

Three Realms 551

Chapter 551: A Proud Walkabout Sect

Shen Qinghong heaved an internal sigh of relief when Elder Yun Nie walked over. He was truly feeling a mix of emotions at the moment. He'd indeed felt anger bubble up from within him when Zhu Feiyang and Wang Han were bullying him just now, and Wei Qing had obviously fanned the flames to put him in an uglier spot. But to be honest, he had nothing that he could say to defend himself.

He was inferior to Zhu Feiyang and Wang Han in terms of cultivation level, and below Wei Qing when it came to pill dao scores. If he'd tried to retort, it would've only led to greater shame being piled on him. But at that low moment, it'd been Jiang Chen who'd stepped out to rescue him from the situation, successfully attracting the ire of the crowd.

Shen Qinghong had never known what it meant to feel gratitude, but in that moment, he'd finally felt an inkling of that emotion. In times of crisis, it was those from his own sect who'd stepped forward to help him. None of those so-called friends he'd cultivated had come forward at all. It'd been Jiang Chen, the one who'd always been at odds with him, who'd taken a stand for him.

Moreover, it'd been Elder Yun Nie's appearance at this time that'd scared the group off, someone he equally disliked. After all, Elder Yun Nie had openly argued with his master before. Yet it was the two he normally had the worst opinion of who'd saved him from his awkwardness today.

Elder Yun Nie's expression was a bit solemn. "How did you all do?" He looked at Shen Qinghong first with a hint of expectation. After all, he was the top genius of the Regal Pill Palace.

"I didn't do so well in the second section and could only identify five or six ingredients. I don't think I'll be able to obtain full marks in the third section either." Shen Qinghong didn't dare hide anything at the moment.

Ling Bi'er also responded, "My situation is similar to senior brother Shen's."

"How about you, Gaoqi?" Elder Yun Nie skipped over Jiang Chen and asked Mu Gaoqi next.

Mu Gaoqi smiled faintly. "I think I did well. I was lucky enough to refine an upper tier saint rank pill, so I should be able to win full points in that section. I only missed two ingredients in the second section, and my other ingredients were correct."

"Oh? How are you so confident in your answers?" Elder Yun Nie smiled.

"Brother Chen said so."

Elder Yun Nie and the other elders all looked at Jiang Chen, their gazes a bit odd.

Elder Yun Nie smiled. "Jiang Chen, you've become the answer key, haven't you? Did you really identify the Skyheart Rebirth Pill?"

Mu Gaoqi jumped in before Jiang Chen had the chance to speak. "It really was the Skyheart Rebirth Pill! Haha, Brother Chen, you're too amazing!"

The elders were rendered instantly speechless after Mu Gaoqi's words. They looked at each other, already convinced about the futility of further questioning. Mu Gaoqi's words had already given them their answer.

Elder Yun Nie sighed. "The elders have met an incredible opponent this time, and I don't believe we'll be able to retain first place with our overall performance. It seems that your genius group's scores will be the key to protecting our first place."

Apart from Elder Yun Nie's stable performance, the other elders had only acquitted themselves nominally, with no performance that was terribly eye catching. If the genius group had done the same, then the championship that the Regal Pill Palace had defended multiple times would surely be seized by one of the other sects this time.

That was the worst result in Elder Yun Nie's eyes. He cast his gaze over at Jiang Chen; obviously aware that the crux of this dilemma lay with Jiang Chen. If he could take the champion's position of the genius group, an additional hundred points would be added to the Regal Pill Palace's overall score. Only then would they have the hope of keeping the overall champion's position.

Jiang Chen knew of Elder Yun Nie's thoughts and gave him a small, confident smile. Elder Yun Nie heaved a long sigh of relief in his heart when he saw how self confident Jiang Chen was. Although he knew that Jiang Chen was their ace, if the latter hadn't performed well in the fourth round, then they might lose the championship of the genius group as well.

Elder Yun Nie had been highly confident in his ability to claim the championship of the elder group were it not for the sudden appearance of an elder possessing a divine fire. It had thrown their initial plans into disarray and cast a shadow over Elder Yun Nie's chances for seizing the championship.

If the elders didn't cinch the championship of their group, then they would lose the extra hundred points that they would've otherwise received. If the geniuses also failed to secure their championship title, then it would spell no end of trouble for the overall Regal Pill Palace rankings.

Jiang Chen had reason enough to be confident, because apart from the slight uncertainty in the first section in this round, he was certain that there would be no issues with any of the other sections. He was guaranteed to be the champion of his group, and would outpace the first runner up by far.

The elders of the Walkabout Sect also arrived, striding forth as if mature trees welcoming the spring. Pride and confidence was splayed all over their faces, and it was apparent that they were very satisfied with their results this time. They were greatly assured of their chances in seizing the Regal Pill Palace's throne. At least, they were certain that the performance of the Walkabout Sect elder group was superior to the overall performance of the Regal Pill Palace elder group. It was now down to whether the genius group had done the same as well.

As long as their genius group didn't lose to the Regal Pill Palace, then the Walkabout Sect was destined to overthrow the Regal Pill Palace and take home the championship.

This would be a historical moment! Even taking a step back, if their genius group lost to the genius group of the Regal Pill Palace, the overall championship would be theirs as long as their elder group score had a more than 200 point gap! Their buoying confidence stemmed from the performance of a heaven defying elder in their elder group. He had simply acquitted himself too well, and the others had put forth

a stable performance to support him. When it came down to the wire, old fellows such as them wouldn't bother wasting time in verbal sparring, so they all settled in to await the final results after some superficial pleasantries.

The elder group's scores were out after roughly two hours. In line with everyone's expectations, Elder Wu Hen took first place with 1,880 points. This awarded him another 100 points, bringing his score to a stunning 1,980 points.

Elder Yun Nie was in second place with 1,830 points, and some elder from the Tristar Sect had come in third.

A loud hubbub broke out when the elder group scores came out. As a first in the Myriad Domain, Elder Yun Nie had actually lost the championship for the elder group! This was absolutely a note for the historical record!

The overall group ranking for the elder group were soon tallied as well, and the Walkabout Sect had actually taken first place thanks to their overall performance! They were approximately 300 points higher than the elders of the Regal Pill Palace! This kind of gap left the four great elders from the Regal Pill Palace with ashen expressions. Apart from Elder Yun Nie, the others were completely ashamed of themselves. They knew that Elder Yun Nie had already done quite well. He'd only lost to Elder Wu Hen because the latter had a skyfire; this advantage was simply too much to close.

They were the ones who were truly dragging the Regal Pill Palace elder team down.

The rest of the elder group were ranked as Tristar Sect coming third, then Dark North Sect, Great Cathedral, and lastly Sacred Sword Palace. There was no surprise that the Sacred Sword Palace had come in last, but the entire scene erupted into a hubbub once again when the rankings were fully revealed. Cries of congratulations and felicitations rang out around the Walkabout Sect, and those from the Sacred Sword Palace in particular drew close to tender their congratulations. The Walkabout Sect's elder group was ahead of the Regal Pill Palace by nearly 300 points. This had almost guaranteed their position as overall champion. As strong as the Regal Pill Palace genius group was, could they close this kind of gap?

Elder Yun Jian of the Sacred Sword Palace chuckled. "Congratulations, Daoist Wu Hen. It looks like the pill dao landscape of the Myriad Domain will transform with this time's Pill Battles. With the Walkabout Sect charging ahead to seize the championship, please remember to take care of us Sacred Sword Palace in the future, so that we might learn from you and improve ourselves."

Elder Wu Hen smiled. "Daoist Yun Jian is too polite. Our two sects are as if brothers. Aren't your words simply too polite?"

This sham of a conversation between the two placed the Regal Pill Palace in an exceedingly awkward position. On one side was their biggest competitor in this time's Pill Battles, and the other was the Regal Pill Palace's hated rival. That the two were coming together to congratulate each other, wasn't this a blatant denial of face to the Regal Pill Palace? *nOve-lb/In*

As shrewd as Elder Yun Nie was, the edges of his vision were touched with scarlet rage as he witnessed this play. Ouyang De's face was like a thundercloud on the verge of erupting, and he was barely holding himself back from cursing them to kingdom come. It was rather Jiang Chen who maintained a composed

expression and a secretive smile as he observed the relationships between the various sects of the Myriad Domain.

It seemed that the Walkabout Sect wanted nothing more than to take the title of first sect of pill dao from the Regal Pill Palace, and were eccentric and difficult to predict. The Sacred Sword Palace and Regal Pill Palace had a simple relationship, that of irreconcilable fire and water. On the other hand, the Great Cathedral was busy styling themselves as the pre-eminent leader of the sects and focused on knocking down the Tristar Sect. Only the Dark North Sect maintained good relations with the Regal Pill Palace.

Mu Gaoqi snorted softly, his lips twitching continuously, patently irritated by the masquerade these two sects were putting on.

Elder Yun Nie extorted everyone behind him in a low voice. "Chin up, everyone! Our Regal Pill Palace has lost this battle, but we have yet to lose the battle of talent! Gaoqi, your potential destines you to be someone who will come to dominate the pill dao arena in the Myriad Domain. In the future, it would not be an exaggeration to say that you alone will be able to command the winds and clouds. Don't be distracted by momentary gains and losses.

"Remember, tempering iron requires strong tools. Without exception, everyone needs to put forth effort if a sect is to be strong. Once you fail to maintain that drive, others will come to step on and suppress you. If glory finds the sect, it finds us all. If the sect falls, so do we all. Starting from myself, I hope everyone can learn their lessons from this experience and contemplate the reason for our loss from ourselves." Elder Yun Nie didn't say much else as he waved his hand. "Let's wait for the genius group's scores."

There was no point in speaking more about it now. The genius group's scores were also tallied before long, and the various sect heavyweights also walked out. Although Dan Chi had a calm expression in the front, a trace of delighted glee had yet to dissipate in the corners of his eyes. Walkabout Sect Head Wei Wuying's face was as black as night, his expression as if he'd suddenly plummeted from a great height. Tristar Sect Head Zhu also shook his head lightly, plainly a bit disappointed.

Elder Yun Nie had sharp eyes and immediately caught sight of this scene. When he saw how the palace head was forcefully holding in a joyous expression, a spark of hope ignited in him. Could it be that the genius group's performance was so heaven defying that they'd turned the situation around?? When he took another look at how Wei Wuying had an absolutely darkened face, appearing almost enraged, his hopes began to rise. This didn't seem like the expression of a sect that had just won the championship!

All of a sudden, Elder Yun Nie's heartbeat sped up. His gaze couldn't help but drift over to Jiang Chen's direction to see that him still treating everything noncommittally. A faint smile drifted around and off Jiang Chen's face.

"To think that the one who would save the Regal Pill Palace in its final moment would be this miraculous youth!" Elder Yun Nie sensed the answer floating up in his heart. Now all that was left was to see how the geniuses had performed... and how they'd bridged the 300 point gap the Walkabout Sect's elder group had created!

Chapter 552: The Ultimate Comeback

The rankings for the genius group were quickly calculated. Jiang Chen had actually received 580 points in the fourth round, losing only 20 points in one of the questions regarding the completion of a pill recipe. This way, out of the total 2,000 points possible for four rounds, he'd taken 1,980 points for himself. As the champion of the genius group, he received another 100 points to reach a total of 2,080 points!

It was one thing for Jiang Chen to have such an inordinate score, but Mu Gaoqi had also soared above the rest in the fourth round. He'd lost only sixty points in the fourth round and had tied for second with Ding Tong at 540 points. In this way, his final score was an astonishing 1,790 points. This was second only to Ding Tong's 1,810 points. In the end, Mu Gaoqi had managed to rank third overall.

Wei Xing'er had come in fourth with 1,720 points, and Wei Qing fifth with 1,710 points. Ling Bi'er was sixth with 1,670 points, and the remaining seventh to tenth spots were divvied up between the disciples of the great sects. Because Shen Qinghong had only made a mediocre showing in the fourth round, he'd barely managed to secure a spot in the top ten, coming in tenth. Wang Han of the Sacred Sword Palace had been the one who'd lost the rat race and dropped to eleventh.

Jiang Chen laughed heartily when the scores came out and bounded over to the mountain of spirit stones with extreme speed, shoving them all into his bag without another word. "Many, many thanks to everyone giving me this opportunity."

Everyone here were notable personages. It had been Wei Qing who had put together the bet, and those who had participated were all top geniuses. There was no one present who would go back on their words for a mere fifty thousand spirit stones. Jiang Chen's score did indeed place him at the top of the genius group, but it was just that they all felt that they'd lost face when he'd gone over to collect the spirit stones. If looks could kill, Wei Qing in particular would've murdered him right then and there.

This had been a bet that he'd put together with great effort so that he could strike it rich, but instead, Jiang Chen had reaped all the benefits. To add insult to injury, he, as the one who'd started everything, had only placed fifth.

With the announcement of the genius group's scores, the final scores had also been tabulated. The combination of the genius and elder group scores would become the overall score of each sect for this time's Mt. Rippling Mirage Pill Battles.

To make matters interesting, the Regal Pill Palace genius scores were actually ahead of the Walkabout Sect geniuses by roughly 700 points. Jiang Chen in particular was a full 360 points ahead of Wei Xing'er, their highest scorer. Second place in the Regal Pill Palace, Mu Gaoqi, was a full 80 points ahead of the Walkabout Sect's second place, Wei Qing. And although Ling Bi'er and Shen Qinghong hadn't displayed performances that were as impactful as Jiang Chen and Mu Gaoqi, their combined scores were enough to suppress the remaining geniuses from the Walkabout Sect. In this regard, it was no surprise that the Regal Pill Palace genius group had a roughly 700 point lead over the Walkabout Sect's genius group. When that was applied to the overall scores, an astonishing result came to the fore. The Regal Pill Palace had, in one fell swoop, closed the 300 point gap, overtaken the Walkabout Sect, and then lengthened their lead by roughly 400 points. It was an undeniable first place finish.

This comeback of the century sent everyone present reeling with astonishment and disbelief. The Walkabout Sect in particular were utterly flabbergasted. They had never dreamed that their nearly 300 point lead would be so perfectly reversed into them being led by more than 300 points. The genius

group, with Wei Xing'er and Wei Qing at their head, were dumbfounded. This was a humiliating outcome, one that was nigh impossible to swallow.

In another surprising turn of events, the Tristar Sect had almost managed to catch up to the Walkabout Sect using the stable performance of their genius group. Their overall ranking was number three, but they were obviously not satisfied with the result either. However, with the awkward situation of the Walkabout Sect first laughing and then ending up crying, the Tristar Sect didn't end up losing their composure as much.

On the Walkabout Sect's side, the cocky expressions of those elders were now akin to fighting gamecocks who had lost, darkened and sunk to the lowest of depths.

The Sacred Sword Palace scores were as expected, solidly in last place. However, this wasn't the most awkward of matters for them right now. What was particularly awkward, and rather galling, was that they had just indicated their goodwill to the Walkabout Sect earlier and congratulated them ahead of time for winning the championship. These results were a couple of fierce slaps to their faces, burning their cheeks with shame.

"Heh heh, congratulations Elder Yun Nie."

"Congratulations, Daoist Yun Nie. The Regal Pill Palace well deserves this win!"

"The Regal Pill Palace is the first sect for pill dao in the Myriad Domain after all! This kind of foundation and lineup of geniuses is simply stunning."

"Indeed, Daoist Yun Nie. It's likely that no one will be able to shake the Regal Pill Palace's position in the next thousand years, not with the type of advantage you possess. You were able to send out just your unknown youths to put on such a stunning display!"

Mu Gaoqi and Jiang Chen had been relative unknowns beforehand, but they were now the biggest reasons why the Regal Pill Palace had defended their championship title once again.

Elder Yun Nie's emotions had just been through incredible highs and lows, but he was still worldly-wise after all. He had regained his composure enough to thank them all one by one. One had to say, apart from being hated rivals with the Sacred Sword Palace, the Regal Pill Palace still enjoyed decent popularity in the Myriad Domain. The Dark North Sect was its brother sect, and those of the Great Cathedral had a good impression of the Regal Pill Palace as well. As for the Walkabout Sect, they viewed the Regal Pill Palace as a latent competitor, but that was another story. The Tristar Sect was a mysterious entity and did things by themselves. They weren't close with anyone, but also not particularly hostile with anyone either.

The fifth rank sects were actually the most friendly with the Regal Pill Palace, because the Regal Pill Palace was actually much more amiable compared to the other fourth rank sects. This wasn't only because the Regal Pill Palace had allied with a small power like the Precious Tree Sect, but also because the Regal Pill Palace rarely put on the airs of a fourth rank sect to bully the numerous fifth rank sects. When it came to the division of profits, the Regal Pill Palace were amongst the few that would step out to speak for the fifth rank sects.

Although this was but one of Palace Head Dan Chi's strategies, it had certainly garnered visible results. When the Walkabout Sect elder group had been in the lead, only a few of the fifth rank sects had come up to tender their congratulations. But now that the Regal Pill Palace had made this great turnaround, almost all of them came up to share in the moment.

Jiang Chen hadn't thought either that the Regal Pill Palace would enjoy such high popularity with the fifth rank sects. As the primary reason why the Regal Pill Palace had been able to defend the championship this time, there were naturally many who came up to befriend and greet him. Jiang Chen didn't put on any airs and responded to each and every one of them. This continued for quite a while before everyone returned to their seats.

Elder Yun Nie sighed. "Palace Head Dan Chi has always advocated that we be considerate and kind to men of talent. Our sect has refused almost no sect who's asked us to refine pills for them over these years. This is merely the visible proof of how we've been able to collect on those favors. I have to admire the palace head's vision."

The other elders also nodded as well. Ouyang De spoke, a tinge of shame in his voice. "Elder Yun Nie, I was rather a bastard before and full of myself. I have truly seen the light this time. If it wasn't for your keen eye for talent that uncovered such geniuses as Jiang Chen and Mu Gaoqi, I'm afraid the Walkabout Sect would have truly taken the championship from this time's Pill Battles. Then I, Ouyang De, would've been condemned as a traitor of our sect throughout the ages."

Ouyang De had been nursing a grudge against Jiang Chen and Mu Gaoqi because of the matter of the Pill Battle spots. He'd really wanted to obtain a spot for his grandson, Ouyang Chao. But it now seemed that had he really done so, his grandson wouldn't have had any effect other than dragging the Regal Pill Palace down. If that had happened, he really would have been the ultimate sinner in Regal Pill Palace history. If Jiang Chen and Mu Gaoqi had been swapped out for pill dao geniuses on the level of Ouyang Chao, then there would've been no doubt of the Regal Pill Palace's defeat at the hands of the Walkabout Sect.

"Jiang Chen, Mu Gaoqi, you two are very good. Truly very good. I will have Ouyang Chao learn more from both of you when I return." Ouyang De had finally seen through the clouds now. Although his grandson was a scion of the sect and a genius in his own right, he was on a completely different level compared to Jiang Chen and Mu Gaoqi. As opposed to continuing to butt heads with these two geniuses, why not befriend them? Ouyang De had some valuable insights from this time's Pill Battles regarding internal conflict. Ultimately, he realized, it had no future for the sect. When the Regal Pill Palace had trailed behind the Walkabout Sect by roughly three hundred points, there had been no lack of people who'd immediately come forth to step on them. Such was how disinterested and uncaring the world was.

Elder Yun Nie's words had given them great food for thought. One had to be strong themselves if they wished to temper iron. A sect had to be united internally, with everyone exerting force in unison to benefit the sect and make it stronger. Only when the sect was strong would others be prevented from stepping on them. Only then, would the sect be respected wherever they went.

At that moment, the organizer on stage gestured for silence. "Everyone, please be quiet. The rankings are out for the Pill Battles, and you can now raise any objections you may have. If there are no objections, then we will seal the scores and announce the end of the Pill Battles."

Wei Wuying was the first to jump out. "I have objections!"

His face had turned as dark as the depths of the sea in his bad mood. It was obvious that when the elder group had raced ahead with such an incredible lead, he'd thought that the championship was already in his hand. But the genius group had suddenly collapsed, and the trophy that had been at the tips of his fingers had slipped through and landed in someone else's lap.

"What objections do you have, Sect Head Wei?"

Wei Wuying zeroed in on Jiang Chen without hesitation. "I have objections about Jiang Chen's scores! How did he know about the Skyheart Rebirth Pill? Only his answer was correct! In addition, the pill he refined at the end doesn't seem to have been in our plan!"

When Dan Chi heard Wei Wuying target the Regal Pill Palace, the former snorted coldly. "Does he need to report to you how he knew? What does it matter if the pill wasn't in the plan? The critical thing was that the pill was a true saint rank pill, that's all!"

The so-called plan was the fact that the ingredients they'd supplied had been carefully calculated beforehand. At most, it was designed to allow a pill at the initial true saint rank. However, Jiang Chen's Longevity Pill had been in noticeable excess of that standard. This was why Wei Wuying had raised the objection of it not being in the plan. *n..Ovel* **B**In

Once Wei Wuying had spoken thus, Wang Jianyu immediately joined the conversation with a sneer. "It is indeed suspicious that it's not in the plan. What do you think, Sect Head Zhu?"

Sect Head Zhu chuckled. "I only think it to be rather odd. The pill does indeed look extraordinary, and seemingly not on the level of the Myriad Domain."

Everyone's gaze turned towards Jiang Chen. The Sacred Elephant family head smiled. "No need to argue about this. Why don't we ask the man himself? Little friend Jiang Chen, what pill is this?"

Jiang Chen walked indifferently forward amidst countless gazes. "In response to the various sect heads, this pill is named the Longevity Pill. If a sage realm cultivator ingests it, it will extend their lifespan to a maximum of eight hundred years."

"What?" All of the expressions on the elders changed drastically when they heard this. They were all sage realm cultivators! Who wouldn't be tempted when they heard that they could extend their lifespans?

Chapter 553: The Uproar Brought By the Longevity Pill

Even someone as composed as Dan Chi was visibly moved by those calmly spoken words. He was less than a hundred years old and was in no immediate need of the pill. However, he was knowledgeable enough to immediately understand the value of this pill. He hastily pulled Jiang Chen behind him. "Jiang Chen, there's no need to speak anymore."

Beneath the stage, Elder Yun Nie also couldn't help but shoot to his feet, his expression one of shocked understanding. As one of the pill dao heavyweights of the Myriad Domain, he was even more clear about the pill's worth than even Palace Head Dan Chi's. When Jiang Chen spoke of the Longevity Pill, it was as if Elder Yun Nie's brain had been rocked by an explosion. However, he was immediately struck by the importance of the situation, and instantly regained his calm.

"Old brother Dan Chi, now what are you doing?" The Sacred Elephant family head chuckled. "It's the first time we've all heard of the Longevity Pill, we should take advantage of this opportunity to increase our knowledge."

Palace Head Dan Chi smiled faintly. "The Pill Battles are over. Since this pill reaches the necessary requirements for the score it was awarded, then it's in line with the rules of the contest. Nothing else needs to be said. We cannot repeat ourselves and grow bolder each time. When Jiang Chen had good scores previously, you asked to test his lineage. Now that his pill's level is high, you want him to explain where it comes from. Everyone, how can you bear to treat a young junior thus? Does this not speak to your conscience?"

From Palace Head Dan Chi's perspective, he naturally wanted to protect Jiang Chen. Based on what Jiang Chen had described, this pill would cause an absolute uproar when it got out. It was a wonderful thing for the Regal Pill Palace, but was also both fortune and disaster for Jiang Chen.

Naturally, its upside was that Jiang Chen's name would be spread far and wide, but the pressure it brought was a significant drawback. Having grasped both the recipe and refining method of such a high level pill, Jiang Chen would undoubtedly become a popular figure. There would absolutely be countless others who would make a move on him with ulterior motives.

Wei Wuying laughed darkly. "Ole brother Dan Chi, now you've placed yourself in the wrong with your words. As long as you have a clear conscience, what reason would you have to fear speculation?"

Palace Head Dan Chi only snorted coldly. "Sect Head Wei, just say so if you feel that you can't afford to lose. We might possibly see ourselves bestowing the Pill Battle championship title on you."

His words were sharp and incisive, doing double damage to Wei Wuying. He leapt up like a cat that'd had its tail stepped on. "Dan Chi, what exactly do you mean by that!"

"Alright, alright now." The Sacred Elephant family head stepped forward to smooth over the situation. It was clear as day in his heart that the Regal Pill Palace would never stoop to cheating, and he was well aware from beginning to end that it was impossible for anything untoward to be about Jiang Chen. His origins were no secret at all thanks to the Precious Tree Sect and Regal Pill Palace's public alliance. His background had long since been thoroughly investigated.

The Walkabout Sect was causing trouble because they'd just seen the championship vanish before their very eyes. The Sacred Sword Palace was causing trouble because they were hated rivals with the Regal Pill Palace. Now that the Longevity Pill had appeared, there was only one thought in the family head's mind. Somehow, he had to obtain this pill!

This family head was the strongest amongst the four families in the Great Cathedral. He was the most senior, but also the most elderly. He didn't have many years of life left to him. Although his cultivation was the highest in the Myriad Domain, it wasn't much of a point of pride if one didn't have enough years

left to live. Therefore, his was the heart which had pounded the most when he heard Jiang Chen mention the effects of the Longevity Pill.

“Ole brother Wei, ole brother Dan Chi, both of you should just speak fewer words. There are so many eyes watching the Pill Battles; what wrong could occur under our watch?” The family head’s words were blatantly biased towards the Regal Pill Palace. It wasn’t that he’d suddenly discovered his conscience towards this much abused sect, but that he now had something he wanted to ask of them.

Dan Chi nodded. “Since the Sacred Elephant family head has spoken, I think it’s time to announce the end of the Pill Battles and distribute the spots for Mt. Rippling Mirage. Continuing this farce would only disgrace ourselves. A vaunted fourth rank sect should have the bearing of a great sect so as to not become a laughingstock for the world.”

The Sacred Elephant family head also knew that it was asking a bit much to have the Regal Pill Palace share the Longevity Pill. He could only ask privately if they could make a transaction, but he also knew that if he didn’t please Dan Chi at this moment, there was no way in hell that Dan Chi would sell the pill to him.

“Mm, my Great Cathedral has no objection to these results. What say you, ole brother Zhu?” The family head was well aware that the Dark North Sect would absolutely support the Regal Pill Palace. So apart from the Sacred Sword Palace and Walkabout Sect, all that remained was the Tristar Sect’s attitude.

Tristar Sect Head Zhu smiled wryly. “To be honest, although I have many questions in my heart, I feel that I should accept the truth with how things have developed. Since we can’t find any evidence, it’d be a waste of time to continue arguing here. We might as well start distributing the spots to enter Mr. Rippling Mirage.

“This makes sense, I say we accept these results as final.” Honored Master Tian Ming of the Dark North Sect grinned.

Wang Jianyu of the Sacred Sword Palace looked at Wei Wuying, but saw the latter sigh softly, seemingly out of resignation, and not voice a single word of protest. Wang Jianyu’s original intention had been to cause trouble to the very end, but as the last of the six great sects, the Sacred Sword Palace really didn’t have much right to kick up a fuss.

With the fourth rank sects having reached an accord, the fifth rank sects naturally wouldn’t have any objections. They accepted from the bottom of their hearts the fact that the Regal Pill Palace had taken the championship. n--OveLb1n

Distributing the spots was a rather easy task. The top 30 of the elder and genius groups had the right to enter Mt. Rippling Mirage. The first ten of each group had 20 days to spend, and the next ten had ten days worth of time. The last ten had five days.

“Alright, the Pill Battles of Mt. Rippling Mirage end here. Opening the restrictions around Mt. Rippling Mirage will take a few more days. As such, everyone can continue staying here. Use this time to interact with each other. Previous rules will be once again in effect, and a few small-scale trading fairs will be allowed during this time. Everyone can exchange for what they like.”

The various great sects of the Myriad Domain all had their respective specializations. This was how they were able to sit on the throne of a fourth rank sect. The Great Cathedral had the richest lineage and strongest power. The Sacred Sword Palace pursued swords as the true way and reigned sovereign over sword dao. The Regal Pill Palace was founded on pill dao and had no equal. The Walkabout Sect was the worst to antagonize due to their prowess in poison. The Tristar Sect was adept at crafting talismans, and the Star and Moon Glyph was their trademark work. The Dark North Sect was located deep in the north of the Myriad Domain and had the richest resources. Each of the six great sects had their strengths and their own trump cards.

To the candidates of the six great sects, it wasn't a matter of whether or not they'd receive a spot to enter the mountain, but just a matter of when they'd enter.

On the Regal Pill Palace side, all of their four geniuses had made it into the top ten and would be amongst the first batch to enter. They would enjoy twenty days worth of harvesting time. From the elder group, only Elder Yun Nie and Vice Hallmaster Wang Yue had made it into the top ten. Ouyang De and the other elder Che Ziwu was only in the top twenty, and therefore the second batch. After the spots were allocated, the first part of the Pill Battles of Mt. Rippling Mirage were announced to have come to an end.

To Jiang Chen, the first part was merely warm up. His true goal was to enter the mountain to harvest spirit herbs. This Mt. Rippling Mirage was the best peak in the Myriad Domain for harvesting spirit herbs, and doubled as the royal spirit herb garden back in the days of the Myriad Empire, reveling in royal fortunes. This history alone made it clear that this mountain was no ordinary landscape feature.

"Come here for a moment, Jiang Chen." Palace Head Dan Chi called out to him. Elder Yun Nie was also quietly standing next to Dan Chi. It was obvious that the two heavyweights wanted him for something.

Back in his residence, Dan Chi enclosed his secret chamber in a soundproof shell before he spoke, "You were far too impulsive today Jiang Chen. Whether that Longevity Pill is real or fake, you shouldn't have said that it could extend one's lifespan to eight hundred years."

Elder Yun Nie also sighed. "The consequences for those words will be severe. Jiang Chen, tell us, is the Longevity Pill that miraculous?"

Since Jiang Chen had dared announce the pill, he naturally wouldn't dare not admit to it. He nodded and confessed all he could share, "The Longevity Pill does indeed have that kind of miraculous effect. However, only sage realm cultivators can use it. To take it when one has yet to enter the sage realm means bodily detonation. Taking it beyond the sage realm will result in a lack of benefit. It will only extend lifespans by three to five years."

Palace Head Dan Chi and Elder Yun Nie looked at each other, the light of surprise and shock dancing in their eyes. It was obvious that they were stunned by the news that Jiang Chen had brought, and were also certain at the same time that this wasn't something Jiang Chen had randomly made up. Although they were long since used to all sorts of heaven defying performances from him, their hearts were still plunged into an emotional turmoil this time. If Jiang Chen was willing to offer the pill to the sect, it alone would be enough to bring unmeasurable wealth to the Regal Pill Palace! If they handled things well, then it could even birth a real chance of having the Regal Pill Palace vault into the ranks of a third rank sect after a few decades!

However, how could they broach the topic of having Jiang Chen offer up the Longevity Pill? After all, technically speaking, Jiang Chen wasn't someone who their sect had cultivated. If it'd been a direct descendent of the sect, they might've been able to have him hand over the pill and give him some benefits in return, focusing some attention on raising him. But Jiang Chen was not a direct descendent of the sect, and the Regal Pill Palace had merely supplied a platform for his heaven defying rise. They hadn't actually contributed to his rise at all. Their faces weren't so thick as to demand the pill.

When Jiang Chen glimpsed their complicated expressions, and how they were restraining themselves from speaking, he could roughly guess their thoughts.

"Palace Head, Elder Yun Nie, since I've spoken of the Longevity Pill, I don't have the desire to hoard it. I owe a debt of gratitude to the Regal Pill Palace for being my patron, and you two have done your best to mentor me. There are no outsiders here. Treat this pill as a bit of my contribution to the sect." Jiang Chen's proactiveness in raising this subject dialed down some of the awkwardness. But it was now the two heavyweights who were speechless.

They've been thinking of how to convince Jiang Chen, but who would've thought that he'd actually speak of it first. This made them feel that even a young man's bearing was greater than the two heavyweight's.

Dan Chi smiled ruefully. "Jiang Chen, Elder Yun Nie and I are the ones embarrassed after your words. All of us have seen your accomplishments for the sect. Setting aside this time's Pill Battles, you have brought about a new culture to the Rosy Valley, setting the best example for the young disciples in the Rosy Valley and inspiring in them a kind of ferocity and bearing they lacked before."

Elder Yun Nie was also of the same opinion, but he still felt a bit embarrassed at just accepting the Longevity Pill with no reward. "Jiang Chen, this pill is too precious and it may not be a bad thing for you to give it to the sect. But if you have any requests, please speak of them. We would hate to be treated as outsiders."

Chapter 554: Pill King, Pill Emperor

Jiang Chen didn't raise any grand wishes, just thirty percent of the profits from the pill. This made Palace Head Dan Chi and Elder Yun Nie both sigh greatly with admiration. The profits brought by the Longevity Pill would be nothing less than spectacular. There wasn't much difference between Jiang Chen's actions and just giving away the pill for free.

"Jiang Chen, thirty percent of the profit is much too unfair for you."

Jiang Chen smiled. "I can indeed harvest wealth if I keep the Longevity Pill to myself, but only I will grow rich from that. If I give it to the Regal Pill Palace, the profits brought about for the sect will be a meritorious achievement that will last for a thousand years. I may not be a saint, but I quite admired what I heard of Palace Head Dan Chi's great ambitions that day. Although I may not be able to accompany the sect head in heralding in a new era, but at least I can do my own part in bringing it to fruition. Treat the Longevity Pill as my effort towards this endeavor."

Palace Head Dan Chi's heart harbored great ambitions to revive the past glories of the Myriad Empire, to re-establish a royal family and unite the Myriad Domain. Jiang Chen hadn't felt much resonance with such thoughts at first, but after experiencing the Pill Battles and seeing the crazed level of scheming the

various sects resorted to, he could finally identify that there was indeed a reason why a domain was strong or weak.

United they were strong, divided they were weak.

The various great sects in the current Myriad Domain were no different than a tray of loose sand. No one accepted anyone else, and everyone stayed guarded against everyone else's sabotage. With such belligerent backbiting, how could the Myriad Domain ever hope to grow stronger? The sight of this sorry situation was what let Jiang Chen realize how precious Palace Head Dan Chi's grand plans were, and how great his vision was.

Although the Longevity Pill was rare, this kind of pill recipe was merely a lower level recipe in Jiang Chen's memories. But to a fourth rank sect of the Myriad Domain, this pill was undoubtedly worth cities!

When he saw Jiang Chen thus, Dan Chi sighed. "Yun Nie, I have to admit, it certainly seems that the waves that push from behind are the ones who provide the momentum in a river. I don't think the Myriad Domain has ever seen such a youth as Jiang Chen, with such bearing at his age!"

Elder Yun Nie couldn't help but admire the palace head by now. "The Palace Head's vision in bringing Jiang Chen to the Regal Pill Palace was truly a stroke of genius."

Palace Head Dan Chi nodded, then suddenly recalled something as an item appeared in the palm of his hand. "Jiang Chen, everything about you is good, but only that space ring of yours is a bit behind the times. This Meru Ring [1] is one that I received from a master refiner when I was traveling through the Upper Eight Realms. You can have it!"

Although a Meru Ring was precious, it obviously wasn't on the same level as the Longevity Pill. This was just a token of Dan Chi's sentiments.

Elder Yun Nie thought for a bit and took out a pill flask. "Jiang Chen, this pill is named the Origin Doubling Pill. I refined this from a jug of Firstwind Dew that I obtained when I was still traveling the world. I only have three left. Treat it as a token of my thoughts." n..OvelBIn

Firstwind Dew!

Jiang Chen had never heard of the Origin Doubling Pill before, but he had definitely heard of Firstwind Dew. This was one of the purest sources of water in the world.

All of the five elements came from various sources. Just as there was a source of fire, there was naturally a source of water. Wood had its sources as well—the wood spirit spring was actually a wood source, and the Tayi Jade Vine that produced the spirit energy another more high quality one. Finally, the magnetic golden mountain was actually a source of metal.

When he saw how Jiang Chen looked a bit perplexed, Elder Yun Nie was actually slightly surprised. Jiang Chen, with his stunning potential, clearly had never actually heard of the Origin Doubling Pill before! Otherwise, he wouldn't have had this blank reaction upon hearing the pill's name.

Palace Head Dan Chi smiled. "Elder Yun Nie's present is quite a generous gift. Jiang Chen, this Origin Doubling Pill will unequivocally help you ascend to the next level of the origin realm. If you enter the

sixth level origin realm one day, you'll be able to use this pill to break through to the seventh level in one go!"

Jiang Chen was slightly moved and hastily offered his thanks. "Many thanks to Elder Yun Nie's gift!"

Elder Yun Nie was also gratified to witness Jiang Chen's reaction. "Compared to the value of the Longevity Pill, this Origin Doubling Pill really isn't anything."

In truth, it actually wasn't a difficult pill to refine. What made it difficult was that the ingredients required were just hard to find. For example, Firstwind Dew wasn't something so easily run into. It was actually an earthly treasure that one could only hope for, and not plan on.

Jiang Chen was actually smiling ruefully in his heart. Elder Yun Nie is truly extravagant! He actually used Firstwind Dew in refining the Origin Doubling Pill. This was one of the most wasteful ways to use this material. One had to know that no matter how amazing the Origin Doubling Pill was, it was still just a saint rank pill at the end of the day. Although it sat at the peak of the saint rank, it would never be able to surmount that last barrier. However, the Firstwind Dew was an ingredient on a level far above the saint rank.

But of course, there was no way Jiang Chen would actually voice any of this. To him, the Origin Doubling Pill wasn't a bad thing.

"Ah right, Jiang Chen, you can take only one of this pill. Taking it again would not result in any effect." Elder Yun Nie reminded him at this point.

This was common pill dao knowledge. Any level advancing pill was usually a one-time use only. The effect wouldn't trigger upon the second ingestion, unlike the Origin Fostering Pill which could be used over a long time to increase one's energy.

Having accepted benefits from the two seniors, Jiang Chen knew that it was time for him to express some things as well. He immediately took out a brush and paper to write down the recipe for the Longevity Pill.

Dan Chi and Elder Yun Nie both sighed with admiration after they took a look at the recipe. This Longevity Pill was actually quite ingenious! It was such a high level pill, but didn't impose stringent requirements on ingredients. None of its ingredients were difficult to collect. This way, at least they could be certain that the Longevity Pill wouldn't be in short supply because of ingredients.

Of course, the difficulty of the pill lay not in the ingredients, but the refining process. It was a type where it tested a pill master's skills to the extreme.

This precisely illustrated the saying that outsiders watch for the show, and professionals watched for the process.

Elder Yun Nie and Dan Chi gazed in thought for a while, then looked at each other. It seemed they'd just reached some sort of understanding of this Longevity Pill.

Dan Chi suddenly looked at Jiang Chen, a complicated look in his eyes. He couldn't help but laugh. "Alright you, Jiang Chen! You certainly were well prepared in bringing out the Longevity Pill. If I remember right, you threw in more than 20 ingredients when you were refining the pill, but there are

less than half that in here in the real recipe. Speak candidly, did you already anticipate that this pill would be furiously copied once it was revealed, and so did all those deceptive actions beforehand?”

Jiang Chen smiled, not denying anything. After all, he had done that on purpose. Otherwise, he'd have suffered a great loss if someone had gone and just copied his actions to recreate the pill!

Although the refinement method wasn't something that could be learned with a single glance, he was still incredibly careful. He didn't want to leave the slightest gap for anyone to slip into. This conscientious move delighted Palace Head Dan Chi and Elder Yun Nie. They'd been slightly concerned that the other heavyweights had memorized all of the proper steps during Jiang Chen's refining process. Now, it looked like they'd worried too much. That problem had already been foreseen and avoided.

“Elder Yun Nie, do you think you can manage to refine this pill?” Palace Head Dan Chi asked.

Elder Yun Nie took a moment to contemplate the recipe. “With such a detailed pill recipe, I have a roughly sixty to seventy percent assurance in refining it. It's just a matter of expending more resources. Setting aside Jiang Chen masking his true actions, the others still might not have learned his process even if they had the benefit of close observation.”

Apart from reconstructing the original ingredients, there were all sorts of knacks and hidden hand seals hidden in this refining process, not to mention sophisticated requirements imposed on the control of fire for this pill. A mistake in any of the details might result in completely wasted effort, yet Jiang Chen's recipe clearly delineated all of the smallest details. This was basically handholding a great pill master like Elder Yun Nie through the process.

The more Elder Yun Nie read this recipe, the more agitated he became. He itched to instantly fire up his cauldron to try his hand at refining the pill. When he'd read the entire recipe eight times over, Elder Yun Nie finally sighed. “Jiang Chen, with your pill dao skills, honestly, apart from resources, we can offer you no other help, particularly in terms of technique. You would certainly be feted even if you were in the Upper Eight Realms. At this rate, you will certainly become a pill king in the future, even...”

Even Elder Yun Nie didn't dare go on beyond that point. Palace Head Dan Chi laughed heartily. “Elder Yun Nie, there are no outsiders here; don't be so cautious. We're behind closed doors complimenting ourselves. What are you being embarrassed for?”

“Then let me continue on. Jiang Chen, Elder Yun Nie has high hopes for you. However, there's no uncertainty of you becoming a pill king. It's rather that legendary level of pill emperor that should be your goal.”

Pill king, pill emperor?

Jiang Chen was rather unfamiliar with these titles. Although he was widely read in his past life, every plane of existence had different denotations for pill master titles. He guessed that these two were the strongest titles in the Divine Abyss Continent.

When he saw that Jiang Chen was having trouble understanding, Elder Yun Nie explained, “Pill king and pill emperor are both titles in the world of pill dao. A pill master is divided into nine levels, and only when one is above the ninth level does one have the right to receive the title of great pill master. Great pill masters are also divided into nine levels, and only when one is greater than the ninth level does one

have the right to join in the pill king tests. Only when one passes those tests does one have the right to be hailed as a pill king.”

“Pill king tests!” Jiang Chen had never heard their like in the Myriad Domain before.

Elder Yun Nie felt a bit awkward. “It’s normal that you haven’t heard of them, because none of the sects or organizations in the Myriad Domain have the right to participate in those tests.”

“There are qualifications?” Jiang Chen was baffled.

“Only a publicly acclaimed third rank sect founded for pill dao has the right to participate in the pill king tests. In addition, a third rank sect can only participate in the tests up to the third level pill king. A second rank can go up to sixth rank pill king, and only a first rank sect can go beyond that.”

“Eh, then doesn’t that mean only a few sects have the right to participate in the seventh rank pill king tests?” Isn’t it easy to have a shortage of talent then?

“The Upper Eight Realms aren’t just comprised of first rank sects. There are also some pill dao organizations and other agencies. Although their power isn’t as grand as a first rank sect, they are not to be underestimated either. They also have the right to participate in the tests above seventh rank pill king.”

“Then what about pill emperor?”

Elder Yun Nie sighed. “A pill emperor is a legendary existence. No sect or organization is able to sit for its test. A pill emperor must be at the peak of ninth level pill king or be able to suppress all other pinnacle pill kings when they meet. One can also become a pill emperor if one has made a grand contribution in a certain area, or have successfully created their own pill dao school of thought...”

There were many avenues to being hailed pill emperor, but they all had one thing in common—public recognition!

Mt. Meru is a sacred mountain with five peaks in Buddhist cosmology and is considered the center of all physical, metaphysical, and spiritual universes. There is also a Buddhist story that mentions storing Mt. Meru into a mustard seed, referencing that even something as small and limited as a mustard seed can store an existence as infinitely large as Mt. Meru.

Chapter 555: Two Heavyweights Fight Over Jiang Chen

One could obtain the title of a pill king just through passing a couple of tests. But the title of pill emperor was only bestowed on someone after they’d accomplished a remarkable feat or formed their own pill dao school of thought. Only then would they be publicly acclaimed as a pill emperor, and have their name resound beneath the heavens.

“A pill emperor is born only once in a millennia, and even then there are times when millennia can pass without seeing the birth of one. The pill emperor of our time has secluded himself from the world and lives in the Divine Abyss Continent. Or so we think, since we haven’t heard of any rumors about him in our Myriad Domain.” Elder Yun Nie sighed lightly, a shiver in his voice from emotion.

In the Myriad Domain, the Regal Pill Palace was undoubtedly the first amongst the sects when it came to pill dao, and Elder Yun Nie was the undisputed master in the region for pill dao. However, in the greater

picture of the entire Myriad Domain, Elder Yun Nie was just an ordinary pill master. He didn't even have the right to participate in the pill king tests.

"Jiang Chen, in our Regal Pill Palace history, only the first forefather had received the title of pill king. Even then, it was only second level pill king. Even so, it was enough to let him amass enough resources to found a sect in the lower realms. If he had been a fourth or fifth level pill king, he would've been capable of establishing a sect even in the mid realms and still leave a wondrous legacy. If he had become a seventh level pill king or above, he would have been a precious guest in the Upper Eight Realms, and the honored elder of a first rank sect. In the worst of scenarios, while he may not have been capable of shouldering a first rank sect, he wouldn't have had the slightest problem with a second rank sect!" Palace Head Dan Chi smiled. "There have been no more than ten pill kings in the entirety of Myriad Domain history. Of them, most have come from the Myriad Empire royal family."

When the Myriad Empire had ruled the territory as an unchallenged existence, the sects had not been the strong existences they were now. They'd only become this strong after the Myriad Empire had fallen and they'd divvied up the resources.

Jiang Chen was spontaneously enlightened, and began to comprehend what kind of power a pill king and emperor held in the Divine Abyss Continent.

Elder Yun Nie, someone titled as first in pill dao in this region, still wasn't a pill king. It only went to prove that the title of a pill king wasn't so easily obtained. However, apart from himself, Jiang Chen felt that there was another who had the potential to obtain such a title. That would be none other than Mu Gaoqi.

They chatted for a while longer before Palace Head Dan Chi smiled. "Jiang Chen, it will take a few more days for the restrictions to be lifted. You can make good use of these days. Multiple small trading fairs will start between the large sects. If you go take a look, perhaps you might even chance upon a treasure!"

When they parted ways, Jiang Chen was in no hurry to return to his residence, instead making for the main lobby of Rippling Mirage Hall. He naturally wouldn't pass up any trading fairs. Resources could flow in either direction, and that so happened to be what he lacked the most at the moment. Resources didn't just include spirit herbs and pills, but also various earthly treasures as well. In the world of martial dao, resources were multi-faceted.

Shen Qinghong, Mu Gaoqi and Ling Bi'er were all within the lobby as well. Shen Qinghong had a vast hoard of wealth, but wasn't too interested in this trading fair. In addition, after the impetus provided by Wang Han and Zhu Feiyang's mockery, he was finding courage after knowing humiliation and knew that he had to break through the sage realm sooner rather than later. Otherwise, when faced with people like them, he would never be able to fully lift his head as the top ranked genius of the Regal Pill Palace.

"You're here too, Brother Chen!" Mu Gaoqi had set up a small stall, evidently very interested in this trading fair.

Ling Bi'er hadn't set up a stall, but was looking around. It was apparent that she was looking for something. Jiang Chen had given her a list of the spirit herbs needed to cure the Miasma. She wanted to

see if she could find anything she needed in these trading stalls. However, even after a few circles, she came up empty handed.

“Junior sister Ling, I see you walking to and fro. Is there something you need?” Wei Qing suddenly showed up in front of Ling Bi’er, smiling merrily. “Tell me about it, and maybe I can help!”

Ling Bi’er had no good feelings towards this kind of fawning behavior, nor even any for Wei Qing himself. She furrowed her brows slightly and turned her body, walking past Wei Qing.

Unfortunately he seemed to quite enjoy being endlessly rebuffed. As the most exemplary genius from the Walkabout Sect, how would he lack for girls? What he lacked was a challenge like this! Therefore, the more Ling Bi’er brushed him off, the more exciting he felt the challenge had become.

“Hmph, you’re acting all high and mighty in front of me now, but just you wait until I have you. As ready you are to die for your chastity now, I’ll turn you into a slut once you’ve tasted my ultimate techniques!” Wei Qing was plainly very confident about Ling Bi’er and had long since viewed her as something that belonged to him. As he watched her alluring figure leave, he swore a silent vow that he would get his hands on Ling Bi’er, no matter the cost.

When Mu Gaoqi saw from a distance that Wei Qing was bothering Ling Bi’er again, he was quite irritated inwardly. “Brother Chen, this Wei Qing is truly too cocky. He keeps chatting up senior sister Ling Bi’er like a filthy fly.”

In Mu Gaoqi’s eyes, he’d long since classified Ling Bi’er as his Brother Chen’s woman. This Wei Qing was really courting death in approaching her again and again!

Jiang Chen smiled. “Gaoqi, be careful and take it easy if you meet him in Mt. Rippling Mirage. He’s vicious and ruthless. He’s bound to take revenge for any slight.”

Mu Gaoqi nodded. “Don’t worry Brother Chen, I’ll be careful.”

Mt. Rippling Mirage was enormous, and everyone would be randomly scattered inside after going through the entrance formation. Although there was still a chance to run into each other while they were inside, it was in no way guaranteed.

“Daoist Jiang Chen.” A voice came from behind as they chatted. Jiang Chen turned his head to see a Dark North Sect disciple dressed in a robe. He actually had a similar bearing to Mu Gaoqi, but wasn’t quite as handsome as him. Instead, it seemed that he was a touch more melancholic. “This humble one is Ku Zhu of the Dark North Sect. I am here on our sect head’s behalf to invite you for a meeting.”

Honored Master Tian Ming?

Jiang Chen was slightly surprised, but immediately surmised why the honored master was looking for him. When he considered how close the honored master was with Palace Head Dan Chi, he naturally couldn’t turn down this request. He nodded at Mu Gaoqi, “Gaoqi, keep an eye on things here for me. I have a list here, and if these spirit herbs or their substitutes appear, grab them all for me.”

“Sure, Brother Chen! Don’t worry, I’ll keep an eye on everything here.” Mu Gaoqi agreed readily. His admiration of Jiang Chen was second only to that of Palace Head Dan Chi and his honored master Elder

Yun Nie. He probably even estimated Jiang Chen as his closest friend. He was more aware than anyone else that if it hadn't been for Jiang Chen, he wouldn't have placed third on the overall ranking!

Ku Zhu was delighted to see that Jiang Chen was so easy to talk to. He'd been fretting over what to do if Jiang Chen hadn't been willing to go.

"Daoist Ku Zhu, let's go."

Ku Zhu nodded, a perpetually bitter expression on his face as he led the way forward. They hadn't walked far before someone else walked out from their right. It was a Great Cathedral disciple. "Brother Jiang Chen, Xiang Qin from the Sacred Elephant family greets you. Do you have a moment? My family head would like to speak with Brother Jiang."

Ku Zhu spread out his arms with a look of alarm, like a fighting gamecock gearing up for a match. "Senior brother Xiang Qin, I was the first to invite senior brother Jiang Chen."

Xiang Qin frowned slightly at seeing this. "And you are...?"

Ku Zhu said stiffly, "I'm Ku Zhu of the Dark North Sect. Senior brother Xiang Qin, please step out of the way. The sect head is waiting for me to return."

Ku Zhu was a hardheaded person alright; he didn't know how to beat around the bush when it came to speech. Xiang Qin could also subtly detect this from his style of talking. He was one of the top geniuses in the Great Cathedral after all, and didn't want to lower himself to Ku Zhu's level. He paid no attention to the Dark North Sect disciple, and raised his hands in a cupped fist salute towards Jiang Chen. "Brother Jiang, my family head invites you with full sincerity. Please show me some face here."

Jiang Chen was also caught in a difficult position. He flicked a glance at Ku Zhu. "Brother Xiang, we're supposed to heed the call of our elders. However, Daoist Ku Zhu was here first. If I leave him here and go with you, that won't do either."

Xiang Qin seemed to also think that this was asking a bit too much. He looked at Ku Zhu. "Junior brother Ku Zhu, how about this? You can go back and tell Honored Master Tian Ming that I forcefully invited Brother Jiang, and that I'll go and express my apologies in person later."

This is the precursor to forcefully taking Jiang Chen from him! Ku Zhu's eyes widened in a glare when he heard this. "No! Not unless you kill me! The only way you'll be taking senior brother Jiang Chen from me is over my dead body!"

Xiang Qin's face grew cold. He was the top genius of the Great Cathedral, and there weren't many in the younger generation of the Myriad Domain who would dare rebut his words. Even the most exemplary Lin Hai would be respectful in front of Xiang Qin. Who does this Ku Zhu think he is?

"Don't throw away the face I'm trying to give you. Even Lin Hai wouldn't be acting like this in front of me." Xiang Qin's voice carried a note of warning. However, he'd underestimated Ku Zhu's temper.

"Lin Hai is Lin Hai, and I am myself. I only know that the sect head has ordered me to invite senior brother Jiang Chen. What does it have to do with me who you are?"

Jiang Chen knew that things would become increasingly worse if they went much further in this direction. He could only step forth to try and smooth the ruffled feathers. "Gentlemen, how about this?"

Both of you can go back first and have a discussion about this. If it's nothing too special, why don't we sit down together and discuss this? We can save the trouble of arguing who has precedence."

"No!" Both Ku Zhu and Xiang Qin shook their heads when Jiang Chen finished speaking. It was obvious that they were both determined to have Jiang Chen.

They stood there, locked in a stalemate when a long peal of laughter suddenly sounded. "Sage nephew Xiang Qin, I have a long standing appointment with sage nephew Jiang Chen to introduce him to the genius disciples of my Dark North Sect. What is the meaning of this willful obstruction of yourself?" n--
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It was Honored Master Tian Ming himself! As fierce as Xiang Qin could be, he didn't dare act wildly in front of the honored master.

"Haha, Tian Ming ah, I just so happened to want to speak with sage nephew Jiang Chen as well. You can't just take him from me." The Sacred Elephant family head also seemed to pop out of nowhere.

If an analogy was struck that Xiang Qin facing off against Ku Zhu was a meeting between pawns, then Honored Master Tian Ming and the Sacred Elephant family head was a meeting of generals. Jiang Chen had become the choicest slice of meat at a buffet in a flash.

The originally bustling main lobby instantly grew solemn and quiet. All sorts of surprised glances flicked over as their owners watched the situation develop. Two great sects were fighting over Jiang Chen! Just what was going on here?

As the focus of the attention, Jiang Chen didn't know whether to laugh or cry. The current situation was absolutely something he didn't want to see. No matter which side he chose, he was destined to offend the other side. Even if this had nothing to do with him, he was suddenly faced with a decision to choose.

More and more people made their way into the main hall. Some of the other heavyweights from the other sects also walked out when they heard the commotion.

Chapter 556: Furiously Fighting Over the Longevity Pill

"Haha, now isn't this quite a gathering? Everyone, what kind of show is this? Jiang Chen is a young man who's just set foot in this broad world of ours. Don't go scaring him now." Palace Head Dan Chi's voice had barely broken the silence before his figure appeared. He'd obviously made his way as quick as he could after hearing the news. Protecting Jiang Chen was his first and only priority here. How would he not know what kind of thoughts were running through the heads of these old fellows? They were just here to swindle the Longevity Pill from Jiang Chen.

Honored Master Tian Ming chuckled merrily at the sight of Dan Chi. "Ole brother Dan Chi, you have to come uphold justice! It was I who invited sage nephew Jiang Chen first, but Family Head Xiang wants to take him away by force! I can't win against this strong-arming tactic even when I'm in the right! Ole brother Xiang, you're the older brother. What harm is there in giving way before your younger brother once or twice, hmm?"

Honored Master Tian Ming was renowned for his ability to coax others into acceding to his wishes. These words were clearly a small persuasion for the family head into giving way. They were both sect heads of fourth rank sects, and Tian Ming was already keeping a low enough posture as it was. In the

end, he was indeed in the right since he had invited Jiang Chen first. The family head of Sacred Elephant was named Xiang Wentian. He actually wasn't the domineering sort ordinarily, but he seemed to have steeled his heart to be unreasonable this time. He waved his hand and smiled faintly. "Tian Ming, I would've let you have your way if it was anything else. I won't play around with words in front of you. By my calculations, I have less than sixty years left to spend on this Myriad Domain of ours. But you want the Longevity Pill as much as I. I could step back from any other matter, but how could I do the same when it comes to my life?"

Sage realm cultivators could live at least fifteen hundred years, and could stretch that up to two or three thousand years. That the family head had just stated his remaining lifespan as less than sixty years birthed a natural curiosity to know exactly long he'd lived.

Honored Master Tian Ming also smiled wryly when he heard the family head's words. "Ole brother Xiang, to be truthful, I was injured when cultivating a few decades ago and damaged my lifespan. I don't have many years of life left either."

Everyone was surprised that these two heavyweights were suddenly sharing their woes with each other. When it came to the Longevity Pill, all the other heavyweights were also quite tempted, but their lifespans hadn't reached a dangerous low yet. However, this kind of pill was the best as an emergency reserve. It would never hurt to have a pill or two stashed away. **None.**

As the atmosphere at the scene grew more and more heated, Wang Jianyu of the Sacred Sword Palace became increasingly irritated. Why the hell does your Regal Pill Palace always hog the limelight, and have others always chase after you?! You want to take an advantageous position with an uncommon product? As if I'd just let you! His thoughts suddenly spun furiously for a moment, and a smile creased his face. "Elder brother Xiang, Tian Ming, both of you should keep your calm. If even a young disciple can refine this pill, I'm sure it can be mass produced. When that is set in motion, the two of you can buy as much as you'd like. That is... unless the Regal Pill Palace wants to hoard its stockpile and can't bear to take it out."

This was a blatant attempt to drive a wedge between the two sect heads and an overt attempt to rake the Regal Pill Palace over hot coals. Yet, it wasn't entirely ineffective, as Family Head Xiang looked at Palace Head Dan Chi with a solemn gaze. "Younger brother Dan Chi, what's the situation with this Longevity Pill? Your Regal Pill Palace won't be doing something so untoward, hmm?"

Palace Head Dan Chi smiled faintly and looked deeply at Wang Jianyu. "Everyone, I do apologize. If we could produce this pill in bulk, we wouldn't have waited until today to release word of it. I don't know if Sect Head Wang has just lost his common sense or is purposefully stirring up trouble with his words. If we could produce this pill in bulk, my Regal Pill Palace would've soared to the top a long time ago. Why would we wait until this kind of gathering to release it?"

Everyone felt that Dan Chi's words made sense after they'd thought over it some. If the Regal Pill Palace really could produce the Longevity Pill in bulk, they would've long since taken it out and made a killing. Why would they remain silent to this day? This kind of pill would never want for demand. No matter how much was produced, it could all be sold.

After all, the wealth of sage cultivators was astonishing. This kind of pill that could extend their lifespan would absolutely be sold for a monumental price. To take Family Head Xiang as an example, even if he

were to take out half of his wealth in exchange for one pill that extended his life by five hundred years, he would do so without the slightest crease of his brow.

“When it comes to pill refining, my sect’s Elder Yun Nie has more authority to speak than I do.”

Everyone’s gazes turned towards Elder Yun Nie, who had been prepared for this in advance. “Although the materials for this Longevity Pill are precious, that is still not the most important limiting factor for refining this pill. In fact, the most vital limiting factor is that its refining process is exceedingly complicated, and its rate of success almost depressingly low. Moreover, the process is highly demanding of one’s consciousness. Each attempt at refining must be accompanied with at minimum ten days to half a month of rest and recovery. This kind of pill would never be able to be mass produced. Even if a pill king were to undertake the task, he would at most manage one attempt every ten days, with no more than three pills appearing in his cauldron at the end.

“As for the pill masters of my Regal Pill Palace, I’m afraid that only I am currently capable of refining this pill apart from Jiang Chen. As it stands right now, this pill can only be refined once every month or two at its utmost maximum. In addition, Jiang Chen is young, and cannot spend a long period of time exhausting his consciousness for pill refining. The sect won’t let him do so either. After all, martial dao cultivation is the true focus of a genius.”

Elder Yun Nie’s words were impenetrable. No one could find any fault with them. However, all of them couldn’t help but look sideways at Jiang Chen and feel inwardly greatly contemptuous. In their eyes, Jiang Chen’s little bit of cultivation didn’t make him any sort of martial dao genius. He might as well focus wholeheartedly on the grand task of refining pills. However, they naturally couldn’t voice such words in this situation. If they did, they would greatly offend Jiang Chen and then could kiss goodbye to any hope of gaining a Longevity Pill in the future.

Wang Jianyu snorted coldly. “Even if you fire up the cauldrons only once every three months and refine three pills each time, that’s still quite a number in the long run.”

Elder Yun Nie couldn’t help but burst out in laughter. “Sect Head Wang is a sect head after all! How can you voice such naive words? Refining the Longevity Pill is a task that drains the consciousness and runs the risk of harming the mind. Whether it’s cultivators or pill masters, even if an exhausted consciousness can recuperate, it will still harm their foundations in the long run. Do you mean for my sect’s pill masters to risk their lives to refine pills? To put it bluntly, even if we fire up our cauldrons once every three years for this refining, that’s still an enormous drain on the mind after a few decades or a hundred years, let alone once every three months. In the best case scenario, we would end up harming the mind. At worst, we would risk complete mental collapse.”

This wasn’t Elder Yun Nie being an alarmist. The Longevity Pill recipe was indeed uncommon, and if it wasn’t refined by a pill master with extreme skill and a robust mental state of mind, it would indeed be a great drain on the consciousness. Jiang Chen hadn’t been afraid because he’d trained in “Boulder’s Heart” and “Psychic’s Head”. His consciousness had been perfectly tempered, and was in fact on par with that of a pill king. The most important thing was, he was just trying things out and wouldn’t possibly be continuing to refine this pill for the long haul.

To Jiang Chen’s level of consciousness, the drain on his mind if he had to refine the pill twice a year was almost negligible. Besides, the drain on the mind could also be repaired through pills. But of course, he

naturally wouldn't speak any of this. He knew Elder Yun Nie wanted to increase the value of this pill and starve out the market.

The others naturally had nothing to say after Elder Yun Nie's detailed explanation. One couldn't simply demand the Regal Pill Palace pill masters to risk their lives, could they? It was up to them whether or not they wanted to refine this pill.

Wang Jianyu kept a stiff upper lip even after being put in his place by Elder Yun Nie. "This pill is yours, and it's all down to you flapping your lips on how it's to be managed!"

Dan Chi smiled. "So you do know that this pill belongs to us? Then it's up to us to decide how we want to refine it."

Xiang Wentian frowned with impatience as he listened to them bicker. "Younger brother Wang, stop being a bother here." He then looked at Dan Chi. "Younger brother Dan Chi, tell me, will there be a Longevity Pill allotted to me?"

Palace Head Dan Chi responded seriously, "Apart from Jiang Chen refining the Longevity Pill once so far, even Elder Yun Nie has yet to attempt it. As for the one that Jiang Chen has refined, that's his private property. I'm not at liberty to make decisions for him."

So the topic had come back to Jiang Chen again. Xiang Wentian had to have it, and so his glittering eyes moved to Jiang Chen. "Sage nephew Jiang Chen, name whatever price you will for your Longevity Pill. We can all compete on basis of price if it comes down to it!"

The Great Cathedral possessed a grand repository of wealth and wasn't afraid to show it. The conversation had now shifted to a war of wealth. When Xiang Wentian's words rang out, some of the other sects also started thinking rapidly. Someone immediately took the opportunity to call out, "I say, why don't we have an open auction with the pill going to the highest bidder!"

These words spurred the others into motion. "Right, fair competition with it going to the highest bidder is the principled thing!"

"This is rather good. This way, everyone has a chance, and no one will have complaints if they lose."

Honored Master Tian Ming smiled ruefully. It wasn't that his Dark North Sect didn't have money to spare; they were also wealthy and willing to flaunt it. Their advantage in resources was very apparent sitting in the northern end of the Myriad Domain. It was just that if this turned into a competition with the Great Cathedral in terms of wealth, only a huge loss awaited. He'd wanted to grab Jiang Chen and conduct a private transaction, and all things considered, he'd gotten there first. But after the Sacred Elephant family head's shenanigans, it was now an open competition. Tian Ming was undoubtedly the most dejected one present, and not to mention that he had the closest relationship with the Regal Pill Palace. So whether in a public arena or private area, he should've held priority. However, he knew that this had nothing to do with the Regal Pill Palace, and that it could only be chalked up to Xiang Wentian of the Great Cathedral being too domineering.

Xiang Wentian was at ninth level sage realm, and his personal strength was the unquestioned peak of the Myriad Domain. He was also the head of the Great Cathedral, a sect that boasted the strongest martial strength in the Myriad Domain. If he didn't want to be reasonable, there was nothing anyone

else could do. Yet, Honored Master Tian Ming was unresigned. He had to have the Longevity Pill, and even if it came down to bidding, he had to win at least one of them. Who knew when another would next appear!

The other sect heavyweights were as equally tempted as Honored Master Tian Ming and Xiang Wentian. Since the competition was now open to all, who said they needed to leave it to those two? Whoever had enough charisma and willingness to bid could compete.

In this way, everyone's thoughts began to churn. Only Wang Jianyu remained stubborn in his recalcitrance. He still felt all of it to be a show that the Regal Pill Palace was purposefully putting on to convince the crowd that the pill was a rare and difficult thing to obtain. But after being chastised by Xiang Wentian, he didn't dare offer his contrary words. That Great Cathedral family head might do something outrageous when venting his ire. Wang Jianyu couldn't afford to lose his face here. So although the Sacred Sword Palace was known for being cocky, it still reined itself in when faced with the Great Cathedral.

And this, was how an auction began with a thunderous uproar.

Chapter 557: A Preposterous Bidding War

Although it was a spontaneous auction, the atmosphere was abnormally fervent. The one hosting the auction was a fifth rank sect head. He had no wishes or desires and was fully aware that he didn't have the resources to battle for the pill. In addition, his sect had received no end of benefits from the Regal Pill Palace in the past, so he had naturally volunteered to host this auction.

"Everyone, can I say a few words?" Wang Jianyu couldn't help but open his mouth again when he saw the auction about to start.

Xiang Wentian could barely keep his anger in check when he saw Wang Jianyu jumping out again. "Wang Jianyu, you have the most amount of issues here. Hurry up and fart out whatever you have!"

He wasn't ordinarily such a crude person, but he simply couldn't remain composed when he'd fully understood the effects of the Longevity Pill. Being able to extend his lifespan up to a maximum of eight hundred years was an incredible temptation! However, this Wang Jianyu wouldn't stop running his mouth, buzzing around like an annoying fly!

Wang Jianyu felt a bit awkward at hearing that, but still summoned his courage and raised his hands in a cupped fist salute towards Xiang Wentian. "Elder brother Xiang, it's not that I want to keep talking, but has everyone considered what would happen if this Longevity Pill doesn't have the effect of extending lifespans? What then?"

These words were like a cold bucket of water on everyone's fervor. The value of the pill had blinded everyone, but Wang Jianyu's reminder awoke them to this potential problem. What if the Regal Pill Palace was boasting and had severely exaggerated things? The scene instantly cooled as everyone looked over to the Regal Pill Palace.

Palace Head Dan Chi was quite forthright as he spoke. "Haha, all's fair in the world of transactions. If everyone feels that this is too risky, then we can cancel the auction. After all, it's not us who are desperate to sell the pill."

Elder Yun Nie also smiled. "Since everyone feels this as the case, then let's cancel it." He rose and prepared to walk off the stage.

When Jiang Chen saw that the two heavyweights had both spoken, he naturally rose to his feet as well. "I was the one who refined the Longevity Pill, and my original intentions were to save it for the elders of my sect. If it hadn't been everyone here fighting over it, I hadn't planned on selling it either."

Xiang Wentian was starting to panic now. He hastily rushed forward and pulled at Dan Chi. "Ole brother Dan Chi, don't speak words out of anger. Ole brother Yun Nie, show me some face. Let's all calm down, calm down."

Palace Head Dan Chi roared, the very picture of enraged innocence. "Ole brother Xiang, it's not that I don't want to show everyone face, but there are some here who deny my sect the proper respect it is due! At the end of the day, we're all fourth rank sects. We all behave with a certain bearing. But right here, we have someone who insists on nitpicking at the details, fanning the flames of drama, and crying wolf when we've placed our hands on our hearts and opened the doors of our sect to do honest business. What would you do in our situation?!"

Wang Jianyu snorted coldly. "Dan Chi, don't try to pretend that you're that innocent. Why would you feel so guilty if your Longevity Pill is really that miraculous?"

Xiang Wentian's patience had been well and truly overdrawn. It was plain to him that the Regal Pill Palace was erupting in anger. If Wang Jianyu continued down his path, then he really might ruin everything. "Wang Jianyu, shut the hell up! Another word out of you will mean nothing less than declaring the entire Sacred Elephant family as your enemy!"

Notwithstanding Xiang Wentian's true feelings of rage at potentially missing out on this opportunity, his wrathful performance was also to ensure that the Regal Pill Palace was reassured by his show of support. That way, hopefully, they might not really put the Longevity Pill away.

Honored Master Tian Ming also chimed in. "If none of you believe in the effects of this pill, I'll gladly take it off your hands. I'll take on the risk freely, no need to fear if it's an exaggeration."

"Dream on!" Xiang Wentian rolled his eyes.

Wang Jianyu had received a faceful of dust at Xiang Wentian's words. He'd wanted to sow some seeds of doubt, and douse everyone's fervent behavior with questions of the Longevity Pill's legitimacy. But he hadn't thought that Xiang Wentian's desire was completely beyond his imagination!

Xiang Wentian tried every possible method of coaxing he knew before he finally persuaded Dan Chi and Elder Yun Nie to stay. In all fairness, the latter two hadn't actually planned on cancelling the auction, they just wanted to teach Wang Jianyu a lesson he wouldn't soon forget. Don't you like to run your mouth? Keep running it and see what happens, hmm!

When Jiang Chen saw that the two had taken their seats again, he too smiled and prepared to return to his seat.

Wei Wuying suddenly laughed, "Well, just how many years of life can this Longevity Pill offer? We should at least know this!"

Xiang Wentian had just sat down when he saw Wei Wuying stepping forth next to create trouble. He rolled his eyes and was about to erupt again when Jiang Chen suddenly stood up with a smile. "I'm the one who refined the Longevity Pill, and this is only a lower rank version. However, I hereby announce that if the Walkabout Sect and Sacred Sword Palace participates in the auction, I will take back the pill. For your information, a lower rank pill will have no problems extending one's life by five hundred years. You will feel the pill repair your bodily functions immediately after ingesting it. Payment will be immediately refunded if an effect isn't apparent."

Jiang Chen didn't engage in empty bluster. There was nothing more convincing than an on-the-spot refund. The expressions of those from the Walkabout Sect and Sacred Sword Palace immediately changed when Jiang Chen was done speaking. Wang Han slammed his hand down on the table, "And who the hell do you think you are, Jiang Chen? Are you worthy of banning my Sacred Sword Palace?!"

Wei Qing also looked at Jiang Chen sinisterly. "Kid, your arrogance really knows no bound, huh! It looks like I really need to teach you a lesson on how a young, ignorant junior should act!"

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, completely ignoring the two. He looked at the host instead. "We can begin."

However, this nonchalant attitude sent Wang Han into paroxysms of fury. He shot to his feet, absolutely infuriated at this dismissal. "Jiang Chen, get the hell down here right now! I'll teach you how you should act in front of your seniors!"

However, a deep growl emanated from Xiang Qin from the Great Cathedral, "Wang Han, sit your ass right back down! One more word and I'll break an arm. Two more words, and you'll have to learn how to wield your swords with your feet!"

Xiang Qin was well aware of how deeply his family head desired the Longevity Pill, and these fellows were continually disrupting the proceedings with unmitigated abandon! As Xiang Wentian's direct grandson, how would he not understand what this pill meant to his grandfather? Moreover, how could he not understand how meaningful it was for him? If his grandfather could live another five hundred years, that meant his backer would also live another couple hundred years. This was greatly advantageous for Xiang Qin's development.

If his grandfather fell, then not only would the Sacred Elephant family lose their position as the head of the Great Cathedral, but he would also likely lose the qualifications to become the next Sacred Elephant family head. After all, he had yet to fully grow into his power and fill out his wings. He had to further consolidate his position as the future Sacred Elephant family head under his grandfather's care. Therefore, Xiang Qin was all too aware of the significance of this pill.

Even though Wang Han brimmed with killing intent, he still didn't dare stand up to the first genius of the Sacred Elephant family. He knew that Xiang Qin was nothing if not a man of his word. Thus, Wang Han glared threateningly at Jiang Chen, his face filled with angered humiliation. It was clear that he had placed the blame of his embarrassment firmly on Jiang Chen's head.

On the other hand, Wei Qing's personality was devious and crafty. Although he itched to kill Jiang Chen right then and there, he couldn't afford to take a public stance against a genius of the Great Cathedral either. He too sized up Jiang Chen in a sinister fashion and plotted on how to handle this thorn in his side.

Jiang Chen stayed as collected as ever, letting the provocative looks slide off him like rain on a rock.

With the Sacred Sword Palace and Walkabout Sect barred from the proceedings, the auction had lost some serious competition for the Longevity Pill. The fifth rank sects obviously didn't have the sufficient wealth to participate, and the Regal Pill Palace naturally wouldn't step forth to bid either. As a result, the only bidders left were the Great Cathedral, the Dark North Sect, and the Tristar Sect.

"This is a lower rank Longevity Pill that can be taken by a sage cultivator to extend their lifespan by five hundred years. The starting bid will be placed at three hundred thousand spirit stones. The auction begins now."

There weren't that many rules when it came to this spontaneous auction. The auctioneer had barely gotten the words out before the Dark North Sect immediately shouted out, "Five hundred thousand!"

Well well. The bid had immediately jumped to five hundred thousand spirit stones. This figure had just exceeded Jiang Chen's winnings from his bet. Interestingly, that bet had been based on individual participation as well. Apart from his own principal, there had been four hundred thousand spirit stones spread between eight participants. This Longevity Pill had been refined from free materials, but the money earned from it was going into his own pocket. The fifth rank sect geniuses couldn't help but admire Jiang Chen. They didn't even have ten thousand spirit stones on hand, let alone five hundred thousand! But here was Jiang Chen with a pill he'd refined in the competition soaring to a price of five hundred thousand spirit stones. To make matters even more exciting, this was only the beginning!

The Tristar Sect didn't dither around either. "Six hundred thousand!"

Xiang Wentian cackled. "One million!"

When it came to the depth of their pockets, the Great Cathedral and Dark North Sect were actually on par with each other. But Xiang Wentian's momentum was indeed frightening. It was obvious that with less than 60 years left of life, his desire for the Longevity Pill was bordering on obsessive. One wasn't born with things like spirit stones, and they weren't something he could take when he finally departed this world. He was determined to purchase this pill even if he used up all the wealth in the sect.

Of course, to the peak existence in the Myriad Domain, a million spirit stones was akin to an ordinary person's thigh hair. It was next to nothing to him.

Honored Master Tian Ming knew that Xiang Wentian was trying to use his aura to suppress any more bidding, and naturally didn't back down. "1.5 million!"

"2 million!" Xiang Wentian added another five hundred thousand as soon as Honored Master Tian Ming had finished speaking, as if two million upper rank spirit stones was as a bauble like two candies left over in his pocket.

Tristar Sect Head Zhu laughed ruefully. He finally saw things clearly. These two madmen were hellbent on turning this into a bidding war. He'd originally held an opportunistic mindset earlier and thought he had a chance at the winning bid. But with these two lunatics in the mix, getting the Longevity Pill would be nothing but a dream. Shaking his head, Sect Head Zhu decided to withdraw.

Honored Master Tian Ming was a nice guy, but he was also incensed by this kind of provocative bidding. "3 million!"

“4 million.” Xiang Wentian’s tone was as carefree as if he was offering four million pebbles. One had to say, Xiang Wentian’s presence was truly domineering. The aura of bulling through until he reached his goal had already given him an upper hand in the auction, and this kind of grand bidding war was filling the hearts of the fifth rank sects with awe. They’d never seen such generous bids!

Four million upper rank spirit stones for one pill! Even the annual expenses of a sect likely wouldn’t reach this figure. Even the elders and heavyweights of the fifth rank sects had likely never witnessed such an explosive scene, not to mention the young geniuses. Young and old stood stunned at the sight of these two bidding. They couldn’t help but swallow noisily when they turned to look at Jiang Chen in admiration and worship.

Chapter 558: The Longevity Pill That Turns Back Time

Honored Master Tian Ming wasn’t willing to play second fiddle to this madman as he hiked the price up to five million. However, Xiang Wentian’s eyes had gone bloodshot in his desire. He didn’t even blink as he tossed in a bid of six million spirit stones.

The situation was quickly getting out of hand. If this continued, these two maniacs might resort to something ludicrous in their frenzy for the pill. Off to the side, Wei Wuying was watching coldly. If he had been allowed to speak, he would’ve gladly added some more fuel to the fire and turned it into a complete mess. Things would be perfect if he could incite a fight between the Great Cathedral and Dark North Sect.

Wei Wuying was the sort who loved a good show, but didn’t particularly care about how it came about. The unluckier others were, the happier he was. Besides, with how the competition had developed, he too felt that the price of the Longevity Pill had far exceeded its true value. Six million stones! Even if he were to take out so many stones in one go, it would still tug painfully at his heartstrings.

Wang Jianyu had been forced to sit in silence after being blasted by Xiang Wentian, but his thoughts ran a similar path to Wei Wuying’s. His only hope was that the bidding would boil over to the point where it would rage completely out of control. If the situation reached that point of no return, he could step forward to fan the flames a little and embroil the Regal Pill Palace in the whole mess. If both the Dark North Sect and the Great Cathedral also formed a grudge with the Regal Pill Palace over this incident, then the Regal Pill Palace would become the hated enemy of all the other sects in the Myriad Domain. He would naturally be delighted to see this happen, and would laugh even in his sleep if it really did.

Honored Master Tian Ming was now caught between a rock and a hard place. Judging from Xiang Wentian’s attitude, there was no way he would stop. Tian Ming also knew that that no matter how he upped the price, the other would always be nipping at his heels. This old man was obviously ready to go to the point of bankrupting his family in order to obtain the pill and save his life.

As he hesitated, Xiang Wentian smiled coldly. “Why aren’t you bidding, old man Tian Ming? Doesn’t your Dark North Sect possess a great deal of wealth? Continue!”

Honored Master Tian Ming was different from Xiang Wentian. Although the former’s sect had money, it had to come from sect funds in the end. Although he was the sect head, he had other heavyweights in his sect that could put pressure on him. But when it came to the Sacred Elephant family, Xiang Wentian’s word was law and no one dared disobey him. Honored Master Tian Ming had already lost in

terms of prerequisites. However, he didn't feel comfortable in just giving up just like this. He ignored the darkening faces of his elders and cried out, "7 million!"

Xiang Wentian could also tell that Tian Ming was at his limits and couldn't really hold on. He laughed arrogantly, "I'll put down 8 million! Old man Tian Ming, dare you carry on?"

Tian Ming privately cursed at Xiang Wentian for being a madman and refused to step down. "I also offer 8 million and a jug of Darknorth Starsand. This is the best material in the Myriad Domain to use for refining weapons and glyphs."

Xiang Wentian immediately laughed heartily. "Are you out of money and resorting to precious materials to guarantee your bid? I'll offer 10 million and the full skin of a Lightning Antlers Python. This python skin can be used in crafting earth rank glyphs and runes!"

Tian Ming was speechless as he glared silently at Xiang Wentian, knowing that this crazed old man had indeed thrown everything to the winds. Even if they continued bidding on the pill, Tian Ming didn't have the same advantage of throwing everything to the wind. "Fine, this one goes to you, ole brother Xiang. I can't move you with pleas, nor can I best you with wealth. If there's another Longevity Pill, you can't take it from me then!"

These words were clearly capitulating on the auction, and looking for a concession. Xiang Wentian laughed heartily and didn't press his point when he saw Tian Ming conceding. "What does another pill have to do with me? This pill isn't candy. It's of no more use to me after I take one."

When he finished, he looked at Jiang Chen with hotly burning eyes. "Jiang Chen, this Longevity Pill is now mine, right?"

Jiang Chen smiled faintly and looked at the impromptu auctioneer. The latter chuckled. "Is there anyone offering a price higher than the Sacred Elephant family head?"

No one topped that bid even after three rounds of questions. It was obvious that no unsuspecting person would come fight for this pill now. In addition, anyone who stepped forth to try to seize it now would be publicly setting themselves against the Sacred Elephant family head. The price of doing so would be unimaginably horrifying.

Bam! The impromptu auction was declared at an end when the gavel came down. Xiang Wentian was delighted and reached into his robes for a storage ring he'd long since readied. He flung it forward carelessly onto the auction table. "Ten million upper rank origin spirit stones and the skin of a Lightning Antlers Python. It's all in here, check it yourself. Where's the Longevity Pill? Give it to me, give it to me!"

Xiang Wentian couldn't wait another second. Nothing was more urgent than the pursuit of life.

Jiang Chen carefully took out the pill and handed it over. He was about to give a few reminders of its effects when Xiang Wentian forestalled him by snatching the pill and started beaming merrily at it. "Good, good! It's clearly apparent with a glance that this pill is uncommon. I've once seen some of the earth rank pills that emperor realm cultivators take, but none of those can measure up to this one! How could this be fake? Only idiots would think this is fake, hahaha!"

Xiang Wentian was immensely proud of himself. It appeared that he'd seen the Longevity Pill before, but just hadn't revealed the level of this pill before. Now that he had it in hand, he was happily revealing its

level. It was obvious that although ten million upper rank stones was a great deal of his wealth, he felt it a completely fair trade to receive a pseudo-earth rank pill that would lengthen his lifespan in return! These days, no dream was as alluring as the chance to extend his life. In addition, with his cultivation at the peak of the sage realm, an additional 500 years gave him the confidence to try for the emperor realm.

Once he succeeded in ascending to the emperor realm, then he would've truly made it. An emperor realm cultivator appearing after several hundred years was absolutely of monumental significance! Not only would the Great Cathedral soar to new heights, his overall lifespan would see yet another breakthrough.

One's lifespan would increase by at least a thousand, possibly even two or three thousand years when breaking through from the sage to emperor realm. He would then have ample time to assail even higher realms. For a cultivator of his level, what was more alluring than the idea of extending his lifespan again?

As he listened to Jiang Chen mention a few things regarding the Longevity Pill, Xiang Wentian went ahead and popped the pill into his mouth.

Taking it on the spot!

Everyone was both surprised and amused by this scene. The mightiest, strongest cultivator in the Myriad Domain was actually this impatient?

When the Longevity Pill hit Xiang Wentian's stomach, it dissolved and traveled to every inch of his body through his meridians. On the outside, his body was suddenly covered with a light red haze that was speckled with green. Upon seeing this, Jiang Chen recognized it as the pill starting to come into effect.

The red haze indicated the strength of Xiang Wentian's bodily functions, and the green specks represented the medicinal effects of the dissolving Longevity Pill. As time passed, the faint green specks faded away, and the red haze grew increasingly stronger and vibrant. Xiang Wentian's skin also began to crack, the fissures expanding like a python shedding its skin. The dead skin broke into flakes, falling off like chunks of mud that had been plastered onto a wall.

Beneath the dried flakes, fresh new skin peeped out. Xiang Wentian was shedding his skin like a python in exchange for new skin! Black impurities began to flow out of his orifices and fingertips in short order. Jiang Chen knew that the process of shedding dead skin was the renewal of the body's exterior, much like an old tree gaining new shoots. The black sludge was the concentrated form of all the impurities that had accumulated inside the body after all these years being forced out by the medicine in the form of bodily waste.

Jiang Chen nodded slightly as he analyzed the pill's effects. By this point, even those who had the worst observation skills could tell that the Longevity Pill was living up to its name. Perhaps they couldn't understand what the black sludge was, but the picture of new skin beneath the molting old skin was something even fools could understand.

As the haze of light slowly began to fade, Xiang Wentian's features began to come back into view. As it died away, it revealed a face that was no longer marred by wrinkles, and a head of hair that looked like it'd been dyed from snowy white to jet black. In the short time since Xiang Wentian had taken the pill,

his entire being seemed to have reverted back from his elderly frame to that of a healthy middle-aged man!

When everyone managed to pick their jaws off the floor, an uproar broke out. The crowd was absolutely flabbergasted by the amazing effects of the Longevity Pill. n-(0V**EL**ln

“Grandfather, you’re... you’re younger!” Xiang Qin was both surprised and overjoyed. He couldn’t help but yell loudly. If Xiang Wentian was the happiest after this entire episode, then the second happiest would absolutely be Xiang Qin.

The other family heads from the Great Cathedral also walked up to offer their congratulations.

“This is wonderful, ole brother Xiang. This Longevity Pill is indeed wondrous to be able to turn back time like this. This is absolutely incredible!”

“Ole brother Xiang, you often sigh that the prime of life is transient and that you want to borrow another five hundred years from the heavens. It looks like you’ve obtained your wishes!”

“The Longevity Pill lives up to its name!”

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. If the Longevity Pill had sold according to market value, it would’ve fetched one or two million spirit stones at most, which was already an eye-popping price! He’d made out like a bandit from this auction. As for the claim of reversing time, that was merely an exaggeration. The pill didn’t actually do that. It cleaned all the impurities from one’s body and stimulated the remaining life-force hidden in one’s body. No one, not even the most pinnacle cultivators, could dig out all of their life-force’s potential. There would always be various reasons or causes that damaged or suppressed the body’s natural mechanisms.

What the Longevity Pill did was to clear away all those impurities suppressing or damaging the body’s mechanisms and thoroughly excavate the potential in a human’s life. In actuality, this lifespan should’ve originally belonged to Xiang Wentian, but had been left untapped due to various reasons. All the pill had done was to take it back. The emperor realm cultivators actually had a similar kind of pill available to them as well, but its level was even higher.

Xiang Wentian knew his body’s condition far better than anyone else. He could feel how light his steps seemed to be. He’d bid farewell to that declining body of his and replaced it with one full of life.

“Hahaha, Jiang Chen, my money was well spent! My body has absolutely returned to what it was five hundred years ago. It’s not a lie at all that the Longevity Pill can extend life by five hundred years. Now, which of you would dare say that my money wasn’t well spent?”

Money wasn’t anything to Xiang Wentian. Having extended his life was something truly worth celebrating!

Chapter 559: A Thrilling and Exciting Effect

Just a short while ago when the price of one Longevity Pill had shot to the skies, the onlookers had felt it to be a ludicrous amount for a pill. That is, that was the thought in everyone’s mind except the two fighting over it. Even if the two heavyweights from the Regal Pill Palace had found this price to be verging on the ridiculous, not a hint of it crossed their faces. But having seen Xiang Wentian’s stunning transformation, all doubts and skepticism were now gone with the wind.

Everyone could more or less understand the miraculousness of pills. But for a pill to have such amazing and instantaneous effects like the Longevity Pill was still a first for everyone, even those with a wide array of experience. They all looked at Xiang Wentian, not even blinking for fear of him reverting to his previous form if they did. This scene was just like magic. But no matter who, everyone was convinced that the Longevity Pill had the power to turn back time.

“Congratulations, ole brother Xiang!” Palace Head Dan Chi was the first to come forward in congratulations. Although he was surprised, he was even more delighted. He could see the glorious future of the Longevity Pill from Xiang Wentian’s transformation.

Xiang Wentian laughed heartily. “Haha, ole brother Dan Chi, I definitely owe your Regal Pill Palace one this time!”

Xiang Qin also walked in front of Jiang Chen. “Brother Jiang Chen, you are my brother from now on. Whoever makes trouble for you in the Myriad Domain invites trouble from me, Xiang Qin!”

Xiang Qin sent a fierce glare in all directions when he was done, taking special care to linger in Wang Han and Wei Qing’s direction. He was obviously aware that Jiang Chen had earned their enmity.

Jiang Chen smiled in response when he saw Xiang Qin’s enthusiasm. “I am truly flattered and overawed by Brother Xiang’s courtesy.”

Xiang Qin had a generous personality as he too smiled, “Brother, you have such pill dao potential at your age. You must come and visit our Great Cathedral often!”

“I will certainly visit Brother Xiang when I have the time!”

The two acted like old friends at their first meeting, a sentiment that made Wang Han grit his teeth to watch. He also knew that Xiang Qin was going to these lengths as a public warning to him and Wei Qing not to touch Jiang Chen. However, even as Wang Han ground his teeth together, this only reaffirmed the determination to see Jiang Chen dead. If Jiang Chen was allowed to come into his full strength, then he really might become an enormous threat to the Sacred Sword Palace in the future! With the undying enmity between the Sacred Sword Palace and Regal Pill Palace, the stronger the Regal Pill Palace became, the harder it would be for the Sacred Sword Palace to remain at ease.

“Congratulations, ole brother Xiang.” Tristar Sect Head Zhu also came forward with good wishes.

Xiang Wentian was the preeminent martial dao cultivator within the Myriad Domain after all. How would the others dare not show him face? Even the previously lectured Wang Jianyu stepped forth with a smile plastered on his face. Thankfully, Xiang Wentian was too elated to follow up on what happened earlier, thanking everyone with smiles. Only Honored Master Tian Ming slouched, dejected, in a corner. He’d fallen into depression when he’d lost the bidding. He’d even hoped at one point that the pill was fake! Now seeing how magnificent Xiang Wentian’s changes were after he’d taken the pill, he was assaulted by another storm of regret. However, rationally, he also knew that competing with that crazy old Xiang Wentian in terms of wealth was a lost cause to begin with. He had been doomed to lose from the beginning. “I say, ole brother Dan Chi, I’m reserving the next Longevity Pill that’s refined. No one can take it from me!”

Honored Master Tian Ming was a clear-headed person and knew that this matter really couldn't be blamed on the Regal Pill Palace. He'd lost fair and square, and no one could be placed at fault. Although this had nothing to do with the Regal Pill Palace, Palace Head Dan Chi still felt a bit guilty towards Honored Master Tian Ming. "Ole brother Tian Ming, the next Longevity Pill to be refined is definitely yours."

Honored Master Tian Ming finally smiled when he heard this. "Good, good! I won't short you on the price either. I'll pay just as much as ole brother Xiang did."

Honored Master Tian Ming's words set down a base price for the Longevity Pill at ten million upper rank origin spirit stones. One had to say, this figure was a particular exorbitant one. But since even Xiang Wentian and Honored Master Tian Ming had bought the pill for this price, no one could find a problem with it.

A high price made for an upscale strategy. They already had a ringing endorsement from Xiang Wentian, so the Regal Pill Palace wouldn't worry for lack of buyers. Which heavyweight amongst the six great sects would be unable to take out ten million stones, to say nothing of anything else?

Ten million stones for five hundred years of life. This was a good trade no matter how one looked at it. Even many of the fifth rank sect heavyweights were tempted. There weren't that many sage realm cultivators in the fifth rank sects, but there were still a couple.

The sect heads of a fifth rank sect could still take out ten million spirit stones. It just might be a heavier burden for them as it might represent more than half of their personal wealth.

"Ole brother Dan Chi, I'd also like to reserve a pill. Can I do so?" Tristar Sect Head Zhu chuckled.

Dan Chi smiled. "We will prioritize Myriad Domain requests for the Longevity Pill. Of course, it is indeed difficult to refine this pill, so we can't guarantee when a second and third pill will be produced."

"Haha, I can wait, I can wait." Sect Head Zhu hurriedly responded with a smile when he saw that Dan Chi didn't turn him down.

It was those of the Sacred Sword Palace and Walkabout Sect who were the most dejected now. Jiang Chen had already clearly indicated that he wouldn't be selling this pill to members of their sects. They were people who demanded face; how would they be able to take this lying down? Wang Jianyu in particular quite desired a Longevity Pill, but he knew that if he stepped forward with a reservation request, that'd only be inviting humiliation down on himself. He flourished his sleeve, snorted, and left.

When Wei Wuying of the Walkabout Sect saw Wang Jianyu leave, he laughed wryly in his heart. He knew that he had offended the Regal Pill Palace quite a lot just now, and flicked a glance over to Elder Wu Hen. Elder Wu Hen smiled and walked up. "Daoist Yun Nie, you and I have been friends for a hundred years now. You won't really be banning my Walkabout Sect from this pill, will you?"

Elder Yun Nie smiled. "The Walkabout Sect possesses a high caliber of talent in pill dao as well. Normally, you don't purchase any pills from my Regal Pill Palace either. Furthermore, there's temporarily no one who has a need for this pill in your sect."

"Palace Head Dan Chi, I'm from the Nearmoon Sect. I'd like to be so bold as to reserve a Longevity Pill..."

“Palace Head Dan Chi, this little brother would also like to reserve a pill.”

All of the fifth rank sect heads stepped forward in this moment, and those who had some relationship with Palace Head Dan Chi took an additional step forward. It was apparent that the Regal Pill Palace had a good network of connections and a stellar reputation. These fifth rank sect heads all knew that the Regal Pill Palace was kinder than the other sects when it came to business negotiations.

Elder Wu Hen looked at the scene developing in front of him. “Daoist Yun Nie, you wouldn’t sell to the fifth rank sects and still bypass our Walkabout Sect, would you?”

It wasn’t that Elder Yun Nie was purposefully not agreeing, but that the Longevity Pill was Jiang Chen’s recipe. Jiang Chen had already made his position clear in not selling to the Walkabout Sect and Sacred Sword Palace, so Elder Yun Nie wasn’t at liberty to overrule Jiang Chen’s words. “Daoist Wu Hen, we can slowly discuss the particulars of business between our two sects in the future. This matter is immensely important, and I can’t make the decision on behalf of our Regal Pill Palace either.”

Elder Yun Nie could only fob Elder Wu Hen off for now.

What followed next had nothing to do with Jiang Chen. Although he had refined four Longevity Pills, he’d only taken out the lower rank one for the auction. There was one more lower rank as well as two mid rank pills that Jiang Chen wasn’t planning on taking out for now.

By his estimations, he calculated that even Elder Yun Nie would only be able to refine two or three pills a year. There was no way that he’d be able to refine any more. Elder Yun Nie’s consciousness might not even be as strong as Jiang Chen’s, since the latter had the benefit of Boulder’s Heart and Psychic’s Head supporting him. As for pill refining techniques, there was even less of a comparison to be drawn there.

Jiang Chen estimated that if Elder Yun Nie were to refine the pill, his chances of success would very low. He’d likely only make an attempt once or twice a year. His consciousness wouldn’t be able to take it if he made any more attempts than that. Unless Elder Yun Nie ascended to the level of pill king, it was unlikely he’d ever reach the point of making an attempt once every three months. At that point, his chance of success would also be higher, and he’d definitely produce one or two pill in each attempt. After all, no pill king would be able to measure up to Jiang Chen in his past life in any aspect of pill dao technique.

Ling Bi’er was genuinely happy for Jiang Chen when she saw everyone mobbing her sect for a chance of a Longevity Pill. This junior brother Jiang Chen seemed to be all encompassing! She was suddenly a bit more confident in his abilities to cure her father’s Miasma.

Mu Gaoqi was even more delighted. The more Jiang Chen succeeded, the happier he was. “Brother Chen, you’ve really come into some wealth this time.” He sighed with admiration.

“Did you pay attention to the spirit herbs for me?” Jiang Chen responded with a question.

Mu Gaoqi smiled ruefully. “Brother, everyone switched their attention to the Longevity Pill in the hubbub. No one was in the mood to sell anything.”

Ling Bi’er also walked over at this time. “Congratulations, junior brother Jiang Chen. From now on, there will be no one who doesn’t know your name in the entirety of the Myriad Domain.”

Jiang Chen flashed a dashing smile. "That doesn't matter; there's actually not that much advantage in being famous." n)(OVelbIn

Being a celebrity did indeed bring its own worries. A large group of young folk from the Myriad Domain came over to greet Jiang Chen. Among them were both fourth rank sect geniuses as well as fifth rank sect geniuses. Everyone had the same thought; they had to build a good relationship with Jiang Chen. With his deep pill dao potential, he would certainly become a pill king one day, rising up to becoming a person of incomparable value in the Myriad Domain.

Even the various sect heads had to show him a bit of respect now. If his martial dao potential was a bit higher, then he might even become the legendary figure of his generation in the Myriad Domain! Therefore, apart from the few geniuses who looked upon Jiang Chen with hate, almost all of the young geniuses who'd come to Mt. Rippling Mirage wouldn't pass up the opportunity to get to know Jiang Chen. Even if they couldn't become good friends, it would be good to become acquainted with Jiang Chen.

It was because of this that Jiang Chen decided to just go into closed door cultivation when he returned to his residence. He didn't want to waste time exchanging meaningless pleasantries. Why not make use of this time to cultivate instead?

The restrictions placed on the outskirts of Mt. Rippling Mirage were lifted three days later. The top ten from both the elder and genius group would be the first batch sent into the mountain, with the full twenty days of harvesting available to them. This was the benefits granted to the winners of the Pill Battles, and they would equally split any gains with their sect. But of course, it was up to each individual person's discretion just how much they took out to hand over to the sect. In the years of the pill battles, the amount that was truly taken out and handed over to the sect was less than thirty percent, never mind fifty!

The various sects didn't do much to enforce a strict split either. If individual sect members grew strong from this lax behavior, it would still trickle down to the sect in the end. Therefore, the sects weren't too strict when it came to this requirement. Otherwise, it was quite easy to tighten the screws on things if they so desired.

Chapter 560: Mt. Rippling Mirage

The first batch of twenty to enter Mt. Rippling Mirage had already congregated outside the mountain. The heavyweights of the six great sects were in charge of controlling the formation around the mountain. As they activated the formation, a rainbow-like bridge shimmered into existence in front of everyone.

"This is the transportation gate of Mt. Rippling Mirage. All of you have in your hands a jade token that was specifically refined to correspond to this formation. Remember, when the twenty days are up, the formation will automatically transport you out. The token will help you locate the nearest transportation matrix, in case you run into any danger. If you crush it in the vicinity of a matrix, you will be automatically transported out. There are multiple matrixes within the mountain, and any of them will be able to teleport you out."

The jade tokens in everyone's hands were actually to save their lives. Spirit herbs weren't the only things that grew on the mountain, all sorts of danger lay hidden on its slopes.. If anyone met with danger they couldn't handle, it'd be best to leave voluntarily. Of course, although there were many transportation matrixes within the mountain, they weren't everywhere. Someone with particularly ill luck may not run into a single one even if they searched for hours. Each year, there were always a few folk who died on the mountain. In unlucky years, roughly 25% of the ones who departed for the mountain would never come back. That meant that out of sixty, at most a dozen would die..

With this first group of twenty, the Regal Pill Palace took up two spots from the elder team, and four from their genius team. It was Mu Gaoqi's first time participating in such a grand affair, and he was obviously still a bit nervous. When he set foot on the rainbow bridge, the normally chatty Mu Gaoqi was uncharacteristically quiet.

"Don't be nervous, Gaoqi!" Jiang Chen encouraged.

Mu Gaoqi managed to smile, "You be careful Brother Chen! The matrix will fling us into different corners of the mountain. I've heard that the mountain is as vast as the seas, with no end to them. I wonder if we'll be able to meet once inside!"

If they could, Mu Gaoqi would love nothing more than to form a team.

Jiang Chen smiled. "It'd be best if we could bump into each other. Gaoqi, don't try to stick it out if you run into danger. Find a transportation matrix to make your escape."

Mu Gaoqi's cultivation level was undoubtedly one of the lowest amongst the candidates. Out of the ten geniuses present, his cultivation was absolutely at the bottom. Things would be alright if he met folks that he could reason with, but if he ran into someone like Wei Qing, then, he'd be in for it.

However, the Regal Pill Palace upper echelon took the protection of Jiang Chen and Mu Gaoqi seriously. They handed each one an air escape rune before they set out. This rune could instantly transport its holder fifty kilometers from their present location. Although that wasn't very far, it would certainly take the bearer away from any area of immediate danger. They'd then have greater hope of finding a transportation matrix and crushing the jade token to escape.

"Remember, when the matrix activates, don't circulate your energy to fight against it. Otherwise, you might be devoured by the formation." A solemn reminder rang in everyone's ears.

An enormous rumble then sounded as a rainbow colored beam filled the area, enfolding the twenty bodies and turning into a rainbow streak of light that disappeared into the void.

Within the beam, Jiang Chen only felt that his senses were completely torpid, like his body had returned to its most basic state. He couldn't see, hear, or smell anything. It felt like everything had returned to an unformed chaos.

Each of his limbs felt like it was being suppressed by incredible pressure, akin to countless mountain ranges crushing him. Trying to move his limbs was almost a futile effort. This feeling continued for a short while, and then a rumble spread to his ears.

The multicolored lights in front of him faded away as his senses regained their usual level of receptivity.

“Mm, am I in Mt. Rippling Mirage now?” Jiang Chen looked around and found himself on a hillside halfway up the mountain. The ground was carpeted in green, and a purple bamboo tree patch dotted the hillside off to the side. A faint mist wreathed around the purple bamboo forest, giving it the ethereal feeling of a fairy realm. Jiang Chen’s senses penetrated into the somewhat loose dirt beneath his feet as he breathed in the incomparably fresh air. His first impression was that of spirit power, a density and concentration of energy that exceeded even that of the Regal Pill Palace’s Rosy Valley.

Jiang Chen called upon his God’s Eye and swept his gaze in all directions. His scan didn’t reveal any signs of danger for the time being. His gaze moved back to the curious patch of purple bamboo.

“This purple bamboo has grown straight and tall, fed by abundant spirit energy. What’s even rarer to see is that it seems to be full of an ethereal air. Miss Huang’er will surely like it if it’s transplanted into the Sovereign Area.”

Although there was ample spirit power within the purple bamboo, its use in the martial dao world tended more towards aesthetic purposes. There were those who used it to create the xiao, flutes, and other instruments. It could also be used to craft weapons, but its battle strength wasn’t particularly noteworthy. It could be said that it was neither a battle oriented item, nor a spirit herb.

With a little bit of effort and time, Jiang Chen had uprooted the patch of bamboo and stored it away. If anyone had been around to see Jiang Chen’s actions, they would’ve surely feared for his brain or laughed at him. He was spending his precious time on such an utterly useless item.

He didn’t tarry after digging up the bamboo trees. Time was indeed precious, and he didn’t want to return empty handed after 20 days. With Jiang Chen’s pill dao potential, he was virtually a fish in familiar waters when harvesting spirit herbs from Mt. Rippling Mirage. As the day grew long, not a single saint rank spirit herb remained unharvested in Jiang Chen’s wake. As for those below saint rank, he couldn’t be bothered with them. Truthfully, even saint rank herbs didn’t hold much allure for him. After all, they only matched up to the origin realm for human cultivators. Only the true saint rank spirit herbs were on the level of the sage realm.

Although Jiang Chen was at the peak of fifth level origin realm, everything he used were naturally treasures of a higher realm. His standards didn’t put anything below rare saint rank spirit herbs in his sight. However, this didn’t mean that these items wouldn’t be of any use. After all, his people needed resources too. The ones offered by the Regal Pill Palace wouldn’t last long.

In three days, an area of fifty kilometers around Jiang Chen had been stripped of all saint rank spirit herbs. He hadn’t gotten his hands dirty himself, instead summoning the Goldbiter Rats. He’d simply selected a few thousand of the more shrewd and strong-looking ones. It would’ve been a shame not to make use of the free labor. Since they’d already benefited multiple times from Jiang Chen, the Goldbiter Rats had long since viewed him as their master. They wouldn’t slack off just because of this kind of task. Moreover, Jiang Chen had also stipulated that a third of all saint rank herbs obtained would belong to them, and any herb below the saint rank was theirs to enjoy. With such a deal in place, the amount of spirit herbs Jiang Chen received over three days was more than the amount that five hundred people could’ve harvested.

It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that he’d nearly razed the mountain down to its bones.

As for Long Xiaoxuan, he couldn't even be bothered to crack open an eyelid when it came to this level of spirit herbs. To him, he was simply accompanying Jiang Chen because he wanted to see and understand this world. What did he care about saint rank spirit herbs?!

However, even though he was the descendant of a dragon, he'd lived by the wood spirit spring since birth. This had instilled a nebulous fear of the outside world in him, which made it easier for Jiang Chen to get the dragon to behave. Otherwise, if Long Xiaoxuan went on a rampage and ran riot through the mountain, it'd scare people witless!

In the bigger scheme of things, scaring people would only be a small matter. If he was discovered by the heavyweights, then they wouldn't be able to find peace no matter where they went in the Myriad Domain. Although there was no one in this region who could handle a dragon's wrath, there were numerous experts in the other regions who would find it laughably easy to take Long Xiaoxuan down. Any random emperor realm cultivator would be enough to pose a threat. After all, in dragon years, Long Xiaoxuan had only just been born; he had yet to fully grow into his formidable battle strength. To make matters worse, he had almost no battle experience to speak of.

At the end of those three days, Jiang Chen left the area. Despite having collected quite a few saint rank spirit herbs, his appetite had yet to be whetted. He'd looked forward to entering the mountain for so long that he wasn't satisfied with just this level of herbs now that he was finally here.

A few hours later, a figure landed in the same area Jiang Chen had just spent three days in. It was that mysterious Ding Tong of the Tristar Sect!

"Mm, according to my unique mark, Jiang Chen seems to have lingered here for a very long time." Ding Tong took a spin around the area. Much to his surprise, the spirit herbs in the area seemed to have been thoroughly ravaged. There wasn't even one decent herb that'd been left behind in one piece.

"How could this have happened?" Although Ding Tong wasn't overly interested in spirit herbs at the moment, he was still a bit perplexed at the sight of this strange scene. Judging from the tatters left behind, it looked like a thousand harvesting teams had churned through the area, leaving just a measly few pickings behind.

"This isn't right, how could large numbers of people come through Mt. Rippling Mirage? The first batch numbers no more than twenty people. This place shouldn't look like this even if we all harvested for ten days and nights straight!" Ding Tong found this barren landscape incredibly difficult to comprehend, but he quickly refocused. His goal here was to track Jiang Chen, not investigate this strange spirit herb phenomenon. When they'd all entered the mountain, he'd used a unique method to unknowingly leave a mark on Jiang Chen's body. It was how he'd tracked Jiang Chen to this specific location through the vast mountain.

Ding Tong was different from Wang Han and Wei Qin. The latter two had visibly displayed their hatred of Jiang Chen, but Ding Tong had carefully concealed his killing intent ever since he'd called Jiang Chen out for a discussion. One could say that his primary goal in Mt. Rippling Mirage was the death of Jiang Chen, not the harvest of spirit herbs. After investigating the area for a while, Ding Tong once again activated his unique tracking method and left for another area of the mountain.

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As Jiang Chen travelled between areas, a feeling of frustration and disgust suddenly surged in his heart. A foreboding feeling had needled his consciousness ever since he'd entered the mountain, fading in and out of existence. He'd thought at first that it was simply the danger inherent to Mt. Rippling Mirage that'd caused the frisson of alarm to spike again and again.

But after spending a few days in the mountain's interior, he had yet to meet anything that would pose a life or death danger to him.

However, this annoying feeling kept niggling in his heart, increasing with every step he took. It seemed that something, somewhere, had just taken a turn for the worse.