

Three Realms 91

Chapter 91: Jiang Chen, Descent of the Divine Weapon

Princess Gouyu felt anxious and furious, her mind completely blank as she left the capital.

She felt that she'd let Jiang Chen down, her mind full of the interactions she'd previously had with Jiang Chen.

The first time they'd met was in the imperial harem, where Jiang Chen had thoroughly lectured her.

The second time was at the Soaring Dragon manor, where Jiang Chen had sworn at the Pill King Garden, and sworn at the Duke of Soaring Dragon. That was the first time she'd seen a different side of Jiang Chen.

Afterwards, every interaction caused Princess Gouyu to tremble — to be surprised and overjoyed.

Jiang Chen had even given her pointers regarding the shackles of her martial dao, and had helped her join the ranks of the eleven meridians true qi masters.

Including the twenty percent dry shares from the Hall of Healing, and the glory of him suppressing the Long siblings in the Hidden Dragon Trials...

From beginning to end, Princess Gouyu couldn't believe that such a breathtaking genius would fall just like this.

She wouldn't believe it. Until she saw Jiang Chen's corpse, Princess Gouyu would never believe.

Since her royal brother wouldn't protect the Jiang family, her actions to protect them wouldn't be an official matter, but a personal one.

At the doors of the Jiang family's manor, Commander Tiandu said, "Long Yi, this is a grievance between you, the dukes. His Majesty can wash his hands of it. However, know when to stop. Don't disturb the citizens or run wild in the capital. Otherwise, my Tiandu army is not a pushover."

Long Yi smiled sinisterly, "Be at ease Commander Tiandu, our Long family have always conducted our matters with reason. We only seek to resolve our old score with the Jiang family, and absolutely won't disturb or embroil anyone else within it, especially the citizens."

"That would be best." Commander Tiandu waved his hand, and left with the vast swathes of the Tiandu army.

Long Yinye smiled. What did the retreat of the Tiandu army mean? It meant that Eastern Lu had bent and given way! This also meant that the limelight of the Long family had already exceeded that of the royal family!

"Listen well, old and young of the Jiang family. Your unfilial son Jiang Chen ambushed the heirs of the Soaring Dragon dukedom within the Boundless Catacombs, and violated all of the heavenly laws of morality, defying the authority of the first duke. We are here today on orders of the duke of Soaring Dragon for a punitive expedition. Any of the Jiang family servants, followers, and guards, who are willing

to turn over a new leaf, bring out the head of a Jiang family member with you. This is your chance to do a deed of merit. Otherwise, when this large army rushes in, no one shall be left alive.”

Long Yi’s voice rang out like a bronze gong, carrying the power of eleven meridians true qi with it as it spread throughout the entire Jiang family.

This was seeking to divide the masters and servants of the Jiang family — attempting to cause internal discord without even a fight!

However, Long Yi had underestimated the Jiang family’s degree of unity. All those within the Jiang family had faces full of tragic fury, the resolve to fight to the death imprinted on them.

Even the new followers that Jiang Chen had recruited had faces full of resolution. Their determination to live and die with the Jiang family was apparent without any need for words.

Jiang Feng’s expression was bitterly wry. He knew that, with the withdrawal of the Tiandu army, the Jiang family had still become Eastern Lu’s discarded pawn in the end, and been given up on by Eastern Lu.

“Everyone, if you leave now, I, Jiang Feng, will not find fault with you.” Jiang Feng said, as he swept his gaze in a circle.

The nearly one thousand death warriors of the entire Jiang family all shook their heads resolutely.

“Your Lordship, what kind of people would we be if we left now?” Jiang Ying’s fierce eyes held tears. “We’ve been indebted to Your Lordship these years for all your care, this is where we repay you with our deaths.”

Jiang Ying suddenly drew out his sword. “A Jiang family man can fall in battle, but can not surrender!”

“Fall in battle, no surrender!” Charged voices and righteous ardor were suffused with the resolve to rather die than be insulted.

“Your Lordship, when the fight starts later, we will block the opponents. Retreat when you find a good opportunity, and return to the Jiang Han territory. While there’s life, there’s still hope.” Jiang Ying counseled in a low voice.

Jiang Feng smiled faintly, “How am I, Jiang Feng, someone who drags out an ignoble existence?”

“Your Lordship, the greater picture is what’s more important.”

Jiang Feng shook his head, his gaze deep as he looked to the direction of the north east. The Boundless Catacombs were located there — news of his son was located there.

Only, Chen’er, are you still alive?

If you’re still alive, then what fear do I have if I die in battle? As long as the bloodline of my Jiang family remains, then there’s no fear that the events of today will remain unavenged.

If you’re not alive, and I live out a dismal existence, what meaning is there in that?

“The Jiang family can fall in battle, but not surrender.” Jiang Feng’s gaze suddenly became incomparably resolute as he yelled, his longsword in hand, and his heroic spirit soaring to the heavens. “Long Yi, come inside and fight to the death!”

Jiang Feng was a newly ascended true qi master. But ever since Jiang Chen had passed onto him the “Secret of the Nine Laughing Oceans”, his training had advanced at a tremendous pace, and his knowledge of the martial dao had risen by more than just a single level.

Whether in terms of martial dao or experience, at this moment, Jiang Feng was actually fully on par with an eleven meridians true qi master.

Long Yi uttered a cry, “Alright, Jiang Feng, I will spill your blood first, and take your head!”

Long Yinye also called out loudly, “Everyone ready! He who captures the Jiang Han manor and obtains Jiang Feng’s head will be rewarded with ten thousand gold!”

An army thirty thousand strong roared in unison as their voices shook the clouds.

The battle could be triggered at any moment.

“Hold!” Princess Gouyu’s figure abruptly dashed in at that critical moment. “Long Yinye, I command you, in the name of the organizer of the Hidden Dragon Trials, to immediately withdraw your troops.”

“Withdraw my troops?” Long Yinye smiled. “Princess Gouyu, don’t get things wrong. This isn’t the Hidden Dragon Trials, but represents the grievances between dukes.”

“Your claim of Jiang Chen ambushing you happened during the Trials. As the organizer of the Trials, I naturally have the authority to intervene.”

“You?” Long Yinye laughed coldly. “This is something that even His Majesty, the king, isn’t paying attention to. Don’t you think that your intervention is a bit inappropriate, Your Highness?”

Princess Gouyu wielded her sword in her hands. One person and one sword stood on the stone steps outside the Jiang family manor.

The aura of an eleven meridians true qi master emanated without reservation. Her almond eyes raked over the scene, as she swept her gaze across the Duke of Soaring Dragon’s associates. “Have all of you forgotten that this is the capital? Long Yinye doesn’t know any better, and so you don’t know any better as well?”

“Princess Gouyu, I’ll remind you once again that this is a grievance between dukes. Since even His Majesty the king has washed his hands of the matter, you have no business in intervening in this matter.”

Long Yinye’s tone was becoming more and more domineering and tyrannical.

“I just so happen to want to intervene today.” Although Princess Gouyu was of the weaker sex, she was exceedingly stubborn. Her tone was indifferent and determined, “You’ll have to step over my dead body first, if you wish to move against the Jiang family.”

Long Yinye had never thought that even after Eastern Lu had given up on the Jiang family, Princess Gouyu would protect the Jiang Family with such a resolute attitude.

“Princess Gouyu, is the Jiang family really worth your actions?” Long Yinye wasn’t angered, and smiled instead.

“This has nothing to do with the Jiang family, I’m doing so only to ensure peace of my conscience.” A sense of firm determination was suffused within her diffident words.

“Since that’s the case, then forgive me for my offense.” Long Yinye was not one to have compassion for women. “Army, be at the ready — no matter who’s in the way, kill them!”

“Kill!”

The army roared in unison.

“Kill.”

In the moment that the great army prepared to move, a remote voice suddenly echoed through the air. It was sudden, but effective, as it penetrated and pierced through gold, shattered rock, and penetrated straight through the heavens.

A shrill bird cry accompanied this “kill”, as it broke through the air with the sound of ripping silk. At the same time —

A golden shadow suddenly dove down from the clouds with the speed of lightning.

Just as this golden shadow dove down, another sound of ripping silk split through the air, driving a stream of light as fast as a shooting star, as it descended with a loud crash.

An arrowhead — an arrowhead with unparalleled strength — shot unerringly towards Long Yinye.

This arrowhead was shot accurately towards Long Yinye, in front of the thirty thousand strong army.

“Be careful young duke!”

The unexpected arrival of this arrow was without any precursors, as if the immortals in the heavens had shot this life reaping arrow from the clouds.

Long Yi was the first to react, but too late to use his weapons to block the arrow. He hit upon an idea in his desperation, and abruptly shoved Long Yinye.

The arrow had already arrived by then, and pierced through Long Yi’s shoulder. It’s momentum wasn’t decreased as it shot through him and out behind him, coincidentally shooting through the chest of the heir of Yanmen, Yan Yiming, who was standing behind him.

Pfft. Pfft.

The power of this arrow was as if a meat skewer, finally stopping after it shot through the fifth person.

Long Yinye had been pushed down by Long Yi, and was extremely bedraggled. He was about to rise, when two more whooshes broke through the air from the clouds.

The same arrowhead, the same power, the same wily angle.

This time, it was arrows to the left and right — two arrows in succession — making it impossible for Long Yinye to escape.

“Protect the young duke!” Long Yi was greatly agitated and leapt towards Long Yinye. Except, his shoulder was injured and he was still a step behind.

He flung himself forward and took another arrow to the back.

The other arrow shot unerringly into Long Yinye’s forehead, the arrowhead instantaneously piercing through the helm and drilling into his skull. The strong true qi sent Long Yinye and the arrow flying into the crowd, causing great disarray to the formation.

“Oh no, the young duke’s been shot!”

“The young duke’s been shot!”

This frightening scene completely dumbfounded the thirty thousand strong army, and caused them to dissolve into mass chaos.

This unexpected development had caused changes too fast for them to react to.

By the time they’d gathered their wits, Long Yinye’s forehead had taken an arrow and his status was unknown. Long Yi’s shoulder and back had been hit, and he was gravely injured.

“Look, the sky! Up in the sky!”

Shrill and domineering bird calls rang out from the air, cutting through the sky.

Two golden shadows burst through the clouds, hovering in the air above the manor.

“It’s Goldwing Swordbirds!”

“There seems to be someone on it, it looks like Jiang Chen!”

“And another one... Eh, he looks familiar, who is it?”

“It looks like the heir of Jinshan, Fatty Xuan!”

“No, that person isn’t fat at all, how would he be Fatty Xuan?”

On the back of the bird, Fatty Xuan was extraordinarily pleased with himself in that moment. He was fired up with boundless enthusiasm, and felt that his life had reached its peak at this step. He gathered up his true qi and yelled out, “You monsters and freaks dare assault a duke’s manor under broad daylight. Do you have any respect for the nation’s laws?”

“It really is Fatty Xuan.”

Some of the heirs who had flocked to Soaring Dragon’s banner finally recognized Fatty Xuan’s voice.

Jiang Chen held a bow in his hand, and pointed to the thirty thousand strong army from afar. Although it was only a bow and arrow, when it was locked onto the army, all of them shuddered with fear, and had the feeling that armageddon had arrived.

The leader of an army could be changed, but an ordinary person should have his own unswervable goal.

This thirty thousand strong army just so happened to be ordinary people whose goals had been taken.

There was no other reason. Even the mighty Long Yi had taken two arrows, and the arrogant Long Yinye had taken a headshot.

To descend from the sky with such aura and occupy a commanding height, it was easy to imagine the deterring force he emanated.

The world of martial dao was still one of the strong. Admiring the strong, and thus fearing the strong, was an eternally immutable truth.

“Long Yinye is the head of the evil that attacked my Jiang Han manor — and he has now been executed. You’ve been bewitched by him. Whether you choose to fight, or to make peace — to live or to die — it is your choice.”

Jiang Chen’s voice finally sounded from the back of the Goldwing Swordbird.

This scene made the heart of Princess Gouyu on the ground tremble — she was utterly dumbfounded. But she knew within her heart that she’d probably never be able to forget this scene for the rest of her life.

This was the descent of the divine weapon, as it turned back the powers of darkness.

This was the stuff of legends — of storytellers. Yet it was now playing out in real life, in the skies of the capital above the Jiang Han manor!

Chapter 92: Killing and Displaying a Show of Force

“Throw down your weapons and leave. You will be spared from death. Those stubborn in their negativity and defiance will die!” Fatty Xuan called out loudly on the back of the Goldwing Swordbird.

He also knew that he was a green leaf — a green leaf that was there to set off the big red flower that was Jiang Chen.

Except, this moment and this scene let Fatty Xuan clearly know that even if he was a green leaf, he was sure to become a legendary green leaf from today onwards in the Eastern Kingdom.

Those vassals who were not directly related to the Duke of Soaring Dragon had already lost their fighting spirit and had all thrown their weapons down.

Those troops directly under the Duke of Soaring Dragon’s control also became headless flies in this situation where Long Yinye was dead, and Long Yi was gravely injured. They all looked at each other, at a loss for what to do.

At this moment, a captain with one eye leapt forward. “The Duke has nurtured his soldiers all for today’s battle. How many can Jiang Chen kill with that bow and arrow of his? Chin up if you’re a good son of the Long family! Rush in and kill Jiang Feng! Wipe out the Jiang family!”

“Ah!”

An arrow as swift as lightning had already pierced through his throat after he'd finished speaking.

"Who else is there?" Jiang Chen's voice was remote. There was already another arrow on his bow as if he had performed a magic trick.

He had looted this bow from Xue Sha, and there actually weren't that many arrows within the quiver — only twenty or thirty. That attack on Long Yi and Long Yinye just now had used three.

There were still roughly twenty or so arrows, yet Jiang Chen wasn't worried about a thing.

He'd shoot whoever popped out.

Although there would be a few amongst these people who were unafraid of death, not everyone would be willing to seek one's doom in the face of absolute power, when they knew that death was certain.

As long as he killed those that poked their head out, and made an example of them, he was sure to be able to destroy their fighting spirit.

"There's me."

"And I!"

Whoosh, whoosh.

Two more arrowheads once again found their way unerringly into the throats of these two captains.

Upon seeing that there were those who still hadn't given up hope, Fatty Xuan called out, "Long Yinye is already dead, and your master is gone — is it really worth it to waste your life like this?"

These words had a devastating impact.

Indeed, Long Yinye was dead. Who were they working themselves to the bone for?

Princess Gouyu waved her longsword and admonished, "You have been sent out without righteous cause, and acted without justification. The death of Long Yinye and the grievous injuries of Long Yi are proof. Why haven't you retreated? When the Tiandu army arrives, all of you will be dead without a complete corpse."

Princess Gouyu represented the royal family. Her words were the straw that broke the camel's back, finally making the Long family's fierce, elite soldiers waver with uncertainty.

Someone threw down his weapon. Where there was one, there would be two. Swathes of soldiers threw down their weapons afterwards. The people's courage was gone as fast as the receding tide water.

In the span of a moment, the great thirty-thousand strong army that'd gathered in front of the Jiang Han manor doors had completely scattered.

There were only the corpses of Long Yinye and a few captains present, along with Long Yi crouched on the ground, his status unknown.

Jiang Chen was a cautious person. He shot out another arrow that penetrated Long Yi's skull, nailing him firmly to the ground. It was only then that he descended from the clouds.

At this moment, a din of cheers sounded from within the Jiang Han manor.

Too amazing. This change was too unexpected.

They were already prepared to fall in battle, and had formed a resolution in the face of certain death. Who would've thought that such a change would occur so suddenly?

There was nothing left of the thirty-thousand strong army that had been like a pack of wolves or tigers.

And they, a thousand strong, hadn't even had a chance to get their hands dirty.

The descent of this divine weapon seemed like aid gifted from the gods.

Those of the Jiang family all looked at Jiang Chen as if exalting a saint. Those eight personal guards of his were also moved beyond belief.

This was their master, the one that they were following. These scenes just now had caused their blood to thrum and boil.

Admiration, worship. These words were insufficient to express the depths of their current emotions.

They only knew that even the position of first duke within this kingdom was likely not worthy of becoming this master's goal.

"Chen'er." Although Jiang Feng was experienced and steady, he too also slightly lost his composure in this moment. His large hands grasped Jiang Chen as tears swam in his fierce eyes.

He was overjoyed, overjoyed that his son had returned safely.

He was proud, proud that his son had turned the raging tide.

Fatty Xuan hopped down from the back of a Goldwing Swordbird and made a beeline to Long Yinye's corpse, giving it a few vicious kicks. "Aren't you awesome? Don't you walk over everything? Isn't it the ones who adhere to you that ascend, and those that defy you who die? Why don't you show me how awesome you are now?"

Fatty Xuan had received more than his fair share of bullying from the upper echelons of the noble heirs during ordinary times in the capital. This Long Yinye was the representative figure of those elite heirs.

This person was domineeringly tyrannical. His many evil deeds were too numerous to inscribe on all available bamboo strips.

That was why Fatty Xuan had forgotten himself in his actions. He'd vented quite a bit of ill will.

After kicking him for a few times, Fatty Xuan drew out his waist knife and chopped off Long Yinye's head. He then walked towards Long Yi, and imitated his previous actions.

Holding the two heads, Fatty Xuan called out, "Brother Chen, I'm making a trip to the Soaring Dragon manor."

One could tell that Fatty Xuan's grudge against Soaring Dragon went uncommonly deep. This was putting on a show of force at the first possible chance!

Jiang Chen called over a Goldwing Swordbird and murmured to it a few reminders in the beast language. He patted Fatty Xuan's shoulder. "You can go, but don't linger. Strong practitioners abound at the Soaring Dragon manor, don't trap yourself in there."

Fatty Xuan smirked, "Brother Chen, you know I'm most afraid of death. I promise that I'll never descend to within firing range of their bows and arrows, will that work?"

The act of killing someone and then displaying their head was already a bit over the top.

But, compared to what the Duke of Soaring Dragon had done to the Jiang family, this wasn't even worth mentioning.

The two sides were in a blood feud by now, and wouldn't rest until one side was dead. Jiang Chen naturally had no further reservations. He would counterattack the Duke of Soaring Dragon, using whatever means necessary.

Jiang Chen firmly believed that if he hadn't made it back in time, the downfall of his clan members would be even more worse off. Long Yinye was sure to be ten times crueler than himself.

With Long Yinye's brutal and bloodthirsty personality, he was sure to invent even more ruthless tricks in order to terrorize the other dukes.

Having been born into a royal household, Princess Gouyu was accustomed to these sort of happenings. She felt that there was nothing untoward about Long Yinye's head being cut off.

"Jiang Chen, I knew that you would come back." Princess Gouyu walked up.

Jiang Chen looked at Princess Gouyu and sighed lightly, "Your Highness, I, Jiang Chen, owe you for today's grace of a helping hand. I will be sure to return this favor to you."

"Don't talk like this Jiang Chen. I came for my own peace of mind, not that I was counting on your return. Besides, I..."

Jiang Chen spread out his hands, "This is my personal principle."

Princess Gouyu wasn't happy to see Jiang Chen like this. Her heart rather sank instead. She knew that the relationship between Jiang Chen and her royal brother had broken apart at last.

Jiang Chen made no mention of the king, and had only said that he owed her, Princess Gouyu, a favor.

What did this mean? This meant that Jiang Chen had no more illusions about her royal brother, Eastern Lu.

"Ai." Princess Gouyu sighed in resignation, her emotions exceedingly complex.

Jiang Chen's miraculous appearance today, and his unparalleled performance, had completely upended her understanding. Even Long Yi, an eleven meridians true qi master, had been unable to contend with Jiang Chen's heavenly shot.

Just how strong was Jiang Chen?

To be honest, after Jiang Chen had eaten the Rare Jade Fruit in the Boundless Catacomb and had broken through, he'd successfully ascended to ten meridians true qi and joined the ranks of true qi masters. Even in a direct confrontation, he'd have the ability to battle an eleven meridians true qi master.

Not to mention that he was using Xue Sha's treasured bow and his heavenly arrows, further adding to his power. Add to that his advantageous position from above, his wizardry with the bow and arrow, and that he had caught the others off guard.

Besides, the diving force of the Goldwing Swordbird had also unconsciously made things easier for Jiang Chen. It had led to an increase in supporting power, perfecting the force from his arrow.

And, Long Yi had more or less had a self sacrificial mindset in saving Long Yinye. If he hadn't paid heed to Long Yinye, and only been concerned about his own escape, he would've been entirely able to escape, since Jiang Chen's first arrow hadn't been aimed at him.

The pity was that he was Long Yi, a loyal servant of Soaring Dragon. He had paid the price himself as well in trying to save his master.

An army of thirty thousand strong had scattered like birds and animals. All of them fled frantically back to the Soaring Dragon manor. However, as fast as their feet were, they were unable to measure up to Fatty Xuan's Goldwing Swordbird.

Whilst these deserters were halfway through their trek, Fatty Xuan had already arrived in the air above the Soaring Dragon manor.

Fatty Xuan was a somewhat silly person. He gave no thought to his old man's stance, as he hovered in midair, calling out loudly. "Long Zhaofeng, come out!"

This sudden yell caused an uproar around the Duke of Soaring Dragon within a radius of several kilometers.

Who was this? They were much too bold, and actually dared to say the Duke of Soaring Dragon's name? Was he courting death?

Duke Long's right eyelid kept jumping. It was as if thunder had struck out of nowhere when he heard this abrupt yell, and his entire being spasmed.

"Who is it?"

Some of the strong practitioners loyal to Duke Long had long since rushed to the roof.

"Who the hell are you to dare come and act wildly at the Soaring Dragon manor?" These Soaring Dragon practitioners only felt that it was rather odd to see someone riding a bird up in the clouds. They felt that an expert from one of the hidden sects had graciously arrived, as all of them tilted their heads back, as if confronting a formidable enemy.

"Act wildly? I'm here to give you a present! Tell Long Zhaofeng to come out!"

Fatty Xuan felt really damn good inside. What was this? This was him becoming a new person!

To think that he, Fatty Xuan, someone who'd always been the target of bullying in the capital, could directly voice Duke Long's name today... What was properly standing up with his head held high? What was the peak of a life? Nothing would surpass this moment today.

Long Zhaofeng heard clearly, and he too vaulted up to the roof, standing in a high place, and threw his head back to ask, "Who might you be, and what gift do you bring?"

Fatty Xuan was a slippery fellow as he hid in the far reaches, not showing his face. His head was crouched down on the back of the Goldwing Swordbird, presenting an exceedingly bizarre appearance.

"What gift? I ask you, where is your son Long Yinye? Where is Long Yi?"

Long Zhaofeng started, not comprehending but responding, "Long Yi has accompanied my son Yinye on an outing to resolve some personal matters. I anticipate that they will return shortly. Who might you be, are you a friend of my son Yinye?"

Seeing that since this person rode a Goldwing Swordbird, he likely had a powerful background. Given this, Long Zhaofeng restrained his tone and even injected a few traces of joviality.

"Haha, resolving some personal matter is it? They'll return shortly?" Fatty Xuan smiled as he spoke.

"Yes."

"You're wrong, they've already returned. Take this."

Fatty Xuan threw down the package and it fell through a great distance. The momentum behind a throw from such a high vantage point was quite strong, and Duke Long didn't dare underestimate it. He struck a firm horse stance and encircled it with his hands, catching it firmly after making a few circles.

Long Zhaofeng was completely befuddled. He was perplexed by the other's words of, "They've already returned. Take this," and had the vaguest hair-raising feeling.

Chapter 93: The Duke of Soaring Dragon in a Messy Disarray

The moment he opened the package, the Duke of Soaring Dragon turned into a messy disarray. He was petrified.

Long Yinye's head had a large hole in the forehead and widely staring eyes from an unpeaceful death. Those eyes met Long Zhaofeng's the instant he opened the package.

"Ah!" A mouthful of blood sprayed out from Long Zhaofeng's mouth.

"Your Lordship, what's wrong?" The personal guards around him all ran over.

"Kill him, kill him, kill him!" Long Zhaofeng was like a mad demon as he pointed towards the sky and gave the command over and over again.

Fatty Xuan laughed loudly, "Long Zhaofeng, you allowed your son and daughter to kill other heirs in the Boundless Catacombs. Did you never think this day would arrive? There is karma even in the immediate life and it comes swiftly. Hold your son's head and go slowly cry in the corner!"

"Kill him!" Long Zhaofeng painfully cried out with all his strength.

However, Fatty Xuan was a person who was afraid of death. How could he ever situate himself in the midst of danger? He patted the back of the Goldwing Swordbird's head and immediately shot into the clouds.

"Hahaha, Long Zhaofeng. You kill others and should know that there would come a day when someone else kills you! Long Yinye is merely the first step in the destruction of your Long family!"

Fatty Xuan thoroughly enjoyed this verbal interplay, finally turning back happily and leaving in triumph.

Even Long Juxue, who was training being closed doors in the Long manor, was disturbed. Her body flew as it dashed up to the roof, but she soon saw Long Yinye's head staring back at her with wide eyes.

"Brother!" Long Juxue was also dumbfounded.

So what is she had an azure phoenix constitution? So what if a hidden sect had marked her with their attention?

This wouldn't change the reality of her elder brother's decapitation at the hand of others!

Would a strong potential and a powerful background revive Long Yinye?

No!

Long Juxue's face turned slightly pale and her tone was frosty. She asked, "Who did it?"

The faces of the personal guards were all drained of blood as they shook their head. "We're not sure. Someone rode a Goldwing Swordbird just now to... to deliver the young duke's head."

"That person's voice was familiar." Although Long Juxue was grieving, her mind was not engulfed in confusion.

"Could it be Jiang Chen?" A personal guard asked hoarsely.

"It wasn't Jiang Chen's voice!" How could Long Juxue fail to discern Jiang Chen's voice? When Jiang Chen was mentioned, she suddenly thought of someone else. "Right, that voice. I remember now. It's Fatty Xuan, the heir of Jinshan! One of Jiang Chen's lackeys."

"Duke of Jinshan?" A trace of killing intent once again flashed through Long Zhaofeng's fierce eyes.

He had just now been wallowing in the pain of losing his son and could not break out of it. After a short period of turmoil, he slowly came back to his senses. When he heard the three words 'Duke of Jinshan', his desire to kill rose sharply and quickly.

"Yinye, Long Yi, your brave souls must be close. Keep watching! I will be sure to avenge you. Jiang and Xuan family clans, I will exterminate you, piling up your corpses into mountains and making rivers out of your blood!"

Long Zhaofeng wept tears of blood as he swore.

"Long Er, pass along my commands. All those dukes who have flocked to the Long family banner must travel to the Soaring Dragon manor within two hours!"

Long Er's heart contracted. He knew that the duke was moving up the timetable for the battle!

The elite soldiers of Soaring Dragon finally made it back in twos and threes from the streets outside.

“Your Lordship, terrible things have happened. The young duke he...”

A layer of frost covered Long Zhao Feng’s face as he said to Long Er, “Dispose of these incompetent, deserting buffoons!”

“What? Long Yinye went to punish the Duke of Jiang Han and was shot on the spot from the skies by Jiang Chen? Long Yi was also killed as well? And the heir of Yanmen, Yan Yiming?”

“Jiang Chen came back? He didn’t die? Long Yinye was shot by him?”

The news of Long Yinye being killed, the fall of Long Yi, and Jiang Chen returning with a great vengeance spread throughout the capital in only fifteen minutes.

Those dukes who had already flocked to the Duke of Soaring Dragon’s banner were even more astounded, their mouths full of a bitter taste.

They almost couldn’t believe their ears. With the Duke of Soaring Dragon’s elites and the eleven meridians true qi master Long Yi holding down the fort, how could anyone have been killed by Jiang Chen?

They couldn’t make sense of it!

However, truth as solid as iron forced them to believe this.

“Your Lordship, the Duke of Soaring Dragon has sent an urgent summons for Your Lordship to discuss pressing matters at the Soaring Dragon manor.”

Almost all of the dukes that had sought succor with the Duke of Soaring Dragon received the same piece of news afterwards.

To go or not to go?

Some dukes were a bit hesitant. Jiang Chen returning with a vengeance and the death of Long Yinye had caused some sudden ripples in the plot that was originally a foregone conclusion in the capital.

This turnaround had been entirely out of the blue.

They had to admit, they were wavering. They were beginning to suspect whether or not the Duke of Soaring Dragon would truly be so successful in his coup. Would he really make a clean sweep of obstacles wherever he went?

Except, they already had no other choice. They had long since boarded the Duke of Soaring Dragon’s ship. If they didn’t go now, when the dust settled and everything was reckoned for, those of them tagged with Duke Long’s label would still not end up with pleasant downfalls.

In the moment that they had made their decision, they were destined to be unable to disembark from that ship.

Even if they didn’t want to, they still had to go, .

They had no other choice now. They must unite beside Duke Long's side and help him in his coup to turn the land of the Eastern Family into the land of the Long family.

Only in this way could they unmake this dangerous situation, and transform themselves into meritorious founding nobles with a shake of their bodies.

If they shrank back and allowed the Duke of Soaring Dragon to be destroyed, then they too would not be far from death.

One had to say, Duke Long's charisma was still exceedingly strong. Even the fall of Long Yinye was insufficient to shake his charisma and domineering air that was as enduring as the land and sky.

Long Yinye was dead, but Duke Long had many sons. He could always appoint another young duke and spend some more time in cultivating him.

As long as Long Juxue was fine, and as long as the azure phoenix constitution remained, Duke Long's backer would not disappear. After all, that azure phoenix constitution had caught the attention of the experts of the hidden sects!

The experts of the hidden sects were a legendary existence, and were an absolutely much more domineering force than the forefathers of the Eastern clan.

Although your Eastern family forefather is a spirit dao practitioner, at the end of the day, he is only one person, utterly isolated.

When compared to the strong ones of a sect, you would be alone and helpless!

This was why the Duke of Soaring Dragon could rope in so many dukes.

Out of 108 dukes, there was actually fifty or sixty dukes who had already thoroughly sided with the Duke of Soaring Dragon.

There was still a portion loyal to the royal family, and another portion that was neutral.

"Everyone, under the circumstances, I won't voice empty blather. Everyone has expressed their attitudes. I, Long Zhao Feng, will also not mince words! The Eastern clan is immoral and favorites sycophants, persecuting the faithful and honest. My son Yinye was killed when he went to punish the Duke of Jiang Han. They say it's Jiang Chen's doing, but do you believe that a mere son of the Jiang clan could have such power? The experts from the royal family must have had a hand in this! I, Long family, announce today that I am raising arms to send a punitive expedition against the Eastern clan!"

"Raising arms for a punitive expedition, the Long clan replacing the Eastern clan!"

All the dukes stood up and raised their arms, shouting loudly.

"Very good, my Long family, on this day, will raise an army of justice to suppress an immoral ruler! Everyone present is a duke, please command your troops to raise an army of justice and cooperate in this great cause!"

"We are willing to raise an army of justice and aid the duke of Soaring Dragon in suppressing an immoral ruler, heralding in a new dynasty and age!"

No matter how shameless the act in struggles of power, an excuse both dignified in form but insincere in substance would have to be found. Even someone such as Duke Long was no exception.

It was a coup in actuality, but he still sought to craft himself an image of unparalleled benevolence and justice. It seemed that only in this way would he feel at ease and contented.

"Everyone, I have a suggestion." The person speaking was the Duke of Yanmen, Yan Jiuzhuang. His son Yan Yiming had been the one that had also been shot by Jiang Chen in front of the Jiang Han manor doors.

"What valued suggestion does Duke Yan have?" Long Zhaofeng exuded a generous air.

"The time needed for all of us to raise our armies and cleave a path to the capital will take anywhere between three to eight days. Even though we have already brought our personal guards with us and laid out our elite troops, compared to the Tiandu army, at best we can say that we're evenly matched. As opposed to rebelling now, why not wait until the big army arrives."

"Then we just wait? How can we swallow the events of today?" The person speaking was another duke. His son had also been shot to death, under the same arrow that had killed Yan Yiming. They had been part of the meat skewer.

"Of course we don't just wait around! I can raise the call of cleaning evil ministers from the king's side and first lay siege to Jiang Han manor, Jinshan manor, Hubing manor..."

"Duke Yan's suggestion is quite sound!" Long Zhaofeng's eyes gleamed.

Although his version was that an expert from the royal family had killed Long Yinze, but many of his personal guards had seen with their own eyes that the person who had killed Long Yinze was Jiang Chen. Who else could it be?

He had said so just now to fabricate a feud with the royal family and find a banner of justice and righteousness for him.

Therefore, the person that Long Zhaofeng actually hated the most at this moment was Jiang Chen. The person he most wanted to delight in killing was Jiang Chen!

Within the palace, Eastern Lu's complexion was wan and pale, his eyes full of regret and vexation.

He had also received intelligence at the earliest possible timing that Jiang Chen had returned, and returned with a vengeance. In fact, the manner of his return had been sculpted into a legend by the rumormongers in the capital.

Although Eastern Lu didn't wish to admit it, he had to admit it. He had made a crappy move once again! He had actually given up the Jiang family underneath the pressure from the Duke of Soaring Dragon, and he had given up the strong power that he could have once drawn to his side.

Upon thinking of Princess Gouyu's words, Eastern Lu practically wanted to slap himself. The ruler of a kingdom didn't even measure up to his sister, a woman, in generosity and bearing.

"Has the capital fallen into chaos?" Eastern Lu shook his head, calming himself with effort. "Jiang Chen's return is not necessarily a bad thing! Even though Jiang Chen and I are divided in heart and practice,

there's no fear in that. Now that Jiang Chen has killed Long Yinye and Long Yi, forming a blood feud with Long Zhaofeng, the scene of two tigers battling is unavoidable. If I can provide support from the shadows and add fuel to the flame so that they battle into a state of chaos and darkness, I may yet stand to profit without working for it!"

Eastern Lu started making his calculations, planning on how he would profit from this and how he would set Soaring Dragon and Jiang Han at each other's throats.

"If Soaring Dragon triumphs, his vitality will still surely be greatly undermined. I will then coordinate with the elder grandfather's power to make a strong move. I will surely be able to cow the other dukes into submission and oppress the Duke of Soaring Dragon."

"If Jiang Chen's side wins, then I will use the strategy of treating him kindly to win his heart. I will use Princess Gouyu or Ruo'er as bait and fence this person into the royal family. If he wants to, I can even give both Gouyu and Ruo'er to him, and have aunt and niece both serve him as well. Except, this matter can't be known publicly, I must work from the shadows."

Eastern Lu's thoughts became more and more random and deviated more and more from the proper path.

When his thoughts traveled here, his brow unknit and he became much more cheery. Jiang Chen's return made him much more at ease.

Even if Jiang Chen couldn't win, as long as he could drag out enough time for the elder grandfather to emerge from closed door cultivation, everything would be alright.

Chapter 94: The Responding Strategy

They knew that the death of Long Yinye was only the start of this conflict. The true battle was not even on the horizon yet.

After a short while, the Duke of Jinshan and the Duke of Hubing had also heard the news and arrived.

These two were Jiang Feng's best friends, and even if they hadn't set foot on the Jiang family ship, the Duke of Soaring Dragon wouldn't let them off the hook either.

Jiang Chen was overjoyed to see that Hubing Yue was safe and sound. This made him feel a little bit less guilty.

However, at this moment, Jiang Chen had no time to catch up with Hubing Yue. He had already secretly called for Qiao Baishi.

Qiao Baishi rushed to meet Jiang Chen as soon as he received the summons.

"Baishi, I'm sure you also know of the sudden changes within the capital and the conflicting sides."

Qiao Baishi's emotions were also similarly agitated. "Honored master, there were rumors earlier in the capital that you had fallen in the Boundless Catacombs, but I refused to believe them. I know that honored master is one with great fortune and would never die prematurely. However, to think that honored master would return in such a legendary manner..."

“Heh heh, legendary manner? That’s just rumormongers embellishing the facts. Baishi, you’re a calm person and thus should know that the capital will soon be engulfed in chaos.”

“Mm.” Qiao Baishi sighed lightly, but his eyes gleamed. “What marvelous ploy does honored master have?”

“The greater picture has already been formed for the capital’s chaos. I cannot stop it either. With my Jiang family’s strength, we will be unable to save the situation. It would be a joke to directly confront the Duke of Soaring Dragon.”

Although Qiao Baishi wasn’t willing to admit it, he also knew that Jiang Chen spoke the truth. As the first duke beneath the heavens, the Duke of Soaring Dragon’s foundations were simply too deep.

He definitely wasn’t someone that the Jiang family, a mere duke of the second rank who had risen to power within a short period of time, could contend against.

“Baishi, I’ve decided to retreat.”

“Retreat?” Qiao Baishi was startled.

“Of course. However, not retreat back to the Jiang Han territory. With the current situation, I won’t make it far out of the capital. I plan on breaking the whole up into parts, dissolving the personal guard of my Jiang family, and hiding them in every corner of the capital. I plan on having you arrange some of the core people.”

Qiao Baishi’s blood boiled at seeing Jiang Chen place so much trust in him. “Please be at ease honored master, the foundations of the Hall of Healing within the capital will only be deeper than the Duke of Soaring Dragon’s, and not shallower. There will be no danger of anything going wrong in concealing a few people.”

“Mm. If I don’t have family considerations, I’ll be able to thoroughly play with the Long family.” A trace of a cold smile leaked out from the edges of Jiang Chen’s lips.

“Honored master, you’re going to battle the Long family all by yourself?” Qiao Baishi asked in shock. This was simply too legendary?!

“Single-handedly? I’m not that bored. I have my methods, you don’t need to ask. You’ll know about them when the time comes.”

Jiang Chen smiled mysteriously.

For some reason, Qiao Baishi had already grown accustomed to Jiang Chen’s somewhat mysterious, yet greatly comforting smiles.

Every time, at a critical moment, honored master had been able to claim victory with unconventional tactics.

The truth had proved this point time and time again.

So upon seeing Jiang Chen smile like this, Qiao Baishi’s heart was at ease.

“Honored master, I’ll go back and make some preparations. I’ll be able to take your people in at any time.” Qiao Baishi rose and took his leave.

“Baishi, you’ve gone to great trouble. I will remember your service when this matter is concluded satisfactorily.”

Qiao Baishi was in fine fettle. The benefits he had enjoyed under Jiang Chen were already quite high. Those amazing pill recipes had caused Qiao Baishi’s position within the Hall of Healing to almost now be on par with that of the Lord Hallmaster’s.

Except, Qiao Baishi’s worldview was now also broader. With such a master, why should his vision be limited to a mere kingdom?

Looking at his honored master’s posture and disposition, it was obvious that a mere kingdom would not tie him down.

After concluding his discussions with Qiao Baishi, Jiang Chen walked towards the main hall. At this moment, Jiang Feng, the Duke of Jinshan, the Duke of Hubing, and others were discussing nervously.

They had discussed a few responding strategies, but always felt that these strategies were useless in the face of absolute power.

“Brother Jiang, it looks like the strategy to take now is still to seek help from the royal family.” The Duke of Jinshan sighed softly.

Jiang Feng shook his head lightly. “Two wise younger brothers, I am not opposed to you seeking help from the royal family. But according to my knowledge of Eastern Lu, the two of you shouldn’t have high expectations from him.”

One could hear that Jiang Feng was both utterly and bitterly disappointed in Eastern Lu.

Even with the Jiang family’s accomplishments, the Tiandu army had retreated just like that. How was this the behavior worthy of a king? This was practically a treacherous and a ruthless ruler.

Hearing his father’s opinions of Eastern Lu, Jiang Chen clapped his hands together and laughed loudly. “Father, you’re finally seeing it clearly. The Eastern clan is indeed unworthy of our loyalty. I have a plan for the situation at hand, will all of you listen to it?”

“Oh? Chen’er, what marvelous plan do you have?”

Whether it was Jiang Feng, the Duke of Jinshan, or the Duke of Hubing, none of them dared to view him as a foppish dandy anymore.

Jiang Chen smiled and described his plan.

“Breaking the whole up into parts, avoiding the edge of advance?” Jiang Feng murmured.

The Duke of Jinshan nodded slightly, “Sage nephew’s plan is sound. Except, one needs exceedingly deep connections in order to avoid the Duke of Soaring Dragon’s pursuit within the capital.”

“I naturally have my ways with regards to that. Uncles, are you willing to trust your nephew?”

The Duke of Jinshan sighed. He too had heard of his son's "great act" that had thoroughly offended those of the Soaring Dragon family.

His son had even committed the deed of hauling Long Yinye and Long Yi's head to the Soaring Dragon manor as a show of force. The Duke of Jinshan knew that there was no way back for him. He had to take the same path as the Jiang family and see it through to the end.

"Wise nephew is as if a man of great wisdom who often appears the fool. All sorts of miraculous feats have been enough to demonstrate this. My line will follow your arrangements."

"Ah, whatever. Having been an official all my life, it's a rare thing to have two good brothers such as you two. My Hubing line will live and die with you." The Duke of Hubing also expressed his attitude.

The three dukes actually didn't have that many troops at their temporary manors in the capital. The Jiang Han manor had just over a thousand, and both the Duke of Jinshan and the Duke of Hubing had only a few hundred people.

After dispersing the various people on the outer fringes, there were only a hundred or so core people left in each house.

They added up to three, four hundred people, a figure comparable to a stone sinking to the bottom of the great sea in the large capital.

It was because Jiang Chen had forcefully shot and killed Long Yinye that the capital had been plunged into a state of chaos.

This type of chaotic situation was the best cover.

As for the Soaring Dragon manor, all of Duke Long's underlings were also discussing their grand plans within the manor at the moment. All intelligence networks existed in a state of half collapse.

This made Jiang Chen's plan of withdrawal even more convenient.

After six hours, Jiang Chen's plan of retreat was completely concluded.

There was not a single soul left in the empty corridors of the three great manors.

"Chen'er, are you not leaving?" Night had fallen and Jiang Feng pushed a door open and stepped through. He asked Jiang Chen considerably, sitting in the middle of the courtyard.

"Father, I'm the biggest target. If I don't go, the bulk of their attentions will be placed onto me. By not leaving, I can provide the greatest cover to you all."

Jiang Chen was clearly aware that the others were all of little value and interest to the Soaring Dragon household. If they could cleanly slaughter the others in one fell swoop, that'd be great.

But, if Jiang Chen disappeared, then the Soaring Dragon household would never be satisfied no matter how many people they killed.

As long as he, Jiang Chen, was present, then the others wouldn't be the focal point and would thus be a bit safer.

Jiang Feng was vaguely moved. A hundred emotions crisscrossed his heart when he looked at his son's calm and relaxed face. When had his son become so dependable?

He was gratified but said nothing more. He quite admired his son's manly courage.

Patting Jiang Chen's shoulder, he said, "Son, your old dad's most accomplished achievement in this life isn't attaining that ranking of duke of second rank, but you. Since you're not leaving, you naturally can't force your old man to leave! Even Fatty Xuan can fight by your side. At the end of the day, your old man is still a true qi master. How little face would I have in hiding hither and thither?"

Jiang Chen laughed involuntarily. He knew that this was fatherly love, true fatherly love.

Father and son going into battle together. What else could be more persuasive evidence of fatherly love?

Slight ripples of emotion spread out throughout Jiang Chen's heart. He was touched.

"Alright, then us father and son will simply let it all go and do something great. We'll cause even the mountains and rivers to change color and the moon and sun to be without light." Jiang Chen was also voiced a lofty sentiment.

To be honest, with his current circumstances, Jiang Chen had long since seen through that Duke of Soaring Dragon and that royal family. Who cared if you, Duke of Soaring Dragon, had an impressive backer? Who cared if you, the royal family, had some elderly grandfather?

Jiang Chen ignored them all.

The Duke of Soaring Dragon was nothing good, and how was that Eastern Lu anything good either?

Jiang Chen had already decided that he held his destiny in his own hands. This was more persuasive than anything. Depending on the heavens or the earth, in the end, one still had to depend on themselves.

And he, Jiang Chen, had already grasped enough strength.

"Your Lordship." Jiang Ying's body suddenly dashed out of the darkness.

"Jiang Ying, what news?"

"In response to Your Lordship, the Duke of Soaring Dragon has summoned the dukes on his side and raised the call of clearing out the evil ministers from the king and exterminating the crafty sycophants. He has pointed the spear at our Jiang Han manor."

"Despicable." Jiang Feng trembled from his rage. In terms of crafty sycophants, was there anyone who was greater than the Duke of Soaring Dragon himself, Long Zhaofeng?

"Father, don't be mad. Long Zhaofeng is but rotten bones in the graveyard, a grasshopper after autumn. He won't be able to hop around for too long."

He was waiting, waiting for the moment of the final battle to arrive.

Jiang Feng also didn't know from where Jiang Chen was getting his confidence. But upon seeing Jiang Chen thus, the former more or less gained some confidence as well.

After all, with the Goldwing Swordbirds, they would have no trouble fleeing if they couldn't win in battle.

The father and son duo thus sat in the courtyard for the entire night. The moment dawn broke, Jiang Chen patted his father's back.

"Father, we should go."

"Go where?" Jiang Feng felt it a bit odd.

Jiang Chen whistled lowly and two Goldwing Swordbirds shot out from the shadows.

"Father, hop on. Come with me." Jiang Chen whistled and the two Goldwing Swordbirds took the father and son duo shooting into the clouds, vanishing in the dawn over the capital.

"Chen'er, where are we going?"

"To find reinforcements of course." Jiang Chen smiled and pointed at the valley ahead. "The advance guard is up ahead. The main army will also be here between a few hours or half a day."

Jiang Chen muttered something after finishing speaking. In the span of a moment, countless Swordbirds fluttered out of the valley as if locusts, covering the sky and blotting out the sun, filling half the sky instantaneously.

Within one full division, there were more than ten thousand Swordbirds. Each Greenwing Swordbird was equivalent to four meridians true qi.

Each Silverwing Swordbird, of which there were several hundred, was equivalent to a practitioner in the advanced realm of true qi.

There were also ten Goldwing Swordbirds. Each of them was equivalent to a human true qi master.

The most important thing was that the Swordbird division controlled the skies, holding an advantageous vantage point. Once battle was engaged, the benefits of that advantage would be more than readily apparent.

The feathers of the Swordbirds were as if knives. Ordinary arrows wouldn't even be able to make a dent at all.

Chapter 95: Rare Jade Fruit

Jiang Feng was thoroughly dumbfounded. He knew that his son must've had some miraculous encounters. Otherwise he never would've turned from someone who couldn't even pass the foundational exams to becoming someone that was a thorn in the side for the Duke of Soaring Dragon.

"Chen'er, these... these Swordbirds, they are all very obedient to you?" Jiang Feng felt a bit out of breath.

"Father, this is my trump card. With just a single order from me, they will battle to the death at any time!"

Jiang Feng's facial expression was unimaginably queer. He was both excited by his son's miraculous changes, but at the same time also vaguely lamented the state of the universe and pitied the fate of mankind.

"Chen'er, these birds are bloodthirsty. If they move towards the capital and only attack the Duke of Soaring Dragon, that is justifiable because his crimes more than deserve death. But if they rage out of control, then the capital and people will be plunged into misery and suffering."

At the end of the day, Jiang Feng was still a member of the Eastern Kingdom. He had always been benevolent, and although he had a deep and abiding feud with the Duke of Soaring Dragon, but his thoughts were still on the possibility of involving innocent citizens if this bird army went towards the capital.

"Father, I have complete control over the Swordbird army. However, since father is worried about involving the citizens of the capital, your son can also lure the Soaring Dragon Family out of the capital first and then fight to the death."

"That would be for the best if it can be done." Jiang Feng was not one to speak empty words of kindness and benevolence. "My Jiang family has a blood feud with the Duke of Soaring Dragon, and neither of us will rest while the other is still alive. If we don't make use of this opportunity to completely eradicate the Long family by the roots, we will only be plagued with troubles in the future! There will be no place for us to stand in the great Eastern Kingdom."

"Father's words are exceedingly true. Although the heavens are thus vast, the great sons of my Jiang family may not have to find a foothold only in the Eastern Kingdom. Not to mention, it's not a given thing as to whether or not this kingdom's land still belongs to the Eastern clan after this war." Jiang Chen laughed lightly.

"If it's not named Eastern, would it be named Long instead? This must be avoided at all costs." Although Jiang Feng had given up all hope on Eastern Lu, but he'd still rather have the Eastern family continue to control the kingdom if he had to choose. If the kingdom fell into the hands of the Long family, it would be an absolute disaster for the Jiang family.

"Father, why must it be named Long instead of Eastern? Have you ever had this thought father, for the kingdom to bear my Jiang family? Why should this be out of consideration?" Jiang Chen's tone was noncommittal.

"Eh?" Jiang Feng's stalwart body trembled. "Chen'er, your words..."

"Are treason and heresy?" Jiang Chen chuckled. "Father, in the world of martial dao, the strong is revered. This Eastern clan did nothing more than wrest their land away from someone else. It's said that everyone takes a turn in sitting in the emperor's seat, and it's my family's turn this year. Except, my Jiang family may not be interested in being a mere ordinary kingdom."

Jiang Feng didn't speak for the longest time. He had to say that his son's words made a great deal of sense and caused him to feel a bit tempted.

As a duke, Jiang Feng wasn't one who was foolishly loyal. On the contrary, he had his own opinions about the political situation.

Therefore, Jiang Chen's words truly did cause his heart to palpitate with excitement.

Indeed, why couldn't the Jiang clan be a contender?

Were princes, marquises, generals, and ministers all born into their positions?

The Eastern family clan was immoral, so why should the Long family be allowed to vie for their position and not the Jiang family?

Jiang Chen also knew that his old dad was undergoing a fierce mental battle. But if one thing was certain, it was that his old dad was tempted.

Who didn't want stamp their names on the pages of history?

What male didn't wish to achieve meritorious acts, carve out new lands, and be hailed as king and overlord?

Who made the rule that the sons of the Jiang family couldn't ascend to the throne and sit as the ruler of a nation?

"Father, this is a 'Rare Jade Fruit'. If you eat it, it will unequivocally raise your training by one level." Jiang Chen had received six Rare Jade Fruits from Mang Qi. He'd eaten three on the spot, and brought back the remaining three.

"Unequivocally raise my training by one level?" Jiang Feng was astonished.

"Mm. This is a spirit fruit that has absorbed the spirit energy of the heavens and earth. It's quite rare, even one glimpse is difficult to attain in a hundred years."

Jiang Feng absolutely trusted his son, but, he couldn't help but ask, "Chen'er, wouldn't it be a better thing if you were to eat this spirit fruit?"

"I've already eaten it." Jiang Chen smiled. "There's no use in eating too many."

"Oh, then I won't decline. Haha." Jiang Feng didn't hesitate upon hearing that his son had already eaten up. He took the Rare Jade Fruit and ate it in two or three bites.

"Father, you'll need a few days to train after eating this fruit in order to break through. I'll find a secluded spot in this part of the mountain valley and arrange for a portion of the Swordbirds to stand guard over you!"

"Chen'er, where are you going?" Jiang Feng was curious.

"If Father won't let me bring the army to create a large disturbance within the capital, your son should at least go back and take a look. What if that Long clan does the perverse thing of searching throughout the city? I still have to look after the people there, right?"

Jiang Feng's heart tightened, "Right, right. Although the Hall of Healing has firm foundations within the capital, but they don't have any military power within their hands. If the Duke of Soaring Dragon throws all caution to the winds, then even the Hall of Healing will become very passive."

Jiang Chen knew this very well and nodded, his gaze flitting off towards the direction of the northeast.

The first thing he had done when returning to the Jiang Han manor was to take out Mang Qi's tooth and infuse it with true qi, asking Mang Qi to send out the army of Swordbirds to await his commands.

Mang Qi was quite concerned with Jiang Chen's matters and immediately counted out twenty divisions of Swordbirds. A full two to three million Swordbirds set out on their way in massive, streaming columns. They arrived in roughly half a day.

At this time, the capital had dissolved into a state of utter chaos and confusion.

On the Duke of Soaring Dragon's side, the elite personal guards of dozens of dukes had all gathered at one place. An army of fully ten thousand elite soldiers had surrounded the Jiang Han manor, Jinshan manor, and Hubing manor.

All the houses in the streets and alleyways of the capital had shut and barred their doors. No one dared to set a foot outside.

Not a single person ambled along idly on the empty streets. All the shops had also closed their doors, deathly afraid of being embroiled into this undeserved calamity.

Everyone knew that the capital had sunk into chaos, utter confusion, and disarray.

A slaughter was about to take place in the capital.

A cruel and brutal battle for power was about to begin exchanging blows .

Except, when the great army had surrounded these three manors, they discovered that these manors had long since been abandoned and not a single person was to be found.

"What? Escaped?" Long Zhaofeng surged to his feet when he received the news.

"Not a single person was to be found in the three manors!"

"Search, search the entire city! Several thousands worth of people from three families couldn't have possibly all vanished in a single night." There was a layer of frost on Long Zhaofeng's face.

His fist was clenched tight, so tight that his knuckles creaked and cracked.

The depths of his hatred right now couldn't be washed away by the waters of three rivers and five oceans. He even hated the Jiang clan more than he hated the royal family!

He only wanted to seize power from the royal family.

But his hatred of the Jiang clan stemmed from the death of his son!

Long Yinye was the son that he, Long Zhaofeng, had been most proud of, and his most distinguished heir.

Long Zhaofeng's eyes were filled with the anguish and the hate of losing a son. To think that he, the Duke of Soaring Dragon, had been domineering all his life. It was always him who'd exterminated other family clans and him who killed those of other families.

When had it turned into those of the Long family being killed?

Therefore, Long Zhaofeng was not only enraged, he was furious! This wasn't a simple matter of vengeance, but a greater matter of protecting the power and dignity of the Long family, as well as making an example for others to see!

"Your Lordship, the several thousand people of these three families couldn't possibly have gone anywhere in the span of one night. They must be hiding somewhere."

"Yes, the city gates are shut, they can't leave the city either."

"That may not be true. If they bribed the guards and had a royal order, it wouldn't be impossible for them to leave under cover of the night!"

The strategists working for the Duke of Soaring Dragon all expressed their opinions.

Long Zhaofeng nodded faintly. "This is simple. Send people to inquire at all the city gates. Our Long family has connections at every city gate."

The Duke of Soaring Dragon had plotted a coup and thus would pay special attention to this subject of city guards. He must have also expended a lot of thought and effort to smuggle in a lot of spies and make a lot of connections.

Just as he was speaking, another one of his confidantes walked in. "Your Lordship, your subordinate has already investigated all the various city gates. There was absolutely no large scale movement of people last night!"

Long Zhaofeng was overjoyed. "In that case, then they must be within the capital! Seal off the capital, dig three feet into the ground, and find them!"

He had a good pretext for making his moves, and under the banner of vengeance for his son, he had even fewer reservations.

If the royal family wanted to intervene, then he had the excuse of gaining revenge for his son.

If the royal family didn't intervene, then he had even fewer reservations.

By now, all the armies of the various dukes were being dispatched and already heading to the capital. Even if Eastern Lu wanted to have a showdown, Long Zhaofeng wouldn't be afraid.

Within the palace, Eastern Lu's complexion was wan and he had some black circles beneath his eyes. It was obvious that he hadn't slept at all during the night.

"Your Majesty, the Jiang Han manor, the Jinshan manor, and the Hubing manor are all deserted. It's as if they vanished within a night."

"What? They fled?" Eastern Lu was also greatly shocked upon hearing this news.

The Jiang family had fled? If this was the case, then the wishful thinking of profiting without effort would be nonexistent!

He was betting on the Jiang family and Long family fighting a bitter battle, and both sides suffering heavy losses so that his Eastern clan could profit from the middle!

“Your Majesty, the Duke of Soaring Dragon has gathered the personal guards of dozens of dukes under the banner of vengeance for Long Yinye, and is searching throughout the capital for members of the Jiang family. There is an atmosphere of fear and trepidation within the capital now, and such a fearful din that even the dogs and chickens have no peace.” The commander of the Tiandu army, Wei Tiandu, also had a deeply worried face.

“Your Majesty, urgent intelligence! The dukes from various territories have sent back urgent news that fifty to sixty small and large dukes have signs of large deployment of troops within their territories, and they’ve already started on their way. Judging from the direction of the army, they are heading straight for the capital!”

Internal intelligence reports came flying in ceaselessly like flakes of snow.

Wei Tiandu gave a great start of shock. “Your Majesty, the Duke of Soaring Dragon is finally rebelling!”

Eastern Lu’s body wavered slightly. “Fifty to sixty dukes? This Long Zhaofeng has actually lured this many dukes to his side?”

Eastern Lu flew into a great rage. He drew out his rapier and chopped the table in front of him into two with a wave of his hand. “Damned things! My Eastern clan has always treated them well, why do they all rise against me? Why do they all go and lick Long Zhaofeng’s ass? Who is he, Long Zhaofeng, to deserve such treatment?”

“Your Majesty, your subject feels that we should immediately send an emergency summons to those dukes loyal to Your Majesty and have them deploy troops quickly to aid the king and protect the land!”

It was as if Eastern Lu had awoken from a dream as he hastily commanded the eunuchs to carry out his royal decree, summoning all the dukes into the palace to await his commands.

One had to say, Eastern Lu had been too careless in his grasp of the situation as a king of a nation. He had been too passive, and always plotted and schemed in small areas, while missing the greater picture. When he was finally enlightened, the situation was already greatly disadvantaged towards him.

Chapter 96: Eastern Lu, Here’s Your Dukedom Back

Out of the 108 dukes, more than half of them had already openly sided with the Duke of Soaring Dragon.

“The remaining half of the dukes should be loyal to me. Even if there is a forty-sixty split, I have the Tiandu army, the city guard, the royal personal guards, as well as the royal experts and the court officials’ elite personal guards. My strength will absolutely not be lower than that of the Duke of Soaring Dragon.”

Eastern Lu was calculating the other’s strength. As long as the rest of the dukes were loyal to him, and he added to that the trump cards the royal family held, what need did he have to fear the Duke of Soaring Dragon?

Of course, Eastern Lu hadn’t given up his illusions even now. He was still dreaming of forcing others to submit without a fight.

Except, reality was much crueler than he thought. The rest of the dukes that trickled into the palace one by one only numbered between twenty and thirty.

This was to say that the neutral attitudes of the other twenty to thirty dukes were quite clear. They wouldn't side with Soaring Dragon, but neither would they listen to the royal family's deployment.

To Eastern Lu, these neutral dukes were a disaster for the royal family.

However, the twenty to thirty dukes who entered the palace were true friends of the Eastern clan. They were diehard Eastern supporters. They also knew that if the Eastern clan was done for, it would be the end of the road for them too. Once the Duke of Soaring Dragon seized power, he would absolutely not allow them to live free and unfettered lives.

Their profits had long been tied together with those of the royal family. No matter if they were willing to or not, they had to render services to the royal family unto their deaths.

If the royal family lived on, their fortune and prosperity would live on as well.

If the royal family was no more, their family clans would, without a doubt, be annihilated and be replaced by those aristocratic families behind them, who were eyeing their positions with covetous eyes.

Out of the four great dukes, the Duke of Vermillion Bird had clearly sided with the Duke of Soaring Dragon.

The Duke of White Tiger and the Duke of Black Tortoise had sided with the royal family.

These twenty some dukes now looked towards the Duke of White Tiger and Black Tortoise for guidance. With these two great pillars strengthening them, it more or less gave them some confidence.

"Your Majesty, the Duke of Soaring Dragon rising in revolt is now a fact. According to your subject's thoughts, we should gain the advantage by striking first, and by deploying the Tiandu army, city guards, royal personal guards, and royal experts to suppress the Duke of Soaring Dragon. Otherwise, the capital will be in grave danger when their army arrives."

"The Duke of White Tiger speaks sensibly. If we suppress the Duke of Soaring Dragon now, not only is our power not too weak, we're even slightly stronger than him!"

Eastern Lu contemplated. He had tragically discovered that this battle seemed to be unavoidable and couldn't be delayed. His plan of delaying until the elder grandfather emerged from his closed-door training wouldn't work.

"Royal brother, the personal guards of the Duke of Soaring Dragon have been rampaging through the streets of the capital and disturbing the citizens. Will you continue to sit idly by?" Princess Gouyu was also extremely agitated these days, and frantically rushed in.

"Gouyu, good timing. We were discussing with the various dukes..."

"Royal brother, the capital will change owners if you just keep discussing. They're searching around for and arresting members of the Jiang family now, how is this not terrorizing the other dukes as well? If he does arrest members of the Jiang family, how will the other dukes think and feel? Even if they have loyal

inclinations to the royal family, will they have the courage to stand up to the Duke of Soaring Dragon's threatening demeanor?"

Princess Gouyu was irate. She was irate that her royal brother hadn't listened to her, and had actually withdrawn the Tiandu army when Long Yinye had besieged the Jiang Han manor previously.

After he had made the wrong move then, the balance of the heavens had tilted immediately. The royal family had been severely disadvantaged afterwards, and had lost the people's hearts.

Although these dukes proclaimed their allegiance to the royal family, it wasn't because they were loyal, but that their profits were too closely tied in with the royal family's and couldn't be broken apart.

Why would they fight along with the royal family if they had a way out?

"Your Highness, the Jiang family is a subject of the royal family but has gone missing and fled at this critical moment. You shouldn't care too much about the remnants of a family who decided to flee on the brink of battle." Some dukes spoke out.

Princess Gouyu's phoenix eyes glared, "What do you mean fleeing before battle? The Jiang family cannot turn the situation by themselves. Without the protection of the royal family, it's a wise choice to avoid the edge of advance."

"Heh heh, having been fed and paid by our ruler, we should be loyal and follow our liege's every thought and step. If Jiang Feng is willing fight to the death with the Duke of Soaring Dragon, then I'll think highly of him... who doesn't know how to run away?"

Eastern Lu also nodded. "Gouyu, the Jiang family's actions have caused Us great disappointment. We wish to suppress the Duke of Soaring Dragon, but have no obligation towards the Jiang family."

Gouyu was speechless. Her heart sank to the bottom after hearing Eastern Lu's words. She knew that there was no convincing her royal brother.

What nonsense was this about the Jiang family's actions disappointing him? Why didn't he think of how much his previous actions have disappointed the Jiang family?

Gouyu smiled bitterly, her expression ghastly. "Royal brother, if you want me to fight to my death, your little sister will obey your commands at any time. Your sister will not be involved in these courtly matters anymore."

Nothing was more lamentable than a dead heart. Princess Gouyu could see the shadows of the ruler of a dead nation on Eastern Lu. She saw the shadows of a vacillating failure.

"Gouyu, you must remember to stand by my side at this moment. Don't think of those random thoughts anymore. Jiang Chen fled before the brink of battle, you don't need to think about him anymore."

Princess Gouyu's mouth was filled with a bitter taste. She was stricken, yet said nothing as she walked outside.

At this moment, a shrill bird call sounded from the air, with a loud yell ringing out from overhead.

"Eastern Lu, come out."

It was Jiang Chen.

A trace of surprise and joy flashed through Gouyu's almond-like eyes. Had Jiang Chen changed his mind in the end and was willing to aid her royal brother in suppressing the Duke of Soaring Dragon?

"It's Jiang Chen." All the dukes had made out Jiang Chen's voice.

Eastern Lu's face was purple. This Jiang Chen dared to say his name without any of the courtesies that should be observed by a subordinate to his superior.

A crisp metallic sound of metal striking the ground crashed onto the stone steps of the palace.

Everyone looked in the direction of the sound and saw a jade encrusted gold medallion. The design was unique and was the emblem of the right to a dukedom.

"Eastern Lu, take back this dukedom medallion. Henceforth, my Jiang family has broken off all relations with your Eastern family and we will have nothing more to do with each other in the future."

Jiang Chen's voice was remote as he rode a Goldwing Swordbird, occupying a high vantage point. He was coldly invincible in the air, causing Eastern Lu and the other dukes to all feel a bit ashamed of their ungainly appearance.

"Jiang Chen, you are fed and paid by the king, yet you fled before the brink of battle. Your Jiang family..."

"The Eastern clan was unworthy of my Jiang family first. You all are not blind, and should be able to see it. Don't give me the bullshit of the subject must die if his liege commands it. Now that chaos reigns under heaven and the strong are revered, if you have the time to waste in empty blather with me, why don't you spend it on thinking how to deal with the Duke of Soaring Dragon instead."

Jiang Chen turned to leave after he finished speaking.

"Jiang Chen." Princess Gouyu's heart ached. Tears gathered at the corners of her eyes as she cried out sorrowfully, "Is there really nothing more we can do? I beg you, help me one more time."

Princess Gouyu was a proud and headstrong person. Her background was awe inspiring and her cultivation high. When had she ever pleaded with anyone at all?

But, at this moment, she was begging Jiang Chen with tears on her face.

"Gouyu, I can help you escape the sea of fire that is the capital, but I won't help that coward Eastern Lu."

Eastern Lu's face burned.

"Jiang Chen, you and the Duke of Soaring Dragon have a blood feud. Even if you don't help my Eastern clan, you should at least put aside your differences and help us fend off the Duke of Soaring Dragon together." Princess Gouyu tried persuading again.

"Long Zhaofeng? Heh heh, rotten bones in a graveyard is all he is. If his Long family wins this battle, I naturally have my ways to annihilate the Long family. What need do I have to cooperate with Eastern Lu?"

Princess Gouyu felt a mix of complicated feelings. Of all these people, she knew Jiang Chen the best and knew that there were simply too many secrets hidden on him.

She had no doubt that Jiang Chen absolutely had the power to wipe out Long Zhaofeng. Except, with the way things were, what reason did Jiang Chen have to help the Eastern clan?

"Jiang Chen..." Princess Gouyu said painfully. "Treat it as that my Eastern clan has wronged you. I only have one favor to ask, can you take Ruo'er away from here? If you can, please take care of her for the rest of her life."

"That I can do." Jiang Chen nodded.

Eastern Lu snorted coldly. "Jiang Chen, what need do we have for you to take care of our daughter? My Eastern clan has numerous methods to suppress the traitor Long Zhaofeng. How is my royal family's princess someone that an uncivilized churl like you can dirty?"

"Royal brother!" Princess Gouyu was aghast. He was cutting off the last avenue of retreat.

Indeed, Jiang Chen's expression darkened. "Gouyu, if you need me to take care of Princess Zhiruo, find a way to contact me. I'm leaving."

Gouyu's body collapsed and she sat dejectedly on the stone steps, her heart as dead as ashes.

She had also thoroughly given up on Eastern Lu.

The Duke of Soaring Dragon's search and arrest grew more and more violent. The entire capital was engulfed in chaos. Corpses could be seen lying everywhere on the streets.

When rules and regulations lose their power, violent factions will rage out of control — like a wild beast out of its cage — bringing forth untold disasters.

People started to die in the capital. Many died.

Killing and raiding. Noise so loud that chickens and dogs could get no rest. Ghosts wailed and wolves howled. No peace whether day or night.

It was a good thing that the place Qiao Baishi had arranged for was exceedingly secluded and they didn't have to worry about it being found immediately. Except, with these kinds of methods continuing, Jiang Chen was also worried if the Hall of Healing could withstand it.

He thought, and still decided to retain the initiative in his hands.

He immediately deployed large numbers of Goldwing and Silverwing Swordbirds to enter the city at night, removing all the core family members who still remained within the capital in several batches.

Under the cover of night, the mobility of aerial troops was quite high. All the people had been sent out of the city within two hours.

After continuous days of fruitless searching, the movement finally turned into revolt.

That night, the Tiandu army and the elites of the Duke of Soaring Dragon had their first conflict.

Afterwards, two of the commanders of the city guard announced their allegiance to the Duke of Soaring Dragon. The city guard fractured from the inside.

Following that, one of the commanders suddenly revolted while executing his duties within the palace. He brought his troops to charge down the palace and met the royal personal guards in pitched battle.

The capital became overwhelmingly disorderly in the span of a night.

Jiang Chen, at this moment, had detached himself from the situation and was quite at ease. His people had left the capital and the main force of Swordbirds had mostly arrived.

As soon as he gave the order, they would charge into the capital. Whether it was the Duke of Soaring Dragon, or the royal family, he would be able to suppress them within two hours.

Except, the battle wasn't at an impasse for too long. Eastern Lu had never thought that the Tiandu army and city guards, entities he'd always viewed as staunch subjects, would be divided by the Duke of Soaring Dragon.

The Tiandu army and the city guards were rife with internal discord, greatly chipping away at the royal family's battle strength.

Long Zhaofeng had made many preparations in the dark for this coup and had recruited many experts. Their battle strength was not the least bit subpar in comparison to the experts of the royal family's retainer.

The royal experts were tied down. That meant one less trump card for Eastern Lu.

Three days later.

The palace's outer defensive perimeter had been penetrated. The Eastern clan and the royal personal guards hung onto the core parts of the palace with a death grip, making their final stand. The personal guards of those loyal to the royal family had basically been exterminated.

The dukes had retreated to the palace within the Eastern clan, stubbornly fighting to the end.

The outskirts of the palace, three levels within and three levels on the outside, had been fully besieged.

The Eastern clan was on the verge of destruction.

Chapter 97: The Perilous Circumstances of the Eastern Clan

Eastern Lu's hair turned white in one night. All the territory in the world belonged to the king, but as the ruler of a nation, he could only hunker down within his palace walls right now and make the final struggles like that of a caged beast.

It was said that a rout is like a landslide.

If the Tiandu army and city guards hadn't been divided and remained as a thick slab of steel, Eastern Lu would have absolutely been equal in influence and power to Long Zhaofeng within the capital.

The pity was, Long Zhaofeng had set his plans into motion many years ago, and successfully infiltrated even the Tiandu army and city guards.

In this way, the original impasse had turned into a one-sided rout.

Eastern Lu felt bitter in his heart. He knew more clearly than anyone that he was trapped within the palace, that he could only make the struggles of a caged beast and that he wouldn't last much longer.

Unless the elder grandfather emerged from closed-door cultivation early and turned the tides.

"Gouyu." Eastern Lu's eyes were red. "I was wrong, ridiculously wrong. I regret not listening to you. I know that I didn't lose to Long Zhaofeng, but rather lost to myself, losing the heart of the people."

Men speak kindly in the presence of death.

At this moment, as he reached his end, Eastern Lu had suddenly comprehended that Gouyu had always been right.

Except, there was no medicine he could take to cure the regrets he had in this world.

Gouyu had fought for three, four days in a row and was weary beyond belief. Even as an eleven meridians true qi master, fighting for so many successive days still took a huge toll.

Princess Gouyu's reaction was remote and aloof upon hearing Eastern Lu's "heartfelt words".

It was too late to speak of this.

"Gouyu, I know that you also look down upon me in your heart. There's no use in saying these words now that the situation has developed thus. No matter what, you and I are still brother and sister. The blood of the Eastern clan flows through our veins." It was rare for Eastern Lu to openly reveal his emotions.

"You're right, that is why I am fighting bitterly here for the Eastern clan." Princess Gouyu's tone was cold.

"Ai! Gouyu you can hate me, I deserve it. Let it be this way then. Gouyu, since the situation is thus, I ask only one thing from you. Take Ruo'er and Lin'er with you, and flee as far as you can. As long as the bloodline of my Eastern clan exists, after the elder grandfather emerges from his closed-door training, there will be a day in which these lands will be ours again. This is my last request. Dear sister, you cannot refuse this request."

Eastern Zhiruo and Eastern Lin, they were Eastern Lu's most beloved daughter and son.

"Escape? There is an invisible net preventing all escape, how can we escape?" Princess Gouyu's mouth was full of a bitter taste. Jiang Chen had extended an olive branch, but Eastern Lu had rejected him in an addlebrained decision.

Now that the great army was already here and the palace had been surrounded so that not even a drop of water could be leaked out, how was she to get in touch with Jiang Chen?

In fact, where was Jiang Chen now? Princess Gouyu had no idea.

"Gouyu, chin up. Although I've been outmaneuvered by Long Zhaofeng, how could our Eastern clan be out of trump cards? I still have one last ace up my sleeve. Although it's not enough to turn the tide and

emerge victorious, there's still a forty, fifty percent assurance of cleaving out a bloody path and covering your escape."

Eastern Lu's words expressed his death wish.

Eastern Lu's gaze rather cleared up after these words, suffused with a clarity of thoroughly understanding things.

"Gouyu, you don't need to persuade me. These are sins that I have committed, and so I will use my life to bear the consequences. In the future, tell Ruo'er and Lin'er that although their father was a self indulgent and useless ruler, he was at least a man who took responsibility!"

Eastern Lu's voice became a bit choked up when he spoke of this.

"Royal brother..." Although Princess Gouyu was vexed with Eastern Lu's obstinance and adherence to his own judgment, and wished dearly that he'd listened to her so that the situation of today never came to be, but they were blood siblings after all. Princess Gouyu's heart also ached slightly upon seeing Eastern Lu like this.

"Remember, carve a way out in the chaos that will ensue also! I'll also have Wei Tiandu help hew out the way for you. Remember, don't be irresolute and hesitant, seize the right moment, you must escape!"

Eastern Lu clapped his hands slightly a few times when he finished speaking, and eight people clad in black walked out of the darkness.

"Your Majesty."

"Everyone, now that things have gotten to this stage, I can only ask you to fight together with me.."

"We are willing to die for Your Majesty!"

These eight people were all true qi masters, true qi masters that even Princess Gouyu hadn't seen before!

"Gouyu, these eight death guards have been by my side since I was eight. Apart from me, no one else knows they exist."

Eastern Lu took out a jade bottle and poured out ten pills. "This is the 'Great Dao Berserk Pill'. After taking it, it will enable a true qi master to double his strength for a short amount of time, or even more."

The eight death guards said nothing as they all walked up and swallowed a pill.

Eastern Lu's gaze was deep as he looked at this pill for a while, then threw his head back and swallowed it.

"The last one is for Wei Tiandu." Eastern Lu sighed lightly. "Are all of you ready?"

"We are willing to die for the king!"

The eight of them spoke in unison, their words carrying resolute determination.

"Good, I will personally join the battlefield in a while and draw their attention. You will aid me in delaying them for as long as possible, and attracting as many experts as possible."

“Come in, Tiandu.”

Wei Tiandu walked in from outside and swallowed the last pill without hesitation.

“Tiandu, I will be taking the battlefield myself and will undoubtedly attract many of the other side’s experts. You will be in charge of the front. No matter what you do, hew out a path of blood, and protect Princess Gouyu and the others as they retreat!”

Wei Tiandu bowed as he accepted his orders, “As long as there remains one breath of life within Tiandu, Tiandu will be sure to cover the escape of Your Majesty’s bloodline!”

Eastern Lu nodded, “Make your preparations, someone send for Lin’er and Ruo’er!”

After one hour, the sky had started to slowly darken as another cycle of night was about to arrive.

Eastern Lu slowly moved his gaze across the faces of all those who assembled.

“Are you willing to die in battle with me?”

“We are willing to die for Your Majesty!” The eight death guards, Tiandu army, and a thousand royal experts all responded in unison.

“Good, then let me personally exchange a few moves with Long Zhaofeng!”

Eastern Lu’s body moved, and he took the lead in flying out as soon as he’d finished speaking.

“Long Zhaofeng, you have committed high treason and have risen in rebellion to usurp the throne. Dare you meet Us in battle?” Eastern Lu was the ruler of a nation and lived off the fat of the land. Very few people knew that he was an eleven meridians true qi master himself!

Long Zhaofeng’s army had already surrounded the palace so that not even a drop of water could leak out. It could be said that victory was already within his grasp.

Long Zhaofeng’s underlings were already planning on how they would coronate Long Zhaofeng, how they would celebrate and drape the royal yellow robes over him.

“Mm? Eastern Lu?” A vicious killing intent flashed through Long Zhaofeng’s eyes.

“Duke Long, this Eastern Lu is at the end of his days. He is struggling in his death throes by inviting you to battle. We now hold the glorious victory in our hands, why bother with some fiddly single combat with him?”

Long Zhaofeng nodded slightly. His being was now priceless. Although he didn’t fear a fight to the death with Eastern Lu, he felt that there was no need with the current situation.

It would be incredibly unworth it if something happened to him.

“Eastern Lu, don’t be naive. Recognize the situation and surrender with dignity. You’re the ruler of the nation after all. I, Long Zhaofeng, can give you a dignified death. If you persist in stubborn defiance, when the great army rolls forward, any one person can stomp you to death!”

Long Zhaofeng was in high spirits as he tried to undermine Eastern Lu’s fighting spirit.

“Hahaha, Long Zhaofeng, are you a coward who avoids battle? If you don’t even have the courage to fight, how will you command the obedience of the dukes? How will those beneath the heavens submit to you?”

Eastern Lu tried to goad Long Zhaofeng into action.

“Eastern Lu, you’re just a homeless, stray dog. With Duke Long’s noble, precious body, do you think you even have the qualifications to fight Duke Long in single combat?”

The duke of Yanmen, Yan Jizhuang, was one of Long Zhaofeng’s loyal supporters. He was the first one to jump out and start yelling.

“Treacherous ministers and usurpers!” Eastern Lu decisively picked up a bow and arrow and sent an arrow whistling towards Yan Jizhuang.

“Who is willing to slaughter enemies with Us?”

The aura of Eastern Lu’s eleven meridians true qi spurted out impressively, as countless arrows flew through the air towards Duke Long’s side after that initial shot.

He picked up a large blade afterwards with a wave of his hand, leaping up into the air and dazzling the eyes with the blade’s light. It was as if a dragon was leaping over the abyss as an eye-catching splendor sparkled out. It came crashing down onto Duke Long with a huge motion.

“We will follow Your Majesty in slaughtering traitors!”

The eight death guards split up on both sides and started charging along with Eastern Lu like wolves and tigers.

Afterwards, large numbers of royal experts also rushed into the fray, unafraid of death.

Although the amount of these people rushing towards the Soaring Dragon army was as if a stone sinking into the ocean, the instantaneous explosion of power and lethality was still quite awe inspiring from all these true qi masters.

Lights flashed and shadows of the blade danced. Blood and flesh flew everywhere.

In the span of a breath, dozens of Duke Long’s personal guard were hewn to death.

“Kill them!” Duke Long’s eyes glared as he gave the order in a loud voice. “Whoever kills Eastern Lu will be made lord of ten thousand households!”

At this moment, a tragic scene was depicted.

On the royal family side, the royal experts and royal personal guards all bore the demeanor of fearlessly and vigorously undertaking this matter for their liege. They crashed endlessly into the Duke of Soaring Dragon’s camp like the tidewaters.

In that moment, bloodthirsty yells shook the sky.

Wei Tiandu brought with him three hundred elite troops as he gave a long yell, “Kill the traitors, kill!”

His long spear danced as he also charged for the world outside the palace.

Wei Tiandu was an eleven meridians true qi master to begin with. After taking the “Great Dao Berserk Pill”, his battle strength increased swiftly.

One long spear thrust out like a dragon leaping out of the seas, and a fierce tiger coming down from the mountains.

Beams of light shot from the spear and sent a great patch of enemies flying.

Princess Gouyu wielded a short sword as she brought along Eastern Lin and Eastern Zhiruo in her wake, following behind the three hundred Tiandu elites.

She only had one thought in this moment, take her royal brother’s children to safety!

She gave no thought to the consequences and threw herself into the fray.

Once these three hundred Tiandu elites put forth their all, the battle strength that exploded out of them enabled each person to hold off ten others alone.

Not to mention the addition of a berserk eleven meridians true qi master Wei Tiandu. This made their powers of destruction even more frightening.

A small opening was created not too long after.

“Princess, hurry up and take their Highnesses and leave!” Wei Tiandu urgently called out as his long spear danced like a mad demon, sweeping away the enemies that surged like tidewaters next to him and stabbing them to death.

“Oh no, someone wants to escape!”

On Long Zhaofeng’s side, someone immediately detected Princess Gouyu’s intention to break through the siege.

Long Zhaofeng yelled out, “Long Er, Xue’er, take a pack of experts with you and stop them. Not a single one can be allowed to escape!”

“Understood!” Long Er and Long Juxue accepted their orders.

Wei Tiandu was truly putting his life on the line. None of his moves were defensive in nature. All of them were fierce, violent attacks that brought with them an incredible destructiveness.

His every attack and move sought to create an opening.

They only needed to create one crack to enable Princess Gouyu and the others to escape in the chaos!

The streets of the outside world were only around ten meters away now.

Chapter 98: Jiang Chen Makes His Move

Although they fell down bravely, tragically, and despite every person killing at least more than ten times their worth of enemies, the great army continued to surge forward like the tidewaters.

However, Wei Tiandu finally carved out a break thanks to his tremendous destructive power.

His long spear wavered as he continuously drew out rings of true qi, sweeping away as many of the enemy as he could within a space of twenty or thirty meters.

“Princess, go!”

The only moment had finally appeared.

Wei Tiandu had already suffered from multiple hits from blades and swords. Fresh blood splurged out endlessly as many large and small cuts turned him into a bloody figure.

Except, a tragic yet content smile was on Wei Tiandu’s face at the moment.

“Come, come at me!” Wei Tiandu roared crazily. “I want all of you to die!”

The stance of an eleven meridians true qi master putting his life down on the line was indeed astounding. The break widened even further.

Princess Gouyu grabbed one child in each hand and circulated her true qi, yelling lowly, “Let’s go!”

With Eastern Lin and Eastern Zhiruo, her feet pushed off the ground and her body flew through the air, bounding out of the ring of battle, and dashing quickly for the outside streets.

Wei Tiandu and his spear stood sideways on the great avenue, crashing and thrusting out to his left and right, stabbing more than ten elites of the Soaring Dragon side who ran up in pursuit to death.

At this moment, a shadow wavered in the air as if a light breeze was blowing.

A light fragrance wafted out as green sleeves danced. A sword like a poisonous snake pierced into Wei Tiandu’s right ribs in a slanted direction.

The person behind the ambush was Long Juxue, here on orders.

“Wei Tiandu, die!” Long Juxue’s gaze was remote as her slender arms raised and the light from a sword’s blade drew an arc in the air. It slashed across Wei Tiandu’s chest, bringing his organs trailing out after.

Wei Tiandu’s mouth was full of blood as both eyes glared at Long Juxue. He laughed ghastly, “So you’re the evil scourge? That so-called azure phoenix constitution? I will go down with you!”

Wei Tiandu was quite brave and fierce. His organs were trailing outside of him as he threw his spear away, stubbornly reaching out with both hands towards Long Juxue, attempting to latch onto her.

“Huh. Struggling in your death throes.” Long Juxue’s body moved as she slashed out with her sword twice, relieving Wei Tiandu’s arms from his body.

Wei Tiandu roared like a tiger, but still refused to give up. He leapt forward like a tiger, opening his mouth wide in an attempt to bite Long Juxue.

Except, being so heavily injured, how could he do anything to a young genius like Long Juxue?

A sword aura flashed past Wei Tiandu’s neck like frost as a head shot up towards the skies.

Long Juxue said coldly, “Put the head away, display it to the public tomorrow.”

Long Er and some other true qi masters ran off in pursuit towards the direction of Princess Gouyu's escape.

If Princess Gouyu hadn't had two people with her, she could absolutely escape from the ring of battle with her cultivation as an eleven meridians true qi master.

Whether it was Long Er or Long Juxue, or any of the other true qi masters, none of them would be able to hold her down.

But, the two children together weighed two hundred pounds. This greatly decreased her speed. Long Er and the others caught up with them before she'd even made it down one street. There was less than two hundred meters between the two parties.

"Gouyu, I respect you as a dignified person. Stop and I'll leave you a complete corpse in death." Long Er called out.

"Blasphemy." Long Juxue had caught up from behind and hectored. "Long Er, who gave you the authority to make such promises lightly? My lord father has named this woman as someone he wants, how can we let her die easily and swiftly?"

"Gouyu, you considered yourself a world above others when you were in charge of the Hidden Dragon Trials. Did you ever think that there would be a day like this?" Long Juxue laughed coldly. "I will take both you and your niece, tear off all the clothes on your bodies and let all the men in the kingdom look upon your naked bodies. Then, I will find one hundred of the dirtiest men in the kingdom and have them service you one by one."

Long Juxue's words were suffused with a cruelty and ruthlessness that was at odds with her age.

"Auntie, put us down, hurry up and escape. Avenge us in the future!" Eastern Lin called out.

"Auntie, hurry up and run. Go find Jiang Chen!" Eastern Zhiruo still hadn't forgotten Jiang Chen at this moment. She felt that in this world, only Jiang Chen could save her and save her auntie.

"Escape? Where to?"

Long Juxue made a hand motion. Long Er and the other six or seven true qi masters increased their speed and dashed forward.

A hundred meters... fifty meters... thirty meters.

They were coming closer and closer into attack range.

At this moment, that piercing and familiar bird call once again broke through the firmament of the heavens.

Once, twice...

It seemed to coalesce into countless sounds after a while, concentrating into a sea of bird calls.

Gold light streaked through the skies, bringing with it an awe-inspiring presence.

Whoosh.

Whoosh, whoosh.

The arrows that streaked through the sky were like death reaping runes as they shot towards the pursuing crowd.

Bam, bam.

Two true qi masters were caught off guard and flipped over themselves when these arrows with strong momentum connected.

Princess Gouyu had already closed her eyes and was prepared to die, her heart was completely in despair.

When she heard the familiar bird calls, a warmth rose up in her heart. It was like when a drowning person suddenly clutched onto a straw. She knew that she was safe.

Their savior was here.

“Throw them up here.” Jiang Chen called down to Gouyu from his lofty vantage point.

Princess Gouyu hastily threw Eastern Lin and Eastern Zhiruo one after another into the air. Jiang Chen made a gesture and the two Goldwing Swordbirds flew sideways in the sky, catching them firmly.

Another one dashed towards Princess Gouyu. Gouyu raised her feet and mounted as well.

When she was astride the back of the Goldwing Swordbird, a heavily hovering stone in Princess Gouyu’s heart was finally placed down.

“Jiang Chen!” Long Juxue had slashed her way through with a sword and violent beams of hate shot out from her eyes when she saw Jiang Chen’s sudden appearance.

“It’s me.” Jiang Chen raised his bow and arrow and shot another arrow at Long Juxue.

This woman was even more ruthless than Long Yinye, she had to be eliminated.

However, Long Juxue was obviously prepared for his arrow as her body immediately flashed behind a large tree. She grit her teeth, “Jiang Chen, are you trying to push the clock back and stubbornly resist my Long family to the end?”

“Long Juxue, the moment that your Long family sent assassins to kill my father, our families were destined to a fate of not resting until one side was dead. Within the Boundless Catacombs, even the members of the ‘Hidden Hand’ whom you had colluded with were unable to kill me. You have missed your only chance. From today on forth, your Long family can only await my endless vengeance!”

Jiang Chen whistled sharply after he’d finished talking and called out to the Goldwing Swordbirds, preparing to leave.

Eastern Zhiruo sobbed as she pled, “Brother Jiang Chen, please save my royal father.”

Jiang Chen’s gaze was remote as he looked in the direction of the palace. He sighed lightly, “It’s too late.”

It was indeed too late, because the Duke of Soaring Dragon was already surging in this direction with the army. It was obvious that the outcome over at the palace was a foregone conclusion.

Looking at the great army that advanced in a black mess like the tidewaters, Jiang Chen said, "Gouyu, let's go."

It was as if knives churned in Princess Gouyu's heart, she too knew that her royal brother must have fallen. She grimly bore up beneath the tragic in her heart and led Eastern Zhiruo and Eastern Lin away.

"Jiang Chen." Long Zhaofeng's army had finally arrived.

"This is my Long family's grievance with the Eastern clan. Didn't you announce that you had broken off all relations with the Eastern clan? Why do you intervene now?"

Long Zhaofeng was the representative character of his time alright. He could actually suppress his hatred in losing a son and still speak to Jiang Chen thus in this moment.

"Do I need a lecture from you when I, Jiang Chen, choose to do something?" Jiang Chen laughed coldly.

Although the great army formed a dark sea of humanity below like the surging tidewaters, what reason did Jiang Chen have to fear?

"Huh. And I thought you had a backbone, but you're still only one of the Eastern clan's lackeys in the end. Except, is the Eastern clan worthy of your loyalty?"

Long Zhaofeng's arm rose with a head clutched in his hand. It appeared exceedingly sinister in the dark of the night. "This is Eastern Lu's head. This is the fate that has befallen the one you serve."

"You have taken his head today, there will naturally be someone who takes yours, just like your son." Jiang Chen snorted in laughter.

Long Zhaofeng's body wavered, he almost spat out a mouthful of blood. This Jiang Chen was impenetrable and impossible to goad into action.

"Royal brother!"

"Royal father!"

Princess Gouyu and Eastern Zhiruo were overwhelmed by grief when they saw this scene.

Jiang Chen called out coldly. "Hurry up and leave. If you don't, then you too will be unable to leave."

Long Zhaofeng yelled out, "Archers, whoever shoots down Jiang Chen will also be made lord of ten thousand households!" The depths of Long Zhaofeng's hatred for Jiang Chen was not something that could be summed up with a few short words.

Except, how would Jiang Chen give him this opportunity? The Goldwing Swordbird easily swept away the arrows that shot into the sky, streaking through the sky with a dashing figure and vanishing in the distance.

"After them!" Long Zhaofeng was unable to contain his anger.

The sweet joy he'd had in killing Eastern Lu had mostly disappeared after Jiang Chen's act.

If he couldn't kill Jiang Chen, so what if he wore the royal robes of yellow? So what if he held the position of king?

As long as he hadn't exacted revenge for his son's death, he would have never fully vented his spleen.

"Long Zhaofeng, wash your head well. I will come for it sooner or later." In the great expanse of the sky, Jiang Chen's remote voice seemed to emit from the air. Intangible and ethereal, mysterious and difficult to locate.

What did it mean to feel aggrieved? Long Zhaofeng's current feelings were aggrieved.

He, Long Zhaofeng, had been domineering and tyrannical all his life, the hero of his generation and now even the territory of the Eastern clan was within his hands.

But, he could not devise a suitable plan against a mere youth.

Shame. This was practically the epitome of shame.

"Convey my order! Gather the troops of the various dukes, I want to personally conquer the Jiang Han territory. I want the Jiang family to disappear from the landscape of the kingdom, and the Jiang bloodline to disappear from this world!"

Long Zhaofeng was thoroughly infuriated.

"Your Majesty."

All the people around him knelt down.

The Duke of Yanmen was the first to speak. "Your Majesty, the traitor Jiang Chen must be killed, and the Jiang family clan must be exterminated. But Your Majesty has just consolidated your grasp on the nation and must first ascend to your throne, and consolidate the heavens and earth. Only in this way will the public's hearts be assuaged and the lands united as one. Afterwards, those matters of conquering a territory will certainly be achieved irresistibly like sweeping up dead leaves."

"Please ascend to the dragon throne first Your Majesty."

"Please ascend to the dragon throne first Your Majesty."

The voices sounded out in unison and filled every corner of the capital.

Long Zhaofeng ascended to the throne and changed the name of the kingdom to Zhao, the Great Zhao Kingdom.

This news made its way into every corner of the capital over the course of one night, traveling to every household.

Some rejoiced and others sorrowed in that moment.

Those who supported the Eastern clan were all privately disappointed and exceedingly pessimistic.

Those who supported Long Zhaofeng proclaimed the news from the rooftops and congratulated each other on the prospect of getting good appointments.

Within the Hall of Healing, they too had received swift intelligence and the executive levels had gathered together at the fastest speed.

"I said long ago that it wasn't a good thing to walk too closely with the Jiang family." That Elder Blue was the first to step out and jeer mockingly.

"Your networking strategy was obviously wrong, number three." The second hallmaster Yue Qun also stood out in admonishment.

"Absolutely wrong, our Hall of Healing is in great trouble this time. We thoroughly offended the Duke of Soaring Dragon in that fight with the Pill King Garden. No, he's not the Duke of Soaring Dragon now, he's now His Majesty." Another elder spoke up.

In the span of a moment, fully one half of the senior executives of the Hall started admonishing Qiao Baishi.

Even the lord hallmaster Song Tianxing hadn't anticipated on such a large backlash. One had to know that when the Hall of Healing benefitted previously, these people had praised Qiao Baishi up to the heavens.

Chapter 99: Changes in the Hall of Healing

Qiao Baishi's heart was full of wryness. His gaze was filled with some bitterness as he swept his eyes across these people's faces.

These were his colleagues in the Hall of Healing? These were his so-called brothers in life and death?

When the Heavenly Karma Pill, Vast Ocean Pill, and One Buddha Powder were produced and available on shelves, what attitude did these people have? Each of them couldn't keep their mouths closed from laughing so much, praising that he was wise and brilliant and had accomplished a great service for the Hall.

But now, how short of a time had it been until it had all been forgotten? They could easily distort the facts just because the Duke of Soaring Dragon had risen to power, and twist all of his previous achievements into crimes.

One had to know that the profit the Hall of Healing had gained from these three medicines in the past couple of months was profit they would have had to previously earn over three years.

This was to say that the profits of the Hall of Healing had increased manyfold in a short period of time.

This didn't even take into account future anticipated revenue — and that could all be estimated.

Qiao Baishi's heart grew cold as he said remotely, "If you thought I was wrong, then why didn't you speak up earlier? How come you didn't object when we originally introduced those pill medicines?"

"What kind of attitude is this? What's wrong in us saying a word or two about you? Do you not think that our Hall of Healing is not now a thorn in the side of the newly ascended ruler?" The second hallmaster Yue Qun admonished.

Elder Blue also said sourly, "Huh, you won't allow others to speak against you just because you have a bit of accomplishments to your name? Mark my words, you had ulterior motives in introducing those pills."

"Ulterior motives?" Qiao Baishi was enraged. "Have I diverted a single bit of money that the Hall has earned into my pockets?"

"Who knows?" Elder Blue was completely unwilling to back down.

"Enough." Song Tianxing slammed his hand down on the table and said upon seeing that the two were about to dissolve into a yelling match.

There was still quite a deterring force from the lord hallmaster's words. All of them immediately shut their mouths and didn't dare say anything else.

Qiao Baishi stood up and cupped his hands, "Lord Hallmaster, I, Qiao Baishi, do not wish to argue over this matter. The annals of the Hall's history will attest to my merits and faults. I was raised by your hand and I have nothing to say if you wish to punish me. But these people... huh. They're not worthy."

Qiao Baishi also had a lofty and unyielding character. These people normally didn't do anything, but now all of them wanted a piece of the action if there were benefits to be had. All of them shirked responsibility when something went wrong, and pushed everything onto him.

How was Qiao Baishi an easy target for them to bully at will?

Song Tianxing sighed lightly, "Number three, the bigger picture is greater than the individual. If Long Zhaofeng hadn't usurped the throne, our Hall of Healing needn't have feared his status as first duke. But now..."

"Lord Hallmaster, I suggest that we hand over Qiao Baishi. He is a confederate of that Jiang Chen, if we hand him over to the king, it will absolutely appease some of his anger. Also, His Majesty has just recently conquered this land. The country has disintegrated and the people's hearts are shaky. There are untold multitudes of injured, he will need the Hall of Healing as well." Elder Blue's suggestion was a drastic method to deal with the situation.

"I feel that Elder Blue's suggestion is quite good." Second hallmaster Yue Qun also assented.

"I agree with this suggestion."

"I too agree."

To think that a large half of the senior leadership actually favored handing Qiao Baishi over!

"Lord Hallmaster, this isn't fair! The third hallmaster has accomplished deeds of valor in battle. Does his deeds become crimes merely because of a change in the political situation?"

"Absolute bullshit. If Qiao Baishi really has won distinctions in battle, then the Hall needs him to accomplish even more achievements now. Sacrificing just him to preserve the entire Hall is the biggest accomplishment of all."

“Indeed, if you want to talk about worthy deeds, then helping the Hall distance itself from danger is a worthy deed.”

These senior executives were truly shameless. Even lord hallmaster Song Tianxing felt embarrassed when he heard these words.

Just as these senior executives were chattering ceaselessly and embroiled in fierce arguments, a low curse suddenly sounded in the air. “Quarreling amongst brothers in the same family late into the night, and quite energetically at that? Can a body get any rest around here?”

This voice was aged, but it was suffused with a presence that demanded respect from others.

“Elder Shun has spoken?” An elder was astonished.

Elder Shun was only the Hall of Healing’s resident expert, but his position within the Hall was greatly revered. Even the lord hallmaster Song Tianxing himself had to treat him with the utmost respect.

When Jiang Zheng had marketed the recipe for the Heavenly Karma Pill to Qiao Baishi, all the senior executives had been unable to make a decision. It was only through Elder Shun’s verification that Qiao Baishi was able to make up his mind.

Song Tianxing smiled awkwardly and apologized, “Elder Shun, we’ve disturbed your rest in the middle of the night. We are deeply sorry. It’s just that the winds of change have blown into the capital and the Hall needs to discuss a responding strategy.”

“Discuss what? Discuss how to give up the only person of talent within the Hall to amuse and placate the anger of the new king?”

Elder Shun’s voice was filled with contempt as he cut straight to the point with sarcasm.

Those senior executives who had wanted to hand Qiao Baishi over all looked on with uncomfortable faces, feeling indignant but not daring to voice it.

“Song Tianxing, my granddaughter and I have no interest in intervening with your internal affairs. However, Huang’er and I have both verified that Heavenly Karma Pill. If you all think that Baishi has acted incorrectly, then that also means we were wrong as well.”

“Not at all, not at all.” Song Tianxing knew more clearly than anyone else the power that Elder Shun had.

“If that’s not the case, then what are you blathering on about? Winds of change in the capital? Do you think everything is over now that Long Zhaofeng has ascended to the throne?”

Elder Shun’s words left everyone dumbfounded.

Song Tianxing gathered his courage to ask, “Elder Shun, we are silly and foolish. Does Elder Shun think there are further twists and turns about to take place in this matter? Who in the kingdom can contend with the Long family’s power now?”

“Huh. I have no interest in the stupid affairs of a change in royal power. I’ll only say one thing, Qiao Baishi cannot be touched. Whoever moves against him is making a move against me.”

Elder Shun remained silent after saying these words. He gave no further responses no matter how much Song Tianxing asked or what he said.

Song Tianxing hadn't wanted to punish Qiao Baishi in the first place. After all, Qiao Baishi was a treasured subordinate that he had personally mentored. He had once wavered for the profits of the Hall, but that had certainly not been his true intentions.

He took advantage of the situation to find a way out. "Alright, since Elder Shun has spoken, it's inconceivable that any of you have greater foresight than our Elder Shun. Since the dust has settled within the capital, even if the Long family wishes to settle their debts, it won't be the Hall's turn for the time being."

Qiao Baishi felt dispirited, but said nothing and kept silent. He actually felt quite desolate inside. To think that despite devoting his entire life to the Hall of Healing, he still needed a resident expert, one whom he ordinarily had no dealings with, to save his life in the end.

"There's no real reason to stay with the Hall of Healing." Qiao Baishi thought of Jiang Chen, and remembered this mysterious and honorable young master, and a current of warmth rose up in his heart.

Compared to his honored master Jiang Chen, Qiao Baishi felt that these colleagues were as boring and disgusting as maggots.

In another room in the Hall of Healing, a girl dressed in green sat beneath a single lantern. Her features were stunningly beautiful as if an immortal had descended upon the mortal realm.

"Elder Shun, it's rare to see you fly into a rage." The girl played listlessly with the lantern wick as traces of worry were evident between her brows, appearing all the more wondrous beneath the lantern's light.

"Heh heh, Huang'er, the senior leadership of this Hall of Healing are simply ridiculous. Qiao Baishi is a crane amongst chickens, and it was a foregone conclusion that he would be envied by others. Yet they wanted to hand him over to Long Zhaofeng! It seems like this Hall of Healing is also a place that envies the wise and not worth lingering in."

Elder Shun sighed lightly, his tone a bit bleak. "If it wasn't for old man Qian Ji's wondrous divination skills showing him a sign that the clue to curing your sickness would be obtained in this common kingdom, why would I be so bored as to subject Huang'er to the agonies of boredom in this forsaken place?"

The girl in question, Huang'er, instead smiled, "Elder Shun, the matters of divination are vague and insubstantial. It may exist, and it might not. Why should we overly care about them? Let destiny take her course. Besides, if we hadn't come out, my sickly body would only be subjected to endless eyerolls and constraints at home."

The girl's smile was suffused with a kind of hazy, undefined, and mysterious feeling. Her beautiful and bright clever eyes sparkled with a light not of this mortal life, as if a current of clear spring from the heavens.

"Huang'er, don't you think it's a bit odd that the Hall of Healing recently introduced the Heavenly Karma Pill, Vast Ocean Pill, and One Buddha Powder? The quality and rank of these pills have obviously surpassed the limits of this ordinary kingdom."

“Yes, I’ve also obtained a few of these pills from Song Tianxing for research. They are indeed not ordinary. With these pills, if the Hall of Healing manages things well, it won’t be a problem for them to dominate the surrounding sixteen kingdoms.”

“The point isn’t how the Hall of Healing will do, but rather where did these recipes come from? I seem to remember that the Heavenly Karma Pill was purchased from the hands of a Jiang family’s servant.”

“The Jiang family?” Miss Huang’er held a few traces of uncertainty.

“Yes, the Duke of Jiang Han. I’ve inquired around and learnt that Jiang Feng’s character is alright, but he’s quite ordinary in all other areas. However, I’ve also heard that his son is quite odd. He behaved atrociously at the Rites of Heavenly Worship and was beaten half to death by Eastern Lu. He then started treating Eastern Lu’s daughter and diagnosed her with something called a yin constitution. In addition, the servant Jiang Zheng is the body servant of this Jiang Chen. Wouldn’t you say that there’s something odd with regards to this Jiang Chen?”

“How can there be something odd about the son of a duke?” Miss Huang’er was a bit perplexed.

“It’s quite strange indeed. I even suspect that he is the mastermind behind the Heavenly Karma Pill. Including the Vast Ocean Pill, One Buddha Powder, his shadow is in the background behind everything that’s happened in the Hall of Healing. The sudden change in the winds and clouds of the capital this time were also heralded by this person. Also, this person can actually control the Goldwing Swordbirds and he even killed the son of Long Zhaofeng.”

The more he spoke, the more Elder Shun felt that things were increasingly bizarre. “This person was the shame of the capital a few months ago and couldn’t even pass the foundational exams. How many months has it been? He’s turned into the man of the hour that can influence the situation in the capital with a shake of his body. Huang’er, would you say that something will come true on this person?”

“Something will come true?” Huang’er smiled lightly. “Elder Shun, do you want to say that Elder Qian Ji’s divination will be fulfilled by Jiang Chen?”

“Anything is possible.” Elder Shun also thought that it was a bit farfetched. No matter from which angle one contemplated from, the son of a duke didn’t seem to fulfill the signs.

But, he couldn’t sit idly by and ignore the slightest clue, even if it didn’t seem like a clue.

“If there’s a chance, I’m going to meet this Jiang Chen.” Elder Shun made up his mind.

Nothing more was said that night.

Early next morning, a news bomb was dropped onto the Hall of Healing. Qiao Baishi had left and left behind one letter bidding his farewells to Song Tianxing. The words within the letter made it clear that with this departure, Qiao Baishi would never come back to the Hall of Healing.

This was to say that Qiao Baishi had broken off all relations with the Hall of Healing.

Song Tianxing was dismally downcast, he knew that his waffling attitude had hurt Qiao Baishi’s heart.

“Fleeing for fear of punishment. If he didn’t have a guilty conscience, why would he run away?” Elder Blue interspersed her talk with curses, putting on the air that she’d long since seen this coming.

“You, shut up!” Song Tianxing burst into anger. He was exceedingly irritated. Qiao Baishi’s departure had seemed to cause him to lose quite a lot in a single moment.

Chapter 100: Long Zhaofeng, I’ve Waited a Long Time for You

Just as Song Tianxing had said, a thousand things were waiting for Long Zhaofeng when he ascended to his throne. He didn’t have the time to immediately make trouble for the Hall of Healing.

Long Zhaofeng gave a command the first day he took his throne and gathered all the dukes on an expedition into the south to march on the Jiang Han territory, and punish the traitorous Jiang Feng father and son.

In addition, Long Zhaofeng would personally join this expedition.

Everyone knew that Long Zhaofeng’s hatred of the Jiang family ran as deep as the ocean. Jiang Chen had shot his most beloved son, Long Yinye, to death with one arrow. The pain of losing his son caused Long Zhaofeng to be unable to be happy, even after taking the throne.

It was like the brightest jewel on the crown had been taken away by someone.

The army, in full battle array, awaited its commands, ready to set out at any given time.

Long Zhaofeng wore a full length cape and looked quite majestic. Handpicked elites were beneath his command and he walked to the front of the great army surrounded by the soldiers of the various dukes.

“We have just ascended the throne, but unfortunately the traitorous Jiang family are succoring the leftover evil of the Eastern clan. They are attempting to defy my royal Long family and in doing so, they are defying the entire kingdom. The kingdom will not know peace until the Jiang family is annihilated and the Eastern clan exterminated. We have the feud of losing a son to the Jiang family as well. We are personally taking the field today, are you all willing to punish traitors with Us?”

“May Your Majesty live ten thousand years, may the Long family live ten thousand years!”

“Suppress the Jiang family, annihilate the Jiang clan!”

“Suppress the Jiang family, annihilate the Jiang clan!”

The army called out in unison, their spirits soaring to the firmaments, rocking the heavens and moving the earth.

“Forward!” Long Zhaofeng waved his long whip as the great army moved forward. It was an army of a million strong as it split into three armies, making their way south to the southern borders and Jiang Han territory.

“Jiang Chen, Jiang Feng, I swear that I will not return to the capital if I don’t fill up and level out the Jiang Han territory and slaughter all of your Jiang family, young and old.” Long Zhaofeng swore a blood oath.

Astonishing killing intent also emanated from Long Juxue, her features like icy frost. With regards to Jiang Chen, her hatred of him was bone deep.

This kind of hatred was not simply because Jiang Chen had killed her elder brother Long Yinye, but the kind of hatred that also stemmed from other emotions, such as jealousy.

Logically speaking, she, Long Juxue, had an azure phoenix constitution and had attracted the attentions of a heavyweight in a hidden sect. She was the golden girl.

And true, she had enjoyed a smooth, easy life for more than ten years in her path as a genius. She had suffered no setbacks and had always occupied the spot at the top, lauded by tens of thousands, pursued by tens of thousands, and adored by tens of thousands.

But, this situation had changed because of Jiang Chen's appearance.

Bai Zhanyun, Yi Taichu, these heirs of the four great dukes had originally been followers kneeling at her feet, but had started keeping their distance from her with Jiang Chen's appearance.

This could have been forgiven, but Jiang Chen had actually publicly refused her request of the Dragonbone Sun Grass in the Hall of Healing, and hadn't left her any face at all.

If it was said that these were just matters of face, then the issue of Jiang Chen winning out over her in the Hidden Dragon Trials, when his eight personal guards were the first to complete the exam, had been an act of seizing with one stroke the superiority that the Long family had preserved for hundreds of years.

And in the Boundless Catacombs, under that careful and intricate planning along with two spirit weapons, as well as four killers of a true qi master level, it still hadn't been enough to kill Jiang Chen.

All of these things added together were enough to stoke Long Juxue's killing intent towards Jiang Chen to its peak.

She had been foiled time and time again when she went up against Jiang Chen, even with her azure phoenix constitution. This made her jealous and gave her a sense of danger.

Her exceptional advantages would be further nibbled away at if this Jiang Chen was permitted to live and continue to grow.

Even if Jiang Chen was inferior to her and hadn't attracted the attentions of the heavyweight of any sect, Long Juxue was absolutely unwilling to see the halo of another genius exist next to her own halo within the bounds of the kingdom.

The great army advanced forward with great strength and vigor.

The road from the capital to the southern border was long. Many territories, cities, mountain passes, and dangerous areas would be passed.

The Second Crossing was one of those mountain passes.

Tall and rugged mountains bordered both sides of this mountain pass. The pass was built according to the mountain, easy to defend and difficult to attack.

The Second Crossing was located in the land of the Duke of Yanmen, Yan Jiuzhuang's territory.

The general in charge of this pass was Yan Jiuzhuang's beloved confidante. Except, the head of this beloved confidante had long since been separated from its body.

Last night, when it was dark and the winds strong.

Countless numbers of fierce fowl flew in from an unknown origin under the cover of night, assailing the mountain pass.

In almost less than fifteen minutes, the mountain pass had fallen to the endless numbers of violent fowl. All of the defending soldiers had been turned into food for these wild birds.

“Chen’er, is Eastern Lu truly dead?”

Above the mountain pass, Jiang Feng, having broken through to eleven meridians true qi, still found it hard to accept this reality.

“He’s dead and has reaped what he sowed. No one can be blamed for his downfall.” Jiang Chen didn’t have much sympathy for Eastern Lu.

It wasn’t that Jiang Feng felt sorrowful, it was just that the Eastern Kingdom had been under the rule of the Eastern clan for far too long. Eastern Lu’s sudden death, the collapse of the Eastern clan, power transferred to someone else — this caused Jiang Feng to have some problems adjusting.

“Long Zhaofeng is committing many sins.” Jiang Feng had also seen much these days. The turmoil in the capital and endless slaughter had truly created rivers of blood in the capital in just a few days.

“He won’t prance around for much longer.” Jiang Chen’s tone was remote. “According to the calculations, the great army that he’s personally leading should be arriving soon?”

Jiang Chen hadn’t chosen the Second Crossing without reason.

This place was easy to defend and hard to attack. The terrain was advantageous in concealing his great Swordbird army. He would ambush Long Zhaofeng’s great army here and thus chose this place to be Long Zhaofeng’s resting ground.

Jiang Chen knew clearly that the first thing Long Zhaofeng would do after taking his throne would be to conquer the Jiang Han territory, fight against the Jiang clan, and exterminate the Jiang clan.

Jiang Chen’s aim was equally clear, and that was to kill Long Zhaofeng, kill Long Juxue, and exterminate the Long family.

This wasn’t a personal grudge, but a battle in which both families wouldn’t rest until one side was dead.

This battle must end in the complete annihilation of one side. Otherwise, if one side didn’t fall, the other would never have peace.

“Jiang Chen, are you truly certain that our small amount of people will be enough to fight in this pass against Long Zhaofeng’s great army that has turned out in full force?” Princess Gouyu was thoroughly weary after the past couple of days, but she cared even more about the situation at hand.

“Gouyu, when have you ever thought that I, Jiang Chen, have done something without assurance of success?” Jiang Chen smiled faintly and asked in response.

“But, Long Zhaofeng pulled off a successful coup and the various dukes have acceded to his rule. If he’s gathered together the various armies of the dukes, he will have roughly one million troops. Although

this pass is easy to defend and hard to attack, if everyone in the million strong army charges forward, it will more than enough to overwhelm this pass ten times.”

Princess Gouyu wasn't a brainless person, she still had some knowledge of the matters of war.

“Charge?” Jiang Chen smiled leisurely. “They won't have the chance to charge. They'll only have one choice. If they can escape, that will be their fate. If they can't, they'll die.”

Jiang Chen's tone suddenly descended as killing intent exploded in his eyes.

Soldier and small pawns can run away.

None of the Long family would be allowed to go.

He wouldn't forget the scene of the Duke of Soaring Dragon sending people to assassinate his father Jiang Feng. He wouldn't forget the scene of his father's face black with poison. Likewise, he also wouldn't forget the scene in which Long San tried to kill him when he was executing a mission. It was even more so impossible for him to forget the scene of Long Yinye and Long Juxue partnering with four great killers in the Boundless Catacombs, forcing himself into desperate circumstances.

If it wasn't for the fact that he was lucky and had all sorts of trump cards, he would've died an unknown numbers of times already.

Jiang Chen wasn't someone who treasured and nursed grudges, but he also wasn't a living Buddha, able to meekly let the saliva dry when someone spat in his face. It wasn't the simple matter of a grudge between him and the Long family now, but a matter of who lived and who died.

“They're here.”

Jiang Chen's ears moved slightly as his Ear of the Zephyr picked up the sounds of the great army marching, fifteen kilometers out.

“They're here?” Princess Gouyu's feminine features changed slightly as she listened intently, but couldn't hear anything.

Jiang Feng also perked up his ears but similarly didn't hear anything.

Standing like a sculpture on the top of the mountain pass, Jiang Chen remained silent without speaking. His gaze was resolute and full of killing intent, silently awaiting the moment of slaughter.

“Long Zhao Feng, I hope you're already wearing the royal robes. Otherwise, you'll never have a chance to wear them again in this lifetime.”

The thought flashed through Jiang Chen's mind.

After a short while, Princess Gouyu and Jiang Feng finally heard the disturbance. The aura and killing intent of a million strong army proceeded forward, that suffocating feeling of oppression caused Princess Gouyu's heart to involuntarily contract as she looked uncontrollably in Jiang Chen's direction.

He was as steady as ever, almost as if he was sitting quietly and meditating, but with the small smile on his face slowly spreading out.

"Is... is he really this assured of victory?" Princess Gouyu's heart was in a disarray. This suddenly appeared youth had completely upended and redefined all her knowledge and the barriers to her heart in a few short months.

The great army had finally arrived.

Long Zhaofeng wore durable armor over his royal robes and turned to the Duke of Yanmen by his side, "Duke Yan, the Second Crossing is just ahead right? Why do they still not respond after your intelligence has been delivered?"

Yan Jiuzhuang was also a bit surprised. The defending general of the Second Crossing was his beloved general. Logically speaking, he wouldn't shirk his duties so.

"Shall your old subject send someone to scout ahead?" Yan Jiuzhuang asked weakly.

"No need. The army will proceed forward. Tell him to open the pass. Duke Yan, you should be more cautious in using someone who neglects his position so." Long Zhaofeng said faintly.

Sweat poured down Yan Jiuzhuang's back. How could he not discern his king's notes of displeasure from these words?

At this moment, a figure suddenly appeared above the mountain pass like a divine entity descending and looking down upon mortals, as it flicked a glance at the great army beneath.

"Long Zhaofeng, I've waited a long time for you."

Jiang Chen's voice was as calm as water, but also came surging towards the great army like great waves of the vast ocean crashing down one after another.

"It's Jiang Chen." Many immediately recognized him.

"Jiang Chen." Long Zhaofeng's eyes immediately became bloodshot as endless rays of hatred shot towards the sky over the mountain pass when he saw his enemy.

"Little petty villain Jiang Chen, why are you here? Where are the defending soldiers and general?" The Duke of Yanmen called out.

"Defending soldiers and general? Those worthless things are only good for feasting and drinking just like you, Yan Jiuzhuang. They've already reported to the underworld. Yan Jiuzhuang, the road to the underworld isn't far. You should still be able to meet up with them if you hurry on your way now."

Jiang Chen's cold voice traveled down from the top of the mountain pass.

"Jiang Chen, do you think that seizing one mountain pass is enough to obstruct the southern momentum of my great army?" Long Zhaofeng smiled coldly as he called out.

"Obstruct?" Jiang Chen's tone was filled with disdain. "Long Zhaofeng, you think too much. I chose this pass only because I thought this area was more suitable to be your resting place."

What?

Resting place? The million strong army almost laughed. Was Jiang Chen crazy? Even if he had a few troops with him, he dared to voice such lofty words of taking the life of a king with just one mountain pass?

Was this the daydreams of an idiot?