

Three Realms 461

Chapter 461: Jiang Chen Refuses To Be Taken Down a Peg

Jiang Chen passed through Rosy Valley unchallenged, thanks to his medallion of a core disciple. However, his group of followers were a bit more... conspicuous.

The Qiao Brothers, Guo Jin, and the others were all in the first or second level spirit realm. They stuck out like a sore thumb in Rosy Valley.

One had to know that the core disciples in the Rosy Valley were all firmly in the origin realm. Most were in the earth origin realm, and a few had even reached the sky origin realm.

Even if those geniuses were to accept followers, they wouldn't accept those with a low cultivation level for no reason at all.

The weakest of their followers were in the sky spirit realm, or even spirit kings.

Those in the small spirit realm such as Xue Tong and the others were almost nonexistent in Rosy Valley. Even the medicine boys running errands in the Rosy Valley were mostly in the earth spirit realm.

Therefore, the guards to the Rosy Valley had wry expressions of surprise when they saw Jiang Chen's followers. They found this scene rather amusing.

Gouyu's personality was bold and unconcerned, but she could also feel that their cultivation level seemed to be something embarrassing for Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen was rather calm. This so-called gap was only temporary. It was only due to those in the Valley being born in a better place and thus receiving better resources from the Regal Pill Palace.

If Gouyu, Xue Tong, and the others had been born here, there was a high likelihood that they would be inner disciples, if not core disciples.

Gouyu's cultivation level had been rising without pause after eating a green Divine Fruit of the Rosy Dawn. She was now at the peak of the earth spirit realm. However, this level of cultivation was still nothing compared to the other followers of the core disciples.

A few of them, wearing the obvious adornments of followers, crossed their paths along the way. All of them were, at minimum, at the sky spirit realm.

Their faces displayed unconcealed mockery when they saw Gouyu and the others.

Some even started muttering, "Look at what the cats dragged in. When did the requirements of the Rosy Valley become this lax?"

"Indeed, the Rosy Valley is a place reserved for geniuses among the core disciples. How did people who aren't not even worthy of running errands make it in here?"

"Pfft, is this kind of trash worthy of entering the Valley? They'll be thrown out sooner or later."

Although these murmurings weren't loud, they were perfectly audible to Jiang Chen and the others.

Jiang Chen's gaze grew frosty, flicking over to these fellows.

These followers didn't dare cause trouble when faced with Jiang Chen's aura. They shrank in on themselves and quietly slunk away.

Although they didn't feel much pressure speaking idly about Gouyu and the others, they still didn't dare act impudently in front of Jiang Chen.

They wouldn't be able to seek justice anywhere if Jiang Chen beat them up. Although their masters could make an appearance and regain face for them, it wasn't worth it to take a beating for free!

Gouyu was a bit depressed. "Young master, we've lost face for you."

Jiang Chen laughed, carefree, "This is called snobs throwing their weight around. This is all they'll ever amount to in their lives. Is there a need to fuss about such short sighted people?"

Huang'er also took Gouyu's arm lightly. "Big sister Gouyu, these people accumulate no virtue with their mouths and do not have the appropriate breadth of mind for martial dao. Sir Jiang is correct, there's no need to bother with them. I trust that sister Gouyu will be far beyond them in a few years."

Huang'er was as considerate as always. Her every word and gesture always gave one the feeling of a breath of fresh, spring air.

Although Gouyu was dejected, she felt a lot better after Huang'er's words.

She grasped Huang'er's hand, her eyes smoldering with determination. "Younger sister Huang'er is right. How could I, Gouyu, possibly admit defeat to these people? They were merely born in a slightly better place than me. I'll make them look up to me in a few years!"

She'd always been one to not admit defeat to a guy. Now that she was being contemptuously dismissed, her self-respect had been severely challenged.

Huang'er laughed lightly, "Precisely the case! Sister Gouyu is incredibly clever—there's no doubt you'll be able to do it!"

Gouyu also smiled, "You're the clever one! If I were a guy, I would definitely fall for you."

"What a pity that sister Gouyu is not a male."

Gouyu's spirits had taken a great turn for the better, and remained in good cheer as the group arrived at Jiang Chen's residence.

The Rosy Valley had plenty of room, with quite the distance between each residence. There was ample private space to prevent being disturbed.

Jiang Chen's residence wasn't actually the best in terms of terrain, and in truth, it was one of the lower quality ones in the Rosy Valley.

This was because Jiang Chen was only of the first level origin realm and lacked the qualifications for a higher level residence.

Even so, this residence was still much grander than the one he'd had in the Precious Tree Sect.

Gouyu and the others were all delighted when they entered the doors, completely sweeping away their previous melancholy.

This residence was designed in quite a grand fashion. There was a cultivation area, living quarters, relaxation area, receiving area, pill refinement room, and weapon refinement room. Areas for all sorts of purposes could be found here.

Even if he had another ten or twenty followers in addition to his paltry few, they would've all been able to live comfortably as well.

"Younger sister Huang'er, look at this medicine garden! You'll have ample space to exert yourself in the future for your flowers!" Gouyu was quite excited.

Huang'er smiled slightly, taking a stroll around the residence.

She would be spending part of her foreseeable future here.

Jiang Chen was catching up with everyone after they'd all settled in when a voice came in from the outside. "Senior brother Jiang Chen, my house's master, senior brother Yan Hongtu tells you to make a visit."

The voice came from a follower.

When Jiang Chen walked outside, he saw a spirit king cultivator standing outside, wearing the adornments of a follower.

Although the person looked at Jiang Chen respectfully, there was a subtle sense of superiority about him. It was apparent that he wasn't quite accepting of the core disciple who'd just entered Rosy Valley.

"Senior brother Yan Hongtu?" Jiang Chen's brows furrowed. He wants me to make a trip just when I've arrived?

Logically speaking, certain courtesies still had to be extended even if the other wanted him to make a trip. Sending a random follower to pass on a message—there were obvious hints of contempt and even blatant provocation in this action.

If this senior brother Yan Hongtu was truly interested in the newcomer, he should've been the one to pay the visit. After, Jiang Chen was newly arrived in the Valley and wholly unfamiliar with everything.

"Correct. Senior brother Yan Hongtu is one of the masters of the Soaring Clouds area of Rosy Valley." A thick sense of pride suffused the words of the spirit king follower.

It was as if being senior brother Yan Hongtu's follower was the utmost pride and joy of his life.

Jiang Chen nodded his head lightly, "Tell me the address. I'll pay him a visit when I have the time."

Although Jiang Chen was a bit displeased, he didn't erupt in open hostilities.

"What do you mean pay a visit when you have the time?" The follower blanked momentarily and looked at Jiang Chen incredulously. "Senior brother Jiang Chen, you don't know the rules because you've just arrived, right? In the Soaring Clouds area, senior brother Yan Hongtu is bestowing favor if he wishes to see someone. Who doesn't immediately spring to action when they hear of his summons, afraid to be

even a moment too late? Are you... are you sure that you'll wait until you have time to? You'll make senior brother Yan Hongtu wait?"

Halfway through, his words were tinged with an odd tone, a supercilious smile plastered on his face.

He was obviously telling Jiang Chen, how dare you reject our actions in giving you face? It is such a great honor that senior brother Yan Hongtu wishes to see you. How dare you drag your feet?

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. "I still have some things to attend to and won't be able to see you out."

He wasn't an easy target or a yes man. Am I to trundle over immediately to listen to your speeches whenever you, Yan Hongtu, summons me?

Jiang Chen wasn't the sort to be easily summoned even when he was free, never mind at a time when he was busy, as he was at the moment.

It wasn't that no one could stir him to action, but that he didn't even know this senior brother. Their relationship was far from the point of him being on call.

It was obvious that this Yan Hongtu wanted to take Jiang Chen down a peg. How would Jiang Chen possibly play along?

The follower was absolutely flabbergasted when he saw Jiang Chen's attitude.

Apparently, senior brother Yan Hongtu was his sky, his everything in the world.

He'd never thought there would be someone who dared resist against his senior brother's will in the Soaring Clouds area. There had once been a core disciple who hadn't obeyed, but he'd been taught quite the lesson in the end!

There were four areas in the Rosy Valley, and although the Soaring Clouds area was the lowest level, Yan Hongtu had absolute authority here since he was the boss.

There really had been no rookie over these years who'd dared dragged his feet when Yan Hongtu issued a summons.

"You must think things through carefully, senior brother Jiang Chen. If you don't go now, even if you want to in the future, you may not have the chance."

Jiang Chen's expression grew frosty. "I'll go when I want to. Can the master of your house kidnap me and force me there if I don't want to?"

Jiang Chen was also irate at this point.

A follower was still a follower in the end. He didn't dare act too atrociously in front of a core disciple. He only chuckled coldly and cast a pitying look at Jiang Chen.

In his eyes, the future of this rookie who'd offended senior brother Yan Hongtu was basically over.

Yan Hongtu was a twenty something year old genius in the Regal Pill Palace. An aquiline nose punctuated a thin, vicious looking figure. He lived in the best residence in the Soaring Clouds area and held power over everything in this section.

He could absolutely be promoted to a higher level area with his cultivation level and strength, but he liked the power and prestige of holding sway over an area.

It was said that one would rather be the mouth of a chicken than the behind of a cow.

He'd rather be the boss of the Soaring Clouds area than be subject to someone else's orders in a higher level area.

Over the years, Yan Hongtu had maintained his personal strength and authority at the peak. No one dared naysay him.

Which core disciple in this area would dare show him such lack of face?

His face instantly darkened when his follower brought this message back.

"He'll come visit when he has time to?" Yan Hongtu flew into a rage. "When did the rookies of the Soaring Clouds area develop such personality?"

"Senior brother Yan, that kid looks like a country bumpkin and obviously doesn't think much of you. In my view, this kind of stubborn country mule will have no idea who the boss here is if we don't rough him up a bit."

The follower also added fuel to the flame, his tone dripping with provocation.

"Hmph, I've heard that this Jiang Chen has quite a name for himself in the Precious Tree Sect. He probably really thinks he's something in the Regal Pill Palace." A few hints of derision appeared on Yan Hongtu's ruthless face.

"Pah! Who the hell is he? A small place like the sixteen kingdoms alliance has completely exaggerated him. He's just a clueless rookie in the Rosy Valley. He'll coil himself up even if he's a dragon, and lay flat if he's a tiger!" The follower carried on in the same vein as Yan Hongtu and started talking tough.

Chapter 462: The Demigod of Wood

Yan Hongtu attempting to take Jiang Chen down a peg wasn't out of the latter's expectations. Jiang Chen would have anticipated something along these lines even if Dan Chi hadn't warned him beforehand.

He was a foreigner after all, and had suddenly taken up residence in the core disciples' territory. It was virtually impossible for everyone to accept him straight off the bat, not to mention the reputation that came along with him. The sage one himself had deigned to ally with the Precious Tree Sect because of Jiang Chen!

Just this point alone was enough to make Jiang Chen a target of public censure.

Everyone was a genius here, and what genius would submit to another?

Jiang Chen was the genius from a small place and had suddenly received so much attention from Dan Chi. Who wouldn't nurse some little grievance or plot in their hearts? How many wouldn't suffer from the slightest upwelling of jealousy? This Yan Hongtu was just one of their representatives. Of course,

Jiang Chen also knew that some things were unavoidable and had to be subdued head on in order to survive in the sects.

“Young master, it seems that this Rosy Valley isn’t all that either. Vile characters seem to abound like ghosts around here.” Gouyu huffed.

Jiang Chen was rather noncommittal. “Where there are people, so will there be the jianghu. 1 Where there is the jianghu, so will there be conflict. Since we have arrived, let us relax and enjoy things.”

He was about to return to his courtyard when another voice rang out. “Daoist Jiang Chen, please hold your steps.”

Jiang Chen turned his head to see a young man standing a few paces away. He possessed a natural grace and elegant brows, dressed in an outfit that looked almost like a priestly frock. All of this culminated in an ethereal feeling even at his young age.

“I am Mu Gaoqi, a newly ascended core disciple last to enter the Rosy Valley before you. I have heard of your name and come to pay a visit. Am I intruding?” Mu Gaoqi seemed even a year or two younger than Jiang Chen.

So the saying went, whoever comes is a guest. Jiang Chen wasn’t an unreasonable person, and one didn’t reach out to slap a smiling face. This Mu Gaoqi had come ever so politely and didn’t seem to possess malicious intent.

“Please come in.” Jiang Chen nodded, showing the other the way in. The female followers excused themselves when they saw that they had guests. Being even more of a reclusive person, Huang’er would never appear in front of strangers.

Xue Tong had also planned on dismissing himself after he’d brought in tea for the guest. It was patently obvious that the mockery the followers had been subjected to after entering the Rosy Valley had made them more or less self conscious. They were deathly afraid of losing more of Jiang Chen’s face if they stayed.

“Xue Tong, you’re not an outsider. Stay and listen to the discourse of a Regal Pill Palace genius. This will also be a learning opportunity for you.” Jiang Chen wasn’t willing to let cracks appear in the dao hearts of his men. His actions were an attempt to goad Xue Tong and the others into triumphing over their low self esteem.

Mu Gaoqi hastened to bow at the waist and smile, “You praise me too highly.”

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, “I’ve only just arrived and don’t know the rules of the Rosy Valley. I’ll salute Brother Mu with this cup of crude tea first then.”

Being a humble man, Mu Gaoqi was a bit startled and flattered by Jiang Chen’s proactive toast. Jiang Chen observed the young man’s language and countenance and felt that the other truly wasn’t here to create trouble. Mu Gaoqi was careful and deliberate in his every motion, acting cautiously in all affairs. He appeared quite different from the other sect geniuses, not at all the type that threw his weight around in a domineering fashion.

“Brother Jiang Chen, this younger brother should be a year or two younger than you. You can call Xiao Mu or Gaoqi. Brother Jiang Chen’s name has pierced my ears like thunder these past few days in the Regal Pill Palace. I’ve specially brought over some pills for my intrusion today, I hope Brother Jiang Chen doesn’t think little of them.” Mu Gaoqi brought out a few small pill flasks as he spoke and placed them on the table.

“Heh heh, my martial dao potential is quite mediocre in the Regal Pill Palace, but I have a bit of potential in the area of pills due to my innate wood constitution. My path into the Rosy Valley was crafted from pills and the small advantage I have in refining them. Contained in these three flasks are: the Origin Fostering Pill that enhances the effects of cultivation in the origin realm, the Spirit Consolidation Pill that will quickly raise a spirit realm cultivator’s level, and the Seven Star Coalescence Pill that will instantly recover half of your origin energy after prolonged battle. I was limited by various conditions and couldn’t refine too many higher quality Origin Fostering Pills due to its high requirements. The Spirit Consolidation Pill, on the other hand, functions very much like the Divine Fruit from the Precious Tree of your Precious Tree Sect. Heh heh, it was thanks to this pill that I made it into the origin realm!” Mu Gaoqi gave a careful introduction of these unexpectedly very precious pills.

“Daoist Gaoqi, isn’t it a bit too precious to present such valuable pills at our first meeting?” Jiang Chen smiled slightly.

Mu Gaoqi hastily responded, “These pills may be more precious to others, but I can easily refine them again after they’ve been used up due to my mastery of the dao of pills. In addition...”

“In addition what?” Jiang Chen laughed.

“Alright...” Mu Gaoqi’s handsome face reddened. “I actually have some personal motives in coming here. I have a matter to request because I’ve heard that Brother Jiang Chen has a natural affinity for fire and water.”

“What makes you say that?” Jiang Chen couldn’t help but laugh when he saw Mu Gaoqi blush as he spoke. This fellow is such a bashful character; he likely isn’t one of those with evil in his hearts.

“It’s just that I was training in the outside world a while ago and discovered a clear spring with a few other sect disciples. It looked like a spring with an underground water source. When I took a sample of the water to test it, I discovered that it was a spring containing very pure wood spirit energy. I’m naturally very sensitive to wood spirit power since I have a natural born wood constitution. Therefore, we decided to try and locate the source of the spring, but discovered that the spring travels through a deep cavern. We were blocked by the exceedingly complex terrain inside the cavern after walking less than a tenth of its length. The cavern fluctuates wildly between hot and cold temperatures. Fire spews out from beneath the ground and rampages around like a dragon when it’s hot, and the surroundings become as cold as the highest peaks, seemingly able to freeze our very blood when it’s cold.” Mu Gaoqi’s gaze was fixed on Jiang Chen as he spoke.

Jiang Chen seemed to grasp something at this point, an understanding of what Mu Gaoqi’s intentions were.

“Brother Jiang Chen, we’d strike it rich if we can find the source of the innate spring.” Mu Gaoqi’s tone became a bit agitated. “My natural born constitution is one step away from the innate level. The

potential in my body will surely evolve to an innate wood constitution if baptized in the spring. And it's not just me, any cultivator who undergoes treatment from the spring will see their bloodlines and potential evolve. This is an enormous opportunity!"

"And you want my help?"

"No no..." Mu Gaoqi quickly denied. "How would this pitiful amount of pills be enough to solicit your help? I merely wish to offer a favor and invite you to join us."

"Invite me to join you?" Jiang Chen was actually a bit tempted. "When do you set out?"

"I think roughly three months from now. There's still plenty of time for us to make our own preparations. Of course, not that many know of this yet. The disciples who found it have a tacit understanding that none of us will spread the word about this. Otherwise, we won't be able to claim any of it if any of the stronger disciples found out." Mu Gaoqi's personality was a bit more introverted, and his network within the Regal Pill Palace was nothing special. Most introverted folks were slow to warm up to others and found it difficult to trust others. This was why he hadn't dared to invite any of the stronger geniuses.

In addition, according to his speculations, one with the ability to train in both the fire and water attributes was eminently suited to go adventuring through that cavern. Add to that Mu Gaoqi's complete idolization of Sage Dan Chi; he'd felt that the one who his idol valued so highly was worthy of trust—this was why he'd taken the relatively bold move of inviting Jiang Chen after careful consideration.

When he saw Jiang Chen remain silent without a word, Mu Gaoqi hastened to add, "Brother Jiang Chen, if you think that I'm not showing enough sincerity, I can promise you that I can be in charge of all the Spirit Consolidation Pills that your followers need in the future. You don't even have to prepare the ingredients. What do you say?" As a resident of Rosy Valley, Mu Gaoqi naturally knew that Jiang Chen's people had become the butt of all the jokes in the area.

A vaunted core disciple in the earth spirit realm with small spirit realm cultivators as his followers? This was a unique sight within the Rosy Valley, and it was difficult not to become a laughingstock.

"Daoist Gaoqi, I will agree for now since you think so highly of me. However, I will withdraw my participation at any moment if I find that the truth is different from what you've described or if you've sought to conceal anything from me." Jiang Chen said everything up front first.

Mu Gaoqi was overjoyed and cried out excitedly, "May the heavens smite me if I've held anything back! However, those who discovered the spirit spring with me all have higher cultivation levels. I'm afraid we might run into some trouble later on."

"Worry not about any of that." Jiang Chen wasn't worried about the strength of others, but more concerned with if there was any scheme or trap here. At least presently, he could be at ease since Mu Gaoqi had offered his sworn word.

Mu Gaoqi's psychological defenses against Jiang Chen gradually relaxed after the two had hammered out the details. He began to speak of some of the details behind the Valley to Jiang Chen. "There are roughly a thousand disciples in the Rosy Valley. One who has just entered the origin realm as I is at the

bottom of the heap. It's a good thing that others don't bully me too much because I'm well versed in refining pills. They call me the "Demigod of Wood" 3 due to my proficiency in the dao of pills."

"Haha, you do have a bit of an ethereal air about you that the immortals would have!" Jiang Chen laughed.

"It might have something to do with my natural wood constitution. Oh right, Brother Jiang Chen, I've heard that Yan Hongtu has summoned you? Was there such a thing?" Mu Gaoqi asked.

"Indeed, how is this person?" Jiang Chen continued to ask.

Mu Gaoqi revealed a trace of a wry smile. "This person is one not to antagonize in the Soaring Clouds area. Brother Jiang Chen, I recommend you find an opportunity to express that you've submitted to him." Mu Gaoqi's personality was cautious and one that didn't easily speak ill of others. It could be seen from his tone and attitude just how domineering and rampant this character normally was.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly and didn't keep speaking. He shifted direction to ask, "Is this Rosy Valley divided into different sections?"

"Indeed. There are four: Soaring Clouds, Peerless, Sky Pillar, and Sovereign areas. The Soaring Clouds area holds the lowest amongst the core disciples. Those in the Peerless area are a bit higher, but the true apex core disciples dwell within the Sky Pillar and Sovereign areas. Those who have the right to enter the Sovereign area are the real true disciples of the Regal Pill Palace and the premier geniuses. There aren't too many of them. They have the right to assail the sage realm and have too big of a gap with us." Mu Gaoqi's tone was also filled with fear and admiration when he spoke of the Sovereign area.

"Yan Hongtu is the tyrant of the Soaring Clouds area, isn't he?"

"You could say that. Senior brother Yan's strength is actually enough to enter the Sky Pillar area, but he gains much in controlling the Soaring Clouds area. He's king here and naturally doesn't want to leave."

In his current, easily abused position, Yan Hangtu was the recipient of all sorts of fawning; he could even collect protection fees. There was no way in hell he wanted to leave!

1. Literally lakes and rivers, indicative of the greater world.
2. It appears that constitutions have levels as well, with innate > natural born.
3. Mu is his surname and also translated to "wood"

Chapter 463: Great Barkers Are No Biters

Mu Gaoqi obviously didn't wish to speak too much about Yan Hongtu, merely reminding Jiang Chen that submitting to the local tyrant was leagues better than offending him. To that end, he was even willing to spend his own money to smooth things over for Jiang Chen.

"Brother Jiang Chen, if you are unwilling to set aside face or spend money, I can bring over some more pills that you can use to fob him off with and end this matter. He won't make trouble for you in the short

term if he gains some benefits from you.” Mu Gaoqi’s careful personality destined his style to be passive and weak. He would rather spend money to resolve problems than fight for himself.

Jiang Chen didn’t look down on the other for that. He knew that Mu Gaoqi had no backer in the Regal Pill Palace, and his martial dao potential wasn’t at the level of a favored son of heaven. One who eked out survival in the cracks of life was fated for a life philosophy of being prudent and humble. It wasn’t Mu Gaoqi’s fault.

They exchanged another round of pleasantries before Mu Gaoqi took his leave. The latter reminded Jiang Chen over and over again before he left not to butt heads with Yan Hongtu.

Jiang Chen dismissed his words with a smile. “Be at ease, Daoist Gaoqi, the matter between us will not be delayed.”

Jiang Chen had never purposefully provoked anyone, but neither would he deliberately fawn upon another. If Yan Hongtu had wanted to be friends, Jiang Chen naturally would’ve treated him in the same manner. But if he wanted to step on Jiang Chen, the latter would never compromise.

It was as Sage Dan Chi had said, conflict and inner turmoil was unavoidable when trying to survive in the sect. In the world of martial dao, the weak were nothing more than fodder for the strong.

Yan Hongtu had no previous grudge with Jiang Chen, so the former obviously just wanted to suppress Jiang Chen and use this to raise his own profile, solidifying his rule over his domain. However, Jiang Chen wasn’t about to quietly submit. It wasn’t that he couldn’t take a step back on the path of martial dao, but that there was no need to do so here.

“Mu Gaoqi is not a treacherous sort, just one with a softer personality. He’s able to survive in the cracks, but he lacks the bit of drive and brilliance of one who seeks the peak of martial dao.” Jiang Chen had a good impression of Mu Gaoqi as he mindlessly toyed with the pills the latter had brought. These didn’t hold much allure for him, but the latter’s nickname as the Wood Demigod wasn’t for naught.

Pills of such quality didn’t exist in the sixteen kingdom alliance—particularly that Spirit Consolidation Pill, the one that Mu Gaoqi had gifted roughly forty of.

“He’s not a miserly one, at least.” Jiang Chen didn’t have much use for the Spirit Consolidation Pill, but it really was quite useful for cultivators in the spirit realm. Although it was a bit of an exaggeration to compare it to a Divine Fruit, it wasn’t too far off either.

Jiang Chen summoned Gouyu and the others, giving each four pills. He planned on giving Tang Hong four of the remainder, and doling out each of the final pills amongst the other Precious Tree Sect disciples. Even though he didn’t have much of a relationship with them, they were all Precious Tree Sect members in the end. They were now crossing the river in the same boat. Giving them each a pill would be doing them a favor as well.

As for the Origin Fostering Pill, Jiang Chen observed the five of them in the palm of his hand for a moment. He had some use for them, but with his preferences, he wasn’t quite satisfied with their quality. He kept two and decided to give the rest to Ye Chonglou.

The lordmaster had just broken through to the origin realm, and although his potential had yet to be fully explored, the area of improvement left to him was nothing compared to a young person's. Perhaps these pills would be more suited for Ye Chonglou.

It was rather the Seven Star Coalescence Pill that was a rare find for Jiang Chen. He'd refined those sort of pills back in the Eastern Kingdom, and the Vast Oceans Pill was still a hot item in the sixteen kingdoms alliance.

However, that particular pill was only useful in the true qi realm. Its effects were greatly decreased in the spirit realm, and completely inadequate in the origin realm.

"Seven Stars Coalescence Pill? Recovering origin energy... it looks like I must assimilate into the local culture after entering the Regal Pill Palace and place greater emphasis on pills."

The Regal Pill Palace was a sect that had been founded for the dao of pills. If a disciple didn't know how to refine pills, then they weren't a proper Regal Pill Palace disciple.

However, Jiang Chen had lacked time in the past two years to further his studies in the dao of pills. Otherwise, there truly wouldn't be anyone in the Divine Abyss Continent who had more potential in this field than him. He had been a pill master renowned through the realms in his past life!

Jiang Chen summoned Gouyu after he'd portioned out the pills. "Gouyu, go find Lordmaster Ye Chonglou and take these pills to them." He would send a message with his consciousness on how to proportion the pills, so there was no need to tell Gouyu about that.

Wen Ziqi walked up afterwards, "Young master, the spirit medicines you gave last time have been consumed. The Silvermoon Monsterapes have large appetites now and eat quite a lot."

She was spending enormous time and effort on separately raising the two Apes. However, as time went on, the Apes also entered a period of rapid growth. The sudden explosion of their appetites meant that their development was about to accelerate. This was a good thing, but presented an enormous expense for Jiang Chen.

He had many resources, whether from the Precious Tree Sect or the legacy territory from ancient times. But even so, there were many who depended on him, so it was difficult to make ends meet. Add the several hundred Goldwing Swordbirds that Jiang Chen had always kept at his side, that meant he had another couple hundred spirit realm cultivators to feed. Their appetites were equally astounding.

"Who would've thought that I, Jiang Chen, would have to start worrying about day to day living?" The Regal Pill Palace's resources were ten times that of the Precious Tree Sect, but they were still noticeably insufficient in his hands because he had so many vassals who needed them. Gouyu and Xue Tong were followers and not official disciples, so they received no resources.

"It looks like I still need to earn money eh!"

This wasn't difficult for Jiang Chen, particularly in the Regal Pill Palace. He decided to still attack this problem from the angle of refining pills.

The Silvermoon Monsterapes, Goldbiter Rat King and Goldwing Swordbirds were all clamoring for food, awaiting bloodline evolution. If they didn't receive enough resources, their strength would never develop at the proper pace.

Jiang Chen recalled that apart from the standard amount allotted from the Regal Pill Palace, he could also undertake missions to earn resources, or even travel outside the sect and gain resources in that manner.

"It looks like I should go see what missions are available." There was much he needed to be familiar with in order to settle into sect life as soon as possible, having newly arrived in the Regal Pill Palace.

He sat down cross legged, meditating for a moment and unearthing a few ancient pill recipes from the memories of his past life that were suitable for the origin realm.

"Collect resources, refine pills and increase strength." These were the matters that Jiang Chen needed to pay the most attention to. He glanced at the time and saw that Gouyu had left for roughly three hours. It should have been enough to visit Ye Chonglou and return, yet there was no sign of her.

As he mused, Huang'er appeared at his door with scattered footsteps. "Sir Jiang, sister Gouyu has left for so long and is unfamiliar with the people and terrain here. Huang'er is a bit worried." Huang'er had built an exceedingly deep relationship with Gouyu during this time, and was thinking the same thoughts as Jiang Chen.

"Mm, I was just thinking the same. But this is the Regal Pill Palace, so nothing untoward should have occurred."

Even so, Jiang Chen didn't linger. Gouyu was his follower and had always performed her job without cause for censure. Jiang Chen rather admired her frank directness.

The other followers were also worried when they heard that Gouyu had yet to return and followed Jiang Chen out on his search.

They actually heard Gouyu's raised voice in the midst of an argument at the Valley entrance even before they'd walked up. "Nonsense! By what right do you bar my entrance?" Gouyu had her hands on her thin waist as she argued with the guards at the entrance in a charming and non-threatening way.

"The Rosy Valley is the residence for geniuses. You have no right or papers, of course you can't enter."

"Bullshit! I just left from here and now I can't enter? You're just purposefully making things difficult!" Gouyu was also growing more and more irritated by now.

"Heh heh, so what if we are? What are you going to do about it? You can enter however you'd like if you have the medallion of a core disciple. Stay the hell away if you don't!"

"Are the followers of the core disciples not human? Can we not enter? Then why can those followers enter and leave as they wish?" Gouyu pointed at the other followers entering and leaving the Valley.

"And how do you compare to the others? Who's your master? What's your cultivation? A mere earth spirit realm? Even the medicine boys running errands have a higher cultivation than you. You blasphemy the Rosy Valley with your presence!"

“Right, know your place! You’re not even sky spirit realm!”

“Alright, either go the hell away or don’t blame us for taking action!” These guards all spat vicious words, their countenances at their most superior.

“Tsk tsk, I’d like to see just how you will take action!” Jiang Chen’s voice rang coldly from behind them. “Gouyu, come in.” There was a kind of authority in his voice that no one dared question.

Jiang Chen’s God’s Eye swept through the guards, gleaming, “I will help anyone who touches even a hair on her head reincarnate immediately.”

He was obviously not joking. It was said that great barkers are not biters. It was fairly obvious that these guards were targeting Gouyu by blocking her. Their target? Him.

Otherwise, with Gouyu’s identity and status, and being a great beauty to boot, these guards had no need nor motivation to make things difficult for her.

Since he’d trained the Evil Golden Eye, Jiang Chen’s gaze was starting to possess more and more of a royal’s dignity. The heavenly intimidation within his eyes left the guards at a bit of a loss, as if their very souls were being held fast. They couldn’t move at all.

Gouyu snorted softly and walked in openly. “Young master, the items have been delivered to the lordmaster. He thanks you greatly.”

Jiang Chen waved his hand and stared at the guards, his tone ice. “Open your eyes and take a good look! These are my followers. Whoever dares give them trouble when they enter and leave in the future is challenging my good temper. Repetition of such a matter will not be tolerated. If this happens again, I don’t mind killing some of you to help stimulate your memories.”

Chapter 464: Stunning Four Seats with One Point

Obviously, these guards weren’t at too high a level. Otherwise, they wouldn’t be stationed at the door. Most of them were at the sky spirit or spirit king level, placing them at the same level as most of the core disciple followers.. They would only have the right to live within the Rosy Valley once they entered the origin realm. Before then, they could only slave away as someone else’s follower or earn resources through missions.

Therefore, the origin realm was a moat in the top Myriad Domain sects. Breaking through to the origin realm opened up a wide path of light for one, but until one did so, one’s fate was dipped in mediocrity. When a cultivator broke through to the origin realm, it was akin to a carp transforming to a dragon after leaping through the dragon’s gate.

But of course, there were more than a hundred thousand disciples who had yet to reach the origin realm, and only so many who could do so. It was apparent from a glance at the Rosy Valley that those who could break through were few and far in between, even in a fourth rank sect like Regal Pill Palace.

Even if Jiang Chen didn’t have much seniority, he was still a core disciple in the end. If he really wanted to start a killing spree and find an excuse to kill a few guards, he’d be the one in the right no matter who he talked to.

Jiang Chen had weathered all sorts of violent conflict in the past of his rise. Killing intent formed naturally in the subtle undercurrents of his words. The guards all became as silent as cicadas in cold weather, not daring to make a peep.

They had received orders from others to find an opportunity to pick at Jiang Chen and make life difficult for him. But they were limited to his followers. Someone of Jiang Chen's stature wasn't something they could afford to antagonize.

Jiang Chen's followers were all very gratified by the scene he was making. They knew that his anger was for their sake, to gain face for them and back them up. All sorts of taunts and jeers had drenched them ever since they'd first set foot into the Rosy Valley. As a result, the followers were feeling rather self-conscious. Jiang Chen's actions and words firmly tamped down the cracks in their dao hearts.

"Tsk tsk, isn't your temper a bit big for someone who's just arrived in the Valley? Flaunting your status with a few guards at the gate? You think you're hot stuff, do you?" A chilling voice rang forth not too far away, a few other mocking voices quickly following up.

"Heh heh, perhaps he's used to being the bully of a little place and hasn't gotten rid of that nasty little habit after arriving at the Regal Pill Palace."

"This is the Regal Pill Palace! He should put away that country bumpkin temper of his from the sixteen kingdoms. Otherwise, he's going to end up on the short end of the stick sooner or later." These words were accompanied by the appearance of several figures.

Three core disciples blocked the path with their followers. Whether by chance or design, they happened to obstruct Jiang Chen's path back to his own residence.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly and swept God's Eye over these fellows. They were roughly second and third level origin realm. This kind of character was likely cannon fodder for others in the Soaring Clouds area. He revealed a meaningful smile and slightly furrowed his brows, "Great barkers are no biters. What do you mean by this?"

"A country bumpkin alright, no manners at all!"

"Someone who dares offend even senior brother Yan Hongtu is seriously idiotic."

The three fellows all spoke words of censure, completely forgetting that they were the ones who'd jeered at Jiang Chen first and block the way.

Jiang Chen's face darkened. He couldn't be bothered wasting more time with them, "Two words. Piss off."

It was obvious at a glance that Yan Hongtu had sent these minor characters to test him. Jiang Chen was utterly disinterested in playing along with this kind of farce. However, his attitude provoked anger from the others.

Although their positions were nothing much in the Valley, they were still core disciples after all and possessed the pride of one.

This was particularly true in front of Jiang Chen. They felt they were obviously superior in terms of seniority or cultivation level. Such as it was, it was the normal course of action to humiliate and trample

Jiang Chen. However, this country bumpkin had dared to retort in such an arrogant tone? And that to three core disciples? This was an unprecedented affront to their pride!

“Jiang Chen, it looks like we need to teach you what the rules of the Valley are!” The three core disciples glanced at each other, striking a formation in the shape of the 品 character, completely sealing off Jiang Chen’s path.

The Regal Pill Palace didn’t forbid disciples from sparring with each other. Disciples only needed to request permission from the sect if it was a fight to the death. Otherwise, they were allowed handle minor scuffles and conflicts amongst themselves. Thus, these kind of face offs were quite common in the Valley.

“Trash like you want to talk rules with me? I’ll just ask you this, are you going to piss off or not?” Jiang Chen arched one brow and raised his voice.

“Jiang Chen, I’ll give you two choices! Either you kneel down now and beg for mercy, or I’ll beat you until you’re on your knees and begging for mercy!”

Jiang Chen’s eyes narrowed to slits. His face darkened as he suddenly raised his right index finger, pointing into the distance.

“Piss. Off!” His shout rolled forth like a crack of thunder as the Evil Golden Eye shot out with a vicious light, cutting through the sky like a flash of lightning. A beam of starlight blazed out from his finger and swept through the void with boundless frostiness. The temperature in the air dropped in an instant, causing the very air to freeze.

The frighteningly icy light burst through the air, freezing the ground beneath the three core disciples in the span of a breath, the immense power of ice crashing down on them like a collapsing ice shelf.

“What??”

“No!!”

Jiang Chen had combined the power of the Ice Lotus and the Supernova Point for this move. Its full name was the Profound Dark Supernova Point. This single point brought forth the chill of the deepest depths of winter, sealing everything in permafrost.

The restraining power behind the wintry current was quite domineering, instantly locking off the entire area. The three core disciples were encased in ice, their blood freezing at a speed visible to the human eye.

Their weak followers were almost instantly frozen into ice sculptures, with only a pair of despairing eyes exposed to the outside world, blinking frantically in their boundless fear and despair. It was as if they’d experienced the most frightening thing in this world.

The three core disciples were scared out of their wits. They couldn’t prevent this power of ice from invading their bodies no matter how they resisted!

Jiang Chen’s finger hung in midair. Their life and death rested on the slightest twitch of his finger.

A hint of a mocking smile appeared at his lips as he retracted his finger. The terrifying frosty power immediately dissipated and the brightness of the day was restored.

Blood and qi finally resumed their normal circulation finally came back when the pressure of the wintry force withdrew. The disciples circulated their qi for a few cycles before dispersing the icy energy that had invaded their bodies. When this was done, they looked at Jiang Chen with newfound fear in their eyes.

They were nominally of the same sect after all, so Jiang Chen hadn't struck a fatal blow. He'd only given them a warning.

Nothing was more persuasive than the threat of death.

As arrogant as the three core disciples were, they too knew that it would have been as easy as the flip of a hand had Jiang Chen wanted to destroy them just now. How would they dumbly continue to block the path now?

As they looked at Jiang Chen leave with fanfare, the three bedraggled disciples looked at each other and saw a thick sense of dread in each other's eyes.

"This kid... has such frightening power at a mere first level origin realm? He's completely on par with the earth origin realm geniuses!"

"Ai, let's not talk about it. Let's go back and tell senior brother Yan Hongtu first. We've seriously lost a great deal of face this time."

"Jiang Chen..."

The three core disciples had been brought right to death's door and had lost all of their previous cockiness. Heads down, they walked off.

"Young master, that finger just now was damn cool! When can I, Qiao Shan, be that amazing??"

"We'll be able to do that sooner or later if we follow the young master. When we were bumming around in the Eastern Kingdom, when would we have ever have imagined that we'd enter the spirit realm one day?" Guo Jin had a great deal of faith in Jiang Chen.

"That's right! Let's see if those dogs can still look down on us after the young master's made his move!" The Qiao Shan and Qiao Chuan duo were filled with a thick sense of pride in their words, feeling justified in walking around with heads held high.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. "Let's go back first. This matter isn't over yet. Those three minor characters were only Yan Hongtu's vanguard, completely insignificant."

Since Yan Hongtu was the tyrant of the Soaring Clouds area, there was no way he would let this matter rest. However, Jiang Chen wasn't afraid either. If one wanted to rise in the world of martial dao, there would always be a tiger or obstacles in the way.

If Yan Hongtu was so blind as to come knocking on Jiang Chen's door, he would be kicked out in overwhelming style. There would never be an end to things if Jiang Chen gave way!

His intuition was quite correct. His residence was surrounded by people early the next morning.

To be more accurate, it was surrounded by a group of followers.

It looked like all the followers of the core disciples had been mobilized. They had all congregated outside Jiang Chen's residence. They had gathered under the banner of forcing Jiang Chen's followers out for inadequate cultivation. Even the errand boys were of the sky spirit realm!

Thus, they had come to protest with self righteous tones, denouncing Jiang Chen and wanting him to banish his followers.

Jiang Chen smiled coldly. Yan Hongtu is surely behind these people. "You want to use this method to cause frustration for me?" He walked out leisurely and sized up the crowd. He estimated at least a thousand people were gathered at his door.

Jiang Chen wasn't one easily angered, but that didn't mean he had no temper whatsoever. "All of you, shut up! I will count only to ten. If even a shadow of your presence is in my eyes after ten, I'll annihilate every single one of you!"

Jiang Chen was truly enraged now. So much nonsense and irritating affairs had cropped up just two days after setting foot into the Rosy Valley. This was severely impacting his day to day routine.

"Ten, nine, eight, seven..."

Jiang Chen wasted no more words and didn't attempt to convince these people. He knew that Yan Hongtu had sent all of them. They didn't dare not come, and indeed, had no choice but to come.

Therefore, no reasoning or words would sway them. The only option was force.

"Six, five, four, three..."

Jiang Chen's tone grew frostier the more he counted down. Killing intent began to gather, and an icy chill pervaded the atmosphere.

"Hmph! Jiang Chen, you're simply too arrogant! This is the Rosy Valley, do you think you can kill whoever you want to kill?"

"That's right. Jiang Chen, these demands are all very reasonable. You're just opening up with death threats without even listening to them. Do you have any respect for the rules?"

"Don't think you can throw your weight around so brazenly just because you have some skills to your name. Your bit of cultivation is still far from the peak of Rosy Valley!"

Waves of provocative shouts rose and fell. Jiang Chen knew that the hand in the shadows had finally emerged.

Chapter 465: Huang'er Makes Her Move

Jiang Chen was in complete readiness as he stood in front of the door. The aura of a lone spear holding back the entirety of the enemy forces radiated from him alone. He would be just as calm and reserved

as usual even if the wind howled like horde of hungry beasts, rain lashed down in an unending storm, or ten thousand troops thundered towards him..

Suddenly, his God's Eye flickered as he shouted, "Be open and righteous if you've come to make trouble! A vaunted Regal Pill Palace core disciple like you shouldn't act like a petty ruffian in a marketplace, stirring up an ignorant mob to cause a ruckus! I feel disgusted for you even if you don't!" By the time he was done speaking, his God's Eye had completed a sweep of the surroundings, up to five miles in every direction.

Silhouettes flickered in the distance from all directions, shooting towards him. Clearly, Yan Hongtu had quite a bit of charisma. Whether these people were here of their own accord or not, the influence he commanded in the Soaring Clouds area was obvious.

"Any more of you? Come on out!" Jiang Chen snorted coldly.

All the core disciples parted to the sides, leaving a path down the center. in the middle. Standing at the end of the path was a young man in a silver robe. His eyes were as sharp as daggers, and the combination of his aquiline nose and sharp eyes gave him a sinister inclination. He took long strides down the path as several core disciples formed an escort for him.

"Senior brother Yan."

"Greetings to senior brother Yan."

"Welcome, senior brother Yan! Jiang Chen, how dare you not quickly welcome the senior brother?"

Jiang Chen flicked a faint glance at this overweening senior brother. He was thoroughly enjoying lording it over this scene, taking it for granted. It was apparent that he was used to being feted and quite enjoyed the treatment of ten thousand people fawning on him.

This person's cultivation level should be at fifth or sixth level origin realm. Although he hadn't reached the sky origin realm, this was more than enough to hold an absolute advantage in the Soaring Clouds area. The heart gives birth to the appearance, and judging from the looks of this person, he was the sort to seek revenge for the slightest grievance, an exceedingly ruthless and vicious man. He was the kind to thoroughly exhaust all the methods to achieve his goals. Whoever dared cross him or offend him would undoubtedly face his unscrupulous revenge.

He must have purposefully planned this gathering today to suppress Jiang Chen. But a hint of a smile tugged at the latter's lips. He obviously wasn't going to play along.

When Yan Hongtu saw that Jiang Chen was so haughty as to not express anything at the sight of him, he was even more incensed, feeling as though his throne had just been severely challenged.

"You're that Jiang Chen?" Yan Hongtu walked up and looked at Jiang Chen with a supercilious smile, an arrogant look in his eyes.

"Yan Hongtu, is it? I have no interest in wasting words with you. Bring out your weapons if you want to really make a fuss. Who are you trying to disgust by compelling these ignorant folk to come make trouble?" Jiang Chen was completely exasperated by these paltry tricks. He didn't even have the interest in breathing the same air as characters like these.

What a stereotypically petty villain.

“How dare you, Jiang Chen, call senior brother Yan by his name!

“You dare disrespect senior brother Yan in the Soaring Clouds area, do you wish to die??”

“Senior brother Yan is the master of the Soaring Clouds area and is showing you face in coming to your residence! Do you understand the rules at all, crude little bumpkin?!”

Yan Hongtu didn't need to say anything. His underlings spoke all that needed to be said, denouncing Jiang Chen loudly in an unbridled attempt to kiss up to Yan Hongtu.

Jiang Chen laughed coldly. Toadies like these could be found everywhere. At this point, he was used to the sight of them. Jiang Chen's eyes flicked up to rest on Yan Hongtu's face, a mocking tone to his voice as he said, “I, Jiang Chen, only respect true talent and those with a laudable spirit. Are any of you worthy of my respect?”

Yan Hongtu smiled through his anger, “Jiang Chen, I've heard of your name and your arrogance, so don't say I'm bullying you. These followers are also disciples of the Regal Pill Palace, each with their own dignity. Bringing in any random stray cat or dog off the streets into the Regal Pill Palace is an affront to all of us, a blatant disregard for the rules!”

“Rules? What rules? Does the sect have such a rule?” Jiang Chen snorted derisively.

“The sect doesn't, but the Soaring Clouds area does. Even if this area doesn't, then it exists because I say it does!”

Yan Hongtu's tone was tyrannical, leaving no room for argument, “Even the errand boys in the Soaring Clouds are of the sky spirit realm. Although you don't think it's humiliating to bring in riffraff from the street, this is our dignity on the line!”

“Right! Jiang Chen, you're throwing away face for our area!”

“We can't let this kid wreck the rules!”

“Jiang Chen, there are plenty of inner disciples available if you want to search for followers. Bringing in these strays is blasphemy towards this sacred land!”

“The Soaring Clouds area will never allow such trash to exist here!”

These core disciples were obviously colluding with each other. Their heckling rose and fell, a tide of verbal haranguing landing on Jiang Chen.

As if he'd heard nothing, Jiang Chen's brow arched, and he barked, “Shut up!” His voice tolled like a bell, stunning the raucous crowd into silence.

Jiang Chen smiled indifferently, “What the hell do any of my followers have to do with you lot? I only know the sect's rules and don't know what kind of bullshit rules this area has. If such a rule truly exists, change it immediately. If it doesn't, go back to whatever hole you crawled out of. Run away as hard as you're scheming about me, now!”

Yan Hongtu spread out his hands and leered, "Jiang Chen, are you truly going to go against the tides and offend the entire Soaring Clouds area?" He was quite devious with his words, deliberately setting the situation up as Jiang Chen against the entire area.

Jiang Chen was about to speak when light, peaceful footsteps sounded. He only needed the briefest of moments to know that those agile footsteps belonged to Miss Huang'er.

She'd already walked up next to him whilst Jiang Chen was still being surprised. "Yan Hongtu, is it? You target the followers with every word you say. How about this, since all your followers are here, I'll play one song. If any of them can remain standing here at the end of my song, then we'll leave. If on the contrary, then don't make an issue out of us again in the future." Huang'er's voice was ethereal and otherworldly, as if a valley of orchids or a clear spring.

Everyone was surprised by this voice. When they saw that the speaker was an exceedingly ugly young girl, this made them feel even more strange.

Huang'er ignored all of their reactions and hesitation to flip her hand over. An ancient zither hovered in midair, and her slender, flawless fingers began to play. Strong notes started to reverberate through the air in short order, violently thrashing to form a melody that raged with violence. Shining spears and armored horses appeared, along with the crashing of thunder, avalanches from the highest mountains, and a tsunami that surged high enough to blot out the sky.

These killing notes seemed to embody a certain type of magic to them, cutting straight through a person's soul. A thought struck Jiang Chen as he looked at Miss Huang'er's fingers fly. He was incredibly astonished to discover a terrifying attack on the soul held within the melody.

This formless attack instantly destroyed the mental defenses of the cultivators with a mediocre strength of heart. Caught up in their enormous fear, the illusions trampled roughshod over them.

In addition, this kind of attack wasn't just an illusionary one, but a tangible one using the sound waves themselves. A dual attack on the soul and the body, indeed, some of the followers with low cultivations began to scream, covering their ears as agonized wails tore themselves free of their throats.

However, this kind of attack wouldn't be evaded just because one covered their ears. This kind of attacking melody seeped into every pore, every inch of their skin was fair game.

As the howls of misery grew louder, some of the followers began to flee in disarray. More and more followers escaped when they couldn't contend against the notes.

The courtyard was deserted in little less than half an hour. Not a single follower could be seen, and that was when Huang'er's white jade-like fingers lightly pressed down on the zither, abruptly muting the notes that rang through the air.

As the music stopped, some of the core disciples with lower levels of training felt their chests lighten, as a mountain's worth of pressure had suddenly disappeared. The blue sky that'd seemed ready to collapse in on them regained its clear sunniness.

All of them secretly wiped away sweat, their hearts still palpitating in fear and the drums of retreat starting to beat in their minds. They'd hadn't necessarily been of one mind with Yan Hongtu previously, and had come because they were quite afraid of Yan Hongtu. They feared not showing him face.

But now, who was willing to lead the charge for him in the face of such a strong, domineering power? If that ugly girl had kept playing just now, even their mental defenses may not have held on. Once their strength of heart was damaged, progress would be quite difficult in the origin realm.

The desire to leave rapidly grew in most of them. They were unwilling to become embroiled in this conflict. The more astute ones even observed that Yan Hongtu's position as the local tyrant might be severely impacted by Jiang Chen, or perhaps even utterly destroyed!

Huang'er clasped her hands together, and the ancient zither vanished as if she'd turned a trick. She smiled softly at Jiang Chen and quietly retreated to the side.

When Jiang Chen saw that Huang'er's music had scared off a thousand sky spirit realm cultivators, he too applauded with hearty laughter. He looked at Yan Hongtu, feeling even more lighthearted than he had before. "What do you say to that, Yan Hongtu?"

Yan Hongtu would've never thought that Jiang Chen would have such a strong follower by his side. This had suddenly placed him in an extremely passive position. "Hmph! Even if this follower is strong, the others are weak. That is the truth." He snorted coldly, obviously not about to let the matter rest.

Jiang Chen burst out in laughter, "If we're talking in terms of strength, then doesn't this mean all of the followers in the Rosy Valley can get the hell out in front of mine?"

Yan Hongtu had no comeback to that.

Jiang Chen's follower could indeed sweep all the others away in terms of strength. Their banner and protest was completely ineffectual in that manner. "Jiang Chen, I can let the matter of the followers go. However, you're creating quite a storm in just a few hours of your arrival in the Rosy Valley. As the master of the area, I will not allow you to publicly flaunt our rules and customs!"

Jiang Chen was quite ticked off by this bringing up of nebulous rules over and over again. "Yan Hongtu, think of some new tricks if you want to make trouble. What rules, what customs? Who the hell are you? Who said you make the rules here? My rule is simple, I do not attack unless I am attacked. If you attack, I'll return it to you tenfold! So tell me, do you want to enter a contest of civil subjects or martial dao? Hurry up and throw down the gauntlet, I don't have time to waste on you."

He truly didn't think much of a character like Yan Hongtu. The others in the area may fear him like they did a tiger, but he was nothing more than a capering clown in Jiang Chen's eyes!

Chapter 466: A Contest of Controlling Fire

"Have you heard? The master of the Soaring Clouds area, Yan Hongtu, wants to duel with the new core disciple Jiang Chen!"

"I've heard that they're betting on three matches, using martial dao and pills as the first two arenas. If the results of the first two are inconclusive, they'll choose another subject for the third bet."

"Heh heh, I hear the forfeits are quite large!"

“Aren’t they now! If Jiang Chen loses, he needs to be Yan Hongtu’s follower for three years. If Yan Hongtu loses, his stipend for the next three years will be handed over to Jiang Chen. It’s been set down in paper and ink, and apparently they’ve made an oath to the heavens and earth!”

“A follower for three years, and three years worth of stipends. These two fellows really have some balls, huh!”

“Hmph, Yan Hongtu is sinking to new lows of depravity. It’s one thing to play around at being a king in the Soaring Clouds area, but now he’s bullying newly ascended core disciples! He really is disgracing himself.”

“The monkey reigns in the mountains when the tiger is absent. Yan Hongtu is a smart one alright. He knows that he’d only be a nameless pawn if he enters the Sky Pillar area, yet he is a king if he remains in the Soaring Clouds area.”

“I’ve heard that Jiang Chen has a truly impressive background. The Palace Head allied with the Precious Tree Sect just for him, and Jiang Chen actually trounced the inspector of the Sky Sect when he was in the spirit realm. This person is not one to overlook!”

“Heh heh, there’s also something called hyperbole. So what if it’s an inspector from the Sky Sect? Does the Sky Sect have no mediocrity or trash?”

“No matter what, Yan Hongtu won’t gain much face even if he wins after bullying a disciple who recently ascended into the origin realm. Although, if he loses, then he’s completely done for in this life.”

“That’s very true. A character like Yan Hongtu is destined not to amount to much. He’s probably thought this through, otherwise he wouldn’t be acting such a fool like this.”

The news of Jiang Chen and Yan Hongtu dueling spread through the Rosy Valley like wildfire.

“Young master, all of Rosy Valley is talking about the duel.” Xue Tong was a bit worried. Yan Hongtu was at fifth level origin realm and the boss of the Soaring Clouds area, far beyond Jiang Chen in both cultivation level and seniority. It would be a bald faced lie to say that Xue Tong wasn’t worried at all.

“Xue Tong, what are you worried about?” Gouyu was completely dismissive of the hubbub. “If the young master dares answer the challenge, then he must have his own reasons. When have you ever seen the young master lose any bet?”

This made a lot of sense once everyone had the opportunity to think it over.

“Haha, the young master is a natural winner! He was like this in the Eastern Kingdom, the Skylaurel Kingdom, again in the sixteen kingdoms alliance, and will definitely be the same in the Regal Pill Palace!” Qiao Shan’s voice boomed loudly.

Mu Gaoqi, also known as the Demigod of Wood, came rushing over as they chatted amongst themselves. He had a wry smile on his face, “Brother Jiang Chen, you were simply too impulsive. Yan Hongtu has been renowned for many years and possesses an absolute advantage in the Soaring Clouds area! Even if you wanted to duel him, you should’ve waited a few more years before doing so!” It was clear that Mu Gaoqi was truly worried.

“Have no fear, Daoist Gaoqi. I promised that I would explore the spirit spring with you three months from now. I have no intention of delaying that deadline. What the hell is that Yan Hongtu? Is he even worthy of me being his follower for three years?”

It wasn't that Jiang Chen was arrogant, but that he had long since thoroughly probed just how much weight there was to Yan Hongtu.

Mu Gaoqi sighed when he saw Jiang Chen this determined. “Brother Jiang Chen, there are many rules to a contest of pills. I'll explain them to you first so you're not caught off guard...” He was obviously the most anxious one right now. If Jiang Chen happened to lose and become Yan Hongtu's follower, then his own plans would be deeply affected as well.

That spirit spring was simply too important to him.

Jiang Chen didn't decline Mu Gaoqi's enthusiasm and patiently lent an ear to all his explanations. Jiang Chen was more or less familiar with the rules after one go through. Although Mu Gaoqi had never participated in a duel, he'd witnessed at least fifty, if not a hundred of them during his time in the Rosy Valley.

Such conflicts weren't rare, and the application for the duel was quickly approved.

An elder had taken the responsibility from the Regal Pill Palace side to organize the duel. “Our Regal Pill Palace was founded on the basis of the dao of pills. When the disciples of our sect duel, the first duel is one of pills, and only then martial dao. Are there any objections?” He looked at the two he was addressing; Jiang Chen's expression was at ease whereas Yan Hongtu brimmed with confidence, itching for the chance to prove himself.

“I have no objections.” Yan Hongtu's voice rang out loudly, seemingly wanting to suppress Jiang Chen using volume alone.

Jiang Chen said faintly, “No objections.”

The organizer nodded when he saw the two combatants express no objections. “Alright, as there are myriad topics that pills touch on, the topics will be selected at random. A referee will oversee the match, and the match must stay within the bounds of the sect's rules. The victor will be determined after three matches. I will now begin to select the topics.” He'd selected three crumpled bits of paper from a randomly scattered pile as he spoke.

“The topics of the three pill matches will be: fire control, cauldron inspection and pill refinement.”

A ghost of a smile curled Yan Hongtu's lips, utter confidence in every crease of his face. He'd heard many rumors of Jiang Chen's martial dao potential, and was well aware of his opponent's strength. However, he was at fifth level origin realm, whereas Jiang Chen was at first level. There was no reason for Yan Hongtu to fear.

As for the dao of pills, he was even more confident given his background of the Regal Pill Palace. Jiang Chen was from the poor backwater that was the sixteen kingdoms alliance, how much could he possibly have seen of the dao of pills?

Skill in the dao of pills?

Yan Hongtu smirked contemptuously, completely dismissing Jiang Chen in his heart. "Jiang Chen, let me teach you a lesson today in what a true disciple of a great sect is, a true genius of the Regal Pill Palace! Hah! Do you think you're worthy?" Yan Hongtu's provocation was full of disdain.

Jiang Chen truly couldn't be bothered with verbal sparring. That Yan Hongtu seemed to be quite confident in his ability in the dao of pills. Well, the higher he soared with that faith, the more satisfying it would be for Jiang Chen to crush him.

It was always such a gratifying feeling to smack an enemy down like a fly using the art they were most adept at.

"The first topic is controlling fire. Control over fire is an absolute prerequisite for setting foot on the path of pills. If one cannot even control fire, then they are an absolute failure of a pillmaster."

"Do you see the twelve small cauldrons in front of you? There are twelve types of fire within, including but not limited to, heavenly fire, earthly fire, ghost fire and odd fire. But at their very heart, they are all fire. Both of you have fifteen minutes. Whoever can awaken the higher number of fires using their arts within this period will be the victor. Remember, your skill with fire must first resonate with them before awakening them."

Resonance with the origin of the flames was a common subject in the area of fire. And to be honest, this method was widely used by fire experts to test many different kinds of fire. The true heavyweights, those at a heavenly level, were well versed in the methods of resonating with various sources of fire to investigate their properties.

Fire was one of the original forces of the universe. Who knew how many types, shapes and forms of fire existed between the heavens and earth? Some types of skyfire were as small as a speck of dust, but held enough power within them to destroy an entire city, or even a world.

"Your fifteen minutes starts now." The first match officially started with the judge's command.

Yan Hongtu, the epitome of confidence, made a hand seal and brought a flame in the shape of a peony into existence. His gaze was full of gravitas as he started setting up flames around the small cauldrons.

One had to say that Yan Hongtu was quite adept at controlling fire. It only took a blink of an eye to awaken two cauldrons of fire. When he flicked a glance over at Jiang Chen, he saw Jiang Chen looking intently at the cauldrons as if they held mesmerizing patterns, not making a move at all.

"Haha, this country bumpkin has no idea how high the heavens go! He probably doesn't even know how to control fire!" Yan Hongtu's preconceptions were unshakeable, and he only saw Jiang Chen at a complete loss of what to do.

Jiang Chen had indeed not begun to act. He also had no interest in how much fun Yan Hongtu was having. He'd entered that state where he had once again lost himself in thought. The distractions of the outside world washed off him, leaving his dao heart unaffected.

He observed each small cauldron and analyzed it, a wealth of information flowing through his mind.

"Mm, this is the Phantom Whitefire, that's Volcanic Trueflame, and Heartwood Spiritfire, Azurethunder Oddfire over there...." Jiang Chen's mind kept analyzing the origin of the flames in the small cauldrons,

and had completely seen through all of them in short order. He snapped his fingers, a bizarre fire glyph appearing in mid air. He stretched it to and fro, like strumming a zither, creating a uniquely beautiful melody and rhythm.

The small cauldrons suddenly lit up like candles being lit in succession. Flames of every color and shape flared into existence.

One flower, two flowers, three flowers...

Twelve flowers of different flames were joyously burning after a short span of time. The flames climbed higher and higher, seemingly dancing with joy at finally finding someone who wholly understood them. The flames seemed to form a strange sort of communication with Jiang Chen's fire glyph.

"Mm?" The referee had also thought that Jiang Chen hadn't known how to control fire when the latter hadn't made a move earlier. But now that Jiang Chen had finally made his move, the flames in the little cauldrons moved like they'd been lit automatically. The referee was stunned openmouthed at this sight.

The rhythm of the flames being lit was simply too beautiful. It had gone from left to right in single file, as neat and orderly like standing in line. It was just like someone had lit them quickly and at an even tempo.

Jiang Chen's movements had been incomparably elegant, making him a joy to watch. This was also when the fifteen minutes were up.

Yan Hongtu had awakened seven fires by the time the bell rang, and he turned with a gleeful face, ready to see Jiang Chen make a fool out of himself. However, he was utterly petrified when he took a look. The arrogant smirk was still on his face, but appearing quite ironic as a result.

All twelve flames had been awakened in the twelve cauldrons, and their forms were far superior to his own.

"How... how is this possible??" If it hadn't been for the referee present, he almost wanted to think that Jiang Chen had cheated!

Chapter 467: Winning in the Dao of Pills, Facing Off with Martial Dao

Clapclapclapclap!

It took a while for the referee to come back to his senses. When he did, he immediately began to applaud without reservation. He was beside himself with admiration. "Jiang Chen, it had never occurred to me that you might be a genius at controlling fire. You've awakened the flames in every cauldron! That is an exceedingly rare feat even amongst the younger generation. Haha, Sage Dan Chi's eye for talent is really to be admired."

The referee was human too; he had his own standards for beauty and admiration. Jiang Chen's hand just now had elicited honest appreciation from the referee, and so he didn't stint the young man his due praise.

Of course, this didn't impact the impartiality of his judging.

“Yan Hongtu, you’ve lost the first of the three matches concerning pills. You still have two more chances, but if you lose in the next topic, cauldron inspection, then you’ll have lost in the arena of pills.”

If Jiang Chen won two out of the three matches, then there was naturally no need for a third match.

Yan Hongtu had yet to come to his senses from his defeat in the battle of controlling fire. He’d displayed his skills to the pinnacle of his ability, awakening seven flames. He’d even thought he was performing beyond his abilities, and was quite something. But just when he’d believed victory was within his grasp, Jiang Chen had awakened all twelve flames. This had upended everything! There was no way he could accept this! However, the referee’s voice reminded him that he had already lost the match of controlling flames. If he lost the cauldron inspection match, then he would lose this part of the bet.

This meant that no mistakes could be tolerated in the next topic. “Hmph, Jiang Chen! You must’ve eked out a fluke of a win using some trick. But cauldron inspection relies on the keenness of one’s vision and breadth of their experience. Don’t you think you can slip by with trickery again!” Yan Hongtu still felt that Jiang Chen had cheated his way into awakening all twelve flames. Otherwise, how could it possible that a backwater place like the sixteen kingdoms could produce a cultivator with such impeccable skill at controlling fire? That level of skill only made sense if displayed by a genius disciple of a large sect like the Regal Pill Palace!”

Jiang Chen couldn’t be bothered to argue as he serenely waited for the referee to begin explaining the next topic.

“The second topic relates to cauldron inspection. There is one cauldron in front of each of you, both exactly the same. Each of these cauldrons have certain defects. Your task will be to find those flaws, no matter how minute they may be. Whoever finds more will be declared as the victor. One point will be deducted for every false identification made. Once again, the allotted time is fifteen minutes.”

The rules weren’t complex. A point was added for proper identification and a point subtracted for false positives. Jiang Chen almost wanted to laugh when he heard this. This competition was almost tailor-made for him! When his God’s Eye was combined with the Evil Golden Eye, it would be too easy to search for the flaws in these cauldrons. When his God’s Eye was activated, even the tiniest of flaws would be magnified more than ten times over.

“The cauldron inspection match begins!” The referee’s bellow started the clock for the second subject.

Yan Hongtu knew that things had come down to the wire. Therefore, he immediately flung himself over to the cauldron as soon as the referee shouted and began to carefully inspect it.

Jiang Chen remained as laid back as ever. He gestured once, forming a chain of fire that hoisted the cauldron into the air in front of him.

He thrust out nine successive goutts of flame, setting the surroundings of the cauldron afire. This was his unique method of inspecting cauldrons, a method that had been invented by a divine level expert!

When a cauldron was heated and primed by fire, its flaws and obscure insufficiencies would be enhanced, becoming even more apparent. This kind of method was actually but a small trick, with not much use for it. Many pill masters used it to evaluate cauldrons before pill refinement, to ensure that the cauldron wouldn’t explode halfway through the process.

However, this small trick would be the trump card in Jiang Chen's hand that took home the victory.

All of the cauldron's flaws revealed themselves beneath Jiang Chen's God's Eye after it'd been heated. There was simply no place for them to hide.

Psh psh psh psh!

Jiang Chen continuously slapped his mental mark onto each flaw, and in less than fifteen minutes, had found all fifteen flaws in the cauldron.

When he looked at the time again, he noted that less than two thirds of the allotted time had gone by. He didn't posture proudly, but unhurriedly retracted his hand seal and retrieved his fire, placing the cauldron on the stage again.

Although the answer had yet to be revealed, Jiang Chen's bearing and casual grace still drew private admiration from the referee. At the very least, methods like Jiang Chen's way of inspecting cauldrons were something the referee himself had never seen, to say nothing of anything else.

When those present saw how Jiang Chen stood there with quiet confidence and a dignified bearing, moving with such calm gestures and a carefree attitude rarely seen in one so young, it was already enough to make Yan Hongtu come up short in their eyes.

The bell rang as soon as the fifteen minutes were up.

Yan Hongtu cried out agitatedly, "I've found eleven flaws, there are definitely no more! I've totally achieved full marks in this topic! There's no way that I'm not the winner this time!"

The referee laughed wryly when he saw Yan Hongtu so incapable of keeping his composure. "Yan Hongtu, who told you you achieved full marks? Who also told you there were only eleven flaws? This cauldron has a total of fifteen flaws."

"What? Fifteen?? How is that possible?! How come I only found eleven??" Yan Hongtu was stunned, but then immediately laughed. "Eleven is still plenty. Jiang Chen, how many did you manage to find, huh?"

Jiang Chen smiled indifferently, "Not many, just fifteen."

"What?!" Yan Hongtu started to guffaw. "You're dreaming, aren't you? You can't cheat in this topic, a flaw won't appear somewhere just because you say there's one!"

Jiang Chen really couldn't be bothered to bandy words with someone like him and spoke to the referee, "There are fifteen flaws in total on the cauldron, and I've tagged each one with my mental mark. The marks won't fade anytime soon, please feel free to inspect the cauldron."

Although the referee had yet to go over the results, Jiang Chen's bearing made him feel that there was no way this candidate was mistaken.

Indeed, the referee nodded after inspecting Jiang Chen's cauldron. "Jiang Chen has located all fifteen flaws. Yan Hongtu, you located eleven. As such, Jiang Chen wins again. Jiang Chen has won two topics in a row in the arena of pills, and this competition is now over!"

“Impossible!!” Yan Hongtu couldn’t accept this result at all. Jiang Chen won? The country bumpkin Jiang Chen won? On what basis?!

“Honored referee, are you mistaken somewhere? This Jiang Chen comes from the sixteen kingdoms; he’s probably never even touched pills before! How can he possibly win twice?! And so perfectly each time?! Who would believe that?!”

The referee’s expression grew cold, “Yan Hongtu, are you doubting my impartiality?” Yan Hongtu felt his hairs stand on end, chills running down his back when the referee leveled a glare at him.

Judging a competition was a duty that was on par with those of the Hall of Punishment in terms of impartiality. Whoever dared question his objectivity was questioning the entire Regal Pill Palace.

“I don’t dare question the honored referee, but I suspect Jiang Chen of cheating!” Yan Hongtu refused to accept the outcome as he felt his loss was entirely the wrong result.

“Cheating?” The referee laughed coldly. “If he is able to cheat right in front of me, a sect elder, then that’s his ability. Just how might he have cheated without knowledge of the topics beforehand? You tell me how he cheated!”

Yan Hongtu had nothing to say in response.

Even if Jiang Chen had some sort of special treasure, that still wouldn’t count as cheating. That was part of his abilities and his fortune. A competition of pills was conducted by pitting the holistic strengths of both parties against each other.

“Yan Hongtu, don’t duel if you can’t afford to lose. You should be able to accept a loss if you want to duel. Questioning the referee is courting death!” Yan Hongtu trembled like a cicada in cold weather at the sight of Jiang Chen’s eyes, afraid to say anything else.

He glared ferociously at Jiang Chen, “Jiang Chen, you may be able to use trickery to obtain victory in the dao of pills, but let’s see how you do that in the ring!” He turned his head without looking back after that and rushed straight for the martial dao stage.

“Jiang Chen, meet me in the ring if you’re a man!” Yan Hongtu even purposefully left this parting shot, as if afraid Jiang Chen wouldn’t show up.

Jiang Chen laughed leisurely, “Yan Hongtu, you can’t conceal the weakness in your heart no matter how loudly you jeer. Remember, three years worth of stipends, even a day less won’t do!” A character like Yan Hongtu wasn’t worth his interest, but three years of his stipend was definitely worth his interest. He was damn poor now, after all!

Standing in the ring, Yan Hongtu stared at Jiang Chen with all-consuming hatred. It was obvious that his loss in the area of pills had thoroughly enraged his pride. He felt that Jiang Chen had utterly offended him.

“Life and death is up to the heavens in the ring. However, you are but peers in the same sect sparring against each other. I hope you are not blinded by hatred and pull your blows when you land them. Otherwise, if you kill someone in the ring today, someone else may kill you in the ring tomorrow.” Another organizer was in charge of referee duties for the arena of martial dao.

These words held much warning in them. When sect disciples sparred, it was far from a matter of life and death, so there was no need for killing blows.

Two wrongs don't make a right. A duel between those of the same sect rarely ended in a death. After all, everyone had a patron or someone backing them. If you killed someone today, it was hard to guarantee that someone stronger than you wouldn't come for you tomorrow.

Therefore, participants never broke the unspoken rule of not fighting to the death in one of these duels. However, Yan Hongtu was currently blinded by hate and had thrown all those unspoken rules to the back of his mind.

Right now, he only wanted Jiang Chen to die! He would be able to salvage his dignity, lost from his defeat in the dao of pills, if he trounced and tortured Jiang Chen to death.

Jiang Chen could naturally detect this unbridled killing intent from Yan Hongtu, and had long since seen through his personality. Not only was this person narrow minded, vicious and sinister, but it was apparent just how domineering and cruel this person was from seeing so much killing intent triggered from simple internal conflict.

However, what fear did the current Jiang Chen possess in the face of a fifth level origin realm now?

He'd felt his martial dao advance in leaps and bounds everyday since entering the origin realm. The development of his various arts had bolstered Jiang Chen's confidence to the point where he had full faith even facing the peak of the earth origin realm. He even had the courage to battle a sky origin realm cultivator.

Since Yan Hongtu was offering to make an example out of himself, Jiang Chen didn't mind using him as a stepping stone to make a name for himself in the Rosy Valley.

The rise of one's martial dao path wouldn't come with no rhyme or reason, just as status and benefits was continually built up and accumulated through conflicts with geniuses. Yan Hongtu's provocation of Jiang Chen was actually a nice opportunity for the latter to let his name resound!

Chapter 468: The Pitched Battle Between Origin Realm Cultivators

If one wanted to be entirely accurate, an origin realm cultivator is more aptly named a nascent soul cultivator. Distillation of spirit power allows one to refine a spirit essence from one's body. This spirit essence is the nascent soul, replete with a form, consciousness, and the ability to materialize outside the body. As a result, the strength of an origin realm cultivator was a qualitative step higher than a spirit realm cultivator.

Jiang Chen's strength had increased so rapidly precisely because he'd broken through to the origin realm. The speed of his improvement now far outstripped his previous rate in the spirit realm. At that time, he could challenge cultivators a level or two higher than him, but crossing too many levels was quite an undertaking.

If he fought against an earth spirit realm cultivator when he was in the small spirit realm, Jiang Chen could at most pray to defend himself. It was almost impossible to win. But now that he was in the minor origin realm, he had a ninety percent chance of victory when fighting an earth origin realm cultivator.

It wasn't that an earth origin cultivator was that weak, but that his potential had simply exploded through the gate after entering the origin realm. Like a geyser finally finding an outlet, his breakthrough had led to his techniques improving by a minimum of three to five times over. Some techniques had evolved to an entirely new level, improving ten times over!

Yan Hongtu was well on his way to forming a tyrannical momentum about him, his battle intent whipping around him. He was releasing his origin realm aura without reserve, his intention to skin and eat Jiang Chen alive quite blatant.

It had been quite a while since a physical match had appeared in the Rosy Valley. The dull constancy of sect life lent quite an appealing allure to martial matches. Core disciples from all corners of the valley made their way over to gather around the ring.

No one wanted to miss a duel between core disciples. Followers in particular thronged around the ring, creating several circles of audience members. Although some of the stronger core disciples valued themselves too highly to appear in public, they still kept an eye on the happenings in private.

If one discarded Jiang Chen's great fame and connection with Sage Dan Chi, he was just a core disciple who'd barely entered the origin realm. As mighty as the rumors had made him out to be, the gap between his strength and Yan Hongtu's was there for all to see.

When a first level origin realm was matched up against a fifth level, the difference of four small levels was an enormous disparity no matter how one looked at it, not to mention that Yan Hongtu had always been training in the Regal Pill Palace.

No matter how much of a genius Jiang Chen could be, he'd still only been training in a small place like the sixteen kingdoms alliance all along. In the eyes of the audience, the disparity in the level of martial dao between the two was a gulf that could never be crossed.

The Regal Pill Palace was a top sect of the Myriad Domain, and at best, one could describe the Precious Tree Sect as a third or fourth rate sect. The gap was obvious no matter what angle one took to approach the matter.

"That's odd, so odd! I hear that Yan Hongtu's already lost to this Jiang Chen in the arena of pills. Does this genius from the sixteen kingdoms have such enormous pill potential?"

"Either he's too strong or Yan Hongtu is too useless. Yan Hongtu has no drive to improve and just cowers in the Soaring Clouds area everyday to play at being king. He's content at being a frog at the bottom of a well and has completely let himself go!"

"You make sense. Senior brother He, who do you think will win this match?"

"Martial dao is different from that of pills. One can find opportunities to employ trickery when competing with pills, but martial dao is a test of true talent. One's true skills are the basis that proves a victor. In my view, as low as Yan Hongtu has sunk, if he can't even take down a first level origin realm, then he can really ram himself to death against a block of tofu."

“That’s true, it would be the most colossal joke beneath the heavens if a fifth level origin realm couldn’t even triumph over a first level origin realm. Such a humiliating record has yet to appear since the Regal Pill Palace’s founding, right?”

“Heh heh, that’d be hard to say. When Palace Head Dan Chi was young, he also challenged a senior brother in the earth origin realm. However, the person he challenged had just entered the earth origin realm and had yet to consolidate their grasp on their cultivation.”

“Tsk tsk, what right does Jiang Chen have to be compared to Sage Dan Chi? Sage Dan Chi has the highest level of martial dao potential in the last three hundred years of our sect’s history!”

“That’s right, Sage Dan Chi absolutely has the right to be hailed a king or emperor in the future. With him leading our sect, the Regal Pill Palace will absolutely walk forward into an age of glory and construct an empire!”

Dan Chi’s popularity with the young guard was really very high. They all deeply loved and revered him, each viewing him as their idol. On the other hand, they possessed a deeply skeptical attitude towards Jiang Chen. Although he had been personally chosen by Sage Dan Chi, their deeply rooted prejudices posed an immense barrier towards accepting that a small place like sixteen kingdoms alliance could produce a stunning genius.

Jiang Chen had long since tuned distractions out in the ring. His obliviousness was proof that he’d entered his peak condition. Although he had completely seen through Yan Hongtu, the latter was still a fifth level origin realm cultivator. The slightest bit of carelessness would mean the end of the match. Jiang Chen would have to fully exert his battle ability this time. It certainly wouldn’t be as easy as trampling old monster Sunchaser.

“Jiang Chen, stop posturing around!” Yan Hongtu roared loudly as a frosty gleam appeared in his sinister eyes. “Only the strong are revered in the ring. All of your smoke and mirrors are useless here!” He shook his arms when he was done, emitting a long whistle.

The totem of an enormous eagle suddenly formed behind Yan Hongtu’s back. Jiang Chen knew that this was likely the materialization of Yan Hongtu’s nascent soul.

“See how I’ll devour you, Jiang Chen!!” The sharp sound waves of Yan Hongtu’s wild howl gathered into an enormous wave, cresting ever higher as it surged towards Jiang Chen. The mysteries behind the sound wave formed by the howl were quite impressive. It was a simultaneous physical and mental attack.

Jiang Chen didn’t let down his guard as he swiped the air, creating a defensive air current from the magnetic force that wrapped itself around this giant wave of sound. Magnetic force was the most adept at destroying force fields and controlling the other’s strength and tempo.

The defensive air current formed from magnetic force never gave the sound wave a chance to exhibit its true strength, grinding it down until it shattered into fragments with a muted crack.

“What?!” Yan Hongtu was dumbfounded. Although his sound wave attack wasn’t any sort of trump card, it was still nonetheless a very frightening attack.

A mere first level origin realm cultivator had been able to destroy it using a simple forcefield defense? This result was utterly outside Yan Hongtu's expectations.

"Hmph!" However, his shock didn't dampen his fighting spirit. Yan Hongtu's body flashed as his arms seemed to transform into a pair of eagle wings, launching himself into the sky.

"Eagle Rays, shoot!"

Yan Hongtu's art was one that fully assimilated the form and strikes of an eagle into his techniques, giving rise to a domineering offensive.

He dove from his superior position in the sky with incredible speed, his ferocity and speed increasing his offensive ability with every moment. Jiang Chen continued to unleash magnetic force around him, molding it into a protective forcefield once again.

Bam!

The impact didn't seem to faze Yan Hongtu, as he continued to accelerate even more. His speed grew until he became just a trail of light constantly blitzing Jiang Chen's defense, diving to and fro. Endless silhouettes formed frighteningly fast and strong attacks, a barrage that didn't even stop for a breath. The mystery that governed this entire offensive was a single concept, "speed".

Unparalleled speed would break ten thousand arts.

"This won't do, there's no advantage in combating speed with such a passive defense!" Jiang Chen was well aware of the shortfalls of his current position. Yan Hongtu's attacks were so fast that he would likely even find gaps in the Lotus' perverse defensive capabilities. He was also utterly capable of taking advantage of such opportunities too. His specialty was obviously an offensive that made use of his tremendous speed and overbearing force—a true fifth level origin realm alright!

His thoughts whirling, Jiang Chen formed a counter strategy. He made a hand seal and enclosed himself in boundless magnetic power. Twelve fire and ice lotus vines appeared on the ground in the next moment, and an even stranger scene appeared as the magnetic power flickered.

The twelve vines actually all transformed into replicas of Jiang Chen and dashed to the four corners of the ring.

"What's going on?" Yan Hongtu had been luxuriating in the feedback of his attacks when he suddenly noticed that multiple Jiang Chen's had appeared on the ring.

"Hmph, illusions? Trying to scare me off with this little sleight of hand?" Yan Hongtu displayed disdain after a brief pause. A quick flick of his hand brought out more than a dozen throwing daggers.

"Eagle Wings, Timestream!"

The throwing daggers shot unerringly to the twelve figures as fast as shooting stars.

Pfft pfft pfft!

All of the throwing daggers found their target. Yan Hongtu roared with proud laughter as he paused, “Jiang Chen, so what if you have a thousand, or even ten thousand copies of yourself? No matter which one is your real form, being hit by my eagle throwing daggers would only result in your crushing defeat!”

Which Regal Pill Palace disciple wasn’t an expert in pills? Since they were familiar with pills, they were naturally well versed with using poison.

Yan Hongtu’s personality was wily, and seemingly without a bottom line. Of course there was poison on the throwing daggers. This poison was quite vicious in its make, directly invading the consciousness and heart. It would instantly numb the nerves, block blood vessels, and fog one’s mind.

Thus, when he saw that his throwing daggers had pinned down all twelve copies of Jiang Chen, Yan Hongtu knew that he had won for certain. He was very confident in his usage of poisons. What he had to do now was to slowly appreciate Jiang Chen struggling for his life. Yan Hongtu had already made up his mind to kill Jiang Chen in the ring. No matter what his background is, offending me, Yan Hongtu, leads only to death!

How would he continue to solidify his position of power in the Soaring Clouds area if he didn’t kill Jiang Chen as an example?

The light from the twelve figures slowly receded, revealing the true forms of the twelve lotus vines.

The Lotus of Fire and Ice was a spirit entity to begin with, lacking human flesh and blood. The poison was completely ineffective against it. Human poison would never have an effect even if it were to be splashed on tree roots.

Yan Hongtu’s heart suddenly sank. The twelve figures had all been fake! “Then where’s Jiang Chen?!” Since they were all fake, where was the real Jiang Chen? One of the most frightening things in the ring was undoubtedly the sudden disappearance of one’s opponent. The full knowledge that an unnatural ghost aiming for one’s throat was in the vicinity, but also the horrifying lack of knowledge of where it was.”

“Playing with throwing daggers, Yan Hongtu? From where I’m standing, your abilities are closer to that of an unweaned brat!” Mockery suffused Jiang Chen’s tone as his voice echoed from all corners of the ring. There was also a Soaring Eagle form in his Moonshatter Flying Daggers. There were actually similarities between that and Yan Hongtu’s throwing dagger technique, but the lines of Yan Hongtu’s technique were far inferior to the perfection of the Soaring Eagle form of the Moonshatter Flying Daggers.

Besides, Jiang Chen’s true body had never been within Yan Hongtu’s attack range. Even if he had been, Jiang Chen naturally had his ways of striking back.

Yan Hongtu’s face changed greatly as he realized he had no way of determining where Jiang Chen was from his voice!

Jiang Chen's voice had barely echoed across the ring when more than a dozen copies of himself appeared. Yan Hongtu was absolutely flabbergasted. All of the silhouettes looked so realistic, he couldn't tell the real from the fake.

"Yan Hongtu, we are of the same sect, but you insist on being so overbearing. You reign supreme over the Soaring Clouds area and are accustomed to trodding upon others. So today, let me show you the feeling of being stepped on!"

All of a sudden, a storm started into whirl into existence around the ring. A golden glimmer to its winds, the storm instantly covered the ring, like an endless golden ocean.

"Magnetic storm!" Jiang Chen had been building up to this for quite a while, and the power of the magnetic storm that now erupted was enough to eclipse everything Yan Hongtu had done. With Yan Hongtu's current strength, Jiang Chen's magnetic storm wasn't enough to swallow him whole. However, if many storms gathered together, then their combined might would still be quite terrifying.

Yan Hongtu suddenly felt that he'd been caught up in a strange tempo. His movements had suddenly become sluggish, fettered by the storm. "What's going on? Why's my body suddenly so heavy?" He was immensely shocked.

Yan Hongtu lost his balance when a tendril from the storm wrapped around his waist. He was about to move away with a flash of light when further tendrils firmly held his limbs down.

This was when all of the various copies of Jiang Chen reverted back to their real forms. Countless vines had transformed into durable, tenacious ropes that thoroughly trussed up Yan Hongtu.

As much skill and ability that Yan Hongtu had to him, he could call upon none of that in this moment.

Jiang Chen's true form suddenly wavered and appeared in front of Yan Hongtu. The nameless saber raised high and whisked past Yan Hongtu's head.

Fft!!

The blade's light flashed.

Cold gripped his body as Yan Hongtu's heart spasmed. He cried out ghastly, but realized that he was fine. Only a tuft of hair on his head had been cut away.

"Jiang Chen, kill me if you will, why toy with me?!" He flew into a rage from his humiliation.

Jiang Chen's expression darkened. "It's not that I won't kill anyone, but that I don't feel like killing anyone. Sage Dan Chi brought me to the Regal Pill Palace and if I kill you today, people will surely fault Sage Dan Chi for bringing in a troublemaker. It would besmirch his reputation. If it was just up to me, I wouldn't frown even once if I beheaded you ten times over."

Jiang Chen's voice suddenly increased in volume. "I only have one principle, and it's that I do not attack if I am not provoked. If I am, then retaliation is a foregone conclusion. This is your first warning Yan Hongtu, and I spare you for consideration of Sage Dan Chi's face. If there is another time, my blade will show no mercy no matter who it is!"

Jiang Chen was making use of Yan Hongtu's matter to proclaim to the entire Rosy Valley that do not piss me off. Whoever does so next will not pay the mere price of a few hairs.

Yan Hongtu was ashen-faced. He'd never thought that he'd be trampled so easily at fifth level origin realm. No matter how fierce he was normally, he was unable to utter any tough words at this point. If he managed to irk Jiang Chen, he'd be dead with a single stroke, no matter how much courage he had.

Those watching beneath the stage of the ring were also dumbfounded and quiet. It had been a battle that everyone had thought Yan Hongtu was sure to win, but had ended so quickly in such a bizarre fashion. The latter had lost almost so utterly and suddenly before anyone had figured out how Jiang Chen was fighting.

Everyone's hearts were solemn and grave in that moment. They didn't doubt Jiang Chen's words in the slightest. That he didn't kill Yan Hongtu didn't mean that his next challenger would be so lucky.

Jiang Chen withdrew his arts and strode down from the ring, ignoring all of the flabbergasted and insensate looks around him. Things were as he'd thought, status and treatment were to be fought for. He trusted that no one would dare point fingers or gossip about him in the Rosy Valley after this match, and that there would definitely be no one as insensible as Yan Hongtu, wanting to make an example out of Jiang Chen to show off their own power.

Jiang Chen wasn't an easy target, but a tough bird that would break their teeth if they tried to devour him!

The world of the sects was just this odd. The weak never received any respect, and the more the strong fought and displayed their brilliance, the more they'd receive widespread attention.

Summaries of what had happened travelled swiftly after the battle had ended, and Sage Dan Chi naturally received his news at first light.

"The eye of the sage one is indeed different! Haha, it's only Jiang Chen's third day in the Rosy Valley, but he's already beaten Yan Hongtu into the ground. It looks like the order of the Rosy Valley is about to be upended!"

"I have to say, Jiang Chen is changing my view of the sixteen kingdoms. Whether or not it's to their credit that they cultivated a talent such as Jiang Chen, it at least proves one point—even the smallest and most unassuming places can give rise to geniuses!"

"Sage one, you should discover and recruit more geniuses like these!"

These were all Sage Dan Chi's confidantes, so there were a slight fawning tone in their words. However, Jiang Chen's performance was so perverse that it was no trouble for them to do so.

It was rather Sage Dan Chi who didn't have much of a reaction. To him, defeating a mere Yan Hongtu was no great feat. With his knowledge of Jiang Chen, even a sixth level origin realm might not have won against Jiang Chen, much less a fifth level.

Dan Chi's eye for talent was quite keen. He'd thoroughly studied the fight in which Jiang Chen had utterly trounced Sunchaser. He'd felt that Jiang Chen had been quite at ease and hadn't displayed all of his abilities in that fight. Therefore, Dan Chi's estimation of Jiang Chen's strength had long since reached

the level of the peak of the earth origin realm. He even felt that Jiang Chen wouldn't be defeated by even a sky origin realm cultivator.

This was purely a conclusion he'd reached after minute observation. Therefore, Dan Chi really wasn't that interested in Jiang Chen's fight against Yan Hongtu. He was much more interested in Jiang Chen's performance in the competition of pills.

Dan Chi had learned from the referee of what had happened. Dan Chi had taken quite a while to recover from the throes of his shock after learning of what Jiang Chen had done. If the referee's descriptions hadn't been exaggerated, then Jiang Chen's performance in the dao of pills far outstripped his display in the ring.

"Jiang Chen...." Several more traces of expectation were attached to this name in Dan Chi's heart.

The changes after Yan Hongtu's challenge were indeed great. When Jiang Chen returned to the Rosy Valley, he felt a noticeable decrease of hostility that had been replaced with respect and awe. After all, the outside world now felt that Jiang Chen's strength was enough to compete against the peak of the earth origin realm, and this level of strength all lived in the Sky Pillar area. Unless their brains had been crushed by a door, no one else wanted to become a second Yan Hongtu.

Having been defeated in one match, Yan Hongtu had left the Rosy Valley that day and journeyed outside to train. It was obvious that he had no face left after this match, and he didn't even have a reason to hate Jiang Chen with.

It had been Yan Hongtu stirring up trouble all along. Jiang Chen had only been forced to answer his calls. Jiang Chen hadn't even killed him in the end, not out of consideration for Yan Hongtu, but for Sage Dan Chi in not wanting to slaughter his own peers. It could be said that Jiang Chen was displaying the very height of genteel manners.

The Demigod of Wood Mu Gaoqi was undoubtedly the most surprised. He'd been encouraging Jiang Chen to take a step back ever since he and Yan Hongtu had butted heads. He didn't look favorably on their match at all. But who knew that Jiang Chen would trample Yan Hongtu so easily? Mu Gaoqi was so surprised that his eyeballs were almost falling out of their sockets.

"Brother Jiang Chen, I was short-sighted and did not recognize Mt. Tai. I am ashamed!" Mu Gaoqi was now a common fixture in Jiang Chen's residence.

"All's well as long as we haven't delayed exploring the spirit spring." Jiang Chen smiled faintly. He naturally knew that Mu Gaoqi hadn't thought much of his chances, and that Mu Gaoqi had kind intentions. After all, logically speaking, a mere first level origin realm did indeed not have the foundation to fight against a fifth level origin realm.

"Heh heh, I feel more steady at heart after seeing how strong Brother Jiang Chen is." Mu Gaoqi was also willing to thoroughly display his sincerity as he took out some more pill flasks. "Brother Jiang Chen, these are some Spirit Consolidation Pills. I promised you last time that I would take care of all the pills that your followers need."

Jiang Chen smiled and flicked a glance at the pills. "Daoist Gaoqi, it's bad to always put you out of pocket. I have a few things that I'd like to ask you."

“Not at all, not at all. Please ask whatever you’d like, Brother Jiang Chen. I am half of a private investigator as well, my intelligence network is a sharpe” Mu Gaoqi was well versed in refining pills, and many core disciples who didn’t want to waste their own time in refining pills or had lesser pill potential would all ask Mu Gaoqi to refine their pills for them. After a while, it was easy for Mu Gaoqi to obtain intelligence that was useful to him, so his intelligence network was quite strong.

“I urgently need some resources at the moment. What do you think is the fastest shortcut to obtaining resources in the Regal Pill Palace?”

“Accepting sect missions and adventuring outside.” Mu Gaoqi blurted out. “There are many levels to the sect missions and the rewards are high. The risks are great in adventuring outside, but so are the gains.”

“Are there no other ways? Operating a business in pills for instance?” Jiang Chen probed.

“A business in pills?” Mu Gaoqi was surprised. “There is a habit of trading pills in the sect, but who is so bored as to refine pills all day and night? This is a huge drain on time and will impact one’s martial dao training. The key point is that there are no exclusive pill recipes. The pills that you refine, so too can others. I think that’s not a way to gain riches.” He refined pills for others normally speaking, but had never given thought to operating a pill business. After all, pills weren’t in such shortage within the sect. A pill that you could refine yourself would never be so popular as to the point of being sold for profit.

Jiang Chen sighed lightly, it looked like he wouldn’t be able to accomplish his plan alone. “Is there an organization that operates business in pills in the Regal Pill Palace?” He asked further.

“Pills are uniformly distributed in the sect. There are many barter and transactions with the sect, but the best pills are in short supply. As for outside of the sect, there are certainly several external powers and secular factions who operate their business, but the quality of their pills is absolutely substandard for us.” Mu Gaoqi shook his head and was in obvious disparagement of Jiang Chen’s sudden stroke of insight.

Chapter 470: The Endless Recruitment of the Elders

Jiang Chen roughly understood Mu Gaoqi’s meaning. The best pills in the Regal Pill Palace were all distributed uniformly. They didn’t exist in large enough quantity to make a profit from selling them. As for ordinary pills, they were useless to core disciples, so there was abundant supply with no demand. There was no market for them in the sect. Therefore, while there was indeed some small trade between the disciples in the Regal Pill Palace, but there was no opportunity for a larger scale market.

“Daoist Gaoqi, if I were to say that I have a unique pill recipe that none of the other sects have, with above average effects, would there be a market for it in the sects?”

This question made Mu Gaoqi start slightly. “Brother Jiang Chen, do you mean that?” He blinked his eyes quickly, his lashes fluttering on his cheeks.

“Don’t bother with the validity of my words for now, analyze the market for me.”

Mu Gaoqi nodded. “If there really is a unique recipe and pill that is eminently suited for the core disciples, there would still likely be a market for it. However, I still think it’d be very difficult to establish

a large scale market. There are many reasons. Firstly, the sects allocate pills to all of the disciples, preventing a shortage in this area. Secondly, everyone's cultivation resources are limited and thus lack sufficient purchasing power. Thirdly, the sects may not allow personal operation of business." When Mu Gaoqi finished his words, he'd immediately slashed Jiang Chen's great plan to gather wealth in half.

Jiang Chen had already readied a recipe and had planned on making a great deal out of things, even leveraging the partnership model that he'd originally formed with the Hall of Healing. He was particular fond of earning money without putting forth any effort, splitting a share of the profits without any investment at all.

However, he hadn't thought that there wouldn't be a market at all for his great plan in the sects. All the same, he wasn't dejected. He decided to pay further attention to the situation.

The way he'd partnered with the Hall of Healing had first brought in money from the Eastern Kingdom, then hauled in massive revenue from the entire sixteen kingdom alliance. In the same vein, Jiang Chen believed that as long as he possessed an absolute advantage with his pill recipe, he could also earn money, and great amounts of it at that, because the Myriad Domain was vast.

He'd at least be able to stop worrying about resources. However, he was proceeding much more cautiously than he had in the Eastern Kingdom. He wouldn't easily take out a pill recipe, since recipes at this advanced level were a much less casual affair here than the Hall of Healing. If he accidentally slipped up and elicited too much attention, his troubles would only increase. He might even attract a fatal disaster. After all, the recipe that he was going to bring out this time was quite excellent, to the point where it would cause others to go mad.

"Brother Jiang Chen, if you have a recipe, I would advise you to not make money off of it. The best thing to do is to offer it to the sect and add to your accomplishments, exchanging it for resources. If you spend so much time and effort to get a business going, being successful is one thing, but us cultivators can't afford to waste so much time and effort. Besides, if the sect finds out that you have an exclusive recipe and didn't offer it up, they might come make trouble for you." Mu Gaoqi's thinking was on the straight and narrow after all. He didn't ask Jiang Chen about his recipe, but focused his efforts on analyzing the situation.

"Brother Jiang Chen, I've built up a small amount of savings over the years. I can be in charge of the pills for your followers for the next three months. The stipend you get every month should be enough for you to use." It was readily apparent that Mu Gaoqi was going all out to recruit Jiang Chen as a comrade. He didn't want Jiang Chen to waste his time on unlikely endeavors, nor did he want Jiang Chen to possibly stir up trouble.

If it wasn't for the preset timeline of three months, he would be fully in favor of setting out immediately for the spring.

Regardless, Jiang Chen could still feel Mu Gaoqi's sincerity and also knew how important that spring was to him. After he sent Mu Gaoqi off, Xue Tong spoke with some worry, "Young master, Mu Gaoqi is being so generous that I fear the place he is inviting you to is certainly very dangerous. Otherwise, he wouldn't need to be so eagerly attentive!"

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "This I'm naturally aware of, but the spring is also as he says, a life changing opportunity for him. It's normal that he's so eager! Since he is treating me sincerely, I won't let him walk away empty handed. But if he's up to any tricks, I can withdraw at any time and leave him with nothing."

With Jiang Chen's ability in reading others, he was certain that Mu Gaoqi was being quite sincere with no ulterior motives in inviting him to join the group. The latter was being so generous because he didn't want Jiang Chen to exert any effort and possibly run afoul of someone. If an accident befell Jiang Chen, it would impact his great plan of exploration.

"Never mind this, I'll go to the Hall of Spring and Autumn first. Apparently we can request missions there. I'll at least first gain an understanding of the mission levels and their corresponding rewards. If the rewards are rich enough, I can actually request a few to do. If they aren't, then I'll forget about them." Jiang Chen now understood the struggles of daily living as he was in charge of looking after his people. He didn't want to waste large amounts of time in completing sect missions, only to receive a pitiful amount of rewards in the end. He had to understand the rules first.

He was about to set out when visitors suddenly appeared outside his door, claiming to be the elders of the Regal Pill Palace.

"Regal Pill Palace elders?" Jiang Chen was a bit surprised. His fight with Yan Hongtu shouldn't have been enough to alarm the true experts, shouldn't it?

Although there were more than a hundred elders in the Regal Pill Palace, their position in the sect was still exceedingly high. They all held great power and exercised it in different areas.

"I am the elder of the Herbal Hall, Linghu Xian. May I come in for a chat?" This elder possessed white hair with a child's complexion, appearing to be in sprightly spirits and very hearty.

The Herbal Hall was one of the top three halls out of the nine in the Regal Pill Palace. It was listed as part of the top along with the Hall of Might and the Hall of Spring and Autumn.

The Herbal Hall was in charge of refining pills, cultivating ingredients, and held sway over the production of pills.

The Hall of Might was without a doubt the foremost of the halls. It oversaw every part of cultivator training, including techniques, secret arts, weapons, and others. The entire ensemble fell under its jurisdiction.

The Hall of Spring and Autumn was in charge of distributing pills and all sect resources.

Of course, these were just their areas of responsibility. It was the Palace Head and the elder council who held true power in the sect. However, they couldn't possibly personally oversee everything. Therefore, the halls still possessed great power in the areas they were in charge of.

Since Elder Linghu Xian was in charge of the Herbal Hall, he must be a pill master.

"Please come in, Elder Linghu." Although Jiang Chen didn't know why he was here, he couldn't detect any hostility. Perhaps the elder wasn't here for Yan Hongtu?

Jiang Chen wouldn't purposefully fawn on this sect heavyweight, but neither was he willing to easily offend him.

“Little friend Jiang Chen has moved into the Rosy Valley for three days, yet there are none in the Regal Pill Palace who are unaware of your name. It seems that gold will shine through no matter where it is.” Linghu Xian chuckled, voicing some generic pleasantries amidst his compliments. Jiang Chen naturally didn’t take him seriously either.

“Ai, a young man with his group of followers. You haven’t had it easy since arriving at the Regal Pill Palace either.” Linghu Xian’s tone suddenly changed. “Jiang Chen, has everything been smooth for you in the past couple of days?”

“Many thanks for Elder Linghu’s concern, things have been relatively smooth.”

“Mm, mm. The number of people coming to make trouble for you after Yan Hongtu’s defeat at your hands will certainly be much less. However, coming from the Previous Tree Sect, your foundation might not be to your satisfaction. Do you lack cultivation resources?”

Jiang Chen couldn’t help but laugh internally, not knowing just what Linghu Xian was up to. He didn’t have any sort of relationship with this elder. Linghu Xian’s sudden concern was absolutely not genuine. I wonder what he wants to know?

“A lack of resources is only temporary. As time goes on and the path levels itself out, I trust that there won’t be many problems with my resources.” Jiang Chen spoke candidly and didn’t deny that he was a bit short on funds at the moment.

Linghu Xian chuckled. “Alright, I’ll cut to the point. Since you are short on resources, I happen to have an easy job here that pays well. I wonder if you might be interested?”

“An easy job with good pay? What kind of good job is this?”

“Heh heh, I’m going to refine a pill soon and need to recruit some more outstanding medicine boys to act as a support. Jiang Chen, are you interested?”

Medicine boy?

Jiang Chen smiled. You’re quite bold, aren’t you, wanting me to be your medicine boy? He immediately shook his head and declined, “I’ve never been a medicine boy and don’t have much interest in it.”

Linghu Xian chuckled again. “It might be a bit too much to call them medicine boys, they’re actually assistants. Consider it a bit more, little friend. I won’t mistreat you in terms of resources.”

For some reason, Jiang Chen didn’t have a good impression of Linghu Xian. Although the old fellow had a polite smile on, little hints of insincerity here and there made him appear overly shrewd. Jiang Chen didn’t particularly care for interacting with people like these. Therefore, whether it was being a medicine boy or an assistant, he wasn’t interested at all.

Jiang Chen declined politely no matter what Linghu Xian said. The elder’s face finally began to darken and turn ugly. He left with a flourish of his sleeves, obviously very dissatisfied with Jiang Chen’s lack of showing him face.

A few more elders visited after Linghu Xian left. Their purpose was all the same. This bizarre scene rather surprised Jiang Chen. Why had all these elders suddenly come looking for him? They all happened

to be refining pills with great coincidence, and every single one of them happened to need a medicine boy?

The matter was quite odd, making Jiang Chen even less likely to agree to anyone. He was well aware that if he said yes to anyone now, he would definitely offend the others.

A full eight elders from the Herbal Hall came to visit Jiang Chen's residence over the next couple of days, all wanting to recruit Jiang Chen. He politely declined them all as he didn't understand the situation.

He was indeed lacking in resources, but he didn't want to sell himself in such an unknowing situation, particularly when so many elders were coming to recruit him. Something must be amiss.

He decided to first look at the sect's missions at the Hall of Spring and Autumn. All he needed was his own efforts to feed and clothe himself! He had no interest at all in working for these elders, and being awarded that little bit of resources after they'd profited off his labor.