

Three Realms 2361

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

Chapter 2361: Seven Secret Keys

Jiang Chen secretly observed the seating arrangements of the godkings, which gave him some clues. The true culprits must be among those assigned to the important seats.

There was no way to discern their exact identities and numbers yet, but Jiang Chen was sure the seven godkings who held the keys to the Divine Prison of Eternity must number amongst them.

All seven of them would be renowned figures.

“Announcing His Majesty Skypillar!” exclaimed a shrill voice from the back. Strains of stately music sounded. A magnificent procession entered, the emperor occupying a sedan chair of dragon and phoenix. Armored warriors took point, brandishing their weapons as they took purposeful steps.

Skypillar sauntered to the dragon throne.

As soon as he took his seat, Jiang Chen noticed how the godkings’ gazes changed. Envy, contempt, jealousy, feigned bemusement, and nonchalance were on wide display.

“All hail Your Majesty.” All of the godkings bowed to Skypillar.

When all was said and done, Skypillar was still the acting celestial emperor, which made him the ruler of Taiyuan Plane. It didn’t matter how much of a mess he’d made out of the realm.

“Haha, you’ve traveled far and should be spared the formalities. Everyone, take a seat!” Skypillar laughed heartily, but there was a hint of insecurity to his boisterous laughter.

Ah, I can cross him off the list of suspects now. Jiang Chen updated his mental roster.

Although Skypillar held one of the seven keys, he couldn’t be the true culprit. That was what Jiang Chen concluded from his observations, to which his instincts strongly agreed.

“As usual, we should inspect the seven keys to the Divine Prison of Eternity before the meeting starts,” pronounced Skypillar. “Come forward, six other keyholders.”

It was a ritual at every conference to confirm that no one had lost or used their key. No one dared object to it where Celestial Emperor Taiyuan was concerned.

Although Skypillar wasn’t the true culprit, he didn’t want Celestial Emperor Taiyuan to be released. He was the emperor now. It was only natural that he’d want to remain on the throne.

Taiyuan Plane was deteriorating, but the throne was still more important to him. It was human nature to be selfish.

Godking Crimsonwaters and five other godkings rose to their feet.

They were all assigned to the most important seats. From the front row, they approached Skypillar and took out their keys, placing them on the table before the celestial emperor.

Skypillar smiled and did the same.

All seven keys were shaped differently. They caught the eye and lured observers in.

Jiang Chen barely stopped himself from rushing up to grab the keys and hare off to rescue his father.

He knew that would be beyond unwise. No one could possibly do such a thing on their own with so many powerful individuals present. Not even Skypillar was powerful enough to do so.

After some inspection, Skypillar said with a smile, "The keys haven't been compromised. You may take them back."

The six godkings walked up to the table and took back the key they were entrusted with.

Jiang Chen kept a close eye on the six godkings. He knew Crimsonwaters. Most of the other five, he'd heard of, but remembered little about.

One of them, though, he knew well. It was the second godking from the left; a graceful man dressed in a green robe.

Godking Greenwood. The Amaranthine Clouddew Fruit I saw from my past life belonged to him. Father didn't say he was a godking back then.

Jiang Chen looked at the familiar face curiously. Hundreds of thousands of years had passed, yet Greenwood appeared as graceful as ever. Time had been kind to him. He seemed to have cast off the old and regained his youth, projecting a very amiable aura.

Greenwood picked up his key and halted. "We've lost close to ten godkings since the last convention, Your Majesty Skypillar. Why is that?"

Skypillar hadn't expected the question. He scowled. "The godkings are responsible for themselves, Greenwood. What do you expect from me? Shouldn't you be giving me an explanation?"

Greenwood smiled faintly. "You're the ruler of Taiyuan, Your Majesty. You hold power over all matters in the realm and you're obligated to take care of them."

Skypillar scoffed. "Are you telling me what to do?"

Unfazed, Greenwood chuckled and then sighed. "I simply hope that Your Majesty will try harder to pull Taiyuan Plane out of this pit we're in. I'm not telling Your Majesty to do anything."

"Nonsense!" A godking dressed in a black robe snapped at Godking Greenwood with a severe expression. "What is this pit you're talking about? Don't try to spread fear, Daoist Greenwood."

This was Godking Darknorth, another keyholder.

"Haha, are you blind, Daoist Darknorth?" mocked Greenwood. "Anyone with eyes can see the mess Taiyuan Plane is in."

"That's not because of His Majesty. His Majesty took over only a few centuries ago. He's still adjusting to his mantle. You're being purposefully harsh. Just what are you planning here?" Darknorth levied a serious accusation.

He did have a point. Skypillar had been on the throne for less than five hundred years, which wasn't enough time to achieve anything great or revolutionize the realm.

"Alright, enough. You're both godkings. It's unbecoming of you to squabble in public." Another keyholder took a step forward. He was dressed in a pristine white robe, which would suggest an obsession with cleanliness. Still, the man looked personable and upright.

Jiang Chen didn't particularly care for people like him. They were rarely as innocent as they appeared to be. In fact, they often hid great darkness in their heart.

Of course, that was Jiang Chen's first impression. He was still observing the godking to discern his true nature!

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Chapter 2362: A Verbal Spar

There were two godkings who hadn't spoken up yet. One of them was dressed in a golden robe, his presence as sharp as a blade. He seemed to consider himself above mundane matters and was too good to get involved.

The other was a kind, friendly looking man with a chubby face and a faint smile. He looked like a typical pushover. Then there was Godking Crimsonwaters.

Seven godkings held the keys to the prison, and the culprit was among them.

Who could it be?

Jiang Chen had been keeping watch. The truth would be revealed soon.

Godking Greenwood wasn't finished with Celestial Emperor Skypillar yet.

"Your Majesty, you aren't blind to the current situation of Taiyuan Plane, are you? We need a magnanimous emperor with keen foresight. All seven of us are gathered here today with the seven keys. I suggest we head to the Divine Prison of Eternity and welcome Celestial Emperor Taiyuan's return!

"It's been hundreds of thousands of years. No matter what mistakes he's made, he's paid the price. Even if we don't want him to take the throne, we can persuade him into handing over the creation token. Only then will the mantle of leadership be truly passed over, and the new emperor will be recognized and blessed by the heavenly dao." Godking Greenwood tossed out an explosive package.

The very air seemed to grind to a halt.

It'd been a long time since anyone dared bring the matter up. Who would've thought that Godking Greenwood would cut right to the chase not long into the conference?

It caught everyone off guard and breathed a strange tension into the room. The godkings barely moved. Every pair of eyes bore into Greenwood, trying to identify anything unusual about him.

"No one in their sound mind would object to my proposal," Greenwood explained with an earnest expression. "Without the creation token, Taiyuan Plane will be doomed. No matter what you think, we

have to release Celestial Emperor Taiyuan. He's the only one who knows where the creation token is, which is the only thing that can save the fortunes of our world."

It took a long time for the crowd to recover. People talked among themselves, debating the merits of the suggestion.

Jiang Chen wasn't sure if Godking Greenwood was after the release of his father, or the creation token.

Both were possible. If Greenwood wanted the creation token, he was likely to be the villain. Playing the good guy was his way to get what he wanted.

If Greenwood was trying to rescue Celestial Emperor Taiyuan, that would make him a loyal subject who truly wanted to change the destiny of Taiyuan Plane.

There wasn't enough for Jiang Chen to come to a conclusion, so he didn't try. He would see how everything played out.

Darknorth scoffed. "What are you suggesting, Daoist Greenwood? Do you miss Celestial Emperor Taiyuan? Do you want him to regain the throne? Let me tell you, Taiyuan Plane will not allow that! Celestial Emperor Taiyuan has defied the heavenly law. His era is over!"

A traitor, Jiang Chen decided, mentally listing Darknorth as an enemy. Perhaps the man was simply a blind follower of Skypillar's and he only objected in order to safeguard Skypillar's interests. Whatever the reasons, Jiang Chen didn't like the man's words.

Godking Whiteriver, the one in a white robe, maintained his calm composure. "The creation token is crucial to Taiyuan Plane. Even if we disregard all personal desires, it's something we must locate. Without it, we're as good as dead, and so is Taiyuan Plane."

That wasn't an exaggeration.

Godking Ninecauldrons, the godking with a chubby face, chuckled. "It's easy for us to release Celestial Emperor Taiyuan, but have you considered who among us will be able to keep him under control afterwards? What if he holds a grudge against us for imprisoning him for hundreds of thousands of years and takes his revenge? It'll be difficult to stop him then."

It might sound like he had everyone's best interests at heart, but it was obvious that he was against Taiyuan's release as well.

The only ones who hadn't said anything yet were Godking Wintry, whose presence was as sharp as a sword, and Godking Crimsonwaters, who'd always been a prudent man.

"I agree that we should release Celestial Emperor Taiyuan," offered Crimsonwaters. "No offense to you, Your Majesty Skypillar, but to tell the truth, didn't the decline of Taiyuan Plane begin when we imprisoned Celestial Emperor Taiyuan? Have you considered that perhaps the decision itself was a mistake? If it was, why don't we make up for it?"

Everyone was highly shocked.

Crimsonwaters' words were more impactful than Greenwood's. Greenwood had suggested the release of Celestial Emperor Taiyuan, but his focus was on the creation token.

On the other hand, Crimsonwaters didn't even mention the creation token. He suggested that Taiyuan had been wronged, which had much more serious implications.

Everyone who had openly supported Celestial Emperor Taiyuan had either died or disappeared. Did Crimsonwaters have a death wish?

The temperature in the room dropped even further, like a gust of wind blown in from the depths of hell. Everyone feared for their lives.

Skypillar swept his dark gaze over the assembled godkings. The authority of a celestial emperor quickly silenced the agitated crowd. He slammed his hands down on the table. "You've sugarcoated your words, Crimsonwaters, but in the end, you're challenging my authority. That alone is enough for me to punish you for insubordination and disrespect of this position!"

"I'm not afraid of being punished for speaking my mind!" boomed Crimsonwaters. "Many have disappeared or died for openly supporting Celestial Emperor Taiyuan, but there are truths that must be said. Someone has to take a stand. I've never been the most powerful or the most assertive godking, but if someone has to open this can of worms, let it be me!"

"I don't care who the villain is. I'm willing to risk my life betting on everyone's conscience, on your belief in justice. Do you really wish for Taiyuan Plane to slip further and further into the abyss? Do you want to die with the realm? I don't. I want to save our world!"

Jiang Chen straightened his back in respect.

He'd thought that Godking Crimsonwaters were too prudent, but he'd been wrong. The godking might not be passionate in fulfilling his ambitions, but he was a dependable man. He possessed the shrewdness and magnanimity to be a true leader!

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Chapter 2363: At Odds With Each Other

Celestial Emperor Skypillar flew into a rage, his breathing labored and his expression menacing. "How dare you spread such devious heresy, Crimsonwaters?" he snapped. "Take him away and throw him into the dungeon! Strip the key to the Divine Prison from him and divest him of his title! His territory will be taken over by a godking with integrity!"

His rage pushed everyone into action. A group of cultivators lunged like beasts at Crimsonwaters.

Godking Righteous was the first to shoot to his feet.

"I support Brother Crimsonwaters. What do we cultivate for? This is our homeland. Aren't we honor-bound to prevent its doom? How prosperous was the world under Celestial Emperor Taiyuan's rule? Look at what the realm has become. It's weak, grim. You can't all be blind to that, can you? Where's your sense of justice? Where's your conviction? Your courage?"

"I'll put everything I have into supporting you, Brother Crimsonwaters!" The overweight godking pushed his way out of the crowd.

"Count me in." The godking in blue was quiet, but his determination was clear in his eyes.

“Me too.” The thin godking rose as well.

The five of them had obviously reached a consensus in private.

Skypillar lost all control of his temper. “Good, good, good! All of you want to commit treason together! Take them all! Arrest them all! Who will help me subdue these cretins?”

A good number of godkings stood up. Darknorth was the most eager to please the emperor. Ninecauldrons also sighed. “No matter what, Celestial Emperor Skypillar is our supreme leader. Challenging him in public is challenging the seat’s authority, which I’ve always respected. I can’t stand by and do nothing.”

Skypillar held one of the seven keys, and among the other six keyholders, two had chosen to oppose Crimsonwaters.

Godking Greenwood sighed faintly. “What’s the point of this? I said the creation token is the important thing here. Why can’t you focus on that? I’m out.”

He withdrew from the conflict.

Whiteriver shook his head with a sanctimonious expression and muttered, “Why would you raise a hand against your own?”

Despite his words, it didn’t seem like he intended to intervene.

This made two godkings who’d decided to stay on the sidelines.

Skypillar smirked. “Take them!”

Godking Hoarfrost, who hadn’t said anything all along, suddenly opened blazing eyes. “Halt!”

His gaze was sharp enough to pierce the sky. Even Skypillar found himself breathing more quickly in response.

“What do you have to say, Hoarfrost?” Skypillar asked coldly.

“I would like to ask, what has Daoist Crimsonwaters said wrong? Wasn’t Taiyuan Plane a hundred times more prosperous under Celestial Emperor Taiyuan’s rule?”

There was a steely glint to his gaze that prevented anyone from meeting his eyes.

“All of you tell me, do you think the plane can still be saved?” Hoarfrost scoffed, levelling a look straight at Skypillar. “Even mediocre trash like you has taken the throne. That’s proof of how much Taiyuan Plane has fallen.”

“How... how... how dare you!?” Skypillar trembled with fury. He didn’t expect Hoarfrost would mock and ridicule him in person. That was a challenge against the throne’s authority!

“You called me a traitor, Skypillar, but I’m saving your hide. Don’t you think you’ve bitten off more than you can chew? Unless you’re the hand behind the scenes, how long do you think you’ll be able to stay on the throne? Don’t you feel the noose tightening around your neck? Releasing Celestial Emperor

Taiyuan isn't a threat to your power, but a way for you to survive! You should be thankful, yet you call upon others to kill Daoist Crimsonwaters. Is that head of yours empty?"

Hoarfrost's sharp words stunned Skypillar.

Although he was the celestial emperor, he cared most for his own interests. What he worried most about was that someone would overthrow him.

However, would he be able to wear the title of a celestial emperor well given his level of strength? Based on the happenings of the past few centuries, the answer was 'no'.

Current events proved his suspicions right. Clearly, no one took him seriously!

"Stop spouting nonsense, Hoarfrost!" Darknorth snapped. "There's no reason that His Majesty won't be able to stay on the throne. I support him with all of my being."

"Haha, His Majesty is the rightful ruler before a new emperor is selected. I, Godking Ninecauldrons, support him as well!"

Each of the seven top godkings had their roles. It was disorienting for Jiang Chen to watch.

He could now say for sure that Crimsonwaters, Hoarfrost, and Skypillar weren't the enemy.

Darknorth, who had been yapping as Skypillar's lapdog, was unlikely to be responsible either.

That left Greenwood, Whiteriver, and Ninecauldrons as potential suspects. One or more of them must be the mastermind.

Jiang Chen had been keeping himself under tight control, waiting for the right moment.

The air was thick with tension. It felt as if countless blades were hung above everyone's head, ones that could fall and reap their lives anytime.

As a result, no one dared make a sound or take a stand, despite many secretly missing Celestial Emperor Taiyuan. Just as the thin godking had expected, very few were brave enough to show their support.

Few, but that also didn't mean none.

That was a good start. Perhaps all they needed to do was to stoke the fire.

Crimsonwaters stared at Greenwood and exclaimed with ringing tones, "You suggested the release of Celestial Emperor Taiyuan, Daoist Greenwood, yet you're the first to back off. What are you planning? Troublemaker, and now a bystander. What exactly do you want?"

He seemed to have his suspect.

Greenwood smiled faintly. "As I've said before, I agree that Celestial Emperor Taiyuan should be released so that we can get the creation token from him. I'm not getting involved in the rest."

What a cunning old man.

Jiang Chen found it more and more difficult to pin down Greenwood. He should be trustworthy since he possessed the Amaranthine Clouddew Tree. Father had also visited him before.

But father had never mentioned Godking Greenwood. Neither had he said that Greenwood was a confidante Jiang Chen could trust.

Whiteriver remained mysterious as well. He seemed to have his own agenda and was equally suspicious.

Ninecauldrons, on the other hand, was a hypocrite. Jiang Chen wouldn't be surprised if he ended up being the hand behind the scenes.

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Chapter 2364: The Real Intention Is Revealed In the End

It was an impasse.

Given the circumstances, neither side was going to convince the other. Moreover, it'd be difficult for Skypillar to take down Crimsonwaters and his supporters, given that Hoarfrost was on Crimsonwaters' side.

The godkings had split into different factions. It might seem that there were only two sides, but that wasn't the case. Multiple agendas abounded.

Whiteriver abruptly chuckled. "Let's go through the matters at hand one by one. The creation token is the most important at the moment, isn't it? And to get it, we need Celestial Emperor Taiyuan. No matter if we release him or not, we have to at least visit the old emperor. That, we all agree on, don't we?"

Greenwood nodded. "That's right."

Ninecauldrons followed suit. "I have to agree."

"What do you think, Your Majesty?" Whiteriver turned to Skypillar with a smile.

Skypillar huffed. "I'm not opposed to paying Celestial Emperor Taiyuan a visit, but we have to discuss things more before we let him go. There's always a possibility that he may retaliate once he's freed."

He didn't sound as adamant as before. After calming down and considering the circumstances, he could tell that he was in more danger than he'd initially thought.

"My proposal isn't a personal attack on you, Your Majesty," interjected Crimsonwaters. "However, Celestial Emperor Taiyuan's release may not be a bad thing for you. Please consider that carefully."

Skypillar contemplated the godking's words with a frown. Was he respected as a celestial emperor? Judging from how the godkings acted today, how many of them actually took him seriously?

Almost no one.

A mournful look flashed through his face. What was the point of being the celestial emperor then?

What did he expect would happen if he remained on the throne? Would he be able to win others' respect? No, not likely!

None of the keyholders were to be underestimated. They'd never treated him like they would a celestial emperor.

Skypillar was swayed.

Hoarfrost smiled faintly. "Since there's no consensus, the solution is simple. We'll put it to a vote. Majority rules. What say you?"

The suggestion was the ultimate dismissal of Skypillar's authority. The celestial emperor should've had the final say. Putting the issue to a vote meant the emperor's opinion mattered as much as the other keyholders.

Skypillar swallowed the bitter taste in his mouth. Had he been such a terrible leader? Voting on the issue was an insult to him!

Still, there was nothing he could do. There was no reason for Godking Hoarfrost to fear him.

"I agree that we should put it to a vote," said Godking Crimsonwaters.

Greenwood nodded. "We'll vote."

"It's a viable solution. I agree." Whiteriver seemed calm.

Ninecauldrons nodded after some deliberation, but didn't say anything.

With all of them agreeing to the suggestion, it was a foregone conclusion that they were going to put it to a vote. Darknorth's expression was tight. He'd put in so much effort into preserving Skypillar's authority, but it had been all in vain.

The emperor was going to cast a vote along with these godkings. How pathetic!

Nonetheless, that was how things panned out. Darknorth couldn't do anything to turn the tide. He threw Skypillar a weak glance. He'd done all he could.

Skypillar opened his mouth, but found himself at a loss for words. He waved weakly. "It seems that I no longer hold enough respect to be the celestial emperor. Do whatever you want. I'll abdicate the throne from now on."

Skypillar might seem cowardly once his steely facade was peeled away, but he wasn't a fool. If he didn't cut his losses while he could, he might not come out of this mess alive.

Seven keyholders, seven votes.

The results came quickly. Two were in favor of releasing Celestial Emperor Taiyuan. Three were in favor of visiting the old emperor but not releasing him. Two gave up their votes.

Darknorth and Skypillar were the two who abstained.

Crimsonwaters and Hoarfrost wanted the old emperor released, while Greenwood, Whiteriver, and Ninecauldrons supported a simple visit.

Whiteriver smiled. "The majority rules. We'll pay Celestial Emperor Taiyuan a visit."

The crowd was very unhappy with the result.

"All godkings should have the right to vote!" exclaimed Godking Righteous. "Why are the seven of you the only ones who have a say?"

“That’s right. The fate of Taiyuan Plane should be decided by all of the godkings, not just you!”

“Shut your mouths!” snapped Ninecauldron. “We’re the keyholders, which gives us control over the fate of Taiyuan Plane. It’s a power entrusted to us by fate. How dare you simple godkings start a ruckus? If you keep going, you’ll be guilty of disrupting the order of the Sky Palace, the punishment of which is execution!”

“That’s right!” Whiteriver said with a smile. “You’ll only make things more complicated and mislead the group.”

The two godkings killed the spark of a consensus.

Jiang Chen had been watching as an outsider, but no more. A faint smile tugged at his lips. It was time for him to act.

He could say for sure that the mastermind must be among Greenwood, Whiteriver, and Ninecauldrons. It was also possible that all three of them had been involved.

Before Jiang Chen could stand up, Godking Hoarfrost cracked a strange smile. “Whiteriver, Greenwood, Ninecauldrons, you all suggested paying Celestial Emperor Taiyuan a visit rather than releasing him. You’re after the creation token, aren’t you?”

“So what? Without the creation token, Taiyuan Plane has no future. We’re doing this for the sake of our world!”

“You’re been thinking only about the return of the old emperor, Hoarfrost, but have you considered that Taiyuan Plane fell because of Celestial Emperor Taiyuan defying the heavenly dao?”

Hoarfrost’s smile deepened. “You sure are self-righteous, Ninecauldrons. Dare you say the same thing to Celestial Emperor Taiyuan himself?”

“Hmph, I won’t shy away from making the accusation in person!” Ninecauldron retorted with false indignation.

Jiang Chen had had enough. He shot to his feet. “You’re all bark and no bite, old man. I’ll represent Celestial Emperor Taiyuan today and slap you for running your mouth!”

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Chapter 2365: The Taiyuan Token

Jiang Chen’s sudden appearance injected comedy into the scene. What was a young cultivator doing in a clash between top godkings?

“Cease this insolence at once, young Zhen!” Crimsonwaters immediately called out. “Back off! This is a confrontation between premier titled godkings. What are you muddying yourself in the waters for?”

Jiang Chen returned a faint smile. “Nothing, save for this old bastard’s traitorous words! Come out, old fart Ninecauldrons, so that I can make mincemeat out of you!”

There was a confident violence upon his face.

Ninecauldrons was utterly vexed. Where did this kid of all people, find the courage to call him out? Were Crimsonwaters' servants all brainless idiots?

"Are these the manners to be expected from your followers, Crimsonwaters? You're a poor excuse for a teacher, so I shall teach in your stead!" The offended godking pressed his apparent advantage.

Jiang Chen felt his anger and rage focus upon a single point. His blood boiled! Hundreds of thousands of years worth of repressed humiliation channeled through him.

Boom!

The emotions coursing through his blood forged a breakthrough past the peak of his assimilated bloodlines!

Jiang Chen vaulted to godking realm in one bound!

At the same time, the seal in his consciousness shattered into a million motes of light.

A token that was a little longer and thinner than a man's palm floated before him. He felt a world, an endless cosmos, open up to him. It was the creation token!

Jiang Chen's heart skipped a beat. He immediately grabbed and absorbed it into himself, imprinting his own consciousness upon it.

Claimed by a new master!

Under the imprint of Jiang Chen's consciousness, the token emitted the powerful energies of creation. They whipped themselves about the young man in immense vortices, bringing a new world into being.

An experienced cultivator immediately cried out, "What is that? Is that the Taiyuan token?"

"It's the creation token!"

"How could this kid have something like that?!"

"Stop him! Stop him!"

Mass chaos swept through the crowd. Even Skypillar, who'd previously fallen silent, flared with burning greed.

Darknorth immediately sprang in the direction of the disgraced usurper, "Your Majesty, if you take that creation token for yourself, you will be recognized by creation once and for all. Who would possibly dare disrespect you henceforth?"

Blood shot through Skypillar's eyes. "Let us combine forces! If you help me obtain the creation token, we will jointly rule Taiyuan Plane!"

Crimsonwaters couldn't quite take in everything he'd seen. Still, he recovered with remarkable aplomb.

"Come here, young Zhen!" he called out. "I will protect you!"

Hoarfrost was a little taken aback as well. His look toward Jiang Chen was thoughtful rather than avaricious.

Greenwood, Ninecauldrons, and Whiteriver found it difficult to repress their own ambitions. They very much desired to rule Taiyuan Plane themselves by taking the token for their own.

The prospect of becoming lord over these heavenly planes filled them with deep avarice.

By now, Jiang Chen was quite surrounded.

The other vassals scattered to find the godking whom they were respectively closest to, poised to join the battle for creation token themselves. The weaker cultivators could only flee in self-preservation.

Elders Ge and Xu were scared out of their wits. They were so terribly afraid that they wanted to disappear on the spot. How could the young Elder Zhen have the creation token? He had dragged them into trouble they wanted no part in!

Grinning coldly, Jiang Huan slowly stepped in front of Jiang Chen.

He was entirely unafraid despite the arrayal of other godkings. The smile upon his visage was sardonic. "Ninecauldrons, Greenwood, Whiteriver. Which one of you is the mastermind? Or perhaps you three are all conspirators?"

"Who are you?" Ninecauldrons glared at Jiang Huan.

The servant of the previous celestial emperor discarded his disguise and revealed his true strength.

"Who am I? I want to know the answer to that very same question! I have been without an identity for hundreds of thousands of years. Long have I waited to restore my position and what the house of Jiang has lost.

"Listen up! I am Jiang Huan, the Taiyuan Celestial Emperor's distant relative and loyal servant. Today, I receive His Majesty's only son, Crown Prince Jiang Chen, who has brought back the creation token with him. Surrender, traitors!"

He exuded the power of a mature godking.

What?

The celestial emperor's only son? The trash with a yin constitution?

Ninecauldrons roared with laughter. "Jiang Huan? Never heard of you! You should make up a more believable lie. Crown Prince Jiang Chen had a yin constitution. Everyone knows how useless he was! Do you take us for mere children?"

Even Crimsonwaters shook his head to himself. Evidently, he shared a similar opinion.

Jiang Huan snickered. "Ignorant fools! You know nothing of the celestial emperor's might and ability. His Majesty has sent the crown prince through the process of reincarnation. Today, Crown Prince Jiang Chen is a godking himself. Moreover, he has the power to create heavenly planes of his own!"

As he said this, he swept his razor-sharp gaze over the rest of the crowd. "Fellow daoists, you are all pillars of Taiyuan Plane. Do you desire to keep living under the black terror you've suffered for hundreds of thousands of years? Do you want your realm to continue to decline? Do you not long for the glory that we once had?"

“His Majesty did indeed disobey the heavenly dao by refining the Sun Moon Pill. However, his long imprisonment is more than redemption enough. His son’s inheritance of creation token will reverse the realm’s fortunes and grant it new life. Are you willing to continue as accomplices of the true villain rather than accept the change for the better?”

Jiang Huan’s eloquence was above the norm. Every statement resonated with his audience.

Crimsonwaters was overjoyed. “Young Zhen,” he glanced at Jiang Chen, “are you truly the reincarnated Crown Prince Jiang Chen?”

The young man took this moment to draw his father’s sword.

“This is the Edge of Evermore. My father sealed it within my consciousness. As his core vassals, you should all recognize it, yes?”

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Chapter 2366: Celestial Emperor Taiyuan

The Edge of Evermore!

All breathing grew ragged. They hadn’t seen the sword for countless millennia, but its unique qualities and its previous owner’s lingering regality were impossible to emulate.

“That really is the Edge of Evermore!”

“Is he really the crown prince’s reincarnation after all?”

“The son should inherit the father’s throne, should he not?”

“Moreover, the creation token and heavenly dao have not rejected him. They recognize him as the lawful ruler!”

Many vassals were already believers.

“Ridiculous!” Ninecauldrons declared coldly. “The last celestial emperor whisked the token elsewhere in his final days of scrabbling for power. Who can prove that you are his son?”

“I can!” A ringing voice blasted down from the firmament.

The entire palace trembled violently. A bright light rose up outside to meet the unknown newcomer. It was as if the world was crumbling and rebuilding itself.

The terrifying power’s influence soon crept into the palace proper. The light was so blinding that no one could open their eyes.

“Ah! It’s coming from the Divine Prison of Eternity!”

“Is the prison broken?”

“Who does that voice belong to?”

“It’s Celestial Emperor Taiyuan himself!”

“He is finally safe and sound! Hahaha, wonderful! Our realm is saved!”

The freedom of the old emperor allowed some to finally voice their heartfelt thoughts.

Celestial Emperor Taiyuan was a legend, a myth that no one had ever surpassed. His arrival meant the complete rebirth of the realm.

Jiang Chen squinted a little. His face and heart were completely calm. He had dreamed of this day for countless months and years. And yet, his composure was strangely unbroken when the moment actually arrived.

"Father!" he shouted silently to himself.

The collapse of the Divine Prison of Eternity allowed Celestial Emperor Taiyuan to triumphantly emerge like an unchained dragon. He arrived at his palace in mere seconds.

"Hahahaha! Who dares clamor within Taiyuan Sky Palace? Who dares defile Our throne?" His figure emerged into view.

The emperor's majestic form and wild complexion hadn't aged a day. His starry eyes and sweeping strides were utterly familiar.

Everyone felt their heart tremble at the sight. Some were already beginning to tear up and kneel.

"Your Majesty!"

"Thank heavens that you're free!" A large swathe of cultivators fell to their knees.

Jiang Chen strode up with abundant eagerness. "Father, I've missed you for so long!"

Jiang Huan dabbed at the corners of his own eyes, touched by the reunion of parent and child.

Celestial Emperor Taiyuan flashed a gallant grin. "Well done, my child. You haven't fallen short of my expectations. I'm very pleased that you've returned how you did!"

There was no need for excessive words between men.

Father and son exchanged a knowing smile. This look thoroughly connected the relationship of their past lives and the fortunes of their current lives.

"Your Majesty!" Jiang Huan proclaimed emotionally.

"You've done a wonderful job too, Jiang Huan. You far surpassed my meager hopes for you. I hadn't actually hoped for much when I first sent you out. Your contribution is undeniable!"

The retainer wiped at his eyes. "Why should I take credit for something that is only my duty, Your Majesty?"

Crimsonwaters came forward. "Hail, O Celestial Emperor. We welcome Your Majesty's return. Please, take charge of this realm once again!"

"Your Majesty," smiled Hoarfrost. He followed closely behind.

"You are a good man, Crimsonwaters," sighed the celestial emperor before he glanced toward Hoarfrost. "And you are even better. Both courageous and wise! We owe the most to you for Our freedom."

Jiang Chen blinked. "What, Godking Hoarfrost! Are you the one behind Sectmistress Han?"

The godking chuckled. "Han Shuang, hmm? No doubt she received much help from Your Highness."

The celestial emperor roared with laughter. "Our son gifted even Our Measure of Heaven to her! 'Much' is an understatement."

Jiang Chen laughed as well. However, his expression darkened as he swept his gaze over Ninecauldrons and the others.

"Father, who was the mastermind that staged the coup against you? I will personally avenge you today!" The young man burned with indignation. His gaze darted between Ninecauldrons, Whiteriver, and Greenwood. It must be one of those three.

Celestial Emperor Taiyuan paused. His eyes cast a piercing, impenetrable light.

"We wonder who it is?" he muttered, as if to himself. "We will give you an opportunity to volunteer yourself. If you are brave enough to take responsibility, We may consider giving you a chance."

The three looked at each other skeptically. Each mistrusted the others.

Skypillar and Darknorth were already scared witless by Taiyuan's appearance. The ambition they'd had to steal the creation token was scattered to the four winds.

The trio of suspects were the only ones stuck in a hard place.

"I didn't care much for your refinement of the Sun Moon Pill, Your Majesty," Whiteriver laughed palely. "Though I did oppose you, I've never plotted or conspired against you. I have nothing to do with anything that's happened in your absence."

The godking was evidently being as honest as he could.

"We already know it wasn't you, Whiteriver," Taiyuan retorted coldly. "Nevertheless, you've never been one to submit to authority. The new Taiyuan Plane does not need one such as you. Are you going to leave yourself, or shall We send you off?"

An extremely uncomfortable expression on his face, Whiteriver managed to bite back whatever else he had on his mind. "At the end of the day, it is I who has failed you, Your Majesty," he saluted respectfully. "Whiteriver bids Your Majesty farewell!"

Taiyuan smiled coolly. "Let him go," he commanded. "If he shows himself in Taiyuan Plane hereafter, We will slay him Ourselves!"

Whiteriver was solidly exiled, but his life and liberty was safe. He had preserved himself.

The remaining duo wasn't so lucky. The beads of sweat on their brows pooled larger and larger.

Attempting to master his fear, Greenwood stammered, "Y-your Majesty, I've no dignity left to face you. You held me in such regard back then and I was jealous of you for no good reason. But, I really haven't done much to further any plots! Neither have I killed any subject of the Taiyuan Plane. The terror that's lingered here is not from me."

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

Chapter 2367: The True Mastermind

"You have betrayed Our trust and confidence, Greenwood. That is why We took your Amaranthine Clouddew Tree. Let's call it even between us. You may depart as well."

Celestial Emperor Taiyuan was strangely polite and tolerant.

Greenwood gasped. "Were you the one who carried off the tree, Your Majesty?"

The Amaranthine Clouddew Tree had been the godking's life. He never expected the celestial emperor to be behind its disappearance!

At the time, he had believed the heavenly dao to be displeased with his treatment of it!

Greenwood opened his mouth for a moment, then shut it in depressed embarrassment. As he left toward the exit, he mourned, "Your Majesty, do I meet with the same fate as Whiteriver?"

"The same," Taiyuan replied coolly.

He hadn't taken the lives of those who'd betrayed him, but neither was he going to offer clemency. Greenwood and Whiteriver weren't the culprits, but their opposition to his release was explanation enough in itself.

Only Ninecauldrons remained.

The last godking was as white as a ghost. He had cursed the celestial emperor the most viciously just now. Everything pointed to him as the villain. He wanted to break out into tears.

He was innocent!

Though he hated the emperor's refinement of the Sun Moon Pill and had participated in the uprising because of it, he was truthfully no guiltier than Greenwood.

What could he say for himself at this juncture though?

"You had a lot of fun cursing Us just now, Ninecauldrons, did you not? Some of what you said was quite reasonable. However, casting all blame for the decline of Taiyuan Plane upon Our head puts your malice on display.

"We can understand ambition. You want the creation token so that you might rule in Our place. Your slanderous lies are what make you intolerable. Taiyuan Plane will not have you any longer. Slap yourself three times, then leave like the other two!"

"Father!" Jiang Chen was dissatisfied. This bastard had afflicted his father and the Taiyuan Realm for hundreds of thousands of years. Three slaps were too light a punishment!

Taiyuan smiled smoothly. "Don't get so excited, my son. Old Ninecauldrons isn't ambitious or clever enough to be the true mastermind."

"What?" The young man gasped.

Jiang Huan and everyone else in the audience was taken aback as well.

Ninecauldrons was astonished and grateful. He knew he wasn't the chief scoundrel, but he hadn't expected Taiyuan to know that.

If the mastermind wasn't Greenwood, Whiteriver, or himself... then who could it be?

How could the three shadiest godkings all be innocent?

Crimsonwaters, Hoarfrost, and the other vassals were all flabbergasted. There was more to this mystery than met the eye.

"Can it be them?" Some turned toward Skypillar and Darknorth, but their bloodless complexions and trembling lips showed them to be soft stuff.

And yet, the rest of the vassals were much lower in status and strength. There was even less of a chance that it was one of them.

Taiyuan sighed softly. "Things have already come to this, and still you will not show yourself? Why must you continue this charade?"

He murmured these words into the void. However, Jiang Chen's consciousness was extraordinarily sharp and picked up the faintest of auras hidden in the direction his father had spoken.

"Get out here!" The young man slammed down a distorting mass of power, damaging the fabric of space there with the power of the four sacred beasts.

"Tsk, you really aren't trash anymore, you little animal!" The voice that responded was sinister and filled with intense malice. "Why aren't you dead yet, Taiyuan? Why didn't hundreds of thousands of years wear you to nothingness?"

Many godkings paled when they heard the voice. How could this be?

The voice belonged to a subject that ought to have died at least two hundred thousand years ago.

"Godking Mirrorflower!" someone yelled.

Mirrorflower was a woman who had served as one of Celestial Emperor Taiyuan's most trusted advisors and his cherished strategist.

She and her faction had always been only a hair below the emperor himself in strength.

Alas, she had disappeared shortly after the coup, believed by many due to the fact that she had openly supported the emperor both before and after it.

Fallen to the mastermind that had staged the coup, no doubt.

Thus, she had slowly been forgotten about as a footnote in history.

Who could imagine that she wasn't dead after all! Not only that, but she had been the hand in the shadows behind the entire affair!

Truly, this was a wholly fantastic revelation.

Mirrorflower's figure emerged from the air. All onlookers were bewildered.

Her face was just as stunning as before, but ferocity and viciousness tinged it now as well. Her extended hermitage had caused her skin to take on a sickly pallor.

"If you wanted Our domain, Mirrorflower, you should have simply asked. Why did you do something like this? Was there really a need?" Taiyuan sighed.

"Enough of your pretend sympathy, you old pervert! If you had really wanted to pass the throne to me, you wouldn't have refined the Sun Moon Pill or raised other potential heirs!" Mirrorflower gnashed her teeth.

"Jiang Chen is my son. Should I have simply let him die in front of me?" The celestial emperor sighed again.

"Your son?" Mirrorflower spat words full of venom. "A son who was utterly useless! I told you time and time again I would gladly bear any number of children for you. I waited by your bedside, as naked as the day I came to this world, but you just brushed me off! You said that you saw me only as a daughter, you lying hypocrite!"

The shocking secrets that were finally being brought to light dumbfounded the others. Such details regarded the celestial emperor's private life!

"I have a wife," replied Taiyuan coolly. "She may have departed from this existence, but my son remains as proof of our love. The entire world knows I see you only as a child, Mirrorflower."

"I don't want to be just a daughter! What use is that? Is a foster daughter worthy of inheriting the rule of the realm? I want to be empress! I want to rule the realm myself!" Mirrorflower snarled savagely.

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

Chapter 2368: Mirrorbloom Plane

Emperor Taiyuan sighed. "Mirrorbloom, I could have borne the responsibility for whatever crimes you committed. I could have overlooked your betrayal. But for the chaos you've brought upon Taiyuan, for all the lives lost because of you, I will slay you personally."

Mirrorbloom crowed with laughter. "Old fogey, you must be living in the past. Do you think I'm still the same? Your realm will be mine once I change its name, and mine alone! From now on, this place is to be called Mirrorbloom Plane! You and your son are mere stepping stones on my road to ascendency!"

"An idiot dreaming in broad daylight, what a sorry sight." Jiang Huan smiled coldly. "Your Majesty, allow me to kill this traitor in your stead!"

Emperor Taiyuan waved him off. "Stand aside. She's too strong for godkings to take on!"

Mirrorbloom cackled maniacally. "Since you know I'm too much for them, what makes you think you'll be any different? You are no longer the mighty celestial emperor you once were. I am no longer the long-suffering Mirrorbloom who gave way in everything!"

The air solidified around her, suddenly condensing into mirror-like crystals in a bizarre, spine-chilling scene. "Old geezer, let's see what you think of this lady's handcrafted plane!"

With a hand seal, the multitude of mirrors suddenly emitted countless rays of light that acted as black holes. Everything the light touched was sucked inside Mirrorbloom Plane.

Her skills were truly a sight to behold.

Fortunately, Celestial Emperor Taiyuan reacted promptly enough and slapped away most of the light. At the same time, a fierce astral wind rose at his back and blew away more than one godking standing behind him.

Even so, many were those captured inside the mirrors. Busy looking after others, Celestial Emperor Taiyuan himself inadvertently fell prey to a ray of light as well.

Mirrorbloom laughed happily. "Old coot, you're as dumb as ever. Worrying about others at a time like this? Your reward shall be death inside my realm!"

But how would Jiang Chen take that lying down?

He brandished the Edge of Evermore and sent a thunderous slash to intercept the mirror fragments. Possessing the power of spacetime, the sword ignored the concept of distance to land viciously on the edge of Mirrorbloom Plane.

Clang!

His strike shattered many shards of crystals. Terror-stricken, several godkings suddenly fell from these and ran for their lives. However, the one imprisoning his father remained intact.

"Little punk, you should have laid low while this lady was feeling merciful!" Godking Mirrorbloom seethed.

Even so, she didn't dare make light of the young man. The Edge of Evermore was in his hand, but most essentially, he'd refined the Taiyuan's creation symbol.

Technically, he was Taiyuan's true sovereign. Even one as great as her had to stay on her toes when fighting the world's master on home soil.

Jiang Chen shouted, "Everyone, get as far as you can from the Sky Palace. Don't try to help!"

At this stage, not even godkings would be of any help.

Crimsonwaters and Hoarfrost understood immediately. "Everyone, follow our lead and fall back! She stands no chance against two generations of celestial emperors. Peace will soon return to our lands!"

The moment someone took charge, the crowd retreated blisteringly fast, deserting the place in record time. Only Jiang Huan lagged behind, somewhat reluctant. His elder master's life hung in the balance.

His heart hung heavy!

More than anything, he wished he could lend a hand, but the fight had regrettably gone beyond his level. It was a true clash between celestial emperors.

To think Mirrorbloom hid such a phenomenal power! She'd almost succeeded in refining her own plane, even without the help of a creation symbol.

It was clear she'd constructed the embryo of a plane, and was planning to make it slowly devour Taiyuan Plane so it could supersede the latter!

Of course, she could also let her world grow by itself. But the process would be excruciatingly long and arduous. The path of least resistance would be to use another greater world as a foundation for her own, and it was the path she'd opted for.

If she could have her way, Taiyuan Plane would disappear forever while she'd obtain the universe's endorsement and gain her own token, thus cementing the plane as hers. The woman was truly a force of nature.

She'd endured for an eternity, ever striving toward her goal. Yes, she was detestable, yet she was also admirable in some ways.

Jiang Chen stayed in hot pursuit, the razor-sharp Edge of Evermore in his hand. He couldn't let her escape. He knew he had to kill her for good, here and now.

Thankfully, he could match her speed. Moreover, the power of his domain was working to obstruct her plane's course.

Epiphanies came to him one after another, from the Four Symbols True Spirit Painting he'd long been studying, from the wonders of the universe, from the profound principles of creation.

A plane also started to take shape at his side, slowly growing.

Just like Mirrorbloom, he had the power to build his own world. But his approach was more direct, impactful, and orthodox!

While it had been somewhat of a grueling task for her, the blood of the four sacred beasts flowed in his veins. His was a textbook creation born from the five elements. Earth, water, fire, wind, and metal all blended to give birth to something new.

Such a world was a firm and proper existence compared to the patchwork that was Mirrorbloom Plane.

Whether in cultivation or in character, he and his enemy stood at opposite ends of the spectrum.

But Mirrorbloom wasn't without her own advantage. She'd been nurturing her realm for a long, long time. In comparison, Jiang Chen was but a freshly-minted godking.

Without the Four Symbols True Spirit Painting, he wouldn't have come so far so fast, and wouldn't even have dreamed of going head-to-head against Mirrorbloom.

The lack of a creation token was the one chink in the armor of an otherwise nigh-impossible opponent. After all, Jiang Chen had had next to no time to consolidate the power of his own token.

Sovereign of the Three Realms (WN)

Chapter 2369: Madness

It might seem like they were fighting within the Taiyuan Sky Palace, but in reality, both had tapped into the power of their planes. They flung around powerful spatial techniques and could enter a completely different space at any time.

Regular godkings weren't powerful enough to be involved. Godkings who could refine a plane was but a step away from becoming a celestial emperor. The only thing holding them back was the lack of a creation token, which they would acquire sooner or later.

The light reflecting from the Mirrorbloom Plane was as bright as stars. Countless rays of light washed over the entire area, hitting anything and everything.

Jiang Chen deployed his newly formed plane to defend against the incoming attacks. Even he might be devoured by the enemy if the light scored so much as a glancing blow. Then he'd be in Mirrorbloom territory. He would be far from helpless, but he would be at a disadvantage.

Anxiety burned in Jiang Chen's heart. His father had been devoured and trapped by the Mirrorbloom Plane in order to protect the other godkings. There was no telling what would happen if he didn't get his father out in time.

Jiang Chen pushed his innate power to the limits and directed the might of the four bloodlines in his body as four different attacks.

Dragon Howl!

Tiger Roar!

Fire of the Vermillion Bird!

Black Tortoise Festering Gas!

These were techniques the four sacred beasts regularly employed. However, once one tapped into the power of the heavenly dao, the fight was no longer about the technique itself, but an individual's understanding of the heavenly law and profound mysteries of heaven and earth.

Dragon howls reverberated!

The true dragon bloodline controlled time and space. Great forces of lightning tore through the sky and lunged at the light reflected from the Mirrorbloom Plane.

Tiger roars abounded!

The astral white tiger bloodline was one of conflict and slaughter. Incomparably keen blades materialized and cut through the air, seemingly capable of destroying even time and space.

Vermilion Bird fire was that of utmost yang in the world. This bloodline summoned the most scorching flames from heaven and earth and ignited the void, refining all matter.

Festering Gas contained the power of the Black Tortoise, pulsing in concert with the earth. It was the most extreme of yin power in the universe and the most all-encompassing force of the earth. All returned to their origins.

The four bloodlines embodied almost all phenomena in the heavenly planes and all natural forces that dictated the universe.

The incorporation of the four bloodlines was in itself the process of refining a world. The four attacks intertwined to present the trajectories of all things, the transformation of life itself since genesis, and the ebb and flow of a world.

The four sacred beasts manifested and resonated with the supreme power Jiang Chen had released. Their bloodlines worked perfectly with his attacks.

Two strands of power came together as one with Jiang Chen as the core. The attack could topple a world!

Godking Mirrorbloom couldn't be more shocked as she hid within her plane, observing the tremendous forces coming her way.

"That brat is surprisingly powerful. He's as good as his old man was back then." The woman grimaced.

Her eyes darted to the side and settled on Celestial Emperor Taiyuan, who sat cross-legged in her realm with an aloof and all-knowing expression.

His calmness infuriated Mirrorbloom. Even now, the celestial emperor maintained this pretense!

With grit teeth, she reinforced the defenses circling her plane, maintaining a steady supply of energy to keep it intact. Then, she flashed to the subspace near the celestial emperor.

"Taiyuan!" Mirrorbloom bit out, her eyes feral.

Celestial Emperor Taiyuan glanced at her. "It's still not too late to turn back, Mirrorbloom. You're surrounded by all these mirrors. Haven't you seen the reflection of your own soul?"

"Shut up! Don't talk about inconsequential crap! My soul is mine to control! Aren't you the celestial emperor? You're sitting there like a dead dog. Has your divine power finally been eroded after hundreds of thousands of years? Hahaha! I couldn't be happier seeing you fall from grace and sprawl before me like a dead dog!"

Mirrorbloom laughed like a maniac, her body trembling

Taiyuan sighed faintly. "You've lost yourself to your inner demons, Mirrorbloom. What a shame. You've been able to refine your own plane. What astounding talent that is! If you'd kept yourself at peace, you'd one day master the heavenly law and surpass even me. Why couldn't you be patient?"

"Patient? Why should I be patient? I waited more than a million years! When did you ever pay any attention to me? You cared only about your useless son! How did I know you weren't going to pass your throne to him after all the effort you've spent on him?"

Mirrorbloom's expression was wild and vicious. It was clear that she'd gone mad.

Taiyuan flashed the same faint smile that'd always infuriated Mirrorbloom. He never lost his composure. Even after being devoured by her realm, he remained the aloof celestial emperor overlooking everyone. No matter how hard Mirrorbloom tried, she was nothing but a subordinate to him.

"Stop grinning! I'll beat you until you can't smile anymore!" Snarling, Mirrorbloom threw a punch.

Golden light flashed before Taiyuan. Tremendous defensive power surged like a vortex and blocked her punch.

"How dare you resist?!" Mirrorbloom threw furious punches at Taiyuan with great ferocity. This was her world! She didn't believe a decrepit celestial emperor would be able to defend against her.

However, she couldn't break through the golden light no matter how relentless her attacks were. It frustrated her greatly.

"Impossible! This is my world. My attacks overpower all. Why can't I break your defenses? You've been imprisoned for so long. Your fortunes as a celestial emperor should've long faded. Why is this happening?!" Mirrorbloom growled angrily, her attacks growing more and more vicious.

Meanwhile, Mirrorbloom Plane trembled dramatically. Jiang Chen's attacks outside were threatening to undermine its structural integrity.

This was a clash of two worlds.

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

Chapter 2370: Celestial Emperor Taiyuan In A Tight Spo

"Mirrorbloom, your ambitions have made you blind. You were already on the fringes of the supreme dao. You were so close to receiving its favor. But now, you reject it like a madwoman. Sometimes, you have to take a step back to move forward. The longer you persist in the wrong direction, the further you travel from the truth. Mirrorbloom, you've lost your way..."

"Shut your mouth!" At this stage, anything the celestial emperor said was only sheer annoyance to Mirrorbloom's ears. Her desires clouded her mind.

The only thing on her mind was to kill the pair and wrest control of Taiyuan Plane so she could use its energy to nourish her embryonic world. She wanted a realm to call her own sooner rather than later, and the supreme dao's endorsement to boot, along with her own creation token!

To that end, she'd bided her time in secret for ages untold.

Taking a step back after all of this? It'd be the failure of an entire lifetime! It was too late for her to turn over a new leaf.

But it hadn't been long since she'd attained enlightenment and crafted her embryonic plane. With little time to strengthen it, the combined assault from Jiang Chen and the four sacred beasts was a constant thorn in her side.

The young man's voice reached her, echoing directly inside her realm. "Mirrorbloom, I will spare you if you release my father!"

He might have looked a single step away from Mirrorbloom Plane, but they were in fact two worlds apart. To convey his voice through the different spacetimes was proof that his power had reached the celestial emperor realm.

She smirked cruelly, her eyes pure venom. "Little pup, I've already pulped him into mincemeat and made dumplings with him. Want a taste? The flesh of a celestial emperor is quite tender."

Steam almost boiled out of Jiang Chen's ears. "You crazy woman, if you dare harm a single hair on his head, I'll cut you into a thousand pieces and torment your soul night and day for a million years. You'll be begging me for death!"

"Hmph, what a load of bullshit! A snotty brat challenging me? Remember, I took down your old man at the height of his power. I guess you're a chip off the old block. See how I deal with you disgraceful lot!"

She clasped her hands together, then spread them apart.

A strange hexagonal mirror appeared between them, seeming to encompass the four cardinal directions and the entirety of the universe. Within that mirror, she held the moon in one hand and the sun in the other.

"Taiyuan, it's time to send you off to the afterlife. Don't worry, your little pipsqueak will be along soon to keep you company!" She crossed her arms and sent two beams at him. Midway, they combined into one, shooting his way with supreme power.

Merging yin with yang, the dreadful attack carried the most primordial principles of the universe. It was a solid hit that demonstrated full comprehension of her own power.

Boom!

The beam twisted on itself and rammed against Celestial Emperor Taiyuan's golden vortex in a deafening crash, overpowering it and shattering it to pieces.

Fortunately, the vortex cushioned some of the impact before disappearing, mitigating the damage as Celestial Emperor Taiyuan took it head on.

Divine light exploded around him. But his armor served its purpose. Its glow dimmed as its structure underwent an alarming change, its defenses instantly distorted by the onslaught of energy. In the end, it withstood the attack.

"You old fart, I guess you were once a celestial emperor after all. A fallen titan's still a giant! But do you think simple armor will save you? Now that your power has declined, all resistance is futile. Watch me take your life!"

For her, the man was merely prey. She'd been toying with him thus far to enjoy his futile struggles, but Jiang Chen's attacks cut the spectacle short. The situation was too urgent for her to waste her time tormenting the father.

I'd better kill him as fast as possible. A long night is fraught with dreams.

Celestial Emperor Taiyuan had been held captive for too many years to count. Bit by bit, the prison's constant corrosion had eaten away at his cultivation and devoured his strength. After several hundred thousand years, not even he could avoid being affected.

A celestial emperor he might be, but his body was made of flesh and bone, rather than of the supreme dao itself. Not to mention, he no longer had his creation token by his side. He was far from his zenith, and the supreme dao's protection was weakened.

Though he'd secretly sent the creation token to his son, he was still a celestial emperor recognized by the heavens.

It was how he'd endured for this long. The prison might have gnawed away some of his strength, but not all of it. He'd simply fallen to the level of a godking.

Even so, he could handily sort out the current crop of godkings. But perhaps one who matched a celestial emperor in strength like Mirrorbloom was a step too far.

His long captivity, the lack of a creation token, and various reasons all conspired to make him lose ground against her. He resisted her casual attacks with his reserve of energy, but a strike containing the supreme dao of the universe was beyond his ability to weather.

Luckily for him, he was wearing his celestial emperor armor, but it couldn't shield him forever. Fending her off once or twice was its limit.

In the outside world, he might have used his dexterity to evade. But she was supreme inside her own world. No matter how he moved, her attacks could arise from anywhere in her plane, so dodging would be a waste of mental and physical stamina.

Hence, he didn't even try. He spared himself the trouble and sat on the ground cross-legged, preserving his energy. Why squander what little he'd managed to save from the prison's clutches?

As a veteran of untold battles and an experienced celestial emperor, he barely held on despite her frenzied barrage. How long could he last? He himself couldn't answer the question.

Yet, his heart was light. His son was now a fine man thanks to his plans. His legacy would live on. Why should he be worried?

"Chen'er, I know you'll come out victorious," he silently repeated to himself. He was staring death in the eye, but seeing his son all grown up again was enough. His efforts hadn't hadn't been in vain.