

Three Realms 831

Chapter 831: Sacred Peafowl Mountain's Inheritance

Jiang Chen couldn't avoid Emperor Peafowl's enthusiastic gaze, so he smiled and answered honestly, "I could try. Though I would not be able to guarantee the success rate. Plus, this pill is so precious that it would take ages to gather its ingredients again in the case of failure."

Jiang Chen left himself some leeway to fall back on.

Emperor Peafowl sighed, "Genius. What genius! To think that a place overflowing with fortune as my Veluriyam Capital would lack a genius of your ability all these years, but a forgotten place like the Myriad Domain would produce one! No matter how powerful your master was, he couldn't have molded a genius like you if you didn't possess outstanding talents yourself. It is the combined effort of your master's godly methods and your own outstanding talents that made you into the shining genius you are now!"

There were countless youngsters in Veluriyam Capital, but there had never been a person who received such high praise from Emperor Peafowl until now. This was no longer just simple praise, but one that came from the bottom of his heart. Suddenly, the emperor's eyes became determined as if he had just made up his mind about something. "Jiang Chen, I must admit that I haven't told you everything earlier. Now, I believe that I don't have to hesitate any longer. I would like to give you the legacy of the Sacred Peafowl Mountain once ten years is over."

"What?" Jiang Chen was shocked, "You're giving it to me after ten years?"

"Yes," Emperor Peafowl nodded. "You and I need not share a master disciple relationship. All you need to do is to receive the inheritance of Sacred Peafowl Mountain."

Jiang Chen was dumbfounded. "But why?"

Emperor Peafowl's expression was serious. "A great chaos is coming, and Sacred Peafowl Mountain's fortunes will decide Veluriyam Capital's fortunes. In turn, Veluriyam Capital's destiny also decides the destiny of the entire human domain. I have made acquaintances with countless people in my life in attempt to find a person of great destiny to inherit my Sacred Peafowl Mountain, and you are the brightest pearl I have found. I have a feeling that Sacred Peafowl Mountain's legacy will be passed down for eternity if it is in your hands. No one else can fulfill my expectations."

Looking at Emperor Peafowl's sincere eyes, Jiang Chen knew that this great emperor was not joking with him. In reality, Jiang Chen was very much impressed by Emperor Peafowl. After all, the emperor had been born with the All-Seeing Eyes that enabled to see another person's destiny. Even the people around him hadn't made the connection when he achieved his breakthrough beneath the Precious Tree of the Rosy Dawn back then. Emperor Peafowl was the only one who was very certain that he was connected to that extraordinary phenomenon. Moreover, his suspicions were well founded and not empty guesses in any way.

Jiang Chen himself knew about his own fortunes. How could a person who survived the cataclysm and even able to reincarnate with full memories have no good fortune at all? It was impossible that a person who didn't possess a great fortune could achieve reincarnation.

“Don’t turn me down so quickly, young friend. Sacred Peafowl Mountain needs your fortune, but you need Sacred Peafowl Mountain to pave your path to the future too. You understand the reason why your journey has been so rocky, don’t you?” His words hit the nail on the head and silenced Jiang Chen completely.

Of course Jiang Chen knew the reason why.

“There are plenty of reasons, but they can all be summarized under one major one. Your background and starting point is too low, and your patron and power is too weak as well. The fourth rank sect Regal Pill Palace may be a top rank power in Myriad Domain, but resistance is futile even for them when the great calamity arrives.” Emperor Peafowl’s words were very direct. He continued, “The law of survival in the world of martial dao can be cruel or kind depending on your viewpoint, but before a standpoint can even be made, it must have at the bottom a foundation of strength. My Sacred Peafowl Mountain may not be the strongest power in the human territories, but no one can deny that it is one of the strongest.”

Jiang Chen couldn’t refute this point either. “That is why Sacred Peafowl Mountain needs you, and you too need Sacred Peafowl Mountain.” Emperor Peafowl looked at Jiang Chen enthusiastically. “If I name you the young master of Sacred Peafowl Mountain, then no matter how much the Eternal Celestial Capital or the Ninesuns Sky Sect hate you, none of them would dare show their faces in Veluriyam Capital and threaten your wellbeing. The only thing they could do is to swallow all their hatred and live with it.”

Emperor Peafowl was not an expert who embellished the benefits of strength single mindedly, and that was also why his words moved Jiang Chen even more. It was the truth. It had been a while since he started cultivating, and although Jiang Chen was full of mettle and capable and caused big waves wherever he went, he was undeniably weak in the face of true strength.

“Your Majesty, I can only express my gratitude at the great love you show me. However, the burden of inheritance is so heavy. What if I fail to uphold this responsibility? Would it not be a betrayal of your trust? You know of the head of Regal Pill Palace, Dan Chi, who saw the potential in me just like you did. In the end, I wasn’t able to save my sect from being destroyed, and Palace Head Dan Chi himself is still missing. Although I wasn’t the cause of the Regal Pill Palace’s destruction, but it doesn’t change the fact that I, a Regal Pill Palace disciple, wasn’t able to turn the tides around and save my sect from destruction.”

The destruction of the Regal Pill Palace indeed wasn’t Jiang Chen’s fault. The Ninesuns Sky Sect and the Eternal Celestial Capital had long since set set up their plans in order to find Emperor Featherflight. From the moment Emperor Featherflight had escaped into Myriad Domain, he had almost certainly doomed Myriad Domain to a fate of tragedy. But he still couldn’t absolve himself from the guilt that was the destruction of the Regal Pill Palace. He couldn’t help but blame himself for failing to save the sect even though Palace Head Dan Chi put so much trust in him.

Jiang Chen also knew this. After all, he had barely entered the Regal Pill Palace before disaster struck them. There had been so little time that he grow powerful at all. It was obviously unrealistic to hope that an origin realm expert could grow powerful enough to rival a first rank sect in just a couple of years. It was this guilt and regret that had propelled Jiang Chen to do many things for the Regal Pill Palace. He’d willingly braved many dangers and travelled all the way from the Great Scarlet Mid Region to

Veluriyam Capital in search for his sect mates. He even went against the ninth rank aristocratic house, the Sikou Family of Veluriyam Capital in order to save his sect mates.

Logically speaking, Jiang Chen should have felt overwhelmed with joy by the favor Emperor Peafowl was showering him with his offer of inheritance. But all he felt was a heavy weight that threatened to crush his back. It wasn't that he was afraid to shoulder this burden. He simply didn't want to disappoint those who trusted him again. His experience in the Regal Pill Palace had cast a bit of shadow in his heart.

Emperor Peafowl let out a soft sigh, "Young friend, it is only a matter of time before the Divine Abyss Continent falls into chaos. Forget the Regal Pill Palace, even Veluriyam Capital's chances of survival is currently unknown. I am not pushing you to achieve something by entrusting you this inheritance. I simply thought that it is the best choice out of all the candidates I can possibly entrust this to. When chaos arrives, the world will shatter, and no one shall be spared from the great calamity. Even I cannot tell the future of Divine Abyss Continent, and if it will welcome a new age of recovery when chaos passes."

Experts, even those at the great emperor level, were ultimately not omnipotent. No one could predict the future accurately as fate wasn't something so easy to predict. Although there exists great arts that could predict some traces of the future, it was simply impossible to come up with the whole picture. Emperor Peafowl couldn't do it, and even those who were ten times stronger than Emperor Peafowl couldn't do it as well. Not even Jiang Chen's father from his past life, the Celestial Emperor who ruled over the great heavenly world, could predict everything. The saying that heaven's dao is unpredictable was absolutely not empty words. Jiang Chen could see sincerity and great hope in Emperor Peafowl's eyes. He felt like he would be committing a sin if he were to turn the emperor down.

Jiang Chen hesitated for a while. "Your Majesty, this matter is too important. Please allow me some time to think before making my decision."

Emperor Peafowl shook his head. "Jiang Chen, you are good in almost everything, but there is one tiny thing that you lack as a youngster."

"What?" Jiang Chen looked startled.

"Courage and vigor," Emperor Peafowl said indifferently. "I don't know if your teacher has told you this before. I can see a thousand talents in you, but you lack the determined courage and the vigorous drive of a youngster when it comes to such important matters. If a youngster is as astute and circumspect like us older people, it would be mature if put nicely, but lacking vigor if not bluntly."

This was the first time Emperor Peafowl had criticized Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen was silent. He couldn't deny that everything he did was the result of much careful planning ever since he was reincarnated as the son of a duke in the Eastern Kingdom. Although he would do impulsive things sometimes, they were never the result of any less than absolute certainty that he would come out ahead. It wasn't that Jiang Chen was truly lacking in courage. It was simply that the nightmare that was the destruction of the divine plane during his past life had instilled in him an unconscious mindset of cautiousness. After all, the things he bore were so heavy that any misstep might result in the loss of everything he had built for himself. He couldn't afford to lose even once.

Although Jiang Chen had no idea why the divine planes had shattered during his past life, he was certain that it hadn't happened without reason. His reincarnation in this place was not without reason either. Perhaps his father's enemies were the ones who'd brought about the calamity this time. Therefore, as his father's son, he couldn't afford to be careless even though he was reincarnated into a new body. If the cultivators of the divine plane were to find him again, they could easily destroy him a thousand times over.

Jiang Chen had never paid serious attention to his current mindset, but it had become a subconscious of his. When this was pointed out by Emperor Peafowl directly, Jiang Chen abruptly realized that he was a little too cautious, and a little too lacking in the arrogance and recklessness that only a youth would possess. He had maintained a low key profile all this time and was unwilling to get himself involved in conflict. He had wanted to keep to himself and quietly cultivate to the point where he had the strength to investigate the cause and effect of that incident of his past life. But the more he tried to run away, the more he tried to cast off the ties, the more he ran head first into those things.

"Jiang Chen, I may not know what you're trying to escape from, but I can tell you clearly that no one can spare themselves from danger when chaos arrives. The world changes like the tides, and none can resist its mighty flow. It doesn't matter if you're a good or bad, righteous or evil. Everyone will be drawn in all the same. So if you can't escape it, why not meet it head on? Don't you think that you are letting down those wonderful talents of yours by keeping to only yourself?" His words rang so loudly beside Jiang Chen's ears that even the deaf could probably hear them. Jiang Chen was left speechless in the end.

Chapter 832: News of Ling Hui'er

Though Emperor Peafowl wasn't criticizing Jiang Chen, his words still carried a hint of admonishment. As it happened, Jiang Chen couldn't exactly refute him. He'd truly been a little selfish in that area, a little self-centered. He had to admit he'd never thought about carrying the fate of an entire sect on his shoulders. He'd thought even less about shouldering the fate of the common people. Jiang Chen hadn't reached such a level enlightenment yet. In fact, in the world of martial dao, those who'd gained such enlightenment numbered very few.

Ye Chonglou, Palace Head Dan Chi, Emperor Peafowl, they were the only ones who'd reached that level among all those Jiang Chen had met. Only, Ye Chonglou's strength had been a little lacking despite his good intentions. On the other hand, Palace Head Dan Chi had grand aspirations, but the Regal Pill Palace's power and foundation restricted his possibilities. Emperor Peafowl's status was exalted. He was, sadly, at an advanced age, and had come to feel and comprehend the dao of the heavens. He was soon going to break through to a higher stage. When he did so, he wouldn't be able to remain in Veluriyam Capital.

Jiang Chen stayed silent, yet thoughts stormed through his heart and mind. As a matter of fact, Emperor Peafowl was the same type of person as his father from his previous life, the Celestial Emperor. Jiang Chen was convinced that if his father could see him right now, he would certainly not like this child who was cautious to a fault. To put it bluntly, the Celestial Emperor was a heroic sovereign, grand of aspiration and bold of spirit. Otherwise, he wouldn't have willingly sacrificed his own fate and power to refine a Sun Moon Divine Pill for the sake of his son, ruining natural order in the process. Jiang Chen was simply ashamed if he was held up in comparison.

Emperor Peafowl's words reverberated in Jiang Chen's mind like the rolling ringing of a morning bell, cracking, shattering the shackles of his heart, layer by layer. The chains that bound his heart, the shackles buried deep within, shattered and disintegrated one after another. All of a sudden, a spiritual flash shot inside Jiang Chen's sea of consciousness.

As if on the surface of a calm sea, waves suddenly rose on the surface of the seal in Jiang Chen's consciousness. The turbulence was miniscule, but Jiang Chen clearly felt it. And in that moment, he seemed to sense a familiar feeling, the aura of the Celestial Emperor. The feeling was almost imperceptible, disappearing in a flash from his sea of consciousness. However, that flash was like lightning illuminating Jiang Chen's mind, instantly shattering all his burdens.

"Father!" Jiang Chen was now dead certain this seal was related to his father. It had always been a nagging guess, but he was absolutely certain now. At that moment, Jiang Chen's spirit was clear and serene. The chains holding him back vanished with a trace, and he was overflowing with spirit and energy.

"Your Majesty's guidance allowed a sudden flash of insight for this humble junior. Since Your Majesty has bestowed such favors upon me, it would be rude for me to refuse." Jiang Chen's eyes were crystal-clear as he faced Emperor Peafowl.

Delight shone on Emperor Peafowl's face. "Very good, good kid! Sensible and perceptive, you're indeed someone worthy of grooming, the kind of successor I'm looking for."

"After handing Sacred Peafowl Mountain over to me, isn't Your Majesty afraid that your personal disciples will refuse to comply? That the four great monarchs under you will refuse to comply? What about about the clan lords?"

Emperor Peafowl responded with a faint smile, "Since I'm handing it to you, that's something you'll have to resolve with you strength, wisdom and ability. What, not feeling up to it?"

Jiang Chen smiled. "Your Majesty is indeed adept at goading someone into action."

Emperor Peafowl laughed out loud. "Tell me, are you confident?"

"That will depend on how much free rein Your Majesty leaves me."

Emperor Peafowl's face was resolute. "Since I'm leaving it to you, then of course you'll be the one to make decisions. I won't put any restrictions on you. Even if you flip everything on its head, even if you turn Sacred Peafowl Mountain upside down, I definitely won't utter half a word as long as you seem able."

"Very good." Jiang Chen was elated at the promise. "Your Majesty's chiding today has set free my heroic spirit. Since Your Majesty gives me carte blanche, I'm now fully prepared for what's to come. Ten years... ten years..." Jiang Chen quietly mulled over the words "ten years."

It hadn't yet been ten years since he'd appeared in this world. In that time, he'd gone from a small place like the Eastern Kingdom all the way to Veluriyam Capital, shaking the world in his wake.

Ten years later, what would stop him from heading for the pinnacle and dominating human territories? Jiang Chen had never lacked in self-confidence. He'd never let his daring and his aspirations run free, but

that had been out of fear of the consequences, not because he was lacking in either. After tossing away his restraint and the shackles of his heart, Jiang Chen instantly felt himself relax. He was now brimming with grand aspirations.

If one gave a cultivator ten years, perhaps he would only progress a level or two in the same realm. However, ten years for Jiang Chen was the same as a hundred years for others, maybe even a thousand years. After all, ever since his debut, he'd walked a road in a few short years that others would need several hundred years to travel. Hence, ten years might be a pressing constraint, but Jiang Chen didn't believe it was a responsibility too heavy for him to bear.

"Haha, kid, if I hadn't goaded you, would you be brimming with this much motivation?" The Great Emperor laughed out loud. "After the contest this time, keep hiding your strength and biding your time. You'll have to take center stage after the Veluriyam Pagoda closes. Then, I'll proclaim you as my successor. You should be aware that the Veluriyam Pagoda Gathering will have far-reaching consequences for the Capital. When the time comes, you'll have to shoulder the mantle of Sacred Peafowl Mountain's young lord, whether you do it as Pill Master Zhen or as Jiang Chen."

Being Sacred Peafowl Mountain's young lord implied that Jiang Chen would formally enter the core of the Capital, and formally compete with the other great emperor's successors.

Only the strongest could be the Capital's true master. Emperor Peafowl for example, had been the unshakeable number one for three thousand years.

"By that time, you'll have proper justification for mobilizing Sacred Peafowl Mountain's power. It wouldn't be any problem even if you wanted to use Sacred Peafowl Mountain to rebuild the Regal Pill Palace, look for your father, or even look for your fellow sect members. Even declaring war on the Eternal Celestial Capital isn't outside the realm of possibilities."

Something flickered on Jiang Chen's face, but he still immediately shook his head with a faint smile. "Declaring war on the Eternal Celestial Capital isn't a pressing matter for now, and I won't need Sacred Peafowl Mountain's power either. As to rebuilding the Regal Pill Palace, it's actually something I can think about."

Jiang Chen knew that using Sacred Peafowl Mountain's power to wage war on the Eternal Celestial Capital would be a little excessive. He didn't want to give others food for gossip.

"Haha, you are candid and straightforward; that's the thing I like most about you. Of course, it's not impossible for Sacred Peafowl Mountain to wage war on the Eternal Celestial Capital. The only thing required is a suitable reason. If it's because of the Regal Pill Palace, then you would be using your public status for a private quarrel. That would be a little low and unprincipled. But if it's for another reason, it's not impossible to fight against the Eternal Celestial Capital." Emperor Peafowl laughed out loud.

"Alright, your promise today relieved me of a worry. As for the duel against Pilfire City, you'll have to prepare yourself a little anyway. Are you planning to do it in my Sacred Peafowl Mountain or are you going to go back to Taiyuan Tower?"

"I will return to Taiyuan Tower."

.....

Jiang Chen's mood after leaving Sacred Peafowl Mountain was a lot more carefree. He'd thrown away all the worries weighing down his mind. He recognized that his life had indeed been a little constrained and stifled previously. He'd been restricted by all sorts of things. In order to handle matters in place of others, he'd fallen into a vicious circle of overcautiousness. He couldn't do as he wished or act free and unrestrained, following his heart's desires.

To put it bluntly, his hands had been tied by the circumstances. Only, no matter how cautious he was, what use had it been? Almost every bad thing that could happen happened anyway. In that case, why would he still continue like that? Just as Emperor Peafowl had admonished, he might as well live the way he wanted to live, live his life a little bolder, a little more carefree. Everything in Taiyuan Tower was as he'd left it, apart from the business that'd become much more flourishing. Every corner of every floor was bustling with activity.

"Senior brother." Shen Trifire hurried to his side all of a sudden. "You've come out of seclusion?"

Jiang Chen nodded. Seeing Shen Trifire maturing day by day, already able to take charge of the Tower by himself, was a great source of gratification for him. He nodded when he saw the latter wanted to tell him something. "Let's go inside."

Shen Trifire followed Jiang Cheng to a private room.

"What's the matter?" Jiang Chen asked.

"Senior brother, you told me to pay attention to junior sister Ling Hui'er's whereabouts last time, so I've continuously sent men to inquire and investigate everywhere. We found a clue a few days ago."

"Oh?" Jiang Chen's eyes suddenly shone bright. He had been in Veluriyam Capital for a long time now. Ling Hui'er and Ling Su should have arrived already by now. Only, because of all sorts of reasons, Jiang Chen hadn't found them so far. If Ling Su and Ling Hui'er had been able to bypass the Eternal Celestial Capital's blockade, then they'd certainly have come to Veluriyam Capital. That had been their agreement with Jiang Chen.

"Even if junior sister Ling is already in Veluriyam Capital, she still wouldn't have guessed that you're Taiyuan Tower's master. So they wouldn't have come here on their own. My guess is that, if they're already here, they should have mingled with the wandering cultivators. That's why I'd sent many informants to watch the places frequented by wandering cultivators. Yesterday morning, someone sent news that at a certain gathering place for wandering cultivators in the northern part of the city, they saw a man and a woman somewhat similar to the description of junior sister Ling."

"Is she still there?" This stirred Jiang Chen's interest. Ling Hui'er had very distinctive traits. The sight of her bosom was in and of itself rather conspicuous. This trait was extremely obvious. Facial features could be altered or masked, but she couldn't shrink her assets in that particular area.

"We don't have any further news for now. That said, I already sent more men there. When things are settled here, I had planned on going there myself." Shen Trifire knew that any sect member of the Regal Pill Palace was very important right now. Ling Hui'er was a particularly important person even among them. Back then in the Regal Pill Palace, many fellow members of the sect had gossiped about the relationship between Jiang Chen and Ling Hui'er. Shen Trifire was of course aware of the rumors, so he

simply thought Ling Hui'er to be his senior brother Jiang Chen's wife. How could he not take this information to heart?

Chapter 833: The Ling Father and Daughter Pair

Jiang Chen could see that Shen Trifire was already quite devoted to the task at hand. However, he still felt somewhat guilty when he recalled Ling Bi'er's selfless assistance back in the Myriad Domain. The world was a big place—who knew where Ling Bi'er had ended up? Still, her father and sister had come to Veluriyam Capital and were thus his responsibility. He was obligated to take care of them and, in good conscience, couldn't allow any harm to befall them. It wasn't simply a responsibility towards a peer of the same sect, rather, it was a kind of accountability towards the girl who had saved his life.

"Trifire, let us go right now. I will come with you." Jiang Chen couldn't sit still. He wanted to take the Ling father and daughter duo to Taiyuan Tower immediately to ensure their safety. They were already here in the capital. Even though law enforcement was fairly adept, it was still an eat-or-be-eaten type of social pecking order amongst wandering cultivators. Considering Ling Su and Ling Hui'er's level of cultivation, sooner or later they were bound to end up in an unfavorable position.

.....

Located in the northern part of the city, the Azure Sea District was a place well-known for its population of wandering cultivators. At least two or three hundred thousand wandering cultivators roamed its streets each day, with upwards of a million at its busiest times. It was heaven for wandering cultivators, intentionally created by Veluriyam Capital itself to serve as such. The locale was designed to be an area of activity for these cultivators. Here, cultivators could cultivate, conduct business, take up missions, entertain themselves, and carry out just about anything they wanted to do. There was endless wine here, countless women, and limitless money to be earned. Thus, the wandering cultivators of surrounding territories had always viewed this place as a kind of wonderful refuge.

Of course, the district's luxurious surface belied its hidden corners, devoid of light. A place with a heaven-like appearance often held a great deal of accompanying darkness within as well. Acts steeped in grime and malice took place here, just as they did anyplace else. However, wandering cultivators each followed their own paths. No one concerned themselves with the fate of others. For a wandering cultivator, anyone they did not know was considered a passerby. Because of this, the Azure Sea District was actually a rather lawless place. Some obtained money and fame here while others met their demise.

By now, Ling Su and Ling Hui'er had already stayed here for three days. For the first two days, Ling Su had taken his daughter into the nearby streets to privately gather information. He had been more cautious both yesterday and today, however. His worldly experience told him that they were being watched. Today he fully intended to stay inside the inn without venturing a single step outside. Yes, the Azure Sea District did have certain things that were better left unseen, but there were still a few basic principles that everyone adhered to. The inns, at the very least, were safe.

Ling Hui'er was a little bored by it all. "Daddy, we've been stuffed up in the inn all day. This is so dull. Plus, how are we going to discover any news about senior brother Jiang and older sister like this?" She pursed her lips.

Ling Su knew his daughter's nature well. She was indeed the kind of person who found it difficult to simply sit idly in an inn. But an old hand like him knew that the situation within the Azure Sea District was complicated, more so than it appeared at first glance.

"Hui'er, don't be so capricious. This isn't the Myriad Domain. With what little strength we have, at best we can be considered middle-lower class. I can't keep you safe if a problem arises."

"There's no way things are as bad as you say, daddy." Ling Hui'er repeatedly tugged on her father's arm. "We can go out during the day and come back before nightfall. It'll be fine."

It wasn't Ling Su's first day navigating the world, and he was much wiser than his daughter. If he hadn't noticed the signs that something was awry, he wouldn't have needed to be discreet.

"Hui'er, when has daddy hurt you?" He patiently explained. "I want to find your sister more than anybody. But I've traversed more bridges than you have roads. Something is definitely amiss. Let's lay low for a bit—we can take a look around afterwards."

Ling Hui'er was unhappy at her father's refusal to budge and sat down with a huff.

"Hui'er, you..."

They were mid-conversation when a series of footsteps could be heard in the hallway. An attendant at the inn knocked on their door.

"Customer, the crystals that you gave us have almost been used up. If you don't give us further payment, you'll need to vacate your rooms between eleven and one."

Ling Su frowned when he heard the announcement, his expression suddenly becoming very serious. They had spent long days on the road over the course of these past few days. In order to avoid the Eternal Celestial Capital's investigation and pursuit, they had taken many detours. Thankfully, the Eternal Celestial Capital had been after Jiang Chen. People like the Ling father and daughter duo had no place on the city's wanted lists, and they were able to successfully muddle along to Veluriyam Capital. However, their road had been a bumpy one, and they had kept low profiles. They didn't have any real way of making money. As such, their crystals had been quickly used up.

They had only been in Veluriyam Capital for three days, but they had already reached the last of their funds. The original assumption was that they would be able to live at Veluriyam for a fortnight or so, then find some missions to keep themselves barely afloat. But it wasn't until they'd actually arrived at Veluriyam Capital that they discovered their own naivete. The inns within the capital were much pricier than the ones outside. Three or four times more so, in fact.

However, the inns here were significantly safer. While living here, there was no need to worry about someone assaulting them in the middle of the night. Something like that would never happen at Veluriyam Capital. If something like that were to occur, the inn in question would immediately close down. Despite the safety benefits, however, the price for accommodations was high enough to make Ling Su's heart drip blood. The attendant's prompt for the required additional payment only exacerbated his anxiety. He wanted to seek refuge here until the dust settled, but misfortune came in pairs. Instead of finding shelter, he was about to be kicked out of the inn.

Ling Hui'er put on a more careless air. She wasn't at all saddened by the news, and her large eyes twinkled. "Daddy, we don't have money anymore, so how can we keep staying here? Let's go find a mission and ask around in the meantime." She sighed softly, seeming to recall something. "I wonder if senior brother Jiang has gotten here yet? Has older sister met up with him? I really want to know..."

Ling Su's face was fraught with worry. He looked outside with some concern, but had no idea as to what to do next. Without money, they couldn't do anything in Veluriyam Capital. If they couldn't stay in an inn at night, then their safety was no longer assured. "Hui'er, let's pack our things. We're leaving quietly." He had no other resort.

"Why do we have to leave quietly?" Ling Hui'er widened her eyes. "We haven't done anything wrong! Is it really necessary for us to have to sneak around like that?"

"Hui'er, we're not at Regal Pill Palace anymore," Ling Su chuckled wryly. "We can't afford to be easily noticeable. It's my fault for spoiling you when you were little... if your sister were here, you wouldn't even think twice about listening to her."

Ling Hui'er giggled. "Daddy, if you were as fierce as sister is, how would I be able to live with the both of you?" Both of them knew that they couldn't stay in the inn without more money.

There was nothing that could be done. Ling Su had no better solution than to pack his bags and attempt to sneak out. They weren't too far from the inn when a pair of eyes around the corner spotted them. It immediately darted backwards, retreating into the darkness. Ling Su was a well-traveled man and had a wealth of commensurate experience. His intuition was very good in these situations. Sensing something, he pulled Ling Hui'er towards the opposite direction and moved to hasten their pace. "Hui'er, let's go this way."

Though Ling Hui'er was fairly obtuse, her father's guarded watchfulness reined in her whimsical nature in the heat of the moment. She followed closely behind him. In no time at all, several horses charged from the opposite direction they were going in. Ling Su hastily pulled Ling Hui'er to the side of the road, preparing to let them pass by.

However, they were evidently the target of the horses, as the steeds and their riders scattered upon reaching the Ling father and daughter duo's side, encircling the pair. His face tensing, Ling Su growled in a low voice, "Friends, we do not know each other. Why are you blocking the road?"

"Hahaha, you don't know us, eh? So you don't remember borrowing money from us, old fart? You've evaded us for these past few months, but finally no longer!"

"No need for small talk. Debts must be paid. You can't leave today without paying us both the principal and the interest!" The cultivators flourished the riding whips in their hands. With vicious demeanors and greedy looks, they appeared implacable.

Ling Su's heart fell. With his experience, how could he not see that these people were picking a fight on purpose? "I think you have the wrong person. I've never borrowed money from anyone here. If you'd like your debts to be repaid, why are you soliciting me for money?"

Though he knew it was just a trumped-up charge, Ling Su didn't want to turn on them right away. From what he could see, he couldn't match a single one of these cultivators. It would be completely effortless for the men to defeat them.

"Hahaha, the wrong person?" The burly man at the head of the group chuckled. "We've done this for a couple hundred years, and you say that we've got the wrong person? You've got to be kidding me."

"You wanna renege on your debts, old man?"

"Course, you can do that, as long as you give us that girl as collateral. That'll make us barely even."

Ling Su's heart trembled. It was as bad as he had thought. He'd felt someone gawking at his daughter before, but from the looks of it, trouble was unavoidable. The supposed debt they talked about was only a ruse—it was Ling Hui'er they were really after.

Hui'er's babyish face was all puffy and red. "Aren't you guys being unreasonable?" She shouted angrily. "When did we borrow money from you?"

"Ho, the girl has a bit of a temper!"

"Hmm, having a wild side is even better. You can't get out of paying your debts, little girl!"

Ling Hui'er hadn't met anyone as unreasonable as these men before. She was speechless, her cheeks flushing with fury.

Pulling his daughter behind himself, Ling Su spoke to her in hushed undertones. "Hui'er, these people are here to make trouble. They're here for you. Daddy will hold them off for a bit. In the chaos that ensues, you should make your way out of here. Remember, forget about me. Just run away as fast as you can."

As insensitive as Ling Hui'er was, by now even she knew what these men's intentions were. Her heart was both furious and remorseful. She shouldn't have called her father overcautious—his worries had been entirely justified. "Daddy, Hui'er definitely won't leave you behind. We'll fight them if we have to. How can the law not be upheld at Veluriyam Capital? I don't believe it." Ling Hui'er huffed.

Chapter 834: Making Trouble In Public

The cultivators on horseback guffawed when they heard Ling Hui'er's tone. With exaggerated expressions, they staggered to and fro, their bodies swaying from side to side. It was as if they'd heard the funniest joke in the world.

"Law?" One of them cackled, clutching at the back of his horse. "What right do two little ants have to speak of law here, in Veluriyam Capital?"

"Wench, let me teach you what the law here is really like, eh?" Another cultivator rode towards them as he laughed, reaching for Ling Hui'er's chest with a one-armed swipe. Ling Hui'er's pretty face turned pale. Ling Su saw an opening in the action and countered with a block, parrying the other man's arm with his own.

"You're looking to die, aren't you?!" The attacker angrily shouted upon being intercepted. He raised the whip in his hand with a savage motion. It swished through the air like a serpent soaring through water,

intent on striking Ling Su's head. Having to not only protect his daughter but also dodge the blow, Ling Su found himself in a tight spot. Incensed by the proceedings, Ling Hui'er drew her shortsword and slashed towards the whip.

"Get out of the way, girl!" The man was evidently much stronger than Hui'er and knocked away her blade with a single curl of his whip.

Ling Hui'er felt her arm throb, her body shaking as if she'd received an electric shock. The next moment, she was sprawled on the ground, incapable of moving. The man's whip, however, still had leftover momentum. It smashed brutally into Ling Su's face.

Crack!

The sound of the whip was crisp and audible. The blow immediately left a deep gash, exposing the underlying bone.

"Resorting to force because you can't pay up, hmm?" The man grinned scornfully. Showing no sign of relenting, he took another swing at Ling Su's head with his whip. This attack was more vicious than the last. If it hit, Ling Su's head would definitely be sent flying.

Ling Su hastily attempted to evade the strike. Though he was fast, the man's whip was faster. It seemed inevitable that the whip would connect with its target. Suddenly, a sound tore through the air—the whistle of a rock, ricocheting off the whip. The unexpected projectile diverted much of the whip's impact and direction, causing the whip to veer slightly off to the side. Seizing this opportunity, Ling Su avoided the fatal attack just in time.

Gravely taking note of his enemy's ability, he ran quickly towards his daughter. Pulling out his saber, he stood in front of her protectively. The burly man had intended for his whip strike to kill Ling Su, but the rock had appeared out of nowhere and foiled his plans.

"Who?! Who sabotaged me like this?!?!" The man roared savagely into the air, whip still in hand. His companions rode up on either side of him as well, indignantly surveying the surroundings. Clearly, these people were used to running rampant around these parts. They hadn't expected that someone would have the audacity to cause trouble for them in public.

A red-haired man strode over from across the road, his manner indifferent. "Gentlemen, live and let live." He made a cupped-fist salute to those who were gathered. "How much money do they owe?"

The burly man was the unmistakable leader of the bunch. "You're the one who took the shot just now?" He glared at the red-haired man, his eyes menacing.

The red-haired man seemed to have a natural corpse-like demeanor, his face completely devoid of emotion. "Yes."

"Do you know what you're doing?" The burly man asked pointedly.

"I know." The red-haired man seemed to completely overlook the other's intimidation tactic and threatening aura.

"If you know, then you should also know that no one sticks their noses into Myriad Snake Gang's business here in the Azure Sea District! You don't look like someone with three heads and six arms,

hmm?” The burly man looked the red-haired man up and down, his voice becoming gloomier by the second.

“Why don’t you tell me how much money they owe?” The red-haired man had no intention of beating around the bush.

“Who are they to you? You want to pay for them? Do you even have the money?” The burly man sneered.

“Let’s hear your answer first.” The red-haired man said coolly.

“Fine, fine. It’s rare to find a hero like you who’s willing to be a good Samaritan, especially in the Azure Sea District! This is something new! I’ll give you a chance. He borrowed a million high-rank saint spirit stones from us. Now that such a long period of time has passed, he needs to repay three million stones for principal and interest.” The burly man extended three fingers. “If you give us three million saint spirit stones on their behalf, I’ll forget about what happened today.”

The red-haired man furrowed his brows. Three million was clearly more than he’d expected. By now, Ling Su had recovered from the shock of his near-death experience. “I don’t know how overbearing you Myriad Snake Gang people are in Veluriyam Capital,” he loudly protested. “You say that I borrowed money from you, but there’s no proof that I ever did. Do you just grab any random person off the street and say that they owe you money? And if they can’t pay, you’ll detain them instead? Are you debt collectors or robbers? The capital can’t let horrible people like you run amok out in the open like this! I don’t believe it.”

Ling Su had seen similar things happen to others in the past, but he had never personally been the victim of such blatant fraud. And of such a large sum too! He knew that if the debt was substantiated, it would be impossible to overturn for the rest of his life. His daughter would be taken away as well, and terrible things were sure to happen to her. He absolutely could not sit around idly and allow something like that to happen. Seeing as how someone else was willing to come forward and defend him, Ling Su had to loudly proclaim his innocence.

“Us Myriad Snake Gang people always carry out honest deals. We lent money to you because we trusted you—that’s why there’s no lending slip. We didn’t expect you to be such a crafty snake and blatantly deny your debt.” The burly man scoffed, turning to stare at the red-haired man. “Sir, we’re not opposed to you coming to their aid. However, if you can’t pay up, then please get out of the way.” The burly man had noticed the impressive strength of his red-haired adversary. Though he and his cohorts were capable of defeating the man, they would likely have to pay a certain price for doing so. Thus, he had chosen to take a step back in light of different goals. He didn’t want to tangle with the red-haired man for now. It was better to take care of the father and daughter duo first. The red-haired man could be saved for later, when more gang members were present. They could then teach him a lesson about what happens when you stand up for others in the Azure Sea District! *nove*(**LB**.1n

The red-haired man shook his head mechanically, “If you have no lending slip, how can you prove they owe you money? That makes no sense.”

“What now?” The burly man’s tone turned frosty. “Are you saying you’d want to teach the Myriad Snake Gang how we should do business?”

The compatriots behind him were furious as well. "You better take the easy way out while you still can. What happens here is none of your business. If you know what's good for you, scram! Don't interfere with our gang's business. If you don't, don't blame the Myriad Snake Gang for not giving you any face!"

"I'm not interested in any of that," the red-haired man smiled faintly. "However, I won't let you swindle my friends here either."

"Friends?"

"You're lying to our face, aren't cha? You don't look like friends to me."

"Hah, you have too many friends! Is everyone off the street your friend?"

The red-haired man crossed both arms in front of his chest. "I have no right to question how you do business, so you also have no right to question how I make friends."

"You..." The burly man's face darkened. "So you're determined to stick your nose into this?"

"Brother Iron, don't waste any more words with him. If he wants to be the better man, we'll just cut him down. Since when did we allow trash like him to have any say in what our gang does?"

"Yeah, kill him!" The riders were fired up and out for blood.

The red-haired man would have none of it. "How imposing and ferocious! If I didn't know you were the Myriad Snake Gang, I'd think that you were some faction under one of the emperors!"

The burly man hadn't been expecting those words, and found it difficult to assess the red-haired man's background. "Who are you really?"

"A man with no name. It's not important enough to mention." The red-haired man replied calmly.

"You say you're some no-name person, and yet you want to stick your nose where it doesn't belong anyway? Mind your own business!" The burly man had a hunch that the red-haired man likely had some sort of backing. It would be best to avoid conflict with him. The Myriad Snake Gang really didn't have anyone to fear in the Azure Sea District, but still.

"It's not something I enjoy doing, I assure you. But if I don't act, something awful will probably happen to me. Whatever it is, though, it'll be worse for you." The red-haired man was as deadpan as ever.

"Something awful? And it'll be worse for us?" The burly man roared with laughter. "You talk a big game, but can you back it up with your actions? Be careful that you don't hurt your tongue!"

"Hurting your tongue isn't a big deal, but hurting your head... well, then you're done for," the red-haired man sardonically remarked.

"So you're intent on meddling in someone else's business, then?" The burly man was out of patience.

"It's hardly someone else's business. You could say that it's of paramount importance to me," the red-haired man declared. "If I were you, I'd leave now and avoid making this worse for yourselves. The bigger the ruckus, the more trouble you'll have."

"Tsk tsk, are you threatening us?"

“Heh, what a joke! There’s someone brave enough to challenge the Myriad Snake Gang in the Azure Sea District?”

The red-haired man took no heed of their cavalier attitude. He didn’t budge an inch. Like a nail, he was securely stuck into the side of the street, placing himself in front of the Ling father and daughter duo. By now, Ling Su had helped his daughter get back on her feet. He walked towards the red-haired man.

“Thank you for your chivalry, friend. I greatly appreciate...”

“Is your last name Ling?” The red-haired man interjected suddenly.

Ling Su paused, unsure if the other man was friend or foe. He didn’t know how to answer the question.

“If so, I’ll deal with things here. If not, I’ll be off.” The red-haired man seemed to use the same tone to speak to everyone, be it friend or foe.

Ling Su’s heart was aflame with anxiety. After some hesitation, he nodded. “Yes, that is my surname.”

“Then I’ve got the right guy, eh? Take a seat,” the red-haired man gestured with his head. “Don’t worry, their extortion isn’t going to work here. Rather, something bad will happen to them very soon.” The Ling father and daughter duo exchanged looks, sharing the same feeling of incredulity. They weren’t acquainted with the nobility at Veluriyam Capital, and they didn’t have anyone to rely on. But from the looks of it, someone knew them instead and were dead set on helping them... how could this be the case? Moreover, their mysterious benefactor was clearly prominent. As notorious as the Myriad Snake Gang was locally, the gang was completely disregarded.

Chapter 835: The Myriad Snake Gang On Their Knees

One had to admit that the red hair’s panache had affected their confidence to a certain extent. However, the Myriad Snake Gang had been entrenched in the Azure Sea District for so many years, and also had a powerful backer to rely on. Things might be different elsewhere, but within the Azure Sea District, there really weren’t that many people who had the gall to meddle in their business. Even if there were, they knew each and every one of them.

The Myriad Snake Gang’s business was very complex. They had both legitimate and illegal connections, and everyone in the gang was a discerning person. They clearly knew the difference between someone they could offend and those they couldn’t. But this red-haired fellow in front of them was wholly unfamiliar. Looking closer, his clothes weren’t all that impressive either, so he clearly wasn’t someone from a powerful faction. Even if someone like that had a few tricks up their sleeve, they still didn’t pose much of a threat to the Myriad Snake Gang. So, angry enough to lose his temper, the sturdy fellow gave the red-haired man a cold stare. “Sir, since you’ve gone and stuck your nose in business that doesn’t involve you, you can’t blame us for being rude.” The sturdy fellow lifted his hand, sending a firework shooting into the sky. The firework sparkled in the air, snake-shaped trails zigzagging out of it, filling the sky.

As soon as he saw the firework, the red-haired fellow knew that this band of people in front of him was calling their companions. With a slight change in his expression and a cold smile floating on his lips, he said, “Does that mean your gang is determined to make a big fuss out of this?”

“Sir, since you wanted to play the hero, then we might as well play along and make a spectacle out of it.” The sturdy fellow waved his hand with a nasty laugh. Several riders spread apart and surrounded them.

A mocking smile appeared on the red-hair’s face. “Make it a spectacle? I’m simply afraid you won’t be able to afford to later.”

“Pfft! In the Azure Sea District, there’s very little our gang can’t afford to do!” Several of them signaled at each other with their eyes and surrounded the trio, but didn’t act immediately. Their original plan had been to catch the Ling father and daughter, and sell them as slaves. A wandering cultivator like Ling Su would fetch a decent price, but not too much of a profit. On the other hand, Ling Hui’er’s figure was top notch. She would be a hot commodity in the slave market, and earn them an easy fortune.

The Myriad Snake Gang often did shady and unscrupulous business. Only, they had a lot of tricks up their sleeve, and they had sharp judgement. They almost always chose their targets carefully. They could tell the pair was unfamiliar with the Capital, and they had absolutely no one to rely on. They had run around like headless chickens as soon as they arrived at the district. People like that were the gang’s favorite targets. No foundations, no connections, and not too strong either. Moreover, a young woman with Ling Hui’er’s figure was a pearl amongst pearls.

The Myriad Snake Gang had done illegal business for many years. Their judgement was quite accurate in that area. They knew that they wouldn’t suffer any negative consequences acting against the pair. So for these past few days, they’d spent time watching their targets, prepared to go into action when an opportunity rose. They hadn’t expected Ling Su to be so vigilant and hole up in an inn. Even the Myriad Snake Gang couldn’t brazenly charge inside. Only after they ran out of spirit stones and were forced to leave the inn did the gang find the opportunity they wanted. However, they’d never imagined in their wildest dreams that a red-haired fellow would appear along the way and play the role of hero.

In the Azure Sea District, no one would investigate even if they came across a half dead cultivator on the streets. The relationships between wandering cultivators were loose at best, so who would care about another’s life or death? To put it bluntly, it was none of their business. It was precisely because most of the wandering cultivators had this attitude that the Myriad Snake Gang had been able to smoothly operate in the shadows for so long. They’d never met with any resistance, and they’d almost never met with failure.

Not long after the firework exploded in the sky, the sounds of many men and horses rushing to their position filled the air. A hundred people or thereabouts poured in around them. The one in the lead wore full-body scale armor. He sported a pair of triangular eyes sinister enough to give off a frightening feeling. This man was one of the vice leaders of the gang.

“Vice Boss Ma, us brothers were asking these creditors for repayment when this red-haired guy came to stop us. He’s dead set on clashing with our gang.”

“Who might you be, good sir? Which house or sect do you hail from, friend?” Vice Boss Ma didn’t act recklessly. His triangular eyes slightly narrowed while he examined the red-haired fellow.

“I’m not your friend, so no need to act all friendly.” The red-hair’s tone was curt. He wasn’t having any of it.

With a blink, Vice Boss Ma sized up the red-hair up and down. He really felt a little uncertain. Usually, no one important would bother to come down to the Azure Sea District. Even if they did, they would bring a big retinue and in grand fanfare. You could recognize them from miles away. Meanwhile, the red-haired fellow didn't look like someone from a great clan. His mannerisms seemed off. He definitely didn't have the bearing of one from a great sect or mighty house. Rather, it was closer to that of a wandering cultivator. But for a wandering cultivator to try and take on the Myriad Snake Gang inside the Azure Sea District, was this guy looking to die?

How many people had Vice Leader assessed after several decades in this district? Regardless of anything else, his eyes were sharp. He could tell at first glance that this red-haired fellow had the manners of a wandering cultivator, something hard to hide. He was definitely not someone from a powerful faction. With this judgement in mind, Vice Boss Ma now knew where he stood. "Sir, if you're being so unfriendly, then you're not giving our gang any face. In the Azure Sea District, our gang won't show any face to someone who doesn't give us any."

The red-hair shrugged, looking baffled. "I never asked you to give me face though?"

Seeing him play the fool, Vice Boss Ma was of course furious. "If I'm not mistaken, you're only a wandering cultivator. Or do you think that you can challenge our gang with what little cultivation you have?"

The red-hair picked his ear, impatience written all over his face. "Is the Myriad Snake Gang something amazing?"

Furious, Vice Boss Ma's expression immediately sank at those words. "There's nothing else to say then." Glancing left and right, he ordered, "Get them!"

The Myriad Snake Gang had always reigned as despots in the Azure Sea District. Not mentioning wandering cultivators, they wouldn't even blink at challenging scions of great clans if the latter kept their identity under wraps.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh. As soon as his voice fell, shrill sounds pierced the air from behind them. Out of nowhere, arrows streaked through the air like shooting stars. Flying far with far more speed than normal arrows, the arrows thudded into Myriad Snake Gang members with enough force to send them tumbling dozens of meters. After the first volley, arrows came in fast and hard like an thunderous monsoon shower. The sound of iron hooves on flagstones resounded through the air as armored riders seemed to come charging in out of nowhere with awe-inspiring momentum. As the arrows died down, the warriors, sitting astride white horses, rode in, forming up in orderly ranks around them. A full three thousand riders, majestic as fierce tigers, made their presence known. A flag flourished in the wind, depicting a coiling dragon baring its fangs and brandishing its claws. A boundless aura of might radiated from the troop of riders.

"The Coiling Dragon Armored Guard?" For those familiar with Veluriyam Capital, who would fail to recognize the Coiling Dragon Clan's private guard? As soon as they saw this flag, everyone realized this was the Coiling Dragon Clan's manor guard. Apart from the seven great emperors, this was the greatest force in the Capital. As for the private forces of the seven great emperors, they almost never set foot in the Capital, so the Coiling Dragon Armored Guard could be labelled the most powerful force in the Capital.

The Coiling Dragon Clan had kept a low profile these past few years. Their grasp on the Capital had weakened quite a bit. But with the Majestic Clan's fall, the Coiling Dragon Clan shone bright once again. It reminded everyone that the number one clan was still the number one clan. The situation in the Capital hadn't changed yet.

The Azure Sea District was a gathering spot for wandering cultivators, a place great clans and noble families rarely involved themselves in. But that didn't signify that this district was left to run rampant. As the number one great clan in the entire Capital, the Coiling Dragon Clan's forces could go unimpeded anywhere in the Capital.

To put it bluntly, the Azure Sea District might be home to countless wandering cultivators, and their resulting factions, but it was still a marginal area compared to the Capital in its entirety. The great clans and noble houses didn't lack the power to meddle, they simply had no desire to do so.

Seeing the Coiling Dragon Clan's flag appear in this place, the wandering cultivators watching the show all were dumbstruck. It had been a long time since a great faction had publicly come into the Azure Sea District. This time, the Coiling Dragon Clan had made a flashy appearance, even using the Coiling Dragon Armored Guard! It looked like their target was the Myriad Snake Gang? Vice Boss Ma was struck dumb as well when he saw the Coiling Dragon Armored Guard arrive. He suddenly had an ominous feeling.

The red-haired fellow's smile was unsympathetic. "I urged you not to make a big fuss. Things sure are a mess now, aren't they?"

Speaking of, Vice Boss Ma's heart was also in a mess. *F*ck you, asshole! Why didn't you say so earlier that you were from the Coiling Dragon Clan?! What are you dressed as a wandering cultivator for!? If I'd known you were from the Coiling Dragon Clan, I wouldn't uttered a word even if I had ten times the guts!*

Like tigers and dragons, the Coiling Dragon guards encircled the scene. When the encirclement was complete, they opened up a path and three people strolled in. Jiang Chen turned to the other two, "Brother Ji, Captain Mo, I'm in your debt again this time."

"Haha, you and I are brothers, don't talk like a stranger." The one who spoke was young master Ji San. He fanned himself with a folding fan and stopped in front of the crowd.

Vice Boss Ma's knees grew weak. He suddenly had a little trouble staying on his feet. With a plop, he knelt on the ground in spite of himself.

Please, would he still act the tyrant in front of the number one clan in the Capital? If they wanted to destroy him, they could extinguish the Myriad Snake Gang ten times over in a matter of minutes!

"We are honored by your presence, Lord San. Little Ma begs your pardon for not coming to greet you. I am willing to receive any punishment you see fit, my lord." Vice Boss Ma was already advanced in years, but he shamelessly called himself Little Ma in front of Ji San, and he didn't even feel any shame for it.

Crash! Everyone from the Myriad Snake Gang went down on their knees. These people usually strutted about and committed unspeakable evils, but in the end, they were strong against the weak and weak when facing the strong. Seeing the troops from the Coiling Dragon Clan, they were one and all scared out of their minds. Not a whit of their usual rampant, despotic attitude was left.

Chapter 836: Annihilating the Myriad Snake Gang

Young master Ji San's leisurely smile suddenly froze. "And who are you?"

Vice Boss Ma kowtowed repeatedly, "I am the vice boss of Myriad Snake Gang, Ma Yue."

"Myriad Snake Gang?" Ji San frowned and cast an inquiring glance at Captain Mo. As a first rate young master in Veluriyam Capital, there was almost nothing in Veluriyam Capital that young master Ji San didn't know. That being said, he very seldom frequented the gathering places of wandering cultivators. Naturally, he had heard of Myriad Snake Gang. But there was no reason for someone at his level to pay any more attention to an underground gang. This tiny Myriad Snake Gang might be a first rate power in Azure Sea District, but it was ultimately a small fry in the eyes of something as big as the Coiling Dragon Clan. It was already impressive for Ji San to know of its name.

Captain Mo walked over and explained briefly in a whisper. Young master Ji San nodded slightly and frowned, "Even my Coiling Dragon Clan wouldn't dare extort someone on the streets in broad daylight. The Myriad Snake Gang sure has some guts."

Vice Boss Ma immediately started shaking like a leaf, "It's a misunderstanding. It's all a misunderstanding, young master Ji San."

Young master Ji San nodded, "I won't accuse you wrongly, but it's no use for you to proclaim your innocence. Another person's opinion must be checked to verify this." He looked at Jiang Chen, "How do you think we should deal with this, brother?"

Currently, Jiang Chen was listening to the red haired man's narration of events from beginning to end. After that, he patted the red haired man's shoulder and praised, "Good job, Ole Meng. This is a great accomplishment."

The red haired man was overjoyed to hear this. He was one of the ten sage realm experts from the slaves Jiang Chen had snatched from House Sikou. This red haired man, Meng Redhair, was also the first person to come around to the idea of submitting to Jiang Chen and serving him for the next twenty years.

During this period of time, he had been entrusted with searching for the Ling father and daughter in the Azure Sea District. Shen Trifire's attentiveness in this matter had to be commended as well, or he wouldn't have sent a sky sage realm expert like Meng Redhair to Azure Sea District. And if Meng Redhair hadn't shown himself and defended the Ling father and daughter until Jiang Chen and the others had arrived, they would've been taken away by the Myriad Snake Gang already. The consequences of that were simply too awful to contemplate.

Jiang Chen was secretly shocked at how closely the Ling father and daughter had flirted with danger. At the same time, anger was rapidly sending his blood pressure soaring. Although this wasn't the right time to reveal himself to the Ling father and daughter, Jiang Chen was most familiar with Ling Hui'er. Jiang Chen was very sure that these two 'strangers' were the Ling father and daughter, even though they had disguised themselves a little. It was only natural that Jiang Chen was furious after he had heard of their experience.

He knew very well that there was no way someone as cautious as Ling Su would ever borrow a million saint spirit stones from the Myriad Snake Gang, especially since they had just arrived at Veluriyam Capital. He barely needed a toe's worth of brains to know that the Myriad Snake Gang was purposely

blackmailing the Ling father and daughter. Although Jiang Chen didn't yet know why, it most likely had something to do with Ling Hui'er.

Jiang Chen frowned slightly when he heard young master Ji San's inquiry, "I've heard the ins and outs of this incident, and it is obvious that this Myriad Snake Gang extorted and attempted to murder these two wandering cultivators on the streets of Veluriyam Capital. I wonder what is the punishment meted out in Veluriyam Capital for such crimes?"

Vice Boss Ma's expression changed greatly when he heard this, "It's a misunderstanding, young master Ji San. It really is a misunderstanding! It is my subordinates' fault for getting the wrong person! We are absolutely not doing this on purpose!"

Meng Redhair sneered, "Got the wrong person, you say? What were you saying again when they told you repeatedly that you'd gotten the wrong person?"

Young master Ji San nodded and looked at the Ling father and daughter. "You two are the victims of this affair, so you should be the ones to tell us the whole story. Don't worry, the Coiling Dragon Clan upholds the principles of justice and fairness in Veluriyam Capital. You don't need to worry about being attacked or having vengeance exacted on you by anyone for telling the truth."

Ling Su had suffered a whip lash to the face, and although the ugly wound wasn't fatal, it still drew an involuntary frown to Jiang Chen's brow. To his side, Ling Hui'er sobbed and sniffled as she repeatedly dabbed medicine onto her father's wounds. She was like a wounded deer, looking everywhere and nowhere with panicked eyes. It was obvious that this little girl who had never seen the outside world until recently had truly been spooked this time. Her former naivete was now completely gone.

Ling Su comforted his daughter softly, but wasn't quite sure what to do. A trace of doubt and worry was evident in his eyes. It was obvious that he very much wanted to speak the honest truth, but he was also worried that justice would not be upheld even if he did speak out and make complete enemies out of the Myriad Snake Gang. If the worst case scenario really happened, then the two of them would be utterly done for. Even a strong dragon couldn't repress a local snake, not to mention that they weren't strong dragons to begin with.

Suddenly, Jiang Chen walked over to the Ling father and daughter and patted Ling Su's shoulder, "You don't need to worry about anyone taking revenge against you two." At the same time, he sent a message to Ling Hui'er, "Junior sister Hui'er, it's me, Jiang Chen. Just testify against them all you want. I'll make sure they get the justice they deserve!"

Ling Hui'er's tear-laden eyelashes couldn't stop from blinking furiously when she heard this. She stared at Jiang Chen with a trace of disbelief on her face.

"Calm down, junior sister. Don't let them notice anything amiss," Jiang Chen hastily reminded.

Thankfully, Ling Hui'er, for all her carelessness, wasn't a complete fool. She forcefully swallowed the cry that climbed all the way to her throat and broke into a smile. Her senior brother had come out of nowhere to save her and her father when she was in one of the lowest points of her life. Like a drowning person who suddenly found a most reliable log to cling onto, Ling Hui'er wanted to cling to her senior brother tightly. She swiped fiercely at the tears around her eyes before declaring in a loud voice, "It wasn't a misunderstanding at all. When my father told them that they had gotten the wrong person,

they said that they had done this for decades, long enough that there was no way they would have gotten the wrong person. They even said that we were a fool to talk about the law with them. When my father told them to show him a lending slip, they couldn't show us one either. They said that the Myriad Snake Gang didn't need any proof to do business."

Now that Ling Hui'er knew that the person standing before them was in fact senior brother Jiang Chen, she felt as if she had found a mountain to lean against. Her confidence immediately rose by leaps and bounds. Ling Su also nodded. "These people from the Myriad Snake Gang did not speak reason from the beginning. Their demand for repayment was just an excuse! They were coming after us from the beginning."

The vice boss and the brawny man from before felt like ramming their heads against a wall. They had a feeling that the sky was about to fall on their heads very soon. Unspeakable regret welled up inside their hearts. Even in their wildest dreams they hadn't imagined that the Coiling Dragon Clan would appear to defend two insignificant wandering cultivators. *No one in their right minds would provoke you two if they knew that you were affiliated with the Coiling Dragon Clan!*

But it was obviously too late for regrets now. That red haired man had warned them that the consequences would be bigger than they could bear if this incident were to blow up. At the time, they thought that the red haired man's threats were empty farts. Now that they thought back to it, it had been good advice that'd simply sounded jarring to their ears.

Young master Ji San turned serious and nodded slowly after he listened to everything that had happened, "Amazing, truly amazing! I didn't realize that such a thing could happen in broad daylight in Veluriyam Capital. I must say that you Myriad Snake Gang are tough as nails. You're more awesome than even the Peafowl Guard of Sacred Peafowl Mountain!"

Vice Boss Ma shivered all over the second he heard young master Ji San's words. How could he not know that the destruction of Myriad Snake Gang was right around the corner?

He kowtowed repeatedly, like he was pounding garlic with his head, "Mercy, young master Ji San, mercy! The Myriad Snake Gang is willing to pay any price to apologize to them. We are only begging that you show us mercy!"

Young master Ji San's voice grew chillier, "Mercy? Why didn't you show them mercy earlier? Why didn't you show your victims mercy when you publicly extorted them? Why didn't you think of mercy when you were breaking Veluriyam Capital's rules?"

Every Myriad Snake Gang member turned deathly pale at his words. Not wanting to waste his breath any longer, Ji San waved his hands. "Detain them all. Kill anyone who resists!"

He would've dealt with this matter even if Jiang Chen wasn't here to motivate him. Maybe he could've feigned ignorance if he hadn't seen anything. But inaction was unacceptable now that a crime was laid bare before his own eyes. What was the point of having rules in Veluriyam Capital if he were to do nothing about those who broke them before him? These rotten apples were only going to bring harm to the Capital if he kept them around.

Every Coiling Dragon Clan guard acted at young master Ji San's command. It was true that the Myriad Snake Gang had plenty of men, but who in their right minds would try to resist in this situation? They

would only be arrested if they didn't resist, but they would be killed if they did. Very soon, every Myriad Snake Gang member was trussed up like a pig for roast. But young master Ji San wasn't content to stop here. He ordered, "All forces, march to Myriad Snake Gang's headquarters and seal off the entire Azure Sea District. We will not allow even a single scum of the Myriad Snake Gang to slip through our grasp!"

"Understood!" How long had it been since the last time the Coiling Dragon Clan Guard had bared their fangs? Every one of his soldiers grew spirited and flared murderous auras upon hearing young master Ji San's command.

For the past few years, the Coiling Dragon Clan had kept a low profile in Veluriyam Capital, so much so that the people were one step away from forgetting that they were the number one clan in Veluriyam Capital. But now, the clan had finally found an opportunity to brandish their claws and flex their muscles. They would let everyone in Veluriyam Capital know that the number one clan title was still theirs!

The Myriad Snake Gang had never imagined that a trivial matter like this would bring forth the destruction of their organization. Although someone had managed to get word to them, the Coiling Dragon Guard possessed great mobility. They sealed off the entire Azure Sea District in no time at all.

The Myriad Snake Gang reacted fairly quickly, but they still fell short when compared to the Coiling Dragon Guard. A couple of squads split off to seal off the main exits, while the bulk of the troops headed straight for Myriad Snake Gang's headquarter to destroy this malignant tumor that had plagued the Azure Sea District for more than a hundred years.

This truly was a gang who'd committed countless crimes as many wandering cultivators actually joined the Coiling Dragon Guard on their own accord and carved open a path for the guard. It was obvious that the Myriad Snake Gang's conduct had incited the fury of nearly everyone in the Azure Sea District.

The Myriad Snake Gang was swiftly subdued the moment the Coiling Dragon Guard arrived. They were quite impressive within the district, but in reality they sat between a normal fourth rank sect and a third rank sect in terms of strength. Moreover, a gang like this was far less organized than an actual sect. They also had a higher ratio of riffraff than the usual sects, which was why the Myriad Snake Gang collapsed under the might of the Coiling Dragon Guard mere minutes after battle began. The Myriad Snake Gang's boss was strong, but he was leagues away from the sixth level emperor realm expert Captain Mo. He was taken down with almost no resistance to speak of.

Chapter 837: Reunion

All Myriad Snake Gang's mid management and senior executives were put in locked collars and paraded down the streets.

"The Myriad Snake Gang has committed many evils, so the Coiling Dragon Clan will uphold justice today and put them on a public trial. Our aim is to return a clean, untainted Azure Sea District to everyone. If any one of you have injustices or grudges to tell of, please reveal them now, but without any embellishment."

There were at least one hundred people kneeling in the square when all the big and small ringleaders of the Myriad Snake Gang were accounted for. The boss and elders of the gang were actually all emperor realm experts. Even the normal ringleaders were at sky sage realm at a minimum. One had to say that a

power like this could literally do anything they wanted to the wandering cultivators. However, Jiang Chen didn't think that this Myriad Snake Gang was simply a gang made up of wandering cultivators. If they were, they wouldn't have dared act so arrogantly.

The fact that they had dared do what they did meant that they had a patron behind them. Thankfully, the Ling father and daughter were frightened but safe. Therefore, Jiang Chen didn't plan to go down this particular rabbit hole much further. When the news of Myriad Snake Gang's public hearing spread, almost every wandering cultivator in the Azure Sea District rushed to attend. There were plenty of victims of the Myriad Snake Gang who showed up as well. All kinds of accusations and complaints were thrown around like snowflakes in a blizzard. Only the heavens knew exactly how many sinister secrets this utterly unethical organization possessed, so any one of these witnesses voiced a tremendous number of charges. The total amount of crimes this gang had accrued were almost innumerable.

Six hours had passed since the public hearing started, but the number of accusers had only grown bigger over time. The sight was getting unbearable even for the likes of young master Ji San. He cursed fiercely, "I never imagined that a tiny gang like this could've committed so many crimes. They truly are evil to the core."

Jiang Chen smiled, "Brother Ji, you're a great clan descendant who sits high above the status quo and leads a pampered life, so you couldn't possibly imagine just how cruel the competition at the bottom rung is."

Ji San smiled wryly, "Are you lecturing me, brother?"

Jiang Chen shook his head, "What for? You only need to look at these furious wandering cultivators to know just how hard it is to live amongst the roots of society. Veluriyam Capital is quite fair already compared to many other places. It is only normal that there exists a rotten apple or two wherever you go."

"You don't need to console me, brother," Ji San sighed. "Veluriyam Capital has always prided itself as a city of freedom and justice. If these wandering cultivators can't get the protection they deserve here, then it is our breach of responsibility as the administrators of this city."

Jiang Chen looked to the distance and found that the queue of accusers was practically endless. He couldn't help but smile wryly, "I think we can save the public hearing then, brother Ji. The evidence and statements are more than enough to hang them a hundred times over. Also, if you keep this up, the hearing won't end even if you keep this up for three days."

That wasn't an exaggeration either. From the looks of things, every single person who stood up to provide their statements at the hearing were full of grievances to tell. The tears and snot on these people's faces were as pitiful as one could imagine. If this hearing were to continue like this, they might not be done even in ten days' time.

Ji San waved a hand to get a semblance of quiet before declaring loudly, "Everyone, the evidence and statements we've collected are enough to sentence the Myriad Snake Gang to death a hundred times over. Be at ease, the Coiling Dragon Clan will definitely return justice to you all. We will be imprisoning these evildoers and placing them onto death row for the moment. Once we've reported this to our

superiors and verified the evidence, we will announce a public execution and settle your pains once and for all!”

The Azure Sea District had been terrorized by the Myriad Snake Gang for a very long time, so when an upholder of justice finally showed his face in the form of Ji San, no one was willing to let him go just like that. That being said, they also understood that the Myriad Snake Gang was likely doomed for sure this time since the Coiling Dragon Clan itself had gotten involved in the matter. The Myriad Snake Gang left the Azure Sea District under heavy guard. The wandering cultivators who were watching this scene couldn't help but throw a few glances in the Ling father and daughter's direction. Tongues were wagging spiritedly.

The Myriad Snake Gang has finally been toppled. What a satisfying outcome!”

“I know right? They thought that those two wandering cultivators were easy pickings, but it turns out that they were the exact opposite. The Myriad Snake Gang absolutely deserved what they got. Only the heavens know just how many crimes they've committed, and how many lives have been lost to them.”

“I wonder what's the connection between this father and daughter pair and the Coiling Dragon Clan?”

“That may not necessarily be the case. Perhaps someone reported the Myriad Snake Gang to the Coiling Dragon Clan?”

“Maybe the Coiling Dragon Clan had their eyes on the Myriad Snake Gang for a long time already.”

“Hehe, you guys know nothing at all. The Coiling Dragon Clan has kept a low profile for so many years, and they need an opportunity like this one to prove their might to the world. This Myriad Snake Gang is nothing but the appetizer for bigger things to come.” All these wandering cultivators were brimming with excitement. It was obvious that the elimination of the Myriad Snake Gang was a good news of enormous proportion to all of them. Although not all of them were necessarily a victim of the Myriad Snake Gang, everyone in Azure Sea District knew that the gang wasn't a power they could provoke. Every time the Myriad Snake Gang was brought up, there existed no one who wasn't scared witless by the possibility of being targeted by them. Now that this knife hovering over their heads had finally been taken away, almost all the wandering cultivators felt like celebrating. Meanwhile, those at the center of the affair felt like they were dreaming.

Although Ling Hui'er tried her best to control her excitement after Jiang Chen's reminder, it was only by the barest of margins that it didn't spill over into her face. She was just so very happy. They had been drifting here and there for the past few days and experienced countless hardships before they had finally made it to Veluriyam Capital. The few days they'd spent after arriving were especially difficult where even finding an affordable inn had become serious business. They were practically on their last ropes. And now, their hardships had finally come to an end in the form of senior brother Jiang Chen.

His existence was literally like that of a hero of legends. He had appeared like a god to save her and her father when she needed him the most. This feeling was just like the time Jiang Chen had cured her father's sickness. His actions were like a battering ram that continually dealt a massive impact to her heart. When Jiang Chen passed by Taiyuan Tower, he said, “Brother Ji, I shall be parting ways with you here.”

“No problem. A great battle is right upon you, so be ready, brother!” Ji San refrained from inviting Jiang Chen over this time. He knew that Jiang Chen was about to butt heads with Pillfire City’s pill dao expert very soon. This battle was one of the most important battles in the history of Veluriyam Capital. It was a battle that happened but once in a millenium. It was so important that young master Ji San dared not affect Jiang Chen in any way for fear that he would disrupt his mental state.

Jiang Chen nodded slightly at Ling Hui’er, and Ling Hui’er pulled her father by the arm towards Taiyuan Tower’s entrance. They were welcomed into the store by Taiyuan Tower’s attendants. Ling Su still had no idea about Jiang Chen’s true identity at the moment. Therefore, he was a little anxious and worried by the situation at hand. He wasn’t sure whether to be pleased or worried at the excitement on his daughter’s face. He was afraid that they’d simply jumped out of the frying pan into the fire. But there was nothing he could do now except to take it one step at a time. These people were obviously a hundred times stronger than the Myriad Snake Gang.

If the Myriad Snake Gang was at a level where he could only put on a tiny bit of resistance, then these people were so powerful that he didn’t even have the right to resist. After they entered Taiyuan Tower, Jiang Chen spoke to Meng Redhair, “Ole Meng, you did very well today. I’ll decrease your period of servitude by ten years and give you an extra reward later.”

But Meng Redhair wasn’t overjoyed by this. In fact, he responded with a gloomy expression, “But young master, I don’t want to decrease my period of servitude. In fact, why don’t you add ten years instead?”

Jiang Chen was caught off guard, “Huh? But I thought you guys were dissatisfied when I set it at twenty years?”

Meng Redhair said hastily, “That’s them, not me. I thought from the beginning that you were an extraordinary person, and I sincerely wanted to join you, young master. I’m a wandering cultivator with no one to rely on anyway, and a person who treats his subordinates as well as you is almost impossible to find. Forget twenty years of servitude, I can spend an entire lifetime here and still be content!”

Jiang Chen smiled wryly as he was momentarily lost for words. Meng Redhair spoke excitedly, “It’s a promise then, young master! Please don’t decrease my time here. I only want increases.”

Jiang Chen gave him a smile after he realized that Meng Redhair really did want to stay here. He immediately nodded, “Of course I welcome you to stay, Ole Meng. Don’t worry, why would I chase you out if you truly wish to stay here? Keep up the good work. Taiyuan Tower’s future definitely isn’t going to stop here.”

Ole Meng nodded repeatedly, “Yes, yes, I knew that from the beginning. Young master is no small fish in a pond, and it is only a matter of time before you soar to new heights!”

“Mm. Go get some rest. I’ll be talking with them for a little while.” Jiang Chen beckoned the Ling father and daughter over and walked inside. Shen Trifire and a few other Regal Pill Palace sect members also came over. However, none of the two sides recognized each other yet because they’d all disguised their appearances. Jiang Chen arrived at a private room and made sure that there were no outsiders present before he finally smiled. “Junior sister Hui’er, Uncle Ling, you’ve finally shown up. I was quite worried about you two lately.”

Ling Hui'er's eyes suddenly reddened, and the next thing she did was incredibly shocking. She jumped straight into Jiang Chen's arms, broke into a loud cry, and punched his chest repeatedly. "Senior brother Jiang, you have no idea how scared Hui'er was just now! We tried to find you so many times in Veluriyam Capital, but we just couldn't, and our spirit stones were about to run out. We were so close to sleeping on the streets and we had no idea what to do..."

Jiang Chen realized that she must have suffered quite a lot of hardships along the way. Their encounter with the Myriad Snake Gang had especially taught her a good lesson. Ling Su looked astonished when he heard her words, "Ne... Nephew Jiang?"

Jiang Chen patted Ling Hui'er's back softly while casting a slightly apologetic glance at Ling Su. "I'm really sorry, Uncle Ling. I wasn't able to find you even though I looked around a lot. I'm sorry for the troubles you've gone through."

"It really is you?" Even a calm person like Ling Su couldn't help but be overwhelmed by joy at this moment.

"It's me," Jiang Chen pointed at Shen Trifire and the others. "They're all members of Regal Pill Palace. Shen Trifire also played a big role in saving you two."

"Senior brother Trifire?" Ling Hui'er's big eyes looked all over Shen Trifire. "Are you really senior brother Shen?"

Shen Trifire took off his mask and smiled wryly, "It is your shameful senior brother, junior sister Ling. If it wasn't for senior brother Jiang, every one of us would've been sold off to who knows where already. This day of reunion would not have happened if that had happened."

Everyone else was also extremely excited to see Ling Hui'er once more. This was the first other sect member they'd been able to meet except Jiang Chen after the destruction of the Regal Pill Palace. They were overjoyed even at this simple reunion.

Chapter 838: The Gathering of Pill Dao Heavyweights

It was natural that a reunion between peers would result in exceptional excitement from everyone. Experiencing the destruction of their sect together had drawn everyone much closer together. They had been competitors before, but now they huddled together for warmth. They were all vagabonds, and the feeling of meeting old acquaintances in a foreign place was indescribable.

Ling Hui'er listened to Shen Trifire's retelling of Jiang Chen's exploits with much gusto. The more she asked and the more answers she was given the happier she became. Though Ling Su had stayed quiet during the recounting of the tale, his heart was astonished by the news. For Jiang Chen to be capable of achieving such results in the short time that he'd been here at Veluriyam Capital...

Ling Su had been saved by Jiang Chen before, but he'd only awakened after Jiang Chen and Ling Bi'er had departed from Regal Pill Palace for the Myriad Grand Ceremony. Thus, his previous impression of Jiang Chen wasn't that strong. He only knew that the youth was his one-time savior. They'd met once more at Tai-ah City, but that instance had been brief as well. They parted ways after a few scant moments of conversation, agreeing to meet up again at Veluriyam Capital. Ling Su had always based his impression of Jiang Chen off of Ling Hui'er's retelling of events.

Because of the girl's admiration for Jiang Chen, her words constantly sounded overexaggerated. Jiang Chen was portrayed as a prodigious genius without equal. From Ling Su's perspective, his daughter had likely described him as such because Jiang Chen was the object of her affections. It was common for girls in love to embellish the exploits of their beloved. Though Ling Su was grateful for Jiang Chen's help, he didn't raise the youth up on a pedestal simply because of what his daughter had said. It was more accurate, in his opinion, to guesstimate Jiang Chen's abilities to be at around half that level.

The brief gathering with Jiang Chen hadn't helped much in terms of further understanding the young man, either. He later heard some rumors that Jiang Chen had eliminated an entire group from the Eternal Celestial Capital, headed by Gong Wuji. Ling Su dared not inquire too much about the rumors, however, and found it difficult to believe them entirely. Only now, after Shen Trifire had recounted recent events, did he understand the full extent of Jiang Chen's remarkable accomplishments. His daughter hadn't exaggerated at all—in fact, from the sound of it, she'd been fairly conservative. After all, Ling Hui'er had no way of knowing about anything that had happened at Veluriyam. She was only familiar with Jiang Chen's exploits at Regal Pill Palace. How could they compare to the recent happenings here in the capital? She was someone who blindly worshipped Jiang Chen. She never found anything he did too surprising, regardless of how impossible it might seem in the eyes of others.

However, Ling Su didn't possess that element of pure admiration or girlishness, and the things that Jiang Chen had done shocked him to an extraordinary degree. That a youth from the Myriad Domain could do such great things in Veluriyam Capital, the heartland of the Upper Eight Regions... And moreover, he had Emperor Peafowl as his backer. It sounded legendary. Shen Trifire also wasn't the type of person to boast for the sake of boasting.

Ling Su was both surprised and overjoyed. The surprise was from learning Jiang Chen was far more prodigious than he had previously expected, and the joy was from being able to find a place to stay at Veluriyam Capital after meeting him again. He was doing quite well here—even the heir of the Coiling Dragon Clan called him brother.

"Uncle Ling, you and your daughter have wandered for so long. Why don't you stay at Taiyuan Tower for now? I'll have Trifire help you settle down... and of course, your wounds need to be treated."

Flesh wounds like his weren't difficult to treat. Ling Hui'er latched onto Jiang Chen's arm and refused to let go. "Senior brother, tell me more about Veluriyam Capital..." She shook his arm relentlessly.

Jiang Chen smiled wryly. "Trifire's gotten to everything already. What else do you want to know?"

"Anything is fine." She'd always been an adorably simple girl, one who held little regard for trivial details. The fact that she continued shaking Jiang Chen's arm, to the point that he was put in close proximity to her ample chest, went by completely unnoticed.

Ling Su cracked a similarly wry smile internally upon seeing his daughter's closeness to the youth. As the saying went, it was indeed hard to keep a matured woman at home. Jiang Chen wasn't the type of lech who couldn't think straight after seeing a woman, however. "We can talk more some other time, when there's a better opportunity for discourse." he smiled.

"Junior sister, senior brother Jiang Chen has a pill battle in two days. It's quite important. You should let him make the necessary preparations for it," Shen Trifire exhorted.

Ling Su joined in on the reproach, “Hui’er, don’t be rude. Senior brother Jiang is very busy. He doesn’t have the time to waste with you.”

“Okay, okay, fine.” Ling Hui’er pursed her lips. She was only slightly capricious, not a child who didn’t know good from bad. Though a little reluctant, she let go of Jiang Chen’s arm.

“Senior brother, you have to tell me more stories after the battle—that’s a promise. I heard that you really ruined those bad guys from the Eternal Celestial Capital.”

Jiang Chen furrowed his brow upon hearing the Eternal Celestial Capital’s name. “Can that really be called ruining the Eternal Celestial Capital? It’s not even enough to pay off the interest they owe us for destroying our sect.”

All of Regal Pill Palace’s disciples nodded at the mention of the sect’s fall, their expressions tragic. Finding the Ling father and daughter duo had relieved Jiang Chen of one of his worries. Though he didn’t need to prepare for the battle over the Longevity Pill, he didn’t want to underestimate his opponent either. He spent the next two days in a secret room, wholly focused on researching pills and organizing his thoughts. The battle was extremely important. Losing was not an option.

When the time for the battle came, Sacred Peafowl Mountain opened its gates to welcome pill dao heavyweights from all over the world. They had been invited to spectate the battle here. Almost everyone who’d made a name for themselves in the Upper Eight Regions had an invitation from either party. The battle concerned not only ownership of the Longevity Pill, but a larger direction for the Upper Eight Regions’ pill scene as well.

If Pillfire City won, the right to the Longevity Pill would not be their only spoil—Veluriyam Capital’s recent momentum in the pill world would be crushed instantly. On the flip side, if Veluriyam Capital won, their right to the Longevity Pill would no longer be questioned. Furthermore, it would be a modest challenge to Pillfire City’s dominance in the pill world. Thus, there was more at stake to this pill battle than met the eye. n.-o-.v-.E.-ℓ(.B-/1-)n

The invited guests had largely neutral stances in the conflict. It made no difference to these heavyweights whether Veluriyam or Pillfire won. They were only here to spectate and observe—to get a glimpse of how amazing the Longevity Pill actually was. It was the catalyst for this confrontation between the two great factions of the Upper Eight Regions, one southern and one northern. Of course, the guests served dually as referees as well.

The battle could not simply be decided by word of mouth. There had to be pill dao experts observing the outcome. In order to settle the matter once and for all, a significant crowd of masters had to attend. That was the only way to ensure that future disputes would not occur. On a rational level, none of the observers thought that Veluriyam Capital had the ability to challenge Pillfire City when it came to pills.

On an emotional level, however, some hoped that the attempt would have some effect. Pillfire City’s monopoly over the pill industry was too severe. For the human domain, such a dominant position was illogical on a larger scale. Pillfire City received far too many benefits from their throne. The scene needed to be shaken up. Only, could Veluriyam bring that into effect? That was the biggest question that had arisen in everyone’s hearts.

Apparently their representative was not one of the long-established pill kings from Sacred Peafowl Mountain, but rather a newly-minted pill king. That raised even more questions. A fresh pill king, and apparently a youth too... did such a youngster really have the strength to challenge Pillfire City? Everyone's hearts were filled with many doubts.

Whether it was pill refining or martial dao, youthfulness had no benefit aside from granting natural vigor. Pill dao especially was a discipline that called for foundational work, aggregated knowledge, and accumulated experience. No matter how much of a genius a pill king was, it was unlikely for him to even match an average peer who was well-read, much less a top-rank master from Pillfire City.

There was a Peafowl Stage upon Sacred Peafowl Mountain. Pill dao heavyweights from all around the Upper Eight Regions all had seats around it. All of the greats who'd been invited were either pillars of their sect or true masters of their generation. Each individual was at least halfway to pill emperor, a step above ninth-level pill kings. Any one of them would be able to cause ripples across the Upper Eight Regions on their own. They were the greatest amongst the countless pill experts of the human domain, the most radiant stars in the night sky.

There were thirty-some-odd Pillcraft Scrolls in the human domain. Every thousand years, a new scroll was drafted, recording a hundred people within its text. The people present today all had their names in the most recent edition of the scroll. There were thirty-two in total, all of them prominent and well-known. They had gathered out of respect for both Veluriyam Capital and Pillfire City. But most importantly, the battle itself was attractive to them.

All of the guests had arrived by now.

"I hear that Pillfire City has sent the brightest star of their younger generation, Pill King Ji Lang."

"Pill King Ji Lang, eh? Rumor has it that he's already received the full tutelage of Emperor Pillzenith. It looks like Pillfire City is attaching a considerable amount of importance to this fight."

"I'm not surprised that they sent him. The bigger surprise is that Veluriyam Capital is sending a nameless pill king... Pill King Zhen, was it? I've never even heard of him before."

"What does Veluriyam Capital have up their sleeves this time?"

"They're acting too mysterious for me to tell, that's for sure. Apparently, this Pill King Zhen hasn't been at the capital for long, but he's already stirred things up several times... and he's also a disciple of the Deviant Pill Faction, I think?"

"The Deviant Pill Faction? Unorthodox scoundrels, nothing more."

"You can't just say something like that. I know the Deviant Pill Faction doesn't have any outstanding successors in the public eye right now, but they have their place in the pill world."

The Deviant Pill Faction was always a topic of hot debate when it was brought up.

"I say, do you guys mind not squabbling? That's not the main focus of today."

"Exactly. It doesn't matter what faction he's from, sending out a young pill king like that... is Veluriyam Capital trying to destroy its own reputation?"

“Perhaps they’re just utterly giving up. They must have heard about their opponent being Pill King Ji Lang, and thought it was a guaranteed loss. They may as well send a young pill king to cut things short, right?”

“Hah, that’d be a bore. If that really were the case, why would Veluriyam Capital make an announcement to begin with? So that just about anyone could challenge them for the pill at Sacred Peafowl Mountain in three months? That doesn’t sound like they’ve given up.”

“Maybe they didn’t think Pillfire City would swoop in in the first place?” There was widespread discussion before the start of the battle. The gathered parties had many guesses about the circumstances.

Chapter 839: A Hot Reception

"Look, they’re coming out!" Someone with keen eyes shouted in the middle of the crowd, putting an end to the heated discussion that was taking place. Their collective gazes moved to the front.

At the end of the long hallway, the four monarchs led the way. Emperor Peafowl and a youth dressed like a pill king trailed behind them. Further behind was a group of other pill kings, all dressed in Sacred Peafowl Mountain’s pill king uniforms. Only the strongest had been chosen to be in the entourage. Simultaneously on the other side of the corridor, Pillfire City’s representatives made their entry. Emperor Pillzenith was at the head of the pack, followed by a group of his elite guard. A scholarly, middle-aged man was the object of their protection.

“It really is Pill King Ji Lang! Pillfire City is certainly attaching a great deal of importance to this occasion.”

“Pill King Ji Lang is a half-step pill emperor. The average ninth-level pill king has no right to even think of seeking him as their master. Tsk tsk, Pillfire must really want to win.”

“If Pillfire City wants something, it’s hard to say if anyone can deny them. That’s definitely the case when it comes to anything pill related, anyway.”

“Look at Veluriyam’s side. The young man who’s walking with Emperor Peafowl... is that the so-called Pill King Zhen?”

“That should be him. He’s calm enough—what a surprise.”

“How’s that surprising? He’s probably aware that he’s just there for show. He’s going to lose anyway... why should he feel pressured?”

“That sounds about right. I don’t think Veluriyam Capital expects him to win either—he’s so young. No pressure accompanies being the sideshow and learning from his superiors.”

“I’m not so sure about that. Even if he’s not intent on being the star of this event, it’s still difficult to maintain one’s composure. I think that Veluriyam’s Pill King Zhen isn’t as simple as everyone thinks.”

“You have a point, my friend. Someone who can rise up in such a short amount of time in Veluriyam must be a rather remarkable individual. Just look at his mental composure... I doubt this Pill King Zhen will be content with being the sideshow.” Everyone had their own point of view, but the sounds of discussion once again ceased when the two groups approached one another.

“Brother Pillzenith, we have known each other for several millennia, but this is the first time that we’ve had the fortune to see our juniors compete in our stead.” Emperor Peafowl laughed sonorously. As the master of Sacred Peafowl Mountain, Emperor Peafowl was playing the role of a sufficiently good host. He wasn’t being overbearingly aggressive at all.

Emperor Pillzenith faintly smiled. “Brother Peafowl, it is indeed true that we can take a break this time, but I’m not so sure about the compete part.”

“Oh?” Peafowl’s smile was undiminished, even a little inquisitive.

“If I may, I don’t think that the youth you’ve delegated has the qualifications to duel Pill King Ji Lang. They’re not in the same weight class.” Pillzenith’s voice exuded arrogance. His overwhelmingly gate-crashing tone made everyone from Sacred Peafowl Mountain frown. Emperor Peafowl’s strict ruling came through, however, and no one forgot themselves in spite of their anger.

Emperor Peafowl curved his lips, unaffected by the provocation. “Brother Pillzenith, we cannot jump to conclusions too quickly.” he smiled serenely.

“I’m not one to make hasty conclusions in most cases, but when it comes to pills... there’s no reason for us Pillfire City people to be humble, is there?”

Peafowl grinned, “Then, Brother Pillzenith, you haven’t considered what you’ll do if your side loses?”

“Lose?” Emperor Pillzenith laughed. “Brother Peafowl, do you think that Veluriyam Capital has even the slightest chance of victory?”

“The world is transient and ever-changing.” Emperor Peafowl’s eyes gleamed with a curious mysterious quality. “I, at the very least, will refrain from making comments about things that have yet to be decided.”

“Words alone will prove nothing.” Emperor Pillzenith chuckled derisively. “If Veluriyam Capital is so confident, then let everyone here be witness. Let’s see how much substance there is behind your poise.”

“Ji Lang, some youngsters don’t know their place in the world. A bit of appropriate education isn’t bad.” Pillzenith tossed Jiang Chen a sidelong glance, a hint of contempt creeping into the corner of his mouth.

Ji Lang inclined his head in a slight smile. “I understand, master.”

Jiang Chen viewed Pillfire City’s actions with some disdain. He’d seen many powerful factions in his previous life, with no shortage of pretentious ones amongst them. The ones who were the most pretentious generally suffered the greatest losses. Educate me? He couldn’t help but sneer. There had barely been anyone who could teach Jiang Chen anything regarding pills in his previous life within the heavenly planes, much less here on the Divine Abyss Continent.

Pill King Ji Lang appeared to be stronger than all the other pill kings he’d previously seen, stronger than even all of the top pill kings from Sacred Peafowl Mountain. But so what? Someone like that wanted to educate a known master of the heavenly planes? What a joke!

Ji Lang’s gaze was as deep as the starry sky, and anyone who locked eyes with him felt his incredible acumen. He looked at Jiang Chen thoughtfully before making a gesture. “Please, go ahead.”

“The host should favor the guest. After you,” Jiang Chen replied quietly.

Ji Lang paused a moment. He’d expected that Sacred Peafowl Mountain’s young pill king was only here to put on a show. There was no way that the youth’s ability could precede his reputation. He had not expected to be wrong about this aspect. The young pill king didn’t seem to be here on half-hearted measure. Even so, Ji Lang’s heart was tranquil. No external events could alter his confidence. At the Pillfire City of the present, there was no one besides Emperor Pillzenith himself who could make him feel nervous.

The contestants settled into their respective competition areas. Emperor Peafowl and his men returned to Veluriyam’s staging area. The competition was a major event for the city, as the seven emperors were all present, Emperor Shura included. Numerous clan lords sat beside them in the gathering. The Wei father and son duo were normally ineligible to attend such occasions, but they had been granted special permission because of Jiang Chen’s status as House Wei’s guest pill king. The expressions of the people from Veluriyam Capital were mixed as they saw Emperor Peafowl walk towards their area. Some were confused and inquisitive, others were expectant, and still others were indifferent, as if they didn’t care who would win or lose.

“Daoist Peafowl, is this Pill King Zhen reliable?” The one who spoke was a bald, elderly man. His robes were plain and unadorned, appearing uncommonly noble. He was nominally the second-ranked person in Veluriyam, Emperor Petalpluck. Though the elderly man possessed a great deal of seniority, he also had little ambition and primarily treated others with kindness. Though he was allegedly second only to Peafowl, his actual authority and command were inferior to Emperor Shura’s. However, because of his superior seniority, he had always been ranked second behind Peafowl. His special position allowed him to ask such questions without appearing too forward.

Emperor Petalpluck’s inquisitive look only made Emperor Peafowl smile. “If he wasn’t reliable, us sending out another pill king would still elicit the same result.”

It wasn’t a direct answer, but it showcased Emperor Peafowl’s attitude. Given his response, there was no room for inappropriate comments from the other emperors. Further questions would indicate that they questioned Emperor Peafowl’s decision-making ability. Emperor Shura was silent all this time, his expression diffident. It was as if his heart had left his body. As to what he was exactly thinking, who knew? Emperor Peafowl certainly didn’t pay him much mind, and sat down in his assigned spot. There was no trace of nervousness in his demeanor.

When everyone was seated, the pill kings from all over the world stood up and introduced themselves. Any one of these pill dao experts were the cream of the crop in the human domain. Being half-step pill emperors, they possessed extremely high statuses and prestigious reputations.

“We are here on both parties’ invitations, to observe this pill battle. You’ve come to an agreement that the winner of this battle is the true owner of the Longevity Pill, and this will settle that matter once and for all. The ownership will be exclusive, of course, and attempts to refine the pill by any other faction will be seen as copyright infringement and be subject to prosecution, including the loser of today’s battle. Do both sides agree to this?”

Emperor Pillzenith boomed with laughter. "That is the way it should be! History is written by the victors. Losers do not deserve the Longevity Pill! Of course it should be exclusive to the winner. Brother Peafowl, what do you think?"

Emperor Peafowl was the picture of placidity. "I have no objections. However, brother Pillzenith, I'd like to ask you once again... is the Longevity Pill really related to Pillfire City?"

Emperor Pillzenith was expressionless. "Asking this now is merely a dispute of words. Is there any meaning in that?"

"I suppose not, but I have no doubt that the pill will revert to its true owner in the end. That is all I wanted to say. Evil shall never prevail." Emperor Peafowl laughed.

"Well said. I could say the same to you." Emperor Pillzenith responded, his voice a bit wooden.

"Alright, since there is no objection from either side, shall we discuss what exactly the competition for the Longevity Pill should consist of? You should collectively discuss the subject. As the referees, we will not give you any suggestions.. We're responsible for only the judging portion." The jury of referees made a second announcement.

"Brother Pillzenith, how do you propose we compete?" Emperor Peafowl smiled softly.

"Since the Longevity Pill is at stake, of course we're refining it." Emperor Pillzenith wanted to get straight to the point.

Emperor Peafowl glanced at Jiang Chen. Having stayed silent until now, Jiang Chen suddenly smiled. "If we're betting on just refining the Longevity Pill, that is pure blasphemy against this miraculous pill. Sacred Peafowl Mountain has researched the pill for several hundred years, and there are many intricacies to the pill. Limiting this competition to only refining it... that puts a damper on things."

Emperor Pillzenith frowned at his words. "It's a battle between pill kings. If you're not betting on refining the pill, what are you betting on instead? How absurd!"

Jiang Chen's expression was laid-back, his eyes focused on Pill King Ji Lang. "You're here on Pillfire City's behalf. If the Longevity Pill really belongs to you, surely you're not scared of the contents of this competition?"

"What do you propose?" Ji Lang was impassive.

"It's common for pill battles to have three rounds in order to decide the victor. I have three ways here for us to compete. If you're not up for it, then we'll go with your method and simply refine the pill. If that really is the case, though, I wonder how guilty Pillfire City's conscience truly is. I doubt you obtained the pill's recipe from a legitimate source."

It was a crude application of reverse psychology, but oftentimes even crude methodologies yielded unexpected results. Not accepting the bet could be construed as proof of guilt. That was a hard-hitting thought.

Chapter 840: Jiang Chen's Ploy

Jiang Chen had plotted out everything before arriving. The Longevity Pill was a most wondrous pill, and the pill recipe Jiang Chen had produced back then was the most common one. In reality, there were a total of eight ways to make the Longevity Pill. The recipe he used during the Mt. Rippling Mirage Pill Battles was just one of the many pill recipes that existed, and he'd used it only because the ingredients he had been provided coincided with the ones in that particular recipe.

It definitely wasn't the only pill recipe that could create the Longevity Pill. Moreover, many of its ingredients could be replaced. He hadn't told even his Regal Pill Palace sect mates about this. After all, this particular version of the Longevity Pill was difficult enough to digest already. He doubted that a sect at the Regal Pill Palace's level could digest the rest of the pill recipes even if he were to reveal them.

And it was the truth. During the two years Jiang Chen had spent trapped in the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's forbidden area, the Regal Pill Palace had failed to refine even one Longevity Pill. Their strongest pill dao expert, Elder Yun Nie, hadn't been able to succeed in refining it. Jiang Chen aside, the only person in the entire Regal Pill Palace who had the potential to refine the Longevity Pill was Mu Gaoqi. Unfortunately, the Regal Pill Palace had been destroyed before Mu Gaoqi had a chance to fully develop.

Pill King Ji Lang seemed to notice something, and his deep eyes landed on Jiang Chen with an examining gaze. It was obvious that he was trying to figure out what kind of hidden meaning existed behind Jiang Chen's suggestion. Jiang Chen's smile was calm but unfathomable. Pill King Ji Lang couldn't glean anything from Jiang Chen no matter how he tried. After a pregnant pause, Jiang Chen suddenly smiled, "I see that you've been silent for a long time. Have you lost your will already?"

If you won't speak, then I'll force you to speak. If you won't answer me, then it only means that you're lacking confidence. It was an unremarkable psychological attack, but it was also very effective. Pill King Ji Lang was quick to respond, although his voice sounded as indifferent as ever, "There is nothing more convincing than the quality of the pill in pill dao. Whoever refines the highest quality Longevity Pill will be acknowledged as the true creator of the Longevity Pill. Don't you think that everything else is but senseless effort that strays from the right path?"

The moment he said this, the people of Pillfire City immediately echoed him in agreement.

Jiang Chen slapped his forehead softly before smiling a little exaggeratedly, "I heard that you were the pill master with the greatest pill dao talent. Even second only to Emperor Pillzenith in Pillfire City? I can't help but feel the rumors to be exaggerated now that I've heard you speak."

He was purposely trying to infuriate Ji Lang, and his attempt didn't escape Ji Lang's notice. The latter smiled faintly, "Don't you feel embarrassed using such substandard psychological attacks?"

Jiang Chen smiled coldly in disdain, "Psychological attack? You're trying to read too deep into things. You aren't worthy of my psychological attacks with just your level of pill dao. You may think that I'm boasting, so let me show you right now just how foolish your earlier words are."

Jiang Chen turned to face the people around him, cupping his fist in greeting, "As everyone already knows, the quality of a pill is but one part of a whole equation. Whether or not a pill can be passed down in time depends not on its quality alone. First, we must consider if it is cost effective. Next, we must check if its ingredients are easy to gather. We also have to consider its compatibility with other

pills and even more importantly, its effectiveness... Therefore, the quality of a pill is but one part of pill dao.

“Take the Longevity Pill for example. If you and I were to compete in pill refining right here, there are many objective factors that may affect the quality of a Longevity Pill in this contest. For example, the level of a pill cauldron and level of pill fire. This gentleman has requested a duel in pill refining. I do not disagree with that desire. However, I have a suggestion that I would like all present judges to listen to.”

“Tell us.” These judges were all secretly surprised when they heard Jiang Chen’s speech. It really seemed like this young pill king wasn’t here for show. Judging from his aggressiveness, it was obvious that he had come prepared.

On the other hand, that Pill King Ji Lang had chosen to respond with silence when Veluriyam Capital’s side brought up the suggestion. This didn’t necessarily mean that Pill King Ji Lang was afraid, but it did feel like Pillfire City had lost a minor mental skirmish even though he’d retained his grace.

After Jiang Chen had the judges’ permission, he smiled confidently, “Since this is a duel to refine the Longevity Pill, I have a personal suggestion to make on the basis of fairness. I suggest that both pill masters use the most common pill cauldron and pill fire. Only by reducing all objective factors to a minimum will we be able to test a pill master’s true skill. Otherwise, victory through the use of an overpowered pill cauldron or overpowered pill fire can only be considered as a contest of equipment quality, and not true skill. If one side wins, it would be an unfair victory. If one side loses, they can hardly be appeased. You are all leaders of the pill dao industry. I am sure that you all can understand the logic behind my shallow suggestion.”

All of the judges looked to be in agreement as they discussed amongst each other. No matter how badly they thought of the Veluriyam Capital pill king’s chances, it didn’t change the fact that his suggestion made a lot of sense. A battle to decide the right to a pill recipe was a battle of skill. It was natural that whoever had the higher refinement skill when it came to refining the Longevity Pill had a higher chance of being the Longevity Pill’s true master. Ultimately, a fake could never compare to the original in terms of skill.

Moreover, these leaders of pill dao all possessed great understanding of pill dao. Jiang Chen’s words seemed to be in line with returning everything to one’s roots, which resonated with all of them. At their level, pill dao was less of a study, and more of a discourse. Sometimes, all they needed was pure skill and nothing else to refine a pill. No one could deny that outstanding equipment made life better for every pill king, but the pill refining process and the enjoyment one derived at a technical level were absolutely necessary.

“Pill King Pillzenith, Pill King Zhen’s suggestion sounds extremely logical. You are a central pillar of pill dao as well, so may I request your faction’s opinion on this?”

“Yes, if the right to the Longevity Pill is in question, then we should tackle this from a technical perspective. A victory that is won through equipment does feel a little fishy.”

“It’s bad to grow reliant on equipment in the first place. I support the suggestion to use a common pill cauldron and a common pill fire. True essence shines from normality.” A large majority of the judges supported Jiang Chen’s suggestion. n.-0/-∇.-e--I((B(-l.-n

There was no doubt that Jiang Chen's surprise move had thrown Emperor Pillzenith's plans quite into disarray. Pill King Ji Lang had been researching the Longevity Pill's pill recipe ever since they'd acquired it from the Eternal Celestial Capital. As a result, his skill in refining the Longevity Pill had improved massively. That was why he had suggested a duel to refine the Longevity Pill straight away. He was confident that he had a 99% chance of victory if the duel was simply based on who could refine the better Longevity Pill. After all, his skills had improved leaps and bounds after a long period of training. If he could refine the Longevity Pill using top quality equipment, then it was absolutely not a problem to refine a few pills of upper rank quality.

But how could Jiang Chen not notice their little schemes? As the plagiarizers, their confidence was ultimately inferior to Jiang Chen, who was the original. Words couldn't describe how familiar he was with the Longevity Pill in either lifetime. He'd destroyed his opponent's plans in one careless move.

At this point, a refusal from Pill King Ji Lang would only make him look guilty. But if he were to respond to the call and enter the duel with only a normal pill cauldron and pill fire, he had no doubt that this duel would become a challenge. After all, he had never refined the Longevity Pill under such circumstances. It was a conundrum with only one correct answer. Ji Lang knew that Pillfire City would lose its face completely if he refused to meet Jiang Chen's suggestion. Therefore, after making brief eye contact with Emperor Pillzenith, Pill King Ji Lang smiled, "In that case, we agree to his suggestion."

Jiang Chen smiled inwardly when he heard Ji Lang's reply. He knew that he had thrown Ji Lang off balance already.

"This is just the first round. Do you dare to meet us in a round of three?" Jiang Chen had no intention of letting things go down without a bang. He already planned to drag his opponent underwater and defeat them soundly, so he might as well make sure that they lose every bit of face they could muster. Fancy my Longevity Pill, you say? Then you must be prepared to face the consequences of your greed.

Ji Lang frowned, "Three rounds? What other suggestions do you have?"

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "I already told you that the Longevity Pill is Sacred Peafowl Mountain's original creation. We spent hundreds of years in research and learned many things in the process. What I'm really afraid of is that you're too cowardly to accept my challenge, assuming that you even knew that such challenges existed in the first place."

A bad premonition suddenly flashed past Ji Lang's mind, but he immediately chased out stray thoughts with his consciousness. Judging from Sacred Peafowl Mountain's aggressiveness, they probably had mastered the Longevity Pill's recipe. Moreover, there was a high likelihood that Sacred Pill Mountain's recipe had come from a Regal Pill Palace captive. This also meant that the source of both their pill recipes was ultimately the same. They both came from the Regal Pill Palace.

As for their opponent's claim that Sacred Peafowl Mountain had studied the Longevity Pill for several hundred years, Ji Lang didn't believe it in the slightest. Emperor Pillzenith and the entire Pillfire City faction shared the same sentiment. It was impossible for Sacred Peafowl Mountain to keep that sort of information under wraps for several hundred years. If both sides obtained the Longevity Pill from the same source, then what is there to be worried about?

They both had the same pill recipe, but could Veluriyam Capital really master the Longevity Pill better than Pillfire City? Ji Lang didn't think that Sacred Peafowl Mountain's pill king had any right to be placed on par with him. This kid had run his mouth in grand fashion, muddied the waters and fired off one psychological attack after another, causing Ji Lang to feel a little stumped for words. But now that he had calmed himself down, Ji Lang couldn't help but wonder if this kid was simply bluffing him. Is he trying to cheat me out of a win when he's actually all bark and no bite?

The more Ji Lang thought, the likelier he thought that to be Jiang Chen's plan. They both had their recipe from the same source, so what could Veluriyam Capital possibly do that Pillfire City hadn't already figured out? Veluriyam Capital must know that their chances of victory aren't high, which is why they're throwing so many red herrings in an attempt to mislead and bait me into a trap. They must be trying to instill fear and doubt in my mind to create an opening.

Ji Lang didn't feel that his opponent could throw anything at him that he hadn't already seen. In the end, everything he'd said, including the suggestion of three rounds, was to fool everyone into thinking that he, Ji Lang, was afraid to meet Jiang Chen in a pill battle. To put it bluntly, this kid was double bluffing.

I can't be fooled by this kid and weaken Pillfire City's momentum. Let us what he has to say first and decide later. If he wants to fight three rounds, then three rounds it shall be. If the subject doesn't stray from the Longevity Pill, then what do I have to fear even if we go a hundred rounds? When he thought up to this point, Ji Lang regained his usual cool and smiled coolly, "Three rounds it is then. Pillfire City is the original creator of the Longevity Pill. The outcome of your shameful defeat won't change even if we were to duel three hundred rounds."

Jiang Chen's every move was to lead Ji Lang into thinking that he was bluffing. So when Ji Lang fell for his trap just as he imagined he would, cheer bloomed in his heart as he smiled leisurely. "Original creator, he says. Shameful defeat, he says. I seriously wonder where Pillfire City finds its courage to be able to say such words. Don't you feel embarrassed at all?" Jiang Chen extended his second finger, "In that case, let us compete and see who can refine the Longevity Pill using different ingredients. What do you say?"

The crowd broke into an uproar the second those words hit their ears. Ji Lang especially felt a shiver crawl down his back as his pupils violently contracted. His eyes narrowed as he glared straight at Jiang Chen.