

Three Realms 861

Chapter 861: Shocking Wealth

Forget twenty million, the bid could start at two hundred million and he wouldn't even crease his brow. For Jiang Chen, this was no longer a large sum of money. He had already come into quite a bit of money back when he took out three thousand people back at Infant Shriek. If the valuables he obtained back then were to be converted into saint spirit stones, they would be worth at least several hundred million themselves. After he arrived at Veluriyam Capital, Jiang Chen had opened Taiyuan Tower and then seized Taiyuan Lodge for himself. He had obtained innumerable rewards from the various events that happened after that. Currently, Jiang Chen's wealth was shocking to say the least.

In fact, House Wei, the Coiling Dragon Clan and even Sacred Peafowl Mountain itself would send an endless stream of spirit stones into his pockets if he were to make such a request. Money was the one thing Jiang Chen lacked the least. Whereas the Five Great Cauldrons were the symbolic treasures of the Regal Pill Palace. They were important to the Regal Pill Palace just like the Dark North Bell was to the Dark North Sect. They might not be the only sect treasures the Regal Pill Palace possessed, but they were still part of the collection.

In fact, the Five Great Cauldrons practically symbolized the Regal Pill Palace itself and its face. Without the Five Great Cauldrons, the sect's resurrection would be incomplete even if it turned out to be a success. These cauldrons were the only things that could represent the Regal Pill Palace's history and former glory.

That was why Jiang Chen was dead set on obtaining these cauldrons. It was true that he currently possessed a better set of cauldrons compared to the Five Great Cauldrons, such as the Skysnatcher Cauldron he'd won from the Joined Ridges Pavilion auction. But these cauldrons were of special meaning to him.

Wei Xing'er was the one who was stunned by this turn of events. Her bewitching eyes couldn't move away from Jiang Chen as she temporarily forgot how to speak for a moment. Had he really just flung a hundred million saint spirit stones without batting an eyelid? Technically speaking, Wei Xing'er was the young madam of the Veranda now. She had seen enough of the world to know that there were many kinds of wealthy people. However, their wealth only stretched as far as their own local regions. Moreover, not every one of them could throw out a hundred million saint spirit stones without batting an eyelid.

The Resplendent Emerald Veranda might possess this ability, but that was the total sum of all its properties and businesses added together. Even they would have to make some preparations even if they needed to fling out a hundred million spirit stones in one go. But not only had Jiang Chen produced one hundred million saint spirit stones in one go, he even looked like he could repeat the action a couple of times more. In fact, he looked like he carried a few hundred million saint spirit stones with him as pocket change everyday. If her guess was true, then his wealth was shocking to say the least.

If Wei Xing'er were to learn that Jiang Chen was the owner of Taiyuan Tower and the pill king that even Sacred Peafowl Mountain needed to cater to, she would probably forget to collect her jaw even after the auction was over. She let out a soft sigh and smiled wryly. "I guess a good life is not the only thing you're leading, hmm? I doubt even your Regal Pill palace head had so much money in his life."

A hundred million sacred spirit stones equaled one billion origin spirit stones. It was shocking enough that the head of the Great Cathedral, Xiang Wentian had produced ten million origin spirit stones to bid for the Longevity Pill back then. Jiang Chen had just casually exceeded that amount one hundred times over. It was no wonder that Xing'er was shocked by his current wealth. She might be representing the Veranda in this auction, but she was also representing herself too. The amount of capital she was allowed her to use for one auction was just around fifty million. Anything more than that would require real consideration before the bid was allowed to go through.

Admittedly, the Five Great Cauldrons was a more attractive item than the Dark North Bell. The bids rang out faster than the Dark North Bell too. It didn't take long before the bid reached twenty five million.

"It's time for you to make a move," Jiang Chen reminded her.

Wei Xing'er blinked, "How should I bid on this?"

"Just bid however you like," Jiang Chen smiled. His tone was generous and unrestrained.

Wei Xing'er's eyes sparkled as the hint of a devilish smile appeared on her face. Then, she opened her lips and declared, "Thirty million!"

She added five million onto the bid immediately. It was fundamentally different from the petty five hundred thousand bid increase made by those other parties. As expected, her bid quashed many competitors in an instant. There were plenty of people present who recognized Wei Xing'er's voice, and they knew that Wei Xing'er represented the Resplendent Emerald Veranda, and was a local tycoon of Great Scarlet Capital. Normally, Wei Xing'er spent her money bidding on slaves and not objects.

Therefore, her sudden, generous bid of thirty million saint spirit stones on an object was quite intimidating. Despite Wei Xing'er's declaration, there were a few people who refused to give up and continued to bid for the cauldrons. However, their quotes were exactly as minor as before; adding just five hundred thousand stones onto the existing bid. Wei Xing'er immediately made another bid of thirty five million.

This time her aggressiveness completely stamped out their opportunistic hopes, and she ultimately won the four cauldrons with a final bid of thirty million saint spirit stones. No one was surprised that she was this wealthy. After all, the Veranda often displayed all kinds of strange objects in their stores. These pill cauldrons were definitely a suitable addition to their collection. All those who wished to bid for the cauldrons understood that it was a stupid endeavor to try and match the Veranda's wealth. Therefore, Wei Xing'er easily won the items after putting in just two bids.

Although the price was a little high, winning four pill cauldrons with just thirty five million saint spirit stones was still quite a good trade for Jiang Chen. The Skysnatcher Cauldron he bid for back at Joined Ridge Pavilion's auction was more expensive than all four of these cauldrons together. Jiang Chen counted out fifty million saint spirit stones and passed them onto Wei Xing'er. Wei Xing'er looked surprised. What was the meaning behind these additional fifteen million saint spirit stones?

"Stop staring at me like that and take it already. You'll be suspected for bidding for a Regal Pill Palace object no matter what, so these fifteen million saint spirit stones is the money you got for selling the cauldrons to another buyer right after you bid for them. Do you understand? This is how you justify your bid. This is how you shut the mouths of those who try to question you after you return."

Huang'er was very approving of Jiang Chen's decision. While Wei Xing'er appeared well off on the outside, the amount of freedom she really enjoyed was the completely opposite of expectations. They had no doubt that she would be questioned if she spent thirty five million to bid for these cauldrons, but couldn't produce them because she'd passed them to Jiang Chen when she returned. But if she had fifteen million spirit stones, she could excuse herself saying that she had sold the cauldrons right after receiving them.

"Just take it." Huang'er smiled kindly.

Wei Xing'er's strong pride told her that she mustn't take the money. However, Jiang Chen and Huang'er's determined gaze made her feel like turning down their offer would be a crime against them. She looked well off on the surface, but the amount of money that actually landed in her lap weren't much at all. The amount of money she privately owned even less so. A moment later, Wei Xing'er ultimately accepted the money with a soft sigh. She could tell that Jiang Chen didn't care about this miniscule amount of money at all. The fact that he could give away fifteen million just like that meant that his actual wealth was at least tens or hundreds of times bigger than this sum.

The next items that came through the auction failed to garner the same price tag as the cauldrons. Jiang Chen quickly lost interest in the auction as it progressed further. He was waiting only to see if he could spot any familiar faces during the slave part of the auction. If there was no one, then he was going to leave right after.

The last item to be auctioned triggered a commotion, however. It was a saint spirit creature's bloodline from the Great Cathedral with a beneficial effect on going berserk! The object immediately caused an uproar the moment it appeared. Going berserk was no ordinary art. Any cultivator who successfully did so would instantly experience a great increase in strength. Jiang Chen himself had fought against Xiang Tai of the Great Cathedral in a berserk state back at Myriad Grand Ceremony. A clamor of bids overtook the scene the moment it appeared. In the end, the bloodline sold for a total bid price of thirty million.

The auction of goods might have ended, but the auction itself had only progressed halfway. The next part of the auction was of course, the slave auction. Naturally, the bid price of slaves fluctuated wildly. Normally speaking, an origin realm slave wasn't worth much at all. A sage realm slave was worth a lot more.

Between two slaves of the same rank, female slaves were worth more than male slaves. Between two slaves of the same gender, the slave who knew pill dao was worth more than the slave who knew nothing about it. There were plenty of standards in the slave market. Naturally, the price of a single slave couldn't compare to that of a single item in a goods auction. However, slave auctions usually involved large numbers, so the sum of money that flowed from the transactions was not a small sum. Moreover, noble powers often had huge demands for slaves.

Slaves were bought either to be used as servants, cultivation cauldrons, attendants, or for strange purposes. In conclusion, the slave market was ever a hot market in the human domain. In fact, other races would often frequent the human domain to capture human cultivators and sell them in their own domain as slaves. That was because human slaves were obedient and the most convenient race to order around.

“The first group of slaves are origin realm slaves. We will begin this auction by making available five hundred slaves for all to select from. Every one of these slaves has a price tag on them. If you found one that you wish to take, you may pay for them and make the trade immediately. If two people have their eyes on the same target at the same time, then whoever offers the higher price will be the buyer.”

Wei Xing’er remarked to Jiang Chen, “Origin realm slaves have no status here. They do not even have the right to be auctioned in a slave market. Therefore, they’re normally sold by odd-lot trading. Also, there is a rule in the market that states that one family is allowed to buy at most twenty slaves in one go. No one is allowed to go above that number.”

Jiang Chen wasn’t unfamiliar with these rules since he had experienced it firsthand at Veluriyam Capital’s slave market. However, the limit on this quota differed from place to place. It was a way to prevent people from secretly recruiting manpower and strength from the slave markets and breaking the balance of power this way. To put it bluntly, the rule existed because of fear towards the swelling ambition of man.

“Let’s go take a look.” Myriad Domain had plenty of origin realm cultivators. In fact, a lot of Jiang Chen’s acquaintances were at origin realm. He wanted to take a look and see if he could pick up some figurative fish that’d slipped through the net. Origin realm slaves weren’t expensive anyway, so he didn’t mind spending a bit of money to redeem their freedom. He viewed the action as good karma.

In Veluriyam Capital, the price of origin realm slaves hovered between two hundred thousand to one million saint spirit stones. The exceptional ones might cost up to more than a million. Meanwhile, the price of sage realm slaves hovered between two million to twenty million. The exceptional ones might be priced higher. The price of slaves in Great Scarlet Mid Region were a lot lower. Great Scarlet Mid Region’s level of wealth was quite some distance away from Veluriyam Capital’s after all.

It was no wonder that Great Scarlet Mid Region’s imperial family would sell Elder Yun Nie and Mu Gaoqi to Veluriyam Capital. It was obvious that they could profit more if they sold them in that region. Slave trading wasn’t that popular a trade in Great Scarlet Mid Region originally. It was because Myriad Domain was destroyed that the supply of slaves had suddenly become plentiful.

Chapter 862: Jiang Chen Buys Three Slaves

Unlike the slaves in the Myriad Puppets Pavilion back in Veluriyam Capital, these ones didn’t wear any masks. Otherwise, Jiang Chen wouldn’t even have looked at them. However, he didn’t lower his guard even if their faces were exposed in broad daylight. Seen from another angle, the Great Scarlet Mid Region being so straightforward and completely exposing these slaves’ faces might be a trap designed to lure their enemies with.

He was originally planning on buying all Regal Pill Palace disciples if he saw any. But thinking carefully on it now, it seemed very dangerous to do so. In case it turned out to be a trap, he was bound to attract attention if he only bought disciples of the Regal Pill Palace and no one else. After all, who would be so kind as to buy disciples of the Regal Pill Palace only, if they weren’t a disciple of the sect themselves?

Five hundred slaves were put on display one by one and made to kneel on the ground. Only, they were under control. All of them looked dazed. No shame could be seen on their faces, no joy or happiness.

Jiang Chen realized with a quick glance that there were indeed quite a few Regal Pill Palace disciples among them. However, he hadn't had many dealings with them in the past.

All of them were geniuses from the Rosy Valley, but Jiang Chen wasn't on very friendly terms with them. One of them had even crossed paths with Jiang Chen before. It was Yan Hongtu, someone who'd tried to intimidate Jiang Chen as soon as he'd entered the Rosy Valley. He naturally felt lukewarm towards someone like that.

Jiang Chen wouldn't have been very keen to rescue him even without any danger. He wasn't someone to repay grudges with favors. It was important to keep the interest of the sect in mind, but in Jiang Chen's opinion, there was a problem with the intrinsic nature of someone like this who bullied the weak and fawned on the strong. Yan Hongtu might not even be grateful to be rescued, to say nothing about how much aid he could offer for the sect's rebuilding.

This auction seemed to have placed the Regal Pill Palace's disciples in rather prominent spots. Jiang Chen noticed no less than five of them merely walking through the first two rows. On the contrary, not one of them was to be found behind that. Jiang Chen suddenly halted his steps after reaching the fourth row. He noticed a familiar face, but not someone from the Regal Pill Palace. He wasn't even a disciple of the six great sects in the Myriad Domain. Instead, he was a disciple from a fifth ranked sect.

"Is it him?" Jiang Chen had some impression of this man. His first opponent back in the Myriad Grand Ceremony's martial tournament was called a man Feng Pao, if memory served him right. He was a genius from the fifth ranked Extreme Wind Sect. He had been seventh level origin realm back then. This man had been single-mindedly devoted to the way of the sword, someone who could even be called a sword fanatic. In Jiang Chen's opinion, he was someone who should be able to go far in his single-minded pursuit of the pinnacle of sword dao.

Jiang Chen had admired this Feng Pao back then, so he'd imparted to the latter some deeper mysteries of the sword when they fought each other in the tournament. Feng Pao was also a very perceptive man. He'd realized by the end that Jiang Chen had been guiding him, conveying the truth of the sword. He'd reached greater heights in his comprehension of the way of the sword after that fight. Afterwards, with the arrival of the great factions in the Myriad Domain, Feng Pao couldn't fight alone against the tide and found himself a captive after a moment of carelessness.

Jiang Chen stopped in front of him and glanced at his price tag. Eight hundred thousand saint spirit stones.

"I'm taking this one." Jiang Chen picked Feng Pao out without the slightest hesitation. Everyone was still observing looking over the goods right now. He'd been the first to make a move. Jiang Chen wasn't like the others. When others chose who they wanted to buy, they often considered the slaves' characteristics and compared them against each other. As for Jiang Chen, he wasn't buying slaves, he was merely buying familiar faces. That was why he wasn't choosy at all.

Fourth row, fifth row. No one familiar in sight. Jiang Chen saw two familiar faces at the same time when he reached the sixth row. Likewise, the two of them weren't disciples of the six great sects in the Myriad Domain. They weren't even disciples of fifth rank sects. Rather, they were old friends from the sixteen kingdom alliance. They were from the Myriad Spirit Sect, one of the four great sects in the sixteen

kingdom alliance. It was Liu Wencai and Lu Yali, his brothers back when he'd undergone training on Eternal Spirit Mountain.

Liu Wencai had also received a stroke of fortune from Jiang Chen back on Eternal Spirit Mountain. Jiang Chen had given him the Redscale Firelizard bloodline and awakened the power in Liu Wencai's body. Jiang Chen had even given him quite a few insights about cultivation back on Eternal Spirit Mountain.

Back when Jiang Chen had left the Precious Tree Sect, he'd made a detour to the Myriad Spirit Sect to see Liu Wencai and Liu Yali. Those two were both good friends of Jiang Chen's in the sixteen kingdoms. The scenes of his time back on Eternal Spirit Mountain re-emerged in Jiang Chen's mind when he suddenly saw the two of them again.

"I never thought I'd come across brothers from long ago after such so many years." Jiang Chen was a little moved. He didn't have much affection for those Regal Pill Palace disciples. They might have been fellow disciples in name, but they shared none of the feelings between peers from the same sect. On the contrary, Liu Wencai and Liu Yali had shared joys and sorrows with Jiang Chen on Eternal Spirit Mountain. He couldn't just leave them here now that he had come across them. He glanced at their price tags. Liu Wencai was worth eight hundred thousand saint spirit stones, Liu Yali a mere three hundred thousand.

"It looks like Liu Wencai's cultivation made huge strides forward after the awakening of his bloodline. Otherwise, why would his price be the same as an origin realm genius like Feng Pao?" Jiang Chen took both Liu Wencai and Lu Yali with him. After taking those three, Jiang Chen took another look but didn't spot any other familiar faces. He immediately led the three to the transaction area. "I'm taking these three."

The staff inspected the slaves' numbers, took the payment, removed their bindings, and completed the deal. The process was extremely simple. None of the three was someone important, so no suspicions were aroused. The transaction went without a hitch. Jiang Chen took the three of them back to his room at the auction. He saw Wei Xing'er sitting there dazed, her face wan and her lips quivering, as though she'd suddenly suffered a tremendous blow.

"What's the matter?" Jiang Chen asked, a little surprised.

Huang'er heaved a soft sigh. "She said that those auctions are all fake. She saw some slaves she once bought amongst those up for sale. She'd clearly released them, but here they are again. In other words, it's simply impossible for those slaves to leave the Great Scarlet Mid Region!"

"What?" Jiang Chen froze.

Wei Xing'er's face was pained. "I was too naive. I always thought I could spend some money and buy their freedom. I never thought they would still be shackled to their fate in the end. The Great Scarlet Mid Region will never allow those from the Myriad Domain to walk free."

Jiang Chen wrinkled his nose. "In other words, the three I bought are also a no go?" Wei Xing'er said with a bitter smile, "I don't know either, maybe it'll depend on their luck. If their luck's good, they won't be caught and will make good their escape. Otherwise, they'll be caught again return to a life of slavery."

She had clearly just realized this matter, so she suddenly felt dismayed. She'd sometimes participated in auctions in the Great Scarlet Mid Region before, and when she saw familiar faces from the Myriad Domain, she'd rescue them within the limits of her financial resources. Not because she had particular feelings for those people, but purely out of psychological comfort. However, cruel reality told her that everything she'd done was futile as smoke.

It was easy to imagine her disappointment when she realized what she thought to be meaningful suddenly lost all meaning. Jiang Chen didn't contradict her this time. "You already did what you could. If they can't run away, then it's their own fate. No need to blame yourself. Not everyone will be caught and brought back."

Wei Xing'er felt a little better after his comforting words. She looked up and asked, "Did you come back this time to seek revenge against the Great Scarlet Mid Region?" Jiang Chen shook his head, his tone exceptionally firm. "Let them be proud for a few more years. One day, I'll repay them twofold everything they did to the Myriad Domain."

"Then, do you think my Walkabout Sect will be revitalized one day?" Wei Xing'er's eyes suddenly shone bright.

"If everyone in the Walkabout Sect is like you, then that day will come without fail." Jiang Chen didn't want to dampen her enthusiasm after all. He suddenly asked once more, "What's the approximate situation in the Myriad Domain now?"

"I haven't returned there ever since they caught me. I hear it's been divided between the various factions of the Great Scarlet Mid Regions. All the resources have been forcibly seized by the Great Scarlet sects as well." Wei Ting'er was a little depressed. "Seized?" Jiang Chen's laugh was cold. "It seems these sects haven't learned their lesson yet." n((o-)v-(e-.l-.b()1/.n

Wei Xing'er suddenly remembered something. "That time when someone sent all the heads of big sect leaders in the Region to the Great Scarlet Emperor, I heard everyone say it was your doing, is that true?"

Jiang Chen smiled. He didn't deny it. That was only a little advance interest. It was nothing at all compared to everything the Great Scarlet Mid Region had done to the Myriad Domain.

Wei Xing'er stared at Jiang Chen for quite a while before finally asking, "You didn't buy those Regal Pill Palace disciples? Do you need my help?"

"No need, they're merely bait. They shouldn't be in any danger for now." Jiang Chen shook his head and turned down her good intentions. If he bought those Regal Pill Palace disciples right now, it was an unknown whether he could get them out of the Great Scarlet Mid Region. If he didn't buy them, they might continue to live on as bait. So now wasn't the time to save them yet, even if he was going to do it.

Everyone finally finished picking over the five hundred origin realm slaves. Next, the organizers led out twenty sage realm slaves and sold them via auctioning. These sage realm slaves mostly came from the Myriad Domain. Of course, some also came from other areas. The minimum bids were usually above five million.

Jiang Chen didn't recognize any familiar faces, so his interest for the auction waned. He was ready to leave with the three he'd bought once the auction ended. He asked about many other subjects from

Wei Xing'er as they waited for the auction to end. However, she'd never left the Great Scarlet Capital. She only heard some news of the outside world in the Veranda. It wasn't convenient for her to inquire further about them, for fear of raising suspicions that she would turn traitor.

At the end of the auction, Wei Xing'er didn't try too hard to detain Jiang Chen since she knew he wanted to leave. She didn't invite them to go to the Resplendent Emerald Veranda either. After taking their leave, Jiang Chen quickly led Feng Pao and the others out of the Great Scarlet Capital. Though he didn't think Wei Xing'er would go as far as harming him, he could tell she was in a delicate situation. He would find himself in great trouble in case those surveilling her became suspicious.

Jiang Chen didn't stop after leaving the Great Scarlet Capital. Instead, he quickly traveled a thousand miles away from Great Scarlet Capital before finally finding a remote corner to rest. The three he bought showed signs of anxiety since having been bought. They had no idea how their futures would unfold.

Chapter 863: Brotherhood

The three of them weren't bound by any restrictions, but they couldn't conjure up the thoughts to escape. From what they could feel, their purchaser had strength that surpassed theirs by a hundredfold. There was no way they could outrun him even if they got a five hundred mile head start. Simultaneously, they were also curious. Why were they not implanted with any restrictions after being purchased? Was their purchaser really not afraid of them running away? But what ordinary cultivator was this kind to his slaves?

Each member of the trio was occupied with his own thoughts for a time. Feng Pao was unfamiliar with the other two. On the other hand, Liu Wencai and Lu Yali were both sect and blood brothers, but they couldn't exactly communicate in present circumstances.

"Ay," Jiang Chen sighed softly. "Life is a lottery. I didn't think that my travels into the Great Scarlet Mid Region would lead me to some old brothers."

This time, he didn't disguise his voice. Liu Wencai and Lu Yali trembled when they heard this. They gazed at Jiang Chen with indescribable astonishment, their eyes filled with a strong desire for inspection. Clearly, the familiar voice greatly deviated from their expectations. Feng Pao was no stranger to Jiang Chen's voice either. Stunned, he couldn't help but speak aloud, "Are you... are you senior brother Jiang?"

At the Myriad Grand Ceremony long ago, Jiang Chen had thought Feng Pao to be an upstanding man devoted to the sword. He was a candidate with potential and could be molded. Because of this, he had taught Feng Pao some mysteries of the sword at the time. Though Jiang Chen remembered those events still, it didn't weigh much on his mind. But for Feng Pao, it had been an amazing stroke of fortune, and he had taken it to heart ever since. He was very grateful to Jiang Chen. Hearing the voice of his benefactor was very shocking to him.

Liu Wencai was thoroughly bewildered as well. "Brother Boulder..."

At the trials at Eternal Spirit Mountain, Jiang Chen had participated with the alias of 'Boulder'. It was thus the same name that Liu Wencai had always called him by. Though Liu Wencai had found out later about Jiang Chen's true identity, he'd already given Jiang Chen a place deep in his heart as a brother worthy of lifelong respect. He could never forget Jiang Chen's debt of instruction and reformation of

him. Back at the Myriad Spirit Sect, Liu Wencai had been given the cold shoulder everywhere. Without Jiang Chen's tutelage, there was no way he could have stood out from his peers and become the primary recipient of resources. Because of this, he appreciated Jiang Chen beyond everyone else at the sect, including even Forefather Ninelion who mentored him later on.

Lu Yali was even more overlooked at the Myriad Spirit Sect. Just like Liu Wencai, his fate had been changed by Jiang Chen singlehandedly. He saw the latter as a blood brother just the same. 'Brother Boulder' was someone unforgettable to them. The revelation that he was their deliverer from suffering quite excited them. Jiang Chen patted Liu Wencai's shoulder. "Wencai, we haven't seen each other for several years. You've made a lot of progress. You didn't let me down."

"Fatty, you've improved considerably as well." Jiang Chen turned his gaze towards Lu Yali. He'd met the rotund youth through a brawl. An interesting fellow, to be sure—especially when Jiang Chen remembered the fact that he'd intentionally feigned weakness back on Eternal Spirit Mountain. Because of his rounded build, Lu Yali was often nicknamed Pear Lu, or Fatty Lu. The fatty grinned from ear to ear. "Is it really you? The Brother Boulder we've kept in our thoughts day and night?"

Jiang Chen nodded, then turned to Feng Pao again. "Brother Feng, a genius of the sword. It's been many years for us as well. Perhaps these struggles will inspire something in your understanding of the dao."

Feng Pao was the kind of person who could endure anything for the sake of his art. He had treated the past few days of enslavement as a trial. His spirit hadn't been crushed by the experience. However, he was still quite thankful for his rescue. "Senior brother Jiang, the world works in mysterious ways. You were the one to teach me the sword back then, and you are my deliverer now. I have been blessed by very few people in my entire life. You are one of them. If I by chance survive my ordeals and achieve a new pinnacle of the sword, I will come wherever you summon me. Regardless of my strength, regardless of the difficulties before me. I won't bat even an eye."

He wasn't making things up. He was fanatically devoted to the dao of the sword, with little concern life and death. His life had been saved by Jiang Chen anyways. He was prepared to turn it over back to his savior at anytime. As long as he lived, he would not give up pursuing the supreme dao of the sword. Feng Pao saluted with fist and palm. "Senior brother Jiang, I've been imprisoned for a while. I don't know what's happened to my sect and I'd like to investigate. May I have leave to go?" Having been both saved and purchased by Jiang Chen, he felt he had to obtain permission in order to leave.

"Brother Feng, you wish to leave now? Isn't here too far away from the Great Scarlet Mid Region? There is considerable risk if you travel alone."

Feng Pao smiled wryly. "If I am captured again, that is entirely my uselessness. It cannot be helped. Do not be worried, senior brother Jiang. Even if that comes to pass, I will not divulge your location no matter what."

Jiang Chen didn't doubt that one bit. If Feng Pao was the kind of scoundrel who would do that, Jiang Chen would never have taught him the secrets of the sword in the first place. He thought for a few moments before taking out an escape glyph. "This is an escape glyph. It may help you to retreat at a crucial moment. Keep it so you have something for emergencies."

Feng Pao laughed, accepting the glyph without melodrama. "I owe senior brother Jiang more and more. For as long as I live, I will repay you with everything in me." Accepting the escape glyph, he bowed deeply to Jiang Chen, then saluted to Liu Wencai and Fatty Lu before disappearing. With a single twist of his body, he became a dashing breeze in the wind.

Seeing Feng Pao's departure, Lu Yali couldn't resist. "Brother Boulder, there are bounties for you throughout the world. Just letting him go like that, is anything going to..." Fatty Lu did not know Feng Pao very well, and was evidently worried that he would sell Jiang Chen out.

Jiang Chen waved a hand. "There's no need to worry. Even if he was a person that would do something like that, there are many people hunting me already, but I'm still alive and well, aren't I?"

"Brother Boulder, your talent is extraordinary. We've only been apart for a few years, but the gap between us has only widened," Liu Wencai exclaimed admiringly. His emotional reflections aside, Liu Wencai was still entirely overjoyed. Back at Eternal Spirit Mountain, Jiang Chen had taken care of him and instructed him, just like an elder brother would. It could be said that Jiang Chen was the person Liu Wencai admired most. He played the role of a generous patron in Liu Wencai's life.

Even after all these years, he was still touched whenever he remembered Jiang Chen's care. Liu Wencai had both missed and worried about his brotherly figure. Seeing Jiang Chen again was like a hot-blooded youth's reunion with a respected elder brother. His heart was greatly moved. Moreover, this respected eldest brother had just rescued him from a world of suffering. The emotions he felt were indescribable.

They exchanged words about what their experiences had been in the interim. It turned out that the Myriad Spirit Sect had followed the example of Precious Tree Sect's alliance with Regal Pill Palace, affiliating themselves in turn with the Great Cathedral. Because of Liu Wencai's superiority of talent over his peers, he had been sent to the Great Cathedral as well. In effect, Myriad Spirit Sect became a branch of the great sect. However, after the invasion of the Great Scarlet Mid Region, there were heavy casualties since the Great Cathedral was a primary target.

At the battle of the Myriad Grand Ceremony, Xiang Wentian and three other family heads, as well as a few other elders from the Great Cathedral, used their totemic power to break through. Many died in the process, and the escaped survivors were never found. There was also no news of the younger geniuses such as Xiang Qin, who'd come out later from the Paramount Realm and were rescued by Jiang Chen.

Before these sweeping changes, Liu Wencai had cultivated at the Great Cathedral's headquarters. After the great force's invasion, many of the experts guarding the Cathedral died, but some successfully broke through the enemy's encirclement. Being from the Myriad Spirit Sect, Liu Wencai and Lu Yali had not been informed of anything even in crucial moments in the proceedings, so both of them became unknowing prisoners. A tumultuous journey later, they were sold as slaves at Great Scarlet Capital.

Recent times had not been kind to either Liu Wencai or Lu Yali. Hearing the former recount their struggles depicted a new image of the violence of those days.

"It looks like that nowhere in the Myriad Domain was safe from this calamity. There was equal ruin everywhere," Jiang Chen sighed.

"Brother Boulder, do you have any news of the family heads from the Great Cathedral?" Lu Yali asked eagerly.

“What are you asking about them for?” Liu Wencai angrily interrupted. “They were going to escape, but didn’t tell us anything about it. The Great Cathedral, hmph... a sect like that isn’t worth our thoughts.”

Liu Wencai had bad experiences of isolation at Myriad Spirit Sect already. He especially despised the feeling of being abandoned. Lu Yali didn’t know how to reply. “...then what about Myriad Spirit Sect?”

Liu Wencai looked at Jiang Chen when his old sect was mentioned. Certainly, he still had some leftover feelings for it. After all, he had grown up with the Myriad Spirit Sect. No matter how they’d ostracized him and neglected him in the past, there were also people that had been good to him.

“Don’t ask me, I don’t know much about it. The Eternal Celestial Capital and Ninesuns Sky Sect had made preparations in order to unleash this calamity. If a bird’s nest is overturned, no egg within can remain unbroken. I would assume that there is great loss of life within the sixteen kingdoms alliance as well.” Jiang Chen’s tone was heavy.

Liu Wencai and Lu Yali were worried about Myriad Spirit Sect, but he was worried about Precious Tree Sect and the people he knew in both the Skylareland and Eastern Kingdoms. However, a faction like the Eastern Kingdom that was already second- or third-rate in the sixteen kingdoms alliance was fairly likely to be overlooked by first-ranked sects. Current circumstances didn’t exactly permit Liu Wencai and Lu Yali to return to the Myriad Spirit Sect, either.

“What do you plan to do next?” Jiang Chen asked.

Liu Wencai looked at Jiang Chen wordlessly. Now that he’d found Jiang Chen, Liu Wencai’s heart was dead set on following him. Lu Yali was anxious as well. “Brother Boulder, both of us are homeless now. We’ve always treated you like an older brother. Hopefully you can show us a better way.”

After considering a moment, Jiang Chen nodded. “I have important matters at hand that more people would make inconvenient. How about this, go to Veluriyam Capital, to a place called Taiyuan Tower. I’ll give you a token, and you’ll find out the rest when you get there.”

This trip carried great risks for Jiang Chen himself, and he had no reason to take Liu Wencai and Lu Yali along with him. The pair had enough self-awareness to know that they would only be dead weight for Jiang Chen. “Alright, then we shall go to Veluriyam Capital.” They nodded simultaneously.

“Don’t worry, I own that place. Just let them know your relationship to me when you arrive, and people will receive you appropriately. Remember, caution is key. The Great Scarlet Mid Region is cracking down on slaves of every kind. You need to disguise yourselves a bit more...”

Chapter 864: Pursuers

After much costuming and disguising from Jiang Chen and Huang’er, Liu Wencai and Lu Yali’s appearances were drastically changed. Apart from Lu Yali’s inflexibly rotund build, the two were almost entirely different people. The pair was bewildered after seeing each other’s appearances. Jiang Chen’s skills were simply masterful.

“Here are two escape glyphs for each of you. When there is danger, activate one. A single glyph can carry both of you.” Jiang Chen had enough of these glyphs to spare. He gave one to each of them.

Liu Wencai and Lu Yali had never seen anything as nice as these. They were consumables that only a large sect could afford. If they had something like this back then, there was no reason they wouldn't have been able to escape.

"This is another treasure. I've modified it a little bit. Take it for self-defense." Jiang Chen took out a flag as he spoke. The flag used to belong to Dark North Sect's Lin Hai. Lin Hai was actually a traitor from Eternal Celestial Capital. In the Paramount Realm, he had fought with Jun Mobai, a fellow undercover agent from Ninesuns Sky Sect. However, their conflict only ended up benefiting a third party in the end—Jiang Chen.

The flag had made a strong impression on Jiang Chen at the time. Lin Hai was slightly weaker than Jun Mobai in terms of raw strength, but the latter was rendered helpless just by the flag. The flag could both attack and protect, and was quite mighty. It could easily beat out the average sage realm expert. Jiang Chen hadn't actually used the flag after commandeering it. Instead, he adapted it somewhat by removing Eternal Celestial Capital's marks and restrictions, as well as changing its outward appearance.

This way, even if someone from the Eternal Celestial Capital were to see the flag used, they wouldn't necessarily know the flag was their sect's property. After all, this treasure had been given to Lin Hai in secret to assist in his role as a covert operative. Most people wouldn't know where it came from. Jiang Chen placed this flag into Liu Wencai's hands.

"This flag has extraordinary origins. If you find an enemy, you must either kill them or use this item judiciously," Jiang Chen instructed again. He thought for a final while before taking out yet another item. It was a medallion this time. "This is the Silver Dragon Medallion. It's a token of the foremost clan of Veluriyam Capital, the Coiling Dragon Clan. If you truly find an enemy whom you cannot resist, show them this medallion. Ordinary factions won't touch you upon seeing it."

The Coiling Dragon Clan was a representative faction in Veluriyam Capital. Besides the seven great emperors, they held the most influence in the city. The clan lord had given the medallion to Jiang Chen in order to ensure he would be unhindered in the capital. But there had been no reason for Jiang Chen to use it. Pill King Zhen's name alone was prominent enough. There was no one who would possibly dare to offend him in the Capital.

As for elsewhere, if anyone were to discover he was Jiang Chen, even a token from Emperor Peafowl wouldn't be enough to discourage them. The absurdly large bounty on his head was enough to deprive any cultivator of their reason. Therefore, the Silver Dragon Medallion wasn't very useful to Jiang Chen at present. However, it was quite possibly the best protective talisman he could give Liu Wencai and Lu Yali.

Receiving valuables that they previously never had experience with, or right to possess, made Liu Wencai and Lu Yali a little ashamed. Seeing their anxiety on their faces, Jiang Chen clapped their shoulders. "Both of you are my brothers. Don't be a stranger."

The necessity of departure so soon after a reunion left some dismay in Liu Wencai's heart. He knew that Jiang Chen had important things to do though and nodded. "We'll leave right now."

Jiang Chen suddenly smiled. "Don't be in such a hurry to go just yet. Watch me cut down some pursuers."

Liu Wencai and Lu Yali both paused. Jiang Chen traded glances with Huang'er. The girl smiled, slightly inclining her head. "Be careful."

With a sway of his body, Jiang Chen put himself into the open. At this time, five men in black arrived on the scene in hot pursuit. The person who led them had a pair of yellow eyebrows, almost as if they were singed. He stared at Jiang Chen before looking speculatively at his companions. "That's him. He has someone with him, too."

The group nodded amongst themselves, fanning into a circle around Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen looked over the five of them coldly. The strongest among them was only a sky sage realm cultivator. Of the others, two were mortal sage realm, and the other two earth sage realm. If it were the Jiang Chen of the Regal Pill Place, this five-man group would pose a mortal threat to him. But the Jiang Chen of today...

"Are you looking for me?" He smiled faintly.

"Kid, where's the person you were with?" The yellow-browed cultivator glared at Jiang Chen, his consciousness searching through the area.

"There's no need for you to look now. If you can kill me, then you'll be able to find her easily. I'm curious, though, what faction are you from?"

"Heh heh, you're asking too much, kid!" With a shout, the yellow-browed cultivator beckoned his compatriots forth. Five shadows swept towards Jiang Chen. They were well-coordinated and vicious. Though the way they arranged themselves was outwardly chaotic, they were actually following a formation within.

Jiang Chen harrumphed coldly, leaping into action instantly. Like a bolt of lightning, he soared backwards towards the two in the southwest. Two experts took this corner, one earth sage, one mortal sage.

"Excellent!" The two weren't startled by Jiang Chen's charge. On the contrary, they were very pleased. They looked at each other, then changed their stances. Like fishermen pulling at a net, they pulled out a silver chain, sending it hurtling at Jiang Chen's torso. In this moment, something strange happened. The two of them felt their bodies struck by an unknown force. Suddenly, their perfect lockstep was slowed by an invisible strength. Their movement became sluggish for an instant.

The instant however, was enough to spell their final doom. Crack crack!

Two alarming cracks sounded through the air, heralding two terrifying finger points which detonated themselves upon the two. It was Jiang Chen's third Supernova Point technique, Galaxy Supernova Point. The two experts exploded to smithereens upon contact. The shocking spectacle occurred extremely quickly—astoundingly quickly, in fact.

When the other three were able to react, their two peers were already dust. The yellow-eyebrowed sky sage realm expert gasped in surprise. "Careful, everyone. This kid is pretending to be weak in order to take us all!"

Jiang Chen cackled. Taking two lives ignited further murderous intent. He strode forward, reaching another earth sage realm expert with only two or three steps. Taken aback at his speed, the expert clutched at something with a hand. He was making a grab for an escape glyph. Jiang Chen was faster than him, however, and stabbed a finger into the man's forehead.

Bam!

Another one destroyed.

“This is tough, let’s pull out!” The yellow-browed expert’s face colored considerably. He had come to the realization that this opponent was someone he couldn’t contend with. He crushed an escape glyph as he spoke. Its power expanded in preparation to take him away, but his feet were leaden. He wasn’t able to move!. The man looked at his feet, and noticed that strange vines hung around his legs—some were fiery crimson, some were verdant green. The last sage realm expert met the same fate. His entire body was wrapped tightly. How could he escape?

The Bewitching Lotus of Fire and Ice had evolved with each refinement from Jiang Chen. Its current incarnation was far changed from its original form. With its current qualities, Jiang Chen was confident that it could ensnare even a normal emperor realm cultivator, much less a sage realm one. The Lotus had a consuming hunger. Something as nutritious as a sky sage realm expert was swallowed up instantly by the petals at Jiang Chen’s command. There was no time for even a scream to escape.

The remaining mortal sage realm expert was pallid, his body shivering like a leaf. Though they weren’t the most elite in the Great Scarlet Mid Region, they could do as they wished without much interference. Even those from the top sects here gave them some face. The upper classes of the Great Scarlet Empire and the imperial family as well gave them the same degree of respect. That they were thugs working for the Resplendent Emerald Veranda was enough. As one of the wealthiest in the Great Scarlet Mid Region, Veranda was a very influential organization here.

Though they were not as mighty as the few third-ranked sects, the typical fourth-ranked sect found it hard to compete with the Veranda. The five of them weren’t the cream of the crop at Greenwood, but they were still fairly important individuals there. They’d always performed the menial tasks and dirty work for the sect.

Time was of the essence. After having dispatched the four others, Jiang Chen arrived in front of the remaining man, and smiled faintly at him. “Would you like to tell me what you know straight up? Or shall I torture it out of you?”

The man was yellow with fear. His pupils dilated, eyes full of terror. “I... I only want you to let me live. I’ll tell you whatever you want.”

“What if I’m not going to let you live?” Jiang Chen asked quietly.

“Then... I’d rather commit suicide than be threatened by you.” The man gritted his teeth.

Jiang Chen nodded. “Well, that means you don’t know much then. Why don’t I send you off with your friends?”

The man’s face colored drastically. “You... you don’t want to know where we’re from?”

Jiang Chen grinned nonchalantly. “You think I care about something as unimportant as that? You’re either dogs of the Great Scarlet Empire’s imperial family, or members of some sect. But I think it’s most likely that you’re from the Resplendent Emerald Veranda.”

The man was stunned by Jiang Chen's words. He thought they had been quite secretive about it, but their quarry already knew who they were.

"As I thought, you really are from the Veranda." Jiang Chen's face darkened. Huang'er walked over now as well. "I've always felt that Wei Xing'er was in a bad situation at the Veranda. It looks like they won't let anyone off who's met with her, huh. The slaves she rescued before must have been recaptured by these guys too, hmm?"

Huang'er was very clever, and had discerned hints of the truth from these details. Jiang Chen didn't suspect Wei Xing'er herself. If it had been her that betrayed them, then it wouldn't be only these five after the pair, but masses of emperor realm experts instead. She must have had the wool pulled over her eyes regarding this matter as well. Moreover, it seemed that she was only superficially well-off at Greenwood. She knew nothing about the organization's shadowy side.

Chapter 865: The Resplendent Emerald Veranda's True Intentions

Jiang Chen's expression was solemn. He'd felt no goodwill towards any power that existed in Great Scarlet Mid Region at all, and the Resplendent Emerald Veranda was no exception. They'd tried to kill him just because he made contact with Wei Xing'er and bought a few people from the auction. They were completely unafraid of any consequences. People who saw no worth in life were obviously nothing good.

Liu Wencai and Lu Yali walked over while he was deep in thought. Their faces were riddled with shock. The five sage realm experts were akin to children who'd just started walking before Jiang Chen. Four of them were taken out in the blink of an eye, while the last one could do nothing but beg on his knees. They wouldn't have believed it possible if they hadn't witnessed this scene with their own eyes. They'd noticed there was a gap between their strength and Jiang Chen's back at Eternal Spirit Mountain, but the gap had still been visible and measurable then. But today, that gap had grown so big they couldn't even see his back anymore.

"Brother Boulder, can we be the ones to take his life?" Liu Wencai suddenly asked. Jiang Chen nodded and didn't object his request. Liu Wencai had improved a lot over the past couple years. He had been just an earth origin realm cultivator back at Eternal Spirit Mountain, but was already a sky origin realm cultivator. He could see that the evolution of his bloodline was continuously unearthing the potential within his body and enabling him to reach new heights. If that calamity hadn't befallen Myriad Domain, and if Liu Wencai had another three to five years' time to cultivate in the Great Cathedral, he definitely would've risen above many others and become a genius that even the Great Cathedral would fight over. Unfortunately, fate had its own game to play.

When the mortal sage realm cultivator heard that they were going to kill him, he immediately begged, "Please, please, don't kill me. I have information, very precious information that will definitely be useful to you all. If you are friends with the young madam, then I guarantee you'll regret not hearing this information."

Jiang Chen raised a hand and stopped Liu Wencai when he heard this. The combined weight of God's Eye and the Evil Golden Eye landed on his victim. The cultivator couldn't stop sweating and chattering under Jiang Chen's might, but he said, "You... you are stronger than I am, but I... I would rather die than tell you what I know if you won't spare my life."

Jiang Chen knew of a few ways to search the soul, but he hadn't practiced any of them as of now. Moreover, it was extremely difficult to search the soul of a cultivator at the same rank as the seeker. Therefore, Jiang Chen couldn't deny that it would be an issue if the fellow refused to speak even on threat of death.

Huang'er walked over. "We can spare your life, but how can we make sure that you won't betray us if we spared your life?"

Wild joy erupted from the person's eyes when he saw a glimmering hope of survival. He hastily responded, "I can swear an heavenly oath that I will reveal everything I know to you as long as you spare my life. I will leave this place immediately and go into hiding. Even if I am unlucky enough to be captured by the family later on, you will be long gone by then. They won't be able to find you even if they try."

Huang'er exchanged a glance with Jiang Chen. "We can spare him. We might as well get that information than waste our time like this."

Jiang Chen didn't mind killing one more or one less person. Killing a small fry like this fellow wouldn't cause the Great Scarlet Mid Region's strength to drop drastically. His life carried no weight whether Jiang Chen spared him or not. Plus, this cultivator had betrayed his master right after losing to the enemy. There was no way he could serve the Great Scarlet Mid Region after this.

Jiang Chen nodded, "Make the oath, and don't try to play any tricks, you hear me? Any smart tricks or word games you try to play will only backfire on yourself."

The heavenly oath was a most effective tool. A coward like him wouldn't dare go against his oath in a million years. Therefore, Jiang Chen wasn't afraid that he would renege on his oath. As expected, this fellow carefully plotted out his words before he swore a flawless heavenly oath. When he was done, he stared pitifully at Jiang Chen. "You... you won't kill me, will you? You won't go back on your words after I confess, will you?"

Jiang Chen smiled. "That's a gamble that you have to take."

He didn't have the inclination to swear a heavenly oath to a captive. Huan'er frowned, "Either you confess now, or you won't get the chance to say anything ever again in your life. You are our captive, and you don't have the right to bargain with us." nOVe(lb/1n

Said captive was extremely depressed to hear this, but he didn't dare go against her words. He knew that he was a captive too, and that he had no right to speak on equal terms with his captors. Hagglng would only kill him faster, which was why he said honestly, "We are the Resplendent Emerald Veranda's men. We have been ordered by our superiors to capture you."

"Why?"

"That's because you are acquaintances with our young madam and hence, potentially remnants of Myriad Domain. As a member of Great Scarlet Mid Region, it is our obligation to hunt down all remnants of Myriad Domain."

Jiang Chen sneered, "You mean your young madam, Wei Xing'er, is nothing but a figurehead?"

The cultivator shook his head, "Not exactly. She is the young madam of the family after all, so she is not completely without real status. It is true that our master is using her, however. More specifically saying, he's raising her for a certain purpose. I'm not sure exactly what purpose it is, but I did hear that the master needs a cauldron of pure yin to cultivate a certain art. The young madam happens to have the requirements and talents necessary for his cultivation, so she was secretly chosen by the master as his cultivation cauldron. You can say that her time as the 'young madam' of the family is her last supper."

Cultivation cauldron? Jiang Chen and Huang'er exchanged a disdainful glance with each other. A cultivation cauldron basically meant a cultivator of the opposite sex to be used as a cultivation medium and tool during a time of need. Normally, the people used as cultivation cauldrons were met with horrible ends.

In the best case scenario, the cultivation cauldron would be crippled. In the worst case scenario, the cultivation cauldron would lose their life outright. Moreover, the process of this type of cultivation was so horrendous that it was almost publicly acknowledged as the worst thing that could happen to a cultivator.

The fate of a cultivation cauldron was worse than that of a slave. A slave at least had a life and the hope of freedom. A cultivation cauldron's journey was a one way trip. Moreover, both the process and the ending were absolutely horrifying. Eight out of the ten cultivation arts that required a cultivation cauldron in the martial dao world were evil arts. Generally speaking, the ratio of female cultivators being used as cultivation cauldrons were higher than males. This method was commonly known as plucking yin to nourish yang.

Real dual cultivation cultivation arts did exist in this world. Dual cultivation arts that were acknowledged as right and proper emphasized on coupling yin and yang. There was no such thing as using one person's power to replenish the other. That was true evil.

"What cultivation level is your master at?"

"Our master is a sixth level emperor realm expert. I heard that he's planning to reach the seventh level emperor realm, the sky emperor realm."

"Seventh level emperor realm, huh..." Jiang Chen nodded slightly, "It would seem that your master is quite strong."

There weren't many seventh level emperor realm experts in the Great Scarlet Mid Region. Most of the sect leaders of fourth rank sect who'd invaded Myriad Domain were only third level or fourth level emperor realm at best. A seventh level emperor realm expert could be the leader of a third rank sect, a head of the Great Scarlet Mid Region or even a heavyweight in the imperial family.

After all, the Great Scarlet Mid Region wasn't particularly strong in the human domain. The Myriad Domain was just weaker than them. Jiang Chen asked a few more questions to find out almost everything he could about the Resplendent Emerald Veranda. After that, he restrained the captive and threw him into a very concealed spot.

"I've put a restriction on you that will automatically dissolve three days later." Jiang Chen hadn't left any tracks to be found in this desolate and uninhabited place, so he wasn't worried about the threat of discovery.

“Wencai, Fatty, allow me to send you along your way.” When he led Liu Wencai and Lu Yali across thousands of kilometers and confirmed that no one was tracking them down, Jiang Chen finally came to a pause. “Watch out for yourselves, you two. You absolutely mustn’t cause any trouble while you’re still in Great Scarlet Mid Region. Make way for Veluriyam Capital the soonest you can,” Jiang Chen advised.

Both Liu Wencai and Lu Yali looked reluctant to part with Jiang Chen, but they understood that this wasn’t the time play coy. They immediately bid their brother goodbye and went on their way.

Jiang Chen shot a glance at Huang’er after sending Liu Wencai and Lu Yali on their way, knowing what she was hoping he would do. Huang’er was a softhearted girl, and she had felt a kinship with Wei Xing’er even though they’d met each other only once at the Great Scarlet Mid Region. It was obvious she wanted to head to Great Scarlet Capital and save her. But he felt that now wasn’t the best time to save Wei Xing’er. The cultivation of an evil art and the process of nurturing Wei Xing’er into the perfect cultivation cauldron wasn’t something that could be achieved in just a day or two. Jiang Chen felt that saving Wei Xing’er after he returned from the desolate wildlands might be a better choice.

It wasn’t that he was a cold blooded man. It was just that curing Huang’er of her Generation Binding Curse was more important than saving Wei Xing’er to him. Wei Xing’er wouldn’t be in danger even if he did nothing for now. But Huang’er’s Requiem Wood might be gone if he missed this opportunity. Although he’d managed to suppress the Generation Binding Curse for now, it was ultimately a temporary measure. If her curse were to erupt one day without the Requiem Wood to cure it once and for all, then even Jiang Chen would be able to do nothing about it.

“Huang’er, I know that you wish to save Wei Xing’er, but we can’t afford to delay our trip to the desolate wildlands any longer. How about this, we’ll come back to Great Scarlet Capital after we return? The Resplendent Emerald Veranda is still nurturing Wei Xing’er, so it’ll be a few years more before its master can use her properly. There was no way he would give Wei Xing’er her current treatment if it’s something can be completed in a short time.” Jiang Chen’s deduction made a lot of sense.

Huang’er thought over the suggestion for a moment, knowing that everything Jiang Chen did was for her own sake. Therefore, she nodded, “Then let us go and return quickly.” The pair quickly left the place after making up their minds.

Inside the Great Scarlet Capital, at the Veranda.

“Have the five not returned yet?” The Veranda master had youthful looks and a head of shiny black hair. The look in his eyes were deep in a way that gave people an unfathomable feeling. The senior executives standing before him right now were all emperor realm experts.

“Master, they have served the Veranda unfailingly for many years. I am sure that they’ll capture their targets if they truly are the remnants of Myriad Domain.”

“Don’t worry, Master.”

The master nodded and asked, “We have not slipped up in front of the young madam, have we?”

“Allow me to report, Master. The young madam looked pretty unhappy after she returned today. It seems that she figured out that the slaves she bought were resold in the market.”

The Veranda master frowned, “Whose sloppy work is this?”

"Please quell your anger. As long as she is not privy of your ultimate objective, I doubt that she'll care too much about it. In my opinion, she seems to enjoy her life as the young madam quite a bit."

He pondered for a moment. "Ensure that everything is conducted in absolute secrecy. I will achieve a breakthrough in three years' time."

Suddenly, someone rushed in to make a report in the middle of their discussion. "Master, the second group of men we sent out reported that everyone in the first group was killed in action."

"What?!" Everyone present jumped to their feet with a look of shock on their faces.

Chapter 866: Homeland Remains, Empty Chairs at Empty Tables

Five sage realm cultivators were a remarkable force, even for an organization as strong as the Resplendent Emerald Veranda. Their extermination in the blink of an eye struck a heavy blow to the organization. The five had a sky sage realm cultivator among them, and moreover were proficient in coordinated tactics. A combination like this could duke it out even with a lower rank emperor realm cultivator. One or two dying wasn't entirely unacceptable, as long as a few others escaped. But it was the worst result of everyone dead!

A normal first or second level emperor realm cultivator wouldn't be able to kill all of them at once. In the beginning levels of emperor realm, a cultivator's domain wasn't yet stable, and fully containing five sage realm cultivators on a large scale was a struggle. As long as one remained free, they could activate an escape glyph to escape. Fleeing meant opportunities to send out a distress signal to their compatriots at the Veranda. But neither flight nor signal had been possible in time. Their deaths had been sudden and complete, the act itself cleanly performed.

Their opponent, then, had to have been at least third level emperor realm, perhaps even earth emperor realm. There were many earth emperor realm cultivators in the Great Scarlet Mid Region, but they could all be named. None of them had motive to oppose the Veranda. In that moment, the air was thick with contemplation. One of the higher-ups frowned. "Did they hunt down the wrong people?"

"Surely not. It's not like they've done our work for only a day or two. If we weren't satisfied with their work, why would we send them as the vanguard?"

"But if it's an cultivator from outside this region, what interest do they have in simply buying a few origin realm slaves here? It's not like those slaves are important or anything. They're not even disciples of the Myriad Domain's six great sects."

"Perhaps they're a remnant of the Walkabout Sect? Otherwise, why would the young madam be familiar with them?" The senior executives members voiced their concerns and conclusions. nove. **LB**(1n

The master of the Veranda was silent. The news of the five's death had been sudden, and he wasn't quite prepared for them. "The head of the Walkabout Sect has already fallen in battle. Of the other important members of that sect, only Elder Wu Hen escaped. I hear he did so alongside Elder Yun Nie. But, that elder is only a sage realm cultivator... he wouldn't be able to kill all five of them all at once, unless it were by poison."

Mentioning the matter of poison use elicited serious looks from everyone all around. The Walkabout Sect had indeed been a sect which relied on poisons heavily, and were very proficient in their usage. It

was an enlightening reminder. The master of the Veranda raised an eyebrow, looking at a white-haired elder. "Great Elder, this matter is quite strange. I would like to trouble you to investigate with a team personally. It doesn't matter if you can catch them or not. Investigate the scene for any clues, and notify me at the earliest opportunity."

The elder nodded. "I shall go immediately."

"Bring as many as you need," the master instructed.

Another elder piped up. "Master, shall we ask the young madam about this?"

"There is no need to wake a sleeping lion before we are ready to handle it. If they're really from the Walkabout Sect, they'll show up again. We just need to sit back and wait."

.....

Jiang Chen was already a few thousand miles away from the scene of the crime by now. There was no more dawdling on his journey. Two days later, the two of them successfully entered Myriad Domain. After weathering the ravages of war, this region was now much less bustling than that of yesteryear. There were traces of fierce battles everywhere. On the roads, there were even wind-worn skeletons and blackened bloodstains from time to time. Some corpses were still in the stages of decay, and were visited by various scavenging vultures. The birds congregated by the bodies, ravenously tearing flesh from bone. The sight evoked an endless feeling of somberment.

It was a devastated landscape, a banquet of bones. Although Jiang Chen didn't exactly have strong feelings for the Myriad Domain, he couldn't resist becoming angry at the scenery. It was a good thing that Huang'er was by his side. She held his palm softly, soothing his heart and mood like delicate rain.

When he passed by Regal Pill Palace territory, Jiang Chen hardened his heart in order to refrain from revisiting. He was afraid that he would begin a killing spree out of hate and vengeance. Once he did, numerous factions would be notified, and his operation would be jeopardized. When he departed from there, he noticed an increase in wandering cultivators. Evidently, most of the territories here were under the grasp of various factions in the Great Scarlet Mid Region. However, masters from outside clearly weren't as capable as the locals had been. Thus, the Myriad Domain had become a heaven for wandering cultivators instead.

The irritation and depression in Jiang Chen's heart subsided a little as they traveled further from Regal Pill Palace land. The sect had fallen already. Jiang Chen had returned once before, and there would be no difference from back then if he were to do so now. It would increase his sorrow perhaps, and nothing more.

The Skyl Laurel Kingdom and Precious Tree Sect however, he urgently wished to return to those places and see how they fared. The scenery on the way was no different from when he'd first entered Myriad Domain. That continued to be the case even as he approached the sixteen kingdoms alliance. Blood dripped from Jiang Chen's heart. "It looks like this great loss of life wasn't restricted to just the Myriad Domain's core. Distant places, like the sixteen kingdoms alliance, were affected as well."

He finally entered sixteen kingdoms' territory. Myriad Spirit Sect was closest to the border; as Jiang Chen expected, the sect no longer held those lands, being replaced by a small faction from the Great Scarlet

Mid Region. Already numb to the shock, Jiang Chen didn't stay long. He reached the Precious Tree Sect after another half-day. The devastation was especially bad here, and the checkpoints stricter.

The Eternal Celestial Capital and Ninesuns Sky Sect had both made numerous arrangements near Precious Tree Sect territory. Thankfully, Jiang Chen was dressed just like any other wandering cultivator, including those who were plentiful within the areas close by. He wasn't given away. The Precious Tree Sect clearly had new masters.

Mundane nations like the Skylaurel Kingdom were untouched. However, the kingdom's royal family were mere figureheads now. If not for the unspoken rule that mundane factions were not to be touched, someone would have surely come along and utterly destroyed the royal family as well. By now, fourth prince Ye Rong had long ascended to the throne, becoming king of Skylaurel. However, there was no savoring the position. He was a puppet under another's control.

Jiang Chen went to Skylaurel's capital covertly to take a look around. The Dragonteeth Guard was intact as well. His old acquaintances, such as Tian Shao and Tang Long, were still around. Unfortunately, they were only superficially glamorous and lacked autonomy. The king was a puppet, and they were puppets of a puppet. Skylaurel's four great sites had been utterly destroyed as well. Jiang Chen was somewhat cheered up by the fact that many had prepared in advance, thanks to his early warning.

When calamity had befallen the Myriad Domain, Ye Chonglou had gone into seclusion along with a large number of elites. With him was Jiang Chen's uncle Jiang Tong and cousin Jiang Yu, as well as Qiao Baishi, who had joined Jiang Chen ever since his Eastern Kingdom days. They hadn't been vulnerable to the predations of outside factions. Jiang Chen was secretly relieved that he had given a lot of funds and equipment to Ye Chonglou before he went to the Myriad Grand Ceremony. He'd told the elder then to leave Regal Pill Palace and return to Precious Tree Sect in order to prepare for the worst.

It seemed that the old man had trusted him implicitly. For him to have escaped the disaster, his execution was top-notch as well. The Precious Tree Sect was unharmed, and his uncle and cousin were in no danger. Jiang Chen was finally able to lay down his worries. He did not think it prudent to act now on Skylaurel's behalf, either. The grand scheme of things was such that even if he did help the kingdom and restore Ye Rong's rule, it would be meaningless.

Once he'd departed, someone else would find it easy to undo his work.

There was no reason for him to make a move on impulse. It would only further endanger his past acquaintances. Once the overall situation shifted, then an opportunity would perhaps arise. Otherwise, it was best to maintain the current state of things and let sleeping lions lie. Jiang Chen gathered some more information before coming to the royal tutor's residence. Ye Chonglou had lived here, once upon a time, but it was owned now by another.

He stood in the streets beside the residence, and remembered. It had been another night like this, many years ago, when Dan Fei had spoken the secrets of her heart to him. It was a long time since then, but Dan Fei seemed to have vanished thin air. He kept the letter she'd left him. It was still in his traveling bags. There was only a single line: even thousands and thousands of words are insufficient, I will never regret pining for my love. These words crushed down on his heart like a mountain.

Each time he remembered them, Jiang Chen felt strangely flustered. He didn't quite know why that was. He felt that something was amiss, and there was a truth that needed to be uncovered. He even felt that Dan Fei's sudden disappearance might have something to do with him. Except, just what might it be? He really had no idea. Even Ye Chonglou had once reminded him to help look for Dan Fei.

The streets were still as they were, but it was now empty chairs at empty tables. Jiang Chen felt a bit melancholy, and he dallied for a while before leaving. He didn't plan on visiting the Precious Tree Sect. Since it'd fallen into someone else's hands, it was surely the same as everywhere else. Visiting would only increase his heartache.

"Brother Chen, have you felt an odd feeling ever since setting foot into the sixteen kingdom alliance?" Huang'er suddenly asked.

Jiang Chen had been depressed ever since arriving, so although he'd felt that something was off, he hadn't paid attention to it. His thoughts turned in that direction now that Huang'er had mentioned it.

"There's a certain strange, indescribable presence on many of the cultivators here." A complicated tone had crept into Huang'er's voice.

Chapter 867: Returning to the Boundless Catacombs

While they were still speaking to each other, a figure suddenly walked out of an alley of the royal tutor's residence. After the initial surprise, the figure immediately smiled. "Have you two come for that secret realm too?"

Secret realm? Jiang Chen felt a bit of astonishment, but he smiled and said nothing in reply.

"Hehe, there are only two days left before registration closes, and the amount of spots left are few to say the least. You should hurry up if you wish to register."

Jiang Chen answered smilingly, "We're not in a hurry." *no ve-lb(1n*

"You're not?" The person frowned, "The number of spots are limited. You won't qualify for participation if you don't register yourselves soon. Everyone is required to follow a strict set of rules this time."

Jiang Chen had visited practically every reputable secret realm that existed in the sixteen kingdoms alliance. Therefore, he didn't believe that there was another secret realm here that could catch his attention. Seeing that Jiang Chen was unmoved by his words, the person's tone turned a little hostile, "What are you here for if not for the registration? Are you trying to spy on us or something?"

"Is this place your home's private grounds or something?" Jiang Chen countered with a sneer.

The person grew angry and laughed oddly. "You're pretty arrogant for an insignificant wandering cultivator, aren't you? If you're here to register then get moving already, but if not then get your ass out of this place now. Save your spying for another place."

Jiang Chen could eliminate a small fry like this with a finger if he wished. But he had important things to do right now, so why would he? He sneered, shot Huang'er a glance and left with her.

"Hmph, I guess you aren't stupid enough to fight me." The person thought that the two wandering cultivators had left because they feared his terrifying aura. He muttered behind Jiang Chen and Huang'er's back with an air of pride.

When the duo left the royal tutor's residence, they noticed a lot of wandering cultivators rushing towards their direction in a hurry.

"What kind of secret realm is this to attract so many cultivators?" The sight of these wandering cultivators gave even Jiang Chen odd vibes. They'd likely come from other powerful domains as they were obviously not on the same level as those in the sixteen kingdoms alliance. Origin realm cultivators and sage realm cultivators were literally crawling all over the place.

Huang'er frowned, "I can sense a frenetic energy from these people. It's almost as if they were drawn here by something deadly attractive. What on earth is it? Can it be..."

Jiang Chen's expression abruptly changed when he heard this. That the prize these people were looking for might be the Requiem Wood had hit him as well. Had news of the Requiem Wood finally leaked to the public? If that was the case, then the difficulty of their journey had just inched up another notch. Still, Jiang Chen was determined to hunt for the Requiem Wood at his own pace. That the place was crowded didn't matter, that all these wandering cultivators had come together for an unknown reason didn't matter either. As long as he had He Hongshu's map and data, he didn't need to pay attention to any of these variables.

"No matter what happens, as long as the Requiem Wood exists, I will obtain it and eliminate the Generation Binding Curse plaguing you once and for all, Huang'er." Jiang Chen's tone was imbued with unquestionable determination.

The Eastern Kingdom wasn't that far away after they left the Skylaurel Kingdom. Jiang Chen ultimately decided to swing by the former as well after a moment's thought. Although the Eastern Kingdom was his birthplace, there was no one else he cared for there except Eastern Zhiruo. The kingdom might be a remote location, but it too was currently ripe with unusual activity. It hadn't escaped disaster simply because it was located out of the way.

The entire Eastern Kingdom was more or less experiencing the same thing as the Skylaurel Kingdom. Although the Eastern royal family was still nominally the ruler of the Eastern Kingdom, they had become puppets just like Ye Rong of Skylaurel Kingdom. Contrary to expectations, Eastern Zhiruo wasn't disturbed by the changes happening around her because she wasn't a cultivator. She was staying inside the palace and living the life of a princess. The changes of the outside world didn't affect her much.

Many years had passed, and the sickly little girl he knew in the past had now grown up into a beautiful adult. But despite her growth, her constitution still made her look a little sickly. The tinge of sadness furrowing her brows suggested that she wasn't quite happy with the palace life she was currently leading.

Perhaps it was a mistake to leave her here back then. Jiang Chen thought as he watched her from the palace walls outside. That being said, he also knew that leaving Eastern Zhiruo behind was the best choice he could've made at the time. If she had come along with her sister Eastern Gouyu, she might have perished during the destruction of the Regal Pill Palace.

Huang'er knew about Eastern Zhiruo. Back when Huang'er stayed at the Eastern Kingdom, she already knew that Jiang Chen's rise to power had started with Eastern Zhiruo's treatment. Therefore, she wasn't surprised that Jiang Chen would visit Eastern Zhiruo.

"Let's go." Jiang Chen watched over Eastern Zhiruo for a moment, but didn't stay any longer than was necessary. He neither wanted to shatter the peace she currently enjoyed or meet with her right now. It might not be a good thing to catch up now either. Jiang Chen's worries were completely settled by the time he left the Eastern Kingdom. Although the sixteen kingdoms alliance was just as tattered as the Myriad Domain, the situation was better than he initially feared.

After leaving the Eastern Kingdom and approaching the Boundless Catacombs, Jiang Chen came to a pause, "Please wait here for a moment, Huang'er. I would like to meet an old friend here."

Huang'er was very generous and didn't pry into Jiang Chen's private business. She smiled softly and nodded in response.

The Boundless Catacombs were the same as he remembered. To everyone else, it was just a secret realm in the Eastern Kingdom. A secret realm of this level held no attraction to any foreign cultivators at all. After all, the bar of the Eastern Kingdom Hidden Dragon Trials was too low. The Boundless Catacombs was a secret realm targeted at true qi realm cultivators. Naturally, no one paid attention to a secret realm of this level. But Jiang Chen knew more about this place than others.

Back when he was undertaking the trial of the Boundless Catacombs, he had been hunted by the assassins of Hidden Death. Two descendants of the Soaring Dragon clan had also tried to harm him. When he escaped into the depths of Boundless Catacombs, he once encountered a wild beast called Mang Qi at the fourth level. Jiang Chen had made a pact with the creature at the time.

Although Jiang Chen didn't notice anything amiss back then, Mang Qi's presence and the formation beneath the Eastern Kingdom now felt absolutely strange to him. He walked deeper into the Boundless Catacombs. The infinite army of swordbirds that once threatened his well-being was no longer a threat to him. They shied away from him in fear when he unleashed his aura.

Jiang Chen walked all the way to the third level and entered into the abyss of the Boundless Catacombs once more. This was supposed to be a trip down the memory lane, but Jiang Chen noticed something different this time. Although he had visited this place once, he couldn't sense even a shred of familiarity from the abyss around him. With his level of consciousness, there was no way he would have no impression of the place if he had came through this way before.

"As I thought, this Boundless Catacombs contains an enormous secret." Jiang Chen grew even more certain in his assumption. The scions of the Eastern Kingdom dukedoms who entered this place normally operated around the first and second level. Anyone who could make their way down to the third level was considered pretty impressive. Jiang Chen felt as if the abyss was truly endless as he walked into the fourth level of the Boundless Catacombs. There didn't seem to be a fixed route that existed at all in this place. The innumerable forks in the road overlapping one another made him feel like he was feeling his way inside a maze.

"It looks like the Boundless Catacombs aren't as simple as they appear. Most who enter the fourth level lose their way and never make it into the heart of this place. I didn't find any clues despite having come

to this place once. There's definitely a formation in this place. Those who aren't able to walk behind the curtains of the formation can only be lost forever amidst the infinite forks of roads." Jiang Chen was no longer a greenhorn in terms of formations. After inheriting the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect's formation foundation, his knowledge of formations could now be considered quite vast.

However, this Great Formation of Heavenly Soul Confinement couldn't be completed by the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect prior to their destruction. Several other sects specializing in formations had to come together before it was finally complete. "Can it be that this Great Formation of Heavenly Soul Confinement really was arranged by the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect?" Conflicting feelings plagued Jiang Chen's mind as he walked further into the abyss. If the Great Formation of Heavenly Soul Confinement really was set up by the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, then the living beings who were sealed here might very well be a foreign race of ancient times. However, he'd promised Mang Qi that he would take the creature out of this place.

"Let's meet Mang Qi first and see what he has to say. If Mang Qi really is of foreign origin, then I must restrict its actions and prevent it from committing evil, even if I am to fulfill my promise and save him from this place." He recalled that Mang Qi had shown itself as a spirit rank cultivator at the time. But now that he thought about it, it was plainly impossible. If it really was a spirit rank cultivator, it would've died a long time ago already. There was no way it could've lived since ancient times. He had no doubt that Mang Qi had hidden its true strength.

While thinking, Jiang Chen suddenly sensed something before him. A purple flash later, a door seemed to appear in the void. Jiang Chen was startled. Countless green light suddenly exploded where the purple flash was.

Thump thump thump. The familiar shaking was caused by Mang Qi's footsteps.

"Jiang Chen, you're here!" Mang Qi's voice rang from inside the darkness.

Jiang Chen stayed at the same spot and unleashed his consciousness completely. He was fully on his guard towards Mang Qi. Its enormous body appeared from the darkness as its bell-like eyes roamed around Jiang Chen's body, "It's only been a few years, but your growth truly is impressive, Jiang Chen. I knew that my eye for talent is good!"

"You haven't changed at all, Mang Qi." Jiang Chen said indifferently.

Mang Qi was startled for a brief instant before he examined Jiang Chen. Then, it smiled wryly, "It looks like you have your guard up against me?"

Jiang Chen didn't deny it, "You are a being who's trapped inside the Great Formation of Heavenly Soul Confinement. If I'm not mistaken, you're a member of a foreign race, aren't you?"

He had learned about the foreign races from the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect. That was the deduction he came to with knowledge, information and rumors he'd collected over time.

Mang Qi exclaimed, "You know about the foreign races?"

"Are you part of them?" Jiang Chen frowned.

Mang Qi's expression dimmed, but it didn't deny the accusation, "From the standpoint of a Divine Abyss Continent denizen, yes. I am part of a foreign race."

Jiang Chen's expression turned cold. His assumption wasn't wrong.

Chapter 868: Mang Qi's True Origin

"You, a foreign being from outside the realm, are asking me, a cultivator of the Divine Abyss Continent to save you from the Great Formation of Heavenly Soul Confinement? What a great scheme," Jiang Chen mocked.

Mangji only smiled wryly without argument. In an instant, the air between them grew stiff. In the darkness, neither man nor beast spoke. It was a beat later that Mang Qi sighed softly as it spoke. "Jiang Chen, when you've lived to my age and been in this situation, perhaps any edges, any opinions you have would have already been worn down by the endless ebb and flow of time. Nonetheless, since you have brought up this matter, I feel that I still have to defend myself a little. Would you be willing to grant me this chance? You can choose not to listen."

Jiang Chen wasn't tyrannical to the point of denying the creature speech. He calmly replied, "Say your piece."

Mang Qi nodded. His eyes shone with the bleakness of the endless currents of change. "It is as you say. I am from another realm. Most of those been bound here by the great formation are as well. It's just that there are differences even within the foreign realms. The only ones who truly invaded your Divine Abyss Continent are the demon race. The rest of us are merely their puppets, mercenaries under their manipulations. Our homes have long since been seized by the demon race. Our people, our children are mere cannon fodder and sacrificial pawns coerced into forced conquest across the endless planes! You can see me as a foreign being, but the ones invading your Divine Abyss Continent are actually the demon race."

This speech by Mang Qi was not too long, but its meaning was clear.

"You are puppets of the demon race?" Jiang Chen furrowed his brows, half-believing Mang Qi's words.

"That's right. We're all victims of the demon race. Being trapped in this formation by the heavyweights of the Divine Abyss Continent is our just desserts. We carry neither hate nor vengeance towards your Divine Abyss Continent. Because to you, whether we came here voluntarily or not, we are still invaders. It is natural that we should be trapped and killed. However, the real source of evil springs from the demon race. The instigator of this war is the demon race. It's this greedy and aggressive evil race!" Mang Qi's eyes flashed with boundless hate as he said his. The fires of rage in his gaze seemed to have blazed without rest since an eternity ago. "You may question me, doubt me or even hate me. And you're right in doing so. To you natives, we are no doubt invaders. From your point of view, anyone who encroaches upon your homeland is an enemy or a bandit."

Mang Qi sighed lightly. There was a dreamlike quality to his voice as he mused, "I had a family and a homeland. My home was an incredibly beautiful place. The various races there might have occasionally disagreed and fought, but everyone lived in peace. That is, until we were discovered by the demon race. With them, they brought endless destruction. They ravaged my homeland, eliminated countless races, rounded up every warrior and sent them on forced conquests whenever and wherever they liked... Who

knows how many places like my homeland the demon race have razed? I must commend the heavyweights of your Divine Abyss Continent for their strength. At least they can withstand the demon race's invasion. Even under such onslaught, you can stand firm against the destruction of your homeland..."

Jiang Chen was curious. "Haven't you been trapped underground? How do you know that my homeland hasn't been destroyed?"

Mang Qi laughed bitterly. "That's because you don't know the extent of the destruction the demon race can wreck. If they successfully dominate this realm, then how could there be any traces of your human bloodline left? How could the human race continue on until today? And how could you be standing in front of me?"

With the strength of the demon race's bloodline, they did not simply occupy any place they invaded. They assimilated the place starting from the bloodline and finally changed every race into denizens of the demon race. If there were races that could not transform or integrate into the demon race's bloodline, they would be turned into slaves or tools of war. Otherwise, they would all be killed.

"Mang Qi, I'll believe you for the time being. I only want to know, just how many heavyweights have been sealed by this formation? And how many of them are members of the demon race?" Jiang Chen knew too little of the distant past. The records of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect hadn't mentioned too much either and had almost no details. Clearly, since there had been no one left in the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect to return, there would naturally be no substantial records. Jiang Chen wished to take this chance to thoroughly understand everything.

Mang Qi shook his head. "Not a single one is a member of demon race."

"What do you mean?" A flash of distrust crossed Jiang Chen's face.

"The only ones in the formation traps are puppets like me who have been forced into combat. I don't know exactly how many of us there are. Nor do I know how many are still alive. I only know that in the initial battle, the heavyweights of your Divine Abyss Continent had given their all to construct such a terrifying seal, in order to lure us to this place and trap us within the seal. In that battle, the demon race had only pulled strings behind the curtains. None of them actually fought."

This news was extremely unexpected. Mang Qi continued, "If you don't believe me, you can extract my blood and bring it to an expert for confirmation. Then you'll know that I don't carry the demon race's bloodline."

Instead, Jiang Chen raised an eyebrow. "Since the demon race forced you to fight, why did they not assimilate you?"

Mang Qi forced a laugh. "The demon race are an arrogant bunch. All along, they've believed themselves to be the most outstanding, the most distinguished race in the universe. As such, they're exceptionally proud of their bloodline. Not everyone is qualified to inherit their so-called bloodline assimilation. We were only their puppets of war. From their point of view, we weren't even good enough to receive their bloodline."

"Are you serious?" Jiang Chen was dumbfounded.

“Actually, that is only the arrogant prattle of the demon race. In reality, despite the strong invasive ability of the demon race’s bloodline, the universe is too wide and there are just too many races. Not every race’s bloodline can be so easily taken over. Many races are too difficult to assimilate, nor do the demons choose to assimilate all races. Normally, races with strong offensive abilities that are good at close combat possess strong bloodlines. They’re gifted with a natural resistance against the demon race. For example, you humans aren’t all qualified to inherit the demon race’s bloodline. Instead, they will select some stronger bloodlines to assimilate. With generation after generation of endless multiplying and assimilation, the demon race will achieve their goal of replacing the original bloodline.”

Jiang Chen understood quite a bit about the demon race from his previous life. Some of this information he was aware of but there were some parts that were new to him as well.

“Then, you’re one of the races that the demon race couldn’t assimilate?” Jiang Chen asked.

Mang Qi sighed. “If we’re talking about bloodline assimilation, they can assimilate me over my dead body. Even if I’ve become a puppet of war, I can at least still latch on to the string of hope that one day, I can return to my hometown and rebuild my home. If I lose even my bloodline, I will have completely turned into a zombie. What right do I have to return home with a sullied bloodline?”

It was clear as day that this Mang Qi had very unique feelings for his family and hometown. To him, they were obviously saintly existences.

“That means you want to leave this place not in order to incite trouble, but in order to return to your homeland?” Jiang Chen felt that his question was a little superfluous but asked anyway.

“Yes.” Mang Qi answered very sincerely, “I can swear a heavenly oath to you. It was definitely not my intention to come here. Nor is it my intention to retaliate against your Divine Abyss Continent upon leaving this place. The endless flow of time has worn down every ambition I ever had. Now, I only have one desire and that is to return to my homeland. Even if I can only glance at it before dying the next second, I will pass on with a smile.” As he said this, Mang Qi’s eyes glowed with a divine light, the flow of intense feelings of sincerity.

Jiang Chen also felt sorrow in his heart. From what he had observed, this Mang Qi was not lying. He immediately nodded and replied earnestly, “Thank you for explaining things to me. The previous agreement will still be in effect. Should I gain the power to in the future, I will definitely bring you out of this place. However, leaving the Divine Abyss Continent will also not be easy.”

Mang Qi’s eyes revealed rays of delight. “As long as I can leave this seal, I would at least have regained my freedom. As for when I can return home, that’d depend on luck. As long as I’m still alive and my body is my own, there is still hope for me to return to my homeland. Wouldn’t you say so?”

As long as there was freedom, there was hope. Without freedom, everything was just empty prattle. n-
(OveℓbIn

“Yes. However, at my current level, I cannot bring you out from this formation. You can only remain here for the time being.”

“That’s alright. It’s fine. I’ve already waited for countless years. What’s impossible about waiting a while longer? Jiang Chen, I have a premonition. If I am ever able to leave this place, the person who sets me

free will be you and no one else.” As a creature that had existed since ancient times, Mang Qi possessed powerful instincts. When it first sensed Jiang Chen’s existence, it had felt that this boy was different from the rest. It had sensed some traits that were not from this world on the human boy’s body. When it saw Jiang Chen again today, the changes to Jiang Chen’s body within a mere ten years were astounding. This only reinforced Mang Qi’s opinion.

“Since you’re that confident in me, then wait a little longer. Similarly, I also hope that you’re not playing any games with me.”

Mang Qi hurriedly replied, “Nowadays, there is only my home on my mind. I think of nothing else. That’s right, what made you return here to visit me?”

Jiang Chen recounted the situation in the world outside. Mang Qi knew nothing about the Divine Abyss, nor was he too interested in its matters.

“You said you want to go to the desolate wildlands?” Something in Mang Qi’s eyes shifted when he heard this.

“Yes. The Requiem Wood, have you heard of it?” Jiang Chen asked. The moment this question left his lips, Jiang Chen discovered instead that Mang Qi’s expression had instantly turned extremely ugly and deadly serious.

Chapter 869: Secrets of the Demon Race

Mang Qi’s expression was extremely ugly. Its tone was unprecedentedly stern as it responded, “In ancient times, the desolate wildlands were invaded by the demon race. The nest of the demon race is precisely in the desolate wildlands. This place where we were sealed is the boundary of the desolate wildlands. Are you really thinking of charging straight into demon race territory?”

“Demon race territory? We’re in the Divine Abyss Continent. There aren’t any demons here.”

Mang Qi shook its head repeatedly, “There’s no way the demon race isn’t present. The bloodline of the demon race is not so easily extinguished. Their temporary absence may only be a sign that they are biding their time. Without the demon race, why have the desolate wildlands remained as desolate as ever even today? Because you human cultivators don’t even dare to occupy that place, because the bloodline of the demon race has not disappeared at all. Jiang Chen, if you... if you don’t know how terrifying the demon race is, it’s best that you don’t approach the desolate wildlands.” Mang Qi was clearly extremely agitated. It hated the idea of Jiang Chen risking his life.

“I’m sorry but I must go to the desolate wildlands. I have to obtain the Requiem Wood.” Jiang Chen will not let anyone stand in the way of his plans.

Mang Qi stared at Jiang Chen with eyes as wide as copper bells before it sighed softly, “Do you know that the Requiem Wood never existed in your Divine Abyss Continent? It’s a species the demon race brought with them.”

Jiang Chen laughed, “That doesn’t matter to me.”

He had seen Requiem Wood before in his previous life. It wasn’t necessarily a species that belonged solely to the demon race. There were many other races that could cultivate Requiem Wood as well.

However, Requiem Wood was indeed a kind of plant favored by the demon race. Nonetheless, Jiang Chen needed to get his hands on the Requiem Wood. He would climb a mountain even if he knew it was infested with tigers.

Other people might be terrified of the demon race. But with the knowledge accrued from his previous life, Jiang Chen possessed no bone-chilling fear towards the demon race. To him, the demon race was nothing more than just another race in the heavenly realm. While they were strong, they weren't powerful to the extent that other races would quake in their boots upon hearing their name.

When Mang Qi saw his stubbornness, it could tell that this youth had already matured. He had his own way of thinking now, to the degree that people around him had no way of changing his standpoint. Mang Qi felt shock but also a sense of gratification. Jiang Chen's growth was music to his ears. The faster Jiang Chen matured, the brighter its hope of leaving this place became. Ultimately, this was a good thing.

"Mang Qi, I might be speaking out of turn, but what exactly is your cultivation?" Jiang Chen naturally did not believe that Mang Qi was truly only in the spirit realm.

Mang Qi smiled bashfully before saying in a somewhat embarrassed voice, "It's true that I hid my true strength last time, but I didn't want you to be scared. I was also worried that you wouldn't understand, that you wouldn't accept me."

"Just tell me. I can handle it," Jiang Chen smiled.

"That year, the ones who were chosen by the demon race to be leaders of the puppet army were all acknowledged by the heavenly law. Do you understand me when I put things this way?"

"Empyrean rank?" Jiang Chen's pupils contracted rapidly in shock as he stared unwaveringly at Mang Qi.

"Indeed. There are at least a hundred others like me within the formation and countless others below empyrean rank. However, it's almost impossible for anyone below empyrean rank to survive for so many years. Of course, each race differs from the others. But anyone able to make their way here, even those below empyrean rank, is certainly no poser. Although they haven't been able to train, but if they managed to survive until now, they must undoubtedly be terrifying existences!"

Jiang Chen was speechless. He's already given Mang Qi's power the benefit of the doubt, but who'd have thought that even then, he had underestimated it. More than a hundred beings of empyrean potential were sealed within this formation! If a situation of this scale was unleashed, it would pose an unfathomable danger to the Divine Abyss Continent. He couldn't guarantee that every one of the beings trapped here was like Mang Qi who did not harbor any hatred for the Continent. His expression instantly turned grave. A moment later, he asked, "Mang Qi, I hope you keep our agreement a secret. If I manage to get you out of here one day, I also hope that none of the others here will be released to wreak havoc on the Divine Abyss Continent as a result."

Mang Qi fell silent for a second before it nodded. "I will take the secret to my grave. However, I feel that if you really manage to break this seal one day, it'd be most beneficial if you could use the others for your own goals."

Jiang Chen pondered on this, but he still replied, "We'll see when the time comes. If their personalities are all like yours then it wouldn't be so bad. I'm just afraid that some will be overly stubborn in their ambitions."

Mang Qi sighed, "If the edges of their personalities have not been worn out even after this amount of time, then something must be wrong with their brains."

Things like personalities were difficult to predict. Some people's stubbornness could be washed away by the tides of time but others might be naturally unbridled. No amount of years could change that.

"Wouldn't an even larger number of demon race forces be needed to manipulate so many puppets of war to serve them?" Jiang Chen asked abruptly. n-(Ove**l**bln

"Why would the demon race need so many troops to control puppets? But still, there were some troops of demons, consisting of quite a few members, that invaded the Divine Abyss Continent. However, they obviously underestimated the power of your continent. Those few troops failed to achieve anything. From the looks of it now, they should have been suppressed by the heavyweights of your Divine Abyss Continent. But don't just assume that everything is over," Mang Qi replied in a heavy voice. "When the orbital trajectory of the heavenly planes coincides once more with the demon race's path of invasion, the demon race will be given another pathway into this place. That is when they will strike again."

Jiang Chen was very clear on matters related to orbital trajectories. As the son of the Celestial Emperor in his previous life, he naturally knew the theory behind the movement of the heavenly planes. These realms contained countless secular realms and minor worlds. These worlds that fell within the umbrella of the heavenly planes were all governed by the laws of heavenly orbit. Every plane was interconnected through a heavenly path. Only, the heavenly paths were closed most of the time.

The overlap of heavenly paths signaled the time when interplanar wars was at its most active. Intersection meant that the heavenly paths were straightened out, and no obstacles were in between each other. The entrance of one plane into another was as simple as breaking into a neighbor's backyard. Of course, the realms and minor worlds within the heavenly planes were as numerous as water droplets in the ocean and stars in the sky. There was no way to account for all of them.

The time until the heavenly paths into these countless planes overlapped again could be as short as ten thousand years, or as long as more than a few million years. Apart from the overlap of heavenly paths, the only other way for a plane to invade another was through interplanar hopping. That kind of dimensional travel required an extreme amount of time and effort, and was fraught with danger. Therefore, unless the heavenly paths overlapped, there was rarely any conflict between planes, unless they were close enough to each other to simplify interplanar travel. From the records of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect, the invasion of the demon race should have been because they accidentally discovered the Divine Abyss Continent during the overlap of heavenly paths.

When Mang Qi saw Jiang Chen's skepticism, it emphasized very seriously, "Don't doubt me. The demon race holds long grudges. The demon king will definitely not forget the defeat of his armies here. When the heavenly paths overlap again, they will definitely invade again in even greater numbers. Even more heavyweights of the demon race will descend upon this place. Mark my words!"

At least ten thousand years had passed since the ancient era. Who knew when the heavenly paths would overlap again? As of now, the Divine Abyss Continent, especially those in the know within the human domain, did not fear the invasion of the demon race from outside the continent. What they feared was kindling the embers of the demon race within the Continent.

The demon race had definitely not been completely exterminated during the ancient war. It was just that those that had been sealed were still in stasis and those in hibernation were still isolated. That war had only come to a temporary lull. It had not concluded, and the various races of the Divine Abyss Continent only buried their heads into the sand. Everyone was content to pretend that this matter had never happened. They were satisfied with simply deceiving themselves to get past each day. In particular, what had occurred with He Hongshu reinforced Jiang Chen's belief that the demon race had already begun to stir again.

However, Jiang Chen was not that fearful of the demon race, nor did he desire to escape. "Mang Qi, I will keep what you've told me in mind. The movement of heavenly paths is governed by the laws of heavenly dao. No man can obstruct them. All I can do is to prepare myself to greet any unforeseen changes." This was Jiang Chen's truest mentality.

Mang Qi was somewhat astonished by Jiang Chen's confidence. But as he thought about his judgment of Jiang Chen and the latter's stunning progress in recent years, he began to relax. "In short, just be careful. You'll definitely alert the demon race if you try to cross the desolate wildlands," Mang Qi warned Jiang Chen again. "Even if they're no longer running rampant in this world, even if they've already gone into hibernation, you must never underestimate the kindling ambitions of the demon race."

Jiang Chen took Mang Qi's painstaking advice to heart. He left the Boundless Catacombs in much higher spirits. At least, Mang Qi wasn't part of the demon race and the contract they had formed would not be something that would come back to bite him. That was a preoccupation that he could finally lay to rest. When Huang'er saw Jiang Chen emerge with both relief and grimness on his face, she was also curious. "Brother Chen, Elder Shun once said that this Boundless Catacombs is a very unique place. Nothing happened to you down there, right?"

Jiang Chen didn't have anything to hide from Huang'er. When she heard all that Jiang Chen had to say about the formation, she was greatly shocked. "Who'd have thought that there'd be so many mysteries surrounding the ancient era!"

"Heh, those heavyweights from the ancient era were such a courageous generation. Yet now, they're all turtling themselves up in the Myriad Abyss Island with no balls to poke their heads out. What the heck is that?" Jiang Chen still looked down on the Myriad Abyss Island. Did they really think that foreign experts would be unable to detect the Divine Abyss Continent if they hid on the island? They were definitely burying their heads into the sand.

Perhaps the Myriad Abyss Island possessed some mysterious way to deceive prying eyes. Indeed, hiding on the island might help one evade those wandering interplanar adventurers. But, when the heavenly plans overlapped once more, when the vengeful demon race launched their large-scale invasion, it wouldn't matter where they hid.

When Huang'er heard Jiang Chen's dissatisfaction towards the Myriad Abyss Island, she also smiled, "Actually, Brother Chen, regarding the Myriad Abyss Island, hiding from other planes' heavyweights is

just one aspect. Another aspect is the geographical advantage of the island. Those people are not only hiding. In the ancient war, countless spirit veins were dispersed and destroyed. Many places are no longer suitable for the training of empyrean experts. It is difficult for those spirit veins to recover without at least a few tens of thousands of years. The Myriad Abyss Island is the only remaining place where empyrean experts can train easily. It is already incredibly difficult for this outside world to accommodate a large number of empyrean experts...”

Chapter 870: The Desolate Wildlands

It wasn't as if Jiang Chen had never considered these reasons. Although certain parts of the explanation sounded reasonable, once those empyrean cultivators had entered Myriad Abyss Island, they'd turned it into their paradise, a forbidden area cut off from the rest of the world. Thereafter, they had never paid any attention to the world around them, showing no interest in matters unrelated to their island.

As a result, a problem more or less arose. As the heavyweights of Myriad Abyss Island continued to hole themselves up in the island for increasing periods of time, they gradually distanced themselves from the outside world. Unlike the heavyweights of the ancient era, they no longer felt the same sense of responsibility. If it had been those heavyweights from the ancient era who had protected their home up until their dying breaths, they would never have abandoned their homeland just because they had found a plot of pure land.

“What a pity. Most heavyweights from that time must have perished during the ancient war. What's left is only a generation of opportunists, it seems.” Jiang Chen surmised.

On the battlefield, especially during the ancient war where entire races had been extinguished, the ones who had managed to survive must have either been profoundly lucky or supremely crafty opportunists. As the saying went, my brothers can die but I will not.

There were quite a number of such snakes in the martial dao world. They only followed one principle: self sacrifice was out of the question. If sacrifices needed to be made in the name of justice, take the lives of others instead. These snakes simply hid. Even if they had to play dead, they still refused to battle to the death like proper men. They could sacrifice anything except their own lives. Of course, not all of them were necessarily like this, but there were definitely plenty of snakes among those who had managed to survive the bitter war of the ancient era.

Jiang Chen continued to mull over Mang Qi's words along the way. After departing from the Boundless Catacombs, their next destination was the Jiang Han province. Back then, the spirit herbs that had been planted in the land with the spirit vein had matured overnight. Jiang Chen had a deep impression of this odd occurrence. He had sensed this was a sign of great foreboding. After so many years, he suddenly wanted to see how everything had developed.

The Jiang Han province had changed beyond recognition. Since this had once been Jiang Chen's hometown, various parties had exerted their influence over this area. Whether it was the Eternal Celestial Capital or the Ninesuns Sky Sect, they had all sent numerous heavyweights to this place, turning it upside down. Only, those close to Jiang Chen had already left the province. The people left behind were all relatives far removed from his family. Jiang Chen didn't feel any sense of attachment towards them. However, even those far-removed Jiang family members had also completely vacated this place.

The land had already turned into a no man's land. Even the monarch of the Eastern Kingdom did not dare to dispatch people to govern this place. This was because this place had been seized by numerous wandering cultivators. It had become a paradise for the activities of wandering cultivators, a rest stop for those looking to explore the desolate wildlands. Indeed, the Jiang Han territory and Jiang Han City were not only much livelier than before, they had also grown massively in scale.

Even the duke's manor had been requisitioned. The outer appearance had stayed the same, but the ones who lived there no longer had any relations with the Jiang family. Jiang Chen didn't feel much sentiment towards the Jiang Han province, but he still felt that there was something distinctly wrong about his province being taken over by other people.

If his father returned and saw that the place of his past glory had been ransacked like this, he would definitely be unhappy. As much as Jiang Chen wanted to shoo these people away, he forcefully restrained this impulse. Right now, everything had to be considered in the greater scheme of things. Prior to obtaining the Requiem Wood, nothing else would be of importance. Much like the Skylareel Kingdom, the place was teeming with passing cultivators. Occasionally, one could even catch a glimpse of some sects' heavyweights. It was truly uncommonly lively for so many people to come and go through the tiny Jiang Han province.

"Just what kind of event is going on?" Jiang Chen felt that there must be a reason behind this unusual buzz.

In the interior of a tavern, Jiang Chen and Huang'er sat in a corner, drinking some ale while listening to the idle chatter of the wandering cultivators around them.

"Apparently, the seal will break within a few days. The fog of mystery enshrouding the desolate wildlands will also be mostly dispersed. Finally, we human cultivators will be able to enter the desolate wildlands, that enormous treasure trove!"

"Brother, you're too optimistic. Since time immemorial, the thousands of miles comprising the desolate wildlands have been sealed off from our human domain. If this seal is currently breaking, it might be indicative of an imminent disaster."

"Quit your alarmist talk. Who knows how many heavenly treasures the desolate wildlands has carried from ancient times until today! Even if there's some danger, it's a necessary risk for the sake of honor and riches!"

"Ugh, I hope you're right."

Jiang Chen and Huang'er heard many similar conversations after sitting for fifteen minutes. The desolate wildlands, a seal, fog and haze... Such terms caused shivers to run silently down their spines.

The Darkmoon Kingdom was located beside the Eastern Kingdom. These two kingdoms were both bordered by the desolate wildlands. Many people saw the two kingdoms as places located on the periphery of the desolate wildlands. Therefore, these two kingdoms had always been rejected and marginalized by the sixteen kingdoms alliance. On the flip side, the sixteen kingdoms alliance was further marginalized and looked down upon by other powers. The root cause of it all was their proximity to the desolate wildlands.

Any place that was located near these desolate wildlands was considered to be a source of danger within the human domain. According to legend, the desolate wildlands was where demons had been sealed away in ancient times. This was the land where the demon race had staked their claim a long time ago; this was where the ancient heavyweights had defeated the demon race and sealed the area off from all other human cultivators. However, anything related to the ancient war with the demon race had been labelled as taboo within the Divine Abyss Continent. No detailed records of any kind had been passed down. It was to the extent that even some large sects didn't have much information on the ancient war.

Those who knew of the war were either dead or had already left the human domain. They had departed this vast earth to the similarly boundless Myriad Abyss Island; they had fled from the infinite continent to the endless abyss. Therefore, the entirety of the human domain, including other races from different domains, was relatively ignorant of the desolate wildlands and of the ancient war that had taken place there. Conversely, there was no shortage of rumors and suspicions.

Humanity was perversely curious about the desolate wildlands. But, at the same time, they feared it down to their very bones. The curiosity stemmed from the fact that the desolate wildlands was a place that had been left untouched since the ancient era—it was a virgin land that had never been exploited. From the distant past to present day, more than a few tens of thousands of years had passed. This untouched land undoubtedly contained endless amounts of treasure. Moreover, it might even contain valuables and precious items left over from the ancient war. This was why everyone agreed that there must be countless opportunities waiting in these desolate wildlands, and that it was surely a treasure trove untouched by human hands for more than ten thousand years.

For any hot-blooded adventurer, this point was undoubtedly an enormous attraction. In particular, for runaway fugitives who were disillusioned by years of futility and hopelessness and were willing to risk it all, this was the place with the highest chance of helping them reverse their fortunes. After all, with the current hierarchy of the human domain, it was impossibly difficult for wandering cultivators to stand out amongst their peers. Great sects carried great power, as they controlled most of the resources in the human domain. The number of wandering cultivators might be more than ten times the number of sect members, but the amount of resources allocated to them might not even reach one tenth of that allocated to sect members.

This severe disparity drove the wandering cultivators to stake their lives on much greater risks than sect disciples. Wandering cultivators possessed no boundless resources, no immovable pillars of support, and no inherent bloodlines. Their only advantage was their fearlessness of death. Therefore, upon hearing the news that there was hope of entering the desolate wildlands, countless wandering cultivators had rushed madly into the sixteen kingdoms alliance, as if ready to toss their lives to the wind. It was just that this news had not spread to the general public yet. Otherwise, the number of wandering cultivators hurrying over would perhaps be ten times greater.

The chatter around Jiang Chen and Huang'er was filled with various statements and theories. At present, they didn't know just whose information would be relatively more accurate. However, the general gist of everyone's conversations revolved around the desolate wildlands, the gap in the seal, and how everyone was planning to go about exploring the area.

Jiang Chen couldn't understand it. "He Hongshu and the others have already entered the desolate wildlands. Doesn't that mean that the desolate wildlands should have opened long ago? Why are these people saying they need to wait two more days? Was He Hongshu lying to me?"

He dismissed this possibility upon further consideration. Perhaps He Hongshu was capable of lying, but he couldn't have fabricated the information regarding the piece of Requiem Wood. Jiang Chen ran through some careful mental calculations before coming to a conjecture. "Maybe there's indeed a gap in the seal within the desolate wildlands, but this gap only appears cyclically?"

Actually, the periodical weakening of a seal was nothing uncommon. For example, some solar formations would weaken deep into the night, when the sun's energy was at its weakest. When the sun rose the next day, the seal would once again regain its normal strength. From the distant past to the present, more than ten thousand years had passed since the desolate wildlands had been sealed. Some weakening taking place in the seal was entirely possible. After all, things like formations could be affected by a gap in even the smallest component. Back on Mt. Rippling Mirage, Cao Jin and his fellow sect members had only been able to break the seal surrounding the place and subsequently enter the mountain because, after many years, the formation had slowly degraded, exposing a tiny gap.

The two of them stopped over at the Jiang Han province for half a day before leaving.

"Brother Chen, it seems that all these wandering cultivators rushed here for the desolate wildlands." Huang'er's delicate brows were colored with a trace of worry.

"Right. It's still too early to tell if this spells fortune or disaster," Jiang Chen sighed. "Let's not worry about these things at present. As long as we find the Requiem Wood, our trip will not have been in vain."

They didn't need to group together like the other wandering cultivators. With the map that He Hongshu had provided, the two of them soon arrived at the entrance indicated on the map. This entrance was at the intersection between the Jiang Han territory and the Dark Moon Kingdom. It was an extremely remote place surrounded by miles upon miles of mountainous ravines. What they had not expected was for the area around this valley to be packed with cultivators. Clearly, there were quite a number of well-informed cultivators. Jiang Chen and Huang'er's arrival at this place also did not stir up any particular response from these cultivators, who had long since occupied the place.