

Three Realms 721

Chapter 721: Young Master of the Wei Family

Those sent to retrieve ingredients swiftly returned with their prizes. Jiang Chen took them to his room where he concocted a few pills capable of slowing the poison's progress. Although the "Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder" was indeed powerful, its poisonous attributes were not especially violent. With these pills, the poison's effects could be suppressed for at least half a month.

Jiang Chen could even provide a complete cure right away, but decided to play his cards close to his chest. He had no choice but to let the young master of the Wei household suffer for a few more days. Moreover, Jiang Chen assumed this Lord Seven would also be speculating about his identity. Lord Seven might've even be wondering if this mysterious pill king was the Jiang Chen that the Eternal Celestial Capital was so desperate to catch. Jiang Chen might encounter some unexpected trouble if he didn't keep a hold of the other party's fate. They might not necessarily betray him, but they could easily extricate themselves from a potentially sticky situation. Frankly speaking, this was simply a case of mutual exploitation. It was crucial to retain one's value in such an exchange and Jiang Chen's current significance lay in the fact that he had the means to treat the poison. He had no need to fear being sold out as long as the other party was dependent on him.

After refining the pills, he duly delivered them. "Lord Seven, the young master's ailment will certainly be alleviated after these pills. He will definitely regain consciousness today. Please make arrangements to leave the city tomorrow morning." Jiang Chen didn't stay to exchange superfluous words. He turned around and left swiftly. It was meaningless to speak too much. He'd rather let them figure things out themselves. They had no reason to inquire into the root of the matter unless they were completely out of their minds.

Lord Seven held the pill in his hands and was momentarily caught in indecision. He still hadn't been able to see through this person who had mysteriously appeared to offer his services.

"Lord Seven, this person... what are his intentions?"

"Lord Seven, could he be the one the Eternal Celestial Capital is after? Perhaps he wishes to borrow our strength to leave the city?"

"That might be the case. He'd better not be deceiving us and worsening the young master's illness." The people began to voice their opinions and concerns one after another.

Lord Seven gestured, "As matters stand, we can only observe the young master's condition after he takes the pill."

They were left with no other alternative. With the poison already at this stage, the future was already guaranteed to be catastrophic unless immediate treatment was administered. No one wanted to admit it, but they were ready to grasp at any straw in their desperation. They promptly placed the pill into the young master's mouth and helped him swallow.

Everyone was in attendance, all eyes on the young master. The young man lying on the stretcher opened his eyes with much effort after fifteen minutes. "This... am I home?"

"Young master, you're truly awake?" Lord Seven was overjoyed.

“Qixia,[1] where am I?”

“Young master, we’re still at the Myriad Peoples City. We’ll return to Veluriyam Capital soon.”

The young master’s voice was faint. “Qixia, if I don’t make it, you have to warn father of the conspiracy within the family walls; brother turning on brother...”

Lord Seven hurriedly replied. “Young master, you won’t die. We’ve managed to invite a pill king to help us, and your poison is under partial control. You’ll be cured as soon as we return to Veluriyam Capital. Young master, you have to hold on.”

Although it was uncertain whether he understood everything, the young master nodded weakly and slowly closed his eyes without replying. Lord Seven hurriedly leaned forward to listen for signs of breathing. Relief flooded his body as he felt the young master’s breathing and pulse becoming stronger.

He waved his hands. “All of you withdraw; don’t disturb the young master’s rest.” Lord Seven kept watch alone after sending everyone out. The young master woke up once again after two hours of rest. His mind had recovered much of its clarity, and his consciousness had also been restored to its normal state.

“Qixia, am I really not dead?” The young master’s eyes were becoming increasingly spirited.

“Young master, you’ll be fine! That pill king’s intervention is indeed extraordinary!” Lord Seven was truly convinced of Jiang Chen’s skills now.

“Which pill king is he? No ordinary pill king can deal with this poison.” The young master apparently had some misgivings. Lord Seven thus summarized recent developments for him.

The young master was slightly taken aback. “How extraordinary! Could he be the Jiang Chen that the Eternal Celestial Capital is after?”

Lord Seven laughed wryly, “That Jiang Chen is merely a youth from the Myriad Domain. It’s also common knowledge that they haven’t birthed any pill kings. Although I had my suspicions, I feel that this person is unlikely to be Jiang Chen.”

How would it be so easy to nurture a pill king? How could a pill king rise from a backwater like the Myriad Domain, not to mention one of such a caliber? Lord Seven had previously suspected that the other party was Jiang Chen looking to borrow their influence to pass the northern gate. Now after seeing the latter’s methods and the young master’s subsequent recovery, Lord Seven no longer felt that the pill king was Jiang Chen. He was sure that there was no way Jiang Chen would possess such miraculous skill in pill dao. He had also never heard of the Myriad Domain boasting of such a pill king. But it went without saying that as a citizen of Veluriyam Capital, Lord Seven had very little interest or understanding regarding the affairs of the Myriad Domain.

Jiang Chen massacring Gong Wuji’s party was hot news in the various neighboring regions. But to those of Veluriyam Capital, it was nothing of special concern. After all, even the Eternal Celestial Capital was an unremarkable existence to Veluriyam Capital.

“His identity notwithstanding, such a person must be recruited at all costs. Don’t offend him.” Feeble as he was, the young master still possessed a resolute charisma.

Lord Seven replied swiftly, "Please rest assured, young master. This subordinate understands. Even if he is taking advantage of our power to pass through the northern gate, it's not necessarily a bad thing to build a good relationship with such a man."

"Indeed. We'll have to see how much gall they have if the Eternal Celestial Capital wishes to inspect House Wei!" Although still recovering, the bearing with which this young master spoke commanded much esteem. "One more thing, Qixia. Upon our return, don't disclose the news of my recovery even if I'm cured. Something about this poisoning is extremely peculiar. I suspect..."

"Young master, could it be that you've some speculations about the source of the poison?" Lord Seven was alarmed.

"I'm quite certain that I was poisoned even before I left home. I suspect treason within our walls! The question is who and from which branch?" The young master's tone was ugly. "Who would've thought our great House Wei would actually raise a traitor!"

"Young master, are you certain?" Lord Seven was overwhelmed.

"Although not fully certain, I'm at least nine parts certain of this. Let this be for now, we can discuss this further upon our return. The most important matter at hand is to build an amiable relationship with this pill king. Our Wei family had always lacked talent in that field. If we can build a good relationship with this master, perhaps he will lend us some assistance in the future.

"The young master is indeed wise. Although this pill king is mysterious, this subordinate feels that he is a true master of his trade." Jiang Chen's extraordinary methods had brought about swift and dramatic results, which was enough for Lord Seven to sing constant praises. His assessment of Jiang Chen had increased tremendously as a result. Master and subordinate chatted for a while longer before Lord Seven reminded his charge, "Young master, your poison has yet to be completely cured. You should rest and recuperate for now. Leave matters regarding the pill king to this subordinate."

The butler's devotion was evident to anyone passing by. Despite being a mere subordinate, he obviously held the young master's life in higher regard than his own. Jiang Chen received a multitude of odd glances when he returned to the plaza. These wandering cultivators were obviously curious about his identity. According to Lord Seven, it appeared that this unassuming fellow was actually a pill king? Pill kings were a rare sight in Myriad Peoples City, especially for the wandering cultivators. To them, pill kings were nothing short of divine existences. A pill king's worth was not something these wandering cultivators could compare to. An abundance of emperor realm cultivators existed in the Divine Abyss Continent, but there were less than a tenth of that number who could call themselves pill kings.

From this, one could see how high a pill king's worth and status was in the Divine Abyss Continent. Jiang Chen had already grown accustomed to these astonished looks. He'd been on the receiving end of such looks since he'd first joined a sect. But he didn't wish to further complicate things at this time. Many of the wandering cultivators who wanted to approach him tactfully backed off after seeing Jiang Chen's indifferent attitude. Obviously, no one was willing to rashly disturb a pill king for fear of rousing his ire and landing in hot water. To be frank, a single word from a pill king could move countless people on his behalf.

"Sir Jiang, have you found a way to leave the city?" Huang'er asked with a smile.

“Let’s talk inside.” Jiang Chen narrated everything that had happened after he’d entered the room.

“Huang’er is not overly familiar with Veluriyam Capital. I’ve only heard that they’re led by seven Titled Great Emperors, who oversee twenty eight major clans beneath them. Every major clan oversees a large tract of territory with countless aristocratic families, sects and factions beneath them. That should be the basic administrative structure of Veluriyam Capital.” Although Huang’er didn’t know many specifics, she was well acquainted with the general picture.

“This means that House Wei is an aristocratic family under one of the major clans? They are a third rate force within the Veluriyam Capital?” Jiang Chen became somewhat hesitant, “Are they reliable?”

“A third rate force from the Veluriyam Capital is still no weaker than the average second rank sect. Furthermore, they represent Veluriyam Capital. I highly doubt that the Eternal Celestial Capital would willingly butt heads with them. After all, it’s a well known fact that Veluriyam Capital protects its own,” Huang’er analyzed coolly.

“I hope so. Who knows how long it’ll take to pass through the northern gate if we miss this opportunity,” Jiang Chen sighed. It was somewhat of a gamble this time, but they had no other choice. If they were to wait and prepare until the outcome was certain, everything would be over and done with.

Their original projection for the journey had already been delayed quite a bit. The agents who had been sent to buy the Regal Pill Palace prisoners should have long since returned to Veluriyam Capital. And yet, Jiang Chen was still on the road. If too much more time passed, there would be no telling how much more tangled the situation could get. He could wait no longer.

Huang’er suddenly spoke, “Sir Jiang, I’m not certain about this Wei family’s prestige and whether they can suppress the arrogant Eternal Celestial Capital. Why don’t we split up? You go with them and I will move on my own. That way we’ll draw relatively less attention.”

“How can I allow this?” Jiang Chen shook his head, “I promised Elder Shun that I would take care of Miss Huang’er...”

Huang’er smiled sweetly, “And you take care of me very well indeed. However, Sir Jiang needs to listen to Huang’er this time. They won’t interrogate me if I’m on my own. I’m a girl after all, and completely different from their target. I’ll find a way to meet up with you right after we pass through the northern gate.”

Jiang Chen wanted to protest, but Huang’er’s eyes glimmered with determination. “Sir Jiang, this time you must yield to Huang’er’s temper! It’s been so decided; I’ll return to my room now. You leave with them tomorrow morning and I’ll leave a while later.” Huang’er’s usually easy-going demeanor had been replaced by firm resolution. She didn’t allow Jiang Chen the slightest opportunity to refuse.

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Qi is the Chinese character for “seven”

Chapter 722: Barred At The Northern Gate

Jiang Chen woke up early the next morning with the intention of seeking out Huang’er and continuing their conversation. However, he was a step too late. She’d left behind a note telling him that she was

going for a stroll. She also mentioned that there would be no need to wait for her, but to leave the city first. Jiang Chen knew that Huang'er had done this on purpose, and he was greatly touched by the kind gestures of this considerate girl. Although she was an incredibly beautiful, highly prestigious, and extremely talented young lady of a noble house, she was also extremely considerate and possessed none of the headstrong and unruly temper a noble lady usually had in spades. Instead, she had an open and natural bearing. Since Huang'er was rather insistent on this course of action, he naturally wouldn't continue to turn down her offer.

He arrived at Lord Seven's doorstep on time. The butler had been waiting at the door since daybreak. He looked noticeably more enthused than he was yesterday when he'd glimpsed Jiang Chen. "My lord, we have prepared the ingredients."

When he heard Lord Seven's tone, Jiang Chen immediately knew that the Wei young master was doing well. He nodded indifferently, "Let us depart then. Allow me to confirm with you one last time: are you sure you can do this?"

Lord Seven naturally knew what Jiang Chen meant. He smiled, "I wouldn't make a joke at my young master's expense, no matter what."

While they conversed, the door to the neighboring room opened to reveal a young man whose face was tinged with a faint purple hue. He staggered for a brief moment before making his way unsteadily towards the two.

"Why have you come out, young master?" Lord Seven hastily went over to support the young man.

"I'm fine," The young man waved Lord Seven away. He nodded kindly at Jiang Chen, "You must be the venerable pill king who cured me of the poison?"

"It seems that you're recovering quite nicely." Jiang Chen examined this person with a critical eye before smiling faintly.

This young man obviously knew how to conduct himself. He dropped into a deep bow in front of Jiang Chen, "I am Wei Jie, the descendent of a ninth rank aristocratic family in Veluriyam Capital. I thank you for saving my life, venerable pill king."

Jiang Chen smiled indifferently, "It's nothing, we just happen to have what each other needs. Besides, your current state is only temporary."

Wei Jie didn't take offense at Jiang Chen's words. He smiled slightly, "I believe that I will definitely make a full recovery with your aid, venerable pill king."

Seeing that this Wei Jie didn't possess the arrogance that most aristocratic descendants did, and that he was extremely cognizant in how to interact with others, Jiang Chen's impression of Wei Jie improved slightly. "Let's go," Jiang Chen nodded, not wanting to talk more than necessary.

Lord Seven looked surprised, "Don't you have a companion, my lord?"

"He was just a friend of mine from the city. He purposely came to visit me when he heard that I was here. He's since left."

The reason Jiang Chen purposely mislead them was because he didn't want them to know that he was the person the Eternal Celestial Capital was hunting for. As expected, both Lord Seven and Wei Jie exchanged a brief glance after hearing Jiang Chen's words. The last bit of suspicion they held in their hearts vanished completely. However, truth be told, they didn't really care if this venerable pill king was Jiang Chen or not. Wei Jie's life was more important than anything else, so even if he really was Jiang Chen, there was nothing wrong with using each other to fulfill their respective needs.

As they walked down the streets of Myriad Peoples City, Jiang Chen felt rather calm as he took in the culture and customs of Myriad Peoples City. He had already made up his mind to make this gamble; there was no point worrying over it now.

They arrived at the northern gate an hour later. As they had imagined, the northern gate had become a lot different after the Eternal Celestial Capital had taken over. Sentries flocked everywhere, and the gate itself was enveloped in all sorts of restrictive formations. It practically looked like a dragnet of sorts.

There was no less than a thousand people queuing up to exit. It was obvious that the inspection process was incredibly complicated and quite time consuming. However, it was obvious that those from Veluriyam Capital wouldn't bother to wait in a line. While the group might have looked helpless and passive when Wei Jie was hurt, their sense of superiority as a person from Veluriyam Capital was all too obvious at the moment.

Under Lord Seven's guidance, they ignored the line and cut right through the crowd to the city gate. The queuing wandering cultivators were obviously used to such groups already. After all, all parties from Veluriyam Capital never had any intention of lining up for their turn, no matter what their status was. The Eternal Celestial Capital wouldn't force them to stand in line either, so they hadn't stopped Veluriyam Capital groups from jumping the line. When Lord Seven walked up to the inspection point, some Eternal Celestial Capital disciples were already holding up strange-looking mirror fragments, wanting to flash them across Lord Seven's face.

Lord Seven immediately pushed them out of the way and hectored, "What are you doing?"

Those belonging to the Eternal Celestial Capital quickly surrounded them as a middle level manager walked over to meet Lord Seven. He looked Lord Seven up and down several times before politely saying, "Please cooperate with us, sir."

Lord Seven grinned widely, "Are you someone from Myriad Peoples City?"

"I am an inspector from the Eternal Celestial Capital. I have been ordered by my superiors to hunt..."

"The Eternal Celestial Capital?" Lord Seven interrupted brusquely before the other could finish, "Is the Myriad Peoples City part of Eternal Celestial Capital's territory now?"

"Sir, the Myriad Peoples City is not part of the Eternal Celestial Capital's domain, but we have already come to an agreement with the city lord of Myriad Peoples City about this temporary situation with the northern gate. Please cooperate with us, sir."

Lord Seven laughed loudly, "Cooperate? And why should we cooperate with you? I've passed through this northern gate at least eighty times already, but this is a first for me. What, the Eternal Celestial

Capital comes all the way to the doorstep of Veluriyam Capital to inspect Veluriyam Capital citizens? What kind of colossal joke is this?"

The expression of the person in charge darkened, "Please don't make this difficult for us, my friend. If you are someone from Veluriyam Capital, then you are definitely not our target. So what's the harm of cooperating with us? Just think of it as doing us a favor."

They had encountered several groups from Veluriyam Capital over the past few days. After some negotiation, the majority had shown the Eternal Celestial Capital some face. The Eternal Celestial Capital also prepared a small gift in return as a show of their thanks, leaving both sides happy at the outcome. However, Lord Seven obviously had no plans of showing the Eternal Celestial Capital face. He sneered, "Do you a favor? Who will do us a favor then? You're blocking the entrance to Veluriyam Capital and you're expecting me to show you face? You're funny, real funny!"

Lord Seven was in an extremely combative mood. He obviously didn't plan to give an inch of ground. The noise from their argument alerted the higher ups of the Eternal Celestial Capital. A big man dressed in rich robes walked over, a few stragglers accompanying him. The entire scene fell silent the moment this person appeared. All whispers and gossiping stopped instantly, as if they had agreed to do so beforehand. A late level emperor realm cultivator?

"Venerable saint holy king!" Those who belonged to the Eternal Celestial Capital all greeted and saluted him respectfully. They obviously respected the big man a lot.

A venerable saint holy king? Jiang Chen's heart sank a little. He had also heard that the Eternal Celestial Capital had sent an eighth level emperor realm expert and a saint holy king to oversee this mission. A saint holy king's status was extraordinary within the Eternal Celestial Capital. They could be considered the top leaders of the sect, just like the venerated elders of regular sects, an extreme heavyweight. In terms of status and authority, these saint holy kings were absolutely part of the top twenty, or even the top ten of the entire sect. They were much more respected than a holy king like Gong Wuji.

"Which family in Veluriyam Capital do you belong to, my friend?" The saint holy king smiled faintly as he stared at Lord Seven. His eyes were so deep that he looked like he would see right through Lord Seven.

Lord Seven was also an emperor realm expert. However, he was only at initial emperor realm. He could feel a slight pressure fall on him as he stood up to a late level emperor realm. However, he was used to big scenes in Veluriyam Capital, so he wasn't frightened speechless. He smiled calmly, "Venerable saint holy king, you sound like you're going to make a decision based on who we are? What would you do if I say that I am a servant of one of the emperors?"

The saint holy king laughed, "if you are, then naturally I would have to show you respect. But you don't look like one."

This saint holy king named Mu cast a glance at the warriors behind Lord Seven. He possessed some level of insight, and obviously knew a little about the class and strata of the forces in Veluriyam Capital. He could see that these people were quite powerful, but it was also equally obvious that they were absolutely not direct subordinates of one of the emperors.

Lord Seven obviously had no wish to be led about by the nose. He smiled widely, "I have no interest in talking nonsense with you. My young sir is grievously injured, and we must go back to Veluriyam Capital

immediately to treat his wounds. Moreover, he also carries an incredibly important and time-sensitive message for Veluriyam Capital. If you know what's good for you, you'll let us through right now."

"Of course I can let you through, but please cooperate with us." This saint holy king was obviously not a pushover. Veluriyam Capital was stronger than a first rank sect, but that was only when comparing the two overall. A first rank sect might be afraid of Veluriyam Capital, but they might not necessarily be afraid of every force in Veluriyam Capital. If every person belonging to Veluriyam Capital refused to be inspected, then his inspection would completely lose its meaning.

Lord Seven retorted decisively, without a single shred of hesitation, "Impossible!"

Saint Holy King Mu said coolly, "Then my apologies, please choose a different path to return to Veluriyam Capital."

Lord Seven's face stiffened, "So the Eternal Celestial Capital plans to butt heads with Veluriyam Capital to the end, are you? I shall report every word to my patriarch then. Mu, I sure hope you can endure the consequences if Veluriyam Capital and the Eternal Celestial Capital come to blows in the future."

It was true that a saint holy king of the Eternal Celestial Capital's status was esteemed, and this one's strength was much higher than Lord Seven's. However, Lord Seven was a denizen of Veluriyam Capital, and thus held the psychological advantage in this matter. Plus, it wasn't like Lord Seven had never seen a cultivator at Holy King Mu's level in Veluriyam Capital. In fact, he had seen quite a lot of cultivators who were stronger. That was why Lord Seven wasn't afraid of the saint holy king at all in this game of brinksmanship.

Saint Holy King Mu's expression sank slightly. If he was to be honest with himself, he didn't wish to make the situation any bigger than it was already either. After all, they were already risking the wrath of Veluriyam Capital with their current actions of blocking the gate. If these people really went back and twisted his words, it might actually turn into an immense misunderstanding. The Eternal Celestial Capital had absolutely no intention of provoking a giant like the Veluriyam Capital.

"Can we speak somewhere else, my friend?" Holy King Mu's attitude softened just a little.

"There's no need. We will pass through this Myriad Peoples City northern gate in precisely the manner we used to in the past. You don't need to go fishing for our identities either. House Wei has never been inspected in Veluriyam Capital, but now you're saying that we have to be inspected in a tiny place like Myriad Peoples City? Dream on!" Contrary to his looks, this Lord Seven was apparently an expert when it came to borrowing his force's prestige.

Chapter 723: A Narrow Escape Through The Northern Gates

House Wei?

The wandering cultivators around them shifted in surprise. House Wei was truly one of the greater factions in Veluriyam Capital. Although not a personal faction of one of the emperors, nor one of the most preeminent powers, it was nevertheless still a first rate power. It was one that stood out even amongst other first rate powers. Everyone knew that seven Titled Great Emperors stood at the peak of Veluriyam Capital. These were powers that stood far above all others. Beneath them were twenty eight

great clans. These twenty eight great clans were the twenty eight most preeminent powers. Below these twenty eight great clans were the noble houses, among which was House Wei.

While it seemed on the surface that these noble houses came third in the power structure, factions like these were undoubtedly first-rate influences in Veluriyam Capital. These factions had the right to speak even in front of the seven emperors.

The wandering cultivators started whispering amongst themselves.

“That’s House Wei! House Wei, that’s not a small, ordinary faction.”

“Things are getting interesting now. It’s not hard to understand that a power like House Wei wouldn’t be happy about submitting to questioning.”

“Right. They’d have to lower their heads and submit if this was Eternal Celestial Capital territory. However, we’re at Veluriyam Capital’s doorstep at the moment. To make them willingly submit to questioning, this is truly...”

“Exactly. The preeminent factions of the Veluriyam Capital are all very touchy about their dignity. To make them submit to questioning would be a slap in the face. It’s hard to fault their dissatisfaction.”

“Let’s keep watching, it seems a good show’s about to unfold!” The wandering cultivators chatted amongst themselves. They didn’t take any great pains to avoid being overheard. They hadn’t said anything particularly biased, so they weren’t afraid of offending any of the parties involved.

With someone playing the part of the villain, there would naturally be someone to play the part of the hero. The young master of House Wei walked forward, his strides calm and leisurely. He cupped his fists in a salute to Holy King Mu, “Holy King Mu, I am Wei Jie.”

Holy King Mu clasped his hands in response, careful to be respectful. “So it turns out to be the young master of House Wei from Veluriyam Capital.”

As an aristocratic family of the Capital, their name travelled far, enough to reach Holy King Mu’s ears. It might not be a faction he had to avoid offending, but if he did have a falling out with them, their words could potentially sway the decision of one of the emperors. If they went so far as to complain to the emperor, they might actually put the Eternal Celestial Capital on the defensive.

“Holy King Mu, in the grand scheme of things, one could make the argument that you’re my senior. If I were an insignificant child with no fame to his name, then of course it would be of no matter if I had to submit to questioning. However, here, this young one represents his entire house and the dignity of Veluriyam Capital. I would be the first to find such questioning unacceptable, much less everyone else in this world. If anyone was to say that my House Wei fears your Eternal Celestial Capital, or further, that my Veluriyam Capital fears your Eternal Celestial Capital, it would be impossible to prevent these words from spreading.” Wei Jie’s words seemed very peaceful on the surface, but there was no mistaking the underlying tone. An interrogation was out of the question. To be questioned was to be slapped on the face. That was something impossible to accept, whether for House Wei or for Veluriyam Capital. An ordinary faction wouldn’t even have the gall to say they represented Veluriyam Capital, yet a family like House Wei was entirely entitled to do so. No one would think they weren’t qualified to say such words.

Holy King Mu found himself in a quandary. House Wei was being very assertive, and they were a faction he couldn't afford to fall out with.

He would never have wasted so many words for an ordinary faction. You can't accept this? Don't even think about passing through then. If you want to pass through, then you need to submit to an interrogation. He wouldn't even shy away from using force if push came to shove. But he truly couldn't afford to take a hard line against a faction like House Wei.

"Wise nephew Wei, since you recognize me as a senior, then please extend me some face. I will personally conduct a questioning, simply symbolic in nature, and we can all go on our way. I will certainly offer my heartfelt thanks after that." Holy King Mu still wanted to try and convince him.

Wei Jie smiled faintly. "Holy King Mu, you still haven't understood me. Gratitude isn't something my House Wei is short of. What I want right now is to pass through the city gates in broad daylight with every part of my dignity intact. Naturally, I would cooperate if we were in your domain. However, we're on Veluriyam Capital's doorstep. Even if you were to offer a hundred thanks, I would still categorically refuse to lose my honor at the entrance to my home."

House Wei's words were reasonable and well-founded, and he'd said them loud and clear. Holy King Mu was at a loss. He threw a charged glance at their group, "Worthy nephew Wei, it's possible for you yourself to pass through without questioning, but the others..."

"The same goes for the others. Since they travel together with me, then they're all old friends and brothers of House Wei. There's no difference between them being interrogated and House Wei being interrogated." Wei Jie had no thought of yielding a single step.

Holy King Mu frowned. "Worthy nephew Wei, you're putting me in a difficult spot."

Lord Seven smiled faintly off on the side, "Do what you need to do. If you're going to use force, we will respond in kind."

They wouldn't win if it came to a fight, but Lord Seven didn't seem to believe that at all. Holy King Mu nearly lost his temper at Lord Seven's words. His jaw tightened in anger, but he still kept his emotions in check. He kept admonishing himself, don't lash out, don't lash out. Things would erupt into a major event if he were to give vent to his anger.

"Ah well. I will give some face to House Wei. However, I have a single request. Since these people are old friends of worthy nephew Wei, there's no harm in introducing them to me so that I may be acquainted with them as well, is there?" Using their treasure to interrogate the group was out of the question, but asking their identities should still be permissible, yes?

Wei Jie beckoned with his hand with a laugh. "Come then, each of you introduce yourselves to Holy King Mu."

Lord Seven was the first to step forward. "Wei Qixia, servant of House Wei for forty years. Holy King Mu, I wonder if I may pass through?"

The other warriors also stepped forward one by one and gave their names. Holy King Mu watched them go past one by one with a sour face, no expression showing on his face. Jiang Chen was the last. Secretly

taking a deep breath, he said when his turn came, "Second level pill king, Zhen Shi, a guest of House Wei."

His words were neither fast nor hurried, and his bearing was calm and indifferent. He introduced himself and was about to leave when Holy King Mu gestured with his hand, "Hold."

Holy King Mu stared at Jiang Chen, speaking to Wei Jie, "Worthy nephew Wei, this isn't this friend's true appearance, am I correct? I wonder whether he can reveal his genuine self?"

Wei Jie responded indifferently, "Holy King Mu, even my father has to give some respect to this venerable pill king. If you were to interrogate him, then the consequences would be far more dire than interrogating me."

Holy King Mu's cold eyes at Jiang Chen. "This person is suspicious."

"Suspicious in what way?" Wei Jie said, his face the picture of indifference, "Is he suspicious merely because he's changed his appearance? Before seeking refuge with my father, this venerable pill king unfortunately offended many friends of his dao. Even my father has never commanded the pill king to reveal his true appearance. Does Holy King Mu desire to leave the pill king with no way out?"

Holy King Mu was half-skeptical. "How many years has it been since this person sought refuge with your father?"

Wei Jie laughed out loud. "Does even my House Wei's guest pill king need to account for themselves to your Eternal Celestial Capital?"

Holy King Mu was also inwardly hesitant. He could clearly tell that the person in front of him had changed his appearance. Yet, Wei Jie had already said that he'd served House Wei for many years, so it clearly couldn't be Jiang Chen.

Holy King Mu muttered to himself for a while, in a quandary. It was a subordinate of his who actually suddenly proposed, "Since this venerable pill king is a guest of House Wei, then he should have an pill king medallion, shouldn't he? This pill king medallion is a widely known token in the world of pill dao; it can't be faked."

Holy King Mu was delighted when he heard this, "Indeed. If this friend could take out his identity medallion, I will have done my duty by examining it."

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. He shook his sleeves and produced a medallion. "Take a good look."

This pill king medallion was as authentic as they came. On its face were clearly written two words, "Zhen Shi." Holy King Mu looked at it closely again and again. This medallion wasn't a fake, and it didn't show any signs of being a forgery either. "Pill king Zhen Shi?" Holy King Mu frowned. He thought for a moment, but still couldn't find any flaws. He cupped his hands in a salute and said with a sour face, "Worthy nephew Wei, apologies for the offense."

Wei Jie let out a faint smile, "Then goodbye." He gestured, and the entire group walked out of the northern gate, all strut and swagger without a look back. There was no pretense of any courtesy towards Holy King Mu and his men. There was no need for citizens of Veluriyam Capital to humble themselves in front of people from the Eternal Celestial Capital. Holy King Mu stared at House Wei's

procession. He watched them for a long while, until they disappeared over the horizon. Only then did he turn back his cold eyes. n-(Ovel&1n

He had a nagging feeling that there was something wrong with House Wei's group, but he couldn't quite put his finger on what. There wasn't a problem with either Wei Jie or Wei Qixia. There wasn't any issue even with the warriors. It was simply this pill king who'd disguised his appearance who made the holy king feel as though he'd swallowed a fly, giving him a lingering nauseous feeling. However, thinking back carefully, Holy King Mu still felt that the pill king shouldn't be related to Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen was a genius from the Myriad Domain. It was fundamentally impossible for the Myriad Domain to produce a pill king. And even if that Jiang Chen had previously completed the pill king evaluation, it was simply impossible for him to foresee this situation where he would have to change the name on his identity medallion to "Zhen Shi." One would use their own name or their title in a pill king evaluation. Who would use someone else's name for no rhyme or reason? Holy King Mu's mind was thrown into chaos for a time.

His instincts as an expert told him there was a problem with this pill king. But the more he reasoned it out, the more he felt that this man shouldn't be Jiang Chen. He turned it over and over in his mind, yet he still couldn't identify an obvious clue. He immediately waved his hand. "Observe the rest carefully, don't overlook a single one."

The House Wei affair was but a passing episode. Countless wandering cultivators whispered among themselves, but none of them dared object to the questioning. House Wei could afford to be arrogant. They weren't entitled to such arrogance. It wasn't that the Eternal Celestial Capital didn't dare offend House Wei. Rather, they didn't dare offend the Veluriam Capital standing behind House Wei. The wandering cultivators, on the other hand, were nothing to the Eternal Celestial Capital. The sect could kill them without batting an eye.

A great stir took place at the northern gates after about two hours. A stunning young lady had appeared alone on her mount. Her clothes were whiter than snow as she led her white horse gracefully through the northern gate. This young woman's beauty and grace was like an immortal descending from the heavens. Everyone at the scene stared dumbstruck, their eyes open wide and their jaws hanging loose.

Some people compared beautiful women to flowers, some compared them to rivers. Yet, any such metaphor of this world seemed to pale in comparison when held up to this young woman. Such stunning beauty didn't belong to the mundane world. Dazed, dazzled, to a one, they wondered whether she was a fairy banished from the heavens, fallen among mortals.

Even the Eternal Celestial Capital disciples in charge of the inspection were sweating. As though they were one and all virgins longing for their first women, they walked on eggshells around her, afraid of offending the beautiful woman. Fortunately, this beauty was very cooperative, and didn't make any trouble for them. After answering their questions, she vanished without a trace, leaving only behind yearning and regret at her absence amongst the disciples.

Chapter 724: A Candid Interaction

"Were we seeing things just now? Where did such a fairy come from?"

“Right? Judging from her temperament, she appears superior even to the ladies of the Upper Eight Regions.”

“Absolutely, even a first rank sect wouldn’t be able to raise a lady of such demeanor.”

The discussion wasn’t taking place among the wandering cultivators, but between the disciples of the Eternal Celestial Capital. Being part of a first rank sect themselves, they felt they had the right to compare. There were in fact, no shortage of beautiful geniuses within the Eternal Celestial Capital. There were even goddess-like existences amongst their ranks. However, even those existences seemed a far cry from the lady who had passed through just now in terms of elegance and temperament.

Demeanor was a mysterious thing. There was no definitive method by which one could measure and compare, but even simple commoners would be able to identify who was superior with a single glance.

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The Wei convoy entered a large city within Veluriyam Capital borders after a day of travel. True to his word, Jiang Chen put together the relevant antidote for Wei Jie during this recess. “Young master Wei, once you take this antidote thrice daily for three days, I have no trouble guaranteeing your recovery.”

Wei Jie accepted the medication with solemn gravity. “I’m deeply grateful to the venerable pill king for saving my life.”

Jiang Chen gestured, “There’s really no need to be. It was only by virtue of young master Wei’s efforts that I was spared a great deal of complications at the northern gate.”

The laughing Wei Jie wasn’t quite convinced of the service he had rendered. “That was a matter involving no great effort on my part. Even without the venerated pill king amidst us, I wouldn’t have allowed them to inspect House Wei’s convoy.”

That was indeed the truth—Veluriyam Capital had their own way of doing things—how could they allow a mere Eternal Celestial Capital to inspect their people? Jiang Chen developed a somewhat favorable impression of him after seeing Wei Jie refrain from taking credit. After a while, Jiang Chen raised his hand, “In that case, I bid you farewell then.”

Wei Jie started, “Is the venerated pill king already leaving?”

Jiang Chen merely nodded with a smile.

“Venerated pill king, please wait,” Wei Jie appeared somewhat alarmed.

“Eh?”

Wei Jie strode forth and spoke sincerely. “Venerated pill king, we aren’t too far from the heart of Veluriyam Capital now. Although I’m not privy to your purpose for visiting the capital, I hoped to entertain you at House Wei. Do allow me the opportunity to express proper gratitude for saving my life. If you require some assistance, it can be said that House Wei possesses some level of prestige within Veluriyam Capital. I would be happy to provide any assistance within my means.”

Jiang Chen was momentarily silent. Originally, he had planned to leave House Wei as soon as their deal had been concluded. He was slightly moved after hearing Wei Jie’s words and seeing the sincerity in his

eyes. I came to Veluriyam Capital to search for leads and ultimately save my people. Since I'm not familiar with the area, local assistance could prove to be quite helpful. Although Wei Jie is quite young, he is anything but mediocre and might prove useful. Besides, these people don't look like the type that'll turn hostile... The more he deliberated, the more he was swayed.

"Venerated pill king, to be completely honest, House Wei is sorely lacking in the field of alchemy, despite our influence in the Veluriyam Capital. We've been desperately seeking to engage a talented guest pill king but to no avail..."

Jiang Chen was slightly distracted as he recalled what Elder Yun Nie had once told him about pill kings and pill emperors back at the Mt. Rippling Mirage Pill Battles. He'd learned that certain third rank sects had the qualification to hold certification tests for pill kings. Second rank sects had the right to certify fourth to sixth rank pill kings, while first rank sects were authorized to certify those from the seventh to ninth rank. Since House Wei family was a ninth rank aristocratic family, they should at least be comparable to first or second rank sects. How could they not have a guest pill king?

Wei Jie hurriedly added after seeing Jiang Chen's hesitation, "House Wei once had a fourth rank pill king. However... ah... certain matters took place in the past and unfortunately, House Wei's pill king perished. From then on, we were left in an awkward state without a pill king."

Jiang Chen appeared pensive after listening to Wei Jie's explanation.

"If even a fourth rank pill king met his end at your Wei household, how much help can a mere second rank pill king as myself offer?" Jiang Chen smiled faintly.

Wei Jie sighed lightly. He didn't attempt to explain further and only forced a smile. "That... Venerated pill king, it seems I've overstepped my bounds. Out of eagerness, I rashly invited you to join our family struggles. Come to think of it, I am being somewhat selfish. I already owe you my life—it was absolutely improper of me to ask you to shoulder such a risk."

"Risk?" Jiang Chen stared blankly.

Wei Jie smiled awkwardly. "Yes, being a guest pill king of House Wei indeed involves some risk. But it was truly not my intention to harm you. I only invited you to stay so that I can entertain you as an honored guest and express my gratitude. I seem to have lost control of my thoughts and strayed from our original discussion."

Wei Jie had expected the pill king to leave in anger after hearing what he'd said. Contrary to expectations, Jiang Chen just laughed nonchalantly. "Risk? It wouldn't necessarily be greater than the risk you take in travelling with me."

Wei Jie was stunned momentarily and failed to comprehend Jiang Chen's words. However, he was an intelligent man. It took a moment, but his suspicions from before came back in full force and a flash of insight let him connect the dots. His expression changed, and finally, let out a rueful laugh. "Which means, you... you truly are the person that the Eternal Celestial Capital was after?"

Jiang Chen was as free as the fish in the vast ocean or the birds in the boundless skies once he'd entered Veluriyam Capital territory. If they were to work together in saving those of the Regal Pill Palace, Jiang

Chen would have to come clean about his identity sooner or later. This kind of thing couldn't be hidden for long.

"Is young master Wei feeling regretful?" Jiang Chen smiled faintly and glanced at the group from House Wei with a meaningful expression, as if he could see through to the depths of the latter's heart.

Wei Jie suddenly slapped his forehead with a laugh. "Who would've thought? How truly unexpected! I'd indeed entertained this suspicion before. But after careful scrutiny, my doubts were gradually erased. And yet, my hunch unexpectedly proved true in the end. But then... who's pill king Zhen Shi?"

Wei Jie was indeed easy going. Despite his astonishment after learning Jiang Chen's identity, he was soon able to recover his disposition and continued to chat and laugh naturally.

"Pill king Zhen Shi?" Jiang Chen barked with laughter, "Just flip the words over."

"Shi Zhen? Who is that?" Wei Jie was obviously not familiar with the name.

"Someone from the Eternal Celestial Capital might perhaps be familiar with the name. Zhen Shi was a second rank pill king from the Ninesuns Sky Sect."

Wei Jie's expression was one of great incredulity. How was this even possible? However, he immediately realized that while the name on the medallion was Shi Zhen when read from left to right, it was Zhen Shi when read in the opposite direction. These tokens were designed differently depending on the location of issuance—some were carved left to right while others were engraved from right to left. There were even those written from top to bottom. It was just that when Jiang Chen had flashed the medallion at that critical juncture, he'd claimed himself to be Zhen Shi. Therefore, everyone had assumed that the token was carved from right to left, playing right into that assumption.

Moreover, Shi Zhen himself was by no means a grand character in the Ninesuns Sky Sect. His name was far from being well known. With that, when Jiang Chen announced himself as Zhen Shi, no one immediately thought of Shi Zhen. Although Holy King Mu had heard of Jiang Chen killing Cao Jin of the Ninesuns Sky Sect, he had no desire to further enquire about relatively minor characters like Shi Zhen and Fatty Wu. After all, there was possible way an aloof existence like Holy King Mu would know of a mere second rank pill king. Jiang Chen thus took advantage of this to fool Holy King Mu.

Wei Jie was momentarily stunned silent, and spoke only after a while. "Sir, you're truly bold and attentive to details. At that pivotal moment, even I didn't doubt a thing, to say nothing of the Eternal Celestial Capital... hahaha!"

Wei Jie also burst out in laughter at that point. He obviously didn't mind. As for being taken advantage of, it was a fact that Jiang Chen had saved his life. A life in exchange for passing a gate—no matter how one looked at it, Wei Jie was the one who had profited from this trade. Jiang Chen was still calm and collected even while facing an eighth rank emperor realm cultivator. As a youth of more or less of the same age, Wei Jie couldn't help but admire his superior mentality and courage.

He didn't know much about matters regarding the Myriad Domain and the Eternal Celestial Capital, but he had heard of the general situation. He naturally knew that the Eternal Celestial Capital had invaded the Myriad Domain to wipe out all its sects. Although he wouldn't rashly stand out to condemn them, Wei Jie was inwardly contemptuous of the Eternal Celestial Capital's actions. What's more, the Eternal

Celestial Capital's brazen attitude in wanting to inspect his family entourage right at Veluriyam Capital's doorsteps was enough to cause Wei Jie to involuntarily side with the Myriad Domain. Now that he'd discovered that the person who saved his life was the very Jiang Chen whom the Eternal Celestial Capital had been chasing so desperately, he was rather astonished and, at the same time, filled with admiration.

Jiang Chen didn't let Wei Jie's praises go to his head, smiling faintly. "Young master Wei should realize by now whose risk is greater."

Wei Jie appeared unconcerned. "Brother, you jest. It's not their place to act so unbridled in Veluriyam Capital. House Wei has absolutely no need to consider their stance. My offer stands unchanged—as my savior, if you're willing to come to our house as a guest, I will do my best as a host. If you require anything done within Veluriyam Capital, I will assuredly do my best to help you."

Wei Jie was apparently not an ingrate who would burn bridges after crossing the river. He was cognizant of gratitude and returning favors. Apart from that, he also admired Jiang Chen greatly. A Myriad Domain youth who was able to stand strong against the persecution of the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect—this alone was enough for Wei Jie to form a friendship with him. Others may fear the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect, but Veluriyam Capital certainly did not. There was absolutely no place for those two sects to act atrociously within Veluriyam Capital borders.

"Young master Wei, you must know that my second rank pill king status is fake." Jiang Chen reminded with a smile.

"Brother, wouldn't I be too condescending and short-sighted if I were to invite you solely for being a second rank pill king?"

After Jiang Chen saw how frank Wei Jie was, he laughed. "Very well then. It appears I was being too pragmatic. On that note, I'm still well capable of concocting anything a second rank pill king can. However, the reverse might not necessarily be true."

Wei Jie was momentarily dazed after hearing Jiang Chen's words. But recalling his poison, he realized that a normal second rank pill king might not have been able to dispel it so easily. Surprise and delight in equal measure bloomed within Wei Jie.

Chapter 725: Veluriyam Capital

The atmosphere became very harmonious once the two were open and honest to each other. One had to say that Wei Jie was quite an amazing young man. He reminded Jiang Chen of the fourth prince Ye Rong of Skylareland Kingdom. However, fourth prince Ye Rong was ultimately just the prince of a secular kingdom. His knowledge and bearing were leagues away from Wei Jie's. Moreover, Wei Jie was a little more aggressive than Ye Rong. This aggressiveness wasn't of the arrogant and despotic kind, but the kind that was unafraid to shoulder responsibility when something came up. Now that he recalled Ye Rong, Jiang Chen found that he missed the Skylareland Kingdom quite a bit. There was also the Precious Tree Sect. I wonder how they're doing?

He had sent Ye Chonglou back to the Precious Tree Sect ahead of time, so the sect should have been prepared to deal with that calamity. If Ye Chonglou had gone back and prepared everything ahead of time, there was a high likelihood that they had avoided disaster. Jiang Chen guessed that the Precious

Tree Sect must have dealt with the situation already. Otherwise, the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect would have used the Precious Tree Sect to threaten him with already. The fact that he hadn't encountered such a dilemma meant that the Precious Tree Sect was at least safe for now.

"Brother Jiang, I have heard of what happened in the Myriad Domain. Everyone knows that the Eternal Celestial Capital is hunting for you. However, I heard that they are sure that you will come to Veluriyam Capital, which is why they had laid many ambushes along the path to the Capital. May I know why?" Wei Jie asked curiously.

Since Jiang Chen had decided to be open and honest with Wei Jie, there was naturally no need to hide this from him, not to mention Jiang Chen still needed to borrow House Wei's strength to inquire about Gouyu and everyone else's whereabouts.

"I'll be frank, young master Wei. Controlled by the Eternal Celestial Capital, the Great Scarlet Mid Region invaded the Regal Pill Palace and kidnapped many of my sect's disciples. Later on, they sold those captives to the Veluriyam Capital. They knew that I would come to save them, which is why they attempted to ambush me along the way."

Wei Jie looked a little moved when he heard this, "Were they really sold to Veluriyam Capital? Is this news accurate?"

Jiang Chen nodded, "This news is absolutely accurate." Not only had he heard this from Gong Wuji, Jiang Chen had also gone to the Great Scarlet Empire to inquire about this personally. He happened to hear the same thing right from a prince of the Great Scarlet Empire himself.

Seeing how certain Jiang Chen was, Wei Jie replied with a very serious expression, "If they really were sold to Veluriyam Capital, then it will be quite difficult to save your people."

"What do you mean, young master Wei?" Jiang Chen asked.

"Veluriyam Capital is a free land, and slave trade is absolutely forbidden. In reality, there really aren't many factions who have the ability to conduct slave trade in Veluriyam Capital. The problem is that those who do are very tough nuts to crack." Wei Jie's tone was also gravely serious when he spoke of this.

Jiang Chen said, "Young master Wei, if this troubles you and House Wei, then there's no need to get involved in this. If you can help me check which faction it was who bought my people, I will think of a way to do the rest myself."

Wei Jie hastily said, "It's not that I'm afraid of trouble, but that these forces just aren't easy to deal with. Let's talk about this once we get back to the capital of Veluriyam Capital."

Although Jiang Chen was feeling afire with anxiety, he knew that this wasn't something that could be dealt with in a short time.

"Brother Jiang, you mustn't act recklessly and use brute force to resolve this matter. If you use brute force in Veluriyam Capital, then the matter will take a turn for the worse and get completely out of hand. The Eternal Celestial Capital may not be able to harm you despite your offenses, but the troubles you will face in Veluriyam Capital will be ten times as worse if you offend a powerful force." Wei Jie's tone was serious, and he absolutely didn't look like he was being an alarmist.

“Don’t worry, young master Wei. We can only make the rescue by ruse. It will be best if I can just trade for them. I don’t mind spending twice, thrice or even five times the price if I can just buy them.”

Wei Jie nodded, “We will plan accordingly once we get back home, but before we do that, it’ll be best if you don’t reveal your identity so as to avoid alerting the enemy. For now, you are still Pill King Zhen Shi. Also, if the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect learn that you’ve successfully made your way into Veluriyam Capital, they might send assassins to come after you. Although Veluriyam Capital forbids other forces from behaving atrociously on their lands, there will always be blind corners where light can’t reach.”

“Mm, my first priority is to rescue my people.” Jiang Chen naturally knew what was first order. It was still a problem of strength in the end. Why would he have needed to hide like this if he had sufficient strength? If he possessed sufficient strength, the Eternal Celestial Capital and the Ninesuns Sky Sect wouldn’t have dared to do anything to him.

A few days later, Jiang Chen and House Wei’s group smoothly returned to the central city of Veluriyam Capital. Jiang Chen was astounded by the prosperity and style of Veluriyam Capital as he stood outside the gates of the central city and stared at the legendary Capital from afar. It wasn’t that Jiang Chen hadn’t seen the world before, but that Veluriyam Capital just stood out too much as compared to the other cities of Divine Abyss Continent. Compared to Veluriyam Capital, Tai-ah City, Great Scarlet Mid Region, Prospering Dragon City or Myriad Peoples City all looked like insignificant villages.

“Do you see that, venerable pill king? That building that stretches into the clouds is the Veluriyam Pagoda. Legend says that it enshrines and worships the ancient Veluriyam Emperor’s empyrean decree and his empyrean relic. The light of the Veluriyam Emperor has blessed the Veluriyam Capital with a hundred thousand years of fortune...”

Jiang Chen followed Wei Jie’s finger and looked to the horizon, seeing a tall pagoda of glass that stretched into the clouds amidst the endless expanse of the city. Rainbow light glowed from the pagoda’s body, illuminating the entire Veluriyam Capital with its radiance. This made Veluriyam Capital look like it was enveloped in a sheen of solemn, divine light.

“Come on, let’s go in,” Wei Jie waved his hands and walked towards the city gate.

“Halt!” They were stopped by a city guard.

Wei Jie frowned, “What’s going on? Have the rules of Veluriyam Capital change while I was away for just a few days? Since when did we start blocking a ninth rank aristocratic family from entry?”

The city guard obviously recognized Wei Jie, and he cupped his hands in greeting, “Apologies, young master Wei. Please come down from your horse before you enter the city. I’m doing this for you, and not because I want to make your life difficult.”

Wei Jie looked surprised, “What do you mean?”

That city guard captain sighed softly as his face became overshadowed by sadness for an instant, “Young Lord Fan had passed away, and the entire city is in mourning. All flights and horse riding is temporarily forbidden. Everyone must walk in and out of Veluriyam Capital.”

“What? Young Lord Fan...” Wei Jie turned incredibly pale as he blurted out, “When did this happen?”

“Just yesterday,” The city guard captain shook his head and waved him off, “Go on in, young master Wei. Keep a low profile when you head home and don’t act brashly.” The city guard was actually giving him pointers out of goodwill.

The shock on Wei Jie’s face lasted for a long time before he finally nodded and cupped his hands, “Thank you for the reminder. I’ll treat you to alcohol when I come by again.”

The city guard captain forced a smile on his face, but said nothing in return. It was obvious that the death of Young Lord Fan had cast a pall across the entire Veluriyam Capital. Wei Jie’s feelings immediately turned downcast as he led his horse, lowered his head and entered the city. Even the normally high profile Lord Seven followed behind the group docilely and walked towards House Wei’s residence with low profile.

House Wei’s status in Veluriyam Capital was quite high, and the place they lived in was a very prominent location as well. It took them two hours of walking before they finally arrived at House Wei’s residence. House Wei’s residence had an incredibly large garden and looked extremely luxurious. It looked uncommon at first glance. House Wei had actually put a banner of mourning over their entrance due to the passing of Young Lord Fan as well.

“Who is this Young Lord Fan, and what is his background? How prominent is he to have the entire city mourn over his death? To think that even a ninth rank aristocratic family like the Wei Family would be in mourning for him!” Although Jiang Chen had questions in his mind, he didn’t voiced them out loud.

He entered the garden along with the rest of the group. House Wei didn’t make noise even though they were happy to see the return of their young master. It was obvious that no one dared to disturb this atmosphere of mourning.

“Qixia, please help prepare a place for our venerable pill king. Remember, it must be of the highest standard!” Wei Jie instructed Lord Seven. At the same time, he turned to Jiang Chen and said, “Venerable pill king, I shall be visiting my seniors first. Please forgive me for any slights that I might cause you during this time.”

They had had a tacit understanding to call Jiang Chen the ‘venerable pill king’ since they didn’t wish to reveal his identity at the moment. Lord Seven thought that the young master was hoping to retain this venerable pill king in their family, so he did his best to serve Jiang Chen without any hesitation. When he was done arranging a place for Jiang Chen, Lord Seven commented, “Please call me anytime you want if you need anything, venerable pill king.”

“Thank you for going to this trouble, Lord Seven,” Jiang Chen smiled faintly.

“That’s the way it should be. I shall not disturb your rest any longer, venerable pill king.”

After Lord Seven had left, Jiang Chen looked around and sighed in admiration. Even their guest room looked like an entirely different world. This guest room had several rooms and a relatively big garden. Everything looked very peaceful and calm. In a place like Veluriyam Capital where every inch of land was worth precious gold, the fact that House Wei could spend this lavishly showed that their status indeed very high.

When he was done familiarizing himself with the place, Jiang Chen returned to his room and finally let out a sigh of relief. After being hunted for such a long time, he could finally spend a night relaxing. He wasn't worried that the Eternal Celestial Capital would chase him all the way to this place. Judging from House Wei's lordly appearance alone, he knew that there was no way the Eternal Celestial Capital would dare cause trouble in this place even if they somehow tracked him to Veluriyam Capital.

"Miss Huang'er should've entered the city as well. Once she sees the markings I left along the way, she will meet up with me then." Jiang Chen wasn't worried about Huang'er. He sat cross legged and began meditating for four hours. Then, he sorted out his thoughts over the past few days. Everything had happened too quickly since the Myriad Grand Ceremony. He'd nearly had no time at all to put everything in order. Four hours later, Jiang Chen was just about to stand up when he suddenly heard a series of footsteps coming from outside.

"Brother Jiang," It was Wei Jie's voice.

"Young master Wei," Jiang Chen opened the door.

"Forgive my negligence, brother Jiang. I visited my seniors and we chatted about some things. I'll go out tomorrow and ask for the news for what you seek first thing in the morning."

Jiang Chen nodded, but changed the subject, "Young master Wei, who is Young Lord Fan? What kind of person is he to have the entire city mourn for him? Is he the young master of Veluriyam Capital itself?"

Wei Jie's face became overshadowed with sadness as he sighed softly and nodded, "Although he isn't the only young lord of Veluriyam Capital, you aren't wrong for calling him the young master of Veluriyam Capital."

"Oh?" Jiang Chen looked curious.

"Young Lord Fan is Emperor Peafowl's proudest true disciple, and Emperor Peafowl is the leading emperor out of the seven emperors of Veluriyam Capital. Young Lord Fan was exceptionally talented and powerful, and even rarer was the fact that he's extremely noble minded even though he was still very young. You can say he is a genius favored by heaven. Veluriyam Capital has many young lords, but Young Lord Fan was commonly acknowledged to be the genius with the highest chance to inherit the position of city lord of Veluriyam Capital. What a pity..."

Chapter 726: Slave Market *The heavens envy those with great talent!* Wei Jie spoke a lot, and his emotions had run a little high during the conversation, but Jiang Chen more or less understood what he meant. In the end, it all boiled down to that saying.

"Brother Jiang, there are only a few people whom I'm impressed by amongst my peers, and not even you, brother Jiang, have impressed me so much that I would submit to you fully. However, Young Lord Fan is one of the very few people whom I am fully willing to swear my allegiance to." It would appear that Wei Jie was a die hard supporter of Young Lord Fan. Jiang Chen wasn't surprised by this. It would be stranger if the most outstanding genius in Veluriyam Capital didn't have a large group of followers and admirers. Still, just what exactly had taken the life of a genius like this?

Jiang Chen didn't try to inquire about the matter, however. Right now, the only thing he was concerned about was the whereabouts of Gouyu, Mu Gaoqi and the others. Young Lord Fan's death had obviously dealt a great blow to Wei Jie's psyche and he quite plainly didn't wish to talk much on this topic either.

"Brother Jiang, since you've arrived at Veluriyam Capital, you should be prepared to stay here for a long while, aren't you? In that case, there are certain things that I need to tell you about Veluriyam Capital. We have seven Great Titled Emperors, and beneath them there a total of twenty eight clans. The aristocratic families only came after these clans, and my House Wei is one of the aristocratic families. However, House Wei is a ninth rank aristocratic family and thus classified as one of the highest ranking existence among all other aristocratic families..." Wei Jie explained everything in great detail, and he paid particular emphasis to what Jiang Chen should pay attention to in Veluriyam Capital, and what forces he couldn't or shouldn't provoke.

The emperors and the great clans were a moot point. They were of course under the 'do not provoke' category. There were also many big and small forces that fell under the 'do not provoke' category. Of course, Jiang Chen hadn't come to Veluriyam Capital to cause trouble. His code of conduct was very simple: he would do no harm to those who did no harm to him.

Jiang Chen had to admit that Wei Jie was a kindred spirit. The two of them chatted deep into the night before Wei Jie finally bid him goodbye. The pair agreed to head out and ask around for information first thing in the morning.

The night passed peacefully and quietly. Jiang Chen woke up very early the next morning. Wei Jie had arrived at his residence as well. The duo headed out after they had breakfast. But just as they were about to leave the residence, they saw a group of people walking over from the road to the right of the residence. The leader of the group was a middle aged man and a youngster. They were followed by a pill master dressed in a pill master's robes. A group of soldiers followed behind the trio.

Wei Jie's footsteps halted when he saw the group.

"When did you come home, Jie'er?" The middle aged man looked surprised when he saw Wei Jie and walked over with a face full of smiles.

"Fifth uncle," Wei Jie smiled. "I've just returned yesterday evening and haven't been by yet to pay you a call, Uncle Tong."

"Cousin, I was very worried when I heard that you were hurt, but it seems that you're full of vigor and perfectly fine! I can be at ease now," the young man beside Uncle Tong chuckled and walked over. He looked Wei Jie up and down for a very long time.

"I'm fine, brother Xiu. I'm sorry to have worried you," Wei Jie's tone was polite and amiable. They exchanged conventional greetings for a while before Wei Jie finally bid them goodbye, "Fifth uncle, brother Xiu, I need to head out for a bit. I'm sorry, but I must take my leave now."

After saying this, Wei Jie nodded at Jiang Chen and walked towards the main entrance together. He hadn't introduced Jiang Chen to them. The group remained where they were and stared blankly at Wei Jie's back. They looked both shocked and astonished.

"Daddy, that kid looks like he's perfectly fine, doesn't he?" The young man called brother Xiu muttered.

“Keep your mouth shut inside the manor!” The middle aged man snapped with a frown. At the same time, he swept a slightly severe glance across the pill master in front of him. The pill master was expressionless, but his eyebrows had wrinkled slightly, “This doesn’t make sense. I controlled the dosage and calculated its effects very accurately. He shouldn’t have come back at all. The Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder is no easy poison to cure, so how did he do it? How strange, how strange...”

“Hmph!” The middle aged man flourished his sleeves and looked very obviously displeased with this outcome, “Pill King Jiang, I haven’t treated you badly here, have I? But it seems that you’ve disappointed me this time.”

The pill master smiled indifferently, “Heaven’s plans supersede our own. He may have been lucky this time, but he may not be as lucky the second time, will he? Don’t worry, I have a new plan in the works already.”

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After strolling about two kilometers away from the main entrance, Jiang Chen suddenly spoke up, “Young master Wei, are those people from earlier your kin?”

“Mm. My fifth uncle is cousins with my father, and he counts as an uncle of our family. He is only second to my father in terms of status. That young man is called Wei Xiu, and he is my fifth uncle’s son. He counts as a brother of the family to me.”

Jiang Chen smiled subtly and said, “You’re not too close to each other, aren’t you?”

Wei Jie looked startled. He had acted very cordially and considerately earlier, and he hadn’t revealed any displeasure or dissatisfaction at all just now. So why had Jiang Chen said this?

“Brother Jiang, did you notice something?” Wei Jie looked a little surprised.

“Hehe,” Jiang Chen smiled faintly, “If you found it inconvenient to divulge certain things, young master Wei, then it wouldn’t be right for me to speak either. I don’t wish to be suspected of sowing dissent after all.”

Wei Jie had been putting an act when he faced his relatives just now. The reason he hadn’t told Jiang Chen about it wasn’t because he was trying to hide anything, but simply because he thought that family drama shouldn’t be spread about carelessly. When he heard Jiang Chen’s words, Wei Jie smiled wryly, “You truly are a genius who can stand toe to toe with the Eternal Celestial Capital, brother Jiang. It would appear that I cannot hide even something like this from you. My fifth uncle has fought very fiercely against my father since young, and when our generation was born, his son fights fiercely against me as well. That’s why what you saw earlier is just an amiable act.”

Jiang Chen nodded slightly, “It is a fierce fight that can only end in blood. You know that this father and son are the ones who had planned to kill you, don’t you?”

Wei Jie shook and looked at him with a face full of surprise, “What did you say?”

Jiang Chen was surprised himself to see such a strong reaction from Wei Jie. He’d thought that Wei Jie had known about this from the beginning, but it would appear that was not the case. “You didn’t know?” Jiang Chen rubbed his nose a bit with embarrassment.

Wei Jie's eyes were filled with disbelief. It wasn't that he hadn't suspected them before. In fact, he had speculated that it might be there work a long time ago, or he wouldn't have told Wei Qixia that this father and son were the poison inside the manor walls. But although he might have guessed this, only his father, Wei Qixia and a handful of people knew about this. He had never brought this up to Jiang Chen. So he was surprised, *just how did Jiang Chen learn about this?*

The atmosphere between the two became a little awkward for a moment. Jiang Chen sighed softly and said, "Just assume that I've spoken out of turn if you don't believe me, young master Wei. Do forgive me."

Jiang Chen wasn't trying to drive a wedge between the two parties on purpose. He simply thought that he should remind Wei Jie of his impending troubles since he was cooperating with young master. Conflict would be detrimental his rescue plans too.

Wei Jie let out a long sigh, "Family shame should not be spread carelessly. I wasn't prepared to talk about this scandal, but I didn't imagine that you would have guessed it already. I'm curious, though. How did you guess it?"

Jiang Chen shook his head, "It's not a guess. I'd realized it only just now."

"Just now?" Wei Jie looked even more bewildered.

"There was a pill master standing next to your uncle, and he had probably refined the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder within the month. There is a bit of leftover presence on him that is so weak that only a professional would notice. Moreover, I noticed a hint of killing intent from your cousin Wei Xiu while you were conversing with your fifth uncle. He hid it well though, and since you were in a conversation, you missed it. Things were clearer to me since I was an onlooker."

Wei Jie was stupefied. He wasn't quite sure what to say. The smell of the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha powder? Jiang Chen could sense it even though it was concocted almost a month ago? Just how powerful a consciousness and sense of smell did one have to have to notice it? Moreover, he had noticed Wei Xiu's killing intent even though Wei Jie himself hadn't noticed anything. *This Jiang Chen... no wonder he was able to repeatedly pull one over the Eternal Celestial Capital. He really is an expert who hides his claws well.*

"You've schooled me again, brother Jiang. There are always someone better out there, I see." Wei Jie looked impressed, "Seeing is believing. I am truly impressed."

Jiang Chen wasn't trying to show off on purpose. Since his point had been made, it was now up to Wei Jie to deal with it. Internal conflict within a family was nothing novel. Even the small Eastern Kingdom had plenty of conflicts over power within the royal family.

"Where are we going, young master Wei?" Jiang Chen asked.

"We're heading to the Fish and Dragon District."

"Where's that?" Jiang Chen asked curiously.

“As the name would suggest, it’s a place filled with all sorts of people. It acts as an extremely large trading zone where all kinds of business happen. All slave trading basically happens in the Fish and Dragon District.”

All sorts of people? And they call it the Fish and Dragon District? [1] Jiang Chen shook his head inwardly and thought that Veluriyam Capital really was very different from everywhere else. It was impossible that slave trading would happen between the sects of the Myriad Domain.

There were plenty of people in the Fish and Dragon District, and it was bigger than Jiang Chen imagined. People of all types were present. One only needed to take a casual glance to find sage realm cultivators everywhere on the streets. Even emperor realm experts could be glimpsed often. As for origin realm cultivators, they were literally innumerable, as many as the hairs on an ox. Here, even an insignificant servant was at minimum spirit realm. A spirit realm cultivator was at the bottom of the status quo in this society. Even a random street sweeper was at least a spirit realm cultivator.

One could see that Wei Jie had an enormous social network. After entering the Fish and Dragon district, he would often be greeted by people on the streets. It would appear that he was pretty well liked. Wei Jie was extremely easy going himself. He would always smile welcomingly at anyone who greeted him. It neither made him look arrogant, nor make him overly humble. “This is the place.”

The duo entered an alleyway after passing through several streets. The alleyway wasn’t wide, but there was another world inside once they entered. There were actually all kinds of stalls within this enormous trading zone. There were actually countless slaves who were kneeling at each stall. These slaves all had price tags on them, so they were obviously for sale. However, it wasn’t like Jiang Chen had never seen slave trading during his previous life. He unleashed his consciousness and looked everywhere.

The first row, the second row...

After sweeping through the slaves again and again, he didn’t find any familiar faces from the Regal Pill Palace at all. “They’re not here. Let’s head inside,” Wei Jie pulled Jiang Chen into a shop in the market.

“Oh, isn’t this the young master of House Wei?” A slightly sharp voice rang the moment they stepped inside, “What a rare customer! So? Have you come here to buy a few slaves for your fancy?” A man with a face covered in makeup chuckled and beckoned them over.

The idiom used to describe the variety of people involves the characters for fish and dragon as well.

Chapter 727: Why Don’t You Beg Me Instead?

This man was about thirty years old and dressed in very luxurious clothing. It made him look a little frivolous, not to mention that he had powder on his face too, adding a hint of femininity to his appearance. Judging from his tone, he and Wei Jie were obviously not so close that they could trust each other completely, even if they knew each other. Although his tone was rather cordial, it wasn’t completely deferential.

Wei Jie smiled faintly, “Brother Lin, I see that business is booming.” As he said this, he introduced the man to Jiang Chen, “This is brother Lin Ming. He is a respectable person in Fish and Dragon District.”

“Brother Lin Ming, this is my friend Zhen Shi.” It was still the same pronunciation, just that Wei Jie had used two different characters.

“Hello, friend Zhen,” Lin Ming nodded. His expression was neither too cool nor too cordial, but just right for the occasion. “What brings you here today, young master Wei? If I recall, you aren’t too interested in the slave market.” Lin Ming was a businessman. He immediately felt a prickle of wariness when he saw that Wei Jie hadn’t revealed his intentions despite the conversation going on this far. Thus, he decided to take the initiative instead.

Wei Jie smiled, “Brother Lin, can we talk somewhere else?”

It was a bit of face that Lin Ming had to give, so he immediately nodded slightly, “Please, come in.” He smiled after as he served them high quality tea, “Young master Wei, this mystery is starting to make me itch. Why don’t you tell me directly what good spot of business you’re here to offer?”

Lin Ming was extremely smart to use ‘good business’ as his pretext. The underlying meaning was very obvious: If Wei Jie had nothing good to offer, then he might as well not say anything. Jiang Chen could hear the undertones, and so could Wei Jie. However, Wei Jie smiled and replied, “Brother Lin, I’ll be honest with you. I am here to inquire about some news.”

Lin Ming’s expression froze as the smile on his face abruptly disappeared, “Young master Wei, my business doesn’t involve selling information. Do you have the wrong man?” It was an understandable position for a businessmen to care primarily about profit.

“Brother Lin, I will reward you if you have the news I seek,” Wei Jie pushed ten thousand saint spirit stones before Lin Ming without batting an eye.

Ten thousand saint spirit stones was not a small sum. Lin Ming’s eyes flickered as he glanced down at the spirit stones. However, he pushed them back to Wei Jie without any hesitation, “I’m sorry, young master Wei. We observe certain rules in our trade and will do only what is required by our business. We are absolutely forbidden from carelessly talking about anything else.” Lin Ming was obviously extremely cautious when it came to this matter. Although he had no idea what kind of news Wei Jie was looking for, he still turned down the young master immediately without showing even an ounce of interest, despite the promise of great rewards.

His cautiousness quite caught Wei Jie off guard. He had thought that information wasn’t all that secretive here, and that ten thousand saint spirit stones would more than suffice. He never thought that Lin Ming would turn him down without a second’s consideration. “Brother Lin, we can still discuss this if it’s about the money. You simply need to speak your price.”

Lin Ming set down his teacup, “Young master Wei, I won’t hide this from you. There is no way you’ll get anything out of me today no matter how much money you offer me. I don’t know about the others, but I will never break our rules. To put it bluntly, our businesses tread the very edge of legality, meaning while we’re not illegal, we shoulder an incredible risk all the same. We could be crushed with one careless misstep. Please understand this, young master Wei.”

It was true that the slave trading industry was extremely profitable, but it was also equally risky. Bosses normally weren’t willing to talk about their industry or even dig into their slaves’ backgrounds. If the goods were slaves, then all they did was slap on a price tag and sell the goods immediately. The obvious benefit from this informal protocol was that if the slave’s information wasn’t disclosed, the bosses were protecting themselves from information leakage and making new enemies. As slave traders, they

neither cared not inquired into their slaves' identity. This was also to avoid the disaster that might befall them if they accidentally sold a person with a powerful background.

Although Veluriyam Capital feared no force, that didn't mean every businessman in the Capital was just as strong. There certainly was no end of examples in this trade of someone selling the wrong person and meeting with calamity. That was why slave traders kept a low profile and a tighter mouth even though their profits were massive.

Wei Jie actually wasn't sure what to say when he heard Lin Ming's very decisive rejection. They were both worldly people, so of course he understood that Lin Ming was basically throwing them out of his shop. Wei Jie immediately cast a somewhat helpless glance at Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen hadn't said anything since entering the shop, drinking his tea calmly amidst the exchange of words. He finally put down his teacup when he saw Wei Jie looking his way. He cast an indifferent glance at Lin Ming and said, "Boss Lin, you haven't been sleeping well lately, have you? Does your left shoulder hurt like a thousand ants are biting you every 11pm to 1am? Moreover, white dots are starting to show up on your left cheek, right? That is why you have no choice but to conceal things with makeup, isn't it?"

Wei Jie looked startled. He didn't know why Jiang Chen had suddenly started speaking gibberish. On the other hand, Lin Ming trembled all over when he heard Jiang Chen's statements. The light of disbelief shone out of his eyes.

"Sigh, how unfortunate. How unfortunate it is that you won't have the time to enjoy all the money you've earned from this trade, Boss Lin." Jiang Chen sighed and stood up, "Boss Lin, please excuse us. Thank you for your service."

He flung a glance at Wei Jie after saying this and made to head outside. The look in Lin Ming's eyes grew complicated as he bit his lips softly. It was obvious that Jiang Chen's words had struck a nerve, and he was feeling extremely conflicted on the inside. Seeing that Jiang Chen was about to leave, he leaped to his feet and swiftly caught up to him, "Brother Zhen, please wait."

"What is it, Boss Lin?" Jiang Chen purposely answered as if he didn't understand his actions.

Lin Min sighed wryly with resignation, "Please stay for a while longer, brother Zhen."

"Oh, it's alright. There are still some things that we need to attend to. Thankfully we came out early today, so maybe we'll get the news we need if we use the time to visit a few more shops, don't you think?"

Jiang Chen was finding the entire situation quite amusing. After he had struck Lin Ming's weak point, the trader would probably do his utmost to keep him there even if he really were to leave now. As he had expected, Lin Ming said morosely, "Brother Zhen, you shouldn't trouble two people with the same trouble. There's no need for you to go to other shops. It is very likely you won't get anything out of them either."

Jiang Chen purposely responded, "But Boss Lin has to scrupulously abide by the rules of trade. We can't possibly trouble you with this dilemma any further!"

Lin Ming seriously felt like crying. He waved his hands repeatedly, "It's no trouble, no trouble at all."

When Jiang Chen so accurately spoke of the symptoms that had been plaguing him, Lin Ming really felt as if a bolt of thunder had struck his head. This illness had been plaguing him for several years now. Moreover, he had gone to many reputable pill kings in Veluriyam Capital and paid countless fees, but his illness had never shown any signs of recovery. Even those pill kings could do nothing.

Lin Ming might earn a lot of money, but his status really wasn't all that high. He neither had the qualification nor the right to visit a high ranking pill king and request a diagnosis. Therefore, not only was he not recovering, he was even getting worse and worse. When Jiang Chen had suddenly identified his sickness, he felt as if a ray of light had suddenly entered the infinite realm of darkness he was trapped in. He was as if a drowning man who suddenly found a log to cling to.

So how could he possibly let it go?

Wei Jie was caught off guard by this sudden turn of events, but he reacted very quickly to this new charade, "Brother Zhen, let's stay for a while longer. Look at how cordial Boss Lin is. There aren't many people who are as good a friend as him in the Fish and Dragon District, you know."

Lin Ming's face was burning. He wasn't sure if Wei Jie was provoking or taunting him by saying that, but none of that mattered right now. When everyone was seated once more, he personally poured tea for Jiang Chen and Wei Jie again. "Young master Wei, I wasn't lying about what I said earlier. Those are the rules of my trade. I am but a small fry in this river, and one misstep may very well result in my demise. Please understand that I am not making your life difficult on purpose, and my caution is all a helpless action to protect myself."

Wei Jie smiled noncommittally. Now that Jiang Chen had taken the reins, it wouldn't be right for him to speak up. Jiang Chen also smiled and said nothing. Although he knew that Lin Ming's words had some grains of truth in it, in reality, it was all up to the individual himself. There was no way a bit of insider information could bring forth disaster, could it? Regardless, he held his opponent's life in his hands right now. It was now up to Lin Ming and how far he would cooperate.

Lin Ming also knew that he might not even have the chance to speak if he didn't express something right now. He immediately looked at Wei Jie. "Young master Wei, my business is small in this trade. If I know anything about the news that you seek, that I will definitely tell you about it. I only ask that..."

Lin Ming looked at Jiang Chen while he said this. He obviously was hoping that this mysterious Sir Zhen Shi could diagnose his illness for him. Jiang Chen smiled faintly and responded, "It's nothing big, really. Have you heard of the Myriad Domain, brother Lin?"

"Myriad Domain?" Lin Ming was slightly startled as he nodded subconsciously, "Sure. They're the force that's currently in conflict with the Eternal Celestial Capital, right?"

"Yes, they are. I heard that Veluriyam Capital has taken in a group of slaves from the Myriad Domain. So what I want to know is, which faction has these slaves?"

Lin Ming stared a little suspiciously at Wei Jie after his initial surprise, and then looked at that Sir Zhen Shi. He couldn't help but feel a little strange. Why was House Wei interested in a mere Myriad Domain?

Wei Jie smiled faintly, "Reign in your imagination, Boss Lin. I heard that Myriad Domain's Regal Pill Palace is a sect of pill dao, and that there is an extremely rare pill dao genius among them. Plus, they

have some items that I want... as you know, I've been worrying about getting a pill king for many years..."

Everyone in Veluriyam Capital knew that House Wei didn't have a guest pill king. Everyone also knew that House Wei's previous pill king had died a horrible death. That was why Lin Ming believed almost all of Wei Jie's words when he heard them. "Is that all?" Lin Ming blinked once and looked at Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "If your information is useful, then I'll be able to treat you. I won't be just treating your symptoms either. You'll be fully cured!"

"You can cure me fully?" Lin Ming's eyes lit up, "That all depends on whether your information is worth the price, Boss Lin," Jiang Chen didn't deny it.

Chapter 728: Preliminary News

Lin Ming could hardly not cooperate, being the businessman he was, and with his life in Jiang's grasp. A wry smile later, he responded to Wei Jie, "Young master Wei, someone did buy a batch of slaves from the Myriad Domain, and those slaves are indeed from the Regal Pill Palace. However..."

"Just tell me directly what you wish to say, Brother Lin," Wei Jie said.

"It was a boss of the Fish and Dragon District who did this business, but that boss is among the top ten slave traders in Veluriyam Capital. I am far inferior to him."

"Who is it?" Wei Jie probed deeper.

"It's the Myriad Puppet Pavilion."

"The Myriad Puppet Pavilion?" Wei Jie stared at him blankly.

"Yes, the Myriad Puppet Pavilion. Their backer is House Sikou," Lin Ming spoke plainly, not holding anything back.

"House Sikou?" Wei Jie's expression immediately turned ugly. House Sikou was one of the few sworn enemies House Wei had in Veluriyam Capital.

Lin Ming smiled wryly, "Young master, let us stop here. I would ask that you please don't sell me out in the future. I do not nearly have enough wealth to endure the Myriad Puppet Pavilion's full strength."

Wei Jie said seriously, "Don't worry, Brother Lin. I am not a person who sells out my friends."

Lin Ming waved his hands. This news wasn't all that big of a secret. Almost all the bosses in their circle knew about this. He then looked at Jiang Chen with an imploring look in his eyes. **no 17e/1b.1n**

Jiang Chen smiled, "Boss Lin, your symptoms are not caused by an illness, poison, or evil aura."

"What might be the cause then?" Lin Ming could not look any more gloomy.

"Where do you normally live?" Jiang Chen asked with a smile, "If I'm not mistaken, you rest with a pet beside you at night, right?"

"How... How do you know about this?" Boss Lin was shocked.

"I even know that your pet is probably something that looks like a cat. However, it isn't actually a cat, but a variant species."

"Ah? I've always thought that it was a cat. Is there something wrong with it? But I've invited those pill kings into my home, and they've inspected my cat too. They didn't mention anything like this."

"That's because they're ignorant," Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "The cat isn't carrying anything, so none of the pill kings you brought to your house would be able to notice anything wrong with it. The cat itself is perfectly fine too."

"Then... what is the problem then?" Lin Ming lips were trembling with agitation. He could feel it, a thin, fragile strand of hope that the symptoms that had been plaguing him for all these years were finally going to be resolved today.

"It's not even worth a mention once the truth is out, really. Go back and kill this cat. After that, I'll write you a prescription that you should consume for a full month. Once you've taken the prescription for a month, you'll be fully recovered."

"Are you sure?" Lin Ming's voice was a little shaky.

"What need do I have to lie to you?" Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "Bring me brush and paper."

Lin Ming prepared the brush and paper himself before placing them respectfully in front of Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen didn't dally, immediately writing out a prescription. "This is the prescription. Once you've obtained the necessary spirit herbs, you just need to boil them all together however you like. No technique is necessary. After that, simply drink your concoction."

Lin Ming unconsciously accepted the prescription even as a feeling of disbelief jolted through his brain. He felt like he was in a dream. If Jiang Chen hadn't so clearly described his everyday life, Lin Ming would've definitely thought him a liar trying to fob him off with excuses. However, his instincts told him that this was the right bet this time. Jiang Chen's tone and expression didn't belong to a liar at all. In fact, he could even see a certain something from his eyes that told him that Jiang Chen thought it beneath him to lie! For a moment, Lin Ming was overwhelmed by his emotions. He felt as if he had finally awakened from an everlasting nightmare.

"Go get your herbs. Later," Jiang Chen could see how agitated Lin Ming was, but as a pill master, he had seen similar sights countless times during his past life. Wasn't Lin Ming's expression the same as Wei Jie's subordinates when Jiang Chen had saved Wei Jie?

Lin Ming grabbed Wei Jie's hands, "Young master Wei, I owe you a favor this time. Come to me if you have anything else that you need in the future. As long as it is within my power, I will do everything I can to fulfill it!"

He didn't dare to grab Jiang Chen's hands because he thought that this mysterious Zhen Shi was a little unfathomable. He didn't dare to grab the pill king's hands carelessly.

Wei Jie beamed at him, "You speak too heavily, Brother Lin. I've always liked making friends, so if you truly believe that I'm worthy of your friendship, then let us associate with each other much more in the future."

“Of course, of course,” Lin Ming looked extremely excited.

Wei Jie patted his shoulders and said, “You are a lucky man, Brother Lin. Brother Zhen possesses an unfathomable depth in pill dao talent. He does not normally treat someone, but when he does, he never makes a mistake.”

“Definitely, definitely,” Lin Ming agreed with him strongly. There had been countless pill kings who’d investigated his symptoms, but none of them had been able to do anything about it. However, this Lord Zhen Shi had only taken a few casual glances to figure out everything about his symptoms. This absolutely wasn’t something any ordinary person could do.

Inferior men and goods were always discarded in front of true value. Compared to Lord Zhen Shi, those pill kings he’d seen before were utter trash who didn’t deserve their reputation! Lin Ming felt like crying aloud as he walked Wei Jie and Jiang Chen out of the door. These symptoms had tormented him for far too long now. The prescription he was holding in his hands felt heavier than a million saint spirit stones.

“So what’s with his symptoms, Brother Jiang?” Wei Jie couldn’t help but ask after they left Lin Ming’s shop. He was just as curious as Lin Ming was.

“It’s what it seems. The cat he raised isn’t a normal cat but a nether felidae. This animal cries softly during the four hours between 11pm and 3am and attracts much fiendish yin energy to itself. This energy is exactly what’s hurting Boss Lin. This fiendish yin energy isn’t visible in daylight, and it always reappears at night. As a result, he is tortured by that energy everyday. His symptoms are actually so serious that livor mortis has already appeared on his face.”

“Livor mortis?” Wei Jie felt his body grow cold when he heard this. “How could a living person possibly have livor mortis?”

“This fiendish yin energy comes from the underworld, so it contains the gas of the dead. This Boss Lin may be alive, but he may as well be one of the living dead the way he is right now. If I hadn’t appeared, he would be dead for sure in less than three years.”

“It’s that bad?” Wei Jie looked shocked.

“This is nothing compared to the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder,” Jiang Chen smiled faintly. “He could live for ten years or less despite this fiendish yin energy from the underworld, but the Ninelaugh Golden Buddha Powder will kill you the moment you laughed nine times. I rather think that the person who’s trying to kill you is far crueler.”

Wei Jie’s expression turned serious as he sighed softly, “Brother Jiang, there are certain things that I have found hard to speak of with you, but I dare not conceal them any longer considering how honest you are with me...”

Jiang Chen waved his hand, “We will have the chance to talk about that once we return. Let us head to Myriad Puppet Pavilion first.”

Wei Jie smiled wryly, “Brother Jiang, we need to consider this at length. The Myriad Puppet Pavilion is not difficult to deal with, but if their backer is House Sikou, then this matter has just become quite the predicament.”

“Mm? Is House Sikou very powerful?”

“Not really. They’re a ninth rank aristocratic family just like us, and their standing in Veluriyam Capital is not bad either. What I mean by predicament isn’t their strength, but because they are one of our sworn enemies. To say our relationship is bad is just the tip of the iceberg!” Wei Jie knew that there was no concealing these details. There couldn’t be a bigger coincidence. It just had to be House Sikou! He looked a little embarrassed as he stared at Jiang Chen. It was obviously that he was feeling very apologetic for this outcome.

Jiang Chen considered this for a moment and nodded, “Alright, in that case why don’t you head back first while I go over and have a look myself?”

Wei Jie shook his head, “You came together with me, so the entire Fish and Dragon District probably knows about it by now. Even if you were to head in alone, the Myriad Puppet Pavilion wouldn’t show you the slightest cordiality.”

Jiang Chen thought through this and felt that Wei Jie’s words made a lot of sense. “In that case, let us leave first and find a place where I may switch my disguise before coming out again.”

The pair left the Fish and Dragon District. Very soon, a couple of spies sent news to the Myriad Puppet Pavilion and through them, House Sikou. “Young master Nan, House Wei’s Wei Jie showed up just now. He just left.”

“Oh? What was he here for?” The man known as young master Nan was a young man dressed in silver robes.

“I’m not sure, my lord. He took a spin around the slave market and stayed at Lin Ming’s shop for a moment, but left soon afterwards.”

“Summon Lin Ming,” Young master Nan gestured.

Lin Ming was soon in front of him. “Young master Nan,” Lin Ming neither acted too arrogant nor too humble. His attitude towards young master Nan was more or less the same as how he’d treated Wei Jie at the beginning.

“Boss Lin, did House Wei’s Wei Jie go to your shop just now?” Young master Nan asked indifferently. This young master Nan was a member of House Sikou. His full name was Sikou Nan.

Lin Ming knew that his meeting would not be concealed from the eyes of Fish and Dragon District, so he didn’t refute it, “Yes, young master Wei and another person came into my shop and stayed for a little while.”

“What was he doing?” Sikou Nan’s voice was indifferent and somewhat interrogative. He spoke as if he was naturally in a position of authority.

Lin Ming wasn’t naturally a bit unhappy to hear such a tone. The fact that he was able to establish himself in the Fish and Dragon District was proof that he wasn’t completely powerless. He wasn’t afraid of Wei Jie, so naturally he wasn’t afraid of this Sikou Nan either. He was irritated to hear Sikou Nan questioning him with such an impolite and arrogant tone. However, as a businessman he was well versed in hiding his emotions. “He came to my place seemingly wanting to buy a few slaves for himself.

However, he left afterwards because we failed to come to an agreeable price," Lin Ming told a random lie.

It wasn't easy for Sikou Nan to differentiate if a lie like this was true or false. "Is that all? was there anything else?"

Lin Ming shook his head, "It's not like I have a relationship with House Wei. What else do you think there might be, young master Nan?" Lin Ming's tone wasn't arrogant, but it wasn't completely subservient either.

Sikou Nan asked a couple more questions, but failed to get anything out of Lin Ming. He waved him away and said, "Boss Lin, there are some people that you can't do business with, such as House Wei. You understand what I mean, don't you?"

Lin Ming smiled but said nothing. He turned around and left.

After Lin Ming had left, Sikou Nan sent for his subordinates, "Send out more eyes and keep a closer watch on House Wei. I want to be informed immediately if House Wei even steps foot in the Fish and Dragon District!"

Once they exited the Fish and Dragon District, Jiang Chen told Wei Jie to head back home first. Once Jiang Chen was alone, he slipped into a secluded corner and changed into a new outfit in a few breaths. He was just about to exit when a sudden voice rang out from behind, "Please wait a moment, my friend."

Jiang Chen's figure blurred as he turned around. He was just about to enter a defensive stance when the person giggled, "Relax, young master Jiang. It's me." Like a pure lotus in the breeze, Miss Huang'er appeared before him.

Chapter 729: A Revolting Business Custom

"Miss Huang'er, you're here!" Jiang Chen was ecstatic to suddenly see her. The two of them had slowly become accustomed to each other's presence after the long journey they'd spent together. The few days of separation had left Jiang Chen with a foreign feeling, one of emptiness and loss. Seeing her again immediately brightened his mood, filling his heart with contentment. Even though it was evident that Huang'er hadn't deliberately dressed up, her casual clothes imparted a certain unexpected charm.

"Sir Jiang, I followed your marks here. Have you found any news of big sister Gouyu?"

Jiang Chen nodded as he composed himself once again, "There are a few leads, but nothing certain yet. I was just getting ready to take a closer look." Without leaving out any details, he explained what he had learned so far.

Huang'er frowned, her slender brows knitting together a little when he finished. "If that's the way things are, then we should go check things out without delay."

"Mm."

Huang'er stopped herself after raising a foot, having thought of something. She giggled. "I should probably disguise myself again." Saying this, she nonchalantly passed a hand across her face. A mask glimmered into existence, hiding the beauty beneath.

Jiang Chen smiled, knowing that she hadn't done so to be pretentious, but rather to avoid unnecessary trouble. If Huang'er were to appear with her actual appearance in a place as seedy and disreputable as the Fish and Dragon District, there was no telling how much annoyance it would cause. Huang'er's actions were intended to avoid trouble for him as much as it was to avoid trouble for her.

The two of them quickly returned to the Fish and Dragon District. To avoid suspicion, they took their time to circle around the slave markets several times before heading towards Myriad Puppets Pavilion. As a major establishment within the slave markets, Myriad Puppets Pavilion was noticeably different from the normal stores. The two of them were greeted with a sense of extreme luxury as soon as they stepped foot inside. Compared to the scattered stalls outside, both of them wondered for a moment if they'd entered the wrong door.

No slaves were on display inside. That alone was a marked difference from the stalls outside. Instead, an attendant appeared near instantly beside them, ostensibly to greet these new customers. "Honored customers, what kind of goods are you looking for?"

Jiang Chen had already mentally prepared himself before walking in. The more cautious one appeared to be in this kind of store, the less respect one received. Better to look calm and impenetrable, so that others couldn't gauge one's depth. Only then would they pay attention.

"What goods are there?" Jiang Chen wandered in a circle before haughtily seating himself on a chair.

"What grade of goods is the honored customer interested in?" Employees of large stores rarely had the bad habit of being overly arrogant. The attendant didn't dare slight the customer upon seeing how importantly he seemed to carry himself.

"The higher the grade the better, of course," Jiang Chen smiled faintly. "If I could examine the goods in person, that would be best."

"Of course, that's not a problem. However, we do have a custom in this business. If you'd like to examine the goods, you'll have to make a down payment," The attendant chuckled.

"Money is no object," Jiang Chen casually waved a hand.

"Haha, honored customer, you misunderstand. Our humble store never questions our customers' financial abilities. Many of our largest transactions do not take spirit stones."

"You don't take spirit stones?" Jiang Chen furrowed his brow. Currently, it was the one thing he didn't lack in. The spoils from the battle at Infant Shriek hadn't been anything of note, since those cultivators had been careful enough to stash their important belongings somewhere else. On the other hand, they had carried plenty of everyday items such as spirit stones. When it came to spirit stones, he was definitely a millionaire now.

"Certainly. The biggest sales we make can in fact cause a stir within the upper echelons of Veluriyam Capital. Special goods demand special means of transaction. If there are no assets of interest on the other side of the bargain, we will definitely not easily part with our top quality goods."

Hearing this, Jiang Chen scowled imperceptibly. Why does a business have so many rules?

"Let's see the goods first," Huang'er abruptly opened her mouth off on the side, plonking something down with calculated indifference.

The attendant took a closer look, and almost had his jaw drop with surprise. Was ... was that a piece of spirit marrow? Spirit marrow was also a kind of spirit stone, but it was the very purest essence of its kind. The distilled spiritual strength inherent within a piece of spirit marrow could rival that of ten thousand, even a hundred thousand spirit stones. However, a hundred thousand spirit stones were easy to obtain, but obtaining a piece of spirit marrow was particularly difficult. Spirit marrow had many more uses than spirit stones, for example, etching formations, crafting pills, creating talismans...

The eyebrows of experts may not even twitch if spirit stones were placed before them. Most of the time, wealth held no meaning for the strongest of the strong. But when something like spirit marrow appeared, it held an allure that even the most elite cultivators could not resist. This was the good thing about spirit marrow. Even one piece was more alluring than a hundred thousand spirit stones. If one had a hundred thousand spirit stones, one might still be considered poor in the world of martial dao. But if one had a single piece of spirit marrow, then one was definitely rich.

Spirit marrow was not something the ordinary poor would possess. As expected, the attendant's eyes brightened when he recognized the spirit marrow. The two had been served by this particular attendant up until now, but the latter immediately offered an apologetic smile, "Honored customer, please wait a moment."

It didn't take but a moment for a well-dressed middle-aged man to approach them. His moustache danced on his face as he spoke with a wide smile. "Honored customers have paid us a visit! Please excuse our rudeness."

"How should we address you, shopkeeper?" Jiang Chen asked, smiling faintly.

"My surname is Li, so please feel free to call me Shopkeeper Li." The middle-aged man's beaming expression was the height of enthusiasm. *nOve/lb-In*

"Shopkeeper Li, I came here today because I heard that your Myriad Puppets Pavilion is one of the giants in this business. I hope we're not disappointed."

Shopkeeper Li maintained an easy smile, "Ah, not at all, not at all. If the two of you have any special needs, please don't hesitate to mention it to this humble shopkeeper."

Not in a rush, Jiang Chen lightly drummed his fingers rhythmically upon the table. A similarly easy smile hung on his face. "Shopkeeper Li, we are in recent need of new manpower, ideally a group with reasonably good talent with pills. If I may ask, how many units of this type can the Myriad Puppets Pavilion supply?"

"However many you would like, honored customer."

"Oh? How impressive." Jiang Chen laughed. "If that's the case, shall we take a look at the goods first?"

Shopkeeper Li nodded, "That shall be arranged immediately. Honored customers, please follow me."

The shopkeeper led Jiang Chen directly towards the back, past the anterior hall. The space suddenly broadened—its immenseness far surpassed anything Jiang Chen could've imagined. They swiftly arrived

at a patch of unoccupied ground in the back. Shopkeeper Li spoke, "Honored customer, please wait shortly. We are already organizing the goods for display."

Barely a brief moment passed before thousands of slaves were trotted out. However, Jiang Chen was stunned upon seeing them emerge. The slaves were each wearing a mask and plastered with sealing talismans, erasing their personal auras. Their faces couldn't be seen, and the ripples of their consciousness completely indiscernible. From far away, they all looked almost exactly the same. Jiang Chen and Huang'er exchanged a look, the two of them equally speechless.

"Shopkeeper Li, how am I supposed to examine the goods like this?" Jiang Chen was greatly put out. "I can't see their faces or sense the level of their cultivation."

Shopkeeper Li laughed, "Honored customer, this is customary in our line of business. Their senses are all sealed away before being sold and their true appearances hidden. You can only view their associated explanatory papers to examine the goods. Each slave has the details of their cultivation written, as well as their features of note, specialties, et cetera. The overview is quite accurate. If you find that the goods differ from their brochure after you receive them, we accept refunds without question. Don't worry, the Myriad Puppets Pavilion makes all of its business deals in earnest."

Jiang Chen cursed internally. Could reading an explanatory brochure really be called 'examining the goods'? He almost wanted to give Shopkeeper Li a beating, but firmly tamped down on that impulse. But what kind of examination was this, exactly?

"Honored customer, what do you think? Shall we go over them one by one, or...?" Shopkeeper Li asked, his expression quite eager. How could he know that Jiang Chen was furiously angry in his heart?

"Shopkeeper Li, since their senses have been sealed away, does that mean they won't be able to hear what we are saying?" Jiang Chen said, not altering his voice, purposely using the one he had used at Regal Pill Palace. Since I can't see their faces and can't detect them by the ripples of their consciousness, surely someone that knows me would give me a sign if I raise my voice? But no such result came. The slaves were truly like wooden puppets, and had no reaction whatsoever. They stood straight at attention, almost like the walking dead.

"Hehe, they can't hear, see, or feel. They can't sense anything before the seals are removed, much like a puppet," Shopkeeper Li chuckled.

"Shopkeeper Li, I have a strange quirk. Even my slaves must be of fair appearance. How about you take off their masks and let me take a peek?"

Shopkeeper Li's face was the very picture of a salesman's happy smile, but he still shook his head.

"Honored customer, we can't do that. This custom is ironclad for our business, and can't be broken."

"Customs are fixed. People should be flexible," Jiang Chen offered further encouragement.

Shopkeeper Li produced a placatory smile, "Honored customer, everything else can be discussed, but this absolutely can't be done. If I gave you this chance now, my boss would kill me immediately. We are doing business together, you and I. Does the honored customer honestly wish for me to lose my life?"

The lack of flexibility in Shopkeeper Li's words filled Jiang Chen with consternation. He thought a moment, then suddenly asked again, "Shopkeeper Li, I hear that you've recently gotten a new shipment of goods in stock, with very high quality. Could you take that shipment out separately for a stroll?"

Shopkeeper Li was momentarily taken aback, "We have received many batches of goods recently, which shipment do you mean?"

Jiang Chen wanted to directly say 'the shipment from the Myriad Domain', but he knew that he couldn't; that would expose him immediately. "How many batches are there? Why don't you bring them all out, since I need a lot anyway."

Jiang Chen had heard that there were quite a lot of Regal Pill Palace people sold. There were at least several dozens, perhaps even several hundred. Shopkeeper Li grinned briefly, "Actually, all of the new goods are here already. We have a high rate of inventory turnover, and new goods generally can be completely replaced in a fortnight. We received all of these within the past two months."

"Oh? Are you sure that they are all here?" Jiang Chen asked, yet again.

"They are all here, except the most outstanding, which are individually listed as some of our finest goods. Those finest goods are only offered for sale in our auction, and won't appear here."

"There are more, higher quality goods? May I see them?"

Shopkeeper Li smiled wryly. "The finest goods can only be seen at auction. Even my authority isn't enough."

The more Jiang Chen heard, the angrier he grew. How were they supposed to do business? If he couldn't examine the goods, who knew if the group from Regal Pill Palace was here or not? Buy all of them? The group numbered almost two thousand! Though he was incredibly wealthy, even he might not be able to shoulder this burden. What if the people he wanted wasn't within this group, wouldn't he be out tons of money then? Loss of money aside, if he exhausted his wealth here, what else could he do in the short term to rescue his fellow sect members?

Chapter 730: You Forced Me to Rob You

However, Shopkeeper Li had also mentioned that they had a rapid turnover. These slaves might be considered a new batch right now, but in just half a month, they might be all gone. If one took into consideration how these slave traders conducted business, it would be incredibly difficult for him to track down his sect members if they were sold again. With rules like these in place, it would be near impossible to track down a buyer, no matter how far one dug. It was impossible to check who they'd sold to whom and to where. Without a first name, a last name or any physical characteristics to use as a reference, there were naturally no clues left behind.

He had to admit that although these rules were absolutely disgusting, it did protect these profiteers' interest and safety to an extreme degree. Even if a slave somehow regained their freedom and experienced a massive growth in strength, they wouldn't be able to find a target for revenge. After all, just how would one track down the ultimate mastermind or the middlemen after they'd been passed through so many hands with every sense sealed?

Jiang Chen wasn't sure what his next steps should be. If he didn't buy them, he would miss the chance to save his sect members that were part of this group, if they were even part of this group. If that happened, he would never have the chance to save them again. If he were to try and purchase them all, he might not be able to afford all two thousand slaves at once no matter how wealthy he was. Moreover, whether the trader was even willing to make such a sale was another question in and of itself. After giving the matter some thought, Jiang Chen ultimately decided to do what he could at the moment. He immediately asked, "Shopkeeper Li, what kind of price can you give me if I were to buy all of them?"

"What?" Shopkeeper Li was completely stunned by this, "Buy... buy all of them?"

Jiang Chen rubbed his nose, knowing that his words must be rather shocking considering how exaggerated the reaction was. However, he was not in a position to back down after venturing the question. "Yes. Don't tell me that this too is against the rules?"

Shopkeeper Li smiled wryly, "Honored customer, I think you best look at the prices first... also, we have a rule that restricts us from selling more than fifty slaves at once. It would cause too big of a splash if we were to sell anymore than that, which is why we're absolutely forbidden from doing so. Fifty slaves is our highest limit."

Jiang Chen cast a few random glances at the prices and was instantly flabbergasted by the absolutely ghastly prices. An origin realm cultivator could cost between two hundred thousand to one million saint spirit stones. A sage realm cultivator was priced anywhere between two million to ten million saint spirit stones. This meant that on average Jiang Chen would have to spend at least two to three million saint spirit stones on every slave, and there were roughly two thousand slaves in this place. It would cost him more than six billion saint spirit stones to buy all of them. No matter how wealthy Jiang Chen was right now, the total sum of his wealth was far and away from this number.

Yes, it was true that he gained a lot of profit after sweeping through the three thousand strong group of cultivators at Infant Shriek, but those people had only brought enough spirit stones to spend on daily expenses, not their entire wealth. Even if he were to convert all the spirit stones he collected into saint spirit stones, it would only still be worth a couple billion or so. The sum needed to purchase all of the slaves in front of him was completely astronomical!

Even House Wei might not necessarily be able to mobilize this many saint spirit stones at once, despite being one of the top few aristocratic families of Veluriyam Capital, to say nothing of Jiang Chen. Or rather, while they could afford this amount, but even they would find it difficult to gather this sum in a hurry. He suspected that only one of the great clans could easily produce this number without suffering too great a loss.

"Didn't Wei Jie said that this Myriad Puppets Pavilion is a property of House Sikou? Is House Sikou this rich?" Jiang Chen was secretly shocked. However, he did understand that this trade had a rather high profit margin. These goods might have a price tag of two to three billion, but the actual cost would be at most one tenth of the price. At the same time, roughly only forty percent of these profits would enter House Sikou's pockets. The rest would be spread out to many, many other channels. Otherwise, it was impossible for such profits to exist in a high risk business like slave trading.

Right now, the problem he faced was that the boss refused to sell to him, even if he somehow possessed the capital. Shopkeeper Li made it very clear that he could only buy a maximum of fifty slaves at once. Anything more than that was unacceptable. Jiang Chen finally understood why the other party had worn such a astonished expression on his face when he heard that he was going to buy all of them. He had inadvertently spoken something stupid that revealed his lack of knowledge of this industry. "Shopkeeper Li, the rules of your trade sure are inflexible! How would you justify this fifty slave limit? Why won't you allow your customer to make a purchase if they have the money?"

Shopkeeper Li smiled wryly, "You must be new, honored customer. In the first place, slave trading isn't the kind of business that can operate openly. If I were to be blunt, it steps across a few lines in the sand. Thus, if we were to make too big of a sale, then it would influence the general state of affairs. If we allow you to buy a hundred or a thousand slaves at once, and if these people were all granted their freedom, how big of an impact do you think they would have on Veluriyam Capital? And how big of a hidden threat would it create in the Capital? Hypothetically speaking, if someone were planning to cause trouble and purchased several thousand slaves at once, how much damage would that cause in the Capital?"

"So you're saying that I won't have a place to spend my money today?" Jiang Chen was absolutely depressed by these confounded rules.

"I'm sorry, honored customer. You can follow our rules and make a total purchase of fifty slaves every seven days. This is our absolute limit," Shopkeeper Li had worked here for dozens of years, but he had never met a situation like this before.

Buy all of them? You want to buy two thousand people at once? Are you sure you have the money to do so? Shopkeeper Li was ultimately a worldly person. He might find it funny and think that this customer was much too green for this trade, but nary a trace of his true feelings made it to his face.

Jiang Chen exchanged a helpless glance with Huang'er. They could both see the resignation in each other's eyes. "Miss Huang'er, they might actually be forcing me to rob them," Jiang Chen mentally communicated with Huang'er.

Huang'er smiled faintly, "Then let's commit a robbery."

For some reason, what Huang'er used to view as an extremely despicable act of banditry somehow became an unbelievably wondrous experience when it was done with Jiang Chen. She was experiencing the joy that one experienced breaking the rules, that she was so used to following, with someone she admired.

Jiang Chen suddenly smiled and said to Shopkeeper Li, "I say, Shopkeeper Li, security isn't very tight here, don't you think?"

Shopkeeper Li abruptly paled, "You..."

He couldn't even finish his sentence before the scene before him blurred. He suddenly found himself standing at the center of a sea of yellow sand. It was as if he was suddenly exiled to an abandoned desert. "Not good! Someone's attempting a robbery!" Shopkeeper Li shouted at the top of his lungs. His shouts were pointless, however. With a formation between him and the real world, he could shout himself hoarse and not be heard by anyone outside.

Jiang Chen summoned his palace abode and threw every slave inside it. "Miss Huang'er, let's go!"

They both felt a sense of helplessness, but also a streak of excitement in committing this robbery. They felt like naughty kids breaking the rules and got an extremely great kick from it. The two shot straight into the sky, tearing up escape glyphs as they did so. At the peak of their flight, they abruptly vanished.

Shopkeeper Li kept yelling without pause, but his view blurred once again. Once he could stop his eyes from rolling, he discovered that he was still at the shop. All the slaves before his eyes had vanished. "Not good! Help! Help!" Shopkeeper Li started screaming like he was a pig being slaughtered.

It wasn't like this backyard had lacked formations or defenses that would activate to protect their property. However, this pair had been able to calmly avoid triggering these defenses and any formations before vanishing! Shopkeeper Li could scarcely believe that such a bizarre thing had happened. The experts of the Myriad Puppets Pavilion surged in from all directions.

Before long, dozens of sage realm experts had surrounded the backyard and an initial emperor realm expert strolled in. "What's wrong, Old Li?" n.)OœLBIn

Shopkeeper Li gasped wretchedly, "Manager Qiu, a disaster has happened! Our goods from the last three months has all been robbed by someone!"

The initial emperor realm Manager Qiu thought that his ears were mistaken, scolding, "What kind of nonsense are you spouting? There was a total of two thousand slaves here! Are you dreaming or what?"

"I'm telling you the truth!" Shopkeeper Li looked like he was about to cry.

Manager Qiu gestured to behind him, "Check the warehouses."

The warriors behind him had long since gone to inspect the warehouses, even before the order had been issued. It didn't take long for them to rush back, panting, "This is bad, my lord! They really are all gone!"

"None of the formations at the scene were triggered. Manager Qiu, these people came bearing ill intentions!"

Manager Qiu's expression immediately darkened. He finally realized that Shopkeeper Li wasn't lying. "What happened? Tell me everything in detail." He was an emperor realm cultivator after all, and quickly calmed his rage.

Shopkeeper Li began conveying everything from beginning to the end with a wretched expression on his face. He also emphasized strongly that the other party had a piece of spirit marrow, and that they'd attempted to buy all of the slaves at once.

"So they're foreigners," Manager Qiu wore an extremely ugly look on his face as he muttered to himself, "If they were locals, they would have known about our purchasing rules."

But another warrior said, "Manager Qiu, that may not necessarily be the case. What if this bastard has been planning this robbery for a long time and merely said those words to confuse us and lead us down the wrong line of thought? We might be falling into their trap if we go down this way of thinking."

His words called Manager Qiu's attention to this possibility, and the manager nodded slightly, "We should follow both paths of investigation thoroughly! How dare they rob the Myriad Puppets Pavilion! How dare they commit such atrocities in Fish and Dragon District! This is... this is..." Manager Qiu was so angry he couldn't even find the right words to describe his feelings. He really was feeling a little muddleheaded from anger. Regardless of who their enemy might be, they certainly had unmitigated gall. After all, robbing the Myriad Puppets Pavilion was the equivalent of robbing House Sikou. Moreover, committing a robbery at the Fish and Dragon District was the equivalent of taunting the entire District! House Sikou wouldn't be the only one offended in this case.

This entire matter seemed all so ludicrous. It wasn't like the Fish and Dragon District had never experienced a robbery, but they had mostly happened to those luxury stores that sold trinkets. In the slave market, 'robbery' simply didn't exist as a concept because the amount of people one could loot in one go was plainly limited. Plus, it wasn't easy to hide a person at all. Unlike precious herbs and treasures, the uses of a slave were too singular. Moreover, these slaves might not even be useful if one obtained them outside of purchasing them!

It was exactly because robbery didn't exist as a concept in the slave market that the Myriad Puppets Pavilion had not put up an utterly impregnable defense. Unfortunately, this had also given their enemy the opportunity to rob them. Most importantly, the enemy was actually capable of making off with two thousand people at once. This was the most shocking news of them all. Everyone knew that humans couldn't live long inside a space ring. Moreover, how did they manage to transfer two thousand people into a ring in such a short time?