

Three Realms 601

Chapter 601: The Mysterious Ruins

Apart from the high-spirited and defiant words on the stone wall, names had also been carved into the stone wall as well. It was clear that these were the signatures left behind by the disciples of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect.

The calligraphy was elegant and bursting with energy, with the spirit of flying dragons and dancing phoenixes. Not a hint of the despondency and plaintive self pity of one about to die was present. Every single signature displayed the comprehension of one who'd transcended life and death.

One's words were a marker of one's person. Even though thousands of years had passed, Jiang Chen could still see the lofty sentiments of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect disciples. Even though they had charged into the frontlines to confront their implacable enemies, even though they were fully aware of their impending demise, they still held fast to their open-minded optimism and had found an understanding that transcended the cycle of life and death.

"Just what had happened in the ancient past? Such a powerful sect actually had to send all its members to the battlefield, and they all died in battle?" Jiang Chen's mind was filled with questions. He also sensed something strange about the origins of that powerful enemy. However, there were no clues to that end in the carvings on the face of the stone cliff.

Heavy stone steps girdled the face of the cliff, providing a path to the clifftop. At the clifftop, Jiang Chen was greeted by three majestic statues. Each approximately one hundred and twenty meters tall, they towered over the cliff. Even though the trappings of time had eroded them, their valiant and formidable aura hadn't diminished in the slightest. A stone tablet off to the side was inscribed with two words: Ancestor Cliff.

Jiang Chen nodded slightly. So this was a sacred ground meant to offer tribute to their ancestors. These three ancestor statues had been carved with exquisite detail, almost life-like. Although they were but sculpted stone, they seemed to possess wisps of an ancient will, to the point where Jiang Chen could almost detect faint traces of vitality surrounding the statue. It was as though they could come to life any moment.

Jiang Chen knew that once they reached a certain level of skill, experts were capable of imbuing a statue with their will and consciousness, leaving the inanimate object a bit of vitality. In other planes, there were even titans who could create copies of themselves from paintings and sculptures simply by melding a portion of their consciousness with the object. Those who lacked strength could only leave behind a trace of their intention and consciousness. On the other hand, the ones with powerful arts at their disposal could create a fully autonomous and independent doppelganger.

The three statues that Jiang Chen was gazing at might contain a trace of ancient will, but had obviously not reached the level of independent autonomy. It was also fortunate that it was Jiang Chen who stood there before them. Any other youth of the Myriad Domain would not have the level of consciousness necessary to detect the abnormality in these statues.

Jiang Chen stood beneath the statues, experiencing the ancient presence that these statues exuded.

Wisps of presence curled up from beneath the pedestal of the three statues. The stone statues seemed to be almost arresting the presence, as the spirit energy bubbling from below seemed on the verge of exploding forward. It was enough to pique Jiang Chen's curiosity. He guessed that several extraordinary items were buried below the stone statues.

The words carved on the cliff face had explained that should any of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect disciples survive, they must return to revive the sect. However, it was apparent that all its disciples had perished in battle. And he, Jiang Chen, seemed to be the first person who'd discovered this place since that time. With that said, he really should be the one who could receive the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's legacy.

It's just... As Jiang Chen surveyed his surroundings, he was at a loss. With the exception of the overflowing spirit energy emanating from below the three statues, was there anything else belonging to this Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect that he could inherit?

Besides the graveyard that sprawled over the mountainous wilderness, apart from the pieces of fallen ruins and shattered walls, there was only this towering cliff. As he stood atop the cliff, Jiang Chen used his God's Eye to carefully scan the area around him, but didn't detect anything out of the ordinary.

Even after a few minutes spent walking around the top of the cliff, he still didn't find anything. As for the spirit energy emitting from the bottom of the statues, Jiang Chen surmised that they were likely from spirit herbs.

However, Jiang Chen did not consider moving them. After all, these were three monuments that had been dedicated to their ancestors, clearly a sacred ground for the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. Even if there were treasures beneath, they could not be reached without destroying the statues. Only, to destroy someone else's sacred statues for the sake of a few stalks of spirit herbs, Jiang Chen couldn't be bothered to do so. And neither would he do it.

Not only was this blasphemy to the ancestors, it was further disrespect to the sect. If this had been a sect which had conducted all kinds of misdeeds, Jiang Chen might not have had any qualms about wrecking their grounds for herbs. But although Jiang Chen had never witnessed the conduct of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect first-hand, he could tell from the rousing words on the cliff face that this was a morally upright sect that inspired veneration from all.

Naturally, Jiang Chen would not desecrate their sacred grounds for some mere spirit herbs. Not to mention, he wasn't particularly excited about the legacy of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect either. After all, with all the knowledge he'd retained from his previous life, no matter how impressive the ancient sect had been, it still wouldn't measure up to his past.

He circled the area a few more times, still empty-handed. Although he was slightly disappointed, he wasn't excessively upset. "Forget it. This Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect is already a thing of the past. Even if they had a legacy, I'm just an unrelated party. It's fine, right now, time is of the essence. I should start thinking about how to get out of this place."

Jiang Chen had not forgotten that there were only two more days that he could remain in Mt. Rippling Mirage. And if he remembered correctly, the ruins he had entered were in the area of the ancient herb

garden. The formation covering this area opened only once in three thousand years. If he did not leave as soon as possible, he might be trapped here for the next three millennia.

The moment he thought of this, Jiang Chen stepped before the stone statues and cupped his fists in a show of respect. "The members of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect all died in defense of its homelands. This is worthy of nothing less than utmost respect. Even if I, Jiang Chen, have not found fortune here, I will remember this matter, and search for any descendants to send here."

When all was said and done, Jiang Chen still deeply revered the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. No matter what, such an illustrious sect had actually sent all its members into battle, to the extent that it had sealed its gates shut. This kind of selflessness and noble integrity was something Jiang Chen admired greatly. This was why this sect had won Jiang Chen's respect.

When he finished, Jiang Chen turned and descended along the stone steps, using the nameless saber to find his way back to the altar. However, the moment that Jiang Chen stepped off the cliff, rays of dazzling light suddenly exploded from the area around the cliff. In an instant, an enormous formation appeared on the ground beneath Jiang Chen. Every inch of the space around him was filled with numerous ancient characters and patterns. And on the lofty cliff face, an enormous Nine Palaces^[1] diagram appeared. This diagram shone with a light golden glow, emanating a terrifying feeling. The lines that delineated the Nine Palaces flickered on and off, bright and dark with a moment's difference.

"The Nine Palaces Formation?" Jiang Chen was slightly taken aback. He had seen a great variety of things in his previous life so naturally, he knew what this was. This wasn't even an extraordinarily complicated design, but this version couldn't be considered a simple Nine Palaces Formation.

But to think that such a formation had been hidden on the cliff face? n/)

Jiang Chen subconsciously took a step back, but he soon discovered that the area around the cliff had been enclosed by a ring-shaped formation, as though the the ground had been split by a circular crack. Frighteningly powerful spirit pulses overflowed from the crack, forming an enormous circular energy cyclone that covered this entire mountainous region.

"Formations amongst formations, this Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect seems to be a sect renowned for its formations." In his previous life, Jiang Chen had studied formations rather extensively, so he could see that the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's techniques were definitely extraordinary.

Apart from the formation that surrounded Mt. Rippling Mirage, another encircled the large waterfall at the entrance to the ancient herb garden. There was yet another formation around the interior of the island. And the position of that altar was clearly the location of another formation. Layers upon layers of formations covered the area around the cliff.

The road here had been dotted with formations. For a person entering this place from the outskirts of Mt. Rippling Mirage, he would have to face at least four or five formations along the way. If not for this chance, there would have been no other way to enter this place.

Jiang Chen pondered for a brief second before a ray of powerful light shot out from one of the grids of the Nine Palaces Formation, enclosing his entire body. With a quick, easy motion, Jiang Chen was sucked into the grid. He didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. Once again, he had been summoned to a brand new territory without even the time to decide on his options.

This time, Jiang Chen entered a giant residence that had been carved into a mountain. The residence's architecture was distinctly antique. The dense feeling of desolation and timelessness left Jiang Chen wondering if he had suddenly traveled back to an ancient era.

"Welcome." An aged and desolate voice resounded.

Jiang Chen froze in his steps, instantly raising his guard. He spread out his senses and observed his surroundings. Never in his wildest imagination had he expected someone to be here in this cavern. However, he soon realized that the voice hadn't emerged from a real person, but was rather a message left behind by an ancient consciousness.

"No matter who you may, no matter where you come from, if you are able to reach this point, you must have passed through several formations. Moreover, you must have possessed a token from our Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. Along the way, you must have scaled the ancestor cliff.

"Fortune seems to have smiled upon you, because the ability to enter this cavern proves that you are not willing to throw away all your principles in order to accomplish your goals. At the very least, you are not a person completely devoid of conscience. Otherwise, not only would you have been unable to receive our Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's legacy, but you might even have perished in your attempt to do so."

Jiang Chen was shocked. Why had this ancient message said something like that? Had they anticipated people trying to break into their place?

"Do not be alarmed. Different people have different natures, and the fate that befalls each person who enters our sect grounds is wholly different. In reality, amongst the nine gates of the Nine Palaces Formation, there is only one working gate. The other eight will lead either to your death or to your destruction."

Only one working gate?

Jiang Chen broke out in cold sweat. There was actually only one gate that resulted in life in the Nine Palaces Formation? The other gates would lead to death and destruction? How could... how could this not cause Jiang Chen to feel nervous? He'd subconsciously walked up to and miraculously turned back right in front of the gates of hell. But, why was it that he'd been brought to the single working gate instead of being sent to his demise through the other gates?

Jiang Chen had some vague conjectures, but was still very much bewildered by this situation. Although the voice had told him that he had arrived at the gate of life, Jiang Chen did not dare to relax just yet. Every corner of this ancient sect had been filled with peculiarities. Jiang Chen certainly did not wish to fall into dire straits from just a momentary lapse in focus.

"Fated one, you must be curious as to why your luck is so good. Eight out of nine gates of the Nine Palace grid leads to death, and just one to life, yet you've been sent through to the single working gate? The reason behind that is your triumph over your greed. Although that does not automatically make you a noble person, it at least proves that you are not completely unscrupulous. And only this kind of person is qualified to receive the legacy of our Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect!"

The Chinese divided the sky up into nine quadrants to gather information about the seasons. This school of thought is often used in geography, military tactics, calligraphy and martial arts

Chapter 602: Jiang Chen Trapped!

Jiang Chen knew that everything the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect had organized had been meticulously arranged. Starting from the formation on the outskirts of Mt. Rippling Mirage, all the layers of the various formations had been carefully interlocked with each other. There were almost no flaws. If there had been the slightest break in the middle, he never would've made it here. It had indeed been the combined effect of many factors that he'd been able to reach here.

"Spirit power emanates from beneath the sculptures at Ancestor Cliff, but you didn't disturb them. This goes to show you aren't an avaricious man. Had you been tempted by the waves of spirit power and disregarded the sanctity of the Ancestor Cliff to disturb the statutes in search of treasure... you would have been killed by either the restrictions on the cliff, or plunged into a land of sure death by the Nine Palaces Formations."

The situation only dawned on Jiang Chen when he heard this. He'd had his suspicions before, but only realized now how sensible his decision not to shift the sculptures had been. If it'd been anyone else, it would indeed have been difficult to triumph over their greed after sensing that dense spirit power. It was because of his lack of desire and the respect in his heart that he hadn't disturbed those sculptures. That was how he'd avoided catastrophe.

Jiang Chen truly had to admire the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's ingeniously designed process. They'd first sent him to the cemetery that'd held ten thousand tombstones to strongly shake his psyche. The stirring words on the cliff face had further impacted his mind. If it'd been anyone with ulterior motives in mind, they still would've gone for the treasures on Ancestor Cliff even after seeing the scene at the cemetery. And if it'd been anyone with a bit of righteousness to them, a bit of worship for the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect would've formed after seeing the cemetery and the words on the cliff face. They would've never had the heart to disturb the sanctity of the Ancestor Cliff.

This arrangement not only showed a keen understanding of human nature, it had been constructed in a way that tested one's very nature. As long as one's heart was not just, there was no way they could receive the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's approval. But if one was honest and generous, he would instead be sent to the single working gate of the Nine Palaces Formation, just like Jiang Chen.

The cavern fell completely silent after the voice finished speaking. Jiang Chen extended his senses a little. Only after discovering that there were no restrictions or danger around him did he proceed forward. Looking on from the outside, he hadn't thought the cavern to be very big. But after turning a corner and walking through several corridors, he realized that the cavern was truly a completely different world. It was divided into layer after layer and unexpectedly gave one a feeling of endlessness.

Jiang Chen walked past the lobby of the cavern and arrived at a place reminiscent of a library. This library had three floors and displayed a variety of old records. Much to his surprise however, there was not a single speck of dust tainting the rows of bookshelves. It was as though time had not left any traces on this place at all. Jiang Chen knew then that this cavern must be protected through some special means.

The four treasures of the study were placed on a simple desk. A simple, old-fashioned brush lay to the side, as if the ink was still drying on it. An ink slab in the shape of a dragon's tail was next to it, with ink still contained within. It was as if the owner of this residence had been writing something just a moment ago, and had just stepped out to run an errand.

Jiang Chen found this still wet ink slab and brush rather inconceivable. Truly, he was shocked for a moment. Countless months and years had passed from ancient times until now, but this ink and brush still had not dried up. It seemed that the owner of this room had indeed spent a lot of blood and sweat on the creation of this cavern. Jiang Chen could not help his curiosity as he walked over to the desk and looked down on the calligraphy scroll.

"Our sect partakes of the spirit power of the heavens and earth, and receives the worship of the peoples. As the strong enemy advances, we hereby declare our intention unto death to resist with strength, defend our homes, and regret not our deaths..."

There weren't many words on the scroll, but one could recognize the spirit of indomitable momentum that underlay each word. Jiang Chen surmised that the one who wrote these words must have faced his ultimate decision, and had been about to depart. He likely had not finished crafting his message before he left.

Jiang Chen had yet to find any concrete hints regarding the powerful invaders after searching around. Nonetheless, those were all things of the ancient past. If he took a moment to think, the Divine Abyss Continent right now was perfectly fine. Those foreign invaders likely had not conquered the Divine Abyss Continent.

Jiang Chen wasn't the kind of person who would worry over sect members of an ancient sect. To be honest, he was more interested in the history of the Divine Abyss Continent. He wanted to know whether this Divine Abyss Continent was somehow linked to his previous world. Since this Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect had existed so long ago, there was the slight possibility that he could find some clues. Jiang Chen took a seat on the chair and took some scrolls from the desk. These scrolls were clearly some daily recordings that the room's owner had kept. He was quite surprised after scanning through them.

These notes actually mentioned that once one entered the central district of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, they needed to understand the mechanics of every formation the Sect had constructed in order to exit. This was because the formation the sect had used to seal the mountain only allowed entry, not exit. One had to master the formation in order to depart, and the formation used to seal the mountain had been formed from hundreds of smaller formations.

Jiang Chen was entirely dismayed as he clutched those notes in a state of shock. To control every formation in this Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, just how many months, how many years would that take?

Before everything else, the notes had vaguely mentioned that at the very, very least, the minimum cultivation needed to control every formation was the sage realm. That was to say, one who had not reached the sage realm wasn't even qualified to try. And what the notes truly revealed were that the status of sage realm was at best just an entry requirement for the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, a common sight for the sect.

Jiang Chen couldn't help but smile ruefully. "An ancient sect is after all, an ancient sect. Even among the sects of the Upper Eight Regions, sage realm could be considered a solid level of power. Yet it existed as merely the entry requirement for this Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect? Could it be that such a perverse level of power was necessary to enter a sect from this ancient era?"

Jiang Chen's brain was filled with questions, but he was still not too shocked by this revelation. On the plane of existence that he had been in his past life, even a Great Titled Emperor didn't meet the minimum requirement of entry.

According to these notes, the majority of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's battle power came from emperor realm cultivators. And the owner of this notebook was an existence that obviously surpassed the emperor realm.

"Although the owner of this room only mentions his cultivation in passing, there is no question that he has surpassed the emperor realm. Only when one breaks through this realm does one have the ability to break through the void and enter the celestial planes. That would be when a cultivator is acknowledged by the heavenly dao and becomes a celestial level cultivator." Jiang Chen recalled his memories from his previous life, and guessed that the room's owner must also be a celestial powerhouse at the very least.

When he reached the end of that thought, a spark of curiosity ignited regarding the ancient era of the Divine Abyss Continent. In his notes, the room's owner had also mentioned some mysteries surrounding the Divine Abyss Continent, as well as the names of some other sects.

It seemed that the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect could not be considered a peak level of power amongst the entire Divine Abyss Continent. During that glorious era, there had been numerous sects and countless races. It had truly been a prosperous era. However, the names of these sects had not been recorded in modern history of the Divine Abyss Continent at all. It was as though that ancient era had been completely struck out of history.

At least, Jiang Chen had not seen any records of those sects in the Myriad Domain. As he went through all the notes on the desk, Jiang Chen used the anecdotes in the notes to collate and analyze information regarding that ancient era. The only problem was that the anecdotes were now so old, they were no longer applicable in the modern era.

His primary concern right now was how to escape this place. He certainly did not want to be trapped here for several hundred years. If he unraveled all the formations in this place and understood every one which sealed the mountain to escape this place, the outside world would have completely changed by then.

"No, I must get out. I have to." Jiang Chen wasn't someone who lost their cool easily. But the state of affairs outside was too volatile for him to stay in here for long.

He'd been worried about his father ever since the latter had left for the Upper Eight Regions. If he was stuck here for a few hundred years, by the time he left, his father might have encountered some danger or reached the end of his predestined lifespan.

As for his subordinates in the Regal Pill Palace, Jiang Chen foresaw tumultuous change in the Myriad Domain within the next ten years. If the Tristar Sect colluded with the Ninesuns Sky Sect, there would

definitely be disaster. And once the disaster spiralled out of control, the order of the Myriad Domain would undergo great changes.

With the tyranny of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, they might even massacre the Regal Pill Palace if they faced any opposition. And from what Ding Tong had said, Jiang Chen knew that he had offended the third young genius of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, Yong Xingyun.

That was a perverse genius who was assailing the emperor realm! If that fellow decided to descend to the Myriad Domain because of Ding Tong's death, there would be no other result than a bloodbath!

Although the formations he had placed in the Regal Pill Palace were impressive, they could at best defend against a top tier sage realm heavyweight. The formations may somewhat sting one in the half step emperor realm, but that heavyweight could definitely break them if he put in enough time and effort. After all, that Nine Gates Incineration Formation was only at half of its maximum power. At that time, Jiang Chen's resources had been limited and he had lacked enough origin spirit stones. Even the formation at half-power had been won through various swindles.

He had won tens of thousands of origin spirit stones on this trip to Mt Rippling Mirage, and could now return to improve his formation. However, he was now trapped in this Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect.

His father in the Upper Eight Regions; his friends who were waiting for his return to the Regal Pill Palace; the constant possibility that a mishap could occur with the Generation Binding Curse despite the fact that he'd constrained it; his promise to cure Senior Sister Ling Bi'er's father...

These various concerns constantly nagged at Jiang Chen to leave this place. Nonetheless, he was aware that with his current level, brute-forcing his way through the numerous ancient formations was but a fool's daydream. Thus, no matter what he wished for, he had to accept this reality. He could only leave after cultivating, learning various formation techniques and mastering the formations set by the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect.

Jiang Chen didn't believe that he would have any problems learning the formation techniques. The problem lay with the fact that he needed to be at least sage realm to be able to learn them to begin with. Since he was a mere fifth rank origin level cultivator, he would definitely require lots of time. Fortunately, the spiritual energy in this cavern was abundant, far beyond what the Regal Pill Palace could offer. If Jiang Chen did not consider the situation outside, this place was actually perfect for training.

Chapter 603: Sky Origin Realm, Breaking Through the First Formation

Thanks to the experience Jiang Chen had accumulated over two lifetimes, he possessed great wisdom and determination. After he suitably assessed the situation, he knew he had no other choice and decided to stop thinking so much and focus on cultivating instead.

To be honest, various ties and concerns in the Regal Pill Palace had prevented Jiang Chen from sitting down and concentrating for long periods of cultivation, so this was actually an opportunity for him. Thus, Jiang Chen began his attempt on sixth level origin realm after swallowing some Origin Fostering Pills.

Originally, he'd been at the peak of the fifth level origin realm, so it was only a matter of time before he made it to the sixth level. Jiang Chen smoothly broke through after roughly half a month. Even afterwards, he was in no hurry and took his time in fortifying his new realm.

When he had solidified his grasp on sixth level origin realm, he then took out another pill flask. There were three Origin Doubling Pills within it. When Jiang Chen had gifted the Longevity Pill to the Regal Pill Palace, Palace Head Dan Chi had given Jiang Chen a storage ring, and Elder Yun Nie had presented Jiang Chen with these three pills.

The Origin Doubling Pill, which had been refined from the Firstcloud Dew, was said to be a pill that absorbed some of the qi of the heavens and earth. Jiang Chen had felt that Elder Yun Nie completely squandered the Firstcloud Dew in using them to refine the Origin Doubling Pills, but he didn't think so now. The higher quality these pills were, the better Jiang Chen received them as they could unconditionally increase his cultivation by one level within the origin realm.

Jiang Chen had been planning to use this heaven-defying pill when he needed to assail the sky origin realm. Now that he was at the peak of the origin realm, at the sixth level, what better time to take the pill?

Any pill useful in ascension could only be taken once and would have almost no effect if taken again. This also applied to the Origin Doubling Pill since one pill was enough to unequivocally ascend one level upwards but the second would be virtually ineffective. Thus, Jiang Chen took a pill, put the other two away and then sat down cross-legged to refine the medicinal power held within the pill.

These kinds of pills usually had very domineering effects. Otherwise, how could it unconditionally help a cultivator ascend one whole level? The process of condensing a decades worth of effort and cultivation into a day or a half meant the refinement process was filled with great agony and struggle. It was a good thing that Jiang Chen was mentally prepared.

Three days later—

Large beads of sweat continuously trickled down Jiang Chen's face, but the joy of advancement danced on his lips. "As expected of a pill refined from the Firstcloud Dew! Simple and direct, the effects were quite domineering! If I hadn't practiced the 'Nine Transformations of Demons and Gods' to reinforce my physical body, I likely would've been in for much more pain!"

Jiang Chen had gotten off fairly unscathed since he hadn't suffered as much physical pain as others who had taken the pill. Breaking through to the seventh level origin realm instantly catapulted Jiang Chen into a new realm, one of a true sky origin realm cultivator.

But even so, he wasn't proud of himself at all. There was still the eighth and ninth level origin realms ahead. He'd then have to use ninth level origin realm as a foundation to reach for the peak of the origin realm, the border of the half step sage realm.

Only when he found the clues within the half step sage realm would he have the chance for a moment of enlightenment and set foot into the sage realm. This meant that he had at least three or four more steps to take before he reached the sage realm, and none of these steps were easy ones to make.

Instead of being impatient for further results after breaking through to seventh level origin realm, Jiang Chen remained within the library to peruse the ancient tomes and understand more of this residence. It wasn't that he didn't want to start exploring, but that he was currently too weak to venture into the area beyond the library. Layers upon layers of strong formations had become a natural barrier such that he could only stare blankly at the area behind the residence.

According to the records in the journals, there should be a Tower of Inheritance behind the residence. All of the treasures that the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect had left behind would be in that tower. Jiang Chen would have to break through every layer of formation in order to obtain what was in the tower.

Nonetheless, Jiang Chen wasn't depressed. It was better to have a goal than to grasp blindly. He wasn't the sort to halt in his tracks and watch from the sidelines, nor was he the sort to flee in the face of battle. He could understand the caution of the owner of this residence. Considering how the entire Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect had fallen in battle, he naturally needed to design layer upon layer of tests to select the proper individual to pass the sect's inheritance onto.

Firstly, it would test the individual's mind and personality, and secondly it would hone the individual's will. If the one being tested couldn't overcome even a little assessment, what right would he have to receive the sect's inheritance?

According to the journal, Jiang Chen would need to overcome three tests in order to make it through the Tower. The first one had to do with the Minor Artifice Formation. This was a formation that combined the tangible and the intangible. What was the tangible? It was what the eye could see, the ear could hear, the nose could smell and the hands and feet could touch. But anything that seemed tangible, was also a fabrication.

This Minor Artifice Formation was both real and illusory. Everything one saw, heard, smelled, and touched after entering the formation could be real, and could also be an illusion. One had to rely only on his consciousness instead of his five senses in order to break through the formation. Now that Jiang Chen had broken through to the seventh level, his consciousness had grown much stronger so he decided to challenge this Minor Artifice Formation. However, every formation here was similarly risky. If he set one foot wrongly in the formation, he could trigger all sorts of attacks.

"There's nothing I can do about that. I've broken through to seventh level origin realm and learned much about formations. Add to that my knowledge of formations from my past life and a mere Minor Artifice Formation should be of no difficulty." Jiang Chen leaped into the formation as soon as his thoughts traveled here.

The formation activated as soon as he jumped into it. It was a vast space that surged and broiled with countless waves. Tidal waves rose instantly, forming the might of tsunamis that crashed upon mountain peaks. As Jiang Chen stood in the center of this space, he heard thunder raging all around him as enormous waves crashed upon him. Lonely wolves howled in his ears, and he almost thought that he'd plunged into the eighteenth level of hell.

Suddenly, the large wave was ripped apart as a posturing and snarling dragon pounced on Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen frowned and remaining coolly composed, shouting lowly, "You do not deceive me!"

Thunder clapped as he spoke. His angry bellow echoed outwards, its invisible power smashing the enormous dragon into nothing and returning it to the void. It was indeed fake. Jiang Chen smirked. When it came down to things, this formation played on people's minds. If one didn't understand the fundamentals of the formation, then they wouldn't understand the notion that all that was tangible was actually fake. This was the heart of the formation.

If one actually tried to fight back against all the illusions that appeared, then they might actually plunge into unredeemable depths. It was a good thing that Jiang Chen had a strong consciousness. If it was someone with a weaker mindset, they might subconsciously attempt to resist when they saw such a realistic dragon pouncing on them.

The Minor Artifice Formation was a mindgame. Even if the one knew that false images were attacking them, would their consciousness be able to withstand such an assault, would their minds falter, and would internal demons rise in the face of great fear? Once the formation detected any fear, it would double down on this particular kind of illusion until one's mind collapsed.

Jiang Chen however, had been tempering his mind with "Boulder's Heart" ever since he had reached the spirit realm. The strength of his consciousness right now was on par with a cultivator of Dan Chi's level. Therefore, even though countless falsehoods appeared in the formation, Jiang Chen remained as unmoving as a mountain through it all.

However, this only meant that he wouldn't be beaten by the formation, but he'd still have to understand the foundation of this formation in the midst of all these illusions in order to break through to it. Unless he was powerful enough to forcefully crush the formation, he'd have to decipher the inner workings of the formation in order to leave. At his current level, he didn't possess the strength and immense finesse needed to crush the formation.

It was at this time that his memories from his past life proved their worth. Although he hadn't studied this formation before, he'd encountered similar ones. He'd never broken through one himself, but he'd read much about simulations and practical combat experience. Therefore, he ignored everything he saw, heard and smelled within the Minor Artifice Formation and only used his consciousness to probe at his surroundings.

The formation alternated between a heavy blizzard, fiery flames from a volcano, hundreds of simultaneously blooming flowers, and numerous living things withering and dying. All sorts of odd delusions and illusions assaulted Jiang Chen, but he ignored them all. Suddenly, his consciousness registered a faint ripple on the path of oval stones that he was walking on. "The foundation should be nearby!"

Jiang Chen's strong consciousness had picked up on something, and he swept his consciousness over the path as it illuminating it with a lamp. "This is it!"

He suddenly darted forward and slammed his hand down on a grey-white stone. In the next moment, a strong beam of light pierced his eyes as the space around him seemed to peel off in layers, collapsing before Jiang Chen's eyes. The stone transformed into a speck of pale-yellow light that landed in Jiang Chen's hands.

In the next instant, the illusions created by the formation, as well as the countless oval stones on the ground, all turned into odd runes that looked like tadpoles, which in turn slowly evaporated in the air.

Bam!

All of the runes and scenery then melted into the void, as if they had completely evaporated. When Jiang Chen opened his eyes, he found himself standing in the middle of the corridor, less than ten meters away from where he'd just jumped into the formation.

"Tsk tsk. The Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect is well worthy of their name as a sect founded upon formations. Such a strong formation was set up in a space of less than ten meters. There really is something to the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect!" Jiang Chen looked at his hand again and saw that the oval stone had turned into a formation disk.

He was delighted. This was the disc for the Minor Artifice Formation! So it turns out there are benefits to breaking through the formation. I've received a formation disk in exchange!

What was a formation disk? When it came down to things, it was the model for a formation. Not every formation had a disk, but if it did, one could quickly set up the formation. Therefore, all strong formation masters carried many disks with them so that they could set up a formation whenever necessary

Formations without disks took too long to set up, and were impractical when used in combat. Formation disks alleviated this concern, as one only needed to activate the disk and supply it with the proper amount of spirit stones. The formation master didn't need to do anything else as the disk would take care of everything else. The formation would even run automatically as well!

Chapter 604: Thundercloud Cicada Wings, Magnetic Golden Mountain

Since Jiang Chen had received a Minor Artifice Formation's formation disk, this meant that he'd also received a Minor Artifice Formation. This was nothing less than an incredible profit. Armed with this formation disk, even someone utterly hopeless at formation techniques would be able to activate the formation to confront any enemies as long as he had enough spirit stones at his disposal. Thus, Jiang Chen was naturally aware of the disk's benefits.

Creating a formation disk was a very complicated process. The difficulty of distilling such an enormous formation into such a tiny disk could well surpass the difficulty of setting up the formation in the first place. Moreover, the materials required to put together such a formation disk were uncommon, and not every formation could be condensed into a disk form.

However, if a disk containing a particular formation could be manufactured, it instantly became a more effective tool in battle. Leaving aside other considerations, the advantage of an instant deployment left its user with a significant edge over their opponents. Although techniques that could hasten the activation and deployment of formations existed, they could never surpass the direct speed of a disk.

In his previous life, Jiang Chen had extensively studied formation disks, even drawing up theoretical plans for various formation disks. It was just that his achievements regarding formation disks paled in comparison to his prowess with pills. Nonetheless, Jiang Chen was not satisfied with just breaking through this Minor Artifice Formation.

In order to exit this Tower of Inheritance, he needed to break through three formations, of which this Minor Artifice Formation was only the first. The second and third formations would only be increasingly difficult. Although Jiang Chen wanted to leave as soon as possible, he knew the principle of “more haste, less speed”. If he simply blindly rushed forward and ended up in a trap, things would take an immense turn for the worse.

The first formation tested the level of his consciousness. The second was a pure combat formation. Jiang Chen estimated that he didn't have much of a chance to break through this combat formation before he entered the ninth level origin realm.

Fortunately, the environment of this cavern was highly suited for training. If he single mindedly focused on his cultivation, he could actually accomplish twice as much with half the effort. Fortunately, he didn't lack for any resources at the moment.

After entering the seventh level origin realm, Jiang Chen decided to refine the dragon crystal. Although he carried many upper rank Origin Fostering Pills with him, the spirit power and essence within those pills wasn't on par with the dragon crystal. The spirit power that a single dragon crystal contained could rival that of at least a thousand Origin Fostering Pills. And Long Xiaoxuan had given Jiang Chen quite a number of dragon crystals.

Jiang Chen took out a crystal and began to refine it. The spirit power of the dragon crystal was so dense that Jiang Chen spent ten days just to completely refine it. Jiang Chen pulled streaks of rich spirit energy into his dantian, reforging his entire body in the process. The might of the dragon crystal was most impressive. It was able to provide the energy necessary for cultivation while tempering his physical form at the same time. Since Jiang Chen practiced the Nine Transformations of Demons and Gods, the energy that overflowed from the dragon crystal wasn't wasted in the slightest.

Besides absorbing spirit energy everyday, Jiang Chen also did not neglect his arts and techniques.

The superiority of the Thundercloud Cicada bloodline was finally displayed after entering the sky origin realm. Jiang Chen had finally trained to the point where he could summon the Thundercloud Cicada Wings at will. Shapeless and transparent, the wings were invisible to the naked eye.

Although the wings he'd just cultivated could not yet be considered strong, once Jiang Chen had grown used to them, he would be on par with a sage realm cultivator in terms of flight capability. Incidentally, the Thundercloud Cicada Wings were capable of growth. Once his Cicada Wings had fully matured, his speed would definitely far surpass that of a similarly-ranked practitioner. Moreover, his agility and burst speed would grant him an even heftier advantage. The Cicada Wings were a great gain that markedly lifted Jiang Chen's spirits.

Now that he had entered the seventh level origin realm, he could finally begin using the previously untouched magnetic golden mountain. Ever since Jiang Chen had refined the magnetic heart, that magnetic golden mountain had already become one of his personal treasures. It was just that he had never made full use of everything the magnetic golden mountain had to offer. With his current realm of seventh level origin realm, Jiang Chen wanted to summon the mountain and integrate it into his combat ability as a suppressive tool.

The magnetic golden mountain was not just a simple mountain. It also possessed a strong source of magnetic and metal power. Once he summoned the magnetic golden mountain, any opponent weaker than him would be crushed beneath it, and any stronger opponents would have their movements constrained by the mountain's magnetic ability. Coupled with the lethality of the metal power, it would be a shockingly formidable weapon.

Although Jiang Chen was now seventh level origin realm, his true strength was at the peak of the origin realm. Hence, when he summoned the magnetic golden mountain for the first time, its form was bigger and grander than he had imagined. Only, compared to the magnetic golden mountain at the peak of its glory, its appearance was less than a thousandth as impressive.

Of course, Jiang Chen wasn't upset at this. He believed that as his own potential increased, the might of this magnetic golden mountain would also rise step by step.

Even if its power was only at a thousandth of its original form, the kind of all-oppressing grandeur generated from having a small mountain suddenly crash down on one would be enough to completely petrify most other similarly-ranked practitioners.

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Within the Regal Pill Palace.

Three months had passed since the trip to Mt Rippling Mirage, and no one had any word from Jiang Chen. Although Palace Head Dan Chi was very optimistic about Jiang Chen's chances, his spirits were still somewhat dampened.

"Yun Nie, what progress have you made with the Longevity Pill?" Dan Chi asked.

Elder Yun Nie replied with a wry smile, "The requirements for this Longevity Pill are incredibly high. I've attempted multiple times, but I've always failed at the most crucial moment. It seems that..."

Palace Head Dan Chi sighed softly. "If even you, Yun Nie, cannot refine this pill, it seems that this Longevity Pill is quite extraordinary. Ole brother Tian Ming of the Dark North Sect has been quite urgent on this matter. He's already messaged us twice within the past three months to inquire of the pill's progress."

"This pill exhausts so much of my consciousness that at most, I can only attempt it once every three months. Fortunately, my previous two attempts were both failures so I managed to escape harming the foundation of my consciousness." Elder Yun Nie's tone was extremely exasperated as he spoke about the Longevity Pill.

Jiang Chen had not only given them the pill recipe, he had even passed them every secret and detail regarding the refinement process. From Elder Yun Nie's perspective, he shouldn't have too many problems refining it. However, only when he had truly tried to do so had he come to realize how tedious and difficult the refinement process was.

Even with Elder Yun Nie's current level of consciousness, he still felt helpless. If he could not raise his level of consciousness, then he could at most raise his success percentage to about ten or twenty percent when it came to refining this Longevity Pill. When he thought ruefully about his chances, he

could not help but admire Jiang Chen. He'd been able to withstand the pressure and circumstances in Mt. Rippling Mirage to completely refine the Longevity Pill in just one go.

Just how astonishing was his mental strength? Just how stunning was his level of consciousness? Elder Yun Nie and Palace Head Dan Chi glanced at each other, amazement sparkling deep in their eyes. It was clear that these two people were simultaneously thinking about Jiang Chen's level.

Palace Head Dan Chi laughed ruefully. "If that is so, then Jiang Chen's level..."

"Has definitely surpassed mine," Elder Yun Nie finished for him.

"I pray that the heavens will help such a worthy person. Nevertheless, this trip to Mt. Rippling Mirage has definitely been a fruitful one. I've noticed that as of today, the geniuses of Rosy Valley have become much more united. In particular, Shen Qinghong seems to have gained much motivation. He's not only broken into the sage realm since his return, but he has actively sought to pass on his cultivation experiences to younger disciples through his lectures. This is truly unusual behavior."

Elder Yun Nie smiled, "Shen Qinghong was provoked time and again by Wang Han and the rest on Mt. Rippling Mirage. His courage stems from the fact that he has experienced humiliation. His realization of this is a blessing that emerged from a curse. Moreover, Jiang Chen repeatedly helped him out of his predicament. Even if he doesn't say anything, his heart is genuinely thankful towards Jiang Chen. He's come to realize that in times of crisis, fellow sect members are ever the most reliable."

"Haha, Elder Yun Nie, have you realised that ever since Jiang Chen entered our Regal Pill Palace, our sect has run smoothly and has been improving day by day?"

Elder Yun Nie nodded and exclaimed, "Indeed. Palace Head, back when you allied us with the Precious Tree Sect, I was still slightly skeptical. I have to say, Palace Head is truly far-sighted."

Actually, this matter was not just due to Palace Head Dan Chi's far-sightedness. The only reason for this was Elder Shun. If Elder Shun hadn't mentioned Jiang Chen, Palace Head Dan Chi never would have noticed Jiang Chen, thought to check his background, and discovered the child's miraculous growth. Only then had Dan Chi resolved to ally with the Precious Tree Sect due to his love for talent. He had never imagined that Jiang Chen would bring about so many unexpected benefits to the sect in just one short year.

Their victory atop Mt. Rippling Mirage had more or less been solely orchestrated by Jiang Chen. During their harvest on the mountain, Jiang Chen had been the one to reverse the tides and obtain quite a number of sky spirit herbs, the bulk of the earth spirit herbs and an even bigger quantity of Sage Fledgling Grass. Any one of those assets were enough to propel his wealth far above the six major sects.

Even a single stalk of sky spirit herb was unquestionably priceless. Now, the Regal Pill Palace possessed a grand total of seven sky spirit herbs, five of which were with the sect and the other two with Jiang Chen. Naturally, the Regal Pill Palace would avoid revealing any such news. Currently, the six major sects all believed that the bulk of the sky spirit herbs were entirely in the hands of the Regal Pill Palace, and they'd only held the initial allotment of two stalks of sky spirit grass. Moreover, as opposed to the Regal Pill Palace, the other sects all considered Jiang Chen to be dead without question.

If he was truly trapped in the ancient herb garden, who would still care about his life or death after three thousand years?

Palace Head Dan Chi sighed lightly. “What a pity. Jiang Chen has contributed so much to our Regal Pill Palace, but is now trapped in Mt Rippling Mirage. I had hoped that he would amaze the world during the Myriad Grand Ceremony in three years time. It seems that this plan is now nothing but dust.”

“Not necessarily. If it was anyone else, they might truly be trapped in the mountain. But this is Jiang Chen... I remember reading a tidbit from his past that said he had been trapped in some forbidden territory back in the Sixteen Kingdom Alliance. Didn’t he escape in the end?” Elder Yun Nie was speaking of the time that Jiang Chen had been imprisoned in Eternal Spirit Mountain.

At that time, Elder Shun had been the one to disturb the fundamental formation of the mountain. As a result, the mountain had been sealed earlier than expected, trapping Jiang Chen within. Elder Yun Nie did not actually know the details of this event and had only heard all of this via hearsay.

“Indeed. This child is a miracle maker. If anyone in the Myriad Domain can escape from Mt Rippling Mirage, the first person this sect thinks of is him. Yun Nie, take a bit more care of our sect matters. I’ve decided to undergo secluded cultivation to break through the sky sage realm.” With everything he’d gained this time, Palace Head Dan Chi had broken through to the sixth level from the fifth level of the sage realm. As of today, he made up his mind to use all his strength to break through to the sky sage realm in one go. After all, their trip to Mt Rippling Mirage had granted them some hefty profits, especially those stalks of Sage Fledgling Grass that could now be refined into sufficient numbers of Heroic Sage Pills for his use. To Dan Chi, it was as if he’d been granted freedom, as unrestrained as a fish that roamed the seas or a bird that soared through the skies.

Chapter 605: The Hearts of the Girls

The conflict between the Sacred Sword Palace and Regal Pill Palace had only intensified during this last trip to Mt. Rippling Mirage, giving Palace Head Dan Chi a great sense of crisis. Although the Regal Pill Palace’s martial ability had improved greatly over the recent years, there still existed a large disparity between them and the other fourth rank sects. The Regal Pill Palace’s martial heritage still had some gaps that required shoring up. In this respect, Elder Yun Nie had recently become privy to the palace head’s reasoning. He had previously felt that Palace Head Dan Chi’s focus on strengthening the sect’s martial dao had caused the Regal Pill Palace’s pill dao to weaken.

Now it appeared that strengthening martial dao at the potential expense of the pill dao couldn’t be an error as long as they lived in the world of martial dao. A temporary sacrifice of pill dao wasn’t a heinous error. Why had the Sacred Sword Palace dared provoke the Regal Pill Palace again and again this time around? They were confident in the fact that the Sacred Sword Palace’s martial dao was far stronger than the Regal Pill Palace’s. Wang Jianyu, Wang Han and Elder Chen’s repeated provocation of the Regal Pill Palace certainly gave Elder Yun Nie enough to reflect over.

In the world of martial dao, strength was the only rule that was respected. That was all the more evident in situations of strife and conflict. Take Shen Qinghong for example. In the Regal Pill Palace’s Rosy Valley, he held enough power to summon clouds and rain with but a flick of his hands. But at Mt. Rippling Mirage, he was treated as a step below all of the other peak geniuses simply because he had yet to break through to the sage realm.

He could only stew silently in the face of Wang Han's barbed words. The world of martial dao was, in essence, a practical one – the strong set the rules. If one was a tad stronger than the others, then one could ride roughshod over others. If one was a tad weaker, then one could only suffer in silence.

Contrary to expectations, neither chaos nor confusion reigned in Jiang Chen's residence despite his absence for the past three months. His followers had an unshakeable faith in him. Even if Jiang Chen had not returned yet, they were convinced in their heart of hearts that it was but a matter of time before their young master came back.

When their young master had been trapped in the Eternal Spirit Mountain, hadn't the Precious Tree Sect also believed that he was dead without a doubt? Hadn't the young master returned in glory back then? Thus, even though he was currently trapped in Mt. Ripping Mirage, they still believed he would triumphantly return.

"Younger sister Huang'er, our young master has yet to return. It's been hard on you lately." Gouyu was somewhat apologetic towards Huang'er since Jiang Chen had entrusted the matters of his residence to Huang'er on his departure.

Huang'er laughed gently. "Elder sister Gouyu, I owe my life to your young master. What do these little things count for?"

Princer Gouyu had an indescribable feeling in the face of Huang'er's demeanor and comportment. She'd always felt that Huang'er should've had unparalleled looks to match her temperament, yet it was not to be.

Thus, Gouyu both liked and pitied Huang'er. As a woman beautiful inside and out, Huang'er knew that Gouyu looked compassionately upon her because of her looks. Despite this, she only smiled faintly and didn't offer up any explanations. "Elder sister Gouyu, you have no reason to worry. Huang'er has seen that your young master seems to be one blessed with great fortune. Though he hasn't returned yet, he'll surely return after a period of time."

Gouyu nodded, "That's for sure. There really hasn't been anything that's managed to trap him since he's set out in the world, despite all the big and small battles he's encountered."

As the two of them chatted, footsteps sounded from behind the door. It was Jiang Chen's cousin and personal guard, Xue Tong.

"Greetings to Miss Huang'er. Greetings to Princess Gouyu."

Gouyu quickly asked, "Xue Tong, is it news of the young master?"

Xue Tong shook his head, "No, it's Miss Ling from the Sovereign Area's third residence sending over a batch of cultivation resources."

An odd look flashed through Gouyu's eyes as she remained silent for a moment. She smiled ruefully.

"This is already the third time Ling Bi'er has sent over cultivation resources. Younger sister Huang'er, do you think this Miss Lin fancies the young master?" Gouyu was always direct and spoke whatever came to mind.

Huang'er dimples formed once again as she smiled gently. "Your young master is so outstanding that it's certainly possible for him to receive Miss Ling Bi'er's favor." Mentioning Ling Bi'er brought Ling Hui'er to mind, and Huang'er couldn't help but remember how she'd seen Ling Hui'er's daring move that day when she was picking flowers in the woods. Ling Hui'er had actually grabbed Jiang Chen's hands at that time and pressed them onto her chest. This matter had left quite a deep impression on Huang'er, making her remember the Ling sisters.

Hearing this, Gouyu flashed a mischievous smile and teased Huang'er, "Well, younger sister, since you think my young master is impressive, do you also like him a little?"

Other girls might have acted shy or coy when faced that particular question. However, Huang'er only gave a light sigh. "What does it mean to like or love someone in this world?"

Somehow, Huang'er thoughts had turned to her own life experiences and how her parents' generation had caused hate and resentment to spring from love. The Generation Binding Curse that afflicted her had been caused precisely by the emotional entanglements of the prior generation. Thus, the word "love" appeared quite hazy to Huang'er. Though a bud had perhaps sprouted in her heart, she dared not allow it to grow. Or to put it more aptly, there had been no opportunity for it to grow. These words of Huang'er seemed to have also stirred some thoughts within Gouyu's heart as she too fell silent.

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Within Ling Bi'er's residence.

Ling Bi'er kept watch over her father, Ling Su's, bed while holding her father's hand.

"Sis, it's all your fault. Why didn't you stop senior brother Jiang Chen?!" Ling Hui'er still had not let this matter go even after three months. She kept feeling that her sister should have stopped Jiang Chen and the two of them should've come out together.

Ling Bi'er was also deeply feeling the pangs of regret at that moment. If she had another chance, she would not have been so reserved or cared so much about how the others would've viewed her. She would have held back Jiang Chen back with all her strength and not let him risk himself. Alas, it was too late to say anything now. Although Jiang Chen had already given Ling Bi'er the four spirit herbs necessary to cure her father's Miasma, without Jiang Chen, she could not actually perform the detoxification.

"Big sis, why don't you say something, ah? Will senior brother Jiang Chen be able to come out?" Ling Hui'er continuously clung to and swung Ling Bi'er's other arm.

Ling Bi'er felt endless remorse within her heart as she blamed herself. During the past three months, whenever she sent cultivation resources to Jiang Chen's residence, her sense of guilt had always pushed her to leave without seeing his followers. Hearing her sister repeatedly ask her, Ling Bi'er's eyes grew red-rimmed and a few pearly tears rolled down her beautiful face.

"Hui'er, junior brother Jiang Chen is a good person. He will certainly turn misfortune into fortune." Ling Bi'er mustered all of her resolve.

"But... the next time Mt. Rippling Mirage opens will be in thirty years." Ling Hui'er didn't know about the ancient herb garden and thought that Jiang Chen was only stuck in Mt. Rippling Mirage. Ling Bi'er felt a

knife twisting in her heart. She knew that the place where Jiang Chen had truly disappeared in was the ancient herb garden, and the next time it would open was possibly three thousand years later.

Three thousand years...

Ling Bi'er felt like her body empty of energy at the enormity of that timespan. She could wait for Jiang Chen three thousand years or even thirty thousand years. If this life wasn't enough, she could keep waiting in her next life. Whether it was for ten lives, or a hundred lives... she could wait for him. But her father's affliction could not wait three thousand years!

Ever since Jiang Chen's appearance, Ling Bi'er's iceberg-like emotions seemed to have melted, gradually opening up. Jiang Chen was like a stone pebble that had slammed into her heart's door, sending aftershocks rippling within.

Time after time, Jiang Chen's outstanding conduct had overbearingly intruded into her heart.

Time after time, Jiang Chen's superior moral character had silently melted the iceberg about her.

On that trip to Mt. Rippling Mirage, they'd interacted more than they'd ever before. Though they hadn't spent every day together, a small seed of affection had been planted in the heart of a girl experiencing love for the first time. Unlimited strands of feeling had sprung into being to tie themselves into thousands of knots. Moreover, Ling Bi'er had previously sworn that she would stay by the side of whoever saves her father. And although Jiang Chen had not yet cured Ling Su, in Ling Bi'er's heart, Jiang Chen was the only one that could.

Just like one who had experienced the vast oceans wouldn't be attracted to another body of water, no one else was worth considering now that she'd acknowledged someone to be the one. Even if there jumped out a genius who was ten times stronger than Jiang Chen, he would not be able to replace Jiang Chen's status in Ling Bi'er's heart.

Compared to Ling Hui'er's straightforward enthusiasm, Ling Bi'er's temperament was as cold as ice. She was very slow to warm up to the affections between man and woman. But once she did, her feelings went far beyond merely pledging undying love or being steadfast until the seas ran dry and stones eroded to dust.

She had made up her mind that once Mt. Rippling Mirage opened next time, she would take her father to the mountain. If she could find Jiang Chen, that was for the best. If not, then she would stay, grow old and live out the rest of her days on Mt. Rippling Mirage.

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Tristar Sect, inside the Tristar Great Hall.

Sect Head Zhu and Elder Tan Lang were keeping a few Sky Sect inspectors company. It was evident these inspectors were all extraordinary. The first was a middle-aged man who wore a purple robe with two golden stars embroidered on his chest. A two-starred purple robe indicated his status as an eleventh rank inspector of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, one rank above Feng Beidou. The difference of a single rank was actually an enormous difference in status. Eleventh rank inspectors were at minimum sky sage realm, with most at peak sage realm. As for twelfth rank inspectors, those were even more rare and they were all at least half-step emperor realm or even emperor realm experts.

In addition to this eleventh rank inspector, there also sat a blue browed youth with a sinister, calculating temperament. He seemed coldly detached, arrogant to the point where it seemed like he disdained even introducing himself. He just sat there with his eyes closed, the very picture of haughtiness. However, not a single member of the Tristar Sect dared to even put a single whisker out of place. In addition to the eleventh rank inspectors, there were also several ninth and tenth rank inspectors – obviously the subordinates of the eleventh rank inspector.

“Sect Head Zhu, your Tristar Sect is truly disappointing. Although Ding Tong couldn’t be considered a top genius of the Sky Sect, but he was at least considered a proper first class genius. The Sky Sect sent him to help you set the board, but you don’t even know how he perished?” The eleventh rank inspector’s tone was like the frozen tundra, and held no doubt of who he thought was to blame.

Sect Head Zhu was full of fear and trepidation, “This really was an accident. Young master Ding Tong moved independently after entering Mt. Rippling Mirage. Elder Tan Lang tried contacting him several times but he did not respond...”

“Alright, stop explaining. Sect Head Zhu, just tell me this. Is the Tristar Sect truly capable or not? If not, then it’s not necessary to support you, as the Sky Sect can just find another sect to raise.”

Sect Head Zhu and Elder Tan Lang wore miserable expressions, but were unable to refute any of his barbs. They were constrained by their heavenly oaths and thus unable to disclose the matters that had occurred in the ancient herb garden at the heart of Mt. Rippling Mirage. And since they could not reveal anything, they were unable to use that information to atone for their sins.

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Chapter 606: The Ten Great Disciples, Sky Sect Geniuses ~~n--0vE?bIn~~

When he saw that both Sect Head Zhu and Elder Tan Lang hesitated to speak, the inspector harrumphed coldly. “As matters stand, what else are you unable to speak openly about? Stalling amongst yourself like this, it seems you still have something to hide?”

Sect Head Zhu smiled wryly and replied. “There are certainly things we wish to keep hidden. Only, Elder Tan Lang’s previous heavenly oath holds the fortunes of the sect at stake, so we cannot reveal anything. Yet this matter is of utmost concern, so Elder Tan Lang and I are also finding it difficult to explain our troubles.”

The eleventh rank inspector furrowed his brows. “The fortunes of your sect?” “That’s right. If we reveal anything, our Tristar Sect will be subject to heavenly judgment.” Elder Sect Zhu’s face revealed his unease. The descent of heavenly judgment was a petrifying thought.

The members of the Ninesuns Sky Sect were naturally well aware of this fact. The eleventh rank inspector fell into a contemplative silence. However, after a moment of thought he relaxed his brows and chuckled icily. “Sect Head Zhu, you are certain that this matter is very important?”

“It is truly very important.” Sect Head Zhu nodded.

“Fine. Since that is so, the Sky Sect will grant your Tristar Sect another chance. From this moment on, the Tristar Sect will henceforth become a division of the Ninesuns Sky Sect and will enjoy treatment

corresponding to one of the twelfth star divisions. When we establish a manor in the Myriad Domain in the future, Sect Head Zhu, you will be granted a seat as the vice manor lord.”

“What?” Both Sect Head Zhu and Elder Tan Lang were bewildered. “What is it? You’re unhappy?” The eleventh rank inspector’s voice grew cold.

“No, that’s not it. Respected inspector, what do you mean?” Sect Head Zhu’s breathing increased in pace.

“Is my meaning still not clear? The Tristar Sect no longer exists from this moment henceforth. Since it doesn’t exist, then the heavenly oath doesn’t bind it, and the fortunes of the sect are all just empty talk. We will set up a Myriad Domain Manor within the sect, and you will be appointed vice manor lord. Why not be happy about this? The Tristar Sect will enjoy the treatment of a twelfth star division, how would that be less than a mere fourth rank sect?”

There were less than 20 twelfth star divisions of the Sky Sect in the entire Divine Abyss Continent, and the position of a division was absolutely higher than a mere fourth rank sect. As for the manors that the Sky Sect were divided into, there were only nine at the moment. Even if a new one was created for the Myriad Domain, even ranked dead last of all the vice manor lords, Sect Head Zhu would grasp power far beyond that of a fourth rank sect head. Sect Head Zhu was utterly delighted by this new development. The most critical thing was that if the Tristar Sect no longer existed, then the heavenly oath would no longer bind them.

The eleventh rank inspector smiled faintly and slapped a medallion of a division head onto the table. “Zhu Changsheng, if you accept this, then the Tristar Sect will no longer exist. It is entirely up to you whether you accept it or not.

Sect Head Zhu didn’t hesitate at all as he quickly snatched it. “Subordinate Zhu Changsheng greets all the superiors present.”

“Good! Straightforward and decisive!” The inspector smiled faintly. “Allow me to introduce myself, I am Weizi Kua, an eleventh rank inspector of the Sky Sect. These are all my subordinates.” He then pointed at the remote youth with the blue eyebrows. “This youngster is one of the ten great disciples. He is Sir Cao Jin, ranked ninth amongst the ten great disciples.

The ten great disciples?

Zhu Changsheng and Elder Tan Lang started sweating profusely inside. “We greatly welcome Sir Cao! We had eyes but did not recognize Mt. Tai, please forgive us!”

How could these two sit still in the presence of one of the vaunted ten great disciples of the Sky Sect? There were countless disciples in the Sky Sect, with geniuses as numerous as hairs on oxen. For one to be ranked amongst the top ten, even at number nine, that was still exceedingly stunning!

It was obvious that even the eleventh rank inspector was respectful in front of Cao Jin, as this genius’ future accomplishments would far exceed that of an eleventh rank inspector. If Cao Jin developed into his full strength, even if he wasn’t one of the candidates for sect head of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, he would at least be in charge of one of the manors. His position then would be completely incomparable to that of an eleventh rank inspector!

Although an inspector was a high position, they were still only sect representatives sent to investigate the various divisions. There was a qualitative difference between an inspector and a manor lord who held true power in their hands.

Although Cao Jin had yet to ascend to the emperor realm, he was already at the peak of the sage realm at his young age! This level of cultivation was capable of trampling everyone in the Myriad Domain. Therefore, it was understandable that Cao Jin emanated such an overbearing attitude. He smiled dispassionately and waved his hand, “Zhu Changsheng, you’ve heard Envoy Weizi’s words and accepted the division head medallion. Shouldn’t you speak of useful things now?”

Cao Jin’s tone wasn’t particularly stern or soft, but it contained a naturally overpowering aura.

Zhu Changsheng hastily nodded, throwing a glance at Elder Tan Lang. “Tan Lang, you were actually part of things, it’s more detailed coming from you.”

Elder Tan Lang nodded and organized his thoughts, thoroughly describing the events of the ancient herb garden. He waxed eloquent with regards to the various schemes between the sects and how Jiang Chen had used the antidote for the Miasma in the end to swindle the sects out of great amounts of spirit herbs. He concealed nothing, freely explaining everything he knew of.

Zhu Changsheng tacked on further details when the elder was finished, “Everyone present here might be unfamiliar with Jiang Chen’s name. The Purple Sun Sect of the sixteen kingdom alliance was almost destroyed at this person’s hands.”

This matter suddenly reminded Weizi Kua of something. “Jiang Chen, the one who killed all those in the Purple Light Division by himself? It’s said that there was also a young girl with an azure phoenix constitution that fell?” His tone was held a note of pure surprise.

“Indeed. When Inspector Feng Beidou made his bet with the Regal Pill Palace, it was the appearance of this child who wrecked the Sky Sect’s first setup.” Zhu Changsheng’s words were filled with an unconcealed intent to worsen relations between the two parties.

Cao Jin suddenly smiled coldly. “This kid seems to be a bit interesting? I heard that that azure phoenix constitution had been earmarked as a cultivation furnace for senior brother Yong Xingyun. Her death has caused his Dragon Phoenix Sword to remain yet uncompleted. This kid is something else, isn’t he? He has yet to set foot out of the Myriad Domain, but he’s already offended senior brother Xingyun. Apparently senior brother Xingyun gave orders to Ding Tong to bring this kid back for him. It looks like Ding Tong’s disappearance might have something to do with this kid, hmm?”

Cao Jin might look the image of a spoiled brat, but his powers of deduction were nothing to laugh at. He was arrogant but not brainless. On the contrary, to be able to emerge from a crowd of geniuses meant that his intelligence was very high. Something that neither Weizi Kua nor Zhu Changsheng had thought of, but Cao Jin had instantly cut to the heart of.

“What? Ding Tong’s disappearance has something to do with that kid?” Zhu Changsheng started, and even Elder Tan Lang had a look of incredulity on his face.

Cao Jin smiled faintly and didn’t explain himself.

However, Weizi Kua laughed ruefully. "According to your descriptions, there's no entity within Mt. Rippling Mirage on the level of the sky sage realm. And amongst those who entered, there wasn't anyone who could possibly have killed Ding Tong. Then how could he have perished without cause or reason? Given his temper, he must have gone to pursue Jiang Chen but this Jiang Chen brat must have used some unknown way to kill Ding Tong instead. Don't you agree, Sir Cao?"

Cao Jin didn't put on any airs in response to Weizi Kua's query, and only nodded calmly. "This must be the case."

"But... but that Jiang Chen is only an earth origin realm cultivator. And Ding Tong is in the earth sage realm..." Sect Head Zhu still found this explanation somewhat unbelievable.

"Hmmp. That's your problem of being too narrow-minded. If that Jiang Chen didn't have any tricks up his sleeves, how could he have toyed around with all of you? The only thing you see is martial power. Haven't you considered how strange it was that he wasn't even afraid of the Miasma?"

"Indeed, not only was this brat the victor of the Mt. Rippling Mirage Pill Battles, he'd triumphed with flying colors. Could it be that he is a genius in poisons?" Cao Jin replied calmly, "Even a genius in poison might not have been able to best Ding Tong. But Ding Tong might not have been aware of his enemy's ability and underestimated him, thus falling prey to an insidious plot. This is certainly a possibility."

"In any case, that's enough, there's no more need to discuss this. For such an insignificant ant, he's already in Senior Brother Yong Xingyun's blacklist even if he wasn't trapped in Mt. Rippling Mirage. This brat is assuredly a dead man walking. On the other hand, since the Regal Pill Palace has gained so many sky and earth sage herbs..." Cao Jin's lips twisted into a cold smile.

"Not only that, they also possess the Longevity Pill." Elder Tan Lang suddenly spoke up, "That Longevity Pill can extend the life of a sage realm expert by five hundred years!" "What?" Weizi Kua surged to his feet when he heard this. "Extend the life of a sage realm expert by five hundred years? Are you sure?"

Elder Tan Lang's heart quailed under the pressure from Weizi Kua's aura but nonetheless, he nodded, "Sect Head Zhu... no, Division Head Zhu also witnessed it first-hand."

Zhu Changsheng nodded and replied in a grave voice, "That is definitely true. The head of the Sacred Elephant family of the Great Cathedral, Xiang Wentian had originally reached the end of his predestined lifespan and would have perished within fifty years. But after he ingested the Longevity Pill, his condition transformed completely -- his life force returned, his appearance changed; he must have gained at least five hundred years!"

Weizi Kua and Cao Jin glanced at each other, their faces unable to conceal their shock. Both of them could be considered well-learned individuals in the Upper Eight Regions. They had also seen many variations of pills capable of extending one's life. But five hundred years was too ridiculous. Moreover, the way Zhu Changsheng had spoken of it exaggerated its prowess even further, since it seemed to produce instant effects.

Zhu Changsheng was worried that they wouldn't believe him and hurriedly added, "This subordinate also finds this matter hard to believe. I would not have dared to speak of it had I not seen it with my own two eyes. That Longevity Pill well and truly produces such an effect. If you don't believe me, please ask anyone at the scene where it was used."

Cao Jin clapped the back of his chair, “No need to ask. We’ll just go directly to the Regal Pill Palace.”

The top ten geniuses of the Ninesuns Sky Sect were able to freely traverse the Myriad Domains. The Regal Pill Palace? To Cao Jin, that place was no different than his own backyard. Of course he would feel entitled to take anything he wanted.

“Coming, Inspector Weizi?”

Weizi Kua hesitated for a second. “Sir Cao, this matter requires careful deliberation. If we reveal ourselves, we’ll be laying our cards on the table. The people of the Myriad Domain might not unite for much, but once a matter concerns the future of their domain, they will still stand together. We...”

“Then we should just show our hand. If you ask me, we were too nice in trying to arrange this and that. Just massacre them all. We can talk after killing a few of their stronger members.” Killing intent suddenly surged into Cao Jin’s eyes.

Weizi Kua laughed ruefully. If they did as Cao Jin wanted, they’d certainly be more content. But once things reached that level, they would truly be showing their entire hand. The Sky Sect’s plans had not reached fruition just yet. Showing their hand now would only be detrimental in the larger scheme of things.

Chapter 607: Attack on the Regal Pill Palace

Wei Zikua was an inspector whose responsibility was to lay the groundwork for the Myriad Domain plan. On the other hand, Cao Jin didn’t care about such matters. As a genius disciple, the only thing he looked to was profit, so he wasn’t in the least interested in the Myriad Domain’s overall situation. What he was interested in were the earth and sky rank herbs. How could Cao Jin not be moved when he heard that Jiang Chen had received a hundred earth rank herbs? Not to mention the extra seven sky rank herbs he held!

Both Zhu Changsheng and Elder Tan Lang had played a little trick by deliberately omitting the fact that the sky rank herbs might be with Jiang Chen instead of the Regal Pill Palace. All they wanted was to instigate matters and see misfortune fall upon the Regal Pill Palace.

Zhu Changsheng laughed. “Truthfully, if you attack the Regal Pill Palace, the other sects might not help them aside from the Darknorth Sect. At the very least, it’s guaranteed that the Sacred Sword Palace will stand by and gloat. The Walkabout Sect also prefers not entering the fray until others have exhausted themselves. The Great Cathedral’s response might be a bit more ambiguous, but they usually will not act unless they spy profit so they might not help either.”

Cao Jin nodded slightly. These things were not important to him at all. From the very beginning, he had not taken any of the Myriad Domain sects seriously. Whether or not they would assist the Regal Pill Palace was just a fleeting concern to him. With his peak sage realm cultivation, who could stop him from gracing the Regal Pill Palace with his presence? Wouldn’t he be able to take whatever and however much he wanted?

Earth rank herbs were used by emperor realm cultivators, but even emperor realm experts weren’t able to use as much as they wanted to.

In the entire Divine Abyss Continent, the higher rank the spirit herb, the lower the supply. Though Cao Jing was only in the peak sage realm at the moment, he was but a step away from emperor realm. He naturally felt a rush of excitement when he heard that the Regal Pill Palace had so many earth rank herbs. What's more was that there were even several sky rank herbs. To him, these sky rank herbs were luxuries that rarely circulated even in the Upper Eight Regions.

Cao Jin smiled casually, having already made his decision. He cupped his hands towards Weizi Kua. "Envoy Weizi, you have your duty, but I have my ambitions. I must make this trip to the Regal Pill Palace."

Weizi Kua very much wanted to prevent Cao Jin from going but his identity and status were simply insufficient to stop Cao Jin. He could only smile ruefully. "Great Sir Cao, this matter really is important. Revealing our cards too early will affect the Sky Sect's overall plan for the Myriad Domain..."

"What overall plan? Overall plan or not, the Myriad Domain is just a Lower Region. Even if we establish a manor there, what of it then? Sky rank herbs are heavenly treasures. If we don't accept what heaven gifts us, we'll only invite calamity onto ourselves. Rest assured Inspector Weizi, I'm only going for the spirit herbs and not seize power. I won't affect the overall plan."

Cao Jin clearly had not explained things because he was afraid of Weizi Kua. What he was concerned about was if he really did derail the overall plan, even his status as one of the ten great disciples would not save him from receiving some sort of punishment when he returned to the sect.

If he could avoid damaging the sect's plans, he should definitely do so. Although Cao Jin was assured of his own superiority, that didn't mean he was a musclehead who only knew to fight. Cao Jin had already left his seat as he was speaking. He turned into a shadow and disappeared from the Great Hall. Weizi Kua could only stare after him, dumbfounded.

Zhu Changsheng and Elder Tan Lang were secretly gloating. Rivers of blood would flow once this murderous star invaded the Regal Pill Palace. Elder Tan Lang particularly had a belly full of grievances when he remembered how Jiang Chen had extorted him out of a sky rank herb on the lake shores. Now that a Sky Sect genius like Cao Jin would be calling upon them, even if the Regal Pill Palace wasn't wiped out entirely, they would at minimum lose a layer of skin.

Weizi Kua's face darkened as he glanced at Zhu Changsheng and Elder Tan Lang. "Are you two gloating secretly now that you believe your mind games worked?"

Zhu Changsheng and Tan Lang looked at each other, not knowing how to answer.

"Don't be naïve. Cao Jin has a strong dao heart, how could you possibly sway him? The reason he went was because of the spirit herbs and Longevity Pill. If he wasn't interested, then it would be futile even if you talked his ears off. Forget it. Apart from a few final details, our sect's plan for the Myriad Domain is nearing its completion and we're just waiting for a few final things. Hopefully nothing goes wrong or else, or all our previous work would have been for naught." As he was a cautious person by nature, Weizi Kua was worried after he saw Cao Jin leave. While openly invading the Regal Pill Palace might be gratifying and enjoyable, it would be much harder to conquer the Myriad Domain without bloodshed once they had alarmed the region. Thus, he decided it was best to follow as an observer.

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Cao Jin streaked at lightning pace towards the Regal Pill Palace in a beam of light. If this had been the Upper Eight Regions, then he might not have flown so impetuously, but he had no such fear in the Myriad Domain.

He arrived at the Regal Pill Palace's boundaries half a day later, and at the outskirts of the Regal Pill Palace complex in another two hours. Cao Jin stood in the air and looked down condescendingly over the entire Palace. Suddenly, his eyes rested upon a residence in the Rosy Valley. "Hm? That residence is a bit odd. There seems to be a some sort of formation over it?" Cao Jin opened up his consciousness, scanning the entire Regal Pill Palace complex. Even Dan Chi's residence didn't catch his interest, but Jiang Chen's Nine Gates Incineration Formation had piqued Cao Jin's attention.

As Cao Jin's consciousness flit about outside Jiang Chen's residence, Huang'er, who happened to be bathing in the wood spirit spring, frowned. "Where did this peeping tom come from? Someone actually dares sweep my residence with their consciousness?" Though Huang'er was normally mild-mannered, she could not help but be more sensitive when she was bathing in the spring.

Although she knew that that person's consciousness was unable to see through the wood spirit spring or spy her bathing, Huang'er still felt deeply offended. Not only was a girl without her clothes always particularly sensitive, this consciousness felt condescending, menacing and unscrupulous. This made Huang'er sure that this wasn't an expert from the Regal Pill Palace but someone with ill intentions!

Huang'er emerged from the wood spirit spring with a splash. Her perfect body appeared even more fairy-like after being purified by the spring. The fog from the spring rose in wisps and shrouded the area, exuding a holy and spiritual feeling. As she exited the spring, her clothes immediately covered her flawless body with a flash of light. Although the person might not have come for Jiang Chen's residence, she felt responsible for safeguarding it since Jiang Chen had entrusted his residence to her. Thus, though Huang'er had never paid special attention to anything in her life before, this matter became particularly important to her. Huang'er would absolutely not agree to anyone who bore ill intention towards this residence.

As Cao Jin's consciousness was extremely overbearing, the entire Regal Pill Palace was soon alerted. The Hallmaster of the Hall of Might, Lian Cheng, was immediately aware of the strong sense of provocation within this consciousness. With a long hiss, he transformed into a beam of light and shot into the sky with a momentum as fierce as dragons and tigers. "What presumptuous person dares to sweep my sect with their consciousness?" Elder Lian Chen wasn't a shrinking violet. Once his violent temper erupted, even Elder Yun Nie needed to give him some room.

Cao Jin had a face of indifference and clasped his hands behind his back, the very picture of an old wise man.

"Kid, was it you who used your consciousness to sweep my Regal Pill Palace?" Elder Lian Cheng quickly noticed Cao Jin. However, Cao Jin merely gave Elder Lian Chen a cursory glance before he continued to wantonly probe the sect with his consciousness.

"Kid, are you deaf or mute? This seat is questioning you!" Elder Lian Chen thundered.

"What qualifications do you have to question me?" Cao Jin sneered, "Old man, let me ask you a question. Who is the one in charge of your Regal Pill Palace?"

Old man?! Elder Lian Chen was about to go ballistic. In this day and age, there was someone who actually dared come to the Regal Pill Palace and call him an old man?! Had this kid gone insane?

“Where are you from, ignorant child? Are all your elders dead? Is that why no one has ever taught you to respect your elders?” Elder Lian Chen was hopping mad.

“My elders?” Cao Jin sneered, “A rotten old man like you, are you worthy to be considered my elder?”

Elder Lian Cheng was completely enraged, “This little beast! It seems that if this old man doesn’t teach you a...”

Before he could finish his sentence, Cao Jin’s face turned cold and he suddenly shouted, “Scram!”

His voice was as imposing as tribulation lightning as it thundered towards Elder Lian Cheng with overwhelming momentum. Right as Elder Lian Cheng was rushing over, this thunder-like sound wave crashed into him head on.

Bam!

Unable to put up the slightest resistance, Hallmaster Lian Cheng was directly blown away. He tumbled down from the sky.

Nearly every Regal Pill Palace disciple clearly witnessed this scene as it happened in the skies above the sect. The person who was akin to the God of War in their hearts, peak earth sage realm Elder Lian Cheng, had actually been blasted away with a single shout! This was completely horrifying! Thankfully, someone on the ground had seen Elder Lian Cheng fall down and hurried to catch him. Even so, the person who caught Elder Lian Cheng also felt as though he’d been struck in the chest and took multiple steps back before he could stand firm. His chest was heaving and he was unable to catch his breath. A single sound wave had actually been so unimaginably powerful! When he looked at Elder Lian Cheng again, the latter had a mouth full of blood and was gasping weakly.

“Hurry... quick... start the Great Protection Formation,” Elder Lian Cheng struggled to spit out these words before he collapsed in a dead faint.

“Elder Lian Cheng is seriously injured! Quick, quickly start the Great Protection Formation!”

“Start the formation!”

“Inform the palace head, go, go!”

“Sound the highest level alarm, sound the highest level alarm!”

The whole Regal Pill Palace immediately descended a chaotic mess reminiscent of a knocked-over ant hill. Fortunately, the disciples manning the Great Protection Formation were well-trained and quickly initiated the formation matrix upon receiving the message.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

The Great Protection Formation swiftly started up, enclosing the entire Regal Pill Palace complex. Cao Jin smiled and crossed his arms, apparently not in a hurry to attack. This caused the people below to feel

some relief amidst their fear. Thankfully, the enemy was arrogant and had not taken the chance to start his assault before the formation had been set up.

However, who was able to contend with such a vicious enemy?

It wasn't that Cao Jin had not seen the opportunity to attack, but rather that he had deliberately let it go. He wanted to wait for them to complete their Great Protection Formation.

He knew that blasting away that old man was but the first step. This wasn't enough to completely intimidate the Regal Pill Palace. Only when he'd completely broken apart the Great Protection Formation that they were so proud of would their spirits be crushed. And when that happened, it would be easy for him to pick and choose whatever he wanted.

Chapter 608: An Arrogant Cao Jin

"The Great Protection Formation, is it?" Cao Jin smiled faintly. Before he'd arrived at the Regal Pill Palace, he'd seen that formation when he had fully opened his consciousness. But this was also what he found odd—the greatest formation of this fourth rank sect was inferior to a small formation that protected one of its residences. This Great Protection Formation could shield the sect from at most a cultivator in the ninth level sage realm. For Cao Jin who was at the peak of the ninth level sage realm and one step away from the emperor realm, it wouldn't do much against him. Rather, the formation around the residence was exceedingly complex and offered much higher defensive capabilities despite being smaller in scale. Cao Jin felt that he'd have to use more effort to break through that formation.

However, he was one of the ten great disciples of the Sky Sect and carried countless treasures on him. Naturally, he had treasures that could break through formations. With a wave, a silver-colored awl appeared in his hand. It was but one foot long, but its splendor soared into the skies when it appeared. The exotic silver light flaring out from it was resplendent and glorious, changing the colors of the mountains and rivers and outshining the sun and the moon. This was called the Moonshatter Awl and was a treasure designed to break through formations. Only the true disciples of the Sky Sect had the privilege of owning it.

Cao Jin wielded the Moonshatter Awl in one hand and stuck the other hand behind his back. He arched one blue brow and smiled faintly. "Three moves. If I can't break apart this so-called Great Protection Formation in three moves, then hail me as incompetent!"

He drew an arc with his hand as he spoke, a faint, careless movement that actually held the feeling of sketching out the land.

Whoosh!

A trail of resplendence akin to the galaxy followed his movement and landed on the formation like an ancient silver dragon.

Wham wham wham!

The Great Protection Formation instantly reacted with a series of fierce rumbles, the countless runes hovering in the air as they shook and trembled. These runes made up the formation as parts of a cohesive whole. Each rune was connected to the others like the links of a chain. If any of them were broken apart, then the entire formation would also be affected.

Cao Jin's Moonshatter Awl was an earth rank treasure, and normally only emperor realm cultivators had the right to use it. However, the Sky Sect was enormously wealthy. Adding that to his status as one of the ten great disciples meant he had more than one earth rank treasure on him despite having yet to set foot into the emperor realm. Compounding the Moonshatter Awl's status as an earth rank treasure with Cao Jin's arts, meant that this blow had been absolutely on par with the full blow from a first level emperor realm cultivator.

The Great Protection Formation wasn't a bad formation, but its level was still that of the Myriad Domain. Therefore, it was more than enough to defend the mountain under ordinary conditions, but who would've thought that this enemy would be so domineering? Parts of it had cracked open under this first blow and the entire formation started shaking severely.

"This is bad! The enemy is strong! He's broken the foundation of the formation with just one move!"

"Notify the palace head! Hurry!"

It had to be said that the Regal Pill Palace was greatly frightened by Cao Jin's ability to shatter the formation with one blow. It had been crazy enough that that blue eyebrowed monster had sent Elder Lian Chen flying. But shaking the Great Formation with one blow was even more unheard of!

It wasn't that the Regal Pill Palace had never faced strong enemies before, but it was the first time they'd come face to face with such an overwhelming one. As the entire Regal Pill Palace shook and trembled, the younger generation in particular was filled with shock and dismay. They had no idea who'd they antagonized for such a terrifying character to descend upon them. Judging from the person's age, he was unlikely to be over thirty years old. But how could someone who under 30 years possess such terrifying strength? Could it be... someone from the Upper Eight Regions?

The upper executives of the Regal Pill Palace were all alarmed as well. Even even those ancient characters who'd sealed themselves in closed door cultivation emerged due to the disturbance. After all, everyone could feel in every corner of the sect that the Great Protection Formation was shaking. They all knew that it was a matter of life and death for the sect once the formation was attacked. If they didn't stop him even now, then the sect might very well be destroyed.

At this moment, Palace Head Dan Chi had been assailing the seventh level of the sage realm with all his strength during this time, but he was disturbed as well and had to stop his meditation, bringing large numbers of experts with him into the air. Almost all of the earth sage realm cultivators had gathered, along with some old antiques who'd never revealed themselves.

"Tsk tsk. Isn't that Venerated Elder Hu?"

"Look over there, it's Forefather Qi, the junior brother of the last palace head!"

"And look...!"

All of the Regal Pill Palace disciples were pointing and whispering. Though they were worried about the situation at hand, they also felt that there should be no problem after so many hidden experts of the sect had appeared. A cloud of uneasiness enveloped the sect.

Dan Chi approached Cao Jin whilst flanked by a crowd of earth sage realm experts. "Who might you be and what is your reason for arbitrarily attacking the Great Protection Formation of my sect?"

Dan Chi was still one of the preeminent geniuses within the Myriad Domain. Although he was the palace head now, that heroic air and charisma he'd possessed back in the day was still there. However, with his eye, he could tell that this unfathomable young man had yet to fully reveal his full power. Dan Chi was widely knowledgeable and thus knew that this young man most likely had an impressive background and would be difficult to deal with.

Cao Jin's blue eyebrows twitched slightly as he flicked a glance at Dan Chi. The others seemed as extraneous as air to him, not worthy of even a glance. "You represent the Regal Pill Palace?"

The question was exceedingly discourteous, but the attitude brimming in his tone sent a rush of blood through all the earth sage realm cultivators' veins, as if a veritable mountain was bearing down on them.

Dan Chi frowned. "I am Dan Chi, the current palace head of the Regal Pill Palace."

Cao Jin's brow smoothed out. "You're the palace head? When did the Myriad Domain become so weak that a mere sixth level sage realm can become the head of a fourth rank sect?"

"How dare you?!"

"Keep a clean mouth!" Loud exhortations travelled out from behind Dan Chi, all the experts exceedingly displeased by Cao Jin's arrogant tone.

Cao Jin smiled nonchalantly. "What, am I wrong?"

In the Upper Eight Regions, the head of a fourth rank sect was at least peak sage realm, with even stronger ones in the emperor realm. There was no doubt that the Myriad Domain was only a Lower Region since even their strongest sect, the Great Cathedral, only boasted a ninth level sage realm expert as their leader.

As Dan Chi had only recently ascended to sect head, he was still new to his position. Add that to his youth and relative lack of tenure, it was natural that there was a gap between his cultivation levels and that of the other old monsters in the Myriad Domain. However, the heavyweights of the other four sects didn't dare belittle Dan Chi, because none of them had been even a normal elder in their own sects at Dan Chi's age. Yet here he was, already the head of the Regal Pill Palace based on his own talents and charisma. He was less than a hundred years old and already at sixth level sage realm. Who was to say that he wouldn't surge to the peak of the sage realm in another one or two hundred years, or even have the chance to assail the emperor realm? After all, he was simply too outstanding for a region on the level of the Myriad Domain.

Dan Chi kept his head and restrained the Regal Pill Palace from cursing the outsider even further. He responded in a manner that was neither servile nor haughty, "My Regal Pill Palace's ability to propagate our legacy for a thousand years has never been driven by only a single person. I, Dan Chi, have only accepted everyone's nomination to take the seat of palace head. Who might you be in coming to instigate trouble here? Why duck and hide, afraid to announce your identity?"

Instead of growing angry when he heard this, Cao Jin maintained his indifferent expression tinged with a bit of arrogance. "Trying to goad me into action through mockery?" He immediately shook his head slightly and stared at Palace Head Dan Chi. "Although you're a bit weak, you seem to be the tallest

amongst a short crowd. Then you'll do. You have the right to ask me questions if you can take three of my hits."

The entire crowd erupted in a mass of angry shouts and yells when they heard this.

Three hits?

This brat was much too arrogant! Palace Head Dan Chi's standing was quite high in the Regal Pill Palace, and it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that he was viewed as the reincarnation of a god. Ever since he'd made palace head, everything he had done had greatly revitalized martial dao in the sect and increased its overall strength in a few short decades. Although there was still a gap between the Regal Pill Palace and the Sacred Sword Palace in terms of martial cultivation, that gap was rapidly shrinking. Therefore, everyone greatly admired and worshipped Palace Head Dan Chi.

This blue eyebrow cretin wanted their beloved palace head to take three hits before he could ask any questions? This insanely cocky attitude thoroughly antagonized the entire Regal Pill Palace. They'd seen arrogant individuals before, but never one on this level.

Dan Chi however, was inwardly paying solemn attention. According to his internal analysis, not only was this blue browed kid not a friendly newcomer, his surefire attitude concealed his supreme confidence. Dan Chi speculated that this person was a supreme genius from the Upper Eight Regions. Based on his cultivation level, he was at least ninth level sage realm, if not emperor realm.

If he'd been an ordinary ninth level sage realm cultivator, Dan Chi might have had some confidence in taking three hits. But if it was a top genius from the Upper Eight Regions, Dan Chi had to take a step back to think carefully because such a person was absolutely someone no Myriad Domain level cultivator could compare to in terms of both potential and resources. If this blue browed youth was ninth level sage realm, then Dan Chi would rather face off against Xiang Wentian's ninth level sage realm.

"Palace Head, allow me to try his paces." A venerated elder of the fifth level sage realm walked up. These old fellows were also well aware at this moment that Palace Head Dan Chi represented the Regal Pill Palace. His humiliation meant the entire sect's humiliated. If Dan Chi was defeated, then the sect would have no more trump cards to work with. The blue browed youth seemed arrogant but was actually deviously calculating. He well knew the theory of needing to capture the leader first when rounding up bandits. The Regal Pill Palace would be at his feet once he defeated Dan Chi!

Palace Head Dan Chi nodded. "Be careful Elder Hu, this person is quite strange. He's at least ninth level sage realm. Focus on keeping yourself safe if anything goes wrong."

Elder Hu nodded with a solemn expression and jumped out of the crowd, calling out with an arch of his eyebrow, "I'll take you on!"

Chapter 609: Mysterious Cloaked Person

Cao Jin glanced at Elder Hu to his side and quirked his lips. He brandished his sleeves carelessly. "Scram!"

The angle from the flourish actually formed a terrifying whirlpool of inner energy that struck through the air like a nebula descending from the heavens. It was only when this momentum was crashing towards

him that Elder Hu learnt how terrifying this blue browed youth was. He grit his teeth and punched out with his fists, simultaneously crushing two defensive talismans.

Bam!

Two shields blossomed around him, but the enormous power crashed into them like dragons ripping through the void, tearing them apart.

“No!” A trace of terrified surprise flashed through Elder Hu’s eyes as he tried to retreat. But the power from the sleeve seemed to follow him like his shadow. It raced closely after Elder Hu before hurtling into his chest. He opened his mouth and spewed a great gout of blood before he dropped like a kite with cut strings.

One move, again!

Even the reclusive Elder Hu, whose strength was on par with Elder Lian Cheng, had been sent flying with one move from this young man! Everyone, including Dan Chi, sucked in a breath. The old monsters standing behind Dan Chi were even more shocked. All of them had lived for over a thousand years, but they were actually this helpless against a youth! Such dominating strength shouldn’t appear in the Myriad Domain. Even the slowest amongst them knew by now that this youth was from the Upper Eight Regions. *nove/Lb(In*

“Dan Chi is it? I don’t mind slaughtering you all if you send out more cannon fodder.” Cao Jin’s gaze was cold as he locked onto Dan Chi. He may have seemed cocky, but he was an exceedingly smart person. When he’d sent Elder Lian Cheng and Elder Hu flying, he’d injured them gravely but not fatally. If he’d attacked with full force, both of the two elders would’ve died just now, but he’d held back for other reasons.

His goals were the sky and earth rank herbs, and the Longevity Pill recipe. If he started killing people, he might rouse the ire of the entire Regal Pill Palace and they might very well decide to fight to the death with him. Once the other side decided to go down together, it’d be impossible for Cao Jin to gain what he wanted even if he was able to leave. Therefore, he had refrained from killing anyone, not because he couldn’t, but out of purposeful calculation. If things really escalated to the point where the entire sect was willing to put their lives on the line, then he would end up with nothing.

Dan Chi knew that if he didn’t take a stand soon, the Regal Pill Palace would teeter on the edge of destruction, and his own reputation would free fall. He nodded slowly, “Judging from your overwhelming strength, you must come from a first rank sect of the Upper Eight Regions. The geniuses from that area have lofty visions. Why have you set your sights on my Regal Pill Palace today?”

Cao Jin smiled faintly. “You want to know?”

“I wish to hear the particulars.” Although a life and death struggle was staring at him in the face, Dan Chi didn’t lose his composure.

“Alright, take three of my hits first then. If you can, I’ll leave without another word..” Cao Jin smiled slightly. “But if you can’t, then what I say goes.”

Dan Chi thought for a moment. Although he knew that there was a great gap between his strength and Cao Jin’s, there was still a thirty percent chance that he would be able to take three hits. Now that things

had progressed to this, he had to fight to the death even if there was a ten percent chance, much less thirty. If he shied away from battle, then even if this youth didn't destroy the Regal Pill Palace, the sect's morale would be greatly affected and its strength sapped. This might even prove its undoing. Then, as sect head, he would lose all his authority and dignity, and all his hopes and ambitions would disappear like fleeting clouds. Therefore, he had to take to the battlefield no matter what. Fleeing was not an option.

"Alright, since you insist upon this matter, then I will take three of your hits." Palace Head Dan Chi made up his mind.

"Think twice, Palace Head!"

"Palace Head, this kid is strange. Why don't we all attack him at the same time along with the Great Protection Formation. If so, we might be able to withstand him! Then, we can then call the other sects for help and everyone can destroy this cretin together."

"Indeed, Palace Head! All sects have the responsibility to step forth when strong enemies invade the Myriad Domain. Our Regal Pill Palace doesn't have to face this alone!"

The old fellows behind Dan Chi were all prudent and cautious. It was apparent that they didn't think well of Dan Chi's chances against the blue browed youth. But with a wave of his hand, Dan Chi stoppered their protests and advice. He was the head of the Regal Pill Palace and had just participated in the Pill Battles. Naturally, he had a deeper understanding of the relationship between the six great sects of the Myriad Domain compared to these elders who didn't usually step out of the sect. To be blunt, each of the six great sects had their own plans. Ask them for help? Apart from the Dark North Sect who would respond, none of the others were worth depending on! In particular, they'd be lucky if the Sacred Sword Palace didn't delight in the Regal Pill Palace's misfortune instead!

Cao Jin was slightly surprised to see Dan Chi walk out. The edges of his lips curved into a smile. "Dan Chi, it seems that I've underestimated your courage. Three hits..."

A faint blue air current that flowed in tune with the endless heavens had startled rippling over Cao Jin's body as he was speaking. At that moment, Cao Jin seemed to dissolve into the void.

"The first hit," Cao Jin said apathetically as he pointed a finger downwards. Starlight flashed by, melting into the air before it splashed outwards like a river pouring forth from the heavens, instantly covering the surroundings with countless stars. This was one of Cao Jin's arts, the "Milky Way Point".

The tip of his finger was festooned with the resplendent celestial radiance of a river of stars.. Each flicker of a star held enough power to crush mountains and rivers. The stars twinkled on and off before they suddenly converged into a single point and transformed into a terrifying cloud of blinding light. It crashed towards Dan Chi like a meteor!

Dan Chi's entire body tensed as he focused on the attack. He fully extended his consciousness as he locked onto Cao Jin's every movement and gesture. He knew how difficult it would be to take three hits from someone as strong as Cao Jin. But he'd never thought that what looked like a careless point of a finger had such terrifying might behind it! How was this a ninth level sage realm genius? This was absolutely the peak of the sage realm, half step emperor realm! Dan Chi didn't dare underestimate this

attack. He drew a circle with his hands and quickly formed a vortex within it. Gusts of air continued to converge as the vortex spun faster and faster, becoming a glossy mirror of air currents!

Wham!

The point that seemed to contain the Milky Way hurtled down and crashed into the air current mirror!

Bam!

The mirror shattered as all its air currents scattered. Dan Chi gave a muffled grunt as he was caught in the wake of the attack. He stumbled a dozen steps backwards, a wave of nausea and disgust bottled in his chest. A mouthful of blood welled up in his throat, but he struggled to force it back down. Dan Chi circulated his breathing and flushed red and white, before finally settling back down after he'd circulated his qi seven or eight times.

"Hmm?" Cao Jin was taken aback. Even though he'd only use seventy to eighty percent of his power, he hadn't thought that a sixth level sage realm fellow would be able to take on his vaunted Milky Way Point. The air current mirror that Dan Chi had formed within the vortex was clearly quite a profound technique. There was a layer to it that even Cao Jin couldn't understand.

Dan Chi was also supremely shocked. The move he'd just used was one that Elder Shun had passed onto him before the latter had left. It was meant to be an ultimate trump card to save his life! Since Dan Chi had only practiced it for a short time, he'd only excavated ten to twenty percent of its potential. But even so, this was already his strongest defensive measure. Who would've thought that the other's first blow was enough to force out his trump card? And even then, Dan Chi had still come off worse in the exchange?!

Whilst Dan Chi was stunned, Cao Jin was also slightly surprised. He hadn't anticipated either that a mere fourth rank sect would have such marvelous defensive arts!

The rest of the Regal Pill Palace were even more surprised, but also quite excited. As expected of the palace head! Although his cultivation level was theoretically not that much higher than Elder Hu and Elder Lian Cheng, the two elders had been sent flying with one blow with their lives on the line. However, Palace Head Dan Chi had taken on an even stronger blow, but had only backed up a dozen steps. There didn't seem to be a clear winner in this exchange.

Everyone's confidence in Palace Head Dan Chi surged in this moment. They all knew that the previous palace head had been strong, but it had been many years since he'd passed on. No matter whether they were willing, the current Regal Pill Palace had to rely on the young Dan Chi now. Now it seemed that although the young Dan Chi might not be on the previous palace head's level yet, he was the most dependable person in this sect!

Huang'er had been observing quietly, concealed in the doorway of Jiang Chen's residence. She'd planned on seeing how things played out, but when she saw Palace Head Dan Chi's move, her heart leaped. "Elder Shun? Elder Shun has taught Palace Head Dan Chi before? This move, 'Vortex Looking Glass', is one of Elder Shun's arts!"

The highly intelligent Huang'er immediately pieced the puzzle together. Elder Shun must have passed through the Regal Pill Palace after leaving the sixteen kingdom alliance on his search for the Requiem

Wood. He knew that the Regal Pill Palace had been founded on pill dao, so he wanted to come here to try his luck. He must've stayed briefly because he'd gotten along with Palace Head Dan Chi. Many thoughts spun through Huang'er's mind as her body vanished with a flash.

Cao Jin was laughing heartily up in the air. "Good! This is a bit interesting. Dan Chi, you deserve your title as palace head just from being able to take that blow. Your strength isn't below seventh or eight level sage realm. However, I'll use my full force for my next move!"

Cao Jin didn't care about the process, only about the results. Since he'd promised to deal three blows, he wouldn't allow himself to use a fourth. He would grasp all initiative.

Dan Chi treated this with grave solemnity. His opponent had already seen his trump card. Although he still had another, it could only be used once. That'd still leave the other with one more move! Just as he was concentrating fiercely, the air suddenly shook violently. A crack ripped through the clouds, from which a black shadow darted out.

Without forewarning, a mysterious person in a black cloak suddenly inserted themselves between Dan Chi and Cao Jin. "The Ninesuns Sky Sect must treat you quite well to give you treasures like the Moonshatter Awl and the Milky Way Point. It looks like you're one of ten great disciples?" The person's voice was dry and cracked, a sign that it was obviously obscured. However, when this voice traveled into Cao Jin's ears, it actually pierced straight through his consciousness, making it tremble uncontrollably!

Chapter 610: There's Always Someone Stronger

Cao Jin was greatly astonished. He hadn't detected this mysterious person before they'd popped out, and he also inwardly sucked in a breath. "Who are you?"

The cloaked person responded noncommittally, "Don't ask me who I am. Take three of my hits. If you can take them, I'll let you go. I won't make things difficult for you if you can't, just don't let me see you in the Myriad Domain anymore."

These words were spoken so nonchalantly as if this all made complete sense, like Cao Jin was just a clay doll in the cloaked person's eyes, completely harmless. This person's sudden appearance had caused the scene to take another turn, and the situation that had been extremely disadvantageous towards the Regal Pill Palace had changed greatly. It seemed that... this cloaked individual was on the Regal Pill Palace's side?

Cao Jin's eyebrow was arching slightly as he looked at this black cloaked person, arrogance no longer to be found in his eyes. He wanted to look straight through the cloak and see just who was within it! But no matter how he probed, it was as if his consciousness had sunk into the vast seas like a rock. The newcomer had a strong restrictive ability that barred all probes into them, and seemed to be ignoring Cao Jin's attempts as well. They only hovered nonchalantly in midair. Only a pair of eyes that was as deep as the endless starry skies apparent from beneath the cloak.

The atmosphere at the scene grew a bit odd. Cao Jin had been overweeningly arrogant just now and sent two Regal Pill Palace elders flying, and had then made an agreement of three moves with Palace Head Dan Chi. The palace head had just barely managed to withstand the first blow with all his strength, and now this mysterious cloaked person had appeared, wanting Cao Jin to take three hits instead!

Those of the Regal Pill Palace couldn't quite react in time to this new development. Everyone, including the palace head, was quite curious about the newcomer. Not only was this person mysterious, but they'd revealed Cao Jin's background with one word. This greatly shocked everyone assembled as the entire sect became on high alert when they learned that a supreme genius of the Ninesuns Sky Sect had come knocking.

Cao Jin was even more so as he hadn't told anyone of his background since arriving, but this person had seen through everything instantly. This kind of observation skills made Cao Jin suspect that he had no secrets at all in front of the other. Even incredibly confident as he was, he couldn't help but feel a bit uncertain at the moment. He felt that he was mysterious enough in the eyes of the Regal Pill Palace, but this newcomer was even more so.

Should he take the three hits?

As resolute as Cao Jin was, he began to hesitate. This person had appeared so suddenly and without forewarning, completely ignoring the probe from his consciousness. All signs pointed to that this person was only stronger than Cao Jin, and not weaker. The strength of their single word penetrating his defenses and consciousness made Cao Jin apprehensive. The other possessed the arts to attack the consciousness!

As one of the ten grand disciples of the Sky Sect, it would simply be too embarrassing if he was unable to take even three hits from the other. His reputation would be ruined if word got out. Thus, he waffled for quite a while and decided to not do anything that he wasn't completely certain of. He could return to the Regal Pill Palace at any time. The thing to do was to take care of this cloaked person first.

Cao Jin laughed heartily when his thoughts travelled here. "You must not be from the Regal Pill Palace. This is a private grudge between me and them. It doesn't seem that appropriate, does it now?"

The cloaked person smiled faintly. "You have the right to ask me questions if you can take three of my hits."

This had been what Cao Jin had said to Palace Head Dan Chi previously, and now the cloaked person had returned them verbatim. The Regal Pill Palace felt greatly vindicated, and Palace Head Dan Chi in particular felt such a great flow of warmth in him. Although he didn't know where this mysterious person had come from, he could be certain at this moment that this mysterious person was very kindly predisposed towards the Regal Pill Palace. The elders behind him all looked curiously at the palace head. It was obvious that they were very curious where this cloaked person had come from.

Dan Chi smiled faintly and didn't say anything. He didn't know where this person had come from either, but it was necessary sometimes to maintain a bit of a mysterious air as the palace head. Making it so that his men couldn't see straight through him was also a management method. When he heard this person's words and how they were in obvious support of the Regal Pill Palace, Dan Chi was even more certain that the newcomer bore no ill will towards the sect.

Cao Jin was quite infuriated at the moment. Karma had certainly arrived quickly. He'd put on such airs with Dan Chi before because he'd wanted to take down the morale of the Regal Pill Palace and shave away at their face. Now that these words had been returned exactly to him, he felt even worse than if

he'd eaten shit! A ball of rage built in his chest as blood surged to his brain. He almost wanted to throw caution to the wind and agree.

However, Cao Jin was a calculating person after all and he smiled slightly, affecting a dashing air. "I can let things go this time since you have jumped out to defend them. We'll meet again next time. We shall meet again in the future."

Cao Jin was someone who could set things aside when needed to. He wanted to leave now that things weren't going his way. He could come back at his leisure when this cloaked individual left. With the Regal Pill Palace, he could come and go anytime he wished and do whatever he wanted. In Cao Jin's eyes, this person was at most a visitor in the Regal Pill Palace. This kind of person wouldn't spend a long time in a place like this, and could even just be passing by.

However, Cao Jin had obviously underestimated the cloaked person. He was about to dash away when he realized that the cloaked person had landed in front of him with a flash.

"In a hurry to leave?"

Cao Jin frowned. "I gave you face. Are you pushing your luck?"

The cloaked person shook their head slightly. "Then don't give me face."

Cao Jin was instantly at a loss for words. He'd seen his fair share of difficult people to deal with, but this one did things completely out of the ordinary. He'd shown them face, but they didn't want it? He struggled to keep his head. "Then what do you want to do?"

"Speak. What did you come to the Regal Pill Palace for, and with such an overbearing manner?" The cloaked person seemed to be completely removed from the world as there was no hint of emotion in their detached tone at all.

Cao Jin asked angrily, "Are you part of the Regal Pill Palace?"

"The Regal Pill Palace has a deep relationship with me. Out with it. You still have the freedom to speak now. It will be too late to do so when we exchange moves later."

It'd only ever been Cao Jin threatening others, so it was quite a novel feeling that one of the ten great disciples of the Sky Sect would be threatened in a mere Myriad Domain! But he actually felt a bit guilty beneath the pressure from the cloaked figure. However, the other plainly didn't plan on giving him time to hesitate. A stunning aura suddenly rose around the cloaked figure and formed a pale-green vortex!

When this vortex formed, it seemed to create an independent zone in the air, becoming an intangible cage!

"Emperor realm sphere of influence!" Cao Jin trembled all over. He'd be a waste of his life if he still didn't recognize what was staring at him in the face. This was the sphere of influence unique to emperor realm cultivators!

What was meant by this sphere of influence was a cultivator using their own aura to create an area of space that was completely under their control. They were the rulers of this zone! Only emperor realm cultivators could do this. Although there was the occasional peak of the sage realm cultivator who could do so, those were one in a million and usually not a human cultivator.

For human cultivators, only those in the emperor realm had the ability to create their own sphere, and this mysterious person in front of him had extended their own sphere with no forewarning and sealed Cao Jin in.

He was absolutely scared witless.

“This is your last chance. Speak.” The cloaked person’s tone was as measured as always.

Large beads of sweat dripped down continuously from his forehead. He didn’t want to accept how the situation had developed. “Just who might you be, must we really deny face to this extent?”

“Do you have any face left?” The cloaked person asked faintly.

Cao Jin was backed into a tight corner as this was how the person responded, no matter what he said. He couldn’t get a rise out of them at all. “Fine. Fine!! You’re something alright.” Cao Jin spat out. “I heard that the Regal Pill Palace had come into the possession of some sky rank spirit herbs and earth rank herbs, as well as a Longevity Pill recipe. I came hunting for treasure.”

The cloaked figure looked at Cao Jin with a remote look and nodded slightly. “Very smart. You didn’t lie.” The person then looked at Palace Head Dan Chi. “Palace Head Dan Chi, this person has come in an unbridled manner to your territory. How would you like to handle him?”

The palace head looked at Elder Yun Nie. Both were extremely taken aback. How did this person know about the sky and earth rank spirit herbs? Everyone had sworn a heavenly oath in Mt. Rippling Mirage, but someone had gone back on it and revealed the matter of the ancient herb garden? Their spirits were exceedingly heavy. They knew that there would be no peace in the Myriad Domain now that this secret had been revealed.

Palace Head Dan Chi called out, “I only ask one question, from whence did you come by this news?”

Cao Jin smirked dismissively and ignored the palace head. He was wary of the cloaked person, not Dan Chi. How did a mere Regal Pill Palace palace head have the right to interrogate him? The cloaked person looked at Cao Jin and didn’t take down their sphere of influence.

Cao Jin seemed to know that the cloaked person wanted to interrogate him and smirked proudly. “I’ve already explained my intentions, is it important where my information is from? Since you are able to deploy a sphere of influence, you also have at least seventy to eighty percent guarantee of killing me. However, I still have my trump cards. If you force me too hard, I might throw all caution to the wind and take you all down with me. Even if you can ensure that you’ll leave with your life, you still might be injured...”

The cloaked person didn’t seem to want to trade verbal spars with Cao Jin either. “You think too highly of yourself.” They didn’t make a single move, but Cao Jin felt a cool breeze whisk by the back of his head. His neatly tied hair suddenly loosened as they were all cut off.

“Get out of the Myriad Domain. What comes off the next time I see you isn’t your hair, but your head.”

Cao Jin felt his body relax as an enormous surge of power pushed him several thousand meters outwards.