

Three Realms 581

Chapter 581: The Divine Island

Jiang Chen swept his eyes over the area and noticed that most of the participants had already gathered here. At rough count, there were fifty cultivators, including the seven of the Regal Pill Palace. It seemed that Vice Hallmaster Yue had entered with the third batch of candidates, and had met up with Elder Yun Nie.

Elder Yun Nie and three other elders had taken up strategic positions, covering the four cardinal directions in order to protect their young geniuses. They were genuinely worried that the two wyverns would change targets and start diving.

When he saw Jiang Chen, Elder Yun Nie called out to him. "Jiang Chen, come over here."

Although Jiang Chen wasn't afraid of the two wyverns, he couldn't appear too out of the ordinary at the moment. He picked up his speed and entered the defensive formation.

Mu Gaoqi ground his teeth. "Wang Han was up to no good when he lured those two monsters here!"

Jiang Chen just smiled. In truth, it was almost the opposite. If Wang Han hadn't been smart enough to lure the two wyverns to this area, he would've been brutally hunted down by the two sooner or later.

Jiang Chen surveyed his surroundings. A large lake took its stately place at the bottom of the valley, and everyone was using its east shore as a gathering point. The lake brimmed with spirit power, manifested by a delicate mist. It looked mysterious and unfathomable, provoking an endless source of imagination. The lake was as if a sleeping beauty, full of magical attraction that irresistibly drew the curious glances of those who saw it.

In the middle of that vast aqueous expanse, Jiang Chen spotted a cluster of islands. It was clear that spirit power was almost overflowing from those islands, lovingly spilling over into the air and entwining around the islands. Thanks to the evaporation of the spirit power, rays of light portended peace and prosperity in the air, giving the islands an exceptionally divine air, as if an immortal realm of great fortune. n-(O/-v(/E--1-/b-.l()n

Jiang Chen recognized those islands as the true core of Mt. Rippling Mirage, and the center of the ancient herb garden! Although he was quite a distance from the abundant spirit power that spilled and flowed in the air above the islands, he still felt physically and mentally refreshed as it wafted over on the wind. Just this hint made it apparent just how rich the spirit power of the islands was.

"It looks like the islands will be the main point of contention in the last three days." Jiang Chen discreetly turned his attention to the battle raging in the skies above him. He noticed that although all the sects were engaging the wyverns with gusto, they were also keeping a covetous eye on the islands in the lake.

The defensive perimeter below was continuing to constrict as more sage realm cultivators began to join the fray. The Regal Pill Palace was no exception as two other elders joined Elder Yun Nie and Vice Hallmaster Yue on the battlefield.

Although the two wyverns were quite ferocious, they found it hard to keep up with the increasing number of sage realm cultivators joining the battle. The more extraordinary of the Myriad Domain

young geniuses were also itching to join as well. For example, on the Sacred Sword Palace's side, Wang Han had recovered his overweeningly arrogant attitude after he'd adjusted his state. He'd changed into a pristinely white outfit, and strutted over to the Regal Pill Palace's side. He spared Jiang Chen an angry glare, fire dancing in his eyes, "Kid, don't think this is the last of it!"

Jiang Chen shrugged and smiled faintly, clearly not paying heed to those words. Jiang Chen would treat even Wang Jianyu of the Sacred Sword Palace as though the other had merely farted, much less a Wang Han.

Wang Han felt like he'd punched a ball of cotton when he saw how thoroughly Jiang Chen was ignoring him. His ire unspent, he suddenly caught sight of Shen Qinghong out of the corner of his eye. He smirked coldly, "Old brother Shen, you're a genius of the Myriad Domain's younger generation, and as such should help shoulder our elders' burdens. As the first genius in the Regal Pill Palace, are you planning on just watching from off to the side?"

Elder Yun Nie suddenly glared down fiercely. "Wang Han, if you want to go battle, you are entirely free to. What are you running off your mouth here for?"

Wang Han was still a bit cautious when it came to Elder Yun Nie, so he laughed loudly. "Is the so-called first genius of the Regal Pill Palace just a title to lay claim to false fame? A lie that stands for the ages? Since that seems to be the case, you should all take a look at how I, a genius of the Myriad Domain, battle those monsters!"

He explosively blasted into the air after those words, stimulating his energy to make his sword erupt with light. The light from the sword rent the void as it inscribed a frosted arc that shone with the splendor of the galaxy. It finally impacted in a blow, striking the back of one of the wyverns.

Attacking the wyverns when so many experts were also attracting their attention was simply taking advantage of the situation. The strike looked stunning, but in the end, it was a mere prick in the back. However, even that was enough to make Shen Qinghong quite depressed.

Wang Han was a sage realm cultivator after all, and he'd already grasped the initial techniques of flight whereas he, Shen Qinghong, remained that small step away from the sage realm. Therefore, he couldn't join this kind of fight even if he wanted to. This was obviously Wang Han mocking him. Shen Qinghong's face was a bit white as the look in his eyes danced, feeling like blades were cutting across his heart as he watched the figures bob and weave in the air. For someone as proud as Shen Qinghong, the repeated humiliations he'd experienced during this Mt. Rippling Mirage trip had greatly decreased his self confidence.

It was rather Jiang Chen who smiled mysteriously to the side, "Wang Han's in for it now!"

His words had just landed in the ears of the others when the other wyvern suddenly sensed Wang Han's presence and let out a long howl of fury. It strafed the air with its wings, forcing the sage realm cultivators beside it to leap back in a hasty retreat. It opened its mouth, and released what seemed to be an endless surge of purple lightning that struck at Wang Han with swift ferocity.

The lightning bolt rent the air as it exploded into countless purple lightning snakes that careened through the sky. Although the sage realm cultivators next the wyverns had fast reactions, they still weren't fast enough to catch lightning as it snaked down to Wang Han at a terrifying speed.

Wang Han had been feeling quite proud about ambushing the wyvern when he was unexpectedly confronted by a sky covered with jagged purple lightning homing in on him. Fright drained the color from his face and he threw all thoughts of image to the winds. He dove desperately, as fast he could, letting himself crash into the ground with a frightening boom.

He was all too familiar with the power of the lightning, and knew that escape in any other direction would only result in him being cleaved in two by the lightning's edge. Only by free falling downwards and slamming into the ground would he have a chance to live.

Indeed, the two Sacred Sword Palace elders below reacted swiftly and flung out several talismans in a row. The talismans all radiated green light to form streams of green air currents, mysteriously catching all of the purple lightning like green carpets.

Wham wham wham!

The purple lightning and green air currents clashed against each other with ear piercing shrieks, sending the air around them into disturbance as gusts and turbulence rocked the air.

Wang Han's speed was nothing to laugh at, so although he'd slammed himself into the ground and looked quite the worse for wear, he hadn't actually suffered injury from the lightning. Bedraggled, he picked himself from the ground and bolted for the defensive encirclement.

Shen Qinghong spurted out in laughter. "Wang Han, is this what you meant by battling that monster?"

Many watching on the ground burst out in raucous laughter, obviously amused by Wang Han's comical downfall. Wang Han had always possessed a genteel bearing, self-styling himself as the top genius of the Myriad Domain. He'd lost a great deal of face in falling down in such an ignoble manner this time. He was so incensed that he almost spat out a mouthful of blood, but settled for glaring frostily at Shen Qinghong, unbounded killing intent surging out of his eyes.

Shen Qinghong had been feeling a bit self conscious before, and a bit wary of Wang Han who'd broken through to the sage realm before him. Yet, the sight of such an unkempt Wang Han easily dissolved the knot in his heart. He felt then that there was nothing to fear about this Wang Han. Turning the focus of his gaze to Jiang Chen, he also felt that this young genius wasn't as irritating to the eye as he'd first believed. Shen Qinghong had suffered the mockery and laughter of the sage realm geniuses throughout this trip to Mt. Rippling Mirage, and each time, it'd been his peers who'd stood up for him. Shen Qinghong's comprehension wasn't weak, and his mental state had been tempered repeatedly on this trip, which was how he could come to such conclusions.

Mu Gaoqi asked with curiosity, "Brother Chen, how did you know that Wang Han was in for it?"

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, but didn't respond. It was plain to him that the two wyverns viewed Wang Han as the culprit who'd stolen the Sage Fledgling Grass. Why else would they have chased him for days on end without respite? Wang Han's seemingly dashing strike had done nothing more than expose the fact that he'd entered their attack range. Of course they would attack him! However, this conclusion was something that'd come out of the various grudges that had formed when the two of them had fought over the Grass. It was rather difficult to succinctly explain.

The elder of the Sacred Sword Palace also found this situation to be rather odd. “Wang Han, these two wyverns seem to be abnormally fixated on you. Just what have you done to make them hate you thus?”

Wang Han stared viciously at Jiang Chen as he intentionally raised his voice, “Senior Elder, this is all because that little bastard Jiang Chen stole several thousand blades of Sage Fledgling Grass and pinned the blame on me!”

Wang Han’s words had been spoken quite loudly, such that even the cultivators battling the wyverns in the air had heard them clearly. They rang in everyone’s ears as if a crack of thunder.

Several thousand blades of Sage Fledgling Grass?

Everyone doubted their ears in that second. Ten blades was already a small fortune, and a hundred was a great transaction. But several thousand blades? What kind of concept was that?

Even all the blades of Grass in the six great sects were piled together, they still wouldn’t amount to several thousand blades, but this Jiang Chen had several thousand of them all to himself? Therefore, the atmosphere at the scene instantly became quite awkward. All eyes were on Jiang Chen, as if wanting to see straight through him.

It was a good thing that Jiang Chen had realized beforehand that Wang Han would certainly reveal this if he was provoked enough. So, when everyone looked over at him, his lips curved upward slightly as he looked at Wang Han as if looking at an utter idiot.

Mu Gaoqi was the first to leap up. “Wang Han, don’t you go falsely accusing others! Several thousand blades of Sage Fledgling Grass? What kind of dream do you think you’re in?”

Wang Han gave a long peal of laughter. “What, Jiang Chen, you have the guts to do it, but none to admit it?”

It was apparent that Wang Han was delighted to see everyone look at Jiang Chen with such avaricious eyes. Don’t you think you’re quite something, Jiang Chen? Don’t worry, I’ll slander you first regardless of whether or not you have the Grass!

Everyone’s attitudes were quite congruent when it came to matters like these. They would rather believe it to be true than not. Thus, everyone looked at Jiang Chen with traces of judgement.

Elder Yun Nie snorted coldly upon seeing the hints of judgement and jeered, “Wang Han, this isn’t the first time your Sacred Sword Palace is pinning a crime on someone else. When Jiang Chen’s score was in the lead in the Pill Battles, your sect said that something was amiss with his bloodlines and wanted to check them. Do you want to try the same trick again? You have truly inherited Wang Jianyu’s style.”

Chapter 582: Being Framed

Without a doubt, Wang Han’s words had a great effect on those cultivators fighting the wyverns. They quickly deployed various arts as if they were on stimulants, swiftly beating the wyverns black and blue.

It was apparent that those previous displays of intense fighting were all just an act. All of the elders had been idling on the job, and merely going through motions with no one exerting themselves. But after hearing Wang Han’s news, everyone all wanted to know the truth of the matter and so naturally stopped holding back, deploying their strongest moves.

With so many sage rank cultivators fully displaying their abilities, how could the two wyverns, equivalent to the human sage rank, be their match? Faced with the many vicious attacks, the wyverns soon fled with despondent shrieks echoing for miles.

These elders were completely disclined to give chase, and all dropped back to the ground like dumplings falling into a pot. Their attitudes fully exposed the fact that the thousands of Sage Fledging Grass had deeply stirred their interests. No one was willing to miss out despite not knowing whether things were true or false. Normally, even a few dozen of Grass would be considered a great wealth, the notion of thousands was setting their blood on fire. Who was still interested in playing with those wyverns?

Seeing this scene, Jiang Chen could not help but laugh inwardly. These bunch of old codgers are all so wily and deceitful. The previous fighting seemed so intense, but in fact everyone was holding back. No one was truly calling on their full strength at all. They were all bestirring others to action and scheming against each other. It seems the internal struggles of the Myriad Domain are very severe indeed. Jiang Chen also knew that these elders would be covetous of the Sage Fledging Grass and make trouble for him. Fortunately, I've already prepared for this. Jiang Chen was thus pleased but remained silent.

Elder Wu Hen from the Walkabout Sect was hiding amongst the group of elders, but constantly glaring at Jiang Chen with ill-intent. He was also very surprised. What kind of dog shit luck does this Jiang Chen have? First he finds a sky rank herb and then he discovers thousands of Sage Fledging Grass? Is this kid born with innate fortune?!

Though Elder Wu Hen's heart was ablaze, he also felt very conflicted. Should he question Jiang Chen directly or remain silent? If he brought up the matter, the sky rank herb may be exposed. Even if there were thousands of Sage Fledging Grass, it'd be impossible for all of them to fall only into his hands. But, if he didn't use this opportunity to find fault with Jiang Chen, then it would be even more difficult to make trouble for Jiang Chen after they left Mt. Ripping Mirage. Thus, Elder Wu Hen was suffering from incredible inner turmoil.

Contrarily, the Sacred Sword Palace's Elder Chen stepped out and accused loudly, "Elder Yun Nie, everyone knows that your Regal Pill Palace shields its own. However, protection shouldn't be so blatant, right?"

Elder Yun Nie scoffed. "What blatant? How can we compare to your Sacred Sword Palace's shameless protectionism?"

Elder Chen gestured impatiently. "Everyone here was working hard to fight off those two wyverns, yet your disciple was silently gathering a fortune. That isn't proper!"

"Right, Elder Yun Nie. It can't be that everyone is obligated to help out your disciples when they cause trouble!" Tristar Sect's Elder Tan Lang added on.

"Could it be that everyone wants to dump this crock of nonsense onto our Regal Pill Palace just because of Wang Han's one-sided allegations? Is it reasonable for there to be thousands of Sage Fledging Grass to exist?" Elder Yun Nie aggressively refuted.

An elder from the Walkabout Sect immediately stepped out, "If this wasn't true, I don't think sage nephew Wang Han would make something like this up out of thin air." This elder was called Wu Hui. Since he wasn't aware of the sky rank herb, he instinctively stood out to confront the Regal Pill Palace.

In but a moment, the Sacred Sword Palace, the Walkabout Sect and the Tristar Sect seemed to have allied together to pressure the Regal Pill Palace. Elder Yun Nie smiled faintly. "We still have three days left. If everyone wants to stand around here flapping their mouths, then this old man is willing to accompany you all." Over the

An elder from the Dark North Sect's tried to smooth things over, "I think it's better for us to stop squabbling about this. Whether it's true or false, everyone has their own fortunes here in Mt. Ripping Mirage. Jealousy will not cause others' fortunes to become yours. In my opinion, everyone should be figuring out how to reach that cluster of islands."

Having a deep friendship with the Regal Pill Palace, the Dark North Sect would obviously not add insult to injury. Instead, the elder's words were trying to give Regal Pill Palace a way out.

The Sacred Sword Palace's Elder Chen retorted coldly, "The Dark North Sect and Regal Pill Palace are like one family. Just because you want to be magnanimous doesn't mean everyone else needs to be generous. This Jiang Chen attracted those two wyverns here and caused everyone to exert themselves in chasing them off, yet he still monopolizes the thousand blades of Grass? How can there be such a thing? As I see it, sharing in responsibilities means sharing in rewards. Anyone who puts forth their strength should be rewarded for their efforts. Doesn't everyone agree?"

These words had great appeal as the importance of the Sage Fledging Grass was really too great. Even the Great Cathedral was keeping silent. Although they had previously benefited from the Regal Pill Palace with regards to the Longevity Pill, the thousands of Sage Fledging Grass had aroused their greed.

Elder Xiang Gan stood there smiling without a word, evidently not intending on smoothing things over. It was actually Xiang Qin who opened his mouth, planning on speaking out on Jiang Chen's behalf. Unfortunately, he had to swallow his words upon seeing Elder Xiang Gan's glare, and could only scratch his head and look at Jiang Chen apologetically. Xiang Qin was actually rather grateful towards Jiang Chen for refining the Longevity Pill and helping his grandfather, Xiang Wentian, gain a few hundred more years of life.

Thus, although the Dark North Sect stood on the Regal Pill Palace's, they seemed quite forlorn. The other three great sects were united while the Great Cathedral was tacitly agreeing to all this on the sidelines. Great pressure was being brought to bear on the Regal Pill Palace.

Seeing this situation, Elder Chen became more audacious. "Since everyone has no opinion, Elder Yun Nie, is the Regal Pill Palace planning on going against the collective will?"

An elder nearby also jeered, "The Regal Pill Palace sure has a big appetite to try and swallow thousands of Sage Fledging Grass. I'll be blunt. Can you take it all? Are you not afraid of choking to death?"

Elder Tan Lang from the Tristar Sect was exasperated. "Yun Nie, in our Myriad Domain, there truly isn't any sect willing to go against the collective will. If Jiang Chen hadn't attracted those two wyverns here, then all those thousands of Sage Fledging Grass could be considered his own good fortune. However, since everyone ended up putting forth effort, then the herbs should be divided up."

"Right. The herbs should be divided up. Yun Nie, stop wasting everyone's time!" Walkabout Sect's Elder Wu Hui blustered.

Elder Yun Nie also felt that this was all quite troublesome. But just as he was about to speak, he was interrupted by Jiang Chen's carefree laughter. "Everyone here can be considered my seniors, so normally I would remain silent. However, this Wang Han has always been hostile towards our Regal Pill Palace. Wouldn't the world laugh their heads off if they heard that a single accusation from him has spun everyone in circles?"

Jiang Chen then calmly added, "I'm merely a fifth level origin realm cultivator. Do you think I have the ability to not only face off against the two wyverns and snatch the thousands of Sage Fledging Grass, but then also frame Wang Han? Aren't you all thinking too highly of me?"

Everyone paused upon hearing these words. The wyverns needed only one move to completely oppress the fifth level origin realm Jiang Chen. He might not even be able to escape from them, much less steal the thousand blades of Grass.

Wang Han coldly interjected. "Don't be confused by this kid everyone. This kid has some sort of method to escape through the ground and avoid the wyverns' sight. I've seen this with my own eyes. If this is a lie, then may I be struck by lightning!" Wang Han had hardened his heart to kick Jiang Chen while he was down, and didn't hesitate in swearing such a fierce oath.

Those assembled had started to waver, but their doubts were dispelled upon hearing this oath and they all looked at Jiang Chen again.

"I did see the thousands of Sage Fledging Grass. However, Wang Han attacked me before I had a chance to harvest any. As for what happened after I fled, I have no idea. Wang Han, do you dare swear an oath to the heavens that you personally saw me pluck any Sage Fledging Grass?"

Wang Han sneered. "Wouldn't you go back and harvest them when I was being pursued by the wyverns?"

"Tsk tsk, is it possible that your Sacred Sword Palace's framing method is all about assumptions and 'could have's' and 'would have's'? I rather suspect that it was you who harvested all the Sage Fledging Grass and thus caused the two wyverns to chase after you. After all, I left the scene before you did." Jiang Chen argued with great aplomb.

Wang Han's face darkened. "I can swear an oath that I absolutely did not obtain any Sage Fledging Grass. Jiang Chen, do you dare swear such an oath?"

Jiang Chen answered indifferently. "I can't be bothered to. Do I have to swear an oath every time you try to frame me? Why?"

Elder Tan Lang from the Tristar Sect laughed slyly, "In my opinion, there's no need to keep arguing. Innocence or guilt is very easy to prove here, just take out your storage ring and show everyone!" These words resulted in great agreement.

"Right, the two of you should take out your storage rings and show everyone! This is clear and simple. We can stop wasting time this way."

"Yes, let's do it this way!" Everyone nodded and agreed with Elder Tan Lang's suggestion.

Wang Han smirked after his own sect's Elder Chen glanced at him. "I'm fine with this. Jiang Chen, why don't you show us your storage ring? Don't say you can't be bothered with this. Otherwise we'll assume it's because you have a guilty conscience!" With this, the pressure seemed to now be all on Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen's heart was full of rage as his eyes flashed coldly. This world was truly crass. Everyone wanted him to cooperate, checking this and checking that just because of a single claim from Wang Han. It wasn't that Jiang Chen didn't dare, it was that Jiang Chen was pissed off.

"Jiang Chen, are you feeling guilty now? Since even Wang Han has agreed, what's a mere fifth level origin realm cultivator like you putting on airs for?" Elder Chen ridiculed.

Jiang Chen coldly glared at Elder Chen, "Elder Chen, why must I cooperate every time your Sacred Sword Palace tries to frame me? Where's the justification in that?"

"Do we need justification?" Elder Chen's tone was apathetic, as if this was only just and right. He suddenly laughed and said, "But since you're asking so ignorantly, let this old man give you an answer. The justification is that you aren't strong enough. The justification is that you're merely a junior. What right do you have to monopolize thousands of Sage Fledging Grass?"

Jiang Chen snorted angrily. "Then I'll only say this. If you are unable to find the thousands of Sage Fledging Grass on me, will you go eat shit, Elder Chen?"

Elder Chen's expression froze when he heard this. "How impudent!"

The Sacred Sword Palace's people all burst forth with killing intent, ready to unsheathe their swords. Those from the Regal Pill Palace did not shirk away and Elder Yun Nie's aura flared as he stepped forward to protect Jiang Chen. The atmosphere had become very tense, as if another wrong word would cause outright fighting to break out.

Chapter 583: Asking For A Face Slapping

The bystanders from the other sects were struck speechless. They never would've dreamed that a mere fifth level origin realm disciple of the Regal Pill Palace would possess enough of a temper to actually tell a venerated elder of the Sacred Sword Palace to eat shit! Elder Chen Shizhen was ranked in the top three in the Sacred Sword Palace, and was a top existence of the Myriad Domain. Now, a junior had told him to eat shit?! The spectators couldn't help but admire Jiang Chen's courage.

Chen Shizhen was livid, but the next moment, he burst into heavy laughter as killing intent flooded his eyes. "Good, very good! I've lived for a few hundred years, but it's my first time meeting such an arrogant and unbridled junior! Elder Yun Nie, your Regal Pill Palace has such good manners, huh!"

Elder Yun Nie didn't back down either. "Elder Chen, are you implying that your Sacred Sword Palace is allowed to oppress Jiang Chen, but he can't try to defend himself? Even if my sect wasn't a fourth rank sect, we still wouldn't be under your jurisdiction, much less when all of us are on the same level. What right do you have to force my disciple to do something against his will again and again?! Last time, you wanted to test his bloodline, and this time, his storage ring. Next time, if you want his life, does he have to docilely hand over his head!?"

Obviously, Elder Yun Nie had gone beyond mere irritation. As the highest ranked among those participating in Mt. Rippling from the Regal Pill Palace, he was well aware that his words held the most

weight. He was also aware of the ramifications to the Regal Pill Palace's reputation if he didn't stand out to protect Jiang Chen this time. Jiang Chen may eventually have to accept the inspection if the situation warrants it, but the Regal Pill Palace would brook no nonsense from the Sacred Sword Palace.

Elder Chen rolled his eyes, ignoring reason as he started to mock Jiang Chen. "This ole man only knows that it's foolishness to go against the crowd. Even a sage realm genius Wang Han is willing to show everyone his storage ring, so how dares a mere fifth level origin realm cultivator show such attitude?"

"So what if he's a sage realm genius? Does being in the sage realm grant him greater status?" Elder Yun Nie refuted coldly. "Furthermore, Jiang Chen is only in his early twenties. How do you know he won't break into the sage realm in a few years? How about I ask what level origin realm Wang Han was at when he was Jiang Chen's age?"

In all honesty, reaching the fifth level of the origin realm with Jiang Chen's young age and poor origins was already considered a miracle.

Tristar Sect's Elder Tan Lang gestured placatingly, "Elder Yun Nie, this bickering is unbecoming of the both of you. Inspecting the storage rings a little isn't a big deal. If it turns out to be a misunderstanding, then at least everything will be cleared up."

"Heh heh, Elder Tan Lang, I'm surprised that you haven't exhausted yourself from meddling in matters that don't concern you. Just let things go if it's a misunderstanding? Do you treat our Regal Pill Palace disciples like puppets on a string, free to dance at anyone's pleasure? Will a single phrase of 'it's a misunderstanding' be enough of an apology after an unwarranted inspection? Do you not understand that continuously making things difficult for a junior will affect their dao heart?!" Elder Yun Nie bellowed, the very picture of indignant fury. He might not be able to overturn the collective opinion, but he could not easily allow others to freely inspect the storage rings of his sect's disciples.

"Then how do you want to go about this?" Elder Tan Lang asked with furrowed brows. In response, Elder Yun Nie looked to Jiang Chen, silently asking what his bottom line was.

Jiang Chen's reply was carefree and light. "This is already the second time the Sacred Sword Palace has publicly accused me. It is said that one shouldn't bully the young when they're poor, and this situation seems to be a perfect example of everyone bullying me in my destitute youth. I don't want much, but even if my cultivation level is low, I will not yield to the Sacred Sword Palace's constant provocation. How about this? You can inspect my storage ring, but if the results prove Wang Han was slandering me, Wang Han has to eat shit as an apology."

A cold glare shot out from Wang Han's eyes when he heard this. His hand instantly moved to his sword, ready to attack.

Jiang Chen sneered. "What? If you can talk shit, then you can eat it. Wang Han, each bit of spittle from a man is like a nail. If you dare talk shit, then you should be prepared to eat shit as well. If you don't want to eat it, I'm fine with anyone from your Sacred Sword Palace substituting for you." Though the truth of the matter wasn't known yet, many people in the audience still admired Jiang Chen's courage and demeanor. If they put themselves in his shoes, Jiang Chen really did have a reason to be indignant.

They'd previously claimed his bloodline was problematic and had forcefully tested his blood. Now they wanted to inspect his storage ring. Which young genius' temper wouldn't flare up at this sort of behavior? Thus, Jiang Chen's words resonated with some of the young geniuses present.

"Kid, not only do I think that you're hiding a guilty conscience, but you also seem to want death in the worst of ways. Do you think that your Regal Pill Palace is capable of going up against the entire Myriad Domain?" Wang Han threatened coldly.

"Don't make me laugh, why would we go up against the entire Myriad Domain? The only question that matters here is, Wang Han, since you've dared to accuse me, do you dare bet with me? If you find the thousands of Sage Fledgling Grass on me that you accuse me of hiding, then I'll absolutely agree to evenly share it with everyone present. Without complaint. However, if you can't find it, then it means you were deliberately slandering me with dishonest motives. Do you really think your face so great that you can slander me willy nilly?"

Jiang Chen earnestly cupped his hands at the surrounding elders. "Everyone here is a heavyweight of the Myriad Domain and should all understand that I, Jiang Chen, am not a junior who will make something out of nothing. I only have a single reasonable request: if the Sage Fledgling Grass is not found on me, Wang Han must eat shit. Only then will the resentment of my heart be resolved. If he dares not shoulder the consequences of slandering me, but still wishes to inspect my storage ring, then I, Jiang Chen, would rather die than submit!"

With those words, the pressure was now all on Wang Han's shoulders. There was always a price to pay for attempting to incriminate another, no? One couldn't just open their mouth and freely dump a crock of shit on someone.

A Dark North Sect elder chimed in, "While I don't know how everyone thinks, Jiang Chen's request sounds very reasonable. There has always been animosity between the Sacred Sword Palace and the Regal Pill Palace, and the constant nitpicking won't sit well with the younger generation. I don't believe there's anyone here who wishes to take unfair advantage of the young, right? Moreover, anyone who wishes to stir up trouble should be ready to shoulder the consequences, correct? Otherwise, if I accuse you and you accuse me right back, then won't we dissolve into chaos? What say you, ole brother Xiang Gan?"

This elder from the Dark North Sect was rather sly. He was able to speak up for the Regal Pill Palace while also drawing the Great Cathedral into the fray,, forcing them to stand out and make their stance clear. Although Elder Xiang Gan also wanted to inspect Jiang Chen's storage ring; objectively speaking, Jiang Chen's rage was reasonable. After all, Jiang Chen had been the passive defendant from beginning to end so far.

In addition, the Great Cathedral had recently bought the Longevity Pill personally refined by Jiang Chen. Burning the bridge after crossing it was indeed inexcusable. Thus, Xiang Gan could only nod his head and ask, "Ole brother Chen, how certain is your Sacred Sword Palace about this? If you're not confident, then it is indeed not appropriate to recklessly accuse someone. Why don't you display some sincerity as well?"

By the side, Tristar Sect Elder Tan Lang only cared about finding the Sage Fledgling Grass. He couldn't care less about the grievances between the Sacred Sword Palace and the Regal Pill Palace. Thus, he

noded his head in firm agreement, "When it comes down to it, Jiang Chen's request isn't unreasonable. Although, 'eating shit' seem to be words spoken in anger. No one can really eat feces. Why don't we change to a different method?" n-(σ-/v-/ε--L)/b.-l--n

"Right, let's use another method." Many also agreed.

This really depressed Wang Han. Him exposing Jiang Chen was obviously something that would benefit all of them, but he alone would have to bear the consequences. However, how could he back down now? If he shrank back here, everyone would only assume he had falsely accused Jiang Chen and wasted everyone's time. This would in turn cause the Sacred Sword Palace to become the butt of public criticism.

"Sage nephew Jiang Chen, how about switching to a more moderate method? For example, maybe some kind of compensation?" chuckled Elder Xiang Gan.

Jiang Chen shook his head, "Buddhas fight for faith, while men fight for honor. I don't need any sort of material compensation. Either he eats shit, or else he slaps himself in the face twice and publicly apologizes for slandering me."

Though this request was indeed certainly milder than eating feces, it was still very hard for a top genius to accept slapping himself. However, this was already Jiang Chen's bottom line.

"Everyone, don't try and urge me to concede even more. This is my bottom line. We all know that if someone else was continuously trying to slander and find fault with you, your anger would burn several times hotter than mine!" Jiang Chen stoppered any further entreaties of mercy with iron words. He would not budge a single step more. Thus, everyone's gaze moved from Jiang Chen onto Wang Han.

Wang Han was now unable to dismount from the tiger's back, caught between a rock and a hard place. Though he had guessed Jiang Chen was the one who'd harvested the Sage Fledging Grass, he had no evidence. At the end of the day, he was simply gambling on the outcome. However, if he lost this bet, slapping himself in front of so many people would hardly be any better than eating shit. Unfortunately, he no longer had anywhere to back down to now that everyone was staring at him.

Elder Chen snorted, "Everyone, aren't we all mistaken about something here? Just a few pestering words from this kid Jiang Chen and now our Sacred Sword Palace is somehow the public enemy? That doesn't seem fair!"

"Fair?" Jiang Chen laughed coldly. "Are you qualified to talk about fairness? When your Sacred Sword Palace wanted to test my bloodline, did you think about fairness? When you were interfering with my Longevity Pill's auction, where was fairness then? Now you're accusing me of monopolizing thousands of Sage Fledging Grass, what is this fairness you speak of?"

Elder Chen was dumbfounded by Jiang Chen's unexpected eloquence.

"Wang Han, scrub that sour expression from your face. You keep yapping about how you're a sage realm young genius, acting as if you're a notch above everyone else. Does your so-called genius' demeanor lack even this bit of courage?"

Wang Han erupted with anger. "Sure I can agree, kid! But do you dare to let us search your entire body? Who knows if you'll hide the Sage Fledging Grass somewhere else on your body and offer a decoy storage ring?"

Jiang Chen scoffed lightly. "Just say it. If you can't find the Grass, are you willing to slap yourself?"

"Why not?!" Wang Han had been completely riled up.

"Words are cheap. Swear a heavenly oath." Jiang Chen had steadily reeled in Wang Han to this point.

Wang Han was now completely devoid of ways out after these words dropped into the situation. Xiang Qin from the Great Cathedral could not help but ridicule him when he hesitated, "Wang Han, I've long since felt that you're no man at all! If you're a man, then act like one! A man should repay kindness with grace and return animosity with revenge. Be more direct about it! If you dare make the bet, then make it. If not, then admit your loss! What are you dithering about for?"

"Right, well spoken! The Sacred Sword Palace is full of sissies. Speaking of sissies, where the heck is that idiot Du Lihuang? How come he's not here yet? I still need to collect a debt from him!" Yue Baize, another Great Cathedral genius, added on.

Compelled by this string of mockery, Wang Han gritted his teeth, "Fine! We have quite a few elders present here. If Jiang Chen is willing to submit to a full body search and no Sage Fledging Grass is found, then I, Wang Han, am willing to slap myself and apologize to him. If I renege, may the heavens strike me down with lightning!"

Hearing this oath, everyone turned their attention towards Jiang Chen and he smiled lightly, "Very well."

Following this, he once again performed a cupped fist salute towards everyone, "The Great Cathedral, the Dark North Sect, and the Tristar Sect can search me. As the plaintiff, the Sacred Sword Palace cannot search me. Who knows if they'll try and frame me by planting something on my body? Also, I don't like the Walkabout Sect, so if they want to search me, they must do so under the supervision of Elder Xiang Gan and Elder Yun Nie."

Jiang Chen obviously did not trust the Walkabout Sect one bit, purposely singling them out.

Wang Han Slaps His Own Face

Elder Wu Hen's face darkened. He said frostily, "Jiang Chen, you treat my Walkabout Sect differently. Do you feel guilty? The more you do, the more I actually suspect you."

The sly fox had kept his mouth shut so far as he sized up the situation. Possible ways of taking care of Jiang Chen even ran through his mind. If he left a lethal poison on Jiang Chen's body, he wouldn't have to worry about him not handing over the sky rank spirit herb. As valuable as it was, it wasn't worth dying for.

Although his plans were well thought out, it was a pity Jiang Chen had ruined them with a few simple words. If he couldn't freely search Jiang Chen, it would be difficult to do anything to the boy. Elder Yun Nie and Xiang Gan both had sharp eyes, it would be incredibly difficult to surreptitiously poison Jiang Chen under their supervision.

Jiang Chen remained cool and collected. "What the hell do your suspicions have to do with me? This farce wouldn't exist if it wasn't for many here suspecting me. What makes you so special that I have to accede to your wishes?"

Elder Xiang Gan spoke at this time, "Alright, less nonsense. I can promise nothing will be overlooked if I conduct the search. Let's settle this fairly. Wu Hen, it doesn't matter if your Walkabout Sect is involved."

The Great Cathedral always brought along a domineering aura, so Elder Wu Hen had to pause and consider Elder Xiang Gan's words. Elder Wu Hen was infuriated. But in front of the elder from the Great Cathedral, he didn't dare to be too overbearing. A dark laugh escaped his mouth as he said, "Of course, ole brother Xiang, I fully trust you. It's just that I understand the devious nature of this child like no other, and when it comes to several thousand blades of Sage Fledgling Grass, I prefer to keep matters in my own two hands. I also bear responsibility to sage nephew Wang Han from the Sacred Sword Palace!"

Elder Chen of the Sacred Sword Palace nodded. "Indeed, I believe Elder Wu Hen is the most impartial. If he cannot conduct the search, I won't accept the outcome!"

Tristar Sect Elder Tan Lang was also quite irritated. "I don't care what you all are blathering about. I'll go first. Jiang Chen, open your storage ring and don't try to resist me with your consciousness. I'm going to search you."

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. "Please do as you wish." He allowed Elder Tan Lang access to his storage ring. One after the other, the elders of the various sects swept their senses over the contents of his storage ring. Jiang Chen let it all happen, a cold smile on his face.

He had long since anticipated that Wang Han would try to frame him, so he had made some preparations like placing all his newly gained treasures into the Millionditch Stone Nest. The nest had a space that could hold millions of rats, so there was definitely enough room for Jiang Chen's spirit herbs. Luckily so, because if the elders were to see the sheer number of earth rank herbs and the single Hidden Chameleon Cloudpine in his possession, even without the Sage Fledgling Grass, they would be stunned speechless. Hundreds of his Goldbiter Rats had scavenged the ancient herb garden, gathering far more spirit herbs than the other fifty people here combined. Jiang Chen also received quite the haul from the storage rings of Wei Qing and Du Lihuang.

With all that said and done, there were only tens of thousands of upper rank spirit stones and some true saint rank and saint rank spirit herbs within his ring. These were all items everyone knew about as well. He also had some pills, but they were nothing out of the ordinary. Everything he wished to keep a secret, like the Longevity Pills, were also hidden in the nest.

The elders' consciousnesses didn't overlook any corner of Jiang Chen's storage ring. They swept back and forth, but couldn't even find a single blade of the Grass, much less thousands. To the elders, Jiang Chen's storage ring was of no value. There was nothing that caught their eyes. In fact, his items were so ordinary, they didn't even pause on any for a closer look.

Elder Tan Lang was the first to retract his consciousness and swept it over Jiang Chen's body. He didn't find anything out of the ordinary on his body either, so he shook his head and looked at Wang Han with the hint of a smile. It was obvious that the elder was now thinking that Wang Han had purposefully set Jiang Chen up.

The elder of the Dark North Sect walked up and searched Jiang Chen from top to bottom, then walked off, a smile on his face.

Elder Xiang Gan was even more careful than Elder Tan Lang in his search, but came up empty-handed as well. He shook his head and said, "Ole brother Chen, your Sacred Sword Palace really creates too much trouble. I believe sage nephew Jiang Chen is innocent."

Everyone from the Regal Pill Palace sighed in relief when they heard Elder Xiang Gan's words. Especially Mu Gaoqi had nervousness written all over his face. He wasn't all that worried about a few blades of grass, but if Du Lihuang and Wei Qing's storage rings were found, a sect war was more than likely to break out. Mu Gaoqi was soaked in cold sweat, terrified of what might happen. Only when Elder Xiang Gan's words entered his ears, did he manage to calm down the worry in his heart.

Elder Wu Hen laughed coldly. "It's my turn now, isn't it?" He was absolutely certain Jiang Chen played some trick on them. Otherwise, where had that sky rank spirit herb gone to? Of those present, only Elder Wu Hen and Elder Wu Qi knew Jiang Chen had a sky rank herb. They concluded from the reactions of the three elders before them that they hadn't found it. That could only mean Jiang Chen had hidden it somewhere!

He began a careful search under the supervision of Elder Yun Nie and Elder Xiang Gan, but he too came up empty-handed. However, he was more detail oriented than most and desired more than anyone else to grasp one of Jiang Chen's secrets. He searched through Jiang Chen's storage ring for a long time when his vision landed on a certain item. "What's with this stone? It looks very odd."

He was talking about the Millionditch Stone Nest, and Jiang Chen's treasures really were hidden within it.

Jiang Chen only snorted coldly, "Does that stone look like Sage Fledgling Grass to you?"

Elder Wu Hen sniffed. "Answer my question. Stop it with the useless excuses."

Jiang Chen was indifferent.. "Are you speaking useless platitudes or am I? You're looking for the Grass, so why the sudden interest in a stone? Do I even have the obligation to answer you?"

Elder Wu Hen cackled. "I think there's something wrong with this stone."

Jiang Chen laughed in anger. "Do I have to explain everything, everytime, when you have it out for me again? Can I try that too? You're the descendant of the demons! Can you prove to us you aren't?"

Elder Yun Nie harrumphed. "Wu Hen, are you trying to create trouble where there is none?"

Elder Xiang Gan also showed his displeasure. "Wu Hen, are you done searching?"

Elder Wu Hen rolled his eyes, a million thoughts running through his mind. "I suspect there's something amiss with his stone, but he doesn't dare take it out for inspection. Pretend I hadn't said anything."

Elder Chen of the Sacred Sword Palace immediately followed up. "No clues should be overlooked when it comes to the Sage Fledgling Grass."

Elder Yun Nie could take it no longer. "Chen! Watch it!"

Xiang Gan spread out his hands and spoke to Jiang Chen, "Sage nephew Jiang Chen, what is the stone?"

Jiang Chen shrugged. "I want to decorate my residence in the Regal Pill Palace with some stones. Why? Do you guys really think I can hide Grass in a stone...?"

Silence followed.

Before anyone, especially Elder Wu Hen, could regain their wits, Jiang Chen continued, "You're a senior, so I should respectfully call you Elder Wu Hen. However, you're not worthy of my respect, Wu Hen. I'm not fake like you. If you want to search my stone so badly, fine, you may. I only have one condition. Just like Wang Han had to do before, swear a heavenly oath, and if you're wrong, you must slap yourself across the face twice. After you make the oath, you can search all you want."

"Disrespectful brat!"

Jiang Chen had properly enraged the members of the Walkabout Sect. He laughed heartily, "Disrespectful? Look at how much time we're wasting here because of an idiot's words."

Elder Wu Hen's expression was overcast, no one knew what he was thinking. Finally, he showed a bright smile and said, "Forget it, I give up."

He had a name and reputation, a heavyweight of the Walkabout Sect. He couldn't take the ignoble loss of face that came with slapping himself. He trusted Wang Han, who had accused Jiang Chen of taking all the Sage Fledgling Grass, but he couldn't dismiss the possibility Jiang Chen had hidden the Grass somewhere else prematurely. It was the only explanation he could come up with as to why Jiang Chen could stand here so fearlessly. Although Elder Wu Hen wasn't the headstrong, proud young man Wang Han was, he wasn't a pushover either. He was experienced and shrewd, and guessed he wouldn't be able to find any clues on Jiang Chen after weighing things up.

Elder Wu Hen decided to give up for now. It was actually good news for him they were unable to find anything. That meant he still had a chance to gain the sky rank herb for himself! With Elder Wu Hen's announcement of giving up, the search concluded. Naturally, the two parties in question, the Regal Pill Palace and Sacred Sword Palace, didn't search.

Jiang Chen took a step forwards, a cold glint in his eyes and his mouth tightly shut as he stared at Wang Han. Shen Qinghong was dancing with joy inside, absolutely thrilled and delighted. He finally had the chance to jeer at Wang Han. He walked up to Jiang Chen's side, smiling, and said, "Brother Wang Han, the heavenly oath is said to work unerringly. Don't joke with your own life now."

Mu Gaoqi also smiled. "Is this an example of being caught in your own web and picking up a stone to smash your own feet?"

Shen Qinghong said between his fits of laughter, "Junior brother Mu is wise, there's also another saying that says you won't die if you don't look for death. Hahaha!"

All eyes focused on Wang Han, who was now boiling with rage as the flames of fury surged in his chest, wanting to explode out. If he could vent this fury on Jiang Chen, he wouldn't have minded killing him ten times over. However, he couldn't even regret things in the face of the heavenly oath.

He grit his teeth as he stared at Jiang Chen with the eyes of a viper. "Jiang Chen, I know you're up to something. I lost the bet, so I apologize to you."

Wang Han showed no compassion to himself as he stretched out both arms and slapped himself fiercely on both cheeks.

The crisp sounds of the slaps numbed everyone's scalps. They muttered inwardly, thinking Jiang Chen wasn't a character to antagonize. Even a genius like Wang Han had met with defeat in his hands.

Chapter 585: Rules of Division

The entire scene had fallen silent. There was no one who couldn't feel how much hatred was imbued within those two slaps that hit Wang Han's face. And the person responsible for this? A fifth level origin realm cultivator from the Regal Pill Palace!

Elder Chen's face was also ashen. Although it was Wang Han who'd slapped himself, Elder Chen had also suffered an extreme loss of face. After all, Wang Han hadn't just slapped himself, but had dealt a blow to the Sacred Sword Palace's entire reputation as well.

"Jiang Chen, I, Wang Han, swear I'll kill you one day!"

Jiang Chen couldn't be bothered with such threats. Would Wang Han have coexisted peacefully with him, even if the events of today hadn't come to pass? Wang Han had attacked without a word when they'd found the Sage Fledging Grass.

"You should be thankful that I didn't make you eat shit." Jiang Chen responded with an indifferent smile, dismissing Wang Han's pointless provocation.

Elder Chen also glared darkly at Elder Yun Nie. "Our Sacred Sword Palace will remember this!"

Elder Yun Nie scoffed. "Sure, go ahead and record it. Who are you trying to scare?"

The relationship between the Regal Pill Palace and the Sacred Sword Palace was already antipathic enough to be akin to fire and water. Since the two didn't get along to begin with, what did it matter if new hatreds were added to old animosities? Not to mention, this time, it'd been the Sacred Sword Palace picking a fight.

Elder Xiang Gan chuckled. "Alright, alright. Any and all misunderstandings should be cleared up by now. Fortunately, we didn't waste too much time. Now that most of us have arrived and not much time remains, shouldn't we think about how to distribute the treasure from the island in the lake?"

The eyes of those assembled gleamed and filled with desire when the topic of the core island of the lake was mentioned. However, Elder Wu Hen from the Walkabout Sect furrowed his brows. "Wait a moment, our Walkabout Sect is still missing someone."

Elder Xiang Can was unsympathetic. "We've all waited so long. If we wait for everyone to gather, we may run out of time. Who's willing to wait?"

Most of the sect elders shook their heads, those from the fifth rank sects even more vigorous in their efforts. It had taken so much effort to enter this place that they were unwilling to wait.

Elder Wu Hen glanced at Wei Xing'er nearby and asked, "Has Wei Qing responded yet?"

Wei Xing'er shook her head. "We're unable to contact him."

Elder Wu Hen's heart skipped a beat. Although Wei Qing was arrogant, he was still a genius after all. There were only very few who were capable of harming him in this ancient herb garden. If he hasn't arrived by now, has Wei Qing actually... perished? Elder Wu Hen couldn't help but glance at Jiang Chen when his thoughts traveled here.

With Elder Wu Hen's understanding of Wei Qing, Wei Qing certainly would've gone to create trouble for Jiang Chen. But here, Jiang Chen was perfectly unscathed, and Wei Qing was now mysteriously missing. Although he had no evidence, Elder Wu Hen's initial hunch was that Jiang Chen had slain Wei Qing. Only, this sort of guess was not something he could bring up without evidence. He could only sit silently on his speculations.

Elder Chen of the Sacred Sword Palace also interjected, "Our Sacred Sword Palace's Du Lihuang has also yet to arrive. Elder Xiang Gan, how should we deal with this?"

Elder Xiang Gan mocked him right back, "What the hell does Du Lihuang have to do with this old man? Do you think this old man is responsible for babysitting your Sacred Sword Palace's brats?"

Elder Chen refuted, "Didn't you originally promise that your Great Cathedral would not make trouble for our disciples?"

"Do you have evidence that my sect's disciples did anything?" Elder Xiang Gan's tone turned cold.

Elder Chen's first thought was that Yue Baize had killed Du Lihuang in revenge. Seeing Elder Chen look at him, Yue Baize bristled. "What are you looking at me for? If I really killed that idiot, why would I be afraid to admit it? He was lucky and didn't run into me, or I wouldn't have minded smashing him to death with a single punch!"

Yue Baize's anger clearly had not abated from Du Lihuang ruining his plans for the Silverlion. Although Du Lihuang seemed to have run into trouble, Yue Baize still resented not having personally beaten him to death.

Elder Chen carefully observed Yue Baize for a while and realized that he really wasn't putting on an act. Elder Chen's heart skipped a beat. If Yue Baize really hadn't killed Du Lihuang, then who was responsible? Elder Chen broke out in a cold sweat as he came to terms with the fact that the Sacred Sword Palace seemed to have quite a few hidden enemies within the Myriad Domain. If not someone from the Great Cathedral, was it possibly someone from the Regal Pill Palace? But they weren't necessarily strong enough to kill Du Lihuang. Even the half-step sage realm Shen Qinghong was only slightly stronger than Du Lihuang. The former wasn't so strong as to kill Du Lihuang in a one-sided battle.

The opponent must have exerted overwhelming strength in order to kill off Du Lihuang such that he couldn't even get a message out. Was it an elder?! But that seemed unlikely; all the elders would've focused on approaching the center of the herb garden. They had a low chance of bumping into Du Lihuang.

Suddenly, Jin Feng from the Sacred Sword Palace spoke up. "Elder Chen, junior brother Du sent me a message previously that he was going to make a deal with Wei Qing from the Walkabout Sect."

“Oh?” Hearing this, Elder Chen’s expression shifted as he glanced at Walkabout Sect.

Elder Wu Hen dismissed his glance. “Don’t look at me. Wei Qing has probably perished too.”

Everyone was shocked to hear this news. Two top geniuses from fourth ranked sects had actually perished here? This ancient herb garden really was a dangerous place!

“Did they accidentally run into those two fierce wyverns?” Some folks wondered.

“It’s highly likely. If it wasn’t those two wyverns, it would be virtually impossible for a normal expert to kill off both Wei Qing and Du Lihuang.”

“Ai, who knows? Maybe those two encountered a dangerous situation and escaped by crushing their jade tokens? There’s no point in worrying about it right now. Let’s just treat those people who haven’t arrived already as having forfeited.”

Elder Chen sighed and could only hope optimistically that the situation was really thus. Mt. Rippling Mirage was isolated from the outside world, so they really wouldn’t know if the two had left the mountain. The truth would only be known once all of them left Mt. Rippling Mirage.

Elder Wu Hen seemed expressionless, but was inwardly taken aback. Wei Qing combined with Du Lihuang hadn’t been able to take out Jiang Chen, but might have been killed in return instead?

His vigilance towards Jiang Chen grew even more. This youth, who only boasted a fifth level origin realm cultivation, seemed to be a wellspring of surprises again and again. This only went to prove that Jiang Chen really wasn’t as simple as he appeared.

Unfortunately, aside from the Sacred Sword Palace and the Walkabout Sect, no one else paid much attention to the missing Wei Qing and Du Lihuang. No one cared much about whether they were dead or alive. Their primary concern at the moment was how many precious spiritual herbs and priceless treasures could be found on that island in the middle of the lake. *noVE/llb*)In

Someone shouted out suddenly, “Look! The mist over the lake seems to be dissipating.” As everyone looked up, they saw the mist shrouding the lake gradually thinning. The gradual dispersal of the mist allowed the island to grow clearer, revealing details that were previously hidden.

At first glance, the island didn’t seem overly large, being less than a hundred acres. However, it exuded an unbelievable amount of spirit power. More than anything else, it was clear proof that the island was hiding a great amount of precious treasures. Just seeing the layers of spirit power emanating from the island caused everyone to burn with enthusiasm. Who wouldn’t be ecstatic at a rare stroke of great fortune avidly waving at them from the island?

“Everyone, let’s be blunt first. The Great Cathedral has a priority claim on any treasures that are found.” Elder Xiang Gan stepped ahead of the group and stated. His tone brooked no opposition, a domineering presence emanating from his words.

Since the Great Cathedral’s strength was the highest among the six great sects, the other five sects couldn’t object to the arrangement set forward by the Great Cathedral. However, the remaining five sects were relatively equal in strength, so ranking them in order of priority was a difficult task. After all,

it was clear that it may not be possible to evenly split the profit from this venture. On the other hand, looting as they pleased would only create complete chaos.

"I propose that we use the rankings of the Pill Battles to decide priority." Ouyang De of the Regal Pill Palace suggested.

"Absolutely not!" rejected Elder Chen. "Why should we use the Pill Battles to decide the order?"

"If the Great Cathedral is willing to abide by the pill competition rankings, then our Walkabout Sect is also willing to." Since the Walkabout Sect ranked second during the competition, they were okay with a relatively high priority ranking.

Elder Xiang Gan scoffed, "What now, your Walkabout Sect is trying to scheme their way above our Great Cathedral?" The Great Cathedral was the strongest among them, and would naturally not agree to use the Pill Battle rankings.

"Let's draw lots then," advocated Elder Tan Lang of the Tristar Sect. Since his sect had no advantage in either the Pill Battle rankings or overall sect strength, then he might as conduct a random drawing. At least this way, they might get lucky.

"Right, let's draw lots. Our Dark North Sect also supports this suggestion."

Elder Chen coldly intoned, "I have no comment about drawing lots."

"Fine, drawing lots it is." After Elder Wu Hen deliberated for a bit, he also felt that drawing lots was the best method.

Elder Xiang Gan sneered, "It's decided then. The five of you can draw lots. The Great Cathedral will retain our number one priority."

Imperious and dominating without question! Elder Xiang Gan's strength was unquestionable, and the Great Cathedral the first sect amongst all in the Myriad Domain. Everyone could only helplessly endure in silence in the face of his haughtiness. So other than the Great Cathedral, the remaining five sects drew lots. The fifth ranked sects were completely marginalized in this process, since they didn't have the qualifications to participate. The Regal Pill Palace's luck turned out to be average, drawing the fourth ranking.

Thus, the Great Cathedral was first, the Walkabout Sect was second, the Sacred Sword Palace was third, the Regal Pill Palace was fourth, the Dark North Sect was fifth, and Tristar Sect ended up sixth. Although Elder Tan Lang was quite unhappy with the result, he dared not voice his ire after receiving one of Elder Xiang Gan's glares. Instead, he could only swallow his resentment with dejection.

"Now that the order is set, everything else is straightforward. We'll use the priority sequence if anyone comes across sky rank herbs. Each sect can only pick one herb. After all six sects have picked one each, if there is a seventh sky rank herb, then the Great Cathedral will kindly accept it. If there are twelve sky rank herbs, then congratulations to everyone as each of the fourth rank sects will end up with two sky rank herbs. As for the fifth rank sects, they are allowed to take earth rank herbs, but only after the fourth rank sects have done so. The same goes for true saint rank herbs. As for sage rank herbs, they belong to whoever harvests them." Elder Xiang Gan thus laid out the rules.

He couldn't be too overbearing with his rules. If he was too oppressive, then the five other great sects might band together to resist him. Thus the rules were balanced such that, overall, the six great sects had roughly the same treatment.

Of course, having number one priority meant his Great Cathedral had an innate advantage. In case there was only one sky rank herb, it would naturally end up with the Great Cathedral.

Jiang Chen appeared as if he wasn't listening as they discussed the rules of distribution. Instead, he'd opened his God's Eyes and was observing the dissipating mist. His brows were furrowed, as if engrossed in thought.

Chapter 586: Fighting Uproariously Over Spirit Herbs

The island in the center of the lake was certainly the heart of the ancient herb garden. Of that Jiang Chen had no doubt. However, although it was close at hand, he had the feeling that it wasn't as easy to reach as it appeared. He also felt something slightly disconcerting about the atmosphere around the large lake. At first glance, the lake surface looked calm and serene, but Jiang Chen's experiences from his past life warned him. To him, it felt like the peaceful lake surface hid a terrifying power lurking just within the waters.

Even as the hazy mist slowly dissipated from the air above the lake, Jiang Chen felt his suspicions grow. The radiant light that spilled over from the island seemed too unreal to be believable. As he pondered, Elder Xiang Gan suddenly called out, "Everyone, my Great Cathedral will take the first step!"

He shot into the air, leading the way as he headed towards the island. Xiang Qin and Yue Baize were a step behind him, streaking through the air in a blaze of light. The other three elders of the Great Cathedral also followed swiftly behind the trio. The two remaining geniuses of the Great Cathedral were only at the peak of the origin realm, but were undeterred in their pursuit, crushing flight glyphs that bore them through the air.

Members of the other sects also took the opportunity to take to the air, even those of the fifth rank sects. On the Regal Pill Palace side, Elder Yun Nie led the group to occupy the center of the overall formation, flying over to the island in the center of the lake. Although none of their four young geniuses were of the sage realm and thus couldn't fly, this feat wasn't difficult to accomplish thanks to the help of flight glyphs.

It didn't take long for everyone to arrive at the center of the lake. As each figure landed on solid ground, they felt a feeling of ease and comfort suffuse their bodies as the abundant spirit energy made them feel carefree and joyful.

"Tsk tsk, even the outskirts of this island has such abundant spirit energy. It's already on par with the richest land in our sect. How dense will the concentration of spirit power become when we reach the heart of the island?" An elder of the Sacred Sword Palace called out. This island wasn't big, but it gave others a sacred feeling.

Elder Yun Nie looked out and also reflected to himself, sighing, "Such rich spirit power is unseen even within the six great sects. There might very well be sky rank spirit herbs within!"

Everyone was thinking of sky rank herbs in traveling to the island. The elders had all more or less collected some earth rank herbs along the way. Although it was a level of spirit herb more commonly used by emperor realm cultivators, there was still a market for them in the Myriad Domain, albeit one not commonly seen.

Sky rank herbs however, were an occurrence that appeared once in a hundred years. The appearance of a sky rank spirit herb heralded conflict and bloodshed, which was why they were virtually unseen in the Myriad Domain. However, everyone present had a hunch, that this time, one would certainly appear in the core area of the ancient herb garden. So therefore, none of them were wondering if a sky rank herb would appear, only wondering how many would appear.

“Everyone be careful, there’s a formless formation on the outskirts of the island. Don’t charge about heedlessly.” Although Elder Yun Nie was inwardly agitated, he didn’t lose his composure and actually discerned something of the situation.

Jiang Chen had also noted that there were invisible formations around the moment he landed, and even more things present that no one could see. His nose twitched as he cautiously observed the surroundings with his consciousness, doubt growing in his heart.

“What are you looking for, junior brother?” Ling Bi’er grew curious when she saw Jiang Chen walk to and fro on the outskirts of the island, looking hither and thither. She was worried that there would be danger on the island as well, and so had followed Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen said lowly, “Senior sister, don’t you think this island is a bit bizarre?”

“This island is full of peculiarities, but I can’t actually identify what.” Ling Bi’er responded honestly.

Jiang Chen nodded, seeming to be forming vague guesses but saying nothing. When he saw how concerned Ling Bi’er was, a thought struck him. “Senior sister, I’ve already found the Scarletheart Fruit out of the four spirit herbs. We’re only missing the Thousandmesh Jaderoot now.”

“Really?” Surprised delight shot out of her eyes, agitation cracking the face of the usually frosty Ling Bi’er. *Overleaf*

“Yes. I hope the Jaderoot is on this island.” Jiang Chen nodded. “There are many spirit herbs in the outskirts. Senior sister, let’s go take a look.”

Ling Bi’er nodded and responded very docilely, “Alright.”

The two walked around for a bit. Although there were saint rank spirit herbs on the outskirts, there were very few true saint rank spirit herbs present. The Jaderoot was a true saint spirit herb of the highest order, so there wasn’t a single shadow of it to be seen.

The heavyweights of the six great sects had managed to find the entrance formation by now. “Everyone, the formation should open once every three thousand years as well. This entrance is not fully opened yet, so why don’t we combine our efforts to attack the formation and open it? Otherwise, we’ll have to wait for a day or more for it to finish opening.” This was Elder Xiang Gan’s proposal, one that was met with general approval. It was apparent that everyone was in an extremely anxious mood after entering the core of this island.

Every minute and second was utterly critical.

Jiang Chen and Ling Bi'er had returned to the crowd by now and heard Elder Xiang Gan's suggestion. Jiang Chen, however, frowned. "Mt. Rippling Mirage and this ancient herb garden, as well as the center island of this garden are protected by layers of formations, set up in a complicated manner. It's obvious that someone went to great pains here. There's a certain order to everything here."

From his past life's experience, Jiang Chen felt certain that a great deal of careful calculation had gone into setting up the formations on this island. If the formation was still opening up, then they should wait and not try to break through it with brute force. Yet, while those may be his thoughts, he had no right to speak here. He had already taken the lion's share of attention before, and had attracted many eyes. If he were to step out and proffer his thoughts, he'd only attract more attention. He didn't want to put himself forth as the public enemy and be universally condemned.

Therefore, although he was greatly dismissive of Elder Xiang Gan's idea, he didn't show a flicker of a reaction, only sending silent messages to Mu Gaoqi and Ling Bi'er, "I fear that there will be repercussions if we break through this formation with force. Everyone should be careful and leave immediately if we run into any dangerous situations!"

Jiang Chen was a decisive person. Although he was curious just how many treasures could be obtained from this core area, he wasn't someone who would forgo his life for wealth.

Mu Gaoqi's worship of Jiang Chen had reached almost utter blindness by now. At this point, if Jiang Chen issued a proclamation to eat shit, he'd likely think that the former had a reason for it. As for Ling Bi'er, although her level of trust wasn't at Mu Gaoqi's exaggerated levels, she had an inexplicable sense of dependency on Jiang Chen as well.

All of the elders gathered together under Elder Xiang Gan's leadership and unleashed their respective arts, raining blows on the gap in the formation. The combined efforts and strength of thirty sage cultivators weren't any inferior to the normal blow of a sixth level emperor realm cultivator.

Wham!

Each attack ripped apart various runes, releasing multi-hued air currents from the formation gap. These runes were the ones that had built up the formation, and were continuously destroyed as the formation opened. As the attacks continued, they hammered away at the integrity of the formation and increased the density of the spirit power leaking out from it. The rainbow-colored air currents began to spread, causing an iridescent fog to enclose the air over the island after a short while.

As Jiang Chen watched the opening widen, his expression actually became more solemn instead of growing excited. His God's Eye looked at the vivid clouds spreading through the air, furiously running through calculations and ideas in his mind.

It was at this moment—

Boom!

A colorful plume of air mushroomed into the air, accompanied by a heaven-shattering explosion. The formation had completely collapsed, and an obvious rupture appeared in front of everyone. The formation is finally destroyed!

“Come, let’s go in!” Elder Xiang Gan didn’t hesitate for a moment as he charged in with his people. All of the other sects were loath to be left behind and sprinted in as well.

“We go!” Although Elder Yun Nie was a cautious sort, the arrow had already been notched to the bow and he couldn’t fall behind. Otherwise, if they went in too late, there would be nothing good left for the Regal Pill Palace.

“Let’s go!” The other three elders also agreed.

Jiang Chen saw Mu Gaoqi look at him and nodded in return. He still finally decided to go in to take a look. With that, the Regal Pill Palace team also rushed into the depths of the island.

A carpet of lush, verdant growth greeted the eyes as they rushed in. All sorts of exotic and rare flora decorated the two sides of their trail. There weren’t just any spirit rank herbs here at all, the most inferior among them were of the saint rank, and there were many true saint rank herbs as well.

This was an absolute treasure hoard!

The young disciples of each sect in particular lost their minds and started furiously raiding the area. Although saint rank spirit herbs weren’t that precious in the context of the ancient herb garden, they would fetch a pretty price in the Myriad Domain, to say nothing of those of the true saint rank. Those spirit herbs were absolutely a luxury good for origin realm cultivators. Even the top geniuses who’d just entered the sage realm had an enormous need for true saint rank spirit herbs. So no matter their cultivation level, all the young geniuses started furiously harvesting herbs.

Shen Qinghong couldn’t help but join in as well. Mu Gaoqi spoke, “Brother Chen, should we go grab some?”

Jiang Chen nodded his head slightly, “You can grab some if you like.”

He however, didn’t make a move, but merely took a leisurely spin around the premises, occasionally picking a herb here or there. However, he didn’t sweep through the fields with abandon like the rest of the young disciples. He was very choosy with the herbs he took, and they weren’t the most precious ones either. No one paid attention to his movements apart from Elder Wu Hen. He was watching the former with a cold eye from the shadows, completely perplexed. No matter how hard he thought, he couldn’t fathom exactly what Jiang Chen was up to.

Chapter 587: Deliberate Suppression

Only Elder Wu Hen, who was keeping an eye on Jiang Chen, would glance at the herbs occasionally; the other elders didn’t spare them even a glance. The spirit herbs growing here were unable to satisfy the appetite of these elder level old monsters. Sky rank herbs were what they sought, and they even disdained to act if it didn’t at least involve earth rank herbs.

The young geniuses only required four hours to pluck the fields in their immediate surroundings bare. These fellows were very satisfied with their bountiful harvests, faces of joy all around. Mu Gaoqi, by virtue of his innate wood constitution, had also hit a big score. “Senior brother Chen, how was your harvest?” Mu Gaoqi asked curiously.

Jiang Chen shook his head and smiled mysteriously, not saying a word. He hadn't fought for the herbs at all, and the ones he did take could not be considered valuable. But Jiang Chen was confident that in a few days' time, these herbs could spike in value, giving him unimaginable wealth. After all the herbs were divided, the group set off again.

The island was not large. A large and tall structure came into view through the hazy mist after a few kilometers. Jiang Chen had excellent vision by virtue of his God's Eye and could make out the structure was actually an altar. There was a large platform surrounded by thousands of stone steps leading up to it, like a ladder ascending to the heavens.

In each corner of the first platform was a garden filled to the brim with spirit herbs. There was a second platform identical to the first after ascending another 400 or so steps. Although the gardens on this second platform were much smaller than the ones on the first, they were abundant in richer spirit power. Different from the first two platforms, the third had an altar in the middle. There was a garden in each corner of this platform, very much like it had been on the previous platforms. The real difference was that these gardens were brimming with layers of fortuitous aura. Rays of respondent light emanated from them and created a breathtaking scene, exuding an exceedingly divine atmosphere.

"Sky rank herbs!"

Jiang Chen could not see the third platform, but when he used Psychic's Head, his consciousness was on par with any of the elders here. Just like the elders, he discovered the sky rank herbs up on the third platform. Jiang Chen wasn't sure on the amount of sky herbs that were up there, but their strong and unique sense of spirit power could not be mistaken. He could also tell that there were earth rank herbs growing in the gardens on the second platform.

Correspondingly, the largest four spirit fields on the first level contained true saint rank herbs. This was to say there were three platform levels ranked from low to high, with different levels of fortune that increased in a linear fashion. The elders had all experienced many things in their lives. When their eyes were met with the highest platform, they instantly knew what was there!

The imaginations of these old monsters ran wild. They knew they would find sky rank herbs on the third platform. The only question they couldn't yet answer was how many of these herbs they would each obtain.

"Everyone, I have a suggestion!" Elder Chen from the Sacred Sword Palace suddenly spoke up. Everyone's hearts were afire at this time and they were feverishly scheming and plotting. Elder Chen's words actually broke up this awkward situation.

"What is it?" The elders looked at Elder Chen with some puzzlement.

Elder Chen said straightforwardly, "Everyone here should have guessed by now that the platform on the third level contains sky rank herbs. I suggest we divide up the herbs using the previously decided order." His Sacred Sword Palace had placed third in the lottery. If they stuck to this plan, he was certain there would still be sky rank herbs for him to obtain. Perhaps, they might even get lucky and get two or three herbs. No one had any objection toward Elder Chen's restatement of the distribution plan.

"Since the distribution method for the sky rank herbs has been set, shouldn't there also be rules for the earth rank herbs?"

Sky rank herbs were a legendary existence in the Myriad Domain, so cultivators were willing to put their lives on the line for them. However, they were just too hard to come by and as a result, earth rank herbs were also very precious. Even sage rank cultivators considered earth rank herbs to be luxury items. After all, sage rank cultivators normally used true saint rank herbs and even then, were not able to freely consume them. Everyone had been fully focused on the sky rank herbs, they had forgotten about the earth rank herbs. With Elder Chen's reminder, realization struck them, he's right! There's still earth rank herbs!

Judging from the size of the second platform, there should be quite a number of earth rank herbs available. The sage realm cultivators already harvested quite some earth rank herbs in the ancient herb garden, but none of them would complain to get a few more of these luxury items. Besides, even if they did get their hands on the sky rank herbs, who was to say they could actually use them for themselves? It was much more likely that they would have to hand them over to the sect. Earth rank herbs on the other hand, could be kept for their own use and no one would criticize them for it. "Younger brother Chen, do you have a plan in mind?" Elder Xiang Gan smiled lightly.

Elder Chen smiled. "Since the sky rank herbs were divided according to sect, the earth rank herbs should be divided up according to individual cultivation levels. I recommend only sage realm experts should be allowed to pluck earth rank herbs. Each earth sage realm expert should be allowed two herbs, and each mortal sage realm cultivator one. We'll take turns harvesting and when everyone's had their turn, we'll start again from the beginning until there are none left."

Elder Xiang Gan had no objections, but still stated overbearingly, "It will be the same as before, the Great Cathedral has number one priority. I suggest we use the previous distribution order and have the fifth rank sects go after the Tristar Sect. Are there any objections?"

"The Sacred Sword Palace has no objections." Elder Chen replied instantly.

"The Dark North Sect has no objections."

"The Walkabout Sect likewise has no objections."

Elder Tan Lang from the Tristar Sect felt quite depressed because his Tristar Sect ranked last in the lottery, making this plan quite unfavorable for them. However, he also understood that objecting would only be inviting humiliation upon himself, so he could only helplessly concur. "What is there for me left to say? There seems to be no objections."

On the Regal Pill Palace's side, though they were ranked fourth, this new rule was actually not the fairest for them since they only had four sage realm elders. None of their young geniuses were in the sage realm. This was a great point of dejection for them. As for the Dark North Sect, although they were ranked fifth in the lottery, they had agreed because they had two sage realm young geniuses on top of their four sage realm elders.

The Sacred Sword Palace was in a similar situation with Wang Han and Jing Feng both being in first level sage realm. Elder Chen wouldn't have made the suggestion in the first place if they didn't have an advantage in terms of numbers. As for the Great Cathedral, they had no reason to object either, since aside from having priority, their four elders and Xiang Qin and Yue Baize were all in the sage realm.

It was easy to see from this that Elder Chen's distribution proposal was meant to lower the Regal Pill Palace's gains. Elder Yun Nie was well aware of the situation, but was helpless to object since everyone supported the proposal. The Regal Pill Palace could not object by itself. As for the elders of the fifth rank sects, they were just here to make up the numbers. They were already thankful to be here; how could they have any right to speak?

"Elder Yun Nie, we're just waiting on your Regal Pill Palace to agree. Unless, you wish to oppose?" Elder Chen mocked.

Elder Yun Nie snorted. "A small man is intoxicated by his success."

Elder Chen burst out in laughter. "Yun Nie, I know you're unhappy. However, it isn't our fault your young geniuses are trash. If only they were half decent and stepped into the sage realm, wouldn't your quota be higher?"

Elder Xiang Gan also knew that Elder Chen's proposal was meant to upset the Regal Pill Palace but he didn't want to waste any more time.

"Alright, let's stop digressing. The sky rank herbs and earth rank herbs' distribution have been decided. As for the true saint herbs on the first platform, let's have the young geniuses at the origin realm take them. After all, we can't take everything for ourselves. The young should have a taste as well, mm?" Elder Xiang Gan stepped in to play the role of a good person.

With the sky rank herbs and earth rank herbs' thus distribution decided, the rest didn't matter much anymore. Although the remaining true saint herbs were still valuable, all of them combined might not be comparable to a single earth rank herb. This so-called generous gesture seemed less of compensation and more of a way to stuff their mouths full. Mu Gaoqi felt his belly burn with anger after hearing how the herbs would be distributed. He muttered, "The Sacred Sword Palace really is a bunch of bastards, opposing our Regal Pill Palace at every turn. They're clearly aiming for us with that plan!"

He felt depressed, also because he was completely helpless. After all, in the end it was him who hadn't lived up to expectations. Jiang Chen on the other hand, only showed a hint of a smile with a slightly odd expression. It was as if he didn't resent this distribution plan and thought that being excluded from the earth rank herbs wasn't a big deal whatsoever.

"Brother Chen, what do you think?"

"Gaoqi, calm down. Their fists are stronger, for now, so the distribution method is naturally up to them. But who knows what the final distribution will turn out to be?" A mysterious smile appeared on his face, but he refused to explain. Turning his head to Ling Bi'er, he said, "Senior sister, let's see if we can find any Jaderoot on the first platform. We just have to find one and we'll have gathered all the ingredients for the antidote."

"Mm, junior brother, it's all thanks to your hard work."

Elder Xiang Gan's sonorous voice sounded out at this time. "Alright, the origin realm cultivators can go harvest the spirit herbs on the first platform. They will follow the same rules we do."

Hearing this, the origin realm cultivators stepped forward one by one. *noVe.lb-In*

Chapter 588: The Sacred Altar

The enormous three-tiered altar looked sacred and majestic from a distance. The closer the group approached, the more they perceived the altar's ancient, desolate atmosphere, inspiring a sense of awe. Upon arrival, the elders of the various sects began their foray by circling the first platform to eliminate any hidden risks.

Elder Xiang Gan then spoke, "Alright, there are four spirit herb fields here with over ten thousand true saint rank herbs, and only twenty some origin realm cultivators. Therefore, I propose that the origin realm cultivators can keep half of the herbs they harvest, and offer up the other half to their sects." Over ten thousand true saint rank herbs divided by twenty some origin realm cultivators meant that each cultivator would still receive three to four hundred true saint rank herbs. This number was quite stunning.

No one objected to this proposal; half of the herbs collected should indeed be handed over to the sect according to the normal harvesting rules of Mt. Rippling Mirage. With these rules, it became easy to divvy up the herbs. Jiang Chen's God's Eye searched to and fro, and he soon found the Thousandmesh Jaderoot in the second spirit herb field. There was also more than one of them as well. Luckily, no one had taken it by the time it was Ling Bi'er's turn. Thus, it fell into her hands, and at long last, the two of them had collected all four herbs on Jiang Chen's list. After roughly an hour, all the true saint rank herbs on the first level had been claimed and the group proceeded onwards to the second layer platform.

"Brother Jiang Chen, how many earth rank herbs do you think there are on the second level?" Mu Gaoqi asked curiously.

Jiang Chen smiled, "The more the better."

Mu Gaoqi was a bit sullen. "We won't have a share even if there are a lot. In fact, I hope that there aren't any so they'll be less pleased with themselves."

Wang Han was walking in front and looked back with a contemptuous smile when he heard Mu Gaoqi's muttering. "Is this an act of denouncing the grapes as sour since you can't have them?"

Mu Gaoqi's lips twisted as he growled back, "And what are you so proud of?"

"What now? I can't be proud? I have a share of the earth rank herbs from the second layer coming to me. Do you?"

Clearly, Wang Han was deliberately showing off. It was Jiang Chen who yanked on a corner of Mu Gaoqi's robes and said, "Gaoqi, it's pointless to argue. As good as these earth rank herbs are, who knows who they'll end up with in the end?"

Wang Han scoffed arrogantly. "No matter whose pocket they end up in, they won't end up in your subsage realm level hands."

"Really now?" Jiang Chen smiled indifferently. "Do you want to bet again? If an earth rank herb lands in my hand, will you go eat shit?"

The words of 'eat shit' had become taboo to Wang Han, so when he heard this, his expression went black. "You pathetic origin realm level insect! You're merely at the level of an ant, what are you so proud of? If you ever fall into my hands, I will let you know what it means to wish for death!"

At this time, that Elder Chen suddenly laughed. "Wang Han, what are you arguing with an origin realm cultivator for? Don't forget your own identity as a sage realm genius. You need to look upwards, not always pay attention to the rabble below."

This young and old duo were putting on quite a show. Mu Gaoqi's face was flushing beet red, and he was quite livid. Shen Qinghong had also been silent, but he'd been mentally flying through certain plans. When I return to the sect this time, I must go into closed door seclusion and not come out until I break into the sage realm! Ling Bi'er, on the other hand, was still immersed in joy. Her mind was no longer here in this ancient herb garden, but had instead flown back to the Rosy Valley, back to her own residence, and back to her father's side. All she wanted was to leave as soon as possible so that she could remove the Divine Befuddlement Miasma from her father's body.

On the other hand, Jiang Chen's face was a mask of detachment. How many ultimate experts in his past life had scraped and bowed in front of him? How could a mere first level sage realm Wang Han be mentioned in the same breath as them? Even a Titled Great Emperor was not qualified to be a doorman in the divine levels. As strong as they were, they were only experts in the secular realm, but minor characters in the greater picture. Thus, it was useless for Elder Chen and Wang Han to try and provoke Jiang Chen like this. Their words were like the passing breeze, not leaving a single trace behind.

Four hundred stone steps later, they finally reached the second platform. This platform was rather spacious, and its floor was marked by various strange drawings. Ancient characters, ancient pictograms, and dense tadpole-like runes decorated the ground. They looked particularly abstruse and mysterious. This place should have been used for sacrifice in the ancient times. Jiang Chen took a look around, roughly gleaning the meaning of the drawings and understanding that the drawings had no attack power in and of themselves. Apart from him though, there was an obvious lack of comprehension from the others. However, they had also guessed that these drawings were highly symbolic, and were likely some sort of ancient totem. Thus, they looked upon them from a distance and didn't dare approach.

The four spirit herb fields had been scattered to four corners. The fields were lush and full of herbs, all striving to outdo each other in appearance. It was as if the place had flourished from ancient times till the present. Jiang Chen's gaze swept through the fields, and the results were greatly surprising. There was almost a hundred earth rank herbs in each field, indicating around four hundred herbs in total.

Thus, the thirty plus sage realm experts would each receive around ten earth rank herbs. This number was slightly out of Jiang Chen's expectations. The elders of the six great sects were just as excited, as shrewd light radiated from their eyes.

"Haha, since we've already said the Great Cathedral would go first, this old man is going to help himself!" Elder Xiang Gan was extremely domineering. After wandering through the four fields for a bit, he immediately locked onto two earth rank herbs and stashed them into his storage ring. The Great Cathedral's other six participating members all waded in afterwards as well.

Next, the Walkabout Sect took their turn. Elder Wu Hen took the lead unceremoniously as he put two spirit herbs into his storage ring that he'd earmarked quite a while ago.

The Walkabout Sect was only allowed five harvesters but even so, the number of earth rank herbs once again decreased by another small amount. Next was the Sacred Sword Palace with a quota of six people allowed.

They had the same numbers as the Great Cathedral, so another batch of herbs went into the pockets of the Sacred Sword Palace. According to the previous rules, an earth sage realm cultivator could pick two herbs while a mortal sage realm cultivator could only pick one. When it was the Regal Pill Palace's turn, only Elder Yun Nie could harvest two earth rank herbs, as he was the only one in the earth sage realm. The other three elders could only pick one during their turn. Earth rank herbs also had different levels of quality to them, so those harvesting earlier naturally had an advantage. Fortunately, the overall quality of any of the earth rank herbs was not low. Plus, everyone had different needs, so they ended up taking what they needed with little conflict.

There were ten earth sage realm experts and twenty five mortal sage realm cultivators, meaning that forty five herbs would be harvested in each round. Thus, the four hundred or so earth rank herbs were enough for the sage realm cultivators to go through the harvesting order nine times. This meant that each earth sage realm expert would end up with eighteen earth rank herbs, while each mortal sage realm cultivator would have nine. As envious as the origin realm cultivators were, they could only stand on the sidelines and look on at the others earning a fortune.

"Ai, who knew that there would be so many earth rank herbs? If this is the case here, then there are probably many sky rank herbs above as well." Mu Gaoqi's tone was somewhat forlorn. According to his calculations, the Regal Pill Palace would only receive forty five earth rank herbs out of the total of four hundred.

This number was quite low compared to the Great Cathedral and the Sacred Sword Palace's haul. The Great Cathedral in particular, was able to obtain seventy two earth rank herbs after nine rounds with their two earth sage cultivators and four mortal sage cultivators. Moreover, since the Great Cathedral was number one in the pick order, if any herbs remained after the nine rounds, they would get to go again.

There really were another fourteen herbs after the ninth round. Thus, the Great Cathedral went a tenth round and harvested another eight herbs. The remaining six herbs then went to the next in order—the Walkabout Sect. As a sage realm genius, Wang Han ended up with nine more earth rank herbs in the end and obviously wanted to mock the Regal Pill Palace with his gains.

Displaying the nine earth rank herbs in his hand, he looked at Jiang Chen and sighed, "Though the distribution of the earth rank herbs is complete, it seems like some people's hands are as empty as ever. Where are their so-called earth rank herbs, ah?"

Mu Gaoqi curled his lips and cursed quietly, "Puffed up scoundrel!"

Wang Han looked at Jiang Chen. "It seemed that someone wanted to bet with me earlier? Do I remember this correctly?"

Jiang Chen smiled leisurely, "What are you so proud for? Life is fickle. Maybe in just a little while, you will beg me to take your earth rank herbs!"

Hearing this, Wang Han gave a scornful laugh and then suddenly spat out, "The f*ck you sprouting in broad daylight?"

Jiang Chen smiled silently, and did not continue to argue.

At this time, Elder Xiang Gan's voice once again sounded out, "Alright, we've finished distributing the earth rank herbs. Next up is the real show. Once we reach the third level, everyone must be extremely careful. Rash behavior will not be tolerated. Whoever affects the harvesting of the sky rank herbs will become the eternal sinner of the Myriad Domain." Elder Xiang Gan issued a reminder in advance; he would not forgive any lapses in attention at this point. Faces full of tension, everyone nodded. Although they were all happy from dividing up the earth rank herbs, that was just an appetizer. The main course was on the third level of the altar!

Although the group was still on the second platform, they were already able to feel a rich concentration of spirit power falling from the third level. This kind of atmosphere was as if a desolate and sacred air was passing through a river of space and time, traveling directly from the ancient times. As if with an unspoken mutual understanding, everyone remained silent as they walked towards the third layer of the altar.

The hundreds of stone steps were like a bridge from the current times to the ancient past; everyone felt immersed in the atmosphere; it was as if they were on a holy pilgrimage. Only Jiang Chen's mind was as calm as water. He had opened his God's Eyes to the fullest and had spent his time observing this mysterious altar. Though he also knew that the third level would have sky rank herbs, he had a feeling that the most noteworthy and valuable things on this ancient altar might not be the sky rank herbs at all.

Chapter 589: Appearance of the Sky Rank Spirit Herbs

The altar appeared both sacred and dignified on the third platform, looking down at everything from its position at the top. In the moment that the crowd set foot on the third platform, they felt a wave of an ancient presence wash over them. The altar had stood for countless years, its thick sense of desolation instilling an urge in those assembled to genuflect at the altar. Despite the years, the sand grains from the river of time had left nary a hint on the altar. Not even a speck of dust adorned its surface. It was almost as if someone had been dusting it off every day. However, everyone present knew how impossible that supposition was. The ancient herb garden opened but once in three thousand years. There was no one who could come day after day to clean the altar. Nevertheless, no hint of the time that had passed was visible on the altar, not a single detail out of place.

It was as if the countless years had only left behind a feeling of desolation, and nothing else. Jiang Chen stood at the rear of the crowd, not a ripple of emotion visible on his face, but great waves surging in his heart. When he'd set foot on the third platform, he'd felt some sort of connection with this presence. But when he analyzed it further, he realized that this tenuous unknown connection didn't seem to be between him and the ancient garden, but between the altar and the nameless blade on his back instead!

This discovery left Jiang Chen quite astonished. He'd always known that this treasured blade was extraordinary. Although he'd used it against enemies, the blade technique of "Vast Ocean Current Splitter" wasn't really at a high enough level to truly excavate the blade's potential. He'd only tapped into the barest surface of its abilities, but what had puzzled him the most was that Jiang Chen had obtained this blade from the Eastern Kingdom, when the second organizer of the Hidden Dragon Trials

Du, Ruhai, had been arrested and his house sealed. Princess Gouyu had been present as well, and he'd taken almost nothing, just this simple blade. And now, he'd unexpectedly discovered a clue about it in this altar.

Although this connection was nebulous at best, Jiang Chen was very sensitive and had clearly grasped it. "A blade from the Eastern Kingdom and a divine altar within Mt. Rippling Mirage of the Myriad Domain. What's the connection between the two?"

Jiang Chen couldn't even begin to extrapolate the answer no matter how hard he thought, but of one point he was certain, and that was that the two had something in common. Even if they weren't directly linked, they were certainly indirectly connected. As for why the blade had come into the Du clan's hands and had its shine dulled, obscuring the splendid radiance it should've had—this was an ancient mystery that no one would be able to solve.

Jiang Chen didn't outwardly reveal his discovery, but discreetly observed the altar instead. There were twelve round pillars to the towering altar, with exceedingly profound, ancient runes carved on each pillar. All of them formed a perfect whole together with the twelve pillars. The dome of the altar topped the pillars, with even more lifelike pictographs inscribed into it. Although quite a sight, no one knew what they meant.

This altar looked simple and apparent to one glance, but that solemn, holy presence made everyone unconsciously avert their eyes. Jiang Chen took a close look and noted steps made of white jade around the altar, with ripples that shimmered in and out of existence around the jade steps.

Jiang Chen recognized that to be an exceedingly strong formation. It would appear that although the altar had weathered many years, the restrictions had yet to fade. This meant to say that the interior of the altar was a forbidden area, not to be ventured into. The shimmering ripples looked as gentle as water, but Jiang Chen was certain that even if Elder Xiang Gan barged in, he would be instantly slaughtered by the formation.

Elder Xiang Gan observed the altar's outskirts for a bit and revealed a hint of a solemn look. "Everyone be careful, don't venture in mistakenly. Be careful of being destroyed by the formations!"

Elder Xiang Gan was someone who recognized the value of what was staring him in the face. Everyone snapped to solemn attention, but they weren't here for the altar either. Although the altar was incomparably holy, it was apparent at a glance that it was empty, with nothing of value within. Therefore, everyone felt that the altar was just for worship. It might've held special meaning in ancient times, but there wasn't much meaning to it now for them.

However, Elder Xiang Gan still approached, gravely reverent, and bowed respectfully towards the altar. "Oh ancient gods, we are but passersby from the Myriad Domain. We dare not desecrate the altar, but only wish to beg for some sky spirit herbs for the future of the Myriad Domain. We pray that the gods do not fault us for doing so."

The other elders also came forward to pay their respects as well. Although no one had any idea if there was any use to this ritual, everyone felt more at ease after doing so. There were beams of spirit power ensconcing the four corners around the altar, but in between them, one could still glimpse them, the sky rank spirit herbs!

There were three sky rank herbs in each plot of land, making for twelve total. Elder Tan Lang of the Tristar Sect instantly heaved a sigh of relief. His sect was ranked sixth from the lottery, so if the total number of spirit herbs wasn't a multiple of six, it would be a loss for his sect. But since it had turned out to be so, each great sect would be able to receive two sky rank herbs.

But now it was Elder Xiang Gan who was a bit dejected. Since there were twelve herbs, there wasn't anything extra that his Great Cathedral could skim off. If there'd been thirteen, then they would've been able to take another one. But since it was an even twelve, everyone would receive the same amount. However, he wasn't overly depressed as there were two sky rank herbs earmarked for him. He chuckled, "The same rules apply. My Great Cathedral chooses first. Since there are twelve, each sect will receive two. That's fair."

Elder Wu Hen was one who played his cards close to his chest, but he couldn't help but feel moved at the sight of the sky rank herbs. He'd chased after Jiang Chen for so long for just a single sky rank herb, right? But now, there were twelve in front of him. And of those, two would be coming to his sect!

However, there were spirit power forcefields around the spirit herbs, so it would take some effort to harvest them. But with the strength of the sage realm cultivators present, even though it would take a bit of time to break through the forcefields, it was still a sure bet. The only difficult part was to do so without harming the spirit herbs. Otherwise, they would've easily broken through the forcefields through brute force with just a couple blows.

Jiang Chen took a look at the heavyweights grouping together and didn't step forward to become involved. He started walking down the third level platform. When Mu Gaoqi and Ling Bi'er saw him do so, they grew curious.

"Brother Chen, where are you going?" Mu Gaoqi asked inquisitively.

Jiang Chen waved his hand, "I'm going to take a look around on the second level; you can just stay here."

Although Jiang Chen's actions were a bit odd, no one paid any attention to him at this critical moment. Even Wang Han only smirked disdainfully when he saw Jiang Chen walk down to the second level. Is something wrong with his brain? Is he hoping that something's been left behind on the second level?

It was impossible for anything to be left behind after so many sage realm cultivators had swept through the area. Wang Han might've followed Jiang Chen down at any other time, but now that a sky rank spirit herb was about to emerge, there was no way he wanted to miss the show. Therefore, after he flicked a contemptuous glance at Jiang Chen's diminishing back, he retracted his gaze and turned his attention to the sky spirit herbs.

Jiang Chen arrived on the second platform and found a relatively quieter corner, taking out the Skyweave Cauldron and a pile of spirit herbs from his storage ring at the same time. These were the herbs he'd collected after setting foot on the island. Almost all of the young geniuses had been furiously raiding the spirit herbs back then, with the exception of Jiang Chen. He'd targeted very specific herbs, a move that had elicited surprise from Elder Wu Hen. But no one knew why Jiang Chen had done so, and now he was taking out the herbs he'd gone to great pains to collect. Naturally, he had his uses for them.

Ever since he'd arrived at the banks of the lake with everyone else, he'd felt that the environment around the lake had been rather special. The multi-hued haze over the lake had attracted his particular attention. When he set foot on the island, the presence hidden within the rainbow colored haze had made him even more certain that a Miasma was hiding within this seemingly splendid colored fog, within the interplay of rainbow colored spirit power.

The haze was the Divine Befuddlement Miasma!

Although completely different from the one that afflicted Ling Bi'er's father, it was only stronger than it and not weaker. The complexity within was many fold over the one that plagued Ling Bi'er's father.

Jiang Chen had kept watch along the way, and he concluded that this Miasma was likely intentionally left behind by the great personage who'd created the ancient herb garden. To put it plainly, it was a test. If one could sense the Miasma, they would also know that there would be a corresponding cure for it on the island. nove-1b.1n

This was a great scheme of life and death. There was death in life, and life in death. But apart from Jiang Chen, everyone's eyes had been on the spirit herbs on the island, and no one had understood this plan!

It was only Jiang Chen who'd detected the slightest incongruity when he arrived near the lake. Add to that his previous experiences in his past life, it quickly enabled him to see through this life and death scheme. The spirit herbs that he'd picked were precisely those that could counteract the Miasma. And now, he was going to take advantage of the time everyone was so busy harvesting the spirit herbs above to refine the antidote on the second level.

Chapter 590: Is Jiang Chen Crazy?

Jiang Chen had the recipe and the necessary ingredients, which he had harvested in the ancient herb garden, to concoct the antidote. Put plainly, it was impossible for another antidote for this particular Miasma to be produced on this island.

Once he finished refining the antidote, it wouldn't matter how many sky rank and earth rank herbs the other people had obtained, the final distribution would still be up to him. If they didn't cooperate, Jiang Chen wouldn't mind 'accidentally' dropping the antidote into the lake. Only the members from his sect could count on his benevolence.

It was obvious this island was full of peculiarities with restrictions seemingly all around. However, these restrictions' only function was to scare people. Those who moved with caution and patience wouldn't find their lives put in danger in the herb garden, since the killing power of the formations had decreased. This was also the reason the sects were able to enter the island. n.-07e1b1n

However, one obviously couldn't come and go as they pleased on this island. The formations were merely some trivial tests on the surface. The real test was this ingenious life and death scheme that was concealed exceptionally well. This island was meant to be enjoyed by pill experts, so the life and death scheme was obviously to test their pill knowledge. If they couldn't figure out the existence of this test, or lacked the knowledge on how to overcome it, they were simply not fated to enjoy the fortunes of this island.

After all, life and death were ruled by fate.

Those who ended up poisoned by the Divine Befuddlement Miasma and perished here did not deserve any sympathy. In fact, the heavyweight who had designed this life and death scheme had left behind multiple solutions to live. A large number of ingredients necessary to create the antidote for the Miasma were planted within the spirit herb fields. If a pill king level expert noticed the Miasma only after they left the island, they could still use the herbs they previously harvested to refine the antidote.

From this it became apparent the creator of this island understood full well that whoever entered this island, they would sweep the place clean. In the process, they would obtain all the necessary herbs to concoct the antidote. This life and death scheme illustrated the concept of 'death in life and life in death'. The key point was to see if those who entered the island possessed the necessary perception and comprehension.

It turned out that of the many who entered, only one had all these qualities, and that was Jiang Chen. He was aware of this and came up with a plan accordingly.

This was the reason he was indifferent no matter how the 'experts' divided up the sky and earth rank herbs. Jiang Chen didn't feel dejected at all when that petty character Wang Han was boasting. In fact, the more earth rank herbs there were, the better it was for him. This was also the reason he was willing to continue to bet with Wang Han. Jiang Chen understood clearly, that as precious as sky rank and earth rank herbs were, they weren't as precious as life itself.

Mu Gaoqi was very dissatisfied with the distribution method and felt that the Sacred Sword Palace was deliberately suppressing the Regal Pill Palace. Jiang Chen, on the other hand, remained calm throughout and informed Mu Gaoqi that the final distribution was still up in the air. When Wang Han showed off his earth rank herbs, Jiang Chen had casually mentioned Wang Han would be begging for him to accept them later on. At every point was it evident that everything was within Jiang Chen's calculations. The antidote itself was not difficult to refine. The difficulty was in seeing through this life and death scheme and finding the correct herbs from the various fields.

Jiang Chen finished refining over a hundred antidote pills about four hours later. After leisurely putting the pills and pill cauldron away, he calmly walked back up to the third level. At this time, the distribution of the sky rank herbs was nearing its end. Seeing Jiang Chen ascending the stone steps, Mu Gaoqi hurriedly came over, "Brother Chen, why did you come only now?" He sighed deeply, then continued, "Sky rank herbs are really extraordinary. Every single one of them is amazing. They seem like they're alive. That spirit power really is..."

Mu Gaoqi was unable to find the words to describe them.

Jiang Chen understood his enraptured look. Sky rank herbs were really too rare in the Myriad Domain. Once every hundred years some of them would appear. And even when they did, they wouldn't be up for auction. They were kept by the top level experts who could obtain them. Today was an eye-opening experience for the younger generation. Of course, there was an exception. These sky rank herbs were precious to the current Jiang Chen, but in his past life, any random weed in the Celestial Palace's rear garden was more valuable than the sky rank herbs of the secular realm.

The others were treating this as an eye-opening experience, whereas Jiang Chen was thinking about the sky rank herbs' practical value. The distribution of the herbs went smoothly, the fifth rank sects not even daring to think of partaking. Letting them participate in the distribution of the earth rank herbs was

already very generous. If they had so much as thoughts of taking the sky rank herbs, they might have to spit out the earth rank herbs they'd already obtained. Although the fifth rank sects were envious, they were quite self aware and dared not make a ruckus or show any covetous emotions.

After the group finished distributing the sky rank herbs, they didn't seem to find anything else special around the altar.

The sun was already setting on the horizon, so everyone decided to camp on the island for the night and leave the next day. Twelve sky rank herbs, four hundred earth rank herbs and countless true saint herbs. The island's herb harvest had far exceeded everyone's estimates. The great sects were greatly elated. Only Elder Wu Hen didn't share in everyone's joy, Jiang Chen's sky rank herb on his mind. After walking down the altar, they found a place to set up camp on the first platform. Each sect maintained their distance from the others as they were worried about any issues that might crop up.

After all, they were currently in extraordinary times as everyone possessed precious sky rank and earth rank herbs. They were all on guard against those harbouring evil thoughts.

Though Elder Wu Hen was ready to make a move against Jiang Chen, he was unable to find an opening since everyone was on high alert. He forcefully held back his urges. We still have two days left. As long as Jiang Chen doesn't leave Mt. Rippling Mirage, I still have a chance!

Moreover, Elder Wu Hen was confident Wang Han's claim that Jiang Chen had obtained over a thousand Sage Fledgling Grasses was true. A thousand Sage Fledgling Grass were almost comparable to a single sky rank herb. After all, in the Myriad Domain, the demand for the Heroic Sage Pill far surpassed its supply.

A calm night passed.

Early the next morning, everyone returned to the edge of the island, and they waited for the layers of mist to disperse..

"Alright, the lake's mist has almost disappeared. Everyone, get ready to leave," said Elder Xiang Gan from the Great Cathedral.

"Right. Let's leave as soon as possible. I've always had this feeling that this island is a bit strange. If we don't leave, my heart will always be at sixes and sevens," Tan Lang of the Tristar Sect followed up.

"Hmm? You also feel it?" Elder Chen was slightly surprised.

The senior elders looked at each other traces of dismay. Evidently, everyone felt this vague ominous feeling, but no one had mentioned it until now since they couldn't discern what it was. They now realized they were all sharing this feeling.

Elder Wu Hen sneered, "Who cares how strange or ominous it is. As long as we leave, what does it have to do with us? Those sky rank herbs aren't illusions, that's all that matters."

Everyone nodded in agreement. "Come on, let's go!"

As everyone turned into streaks of light traveling to the shores of the lake, Jiang Chen reluctantly looked back at the island. He was somewhat unwilling to leave the island as he still wanted to know what the connection between the divine altar and the saber on his back was!

But he could not carefully explore the altar with so many people around. He could only leave with everyone else for the time being. There were still two days left after all. Jiang Chen had decided he would find an excuse later on to come back to look for clues.

Aside from Jiang Chen, everyone was a bundle of nerves. They didn't relax until their feet touched the shore again. After landing on the shore, Elder Xiang Gan looked around. "Alright. The ancient herb garden was a great find. From now on we will go our separate ways, so be careful of your valuables. The heart of a man is unpredictable. If an accident happens in the remaining two days, you will only have yourselves to blame."

Elder Xiang Gan's meaning was very obvious. Everyone should go back to their original groups. If any sect was robbed or plotted against by others, they could only resign themselves to fate and could not blame others. Everyone understood this fact and many had decided that they would immediately find a transportation matrix and crush their return talismans after leaving the ancient herb garden. They had already obtained a great harvest and could care less about the spirit herbs outside this garden. At this crucial time, they shouldn't be penny wise and pound foolish. No one wanted to pick up sesame seeds only to lose the watermelon!

Everyone was filled with worry and about to set off, when they suddenly heard a remote voice. "Please, wait."

This voice was unexpected as everyone was preoccupied and unwilling to waste time chatting. They turned toward the voice and saw Jiang Chen indifferently standing on the shores of the lake, seemingly looking down on them all.

Wang Han scoffed, "What now? What more nonsense does a kid like you want to fart?"

Not giving Wang Han a single glance, Jiang Chen faintly smiled and looked at each sect's leader. "Gentlemen, isn't it time to discuss the issue of distributing the earth and sky rank herbs?"

Jiang Chen's question stunned everyone and their expressions represented their thoughts perfectly. Has that brat gone mad?

Elder Chen ignored Jiang Chen and instead turned toward Elder Yun Nie with a mocking smile. He coldly asked, "Yun Nie, has this kid from your Regal Pill Palace gone crazy from heartache?"