

## Chaotic 281

### Chapter 281: Legend of the Saint of the Zither, the Heavenly Enchantress

Following that, Jian Chen rarely ventured out of his room and continued to cultivate. He could rarely be seen by the other members and would only occasionally spar with Qin Xiao.

He was always constantly reminded of Elder Wu who hadn't come to bother him any more. It was almost as if he had disappeared from the Tianqin clan and was no longer seen by Jian Chen.

This pattern continued for a month. With the assistance of the monster cores, Jian Chen was able to make a breakthrough to become a Peak Great Saint Master.

After, Jian Chen had spent another large amount of time to stabilize his newfound power and to eliminate any of the hidden dangers brought by the monster cores in his body. After all that was done, he continued to cultivate with the monster cores once more.

Soon, another half month had past. News of the Multicolored Stone had already lost its interest in the Tianqin clan since everyone had already forgotten about it.

Similarly, Ming Dong hadn't been idle and followed Jian Chen's lead by shutting himself in his room and earnestly cultivated his own strength with the help of a monster core.

Ten days later in the morning, Jian Chen finally opened the door to his room and walked out.

Looking at the nearby room of Ming Dong, Jian Chen could detect even behind the closed door a small and obscure fluctuation of energy; Ming Dong was still cultivating at this moment.

Slowly taking in a deep breath of the morning air, Jian Chen muttered, "We've been here for two months now. Not too long from now, the Tianqin clan will surely send men to Mercenary City." Looking at Qin Xiao's residence some distance away, Jian Chen hesitated for a moment before finally deciding to walk over. The definite time for when this would happen needed to be verified by Qin Xiao.

Just as Jian Chen was about to enter the isolated compound of Qin Xiao, a guard standing by the gates blocked him.

"Fellow brother, is Qin Xiao currently inside?" Jian Chen cupped his hands respectfully.

"The young lord went to the training grounds earlier, he is no longer inside his compound." The guard replied.

Afterward, Jian Chen headed for the training grounds. After these past few weeks, Jian Chen had traveled with Qin Xiao to the training grounds multiple times, so he was familiar with the way to the area.

Just as Jian Chen was crossing by a garden, the sweet melody of a zither being played could be heard in a nearby pavilion. Almost as if the song had an enchanting ability, the moment anyone heard this melody would feel as if their heart strings were resonating along with the zither.

TL Note: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zither>

The moment Jian Chen heard the sound of the zither, he unconsciously stopped walking and turned to look toward the source. He could only see a woman wearing a white colored pao robe with her back facing Jian Chen in the pavilion. Her jade white fingers could be seen dancing along the strings of the zither as the sweet melodies rang throughout the area.

Walking toward the pavilion, Jian Chen quickly approached the back of the white robed woman. Her black hair hung behind her shoulders down to her back. A white veil covered her face so that Jian Chen couldn't see her appearance.

The part of the woman's face that could be seen could only be described as quite heavenly, almost devastatingly beautiful.

The woman playing the zither was the second sister of the Tianqin clan.

In a flash, she finished playing the ballad and turned to look at Jian Chen. "Does my lord enjoy the sound of the zither as well?" The second sister was fairly nice sounding, capable of being as enchanting as a skylark so that anyone who listened to her would be enchanted. If one wasn't strong enough, then they would go mad after hearing her voice.

With a light smile, Jian Chen replied, "The second sister's ability with the zither is quite amazing. Although I do not understand how the zither works, I still found myself attracted by its song."

Smiling sweetly, she spoke with a gentle voice, "I thank the lord for his praise."

Jian Chen continued to smile at her, "Second sister's skill at the zither has already reached the realm of perfection and befits the song of an immortal. This one truly admires your skill, and couldn't help feel my own heart be moved."

"I am quite fond of the four arts and studied them studiously when I was young, but I am still far from the realm of perfection, while the sounds of my zither are quite beautiful, it was mostly because of the zither itself." The second sister's delicate white finger stroked a string on the zither as she muttered, "Although this zither is a copy of the Zither of the Demonic Cry, it uses a variety of expensive looking ingredients. Even then, the inside of this holy zither contains the Saint Force of the Heavenly Enchantress, so the music that comes out of this instrument can move people's soul so much that it could absorb it.

"Saint of the Zither? Heavenly Enchantress?" Jian Chen asked with confusion, "Second sister, just who is this Heavenly Enchantress of the Zither supposed to be?"

The second sister of the Tianqin clan looked at Jian Chen with a strange look before relief filled her face. A look of worship was on her face as she spoke, "Since lord Jian Chen came from a kingdom far away from here, it is natural to not know about the Saint of the Zither, the Heavenly Enchantress. In this kingdom, she is a well known figure who wields the Zither of the Demonic Cry to a terrifying degree that even the experts of the continent will be affected. The Heavenly Enchantress uses her zither as her weapon in a way that cannot be defended against. Not many can last long under her zither, and when she uses it, she can cause those affected by the music to become lost in an illusion. Her zither has the ability to erase one's spirit and even the body so that they become an incorporeal being after death."

“The Heavenly Enchantress’ ability with the zither has already reached the realm of utmost perfection. When she plays her zither, then even the weather can change. Legend has it that ten years ago, she alone was able to prevent the war between two kingdoms by playing her zither on the battlefield. In a short moment, she had caused hundreds of thousand soldiers to fall into a deep sleep that they could only wake up from after three days and three nights.”

The second sister truly did worship this Heavenly Enchantress. The very moment she started to talk about the Heavenly Enchantress, her eyes began to light up with a strange light.

“A single ballad from the zither was enough cause two entire armies to fall asleep for three days and three nights, just how terrifying is this Heavenly Enchantress?” Jian Chen spoke with uncontained shock.

“The Heavenly Enchantress’ ability to play the zither can be said to be unparalleled and her songs fit to be called the songs of the immortals.” The second sister spoke. Since she loved the four arts, she had long since set the Heavenly Enchantress as her goal.

“Ah, the Heavenly Enchantress is indeed magical. If given the chance, this one would love to be familiarized with her music.” Jian Chen spoke.

“The Heavenly Enchantress is already a saint, she is not an easy to see person.” The second sister looked at Jian Chen with a curious look, “Lord Jian Chen, I’ve heard that you wish to join the Gathering of the Mercenaries?”

Jian Chen sat down on a nearby stool and replied, “Correct! I have decided to participate in the next Gathering of the Mercenaries.”

“I’ve never seen the Gathering of the Mercenaries myself, but I have heard that it is quite perilous. Rumors have it that the chances of a man surviving is about ten percent. Even an Earth Saint Master is not guaranteed to survive there. Lord Jian Chen must take care of himself.” The second sister spoke gently.

“I thank the second sister for her advice, I will take care of myself.”

After talking with the second sister for a while, Jian Chen left the pavilion to continue toward the training grounds.

The training grounds of the Tianqin clan was an elevated platform that was two hundred feet long. The moment Jian Chen arrived, he could see Qin Xiao just jumping off from the platform while five guard captains were all laying on the ground with a pale faces.

Taking a towel offered to him by a guard, Qin Xiao wiped off his sweat before laughing at Jian Chen, “Brother Jian Chen, what brings you here, did you want to spar with me?”

Jian Chen smiled back at Qin Xiao before replying, “Brother Qin Xiao, I just wished to come and ask when we will be heading for Mercenary City.”

“Don’t worry! There is no rush! Right there is still three months until the Gathering of the Mercenaries. We will wait for until half a month before setting off.” Qin Xiao said.

Hearing this, Jian Chen had some hesitation, “Brother Qin Xiao. I have to leave for a small moment of time, but I will be back by then.”

Jian Chen's strength had already reached the Peak Great Saint Master realm, and the Gathering of the Mercenaries will surely have plenty of talented geniuses at the Earth Saint Master level. So before the Gathering of the Mercenaries, Jian Chen wanted to cultivate until he could make the breakthrough to become an Earth Saint Master. This way, the Gathering of the Mercenaries would be an even easier event to win.

Qin Xiao didn't ask what Jian Chen was up to, instead, he had only warned Jian Chen not to miss the date. Thus, Jian Chen left the Tianqin clan by himself on a magical beast out of Walaurent City.

"Jian Chen has left the clan compound possibly to head to a faraway place. Go and report that to Elder Wu." A guard standing by the gates spoke to the other as they watched Jian Chen leave the compound.

Within a separated courtyard, Elder Wu and another man around the same age as him sat together at the same table.

"Elder Wu, your loyal servant has some news to report!" Suddenly, a guard ran into the courtyard straight toward Elder Wu.

Hearing this, the elder's eyes narrowed as he looked at the guard with an annoyed look, "Don't you know that it is prohibited to disturb me as I play chess with another?" The elder spoke with anger.

"Elder Wu, this was a command that you personally instructed for us to do of the highest priority. No matter what time, you said for us to report it straight away." The guard spoke.

At this, the elder's heart skipped a beat as he called out to the guard, "You may come in.", allowing the guard to enter into the inner courtyard.

"Old man Wu, just what could be so important? Could it not wait for our chess game to be finished?" The elder by Elder Wu's side asked.

"Elder He, I have some pressing matters to attend to, the chess game will have to wait." Elder Wu spoke without turning to look as he followed the guard out.

As he exited the courtyard, Elder Wu turned to look at the guard. Without even needing to be asked, the guard immediately replied, "Elder Wu, Jian Chen just left the compounds headed toward the outside city area."

Elder Wu's eyes began to shine, "What direction is he headed in?"

"The eastern city gates."

## Chapter 282: Attacking an Earth Saint Master

Jian Chen rode his Class 3 Magical Beast out of Walaurent City and off into the direction of the sun to the east.

He had long since seen the neighboring area from within Walaurent City. So a hundred kilometers away, Jian Chen's goal was the little mountain range there. Jian Chen had already read up everything he needed to know from both the Changyang Manor and Kargath Academy about the process of becoming an Earth Saint Master, so the rules behind the process had already been memorized by him.

Although only ten percent of people were able to make the breakthrough to become Earth Saint Masters, Jian Chen was confident in himself. He was confident that the threshold barrier that prevented most people would not work against him.

If the very first obstacle on the road of cultivation were to scare him away from trying to become an Earth Saint Master, then how would he be able to make it past the harder bottlenecks in the future?

Walking through the plains near Walaurent City, Jian Chen arrived at a small forest. His Class 3 Magical Beast mount continued to trot deep into the forest with a whistling sound and a pace that many people would find hard to keep track of.

Just as Jian Chen entered the forest, a strong amount of Sword Qi suddenly flew through the dense foliage and shot toward Jian Chen.

Immediately flying off his mount, Jian Chen dodged to the side.

A wretched sound could be heard as the Class 3 Magical Beast Mount was split in two. A river of blood flew through the air and stained the surrounding grass with it.

A strong amount of Saint Force gathered within Jian Chen's right hand, quickly forming the silver blade of the Light Wind Sword. Emitting some Sword Qi of his own, he sent it flying back in the direction from the attack.

The foliage in that area shook as the Sword Qi disappeared inside. A gray robed man came walking out from the bushes before an earth shattering amount of pressure suddenly descended upon Jian Chen. In the next moment, the sword in the man's hand suddenly came flying down toward Jian Chen.

"An Earth Saint Master!" Jian Chen thought to himself before turning serious. Without hesitation, an azure and violet glow began to fill up his Light Wind Sword before he stabbed outward with it.

"Ding!"

The two Saint Weapons made contact in midair with sparks flying everywhere. Because of the azure and violet Sword Qi, the Light Wind Sword was able to cause a nick to appear on the other man's sword.

With a muffled shout, the gray robed man flew backward. Since his Saint Weapon had been damaged, he had received a portion of the damage too.

Even Jian Chen stumbled back a few steps. Right now his strength was at the Peak Great Saint Master realm, while this was a big improvement compared to before, he was still weaker than an Earth Saint Master.

Tilting his head up, Jian Chen saw the appearance of the gray robed elder. With a cold glare, he spoke, "Elder Wu, so it's you."

The one who had suddenly attacked him was Elder Wu from the Tianqin clan.

Elder Wu was looking at the damage done on his Saint Weapon with a look of utter disbelief and shock.

"How is this possible, just with your strength, how did you manage to damage my Saint Weapon?" Elder Wu was flabbergasted, his eyes continued to look at both Jian Chen and his damaged sword.

Jian Chen laughed when he saw the shock on the elder's face, "Elder Wu, it seems that you are not willing to forget about the Multicolored Stone."

Upon hearing the stone's name, the elder's face suddenly regained a clear expression and replaced the shocked look he had. "Correct, the Multicolored Stone is a Supreme Treasure with a terrifying amount of power it seems. The sole reason you could damage my Saint Weapon as to be the work of the Multicolored Stone."

With that reasoning, the elder's face grew calm once more as he stared darkly at Jian Chen, "Jian Chen, I am giving you two paths to choose from. The first path, I will pardon your life if you give me the Multicolored Stone. The second path, I will kill you and take the stone from your dead corpse. Choose wisely now."

Jian Chen laughed coldly, he didn't feel inclined at all to answer the elder's options. Taunting Elder Wu, Jian Chen asked his own question, "Elder Wu, do you really think you can beat me?"

With a snort, the elder responded, "Jian Chen, don't even try to think that with a Supreme Treasure you will be able to defeat an Earth Saint Master like me. Earth Saint Masters and Great Saint Masters have a difference between them as wide as the heavens themselves. There is no way for the Supreme Treasure to make up for that." However, even as he spoke, there was a hint of fear in the deepest parts of the elder's eyes.

"What?" Jian Chen sneered, "Then today I'll show you how an Earth Saint Master can be killed by a Great Saint Master. This barrier dividing the two realms will be broken by me!" With that, Jian Chen immediately charged at Elder Wu.

"Hmph, how arrogant. I doubt that as a Third Cycle Earth Saint Master, I will not be able to tame you." Elder Wu gave an explosive shout before the Saint Force within his Saint Weapon exploded with power and flew toward Jian Chen.

Because of the azure and violet Sword Qi, Jian Chen's sword had already been strengthened several times over so Jian Chen did not fear Elder Wu's sword.

The elder knew that Jian Chen's Saint Weapon was quite dangerous, so he tried to avoid a clash of blades. His giant sword had then suddenly diverted paths and avoided hitting Jian Chen's Light Wind Sword before stabbing toward his chest.

With a snort, Jian Chen maneuvered his sword so that it suddenly changed directions as if it were a viper. In mid air, the sword diverted paths and chased after Elder Wu's sword.

Jian Chen knew all too clearly that an Earth Saint Master was not that easy to kill. Even if Elder Wu were to dodge his sword, then the Light Wind Sword would strike against his Saint Weapon. In that case, then it would bring a catastrophic amount of damage.

Jian Chen's sword was fast enough that Elder Wu wasn't able to dodge it, so in the end, the tip of the Light Wind Sword managed to strike against the broad side of the elder's Saint Weapon.

"Ding!"

With a metallic clank, the Light Wind Sword instantly pierced through the broadsword. With this damage to both the elder's Saint Weapon and his health, the elder's face instantly went pale as he spat out a mouth full of blood.

Immediately pulling back, Elder Wu flashed away from Jian Chen as he looked at Jian Chen with dread, "I didn't think that a Supreme Treasure would be so powerful for a barely Great Saint Master to be able to bring about such a threat to an Earth Saint Master!" Although his injuries were quite severe, the elder didn't have any thoughts about retreating. In his heart, he still believed that he had enough strength to steal away the Supreme Treasure from Jian Chen's hands.

Jian Chen's figure disappeared in a blur and left behind only a small trace of himself as he flew towards Elder Wu at breakneck speeds.

Growing even more serious than before, he didn't even have enough time to wipe the blood from his own face as he stood his ground against Jian Chen. After suffering from Jian Chen's hand twice now, Elder Wu was afraid of his sword and the consequences it would bring. Just a single stroke of the sword was enough for him to feel panicked, so this fight was starting to rethink all of his possible choices.

Jian Chen had no hesitation. His Light Wind Sword became a hazy glow of light as it stabbed at Elder Wu. Multiple apparitions of the Light Wind Sword could be seen stabbing at Elder Wu, but he was an expert of defense because of his earth Saint Force, the Saint Force inside of his body had already formed an armor of unbelievable strength. In front of the azure and violet Sword Qi, this defensive armor made of Saint Force was nothing more than a piece of decoration and would do nothing to help with Elder Wu's defenses.

At this moment, Elder Wu wouldn't be able to move fast enough to dodge, so Jian Chen's sword slashed onto his shoulder. Another second passed, the sword immediately moved deeper into his chest area.

"Ah! Feeling the deep pain within his chest, Elder Wu gave a miserable cry. Capitalizing on this opportunity, Jian Chen immediately slashed at the elder's neck with his sword.

A single human head flew through the air as blood came spilling out. Elder Wu had been killed by Jian Chen with regret still filling his eyes.

He would never believe that he would be killed. He was an Earth Saint Master at the Third Cycle and Jian Chen was only a Great Saint Master.

With this, Jian Chen exhaled slowly. Elder Wu had been an Earth Saint Master of the Third Cycle, so the fight had been hard despite the quickness of the battle. His strength was far stronger than the patriarch of the Xia clan.

Walking up to the headless corpse of Elder Wu, Jian Chen knelt down to take his Space Ring. With some hesitation, he finally decided to bury the body of the elder.

Walaurent City was close to the forest, so if the elder's body were to be discovered, then the Tianqin clan would come and investigate. By this point, it would become a huge headache for Jian Chen.

Once Elder Wu's body was properly buried, Jian Chen tidied up the battlefield and hid all of the damage that his fight had caused before finally leaving the area.

Four hours later, Jian Chen arrived at the mountain range. Finally sitting down on a huge rock, he began to calm his heart for a moment. Then, taking out two more Class 4 Monster Cores, Jian Chen began to cultivate.

This mountain range didn't have a single magical beast in sight. Even the wild animals were rare to see along with any humans. Thus, Jian Chen could cultivate in peace.

The energy within the monster cores began to flow into Jian Chen's body as he tried to filter out the berserk element within them. Almost as if by some magical force, the energy began to assimilate into his body and then flowed into the azure and violet Sword Spirits.

As the energy continuously flowed into Jian Chen's dantian for his Light Wind Sword to absorb, the sword began to glow with a stronger light with each passing second.

The procedure to making the breakthrough from a Great Saint Master to an Earth Saint Master had already been documented and memorized by Jian Chen, so he could allow this part of the cultivation to proceed with ease.

Making a breakthrough from a Great Saint Master to an Earth Saint Master was a transformation of quality. A monumental amount of energy was required so that the Saint Weapon would absorb far too much energy than it could contain. Then, the Saint Weapon would explode into multiple fragments that would stay within one's body temporarily. Before the fragments disappeared, a large amount of energy would be needed to refine the fragments once more. The fragments would be reinforced and changed, in the end, they would be combined together once more. The Saint Weapon would be condensed into a new version, thus transforming the Saint Weapon as a whole.

#### Chapter 283: Increase in Strength

While transforming the Saint Weapon looked to be a simple task, in actuality this process was one of extreme difficulty. If one's control was insufficient, then the Saint Weapon fragments would disappear from one's body and turn them into a cripple. In some serious cases, when the Saint Weapon exploded, the amount of energy would be enough for the cultivator to find himself waking up by the yellow river with no life to return to.

This process seemed to be quite easy in terms on paper, but this obstruction had caused many cultivators to be forced to stop before they could make the breakthrough, at the same time, it had also caused many cultivators to lose their lives. As a result, the success rate of a Great Saint Master making the breakthrough to become an Earth Saint Master was ten percent. Each and every single one of those who made the breakthrough were cultivation geniuses who were well known to many.

Jian Chen continued to absorb the energy from within the monster cores at a steady rate. Then at last, the Saint Weapon within his dantian had finally reached a point where it was shaking unstably. The energy pulsating out from his Saint Weapon was so strong that Jian Chen had found it quite hard to control as if an enormous elephant was trying to pull away from him.

A day went by as Jian Chen sat in front of the waterfall. Twenty Class 4 Monster Cores had already been absorbed by him before the Saint Weapon was at its utmost limit on how much energy it could absorb and was on the verge of exploding.



Even Jian Chen's body was reaching its limit. Each energy surge within his body moved in such strong amounts that his entire body began to leak blood from his pores. Even the organs within his body were feeling a strong amount of pressure.

The monster cores within Jian Chen's hand had all of its energy absorbed, so with that, Jian Chen took out a Class 5 Monster Core from his Space Belt.

A Class 5 Monster Core was even stronger in terms of quality and quantity than a Class 4 Monster Core. The moment the energy from the Class 5 Monster Core entered Jian Chen's dantian, his Saint Weapon couldn't handle it anymore and immediately exploded, causing countless of tiny fragments to appear within his dantian.

The very moment the Saint Weapon exploded, an extremely strong amount of energy exploded out from his dantian. Firmly, the energy struck against Jian Chen's organs and even his meridians as if a bomb had gone off within his body.

Jian Chen stifled a groan as he spat out a mouthful of blood. Since his Saint Weapon had exploded, he felt an extreme amount of damage to his body as the repercussion. The amount of pain was so intense that Jian Chen's body felt numb all over. Even his head began to feel dizzy as he teetered on the verge of consciousness.

It was this step that caused many men to die on their path to become an Earth Saint Master.

Biting his lip, Jian Chen resisted the pain to remain awake. He could feel that the energy from when his Saint Weapon had fragmented enter his main bloodstream. Jian Chen's heart clenched as he threw away his hesitation. The thousands of pieces were all closely linked to his spirit, so he could feel each and every single one of them. Immediately absorbing the energy from the Class 5 Monster Core, Jian Chen tried to replenish the energy he had lost.

Jian Chen had already made it past the threshold between life and death. What was next was the most crucial step; the Saint Weapon fragments would only stay within the dantian temporarily. They would not be permanent. The amount of energy that moved around the dantian would disappear at an alarming rate, and if all of the energy were to leave, then the cultivator would become a cripple.

The pure energy from the Class 5 Monster Core flowed into his dantian, once immediately inside, the energy would fill up every single fragment of his Saint Weapon.

Thanks to that energy, not only would the energy within each fragment be replenished, but there was even a surplus of energy that would begin to try and refine the fragments once more. Consequently, the fragments would grow stronger as the quality of the fragment increased.

This step of the process required a monumental amount of energy, and so the extremely strong amount of energy from the Class 5 Monster Core entered Jian Chen's body via his pores and began to gather within his dantian.

In half a day, the Class 5 Monster Core had all of its energy completely absorbed. Quickly, Jian Chen grabbed another two Class 5 Monster Cores from his Space Belt.

Inside his dantian, the Saint Weapon fragments continued to twinkle with a faint light almost as if they were each a tiny star. The amount of energy they absorbed made them resemble more of a black hole instead as they showed no signs of stopping, however, the light grew stronger with each passing second.

The hardships and troubles of making the breakthrough to become an Earth Saint Master were in a far different realm of difficulty than his previous breakthroughs. He had to meticulously control every single step of the way without mistake, or all of his efforts would be for nothing.

Another three days went by, resulting in Jian Chen fully consuming the energy within a dozen Class 5 Monster Cores. Right now each one of the fragments accumulated an enormous sum of energy so that each fragment was absolutely saturated. By now, they had the ability to transform to become like shining gems, making Jian Chen's dantian seem as if it was an ocean of shining stars.

With a single thought, Jian Chen's spirit transformed into thousands of pieces as he began to reforge the fragments of his Saint Weapon. At the same time, the two Class 5 Monster Cores within his hands continued to supply his dantian with a stream of energy. His dantian was like the cauldron and the energy was the fire that allowed for the fragments to be refined and smelted.

"Kacha!"

On Jian Chen's face, a crack could be seen forming before his entire body suddenly gained several cracks. The spread was accelerating extremely quick so that his entire body had cracks all over. In the end, his skin was almost like that of an elderly person before finally dropping away from him.

On the verge of becoming an Earth Saint Master, his own body would also undergo a transformation. An Earth Saint Master was a huge qualitative leap from a Great Saint Master. It would not only make the body stronger, but it would cause the body's skin to be cast away and form anew.

The old skin fell away to reveal Jian Chen's new skin. The new skin was unblemished like an infant's, and there was a strange glow of light flowing around it.

Six hours later, Jian Chen's bodily transformation was complete. His Saint Force had been completely reforged so that the Light Wind Sword once more floated within Jian Chen's dantian as if it had never been broken in the first place. However, the amount of energy it contained was several times stronger than before—a dozen times at the very least. This wasn't a small increase in strength, but rather a huge jump in quality.

If the amount of energy within the Light Wind Sword before was like a vat of water, then the amount of energy now was like an endless ocean.

If the energy before was like a small fire that could burn only paper, then the energy now was a raging inferno that could melt even steel. The two could simply not be compared to each other in a relatable degree.

Jian Chen didn't stop there. The energy continued to splash into his body and enter his bloodstream, organs, meridians, tissue, and even into his dantian once more.

The previous step where the body transformation was for the breakthrough to become an Earth Saint Master. Right now this system of refining his entire body was in accordance to the Azulet Sword Law's "Record of Bodily Refinement" method to increase his strength.

By now Jian Chen's Saint Force was several times stronger than before. It could be said for certain that the moment his body finished being tempered, then he would go through another leap in strength.

#### Chapter 284: The Return

Now at least a dozen times stronger than before, Jian Chen's Saint Force continued to wash over his skin before assimilating into each part of his body.

Jian Chen had completely finished refining his body, but not a single spot of his body had changed physically. If he were to exercise to strengthen his body, then his body would be deformed into a shape he did not want. He would become sturdier and that would completely squash Jian Chen's preferred build. This type of development was not suitable for what Jian Chen needed.

Not a single swordsman should have a stocky build. A sword user must remain thin and slender. This way, it would be more beneficial for the swordsman to be able to swing in any position with the least amount of power or movement. The way the Azulet Sword Laws had recorded the "Record of Bodily Refinement" would best suit a sword user that fights in the same manner as a fencer.

This method not only strengthened the body without changing the shape of it, but it would continue to strengthen the body. As long as the energy is supplied to the inner body, then the entire body would be strengthened as a whole.

A layer of energy continued to flow over Jian Chen's body with a sparkling light. After that transformation, the pure energy harmonized with Jian Chen's body improving his flesh and blood immensely.

The energy from the Class 5 Monster Core would be used in place of his own energy. Strengthening his body required a tremendous amount of energy, since Jian Chen had the monster cores he didn't need to worry at all about using too much energy. The awkward event that had occurred back in the Changyang Mansion would not happen again.

The process of tempering and refining his body required a longer amount of time. After seven days, Jian Chen had absorbed another two dozen Class 5 Monster Cores before finally finishing. By now, he was at the utmost limit, if he wanted to increase his body any more, then he would have to use his Saint Force to transform it.

On top of the giant stone, Jian Chen slowly opened his eyes from his meditative state as he finally returned to the land of reality. His ears trembled as the sounds of the roar of a wild beast could be heard from some distance away.

Feeling the extreme change in quality in his Saint Force, Jian Chen couldn't help but have an extremely happy smile on his face. As of today, he had finally made the breakthrough to become an Earth Saint Master, earning his spot as one of the strongest experts on the continent.

"Right now my body is far stronger than before. At this point, I wager that it is at least a dozen times stronger. At this rate, even a Saint couldn't hope to damage me with his Saint Weapon." Jian Chen muttered as he poked at his own body a look of joy covered his face as he figured out the results.

Extending his hand, a large concentration of Saint Force began to flow toward Jian Chen's arm before quickly forming the Light Wind Sword.

When the Light Wind Sword appeared in Jian Chen's hands, it released an intense light that seemed even sharper than before.

The Light Wind Sword of now did not differ in shape or size. The sword had undergone no physical change other than the increased glow to it. It was almost as if it reflected light as clearly as a mirror could illuminate the area around it.

Suddenly, with a single shake of Jian Chen's hand, the Light Wind Sword began to shake intensely. With a large sound of a sword moving through the air, a bright silver light came out from the Light Wind Sword and instantly cut all of the surrounding pieces of grass that made contact with it into powder.

An intense glare appeared in Jian Chen's eye at that moment as his figure suddenly disappeared into thin air. His body became hard to detect as an ear piercing shriek could be heard. The Light Wind Sword multiplied into a series of mirror images as it filled the air before stabbing outward in every single direction.

His unbelievably fast speed was enough for a large gust of wind to blow into the field. Gradually, the wind picked up in speed before causing some of the loose grass and leaves to fly into the air and swirl around Jian Chen.

"Yin!"

The Light Wind Sword continued to ring with a screeching sound as the various mirror images of the blade continued to stab at the countless floating leaves.

This fast movement continued on for some time before Jian Chen came to a screeching halt. Instantly, the wind that had been created due to his speed began to die down. Because of that, the leaves all lost their upward momentum and began to descend back down to the ground slowly.

If one were to look closely, each and every single one of the leaves would have the character "Sword" etched into it. Each character was of varying sizes, but each one of them had been etched with an exquisite handwriting. Not a single one was sloppily done and each leaf did not have any extraneous damage.

After making the breakthrough to becoming an Earth Saint Master, Jian Chen's sword speed had increased once more. When he was still a Great Saint Master, his sword was fast enough to pressure both Great Saint Masters and even Earth Saint Masters without much trouble. With the azure and violet Sword Qi, he was able to defend himself against Earth Saint Masters. Following his rise to become an Earth Saint Master, not a single Earth Saint Master would be able to hold themselves against him if Jian Chen were to use his azure and violet Sword Qi now.

Looking at the fluttering tree leaves around him, Jian Chen had a look of pure joy on his face. After reabsorbing the Light Wind Sword, he took off his clothes and leaped into the comfortable pool of water right next to him. After bathing himself, he took out a new pair of clothes and dressed up before immediately leaving the place.

Half a day later, Jian Chen returned to Walaurent City to where the Tianqin clan was. Walking through the clan compound gates, he saw Qin Xiao and Ming Dong rush toward him, both of them had already received prior notice of his return.

“Brother Jian Chen, you’ve finally returned! After leaving for a dozen days or so, I was starting to worry. I was even beginning to fear that you wouldn’t return in time to go to the Gathering of the Mercenaries.” Qin Xiao laughed as he approached Jian Chen.

“Jian Chen, how come you didn’t tell me before you left? You just left me here all alone.”

Ming Dong glared at Jian Chen with a grumble as he complained to him.

Jian Chen looked at Ming Dong for a moment before giving a small smile, “Ming Dong, you are quite talented! In such a short amount of time, you’ve already reached the Great Saint Master realm. I had anticipated that you would take a longer amount of time, but you’ve managed to beat my expectations.”

“With the support of your monster cores combined with my free time, I was able to spend the entire time cultivating. Of course my cultivation would progress faster than normal.” Ming Dong spoke with a proud look on his face.

Chapter 285: The Departure

Suddenly, Qin Xiao let out a surprised whistle as he began to look at Jian Chen with a strange look. Walking around him, Qin Xiao inspected Jian Chen for a moment before saying, “Brother Jian Chen, you left the compound for only a dozen days or so, so why is it I feel that you are completely different than before?”

At this, Ming Dong nodded his head in agreement, “And here I thought I was the only one, so even brother Qin Xiao could feel that Jian Chen is quite different.”

Hearing the two men talk, Jian Chen’s heart skipped a beat. If it were just Qin Xiao who said this, then Jian Chen could have played it off as some sort of joke, but even Ming Dong unexpectedly detected a change, the situation was now a bit more serious.

“Could it be that after making a breakthrough to becoming an Earth Saint Master, even these two are able to sense it?” Jian Chen thought to himself.

Just then, Qin Xiao gave a knowing smile as if he realized something. “Brother Jian Chen.” He whispered. “In this short amount of time, could you have gone off somewhere to spend the time with some young girl? I’ve heard that a few men have undergone a great noticeable change after experiencing this.” Qin Xiao laughed as he smiled coyly.

With a dumbfounded look, Jian Chen glared at Qin Xiao with a dirty look, “Qin Xiao, don’t say such nonsense.”

Continuing to laugh, Qin Xiao had a crooked smile on his face, “Brother Jian Chen, you seem quite uncomfortable, could I have struck the truth head on?”

Jian Chen was left speechless. While Qin Xiao was quite honest and tall, Jian Chen didn’t think that he would be such a master with women?

Ming Dong looked at Jian Chen with a serious look, “Jian Chen, I really do sense that something is quite different with you.”

Laughing, Jian Chen said, "Then say it, just where am I different?"

Looking closely at Jian Chen, Ming Dong began to circle around him like Qin Xiao had done before at last shaking his head, "I don't know."

With a smile, Jian Chen said, "That's settled then. On an unrelated note, brother Qin Xiao, has the date for when we set off for Mercenary City been decided?"

With this change in topic, Qin Xiao straightened himself up, "The date has been decided. After three days, our Tianqin clan and several other strong sects within the Zhuya Kingdom will travel to the other kingdom Zhuya Kingdom is allied with to use their Space Gate.

"Oh? The amount of people participating in the Gathering of the Mercenaries is quite a lot." Jian Chen muttered.

"Although there is going to be a hundred people at the least going, only a few dozen of them are actually going to be participating. The rest of them are just bodyguards just in case something goes wrong during the Gathering of the Mercenaries." Qin Xiao said.

After the date had been discussed, Jian Chen and Qin Xiao separated from each other. Leading Ming Dong back, Jian Chen returned to his own room.

Closing the door, Ming Dong grabbed a chair to sit in before looking at Jian Chen with concern. "Jian Chen, it won't be long until the Gathering of the Mercenaries starts. It will be extremely dangerous there and even Earth Saint Masters don't have a good chance to survive there, do you realize this?"

With a faint smile, Jian Chen replied, "Ming Dong, don't worry. If I plan on going, then I naturally understand the risks. Even if I don't make it within the top ranks, protecting my own life won't be much of a problem." Jian Chen was filled with confidence in himself. In the past his strength as a Great Saint Master was enough to be a threat against Earth Saint Masters. Now that he had passed the bottleneck combined with the assistance of the azure and violet Sword Spirits that could destroy Saint Weapons, Earth Saint Masters were no longer a concern for him.

"Very well then, I wish you all the best. The Gathering of the Mercenaries isn't a place I should participate in. Although my strength has reached the Great Saint Master realm, it is still a long time until I am able to qualify for such an event. At the very least, I'll accompany you to Mercenary City." Ming Dong knew that as a Great Saint Master, he was not strong enough to participate. If he did, then he would only be sending himself to his death.

After that, Ming Dong left Jian Chen's room, leaving him all alone to sit on his bed and focus on strengthening himself once more.

Suddenly, a knock on the door could be heard as a white robed middle aged man slowly walked into Jian Chen's room—it was the patriarch of the Tianqin clan.

The moment Jian Chen saw the patriarch, he immediately stood up from his bed and cupped his hands in salute, "I greet the patriarch!"

The patriarch had a small smile on his face as he walked in before his eyes look at Jian Chen for a moment with a sudden stiffness. His eyes held a hint of shock as he couldn't help but speak out with a

startled voice, "It is no wonder Xiao Er admires you so much; not only is brother Jian Chen quite strong, but a genius at cultivation as well! Brother Jian Chen can't be any older than twenty five, yet you've already made the breakthrough in such a short amount of time to become an Earth Saint Master, how terrifying!"

Jian Chen's face didn't have any shock on it, this discovery of the patriarch was to be expected. After making the breakthrough, his entire body had undergone a transformation that allowed Ming Dong and Qin Xiao who were both familiar with him to be able to detect a change. The extremely experienced patriarch would be able to spot it right away.

"Patriarch Qin is too kind, this one came across some luck, and thus was able to succeed." Jian Chen bowed.

"Brother Jian Chen, since you've only just made the breakthrough, there is a unique presence surrounding your body after the transformation. As long as one is quite sharp sighted, they will be able to see it. This is not a good benefit for you during the Gathering of the Mercenaries." Producing a small book in one of his hands, the patriarch said, "This is a method of hiding your presence. After you learn this method, then you will be able to hide your presence so that you will not seem like an Earth Saint Master. In fact, it will hide your entire strength. This will undoubtedly be a great help to you in Mercenary City, after all, every portion of strength hidden is another hidden trump card to be held."

Upon seeing this book of a method on how to hide one's presence, Jian Chen's eyes gained a joyful light to them. With a word of thanks, he immediately took the book from the patriarch's hands.

"Brother Jian Chen, we will be leaving in three days, so I'll allow you to borrow it for three days. After that, please return it to me." The patriarch smiled kindly without the arrogance of an honored elder.

Jian Chen nodded, "In three days, I will definitely return the book."

The patriarch walked to a nearby chair to sit in with a look of hesitation. Then, he looked at Jian Chen, "Jian Chen. I originally came here with a request, might you listen to it?"

Hearing the hesitation in the patriarch's voice, Jian Chen looked at him, "What matter might the patriarch have for me? As long as I have the ability to do it, then I will do my best to not shirk my duties."

The patriarch became extremely serious as his eyebrows knit together in concern, "This task shouldn't be of any difficulty to you, but if by chance Xiao Er comes across some trouble in the competition, I implore brother Jian Chen to do his best to rescue my son if need be."

Hearing that, Jian Chen laughed, "Patriarch Qin doesn't have to worry. Qin Xiao and I are like old friends. Even if the patriarch did not request this of me, I would still do it."

"Is that right? Then I am relieved. Brother Jian Chen, please try to comprehend the hidden presence method quickly then. I will not disturb you any longer." With a sigh of relief, the patriarch quickly departed from his room.

Three days quickly went by as Jian Chen was quickly woken up by Qin Xiao early in the morning. Then with Ming Dong, the three walked to the main courtyard.

By the time Jian Chen and the other two arrived, there was already plenty of people congregated together. Around half of the group were seventy year old elders that Jian Chen had never seen before. Right in front of them were four large flying type magical beasts perched nearby, from the look of things, these magical beasts were at the Class 3 Magical Beast level.

Flying type magical beasts were extremely rare treasures within the Tian Yuan Continent. Not only were flying magical beasts hard to capture, but not many people would dare try to tame them. Once the rider was in the air, their lives would be entrusted to the flying magical beast. If they were to go crazy thousands of kilometers in the air, then even an Earth Saint Master might not be able to survive.

“Could it be we are to sit on top of a flying magical beast? I’ve never rode on one before.” Upon seeing the four magical beasts, Ming Dong cried out with some excitement.

Chapter 286: Grand Elder

“Could it be we are going to ride a flying magical beast? I’ve never ridden one before.” Seeing the flying type magical beasts, Ming Dong had a look of excitement. Then a look of worry flashed across his face, “I’ve heard that flying magical beasts often times go out of control since their wild nature is stronger than any other magical beast. If by chance the magical beast throws us down from midair, then we would all be resigned to death.”

A blue robed youth from not too far away looked down on Ming Dong with a look of despite before sneering at him, “Hmph, how cowardly. If you do not wish to to ride the flying magical beast, then don’t, no one is forcing you.”

Hearing this, Ming Dong stared at the youth with an angry stare, but before he could say anything, the youth opened his mouth once more, “What? Did you wish to fight? Come then, try and hit me.” The youth was overly haughty and didn’t even see Ming Dong as his opponent at all, furthermore, he completely ignored Jian Chen who was right by Ming Dong’s side.

The surrounding people looked at the commotion with a cold stare, but not a single person wished to get involved.

Jian Chen’s face narrowed at the youth’s words however. The arrogant nature of this youth was something that Jian Chen disliked, but before he could raise his hand to teach him a minor lesson, a figure suddenly appeared in front of him. It was the sturdy looking Qin Xiao who suddenly appeared right next to the youth before slapping him firmly in the face, “Tian Ling you brat!” He spat. “To dare curse at my good friend, you’re asking for a spanking!”

Qin Xiao’s palm had not been gentle. When the youth had been slapped, he immediately fell to the ground with the part of his face hit already starting to swell.

Qin Xiao didn’t plan on letting Tian Ling off that easily and immediately kicked him in the stomach, causing the youth to curl up in pain. Opening his mouth, Qin Xiao said, “Tian Ling, you are too arrogant. To dare even curse at the brothers of mine, let’s see if you dare repeat it again.”

Tian Ling looked at Qin Xiao in silent fear. Within the Tianqin clan, Qin Xiao had a high position of power and was beloved by many. He was even the son of the patriarch, making him a person very few would dare to provoke.



“Enough, Qin Xiao, no matter what you say, you and Tian Ling grew up with each other. Just why should he be friendly to outsiders, could it be that these outsiders are even more important than your sisters and brothers?” A middle aged man walked forward before staring icily at Qin Xiao. Then, his eyes wandered over to where Jian Chen and Ming Dong was before his expression grew dark.

“Uncle!” The moment the youth saw the middle aged man, he began to crawl toward him as if he was his savior. Both eyes then swung toward Jian Chen and Ming Dong with a hate filled glare.

Qin Xiao himself restrained himself when he saw this man, but his attitude itself did not. Feeling justified in his actions, he spoke, “Uncle Tian Zhou, just what are you saying? Jian Chen and Ming Dong are my sworn brothers, how could they be considered outsiders? Besides, I heard how this matter was started. Tian Ling was trying to start trouble for no reason and offended my brothers first. This is entirely his fault, just what right does he have to blame someone else?”

With a snort, the man ignored Qin Xiao’s words before looking coldly at Jian Chen and Ming Dong straight into their eyes. “You two, right now we are about to depart from the Zhuya Kingdom, please go back to wherever you came from.” The man was not at all gentle with his words as he commanded them to leave the area.

Hearing this, Jian Chen and Ming Dong both narrowed their eyes. This man was speaking as if he was the patriarch himself giving the orders.

Both Jian Chen and Ming Dong had already been guests at the Tianqin clan for two months, by now, there was only half a month until the Gathering of the Mercenaries started. If they were not able to use the Space Gate, then there would be no possible way for them to reach Mercenary City in such a short amount of time.

The man’s words had caused Qin Xiao to explode with fury as he stomped forward with a furious glare, “Uncle Tian Zhou, what is the meaning of this? Brothers Jian Chen and Ming Dong have received the Tianqin clan’s invitation to join us on our travels to Mercenary City. They are both the noble guests of our clan, just how could you treat them in such a poor manner?”

“Noble guests!” The man laughed in disdain, “Just how could these two be noble guests of the Tianqin clan? Nephew Qin Xiao, you should do well to not bring as many dubious people back to our clan. The Tianqin clan is the number one clan in Walaurent City, not just any random small clan. This is not a place where you can bring back any dregs of the city to.”

Looking back to Jian Chen and Ming Dong, the man said, “Be tactful and leave this place at once. This is not a place where you should loiter about.”

“Uncle Tian Zhou, you dare to call my friends some random dregs of the city? Then could those three men behind you be nobles then? According to your own words, we should not be bringing in the dregs of the city into our Tianqin clan.” Qin Xiao spoke rudely. If it were any other person that was talking to Qin Xiao like the middle aged man, then they would have been waking up with a headache. This middle aged man was not someone Qin Xiao could defy too much, so he could only hold back his anger.

The middle aged man’s face grew dark, “Hmph, the three brothers behind me are the pillars of my mercenary group and have traveled extensively with me for over twenty years. We’ve went through multiple life or death situations and even crawled up from the very depths of hell together to become

friends until death! Just how could that be compared to the people you've randomly found outside the clan?" With that, the man turned to look at Jian Chen once more, "So you haven't left yet still? Did you wish for me to remove you from this area personally then?"

The surrounding people were all looking closely at them now. Not a single one of them had said a thing although Jian Chen had been a guest, it was a relatively unknown matter. Aside from Qin Xiao and a few others, not many people knew Jian Chen.

Jian Chen's face began to darken as he spoke, "If it is the patriarch's will, then this one will immediately leave, but whoever you are, how could you represent the will of the patriarch? Just what qualifications do you have to tell me to leave?"

"To dare refuse to hear me, you are courting death!" The man bellowed before a ripple of Saint Force formed in his hand. A bright red colored blade appeared in the man's hands, causing the temperature to skyrocket whenever it was swung.

"Stay your hand!"

Just as the man was about to slash into Jian Chen, a dignified sounding voice suddenly called out, causing everyone to turn to look at the purple robed patriarch of the Tianqin clan walking toward them.

Seeing the patriarch walk by, the man slowly reabsorbed his Saint Weapon. With a venomous glare, the man looked at Jian Chen, "Hmph, I'll let you off today, leave the Tianqin clan now."

Jian Chen's own eyes had a cold tint to them as a small amount of killing intent slowly leaked out from him. There was even a sneer of disdain on Jian Chen's face as well. He knew all too clearly that the man was an Earth Saint Master, and a fire Saint Master at that. A single strike of his would be extremely overwhelming, but even then, Jian Chen did not see it as a threat to him.

Ming Dong still had an angry look on face, the words of the middle aged man did not leave him with a happy sensation, even Qin Xiao looked quite troubled.

The patriarch only needed to take a single look at Qin Xiao to know what event had just transpired. With a dark look, he turned to look at the middle aged man, "Tian Zhou, brother Jian Chen is an honored guest of our Tianqin clan, just how could you be so rude to him?"

The one called Tian Zhou snorted before giving an askew glance at Jian Chen and Ming Dong, "Elder brother Qin, just when will you learn of nephew Qin Xiao's attitude. Going around randomly and pretending that two younger generation men are our honored guests? If the Tianqin clan were to be different than what it is now with big brother Tian Ming as the patriarch, then we wouldn't have any random person enter our clan. What's even more ridiculous is that our Tianqin clan is for some reason bringing two outsiders through the Space Gate to enter Mercenary City, big brother Qin, do you not realize just how costly the price of using the Space Gate is?"

"Shut your mouth!" The patriarch's face became gravely serious, "Tian Zhou, how can you speak to me in such a manner? Tian Zhou, it seems your time in the outside world has made you even more narrow-minded than before. Brother Jian Chen is an honored guest within our Tianqin clan. With this type of treatment toward our guest, just how could our reputation not be tarnished by this? Hurry up and apologize to brother Jian Chen immediately!" The patriarch bellowed angrily.

“Hmph, like father like son. Wanting me to apologize to the younger generation? That is just wishful thinking!” Tian Zhou spoke haughtily. As if he was a high and mighty clan leader, he simply gave no face at all to the patriarch. With that, he leaped into the air and landed on the back of one of the flying magical beasts. Then, the three men behind him followed suit and landed on top of the flying magical beast as well.

Seeing how Tian Zhou was so condescending to the others, the patriarch of the Tianqin clan narrowed his eyes. His chest began to heave heavily in anger, showing that he was not pleased at all.

Qin Xiao walked up to Jian Chen and whispered to him, “That man is uncle Tian Zhou, he’s a part of the Tian family and holds a high position within the Tianqin clan that is almost as powerful as my father. He has been traveling in the outside world for many a years and only returned to the clan two days ago. It seems that he has a major complaint with you here. In the future, you must take care, since he is an Earth Saint Master.”

Jian Chen nodded his head and said, “I will be careful.”

Just at that moment, a black robed elder dropped down from the skies before somehow floating ten meters above the ground before looking at everyone there.

“We see the Grand Elder!”

As soon as everyone saw this elder, everyone within the clan compound bowed deeply. Even the Tian Zhou who was sitting on the flying magical beast immediately got up to bow down respectfully.

“A Heaven Saint Master!” Seeing the floating elder, Jian Chen’s pupils dilated in shock. This Tianqin clan had unexpectedly had a Heaven Saint Master expert!

The elder looked at both the patriarch of the Tianqin clan and Tian Zhou before looking at the nearby Qin Xiao with a kind smile on his face. The moment his eyes landed upon Jian Chen, there was a look of extreme disbelief, but that was quickly hidden away from his eyes.

Exhaling, the elder’s gaze grew complicated once more. Regret could be seen along with rejoicement, but then even an eager expectation could be seen, causing people to be confused.

“Tian Zhou, Qin Yisheng.” The elder spoke.

“I am at the Grand Elder’s command.” The patriarch and Tian Zhou both spoke out.

“The very first teachings of the Tianqin clan passed down from our ancestors are something you two should understand. In the case that the two of you are trying to split the Tianqin clan, then a serious punishment awaits the both of you.” The elder spoke calmly, but when the two men heard those words, their hearts shook with fear.

“The Grand Elder needn’t worry, we adhere to the ancestor’s teachings and will defend the feelings of the Tianqin clan.” The patriarch said.

Tian Zhou bowed his head, “I, Tian Zhou, respect the ancestor’s teachings and will strive to protect the clan’s feelings.”

“Good!” The elder nodded his head, “Is everyone here.”

“Everyone is here, Grand Elder.” The patriarch spoke straight away.

“Then let us be off now.”

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After that, everyone climbed onto the back of the flying magical beast. Each one of them had dozens of people, totaling to forty people per beast. Ming Dong and Jian Chen both sat on the same magical beast along with another seven people sitting right next to them on its back.

With a fierce flap of its wings, the flying magical beast immediately took off into the air and began to accelerate. The Grand Elder of the Tianqin clan began to follow close behind, flying on his own as if to personally oversee their trip.

#### Chapter 287: Space Gate

The flying magical beast rose several kilometers into the air at a rapid speed while the Grand Elder followed close behind on his own. He was there to protect them all in the case that a flying magical beasts went out of control. Although this was not a common occurrence the majority of these riders were members of the Tianqin clan and were the future of the clan. There was no way the Grand Elder would want them to come across an accident.

Sitting on top of a flying magical beast, Jian Chen’s expression was quite complicated. His mind couldn’t help but think of the Hua Yun Sect who had forced him to run away from his home. At that time, it was Chang Bai who was the one who drove the flying magical beast from Lore City.

Then, he thought of his extremely loveable mother Bi Yuntian and his elegant flower like second sister Changyang Mingyue. Then there was also his sturdy eldest brother Changyang Hu and the ever so dignified father and leader of the clan, Changyang Ba. Each one of their images suddenly burned brightly within Jian Chen’s mind as well as a few other fragments of memories from his time in the Changyang Mansion.

“Hua Yun Sect!” Jian Chen clenched both of his fists tightly in anger. he had been forced to escape from the Gesun Kingdom because of them; it was unfortunate that the Hua Yun Sect had so much power within the kingdom and had at least two Heaven Saint Masters enlisted within their ranks. This had made even the royal family of the Gesun Kingdom unable to help him and the Changyang clan unable to do anything.

“Hua Yun Sect, just wait for me to return, I, Jian Chen, will return to right this. These years have made me into a wanderer with no home. This debt, I will return unto you!” Jian Chen’s eyes flashed with a terrifying amount of power. He knew that while he was an Earth Saint Master and had the Sword Spirits with him, no Earth Saint Master could threaten him, but Heaven Saint Masters were something Jian Chen would have trouble against.

Each realm after the Earth Saint Master realm was like crossing the endless ocean to attain a new height. The difference was like the heavens and the earth themselves and could not be easily described.

The amount of Saint Force within a Heaven Saint Master was a terrifying amount. They could use it to support themselves as they flew several kilometers into the air to travel and never ran out. It was only if they had gone through a long and intense battle that their Saint Force would start to feel the effects.

Jian Chen continued to sit on top of the flying magical beast as the wind flew past his ears, sounding like a clap of thunder that affected everyone's ears.

On the way, several groups of men flying on their own flying type magical beasts could be seen not too far away. Each one of these men were strong powers within the Zhuya Kingdom, and each major group had a single Heaven Saint Master following behind to offer protection. These Heaven Saint Masters and the Tianqin clan's Grand Elder bade a polite greeting as if they were good friends with each other before continuing on with their journey together.

Not everyone who wanted to go to Mercenary City had access to a flying magical beast. On the ground far below, countless groups traveled on magical beasts or on foot in great numbers. Each group numbered over a hundred while the dust behind them was kicked up, causing the scene to look as if there was a large dirt colored dragon below.

Half a day later, everyone had finally left the borders of the Zhuya Kingdom. With another day's time, they finally arrived at the kingdom that had the Space Gate called the Dazhou Kingdom.

"I've heard my father once say that there was a time the Dazhou Kingdom was in a golden age where its strength was strong enough to be great friends with the Three Great Empires. The Space Gate was then left behind by the unbelievably strong Protector of the Realm. However, when the Protector of the Realm left, the Dazhou Kingdom began to slowly decline before becoming an obscure and small kingdom like it is today." Qin Xiao explained to Jian Chen.

Jian Chen could only sigh at the absolute power a strong cultivator could have. He had no idea that even an extremely strong kingdom would slowly decline after the loss of a strong cultivator.

While the Dazhou Kingdom had declined, the amount of territory it had remained the same. It took a good part of the day for the flying magical beasts to finally approach the imperial city of the Dazhou Kingdom.

The murmur from the people riding on the magical beasts began to grow louder as they approached the city. Jian Chen could see that there were at least ten Heaven Saint Masters flying together behind them. Aside from that, there was still another Heaven Saint Master riding on a flying magical beast, but he had been harder to discover.

These men were from different kingdoms and regions where they represented different factions of power, but each one of them was planning to head to Mercenary City.

The Tianqin clan's group was led down to the outside of the imperial palace by the Grand Elder. Then, a single armored person came out to greet the Grand Elder with a cordial greeting before ushering everyone inside a courtyard to rest.

"The Space Gate will open in two days, these next two days you can rest easily, but don't wander off. This is still the imperial palace of the Dazhou Kingdom, if you cause a disturbance, the clan will not be able to protect you." The Grand Elder warned everyone before leaving.

Tian Zhou glared icily at Jian Chen before snorting and turning to walk out of the room. Although he had desperately wanted to teach Jian Chen a lesson, he was in the imperial palace just like Jian Chen, so he didn't dare cause trouble now.

Qin Xiao walked up to Jian Chen's side and spoke with some concern, "Jian Chen, Tian Zhou will be participating in the Gathering of the Mercenaries, in the case that you come across him, please be careful."

Jian Chen nodded without saying a word.

These next two days were relatively peaceful as the entire Tianqin clan all behaved themselves while resting within the courtyard provided to them by the imperial palace. Not a single one of them left the courtyard in fear of causing unneeded trouble. Although the Dazhou Kingdom was stagnating, the kingdom was still capable of making the other kingdoms feel fear.

Two days later, the Tianqin clan followed the Grand Elder out of the courtyard and between the giant pavilions of the palace before finally stopping in front of a large piece of ground.

There was already a large amount of people gathered here. At the very least, there were upward of a thousand men all densely gathered within this piece of ground.

Jian Chen tilted his head, he could faintly see a heavily encased area that spanned around a hundred meters in circumference and had plenty of people stopping right in front of it.

"I've heard that the Protector of the Realm left this barrier many years ago. It's so extremely big and even after so many years, no one has been able to break it..."

"Rumors say that when the Dazhou Kingdom was in a war, a Saint Ruler stealthily snuck into the Dazhou Kingdom in order to strike at this barrier and take away the Space Gate. Unfortunately even with all of his strength, he wasn't able to even dent the barrier and could only retreat in defeat."

"The Dazhou Kingdom's Protector of the Realm was extremely strong. He has long since stood at the apex of the Tian Yuan Continent, the barriers he could make are unbreakable to any Saint Ruler."

"I've heard that the Dazhou Kingdom's Protector of the Realm had reached the pinnacle a long time ago, when he disappeared, he must have been trying to make it past the final bottleneck. Seeing how it's been several hundred years, it seems that he was defeated before he could make that breakthrough..."

"The peerless Protector of the Realm has long left this world, what a shame. How unfortunate for this type of expert to leave the world."

The people all around them began to talk among each other as they talked about the barrier. Many of them could only sigh as they looked at this particular barrier in respect and adoration.

"For even a Saint Ruler to not be able to break apart this barrier, just how strong was the Dazhou Kingdom's Protector of the Realm?" One of person whispered in disbelief.

Suddenly, the entire crowd went quiet as if everyone had simultaneously shut their mouths. Following the silence, five white robed elders suddenly came dropping down from the skies gracefully. From this, Jian Chen felt as if these men were immortals descending down onto the mortal plane.

These five elders walked over to five different points on the barrier before a five star array began to grow brightly on the ground.

At this moment, one of the elders in the middle cupped their hands, "It has been fifty years since the last time. Today we meet once more, and next, we will be employing a secret method to temporarily close the barrier to the Space Gate. Everyone will be able to travel to Mercenary City afterward. The way to use the Space Gate should be familiar to everyone, so we shall not spend anymore time explaining it."

Afterward, the five elders began to open up the barrier.

One by one, men began to slowly move forward into the large ripple of energy that was the Space Gate. Just like that, each one disappeared from sight.

Quickly came the Tianqin clan's turn. At this moment, Jian Chen could finally see the Space Gate that was hidden at first by the barrier. The Space Gate was three meters tall and the energy that was moving around the Space Gate was strong enough to distort the space around it. The area didn't seem very stable and the light was shining out in intense rays with a mysterious glow.

Underneath the Space Gate was a mysterious matrix with several Class 5 Monster Cores at certain points of the matrix. Each supply point of these monster cores had supported the Space Gate when it opened.

This was a type of portal that allowed one to travel through space and linked two different places, and could be used to cross over the endless ocean.

Chapter 288: Arriving at Mercenary City

The Space Gate was open for use, but it was not free of charge. Every single person had to hand over a few Class 5 Monster Cores. While the numbers varied, the average person only handed over a single Class 5 Monster Core in the end.

This type of entry price would have made the Xia clan and the Tianhua Sect in the Blue Wind Kingdom find it hard to pay, but this was where multiple experts of various kingdoms gathered, accompanied by Heaven Saint Masters. A few Class 5 Monster Cores wasn't something they would see as expensive.

The Tianqin clan had forty men in attendance, but over half of them were only bodyguards for the trip. So in truth, there were only ten or so men actually going to Mercenary City.

The Grand Elder led the group to the Space Gate and swept a glance at the men behind him, before passing several Class 5 Monster Cores to the Heaven Saint Master standing watch, "There are nine men total here, and we have nine monster cores as well."

The Heaven Saint Master from the Dazhou Kingdom took the monster cores with a smile, "You may enter, I hope that you will have a satisfactory competition."

The Grand Elder spoke a few more polite words with the Heaven Saint Master before walking through the Space Gate. With a single step, he was able to cross thousands of miles to the other side of the Tian Yuan Continent.

Afterwards, Jian Chen and Ming Dong followed behind Qin Xiao in succession through the Space Gate.

Aside from the Grand Elder, Tian Zhou and his three mercenary friends, Ming Dong, Jian Chen and Qin Xiao, there was one other cold looking middle-aged man. He wore a black robe, and had a face that

seemed as if it had never once smiled before. Both of his eyes were exceptionally cold as they flashed with a dangerous gleam.

“Jian Chen, that man is called Qin Jue. However, he is not a direct descendant of the Tianqin clan, he was an abandoned infant from the outside world picked up by my father. On the outside, he is cold and detached, but because he was raised by the Tianqin clan, his heart is loyal to us. Furthermore, because of his talent at cultivation and strength, as well as his hard work, he became an Earth Saint Master three years ago.” Qin Xiao spoke to Jian Chen in a low voice, a look of extreme admiration on his face

With that, the Tianqin clan crossed through the Space Gate. The moment Jian Chen stepped across, he could feel nothing but an invisible, protective layer of energy cover him before reaching the other side.

He appeared in a dense forest, where hundreds of people had already gathered up. They had passed through the Space Gate to first.

“I didn’t think that this world would have something as mysterious as the Space Gate. Just what kind of amazing methods did the exceptional expert who created this Space Gate use?” Jian Chen sighed in admiration. He greatly desired to reach such a goal, and looked forward to the day he’d reach such a level as well.

“Let’s go, Mercenary City is right in front of us.” After waiting for everyone to arrive, the Grand Elder led the group out of the forest. Since magical beasts weren’t allowed to enter the Space Gate, everyone could only walk. Despite that fact, the traveling pace was quite fast.

The forest wasn’t very large. When they walked out of it, they entered a plain, where there were quite a few men like Jian Chen’s group that were walking towards Mercenary City. From time to time, a few other groups riding magical beasts would pass by, sending dust flying into the air. There were some others flitting across the sky on some flying-type magical beasts as well.

Everything was the same as when Jian Chen’s group had first left the Tianqin clan. The only difference in their journey now was that they were walking rather than flying.

On the road, Tian Zhou continued to stare coldly at Jian Chen’s back. If it were not for his worry about the Grand Elder, then Tian Zhou would have most likely struck out at him.

Seeing how Jian Chen had been ignoring him as if he hadn’t noticed Tian Zhou’s existence, Tian Zhou was angry enough to visibly gnash his teeth. His heart truly wished for Jian Chen to say something contradictory, that way, Tian Zhou would be able to teach him a lesson.

Four hours later, the Grand Elder finally led the entire group to Mercenary City. Mercenary City was an enormous city that was spread over an extremely vast piece of ground. The only difference between Mercenary City and the other cities was that there was no walls here at all; one could enter the city from any direction. Instead, there was a giant golden barrier that glowed faintly around the city, protecting Mercenary City within.

“I want everyone to remember that no matter what, do not start a fight within Mercenary City or you’ll risk a severe punishment. There are many powers in the city that we cannot afford to offend; so you would do well to remember this one rule.” The Grand Elder spoke sternly to the group he was leading.

“Yes, Grand Elder!” The men all cried out respectfully.



With that, everyone began to walk into Mercenary City. Although there were no walls, the interior of the city wasn't all that much different from any other city, with various shops and taverns crammed together all over the city.

The Gathering of the Mercenaries would start after another half month, so the Tianqin clan had set up a temporary place of residency in a tavern. The next day, Qin Xiao, Jian Chen, and Ming Dong all left to take a stroll around the city.

The Grand Elder had disappeared by the second day, just like he had when they were back in the imperial palace of the Dazhou Kingdom. No one knew where he went, but he hadn't restricted anyone from going anywhere.

The next few days were rather calm, but more and more people began to flow into Mercenary City. Every single inn was completely filled with men, and there were even many tents set up outside the city.

In a flash, half a month had gone by. Early that morning, the Grand Elder finally appeared in front of the Tianqin clan once more, and led the group to the center of Mercenary City.

"Ming Dong, take the next few days to rest and be careful." Jian Chen called out to Ming Dong as he left.

Ming Dong nodded his head before clapping him on the shoulders, "I understand, make sure you come back safely. I'll be waiting for you."

The Grand Elder turned to look at Ming Dong, "Mercenary City is an extremely safe city. You will never find a city safer than this one. Just remember, do not start a fight within Mercenary City no matter what, or else no one will be able to save you."

"I thank the elder for the warning." Ming Dong cupped his hands together respectfully.

The group quickly arrived at the center of Mercenary City. It was an extremely large plaza, but it had already been filled to many people to count. Jian Chen could only guess there to be at least a hundred thousand. In the middle, there was a fifty meter tall tower with a single, vivid and life-like sculpture of a middle-aged man. There was a mysterious charm to it that made it seem as if a real person had been petrified. Its finger pointed toward the distant horizon, as if trying to penetrate the heavens.

The entire area around the sculpture quite a few elders, as well as some middle-aged men with extraordinary presence, looking at the sculpture with both great respect and a hint of fear.

"Could it be that this sculpture is of Mercenary City's founder? I've heard that the founder was a person of unbelievable strength and has even be said to be a paragon under the heavens. It was said that nobody was able to rival him. Unfortunately he has gone missing for many years..."

"According to the ancient records, when the age of chaos descended upon the Tian Yuan Continent, humanity was on the brink of extinction after being faced off against hundreds of races. But when humanity was at the end of their road, a genius with enough power to shock the world appeared to fight against the experts of each of those races. In the end, the enemies of humanity were chased away and thus the humans of the continent were saved. This savior then established Mercenary City and spurred the development of mercenaries within the continent..."

“The ancient records also said that the founder of Mercenary City was called Mo Yuntian. He was said to be the strongest person to ever exist. There are no later records of him; he probably left this world for another.”

“By now, it’s been a hundred thousand years since Mo Yuntian’s era, but no one is capable of living that long. It is a shame that this once-in-a-millennium talent was unable to break away from the predestined end...”

One could see the elders discussing this from anywhere in the plaza. Every one of the elders looked toward the sculpture with reverence, and even the Grand Elder was no exception.

#### Chapter 289: The Summoning of Ming Dong

Seeing how everyone was talking, Jian Chen looked at the large sculpture as well.

Suddenly, a blue robed elder came down from the sky. His facial characteristics were nothing out of the ordinary, but the very moment he had appeared, the World Essence in the air suddenly went still. An overwhelming amount of pressure over took it, causing everyone there to feel as if their heart would stop.

When the elder appeared, everyone else suddenly ceased talking and descended into a period of silence.

The elder floated in the air, standing high above even the heads of the Heaven Saint Masters. With an elderly voice, he spoke out, “I proclaim now that the bi-centennial Gathering of the Mercenaries has officially started. Every participant should remain standing while every other person should move back.

With the elder’s words, the sudden movements of the crowd could be heard as the men who were older than the rules dictated immediately began to move away.

“Jian Chen, take care of yourself!” Ming Dong spoke to Jian Chen before following the ground to leave.

As the amount of people lessened, there still remained several tens of thousands of people.

Seeing how the group in front of him was beginning to lessen, the elder spoke out once more, “The Gathering of the Mercenaries allow permits those under the age of fifty to participate. In the case that someone over the age of fifty tries, then they will suffer the harsh punishment from the barrier and be annihilated. For those who are over the age of fifty, leave now. This is your final warning.”

Several hundred men then left the group slowly with looks of dissatisfaction.

With the final stragglers all gone, the elder waved his sleeves, causing several hundred black tokens to fly out toward the thousands of people below.

Jian Chen grabbed onto one of the tokens that fluttered down to him. It was around the size of his palm and was created by a material unknown to him. It was unnaturally hard and didn’t seem to be easily breakable. Furthermore, there was a strange energy that flowed in it.

The elder looked down onto the crowd and spoke, “This is the command token. The first competition will be a free-for-all in a special region that you will be sent to after the World Door opens. After that

year, the top 500 people with tokens will qualify.” Cupping his hands, he spoke up to the air, “May the Elder open the World Door.”

The World Essence grew deathly still once more along with everyone else suddenly going motionless where even the breathing of people could be heard.

Suddenly, a massive amount of energy began to flow from the skies, attracting everyone in sight. Everyone could only see the first signs of energy being warped about in midair, and in two brief moments, a strong multicolored light could be seen from the rapidly expanding space. Quickly, a hundred meter wide hole could be seen with a large space of what could only be described as chaotic inside.

The pitch dark token in everyone’s hands began to glow a dark light before enveloping everyone within it, elevating them up into the air toward the hole.

“Ah!”

Suddenly, a miserable cry could be heard as one of the men close to the tear in the sky began to melt quickly right in front of them. In a small amount of time, not even a single trace of their body could be seen remaining.

“For those over the age of fifty, they will incur the wrath of the World Door and will dissipate from the world itself. There is no need for panic, those under the age of fifty will be allowed in with no problems.” The floating elder spoke.

Many men began to look frightened as they began to struggle in midair. “I-I gi-give up! I don’t wish to participate anymore...” Unfortunately, they were already slowly rising into the air because of the energy that enveloped their body, they could only helplessly rise up into the air toward the hole.

“I gave you a chance before, that opportunity has nigh passed.” The elder spoke with a cold glare.

“Ah!”

Another pain filled shriek could be heard coming from a man as he began to burn from the inside out alive. In a second, his body had disintegrated into the air.

“I beg of you, please let us go...”

“Please, I no longer wish to participate...”

A few men who were over the age of fifty that tried to take advantage of the crowd immediately tried to beg for forgiveness.

The elder narrowed his eyes as he looked at them with an impatient look. With a wave of his hands, the balls of energy began to accelerate toward the hole in the sky.

“Ah...”

Following several cries of fear, those who were over the age of fifty were quickly burnt to ashes that were then burned up as well. This sight shocked everyone who witnessed it, and those who were older than fifty but had left earlier rejoiced to themselves secretly.

Afterward, all those who were remaining began to disappear from sight into the hole.

“Let me through, let me through, I wish to participate!” Suddenly, a voice behind the group could be heard as Ming Dong charged toward the ascending group with a pleading look at the floating elder.

The stares of every person there concentrated onto Ming Dong as if he were an idiot. The distribution of the tokens had already been finished, and the group was already disappearing into the chaotic space to start the competition. Just what reason would the elder have to stop to allow a single person entry?

Still raising into the air, Jian Chen turned to look at Ming Dong with a surprised look. He didn't understand just what reason Ming Dong had for suddenly wanting to join the Gathering of the Mercenaries.

The floating elder furrowed his eyebrows together in annoyance as he looked at Ming Dong. Just as he was about to send him away, a sudden change in expression could be seen before a black token shoot toward Ming Dong's hand, “Enter then.” He spoke softly.

In a split second, the elder's treatment of Ming Dong had done a complete reversal; his voice wasn't as cold as before. Instead, it was much warmer now.

Those who knew of the elder on a personal all dropped open their mouths in shock as they looked at him in shock.

“It seems that youth is no ordinary person.” A person whispered.

Jian Chen looked on with shock as well as he saw Ming Dong begin to rise up into the air after them. He felt confusion in his heart as he tried to figure out just what had just happened. A flash of concern came over his face. The elder's words were quite clear, after they pass through the World Door, it would be a free for all. With Ming Dong being a Primary Great Saint master, the amount of danger he would have to face would be obscenely absurd. Even if they were together, Jian Chen would be powerless to protect him.

The token in Jian Chen's hand brought him through the hole and dropped him in the middle of a thick forest. Everywhere he looked, all he could see were trees.

Suddenly, multiple blurs came flashing down from the sky down next to him.

Seeing just who was right next to him, Jian Chen let out a smile, “Ming Dong, so it is you! How excellent, to think that you would be right besides me!” The person who had fell next to him had been unexpectedly Ming Dong.

As if shocked at the sudden shout, he reflexively brought out his Saint Weapon in preparation to fight. But as soon as he heard the familiar sound, a smile lit up his face as he absorbed his weapon, “Jian Chen, so it's you! This is great, with us two combined, we'll definitely be able to forge ahead.”

“Ah, Ming Dong, weren't you against participating in the Gathering of the Mercenaries? Why is it that you've suddenly changed your mind? That strong elder had unexpectedly allowed you to enter as well.” Jian Chen's face held some confusion.

Hearing this, Ming Dong's face went blank, "Even I don't know why I suddenly decided to participate. I felt as if someone was calling me here and the feeling was growing stronger and stronger. In the end, I suddenly found myself unable to control myself before coming here."

"What, you felt someone calling you? Then can you still sense the calling right now?" Jian Chen was shocked at this strange development.

Ming Dong closed his eyes to concentrate before nodding slightly, "I can still feel it, but the call is much weaker than before."

Jian Chen narrowed his eyes in thought, "Then can you sense where the call is coming from?"

"From the east!" Ming Dong pointed.

Jian Chen looked toward the direction Ming Dong was pointing with a thoughtful glance. "Then let's go there and see just what is calling you." With that, Jian Chen and Ming Dong began to walk toward the east.

The place Jian Chen and Ming Dong were in was an isolated mountain range with a sinister environment as multiple poisonous insects and vipers could be found.

Suddenly, Ming Dong's body plunged into the earth, he had unexpectedly stepped into a barely visible swampland.

Ming Dong slapped at the swamp in order to fly out, but before he could move, his face suddenly winced. "Something has bitten onto my leg, help me!"

With great shock, Jian Chen immediately grabbed onto Ming Dong's shoulders. Ming Dong immediately flew into the air, and at the same time, a poisonous viper as thick as Jian Chen's head followed after him with both of its fangs clamped tightly onto Ming Dong's legs.

Jian Chen's eyes flashed as he brought out his Light Wind Sword. With a quick slash, the snake was cut into several pieces, causing blood to rain down below.

Jian Chen caught Ming Dong as he fell from the sky. Although the snake had been cut apart from him, the head of the snake was still attached to Ming Dong's legs.

With another wave of his hand, the sword in his hand flashed once more before splitting the snake head in two. As for the area where the snake had bitten, the venom had already entered Ming Dong's wound, turning the immediate area around it blue while rapidly spreading.

Ming Dong took out a white bottle from his Space Belt and began to sprinkle the area around it while muttering, "It's a good thing I bought some antidote from Walaurent City. This type of antidote is quite famous around the continent that can cure hundreds of poisons. The only bad thing about it is its price."

Jian Chen looked at the wound on Ming Dong's leg, "Are you able to walk then?"

After treating the poison, Ming Dong began to flex both of his legs before smiling, "It's a good thing the wound isn't too deep. There is no problem, let's keep moving."

“Be careful then, we’ll keep going, but we don’t know what’s in this place yet. There’s still plenty of people we have yet to see.” Jian Chen said.

“Wait a moment!” Ming Dong walked up to the carcass of the snake before cutting it open. Extracting a monster core from it, he laughed, “This type of stuff shouldn’t be thrown away, or else it would be a waste of money!”

Jian Chen couldn’t help but laugh. The snake was only at the Class 3 level, so a Class 3 Monster Core was not something he had thought to be valuable.”

After this harrowing experience, the two continued on their journey with caution. Although they were very cautious, the hidden dangers of the area continued to surprise them as they continued. The areas that seemed to be solid ground turned out to be swamps that acted like quicksand. Even Jian Chen had been victim to this several times, but he had been able to quickly escape.

While in the mountain range, they would come across a few magical beasts. Most of them were Class 3 or Class 4 Magical Beasts, and the majority of them were quite poisonous.

Jian Chen and Ming Dong continued forward for another half day before Jian Chen suddenly halted. His ears began to tremble as he waited for movement.

After a moment, Jian Chen let out a smile, “After half a day of walking, we’ve finally come across another person. This place is quite large for us to take this long to see a person if there is several hundred thousand people here.”

“Jian Chen, there’s someone nearby?” Ming Dong looked at Jian Chen with surprise, but there was a look of joy on his face.

Jian Chen nodded his head, “Correct, there’s just one person not too far away from here. From the sounds of things, he’s coming toward us.”

“How strong do you think he is? If he’s an Earth Saint Master, then we’ll be in trouble.” Ming Dong had a serious look on his face now.

Jian Chen clapped Ming Dong’s shoulders casually, “Don’t you worry. The amount of Earth Saint Masters under the age of fifty is quite low. How could it be that easy to come across one? Let’s go, let’s go see just how strong this person is and just how we’ll obtain his token.”

#### Chapter 290: True Sword Qi

Jian Chen and Ming Dong continued to walk, after walking for a little while longer they quickly came across the other person. The man looked to be a tall but skinny middle aged man that was dirty looking all over and quite miserable. The tree branches had already cut away at his clothes, revealing the bloody scratches underneath. Clearly, he had taken a large amount of pain from the environment.

When the middle aged man noticed there was someone around, he instantly grew alert. In the next second, he took out his Saint Weapon, but the moment he saw that the two in front of him were merely youngsters, his vigilance immediately lowered.

“Haha, after half a day, I’ve finally come across people. I must say, this place is so large that even after walking for half a day, I came across no one else. Just how strong of a person does one have to be to

create such a place like this?" The middle aged man brandished his sword with a smile. His face had slackened as his eyes stared at Jian Chen and Ming Dong with a strange glint.

Jian Chen laughed as well before saying, "That's right. This place is truly large, after walking for half a day, we've finally come across a lone person."

"It seems that we were fated to meet. Fellow brothers, just what is your name?" The man began to smile in a seemingly harmless way.

"Seeing how we have never met before, it would be inconvenient to tell you my name." Jian Chen laughed.

"Fine then!" The man replied casually. Looking to and from Jian Chen and Ming Dong, "This Gathering of the Mercenaries isn't a good place to be, there are many hidden dangers to be experienced. This isn't the place for two youngsters to be most especially. You two would find it best to immediately leave this place. Of course, the two tokens you both have will bring you trouble. Why don't you hand them over to me so I can bear the responsibility for you?" With that, the middle aged man lifted his sword and started to walk over to Jian Chen and Ming Dong.

Jian Chen let out a thoughtful smile before taking out the token from within his Space Ring. Waving it at him, Jian Chen smiled, "If you want it, then you'll have to take it."

Seeing the token appear within Jian Chen's hand, the middle aged man's eyes began to shine. Immediately looking at Jian Chen's hand, he saw the Space Ring that was adorned on his finger.

"A Space Ring!" The man cried out in shock. Growing serious, his eyes couldn't conceal the pure greed behind them.

"No, little brother. That Space Ring currently in your possession will bring you trouble as well. Why don't you hand both the Space Ring and the token over to me. I'll keep the both of them safe, I can guarantee their safety if you do. Not only that, but it will be one less danger to your life." The middle aged man couldn't help but smirk. Even his voice began to tremble at the sight of the two prizes in front of him. To him, Jian Chen and Ming Dong were both easy targets because of their age. No matter how strong the two might be, he was already dead set on pursuing them.

Jian Chen laughed involuntarily before looking at the man in the eye and sneered, "You couldn't even cheat a three year old child with your words."

"You must be rotted in the brain to think that we are such idiots." Ming Dong cursed at him from the side of Jian Chen.

The man's eyes began to flash dangerously as he revealed a cold smile, "Fellow brothers, I was only just thinking what was best for you. Those items aren't safe on you." With that, the man walked even closer so that he was ten meters away now. With the giant sword in his hand, it began to radiate energy as he began to prepare to attack.

Jian Chen looked with disdain at the man. He was only a Peak Great Saint Master; someone not worth being worried about. "The items are in my hand, if you have the ability, come and take them."

The man's eyes flashed dangerously as he laughed, "So it seems you two are quite obstinate. Then allow me to come and take them." The Saint Weapon in his hand began to fluctuate wildly as it flew at Jian Chen's heart. His action was meant to kill without remorse or second thoughts.

A small sliver of killing intent leaked from Jian Chen as the Light Wind Sword immediately appeared in Jian Chen's hand. In another moment, the sword disappeared in a flash and broke the other man's Saint Weapon with a large metallic sound.

With his Saint Weapon broken, the man spat out a mouthful of blood as his face grew white before falling to the ground.

Jian Chen had snapped his Saint Weapon in two with a single strike. This was the equivalent to crippling the man's dantian, causing him to lose all of his cultivation as well as causing a tremendous amount of damage to his body.

"H-ho-how....how is this....po-possible..?" Seeing the broken remains of his Saint Weapon, the man's face was shocked. This was too strong of a strength, causing him to be stunned. To make matters even worse, the one responsible for breaking his Saint Weapon was only a twenty year old youth.

Even Ming Dong who was standing by Jian Chen's side was shocked to the point of disbelief. Seeing just how Jian Chen was able to break a Peak Great Saint Master's sword in two was just too frightening for him.

"You... just how could you have so much strength at such a young age? Are... are you a wolf in disguise?" The man looked at Jian Chen with hatred as if he had been unjustified, but as he spoke his voice was growing weaker and weaker.

"We are not hiding in disguise at all, this is the result that you have brought upon yourself." Jian Chen laughed. Then walking up to the man, he said, "Bring out your things immediately, this way, you'll at least have a chance to live. Otherwise, I'll kill you right now."

The man's mouth began to drip with blood as he looked at the broken parts of his Saint Weapon. With a face full of regret, he slowly pulled out his Space Belt and placed it to the side.

Jian Chen picked at the Space Belt with his sword before grabbing the token from within. He didn't see anything else of value, confirming that the man was truly poor.

Shaking his head in dejection, Jian Chen threw the Space Belt on the floor before leaving with Ming Dong.

"Jian Chen, just how strong are you now for you to be able to break the Saint Weapon of a Great Saint Master with one strike? This is something only an Earth Saint Master could do." On the road now, Ming Dong finally asked the question that he had been holding in for so long.

Jian Chen laughed, "Back when I left the Tianqin clan for some time, I made a breakthrough to become a First Cycle Earth Saint Master."

"What, you've already made a breakthrough?" Ming Dong asked with shock, he didn't dare believe his ears. An Earth Saint Master was the result of a Great Saint Master risking death to cross over. The passing rate was only ten percent to become an Earth Saint Master, but this youth had somehow



managed to do it. With Jian Chen's age not even reaching twenty five and becoming an Earth Saint Master by then, this was truly an earth breaking achievement. If news of this were to spread, then it would cause an undeniably large boom of shock.

After he spoke, Ming Dong was confused so he asked, "What does it mean to be a First Cycle Earth Saint Master?" He had no idea that the Earth Saint Masters were categorized differently.

Jian Chen began to explain. "Saints up to the Earth Saint Masters are categorized into three different tiers; primary, middle, and peak. The moment one becomes an Earth Saint Master, the categorization becomes different. There are six different parts, the lowest class is the First Cycle while the strongest class is the Sixth Cycle.

Ming Dong looked on with understanding, "I didn't think that even Earth Saint Masters would be classified in such a way. If you didn't tell me, I never would have known about it." Suddenly, Ming Dong had a thought, "Ah, Jian Chen, just what attribute do you have?"

Hearing this, the Light Wind Sword immediately appeared in Jian Chen's hand as he showed off the shiny gleam. The Light Wind Sword began to emit a hazy silver glow that continuously glowed in the sky. It was almost as if it was forming an insanely sharp sword with Sword Qi, and the moment the Sword Qi touched Ming Dong's body, he immediately felt as if thousands of swords were cutting into him for an undesirably painful feeling.

"My Saint Force doesn't have any attribute, this is all pure Sword Qi." Jian Chen said. Sword Qi wasn't rare by any means, practically everyone knew of it. It was just the sword's equivalent of Saint Force and had a tremendous killing power that could make a long distance attack.

This was what true Sword Qi looked like. What many others had was only what the sword made, thus was not strong enough to be called Sword Qi, it could only be called energy. This was because the energy was not strong enough nor had the same sharpness of Sword Qi.

Jian Chen's Sword Qi was incomparably sharp, intense, and quite potent. True Sword Qi was able to strike at a further distance than condensed energy that replicated Sword Qi. Furthermore, true Sword Qi didn't require a sword to use, instead, one could use their finger to cut a tree or rock.

Jian Chen didn't know when his Saint Force had been able to turn his energy into true Sword Qi; it seemed to be an innate thing. The credit could only be given to the Sword Spirits within him.

"What a strong amount of Sword Qi, it's completely different from all the rest. It felt as if it were as strong as a fire Saint Force attack." Ming Dong gasped.

The two began to talk for another four hours as they continued to walk around the forest until they reached a recent battleground. The ground was filled with blood and there were two corpses nearby filled with injuries. From the injuries, it could be seen that it was done by humans. And not too far away were their Space Belts.

Ming Dong looked at their Space Belts before saying, "Their tokens aren't in here, just a few things. There's nothing of value, it would appear someone else has already taken them."

Looking all around himself, Jian Chen noticed that there were multiple footsteps leading in a single direction.

“Let’s go, it’s best for us to first find out just what was calling you. My intuition says that whatever is calling you, it’s for a good thing.” Jian Chen said.

“Okay then. I too wish to find out just what was calling me. To think I was unable to control myself and came here!” Ming Dong spoke with anticipation.