

Chaotic 511

Chapter 511: Saint Ruler of the Qinhuang Kingdom

Jian Chen's usage of the Radiant Saint Force had been maintained for an entire day before his "spirit" consumption had finally been too much for him to take. In this time, a small portion of his body's wounds healed. It was not a complete recovery, but movement would not be too terribly hampered now.

Afterward, Jian Chen sat cross-legged on his bed with his face unintentionally facing the sky as he began to recover the spirit that he had used up. This was the very first time he had to recover his energy in such a fashion ever since he became a Heaven Saint Master.

With another day focused on restoration, Jian Chen's spirit had been replenished to the very max where he then resumed using the Radiant Saint Force to heal his wounds.

Continuing this pattern for five whole days, Jian Chen finally healed himself completely. Then, with a change of his clothes, he exited his palace halls.

As soon as Jian Chen walked out from the halls, the twelve individuals from the Qinhuang Kingdom came gathering in one after another. For the past week, they had been keeping guard over him from all corners while monitoring the outside for anything. So, Jian Chen's departure from his bedroom had been easily spotted by them.

Every single one of the twelve Heaven Saint Masters displayed stunned looks when they saw the healthy Jian Chen walk in front of them without a problem. Xiao Tian's mouth dropped open to ask, "Imperial Protector, your wounds have already fully healed?"

Jian Chen nodded. "Correct. I am fully healed now. With the Radiant Spirit Pills and another secret method, my recovery rate was accelerated."

Jian Chen's "secret method" had been Radiant Saint Force. The Radiant Saint Force was of a unique nature, and only Heaven Saint Masters or stronger would be able to sense it. Other people would be completely unable to sense it. Even with these Heaven Saint Masters, Jian Chen had spent the past few days making sure all of the Radiant Saint Force had been depleted so that none of the twelve would be able to sense it.

"Imperial Protector, Qing Shaofan has already returned to the Qinhuang Kingdom to request the four ancestors to come straight away. Right now we will just need to remain here for several days. I have faith that they will come straight away. Until then, we should discuss the best method on how to deal with the Sect of Dragon and Tiger." Qin Wuming spoke.

"That's fine. We'll stay here for two days. I especially will not let this matter with the Sect of Dragon and Tiger end like so." Jian Chen spoke with a dangerous gleam in his eyes.

"That is to be expected. The Imperial Protector's talent exceeds all others and could be said to be the first in the history of the Tian Yuan Continent. With such a frightening battle strength, no other Heaven Saint Masters can be a match; you could be said to be even the strongest one beneath Saint Rulers. In the future when the Imperial protector breaks through to the Saint Ruler realm, what fear would there be for the Saint Ruler of the measly Sect of Dragon and Tiger? Even if the Saint Ruler of the Sect of

Dragon and Tiger established himself many years ago, I doubt he would be a match for the Imperial Protector then.” Tian Luo spoke with a serious and earnest expression. After traveling with Jian Chen for days, the five Heaven Saint Masters that had gone with Jian Chen to the Gesun Kingdom already had a decent grasp of how strong he was.

One may ask two Fifth Cycle Heaven Saint Masters and a Sixth Cycle Heaven Saint Master, who had lost to Jian Chen, just how many people beneath the Saint Rulers on the Tian Yuan Continent would be able to accomplish the same thing? Furthermore, back in front of the mountain gates to the Sect of Dragon and Tiger, Jian Chen had easily shattered the barrier that a Saint Ruler had personally placed on him. With such a glorious fighting strength, in the realm of Heaven Saint Masters aside from Jian Chen, what other person would be able to accomplish this same feat?

The same day Jian Chen had fully recovered, Qing Shaofan had reached the Dazhou Kingdom. After flashing proof of his identity, that he was from the Qinhuang Kingdom, the king of the Dazhou Kingdom treated him completely different than before and had become all smiles with him.

Although the Dazhou Kingdom was quite far from the Gesun Kingdom and the Heavenly Eagle Kingdom, the news that had transpired there made its way around like wildfire. Even the faraway Dazhou Kingdom had heard the news and understood that the Heavenly Eagle Kingdom — a kingdom that was not as weak as the Dazhou Kingdom — had been laid waste to and destroyed by 500,000 elite soldiers and more than a dozen individuals from the Qinhuang Kingdom. This had allowed even the commoners of the continent to see the terrifying might of one of the Eight Great Powers.

When they learned that Qing Shaofan was an Imperial Advisor for the Qinhuang Kingdom and wished to use the Space Gate to return to the Qinhuang Kingdom, the king of the Dazhou Kingdom no longer held any doubts to his identity. He didn't even need proof that Qing Shaofan was who he said he was before allowing him to pass through their Space Gate to the Qinhuang Kingdom without any problems.

After returning to the Qinhuang Kingdom, Qing Shaofan ran like the wind and lightning back to the imperial palace where the Qin Heaven Palace was.

There was a total of five Qin Heaven Palaces in the imperial palace of the Qinhuang Kingdom. Each one was dedicated specifically for an Imperial Protector to use. They were the five palaces that held the most power in the imperial palace, and even the palace of the king of the Qinhuang Kingdom was incomparable.

Qing Shaofan arrived in front of one of the Qin Heaven Palace and was immediately stopped by one of the guards standing guard there.

“Please halt here, Imperial Advisor. Without the permission of the honored Imperial Protector, no one may enter.” The imperial guard spoke politely to Qing Shaofan.

Qing Shaofan nodded his head. “If I may trouble you to ask the honored Imperial Protector, Qing Shaofan has a matter of extreme importance to report. This matter relates to the honor of our Qinhuang Kingdom and the Imperial Protector Jian Chen.”

Hearing this, the imperial guard knew that this matter was of critical importance. Solemnly, he replied, “Please wait here, Imperial Advisor. This humble officer will immediately report to the honored Imperial Protector!” With that, the imperial guard captain personally ran into the palace.

Rapidly, the captain came running back out from the Qin Heaven Palace and spoke to Qing Shaofan, "Imperial Advisor, please enter!"

With a bow, Qing Shaofan sucked in a deep breath and tidied up his own clothes before striding into the Qin Heaven Palace.

"By the request of the honored Imperial Protector, please follow this slave servant, Imperial Advisor Qing Shaofan." As soon as Qing Shaofan entered the palace halls, a maid called out to him to follow her.

Not long after, the two came to a stop outside of a room. The doors to the room were closed shut, and the maid made no efforts to open them. Merely standing outside of them, she spoke respectfully, "A report for the honored Imperial Protector, the Imperial Advisor Qing Shaofan has been brought."

"You may leave!" A gentle but ample voice called out from within the room. From the voice, one could just barely make out the fact that this speaker was a middle-aged man.

"Yes, this slave servant will now depart!" The maid bowed before the door and left the area with light footsteps.

"Qing Shaofan wishes to pay his respects to the honored Imperial Protector." After the maid had left, Qing Shaofan immediately bowed ritualistically to the doors respectfully. Behind these doors, there was a hermit at the level of a Saint Ruler. An entity that was essentially a paramount.

"Qing Shaofan, you have a matter to report!" The man was still speaking quite gently, giving a warm and cordial sense. Compared to the Saint Ruler of the Sect of Dragon and Tiger, it was completely different.

"Honored Imperial Protector, the matters is as it stands..."

After making his opening statement, Qing Shaofan spoke in great detail of what had happened. He made sure to emphasize the rampant matters of the Sect of Dragon and Tiger and how they did not place the Qinhuang Kingdom in their eyes at all. It was hard to hide the fury in his eyes, and at last, Qing Shaofan spoke of how the Saint Ruler had clearly known and acknowledged that Jian Chen was an Imperial Protector of the Qinhuang Kingdom and had still inflicted a serious wound onto him.

Even the Imperial Protector in the room felt quite indignant after listening to Qing Shaofan's story. "The Sect of Dragon and Tiger knew that Jian Chen was an Imperial Protector for our Qinhuang Kingdom and still dared to attack him. This is simply an act against our Qinhuang Kingdom. Qing Shaofan, you acted appropriately. We of the Qinhuang Kingdom must protect the millennia of honor our country has built up. We will simply not allow anyone to challenge or make an enemy of our Qinhuang Kingdom. You may leave first. I will go discuss with the other three."

Chapter 512: The Personal Arrival of a Saint Ruler

Even the Imperial Protector in the room felt quite indignant after listening to Qing Shaofan's story. "The Sect of Dragon and Tiger knew that Jian Chen was an Imperial Protector for our Qinhuang Kingdom and still dared to attack him. This is simply an act against our Qinhuang Kingdom. Qing Shaofan, you acted appropriately. We of the Qinhuang Kingdom must protect the millennia of honor our country has built up. We will simply not allow anyone to challenge or make an enemy of our Qinhuang Kingdom. You may leave first. I will go discuss with the other three."

“Yes, honored Imperial Protector, Qin Shaofan will be taking his leave then!” Qin Shaofan spoke respectfully before bowing with his body and leaving the room with a light step to his feet.

After Qin Shaofan had left, the doors had abruptly opened, revealing a white robed middle-aged looking man that slowly walked out.

The middle-aged man didn't look past forty years old, but his hair was completely white. There was nothing to hold his hair up, so his hair hung freely over his shoulder like a silver waterfall.

The man's face was stalwart. His pitch-black eyes contained a depth similar to the stars in the night sky. They seemed to hide even the world itself, but from the light in his eyes, it was as if there was another expansive world to be seen in there.

This middle-aged man was one of the Imperial Protectors of the Qinhuang Kingdom, Qin Yunlong. Qin Yunlong was a member of the imperial palace and had been the king for the kingdom a thousand years ago. Not long after he had abdicated the throne, he made a breakthrough to reach the paramount realm of a Saint Ruler. From then on, he hid himself away in the Qin Heaven Palace where very few had seen him.

After Qin Yunlong exited his room, he walked toward the other palaces. Passing through the drawing room at the center, several maids could be seen chatting there.

As a maid within the Qin Heaven Palace, their statuses were among the highest in the Qinhuang Kingdom. There weren't many things to do in the Qin Heaven Palace aside from cleaning and any other everyday affairs. The Imperial Protectors spent all their time within their rooms cultivating, and aside from anything major, they would never come out. Some of the maids had gone tens of years without hearing the voice of one of the Imperial Protectors.

When Qin Yunlong appeared without a sound right in front of these maids, they immediately halted their conversation to stare at Qin Yunlong in brief amazement. Even their most basic manners had been forgotten at that moment.

Although some maids had been in the Qin Heaven Palace for many years, they had never personally seen the Imperial Protector before. There were very few people aside from them that would visit the Qin Heaven palace since not many people had even the right to do so in the first place. Even the guards on the outside would never dare enter the palace without something serious to report. So when this middle-aged man appeared in front of the maids, they were stunned for a good while. Ever since they had been hired to come to the Qin Heaven Palace, they had never seen a stranger enter it.

Not paying attention to the maids, Qin Yunlong walked toward the gates. As he approached the gates, they swung open without a sound.

Seeing Qin Yunlong disappear past the gates, the maids finally regained their wits. Thunderstruck, one of the maids let out a low gasp, “Dear heavens, he... he... he can't be the honored Imperial Protector, could he?”

Hearing this, the other maids immediately became as pale as a sheet. “I didn't think that the honored Imperial Protector would actually come out. It's all over, we didn't greet him at all. This isn't respectful

to the Imperial Protector at all! In the case that the honored Imperial Protector is offended, that'll be a capital offense for all of us.”

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Outside the Qin Heaven Palace, the imperial guards standing watch at the gates saw Qin Yunlong and were stunned as well. However, they immediately shaped up. They knelt down on their knee, “This petty officer pays his respects to the honored Imperial Protector!” The captain guard boomed first. He had already watched over the Qin Heaven Palace for a hundred years, and the last time he had seen the Imperial Protector Qin Yunlong had been at least fifty years ago. He knew full well that this person in front of him was one of the paramount Saint Rulers of the Tian Yuan Continent.

“This petty officer pays his respects to the honored Imperial Protector!”

The moment the imperial captain had mentioned “honored Imperial Protector” every single imperial guard standing watch over the Qin Heaven Palace immediately knew who this Qin Yunlong was and knelt down to the ground.

“There is no need to be so polite, rise!” Qin Yunlong rose both palms up, causing several hundred imperial guards to feel an immovable pressure come up from beneath their knees, bringing them up.

Qin Yunlong traveled through the imperial palace, and with each step he took, he traveled a few dozen meters. In a flash, he arrived at the other Qin Heaven Palace.

When he entered the Qin Heaven Palace, three elders had already gathered at a table. These three elders all had their hair tied up in a crane style, and aside from this, they were not that unordinary looking. Each one of them was extremely common in appearance — just like an ordinary elderly man. On the side, there were several maids trembling in fear as they poured tea.

Qin Yunlong didn't even greet anyone there. He instead walked straight to his magnificent throne at the table.

“Elder Qin, what matter did you call us three here for?” One of the elders spoke. His voice was quite high pitch as if he was speaking from a horn.

Qin Yunlong thought for a moment before speaking, “It primarily pertains to Jian Chen.” After that statement, he told the other three elders what Qing Shaofan had told him.

“I may have heard of this Sect of Dragon and Tiger before. They were established a few thousand years ago, but that Saint Ruler they have only made the breakthrough a thousand years ago. From what I know, they only have one Saint Ruler. Yet, they still have the cheek to act against our Qinhuang Kingdom.” An elder spoke.

“Hmph, a single Saint Ruler still dares offend our Qinhuang Kingdom. It seems in the thousand year peace for our kingdom, there have been several factions that have seen fit to remove us from their eyes.”

Qin Yunlong spoke, “What do the three of you propose we do about this?”

“Jian Chen has a talent that exceeds all else. There is no one else in history who has been able to reach the Heaven Saint Master realm at such a young age as he did. With access to the holy lands, there is no

need to debate if he will become a Saint Ruler, he may very well become a Saint King. Thus, he holds a very important position in our Qinhuang Kingdom. If the Saint Ruler of the Sect of Dragon and Tiger dares act against him, then we cannot just sit idly; otherwise, Jian Chen may very well hold us complaint.”

“I agree with that. No matter if we deal with the Sect of Dragon and Tiger as a way to protect the honor of the Qinhuang Kingdom or as a substitute for Jian Chen’s response, we must all see this through in person. Do you all agree?” Another elder spoke.

Qin Yunlong chuckled, “I was a member of the imperial palace of the Qinhuang Kingdom, and this matter concerns the prestige of my Qinhuang Kingdom. There is no way I could not do anything. Harry and I will be all that’s needed to go.”

“That’ll do. With you two, there’ll be nothing to worry about even if the Sect of Dragon and Tiger has outside help. When will you two set out?”

“It is best not to delay matters, we will leave now.”

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Afterward, Qin Yunlong and Harry called in Qing Shaofan. He led the two Saint Rulers to the Space Gate to leave the Qinhuang Kingdom.

In the center of the imperial palace in the Heavenly Eagle Kingdom, there was a fist-sized hole in the middle of a large clearing. In that hole was another fist-sized crystal.

Just at that moment, a multi-colored light came flashing out from the previously ordinary looking crystal. After that flash, the space above it began to ripple and twist before gradually forming a three meter high doorway.

When the Space Gate formed, Jian Chen and the other twelve individuals immediately sensed it. Flying into the middle of the palace at high-speeds, they came to a stop right in front of it. After the Space Gate had completely stabilized, one was able to clearly see the scene within the space — the imperial palace of the Qinhuang Kingdom.

Qing Shaofan and two Imperial Protectors from the Qinhuang Kingdom stepped through the Space Gate. The Space Gate then winked out of existence after they crossed.

“We pay our respects to the honored Imperial Protectors!” The twelve Imperial Advisors bowed in salute. They were all of the Qinhuang Kingdom and knew of the first four Imperial Protectors of the Qinhuang Kingdom.

Jian Chen stared curiously at the middle-aged and elderly man behind Qing Shaofan. Although he knew that both of them were Saint Rulers, his heart did not feel anything out of the ordinary. This was because he had seen this type of existence many times before. The first had been those dozen elders back in Mercenary City, and then the mother of the white tiger cub, Rum Guinness. Then, there was the old Ape King of the Spirit Apes. All of them were of the Saint Ruler realm.

After seeing so many Saint Rulers, Jian Chen had gradually grown insensitive to them, and no longer felt as excited as he had the first time he saw one.

The eyes of the two Saint Rulers gathered on Jian Chen before the elderly one smiled, "You must be Jian Chen!"

Jian Chen cupped his hands together, "This one is Jian Chen, I pay my respect to my seniors."

"Jian Chen, there is no need for the politeness. I am Qin Yunlong, the 173rd generation king of the Qinhuang Kingdom. By my side is Harry, although he is not of our kingdom, he is my best friend." Qin Yunlong smiled, speaking to Jian Chen as if they were on equal standing. In the eyes of the Qinhuang Kingdom, Jian Chen was the future pillar of the kingdom. Although there was currently four Saint Rulers for the Qinhuang Kingdom, they would not live forever. One day, there would come a time for their lives to end.

Seeing how amiable and approachable these two Saint Rulers were, Jian Chen gained a very nice first impression of the two.

Words of greeting and conversation were made promptly afterward before the two Saint Rulers moved to the crux of the problem. "Jian Chen, the two of us already know about the aggressions of the Sect of Dragon and Tiger. Our Qinhuang Kingdom will certainly not leave matters at this. You can lead the way, and we will meet and deal with that Saint Ruler."

Chapter 513: Invitation of the Saint Ruler

The arrival of two Saint Rulers had instilled a great amount of confidence in Jian Chen. His heart now no longer feared the Sect of Dragon and Tiger. After they had arrived, the entire group set off for the sect with the two Saint Rulers leading the way.

A day later, Jian Chen and the others from the Qinhuang Kingdom reached the Sect of Dragon and Tiger once more. Seeing the towering buildings of the sect on the mountain, no one felt any more pressure in their hearts. The pressure that was once exerted on them by the Saint Ruler was gone without a trace. That was due to the fact that the two Saint Rulers that had come from the Qinhuang Kingdom completely dominated over the one from the Sect of Dragon and Tiger.

"Honored guests from the Qinhuang Kingdom, if you are inclined, please come into the Sect of Dragon and Tiger to sit!"

When everyone had gotten close to the mountain gates, a calm elderly voice could be heard from the interior of the sect. This was the voice of the Saint Ruler of the Sect of Dragon and Tiger.

Perhaps it was because he was dealing with two Saint Rulers from the Qinhuang Kingdom, but the Saint Ruler of the Sect of Dragon and Tiger's attitude had completely vanished. Several days ago, Jian Chen and the other Heaven Saint Masters weren't able to pinpoint where the Saint Ruler's voice was coming from. However this time, they could clearly hear that it was coming from within the sect now.

The voice of the Saint Ruler had made its way to the ears of many individuals within the sect. In shock, they piled out one after another from the buildings and stared solemnly at the flying group of people off in the distance.

When the sectmaster Kris and the other Heaven Saint Masters heard the Saint Ruler speak, they grew especially grim. They knew that if the Saint Ruler called someone honored guests, then that meant they

were of equal standings with him. Plus, there were two of them which meant the pressure they felt had multiplied greatly.

Qin Yunlong gave a cold smile as he stared deeply at the Sect of Dragon and Tiger, "You all stay here. Harry and I will go inside to meet with that Saint Ruler."

After that, Qin Yunlong and Harry both transformed into two currents of light and flew to the sect at unbelievable speeds. Their speed was so fast that even the space around their bodies began to slightly distort.

In that split moment, the two figures of the Saint Rulers from the Qinhuang Kingdom disappeared from Jian Chen's sight. Their speed had been so fast that even Jian Chen had been astonished.

Jian Chen and the others stared anxiously at the encampment where the sect was. "How do you think the two honored Imperial Protectors will deal with this situation?" Xiao Tian asked.

"That doesn't even need to be said. The Sect of Dragon and Tiger may be a major sect on the continent, but they only have a single Saint Ruler. How could they be a match for our Qinhuang Kingdom? The honor of our kingdom cannot be so easily violated. So I can see that if the Sect of Dragon and Tiger wishes to get by this peacefully, they have no other choice but to pay a hefty price." One of the Imperial Advisors spoke.

"Correct. Now that two Imperial Protectors have personally arrived, the Saint Ruler of the Sect of Dragon and Tiger wouldn't dare keep the same attitude he had several days back, or else the Sect of Dragon and Tiger will be razed down to the ground today."

"I would look forward to that. The destruction of the Sect of Dragon and Tiger isn't very important, but what's truly important is that we would have the good fortune of being able to witness a battle between Saint Rulers. I have lived for many years, but I have never seen a battle between Saint Rulers before." Qin Wujian smiled joyously.

Hearing this, Qin Wutian agreed as well. "Yes, I wish to see that Saint Ruler remain unyielding. That way, we will be able to see the strength of a Saint Ruler." The two brothers had an expectant gleam in their eyes in eagerness to see the two Saint Rulers from the Qinhuang Kingdom fight against the Saint Ruler from the Sect of Dragon and Tiger.

Hearing the two chatter, Qin Wuming's face grew slightly dark as he growled, "You two settle down. Are you two even capable of discussing the matters of the Imperial Protectors?"

Qin Wuming was clearly held in high regard by both Qin Wujian and Qin Wutian. With a few words, Qin Wujian and Qin Wutian instantly grew quiet. Although they were all Heaven Saint Masters, the two brothers didn't dare go against their own father.

Afterward, no one bothered to speak anymore. They watched the empty space above the Sect of Dragon and Tiger in silence. Many of them had already predicted a good show, leaving them quite expectant.

In this quiet moment, time seemed to have gone by in rapid succession. Unknowingly, a candle wicks worth of time had passed by, but there had been no explosion or sounds of battle to be seen or heard

from the interior of the sect. Not even a single iota of battle presence could be felt; it was as if all was quiet in the world.

Seeing the period of calmness in the sect, Jian Chen's eyebrows creased together. This was something he felt was different than what he had imagined.

Continuing to stand there, two hours had quickly gone by before the two Saint Rulers from the Qinhuang Kingdom finally came back out.

Upon this sight, Jian Chen had a look of disappointment flash briefly across his face before disappearing just as quickly. The two Saint Rulers' way of dealing with this situation had been quite different than what Jian Chen had expected. In his mind, he would never let such a matter like this be let off so easily. He had been heavily injured by the Saint Ruler of the Sect of Dragon and Tiger after all. If not for the fact that the Saint Ruler had been afraid of his title of an Imperial Protector, then Jian Chen might have not been able to leave the sect that day.

That was because the Saint Ruler of the Sect of Dragon and Tiger had deeply coveted the strength of the azure and violet Sword Spirits Jian Chen had.

The two Saint Rulers walked into view of everyone, but their faces were quite unwell, gloomy even. Qin Yunlong especially had a bit of a frosty gleam in his usually deep eyes.

The thirteen Heaven Saint Masters and Jian Chen tried to discern information from their body language. Seeing how the two Saint Rulers were in such a state, everyone grew quiet for a moment, instantly growing serious. They all realized that the situation had to have some sort of terrifying or unwanted turn of events.

"Seniors, what is the result of this matter?" Jian Chen couldn't help but ask. In this group, only he had an identity high enough to speak. If it wasn't him that did, then it wouldn't be suitable.

Qin Yunlong spoke, "Jian Chen, your grievances with the Sect of Dragon and Tiger concludes here."

Hearing this, Jian Chen's face changed abruptly. Muttering, he asked, "Seniors, could it be that the Sect of Dragon and Tiger is far too strong to have seniors be afraid?"

Qin Yunlong shook his head, "That isn't it. The Sect of Dragon and Tiger is nothing to worry about, but there is still a secret to be revealed here. Jian Chen, we two will head back to the Qinhuang Kingdom straight away and will be taking our leave first."

"May seniors have a good voyage!" Jian Chen cupped his hands.

"May the honored Imperial Protectors have a good voyage!" The thirteen Heaven Saint Masters bowed in respect.

Qin Yunlong stared at the thirteen individuals and spoke, "Help Imperial Protector Jian Chen tidy up the rest of the affairs here and then come back when finished." With that, Qin Yunlong and Harry immediately left the area. Their speed was extremely fast, and in that instant, they had already disappeared off into the horizon with haste.

Seeing the two Saint Rulers recede away, Jian Chen and the other thirteen felt unwell. From the appearances of the two Saint Rulers, everyone could tell that something terrifying must have happened and bore relevance to the Qinhuang Kingdom.

“Let us go back then!” Jian Chen called out to everyone and prepared to leave.

“Might everyone stay here for a little longer!” Suddenly, a voice called out from behind. Everyone could see the sectmaster Kris come flying out. He ascended in front of Jian Chen.

Seeing the sectmaster Kris, Jian Chen’s face darkened as he spoke coldly, “Sectmaster Kris, what business might you have?” If not for the fact that there was a Saint Ruler hidden in the sect behind him, then Jian Chen would wish nothing more than to inflict yet more serious damage to Kris.

There was a carefree smile on his face as if he had completely forgotten about the matters that had happened a few days ago. Cupping his hands, he spoke, “Imperial Protector, our elder sectmaster wishes for you to sit within our sect for the time being.”

Hearing this, Jian Chen started while the other thirteen individuals from the Qinhuang Kingdom instantly displayed gloomy and cold expressions on their faces.

Sensing the hostility from everyone around him, Kris revealed a faint smile, “Everyone needs not worry. Our elder sectmaster only wishes to chat with the Imperial Protector and increase our goodwill with each other. There will be nothing done to make it unfavorable for the Imperial Protector. After all, our sect doesn’t dare become an enemy for your Qinhuang kingdom.”

The thirteen felt the tension ease from their faces, but they looked to Jian Chen one after another. If it had been anyone else that had asked, then they would have said no for Jian Chen, but the request had come from an enemy Saint Ruler.

Jian Chen hesitated. He didn’t know just what the Saint Ruler had done to make the two Saint Rulers from the Qinhuang Kingdom give up their pursuit on this matter, but the words Qin Yunlong had mentioned before comforted Jian Chen — the Sect of Dragon and Tiger was nothing to worry about.

With that in mind, Jian Chen felt a little relieved. Agreeing to Kris’ proposal, he replied, “If I don’t go, it would appear that I, Jian Chen, feared your Sect of Dragon and Tiger. That’s all then. If your elder sectmaster wishes to talk with me, then I will see just what he wishes to talk with me about.” Jian Chen turned back to the thirteen Heaven Saint Masters, “Wait here for the moment. I will go in.” With that, Jian Chen didn’t delay for even a second and flew straight into the interior of the sect.

Under Kris’ lead, Jian Chen arrived at the mountain in the back of the sect and finally came to a stop right in front of a cavern.

“Imperial Protector, the elder sectmaster is in this place. I’m afraid I cannot accompany you into this cavern.” Kris spoke to Jian Chen right outside of the entrance.

Jian Chen didn’t speak a word and strode into the cavern by himself. Passing through a hundred meter corridor, he finally arrived at an expansive space within the mountain. It was well illuminated, and countless of fist-sized night pearls adorned the ceiling of the cavern to provide the entire place with some light.

The cavern was simple in arrangement. In the middle, there was a simple stone table built, and a single layer of dust could be clearly seen on the table. This cavern had clearly not been swept for a very long time. Not only was the table like this, but even the ground was no exception. Whenever Jian Chen took a step, a clear footprint could be seen left behind.

Jian Chen swept his eyes around the place only to discover that there was no one here. Just as he was about to become doubtful, a clear sound could be heard from the side where a stone door began to open, allowing a black-robed elder to appear in front of Jian Chen.

This elder had a crane-styled haircut and was quite tall and sturdy. His back was built like a bear and his shoulders like a tiger. Just standing there, he was like a tall shield at about two meters tall — a height that was about a head taller than Jian Chen.

Chapter 514: Negotiations

Seeing this elder, Jian Chen's eyes flashed with a fierce gleam that was not at all hard to see. There was no need to even think to know that this elder was without a doubt the Saint Ruler of the Sect of Dragon and Tiger.

Jian Chen stood there in silence and observed the Saint Ruler without a word of greeting or movement. There was no good-will felt for this Saint Ruler since the memory of him being severely injured by him was still fresh in Jian Chen's mind.

The elder paid no mind to Jian Chen's silence and lackluster movements. He just stared at Jian Chen with eyes that seemed unnaturally deep. They almost seemed capable of seeing through the secrets Jian Chen had without fail. With a smile, he spoke, "It is no wonder you are an Imperial Protector for the Qinhuang Kingdom even as a Heaven Saint Master. With a talent that exceeds all others, it is still rare to see someone so young to step into the Heaven Saint Master realm."

The Saint Ruler paused his words when he didn't see Jian Chen reply, but continued to speak again afterward. "There is a life-or-death threshold to cross from an Earth Saint Master to a Heaven Saint Master. This threshold is one of the only times of danger a cultivator experiences in his or her progression. For an Earth Saint Master to make the breakthrough to become a Heaven Saint Master, they need to be able to control the energy of the world as well. This step is something that countless of talented Earth Saint Masters may not be able to accomplish; thus, their road ends there. Only a few destined ones make it past this obstruction and make that next step into the realm of the Heaven Saint Masters."

"It is more difficult than the previous two obstacles for a Heaven Saint Master to make the breakthrough to become a Saint Ruler. For to become a Saint Ruler, one must be able to comprehend the mysteries of the world. These mysteries of the world are far more complex than the energies of the world, cultivation talent will not make up for the deficit of not understanding. Within the Tian Yuan Continent, those with unparalleled talent are not many, but there are still enough that have become a Heaven Saint Master under the age of fifty. Among those that did, the ones that became a Saint Ruler can be counted on one's fingers. However even among them, there are many that fell off the road halfway and were unable to understand the mysteries of the world and remained a Heaven Saint Master."

Hearing this, Jian Chen's eyebrows creased together and spoke expressionlessly "Senior, did you call me here in hopes to give me this tidbit of information?"

The Saint Ruler gave a faint smile, "Don't be in such a hurry. Listen to what I have to say first, Jian Chen. I know that you are the number one mercenary from the most recent Gathering of the Mercenaries, and you were able to enter the holy lands to cultivate. Although legend has it on the continent that anyone that is able to enter the holy lands will later make the breakthrough to become a Saint Ruler, it is only a possibility. Think about how long Mercenary City has existed on the continent, and how many times a person was able to enter the holy lands to cultivate every fifty years. With so many years gone by since its creation, the amount of people that have entered the holy lands are plenty, but in the end, how many of them managed to become a Saint Ruler?"

The Saint Ruler looked to Jian Chen and continued to speak, "Jian Chen, I have a scroll here that I found several hundred years ago in a cave that belonged to a Saint Ruler. This scroll contains the realizations of a Heaven Saint Master that became a Saint Ruler and was what I relied upon years ago to study and make the breakthrough to become a Saint Ruler. Although this scroll is not that useful for a Saint Ruler, it is a treasure among treasures for a Heaven Saint Master, for this scroll is a shortcut to the path of a Saint Ruler."

Hearing this, Jian Chen could already more or less figure out what the Saint Ruler was planning. His mouth curled into an icy smile, "Senior, do you mean to say that you wish to give this scroll to me in exchange for something from me, correct?"

"Correct!" The Saint Ruler gave up beating around the bush and continued with what he had wanted to say straight away, "Jian Chen, this old man can give you this scroll free of charge, but on one condition, this old man wishes to know about the secret of that mysterious power. Where would one be able to obtain this secret, and how would one be able to cultivate its secrets?"

Jian Chen didn't hesitate to shake his head with the same cold smile, "My apologies, senior. Please forgive this one for not being able to answer!"

The Saint Ruler was not angered. It seemed that he had predicted this outcome and patiently explained, "Jian Chen, consider this deal for a while. Although you may be the strongest of all beneath Saint Rulers with that energy, you are still a weak little ant in front of a Saint Ruler. To exchange the mystery that is that energy for a shortcut to become a Saint Ruler does not negatively impact you."

"There is no need for considerations. Senior, if there is nothing more that needs to be said, then this one will be taking my leave." Jian Chen cupped his hands and prepared to leave.

"Jian Chen, if you are still not pleased with this transaction, then I will add on an additional object." The Saint Ruler was adamant and really wished to know the mystery behind the energy Jian Chen possessed.

Jian Chen hesitated slightly, but for the Saint Ruler to learn of the Origin energy of the azure and violet Sword Spirits, that was not a good thing. Despite his concerns, Jian Chen did not yield, "I am afraid to disappoint senior, but no matter what priceless treasure you offer me, I will not divulge my secrets. Senior, please give up on this." With that, Jian Chen turned around and left. Despite the other person being a Saint Ruler, he did not fear him at all.

After Jian Chen had left, the Saint Ruler's warm expression instantly froze over. Staring at the disappearing figure of Jian Chen, his eyes revealed a frosty glare, "If you refuse my toast, then take the wine instead!" With that, the space within the cave seemed to instantly freeze over, and it seemed that time had completely stopped within.

After leaving the sect, Jian Chen's heart grew firm. Now that the Saint Ruler of the Sect of Dragon and Tiger was thinking about the Origin energy of the azure and violet Sword Spirits, this could be a potential threat to Jian Chen. Although he had the support of the Qinhuang Kingdom, the Sect of Dragon and Tiger wouldn't be too afraid to conduct a covert move against him.

Jian Chen regrouped with Xiao Tian and the others. When they saw how serious Jian Chen was, someone immediately asked in concern, "Imperial Protector, did the Saint Ruler not do anything with you?"

"He covets the energy I wield." Jian Chen spoke gravely.

Hearing this, the dozen Imperial Advisors blanched. To have a Saint Ruler set his eyes on someone was not a good thing. Furthermore, they could all predict what would happen after this was over.

"Imperial Protector, we may as well head back to the Qinhuang Kingdom. In there, the Sect of Dragon and Tiger wouldn't dare do anything to you." Tian Luo proposed.

"For the time being, I cannot. There is still plenty I need to do. Well, we shouldn't talk about this for now. Let's leave first, it's unclear whether or not the things we fear are superfluous or not." Jian Chen spoke.

A day later, the group of people arrived back at the imperial palace of the Heavenly Eagle Kingdom. As soon as they had descended, a single silver-armored soldier came running forward and knelt in front of Jian Chen, "A report for the honored Imperial Protector. The treasury has been completely dismantled. All of the materials have been placed within Space Rings and are ready for transport."

Jian Chen took the Space Ring and inspected the materials inside. Sure enough, there were plenty of piles of tempered steel that formed a mini-mountain range.

Jian Chen kept the Space Ring and spoke to every soldier, "Gather everyone and return to the Gesun Kingdom."

The matters within the Heavenly Eagle Kingdom had long since been finished, and the business with the Sect of Dragon and Tiger had been temporarily finished. There was no point in staying here any longer, so Jian Chen and the group had no desire to stay in the imperial palace either. They immediately left the palace, and returned to the Gesun Kingdom.

This time, the entire group split between two paths. Jian Chen and the Imperial Advisors traveled together through the air toward the Gesun Kingdom while the three generals traveled with the hundred elite soldiers, who were mounted on their magical beasts, toward the Gesun Kingdom on ground.

With the speed of flying through the air, Jian Chen and the ten other individuals had only wasted two days worth of time before arriving back at the Gesun Kingdom. When they descended down into Lore City, they were greeted by the 500,000 Eastern Deity Soldiers who had returned several days before them. At this moment, all of the soldiers were gathered in a large encampment near Lore City.

Jian Chen and the other ten individuals from the Qinhuang Kingdom entered Lore City and slowly landed in the Changyang Manor.

The Changyang Manor had been completed several days ago as well. Its scale was at least double than what it was before and a giant street now encompassed the outside of it. The ceremony for the manor had not been conducted because the most important figure of the Changyang clan had not returned yet. The family and guards of the Changyang clan had remained within the inns, living there during this time. Before the ceremony started, no one dared enter the manor. This was one of the traditions of the Tian Yuan Continent they feared to break.

As soon as Jian Chen and his group descended down to the ground, another group of people could be seen hurrying toward them. Leading the group was Changyang Ba and Bi Yuntian. Chang Wuji and several of the other elders followed them from behind.

Seeing the ten Imperial Advisors gather around Jian Chen like the stars around the moon, Changyang Ba displayed a look of utmost pride in his eyes. Laughing merrily, he spoke, "Xiang'er, I didn't think that you would return this quickly. We only returned two hours ago ourselves."

Seeing his parents, Jian Chen immediately felt happier and smiled in greeting, "Father, mother!"

"Xiang'er, the matters with the Heavenly Eagle Kingdom have been taken care of now, correct? There was no problems I hope." Changyang Ba asked in concern.

"En, everything has been taken care of. Father doesn't need to worry about these matters anymore." Jian Chen gave a comforting smile. He simply didn't dare speak about the matters that had happened with the Sect of Dragon and Tiger since he knew that his parents would be even more worried.

"That's fine then. Xiang'er, the manor has been completely rebuilt. Now that you've returned, let us conduct the official ceremony in three days. Xiang'er, was there something you wanted to say?" Changyang Ba spoke. In front of his own son, he seemed to have forgotten about his own position as the head of the clan and completely handed the discussion over to Jian Chen.

"Father, as long as you are the host, then it's fine." Jian Chen smiled.

"So it'll be then. Now that this matter is over, Chang Wuji, I'll have to trouble you with sending out the invitations. Please invite the officials of the Gesun Kingdom for them to participate in the official ceremony of the Changyang Manor in three days time." Changyang Ba boomed with laughter.

Chapter 515: A Visit From Elders Feng and Yun

The situation for the Changyang clan in the Gesun Kingdom was far different than before. The opening ceremony was extremely magnificent, and every single major party within the kingdom had been invited — even the Hua Yun Sect that had caused trouble for the Changyang clan had been no exception.

No one that had received an invitation had declined it. On the very first day after the invitations were sent out, plenty of people had already shown up to Lore City. These people were all the strongest representatives of their respective clans or families, and they were here to pay respect to the honorable Changyang Clan. As a side mission, they were trying their best to show the friendliest of intentions to them.

This time, the inhabitants of the Gesun Kingdom weren't the only ones that knew about the trek of the Qinhuang Kingdom and Gesun Kingdom to the Heavenly Eagle Kingdom. All of the surrounding kingdoms had gained knowledge of the information as well. It stirred a giant wave of attention from even the more influential factions. Even the movement of the Eastern Deity Swords had been investigated before everyone had made a startling conclusion. The reason why the Qinhuang Kingdom was helping the Gesun Kingdom was because of the Changyang clan.

Therefore, even people who hadn't been invited to the opening ceremony of the Changyang clan showed up alongside the ones that had with plenty of precious gifts to present to the clan. All sorts of nobles showed up to Lore City, giving every single inn within the city to reach an all time high of prosperity in the history of their business. Some inns had completely filled up within a single day, forcing several mercenaries to have no choice but to camp in the city outskirts.

The guests who had arrived late all had a look of helplessness when they saw the jampacked inns. In the end, they had to take a leaf from the mercenaries' book and set up a camp in an open clearing with feelings of injustice.

The amount of people coming to congratulate them caused the entire Changyang clan to be taken back, but under the careful arrangements of Chang Bai, he was able to expand the entire banquet out onto the surrounding streets. There were now well over a thousand tables, and every single chef from Lore City had been hired to help.

Three days later, the Changyang clan's banquet finally started, but the ceremonial host was Changyang Ba while Jian Chen himself was hidden from sight. This led many people, that were looking forward to seeing Jian Chen, to feel disappointed.

The ceremony for the opening of the manor had been grand, but it did not last for long. After a single day, it was over. On the second day, every single person visiting had left one after another.

After the ceremony ended, the people of the Changyang clan finally began to officially move in and recruit some more guards. Although the Changyang clan was well known without anyone in the Gesun Kingdom daring to go against them, there was still plenty of work to do.

Within the center of the newly constructed Changyang clan, there was a magnificent hall created for Jian Chen, which had been proposed by the elders of the clan. This would be a place meant specifically for Jian Chen to use, and not only was the exterior magnificent, the interior design and decorations were splendid.

At this moment, Jian Chen, You Yue, Ming Dong, Qin Ji, Dugu Feng, Yun Zheng, and Senior An were all gathered around a round table.

At that moment, a guard came running in, "A report for the fourth master, there are two guests who go by the names elder Feng and elder Yun here to see you."

"What? Elders Yun and Feng!" Jian Chen was startled. Those two elders were from the Huang family, but he never would have thought that the two of them would have taken the initiative to look for him.

"Could they be here for the Saint Ruler's skeleton?" Jian Chen couldn't help but think with a dark expression.

“Jian Chen. Who are these two elders? Are they friend or foe?” Ming Dong asked.

Jian Chen hesitated before saying, “Acquaintances from the past. If everyone could sit here for now, I will take my leave first.” With that, Jian Chen immediately left the room to walk to the gates of Changyang Manor where the two elders, Feng and Yun, were waiting. The two of them displayed gentle smiles and gave off the feeling of amiable and friendly people.

“Seniors, what wind has brought you two here to my home today? This one is truly surprised.” Jian Chen cupped his hands together with a smile to greet the two.

“Haha, fourth master, perhaps, are we not welcome to pay a visit here?” Elder Feng cupped his hands in return. Using the title ‘fourth master’ instead of Jian Chen was a sign of speaking to Jian Chen with his proper title.

“Seniors are definitely welcome, please, come in.” Jian Chen smiled cordially and led the two elders into the manor.

Within one of the more private rooms, the three men sat down before Jian Chen spoke straightforwardly, “Seniors, I presume you are not here for the Saint Ruler’s skeleton.”

The two elders laughed merrily before elder Feng replied, “The fourth master misunderstands, the two of us are here solely to pay a visit and not for the skeleton. You are after all a benefactor of our Huang family. While the Saint Ruler’s skeleton is important, our Huang family will not show ingratitude to a friend. Neither would we do such an act like that and earn animosity with the Qinhuang Kingdom, we would not dare infuriate an Imperial Protector from that kingdom.”

Hearing this, Jian Chen’s eyes flashed with a gleam of light. He hadn’t thought that the Huang family would be able to find out that he was the Imperial Protector of the Qinhuang Kingdom so fast.

When he heard that the Huang family was not here for the Saint Ruler’s skeleton, Jian Chen let out a sigh in relief. With a brief moment of hesitation, he spoke, “If not for the Saint Ruler’s skeleton, then what matters might seniors be here for?”

“Haha, fourth master. We are here because our patriarch wishes to invite you to serve as an honored guest at our Huang family.” Elder Feng smiled.

“You wish for me to be a guest at your Huang family? There are no social ties between your Huang family and I.” Jian Chen was suspicious.

“Haha, fourth master, it is our patriarch that invited you. Whatever reason there might be, the two of us do not know. The fourth master just needs to understand that our Huang family bears no ill will toward you.” Elder Feng spoke.

“Yes, fourth master, our Huang family has no grudge to bear against you. Not only does our patriarch wish to see you, the young miss wishes to see you again as well.” Elder Yun sighed, “If not for the fact that our young miss is currently busy taking care of several matters at home, I’m afraid she would have sought you out earlier.”

Hearing elder Yun mention the young miss, Jian Chen immediately thought of the yellow-robed woman of unmatched beauty as well as the very beginning part of the free-for-all portion of the Gathering of the Mercenaries. Unconsciously, he asked, "Is it Huang Luan?"

"Correct, it is the young miss, Huang Luan. Fourth master, our young miss has been missing you quite so for these past few suns. If you come to our Huang family, please come see her as well." Elder Yun sighed with a complicated expression on his face.

Jian Chen sat there in deliberation for a brief moment before nodding, "Fine then. I agree to visit your Huang family. What time would you like?"

At this, the two elders immediately grew excited. "Fourth master, if you have nothing important at the moment, then we can go now."

"Go now? That quickly?" Jian Chen was stunned.

Elder Feng nodded. "There is indeed some panic because the young miss has come across some trouble and wishes to see if you can help her. To be brief, the sooner we go, the better."

Hearing elder Feng speak, Jian Chen had made up his mind. "Fine then, please wait for me as I bid farewell to my family."

An hour later, Jian Chen had said goodbye to everyone and followed the two elders away from the Changyang Manor. Along with the three, Xiao Tian, Qing Shaofan, Cao Keqin, Dongyi Junbai, and Tian Luo all came with Jian Chen.

Taking the five of them to the Huang family had been Qin Ji's idea. When Qin Ji had heard that Jian Chen was going to the Huang family, he had immediately worried for Jian Chen's safety. He had been adamant that Jian Chen bring five Imperial Advisors with him. In the end, Jian Chen had no other choice but to agree to Qin Ji's request. Taking five of the most trusted Imperial Advisors to serve as a way to show off prestige.

It was only 30,000 kilometers from the Gesun Kingdom to the Huang family. Jian Chen and the five Imperial Advisors only needed a single day and night to follow the two elders before finally arriving at their home.

The Huang family was a family-based power that was located on top of a beautiful and spiritually rich mountain. From the moment Jian Chen and the others descended down, they could see plenty of buildings littering the mountains.

As they drew near, two Heaven Saint Masters flew up from the compound and stopped right in front of the two elders Yun and Feng.

These two middle-aged men were tall and sturdy with doughty faces. Their tiger eyes gleamed brilliantly and hid a tremendous amount of power within them.

Jian Chen sized up the two men in front of him. From just how much power they exuded, Jian Chen guessed that these two men were at the very least Fourth Cycle Heaven Saint Masters.

"So it's elder Feng and elder Yun." The two men cupped their hands toward the elder before their eyes turned to stare at Jian Chen and the five Imperial Advisors.

The two elders returned the greeting before turning around to Jian Chen. "Fourth master, these two are elders of our Huang family. The two of them are brothers named Huang Lan and Huang Feng."

"This one is Jian Chen. I wish the two elders good health." Jian Chen put on a faint smile and cupped his hands together. The other five Imperial Advisors bowed as well with their hands cupped together, but they remained silent.

Elder Feng continued to speak, "Elders Huang Lan and Huang Feng, these five are the honored guests from the Qinhuang Kingdom and are here by invitation from the patriarch."

Chapter 516: Ancestor of the Huang Family

Upon hearing that Jian Chen and the others were guests from the Qinhuang Kingdom here by invitation from the patriarch, Huang Lan and Huang Feng immediately grew solemn and began to look at Jian Chen and the others in a new light.

The Qinhuang Kingdom was several times stronger than someone like the Huang family.

"We welcome our guests from the Qinhuang Kingdom into our Huang family. Your arrival has truly brought light to our humble Huang family, please, come in." Elder Huang Lan spoke cordially and guided the others in with a smile.

"Elders Huang Lan and Huang Feng, please continue with whatever tasks you have. I will be bringing our guests to the patriarch at once." Elder Feng smiled.

Huang Lan and Huang Feng immediately felt some veneration for the patriarch at the mention of him. In the Huang family, the patriarch was the one they held in the highest esteem.

"Then we won't waste the precious time of our honored guests. Elder Feng, elder Yun, we'll leave the two of you to receive our guests then." Elder Huang Feng smiled. Ever since they had realized that Jian Chen and the others were from the Qinhuang Kingdom, their attitudes had grown extremely amiable.

After bidding farewell to the two elders, elder Feng and Yun led Jian Chen inside the compound and to a gigantic palace at the center of it.

Upon arrival, a single middle-aged man walked out from the hall, "Elder Feng, elder Yun, the patriarch is already waiting for you all in the halls. If everyone could please enter."

The two elders nodded before guiding Jian Chen and the five Imperial Advisors into the hall.

It was extensively spacious in the hall, but it was filled with a tremendous amount of pressure. Despite the simple arrangement inside, Jian Chen could distinctly feel the broad amount of grandeur that disseminated from the the entire hall in a different way than the imperial palace of the Qinhuang Kingdom.

This hall had existed for a very long time. Although it was built with plenty of precious building materials, it was not able to withstand the passage of time. The entire hall had the scars left behind by time, giving it an ancient but desolate feeling.

Jian Chen's eyes looked around at the twenty or so chairs placed on both sides of the giant hall. Ten other elders around the age of seventy could be seen seated without a word, their eyes closed. On the

throne up front, a single white-robed crane-haired elder could be seen seated on it. There was a faint smile on his face that gave the impression of being warm and gentle as if he was a benevolent old man.

Just as Jian Chen and the group of seven all entered the hall, the ten elders opened their eyes at the same time. Their eyes were full of a bright light that seemed to stare curiously at the six.

“Patriarch, the honored guests have been brought. This one here is the one invited, while the others behind him are the Imperial Advisors for the Qinhuang Kingdom.” At the center of the palace, the elder Feng cupped his hands and spoke to the elder seated at the front.

“This one is Jian Chen, I pay my respects to patriarch Huang!” Jian Chen smiled as he cupped his hands.

The seated elder returned a smile to Jian Chen, “For an Imperial Protector of the Qinhuang Kingdom to stay as a guest in my Huang family, it is a great honor. Please, have a seat!” The destruction of the Heavenly Eagle Kingdom had been something every single power in the vicinity had paid attention to. Therefore, Jian Chen’s identity as an Imperial Protector for the Qinhuang Kingdom had long since been known to them.

Jian Chen and the other five Imperial Advisors wasted no more time and sat in vacant chairs.

Once everyone was seated, the seated patriarch spoke out loud, “Allow this humble person to introduce myself. This old man was the patriarch of the Huang family two generations ago, but that was well over sixty years ago. Originally I had planned to stay within the back of the mountains to cultivate and ignore the family matters, but a visit from an honored guest from the Qinhuang Kingdom is far too important for this old man to not personally oversee. If I was negligent in receiving, please excuse this one for it.”

Afterward, Jian Chen and the patriarch exchanged several more words before quickly getting to the center of the problem.

“Imperial Protector, this time I have invited you here to be an honored guest in our household. Aside from a matter with the ancestor, our Huang family still has a small understanding we wish to resolve with the Imperial Protector.” The patriarch spoke.

“Patriarch, please just call me Jian Chen. It is more pleasing to the ear to me, and for whatever business it is, the patriarch is free to say it without worry.” Jian Chen replied.

“Then, I will call you Jian Chen from here on out.” The patriarch continued, “Jian Chen, I heard of what had transpired in that empty space in the Gathering of the Mercenaries from the mouth of Huang Luan directly. Right here, I wish to represent the Huang family as I give our thanks to you for helping safeguard our Solunar Bow.”

Although a Ruler Armament is an extremely precious treasure to any family, the bicentennial Gathering of the Mercenaries was also very important. It meant so much to people that the Huang family, the Shi family, and even the Qinhuang Kingdom had spent countless amounts of energy in vying for the number one spot in the tournament. For whoever was able to become the King of mercenaries would possess the right of being able to cultivate in the holy lands for a period of time. This was a very good way of setting the foundation to become a Saint Ruler in the future. Thus, every single top-notch family would do their best to help whichever outstanding talent they had. As long as they had the possibility of

someone in their family becoming number one, it didn't matter how many more times they participated in the Gathering of the Mercenaries, they would still gain a Heaven Tier Battle Skill to take home.

Huang Luan was the most outstanding person to appear within that generation of the Huang family. Not only was she a direct descendant of the main family, she was already an Earth Saint Master at her age. For that reason, the patriarch had decided on lending her a Ruler Armament to use in hopes that she could demonstrate her extraordinary talent within the Gathering of the Mercenaries and hopefully become number one. If she happened to gain the rights to cultivate in the holy lands, then with her talent in cultivation, Huang Luan would in the future make the breakthrough to become a Saint Ruler that would make it worthwhile for her to use the Solunar Bow in the Gathering of the Mercenaries.

However, the Huang family had made a miscalculation in regards to the empty space. They never would have imagined that the Shi family would actually take advantage of the empty space to try and take away the Solunar Bow. The Huang family had nearly lost their Ruler Armament because of their lack of defenses, but it was fortunately thanks to Jian Chen that the Ruler Armament had been able to return safely to the Huang family.

Jian Chen laughed when he listened to the patriarch. "This one once had a meeting of fate with miss Huang Luan before, but I owed the young miss a favor for that. That matter with the young miss in the empty space was a chance for this one to make it up to the miss Huang Luan, so the patriarch shouldn't weigh too much importance to this."

The patriarch had no idea that Jian Chen had once met Huang Luan before and had taken his words to merely be said out of politeness. Thus, he did not spend any more time worrying about this problem.

"There is still a second matter." The patriarch continued to speak, but after that moment, an embarrassed look overcame his face. Apologetically, he spoke to Jian Chen, "Jian Chen, I know of the matter that happened days ago. It was nothing more than a misunderstanding on our part. We hope that you will pay it no mind. That elder in question has already been deeply punished."

Jian Chen waved his hand without a care, "I've long since forgotten about that matter. The patriarch needn't worry about it. If anything, it was the Qiangan Kingdom that gave rise to this problem."

Seeing that Jian Chen hadn't cared for the matter with the Saint Ruler's skeleton, the patriarch could finally rest in peace. This was after all an Imperial Protector of the Qinhuang Kingdom, meaning that he could not be easily offended. Furthermore, even if he was not an Imperial Protector of the Qinhuang Kingdom, Jian Chen was still a benefactor to the Huang family. To forget their favors and violate kindness was something that the Huang family didn't dare commit to.

Just as the patriarch was about to continue speaking, his face suddenly slackened. Just as quickly as it changed, his face calmed down again, "Jian Chen, our ancestor wishes to meet with you. Please follow me, I will take you to the secluded part of the mountain where our ancestor is. Elder Feng, elder Yun, please show the rest of the Imperial Advisors from the Qinhuang Kingdom where they will be resting."

Afterward, Xiao Tian and the group followed the two elders while Jian Chen followed the patriarch to the backside of the mountain.

Jian Chen flew behind the patriarch of the Huang family toward the back of the mountain. Very quickly, they came to a stop at a sword-shaped mountain peak that pierced through the clouds.

This mountain was about five to six thousand meters high and towered into the clouds above. People's eyes were unable to take in the entire view, and an endless sea of clouds blocked anyone from seeing what was above the clouds.

The mountain peak itself wasn't very large at about a hundred or so meters tall. However, the top part of the mountain peak seemed as if a sword from the heavens had bisected the peak in two. Thus, the mountain peak was a piece of flat ground without any uneven surfaces.

At the top of the mountain peak, there was a single lonely house that was established there. Enduring the howling winds for years on end, this house seemed quite lonely and desolate to Jian Chen.

"Elder ancestor, the honored guest has been brought." The patriarch bowed respectfully toward the little house.

"Jian Chen, enter!" An elderly voice called out from within.

Jian Chen cupped his hands before entering the house without hesitation. The patriarch hadn't any plans to stay and turned around to immediately leave the mountain peak.

Jian Chen walked straight in through the doors of the wooden house. The house was rather small, and there were no decorations within it. The very moment Jian Chen walked in, he could see a white-robed elder inside.

The elder had his white hair coiled around his head with a wooden hairpin stuck through it. Seeming quite experienced, his two legs were crossed over a jade stone while his hands were at his abdomen. There was a faint smile on his face, giving him the distinct spirit of an immortal.

Chapter 517: Plight of the Huang Family

"This one is Jian Chen, I pay my respects to senior!" Jian Chen bowed down to his waist with the utmost respect. This was a Saint Ruler standing in front of him after all.

The eyes of the ancestor of the Huang family were sparkling bright like the moon. As if capable of staring into the center of Jian Chen's heart, his eyes studied Jian Chen with a faint smile and a nod of his head.

Welcoming the gaze of the patriarch, Jian Chen suddenly felt as if his entire body was being analyzed and understood by him. In front of the patriarch, Jian Chen may as well have been without clothes or any other object, as nothing was a secret to the patriarch's eyes.

The light in the patriarch's eyes quickly receded back into an ordinary one. Sparring forward with conversation, the patriarch praised Jian Chen, "You deserve to be called a man of character and astronomical talent. Not only were you able to breakthrough to the Heaven Saint Master realm at your age, you are also not too prideful, not too impatient, and steady as a mountain. To be able to accomplish so much in so little time is very difficult. It is no wonder the Qinhuang Kingdom was so easily willing and confident to let such a youngster take up the mantle of an Imperial Protector. Not only did they see your talent, they saw your personal character and conduct."

The ancestor's words caused Jian Chen to be astonished. Even with the high importance Jian Chen had placed on the strength of a Saint Ruler, he did not expect to have his entire strength be seen through with just his eyes. That strength was too terrifying. Subsequently, Jian Chen felt worried and unsure if

the Saint Ruler would be able to see through the secret that he had no Saint Weapon and the existence of the azure and violet Sword Spirits.

When he looked at the ancestor's expression, Jian Chen relaxed a bit. That was because the ancestor clearly did not look as though he had seen through everything from Jian Chen. Otherwise, if he knew that Jian Chen had such an unbelievable amount of strength without a Saint Weapon, then even a Saint Ruler wouldn't help but feel shocked and would be unable to maintain a calm face like the one he had now.

Because the destruction of a Saint Weapon meant either death or becoming a cripple for a person. This was considered to be an uncontroversial fact, but Jian Chen was a deviation from this.

"This one feels quite accomplished with the amount of praise from senior. I am not as outstanding as senior says, in comparison, this one is nothing and not worth so much praise." Jian Chen cupped his hands together. Although there was a smile on his face, he was neither servile nor overbearing.

Hearing this, the ancestor laughed and stroked the beard under his chin with a gentle hand. "This old man was only able to get to where I am today after spending 1300 years worth of time. If I think back to when this old man was your age, I was still dithering around the boundary to become an Earth Saint Master, but I was still not quite there. Compared to you, it is this old man's achievements that are not worth mentioning. If you cultivate for as long as this old man, then you will definitely reach past this old man. At the very least, you will become an entity a layer higher than a Saint Ruler."

Jian Chen had no look of arrogance on his face. Having the memories of two lives, he had experienced many things that had honed him. With the great waves and tremendous winds, Jian Chen had lingered between the realms of Yin and Yang. Compared to the children born and raised within the greenhouse-like family to mature, Jian Chen was completely different. He had long since been mentally fortified by his experiences.

"Senior likes to joke I see. The events in the future cannot be so easily dictated by anyone. Although I have several achievements now, the path for the future is still to be taken slowly. One cannot say for certain that this one will reach the world senior lives in, or if this one will die on the way there." Jian Chen spoke calmly.

Hearing this, the ancestor nodded his head in approval. "Your words have merit to them. There are many people on the Tian Yuan Continent, and there are just as many outstanding geniuses. Even among these talents, only a few of them actually become successful. Plenty of them lose their lives on the way or in the cradle of success."

The ancestor suddenly stopped speaking to glance impassively at Jian Chen, but there was a faint smile on his face, "Well then, let us dispense all of the pleasantries. Jian Chen, do you know why I called you here today?"

"Forgive this one for his ignorance. Please, if the ancestor could enlighten me!" Jian Chen spoke.

The ancestor stood up, "This house is actually quite too small for this. Let us walk outside to speak." With that, the ancestor walked out from his wooden house.

Jian Chen walked out from the house only to realize that a transparent barrier had somehow been erected in the surrounding area around the mountain peak. The entire mountain peak was enclosed inside so that the howling winds would have no effect on the people inside.

Not too far away, the earth element had begun to gather and form a stone table in front of them. The ancestor could be seen already seated on a stone stool.

“Come, sit!” The ancestor gestured to Jian Chen.

Jian Chen didn’t hesitate to sit down at the table.

The ancestor took out two wine cups and a jade bottle from his Space Ring before pouring a cup for Jian Chen. “This old man has erected a barrier over this area. Not only will our conversation be unhearable from the outside, this entire interior will be invisible as well.”

Jian Chen knew that the ancestor of the Huang family would begin to talk about a serious point and grew extremely solemn himself. But before he could even open his mouth to speak, the ancestor had already beaten him to the punch.

“Jian Chen, this old man invited you here today to primarily talk about a matter of business with the Qinhuang Kingdom. Since you are an Imperial Protector for them, your status is even higher than that of the king, you represent the Qinhuang Kingdom.” He spoke.

Pondering, Jian Chen asked, “What sort of business might senior be talking about?”

The ancestor did not reply right away. He instead took a sip of his wine. After a small while, he finally continued, “Jian Chen, this old man does not enjoy beating around the bush, so I’ll speak honestly. Our Huang family wishes to ally ourselves with the Qinhuang Kingdom. If the Qinhuang Kingdom is able to help us survive something, then our Huang family will never be able to thank the Qinhuang Kingdom enough.”

“Senior, would it be possible to tell us just what circumstances the Huang family is in. Is it related to the Shi family?” Jian Chen asked.

The ancestor shook his head, “If it was the Shi family, then our Huang family wouldn’t be forced back in such a manner. This time it is because of the Hongfu clan.”

“Hongfu clan? Senior, could this Hongfu clan be even stronger than the Shi family?” Jian Chen spoke with a newfound interest.

The ancestor nodded his head, “Correct. To be specific, the Hongfu clan is several times stronger than the Shi family. That is because in their clan, they have two Saint Rulers and two Ruler Armaments!”

“What!? Two Saint Rulers!” Jian Chen was dumbfounded. On the Tian Yuan Continent, a clan that had one Saint Ruler was already considered one of the best clans, but the Hongfu clan had actually two Saint Rulers. Their strength wasn’t too far off from the Sect of Dragon and Tiger.

Seeing the shocked look on Jian Chen’s face, the ancestor of the Huang family gave a reassuring smile, “Jian Chen, you needn’t worry. While the Hongfu clan has two Saint Rulers, their strengths lie upon the Second and Third Layer. Even if they both wielded Ruler Armaments, this old man could handle the both of them alone.

Jian Chen was shocked once again. He looked at the ancestor with a newfound light in his eyes. If he could go against two Saint Rulers wielding Ruler Armaments by himself, then just what level of strength had this ancestor reached? The Fourth Layer? He had to at least be at the Fourth Layer.

The ancestor continued to speak, "The grievances between our Huang family and the Hongfu clan have long since reached a point of no return. They had started several thousand years ago, and up to even now, our Huang family and their Hongfu clan have been at equivalent strengths almost. Even now, our two families would suffer tremendous losses if we were to fight now. Thus, there has never been any conflicts between our two sides, but in private, there have been countless clashes that occur on a frequent basis. Even this old man has fought several times with the two Saint Ruler, but it has never been so serious yet."

"A few years ago, the Hongfu clan and another family began to get close. In addition to having the Yan family draw close to them by use of marriage, they began to treat our Huang family even more threateningly. Just faintly, they have already started to bring us closer to a battle to the death through an ever increasing amount of pressure. This was the reason why the offspring of my Huang family had entered the empty space without a barrier during the Gathering of the Mercenaries. This old man did not use any energy so I could conserve as much energy as I could in the case that the Hongfu clan and Yan family made a surprise attack."

"What this old man didn't think of was the fact that while my Huang family was minding their own business, the Shi family would suddenly attack our Huang family. They tried to steal away the Ruler Armament in our possession, and although this old man has no way to forcibly recall the Ruler Armament, it would cost some of my vital energy to reclaim it. Without a Ruler Armament, if the Hongfu clan and Yan family unleashed a surprise attack, even I would not be able to stop their alliance. From this, I can only imagine that if the Shi family did not get roped in by the Hongfu clan, then they had at least reached a secret agreement with each other."

The ancestor's face looked helpless. With a sigh, he spoke, "The combination of the Hongfu clan and Yan family is already a considerable amount of pressure to my Huang family. With the added Shi family, my Huang family would have no power to defend ourselves if they all attacked together. Thus, my Huang family is desperately looking for an outside power to assist us."

Hearing this, Jian Chen felt a headache occur. The Huang family was certainly facing an unhappy situation. The Hongfu clan had two Saint Rulers that the ancestor of the Huang family was still able to fend off with difficulty. With the Yan and Shi family participating, there would be another two Saint Rulers added to the mix as enemies. With the ancestor by himself, he was clearly no match for the four.

Jian Chen was extremely clear on the motive for the ancestor wishing for an alliance with the Qinhuang Kingdom. There was nothing else but his desire to borrow the power of the Qinhuang Kingdom to stabilize his Huang family.

Jian Chen hesitated for a moment. "Senior, this is quite the important matter. Please forgive this one for not being the one to give a response." Jian Chen really didn't dare give a response to something like this. If he did, then it would be very possible that the Qinhuang Kingdom would earn another two strong enemies. Although the Qinhuang Kingdom had four Saint Rulers, two enemy Saint Rulers was still quite a foe to the kingdom.

Furthermore, there had been a sour taste left in Jian Chen's mouth after the events with the Sect of Dragon and Tiger. To him, the two Saint Rulers of the Qinhuang Kingdom had personally come to fight with the Saint Ruler from the Sect of Dragon and Tiger. Even if the Saint Ruler from the Sect of Dragon and Tiger didn't fight, he would have to pay a very hefty price, but the final conclusion had been completely outside of Jian Chen's expectations. Not only did no fight occur, the two Saint Rulers from the Qinhuang Kingdom had unexpectedly left with such serious expressions. This had made Jian Chen uneasy and slightly concerned in his heart. Although he didn't know what the elder sectmaster had said to the two Saint Rulers, it surely had to do with the Qinhuang Kingdom if it had stopped the two of them dead in their tracks.

Thus, at this crucial moment, Jian Chen wasn't willing to make the Qinhuang Kingdom a lightning rod for additional troubles.

Chapter 518: The True Strength of a Saint Ruler

With Jian Chen declining to represent the Qinhuang Kingdom in a decision to ally with the Huang family, the ancestor of the Huang family sighed. He had not felt this was an unexpected decision; he even predicted that Jian Chen would decline. Prior to this, he had been clinging onto that sliver of hope, but now, Jian Chen had essentially extinguished the final piece of hope in the ancestor's heart.

"Senior, I am truly apologetic. This matter involves far too many players for me to make a decision." Jian Chen spoke apologetically. From the ancestor's face, Jian Chen could see that the ancestor's shoulders were heavily weighed down by the pressure about his Huang family.

"This old man can understand your troubles. The Qinhuang Kingdom is one of the Eight Great Powers, but they cannot belittle any single Saint Ruler level expert like so. Even more so, they cannot offend four Saint Rulers at the same time. If it were me that stood in your shoes, I wouldn't agree either." The ancestor sighed.

Jian Chen hesitated for a moment, "Senior, although I cannot involve the Qinhuang Kingdom in this myself, if there is ever something I can do, then I will do my best to help the Huang family."

Jian Chen had been honest and wasn't lying for the sake of face, so the ancestor felt moved. Smiling, he said, "Jian Chen, this old man understands your intent. A fight between Saint Rulers is something a Heaven Saint Master cannot interfere with. Even with your excellent talent as one of the strongest on the continent, you wouldn't be an exception to this. If you work hard and cultivate, in the future you will definitely exceed this old man. Thus, you should do your best to increase your strength. When you become a Saint Ruler, we will see if my Huang family will still need your help or not."

Still hesitating, Jian Chen replied, "Senior, this one knows that an individual at the Saint Ruler realm is extremely strong. Back at the Sect of Dragon and Tiger, I was educated on the very tip of the iceberg of a Saint Ruler's strength, but the clear level of it is still quite fuzzy to me. This one wonders if senior would be able to allow me to experience a Saint Ruler's strength. This one would like to try his best to see just how big of a gap there is between me and a Saint Ruler and if I can defend myself from one."

The reason why Jian Chen had said these words was simply to increase his knowledge on the strength of a Saint Ruler. The Saint Ruler of the Sect of Dragon and Tiger had already expressed his interest in the Origin energy of the azure and violet Sword Spirits. The Saint Ruler was afraid of Jian Chen's identity as

an Imperial Protector of the Qinhuang Kingdom, but this did not mean he was not afraid to act in secret against Jian Chen. As long as he could clearly understand the exact strength of a Saint Ruler, then Jian Chen would be able to find a plan to deal with a Saint Ruler should one attack him in the future.

“Jian Chen, the difference between a Saint Ruler and a Heaven Saint Master is even further than you can imagine. A Saint Ruler has already understood the mysteries of the world to the point where each movement they take embodies the energy of the world. As the proverbs say: all are ants beneath a Saint Ruler. In front of a Saint Ruler, a Heaven Saint Master is indeed as weak as an ant. If you truly wish to see a Saint Ruler’s strength, then this old man will let you satisfy your curiosity.” The ancestor spoke. At the last word, a barrier suddenly appeared and imprisoned Jian Chen within it.

“Jian Chen, this is the barrier that only a Saint Ruler can create. Containing the laws of the world, it is connected with the world itself intrinsically. One can say the interior of this barrier is an entirely different space. Although a barrier is unbearably weak toward another Saint Ruler, even a Heaven Saint Master is unable to break through this. Aside from the power of the barrier being depleted, a Heaven Saint Master has no chance of shattering it.” The ancestor spoke.

The ancestor’s words had clearly entered Jian Chen’s ears, but even after hearing them, Jian Chen had remained unconvinced and immediately brought out the Origin energy of the Sword Spirits. A rich amount of an azure and violet glow could be seen gathering and condensing into the form of a sword before Jian Chen chopped down at the barrier.

“It’s no use. This old man’s barrier is something that a Heaven Saint Master cannot shatter apart by himself unless the barrier runs out of power. This barrier is the energy of another domain, one that a Heaven Saint Master cannot even think of touching.” The ancestor smiled faintly, completely sure that Jian Chen would not be able to split apart the barrier he had personally put down.

At that moment, the Origin energy made contact with the barrier. With a “pop!” sound, the barrier was popped by Jian Chen’s sword as if it had been a giant balloon filled with air. After the sword had pricked through it, the barrier completely disappeared from sight.

The expression of the ancestor immediately went rigid. Staring blankly at where the barrier had dissipated, a look of disbelief crossed his face.

“Impossible, you actually broke the barrier I put down!” The ancestor spoke with a rather crestfallen and shocked voice.

He quickly recovered himself however. Staring curiously at the Origin energy in Jian Chen’s hand, he exclaimed, “What a powerful energy.”

Seeing the expression on the ancestor’s face, Jian Chen couldn’t help but have a small smile on his face. Cupping his hands, he spoke, “Senior, please advise me!”

Standing up from his stone stool, the ancestor’s eyes began to sparkle with a bright light. Firmly, he spoke to Jian Chen, “Jian Chen, a barrier is just one of the many tools of a Saint Ruler, but it is not a part of a Saint Ruler’s attacking strength. Right now I will show you the difference between a Saint Ruler and Heaven Saint Master, you may attack as you please.”

Separating himself from the stone table, Jian Chen's right hand began to sparkle with an even brighter light of azure and violet from the Origin energy. As if two serpents or Yin Yang fish, they coiled around his arm, but they never touched one another.

Concentrating heavily on the Saint Ruler in front of him, Jian Chen had no intention to hold back. All of the Origin energy within his body had been brought out to its maximum amount. His right hand began to shake violently as the amount of power coursing through his arm had transformed it into a blur of mirror images that shot toward the ancestor with blinding speed.

With only a flash of azure and violet, the Origin energy reached three inches to the Saint Ruler's chest before stopping. The Origin energy found itself unable to advance another fraction of an inch forward.

Jian Chen blanched in surprise. His feet slid forward in an attempt to use his entire strength to push the Origin energy forward, but he was powerless despite his attempts. The Origin energy was simply unable to go even a small inch forward.

Jian Chen's eyes flashed as he decided to take back his sword. With a flickering of his body, he circled around the ancestor's body to attack from the back, but the results had been the same. The Origin energy stopped moving three inches away from the ancestor's body, it was unable to progress anymore.

"Just what in the world is this?" Jian Chen was extremely curious. This was the very first time he had seen the methods of a Saint Ruler, but even now, Jian Chen was unable to understand it.

"Jian Chen, you now understand just how large of a difference there is between a Heaven Saint Master and a Saint Ruler. Even if a Saint Ruler remains motionless, there is nothing a Heaven Saint Master can do to injure them." The ancestor chuckled.

"Senior, would it be possible to tell me how you managed to do this?" Although he was unable to harm the ancestor at all, Jian Chen was not discouraged and even asked a question with some curiosity.

The ancestor turned around to teach and explain to Jian Chen with a smile, "That is the mystery of space!"

"Mystery of space?" Jian Chen murmured to himself in a low voice. His eyebrows furrowed together in deep thought.

The ancestor continued to explain, "A Heaven Saint Master can control the energy of the world in ways that can enable them to fly through the air. A Saint Ruler has comprehended the mysteries of the world can initially use the energy of space. I was using this spatial energy just then."

"In the eyes of others, you are only three inches away from hitting me, but what you may not know is that in the eyes of an observer of these three inches, they are actually comprised of several kilometers. Depending on the level of comprehension on space by a Saint Ruler, this distance can be infinitesimally extended. Unless you can transverse this space or perhaps break through this space, there is no way you can harm an entity of a Saint Ruler."

"Space, so this is the energy of space." Jian Chen made a realization. His understanding of a Saint Ruler had increased even more now. Space was a gap that was still too far for him to cross just yet.

“You understand the distance between a Heaven Saint Master and a Saint Ruler now I take it?” The ancestor spoke in a teacherly manner toward Jian Chen.

“I understand now. The mysteries of the world are indeed massive if they can control even space itself. With that, how wouldn’t a Saint Ruler be able to fly at a tremendous speed?” Jian Chen’s face had grown serious as he spoke.

“Correct!” The ancestor replied, “A Saint Ruler who has just comprehended the mystery of space is indeed fast. For an individual with a deeper understanding of it, a single step of theirs can transverse several thousand kilometers. In today’s time, there are only a handful of men who are capable of this.”

Jian Chen’s eyebrows knit together tightly. He thought about that Saint Ruler from the Sect of Dragon and Tiger; if the speed of a Saint Ruler was that fast, then it would be fruitless to even attempt to run away from one. Although Jian Chen wasn’t sure if the Saint Ruler from the Sect of Dragon and Tiger would attack him, he couldn’t lower his guard — he had to remain wary.

Afterward, Jian Chen and the ancestor began to chat before Jian Chen finally left the mountain peak to go back to the villa by himself.

“Fourth master, you’ve returned so quickly!” As soon as Jian Chen descended down into the villa, the two elders Feng and Yun flew up to receive him as if they were all good friends.

Jian Chen smiled, “This one and the ancestor have already finished our talks and now it is time for me to return to the Gesun Kingdom. Many thanks to the two seniors and the Huang family for having me.”

Hearing this, the two elders gave each other a look — concern could be seen as wrinkles across their foreheads. Elder Feng spoke, “Fourth master, why leave so quickly? Come stay awhile!”

“There is no other choice, I have a group of friends waiting for me back home. I cannot just so blatantly leave them all on the side. There is still some matters I need to take care of with them.”

“Fourth master, it is seldom that you come by the Huang family, why not first see the young miss?” Elder Feng spoke.

Jian Chen hesitated as the memories of his days with Huang Luan suddenly appeared in his mind. He hadn’t seen her in a long time, so there was willingness to see her again.

“Fine then. It is indeed rare to come by here, I’ll go see miss Huang Luan then.”

Chapter 519: The Feelings of Huang’er

Afterward, elders Feng and Yun led Jian Chen down to the villas of the Huang family without any obstructions. There were many people who recognized the two elders on the way and bowed in respect to them. Clearly, the two of them held quite high positions in the Huang family.

The villas of the Huang family were quite large. The three of them walked side by side with a smile on their faces as well. This sight caused everyone who saw the youth to be quite curious, and they began to guess at Jian Chen’s identity.

After walking with the two elders through a villa, the three of them finally reached their destination where a two-story pavilion could be seen.

“Fourth master, this is the chamber of our young miss. She has stipulated that should the fourth master arrive, walking in directly would be fine.” Elder Feng gave a meaningful stare and smile while elder Yun stood on the other side with a similar expression.

Jian Chen stared at the pavilion in front of him without paying attention to the expressions on both elders faces. After a slight moment of hesitation, he finally stepped toward the door. Pushing it open, Jian Chen then walked into the building.

The first floor of the pavilion was a very expansive lounge. Despite it being spotlessly clean, it was vacant and devoid of any single person, but at the end of the lounge was a wooden staircase that led to the second floor.

Hesitating again, Jian Chen slowly stepped toward the staircase and up to the second floor. Upon his arrival, a sweet-smelling scent wafted into his nose. Breathing in, he suddenly felt like he was intoxicated and had his mind stripped away from him. This was a scent that would make you indulge yourself without restraint.

Jian Chen took in a deep breath of the fragrant air, and after taking it in, he couldn’t help but sigh, “What an enchanting scent!”

Jian Chen had not spoken out loud, but in this quiet pavilion, it may as well be a clap of thunder that no one would be able to ignore.

Jian Chen studied his environment only to find that this room had been decorated with comfort in mind. The interior wasn’t grand in appearance, but there were several things that a woman would own and plenty of beautiful decorations in the room. It was enough for anyone that had come here for the first time to be able to make an accurate guess that the owner of this room was a female.

In the center of the room, there was a neat and tidy bed. This bed was quite small and was only capable of holding one person on it to sleep on. On the yellow bed was a yellow blanket that had been folded several times with all sorts of marks left behind. It was clear to see that this bed had not been touched for some time.

To the side of the bed was a single window. At this moment, there was a woman whose back quietly faced Jian Chen as she stared out the window. As if spellbound, this woman stared at the scenery outside the window. She wore a black dress with her black hair drooped down. This combination of clothes and appearance had harmonized with each other perfectly, inducing a feeling of grace. Although her face could not be seen, her beautiful stature was more than enough for anyone to guess that the face of the owner would be beautiful as well.

Jian Chen’s eyes fixed themselves onto the back of this woman. Although he wasn’t able to see her face, the figure was quite familiar to him, and his mind had already seemed to have made a verdict on who this woman was — it was Huang Luan, who he hadn’t seen in a very long time.

Staring quietly at Huang Luan’s back, Jian Chen’s lips couldn’t help but curl into a smile. That was because he had suddenly thought about the first time he and Huang Luan had met.

“Miss Huang Luan, it has been a long time since we last saw each other. Compared to then, you have more grace now it seems.” Jian Chen spoke with a smile still on his face.

Hearing this, Huang Luan's black dress wearing figure began to tremble. Her teeth began to nibble at her lower lip in hesitation before seemingly coming to a conclusion. Finally, she turned around slowly. She looked to Jian Chen's handsome face with a complex look of happiness.

It had been more than half a year since they had last met, and Huang Luan's beauty had indeed grown since then. Her beauty now was still capable of befalling a kingdom and left no room for argument. Even the fish and the birds would be captivated by her, and the moon would hide itself behind the clouds in shame.

Huang Luan's limpid autumn eyes stared at Jian Chen as if lost in thought. Her mouth slowly opened as she asked, "Should I be calling you Jian Chen or Changyang Xiangtian?"

Smiling confidently, Jian Chen replied, "Just call me Jian Chen. I rather like that name. The name 'Changyang Xiangtian' is something only my family uses. Besides my family, I am Jian Chen!"

Huang Luan took several light steps toward Jian Chen at her leisure. At an extremely close range, her eyes were still full of complexity. Even now, in her mind, Huang Luan was unable to even think back to when she and Jian Chen had first met or when they had met again in the empty space during the Gathering of the Mercenaries.

This was the very first time Jian Chen had ever seen Huang Luan have such a look in her eyes. Sensing that something was off, he gave an awkward smile, "Miss Huang Luan, are you alright!?"

As soon as Jian Chen had finished speaking, Huang Luan had abruptly spread open her arms to hug Jian Chen. Her entire body stuck close to him. Her slender but exceptionally powerful arms had already pulled Jian Chen close to her.

This sudden development had startled Jian Chen so much that he became mute with shock. For a half-moment, Jian Chen hadn't responded to her. As far as he knew, even though he and Huang Luan had gone through a period of trouble together, the relationship between the two had never reached such a close and intimate level like this.

When Jian Chen had finally recollected himself, he could feel the lovely but tightly-clenched arms of Huang Luan still wrapped around his body. His thoughts had instantly descended into chaos — with Huang Luan suddenly hugging him like this, the mentally unprepared Jian Chen was at a loss for what to do or what would happen next.

"Miss Huang Luan... th-this..." Jian Chen swallowed. Even though he wanted to say something, he suddenly found himself unable to say anything. It was the two soft but firm sensations he felt pressed against his chest that made Jian Chen's heart beat with an unprecedented level of violetness.

"Jian Chen, I wanted to hug you, so let me hug you for a while, okay?" Huang Luan's voice could be heard right next to his ears. Like the soft hum of a mosquito, her sweet-sounding voice gently blew by Jian Chen's ear, allowing him to feel his ear go both numb and ticklish.

Jian Chen sucked in a deep breath in an attempt to forcibly calm down. Gathering his thoughts, he finally managed to ask, "Miss Huang Luan. Just... what is the meaning of this?"

This time, there was no response from Huang Luan, who instead chose to continue hugging Jian Chen tightly. Her entire body seemed as if it was stuck to him; her head was next to Jian Chen's shoulder, and

both of her eyes were closed shut. Her entire state of mind had descended into a wondrous sensation she had never experienced before. Quietly enjoying this sensation of the mind and soul, her mind was filled with joy.

Right now, in her mind, Huang Luan was replaying the scene from when she had first met Jian Chen.

She remembered, that time the two of them had once shared...

“You scoundrel, to think that you would peek at me taking a bath, I will definitely kill you!”

“Hold on, miss! This was just a misunderstanding, I had no intentions of peeking on the miss taking a bath...”

.....

She remembered, that time in the empty space during the Gathering of the Mercenaries...

“Bastard, if you’re a man, don’t even think about running away...”

“I don’t wish to stand around to be your live shooting target, I’m not that foolish...”

.....

She remembered, that time when they fought against Shi Xiangran...

“Scoundrel! If you help me deal with them, I’ll write off our differences!”

.....

She remembered, that time when Jian Chen had been crushed by Shi Xiangran’s Seal of Treasure Mountain.

“You scoundrel, how could you be this stupid? I told you to run, but you stood there like an idiot. An idiot’s death! That’s what you deserve...”

.....

She remembered, that time when they were about to go on their own separate ways...

“Did you not want to know my name?”

“You never told me, how would I know it?”

“Did it not occur to you to ask?”

Even now, she could clearly remember these memories. Her own heart felt as if she had lost something when she had first parted from Jian Chen. At the same time, she had felt happy when Jian Chen had been with her.

At that time, Huang Luan remembered how she had first felt about this person. Truly, she hated him to the bone. She wanted nothing more than to scalp his skin, tear his muscles, drink his blood, and eat his flesh. At that time, her body had been seen by this man, a man that was both very weak and a stranger. Huang Luan had been left with a very deep impression of Jian Chen for that reason. It was only when she

returned to the villa that she had brooded over her feelings and tried to forget that it had ever happened. However, the feelings she had for Jian Chen had only made her feel even more hurt.

Later, when she participated in the Gathering of the Mercenaries, she had come across Jian Chen once again in the empty space by chance. Although Jian Chen's sudden explosion of strength had startled her, she still felt some animosity for him. This animosity had permeated her entire body down to her bones; it hadn't been alleviated since her first meeting with him, that was why the two of them had started to fight.

However, when Shi Xiangran had attacked her, she had fallen into a predicament. At that moment, she had no other choice but to cry for help to Jian Chen for the sake of protecting her Ruler Armament. Though she didn't believe that Jian Chen would help her from her problem, and escape was hopeless for her since there had been many experts aligned with Shi Xiangran. With no other option to choose from, she could only resign herself to feeding the dead horse some medicine.

However, despite the injuries Jian Chen had, his fighting strength had been overwhelming and far beyond her expectations. Not only did he defend himself, he was able to kill the Earth Saint Masters with Shi Xiangran and reduce the pressure on her. Then, they had even managed to escape from that predicament with the two of them uniting to defend themselves from Shi Xiangran.

After these series of events, Huang Luan's perspective of Jian Chen had begun to change bit by bit. The two of them had no other choice but to stay with one another until the tournament had ended after they scraped together their strength to fight Shi Xiangran,.

In this period of contact with Jian Chen, Huang Luan's understanding of him had grown deeper and deeper. Whether it was his influence, his appearance, or even his moral character, she was not too picky to find fault in any of them. He was even strong as well. His good attributes slowly had Huang Luan changing her mind about Jian Chen, and she gradually threw away the hatred she felt for him. Especially since that first awkward meeting was really just a coincidence.

Jian Chen possessed a handsome charm that could sway any woman under the heavens. Combined with confident and free nature of his, his supertalent, the amount of power he was endowed with, that made him brave, and his intelligence in the face of any enemy strike, all of these superior qualities of his gave him an unbelievable allure. He could even be said to be the shining white knight of any woman on the continent.

When she had thrown away the prejudice she felt toward Jian Chen, she discovered all of his strong points when they were traveling together. Unbeknownst to her, Jian Chen had left a deep imprint in her mind.

It was during that time that Huang Luan had felt something murky in her mind. From then to the time where she had split with Jian Chen after the Gathering of the Mercenaries, this murky sensation had gradually grown clear in her mind. When she had returned to the villa this particular feeling had grown extremely fierce. In the end, this line of thought had seized control of her thinking had begun to replay memories of when she was with Jian Chen frequently.

This feeling hadn't been lost even after she had split ways with Jian Chen. Instead, it had been like a poison that spread through her body. It reached deeper and became even more serious to the point where she could no longer free herself from her thoughts.

Chapter 520: Determination

Huang Luan held Jian Chen tightly in a quiet but comforting embrace. No words had been voiced, but the feelings and thoughts that had welled up inside her had finally exploded out. Just like a volcano erupting after a period of buildup, the resulting momentum was both fierce and hard to control.

Jian Chen was dumbstruck. His entire body had gone rigid without moving for a long period of time. Even with memories from two worlds, he never remembered being hugged by a female before, so this was the very first time he had experienced the warmth of one.

This was not a woman with a beauty that could bring the downfall of a city, but a woman with a beauty that could bring an entire kingdom to its knees.

Time in this dubiously quiet place slowly passed by. A beautiful moment was fleeting; this one was no exception.

Huang Luan and Jian Chen had remained together for an unknown amount of time before Huang Luan finally loosened her grip on Jian Chen. Slowly standing up, Huang Luan looked up at Jian Chen with her bashful eyes. Then, tilting her head down, she slowly began to smooth out the wrinkles in her messy robes. Both of her cheeks had gone red in the prominent display of a shy girl.

This appearance of hers had caused Jian Chen to be dumbfounded. From the very beginning of when he came to know Huang Luan, she had given Jian Chen the feeling of being icy cold and habitually silent. There was never a time where she had revealed such a shy expression.

"Is this the same Huang Luan I first came to know?" Jian Chen couldn't help but question himself. In his mind, the Huang Luan he knew and the one in front of him were two completely different people.

Jian Chen sucked in a deep breath and was hit with the sweet-smelling fragrance coming from Huang Luan's body once more. His entire mind had been intoxicated by it, this scent combined with her throwing her arms around him was as good as a bewitching medicine concocted against a man. If it were not for Jian Chen being a Heaven Saint Master with an impressive willpower and mind, then it would be very likely that he would have lost all self-control.

Slowly bringing himself back to a calm, Jian Chen stared at the nearly-touching Huang Luan with a complex stare. Hesitantly, he opened his mouth to ask, "Miss Huang Luan, are you alright?"

Huang Luan shook her head slightly and slowly brought her head up to look at Jian Chen. After a brief period of time, the expression on her face had finally returned to normal. Although there was still the remains of a blush on her cheeks, it had enhanced her charm by quite the amount.

But seeing the handsome and stalwart face of Jian Chen, Huang Luan's eyes had gradually reverted back to a blur. A face like his had been like an increased dosage of Yang qi after half a year of not seeing him.

Jian Chen had felt goosebumps arise on his skin from Huang Luan's stare. Unconsciously, he had retreated several steps as if he was afraid of this look. Jian Chen wasn't a naive three year old, he knew

just what that stare had meant in Huang Luan's eyes. But this had given him an extreme amount of trouble in his heart. He was already shouldering an extreme amount of worries with him, and although it seemed that Jian Chen was a person with a far future, he was still just a Heaven Saint Master in strength while also being an Imperial Protector for the Qinhuang Kingdom. Jian Chen was fully aware of how much pressure the future had in store for him, so today, he wanted to spend all of his efforts on improving his own strength. There was simply no time to even think about settling down.

"Jian Chen. From our departure in Mercenary City to now half a year later, have you thought about me?" Huang Luan whispered to Jian Chen with a soft voice. Right now in terms of emotions, Huang Luan was far more honest than before. She was no longer the secretive, daredevil, and heroine figure from before. Compared to You Yue, they were as different as black and white in personality.

"Eh..." Jian Chen hadn't thought that Huang Luan would actually ask a question like this. In his period of distraction, Huang Luan's temperament had suddenly flared up in way that Jian Chen felt had contrasted quite heavily with her usual icy expression.

But Jian Chen had quickly recovered. Still slightly stupefied, he answered, "I have!"

Hearing this, Huang Luan's face had broke into a happy smile. Unknownst to her, Jian Chen's thoughts of her was completely different than what she had thought of him. When Jian Chen had said that he had thought of her, he had only thought of the occasional times where he thought of the past, but there was no longing in them.

Yet, this smile of Huang Luan did not last long. Her face had quickly grown dark; a concentrated amount of sadness and worry was mixed into it.

Seeing this expression of hers, Jian Chen had disregarded the abnormality of Huang Luan's previous actions. Jian Chen's heart had dropped, he could already tell that Huang Luan had perhaps came across some sort of trouble.

"Miss Huang Luan, are you fine?" Jian Chen asked again. When Huang Luan had first hugged Jian Chen, he had a strange feeling in his heart. And now this worried expression of Huang Luan had brought him to an indescribable level of anxiety. Right now, Jian Chen himself wasn't sure if this anxiety was because of Huang Luan or not.

Huang Luan's reluctant eyes lingered on Jian Chen's handsome face and the chest where she had buried herself into. With a soft sigh, she slowly turned back to the windows so that she could stare out of it with a despaired look.

In the split second when Huang Luan had turned around, Jian Chen had caught a glimpse of a teardrop beginning to fall from Huang Luan's eyes.

Jian Chen's heart had immediately grown heavy for some reason. He didn't know why, but this sight of Huang Luan had caused his own heart to hurt. Just faintly, he could sense that something terrible had happened to Huang Luan.

After a long while, Huang Luan finally opened her mouth, "Jian Chen. Did you know, my father has already betrothed me to the second young master of the Huanggu clan." Huang Luan's voice had been

weak and without strength. There was pain to be detected in her voice, and just a slight amount of a sob could be heard as well.

Jian Chen had been startled to hear this. Although not a single woman had ever crashed their way into Jian Chen's mind before, when he heard Huang Luan speak, Jian Chen's heart couldn't help but grow heavy. Perhaps it was because of Huang Luan's current state, but Jian Chen's heart had begun to bubble with a strange sensation. He certainly did not wish for a beautiful woman to be betrothed to a man she did not love.

Restraining the emotions in his mind, Jian Chen asked, "Huanggu clan? Could this be another strong clan that can rival your Huang family in strength?"

"The Huanggu clan is incomparably strong in comparison to my Huang family. The Huanggu clan is a family that has stayed in insolation similar to my Huang family, the Shi family, the Jiede clan, and the Dugu family. Families that have stayed in isolation like ours have several thousand years worth of history, a Saint Ruler appearing from it, and have unbelievable strength." Huang Luan explained.

"Isolated families? Does that mean every Saint Ruler has come from a clan or family that hide itself away?" Jian Chen asked curiously.

"That's not it. A family in isolation and a family that isn't are different. To be called an isolated family is to be in an isolated state and to not have contact with the outside world. Only by doing that can a family be said to be isolated. Our Huang family for example has been stationed deep within the mountains for many years without many of our disciples exploring the outside world. That has led to only a small amount of people knowing who we are. The other isolated families are like this as well."

"I heard about what happened with the Saint Ruler's skeleton from uncle Feng and uncle Yun. If it weren't for the fact that the Qiangan Kingdom had found and leaked the news of a Saint Ruler's skeleton to us, our Huang family would never have stepped a foot out into the outside world unless for something important.

"On the outside, there is still many other strong powers that overwhelm those isolated families like mine. For example the Eight Great Powers and the Three Great Empires. There are also the ancient clans whose strength outstrip the isolated families and are a part of everyday life where they are located at. Amongst the isolated families, there are only an extremely small few that can even compare in strength to the Eight Great Powers or the ancient families. As for the Three Great Empires, we are still an era behind. Only the mysterious ancient families would be able to contend with them."

Jian Chen had felt like he was another step closer to understanding the strength of an isolated family after Huang Luan had explained it to him. But he hadn't thought that above these isolated families would be the even more gigantic ancient clans.

"How strong are these ancient clans?" Jian Chen asked curiously.

"You cannot even imagine!" Huang Luan spoke. "I've only read about the ancient clans in the ancient records of my Huang family. I've never heard anyone talk about them before though, so I only know that these ancient families have existed for tens of thousands of years and more. Although they've existed on the continent, no one knows where."

“But the records had it written that unless something major happens on the Tian Yuan Continent, these ancient clans won’t appear at all. That is because they are a true clan that lives in isolation.”

“I had no idea that the waters of the Tian Yuan Continent would be that deep.” Jian Chen spoke. His perspective of the Tian Yuan Continent had changed quite a bit.

Along with the progression of his strength, his domain of understanding had increased as well. At the beginning, he had only been at Wake City to hunt for monster cores to cultivate. A lowly third-rate city where Great Saint Masters were considered far and few and Earth Saint Masters to be the apex of experts and had the power to call the wind and summon the rain. As for Heaven Saint Masters, whether it was the Blue Wind Kingdom or the Gesun Kingdom, they were highly respected almost like gods. Heaven Saint Masters represented a kingdom’s strongest source of power, and in a war, an individual like a Heaven Saint Master was the same as several million elite soldiers.

And now that he had come into contact with a major family like the Huang family, Jian Chen felt as if he had stepped into a whole new domain where the pinnacle of power was no longer a Heaven Saint Master. There was an even higher level—the Saint Rulers who comprehended the mysteries of the world. A Heaven Saint Master was nothing more than a median of strength.

Jian Chen tilted his head down to think, “Miss Huang Luan, I’ve heard of the predicament your Huang family faces from your ancestor. Your betrothment to the Huanggu clan is surely because the Huang family wishes to tie in the Huanggu family behind your family banner.”

“Your guess is correct. Although it seems quite calm and quiet on the surface of our family, the core disciples are all aware of how bad the predicament is for our family. If we do not find any outside help, then I’m afraid the remaining days for our Huang family will be numbered. The hatred between the Huang and the Hongfu clan has gone on for generations now, there is no other way to resolve this bitter hatred now. From our two families, one of us has to die. With the power of the Hongfu clan, they can control our Huang family now. It is only by uniting with the Huanggu family that we stand a chance against them. They will think twice about attack, and I, I will be offered to the Huanggu family as the only present.” Huang Luan spoke.

Jian Chen had nothing to say after Huang Luan spoke. He just stood there in hesitation for a long time—his eyes sparkled with a light that seemed as if there was some sort of internal conflict in them.

After a while, Jian Chen bit his lips and finally thought of an idea. “If I am able to find some help for your Huang family, would that be enough for your betrothment to the Huanggu family to be annulled?”

Huang Luan’s body shook violently for a moment before slowly turning to meet Jian Chen. Looking at the earnest face of Jian Chen, Huang Luan’s own face had not a happy smile on it, instead, there was a helpless and mourning expression.

“Jian Chen, I know that you are the Imperial Protector of the Qinhuang Kingdom, presumably not for too long either. That means your position within the kingdom is still unstable as well. This betrothment was the proposal of my father and has the support of the ancestor. The two of us alone are unable to do anything, so it is best you not get involved. Otherwise, there will be even more trouble for the Qinhuang Kingdom and the other men of power within the kingdom will no longer agree to let you do as you please.”

Huang Luan's face had grown helpless beyond helpless. Both eyes looked to Jian Chen with a shallow smile, "Actually, to be able to hug you at this moment and leave behind my fragrance on you is more than enough for me."