

SOVEREIGN OF THE THREE REALMS

BOOK 03
ESTABLISHMENT IN SKYLAUREL KINGDOM

Plow Days

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Sovereign of the Three Realms

(三界独尊)

by

Plow Days

(犁天)

Synopsis

Jiang Chen, son of the Heavenly Emperor, unexpectedly reincarnated into the body of a despised young noble, thus embarking on the path of the underdog trouncing all comers.

No one has the right to call himself a genius in front of Jiang Chen, as no one has a better understanding of the heavens than the son of the Heavenly Emperor.

Genius?

He who adheres to me shall ascend, those who oppose me can find solace in hell!

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First Edition: October 2016

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Book 03: Establishment In Skylaurel Kingdom

Chapter 131: Rampant Disciples Of The Azure Heaven Northern Palace

Tang Long was actually also a bit hesitant. If it wasn't for the fact that the border missions lately had been quite important, hence resulting in a sheer lack of time to make a trip back home, he absolutely wouldn't have asked a group of strangers to courier some items for him.

However, his family was urgently waiting to use these items. If the most apt timing was missed, it'd be quite a regretful affair.

Tang Long had been debating over the past couple of days whether or not to make a trip home and suffer the punishment for doing so. But he knew that if he snuck home without receiving approval, it would count as leave without notice. The lightest punishment he would face would be a loss of this honorable position, and the heaviest was the death penalty!

Tang Long wasn't afraid of death for his family, but he knew that if his family didn't have him and his job, they wouldn't be able to continue surviving at all.

Tang Long was the pillar of the family. If he fell, his family would be done for.

Thus, Tang Long had kept a firm grip on his impulse to abandon his station and go home these days. He'd thought of asking others to take the items back for him, but as a border Wyvern Knight, his status was low and he hadn't netted any profits in the ten or so li of

land that he patrolled.

Therefore, although this job looked flashy and glamorous, it was only a way to put food on the table and barely maintain the lives of the entire family. His position in society was still quite low.

As a result, he basically couldn't find anyone he could entrust to take the items back home for him.

It was either people disdained running an errand for him, or he didn't trust strangers.

But Jiang Chen's group all looked kind and affable. Moreover, they were generous and the honored guest of the fourth prince Ye Rong.

Tang Long had gathered up his courage in making this request. The reason that he had explained so enthusiastically to Jiang Chen's group before was partially to lay down the groundwork for this matter.

In addition, Tang Long was at least at ease because this group of people was quite generous. Although the items that he was entrusting to them were quite valuable to him, this wouldn't be the case in these people's eyes. The value of the items that he'd entrusted to them paled far beneath the bottle of qi replenishing pills, the Vast Ocean Pill.

The only thing he was worried about was that this group's

equipment was too flashy and was likely to get them into trouble when they passed through the territories of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace and the Qingyang Valley.

The items that he was entrusting had to be delivered within seven days. If delivered late, there was no point in sending them back at all.

All sorts of conflicting thoughts made Tang Long give repeated exhortations.

Jiang Chen patted Tang Long's shoulder, "Don't worry, I know how important these items are to your family. I promise not to tarry."

Tang Long was a bit touched. He was an ordinary practitioner and had always been looked down upon for his profession.

The fourth prince's honored guests were so easily approachable. Not only had they agreed to take things home for him, but had even clapped his shoulder with such familiarity.

"This young master is truly a kindhearted person. I, Old Tang, would like to inquire the young master's honored name."

"My surname is Jiang, I'm sure we will meet again someday. I'll treat you to drinks whenever you return to the capital." Jiang Chen laughed, waved his hand and the group left after saying their goodbyes.

According to the route that Tang Long had pointed out, their travel was indeed free and unobstructed. Add that to the Goldwing Swordbirds' speed, and they had flown out roughly one thousand li after two hours.

"Everyone decrease your speed. We should have already entered the boundaries of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace. According to Tang Long's words, we must be careful here to not trespass into their territory." Jiang Feng was experienced and steady.

He knew that his son Jiang Chen and his personal guards all had the temperament of youth. They would surely be enjoying themselves in this flight, and he was worried that they would be too high profile and attract trouble.

Jiang Chen actually didn't possess a flamboyant personality as he restrained his troops to fly within the laid out path. He still rather enjoyed himself on a slow flight.

"Young master Chen, this Skylaurel Kingdom is quite vast and there's such varied terrain." It was Qiao Baishi's first visit to the Skylaurel Kingdom.

All sorts of new sights and sounds had greatly expanded his worldview.

"As expected, the Skylaurel Kingdom has a well deserved reputation in the outside world." Even someone as proud as Gouyu couldn't help but sigh with appreciation.

When the Eastern Kingdom was compared with the Skylaurel Kingdom, it truly did pale far in comparison.

Jiang Chen smiled but didn't say much. In terms of breadth of vision, he hadn't been to many places in this life, but he'd observed the heavens and seen all sorts of realms and levels of existence in his previous life.

This Skylaurel Kingdom was just a bit bigger than the Eastern Kingdom with a bit more resources. At the heart of it all, it was just an ordinary kingdom as well.

The differences came from the disparity between a large kingdom and a small kingdom.

Fortunately, Qiao Baishi and the others held high statuses in the Eastern Kingdom, and they didn't lose their heads.

If Fatty Xuan was beside him, he surely would've shouted and yelled, wantonly venting his emotions.

However, Fatty Xuan hadn't followed Jiang Chen. It wasn't that he wasn't willing; he was actually more than willing to.

But at the end of the day, Fatty Xuang was the son of the Duke of Jinshan and the heir to Jinshan. His old man would never have let him go.

The current Duke of Jinshan was one of the four great dukes of the Eastern Kingdom, and Fatty Xuan the future heir to one of the four great dukes. If he left, that would throw things into great disarray.

Therefore, even if Fatty Xuan was unwilling to, he had to stay docilely and remain the heir.

Hubing Yue was also the same, but his aspirations were much more resolute than Fatty Xuan's. Although he greatly admired Jiang Chen, his personal ambitions had always been to rank first.

Of course, neither had Jiang Chen thought that he had to bring the two along. Ultimately, those two were just lingering remnants from the vulgar life of the previous Jiang Chen.

The group of people were flying leisurely along when Jiang Chen's ears suddenly twitched. The Ear of the Zephyr had caught the sounds of pulses of true qi in the distance. It was currents that originated from flight and was moving at an extremely rapid pace, headed in their direction.

Jiang Chen's lips moved as he commanded all the Goldwing Swordbirds to slow down and retreat midair to two sides.

He didn't want the reckless people flying helter skelter to ram and collide into him.

Although Jiang Chen wasn't afraid of taking care of matters, he

also didn't wish to deliberately create new troubles.

"The Dragonteeth Guard is handling a case. Everyone in front, move!"

A strong shout traveled to them from the fore as two light yellow streaks broke through the air. Two light yellow fowl were piercing through the clouds and shooting through the mists like sharp arrows with their wings outstretched, hurtling directly towards Jiang Chen's group.

Jiang Chen commanded the Goldwing Swordbirds to make way.

The two beams of light flashed by and those on the back of the light yellow fowl barely caught a fleeting glance of the people to the side. They were both slightly surprised to see Jiang Chen's group.

One of them went, "eh?" but didn't stop, flying hurriedly past and didn't linger at all.

The two beams of light had disappeared within a mountain of clouds and sea of mist in the time it took to exhale one breath of vapor, vanishing without a trace.

"The Dragonteeth Guard?" Jiang Chen faintly recalled that Ye Rong had once said that the Dragonteeth Guard were the royal guards of the Skylaurel Kingdom, similar to the Tiandu army of the Eastern Kingdom.

Except, the duties and authority of the Dragonteeth Guard were much greater than that of the Tiandu army.

At least, within the Eastern Kingdom, the Tiandu army rarely left the capital to pursue a case, whereas the Dragonteeth Guard seemed to spread throughout the entire nation.

Whenever they went, the local authorities had to surrender certain power to them.

The Dragonteeth Guard represented the royal family of the Skylaurel Kingdom. To voice a blunt truth, they were answerable only to the king of Skylaurel Kingdom.

For all others, no matter if they were a mighty duke of the Skylaurel Kingdom, they all had to weigh the consequences before offending the Dragonteeth Guard.

“This Dragonteeth Guard is quite strong.” Gouyu also clucked her tongue privately. “Can it be that even the ordinary Dragonteeth Guard is equipped with flying spirit beasts within the Skylaurel Kingdom?”

There were a few traces of surprise within Princess Gouyu’s tone.

Even the royal family of the Eastern Kingdom didn’t possess flying spirit beasts. It wasn’t that the Eastern Kingdom didn’t have these sorts of spirit beasts, but that no one within the Eastern

Kingdom had the ability to tame them.

Jiang Chen was an anomaly within the Eastern Kingdom. Gouyu didn't know how Jiang Chen did it either. This was his personal secret and Gouyu didn't ask about it.

"Forget it, let's go." Although Jiang Chen was a bit surprised, he didn't pay too much attention to it.

The group set off on their way again, but hadn't been traveling for fifteen minutes when another wave of true qi pulses came from the front. This time's wave carried more than twice the power of the previous wave.

Seven or eight streams of light coalesced into a ball of bright haze and came tearing through the air.

Holding to their principle of not getting into trouble, Jiang Chen and the group gave way again, thinking that this group of people would also swiftly fly by.

However, they hadn't thought that the seven or eight beams of light would suddenly halt.

There were eight grimacing, green wyverns that flexed their claws and flashed their fangs, appearing extremely ferocious. They made gruesome faces at the Goldwing Swordbirds, as though provoking them.

These wyverns seemed to be of higher quality than the one Tang Long rode.

“Eh? What are they riding?” A young man on the back of a wyvern asked when he saw the Goldwing Swordbirds that Jiang Chen’s group was riding.

Jiang Chen, Gouyu, and the others glanced at each other, full of resignation. It truly seemed that whatever they didn’t wish to meet would come knocking at their doorstep.

There were eight people in total in this group, and they all wore red robes with blue lines embroidered on the outside.

They were obviously people from the Azure Heaven Northern Palace, and the people that Tang Long had reminded them again and again to not trifle with.

Jiang Chen and his group were already keeping a low profile and giving way whenever they saw someone, trying very hard not to be embroiled in trouble. But when these eight people stopped, Jiang Chen knew that this would likely be truly unavoidable.

“All of you look unfamiliar. Where are you from and where are you going?” A tall, bulky, twenty year old young man within the group asked.

This person looked to be the leader of this crew. Judging from his style, he seemed to be used to lording over everyone with others

looking up at him, and used to interrogating other people.

"The capital." Jiang Chen responded with these two words.

"No shit. My senior brother is asking where you come from."

Jiang Chen flicked a glance at the crowd. "Is that important?"

"What's with your bullshit? Answer when someone asks you a question!" Another bulky man with slanted eyes yelled out loudly.

Gouyu's beautiful face flickered slightly. Her personality wouldn't allow others to heckle her to their hearts' content. Even if the Azure Blue Northern Palace were people they shouldn't offend, how could she be frightened with the fiery character that she had cultivated over twenty years?

She was about to erupt when Jiang Chen waved his hand and stopped her.

"Everyone, we're all passersby traveling past each other on the road. The great road travels to the heavens and everyone travels on their respective sides. Questions will delay the journey. Why don't we take our leave here?"

Jiang Chen didn't want to cause trouble, but he wouldn't continue to humble himself because of this mindset or even give up the bottom line of being a person.

“Eh? This group of idiots doesn’t look citizens of our Skylaurel Kingdom!”

“Could they be spies from another country? Judging from their steeds, our Skylaurel Kingdom doesn’t have these. Who cares, let’s arrest them and then interrogate them closely.”

“I say, let’s chase after those two frauds instead. Those two guys dared forge the identities of the Dragonteeth Guard and were audacious to the extreme. The most damnable thing was that they dared cheat us out of two of our Yellow Feathered Divine Eagles.”

Not everyone in the Azure Heaven Northern Palace liked to create trouble. This person was of the opinion that their business was more important than picking a fight with passersby.

Chapter 132: It's So Hard To Keep A Low Profile

The opinions of this group clearly conflicted and everyone gazes finally rested on the tall, stocky youth with a high nose bridge.

This person was obviously the leader.

"Senior brother Kuang, what do you say? Do we arrest this group of rampantly cocky people?"

"Senior brother Kuang, according to what this little brother thinks, those two frauds have long since made their escape. It will be hard to find them amidst the mountain of clouds and sea of mist."

"Yes, this group of people swaggered and strutted as they flew over our heads, and the presence of their steeds will surely cover the presence of those two frauds. How then,will we chase after them?"

"Indeed, if we can't catch those two frauds at the end of the day, it'll largely have to do with this bunch of bastards. If it wasn't for them passing by and washing away the frauds' presence, it wouldn't have made our search so difficult!"

The band of people actually transferred their anger onto Jiang Chen's group, completely pushing off their own incompetencies in the search operation onto the latter's head.

The tall and stalwart senior brother Kuang smiled amusedly, sizing up Jiang Chen's group with an unfriendly gaze, as if a butcher measuring sheep for slaughter.

"You there, who are you? I'll give you one last chance. If you don't answer immediately, then don't blame us of the Azure Blue Northern Palace for not giving you face." Senior brother Kuang finally opened his mouth.

He'd actually wanted to take action long before this, but he'd had to find an acceptable reason for taking action.

Jiang Chen flicked a diffident glance at this senior brother Kuang and laughed coldly, completely indifferent as he waved his hand. "Let's go."

"You want to leave?" Senior brother Kuang was incensed upon seeing Jiang Chen disregard him. "You're in Palace territory, and you want to leave without giving me a full report of who you are?"

Jiang Chen's body suddenly halted as he shot a piercingly cold look at senior brother Kuang. "Just who the hell are you? Are you part of the Dragonteeth Guard? Or are you perhaps a royal expert? What right do you have to interrogate me?"

"Ho, brat, you're quite cocky?"

"Senior brother Kuang, don't continue on blathering with this

kid, let's capture him first. No one dares act so wildly in the territory of our Azure Heaven Northern Palace."

"Yes, he needs to die just because of his attitude!"

Senior brother Kuang received support from his comrades and felt even more emboldened. "Brothers, you are right. This band of people has unknown origins and are likely the accomplices of those two frauds. Take them!"

Within this group, each person was a true qi master, and although they could not be counted amongst the most elite existence in the Azure Heaven Northern Palace, they still had it in the bag when bullying outsiders within their territory.

Besides, there was the mammoth Azure Heaven Northern Palace backing them up.

Jiang Chen didn't want to start a fight in someone else's territory either and he transmitted his voice to Gouyu, "You and my father lead the way and take the group away first. I'll hold off these people and follow you shortly."

Princess Gouyu swept her gaze across these people and displayed a contemptuous cold smile in her eyes. Even without Jiang Chen, she, Gouyu, wouldn't have been afraid of these people.

Since Jiang Chen was going to restrain these people, that was great as well.

They were ultimately still at a disadvantage when they picked fights in other people's territory. Gouyu understood this and waved her hand, silently exchanging an understanding with Jiang Feng. They led the group and flew away swiftly without another word.

"Eh? You really want to leave?"

"Don't leave, halt!"

Jiang Chen blocked the way by himself as he raised the Da Yu bow he was holding. He did not touch the arrows that came as a set with the Da Yu bow and instead, took out three ordinary arrows.

"What's the rush? I haven't left yet. Since you want to play, I'll play with you." Jiang Chen's aura suddenly flared and strong vast waves of true qi surged forth into great true qi torrents, embroiling the nearby clouds around the mountains and sea of mist. It appeared truly impressive and gave off the feeling that one man could hold out against ten thousand.

That bow was not one to be underestimated. With this bow in hand, those Azure Heaven Northern Palace disciples who wanted to rush over and stop the group all halted in their tracks.

They weren't fools. They were all true qi masters and had seen many battle setups.

It was apparent from just one move whether one had true skill.

When the aura of Jiang Chen and his bow was released, the presence was that of swallowing the heavens and taking the earth. This kind of aura was not empty bluster, but one that had been honed again and again through blood-soaked battles.

It was the aura of someone who'd once killed a spirit dao practitioner!

None of them doubted that if they brashly rushed over, they'd become ghosts beneath the other's arrows!

Senior brother Kuang stared coldly at Jiang Chen. He hadn't anticipated either that such an expert would be concealed amidst this unassuming group of people.

'You're also a true qi master!" Senior brother Kuang's tone was awe-inspiring. "You dare draw your weapon first within my Palace's territory. Very good, you're dead meat!"

"If I recall correctly, your Azure Heaven Northern Palace is merely one of the Precious Tree Sect's ritual sites in the Skylaurel Kingdom. But it sounds like you've more rules than the Precious Tree Sect?"

Jiang Chen smiled coldly, how would he not know the vain personality of someone like senior brother Kuang?

People like this had a bit of strength but were absolutely not amongst the top within the sect. Nevertheless, they liked to seek out the limelight and cause trouble, swaggering about with borrowed influence from the sect's name.

Jiang Chen disdained this type of people. They'd initially been chasing after two enemies, but when they suddenly saw others along the way, they could actually abandon their mission and plan to rob someone else halfway through.

To put it nicely, these people were sect disciples. To put it in a not so nice manner, they were buffoons, bandits, and evil scoundrels. Even if you clearly and thoroughly answered all their questions, they would still find some excuse to create trouble for you.

Jiang Chen couldn't be bothered to waste empty blather with him as he locked on with his Da Yu bow. He would shoot whoever dared to venture a step forward.

Even if it was Azure Heaven Northern Palace territory, Jiang Chen couldn't be confined by so many reservations. He'd never been someone who meekly accepted insults and absolutely couldn't become someone who placed himself at the mercy of others.

Since the thought of highway robbery had occurred to the other party, they naturally would've had the urge to kill. Killing and looting were always connected to each other.

To only rob and not kill, Jiang Chen didn't think the people of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace were that benevolent.

"Whoever crosses this line, dies!" A hint of a faint smile spilled out from Jiang Chen's lips.

This wasn't an empty boast. Out of this group of people, the most powerful was senior brother Kuang. Although this senior brother Kuang was strong, he was only a bit stronger than Long Yinye and absolutely not on par with Long Yi.

Jiang Chen had been able to kill Long Yi previously.

Now that his training had already advanced two levels and joined the ranks of eleven meridians true qi masters, leveraging that to the advantage provided by the Da Yu bow, there was no difference between killing someone of his own level and slaughtering chickens.

Senior brother Kuang stared intently at Jiang Chen with the eyes of a hungry wolf. He didn't suspect Jiang Chen's words. He could also sniff out the feeling of danger from Jiang Chen.

Although senior brother Kuang had committed a considerable amount of murder and banditry, he truly didn't dare take the risk today.

If he did run the risk and charge in, what welcomed him would very possibly be a fatal arrow.

Senior brother Kuang had experienced multiple battles and exchanged blows with many true qi masters, winning and losing his fair share. He had accumulated innumerable real battle experiences over the many years.

But he had never once met an opponent before whom he dared not make the slightest move against.

The instinct of a wolf caused him to clearly understand that if he rushed past that line, his opponent would surely shoot him to death!

Senior brother Kuang threw a glance at his comrade. The comrade understood and didn't charge past the line, starting a descent instead and prepared to call for reinforcement on the ground.

"Take another step and die!"

Jiang Chen's arrowhead locked onto that descending disciple.

Senior brother Kuang called out raspily, "Brat, looks like you want to thoroughly offend our Azure Heaven Northern Palace."

"Cut the blather! Stay there obediently and don't move. The tables have turned, whoever moves, dies!" How could Jiang Chen not know what plans they were cooking up?

They couldn’t win in a fight here and couldn’t split off in hot pursuit to rob the others. Thus they wanted to call in reinforcements instead.

Although these folks looked fierce, but each of them knew their place better than anyone else when it came to moments of life or death. They all froze carefully, deathly afraid that they would be shot and killed if they moved.

This impasse continued for roughly fifteen minutes before Jiang Chen laughed heartily and estimated that Gouyu and the others should be quite a distance away.

This group of people wouldn’t be able to catch them even if they tried.

He flicked a glance at senior brother Kuang that contained a few hints of mockery, “Well, aren’t you being nicely behaved. I don’t want to kill anyone, and you don’t want to go rushing to your deaths either, alright?”

Jiang Chen urged the Goldwing Swordbird onwards when he’d finished speaking. He turned into a stream of golden colored light, heading in the direction that Gouyu and the others had taken.

Senior brother Kuang and the eight total people in the party heaved a long sigh after this. That senior brother Kuang’s expression was dark and ruthless, “Number five, go notify senior brother Yi. The rest of you, follow me and chase after them!”

“Alright!” One of them descended below the cloud layer and flew off to notify his companions.

Senior brother Kuang grit his teeth. “Not matter where this fellow is from and who he is, the humiliation of today won’t be forgiven just like this.”

“Yes, he can’t be left off the hook this easily.”

“Their steeds seem to be of even higher quality than our green wyverns. The golden colored feathers look as sharp as the blade of a sword and exuded such glow. Tsk tsk, not bad at all.”

“And there’s so many of them. If we can seize them, even one of those creatures would fetch a whopping price. Our Skylaurel Kingdom doesn’t have those beasts, a thing is valued if it is rare!”

“Cut your blather, after them!” Senior brother Kuang spurred on his green wyvern and grit his teeth as he rushed to the very front.

“Heh heh, it looks like you guys didn’t give up after all!”

A cold laugh suddenly traveled from the clouds.

A frightening sound broke through the air at almost the exact same time, piercing through the clouds and penetrated the mist, turning into a terrifying curve and shooting straight for senior brother Kuang’s head.

This arrow came exceptionally suddenly and swiftly, practically a shooting star.

Senior brother Kuang didn't even have time to react in his panic.

Bam!

The arrow connected unerringly with his head!

"Ah!" Senior brother Kuang gave a ghastly cry, but he immediately discovered that his head hadn't gone flying. The thing that had flown off his head was the simple helm on his head.

"This arrow was a warning, if you keep chasing me, the next arrow will definitely kill you!" Jiang Chen snorted coldly.

If it hadn't been for the fact that he'd just entered the Skylaurel Kingdom for the first time and didn't wish to randomly kill people, with senior brother Kuang's actions, Jiang Chen would've killed him three or five times over by now!

Senior brother Kuang was frightened out of his wits as he ran his hand over his head again and again, confirming that his head hadn't moved house. He finally exhaled a long sigh as cold sweat poured out on his head, neck, and back.

This arrow had been too fast and too fierce; it had been

impossible to guard against.

If the other hadn't restrained himself a bit, it would likely be a foregone conclusion that his head would've long been pierced and made into a meat paste. How would he still be alive?

"Senior brother Kuang, do we still chase after him?"

Senior brother Kuang's gaze was ferocious as the viciousness in his bones was utterly aroused. He clamped down on his teeth and said, "Let's head down first and wait for senior brother Yi so we can pursue this person together! If we don't kill him, I will never be able to stomach this insult!"

Chapter 133: Battling A Half Step Spirit Dao Realm

In terms of speed, the lines of the feathered wings of the Goldwing Swordbirds were quite perfect. They were basically uncontested in speed when bursting through short distances.

In terms of stamina, however, the Goldwing Swordbird's body wasn't big and the construction of their feathered wings determined that their stamina wouldn't hold out for long distance flight.

Jiang Chen spurred on the Goldwing Swordbirds and flew at max speed for half an hour before catching up to Gouyu and the others. The entire crew was excited to see Jiang Chen return safely.

"We need to pick up our speed and leave the Azure Heaven Northern Palace territory as fast as possible. That band of people are all desperados that have been spoiled by the Palace and they won't be willing to let us off that easily."

Jiang Chen was also quite resigned. Many things could not be done according to his will when he was in someone else's territory.

If anyone had dared to block the way and attempt to rob him within the Eastern Kingdom, Jiang Chen would've long since shot him dead with one arrow.

Of course, it wasn't that Jiang Chen was afraid of the Palace, but

that he'd considered the fact that the entire group had just arrived and he didn't wish to cause trouble and embroil others.

However, Jiang Chen hadn't thought that even though he'd exercised such forbearance and self restraint it still hadn't been enough to make senior brother Kuang aware of the overwhelming odds against him. When the latter had seen others from his camp, he'd immediately embellished with highly colorful details and won over many senior brothers who were much stronger than him. He'd gathered a hundred or so of these compatriots and split them up into four or five different teams, starting the search for Jiang Chen's group in the manner of casting a net.

Within the northwestern territory of the Skylaurel Kingdom, the Azure Heaven Northern Palace held absolute dominion.

Upon hearing that their junior had been bullied by a bunch of strangers, the senior brothers that were on good terms with senior brother Kuang were all greatly infuriated.

When they further heard that the crowd of strangers had brought a large number of steeds with them and that they all looked superior to the green wyverns, those senior brothers with middling relations with senior brother Kuang also joined in on the search teams.

"Let's take advantage of this rare opportunity!"

"Let's go out and grab our share!"

The disciples of the Azure Blue Northern Palace held quite an advantage within their area of influence; they could fly anywhere they wished to shorten the travel.

For them, there were no restrictions within the Palace territory. They didn't need to ask for permission whenever they passed through any government offices or any dukedoms. They could come and go as they wished.

In this regard, a search and capture operation naturally held a great advantage.

As for Jiang Chen's group, they naturally couldn't fly around randomly given that it was their first visit to a foreign land. They had to follow the flight path.

In this regard, their flight path was long since mapped out by the others.

A big net that came from all quarters closed tighter and tighter around them.

After roughly two hours, Jiang Chen's party was more than a thousand li away from the place of conflict. They would begin to slowly leave the Palace's territory after another four to five hundred li.

They wouldn't have to worry about trouble much as long as they left the the Palace's sphere of influence.

As domineering as the Palace was, they wouldn't cross their own borders on a mere manhunt. Even if they acted recklessly and cared for nobody, they wouldn't be able to cross into other territories to kill as wilfully as they could in their own territory.

Jiang Chen felt a baffling sense of pressure in his heart the longer they flew.

His "Boulder's Heart" had already been trained to the peak of the third level by now, and it wasn't too far off from the fourth realm.

This was to say, his instincts were much greater than they were in the trials of the Boundless Catacoimbs.

"Everyone be careful, the Azure Heaven Northern Palace will surely not have given up. I suspect that they are still pursuing us. Everyone, be on your guard."

"Come if they dare, who's afraid of them!" Princess Gouyu fondled the handle of her sword as a proud curve appeared her sexy lips.

Jiang Chen looked at his eight personal guards and then looked to his father's side.

On this trip, their band of twenty or two they had only brought twenty Goldwing Swordbirds with them. The rest of the Goldwing Swordbirds had been situated in desolate areas and temporarily

hadn’t followed them.

This was also a strategy that Jiang Chen had created. After all, the might and presence of several hundred, almost a thousand Goldwing Swordbirds crossing the borders would be overly frightening.

They would definitely become a target if they held such a high profile.

Events proved that Jiang Chen’s concerns had been right. Forget about almost a thousand Goldwing Swordbirds, their band had been targeted by others when each person rode a Goldwing Swordbird.

“Damnit, is there no end with this Azure Heaven Northern Palace?” Jiang Chen’s Ear of the Zephyr had already caught traces of the enemy’s movement.

“Everyone on guard and continue on our way. Maintain battle formation,” ordered Jiang Chen.

The Jiang Chen of now wasn’t the same person above the Second Crossing and the person who’d ate quite a defeat at the hands of a spirit dao practitioner. He had been training the Goldwing Swordbirds all these months in the Eight Trigrams Assimilation Formation.

The formation could now be broken apart into many smaller

formations and could even be reassembled into mid-sized formations. Large numbers of Goldwing Swordbirds could also be formed into big formations.

Without a doubt, the individual fighting strength of his eight personal guards were the lowest of those by Jiang Chen's side right now. Apart from Xue Tong, they were all practitioners of eight meridians true qi. His potential was a bit greater, and he'd already entered nine meridians true qi.

However, the eight of them also had an advantage, and that was familiarity with the formation. After the exposure of several months, their mastery over this formation had already allowed them to grasp seventy to eighty percent of the formation.

Now, combined with the battle strength of the Goldwing Swordbirds, eight people riding on their eight Swordbirds could at least face more than ten true qi masters without being at a disadvantage.

If their training broke through to the true qi master realm, then they'd even be able to exchange a few passes with a spirit dao practitioner.

Jiang Feng's batch of personal guards with Jiang Ying at the head were stronger overall, particularly as Jiang Ying had even entered the ranks of true qi masters.

Of course, the one with the strongest fighting ability within their group was still Jiang Chen.

Apart from Jiang Chen, Princess Gouyu and his father Jiang Feng would be the next strongest.

“Gouyu, you’re in charge of leading the eight personal guards and I’ll take care of my father’s side. Closely defend the left and right flanks, and don’t let them scatter our front line.” Jiang Chen reminded her.

Gouyu lifted her exquisite chin as her neck, pink as jade, also lifted. “Don’t worry, I won’t be a burden to you!”

The group proceeded at an even pace whilst maintaining the formation. Although they knew full well that pursuit was coming, they still didn’t fly randomly or change their flight path.

They hadn’t even resolved the troubles at hand. If they blundered into another forbidden zone and caused even more trouble, that would only serve to bring on more headaches.

“Senior brother Yi, do you see them? They’re in front!” Senior brother Kuang’s tone grew quite agitated when he discovered Jiang Chen’s group.

This time, senior brother Kuang’s posturing was noticeably lower as he accompanied another youth. This youth’s expression was cold, and his lean face appeared quite frosty. There was a scar from a knife beneath the corner of his eye, one that resembled a crawling worm, giving this youth a few more hints of viciousness.

This person was the person that senior brother Kuang wished to kiss up to – senior brother Yi.

“Go and stop them!” This senior brother Yi’s voice was as cold as a blade’s.

“Let’s go!”

A band of more than ten spurred on the green wyverns and charged down at great speed.

“Brat, still want to escape?” Senior brother Kuang yelled out loudly.

“You want to die?” Jiang Chen had actually discovered this group of behind them, and saw that this Kuang surnamed fellow still hadn’t changed his mind and was actually rushing out in front.

He no longer hesitated and shot an arrow back as he turned his head.

This arrow was incredibly sudden and exceptionally fast. Senior brother Kuang was rushing forward quite quickly, but senior brother Yi was even faster. One couldn’t even see how he made a move, when suddenly a sudden streak of silver white light furled into existence and a silver chain caught the arrow when it was ten meters away from senior brother Kuang.

The person manipulating the chain was the scar-faced senior brother Yi.

This person laughed coldly, “What kind of skill do you have in ambushing with a hidden arrow?”

The silver chain flung out with a shake of his arm and the arrow reflected back towards Jiang Chen, turning into a current of air.

Jiang Chen was also slightly surprised to see this person make a move.

“Is this person a spirit dao practitioner?”

This strength had noticeably exceeded the level of a true qi master. But it seemed to be missing something to be labeled the spirit realm.

Jiang Chen had personally witnessed the power of a spirit dao practitioner. Even the weaker Xu Zhen had had far great battle capabilities than this person in front of him.

If he had to measure this person’s strength, then he’d be roughly between the peak of the true qi realm and spirit dao.

Jiang Chen still didn’t dare underestimate this person, however. It was a good thing that the four times refined spirit weapon, the Da Yu bow, was in his hand. He waved the longbow in his hand and brushed away the reflected arrow.

“This will be a bit tricky!” Jiang Chen thought privately.

“Senior brother Yi, thank you for your helping hand!” That senior brother Kuang had become conceited with satisfaction and had almost repeated his prior mistakes. If senior brother Yi hadn’t made a move with this arrow, it would’ve boded more ill than well for him.

“Don’t talk nonsense. I’ll restrain this person. You handle the others.”

Senior brother Yi had locked onto Jiang Chen from a far distance aways.

The two practitioners stared at each other through the air, the auras locked onto each other. They were at an impasse for the moment. No one seemed to want to make the first move, as if whoever made the first move would lose the initiative.

“Your strength is not that bad. It’s a pity that you’re still in the true qi realm and not my opponent!” The voice of senior brother Yi was as sharp as metal, piercing and irritating.

“As if you’re a spirit dao practitioner.” Jiang Chen was contemptuous.

“Even though I’m not a true spirit dao practitioner, I still have half a step in the spirit dao realm. It’s enough to crush someone

like you, who is merely at the peak of the true qi realm!”

Senior brother Yi’s aura abruptly rose after he finished speaking.

His entire being was like a tempest, full of the mysteries of power.

“Three moves!” Senior brother Yi said coolly. “I will dispose of you within three moves!”

The wind rose and the clouds moved.

The air current in the void next to senior brother Yi suddenly pulsed with no forewarning whatsoever. The currents of air seemed to form a rhythm that moved to the same tempo.

This wasn’t true qi and was full of more mysteries than true qi.

“Chain of cloud and wind, lock on!”

Senior brother Yi seemed to turn into a magician when a silver white chain suddenly crawled out of the air around him. It abruptly started spiraling towards Jiang Chen according to the rhythm of the air currents.

“A spirit qi air current!”

Jiang Chen was greatly surprised. This senior brother Yi wasn't boasting emptily when he called himself a "half step in the spirit dao realm". Although his control over spirit power wasn't that practiced, but this truly was an air current formed from spirit qi.

Accompanied by the attacks of the chain, the air around Jiang Chen was immediately sealed off in the span of a moment!

Jiang Chen's gaze was deep as he'd grasped the nameless saber in his hand at the very moment that senior brother Yi had started his attack. Using the incantation of the blade as a conduit, vast waves of true qi surged through like the tidewaters.

The Goldwing Swordbird beneath him was Jiang Chen's old partner by now. It knew that Jiang Chen was going to make a move and so matched the rhythm of his true qi, matching its strength to a perfect peak.

"The vast ocean rages and the great billows surge... cleave!"

The Goldwing Swordbird shot to the forefront as a golden colored light drew out a beautiful curve and the peerless glint of a blade shot out within that cleave.

It was the third form of the Vast Ocean Current Splitter – Wave Surge!

Chapter 134: A Disadvantaged Half Step Spirit Dao Practitioner

Jiang Chen, eleven meridians true qi master.

Senior brother Yi, half step spirit realm.

Logically speaking, the two weren't on the same level at all with regards to the differences in their actual strength.

However, as this stunning Wave Surge was cleaved out, the gleam of the blade activated by the majestic true qi was exquisite from its peak down to its most minute details as it cleaved through the empty air.

The strong true qi current immediately scattered the currents within the empty air.

The six chains formed by the air currents were dispersed as those air currents scattered chaotically.

The sound of metal clashing against metal rang piercingly through the air.

It was a draw after one move!

"Mm?" Senior brother Yi was a bit surprised. "The true qi realm can actually disturb the currents of my spirit power and break the

restraints of my chains of wind and cloud?”

Jiang Chen had forced back the other’s attack with a single flourish of his blade and compelled the Goldwing Swordbird to move swiftly backward when the other was still dumbfounded.

Golden light broke through the air as Jiang Chen’s Da Yu bow was already in his hand.

“Die!”

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!

Three arrows shot mercilessly in quick succession towards the Palace disciples.

The Palace disciples had been besieging Jiang Feng and the others, and thus had not predicted this shift in battle situation They hadn’t thought that Jiang Chen could still spare effort in attacking them when he was being suppressed by senior brother Yi.

The arrows had arrived at their target as soon as their sounds had broken through the air.

Three cries of agony sounded at almost the same time from the disciples when the three arrows shot through their throats.

Of course, Jiang Chen had only used ordinary arrows on these ordinary true qi practitioners. They weren't worthy of the arrows that came as a set with the Da Yu bow.

Senior brother Yi had lost his concentration, allowing Jiang Chen to strike during the window of opportunity and now three of his peers were dead.

Although senior brother Yi didn't care that much about the life and death of his peers, but the fact that his opponent had killed his peers right in front of him was undoubtedly a slap in his face.

Jiang Chen snorted coldly as he wielded the nameless saber, blocking the way in midair and keeping his distance from the ring of battle in front.

Senior brother Yi's eyes glinted with a violent light as he snarled viciously, "That stroke was not too bad. However, if you think you can fight against a spirit dao practitioner by relying on your training in the true qi realm, you are incredibly wrong."

"Hah. As if I haven't seen a spirit dao practitioner before." Jiang Chen smiled coldly.

Not only had he seen a spirit dao practitioner before, but he'd also exchanged blows with one. Although this senior brother Yi was a half step in the spirit realm, in terms of power, he was far weaker than even Xu Zhen. How dared he sound his own trumpet in front of Jiang Chen?

The air currents once again trembled in movement around senior brother Yi as an enormous tempest suddenly swirled into being. An azure whirlwind coalesced into a current as thick as a bucket.

Senior brother Yi's chains churned continuously within this whirlwind and actually condensed into an air current in the shape of a black dragon. It rushed towards Jiang Chen like an enormous drill.

"Impressive in appearance only!"

Jiang Chen had already thoroughly sussed out senior brother Yi with the latter's first attack. Jiang Chen didn't even bother using the nameless saber this time.

He abruptly spurred the Goldwing Swordbird onwards, shooting up into the sky.

His two hands curled into fists as one was like the moon and the other held up the sun.

"Divine Aeons Fist, Yin Yang Obliteration!"

Two currents of true qi were as if the moon and sun had fused together. They alternately combined and separated, condensing into a frightening trail behind a punch that crashed towards the other's air current!

The "Divine Aeons Fist" was a boxing method that manipulated

yin and yang qi. With Jiang Chen's current strength, he'd only understood up to the peak of four cycles of wilting and blooming.

However, the mysteries of four cycles of wilting and blooming were equivalent to the layered effect of three levels of true qi. Adding that to the mysteries of the yin and yang, the combined strength of these two punches were equal to ten times the effect of layered true qi.

The punch embodied an imposing aura and the cycle of blooming and wilting. The alternation of the four seasons could be experienced within it.

Bam! The punch's aura crashed into the air current and dispersed it with a roar. Following that, the mighty aura of the punch was also shattered to bits as it returned to the void.

The first collision had also ended in a draw.

"What?" Senior brother Yi found this hard to believe. After all, he was an expert who'd cleaved open his spirit ocean. With his employment of spirit power in his blow, it had already been a blow at the peak of a half step spirit realm.

If it was any other true qi practitioner, he would've long since been swallowed by the attack and churned to meat scraps.

Just where did this youth hail from to be able to go head to head with him twice when he was a half step into the spirit realm!

This had surpassed the bounds of reason and violated the rules of martial dao!

“Heh heh, it looks like at the end of the day, the so-called half step spirit realm is still not being in the spirit realm!” Jiang Chen’s tone held a few hints of mockery.

His hand flexed as he once again grasped the Da Yu bow. “I’ve already taken two of your moves, now you take one of mine!”

The Da Yu bow, a four times refined spirit weapon.

Jiang Chen had been displaying only a small part of his talent just now when he shot at those three with ordinary arrows.

But now, Jiang Chen was well aware that no matter how strong ordinary arrows were, they were not enough to pose a threat to this scar faced youth.

Then, let him taste the true might of the Da Yu bow!

Resolute killing intent flashed through Jiang Chen’s stony face. He had become truly angry. This Azure Heaven Northern Palace had challenged his bottom line again and again!

Even if representatives of the Palace came looking for him tomorrow after he killed these people, Jiang Chen would still

absolutely not regret his current decision.

One who walked the path of martial could endure, but could not continue to endure forever.

When one reached the end of one's forbearance, there was no more need to put up with it anymore.

Enduring something too long could possibly result in internal demons, and that would be the worst outcome of all.

"Mm? A spirit weapon?" Senior brother Yi finally had an opportunity to thoroughly observe the Da Yu bow in Jiang Chen's hand. Once the Da Yu bow was combined with the accompanying arrows, the solemn killing force it formed came surging towards him.

"Indeed, a spirit weapon!"

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "You call yourself a half step into the spirit realm, if I don't kill you with at least a spirit weapon, you likely won't be able to die in peace!"

Waves of shock broiled in senior brother Yi's heart. The chains he were using was but a quasi spirit weapon.

Only true spirit dao practitioners were worthy of using true spirit weapons.

Those who could use spirit weapons were either noble sons who were also disciples of enormous power and influence, or sect disciples with astounding potential.

Although senior brother Yi was a disciple of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace, the Palace was only a secular place for the Precious Tree Sect to perform its rites.

To put things bluntly, it was still unknown if he could pass the Precious Tree Sect's tests and become a true disciple of the Sect.

To him, spirit weapons were a luxurious dream.

One had to know that this could only happen in the Skylaurel Kingdom. If Jiang Chen had revealed the spirit weapon in the Eastern Kingdom, it was likely that most practitioners wouldn't even recognize it.

Spirit weapons were a rare commodity. Jiang Chen had only seen Long Juxue and Long Yinye use spirit weapons once in the Eastern Kingdom.

But those spirit weapons were clearly the most ordinary of spirit weapons. It must've been something that Master Shuiyue had left in the Long family for the two to protect themselves with.

Apart from that, even Princess Gouyu of royal descent hadn't had a spirit weapon.

Although senior brother Yi was a disciple of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace and counted amongst the more exemplary of them, he was still a bit of a ways off from using a spirit weapon.

“Kill him and seize the spirit weapon!” A surge of greed burned furiously within senior brother Yi like a blazing flame.

His eyes shone with bloodthirsty light as senior brother Yi sought to strike first to gain the initiative.

The wyvern pressed forward urgently as strong spirit power formed a wall of air, descending straight onto Jiang Chen.

This time, it looked like senior brother Yi was intending on using his spirit power to crush Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen smirked coldly. This scar faced youth wanted to use brute force to crush him?

The Goldwing Swordbird retreated suddenly and withdrew to a suitable distance away from the scar faced youth’s pouncing attack.

The Da Yu bow bloomed with stunning splendor, becoming even more resplendent than the stars in the sky.

An arrow with the unique presence of the Da Yu bow shot

towards the scar faced youth in an arc of indescribable beauty.

A beam of cold light drew out a long trail like a burning meteorite.

What happened next was unthinkable. The scar faced youth knew full well that this strong arrow was aimed straight at him, but he didn't retreat. Instead, he came at it with increased speed.

Quicker than words could tell... pfft!

The might of a four times refined spirit weapon was frighteningly powerful. It had transformed into a ball of wind as it shot into the wyvern's thick neck, spraying forth a rain of blood.

At this moment, the scar faced youth suddenly leapt up and glided through the air. With a flip of his body, he leveraged the strength of the wyvern and pounced towards Jiang Chen.

At the same moment, the six chains in his hand churned down towards Jiang Chen as though they were dragons emerging from the sea.

The scar faced youth had actually sacrificed the life of his steed to decrease the distance between him and Jiang Chen. He wanted to seize the Da Yu bow with his bare hands.

"Humph. Small trifling tricks!"

Jiang Chen seemed to have seen through the other's intention as the second arrow concealed behind the first shot out with almost no hesitation. Whoosh!

The second arrow flew directly and boldly towards the scar faced youth.

"What? Another arrow?" The scar faced youth was hugely surprised.

He was only a half step into the spirit realm and wasn't able to support himself in flight through the sky at all. He could only maintain this gliding posture for the span of one breath.

The chains in his hand shook as they wanted to curl around the Da Yu bow in Jiang Chen's hand and yank it away!

However, the speed of Jiang Chen's arrow far exceeded what he had imagined. In the moment his chains unfurled, the second arrow had already come gunning for him.

Senior brother Yi was faced with two decisions in that moment.

Either save himself, or take the hit!

He was still that tiny bit short. Senior brother Yi's very gums itched with his hate. He twisted his body, landing on the corpse of

the wyvern below him and pushed off it to descend gently towards the ground.

He also knew that he didn't have the ability to fly in this battle in the skies. If he didn't land by the time he had used up this breath, he'd fall to his death!

One had to admit, this fellow was exceedingly cruel. He had sacrificed his steed just like that and even stepped on it after it was dead.

"Tsk tsk. Yi Qiansui, what are you doing? You seem quite beat up huh!"

At this moment, a mocking and jeering voice traveled lazily through the air.

Jiang Chen's face changed as he no longer paused, he spun around and attacked the back of the group with the nameless saber in his hand.

The light from the blade poured forth, bringing with it the most terrifying of Jiang Chen's true qi.

Pssht, pssht!

Four or five people were chopped in half by the aura of Jiang Chen's stroke as though he was chopping up vegetables. Their heads separated from their bodies as they plunged down from the

air.

“Head south, don’t stop, hurry and leave! I’ll stay behind!” Jiang Chen’s voice was a bit anxious because his Ear of the Zephyr had captured the endless sound of enemy footsteps. There were actually four or five bands seeking to surround them on all sides!

Chapter 135: Facing Off Against Four Practitioners Half A Step Into The Spirit Dao Realm Alone

He'd told his companions to head south because the group of people to the south had a relatively weaker aura, and didn't have a fierce practitioner half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm, like senior brother Yi, holding down the fort.

Heading south was possibly their only chance of life.

As for what awaited them to the south — whether or not they would possibly barge into other forbidden areas — Jiang Chen couldn't pay heed to at this moment.

It was a good thing that those in his party were well trained. No one hesitated after hearing his words, and they all steered towards the south.

Jiang Chen operated his Ear of the Zephyr to its maximum, listening in all directions. The information of all aspects continuously gathered in his mind.

There were five groups of people in total, including senior brother Yi's group.

There were people coming from the east and west. There were also people coming from the northeast and the northwest.

The last group was coming from the south, and would run into Gouyu and the others very quickly.

Of the five groups, the one to the south was the weakest. The strongest of their individuals, was at most on par with Gouyu, and wasn't someone to fear.

Jiang Chen only hoped that Gouyu and the others could break through the barricade to the south. As long as they were able to charge through the resistance, it would signify that they'd broken free of the encirclement, and gotten clear of Palace territory.

Of course, of these five groups, senior brother Yi's from the east basically had no fighting strength left.

The Goldwing Swordbird moved as Jiang Chen suddenly stopped. The position that he'd chosen was one that, after all sorts of calculations, was the most centered.

If anyone wanted to pass through this area, they'd have to go through him first because he'd occupied this position.

As long as he tied them down for a little bit and let Gouyu and the others break through, with the short distance speed of the Goldwing Swordbirds, it'd be very difficult for many of these people to catch on.

However, Jiang Chen somewhat regretted things a bit right now.

If he'd known it'd be like this, he would've had Ye Rong send people to meet him at the border.

He'd turned down Ye Rong's suggestion back then because he had wanted to gain an understanding of the local customs and practices of the Skylaurel Kingdom through his own observations.

Besides, he'd felt that if they didn't go looking for trouble, nothing untoward would happen to them.

Who would've thought that the atmosphere of martial dao within the Skylaurel Kingdom would be even more fierce than the Eastern Kingdom. They killed and looted, or stopped others on the road for highway robbery, at the drop of a hat.

"If I'd known this was the case, I might as well not have kept a low profile; I should've brought all one thousand Goldwing Swordbirds with me, and just directly crushed this band of thieves!" Jiang Chen was quite depressed.

However, he also knew that this was just a random thought. Their presence would've truly been too massive if he'd brought a thousand Goldwing Swordbirds with him.

They might have attracted the attention of a group that was even more powerful than this bunch.

Several groups of people made their way to the location within the span of a moment. They were all rather bemused to see only

Jiang Chen hover below the vault of heavens. One man, one steed.

What was going on? This kid hadn't run off or fled? He had struck up the posture of single handedly facing down their groups of warriors? Did this kid plan to fight against their four crews with his power alone?

At that moment, senior brother Yi had also changed to another steed. He looked ruthlessly at Jiang Chen, a thick sense of killing intent permeating his gaze.

However, he knew that with just his personal strength alone, he'd be unable to kill the youth in front of him who possessed the four times refined spirit weapon.

"Yi Qiansui, where does this kid come from? Have you received a thorough understanding of his background yet?" A youth with triangular shaped eyes from another group of people laughed in cold inquiry.

"Humph. Why don't you ask him yourself if you want to know about him?" Yi Qiansui was in a bad temper. He hadn't gleaned any benefits from Jiang Chen, and this made him feel that he'd lost a great amount of face.

"Tsk tsk. You're still half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm. To think that you're in such a bad shape, what an affront to those of us that are also half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm!" The triangular eyed youth jeered.

“You go take a crack if you’re that good!” Yi Qiansui laughed coldly.

The leaders of these four groups were all practitioners who were half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm, and thus none of them were stronger than another. Yi Qiansui had had bad luck with Jiang Chen, thus he didn’t mind these folks having a try as well.

Perhaps these guys would be caught off guard and end up even worse than him!

“To try just because you tell me to, don’t think I’m useless trash like you!” The triangular eyed youth urged on his steed and brought himself brashly forward.

The sinister triangular eyes measured up Jiang Chen like a venomous snake.

“Kid, I quite admire your guts. However, don’t try to put on a front before us spirit dao practitioners, it’s completely useless. True qi currents cover your body — you’re on a completely different level than our spirit qi.”

“Another waste of space who only knows how to flap his lips?” Jiang Chen broke out into a chilly laugh.

“Yo! Kid, you’re rather nobly aloof huh? Can it be that you really think that, as a true qi practitioner, that ten thousand will be unable to get buy while you guard the pass?” The triangular eyed

youth poked fun at Jiang Chen like he was toying with prey.

However, his moves weren't to purposefully waste time in idle chatter. He wanted to beat around the bush and test Jiang Chen's reactions.

The triangular eyed youth had retracted his earlier disdain after their verbal exchanges, and he secretly felt slightly impressed. No wonder Yi Qiansui had had bad luck.

This kid had no flicker of emotion at all when faced with four practitioners half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm practitioners.

Logically speaking, true qi practitioners would instinctively feel a bit panicked when they met those of the Spirit Dao Realm. They would feel fear and maybe, even involuntarily, wish to escape.

But the triangular eyed youth couldn't discover any hint of this at all in Jiang Chen.

"This kid must've trained himself mentally, there's no way he could be so calm otherwise." A thought struck the triangular eyed youth's mind as a sword appeared in his hand.

"Everyone, I'll play with him for a bit. But I'll say this first, if I capture him, all his equipment belongs to me!" The triangular eyed youth's tone was a bit domineering.

"In your dreams!" The other three practitioners half a step into

the Spirit Dao Realm protested at the same time.

The triangular eyed youth was incensed. “I’m leading the charge. Do you guys want to profit off my efforts?”

“No one’s forcing you to lead the charge.” Another chubby practitioner a half a step into the Spirit Dao Realmsaid bad temperedly.

Jiang Chen was privately pleased to see internal conflict arise in the others. The more time these people wasted, the better it was for him.

As long as Gouyu and the others broke through that line of defense, he would immediately dust himself off and depart, leaving this group of idiots to play amongst themselves.

Jiang Chen secretly observed them. The other ten or twenty practitioners were here to round out the numbers. Jiang Chen basically ignored those within the true qi realm.

These people would pose no threat to Jiang Chen, whether it was in terms of attack, or in defense.

The only thing was that the four practitioners half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm would be an extreme hardship. If any two of them cooperated sincerely, then it would be enough to cause great trouble for Jiang Chen.

If three of them cooperated, then Jiang Chen would have no place to escape to.

If all four of them worked together, with no unpleasantries between them, then Jiang Chen would be dead for sure.

However, this was built on the foundation of being surrounded by them. In actuality, Jiang Chen had be on his guard until even now. He would immediately retreat if they sought to encircle him.

And, the direction of his retreat would have to avoid Gouyu and the others.

It was obvious that these four practitioners half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm all had their own motives. This was the only advantage Jiang Chen had.

There was the scarfaced youth Yi Qiansui, the triangular eyed youth, the chubby youth, and the last one, whose appearance looked like a woman's — making it difficult to discern their gender.

This person hadn't spoken at all, but still gave Jiang Chen the feeling that they were the most frightening.

It was said that barking dogs seldom bite.

This person with the hard to discern gender was absolutely the most shrewd and poised of them all.

“How about this, the four of us will combine our efforts and take down this kid first. Afterwards, we’ll split his equipment, how about it?” The triangular eyed youth proposed.

“Alright, I only want the bow. You guys can have the rest.” Yi Qiansui said.

“Heh heh, I want the bow too. Yi Qiansui, ask for something else.” The fatty narrowed his eyes and laughed craftily.

“First come first served, I was here first, so of course I’ll take my pick first.” Yi Qiansui was incensed.

“You were here first alright, but you would’ve fallen to your death had we not gotten here. What right do you have to argue with us?” The triangular eyed youth jeered once again.

Yi Qiansui was greatly ashamed. This was the truth.

However much he was ashamed though, he wouldn’t give way in the face of profit. “Anything you say is pointless. I only want that bow. This kid is bizarre, he’s got to have a lot of valuables. His blade is also very odd. I suspect that it’s a spirit weapon. My chain of wind and cloud actually cracked when he slashed down at it.”

“What? Yi Qiansui, are you speaking truly?” The fatty was surprised. He knew that Yi Qiansui’s chain of wind and cloud was a quasi spirit weapon.

With Yi Qiansui's cultivation of half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm, and him manipulating a quasi spirit weapon to fight against a true qi practitioner... to think that his weapon had been chipped by his opponent!

What did this mean? This meant that the blade of the true practitioner was absolutely stronger than the quasi spirit weapon. It was also one hundred percent certain to be a spirit weapon, and it was very likely to be a high leveled one.

"Absolutely certain. If my words are false, may I be struck by lightning and split into two halves." Yi Qiansui swore.

"Alright then, I'll take a step back. I want that blade." The fatty pouted. "Then it's settled, no one can fight with me."

The triangular eyed chuckled coolly. "You two, one wants the bow, and the other wants the blade. Do you guys take senior brother Liu and me to be dead?"

Senior brother Liu was the indistinct gendered youth who hadn't spoken until now.

The youth's face was quite pale, and his eyebrow arched slightly when he heard triangular eyes refer to him, as he displayed a bizarre smile.

He suddenly took a few steps forward, and swept his gaze over

the other three.

“I’ll say one thing.” Senior brother Liu looked like a woman, and even his voice was sweet and girlish, making listeners feel quite uncomfortable.

The three others looked at senior brother Liu with spurious smiles.

“You three can all go back now.” Senior brother Liu’s tone was diffident, and no emotions surged over into his expressions, as if he was uttering an extremely ordinary string of words.

“What do you mean ‘Go back’?” Triangular eyes started.

“Senior brother Liu, are you still dreaming?” The chubby one joked.

“Stop joking! Things might change the more we drag things out. Let’s grab this kid first. We’ll have all the time in the world to discuss how to split up the goods afterwards.” Yi Qiansui was of the mind to grab the target first, and then discuss how to split things.

Senior brother Liu’s eyelids lifted slightly, “I said, you can all go back — now. Immediately. Scram! I want all of this kid’s equipment!”

“You’re mad.”

“You with the Liu surname, you’ve lost your mind!”

“Heh heh, who do you think you are? There’s no place for you to act like you’re awesome here!”

The other three immediately formed a battlefront and started heckling this senior brother Liu. Everyone was half a step into the Spirit Dao Realm, how could they let this senior brother Liu throw his weight around in front of them?

Senior brother Liu chuckled and said nothing. He lifted his finger and tapped it downwards slightly, tapping it in quick succession with unsurpassed speed, in the direction of those three.

Chapter 136: Bunch Of Dumb Birds, Have Fun

“Stardrop Point!”

“Humph. It’s not like we haven’t seen that before!”

“Showing off your techniques? Bring it on!”

The other three laughed coldly. This Stardrop Point was senior brother Liu’s signature move. They all knew it and thus didn’t pay much attention to it.

Except, their gazes suddenly changed in the next moment and their facial expressions became bitter as well.

That careless point had coalesced into a formless air current and directly ignited into a ball of flame, burning its way directly in front of them in the span of a moment.

“The formation of the spirit sea and the spirit region, you… you broke through? You’ve truly entered the first level of the spirit realm?”

“This… to coalesce spirit energy into a technique, you’ve indeed broken through!”

“Senior brother Liu, you…”

Senior brother Liu's tone was indifferent as he wore a slight smile on his face, "Now can you get the hell out?"

The three of them looked at each other, their expressions were reluctant but they had no choice. They also knew that once someone in the half step spirit realm truly broke through to the first level of the spirit realm, their strength would increase by many times over.

Even if the three of them worked together, they would likely not be able to fight against someone in the first level of the spirit realm. That was to say that senior brother Liu hadn't gone crazy; he absolutely had the right to tell them to leave!

The strongest became the king. Even if they were of the same faction, no one would give way in the fight for resources.

"Senior brother Liu, don't be this way! The bow is yours and the blade is also yours, we'll only split the other items! How about that?" The triangular eyed youth reacted quickly.

"Right, senior brother Liu, although you've ascended, but two heads are better than one. You'll need helpers too. We're willing to be your assistants. This kid has companions and they're all fat sheep. Senior brother Liu, you'll eat the meat and we'll drink a little soup. That works too right?" Yi Qiansui also reacted.

"Senior brother Liu, we're all brothers and peers here. There will be plenty of opportunities to help each other in the future. We

admit that you're the strongest. You take the biggest one and we'll split the smaller ones. Not to mention this kid is slippery and he's alone. He might get away."

Senior brother Liu laughed coldly, "You guys can tag along if you want, but I'll say this first. You guys can receive one each of the animals they're riding. Don't think of getting anything else."

"Only one?" Yi Qiansui shook his head. "Three each. There's three of us and that'll only take out nine. They have twenty to thirty in total!"

"Senior brother Liu, the biggest share is already yours, don't be too harsh." The chubby one also begged.

"Senior brother Liu, I have another request. We can forgo weapons and whatever, but if there's any martial methods or inheritances, we must have a copy as well." The triangular eyed youth also made his request.

Senior brother Liu thought for a while and nodded, "Alright, then each of you can have two of the animals and a copy of any martial methods and secret arts if there are any. Don't haggle any further. You can get the hell out if you don't want to do this!"

Although the three of them felt a bit humiliated, their strength truly was inferior and so they could only pinch their noses and bear with it.

“Alright! Then it’s settled!”

“Everyone attack together, don’t let this brat get away!” Yi Qiansui hated Jiang Chen the most.

Jiang Chen had privately thought that it was comical when they started haggling. Senior brother Liu had just broken through to the first level of the spirit realm and was at the lowest level of the spirit realm.

He was far inferior to that Xu Zhen when it came down to it.

But who would’ve thought that the other three would docilely submit to senior brother Liu? Jiang Chen reflected with emotion that this world of martial dao was indeed one where the strong preyed on the weak.

Except, Jiang Chen didn’t want to be the weak for the others to divvy up.

Seeing that they had concluded their discussions, Jiang Chen whistled sharply, “Bunch of dumb birds, have fun playing. I won’t stick around!”

Actually, while they were still discussing how to split up the goods, he’d used the Ear of the Zephyr to detect that Gouyu and the others had already created an opening and rushed through the blockade.

Since Gouyu and the others had broken through the line of defense, what desire did Jiang Chen have to stay and play this boring game with these idiots?

He patted the Goldwing Swordbird and compelled it to its maximum speed. A beam of golden colored light flashed through the air and vanished beyond the clouds.

“After him!” Yi Qiansui was incensed to see Jiang Chen escape.

The chubby one and triangular eyed youth also followed after.

As for senior brother Liu, he unhurriedly sensed around for a while and then finally spurred on his mount, chasing in Jiang Chen’s direction.

The methods in which a spirit realm practitioner rode spirit animals were indeed much stronger than those of a half step spirit realm. Although senior brother Liu was the last to set out, he’d caught up to the other three within the span of a few breaths.

He’d left the other three behind after a few more breaths.

The speed of those in the true qi realm was even slower. They were easily left behind by Yi Qiansui and the others.

“Tsk tsk, senior brother Liu has plenty to be cocky about now.” The chubby one mumbled.

“Heh heh, if you were to break through, you’d probably be cockier than him.” The triangular eyed youth laughed coldly.

“Bullshit, I, chubby, am the friendliest around. Even if I break through, I wouldn’t put on airs like he did. Blech. What’s with his arrogance and him eating meat, us drinking soup.”

“Stop talking nonsense. If you have the means to eat meat, we’d be happy to drink soup as well.” Yi Qiansui muttered disinterestedly behind the chubby one.

He only wanted to catch up to Jiang Chen right now and torture and kill him to dispel his anger from earlier. He also sighed internally. If he had been just a bit stronger, he could’ve taken down the other before senior brother Liu arrived, and then the equipment would have be his!

“What a pity that the fatty meat so close to my mouth has flown away just like this.” Yi Qiansui was quite depressed.

Jiang Chen sprinted forward at maximum speed. After roughly fifteen minutes, he could see Gouyu and the others far in the distance. With the aid of the “Eight Trigrams Assimilation Matrix”, their band of people had cleaned house in the south through various methods.

Creating this opening meant they had broken through the encirclement.

Jiang Chen sped up again to catch up to Gouyu and the others. He also threw out a few Vast Ocean Pills. “Give these to your steeds. Don’t linger, continue forward with all speed!”

The Goldwing Swordbirds were quite fast in short distance sprints, at least twice as fast as the green wyverns, but their stamina wasn’t that great. This was also one of their disadvantages.

But with the Vast Ocean Pill to replenish their qi, the problem of a lack of strength to continue wouldn’t exist. At least, they wouldn’t have to worry about running out of strength within the next two to three thousand li.

Everyone knew that the pursuers behind them weren’t simple characters when they saw Jiang Chen like this. They gave the Vast Ocean Pills to their steeds after receiving them.

With the medicinal effects of the Vast Ocean Pills, the Goldwing Swordbirds recovered noticeably and then resumed their earlier speed.

They continued the chase in this manner.

Senior brother Liu was definitely a spirit dao practitioner to be able to always trail Jiang Chen and the others.

Fortunately, senior brother Liu seemed to be at the limits of his

speed as well. He seemed to be unable to decrease the distance of the last couple of li between them.

As for Yi Qiansui and the others, they had been left in the dust a hundred or two hundred li ago.

Although this distance seemed far, it was but the span of a few breaths for spirit animals capable of flight.

This was to say that the distance between them hadn't truly widened.

"Stop! You can't escape!" Senior brother Liu infused his tone with spirit power, his voice piercing through the air like rolling thunder, landing in everyone's eardrums.

This spirit power transformed into sound waves that rumbled like thunder, causing all of their eardrums to tremble. Xue Tong and the others who were a bit weaker almost fell off their mounts.

"Cover your ears and don't listen to his bullshit." The sound waves had almost no effect on Jiang Chen given his training of "Boulder's Heart".

The sound waves from more than ten li away could only attack practitioners whose cultivation levels were below true qi masters. True qi masters could basically hold up against them.

"Humph. Another two hundred li and you'll be in Qingyang

Valley territory. You're heading for your own deaths if you continue on this road!"

Senior brother Liu's voice was neither rushed now slow, as if he was certain that he had Jiang Chen and the others in the bag. Obviously, his boundless enthusiasm about his recent breakthrough to the spirit dao gave him a great deal of confidence.

He felt that this group of people was already in his grasp.

"I'm different from Yi Qiansui and the others. I only want your items and not your lives. Leave behind your items and I can let you go!"

"Otherwise, not only will you be unable to keep your belongings in Qingyang Valley territory, but you'll lose your lives as well. You'll become fertilizer if you're lucky, a slave for Qingyang Valley forever if not. You'll be worse than dead!"

Senior brother Liu voiced his threats.

Qingyang Valley?

Jiang Chen was a bit depressed. Judging from the flight path, it was indeed impossible to avoid Qingyang Valley territory if he continued flying from here.

Tang Long had reminded him that two places were very dangerous. One of them was Azure Heaven Northern Palace, and

the other was Qingyang Valley.

Jiang Chen had wanted to avoid them, but discovered in the end that he hadn't avoided a single one. He'd bumped into the Palace's disciples first and became their target. Now that he'd finally discovered a way out, he was about to trespass into Qingyang Valley territory.

This trip to the Skylaurel Kingdom was truly a worrisome affair.

Even so, Jiang Chen wouldn't listen to senior brother Liu's nonsense at this point. It looked like the Palace often killed and looted people.

Letting them go if they left their belongings behind? These were words to deceive a three year old. How could Jiang Chen believe him?

Besides, how could Jiang Chen leave their items behind?

From Tang Long's words, the people of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace were unreasonable bandits.

As for the Qingyang Valley it was said that they didn't kill people and would only kidnap people to be medicine servants for ten, twenty years.

Becoming a medicine servant was still better than killing someone and looting their belongings.

When he looked at it this way, he'd rather bump into those of the Qingyang Valley than fall into the hands of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace.

"If you continue forward another one hundred li, you'll be in Qingyang Valley territory. Do you want to be hacked into meat paste and become fertilizer, or are you willing to give up your possessions?"

"You're sticking with the wrong ideas and will be dead without a doubt." Senior brother Liu was a bit irritated that Jiang Chen and the others were pretending they didn't hear him.

He took out a pill and threw it into his steed's mouth, commanding, "Rush forward, you must stop them and don't let them into Qingyang Valley territory!"

Only, while he had pills, so did Jiang Chen. The speed of the Goldwing Swordbirds was must faster than his steed.

He was a spirit dao practitioner and was a bit more adept at controlling spirit animals, and thus their speed was relatively on par.

If he wanted to be faster, then the spirit animal would have to sacrifice its lifeblood.

When the spirit animal received his master's order, it knew that

it was one for him to use his lifeblood. It took the pill and then immediately started burning his lifeblood to raise speed.

His speed nearly doubled immediately!

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!

Jiang Chen was greatly astonished. Judging from this sound, the other's speed had increased by nearly onefold instantly! How in the world did the other have the ability to increase his speed after chasing them for so long?

Chapter 137: Senior Brother Liu Almost Smacked To Death

Jiang Chen had no time to think. His Goldwing Swordbird was already flying at top speed at this point and there was no possibility raising its speed any further.

Judging from the speed of his pursuers, they would quickly close the gap within only a couple dozen li.

“Don’t hesitate, keep going forward. If he catches up, I’ll hold him back for a while.”

Jiang Chen had no other choice but to pull out the same ploy. It was a good thing that senior brother Liu was alone in chasing him and that the others were still quite a ways off.

Although Jiang Chen couldn’t win against even senior brother Liu, there should be no issues with delaying him for a moment.

Besides, he suspected that the other party must be using some secret art, otherwise the others would’ve raised their speed the moment they had the chance to do so.

Why would he speed up only in this last little bit of distance?

“They must have to pay a price when they raise their speed, otherwise they wouldn’t have waited until now!” Jiang Chen felt

somewhat reassured when he thought of this.

Speed that came at a cost couldn't be maintained for very long. It was the same as a short distance sprint. Speed could be raised to the utmost, but it definitely couldn't be retained for a prolonged period of time.

It actually wouldn't take much time to cover the distance of a hundred li when proceeding at maximum speed.

According to Jiang Chen's estimations, they should have just about entered Qingyang Valley territory by now. In reality, the territories of the Qingyang Valley and the Azure Heaven Northern Palace didn't actually border each other, but the disciples of the Palace had always been overbearing and had gotten into the habit of overstepping their boundaries.

At this moment, senior brother Liu drove his spirit beast forward and finally made it within five li of Jiang Chen. Jiang Chen suddenly halted and pointed at senior brother Liu with the Da Yu bow in his hand.

Jiang Chen's vision was extraordinary and his experience was vast. When he saw that the eye sockets of the steed beneath senior brother Liu were sunken in, he knew that the steed must have used some secret art just now, sacrificing its own lifeblood and harming its own being.

"As expected, the disciples of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace will resort to anything. They are so cruel even to their own spirit

animals for the sake of profit. These people definitely place personal gain above all else and have not the slightest bit of human emotion."

When Jiang Chen saw this scene, a few more traces of disgust and contempt for senior brother Liu grew within his heart.

Many practitioners were cruel to their enemies but treated their comrades exceptionally well, especially their steeds.

The kind of person who could sacrifice an intimate partner like a steed was absolutely a person blinded by greed, ruthless and heartless.

Even if this kind of person gave his word for something, he would still be completely untrustable. He would absolutely be the type to commit betrayal.

"Go ahead and run, why aren't you running anymore?" Senior brother Liu was also quite irritated having chased Jiang Chen for so long.

"What a pity that you've spared not even the lifeblood of your animal to increase your speed. You Palace disciples are all cut from the same cloth, eh?" Jiang Chen mocked.

"Trying to enrage me?" Senior brother Liu snorted in contempt. "I'm not the trash that Yi Qiansui is. Kid, I don't want to waste words with you. Surrender voluntarily and I can grant you a quick

death. If you wait for me to capture you, I'll let you taste all sorts of torture and make it so that even if you beg for death, you are still denied it."

Jiang Chen laughed heartily. "I've heard a lot of grand talk like that just now, four idiots discussing how to split up loot as though taking me for granted. Look at me now, aren't I perfectly fine?"

"Since this is the case, then..." Senior brother Liu hadn't even finished his sentence when Jiang Chen drew back on his Da Yu bow, whoosh!

Senior brother Liu didn't dare treat it lightly when the bow twanged, as he concentrated to prepare to counter the arrow.

But where his eyes focused, there was no arrow shooting towards him. It was just an arrow full of empty posturing.

Jiang Chen laughed loudly, "Idiots are still idiots even after breaking through to the spirit realm!"

Laughing loudly, Jiang Chen spurred the Goldwing Swordbird forward once more and then left swiftly, not wanting to collide head on with senior brother Liu.

That pause just now had just been to obtain a bit more time for Gouyu and the others. Now that his goal had been accomplished, Jiang Chen naturally wouldn't stick around any longer.

Besides, he could tell that senior brother Liu was burning the spirit animal's lifeblood to increase his speed. He definitely wouldn't be able to maintain that for too long.

As such, he grew even more confident.

"Trying to escape? You're still trying to escape?" Senior brother Liu was greatly enraged as he dug his heels into the spirit animal and chased rapidly.

"Watch my arrows!"

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh!

It was real arrows this time. Although they weren't the arrows that came as a set with the Da Yu bow, they were still first class arrows.

Three arrows in succession aimed straight for senior brother Liu's vital parts.

Jiang Chen also knew that it was almost impossible for ordinary arrows to kill a spirit dao practitioner. He hadn't held out for this hope. He only had one goal, and that was to restrain this fellow and decrease his speed to the greatest of his abilities, and restrain his footsteps.

A practitioner in the spirit realm may be strong, but he wasn't strong to the point of ignoring the attacks from a spirit weapon.

He swept the three arrows away with a wave of his hand, the arrows causing his qi ocean to tremble slightly. Senior brother Liu was also internally astonished, “That ordinary attack can vibrate my qi ocean, just what kind of perverse existence is the bow in his hand? It’s probably not an ordinary once or twice refined spirit weapon!”

His speed had decreased once again after this small halt, widening the gap between him and Jiang Chen.

Senior brother Liu was also depressed. He too knew that they had already entered the Qingyang Valley territory. Although he wasn’t afraid of much because there weren’t that many Qingyang experts in this region, the chase would be less smooth to pursue someone in another group’s territory.

However, he was caught between a rock and a hard place now that he had reached this step. He couldn’t possibly give up. He’d expended so much that if he gave up now, he would suffer incredible losses.

Not to mention that this person was outfitted from head to toe with fantastic items that were all things that senior brother Liu needed.

Particularly that bow, it was surely a thrice refined spirit weapon. Only the nobles of the Skylaurel Kingdom or disciples of the Precious Tree Sect would have such a fine item like this.

When senior brother Liu's thoughts traveled down this path, he suddenly started as he realized that he'd seemed to ignore a very important question. Just what kind of background did this person have that he could wield this sort of spirit weapon?

"Yi Qiansui that useless trash! He didn't even suss out a person's background before trying to kill them and loot their belongings. We've stirred a hornet's nest now and picked a fight with someone we couldn't afford to offend!" Some doubt grew in senior brother Liu's mind, but then he immediately thought, "No, this kid shouldn't have any great background. Otherwise, he would hardly conceal his identity. If he was from a great noble family or the disciple of a sect, there would be no reason for him to not identify himself."

Who would be so foolish in the world of martial dao to hide the presence of a great backer, and fail to haul them out even when facing life and death?

"Right, this kid must be a noble from one of those small kingdoms. He must've been a bit spoiled and brought his treasures for a pleasure trip into the Skylaurel Kingdom."

Senior brother Liu felt that this was the only possibility the more he thought about it.

When his thoughts traveled here, he no longer hesitated. He had decided that no matter the cost, this time he must kill everyone in this group.

Seize the good equipment, pass the Precious Tree Sect test, and enter the sect!

This was senior brother Liu's ambition.

As long as he entered the Sect, it wouldn't matter even if he killed a few noble disciples. Within the sixteen kingdoms, even the nobles of these mundane kingdoms would have to make way for the disciples of sects such as the Precious tree Sect.

"Kill that kid and steal his treasure!" Senior brother Liu's rational thought had been completely overcome by greed.

He raised his speed to his limits and could already see Jiang Chen's figure towards the front. Although the speed of the golden colored light was fast, it was still a bit slower compared to his current speed.

Ten li, eight li, five li...

Senior brother Liu's emotions became more and more agitated the closer he was to catching up. This fat sheep was almost at the edge of his mouth. He would have to eat it as quickly as possible to prevent long nights of sleepless dreams.

Just as he was posturing, a sudden wave of movement pulsed through the air. Immediately following that, an enormous air current in the shape of a flower formed overhead.

This air current started pressing down on him after forming a flower of spirit qi.

Senior brother Liu was greatly alarmed as he felt a suffocating presence of despair surge directly towards him.

“This is bad!”

He crouched and flipped directly off his steed, hurtling straight for the ground. He also knew that if that attack truly came crashing down on him, he’d be slapped into meat paste.

He’d rather take a fall than be crushed into meat paste.

At least he wouldn’t die from falling from this height. Some injuries of flesh and skin were nothing to a spirit dao practitioner. He’d be fine with some spirit medicine.

Bam!

Senior brother Liu’s spirit animal didn’t have time to react before being hit by this mighty flower shaped air current.

The flower shaped air current crushed it directly into a cloud of blood as its internal organs all exploded, turning into a bloody wind and rain, scattering down towards the ground.

“Those of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace have become more

and more bold huh!” A wizened and cold voice sounded coolly from thin air.

Having landed on the ground, senior brother Liu had snatched his life from the jaws of death and had yet to recover his wits. He said hurriedly, “Senior, the fault is mine, I’ll get out of here right away!”

Senior brother Liu completely ignored Jiang Chen and the others after he spoke and thought no further of the spirit weapons and treasures. He suddenly turned around and ran, not daring to look back even once.

The person who’d made his move didn’t kill senior brother Liu with his hit, but didn’t make another move again.

“Go back and tell the Azure Heaven Northern Palace that whoever violates the boundaries again will all die!”

Senior brother Liu covered his head and scurried away like a rat to its hole, the very epitome of being bedraggled.

He also knew that the strength behind that blow was absolutely not something that he could take. The wise choice now was to get the hell away and avoid angering the other as much as possible.

Jiang Chen out in front actually hadn’t made it too far before a mysterious power had stopped him and forced him to land.

When he landed, Jiang Chen discovered that he was in a valley and his father, Gouyu, and the others had long since landed.

There were strange ropes that shimmered in and out of existence on all of them, preventing them from moving a single muscle. When Jiang Chen landed, Jiang Feng, Gouyu, and the others were also incredibly anxious.

Jiang Chen smiled wryly, he knew that this must be Qingyang Valley territory and that Valley experts must surely live here.

Otherwise, that senior brother Liu wouldn't have scrammed so obligingly.

"Tsk tsk tsk, these people's training seem to be quite ordinary. However, their steeds look quite nice. Just where are they from?"

"Heh heh, who cares where they're from. Trespassing into our Qingyang Valley means either becoming fertilizer or medicine servants. Tie them all up and wait for Elder Fei to make his judgment."

Those speaking were two medicine boys, and were actually younger than Jiang Chen by three or four years old.

Chapter 138: Time For Jiang Chen To Put On A Front

This Elder Fei that the two medicine boys had mentioned was an extremely odd looking old man. His skinny body was accompanied by a bizarre looking head. As a result, he rather looked quite comical.

The old man's body was as slender and thin as a stalk of ginseng, whereas his head was as flat as an old pumpkin.

This kind of strange head and body combination made this old fellow look weird no matter how he was viewed.

That pumpkin-esque head had almost no chin, but where the chin should have been was a tuft of a very long goatee.

"Greetings to Elder Fei." The two medicine boys hastened to pay their respects when they saw the old fellow.

"The people of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace are acting more and more brazenly." Elder Fei was quite infuriated. "How dare they throw their weight around in my Qingyang Valley!"

"Please calm your anger Elder Fei, those idiots probably thought that Elder Fei was sure to be within the palace in Qingyang Valley and wouldn't appear here. That's why they behaved so horrendously."

“Mm. This explanation makes sense. But the mere fact that they dare to act wildly in my Qingyang Valley territory means that, I, this old man, am still too benevolent usually. Sigh.”

Qingyang Valley was also one of the Precious Tree Sect’s secular places for holding rites within the Skylaurel Kingdom, and it was on the same standing as the Palace. When it came down to it, they were actually from the same faction.

The old man’s thin eyes darted to and fro over Jiang Chen and the other’s bodies. “Who are you, and why are the people from the Palace chasing after you?”

Jiang Chen knew this old man had to have great power to be able to suppress senior brother Liu with just one move. He estimated that this old man’s training would not be less than that of Chu Xinghan’s of the Purple Sun Sect.

“Senior, to be honest we’re really quite innocent. We were just traveling on our way when those from the Palace lost their minds and insisted on chasing us to the death.”

Elder Fei cackled, “Isn’t that an easy question to answer? Those of the Palace are the greediest. Your spirit animals are clearly of a higher level than their green wyverns. It’d be an odd thing if they weren’t green-eyed with jealousy.’”

“So this was the case. The senior’s words have brought spontaneous enlightenment to me.” Jiang Chen was also one to tailor his words for the situation.

This old man seemed to be easier to talk to than those of the Palace, and thus Jiang Chen modified his tone to go along with the other's.

"Spare me the sycophantic words. Although I don't like to kill and rob people, but you must be punished for trespassing onto my territory."

"Senior, we didn't mean to, see..."

"Nonsense. I would've directly made you into fertilizer if you'd meant to trespass. How about this, I won't bully you. 20 years. You can leave Qingyang Valley after you've been medicine servants for 20 years."

Elder Fei spread out his hands, speaking with a tone of not letting personal considerations affect one's execution of public duty.

Jiang Chen had a rueful expression on his face. Qingyang Valley's actions were exactly as Tang Long had described previously. They really didn't kill people, but instead made them serve as medicine servants for twenty years!

Jiang Chen couldn't find it within himself to stay for two years, let alone twenty.

Not to mention, he'd thumped his chest and promised Tang Long earlier that he would bring the items back for him. He would've

broken his word after seven days had passed, let alone twenty years.

However, judging from Elder Fei's posture, he didn't seem to be saying this just for show.

The circumstances were greater than the person.

"Kid, I see a look of shrewdness on your face. Don't try plotting anything. Even one day less than twenty years won't do. If you dare to run away, heh heh! Big Egg, Second Egg, tell them the rules."

"We'll capture you if you run away and chop you up for fertilizer." The two boys answered in unison.

Jiang Chen's face was full of black lines. Come on! I was a renowned pill master in my previous life, and now I'm forced to be a medicine servant for this crazy old man? What a shame!

"Alright senior, we'll be medicine servants then. What chores will you be allocating to us?"

"Allocate what chores?" The old man rolled his eyes. "You amateurs start with hauling water. Spend ten hours everyday on learning spirit medicine knowledge and only then can you start learning how to handle medicine three months later."

"Hauling water?" Jiang Chen almost blew up.

“What, you don’t want to?” The old man chuckled. “Then haul feces.”

“That’s alright! Haul water is it? I’ll haul water!” Jiang Chen gritted his teeth.

Qiao Baishi, who’d been quiet all along during this time, suddenly plucked up his courage at this moment. “Senior, can this junior say a few words?”

“If you’ve got something to fart, hurry up and let it out.” The old man was a bit impatient.

“Senior, junior has once learned some knowledge of pill medicines and has some foundational knowledge of pill medicines. We have twenty people here and twenty years each. How about I stay here and become a medicine servant for you for four hundred years, whereas you let them go? What do you say?”

Even Jiang Chen was greatly astonished by Qiao Baishi’s words. He knew that Qiao Baishi was loyal to him, but hadn’t thought that he’d be loyal to this extent.

“You know of pills?” The old man was a bit surprised. “You’re not lying to this old geezer, are you?”

“Senior, you are an expert, how would I be able to hoodwink you with this little bit of thought? Besides, retaining one specialist such

as I for four hundred years of work should benefit you a lot more than keeping amateurs. They say that a year of work from a specialist is worth ten years from an amateur. Elder Fei, you're still the one gaining from this arrangement at the end of the day."

"Heh heh, you're a loyal one alright. I'll consider this matter. If I discover that you truly do have spirit medicine potential one day, then we'll proceed as you've proposed."

"Please no! Senior, I can wait, but my young master has urgent business in the capital and he can't afford to wait. How about you test me now?"

The old man snorted, "I don't have time right now. Damn it, I've traveled over the greater half of the Skylaurel Kingdom and haven't found a single blade of the Mystic Ruler Grass. Damn it, damn it, damn it!"

Mystic Ruler Grass?

Qiao Baishi hadn't even heard of this before. He wanted to demonstrate his abilities, but was at a loss of what to say.

Jiang Chen suddenly spoke up at this moment and said, "Senior, do you seek the Mystic Ruler Grass to refine the Peaceful Ruler Pill, or to refine the Profound Celestial Pill?"

"Mm?" The old man's originally dim and darkened face suddenly changed when he heard Jiang Chen's question. His murky eyes

shot out a beam of light that swept over Jiang Chen's face.

"Kid, you've heard of the Peaceful Ruler Pill?" Elder Fei planted himself in front of Jiang Chen with a swift step and broke the magical rope on Jiang Chen's body with a squeeze of his fingers.

"Heh heh, what a coincidence. I truly have heard of it before."

The old man's eyes gleamed, but then sighed with depression immediately afterwards. "So what if you've heard of it. Even this old man know of the pill recipe, but it's a pity that I can't refine it because I can't find the Mystic Ruler Grass. It's all in vain."

The Peaceful Ruler Pill was actually an ancient recipe for calming qi as well as calming the mind. At the end of the day, it was in the same series as the One Buddha Powder.

Except, the Peaceful Ruler Pill was on a much higher level. It was many times higher than the One Buddha Powder, and those of the true qi realm wouldn't even be able to use this sophisticated pill.

"Oh yes, the Mystic Ruler Grass is very picky about its environment and is quite, quite difficult to find. It's something that may only come by luck and not by merely searching for it." Jiang Chen was also purposefully putting on a show now.

In actuality, within the memories of his past life, this Mystic Ruler Grass was the equivalent of a weed to the identity of his prior self. If it grew in his garden, it would be treated as a weed and

pulled out.

This was to say that in the eyes of a divine level pill master, the Mystic Ruler Grass didn't even have the right to be a house plant and enter their personal gardens.

Of course, in a mundane kingdom, this sort of spirit herb was truly something that could very well only come by luck.

"Kid, don't put on this act with me. You heard the pill name somewhere and now you are putting on a show in front of me. Hold your plotting. Don't even think of reducing the twenty years by a day."

"Heh heh, I once heard a senior speak of something saying that the original ingredients for pills like the Peaceful Ruler Pill were too difficult to find. There are actually many pills with the same effects as it. He seemed to have mentioned the 'Renewal Purity Pill' or something along those lines. It's said that the ingredients are easier to find, and have effects better than or on par with the Peaceful Ruler Pill I wonder if he was bluffing or not."

"Renewal Purity Pill?? You.. you've also heard of the Renewal Purity Pill??" It was like a spring in which a hundred flowers bloomed had suddenly appeared on the old man's lean face.

"Of course I have, what's so surprising about that?" Jiang Chen purposefully played dumb.

“What’s so surprising?” The old man hopped off one foot. “You say what’s so surprising? Do you know how much I paid just to beg someone to refine one Peaceful Ruler Pill for me? I paid the price, but even then I still have to search for ingredients like the Mystic Ruler Grass myself. The ancient pill recipes are all exclusive secrets, would you say this is surprising or not?”

Jiang Chen was delighted, this meant that the old man didn’t even have the recipe for the Peaceful Ruler Pill.

“If you want to call it surprising, then it’s surprising. If you want to say it’s ordinary, then it’s also ordinary. If you know how to handle it, it will not be difficult. If you think it’s difficult, then you don’t know how to handle it. “

“If you know how to handle it, it will not be difficult?” The old man hopped up again and grabbed Jiang Chen’s sleeve. “Kid, show me someone who knows! If you can find someone, I’ll be willing to pay whatever the price may be.”

“I’d love to find someone, but how can I go looking if I’m stuck here for twenty years?” Jiang Chen chuckled, knowing that this old man had taken the bait, hook, line, and sinker.

“Don’t give me this kind of foolish nonsense.” The old man waved his hand. “If you can find me someone who knows the Renewal Purity Pill, then you’ll be my senior. I’ll bow down to you and even call you daddy dearest. Twenty years? There’s no problem if I become your medicine servant for twenty years.”

“Do you mean that?” Jiang Chen was secretly delighted that this old man had come knocking at the door.

“What a dumb question. Does this old man look like someone who makes irresponsible remarks?”

“No, you don’t look like it.” Jiang Chen shook his head.

The old man’s small eyes spun madly. He’d thought that Jiang Chen had been bullshitting in the beginning, but now he seemed to have gleaned a bit of the truth as he listened. This kid seemed to possibly know what he was talking about?

The old many had spent the efforts of almost twenty to thirty years on the Peaceful Ruler Pill and had worked himself to the bone for it.

He’d tried everything, but always turned up empty-handed in the end.

Even if it was the slightest of chances from Jiang Chen that sounded quite unrealistic, he was still tempted. After all, this matter had become one of his internal demons.

“Kid, think carefully, don’t think of trying any tricks with this old fellow! If I find out that you’re pulling the wool over my eyes and want to take the advantage to run away, you’ll know the consequences!” The old man tried hard to keep a stern face and project a mean demeanor, wanting to use this to awe Jiang Chen.

“Elder Fei, your strength and abilities exceed mine. I don’t think I can get up to any tricks in front of you? Although your eyes are small, they’re extremely sharp! Do you think I don’t know? You look like the typical man of great wisdom who purposefully appears dim-witted.” Jiang Chen started fawning over him.

“Heh heh, you saw through even this? And to think I spent so much effort on concealing it.” The old man puffed his chest up as he stroked his goatee, indulging in self-admiration. “Kid, since you’re not up to some trick, then tell me, has someone truly grasped the Renewal Purity Pill in our Skylaurel Kingdom?”

“It’s nothing to do with the Skylaurel Kingdom, but a good friend I’ve had since young. He’s the one who knows. He appears every three or five years and I can always hear much of the matters of pill medicines from him every time he appears.”

“Oh? Such a wondrous person exists?” Elder Fei was somewhat skeptical.

“Yes, to be honest, I’m headed to the capital of the Skylaurel Kingdom this time because I’ve heard that his elderly self will be taking care of some business within the Skylaurel Kingdom. This is why I’ve come hurrying to pay my respects to him.”

“Can there be such a coincidence?” The old man felt even more baffled.

Chapter 139: An Old Man Who Plays Dumb, Acts Cute, And Has No Principles

Jiang Chen knew that the old man had thoroughly taken the bait now that the old man had said such words.

Qiao Baishi found it privately hilarious on the side. He also knew that they were finally out of the woods this time. With his honored master's eloquence, they'd have this old man turning in circles.

"Coincidence? This is something ordained by heaven. Of course it's coincidence."

"Ordained by heaven?" Elder Fei muttered to himself, his gaze a bit far away and lost. "I've heard of the Renewal Purity Pill, but no one knows of the pill recipe within the Skylaurel Kingdom. It's said that the cost of this pill is indeed much cheaper than the Peaceful Ruler Pill, and that the ingredients are easy to find. It's also easier to refine."

Suddenly, Elder Fei's eyes moved as if he'd decided something.

"Kid, this old fellow will trust you this once. I can avoid pursuing the matter of you trespassing in the Qingyang Valley, but you must introduce me to this mysterious expert."

Jiang Chen purposefully made things difficult, "I can't agree to this brashly. Besides, what's the use of meeting him? This senior has long since paid no interest to the common affairs of the

mundane world. I think that it'll be difficult for you to ask him."

The old fellow chuckled, "It's difficult for me to ask him, but what if you asked?"

"I... why would I ask?" Jiang Chen purposefully played dumb.

"Eh... well!" The old fellow smiled a bit awkwardly. True, why would someone make this request for him? This had nothing to do with them.

Wringing his hands where he stood, he cautiously smiled obsequiously. "Uh, eh, little brother. Tell me, what should I do so that you'll go ask for me?"

Jiang Chen had a darkened face. "I'm not doing it. I was scared by you just now. Twenty years as a medicine servant, so awe inspiring, peh!"

"Heh heh, don't be mad, don't be mad." The old fellow toadied up to Jiang Chen, raising a hand to tap his shoulder in a fawning matter. "Come, come, come. Let this old fellow massage your back for you. What silly twenty years of a medicine servant? I think that you've misheard. I meant that I'll be a medicine servant for twenty years to whoever can resolve the issue of the Peaceful Ruler Pill for me!"

Jiang Chen found it privately hilarious, and couldn't help but want to laugh when he saw this old fellow acting the buffoon.

When it came down to it, this old fellow was eccentric and a bit crusty, but he wasn't of the bad sort.

If it were those from the Azure Heaven Northern Palace, they definitely would be threatening him with life and death, and would have no scruples about using any sort of means to force Jiang Chen to come to terms and submit.

This old man was a pill master and seemed to consider those crooked means behind his notice, holding himself pure and lofty, away from all that.

Even if this kind of person had an eccentric temperament, his natural character wouldn't be crooked.

"I misheard?" Jiang Chen said purposefully.

"Absolutely misheard." The old man nodded his head quite seriously.

"This means that I can leave and go to the capital?"

"Of course! Why can't you?" The old man put on an air as if this was a very strange question — as if Jiang Chen was utterly crazy for asking this question.

One had to say, the old man's personality was quite a bit like an old naughty child. He would play dumb, act cute, and would throw his temper around.

Jiang Chen had had his fun teasing him and laughed, “Elder Fei is it? How about this, come find me in the capital after a while.”

“Really?” Elder Fei’s eyes shot out a great amount of sparks.

“Do I look like a liar?”

“Not at all, not at all!” The old man shook his head as if he was beating a drum. “When this old man first saw you, I felt that you were extremely tall and handsome, of a striking appearance and bearing, a dragon or a phoenix amongst men, an immortal that had descended to the earth… it made it such that this old man couldn’t help but want to become close to you, and even made me yearn to immediately swear the oaths and go through the ritual of slaughtering a chicken and burning yellow paper in order to become blood brothers.”

Fawning words came rolling over him in waves, and flattery billowed — this was the epitome of skilled adeptness.

Jiang Chen discovered that this old man was a bit like him, with no principles whatsoever.

It was as if the old man was sending off his own kin when he saw them off at the road. He waved his hand, “Go well and be careful on the road. If anything happens, just say my name.”

These words were as intimate as they could be.

Apart from Jiang Chen, Gouyu, and Jiang Feng, the others all felt as if they were dreaming. They'd thought that they'd be unable to avoid twenty years of serving as a medicine servant.

Who would've thought that Jiang Chen's few words of bluster and distraction would completely turn the old man around, and would have him send them off as he was sending off his old kin, departing from his usual behavior.

"Chen'er, you..." Jiang Feng wanted to say something.

"Father, let's go, this old man is one of ours in the future." Jiang Chen chuckled. He'd dug a hole just now, and the old man had jumped straight in, leaping in headfirst full of joy.

Twenty years as a medicine servant... Jiang Chen smiled. It would be quite interesting with such an old man as his medicine servant.

...

Within the Qingyang Valley, the two medicine boys, Big Egg and Second Egg, were tongue tied and their eyes were bugging out. They had on faces of confusion, and their mouths were wide open — enough to shove in a chicken leg.

"Elder Fei, that kid looks like he's full of complete nonsense. We're letting him go just like this?" Big Egg found this incredible.

“Indeed, I feel like that kid isn’t anything good.” Second Egg was equally unable to comprehend.

“Heh heh.” Elder Fei smiled meaningfully, stretching out leisurely on his chair. “What do you two know? I’ve lived hundreds of years, and have seen all sorts of people. This kid is full of both truths and falsehood, a person the same as me. He plays dumb when he should play dumb, pretends to be helpless when he should, and isn’t shy about putting on airs when he should.”

“The same person as you, Elder?” Big Egg and Second Egg were even more confused.

“Yes, the same person.” The old man closed his eyes in intoxication, and started humming a small tune. He’d been probing with his act of playing dumb and acting cute just now as well.

The old man had ended up discovering that young kid that spoke with both ease and fluency, was even better at playing dumb than he was. This was right up the old man’s alley.

The old man was quite a narcissistic person, and felt that Jiang Chen was the same as him. Therefore, he absolutely wouldn’t be a bad person, or someone who wagged his tongue too freely.

In addition, after analyzing the details, the kid’s eyes hadn’t even blinked when he’d mentioned the names of those pills. This wasn’t an act that an ordinary person could put on.

How would he have such knowledge without pointers from a pill master?

How many within the entire Skylaurel Kingdom had heard of the Renewal Purity Pill, to say nothing of anything else?

Therefore, although elder Fei looked muddled, he was actually quite astute. He had at least made some preliminary deductions that Jiang Chen wasn't making empty promises.

Not to mention that the capital wasn't too far from here. Even if this kid was up to something, Elder Fei could go any time if he wanted to make trouble for him.

However, Elder Fei's instincts had been honed quite sharply after living for hundreds of years. This time, his instincts told him that maybe this kid really wasn't pulling the wool over his eyes.

He wasn't short on medicine servants or the like anyways.

He had made such a frightening rule because he didn't want too many idle trespassers swinging through the Qingyang Valley, disturbing the peace of the Valley in cultivating spirit medicine.

It wasn't that the old man was truly malicious.

There truly was a fundamental difference between the Qingyang

Valley, and the Azure Heaven Northern Palace.

It was as Tang Long had said; they didn't run into any trouble worth mentioning after leaving the territory of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace and Qingyang Valley.

They arrived at the capital of Skylaurel Kingdom early in the morning on the second day.

As they flew high up in the sky and gazed down at it from afar, the capital of the Skylaurel Kingdom was quite an impressive sight. An enormous city wall and moat were as if they were a brilliant pearl embedded into the earth, presenting a splendid sight.

The tall and mighty sturdy city doors, extensive architecture, capital soldiers bristling with armor and weaponry — every detail was testament to the awe inspiring position of the Skylaurel Kingdom.

"The reputation of the four great kingdoms is well deserved. It looks like we were really frogs at the bottom of a well inside the Eastern Kingdom before."

Gouyu felt quite a mix of emotions as she stood in front of the Skylaurel Kingdom capital and looked at the enormous city walls and moat.

With Tang Long's warning, Jiang Chen and them naturally didn't fly into the capital on the back of the Goldwing Swordbirds.

They landed outside the city doors instead, and lead the Goldwing Swordbirds through the city doors.

With Prince Ye's medallion, their entrance through the city doors was smooth and unobstructed.

The guard at the city gates smiled, "You have the medallion of the prince, and won't have to be inspected when you enter and leave the city gates in the future."

The presence of a bustling city life greeted them as they entered the capital.

Going by the map that Ye Rong had left Jiang Chen, the group ambled along their way and finally made it to Ye Rong's 'Prince Rong Manor' after roughly two hours.

A group of practitioners clad in red armor surged out out from both sides before they'd made it to the front door, as they openly brandished their weapons at the group.

"Idle bypassers may not linger in front of the prince's manor!"

"We are friends of the fourth prince, and have been invited to come visit him." Jiang Chen displayed the medallion.

The red armored practitioners looked at the medallion for a while, after which the captain waved his hand and all the red armored practitioners put away their weapons.

“Please wait, I’ll go notify the fourth prince.”

Hearty laughter came from the manor’s interior after a short while.

“Hahaha, I heard the magpies chattering on the branches after waking up this morning. I made some small calculations and knew that some honored guests were coming to visit. Can it be that my younger brother has come to visit?”

The owner of the hearty voice was Prince Ye Rong.

A red shadow quickly ran out from the door before the sound had even finished echoing. Ye Rong made directly for Jiang Chen, giving him a bearhug filled with burning passion.

“Younger brother, I’ve missed you! I’ve been waiting for your arrival, and have finally seen you arrive.” Ye Rong grabbed Jiang Chen’s shoulders after the bear hug, and looked him up and down, “Heh. Looks like many stories have happened to you along the way.”

Jiang Chen smiled ruefully. “Had you told me that when travelling to the capital that it would be filled with such twists and turns, I definitely wouldn’t have turned down your idea to meet me at the border.”

“What happened?” Prince Ye Rong’s face darkened. “Did some

blind idiot make trouble for my younger brother?”

Jiang Chen sighed, “It’s a long story, I’ll tell you later.”

“Alright, let’s go in, let’s go in. Let’s all come inside to talk. I’ll throw a banquet immediately to welcome you and wash the road dust off your feet. Today is a day of great joy and we must drink. Heh heh, I hadn’t found it within myself to break open the wine I had begged from the Precious Tree Sect. Today, we’re going to get drunk!”

As a prince, Ye Rong’s personality may not have been the most desirable.

But as a friend, Ye Rong’s straightforwardness rather increased Jiang Chen’s good impression of him. At least Ye Rong didn’t put on airs in front of him or make a fuss about a superior facing his junior.

In addition, Ye Rong toed the line very carefully. Although sexy ladies such as Gouyu and innocent beauties such as Wen Ziqi were in Jiang Chen’s entourage, Ye Rong always looked at them with urbane politeness when his eyes passed over them, with not the slightest hint of depravity.

This point, at least, was quite rare to find in someone in a superior position.

Chapter 140: The Difficult Problem Of Settling Within The Capital

Bam! Ye Rong slammed his wine cup down viciously. “The Azure Heaven Northern Palace? I’ve long since heard that they behave incredibly atrociously. Supposedly, the disciples beneath their banner often commit acts like killing people and looting them. I’d always thought that the rumors were a bit of an exaggeration, but it seems like not only were the rumors not exaggerations, but they were actually quite conservative.”

“Younger brother, don’t be mad. These iniquities are all adding up and I’ve already noted these fellows. There will be a day in which I will make them pay a price with interest.”

Jiang Chen smiled, “They’re all a bunch of minor characters and clowns, unable to make it onto the main stage. Brother Ye, you don’t need to worry about this. I can handle a small thing like this.”

“Haha, that’s right! Younger brother, with your potential, if you can enter the Precious Tree Sect, then you’ll be able to stomp on these bastards however you’d like in the future.”

Jiang Chen nodded noncommittally, raising his glass to say, “Come, Brother Ye, let’s drink.”

After drinking and eating their fill, Ye Rong said, “Brother, since you’ve just arrived at the capital, there are many things that I must now detail clearly to you.”

“Go ahead.”

“First, you are my guest and not my follower. Because of this, you can’t live within the manor. In order to live within the manor, you must be someone in the manor’s household or a servant. At the heart of it all, guests are still outsiders and thus you must arrange for accommodations elsewhere.”

Jiang Chen truly hadn’t thought of staying at the manor. With so many in his party, it was obviously an inconvenience, and there wasn’t much point in seeking shelter underneath someone else’s roof.

“That’s easy, I’ll go arrange for a house and a yard in someplace quiet.” Jiang Chen’s monetary ability was astonishing, and although this was the Skylaurel Kingdom, he didn’t think that he would be unable to purchase a house.

Ye Rong rubbed his nose and smiled ruefully, “It’s actually not that simple. You can’t buy a house just because you want to buy one.”

“Oh? Can it be that an inch of land within the Skylaurel Kingdom is equal to an ounce of gold? The land is so valuable that even houses are selling at astronomical prices?”

“It’s not that the land is at an astronomical price. I believe that wouldn’t be a problem with your financial capability. It’s more that you can’t buy a house or manor within the Skylaurel Kingdom

just because you want to. A certain level of status is needed for certain levels of houses. Your status was vaunted in the Eastern Kingdom, but here, within the Skylaurel Kingdom, you're still a blank piece of paper ."

Jiang Chen finally understood after Ye Rong's explanations.

There was a clear hierarchy of status and rank when doing business within the Skylaurel Kingdom. One wouldn't be able to buy a luxurious house without a corresponding status.

Jiang Chen understood matters when put this way.

This was actually similar to the Eastern Kingdom. Ordinary people wouldn't be able to take up residence within luxurious locales. Even movers and shakers within business were absolutely barred from entering the areas reserved for nobles unless they had a corresponding status or awe inspiring achievements.

This wasn't a defined rule within the Eastern Kingdom, but cliques were formed on the basis of these unspoken rules.

The Skylaurel Kingdom had taken things one step further than the Eastern Kingdom had and had written it clearly into law.

Your status dictated what kind of house you could live in in, with no way for anyone to overstep this boundary. You wouldn't be able to buy another house with all the money in the world.

At the heart of it, the Skylaurel Kingdom was indeed different from ordinary, common kingdoms. With Jiang Chen's reputation, the Darkmoon Kingdom had directly promised a position of duke of first rank to him.

After arriving at the Skylaurel Kingdom, not even a prince could help him cheat.

It seemed like the operating machine of the Skylaurel Kingdom was much more rational than that of the Eastern Kingdom and the Darkmoon Kingdom. The rules here were also much more cruel.

"Brother Ye, then what avenues exist to obtain status?"

"There are quite a few ways. Holding civil or military office goes without saying. It's faster to advance through these two methods, but the level of competition there is also the fiercest."

"Apart from civil and military office, the next fastest way would be organizations associated with sects. Pill medicine for instance, or forging weapons. Any topic having to do with training have large amounts of quotas for nobles. The Precious Tree Sect has the four great sites within the Skylaurel Kingdom and thus also holds a large numbers of quotas for nobles."

"The four great sites?"

"Yes, you've already met the Azure Heaven Northern Palace, they're one of the four. There's also the Azure Heaven Southern

Palace, the Qingyang Palace, and the Myriad Treasures Palace that make up the four great sites."

"The Azure Heaven Northern Palace, and there's also the Azure Heaven Southern Palace?"

"Yes, the Northern Palace controls the western region, the Southern Palace controls the southern region. The Qingyang Valley exercises control over the central region of the kingdom and the Myriad Treasures Palace directly set up shop within the capital."

Ye Rong explained patiently, "How about this, I have some personal connections within the Azure Heaven Southern Palace and can get a noble's position for you. However, I can, at most, obtain one of the eighth rank for you through personal connections. It'll be harder to obtain any rank higher than that."

The nobles of the Skylaurel Kingdom were divided into nine ranks.

The ninth rank was the lowest and the first rank the highest.

A prince like Ye Rong was naturally at the level of first rank. If he could become the crown prince, then he would break free from the hierarchy of ranks and would instead become of the royal rank.

"The Azure Heaven Southern Palace?" Although Jiang Chen knew that the Azure Heaven Southern Palace and the Azure

Heaven Northern Palace were two different forces, he still felt slightly ticked off when he heard this name.

“Let’s forget about using your connections. I’ll talk a walk in the capital tomorrow and understand the situation. In the meantime, I’ll take some time to familiarize myself with this new area and find a tavern for lodgings.”

Ye Rong was a bit shamefaced. He was a prince, but in many matters, there was no room for the princes of Skylaurel Kingdom to play favorites and commit irregularities.

In addition, the most important thing was that the king had also included this in his observation of all his sons. If a prince often used the banner of the royal family to demand special treatment and play favorites, then his standing would surely be greatly decreased within the king’s heart.

Jiang Chen was rather opened-minded about all this.

Although his treatment since arriving in the Skylaurel Kingdom had been rather ordinary and had been worlds apart from the position at the apex of all other nobles that had been promised by the Darkmoon Kingdom and the Eastern Kingdom, Jiang Chen rather liked this feeling more.

This kind of new challenge gave him more drive and motivation. Besides, he didn’t think that he’d been unable to obtain even a noble’s status within the capital.

Under Ye Rong's arrangements that night, their group checked into a hotel with wonderful surroundings. After settling down comfortably after the hardships of the road, the night passed peacefully.

The next morning, Jiang Chen summoned his eight personal guards and delegated some missions to them. He had them collect all sorts of intelligence regarding the sect organizations and what qualifications were needed to gain which particular noble status.

He naturally didn't want to undertake such trivial matters himself.

Sending his subordinates to do this was also a test of their competence and a form of training.

Jiang Chen himself brought Gouyu and Qiao Baishi along with him as he followed the address that Tang Long had given, planning on making a trip to Tang Long's family.

Although Jiang Chen didn't know what it was that Tang Long had asked them to courier, he could judge from Tang Long's tone that these items were very important to Tang Long's family.

Tang Long's house was located in the slums of the northwestern part of the capital. Jiang Chen finally found this small alley after threading through many side streets and alleyways.

The dirty alley made Gouyu, a girl born in a royal family, feel a

bit uncomfortable.

However, when she saw Jiang Chen's cool and composed face, she took a few steps forward and let go of her inhibitions. When she stepped down, she didn't find the dirty alleyway that dirty anymore.

Tang Long's family lived in a one story house that appeared quite run down, but was neatly cleaned up both inside and out.

Jiang Chen's group of three knocked on the door, which was answered by a seventeen or eighteen-year old girl. The young girl's dainty face blushed faintly red when she saw the strangers.

She stuttered, "Who... who... are you... looking for?"

"Is this Tang Long's house?" Jiang Chen smiled.

"Y... yes? You are?" The young girl was a bit wary.

A voice traveled out from within, "Sister-in-law, is it my brother? Has my brother come back with that item?"

The owner of the voice didn't sound too old, he seemed to be roughly the same age as Jiang Chen.

"Tang Long asked us to come by with this package. Please take an inventory." Jiang Chen handed the package to the young girl.

The young girl wiped her hands a few times on her clothing with a reddened face before reaching out with her hands and blushing, walked back into the house.

After a while, an excited voice came from within, “Haha, it really is the Black Spirit Wood! Sister-in-law, it’s Black Spirit Wood! Haha, this means I am qualified to sign up for the free clinic that the Azure Heaven Southern Palace is holding a few days later. Sister-in-law, I... I can walk on my two feet in the future! Brother, you really are my big brother!”

The young man within the house seemed to be quite agitated as he kept pounding the boards of the bed and crowing. He seemed to have been repressing himself for quite some time and finally unleashed his steam at this time.

The young girl in the rough hemp walked out again and asked in a timid voice, “You’re friends of Tang Long? Would you like to come inside for some water?”

Jiang Chen looked around the house and saw that this family’s life was quite simple. It looked that their life wasn’t that easy.

Jiang Chen didn’t want to be a burden to them. Since he had delivered the items, he’d completed Tang Long’s request.

“We’ll forgo the water. We’ll be taking our leave now that the item has been delivered.”

The young girl also heaved a sigh of relief when she heard that they wouldn't be coming inside. It was obvious that she didn't know how to treat these guests since her house was in such shambles and these people should be quite noble based off their outfits.

"Uh... um, how is Tang Long?" The young girl gathered up her courage to ask.

"Heh heh, he's doing quite well, but he's been a bit busy lately. It seems that it'll be a while before he can come home. You're his wife right? I hadn't thought that this fellow would have a wife, haha!" Jiang Chen laughed, waved his hands, and left.

After departing from Tang Long's house, Jiang Chen was in no hurry to go back to the hotel. He took a spin around the capital. The capital was quite large, one wouldn't cover it fully without ten days or half a month.

The three of them were walking when they suddenly saw two people hurriedly turn into another alley in front of them.

"Heh heh, hurry up, hurry up. Apparently the Wishing Tower has been opened. This time, up to the eleventh layer of the Wishing Tower has been opened, with only the last couple still sealed. Let's go try our luck."

"Cut your blather and let's go!"

“Damn it, I’m going all out this time. I must pull out a wish above the ninth level. I’ve heard that if you help manifest the wishes above that, you can at least obtain the status of a sixth rank noble!”

“Pfft. Stop dreaming! Would someone put such a wish into the Wishing Tower if you can manifest such a wish? Stop dreaming in broad daylight!”

“That’s not necessarily the case. Have you forgotten what happened two years ago? A wandering practitioner from a small kingdom came to our Skylaurel Kingdom to broaden his worldview and happened to bump into the day of the Wishing Tower opening.He came from some remote backwater land and didn’t know the rules of the Wishing Tower, pulling out a wish of the eleventh level. By some stroke of luck, he could resolve that wish and had his fortunes changed immediately. I think he’s a noble of the fifth rank now! This really was an example of accomplishing an astonishing feat in one night and changing his destiny instantaneously, walking amongst the clouds!”

“That sort of thing only happens once in a hundred years. I’ll be a bit more practical and wish for pulling out a wish that lets me make a bit of money.”

Once Jiang Chen and the others heard the words “Wishing Tower” and the conversation of the two people their interested was stoked..

“Wishing Tower eh? This Skylaurel Kingdom has a lot of curious

aspects. How about we go have some fun too?” They had nothing to do anyways. Jiang Chen wanted to take a look at this Wishing Tower and see just what it was all about. It seemed quite interesting.

Chapter 141: The Wishing Tower

The Wishing Tower was located on the west side of the Skylaurel Kingdom. This side had always been one of the most bustling areas of the capital.

The Wishing Tower was indeed a tower, and was also one of the sacred places of the Skylaurel Kingdom.

The Wishing Tower would always be quite lively every year during holidays, especially during the Mid Autumn Festival. The Wishing Tower was thronged with people then. In the Skylaurel Kingdom, the laurel tree was the national tree and it had much to do with the Mid Autumn Festival.

Laurel trees had been planted in abundance around the Wishing Tower, and the laurel flowers had already bloomed and were exuding a faint fragrance that wafted through the air for ten li.

The Mid Autumn Festival was almost here, and the half month before and after this time was the most happening, most interesting, part of the year for the Wishing Tower.

Jiang Chen finally understood what the Wishing Tower was all about, after asking around.

It turned out that the Wishing Tower was a ceremony that had been passed down in the Skylaurel Kingdom for a thousand years. Anyone from the royal family, to the most impoverished citizens, could place their unresolvable wishes in the Wishing Tower.

A reward would be promised for every wish.

Whomever helped materialize this wish would receive that reward. Of course, every wish placed into the Wishing Tower would be strictly reviewed to ensure that it deserved the corresponding reward.

The Wishing Tower was open once a month.

But during the Mid Autumn Festival, it would be continuously opened for half a month, and the levels which were open would be very high.

There were sixteen levels in total for the Wishing Tower.

On an ordinary day, dependent on the month, the Tower would be opened up to the sixth level, with the eighth level being open at the highest.

During the new year, the Tower would normally be opened to the tenth level, or even the twelfth level.

The Tower would be opened everyday during the month of Mid Autumn, with the highest level being the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, and even higher levels being opened.

Even the sixteenth level would be opened on Mid Autumn’s day.

Of course, no one had ever been up to the sixteenth level. No one was even sure if there were any wishing scrolls on the sixteenth level.

Even if there were, that would be a wish that stretched up to the heavens, with basically no one able to resolve it. It was all abstract representation at that level.

If you handed in a wish scroll to the Wishing Tower, you needed to pay a fee. However, the fee wasn't high, and wishes could be handed in everyday with no restrictions.

If you wished to select a wish scroll, you'd have to wait until the Wishing Tower was open for business.

Today for instance, was an opening day with the advent of Mid Autumn's day, and the scene was quite animated and stirred up.

Of course, it wasn't just anyone who could select a wish scroll. Fees had to be handed in for selecting a scroll, and were much higher than those for handing in a wish scroll.

Ten silver had to be forked over for entering the first level.

Twenty silver for the second.

Fifty silver for the third.

A hundred for the fourth.

The fifth...

Ten thousand silver for the tenth level, with it becoming even more expensive as the level increased.

One had to say, the Wishing Tower was very interesting, but also very pricey.

“Who thought of the Wishing Tower? This is a furious accumulation of wealth by unfair means!” Qiao Baishi sighed in appreciation.

A sea and mountain of those who wanted to go in and select scrolls had formed in front of the Wishing Tower. It was apparent to see that the revenue from just one day of being open was astounding.

Qiao Baishi had always thought that the Hall of Healing made good money, but this Wishing Tower made even more, and made it quite easily to boot.

When the doors opened, the crowd surged forward with cries and yells, eager to send their money inside.

“Young master, let’s go have a gander?” Qiao Baishi thought that

with the honored master's temperament, he would be rather interested in this.

"Let's go and take a look."

Since Jiang Chen wanted to play, he naturally wouldn't consider anything below the tenth level. He took the direct path up, and arrived at the tenth level.

Ten thousand silver would allow you to select one wish scroll at the tenth level.

If you were unable to complete the scroll you selected, the ten thousand silver wouldn't be refunded.

Of course, if you were able to complete the wish, then the rate of return would be at least a hundred or a thousand times greater than this fee, or possibly even greater.

One had to say, there really were plenty of people with money in the Skylaurel Kingdom. There were still quite a few people at the tenth level.

Banknotes worth tens of thousands of silver were continuously handed over.

Some even threw their lot in with one cast of the die, and handed over several tens of thousands of silver, buying a heap of scrolls, and then looking them over one by one in a corner.

These people were normally merchants and the big fish in the business world.

These kinds of people had money but low status in society. They were unable to receive any recognition, and couldn't make it into the upper class circles — they were completely unable to make it into the circle of nobility.

They were trying their luck in coming to the Wishing Tower, trying to see if any prominent character had handed in a wish here that they could help fulfill.

Of course, this possibility was quite low. Normally speaking, the higher level a wish was, the harder it was to fulfill it. If it was a mission that even high officials and noble lords couldn't fulfill, then these big fish in the business world likely had no hope of materializing them either.

Jiang Chen observed for a moment at the door to the tenth level and lifted his head to look up, "What's the highest level that's been opened today?"

"Greetings, the Wishing Tower is opened up to the twelfth level today."

Jiang Chen nodded, "Let's go to the twelfth level."

Jiang Chen wasn't short on money. Although he'd cooperated

with the Hall of Healing for a short period of time, it had also helped him accumulate a lot of wealth.

The price of selecting a scroll in the twelfth level was already as high as fifty thousand silver.

“Honored guest, would you like to try your luck?” The administrator of the twelfth level greeted them quite courteously.

Jiang Chen took out a banknote for a hundred thousand silver. “Let’s play for a round or two.”

There were large banks within the alliance of the sixteen kingdoms and thus banknotes could be circulated between kingdoms. A note for a hundred thousand silver was enough for two scrolls on a twelfth level.

A sexy hostess led Jiang Chen and the others into the inner lobby.

The interior of the Wishing Tower was sumptuously furnished, with each level possessing its own unique character. The twelfth level of the Tower was simple and unsophisticated, boasting of an antique flavor that was permeated with a stately bearing.

Many racks were set up in the lobby. Different areas and different racks represented different wish origins.

There were scrolls from the government, the military, the four

great sites, and all sorts of major agencies and organizations.

The wishes that were placed on the twelfth level were all of a very high level. Basically, any that could be fulfilled would bring astonishing rewards.

Jiang Chen had listened conscientiously along the way. He'd heard that someone had selected a wish and had received the status of a fifth rank noble from the identity of a commoner.

It wasn't that Jiang Chen valued the identity of a noble, but that within the Skylaurel Kingdom, particularly the capital, it was difficult to take even a single step without the status of a noble.

He didn't even have the right to purchase a manor, to speak of nothing else.

Take Tang Long for instance. He'd joined the military already and had become one of the border patrol Wyvern Knights. But he lacked the status of a noble, and thus could only stay within the slums.

This was the reality of the Skylaurel Kingdom.

Even if Jiang Chen viewed fortune and riches as dung and dirt, he was still unable to avoid this reality.

How should he obtain a noble's position in a short amount time? He was wholly uninterested in the status of a noble of the ninth or

eighth rank.

He should at least obtain one of the fifth rank, if not third or fourth, right? Even if the fifth rank posed a bit of difficulty, then one of the sixth rank was his bottom line. He would have no interest in anything lower.

Jiang Chen would absolutely not select a scroll from the military. He was completely uninterested in matters of war. He'd already become weary of mobilizing the million strong Swordbird Army to fight the Darkmoon Army just once or twice. At the end of the day, the circumstances had called for such action.

He temporarily didn't want to have anything to do with the government.

Jiang Chen had gotten tired of matters of politics in the Eastern Kingdom. He knew that that was a minefield — that a slight move on one part might affect the whole.

If he intervened brashly, he would very possibly draw the fire onto himself. Although he wasn't afraid, he'd come to the Skylaurel Kingdom to develop himself, not to raise trouble.

What remained would be the four great sites, the great agencies, and the organization.

Although these powers didn't seem as impressive as the government or military, they actually secretly held the life of the

kingdom in their hands.

Jiang Chen paced back and forth for a bit. These scrolls weren't divided up carefully, and thus it was impossible to know who had handed in which scrolls.

Jiang Chen selected two at random.

The contents of the first one made him laugh involuntarily.

It was obviously from a woman. Her wish was to always appear young, and hope to maintain the looks of a twenty to thirty year old for the next thirty years.

The origins of this scroll was an a Ning surnamed elder in the Azure Heaven Southern Palace.

The rewards of this scroll were indeed quite eye popping. If this wish could be fulfilled, he would directly become the elder's follower and receive the status of a sixth rank noble.

Jiang Chen sighed in resignation. This fifty thousand silver had been a fruitless endeavor. It wasn't impossible to appear young forever, and there were indeed many pills to retain youthful looks.

However, Jiang Chen had no desire to spend so much time and effort on a silly woman. He was about to throw the scroll back when he suddenly flicked a glance at Qiao Baishi at his side.

His hand pausing slightly, and he threw the scroll at Qiao Baishi. “Baishi, this may be suitable for you.”

Jiang Chen had no time to concoct some pills for retaining looks, but Qiao Baishi had the time to.

Qiao Baishi took the scroll and also laughed wryly. “Young master, I know nothing of the art of looking young. Besides, being a follower for this elder, I can already imagine that she must be an excessively narcissistic bitter woman in the throes of early menopause. I think I’ll pass?”

“Haha, you can avoid being a follower, but being a noble of the sixth rank is not bad.”

Just as Jiang Chen had said, there was no benefit in being the follower of an elder. This kind of narcissistic female elder would also be very difficult to serve.

However, the status of a sixth rank noble had quite an allure. Quite a few number of people had come with Jiang Chen to the Skylaurel Kingdom this time.

They had to be settled somewhere.

The more noble identities they obtained, naturally the better. Approaching this from many venues, if this method didn’t work, then perhaps another would.

The most important thing was to temporarily assure themselves of a noble's status so that they could establish a foothold within the capital.

They couldn't very well continue to live in hotels everyday.

Chapter 142: The Wish Scroll

Jiang Chen was also similarly stunned when he opened the second scroll.

He had thought that after reaching the twelfth level, the level of wishes within the Tower would be high end, high class, and grandiose.

He discovered that he'd been sadly naive.

The two scrolls that he'd selected had been enough to thoroughly destroy his illusions.

The first one was from some narcissistic female elder from the Azure Heaven Southern Palace who fantasized about retaining her youthful looks. That wish had been from a self-absorbed woman who was exceedingly sentimental about being youthful and beautiful.

The second wish scroll was actually from an alcoholic.

This person had once tasted a kind of wine somewhere called the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine. He'd only had a small bit, a mere half cup and had never tasted it again after traversing a thousand mountains and ten thousand bodies of water.

He'd reminisced over the taste of the wine continuously, and it nearly turned into an internal demon of his after decades.

Therefore, this wish scroll was to once again taste the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine and resolve his many years of yearning.

Anyone who could help him resolve this wish could find him at the Myriad Treasures Palace, and the identity of this wisher was actually a vice head of the Myriad Treasures Palace.

The reward that he'd promised was actually a middle to upper management position within the Myriad Treasures Palace and the bestowment of the identity of a fifth rank noble. These motions were even more generous and ostentatious than those of the female elder from the Azure Heaven Southern Palace.

The two wishes made Jiang Chen speechless beyond belief.

Women were born with a love for beauty and alcoholics a love for wine.

"What in the seven hells. All random things exist alright. I'd thought that on the twelfth level of the Wishing Tower, the wishes contained would all be quite high class. Geez, I was seriously too naive." Jiang Chen sighed.

Qiao Baishi and Gouyu were equally speechless when they saw the scroll.

They'd also discovered at the same time, that the lifestyles of those with power and those without were completely different in

the capital of the Skylaurel Kingdom.

Those who could issue such a boring wishes were undoubtedly those with exceedingly high amounts of power. They would certainly wield large amounts of resources in their hands and control an extremely strong level of influence.

Otherwise, they wouldn't portion out one of their appointments for nobles onto such a boring wish.

Even though this wasn't considered extremely extravagant, but the operating styles of the powerful and influential were truly on another level.

"Young master, how about we select a few more?" Qiao Baishi was also someone who wasn't short on money.

"Let's go with these two." Jiang Chen waved his hands. These two wishes were personal in nature, and thus a bit easier to fulfill in comparison to those that were embroiled in the conflicts between power and influence.

"These two?" Qiao Baishi was slightly startled. "But we..."

"It's just refining pills and making wine, that won't be a challenge for us." Jiang Chen stuck the two scrolls beneath his armpit and walked towards the front counter.

"Greetings sir, what can I do for you?" The receptionist at the

front counter was also exceedingly polite. He spoke in soft tones that were quite pleasing to the ear.

“I can fulfill both of these wishes, is there a time limit?” Jiang Chen asked.

“Hello, there is theoretically no time limit, but naturally the faster the better as others may also select the same wish, giving rise to potential competition. When there is competition, whoever fulfills it first will receive the reward.”

“That is to say that I can’t take these scrolls with me?” Jiang Chen nodded.

“Yes, my apologies, but you cannot remove these scrolls. Please come back if you fulfill a wish. We will review it strictly through various extensive methods. Of this you can be rest assured of. The Wishing Tower is a tradition that we’ve passed down for a thousand years and have always maintained a standard so high that not even a drop of water could pass through. We’ve never ever had errors committed.”

“Most excellent, then let’s decide on these two wishes.”

“Very good, I’ll register them, please wait a moment.” The various procedures were completed shortly.

“Sir, please store these documents away carefully, they will be your proof of validity later on. In addition, do you require any

other services?”

Jiang Chen chuckled, “I’ll take a look around.”

In all matters, more than enough is too much. Jiang Chen naturally had much more advantage than the others in selecting wish scrolls, but if his performance was too heaven defying, it would attract much too much attention and that wouldn’t lead to anything good.

He only wanted to obtain a noble’s status to settle down within the capital. Making a name for himself could only come after his foundations had been laid firm.

Otherwise, if his repute was too eye catching, it would attract the attentions from various sides and incur unnecessary trouble.

There were simply too many examples of shooting down the bird who takes the lead.

Jiang Chen had no desire to become the center of attention after arriving at a foreign environment and having not yet stabilized his foundations. Roasting himself on the rack brought no advantages to him.

After selecting his wish, Jiang Chen took a spin around the various levels of the Wishing Tower, deciding to leave after seeing increasingly greater amounts of people pour in.

They left the Wishing Tower with some difficulty. After Jiang Chen made it to the bottom of the tower and breathed in the refreshing, faint laurel fragrance in the fresh air, he sighed involuntarily, “To think that this country would be so fervent about the Wishing Tower!”

After being passed down through a thousand years, the Wishing Tower was no longer a simple location for fulfilling wishes. It was a type of heritage and a type of psychological support.

Just like many kingdoms celebrated the new year for a justified reason, this was a type of cultural inheritance.

Everyone from the monarch down to ordinary citizens were willing to be a part of this. This was also why the public was so enthusiastic when the Wishing Tower was opened.

After returning to the hotel, Jiang Chen locked himself in his room and took out brush and paper, putting down some sketches and words.

The millions of years of memories ingrained in him from his past life had encompassed almost all professions, with winemaking also one of the professions that he’d spent quite some time researching.

This was because many practitioners were very interested in the contents of a cup. The life of a practitioner was long and endless, and the long road of training sometimes passed by arduously.

Therefore, wine was naturally an item that practitioners could not do without.

Drinking wine, tasting wine, and appreciating wine were a particular affection shared by many practitioners.

But the most important thing was, many pill masters like to connect making wine and refining pills, perfectly combining the two types of art.

Infusing spirit medicine into wine would make the end product both satisfy a craving and have the effects of medicine.

Jiang Chen had conducted quite a bit of study in this regard in his past life.

He wasn't unfamiliar with the name of Nine Magnificence Dew Wine. In reality, this had been a wine that he'd oft created in his past life.

Except, the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine of his past life was naturally not something that the vice head of the Myriad Treasures Palace had the right to sip. The Nine Magnificence Dew Wine was divided into the common, spirit, saint, earth, and heaven ranks.

In Jiang Chen's past life, he'd studied the history of this wine quite a bit as well as all its ranks.

What he was curious about now was whether the vice head of the

Myriad Treasures Palace had tasted the common rank or spirit rank of the wine?

It was naturally impossible for him to have tasted any greater.

Jiang Chen suspected that it was very likely the spirit rank. If it'd only been the common rank, it wouldn't have been enough for the vice head to yearn after constantly. He was a vice head after all, and wouldn't have such a limited breadth of experience.

The Nine Magnificence Dew Wine could be more accurately named as the Nineflower Dew Wine. The heart of this wine was combining the essence of nine flowers to create an exceedingly wondrous wine that was unforgettable after the first sip.

This type of wine had a unique fragrance, making it difficult for one to forget after one taste.

Jiang Chen could understand the sensation that the vice head had described, because the taste of the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine was truly very unique, making one unable to forget it for the rest of their lives after the initial sip.

Drinking wine was a sort of addiction at the end, and this Nine Magnificence Dew Wine was the kind to make someone unknowingly yearn for it. The drinker would always pine after it after having it once.

It would seem that the vice head of the Myriad Treasures Palace

was surely one who enjoyed fine wine. Otherwise, he wouldn't pay such an exorbitant price and yearn for a mouthful of the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine with his every thought and breath.

Jiang Chen wrote out the crafting recipe for the common and spirit rank Nine Magnificence Dew Wine, recalling it from his memory. As for saint level, that was temporarily unnecessary.

The ingredients for the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine were difficult to collect.

Even if he did collect nine kinds of flowers, if he didn't pick the right supplementary ingredients and they slightly conflicted with the main ingredients, then the wine would turn out to be a complete waste.

The ingredients for the common rank Nine Magnificence Dew Wine and spirit rank Nine Magnificence Dew Wine were completely different.

Of course, the ingredients for a common rank Nine Magnificence Dew Wine weren't those of rare or precious plants. It wouldn't be that difficult to collect them.

It was the nine main ingredients of the spirit rank Nine Magnificence Dew Wine that would take some effort in gathering. The selection of supplementary ingredients would even more so it would be a true test of skill.

The supplementary ingredients of the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine were to enhance the fragrance of the nine types of flowers. They were to fuse the scent of the nine kinds of flowers and fully assimilate their scent into the taste of wine, so that they wouldn’t be separate from the taste of the wine.

Each flower needed one supplementary ingredient, but more than due care had to be taken in the selection of every supplementary ingredient. They absolutely couldn’t conflict with any of the other main ingredients.

This was a true test of skill.

The knowledge and skill contained within was something that many crafters were unable to gain a complete handle on for the entirety of their lives. This was also the reason why this wine was rarely passed down through the ages and why there was almost none of this wine in existence.

An ordinary person would be able to enable his offsprings and generations of descendants to enjoy eternal fortune and prosperity if they could simply grasp this skill.

The wish scroll gave Jiang Chen some inspiration.

If he wanted to establish a foundation within the capital in the short term, perhaps the art of crafting wine would be a good decision.

All other venues would more or less become embroiled within all sorts of struggles. The art of crafting wine was relatively simple.

The practice of drinking was quite prevalent within the Skylaurel Kingdom. All men tended to drink, and drink fine wine at that. Even the majority of the women had a sip or two.

The eight personal guards came back later that night, all bringing back some useful information, more or less.

One could see that they had tried quite hard today.

Of course, Jiang Chen knew that they needed this kind of training. Having been born from such a small place, there would be no place for them in a place like Skylaurel Kingdom if they didn't go out and train for a bit.

Over the next few days, Jiang Chen delegated the eight personal guards to buy ingredients separately. He chose mid sized spirit medicine shops, instructing them to avoid the large sized ones if possible.

Most of the ingredients had been purchased after a day. There were still two supplementary ingredients that were unavailable even in the large stores.

Jiang Chen felt it a bit odd. Although these supplementary ingredients were a bit uncommon, they weren't to the point of being unpurchasable everywhere.

He asked around privately and finally understood that it wasn't that there were none of the ingredients available, but that all major storefronts had hidden them and weren't selling them.

The reason was simple. The Azure Heaven Southern Palace planned to hold a great exhibition in the capital in a few days. The contents of this exhibition would be rich, with the Southern Palace sending out many spirit alchemists at that time.

Apart from the public clinic, there would be all sorts of transactions and pill medicine exhibition displays.

It would seem then that many of the best items wouldn't be sold in the lead up to the event. The shopkeepers all wanted to see if they could sell them for even higher prices due to storing them up previously for the transaction fair.

Chapter 143: To Slap Or To Be Slapped?

As one of the four great locations of the Skylaurel Kingdom, the Azure Heaven Southern Palace had an enormous reputation. Its influence was almost unmatched within the southeastern region of the Skylaurel Kingdom.

In comparison to the tyrannical reputation of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace, the Southern Palace appeared much more practical and friendly.

Of course, this had something to do with its location as well.

The capital of the Skylaurel Kingdom was in the southeastern region of the kingdom. This region was where the core of the royal family's power was located.

It was obviously impossible for the Southern Palace to be as domineering and bratty as the Northern Palace.

Within a kingdom, the power and influence of the royal family was still paramount. If the Southern Palace didn't keep a low profile to the side of the royal family, how would the latter tolerate their existence?

How would an outsider be allowed to snore next to your bed?

Therefore, in stark contrast to the tyrannical domination of the Northern Palace, the Southern Palace had an exceptionally good

reputation, and was the location out of the four that was most willing to enter society.

The Qingyang Valley kept as low a profile as they could. Their members almost never made an appearance in society, and very rarely formed relationships with those in the outside world.

Apart from recruiting, they had almost no business with the outside world.

The Myriad Treasures Palace both spanned the greatest breadth of all of the locations and was involved in every field, but emphasized doing business.

As opposed to saying that the Myriad Treasures Palace was a site for conducting rituals, it would be more accurate to say that it was a place that the Precious Tree Sect had established to do business within a common kingdom.

In addition, the areas that the Myriad Treasures Palace were involved with were quite broad.

Pills, spirit medicine, spirit weapons, martial methods, secret arts, talismans and seals, spirit creatures...

All sorts of popular fields, non mainstream fields — there was almost no business that the Myriad Treasures Palace didn't partake in.

Since the two supplementary ingredients he needed could be obtained in a few days at the exhibition, Jiang Chen wasn't in a hurry because of just a few additional days.

These merchants were simply trying to raise prices by not selling their wares now. Although Jiang Chen could still purchase them by bidding a high price, he stuck to his principles of keeping a low profile, and didn't wish to draw overt attention.

He wouldn't be able to start making wine the instant he'd purchased these two supplementary ingredients anyways.

After all, making wine required the use of a wine distillery and all sorts of equipment.

Equipment was easy to take care of, but finding a wine distillery would take more time. It was a good thing that the atmosphere of enjoying wine within the Skylaurel Kingdom was quite prevalent, and that there were many wine distilleries up for rent.

Over the next couple of days, Jiang Chen sent out his people to ask around, finally finished negotiating with a wine distillery that had come down in the world, and signed a short term lease agreement with it.

After everything had been readied, the great exhibition from the Southern Palace proceeded as planned.

Jiang Chen brought his followers to the exhibition location early

that morning.

Apart from the Myriad Treasures Palace being right outside the capital, none of the core territories of the other four locations were in the capital. But as great powers within the kingdom, they all had their own turf within the capital.

The Azure Heaven Southern Palace was no exception.

Jiang Chen had thought that he'd come quite early, but discovered that he wasn't the earliest when he arrived. When they arrived, there were already many present.

All sorts of booths and transaction counters were decked out in full array, and the entire scene was bustling.

Jiang Chen's goal this trip was the two supplementary ingredients.

When he arrived at the transaction area though, there were so many rows of booths that it was difficult for his eyes to take in.

However, he also knew that the two supplementary ingredients were relatively uncommon, and thus ordinary booths wouldn't have them. Only those belonging to the great powers would have them in stock.

Therefore, he made directly for the VIP area.

The VIP area was filled with the influential powers and great merchants of the Skylaurel Kingdom.

Anyone who could have a booth in the VIP area was basically at an awesome level of existence.

It went without saying that the Southern Palace would have spots. The other three locations had also received invitations and sent many representatives.

When Jiang Chen and the others neared the VIP section, a pair of eyes immediately discovered them from a spot inside the transaction area.

This person was a disciple of the Northern Palace, and had participated in the battle pursuing Jiang Chen's group. However, this person was only of the true qi realm, and wasn't too conspicuous.

When this person saw Jiang Chen, his head retracted slightly, and he lowered his head. He walked to the side of one of the people in charge on the Northern Palace side and murmured a few words next to the person's ears.

This person was also roughly twenty or so years old, and had look of cunning shrewdness on his face. When he heard the words of his peers, his eyes formed into a long slit as he glanced semi unwittingly in Jiang Chen's direction.

He only gave a hasty flick and retracted his gaze, obviously afraid of acting rashly and alerting the enemy.

He then said a few words to his peer and nodded his head slightly, speaking a few words in exhortation — plainly already formulating some sort of scheme.

Jiang Chen's attention naturally didn't take heed of all of this.

"Do you have Bluelily Grass and Wooden Pellets?"

"No!"

"Boss, how much are you selling these Bluelily Grass and Wooden Pellets for?"

"Eh, this is just a sample, it's not for sale."

"Brother, what price are the Bluelily Grass and Wooden Pellets going for?"

"My apologies, someone's already reserved these items and I can't sell them!"

"Boss..."

“My apologies, I don’t have any Bluelily Grass or Wooden Pellets.”

Jiang Chen only discovered that something was afoot after he started inquiring about the two ingredients. He could’ve brushed it off as the merchants stockpiling and not selling if he hadn’t been able to purchase these two items two days ago, the merchants wanting to obtain a high price.

But the transaction fair had started already… then, did they still wish to raise their prices? Business had never seemed to be done in this fashion, starting from ancient times.

The items were right there, but they had all sorts of excuses for not selling.

If everyone was doing so, then he’d let it go. But everyone was conducting their purchasing and selling of all sorts of spirit medicines quite smoothly. Although their prices veered on the high side, no one had run into the same baffling treatment that Jiang Chen had run into.

Every store he walked into would either not sell, or would find all sorts of excuses.

This was truly strange. Jiang Chen hadn’t thought that he’d be able to draw such hatred, being a newly person arrived in the capital, such that all the merchants would unite against him.

The first being that Jiang Chen thought of was the Azure Heaven Northern Palace.

He took another look at the Northern Palace booths. They appeared quite busy and crowded, with plenty of people standing in front of them and bustingly with activity.

Qiao Baishi walked up at this moment and said lowly, “Young master, your subordinate just handed over some silver and asked these merchants. It seems that... the merchants have formed an accord in that they won’t sell anything that you wish to buy to you.”

“Why is that?”

“I think the Azure Heaven Northern Palace is purposefully making life difficult for you.” Qiao Baishi speculated.

“The Northern Palace?” Jiang Chen’s gaze turned cold. He hadn’t fully collected on the debt for the Northern Palace irritating him last time — did these fellows want to give him trouble within the capital?

Old and new grudges surged up together as a bit of killing intent flashed through Jiang Chen’s eyes.

“Mm. Who else is there apart from the Northern Palace? It’s impossible for these merchants to not give the Northern Palace face. It’s rather normal for the four great sites to give each other

face. After all, we have no influence or power within the capital, and no one would be willing to offend the Northern Palace over this small matter."

Jiang Chen also felt that Qiao Baishi's analysis made a great deal of sense. But the Northern Palace was truly being too childish by playing this hand.

"If they're unwilling to sell to me what I want to buy, will they still refuse to sell if someone else buys for me?"

Qiao Baishi smiled ruefully, "I seemed to hear that the Azure Heaven Northern Palace has released word that they're buying Bluelily Grass and Wooden Pellets at a high price. They're buying up all of these two items today, and will pay double."

"Tsk tsk, they're willing to pay a high price." Jiang Chen smiled coldly. "This is to say, they're going to buy whatever I want?"

"Ai, come come come. We're purchasing Bluelily Grass and Wooden Pellets at high prices. Our Azure Heaven Northern Palace is willing to buy as much stock as there is!"

A fellow suddenly cupped his hands by his mouth and started hollering and yelling by the booths of the Northern Palace.

He smirked and winked in Jiang Chen's direction as he yelled, obviously purposefully displaying his strength.

“Damn it!” Gouyu couldn’t help it but want to grip her sword handle.

“Don’t be rash.” Jiang Chen flung out his sleeve and halted Gouyu’s action of fumbling for her sword

“They go too far in their bullying!” Princess Gouyu was indeed quite ticked off as her chest heaved, obviously heavily angered.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, as he walked over with slow steps and stood in front of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace booth.

“You’re planning on cornering the market aren’t you? If I recall correctly, this is a transaction fair held by the Southern Palace, when was it the Northern Palace’s turn to behave wildly?” Jiang Chen asked faintly.

“Kid, you can eat out of the wrong bowl but you can’t say the wrong words. This is normal purchasing behavior. What cornering the market? Don’t spew blood from your mouth.” The person in charge smiled coldly at Jiang chen.

“Tsk tsk, isn’t it said that the Northern Palace won’t dare admit to their deeds? You guys even dare do things like killing and looting others, but don’t dare admit to these sort of acts? Normal purchasing behavior? Doesn’t your face flush red when you utter these words?” Jiang Chen laughed contemptuously.

The face of the person in charge darkened, “What? Do you see a

rule that says we can't make our purchases? Make your own if you have the skills to. This is fair competition!"

"Fair competition?"

"Indeed." The person in charge strutted. "It isn't that I, with the Zhang surname, hold you in contempt, but if you can buy the Bluelily Grass and Wooden Pellets here today, I'll crawl out from here!"

The person in charge had a sharp eye and he could tell that Jiang Chen likely didn't have much of a position within the capital. Otherwise, he wouldn't use this short of method to purchase these two items.

A person who utterly lacked methods like this fellow was on a completely different level to his Northern Palace. How would the merchants of the transaction fair today not give face to his Northern Palace and sell the two items to Jiang Chen instead?

Therefore, the person in charge felt greatly assured when he spoke these words. He wanted to leverage his actions in this matter to suppress Jiang Chen and curry favor with his senior brother Liu who was already in the spirit realm.

Although senior brother Liu hadn't come today, if he did this matter well, it would surely travel to senior brother Liu's ears.

The person in charge had committed these actions to fawn over a

spirit realm practitioner, and had raised such a fuss.

He also firmly believed this because he'd been in this line of business for so many years and had deep and vast connections. Those who'd appeared here today were all old faces. They all met regularly and frequently, therefore who would deny him this face?

Besides, this kid looked like a foreigner. Even if they weren't his old pals, these merchants wouldn't offend him, a disciple of the Northern Palace, for a foreigner.

Jiang Chen looked at this person and then looked at the expressions of the merchants surrounding them, watching them with the look of enjoying a good show. A trace of a smile appeared on the corners of his lips.

"Crawl out? Are you sure?"

The person in charge puffed out his chest, "Yes. If you can buy them, I'll crawl around this transaction area three times. What will you do if you can't buy them?"

Since he was going to suppress Jiang Chen, the person in charge didn't want to simply ban him from the market. The more he humiliated Jiang Chen, the more capital he'd have in the future for currying favor with senior brother Liu.

Not only did he wish to force out Jiang Chen, he also wanted to make use of the opportunity to thoroughly stomp on him, utterly

shaming him, and making it so that he had no face to stay in the capital anymore.

Chapter 144: A Crude And Simple Way Of Face Slapping

At the end of the day, Jiang Chen was someone who'd lived two lifetimes. Therefore, how could he possibly be provoked by such childish tactics, and from someone who was jumping around like a clown to boot?

Jiang Chen smirked disdainfully, "I'll be unable to buy it? Is there anything that isn't for sale beneath the heavens?"

The person in charge scoffed coldly, his eyes sweeping across all of the other merchants, obviously warning them to not sell to Jiang Chen at any cost. Otherwise, it'd be a denial of face for him and for the Northern Palace.

Except, Jiang Chen ignored his small moves, as a hint of a meaningful smile clung to the corner of his lips throughout all of this.

His leisurely gaze swept across all of the merchants. They either averted their gazes, didn't even lift their heads, or smiled ruefully and shook their heads.

It was apparent that if they were to choose, they wouldn't stand on the side of a foreigner.

Even if they weren't necessarily on the best of terms with this person from the Northern Palace, and weren't of the same mind as

this person in charge.

However, the circumstances demanded thus. These were the hidden rules.

The Northern Palace representative was obviously well aware of this. His confidence was bolstered even more upon seeing everyone's reactions, and he smiled arrogantly at Jiang Chen in a display of power.

The meaning was obvious: Well? Why don't you try and buy something?

Jiang Chen remained as noncommittal as the wind and clouds, barking out a laugh as he took a slight step into the center.

He raised a single arm, a pill bottle appearing in his hand. His voice was level, a smile teasing the corners of his mouth as he said calmly, "I have a supreme rank Vast Ocean Pill here that can instantly recover seventy percent true qi. I don't need to elaborate more on the value of this pill. With this pill, I will trade it for ten blades of Bluelily Grass and twenty Wooden Pellets. First come first served, with no waiting around after the time limit."

Those small moves and tricks, and so-called hidden rules of business were actually all extremely weak, having only to do with personal considerations.

There were no hidden rules that couldn't be broken in the face of

absolute profit. Besides, those hidden rules weren't dependable at all.

A supreme rank Vast Ocean Pill could instantly recover seventy percent true qi.

In the qi replenishing pill realm of the entire sixteen kingdom alliance, pills apart from the Vast Ocean Pill could at most recover forty percent of true qi.

A pill master could occasionally go above and beyond and produce a pill that recovered fifty percent true qi.

However, recovering seventy percent was unheard of.

The Hall of Healing had actually started producing the Vast Ocean Pill in the Eastern Kingdom a few months ago, but its production numbers weren't high yet and a pitiful amount had trickled into the Skylaurel Kingdom.

But once the Vast Ocean Pill had made its entrance, it had made exceedingly great waves in the Skylaurel Kingdom. It'd become the height of fashion, and it was difficult to find even a single pill in the entire upper class society of the kingdom.

This was no wonder. After all, the amount produced by the Hall of Healing wasn't even enough to satisfy demand within the Eastern Kingdom itself. There were countless orders.

The numbers of pills that had made their way into the sixteen kingdoms was incredibly low.

Therefore, although the Vast Ocean Pill had a great reputation within the Skylaurel Kingdom, the number of people who possessed this pill were exceedingly few.

Plus, no one had ever heard of a supreme rank Vast Ocean Pill that could recover seventy percent true qi.

The entire transaction area suddenly became deadly quiet after Jiang Chen had spoken, and a solemn stillness reigned supreme at the scene.

Everyone seemed to shut their mouths with great accordance.

“Supreme rank Vast Ocean Pill? Spontaneously recover seventy percent true qi?” Someone’s mind finally started moving again.

“In exchange for only ten blades of Bluelily Grass and twenty Wooden Pellets? This… is this a joke?”

“No way? The value of ten blades of Bluelily Grass and twenty Wooden Pellets aren’t even worth an ordinary Vast Ocean Pill? A supreme rank? Is this really right?”

“Could this young man have gone mad and is speaking crazy nonsense?”

Words could be nonsensically spoken, but there was no faking a pill. Jiang Chen didn't indulge in meaningless boasts, but merely tipped the bottle so that a supreme rank Vast Ocean Pill landed in the heart of his palm.

When the pill appeared, everyone's eyes simultaneously focused on him.

In the span of an instant, everyone's breathing became hurried and their eyes became fervent.

It really was the Vast Ocean Pill!

The color and luster, the presence, the purity, and that appearance that was full of spirit power, it was like a pill filled with the presence of life, full of heart moving vigor and vitality.

This kind of temptation was like a beautiful woman with a lithe figure and wondrous curves, wearing only a thin veil of clothing and the splendor underneath moving in and out of sight, making it almost impossible for someone to resist and made one's blood vessels involuntarily pump out blood.

Could anyone withstand such temptation?

For some so-called face? So-called hidden rules? To beat down on a foreigner for that bunch of jerks from the Northern Palace?

That was obviously was laughably ridiculous.

Business was business. Profit was always first.

“Brother, do you mean that? I, I’m willing to offer twenty blades of Bluelily Grass and fifty Wooden Pellets to trade. No matter how much you need, just tell me and I’ll help you gather it.”

“Don’t listen to him, this is our Southern Palace territory. There’s no one here with more stock than us. Brother, we can discuss however much you need.”

“Please, aren’t you fellows ashamed of yourselves to be talking about spirit medicine in front of us Qingyang Valley disciples? Don’t you feel shamefaced? Who amongst you lot has higher quality Bluelily Grass and Wooden Pellets than our Qingyang Valley?”

Qingyang Valley?

Jiang Chen couldn’t help but look in that person’s direction. It was a middle aged man who was dressed like a farmer and was the type who couldn’t be able to be picked out in a crowd.

However, this person’s eyebrows were currently dancing with pleasure as he had a face full of ardent eagerness. When he saw Jiang Chen’s gaze land on him, he nodded and bowed even more fawningly, giving off the appearance of being overwhelmed by an unexpected favor.

“This fellow probably doesn’t know of the agreement between me and Elder Fei? Otherwise how could he have dared joined forces with the Northern Palace earlier and refuse to sell to me?”

Jiang Chen paid no heed to small matters such as these at this moment but smiled faintly. He didn’t say yes or no, but merely watched this group of people.

“Brother, how about this. Give my Southern Palace some face and you can come find me whenever you need any spirit medicine, and I’ll give you ten percent off everything.”

“I will say it again. All of you need to step aside when it comes spirit medicine in the Skylaurel Kingdom. What does the Qingyang Valley do? We specialize in cultivating spirit medicine, that’s our trade.” The farmer-esque Qingyang Valley middle aged man said with a look of pride.

“Psht! Look at you strutting around! What precious thing hasn’t our Myriad Treasures Palace seen? You only grow some some spirit medicines, why don’t you compete in some other area with our Myriad Treasures Palace?” A Myriad Treasures Palace disciple opened his mouth to retort and then immediately faced Jiang Chen, his face wreathed in smiles. “This brother, surely you’ve heard of the Myriad Treasures Palace’s reputation. We do great business, particularly in appreciation of exotic and bizarre treasures such as this supreme rank Vast Ocean Pill. This pill is hard to obtain within the Skylaurel Kingdom, and it’s not worth it for you to trade it for mere Bluelily Grass and Wooden Pellets. How about this, my Myriad Treasures Palace will give these items to you

for free. Treat it as a sign of friendship. I only have one request, and it's to consign your supreme rank Vast Ocean Pill. If we auction it off at the auction fair this autumn, we may be able to obtain an extraordinary price. What do you say? Not only do you not lose, but you also stand to profit greatly. And by attracting such a VIP to the Myriad Treasures Palace, I can gain face and revenue. It's a win-win situation!"

This disciple was most definitely from the Myriad Treasures Palace. One could see that he was adept at doing business. His words were logical and reasonable, and paid heed to personal considerations and business. This made even Jiang Chen feel a bit tempted.

At this time, the one who was the worst off was that person in charge of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace. His face was as dark as if someone has splashed ink onto his face.

All of the merchants had betrayed him in the midst of battling and vying with each other to offer benefits to that person, practically wishing to serve themselves up on a silver platter.

What was this?

This was slapping his face, leaving not the slightest shred of face for him, a disciple of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace!

But he also knew the reason for these people losing their composure. If it was anyone else, he would've surely done the same thing.

Who could resist a supreme rank Vast Ocean Pill?!

Seeing that the atmosphere at the scene was becoming more and more fervent, his face burned with increasing heat. He wanted to slip away before anyone paid attention to him to avoid losing more face.

One had to know, he had spoken great words just now. If Jiang Chen could purchase Bluelily Grass and Wooden Pellets here, then he'd crawl around the transaction area three times!

Now, under these circumstances, not to mention selling, there was a huge group of people crying and wailing to pounce on the offer by giving it to Jiang Chen for free. He'd truly lost a lot of face this time.

"Eh? Brother Zhang, where are you going?"

It was a damned pity that a piercing voice traveled to him when he was halfway out of the door.

Someone had snitched on him!

This disciple of the Northern Palace dearly wished to crawl into a crack in the ground. His entire being stiffened where he stood. He could neither walk on nor retreat.

His expression was like someone had clapped a basin of feces and pee onto his face, the epitome of being bedraggled.

“I… I’m going to the latrines.” The person in charge with surname Zhang spoke with a bitter face and a conflicted expression.

This repressed excuse resulted in a wave of sarcastic jeering from all those assembled. Since the hidden rules had been broken now, people no longer had anything they were concerned about.

Jiang Chen smiled, “Your brave and lofty words just now don’t seem to have much use. I’d really thought that your Northern Palace could corner the market in a domineering fashion. It looks like you onlywrapped yourself in tiger skin to intimidate others.”

“You… brat, don’t you get uppity!”

“Who’s being uppity? Who was throwing his weight around just now? Who was it who said that if we could buy these two items, he’d crawl three times around this area?” Gouyu couldn’t help but take a step forward, plant her hands on her waist and hector, “Now, are you going to crawl around the transaction area three times by yourself, or should I find a rope and lead you around for three circles?”

“I…” As a disciple of the Northern Palace, it was the first time that this person in charge with surname Zhang had lost so much face. He looked around desperately in all directions, sending out all sorts of pleas for help, hoping that someone would lend him a

helping hand.

But who would help him out of a bind in this moment?

Everyone was but an acquaintance to each other in setting up booths here to do business. They could help him bully a foreigner. But now that they knew that not only could they not bully the foreigner but should fawn on him instead, whoever spoke up for disciple Zhang would be have to be missing half a brain.

When a wall is about to collapse, everyone gives it a push. Although no one was stepping forward to give it a push, the expressions on their faces clearly showed that they were watching a good show which was not too much different from pushing down a wall together.

“Forget it, forget it. A bunch of people who forget honor at the prospect of profits and have no loyalty to speak of. I, the disciple of the Northern Palace, would rather die than be humiliated.”

The fellow stiffened his neck and simply decided to play the rogue, jeering at Jiang Chen, “Either you chop off my head with one stroke or forget about making me, a disciple of the Northern Palace, bend my knee and bow to you! That’s completely impossible!”

Chapter 145: Hitting Someone In Addition To Slapping Face

“You’re making a fool of yourself!”

Just as everyone was thoroughly speechless at this Northern Palace disciple’s shameless tactics, a cold admonishment traveled in from afar.

A middle-aged man walked out with large strides, wearing an apricot colored robe shortly thereafter.

All of the representatives of various powers had gazes filled with hints of both respect and fear when they saw this person. Some even looked at that Northern Palace disciple with the air of delighting in his misfortunes.

They all knew that this fellow was about to be punished..

An apricot colored robe represented that one was an administrator of the Azure Heaven Southern Palace. There were also three short swords embroidered onto the chest of this administrator’s robes. It was obvious that he was one who was in charge of penalties and punishment, and was someone with great power and influence.

That disciple of the Northern Palace hastened to greet the administrator, saying in a fawning tone, “Sir Bei, you’ve arrived.”

Sir Bei was expressionless as he shot cold looks at the Northern Palace disciple, “I’ve always heard that the Northern Palace had an insufferable style in the western part of the kingdom, a style as if no one could beat them. It now looks like the rumors are true. To think that you even dare to cause trouble at a grand exhibition that my Southern Palace is holding in the capital, beneath the feet of the royal liege. Your boldness knows no bounds!”

“I, I…” The Northern Palace disciple’s face turned ashen as his legs trembled from fright, and he almost cried out in his anxiousness.

“Come!” Sir Bei’s face was darkened.

Several disciples enforcing the law immediately surged out from the back like wolves and tigers.

“Take him away and cane him a hundred times. If he dies, feed him to the dogs. If not, tell him to get the hell out of the capital! Kill him and his friends on sight if they are seen again at one of my Southern Palace’s pill exhibitions!”

Sir Bei coldly gave the cruel order.

“Ah, Sir Bei, don’t beat me, don’t beat me!” The Northern Palace disciple started crying in his desperation. “I’m the nephew of Elder Huyan of the Northern Palace, don’t beat me…”

“Another hundred strokes!” Sir Bei’s expression was wooden.

“Sir Bei, you are… you are slapping Elder Huyan’s face!” The Northern Palace disciple screamed shrilly. Another hundred strokes made for two hundred in total. At best, he’d be crippled if not dead.

A trace of a cold smile appeared on Sir Bei’s frozen face as he waved his hand, “Haul him out and beat him until he’s dead!”

The disciple that had faced off with Jiang Chen along with a couple of his followers were hauled out like dead dogs amidst a din of dreadful howls.

Sir Bei’s gaze was severe as it swept the scene. “Remember this, whoever dares to cause trouble at a grand occasion held by the Southern Palace will pay the price.”

“No matter how great your status or your backer, I am the keeper of the law for the Southern Palace. Threatening me with your patrons? That’s meaningless to me.”

This Sir Bei’s thunderous methods displayed to everyone his coldhearted impartialness.

Some fellows who were not quite on the straight and narrow also proceeded forth cautiously.

Sir Bei’s gaze fell onto Jiang Chen’s body and he nodded slightly. “Young man, you’re not at fault for the matters of today. My

surname is Bei, if you run into any more difficulties here, you can directly report it to me. I represent the Southern Palace and apologize to you for the matters of just now."

This Sir Bei was incorruptible and unmoved by entreaty. Jiang Chen was slightly surprised to see Sir Bei apologize to him.

"Sir Bei speaks too gravely. The bad eggs of the community still number amongst the few. However, I rather admire Sir Bei's just methods and impartialness."

"Nothing can be accomplished without norms or standards. The reputation of my Azure Heaven Southern Palace is at stake. How would I let it be ruined by an evildoer?"

Jiang Chen nodded. One had to say, he had quite a bit of goodwill towards this Sir Bei. It had been particularly satisfying to see the Northern Palace fellows dragged out like dead dogs.

"No matter the case, I still thank Sir Bei for administering the law justly." Jiang Chen cupped his hands.

Sir Bei waved his hands, "Buying and selling fairly is the most basic matter. Be at ease, no one will dare to be up to anymore shenanigans here. However, although they won't look to me for an answer after killing a disciple of the Northern Palace today, it's very likely that they'll come looking for you. You must be prepared."

Jiang Chen was rather touched that a senior executive of the Southern Palace, a keeper of the law, could speak so candidly without reservation.

“Sir Bei is right in your reminders. I will pay attention.”

The Northern Palace causing trouble for him? Flames of anger rose up from his heart whenever he thought of the four words, ‘Azure Heaven Northern Palace’ and of that group of disciples that had attempted highway robbery that day when they were heading for the capital.

Jiang Chen hadn’t forgotten this old grudge. He was only waiting until after he found his footing in the Skylaurel Kingdom. When he did so, he would surely make the Northern Palace pay ten times over.

One had to say, Sir Bei’s influence was quite frightening. After making an example of the Northern disciple, everyone was much more honest within the transaction area.

Although they all knew of the extreme temptation from Jiang Chen’s Vast Ocean Pill, no one dared threaten Jiang Chen at this time.

Jiang Chen finally decided to purchase the needed Blue Lily Grass and Wooden Pellets from the Myriad Treasures Palace disciple.

The disciple didn’t wish to take Jiang Chen’s money, but Jiang

Chen insisted on paying.

Jiang Chen was a particular person. He didn't wish to receive another's largesse for no reason at all. Not to mention that this bit of money was as simple and easy as pulling off a hair off his thigh to him.

He had decided to transact with this disciple of the Myriad Treasures Palace because the disciple was a smart person, and Jiang Chen liked dealing with smart people.

After obtaining the items he needed, Jiang Chen wasn't willing to waste anymore time in the transaction area. He walked out with Gouyu and the others, heading outside.

The Myriad Treasures Palace disciple also followed him outside, calling out to Jiang Chen, "Brother, please hold for a moment."

Jiang Chen stopped. He knew that the Myriad Treasures Palace was one of the great powers within the capitals, and was one of the four great sites that the Precious Tree Sect had established within the Skylaurel Kingdom. It was also the only one out of the four great sites to be entrenched within the capital.

Since he wanted to operate within the capital, there would only be benefits from having a good relation with the Myriad Treasures Palace.

"Brother, I'm called Fengyan, a disciple of the Myriad Treasures

Palace. I'm truly sorry about what happened just now. Although the four great sites compete against each other,in the shadows, no one is willing to offend each other. So when the Northern Palace fellow wanted to buy the Bluelily Grass and Wooden Pellets, we..."

"It's alright, it's not your fault." Jiang Chen also knew that this was part of the hidden rules of the transaction area.

"I feel even more ashamed now that you've spoken as such. Brother, you're quite generous. I, Fengyan, would love to have you as a friend. Why don't we find a place and I'll treat you to some good wine?"

"Let's not for now, I'll remember Brother Feng's good intentions. I'm sure I'll have more dealings with the Myriad Treasures Palace in the future, and will need Brother Feng to take care of me in the future." Jiang Chen also said politely.

"Haha, if brother is willing to honor the Myriad Treasures Palace, the Palace would surely be graced by your presence. Oh right, we've chatted for so long, but I've yet to ask your name."

"I'm called Jiang Chen."

"Jiang Chen." Fengyan nodded slightly. "A good name."

He then seemed to suddenly recall something as his expression changed slightly and he asked hoarsely, "Jiang Chen? Brother, are you from the Eastern Kingdom?"

Jiang Chen was privately startled. Had his reputation already traveled to the Skylaurel Kingdom? This Fengyan was just a disciple of the Myriad Treasures Palace, how could he already know of him?

Jiang Chen wasn't sure whether to be happy or depressed, but he still smiled. "To think that Brother Feng has heard of my name?"

Fengyan was even more enthusiastic. "Brother Jiang, do you know how great your reputation is? The Skylaurel Kingdom is amongst the top in the alliance of the sixteen kingdoms and thus naturally knows everything that happens within the alliance. Due to its business needs, our Myriad Treasures Palace needs intelligence from all aspect, so brother Jiang's name is like a thunderclap piercing our ears within the Myriad Treasures Palace."

To say that his name was a thunderclap piercing their ears was obviously a nicety, but Fengyan's desire to become friends with Jiang Chen truly did become stronger when he heard Jiang Chen's name.

In all honesty, all the intelligence reports from the Eastern Kingdom had molded Jiang Chen into a mythical figure. He had suppressed the Long family's rebellion single-handedly, annihilated the Darkmoon Kingdom's million strong army, and shot down the first general of the Darkmoon Kingdom...

All sorts of rumors made Fengyan have no choice but to value

Jiang Chen highly.

Fengyan was a smart man. He didn't think that he, a disciple of the Myriad Treasures Palace and a upper class level personage within the Skylaurel Kingdom, had any sort of right to look down on this genius who had come from the Eastern Kingdom.

Although the Skylaurel Kingdom was many times stronger than the Eastern Kingdom within the alliance of the sixteen kingdoms, even the weakest countries had geniuses.

Jiang Chen's genius was obviously not something that he, Fengyan, could dismiss. On the contrary, Fengyan had put together the observations of just now and his combined intelligence to think carefully and felt even more so that he should strike up a friendship with Jiang Chen.

"Brother Jiang, I still repeat what I said earlier. If you consign the Vast Ocean Pill to our Palace and place it on auction, you will surely receive an excellent price for it and heighten your fame at the same time."

Jiang Chen knew that Fengyan was indeed sincere and nodded, "Brother Feng, I'll be sure to come visit you at the Myriad Treasures Palace when I'm done with the things at hand."

Fengyan was even happier after receiving Jiang Chen's assent.

The two were chatting when a shout sounded from the side.

“Damned bitch, why don’t you say another word? Trying to bluff me with a broken piece of wood?”

“Stop immediately!”

Fengyan and Jiang Chen couldn’t help but look over when they heard the yelling.

They saw a young man in a red colored robe that was embroidered with blue lines hectoring loudly. A fragile and delicate girl was kneeling down in front of him.

The young girl sobbed as she stubbornly hung onto the youth’s calf and refused to let go.

“Return my Black Spirit Wood to me.” The young girl’s voice was low and her voice shook, but her demeanor was abnormally stubborn, as if she would never let go before having taken her item back.

“Didn’t I already return that broken piece of wood to you? Do you not believe that I’ll beat you to death right now if you don’t let go?”

The young girl only shook her head, “You didn’t take this one away. Return the one you took.”

“Screw you, dumb bitch. I’m a vaunted disciple of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace, why would I want your broken piece of

wood? Look at you dressed up in rags like a begging slut. Are you trying to blackmail me?”

“Him again!” Jiang Chen hadn’t even spoke before Gouyu, behind him, was already groping for the shortsword at her waist. That fellow who hailed from the Northern Palace was the senior brother Kuang who had wanted to rob them last time.

Jiang Chen also felt his killing intent increase greatly when he saw this person. When he looked again at the young girl, he discovered that the young girl was Tang Long’s fiance.

Both sides were his acquaintances.

Senior brother Kuang’s eyes glared when he saw someone approach, but his expression changed greatly when he saw that it was Jiang Chen. He flung Tang Long’s fiance away with a slap.

“Get the hell out of my way. I don’t have the time to waste here with you.” He lifted his feet up and planned on running further in.

“Brother Feng, can the Northern Palace also rob others in broad daylight in the capital?” Jiang Chen asked faintly.

Fengyan started and said, “Security within the capital is quite good. If the Dragonteeth Guard knew of such robbery, the culprit would either be thrown in jail or executed immediately.”

Jiang Chen nodded and lifted off his toes, swooping down like a

falcon as he blocked senior brother Kuang's way. "This world is such a small place, to think that we'd meet again."

Chapter 146: Not Just Beating Someone, But Also Killing Someone

Although senior brother Kuang had just displayed a malicious looking face towards Tang Long's fiance, when it came to Jiang Chen, he was not the slightest bit ferocious. Senior brother Kuang had already almost died twice beneath Jiang Chen's hand.

The first time had been because Jiang Chen didn't wish to make enemies and didn't deal a fatal blow due to a desire to merely issue a warning.

The second time, Jiang Chen had intended for senior brother Kuang to die, but the latter had been saved by his senior brother Yi Qiansui.

He hadn't died from his great misfortune , and senior brother Kuang had forgotten this matter altogether a few days later. But who would've thought that he'd run into Jiang Chen again today?

"Get out of the way!" Senior brother Kuang roared lowly. "Kid, you have offended my senior brother Liu, and he's also in the capital right now. If you recognize the circumstances you're in, you still have time to get the hell out of here."

"Hand over the item." Jiang Chen said faintly.

"What item?" Senior brother Kuang played dumb and asked.

“Cut your blather, the Black Spirit Wood.”

“Black Spirit Wood? I don’t know what you’re talking about! If you don’t get out of my way, I’m going to sue you for robbery!” Senior brother Kuang grimaced with a smile. “This is the territory of the Azure Heaven Southern Palace. My Northern Palace is of the same breath and branch as the Southern Palace. We are as dear to each other as members of the same family. Do you believe that with just one word from me, there will be several hundred Southern Palace disciples rushing out to attack you?”

Senior brother Kuang was well versed in the art of strutting around on borrowed influence. Except, he hadn’t entered the transaction area just now and hadn’t known what had happened.

“Of the same breath and branch? Dear to each other like members of the same family?” Jiang Chen laughed contemptuously. If they really were as dear to each other like members of the same family, then how would Sir Bei have given the order to cane that Northern Palace disciple to death?

“I don’t want to talk empty nonsense. Are you handing over that Black Spirit Wood or not?”

Senior brother Kuang looked at Jiang Chen and then looked at the young girl, thinking, “Can it be that these two know each other? Just where does this kid come from that he knows such a downtrodden girl? Judging from the girl’s looks, she should be at the very bottom of the totem pole. How much of a background can this kid have?”

When his thoughts travelled here, senior brother Kuang hardened his heart, “Stop spewing out blood. I have a stick of Black Spirit Wood here that I dug out from an old forest deep in the mountains. Who the hell do you think you are to make me hand it over? Do you want to rob someone in the capital? Does law and order exist anymore?”

When a petty fellow bites you, only death awaits.

“A robber crying ‘catch the thief’!” Jiang Chen’s brow creased faintly, but he broke out into a smile instead. “Good, very good. I had been worrying about what excuse to use to tally up our old debts. However, you’ve rather helped me resolve this difficult problem.”

“What… what do you want to do?” Senior brother Kuang’s facial expression changed greatly.

“Do what?” Jiang Chen advanced forward in a threatening manner. “Stopping someone to rob them, if I recall correctly, you can be executed where you stand? Brother Yan, such a regulation exists within the kingdom’s laws, correct?”

Fengyan opened his mouth and had wanted to speak a conciliatory word when a notion flashed through his mind. He said instead, “Such a regulation does exist within the kingdom’s laws. Except, brother Jiang…”

“Then things are easy with this law.”

Jiang Chen smiled beatifically as he stomped down with both feet, struck out with two fists to both the left and right and sent two punches flying out.

One was as if a hundred flowers had blossomed, and the other was as if ten thousand souls laid in hibernation.

It was the boxing mysteries from the “Divine Aeons Fist”.

Senior brother Kuang’s strength was far below that of Jiang Chen’s, and fear grew within his heart now that Jiang Chen had backed him up against a wall.

Senior brother Kuang had no time to even react to these incredible boxing techniques before he’d taken both fists to the chest, flying out backwards like a kite with a broken string.

Jiang Chen leapt up and dashed up to senior brother Kuang, and was about to extend a hand and take back the Black Spirit Wood.

A harsh yell sounded from behind him, “Stop!”

Whoosh whoosh whoosh sounded out in the next second as six Dragonteeth Guard members, dressed in light yellow robes, shot to the scene like sharp arrows.

The six Dragonteeth Guard surrounded Jiang Chen.

“Who are you and how dare you kill someone in broad daylight?” A Dragonteeth Guard interrogated.

“In response to you sir, this person was committing robbery in broad daylight and I was forced to make a move to take back what is mine.”

“A robbery in broad daylight? Do you have any proof?”

“There’s a stick of Black Spirit Wood in his possession, that’s the evidence. The owner of the Black Spirit Wood is still here, she’s the witness.”

“You’re the witness? Are you sure that this person stole your Black Spirit Wood?” The Dragonteeth Guard pointed at senior brother Kuang’s body and asked.

Tang Long’s fiance looked at Jiang Chen with a face full of gratitude as she lightly bit her lip, nodding very firmly, “Yes, this was the villain that stole my Black Spirit Wood.”

Since a murder was involved, the deputy of the Dragonteeth Guard didn’t dare to make an easy judgment. Not to mention that his eyes were keen and he recognized that the accused was a disciple of the Northern Palace. He likely couldn’t listen to a one-sided story.

He immediately said, “A case involving a human life should be

treated with the utmost of care. The rights and wrongs are convoluted, and I cannot listen to only your side. I feel that you must come back to the Dragonteeth headquarters with me and wait there to regain your innocence until a full investigation of this matter is conducted. If the truth is not as you've said, then murdering someone is a heinous crime."

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, "There's no problem for me to go back with you, but can I be allowed to leave behind a few words?"

Jiang Chen also knew that since the Dragonteeth Guard had appeared, he would be defying the law if he refused to make this trip with them which would undoubtedly give rise to greater conflict.

Since he'd just arrived in this place, he had no need to create such a great disturbance.

When the Dragonteeth Guard saw that Jiang Chen was unrushed and unhurried with an uncommon air, he didn't dare to offend Jiang Chen either and nodded.

Jiang Chen walked up to Fengyan, "Brother Feng, although you're an eyewitness, but I wouldn't untowardly ask you to be a witness. There's a list here, please give it to your vice head Shi of your Myriad Treasures Palace. If he won't receive you, tell him that it has something to do with the Wishing Tower."

"Oh?" Fengyan was startled. He had indeed been worried that Jiang Chen would ask him to be a witness, and had been quietly

calculating if it was worth it to offend the Northern Palace in order to gain Jiang Chen as a friend.

Seeing that Jiang Chen didn't intend ask him to be a witness, his heart lightened, but also felt slightly disappointed at the same time. Jiang Chen only wanted him to deliver a list, that wasn't anything difficult.

"Brother Jiang, please be at ease. I will, rest assured, deliver this list with the fastest speed possible to vice head Shi."

"Baishi, take this list and conceal the key ingredients. Go have a chat with Elder Ning of the Azure Heaven Southern Palace." Jiang Chen gave another list ot Qiao Baishi.

This list contained a pill recipe that Jiang Chen had prepared previously, called the "Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill". It was precisely what Jiang Chen had prepared for Elder Ning.

Elder Ning had made a wish of everlasting youth in the Wishing Tower. Although Jiang Chen hadn't had much interest in this matter to begin with, he then immediately thought about how he could give this opportunity to Qiao Baishi.

By now, Qiao Baishi was Jiang Chen trusted confidante and knew the deep meaning behind Jiang Chen's action. He nodded slightly as he took the recipe. There was no longer a need for heroic utterances now to prove his loyalty to Jiang Chen.

Having concluded his instructions to Gouyu and Qiao Baishi, Jiang Chen turned to Xue Tong, “Xue Tong, go find the Qingyang Valley’s stronghold within the capital and pass on a message to old man Fei that I’ve been invited in for a spot of tea by the Dragonteeth Guard. He can do what he sees fit to do. If he’s still thinking about the Renewal Purity Pill, then he needs to get the hell into the capital immediately.”

Jiang Chen also knew that he’d just arrived in the Skylaurel Kingdom and was unfamiliar with the people and the territory. He had yet to build up his networks. If he was taken away by the Dragonteeth Guard and if the Northern Palace intervenes, he, Jiang Chen, would more or less end up with the short end of the stick.

The Dragonteeth Guard may decide cases according to the law, but that was with the one caveat that the Azure Heaven Northern Palace didn’t intervene.

Once the Northern Palace intervened, if Jiang Chen didn’t have any other methods, then with his identity as a newly arrived foreigner, he was sure to end up with a terrible fate.

At this moment, Jiang Chen naturally didn’t mind making use of someone else’s strength.

Jiang Chen had reincarnated not as someone who went about with brute force. He was combining all of his advantageous factors to eliminate all disadvantageous factors. He of course knew the value of leveraging other people’s strength.

Having concluded his instructions, Jiang Chen gallantly returned to the side of the Dragonteeth Guard and smiled faintly, “Let’s go. I’ll also say this, I hope you can decide the case according to the law. This young girl is a witness, I also hope that she doesn’t suffer from any unfair treatment.”

The deputy of the Dragonteeth Guard didn’t dare lose his alertness when he saw Jiang Chen’s uncommon demeanor. “My Dragonteeth Guard is impartial and objective when deciding cases. You don’t need to worry about this.”

....

In some luxurious apartment within the capital.

Some youths wearing the robes of the Azure Heaven Northern Palace were drinking toast after toast and having a great time.

Suddenly, a subordinate walked in and murmured a few words into the ear of a scar-faced youth. The youth’s face immediately changed.

“What?” The scar-faced youth surged to his feet, his eyes full of a violent light, and his face darkened so much that it was like he wanted to eat someone. “What did you say? Say that again?”

The subordinate was so frightened that his expression changed greatly and he stammered, “This... is the news that’s just come

back, senior brother Zhang Meng was caned to death by the lawkeeper of the Southern Palace at the transaction area, and senior brother Kuang was also beaten to death with one punch by someone on the street."

"What did you say?" A youth whose gender was hard to discern, dressed in a fey manner, shot out a violent beam of light from his eyes. "Zhang Meng was beaten to death?"

"Speak clearly, what exactly happened?"

The subordinate strived valiantly to control his nervous emotions and said, "This was what happened, senior brother Zhang Meng saw the brat that you senior brothers attempted to take down last time... and then..."

This subordinate stammered and finally clearly explained all that had happened.

The womanly youth was indeed the senior brother Liu, Liu Can, who had chased Jiang Chen into the Qingyang Valley and had almost been slapped to death by Elder Fei. This person's training had broken through the ranks of half step spirit dao and had now entered into the first level of the spirit realm. He was now the leader of the group.

Liu Can didn't mind the fact that senior brother Kuang was dead, but Zhang Meng was different. Zhang Meng was Liu Can's younger cousin, and the two had entered the Azure Heaven Northern Palace together when they were small.

Zhang Meng was also quite gifted in the area of business. The path of training could not be walked without money. The fact that he, Liu Can, had had such accomplishments in the field of training, could not be overlooked by Zhang Meng's contributions in the area of money.

Liu Can had always treated Zhang Meng as his own younger brother. When he suddenly heard that Zhang Meng had been beaten to death by the lawkeeper, even he was dazed, despite being a spirit realm practitioner.

"That kid again." Liu Can ground his teeth as the flames of anger danced in his eyes. "You were lucky last time and fled to the Qingyang Valley. If you'd cowardly hunkered down in the Qingyang Valley, I wouldn't have been able to do anything to you. Now that you've come to your death in the capital, I'll write my damn name backwards if I can't kill you!"

The scar faced youth, Yi Qiansui, was one of the killers that had originally pursued Jiang Chen.

He said, "Senior brother Liu, this fellow is a bit strange. How could he emerge unscathed after falling into old man Fei's hands in the Qingyang Valley?"

"Yes. Old man Fei is renowned for being tricky to handle. He doesn't even give face to our Northern Palace head. How would he let this kid swagger into the capital like this and not be a medicine servant for twenty years?" The person speaking was one of the half

step spirit realms that had also been chasing Jiang Chen originally, that triangular eyed youth.

Liu Can snorted coldly. “Old man Fei can throw his weight and power around in the Qingyang Valley, but his broken rules are of no use within the capital. This time, no matter who this fellow’s backer is, I’m going to be the death of him.”

Yi Qiansui also chuckled. “I’d thought that this fat meat had flown away, but who knew that we’d regain it right after losing it. Looks like we made the right choice in coming to the capital this time around.”

Chapter 147: The Matter Grew Big

“Senior brother Liu, we’re here this time to support the first prince. If we handle this matter through the first prince and the Dragonteeth Guard exerts some pressure, we can absolutely swallow that kid. When that happens, his goods…” The triangular eyed youth volunteered this plot to Liu Can.

When they, practitioners of the half step spirit realm, fought ceaselessly over splitting up the spoils of battle, it had instead given Jiang Chen the opportunity to slip through the cracks and get away.

Now that Liu Can had risen to the first level of the spirit realm and that his training had greatly increased, he had overwhelming power and thus the others had naturally made him their head. They no longer dared to talk about equal division.

Liu Can nodded his head viciously, “The first prince has far reaching ambitions and is not terribly interested in money. However, there’s two beauties among that kid’s followers, and their looks are indeed not bad. They’ve got quite an exotic air about them. The first prince likes this sort of thing. If we can offer those two to the first prince, this would be quite a favor.”

“Alright, it’s settled then. The beauties will be given to the first prince, and we’ll still split up the kid’s items according to our agreement last time. How about that?” Yi Qiansui slapped the table and called out.

Everyone's gazes looked towards Liu Can in unison. All was empty talk if senior brother Liu didn't nod his head.

Liu Can had also considered the needs of the people, and that he must give them some reward if he wanted them to do everything in their power. He immediately nodded, "Alright, we'll proceed according to last time's agreement. All of you will receive two spirit beasts, and everyone can make a copy of any martial methods or secret arts."

There was a fundamental difference between a half step spirit realm and first level spirit realm after all. Everyone was overjoyed to hear that Liu Can had agreed.

"Senior brother Liu, this matter should not be delayed. Let's go visit the first prince right now!"

...

Two hours later, at the manor of the first prince of the Skylaurel Kingdom.

"Liu Can, this person you speak of, do you know his background?" First prince Ye Dai smiled faintly.

"Background?" Liu Can started. "We rushed to the capital after receiving the first prince's summons and truly haven't had the opportunity to inquire this matter. Can it be that this kid has a mighty background?"

First prince Ye Dai was the prince with the greatest repute amongst all the princes in the Skylaurel Kingdom, the favors of tens of thousands focused on him alone. He was one of the hottest contenders to be the next king.

His complexion was as clear as jade, his gaze as clear as the stars. His every movement and gesture appeared graceful and dapper.

“He doesn’t have much of a background, but is indeed a bit interesting. It’s a pity that he’s meant to be an enemy and not a friend.”

“Your Highness, why do you say so?” Liu Can was vaguely startled.

“This person comes from the Eastern Kingdom, and is a legendary figure within the Eastern Kingdom a while ago. His name is Jiang Chen, and he once suppressed the attempted uprising of the Long family within the Eastern Kingdom.”

“Eastern Kingdom?” Liu Can had been worried that he’d antagonized someone he couldn’t afford to. His heart lightened when he heard the Eastern Kingdom. “That tiny ass kingdom? As legendary as he could’ve been in a small kingdom, that should be his limits.”

The first prince Ye Dai smiled, “Intelligence indicates that the first one that this person visited in the capital was number four from our family.”

“The fourth prince, His Highness Ye Rong?”

“Indeed, our number four usually reveals nothing of himself and seems exceedingly low key. But you’d be gravely wrong if you think he’s someone who’s accepted his lot in life. Why did this Jiang Chen come to the Skylaurel Kingdom? Number four must be up to something in the background.”

Liu Can was deep in thought, “Your Highness, do you mean? We should...”

Liu Can paused and raised his right hand, making a downward chopping motion.

“Jiang Chen killed a disciple of your Azure Northern Heaven Palace, the law of the land will not condone his actions. Your Northern Palace won’t just roll over and play dead, will it?

Liu Can beamed happily. Although the first prince didn’t say it literally, but this was already a very clear indication. This was hinting for them to make an issue out of this and assign Jiang Chen to death.

“Please be at ease, Your Highness. Where would my Northern Palace put our face if we let some outsider brat strut around within the Skylaurel Kingdom? We’ll lodge a serious complaint with the Dragonteeth Guard and ask them to arbitrate with justice, blood for blood!” A sinister smile was displayed on Liu Can’s face.

“There are many of our own on the Dragonteeth Guard’s side. I will instruct the others to pay attention to this matter. The four great sites are strongholds that the Precious Tree Sect has set up within the Skylaurel Kingdom. Beating one of the disciples of the four great sites to death is a slap in the face to the Skylaurel Kingdom, and even more so, a slap to the face of the Precious Tree Sect!” Ye Dai’s tone was grave.

Liu Can rejoiced privately. He was greatly reassured with the first prince’s guarantee.

“Heh heh, Jiang Chen is it? The legendary character of the Eastern Kingdom is it? Now that you’ve come to my Skylaurel Kingdom, you have to sit even if you’re a dragon, and lie down even if you’re a tiger. This time I’m going to humiliate you slowly, torture you, and then kill you. I’ll take your women and steal your fortune!”

…

Jiang Chen sat on a chair with his eyes closed. It’d been about two hours since he’d been brought here.

This room had bright windows and a neat chair, the chair was even made of high quality golden rosewood.

No one had come to question him or talk to him since he’d been brought here.

Jiang Chen knew that this was the silent treatment.

Before the Dragonteeth Guard had sussed out his background, they could only use this kind of method that neither offended nor kissed up to him.

He also knew that after these two hours had passed, everyone on all sides would start making their moves. What needed to be investigated would also pretty much be investigated.

What happened next would absolutely not be as peaceful as things had been.

Flinging all those random thoughts to the back of his mind, Jiang Chen calmed his mind according to the art of Boulder's Heart and organized the happenings of the past couple of days in his mind.

The door was pushed open with a creak.

A group of Dragonteeth Guard rushed in. The person at the head had a particular pattern embroidered on the chest of his pale yellow Dragonteeth Guard robes. His looks were a bit sinister and his mouth drooped down slightly. His eyes in particular had a gloomy look that made one shiver all over, but not from cold. He gave others the terrifying feeling of one's hair standing on end, as if one was facing a viper.

All the other Dragonteeth Guards automatically stood to the side

or behind this person.

“General Lu, this is the one.” One of the captains spoke fawningly in front of this person like he was currying favor.

“You’re called Jiang Chen? You’re from the Eastern Kingdom?” General Lu, who possessed a sinister expression, asked in a gloomy tone.

“Indeed.”

“You beat a disciple of the Northern Palace to death, did this occur?”

“I beat to death a criminal who was committing a robbery in the street.” A trace of wariness rose in Jiang Chen’s heart when he heard the other’s tone.

“Bullshit! The identity of a Northern Palace disciple is noble and lofty, why would he possibly commit robbery in broad daylight?”

“A noble identity means one won’t commit robbery in broad daylight?” Jiang Chen flicked a light glance at the other person. “Please forgive me for not fully comprehending your logic.”

“Kid, this is our General Lu, you better behave yourself! What are you being cocky for?” A Dragonteeth Guard behind General Lu shouted out.

“Being cocky? Dealing with the matter as it stands is called cocky?”

Bam!

General Lu slammed his fist onto the table. “Jiang Chen, I don’t like to waste time in empty blather. You beat a disciple of the Northern Palace to death and now they are asking me for the killer. You better admit to your guilt and submit to whatever judgment there will be so that we can handle this matter fairly and impartially. If you continue to put up a stiff resistance…”

“General Lu is it?” Jiang Chen spread out his hands, cutting the other off. “Don’t you give me this spiel either. It was proper self-defense for me to beat a criminal to death. I acknowledge no guilt. In addition, your words have already shown your bias, what further talks will there possibly be of handling this matter impartially? Aren’t you embarrassed from saying such things?”

“This means that you intend to stubbornly resist to the end?” General Lu laughed coldly in succession.

“Jiang Chen, we can give you one last chance. You killed someone in broad daylight, do you admit to that or not?”

Jiang Chen shook his head lightly. “I have nothing to admit to.”

“Very good! It looks like you won’t give up your false hopes until

all is over, and have hardened your heart to fight against the Dragonteeth Guard. Take him away and place him into the Black Dungeons!”

The Black Dungeons were where the Dragonteeth Guard kept the repeated offenders of severe crimes.

Once someone was sent to the Black Dungeons, they almost never made it back out alive again.

There was basically only one possibility of being able to walk out of the Black Dungeons, and that was being dragged out to be executed.

The other possibility was that one went in on their two feet and laid down to become a corpse on their way out.

Several of the Dragonteeth Guard held Jiang Chen under guard and arrived at the Black Dungeons’ area.

“Damn it, this place always feels sinister whenever we walk close to it. The back of my neck and head are tingling with cold.” One of the Dragonteeth Guard complained.

“Sigh, stop complaining. Hurry up and throw this kid in there so we can report back to General Lu.”

“I say kid, is there anything valuable on you? Hurry up and hand it over. Perhaps if we’re in a good mood, we’ll carry a few messages

for you with your last words.”

“Indeed, indeed. When you’re in the Black Dungeons, not even your bones will be left to you, much less your valuables. You’d be bringing a gift in for those scum if you brought in anything good.”

Their words were already treating Jiang Chen as a dead man.

Jiang Chen kept as cool as a cucumber as he smiled faintly. The Dragonteeth Guard in charge of escorting him were all obviously small characters. There was no point in verbally sparring with them.

“Yo, kid! You have some courage huh? Don’t blame me for not reminding you. Even if you were born and raised in the Skylaurel Kingdom, the only path for you would be death once you’ve offended the Northern Palace, moreover you’re actually a foreigner. Unless you’re one of the disciples of the three great sites and had a great patron backing you up, you’re dead.”

“Number seven, stop talking nonsense with him! Would he be sent to the Black Dungeons if he had a great patron? General Lu himself is personally presiding over this case, doesn’t that make this case quite apparent? Them on top want him dead, there’s no way he would be allowed to continue living.”

“Heh heh, this kid is quite tough when it comes to it. He’s not begging for mercy even now.”

“Alright, we have arrived at the Black Dungeons area. Let’s stop for a moment.” The captain waved his hands and looked at Jiang Chen, sizing him up. “Kid, let’s speak frankly. There’s no way you can leave after having arrived here. You have two options. One, quietly hand over anything valuable on you and save us the effort of searching you. The second choice will be a bit offensive. If you don’t quietly hand things over, then we’ll have to do it ourselves. I’ll warn you beforehand, things won’t be that civilized if we have to take things into our own hands.”

“Are you sure that you’re the Dragonteeth Guard and not disciples of the Northern Palace?” Jiang Chen asked faintly.

“What do you mean?” The captain asked blankly.

“The disciples of the Northern Palace are skilled in committing robbery. Does what you’re doing count as blackmail and extortion? Or is it just blatant robbery?” Jiang Chen asked leisurely.

“Kid, looks like you’ve thoroughly hardened your heart!” The captain flourished his sleeves, “Then don’t blame us for being unkind. Number six and seven, strip him!”

“Halt!” A stately voice sounded at this time.

Chapter 148: Undercurrents Billow And Surge

A tall and enormous figure strode in from outside the door as soon as this voice had sounded. Judging from his uniform, he was placed at a noticeably higher rank than those present. His eyebrows were as thick as silkworms and he exuded a feeling of justice despite not having expressed anything.

“Commander Tian?”

When the Dragonteeth Guards saw this person, their faces all changed slightly as they instantly cleaned up their previously scoundrelly act and stood in a line with their gazes lowered, saluting the person who’d arrived.

“Tsk tsk. You guys are becoming too big for your britches eh? Blackmail and extortion. You’re my troops alright. Definitely showing off the pride of the lofty Dragonteeth Guard.”

“Commander, we…” Beads of sweat had gathered on the captain’s forehead as he was frightened to the point of almost peeing himself.

“What? Still want to argue? Do you think I’m deaf and haven’t heard anything?” Commander Tian’s gaze turned cold.

“No, no Commander Tian, we were wrong. We deserve to die.” The captain’s legs bowed as he abruptly kneeled down.

“Commander Tian, we were wrong. Please forgive us this once on the basis that we have followed you for seven to eight years.” Several of the Dragonteeth Guards also kneeled down and continuously knocked their heads against the ground.

It was said that nothing is like having a man on the spot to give orders.

Although General Lu’s position was high, a full level higher than a commander’s, but even his high position was of no use in keeping these fellows in line.

Commander Tian was the person who kept them in line and their real supervisor. Of the people in this group, whether it was the captain or team members, they all fell within Commander Tian’s jurisdiction.

How could they not be afraid that the commander had stumbled upon this ugly matter? Besides, they were very well aware that he abhorred evil as a deadly foe, and was renowned for being coldly impartial.

Once Commander Tian wanted to levy a punishment on them, even pleas for leniency from those in even higher positions wouldn’t necessarily be useful, much less than one from General Lu.

Commander Tian had a fiery temper. When ignited, he would butt heads with even a general, not to mention that General Lu was

actually only a vice general.

“All of you, get the hell up! Are all my men as cowardly and timid as you guys?” Commander Tian roared.

When the Dragonteeth Guard heard Commander Tian roar at them, they were rather happy instead. They knew that if the commander was yelling at them, this meant that he wasn’t thoroughly enraged.

Once the Commander was thoroughly enraged, there wouldn’t even be a chance for him to roar at you even if you wanted him to.

The group of people meekly got up and carefully stood to the side, not daring to even breathe too loudly.

“Put this person in the single holding cell first.” Commander Tian instructed calmly.

“But…” The captain was a bit hesitant.

“What? Is there a problem?” Commander Tian rolled his eyes and asked in return.

“General Lu is personally handling this case, and…”

“What? Do you think that you can ignore my commands now that you’ve latched onto General Lu?”

The so-called single holding cell was a separate area within the Black Dungeons.

This has been readied for special individuals, and was equivalent to a VIP room within the Black Dungeons. Once within the single holding cell, this meant that this person was under a protected status within the Black Dungeons.

Otherwise, when held with another group of desperados within the Black Dungeons, anyone would lose at least a layer of skin, if not die outright.

Although the single holding cell wasn't too large, it was a separate space and could bypass harrassment from other prisoners. It was indeed VIP treatment within the Black Dungeons.

"I'll say this one last time. Take him to the single holding cell." Commander Tian said emotionlessly. "You can choose to listen to General Lu and bear the consequences yourself."

The Dragonteeth Guards looked at each other and were quite conflicted. General Lu's position was higher and his backing was greater. This was a foregone conclusion.

However, Commander Tian was their real superior and treated them quite well normally. Out of the one hundred commanders within the Dragonteeth Guard, Commander Tian was renowned for favoring his own people, and often talked back to even generals for the benefits of his own men.

They truly did support a supervisor like him from the bottom of their hearts.

If they listened to General Lu and threw Jiang Chen into the Black Dungeons, they would then be thoroughly offending Commander Tian.

Afterwards, if Commander Tian wrote up their extortionist tactics displayed just now and handed it to a supervisor for the Dragonteeth Guard, what awaited them would be stern military punishment.

At the very least, they would lose their title as the Dragonteeth Guard, and at the very worst, they would be executed!

The matter of extortion and blackmail could be a small or large matter. If no one pursued it, then nothing would come of it. As soon as someone seized upon it however, then it'd become a great matter.

It'd be even worse when it was one's own supervisor doing the investigating.

Everyone knew that Commander Tian was renowned for shielding his men's shortcomings and taking care of his troops. If there was a subordinate that even he himself was publicly accusing, how disgusting and unpalatable would this person be?

Anyone who could make it to be a member of the Dragonteeth Guard couldn't be a fool.

After hesitating for a slight while, the captain said hastily, "Commander Tian, we're all your troops. Of course we listen to you."

"Commander Tian, please be at ease. We won't speak of this matter outside, and definitely won't let General Lu know."

"Yes, we listen to Commander Tian."

Commander Tian had been listening with narrowed eyes. If these fellows had hesitated too long, he absolutely wouldn't have minded using the coldest and cruelest methods to kick them out of his team and use military law to ensure that they could never receive another chance.

Seeing that they hadn't hesitated too long in the end, Commander Tian nodded his head slightly. "Even if you guys don't speak of this matter, this can't be kept under wraps for too long. However, if General Lu has any opinions whatsoever, tell him to come find me. You guys were in charge of this case in the beginning, right? That Lu person is simply stretching his hand out too far."

"Yes yes, regardless, we won't run our mouths when we leave from here." The captain promised.

They definitely wouldn't speak of this. If they spoke of it, they would displease both sides and create further trouble for themselves.

Of this, Commander Tian was quite assured of.

"I'll take over. All of you are dismissed." Commander Tian waved his hand and sent the fellows on their way.

When the Dragonteeth Guard had left, Commander Tian said to Jiang Chen, "Jiang Chen, I won't speak unnecessary words. I owe a great debt of gratitude to the fourth prince. You are his honored guest and so I won't let you suffer here. I've just taken a look at this case just now and it's quite complicated. There's certainly someone up to something behind the scenes. If the Azure Heaven Northern Palace hangs onto this matter with a death grip, I'm not sure if the fourth prince can hold up beneath the pressure."

So Commander Tian was actually one of fourth prince Ye Rong's men, Jiang Chen smiled with understanding. "Tell the fourth prince that if he's not at liberty to intervene in this matter, he can just wait and see. I won't blame him. I'm rather curious though, just who is General Lu? What relations does he have with the Northern Palace?"

Commander Tian sighed lightly, "It's a long story. The Northern Palace has always been domineering amongst the four great sites and have always subtly styled themselves as the first amongst the four. Whether it's the Northern Palace or General Lu, they're all quite close to the first prince. The first prince is one of the hot contenders to be the next ruler and the one with the highest

amount of support.”

Jiang Chen had an overall understanding after Commander Tian’s simplified summary.

Whether it was the Northern Palace or General Lu, the great backer behind them was the first prince of the Skylaurel Kingdom and a contender to be the future Crown Prince.

“This is to say that my careless execution of a robber unintentionally triggered both veiled strife and hidden struggles between the princes?” Jiang Chen couldn’t help but laugh ruefully. He hadn’t thought either that the situation within the Skylaurel Kingdom was this sensitive, and that a small matter could cause such large ripples.

“It would likely be a small exaggeration to say that this gave rise to a conflict between the princes. But it’s obvious that the first prince wishes to make use of this opportunity to suppress the fourth prince. This has been clearly indicated from various details.”

Suppress the fourth prince?

Jiang Chen was a bit ticked off. Make an example of me because of conflicts between you princes? So what if you’re the first prince?

It wasn’t that Jiang Chen liked to cause trouble, but that the

Northern Palace had been the one to start this entire matter.

"Does this count as beating the dog before the lion? I'm that poor dog and the fourth prince is the lion?" Jiang Chen laughed coldly.

Commander Tian stared dumbly for a second and also laughed ruefully. "The first prince kills decisively. In his eyes, there's no one who cannot be sacrificed. If he wishes to kill someone, it's as easy as stepping on an ant for him."

"An ant?" Jiang Chen smiled in his anger. "Good, very good. What a fantastic show of beating the dog before the lion. However, even if he views me as a chicken waiting for the slaughter, I'm afraid he's going to be disappointed this time."

"Oh?" Commander Tian's eyes gleamed.

Jiang Chen laughed faintly before he sat down crossed legged with a flourish, simply deciding to close his eyes and speak no further.

Commander Tian opened his mouth but ultimately decided not to ask further. He cupped his hands to say, "Brother, my power is limited with regards to matters above me and I cannot intervene. Here however, even if General Lu makes an appearance to suppress me, I still won't let you suffer one iota. My power can only reach this far."

"Alright, Commander Tian has a great heart. I, Jiang Chen, will

remember this favor.” Jiang Chen nodded calmly. He also knew that Commander Tian spoke truly and was a person of solid character.

…

A female disciple was standing outside the door of a certain room within one of the strongholds of the Southern Palace within the capital. She spoke respectfully, “Elder Ning, there’s a man around 30 or so years old who petitions to see you.”

“A man?” A gentle yet somewhat lazy voice traveled out from within. “Who is it?”

“Your disciple has ignorant eyes and couldn’t recognize him. It looks like he’s not one of the nobles of the kingdom.”

“Did he say why he wished to see me?” Elder Ning asked again.

“He did, it seems to have something to do with the Wishing Tower. However, he didn’t go into specifics on precisely what. He only wanted your disciple to notify you as soon as possible and was afraid that a delay would bungle matters.”

“The Wishing Tower?” Elder Ning’s originally noncommittal voice suddenly became a little unsettled. “Are you sure you’ve heard correctly?”

“Your disciple heard very clearly. He did indeed mention the

Wishing Tower.”

“Hurry, bade him come in. And, no one is allowed to disturb me while I receive my guest.” Elder Ning threw off her usual lethargy and gave hasty orders.

“Yes.” The disciple was a bit baffled. Why did Elder Ning turn into someone else when the Wishing Tower was mentioned?

Footsteps sounded outside the courtyard after a moment. An exceedingly magnetic voice rang out, “Foreigner Qiao Baishi petitions to see Elder Ning.”

“Come in.”

The lazy voice caused Qiao Baishi’s body to shudder vaguely, involuntarily reacting in a way that he shouldn’t have.

Chapter 149: Ordering Around Two Heavyweights

Qiao Baishi recollected his senses and pulled himself together before pushing and entering through the door. What greeted him was a fragrance that gladdened his heart and refreshed his mind, giving him the feeling of having mistakenly stumbled into a lady's boudoir.

He lifted his head to see a well arranged room. It was akin to the room of an unmarried girl from a respectable, cultured family. There were several hints of the charming playfulness of a young girl amidst luxurious opulence.

If he hadn't seen it with his own eyes, Qiao Baishi would've been hard pressed to believe that this was the room of a middle aged female elder.

"Qiao Baishi? Hehe, can it it be that I know little of what goes on in this world recently? When did our Skylaurel Kingdom gain another young, handsome genius in the world of pills?"

Qiao Baishi was thirty some years old and it wasn't quite a stretch to label him as a young, handsome genius.

Qiao Baishi cupped his hands and chuckled, "Your praise is far too high, far too high. It's rather Elder Ning who is a national beauty and possesses the wondrous reputation of an unaging legend. Although I've always humbly abided in the Eastern Kingdom, I too have long admired your name."

That so-called “unaging legend” was naturally fulsome flattery.

But these two words had flair and innovation to them. They were different from the usual tripe.

Indeed, when Elder Ning heard these words, she was naturally pleased and a smile like spring blossomed on a face from which age was impossible to discern.

“An unaging legend? Who said that? How come I’ve never heard it before?” Elder Ning’s exquisite eyes danced. Light rippled through her naturally mesmerizing eyes, as though water would drip out at any point.

“Eh? Elder Ning has never heard of this before? But of course, elder, you are a sage, indifferent to wealth and fame, aloof and detached from public opinion. You no longer care about your reputation in the outside world.”

Another wave of fulsome flattery came crashing over and the smile on Elder Ning’s face became even more unconcealed.

“Hehehehe…” Elder Ning smiled. “Qiao Baishi, is it? You are truly an interesting person. Did you say you come from the Eastern Kingdom just now?”

“Yes.”

“The Eastern Kingdom is quite far from here, what brings you to the Skylaurel Kingdom?”

“Would you believe me if I said I was attracted by your fame? You probably don’t know that in the noble circles of the Eastern Kingdom, all of us admire your sketches in private. The noble circles take pride in collecting your sketches. Although I too desire to collect them, unfortunately, my funds are low and I have no way of competing with those great nobles. I truly hold regrets within my heart. However, now that I’ve been received by you in person, I will have much to boast about when I go back this time.”

Qiao Baishi scratched his head quite “honestly” when he spoke of this and laughed dumbly.

One had to say, women should never listen to men’s lies. Qiao Baishi’s lies had reached the level of being truer than the truth, giving Elder Ning no choice but to believe his words.

Elder Ning was obsessed with beauty and was exceedingly narcissistic. Add that to the fact that she did possess uncommon beauty and was talented at dressing herself up, she looked twenty years old even at an age greater than forty.

This was what she’d always been proud of.

She’d had a stiff face on originally and wanted to see what this foreigner had come for, but now that Qiao Baishi had flattered and teased her, she was all giggles and a flutter, unable to remain reserved even if she wanted to.

Retracting her smile with some effort, she patted her chest, “Alright, Qiao Baishi, I admit that I’m starting to admire you a bit. Did you say you were here on behalf of the Wishing Tower?”

“Yes.” Qiao Baishi didn’t deny this at all. “I’m here to grant Elder Ning’s wish.”

“What?” Elder Ning found it even more difficult to remain reserved. She surged to her feet and padded over with her bare, jade-like feet. “You can grant my wish? Do you know what wish I’ve made?”

“Of course! You wish to remain ever young and maintain an unaging appearance for the next thirty years.”

“You… you really have the methods to do that?” Elder Ning’s eyes widened greatly as fervent expectation suffused her charming eyes. Her expression was one anxious for a personal favor and worried that she would lose it, as if deathly afraid that Qiao Baishi would give a negative answer.

“If I didn’t have the ability to, how would I dare call upon you?” Qiao Baishi smiled.

“But, why me?”

Qiao Baishi spread out his hands. “There are not that many why’s and how’s. There’s a saying in our Eastern Kingdom that women

are in charge of appearing as beautiful as flowers, whereas men are in charge of earning money and supporting the family. Women exist to be beautiful and to pursue beauty is both part of their innate nature and their responsibility. Men have the heaven sent task of thinking of various methods to protect a woman's beauty."

"Haha what!" When had Elder Ning ever heard such refreshing words before? She was so delighted that flowers were blooming in her heart. She was also filled with curiosity towards Qiao Baishi at the same time, but she spoke in false, cute anger, "Don't you tease me and exaggerate as if we're husband and wife."

"Heh heh, I spoke in error. However, should it not naturally be the greatest wish of all men beneath heaven to fulfill Elder Ning's wishes?"

Elder Ning was so amused by these words that she couldn't stop smiling and laughing as she completely discarded the image of a demure lady. She was beside herself with joy and was almost capering with joy on the spot.

"Mm mm, Qiao Baishi, I realize that I admire you more and more. I've decided that no matter whether or not you can help me fulfill my wish, I will hire you to be my assistant. And, I will help you obtain the identity of a fifth rank noble to the best of my abilities. You are simply too interesting!"

Elder Ning had promised the position of a sixth rank noble and simultaneous recuitment as a follower on the wish scroll.

But now, the position of follower had turned into assistant and the sixth rank noble had risen to a fifth rank noble. One could see from this just how amused Elder Ning was by Qiao Baishi.

Qiao Baishi made use of every single second, sighing, “Elder Ning, to be honest, this matter had been one hundred percent assured of success. But, I have a business partner who’s gotten himself into a bit of a sticky situation. Now, I have a pill recipe in my hands for retaining youthful looks named the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill, but it lacks that last bit of medicinal lead.”

“What sticky situation?” Elder Ning was a bit panicked when she heard these words.

“Well, here’s the situation. My friend obtained this recipe through a fortuitous encounter. He gave me the recipe, but didn’t give me the last ingredient. He was waiting for me to finish gathering money before giving me the last ingredient.”

“Money isn’t an issue. How much is he asking for?” Elder Ning wasn’t short on money at all.

“I’ve already gathered the money, but now he’s been caught up a matter that seems a bit tricky to handle.” Qiao Baishi said with a bit of depression.

He was purposely taking this circuitous path to make Elder Ning’s heart anxious, to make her curious, make her itch in the heart but be unable to scratch it, and to make her ask voluntarily.

“Just what has happened?” Elder Ning was frantic. “I have quite a network within the Skylaurel Kingdom. What matters can possibly exist that my Southern Palace can’t handle?”

“He killed someone.”

“So he killed someone. How big of a matter is this? I’ll immediately send someone to bring him out. The Dragonteeth Guard locked him up right?” Elder Ning was quite straightforward.

“He killed a robber.”

“A robber? Since when was it a crime to kill a criminal? Does the Dragonteeth Guard even know how to handle their cases anymore?”

“The main thing was that the robber he beat to death comes from quite a strong background.” Qiao Baishi continued to lead her on.

“A strong background? As strong as this background is, is it bigger than even mine, an elder of the Southern Palace?” Elder Ning snorted delicately and was a bit displeased.

Qiao Baishi sighed, “To speak candidly, he beat to death a disciple of the Northern Palace.”

“The Northern Palace?” Elder Ning exclaimed softly, and then immediately nodded meaningfully. “I truly do believe you now. The Northern Palace has always had the style of bandits and

villainous thieves.”

“Ai, I’ve heard that the Northern Palace is giving the Dragonteeth Guard a lot of pressure to make this case of justified self defense into one of murdering someone on the street. They seemed to have sent out the tough message to discourage anyone of even thinking about going against them in this issue, no matter who it is who makes an appearance or how much face this person can command.”

“Such an egotistic tone!” Elder Ning was long since become drunk on the brew that Qiao Baishi had been offering. How would she possibly give thought to the idea that the connotations of Qiao Baishi’s words were to direct her to a certain conclusion and even to purposefully stoke her anger?

“I’d like to see how this is the case. This is still the land of the Ye family and the territory of the Skylaurel Kingdom. So the Northern Palace runs rampant in the western region of the kingdom, do they seek to blot out the sky with one hand in the capital as well?

“Qiao Baishi, I’ll write a note for you. Give it to the Dragonteeth Guard and have them handle the case impartially.”

Elder Ning was an elder who had actual power within the Southern Palace. Her position was high and her influence strong. She was ranked slightly lower than only a few people. Her words held great authority within the Southern Palace, and she was a notable character within the Skylaurel Kingdom.

Her note wouldn't be any less important than those of nobles and officials holding power at court.

Qiao Baishi was overjoyed upon hearing these words, "Things will be easy with the elder's personal note. This is the recipe that I've received. I offer it to you for your perusal first. Once my friend is released and the recipe is combined with the last ingredient, then the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill will come to fruition!"

Elder Ning happily accepted the recipe, the evaluation of Qiao Baishi in her heart rising another level again. She thought that Qiao Baishi was definitely sensible since he didn't attempt to hide or withhold the recipe. Who would've thought that a man from a small place like the Eastern Kingdom would have a greater bearing than the men of the Skylaurel Kingdom?

...

The capital, in the Myriad Treasures Palace.

There were two people who held actual power within the Myriad Treasures — one of them was the head, Zhuge Yan, and the other was the vice head Shi Xiaoyao.

At this moment, vice head Shi Xiaoyao was sitting in his yard and leisurely tasting wine.

This time every day was the moment he enjoyed fine wine. He

had maintained this habit for decades, unshakable under any circumstances. He'd still have to have his wine even if the sky was caving in.

It wasn't until he'd drank the last drop of wine, put down the wine cup and smacked his tongue and lips that he sighed, "Fine wine must be had, but it's a pity that although there is much fine wine beneath the heavens, only their taste is good. Those that are fine to the point of striking one's heart and soul are as rare as the feathers of a phoenix and horn of a unicorn. What a pity... a pity... when can I have another sip of the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine?"

Like a blemish in an otherwise perfect thing, vice head Shi gave a drunken belch. This kind of life was most satisfying and enjoyable to him.

Seeing that at last, he had finally finished drinking his wine, a follower cautiously approached him. "Sire, there's a Myriad Treasures disciple called Fengyan waiting outside, asking to see you. He's waited for about an hour upon hearing that you were tasting wine inside."

"Fengyan?" Vice head Shi narrowed his eyes. His mind did seem to remember that there was a such a disciple within the Myriad Treasures Palace.

Except, there were thousands and tens of thousands of these sorts of disciples within the Myriad Treasures Palace. Shi Xiaoyao could only remember his name.

“What, do you think that I have that much time on my hands? So much so that even an ordinary disciple can come and ask for an audience?” Shi Xiaoyao’s temper was even more proud and aloof than Elder Ning’s.

“No... not at all. Your subordinate also hinted to him that with his status, he had no right to directly ask for an audience. But, no matter what I said, that fellow wouldn’t leave. He seemed quite anxious from his appearance.”

“When did our Myriad Treasures Palace accept such a disciple who doesn’t understand the rules?” Shi Xiaoyao’s face darkened as he became unhappy.

“He said he was so bold as to ask for an audience because of a Wishing Tower matter.” The subordinate had to respond honestly.

“What? Wishing Tower?” Shi Xiaoyao who had originally been lethargic seemed as though he had been suddenly been revived and pumped full of blood. His body sprang up like a spring. “Where is he? Quick, send him in. What the hell are you guys doing, why didn’t you notify me of such a big happening earlier?”

Chapter 150: Vice Head Shi Is Quite Enraged

“Disciple Feng Yan greets Vice Head Shi. Your disciple is fearful because he has requested for an audience above his level. I ask that the vice head’s pardon this disciple’s crime of impoliteness.” Feng Yan immediately knelt on the floor in fear when he entered, making his posture quite low.

He also knew that the vice head’s temper was erratic, and that he was renowned for not being easy to get along with; he’d taken a risk in paying a formal visit. If he angered the eccentric vice head, life wouldn’t be easy for him.

“Cut your blather, I don’t buy any of this.” Shi Xiaoyao flourished his sleeves and lifted Feng Yan’s body up. “Stand up properly and explain to me, what’s going on with the Wishing Tower? If you dare to hoodwink me, heh heh, do you dare to believe that I won’t skin you alive and pull out your tendons, right here, and right now?”

This wasn’t a threat. Duping the vice head was absolutely a towering, heinous crime. There wouldn’t even be a venue for an appeal if he was killed.

Feng Yan’s position in the Myriad Treasures Palace wasn’t high, and he had no backer. If this wasn’t true, he wouldn’t go to the transaction area to conduct business. Any self respecting disciple would be contemptful of anything that required him to put his face on the line like this.

It was precisely because Feng Yan had no status and no patron, that he'd always liked to take risks, believing that money came from danger.

He'd chatted up Jiang Chen partially because of his own consideration of this aspect; he wanted to wrestle a future through his interactions with Jiang Chen.

Shi Xiaoyao had spoken. Feng Yan thus knew that he was an arrow that had left the bow already, and that had no possible return.

He simply bolstered his courage and spoke truthfully, "In response to your sir, your disciple has met a unique person at the transaction fair of the Azure Heaven Southern Palace. He gave me a list and told me to convey it to you sir. He said to mention the Wishing Tower if you weren't willing to meet. Your disciple was requested by others to do this thing, and had originally also thought of this matter as a bit ridiculous. However, this person took out a Supreme Rank Vast Ocean Pill as if it was nothing to him, making your disciple unable to dismiss this matter very easily."

"A Supreme Rank Vast Ocean Pill?" Even Shi Xiaoyao was a bit startled by this. "Does such a thing actually exist in our Skylaurel Kingdom?"

"Your disciple has little learning, and it was also the first time that I've seen such a thing. That was indeed a Supreme Rank Vast Ocean Pill, and it could recover seventy percent true qi instantaneously."

Shi Xiaoyao waved his hands, “This doesn’t count as little learning. I’ve lived a darned long period of time, and have never seen a pill that could recover seventy percent true qi in the field of qi replenishing pills. However, as good as this Vast Ocean Pill is, it’s only useful in the true qi realm. It’s still of little value in the spirit realm.”

“The Headmaster’s words are logical.” Feng Yan could only go along with Shi Xiaoyao’s tone.

“Where is this list that you spoke of?” Shi Xiaoyao had flagging interest. He had walked through countless places over these years, but had never had another sip of the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine.

He didn’t think that a person who Feng Yan had randomly met would be able to fulfill his wish for him.

Feng Yan carefully took out the list and handed it over respectfully to the vice head.

Shi Xiaoyao took the list, flicked a glance at it when he opened it, and his brows suddenly arching slightly.

As he continued to read further, Shi Xiaoyao’s brows unconsciously knit into furrowed rows. When he got halfway down the page, Shi Xiaoyao abruptly surged to his feet and reached out to grab Feng Yan by the throat.

“Speak, where is this person? Where is he? Hurry and speak!”

This unexpected move greatly startled Feng Yan. He thought that Shi Xiaoyao wanted to wipe him out.

Upon seeing that spittle was flying wildly from Shi Xiaoyao in his haste to find out where Jiang Chen was, Feng Yan finally vaguely understood that perhaps there was something uncommon about this list.

Shi Xiaoyao seemed to have realized that his sudden, abrupt moves may have frightened Feng Yan. He immediately released his hand lamely and mumbled, “Don’t be so cowardly will you? I could wipe you out with a flick of my finger if I wanted to. Not bad, not bad, you’re called Feng Yan is it? You’ve accomplished a great deed this time. I’ll make you an administrator after this.”

It was as if Feng Yan had been electrocuted all over by this small speech, and he was utterly dumbfounded. When vice head Shi had leapt up just now, he’d thought that everything was over. Who would’ve thought that his next words would be to make him an administrator?

The great rises and falls of life truly came too abruptly.

Giving an ordinary disciple the position of an administrator all of sudden was equivalent to suddenly rising more than three levels, like a carp making its way up a waterfall, hoping to become a dragon.

“What? Are you shocked senseless, or beside yourself with joy?” Shi Xiaoyao raised his hand, preparing to fling a slap over.

Feng Yan was rudely awakened as he hastily spoke, “He... he’s been taken away by the Dragonteeth Guard.”

“What?!” Shi Xiaoyao sent the chair next to him flying with one kick. “What the hell, which f*cking idiot had such nerve? Didn’t you tell them that this person had connections with me?”

“I... your disciple didn’t dare say. What if he was a fraud? Wouldn’t that have besmirched your noble reputation?” Feng Yan was also quite regretful at this moment. Why hadn’t he had a stiffer attitude in the beginning, and said a few words in Jiang Chen’s defense?

Shi Xiaoyao hopped up on one foot and cursed loudly. “Useless dunce! Go now and get the hell over to the Dragonteeth Guard! Tell them to immediately release that person, right now!”

The vaunted vice head of the Myriad Treasures Palace was an esteemed personage within the Skylaurel Kingdom, especially within the capital. Any random word from Shi Xiaoyao was enough to send tremors through the capital. Even the general director of the Dragonteeth Guard had to give him some face.

After all, the Dragonteeth Guard only took care of things for the royal family, whereas the Myriad Treasures Palace took care of things for the Precious Tree Sect.

Although the Skylaurel Kingdom was great, it was still a kingdom that depended on the Precious Tree Sect. Without the patronage of the Precious Tree Sect, what right would it have to number amongst the foremost within the sixteen kingdom's alliance?

Having received Shi Xiaoyao's order, Feng Yan was greatly reassured. He knew that this was a chance. If he could handle this matter appropriately, then the position of administrator might very well materialize thanks to Jiang Chen.

"Your disciple will go now and convey your words."

"Get the hell over there now!"

Although he was being cussed at left and right, Feng Yan's heart was as sweet as if he'd drunken honey. He knew that after he'd held on for so many years, he was finally seeing a glimmer of a chance.

"Just what did Jiang Chen write in that list? Why was it like the vice head had seen a pill of eternal life when he read it?" Although Feng Yan was curious, he didn't dare to ask too many questions. He knew that it was enough to finish the tasks within his responsibilities. He should never ask about matters that he shouldn't know about.

...

The capital, one of the Qingyang Valley's strongholds.

“Kid, you better take a good look at what this place is if you want to cause trouble. The territory of the Qingyang Valley isn’t a place where you fellows can behave as you want to.” A Qingyang Valley disciple said with a very irked tone.

“Cut your blather. I’ll say this again, I’m here to deliver a message.” Xue Tong’s brow was also vaguely furrowed.

“Why don’t you stop joking around and look at yourself in the mirror. The likes of you sending a message to Elder Fei? Do you know Elder Fei’s status? He’s the head instructor of the Qingyang Palace. Is he someone you can meet just because you want to?”

Xue Tong was also startled. They’d known that the strange old man was a senior executive within the Qingyang Palace, but they hadn’t thought that he’d be the head instructor!

At this moment, Wen Ziqi made a courteous greeting. “Big brother, we’re really here to bring a message to Elder Fei. How can we make you believe us?”

“How could we believe you?” The disciple’s tone turned slightly better when he saw that Wen Ziqi was a gentle beauty. “He just said that all of you had passed through Qingyang Valley earlier and talked with Elder Fei. Who are you kidding with these words? Foreigners have to be a medicine servant for twenty years when they enter the Valley, that’s the rule. And yet I see that none of you are past twenty years old?”

Wen Ziqi smiled ruefully. No wonder the other didn't believe them. That was the rule!

They couldn't fault him either. None of them were over twenty years old. No one would believe them if they said that they'd been medicine servants for twenty years.

"Big brother, the young master of my house isn't an ordinary person. He has an agreement with Elder Fei. Besides, your Elder Fei has two medicine boys called Big Egg and Second Egg. This is true, right?"

"You know Big Egg and Second Egg?" The disciple was startled. Big Egg and Second Egg had always remained within the depths of the Valley, and never ventured out. Those who'd never entered the Valley truly wouldn't know of them. Could this group of people really have something to do with Elder Fei?

Upon seeing that he was hesitating, Wen Ziqi smiled slightly. "I also know that your Elder Fei has been searching for the Mystic Ruler Grass all these years. This is also true, right?"

"What?" The disciple was greatly startled. "You know even this?"

"Not only do we know this, but we also know that Elder Fei wishes to refine the Peaceful Ruler Pill. It's a pity that the Mystic Ruler Grass is just too difficult to find, and thus Elder Fei is still empty handed to this day."

“This… this… this, can you really…”

Qiao Shan had always been an impatient sort, and couldn’t hold it in anymore. “This, this, this, what? You’re the one with all the useless blather. Our young master has said, ‘if Elder Fei is still thinking about what he wants, then get the hell to the capital immediately.’ If he’s late, he won’t even be able to find a place to cry.”

Qiao Chuang patted the counter and raised his voice. “Did you hear that? Do we need to repeat it again? The young master of my house is a friend of many years with your house’s old man Fei. It’s your house’s old man who went out on a limb to beg our house’s young master. Don’t go and think that it’s our young master who’s sucking up to old man Fei. You get my drift?”

These two brothers both had brash personalities. They swaggered out the door after saying their piece.

As the captain, Xue Tong could only laugh ruefully and shrug his shoulders, saying to the disciple, “My two brothers are a bit more crude. However, although their words are a bit piercing to the ears, they speak the truth. This matter is of great urgency. If Elder Fei wants what he desires, then he must immediately make it into the capital and tell the Dragonteeth Guard to hand over our young master.”

“Remember, delays spoil an important affair. You won’t be able to redeem yourself even if you have ten heads to spare.” Guo Jin also sighed lightly and walked away, shaking his head.

The Qingyang Valley disciple was completely befuddled as he watched the strange group of youths walk away. He couldn't recover for the longest time.

When he finally sorted out his thoughts, his expression suddenly changed drastically. "This is bad, these people were so detailed about Elder Fei's matters. Their words are likely true. What Dragonteeth Guard, can it be that their young master has offended the Dragonteeth Guard and they're waiting for Elder Fei to go and save him?!"

"Can it be that their young master has what Elder Fei wants?"

"This is bad, activate the thousand li transmission skill immediately, and ask Elder Fei to travel to the capital as soon as possible!"

...

The Black Dungeons area of the Dragonteeth Guard.

General Lu was currently in the midst of throwing a fit. "You dumb animals dare to agree outwardly, but disagree at heart. You dare give this kid a single holding cell, when I told you to put him into the Black Dungeons? What? Do you think I want this kid to have a vacation in the Black Dungeons?"

The faces of the Dragonteeth Guards were all ashen from their

fear as they cowered on the ground.

Commander Tian stood with a ghastly pale face to the side, “General Lu, don’t beat around the bush. They’re my men, it’s I who had them do so.”

Commander Tian lived up to his reputation of shielding his own men alright. He stood out at this moment in order to shoulder all the responsibility, making the other Dragonteeth Guards feel quite grateful.

“Tian Shao, what do you mean by this? Is it that I, a general, can’t even command the men beneath you?” General Lu’s tone turned frosty.

“Vice General Lu, I truly don’t recall that I had a character such as you as one of my supervisors. The general of my troop is surnamed Qiu, and the vice general is surnamed Chen. I truly don’t know what basis Vice General Lu has to command my men on.”

Tian Shao’s tone was neither rushed nor hurried, neither cringing nor arrogant, and wasn’t stopped in his tracks by General Lu’s aura, but rather argued with logic and reason.

Chapter 151: Lu Wuji Has Caused Great Trouble

There was a general director in charge of the Dragonteeth Guard who held command of the Dragonteeth Guard, and was in charge of all of the Guards.

The Dragonteeth Guard was divided into ten troops, with a general and vice general assigned to each troop.

There were ten squadrons underneath each troop, with each squadron numbering ten thousand. There was one commander and two vice commanders for each squadrons.

There were lieutenants and captains beneath each commander, and each level was strictly partitioned.

In other words, the general director was naturally at the highest level.

There were three vice directors beneath the general director, followed by ten generals, and then by the ten vice generals.

This General Lu was actually just a vice general.

In terms of title and level, he was indeed a level higher than a commander like Tian Shao.

However, the troop that Tian Shao belonged to wasn't part of Vice General Lu's jurisdiction. Tian Shao had a direct supervisor above him, and a general and vice general that he reported to.

Therefore, strictly speaking, Vice General Lu couldn't issue commands to him, Tian Shao.

However, everyone knew that this Vice General Lu was renowned for having connections. His backer was a vice director of the Dragonteeth Guard.

This vice director was first prince Ye Dai's good friend.

In this way, Vice General Lu's connections reached all the way to the first prince.

With these levels of backers, it allowed Vice General Lu to be extremely domineering and tyrannical within the Dragonteeth Guard. He often committed acts such as overstepping his jurisdiction and handling cases outside of his control.

Except, he hadn't thought that at this moment, Tian Shao, a mere commander, would dare to publicly retort against him.

"Tian Shao!" General Lu stared coldly at Tian Shao. "I've heard of your name and know that you're a famous thorn in the side of the Dragonteeth Guard. You're right, I'm not your direct supervisor, but it only takes a word from me to have your General Qiu make an appearance. If you get out of the way now, I can let

bygones be bygones.”

“My apologies, however, I don’t give way in my territory!” Tian Shao rejected him with these words.

“Good… Good… Good!” General Lu voiced ‘good’ three times in a row with an incomparably sinister tone. “Tian Shao, I don’t know what so-called principles you’re sticking to, or what kind of unpresentable relations you have with this kid, but I’m going to tell you right now, you show no respect for your superiors and offend those higher than you. You have deeply offended me. I can tell you clearly, your life as a commander will reach its end soon!”

Tian Shao’s temper was also quite ornery. “As long as I’m still a commander, don’t you even think of getting past me.”

One could tell that Tian Shao had been deeply angered. This man with a strong sense of principles and justice had been truly enraged by General Lu.

“Tian Shao, don’t stubbornly stick to your foolish ways without seeing the light! General Lu has a background that has direct access to the highest authorities. Going against him is like a praying mantis trying to stop a chariot. Overconfidence will destroy you! It would only take a word from the general if he wished to destroy you. If you step aside now, we can still plead for leniency on your behalf. “

“Fawning upon the rich and powerful, swarming around like flies for food! To think that comrades of I, Tian Shao, are such

shameless scum like all of you. I'm ashamed to be in the same company as you. Get the hell away from me, get as far away as possible. Don't make a clamor in my territory."

"Conceited arrogance!"

"Ignorant buffoon!"

"Tian Shao, you're dead meat. No one in the Skylaurel Kingdom will be able to save you now."

General Lu was also thoroughly enraged. His face was dark as he said, "Jian number seven, go report to Vice Director Yang the matters that have occurred here. Ask him to write a report of censure to withdraw the title of commander from Tian Shao."

"Understood!"

Tian Shao's face was ghastly pale. He knew that Vice Director Yang Zhao was General Lu's uncle. He was the third greatest character within the Dragonteeth Guard. His position was high and his power was great. He was no trivial character.

It would only take one word from him if he wanted to impeach a commander.

However, now that matters had proceeded to this point, Tian Shao knew that he had no choice, and had made up his mind decisively.

He also knew that if he wanted to make a stand against these people with his power alone, it would akin to a praying mantis trying to stop a chariot.

But, he had his own principles. Even if it was akin to a mantis trying to halt a chariot, he'd still use all the strength in his body if he felt it was the right thing to do. He only strove to have a clear conscience.

At this moment, someone hurried in from the outside and handed a note over to General Lu.

General Lu was in the midst of being thoroughly ticked off by Tian Shao and took the note with extremely ill temper. He looked at it for a while, his face darkening, and then ripped the note up into little shreds. "What right does an elder of the Southern Palace have to question how the Dragonteeth Guard handles our cases? Go tell the person who's come that Jiang Chen is a serious criminal of the Dragonteeth Guard, and that it doesn't matter who comes to plead on his behalf."

General Lu's eyebrow arched as he flicked a glance full of some sarcasm at Jiang Chen sitting in his cell. "Kid, you were so cocky because you have some connections to a female elder of the Southern Palace? No wonder you were so arrogant! However, I can tell you clearly that even if Elder Ning herself came to ask for you, she wouldn't be able to save you. You kid, put this hope to rest!"

His words had just sounded when another subordinate hurriedly

walked in. He'd brought someone with him — Feng Yan.

"And who are you?" General Lu's brow furrowed as he looked at Feng Yan.

"I'm a disciple of the Myriad Treasures Palace, and am here on Vice Head Shi's orders, here to ask for this person on his behalf." Feng Yan was absolutely willing to humble himself and adopt a low posture in front of Shi Xiaoyao, but this vice general of the Dragonteeth Guard had no right to put on airs in front of him, Feng Yan.

After all, with the identity of a disciple of the Myriad Treasures Palace, he didn't belong to the jurisdiction of any government agency, and was answerable only to the Myriad Treasures Palace. To speak even more broadly, he was responsible only to the Precious Tree Sect.

"Ask for this person?" Vice General Lu laughed coldly. "Is it child's play when the Dragonteeth Guard handles a case? You get the person when you ask for them?"

Feng Yan was infuriated by these words and asked faintly in response, "Do you mean that the words of our vice head are of no use?"

"Don't you try to alienate one person from another. Go back and tell your vice head that this Jiang Chen is a serious criminal and is implicated in matters involving national security. I hope that he'll understand."

Vice General Lu didn't dare speak too harshly to Shi Xiaoyao. This was an old monster that was several times scarier than Elder Ning.

"Vice General Lu, speak not of alarmist talk like that. I watched with my own eyes the process of Jiang Chen beating a disciple of the Northern Palace to death. That Northern Palace disciple committed a robbery first and Jiang Chen acted after. He was acting in justified self-defense, and isn't guilty at all. Hurry and release this person, or our Myriad Treasures Palace will see out the end of this lawsuit with you."

Feng Yan hadn't been a witness for Jiang Chen on the streets because he hadn't been confident then.

But it was different now, as he felt quite reassured with Shi Xiaoyao's orders.

"What the freaking hell. Come!" Vice General Lu waved his hand. "This is heavily fortified Dragonteeth Guard territory, haul out the random trespasser."

"Understood!"

A group of Dragonteeth Guard immediately surged forward like a pack of wolves and tigers, lifting up Feng Yan, and carrying him out directly.

Feng Yan cursed loudly, “Damn you with the Lu surname, do you think you, a mere vice general, can blot out the sky in the Skylaurel Kingdom?”

His mouth was stoppered as soon as he’d finished cursing.

Seeing that Feng Yan was being hauled out by his men, Vice General Lu smiled coldly at Jiang Chen. “It seems that I’ve rather underestimated you. To think that you’ve even a path to the Myriad Treasures Palace. However, this should be the end of your road. I’ll say this again, there’s no one in heaven or on earth who can save you.”

Jiang Chen turned a deaf ear to this, and had absolutely no reaction to Vice General Lu’s words.

“Keep pretending kid. It’ll be your execution day when this case is sent upwards, judged, and stamped with the Dragontooth seal. I’ll see how you pretend then.”

“And you, Tian Shao, you’re in the same boat as this murderer. You have an additional crime of harboring a criminal. We’ll take a tally of all these crimes together when the time comes!”

Tian Shao snorted coldly and also sighed sadly for Jiang Chen in his heart. The elder of the Southern Palace and the Vice Head of the Myriad Treasures Palace had come to plead on his behalf, but still hadn’t managed to bring him out of this place.

It looked like the first prince had hardened his heart this time and wanted to make Jiang Chen's case an airtight one. He'd fully decided to kill Jiang Chen and use that to suppress fourth prince Ye Rong.

"Forget it, forget it. A gentleman is ready to die for his bosom friends. I, Tian Shao, have received great favor from the fourth prince. Jiang Chen is also a good man, and to be able to weather hardships and die with him means that I'll have company on the way to the underworld."

...

"What did you say?" Elder Ning's willow brows arched. "That Lu surname acted that wildly? He dared to rip to pieces a note written by my own hand and speak so insolently?"

"Yes, he said that as an elder of the Southern Palace, you have no right to question how the Dragonteeth Guard handles their cases. He also said that when he was in charge of a case, it didn't matter who pled for leniency."

Elder Ning's full bosom heaved as rage appeared on her delicate features. Her jade palm slammed down fiercely on her chair. "This dumb animal's madness knows no bounds, based purely on his uncle. I paid heed to common courtesies in writing him a note — I was honoring him! Since he doesn't know how to appreciate favors and refuses a polite toast, then I'll wait for him to come beg me."

When she finished, Elder Ning raised her voice. "Chun Lan, pass

down my orders and tell those below that the set of equipment for the Dragonteeth Guard can be held temporarily. In addition, the sums that they haven't paid in full the last couple of times must be taken care of before noon tomorrow."

Elder Ning had been obviously enraged. "How dare that Lu surnamed animal look contemptuously upon me! He is indeed wicked. I'd like to see if they can really blot out the sky with one hand in the capital?"

Qiao Baishi hastened to speak a few conciliatory words, "Please calm your anger, calm your anger. Elder, your being is priceless. Don't tax yourself by clashing with that ignorant brute."

"You're right. I wrote a note to them and tried fair means before resorting to force. I gave this stupid animal face, but he didn't take it. Alright, I'll sit here and wait for them to come begging!"

...

Myriad Treasures Palace, Shi Xiaoyao's yard.

"What?" Shi Xiaoyao thought he'd misheard. "Say that again!"

Feng Yan had a downcast face. "Noble head, that General Lu had such an imposing air. Not only did he not give you face, but he also said, 'How could you get what you want, when the Dragonteeth Guard are handling the case?' Not just anyone can interfere when he handles a case. Your disciple was angered and argued on basis of

reason with him for a few words, before he had someone throw your disciple out. He was indeed rude and didn't give precedence to you at all."

"Asshole. Animal!" Shi Xiaoyao's fist crashed down and a stone jar was immediately pulverized into dust. "Is this Lu surnamed dumb animal that old man Yang's nephew? Very good, very good. Even old man Yang doesn't dare talk to me with that kind of tone. Has this animal gained courage from eating the heart of a bear?"

Feng Yan spoke, a bit depressed, "He has deep relations with the Northern Palace, and is venting a breath of ill will through this. He's making use of public power to avenge personal interests."

Shi Xiaoyao grit his teeth, "I don't give a damn if he's abusing public power, or judging this case impartially. I'll make life difficult for whomever doesn't give me face."

Shi Xiaoyao's personality was eccentric and proud. Once irritated, his temper wasn't something that an ordinary person could withstand!

Chapter 152: The Dragonteeth Guard Trembles!

“Feng Yan, take my card and visit the second highest personage of the Dragonteeth Guard, Vice Director Zhou. Tell him that all business between my Myriad Treasures Palace and the Dragonteeth Guard will be halted for three years. Any business that they have entrusted to us is to be returned to them in full.”

The Dragonteeth Guard had extremely high expenses from feeding a million strong army. The stipend from the kingdom was enough to enable them to become strong and mighty, but it was very difficult to help each member of the Guard actually earn money.

Therefore, the Dragonteeth Guard had their own ways of making money. All of the Guard’s gains from cases didn’t have to be handed to the royal treasury. They were instead handed over to the Myriad Treasures Palace to be sold or auctioned off.

The income from this was much more rewarding than the funds that they’d receive from the kingdom, and was the true source of wealth for the Dragonteeth Guard. It was a small gold mine for them.

If this bit of business was stopped, the entirety of the Dragonteeth Guard would only be able to subsist on the stipend from the kingdom, and wouldn’t ever enjoy the benefits of this gold mine anymore.

The benefits of this gold mine were practically a hidden rule for the Dragonteeth Guard. If the benefits of this gold mine were to disappear, the entire system that the Dragonteeth Guard had created would definitely fall into an uproar.

One had to say, Shi Xiaoyao's actions were more ruthless and brutal than Elder Ning's.

If one were to say that Elder Ning had left a trace of a way to salvage the situation, then Shi Xiaoyao was an absolute demon when his ire was aroused. He would dare do the most outrageous things.

Not to mention, he had the authority and the rights to. Even the head of the Myriad Treasures Palace, Zhuge Yan, wouldn't say much about this decision.

After all, the vice head's face had to do with the reputation of the Myriad Treasures Palace. Anyone who slapped the vice head's face had committed the same action as trashing the Myriad Treasures Palace's banner. If they didn't strike back, it would be the same thing as them destroying their own banner.

...

The Dragonteeth Guard was both the most influential and the strongest army within the capital.

They had a decent amount of authority and all sorts of roles; such

as protecting the royal family, guarding the capital, and defending the royal authority. They were also in charge of inspections, customs, and general security — amongst other things.

It could be said that, if it was something to do with matters of force within the Skylaurel Kingdom, no one would be able to make a move without the Dragonteeth Guard's permission.

In addition, the Dragonteeth Guard didn't fall under any jurisdiction. They were answerable only to the king himself. The king alone had the authority to command the general director of the Dragonteeth Guard.

Anyone else, even the king's own sons, wouldn't do.

It could be seen from this how much authority the Dragonteeth Guard had.

Of course, despite them having this much power, it was only applicable to the various aspects of the kingdom. Having great power didn't mean that they could blot out the sky with one hand. It also didn't mean that they wouldn't have any favors to ask of others.

Take the four great sites for instance — even the Dragonteeth Guard didn't dare to easily offend them.

The four great sites were part of the Precious Tree Sect's authority, and answered directly to the Precious Tree Sect. Even

the king himself gave quite a lot of face to them in private, not to mention the Dragonteeth Guard.

Offending the four great sites would mean that even the foundations of the kingdom would possibly shake.

The Dragonteeth Guard had a general director who was a trusted confidant of the king, whose name was Shangguan Yi.

Shangguan Yi didn't venture out often. Although his authority reached the heavens, he almost never showed his face. He left most things for the three vice directors beneath him to handle.

At this moment, three out of the four total generals and vice directors had assembled.

Shangguan Yi had an urbane manner about him. He looked roughly forty years old, and had a sprinkling of white hairs in his sideburns that further offset his steadiness and maturity.

A pair of eyes akin to those of tigers and dragons were suffused with an uncommon light, giving others the feeling of being filled with vitality.

He leaned slightly forward, patiently listening to the complaints of the other two vice directors.

"General director, it isn't that I didn't try, it's just that I don't know what madness has gotten into the Southern Palace. The

equipment we ordered was to be delivered half a month ago, but they've suddenly said that they don't have time to deliver the shipment. They also want us to pay in full what we owe them before noon tomorrow."

The person complaining about this matter was a stout, short, middle-aged man. He was one of the four directors of the Dragonteeth Guard, ranked number three amongst the vice directors, named Qi Tiannan. He was without a doubt the fourth greatest personage in the Dragonteeth Guard.

General director Shangguan Yi smiled faintly, and set down the teacup in his hand. "Old Qi, has something gone wrong with our communications with the Southern Palace? Didn't we say that we'd make up for the outstanding balance when our items were sold at the Myriad Treasures Palace, and after we'd received the funds?"

The Dragonteeth Guard didn't have any industry themselves, and weren't allowed to participate in business. Therefore, their source of income, to a great extent, depended on their business with the Myriad Treasures Palace.

All sorts of spoils and stolen goods that they'd received would be given to the Myriad Treasures Palace for them to sell.

This was the Dragonteeth Guard's greatest source of revenue.

Qi Tiannan smiled ruefully, "General director, you too know that the Southern Palace has always been nice and polite when

conducting business. I've gone over this a hundred times, and don't understand why all of this has suddenly changed either. I suspect that possibly, we've offended them somehow?"

"Mm, according to my understanding, the Southern Palace wouldn't just have a fall out like this. Old Qi, you must find Elder Ning and have a thorough discussion about this. If we've really offended them, we should offer gifts and apologize. We can't have a dispute due to personal feelings."

"Understood. I, Old Qi, know what to do once given the general director's orders."

Shangguan Yi smiled faintly, and turned his gaze to another balding elder. "Director Zhou, you don't look too pleased. Has something happened on your side as well?"

The balding elder was in an even higher position than Qi Tiannan. He was the second highest personage within the Dragonteeth Guard, Zhou Kai. His power was second to only the general director Shangguan Yi.

One could tell that Zhou Kai was from the old guard in the Dragonteeth Guard, by Shangguan Yi's use of his title. Even Shangguan Yi treated him with some respect.

"Ai, general director. To be honest, I, Old Zhou, shouldn't come pour my grievances into your ear. However, this matter was truly too unexpected and too serious. I had to come find you and discuss a response." Zhou Kai also started pouring out his complaints

when he opened his mouth.

"Oh? What matter could this be?" Shangguan Yi was a bit surprised.

"I've just received a calling card from the Myriad Treasures Palace. A disciple said that he was here on Vice Head Shi's behalf to notify me that the Myriad Treasures Palace is halting all business with us for three years. All business that we've entrusted to them has been returned to us. It's really quite bizarre. This is indeed, really quite bizarre. The Myriad Treasures Palace has always been tempted by money. We do so much business with them, and they take a ten percent commission. Do they think that that's too little?"

"It's not a matter of money." As the general director, Shangguan Yi possessed an exceptionally keen state of mind. His brow furrowed, "Something is very wrong here. The Southern Palace and the Myriad Treasures Palace have always had an amicable partnership with us. Why did these two great powers change so drastically within the span of a single day? Old Zhou, did that disciple of the Myriad Treasures Palace say anything else?"

"Nothing else, just that our partnership was temporarily halted, and that our business had been returned to us. I wanted to ask further, but he paid me no heed and left."

The three directors all had grave expressions on their faces. They'd realized that this likely wasn't an accident. Something must have gone wrong in the Dragonteeth Guard for them to offend these two great powers.

“Old Zhou, the person who has tied the bell is required to untie it. Shi Xiaoyao possesses an eccentric personality, and requires his fur to be brushed in the proper direction. The more you get in his face, the more stubborn he becomes. Go, butter him up and find out where our Dragonteeth Guard have offended him, and given him reason to be so angry.”

If it were any other powers, the Dragonteeth Guard would have no need to look to anyone else.

But, whether it was the Southern Palace, or the Myriad Treasures Palace, they were all part of the Precious Tree Sect. The Dragonteeth Guard wanted to act tough to them? They didn’t have the right to.

At most, they were on the same footing, and didn’t have to give each other face.

However, the others could ignore the Dragonteeth Guard, but the Dragonteeth Guard couldn’t afford to ignore them. To a great extent, the Dragonteeth Guard’s operations couldn’t wean themselves off of the support of the four great sites.

Therefore, even if they had to humble themselves, they would still have to settle this matter.

One had to say that, if their partnership with the Myriad Treasures Palace was stopped, none of the others would be able to digest the items that they had.

Without the Myriad Treasures Palace, they wouldn't be able to sell their items for a good three to five years.

However, how many years could the Dragonteeth Guard afford to wait? The Southern Palace was already knocking at their door to collect on their debts, to say nothing of anything else.

It was akin to a leaky roof running into successive nights of rain.

"General director, things are truly bad. Elder Fei of the Qingyang Valley just came to us in a huff. Your subordinate stopped him, saying that the director was in a meeting, and attempted to ask him to wait a moment. Who knew that Elder Fei would show me a cold expression without another word, saying to look elsewhere for the Full Moon Pill that the general director had asked him to refine. In addition, all pill partnerships that we have with the Qingyang Valley have all been cancelled. In the future, when our Dragonteeth Guard handles cases, we must skirt past their territory. Otherwise, every person they catch will spend a lifetime in servitude!"

"What did you say?" At this moment, even the tremendously calm Shangguan Yi was unable to retain his composure.

"Elder Fei was here? Where is he now?"

"He... he left." The subordinate stammered.

“Useless thing, don’t you know to directly come in and make a report?” Shangguan Yi rarely lost his temper to hector his subordinates, but this time, he made an exception.

“I… your subordinate also said I would make a report, but he didn’t give me a chance to. He yelled out quite a few insults, saying that our Dragonteeth Guard were white-eyed wolves, devoid of gratitude, and even greater…”

“Stop.” Shangguan Yi glared at him. “Dismissed.”

The subordinate saw that the atmosphere was quite off, and didn’t dare to linger. He hastily walked out.

All of these matters had happened one after another, crashing down onto the Dragonteeth Guard like one blow after another.

Shangguan Yi’s astute eyes were filled with confusion at the moment. “Both of you, do you see what’s happening? The coming events have cast their shadow in front of them.”

Out of the four great sites, three of them had blown up at them in a short period of time. What did this mean? This meant that the Dragonteeth Guard had done something gravely wrong, and had really put their foot in it.

The other two vice directors also had looks of awkwardness on their face, their expressions filled with astonishment that they couldn’t voice. They were all shrewd people; how could they not

see that something was greatly amiss here.

If only one of the sites had blown up at them, then it could be called an accident. But three had completely turned hostile at almost the same time. There was great meaning in this.

Even if it was the Dragonteeth Guard, simultaneously offending three out of the four great sites at the same time, wasn't something that they could hold up against. They could run into overwhelming disaster with the slightest misstep.

If the three sites combined their strength to go against the Dragonteeth Guard, even they would have heads rolling on the floor, and even their foundations upended!

Chapter 153: All Of This Has To Do With Jiang Chen?

A sense of danger they had never experienced before was now resting on the Dragonteeth Guard's heads.

Upon seeing Vice Director Zhou and Vice Director Qi begin to speak but then hesitate, Shangguan Yi waved his hands. "Forget it, don't say anything for now. Since this matter has already happened, there must be a reason for it. The only thing we can do is to prescribe the right remedy for the illness and sacrifice our face to inquire what the situation is."

"Indeed, even if we die, we must at least go down knowing why."

"This is the only way to proceed."

Shangguan Yi nodded. "I have some relations with Elder Fei, I will go pay him a personal visit. Old Qi, you go visit Elder Ning. Remember, do not intentionally bow and scrape, but don't put on any airs as well. We must at least understand the reason behind all this. If it's our fault, then we will bear responsibility. If it's not our fault, then we don't need to compromise out of consideration for general interest. Understood?"

Having said his piece, Shangguan Yi's gaze once again turned to Vice Director Zhou, "Elder Zhou, Shi Xiaoyao's temper is eccentric, you need to take more on your shoulders."

Zhou Kai nodded, “I’m already old and won’t bother with arguments. If it is indeed the fault of our Dragonteeth Guard, we’ll shoulder the brunt of the responsibility. If they wish to suppress us, our Dragonteeth Guard isn’t an easy target for them either.”

“Alright, this matter should not be delayed so let’s split up and set out.” Shangguan gave an order.

....

Qi Tiannan had already stood at the doors to Elder Ning’s yard for almost half an hour before footsteps sounded from within. “Vice Director Qi, apologies for keeping you waiting. The elder of my house was having her beauty sleep just now and no one dared disturb her. She’s awake now and feels quite apologetic that Vice Director Qi has been waiting outside for half an hour. She has already thoroughly lectured us subordinates. Please come in, come in.”

Although Qiao Baishi had yet to bring about Elder Ning’s wish, Elder Ning was already treating him as her most competent assistant now.

Qi Tiannan flicked a glance at Qiao Baishi and thought that although this person looked unfamiliar, and he had never seen him before, he had no time to think too much about it.

“Director Qi, my underlings didn’t know any better and kept you waiting.” Elder was rather polite and friendly, her voice a bit lazy from having just woken up.

“Oh, none of that. I, Old Qi, didn’t have the heart to disturb Elder Ning’s beauty sleep. It is a grave encroachment to disturb one’s sweet dreams.”

“Hehe, Director Qi is still so considerate.” Elder Ning said with a smile as her slender hands played with the velvet fan she was holding.

“Elder Ning, old Qi I wouldn’t have come if I didn’t have something to ask of you. I dare ask one question, have I, old Qi, somehow offended the Southern Palace in some regard?”

“Given offense? What are you talking about?” Elder Ning’s charming eyes widened with innocence. “Director Qi and I have had a relationship spanning back many years, and the way you comport yourself and handle matters has always been my role model.”

“Then.” Qi Tiannan was a bit depressed. “But we truly do need that shipment. And to return the funds we owe you tomorrow, that really is…”

Elder Ning shook her head. “I am willing to help but unable to do so in this matter.”

Seeing that Elder Ning had’s expression had suddenly turned hostile, Qi Tiannan understood that he must have offended this madam somehow.

“Elder Ning, you know the character of I, old Qi. Please speak candidly. Have I offended you somehow? If so, I, old Qi, am willing to apologize for my wrongdoing. Even if we can’t conduct business, kindheartedness and justice still exists. I, old Qi, have always greatly admired Elder Ning.”

“Do you really want me to speak candidly?” Elder Ning asked indifferently.

“Please, I await a frank word.”

“Director Qi, you were right just now, even if we can’t do business, our relationship still exists. However, I’ve discovered that you Dragonteeth Guards do not speak of kindheartedness or justice at all. I have a friend who was robbed on the streets and accidentally killed the robber in self defense. He was thrown into the Black Dungeons without any forethought by the Dragonteeth Guard. I wrote a note on my friend’s behalf, but the note was ripped up and I was greatly humiliated. Something about how I, a mere elder of the Southern Palace, had no right to inquire after a case that the Dragonteeth Guard was handling.”

Elder Ning became more and more angered the more she spoke. “I’d like to ask, is this how you Dragonteeth Guard handles cases? Justified self defense was turned into a murder and resulted in confinement in the Black Dungeons. Alright, since I cannot reason with you with logic and my pleas are useless, then this is easy. I’m paying no heed to this matter. You Dragonteeth Guard don’t come begging to me either. If it comes down to it, we’ll take our own paths in the future!”

“What?” Qi Tiannan was no longer coolly composed. He widened his eyes, “Something like this happened?”

Qiao Baishi added fuel to the flame on the side, “Would the elder of my house accuse you for no reason at all? That Lu surnamed fellow not only tore up my elder’s note, but he also humiliated my elder. Director Qi, if it was a disciple of my Southern Palace who lacked intelligence instead, would you feel at ease?”

“Lu surnamed fellow? Lu Wuji?” Qi Tiannan suddenly thought of someone and seemed to understand something in that moment. When it came to this Lu Wuji, he was someone who cared little for laws and rules. If this happened to anyone else, Qi Tiannan might have been a bit skeptical. But since this had happened to Lu Wuji, he was instantly seventy to eighty percent convinced.

Lu Wuji was renowned for being domineering within the Dragonteeth Guard due to his uncle being one of the vice directors of the Dragonteeth Guard.

“I don’t know what’s his name, just that the Dragonteeth Guard calls him General Lu. Is he called Lu Wuji? He’s just as his name says, running wild and amuck.” Qiao Baishi jeered mercilessly.

Qi Tiannan found it difficult to sit still. If this matter was as depicted, then the Dragonteeth Guard had truly been too impolite.

According to law, there was no need to bear any punishment for killing someone in justified self defense.

When justified self defense was treated as a murder case and the defender was thrown into the Black Dungeons, this was a gross mistake in itself.

Elder Ning had sent over a note and not only had Lu Wuji ripped it to shreds, but he'd also made impertinent remarks that Elder Ning was a woman and thus was innately selfishly oversensitive! If it had been him, Qi Tiannan, in her shoes, he likely wouldn't have been able to accept this either.

A dignified elder had been humiliated like this, no wonder she had been so enraged.

"Elder Ning, I will immediately go back and investigate this matter. If that Lu Wuji was really such a bastard, then my general director will for surely have an explanation for this. Will you give me half a day's time?"

Elder Ning's jade hand lighted patted her mouth. "I've slept for a while, but why do I still feel so tired?"

Qi Tiannan hurriedly stood up, "Old Qi will be taking my leave now. We will be sure to give Elder Ning a satisfactory response for this matter within a day's time."

...

The Myriad Treasures Palace, Shi Xiaoyao's yard.

“Old Zhou, if it wasn’t for your elderly age, I wouldn’t even let you drink the wine you’re drinking today.” Shi Xiaoyao had a belly full of anger and spoke through gritted teeth.

Zhou Kai could only smile obsequiously. “Old brother Shi, just what has caused you so much anger? Our two houses have always enjoyed an amicable partnership. Why…”

“Why?” Shi Xiaoyao laughed coldly. “Old Zhou, you’ve also lived a great number of years. If one of the disciples of my Palace suddenly slapped you in the face, what would you think?”

“Slapped my face?” Zhou Kai was bewildered.

“Don’t play dumb with me. Your Dragonteeth Guard has quite some abilities huh? Grasping military power in your hands, running around wildly with abandon, respecting not even the king. You arrest who you want and kill who you want. You decide cases however you want to. You’re certainly the strongest power in the kingdom alright.”

Zhao Kai broke out in a cold sweat the more he listened. Shi Xiaoyao’s words were actually all laced with freezing irony and burning satire. What did this mean? This meant that there were raging fires of anger within his belly.

“Old brother Shi, don’t beat around the bush. Killing someone is par for the course. See, old brother, I come with much sincerity this time to understand the situation. Is it that one of my men was

immature and offended you? Just tell me and I'll administer beatings and punishments appropriately when I go back."

"Beatings? Punishments? How would I dare? How would I dare inquire about the matters of your Dragonteeth Guard? How would I dare interfere? I may very well be thrown into the Black Dungeons instead." Shi Xiaoyao said exaggeratedly.

Zhou Kai had finally gleaned a bit of meaning from all this. It looked like one of the Dragonteeth Guard underlings had committed a thoughtless act and utterly infuriated Shi Xiaoyao.

"Old brother Shi, please speak candidly. Which idiot offended you? I'll haul him in front of you and if it's his fault, it's your call if you wish to beat or kill him."

"Beat or kill him? Old Zhou, do you think I'm one of your Dragonteeth Guards? I don't have your power and prestige. The representative I sent was almost beaten to death by your Dragonteeth Guard."

Despite how it seemed that Shi Xiaoyao hit and cursed at his underlings on a whim, he was actually extremely prejudiced in their favor. Feng Yan was someone he'd sent and thus represented Shi Xiaoyao's face.

Feng Yan had almost been beaten by Lu Wuji — this was undoubtedly a slap to his, Shi Xiaoyao's, face.

“Director Zhou, as a junior, I originally have no right to speak. However, that Lu Wuji of your Dragonteeth Guard is truly too outrageous. He doesn’t look at the evidence when he handles cases and twisted justified self defense into a murder case. As an eyewitness, I also count as a witness. But when I went to talk to him on my head’s orders, I was almost beaten up by him.”

Feng Yan felt resentful and continued, “If you want to beat me, then fine, I’m just a puny disciple. But he dared speak impertinently and say that no one could interfere when the Dragonteeth Guard was handling cases just because they wanted to. Does this mean that the head of my house couldn’t even go discuss this with him? He was mishandling a case that involved a friend of the head of my house and we couldn’t even ask after it?”

Zhou Kai finally understood where the crux of the problem. Lu Wuji!

Zhou Kai was a believer when he heard these two words. He raised the cup in front of him, “Old brother Shi, I punish myself with this cup of wine and apologise in advance to you. I will immediately go back and investigate this matter. If matters are as how this little brother has said, I will not sit idly by. My Dragonteeth Guard will also give you a satisfactory explanation.”

At the heart of this matter, Shi Xiaoyao was still making a point about face. Zhou Kai didn’t dare to linger. He knew that Lu Wuji was a lawless fellow. If he sealed that mishandled case in stone and caused the death of the person in the Black Dungeons, then this matter would completely blow up in their faces. It’d be impossible to reconcile with the Myriad Treasures Palace then even if they

wanted to.

...

Qi Tiannan and Zhou Kai were relatively fortunate. Shangguan Yi ran into much worse treatment compared to them. The eccentric old man Elder Fei had an even more fiery temper than Shi Xiaoyao. Shangguan Yi didn't even make it through the door of his room. Elder Fei only had his underlings leave one sentence behind, "If even a hair is missing on Jiang Chen's head, then he would make ten thousand heads roll from the Dragonteeth Guard!"

"Jiang Chen?" Shangguan Yi only ever inquired after big matters and was actually less familiar with this name compared to his men.

After all, the current level Jiang Chen was at was a bit too low for him. He'd yet to reach the level in which Shangguan Yi would concern himself with.

"Jiang Chen? This name seems a bit familiar. Is he Elder Fei's relative or something? Oh dear, can it be that my Guard has arrested this Jiang Chen and..."

Shangguan Yi became a bit anxious when his thoughts travelled here.

Chapter 154: The General Director's Choice

The three directors had once again convened in the Dragonteeth Guard headquarters.

Shangguan Yi didn't say anything, but Zhou Kai and Qi Tiannan's words were almost entirely of the same line, the same version under different circumstances.

And the crux of the conflicted all pointed to one person in the Dragonteeth Guard — Lu Wuji.

"General Director, Lu Wuji is the nephew of Vice Director Yang. His reputation has never been the greatest. Elder Ning and Vice Head Shi are all enraged because of the same person. They say that he distorted the truth and twisted justified self defense into a crime. Not only that, he tore Elder Ning's note up and almost beat the person Vice Head Shi had sent. Wouldn't you say that this Lu Wuji has utter contempt of all laws and regulation?"

At this moment, Shangguan Yi finally understood why Elder Fei was so angry. If it had been him, Shangguan Yi, who had been bafflingly arrested and clapped into the Black Dungeons, he would also be quite angry and likely even worse off than them.

"Do you know who Lu Wuji has arrested?" Shangguan Yi probed.

"I'm not sure, Elder Ning says he's her friend."

“Shi Xiaoyao also said he’s his friend, but he didn’t say his name.”

Shangguan Yi sighed, “His name is Jiang Chen.”

“Jiang Chen?” The two vice directors looked at each other, at a loss of what to do. Their status was high and they rarely asked about common matters. They had never paid attention to Jiang Chen’s name either.

“Who’s this Jiang Chen? Why is it that three out of the four great sites are protecting him?” Qi Tiannan’s facial expression suddenly changed. “Can he be a disciple of the Precious Tree Sect?”

When Shangguan Yi heard the three words of “Precious Tree Sect”, his face abruptly drained of color. “If this is the case, then Lu Wuji has truly caused an overwhelming disaster!”

At this moment, one of his subordinates came to report, “Directors, the Dragonteeth Guard members who were first on the scene have arrived.”

“Send them in.” Shangguan Yi said hastily.

Tian Shao’s men, the ones who had been the first on the scene to handle Jiang Chen’s case, quaked in their shoes as they walked in. Facing three directors at the same time was something they had never experienced before. They almost couldn’t stand straight.

“You there, don’t worry. I have a few questions to ask you. I don’t care what pressure or threats you have faced before, none of that is relevant. I will be the judge for you. What you need to do is to completely recount this matter. Don’t color it with the slightest bit of your personal feelings, I want the truth!”

Shangguan Yi spoke with a few traces of pacification.

“Do you hear that? The general director wants the truth.”

The teeth of the Dragonteeth Guard clattered as they calmed themselves with effort. The captain finally opened his mouth. “The matter occurred on the streets where the Southern Palace was holding their grand exhibition. At that moment...”

The captain restored the events that had happened. However, they hadn’t seen the events that had happened before they arrived at the scene.

They could only retell what had happened after they’d arrived, including Lu Wuji’s flagrant interference, forceful cutting in, Commander Tianshao’s strong argument on just grounds, etc. All of this was poured out like beans spilling out of a bamboo container.

When they heard that Jiang Chen had beaten a disciple of the Northern Palace up, the three directors looked at each other and they were all absorbed in their thoughts.

Now that the situation had developed to this point, semblance of some ideas had vaguely surfaced. A disciple of the Northern Palace, Lu Wuji, as well as Vice Director Yang behind Lu Wuji were all people on the same front line, and all people of the first prince.

In this way, a case that looked simple was something that actually had implications that led to the first prince?

“General director, this case seems to be too difficult to handle.” Qi Tiannan was a bit depressed.

“I don’t think there’s anything difficult about this, just handle it impartially.” Zhou Kai’s tone was firm.

They had all heard of the reputation of the Northern Palace. Killing, raiding and committing robbery on the road, these were all matters that the Northern Palace liked to do.

“Then, where are the witness and evidence now?” Shangguan Yi asked.

“The witness has been detained, while General Lu has taken all the evidence.”

Shangguan Yi’s face darkened and then asked the Dragonteeth Guards, “How is Jiang Chen now?”

“Commander Tian Shao arranged for him to be put into the single holding cell, but we’re afraid that General Lu has already

received the order to remove Commander Tian Shao's title by now. We're not too certain what the exact situation is."

Of the three vice directors of the Dragonteeth Guard, Zhou Kai was in charge of financial affairs, Lu Wuji's uncle, Yang Zhao, was in charge of human resources, and Qi Tiannan was in charge of all sorts of administrative affairs.

When it came to Yang Zhao, he grasped the power of appointment and removal for the level of commander and below, and he had a lot of power as well.

Apart from generals having to be personally appointed and removed by the general director Shangguan Yi, Yang Zhao did indeed have the power to remove a commander.

When Shangguan Yi's thoughts arrived at this point, he hastily said, "Old Zhou, I need you to make a trip immediately to the Black Dungeons and take my Dragonteeth Guard emblem. Stop Lu Wuji and protect Jiang Chen at all costs. If Lu Wuji dares act out of line, arrest him forcefully. Ignore all who plead on his behalf!"

"Understood!" Zhou Kai accepted his orders.

"Old Qi, take people with you and bring the important witness. If anyone blocks you, suppress them. Don't let anything happen to the witness."

To think that a simple matter would have anything to do with

the four great sites and drag all of them in to the extent that it even involved the open rivalry and veiled strife between the princes. Shangguan Yi didn't dare lower his guard.

No matter which way he leaned, he was sure to offend one side. The only thing they could do now was to handle the matter impartially and return the original, naked truth.

This was the only way in which they would be on the side of reason and not be condemned by the public.

However, from the reactions on all sides, Shangguan Yi had also guessed that it was likely eighty percent true that the disciple of the Northern Palace had attempted robbery.

...

In the Black Dungeons.

Lu Wuju was sitting cross-legged with an extremely at ease expression, as if he was a hunter toying with his prey and enjoying the psychological thrill of this perverted mindset.

As for Tian Shao, he sat cross legged on the other side of the Black Dungeons.

As domineering as Lu Wuji was, he still knew that he could not use brute force before he received the removal order. If he used brute force to take Tian Shao down, then he really would be

crossing the line.

Even if he had his uncle to wipe his butt after him, this would be a tricky matter to address if it was reported upwards. After all, intervening in this case was a step out of bounds in itself.

He wasn't in a rush at this moment either. On the contrary, he rather enjoyed this feeling. He was like someone who'd received a treasured sword and Tian Shao and Jiang Chen were yearlings waiting for the slaughter.

It was a pity that the two stubborn yearlings still refused to cry out in agony even at this moment. This made his spirits feel slightly dampened.

Therefore, he continuously used words to provoke Jiang Chen.

"Jiang Chen, I've heard you have a few beauties amongst your subordinates. I'll take care of them for you after you die. It's said that you also have a few men as well. Heh heh, our Skylaurel Kingdom also has slave markets. It will be like recycling trash when I sell them later."

"And you, Tian Shao, I hear that you have an eight year old daughter? And a very beautiful wife? Is that so?"

Tian Shao's tiger eyes glared as he snorted, "Shameless petty villain! The heavens watch over men's actions. Lu Wuji, you take advantage of your power to bully others. You have absolutely no

respect for the law, the heavens will take care of you sooner or later!”

“The heavens? Haha, I’m the heavens here, what do they matter? The heavens are number two and the earth is number three. I, Lu Wuji, am the boss!”

Jiang Chen had been sitting cross legged and saying not a word. When he heard these words, his eyes suddenly glared and shot out a frightening beam of cold light. “Lu Wuji, heaven’s vengeance is slow but sure. You defy heaven and have contempt for the law, the heavens will exact justice on you.”

As the son of the Celestial Emperor in his past life, the words that Jiang Chen could least bear to hear were stupid words blaspheming the heavens and earth.

“The heavens will exact justice on me?” Lu Wuji laughed heartily. “Even if there is such a day, I’m afraid that you won’t be able to see it. Let me tell you what the heavens are. Being alive is the heavens. Being dead is being a ghost. Jiang Chen, you’ll be a ghost very soon. The angels of death are coming for you soon.”

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, “The angels of death? Well said, when you are greeted by them one day, make sure to greet them for me.”

Killing intent exploded on Lu Wuji’s face. “Kid, you’re facing your death and are still being stubborn.”

Footsteps could be heard from outside at this moment. It was the person that Lu Wuji had sent to apply for the removal order earlier. He came in with hurried footsteps, and a removal order in his hand.

Lu Wuji was overjoyed and held it up in his hand. “Tian Shan, open your dog eyes and take a good look. The removal order is here. From now on, you are no longer a commander in the Dragonteeth Guard. Put your commander shoulder patch down, remove your Dragonteeth Guard uniform, and do not resist arrest!”

Tian Shan threw his head back and cried out, “Heavens, why are you so unjust to let such petty villains hold sway? I, Tian Shao, with a firm and unyielding character, am to be insulted by such a petty villain on this day!”

Jiang Chen on the other hand, spoke faintly, “Commander Tian, the natural laws are manifest and victory or loss isn’t decided at this moment. Come here and we’ll advance or retreat together.”

Actually, these Black Dungeons couldn’t trap Jiang Chen at all.

With Jiang Chen’s current level of training, he’d be able to fend for himself even if he met Liu Can of the first level of the spirit realm.

Although these Dragonteeth Guards were an army of wolves and tigers, they were only of the true qi realm in the end.

If he really wanted to turn hostile, he had an eighty percent chance of breaking free.

Lu Wuji coldly laughed continuously, “A caged animal making its death struggles? Jiang Chen, do you know what I enjoy the most is admiring the view of prey in its death struggles?”

Jiang Chen laughed heartily, “Lu Wuji, I don’t know if I’m making my death struggles. One thing I’m certain of is that I, Jiang Chen, will certainly not die before you.”

“Daydreams of an idiot.” Lu Wuji grimaced in laughter and abruptly yelled out, “Kill, with lawful authority, the repeat offender Jiang Chen in his attempted jailbreak!”

Lu Wuji was a ruthless person. He wanted Jiang Chen dead and he didn’t even wish to wait until the final judgment of the case. He wanted Jiang Chen dead now.

Therefore, a jailbreak was naturally the best excuse.

Striking a jailbreaker down was perfectly logical and reasonable, it could be done flawlessly. Lu Wuji was well versed in this matter and he didn’t have any psychological stress about it at all.

“Kill!”

The Dragonteeth Guard that Lu Wuji had brought charged in like wolves and tigers.

“Halt!”

An enraged and shocked roar sounded from the outskirts of the Black Dungeons in this critical moment. “Halt, all of you! You worthless trash, do you want to die!?”

This voice was like a thunderclap out of a blue sky as it echoed throughout the entire Black Dungeons, vibrating so that the eardrums of the Dragonteeth Guard buzzed. The heavens and earth trembled and they almost couldn’t keep their footing. They swayed and trembled, unable to hold the weapons in their hands firmly.

In the next moment, the number two personage of the Dragonteeth Guard, Vice General Zhou Kai, came rushing in with great presence along with a pack of elites.

The heart that had leapt into Zhou Kai’s throat went back to his chest the instant he saw that there wasn’t a scene of flesh and blood flying everywhere.

Thankfully, disaster had been averted. There was still time to salvage everything!

Chapter 155: Lu Wuji Is On His Knees

Lu Wuji was a bit surprised to see Zhou Kai appear with a prevailing thirst for blood. “Vice Director Zhou, what brings you here?”

Zhou Kai itched to slap Lu Wuji to death right now. He didn’t even look at him as he roared, “All of you, drop your weapons and kneel. Otherwise, you’ll be treated as traitors of the Dragonteeth Guard!”

As one of the four directors of the Dragonteeth Guard, Zhou Kai was the first vice director, but he usually only handled financial matters and rarely inquired after affairs of the Dragonteeth Guard. As a result, he did not have too much influence within the Dragonteeth Guard.

Therefore, when this command was given, the team on Lu Wuji’s side all looked at each other with some embarrassment before they all looked unanimously at Lu Wuji.

Who knew that this gesture would thoroughly pierce Zhou Kai’s self esteem as an elder of the Dragonteeth Guard. He was number two of the Guard, but no one moved to execute an order he’d given.

It looked like the tiger had been asleep for so long that not even this group of Dragonteeth Guard paid him proper respect, and instead treated him as a paper tiger!

Lu Wuji had a face full of shock as the vice director drew near, “Vice Director Zhou, just what has happened for you to be so up in arms?”

Lu Wuji had been here all along toying with Jiang Chen and the others, and hadn’t left the Black Dungeons for a good half day. How would he know what had transpired in the outside world?

Besides, although the Southern Palace, Myriad Treasures Palace, and Qingyang Valley were enraged, they only used their connections in private and didn’t widely publicize their actions. Therefore, Lu Wuji hadn’t received any word of this at all.

Lu Wuji would have been better off not asking. His actions became the greatest offense in Zhou Kai’s eyes.

“The Dragontooth emblem is here. Those who don’t kneel will be executed with no exception!”

Zhou Kai had brought the Dragonteeth Guard’s true elites this time, and they were much stronger and more important than Lu Wuji’s men.

Everyone was dumbfounded when they saw the Dragontooth emblem, and Lu Wuji was instantly petrified. Clattering sounds rang out from the back as Lu Wuji’s team all threw down their armor and weapons and crouched on the ground.

Seeing the Dragontooth emblem was like seeing the general

director himself arrive.

Within the Dragonteeth Guard, the general director was the supreme one! The general director held the lives of everyone in the Guard in his hands.

The Dragontooth emblem was the totem of the Dragonteeth Guard. It was as if a common mortal had seen a deity or Buddha. Their first thought was to submit, and their second thought was to submit!

“Lu Wuji, how dare you refuse to kneel upon seeing the Dragontooth emblem? Do you really wish to mutiny?”

Zhou Kai turned around and gave a harsh yell. The sound of a sword being unsheathed rang out afterwards.

Lu Wuji was completely dumbfounded, but that remaining bit of reason and logic caused him to involuntarily bend both legs and kneel.

Submitting to the Dragoontooth emblem was the first rule that almost every Dragonteeth Guard had to learn before entering the Guard.

“Who is Tian Shao?” Zhou Kai asked.

Tian Shao stood up from the back. “Your subordinate Tian Shao greets Vice Director Zhou.”

Zhou Kai was quite gratified and nodded his approval. “Tian Shao, the general director already knows of matters here. It is quite good, quite good that you can stay true to yourself and not bow in defeat to evil winds and noxious influences.”

Tian Shao had been completely bewildered in the beginning and hadn’t comprehended just what was going on. He finally understood when he heard Zhou Kai’s words and perceived that this matter had already disturbed the general director.

Vice Director Zhou had come ready to kill because he wanted to bring order out of chaos! He was here to provide backup for Jiang Chen and prevent Lu Wuji from pushing a perverse policy!

Tian Shao’s heart felt bittersweet when he heard Zhou Kai’s compliments. He felt that the humiliation he’d suffered through just now had been worth it.

“Vice Director Zhou, your subordinate was incompetent. I could only complete the matters within my duties. If it wasn’t for your timely arrival, the consequences would’ve been dire without thinking!”

Zhou Kai nodded, “Go, open the door. I want to personally apologize to little brother Jiang Chen.”

Lu Wuji and his accomplices’ hearts all chilled when they heard these words. Zhou Kai was calling Jiang Chen his little brother. What did this mean?

This meant that the winds had changed and that the general director wanted to personally protect Jiang Chen!

As great as Lu Wuji's power was and as strong as his backer was, could they be more powerful than the general director?

"Jiang Chen, we have caused you suffering. Any sort of apology would be empty talk. I only have one promise — that our Dragonteeth Guard will give you a satisfactory explanation."

Jiang Chen actually hadn't suffered at all, to be honest.

"Vice Director Zhou, all sorts of birds can be found when the woods cover a vast expanse. The Dragonteeth Guard control an army a million strong so it's inevitable that a few bad apples will appear. Since Commander Tian Shao tried his best to mediate, I didn't actually suffer that much in this matter."

Zhou Kai was startled. He'd thought that the young man would be unreasonable and make a scene after enduring such suffering. Who would've thought Jiang Chen would easily gloss over this with a smile?

Zhou Kai's impression of Jiang Chen immediately increased to a very high level in the span of a moment.

"You're right, Tian Shao didn't throw away the moral integrity of a serviceman. I quite admire him. Little brother Jiang, if you

don’t mind, may we have a few words?”

Jiang Chen waved his hands slightly, “Elder Zhou, I’d like ask General Lu a few questions first.”

Zhou Kai nodded. His relationship with Lu Wuji’s backer, Vice Director Yang, had been mediocre to begin with. He naturally wouldn’t object if Jiang Chen wanted to do so.

If they could make use of this opportunity to make this matter a bigger issue and suppress Vice Director Yang’s arrogance, Zhou Kai would be happy about this outcome as well.

“General Lu, I’m unsure how great your position is and how frightening your power is, I only ask you one question. What grudge do you have with me that you treat my justified self defense as a murder case?”

Lu Wuji was woodenly silent. History is written by victors. He was now kneeling on the floor, and a thousand, even ten thousand words would all be empty unconfident fluff.

Gritting his teeth with hatred from the bottom of his heart, his mind was also a chaotic mess. He too, didn’t understand what was going on. Wasn’t Jiang Chen a foreigner? He had some fame in the Eastern Kingdom, but what did that little bit of fame mean in the Skylaurel Kingdom?

Why would such a small matter disturb the general director?

Jiang Chen was just an ant from the Eastern Kingdom. Apart from the king, who else would merit personal inquiry from the general director's priceless self?

"The fourth prince?" This notion flashed through Lu Wuji's mind, but he immediately denied it. "The fourth prince is second or third rate amongst all princes. He's not even fit to carry the first prince's shoes. He should be in a rush to kiss up to the general director, how could he possibly affect the general director's decisions?"

Lu Wuji went over this hundreds of times but still couldn't come to an answer.

"You want to kill me. I can understand that you've taken benefits from the Northern Palace or received their threats. But, what mistake did my subordinates commit? You said that you'd sell them to the slave markets after killing me? Are you a Dragonteeth Guard or a robber?"

"Tian Shao, he's your colleague, but you keep thinking about his wife and daughter. I'd like to ask, are you human or a beast in human skin?"

Tian Shao also clenched his hands into fists when he heard these words as boundless hatred shot out from his tiger eyes.

"You said that nothing in the heavens or earth could save me, and said that there was no way I could make it out alive now that

I've entered the Black Dungeons. I can leave immediately now, but you must continue to kneel here like a dog. You said heaven was number two, earth number three, and you were the boss here. Then I'd like to ask you, what's your rank now?"

Lu Wuji had been cast into hell from heaven all of a sudden, and then been continuously scoffed at by Jiang Chen. The humiliation within his heart exploded all of a sudden.

"Jiang Chen you village buffoon, you animal! What are you so proud of? This matter isn't over!"

Zhou Kai hectored, "Lu Wuji, you have no respect for the law and abused your power. No one will save you this time, even if you have the greatest backer."

Lu Wuji started laughing loudly. "Vice Director Zhou, don't frighten me. There are still two possibilities to how this case will be decided."

"Two possibilities? You're too naive! The witness for this case is being protected by the general director's men. Add to that the eyewitness from the scene, and the outcome of this case is a quite clear."

"So what? At worst, this counts as mishandling a case. What can you do to me? Mishandling a case is at most, considered as a dereliction of duty. This kind of crime can be severe or light. A light punishment would be to demote me, a severe punishment would be to fire me."

Zhou Kai was at a loss for words. If it was any other general who had done these things and committed this overwhelming disaster, they would possibly even lose their life.

However, Lu Wuji had absolute contempt for the law and consequences because he had a backer.

With the mighty being of Vice Director Yang there, it was very possible that he would only be charged with a dereliction of duty crime in the end and get off lightly.

This kid would surely make it back to the position of vice general after a short while.

After all, Vice Director Yang held certain powers of appointment and removal. This power was something that even the first directory, Zhou Kai, didn't possess.

Jiang Chen was rather supremely uninterested in how the Dragonteeth Guard would handle Lu Wuji.

Rather, he was more interested in how much he could gain from this matter.

To put it candidly, Lu Wuji was a a pawn. There would be another to replace him if this sort of minor character died. Their numbers wouldn't decrease by one if one was killed, and wouldn't increase if he remained.

Jiang Chen had hundreds of ways to kill minor characters like these.

Upon seeing Zhou Kai remain silent, Jiang Chen was a smart man and knew that although Zhou Kai's position was high, he likely couldn't make the decision either.

He spread out his hands, "Elder Zhou, I don't want to inquire into the personal affairs of your Dragonteeth Guard. However, I won't pretend that nothing has happened after this matter."

Zhou Kai smiled ruefully. This young man didn't flaunt his light, but that didn't mean he didn't have any. He hadn't given him, Zhou Kai, a hard time because he had good breeding and self restraint.

However, this matter didn't mean it would be resolved just like this.

"Tian Shao, the safety of little brother Jiang Chen in the capital will be temporarily handled by you. Remember, our Dragonteeth Guard was at fault first in this matter. You must serve little brother Jiang Chen well."

"Your subordinate understands." Tian Shao accepted his orders.

Zhou Kai had no other choice. He couldn't promise Jiang Chen anything. After all, it was up to the general director how this

matter was handled.

What he could do was to humble himself as much as possible and give Jiang Chen a better impression.

Lu Wuji was a dumbfounded to see Jiang Chen leave like this, He hadn't left behind a single harsh word nor lodged a fierce protest to angrily demand that he, Lu Wuji, be punished.

He almost didn't believe his eyes. Jiang Chen was leaving like this?

So it turns out that this kid is a just a weakling who talks a big talk? He knows that he can't afford to enrage me, Lu Wuji, and doesn't even have the courage to pursue things further? Haha! A village buffoon who's never seen the world is just a buffoon who won't amount to much after all!

Although Lu Wuji was kneeling on the ground, there was no longer any pressure in his heart. Since Jiang Chen wasn't pursuing this matter, this meant that the Dragonteeth Guard had even less of a reason to pursue it!

Chapter 156: Vice Director Yang Wanted To Cry But Had No Tears Left

Although Jiang Chen said that he wouldn't inquire after the internal matters of the Dragonteeth Guard when he left and that this matter wasn't over, all of this sounded like weak, superficial words to Lu Wuji's ears.

If Jiang Chen really did have guts, he would have seized the best timing to lose his temper and make a scene immediately. When this timing was over and the matter had passed, who would pay attention to him, a foreign village buffoon even if he wanted to pursue it?

"He's definitely a village buffoon from a small place. He has no guts at all. He scared me for no reason. Ah forget it, forget it. Although old man Zhou doesn't like me, he has nothing on me with uncle there holding down the fort!"

Lu Wuji felt even more reassured when his thoughts traveled down this point. If it hadn't been Zhou Kai holding the Dragontooth emblem in his hand, he likely would've immediately gotten up and swaggered out of the place.

Jiang Chen had somewhat surprised Lu Wuji in his lack of pursuing the matter immediately.

What was even more surprising was that even Zhou Kai didn't seem to have the intention of pursuing this any further. He simply waved his hands, "Pray that this matter will be resolved easily in

your favor!”

With that, Zhou Kai had actually left together with his team of wolves and tigers.

When Zhou Kai left with the Dragontooth emblem, Lu Wuji immediately revived with full blood and stood up dashingly, brushing the dust off his knees. “What bad luck to disturb the general director for such a minor, miniscule matter. It gave old man Zhou a chance to swagger around in borrowed influence and humiliate me. What bad luck!”

“General Lu.” His men, jittering with fear, drew near him.

“Look at all of you with your heads down. Did your mother or old man die or something? The matter’s already over, what are you doing with faces full of ugly expressions?” Lu Wuji cursed.

“General Lu, something’s not quite right here.”

“What’s not quite right? Old man Zhou must have been up to no good within this. What are you afraid of? With my uncle there, old man Zhou won’t be able to do much!” Lu Wuji didn’t care at all.

He immediately spoke through gritted teeth afterwards, “As for Jiang Chen, that dumb animal, how dare a village buffoon humiliate me? As long as you remain within the Skylaurel Kingdom, I will make sure you die a ghastly death!”

Although Lu Wuji had suffered no harm, he had originally held victory within his hands and had uttered all sorts of wild words. When it came to the final step, the situation had suddenly changed drastically and he'd fallen straight from heaven.

Jiang Chen, who'd been slated for death according to his words, had swaggered past him out of the place.

His heroic and proud words had turned into outrageous jokes.

Accustomed to acting however he wanted within the capital and commanding the wind and rain, exercising control over other people's life and death, Lu Wuji deeply felt that this was shameful and a greatest affront to him.

"Ai, after going to all this trouble, that kid Jiang Chen still walked out of here alive. I still have to give the Northern Palace an explanation."

Lu Wuji walked home with this irritated feeling.

When he was almost home, he suddenly felt that this matter should be explained to his uncle and immediately set off for the manor of Vice General Yang Zhao.

"What? Lu Wuji seeks an audience?" By this time, Yang Zhao had already received pressure from many sides and was being scorched by the flames. When he heard that Lu Wuji was asking to be received, he viciously threw the teacup in his hand onto the

ground and broke out in large curses. “Does that idiot have the brains of a pig? How dare he come see me at this time?”

Although he was cursing madly, Lu Wuji was still his own nephew, and Yang Zhao had been taken care of by his sister since he was small. Since Lu Wuji was his sister’s only son, he basically treated Lu Wuji like his own son.

“Sir uncle, you must take action on your nephew’s behalf on account of my dearly departed mother!” Lu Wuji had long since gained a thorough understanding of his uncle Yang Zhao, and knew that if he cried, no matter how hard a heart that his uncle had, it would soften for sure.

He had used this move several times over the years at critical moments and it had always proven useful.

Indeed, Yang Zhao had been filled with the fires of anger, but they all dissipated quickly when he saw Lu Wuji this way.

His nephew’s features still bore traces of his sister’s looks.

“Ai, Wuji, you really shouldn’t have come back this time.”

“Why?” Lu Wuji was startled. He hadn’t thought that his usually domineering uncle would voice such depressed words today.

“You mishandled a case. Even if they only charge you with dereliction of duty, you should’ve remained at the Dragonteeth

Guard headquarters and awaited the investigation from above. But you swaggered back here. Tell me, how do you think the outside world will view this? You're my nephew, but can you be pardoned just like this when you commit something wrong?"

Lu Wuji wasn't a fool. He immediately understood the salient points that Yang Zhao pointed out.

Even if there wasn't much problem with dereliction of duty, he still had to go through the protocol. Swaggering home like this would undoubtedly give a signal to the outside world — that even if he committed a mistake, he wouldn't be punished for it because he was Yang Zhao's nephew.

This kind of signal was without a doubt, very disadvantageous to him.

"Zhou Kai that bastard. I was wondering why he was suddenly so easy going to let us go? He was digging a hole for me!"

Lu Wuji still had some brains after all and he came to terms with this rude awakening.

Yang Zhao was both sorry and infuriated when he saw Lu Wuji's appearance. "So you're not a complete idiot after all."

"Then what now?" Lu Wuji felt extremely put out now that he discovered he had been set up by Zhou Kai.

“It’s difficult to say. Us uncle and nephew have to put on a show, one of grievous sadness.” Yang Zhou threw out a rope and two branches of thorns. “Take off your clothes and tie yourself up. I’ll personally take you to the general director. The general director is a nostalgic person. I hope I can quell his anger by doing this.”

Bearing the rod and willingly taking punishment was an old trick, but the most useful method to salvage the situation now.

“Uncle, just what is that Jiang Chen’s background? Do you have any news from your end? Why is the general director personally acting on behalf of a minor character?” Lu Wuji was still a bit unreconciled about this development. He felt that he’d been played in a most bewildering manner this time.

“I haven’t received intelligence of the particulars of the situation either. I’ve only learned from various secret channels that not only is the general director quite enraged this time, but that old Zhou and old Qi are also involved.”

“Can it be that they’re acting in tandem against you?” Lu Wuji thought of a conspiracy theory first.

“Impossible.” Yang Zhao shook his head decisively. “Old Zhou has unfriendly relations with me, but I understand old Qi. He won’t intentionally target anyone. Don’t ask so much now, this matter shouldn’t be delayed. I’ll haul you in front of the general director right now.”

Yang Zhao was naturally an ambitious person who excelled in

psychological games given that he'd made it to the second general director, the third personage of the Dragonteeth Guard and held the power of appointment and removal.

Of course, when Yang Zhao appeared at the doors of the Dragonteeth Guard with a trussed up Lu Wuji, cursing madly as he hauled the latter along, it naturally drew looks from many.

"That's Vice General Yang alright. He doesn't tolerate it even when General Lu makes a mistake and has personally brought him here all tied up. It's admirable that he punishes his own relations in the name of justice!"

"When a prince commits a crime, his punishment is the same as a commoner. Lu Wuji seems to have committed a huge disaster this time. Vice Director Yang will surely not protect him."

"Yes indeed. Vice General Yang is objective and impartial, how could he possibly show favoritism?"

These comments made Yang Zhao gloat inwardly, further confirming that he'd chosen the correct move.

"General director, Yang Zhao is fearful and have personally tied up this animal to bring to you to await your judgment!"

When he saw the general director Shangguan Yi, Yang Zhao stomped down on Lu Wuji's butt and roared out, "Dumb animal, why aren't you kneeling and begging the general director for his

forgiveness yet?”

As foolish as Lu Wuji was, he didn’t dare get up to any antics in front of the general director’s power. He spoke respectfully and fearfully, “General director, I was young and ignorant, inexperienced in the ways of handling cases. This caused me to commit the error of biased judgment in this case. I am willing to accept the general director’s punishment.”

These words were quite cunning. He first removed the actions of him framing Jiang Chen and used nonsense such as, “young and ignorant, inexperienced in the ways of handling cases” to gloss over the matter.

He then said something about willing to accept the general director’s punishment — that was even more slippery. He was initially supposed to undergo investigation from the Dragonteeth Guard’s disciplinary department and accept the judgement of the military.

If the general director punished him, that meant he wouldn’t have to undergo punishment from the military.

Yang Zhao also spoke with deep distress, “General director, it’s because that I’ve been too busy normally that I’ve neglected my education of this kid. He’s committed such a dire mistake this time that if you wish to remove him from his position or punish him, I, Yang Zhao, won’t say a word on his behalf.”

If it was any other time, Shangguan Yi would have waved it off

with a smile.

However, Yang Zhao discovered that things were a bit different this time. Shangguan Yi was expressionless. He made no comment, and didn't propose any punishment. He didn't even look at Lu Wuji.

This bizarre situation suddenly sent Yang Zhao's heart pounding. A foreboding feeling of unease started to spread out within his heart.

At this moment, two more people walked in through the doors. They were Zhou Kai and Qi Tiannan.

Zhou Kai had a livid expression on his face as he looked at Yang Zhou and the trussed up Lu Wuji before walking past them with a shadow of a smile.

As for Qi Tiannan, he shook his head ruefully and didn't dare exchange looks with Yang Zhao. It was obvious that he didn't want to have too much contact with Yang Zhao.

This kind of situation made Yang Zhao feel more and more uneasy.

Zhou Kai's reaction had been within expectations because they were old rivals but there was much more meaning to Qi Tiannan's purposeful evasion of his gaze.

Could it be that there was more to this matter?

Shangguan Yi sighed lightly, “Vice Director Yang, the most critical problem now isn’t how to handle your nephew, but how to placate the anger from all sides.”

“What do you mean?” Yang Zhao blanked for a moment. Even if the Dragonteeth Guard mishandled a case, that was an internal matter. What anger from all sides?

“It looks like your nephew hasn’t told you everything?” Zhou Kai smiled coldly.

“Dirty swine, what else did you conceal?” Yang Zhao was losing face and thus kicked viciously at Lu Wuji. He was truly enraged this time and hadn’t faked that kick. Lu Wuji rolled on the ground in pain.

Shangguan Yi frowned. “Since you don’t know, Vice Director Qi, go over the situation with Vice Director Yang. The person who fastened the bell is needed to undo it, and it falls to the two of you to resolve it.”

Qi Tiannan nodded, “This is how the situation stands…”

Qi Tiannan went over the particulars of this matter again, especially going over in detail the parts having to do with Elder Ning and Shi Xiaoyao.

When he got to the part of Elder Fei from the Qingyang Valley, he quickly glossed over it due to considerations of face for general director Shangguan Yi.

Yang Zhao's face changed drastically throughout these words and he wanted to cry, but had no tears. He knew that his nephew could cause a world of trouble, but this time's mess was simply too great.

This was practically an overwhelming disaster that was raking the entire Dragonteeth Guard over hot coals!

Chapter 157: Blackmailing Vice Director Yang

“Vice Director Yang, the flames of anger from the Southern Palace, Myriad Treasures Palace, and Qingyang Palace are all awaiting to be extinguished by us. I only have one word. If you can put out the flames of their fury, then I will not pursue Lu Wuji’s matter.”

Shangguan Yi set forth his bottom line.

There was a rueful look on Yang Zhao’s face. Extinguish the flames of anger from these three places? He knew that he didn’t have the ability to do so. He had always been close to the Northern Palace.

He had no business dealings with the other three and thus only had a middling relationship with them.

If even the face of the general director wasn’t useful, then where did he rank on the totem pole? He would only be inviting humiliation.

His mouth displaying an exceedingly stiff smile full of bitterness, Yang Zhao couldn’t help but ask, “General director, the fault definitely lies completely on Lu Wuji this time. However, I’d still like to ask, just who is this Jiang Chen? Does he command so much face that three out of the four great sites would act collectively for him?”

“You’re asking me, but who should I ask?” Shangguan Yi asked expressionlessly in return.

“This matter cannot be delayed. General director, if the patience of these three sites are exhausted, then I’m afraid it will become more and more difficult to talk to them later on.” Zhou Kai further fanned the flames.

Shangguan Yi’s gaze was full of meaning as he looked at Yang Zhao.

Yang Zhao’s eyes wanted to evade his gaze, but there was nowhere for him to hide. He could only smile ruefully, “General director, you also know that my power is limited. My face isn’t big enough to appease these three great powers. It’s not that I don’t want to, I really don’t know where to begin. Can you give me a hint? Offer gifts and apologies? I can make Lu Wuji do this.”

“Offer gifts and apologies?” Zhou Kai smiled diffidently. “Vice Director Yang, do you think that Shi Xiaoyao and Elder Ning made raised such a big fuss just for a word of apology?”

Yang Zhao had no retort available even though he’d put in a bind by Zhou Kai. He was in a low position now and could only allow Zhou Kai to jeer however he wanted.

“Old Qi, do you have any suggestions? You can’t kick me while I’m down now, you have to give me a hand.” Zhou Kai opted for a coaxing tone as he asked Qi Tiannan for ideas.

Qi Tiannan mused for a bit and said, “I think the crux of this matter is still on Jiang Chen. The anger from the three sites could be a great matter or it could be a small matter. Although Lu Wuji has offended them, but the youngster was immature and gave offense with his words. At the end of the day, the matter is over when their anger dies. They continue to hold on surely because Jiang Chen isn’t willing to let go.”

Shangguan Yi nodded slightly. After so much had been said, Qi Tiannan’s words had finally hit the spot.

“Old Qi’s words are correct. Jiang Chen had also said previously that however our Dragonteeth Guard would like to handle this, it is our internal affair and he wasn’t at liberty to inquire. However, he wouldn’t treat this matter as if nothing had happened.” Zhou Kai also spoke up. “Lu Wuji threw Jiang Chen into the Black Dungeons and subjected him to a round of threats. The spirits of a young man are proud and he certainly won’t be willing to let this matter go so easily.”

“Old Zhou and Old Qi’s words make a great deal of sense. Vice Director Yang, resolving this matter lies in Jiang Chen’s hands. Only when Jiang Chen’s anger is assuaged and he approves, will the three sites let go as well.”

Shangguan Yi was also resigned. Having three of the four great sites announce their intentions to halt cooperation with the Dragonteeth Guard was undoubtedly a lethal blow.

For every day that this situation persists, then it would be a day later that the Dragonteeth Guard could resume normalcy.

…

The person in question, Jiang Chen, was busying himself and quite at peace.

He had already gotten in touch with a dilapidated brewery and was making preparations to distill the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine. Now that all the materials were all at hand, everything was in readiness.

Simultaneously, he began preparing the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill. Compared to the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine, the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill was much easier to refine.

This was a pill for retaining youthful looks, and was actually much easier to refine than the Vast Ocean Pill or the Heavenly Karma Pill.

“Baishi, you’ve done well. I can tell that Elder Ning values you highly. This is a chance for you. You’re my disciple, but I hope you can also find opportunities to make strides in your own career.”

Qi Baishi was quite grateful. “Honored master, your disciple would still like to stay by your side and work for you.”

“I need you to make it into the Southern Palace. This will also aid

your future development.”

Jiang Chen’s first goal was martial dao.

The dao of pills was just supplementary to him pursuing martial dao. Since he’d accepted Qiao Baishi as his disciple, he naturally needed to have a few considerations for his future career.

Logically speaking, if Qiao Baishi could make it into the Precious Tree Sect through the Southern Palace, it would be quite a good choice for him.

Qiao Baishi was also quite sensible as he knew that this was his honored master making preparations for him. He nodded. “Honored master, you will always be my priority no matter where your disciple goes. If you tell me to go to the Southern Palace, then your disciple will surely work with all my heart.”

“Baishi, you’ve never let me down.” Jiang Chen nodded. “This Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill will be the way in which you ascend. I will pass this onto you now.”

Qiao Biashi was touched and felt quite proud. He knew that his honored master completely trusted him and that he was placing a lot of importance on him.

Jiang Chen passed down the pill recipe to Qiao Baishi and gave him a few pointers on the knacks of refining. In actuality, Jiang Chen hadn’t refined this pill much in his previous life.

But in the memories of his past life, the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill had astonishing results with regards to retaining youthful looks.

If he used even slightly better ingredients and refined a supreme rank Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill, it would even produce instantaneous effects.

After giving the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill to Qiao Baishi, Jiang Chen focused on brewing the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine.

In the next three days, he completely immersed himself in creating the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine. No matter who came to visit from the outside world, they were all held at bay by Gouyu and his eight personal guards.

Feng Yan, the disciple of the Myriad Treasures Palace, had a spring in his step lately. Because of this time's issue, he had been specifically singled out by Shi Xiaoyao and now occupied the position of administrator.

Although he was a vice administrator, the speed of his ascension was an absolute three levels in a row compared to that of an ordinary disciple.

This made the other disciples who had been toiling away with him in the bottom ranks for many years all envious beyond belief.

Feng Yan was quite delighted, but didn't forget who he owed all this to. He knew that it was all because of Jiang Chen that he could occupy this position. Whether or not he could continue to sit in this seat in the future, or even have the opportunity to take a further step forward would depend entirely on Jiang Chen!

Therefore, when he was kept outside the door by Jiang Chen's personal guards, not only did Feng Yan not lose his temper, but he was actually quite patient. He came once every morning and once every night. Not even thunder and lightning could deter him.

Those from the Dragonteeth Guard were also blocked outside the door.

Vice Director Yang Zhou had initially maintained an air of superiority. He'd sent one of his men to come start a discussion with Jiang Chen and see if they could handle this privately.

It was without a doubt that this man hadn't even set foot inside the door before he'd been hauled off by the personal guards.

Yang Zhao then sent someone with higher authority bearing a lot of gifts as well, fully giving the impression of wishing to offer gifts in apology. They were all brusquely turned down by the personal guards.

The flames of anger burned within Yang Zhao's heart. Despite his power and status as the third personage of the Dragonteeth Guard, he'd actually been rejected twice by a foreigner village buffoon!

If this was before, Yang Zhao would've surely flown into a rage.

However, this time, he was at his wits end. He suppressed his rage and personally made a visit, deciding to have a conversation with Jiang Chen with his status as a Vice Director of the Dragonteeth Guard.

What he hadn't counted on however, was that he continued to receive the cold shoulder.

"My house's young master is in closed door cultivation. All matters must wait until he emerges."

Yang Zhao calmed the fires of anger within his heart with great effort, and asked when Jiang Chen would emerge. The answer he received was, "We're not sure."

Yang Zhao, a person with such a deep degree of shrewdness, almost couldn't hold it in and wanted to roll up his sleeves and come out swinging. But reason told him that once he started throwing punches, he would start a death feud and relations with the three great sites would be utterly destroyed.

As much power as Yang Zhao had and as much capability he had, he had absolutely no courage in this area. He also had no ability to bear the consequences of this disastrous outcome.

Forcefully swallowing this humiliation, Yang Zhao prepared to

return in a few days.

A man suddenly walked out when he was about to leave. “Hold, you’re Vice Director Yang, right?”

Yang Zhao had been met with a door shutting in his face. When he heard these words, it was as if a drowning man had latched onto a log as his eyebrows arched with happiness eyebrows. “Yes, that’s me.”

He didn’t dare put on any airs at this moment or throw his weight around as the third personage of the Dragonteeth Guard.

Although the other side was a blank sheet of paper in the Skylaurel Kingdom and even though the other side had no power or influence at all, he, Yang Zhao, could definitely not put on any airs during this moment.

“Why hasn’t Lu Wuji come?”

As Yang Zhao had made it to the position of third personage within the Dragonteeth Guard, not even the general director had talked to him with such an interrogative tone in recent years.

But now, the circumstances bore greater importance than the person. Even though he’d been slapped on the left cheek, he still had to offer his right cheek and smile, “Lu Wuji has neglected his duties in the course of handling a case and has been grounded.”

“What a nice dereliction of duty, you’ve done away with all responsibility quite nicely!” The person walking out from within was Jiang Chen’s younger cousin Xue Tong, the captain of his eight personal guards.

“I have a list here. Take a look.” Xue Tong radiated out a surge of true qi and sent the list floating in front of Yang Zhao.

Xue Tong’s moves were a bit rude and made Yang Zhao feel a bit irritated, but he still reached out a hand and snatched the sheet.

Xue Tong said blandly, “This is my young master’s bottom line. The day you collect all these items and deliver them to us is the day that anger of my house’s young master will be placated.”

Yang Zhao flicked a careless glance and his brow immediately furrowed. “First rank Cloudflower Grass? King of Mauve Jade Ginseng? These… these are all spirit rank ingredients. This… this is highway robbery!”

In his haste, Yang Zhao had forgotten the filter on his mouth.

Xue Tong smiled slightly. “Don’t be mad Vice Director Yang. If you think this is extortion, then treat it as a joke and rip it up after you’ve read it.”

Rip it up? If anger could burn this list up, it would’ve long since turned to ashes. However, how could Yang Zhao possibly rip it up?

What did ripping it up represent? It meant that they were completely and openly hostile and had completely declared war on the three great sites.

"Alright, alright, alright. I concede my defeat this time. If these items are collected, can Jiang Chen represent the position of the three great sites?"

Xue Tong spread out his hands, seemingly not wanting to say much more. "Let's talk after you've collected all of them."

With that, he flicked a careless glance at Vice Director Yang and turned to walk inside, leaving Yang Zhao standing outside awkwardly with a face full of bitterness.

"Keep it in, keep it in, can't lose my temper. Jiang Chen this dumb animal, how dare a foreigner threaten me?! See how I'll get you after all this is over. Who would've thought that I, Yang Zhao, who could act however I wished for half my life, would be humiliated by these guard dogs today! Jiang Chen, Jiang Chen!!" Raging killing intent surged within Yang Zhao's heart.

Chapter 158: The Nine Magnificence Dew Wine That One Goes Crazy For

One had to say, Jiang Chen's list was an absolute tall order, and a very tall one at that.

It would be a pity if he gave up this chance to swindle through targeting weaknesses.

It wasn't that Jiang Chen was greedy, but that he didn't know when the next opportunity would come around if he missed this one. He'd finally borrowed the might of the three sites. If he didn't leverage this advantage to its fullest potential, then all this scheming would have been wasted.

As for that minor character Lu Wuji, he could vent some of his anger if he killed Lu Wuji, but from Jiang Chen's height, killing Lu Wuji was just like stepping on an ant.

At the heart of it, it was much more worth it to savagely rip Yang Zhao off.

When Yang Zhao returned home, his heart spasmed each time he looked at the list. All of the items on the list were rare and precious spirit ingredients.

It would be difficult for him to avoid ponying up vast sums if he wanted to collect them all. He made a brief calculation. If he wanted to gather all of them, it'd take at least one third of his

earthly possessions.

One third of the wealth that he had accumulated from all those years of scraping off the fat of people, hoarding stolen goods, and milking other parties dry would besucked out in one go. Yang Zhao's heart ached with pain whenever he thought of this.

"How about having the Dragonteeth Guard pay part of it? This matter involves the overall profits of the Dragonteeth Guard anyways." Yang Zhao had thought of this as well.

But when he recalled the general director's solemn expression, he let go of this notion. If he dared to make such an outrageous request, then it was likely that the general director would remove him from his station afterwards.

What was he without the title of vice director? Not even a pile of shit.

People would at least not be willing to step on a pile of shit on the streets. However, if he didn't have the halo of being a vice director of the Dragonteeth Guard, he would be stomped to death when his enemies came knocking on his door.

"Lu Wuji this useless trash!" Yang Zhao was depressed. This was no longer a simple matter of saving his nephew, but something that had to do with the partnership between the Dragonteeth Guard and the three main sites.

If he, Yang Zhao, extracted himself from the situation and gave no thought to it, Lu Wuji would be dead without a doubt. When the partnership with the three great sites was halted, the final responsibility would still be up to him, Yang Zhao, to bear.

He would still be sitting uneasily in his position of vice director.

“Forget it, forget it.” Yang Zhao made a painful decision. “In the end, I have to pay this money. I’ll let that kid Jiang Chen strut around for a bit. When all of this blows over, I’m going to make him spit it back out along with his flesh and bones!”

Ultimately, he was a decisive and ambitious person. He immediately used all of his connections to start collecting the items on the list.

Skylaurel Kingdom was rich in resources, and Jiang Chen’s list had been based off of the Skylaurel Kingdom’s situation. Therefore, the items he’d listed were all ones that could be found within the Skylaurel Kingdom.

Time passed as five days went by in the blink of an eye.

Jiang Chen watched the steam curl up into the air with a fixed gaze.

At this moment, his God’s Eye and Ear of the Zephyr was deployed to their maximum capabilities and were capturing all the fine details.

This was the final step in the process of distillation. When the flames had risen to the appropriate heat, they would automatically filter out the liquid and the finished Nine Magnificence Dew Wine would slowly flow out.

“Mm, the scents of the nine different flowers can be discerned from this fragrance if it is finely analyzed, but they also seem to have become as one. This duration and degree of heating is about right.”

“Extinguish the flames.”

The flames had reached the appropriate heat and the tap was opened. A liquid like nectar slowly flowed out with a memorable fragrance.

A spirit level Nine Magnificence Dew Wine had been successfully created!

Just after Jiang Chen had successfully created the spirit level Nine Magnificence Dew Wine, Qiao Baishi also successfully refined a batch of acceptable Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill after many failures.

The Nine Magnificence Dew Wine was decanted into the already prepared wooden container. This wine was quite particular about its container. If the wrong sort of container was chosen, it would have a certain degree of effect on the quality of the wine.

Jiang Chen naturally wouldn't commit this sort of mistake.

The Nine Magnificence Dew Wine was produced in exceedingly small quantities, and the amount that would become alcohol in the end was all the cream of the crop of the essence. Therefore, Jiang Chen had prepared so many materials but only had enough to fill nine flagons.

But of course, this amount was already quite astonishing.

At this moment, Qiao Baishi's forehead was also beaded with sweat. He was used to refining other pills but this Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill was so out of the ordinary that it had expended much of his energy.

"Honored master, your disciple has succeeded in carrying out his assignment."

Out of the Four Season Eternal Spring Pills that Qiao Baishi had refined, four supreme rank pills had actually appeared. Most of them were upper rank, with less than ten percent middle rank.

There wasn't a single inferior rank pill.

"Baishi, your dao of pills and artistry has risen greatly."

Qiao Baishi hastened to say, "This is all because of honored

master's guidance."

This wasn't Qiao Baishi being humble, Jiang Chen had actually given him many pointers in the area of refining pills. He'd even overturned his previous techniques in refining pills and helped him embark on new paths of thought, helping him understand how superficial and laughable the concepts that he'd grasped before were.

Whenever he caught glimpse of a shortcut, Qiao Baishi's techniques naturally increased greatly. He was a person capable of learning after all.

"Baishi, I'll split these pills with you. Since you're going to the Southern Palace, why not make Elder Ning be happier and gift her a supreme rank Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill?"

"Honored master, just what effect does this Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill have?" Although Qiao Baishi felt that this pill was uncommon, he had no idea of what its actual results would be.

"Baishi, you've seen the materials as well. I'll only tell you that the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill is at the peak of perfection at the supreme rank. It's absolutely incredible. It could take effect immediately, or at the very least within six to ten hours. Do you understand it when I put it this way?"

"It's that amazing?" Qiao Baishi didn't know much about the art of retaining youthful looks.

Jiang Chen continued to tease him mercilessly, “Just you wait until Elder Ning promises herself to you.”

In actuality, Jiang Chen hadn’t nearly exaggerated enough. This supreme rank Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill was not simply just capable of removing spots and wrinkles.

This pill could change the bodily functions of a woman from their foundation and reshape her body functions, revitalizing her blood and qi, imbuing her meridians with new life, and thus bringing about the heaven defying effect of regaining youth.

It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that even an old woman with a face full of wrinkles could regain the appearance of herself at thirty or forty years old if she took this pill.

If it was a woman with decent foundations, then upon taking the pill, she would be able to deploy its maximum effectiveness, and its results would be even more incredible.

Seeing Qiao Baishi flush red, Jiang Chen laughed involuntarily, “Baishi, you’re well over thirty, what are you blushing for?”

Qiao Baishi had been groomed as Song Tianxing’s successor since he was young within the Hall of Healing, and his days had passed quite simply, filled with just business and spirit medicine.

He had experienced the matters of men and women, but had gone through almost no particularly special experiences.

“Alright, so many days have passed already, I’m sure they’re anxious with worry. If we don’t give the other parties a taste of sweetness, they’ll think that we are frauds.”

Although Feng Yan’s mood had been light for the past couple of days, he was still more or less worried. He now knew why Vice Head Shi placed such importance on Jiang Chen.

However, could Jiang Chen help Vice Head Shi materialize his wish? Feng Yan was still a bit uncertain within his heart. If Jiang Chen did anything out of the ordinary, then he, Feng Yan, would pay the price for it as well.

After all, he was the go-between.

Therefore, he came every morning and night. It was also a materialization of his anxious emotions.

“Heh heh, Brother Feng, sorry to keep you waiting.”

“Ah? Younger brother Jiang, you’ve finally emerged from closed door cultivation. Our house’s vice head has spoken of you everyday. This has truly made me anxious.”

Jiang Chen looked at Feng Yan and smiled, “It looks like brother Feng has risen quite quickly this time.”

“When it comes to this matter, it’s all thanks to you, younger brother Jiang. Today, I have accomplished much and I owe all of that to you.” Feng Yan spoke rather sincerely this time.

“Alright, I expect that you’ve had a few difficult days. The vice head of your house has also gone to great effort this time regarding the business of the Dragonteeth Guard, I should pay him a visit and express some of my sentiments.”

“Ah?” Feng Yan started and was immediately overjoyed, “Younger brother Jiang, you…”

“Let’s go!” Jiang Chen patted Feng Yan’s shoulder.

Feng Yan was delighted beyond measure and his heart was quite agitated. He wanted to say something, but was immediately shamefaced when he saw that Jiang Chen’s expression was calm.

“Right, younger brother Jiang is indeed someone who does great deeds and is neither proud nor fidgety. It’s nothing exciting if even the sky caves in. In comparison, I can hardly retain my composure.” Feng Yan couldn’t help but reflect when he saw Jiang Chen’s cool and composed behaviour.

“This is my chance. Younger brother Jiang isn’t just a character who will be confined to one place. If I can hold onto the line of younger brother Jiang, perhaps there will be more chances in the future. It looks like I must spur myself onto greater efforts so that I won’t appear to be too far behind. Otherwise the distance between younger brother Jiang and I will only increase in the days to come.

I won't have the right to play up to such a big character like him in the future."

Although Feng Yan was of humble origins, he was an extremely nimble person. He knew that he could progress from a humble disciple to a senior middle management position of an administrator and the person who would change his fortunes was undoubtedly Jiang Chen.

If one didn't properly curry favor when he met someone like this, then he was a fool.

"In the future, no matter what, I, Feng Yan, must resolutely stand on the side of younger brother Jiang and be his bosom friend, even his follower or his subordinate. Even if I'm a dog and must listen to his commands, I will try my hardest to become someone that younger brother Jiang trusts!"

Feng Yan thought furiously as he walked.

...

Shi Xiaoyao had narrowed his eyes as a pair of eccentric eyeballs sized up Jiang Chen, sized up this young man who'd caused him nights of restless sleep before he had even met him.

"Jiang Chen, Eastern Kingdom..." Shi Xiaoyao's eyes suddenly widened as he sat up. "Alright, I will pay no heed to all this trivial, minor matters. I care only about one thing. Where's the wine?"

Jiang Chen smiled faintly and flicked a glance at the wine cups in front of Shi Xiaoyao. “It is said that good wine should be paired with luminous wine glasses. Good wine should have good containers. Can this trash be taken away first? They’re an affront to the eyes. Do you have cups of old vine? If not, how about cups of young vine?”

Jiang Chen was fine if he remained quiet and didn’t open his mouth, but when he did, he almost frightened Feng Yan into peeing himself. This Jiang Chen was simply too bold. This was the vice head of the Myriad Treasures Palace!

Shi Xiaoyao started, and then broke out in a large grin. He spread his hands out, “Feng Yan, get the hell out first. Such good wine would be wasted on you.”

Feng Yan felt that it was rather sweet to be cursed at by Shi Xiaoyao, and he chuckled as he retreated from the room.

Chapter 159: Some Houses Rejoice, Some Houses Are Sorrowful

What Jiang Chen hadn't anticipated, was that Shi Xiaoyao's next move would actually be to sweep all of the wine cups on the table to the side.

He reached into his shirt and actually took out a cup made of old vines.

At this moment, a man as crude as Shi Xiaoyao was actually handling this cup made of old vines with a look of tenderness on his face — as if he was caressing his own newborn daughter. He was careful, soft, and his face was filled with a gentle look.

In this instant, Jiang Chen saw the shadow of an alcoholic in Shi Xiaoyao.

"Jiang Chen, the last time that I tasted the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine was with this same cup made of old vines. I had but a bit of fortune and destiny, and didn't have the chance to taste it again. However, I possessed thick skin, and although I couldn't taste the wine again, I happened to bring the cup home with me. Heh heh..."

Shi Xiayao leered just a bit, as if appropriating such a thing wasn't a shameful thing, but rather something to be proud of.

"I'd been suspicious for just a second whether you were able to

really bring the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine. Now, I believe you much more because you know about a cup made of old vines!”

The cup made of old vines is the best vessel to drink the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine with. Shi Xiaoyao had originally heard this from someone else as well.

Therefore, Shi Xiaoyao hadn’t been angered by Jiang Chen’s words just now, but rather had become overjoyed.

Putting the cup made of old vines carefully onto the table, Shi Xiaoyao actually closed his eyes. “Jiang Chen, if you’re lying to me, then get the hell out now. Since you’ve mentioned the cup made of old vines, I can let you go this one time. If you’re here in earnest, pour the wine!”

The Nine Magnificence Dew Wine proceeded to land in the cup made of old vines like ancient nectar. The sound that it gave rise to was as if a babbling mountain spring that had its own mesmerizing rhythm.

In the span of a moment, all artistic conceptions seemed to meld into this Nine Magnificence Dew Wine. It was as if the surroundings on all sides had turned into a deep mountain valley that was filled with all sorts of exotic flowers and grass. A clear mountain spring flowed slowly through it, making one free of mind, and happy of heart.

Shi Xiaoyao’s entire body spasmed, as his tightly shut eyes suddenly opened.

The next moment, this vice head of the Myriad Treasures Palace, one of the few characters who held significant power within the Skylaurel Kingdom, actually began to bawl like a child!

Tears covered his face!

His lips trembled. “Who would’ve thought that after so many years, I, Shi Xiaoyao, would actually have the good fortune to once again meet the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine!”

He raised the cup made of old vines and placed it next to his lips, seemingly wanting to mobilize his six senses and all the strength in his entire body in order to drink the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine.

When the wine entered his mouth, it was as if Shi Xiaoyao was an old monk who’d entered a trance — he was petrified.

This feeling was just too wondrous and too unforgettable.

This was the taste that had always been in his dreams, the taste that he’d always been preoccupied with.

“Heh heh, Vice Head Shi, cry if you’d like. I know that you told Feng Yan to get out because you were afraid of your subordinate seeing you lose your composure. How embarrassing would that have been!”

Shi Xiaoyao chuckled and scratched his head. “Jiang Chen you brat, you saw through even this. It looks like I’ve truly underestimated you.”

“How’s the wine?”

Shi Xiaoyao sighed. “I only have three words, ‘death without regret’.”

‘Death without regret’ meant that after tasting this wine, even if he, Shi Xiaoyao, immediately died, he’d have no regrets whatsoever.

What compliment could be higher than this?

Jiang Chen chuckled and pushed the jug of wine forward. “Vice Head Shi, a hero knows another. If it wasn’t for you going to this trouble on my behalf for the Dragonteeth Guard matter, then you likely wouldn’t have even been able to taste this Nine Magnificence Dew Wine this quickly. This jug of wine is all yours.”

“What?” Shi Xiaoyao jumped up and held onto the jug with a death grip from both hands, as his eyes blinked shiftily. “Jiang Chen, don’t regret this now.”

“A treasured sword is given to a martyr, and rouge given to a beautiful lady. Isn’t it a much better thing if the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine is gifted to someone who understands wine like Vice Head Shi, rather than having those ignorant buffoons drink it?”

Shi Xiaoyao chuckled. “I like hearing talk such as this.”

“Mm. Then I won’t disturb Vice Head Shi from tasting beautiful wine.” Jiang Chen rose and prepared to leave.

Shi Xiaoyao started. He’d thought that Jiang Chen would make some sort of request. He’d already mentally prepared himself so that, no matter what Jiang Chen asked for, he’d strive to fulfill it to the best of his abilities.

Who would’ve thought that Jiang Chen would leave without mentioning any requests at all.

“Wait a moment!” It was Shi Xiaoyao who found it a bit difficult to hold onto his face now. He had thick skin, but it wasn’t thick enough to the point of drinking someone else’s wine, and not indicating anything in return.

“Jiang Chen, you materialized my wish for me. According to the promise that I left in the Wishing Tower, I must help you obtain a position of at least a fifth rank noble. However, with your abilities, being a fifth rank noble is beneath you. How about this: I’ll strive my hardest and promise that I’ll get you at least a position of fourth rank, and will try quite hard for third rank. How about that?”

“Vice Head Shi is a man of his word alright.”

“Haha, I won’t keep you today. I’m going to embrace this jug of Nine Magnificence Dew Wine in my sleep tonight. No one can stop me.” Shi Xiaoyao cackled heartily, in an exceedingly great mood.

...

On the Southern Palace side, Qiao Baishi rubbed his cheek, his face bright red, and a complex mix of emotions within his heart. He stood there, a bit at a loss on what to do.

This was because, just moments before, the dignified and graceful Elder Ning had completey disregarded the etiquette of a noblewoman, and had fiercely kissed him whilst hugging him.

“Baishi, I’ve discovered that I may truly love you to death.” Elder Ning chuckled as she carefully checked her face, neck, and even the back of her ears in a bronze mirror.

“This is too amazing! Baishi, do you believe if you sold this pill, that at least ninety percent of the women beneath the heavens will want to sleep with you?”

Qiao Baishi was speechless. What could he say to that?

Elder Ning’s exaggerated performance had already fully portrayed the effects of the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill.

A powerful and influential elder who had lost her composure so utterly in such a short amount of time; it was patently obvious how

crazy this pill was.

“Baishi, look at me here. I had some eye bags before, but now, they’re all gone. And here, I had a small freckle here before, and I was fretting endlessly over it! Hehe, it’s gone now as well. And, I felt that my skin was a bit dry before and was lacking in elasticity, but now… don’t you see? Isn’t it so delicate and tender? Heh heh, Baishi, why aren’t you saying anything? Hurry and come over and take a look for me.”

This was a woman. No matter how high her position, or how much power she held, she was still a woman.

The nature of a woman had been utterly revealed, without a doubt, in this moment.

Qiao Baishi had also finally witnessed just how crazy women could get when they pursued beauty.

Elder Ning touched her face on the left and right, appearing a bit worried about the personal gains and losses. “Baishi, do you think that others will still recognize me if I walk out like this? If they don’t recognize me, it’d also be a bit inconvenient.”

Qiao Baishi laughed ruefully, “Elder, you were born a heavenly beauty — this Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill is only adding brilliance to your already present splendor. Your original foundation is there, and your uncommon presence is there as well. Unless they’re blind, whoever can’t recognize you has something wrong with their brain.”

With this bit of fawning flattery, Elder Ning began glowing even brighter with health. She was like a blossoming flower — uncontrollable in her magnificence.

“Baishi, look at you. You’ve such a sweet mouth and are so competent. And this pill recipe... I truly am a bit afraid.” Elder Ning suddenly became a bit depressed.

“Afraid?” Qiao Baishi started.

“Sigh. Yes.” Elder Ning walked over and sat down next to Qiao Baishi. “You’re so talented that one day, you’re destined to shine brilliantly with your radiance. I’m afraid that I won’t be able to part from you, and also afraid that someone will steal you away from me.”

Qiao Baishi had thought that she was joking at first, but extremely complicated emotions were in Elder Ning’s eyes. It seemed that she truly was genuinely worried.

“I owe a debt of being understood and well treated by Elder Ning. It is my honor to be of assistance to Elder Ning.”

“Baishi, do you truly think this way?” Elder Ning’s eyes held a gaze of abundant joy.

“Absolutely, without a doubt.” Qiao Baishi said.

“No, no.” Elder Ning shook her head again. “I can’t be this selfish. I wouldn’t be able to bear it if you were my subordinate. Baishi, with your talents, you should at least be an elder.”

Qiao Baishi laughed, “I’m a foreigner who’s only just arrived in the Skylaurel Kingdom. I’ll feel quite reassured if I can solidly remain at Elder Ning’s side and assist you. It’s impractical to have too many thoughts.”

Elder Ning didn’t speak, only got up lightly and walked in front of the mirror, as she looked at herself in the mirror’s reflection and sank into deep contemplation.

One had to say that, although Shi Xiaoyao appeared crude, he was actually quite a particular person. He was quite efficient. as he obtained a fourth ranked noble’s position for Jiang Chen the next day, and also gifted him a large manor within the nobles’ section.

This was an unexpected joy.

Jiang Chen hadn’t thought that a jug of Nine Magnificence Dew Wine would be worth so much. Shi Xiaoyao had resolved his issue of a noble’s identity as well as a residency.

This efficiency was seriously high.

Vice Director Yang Zhao was another person who was highly efficient. He’d utilized almost all channels in the past two days, and had finally gathered all of the items on the list within the two

days.

“Uncle, you want me to bring these items to Jiang Chen? To offer gifts and apologize?” Lu Wuji’s face was resolute as he cried out, “I’m not going!”

“You’re not going? If not you, then who?” Yang Zhao said angrily.

“Didn’t you already go once uncle? It’s always awkward at first, but it gets easier afterwards. You should go again this time.” It would feel worse to Lu Wuji for him to go meet Jiang Chen now, than it would be to kill him.

“Lu Wuji, are your brains filled with water? I go? What if Jiang Chen doesn’t buy it if I go? Fine, you don’t have to go. But if the matter of the three great sites isn’t resolved, you’ll bear the brunt of the general director’s fury. I’ve always treated you as my own son. You’re a fine one alright, disappointing me time after time!”

Lu Wuji was unafraid of anything beneath the heavens or earth because of this uncle. Now that he saw that Yang Zhao was truly angry, he softened at once.

“Uncle, don’t be like this. On behalf of my deceased mother…”

“Stop mentioning your mother, I’ll throw you out immediately if you keep talking about her! I’ll ask you again, are you going or not?”

Lu Wuji realized that his trump card was ineffective, and grit his teeth as he said with a bitter expression, “I’ll go. I’ll go then!”

Lu Wuji knew that if he didn’t go this time, he’d likely lose his uncle’s affections forever.

Chapter 160: You're Right, I Am Indeed Quite Proud

The capital of the Skylaurel Kingdom, in front of Jiang Chen's new manor.

"What? Who did you say you were?" Qiao Shan put one hand up to his ear with the composure of someone who had not heard properly. "I say, did you not eat your breakfast or something? Can't you speak louder?"

Lu Wuji's face was livid. Such humiliation!

How could he not realize that Jiang Chen's personal guard was purposefully shaming him and riling him up?

But, given the circumstances, as awesome as he, Lu Wuji was, he didn't dare to raise a fuss. He firmly repressed the anger within his heart and raised his voice, "I am Lu Wuji and I am here to offer my apologies to Jiang Chen."

"Lu Wuji?" Qiao Shan started and turned back to the companions by his side. "Who's Lu Wuji? Have you guys heard of him?"

The others all chuckled and shook their heads.

How could Lu Wuji not know that these personal guards were purposefully making fun of him? With his usual lofty and arrogant

demeanor, Lu Wuji almost wanted to pull his sword out on these fellows who were insulting him.

However, his remaining bit of reason had yet to be swept away by hatred. He gathered up his courage and said loudly, “Brothers, I’ve already brought the items that the master of your house wanted. It was my fault previously for not seeing Mt. Tai. I’m here to apologize to your young master.”

At this time, a round of hearty laughter rang out from the yard as Jiang Chen and Tian Shao walked out side by side.

“Commander Tian, you’ve gone to great trouble over the past couple of days. I have already settled in here so you can return to the Dragonteeth Guard to report in. Please give my greetings to the directors.”

Tian Shao cupped his hands, “Not at all, not at all. Younger brother Jiang, I will see myself out.”

The two chatted and laughed as they arrived at the door, completely disregarding Lu Wuji on the side, as if he was nothing but a cloud of air standing there.

Particularly Tian Shao, his eyes only swept past Lu Wuji’s face once when he exited through the door. He didn’t even look at Lu Wuji when he left.

Lu Wuji was incredibly incensed. He had always been high above

others with his eyes on the top of his head. Within the Dragonteeth Guard, even Tian Shao's supervisor was quite friendly when he saw Lu Wuji, greeting him as General Lu.

This Tian Shao dared to ignore him, Lu Wuji! He'd dared to ignore a vice general who was higher ranked than his own rank of a commander!

"Tian Shao, when the matters of today pass, I will teach you how heavy the price of offending me, Lu Wuji, is!"

Lu Wuji glared viciously at Tian Shao's departing back as he grit his teeth internally.

"Stop looking at him. Before you want to exact your revenge, you should first consider whether or not you can make it through this current trial." Jiang Chen thoroughly understood the human heart. Due to his training of Boulder's Heart and God's Eye, he was quite accurate with regards to his statements.

"Jiang Chen, you're quite proud right now, aren't you?" Lu Wuji couldn't help but ask.

Jiang Chen laughed leisurely. "Yes, you're not a complete fool! You're able to tell even when I'm proud of something. You're right, I'm quite proud. Why shouldn't I be? Someone who wanted to step on me is now begging me to accept his offerings and pleading for my forgiveness. You tell me, wouldn't you be proud if this happened to you?"

If this matter had happened to Lu Wuji instead, he would surely be even more proud and unbridled.

Even Lu Wuji himself couldn't deny this point.

"Jiang Chen, the items are all here. Please look over them." Lu Wuji wasn't an utter fool in the end. He knew that verbally sparring with Jiang Chen now would only be bringing trouble onto himself.

"Put them down. I think you don't have the guts to skimp on any of them." Jiang Chen laughed faintly.

"What about the matter of the three great sites?" Lu Wuji was most concerned about this. If the three great sites didn't ease up, he'd be skinned and stripped of his tendons when he went back.

"What do the three great sites have to do with me?" Jiang Chen smiled.

Lu Wuji's face turned ashen, "Jiang Chen, what do you mean by this? You've already accepted the items. Do you want to go back on your word?"

Jiang Chen laughed leisurely and said nothing before speaking to Qiao Shan and Qiao Chuan, "Bring the items inside."

Jiang Chen walked into the yard with an even pace after giving his orders, leaving Lu Wuji outside. Lu Wuji wasn't sure if he was

to go or to stay.

"Jiang Chen, don't go too far in taking advantage of others!" Lu Wuji grew a bit anxious.

"Going too far in taking advantage of others?" Jiang Chen's coolly composed voice traveled out from within. "Lu Wuji, you think too much. In my eyes, you're not even a human being. What right do you have for me to bully you? Get out of here, don't make a fool of yourself in front of my front door. I'll feel embarrassed even if you won't."

Lu Wuji rather wanted to erupt in a rage, but he also knew that if he lost his temper now, it would give Jiang Chen an excuse to take his revenge. This was Jiang Chen's territory and a good man didn't fight when the odds were against him.

"Jiang Chen, just you wait. You accepted the items but didn't uphold your part of the agreement. I can't do anything to you right now, but the same doesn't hold true for my uncle!" Lu Wuji thought and immediately had an idea. "Right, I'm going to go back right now and tell my uncle all this. I'll greatly embellish it and enrage uncle so that he'll make a move to suppress this Jiang Chen."

Lu Wuji went back to Yang Zhao's manor in high spirits and great enthusiasm, greatly exaggerating the events of the day and enlarging Jiang Chen's domineering arrogance by more than ten times.

After he'd blathered away a huge chunk of words, Yang Zhao raised one foot and stomped down on his butt. "Idiot! You're a boor compared to Jiang Chen!"

"What... what did I do now?" Lu Wuji was unreconciled and had a face full of innocence.

"What? Do you really think that Jiang Chen is as stupid as you to accept the items and not do anything? We've just received word from all sides that all cooperation is back on."

"Ah?" Lu Wuji was stunned. His efforts in wagging his tongue had been a complete waste.

Raising his neck, Lu Wuji had another idea. "Uncle, now that the partnerships are back on, this means that the three great sites are no longer up in arms. Then, are you just accepting the fact that Jiang Chen swindled us out of so much? This isn't your style."

"Accepting this?" Yang Zhao laughed coldly in succession. "That Jiang Chen must have the appetite to swallow all my items for me to accept this!"

Lu Wuji was immediately invigorated when he heard this. "Uncle, what brilliant scheme do you have in mind?"

"Wuji, do you know where you went wrong this time? You were wrong in that you charged too far out. Of course, I neglected my supervisory duties in this matter as well. For now on, don't rush

too far out in front. Jiang Chen's offended the Northern Palace, why should we charge the enemy lines on the Northern Palace's behalf? Remember, don't act as weapons for others in the future. Instead, be the one to compel those of the Northern Palace to stick their necks out."

Lu Wuji slapped his thigh. "That's right! I truly did miscalculate this time. It was a Northern Palace affair to begin with. I was only a bit more proactive because I wanted to put on a strong performance in front of the first prince."

"Be smarter in the future!" Yang Zhao analyzed. "The first prince will certainly keep how much you've sacrificed this time in mind. You can make use of this opportunity to engender more goodwill from the first prince. Remember, you're in control of whether you're a dragon or a snake. When he ascends to the throne in the future and becomes king, it's up to you if you continue to be cowardly and timid, or rise to the position of general director. I can support you from behind, but am also limited in what I can do."

Lu Wuji was deep in thought.

...

Within the manor of the fourth prince Ye Rong.

Ye Rong laughed heartily. "Younger brother, I have to say that I've once again underestimated your ability. Come, I salute you with this cup of wine."

“I also salute younger brother Jiang Chen.” Tian Shao also raised his cup. He was very grateful to Jiang Chen. That kind of gratitude was very similar to Feng Yan’s gratitude to Jiang Chen.

“I’m ashamed. I hope I didn’t involve the fourth prince this time.” Jiang Chen raised his glass and made an indication, saying to Tian Shao again, “Brother Tian, congratulations on being promoted to vice general.”

“Involve me?” Ye Rong smiled. “This is precisely the kind of situation I wanted to see when I invited you to the capital. The more trouble you can stir up, the prouder I feel. This proves that my assessment was quite accurate and true.”

Tian Shao also smiled. “Younger brother Jiang Chen, this time’s matter isn’t necessarily a bad thing for the fourth prince. At least, there has never been anyone who emerged from an exchange with the first prince bearing the upper hand. Although the first prince hadn’t made an overt appearance in this matter, but privately, every prince knows full well that the first prince wanted to use this matter as an excuse to oppress the fourth prince. However, he’s miscalculated this time.”

Tian Shao was a military man. Whether he was a commander or a vice general of today, his words were always straightforward and candid. He wouldn’t beat around the bush.

This was also what Ye Rong admired about Tian Shao.

“Come, let’s drink.” Jiang Chen hadn’t thought that this matter would actually be embroiled in the covert struggles and open competition between the princes. He wouldn’t set himself on a pedestal when he heard them talk thus.

After the wine had filled their stomachs, Ye Rong said again, “Younger brother, although I don’t know why the three great sites would go to this much effort at the same time, but I must remind you of one point. Your position and your status have now changed. The number of people keeping an eye on you will have increased as well. Be careful of what you do. Neither Vice Director Yang of the Dragonteeth Guard nor those of the Northern Palace are kind folk.”

“Right, you must be on your guard against a counterattack from them.”

Jiang Chen nodded. “Thank you for your reminder. I understand.”

Ye Rong laughed frankly and suddenly thought of something. “Right, younger brother, I’ve come to find you this time to tell you something.”

“What is it?”

“The matter is as follows. My teacher, Tutor Ye, Ye Chonglou, will be holding a birthday banquet in half a month. All of us princes will be going to offer our birthday tidings. I only have three spots on my side so I can bring three people with me. I

wonder if you, younger brother, have any interest?”

Offer birthday tidings to someone? Jiang Chen honestly didn’t have much interest in that. But since Ye Rong had put it this way, he wasn’t actually asking for Jiang Chen’s opinion, but rather, inviting him to participate. He obviously couldn’t turn it down.

Jiang Chen smiled and nodded, “The teacher of the prince must be an elder who is of noble character and high prestige. It must be very be exciting then. If I can attend and broaden my knowledge, that’d be a good thing as well.”

“Indeed, indeed. You can also increase your network and raise your level of recognition. You’ve just arrived in the Skylaurel Kingdom and likely don’t have a direct impression of Tutor Ye.”

When Tian Shao heard Tutor Ye’s name, he had a face full of respect and worship as his entire body straightened.

“Younger brother Jiang Chen, Tutor Ye is the spirit king protector of the kingdom for the current dynasty. His level of training is mysterious and unfathomable. It’s said that even the elders of the Precious Tree Sect quite admire Tutor Ye’s level of martial dao training.”

“Spirit king protector?” Jiang Chen started. He knew that only a practitioner at the peak of the spirit realm had the right to be called a spirit king. Those who were labelled spirit king would be those who were placed above the peak of the spirit realm.

“Yes.” Tian Shao’s tone was very reverent. “Younger brother Jiang Chen, do the four great sites have great power? Yes, but even the heads of the four great sites must call themselves juniors in front of Tutor Ye. How strong would you say that Tutor Ye is?”

Even Jiang Chen felt surprised now. The Skylaurel Kingdom had such a strong kingdom protector? In contrast, that so-called elder grandfather of the Eastern Kingdom who’d never shown his face was basically a joke.

“Tutor Ye is also an elder grandfather of the royal family?” Jiang Chen was quite curious.

Ye Rong sighed, “Royal father has never mentioned his status to us. We only know that his surname is Ye, but we don’t know if he’s an elder grandfather of the royal family. We also only know that he’s celebrating his birthday, but don’t know how old he is.”

Such a mysterious old man rather gave rise to a trace of yearning in Jiang Chen’s heart.

Spirit king protector of the kingdom. Just based on these words, Jiang Chen decided that he would go meet him no matter what. He also wanted to see just what the practitioners at the peak of the spirit realm within this world were like.

Perhaps, he would be able to obtain a trace of inspiration regarding the spirit realm from him?

Chapter 161: Old Man Fei Begging To Be A Medicine Servant

Although the matter with the Dragonteeth Guard this time had remained within a small, tight knit circle, Jiang Chen's name became a hot topic that no one could veer away from.

However, Jiang Chen paid no heed to the goings on in the outside world.

He now had gained both the identity of a noble and a manor. He finally had a place to stay within the Skylaurel Kingdom, and all was proceeding on the proper path.

"The next step is to assail the spirit realm. With my current foundations, assailing the spirit realm isn't much of a problem. The key point is cleaving open the spirit ocean. The level of my spirit ocean will determine the height of my future path in martial dao. Unfortunately, I currently haven't had much dealings with spirit realm practitioners, and don't have much direct knowledge of this world's spirit practitioners."

Jiang Chen tried hard to think back. He'd had a few dealings with the spirit realm disciples of the Purple Sun Sect back in the Eastern Kingdom. When he'd arrived in the Skylaurel Kingdom, he'd had a few more run-ins with the Northern Palace disciples.

Of course, the Northern Palace was just a satellite site of the Precious Tree Sect, and their so-called spirit realm practitioner were just all dabblers.

Apart from Liu Can who'd truly stepped into the first level of the spirit realm, all the others were merely at the half-step spirit realm.

It was rather the disciples of the Purple Sun Sect whose strength had been increasingly stronger.

"Forget that Xu Zhen, he's not that much stronger than Lu Can of the first level spirit realm. Yu Jie's level of training should be at the second level or even the third level of the spirit realm. Chu Xinghan, who'd appeared last, was greatly stronger than Yu Jie. He likely has the strength of a fourth level spirit realm, or even higher. However, from the power they deployed, they seemed to be greatly limited. They seemed to be continuously limited towards the water attribute. Could it be that, from the very beginning, the creation of their spirit ocean was favored towards the water attribute?"

He truly had had limited exposure to spirit realm practitioners, and temporarily hadn't met a single person that he could spar with peacefully.

However, Jiang Chen was different from the practitioners of this world. His knowledge of martial dao exceeded even that of the premier practitioners in this world.

Of course, he hadn't been able to cultivate in his past life, but he had used a mind full of theoretical knowledge to train countless domineering geniuses. Any one of these geniuses could likely

trample over the preeminent practitioners of this world if they arrived here.

Therefore, Jiang Chen was self confident. He wasn't lost.

"After last time's enlightenment, I already know that the so-called twelve meridians true qi is actually a bridge, a process in which one transforms from mortal to spirit. The spirit realm is merely the first step in shaking off the mundane. To truly control the heavens and reshape the power of reincarnation, who knows how long this road will be..."

Jiang Chen was well aware of how long and arduous the path of martial dao was. Even if he held advantages that others didn't have, he still couldn't relent in the slightest on this road.

"My memories from my past life are my advantages, but my resources of this level are obviously quite poor. I must leverage my own advantages to the best of my abilities in order to collect the best resources of this world for my use."

Jiang Chen knew that the path of martial dao wasn't a fight against the heavens, but a fight against people.

Resources were limited, but practitioners, coming in one generation after another, were unlimited. Unlimited people fighting over limited resources. It was a given that some would become dragons, and others would become ashes.

Jiang Chen had also undergone significant contemplation before swindling the people who he'd gone after this time.

Killing a minor character like Lu Wuji would only vent a moment's worth of ill will. In Jiang Chen's eyes, Lu Wuji was just an annoying, bouncing cockroach. There were plenty of opportunities to kill him.

But the spirit ingredients that he'd garnered were ones that he desperately needed.

A process was necessary to break through to the spirit realm. He needed some supplementary aid to help him decrease the amount of winding paths on his road of martial dao.

"Young master, the weird old man from the Qingyang Valley is here again."

Just as Jiang Chen was meditating, Xue Tong came in with a report.

Jiang Chen had paid visits to the Southern Palace and the Myriad Treasures Palace. But he'd purposefully set old man Fei from the Qingyang Valley aside so as to stoke his anxiety.

Jiang Chen had grasped old man Fei's mindset and was of a mind to train this stubborn old man. So he'd kept whetting old man Fei's appetite and made it so that the old man would voluntarily come find him.

“Jiang Chen, you darned kid, you simply lack heart, don’t you? Tell me, hasn’t this old man been a staunch and loyal supporter? I was openly hostile to Shangguan Yi over your issue. You’re a fine one alright, you haven’t spoken anything to me in all these days. This angers me, this truly angers me.”

This strange old man gurgled tea in large sips as he complained whilst his eyes stared shiftily as Jiang Chen.

“Old man Fei, you can’t blame me for this. You also know that I’ve just arrived in the capital and all sorts of random, complicated events have cropped up in my face. See, if it hadn’t been for you this time, it would’ve been an unknown if I’d even been able to make it out of the Dragonteeth Guard’s Black Dungeons.”

Elder Fei particularly liked to hear words like these. He chuckled, and then seemed to immediately recall that he was here in protest. Shouldn’t he be more serious?

He drew his face downwards, “Jiang Chen, you told me to come find you at the capital last time. Now that I’m here, how do you plan on arranging this matter?”

“Old man, did you know that your acting really sucks? Don’t act deep and mysterious, that takes technique and isn’t something you’re good at.”

Elder Fei rolled his eyes and sprawled out on a chair. “Anyways, I’m going to stay here even if you don’t give me an explanation

today. I'll eat your food and sleep in your house. I'm going to follow you even when you go to the outhouse, and will stick by your side when you go find a woman. You're stuck with me!"

Jiang Chen was speechless. The old man absolutely was an amateur at concealing his feelings, but he was definitely a pro at being a rascal.

"Old man, must you really?"

"Heh heh, someone with a thin face won't have a full belly. Those with thick faces will eat their fill. I don't have anything else to do, so my face is quite thick." The old man didn't find his behavior shameless, but was rather proud.

"Fine then!" Jiang Chen flicked his middle finger at old man Fei and then immediately asked merrily. "So speak, just what do you want?"

"Isn't that bullshit? I want you to introduce me to the wise senior."

"And then what?"

"I'll ask him how to refine the Renewal Purity Pill then." The old man was a bit impatient. "I say, Jiang Chen, are you trying to go back on your word? Why do you keep repeating things we've already agreed upon?"

“Go back on my word? Do I look like that sort of person? I mean, what if he isn’t willing to teach you after I introduce you? What then?”

This question was one of the ones that old man Fei was most worried about. When Jiang Chen asked him, he was instantly dumbfounded and murmured. “What if he’s not willing to teach? Not willing to teach? What then?”

He then smashed a fist into his thigh and bit off his words, “If he’s not willing to teach me, then I’ll hail him as my master. That’ll work, won’t it?”

“Take him as your master? Do you think such a learned, erudite sage such as him would take an old and decrepit man like yourself as his disciple?”

Old man Fei was stunned again. This was true. That esteemed person had no relationship with him. On what basis would that esteemed person have to take him, a frumpy old man, as a disciple?

“If it comes down to it, I’ll even be his medicine servant and his follower. How about that?” Old man Fei was willing to lay down everything as he spoke through gritted teeth.

“Wouldn’t that be an injustice for you?” Jiang Chen chuckled.

“What do you know?” Old man Fei was delightfully proud. “This is why we say you young folks are as short sighted as mice. You

think being a medicine servant or follower for someone is embarrassing. Why don't you think that a great character who is able to grasp the Renewal Purity Pill is a person whose existence has ways to heaven. To follow at the side of such a great character as this and learn the tiniest bit of anything would result in endless benefit! Ai, your hair isn't even fully grown out yet. You won't understand if I speak of this to you."

Jiang Chen smiled mischievously. "Old man, does this mean that you're willing to let go of all your moral principles in the name of learning?"

"What are moral principles?" The old man laughed oddly and asked tiredly, "Can I sell that for money? If I can, I'll wrap all of it up and sell it."

"Ai. Have you ever thought about what if that sage elder is younger than you? Won't you think that you're demeaning yourself?" Jiang Chen chuckled.

"You're speaking like an outsider again. In the world of training, age is but a number. Many young geniuses have packs of old fogies by their sides. Do you think they feel it's shameful? They're happy as a clam! The strong are venerated, do you understand that?" Old man Fei spoke with sincere words and earnest wishes.

Jiang Chen was speechless. It seems that this old man really didn't have principles. He wondered how badly the old man had been worked over by others to have such a unique perspective on life.

“Therefore, you’d be willing to sell yourself to whoever teaches you how to concoct the Renewal Purity Pill?”

Old man Fei laughed dryly. “I wouldn’t even bat an eye if I sold the entire Qingyang Valley, much less myself.”

“Do you mean that?” Jiang Chen laughed lazily.

“Truer words have never been spoken. Hey, I say, can you cut the blather? When will you introduce me? Just tell me straight up!” Old man Fei was getting displeased.

A trace of a calm and composed smile hung at the corners of Jiang Chen’s lips as he looked at the strange old man scratching his ears and head in embarrassment.

“Then kneel and kowtow.” Jiang Chen threw out this sentence diffidently.

“What?” Old man Fei rolled his eyes, but seemed to read some clues from Jiang Chen’s eyes in the next moment. His entire body seemed to have been electrocuted as it trembled violently, and he jumped up and leapt in front of Jiang Chen with greatly exaggerated movements.

“What, what did you just say? For me to kneel and kowtow?” Old man Fei’s voice was actually trembling, as agitated as a man who’d been willing to die, but suddenly heard words that there was a

medicine that would help him come back from the dead in this world.

"What? You're not willing to? Alright, then it seems like all your heroic utterances were jokes? Forget it, forget it, pretend I didn't say anything." Jiang Chen reached out a finger and waved it.

"Don't, don't do that." Old man Fei had a fawning expression on his face. "Jiang Chen, no, young master Jiang, please speak more clearly."

"I've already told you to kowtow and take the oath, have I still not been clear enough? Old man, your powers of comprehension are so poor that it seems I must thoroughly reconsider whether or not to accept you as my medicine servant."

"You... you accept me as your medicine servant?" Old man Fei widened his eyes as his tongue curled in his mouth, beams of unbelievable shock shooting out from his eyes. "You're... you're that sage elder?"

"Mm mm, your comprehension isn't that bad after all. But, I'm not some sage elder. You can treat me as the sage elder's representative, do you understand?"

"Understood, understood. You're the sage elder's treasured disciple." Old man Fei was so happy that his smile reached his eyebrows and his old face was wreathed with fawning smiles. "Right?"

Seeing that Jiang Chen didn't respond, old man Fei seemed to suddenly understand something as he sank to his knees and kowtowed. "With the heavens as my witness, if young sir Jiang Chen can pass onto me the Renewal Purity Pill, I, Fei Xuan, will be willing to take his commands and be his follower, ready for his beck and call. If I have any other contrary thoughts, may the heavens and earth destroy me."

So old man Fei's name was Fei Xuan.

One had to say, this old man was quite something. He would joke around like a kid who'd never grown up, he was great at playing dumb and acting cute, but when he fixed his sights seriously on something, he would be more resolute than anyone.

Chapter 162: The Renewal Purity Pill

If it'd been anyone else, they would've hesitated a bit before kowtowing and taking the oath. They'd be concerned about their personal gain, weigh up their face, and consider gains and losses from all aspects.

But old man Fei was quite straightforward as he immediately kowtowed.

After he kowtowed, he didn't stand up and voice some pleasantries like ordinary folks, neither did he feel regret, anger, or humiliation.

Old man Fei did nothing of that sort. He put on his thickest skin and drew close to Jiang Chen with a smile. "Young master, old Fei is one of yours from now on. You wouldn't let one of your own come off worse, would you now?"

He rubbed his hands as he talked, and his expression was as wily as it could be. His eyes looked around shiftily and he looked quite comical.

It was Jiang Chen's turn to be left without a comeback this time. He'd thought that this old man would struggle for a bit, contemplate it for a while, or even angrily reject it.

Who would've thought that this old man would be so decisive?

In this way, Jiang Chen didn't even have the grounds to be demure and modest even if he wished to.

"Old man Fei, will you really have no regrets about this?" Jiang Chen asked faintly.

"Regret what? I, old man Fei, have lived a long life and have never known what is regret. Instead, I think that if I turned this down, then I really would regret it."

"Oh? You're that confident in me?" Jiang Chen had thought this old man had acted on the spur of the moment. Could it be that there was another motive behind all this?

"Heh heh." Old man Fei strutted with pride. "Young master, I haven't lived to this age for nothing. How long has it been since you've arrived at the capital? You could quickly deploy three out of the four great sites to back you up. Moreover, you had them back you up while running the risk of offending the Dragonteeth Guard. I, an old man have a favor to ask of you, but could it be that the Southern Palace and the Myriad Treasures Palace also have favors to ask of you?"

"Alright, even if they did have favors to ask of you, then at the very least this means that you're not a simple person, since you were able to lead three great sites by their noses in such a short timeframe. I wouldn't believe it even if you beat me to death if you say that there's not a hint of a mystery surrounding this kind of person."

When he spoke to this point, old man Fei smiled in a way that showed off his cleverness, “Young master, how would you say my powers of comprehension are?”

“Not bad, you’ve got some. You’re decisive enough. Old man, this is the recipe for the Renewal Purity Pill, take it.” Jiang Chen reached randomly and took out a recipe, throwing it over.

Seeing that Jiang Chen was throwing over a recipe like a piece of trash, old man Fei’s initial thought was that Jiang Chen was joking.

The Renewal Purity Pill was an ancient recipe! Even if there was a patron behind Jiang Chen, he wouldn’t hand it over that easily, right?

At the very least, Jiang Chen could raise all sorts of requests and add all sorts of conditions, taming him so that he was properly docile before taking out the recipe.

He carelessly spread out the recipe and took a look at it. Old man Fei’s expression immediately stiffened as his hands started trembling uncontrollably in a sign of weakness. It was as if his entire body had been electrocuted as he suddenly shook.

“This… this truly is the Renewal Purity Pill?” Old man Fei cried out hoarsely.

Old man Fei wasn’t an unprofessional outsider. Despite the fact

that he'd never seen the recipe for the Renewal Purity Pill, he'd still more or less heard of it and had studied the medicinal theory behind recipes.

If it was a fake recipe, a professional would be able to identity the problems with a single glance.

If it was a real recipe, a professional would also be able to discern its validity with a single glance.

This recipe may have been hastily written, but the ingredients, refining methods, knacks, and so on that were within it were all logical and reasonable. Only another professional could've written this.

"What? Do you think I would've fobbed you off with a fake recipe?"

Old man Fei's next move made Jiang Chen stare with his mouth agape.

The old man's legs bent as he once again kneeled down, and bambambam'ed, kowtowed three times.

"Old man, didn't you already kowtow earlier? What's this for?"

"Heh heh, that kowtow from before was merely a function of the circumstances. This kowtow is from the heart. Young master, if you tell me to go east in the future, I will absolutely not go west. If

you tell me to kill someone, I daren't set a fire instead!"

"Ah forget it. You've quite a few years on you and have some reputation in the outside world as well. It's asking a bit too much for you to call me by young master. Call me young Jiang or young Chen in the future. Don't call me young master. It'll make people think that I actually have some sort of amazing background."

"Young Chen, if you don't have an amazing background, then no one within the Skylaurel Kingdom has an amazing background." Elder Fei chuckled and appropriately changed what he was calling Jiang Chen.

The old man could understand less and less of Jiang Chen now.

Although Jiang Chen appeared to be from the Eastern Kingdom on the surface, it was apparent even if one thought with their feet that he absolutely wasn't as simple as he appeared on the surface.

How could a young man who could easily take out an ancient pill recipe like the Renewal Purity Pill have a simple background?

At this moment, ripples of emotion were indeed rising in the old man's heart. He had seen generous young folk, but to give away ancient pill recipes like they were wares by the roadside, this was seriously his first.

Just from Jiang Chen's demeanor alone, it was enough to leave all the young folk within the capital in the dust, to speak nothing

of anything else.

"Heh heh, this old man is still wise and brilliant. If I'd made that kowtow of mine that little bit later or had been less resolute, then maybe young Chen wouldn't have trusted me as much, and probably wouldn't have given me the Renewal Purity Pill recipe outright. What a haul! Mm mm, young Chen has such an amazing background, he must possess many more good things on him. I must closely follow behind young Chen's footsteps. Who knows, there may even be greater surprises in the future. Damn it all to hell. So what if I offended an elder in the Precious Tree Sect and had been sent here to this middling kingdom for decades. Huh huh, perhaps by following young Chen, I can swagger back to the Precious Tree Sect in the future!"

Although old man Fei had the final say on everything in the Qingyang Valley, he also had his share of sad and bitter past events. In actuality, he had offended a mighty man within the Precious Tree Sect and couldn't make it there anymore. Thus, he'd ran to the Skylaurel Kingdom and became the head of a secular site. With his abilities, this was actually a huge grievance for him.

Old man Fei had always wanted to return to the sect for every second these past decades and redeem himself with revenge.

It was a pity that his abilities and fortunes were limited. He'd offended an elder of the Precious Tree Sect. It was almost impossible for him to return to the sect.

Even so, old man Fei had never given up. Returning to the sect had become his goal for this lifetime and also his internal demon.

Everything he did was in pursuit of this goal.

Except, reality was a harsh and cruel thing. No matter how he tried, he had always instead drifted further and further away from that goal. From beginning to end, he was never able to catch a glimpse at a ray of hope.

However, Jiang Chen's appearance caused this door that had seemed tightly shut to suddenly open a crack, allowing a beam of light to shine in.

How would Jiang Chen know that old man Fei would have such bittersweet thoughts? He only saw old man Fei smile foolishly sometimes and then cry painfully for a bit, as if deep in thought.

"Old man, are you so happy with this mere pill recipe that something's gone wrong with your brain?"

"What 'just this pill recipe'?" Old man Fei shouted out. "This pill recipe is my lifeblood. Young Chen, you are truly the blessed savior of my life."

"Cut the blather. Oh right, I have something for you to do."

"What is it? Go ahead young Chen, if I don't handle it well, then kick my ass." The old man slapped his chest.

“Find a standard pill room for me, it’s best if it’s the kind with a formation to refine pills.”

“Standard pill room? Formation to refine pills?” Old man Fei’s expression was lost. “Young Chen, what’s a formation to refine pills?”

Pfft!

Jiang Chen had been taking a sip of tea when he sprayed out his mouthful after hearing old man Fei’s question, spraying it all over the latter’s face.

The old man didn’t wipe it off or make any motions. He just stood there with a face full of innocence. “Young Chen, don’t do that. I really don’t know what’s a formation to refine pills.”

Jiang Chen was completely speechless. He’d still overestimated the Skylaurel Kingdom’s infrastructure. After thinking about it however, this was normal. Most pills used in the realm of true qi could be refined through an ordinary pill cauldron. Who needed the aid of a pill refining formation?

Even among the spirit level pills, there were very few that required a pill refining formation.

“Young Chen, don’t stay silent. This must be very advanced level of knowledge. Please explain to me on the basis that I’m quite eager to learn.”

Seeing that the old man had a face full of desire, Jiang Chen didn't know what to say.

"A pill refining formation is as its words. It's employing formations to supplement the dao of refining pills. Complicated pills are sometimes completely uncontrollable with just a pill master's own level of training, particularly when it comes to controlling the flames. If the pill master's level of training isn't high enough, he will be greatly restrained. With a pill refining formation, he can manipulate the formation, and utilize it to create energy to aid the refinement of pills. Although the costs of this are high, it can help the pill master have an easier time refining pills while the chances of success will also be much, much higher."

"Utilize formations to refine pills?" This completely upended old man Fei's knowledge of the dao of pills and opened an entirely new door for him, allowing him to glimpse into a new world of the dao of pills.

"Can such a marvelous formation exists in this world? What... what genius invented this? Using formations to help refine pills, this is absolutely the innovation of geniuses!" Old man Fei's face was full of excitement as his spray and spittle flew everywhere, he was so agitated that he spinned in circles where he stood.

Innovation of geniuses?

Jiang Chen, again, didn't know what to say. This was as common

as home cooked food in the past Jiang Chen's eyes. There was nothing remarkable about it at all.

One had to say, the Skylaurel Kingdom was a small place after all. The matters they could come in contact with were simply too few.

The spirit medicines that Jiang Chen had obtained from Lu Wuji had actually been to refine a certain type of pill.

This pill had an exceedingly low rate of success. For insurance's sake, Jiang Chen had thought of using a pill refining formation, but he hadn't expected that the Skylaurel Kingdom wouldn't have it at all.

"Old man, so there's no pill refining formation. How about a proper pill room? There's got to be that at least, right?"

Old man Fei chuckled. "Not a problem at all. The Qingyang Valley is the site amongst the four that is most adept at the dao of pills after all. We have many strongholds within the capital, and plenty of pill rooms. I often refine pills in the capital as well. Young Chen, do you need one now, or...?"

"The sooner the better."

"Alright, I'll go prepare that right away." Old man Fei was a man of his words as he tore off in a great hurry.

"Ai, it looks like my starting place after reincarnation is seriously

low. Seems like I'll have to spend some thought on this since there's no pill refining formation."

The pill that Jiang Chen wanted to refine this time was no trivial matter. It was the golden key to success in forging his physical body, cleaving the spirit ocean, and transmuting from mundane to spirit.

It wasn't that Jiang Chen was anxious for results, but that he had clearly felt that his current level of martial dao was too low. This made it very difficult for him to even protect himself in this world.

Jiang Chen didn't wish that his life would always be in the care of others. Therefore, he desperately needed to break through!

Chapter 163: The Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill

Breaking through to the spirit realm wasn't a difficult task. If Jiang Chen wanted to, he had an eighty to ninety percent chance of doing so within a month.

Although Jiang Chen wished to make it quick, he didn't want to be overly rushed either.

The pill that he was refining this time was called the "Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill".

The name was quite domineering. In actuality, this was a pill that could cleave open and shape the spirit ocean.

Jiang Chen naturally had even better pills, but with the Skylaurel Kingdom's current conditions, the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill was the limit of his abilities.

Jiang Chen wouldn't be able to gather the ingredients for any better pills, and he wasn't assured of success in refinement.

The Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill was the most appropriate pill that Jiang Chen currently thought he could refine successfully.

The fine items that he'd swindled from Lu Wuji last time were precisely the materials needed to refine the Five Dragons Opening

Heavens Pill.

Jiang Chen also knew very well that the success rate of this pill wasn't that high, and so he'd made an exorbitant demand for enough materials for ten tries. This way, he'd have sufficient capabilities to fail.

The so-called five dragons of the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill actually referred to the five elements: metal, wood, water, fire, and earth. These five elements were innately present in the human body, and corresponded to the five organs.

The five dragons, as they implied, were to train the five types of qi and induce them into becoming dragons.

Opening Heavens was to cleave the spirit ocean open.

The pill was for coalescing the five types of qi into dragons and cleaving open the spirit ocean — thus was the origins of the name of the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill.

Jiang Chen was well aware that even within the Skylaurel Kingdom, the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill should not have existed.

If this pill were to make an appearance, it would absolutely cause a public uproar and riots.

Of course, Jiang Chen wasn't so foolish that he would introduce

this kind of pill into the market.

It was different from the Heavenly Karma Pill and Vast Ocean Pill. Those pills only served a complementary purpose.

But the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill was completely different. From many aspects, taking this pill was a mandatory step in entering the spirit realm.

For one, this pill could ensure, with ninety nine percent surety, that a true qi practitioner would have no accidents while assailing the spirit realm.

If being able to guarantee that no accidents would occur when assailing the spirit realm, then this would absolutely overturn everything if it appeared within the Skylaurel Kingdom.

One had to know, practitioners at the peak of the true qi realm were as many as the hairs on oxen within the Skylaurel Kingdom, but less than one out of a hundred successfully assailed the spirit realm.

Some didn't dare to make an attempt. They were afraid that if they failed, they would be dead and their training erased.

Some had missed the age to make an attempt and they knew that they wouldn't possibly succeed, and so they gave up.

Some made the attempt, but they failed. They were either

crippled or dead.

Those few lucky ones successfully made it through their attempt and shook off the mortal coils to become spirit, becoming a spirit realm practitioner that all true qi practitioners admired and looked up to.

If true qi couldn't transmute to spirit qi, then one was a worm in the end.

This was the true meaning of martial dao.

The spirit realm represented breaking free from the mundane and reaching a higher level in one's studies.

Remaining in the true qi realm meant that one hadn't shaken off the mundane shackles and were still ordinary mortals in the end. As strong as their martial prowess was, they were still limited after all. Their lifespan was still curtailed compared to a spirit realm practitioner's lifespan.

Therefore, this simple function from the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill would be enough to make everyone go utterly crazy for it.

However, for the pill itself, guaranteeing the success of assailing the spirit realm was only a basic function.

Its most important function was to stimulate the five inner qi

types and induce the qi to become dragons, sculpting the spirit ocean, assailing the spirit ocean, and excavating the potential of the spirit ocean in the body.

This function was where the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill proved to be the greatest.

From Jiang Chen's interactions with the disciples of the Purple Sun Sect, he could tell that a spirit dao practitioner had overwhelming advantages over the true qi realm.

But from their moves, it looked like their crafting of the spirit sea hadn't been too successful. The excavation of their potential had also been very singular focused.

From beginning to end, he had seen the Purple Sun Sect disciples demonstrate the potential of almost only the water attribute.

The water attribute was only one of the five types of qi.

In the greater world and a greater plane of existence, if someone was able to unearth one or two areas, they would almost be the lowest level of existence and a non-mainstream practitioner.

Even if they'd entered the spirit realm, their potential was usually the worst, their birth the lowest, and their qualifications would be the same as a poor practitioner.

If these poor practitioners didn't have the ability to obtain good

pills and cleave the spirit ocean open from their own hard work and training, they were often seen as the lowest level of existence in the world of training.

The saying of ‘those who specialized in the civil subjects would be poor, and those who specialized in the military subjects would be rich’ was not a random saying out of nowhere.

If one didn’t have a strong family background and plenty of disposable wealth, falling behind even one step due to a lack of strong economic support meant falling behind for the rest of one’s life.

Only exceedingly few geniuses with astonishing potential would be able to trample over scores of practitioners with their breathtaking abilities. This kind of unsurpassed genius did exist amongst poor practitioners, but they numbered very, very few. It was like looking for a needle in a haystack and it was something that would come about by luck and not through search.

The current Jiang Chen, when compared to the sect disciples, was indeed a poor practitioner.

Born of a small duke in a common, ordinary kingdom, he lacked a strong family background, a patron, strong economic support, and he didn’t enjoy an endless supply of resources.

But, he had the potential that he’d brought from his past life. It was definitely worthy of the title of being a breathtaking and astonishing genius!

“Whether it’s the Eastern Kingdom or Skylaurel Kingdom, they are all stops along my way of martial dao. While life goes on, there is no rest on the path of martial dao. It looks like I must hasten my pace.”

…

Old man Fei did indeed have many strongholds within the capital. It was akin to a cunning rabbit having three holes to his burrows.

“Young Chen, this is one of the best pill rooms in the capital. There are no disturbances from the surroundings and its location is more isolated. What do you think? If you don’t like it, I’ll take you to another one.”

“No need, this is fine.” Jiang Chen understood that the conditions of the Skylaurel Kingdom were like this, so he couldn’t be more demanding.

“Then… ” Old man Fei hesitated, a fawning look to please on his face, but he stopped after opening his mouth. “Young Chen, I’m quite curious, what pill are you refining?”

“What, you’re curious?”

Old man Fei nodded his head like a chick pecking rice. “Yes, yes! Young Chen, your moves are powerful and unrestrained with

talent, full of mysteriousness and unexpectedness. I'm curious about anything that is young Chen."

"Don't natter at me. This pill has no use for you, so don't waste too much time thinking about it. Right now, patrol the surroundings for me for the next ten days to half a month. Remember, don't let any strangers approach within a hundred meters of this place."

Upon hearing that this pill would be of no use for him, the old man's curiosity more or less subsided a little. Hearing that Jiang Chen wished for him to survey the surroundings, the old man didn't turn it down, but he was rather raring to go.

What did this mean? This meant that Jiang Chen was going through the initial steps of accepting him!

Young Chen was a genius under the protection of a mysterious expert. Old man Fei felt that it was his honor to be acknowledged and accepted by young Chen.

"Please be at ease young Chen, I will haul off anyone who dares to disturb your pill refinement and chop him into pieces to be fertilizer for the Qingyang Valley. Ah, it's a pity that I cannot observe young Chen refining pills. It is indeed a pity." The old man implored him with a pathetic look.

Jiang Chen chuckled as he knew that the old man was most skilled at pushing his luck. He didn't engage in a conversation with him and walked directly into the pill room.

Although there was no pill refining formation, one had to say, old man Fei was still quite competent. This pill room had been prepared quite well, with all needed items in full readiness. Jiang Chen didn't need to prepare anything. He only needed to bring his own raw materials to get started.

The Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill had five types of ingredients that corresponded to the five elements of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth.

There were more than eighteen supplementary ingredients.

The process of refining this pill was quite complex and detailed, and the refinement process was also quite long. It would take an incredible amount of energy and concentration, thus Jiang Chen had wanted to leverage the pill refining formation.

Jiang Chen sat cross legged in front of the pill cauldron and he used the God's Eye to carefully observe the cauldron's quality, ascertaining that there were no problems with it.

He then observed the other refining tools, for instance, the firestarter and tinder.

They were all the basics tools of a pill master, and these were necessary steps before refining pills.

Not a single bit of an accident was allowed to happen during the

process of pill refinement. The pill would be a complete failure and waste when an accident happened, and the materials would be wasted in vain.

These ingredients had been difficult to obtain. It would've been impossible to gather them all in the Skylaurel Kingdom if one didn't have certain avenues, and it would've been difficult to buy them all in a short amount of time even if one did have the money to.

"At the end of the day, I have to thank that idiot Lu Wuji. If it wasn't for him resolutely and steadfastly committing stupid acts and enraging Elder Ning and Shi Xiaoyao, this matter likely wouldn't have been so smooth."

Jiang Chen revealed a mischievous smile at the corner of his lips as he looked at the superior ingredients. Lu Wuji was truly Santa Claus!

Even Jiang Chen hesitated. Was it better to destroy this opponent, who appeared smart on the surface but was actually as dumb as a pig, or was it better to leave him alive?

On careful consideration, it seemed to be a rather fine thing to keep this kind of opponent around as Santa Claus.

The first firestarter was lit, then the second, third, fourth, and fifth.

There were five flames in total.

There was also an art to flames. A correspondingly relevant flame was necessary depending on what kind of pill was being refined. There was a vast difference between the fire of metal, the fire of wood, and so on and so forth.

Jiang Chen lit the flames according to the relationship between the five elements and warmed the pill cauldron.

He'd proceeded cautiously in all these steps and according to how he should progress in all of them.

Jiang Chen had gone over these steps of refinement many times in the past few days. He could be certain that nothing would be missed.

The five main ingredients were then added to the pill cauldron in accordance to their proper order, with the supplementary ingredients afterwards. They were mixed together according to their proper fires, slowly simmered with the relevant flames...

Even though Jiang Chen had simulated all sorts of details countless numbers of times beforehand, he too felt that there were a great deal of them and it was quite exhausting.

This was Jiang Chen — if it was any pill master blow the spirit realm, they'd probably spit out blood before they'd made it through one process.

Having trained in the “Boulder’s Heart”, Jiang Chen’s mental concentration was more than ten times that of an ordinary person’s. Even so, he still felt slightly weary after following through with these steps one by one.

It was a good thing that after following these steps, it was manual operations next. This was a test of his control over fire. This needed skills of manipulation and observation. With his level of God’s Eye, that shouldn’t prove to be too much of a problem.

Time passed by in seconds and minutes. Jiang Chen looked as green smoke started rising from the pill cauldron. This green smoke had actually been steamed out all the ingredients, and it was the dross and waste matter from the spirit ingredients.

Upon seeing that the green smoke was becoming fainter and fainter, Jiang Chen knew that the flames were about ready. This was the tail end of the process, and it was already set in stone whether or not the pill had succeeded.

In this instance, even someone as calm as Jiang Chen felt the faint sensation of blood thrumming in his veins. This was the first time he’d so gravely refined a pill.

As a pill master in his previous life, Jiang Chen felt tragic that he’d been reduced to fretting over whether or not the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill had succeeded, but also felt a boundless strength to fight on.

Chapter 164: Old Man Fei's Grievous And Sad History

A bout of qi surged out and knocked off the cauldron cover. Smoke roiled and billowed from the interior of the cauldron, full of a strong sense of medicine.

Jiang Chen's brow creased faintly. The stinging smell that assaulted his nose made his heart sink.

Although he'd never refined the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill in his past life, he knew that if this pill was successful, it would be embodied with the presence of a dragon swallowing the heavens. It would absolutely not be like this.

Indeed, when the completed pill appeared, Jiang Chen didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Looking at its black and dull appearance, Jiang Chen knew that this pill was trash.

It wasn't even a half finished product, much less a finished product. No one would likely even pick it up even if he left it by the side of the street.

"Completely in accordance with my expectations, the first attempt was a failure."

Jiang Chen was in no hurry to start the second attempt. He sat cross-legged, adjusted the true qi within his body, and went over the entire refining process.

Every detail and step went through his mind like a movie.

“Theoretically speaking, none of my steps had been wrong, so where had it gone wrong?” Jiang Chen meditated and thought back to the refining process, concerned about his personal gains and losses.

But he discovered that he hadn’t had any flaws in his first refining!

“Could it be that I missed something during my operations? Or was it that my control of the flames wasn’t precise enough?”

Although Jiang Chen had been a pill master in his past life and was well versed in the dao of pills, he’d never refined the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill and thus had no direct experience.

He couldn’t figure out the reason why this was happening.

After meditating for two hours, Jiang Chen adjusted himself back to his peak condition and began his second attempt at refining. He was even more careful and cautious this time.

He sought perfection to the best of his abilities at every step.

However, in the moment that the results were revealed, Jiang Chen was disappointed once again.

The result was exactly the same as his first attempt. It wasn't even a half finished product, it was complete trash.

The third time, the fourth time...

Everytime, Jiang Chen always felt that there wasn't absolutely no flaw in that particular attempt, but the final result was always the same dregs as before.

"What the hell? When have I, Jiang Chen, ever been so bedraggled in my past or present life? Am I unable to refine a finished product when I refine a mere Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill without the aid of a pill refining formation?"

The determination to excel was stimulated out of Jiang Chen's bones.

However, he knew that something was definitely wrong here. If he continued on this path without changing his mindset, things would definitely not go well.

He'd prepared enough material for ten tries this time, yet he had now failed four times. This meant that he had six chances left. And for these six chances, each failure would mean that he had one less attempt left.

"There shouldn't be any problems with the details, so where is it going wrong exactly? It's not like the Five Dragons Opening

Heavens Pill is a particularly special pill. With my abilities, I shouldn't fall down in the same place for four times in a row. Something must be going wrong here."

Jiang Chen once again sank into a meditative state. He decided to switch up his thinking and change his mindset.

"The Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill induces the qi to become dragons, opening the heavens and cleaving the ground open. The name of this pill is grand and magnificent..." Jiang Chen suddenly seemed to grasp the trace of a hint.

"That's right, the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill induces qi to become dragons, opens the heavens and cleaves the ground open. How heroic and gallant is this? I seemed to have departed from the true meaning of this pill. I've been careful and wary in the process of refinement and have been afraid of failure. I've completely missed the true meaning of this pill. I stuck to the pattern routinely without a thought, and set out to draw a tiger but ended up with a dog, completely failing to achieve what I set out to do."

A stroke of brilliance flashed through Jiang Chen's mind as inspiration came thick and fast. He'd immediately found the crux of the problem.

He was a reincarnated pill master after all, the dao of pills was as clear as day to him. Once he figured out the critical point of a problem, the direction of his next step was thus clear to him.

Indeed, there wasn't anything wrong with his refining process at all, but that his mindset was wrong. He didn't embrace the attitude of a surefire victory from the very start.

It'd be impossible to succeed in refining the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill in that sort of condition.

Jiang Chen knew that it was his fear of failure that had led to this outcome. Because he lacked the aid of a pill refining formation, it had caused Jiang Chen to operate with less than one hundred percent confidence from the very beginning.

This was a fatal problem for a pill master.

Once he found the reason for his failures, he adapted. Jiang Chen's powers of adaptation were still quite strong. If it was any other pill master, their mindset would surely have been adversely affected after failing four times in a row.

But Jiang Chen had trained in the "Boulder's Heart" art, and his mental state was akin to a boulder. His emotions wouldn't be disturbed just because he'd failed a few times.

Indeed, when the cauldron was opened for the fifth time, the pill had taken shape. Although it was a bit of a ways off from an inferior rank pill, it could just barely be labelled as a finished product.

"It looks like my direction was correct. This fifth time has more

or less been affected by my mindset. I will surely succeed on my sixth try!”

One had to say, Jiang Chen’s confidence was a sort that other pill masters was unable to learn.

His results were indeed a bit better the sixth time the cauldron was opened. This time’s Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill had reached the quality of an inferior rank pill.

Although the seventh time also resulted in an inferior rank, but its appearance and quality had greatly improved from the previous pill. If it was said that the last pill just barely managed to be counted amongst the inferior rank, then this one was definitely the zenith of the inferior ranks.

Jiang Chen was spurred onto greater heights when he saw this improvement.

After meditation, his mental strength had received sufficient rest and he made another attempt with vigorous spirits.

The eighth time the pill cauldron was opened, he finally saw a middle rank Five Dragons Opening Heavens pill!

A middle rank pill was enough to guarantee a ninety five percent chance of success. This was to say that a practitioner at the peak of the true qi realm would have a ninety five percent chance of successfully assailing the spirit realm if they took this pill.

This was practically an assured slot into the spirit realm.

Each flower grows higher than the last. Jiang Chen rode his momentum and actually refined upper rank pills in his ninth and tenth times!

“What a pity, if I had another five sets of ingredients, I would at least have an eighty percent chance of refining a supreme rank pill!”

Jiang Chen sighed, not without regrets.

However, it was already enough to have this amount of reward. Jiang Chen didn’t feel dissatisfied about anything. A supreme rank pill was often something that came by from luck and could not be searched for.

Jiang Chen was already rather satisfied that he had made it to this step. If it’d been anyone else, they’d most likely have despaired with such a harrowing beginning.

Jiang Chen had been able to turn the tide and overcome a disadvantageous situation, finally refining four to five finished products. It truly hadn’t been easy.

Although refining ten times had seemed to take very little time, in actuality, almost every attempt towards the end had taken an entire day, or even two days.

The process of refinement hadn't been that long, but what had needed more time was the time spent in meditation, rest, and recovering his mental strength.

When Jiang Chen walked out of the pill room and breathed in the air of the outside world, he luxuriated in the afternoon sun and felt quite at ease.

Old man Fei came bumbling over, "Young Chen, you've emerged from closed door refinement?"

"Old Fei, you've gone through quite some trouble this time."

Old man Fei's nose stuffed up and he almost shed tears. It truly had not been easy, guarding a door for ten days. He'd finally received a word of praise.

With Jiang Chen's word of comfort, old man Fei felt that these ten days had all been worth it.

"Oh right, old Fei, there's one thing that I find quite odd. Of the four great sites that belong to the Precious Tree Sect, three of them keep quite a high profile. The Northern Palace is domineering and arrogant, the Southern Palace likes to be in the limelight, and not to mention the Myriad Treasures Palace — there's not any business within the entire kingdom that they don't have a hand in. Why do I feel that only your Qingyang Valley keeps such a low profile to the point of taking it to the extreme? You don't look like someone who likes to keep a low profile!"

Jiang Chen was quite curious about this matter.

Who would've thought that he'd touch upon old man Fei's hidden pain with this question?

Old man Fei sighed dejectedly, as an incredible trace of sadness appeared within his crafty eyes.

"Ai, young Chen, to think that you've such skills in observation at your young age. That's right, our Qingyang Valley is indeed low key."

"Don't tell me that you're someone who innately likes to keep a low profile. Don't try to fob me off with words used in placating a three year old."

Old man Fei scratched his head and chuckled. "Fine, I'm your servant after all. Even amongst Qingyang Valley disciples, not many of them know of this matter."

"Oh? Is there something behind this?"

"Young Chen, you've also made the observation that the higher the profile one keeps in the Skylaurel Kingdom, the more capabilities, status, and support one has. It's not that I, old Fei, don't know how to handle matters nor do I not know how to maintain a high profile, it's that I truly have my difficulties that I'm unable to voice."

“What difficulties?”

“Young Chen, I was a disciple of the Precious Tree Sect back in the day. I had quite a reputation amongst the younger generation. Except, I was destined to run afoul of base persons in my life. I accidentally wounded a son of an elder of the sect in a fight once, and everything went downhill for me then. I finally couldn’t make it within the sect any further and voluntarily applied to pave the way for a site in a common kingdom, and this is how the Qingyang Valley came to be.”

“It’s better to be a bird’s beak than a cow’s rump. You were bullied in the Precious Tree Sect and was treated unjustly, it’s a wise decision to become the boss of an area within an ordinary kingdom.”

Old man Fei widened his eyes, “Young Chen, you must be kidding! Do you know what the identity of a sect disciple means? Particularly someone like me. If it hadn’t been for that matter, with my potential, I would’ve likely made it to the position of elder within a few decades. At worst, I would’ve been an elder-in-waiting. But look at me now. Even you’ve said that I’m an old and gross old man. Sigh. This is life. Taking a single step with the wrong foot means that my entire life is wrong.”

“Ai, young Chen, you’re young and so you won’t understand the bitterness, despair, and desolation of a sect genius coming down in the world to be amongst the common.”

At this moment, old man Fei had changed from his usual noisy and boisterous countenance, and his thin eyes were full of a tragic sadness that touched others.

Although Jiang Chen wasn't the disciple of a sect, but from his knowledge of this world, there was indeed a great difference between sect disciples and ordinary practitioners.

To be exiled from being an exemplary disciple of a sect into passing the time in the common world, this was the same as Jiang Chen reincarnating into the son of a common, little duke from being the son of the Celestial Emperor. It was a speedy descent down three thousand meters.

However, Jiang Chen was luckier than old man Fei, because Jiang Chen hadn't been able to cultivate in his past life, and good fortune had come out of a disaster when he reincarnated and now possesses the qualifications to train.

In that moment, Jiang Chen felt that he instead pitied old man Fei as someone who was afflicted with a similar suffering.

Chapter 165: Realizing The Philosophy Behind Entering The Spirit Realm

“Young Chen, there are no outsiders here and I, old Fei, am not scared of any jeering. To be honest, look at me. My position as the head of one of the heads of the four great sites, the Qingyang Valley, looks quite lofty, doesn’t it? However, in reality it’s less than even a fart. Any random, mid-ranked disciple from the Precious Tree Sect can point at my nose and curse my mother. I wouldn’t even be able to talk back. Therefore, this superficial level of glory exists only in ordinary people’s eyes.”

“Including the Northern Palace, Southern Palace, and Myriad Treasures Palace — their circumstances are surely better than mine, but their senior executives only amount to so much in the eyes of the Precious Tree Sect. Not that many sect disciples would give them face. In the eyes of true sect disciples, anyone who fools around in a common, ordinary kingdom, is someone who will amount to nothing. They’re all rejected defectives from the sect, and destined to have not much of a future. Do you understand when I put it this way, young Chen?”

Jiang Chen nodded faintly, “The sect disciples have their eyes set in high places. In their eyes, wasting time in the mundane world is a loss of power, and such people won’t amount to anything. This isn’t too difficult to understand.”

“Eh? Young Chen, are you also a sect disciple too? Otherwise…”

Jiang Chen waved his hands, “I’m not a sect disciple. I was born in the Eastern Kingdom, all of this can be verified. I can only say

that I'm a bit luckier than ordinary practitioners."

Old man Fei seemed to be musing over something when he suddenly said seriously, "Young Chen, allow me to continue. With your potential, your worldview and your bearing, it would be a true pity if you didn't enter the sect. In my eyes, you absolutely have the qualifications to enter the Precious Tree Sect, and you can absolutely soar up into the sky and take the lead!"

"Let's talk about that later. If being in a sect is a boulder than I am destined to be unable to bypass, then there's nothing bad about entering and obtaining a slight understanding."

Jiang Chen felt slightly distasteful towards the Purple Sun Sect, but this wouldn't cause him to be irreversibly prejudiced against sects. He was an opened minded person, and naturally wouldn't purposefully evade or reject sects because of a few subjective notions.

Jiang Chen had still inherited the thinking patterns from his past life as someone in a lofty position. If the sects were an obstacle that he was destined to run into, then he would either step over them or right on top of them.

Seeing that Jiang Chen's attitude was this peaceful, old man Fei was flabbergasted. He wasn't sure if Jiang Chen didn't know that much about sects, or if his worldview was vast enough that he'd already jumped out of the confines of a sect and hence lacked the passion for them?

As he thought about it, he felt that it should be the latter.

Regardless of how he looked at things, young Chen didn't see like one of those country bumpkin practitioners who hadn't seen much of the world. Could someone who could gift him the Renewal Purity Pill like it was cabbage be completely clueless about sects?

To say the least, if Jiang Chen was willing to offer the recipe to the Renewal Purity Pill, it would be enough for him to gain a very nice position within the sect.

If he could offer it to an important member of the sect, perhaps he could gain the patronage of a great backer.

"However, why doesn't he do so? Judging from his cultivation, he doesn't seem to be a spirit realm practitioner. Can it be that the mysterious expert behind him is just a great pill master, and is unaccomplished in the realm of martial dao?" Old man Fei found it hard to get a grasp of things.

Jiang Chen paid no heed to old man Fei's thoughts as he patted his shoulder, "After endless mountains and rivers that leave doubt whether there is a path out, suddenly one encounters the shade of a willow, bright flowers and a lovely village... Old man Fei, you've been ostracized from the sect for decades and are still so loyal to it. I believe that there will come a day when you can make a triumphant return back to the Precious Tree Sect."

Old man Fei smiled wryly. "I hope such a day comes. I'm trying my best with the Qingyang Valley because I also want to make that

slightest bit of contribution to the sect. I hope there will come a day when I can move the gods so that the senior levels of the sect know that there is such a character as I, Fei Xuan. Even though I was exiled, I never had any complaints or regrets and I even dreamed of returning to the sect when I slept."

Jiang Chen sighed lightly. There were indeed many strange folk within the four great sites.

Elder Ning was absolutely focused on exterior looks with an almost perverted fixation on appearances.

Shi Xiaoyao was an absolute alcoholic, and quite besotted with the dao of wine.

As for old man Fei, he was a fervent supporter of the Precious Tree Sect. Even though he'd been discarded by the sect, he'd hardened his heart in his desire to return.

These were the hundred facets of the world.

Jiang Chen seemed to glean sudden reflections and feel sudden emotional resonance from these people.

"This is odd, why is it I've become so melancholy and moody all of a sudden? This is really bizarre." Jiang Chen also felt strange. He didn't know where these thoughts had come from either.

However, he'd naturally had these thoughts and couldn't help

but glimpse the hundred facets of human life from their state of their lives.

Suddenly, Jiang Chen seemed to grasp a thread of inspiration as his thoughts raced. Countless thoughts surged in that moment, as if a meteor shower fell from the skies, an irresistible advance.

“Old Fei, guard the surroundings for me a few more days, I’m going into closed door cultivation.”

After he threw down this strange instruction, Jiang Chen once again returned to the pill room. This time, he wasn’t refining a pill, he was meditating.

Those notions just now had enabled Jiang Chen to capture a wisp of inspiration, to grasp a delicate, mysterious opportunity.

Elder Ning, Shi Xiaoyao, old man Fei...

All these people and their stages of lives represented a type of attitude towards life.

Their attitudes were some of the most ideal material to refer to when shaking off the ordinary and entering the spirit realm.

Elder Ning, Shi Xiaoyao, why were they like that? It was obvious that they had been disciples who’d been washed out of the Precious Tree Sect. They were disciples who had no future within the sect, and so they simply decided to come to the ordinary world to enjoy

life, and enjoy the thrills that power and influence brought in the ordinary world.

Meanwhile, old man Fei had also been expunged from the Precious Tree Sect, but he'd never accepted his defeat and never forgotten his desire to return to the sect. Even now, despite the fact that he was getting on in the years and behind the times, he still couldn't forget it.

Wasn't this the resolute conviction of "tearing through the boundaries and entering the spirit realm" that compelled him forward?

Old man Fei was meant to be a spirit realm practitioner, but without the support of the sect, he hadn't enjoyed the benefits of endless resources and was still an ordinary, middling, old man when he fell to the mortal world.

Although he held a large amount of power, his glory was only unparallelled within an ordinary kingdom. It was as he'd said, any true Precious Tree Sect disciple who was anyone could point a finger at his nose and curse his mother.

This was the division between the mortal and spirit realm. This was the path of martial dao. This was why there existed a never-ending drive to climb upwards.

Jiang Chen had theorized quite a bit of philosophy from these three people.

One was still ultimately a worm if he couldn't transmute true qi to spirit.

Transmuting true qi to spirit was the goal of all practitioners. But those who could truly complete the process were all geniuses that wore the golden scales of dragons.

To those who could take this step, it was but a simple step.

For those who couldn't make it, it was a chasm.

"Why is it that the ratio of practitioners that have transmuted their true qi in this world is so low? Why is the success rate of entering the spirit realm so low? From what I've seen, it's not a simple matter of not having the assistance of spirit medicine. It seems that their knowledge of the unformed bridge between true qi and spirit qi is not wholly complete. Perhaps, for the practitioners of this world, they think that transmuting true qi to spirit is merely an ascension of their martial dao training, but they cannot comprehend that it's a transformation, a ritual of leaving behind the mundane and entering the spirit. The enhancement of strength and raising of one's level in this process is important, but the enhancement and transformation of the heart's strength is equally important. Those who are unable to comprehend this will be unable to make it past this hurdle. This isn't too difficult to understand either."

In his meditations, Jiang Chen perceived many theories, and his comprehension of the heart's strength had already gone through a transformation, unbeknownst to him.

It wasn't a simple matter of understanding the true meaning of martial dao, but a comprehension of a stage of life.

From a certain aspect, Jiang Chen was also considered as being half step spirit realm from this moment forth.

And he only lacked that final step in the process now, and that was to transmute his true qi to spirit, cleave open the spirit ocean, and reshape the spirit ocean!

Jiang Chen had the aid of the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill in this process. He was richly endowed by nature compared to the other practitioners.

"Some of my comprehensions need to be more thorough. I still need some inspiration to complete the final bit of understanding. Obtaining that bit of understanding will be moment I enter the spirit realm."

Jiang Chen knew that he didn't have any time left for that now.

He had promised fourth prince Ye Rong that he would participate in Tutor Ye's birthday banquet, and offer his birthday wishes to this esteemed and sagacious elder. He couldn't break his word.

Refining the pill had taken ten days or so, and he'd meditated for a few more days. He calculated the dates and discovered that it was only another day or two before the promised day arrived.

When he returned home, Jiang Chen actually discovered that something had cropped up at home.

After Qiao Baishi had gone to the Southern Palace, the mundane tasks of the house fell to Jiang Chen's uncle, Jiang Tong, to handle. Jiang Chen's father, Jiang Feng, focused on martial dao and rarely inquired after matters at home.

Although Gouyu was Jiang Chen's follower in name, no one in the Jiang family truly treated her as a follower. She was basically the commander of the home guard.

This was to say, the entire Jiang family lacked a pillar when Jiang Chen wasn't present.

"The Dragonteeth Guard again?! Do they think that they didn't receive enough of a lesson last time?" When Jiang Chen heard from Xue Tong's report that it was the Dragonteeth Guard again, rage rose in his heart.

"Young master, it's different this time. According to the laws of the Skylaurel Kingdom, an unregistered spirit fowl cannot fly within the capital. The Qiao brothers have a brash personality and forgot themselves for a moment, giving an opportunity to the Dragonteeth Guard. They were captured along with their Goldwing Swordbirds. We asked about the matter through Commander Tian Shao, he's unable to do anything in this matter either."

“Are the two brothers alright?” Jiang Chen was more concerned with if any harm had befallen them.

“Having been captured by the Dragonteeth Guard, they’re sure to suffer a bit. I went to visit them, it’s not yet to the points of threatening their lives. Apparently a great character is celebrating his birthday soon, and the capital will be fasting for three days, with no blood allowed to be shed. The Dragonteeth Guard has to adhere to this too, so it seems that their lives should be safe for now.”

Xue Tong felt similarly resigned. The Qiao brothers had brash personalities. Perhaps they could act without reservations in the Eastern Kingdom, but their characters would definitely land them in trouble in the Skylaurel Kingdom.

“Xue Tong, don’t berate yourself over this matter. You’ve tried your best, the fault isn’t on you. I’ll take care of it from here.”

“Young master, the Dragonteeth Guard is sure to use this as an excuse and make a big deal out of it, what strategy do you have?”

Jiang Chen spread out his hands. “If soldiers approach, we’ll send a general to fend them off. If water rises, we’ll create a dam to stop it. It happens to be the spirit king protector of the kingdom, Tutor Ye’s, birthday tomorrow. I will accompany the fourth prince to the banquet. You need not inquire more with regards this matter.”

The Dragonteeth Guard again!

A trace of killing intent flashed through Jiang Chen's eyes.

"Dragonteeth Guard, I've already forgiven you once. I hope you were proceeding about this case normally this time, and not purposefully starting something. Otherwise, I will indubitably let you understand that you have to pay the price for provoking me, Jiang Chen, in blood!"

Chapter 166: The Birthday Banquet Of The Spirit King Protector Of The Kingdom

The name of Ye Chonglou was like the existence of a totem within the Skylaurel Kingdom. No one, from an eighty year old elderly man down to toddlers and children, would be unfamiliar with this name.

He didn't have an awe-inspiring official title or a complex network of hanger-ons and power.

To put it even more plainly, he was just an old man who had nothing to do with the world. An idle, unoccupied person who busied himself with watching flowers bloom and fade. A person who concealed himself in the city.

However, when his name was mentioned, everyone from the king down to the commoners would be gravely respectful.

This was because this name was a monument and a totem to the Skylaurel Kingdom.

All the princes of the Skylaurel Kingdom had to respectfully call Ye Chonglou, "Teacher."

Even the current king, who was a prince from the last generation had to respectfully call Ye Chonglou, "Teacher" as well.

Even the generation before the last, and the one before that...

At least five generations of the Ye family dynasty had to respectfully call Ye Chonglou “teacher”.

It could be said that tutor Ye Chonglou had passed his knowledge down to generation after generation of disciples in the royal family. No one could clearly identify how many generations it had been, and no one knew just how old Ye Chonglou was.

Generations of heritage and years of accumulation had resulted in Ye Chonglou’s current day standing. Even though he held himself aloof from worldly affairs, no one had the right to compete with him.

Ye Chonglou didn’t have any particular hobbies. He just had one habit, and that was to celebrate his birthday once a year.

Because of his habit, the royal family of the Skylaurel Kingdom had specially built a Tutor Manor for him.

This Tutor Manor was used only once a year, and that was to hold Tutor Ye’s birthday banquet.

Jiang Chen wasn’t born and bred in the Skylaurel Kingdom, and thus, he didn’t have any direct knowledge of Tutor Ye. Therefore, when he saw fourth prince Ye Rong and the others meticulously get ready, he was a bit surprised.

“Younger brother Jiang Chen, you’re here. Come, I’ll introduce you.” Ye Rong called out happily when he saw Jiang Chen. “You’re old acquaintances with Tian Shao. He will be accompanying me to offer birthday tidings to Tutor Ye this time as well.”

Ye Rong pointed at another young man with sculpturesque features next to him, introducing, “Lin Qianli, core disciple of the Azure Heaven Southern Palace. Your ages are similar, thus you can interact more.”

Lin Qianli’s expression was remote as he looked at Jiang Chen and nodded slightly.

When Jiang Chen saw him acting like this, he knew that Lin Qianli was likely someone with a haughty personality, so he smiled carelessly and was randomly polite, “I’ve long been looking forward to meeting you.”

If it was anyone else dealing with pleasantries, they would usually say something polite in response as well. However, Lin Qianli smiled faintly, “You’ve come from the Eastern Kingdom just a month ago and this is the first time we are meeting. Why have you looked forward to meeting me?”

Jiang Chen laughed involuntarily, he’d thought that this Lin Qianli was an enigma and naturally remote, someone who didn’t like to talk. He hadn’t thought that the other would be so sharp, and would seem to be latently hostile.

“The great name of the Southern Palace is illustrious and

renowned. Of course, I've long admired it." Since this fellow was going to be like this, Jiang Chen had no interest in wasting time talking to him.

Ye Rong hadn't thought that Lin Qianli would suddenly be so intensely keen and smiled, "Qianli, you haven't known Jiang Chen for long. When you interact more with him in the future, you'll know that younger brother Jiang Chen is absolutely worth your friendship."

"Jiang Chen, Qianli's personality is just like this. He's cold on the outside and warm on the inside. You'll know what's going on when you spend more time with him." Ye Rong eased the situation.

Tian Shao also said with a smile, "Yes yes, things of a kind come together and people of a mind fall into the same group. Those who aren't the same won't walk together. Qianli, young Chen, I'm slightly older than both of you and I have quite an eye for people. I can promise that the two of you will become good friends after spending some time together."

Lin Qianli smiled apathetically and declined to comment.

Jiang Chen shrugged slightly and he didn't say anything either. He wasn't the sort that had to make friends with someone, and would never put his hot face up to someone's cold bottom.

"Alright, it's about time, let's go."

Anyone could see that Ye Rong had made painstaking preparations to celebrate Tutor Ye's birthday. His outfit was neither showy nor did it lose the splendor befitting the air of a royal disciple. He appeared quite suited to the occasion.

Ye Rong's mood was quite cheery along the way as he chatted and laughed with Jiang Chen and the rest.

"Younger brother Jiang, there are many festive occasions in our Skylaurel Kingdom, the Wishing Tower temple fair for instance, the Precious Tree selection is another. The birthday banquet celebration of Tutor Ye is another one of those."

Tian Shao was quite friendly with Jiang Chen. After all, they had gone through a lot together. At the end of the day, half of the reason why he'd been able to be promoted to vice general this time could be attributed to Jiang Chen.

Therefore, Tian Shao played the role of tour guide for Jiang Chen along the way.

"Tutor Ye a person who is indifferent to fame and wealth. He celebrates his birthday every year and he uses the banquet as an opportunity to examine the younger generation of the Skylaurel Kingdom. Therefore, those who receive the invite are all young wonders of the kingdom who are less than thirty years old. Of course, everyone who receives an invite can bring a certain number of guests. There's no age restriction on the accompanying guests."

“This opportunity is rare. Any disciple in the Skylaurel Kingdom who is anyone would be honored to receive Tutor Ye’s invitation.”

“Younger brother Jiang Chen, don’t feel too ill at ease at an occasion like this. Tutor Ye’s mindset is such that he neither worries nor cares about public opinion. He has a very unique eye in judging people and matters. Things like birth and status are all but floating clouds to him. To him, there is no foundational difference between a prince and a commoner.”

A senior elder who stood at the peak of a kingdom naturally wouldn’t have any distinctive stances. Jiang Chen didn’t doubt this point.

“I’m guessing that the people the first prince is bringing this time will be directed at you. Jiang Chen, you must be mentally prepared.”

Jiang Chen’s issue with the Dragonteeth Guard had caused such a furor, and Lu Wuji had been made an example of to within an inch of his life. As the person behind him, the first prince would surely be ticked off.

“Jiang Chen, don’t worry either. Even if first brother has some ideas or thoughts, he wouldn’t dare act too atrociously in front of Tutor Ye.” Ye Rong comforted Jiang Chen when he saw that the latter wasn’t speaking.

Jiang Chen smiled faintly, “Since we have come, let us stay and enjoy it. There’s nothing much to worry about.”

The Tutor Manor's yard, a quiet and secluded spot within the capital.

The group of four quickly arrived at the entrance to the Tutor Manor.

At that moment, the entrance to the Tutor Manor was bustling with extraordinary activity and noise. Any young disciple who had received an invite all cleaned themselves up nicely and came to participate in the banquet.

There was a small, exquisite lady with a lithe, graceful body at the door. She wore minimal make up and a demure smile that didn't lose the slightest bit of enthusiasm as she greeted all the guests with a smile.

"Jiang Chen, that woman is called Dan Fei. Tutor Ye adopted her when she was young. She's Tutor Ye's disciple in name, but Tutor Ye actually treats her like a grandchild and dotes on her hugely."

When Tian Shao introduced Dan Fei, he lowered his voice as much as possible, obviously dreading this Dan Fei quite a bit.

Jiang Chen lifted his head to look at Dan Fei when he heard Tian Shao speak like this.

The girl was dignified and proper with white, translucent skin and slightly painted eyebrows. The feeling of a female

superwoman exuded from her gestures, giving Jiang Chen the first impression that — this woman is not one to be trifled with.

"Younger brother Ye Rong greets sister Dan Fei." Fourth prince Ye Rong's personality was outgoing as he walked up with a smile of someone greeting an old friend, and sketched a bow.

"Ye Rong, you little monkey! Mm, you seemed to have grown a bit taller in the months that I haven't seen you." The girl called Dan Fei was roughly the same age as Gouyu and thus, she was naturally much older than Ye Rong.

"Sister Dan Fei, to still call me by that in today's occasion is denying your younger brother much face!" Ye Rong purposefully appeared to be a bit depressed, but he was inwardly happy.

He knew that Tutor Ye's treasured disciple Dan Fei still had quite a positive impression of him.

Dan Fei laughed lightly as her slender neck moved slightly, revealing the snow white skin at the nape of her neck and adding a few more traces of allure.

Her finger tip lightly grazing over Ye Rong's nose, she said, "Hurry and go in! Your older brothers have already arrived."

Ye Rong chuckled, "Sister Dan Fei, is teacher in good health?"

"Yes, he's in quite good health. However, he's been worrying

over some matters lately. Eh, that's right, you don't know that already?"

Dan Fei looked at the three companions that Ye Rong had brought, and her almond eyes had a few traces of surprise in them when she swept them across Jiang Chen and the others.

"What's happened?" Ye Rong started as his heart sank in that moment, feeling that he had missed out on something important.

Dan Fei spread out her hands, "Alright, go on in first. Let's chat when we have a chance later on. I need to greet other people here."

Ye Rong had a wry face, "Alright, sister Dan Fei, you need to tell me later. Teacher has been so good to me that I should at least take on some of his burdens for him."

Dan Fei sighed lightly but she didn't say anything.

Ye Rong knew Dan Fei's personality and he appropriately led Jiang Chen and the others inside.

After passing through the door, a spacious yard came into view. It was quite expansive and it had been designed according to the style of a garden. It was as if a beautiful park.

There were artificial mountains, pavilions, running water, and bridges.

The elite disciples of the kingdom who had come to participate in the banquet were all clustered together in twos and threes, talking and laughing. All of them were in high, vigorous spirits.

The Skylaurel Kingdom was amongst the best of the sixteen kingdom alliance. The young disciples of the entire kingdom were suffused with the confidence and bearing that was found only within a strong kingdom.

Judging from this perspective, their overall level was indeed much higher than the noble disciples of the Eastern Kingdom.

From the noble disciples of the previous Eastern Kingdom, setting Jiang Chen aside, the only ones with the right to enter an occasion such as this would likely be the Long family brother and sister.

The least of any of the disciples here would be many times better than any of the other disciples of the so-called four great families.

“The Skylaurel Kingdom isn’t strong without reason.” Jiang Chen had this direct thought in his heart.

Since he was following in Ye Rong’s retinue this time, Jiang Chen would naturally not supplant his host. He kept a low profile next to Ye Rong and avoided unnecessary trouble to the best of his abilities.

Ye Rong's personality was outgoing, with a few traces of humor within his joviality. This caused him to have quite some connections with the noble disciples of the kingdom.

Therefore, many greeted him with a smile everywhere he went.

"Number four, I recall that you've always been quite low key. Why do I feel that you seemed to have changed your style lately?"

Just as Ye Rong was greeting well known acquaintances, someone walked out from a side garden and walked over with a slightly mocking tone.

Chapter 167: Meeting On A Narrow Path, Eyes Ablaze With Hatred

The person who had also arrived wore the accoutrements of a royal disciple. He wasn't tall, but a sense of shrewdness filled his eyes. As those eyes looked around , there were even a few traces of a violent air.

"Third brother, you've come this early?" The smile on Ye Rong's face didn't falter when he saw this person and called out in greeting.

"The earlier the better when offering birthday felicitations for the honored tutor since that indicates you possess more sincerity. Number four, haven't you always said that the honored tutor has always taken great care of you? Why have you come so late? Is it that you affirm with your lips but deny in your heart?"

This person was the third son of the current king, Ye Zheng. Out of all the princes, his status was a bit higher than Ye Rong's, but he basically also had no hope for being Crown Prince.

Ye Zheng probably also knew that he had no hope of being Crown Prince, so he was quite close to first prince Ye Dai and rather proactive about cozying up to him.

"Third brother, you still like to joke around. Us brothers have all benefited greatly from the honored tutor's attentions. How can there be a difference in the weight of our sincerity?"

Ye Rong didn't want to get embroiled in a quarrel with Ye Zheng so he simply laughed heartily. "Third brother, I'll go walk around and say hello to everyone."

Ye Zheng smiled superciliously, "Number four, I was saying just now that you've been keeping a high profile lately. What, you want to greet everyone and make connections here and there? Do you have something in mind?"

This was an allusion and insinuation obliquely implying that Ye Rong had the ambition to become Crown Prince.

Ye Rong looked quite innocent as he laughed wryly, "Third brother, we're all young folks here and just greeting each other. Isn't that common courtesy? Otherwise, people will say that we royal disciples have no manners and maintain an aloof eliteness. Wouldn't that be throwing the face of our Ye family away?"

"Haha, well said, well said!" An extremely magnetic voice suddenly resounded from behind.

Ye Rong knew who it was as soon as he heard it.

Indeed, a person whose complexion was as clear as jade with eyes like bright stars and wearing a light yellow robe that offset his tall stature walked out from the artificial mountains on the side. He was towering, straight-backed, and magnificent, giving one the feeling of one brimming with talent.

“Big brother, you’re here as well.” Ye Rong didn’t actually want to interact with this person, but since he’d already appeared, there was no way that Ye Rong could avoid the inevitable.

The person who had come possessed an imposing and dignified bearing, and comported himself with sophisticated grace. He was the first prince, Ye Dai. There were five followers behind him, also illustrating the special treatment afforded to the first prince.

They were both here to attend Ye Chonglou’s birthday banquet. Ye Dai was the first prince and although he hadn’t been titled the Crown Prince, but he could bring five followers with him.

As the fourth prince, Ye Rong had only three slots.

Although it was just a difference in numbers, this displayed the differences between the two.

“Number four, so you’ve finally arrived.”

“First brother, what does this mean? Could it possibly be that you were waiting for me?” Ye Rong deliberately pretended to be confused.

“You’re right. Heh heh, I’ve been waiting for you.” Ye Dai said with a faint smile.

“I’ve heard that you have a follower called Jiang Chen. I wonder if he has come today?” Ye Dai’s gaze was noncommittal as he swept it randomly behind Ye Rong. That light dismissal seemed as if he had gazed at several wooden logs instead, completely displaying the superior attitude of his position of first prince without holding back anything at all.

Ye Rong started. He’d actually been mentally prepared for Ye Dai’s pointed actions, but he hadn’t thought that Ye Dai would be so direct.

“Royal big brother, it seems rather inappropriate if you wish to cause a scene on an occasion like today?” Although Ye Rong was wary of Ye Dai, he couldn’t possibly back down at this time either.

“Haha, number four, you’re thinking too much, aren’t you? Cause a scene? What can cause a scene about between us brothers? I’ve heard that this Jiang Chen has caused quite a disturbance lately and wanted to see for myself just what kind of amazing character this young man from the Eastern Kingdom is like.”

Ye Dai was quite at ease as he laughed. It was obvious that he felt no pressure at all in front of Ye Rong as his every word and laugh was self-confident and carefree.

And, he also seemed to rather enjoy the dread that Ye Rong was projecting upon confronting him, as though he was facing a formidable enemy.

At this moment, someone growled sinisterly from behind Ye Dai,

“Jiang Chen, the first prince wishes to see you. This is a wonderful thing similar to the auspicious sign of green smoke rising from your ancestors’ graves yet you’re hiding like a young, married woman behind the fourth prince. What, are you afraid to meet the first prince?”

This voice had a harsh tone to it, filled with a sense of hatred that rose up to the heavens. It was vice general Lu Wuji. He’d taken a great fall this time and although he hadn’t been demoted, but his prestige had more or less taken a hit within the Dragonteeth Guard. Add that to being swindled out of a great sum of money by Jiang Chen, his inner energy had been greatly injured. He’d also been humiliated by Jiang Chen. His belly was so full of resentment and anger that not even all the waters of three rivers and five creeks would be enough to wash those emotions away.

“Unpresentable?” Jiang Chen said with a slight smile. “Lu Wuji, perhaps you should say these words to yourself? If I were you, I’d really take cover in a turtle’s shell to avoid coming out in public and making a fool out of myself. What, you didn’t lose enough face last time?”

Lu Wuji’s gaze was tinged with a violent light as he said viciously, “Jiang Chen, don’t you be too proud too quickly.”

“Haha, does this kind of nonsense need to be repeated? Why can’t I be proud? What reason do I have to not be proud in front of you, Lu Wuji? Give me a reason, eh?”

“Jiang Chen, you animal, do you remember me? You beat a disciple of my Northern Palace to death. I, Liu Can, will well and

truly settle this score with you when we exit these doors. Let's see if you can escape to the Qingyang Valley this time!" Another person jumped out and started threatening malevolently.

This person was obviously Liu Can of the Northern Palace, the strongest amongst the culprits who'd originally been pursuing Jiang Chen to death.

"You, transsexual? What, you've come to strut around in pride and glory instead of hiding in your Northern Palace after old man Fei didn't slap you to death with one blow last time? Who do you plan on robbing this time?"

Transsexual! That was a degrading term that commoners used to call eunuchs. Liu Can had unique features since he had the body of a man, but his features contained a few traces of female tenderness. He did rather look like a eunuch.

When he heard Jiang Chen call him a transsexual, Liu Can was greatly enraged. This was the word that was the greatest taboo to him. He was strong within the Northern Palace so no one dared talk about him like that behind his back, much less than to his face.

Not to mention that in such a brief moment, Jiang Chen had humiliated him in front of so many others!

"Jiang Chen, you country bumpkin, you creature as pathetic as a dog. How dare you act this wildly in my Skylaurel Kingdom? I, Liu Can, swear that I will kill you!" Liu Can spoke through gritted

teeth.

“Mm, now that you mention it, your current state of frenzied rage really does make you look like a defeated dog. However, I won’t compare you to a dog since that’s an insult to dogs.” Jiang Chen smiled slightly.

In terms of verbal sparring and how good one was at being venom-tongued, Jiang Chen was absolutely peerless and matchless.

He didn’t need to speak sharply or hop up and down like a shrew cursing in the street, gasping for breath angrily.

A few random words were enough to grasp the scabs of the other’s wounds and viciously throw some salt in their wounds.

Lu Wuji and Liu Can were thus defeated after a few rounds.

This caused a coldly strict youth beside Lu Wuji to be quite irritated. He took one step forward and stared at Jiang Chen with a coolly sinister look. “Jiang Chen, I, Xin Wudao, was handling a case outside and thus allowed you to escaped disaster. If I had been in charge of your case, you would already be a stark white skeleton in the Black Dungeons by now.”

“And who the hell are you? Are you guys taking turns in the battle ring to exchange verbal blows? You’ve got a lot of spare time on your hands.” Jiang Chen looked at those behind the first prince.

“First prince, I must protest. Your followers love flapping their mouths. Aren’t you going to keep in them in line?”

Ye Dai smiled dashingly, “This is a private matter between all of you. Whether it’s me or number four, we both have no authority to intervene. Jiang Chen, I’ve heard of your exploits within the Eastern Kingdom. However, this is the Skylaurel Kingdom. Since you’re an outsider with no foundation, you should look more clearly at which road to take.”

This sounded like a call for peace, but it was actually an attempt at taking Jiang Chen down a peg.

Jiang Chen gave a bark of laughter. “This proves that the first prince does not know enough of me yet. I, Jiang Chen, always walk my own path and let others go on barefoot.”

“Jiang Chen, don’t you be arrogant.” Xin Wudao roared. “I, Xin Wudao, am the general of the seventh troop of the Dragonteeth Guard. I’ll tell you clearly, you’re in trouble.”

“Oh? Are you threatening me?” Jiang Chen sneered with a shadow of a smile. The general of the seventh troop of the Dragonteeth Guard, this meant that he was Lu Wuji’s superior since Lu Wuji was the vice general of the seventh troop.

“Threatening you? Who the hell are you to be worthy of receiving my threats? Qiao Shan and Qiao Chuan are your dogs, aren’t they? They behaved atrociously and disturbed the order of the capital. They’ve already been arrested by me. Jiang Chen, you

were lucky to escape disaster last time because I wasn't there. This time, I'll start with your followers."

Jiang Chen's expression grew chilly. He already knew that something had happened to Qiao Shan and Qiao Chuan which resulted in their arrest by the Dragonteeth Guard. Jiang Chen had been hoping that it was the Dragonteeth Guard going about their normal business, but from Xin Wudao's tone, it was quite apparent that he was using his position to get even for a personal matter.

Seeing Jiang Chen remain silent, Xin Wudao was even more proud. "What? Aren't you going to be cocky? Didn't you suck up to the three great sites? Why don't you repeat past events for me to see?"

It was obvious that inciting a matter like the three great sites simultaneously launching an attack once was alright, but it would definitely not go down well if it was used too many times.

Powers such as the three great sites could not make any decision carelessly. He'd leveraged them well last time, because the others had sought his favor. He had also cleverly used the circumstances he was in to create a situation in which the three great sites attacked the Dragonteeth Guard together.

Such a thing could happen once, but not twice.

There would be no problem on old man Fei's side for the Qingyang Valley, but it was impossible for the sides of the Myriad Treasures Palace and the Southern Palace.

Except, if he played the card that was old man Fei again, it was the same as using the same trick twice. Whether or not it was effective, it would at least appear cowardly and timid.

Besides, after last time's conversation, Jiang Chen also knew that old man Fei had his own burdens. Old man Fei had been marked by those of the Precious Tree Sect and thus had always kept a low profile.

If he pushed old man Fei to the front whenever he ran into something, then that would simply be a bit too cruel to him.

Jiang Chen disdained doing so and hence did not want to do so.

"Jiang Chen, don't say that I'm taking advantage of my power to bully you. I'll give you a chance. There will be a martial sparring segment later when we celebrate the honored tutor's birthday. If you can beat me during that segment, then I'll immediately return those two dogs to you."

Xin Wudao's tone was as quick and forceful as it was overbearing and aggressive. Accompanied with the violence imbued in his gaze, he was a presence that demanded submission from others.

Jiang Chen lifted an eyelid slightly, "Do you mean that?"

Xin Wudao laughed heartily, "I'm a vaunted general of the Dragonteeth Guard. How would I play the juvenile tricks of first

making you promises and then denying them?”

“Alright, it’s settled then.” Jiang Chen said noncommittally.

He could also see that Xin Wudao’s strength had already surpassed half step spirit realm. He was a practitioner truly within the first level of the spirit realm.

To his surprise, out of Ye Dai’s five followers, Jiang Chen discovered that three of them were spirit realm practitioners. Apart from Xin Wudao and Liu Can from the Northern Palace, there was another mysterious man wearing a full body black robe and a cape. He was also a spirit realm practitioner, and his presence in the spirit realm was even stronger than Liu Can’s and Xin Wudao’s.

Jiang Chen already did not have much confidence in facing off against Xin Wudao or Liu Can, but if they wanted him to fight against the mysterious man, then he would be even less assured of a victory.

Chapter 168: Lordmaster Ye With The Invincible Aura

“Younger brother Jiang, you were too impulsive.” Tian Shao sighed when the first prince’s men left. “You shouldn’t have agreed to the demonstration.”

“Jiang Chen, Xin Wudao is one of the ten generals of the Dragonteeth Guard. His training is foremost amongst the ten generals. He’s had many wondrous twists of fortune on his path of martial dao training, and he’s already broken through into the spirit realm. He numbers amongst the top select experts in the younger generation within the capital.” Ye Rong was quite worried. “If he issues a challenge later, I’ll find an excuse to reject it. Ten years is not too late for a gentleman to see his revenge.”

“Ten years?” Jiang Chen shook his head. “A gentleman cannot be cowed easily. Although I, Jiang Chen, am no particular gentlemen, I know that losses cannot be suffered overnight. Ten years for revenge? I can’t wait that long.”

“Ai, younger brother Jiang, this is an obvious trap that they’ve set for you and they’re waiting for you to jump in it.” Tian Shao still wanted to persuade Jiang Chen to give the match up.

“The distinction between geniuses and mediocrity lies in that although knowing full well there’s a trap there, geniuses will jump down without hesitation, whereas mediocrity will cower and shrink. Jiang Chen, it’s your choice whether you’re a genius or just mediocre.” Lin Qianli, who’d been silent all along, suddenly spoke up.

“Oh? Brother Lin, what would you choose if it was you?” Jiang Chen asked rather meaningfully.

Lin Qianli said proudly, “What a useless question.”

“I can answer this question for you on his behalf.” Fourth prince Ye Rong suddenly opened his mouth. “Qianli is an exceedingly stubborn person on his path of martial dao. He never leaves a way out for himself.”

“Haha, not bad, not bad. Even the fourth prince has spoken. Lin Qianli, I’m beginning to admire you a bit.”

Jiang Chen and the others had already followed Prince Ye Rong into the inner courtyard as they chatted.

This was where the birthday banquet was truly being held. All was already in readiness in the spacious inner courtyard, and it only awaited the young geniuses of the Skylaurel Kingdom to take their seats.

Everything would have been precisely prearranged for a banquet of this level. How many invites to send, how many seats to arrange, and everyone’s seating arrangement had all been previously arranged.

Therefore, the possibility of fighting for seats didn’t exist.

As a royal son, Ye Rong's ranking amongst the princes was number four. Therefore, his arranged seat was the closest to the center.

The tables of this banquet were the long, rectangle sort and were placed on the two sides of the courtyard.

The first row of seats on both sides were naturally those of the first prince Ye Dai and second prince Ye Qiao.

Ye Rong had been arranged to sit on the the second row. Third prince Ye Zheng was at the table on the left, Ye Rong was on the table on the right and they sat facing across from each other.

Dan Fei sashayed up to the main table after everyone had taken their seats. Her almond eyes scanned the area and her skin was like flawless white jade. She appeared very lovely and moving.

Her pearly teeth showing slightly, Dan Fei smiled, "Dan Fei is very happy that on this day, every year, I get to see the young geniuses of my Skylaurel Kingdom gather under one roof. I see your growth and changes every year, and see you transform from green youths to strapping men who can undertake tasks alone. The honored tutor holds himself aloof from the world and he has long since made light of the affairs of human life. Why does he wish to celebrate his birthday every year? Not because the honored tutor likes a lively bustle, but because he wishes to see talent of exceptional ability appear in every generation, and to see the pupil outdo the teacher. He wishes for the youths of Skylaurel Kingdom to become stronger and stronger every generation. The kingdom only has hope when the young are big and powerful."

Dan Fei's words were sonorous and forceful, but they still retained a trace of her unique soft tenderness. It made the hearts of the young folk beneath the main table pound with emotion.

The young folk present had all more or less received Tutor Ye's tutelage. Except, some of them were less fortunate and they had had fewer opportunities to receive teaching. They weren't like the princes of the royal family who were able to receive Tutor Ye's personal coaching everyday.

Receiving Tutor Ye's tutelage was a glory, and it was a cherished goal that all these young people would beg for even in their sleep. There was also another key point that they could be close to Sister Dan Fei. She was a woman that filled the minds of young men with dreams and sent their hormones flying.

Looking at the reactions of the young men below, Dan Fei smiled faintly but she didn't say anything. As smart as she was, how would she not know the thoughts of these kids?

"Alright, everyone be quiet now, the honored tutor is arriving."

Dan Fei bent slightly and called out respectfully, "Lordmaster."

An elder with white hair and a white beard wearing a loose robe walked in. A feeling of a mythological immortal emanated from his brow, giving others the spiritual feeling of floating away from the mundane world.

This elder was the totem figure of the Skylaurel Kingdom, Tutor Ye Chonglou.

Ye Chonglou's pace was not fast, but his every step gave Jiang Chen the misconception that a great mountain had grown feet and was moving itself over.

Don... don... don... don...

In that instant, Jiang Chen's "Ear of the Zephyr" actually heard all sorts of drumming sounds. The frequency of these sounds were actually becoming faster and faster.

This obviously wasn't any drumming sound, it was the sound of heartbeats.

Ye Chonglou's every step caused the heartbeat of those around him to speed up accordingly.

"He isn't purposefully stimulating his aura and he isn't using strong spirit power to suppress the scene! Tutor Ye is merely using the rhythm of his footsteps to create oppression and affect everyone's heartbeat!" Jiang Chen was vaguely surprised. He originally hadn't thought much of Tutor Ye, but he suddenly understood why everyone in the entire Skylaurel Kingdom revered this person as a totem character.

Even Chu Xinghan from that day would likely find it impossible

to not be affected by this elder, much less Liu Can and Xin Wudao, those practitioners of the first level spirit realm.

At this moment, Jiang Chen's "Boulder's Heart" began to show its purpose. He calmed the various thoughts in his heart with some effort and he controlled his mind, unmoving as a mountain, as if a boulder.

Even though Tutor Ye's footsteps seemed to be imbued with some sort of magic, as strong as those heartbeats were, he would strive with all his might to be as unmoving as a mountain.

Except, under such strong influence, it was difficult for Jiang Chen to truly be as unmoving as a mountain.

Just as he was unable to hold out —

"Haha, not bad, not bad. We haven't met in a year, but you young fellows haven't laid down your training. Sit, everyone, let's not stand on ceremony."

"Student Ye Dai greets Tutor Ye. May the honored tutor live a long life, with many happy returns of this day unto eternity, forever protect the mountains and waters of my Skylaurel Kingdom and pass down your legacy throughout the ages."

"Ye Qiao greets the honored tutor. May the honored tutor's happiness be as immense as the eastern sea, life as long as Mt. Tai, and remain forever ageless."

“Ye Zheng, Ye Rong, Ye Hao… greets the honored tutor.”

The princes took the lead in stepping out and moving forward to make their bows and gestures.

Only then did the sons and disciples of the other nobles and dukes all step up and respectfully make their greetings, offering words of blessings.

When these ceremonies were observed, Ye Dai broke the ice and smiled, “Sister Dan Fei, it’s about time. Shall we present our gifts to the teacher?”

Dan Fei smiled merrily, “Ye Dai, you’re so eager. It looks like you’ve prepared something nice this year and want to come out on top?”

“Heh heh, sister Dan Fei is sister Dan Fei alright. You can see through even my little bit of planning.” Although Ye Dai possessed a sophisticated manner, he presented quite a nice manner in front of Dan Fei, and tried hard to create the role of a younger brother for himself.

He was well aware that Dan Fei served by Tutor Ye’s side, and she was the tutor’s favorite. As long as he appropriately fawned on Dan Fei, he would surely leave a good impression with Tutor Ye as well.

Having Dan Fei speak a few good words to Tutor Ye was

something that a thousand gold would find it hard to buy.

Dan Fei looked back to cast a look of inquiry at Ye Chonglou when she saw the excited expressions of the young folk all itching to have a go.

The lordmaster didn't look that enthused and flagging interest was hidden in between his brows.

"Dan Fei, come here." He beckoned with his hand.

Dan Fei walked over leisurely and put her ear up to the lordmaster's mouth.

His lips moved slightly, he seemed to be murmuring something. Dan Fei's almond eyes blinked as her brows danced, and then she nodded afterwards.

"Everyone, the lordmaster has said that another segment will be added before presenting the gifts at today's birthday banquet. Everyone, please be mentally prepared. The segment is, if anyone can solve this difficult problem, the lordmaster will owe them a favor."

"What?" All the noble disciples beneath the main table were shocked.

Who was the honored tutor? He was the Mt. Tai and the North Star, the unaging totem of the Skylaurel Kingdom. A favor from

him was definitely a medal that was an absolute exemption from death!

It wouldn't even be an exaggeration to say that a favor from the honored tutor was even more useful than one from the king himself.

After all, the king's favor would undoubtedly be either fame or riches. The noble scions present weren't short of these, and these things could be earned.

However, Tutor Ye was a legendary character. His favor would absolutely surpass mundane glory and splendor!

Even first prince Ye Dai's heart raced as joy blossomed on his face. He'd received some intelligence beforehand so he'd made full preparations before this year's celebrations. When he heard Dan Fei's words, he more or less guessed that the preparations he'd made were the right gamble!

As for fourth prince Ye Rong, he vaguely felt that he had missed something when he heard Dan Fei say that the tutor had something troubling him lately.

When he heard Dan Fei's words now, that thoughtful feeling deepened. He then looked at the sense of excitement that the first prince couldn't fully hide between his brows, and his thoughtful feelings become even stronger.

“This is bad, Ye Dai must’ve received some sort of advance warning this time and prepared for this matter beforehand. I must’ve missed something! I’m going to be caught on the wrong foot this time!”

Ye Rong was a bit regretful but also unwilling to accept his loss at the same time. His connections in the capital still had a gap compared to the first prince.

It was obvious from this matter alone. The first prince’s intelligence could even reach Tutor Ye!

“Sister Dan Fei treats me well and she would definitely not be biased towards Ye Dai and give him information privately. Ye Dai’s mother’s family has great power, wide networks, and many connections. Is he going to occupy the first mover advantage again this time?” Ye Rong felt more and more hopelessly stupid as he thought.

Setting down one foot wrong meant all his footsteps were wrong.

A favor from the honored master was something that even their father, the king, was unlikely obtain easily!

If the first prince took this advantage as well, he really would be like a tiger with wings. He would have subtly received the support of the honored tutor. Ye Dai already had an advantage in the fight over the title of Crown Prince, his momentum as a descending ruler would be even more irresistible then!

“Just what is it that could cause even the honored tutor to have a headache?” Ye Rong was deeply worried at heart and he was also silently praying, “I hope that even Ye Dai will be unable to resolve this problem. Otherwise, if this favor falls on his head, the rest of us princes will be unable to find any footing in the capital anymore.”

Chapter 169: The First Prince Who'd Invested A Lot

In the middle of the stage, Dan Fei's painted brows moved slightly as she smiled. "Alright, first, we will go by the usual rules. Everyone will present their birthday gifts and when all the gifts have been presented, the lordmaster will personally choose three and award them places. Those who are awarded these places can ask the lordmaster questions and seek his guidance. First place can ask two questions. Second and third can both ask one. These are the rules, is everyone clear?"

"Sister Dan Fei, we all know these rules."

"Yes, sister Dan Fei. Let's start with presenting the gifts! This time, I'm going to place no matter what the cost!"

Standing behind Ye Rong, Jiang Chen looked at the expressions that yearned for action amidst the fervent atmosphere, thinking that all of this was a bit strange.

Logically speaking, for such an erudite and otherworldly person like the lordmaster, how the birthday gifts from these youths interest him at all? And to list this as a regular segment that recurred every year?

No matter how he looked at it, Jiang Chen didn't think the honored tutor was a man who craved riches.

But if he wasn't someone who lusted after wealth, Jiang Chen didn't understand it why he would place such importance on this segment either.

Jiang Chen couldn't help but cast a curious and surprised glance at the lordmaster. Ye Chonglou's eyes had been half lidded, and he'd turned a deaf ear to the riotous atmosphere present.

In the instant that Jiang Chen looked over, the lordmaster's eyelids suddenly lifted and his meaningful gaze just so happened to meet Jiang Chen's.

Jiang Chen smiled awkwardly, as if he was a peeping Tom caught in the act. But, he had no misgivings and immediately shifted his gaze away.

On the main table, the lordmaster seemed to have carelessly opened his eyes as well, and he didn't pursue Jiang Chen with his gaze. The look in his eyes was leisurely as he slowly closed his eyes again.

Jiang Chen paid no heed to this small interlude. Rather, it was Ye Chonglou whose heart was slightly stirred. Privately, he was a bit surprised. "The young man standing behind Ye Rong seems to be a new face? Has he possibly trained in some art of mental strength? My footsteps of the heart just now controlled even the spirit realm practitioners, but he was the only one who did not seem to be affected by me?"

The lordmaster's strength was head and shoulders above

everyone else, and with a single thought, he could grasp all movement within a radius of ten li. When he walked with the footsteps to disturb the rhythms of the heart just now, he had been mentally calculating the rhythms of the heartbeats of those present, using that to define the level of training of the young ones present.

Including Dan Fei, there were 24 present, but he had actually captured two kinds of rhythms.

There was actually a fish that'd escaped the net!

Although Jiang Chen could break free from the control of the lordmaster's footsteps of the heart, but he could not prevent himself being identified from the crowd.

The lordmaster had been a bit joyful in the beginning, thinking that the level of training of a particular prince had advanced by leaps and bounds to the point that said prince could fight back against his footsteps of the heart.

But in the end, he'd discovered that the fish that had escaped the net wasn't a prince, and wasn't even a spirit realm practitioner at all. It was a young man he'd never seen before.

Judging from his age, this young man seemed to be even younger than a few of the princes.

At the moment that Jiang Chen's gaze had moved in the

lordmaster's direction, the latter had sensed this and gained a spontaneous interest to probe Jiang Chen.

He had ended up discovering that the little fellow who'd snuck a glance at him wasn't under the slightest bit of pressure. When their eyes met, he'd carelessly moved his gaze away.

"This little fellow is rather interesting. Which house's young master is he?" Some curiosity grew within Tutor Ye's heart. It had been a very, very long time since he'd met such an interesting young person.

In reality, he held a birthday banquet every year because he wanted to test the young of the kingdom and see if there were any surprises.

Naturally, the so-called offering of gifts naturally wasn't because Ye Chonglou coveted these items, but because he wanted to make use of this opportunity to inspect the younger generation's temperament and powers of comprehension.

However, all of them held the mindset of competing with each other in presenting beautiful and fascinating gifts, hoping to curry favor with him.

They were unaware that what he valued wasn't these items, but the bearing and disposition they displayed through the segment of offering gifts.

It was a pity that year after year, the young people present never understood his intentions.

In actuality, the lordmaster didn't even look at the items offered. He'd hand them over to Dan Fei to send to the Myriad Treasures Palace and sell them all.

Dan Fei privately arranged for all the funds gleaned from the sale to go to charity. They were donated to the impoverished citizens within the kingdom who needed help, or used to develop poor practitioners with potential but no family background or backing.

None of the young folk present knew about any of this.

Standing behind Ye Rong, Jiang Chen could also faintly detect Ye Rong's nervous mood.

Indeed, Ye Rong was more than a bit anxious. More accurately, he was nervous to obtain a favor and worried that he would lose. He'd come prepared this time as well.

He wanted to take the lead in the segment of offering gifts and gain the honored tutor's favor. He could obtain the chance to seek knowledge from the honored tutor himself, and obtain the honored tutor's favor and good inclinations.

But, Ye Rong was also well aware that although he had made his preparations, so had the other princes. Everyone was smart and knew that this was the one good chance that came around every

year to curry favor with the lordmaster. No one would let go of this opportunity easily.

"Honored tutor, student Ye Dai has walked through all sixteen kingdoms to obtain a scroll of the "Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting". It is said that if a spirit realm practitioner diligently studies this work, they will be able to increase their mental strength, receive inspiration, and even use it to prolong life! I offer it to the tutor in hopes that the honored tutor will have many happy returns!"

"What? The Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting? Even spirit realm practitioners can use it to increase their mental strength, and prolong their life?"

"This... the step that the first prince has taken with this is simply too big? What else can we bring out to compete with him now that he's shown off this treasure?"

"It's over, it looks like no one else can have a shot at being number one then. Damn it, damn it!"

"The Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting?" At that moment, Ye Rong's heart also spasmed as his mouth was filled with bitterness. All sorts of depressing thoughts surged to the front of his heart. "This Ye Dai! He's definitely invested a lot in this. His actions are to completely end everyone's thoughts about attaining number one!"

Ye Rong was not willing to take this lying down and didn't want

to accept this, but he was also resigned. As the first prince, the power on Ye Dai's mother's side was the strongest amongst all the princes. The amount of resources that he'd received since small had also been the most.

Ye Rong's birth mother was just a regular imperial concubine, with no power or influence. Even though he'd tried hard since he was small, he'd naturally fallen behind first prince Ye Dai in many areas since birth.

And now, the segment of offering gifts once again fully illustrated the differences between them.

After offering such a gift, Ye Dai was in fine fettle as he stood in the center of the area with his tall body, observing the reactions of those around him and enjoying the feeling of being admired and envied by all.

He'd always chased after the feeling of being so far removed from the masses and reality that others could only look upon his back. This was also what he'd always striven for.

His goal was to become Crown Prince, inherit the throne and control the entire Skylaurel Kingdom, making everyone cower beneath his feet!

Whoever affected his pursuit of this goal was a thorn in his side!

After Ye Dai had offered his treasure, Ye Qiao, as the second

prince, naturally couldn't indicate his weakness. Although his gift was also quite fine, but the gap was too great when compared to the Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting. He was about to find some pleasantries to conceal the timidness in his heart when Ye Dai suddenly spread out his hands, "Don't be in a rush, number two. My followers have always admired the lordmaster and have also prepared their gifts."

What?

Some of the expressions on the faces of those gathered became a bit ugly!

It wasn't that followers couldn't give a gift, but their participation had always been optional and voluntary. They usually followed closely after their masters had offered their gifts.

However, Ye Dai was indeed domineering. He hadn't spoken up earlier or later, but instead, waited for the precise moment that second prince Ye Qiao had been about to speak. Speaking out so suddenly was undoubtedly a deliberate slap in the face.

At the same time, it was setting an example to others. The followers of the first prince have also offered gifts, do as you will now!

My followers have given gifts. Can it be that you believe that you are more favoured than the first prince so you can avoid giving presents?

If these people's followers hadn't prepared gifts, then it would further depict how thorough the first prince's considerations were. Even his followers had prepared gifts, look at how much he respected the honored tutor!

From this perspective, it would also offset how generous, magnanimous and thoughtful the first prince was, as well as how well the first prince conducted himself!

Ye Qiao's expression grew ugly after suffering a setback from Ye Dai, and he took one angry step backwards. Although he was the second prince, but he couldn't very well be openly hostile towards Ye Dai on an occasion like this.

Since he couldn't erupt in open warfare, he could only pinch his nose and hold his anger in.

It could be seen that Ye Dai had made exquisite preparations this time. The five followers he'd brought were all his confidantes. They were people that Ye Dai had steeled his heart in his desire to elevate them, and would be his future pillars of rulership when he took the throne in the future.

Having them offer gifts was naturally to give them a chance to display themselves in front of the lordmaster and make themselves known to him, leaving behind a good impression.

Although Xin Wudao and Liu Can usually stuck their noses in the air and were domineering beyond belief, they were as meek as mice at this moment and used almost obsequious attitudes to offer their

personally prepared gifts. They had also all prepared a small speech to offer their birthday felicitations.

The honored tutor only nodded his head slightly, displaying neither sadness nor joy. It couldn't be seen from his face if he was happy or displeased.

He was so noncommittal that it didn't seem to be his birthday banquet at all.

However, Ye Dai wasn't worried. He knew that this was the honored tutor's personality. At his age, wealth and riches will not make him happy or unhappy. What he cared about would certainly be face and the feeling of being respected by others.

One had to say, Ye Dai's gamble had been made with great resolution.

After that, the second prince's gift was a kirin jade pendant that had been carved extraordinarily exquisitely. The kirin was an auspicious representation of longevity. Moreover, since this piece of jade was a fine piece at the spirit rank, it had the effect of calming the heart and mind. It was a rather nice item to gift to the elderly as a birthday present.

Except, for anyone else, this might have been a very rare and valuable gift but the honored tutor was the spirit king protector of the kingdom. He likely had at least eight hundred of something like this at home, if not a thousand.

Although Ye Qiao's followers had also prepared some gifts, they paled far in comparison to the ones that Ye Dai's followers had prepared.

Third prince Ye Zheng had sent a spirit medicine ingredient of the spirit rank. It was quite rare and it was clear that the third prince had spent some time and effort in searching for it.

This item was relatively more appealing than the second prince's jade pendant.

The third prince's followers had also prepared some presents as a gesture of respect, but their value were about the same as the followers of the second prince Ye Qiao. Although they were nice items, but there was nothing terribly interesting about them.

The pressure on Ye Rong was even greater now. He discovered that he'd made a grievous mistake. It wasn't that he hadn't prepared any presents, but that he hadn't made Jiang Chen and the others prepare gifts!

Whether it was Jiang Chen, Tian Shao or Lin Qianli, Ye Rong hadn't had them prepare anything.

This was because in accordance with previous tradition, the gifts from followers weren't considered much at all. No one would make a big deal out of this.

But today, first prince Ye Dai had purposefully called out the

followers’ gifts. This move had caught Ye Rong a bit by surprise.

Chapter 170: The Gift Mocked By All

Ye Rong had specially prepared a gift this time. He had also painstakingly selected his followers, Jiang Chen and Tian Shao, who would been young men who'd been more famous lately, and Lin Qianli, a genius disciple of the Southern Palace.

He'd thought that he'd be able to make quite a showing this time.

Who would've thought that Ye Dai would completely one up him and have three followers in the spirit realm! This would've been completely inconceivable in the past!

In addition, Ye Dai's present, the Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting, had basically set the tone as soon as it'd appeared. Everyone else's gifts were a complete joke in front of the painting. They weren't on the same level at all.

"Number four, what did you prepare this time? You should bring it out for everyone to open their worldview." Third prince Ye Zheng said with a smile that had a few hints of provocation in it.

Ye Rong felt Dan Fei's gaze rest on him and strove hard to calm down. He told himself that he couldn't lose his composure and he must remain steady. He couldn't lose his grace no matter what, he couldn't lose his dignity in front of the honored tutor and Dan Fei.

"Sister Dan Fei, the honored tutor is an erudite sage not of this world. This younger brother was afraid that he would have no interest in common, ordinary things. Therefore, I have obtained

one item that is the young cub of the Swordteeth Flying Fox. This animal has quite a spiritual nature. As big as the Skylaurel Kingdom is, I cannot think of any one other than the honored tutor to raise the spiritual nature of the fox."

Even Ye Dai was slightly surprised when Ye Rong spoke his words. He looked meaningfully at Ye Rong, inwardly displeased.

It could be seen from this gift that Ye Rong had indeed spent quite a bit of effort on it. Although the Swordteeth Flying Fox wasn't a rare or precious beast, if one could raise its spiritual nature, it would evolve into a spirit creature some day. This meant that one would have a spirit creature that was equivalent to a spirit realm practitioner.

The most important thing was that the cub of a Swordteeth Flying Fox had more of a spirit nature than other beasts and it was extremely quite connected to the spirit world. Its size was diminutive and its exterior appearance exceedingly cute. It gave others an exceedingly favorable first impression.

In addition, Tutor Ye didn't have many hobbies, but raising all sorts of rare and precious beasts happened to be his greatest hobby. Although the cub that Ye Rong was gifting was no match to the value of the Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting, it was another matter entirely if it was one of the honored tutor's hobbies.

"Ye Rong, this bastard, it looks like his ambition is not yet dead. He must have brooded over this matter for a long time, naturally to curry favor with the honored tutor. He's just a prince born of a

concubine, does he dare contend with me, a prince of the proper bloodline, for the position of Crown Prince?" Ye Dai did have reason to feel put out.

Ye Rong's recent performance made him feel very unhappy.

Dan Fei took a look at the Swordteeth Flying Fox cub that Ye Rong had offered. The little thing was rolling its eyes around as a chubby paw clutched a piece of fruit. It was chomping away happily, ignoring everyone around him and appearing incredibly adorable.

Women naturally like pets. When she saw that this little thing was so cute, Dan Fei also quite liked it and she couldn't help but play with it a little.

"Number four, where did you find this little fellow? He's so adorable." Dan Fei smiled and seemed to speak a word in careless praise.

Ye Rong has gladdened, but he spoke with a humble expression. "I happened to come across it by chance."

How did he not know that sister Dan Fei's seemingly careless words were actually for him to express himself in front of the honored tutor?

He felt a bit of gratitude in his heart. He knew that sister Dan Fei was still quite good to him.

Although Ye Dai retained a gracious smile on his face, he felt as disgusted as if he'd eaten a fly. Sister Dan Fei was actually all smiles and sweetness to Ye Rong. This made Ye Dai feel quite out of sorts, as if Ye Rong had seized something precious to him.

At this moment, Lu Wuji spoke up from behind him, "The fourth prince's Swordteeth Flying Fox cub is indeed a fun, interesting toy. I wonder what the three behind the fourth prince have prepared for the lordmaster? Let us all increase our worldview as well."

Lu Wuji knew quite well how to take advantage of opportunities. When he saw Ye Dai appear calm on the surface, he knew that the first prince must be extremely put out internally at the moment.

When he saw this opportunity, he knew that it was time to take on some of his master's burdens for him.

Since you, Ye Rong, were seeking the limelight, then we'll start with your followers. We'll make your followers make fools out of themselves and use that to dim your spotlight.

In Lu Wuji's eyes, Tian Shao was a mere commander and someone who wasn't fit for the greater stage. Even though he'd been promoted to vice general now, he was still piss poor. What good things would he have? Taking a step back, the question should be if he has even prepared a gift for the lordmaster.

As for Lin Qianli, that Southern Palace disciple had a personality like a rock in a latrine. He was stinky and hard, and he wasn't

someone who knew the ways of the world at all. How would he even prepare any presents?

As for Jiang Chen, that fellow had some good things, but it was the first time that he had participated in an occasion like this. He'd never truly seen the world. Would he prepare a rich gift? Lu Wuji didn't believe it either.

Indeed, Ye Rong's faintly smiling face became a bit stiff after Lu Wuji had spoken.

Adept at observing people's expressions, Lu Wuji immediately captured this detail and guessed that Ye Rong definitely hadn't told his followers to prepare gifts.

Particularly that Jiang Chen. He hadn't even arrived in the capital for long, would he be willing to part with a large sum to prepare a gift? Absolutely not!

It looked like he'd gambled correctly.

Indeed, the first prince displayed a look of admiration when he flicked a look at Lu Wuji, "Number four, your flying fox is not bad and you've truly put some thought in it. In this way, I'm a little curious about what gifts your followers have prepared."

Ye Dai's eyes were sharp and ruthless. How would he not see that Ye Rong was in a predicament? This was kicking a man when he was down, and it would make Ye Rong appear in a bad light.

If Ye Rong hadn't had his followers prepare gifts, he really would lose a great deal of face.

Ye Zheng had always had poor relations with Ye Rong and he was the first prince's loyal confidante as well. When he saw the first prince open his mouth, Ye Zheng hastened to assent, "That's right. Number four, you've expended so much thought this time, you could not have have very well let your followers come empty handed, right?"

These words were a bit barefaced. But Ye Zheng had always been crude, and so the others were used to his direct bluntness.

This had nothing to do with the other princes and so they were happy to watch the show from the sidelines.

As for the sons and disciples of the other nobles and various dukes, this was an issue between the princes. They naturally wouldn't stand up and say anything. The most important thing was that they had no right to say anything at a scene like this.

It actually looked like all was well and that an amiable atmosphere was prevailing.

But in actuality, the light and shadows from all sorts of blades and swords were flying at Ye Rong ferociously.

Ye Rong never thought that the first prince would make moves

against him so publicly. The smile on his face became a bit stiff in that moment.

Dan Fei had a clever heart and knew that Ye Dai was suppressing Ye Rong when she saw this situation.

She smiled faintly, “Alright now, the so-called offering of gifts is just to provide some entertainment. The lordmaster didn’t make the rule that people must offer gifts.”

Ye Dai smiled dashingly and said nothing.

Ye Zheng purposefully played dumb however, “Sister Dan Fei, don’t be so biased. We’ve prepared gifts for all our followers, but you’re trying to help number four save money.”

These words were half joking and half serious. They were another step forward in forcing Ye Rong down the path of no return.

Ye Rong was severely depressed now. His followers didn’t have to specially prepare gifts in previous years. The princes never confronted each other in a showdown like this, publicly making it difficult for each other to find a way out.

Ye Zheng looked like he was joking, but he actually had the most malicious of intentions.

Just as Ye Rong was at his wit’s end and he was prepared to say a

few pleasantries, Jiang Chen suddenly laughed lightly behind him and said in a tone of self admonishment, “Fourth prince, my deepest apologies. It’s my first time participating in such a grand occasion and I was so nervous that I’d forgotten to take out our exquisitely prepared gift. The lordmaster is of noble character and high prestige. As the spirit king protector of the kingdom, how can us juniors not express our sentiments? May this jug of wine count as the sentiments from all three of us.”

Jiang Chen took out something from behind him after he’d finished speaking. It was a wooden wine jug. The design of this jug was ordinary and common. It looked like a jug made of green vines, and it didn’t look like anything expensive at all.

When Lu Wuji saw Jiang Chen take this wine jug out, he splurted out in laughter.

This jug was seriously too ugly, it was worse than even the ones found in marketplaces. The ones that vendors placed in their stalls would at least be wrapped up nicely to present a look of generosity.

What was this wine jug? Crude, simple, and unfit for the eyes.

It was likely that no one would even pick this thing up if it was thrown onto the streets. Jiang Chen had actually used it to fill with wine and present it as a gift to the spirit king protector Tutor Ye!

This... this was blasphemy.

When they saw Jiang Chen take the wine jug out, the expressions of the others present were also quite a work of art.

There was mockery, surprise, cold sneers, some shaking of heads, and some incredulity.

It was obvious that anyone could use even their feet to think and come to the conclusion that this wasn't some specially prepared gift. This was something that they had hastily fished out from their bodies because they'd been driven up a wall by Ye Zheng.

Perhaps, this kid was an alcoholic? This jug was one that he carried on him at all times to drink from?

"Prince Ye Rong has lost too much face this time. That follower is being a fool in wanting to shoulder his master's burdens. What kind of help was this? This was slapping his own master's face!"

"Is something wrong with this person's brain? Where did Prince Ye Rong find such an undependable follower? Ai, apart from second prince Ye Qiao, who can possibly contend with the first prince, this fourth prince Ye Rong is still quite a way off."

"Now, not even sister Dan Fei will be able to find a way out for Ye Rong."

Those who were present had their own thoughts, but all of them held the mindset of watching a good show, and they wanted to see how this farce would be resolved.

Ye Zheng slapped his forehead and smiled exaggeratedly, “Number four, are you sure about this? This… this is your so-called specially prepared gift?”

“Haha, specially prepared alright. This gift is truly different from the others alright. It’s a completely unique sight, hahaha!” Lu Wuji didn’t conceal his sarcastic implications at all.

“Number four, just speak candidly if you didn’t have your followers prepare gifts! Taking out something like this is an affront to the ears and eyes. This is rather bad!” Ye Zheng said.

It was Ye Dai who smiled and stepped out to say, “Alright, let’s just treat this small interlude as one to liven up the atmosphere. Sister Dan Fei, let’s take this item away first. Otherwise… number four’s face… ”

This Ye Dai was pretending to be a good person now as he spoke with the tones of a caring older brother.

Ye Rong was also slightly surprised and he flicked a glance at Jiang Chen. He saw the shadow of a smile on Jiang Chen’s face, and that he was completely unconcerned with the mockery and jeers from the outside world.

With his understanding of Jiang Chen, Ye Rong felt that Jiang Chen wouldn’t take out a broken and battered item for no reason whatsoever. He said noncommittally, “Big brother, since it’s a gift, why take it away? What can be gleaned about many things if we

only look at external appearances? There's a saying that the outside is good jade, but the inside is filled with rotten materials. A pretty exterior may not indicate a good interior. In contrast, what looks unassuming may not be something poor."

Ye Dai was startled. He didn't think that this number four, who usually never competed for anything, would not only not be filled with gratitude for his "help", but would rather talk back to him!

Chapter 171: Results That Caused Dan Fei's Jaw To Drop In Shock

When Dan Fei saw this situation, her lips parted slightly as she smiled faintly, "Let the lordmaster judge whether an item is good or bad. Next."

Seeing Dan Fei gloss over the matter, Ye Dai couldn't say anything despite his dissatisfaction. He smiled faintly and retreated to his seat.

Internally, he was even more ticked off. Although sister Dan Fei looked to be impartial, she'd actually helped out Ye Rong twice already. This made Ye Dai feel as though countless little bugs were nibbling away at his heart.

"Can it be that in sister Dan Fei's eyes, a prince born of a commoner is more worthy of her protection than I, a first prince of pure and noble bloodline?"

Ye Dai did not believe that, and he would never admit it. "It must be that the brat Ye Rong is usually skilled at fawning over her and knows how to amuse her. In terms of great talent and bold vision, and how strong our foundation of family background is, sister Dan Fei surely holds me in higher regard. Surely, she helped Ye Rong find a way out because she pities the weak. But, from the honored tutor's perspective, how could he have the petty sympathy towards the weak? I, Ye Dai, am the most superior no matter what perspective I am viewed from!"

Ye Dai comforted himself within his heart and cheered himself on.

Since Dan Fei covered up this farce, it didn't affect the atmosphere of the rest of the segment. All the various sons and disciples of noble houses displayed their abilities to their utmost as they offered all sorts of nice items.

After not too long, all the gifts were placed on the main table.

Dan Fei walked to the front of the tutor, "Lordmaster, it's been a rather odd year. The followers of many houses have prepared many gifts as well. The total sum of these gifts is double than the number of gifts we received last year."

The old tutor had been watching with half lidded eyes, as if he was an old monk in meditation. He slowly opened his eyes only after he heard Dan Fei's words.

"Let's take a look." The old tutor spoke faintly.

These faintly spoken words seemed to have a particular magic to them as the hearts of many present trembled slightly.

Everyone knew that the old tutor would list the top three gifts after he took a look.

These three people would have the right to personally ask a question of the old tutor, and receive his guidance.

This wasn’t a mere matter of face, but a real, tangible reward! In the entire Skylaurel Kingdom, the line of people who wished to personally request the lordmaster’s guidance on some matter would stretch from the capital to the border if they all queued up.

However, the opportunities to do so were few and far in between.

These princes had always received the honored tutor’s tutelage, but that was when they were all together. Everyone had learned the same things.

The honored tutor would not be biased as to favor anyone in particular

Receiving personal guidance was in itself a favor. Even the princes engaged in heavy competition for an honor like this.

For one, it was in order to leave a good impression in front of the honored tutor. And secondly, it was to prove to the king that one had received special treatment from the spirit king protector.

The old tutor circled the mound of presents on the table, walking slowly. He didn’t have any particular expression, no matter what gift he was looking at. He was neither happy nor sad.

No one could tell from the old tutor’s face whose present had garnered his fancy, and whose had earned his disdain.

However, Ye Dai was comparatively lighthearted. He was quite confident that although all the houses had offered many fine things this time, there were absolutely none that could be on par with his.

The Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting was definitely worth much more than all of the others, whether in terms of value or quality.

That included even the Swordteeth Flying Fox cub from Ye Rong. That was just a pet after all, a toy.

His Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting was an absolute treasure, a prized possession that would be useful to even spirit realm practitioners. Such items were ones that one could only hope to find by chance!

In all actuality, he'd hesitated quite a long time before offering this treasure. He'd truly made a deep investment with this. What he hoped to gain was undoubtedly the honored tutor's favor and recognition, and from that his endorsement of Ye Dai as the future Crown Prince and the heir to the kingdom.

Although he knew that erecting a ruler-in-training was primarily the business of the king and court officials, but Tutor Ye's opinion held unparalleled importance. If he didn't approve, then not even the king would dare make a careless decision.

In certain aspects, the power and influence Tutor Ye had within the Skylaurel Kingdom was even higher than the king!

The king could be changed.

But within the Skylaurel Kingdom, no one could replace Tutor Ye.

Dan Fei patiently followed beside the lordmaster, a faint smile on her face as she accompanied the old tutor in observing these gifts.

In reality, in Dan Fei's eyes, if she set aside her personal preferences, she too felt that the Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting was the absolute best out of the bunch. The other gifts were completely unable to match it.

However, Dan Fei was also unable to fathom the old tutor's thoughts.

Just as Dan Fei was trying to guess at his thoughts, the old tutor suddenly sent her a message using his consciousness, "Little Dan, which of these gifts do you think is the best?"

Sending a mental message would bypass the concern that those below the main table could hear them.

Dan Fei was momentarily silent , but still spoke honestly, "In terms of quality, the Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting should be the best."

“Mm. Little Dan, you aren’t lying.” The old tutor smiled faintly. “Except, I’m not selecting it as the best.”

“Why is that?” Dan Fei gave a slight start. “If this item isn’t the best, if you choose any of the others instead... won’t the people think that this is unfair?”

“Not fair? If they didn’t think I handle things impartially, they didn’t need to come. This is all voluntary, and I’ve never commanded mandatory attendance from anyone.” The old tutor’s tone was indifference, but a feeling of aloofness suffused it.

In his position, he didn’t care at all about the thoughts or feelings of others, or if it was said that he was favoring or oppressing someone.

If he felt it was good, then it was good. If he felt that it wasn’t enough to be first, then it wasn’t.

No explanations were necessary. Whether you understood or not wouldn’t be enough to change the lordmaster’s choice. You could cast your doubts on the lordmaster’s decision, but you couldn’t doubt his power and authority.

“Lordmaster, little Dan boldly asks, just why is that?” Dan Fei was still a bit curious.

“It’s quite simple. This painting is a forgery.” The old tutor smiled carelessly. “However, even if it was genuine, I still wouldn’t

select it as first.”

“A forgery?” Dan Fei was startled. “The original is still not enough to be the best?”

“Yes, the reason is twofold. The first is that I was the one who created the original Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting. However, it has been a very long time and no one knows of its origins anymore. To think that my junior would actually treat a forgery as a priceless treasure and gift it to me. Heh heh, Dan Fei, wouldn’t you say that I’ve lived too long?”

“The lordmaster has had many happy returns, and no matter how long you live, it still wouldn’t be too long. What is the second reason? Little Dan is quite curious!”

“As for the second reason? Isn’t that even simpler? Naturally, there’s something else that’s drawn my attention. That item is truly first in class in my heart.”

“Oh?” Dan Fei truly was startled. There was something even better? What was it? Dan Fei had been adopted by the old tutor since she was small and knew quite a thing or two about his tastes and preferences.

There was something that appealed to the old tutor even more than the Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting, and she, Dan Fei, hadn’t registered it at all?

“Little Dan, start writing down the placements. In third place, the Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting forgery. Second place, the cub of the Swordteeth Flying Fox. First place, the best present is the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine!”

The old tutor’s sleeves billowed as he picked up that unassuming wooden wine jug and held it in his hand as he murmured, “To think that I would have the fortune to see the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine again in the Skylaurel Kingdom. How rare, how rare!”

It was obvious that in the old tutor’s long life, he must have tasted the Nine Magnifice Dew Wine at some point. Although he wasn’t as fervent as Shi Xiaoyao to the point of being unable to forget it, but as time passed, a good item left a deeper impression in his mind.

This wine had left an exceedingly deep imprint on the old tutor’s heart. And this time, Jiang Chen’s unprepossessing gift had unwittingly woken this deep impression in the lordmaster’s memories and even made his eyes light up!

Dan Fei was thrown into disarray when she saw the lordmaster’s gestures.

In that moment, she rather suspected that the lordmaster had made a mistake. But she immediately dispelled this laughable notion. The lordmaster had seen so much, how could he possibly get anything wrong?

Except, this wooden wine jug looked like the ugly duckling

amidst a flock of swans as it sat within the piles of treasure. It looked cheap and shabby no matter how one looked at it.

To think that the lordmaster had selected this piece of stone out from a pile of jewels, and chosen it as the best. This scene was simply too dramatic.

Except, those beneath the stage were unable to see their motions. They had no idea what had transpired and were all waiting anxiously.

At this moment, Dan Fei walked out from behind the stage, and her pleasing voice resounded again. “Everyone, after the lordmaster’s round of appraisal and selection, the three gifts that have won placements have been selected.”

When they heard that the three best gifts had been selected, the disciples beneath the stage quieted down from their hubbub.

All of them widened their eyes, full of hope, as they stared at Dan Fei. They hoped to read the message that they had been chosen from Dan Fei’s eyes.

However, there wasn’t the slightest hint of a special indication in Dan Fei’s eyes. Her composed face gave nothing subjective away.

However, the more Dan Fei was like this, the more assured that Ye Dai felt. If Dan Fei felt that there was something surprising about the three rankings, then she would more or less have some

particular sort of reaction, right?

She wasn't expressing anything. What did that mean? That meant that there was no suspense about what the honored tutor had selected. His Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting was surely the best.

There was almost no doubt about it!

When his thoughts traveled to this point, Ye Dai's body drew itself up as he inched a bit closer to the stage, prepared to welcome the glorious moment where he took the top after stepping over everyone else.

His followers all had smiles playing about their lips as they had expressions of sharing the glory. Lu Wuji even shot provocative glances towards Jiang Chen.

It was an obvious demonstration of force at Jiang Chen.

But why would Jiang Chen pay any attention to Lu Wuji's juvenile moves? He did not care at all about who was the first and who was third.

He was different from these people, he didn't have the thoughts of purposefully currying favor with anyone. Whether the honored tutor admired or ignored him, Jiang Chen didn't care about any of this in the slightest.

Even if the honored tutor could blot out the sky with one hand in the Skylaurel Kingdom, how did that matter? With the cream of the crop that Jiang Chen had seen in his past life, an old tutor like Ye Chonglou wouldn’t even register on his radar.

To put it more candidly, if Jiang Chen were to select his followers the past life, the level in which Ye Chonglou was at likely wouldn’t be sufficient.

Rather, it was Ye Rong who slightly inclined his body forward, showing his ambition to compete with the first prince.

Time seemed to freeze as everyone gazes focused on Dan Fei’s sexy and moving red lips, as they awaited the announcement of the results.

Chapter 172: The Ranking That Caused Everyone's Mouth To Be Agape With Shock

"In third place of this year's gift segment – the Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting." All was calm before Dan Fei opened her mouth — everyone present was flabbergasted after she'd spoken.

The Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting?

Everyone was stunned. The Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting was third? Wasn't there something wrong here? Had Dan Fei gotten the order wrong?

Even first prince Ye Dai, for all his shrewdness and the effort he spent to display the gracious demeanor of someone who left matters of gain and loss up to fate, his face stiffened and lost all color when he heard these words.

"How is that possible?!" Lu Wuji couldn't help but yelp. "The Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting is only third? Sister Dan Fei, have you read out the placings in the wrong order?"

Lu Wuji thought the same as everyone else, that sister Dan Fei must surely have read the order out incorrectly. No matter how they looked at it, the Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting easily surpassed all the other gifts.

It ranked only third? That meant there were two others in front

of him!

Even Ye Dai's first thought was that something was wrong with these results, not to mention Lu Wuji's complete inability to accept them.

The others also wore a look of unimaginable queerness. Although they had continued to participate in the competition, but they had long since resigned themselves to fate. They felt that since the Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting was surely first, they could only be able to vie for second and third.

Therefore, when they heard that the Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting was third, these people were shocked but also delighted in the misfortunes of others. At the same time, some ambitious thoughts arose in their hearts.

"The Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting is third? Doesn't this mean I have a chance to fight for first? Perhaps the lordmaster hasn't seen my gift before and particularly admired it?"

Many people had these notions in their minds.

"Sister Dan Fei, are you sure you aren't mistaken? I can't think it through. Everyone has seen these gifts, and what could better than the Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting?" Ye Zheng also stepped out to protest against the injustice on Ye Dai's behalf.

Dan Fei said faintly, "Ye Zheng, are you doubting the

lordmaster's eye?"

Ye Zheng suddenly felt flustered and hastily waved his hands, "I didn't mean that at all. I was just wondering if you mixed up the order when you wrote down the rankings."

Dan Fei flicked a glance at him, but her gaze was a bit remote.

This rather meaningful glance caused Ye Zheng to shrink into himself and shut his eyes quite appropriately.

Ye Dai's mouth was full of bitterness. He saw all of sister Dan Fei's reaction. This obviously wasn't a mix up, but an indication that he really had ranked at number three.

And, by how sister Dan Fei was acting, it was apparent that she wasn't even going to give him an explanation!

Ye Dai was dejected to the point of going crazy. He truly didn't understand why this was happening!

Except, he also clearly understood that if he made a scene now, his image in Tutor Ye's heart would likely take a huge hit.

He smiled wryly and retreated, bowing slightly, "Ye Dai thanks the honored tutor for his favor."

Dan Fei nodded slightly and pitied him somewhat when she saw

that he did not lose his composure. She wanted to explain as well, but how could she explain?

Tell him that this was a forgery? That would be an even greater blow than not explaining at all. A vaunted first prince gifting a forgery to the honored tutor, wouldn't that be a great humiliation?

Therefore, the best decision was to not explain.

From Dan Fei's eyes, Ye Dai seemed to see several hints that she couldn't bear the situation, and so he felt a bit better. It was a good thing that sister Dan Fei was still nostalgic and valued old relationships.

Dan Fei composed herself and her bell-like voice sounded again, "In second place, the Swordteeth Flying Fox cub."

Ye Rong was both startled and overjoyed when he heard this. He was happy that his ranking had been greater than first prince Ye Dai's.

He was startled in that, he wasn't first either?

But at this moment, it didn't matter whether he was first or not. In either case, he'd suppressed first prince Ye Dai and thus he'd succeeded this time.

As he recalled the humiliation he'd suffered from the first prince just now, Ye Rong felt a surge of anger. He smiled faintly and

completely ignored Ye Dai's hostile gaze, bowing to Dan Fei. "Ye Rong feels deeply honored to receive the revered tutor's favor, and many thanks to sister Dan Fei."

Lu Wuji still didn't want to accept things. "The Swordteeth Flying Fox is but a toy. To think that its ranking is higher than the Yellow Dragon Watching the Seas Painting, what's with this ranking? Ai, I don't understand it."

Although he was murmuring under his breath, everyone present could hear him.

Dan Fei's gaze was cold as it shot towards Lu Wuji. "And what the heck are you? Who are you to question something that the lordmaster has decided? Get out if you speak another word!"

Dan Fei had followed Tutor Ye since she was young. Even though she held no power and influence in her hands, no one within the entire Skylaurel Kingdom would dare treat this woman lightly.

This was because they all knew that this woman represented Tutor Ye!

Lu Wuji was a premier noble in the Skylaurel Kingdom, but he had absolutely no qualification whatsoever to behave atrociously at this sort of occasion.

To take a step back, even first prince Ye Dai was vastly unqualified to do so!

“Wuji, do not act wildly.” Although first prince Ye Dai rather admired Lu Wuji’s daring and brash style, the necessary pleasantries still had to be observed at an occasion like this.

Lu Wuji backed down with some embarrassment and a darkened face.

He couldn’t accept things at all, and felt that the first prince had been treated unfairly.

When Dan Fei was in a rage, she had her own allure, making the hearts of the young men present pound fiercely, as if a monkey was scratching at them.

“Alright. I now announce the gift that ranked first amongst this year’s gift segment — the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine.”

Dan Fei also knew that if she just said the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine, these people probably wouldn’t even know which one it was. So she picked up that unassuming wine jug and held it in her hand, shaking it slightly to indicate the winner.

Dan Fei also felt this scene was a bit comical. After all, when this wine jug had been offered, it had elicited a round of laughter at the scene and everyone had treated it as a colossal joke.

And now, the item that had been like the ugly duckling had turned into a most stunning swan with a shake of its body, and

become the jewel on a crown!

When her thoughts traveled here, even Dan Fei couldn't help but cast a look of interest behind Ye Rong.

She was quite curious too, just where had Ye Rong found such an odd young man? And how had this young man taken out something that caused even the usually calm honored tutor to be a bit moved?

The Nine Magnificence Dew Wine? Dan Fei had no recollection of the existence of such a wine in her memories. She also knew that the old tutor would sometimes partake in some wine when he was bored and had nothing else to do.

However, the old tutor had never mentioned the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine.

Even Dan Fei, someone who'd been mentally prepared, felt that this was a bit surprising. Then, it went without saying that the reactions of those beneath the stage were in even more of an uproar.

Ye Dai hadn't even known who had offered the gift when he first heard the words Nine Magnificence Dew Wine. But who wouldn't recognize the wine jug in Dan Fei's hands?

The gift that had just been an embarrassment and source of much mockery was now ranked first?

Was this a dream?

Ye Dai almost suspected that something was wrong with his eyes. He blinked, took a closer look, and discovered that there really was nothing wrong with his eyes.

It was indeed the shabby wine jug that Jiang Chen had carelessly taken out and offered just now.

People might have made a mistake if it had been anything else. But this wine jug, with its ridiculous appearance and unique design, was absolutely one of a kind.

No one would be able to imitate it even if they wanted to.

Lu Wuji's eyes were as wide as saucers at the moment. He had an expression of someone seeing a ghost. At this moment, he was the biggest disbeliever of all.

A shabby wine jug had won first place. If he hadn't been hectored by Dan Fei earlier, he almost wanted to hop out to question this decision and rain down a torrent of abuse.

But, reason told him that if he stepped out now, Dan Fei wouldn't mind in the slightest if she threw him out. That would be the greatest loss of face.

Lu Wuji's face was beet red as it flamed. He'd completely lost face. He really wanted to find a hole to crawl into. When this jug had been offered earlier, he'd been the one who jeered the hardest, and mocked that the sender was an uncommon, unique fool.

The truth had proven that he was the fool instead.

Ye Dai was also quite infuriated. He had never thought that the winning gift would be the wine jug.

He had been shamelessly boastful just now in requesting Dan Fei to remove this jug of wine, in case it left a bad impression and adversely impacted everyone's mood.

This was practically the biggest joke. At this moment, he, Ye Dai, had thoroughly and utterly become a background, the background that proved to be the foil for this first place gift.

"Heh heh, big brother, to think that your eye for assessment would be wrong this time." The person speaking wasn't Ye Rong, but second prince Ye Qiao.

Ye Qiao was extremely hostile towards Ye Dai. When he wanted to offer his gift just now, he'd been rather embarrassed when the first prince had purposefully cut him off.

Now that he saw this opportunity, how could Ye Qiao let it go?

"Number four, I hadn't thought that your schemes would be

hidden so deeply. The saying goes well and speaks straight to your second brother's heart. The outside is good jade, but the inside is rotten materials. Indeed, those that look nice and fancy aren't necessarily good. On the contrary, those that don't look like much may be the good items. I've learned much, truly learned much. I've really gained much knowledge this time. Number three, what would you say?"

Second prince Ye Qiao was undeniably a smooth talker. He'd embroiled his three main opponents with a small snippet of speech. He'd made a dig at the first prince and slapped his face, picking at Ye Dai's scabs. On the other hand, he'd purposefully complimented Ye Rong to enflame the first prince's hatred towards Ye Rong.

He'd also laughed at third prince Ye Zheng for good measure.

After all, when Jiang Chen had offered this jug of wine just now, third prince Ye Zheng was the one who's raised the greatest fuss, voicing idiotic words like how the jug insulting the eyes and ears of others.

And now, it'd become the honored tutor's hand-picked gift of first place. Wasn't this the greatest slap in the face for Ye Zheng?

Ye Zheng's face was full of dejection as he was speechless. He could only mutter, "And what are you so proud about? It's not a gift that you offered."

Ye Qiao laughed heartily, "Number three, everyone can admire a

nice item together, why allocate responsibilities so clearly? You, ah, you, you're just so impulsive and unreasonably offended by the smallest things."

Fourth prince Ye Rong had finally recovered by now. To be honest, he'd been slightly disappointed when he learned that he was only in second place.

But when he heard that Jiang Chen was first, his entire being felt as though he was spontaneously flying into the sky. The great ascents and falls of his life had simply come too quickly.

He'd been the same as everyone else, and would've never thought that that uninteresting wine jug would become the gift that won first place.

His words in rebutting the first prince that the outside being good jade, but the inside being rotten materials had actually been to hint obliquely at the first prince himself, but who would've thought it would've turned out to be a prophecy that came true.

There truly was no way for the jug's exterior appearance to be uglier, but who would've thought that what was contained inside would be such precious nectar that the honored tutor would hail as first place?

Feeling the gazes from all sides center in on him, Ye Rong had the feeling of exaltation upon fulfillment. He'd been suppressed by the first prince for so many years but had finally seen the day in which he experienced the sweet thrill of being the main character.

Despite the fact that it'd been Jiang Chen who'd brought this emotion for him, Ye Rong did not mind in the slightest. This was because at the moment, Jiang Chen was keeping quite a low profile in standing behind him and had absolutely no intention of stealing his thunder.

In this moment, Ye Rong felt very gratified and proud of himself. To think that he would unwittingly receive such rich rewards after traveling such a distance to the Eastern Kingdom, going out of his way to enlist the services of a talented and learned man, and recruiting Jiang Chen!

Chapter 173: The Furor Brought By The Gift In First Place

Ye Rong didn't think that Jiang Chen would give them such a great surprise so carelessly.

He had invested a great deal in recruiting Jiang Chen, he'd even gifted Jiang Chen the four times refined spirit weapon, the Da Yu bow.

However, today, Jiang Chen had returned it all, with interest! The magnitude of this return was such that even five spirit weapons wouldn't measure up to it.

A spirit weapon was dead and it could be bought with money.

But the sense of pride, the feeling of exaltation upon fulfillment and the honor of receiving the honored tutor's favor was something that no amount of money could purchase.

Tian Shao and Lin Qianli also felt that this was quite incredulous.

Tian Shao was alright, he'd interacted with Jiang Chen before and more or less understood him. He knew that this fellow most likely had an impressive background, and that he often committed stunning acts.

It was the first time that Lin Qianli had come in contact with

Jiang Chen though, and he'd been rather predisposed against Jiang Chen earlier. But now, Jiang Chen's careless action had astounded all those around him and he firmly suppressed them!

In the beginning, Jiang Chen said that the wine jug was an indication of the three's sentiments, Tian Shao didn't say anything, but Lin Qianli had quite felt embarrassed.

But now, with the turn of a head, the previous humiliation and mockery had turned into unsurpassed pride now and it became the gift in first place that thoroughly trounced everyone!

Even a person as coolly composed at Lin Qianli couldn't help but be more than a bit proud at the moment. He was a proud person, and he had always yearned to be accepted and esteemed by others.

Therefore, he was quite stubborn on the road of martial dao. He only looked to be top dog and have others look up to him.

And in this moment, he well and truly felt the feeling of having others hold him in awe.

Although this feeling wasn't something that he'd earned himself, he still felt rather damn good about it.

Even the most isolated person yearned to be accepted, respected, and valued deep in their hearts. Lin Qianli was no exception.

Tian Shao chuckled merrily, "Younger brother Jiang, I've

unwittingly shared in your glory once again. I shan't fight against you for the chance to ask a question of the lordmaster later."

"Heh heh, since we're brothers, why divide things between me and you so clearly?"

Tian Shao hastened to shake his head and wave his hands, "Forget it, forget it. I'm a military person and I can only ask the lordmaster for his guidance in limited areas. You're young and accomplished, if you receive the lordmaster's guidance, your future will have boundless prospects."

Lin Qianli felt a bit awkward as he was quite conflicted. He knew Jiang Chen had previously said the three of them had prepared the gift together. But he would never be so thick skinned as to claim that he had a part in the glory.

To put it candidly, they were riding on Jiang Chen's coattails.

However, Lin Qianli was truly tempted. Although he didn't think that he would really have the chance to ask the lordmaster some questions, now that the chance was in front of him, he really did want to. He had been stuck at an impasse on his path of martial dao. He was just one step short, but he could never take the leap.

If he could take that step, he could break free from his cocoon and become a butterfly.

Therefore, he was rather hesitant and bit his lip lightly. The

resolute pursuit of martial dao finally triumphed over his modesty as he stammered, “Jiang Chen, can I discuss something with you?”

“No problem,” Jiang Chen waved his hand. “I don’t have any questions to ask. You can have both chances if you’d like.”

Jiang Chen truly didn’t have much to ask. Jiang Chen had possessed more than enough theory in his past life. Although the lordmaster was the enduring monument of the Skylaurel Kingdom, it would still be a colossal joke for him to give pointers to Jiang Chen.

“What?” Lin Qianli suspected that he hadn’t heard correctly.

“Younger brother Jiang, you… ” Tian Shao was also flabbergasted.

Jiang Chen spread out his hands, “I said that we don’t need to be so polite between brothers. How about this, for fairness’ sake, each of you ask one question?”

According to the rules of the gifting segment, whoever won it would have two chances to ask a question. It would be just right if the two chances were distributed to Tian Shao and Lin Qianli.

“Younger brother Jiang Chen, do you really have nothing to ask? The lordmaster is the spirit king protector of the kingdom. His training is at the peak of the spirit realm. If you receive a few words of guidance… ”

“That’s alright, I have my own path.” Jiang Chen said faintly.

Tian Shao wanted to carry on speaking, but Dan Fei said with a smile on stage, “Everyone, here comes the lordmaster. Please say a few words to everyone!”

Cheers rang out from beneath the stage as everyone started applauding.

First prince Ye Dai, battered out of his senses with dejection, controlled his emotions with effort and started applauding as well. Lu Wuji’s gaze flitted around as he hated Jiang Chen even more.

He had once again been humiliated and slapped in the face by Jiang Chen. He’d been made a fool of, and even the first prince had been made a spectacle of.

Hatred!

“Jiang Chen, you like being in the limelight. You’ve thoroughly offended the first prince this time. Let’s see who can protect you in this entire capital!” Lu Wuji’s tone was filled with rage.

Old Tutor Ye hadn’t been very interested before, but at this moment, there were some traces of a smile on his face.

“I stand here every year. My eyes may be closed, but my heart is

open. I may not look beneath the stage, but I observe your every motion and gesture. There is controversy every time when the gift rankings are announced. I never explain anything. You can be full of doubt if you'd like, or be unhappy if you will. I don't care about any of that at all. Those who would come will still come next year, and those who shouldn't come, I wouldn't look forward to you coming either." The honored tutor's voice was resonant and it was carried far. A few traces of gravity had been added to his face that seemed not of this world, reminding everyone that this was an old man who could change the layout of things in the Skylaurel Kingdom.

"Today, I will make an exception. Why did I chose the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine as the best gift? Because I have lived for so many years, so many endless nights, and I have seen a countless number of fine items and forgotten even more of them. But what is truly good is something that one would be unable to forget in their entire lives. These fine items are destined to take root in your mind and leave an imprint behind. This Nine Magnificence Dw Wine is one of the few good things that have left a brand on my heart."

"Perhaps, I am unable to describe how precious it is from direct observation. I can only give an example. Not even the head of the Precious Tree Sect would necessarily be able to drink this wine if he wanted to."

No description or propaganda was needed to describe how precious this wine was.

The most direct way of describing it was that if even the head of the Precious Tree Sect wanted to drink it, he may not be able to.

This was the explanation that cut straight to the point the most and it was the most effective!

The entire crowd was solemnly silent after these words were spoken. All of their emotions were surging bizarrely. What kind of identity and status did the honored tutor have? Would he lie? Would he craft these lies for this wine?

Absolutely not!

Therefore, this Nine Magnificence Dew Wine was truly this precious?

In the span of a moment, all the gazes on Ye Rong became a bit complicated. These people had all originally felt, more or less, that this wine jug was too... unique, and a thorough affront to the eyes.

In this moment, all these thoughts did a complete one eighty.

“Where did Prince Ye Rong find this young man? He carries such wine on him at all times? Did he carefully prepare this in advance to offer it to the honored tutor?”

“This Ye Rong isn’t someone simple alright. He set up a trap step by step, letting the first prince advance and then finally, carelessly offering that wine. This must have been something carefully designed beforehand. It looks like the first prince has fallen into Ye Rong’s trap.”

“To think that Prince Ye Rong was so shrewd! He purposefully found an unassuming wine jug and let everyone laugh at him, to allow the first prince to have his digs and mockery. He then made an ultimate comeback! This type of face slapping is truly brutal, and damned sweet. Look at the first prince, he’s lost a lot of face this time.”

“It looks like we can’t underestimate Prince Ye Rong in the future. I’d always thought that he was a meek, quiet sort. Who would’ve thought that such great ambitions would be hidden behind his low profile? A book can’t be judged by its cover alright.”

Poor Prince Ye Rong. An unexpected matter had helped him leave a fathomless impression in the eyes of others. Everyone thought that he had purposefully led the first prince on and used this method to slap the first prince’s face.

However, Ye Rong obviously didn’t care about this. The more everyone thought in this manner, the happier he was. The more that others kept a fearful and respectful attitude towards him, the higher his place as prince would be.

Although first prince Ye Dai’s mouth was full of bitterness, he was also secretly cowed. He too felt that this had been a trap that Ye Rong had set up, and lured him into stepping into it step by step.

“Ye Rong that animal, to think that he harbored such ambitions. It looks like I can’t sit idly by. I always thought that number two

was the greatest thorn in my side, but now, it looks like I cannot afford to lower my guard against Ye Rong either." Once Ye Dai felt the pressure from Ye Rong, he would exert greater pressure over Ye Rong in the next stage of his plan.

The honored tutor had had the spontaneous interest to voice these words. As for whether or not the people beneath the stage understood him or not, he didn't pay that much heed to that.

Dan Fei smiled faintly, "The confusion should've been cleared up in everyone's hearts now, I think? The lordmaster has lived such a great span of life that he looks lightly on everything. I trust that there is no doubt about the items that can leave an impression in his heart. The Nine Magnificence Dew Wine well and truly deserves the title as first amongst all the gifts."

A palm that was so tender that it seemed to lack any bones waved lightly across her face, tucking a strand of hair that had drifted by the corner of her eye behind her ear. Dan Fei smiled, "Alright. Now, will the owners of the three gifts that received placements please step up and ask their questions. Second and third place both have one chance. The owner of the gift of first place has two chances."

"Ye Dai, you come first."

Ye Dai had readjusted his emotions with quite some effort at this point. Although he was quite dejected that he had received third place, he didn't dare display any displeasure.

He wore a very humble smile on his face, “Teacher, student Ye Dai has a question to ask you. With regards to the alliance of the sixteen kingdoms, is it better that the kingdoms are separate, or that they are one?”

Ye Dai’s question was domineering and expansive, showing breadth of vision. It had to do with the great question of the separation and unification of the sixteen surrounding kingdoms.

He had obliquely learned that the honored tutor was a fervent warmonger when he was young. He’d always advocated the expansion of the Skylaurel Kingdom, swallowing the smaller surrounding kingdoms, conquering the neighboring sixteen kingdoms, uniting the lands, and establishing a great dynasty.

Therefore, his question played up to the honored tutor’s interests. He was purposefully currying favor with the honored tutor, trying to elicit the sympathetic reaction that the two were of the same kind.

The old tutor smiled faintly and looked meaningfully at Ye Dai. “The trend of the world is that those separate for long must unite, those united for long must separate. Separations and unifications follow the greater picture. When the timing is ripe, things will naturally come together. When the timing is not right, it’s better to remain apart than together. I have considered this question as well for the first half of my life. As it stands now, not only is the impetus from greater momentum needed, the existence of a fierce and ambitious person is needed to decide whether remaining apart or together is the way forward. The two conditions must be present at the same time. Without both of them, all discussion of

united the sixteen kingdoms is but empty talk.”

Chapter 174: The Honored Tutor's Difficult Problem And Promise

The old tutor's response actually wasn't what Ye Dai had hoped for. In fact, Ye Dai had really wanted the honored tutor to compliment him and say that he'd asked a wonderful question, and then compliment him on his scope of vision and desire to find high footing. Finally, he would also encourage Ye Dai to use this goal as motivation and strive to achieve it.

Unfortunately, these were all answers that Ye Dai craved, but the old tutor's actual response was vastly different.

However, Ye Dai didn't dare show the slightest bit of dissatisfaction so he put on a facade of being deep in thought. He mused for a bit before saying, "The teacher's words are full of determination aimed at a higher vantage point. Your student will need to advance to another level before being able to comprehend the teacher's perspective. It looks like your student will need to work harder at grasping the greater picture, and must at the same time desire to become a fierce and ambitious person, working towards the goal of uniting the sixteen kingdoms."

Although the honored tutor hadn't responded in the way he hoped, this didn't preclude Ye Dai from expressing his own opinions and views towards the honored tutor.

The lordmaster smiled faintly and didn't respond. He would only answer a question once and it was impossible for him to voice anything else.

Although Dan Fei maintained a natural smile on her face, she was shaking her head inwardly. Ye Dai fancied himself as a clever man.

How would a young man like Ye Dai be able to grasp the perspective from which the honored tutor viewed things?

Dan Fei could actually understand what the lordmaster meant with his words. He was saying that the momentum for a greater picture to unite the sixteen kingdoms had yet to form.

He was also hinting that Ye Dai was not the fierce and ambitious talent that was needed.

That last sentence in particular, in which all was empty talk if both of the requisite conditions weren't meant, was actually a blow to Ye Dai. It was an oblique indication he should stay grounded and humble, and refrain from reaching for what was beyond his grasp.

It was a pity that Ye Dai was completely immersed in his own thoughts and had not understood the connotations of the honored tutor's words.

What heights have you risen to now to speak of uniting the sixteen kingdoms? Your strength has yet to reach the required level but your ambitions are overweening. This would wreck the country and bring ruin to the people.

"In the end, Ye Dai still thinks of himself as a bit more clever

than he actually is." Dan Fei sighed privately within her heart.

Her beautiful eyes changed direction and looked towards Ye Rong, "Ye Rong, you're in second place. What question do you have to ask the lordmaster?"

Ye Rong was all seriousness as he said gravely, "Teacher, my question happens to be almost the direct opposite of big brother's question in terms of line of thought. I've been considering, does a kingdom count as strong if its borders are endless, or if the country is prosperous and the people at peace? For a strong dynasty, even if it carves out new frontiers everyday, if the people are destitute and the soldiers on the front lines suffer high casualties, what is the meaning of exhausting the troops and engaging in war like this?"

Ye Dai's facial expression chilled with Ye Rong's question.

Ye Rong was obviously asking this question just for the sake of asking it. Ye Dai's question had to do with uniting the sixteen kingdoms, whereas Ye Rong asked what was the point in indulging in wars of aggression!

No matter how one looked at this question, it was at direct odds with the question that he, Ye Dai, had asked.

The honored tutor's expression was noncommittal as he wasn't angered by Ye Rong's contrary question. He thought briefly, then said, "Soldiers are men as well. If soldiers and generals have no motivation and goals when fighting on the front lines, they will be unhappy. Then, such wars are meaningless. Expanding borders is

not necessarily an evil. On the other hand, holding the army in check is not necessarily a good thing. The difference between good and bad is determined by the intention of the war. If expanding borders can help more people live a better life, then this war is a good one. This old man's perspective is that the purpose in expanding borders lies not in having more territory, but in helping more people live a prosperous and peaceful life! If one in a superior position loses sight of this goal, then he will lose sight of the correct direction."

Ye Rong listened raptly, nodding slightly as he returned to his seat. He would need some time to absorb and digest these words.

"Alright, now, it's time for the owner of the first place gift to ask his questions. According to the rules, the owner can ask two questions."

Dan Fei cast her gaze onto Jiang Chen.

She was a smart woman and naturally knew that this Nine Magnificence Dew Wine was not something that the three had planned together.

It was one hundred percent something that this strange young fellow had cooked up.

Dan Fei was a woman who didn't easily find her curiosity piqued, but at this moment, she was quite curious about Jiang Chen.

She really wanted to know just what question would this young man ask of the lordmaster? Questions of martial dao? Or questions in other areas?

Feeling Dan Fei's eyes on him, Jiang Chen smiled faintly and inclined his body slightly, hiding behind Ye Rong very naturally.

It wasn't that Jiang Chen was running away from anything; he truly didn't want to keep a high profile. What he wanted to do most at the moment was to close his eyes and rest for a bit, simulating a battle with a spirit realm practitioner.

Because he was going to face Xin Wudao's challenge next. This matter had to do with the life and death of the Qiao brothers.

Under these circumstances, Jiang Chen truly had no interest to bother himself with these things. He knew that if he asked a question, he'd be subjecting himself to all sorts of rumours and gossip.

It was better to avoid these things if possible.

When Tian Shao saw Jiang Chen like this, he knew that Jiang Chen had truly decided to give up his chances and wasn't putting on a show of false politeness. He said to Lin Qianli, "Qianli, you ask first."

Lin Qianli also wanted to protest out of modesty, but his resolution towards martial dao overcame his modesty in the end

and he took a step out.

"Honored tutor, your junior, Lin Qianli, of the Azure Heaven Southern Palace, would like to ask a question with regards to martial dao. Your junior has constantly sought after the great perfection of twelve meridians true qi within the true qi realm. I have meditated arduously for three years but have never obtained it. Your junior would like to ask the honored tutor, is the great perfection of twelve meridians true qi just an insubstantial mirage in the end?"

A sudden beam of shrewd light shot out from the honored tutor's eyes, shooting into Lin Qianli's heart like an arrow of unparalleled sharpness.

"Aren't you half step spirit realm already? And you still cannot let go of your fixation on great perfection? There has never been such a thing as great perfection on the path of martial dao. Perfection means there is no longer any room for improvement. You are fixated on great perfection, yet you do not know that you are already passing up the best timing to enter the spirit realm?"

These words were as lightning streaking amidst the dark, dim hillsides as they lit up Lin Qianli's world of martial dao.

Lin Qianli was akin to being struck by lightning in that moment as he stood there, petrified. Abruptly, the light of enlightenment shot out from his eyes as a relieved smile blossomed on his face.

He bowed deeply, "Many thanks for the honored tutor's blow to

the head, allowing your junior to brush away the clouds and see the clear sky.”

The old tutor smiled faintly and said nothing else. He rather admired Lin Qianli’s decisiveness and strong capabilities of comprehension.

“Junior Tian Shao…” Tian Shao walked on stage next.

Although Jiang Chen had said that this was a gift from all three of them, Lin Qianli had asked one question and Tian Shao was taking the other.

Didn’t this mean there were no opportunities for Jiang Chen to ask anything?

Jiang Chen wasn’t asking? Even the people on Ye Dai’s side was faintly astonished.

Lu Wuji was even cursing Jiang Chen in his heart, “Jiang Chen that fool, how could he pretend to be generous and give such a prime opportunity to someone else? He’s a fool, alright. Mothereffing hell, why won’t such great opportunities fall into my lap?”

Although Lu Wuji had just been hectored by Dan Fei, he still maintained absolute worship and admiration towards Ye Chonglou, just like everyone else.

He would even dream of having an opportunity to ask questions like this, but he knew that such a chance would never come around to him.

As he saw Tian Shao walk onto stage, Lu Wuji's heart felt like it had been bitten by a viper as he was filled with jealousy. Just who the hell was Tian Shao? He'd always been someone beneath Lu Wuji's feet, someone whose status had never been able to match up to Lu Wuji. How could he swagger on stage to ask questions of the honored tutor now?

"Little petty men getting their wish!" Lu Wuji cursed inwardly. He could only scorn the person who obtained what he desired but could not have.

Dan Fei was also slightly surprised. She'd been curious about Jiang Chen and really wanted to know what questions he'd ask.

But, even though she'd waited and waited, the end result was that none of the people asking questions was Jiang Chen.

In this regard, Dan Fei's curiosity towards Jiang Chen increased even more.

Tian Shao's question naturally had to do with martial dao. The honored tutor was obviously a teacher who taught without discrimination. No matter who it was who asked a question, he treated them all fairly and give targeted explanations.

His final answer also greatly benefited Tian Shao.

When the old tutor had finished answering Tian Shao's question, first prince Ye Dai also breathed out a long sigh of relieved comfort. This unlucky break was finally over.

The segment of offering gifts concluded here.

Although he was in third place, this ranking caused him to be dejected.

Even so, he was fully anticipating the next segment, because sister Dan Fei had just mentioned that another segment would be spontaneously added after the gifts were presented.

Ye Dai was rather looking forward to this segment because he had prepared long and hard for it. He'd even given no thought to the costs and had purposefully invited a disciple of the Precious Tree Sect to come just for this matter.

"I hope that the intelligence was correct this time, and that the additional segment sister Dan Fei mentioned was the item that I prepared for. If I can help the honored tutor to relieve his burdens, then I am sure that I will become his most favored student. When I ascend to the throne in the future, I am sure to receive the honored tutor's support and approval!"

Ye Dai's eyes were full of ardent fervor as he looked at Dan Fei with a hotly burning gaze. His heart itched to advance to the next

segment.

When he thought of Dan Fei's promise, all of the blood in Ye Dai's body thrummed and boiled...

Those who could help the lordmaster resolve this difficult would receive a favor from the honored tutor!

After receiving a nod from the lordmaster, Dan Fei once again came to the front of the stage and smiled demurely, "Everyone, I already mentioned earlier that there will be an additional segment added after offering the gifts. According to prior agreement, whoever can help the lordmaster with his troubles in this segment will receive a favor from the lordmaster. Remember, this is a favor that the lordmaster will expend his full energy to fulfil. Everyone please rack your brains."

"A favor that he'll use his full energy to fulfil?"

"My gosh! How many years has it been since the honored tutor has made a promise like this?"

"Tsk tsk, if I could receive a favor from the honored tutor, joining even the Precious Tree Sect would be but a word from the lordmaster away?"

"We must cherish this opportunity!"

"Heh, even the king is likely to be jealous of whoever receives

this favor.”

“Heh heh, if this favor falls to me, I would hail the lordmaster as my master immediately and reside with sister Dan Fei. This way, heh heh...”

All sorts of thoughts and ambitions permeated the great yard in this moment.

Chapter 175: Five Winged Phoenix-Dragon

Everyone was greatly tempted after hearing the honored tutor make such a solemn promise.

This included even princes Ye Dai and Ye Rong.

Everyone was well aware that this favor was on a completely different level compared to the guidance given previously. This favor was absolutely unparalleled and incomparable.

Dan Fei looked at everyone's gazes of desire and expressions that were itching for action, and knew that people's will to fight had been aroused to the fullest.

She smiled faintly as her shapely body walked towards the back. Shortly after, she returned , leading along an exotic beast and walking slowly into the hall.

This beast had a body of jade green feathers. It had a dragon's head, two wings on its back, but its tail was like a phoenix with three wings attached.

When this exotic beast appeared, it brought with it a tremendous sense of awe and pressure. Even Jiang Chen, in the midst of his meditation, was shaken by this strong oppressing pressure. The strong pressure shot into his consciousness like an arrow.

Jiang Chen's eyes opened slightly as he looked at this exotic

beast. Internally, he was also a little astonished. “This is an ancient bloodline, a Five Winged Phoenix-Dragon produced from the crossbreeding of dragons and phoenixes!”

“This world actually has ancient bloodlines?” Jiang Chen was slightly surprised, but he immediately brought his thoughts around to it. Although the ancient bloodlines were rare, but heritage would be passed down through the generations and there would always be crossbreeding in between the generations. There were bound to be all sorts of bloodlines roaming the various worlds and planes of existence.

It wasn’t that astonishing that some of ancient bloodlines could’ve made their way here.

Except, Jiang Chen was still faintly astonished to see one appear in a small place such as the Skylaurel Kingdom. When he further looked at the quality of this Five Winged Phoenix-Dragon, It was undoubtedly one in which the ancient bloodline was very weak and diluted.

According to Jiang Chen’s judgment, at most it would be a bloodline of the upper spirit degree. It could possibly evolve to the upper saint degree if all went well.

If it wanted to reach a higher level, it would either have to encounter great fortune or be exposed to superior cultivation. Otherwise, the saint degree would be the limit of this Five Winged Phoenix-Dragon’s abilities.

“As the spirit king protector of the kingdom and a practitioner at the peak of the spirit realm, it’s not a ridiculous thing for the lordmaster to have had a few favorable turns in life. It seems that the lordmaster isn’t simply just the spirit king protector.” Jiang Chen drew this conclusion in his heart.

When his thoughts traveled here, Jiang Chen’s God’s Eye couldn’t help but cast a few more glances at the Five Winged Phoenix-Dragon before sinking deep into thought.

“Although this Five Winged Phoenix-Dragon has an awe inspiring presence, it seems a bit listless. It looks like the lordmaster is worried about this matter?”

Jiang Chen could not hold back a laugh as he thought, “Old tutor Ye is barking up the wrong tree in his panic. Although its level isn’t high, it’s still of the ancient bloodline. How many of these foppish dandies are able to understand it? Even if something is wrong with this beast, what kind of ideas can these fellows come up with?”

It wasn’t that Jiang Chen looked down on these people, it was that these noble disciples of the Skylaurel Kingdom were not qualified enough and hence likely hadn’t heard of ancient bloodlines at all.

If they hadn’t even heard of them, how could they offer any ideas?

Of course, this matter had nothing to do with himself, and Jiang

Chen had no plans to step in. What he cared most about right now was the battle with Xin Wudao.

He had to deploy his abilities to the utmost in this battle in order to see even a ray of hope.

His eyes closed as he once again shut himself into the world of meditation.

Dan Fei's voice sounded once again at this moment, "This creature is a Phoenix-Dragon, and is the steed of the lordmaster. I'm sure some of you in the audience will have heard of it before. Some problems developed with it three months ago and it became fretful and anxious. It doesn't eat any of the spirit foods offered to it. The beast has lost all desire for food and drink over the past couple of months and is not only dispirited but also lacks energy. Even a spirit creature cannot hold up beneath such torment. The lordmaster has searched for many spirit creature experts but he still cannot identify the reason why."

Jiang Chen laughed coldly within his heart. You don't even know where the beast is from, how would you be able to find the reason why? Prescribing medicine and treating the symptoms still requires knowledge of its origins and what the situation is.

"Everyone, to speak candidly, the lordmaster views this creature as his life. As it goes through such torment, the lordmaster also suffers. If any of you have a way to find out the reasons why, the lordmaster will owe you a favor even if you cannot offer the cure. If you can prescribe the appropriate treatment and solve the issue, then the lordmaster will not only owe you a favor, but will also

grant you a great gift."

"What? Not only owing a favor but giving a gift as well?"

"So generous! Just what is wrong with this spirit animal? Damn it, why haven't I spent more time on the study of spirit animals earlier?"

"Now that the time has come to use them, I rue that I have not perused enough books. I regret not reading more classics and not understanding more of spirit creatures. What a pity, a pity!"

When Ye Dai heard Dan Fei finish speaking, his eyes lit up. He'd already heard some of this news from other channels.

Therefore, he'd gone to the Precious Tree Sect this time and spent a lot of money to invite a genius disciple from the Four Seasons Hall of the Precious Tree Sect, a personage they hailed as one of the five pill geniuses from the Four Seasons Hall, to bolster his group this time.

"Brother Xianke, this time, it's time for you to how your capabilities!" Ye Dai turned and spoke to the mysterious person in all black robes and wearing a cape next to him.

This person was the person whom Jiang Chen was most on his guard against. His level of training was above that of Xin Wudao and Liu Can.

The caped man was a disciple of the Precious Tree Sect. He was a genius in the dao of pills.

“First prince, I don’t want to boast emptily but those who are stronger than me in the dao of pills in the Four Seasons Hall can be counted on one hand. Amongst the younger generation, if I call myself the second expert in the field of pills and raising spirit creatures, then no one will dare call themselves first.”

This caped man’s name was Han Xianke and he possessed the pride and confidence unique to sect disciples.

“Mm. This prince has invited Brother Xianke this time because I value this point of Brother Xianke. If it wasn’t for the fact that Brother Xianke’s name reverberated in my ears like thunder, how would I place as much importance on you as I do now?”

On Ye Dai’s side, he’d invited the genius disciple Han Xianke from the Four Seasons Hall of the Precious Tree Sect.

Ye Qiao had also made some preparations and brought a senior executive from the Qingyang Valley.

As for Ye Zheng, he’d also invited someone, but his guest was relatively less-renowned. He was a renowned veterinarian and had conducted many studies in the area of spirit animals.

Ye Rong finally took stock of the situation and understood what he’d missed out on.

It turned out that these princes had all received intelligence on why the honored tutor was worried. Ye Rong suddenly realized why sister Dan Fei would use such an odd tone to ask why he hadn't seemed to know anything when he had passed through the door just now.

So this was what was going on.

"To think that Ye Dai and the others had such effective and pervasive channels of intelligence. Looks like there's much for me to do if I want to become a strong contender for the position of Crown Prince. I need to make more connections and build more intelligence networks."

Ye Rong was a bit depressed. He knew that if Ye Dai and the others succeeded this time, then the gap between the two of them would grow quite large.

Receiving the old tutor's favor and an additional gift held great meaning.

For reasons unknown, Ye Rong couldn't help but turn his head back and look at Jiang Chen. When he saw Jiang Chen with his eyes closed, having entered into a meditative state, he couldn't help but be a bit disappointed.

In the instant that he considered of Jiang Chen, Ye Rong suddenly had a thought — a thought that desired a miracle to appear.

But he immediately smiled ruefully. Jiang Chen wasn't omnipotent after all. Besides, he himself had not possessed foreknowledge of this matter, what could Jiang Chen possibly do then?

"Ai, Jiang Chen has just accomplished a great achievement for me, I can't ask that much of him." Ye Rong thought.

At this moment, Ye Dai took the lead and stood up, cupping his fists, "Sister Dan Fei, a genius pill master from the Four Seasons Hall of the Precious Tree Sect happens to be amongst my followers today. Amongst the young folk of the Precious Tree Sect, if this genius is number two in the areas of pills and raising spirit animals, then no one will dare call themselves number one."

"Oh? What name does this genius go by?"

"Untalented Han Xianke greets Miss Dan Fei." Han Xianke was different from the others. He was a sect disciple and wasn't willing to to humble himself in front of Dan Fei.

"Sir Han, hello." Dan Fei smiled. "I hope Sir Han can work a miracle and help the lordmaster resolve this issue."

"I will attack this problem with all my strength."

"Sister Dan Fei, I've also invited an elder of the Qingyang Valley. He has quite some experience in the ways of spirit creatures.

Whenever anything goes wrong with the steeds of the four great sites of the Dragonteeth Guard, we all go to him for answers."

The person speaking was second prince Ye Qiao. A middle aged man stood next to him and he looked wealthy, with some middle age fat and a potbelly. In terms of external appearances, he didn't present as convincing a front as Han Xianke.

"Qingyang Valley?" Han Xianke suddenly laughed coldly. "And what the hell is the Qingyang Valley? Is it worthy of being mentioned in the same breath as I, Han Xianke?"

The facial expression of the middle aged elder from the Qingyang Valley grew ugly. "Sir Han, you heal yours and I heal mine. Everyone's going off of their own abilities so there's no need to be this domineering, is t'here?"

Han Xianke was unyieldingly lofty, "Domineering? Are you even worthy of me being domineering towards you? I'm simply conveying a truth. Even if old man Fei was in front of me, he'd have to grovel and play nice to me!"

The four great sites were very imposing within the Skylaurel Kingdom, but only within it. To the disciples of the Precious Tree Sect, particularly geniuses like Han Xianke, the four great sites were merely a trash dump.

Only those who had no future in the Precious Tree Sect and disciples who sought to obtain wealth, prosperity, power, and influence in the mundane world would leave the sect and make a

living for themselves in one of the great sites.

Therefore, it was quite normal for a genius like Han Xianke to disdain the members of the four great sites.

The middle aged elder from the Qingyang Valley had been insulted to his face, but he could only pinch his nose and hold his anger in. He also knew full well that Han Xianke was a genius within the sect. For him, stepping on an elder of a mundane site would be as effortless as stepping on an ant.

The vet that third prince Ye Zheng had invited stood naively to the side, barely even daring to breath. He was so scared that he didn't even dare speak.

When first prince Ye Dai saw that Han Xianke's presence was so strong, he was privately gleeful. He flicked a glance at second prince Ye Qiao, thinking Ye Qiao, you kid, you want to fight with me? You're humiliating yourself this time, aren't you?

I can even bring along a genius disciple of the Precious Tree Sect, what can you bring forth to battle with me?

There was an unbecoming expression on Ye Qiao's face , but he also knew that an elder of the Qingyang Valley truly didn't dare to fight with a genius disciple of the Precious Tree Sect. His strength was unable to overcome the other's.

"Alright, since all of you have come, display your talents! The

lordmaster has spoken that whoever can cure the Phoenix-Dragon is the true genius!" Dan Fei didn't like to see conflict.

So what if he was a Precious Tree Sect disciple? If he couldn't cure the lordmaster's spirit creature, that still made him mediocre and in possession of an unearned reputation!

Others had to give the disciples of the Precious Tree Sect face, but the lordmaster didn't have to at all. To speak frankly, even if it was the senior executives of the Precious Tree Sect, the lordmaster didn't have to give them any face.

Rather, It was Jiang Chen who found all of this funny. Han Xianke was throwing his weight around like he was all that; he seemed to really think that he was quite awesome. Jiang Chen would like to see just how much knowledge and skill he had to his name!

Chapter 176: The Cocky And Bullying Genius Sect Disciple

Jiang Chen didn't know why either, he just felt uncommonly pissed off at Han Xianke. Perhaps it was because he had that arrogant, lofty air about him that sect disciples commonly had. Or maybe it was because of his humiliation of the Qingyang Valley.

Old man Fei from the Qingyang Valley was now Jiang Chen's servant at the very least. The middle aged fatty was obviously one of old man Fei's. Jiang Chen was naturally ticked off to see him shamed.

One had to see who the dog's owner was before beating it, no?

The middle aged fatty was from the Qingyang Valley and thus, he was one of old man Fei's men. The latter was now one of Jiang Chen's servants.

Although the follower of a servant had no status, Jiang Chen didn't want to see someone else being all hoity toity and running rampant over the fatty.

When he heard Dan Fei's words, Han Xianke smiled reservedly and took a step back, "Forget it, I don't like to be associated with trash. Let them go first! If they can handle it, then it isn't a big problem. I'll take action if they can't handle it."

Although sect disciples had all sorts of strange and eccentric

tempers, they would also be a bit bizarrely proud at certain times. Take Han Xianke right now for instance, he was proudly allowing others to go first.

This was because he was a sect disciple and he didn't want to be lumped in with some ordinary, mediocre talents. This would only degrade his status.

He loved seeing others fail and then making his move in the face of difficulties, resolving the issue with one stroke. And then basking in the admiration and respect of others.

This was a little bad habit that almost all sect disciples had.

The first to walk up was the civilian vet that Ye Zheng had invited. This fellow also had an opportunistic mindset. He wanted to use this chance to make a name for himself and make a play for wealth and fortune. Thus, he gathered up his courage to approach.

The Phoenix-Dragon suddenly roared lowly before the vet was within even three meters of it. The vet ghastily cried out and tumbled backwards, spewing fresh blood out of his mouth.

He was just a civilian vet and the level of his martial dao training was middling. How could he hold himself up in the aura of a spirit creature? The shock naturally caused him to cough up blood.

A hint of a jeering smile played about on Han Xianke's lips as he looked at the fat elder of the Qingyang Valley.

The fat elder also had a wry look on his face. He knew that he was caught between a rock and a hard place. He wouldn't be able to not take the stage either.

Not matter what, he'd go up, take a few peeks and pretend to give a diagnosis. Whether or not he succeeded, he'd be able to give the second prince an explanation if he went for a spin on stage.

One had to say, an elder of the Qingyang Valley still had some true skills to his name. At least he wasn't sent spewing blood from the Phoenix-Dragon's aura.

After following the four ways of diagnosis in looking, listening, questioning, and feeling the pulse, the fat elder had a woebegone expression as he spread out his hands. "Miss Dan Fei, there's nothing wrong with this spirit creature."

Dan Fei's beautiful features darkened. Nothing wrong with it? What are you doing here if nothing's wrong with it? Here to watch a good show?

Old Tutor Ye sat on the side privately shook his head. It had been Dan Fei who'd insisted on adding this segment, he actually didn't approved of doing so. He didn't feel that these young folk could solve any problems. He hadn't objected out of consideration for Dan Fei's feelings, and because he was resorting to desperate measures.

No one had any suggestions anyways, what harm would there be

in a couple more quacks having a go?

"And you didn't want to accept the fact that you're trash! Why aren't you getting the hell off the stage right now?" Han Xianke floated onto the stage, grabbed the fatty and threw him off the stage.

The tyranny of sect disciples were fully illustrated in this moment.

It was a good thing that the fat elder had a bit of training. His two feet strove mightily to keep their balance after he was thrown off stage, helping him find his footing.

His face was pale as he said huffily, "Second prince, this is bullying taken to the extreme!"

Ye Qiao also smiled ruefully. "Forget it, forget it! Restraining yourself is to keep to gentle breezes and calm waves, taking a step backwards will bring the wide sea and spacious sky into view. Why don't you go back first?"

The fat elder cocked his head. "I'm not going back. I'd rather like to see just how much skill the so-called sect disciple has to so humiliate me of the Qingyang Valley!"

A Buddha made from clay would still retain several hints of the temper from the material that it'd been made of. The fat elder had been thoroughly infuriated by Han Xianke, and he'd made his up

mind to stay and observe.

If Han Xianke could resolve things, he could steal some knowledge and learn something.

If Han Xianke couldn't resolve things, the so-called genius of the sect was also trash, and no different from him of the Qingyang Valley.

Since they were both trash who couldn't cure the Phoenix-Dragon, what right did he have to humiliate others?

Han Xianke did indeed have some reasons for being so proud. The Phoenix-Dragon's anxiety lessened noticeably when he walked up.

Han Xianke was also met with barely any resistance when he probed and tried to make a diagnosis.

It could be seen that Han Xianke still had some accomplishments in the area of communicating with spirit creatures. The Phoenix-Dragon didn't resist strongly at least.

Given this case, even Dan Fei couldn't help but have some anticipation towards Han Xianke.

But, time progressed, an hour passed, and then two hours. Everyone's stomachs started rumbling, attesting to their empty state. Han Xianke still hadn't come to any conclusions.

Some became unhappy beneath the stage.

“Can you do it or not? Get off the stage if you can’t. More than two hours have passed. We’re all waiting to take our seats and eat, aren’t you hungry?”

“It seems like sect disciples are just that!”

“He was so cocky earlier that I thought he truly did have some special abilities! Heh heh, he’s just outwardly attractive but a worthless person after all.”

“He insulted the Qingyang Valley elder to the point of making him out to be worthless earlier. I was almost truly frightened by him, thinking that he really did have some skills to his name. It looks like I was too naive.”

Some began to gossip slanderously beneath the stage.

Not everyone supported the first prince, and not everyone liked seeing the sect disciples run rampant with tyranny.

Although most people felt that sect disciples tended to be arrogant, and thus it had been natural for Han Xianke to act how he’d been earlier, there was another portion of steely minded folk who didn’t like seeing such style.

Han Xianke did feel a bit awkward at the moment.

This was because he'd deployed everything he had learned in his life, but he'd really discovered that there was nothing wrong with this Phoenix-Dragon.

If you were to say that it was sick, well, no changes had appeared in any of its bodily functions.

If you were to say that it wasn't sick, well, it was truly listless and it wouldn't eat or drink. It also had lost some weight.

But if you were to say that it was listless and lacking in energy, well, the presence within its body was abnormally strong. So it wasn't like a sick spirit creature at all.

Han Xianke really was at a bit of a loss at the moment.

He'd just cussed someone saying they were trash, and now, he'd busily worked away for two hours and also didn't find anything wrong. Could he possibly use, "There's nothing wrong with it" to gloss things over?

If that was the case, then what was the need for him, Han Xianke?

The conclusion that nothing was wrong with it had long been given by the Qingyang Valley's fat elder, and he'd actually thrown the other off the stage when it was given.

Then how could he possibly say the same words, no matter how thick his face was? Would he be thrown off stage like the fat elder by the lordmaster if he said those words?

"Genius Han, you called me trash just now, but you've probed for two hours now. Just what is the problem here? Tell us so we can all learn something." The fat elder asked evenly beneath the stage.

Fatties were indeed a group of people that one couldn't offend. Even if he couldn't best you in a fight and didn't possess power and influence as domineering as yours, he would never forget to exact revenge if you gave him the chance to do so.

The fat elder was perfectly depicting the law of the fatties.

Even though Han Xianke was wearing a cape, those beneath the stage could sense his predicament. Look at sect disciples and how awesome, how full of genius they were!

What was the result?

Still blank, goggle-eyed stares in the end!

"Sir Han, what is your diagnosis?" Dan Fei faintly asked.

Han Xianke stammered after Dan Fei's question, "This... it is indeed a bit complicated. Perhaps this type of spirit creature is only

suited to run wild, and not to be raised by humans?”

Han Xianke could only give a clumsy, inferior answer like this one now that things had developed to this point.

When Dan Fei heard these words, disappointment flashed slightly through her beautiful eyes. How would she not know that these were Han Xianke’s empty words? This Han Xianke, a sect disciple, a bunch of eccentricities to his name. She’d actually thought that there might’ve been some astonishing knowledge to his name. The result had still been a disappointment in the end.

“Miss Dan Fei, perhaps, we could consider returning this creature to the deep mountains and its original environment. If it recovers its primal nature, then perhaps... ”

“Sir Han, do you have a proper diagnosis or not?” Dan Fei was not that happy to see him equivocate.

“In my opinion, it’s that this creature’s wild nature hasn’t been tamed and it’s not suited to be kept in captivity.”

Dan Fei said noncommittally, “Forgive me for not being able to agree. The lordmaster has had this spirit creature for many years and he has always raised it well. If its wild nature had not yet been tamed, it wouldn’t surface after so many years!”

Han Xianke was speechless and spoke woodenly, “Then perhaps the climate is unsuitable for it.”

When these words were spoken, Jiang Chen couldn't bear to listen any longer and splurted out a chuckle.

This laugh was uncommonly ear piercing in Han Xianke's ears. His face darkened as he screamed shrilly, "Who is it? Who dares be so bold? What right do ants have to raise a clamor when sect disciples speak?"

This flying into a rage was to cover his embarrassment.

Lu Wuji had been paying attention to Jiang Chen and immediately called out, "Jiang Chen, do you know Sir Han's background? What do you mean by laughing? Do you look down on Sir Han? Paugh! Are you worthy of doing so?"

Lu Wuji was standing firm for the cause of justice, but his intentions were quite clear. They were to stoke Han Xianke's flames of anger and induce them to burn Jiang Chen.

Indeed, Han Xianke had a belly full of frustrated anger and nowhere to vent it on. He shot a viciously sinister gaze at Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen had been irritated by Han Xianke for a long time, and he was even more out of sorts with Han Xianki's glare. "Stop huffing through your nose and glaring at me. You should first measure whether or not you're trash when you call others trash. Don't be so cocky if you're trash. You're spinning so much crude and unfitting drivel now that you can't find a way off the stage,

don’t you find that funny?”

“Trash? Jiang Chen, you’re crazy! How dare you insult a sect genius as trash? I think you’re looking for death!” Lu Wuji fanned the flames.

Ye Dai also furrowed his brows, “Number four, your follower is quite immature. What the heck is he to besmirch a sect disciple? A village buffoon is ignorant, but are you ignorant as well?”

Ye Rong was momentarily speechless from Ye Dai’s lecture.

Jiang Chen however, laughed heartily, “First prince, you keep calling me a village buffoon, so I’d rather like to ask you, a person from the big city. Just what is wrong with this Five Winged Phoenix-Dragon? You’re not from a backwater, so give me an explanation! I’ll admire you if you can say something, but don’t pretend to be better than who you are if you can’t, alright?”

The scene was gravely silent after these words. This fellow was so dauntless that he even dared to talk back to the first prince?

Chapter 177: Jiang Chen Makes His Move

It actually wasn't that Jiang Chen was purposefully picking a bone with Ye Dai, but rather that the first prince had provoked him and attempted to force him to submit over and over again.

Jiang Chen didn't want to cause trouble, but he couldn't hold up beneath the repeated provocation from these fellows.

Naturally, he didn't mind when they labelled him as a village buffoon, but he truly loathed and detested the first prince's lofty sense of superiority.

This sense of disdain had once appeared with regards to Long Juxue and the sect disciples of the Purple Sun Sect. It was appearing once again with the group around the first prince.

They were acting as if they were the venerated children of heaven so everyone else should naturally be their targets of abuse and humiliation, and stepped on beneath their feet!

What Jiang Chen abhorred most were idiots who obviously amounted to nothing, but loved pretending that they were the proud children of heaven.

If one was talking about geniuses, or favored geniuses of the gods, who had more right to be labelled thus other than Jiang Chen, who was the son of the Celestial Emperor in his past life!

However, Jiang Chen had never said he was a genius, and never used a lofty, holier-than-thou attitude to lord it over everyone else.

What need did true geniuses have for labels? Why would they seek satisfaction from oppressing others?

Dan Fei was slightly surprised to see Jiang Chen rebut Ye Dai. She wanted to smooth things over, but then, her thoughts raced and she suddenly wanted to see what Jiang Chen had up his sleeve. Pacifying words were at the tip of her tongue, but she swallowed them again.

At this point, second prince Ye Qiao also smiled. “That’s right big brother, if you really do have some brilliant ideas, share them with us so we can all increase our knowledge as well.”

Ye Rong was similarly ticked off. Although Ye Dai was hectoring Jiang Chen from the looks of things, he was actually targeting Ye Rong at the end of the day.

“Big brother, since you say that I’m immature and ignorant, then you should do something mature and wise to set an example for us. If you can help the honored tutor resolve his difficulties, then us brothers will also bow to your superiority. Otherwise, if you only know how to ride roughshod over everyone and yell at people, how will you be the model for us brothers?”

Prince Ye Rong had never publicly raised his voice against Ye Dai, but he was finally no longer willing to hold things in now.

Ye Dai smiled coldly, “Your follower even dares to offend the genius of a sect, what else is there that he is unwilling to do? Is there any point in us saying anything?”

Lu Wuji hastened to add, “That’s right, Jiang Chen, the unprecedented way you throw your weight when you say that the sect genius can’t do anything. What, can you resolve this?”

Han Xianke also spoke frostily, “Jiang Chen, you’re a common, ordinary ant and you dare say that I am spinning tall tales. This is not only an insult to sect disciples but also an insult to the Precious Tree Sect.”

All of them were up in arms while using words to suppress Jiang Chen.

Jiang Chen was as noncommittal as the clouds and wind as he said faintly, “Stop posturing. Sect disciples need to use their true abilities and knowledge to prove themselves. Using their reputation to lord over others isn’t the act of a genius, but that of useless trash. You say I’m a common, ordinary ant. If you find that a problem that you, a so-called genius, couldn’t handle was in fact handled by an ant, what would you think then? Where would you put your face?”

“You?” Han Xianke couldn’t help but start laughing wildly. “You’re mediocrity that’s not even in the spirit realm! You don’t even have the right to approach the Phoenix-Dragon. You’ll handle the matter? If you can take care of it, I, Han Xianke, will immediately admit that I’m trash and you’re the genius. I’ll even be your dog from now on!”

“Be my dog? Heh heh, I’m afraid that you’re not qualified to.” Jiang Chen smiled carelessly.

Dan Fei’s almond eyes moved slightly as a trace of hope flashed through them. “You’re called Jiang Chen? Did you say just now that this creature is called the Five Winged Phoenix-Dragon?”

Jiang Chen nodded, “That’s right, its proper name is the Five Winged Phoenix-Dragon.”

“But, we’ve always just called it the Phoenix-Dragon.”

“The Phoenix-Dragon is its origins, the Five Winged is its outward appearance. The bloodline from crossbreeding between phoenixes and dragons has been passed down since ancient times, with the bloodline becoming more and more diluted with every generation. This Five Winged Phoenix-Dragon counts as a lower grade of heritage. A truly strong heritage exists in the Twelve Winged Phoenix-Dragon. Now that’s really something!”

“Twelve winged?” Looks of incredulity were revealed in Dan Fei’s beautiful eyes.

“Jiang Chen, don’t spin such a tall tale. Who doesn’t know how to make up stories? How about you give us an explanation on what’s wrong with this Phoenix-Dragon instead?” Han Xianke said angrily.

“Don’t you try to provoke me now, I actually happen to know a bit more about this matter than you do.”

Dan Fei’s almond-shaped eyes widened. “Jiang Chen, do you really know? Tell us, tell us, just what is wrong with the Phoenix-Dragon?”

“The honored tutor has raised this Phoenix-Dragon since it was young, correct? That span of time equates to roughly thirty or so years all together, right?”

“This… how did you know?” Dan Fei was startled.

As for the old tutor who’d been sitting on his chair all along, a shrewd beam of light suddenly shot out from his eyes towards Jiang Chen.

“From the various emotions being displayed by this Phoenix-Dragon, it’s most likely male. These problems wouldn’t be cropping up if it was female.”

“You know even this? Did you secretly observe it just now?” Dan Fei was even more baffled.

“Stuff like unsuitable climate and its untamed wild nature is all nonsense. The Phoenix-Dragon is one of the easier creatures to tame amongst the ancient spirit creature bloodlines. It is behaving like this for one reason only.”

“And what is that?” Dan Fei asked unconsciously.

“Very simple, it’s in heat.” Jiang Chen chuckled.

Dan Fei immediately flushed bright red. “Jiang Chen, you’re talking nonsense.”

Jiang Chen said gravely, “Breeding between all creatures on the earth and beneath the heavens is a natural law of nature. How would this be nonsense?”

Seeing that Jiang Chen was speaking so seriously, Dan Fei debated with a red face, “You say it… it’s in… whatever. Even if you’re right, why hasn’t this happened before? It…. this is all of a sudden?”

“Stupid! Was I just running my mouth when I said it was roughly thirty years old? We humans start developing when we’re thirteen or fourteen and begin to understand the matters between man and woman. The Phoenix-Dragon is more of a late bloomer and only start maturing after its thirty years old. It hadn’t done so before because it was young. Now that it’s started developing, it’s thinking all sorts of random thoughts. You understand me?”

Even an open girl such as Dan Fei was blushing all over from Jiang Chen’s words. For some reason, although Jiang Chen’s conclusion sounded a bit like groundless gossip, she still believed seventy to eighty percent of what she’d heard.

One had to say, Jiang Chen's conclusion was frightful and shocking to the ear.

Most of the noble disciples present didn't believe him and felt that Jiang Chen was talking out of his butt. But even if he was bullshitting, they still rather admired his courage.

One had to know, to bullshit at a moment like this carried high risks. After all, the person sitting on the stage was the undying totem of the kingdom, Tutor Ye Chonglou!

And, if Jiang Chen's loose words were spoken randomly, then he was undoubtedly flirting and teasing sister Dan Fei. If Dan Fei found out in the end that Jiang Chen was leading her on, he would undoubtedly die a horrible death.

Who didn't know that even if it was the princes of the royal family, no one would dare speak frivolously in front of Dan Fei? Otherwise, Dan Fei would also give them the cold treatment.

Ye Rong was both delighted and worried as he saw Jiang Chen carry on. He knew that Jiang Chen often made surprising moves, and that he never failed with any of them.

He was delighted that Jiang Chen had made his move, but worried that if he messed things up this time, the consequences would be very severe.

Honored Tutor Ye would be unable to contain his anger, and

even sister Dan Fei wouldn't show him a kind face from then onwards.

Ye Rong could only pray inwardly, "Jiang Chen ah, please don't mess this up. Ah forget it, I was the one who brought Jiang Chen here. If I don't trust him, then who would? If I use someone, I shouldn't suspect them. If I suspect someone, then I shouldn't use them. If I, Ye Rong, have so set my determination to compete for the position of Crown Prince, then I will need the tolerance of a ruler-in-waiting. My starting point in all areas is less than Ye Dai. If even my appetite for adventure is less than his, then in what else can I compete with him?"

Ye Rong was also a decisive person. Just like what he'd said when he first recruited Jiang Chen, he and Jiang Chen were both gold buried in the sand.

He felt that he and Jiang Chen were essentially similar. They were destined to emerge from the masses and soar over ordinary folk.

Therefore, he decided to take this gamble and bet everything on Jiang Chen.

Ye Dai had been thoroughly lectured by Jiang Chen earlier and his pride was naturally making him feel quite humiliated as the first prince. Now that he saw Jiang Chen carry on with such a frivolous subject, no matter how he looked at it, it seemed like Jiang Chen was making up a colossal joke.

Ye Dai knew that this was the perfect timing to make a move against his opponent.

He took a step forward and roared out, “Jiang Chen, sister Dan Fei is a belle of rare charm. Don’t you speak filled with such depravity in front of her! What kind of diagnosis is this? You’re acting like a thug! Damned despicable!”

Ye Dai put on the urbane, graceful demeanor of protecting Dan Fei.

He cupped his hands again and said to Dan Fei, “Sister Dan Fei, this kid is the son of a small duke in the Eastern Kingdom. He’s a village buffoon, what would he know about spirit creatures? This brat has a sharp tongue, and he’s particularly adept at spinning lies. Sister Dan Fei, don’t fall for his lies.”

Lu Wuji also added on, “Right, apart from a witty mouth and a glib tongue, this brat doesn’t have any true abilities to his name.”

Third prince Ye Zheng also sighed, “To think that, although the noble sons and disciples of our vaunted Skylaurel Kingdom number in great figures, along with countless numbers of experts, here we are, listening to a backwater kid run his mouth.”

Ye Dai felt even more reassured having received support from so many. He roared with self righteous justice, “Number four, if you still want any face as a member of the royal family, tell this backwater buffoon to shut his mouth. What are your intentions in speaking so lewdly and blaspheming against sister Dan Fei?”

This huge crime came flying towards Ye Rong and Jiang Chen.

Blaspheming sister Dan Fei was a crime that was enough to make many of the young noble sons and disciples present view one as a common enemy.

One had to know, most of these young men had subtle thoughts with regards to Dan Fei. She was elegant and beautiful, poised and dignified. She was the goddess that many noble sons held within their hearts.

A stunningly beautiful appearance, a graceful and noble demeanor, and the most favored disciple of Tutor Ye. No matter from what angle they viewed her from, Dan Fei was the most perfect goddess.

Ye Rong had been oppressed several times by Ye Dai and also said with displeasure, “First prince, I honor you as a senior brother and have always held a tolerant attitude towards your oppression. You say that Jiang Chen is speaking loosely with no basis at all. I’d like to ask you, what evidence do you have that he’s speaking loosely? Since the person you invited couldn’t handle things, you disallow my guest to speak in return?”

“Evidence? Is proof needed to overthrow his ridiculous words?” Ye Dai smiled coldly and wondered if Ye Rong was so idiotic because his brains had been smashed between doors.

“You’re merely slandering others if you have no proof.” Ye Rong

had also had his ire aroused and wasn't backing down at all. He knew that if he backed down from here, then his entire life would be equivalent to being beaten into the ground by the first prince. He would never have the chance to redeem himself.

On the contrary, if he held up beneath the onslaught this time or even came out on top, then it would greatly increase his reputation within the capital and give him the right to compete fairly with Ye Dai!

Seeing the two brothers insist on their sides, Dan Fei was also in a tough position. At that moment, she would invite unnecessary trouble if she favored any side and cause the scene to become even more chaotic.

Chapter 178: The Most Straightforward Way To Resolve Things

To be honest, she didn't think that Jiang Chen was some shady character that was trying to take advantage of her. Dan Fei had secretly been observing this young man. Even when the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine that he offered had been chosen as the best gift, no changes could be seen that had made their way across the young man's expression. This completely diffident expression was absolutely not something that a young man could put on.

Jiang Chen had even given up the coveted opportunity to ask questions of the honored tutor when his gift was chosen as the best, passing them onto his two companions.

Dan Fei also knew that some young men liked to pretend that they were deep or carefree in order to attract her attention.

Dan Fei had also originally suspected that Jiang Chen was pretending.

But after repeated conscious and unconscious observations, she discovered that she'd been thinking too much. Jiang Chen wasn't pretending, he truly didn't care about her.

When Lin Qianli and Tian Shao had asked their questions, Jiang Chen's eyes had even been closed. That completely indifferent expression was only missing these words tattooed on his face — what the hell does any of this have anything to do with me?

Even when she'd led the Phoenix-Dragon out later, everyone's attentions had been fixed on it and they had all wanted to give it a go. Although Jiang Chen had also paid some attention, he immediately had a flat and insipid look on his face afterwards, as if the matter of the Phoenix-Dragon was something he wasn't interested in at all.

If it hadn't been for Han Xianke's final diagnosis simply being too ludicrous and thus caused JIang Chen to involuntarily break out in laughter, Jiang Chen likely wouldn't even have opened his mouth at all.

After Dan Fei's analysis, if Jiang Chen was still pretending, then this young man's acting skills were simply too good.

In either case, Dan Fei felt that Jiang Chen wasn't putting on a front, and likely did have some understanding of this Phoenix-Dragon.

At least, he'd known that the Phoenix-Dragon was male without having even walked forward. He could also make an accurate judgement of roughly thirty years time or so. The outside world would have no way of accessing this information.

Dan Fei didn't think that a young man would have the good luck to guess correctly with one random word.

Jiang Chen also clearly lacked interest in Ye Rong and Ye Dai's tit for tat verbal battle. He stretched lazily and said to Dan Fei,

“Beautiful woman, I merely spoke carelessly, you can listen to as much of it as you will. If anyone else thinks that my words are ridiculous, I welcome everyone to slap me in the face with more accurate evidence. Otherwise, people stop your whining and crying if you have no evidence. Your voices irritate my ears.”

Dan Fei was also slightly disappointed in Ye Dai’s performance today.

Her brow furrowed, she spoke faintly, “If the two of you want to fight, then walk out of here and fight on the main street. Let the citizens of the capital see just how their princes act.”

Ye Rong smiled ruefully and bowed, “Sister Dan Fei, younger brother here has always striven to hold myself in check. Unfortunately, while I seek to restrain myself, they continue to threaten me.”

Ye Dai roared, “Ye Rong, don’t you freaking act like you’re innocent!”

Dan Fei’s face darkened, “Are the two of you quite done yet?”

Although they were both princes, they still didn’t have the right to act atrociously in front of Dan Fei. The two of them shut their mouths, but their gazes at each other were full of animosity.

Dan Fei’s jade face was irritated as she looked at the two with displeasure. She turned around and walked towards the old tutor.

Since matters had developed to this point, she could only ask the lordmaster for his opinion.

The old tutor hadn't said anything because he'd been using his consciousness to observe everything.

As Dan Fei walked over, the old tutor suddenly stood up and spoke to Jiang Chen, "Little younger brother, you're saying that the Phoenix-Dragon is in heat? Then, is this something to be concerned about?"

Jiang Chen wasn't the sort to put on airs, since the old tutor had questioned him specifically, he naturally wouldn't lord around like he was an expert. After all, his identity in this life truly was that of a junior to the old tutor.

"Lordmaster, it's both a cause and not a cause for concern. The Phoenix-Dragon isn't quite like humans. The yang qi within its body is becoming stronger and stronger as a direct result of the yang qi within its body being inadequately dealt with. If this continues on, eventually, it will result in the yang qi separating from the body and will cause damage to the meridians. In serious cases, its body will explode. Its current performance of not wanting food or drink is but the initial symptoms. You'll have a difficult case on your hands when things become this serious!"

"These are only the initial symptoms?" The old tutor had seen many odd things in his life, but what Jiang Chen was saying right now was rather new and interesting.

Jiang Chen nodded, “You’ll know how scary it is when it really starts acting up in a few months. But with the lordmaster’s strength, you should be able to keep it under control.”

The lordmaster smiled wryly. This was his precious steed! Keep it under control? This wasn’t what the old tutor had in mind. He only wanted to cure it so that it wouldn’t continue to suffer.

“Little younger brother’s words are quite refreshing to this old man’s ears. I wonder who the little younger brother’s master is? How do you know about the Phoenix-Dragon?”

Everyone inhaled sharply at these words.

What status did the honored tutor have? And yet here he was, talking with such a courteous and considerate tone, taking such a benevolent attitude when inquiring with Jiang Chen, and even calling Jiang Chen his younger brother!

This… this completely upended everyone’s knowledge!

In that moment, even first prince Ye Dai felt like his mind was befuddled and completely confused. He was also almost crazed with envy and his belly was filled with frustrated anger. He wanted to erupt immediately, but had no place to vent his ill feelings.

How could he vent his feelings? Lose his temper at Dan Fei? Or throw his weight around with the honored tutor?

He didn’t have the right or guts to. Taking a step backwards, even if he had the courage to, the other wouldn’t care about him at all.

So what if he was the first prince? Tutor Ye had weathered through the reigns of several kings. Why would he even care about the feelings of a prince who wasn’t even the Crown Prince?

Jiang Chen chuckled, “Lordmaster, the first prince and them are somewhat right. I am a village buffoon from the Eastern Kingdom. I have no master, only the good fortune to meet an extraordinary person and spend half a year with him when I was young. We were great friends despite our difference in age, and coexisted like master and disciple. I listened to his chatter often and heard of a few things. The matter of the Phoenix-Dragon was also from this senior’s mouth.”

Jiang Chen naturally had a story ready. He’d said this to old man Fei, and naturally brought it out again when talking to Tutor Ye.

There were plenty of unexplainable things about him anyways. All of this could be shifted to that imaginary, mysterious person.

The heavens were thus vast. No one had ever met this mysterious person, and thus no one could prove that he didn’t exist.

The old tutor was an open-minded person. He thought back and forth and didn’t feel that there was anything amiss with Jiang Chen’s words.

After all, no one would believe it if the son of a duke from the Eastern Kingdom had any sort of amazing master or used their master to intimidate others.

Besides, it was impossible for such a strong master, one with a thorough knowledge of the secrets of the Phoenix-Dragon, to exist within the sixteen kingdoms.

Ye Chonglou's strength was great and he'd adventured through many places when he was young. He was quite familiar with the overall strength of the neighboring sixteen kingdoms.

Even a premier sect like the Precious Tree Sect, which was within the sixteen kingdom alliance, would have no way of having knowledge of an ancient bloodline like the Phoenix-Dragon.

In actuality, the old tutor believed Jiang Chen the instant that he'd mentioned the ancient bloodline.

An inexplicable sense of agitation had appeared in the old tutor's heart at that moment, but, after all, he was still an experienced and shrewd person.

He naturally wouldn't jump out impatiently and seek knowledge just because of one word from a young man.

When he heard Jiang Chen speak thus, the old tutor heaved a sigh and actually had a few traces of envy and yearning in his voice, "Little younger brother is indeed lucky. The extraordinary

senior that you had a relationship with was surely one that was at an incredible level of existence. Oh right, did he really say that the Phoenix-Dragon is an ancient bloodline, the result of crossbreeding between phoenixes and dragons?”

“Yes.”

“And the highest level of the Phoenix-Dragon goes up to twelve wings?”

“Theoretically speaking, yes, but his experiences may not have stretched to the limits of the Phoenix-Dragon. Perhaps an even higher level exists that he’d never come in contact with? The world is so vast, and no one is able to speak with certainty, isn’t that so?”

Ye Chonglou quite agreed and revealed an expression filled with extreme yearning. He sighed, “The bloodline of a twelve winged Phoenix-Dragon would surely be so pure, not to mention its level of existence. I have had the great fortune to meet even a five winged Phoenix-Dragon in this life.”

Jiang Chen didn’t respond. The old tutor knew his limitations. Indeed, even meeting a five winged Phoenix-Dragon of the ancient bloodline was a matter of great fortune.

Twelve wings? Don’t even dream of it. That was a steed in which legendary figures from all planes of existence could only hope to encounter.

Twelve wings meant that this was the rare creature's strongest form, a king at the very top. It couldn't be tamed through strength or arts at all.

Ye Chonglou quickly switched from that sort of admiring mood and smiled, "I lost my composure just now. Little younger brother, how do you think we should treat the creature being in heat?"

"The best way is naturally find a mate for it." Jiang Chen smiled. "Except, I think that the Phoenix-Dragon bloodline is something that one can only hope to meet by chance, and can't be obtained through search. By the time you find a mate for it, it will have likely exploded and died long ago."

Ye Chonglou had a face full of ruefulness. Jiang Chen's words spoke to his heart. Where on earth would he go and find a female for the Phoenix-Dragon?

These kinds of matters were basically something that could come by through luck, but never through searching for it.

"Then, are there any other ways?" Ye Chonglou asked.

"Yes, and actually, it's the most common method." A hint of a bizarre smile suddenly appeared on Jiang Chen's face.

"What is it?"

"Castrate it and put things right once and for all."

The entire hall erupted into an uproar after Jiang Chen spoke. A hint of shyness flashed through Dan Fei's beautiful eyes as she stomped her foot lightly, her face a patch of red.

This Jiang Chen truly sought to shock everyone senseless every time he opened his mouth. Castrate it! This... could this be called the most common method? This was giving up eating for fear of choking!

Ye Chonglou had a wry grin on his face, "You... are you joking?"

Jiang Chen spoke seriously, "How would this be a joke? In actuality, the Phoenix-Dragon has always been a creature strong in yin but weak in yang. If Tutor Ye had received a female one, this its potential who would been quite limitless. However, male Phoenix-Dragons have always existed to serve the females, even to the point of being sacrificed for them. Usually, after intercourse, the essence of a male's blood and its meridians would be fully absorbed by the female. When the male dies, the female will eat the flesh and blood of the male and give birth to the next generation. This is an endless succession of life and death. When the gender of a Phoenix-Dragon is determined, it will determine their vastly different fates."

Even Ye Dai began to be swayed with these explanations. He really wanted to find the flaws in Jiang Chen's words, but he couldn't find anything no matter how he looked.

If it was him, Ye Dai, on the stage, could he fabricate such

smooth lies? Craft such flawless excuses? Obviously not!

“Can it be that this brat really has some shitastically awesome luck, and struck up a relationship with an extraordinary person to receive these damnable tips? He’s made such a play for himself in front of the honored tutor. This… this kid’s luck is to the point of defying the heavens!”

Ye Dai was so depressed that he was about to burst. He was also so jealous of Jiang Chen’s damnable luck that he was about to go stark, raving mad.

Chapter 179: The Lord Master's Shock And Handsome Gift

Everyone else was thinking similar thoughts, not even mentioning Ye Dai. They were no longer able to find any other evidence to question Jiang Chen with at this moment.

Therefore, they all felt privately depressed. Why hadn't such marvelous circumstances landed on their heads, but instead fallen on a backwater buffoon like Jiang Chen?

How was the son of a small duke from the Eastern Kingdom worthy of such wondrous encounters?

"If this had landed on my head, I surely would've deployed it to greater use, given both my status and identity in the Skylaurel Kingdom, and reached new heights in my development," they all thought!

It was a pity that such a wondrous opportunity had been given to the minor character of Jiang Chen. This really was a pity.

There was a wry grin on Tutor Ye's face, "This is to say that the male Phoenix-Dragon that I've received is worthless in the end?"

"Not at all. Castrate it, and be done with this once and for all. In reality, most of the Phoenix-Dragons raised by great personages are male. Female Phoenix-Dragons are incredibly rare. To obtain one is absolutely the pinnacle of great fortune. If a male Phoenix-

Dragon is used to breed with a female, its only outcome is certain death. If it doesn't breed, and is castrated and raised further, although it will be slightly different from a female, its bloodline can still evolve as well. This is the bit of experience that countless numbers of seniors have gleaned from tens of thousands of years of actual practice."

Ye Chonglou sighed, "Being advanced in age is indeed not something to bar one's ambitions. Your words are greater than a hundred-year study of books. Jiang Chen, this old man has truly gained knowledge from you."

Everyone beneath the stage was flabbergasted when they heard these words. Were these words really from the honored tutor? The lordmaster was thanking Jiang Chen with the attitude of a student?

This... this was completely unheard of!

"Jiang Chen, I have never liked to owe someone a favor. What I have promised before is immediately in effect. Dan Fei, go and take out the gift that I had prepared previously. Give it to little younger brother Jiang Chen as a token of my gratitude."

"Jiang Chen, you can also ask a favor of me. I owe you one. No matter what it is that you ask for, I can fulfill it for you as long as it is within the boundaries of the Skylaurel Kingdom."

Dan Fei smiled slightly as a certain light flashed through her eyes. She looked at Jiang Chen, then turned and walked back

inside.

Those beneath the stage, in their jealousy, were all swallowing audibly.

Jiang Chen had convinced the honored tutor with that string of words? The lordmaster was planning on making good on his promise just like that, without even verifying if those words were true or not?!

Jiang Chen also smiled, “Honored tutor, aren’t you going to verify my words? What if I’m conning you?”

“Hahah, if a young man can craft so many perfect lies, then you truly have some skill as well. Even if you’re lying to me, I will readily admit to my gullibility. The longer one lives, the fewer chances there are that one will believe a lie. Jiang Chen, you’ve succeeded regardless of whether or not you have lied to me.”

Jiang Chen laughed involuntarily — this old tutor was quite something alright. His words were new and interesting, but he also understood the tutor’s meaning afterwards.

The honored tutor was a great person, and it would be difficult to pull the wool over his eyes. He only needed to analyze the various biological reactions of the Phoenix-Dragon in order to prove the veracity of Jiang Chen’s conclusion.

“That brat Jiang Chen actually lulled the honored tutor into

believing him with a bit of fine rhetoric! My artfully laid plans have been completely shattered this time! Jiang Chen, you've ruined my affairs time and time again. You really can't be allowed to exist within the Skylaurel Kingdom!" Killing intent exploded from within the heart of first prince Ye Dai.

Lu Wuji was both envious and mad with hate. "This brat Jiang Chen has convinced even the honored tutor? Is the lordmaster decrepit in his old age? How could he believe a tripe like this? This is bad, if Jiang Chen has a thick face and wants the lordmaster to take him as a disciple, wouldn't that only spell misfortune for me? It will be difficult to oppress him in the future!"

The others all had their own thoughts as well. Some admired Jiang Chen, some held him in contempt. Some felt that he had incredible luck, while others felt that he was a petty little character realizing his ambitions.

Even Ye Rong was half excited and half envious.

He was excited because the person he'd brought this time had completely KO'ed the first prince and his party. He'd thoroughly suppressed the first prince in both segments and made it so that the arrogant first prince couldn't even raise his head at all.

He was envious about the fact that Jiang Chen had received the honored tutor's favor. If this favor fell to him, Ye Rong, then it would become a sharp weapon on his path to competing for the title of Crown Prince.

However, although Ye Rong was quite moved, he never thought of seizing this favor from Jiang Chen.

He also knew that he had to maintain harmonious relationships with Jiang Chen and not hostile ones. Ye Rong knew that he would lose out greatly if their relationship soured.

After a while, Dan Fei's alluring body shape once again walked out from behind the scenes .

"Lordmaster, here is the item."

Lordmaster Ye waved his hand, "Give it to Jiang Chen."

Dan Fei nodded and offered the jade tray in her hand to Jiang Chen, "Jiang Chen, this is the Skylaurel Kingdom Medallion. Only one is created every ten years."

"What? The Skylaurel Kingdom Medallion?" Greedy glints were reflected in the eyes of the sons and disciples of the noble courtiers and officials beneath the stage.

Even the facial expressions of several princes changed slightly.

Never would they have thought that the honored tutor would bring out such a fine gift!

One had to know that even the king of the Skylaurel Kingdom

didn’t have the authority to unilaterally award this medallion. The construction of each medallion had to be authorized by both the Precious Tree Sect and Tutor Ye. Only then could the king command its production afterwards. It was only effective after unique marks from all three parties had been imprinted on it.

It was an optimistic way of putting things to say that one of these appeared every ten years. In reality, sometimes thirty years had already passed before someone last recieved a medallion.

The recipient of the medallion could do as he wished within the Skylaurel Kingdom. He didn’t have to bow when he saw the king and could visit with Tutor Ye whenever he wished to. The most important thing was, although the Skylaurel Kingdom Medallion didn’t guarantee admission into the Precious Tree Sect, it would greatly enhance the bearer’s chances!

There were countless nobles within the Skylaurel Kingdom, but not a single one of them had received a medallion in almost thirty years.

And today, on an occasion like this, one had appeared and been awarded to a young man who had just arrived in the Skylaurel Kingdom less than two months ago.

This scene was as if a heavyweight bomb exploded in everyone’s hearts.

Even the Dragonteeth Guard general, Xin Wudao of the first level spirit realm, was a bit envious of Jiang Chen. His gaze drilled

viciously into Jiang Chen.

“I must provoke Jiang Chen to participate in the martial demonstration later and kill him.” Xin Wudao knew that if he didn’t kill Jiang Chen immediately, then it would be difficult to suppress him when his wings filled out.

“Jiang Chen, by what virtue and right are you worthy of the Skylaurel Kingdom Medallion?” A ball of anger burned in first prince Ye Dai’s chest.

Lu Wuji was almost frothing at the mouth with jealousy. “That dumb animal Jiang Chen has seriously good luck! This won’t do, we must find a way for him to die. If Jiang Chen doesn’t die, there will be no way that I’ll be able to find my footing in the capital in the future.”

Even Jiang Chen’s own companions, Tian Shao and Lin Qianli, felt that Jiang Chen truly had good luck in this moment, not to mention those who opposed him.

However, they only admired him and weren’t jealous. After all, they had all basked in Jiang Chen’s glory. If it hadn’t been for Jiang Chen, how would they have the opportunity to receive guidance from the lordmaster?

The person most excited wasn’t Jiang Chen, but Ye Rong instead.

The person he’d brought had received the Skylaurel Kingdom

Medallion. This was undisputedly an enormous honor. In the future, others would categorize Jiang Chen as one of Ye Rong's men.

The stature of his camp would undoubtedly increased markedly with the addition of the medallion, giving him an even higher status with the princes within the capital.

"Jiang Chen, the lordmaster favors you so. The Skylaurel Kingdom Medallion hasn't appeared in thirty years. You should thank the honored tutor."

When Ye Rong saw that Jiang Chen's reaction wasn't as overjoyed as everyone thought he'd be, he couldn't help but verbalize a reminder.

Jiang Chen wasn't haughty and didn't try to put on a show of declining. He could tell from everyone's response that this medallion should be something quite useful.

He took the medallion off of the jade tray, "Lordmaster, Jiang Chen accepts this with a stricken conscience."

The old tutor was in a great mood, "No, no, you should accept this with a clear conscience. Oh right, according to the rules Jiang Chen, you can also request a favor of me. Please speak freely of any hopes or wishes."

It could be seen that the lordmaster was keenly interested as he

once again brought up this matter.

How was this owing someone a favor? He was basically gifting one to Jiang Chen! It was apparent that the lordmaster was truly delighted this time.

That gaze and tone carried a sense of encouragement within it, as if hoping that Jiang Chen would make a request.

Ye Rong caught Jiang Chen's eye and he curled his fingers slightly, indicating that Jiang Chen should make the request of hailing Ye Chonglou as his master.

Jiang Chen seemed not to see Ye Rong's movement however, as he smiled, "I can make any request?"

"Haha, nothing is off limits, as long as it is within my power."

Jiang Chen nodded, "Alright, then I think with the lordmaster's power and influence, there should be no problem in ordering about the Dragonteeth Guard?"

"The Dragonteeth Guard?" The old tutor was startled and his tone was slightly disappointed.

Dan Fei had been staring at Jiang Chen with her beautiful eyes before as well, her lips twitching slightly, obviously wishing to see what request that Jiang Chen would make.

Upon hearing Jiang Chen's words, a hard to detect bit of disappointment flashed across her face.

Jiang Chen wasn't making the request to hail Ye Chonglou as his master?

One had to know that there were countless numbers of people begging and crying to hail the lordmaster as their master. Even the lordmaster's tone itself carried some hints of it.

Everyone present was wondering if Jiang Chen would ask to hail the honored tutor as his master.

However, Jiang Chen didn't mention it at all and had brought up the Dragonteeth Guard. Xin Wudao however, suddenly thought of something and his face darkened slightly.

"Lordmaster, two of my men have just arrived in the capital and didn't know the rules. They were arrested by the Dragonteeth Guard. It isn't a big deal, but General Xin Wudao has told me that they will be executed without a doubt. I may not know much of the laws of the kingdom, but I had no idea that flying on steeds within the capital is worthy of the death penalty?"

Tian Shao hastened to add on after Jiang Chen's words, "Unregistered fowl cannot be used for transportation within the capital. However, this isn't a serious crime. If arrested, the most severe punishment would be fines and detention in jail for three days. If the offense is repeated, then the offender will be jailed for a

year.”

The lordmaster finally understood the situation and spoke with a furrowed brow to the first prince, “Ye Dai, look into this matter. Bring his men to me with utmost speed.”

Ye Dai was quite dejected, but how could he say no when the lordmaster himself had spoken?

If he said no, then he’d be disobeying the honored tutor. If he said that he couldn’t interfere with the Dragonteeth Guard, then it would indicate that he was incompetent and didn’t have enough influence. If he couldn’t handle even this matter, then the lordmaster would surely look down upon him.

“Wudao, bring them here now.” Ye Dai pinched his nose and gave Xin Wudao the order.

Xin Wudao was so angry that he almost wanted to spit blood. He had finally gotten a hold of something to hold over Jiang Chen with his arrest of Qiao Shan and Qiao Chuan. He’d been planning on making use of this opportunity in order to suppress Jiang Chen. Who would’ve thought that Jiang Chen would blow some air in front of the honored tutor and lay to rest all his maneuverings in one fell swoop?

Chapter 180: Take A Master? I'm Really Not Interested

One had to say, one word from the honored tutor was more useful than any golden law or precious rule.

Qiao Shan and Qiao Chuan were brought over after a relatively short while. The two had obviously suffered much in the Black Dungeons, and they appeared a bit worse for the wear.

Tian Shao stepped out appropriately, "Fourth prince, younger brother Jiang, let me escort the Qiao brothers back."

His mission had been completed, and it was now time to step out and lighten some of Jiang Chen's burdens.

"Alright, General Tian, we'll have to trouble you to make a trip." Ye Rong nodded.

Qiao Shan and Qiao Chuan also knew that they had committed a mistake and didn't dare meet Jiang Chen's eyes. Jiang Chen walked over, patted their shoulders and said, "Let's talk when we get back."

First prince Ye Dai had come up short in two consecutive segments. Since he'd been left with dust on his face thanks to Ye Rong, for the moment he lacked interest in the proceedings for the time being.

Now that Jiang Chen had rescued the Qiao brothers, their previous plan of using the brothers to provoke Jiang Chen into a martial demonstration was also naturally in ruins.

The most intriguing thing was that the lordmaster had Dan Fei announce, “There will not be a martial demonstration for this year’s banquet. Everyone is free to drink and chat.”

After he made the announcement, the old tutor took the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine, led the Five Winged Phoenix-Dragon away and leisurely took his leave, leaving behind a group of open-mouthed and wide-eyed teenagers.

They had wanted to display their prowess in the martial demonstration, and perhaps attract the honored tutor’s attention if they made a good showing with their skills.

“Sister Dan Fei, what’s wrong with the honored tutor today? There’s always been a martial demonstration every year. Why is it suddenly cancelled this year?”

Ye Dai was a bit surprised. He’d brought several spirit realm practitioners with him this time and had thought that he would be able to make a showing for himself in the martial demonstration segment.

Although he’d lost a lot of face in the two previous segments, he had thought about it and still hoped to find an opportunity to strike back against Jiang Chen.

He hadn't expected that it would end up as though the honored tutor had seen through his intentions and thus directly canceled the demonstration.

Dan Fei however, smiled faintly, "The lordmaster has already probed everyone's martial dao development the first time he made his entrance. Right now, whether we hold a martial demonstration or not holds no meaning to the lordmaster."

The overtone of her words was obviously, "Your martial dao improvement has been insufficient in the past year to surprise the lordmaster. There is no need at all for this martial demonstration."

When Tutor Ye had made his entrance, he had used his footsteps to disturb the heartbeat of those present as a test. Apart from Jiang Chen, the Old Tutor had fully assessed the martial dao training of all present.

Ye Dai was disappointed once again to see Dan Fei's cool reaction.

Even the martial demonstration had been cancelled. That meant that he, Ye Dai, had no chance to redeem himself during this birthday banquet. He had completely and utterly failed.

What followed afterwards was just eating and drinking.

As the first prince, how much interest could eating and drinking hold for Ye Dai?

Add to that everyone at the banquet were all discussing what had happened today and talking quite animatedly whenever they spoke of Jiang Chen.

It was obvious that the main character of the banquet had become Jiang Chen.

Even fourth prince Ye Rong appeared much more frequently as a topic in conversations than the first prince.

As thick as Ye Dai's skin was, he couldn't remain sitting at an occasion like this. As though he was at a business meeting, he drank a round of wine and left with a darkened face.

Although Jiang Chen truly wanted to leave, he had to smooth things over for Ye Rong at least a little bit. Ye Rong had reaped great rewards today, but if Jiang Chen left now, then his rewards would be cut in half.

When the birthday banquet neared its end, Dan Fei's moving figure once again walked next to Jiang Chen. A faint fragrance accompanied her as her body leaned slightly down to Jiang Chen's ears. Her sexy nose almost touched his earlobe as her thin lips blew out a breath that smelled like orchids, "Stay behind after the banquet. The lordmaster would like to see you privately."

Just as Jiang Chen was raising his head with shock, a faint smile spread out over Dan Fei's classy face as she turned to leave.

Ye Rong had no particular suspicion as he patted Jiang Chen's shoulder. "Younger brother, the honored tutor rarely sees a young man alone these days. If a good opportunity presents itself, you must grasp it well."

Instead of taking Ye Chonglou as his master earlier, Jiang Chen had saved two followers. Even Ye Rong had felt it was a pity.

Jiang Chen could've absolutely hailed Ye Chonglou as his master. Once he became the honored tutor's treasured disciple, would he have been unable to save two followers then?

Even a proud man like Lin Qianli felt it was a bit of a pity, not to mention Ye Rong. Before he left, he hemmed and hawed for a while before finally saying, "Jiang Chen, I was wrong before. Credit is due to you for allowing me to overcome the obstacles in my martial learning and achieving a breakthrough in my martial dao. I won't waste words in thanking you. Only, I will consider you as my brother in the future and as brothers, I also want to remind you that if the lordmaster wishes to take you as a disciple, you must treasure the opportunity."

Even Lin Qianli felt that the old tutor had asked Jiang Chen to stay behind because he wanted to take Jiang Chen as a disciple.

Jiang Chen smiled and made no response.

Take a master?

Jiang Chen really had no thoughts about this matter. Although he respected the old tutor, but Tutor Ye truly didn't have the qualifications to be his teacher.

When all the guests had left, Dan Fei's limpid eyes creased in a demure smile. "Let's go."

This woman had a demeanor that naturally attracted others to her every laugh and sigh. Jiang Chen shook his head with a wry smile. Even looking at only the profile of her back was enough to give rise to countless daydreams. No wonder the drool from those young men had trailed three feet from their mouths. This woman did have the right to take pride in herself.

They meandered through the front yard arrived in the backyard of the Tutor Manor.

The decorations of the backyard was a bit less grandiose and more exquisite. It was less luxurious, and more unearthly.

"Haha, Jiang Chen, come come. Come sit." Ye Chonglou didn't have the bearing of a spirit king protector at this moment. He was more like an amiable grandpa from next door.

Jiang Chen didn't stand on ceremony. He pulled over a chair woven out of bamboo and sat down.

"Elder Ye, the earlier you castrate the Phoenix-Dragon, the better. Otherwise, when the level of its yang qi reaches a certain

level and damages the meridians, there will be less available potential for you to cultivate."

Jiang Chen had no interest in taking a master, but he still rather respected the old tutor's personality and disposition. He was treating the old tutor as a friend with his words.

"Jiang Chen, let's not talk about the Phoenix-Dragon for now. Do you know why I've called you in here?"

Jiang Chen smiled wryly as he looked at the old tutor and didn't know how to respond.

When the old tutor saw Jiang Chen was like this, he too sighed privately. His words were hinting to Jiang Chen for a second time that Jiang Chen could take Ye Chonglou as his master.

At the end of the day, now that he'd reached his position, the old tutor couldn't find it within himself to be the one to do the asking. If Jiang Chen happened to reject him, then he would lose his face as the spirit king protector of the kingdom.

It was already difficult for him to give this level of hint. When he saw Jiang Chen smile wryly, the old tutor knew that it wasn't that Jiang Chen had not understood him, but that he truly didn't want to call Ye Chonglou master.

When Jiang Chen saw a bit of disappointment flash through the old tutor's eyes, he suddenly could not bear to let him down and

could only offer this explanation, “How could Jiang Chen not know of the honored tutor’s great favor? Except, when I met that wondrous person, I made a promise to him that I would not take a master before he nodded his approval.”

Ye Chonglou indeed revealed a relieved smile when he heard these words. “Ah, so this is the case, this is the case. No wonder. No wonder. Such a vaunted senior is both like your master and your friend, he naturally wouldn’t want you to take another master. Jiang Chen, for you to respond this way illustrates the upright, moral nature of your character. It is I who have acted rashly. Haha! Now that we’ve laid this out on the table, I feel quite at ease. Jiang Chen, you’ve given me another lesson. I’ve lived so long yet I have not lived as level headedly and open-mindedly as you have.”

“It is miraculous that the honored tutor is complimenting me this much, your junior is almost unable to keep his seat.”

Tutor Ye was in an excellent mood as he asked again, “Did the wondrous senior also brew this Nine Magnificence Dew Wine?”

“He gave me the recipe and I brewed this a while ago. There are many levels to this wine, and this particular one is only at the spirit degree. A saint degree Nine Magnificence Dew Wine is truly rare.”

A shrewd light suddenly shot out of Tutor Ye’s eyes as he seemed to think of something. “Saint degree? Jiang Chen, do you know how to brew a saint degree version?”

“Grasp of materials and flame are the most important components so it is actually not necessarily harder than the spirit degree. Of course, if one has yet to enter the spirit realm, then it would be difficult to brew the saint degree version of the wine.”

The light of deep contemplation could be seen in Ye Chonglou’s eyes, he seemed to be considering something. After a while, the old tutor suddenly said, “Jiang Chen, if the opportunity arises in the future, I would like to sincerely request that you brew a jug of a saint degree Nine Magnificence Dew Wine for me. Would this request be too much?”

He seemed to be deathly afraid that Jiang Chen would turn him down. “Feel free to set any conditions you wish to.”

Jiang Chen smiled, “It’s very difficult to collect all the ingredients for a saint degree wine. Much fortune is required. This isn’t simply a matter of setting conditions. But if there is such an opportunity, it won’t be a big deal to brew a jug for the lordmaster, and no payment is necessary.”

“Excellent. A young man who can sit and converse with me without holding a whit of profit or accomplishment in his mind. Jiang Chen, you’re different from the rest alright.” The old tutor laughed heartily. “I’ve heard that you’ve been in the Skylaurel Kingdom for less than two months?”

“Yes.”

“You’ve caused a number of great ripples in such a short amount of time?” Tutor Ye said with a shadow of a smile.

“Your junior possess a stubborn nature and awaits the lordmaster’s admonishment.” Jiang Chen simply decided to admit to things, and quite starkly at that. He didn’t say anything silly like he’d been forced to.

“Mm. Young folk should have a sense of wildness about them. If you go about your matters in a timid and cowardly way when you’re young, then what can you hope to accomplish? Jiang Chen, no matter what camp you stand in, I only have one request of you.”

“What is it?” Jiang Chen started slightly.

“Freely do as you will! Do whatever that’s in your heart! Don’t be constrained by anyone and worry neither about the pressures from the outside world, nor what troubles and oppression that you may face. I have perceived that there is a large power hidden within you. This is a power that even I cannot fully pierce through. If you give way to pressures from multiple sides and suppress your energy, then this will only bring numerous disadvantages to you with not a single gain in your development. I would be rather disappointed if that were to happen.” The old tutor spoke faintly. “It is precisely because of this that I gave you the Skylaurel Kingdom Medallion.”

Jiang Chen’s thoughts raced as a deeply contemplative look appeared in his eyes. Once again, he’d experienced the way the old tutor cudgeled his brains to help Jiang Chen.

One had to say, although the old tutor wasn't his master, but he had the eye of someone skilled at evaluating talent and had unique measures to conveying his teachings.

"Alright, litte Dan, send our guest out for me." The old tutor waved his hand and walked towards the back.

Jiang Chen was silently digesting the old tutor's words as he followed behind Dan Fei and walked outside.

"Jiang Chen, you really don't know how to appreciate what's good. Many people dream of hailing the lordmaster as their master, and you've actually turned him down!" Dan Fei's voice held vague tones of censure.

Jiang Chen could only smile ruefully. He knew that his moves would appear simply too high-and-mighty in the eyes of outsiders. This woman viewed the old tutor as her heaven so naturally, now that he'd rejected him, she wouldn't give him any good attitude.

"You think you're all that but without the lordmaster's protection, you'll find it difficult to even take a step in the capital. It's obvious that Ye Dai's crew would chew you up and leave not even the bones sooner or later."

Dan Fei was exasperated at his failure to make good and kept nagging at him.

They'd reached the main door by now.

"Sister Dan Fei, here is good." Jiang Chen knew that he was about to be unable to hold up beneath Dan Fei's nagging.

Dan Fei snorted lightly, "I didn't say I was going to keep showing you out. You didn't need to remind me."

Jiang Chen chuckled. He knew that this woman was purposefully finding fault. When women were like this, there would be no end to how much they would trouble him in the future.

He suddenly thought of something and reached into his pockets, taking something out. "Sister Dan Fei, the matters of today are a result of me not being able to tell what's good for me. You're a noble personage and have great magnanimity so don't be mad for such a small matter like this. I have a supreme rank pill specifically for retaining youthful looks. It's called the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill. Its effects are not bad. This is for sister Dan Fei. I hope you will remain forever young and that your looks last as long as the heavens."

Jiang Chen shoved the bottle into Dan Fei's slender jade hand, turned, and ran off.

Dan Fei hadn't had time to react before Jiang Chen had vanished without a trace around a street corner. As she looked at the pill bottle in her hand, Dan Fei was a bit irritated, "This wild youth likes to play his tricks alright. What pill of youthful looks? Am I very old? So old that I need medicine to maintain my looks?"

As she walked back through the door and closed it, she became more and more irritated and huffily threw the pill bottle into the bushes next to her.

She did not really hold a grudge against Jiang Chen, but simply held a baffling anger towards him in her heart. Who knew if it was because Jiang Chen had rejected the lordmaster's desire to take a disciple, or something else?

Chapter 181: Dan Fei With Her Emotions In Disarray

“Heh heh, little Dan, what’s wrong? Your face doesn’t look too good. Did Jiang Chen run afoul of you somehow?” Tutor Ye asked with a chuckle.

“No, I just don’t like his strutting figure. Who does he think he is! Teacher, that little brat dares reject your intention to take him as a disciple although you are a personage of such character!”

“Little Dan, this doesn’t seem like you.” The old tutor smiled. “When did our little Dan become so irritated by matters like this?”

Dan Fei was a bit irked, “Teacher, Dan’er is being a champion for your cause out of the goodness of my heart, yet you laugh at me.”

“Haha, to think that the Dan Fei all the young men in the capital are infatuated with also has the side of a young girl. Little Dan, if they saw your current state, it would surely completely overturn their understanding of you.”

“Then let them overturn! Who asked those silly children to think of me?!” Dan Fei was obviously very spoiled in front of the old tutor, and was acting markedly different from her coolly composed and competent exterior during the banquet.

“Alright, little Dan, all jokes aside, Jiang Chen turned me down because he understood the principle of right and wrong. To be

honest, although I can give him a few pointers on the road of martial dao, but I truly may not have the qualifications to be his teacher in long run."

Shock was revealed in Dan Fei's beautiful eyes. "Teacher, this... isn't this assessment too high?"

Although Dan Fei had been adopted by Tutor Ye since she was young and had served by his side ever since, she had never heard him give a word of high praise to anyone. In the eyes of the old tutor, some of the young folk didn't even warrant any words of praise at all.

Those who the old tutor would occasionally mention would only merit an ordinary compliment.

"It wouldn't be too much to highly praise a young man who, in the vicinity of the sixteen kingdoms, can easily talk about the origins of the Phoenix-Dragon and take out the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine."

"But... he's just been a bit luckier to make the acquaintance of an uncommon expert, that's all!" Dan Fei argued, unwilling to accept that.

The old tutor smiled. "Little Dan, do you think that there are many uncommon experts in this world, and that they're all sitting there twiddling their thumbs, waiting for someone to make their acquaintance and strike up a friendship? There are so many people within the sixteen kingdoms, so many billions of people so why

doesn't such a fortunate encounter happen to Ye Dai? Or to Ye Rong? Why didn't it happen to anyone else; why was it Jiang Chen who was so lucky?"

Dan Fei's red lips twitched, "He's just lucky."

"Haha, luck! Things such as luck do exist. But for Jiang Chen to receive the favor of an uncommon expert, it's not just a matter of luck." The old tutor chuckled.

"Anyways, I just think he's too cocky and will surely suffer in the future. To say nothing of anything else, the first prince's group of people will surely hate him for what transpired today."

"Ye Dai?" The old tutor laughed. "If Ye Dai was smart, he shouldn't have antagonized Jiang Chen to begin with. If he's not smart enough, then I'd say his dreams of being Crown Prince are just about at their end. Rather, although that child Ye Rong has always kept a low profile, who would've thought that he would have such resolve this time to travel tens of thousands of li to the Eastern Kingdom to recruit Jiang Chen. That kid Ye Rong is not simple alright."

"Teacher, do you also think Ye Rong is not bad?" Dan Fei had the best impression of Ye Rong out of all the princes.

Although Ye Dai looked quite charming, graceful, tall and strong with the demeanor of a gentleman, but Dan Fei was quite sharp and extremely intelligent so her observations skills were very strong and she actually didn't admire the traits that Ye Dai were

displaying.

It was rather Ye Rong who was shrewd, but had a stately air in his bones.

“Ye Rong actually made a good move in placing his bet on Jiang Chen.” The old tutor glossed over things as he changed the topic. “Little Dan, make a trip to the Southern Palace and prepare a few items for me. My Phoenix-Dragon, ai, it’s inadvisable to wait longer!”

The old tutor was worried about his Phoenix Dragon. Although the process of castration wasn’t complicated, he still wasn’t at ease handing it over to someone else.

He decided to do it himself, but some things had to be prepared first.

“Yes, Dan’er will do so immediately.” Dan Fei knew what the old tutor was going to do, but she was a girl and wasn’t at liberty to participate in something like this.

“Don’t be in a rush, I’ll write a list for you. How else will you do it?”

…

Dan Fei had some ties to Elder Ning of the Southern Palace.

Therefore, when she needed to do something, she would always look for Elder Ning. Unfortunately, Elder Ning happened to be out when she arrived at the Southern Palace.

Dan Fei handed the list over to the associate and said, “These are some items that Tutor Ye wants. Choose the best ones and pay no heed to price.”

“Yes Miss Dan Fei. Your servant knows that even without your instructions. Please wait momentarily Miss Dan Fei, these items will take a while to prepare.”

Dan Fei nodded, “Please prepare them as soon as possible.”

She walked to a corner of the lobby and found a seat to sit down on. She didn’t like to stand at the counter because people always walked past it.

Particularly the men who walked back and forth, their gazes were always quite dishonest as they swept them back and forth over her body. Although Dan Fei’s disposition was good, she never liked looks that reminded her of hungry wolves.

An exceptional girl like her was a unique sight in the Skylaurel Kingdom. Even if she hid in the corner, she was still given many lecherous looks. They swept up and down her body without abandon. If it wasn’t for her proper and demure appearance projecting its own awe-inspiring aura, many of them would have come and try to chat her up.

Dan Fei actually rarely showed her face in public. Most of her time was spent studying at the old tutor's side. Most of the males that she had come in contact with the most were the noble sons and disciples of the Skylaurel Kingdom.

Although these noble sons were sometimes ridiculous, they would more or less restrain themselves because they knew of Dan Fei's identity, even if they had certain thoughts. They were fearful of the old tutor's presence and they didn't dare step out of line.

However, not that many people in the public knew who Dan Fei was.

Dan Fei felt quite uncomfortable with all these gazes checking her out.

Two more people walked in at this moment. It was actually Elder Ning of the Southern Palace with Qiao Baishi at her side.

"Dan Fei?" Elder Ning was a business person and she had long since formed the good habit of observing everything around her. She scanned the entire lobby as soon as she set foot through the door.

Dan Fei was so extraordinary that Elder Ning's eyes locked on to her immediately, even though she was sitting in the corner.

This was someone that Elder Ning had to curry favor with. She

had a smile on her face as she greeted Dan Fei enthusiastically, “Dan Fei, I was wondering why I heard so much chattering early in the morning. We have a honored guest here! Why are you sitting here? My underlings are so incompetent! Come, come! Have a seat in my house.”

Dan Fei was startled when she saw Elder Ning. She almost didn’t dare greet her. “You’re… you’re big sister Ning?”

Elder Ning burst out in laughter, “Who would be so bored as to pretend they are me?”

Elder Ning tittered, she in a fantastically great mood. She loved seeing that kind of reaction. Ever since she took the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill, she seemed to have returned to the prime of her youth and she was met with these astonished gazes everywhere she went.

These looks made Elder Ning overflow with even more confidence.

“Sister Ning, you… You… ” Dan Fei couldn’t find the appropriate words at that moment.

“Alright, if you want to say that I was quite old before, you can go ahead and say it! I won’t mind, heh heh!” Elder Ning warmly grabbed Dan Fei’s hands and said, “Baishi, this is Dan Fei, my good sister!”

“Dan Fei, this is my newly hired assistant Qiao Baishi. He has a lot of potential.”

“Baishi greets Miss Dan Fei.” Qiao Baishi smiled.

Dan Fei nodded slightly. “Hello.”

The associate had finished preparing the items at this moment and walked over. “Miss Dan Fei, the items have been prepared. Would you like to take an inventory?”

How could Dan Fei take an inventory of the tools and materials needed for castration in front of Elder Ning and Qiao Baishi? It was simply too embarrassing.

She hastily said, “No no, that’s alright.”

She then spoke with a reddened face to Elder Ning, “Big sister Ning, the lordmaster still has some matters to take care of. I need to go back.”

Dan Fei felt that everything was quite odd today.

The perverse existence of Jiang Chen had appeared at the lordmaster’s birthday banquet without warning — this made her feel that things were a bit bizarre.

And now, having met her old acquaintance Elder Ning, it seemed

that she had suddenly become twenty years younger. This was even more bizarre.

Just what was going on today? Why was everything so queer and wacky? Dan Fei started to suspect that she was dreaming.

Walking her to the door, Elder Ning spoke wistfully, “Dan Fei, you’re really in a hurry today? I wanted to share my beautifying secrets with you. Look at your skin, your figure, and your body. Tsk tsk, a flawless born beauty. I would want to eat you if I were a man!”

Dan Fei immediately flushed red, “Big sister Ning, don’t make jokes of me. You’ve become so young all of a sudden that at a glance, I look like your big sister. I’m going to envy you if you keep talking.”

“Heh heh, what is there to be envious about? I was lucky and obtained one Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill. Dan Fei, that pill is truly wondrous. I didn’t dare believe it then, but my entire being seemed to rewind back to twenty years ago in a short two hours.”

“The Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill?” Dan Fei’s moving eyes suddenly darted back and forth, and she said rapidly, “Big sister, I really must go!”

Dan Fei apologized with her words and hopped in a carriage, taking her leave like the wind.

“What’s wrong with Dan Fei today? She seems distracted and dejected. It doesn’t look like her style.” Elder Ning was completely befuddled.

Reaching the Tutor Manor in a short amount of time, Dan Fei put the items down as soon as she entered the door. She immediately went to the shrubbery in the front yard, her charming eyes searching seriously.

“It should be here, there should be no mistake. I was angry just then and randomly threw it. It should be here. Why isn’t it here?”

Dan Fei was a bit regretful. Why had she been so impulsive?

However, the pill bottle was the size of half a fist. It shouldn’t be hard to find in the shrubbery.

After searching for a while, Dan Fei’s elegant forehead was sweating slightly, beads of sweat had formed on her nose and her hair was slightly messed up. There were even some blades of grass stuck on her head.

Dan Fei suddenly remembered something.

“Oh no, can it be that, in the time I’ve been out, Aunt Lan cleaned the yard and picked up the pill bottle?”

This frightening thought made Dan Fei extremely nervous all of a sudden.

Chapter 182: Miss Dan Fei Actually Rifled Through The Trash

"Miss, did you need me for something?" Aunt Lan was diligently cleaning away when Dan Fei called for her.

"Aunt Lan, did you clean this place up?"

The diligent Aunt Lan said quite proudly, "I started cleaning as soon as the guests left. The front yard has already been swept once. Does miss think it's not clean enough? If so, I'll go over it again."

Aunt Lan was without a doubt, the epitome of hard work. Dan Fei had hired her because of this diligence. But today, she'd worked too quickly and wrecked Dan Fei's affairs.

Dan Fei didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "Did you see a pill bottle about this size?"

"Pill bottle? What's that?" Aunt Lan was completely bewildered. A pill bottle was too high class an item for a cleaner like her, so she'd never heard of it.

"Just a small bottle with something inside."

Aunt Lan slapped her thigh, "Oh, I think I picked up something like that. I threw it into the trash pile. Miss, was it something useful?"

Dan Fei shot out like an arrow when she heard the words “trash pile”.

Aunt Lan stared off into space for a good while, completely befuddled.

Dan Fei was pinching her nose next to the trash pit, a look of uncomfortable awkwardness displayed on her charming face as she stood next to piles of garbage.

But, when she thought of the fact that Elder Ning had regained the amazing youthful looks from twenty years ago, Dan Fei felt a surge of unknown courage.

She rolled up her sleeves, revealing a pair of jade white arms that were like spring onions, endured the stench and started rifling through the trash.

A tremendous beauty that shook the noble world was going through the trash.

This scene seemed jarring to anyone who might see it. It was a good thing that this was on private property in the Tutor Manor, so there was no worry that anyone would see it.

“Found it, this is it!” Dan Fei suddenly cried out on top of the trash heaps, joyful delight radiating from her eyes.

A pair of jade hands covered in the sludge of trash was holding the pill bottle as the person in question was smiling foolishly.

It was a good thing that the pill bottle was sealed tightly and there were no worries about the pill medicine inside being contaminated.

Just as Dan Fei was transported with joy, Aunt Lan's exclamation resounded from behind, "Ah, miss, what are you doing? There's dog poop in that trash pile, you..."

Dan Fei was in a complete disarray at that moment. Someone had seen this embarrassing moment!

Sludge dotted her face and head, and her arms were covered with even more filth.

"Aunt Lan, don't tell anyone about what happened today!" Dan Fei didn't actually know how to be a mean person, but she tried her best to maintain a stern face.

As easy going as her demeanor was, she didn't wish for her ladylike image to be destroyed in a day.

Aunt Lan was unable to make sense of anything when she saw Miss Dan Fei, who usually liked to stay pretty, act so out of the ordinary today and go through the trash!

Was this the Miss Dan Fei who was slightly obsessively fastidious

about cleanliness?

After she thoroughly washed herself all over three times, threw away her previously luxurious outfit and changed into new clothes, Dan Fei was like a new person. She grasped the pill bottle like she was hugging a jar of preserves, feeling quite sweet and content.

Women loved to be beautiful, and the butcher's knife of old age was a beautiful person's natural enemy.

Dan Fei actually wasn't that old, she was only twenty years old or so. Not to mention she was a natural-born beauty and knew how to take care of herself, so she appeared rather young all around.

However, the psychological impact from Elder Ning's changes were simply too great.

Elder Ning was a woman around forty years old!

But, the fact that she'd reverted back to eighteen in the span of a moment as a blow that was simply too much for Dan Fei to bear.

Although Dan Fei was only twenty some years old right now, women were most afraid of the butcher's knife that was old age, and were most afraid of growing old.

Come to think of, although she was only twenty some years old now, but she was only ten or so years away from being forty.

Ten years would pass by in a hurry. Even a girl like Dan Fei would sometimes think how cruel the fragility of beauty was. She couldn't help but be afraid sometimes.

Therefore, when she heard the name "Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill", how could she not be agitated?

Elder Ning had regained her looks from twenty years ago immediately after taking the pill. The feeling of regaining one's youth and the allure of sustained beauty was something that even Dan Fei found it hard to resist.

She suddenly remembered what Jiang Chen had shoved into her hand when she left — wasn't that the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill?

No wonder Dan Fei had hurriedly left back then.

"Jiang Chen, if this Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill is real, then I may grudgingly forgive you for what happened previously!"

Dan Fei lay on her bed and propped her feet up on a chair, thinking back to the matters that had occurred today.

"Eternal youth and looks that last as long as the heavens? That fellow spoke frivolously but seemed to allude to the effects of the Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill. Can it be that this pill has something to do with him?"

When Dan Fei's thoughts traveled here, she suddenly sat up. A trace of deep contemplation was displayed on her beautiful face.

"The secrets of the Phoenix-Dragon, the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine... there are a thousand tricks up this Jiang Chen's sleeve. It isn't impossible to say that this Four Seasons Eternal Spring Pill has something to do with him, is it?"

Dan Fei lightly bit her red lips as a few patches of red flew onto her mesmerizing face.

...

When Jiang Chen returned home, he saw the Qiao brothers completely naked, kneeling in the front yard and bearing rods on their backs.

When they saw Jiang Chen return, their heads drooped almost to the crotch of their trousers.

"Young master." Xue Tong felt a bit awkward seeing Jiang Chen enter and walked up in greeting.

"What's this? Bearing the rod in punishment?" Jiang Chen said with a shadow of a smile.

"Young master, these fellows wouldn't get up no matter what I

say. They said that if I didn't beat them, they'll kneel until they die." Xue Tong was rather resigned.

Although he was the captain of the eight personal guards, he couldn't really bear to lay a hand on his own brothers.

"Xue Tong, stop hemming and hawing like a woman, alright? Why won't you dare make a move when we're the ones not afraid of pain?" Qiao Shan's ornery temper came to the fore.

Jiang Chen walked up bad-temperedly and stomped on both of their butts, sending their faces kissing the ground. "Both of you, get up and stop looking like fools."

"No." The two brother had tempers like mules. "It was our fault this time. If you don't hit us, we'll hit ourselves!"

"Number two, you hit me first. We'll take turns until we can't move anymore." Qiao Shan called out.

These two brothers were men of their word as they really picked up the rods and started brutally beating each other.

"Putting on just the right amount of show will be fine. It must be that rogue Qiao Baishi who taught you guys this trick, wasn't it? How would you two sillies have this level of intelligence?"

Qiao Shan and Qiao Chuan had really been getting into things but they froze after hearing those words. Indeed, it had been their

uncle Qiao Baishi who'd taught them this.

"Alright, you guys likely encountered your fair share of hardships in the Black Dungeons, and you've also beaten yourself appropriately. I didn't say I was going to do anything to you." Jiang Chen wasn't a harsh person. At the end of the day, the mistakes that his men had committed weren't a big deal.

"But, we broke the rules and flew into the capital."

"And, in order to save us, the young master gave up a chance to hail Tutor Ye as master."

Jiang Chen smiled when he heard those words, "Tian Shao must've blabbed on the way back?"

The two brothers were flabbergasted as they felt that they had also accidentally sold out Tian Shao. They hastily shook their heads, "No no, we discovered that ourselves."

Jiang Chen didn't know whether to laugh or to cry when looking at these two sillies. "The rule of not being able to fly in the capital is a trashy rule. I'll think of a way to register our Goldwing Swordbirds. As long as we have flight plates, we can fly as we wish."

"Both of you hurry up and go dress your wounds. The young master isn't pursuing this matter, so stop being so dramatic." Xue Tong said as he looked at the Qiao brothers.

The two brothers finally left when they saw that Jiang Chen really didn't seem to want to pursue this matter any further.

"Not bad, Xue Tong. You're looking more and more comfortable in your role as captain. I see that your training seems to have reached the peak of nine meridians true qi. You're a hair length away from becoming a true qi master?"

Xue Tong's speed in training was also quite fast. Although he had received aid from Jiang Chen, Xue Tong did indeed possess high potential to begin with.

The other personal guards were all still at eight meridians true qi. Xue Tong was nearing a breakthrough in the advanced realm of true qi and was already half a foot in the true qi master realm of ten meridians true qi.

"I gave you Xue Sha's bow last time. Come here and I'll pass onto you a few bow and arrow techniques to enhance your fighting abilities."

Jiang Chen had Xue Tong follow him into the secret chamber and verbally passed on a few bow and arrow techniques to him. He also gave to Xue Tong the foundations of God's Eye and Ear of the Zephyr.

"These two secret arts are exceedingly important in training your vision and hearing. If you complement your techniques with these two arts, you will have a great future in the path of the bow and

arrow.”

Xue Tong was touched as his lips trembled slightly. “Brother, you’re my great savior. Without you, I’d likely still be toiling away in the Yinglan Tribe of the Jiang Han territory.”

Xue Tong had lost his parents since he was small and had always lived under someone else’s roof, eking out a living for himself in the Yinglan Tribe.

The chief of the Yinglan Tribe was Jiang Chen’s uncle, and thus Xue Tong’s uncle.

“That’s all in the past. Even in that kind of environment, you still constantly strived to better yourself. You were bound to improve your circumstances sooner or later.”

Jiang Chen patted Xue Tong’s shoulder as he suddenly lost his train of thought. Then, as he looked carefully into Xue Tong’s eyes, a weird notion popped into his mind.

“Xue Tong, have you ever met your parents?” Jiang Chen suddenly asked.

“My parents died on a trial in the outside world when I was six.”

“Then... do you think that your mother, who was my aunt, looked similar to uncle?”

Xue Tong tried hard to think back and nodded, “In my memories, the features of my mother and uncle were indeed roughly similar. About sixty or seventy percent so.”

Jiang Chen nodded and smiled, “Alright, train well. I’ve got two Rare Jade Fruits here. When you become a true qi master and stabilize your training at ten meridians true qi, you can eat one of these fruits. It will unconditionally raise your realm by one level, directly elevating you to eleven meridians true qi.”

“What?”

Jiang Chen had given one of his Rare Jade Fruits to his father, with two remaining. Now, he rewarded Xue Tong with one, with one left. He planned on awarding the last fruit to whoever broke through to true qi master first amongst the personal guards.

“Remember, you only need to take one of the Rare Jade Fruit. Taking more will have no effect. Of the remaining one, give it to whoever amongst the personal guard who ascends to true qi master first. I’ll give them both to you for safekeeping now.”

Chapter 183: The Future Of Younger Cousin Jiang Yu

Having just sent the overjoyed Xue Tong on his way, Jiang Chen walked into the inner courtyard. He'd arrived in the capital for so many days now, but it had been a while since he last had a good chat with his father, Jiang Feng.

"Chen'er, I heard that you just participated in the birthday banquet of the spirit king protector of this kingdom?" Jiang Feng asked when he saw Jiang Chen in such a good mood.

"Yes. Have you also been keeping tabs on this, father?"

"Haha, I naturally pay attention to matters like these. This is the spirit king protector of the kingdom! Ai, when will I, Jiang Feng, reach such a realm in my training?" Jiang Feng asked with a look of admiration on his face.

"Nothing is impossible on the path of martial dao." Jiang Chen smiled. He hadn't discovered before that his father was such a martial dao-holic.

It made sense when he thought about it. Jiang Chen had been such a useless fop before. As the Duke of Jiang Han, Jiang Feng was in charge of everything, no matter how big or small. He had to take on both roles of father and mother, as well as overlook all sorts of affairs. What time would he have left to train?

Now that he wasn't the Duke of Jiang Han and was just an ordinary person, his level of training had advanced by leaps and bounds. He was now a true qi master at the peak of eleven meridians true qi.

Upon seeing his father so mesmerized by martial dao, Jiang Chen really wanted to offer a Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill to his father.

But as his thoughts continued down this path, he restrained this impulse. He'd never used this pill before and there was no rush.

It wouldn't be too late to offer the pill to his father after he'd personally tried it and experienced its effects. The difference of a few days wouldn't mean much.

Jiang Chen had already made his preparations on his way back from the Tutor Manor. He planned on going into closed door cultivation and taking the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill, beginning the process of transmuting true qi to spirit, comprehending the spirit realm and shaping his spirit ocean.

The requisite time could be short, or it could be long. Jiang Chen wasn't sure either.

"Oh right, rather, there's something I suddenly want to ask you." Jiang Chen remembered the odd thing that had happened regarding Xue Tong just now and opened his mouth to ask a question.

“What odd thing?”

“I was speaking with Xue Tong just now and suddenly felt that his bloodline didn’t seem to have that familiar bloodline resonance with mine. Something seems a little off.”

“What’s wrong?” Jiang Feng’s expression was a bit unnatural.

“If Xue Tong’s mother is my mother’s sister, born of the same parents, then we should share a similar bloodline and there should be some resonance between us.”

“Oh. Maybe something went wrong with your perception. He’s your aunt’s brother, of that there is no doubt.” Jiang Feng chuckled. “Alright, Chen’er, your mother passed away more than ten years ago, let’s not talk of these saddening matters anymore. Your third uncle and Xiaoyu have come with us to the Skylaurel Kingdom and are rather lonely. Go visit with them if you have nothing occupying your time.”

Jiang Feng didn’t seem to speak more on this matter and changed the topic.

Jiang Chen felt that this was a bit odd, but wasn’t able to continue asking when he saw his father act in this way.

“Alright, I’ll go check in on them. Take care, father.”

Jiang Chen left Jiang Feng’s room and went to visit third uncle

Jiang Tong's. He had a good conversation with his younger cousin Jiang Yu.

"Third uncle, I feel that Xiaoyu has some potential in the area of networking and relationships. He's not bad at business either. How about I see if I can introduce him to the Myriad Treasures Palace as a disciple or something if the opportunity arises?"

What father under the heavens wouldn't think of his son? When he heard Jiang Chen say this, Jiang Tong was overjoyed, "Chen'er, it won't do for Xiaoyu to sit idly everyday either. It would be wonderful if he could go to the Myriad Treasures Palace!"

"Alright, I'll bring the matter up to Feng Yan when he visits next."

Speaking of the devil, just as Jiang Chen was chatting with Jiang Tong and his son, someone from outside came in to report that the vice administrator of the Myriad Treasures Palace, Feng Yan, had come for a visit.

"Come, Xiaoyu, let's go receive Feng Yan together." Jiang Chen tugged Jiang Yu outside.

Feng Yan had been in a great mood lately. He was riding on the crest of the wave of success, having been promoted and earning great sums of money. He felt that everything in his life was very nice, and that the sun was so brilliant everyday.

He also knew that the person who had brought him all this was Jiang Chen.

Feng Yan cared a great deal about this wonderful herald of fortune. He came to visit almost everyday, in hopes of further increasing the depth of his relationship with Jiang Chen.

“Young master Chen, you’ve become the talk of the capital in the days that I haven’t seen you! Ai, some people are born to be the main character. Young master Chen is undoubtedly one of those people. This makes me, Feng Yan, quite envious.”

“Brother Feng, you’re not doing too badly these days either.” Jiang Chen laughed heartily.

“Heh heh, my little bit of accomplishment is due to the gracious person known as young master Chen.” Feng Yan’s posture was quite prim and proper. He didn’t dare call Jiang Chen brother or anything like that, but rather very respectfully called Jiang Chen, young master Chen.

This was both respectful and intimate.

“Oh right, young master Chen, I’ve heard that you used a jug of Nine Magnificence Dew Wine to win the place of the best gift on Tutor Ye’s birthday banquet.”

“It certainly seems that nothing can be hidden in the capital. How long has it been since I’ve gotten home?” Jiang Chen smiled

ruefully.

“The capital has always been a place of where the winds and clouds intersect. All news travel the fastest in the capital. How about it, young master Chen? Are you interested in auctioning off a jug of the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine at the Myriad Treasures Palace? If our Myriad Treasures Palace can represent this wine, we will surely create a win-win situation.”

Jiang Chen was a bit tempted upon hearing Feng Yan’s words. He looked at Jiang Yu by his side and had an idea. He nodded, “I gifted the spirit degree Nine Magnificence Dew Wine to vice head Shi and Tutor Ye. The ingredients needed to brew this wine cost a slight bit. This wine is also unsuitable for widespread production. If it spreads throughout the market, vice head Shi may not be happy.”

Feng Yan thought that those words made a lot of sense when he pondered them more deeply. Vice head Shi was someone who loved wine. If any random person off the street could purchase the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine with money, then how could this wine still count as a precious wine?

“Here, I have a recipe for a common degree Nine Magnificence Dew Wine. Its level is lower, but it’s still absolutely a peerless brew. This can be introduced into the marketplace.”

“Oh? Such a thing like this exists? Young Chen, this means that we really do have the foundations for a partnership.” Feng Yan’s eyes also lit up.

“Mm, I plan on placing my younger cousin Jiang Yu in charge of this matter. Feng Yan, what do you think about me using the recipe of this wine to buy shares and obtain a place for my younger cousin in the Myriad Treasures Palace?”

Feng Yan started, and immediately smiled, “There would be nothing better. It’s difficult for people to enter the Myriad Treasures Palace, but there will certainly be no problem for young master Chen’s brother. I’ll go report to vice head Shi and I believe that he will absolutely not let you down.”

Feng Yan was a man of action and immediately took his leave to go back and discuss with Shi Xiaoyao.

“Xiaoyu, I’ve paved the way for you. You’re on your own once you enter the Myriad Treasures Palace.”

Jiang Yu was greatly appreciative, “Brother, I won’t let you down.”

After roughly two hours, Feng Yan rushed back with great enthusiasm.

“Young master Chen, the vice head was quite straightforward and generous. He gave Jiang Yu the title of a disciple of first rank. That’s only a level away from my rank of vice administrator.”

The disciples of the Myriad Treasures Palace all started as an intern disciple, before rising to a disciple of the ninth rank, eighth

rank... all the way up until they reached first rank.

A disciple of the first rank was the highest level of existence amongst the disciples. Continuing upwards would be the middle management positions of vice administrator, administrator, senior administrator.

“Vice head Shi also said that as long as younger brother Jiang Yu performs exemplarily within the Palace, he won’t hesitate to make an exception and mentor him.” Feng Yan smiled.

Jiang Chen could feel Shi Xiaoyao’s sincerity. “Feng Yan, go back for now. I will have Jiang Yu bring the recipe for the wine tomorrow and negotiate with you guys. I won’t inquire about the details at all; it will be strictly up to Jiang Yu.”

Feng Yan smiled, “With young master Chen present, we wouldn’t dare mistreat younger brother Jiang Yu. Haha, then I’ll go back first and await younger brother Jiang Yu’s visit tomorrow.”

It could be seen that Feng Yan was quite proactive about this matter and really wanted it to succeed. If he saw this matter through, then he would undoubtedly have made a great accomplishment.

For one, it went without saying that even a common degree Nine Magnificence Dew Wine would be a hugely profitable transaction. They would also not only absorb Jiang Yu into the Myriad Treasures Palace but also further enhance their relationship with Jiang Chen at the same time.

“Xiaoyu, I’m giving you the recipe for the common degree of the Nine Magnificence Dew Wine now. Tonight, think about how you want to handle the talks. Don’t be too accommodating and lose your bottom line. Don’t be short-sighted either and only have money in sight, do you understand?”

“Brother, I will have my boundaries.” A light that itched to see action sparkled in Jiang Yu’s eyes.

Jiang Chen wrote down the recipe of the common degree wine, spoke a few more encouraging words before sending Jiang Yu on his way.

He then called for his men, left some instructions and announced that he was going into closed door cultivation.

Jiang Chen didn’t impart to the outside world the significance of this time’s closed door cultivation.

Only he knew that he was planning on officially taking the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill and preparing his assault on the spirit realm.

The deficiencies of his strength still left his hands and feet tied many times.

Some matters wouldn’t have be that difficult at all if he was strong enough. The feud with the Northern Palace for instance. If

he'd been strong enough, he could've rolled right over them and slaughtered all the robbers. None of the subsequent troubles would've cropped up.

Jiang Chen had learned his lesson and desired to increase his strength.

With a clatter, he poured out several Five Dragons Opening Heaven Pills.

He closed his eyes and started using Boulder's Heart to start sensing these pills. When his mental strength locked onto one of them, a magical connection caused Jiang Chen to open his eyes.

"That's the one!"

Jiang Chen put away the other pills. For a pill like this, taking just one was enough. There was no benefit in taking more.

Jiang Chen sat down cross-legged and entered a meditative state. He went over the information regarding the Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill in his mind once again.

He opened his mouth and swallowed this pill.

The strong medicinal effects immediately spread throughout this body.

There was as if there was a surging ocean within his body, five fierce dragons overturned the tumultuous waves and ran wildly rampant.

“Inducing the qi to become dragons, forging the body, transmuting true qi into spirit qi, coalescing the spirit ocean…”

All sorts of familiar notions flashed through Jiang Chen’s head as step by step, he began to manipulate the five surges of strength that were running around like horses that had slipped their halters.

The Five Dragons Opening Heavens Pill had absorbed the essence of the five elements. The pill that it formed encompassed all five attributes. The five forces actually formed an equilibrium with the entire heaven and world.

For a martial dao practitioner, the physical body was a small world. If a practitioner were to improve or break through to become a stronger practitioner, he would have to continuously expand and improve the small world within his body.

Similar to the greater world, attributes of the five elements were the foundation that formed the small world of the physical body. Jiang Chen’s pill was to cleave into existence a balanced, small world.

In reality, every practitioner trained the five qi within their bodies in the true qi realm. The so-called five qi corresponded to the five organs.

These five qi also corresponded to the five elements.

Except, many practitioners who ascended to the spirit realm were hemmed in by various restrictions, and their foundations weren't solid enough with regards to the five elements.

This was why some could go far when transmuting true qi to spirit, while others always dithered around the beginning of the spirit realm.