless.

It was common knowledge that the two cultivators had been Lightford's favorites. Back in the Boundless Prison, they had served as his most able muscle.

Was it true? Had they really died?

Lightford's expression waxed sinister. "Call everyone available at headquarters together. I'm going to make a personal trip to the Eternal Sacred Land."

His fury was palpable. No one dared defy him; all present jumped into action. Though not many people were available for the operation, Lightford provided more than enough reassurance at the helm.