

Three Realms 911

Chapter 911: The Hundredfold Marrow-Cleanse Pill

The seven judges before him had given fairly ordinary pill recipes. Though the recipes weren't entirely unremarkable, there were no surprises. The participating pill geniuses originally had illusions of receiving some new pill recipes, but although the recipes were new, their quality made them completely useless. Only Pill King Zhen's recipe remained. There was still some anticipation, but it had been greatly reduced since the beginning of the round. There were even feelings of lethargy among some present.

Jiang Chen could feel the dreariness in the air. If he had been a participant, he would have also been dejected with how tight-fisted the top-ranked pill kings were being.

"I'm sure that everyone here is very tired after a month of exertion. But, you must pay special attention to this next segment. The pill recipe that I am about to teach is not for the distracted or the dull. Frankly, one day isn't enough, especially without your full attention. This is a top-rank pill that even emperor realm cultivators can use!" Jiang Chen's speech was like a fresh infusion of blood into the participants' bodies. Their eyes instantly lit up as they looked at Jiang Chen, full of anticipation once more.

"A pill that emperor realm cultivators can use? So, an earth rank pill, then?"

"Ho, an earth rank pill! That's definitely suitable of being called a top-rank pill!"

"As expected of our city's idol! Pill King Zhen is always generous."

"Haha, that's what I thought too. There's no way that the great Pill King Zhen would let us down. Man, the pills before were such a bore."

The participants were none too pleased about the recipes that the judges had presented before. Just because it was customary didn't mean that it wasn't beggarly. Without the competition at play, they would have no interest whatsoever in learning such recipes. On the other hand, Pill King Zhen instantly differentiated himself from the people before him in both poise and largesse. He acted in a way that was well-deserving of his fame. There was a lot of discussion and cheering from the crowd because of it.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly. He didn't care too much about not stealing the other judges' limelight anymore. Honestly, he had his own complaints about their selfishness. The judges were all pill dao seniors of considerable renown. It was normal for such people to help their juniors. Why let the youngsters go home empty-handed from this rare festival?

That these pill kings couldn't reward the youths even a little, at a time like this... No wonder Veluriyam's pill dao couldn't surpass Pillfire's. In terms of accomplishment, it wasn't even a third of their rival's, and this was one of the reasons. He had decided to present the Hundredfold Marrow-Cleanse Pill out of this consideration. Its properties allowed it to easily be classified as an earth rank pill. Comparatively, the other seven judges' pills were all garbage. There was no contest.

Jiang Chen's heart was moved when he saw the participants' eyes brimming with emotion. He pressed both hands down to signal silence. He had clearly underestimated the weightiness of his command. The hand signal alone was more effective than any words could have been. Every participant closed their mouth in unison, and noise was gone from the arena instantly.

He was a little surprised, but then smiled, "This is the moment that everyone's been waiting for. Because I didn't want to let you guys down, the pill that I am presenting today is indeed an earth rank pill. It is called the Hundredfold Marrow-Cleanse Pill, with the power to invigorate muscle and marrow for any body-refining cultivator. Furthermore, it cleanses the aftereffects of old, long-healed wounds, and strengthens your meridians as well. It can do many things, and has no side effects. Truly, it is one of the best body-refining pills available out there." Jiang Chen slowly introduced the pill to his captive audience.

"The... Hundredfold Marrow-Cleanse Pill?" Pill King Yi couldn't help remarking aloud.

"What, have you heard of this pill before, Brother Yi?" The other judges were curious.

Pill King Yi's expression was complicated as he looked on, impressed. "Yes, I had the fortune of seeing it in an ancient manual," he nodded. "But there is no record of the recipe for it in Veluriyam Capital. If this pill spreads, Veluriyam's weakness in this area will be strengthened." Having said this, the pill king suddenly stood up, "Pill King Zhen, I'm sorry to interrupt. May I say something here?"

Jiang Chen smiled at Pill King Yi's sudden interjection. He knew that the old pill king had something important to say. He waved, "Sure thing. Please go ahead, Pill King Yi."

Pill King Yi looked sternly at the participants. "Everyone," he bellowed. "That Pill King Zhen wants to teach you this remarkable recipe is something I both envy and admire. However, I must first play the part of a villain. Everyone here must make a heavenly oath not to spread this recipe out of Veluriyam Capital. Even if you do teach it to someone else, they too must be loyal to Veluriyam. Otherwise, I cannot let the recipe be taught to you."

Everyone understood what he was getting at, including the other judges, who nodded approvingly. Sure, there was always internal strife, but their attitude towards outside enemies was uniform. Nobody wanted something good that Veluriyam possessed to be stolen by another faction, especially one like Pillfire City. A good pill recipe making its way into their hands was like a lamb making its way into the jaws of a tiger. Veluriyam was already at a disadvantage against Pillfire. It wasn't worthwhile at all for this recipe to be lost to them.

Pill King Yi wanted to ensure that this didn't happen—a demand echoed by the other judges, and even Jiang Chen himself. He didn't want his recipe to be another's unintentional benefit. The recipe of the Longevity Pill was an excellent reminder of what kind of trouble such recipes could cause. It had almost made the bastards at Pillfire an absurd amount of money. He wanted to avoid making this same mistake. Though the Hundredfold Marrow-Cleansing Pill couldn't remotely compare to the Longevity Pill, Jiang Chen still didn't want the fruits of his labor to be simply taken away by Pillfire City again.

It wasn't an unreasonable request. None of the participants were against it, and all made their appropriate heavenly oaths in order to keep the recipe a secret. Only afterwards did Jiang Chen begin to teach. The Hundredfold Marrow-Cleanse Pill was ten times, perhaps even a hundred times more complicated than the recipes given by the previous judges.

Every participant had to give 120% effort in order to understand it. Thankfully, Jiang Chen had put a considerable amount of thought into how he would convey its finer points, reducing the recipe's complexity a fair bit. It was impossible that such a recipe could be internalized in only a day's time

otherwise. Still, the studying process was tiresome and painful for many, with the end result only being seventy or eighty percent proficiency. Exactly how much they managed to learn was up to their own powers of comprehension.

Jiang Chen had taught all he needed in just the one day. He wasn't going to repeat himself. All the materials were ready at the beginning of the second day, and the refining process properly ensued.

The vast difficulty of this pill was apparent at once from the get-go. The weaker participants barely managed to retain all the information regarding the refining process. Success was very uncertain, but nobody complained. Everybody knew how big of an opportunity this was. If they could fully understand the pill, it would be a lifelong benefit to their understanding. Because they had been taught in the exact same way, any lack of understanding was entirely attributed to their own weakness. There was nothing to lament.

Jiang Chen's altruism put the other judges to shame. There was no jealousy or antagonism here. It was obvious that Pill King Zhen truly was on a different level from the rest of them. It was them instead who should be honored to be sharing the same position as him. Even the great emperors up on their platform had vastly mixed feelings about him. Emperor Void spoke words of sincere praise, "Brother Peafowl, you truly know this Pill King Zhen well. His generosity is unmatched. I cede this to you."

The other great emperors were similarly impressed. Emperor Shura was the only one unaffected. He looked at Jiang Chen, deep in thought; his eyes held a glimmer of something within, almost like he wanted to see right through him.

Emperor Peafowl took in the reactions of all present, though he didn't comment himself. His smile was as cheery as it had always been. He had already anticipated Jiang Chen's actions entirely. Jiang Chen was a real genius, a young man of great fortune that his All-Seeing Eyes had locked on to. He couldn't possibly be matched by mortals who tended to the tedium of their daily lives.

For the two hundred candidates, the three-day refining process was a rare trial, a battle and a struggle. Even Lin Yanyu, who had come out of Pillfire City, was shocked at the recipe for the Hundredfold Marrow-Cleanse Pill. He knew now that Pill King Zhen truly was the same person as Daoist Huang, who had taken care of him back in the wildlands. He had always thought that Daoist Huang was a martial dao genius. Only presently did he realize why Pill King Zhen had such a resounding reputation here in Veluriyam. This Hundredfold Marrow-Cleanse Pill was explanation enough.

Lin Yanyu had shown remarkable performances in the first two rounds of the Pill Pagoda battles. In the same characteristic fashion, his understanding of the pill surpassed his peers. It only took two and a half days out of the three allotted for him to refine a cauldron of the Hundredfold pills. In terms of speed, he was the first. Following him, a fair few others finished their refining processes as well.

Still, more than half of the participants hadn't finished by the end of the three days. Their scores were understandably zeroed, but Jiang Chen didn't interrupt them. He wouldn't do so unless they stopped themselves first. Sometimes, the pill-refining process deepened a pill master's understanding of the dao. It was a rare occurrence and hard to intentionally replicate. To interrupt them was to interfere with their cultivation. Everyone concluded their refining on the fourth day. Some were successful, while others had failed.

Jiang Chen had no reaction to their joy or sorrow. He had given them the opportunity—it was up to them to grasp it. He began to tally up the scores. The quality of Lin Yanyu's pills allowed him to take the foremost position. Even Jiang Chen was impressed by his pill dao intuition. Without hesitation, Jiang Chen gave the young pill master full marks. The others who had managed to finish within three days received their scores as well.

Chapter 912: Nominated as Young Lord?

When Jiang Chen finished calculating the results, the overall score of the refining segment had been decided upon as well. Subsequently, the combined score of all three segments of the pill battle was swiftly calculated. Wandering cultivator Lin Yanyu had taken the number one spot and defeated every noble youth in Veluriyam Capital. When the ranking list was displayed, an uproar overtook the scene. No one expected that a mere wandering cultivator would beat out every noble youth and pill genius in Veluriyam Capital. For a time, everyone discussed the results heatedly. However, the scores had been calculated carefully by the eight judges. Naturally, there wouldn't be a mistake in the results.

Pill King Yi began announcing the results, "The ranking list is out, and the top thirty participants who passed the tests are the final winners of the Pill Pagoda battles. In accordance to your rankings, each one of you will get a chance to cultivate inside the pill pagoda. Besides that, the top hundred wandering cultivators will also have the chance to join a faction of your own choosing, and change your fate!"

When he said this, all one hundred wandering cultivators broke into a cheer. Lin Yanyu was the only one who remained relatively calm, but the rest of the wandering cultivators appeared as if they had gone mad with joy. Wandering cultivators were ultimately just wandering cultivators. No matter how prideful they were, they knew that they were incomparable to those noble youths. For a cultivator, a patron made a world of difference in the world of martial dao. The descendants of a wandering cultivator might still be a wandering cultivator.

The things a wandering cultivator had to work his entire life to earn might be the same things that a noble descendant was born with. Number one Lin Yanyu aside, the second greatest genius amongst the wandering cultivators sat at the twelfth spot on the ranking list. This showed that the top hundred wandering cultivators were actually quite far behind the top hundred noble youths. The wandering cultivators only had ten seats in the ranking list, but the noble youths had twenty. Still, all those who had fought their way to the top more or less had some potential in them. Even if they were not worthy of the seven great emperor's attention, it wasn't entirely hopeless for them to enter an average aristocratic family or great clan.

Of course, the ten genius wandering cultivators who'd made it to the top thirty were the ones who were truly in high demand. Naturally, Lin Yanyu was the most popular choice of them all. In fact, the fight for him had started immediately after the results of the preliminary contest were announced. Other than Sacred Peafowl Mountain, who maintained a neutral attitude, every other power had more or less thrown Lin Yanyu an olive branch. Speaking of which, it was now time for the wandering cultivators to choose their faction.

"Wandering cultivator Lin Yanyu, the top cultivator amongst the wandering cultivators. Please make your choice."

Lin Yanyu was pushed up on the stage before everyone's eyes. Pill King Yi smiled while looking at him, "Young friend Lin, you may now declare your choice before every person in Veluriyam Capital. Remember, you don't need to be afraid of anything. Just follow what your heart tells you to do and make your choice."

Although Lin Yanyu was a wandering cultivator in name, he was in fact the descendant of a great clan. He had been given noble training since young, so he wasn't that afraid of being on stage. He spent some time thinking about his choice, but the determination behind his eyes was clear from the beginning. While looking at Jiang Chen, he said loudly, "I have come to Veluriyam Capital for one reason only, and that is to join Pill King Zhen. He was my only choice since the beginning, so I will join whichever faction he belongs to. Some of you may be wondering why a mere wandering cultivator like me would be so loyal to Pill King Zhen even though I shouldn't have met him before. I can only tell you this. Half a year ago, Pill King Zhen saved my life and enlightened me about many things." Naturally, Lin Yanyu was talking about the time in the desolate wildlands. However, he didn't speak in detail because he hadn't obtained Jiang Chen's permission to do so.

A murmur rippled through the crowd when they heard his words. The seven great emperors' factions were especially frustrated. This outcome was even more displeasing to Emperor Shura's faction because they'd thought that it was almost certain that Lin Yanyu would join them. In the end, however... Not only had they failed to get Lin Yanyu to join their faction, but they'd even lost Pill King Bu in the process. It was obvious that Emperor Shura's faction had been completely defeated in the Pill Pagoda battles.

When Pill King Yi heard Lin Yanyu's choice, his wrinkled face immediately bloomed into a wide smile. As he'd thought, Pill King Zhen's name had all the rallying power in the world. If someone asked, which faction did Pill King Zhen belong to? Why, Sacred Peafowl Mountain of course! This is Veluriyam Capital, so why is that even a question? This meant that the wandering cultivator Lin Yanyu was joining Sacred Peafowl Mountain! His addition to the fold was, without a doubt, like adding a pair of wings on the tiger that was Sacred Peafowl Mountain's pill dao inheritance.

A huge tidal wave of emotion was also surging inside of Emperor Shura's heart. For the first time, he grew cognizant that this mysterious Pill King Zhen had transformed the entirety of Veluriyam Capital. His influence was truly starting to change all kinds of things inside Veluriyam. Suddenly, Emperor Shura recalled Emperor Peafowl's earlier words and fell into deep thought.

The wandering cultivators after Lin Yanyu continued to make their respective choices. Sacred Peafowl Mountain was without a doubt still the most popular choice out of all the powers due to Pill King Zhen's presence. At least thirty wandering cultivators had chosen to join Sacred Peafowl Mountain out of the hundred wandering cultivators who had qualified. As a result, a lot of good seeds came to Sacred Peafowl Mountain. Of course, this didn't mean that the rest of them didn't admire Pill King Zhen—they just had their own considerations and circumstances. They knew that if everyone joined Sacred Peafowl Mountain, the amount of resources and level of attention that they'd receive would be affected. The leader of the ranking, Lin Yanyu, was already enough to make them pale in comparison, much less the legendary Pill King Zhen. Thus, the wandering cultivators ultimately made the smarter choice for their own future.

When the wandering cultivators were done selecting their factions, the Pill Pagoda battles officially announced its closure. However, due to everyone's previous demands, Jiang Chen still had to lecture for

another ten days. After discussing with everyone, he decided that the lecture would start three days later. Although everyone was anxious to hear what Jiang Chen had to say, they didn't force him to start earlier.

There was still a month or so before the Martial Pagoda battles started anyway, so they have plenty of time. They all could afford to wait. It was understandable that a ten-day lecture would require a certain amount of preparation. The lecture would only be better if Jiang Chen could prepare everything he needed. They could understand the necessity of his request. However, Jiang Chen hadn't delayed the lecture to three days later because he needed to properly prepare for it. Rather, he needed to report everything he'd learned from the desolate wildlands to Emperor Peafowl.

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In Sacred Peafowl Mountain, Emperor Peafowl's face had taken on an unprecedented level of seriousness.

"The reason that holes have appeared in the seal must be due to the influence of the demonic aura in the area. Can the demonic calamity truly not be averted?" Deep sadness colored Emperor Peafowl's tone. Even he, a titled great emperor who had been famous for three thousand years, was feeling a deep sense of helplessness. His views regarding the demon race had always been quite broad and insightful. However, this wasn't something that he could simply change with his power alone. The desolate wildlands' seals had isolated it from the outside world, and even he could only try to glean bits of information from the edges. He couldn't see what was going on inside the desolate wildlands at all.

He could only determine some of the demon race's movements and the state of the seals by observing the foundations of the outer formations and gleaning some other clues. Although these things were all proof that the demon race was plotting something, they weren't actually rampaging across the land yet. Emperor Peafowl was deeply saddened by the large groups of human cultivators who had been lured into the desolate wildlands through the tattered seals and turned into food or pawns.

"You did very well in this matter, young friend." Emperor Peafowl praised him. He was referring to Jiang Chen sealing the holes with his formations and preventing the human cultivators from entering. As long as more human cultivators weren't lured into the desolate wildlands, the resurgence of the demon race could be delayed for at least a little while longer. Otherwise, if an endless amount of human cultivators were baited into the desolate wildlands and turned into the demon race's food or puppets, the demon race would only grow stronger.

Although resealing the holes wasn't a long-term plan, it was the only plan Jiang Chen could think of at the time.

"I am only doing my duty, Your Majesty. Still, the resurgence of the demon race can hardly be stopped. In my opinion, they will break out in ten years at best, or three years at worst. They will definitely reawaken, leave the desolate wildlands, and invade the human domain en masse." Jiang Chen's warning was absolutely not just alarmist talk.

From the commotion caused by the Shadow Demons and Wood Demons inside the desolate wildlands, it was obvious that the demon race had already started making preparations. It was just that they couldn't do anything on a large scale quite yet.

Although the restriction at the entrance of the desolate wildlands was a seal to prevent the demons from entering the outside world, it was also a barrier to humans. Even if the experts of the human race wished to enter the desolate wildlands, the seal was stopping them from doing so. Moreover, the desolate wildlands was without a doubt the best protection the demon race had. Even if the human race were to send in all their elites and even if the demon race were to falter before the humans, they could still hide themselves inside the desolate wildlands.

Therefore, although it looked like the demon race was just starting to make their move, the human race didn't really have many ways to eliminate them while they were still weak. After all, the desolate wildlands had been the demon race's domain since the ancient war.

After contemplating the situation for a very long time, the light of determination abruptly shone in Emperor Peafowl's eyes, "Even if the demon race's resurgence cannot be stopped, that is no reason for us cultivators to sit here and do nothing about it. Young friend, I have sensed the heavenly dao, and I may be summoned by it in just a hundred years' time. I must do something about this threat before that happens. I only have one request I'd like to make today, and that is to transfer the inheritance of Sacred Peafowl Mountain to your hands."

"What?" Jiang Chen was shocked. Although there were some promises between the two of them, he still thought that the emperor's decision to pass control over Sacred Peafowl Mountain on to him was a little too hasty.

"Considering how urgent the situation is, we cannot take things step by step any longer. After the Veluriyam Pagoda gathering is over, I will declare you as the young lord. However, even though you will only be known nominally as the young lord, you will actually be the one who decides every important matter that goes on in Sacred Peafowl Mountain."

"But what about you, Your Majesty?" Jiang Chen exclaimed.

"I will be your shield, but my main attention will not be directed towards Veluriyam Capital." Emperor Peafowl's voice was distant and heroically determined.

"You're planning to head to the desolate wildlands?" Jiang Chen broke into an involuntary cry.

"There are some things that must be done. If my departure can raise everyone's awareness regarding the demon race, then whatever happens, I won't regret my decision." Emperor Peafowl sighed, "I know that I am making your life difficult by putting such a heavy burden on your shoulders so soon. However, the emergence and greatest successes of all geniuses start from troubled soil."

Chapter 913: Pinecrane Pill

Jiang Chen felt like he'd been taken for a ride. He didn't know how to respond to Emperor Peafowl's speech.

Responsibility?

Duty?

Jiang Chen didn't know what to say. If his father the Celestial Emperor knew about his current circumstances, his father would never encourage him to take the coward's way out and escape from it all.

"I don't know how I'll do, Your Majesty, but I will work as hard as I can." Meeting Emperor Peafowl's fervent gaze head on, Jiang Chen made a manly promise.

"Excellent! I'd expect no less from someone as unparalleled as you." Greatly pleased, Emperor Peafowl showered Jiang Chen with praise. "I don't know why I feel this, but I feel that you are the only one that can break down the invisible barrier holding back the Divine Abyss Continent. Only you can bring an end to this warring chaos." His words weren't baseless. Though his All-Seeing Eyes were only open to a certain degree, he could still see things that ordinary people could not. The fortune surrounding Jiang Chen's fate was one of them.

It wasn't the first time that Jiang Chen had heard similar words from Emperor Peafowl. However, he wasn't particularly optimistic. True, his cultivation had seen significant improvements as of late, but the Divine Abyss Continent was still shrouded in mystery. There were many things he did not understand. The human domain, the domains of other races, the desolate wildlands, even the deeply hidden Myriad Abyss Continent... Jiang Chen couldn't put everything together yet.

There was one thing for certain, however—the Divine Abyss Continent wasn't just any normal mortal plane. There were many secrets for him to unravel. For now, Jiang Chen didn't feel like he had to think too much about it. Overthinking was meaningless without the strength to match. His composure strengthened Emperor Peafowl's belief in the youth. Any other youth would perhaps be puffed up at his success. However, the emperor saw a different impassivity in the youth that belied his actual age.

"This time around, Majesty, I'd like to speak about the demon race for a bit. Is there anything in particular that you would like me to relay?"

Emperor Peafowl paused at that. "The demon race?"

"That's right, I'd like to publicize my recipe to resist the Wood Demons."

The young pill king's seriousness was respectable and praiseworthy. "Good child. It's a valuable formula, just like the Hundredfold Marrow-Cleanse Pill's is. The readiness that you show in presenting it forward so simply puts many other, more prominent individuals to shame."

Jiang Chen didn't think it was a particularly grand gesture, though. He didn't need to make money off these formulas. There was no way he could remain unscathed in the event of a demonic invasion in any case. Profiteering in such a circumstance would be immoral. After he bade farewell to Emperor Peafowl, Jiang Chen left Sacred Peafowl Mountain to prepare for his ten-day lecture. He came across Ji San on the outskirts of the mountain just as he was leaving. The latter was visibly cheered up when he saw Jiang Chen come out.

"I thought His Majesty would keep you a few more days, brother." Ji San's eyes were full of worry and concern. Jiang Chen knew why the young man was waiting.

“Aren’t we brothers, Brother Ji?” He patted the young master on the shoulder. “I’m not about to let the Coiling Dragon Clan fall to the wayside. The clan lord has looked out for me time and time again. We’ll talk more about it after we get back.”

Jiang Chen’s words reassured Ji San. He knew that something was going to come of it. “Come, come!” He shouted happily, pulling on Jiang Chen’s arm. “Let’s talk more at the lord’s residence. The clan lord wants very badly to see you as well. The old lord is understandably quite anxious.”

Jiang Chen smiled and nodded. Any worries were purely natural. Few men could defy the threat of mortality. The clan lord was at the end of his days. A weaker man would likely have already been scared to death by the daily approach of his demise.

The clan lord’s face was full of smiles when he saw Jiang Chen’s arrival at the residence. “Pill King Zhen, it’s been over half a year. Your cultivation has improved again, has it not?”

Jiang Chen was perfectly polite, showing deference to the clan lord before laughing, “You look pretty well yourself, Clan Lord. Your health seems good, as of late, at least.”

The clan lord smiled wryly. “I can maintain this for about two or three more years, but given how things are, I don’t think that’ll be enough time for them to change. His Majesty Peafowl’s attitude is pretty unclear. Many think that Emperor Shura will take the throne once the former retires. As the foremost clan under Emperor Peafowl, at best I expect that we’ll undergo absolute disintegration.”

Disintegration? Jiang Chen had to chuckle at that. “I know you’re always looking ahead, Clan Lord, but isn’t that a bit too much?”

“No, no, not at all.” The Coiling Dragon clan lord’s expression was very solemn. “If Emperor Shura takes the helm, everyone from Sacred Peafowl Mountain will have to retire. But that’s not going to be the case for us clans and houses, right? We’ll be used to set an example for others.”

With Emperor Shura at the helm, something like that wouldn’t necessarily happen, but it was fairly likely. There were many hidden enemies for a clan as prominent as the Coiling Dragon.

Any change to the people in power meant a change in their respective subordinates. Nobody could guarantee that the Coiling Dragon Clan would be left untouched.

“Brother, there are no outsiders here, so do forgive my haste. Is it true that you’ve acquired an acorn from an Invisible Chameleon Cloudpine?” This was a more important matter for Ji San. He wanted to know about it without delay.

The Coiling Dragon clan lord looked towards Jiang Chen with equally brilliant interest.

“Am I the type of person who would joke about that?” Jiang Chen grabbed at the air casually and produced an acorn between his fingers.

“Is that... is that a Cloudpine’s acorn?” Young master Ji San was overjoyed. His eyes weren’t the only ones on the acorn. The Coiling Dragon clan lord stared fiercely at it with a deathly fixation, as if it was the source of his life.

“Yes. With this acorn and the Cloudcrane’s heart, we have both of the main materials required for the Pinecrane Pill. The remaining materials are easy to obtain.” Jiang Chen nodded.

“Then... when can it be refined?” Ji San wasn’t a hasty man, but he couldn’t sit back idly either with something so intimately related to the Coiling Dragon clan lord. In the greater scheme of things, it directly affected the clan’s fate.

“Refining it... will take a bit more time and effort.” Jiang Chen sighed softly.

“Why? You can’t contact your master?” The Coiling Dragon clan lord’s body shook. He was very interested in the answer to that question. “As long as he is willing, I will pay any price. Anything that the Coiling Dragon Clan has is his.”

“It’s not a matter of the price.” Jiang Chen smiled. “I really can’t contact my master. He is a secluded man, and I’ve tried the method he gave me without much success. Perhaps he has gone to a place sealed off from the outside world.”

“What?” The Coiling Dragon clan lord’s expression became dull at once.

Ji San was in a panic. “Is there no other way?”

“Probably not in the short term.” Jiang Chen shook his head. “However, my master did teach me how to refine the pill once upon a time.”

“Huh?” Ji San’s sadness was replaced with a renewed vigor. “Then you can refine the pill too, right?”

The Coiling Dragon clan lord clutched at his chair’s handles. He looked at Jiang Chen, not knowing how to feel.

Jiang Chen didn’t deny it. “Yes. But I haven’t refined the pill before, so I suppose I only have a fifty percent chance at success.”

The Coiling Dragon clan lord was ecstatic. “I’m willing to bet with even ten percent. Fifty is more than enough. If your master really cannot be reached, I will have to rely on you instead, little friend.”

Ji San grabbed Jiang Chen’s shoulder as well. “Brother, you’re lucky by nature. Fifty percent for you is at least seventy to eighty for someone else!” He became animated at once, shrugging off his previous despair. “What other materials do you need? I’ll go prepare them right now.”

“No rush,” Jiang Chen laughed wryly. “Refining the Pinecrane Pill isn’t child’s play. I need some time to remember it and figure things out. If I rush headlong into it, there’s no way I’ll succeed.”

“Right, right, my bad.” Ji San quickly changed his tune. “Yes, you should take some time and think about it. I’ll go prep the materials in the meantime.”

Jiang Chen gave the acorn to Ji San. “Keep the acorn for now. I’ll give you a list in a bit. Refining the pill... well, that’ll have to wait until the gathering’s finished.” He raised his head to the Coiling Dragon clan lord. “Are you willing to wait, sir?”

“Haha, the Veluriyam Pagoda gathering only lasts for a few more months. I can wait for that long. I wonder how long the refining process will take, though?”

The Pinecrane Pill was a sky-rank pill, and thus difficult to attempt.

Jiang Chen did some quick mental math before giving a conservative estimate. “Anywhere between fifteen to sixty days.”

The Coiling Dragon clan lord breathed a sigh of relief at the quote. “Okay, then I will patiently await your good news. If you manage the feat, the Coiling Dragon Clan will forever be in your debt.” As the lord of a great clan, it was rare that the Coiling Dragon clan lord would say such things.

“Mm. I’ll go write up the materials list, then I have to do some lecture preparation. I’m off. Please be patient.”

The Coiling Dragon clan lord laughed. “Haha, no problem. Ole Third, see our friend out for me.”

The two of them left Coiling Dragon Clan territory. Jiang Chen wrote up the list, then gave it to Ji San.

“Brother, I don’t think you told the truth in front of the clan lord. How sure are you really about refining the Pinecrane Pill?” Ji San couldn’t help but ask.

“Didn’t you say it already?” Jiang Chen smiled. “Seventy to eighty percent sure.”

“That high, really? So you’re basically entirely certain!” Ji San was amazed.

The Pinecrane Pill was just a normal pill for the Jiang Chen of his previous life. It wasn’t a divine-rank pill, so he didn’t expect to have any trouble with it. But, Jiang Chen hadn’t quite restored his pill proficiency to his previous life’s level yet. Furthermore, making empty guarantees simply wasn’t his style.

Chapter 914: Subduing Pill King Bu

When he returned to Taiyuan Tower, Jiang Chen was greeted by an entirely different situation. The Wei father and son duo were now sidelined in the Tower’s operations. They knew as much and had no intention of contesting it. Their attitude was one completely fit for their station. Presently, House Wei relied on Jiang Chen instead of the reverse. Everyone in Veluriyam Capital knew that. If Pill King Zhen had not appeared out of the blue, the Wei father and son duo would be long dead.

Acting as a judge in the Pill Pagoda battles was already an exceptional honor. All of the other judges were direct subordinates to the titled great emperors. Jiang Chen was the only exception. Pill King Zhen was from Taiyuan Tower alone, which had undeniable ties to House Wei. Furthermore, Jiang Chen had truly made a name for himself throughout the course of the battles. He became even more reputable than all seven other judges combined. The title of ‘best pill master in Veluriyam’ now belonged to him.

The Jiang Chen of today was the greatest in Veluriyam in regards to pills, whether the metric was strength, bearing, or fame. After a brief conversation, Jiang Chen clearly noticed the difference in the Wei father and son’s attitudes. They had become far more humble, and he wasn’t quite used to it. Still, this shift in disposition was completely understandable given Jiang Chen’s increase in fame and status. A difference in station meant a marked difference in how one presented oneself as well. Jiang Chen didn’t plan on changing it, because honestly, it couldn’t be helped. Instead, he grinned at the House Wei head’s humble smile. “House Head, you should make some advance preparations. House Wei should be ready to become a great clan someday.”

“Become a great clan?” Wei Tianxiao blinked. “I... I’m not sure if I’m ready to think about that.” It wasn’t due to a lack of ambition. Current circumstances were complicated. Emperor Peafowl’s continued

governance of Veluriyam itself was in question. As a faction under Emperor Peafowl, House Wei's future hinged upon the identity of Veluriyam's ruler. Without this having been properly decided, their future lacked clarity.

"Don't be fooled by appearances, House Head. You should move forward without hesitation when the time comes." It wasn't Jiang Chen's place to say much more. House Wei was the first faction he'd made acquaintances with in Veluriyam Capital. It was natural for him to want to help them rise up in stature.

Hearing this, Wei Tianxiao pondered the situation for a bit. There seemed to be a hidden meaning in Jiang Chen's words, but he couldn't quite put a finger on exactly what it was. As they spoke, there was an announcement from outside. "House Head, Pill King Zhen, there is a visitor calling himself Pill King Bu. He has a white beard, but says he is Pill King Zhen's student."

Jiang Chen had to smile at the thought. Pill King Bu was a high-ranking pill king loyal to Emperor Shura who had lost a bet to him during the Pill Pagoda battles. It didn't seem like the old man was planning on reneging.

"Let him in." Jiang Chen had no fear of that in any case. If the old man did go back on his words, the heavenly oath that was in place would judge him appropriately.

Pill King Bu had a lot on his mind. Normally, he wouldn't spare the House Wei father and son duo a second glance, despite their nobility. However, he knew what kind of position he had to adopt. With a helpless laugh, he nodded towards them in a half-greeting.

Wei Tianxiao was very pleased that an ordinarily high-and-mighty high-rank pill king was now so honest. Pill King Bu was acting like a child waiting for punishment. He didn't dare dwell on it though, and grabbed at Wei Jie's sleeve. "Jie'er, let us depart for a bit. We should let the pill kings talk alone."

Pill King Bu stood awkwardly in place after the House Wei father and son duo departed. He rubbed his hands incessantly. Despite his loss, it was still hard for someone of his position to grovel too much. He managed only a few phrases after a long period of time. "Pill King Zhen, this old man admits defeat. Why don't you lay down your rules? As long as you don't shame me, I'll do whatever you say."

Having lived out a fairly successful life for most of his years, Pill King Bu only wanted to preserve his reputation. Other things were largely immaterial.

"Shame you?" Jiang Chen smiled. "One only receives respect when they respect others. If you didn't shame yourself in the first place, what opportunity would I have had? But you're my student now, so there's no need to take it out on you anymore. Tell me, will there be retaliation if you leave Emperor Shura? If so, let me know and I'll settle it."

Pill King Bu smiled wryly, "I'm an old man who's devoted my entire life to pill dao. I have no wife and children, nor do I have any relatives. What retaliation could there possibly be? I only have a few pounds of flesh on my body. If he wants them, then let him come. There's no way that I'm going back on my word."

The old man's serious expression told Jiang Chen that he would rather be on Emperor Shura's bad side than break his promise. He was an honorable betting man, in any case.

“Let him come?” Jiang Chen sneered. “You’re my student. I’m not just going to let him come. But I’m warning you right now as well—don’t think of keeping your mind elsewhere. You’re my student now, so I’d recommend you cease any designs on changing your mind later. Twice-betrayers rarely meet a good end.”

Pill King Bu’s neck stiffened. He felt personally insulted. “Don’t worry, I’m not someone like that!” He shouted. “I’m no traitor.”

Jiang Chen smiled, but didn’t affirm the statement. He looked at Pill King Bu for a moment before continuing, “Maybe you think it’s a bit embarrassing to be my student, but even the likes of Pill King Lu Feng begged to become such. If I didn’t have a great need for people, I wouldn’t have been so keen about taking you on as my student myself.”

Pill King Bu’s face turned blue, then purple. He didn’t know what to say. From his expression, though, it was clear that he didn’t completely accept his situation. Jiang Chen smiled. “There’s no one else here. If you still don’t respect me, I can give you another chance to challenge me. The topic is irrelevant. If you can gain even a little advantage over me, I’ll give you your freedom again. You can go wherever you want.”

Although he wanted Pill King Bu’s help, Jiang Chen didn’t want the pill king to harbor any lingering negativity in his heart. Any enlistment of the old man had to be done with his utter and complete submission. One had to remove all distrust from a man’s heart before he could be used. Jiang Chen didn’t want the long-term help of someone that hated him for any reason.

Pill King Bu was curious. How could the young pill king be this generous?

“I’m giving you the opportunity. If you don’t have the courage to take it, then that’s not up to me.” Jiang Chen said with a half-smile.

Pill King Bu’s chest heaved, his eyes bulging. “Do you really mean that?”

“You talk too much. Show me your moves, if you have any. If you don’t, then stay put.” Jiang Chen was annoyed.

Pill King Bu wasn’t upset by the young man’s attitude. He considered for a moment, then took out a pill. “I’m not going to challenge you to anything else. As long as you can successfully analyze this pill and tell me its materials, I’ll be completely convinced. Even half is enough to secure my loyalty.”

The old pill king had mustered up all his courage to say this. He’d attributed his previous loss to lack of care, so he was still disgruntled about it. Smiling faintly, Jiang Chen motioned for Pill King Bu to put down the pill. He swept his gaze across the pill. “This pill has been passed down for three hundred years, has it not? Is it a unique one?” Jiang Chen smiled serenely as he asked.

A look of surprise flashed across Pill King Bu’s eyes. Still, he was unmoved. “Don’t test me. Analyze this pill first.”

Jiang Chen found the old man’s staunchness amusing, and took the pill between his fingers casually. Suddenly, the hint of a mocking smile played across his face. He tossed Pill King Bu’s treasured pill straight into the trash can beside him.

“You...” Pill King Bu’s face colored in fury. “You can shame me, but you can’t shame my master’s pill! I...”

“Is a Profound Dreamweaver Pill really worthy of being treasured like this? It’s just an imperfect version. You haven’t kept this for the last couple centuries, have you?” The degree of Jiang Chen’s ridicule was plain on his face. In fact, the Profound Dreamweaver Pill wasn’t garbage at all. Jiang Chen had merely acted in such an exaggerated fashion to destroy the last shred of Pill King Bu’s dignity and ego. Jiang Chen knew that an old man as stubborn as him wasn’t likely to lose his airs so easily. He would only do so after his ego was completely gone.

“You... you recognize this pill?” Pill King Bu’s entire person was in disarray. His face changed color several times, and he began to stutter. His eyes belied great astonishment.

Jiang Chen curled his lips, “Do you think that everyone is as ignorant as you are? Keeping trash as treasure... surely not!”

Pill King Bu was as gray as ash. Jiang Chen had landed a square hit to the jaw. The pill had been given to him by his first master long ago, on the latter’s deathbed. His master had given him the pill with old, decrepit hands. The pill was his masterpiece, the old man had said, but it was incomplete. If he had been able to refine a real Profound Dreamweaver Pill, then his life would have truly been complete, satisfied unto death...

One of the requests that his master had made was that Pill King Bu, as his student, should successfully refine the Profound Dreamweaver Pill. The pill king had always considered the request to be on the same level of importance as an imperial command. However, he was more than a thousand years of age, yet his master’s dream still had not been fulfilled. Thus, he’d taken out the pill to intentionally make Jiang Chen’s life difficult. He hadn’t thought that a pill that he held in such high regard would be treated as garbage in Pill King Zhen’s eyes.

The pill that his master had requested for him to complete with such sincerity on his deathbed was trash to another. Pill King Bu wanted to lash out, but could not. He simply didn’t have the confidence. Pill King Zhen had directly said the pill’s name with such ease, after all. Maybe it really was garbage in the young pill king’s eyes?

Chapter 915: Complete Submission

Pill King Bu had a complicated look in his eyes. The anger and grievance that he’d initially felt were slowly turning into helpless submission. This was because he knew that the gap between his skill and that of the young pill king was too great. The young man’s horizon was so distant and his strength so great that he could crush even Pill King Bu’s late master with less than a finger. Before a titan, Pill King Bu realized that he couldn’t salvage even a scrap of pride. Sullenly, he walked up to the trash can and picked up the defective pill with red eyes. Then, he wiped it gently, as if he was wiping his most precious treasure. It was only when the pill was completely clean that he finally put it away carefully. His late master had left this pill behind as he drew his last breath. Even if it was worthless, he didn’t wish to see it thrown into the dustbin.

Jiang Chen was a bit startled and moved when he saw Pill King Bu’s actions. Now he was the one who felt a bit sorry. He could see that this pill was extremely important to Pill King Bu. Although the pill was trash and defective, to Pill King Bu it might be a keepsake that was worth risking his life to protect. The

sacred emotion made Jiang Chen realize that he might have gone a little overboard just now. He knocked the table lightly and stared at Pill King Bu. "Ole Bu, this pill may be a keepsake that you've inherited from your master, and as such, it may hold a special meaning for you. So I apologize."

Pill King Bu looked a little surprised as he looked up at Jiang Chen. He obviously didn't expect the arrogant Pill King Zhen to apologize to him.

"I'm not apologizing because this pill is amazing or anything. I'm apologizing because the emotions you've invested in this pill is admirable." Jiang Chen said indifferently.

Pill King Bu let out a wry laugh and said in a distressed manner, "The victor is king, so you may humiliate me all you like. This Ole Bu has lost so thoroughly that I've lost even my underwear."

Jiang Chen could no longer see any trace of arrogance or non-acceptance on the other's face anymore. There was only a deep sense of powerlessness that would naturally follow after a crushing blow. "The Profound Dreamweaver Pill is a pill that sends its user into a dream. It can temper, repair, and improve a cultivator's consciousness. Even more amazing is its ability to repair all damages to one's consciousness, no matter how severe. Therefore, the Profound Dreamweaver Pill really is a first-rate pill. Unfortunately, the refining process of this particular pill is pretty much a failure." Jiang Chen spoke frankly.

Pill King Bu was startled, and he couldn't stop himself from asking, "You know how to refine the Profound Dreamweaver Pill?"

Jiang Chen smiled. "How could I have recognized it at first glance otherwise? The Profound Dreamweaver Pill is a pill that I often refined for practice when I was ten."

He purposely said this in an easygoing manner. However, it still caused a muscle in Pill King Bu's face to twitch in response. The comparison was starting to kill him. The Profound Dreamweaver Pill was a pill that he often refined for practice when he was ten? Was this pill really so insignificant? Was it really a pill that the ten-year-old Pill King Zhen had used to hone his skills, even though his master had failed to uncover its mysteries despite having spent his entire lifetime researching it?

It was common sense that pills that could be used for practice were common goods one could buy off the street. Could Pill King Zhen really afford to be this luxurious since he was ten years old? Was he really that impressive?

"Do you wish to learn?" Jiang Chen smiled meaningfully at Pill King Bu.

Although Pill King Bu wanted very much to raise a prideful rejection, the mere thought of it felt like he was committing a crime. He couldn't help himself from nodding at Pill King Zhen, even though his wrinkled face blushed bright red immediately afterwards. He felt like he was a kid salivating at a tasty lollipop, with Pill King Zhen being the suspicious uncle trying to kidnap him with it.

"Or you don't want to?" Jiang Chen's smile was so irritating that it invited a punch to the nose.

Pill King Bu smiled wryly, "Pill King Zhen, if your intention is to make fun of me, then I must admit that you've succeeded. The Profound Dreamweaver Pill is a regret my master was never able to resolve before he died. Before he drew his last breath he instructed me to perfect and refine the real Profound Dreamweaver Pill."

Jiang Chen nodded, "The basic structure of this Profound Dreamweaver Pill is correct, but there are so many wrong details in this pill formula that you can spend ten lifetimes attempting to refine it and still not come up with anything."

"What?!"

Jiang Chen smiled and stared at Pill King Bu, "I'm telling the truth. You've lived for more than a thousand years, haven't you? You've also spent quite a lot of time trying to refine the Profound Dreamweaver Pill, haven't you? What do you have to show for it?"

Pill King Bu shook his head dejectedly. Reality was a cruel mistress, and lying was beneath him.

Jiang Chen stretched out three fingers with a 'I knew it' look on his face. "If you are willing to learn from me, I can guarantee that you will master the method of refining the Profound Dreamweaver Pill in three days' time."

"What? Three days?!" This time Pill King Bu was so stunned that he almost suspected that his ears had failed him at a critical moment. Three days? This wasn't eating or walking they were talking about. Three days?! Pill dao encompassed a wide spectrum and was extremely profound. Just where would one find a pill that could be mastered in three days?

"You don't believe me?" Jiang Chen smiled, "If I let you teach my Hundredfold Marrow-Cleanse Pill to your students, how many days do you think they'd take to learn it?"

After thinking for a moment, Pill King Bu responded in defeat, "I may need a month or so." On that note, he abruptly raised his eyebrows, "Can you really teach me how to refine the Profound Dreamweaver Pill in three days?"

"Three days is a safe estimate. If your comprehension capabilities aren't especially poor, a day and a half should be enough."

Pill King Bu was starting to feel like his brain was lagging behind. A day and a half? Did he just say that I can learn in one and a half days what my master failed to figure out after an entire lifetime? If my master hears this in the underworld, he would probably be so angry that he'd just jump out of his coffin, wouldn't he?

After hesitating in conflicted anguish for a while, Pill King Bu finally made up his mind and spoke loudly, "Pill King Zhen, if you really can teach me this Profound Dreamweaver Pill and resolve my master's dying wish once and for all, you may command this bag of bones however you'd like in the future. I will willingly obey your every command and not feel even the slightest bit of reluctance."

"Have you finally thought things through?" Jiang Chen smiled faintly.

Pill King Bu nodded resolutely, "No, but there is no doubt that you are tens and hundreds of times better than I am. I will only be humiliating myself if I remain stubborn."

Pill King Bu was an arrogant and bad-tempered man. His flaws were all extremely obvious. However, he was not without any merits either. One, he was a man of his word. Two, he was a man who admired experts. If there was an expert who was stronger than him, and this person managed to dominate time and time again, he would dedicate all of his loyalty to this expert.

Jiang Chen didn't plan to waste any more breath. He grabbed a brush and a piece of paper and wrote the Profound Dreamweaver Pill's formula in beautiful script. When he was done, he brandished his sleeves and sent the pill formula flying towards Pill King Bu.

"This is the the pill formula and refining insight of the Profound Dreamweaver Pill. I've written everything in there clearly, so if you have good powers of comprehension, it should take you at most a day and a half to understand it all. If not, it may take you three to five days. Remember your promise." Jiang Chen's movements had the natural bearing of a person in power, and Pill King Bu caught the pill formula subconsciously while feeling startled. For a time he was quiet and wasn't quite sure what to say.

Jiang Chen was already striding outside. "I will be cultivating behind closed doors for two days so I can prepare the contents of my lecture. I hope that you'll have completely comprehended the pill formula by the time I come out. When that happens, you will join me and act as my support during the lecture."

If Jiang Chen was anyone else, his words would've caused everyone in Veluriyam Capital to drop their jaws in shock. But since he was Jiang Chen, no one thought that he was wrong to say something like this.

When Jiang Chen's back had finally vanished from the room, Pill King Bu eventually came back to his senses and looked at the pill formula. He only looked through a few lines before his expression changed abruptly. He immediately began reading seriously with trembling hands. The more he read, the more grave Pill King Bu's expression became. In the end, his entire body involuntarily trembled in response. It was obvious that he had seen something that agitated him greatly.

He muttered to himself with trembling lips, "The Profound Dreamweaver Pill is actually real? These refining details... They are all where my master went wrong back then. So the reason why I've spent half a lifetime researching using my master's findings and coming up with nothing is because there are too many places where he went wrong. No wonder..."

Pill King Bu inhaled once deeply. The pill formula he was holding felt as heavy as Mt. Tai.

He never thought that Pill King Zhen would actually give him the real pill formula. In his opinion, there was at least an eighty percent chance that Pill King Zhen would humiliate and make fun of him instead. But reality was a lot more difficult to believe than his imagination. This pill formula was very simple and direct. It pointed out all the flaws in his thinking when he studied the pill. Moreover, these details were stated in a very logical fashion. He was sure that the information written on the pill formula wasn't simply fake nonsense.

"He... he only looked at my pill a couple of times, but he still managed to find so many problems with it and identify all of its core issues. Just what is... his real level of pill dao?" Pill King Bu suddenly felt very cold. The more he thought about it, the more he felt that this Pill King Zhen was unfathomable. He almost couldn't believe that he, a mere frog in a well, had issued a challenge against someone as great as him. Was it an undeserving loss? No, it wasn't. Not at all!

Suddenly, Pill King Bu felt as if he was enlightened. If a man learns of the right way in the morning, then he may die in the evening without regret! In fact, an abrupt thought popped into his mind. It might have actually been a good thing to lose that gamble. Pill King Bu himself was shocked by the thought. Why had he changed this quickly? This wasn't like him! But when Pill King Bu looked at the pill formula in his

hand once more, he threw out all reservations and walked quickly towards the door. He could wait no longer to research this formula.

Two days later, Jiang Chen stepped out from his closed door cultivation. He was finished preparing the contents of the lecture. The moment he stepped out, he immediately saw a person standing respectfully at the entrance. He had both arms to his sides and a look of great admiration on his face.

“Ole Bu?” Jiang Chen looked surprised.

Pill King Bu took a step forward and knelt with both knees, “Please accept my respects, master.” After that, Pill King Bu kowtowed stiffly to Jiang Chen. When the master-disciple formalization ritual was complete, Pill King Bu didn’t hurry to get up on his feet. Instead, he said sincerely, “Master, Ole Bu is your disciple from hereon. You may beat or scold me as you wish. Your disciple is willing to accept any punishment for my earlier offense towards you, master.”

If anything, Pill King Bu’s attitude showed that he had nothing to lose. There was a saying that stated that one does not slap a smiling person. Considering that Pill King Bu had truly submitted to him, Jiang Chen no longer saw the need to belittle him any further. “I see that your power of understanding isn’t bad, Ole Bu. Have you mastered the Profound Dreamweaver Pill already?”

A trace of joy passed through his eyes. “If it wasn’t for your teaching, I might actually have spent ten lifetimes in utter failure. Your knowledge of pill dao is as deep as the sea, and Ole Bu accepts his defeat and submission with great joy, master.”

Suddenly, a strange cry rang from outside, “Ole Bu, you shameless bastard! I can’t believe you took my master from me! Listen here, you! I became master’s disciple first, so you better call me your senior brother from now on!!” They didn’t need to look to know who the voice belonged to. It was none other than the childish Pill King Lu Feng.

Pill King Lu Feng started wailing when he strode in and saw Jiang Chen. “Master, why are you so biased? All of the pill formulas you gave me aren’t equal to even one Profound Dreamweaver Pill. Can you really call this proper treatment of the senior brother?”

This old urchin was starting to call himself a big senior brother already!

An amused Pill King Bu wasn’t sure how to react. Technically speaking, Pill King Lu Feng had entered his master’s tutelage earlier than he did, so there didn’t seem to be anything wrong with the way he addressed himself.

Chapter 916: Three Disciples

With Pill King Lu Feng and Pill King Bu there to assist him, Jiang Chen’s burden became much lighter. He imparted some of the contents of his lesson to them so that they could take over some of the lectures. They were both first-rate pill kings in Veluriyam Capital. As such, it was only natural for them to have a high comprehension level. They were able to completely understand the lecture material with just a few pointers from him. However, Jiang Chen didn’t dare give them too many lessons to teach. People wanted to listen to him, after all, and not somebody else. After he was done distributing lectures to Pill King Lu Feng and Pill King Bu, somebody outside suddenly announced that the champion from the Pill Pagoda battles was asking for an audience.

Lin Yanyu? Jiang Chen slapped his forehead. He'd forgotten all about the matter. If there was anyone in the entire Veluriyam Capital who could subdue this supercilious young man called Lin Yanyu, it would be no other than Jiang Chen. This was because he had two identities, and Lin Yanyu was deferential towards both. One of his identities was Lin Yanyu's savior. If Jiang Chen hadn't rescued him at the entrance to the desolate wildlands, the Six Wolves of Sparrow Mountain would have caused Lin Yanyu to suffer a great loss. The second identity was that of Pill King Zhen. Lin Yanyu greatly admired Pill King Zhen. However, it wasn't because he blindly worshipped him, but rather, because Pill King Zhen had defeated the overweening Pill King Ji Lang. Coincidentally, Pill King Ji Lang was also Lin Yanyu's mortal enemy.

Pill King Bu wasn't unfamiliar with Lin Yanyu. As such, he was a little surprised to see this young pill dao talent act as obedient as a lamb in front of Jiang Chen. Before the pill king came under Jiang Chen's tutelage, he'd acted as the representative for Emperor Shura. He'd even twice represented Emperor Shura in recruiting Lin Yanyu. Thus, Pill King Bu understood what Lin Yanyu's personality was like. This young man might seem obedient, but he was actually like an iron fist encased in a velvet glove. An ordinary person would not be able to change his mind easily.

Pill King Bu had tried to recruit Lin Yanyu many times on the behalf of Emperor Shura. The wandering cultivator had always appeared outwardly polite and respectful, but he'd never once made any substantial promises, nor did he ever make it clear that he'd join Emperor Shura's side. This genius wandering cultivator might seem unimposing on the surface, but he was surprisingly opinionated. Meeting under such circumstances was awkward indeed.

Lin Yanyu was a little surprised when he saw Pill King Bu, but he didn't say anything about it. He only gave Jiang Chen a very humble and respectful bow. "Senior Zhen, Junior Lin Yanyu pays his respects."

Jiang Chen smiled wryly. "Since when did I suddenly become your senior?"

"Pill Master Zhen is number one in pill dao in Veluriyam Capital. Therefore, being respectful towards your seniors is only a matter of course." Lin Yanyu said with a serious look on his face. Pill King Lu Feng and Pill King Bu were quite pleased to hear those words. They were both willingly under Jiang Chen's tutelage. But if Lin Yanyu had suddenly spoken to Pill King Zhen as though they were peers, they would have a little difficulty holding onto their dignity. How were they supposed to hold their heads high in the future if this young junior was of a higher seniority than them? Fortunately, Lin Yanyu was extremely tactful and chose not to address Jiang Chen as Brother Huang like he'd done in the past. Otherwise, those two old men might really lose all of their face.

Jiang Chen also noticed this issue and said nothing about it. Instead, he spoke with some amusement and looked at Lin Yanyu. "Why have you not entered the Pill Pagoda?"

Lin Yanyu quickly replied, "Everyone has applied to postpone their entrance to the Pill Pagoda by half a month. They all wish to listen to senior's lectures."

Pill King Lu Feng snorted. "These young brats are surprisingly sly."

Jiang Chen wasn't too surprised. He then asked, "What are your plan from now on?"

"This junior wishes to follow senior around and listen to senior's teachings." Lin Yanyu said sincerely.

A pill dao senior that could defeat Pill King Ji Lang, was worthy of Lin Yanyu's respect and sincerity. However, Pill King Lu Feng's brow twitched. "Brat. You're seeking tutelage under our master too?!"

Pill King Bu stared at Lin Yanyu with an antagonizing look.

"Both of you, stop bullying him. Yanyu is a young man whom I place high hopes on." Jiang Chen laughed in an easy-going manner.

Lin Yanyu was moved when he heard those words. He quickly dropped to his knees and kowtowed. "Senior, I beseech you, please take this disciple into your tutelage. This disciple will definitely serve master well and put his heart and soul into learning."

Jiang Chen had already planned on doing so in the first place. Otherwise, he would never have summoned Lin Yanyu to Veluriyam Capital. However, accepting a disciple was not child's play. "You won't regret this?" Jiang Chen asked with a deep growl.

"Your disciple will never regret this!" Lin Yanyu replied with no hesitation. He was no fool. Pill King Zhen's mastery over pill dao was extremely obvious. Even the legendary, undefeated Pill King Ji Lang had been defeated by this man! How many people in the Divine Abyss Continent could possibly be more powerful than him?

Although Lin Yanyu had inherited his family's profound knowledge, it was all outdated. No matter how deep his family's foundations were, he'd only inherited a portion of that knowledge. Moreover, even if he'd inherited all of his family's heritage, it still wouldn't be enough for him to seek revenge on Pillfire City. If he wanted the slightest glimmer of hope for revenge, or to return the Lin family to its previous glory, he had to seek the tutelage from this god-like senior of pill dao. He would beg to be accepted and learn from such a person. For the past two days, Lin Yanyu kept repeating this question in his mind and eventually came to such a conclusion.

Jiang Chen suddenly started laughing and looked at Pill King Bu and Pill King Lu Feng. "I intend to accept him as my disciple. What do the both of you think of this?"

Since Jiang Chen had already made his decision, the two pill kings naturally could not object. Moreover, there was no reason for them to object. With their master's status in pill dao, it was only natural for him to widely accept disciples.

Pill King Lu Feng grumbled, "In any case, I will be the eldest senior brother."

Pill King Bu laughed wryly. Even though he didn't place much importance in status or titles, he wasn't willing to be a junior to somebody much younger than him.

Lin Yanyu was elated when he saw that neither of these old men had objected. "Yanyu pays his respects to both senior brothers!" He quickly yelled. This meant that he acknowledged the status of his two senior brothers.

Delighted, Pill King Lu Feng immediately broke into a beaming smile. His attitude also took a complete turn. "Good lad. Good lad! You have a keen eye! Mmm! Now that you've joined us, you will be put in charge of attending to master in most of the dirty and tiring work since you're still a young man!"

Pill King Lu Feng immediately put on the airs of the eldest senior brother. Even though this old man might seem to have the personality of an old imp, he was actually quite clever.

“Of course. My two senior brothers are both well-respected individuals and have already made a name for themselves as Mt. Tai and the Big Dipper in pill dao. It is only natural for this junior to be responsible for those tasks.”

Pill King Bu let out a quiet sigh. To think that this kid would so willingly enter master’s tutelage, even though the Emperor Shura was unable to recruit him! This enormous contrast in attitude caused the pill king’s heart to be filled with a wide range of emotions. It seemed like Emperor Shura’s ability to attract the younger generation had been slowly surpassed by the young Pill King Zhen. Pill King Bu had just come under Jiang Chen’s tutelage, and thus hadn’t solidified his position here. He naturally wouldn’t flaunt his seniority. He patted Lin Yanyu on his shoulder to show his support but wouldn’t say anything more.

“Yanyu, both your senior brothers are helping me with the lecture. You should also join them to help me give some lectures instead of just being in the audience.”

Lin Yanyu was taken by surprise. “I... I will lecture too?”

Even though Lin Yanyu had inherited his family’s profound knowledge, his family had encountered huge misfortune when he was young, so he’d wandered from place to place ever since. Therefore, he was no different from any of the other wandering cultivators. With his family background, he wouldn’t get to the point of stage fright. But to lecture on a podium was an entirely different matter.

Jiang Chen patted Lin Yanyu on the shoulder. “No need to worry. I will explain and teach you everything you need to know for the lecture. This is training. If you wish to become a legendary figure in pill dao whom everyone respects, you will have to go through this.”

Legendary figure in pill dao? The three disciples were surprised to the point of speechlessness.

“It would be my own failure if you fail to become a legendary figure in this continent after you’ve been through my tutelage.” Jiang Chen said nonchalantly. He’d spoken those words in a very nondescript manner, yet nobody could conjure any doubts on their authenticity. This was because they could all clearly feel the confidence emanating from their master.

A legendary figure in pill dao, huh? Even old bones like Pill King Bu and Pill King Lu Feng could feel hot blood coursing through their veins, something that hadn’t happened in quite a long time.

The ten-day lecture that the entire Veluriyam Capital had been looking forward to was finally about to begin. Jiang Chen, along with his three disciples, began their lectures under the pill pagoda of the Veluriyam Pagoda. Back when Taiyuan Tower had first opened, Jiang Chen had given a lecture for three consecutive days and had captured a lot of attention. However, everyone had only just begun to hear about Pill King Zhen’s reputation at that time.

This time, the situation was no longer the same. Back then, Jiang Chen had only defeated Pill King Rong, a sixth rank pill king. But now, Jiang Chen had defeated the insufferably arrogant Pill King Ji Lang, a legendary figure from Pillfire City. He was currently the strongest at pill dao in Veluriyam Capital. Thus, it went without saying that the popularity of his ten-day lecture exploded.

A crowd formed under the pill pagoda that extended as far as a few miles back. It was a sea of black in all directions. There wasn't even the slightest space to be found. At a glance, there was at least one million people present. And these were just the lucky ones that came early enough to find a place. Nobody knew for sure how many were lingering outside after they'd failed to find a place for themselves. A lecture given by the number one in pill dao in Veluriyam Capital! For ten days in a row at that too! This was an event that might not even happen once every decade, or even once a century! Nobody was going to want to miss it.

One after the other, Jian Chen began to impart words of wisdom right from the beginning of the lecture. He brought up many classical parables of pill dao and integrated them into knowledge taken from a few pill dao schools. His lecture this time was immensely profound. He captured everyone's full attention as soon as he began the lecture.

Jiang Chen had actually prepared for this lecture very meticulously. He understood that people were there to listen to his lecture on pill dao and not to listen to him ramble on about inconsequential things. Because of that, he discussed some earth-shattering information right off the bat, capturing everyone's attention as if he had used a hook. Without a doubt, only a multi-talented pill dao genius of Jiang Chen's caliber could do such a thing as easily as lifting a feather, condensing so much knowledge into a ten-day lecture.

The surrounding ten mile area was basked in complete silence for a time. After hearing the astounding information from the start, some of the pill experts in Veluriyam Capital that had only attended the lecture to watch a good show couldn't bear to leave. Every single one of them listened as though they were intoxicated. They'd completely forgotten that they were originally there to simply watch the hustle and bustle.

However, the ones that were caught by surprise the most were not these experts, but the three disciples who sat right beside Jian Chen. They were already very impressed by the sheer amount of knowledge their master possessed. But after listening to the lecture, they came to realize that they were like frogs at the bottom of a well. Their master's profound lecture was far beyond Veluriyam Capital's level. One could say that it was far beyond what they thought was possible. This made them feel like they hadn't just improved by one level, but by multiple levels in one go!

Chapter 917: Foremost in Pill Dao in Veluriyam Capital

Jiang Chen wasn't trying to show off. Truth was, with the heavenly knowledge of pill dao he possessed from his previous lifetime, he would be ashamed of himself if his lectures were too elementary. Moreover, it was quite obvious that many people in Veluriyam Capital were attaching great importance to his lectures. Emperor Peafowl in particular had high hopes for him. Jiang Chen was also deliberately using this chance to broaden the horizons of pill dao in Veluriyam Capital, bringing everyone up a level.

Even though Veluriyam Capital's level pill dao wasn't particularly weak, its scope of knowledge was simply too narrow. Without more knowledge, Veluriyam Capital's plans of competing with Pillfire City would forever be a pipe dream. Thus, Jian Chen's goal for this lecture was to broaden everyone's horizons, elevating the stagnant status quo to the next level and injecting a renewed vigor.

It wasn't difficult for him to achieve this because of all the knowledge he possessed. Just a tenth of his knowledge was enough to turn Veluriyam Capital into an eternal legend. Naturally, a simple lecture

wouldn't impose much of a challenge for Jiang Chen. But for the pill dao experts in Veluriyam Capital, this was earth-shattering knowledge! Many of the peak pill dao experts here initially chose not to attend, as they just couldn't put down their pride.

Pill King Zhen might be famous and he may have even defeated the overweening Pillfire City once, but at the end of the day, he was still representing Sacred Peafowl Mountain. Because of this, a few of the pill dao experts serving other emperors decided that showing their face would be too shameful, while others simply chose not to attend. But they'd begun to regret their decision now. They'd just received news from the pagoda that this lecture was one meant for the gods and celestials. Missing the lecture would cause lifelong regret. At the start, these people thought nothing of it. How beneficial could one lecture possibly be? Would listening to it grant them eternal life?

However, they soon received more and more information regarding the lecture, and rumors of the contents from the lecture gradually started piling up. Slowly, these pill dao experts realized that the information covered in the lecture was actually surprisingly profound. In fact, it was actually beyond anything found in Veluriyam Capital's history. Many sharp-witted pill dao experts realized that this was definitely a lecture that broke through milestones. If one were to miss it, one would surely harbor regrets for a lifetime.

None of them cared about their dignity anymore if this was truly the case. Even the pill dao experts who used to loathe Pill King Zhen had no choice but to put down their pride and scurry out from their nests. They secretly disguised themselves so that nobody could recognize them at the lecture. Some even shamelessly cut queues and squeezed through the crowds. It didn't even matter if people were glaring at them or giving them an earful. Naturally, Emperor Peafowl and the four monarchs of Sacred Peafowl Mountain weren't required to queue up. They had special private seats inside the Pill Pagoda and had the privilege of listening to Jiang Chen's lecture while enjoying fine wine. Other emperors who had originally chosen not to attend were now rushing to their seats with their cohorts.

In the end, every single emperor attended the lecture apart from Emperor Shura. News about the lecture quickly spread by word of mouth, causing many influential people to no longer hold themselves back. They wanted to listen to the lecture and see for themselves just how exaggerated the rumors of the lecture were.

Emperor Void had been present ever since the start of the lecture. He laughed when he saw his colleagues rush to their seats. "My fellow daoists. I must say that many of you are already late. You've missed quite a bit of earth-shattering information."

"This emperor heard that the lecture is extremely profound, quite beyond anything Veluriyam Capital has ever seen. I immediately came here when I heard that. I wonder if the rumors are true?" The one who asked this question was the fourth-ranked emperor, Emperor Vastsea.

"Oh, you'll see." Emperor Void exclaimed with a face filled with amazement. "Daoist Peafowl, Pill King Zhen is truly a genius descended from the heavens! I must ask, who is his mentor? With his level of understanding in pill dao, even the strongest pill dao expert from Pillfire City is nothing in front of him!"

Emperor Void had always been very curious about Pill King Zhen's true identity and origins. This wasn't the first time he'd asked such a question. However, Emperor Peafowl only smiled without answering the question. "Focus on the lecture. This emperor has a feeling that after this lecture, Veluriyam Capital's pill

dao will move forwards onto a new stage. This will break the boundaries of our previous knowledge and allow us all to reach a new level of understanding. Everyone will be free from the shackles of established thought. Those with a higher level of comprehension will gain a lot from this.”

Emperor Void agreed. “Mmm. This will indeed upgrade our previous knowledge of pill dao and form a new understanding. After this lecture, Pill King Zhen will surely go down in the history books as one of Veluriyam Capital’s milestones.”

Even the usually quiet Emperor Petalpluck was smiling as he looked at Emperor Peafowl. “Daoist Peafowl. Time and time again, you’ve managed to surprise all of Veluriyam Capital. This time, however, is truly your largest surprise yet! This junior has stayed in Veluriyam Capital for so many years, yet I’ve only ever looked up to you. But I’m afraid that there is now a new person competing for my admiration.”

Emperor Petalpluck was ranked second amongst the seven emperors. However, he was always one who stood aloof from worldly affairs and took no particular interest in matters of power or status. Because of this, he was actually beneath the third-ranked Emperor Shura in regards to authority, despite his higher rank. But since he was almost the same age as Emperor Peafowl, he had no intention to compete or be jealous of Emperor Shura.

“Why do all of you exaggerate? If this is true then I’d better open up my ears and listen closely to see what’s so special about the lecture.” Emperor Vastsea had always been Emperor Shura’s staunchest follower. He was actually here as a representative for Emperor Shura, as the emperor would sooner die than come to the lecture. Pill King Zhen had snatched the wandering champion Lin Yanyu away from him, causing him to lose a lot of face. But as time went on, Emperor Vastsea’s expression slowly became increasingly solemn. When he finally came back to his senses, three days had already passed. The lecture had gone on for three days in a row. Every single person listening to the lecture seemed intoxicated, enlightened. Every single one of them had gained much from this, especially those with a high natural talent for pill dao.

On the fourth day, Jiang Chen began to move on to another topic in his lecture—the demon race. He had planned this right from the start. If he suddenly talked about the demon race for no apparent reason, everyone would surely take his words as that of an alarmist. But on the fourth day, he was able to smoothly divert the topic to the demon race and make it seem a lot less abrupt. He instructed Pill King Lu Feng to talk about what happened to He Hongshu, and how he’d drawn out the wood demon parasites.

The atmosphere immediately turned heavy once he brought up the demon race. It was evident that everyone present still feared and felt somewhat conflicted about the demon race. However, Emperor Peafowl nodded in secret, quite pleased. Since he was the foremost pill dao expert, Jiang Chen would be extremely persuasive if he brought up the topic of the demon race. When Pill King Lu Feng discussed how he’d drawn out the wood demon parasites from He Hongshu, alarm bells began to ring in the hearts of everyone present.

“Everyone, wood demon parasites can enter through any orifice! Pill King Zhen chose not to abandon me and imparted me with a special method for dealing with them. It is also Pill King Zhen’s intention to share this method with everyone! Today, I will be responsible for imparting this method to you. This is important knowledge that could save your life. I hope that none of you will treat this as a laughing

matter.” Even though Pill King Lu Feng usually didn’t take things very seriously, earning him a reputation as an old imp, it actually had a much greater effect when he decided to be serious every once in a while.

After Pill King Lu Feng finished lecturing about the Wood Demons’ poisonous parasites, Lin Yanyu followed up with a lecture about the desolate wildlands. Basing the lecture off of his personal experiences, he embellished the harm and destruction caused by the demon race. The demon race was a scourge to the Divine Abyss Continent since ancient times. This was a well-known fact.

Jiang Chen didn’t plan to overexaggerate the details regarding Wood Demons either. He felt slightly more at peace after imparting the method to defend against them. As long as the method was widely known, it didn’t matter if everyone believed him or not. By doing this, he could at least suppress the spread of wood demon parasites and greatly reduce the threat from the Wood Demons. As for the Shadow Demons, Jiang Chen decided not to elaborate. Even though Shadow Demons were dangerous too, they weren’t as threatening as Wood Demons.

Eight days of the ten-day lecture went by in the blink of an eye. For the final two days, Jiang Chen decided not to lecture. Instead, he’d be doing some questioning and answering so he could help solve some of the audience’s problems. This part of the lecture required even more knowledge and foundation.

One could prepare the contents of a lecture beforehand, but the same could not be said if one was answering questions on the spot! But this wasn’t an issue for Jiang Chen either. For two days, hundreds of people were given the opportunity to have their questions answered, and he was able to give a satisfactory answer no matter how tricky or uncommon the question was. With the ten-day lecture coming to a close, people could no longer dispute Pill King Zhen’s place as the foremost pill dao expert in all of Veluriyam Capital.

Setting the citizens of Veluriyam Capital aside, even Jiang Chen’s fellow disciples from Regal Pill Palace were caught by surprise. They could never have imagined that a fellow disciple from a small place like the sixteen kingdoms alliance would have such a profound understanding of pill dao. This had genuinely overturned their previous beliefs. Even though Regal Pill Palace had been built upon pill dao, they weren’t worth mentioning when compared to Veluriyam Capital. However, Jiang Chen had become the number one pill dao expert in all of Veluriyam Capital! With the backing of such a genius in pill dao, the resurgence of Regal Pill Palace was no longer just an empty dream!

With the conclusion of the ten-day lecture, Jiang Chen left the Pill Pagoda while being swarmed by a sea of voices asking him not to leave. At the end of the day, he was only providing them with supplementary guidance for pill dao. There was no way Jiang Chen would ever want to stand out so much in the pill dao world if he hadn’t made a promise to Emperor Peafowl.

Standing out in such a way was going to bring about some disadvantages along with some advantages. Moreover, his biggest goal for this lifetime wasn’t to become a heavenly pill dao master again. Instead, he was going to make up for the regret he felt for being unable to cultivate in his previous life! His eyes were set on martial dao! In the world of martial dao, only the sovereign would have the last say!

The very reason Veluriyam Capital could become one of the strongest powers in the Upper Eight Regions was due to their flourishing in martial dao. In the domain of martial dao, Jiang Chen remained an insignificant character. The upcoming Martial Pagoda battle would be the perfect stage for him to test

his abilities. Countless geniuses from Veluriyam Capital would be up on stage for him to assess his martial dao. It was this particular stage which he loved the most!

Chapter 918: Plans to Carve a Formation Disk

Less than two weeks remained before the Martial Pagoda battles. Jiang Chen planned on preparing amply in the time that he had left. The battle was a chance to test his mettle. He didn't want to use too many of his treasures unless they were absolutely required, especially ones that were overwhelmingly strong. Many things could only be honed in the heat of battle—things such as understanding the boundaries of martial prowess and sharpening the ability to process information. Jiang Chen knew this well.

“The fact that I've reached the seventh level sage realm is definitely related to the countless battles I've fought in, both big and small. Many geniuses are planning to attend the Martial Pagoda battles. It would be foolish for me not to take this opportunity to test my martial ability.” Jiang Chen had used various items to assist him in many of his battles, especially those fought against higher-level opponents.

If neither side used treasures, Jiang Chen had the natural confidence that he could crush anyone on his same level in a purely martial competition. Even opponents who were one or two levels higher weren't a problem for him. However, each of his battles had been a matter of life and death. If he hadn't used items, his enemies would have. Thus, the Martial Pagoda battles were a rare opportunity for him to participate in something different... a proving ground of sorts.

Understandably, if others used items despite the circumstances, Jiang Chen wasn't likely able to stay the odd one out. His trip to the wildlands had provided him with considerable benefits. The large defensive cauldron that had belonged to Lu Shinan looked quite imposing. It seemed to possess a remarkable force that could draw in various kinds of attacks. It was definitely a defensive powerhouse.

The eight statues that he'd acquired were even stronger. What a shame that the formation disk hadn't come with them. Jiang Chen was very curious about the statues. He felt that they hadn't been fully utilized in the hands of the Prince of Shangping. Since its master was dead, Lu Shinan's cauldron no longer had a personal imprint on it. It took no effort at all for Jiang Chen to claim the defensive cauldron as his own. But although the same was true with the eight statues, he was more upset about the missing formation disk. However, he did take the time to examine the statues more closely. There seemed to be a particularly strong will hidden within. They weren't just typical relics of the past.

“The Prince of Shangping is already dead. From the look of these statues, any previous connection between them and the formation disk is no longer. It seems that the prince had created his own formation disk to communicate with the statues. Unfortunately for him, he could only command the bare minimum of the statues' strength. If he had been able to access even a tenth of their full potential, I likely would have been the loser back then.”

The more Jiang Chen looked at the eight statues, the more he felt afraid. He had been really lucky to have the Imperial Advent Defense Talisman on him. Without it, the eight statues would have been impossible for him to take on. “What a lucky bastard the prince must've been, to have gotten his hands on a treasure like this.” He fiddled with the statues in his hands, filled with an inexplicable fondness for them. “Too bad his fortune didn't last.”

He had the feeling that the eight statues would be tenfold stronger now that they were in his hands, perhaps even a hundredfold. Jiang Chen was a man of action. There were about a dozen days left, so he decided to give personally crafting a formation disk a shot. The earlier he could control the statues, the better. He wasn't after perfect command of them from the outset. As long as he could delve into the basics of their strength—even a tenth was enough!—it would be sufficient to use them as a potent weapon on the offense.

“No wonder something as powerful as my Galaxy Slash technique left only a faint mark back then. More remarkably, the statues can even self-repair! It looks like the earlier damage from my attack has already disappeared.” The more closely he examined the eight statues, the more surprised he was. Though the eight statues appeared to be unliving, they had the ability to regenerate like living creatures.

“There are endless marvels in this boundless universe. The eight statues are definitely extraordinary. Let's see if I can carve a formation disk and put them to good use.” He had gotten the feeling of immense strength from the eight statues during his battle with the Prince of Shangping, but he hadn't taken them too seriously. He had many treasures with which to fend off the eight statues. Conjuring up a magnetic golden mountain, using the mint ginseng, commanding the Bewitching Lotus... and so on. But now it seemed that he'd underestimated the eight statues.

“Perhaps that prince's consciousness hadn't reached the particular level necessary to discover these statues' greatness. Like pearls before swine, their true value had been obscured because of their owner's blindness. How disgraceful.” Thinking such thoughts, Jiang Chen exited the secret room and headed outside. As he came to the door, he saw Shen Trifire leading two others. All three were standing in a circumspect way, clearly having awaited Jiang Chen for hours.

“Senior brother, these two came to Taiyuan Tower half a year ago. They said that you'd sought them out. As a junior, I dared to decide on matters myself, so I sent them out separately on a few errands. Conveniently, they came back to report on their missions today, and because they heard that you were back, they just had to come and see you.” Shen Trifire was a little uneasy. He was scared that he'd been duped. They had tokens on them that signified Jiang Chen's trust, true, but who knew if there was some kind of hidden deception involved?

Jiang Chen smiled. “I'm glad that the two of you arrived in one piece. Fantastic. I've been busy ever since my return, so I haven't been able to make time to see you guys.”

The two were the old friends that Jiang Chen had rescued from the Great Scarlet Mid Region—Myriad Spirit Sect disciples, Liu Wencai and Lu Yali, hailing from the sixteen kingdoms alliance. Both of them were brothers that Jiang Chen had met during their previous trials in Eternal Spirit Mountain. Because the Myriad Domain had been shattered into pieces, they no longer had a place to go home to. They'd been a bit fearful after coming to a place as big as Veluriyam Capital, not knowing what to do afterwards. Thankfully, Shen Trifire hadn't given them any attitude despite his wariness. Their existences here were somewhat riddled with anxiety, but also relatively peaceful, much better than drifting out in the chaotic world, anyway.

“For convenience's sake, you two should call me senior brother from now on as well,” Jiang Chen instructed.

Both Liu Wencai and Lu Yali nodded. Discovering Jiang Chen's lofty position of prominence after arriving at Veluriyam Capital had been daunting, even frightening to a certain degree. Yes, they had been brothers since a long time ago, but there was such a huge gap between them now. Even Liu Wencai felt like he was reaching significantly up the social ladder.

Jiang Chen didn't think so, though. He gave both of their shoulders a firm pat. "Get Trifire to settle you in. I'm going out to deal with a few more things. I'll catch up with you two later."

He valued Shen Trifire a fair amount, but he had only average relationships with the other disciples from Regal Pill Palace. He was closer with these two brothers from the sixteen kingdoms alliance. After all, he'd barely spent any time at Regal Pill Palace, and he wasn't on tremendously amicable terms with the members even back then. If the sect hadn't fallen, Jiang Chen would have never gotten together with them.

Even now, he sheltered these people only for Palace Head Dan Chi's sake. If the broken Regal Pill Palace wanted to rise again another day, they would have to rely solely on themselves. Essentially, he was helping the palace cultivate a new batch of hopefuls. Alas, Mu Gaoqi was still lost in the outside world, a fact that hung heavily on Jiang Chen's mind. Of the younger generation that was still alive, only he and Ling Bi'er warranted his worry. Departing from Taiyuan Tower, Jiang Chen headed for Sacred Peafowl Mountain straight away.

"Haha, young friend, it's rare for you to come find me of your own volition. I don't think it means anything good?" Emperor Peafowl found Jiang Chen's spontaneous visit a little unexpected.

Jiang Chen avoided being roundabout, "Your Majesty, I haven't refused any of your requests," he chuckled. "Now I have a few problems of my own, and I'd like to ask for your generous assistance."

"What are you planning to extort from me, hmm?" Emperor Peafowl smiled. "Please do tell. There's nothing I have that I'll deny from you."

"I'd like to create a formation disk. I wonder if Your Majesty has any materials for that sort of thing?"

Formation disk? Emperor Peafowl hesitated for a moment, his eyes looking deeply at the youth. There was astonishment in them. "You know how to make formation disks? Do you know how much energy and effort goes into them?"

Jiang Chen shrugged. "Those who find something particularly difficult do not truly know how, and those who do find it rather easy. I've learned a few things about carving formation disks here and there."

Emperor Peafowl was silent for a long while before he spoke again, "Your mysterious teacher taught you that too, didn't he?" He asked dejectedly.

Jiang Chen smiled, but didn't deny it. Even Emperor Peafowl listened to this with jealousy. "Ah, little friend, I wonder what kind of a terrifyingly proficient person your teacher is. It feels like there's nothing he doesn't know."

Jiang Chen smiled again. "You know, maybe that's true. My teacher is full of knowledge and wisdom. I don't think I've ever seen him stumped on any matter."

“A senior as great as him is worthy of all respect. It’s unfortunate, us experts of the present are mere well-dwelling frogs in comparison, often full of ourselves to boot.” Emperor Peafowl had some strong feelings regarding the issue.

Gazing serenely at Jiang Chen, the emperor spoke once more. “As for the materials you want... I did, as a matter of fact, incidentally manage to collect some on my travels. I can give them to you, but I have a request in return.”

“What is it?” Jiang Chen was curious.

“I would like to observe the entire carving and creation process.” Emperor Peafowl was extremely blunt, discarding courtesy.

“Does Your Majesty wish to secretly learn from me?” Jiang Chen chuckled.

Emperor Peafowl grinned, not refuting the claim. It wasn’t that he necessarily wanted to learn from him in such a manner. Rather, he was more interested in whether this incredible youth really could make a formation disk on his own. Formation disks in general weren’t especially incredible. How strong a disk was depended on its rank and quality.

Moreover, the formation activated from a disk had no foundation. Compared to ones created with flags and spirit stones, it possessed a few more flaws. However, it did also have a distinct advantage—that of instantaneous activation, without much advance preparation required. Formation flags couldn’t compete with formation disks in this aspect. In duels to the death, this unique benefit provided by a formation disk often provided opportunities to turn the tables. Thus, a strong ancient formation disk was still fairly attractive to powerful cultivators. Even Emperor Peafowl was no exception to this rule.

The emperor was no formation expert, but he had more than a passing interest in them nevertheless. The art of carving formations in particular had always been seen as an ancient tradition. On the modern Divine Abyss Continent, artisans that were knowledgeable in this skill were as rare as dragons and phoenixes. Highly proficient ones were essentially extinct.

Chapter 919: Successful Completion

Though Jiang Chen hadn’t researched formations as deeply as he had pills in his previous life, he still had a fair amount of experience with them. Plus, the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect was a supreme formations sect from the Divine Abyss Continent’s distant past. A classic text of the sect that had been left behind was *The Heart of Formations*, which contained many facets of knowledge relating to formations. Jiang Chen’s sharp intuition meant that he would have a very high success rate if he were to carve a formation disk using the classic as a guide. More importantly, a great deal of technical material regarding disk-carving was included in *The Heart of Formations*—skill, technique, material, and theory. He couldn’t proceed forward with even one of these components missing.

Yes, he was a bit lacking in terms of manual dexterity and practice, but he had several advantages as well—experiences from his previous life, a wealth of knowledge, and a strong fortitude. His past memories were a solid foundation that allowed him a heightened degree of confidence and composure in all that he did. It was no different in this case. He had every faith that the formation disk would turn out perfectly fine.

The difficulty in this case didn't lie in carving the formation disk itself, but bridging the distance between the disk and the eight statues. He wanted them to resonate in a powerful way. If that couldn't be done, it didn't matter how good the formation disk itself was. There were actually many types of materials that could be used in carving formation disks. Naturally, they differed in quality as well, from inferior to superior levels. The materials worthy of Emperor Peafowl's collection were certainly of superior quality.

Taking the materials into his hands, Jiang Chen marveled at them in quiet awe. As befitting of his status as the foremost titled emperor of Veluriyam, Emperor Peafowl had quite the stash. With their prior agreement in place, Jiang Chen had no reason to refuse the emperor's intentions to observe.

A secret room was prepared and the youth sprung into action. Jiang Chen didn't bother attempting to conceal anything from the emperor; he didn't have the time to waste. Thankfully, he'd already put sufficient thought into how the disk was going to be made. A confident artist with a properly formulated plan up his sleeve could proceed to work remarkable magic. So it was with Jiang Chen. He had the idea and outline for the disk already. His mind and hand moved with fluid inspiration. There was no stiffness in his movements at all.

The process was even smoother than Jiang Chen had imagined. His mental fortitude ensured that every detail in the carving process was etched with perfection, and his handiwork was akin to that of an old hand who'd honed his craft for centuries. Jiang Chen admired his workmanship after the disk was complete, rather pleased.

Now came the heavy lifting. The completed disk had to communicate with the eight statues—a connection that had to be created via formational resonance. Formational resonance was a phenomenon in which the disk triggered a formation containing the eight statues. Jiang Chen's consciousness would serve as the link between them, carrying information to and fro. It was a very technical process, but it was also one that Jiang Chen had perfected his ideas for. Still, it took an excruciating and grueling seven days for the final step to be completed.

Marveling at the resonance between the eight statues and his consciousness made Jiang Chen feel quite satisfied. His hard work over the past few days had not been for naught. In terms of both bearing and tapped potential, the eight statues under Jiang Chen's control far surpassed their previous merit under that of the Prince of Shangping. There was no doubt about that. After the entire disk-creating process, only a few days remained before the Martial Pagoda battles. Walking out from the secret room, Jiang Chen saw Emperor Peafowl's half-smile almost immediately. "Your Majesty," he placed a hand to his head. "I have forgotten myself. I almost forgot that I was in your estate."

"So, you really do know how to carve a formation disk," Emperor Peafowl sighed in praise. "Truly a precocious youngster. That's an ancient skill almost lost to time."

Jiang Chen chuckled. "I'm fortunate to have such a masterful teacher."

Emperor Peafowl deeply agreed, nodding. "Your teacher is truly accomplished. That I once wanted to take you on as my disciple... I blush to consider it, now."

Being impressed with someone else was a very rare occurrence for the emperor. He had prevailed in Veluriyam Capital for three millennia, commanding a strength powerful enough to shake the entire Upper Eight Regions. There weren't many who were his equal, much less many whom he could

wholeheartedly respect. However, he truly did fully admire this teacher of Jiang Chen's, though they had never met.

It was easy for Emperor Peafowl to imagine what kind of person Jiang Chen's teacher was. A secluded expert of legendary prowess with strength that possibly exceeded even the great emperor realm, and perhaps even a level higher still. That mysterious teacher's martial ability aside, his pill dao ability and formation-disk carving skills showed that he possessed a remarkable breadth of talent. This was no ordinary man. The emperor was very confident in himself, but he also had enough self awareness to feel short in light of those achievements.

Thus, he completely understood now why Jiang Chen hadn't wanted to become his disciple. With a master as amazing as that, why would he be a consideration? Emperor Peafowl was speaking out of self-reflection, but this was no place for Jiang Chen to follow up on the conversation. He smiled instead. "Still, Your Majesty's foresight cannot be denied. In a different world, I would have been greatly blessed to become your student."

It wasn't really what he thought in his heart, but he still had to be polite. Flattering someone as prominent as an emperor, or even just cheering him up a bit—that was compelling enough alone. Emperor Peafowl roared in laughter. "You certainly talk slick. I somehow can't believe you're being very truthful, though."

"No, I assure you. I really am." Jiang Chen chuckled.

The emperor didn't choose to press the matter any further. He inclined his head. "I'm not envious of the fact that you possess the skills you do. Rather, I feel gratified. It was a very wise choice to have entrusted Veluriyam Capital's future to you. Perhaps even the city itself will be destroyed in the coming demonic invasion, but as long as you remain, our heritage will not be completely lost. Just like what's happening now with Regal Pill Palace. Their sect fell, but their heritage lives on."

Stunned, Jiang Chen looked at Emperor Peafowl with some apprehension. Emperor Peafowl laughed again. "Don't look at me like that, little guy. The things that happen at your Taiyuan Tower are made plain to my All-Seeing Eyes."

Not knowing how to respond, Jiang Chen simply stayed quiet. This Emperor Peafowl was something, alright. All-Seeing Eyes were shut off to most, even in the heavenly planes. It was quite difficult for him—as well as anyone else, really—to perform any sleight of hand beneath the emperor's eyelids. Emperor Peafowl's lack of malice towards him suddenly felt very precious. Jiang Chen was happy as well that he had been friendly towards Sacred Peafowl Mountain in return. He was suddenly thankful for a great deal of the choices he'd recently made.

"Don't worry, Your Majesty," he became serious. "I keep public and private business separate. I won't let Regal Pill Palace become a burden to Veluriyam Capital."

The emperor he addressed this to didn't seem to particularly care. "Why split hairs like that? We're comrades in the same boat, now. Any differences in sect or region should be discarded. Burden or not, there's no need to explain things like that. Do you really think Veluriyam Capital is scared of a mere Eternal Celestial Capital?"

Emperor Peafowl did not deliberately adopt a regal air as he spoke, but the words themselves had been spoken in an unquestionable manner. That's right, Veluriyam Capital was stronger than even a first-ranked sect. In fact, the power of the city could barely be matched by two first-ranked sects combined. What was the reason for Veluriyam to be scared of Eternal Celestial Capital?

"Your Majesty..." Jiang Chen had a profound admiration for Emperor Peafowl's magnanimity. No matter what followed, he was thrilled at the declaration alone. There was no reason for Emperor Peafowl to appease a fourth-ranked sect like Regal Pill Palace, but the emperor didn't care about the sect's rank. The broadness of his heart was evident in the gesture.

"I've said this before—I won't oppose you even if you use or borrow Sacred Peafowl Mountain's power in order to rebuild Regal Pill Palace. Of course, the precondition is that you have to become the young lord. There's no authority for you to use the Mountain's resources otherwise." The older man stared earnestly at his younger counterpart. "Don't look so startled. When the demonic invasion begins, all of these worldly differences will become history, whether their name is the Upper Eight Regions or the Myriad Domain. There will only be two divisions in the future. Either you are a demon, or you are not."

Jiang Chen sighed softly. He knew as well as anyone how terrifying the demon race was, how methodically they could tear through the heavenly planes. The demons were a war-like race—tyrannical and intrusive. Like locusts, they brought destruction everywhere they went. A plane inhabited by a great race was extremely difficult for the demons to invade. One like the Divine Abyss Continent, however, with such prevalent internal strife... any incursion made by the demon race would surely lead to them taking to it, like ducks to water.

"Even though the demon race is on the move in the wildlands, Your Majesty, there shouldn't be an outburst in the short term. I think the next decade or two will still be safe, but fifty or a hundred years later becomes more difficult to say. I set a formation at the wildlands' entrance, outside the restriction. Great emperor realm cultivators aside, anyone else attempting to break through will have a very hard time." Jiang Chen had reported this to Emperor Peafowl once before. From what the emperor had said at the time, he appeared as if he wanted to go there himself to protect the formation. Greedy cultivators had to be warded off from forcibly breaking through.

Since the demon race was reawakening in the wildlands, entering would be walking right into the beast's jaw. It would only feed the speed with which they resuscitated themselves.

Emperor Peafowl sighed softly. "As the saying hopefully goes, if there's a will, there's a way. As Sacred Peafowl Mountain's young lord, you have the authority to decide on everything when I am not here. This extends to matters of the Capital as well. No one can prevent you from doing anything. They won't even have the right to."

Jiang Chen's heart shook. The emperor was giving him a paramount degree of power.

"It's still too early to talk about these things. At this year's Martial Pagoda battles, you must fight your way past the competitors and take the championship. Make it known that you have the qualifications to be Sacred Peafowl Mountain's young lord, and that you're the best candidate for the job. Silence all voices that question you. The only way to do all of these things is to utterly crush your competition."

“Crush... my competition?” Jiang Chen muttered softly, his eyes glittering with eagerness. He had been waiting for this moment for a long while. Not because he wanted to become the young lord, but because he wanted to fight it out with the best of the youths within the Upper Eight Regions on a grander stage.

Chapter 920: The Fight of Three Rankings

However, Jiang Chen still knew nothing about the rules. He didn't know exactly how many outstanding geniuses there were in Veluriyam Capital either. Emperor Peafowl seemed capable of seeing through Jiang Chen's thoughts when he saw the youth's inquisitive gaze. He smiled, “You haven't been in Veluriyam Capital for long, so you must be very unfamiliar with the Martial Pagoda battles. Do you know how many people are registering for them?”

Jiang Chen wasn't in a hurry to answer the question. Instead, he asked, “Is there an age limit?”

Emperor Peafowl nodded, “All participants must be below sixty years old. This is because the Veluriyam Pagoda gathering is held every sixty years. Therefore, everyone only gets one chance in a lifetime to participate in the gathering.”

“Is there a cultivation requirement?”

Emperor Peafowl nodded, “All participants must be at the sage realm or above. Of course, those who aren't even sage realm experts will only be treated as cannon fodder.”

Considering these two requirements, the number of registrants shouldn't be too ridiculous. He immediately offered a tentative answer, “One hundred thousand?”

He knew that the number of participants in the Martial Pagoda battles must be ten times bigger than the number of participants in the Pill Pagoda battles. After all, in the world of martial dao, cultivation reigned supreme while pill dao was only secondary. Not all martial dao geniuses had pill dao talent and vice versa.

Jiang Chen heard that the number of people who participated in the Pill Pagoda battles numbered around thirty thousand or so. Only two hundred participants were left during the semi-finals—a hundred wandering cultivators and a hundred noble youths. Therefore, although one hundred thousand was a safe estimation, the actual number shouldn't be too far off either.

However, Emperor Peafowl laughed loudly, “One hundred thousand? Too few, that is far too few. You might have gotten it right if you had multiplied that number by 10.”

“10 times?!” Jiang Chen looked stunned, “A million? There are that many sage realm geniuses younger than sixty years old in Veluriyam Capital?”

Emperor Peafowl smiled, “It's not just people from Veluriyam Capital, but also the surrounding powers and wandering cultivators. They are all very interested in the gathering. Veluriyam Capital is an extremely attractive power in the southern side of the Upper Eight Regions, and not even first-rank sects can be considered to be on the same level as us.”

Compared to sects, Veluriyam Capital was more open and free. That was why a power like Veluriyam Capital was more attractive to wandering cultivators and others. After all, a sect had many strict rules

and sect-based customs. It was also incredibly difficult for a normal person to enter a sect. However, a power like Veluriyam Capital was different. They could absorb a lot of experts due to their great tolerance and inclusivity.

Of course, their system was not without flaws. A power like Veluriyam Capital was not as unified as a sect. But with Emperor Peafowl around, Veluriyam Capital's unity was more or less solidified. After all, he had ruled Veluriyam Capital for three millennia. His influence and his power to rally and awe the people were deeply rooted in Veluriyam Capital. In addition, Emperor Peafowl himself had incredible charisma.

Jiang Chen couldn't help but feel shocked when he heard that a million people had registered for the Martial Pagoda battles. "Only thirty-six out of a million people can ultimately enter the Veluriyam Pagoda?" He was stunned by this extremely disparate ratio.

"Yes, only thirty-six people can truly enter the main pagoda of the Veluriyam Pagoda. However, we do allow up to two hundred people to enter the Martial Pagoda."

The Veluriyam Pagoda had three pagodas in total, with one main pagoda and two auxiliary pagodas. The two auxiliary pagodas were known as the Pill Pagoda and Martial Pagoda. The main pagoda was the real totem building in Veluriyam Capital. It had stood since ancient times and safeguarded Veluriyam Capital's fate.

"The saying of one in a myriad is truly fitting here," Jiang Chen sighed. "Most of these people don't actually have any hope of winning a spot, so I guess they are just here to make up the numbers?"

"Make up the numbers?" Emperor Peafowl laughed, "A lot of people knew that they could never qualify for a spot in the Veluriyam Pagoda Meeting, but still they fight like madmen all the same. Do you know why?"

Jiang Chen looked startled. "Why?"

"Simple. They fight hard because it's an opportunity to train themselves. A gathering of many geniuses and opponents of the same level is certain to spark much conflict and inspiration. In history, there are many geniuses with low cultivation who had failed to enter the top thirty-six, but they all ultimately became first-rate experts after attaining great enlightenment in the Martial Pagoda. In comparison, there are also a lot of geniuses who made it to the top thirty-six, but were ultimately killed in action or died of illnesses. Therefore, uncertainty forever shrouds the path of martial dao. No one knows who will have the last laugh until the time comes. With your level of comprehension, you should understand what I mean when I say that winning is just a process to true geniuses, shouldn't you?"

Jiang Chen nodded thoughtfully in response. A competition with over a million of participants and innumerable battles of varying sizes was typically a kind of experience that was impossible to encounter normally. A contest of this scale might put a cultivator through hundreds of battles in just a couple of months' time. There were definitely a lot of insight and experiences to be gained. This was especially true for those martial dao geniuses. This contest was absolutely a great opportunity to temper and improve themselves.

He suddenly understood why there were over a million registrants. It was obvious that not everyone was participating for the sake of making it into the top thirty-six. A lot still wanted to participate in the

Martial Pagoda battles despite knowing that there was no way they could enter the top thirty-six. The reason had been stated by Emperor Peafowl earlier. Those who managed to emerge out of a million participants were no doubt geniuses amongst geniuses.

“No wonder the Veluriyam Pagoda gathering is viewed as Veluriyam Capital’s greatest festival. So this is where its attraction lies.” Jiang Chen sighed in admiration.

“A clash between geniuses is never lacking in attraction. However, you’ll not be enjoying any special privileges during the Martial Pagoda battles, Jiang Chen. You must fight from the very bottom like everyone else.”

“What do you mean?” Jiang Chen looked startled.

“The Martial Pagoda battles has three rankings—the New Star Rankings, the Genius Rankings, and the Ranking of Young Lords.

“The so-called New Star Rankings refers to the cultivators who manage to enter the top ten thousand. Only those who qualify for the New Star Rankings have the right to compete for the Genius Rankings. However, a large majority of the noble youths in Veluriyam Capital can bypass the New Star Rankings and participate in the Genius Rankings directly. After the top two hundred cultivators of the Genius Rankings are decided, they are pitted against each other for one last time to decide the strongest thirty-six cultivators of the Ranking of Young Lords. Those who come out on top are allowed to enter Veluriyam Capital’s main pagoda.”

A total of ten thousand people were allowed to enter the New Star Rankings. Out of that ten thousand, a total of two hundred people were allowed to enter the Genius Rankings and Martial Pagoda. Finally, a total of thirty-six people out of the two hundred who made it into the Genius Rankings were allowed to enter the main pagoda of Veluriyam Capital. The difference between all three rankings was extremely clear. For example, it wasn’t actually that hard for many young cultivators to enter the New Star Rankings. Out of a million, the top ten thousand were allowed to enter the New Star Rankings. It was a ratio of 100:1.

However, entering the Genius Rankings was a much more difficult task. All cultivators who managed to endure the cruel competition of the New Star Rankings and enter the top ten thousand wouldn’t be mediocre. Therefore, one could only imagine just how difficult it was to emerge as one of the top two hundred cultivators and qualify for the Genius Rankings.

With these kinds of circumstances, competition would definitely be fierce. Every available spot would be fought for tooth and nail. The ratio of the Genius Rankings was 50:1 since only two hundred geniuses would qualify out of ten thousand. Although this stage of the contest seemed easier because it had a 50:1 ratio instead of a 100:1 ratio, this was absolutely not the case. This was due to the fact that the first stage was comprised of participants of all levels of strength. But after the first round of selection, that was no longer the case.

Thus, those who managed to enter the Genius Rankings wouldn’t be mediocre cultivators. Every one of them was deserving of the title, ‘genius’. And lastly, the top thirty-six cultivators would be decided from these two hundred geniuses. They would enter the Ranking of Young Lords. The competition and the skill level of cultivators at this stage were only higher than before. One could even claim that the

competition of the Ranking of Young Lords decided the future of Veluriyam Capital's fate. As its name would imply, all cultivators who entered the Ranking of Young Lords were strong enough to qualify as a young lord and heir to any of the seven emperors.

It was like a competition between the top ten true disciples of a great sect. Every one of them was extraordinarily talented, exceptionally smart, and incredibly powerful. The difference in strength was very distinguishable. It was almost impossible for a cultivator who lacked extraordinary strength or capability to reach the top thirty-six. An upset could happen in one or two battles, but only those with true strength would persevere in continuous battles.

Jiang Chen quietly digested the contents of Emperor Peafowl's words. He had to admit that the three rankings were logically set up and clearly distinctive. The setup ensured that the weaklings would all be disqualified. It was absolutely impossible for those who feigned their strength to enter the final Ranking of Young Lords. Only those who possessed genuine abilities and superior knowledge surpassing all others could enter.

"Your Majesty, it seems that the noble youths have an advantage in this matter. After all, they are allowed to skip the first stage and participate in the second stage of the Martial Pagoda battles, are they not?"

"Theoretically that is true, but there is a quota. A first to third rank aristocratic family is given only three slots, while a fourth to sixth rank aristocratic family receives five slots. A seventh to ninth rank aristocratic family secures tens slots, while a great clan is allotted twenty slots."

"What about the geniuses under a great emperors?" Jiang Chen asked curiously.

Emperor Peafowl laughed, "The geniuses under a great emperor don't need to participate in the Genius Rankings contest. They only need to participate in the final Ranking of Young Lords contest."

"What? Doesn't that mean that they can wait at ease for the final battle to arrive while everyone else struggles to the top?"

"Yes. That is why the top two hundred of the Genius Rankings should really be counted after subtracting out the quota taken up by the geniuses under great emperors. Therefore, there are in fact only a hundred or so slots open to everyone else."

Jiang Chen didn't know how to react. "The geniuses under a great emperor take up a total of thirty-six slots. Doesn't that mean that they are going to snap up a lot of those slots in the top thirty-six?"

"It's not a lot, but most of them. The so-called contest of the Ranking of Young Lords is actually a chance given to the geniuses below to challenge them. The system has been set in hopes that a few outstanding geniuses can take down those great emperor geniuses and form a system in which only the strongest survives. Unfortunately, there are very few people who have managed to rise from the bottom after all these gatherings. The highest number of common geniuses to ever replace great emperor geniuses was five. On average, the number hovered around two or three. There were actually a couple of times where no common geniuses managed to dethrone a single great emperor genius at all."

Jiang Chen wasn't surprised by this in the slightest. A genius under a great emperor's banner far exceeded all other geniuses beneath them, be it in terms of talent, resources, or horizon. It was just much too difficult for people who were on a different level since childhood to beat them.