

Three Realms 411

Chapter 411: Eighth Level Spirit Realm

Thousandleaf nodded with appreciation. "I'll give you three days. Fei Xuan, you're more familiar with the secular world, so accompany Tang Hong."

Thousandleaf looked around in a circle when he was finished. "Remember, Jiang Chen is a member of the Precious Tree Sect regardless of whether or not he is alive or dead. His family and friends are people that we must protect as well. If anyone dares move against them, that is the same as fighting against our own. If I find out someone had done so, I will not let them off easily!"

Jiang Chen was now the Precious Tree Sect's treasure, and its most precious one at that.

How could forefather Thousandleaf possibly allow the Iron family to harass Jiang Chen's people? If they irritated Jiang Chen, then all would be for naught in the end!

Therefore, forefather Thousandleaf actually had personally given a warning.

When the Iron father and son duo heard this, they were both privately dejected. They knew that this meant the Iron family would be stomped underfoot by Jiang Chen in the future!

They only had one thought in their minds right now, and that was hoping that Jiang Chen never walked out of the Eternal Spirit Mountain. He better die in there!

In the Skylareland Kingdom, everyone in the Jiang manor knew that the selection was over, but was greatly astonished that Jiang Chen hadn't walked out from the mountain.

Jiang Feng had long since left the manor, and there were only Jiang Chen's third uncle Jiang Tong and his cousin Jiang Yu left at home.

Neither of these two had the power to make the decisions in the Jiang manor, so the final word was left up to Gouyu.

"Jiang Chen is the boss of me, Tang Hong. I will not leave his family to fend for themselves. You can go to the Precious Tree Sect if you need protection. I will guarantee your safety."

"We appreciate your good intentions, but we have decided to stay here and wait for the young master's return." Gouyu's attitude was also firm.

She didn't believe that Jiang Chen would fall and resolutely believed that he would return safely.

With Xue Tong as their leader, all the other personal guards expressed determined attitudes as well. They did not want to move to the Precious Tree Sect and wanted to stay in the capital instead.

Their attitudes were clearly defined. If the young master had yet to enter the Precious Tree Sect, then neither would they as followers. Otherwise, it would be an improper act.

Although they were all secular disciples, they had spent a great deal of time with Jiang Chen and had inherited a similar self pride.

Tang Hong also sighed with admiration when he saw this. "You guys follow my boss alright! You guys are the spitting image of my boss. Alright, wait here if you'd like instead. If anyone comes make trouble for you, just mention my name or go to the sect to find forefather Thousandleaf. In fact, the forefather himself has even given instructions about this!"

Forefather Thousandleaf, a venerated origin realm cultivator was paying personal attention to this! This made Gouyu and the others feel pride swelling from within their hearts.

What did this mean?

This meant that the young master had indeed soared to astounding heights this time. Even an origin realm cultivator valued his existence. Even if his current status was unknown, the origin realm cultivator still didn't dare let any of his people suffer.

This obliquely reflected on the young master's current position.

When Tang Hong left, Crown Prince Ye Rong and Tian Zhao of the Dragonteeth Guard all came to visit and inquire how everyone was doing. They didn't give the Jiang family the cold shoulder just because Jiang Chen had yet to return.

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Time flew as if on the back of an arrow; the days and months flashed by like a weaver's shuttle.

Half a year passed by unconsciously just like this.

After half a year of hard work, Jiang Chen had solidified his control in the seventh level spirit realm and was showing slight signs of breaking through.

The concentration of spirit power in the sky quadrant was ten times that of the outside world's. Cultivating here for half a year was the equivalent of three to five years in the outside world, or possibly even more.

Jiang Chen had faced no distractions in the half year here. He hadn't needed to consider the exams, opponents, farm points, or his ranking.

Therefore, apart from occasional conversations with Elder Shu and Huang'er in this half year, he'd spent almost all his efforts in cultivation.

The unconscious Chu Xinghan awoke after spending three months in a coma. A complex interplay of emotions flowed in his heart when he discovered that the person who'd saved him was Jiang Chen.

However, he was an open minded person after all. When Long Juxue hit him with that blow, he knew that his relationship with the Purple Sun Sect was over.

Jiang Chen didn't speak words of encouragement to him. Since he had woken up, it was up to Chu Xinghan's heart and soul if he could regain his faith and set foot on the path of martial dao again.

Chu Xinghan truly did feel his heart was dead inside in the beginning. But as time went on and he witnessed how furiously Jiang Chen cultivated everyday, he was rather touched.

He'd heard that Long Juxue had been cleaved into two by Jiang Chen in the ring.

When he heard this, a knot in Chu Xinghan's heart was undone immediately. It seemed like all his lost vitality and belief had been found again.

"Even Long Juxue of the innate constitution had been cleaved into two with one blow. It can be seen that on the path of martial dao, so-called geniuses and domineering auras are all nothing. I am a man, my master has abandoned me, my peers tried to harm me—when none of these have destroyed me, what reason do I have to wallow in self pity? What else do I have to lose?"

Chu Xinghan suddenly understood all that Jiang Chen had done for him when his thoughts traveled here, and he understood Jiang Chen's hard efforts as well.

"Jiang Chen..."

A light of deep contemplation sparkled in Chu Xinghan's eyes as he looked in the direction of Jiang Chen's residence. He knew that Jiang Chen had been the one to save him, and he'd only lived until now because of Jiang Chen's pills.

Having taken a walk in front of death's doors, Chu Xinghan had gained great comprehension and understood true human nature.

"To think that the one who'd want to kill me would be the master that I have served with great loyalty all along, and the one who saved me would be the very enemy that I wanted to kill with all my strength. How ironic! I am so laughable to have been fenced in by foolish thoughts of filial piety all my life, ones that almost condemned my own life in the end."

Chu Xinghan thought clearly and felt that he was still the lucky one.

When thinking of the others beneath Master Shuiyue and how she lacked talent now, even his former eldest senior brother had defected to the Flowing Wind Sect.

"I must live, and keep on living!" A strong desire to live grew in Chu Xinghan's heart. "My life was given to me from Jiang Chen. I clearly delineate my grudges and favors. I must repay this debt of gratitude even if I die."

Once Chu Xinghan's desire to live was formed, his strong dao heart immediately gave him boundless motivation to train.

On this day, Jiang Chen suddenly felt a surging momentum in his spirit ocean that abruptly brought him to the edge of breaking through.

Jiang Chen was delighted by this. He'd thought that breaking through to the eighth level spirit realm would require a bit more time. He hadn't thought that it'd arrive so soon.

Since the timing to break through had arrived, how would Jiang Chen let it pass him by?

He gathered up his strength for one go as the spirit energy in his spirit ocean became increasingly lively, continuously assailing a higher level.

Finally, when a current of spirit qi had completed a full circulation, he advanced another step forward in the spirit realm and set foot into eighth level spirit realm.

“Hoo! I hadn’t thought that the eighth level would arrive so quickly, much faster than I’d anticipated!”

Jiang Chen didn’t dare tarry as he hastily solidified his foundations after breaking through to another level.

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In a yard not too far away, Elder Shun stood with his hands behind his back, looking leisurely at the residence that Jiang Chen was in. He sighed lightly. “This Jiang Chen is truly a perverse genius. Just how many secrets are present on him? Or has he truly been possessed by a god?”

When Jiang Chen had suddenly gone from useless fop to genius in the Eastern Kingdom, general sentiment had been that he’d been possessed by a divine being.

Elder Shun had heard of it in the Hall of Healing, but had dismissed it with a sniff, utterly contemptuous of these words.

But now, he had to truly wonder, had Jiang Chen really received a divine visitation?

In this world, those with stronger cultivation and strength would have deeper understanding of the matters of the gods.

Elder Shun had never doubted the existence of the gods. It was because he believed they existed that he didn’t believe Jiang Chen had been possessed by one.

Now that he looked back on Jiang Chen’s life, there really had been divine touches all over the place. Jiang Chen was someone he paid particular attention to, so he knew quite a few more details than the forefathers.

However, Elder Shun was a gentleman after all. He didn’t start prying into Jiang Chen’s affairs just because of the latter’s performance.

He knew that if he became nosy and started posing quite a few questions, it would surely give rise to Jiang Chen’s wariness and even result in his aversion and antipathy.

In this way, this would go against Elder Shun’s desires and affect the chances of healing Huang’er’s ailment.

Elder Shun knew that the geniuses of the world all had their own fortunes. No one had the right to ask anything, unless they had nefarious designs.

Elder Shun didn’t have any conspiracies towards Jiang Chen, so he was only grateful towards Jiang Chen’s diagnosis and Huang’er’s treatment. He didn’t ask further about Jiang Chen’s various heaven defying performances.

Jiang Chen also showed a great accord and never mentioned where these things came from.

“Huang’er, how have you felt in this half year?” Elder Shun sighed lightly and turned his head to ask.

“Huang’er has felt much better this half year in accordance with Sir Jiang’s instructions. Even when the symptoms seemed that they would flare up a few times, they could all be suppressed by the ‘Ethereal Soothing Melody’. Sir Jiang is a man of great talent.”

Huang'er was filled with great admiration and gratitude whenever she mentioned Jiang Chen.

"Mm, Jiang Chen must have an uncommon heritage that no one else knows about. Huang'er, who would've thought that old man Qian Ji's divination would be thus miraculous? I am rather curious now how far will Jiang Chen go? I have even higher expectations for him now." Elder Shun didn't conceal his good feelings towards Jiang Chen at all.

"If Elder Shun admires Sir Jiang so much, why not take him as your disciple so you can carefully mentor him?" Huang'er's tone held a few joking traces.

Elder Shun chuckled. "I have to say, I really did think about this. However, I've observed Jiang Chen and let go of this notion afterwards to prevent myself from undertaking a fruitless endeavor."

"Why do you say this?" Huang'er started.

"Jiang Chen is exceedingly opinionated. His every step on his path has been laid out according to his plans. This is the true mind of a genius. In addition, although he knows that my strength is far in excess of the four forefathers, he's never revealed any traces of wanting to cozy up to me. He has his self pride and his own mind. This kind of genius will naturally have his own path in rising. I originally wanted to take him away from this, but now I feel that he should walk his own path. I should not overly intervene in his path!"

There was a tantalizing hint of something mysterious in Elder Shun's voice.

Chapter 412: Plans to Leave, Elder Shun's Request

"Hoo!"

Jiang Chen's eyes opened again after two days of meditation. Breaking through to the eighth level had caused more dao inspiration to spring forth from within, ideas gushing forth like a newly excavated spring.

The benefits of refining the Fire Raven King core were becoming more apparent day by day.

"To think that the benefits of the Fire Raven King core would be thus. At this rate, if I continue to stay in the sky quadrant, I could likely make for the ninth level spirit realm after three months."

Jiang Chen could clearly feel that his spirit ocean had an abundance of spirit power thanks to the boundless source of energy from the Raven King core.

"Mm, this is the path of martial dao that I, Jiang Chen, wish for. This is the exciting life of martial dao!" Jiang Chen was in extremely good spirits when he sensed the vibrant spirit power in his mind.

"However, I've been away for too long. I wonder how the outside world has changed? The Purple Sun Sect will not rest after I've slaughtered Long Juxue. Although, if they vent their rage on my people, there'll be no safe harbor for them to take shelter in the vast Skylareland Kingdom."

Jiang Chen's heart lay with his people. He felt that although the Eternal Spirit Mountain was extremely suitable for cultivation, he would still leave resolutely.

Otherwise, having worries constantly circle him would cause his state of mind to be in disarray. This would be a disadvantageous impact to his cultivation.

“I’m now at eighth level spirit realm, and only one step away from ninth level. Once I reach the ninth level, I’ll be able to do as I will in the sixteen kingdoms, barring interference from the forefathers. But even in the eighth, I have no need to fear when faced with those in the ninth level. I’ll be able to put up a fight even against a spirit king.”

Jiang Chen’s continuous breakthroughs had also raised his confidence.

As his cultivation level rose and he mastered all of the forms of the “Vast Ocean Current Splitter”, he began to develop the technique to a higher level, utilizing mysteries not found in the original method.

His comprehension of the dao of the sword had surpassed that of when he killed Long Juxue.

He’d also long since completed the nine cycles of blooming and wilting of the “Divine Aeons Fist”. The strongest aspect of this technique lay in its ability of rebirth.

The mysteries within the “Divine Aeons Fist” meant that when Jiang Chen practiced other techniques, he would be able to naturally assimilate various techniques, allowing them to reach unthinkable heights.

Jiang Chen was also well versed in the four great arts of the “Moonshatter Flying Daggers” now. Add the throwing daggers forged from the Raven King’s tail feathers, and it was like giving wings to a tiger.

The most critical thing was that as the four divine arts of the “Moonshatter Flying Daggers” continued to improve, the power of this technique would continue to increase as well.

God’s Eye, Ear of the Zephyr, Boulder’s Heart, and Psychic’s Head all continued to improve as Jiang Chen broke through.

His trump card, the Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice could now control forty nine vines at any given time.

The abilities of the Lotus were dependent on his cultivation level.

The stronger his body and spirit ocean were, the stronger the Lotus was as well.

This meant that the Lotus was also continuously evolving and improving.

It was a heavenly treasure to begin with, but its current form was still a far cry from its peak condition.

Jiang Chen was well aware of this, so he cared deeply about the Lotus’ evolution.

“It’s a pity that I could not refine Long Juxue that day in the ring. If I could’ve taken Long Juxue’s innate constitution, the Lotus would’ve risen by more than just one level.”

Although Jiang Chen felt vaguely regretful, he didn’t mind it terribly. There would be many more opportunities like these in the future.

Apart from the Lotus, the magnetic golden mountain was also a great treasure trove.

Ever since entering the sky spirit realm, Jiang Chen’s control over the magnetic power had grown more and more refined. He could easily deploy a magnetic force field now, but he was still a ways off from a magnetic storm.

“If I could form a magnetic storm, I would be able to fight even if I met the forefathers. At the very least I will have confidence in escaping if I can’t hold my own in battle.”

Even though he was still a ways off from generating the magnetic storm, he’d already started practicing the evil golden eye.

The beam of light that had shot out from the evil eye on the magnetic golden mountain had left a deep impression on Jiang Chen.

This art was more useful than any hidden weapon. With a single glare, all enemies would be frozen by the immense magnetic power before they’d had time to react. How domineering of this art!

Therefore, Jiang Chen spent the majority of his time in recent days practicing this art.

It was a difficult matter to train the evil golden eye. It was a good thing that Jiang Chen had practiced God’s Eye, and had a firm foundation in the arts that made use of his eyes.

He used the metal essence power everyday to forge and temper his aura.

The evil golden eye wasn’t just an art of the eyes, but one of the strength of heart as well. It combined the metal essence power with strength of heart to create an enormous power that froze one’s soul and consciousness in an instant, then used the metal essence power alone to spontaneously petrify them.

To Jiang Chen, this evil golden eye art was basically a divine art that was tailored for him.

He possessed everything needed to train in it, and possessed them in spades.

Having cultivated God’s Eye, his eye arts were far in excess of his peers.

Thanks to Boulder’s Heart, his strength of heart was so strong that even the origin realm forefathers stood in admiration.

His source of metal essence power would never be exhausted thanks to the magnetic golden mountain. Add Jiang Chen’s daily refining of the elemental energy into himself to temper his body and train the Nine Transformations of Demons and Gods, he had no shortage of metal essence power.

He possessed all three requirements in abundance.

Therefore, Jiang Chen quickly picked up the evil golden eye. Thanks to his foundation in eye arts, he encountered a lot less trouble and pain in the course of his training.

With his immense strength of heart and comprehension skills, he actually achieved quite a breakthrough with the evil golden eye over these months. Although it paled in comparison to that employed by the enormous sculpture on the mountain, Jiang Chen still possessed roughly thirty percent of the sculpture’s power.

“Hmm, if I’m ever able to deploy fifty percent of the sculpture’s power, then I’ll be able to instantly annihilate those on the same level as me. If I possess seventy percent of its power, then I’ll be able to distract even spirit kings. If I can harness a hundred percent of its power, then I’ll have hope to challenge even the origin realm forefathers. If I surpass it... then I will have full confidence when facing origin realm cultivators.”

Jiang Chen was well aware that there was no limit to the evil golden eye's aura, just like that one beam of strength from the enormous sculpture hadn't been its ultimate blow.

How strong the evil golden eye was, was entirely dependent on the cultivator.

If Jiang Chen made it into the origin realm, he would still be able to easily smash his peers' faces in when he deployed the evil golden eye.

He finally set foot out of the door after he'd resolidified his grasp over all his techniques. He was in a great mood as he breathed in the unique air of the sky quadrant.

I wonder how Miss Huang'er has been in my days of closed door cultivation?

Jiang Chen hadn't forgotten his responsibilities as he pushed through the door and walked towards Huang'er and Elder Shun's residences.

"What? You want to leave?"

Jiang Chen raised his desire to leave when he saw that Huang'er's condition had stabilized. Elder Shun was slightly surprised when he heard this.

Jiang Chen nodded affirmatively. "I've been away too long and some matters in the secular world still weigh on my mind. I might as well go back and take a look instead of being constantly uneasy. It would be difficult for me to progress in my cultivation here in this way."

If one's mind was uneasy during cultivation, it would be very easy to give rise to internal demons.

Elder Shun was silent for a moment and nodded lightly, asking, "Do you plan to return to the Precious Tree Sect then?"

"Yes, since I've chosen them, I need to give them an answer as well. Now that crisis is rearing its head in the sixteen kingdom alliance and changes are shifting rapidly through the situation, it would be a pity to miss it all."

Jiang Chen didn't become arrogant even though his cultivation level had kept increasing. His feet remained firmly planted on the ground.

When he thought about how the sixteen kingdom alliance was just a small corner of the world, the joy that he'd felt in defeating Long Juxue seemed to minuscule in comparison.

Killing Long Juxue was just the finishing touch on their grudge, it was nothing to be happy about. The truth challenges were just about to begin.

He didn't have the ambition to soar to the skies in one move, but wanted to do things slowly but surely.

Elder Shun had an obvious admiration of Jiang Chen's attitude. This young man was neither cocky nor hasty, and didn't consider himself as having rendered a great service after diagnosing Huang'er. Jiang Chen never put forth a variety of requests or wanted to learn of any gossip from him.

This young man was neither arrogant upon victory, nor dejected upon defeat. He didn't reach for anything beyond his grasp and wasn't self complacent.

“In this case, I will need to trouble you for Huang’er’s ailment. That’s alright, it’s time to leave anyways. I will now begin to travel the world and search for the Requiem Wood. However, Huang’er is sick and thus unsuitable to accompany my travels. I am also helpless when her symptoms flare up. Would it be an intrusion to give over Huang’er over to little brother Jiang’s care?”

Elder Shun had actually considered these words for quite a while, and finally spoke them after careful consideration.

He wanted to leave and seek the Requiem Wood.

However, he hadn’t been able to bear to leave Huang’er and fretted over her.

After a few months, Elder Shun finally made up his mind that Jiang Chen was a dependable man before speaking these words.

Jiang Chen looked at Huang’er. She happened to be looking at him as well. Her gaze was noncommittal and leisurely, but he understood the meaning in her eyes.

Even if he declined this request, she would understand and wouldn’t blame him in the least.

However, since he had made his diagnosis, Jiang Chen was of the mind to see things through the end. He knew that the Requiem Wood must be located. Since Elder Shun had made this request of him, his sense of honor had made it impossible for him to refuse.

After all, it was only natural for him to do so after his life had been saved twice.

“As long as Miss Huang’er doesn’t think I am crude and base, I am happy to take care of you. Miss Huang’er herself is very intelligent, so there’s not much for me to worry about at all.

Jiang Chen’s words meant that he was agreeing to Elder Shun.

Elder Shun was delighted by these words. He’d been afraid that Jiang Chen would refuse.

When Huang’er heard the tone of acceptance in Jiang Chen’s words, an odd light flashed through her eyes as well. Her heart trembled as a trace of being touched flashed through her heart.

She had disguised herself with such ugly features because she’d wanted to test this secular youth’s character.

When she saw that he didn’t have the slightest aversion to her ugly face, this was when she was certain that Jiang Chen was a true gentleman.

However, Elder Shun’s departure made her slightly saddened. After so long, she’d long since grown used to their mutual reliance.

Even though she knew that his sudden leave was for her ailment, she still felt a bit lost in that moment.

Chapter 413: Return to Skylareland Kingdom

Since Jiang Chen was to return to the Precious Tree Sect, this put Chu Xinghan in a rather awkward position.

Jiang Chen had saved Chu Xinghan's life, and he wanted badly to repay Jiang Chen, but he was still a Purple Sun Sect disciple after all. To someone as loyal as he was, the notion of him flocking to the Precious Tree Sect's banner was a bit tough to accept.

Therefore, when Chu Xinghan heard that Jiang Chen would return to the Precious Tree Sect, he was a bit dazed, then said resolutely, "Jiang Chen, I owe you my life. You can come take it whenever you want. I would rather be a wandering cultivator all my life than throw myself at the mercy of another sect. Please understand. If there comes a day that you leave the Precious Tree Sect, summon me at any time and I will be there, awaiting your orders."

Jiang Chen did indeed greatly admire Chu Xinghan and didn't want to force the man to follow him.

He smiled slightly, "It's not that I saved your life, you saved your own. With my style, I only ask for a clear conscience, not for any return."

Chu Xinghan was well aware that Jiang Chen was open and straightforward. His admiration for Jiang Chen grew even greater.

Elder Shun laughed heartily on the side, "It just so happens that I am going to travel the four seas and lack someone to keep me company. Chu Xinghan, the fates of you and I seem to intersect. Are you willing to stay by my side and be my companion?"

Elder Shun had saved Jiang Chen from Chu Xinghan's hands back at the Second Crossing.

Chu Xinghan had been able to set his feelings aside with good humor. This had invoked a few traces of admiration in Elder Shun.

And now, destiny had strung them all together in the Eternal Spirit Mountain.

To Elder Shun, this was fate.

Jiang Chen was also delighted to hear this. If Chu Xinghan followed Elder Shun, it would be a great stroke of fortune for him. He immediately smiled, "Brother Chu, Elder Shun is an acclaimed expert of our times. If you can stay by his side and serve him, it would be the making of a new you."

Chu Xinghan naturally wouldn't put on airs. Elder Shun had used just a random move that day at the Second Crossing to dispel all of his attacks. The divine arts contained within that move had been something far exceeding that of his honored master Shuiyue.

Jiang Chen had learned later that Elder Shun had used some tricks to run circles around the four forefathers.

This meant that he was much stronger than them.

Now that Elder Shun had extended an invitation to Chu Xinghan to accompany him, that was an incredible change in fortune. What reason did he have to turn the elder down?

He immediately bowed deeply and said respectfully, "Xinghan is willing to follow by Elder Shun's side, available for beck and call at the side of your saddle to serve you."

Huang'er felt a bit better when she saw that Elder Shun had taken Chu Xinghan for a follower. She too was worried that Elder Shun would feel lonely as he drifted too and fro in his advanced age.

Chu Xinghan also seemed like someone with a good personality, and was loyal. It would rather be a good thing to have him by Elder Shun's side.

When the two sides had finished discussing, they left the Eternal Spirit Mountain and the legacy territory through Elder Shun's handiwork.

Jiang Chen and Huang'er were to head to the Precious Tree Sect, and Elder Shun would take Chu Xinghan in traveling the lands to search for the Requiem Wood.

When Jiang Chen watched the departing figures of Elder Shun taking Chu Xinghan away, he sighed softly. He was genuinely happy at the sight of such an outcome for Chu Xinghan.

When Huang'er saw Jiang Chen sigh, she asked out of curiosity, "Why does Sir Jiang sigh so?"

"Chu Xinghan's life has been tumultuous. Being at Elder Shun's side is a good final destination for him, so I'm happy for him. Of the disciples in the four sects, those who can enter my line of sight are few and far in between. Chu Xinghan is frank and forthright with his own principles. He is indeed a true man."

Huang'er was slightly lost in thought and gave a long sigh after a while. "Sir Jiang only knows to compliment others, but do you know that you are such a person as well?"

Jiang Chen laughed heartily, "I don't know if I'm a true man, but I do know that my grudges and debts of gratitude are clearly defined, and I always repay kindness. Please be at ease, Miss Huang'er, I will not let Elder Shun down and will take good care of you."

Huang'er smiled, her downcast feelings of parting with Elder Shun lightening when she saw that Jiang Chen was sincere. She felt that Jiang Chen was someone open and genuine, easy to get along with.

"Elder Shun and Chu Xinghan have gone far, and we should be on our way as well." Huang'er withdrew her gaze from the distance, steadied her emotions, and spoke to Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen nodded and set off with Huang'er, heading for the Skylareland Kingdom.

What he hadn't thought of was that no matter how fast he went, Huang'er was able to keep tightly to his pace. She would never take even half a step in front of him, but neither would she fall too far behind.

This surprised Jiang Chen, and he became quite curious about her cultivation level.

He recalled that day when he felt her pulse that Miss Huang'er had an exceedingly deep level of cultivation, but he actually couldn't estimate her abilities.

"Miss Huang'er and Elder Shun's origins are mysterious, and their strength is unfathomable." Although Jiang Chen was curious, he didn't nose around.

The two of them occasionally conversed as they traveled, but Jiang Chen never asked where they'd come from.

On this day, they finally set foot into the capital of the Skylareland Kingdom.

Huang'er had put on a black cape. She wrapped herself up firmly and hid her face behind a veil.

Jiang Chen felt that this was because Huang'er was self-conscious about her appearance and didn't say anything.

All was orderly in the Jiang manor, with nothing falling into disarray just because Jiang Chen was absent.

"Young master?" Xue Tong discovered Jiang Chen as soon as he reached the door and yelled out excitedly.

The other personal guards dashed out when they heard this shout, delighted beyond words.

Their last parting had resulted in a leave of almost two years. Everyone had undergone great changes in the meantime.

They had all been young folk, but had all grown and become muscular after two years.

Xue Tong in particular had broken through to the spirit realm, whereas the others were all at the peak of the true qi realm, a mere step away from the spirit realm.

Jiang Chen swept his gaze across all of their faces and smiled. "Not bad, not bad!"

When he walked in the front door, he saw Gouyu standing on the steps of the courtyard. Her figure was still stunning, but her face seemed a bit thinner, imparting more natural beauty to her.

"Young master, you're finally back."

Gouyu was still the eldest amongst them all and thus more mature. But no matter how she tried to conceal the agitated emotions in her heart, they were still revealed in the deepest corners of her eyes.

It was apparent her happiness upon that Jiang Chen's return wasn't any less than that of Xue Tong and the others.

It was just that she was the de facto person in charge when the young master was gone, and so she didn't lose her composure like the others.

"Haha, Gouyu, you seemed to have slimmed down these past two years. These two years have been tough on everyone." Jiang Chen grew lighthearted when he saw that all was well within the manor. "Is my third uncle and Jiang Yu well?"

"The third lord and young master Yu are all very well." Xue Tong responded.

"Mm, let's go inside and chat." Jiang Chen was about to go inside when he suddenly halted, smiled, and pointed at Huang'er. "This is Miss Huang'er, a friend of an old friend."

"Hello Miss Huang'er."

Xue Tong and the others all made their greetings.

Gouyu also walked over with a charming smile and latched onto Huang'er's arm. "Miss Huang'er, since you are our young master's friend, be at ease here."

Huang'er smiled and was happy to see that Jiang Chen's pretty follower was open-minded and friendly.

“Hello older sister Gouyu.”

Gouyu saw that the other had remembered her name immediately, and that her voice was as pure as the heavenly tones. This made her entire being seem quite otherworldly and ethereal.

Therefore, Gouyu was immediately insatiably curious. Where did the young master pick up this old friend? Miss Huang'er's voice is so unworldly, the dulcet tones of a fairy. Just how extraordinary is she?

She became rather curious about Huang'er's face beneath the veil.

Huang'er also seemed to sense Gouyu's thoughts as she gave a soft smile. Girls were remarkably sharp when it came to these matters.

She knew that older sister Gouyu must have some feelings for her young master, so she couldn't help but be curious about other girls.

Huang'er was an empathetic sort as she lightly tugged her veil, revealing the ugly features.

Gouyu was slightly surprised to see this, but that surprise immediately transformed into concentrated apology. She knew that her probing just now had made Miss Huang'er misunderstand.

Huang'er's move had been to dispel Gouyu's curiosity and misunderstanding.

Gouyu felt rather awkward now. She was curious, yes, but didn't mean so in a jealous manner. She felt greatly apologetic that Miss Huang'er had been forced to show her face.

“Miss Huang'er...” Gouyu murmured and wanted to explain herself.

Huang'er smiled faintly. “Older sister Gouyu, I should've shown you my true face to begin with. It is I who have been rude.”

Gouyu felt quite conquered by Miss Huang'er's demeanor. She felt it quite a pity that Miss Huang'er was so kind and straightforward, but her looks were a blemish in an otherwise perfect whole. What was even more rare was that she didn't have the slightest bit of an inferiority complex with showing her face to others. This kind of leisurely bearing could only come from a daughter of an eminent family.

Surprise and guilt filled Gouyu's heart in that moment.

She grasped Huang'er's hand that felt so soft it was almost boneless. “Younger sister Huang'er, you live here from now on. I'll be your champion if anyone dares bully you!”

Gouyu was kindly disposed to this kind and openminded girl, and her protective instincts exploded in a second.

Jiang Chen chuckled and didn't say anything.

It was yet to be determined who would protect who. However, Gouyu's personality was open, fierce, and tough. She was quite direct about her likes and dislikes, and must be feeling guilty towards Huang'er about her actions just now. Wanting to protect her was completely in line with Gouyu's personality.

Huang'er knew that this was a true and genuine girl when she saw Gouyu thus. She didn't reject Gouyu as she smiled gently, “Then I must thank my sister first.”

The two of them walked inside hand in hand, chatting and laughing.

The news of Jiang Chen's return spread quickly to the palace, the Dragonteeth Guard, and every corner of the entire capital.

All of the nobles couldn't sit still as they all set out for the Jiang manor.

Please, Jiang Chen had risen from the Skylaurel Kingdom, and was now first amongst the younger generation with his return!

With this identity, who would dare mistreat him? They couldn't wait to fawn on him enough!

Chapter 414: Dan Fei's Letter

Towards the end, even the king of the Skylaurel Kingdom was motivated to action as he brought a hundred civil and military officials to the Jiang manor to offer his congratulations.

Although the proclaimed purpose was to offer felicitations, everyone's thoughts were actually the same. They wanted to strike up a relationship with Jiang Chen, fawn over him, and pay public tribute to him.

There was no question about it. Jiang Chen's position was higher than even the king's.

As a result of his foundation and identity, the king of the Skylaurel Kingdom wasn't someone who would be afraid even when in the presence of an ordinary elder of the Precious Tree Sect.

However, a genius like Jiang Chen wasn't someone that an ordinary sect elder could measure up to.

In this half year, numerous versions of the various legends surrounding Jiang Chen had arisen, depicting his performance in the selection as extravagantly as flowers falling from the sky, unaccountably magical.

Although these legends had been added to, his string of titles was very real.

The champion of the first secular selection, champion of the mystic and earth quadrants, and victor of the final matches, he'd become the undisputed final champion through destroying powerful opponents along the way and killing Long Juxue in the end.

Long Juxue had become a legendary genius in the sixteen kingdom alliance because of her innate constitution.

However, this legendary genius had been unable to escape her fate of being cleaved to death with one stroke.

That single blow had been enough to explain everything.

Not to mention that forefather Thousandleaf, someone who'd never concerned himself with secular matters, had personally spoken that the sect would protect the Jiang family without regard to whether Jiang Chen was alive or dead.

From this, it showed just how much the Precious Tree Sect valued Jiang Chen.

And now that Jiang Chen had emerged from his confinement, he was as if a dragon returning to the seas, destined to herald a new myth of a legendary genius in the sixteen kingdom alliance.

Could they refrain from fawning over such a character?

If they missed this chance, who knew if Jiang Chen would come back to the Skylareland Kingdom again? Even if he did, when would he do so?

This was definitely their best chance to get into his good graces.

Jiang Chen obviously hadn't expected such a development either.

Although the Jiang manor was spacious, when the nobles and powerful of the entire kingdom arrived on his doorstep, with all of them bringing their children, it made the scene entirely too raucous. These visitors itched to bring the entire younger generation from the families so that their young could learn from Jiang Chen. Even receiving one or two pointers would result in lifelong benefits.

The royal family had to step in and maintain order due to the explosive enthusiasm. They put on a royal banquet to welcome Jiang Chen, inviting all the nobles of the kingdom to attend, but limiting each family to two people.

Even so, the atmosphere was quite fervent.

Jiang Chen had long since grown accustomed to this. It was a common sight to see people flock to those with power.

He didn't refuse these arrangements and interacted closely with fourth prince Ye Rong at the banquet, using his actions to proclaim to those present that he still supported Ye Rong and was his strong shield.

Ye Rong's gains were the greatest in this regard. Everyone up and down the capital knew that Ye Rong's position of heir apparent couldn't be touched.

Even the king himself didn't dare to make any more changes to Ye Rong's position again.

The Azure Heaven Southern Palace, Qingyang Valley, and Myriad Treasures Palace had a ball of a time at the banquet thanks to their close relationship with Jiang Chen.

Palace head Ning in particular was even more emotional. She was deeply thankful that she hadn't married off her daughter to Xiao Yu of the Northern Palace and had chosen Qiao Baishi instead. Otherwise, she'd be so eaten away with regret right now to the extent that her very insides would be green.

The Myriad Treasures Palace was close to Jiang Chen because of Jiang Yu. Vice head Shi Xiaoyao was full of compliments for Jiang Chen.

Thanks to Fei Xuan becoming an elder, Qingyang Valley had abruptly risen to the head of the four sites. All of this was thanks to Jiang Chen, so he naturally held great admiration for Jiang Chen.

Apart from the four sites, general director Shangguan Yi of the Dragonteeth Guard was also deeply appreciative and greatly thankful that he hadn't lost his wits to stand with vice director Yang Zhao originally. Otherwise, where would he be in this banquet today?

He likely wouldn't even be sitting in his position as general director still.

The banquet ended amidst a carefree atmosphere, with some feeling unsatisfied coming up to further heighten their relationships with Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen didn't hold himself aloof as he responded to all of them politely.

Jiang Chen gathered again with those closest to him when all the guests had left.

Prince Ye Rong sighed, "Young master Chen, I count as one who tapped into your potential more in the Skylareel Kingdom, but I must admit that I never thought you would make it to this point."

Although Tian Shao didn't say anything similar, his faintly smiling expression indicated that he quite agreed with the prince.

They were all companions in adversity, and so the atmosphere was quite lighthearted.

Jiang Chen raised his cup, "To those difficult times of misfortunes."

Everyone laughed heartily and raised their cups.

Tang Long was sitting next to Tian Shao. After a few years of development, he had grown into his own and been promoted to commander. However, he was even more respectful now when he saw Jiang Chen.

His life had been utterly changed by Jiang Chen. With his grassroots origins, him becoming a commander in the Dragonteeth Guard felt almost like a dream.

Lin Qianli of the Azure Heaven Southern Palace, Prince Ye Rong's confidante, was also present. He had attended Ye Chonglou's birthday banquet along with Jiang Chen.

When Lin Qianli had first met Jiang Chen, he'd actually been a bit opposed to the latter and even looked down on him. Now that circumstances have changed with the passage of time, he could only sigh with emotion at what had happened between the two of them.

"Young master Chen, I, Lin Qianli, have never much conceded to anyone else in my life. I admire you from the depths of my heart and concede to you." Lin Qianli was proud, but had to accept the situation in the face of a true expert.

Everyone laughed again and raised their cups.

However, everyone was well aware that Jiang Chen's path would depart from this place after tonight, and the trajectory of their lives would be greatly different in the future.

Even if their friendship didn't fade, their interactions would be few and far in between.

After they'd finished drinking, Prince Ye Rong personally saw Jiang Chen to the door and spoke in a sincere tone. "Young master Chen, your future is boundless with this departure. If you have free time one day, come and take a stroll in the Skylareel Kingdom. The doors to the capital are always open for you."

Jiang Chen took a look at Ye Rong and then at Tian Shao and Tang Long.

He saw that their faces were all filled with sincerity.

“We’ve been through thick and thin. Come find me at the Precious Tree Sect if anything comes up.” Jiang Chen had wanted to discuss the disadvantageous straits that the sixteen kingdom alliance was in with them.

However, telling them this now would only increase their worries. Therefore, he decided to keep it to himself.

After all, if any major changes occurred in the bigger picture now, it wasn’t anything that the power of a secular kingdom could handle.

After he took his leave, Jiang Chen walked over to the Tutor Manor. After two years, Jiang Chen wanted to see if the old tutor had succeeded in assailing the origin realm.

However, when he arrived, he saw some of the tutor’s personal guards instead.

“Sir Jiang Chen? The lordmaster is still in closed door cultivation and has yet to emerge.” The guard had obviously heard of Jiang Chen’s legends and spoke quite respectfully.

“Oh? Yet to emerge?” Jiang Chen smiled faintly. “It seems like the lordmaster has gained much from this time’s closed door training.”

He then looked inside the door but didn’t see Dan Fei. He was slightly surprised by that. Dan Fei and the old tutor mutually depended on each other for survival. Why would she be absent during this time?

“Is Miss Dan Fei absent as well?” Jiang Chen was curious.

The personal guard slapped his forehead. “Me and my goldfish memory. I was too agitated upon seeing Sir Jiang Chen and almost forgot the most important matter. Miss Dan Fei has left the capital for almost a year now.”

“Left the capital?” Jiang Chen couldn’t imagine at all how Dan Fei would leave the capital when the old tutor was in closed door cultivation.

“Yes, Miss Dan Fei also left a letter saying to give it to you if Sir Jiang Chen came looking for her. If you didn’t come, we were to burn it after three years.”

The personal guard took out a sealed letter from his clothes and handed it over.

Jiang Chen accepted it but didn’t open it. He responded. “If the lordmaster emerges from closed door cultivation or if Miss Dan Fei returns, please tell them that I’ve already returned to the Precious Tree Sect.”

The personal guard nodded his head rapidly, “Yes, yes.”

Jiang Chen didn’t want to bother the old tutor’s closed door cultivation. He felt slightly lost as he walked beneath the moonlight, threading through the alleyways dotted with shadows from the trees. For some reason, he fell into a despondent mood.

He suddenly recalled Dan Fei’s letter and opened it beneath the moonlight.

The letter was very simple, there was only—

Even thousands and thousands of words are insufficient, I will never regret pining for my love.

Jiang Chen's fingertips trembled. How would he not understand these words? This was Dan Fei expressing her emotions and her love for him through the letter.

He was speechless in that moment. When he thought about the various interactions he'd had in the Skylaurel Kingdom, he was a bit surprised. Logically speaking, how could Dan Fei be so straightforward with her headstrong personality?

Although the meaning behind these words were easy to decipher, but there seemed to be some deep meaning hidden within that Jiang Chen had yet to decipher.

From the calligraphy of these words, they seemed to conceal a thousand matters weighing on one's mind, such as utmost embarrassing and awkward situations. As if there were a thousand words the speaker wanted to say, but could only pen these few words in the end.

Jiang Chen looked at the words but couldn't comprehend them in the end. Just what had happened to Dan Fei that she would suddenly confess her feelings with such ardor and so openly?

These words obviously had great emotions behind them, and would arise only after one's yearning had reached to an extreme.

However, their relationship had never seemed to progress to this step. Dan Fei's face and words rose in Jiang Chen's mind, but he still couldn't make sense of things.

However, he was an open minded person. He would disdain or hold Dan Fei's feelings in contempt. He put the letter back and stored the letter in his storage ring.

It was already the middle of the night when he returned to the Jiang manor.

However, everyone had yet to sleep. Xue Tong was the first to report the happenings of these two years when Jiang Chen returned.

"Young master, the Hall of Healing in the Eastern Kingdom would send a share of profits every three months from the three pills we left them. However, this has suddenly stopped in the past half year. Perhaps something might have happened to them? They used to be very punctual."

Chapter 415: Return to the Eastern Kingdom

Jiang Chen had long since stopped asking after the share in profits from the Hall of Healing. It was Xue Tong and the others handling it all. This was because money from the secular world had long since stopped being his main source of income.

However, he was still slightly surprised by Xue Tong's news.

The Hall of Healing had always done things properly, particularly with regards to the sharing of profits. They'd always purposefully fawned on Jiang Chen and were very prompt with delivering the money.

For it to have stopped for six months straight meant that something must've happened. The Hall of Healing wouldn't have done this on purpose.

"Can it be that robbers discovered the courier's path and intercepted the deliveries, or something has happened in the internal management of the Hall of Healing?"

Jiang Chen's brow furrowed. He really didn't care much about the division of profits.

However, he still minded the Hall of Healing a bit. He'd arranged for a position in the Hall of Healing for his steward, making him a senior executive in the Hall of Healing and receiving ten percent of the profits.

Some others may succumb to a heart of greed because of wealth, but Jiang Zheng was loyal to a fault and would never lust after Jiang Chen's money.

When his thoughts traveled there, Jiang Chen was certain that something must've happened to the Hall of Healing.

"Have Gouyu come see me!"

When they heard Jiang Chen's summons, all the other personal guards made their way over as well.

"Young master." Gouyu stepped forward.

"Has Xue Tong informed you of the matters with the Hall of Healing?"

Gouyu nodded, having obviously been briefed earlier.

"What do you think?"

Gouyu thought for a moment before saying, "As much courage as they might ever have, the Hall of Healing would never be so bold as to withhold your share. Something must have happened."

Gouyu's thoughts were the same as Jiang Chen's.

"Since this is a case, let's make a trip back to the Eastern Kingdom." The more Jiang Chen thought about it, the more out of place he felt all this was. A foreboding feeling surged to the forefront.

When one's cultivation had reached his level, particularly his strength of heart, one's intuition was often very strong and accurate.

When everyone saw Jiang Chen thus serious, their hearts sank. Had something really happened to the Hall of Healing?

"You are all dismissed."

The Jiang Chen of now wasn't the Jiang Chen they once knew. He'd experienced much in the two years in the legacy territory and had matured greatly.

His strength of mind had risen more than ten times. He wouldn't feel panicked and disturbed even if the sky caved in.

Jiang Chen summoned all his personal guards early the next day.

He originally had eight guards, but Ke Mu, Shen Yifan, and Bi Yun had gone off to participate in the selection and had thoroughly lost contact with the Jiang manor.

There were only five left now—Xue Tong, Guo Jin, the Qiao brothers, and Wen Ziqi, as well as Gouyu, a personal guard in name, but a steward in truth.

“There must be a reason behind the Hall of Healing’s matter. I plan on going back to take a look, what do all of you think?”

Having left their homes for too long, all of them actually wanted to go back and take a look as well. Joy blossomed on their faces when they heard Jiang Chen’s words.

“Young master, just give us the order when you’d like to set out.” Gouyu was even more direct.

“This matter cannot be delayed, so we will set out now.”

All of the Goldwing Swordbirds gathered with Jiang Chen’s call. All of the Goldwing Swordbirds he’d brought with him had now evolved fully to the spirit rank.

Having these hundreds of Goldwing Swordbirds meant he had a hundred spirit rank experts by his side.

“Younger sister Huang’er, I forgot to tell you that the Eastern Kingdom is our old home. This time...” Gouyu suddenly wondered what Miss Huang’er should do if they all left.

Huang’er naturally knew that the Eastern Kingdom was their old home. After all, she’d lived there for quite a long time as well.

The Hall of Healing was also the place where she’d taken refuge.

So when she heard the name ‘Hall of Healing’, she too was paying a bit of attention. However, she naturally couldn’t speak these words.

“Older sister Gouyu, if all of you are going, then please let Huang’er keep you company along the way.”

Huang’er was open and forthright without putting on any coquettish airs at all.

After spending a day together, Gouyu was becoming ever fonder of Huang’er’s personality. When she heard that Huang’er would come along as well, she was naturally delighted.

“Young master, should we notify palace head Qiao?” Xue Tong suddenly asked.

Jiang Chen thought for a moment, “That’s alright. Qiao Baishi has no more ties with the Hall of Healing, let’s not embroil him into these controversies. Just us is fine, let’s go!”

Jiang Chen whistled lowly and leapt up on the back of the Goldwing Swordbird he’d always ridden.

The Goldwing Swordbird hadn’t seen action for a very long time. It was naturally beyond itself with itself and shrieked shrilly, its sound traveling for ten li.

The others wasted no time in hopping onto their Goldwing Swordbirds to break through the air, following Jiang Chen’s movements and leaving swiftly.

The skies above the capital were magnificent without parallel in that moment.

Golden shadows streaked through the heavens, soaring to the clouds and presenting an impressive sight.

The entire capital broke out in cheers and celebration. Everyone knew that the golden shadows represented Jiang Chen and a legend of the Skylareland Kingdom!

These jubilatory sounds indicated the citizens' pride and glory, their hero worship of Jiang Chen, and their happy send off for him.

Huang'er sat on the back of a Goldwing Swordbird and heard the great rises and falls of the celebratory sounds below. Her heart was slightly touched by them.

"Sir Jiang never purposefully seeks the limelight or displays his might, but naturally becomes the center of attention no matter where he goes and is admired and respected. This isn't just a matter of unparalleled potential and great strength. Perhaps it has much to do with his personality and charisma?"

Huang'er also smiled warmly when her thoughts traveled here. As she traveled with the wind, she only felt that the entire world had suddenly brightened and opened up to her. She had the feeling of a fish being able to leap as it could through expansive seas, and a bird soaring at will through the boundless skies.

It was as if those beside Jiang Chen all had a unique charisma that could sweep away the shadows of her heart like the sunlight of spring. They could dispel the worries of her life and expel the negative emotions wreathed about her heart.

Huang'er could admit now that the only ray of light in her heart hadn't departed along with Elder Shun.

Jiang Chen and those beside him had used their sincerity and friendliness to scatter down even more radiant beams on her. This sunlight was something that she'd never been able to find in her previous life and environment.

She rather liked this kind of simple, carefree, and lighthearted feeling. Therefore, she delighted in the current situation and wished dearly that she could erase the twenty some past years of her life, excising the scheming and pettiness that had filled her life from her memories.

She liked this kind of simple and leisurely life that was filled with sunlight.

Jiang Chen and the others returned to the Eastern Kingdom borders within a day.

Even after multiple years, every single blade of grass and tree within the Eastern Kingdom was still as if before.

It didn't matter much to Jiang Chen, but Gouyu was quite an emotional person and actually felt a bit apprehensive now that she was close to home.

"Sister Gouyu, are you feeling a bit hesitant now that you are home?" Huang'er was a very empathetic being and asked with a slight smile.

Gouyu didn't deny it as she sighed lightly, "I'm embarrassing myself in front of my younger sister. I only remembered that my surname is 'Eastern' upon setting foot on this land."

To one of the Eastern clan, her love and hate of this land had already settled into her blood and bones. That kind of sentiment was something that couldn't just be thrown away.

"Young master, where should we go?" Xue Tong asked.

"Let's reserve an inn." Jiang Chen had cut off all ties with the Jiang family in the Eastern Kingdom and thus naturally wouldn't go to the Jiang Han manor.

Only if his ole dad Jiang Feng was present would the Jiang Han manor be the true seat of the dukedom's power.

"Gouyu, do you want to make a trip back to the palace?"

Gouyu thought for a moment, "I'd like to go visit Zhiruo."

Jiang Chen nodded. "If we can, let's take the little girl with us when we leave this time. She'll be happier living beneath your protection."

When Jiang Chen thought of Eastern Zhiruo and her yin constitution, a sort of shared commiseration grew in his heart.

"Xue Tong, make a trip to the Hall of Healing first and find out what's going on. If you can, tell Jiang Zheng to come see me."

Jiang Chen didn't want to charge in immediately to the Hall of Healing and denounce them for their crimes.

His status and identity were now different. There was no need to make the situation so awkward in the very beginning. He had come only to understand what had happened in the Hall of Healing, not to call them out publicly.

Xue Tong accepted his orders and was about to set out on his way.

Jiang Chen however, said, "A moment. Xue Tong, I no longer have much use for this Da Yu bow. You should take it. It would be greatly useful to you in terms of defense and utility."

Xue Tong was delighted. The Da Yu bow was a four times refined spirit weapon and an absolute treasure to him!

After many years, the Hall of Healing was still the foremost power amongst the Eastern Kingdom. The Heavenly Karma Pill and two other pills were selling like hotcakes throughout the sixteen kingdom alliance. The speed at which the Hall of Healing was accumulating wealth was exceedingly fast. It quickly became one of the strongest pill powers within the sixteen kingdom alliance.

Xue Tong quickly arrived at the Hall of Healing and saw that all present were unfamiliar faces as soon as he set foot inside. There wasn't a single person that he recognized.

It seemed as if the entire Hall of Healing had changed its appearance.

"Sir guest, what do you need?" An associate approached to ask when he saw that Xue Tong's bearing was uncommon.

"I'm looking for someone." Xue Tong said faintly.

"Oh? Sir, you seem to look unfamiliar, who might you be looking for?"

"Is senior executive Jiang Zheng in?"

When the associate heard the name "Jiang Zheng", his expression flickered slightly before immediately forming an apologetic expression, "Senior executive Jiang Zheng? He hadn't been in lately. Sir guest has made the trip for nothing."

"Not in? Where's he gone?"

"This is a difficult question for me. My position is lowly and humble. I do not interact with the senior executives." The associate's tone rang of obvious perfunctoriness.

Xue Tong frowned. "Then who else is here amongst the executives? Is lord hallmaster Song Tianxing present?"

"No." The associate shook his head.

"Ying Wuyou?"

"He's not here either." The associate's tone became more and more unfriendly.

Xue Tong's face sank as he looked around. Roughly a hundred armored cultivators bristling with weaponry charged out from all directions, surrounding Xue Tong with vicious expressions.

Chapter 416: Big Changes

Xue Tong was wholly unafraid when faced with this scene. He laughed coldly, "It seems that the Hall of Healing really has changed hands?"

"Kid, who are you?" The associate's eyes were sinister as they shone with a violent light.

"It doesn't matter who I am. I just ask you, where's Jiang Zheng? Where's Song Tianxing? Where have Ying Wuyou and the others all gone?"

Xue Tong possessed a decent temper and didn't fly off the handle despite being surrounded.

"Hmph, you ask too many questions. Take him!" The associate gave the order with a wave of his hand.

When the cultivators heard the order, they all rushed over and swung their weapons, wanting to trample Xue Tong into the ground.

Xue Tong was surprised to see that these were all advanced true qi realm cultivators. When did the Hall of Healing start spending money so easily?

The Eastern Kingdom was just a third rate kingdom.

Someone of the advanced realm of true qi was at the strength of a duke.

When had the Hall of Healing's ordinary cultivators reach the advanced realm of true qi? Anything out of the ordinary was always to be suspected, so Xue Tong knew immediately that an enormous change had occurred in the Hall of Healing.

However, how would Xue Tong, one who'd set foot in the spirit realm, think anything of these true qi realm cultivators? He snorted lowly and brandished his sleeves, sending out a ripple of spirit qi. It grew into great waves, sending the cultivators who were charging flying backwards.

Xue Tong floated next to the door with a flash of his body. His gaze was cold as he looked towards the associate. "This matter is far from over. If anything's happened to Jiang Zheng or Song Tianxing, all of you can wait for your heads to hit the ground!"

Xue Tong had only come to gather intelligence and hadn't received authorization for anything else. Therefore, he didn't start a fight and decided to leave.

A light huff sounded from within the Hall of Healing just as he'd made it outside the door.

A current of awe-inspiring sword qi screamed through the air.

Spirit qi along with a thick sense of killing intent. A spirit realm cultivator had made their move!

Xue Tong was greatly taken aback. When had a spirit realm expert appeared in the Hall of Healing?

He spun to the side to evade this fierce blow as he protected his vitals with a sweep of the Da Yu bow.

Suddenly, a few figures dashed out from the Hall of Healing as they whoosh whoosh whooshed to the courtyard in front of the Hall of Healing, encircling Xue Tong.

There were four figures, and all of them small spirit realm cultivators.

Xue Tong gaze flicked from one to another, noting their trap formation.

His face grew cold. "What? You plan on killing someone in broad daylight?"

One of the silver armor clad cultivators laughed coldly, "You were the one who didn't recognize the situation you were in. If you want to blame someone, blame yourself for having a fat mouth. Kill him!"

The four spirit realm cultivators formed a circle formation in a breath, surging forward and slicing through the air with their swords.

Xue Tong however, felt greatly reassured with the Da Yu bow in hand.

He gave a clear whistle and a golden shadow broke through the air. It was the Goldwing Swordbird that Xue Tong had ridden on. Its sharp claws made a grasping motion and flung two vicious beams of light at two cultivators.

If any of them were caught by these clawing motions, they would certainly be ripped to pieces.

The two under attack knew the strength behind those beams of light as their swords danced, defending themselves with all their strength.

The Da Yu bow emitted popping sounds that burst through the air as Xue Tong waved it. Air currents shot out of the bow as if silk, slicing down towards the last two cultivators.

One would always end up worse off when fighting two against four.

Xue Tong used one move to force two opponents back and then whistled lowly before crouching. He shot straight up into the sky, intending to land on the Goldwing Swordbird.

“The kid’s getting away, kill him!”

The four cultivators discovered Xue Tong’s intentions and rose into the air before the Goldwing Swordbird could soar away, sending their attacks in midair.

After landing on the Goldwing Swordbird, Xue Tong’s heart felt greatly settled.

He brandished the Da Yu bow and pulled out two arrows.

He shot them in quick succession, sending them drilling straight towards the two pouncing on him with impressive momentum.

Whoosh!

Their two bodies hung in the air as they hadn’t anticipated the speed of Xue Tong’s arrows.

Neither of them reacted in time as the two arrows connected with audible sounds. However, the arrows had landed in their thighs and hadn’t hit any vitals. The two behind Xue Tong drew rainbow arcs in the air with their swords, cleaving through the air towards Xue Tong.

Although the Goldwing Swordbird shot forward, the air current from their swords were faster as they carved bloody gashes into his back with soft sounds.

Xue Tong only felt his body grew cold as blood spurted out of his wounds. It was a good thing that the Goldwing Swordbird’s forward motion had negated much of the force behind the attack. So although he’d been hurt, he hadn’t been split open.

Even so, Xue Tong knew that today wasn’t the day to stay and fight. He gave his steed its head and broke through the clouds.

The four cultivators could only look dumbly at the vanishing golden dot in the air, dejected and regretful beyond belief. It had been four against one, but they hadn’t succeeded!

The silver armor clad cultivator frowned, “Go in and report to the supervisor. This person is of unknown origins, and will likely end up getting in our way.”

Two of them hauled their injured comrades and walked inside.

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When a bloody Xue Tong appeared in the inn, Jiang Chen’s expression immediately darkened.

“Young master, your subordinate was inept and couldn’t complete what you’d requested of me.” Xue Tong had a look of chagrin on his face.

Jiang Chen suddenly stood up with a thick sense of killing intent on his face. “The Hall of Healing dared make a move against you? When did Song Tianxing become so bold?”

“It wasn’t Song Tianxing.” Xue Tong smiled ruefully. “It looks like everything’s changed in the Hall of Healing. Song Tianxing, Yin Wuyou, and steward Jiang Zheng are no longer there. A group of complete strangers look like they’re in charge of the Hall of Healing.”

“What?” Jiang Chen was completely taken aback.

The Hall of Healing was the Eastern Kingdom’s representative organization, why had they suddenly changed owners for no reason at all?

“Come, let’s go take a look.”

Jiang Chen wasn’t the sort who liked to start trouble, but he wasn’t afraid of it either, particularly when the other had laid hands on Xue Tong without so much as a by-your-leave. That was no different from them taking action against Jiang Chen.

Even if the trouble had been from the original lord hallmaster Song Tianxing’s hand, that wouldn’t have been acceptable either, not to mention those new owners who seemed to be in charge now!

Even if the trouble had been from the original lord hallmaster Song Tianxing, that wouldn’t have been acceptable either, not to mention that new owners were in charge now!

And speaking of which, why had the Hall of Healing just suddenly upped and swapped out owners like this? There was definitely something afoot here.

Jiang Chen didn’t care about Song Tianxing and the others, but Jiang Zheng was his old steward and confidante. He was someone marked by Jiang Chen, and now that he’d gone missing for seemingly no reason, Jiang Chen would absolutely not sit idly by.

Gouyu also returned from the palace as they were speaking.

“Young master.” Gouyu looked like she had something to say, but stopped.

“What is it?” Jiang Chen’s brow furrowed slightly. Judging from Gouyu’s expression, there was indeed something that she found difficult to speak of.

“I just returned to the palace and saw Zhiruo, as well as the king Eastern Lin.”

“How were they?”

Embers of rage smoldered subtly in Gouyu’s eyes, “Much has happened in the Eastern Kingdom in this half year. The Eastern ancestor emerged from closed door cultivation, but was killed within the capital by an unknown assailant. The Hall of Healing was taken over by an unknown force a few months ago. They said that Song Tianxing and the other senior executives had sold the Hall of Healing to them for an astronomical price and given the organization over to them.”

“The Eastern clan ancestor was killed?” Jiang Chen was also surprised by these words.

Gouyu didn’t have many feelings for the ancestor of the Eastern clan. When the Long family had rebelled, this so-called ancestor had remained in closed door cultivation. Gouyu now thought that the ancestor had likely been afraid of the Purple Sun Sect backing Long Juxue, and so had used closed door cultivation as an excuse to avoid disaster.

Now that he'd been killed, she didn't mourn at all.

However, that someone had dared kill an Eastern clan ancestor in the Eastern Kingdom was simply too cocky, and they'd seized the Hall of Healing to boot!

Jiang Chen gaze snapped back to Gouyu, sensing she wasn't quite done yet.

"What else is there? Let's hear it all."

Gouyu sighed lightly and looked at Jiang Chen, "The royal family received this news not too long ago either... your Jiang family in the Jiang Han territory.. in the course of a night..."

"What?" Jiang Chen's heart sank. Although he didn't have many emotional ties to the Jiang family, that didn't mean just anyone could bully them.

"The Jiang family was razed to the ground over the course of a night and has become ruins."

"What?!" A frosty layer covered Jiang Chen's face in a heartbeat. "Where are the people? Are they all dead?"

"Almost all dead. There are a few core Jiang family members whose bodies we couldn't find, but the ordinary members, including the servants, were all buried in the ruins."

Bam!

Jiang Chen slammed a fist viciously onto the table.

This was eradicating his clan!

"Do you know who did it?" Jiang Chen controlled his emotions with great effort as he asked sternly.

"We don't have any concrete intelligence for now. The news of the Jiang family's destruction has been cordoned off. However, from the feedback of those who were on scene, it seemed that those who destroyed the Jiang clan were looking for something. The surroundings had been thoroughly turned over."

It no longer mattered what the reason for this atrocity was.

The important thing was, the Jiang family clan had been annihilated!

Although Jiang Chen had no emotional ties to it, and he and his father had long since drawn lines separating themselves, it was still the Jiang family.

Jiang Chen knew that if his father knew of the Jiang family clan being exterminated, he would be absolutely heartbroken.

"Come, we go to the Hall of Healing!"

Despite the many thoughts running through his mind, he was well aware that he would have to start off with the Hall of Healing first. He had an intuition that all this had much to do with the change in ownership at the Hall of Healing.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!

Countless streaks of golden light flashed through the skies above the Hall of Healing. The golden light surrounded the upper skies of the Hall of Healing within a few breaths.

“Xue Tong, you stay here and control the Goldwing Swordbirds, encircle the entire structure. From now on, people can only enter and not leave. Kill anyone who leaves!”

The flames of Jiang Chen’s desire to kill had been stoked to new heights.

“Gouyu, follow me down.” Jiang Chen instructed.

“Yes.”

Huang’er had been tagging along behind Gouyu and thus said without thinking, “I’ll accompany Sir Jiang down as well.”

Huang’er had spent quite some time in the Hall of Healing and had some feelings for it. When she heard that something had happened, she felt she couldn’t sit idly by either.

The Hall of Healing was as if facing an enormous enemy. The entire area had been on high alert following Xue Tong’s departure. When Jiang Chen and the two others landed, cultivators rushed out en masse and surrounded the Hall of Healing inside and out.

“Who dares trespass on the Hall of Healing!”

Jiang Chen’s gaze grew cold. “I only ask one question. Is Song Tianxing still in charge of the Hall of Healing?”

“Song Tianxing? Haha! People and matters of days gone by! Piss the hell off right now if you recognize the situation you’re in! The Hall of Healing isn’t the same Hall as before. No matter how great your background, you’re dead without a doubt for offending the Hall!”

Jiang Chen revealed a frosty smile upon hearing this. “Then this is indeed not Song Tianxing’s Hall of Healing anymore? Then you lot are invading robbers! Since you wanted to be a robber, then you surely were prepared to die!”

Jiang Chen ignored the hundreds of people in front of him as he spoke, completely sidelined the sharp blades, swords, spears, and axes as he slowly advanced forward.

His powerful aura increased by ten percent with every step, slowly crushing down on the door like an enormous mountain.

Chapter 417: Jiang Chen’s Rage

“Eh? What’s going on? I can’t move my hands!”

“Me too... this... this person knows some sort of demonic art???”

“This is bad, this is the aura of the spirit realm! Everyone kill him altogether now!”

“Kill him! He only has a few at his back and there’s hundreds of us, why would we be afraid of him!”

The few hundred cultivators were arrayed haphazardly in front of the Hall of Healing's doors and jeering arrogantly.

Jiang Chen's gaze grew icy as he suddenly glared, the evil golden eye sending out a scintillating beam of light from his eyes.

Pfft!

The light shot into all the ruffian cultivators' eyes. The cultivators shook when their eyes came into contact with the light, their bodies quickly losing all feeling.

It was like their souls had been frozen over. The surge of power caused their bodies to stiffen. Before too long, the cultivators were as still as statues, as if someone had poured liquid bronze or iron over them to cast lifelike statues.

Jiang Chen waved his hand. "Let's go in."

Gouyu and Huang'er looked at each other, slight shock in their eyes. This was a man who was truly enraged!

This kind of divine art even somewhat amazed Huang'er. In that moment, she felt like she couldn't see through Jiang Chen.

Gouyu was even more flabbergasted.

However, the two were concerned about Jiang Chen's safety and followed him in without hesitation.

"Who is in charge of the Hall of Healing now? Get the hell out here!"

Jiang Chen's voice boomed like rolling thunder, rocking the interior and exterior of the entire Hall of Healing in an instant. His presence was awe inspiring as his voice echoed endlessly.

"Who dares trespass and act wildly in the Hall of Healing?!"

"Kill him!"

"Ah, ah!"

Two voices had just risen in response before ghastly cries quickly followed. As they fell to the ground, it was obvious that Jiang Chen had destroyed them as soon as they'd called out.

Jiang Chen lifted his hand lightly and spoke with a merciless tone, "I will count to five. After five, if those within the Hall aren't within my line of sight, then I'll eradicate you all with no exceptions!"

"Five!" Jiang Chen began the countdown.

"Four!"

"Three!" Jiang Chen's voice counted down in an unhurried manner. His enormous aura kept spreading to every corner of the Hall of Healing.

"Two!"

When he counted down to two, those within the Hall of Healing walked out of the shadows because they could no longer bear the pressure of his aura. They walked out to the main lobby.

They were well aware that if they really stayed stubbornly inside, this strong newcomer would kill even the dogs and chickens in the Hall.

They were all cultivators. They could sense the raging fury behind the aura. This was absolutely something they couldn't resist.

"One!"

Jiang Chen pointed with his finger and counted everyone who'd stepped out. His gaze was an arctic chill as it swept the cultivators in front of him.

"You. Step out." Jiang Chen pointed at someone in a silver robe. He looked to be in middle management.

The person cowered as his legs quivered and shook. He didn't dare not come out in the face of Jiang Chen's summons and so his teeth chattered wildly.

"He-hello." The silver robed individual couldn't even speak properly in the face of Jiang Chen's enormous aura.

"Are you in charge of the Hall of Healing?" Jiang Chen's tone was remote.

"N-no..." The silver robed individual was so frightened that he was on the verge of wetting himself.

"It's... Manager Lie is in charge."

"Where is he?" Jiang Chen continued to turn up the pressure.

The silver robed individual's teeth continued to chatter as he broke out in a cold sweat. He couldn't control himself fully beneath Jiang Chen's enormous pressure. It was as if there was a power in this young man's eyes that was forcing him to submit.

"He's... he's not in the lobby. He probably didn't come out yet."

Jiang Chen nodded lightly, revealing a meaningful smile. He sent out his consciousness and began his search.

Having reached his particular level with Psychic's Head, a mere Hall of Healing was naturally incapable of escaping the reach of his consciousness. He quickly identified three more people hiding in the shadows of the Hall of Healing who had yet to emerge.

Huang'er, at Jiang Chen's side, suddenly smiled. It was apparent that her consciousness had also detected in that moment that there were some who'd yet to emerge.

"Sir Jiang, Huang'er has a bit of a history with the Hall of Healing as well. Allow me to help."

Huang'er spread out her hands after speaking. A guzheng appeared in front of her.

Huang'er's white, slender, jade fingers brushed softly across the surface of the instrument as several notes sounded.

The music was full of only faint killing intent in the beginning, but quickly gathered into a wild intent that roiled like the raging seas. It surged towards three corners, forcing out the three in hiding.

Huang'er was only trying her hand at this. Even Gouyu couldn't see through the profound mysteries within that moment.

Jiang Chen however was extremely shocked. The deployment of this art seemed simple, but it embodied enormous mystical theories within it. Huang'er could actually control the direction of the notes. This kind of control over sound was something that Jiang Chen knew that he didn't have at the moment.

Waves of horrifying howls resounded from several secret chambers not too long after. The three fellows were covering their ears as they ran out shrieking and wailing. From their bedraggled appearance, they seemed as though they would collapse any second.

Huang'er smiled faintly and stopped when she'd achieved her purpose, not intending on stealing the limelight. She smiled slightly, "Sir Jiang, Huang'er can only do so much. The rest is up to you!"

"Many thanks for Miss Huang'er's just act of aid."

It wasn't that Jiang Chen was unable to force these three fellows out, but he wouldn't be able to do so as easily as Huang'er had just done so.

One of the three was wearing a golden robe and looked quite well off. In this moment however, he seemed quite panic stricken and worse for the wear.

"You must be that Manager Lie?" Jiang Chen's gaze zeroed in on the man with the golden robe.

Manager Lie finally regained his senses when the music notes disappeared, but fear filled his eyes. He looked upon Jiang Chen, "Just who are you?"

Jiang Chen shook his head lightly. "I'm the one asking the questions today. Now, if you can't give me a satisfactory answer to any of my questions, I'll relieve you of one of your body parts."

"First question is, where is Song Tianxing and the others?"

Jiang Chen's consciousness locked tightly on him, not allowing a single false word to pass his lips.

Manager Lie stammered, "Th-they... they all left. They sold us the Hall of Healing at a high price... Ah!!"

He screamed hastily as he clapped his hand to his left ear, discovering it gone.

Jiang Chen smiled, a chilling sight, "One more time. Where is Song Tianxing and the others?"

Manager Lie was scared out of his wits as he tried to stop the blood from gushing out his left ear. He almost fainted. "They... they..."

Pfft!

Jiang Chen raised his arm. The enormous metal essence power came slicing out of his hand like blades, as fast as shooting stars, cutting off the man's right ear as well.

"Ah!!" The ghastly screech rang out again. Manager Lie's pant cuffs grew damp as he wet himself in pure fright.

“One last chance. If you don’t answer properly, then the next thing to hit the ground won’t be your ears, but your head.” There wasn’t the slightest hint of emotion in Jiang Chen’s tone.

“I... I’ll tell you! I’ll tell you! I’ll tell you everything!”

No matter how proud he was, Manager Lie could no longer hold on in the face of a life or death crisis. He didn’t doubt the harbinger of death in front of him was speaking the truth.

“We... took over the Hall of Healing. Song Tianxing wouldn’t cooperate, so we killed him.”

“You?” Jiang Chen laughed coldly. “You wouldn’t have such guts by yourself alone. Who’s behind this?”

“We came on orders to seize the three pill recipes of the Hall of Healing. The one who ordered us was the crown prince of the Shangyang Kingdom.”

The Shangyang Kingdom?

Jiang Chen flicked a glance at Gouyu. He didn’t know as much about the sixteen kingdoms as Gouyu did.

Gouyu hastened to say, “The Shangyang Kingdom is one of the four great kingdoms, just like the Skylaurel Kingdom. Shangyang Kingdom’s relationship with the Purple Sun Sect is the same as the Skylaurel Kingdom’s with the Precious Tree Sect.”

Jiang Chen’s face completely darkened when he heard these words. “The Purple Sun Sect!”

His eyebrow arching, Jiang Chen suppressed the flames of fury in his heart and asked, “Why did the crown prince of the Shangyang Kingdom set his sights on the Hall of Healing?”

How would Manager Lie still have the desire to resist now? He spilled out everything he knew like pouring beans from a bamboo container.

“The Shangyang Kingdom has been quite envious of the Hall of Healing crazily reaping wealth like it has in the last couple of years with the three recipes. The crown prince has long set his sights on them. He received some sort of hint from the Purple Sun Sect this time saying that the Hall of Healing had lost its backer, so there would be no fear of retaliation. Therefore, the crown prince finally struck with full force after planning for a very long time in order to take the profits from the Hall of Healing.”

It was normal for such a rich mark to be targeted after a while. However, since they’d successfully taken over the Hall of Healing, why slaughter the Jiang family clan?

It was obvious that something else was at play here.

“You’d already secured the Hall of Healing and the three pill recipes. Why slaughter the Jiang family clan?”

Manager Lie quickly responded, “I didn’t participate in the slaughter. My authority is too low and I have no right either to inquire about the reasons behind this. It’s said that those above weren’t satisfied with just three pill recipes. They seemed to feel that there would be much more treasure in the Jiang family, this was why...”

All the various clues slowly formed into a clear bigger picture.

When it came down to it, this half year had been when he'd been trapped in the Eternal Spirit Mountain.

The other had made their move at precisely this time. Jiang Chen would never believe that the Purple Sun Sect wasn't behind all of this.

Purple Sun Sect, the Shangyang Kingdom...

Fury raged in his heart. He swept a cold glance across the Hall of Healing, "Last question. Where is Jiang Zheng?"

"Jiang Zheng? He was taken to the Shangyang Kingdom. It seems that there are people who want to interrogate him specifically."

Jiang Zheng was Jiang Chen's confidante and steward, yet he had lived and been taken away. What did this mean? This meant that all of this had been directed at him, Jiang Chen!

"Come, we go to the Shangyang Kingdom." Jiang Chen said.

Gouyu and Huang'er looked at each other. They knew that the flames of fury had been thoroughly stoked in Jiang Chen's heart.

It was likely that the Shangyang Kingdom would be in for a terrible time after this. There would likely even be countless numbers of heads that rolled in the Purple Sun Sect.

Those in the Hall of Healing found it incredulous when Jiang Chen and the others walked out. They had escaped disaster just like this?

One of them laughed coldly. "Sonnuvab*tch! Scaring me half to death. He's just a silver spear tip, good for showing and nothing else. Hmph, he must've been scared outta his mind after hearing the Purple Sun Sect eh?"

"Of course. Who dares provoke the Purple Sun Sect in the sixteen kingdom alliance?"

Those who'd lost their wits from fright earlier now all puffed out their chests and began talking tough, as if the sniveling wretches earlier hadn't been them.

Suddenly, someone cried out. "Stop talking, do you hear that?"

Everyone quieted down and focused on their hearing. They seemed to hear scurrying sounds coming from underground.

Suddenly, the ground began trembling violently!

Bam!

The floorboards burst open as countless golden streaks surged out like a fountain, spreading out as if locusts.

The numerous Goldbiter Rats charged out and bit whoever they saw.

Agonized screams filled the air in an instant as rivers of blood flowed.

Chapter 418: Besieging the Shangyang Kingdom

Those alive within the Hall of Helming were all reduced to sticks of stark white bones within fifteen minutes. There wasn't a single complete skeleton to be found.

Jiang Chen had been thoroughly provoked this time.

Extermination!

What had happened had absolutely crossed his bottom line. Even if he no longer had feelings for the Jiang family, he wouldn't sit idly by and allow such a thing to happen!

The Shangyang Kingdom was indeed one of the premier kingdoms in the sixteen kingdom alliance. Because their backer was the Purple Sun Sect, they'd inherited the sect's style and typically acted about in a domineering fashion.

The king of the Shangyang Kingdom, Wu Tan, was an honorary Purple Sun Sect elder and had quite a network within the sect.

King Wu Tan had built quite an impressive kingdom, and his son Wu Hong was equally obsessed with ambition.

Wu Hong had gone for a tour in the Purple Sun Sect half a year ago. He'd paid much to befriend many sect disciples, and had learned about Jiang Chen's matters from those who'd participated in the selection. He'd received the go ahead for some matters, and all that had caused his ambition to overflow and explode.

Jiang Chen was a secular kid who'd risen from the Eastern Kingdom, but had demonstrated a perverse progress from beginning to end, soaring to the top of the selection and then slaughter Long Juxue of the innate constitution!

Just what kind of heritage had Jiang Chen received?

There was no one in the Purple Sun Sect who wasn't afire with curiosity.

It was because of this desire to know and the general public view that he wouldn't be able to exit the Eternal Spirit Mountain, that those within the Purple Sun Sect had decided to annihilate the Jiang family clan. They wanted to see if they could understand what the Jiang family heritage was.

Wu Hong was just a pawn amidst all of this.

But he'd received many promises from the high ranks of the Purple Sun Sect.

The senior levels of the Jiang family clan were all wheezing on their last breaths in the dungeons of the Shangyang Kingdom. It was apparent that extended periods of interrogation had taken them to the limits of their endurance.

One white haired elder in particular was Elder Xi, the most senior person in the Jiang family. Blood continued to ooze out of the corners of his mouth as he muttered curses, "All of you dog of a robber!

Just do away with me with one slice if you've the guts to! Don't even think of getting anything out of me!"

A middle aged person next to Elder Xi was Jiang Zheng. He barely resembled a human from all the torture he'd gone through.

Although he was no cultivator, Jiang Zheng was a tough old bird. All sorts of torture and interrogation techniques had been used on him over these days, with everything in the handbook being used at least once on him. He'd still refused to say anything.

"Elder Xi, don't be afraid. The young master will come save us when he knows what's happened!" Although Jiang Zheng was a pathetic heap on the floor, he was still steadfast.

"Save you?" A man in the royal uniform laughed coldly. "You're still holding out hope even when things have progressed thus? Jiang Chen is suppressed in the Eternal Spirit Mountain, and there's no one on heaven or earth who can save him!"

"Bullshit!" Jiang Zheng cursed loudly. "My house's young master is favored by the gods! He would be able to bear up beneath all the heavens collapsing, much less a mountain!"

Jiang Zheng didn't have many advantages to speak of, but when it came to Jiang Chen, he blindly worshipped the latter and was a typical brainless fan.

The uniformed man smiled slightly and leveled his whip at Jiang Zheng's chin. He spoke chillingly, "You're a rather loyal servant. However, you're dumbly loyal. As long as you cooperate and tell me about Jiang Chen, I promise you endless riches and glory in the Shangyang Kingdom. Isn't that better off than your tiny place of the Eastern Kingdom?"

"Pah!"

Jiang Zheng cursed loudly. "Although I'm not good for much, the Eastern Kingdom is my home! I was born of the Jiang family, and I'll die a ghost of the Jiang family! Big deal about your screwy Shangyang Kingdom! If you irritate my house's young master, he'll defeat your country and destroy your home with a wave of his hand!"

The uniformed man grew irate and waved the whip, viciously cracking it again and again.

"Enough. He'll die if you keep whipping him."

A young man who'd been sitting on the side suddenly spoke up. He wore a robe made of python skin, and was crown prince Wu Hong of the Shangyang Kingdom.

Wu Hong smiled faintly, seeming to confirm that Elder Xi and Jiang Zheng would be tough nuts to crack.

He walked over to another Jiang family elder. "Elderly one, I can see that your position in the Jiang family is middling. As opposed to dying aggrieved like this, why not work together? Tell me, what heritage did that Jiang Chen receive? Any clues at all?"

The elder was taken aback, obviously hesitating.

However, he didn't know what to say to what heritage Jiang Chen had received either. He only knew that this useless fop had suddenly seen the light after being beaten by the king of the Eastern Kingdom. As for what reason, no one amongst the Jiang family members here knew why.

"Prince Wu Hong, it's not that I don't wish to cooperate, but that Jiang Chen had ordinary relations with us to begin with. He didn't let us know anything about him. Apart from Jiang Zheng, none of the others had deep relations with Jiang Chen. Besides, Jiang Chen wasn't close to any of us. You've truly captured the wrong people Your Highness! If we were close with Jiang Chen, why wouldn't we have gone to the Skylare Kingdom with him? Jiang Feng and Jiang Chen ostracized us when they were still at home."

This person had a rather glib tongue as he tried to escape this particular disaster.

Wu Hong snorted coldly upon hearing this. "So according to your words, you know nothing about Jiang Chen?"

"Indeed.""

"Since you know nothing, then you're useless trash. What's the point in keeping you?" Wu Hong suddenly unsheathed his sword and beheaded the old man.

Wu Hong's gaze was cold as he stared fixedly at Jiang Zheng and Elder Xi, saying raspily, "My patience is limited. Today is the final deadline. If we still do not obtain anything of us, then all of you can accompany the Jiang family ghosts on their way to the underworld!"

Jiang Zheng started laughing in an ugly fashion. "Kill us then, why all the talk? My young master will find you sooner or later, and being an enemy of my young master is to seek death! The Wu royals should take heed of your predecessors, the Long family!"

The uniformed man was incensed upon seeing Jiang Zheng dare retort the Crown Prince. He raised his whip and was about to step forward for another lashing.

Wu Hong waved his hand and halted the man. "He won't shed tears until he sees his coffin. Even though we can't pry open his mouth, those within the sect will have their ways. It's about time, those from the sect should be arriving soon."

A long whistle suddenly sounded from the skies above the entire Shangyang Kingdom as Wu Hong was speaking.

This whistle rumbled forth like thunder, unceasing in its duration. It possessed an awe inspiring presence as it came roiling forward like a tsunami. In the span of an instant, ominous clouds covered the skies over the Shangyang Kingdom like black clouds descending on a city's walls.

"Wu Hong, get the hell out here!"

A loud roar pressed down from the skies.

Wu Hong shook all over. What's going on? Who is so bold as to speak my name in Shangyang Kingdom territory?

Within the palace, the king was conquering a beloved concubine in bed. The sounds of their battle filled the air within the bed coverings.

Several maids were waiting by the side of the bed. All of them were stunning beauties and standing with their hands trailing by their sides. They seemed to be long since used to all this, and judging from their looks, could fill in for the concubine at any time.

This sudden roar shook Wu Tan as it felt like lightning had suddenly struck him. He pushed aside the beauty next to him.

“What’s going on?”

All of the guards outside seemed to be facing an enormous enemy as they yelled, “Protect the king, protect the king!”

Wu Tan couldn’t continue his pillaging any further as he flipped over, put on his clothes, and walked outside.

“Your Majesty!”

“Who causes this disturbance outside?” Wu Tan was the ruler of a nation after all. He didn’t lose his composure.

A guard hurriedly ran in from outside the palace before long to make his report.

“Your Majesty, a circular moat has suddenly appeared around the outskirts of the palace and surrounded the entire structure!”

“Your Majesty, countless numbers of black dots are in the sky. We know not what they are and they’ve blotted out of the sun and the sky!”

“Your Majesty, the royal experts have bridged the moat for surveillance and have all been killed!”

Wu Tan became more and more alarmed as he listened to all the intelligence fly in. Just who was being so bold to come act in such a wild fashion in the Shangyang Kingdom?

Didn’t they know that acting so uncouthly in the Shangyang Kingdom was the equivalent of doing so at the doorstep of the Purple Sun Sect?

“Mobilize the royal experts immediately and summon the three great external branches for protection!” Wu Tan ordered.

Just as there were the Precious Tree Sect’s four great sites in the Skylaurel Kingdom, so had the Purple Sun Sect established three external branches.

These three were directly beneath the control of the royal family, a detail in contrast to the Skylaurel Kingdom.

Wu Tan didn’t panic as he orderly set plans in motion.

“Where is the Crown Prince?” Wu Tan asked after laying out his plans.

“The Crown Prince is in the dungeons, interrogating the prisoners.”

Wu Tan spread out his hands. “Have him quickly depart to prevent unexpected complications from developing.”

Wu Tan also knew that those who had come were not friendly, and those who are friendly had yet to come. In consideration of his son's safety, he wasn't at ease in leaving Wu Hong in the dungeons.

Wu Hong quickly ran into the palace to see Wu Tan before long.

"Royal father, what's going on? I've heard that the palace has been surrounded?" Wu Hong asked.

"What are you panicking about?" Wu Tan laughed coldly. "My Shangyang Kingdom has dominated the sixteen kingdom alliance for a thousand years. What haven't we seen before? To act like this in front of the Purple Sun Sect's doors, whoever the opponent is, they're courting death!"

Wu Tan had quite an impressive air about him. He was different from the king of the Skylaurel Kingdom. He was an honorary elder of the Purple Sun Sect to begin with. His position was quite high, and his control over his kingdom was far in excess of the Skylaurel king's.

The royal experts had all gathered before long.

As the head of the sixteen kingdom alliance, the Shangyang Kingdom's royal experts were all of the spirit realm. The leaders in particular were all of the earth spirit realm.

Although the Shangyang Kingdom didn't have a spirit king protector like Ye Chonglou, the nation had four great warriors, Tian Shu, De Qi, Lie Feng, and Cheng Yun. They were all of the sky spirit realm!

These four great warriors usually stayed in seclusion.

When they heard that the palace had been surrounded however, they naturally couldn't sit still anymore and revealed themselves.

"Your Majesty, there is no need to worry. We have already contacted the Purple Sun Sect and their aid will be here in a few hours." The leader of the four, Tian Shu, stepped forward to report.

"Your Majesty, who is this madman to dare disdain the preeminence of my Shangyang Kingdom? We incapable ones are willing to shoulder Your Majesty's burdens and see what crazies dare act wildly!" This was De Qi.

"I will go as well." Lie Feng also stepped forward.

"Then naturally I have to be present as well." Cheng Yun smiled leisurely.

The voice rang like thunder again in the skies at this moment.

"Hark my words, Wu royals! Every wrong has a source and every debt a lender. Hand over Wu Hong in fifteen minutes and there will be room for discussion. If you stubbornly persist in erroneous ways, the Wu clan will be eradicated without leaving even a chicken or a dog in fifteen minutes!"

Jiang Chen's towering rage had transmuted to a thunderous bellow that crashed down on the palace of the Shangyang Kingdom!

Chapter 419: In Front of the Formation

How arrogant!

The expressions of those within the Shangyang Kingdom all changed drastically when they heard this tone.

The newcomer talked about wanting to destroy the royal family with each word he spoke. This kind of attitude made all those present boil with fury.

The face of the Wu family clan was the face of the entire Shangyang Kingdom, and that also represented the face of the Purple Sun Sect.

And now, this unknown intruder was telling the royal family to hand over Wu Hong, or he'd annihilate the entire family!

It was said that the subjects die when their liege is humiliated.

When the royal family was humiliated, their subjects all glared ferociously in their rage and fell to their knees on the ground.

"Your Majesty, we request to take the field!"

"Your Majesty, please allow me to take a pack of royal experts with me to meet with this crazed criminal!"

One had to say that the Wu royal family had quite a strong grasp over the Shangyang Kingdom. They had brainwashed their subjects very successfully. Even the nation's four great warriors were burning with rage and self righteous battle intent.

King Wu Tan was delighted to see this, and also quite pleased by the ardent and enthusiastic situation. This at least proved that there was no problem with the royal family's authority, and that these subjects were indeed loyal.

The crowd's emotions could be used!

Wu Tan spoke lowly. "Those who have come are not friendly, and those who are friendly have yet to come. Since this person dares to besiege the royal palace, he must have quite a background. Can it be..."

"Your Majesty, who can it be?" The four great warriors all asked.

An odd light flashed through Wu Tan's eyes as he turned to Wu Hong, "Hong'er, did the pathetic Jiang wretches confess anything?"

Wu Hong shook his head and was a bit dejected. "They're all a bunch of foolishly loyal idiots. They won't confess to anything no matter how we beat them. I suspect that they just don't know where Jiang Chen's heritage is from."

"Jiang Chen?" The four great warriors were all enormously surprised when they heard this name.

Surprise flashed through Wu Hong's eyes. "Royal father, can this person at our doorstep be Jiang Chen?"

Wu Tan immediately shook his head in denial. "Impossible! The Eternal Spirit Mountain is suppressing him. If the outside world doesn't open the seal, he'll be unable to leave no matter how strong his potential."

“Then can it be Jiang Chen’s followers? Or those from the Precious Tree Sect?” Wu Hong guessed?

“No need to imagine things. No matter who it is, the fact that they’ve come to the Shangyang Kingdom to behave atrociously means that they are offending the Purple Sun Sect. They’re dead without a doubt!” Wu Tan’s tone was sinister and frosty.

His gaze swept the four great warriors. “Four warriors, this person is giving offense to the dignity of the Shangyang Kingdom. The four of you are our nation’s great warriors. It’s time for you to shoulder the burdens of the royal family and the Purple Sun Sect as well. Are you willing to go out and investigate?”

The four warriors exchanged a glance and all nodded.

“We are willing!”

The concerted efforts of the nation’s four warriors greatly increased everyone’s confidence again. The four warriors were all death sworn of the sky spirit realm. Although they were at the seventh level spirit realm, their battle strength was enormous, and they’d be able to put up a fight even if they met someone of the eighth level spirit realm.

Unless the strongest of the Precious Tree Sect had arrived, otherwise the intruder wouldn’t have a good time after making trouble in the Shangyang Kingdom!

But the Precious Tree Sect had always been conservative and kept a low profile, how would they have the guts to act wildly in Purple Sun Sect territory?

Most people thought for a bit and felt that it was the remnants of Jiang Chen’s supporters. With the nation’s four great warriors taking the field, there was nothing to be fearful of!

Wu Tan laughed heartily. “What are we anxious if our nation’s best four warriors are personally handling this matter? Come, bestow upon them the royal wine to celebrate the four warriors’ victory in advance!”

Tian Shu spread out his hands, “Your Majesty, let’s not drink yet. It won’t be too late to come back for a drink after we’ve slaughtered the intruders!”

The four warriors all nodded and selected a troop of men roughly a hundred strong. They were all spirit realm cultivators. All of them sped towards the outside.

Wu Tan waved his hand. “We will personally hold the line for the four great warriors.”

The others naturally wouldn’t tarry when the king himself was personally stepping in. The leaders of all the royal experts surrounded Wu Tan and his son, steadfast and loyal.

There was a deep moat around the outside of the palace that was thirty meters wide and deep. It encircled the palace like a river.

The four warriors had grave expressions on as they looked at that deep moat.

This moat was thus wide and deep. They absolutely couldn’t understand how it’d appeared out of nowhere!

Even a spirit king protector at the peak of the spirit realm would find it impossible to so easily carve out such a moat.

Could it be that the trespasser was an origin realm cultivator?

In that moment, the four warriors began to regret their rash actions a bit. What if the opponent was an origin realm cultivator? The four of them wouldn't even be enough to be a mouthful for their opponent!

However, now that there were so many people looking at them, they were caught between a rock and a hard place.

Tian Shu arched his eyebrow and looked up at the sky, "And who might you be? Do you know this is the forbidden zone of the palace?"

"Irrelevant people who don't want to die can get the hell back!"

A stern order came down from the skies as a golden light flashed, mainly down in splendor. The light landed in front of Tian Shu, only a foot away from his feet.

Such an aura and bearing! Tian Shu had barely seen from where the light had come from.

He only felt that the light had already arrived beneath his feet as soon as it'd flashed. If the other had wanted to kill him, he would likely be a corpse by now.

His face was drained of all color in his shock, and he backed up a few steps subconsciously. Cold sweat poured down his back, soaking his clothes through in a second.

"I'll say this one more time, I'm here only for the Wu royals. Those who are irrelevant and don't want to die, piss the hell off!"

Jiang Chen's voice came down coldly from the heavens, as if he were a deity that ruled over all living beings, full of stern dignity.

Ever since he'd practiced the evil golden eye, his every word and action had become all the more regal.

When he spoke these words, the natural overwhelming sense of pressure made the four warriors feel as if there was a blade hovering over their heads, making them shiver despite the lack of cold.

"Listen to me, Wu family clan. Fifteen minutes, I will only give you fifteen minutes. If I don't see Wu Hong within fifteen minutes, then the Wu family clan will be wiped off the face of this world."

This posture made Wu Hong tremble. He had been someone who was afraid of nothing and did things in a vicious manner. He had all sorts of methods for whatever he wanted.

He'd been the one to give the order to annihilate the Jiang family.

He'd also been the one to craft the plan of seizing the Hall of Healing.

However, as fierce as he was, his scalp still tingled with numbness when he was faced with a scene like this. He had a feeling that his life was in danger.

"Four warriors, the Purple Sun Sect cultivated you, the royal family hosted you, and now it is the time for you to repay the sect and the royal family!"

Wu Tan was quite incensed when he saw that the four warriors had the intention of retreating. He sent over this silent admonishment.

Wu Tan was an honorary Purple Sun Sect elder to begin with. His cultivation level was even greater than the four warriors. So although he was taken aback, he wasn't thrown into disarray.

He was well aware that the opponent was quite thorny.

But if they were of one heart and withstood the attacks for a few hours, all would be taken care of when reinforcements from the Purple Sun Sect arrived!

The four warriors shook all over after Wu Tan's reminder. The king's meaning was quite clear. If they retreated in the face of battle now, they would face the sect's judgement afterwards.

If they forfeited now, they would be throwing away the Purple Sun Sect's face. Even if the king couldn't do anything to them, the sect's strict rules would never let them off the hook. The punishment may even involve their families!

They were riding a tiger now and finding it hard to get off.

For sky spirit realm cultivators, those who could progress to this level were all ruthless individuals. When they thought through the profits and losses, they knew that it would be unforgivable to not give it their all today.

They looked at each other and then shot towards the moat with great accordance.

"Crazed one, I dare you come out for a battle after arriving in Purple Sun Sect territory and throwing your weight around?!"

"What kind of competence do you possess in hiding yourself like this? Come out for an open battle with the experts of the Purple Sun Sect if you have the guts to!"

"Indeed, let us have a just and public battle if you dare. What kind of man are you to be playing these kinds of tricks?"

The four warriors were advancing and retreating together, obviously planning on fighting as a team. They were well aware that none of them would be able to handle this intruder in single combat.

A sharp whistle sounded in the air as Jiang Chen's Goldwing Swordbird dived down.

When he was had flatted out about ten foot into the air, he cast a frosty gaze at the four warriors beneath. He laughed coldly, "Is the Purple Sun Sect supposed to be something?"

"Madman, who are you?"

Jiang Chen laughed distantly as his gaze was remote. He looked in Wu Tan's direction. "Who am I? You guys did so many things in the Eastern Kingdom, what was it all but for me?"

"And now, I've come."

Wu Tan and Wu Hong's chest spasmed when these words sounded; their expressions all changed greatly.

Jiang Chen!

It was really Jiang Chen!

They'd suspected this before coming here, but felt that since Jiang Chen was suppressed within the Eternal Spirit Mountain, it wasn't very likely that he'd be able to emerge.

Even forefather Sunchaser had said that it would be impossible to come out without the coordinated efforts of the four forefathers.

However, not only had Jiang Chen exited said mountain, he'd even charged to the Shangyang Kingdom's doorstep with a vengeful momentum!

Judging from his posture, he came here completely without any apprehension or fear.

Regret flashed through Wu Tan's heart in that moment. However, it only flashed through his heart and didn't appear on his face. He said lowly, "If we're going to do it, we'll go all the way. Jiang Chen and the Purple Sun Sect have long since formed a death grudge. We just need to hold him here for now until the Purple Sun Sect reinforcements arrive. They'll suppress this person and remove this concern for good!"

Wu Tan was well aware that the entire Purple Sun Sect had a bone deep hatred of Jiang Chen. Forefather Sunchaser in particular practically itching for a chance to eat the latter's flesh and sleep on his skin.

Wu Hong also started calling loudly at this moment, "Four warriors, this Jiang Chen is the mortal enemy of the Purple Sun Sect. If we can kill him today, the forefather will be sure to reward us handsomely!"

He was rather quick at thinking on his feet and adept at persuading people.

Indeed, the thought struck the four warriors as they remembered the various grudges that Jiang Chen had with the Purple Sun Sect. This was an opportunity!

If they could kill Jiang Chen and let the forefather know, then forefather Sunchaser would undoubtedly be pleased. He might even promote the four of them, and their days of fortune and glory would be here!

Jiang Chen was strong enough to kill Long Juxue, but she was only one and there were four of them. They were also used to coordinating with each other, and their battle strength in between their offenses and defenses was something that Long Juxue would never be able to measure up to!

Long Juxue couldn't handle Jiang Chen, but they might be able to!

Chapter 420: Internal Conflict, Internal Strife

"Go, kill him!"

The four great champions had always cooperated well with each other. Four beams of light shot into the skies with splendid radiance, each of them wielding their own weapons.

Such a seemingly simple attack was actually split into four quadrants, sealing off all space. This was a common tactic they used.

Although it didn't count as the mysteries of a formation, they cooperated very well together, and so their strength was enormous.

Jiang Chen snorted softly as he was holding the high vantage point, waved with his hand, and sent out four golden beams of light.

The golden beams streaked through the air, transforming into four shooting stars, and vanished into thin air.

Suddenly, the four champions felt their bodies grow cold as a golden colored light flashed in front of their very eyes. A gout of cold air blew straight at them, making their necks feel cold.

"No!"

In that critical moment, when they realized that something was wrong, the four beams of golden light had already flashed past their necks.

The golden light churned!

A strong crisp sound akin to snapping a wooden stick in half rang out at this point, so sharp it made one's hair stand on end.

In the next moment, the momentum of the four great champions halted as they froze in midair.

Four bloody beams of light shone out at almost the exact same time as the four heads shooting into the skies. Their eyes were filled with incredulity as they looked towards the ground below, watching their heads somehow bizarrely separated from their bodies.

All sorts of thoughts they had at this moment soon withered into dreadful misery.

They knew that this would be the last thing they would ever witness in their lives.

Bam, bam, bam, bam!

The four headless corpses plummeted first. They crashed despairingly into the dust as blood poured out from their necks in great gushes.

Next, the four heads that had shot to a peak height in the sky began to descend as well.

Bam, bam, bam, bam! They too landed at the same time.

Dying with dissatisfaction and everlasting regret.

The four greatest spirit realm champions of the Shangyang Kingdom had been slain in the skies above the palace with one move.

The entire palace, which had at least a hundred thousand of spectators, had seen this happen.

In that moment, Wu Hong almost collapsed to his knees on the ground. Their nation's four greatest champions had been slaughtered in a second!

The opponent was so strong to the point of being terrifying.

What was even more horrifying was that this opponent came for Wu Hong.

If it were before, he would've been a key target to protect because he was the crown prince. Even the four great champions would've given their all to protect him.

It was difficult to tell just how much of that loyalty remained after the four champions had been beheaded with one stroke.

After all, this opponent was simply too strong. He was so strong that they couldn't fight him.

King Wu Tan also felt this throat grow dry. He'd thought that even if the combined strength of the four champions couldn't win against Jiang Chen, they'd at least be able to fight him to a draw.

But the battle situation had changed simply too quickly, so fast that he didn't even have time to react.

The four champions' heads were separated from their bodies in the blink of an eye.

They were of the seventh level spirit realm! They would be high levels of existence even in the Purple Sun Sect. If it wasn't for Wu Tan having quite a bit of face, he never wouldn't be able to mobilize these four cultivators to become the nation's champions!

Wu Tan's strength was indeed above them, but that was on a single combat basis. If the four acted together, Wu Tan felt that he wouldn't be able to hold up beneath their onslaught either.

And now, they'd been incredulously killed in front of the formation.

Thanks to that scene, the fighting spirit of Wu Tan and the royal experts were almost all instantly completely shattered.

Strong cultivators abounded amongst the royal experts, but even the strongest leader wasn't as strong as the four champions.

Even they had been instantly slaughtered, what else did the rest of them have to compete?

"Your Majesty, please return to the palace!"

"Protect the king! Protect His Majesty! Retreat to the palace, and reinforce the defenses!"

Bitterness filled Wu Tan's mouth. Retreating to the palace meant lowering his head in front of Jiang Chen. As the ruler of a nation, bowing his head now would be a fatal blow to both morale and his authority.

When they saw the king was hesitating, the royal experts all advised, "Your Majesty, this villain is strong and we cannot withstand him. We must seek succor in the palace and defend with our lives until the sect reinforcements arrive!"

"Royal father, let us take cover for now." Wu Hong also had a long face on. He knew that he had gotten himself into great trouble this time.

However, now that things were like this, Wu Hong also knew that there was no point in regretting it. He knew that since all this had been done with authorization from the Purple Sun Sect, he had no other choice but to do as they say.

If he had refused to heed the intentions of the senior executives, then the position of the Wu family would be endangered as well.

Therefore, he was well aware that he had to have done what he did, and there was no turning back once he set down that path.

However, never in his wildest dreams had he thought that Jiang Chen would be able to escape the Eternal Spirit Mountain, and also unleash all his wrath at Shangyang Kingdom without mercy!

“Father, we can always live on to fight another day! This brat is so arrogant that the Purple Sun Sect will be sure to destroy him. We’re just being ordered by the Purple Sun Sect, and Jiang Chen’s true target is them. The senior executives of the Purple Sun Sect will not sit idly by. There’s no big deal if we lose all face in front of this little thief. Wasn’t a genius such as Long Juxue also slain by this brat?”

Wu Hong wasn’t thinking as much as Wu Tan did at this moment.

He only wanted to stay alive right now and hang on until reinforcements from the Purple Sun Sect arrived.

Jiang Chen glared downwards.

“Wu Tan, I gave you a chance and you didn’t treasure it. From now on, regardless of where they are, I will come take all the lives of your Wu family clan! I will return to you tenfold the number of Jiang family members you killed!”

Jiang Chen’s voice was full of lethal intent.

Wu Tan’s face was ashen as he shouted, “Jiang Chen, every wrong has a source and every loan its creditor! If you really have the ability, you should go to the Purple Sun Sect! What are you doing here, causing a fuss in our secular kingdom? Sect disciples cannot intervene in the matters of the secular kingdoms. This is the rule of the sixteen kingdom alliance!”

“Rule?” Jiang Chen laughed heartily. “Did the Wu clan think about the rules when they slaughtered all those people in my clan? Did you speak of rules when you seized the Hall of Healing for yourself?”

“Don’t talk to me about rules! The rules of the sixteen kingdom alliance aren’t worth shit! I only have one rule—I will not attack unless I am attacked, and if I am, I will return it to you tenfold!”

Jiang Chen pointed at the circular moat. “From now on, everyone is only allowed to enter the Shangyang palace and not a single soul shall leave it. Those who dare cross this moat will be executed!”

When he finished speaking, he waved his arm and the swordbirds dived down like a rain of shooting stars. He had deployed the million strong swordbird army this time, and it really was quite a sight.

Under the leadership of hundreds of Goldwing Swordbirds, the aura of the swordbird army was ten times more impressive than their previous deployment was at the Second Crossing.

The million strong Swordbird army started screaming shrilly in unison. They created a current that swept into the cloud layers furiously. The upper skies of the Shangyang Kingdom became filled with dark storm clouds in an instant, as if the heavens were ready to pour forth a great storm.

This kind of scene was as if calamitous disaster was about to descend upon the Shangyang Kingdom. It put pressure on everyone in the kingdom, and they were frightened beyond belief.

When Wu Tan saw Jiang Chen displaying his prowess, a light had danced in his darkened face. He finally gave a wave of his hand and gritted his teeth. "Retreat into the palace and activate the highest level defenses. Open the underground tunnels and be ready to cover the retreat of the royal children and the disciples! Summon the three external branches to assist and coordinate with us on the inside."

The three external branches of the Purple Sun Sect were all within the Shangyang Kingdom. The journey wasn't far, and they would be here almost as soon as they were summoned.

Jiang Chen watched Wu Tan retreat into the palace with a cold smile, and was in no hurry to pursue him.

He had utmost confidence, and these folks were only struggling on the edge of death in his eyes.

Since the Wu family clan had hardened their hearts to resist to the end, then Jiang Chen naturally wouldn't have any room for leniency in his heart.

After all, the Purple Sun Sect had never shown any form of benevolence when they were suppressing him.

Neither had the Wu clan when they slaughtered the Jiang clan or taken over the Hall of Healing.

Since they were enemies and also robbers to boot, they should naturally be exterminated. Was there any need for mercy?

So now, Jiang Chen was going to visit upon them the exact same treatment he'd received.

The Purple Sun Sect was domineering and viewed people to be as worthless as grass. They always thought they themselves were strong, and so it was the natural course of order to suppress, oppress, and take from others.

To the Purple Sun Sect, strength was everything and conferred upon them legitimacy.

Those who were lesser than them were ants, and so should be stepped on, crushed, and slaughtered.

Therefore, Jiang Chen was only returning the way of the Purple Sun Sect to their kind, that was all.

His heart was as calm as still water, without the slightest ripple in it.

He'd had enough of the Purple Sun Sect. This time, he was going to etch his image upon them so vividly that their scalps would tingle with numbness and the hairs of their bodies stand on end whenever they evoked his memory!

Defenses were heavy around the inner courtyard of the inner palace. All of the palace's mechanisms and restrictions had been activated.

But even so, Wu Tan and son still didn't have the slightest feeling of security at all.

Their opponent was simply too strong, to the point that they couldn't even estimate his strength.

"Royal father, when will the Purple Sun Sect reinforcements arrive?" Wu Tan's heart was in his throat as he felt fear he'd never known before.

Wu Tan's face was grave as he shook his head without another word. Now that things have escalated to this extent, they could only leave their fates in the hands of heaven. It was hard to tell whether the defenses of the palace could last until reinforcements from the sect arrived.

The father and son duo usually leisurely controlled the life and death of others in their everyday rule of the Shangyang Kingdom.

However, they had come to the disastrous conclusion that their fates were now at the mercy of someone else.

They'd always been the ones calling the shots, and the others were mere fodder. But now they had become the hunted instead.

"Your Majesty, this is bad! The manor of the Prince of Benevolence has been subjected to unknown attack! The Wu clan family members..."

"What of them?" Wu Tan's eyes widened as his scalp tingled with numbness. The Prince of Benevolence was his younger brother.

"None... none had managed to escape." The messenger almost didn't dare meet Wu Tan's eyes.

"Your Majesty, tragic tidings! The Prince of Kindness was killed in his manor!"

"Your Majesty, the manor of the Prince of Humility was ambushed, and the prince is nowhere to be found..."

"Your Majesty..."

All sorts of bad news filled in like the tidewaters. Danger suffused the entire palace like the rainwaters flooding in an old, shabby house during a downpour.

"Your Majesty, there are large numbers of royal relatives, clan relatives, and royal concubines outside requesting to enter the premises and seek protection!"

They were currently in Wu Tan's bedchambers, and Wu Hong wouldn't be allowed in here under normal circumstances. However, Wu Hong was temporarily allowed to be in here due to the ongoing crisis.

He hadn't thought that when fright struck into the hearts of everyone, they would all flock to Wu Tan's chambers as they knew the defenses around his chambers were the strongest.

Wu Tan was in a conundrum all of a sudden. There wasn't enough space for everyone, and chaos would easily ensue when there were many people.

But if he didn't accept them, that meant he was giving up on these relatives, which would undoubtedly send an exceedingly bad signal.

"Jiang Chen, don't you dare push me too far!" Fire spat out of Wu Tan's eyes.