

Three Realms 1281

Chapter 1281: Young Lord Zhens Acquisition List

Jiang Chen wasn't worried. He strongly believed that at least a few wandering cultivators would possess something desirable. They were probably just observing from the sidelines and were in no rush to take out their treasures. Wandering cultivators were often very distrustful. If they had any doubts, they'd much rather observe than take any action.

"Jiao Yun, spread the word that I'm buying a few items, the more of them the better. Price is negotiable as long as they can procure the goods." Jiang Chen handed a few scrolls over. "These are the list of items I require. Go ahead and announce them."

Jiao Yun accepted the decree and headed outside with the scrolls.

"Everyone, please hold your chatter for a minute! Young lord Zhen needs to purchase a few things! Friends who possess them are welcome to have a face-to-face transaction with the young lord! The young lord is willing to buy however many that you have! The price is guaranteed to be satisfactory!"

Even the distinguished leaders of the cultivation world couldn't help but pay attention to Jiao Yun, let alone the wandering cultivators. He unfurled the first scroll and called out, "The first item, Eight Treasure Cordyceps! It's an herb that's a collection of eight very rare and unique parasites! The young lord is prioritizing this purchase and is willing to pay a very decent price..."

The Eight Treasure Cordyceps wasn't entirely foreign to the cultivation world. Most cultivators had heard of it. It was just incredibly unique and strange. It seemed like a mere spirit herb at first glance, but that wasn't all there was to it. It was actually a spirit creature that appeared as a spirit herb at times, making it a very rare and precious herb-like creature. It was often used by pill masters in refinement as it was a very versatile ingredient.

However, the pill dao world hadn't truly unearthed the Eight Treasure Cordyceps' full potential yet. Its effects after being refined into a pill weren't much better than its raw form. Even though it was very rare and a quasi-sky rank herb, most saw it as an earth rank herb after judging its usefulness.

"No way. Young lord Zhen is buying Eight Treasure Cordyceps at a high price? Damn it! I sold mine long ago!"

"I've seen it at an auction before. It sold for a very good price then!"

"It's not particularly uncommon even though it's a rare sight. Why is the young lord purchasing mass amounts of it?"

"Yeah! Could it be that he has a way to massively profit from it?"

"I'm really looking forward to seeing what he does with it! If he hadn't explained the hidden properties of the Heavencloud Ganoderma, I probably would've just sold it as a common sky rank herb if I had it."

"Same. He has the ability to turn anything he touches into gold. Items show their true worth only in front of him."

“The Dragon and Tiger Meet has truly broadened my horizons. The heritage and profoundness of these great factions possess are truly unbeatable. I can’t help but admit our inferiority.”

“It depends. A genius of young lord Zhen’s caliber is probably seen only once in every ten thousand years.”

“I don’t care what the rest of you think, I’m completely convinced by young lord Zhen now. I’ve long since heard that Pillfire City is the greatest and possess huge amounts of knowledge. I guess I agree with that, but their character far worse compared to young lord Zhen. Pillfire City is widely known for exploiting us wandering cultivators and sucking our blood dry.”

“That’s right. I really hope young lord Zhen will not follow Pillfire City’s footsteps after he’s grown famous.”

“Never. Such practices were never seen in Veluriyam Capital when it was under Emperor Peafowl’s rule. Young lord Zhen isn’t that kind of person.”

“Mm. As long as young lord Zhen continues to be this virtuous, my loyalty will remain with him and his capital, not Pillfire City.” The wandering cultivators continued to chatter about their great curiosity over why Jiang Chen was purchasing such a peculiar item.

Jiao Yun explained the characteristics of the Eight Treasure Cordyceps before moving onto the next scroll. “The second item is a spirit creature called the Goldencrown Cloudcrane. As the name suggests, this crane has a very unique golden crown on its head. The young lord is willing to pay a very adequate price for this animal!”

Its name was much more foreign to the masses. Not many knew of it. The few that did only knew that it to be a very auspicious animal, weak in strength and cultivation level. However, its flesh was extremely nourishing, which made it a frequent ingredient for restorative purposes by advanced cultivators. In fact, its restorative strength was even higher than many saint pills. However, it was an extremely rare creature.

“The Goldencrown Cloudcrane is said to be extremely precious from head to feet. Its flesh heals the heavily injured and it’s an overall healing agent.”

“Is the young lord planning to refine restorative pills with it?”

“So the animal possesses extreme healing properties, but it can’t actually revive the dead right? What on earth is the young lord planning to do with it? Everyone was scrutinizing Jiang Chen’s purchases in order to predict what incredible marvel he was up to next. His miraculous achievements had been deeply entrenched in their minds.

Emperor Coiling Dragon and Ji San exchanged glances. They knew exactly why Jiang Chen was buying that creature. The Pinecrane Pill!

Back in the day, Ji San had purchased a Goldencrown Cloudcrane under Jiang Chen’s recommendation in one of Veluriyam Capital’s auctions. It was how they’d gotten their hands on the Pinecrane Pill later. If it wasn’t for that purchase back then, Emperor Coiling Dragon would likely be a pile of bones by now.

Jiao Yun unravelled the scroll to show a drawing of the crane to everyone.

“Everyone, please take a closer look. If you possess this creature, please contact our young lord. This creature will be in much better hands if you allow our young lord to unearth its full potential.” After displaying the second scroll for a while, Jiao Yun moved on to the third one.

“The third item on the list is True Heavensfall Iron, a very rare metal. Our young lord is also willing to purchase this at a very reasonable price. He’s willing to give ten Longevity Pills in exchange for five kilograms of True Heavensfall Iron. For a fifty kilograms of iron, our young lord is offering a single Pinecrane Pill.”

True Heavensfall Iron was the material for dirks that powered the formation. Jiang Chen had inherited the Heavenly Chalice Sword Formation from the Crimson Heavens Palace, the second of the Six Palaces of Heritage. It was one of the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect’s ultimate treasures.

Special lightweight dirks were needed for the formation, and they had to be forged out of True Heavensfall Iron in order to extract the formation’s full potential. Ones made out of normal materials couldn’t possibly withstand the formation’s power.

Jiang Chen still remembered Venerated Skysoarer’s advice and placed great importance on the formation.

In the ancient age, an expert from the Ancient Crimson Heavens Sect had used the formation to kill three experts of equal level, even though he’d merely mastered a fifth of the formation.

One had to understand that equal rank cultivators were often very well-rivaled in ancient times. Very rarely would there be a winner in a one-on-one duel. Fighting one-on-three was almost certain death. Thus, one could easily see how heaven-defying the formation was from its illustrious history.

Even though Jiang Chen was getting stronger at an alarming speed, the martial methods he could use to deal with enemies much stronger than him were simply too inadequate. He was more capable of dealing with enemies of the same level, but he sorely lacked a powerful sure-kill technique against enemies many levels stronger than him. Thus, mastering the Heavenly Chalice Sword Formation was of paramount importance.

“The fourth item is...” Jiao Yun moved onto the next scroll unhurriedly. Jiang Chen had given him five scrolls in total. He quietly took his leave after he was done with the announcement.

“Young lord Zhen, the task is complete.”

Jiang Chen nodded. His priority right now were the first three items. The other two could wait.

Even if no wandering cultivator was in possession of these items, Jiang Chen believed that news of his purchase list would quickly spread throughout the human domain.

These items would surely show themselves on his doorstep then. These items were of little use to wandering cultivators, but in his hands, they’d turn into gold. It didn’t take a genius to know what would be the better choice.

Cloudsoar Monarch suddenly approached from the side. “Young lord, an elder from a second rank sect seeks an audience.”

“A second rank sect?” Jiang Chen was mildly taken aback.

Hundreds of factions, big and small, were participating in the Dragon and Tiger Meet. There were dozens of second rank sects in the human domain, a lot more than first rank sects. He hadn't arranged special seatings for these sects, not because he looked down on them, but because he had to give preferential treatment to first rank sects.

"Yes. They mentioned that they might have something which would interest the young lord."

"Show him in." Jiang Chen didn't discriminate.

A short and old man dressed in a brown garb soon appeared. His hair was half black and half white, presenting quite an eye-catching sight.

"Luo Tianshu, an elder of the Nirvana Sect, greets the young lord." This old man was more than aware that an elder of a second rank sect had no right to put on airs in front of young lord Zhen.

"The Nirvana Sect?" There were dozens of second rank sects in the human domain. Jiang Chen had heard of a few, but he knew very little about them.

Cloudsoar Monarch gave a quick reminder. "The Nirvana Sect is a second rank sect from the Swordfield Region. They are one of the most influential factions there."

"Swordfield Region?" Jiang Chen frowned when he heard that name. Unpleasant memories surfaced in his mind.

Chapter 1282: True Heavensfall Iron?

Swordfield Region was one of the largest mid region factions. They were slightly stronger than even Great Scarlet Mid Region. Back when Jiang Chen left Myriad Domain, setting foot for Veluriyam Capital, he'd ventured through Tai-ah City in Swordfield Region. His trip to the city had left him with many awful memories.

The Eternal Celestial Capital had attempted to trap Jiang Chen by spreading rumors that they were holding Palace Head Dan Chi in the city. Jiang Chen had seen through their ruse, but had ventured to the city anyways.

Tai-ah City had been in leagues with Eternal Celestial Capital and assisted them fully with their evil deeds. It was unlikely that Jiang Chen would've made it out alive if he hadn't been so resourceful. He countered their ruse with trickery and counter-lured them to a valley called Infant Shriek, taking them all out in one fell swoop with the local Divine Befuddlement Miasma.

The Swordfield Region and Tai-ah City had left Jiang Chen with a deep impression indeed. Just because he hadn't sought out Tai-ah City for payback didn't mean that he'd happily forgotten about the past.

Luo Tianshu was rather taken aback by Jiang Chen's cold response. Surely this was their first time meeting each other? Was that... animosity in the young lord's eyes?

Could it be that all factions other than wandering cultivators aren't welcome? That wasn't right! Young lord Zhen had been very courteous to guests from all walks of life and didn't seem to bear hostility towards anyone. Did he have some kind of prejudice against the Nirvana Sect?

That couldn't be it either! He hadn't seem particularly fazed at the sect name in the beginning. It seemed like his mood had only soured when the Swordfield Region was brought up.

Luo Tianshu's emotions were alternating between high and low. Even though he was an elder of a second rank sect, he couldn't help but feel inferior to Veluriyam Capital's young lord. If the young lord truly did have a rooted dislike of him, the entire Swordfield Region would likely be in trouble, not just the Nirvana Sect.

"Young lord Zhen, I hear that True Heavensfall Iron is on your purchase list of items?" the elder asked cautiously.

"That's correct. Elder Luo, please have a seat." Jiang Chen answered with a polite smile.

How could Luo Tianshu dare sit in front of Jiang Chen? "I'm fine standing." He smiled.

"Elder Luo, are you certain that your sect possesses some True Heavensfall Iron?" Jiang Chen had realized that he'd completely intimidated Luo Tianshu by now.

"I'm not sure of that, but based on Sir Jiao's description, I believe that we do possess a single piece of it."

"Oh? How big is it?" Jiang Chen's interest was piqued.

"About the size of a watermelon." Luo Tianshu answered truthfully.

"What?" Jiang Chen was taken aback. "The size of a watermelon? Do you know how much True Heavensfall Iron of that amount is worth?"

"Please enlighten me." Luo Tianshu smiled ruefully. "That thing is very heavy. Even though it's merely the size of a watermelon, it seems to be two or three times heavier than normal."

"It must weigh at least one fifty kilograms if it's the size of a watermelon." Jiang Chen answered solemnly.

He needed to forge eighty one Heavenly Chalice Swords. If each dirk was infused with one kilogram of True Heavensfall Iron, he'd need roughly at least one hundred kilograms of it. But only using one kilogram of True Heavensfall Iron in each dirk was a lot less than ideal.

In order to achieve his level of desired strength, he'd need to infuse at least two to three kilograms of True Heavensfall Iron into each dirk. And to reach absolute perfection? Four and a half kilograms. That made for a staggering three hundred and fifty kilograms of True Heavensfall Iron!

But if he could achieve it, the eighty-one dirks would transcend into the empyrean rank. In fact, even many empyrean experts wouldn't have weapons on the same level.

Jiang Chen had initially planned on infusing just two kilograms of True Heavensfall Iron into each flying sword to meet a baseline requirement. That alone would require more than one fifty kilograms of the material. However, Luo Tianshu was saying that his sect possessed a piece the size of a watermelon?

Regardless of the information's authenticity, Jiang Chen couldn't help but be immensely surprised. He initially thought that the second rank sect would only possess at most five kilograms, or the size of a finger. Luo Tianshu's response had truly caught him off guard.

"Elder Luo, getting your hands on such a large piece is no child's play. Are you sure you're not joking?" Jiang Chen growled deeply.

"I'd never dare." Luo Tianshu's forehead glistened with sweat and he offered a nervous smile. "I'm here to verify if the young lord wishes truly wishes to purchase the True Heavensfall Iron."

"Just that?" Jiang Chen's voice was filled with frost.

"N-no! I also wish to verify if your offer holds true!"

"Does it seem like we'd make an empty offer?" Jiang Chen was extremely displeased.

"Elder Luo, if one hundred and fifty kilograms of True Heavensfall Iron is what you offer, then three Pinecrane Pills is what you'll get. Any offers less than a fifty will be paid with Longevity Pills. I'll not entertain any haggling. You may save yourself the trouble and scam if that's your plan." Jiang Chen killed any opportunities for negotiation with a single sentence.

"Young lord Zhen, I don't have the Iron on me, but if you're interested, please feel free to pick a time and pay our sect a visit. Our sect master will be more than delighted to conduct the deal with you."

"Visit your sect?" Jiang Chen laughed. "Forgive me for being blunt, but I don't believe that the True Heavensfall Iron is worth a visit to your sect even if I have a need for it."

Luo Tianshu was merely testing his bottom line. If he agreed readily, the latter might come to a conclusion that he was desperate for the item. They'd surely raise the price then. Jiang Chen would never fall for such an amateur trap.

Luo Tianshu was slightly disappointed when he heard Jiang Chen's reply.

"Aii... but the Nirvana Sect is so far from here. The roads are fraught with danger and uncertainty. It seems this'll be a difficult business to do." The sect representative sighed.

How would Jiang Chen not see what Luo Tianshu was up to? "Our doors are always open if the Nirvana Sect wishes to see this deal through." He smiled blandly.

"Cloudsoar, please send Elder Luo out." Jiang Chen refused to give Luo Tianshu a chance to haggle.

Luo Tianshu had no choice but to awkwardly raise a cupped fist salute and leave. However, curiosity got the better of him before he was shown to the door. "Young lord Zhen, may I ask one last thing before I leave?"

"Speak." Jiang Chen answered indifferently.

"Your mood soured when you heard that I was from the Swordfield Region. Perhaps I have offended you in some way?" This was Luo Tianshu's main concern. He found the matter very strange and wanted to put his heart to rest by understanding why.

“You needn’t worry, Elder Luo. The deal is on as long as there isn’t any enmity between our factions. Everything else is just needless detail.”

“Y-yes. Understood.” Luo Tianshu felt a lot more at ease now.

Jiang Chen furrowed his brows in thought after watching the sect representative leave. The Jiao Brothers approached him. “Young lord, the Nirvana Sect doesn’t know their place! They should’ve just offered the item to you instead of trying to cut a deal! Why don’t we make a trip to their sect and retrieve the True Heavensfall Iron for you?”

‘Retrieve’ was an euphemism for what they were planning to do. Simply put, their intention was to waltz into the Nirvana Sect and conduct robbery in broad daylight.

Jiang Chen laughed. “It’s not that I don’t want to, but if everyone does the same thing, the human domain would be in utter chaos.”

The Jiao Brothers laughed mischievously. They didn’t mind. Thievery and plundering was the way of life for many in the wandering world.

“If you don’t like that idea, why don’t we make a trip to their sect and ‘invite’ their sectmaster for a visit? If he resists, we’ll just come up with a contingency plan!”

“No need for that. They’ll come again if they really possess a piece of True Heavensfall Iron. The Pinecrane Pill is a much more attractive item than a hunk of metal. It’s nothing but a normal piece of refining material to them. The Pinecrane Pill however, is a miracle pill that will extend their lives.” Of that, Jiang Chen was extremely confident.

As they chatted, Emperor Peerless took big strides and approached him with a smile. “Young lord Zhen, someone has just offered you something. Come take a look and see if it’s a Heavencloud Ganoderma.”

The Heavencloud Ganoderma?

Jiang Chen was taken aback. Hadn’t it just appeared yesterday during the treasure appraisal stage? The herb was still on Sacred Peafowl Mountain! How could another one suddenly appear today?

“Come. Let’s go take a look!”

The Jiao brothers were naturally elated by the news. They followed the young lord and Emperor Peerless with large strides.

A spirit herb was enclosed within an unadorned jade box. When Jiang Chen set his eyes upon the item, he could sense the powerful aura emanating from it. It seemed to have some kind of miraculous connection with heaven and earth.

“Young lord, it’s this friend who brought this item to you.” Emperor Peerless introduced the cultivator beside him.

“Friend, how should I address you?” Jiang Chen sized up the cultivator. The newcomer was completely dressed as a wandering cultivator. His eyes were filled with depth and mystery. One look was all it took to know that he was no ordinary person.

“I’m but a nameless wandering cultivator. My name is unworthy of mention. Young lord, what are your thoughts on this Heavencloud Ganoderma?”

Chapter 1283: Controversy Rises Again

Jiang Chen’s gaze shifted from the wandering cultivator to the spirit herb lying in the jade box. The presence projected from this specimen was noticeably superior to the aura from the previous Heavencloud Ganoderma. Radiant light morphed around on it. It brimmed with energy, exuding a refreshing air that seemed to bestow a few more years of life by itself.

“Do you mind if I pick it up for a look?” Jiang Chen looked at the other again.

“But of course.” The wandering cultivator was quite generous.

The young lord lifted the spirit herb without further ado and scrutinized it closely. With his eye for appraisal, it wasn’t difficult to evaluate a mere stalk of spirit herb.

However, this specimen gave him an inexplicable feeling when in hand.

It was a Heavencloud Ganoderma without question, but there was something a bit off about it. The concentration of its energies indicated an age of six thousand years, but its appearance and various details made Jiang Chen feel that it was no more than a thousand.

This was extremely baffling, but a notion quickly flashed through the young lord’s mind. Can it be... He looked meaningfully at the wandering cultivator.

“Friend, this is indeed a Heavencloud Ganoderma.” Jiang Chen nodded without a flicker in expression. “Do you want to trade it to Sacred Peafowl Mountain, cosign it for auction, or just get an appraisal for it?”

The man smiled blandly. “I’d like for young lord Zhen to put a price on it.”

“I already priced this spirit herb during yesterday’s segment.” Jiang Chen smiled back. “Would you like me to repeat myself?”

The man shook his head. “Mine is obviously superior in quality and appearance. Are you trying to pull the wool over my eyes, young lord?”

Jiang Chen chuckled and flicked another look at the Heavencloud Ganoderma. “Most people might be taken along for a ride, but I can tell that this one is only about a thousand years old. It’s not much different from the one yesterday.”

“How is that possible?!” The wandering cultivator lost his cool. “Mine’s superior to the one yesterday in every way! Young lord Zhen, are you trying to keep the price down?”

“Sorry, but this is my judgment. If you think your Heavencloud Ganoderma is better than this, you can have someone else appraise it as well. But to me, it’s just a thousand years old. No matter what other methods that’ve been used to make it appear otherwise, it’s unrealistic to expect a six thousand year old price for a thousand year old specimen.” Jiang Chen didn’t spare any feelings with his response. He could tell that the wandering cultivator wasn’t here to make a trade at all.

And indeed, the man sniffed derisively. "To think that the famous young lord Zhen only amounts to this much. Forget it, forget it. Let's just chalk it up to me being dumb and coming to the wrong place."

He packed up the jade box and left without another word to the young lord, muttering to himself as he did so. "There's as many experts at this wandering cultivator gathering as there are clouds in the sky. You might be blind to true value, but others won't be."

Jiang Chen snorted contemptuously and didn't stop the man from leaving. "Jiao Yun, keep an eye on him and see if he asks anyone else to appraise it. Tell me immediately if he does."

Jiao Yun nodded and tailed the cultivator after he was far off in the distance. Being a great emperor, it was simplicity itself for him to shadow someone.

Indeed, the man headed straight to the Sublime Chord Temple trading district after departing Jiang Chen's area. It looked like Master Dong Ye was his next target. When he saw this development, Jiao Yun about-faced and reported back to the young lord.

"Young lord Zhen, that dick went to the Sublime Chord Temple! It looks like he's going to ask Master Dong Ye the same thing."

Out of the seniors that Jiang Chen had invited to partake in the proceedings yesterday, the Buddhist master indeed had the best eye for treasure.

"Let's see what Master Dong Ye says first." Jiang Chen sounded quite detached. "I'm afraid this person hasn't come with good intentions. He probably wants to make trouble."

"So what if he does, young lord! We'll just throw him out!" The Jiao brothers were straight shooters and disliked wasting effort on talking.

"Heh heh, he'll make a big deal if he really is thrown out and slander the gathering. How can we let him do that? Let's see what he tries to pull first. Master Dong Ye cultivates the Warrior Buddha's Eye. He shouldn't be hoodwinked by these methods."

Although Jiang Chen cast a vote of confidence for the Buddhist master, he was inwardly skeptical. It wasn't just simply faking the vintage of the Heavencloud Ganoderma. The methods used were highly sophisticated, marking it as an uncommon forgery. If it wasn't for his abnormally keen eye and vast knowledge banks, he would've been hard pressed to note the problems.

Indeed, Master Dong Ye came rushing in with excitement not long after. The wandering cultivator was by his side.

"Young lord Zhen, this is a fantastic treasure, a wonderful treasure!" Master Dong Ye was taken over by enthusiasm. "Look at this Heavencloud Ganoderma. It's so perfect and not less than six thousand years! This kind of sky rank spirit herb is extremely rare! Come take a look!"

Jiang Chen didn't know whether to laugh or cry when he looked at the Buddhist master hopping up and down with joy. He looked meaningfully at the wandering cultivator, knowing that the fellow had purposefully not told the Buddhist master that there'd been a previous visit to the Sacred Peafowl Mountain trading district.

“Master Dong Ye, don’t focus on the spirit herb just yet, think about this man’s motive. You cultivate the Warrior Buddha’s Eye. If you can see through to people’s hearts, why don’t you take a look at his?” Jiang Chen pointed at the wandering cultivator with a faint smile.

Master Dong Ye started. “What makes you say that, young lord?”

“Has he told you that he paid me a visit before going to you, and that I’ve already given him an appraisal?”

The Buddhist master blinked and shook his head. “No, he hasn’t.”

The wandering cultivator snorted scornfully. “If I’d said that, Master Dong Ye would’ve been prejudiced against me. So naturally I couldn’t volunteer that. Young lord Zhen, your word alone doesn’t represent anything, does it? Or do I have to give your appraisal result first when I visit any other place? You’re not the leading authority in this field!”

“My my, don’t you have a silver tongue.” Jiang Chen smirked dismissively. “Master Dong Ye, do you really think that there’s six thousand years to this spirit herb?”

“Is there not?” Master Dong Ye took another long look. “In my opinion, six thousand years is conservative estimate. Young lord Zhen, how old do you think it is?”

“I think it’s only one thousand years old.” Jiang Chen smiled faintly.

“One thousand?” Master Dong Ye jumped in shock and smiled ruefully. “Young lord Zhen, I too admire your skill, but an estimate of one thousand years is really too far off the mark. This specimen is obviously much better than the one yesterday.”

“It seems that way, but only on a surface level. Master Dong Ye, this is why I advised a good look at this man’s heart. He purposefully brought this spirit herb to sow dissension between the two of us so we’d fight and disrupt the order of this gathering. You are a mellow and kind individual, don’t be taken in by him.”

The master grew unhappy. “Young lord Zhen, let’s not rush to conclusions. Even if you talk until the sun ceases to shine, that still doesn’t make this Heavencloud Ganoderma less than a thousand years old. I would be so bold as to make a bet that if you invited everyone who knows spirit herbs to appraise this one, it would be older than a thousand years.”

The Buddhist master had an ornery temper and had already been wavering between acceptance and rejection of the young lord to begin with. Given Jiang Chen’s age, it wasn’t very likely that the master would wholeheartedly submit to the young man.

It was obvious that this Heavencloud Ganoderma was more than a thousand years old! How would he possible believe the young lord? The young lord was patently lying through his teeth and insulting his Warrior Buddha’s Eye!

“Please quell your anger, honored master.” Jiang Chen’s gaze was removed as he looked at the wandering cultivator. The latter had a half-smile on his face and was watching the proceedings with interest, as if wanting the show to grow bigger.

If that didn’t tip Jiang Chen off to the fact that this was a troublemaker, then he’d be a real fool.

“Do you feel that your petty scheme has succeeded?” Jiang Chen tossed a jeering glance over.

“Young lord Zhen, you’re the one holding the Dragon and Tiger Meet, so I can’t do anything if you want to turn right into wrong. Your so-called objectivity yesterday was just a sham to trick honest people. This is your true self! You just want to depress the price with your insistence that my spirit herb is only a thousand years old. You might be able to get all the wandering cultivators in the world to buy your lies, but I won’t fall for them!”

So it’d finally come. The fellow was showing his edge and true intentions.

With Master Dong Ye’s temper, his eyes were wide with indignation at this point. “Young lord Zhen, if this really is your true character, then I was blind and a fool to have trusted you!”

The Buddhist master trained in his sect’s vocal projection techniques, so his words exploded in the vicinity like a crack of thunder on a clear day.

They crashed onto Jiang Chen’s heart with gravity. He abruptly realized that he’d underestimated this Buddhist master. Judging from the situation, Dong Ye was likely colluding with this wandering cultivator. Maybe it was even a meticulously laid out plot!

Thoughts flew rapidly through the young lord’s mind as he assessed the most ideal way to deal with the matter. This bald donkey is a good actor. All was clear to him now. With some careful analysis, he realized that he’d been played from beginning to end by Master Dong Ye.

What was seemingly a stubborn and fiery temper was most likely an act, one that’d started the moment the Buddhist master had set foot on the stage.

Sublime Chord Temple isn’t too far from Pillfire, and it’s never had any relations with Veluriyam. It’s only natural that they choose to stand with Pillfire. This bald donkey...

Jiang Chen was swiftly calming down after his initial anger. He knew that he’d underestimated Pillfire’s resolve and activity.

Chapter 1284: The Matter Blows Up

Master Dong Ye’s roar attracted gazes from all direction. The wandering cultivator took advantage of this to shout, “What a nice scheme you’re hatching here, young lord Zhen! You built an open and fair image for yourself with yesterday’s treasure identification segment, but you actually trying to keep prices low in private! Is this your so-called open fairness?? I say this Dragon and Tiger Meet is just a conspiracy for you to use your public office for private gain!”

The Jiao brothers were highly put out with these words. “You’re just here to cause trouble, aren’t you??”

The wandering cultivator didn’t wilt in the face of aggression. “You’re putting on some strong airs, Jiao brothers of Mt. Huai. What, do you use fists to do the talking when you’re in the wrong, young lord Zhen? You might be able to threaten me, but can you threaten the millions of wandering cultivators in the world?” He struck a lofty, defiant pose.

The looks focused on them started filling with suspicion and doubt.

Jiang Chen waved a hand to have the Jiao brothers stop. Various Veluriyam great emperors flew over as well, sensing that something undesirable was going on. The young lord was scrambling for a response to this sudden development, but quickly calmed himself.

“What a grandiose reference to all the wandering cultivators in the world.” His tone was detached. “Friend, I don’t care where you’re from and what motives you have. If you’d behaved yourself in the Dragon and Tiger Meet, my capital would’ve treated you as a guest. But I won’t have any of it if you’re here to cause trouble and throw mud. You keep mentioning wandering cultivators, so I’d like to ask you, what’s your name? Who amongst the crowd here knows you?”

The wandering cultivator was unruffled. “Young lord Zhen, you keep making a big deal of wanting to know my background and name. Are you making your plans for revenge after the fact?”

“Am I the only person here who’s hiding my name and origin? It’s not an easy world out there, so it’s common for cultivators to conceal their names. You keep wanting to find out who I am. What for, hmm?” The man was quite glib and delivered an inciting, aggressive response. Each word targeted Jiang Chen, making the young lord out to be a gangster and a thug.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly in return. “You cower and hide but still pretend to such a self-righteous reason. Whatever then. You’re going to all this effort so you can throw mud onto me. I’ll let you throw to your heart’s content today! Go on then, out with everything you want.”

“What else is there to say? You’re turning my six thousand year old spirit herb into a thousand year old one, nothing’s more obvious than that! If I keep talking, who knows if the blood will rush to your head and you’ll just kill me where I stand?”

“I’m an honest, upright individual and Master Dong Ye verified my spirit herb with his Warrior Buddha’s Eye. Even a blind man can see the difference between a six thousand and one thousand year old spirit herb! Young lord Zhen, I can only say that you’re such an incredible hypocrite! It only took a day for you to rip off your mask of objectivity!”

One had to give it to him, the wandering cultivator had a way with words. He was so smooth that it surprised even Jiang Chen. The lines seemed well rehearsed. They were delivered with familiarity and each built off the one before. Not only did they throw mud onto Jiang Chen, but very rational mud at that. The sentiments within were highly inflammatory.

Han Qianzhan could finally bear it no longer and stepped in. “Friend, justice isn’t necessarily on the side of whoever speaks the loudest. I trust young lord Zhen’s character, and we’re just taking your word for it for now. If you think you’re right, why don’t we lay everything out and made a thorough accounting of the facts?”

The sect head’s words were a club of clarity to many wandering cultivators. They’d been leaning to their peer’s side, but calmed down after hearing this rebuttal. When it came to conflict between wandering cultivators and sects, they’d naturally side with their own and subconsciously feel that a large faction’s words couldn’t be trusted.

But they agreed with Han Qianzhan’s input. It’d been all talk so far. It was best not to jump to conclusions on basis on feeling closer to one side alone. Besides, given young lord Zhen’s performance yesterday, he really didn’t seem as bad as the other guy was making him out to be. If the young lord

really was so rotten, then his acting skills were simply too good! He'd fooled all wandering cultivators in the world!

But again, it really hadn't seemed like an act yesterday. This gathering of his really had proven beneficial to many. Thus, the scales of people's hearts slowly settled back into a neutral position.

"That's right, back up those words! We can look at who's right together."

"Yep. Popular figures draw controversy. Young lord Zhen has such a great name now that it's possible someone's just trying to drag him down."

But the wandering cultivator had latched on and wasn't letting go. He smirked coldly at Jiang Chen, his eyes full of provocation and seemed to be spoiling for a fight. "Young lord Zhen, dare you testify against me in front of everyone?"

Jiang Chen snorted dismissively. "Prancing little clown." He ignored the other and strode onto the stage. "Get up here if you want to confront me. Master Dong Ye, please bestow us with your wisdom since you're a witness as well."

Dong Ye intoned Buddha's name. "I only strive for a clear conscience in my actions. I naturally must bear witness. Young lord Zhen, you are very mistaken in this matter."

Jiang Chen really wanted to leap into a flying kick with how prim and proper the Buddhist master was presenting himself. This bald donkey is damn good at putting on fronts!

The other wandering cultivator joined the young lord on the stage. "Words need to be backed up by facts. I seek justice today and welcome all friends to join me on the stage to impart their wisdom."

Jiang Chen looked coolly at the other man, not doing anything to stop him. Han Qianzhan however, again couldn't help himself. "The seats are full today and there are many experts present. No one can make you suffer an injustice if you're truly in the right. But no one can save you either if you're trying to sow confusion and drag the young lord down."

The man chuckled coldly. "Sect Head Han, we all know that young lord Zhen is a guest pill emperor of your Great Yu Skysword Sect. It's only natural that you'd speak up on his behalf."

Su Huanzhen had wanted to jump in as well, but she was stopped in her tracks when she heard this rejoinder.

Meanwhile, Emperor Dragontyrant of the Heavenly Dragon Sect was sniggering quietly. He was greatly hostile to Sacred Peafowl Mountain given Jiang Chen's earlier rejection and delighted to see someone making trouble for the faction. Jumping out to help was the last thing he'd do. In fact, he wanted to hop in on the action and get a few kicks in as well.

Surprisingly, Shangguan Yanqing of the Ninesuns Sky Sect stood up. "Friend, you don't need to be this worked up if logic really does stand on your side. The more you are like this, the more I suspect that something's afoot. How about this, although I'm no great shakes at appraising things, I can still tell the difference between a thousand year old and six thousand year old spirit herb. Count me in?"

"The Moon God Sect will participate as well." The third sectmaster had finally spoken.

“Heh heh, the Emyrean River Palace would never miss out on such fun.” This sect was a diehard Pillfire supporter. They’d only sent an elder to the Dragon and Tiger Meet. He hadn’t participated much all along, but that didn’t mean he was going to sit out on everything.

“Haha, although my Heavenly Dragon Sect can’t be bothered with these trivial things, we’ve always advocated justice and fairness. Count us in too!”

Su Huanzhen of the Celestial Cicada Court naturally wouldn’t shrink away in moments like these. “My Celestial Cicada Court will participate as well!”

Over on the wandering cultivator side, Emperor Wellspring smiled. “I’ve always trusted young lord Zhen’s character and am willing to stand forth on his behalf.”

Emperor Inferno agreed. “I too trust young lord Zhen, count me in.”

“Hehe, I quite admire young lord Zhen’s youthful charisma. I’ll partake as well.” That was Emperor Reliance.

A bizarre situation had developed. The person facing off with Jiang Chen claimed to be a wandering cultivator, but the three wandering titans had chosen to side with the young lord instead of one of their own. Instead, the ones supporting the wandering cultivator were all sect representatives. It really was very strange.

Sharper wandering cultivators had already picked up on things. This wasn’t a random occurrence at all, but a facing off between sides. Was this really premeditated?

However, most weren’t thinking that deeply. They were incredibly excited. Having almost all the large factions and personages being dragged into this unexpected development was more exciting than any transaction. These kinds of conflicts were what they wanted to see the most!

There were seven representatives from various first rank sects and three wandering cultivator titans. That made for a total of ten, those of whom were the highest level of existences at this time’s gathering. It was more than reasonable for them to appraise the spirit herb.

“Friend, bring out your spirit herb.” Emperor Wellspring smiled faintly at the man. “Let me remind you that if you really are a wandering cultivator, I can promise that no one will harm you today whether or not your spirit herb is real. But if you’re just making trouble using the wandering cultivator name, then I will spill your blood no matter where you’re from, even if the young lord doesn’t wish to pursue things further.”

His words cast a deathly silence on the premises, making the atmosphere take a very weird turn. That had been an unabashed declaration of support for Jiang Chen.

Emperor Peerless also quietly marveled at the allure of the Pinecrane Pill. Having received the pill, Emperor Wellspring’s favorable disposition extended to its creator, hence his great demonstration of support for the young lord.

“Emperor Wellspring’s sentiments are mine as well.” Emperor Inferno looked on coldly.

Emperor Reliance smiled easily. "Me, Old Brother Hui, and Old Brother Inferno are friends of the wandering cultivators. We'll seek justice on your behalf. But if you're an imposter... that would really be too wicked."

The man had never thought that three wandering titans would be so firmly in Jiang Chen's court. Even though he knew he wouldn't lose, he felt uneasy in that moment.

What if he was exposed? Even if the young lord didn't do anything to himself out of consideration of reputation, the three titans were equally personages that he couldn't afford to offend!

Chapter 1285: The Debate of the Heavencloud Ganoderma

Jiang Chen was at his calmest now. The three wandering great emperors' promises greatly relieved him. The stranger's attempt to speak on behalf of all wandering cultivators was done for. Given that the three titans of the sphere had spoken, the man would need to consider his next moves carefully.

The young lord glanced at the strange troublemaker with a cool smile. "Take out your supposedly six thousand years old Heavencloud Ganoderma. Isn't it easier for you to stoke the flames with so many more seniors around?"

The wandering cultivator's heart pounded. What had seemed to be a flawless encirclement now had a slight crack. A tinge of fear entered his mind. However, he couldn't do much else aside from continuing forward. Taking the spirit herb out, he proclaimed loudly, "You don't scare me, young lord Zhen. Now that more seniors are here, there's no way you can hoodwink all of us!"

He adopted a strained tone with malicious intent, fully bent on depicting Jiang Chen as an oppressive villain.

"Come, seniors and friends, one and all. How can my Heavencloud Ganoderma only be a thousand years old?" Pillowing the herb in his hand, the man showed it off to the heavyweights, muttering all the while. "Young lord Zhen, you say that my Ganoderma is the same age as the one yesterday. Why don't we compare them, hmm? Can you bring it out?"

The Ganoderma from yesterday was indeed on Jiang Chen's person at the moment. After the treasure identification segment, Cheng Qian had gone to Emperor Coiling Dragon to make a deal with Jiang Chen and Sacred Peafowl Mountain.

With a faint smile, the young lord took out the very herb that was the talk of the town.

"Hmm?" Everyone was taken aback by Jiang Chen's ready display of the Ganoderma.

"I'm curious, young lord Zhen. How did that Heavencloud Ganoderma come to be in your hands?" Master Dong Ye asked with a frown. His statement left a lot to the imagination.

That's right. Why was the Heavencloud Ganoderma still in young lord Zhen's possession? Shouldn't he have returned it to the wandering cultivator already? Did he...?

Some quick thinkers' thoughts immediately went to the nastier side of the spectrum.

“I’m curious too, young lord Zhen.” The elder from the Emyrean River Palace began his question rather viciously. “It’s only been a day. How did the Heavencloud Ganoderma slip into your possession in such a short span of time?”

As Pillfire City’s dog, the Emyrean River Palace behaved within expectations by standing out to oppose Jiang Chen.

The Heavenly Dragon Sect’s Long Baxiang sniggered. “I hope you didn’t steal it via any underhanded means, young lord Zhen.”

Jiang Chen’s eyes were full of derision: derision for these supposed seniors, who, despite so advanced in age, behaved no better than clowns.

“I know what all of you are getting at. Trying to besmirch my good name, hmm? That’s right, the Heavencloud Ganoderma came into my hands through perfectly upright means. I am its lawful owner.”

“Heh heh, we’re on Veluriyam Capital ground. No treasure owner could refuse an offer from you.” Long Baxiang sneered.

To the side, Emperor Coiling Dragon couldn’t sit still for much longer. “You there, Long so-and-so! Stop with your foolish insinuations. The owner of the Heavencloud Ganoderma willingly traded it to young lord Zhen. I’m a witness to that! If there was any coercion involved at all, then let heaven strike me with the force of five thunders. Aren’t you here as Veluriyam Capital’s guests? Or are you here to engage in debauchery and deception? That seems a lot closer to your real motives right now!”

The emperor’s words were full of justice and reason. For a time, no one could utter a single rebuttal. Many fresh suspicions were assuaged. An oath like that from a great emperor was essentially definitive. No one could casually make an oath to heaven and earth like that.

Jiang Chen’s expression remained impassive. He handed his own Heavencloud Ganoderma to Jiao Yun. “Here, give it to our fellow daoists to peruse. Remind them to pay attention to the roots, the lines on the leaves, and the shape of the herb’s body.”

Carrying out his orders to the letter, Jiao Yun immediately showed it to the others.

“Everyone, the young lord is a candid man, above resorting to petty tricks. However, he’s also stated that anyone using those tricks in front of him will only experience shame. Pay attention to the details. Don’t be deceived by your first impression.”

All the onlookers began to compare the two spirit herbs closely.

From first impressions alone, they all noticed that the concentration of spirit energy coming from the two Ganodermas was vastly different. Moreover, the outward appearances of the two were too divergent. The new Heavencloud Ganoderma was clearly a lot bigger.

An idiot could see how the two differed with a cursory glance.

Even Emperor Wellspring furrowed his brow after seeing the clear-cut discrepancies. He didn’t understand why young lord Zhen wanted to put them side by side in the first place. Not comparing them was surely better. There was such a stark difference when the two were held up against each other!

The elder from the Empyrean River Palace chuckled. "I'm a bit slow about this, so excuse me. How can anyone be confused about such an obvious gap?"

Master Dong Ye sighed. "You must give everyone an explanation, young lord Zhen. Forcibly giving a wrong evaluation for a transaction is at odds with the principle of fairness that you claim to uphold."

Long Baxiang chortled mercilessly. "I didn't expect a man so young to have methods so devious. You almost managed to fool the entire world! If not for this wandering cultivator friend's courage to stand up for himself, everyone else would've remained duped and taken the hit."

Each man's words were more hateful than the last's. The triple attack incited the emotions of a good amount of listeners.

Was young lord Zhen really a fame-chasing hypocrite? Was his 'fairness' just a rallying cry to trick wandering cultivators?

Many were filled with disappointment. They'd respected young lord Zhen a great deal before this, which had also improved their overall impression of large factions slightly. Perhaps young lord Zhen's faction really was different from the others.

It seemed that their illusion had almost been shattered overnight. Now, they felt that they'd been played for a fool. The atmosphere in the crowd took a solemn turn for the worse.

Still, a great swathe of wandering cultivators thought that the speeches so far were largely one-sided. Young lord Zhen hadn't defended himself yet.

If the two spirit herbs really had such a large gap, why would he have taken out his own to compare in the first place? Wasn't that putting himself at a bigger disadvantage? There was surely a reason for young lord Zhen's decision.

The sharper audience members weren't immediately influenced by Master Dong Ye and Long Baxiang's words, instead choosing to observe any further developments. On the other hand, those that supported Jiang Chen already were at a bit of a loss for words. At a glance, the difference was clear as night and day.

Countless eyes gathered upon Jiang Chen.

The wandering cultivator snickered a few more times. "It doesn't matter how you got your hands on the first Ganoderma, young lord Zhen. If you're intent on doing the same by robbing me of my own, then I'll give up my life in pursuit of justice!"

"Enough." Jiang Chen broke the silence with a furious thunderclap. Proverbial lightning surged from his eyes, forming an aura of killing intent that shot toward the other. That single word had been spoken with the fury of a dragon's roar, rattling his audience's eardrums. It shocked every listener in attendance.

The young lord's gaze was knifelike. "Stop making yourself out to be a victim. Your poor performance may be able to fool laymen, but it's far from good enough to hide from my observant eye."

He cupped his fist in a salute to the crowd. "Everyone," the youth proclaimed loudly. "I'm sure that you can see the huge difference between the two Ganodermas at a single glance. As long as you're not blind, yes?"

"But us cultivators should know that what our eyes tell us may not be the truth. The disguise is done reasonably well, but it can't fool real experts. The Heavencloud Ganoderma may be an unfamiliar plant to you, but I know it very well. A true six thousand year specimen has jade-colored roots, and each whisker is perfect and vigorous like a dragon's. The counterfeiting techniques that went into this one are superb, but I'd assume that the artist hasn't seen an actual herb that old himself. What color is this supposedly older one's whiskers, hmm?"

The crowd looked at his behest. They noticed that the whiskers of the newer herb were a faint blue-green. Though they were a bit thicker than the ones belonging to the herb that Jiang Chen had produced, the color was identical.

"You're making things up, young lord Zhen." The wandering cultivator shrieked shrilly. "Is it supposed to be jade-colored just because you say so? Do you have any proof? It's just your baseless word alone without proof!"

Master Dong Ye incanted a Buddhist mantra. "Young lord Zhen, any further quibbling will only lower my opinion of you."

Instead of growing angrier, Jiang Chen laughed. "Master Dong Ye, I've been wrong about something all along. I thought that the Buddhist disciples of the Sublime Chord Temple didn't lie, but it appears that they're just conmen and cheats. Remember, Master Dong Ye, any falsehood is supposed to result in punishment in the hell of pulled tongues. If you can't enter nirvana as a cultivator of the Buddha Warrior's Eye, then I think that hell is where you'll end up. Do you dare swear on Buddha's name that you haven't lied in the matter? If you can make an oath to heaven and earth, then I'll disperse all of Sacred Peafowl Mountain's wealth immediately as compensation to our wandering cultivator friends here."

His speech was both resolute and unyielding, leaving Master Dong Ye at a loss for a reply.

"Like I said, the counterfeiting method is quite good." Jiang Chen continued with a frosty expression. "Alas, the counterfeiter is limited by his experience. Look again at the Ganoderma's leaves. A six thousand year old Ganoderma should have snaking patterns upon its leaves that correspond with the truths of heaven and earth. The ones on these leaves? Nondescript images still in the process of evolving.

"The lines on the Ganoderma's body as well. Many people don't know that they're very similar to tree rings and can be used to tell the herb's age. If the Ganoderma was six thousand years old, it would have sixty lines. How many are on this Ganoderma, eh?"

The crowd of wandering cultivators was collectively stunned by Jiang Chen's new information. Did the Heavencloud Ganoderma have so many distinguishing features? Was the second one really a fake?

Chapter 1286: Jiang Chens Wondrous Abilities

Jiang Chen's eyes were calm and forthright. The confidence he exuded made him that much more convincing. Meanwhile, his counterparty was sweating buckets. The latter's eyes darted around, as if looking for an escape.

But the young lord didn't even bother looking at him. He raised a cupped fist salute to the countless wandering cultivators below. "Dear wandering friends, you've traveled far and wide to attend our event for various reasons. As the host, I'm committed to giving you the best possible experience, but sometimes petty thugs can't help but want to ruin this for us.

"My conscience is clear. I determined from the very beginning that the Heavencloud Ganoderma is merely one thousand years old and didn't threaten or coerce anyone into selling it. May the heavens smite me if I lie!

"This man has repeatedly accused me of depressing prices and pressuring him into selling. If he dares to swear a vow to the heavens and profess his innocence, I'll distribute all of my wealth to everyone present as an apology."

It was a candid speech paired with a clear conscience.

The wandering cultivators below pondered deeply. It was true, it'd been only talk all along. Young lord Zhen didn't seem like the type of person that would coerce anyone into buying or selling things. Was that other fellow really just a troublemaker?

"Emperor Wellspring, that man claims to be a wandering cultivator. I request the three great titans' assistance in verifying his identity. I truly hope that he isn't an imposter trying to mislead the public. Just because I avoid trouble doesn't mean that I'm afraid of it!"

Emperor Wellspring nodded and glanced at the man. "Friend, cough out your name. If you're truly a fellow wandering cultivator, someone will definitely know you."

The man started to panic. He was no wandering cultivator!

He laughed coldly in order to change the topic. "Emperor Wellspring, who knows for sure that you've not been bought out by young lord Zhen? As a leading figure in the wandering world, how can you bend your knees to Veluriyam Capital? You're nothing but a disgrace!"

As a seasoned cultivator, Emperor Wellspring had faced all kinds of situations. He'd never fall for such elementary aggravation. He smirked coldly. "There's no use in trying to drive wedges between folks. I promise that as long as you're a fellow wandering cultivator, I'll not kill you even if you're in the wrong. But if you're an imposter, I'll have no choice but to slaughter scum like you to clear our name!"

"That's right! The wandering world runs by a rigid set of rules! There will be no mercy for imposters!" Emperor Inferno glared at the man intensely. "Remove your disguise and reveal yourself!"

Emperor Reliance smiled gently. "Looks like he really is an imposter!"

That man grew even more flustered. "Is there no more justice under the heavens? How can Veluriyam Capital be allowed to do whatever they please? My fellow wanderers, even the three great titans of the wandering world have sold their souls! How can they still be allowed to shoulder the fates of the wandering world?"

“Master Dong Ye and Emperor Dragontyrant, are you going to sit idle and let Zhen do whatever he pleases?”

Master Dong Ye glanced at Jiang Chen. “Young lord Zhen, from the very start, you’ve only sung your side of the story. Unless you can show us a six thousand year old Heavencloud Ganoderma, I’ll never be convinced.”

Jiang Chen smiled out of complete rage. “Master Dong Ye, your opinion no longer matters after I’ve found out that you two are colluding. I won’t kick you out as you’re a guest from far away, but I truly hope that your actions don’t represent the Sublime Chord Temple, or your sect will regret their decision one day.”

“Young lord Zhen, is that a threat?” Master Dong Ye’s voice was laden with frost.

“Threat?” Jiang Chen laughed coldly. “You must be mistaken. You aren’t worthy of one.”

He stepped forward and fixed a scornful smile on the wandering cultivator. “You want proof? Sure. Your counterfeit is far from excellent. You’ve merely applied a simple trick. It may seem perfect on the surface, but it’s actually filled with flaws. Let me turn your so called ‘six thousand year old’ herb back to its original state.”

This counterfeit technique was quite common in the heavenly planes. Jiang Chen was very skilled and knowledgeable in the art of pill making, so it came as no surprise that he was very familiar with such things. Moreover, the technique was extremely inferior to the ones he’d seen before.

A simple but clever formation had been used to switch up the Heavencloud Ganoderma’s appearance, but to the layman, it was practically indistinguishable. Such petty tricks would never work on Jiang Chen. He wouldn’t have minded it if that man had only tried to scam him, but that wasn’t the case.

That man had gone to the depths of defamation out of evil intentions. Jiang Chen would never let this matter rest easily.

“Young lord Zhen, don’t be rash.” Master Dong Ye stepped forward in an attempt to stop Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen laughed coldly. “Dong Ye, are you worried that I might reveal your little ruse and hypocrisy?”

“Young lord, I’m only worried that you might ruin the Heavencloud Ganoderma with your heretical techniques.” Master Dong Ye answered coldly.

The young lord burst into laughter. “Are you telling me that there’s a technique that can transform an herb from six thousand to one thousand years old? Master Dong Ye, listen to yourself!”

“Master Dong Ye, your reasoning doesn’t make sense. With so many people watching, we’ll surely notice if the young lord is up to something.” Emperor Wellspring added.

“That’s right. Master Dong Ye, you should stop interfering if you have no ulterior motives.”

“Or perhaps you actually do?” Emperor Reliance laughed mischievously.

Master Dong Ye was humiliated. His composure was shattering.

Jiang Chen smiled blandly. He flicked a beam of energy onto the formation. A layman wouldn't notice as it was extremely well concealed, but it was as clear as day to him. The formation shattered upon coming into contact with his finger. It didn't take much effort to break through it as it was only a misdirecting formation.

A flash of light exploded for a moment, then slowly dimmed into a dark glow.

The Heavencloud Ganoderma seemed to have shrunk. Its aura and spirit energy was still there, but its appearance no longer seemed different from Jiang Chen's previous one. The crowd was rendered speechless by the abrupt change.

"Young lord Zhen! What evil method did you use to ruin my Heavencloud Ganoderma?" The wandering cultivator shrieked. "The heavens are watching, young lord Zhen! Aren't you afraid of retribution?!"

Jiang Chen snorted coldly at the man's shameless antics.

"Everyone, I've merely removed the facade on the herb. You must wonder how I've managed to make its quality decline so rapidly." Jiang Chen's eyes were filled with sincerity. "Instead of explaining it to you, why don't I keep the show going and show you something interesting instead?" He smiled nonchalantly.

"I'll make the six thousand years old Heavencloud Ganoderma reappear in front of you." Jiang Chen's voice was filled with mockery, but his eyes were cold and sharp. "I once saw this forgery technique in an ancient text. However, it's evil and vile, so I've never once bothered to use it. Unfortunately, there are others who don't share the same sentiment and tried to trick me with that technique. Due to the circumstances, I've no choice but to perform it in front of everyone."

He walked up to the Heavencloud Ganoderma. Like an illusionist, he began to deploy the method. One had to use high quality spirit stones for the technique to work. He took one out, refined it, then executed the technique and applied it to the Heavencloud Ganoderma.

One had to be very meticulous when creating the formation as carelessness would lead to undesired results. One tiny mistake was all it took to ruin the entire herb. However, Jiang Chen wasn't bothered with such concerns at all.

His technique was immaculate. It only took a few back and forth motions to complete the formation. He infused the energy from the spirit stone into the formation and fully activated it.

The one-thousand years old herb was instantly filled with spirit energy. It seemed to have grown a lot bigger as well and had reverted to its previous state.

"Jiao Yun, let our fellow daoists have a look at it." Jiang Chen smiled faintly.

Jiao Yun was completely enthralled by Jiang Chen's skills. He offered up the Heavencloud Ganoderma excitedly.

"Everyone, this is a six thousand years old Heavencloud Ganoderma! Our young lord has made it five thousand years older in just a few breath's time!" He yelled with an eccentric cackle.

The crowd was flabbergasted by Jiang Chen's insane feat. Their gaze grew increasingly complicated. Admiration, wariness, and even fear could be seen within their eyes.

“What do you have to say for yourself?” Emperor Wellspring asked with a glare at the wandering cultivator.

“The victor is king. I have nothing else to say.” He answered with an odd cackle. In the middle of his sentence, he snapped an escape glyph in half and shot towards the sky.

He was trying to escape!

Nobody had expected that he would have such a trick up his sleeves. Without adequate preparation, not even a great emperor could stop him after a powerful glyph had been activated.

“Not good! This bastard is trying to escape!”

“Ah! He’s a troublemaker after all! He’s even prepared an escape route!”

“Stop him!” The situation was incredibly chaotic.

Jiang Chen was the only one who remained nonchalant. A cold and sinister smile played on his lips. Want to escape? Never in a million years!

An loud and bizarre shriek suddenly echoed through the air. In the next instant, the man fell from the heights. It was as though an invisible wall had suddenly appeared in his path.

Chapter 1287: Avoiding the Death Penalty But Still Suffering Punishment

That man slammed into the ground at an alarming speed. Despite having a respectable cultivation, the impact was so strong that the wind was knocked out of him, almost joined by the contents of his stomach. He wanted to crawl away, but Emperor Wellspring was quick to respond.

With a swipe of the great emperor’s sleeves, a flash of light flew across the man’s face. As though drawn across by a sharp knife, the outer layer of the man’s face peeled away, revealing his true identity.

The crowd’s gaze fell upon his face. The man quickly covered his face with his hands, worried that someone might recognize him.

Emperor Wellspring picked him up. “Look closely everyone. Does anyone recognize him? Is there really such a person in our community?”

The man was ashen with fear when he was rendered immobile.

“No we don’t!”

“It’s obvious he isn’t one of us just judging by his presence!”

“Young lord Zhen, that man isn’t a wandering cultivator!”

“Even if he was, he’d be the scum of our world for disrupting the wandering cultivator gathering!”

“Agreed! He’s liar and a cheat! If it wasn’t for young lord Zhen’s keen eyes, we would’ve been played for a fool!”

“He should be diced into a million pieces!”

“Yeah! If everyone follows his footsteps, the entire spirit herb market will be in shambles! At the end of the day, the ones who will suffer the most are laymen like us!”

“Young lord Zhen, what do you plan on doing with him?”

The truth held the most weight in the end. Even though the man was extremely cunning and eloquent with words, there was little he could do against the incontestable truth. The wandering cultivators who’d believed his words and grew suspicious of young lord Zhen felt like utter fools. Enraged, they yelled for blood and wanted to rip the fellow apart.

“This man’s sins are unforgivable. He attempted to disrupt the wanderer gathering. Killing him would be as easy as slaying a dog, but spilling his blood might bring bad luck to the ongoing event. However, this evil-doer cannot be let off with a slap on the wrist, for he will definitely cause harm to others in the future. He shall be spared from death, but his sins cannot go unpunished.” Jiang Chen announced blandly.

“Young lord Zhen! Let us kill him instead if you won’t do it!”

“Agreed! This man deserves a million deaths for impersonating a wandering cultivator!”

“Emperor Wellspring, please help us administer justice!”

Emperor Wellspring flashed a tranquil smile. “Young lord Zhen, I trust that you already have a hunch about his identity. Let me slay him instead if you’re worried about offending the other party.”

“No need. I can’t bear to implicate anyone else in Veluriyam Capital’s matters.” Jiang Chen answered blandly. While talking, he suddenly struck the man in the dantian.

A great force came bursting out, trashing the sea of qi in the man’s dantian. He sagged to the ground like a pile of mud. Even an immortal would find it hard to stand after his cultivation had been completely destroyed.

“Men, throw him out of Veluriyam Capital!”

The wandering cultivators below cheered thunderously after seeing how Jiang Chen had handled the situation.

“Young lord Zhen, we apologize the misunderstanding earlier.”

“Yeah! We all understand now that you’re an honorable and upright person. If anyone else tries to defame or slander you, I won’t believe a word of it!”

“That’s right! We’d sooner die than believe a word of it! Young lord Zhen isn’t a deceitful and unscrupulous man!” The crowd’s trust in Jiang Chen had deepened by a quite a bit after that enormous commotion.

Steel doesn’t fear the test of fire. Jiang Chen smiled faintly. “Everyone, I’ve made a fool of myself. I hope that I didn’t dampen your spirits. The event will continue. Just in case anyone else tries to throw dirt at me again, Sacred Peafowl Mountain’s trading district will from henceforth be revealed to the public.”

“That’s great! Young lord Zhen, you are truly the beacon of honor and trust!” Jiang Chen’s actions had only made the crowd love him even more.

“Master Dong Ye, you’ve made a huge error this time.” Emperor Peerless’ voice was filled with a hint of frost as well as mockery. He could tell that that the Buddhist master was a co-conspirator.

Master Dong Ye didn’t pay the words any heed and approached Jiang Chen with a righteous expression, his palms pressed together. “Young lord Zhen, I’ve erred. My Warrior Buddha’s Eye still requires tempering. I apologize.”

The monk was admitting to a mistake in appraisal only, and not that he’d been colluding with the imposter. Jiang Chen smiled blandly and chose not to expose the monk. It was better to take things one step at a time. Having a fall out with the Sublime Chord Temple right now would lead to nowhere.

“Master Dong Ye, there’s nothing wrong with making mistakes, but you should really improve your Warrior Buddha’s Eye, or unscrupulous people might take advantage of your sect’s sacred grounds.” It was obvious what he was insinuating.

Master Dong Ye answered emotionlessly. “Young lord Zhen’s words are difficult to fathom. This monk will ruminate upon it when I return home.”

The monk’s face was thick beyond measure. Jiang Chen couldn’t help but be impressed by how well the Buddhist master was maintaining his facade.

Long Baxiang burst into an odd cackle. “To think that there’s such an advanced counterfeiting technique in this world! Young lord Zhen, you’ve truly widened my horizons! I sure hope that Sacred Peafowl Mountain will avoid using it on us!”

Jiang Chen’s expression sank. “Emperor Dragontyrant, you’re shown respect because you’re a guest from far away. However, you’re sorely mistaken if you think that this gives you the right to run your mouth and engage in meaningless slander.”

Emperor Dragontyrant burst into laughter. “Relax! I’m just joking!”

This group of people had incredibly thick skin. They were capable of saying anything as long as it fit their narrative. They had been incredibly fierce and condescending at beginning, but they quickly put on a smile as soon as the situation soured. Who’d harassed the young lord just now? Surely not them!

“Alright, let’s return to our stations and continue with the event. I’m sure there are some of you out there who still harbor malicious intent. I don’t care what plans or schemes you have in store. If you continue to test my patience, be prepared to taste my wrath. Don’t think for a second that I’m not capable of killing!”

“Agreed! Anyone who tries to stir up trouble will be going up against millions of us! We’ll drown him in our spit!”

“We’ll attack the next troublemaker together!” The wandering cultivators were furious as rabble rousers would disrupt the proceedings.

After order was restored, Jiang Chen opened his trading district to all wandering cultivators. Unfortunately, this made the Jiao brothers’ job much harder.

Emperor Coiling Dragon and Emperor Void left their own trading districts to help the young lord as they realized that their business wouldn't be as great. Young lord Zhen was now the core figure of Veluriyam Capital.

What Jiang Chen hadn't counted on was that the prior commotion resulted in many unexpected benefits. The public's perception of him had improved immensely and trust in him had grown by a marked magnitude. Wandering cultivators visited him in endless waves, bringing forth all kinds of great treasures. Three treasures of equal worth to the Heavencloud Ganoderma appeared in just one day.

However, Jiang Chen didn't buy a single one as he didn't need any of them. He had a fair amount of wealth, but it wasn't unlimited. Good steel should only be used on a sword's edge.

He turned them down, but he gave the wandering cultivators a measure of reassurance and encouraged them to participate in the auction later. These items would be worth more for those that actually need them. The wandering cultivators agreed with his analysis.

On the second day, a significant transaction knocked on Jiang Chen's door.

A small party of four, consisting of one half-step emperor and three sage realm cultivators, came to him with a careful air. Their cultivation actually counted as top tier in the wandering world. The leader of the group was a middle-aged man with a blind eye. His pupil had been clouded over by a white substance. However, he seemed to prefer flaunting it instead of hiding it with an eye-patch. It gave him an eccentric air.

"The Four Elites of Peach Mountain greets the young lord." The leader bowed respectfully.

Jiao Yun murmured words of introduction by Jiang Chen's ears. "Young lord, the Four Elites of Peach Mountain are seasoned veterans of the wandering world. They're an upright group, but they are very wary of strangers and prefer solidarity."

Jiang Chen had a rough understanding after Jiao Yun's introduction. "Please, there's no need to be ceremonious. Are you looking to trade or do you seek an appraisal?"

The white-eyed leader nodded gently. "We look to trade with the young lord."

"Oh? What is it that you wish to trade?" Jiang Chen asked with a smile.

"Eight Treasure Cordyceps," the leader answered.

"Mm? May I please have a look?" Jiang Chen's heart skipped a beat when he heard their goods.

"Be my guest." The herb-like parasite appeared in front of Jiang Chen with a fling of his sleeves.

Jiang Chen furrowed his brows and looked at it in detail. "Mm! A fine treasure indeed! It has aged very well!"

"Friend, please state your asking price." Jiang Chen could immediately tell that it was of good quality.

"Young lord Zhen, we have more than just one."

"Oh? How many?" Jiang Chen was elated. The Eight Treasure Cordyceps was extremely useful to him. To think that the seller had more than one!

“Twenty-six.”

Twenty-six?! The young lord almost spat out his tea. “Are you certain?”

“Extremely.” The white-eyed leader was an interesting character. He took out all of them to show Jiang Chen.

Chapter 1288: A Lavish Affair

The visual impact of the twenty-six Eight Treasure Cordyceps was quite intense. The herb wasn't as rare as the Heavencloud Ganoderma, but it was almost impossible to find so many in one place.

Just like the Radiant Celestial Grass that Liu Zhen had produced a while back, the sheer volume of the herb awed Jiang Chen. In some respects, the Eight Treasure Cordyceps was more valuable than the Radiant Celestial Grass, not to mention harder to cultivate.

The Radiant Celestial Grass was only a plant. In ancient times, a fair number knew how to cultivate it. However, the Eight Treasure Cordyceps required eight different types of parasitic bugs in order to flourish. It was extremely difficult to cultivate as a result, and as rare as sky rank herbs.

Strangely, it seemed like Divine Abyss Continent hadn't discovered the best use for these spirit herbs yet. Its spirit herb classification ranked the Cordyceps as quasi-sky rank, rather than sky rank outright.

For Jiang Chen, the sight of twenty-six Cordyceps arrayed together was almost stupefying.

“This is great. All of these are real, quality Cordyceps specimens. You've struck gold, my friends!” Jiang Chen praised, unafraid to reveal his appreciation for the goods. His actions reassured the four wandering cultivators he was speaking to.

They hadn't come to find Jiang Chen until now out of worry for potential malicious price-cutting. Thankfully, the resolution of the Heavencloud Ganoderma crisis had satisfactorily assuaged their fears.

“Young lord Zhen. Do you like these spirit herbs?” The white-eyed leader scrutinized Jiang Chen closely.

“Are you planning to trade all of these to me, friend?” Jiang Chen asked.

“There's no need for us to sell the same product to several different buyers. The reason we're here is because we trust you, young lord Zhen. Please give us a price.”

“Why don't you give me the price you have in mind instead? As long as it's reasonable, I'll buy all of them at that price without another word.” Jiang Chen was very straightforward.

The Four Elites of Peach Mountain looked at each other, anxiety clear upon their faces.

It took a long while for the white-eyed leader to shake himself free of awkwardness. “To tell you the truth, young lord Zhen... we took these Eight Treasure Cordyceps to Pillfire City before. They forced the price way down. They would only offer the equivalent of an earth rank spirit herb's price for it, but it's an herb that's on par with sky rank! We heard that you were buying these at a good price, so...”

Jiang Chen knew their concerns. “Don't worry,” he smiled. “I won't push down the price. I'll pay you the price of sky rank spirit herbs for these Eight Treasure Cordyceps.”

“Really?” The Four Elites of Peach Mountain were stunned. They didn’t think the young lord would be so easy to reason with.

“The normal market price for a sky rank spirit herb is between fifty to a hundred twenty million. At an auction house, really valuable ones can reach two to three hundred.” Laughing, the young lord glanced at the twenty-six Cordyceps once more. “But since you have so many, I doubt it would reach such a high price. Would you be willing to accept an offer of a hundred million per stalk?”

The Four Elites of Peach Mountain were universally taken aback at the offered sum. Incredulity dawned in their expressions.

One Cordyceps for a hundred million? That was a gift from the heavens. A normal sky rank spirit herb went for as low as thirty million sometimes. The Eight Treasure Cordyceps was only equal to quasi-sky rank, so they’d estimated a price of twenty million per at most.

Most importantly, the price that Pillfire City had named had been an alarmingly low ten million per. That was the main reason they hadn’t sold these herbs yet. Their target price was twenty million, after all; though if young lord Zhen was a nice enough person, they wouldn’t have minded fifteen.

But young lord Zhen had immediately given them a hundred million per stalk instead – several times their hypothetical target price!

“Are you... serious, young lord Zhen?” The white-eyed leader was an experienced man, but even so, his head buzzed at the pleasant surprise.

“We can cut the deal as long as all of you agree. I think my price is very fair. There is no one else anywhere that will give you fifty, much less a hundred.” Jiang Chen hadn’t investigated the market himself, but he knew the approximate attitudes of the world. The inhabitants of Divine Abyss Continent hadn’t discovered the true purpose of the Eight Treasure Cordyceps yet.

“Yes, yes, young lord Zhen. Actually, our target price isn’t nearly as high as your quote. Your price has scared us.” The white-eyed leader was a bit flustered. “You are too kind, young lord Zhen. Since your price is so fair, we’re not so money-grubbing that we can’t return the favor. Give us two billion and all twenty-six Cordyceps will be yours.”

The other three men of the Four Elites of Peach Mountain nodded in agreement.

“Yes, we cannot take young lord Zhen’s sincerity for granted.”

“We’ve been to many places in the Upper Eight Regions, young lord Zhen, but a buyer as equitable as you is a first.”

“We will definitely come to any future events that Veluriyam Capital holds, just to support you.”

Jiang Chen understood the psychology of these men. If he wanted to lowball them, he could have easily done so. He was giving a fair price to them solely for the sake of building up his reputation. The Four Elites of Peach Mountain weren’t exactly the most elite of cultivators, but reputation was based on hearsay and rumor. The intangible value of his investment couldn’t be ignored.

“Wonderful. You gentlemen have shown me your sincerity. Two billion it is!” Jiang Chen laughed heartily. “I can’t pay you in full with stones I currently have on hand, but I’ll auction a batch of items in a few days’ time. Shall we conclude the deal after?”

“Not a problem.” The white-eyed leader agreed readily. They had no worries at all about Jiang Chen’s financial solvency. Even a single Pinecrane Pill from the young lord’s hands would fetch a fortune. “Then, we will wait for your good news, young lord Zhen.”

Before Jiang Chen could reply, Emperor Peerless approached them. “If you don’t have enough stones on hand, young lord Zhen, take a few from me. I should be able to rustle up the two billion pretty easily through a few contacts.”

“No worries. There’s nothing wrong with waiting for a few days.” Jiang Chen had plenty of spirit stones with him, but he had even more uses for them. He couldn’t spend them all in one place like this.

The Four Elites of Peach Mountain all saluted respectfully to Emperor Peerless upon seeing the prestigious senior.

Emperor Peerless didn’t take Jiang Chen’s response seriously. He turned to the four wandering cultivators. “If you leave the herbs here, I’ll pay one billion upfront. The rest, I’ll send for from my acquaintances. You’ll get it very shortly. Surely my reputation is sufficient to serve as temporary credit for a few days?”

“You are our senior, Emperor Peerless. Of course we trust you. Let it be as you say, sir.” The Four Elites of Peach Mountain were sharp. How could they turn down a request from Mo Wushuang? Furthermore, the emperor did have a very solid reputation among wandering cultivator circles. They weren’t worried that he’d refuse to pay the rest.

Emperor Peerless was about to leave to gather the stones, but Jiang Chen stopped him. “Never mind. Old Brother Mo, I can pay the other billion. Don’t bother reaching out to your contacts. Put the billion you’re paying on my tab, too. I’ll return it as soon as possible.”

Mo Wushuang laughed. “Young lord Zhen, why stand on ceremony with me? Don’t worry about the billion. Take it as a gesture of thanks. The favors you’ve done me are more precious than stones could ever measure. I can’t hope to repay you with wealth alone.”

That was absolutely true. Jiang Chen had saved his wife’s life and moreover, given him the kunpeng bloodline. Neither was particularly purchasable by spirit stones alone. The Four Elites of Peach Mountain looked on with mouths agape. One billion was nothing to either the young lord or the emperor. No wonder they were big shots; they certainly acted like it with their finances. The four wandering cultivators aspired even more to become like their senior one day.

Despite the spirit stones physically present within their possession, now, it still felt like they were in a dream. If they’d made the alternative decision to sell to Pillfire City, they would only have received two to three hundred million stones. Instead, they had two whole billion on hand!

Jiang Chen appreciated the twenty-six Eight Treasure Cordyceps specimens so much that he couldn’t keep his hands off them.

“Old Brother Mo, if these herbs were sold at Pillfire City, the most one’d get for them would be ten to twenty million. Do you know why I’m giving them this price?”

Mo Wushuang was perplexed. “How come?”

“With the two billion worth of Cordyceps in my hands, I’ll produce product with them that’s more than ten times their worth!”

“Ten times? Twenty billion?” Mo Wushuang clucked his tongue. This second number was almost too large to comprehend. Even a great emperor of his caliber couldn’t produce a sum anywhere near that amount.

Only great emperors belonging to large factions could pool their faction’s resources together to produce such an amount. Alternatively, some ancient hermits also had that much wealth stashed.

“Isn’t twenty billion too much of an exaggeration?” After some consideration, even the great emperor found the sum incredible.

“None whatsoever.” Jiang Chen laughed. “No one has discovered the true value of the Eight Treasure Cordyceps yet. If they had, then they would know it is only slightly less valuable than the Heavencloud Ganoderma.”

“Oho, then what is their true value, young lord Zhen? What is their purpose?” Mo Wushuang was curious.

“The Heavencloud Ganoderma can be used to refine the Emperor Supremacy Pill. But the Eight Treasure Cordyceps, on the other hand, is the main material for the Emperor Ascension Pill!”

“What?” Mo Wushuang had heard of the Emperor Ascension Pill before. He’d seen the name in an ancient text.

“The Emperor Ascension Pill... isn’t that the miracle pill, able to unconditionally increase an emperor realm cultivator’s level by one?” The Emperor Ascension Pill was the same kind of pill as its different-realmed peers: the Origin Doubling Pill, the Sage Smile Pill, and the Emperor Supremacy Pill.

However, the Upper Eight Regions was capped at the level of the Sage Smile Pill. Though the Emperor Ascension Pill had records about it in various books, there was no consensus about its recipe. There were rumors that Pillfire City had the recipe, but according to the city itself, the pill’s materials were difficult to acquire. Therefore, it had trouble refining the pill in bulk.

Jiang Chen smiled with a nod. “The Origin Doubling Pill, the Sage Smile Pill, the Emperor Supremacy Pill, and the Emperor Ascension Pill. The world of martial dao has a place for all of these, and the marvel of its treasures is far beyond mortal imagination.”

“The Eight Treasure Cordyceps... is the main material for the Emperor Ascension Pill?” Mo Wushuang inhaled sharply, a bit quizzical.

Chapter 1289: Controversy Over the Auction List

Mo Wushuang was awestruck; he couldn’t speak for the longest time. The young man before him had time and again overturned everything he knew. He was blown out of his element.

“You’re going to turn the world upside down, young lord Zhen.” Emperor Peerless sighed after a long while. “The Emperor Supremacy Pill, the Emperor Ascension Pill, the Pinecrane Pill... any one of these appearing in the world would consume the entire human domain. But you...”

Jiang Chen smiled slightly. “Old Brother Mo, the Divine Abyss Continent is a big place. The heritage of the ancients is an amazing thing. Why should we be limited to what’s feasible in the human domain? If a martial cultivator can’t even see beyond the boundaries of the human domain, what else is there left for him?”

Any normal youth professing such boastful words would be summarily dismissed by the emperor. However, a declaration from Veluriyam’s young lord was nothing short from thought provoking.

He was right. Why should one’s scope be limited to the human domain? The Divine Abyss Continent was tremendously large. The human domain was just a small corner of that immense space.

Young lord Zhen has lofty ambitions!

Thinking to this point, Emperor Peerless laughed broadly. “Young lord Zhen, I used to feel satisfied at having come so far in my life. If you hadn’t pointed out my error, I would no longer have any pursuits left. After hearing your opinion, I am somewhat ashamed. From now on, I’ll be right behind you. I’d like to see just how far you can lead us!”

The emperor’s own pride was ignited. He felt young once again.

Jiang Chen put away the twenty-six Eight Treasure Cordyceps carefully, then smiled. “These Cordyceps can be used to refine over a hundred Emperor Ascension Pills. What do you think a single pill should be valued at, Old Brother Mo?”

Advancing one emperor realm level for free was a priceless proposition!

“Emperor realm experts are obviously less wealthy than their greater peers. Even so, a price of two to three hundred million would sell like hotcakes. There’s plenty of emperor realm wandering cultivators with that kind of purchasing power, and you can definitely add many more sect-affiliated experts to that list!”

“What about the Emperor Supremacy Pill?” Jiang Chen asked smilingly.

“The Emperor Supremacy Pill, huh...” Mo Wushuang sighed. “The Emperor Supremacy Pill is probably the highest rank pill beneath the heavens. I can’t attach a price to it. Personally speaking, if I had a hard time breaking through within the great emperor realm and found out the help that this pill could offer, I would spend everything I had for a single pill.”

The draw of the Emperor Supremacy Pill was quite different from that of the Emperor Ascension Pill. Its target audience was the most elite stratum of the human domain. Experts at this level commanded the most wealth everywhere in the world of martial dao. Correspondingly, their purchasing power was equally astonishing.

When men reached this level of cultivation, they held an almost incomprehensible fixation for progressing ever forward. In the world of martial dao, the breaking through of levels and realms was the

tireless goal of almost every cultivator. Many experts placed themselves in dangerous situations constantly in order to chase the truth of dao between life and death.

Such 'martial madmen' were never in short supply.

Both True Heavensfall Iron and Eight Treasure Cordyceps had appeared in the trading segment of the meet. Unfortunately, there was still no news whatsoever of the Goldencrown Cloudcrane.

"Is the Cloudcrane really this rare?" Jiang Chen was a little perplexed.

The three days concluded with nary a fowl in sight. Veluriyam's young lord was a little depressed. He'd thought that the Goldencrown Cloudcrane was the most likely to appear. Reality was quite the opposite.

He didn't have a fervent desire for the Goldencrown Cloudcrane. It stayed on his mind because of his transaction with the group of wandering great emperors. The Goldencrown Cloudcrane was one of the keys to refining the Pinecrane Pill.

Ten wandering cultivators had participated in Emperor Shura's encirclement. Aside from Emperor Wellspring, no one else had received their reward yet.

It appeared though, that many benefited a great deal through the three-day trading segment. Even the wandering cultivator great emperors were well pleased. It seemed that they were extremely satisfied.

Standing in their midst, Jiang Chen performed a cupped fist salute. "Everyone, I'm sure you've benefited a good deal from the three-day trading segment. And now, please register if there's a treasure you'd like Veluriyam Capital to auction off. Don't miss out the right timing! Any treasures lower than sky rank will be eliminated from the list, and even treasures that are sky rank will not necessarily make it. For the attendees, absolutely the best and most valuable will be chosen from among sky rank and higher treasures."

There was only a single day for the auction. Not many treasures would pass through the auction process. Therefore, the details required Jiang Chen's personal attention.

Sign-ups concluded in two hours. The list of treasures submitted for auction was fifty-six items long.

"Young lord, all these treasures are from wandering cultivators. Neither sects nor wandering cultivator titans signed up."

"That's understandable. Sects, factions, and wandering cultivator giants hardly want for money. Instead, they seek treasure to an almost obsessive degree." Jiang Chen found nothing strange about this.

Analyzing the list a bit more, he estimated that only four things could be auctioned off in a single two-hour slot. If the auction was allowed to continue for sixteen, only thirty-two treasures were eligible. Of course, an excessive number of items auctioned reduced its quality.

Jiang Chen carefully examined the list's details. With a broad pen stroke, he removed any treasure that was either insufficient or common. It took no time at all for the list to reach the final sixteen.

"I think these sixteen will be fine. Twelve will be listed earlier on, and four will be sold at the end." Finally finalizing the list, the young lord handed it to his subordinates.

Pill King Bu was the one responsible for breaking the news to the registrants that only sixteen had been chosen. When the forty wandering cultivators heard that their treasures hadn't made the cut, they were all very upset indeed. All of them requested a meeting with young lord Zhen.

The pill king wasn't in a position to make decisions on the young lord's behalf, so he sought the latter's advice once more. Jiang Chen thought about it for a moment before waving his hand. "Take me to them."

The young man walked over, the Jiao brothers and Emperor Peerless trailing closely behind.

"You're finally here, young lord Zhen!"

"You must help us, young lord Zhen. We came to the Dragon and Tiger Meet because of your reputation alone. Why are we barred from selling our goods?"

"Isn't that right? There's nothing wrong with our stuff. Auctions elsewhere would move really quickly to snatch it up. How come it didn't make it past the selection process with you guys?"

Jiang Chen listened to their pleas with a smile.

"Gentlemen, I picked out a list of items to sell myself. Your stuff is perfectly fine, but time for the auction is limited. Everything being sold is extremely valuable. The only reason your things didn't make the cut is that pricier things edged you out." The young man patiently explained.

"Young lord Zhen, your words hurt us a great deal."

"I agree. Just how high rank are the selected treasures? I don't believe that my treasure is possibly worse!"

"We would like transparency, young lord Zhen!"

"I can't announce the selected treasures right now," Jiang Chen retorted coolly. "You'll see them soon enough – tomorrow at the auction. These are the rules. There's no need for argument."

The wandering cultivators wanted to protest further, but was stopped by a frowning Jiao Yun behind Jiang Chen's back. "What? Is young lord Zhen's kindness being taken advantage of here? You'd better not take a mile for a given inch."

"Young lord Zhen is the organizer of the event. It's his freedom to pick whatever treasures he likes. Do you intend to force him differently?"

The Jiao brothers of Mt. Huai were reasonably famous seniors in the world of martial dao. Moreover, they were rumored to be pretty fierce. The wandering cultivators were cowed as soon as they opened their mouths.

"It's not easy for us either, young lord Zhen. It's rare to find someone that thinks on our behalf. If we miss this chance, next time... ah!"

"That's it exactly. Please, young lord Zhen, add another day to the auction."

"Shut up!" Jiao Yun barked angrily.

Jiang Chen waved a hand. "Please, please. Gentlemen, I admit that your treasures were indeed sky rank. I've even publicly identified some of them myself. There's a very good reason they didn't make the cut. Your treasures aren't better than the ones selected for the auction, and more importantly, they're not rare in the world of cultivation. As they say, rare things fetch a higher price. The level of tomorrow's auction is particularly high. When your treasures are compared to the others there, they'll seem quite plain. You won't fetch an ideal price for your goods, nor will you actualize the value of your treasure."

He was speaking nothing but the truth. If there were two treasures of the same level, with one rarer than the other, then the first would command a higher following. Supply and demand dictated this to be the case.

The treasures that had failed to make the cut weren't gutter trash, but they were treasures that could be found elsewhere. In an auction setting, the attendees' wealth was generally focused upon the rare treasures available for sale. It was unlikely for relatively common treasures to fetch commanding prices. Far more likely was the opposite. It wasn't unreasonable to expect some items to be left with no bidders.

This more detailed explanation injected moroseness into the wandering cultivators.

"I'd like to add a few words, my friends." Emperor Peerless spoke up. "If the rules aren't followed, then standards wouldn't exist. Young lord Zhen has spent a lot of time and effort on the gathering, so he has to take responsibility for its operations. There's no question that he selected the treasures fairly for the auction. Your treasures' removal from the list was hardly out of selfishness. In fact, he did so partially for your benefit. It's not often that a wandering cultivator gets his hands on a valuable treasure. Ending an auction without any bids is a potential hit to the value of any treasure. Plus, are you really worried about not being able to sell something expensive you own? Are you taking the wandering cultivator meet as an opportunity to get rich quick? If something isn't impossible to find worldwide, then it cannot be sold for much higher or lower than its real price."

Emperor Peerless was a respectable and moral man. His words were far more convincing than the Jiao brothers' intimidation.

Chapter 1290: Realizing Ones Rich

The wandering cultivators couldn't help but agree with Emperor Peerless. His words had a lot of merit. If a treasure didn't distinguish itself in an auction and was let go without any bids, its value would be diminished. For the owner, that would be thoroughly counterproductive.

"We know you have a track record of fairness, young lord Zhen. It's rare for someone to be so considerate of wandering cultivators like you. We would like to humbly ask for any ideas you might have."

"That's right. Anywhere else would try to undervalue our assets. There's no one fair beneath the sun. Young lord Zhen, you're the only one we trust. Why not buy everything off our hands?"

These words won a sympathetic response from the rest.

"We can't trust anyone else, young lord Zhen. We will only sell these treasures to you. It's fine if we lose out a bit for your benefit!"

“Exactly. As long as the deals aren’t too unfavorable, we’ll take whatever you can give.”

“You guys are fools. When has young lord Zhen given a wandering cultivator an unfavorable deal?”

These wandering cultivators were highly calculative men. Everything they said was out of hopes that Jiang Chen would buy the treasures off them for a reasonable price.

The young man looked at the list of items again. All of them were decent enough finds. Since there was only forty, he saw no reason he couldn’t buy out the whole batch.

Unfortunately, he clearly didn’t have enough spirit stones on hand. Plus, many of these items were far from necessary. A glance reminded him that these treasures were all sky rank. A normal sky rank spirit herb was valued minimally at thirty million.

Jiang Chen had named the exorbitant price of a hundred million for the Eight Treasure Cordyceps because that particular spirit herb could generate profit many times that. The most he could do with these treasures was wait for them to naturally appreciate in value. Unfortunately, there really wasn’t much room for them to grow. And in fact, many were consumables. To buy all of them here would cost a billion and some change.

The wandering cultivators’ bright eyes told him that these treasures were their most important asset. These valuable items constituted their owners’ entire livelihoods. Most of them here were sage realm, though there were a few emperor realm experts as well. The emperor realm cultivators were comparatively more relaxed. The sage realm cultivators didn’t have very much that was worth anything at all. Their single possession was also their most prized. All of their hopes were wrapped up in it.

“My friends, I know what these treasures mean to you. I must make it clear that I don’t particularly need any of them. Honestly, they don’t mean very much to someone like me. However, each of these treasures represents your fate and future.”

Jiang Chen’s touching words sent a warm current through the wandering cultivators’ hearts. As wandering cultivators adrift in the world, they lived on a knife’s edge. Their environment was totally incomparable to that of a large sect’s disciples. A treasure was more than enough to change their entire fortunes for the better.

“How about this. I’ll give you a price according to what I feel is right. Each estimate will be accompanied with a promise of integrity. As for whether you’ll sell, well, that’s entirely up to you. I can only guarantee that I won’t intentionally name a lower price than appropriate. I’m not here to exploit you by any means. I’ll actually give you a slightly higher price than is typical.” Jiang Chen picked up the list once more as he said this, looking down it carefully.

It took a few more moments before he was done labeling each of the excluded treasures with a price.

“Here are my quotes. Take a look. There’s no need to haggle. Every quote here has been evaluated partially to your advantage.”

Jiang Chen spoke in a sincere tone. “Also, there’s another caveat. I can only buy the treasures off your hands at some point in the near future.”

At this time, Cloudsoar Monarch walked up. “May I have a moment, young lord?”

Jiang Chen followed his trusted subordinate. "What is it, Cloudsoar?"

"You're the young lord of Sacred Peafowl Mountain now. The riches and vaults of the mountain are yours to command. His Majesty put you into your current position with full acknowledgment of your right to use our resources, there's no doubt about that at all." Cloudsoar Monarch had noticed by now that Jiang Chen was having some problems with wealth liquidity.

The young man had been continually making contributions since the day he'd been made young lord. He had never taken anything from Sacred Peafowl Mountain in return.

Jiang Chen was stunned at the monarch's suggestion. He hadn't considered that possibility at all. Sacred Peafowl Mountain's vaults?

"Don't worry, young lord. The four monarchs unconditionally respect your leadership, and so does the entirety of Sacred Peafowl Mountain. Please, make use of the vault as you see fit. We four monarchs once followed His Majesty. From now on, we do the same for you. Don't forget, you're the lord of Sacred Peafowl Mountain. There's no need to seek our permission for any edicts or expenditures." The monarch's position was quite clear.

"Cloudsoar, how much is there in the vaults?" Jiang Chen had no idea at all.

"We hold allegiance from countless factions and own innumerable businesses. Our profits are high, and we take a cut of all of the vassals' annual profits. There's also large income from taxes. Plus, we're also the foremost faction in Veluriyam Capital, so our wealth is naturally quite stunning."

"So how much is there in total?" Jiang Chen couldn't help but ask.

"We have a few dozen billion spirit stones in storage alone. Our vault holds countless other resources, treasures, and other assets. I can say with confidence that 'far more than a hundred billion' is a conservative estimate."

"What?" Jiang Chen was shocked.

"Young lord, Veluriyam Capital is one of the strongest factions in the Upper Eight Regions. Our riches are a result of accumulation since the ancient times. If not for Emperor Peafowl's dislike for money-making, we would own several times this wealth. Our assets were largely gathered through mundane channels! This is just normal income." Cloudsoar Monarch's explanation sent the young man reeling.

He knew that large sects and factions tended to hoard astonishing wealth. However, the abundant Sacred Peafowl Mountain vaults stupefied him.

And these were only the vaults. What did the vaults hold? Public funds!

Private wealth was intentionally excluded. Experts like Emperor Peafowl were sure to be disturbingly wealthy. The comparison gave Jiang Chen some perspective about just how damn poor the wandering cultivator emperors were – Emperor Peerless among them, of course.

Suddenly remembering something, the youth slapped his thigh. "I hear that Emperor Shura was very good at making money. Doesn't that mean he must've been absurdly affluent?"

“Hmph! No question about it. Shura’s faction was tremendously well-off. I suspect that his faction’s fortune far surpassed ours. After all, the emperor was shrewd beyond comprehension! What a shame that he took all of that money with him. His hoarding benefited others in the end.”

Cloudsoar Monarch’s words upset Jiang Chen a great deal.

“Blast Pillfire City! They’ve gotten away with it again!” Without needing to think about it, he knew that Pillfire City had to have taken the money already. Emperor Shura had died with no valuables left on him, not even a single storage ring.

That wouldn’t do. His money belonged to Veluriyam Capital. Jiang Chen wasn’t going to let Pillfire City snap it up so easily without a fight! Just the thought of it incensed him.

If Shura’s wealth outstripped Emperor Peafowl’s, then Pillfire had received a real windfall.

“Go, seek out Emperor Vastsea. Tell him not to leave yet. I want to talk to him!” Jiang Chen instructed.

“Yes, young lord,” replied Cloudsoar Monarch.

“Mm. Cloudsoar, could you go retrieve three billion spirit stones from the vault for me? As I’m sure you’ve heard already, I have an important use for them,” the young man added.

“As you wish.”

Jiang Chen returned to the forty wandering cultivators. “So, gentlemen, have you come to a decision?”

“Indeed we have, young lord Zhen.” There was a mass of unified shouts. “Your price quotes are very fair. We’ve decided to sell to you!”

Of course Jiang Chen’s quotes were fair. He wanted reputation above all, not fleecing unwitting idiots for a quick buck.

“We can wait a few days. For this price, a decade or more is more than worthwhile!”

“Quite so! Waiting isn’t a problem for any of us.”

“Actually, I managed to get my hands on sufficient capital. There’s no longer a need to wait. I do have a separate request for you, however. If you hear any news about a Goldencrown Cloudcrane anywhere, or know anyone who has one of these spirit beasts, then please let me know. I’m willing to pay a high price for one.”

“A Goldencrown Cloudcrane? Alright, Zhang Ole Seventh will remember this.”

“Deng’s got it as well. I’ll certainly keep an eye out for you, young lord Zhen.”

These people were tremendously pleased to have received such offers from Jiang Chen. They felt that the young lord was a bit different from others from large factions. He was cordial, obliging, and genuine. Someone like that was able to win their affection quite easily.

Cloudsoar Monarch gathered up the necessary three billion in no time at all. The sum was rather insignificant to collect from Sacred Peafowl Mountain’s vault.

The forty treasures cost sixteen hundred million spirit stones in all. It wasn't an enormous amount, but every wandering cultivator was satisfied.

To these drifters, a few dozen million was already nothing short of astronomical. The sage realm wandering cultivators were especially appreciative of the scale of their payout. It was a staggering sum of stones! It couldn't compare to what the Four Elites of Peach Mountain had, but not everyone could enjoy that kind of serendipity.

In the wandering cultivator world, true treasures were possessed only by the very few. Hundreds of thousands of them had come to the event – perhaps one million or more – but only a handful had actually been fortunate.

Emperor Peerless sighed at the wandering cultivators' satisfaction. "Young lord Zhen, the wandering cultivator world is a cruel place. A few dozen million spirit stones... that's probably nothing in the eyes of sect disciples."