

Chaotic 581

Chapter 581: Subjugation (Two)

Jian Chen smiled and cut in onto Shan Xiong before he could speak any longer. "I believe the three of you know that to become a major power on the Tian Yuan Continent requires both power and a strong patron. Your Carnage Mercenaries are indeed strong enough in the Cloud Capital to call yourselves a hegemon, but you are struggling to maintain that position. There are plenty of families or sects that are comparable to yours in this city, and the six families here are most especially strong in comparison. Even if they're divided into six powers, they may as well hold hands as a symbol of how close they are. Should the time come for them to stand together against a common enemy, there won't be a single faction within the city strong enough to fight them."

Zhan Tian and Shan Xiong had said nothing at Jian Chen's words and had a pensive look on their faces. Even Shan Xiong had found reason in Jian Chen's words and grew somewhat subdued, but he still found it hard to suppress the anger on his face.

"Brother Jian Chen, I will have to admit that there is logic in what you say. Our Carnage Mercenaries may seem glorious to the city as one of the major powers here, but in our minds, we can only fear the six clans. Truly, no one would be able to go against their combined might if they join together. However, there are more to this city than the six clans; there are plenty of other considerable forces. If the six clans do indeed ally themselves against us, then not a single one of those factions will sit idly and await death to come for them, they too, will unite the others to fight." Zhan Tian spoke calmly with an equally calm face. It was as if Jian Chen's suggestion for the Carnage Mercenaries to submit to Jian Chen had not bothered him.

With his keen eyes and sharp mind, Zhan Tian had already figured that Jian Chen was not some ordinary person. Although he couldn't estimate his strength, he was able to see Ming Dong and Dugu Feng's strength as Earth Saint Masters very clearly due to the aura that was radiating off their bodies. The fact that these two Earth Saint Masters were subordinates to Jian Chen and sat behind him without a word had only added to Jian Chen's status, and so Zhan Tian found it prudent to treat him carefully.

"Sire Zhan Tian, there is logic to your words as well. Yet, that would only help maintain the Carnage Mercenaries' status within the Cloud Capital. Do you and your Carnage Mercenaries plan to stay within this piddling city forever, do you not yearn to expand into the outer world?" Jian Chen smiled.

"Hah, kid, your ambitions are grand, I give you that. Who hasn't wished to expand their might into the world? However, a feat like that is easier said than done. Without a tremendous amount of power, survival by itself will be hard. Do you think your Flame Mercenaries has that ability?" Shan Xiong sneered.

Confidently, Jian Chen nodded his head, "Correct, our Flame Mercenaries does have that ability."

"You braggart!" Shan Xiong rebuked with a taunting expression.

Zhan Tian's heart had skipped a beat. Observing Jian Chen thoughtfully for a moment, he finally said, "This world is a world where power is equal to respect. A veritable showcase of the strong and where the weak are food for the strong. That is a rule that is ingrained deep within my body." His voice left off after that sentence so that he could stare down Jian Chen with a serious expression, "Brother Jian Chen,

having my Carnage Mercenaries enter your Flame Mercenaries is not an easy task. Would it be possible for you to tell me what power your Flame Mercenaries has, or what patron it is that supports you? Or at the very least, a direction you wish to expand in in the future.”

A victorious smile appeared on Jian Chen’s face at those words; he knew that Zhan Tian was more or less won over. All he needed was proof of power, and the Carnage Mercenaries would swear their allegiances. A development like this had let Jian Chen’s worries decrease by one.

A nervous expression appeared on Shan Xiong’s face as he realized Zhan Tian’s intentions, “Captain....”

But then Zhan Tian put a stop to Shan Xiong’s next words, “Shan Xiong, there’s no need to talk, I alone will make this decision.”

Biting his lips in unease, Shan Xiong finally pursed his lips together and sat there without a word.

“Sire Zhan Tian, the scale of our Flame Mercenaries will not be in the scope of your Carnage Mercenaries in numbers I fear. We have no strong power supporting us, as my Flame Mercenaries rely only on each other. But with time, the Flame Mercenaries will become the strongest in the Blue Wind Kingdom, and even the strongest power in this part of the continent.” Jian Chen spoke.

Furrowing his eyebrows, Zhan Tian questioned, “In the surrounding kingdoms to this area, it is perhaps the Changyang clan in the Gesun Kingdom that could claim the right to being the strongest around. There are none that would dare provoke them, but brother Jian Chen, do you mean to tell me that your flame Mercenaries can overcome the Changyang clan? Let us forego that topic for now and focus on the Blue Wind Kingdom. As of right now, there are still several Heaven Saint Masters that sit on top of the kingdom. Does your Flame Mercenaries have the power to deal with them? I don’t believe that the Heaven Saint Masters of this kingdom will allow you to expand your influence by the sidelines.”

Jian Chen gave a smile of contempt, “Worry not. If the strongest of the Blue Wind Kingdom really does try to trouble my Flame Mercenaries, then even if they send the Heaven Saint Masters, my Flame Mercenaries will see that none of them will return alive. The Changyang clan in the Gesun Kingdom is something you will never need to worry about, for it is an impossibility for a conflict to ever arise between them and I.”

A flash of light appeared on Zhan Tian’s eyes, “Did you originate from the Gesun Kingdom? Or is there some sort of connection between you and the Changyang clan?” At those words, Zhan Tian suddenly realized something and swung his head to look at the silent Ming Dong to the side with shock. “Ming Dong? Is that your name? Are you the very same Ming Dong from the Gesun Kingdom that used a Heaven Tier Battle Skill to wound a Heaven Saint Master?”

A toothy smile appeared on Ming Dong’s face as he responded, “Correct, that person is me. I didn’t imagine that even captain Zhan Tian would know of my little name. It is a humbling experience.”

Zhan Tian, Mu Chi, and Shan Xiong had sucked in a deep breath when they heard Ming Dong confirm his identity. Giving each other a thunderstruck look, they turned back to Ming Dong with a whole new opinion of him.

They all knew that this youth right in front of them wasn’t even thirty years old but he was already a Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master. Becoming a Heaven Saint Master was merely just another step away, and

this Ming Dong was also in possession of a Heaven Tier Battle Skill, an item that any person would salivate at the mouth for. Furthermore, he had used this battle skill at one of the strongholds of the Gesun Kingdom to heavily injure a Heaven Saint Master. If not for his compatriot, then the Heaven Saint Master would have been known as the very first one to die at the hands of an Earth Saint Master.

“I had no idea that you would be the very same Ming Dong that injured a Heaven Saint Master. How blind I was, truly. And captain Jian Chen, that isn’t your true name either I would imagine. If these old eyes of mine can guess correctly, then captain Jian Chen, you are the Imperial Protector of the Gesun Kingdom and the fourth master of the Changyang clan, Changyang Xiangtian.” This time, the speaker had been Mu Chi who stared at Jian chen with shock.

Jian Chen had not denied it and smiled in return, “You are an elder of tremendous intellect. I can only admire your keen eyes on being able to see me through.”

Smiling, Mu Chi spoke, “What person doesn’t know about the fourth master of the Changyang clan, and the power he wields? Rumors of how the Ming Dong that injured a Heaven Saint Master being close friends with the fourth master is already widespread even here. It is also known that Ming Dong frequents the Changyang Manor. Then Ming Dong suddenly joined the Flame Mercenaries and is willing to take a spot as a vice-captain rather than the captain spot. The captain is similarly a youth in his twenties, similar to the fourth master. With these few details, it is simple to conclude the identity of this captain. If I couldn’t do something like this, then I would be a very ignorant man.”

With a bright smile, Jian Chen spoke, “Then, would you be willing to join my Flame Mercenaries?”

The three men gave another look at one another with hesitation before Zhan Tian finally spoke, “Fourth master, please allow this one to impose a question.”

“Speak it then!” Jian Chen replied.

“If I may, when the fourth master established the Flame Mercenaries, who is it that we swear fealty to? The fourth master, or the Changyang clan?” Zhan Tian asked seriously.

“The Flame Mercenaries isn’t as complicated as you think it is. It is completely managed by me with there being no connection between the Changyang clan and the Flame Mercenaries. You can take the Flame Mercenaries to be a completely independent faction without any allegiances.”

Zhan Tian hesitated once more as he spoke, “Fourth master, my Carnage Mercenaries would be willing to join with your Flame Mercenaries as part of a whole, but you must guarantee that my Carnage Mercenaries will be managed by me.”

“I can agree to that. The Carnage Mercenaries will remain under you three as you see fit. I won’t interfere with any of your internal affairs, but I hope that you will make sure to act in the best interest of the entire Flame Mercenaries and listen when I call upon you.” Jian Chen didn’t hesitate to agree to Zhan Tian’s request.

“Then that’s fine. If that’s all, then my Carnage Mercenaries will join with your Flame Mercenaries. I trust that this will be the most sensible choice for us to make.” Zhan Tian laughed carefreely. Although he knew that he would be swearing fealty to the Flame Mercenaries, he didn’t seem to mind it all too much.

Jian Chen had felt rather happy at this rather easy process of subjugation of the Flame Mercenaries as well. "Worry not, in a short amount of time, the Flame Mercenaries will shake the entire continent with its name."

After the major discussions had finally reached an end, Jian Chen did not stay much longer within the courtyards. After agreeing to meet tomorrow morning at the inn to discuss some more, Jian Chen and the others left the Carnage Mercenaries.

When Jian Chen and them left, Shan Xiong spoke to Zhan Tian with an unwilling expression, "Captain, are we really going to submit to the Carnage Mercenaries so easily?"

Letting out a sigh, Mu Chi responded with dim eyes, "Shan Xiong, forget your past status for now. At the current moment, joining the Flame Mercenaries gives us not only a chance, but a chance to return."

"Mu Chi is correct. Shan Xiong, you must look at the long-term benefits. Joining the Flame Mercenaries is an opportunity that rarely comes by. It is by no means a demeaning trait to our statuses. Despite the Flame Mercenaries not being too large, as long as Changyang Xiangtian is there, then it will definitely become a major power within the area." Zhan Tian spoke. "Changyang Xiangtian was able to become a Heaven Saint Master in his twenties. That alone speaks wonders of his perverse talent at cultivation. I am fully convinced that Changyang Xiangtian will ascend into the higher realms any given day now, and with such a person leading the Flame Mercenaries, it would be impossible for the mercenaries to not flourish. This'll make our own development that much easier, it isn't easy to become a Heaven Saint Master after all."

Chapter 582: A Surge In Power

With the subjugation of the Carnage Mercenaries going exceedingly well, Jian Chen and the group had been very happy on their path back home.

On the second morning, the three leaders of the Carnage Mercenaries met up with Jian Chen at the inn they were staying as they had agreed upon the day before. And so they begun to discuss once more about business.

"The next step in my plans is the Bloodthorn Mercenaries, the Bloodrose Mercenaries, and the Feral mercenaries. They are the groups I wish to bring into our folds, and since you three have stayed within the Cloud Capital for so long, you must know plenty about them. Would you please tell us what would be prudent to know as we plan?" Jian Chen asked Zhan Tian and the other two.

Mu Chi had been the first to speak from the three, "The Feral Mercenaries have an extremely close bond with the lord of the Cloud Capital. If you wish to force them into submission, it would require a tremendous amount of power. The Bloodrose and the Bloodthorn Mercenaries on the other hand is much more simpler. From my perspective, you should have those two submit first."

"I agree. Subjugating the Bloodrose and Bloodthorn Mercenaries will be a far easier task than the Feral Mercenaries. Since the captain of the Bloodthorn Mercenaries is infatuated with the captain of the Bloodrose Mercenaries, we should first target the Bloodrose Mercenaries. As long as we get them to submit, then the Bloodthorn Mercenaries will follow shortly afterwards." Zhan Tian agreed.

Jian Chen nodded his head after listening to their reasoning, "If it is as you say, then we should first subjugate the Bloodrose Mercenaries. Why don't you three follow me over there?"

"The three of us have quite the friendship with their captain, Jasmine. It'd be an easier task if we advise her." Zhan Tian spoke.

After the discussion was over, Jian Chen and the others left the inn and rode on their mounts towards where the Bloodrose Mercenaries were.

It was about thirty or so kilometers between the Bloodrose Mercenaries and where Jian Chen had started off from. With the abundant amount of people crowding the streets, Jian Chen's group had to cross through on their mounts at a slow and careful pace. By the time they arrived, a decent amount of time had already passed.

Like the Carnage Mercenaries, the Bloodrose Mercenaries lived within a giant courtyard. But the similarities had ended there. The courtyards of the Bloodrose Mercenaries had been spotless without any dust to be seen. Two sentries could even be seen standing by the gates.

Because the three leaders of the Carnage Mercenaries were seen with Jian Chen, the sentries by the gate had not dared to stop them. Immediately letting out a courteous salute to the group, the guards lead them into the courtyards while sending someone ahead to notify the captain.

And so Jian Chen and his group were seated by the inner halls while they waited for the captain of the Bloodrose Mercenaries to arrive.

They hadn't had to wait for too long before a heroic looking woman came walking out from within the building.

"Haha, Zhan Tian, Mu Chi, Shan Xiong, what winds brought you here to my humble abode today? For you three to come to my Bloodrose Mercenaries, my home has been blessed by your presence."

Looking up towards the source of the voice, Jian Chen saw a woman around the age of thirty or so come walking in. She was beautiful in appearance and quite graceful in her movements. This woman wore a dark-green skirt with an equally dark green blouse. Tying up her hair behind her head was a single bowtie that added to her allure.

"Haha, Captain Jasmine, your words are far too serious to be wasted on the likes of us. It has been two years since we last met, but since then, you have grown far more beautiful." Zhan Tian laughed as he bowed with cupped hands towards her.

Smiling in return, Jasmine's eyes swiveled to look at Jian Chen and the people behind him. "Might I inquire who you might be?"

Jian Chen cupped his hands in salute and smiled. "This one is Jian Chen, captain of the Flame Mercenaries."

"Flame Mercenaries?" Jasmine spoke with a soft voice, "Brother Jian Chen, you are not a native to the Cloud Capital I take it."

“Correct. I am not from the Cloud Capital.” Jian Chen admitted before continuing onwards, “Captain Jasmine, I am here today in hopes that a proposal can be made between your mercenary group and mine.”

Taking a seat at the table with the others, Jasmine stretched her arms lazily, “Then don’t stop your speech midway through and say it.”

Still smiling, Jian Chen spoke, “Then allow me to be frank. Captain Jasmine, I hope that your Bloodrose Mercenaries will join into my Flame Mercenaries.”

Jasmine had flown straight to her feet as soon as Jian Chen’s words registered in her mind. In an instant, her calm eyes had gained a fearsome glint to them as she stared Jian Chen down.

“What did you say?” Jasmine enunciated each word slowly and icily like the expression on her face.

“This one hopes that captain Jasmine will bring your Bloodrose Mercenaries into my Flame Mercenaries as a division of it.” Jian Chen repeated once more for her to hear.

The iciness in Jasmine’s eyes kicked up a notch as she glared at Jian Chen. Seeing that it did not seem like he was joking, she shook her head with a cold smile, “Little brother, you shouldn’t joke around with such a joke like that.”

Jian Chen laughed in response, “But I am not joking. The Carnage Mercenaries have already joined up with my Flame Mercenaries. If captain Jasmine is not convinced, then please ask Zhan Tian, Mu Chi or Shan Xiong.”

Startled by that response, Jasmine’s eyes flew over to Zhan Tian and the other two who had only gave her a nod in confirmation.

Jasmine had been alarmed to an even greater detail by this confirmation. The Carnage Mercenaries were amongst the strongest within the Cloud Capital and had three Earth Saint Masters in their ranks. But now they suddenly joined with an unheard of mercenary group, that had been simply unbelievable.

“Impossible! Zhan Tian, Mu Chi, Shan Xiong, has your Carnage Mercenaries truly joined with the Flame Mercenaries?” Jasmine cried out involuntarily.

“Correct. Our Carnage Mercenaries have joined with the Flame Mercenaries. It is without a doubt the truth. It is our belief that should we join with the Flame Mercenaries, we will establish ourselves within the Tian Yuan Continent. No longer will we be sequestered to this small city and forced to hide like a turtle in its shell.” Zhan Tian spoke calmly.

“Are the Flame Mercenaries that strong?” Jasmine asked again as she looked back to Jian Chen with confusion and disbelief.

“Captain Jasmine, may I ask what the highest level battle skill is within your possession?” Jian Chen asked.

Although she was suspicious of why Jian Chen had asked such a question, she decided to answer honestly. “Two Advanced Human Tier Battle Skills!”

“Captain Jasmine, allow me to tell you a benefit to joining my Flame Mercenaries. For every person that joins my Flame Mercenaries, then they will be given a Primary Earth Tier Battle Skill to learn free of charge as long as they are an Earth Saint Master.” Jian Chen smiled.

Jasmine’s eyes had immediately lit up at the sound of that. An Earth Tier Battle Skill was very sparse within the Blue Wind Kingdom. At the current moment, only the experts that reigned at the top had an Earth Tier Battle Skill.

She had not been the only one to be surprised. Zhan Tian and the other two suddenly felt their heart rates skyrocket upwards and their breathing had started to come in shorter bursts.

But it had been the next sentence of Jian Chen that caused the greatest amount of shock.

“In the future should your group contribute greatly to the Flame Mercenaries with the utmost devotion, then I will impart an Advanced Earth Tier Battle Skill or perhaps even a Heaven Tier Battle Skill.” Jian Chen spoke.

“What! A Heaven Tier Battle Skill? You have one of those!” Jasmine had completely lost her composure at that as she cried out in shock. Both of her red phoenix eyes had grown wide with disbelief.

“Correct. I am in possession of not just one Heaven Tier Battle Skill, but multiple of them. So, how about it captain Jasmine. Will you consider joining my Flame Mercenaries? In the case that you do with the utmost loyalty and a great enough contribution, then I will be more than happy to award you with a Heaven Tier Battle Skill. This is something that people can only yearn for in their dreams.” Jian Chen smiled. In this moment, he only wished to quickly expand his Flame Mercenaries. For the sake of improving the backbone of the group, he couldn’t afford to be stingy and would thus treat everyone equally.

The enticement that Heaven Tier Battle Skill would naturally be tremendous. Unless someone already had multiple Heaven Tier Battle Skills, not a single person would be able to resist the allure and temptation it brought. This time, Jasmine had only taken a moment to think before agreeing to Jian Chen’s request to join the Bloodrose Mercenaries into the Flame Mercenaries.

After the subjugation of the Bloodrose Mercenaries were done, Jian Chen, Zhan Tian, and Jasmine began to discuss the next course of action. It was only until late in the afternoon that they left the courtyards with Jasmine leaving with them.

Traveling once more on the magical beast mounts through the streets, they had attracted a fair amount of attention now that the leaders of the Carnage Mercenaries and the captain of the Bloodrose Mercenaries were together; and with a group of youngsters no less. That much had been more than enough for the people to gossip and spread the news back to the insiders of the city.

But Jian Chen and the others hadn’t cared at all for this. Riding on their mounts, they finally arrived at the grounds of the Bloodthorn Mercenaries after some time.

The captain of the Bloodthorn Mercenaries had been a very straightforward person named Ha Ni with a true infatuation with the captain of the Bloodrose Mercenaries. Despite her indifferent treatment of him, his love for her did not decrease at all. The very moment when he heard that the Bloodrose

Mercenaries had joined with the Flame Mercenaries, he didn't hesitate to join the Bloodthorn Mercenaries as well in hopes that his relationship with Jasmine could be furthered another step.

In short, the subjugation of the Bloodthorn Mercenaries had gone by swiftly and smoothly. Not even a cup of tea later, Jian Chen had already entered them into his group without even adding a beneficial reason to butter them up with.

And now, Jian Chen had collected the Carnage Mercenaries, the Bloodrose mercenaries, and the Bloodthorn Mercenaries into a single entity under the Flame Mercenaries. In two short days, the Flame Mercenaries had skyrocketed in power causing no small joy to Jian Chen. As the captain of the Flame Mercenaries, this could only be described as a surge of power.

However. There was no such thing as a wall that could prevent wind entirely. News of the merge between the three mercenary groups had made its way to the six clans and even the mansion of the city lord. Such a piece of information had caused all of them to grow nervous. The combined might of the three mercenary groups meant at least five Earth Saint Masters joined together. For the six clans in comparison, that was a formidable power that even they found difficulty in matching.

It had been the six clans that had been the most nervous of them all in the city. A meeting had instantly been called for with the head of each of the six clans to discuss what to do next.

Chapter 583: The Movement of Six Major Clans

Within a secret room located at a secret location, the leaders of the six clans of the Cloud Capital were gathered around a table with serious faces.

"I believe everyone is now aware that the Bloodthorn Mercenaries, the Bloodsting Mercenaries, and the Carnage Mercenaries have all joined together to form a single mercenary group. This to us, is undoubtedly an unfavorable situation." An elder spoke.

"That is correct. With the three mercenary groups joining together, they now have at least five Earth Saint Masters. A force like that is comparable to the unison of our six clans almost. In my perspective, we must take action now or else we will not like the horrendous aftermath that will come next." A white-robed man in his middling ages spoke seriously.

"Taking the first course of action is indeed the right choice. But we first must find out the exact reason for why this impromptu coalition has happened. For what reason have they renamed themselves to the Flame Mercenaries? From what my informants tell me, the captains of the Carnage Mercenaries and the Bloodthorn Mercenaries were walking behind a youngster. Perhaps it was because of that youth they were subjugated?" An elder spoke.

"Then it would appear that this youth is not your average youth. However, no matter what status he holds, we must ensure that he doesn't expand his power any more into this city. In two short days, this youth was able to combine three large mercenary groups together. That alone is proof enough that his ambitions are beyond what they should be. Three groups won't be enough to satisfy him I bet. If we allow him to gather even more strength in this city, then his next targets will be us soon enough."

"I can agree with that sentiment. If we continue to sit around like this, then we will ultimately be digging our own graves. When the moment comes for the Flame Mercenaries to overcome us in power, then the next sacrifice to be annexed will be us. We must take action now without any time to spare."

And so the six men descended into a fierce discussion. The rate of growth that the Flame Mercenaries gained was more than enough to cause them all to feel restless.

An elder with white hair suddenly gave a light cough. "Gentleman. This old man has thought of a way to stop the Flame Mercenaries from growing any stronger. If the Flame Mercenaries wishes to annex all of the stronger factions in the Cloud Capital, then why can't we do the same? This way, our six clans can unite to form a single alliance and have any and all factions that wish to preserve their status and name to join with us for the time being. In the case that the other side begins their encroachment, then we will have enough men to start a counter-defense."

"Yes, I agree. This is a very good way to deal with the growth of the Flame Mercenaries. With their current strength, it will mean an unbelievable amount of damages on our part if we try to act against them now. But if we unite everyone, then we'll have enough people no matter how much the Flame Mercenaries try to expand. And at the same time, we'll have more than enough manpower to eliminate the Flame Mercenaries while minimizing our own damages."

"Yes, that seems like the best course of action. However, I don't believe the Flame Mercenaries will for sure try to fight against the entire Cloud Capital. Still, that does not mean we should not try to prevent his growth. Otherwise, it will be hard to do so in the future. For now, we should wait and see what they do next. In the case he does try something, we will have to be ready to stop him."

"Then we shall implement this course of action straight away. Time cannot be wasted, let us all return home to make the proper preparations."

A short amount of time later, the six clans had all a plan to counteract against the Flame Mercenaries. The growth of the Flame Mercenaries had been far too fast for their liking if they had been able to subjugate three different mercenary groups in two short days. It was a fearful thing for the six clans. None of them wanted to be annexed by any single power, so they had been more than willing to suppress the Flame Mercenaries at a moment's notice.

The response from the six clans had been very fast. As soon as their discussion were over, each one of the clans had immediately got into contact with every single faction they knew. Since these factions were also aware of the situation with the Flame Mercenaries, not a single one of them had hesitated to join with the six clans to form an alliance.

With even more people added into the group, the alliance had quickly expanded. As of that current moment, there were at least ten Earth Saint Masters in the alliance along with the ones from the six clans.

News of the six clans joining together to form an alliance had made its way to Jian Chen's ears as well, but he had not been concerned in the slightest. In his eyes, it was a futile attempt that served absolutely no use.

On the second day, Jian Chen had gathered the captain of the Bloodrose Mercenaries, Jasmine, the captain of the Bloodthorn Mercenaries, Ha Ni, and the captain of the Carnage Mercenaries, Zhan Tian

and his two vice-captains together with Jian Chen standing in front of them. By his side was a worn out manual.

Pushing the manual towards them, Jian Chen spoke, "Now that you've joined the Flame Mercenaries, I will fulfill my end of the bargain. In front of me are five Primary Earth Tier Battle Skills. Choose whichever one fits you most. In the future when someone from your group becomes an Earth Saint Master, then let them learn from this manual. In the future, if your contributions are good enough while also maintaining a loyal attitude to the Flame Mercenaries, then I will impart a Heaven Tier Battle Skill to you."

"Thank you captain!" Seeing the manuals on the table, each one of the captains had flames in their eyes as they gave their thanks before immediately choosing from one of the five battle skills.

Out of the five of them, the captain of the Bloodthorn Mercenaries had been the most excited. He had joined the Flame Mercenaries solely because of Jasmine so he hadn't realized that joining the Flame Mercenaries would have such a great bonus like this. When Jian Chen had talked about the Heaven Tier Battle Skill, his own heart was nearly about to leap out from his chest.

Jian Chen's actions there had been an undoubtedly good plan to entice the hearts of people. With an Earth Tier Battle Skill, Jian Chen would cement the feelings of loyalty they had for the Flame Mercenaries while also eliminating any ill will they might have for joining.

Seeing the excited expressions on everyone's faces, Jian Chen smiled in response. This was a satisfactory reaction that he expected to see. After a short while, he spoke, "Our Flame Mercenaries won't stay too long in the Cloud Capital. Perhaps in a few days, we'll leave this place, so prepare your groups to move out of the city."

"Captain, I have a question to ask. Does the Flame Mercenaries have a place to stay? Where might it be? It can't be possible to have this many people drifting this way and that." Ha Ni asked.

With a pensive expression, Jian Chen spoke, "As of right now, there is no determined spot. Right now, we are just expanding the power of the Flame Mercenaries. After we subjugate the rest of the Cloud Capital and then the rest of the Blue Wind Kingdom, we'll expand outwards into the surrounding kingdoms."

This time, both Ha Ni and Jasmine were startled to hear Jian Chen's plan. Neither of the two had thought that he would be thinking on such a large scale. To annex the entire Blue Wind Kingdom of its mercenary groups and then the ones from the surrounding kingdoms was not what they expected to be his goal.

"That concludes our discussion for now. Our next step is for you five to subjugate the powers with the Earth Saint Masters in the name of our Flame Mercenaries." Jian Chen spoke. With Zhan Tian and the other four, there was no need for Jian Chen to personally take part. Those five would be more than enough.

With that order, the five of them walked away.

After they left, Jian Chen took the tiger cub who was rolling around on the bed into his arms and began to stroke its furry head as he started to think about what the next plan would be.

At the current moment, all Jian Chen wanted to do was to expand the powers of his Flame Mercenaries. For the sake of his promise with Kendall, Jian Chen would make the Flame Mercenaries the strongest mercenary group on the continent. This was to say that not only was this a promise, it was a goal that Jian Chen would fulfill.

Aside from him, there were no other Heaven Saint Masters in the Flame Mercenaries. But that fact was not enough to make Jian Chen concerned. As the leader, he was more than aware that the Flame Mercenaries was in its initial stage--something like a child still and filled with superficial power. Right now, it wasn't even on the same level of power as the Blue Wind Kingdom, but with time, power could accumulated slowly.

Jian Chen wouldn't be able to say that he would be able to trust these newcomers to the Flame Mercenaries on how loyal they were. It would be no exaggeration to say that aside from Dohre and the others, Jian Chen trusted no one else--Zhan Tian and the others included.

But trust wasn't something Jian Chen needed from them at this current moment. They were new blood to the mercenaries, and Jian Chen was convinced that the more the Flame Mercenaries grew, the more and more these people will begin to develop loyalty for them. Sooner or later, everyone will feel like the mercenary group was family. Kai Er and the others felt that way especially.

Two hours had past before Jian Chen had realized he had been pondering to himself within his room. It was only when a knock on the door was heard that Jian Chen was snapped out from his thoughts.

Looking to the door, Jian Chen spoke out, "Come in!"

The door opened, revealing Ming Dong and Dugu Feng standing shoulder to shoulder as they walked in. Ming Dong was wearing a black robe fitted slightly for battle while Dugu Feng wore his customary fire-like red robes.

"Jian Chen. Zhan Tian and the others have come into trouble. When they went to subjugate a sect, they just happened to come into contact with the people from the six clans and henned in the grounds of the sect. As of right now, they have no way out." Ming Dong spoke with a slightly unsightly look.

Jian Chen's eyebrows furrowed together at this piece of news. With a slight mutter to himself, he spoke, "This was not within my expectations. I had thought that the six clans would be slower to respond."

"Jian Chen, if the six clans have mobilized themselves against us, then we may as well go all out to subjugate them all at once. There's no need to run here and there to pick them off one by one. But to do that, we'll need to have you meet them in person. I'd be enough to deal with most of them, but they too have people of my same level of strength, meaning if we were to fight, it would become a battle to the death rather than submission. And if there are any Heaven Saint Masters behind them, then they won't dare to fight back even so." Ming Dong continued to speak.

Chapter 584: Fealty From the Six Major Clans (One)

Thinking for a moment, Jian Chen spoke, "Very well. If the six clans have come to our doors to stop us, then we will get two birds with a single arrow and subjugate them all at once. Take me there, we'll head over now."

And so after, Jian Chen called for You Yue and Tie Ta to accompany him out from the inn and onto their Class 3 Magical Beast mounts to ride away.

At this moment within a large courtyard in the Cloud Capital, hundreds of men were gathered within the enclosure to surround a group of fifty so tightly that not even water could leak out.

From within these fifty people, there were five different figures that were especially prominent in everyone's eyes. There were perhaps only a small handful of people that wouldn't know these five; captain Ha Ni of the Bloodthorn Mercenaries, captain Jasmine of the Bloodrose Mercenaries, captain Zhan Tian of the Carnage Mercenaries, and his two vice captains Shan Xiong and Mu Chi.

Jasmine and Ha Ni were both staring heavily at the surrounding people--their eyes had most especially been focused on the dozen people standing in front. The both of them had grim expressions as they registered just who these people were. Each one of them were all titular figures of the Cloud Capital and were experts of the Earth Saint Master realm. Each one of them had been Earth Saint Masters for far longer than Ha Ni and Jasmine and could easily fight them two to one with an advantage.

Zhan Tian, Mu Chi, and Shan Xiong were all relaxed despite the situation they were in. Each one of them were calm despite being surrounded, and instead of being concerned like Jasmine and Ha Ni were, they had instead looked at the group with a cold sneer as if their enemies were beneath their notice.

It had taken a long period of time before Zhan Tian took a single step powerful step forward.

"Gentleman, what is the meaning of this? Do you wish to start a war with the Flame Mercenaries?"

"Ai, Zhan Tian, Mu Chi, Shan Xiong, Jasmine, Ha Ni, we may not be very close to one another, but we have talked with one another before. It was an unexpected piece of information to hear that your group of all people would throw away your good position of captains to become the lackeys of an unknown mercenary group like the Flame Mercenaries, how is that worth it?" An elder spoke with regret as if he felt that it was a complete shame that these five people would willingly work another.

"Zhan Tian, Jasmine, Ha Ni, you three should withdraw from the Flame Mercenaries. Think about the glory you had as captains. What need is there to be a lackey, this is a complete insult to your status." Another man spoke.

"Yes, Zhan Tian. Your Carnage Mercenaries were amongst the strongest within the Cloud Capital. But now you've completely thrown away your entire group to the whims of another to use, is that not an unworthy use of them?"

"There's still time to go back. With the combined power of the Cloud Capital, we'll definitely be able to drive out the evil..."

Practically every single person there were hoping that the five Earth Saint Masters would leave the Flame Mercenaries. Unless there was no other choice, not a single one of them wanted to engage in battle with the five of them. If one did happen, then there would undoubtedly be plenty of deaths, and those five Earth Saint Masters were definitely figures to be reckoned with.

"That's enough, you should all stop talking." Mu Chi waved his hand in irritation. "We have joined with the Flame Mercenaries for glory. Don't even bother trying to use your cheap words to instigate us. It is futile."

“Aye. I, Ha Ni, rejoice at the fact to join with the Flame Mercenaries! Trying to fan the flames of resentment is a waste of your energy and our time, so forget about it.” The captain of the Bloodthorn Mercenaries spoke. After joining the Flame Mercenaries, he was finally able to obtain the Earth Tier Battle Skill that he had always dreamed of. Such a prize had excited him to no end and had caused him to feel extremely devoted to the Flame Mercenaries.

Each one of the figures from the six clans grew dark in the face as they listened to Mu Chi and Ha Ni. “It seems that the poison has already taken root within your body. There is no saving you now.”

“Hehe. I figured that us joining with the Flame Mercenaries would have nothing to do with you. To each their own they say. So when did our actions have to be managed by you?” Zhan Tian laughed.

Everyone could only stay in silence after hearing Zhan Tian’s words.

No longer even pretending to bother with the six heads, Zhan Tian turned to the elder by the side, “Lord Griff, if I may ask about your thoughts on our proposal. If you join our Flame Mercenaries, then the rewards you will receive will be far beyond what you could possibly gather within a single lifetime. It is a path that has no end in potential!”

“Impudence! Zhan Tian, Griff is already a part of our alliance, and yet you still dare try to pull him into your own. Do you even have eyes for our alliance?” Another elder spoke with a heavy expression. Zhan Tian was growing more and more out of control the more he represented the Flame Mercenaries, and now he was completely unafraid of them all. This result had made them all feel rather uneasy.

There had to be something amiss here!

“I didn’t think that this place would be so lively. Every single faction within the Cloud Capital is here it seems.” Suddenly, a loud but clear voice could be heard from the outside as several men and women suddenly came walking into view. They had an air of regalness to them that was unlike the ordinary air to most.

Zhan Tian and the other four had lit up when they saw these figures--they could see that it was Jian Chen and the others.

In an instant, everyone’s eyes flew over to land onto Jian Chen’s body with a look of extreme displeasure.

“Who are you?” A middle-aged man barked at Jian Chen’s group.

“He is the captain of our Flame Mercenaries!” Before Jian Chen had even said anything, Zhan Tian had introduced him first. He knew that Jian Chen was a Heaven Saint Master with unlimited potential, so he would naturally want to curry favor with him.

Everyone had looked flabbergasted at Jian Chen when they heard Zhan Tian’s introduction. Shocked at the news, not a single one of them had thought that the one responsible for annexing three of the strongest mercenary groups in the Cloud Capital would be a youth that was barely in his twenties.

“And here I thought that the captain of the Flame Mercenaries would be some sort of strong burly man. Not once did I suspect that it would actually be a green horned brat! How ridiculous!” A black-robed elder mocked.

“Three of our Cloud Capital’s strongest mercenary groups willingly kneeled down in front of a wet behind the ears brat like this? My my, how shameful that is.” Another thin-looking elder shook his head with a sigh.

Jian Chen’s eyes grew icy for a split-moment before he barked out, “Ming Dong, Dugu Feng!”

Understanding what Jian Chen was asking them to do, Ming Dong and Dugu Feng immediately charged forward with their Saint Weapons out and ready to strike. Saint Force billowed out from their weapons as it stabbed out at the two.

The two elders that had spoken earlier were Earth Saint Masters as well, meaning that their reactions to Dugu Feng and Ming Dong had been swift. Straight away, they had taken out their Saint Weapons to block the strike.

The sword in Dugu Feng’s hand grew fiery as it approached his target, and with the sound of thunder striking metal, his sword clashed against the other with a large explosion. The elder he had clashed with had been forced back by the impact.

“Third Cycle Earth Saint Master!” The man had cried out in shock. But then the next words that came out from Dugu Feng’s mouth had shocked him even more.

“Earth Tier Battle Skill--Heaven Splitter Earth Breaker!” A tremendous amount of fire billowed out from his giant sword as he lifted it upwards. With a mighty heave, Dugu Feng brought the sword down onto the elder to cleave him in two.

The elder had wanted to dodge when a fierce amount of pressure suddenly locked him into place. Feeling as if he had been bogged down by some sort of quagmire and had a thousand pound weight forced onto him, the elder had been rendered helpless to move. With no other choice, the elder could only make use of his Human Tier Battle Skill to try and defend himself against the Earth Tier Battle Skill.

A Human Tier Battle Skill was like striking a stone with an egg when faced against an Earth Tier Battle Skill. As expected, the elder’s body had been knocked flying away with blood coming out from his mouth after sustaining a tremendous amount of damage.

At the same time, the thinner looking elder had been grievously wounded by Ming Dong as well. Collapsing twenty meters away, he landed back down onto the ground with such force that a series of spiderweb-like cracks appeared all around him. The elder’s face was white as if devoid of blood, and compared to the one that fought against Dugu Feng, this elder was far more injured.

Ming Dong had not used any battle skill, but because of his strength as a Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master, he was an extremely terrifying existence. A Second Cycle Earth Saint Master like this elder would be easily defeated by him.

Ming Dong and Dugu Feng’s strength had completely startled the entire group, but they were not too afraid of the two just yet. There were over a dozen of them after all, and in numbers, they evidently had the advantage. With numbers, they could stifle even strength.

But the use of an Earth Tier Battle Skill by Dugu Feng had been something everyone salivated over. Each one of them had thus looked to Dugu Feng with a look of avarice that wasn’t hidden at all.

“Impudence! How dare you strike at our allies? Everyone, forward!” Suddenly, another elder had let out a loud shout as he charged at Dugu Feng with his Saint Weapon and an impassioned look in his eyes.

As soon as this elder spoke, the other remaining Earth Saint Masters had regained their wits and charged at Dugu Feng without fear of the consequences.

Jian Chen looked at the group charge towards Dugu Feng with a cold sneer, “How reckless!” Jian Chen’s hands clutched at the sky so as to gather the energy of the world. With a sudden push of his hands, Jian Chen let out a burst of explosive energy that howled mightily as if it was a dragon towards the group.

Not a single one of the Earth Saint Masters that had charged at Dugu Feng had enough time to react before the tide of energy had slammed against them. Their robes had completely disintegrated into dust from where the energy had struck while each one of them had been sent flying back. With blood coming out from their mouths, each person stumbled ruthlessly across the ground.

It had only been a brief moment where not even enough time had transpired for a breath to even form. But in just that small prolapse of time, over ten Earth Saint Masters had been injured so severely that they could only lay on the ground in pain.

In front of a Heaven Saint Master, an Earth Saint Master was an extremely weak figure. There was not a chance for them to even be able to resist, and only Ming Dong was an exception.

Chapter 585: Fealty From Six Major Clans (Two)

There were several hundred people within the courtyards of the Griff clan, but in this moment, the entire area was completely devoid of conversation. Only the heavy breathing could be heard.

Every single one of them had stared at the ten or so Earth Saint Masters that had been knocked to the ground by the impact with wide-open eyes from disbelief.

Ha Ni and Jasmine had been surprised by Jian Chen’s strength as well since they had no idea just how strong he was. And so even the two of them stared at Jian Chen in silent surprise for a long while.

With a single move, more than ten Earth Saint Masters had been heavily injured. Just what kind of monstrous strength was this?

“Wah! Cousin, you are really strong! Without any effort, even all these Earth Saint Masters were taken care of; is this the true might of a Heaven Saint Master? How amazing!” Suddenly, a loud but excited sound broke the silence that had descended upon the area. Bi Lian had cried out to Jian Chen with such elation that her face had gone red.

Heaven Saint Master! Those three words had been like a sledgehammer that slammed into everyone’s chest and cause them to shiver violently. And now when they looked at Jian Chen, everyone was now appalled at the sight.

None of them could hardly dare to believe their eyes. The twenty something year old youth in front of them was....actually a Heaven Saint Master? A person like this was a golden existence even in the entire Blue Wind Kingdom. Even the king of the kingdom himself would have to treat Jian Chen with the utmost sincerity and manners.

Jasmine and Ha Ni had been dumbfounded in their glances at Jian Chen. It was only right now that they had realized this captain that they had been in contact with had been a Heaven Saint Master this entire time.

Within the entire Blue Wind Kingdom, there were most likely four Heaven Saint Masters left. And each one of them were unrivalled existences that none could even touch.

“So our captain was a Heaven Saint Master this entire time?!” Jasmine and Ha Ni had screamed out mentally. With that thought going around their minds, their hearts had begun to pound faster and faster so that it threatened to leap out from their chests.

The only ones that had managed to keep their cool other than Jian Chen and his group had been Zhan Tian and the other two vice-captains. Those three had already known about Jian Chen’s identity and hadn’t been shocked at all.

By now, the Earth Saint Masters that had been struck to the ground by Jian Chen had finally managed to climb back up to their feet. Such a simple task like that had been made a hundred times more difficult from Jian Chen’s strike. But now that they were up, the Earth Saint Masters could only look at Jian Chen with a completely different expression of shock and fear.

“You--you’re a...a Heaven Saint Master!” A middle-aged man with black armor had cried out with a quavering voice--this man had the head of one of the six clans.

Still holding the white tiger cub in his hands next to his chest, Jian Chen stared down the heavily injured Earth Saint Masters with an icy glint in his eyes, but an expressionless look had been on his face as he spoke, “Since you have all decided to form an alliance with one another against my Flame Mercenaries, I will not let you off lightly. Submit to me and prosper, or oppose me and perish. Make your decision.”

The dozen Earth Saint Masters had all looked unwell at his words, but not a single one of them dared to say anything in return. A Heaven Saint Master’s strength was far too much to even fathom, and it was more than enough to force them all to remain quiet in fear. If a Heaven Saint Master wanted to kill them, then it would be as easily as killing an ant. Like how an ant wouldn’t possibly have the strength to defend themselves against a human, these people wouldn’t even have the strength to run away.

With his speech, Jian Chen had managed to bring silence back down onto the courtyards.

A moment later, an elderly man came walking forward before kneeling down in front of him and spoke out respectfully, “O’ revered one, I am called Griff. My Griff clan would find it an honor to serve as your hands and feet and joined into your Flame Mercenaries.”

This elder was an Earth Saint Master himself and was also the master of the courtyard they were all standing in.

Jian Chen smiled as he nodded his head, “Very well. My Flame Mercenaries won’t treat anyone unfairly.

“To be able serve your majesty would be a great honor for my Griff clan. What more could this one ask for?” Griff had spoken seriously. Joining the group a Heaven Saint Master was in was a dream come true for most. Not only did would they earn a mountain as a support, they would earn a symbol of power. While this had meant that they would lose their status as a power holder, joining the Flame Mercenaries would still elevate their status by a tremendous amount.

And so Jian Chen looked to the rest of the Earth Saint Masters. “Have you made your decision yet? I do not have all day to wait.”

Plenty of men had looked on in hesitation. Not all of them were like Griff and could throw away all that they built up for for the sake of having a mountain as support. Many of them had spent far too much time and blood to have what they had today, and so they were unwilling to bow their heads towards him.

You Yue could more or less see what each one of them was thinking about when she saw their hesitation. “Be at ease, upon joining the Flame Mercenaries, we will not strip you of your authority. As long as you remain a part of our group, you will maintain the power you have now.” She spoke.

Everyone’s eyes had lit up at the sound of that and looked to Jian Chen for confirmation.

Smiling, Jian Chen replied, “Correct. Upon joining my Flame Mercenaries, I will not take away the authority you hold over your clans and sects. You may lead them as you would in the past; however, you will now place more emphasis on the benefit of the Flame Mercenaries. You will not do anything that will lead to the detriment of the Flame Mercenaries, or try to betray the Flame Mercenaries. If you do one of the such things, then I’m sure I won’t need to explain the consequences for you to figure out.” Jian Chen’s eyes gained a heavy glint as he spoke the last line.

“Very well then, my Solar sect will join your Flame Mercenaries then. I hope that you will not eat your words and allow me to keep jurisdiction over my sect.” An elder replied at last.

“But of course. This is a guarantee I am willing to make.” Jian Chen promised to help reassure everyone.

Having Jian Chen’s promise, the other leaders had no longer any more qualms. Even the head of the six clans had ultimately decided to join the Flame Mercenaries.

With everyone now willing to join his Flame Mercenaries, Jian Chen had been satisfied. Now that he had these men and their factions in his group, the Flame Mercenaries had grown exponentially. Combined with Zhan Tian and the other four, the mercenary group now had twenty or so Earth Saint Masters.

And now, the Flame Mercenaries were a powerhouse to be reckoned with. Naturally, this was only in perspective to a small kingdom like the Blue Wind Kingdom. For the entire Tian Yuan Continent, they were still nothing more but a small child.

“When you go back, you will throw out your old signboard and replace it with the banners of the Flame Mercenaries.” Jian Chen had commanded.

“Yes!” Each of the leaders had replied out at once. They were all smart people, now that they were in the Flame Mercenaries, they knew where they stood.

“I will give you all some time to recover from your injuries. But make sure to take care of whatever needs to be done within your households, for as soon as you are all healed, we will be leaving the Cloud Capital.” Jian Chen spoke.

These words however had caused everyone to be startled.

“If we leave the Cloud Capital, then the power we’ve built up within this city will.....” One of the elders had been unwilling to leave behind the powerbase he had built up with his blood and sweat for so many years.

“A tiny amount of power like this is enough for you to be reluctant? How short-sighted you are; follow our captain and he will guide you all to greatness. The power you all wield here in this tiny city pales in comparison to the future power our captain will bring us all!” Zhan Tian had barked out.

And so the doubt in everyone’s heart gradually began to melt away.

Now that Jian Chen had given them all their respective tasks, everyone had split ways to go off and do as they should. Not a single one of them had remained behind--even Ming Dong, Zhan Tian, and the others had left as well.

Now that the major six clans and several other factions had been recruited into his Flame Mercenaries, there wasn’t anything else within the Cloud Capital that appealed to Jian Chen. In just three short days, Jian Chen had completely monopolized the entire power of the city.

“Wah, brother, you’re so strong! Each one of those people were joined the Flame Mercenaries without question! If this was Fengyang City, not a single one of those groups would be as strong as the top three clans!” Bi Lian spoke excitedly. Everything that happened today had been something that she couldn’t even possibly imagine even in her dreams.

Jian Chen had a kind smile on his face when he saw the excitement that was on Bi Lian’s face. The fact that she had called him brother had given Jian Chen a rather warm sensation. Aside from his duty to protect Bi Lian from harm, Jian Chen now felt that he had a duty as an older brother to make her happy.

“Bi Lian, since you haven’t condensed your Saint Weapon, you must make sure you keep hard at cultivating. As long as you are strong, you will be able to do what you set your mind to. If you need some monster cores to cultivate, then feel free to ask me for them.” Jian Chen spoke.

A sour look had immediately spread over her face, “Brother, it’s not as if I’m not trying hard enough. It’s because my talent at it isn’t like yours. No matter how much I try to cultivate, my speed is exceedingly slow. I’m eighteen years old and I’m barely at the sixth layer of Saint Force. There’s still a very long time until the tenth layer I’m afraid.” But then a sweet smile appeared on her face afterwards as she laughed, “But that’s not important. As long as I have a brother like you to protect me, no one will dare bully me.”

Chapter 586: Alarming the King

Forcing out a smile, Jian Chen spoke, “Bi Lian, you are thinking a little too simplistically. I am nowhere as invincible as you think I am. In truth, there is a heavy weight on my shoulders.”

With blinking eyes, Bi Lian stared curiously at Jian Chen, “Brother, just what weight is there on your shoulders?”

A sigh had escaped from Jian Chen’s lips; he did not wish to discuss this problem and had thus decided to change the topic. “Bi Lian, although your aptitude for cultivation is lackluster, there are plenty of heavenly resources that could change that. Wait until we come across one, I will buy one for you and see that you will find a renewed chance at cultivation.”

“A heavenly resource that can do such a thing would have to be extremely ancient in age. Those are far and few on the continent, and each one of them worth a city’s weight in gold almost. Only a very robust and flourishing kingdom would have these heavenly resources in stock; a kingdom like the Gesun or Blue Wind Kingdom would never have the chance for one. In other words, to come across one would be very rare.” The usually very quiet Dugu Feng spoke.

“Wait until we have the chance to explore. I’ll do my best to go and find if there are any heavenly resources that fit the description.” Jian Chen laughed. As of right now, the amount of gold Jian Chen had could rival a kingdom, the loss of money for the sake of a heavenly resource would not bother him at all.

And even Bi Lian had felt a mellow warmth in her heart and a smile on her face when she saw the care and concern Jian Chen had for her.

With that said and done with, Jian Chen turned his attention to Tie Ta who was currently seated on top of his magical beast mount in stone cold silence.

Having known Tie Ta’s personality and what his expression meant, Jian Chen could tell that it would still take some time before Tie Ta would finally adjust to survival on the continent.

“Tie Ta, all that you’ve personally seen so far are just par for the course on the Tian Yuan Continent. A continent where the strong eat the weak and where only the strong have the right to speak. To survive, you must be strong, and without power, there is no point in any discussion.” Jian Chen spoke.

A forlorn expression was on Tie Ta’s face when he looked up to Jian Chen, “Jian Chen, this world is far too cruel. I feel as if this is a land where bandits roam.”

“That is an apt analogy; the world has always been like this. Without power, you will only be bullied by another. With power, everyone will fear you and would dare not anger you. What just happened in the courtyards of the Griff clan is only proof of that.” Jian Chen laughed.

“Haha, big fellow, you’re already such a big person with a mean looking face yourself. But your heart is pure--what a twist.” Ming Dong laughed.

Tie Ta’s face had reddened when Ming Dong had addressed him, but instead of saying anything back to him, Tie Ta had instead chosen to remain quiet.

Jian Chen’s eyes had looked to You Yue by his side. She wore a white robe that accentuated the refined grace she had. It had been no wonder that as a princess, she was said to be beautiful even to bring a kingdom to its knees.

There had been a twinge of guilt in his eyes however. She was his fiancée, but he had no idea how he should treat her now. In his mind, he had no idea how to treat Huang Luan either. She loved him and his parents had betrothed him to You Yue, but hadn’t personally thought anything about it. Even now, he still didn’t even know how to approach the question.

Now that he had experienced life on the Tian Yuan Continent himself, Jian Chen had come out from this experience with plenty of enemies. Some of these enemies were Saint Rulers in isolation, and this had been the instrumental source of stress--a weight so heavy on his shoulders that it may as well be a mountain. For the sake of improving his own strength, Jian Chen had to throw away any superfluous thoughts on settling down.

All were ants in the eyes of Saint Rulers. This was something Jian Che knew, and he also knew that unless he had the strength of a Saint Ruler, he would never be able to hold his footing within the continent.

But how could becoming a Saint Ruler be that easy? Even though he had managed to absorb fragments of the mysteries of the world during his stay in the holy lands, Jian Chen still had a long way to go before he could even come into contact with that realm.

You Yue's face had gone slightly red when she noticed Jian Chen's attentive stare at her. Gingerly shifting over to him like a bashful deer would tip-toe over to the bush, she whispered to him, "Jian Chen, was there something you wanted?"

As if shaken awake, Jian Chen gave her a glittering smile, "You Yue, this is the first time you traveled the continent as well; are you accustomed to how the life of a wanderer is now?"

Smiling sweetly, You Yue replied, "I am rather fond of this lifestyle. Everyday is another day where I get to experience and see something new in the world. There's just so much to this world unlike what there is to be seen in the palace. Every day was spent in boredom and the same scenery, and leaving the palace was very troublesome."

"In the past, I was able to see what the world might have looked through the books in Kargath Academy. It was these books that made me yearn to travel the continent, and now I can finally see the sights for myself." You Yue smiled in bliss.

"The world may be magnificent, but there are just as many dangers as there are sights. Every place of the world has plenty of risks and dangers that could end up as a fight to the death. Every day is a day that a person will die--a peaceful life is not something that anyone could experience."

With some slight bitterness to her face, You Yue responded to him, "Jian Chen, your strength is far more than enough to step across the continent as you please. Just what weight is it on your shoulders that you cannot put down to enjoy life a little bit?"

"Ai!" Jian Chen sighed. "The weight on my shoulder is something I cannot put down. There are still matters that I must resolve."

"Just what sort of matters, will you tell us?" You Yue asked curiously.

Jian Chen shook his head, "It isn't that I don't wish to tell you, it's just that there is no benefit in you knowing the answer. Let us stop the chat for now and discuss what plans you might have for the Flame Mercenaries, shall we?"

.....

And so the group began to discuss the matters of the Flame Mercenaries as they traveled on the road back to their inn. Although they had now monopolized every single powerful faction within the Cloud Capital, they were still staying within the inn from before.

At the same time they had entered the inn, every single leader that had just joined the Flame Mercenaries had made it home as well. The very first thing they had done was to have someone tear down their signboards and replace it with the name of the Flame Mercenaries.

Jian Chen's actions had flown at incredible speeds around the Cloud Capital. Soon enough, practically everyone had heard and learned about how the equilibrium of power had been completely and thoroughly shattered. In the past, there had been many factions vying against each other, but now, there was only a single faction left. In the three whole days that the Flame Mercenaries had been in the city, they had managed to overcome everyone's expectations and so the entire city had been set abuzz with this as their topic of conversation.

When the lord of the Cloud Capital himself had heard what had transpired, his entire person went as stiff as a board. He simply couldn't believe what he had heard--the ten or something factions that had once been separate were now united. With their powers united, they were now stronger than not only the city lord, but most of the factions in the Blue Wind Kingdom--a fact that was completely shocking to think about.

A very serious problem had popped up in front of the lord now. His power as the lord of the city was practically for show now, and if the Flame Mercenaries were to try and do something in the city, there would be no way for him to do anything but to stand and watch by the sidelines.

"Just what sort of god is the captain of the Flame Mercenaries? If he is able to unite so many factions together under his banner, just what is he made of?" The lord had spoken with narrowed eyes. The robustness of the Flame Mercenaries had caused the man no small amount of discomfort.

"The Flame Mercenaries has already evolved to a point where even I cannot do a thing about them. All that's left for me to do is to report this to the king himself." The lord muttered before hastily writing a letter to send off to the imperial palace with the utmost haste.

Nearly half a day later at the imperial palace of the Blue Wind Kingdom, the king had been sitting in his study room when he received the letter. Reading it, his face grew more and more solemn, and the further he read, the more his eyebrows furrowed together.

A long while later, the king had finally put down the letter with a questioning mutter, "Flame Mercenaries? Just where in the world did they come from? I've never heard of such a name and yet they have already subjugated several factions that had an Earth Saint Master in their ranks. That is practically unbelievable."

The fact that the Flame Mercenaries had managed to accomplish so much by uniting several dozen factions together into one faction had been an extremely important issue that made the king very worried.

Then as if the king had thought of something, his eyes began to sparkle, "Perhaps there is a Heaven Saint Master within the Flame Mercenaries. Only a Heaven Saint Master would be able to accomplish a feat like subjugating several factions at once."

Having reached this conclusion, the king's face grew inexplicably solemn. "Men! Call for master Ku Yun into my study at once."

Soon enough, an elder with gray robes came striding into the room. This elder was in his sixties and had bright eyes that sparkled brilliantly.

“Your majesty, what matter have you called me here today?” The elder smiled, but he did not bow to him.

Holding out the letter to the man, the king spoke, “Master Ku Yun, please take a look yourself.”

Waving his hand, the man floated the letter from the king’s hand and into his own hand before starting to read it.

Soon enough, the elder’s eyes begun to show signs of surprise, “What a mercenary team this Flame Mercenaries is. In three days, they managed to unite over a dozen factions? But with a strength like that, why have I never heard of the Flame Mercenaries before?”

“I am quite vexed by this situation. These Flame Mercenaries are most likely a foreign power that immediately sought out to subjugate an entire First Class City in one go. Their scheme is very apparent to see. If we let them alone in our kingdom to grow, then they will become the bane of our existence sooner or later.” The king spoke seriously.

Chapter 587: The Advent of a Powerful Enemy

“Your Majesty, are you saying to get rid of this group?” The elder inquired.

A hum escaped from the king’s mouth, “I wouldn’t say get rid of. The fact that another strong individual has appeared within the Blue Wind Kingdom is a boon to us as a whole. But I fear if he is an outsider and has come into our kingdom to expand his influence before taking those men and leaving the kingdom. Should that happen, the damages to our kingdom would be huge. We have only just finished a war with the Gesun Kingdom, our weakened kingdom definitely cannot sustain another crippling.”

“Then what does your Majesty believe needs to be done?”

“Master Ke Yun, I’ll be troubling you this time. I hope that you will be able investigate the Flame Mercenaries yourself and see what their goals are. If they wish to stay within the kingdom as they try to grow, then I will of course welcome them. But if they wish to steal away people or anything else that could affect our kingdom negatively, then we must strike them down at once without mercy.” The king spoke.

“Understood, I know what needs to be done.” The elder nodded before turning around to leave.

“One moment, master Ke Yun.” The king called out to the elder. “Master Ke Yun, your king is worried that there will be a Heaven Saint Master within the mercenary group. So before you leave for the Cloud Capital, take some people with you.”

“Thank you for your concern, your Majesty!” A brief smile and bow was given to the king before Ke Yun continued on his way out from the study with his held high.

As soon as the king saw Ke Yun leave the room, a wave of concern washed over him. “Why do I feel so much unease, is it because of this Flame Mercenaries? Will it be this newly made mercenary group that will be a scourge onto my Blue Wind Kingdom?”

He had remained seated where he was with a grim expression, “After the battle of the Gesun Kingdom, the kingdom has lost four of eight Heaven Saint Masters; and even the remaining four are all heavily injured. I hope that this feeling of unease is just a feeling.”

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Within the Cloud Capital, discussion had run rampant throughout the next two days. Whether it was the main streets, hidden alleyways, or the restaurants and inns, everyone could be heard talking about the Flame Mercenaries.

The Flame Mercenaries had appeared in the Cloud Capital as if out of thin air. Then with unbelievable speed, they had combined the powers of the first-rate factions into an even bigger entity. News like this would definitely cause a major buzz within the city.

Consequently, this had caused the second and third-rate factions to feel slightly nervous. For the entire day, they had been extremely nervous to the point of having some clans electing to temporarily leaving the city and hide away until the crisis was gone. They were afraid that the hands of the Flame Mercenaries would stretch towards even them. Many--if not all--of the factions did not want to lose the power they had worked for to become a lackey for another.

Of course, not every of these factions had been like that. Some of them had even took the initiative to look for the Flame Mercenaries in hopes of joining it.

When the dozen major clans that had initially joined were given the command from Jian Chen, they began to accept all of the newcomers into the mercenary group without declining a single one.

Right now, the Flame Mercenaries needed new blood to join the Flame Mercenaries. When it came to management, Jian Chen wasn't concerned. The dozen clans had enough power to lay down the law on their own and could easily manage their own mercenaries too.

From the other side, the lord of the city had not been as happy to see more and more people join the Flame Mercenaries. The more people that joined in fact, the more nervous he became. Nothing could be done on his part to ebb this chaotic maelstrom that was happening within his city aside from standing in silence on the sidelines and hope that someone from the kingdom would come in to interfere.

"It is fortunate that the Feral Mercenaries are all out on a mission, otherwise they might have been annexed into this mess too." The lord muttered.

In the blink of an eye, the maelstrom had only gotten bigger. Four days had passed now, and the Flame Mercenaries had continued to swallow up even more factions into their folds. News of what had transpired in the city had even made its way across the entire Blue Wind Kingdom. No matter if it was a big or small city, each and every one of them had heard about it.

Whether people believed it or not, the news that they received had sparked a paradigm shift in the Blue Wind Kingdom--the rise of a new powerful faction had come.

A long ways away from the Cloud Capital was the First Class Tianlong City. Within the biggest mansion in the city stood a middle-aged man. Cloaked in white robes, this man stared out at the pond in front of him with both hands behind his back.

This! This was the lord of Tianlong City!

Almost absentmindedly, the lord began to mutter to himself, "Ah, how unexpected! A truly unexpected event it is. The originally weak and piddling mercenary group back in Wake City has suddenly

transformed to be strong enough to subjugate the entire Cloud Capital in several days. A change like that is utterly inconceivable.”

Inside another room in the same mansion sat Katata and Katafei. Seated at a table, the two of them were discussing with one another over a bottle of wine.

Having drained his cup, Katata spoke to the other, “Katafei, you ought to know what happened back in the Cloud Capital too. Do you think that the Flame Mercenaries there are the very same ones from Wake City?”

“I do!” Katafei spoke. As the stoic one of the two, he cherished his words as if they were gold and did not dispense them easily.

“How are you so sure?” Katata pressed on.

“Jian Chen’s strength is an unknown to us, but to have a Sixth Cycle Earth Saint Master at his beck and call? It is him.” Katafei spoke. There had been suspicion and confusion to be in his mind, but his face betrayed none of those emotions.

Draining the rest of his cup in one single gulp, Katata sighed. “It really is hard to believe that Jian Chen has accomplished so much in just two years. Two years ago he was said to have joined the Gathering of the Mercenaries, did he receive some sort of boon while he was there? It’s a tremendous pity that Mercenary City is nearly worlds apart from our kingdom, only the most important news would make it way here.”

.....

Jian Chen was at this moment sitting on top of his bed within the inn of the Cloud Capital. As he was trying to cultivate, Xiao Bai continued to roll around on the covers of the bed for amusement. It had been fortunate that the cover was a very simple and inexpensive one, for it had already been torn to shreds by the claws of the tiger cub.

Jian Chen had not left the inn for several days and spent his time cultivating in his room to wait for everyone else to fully recover and finish what was left before embarking on their trip out from the Cloud Capital.

“Captain of the Flame Mercenaries, make your way to see us at once.” Suddenly, a voice like thunder had boomed through the skies. The speaker’s voice had been so strong that it seemed to shake the world itself. The streets shook and the buildings quivered--even the clouds had been blown away to reveal the sun behind it--everyone had heard the voice to what very well might belong to a god.

For a moment, the entire Cloud Capital was quiet before suddenly erupting into a cacophony of sound. Everyone had turned their heads to the skies as if trying to find the origins of the voice.

“I see them, look! Over there! Two men in the skies! Those are Heaven Saint Masters!” Suddenly, an excited middle-aged man pointed erratically at a point in the sky with a loud cry.

The heads of everyone in the city turned to look where the man was pointed at--and indeed--there were what appeared to be two tiny ant-like dots up in the sky. While small in figure, the might that exuded from them made them look more like gods descending upon the mortal world.

“Those are two Heaven Saint Masters! They have to be here to fight the Flame Mercenaries, it’s all over for them now.”

“What a calamity for the Flame Mercenaries. With two Heaven Saint Masters here, they’re ruined for sure.”

Everyone had been furiously discussing this topic with some hidden glee. But those who had joined the Flame Mercenaries already had gone pale in the face.

The lord of the city came scrambling out from his mansion to stare out into the skies at the two Heaven Saint Masters. “Two Heaven Saint Masters? His Majesty has sent two over them over? Great! This is fantastic! The Flame Mercenaries are definitely ruined now!”

From every part of the Cloud Capital, several dozen factions that had aligned with the Flame Mercenaries came filing out. When they saw the two Heaven Saint Masters floating high in the sky, their faces had gone pale. Those who had been forced into joining had a happy look on their faces, but those who had willingly joined had felt a fearful look spread on their faces.

A single Heaven Saint Master was already enough to worry them. But two Heaven Saint Masters was a tremendous amount of pressure on them.

From within his own room, Jian Chen slowly opened his eyes to look up.

At the same time, the doors to his room opened to reveal Ming Dong and the others.

“Jian Chen, two Heaven Saint Masters are here--how rambunctious they are to strut here and there on the skies--do they think no one knows who they are? Hah, if they’re willing to try it, I’ll beat them black and blue until they run away.” Ming Dong laughed. In his eyes, a Heaven Saint Master wasn’t some sort of unreachable entity he could not chase up to.

“Captain of the Flame Mercenaries, come on out at once.” Don’t think that hiding away in the city like a tortoise will help you.” This time, another voice had exploded out from the skies with a reverberating echo.

The loud voice had angered Ming Dong, “Who the fuck is that to be so aggressive-sounding?”

A cold smile appeared on Jian Chen’s own face. “Stay here, I’ll go out to greet them myself!” As soon as he spoke, a single hole had suddenly appeared on the top of the roof, revealing the bright azure skies beyond it. Not even a second later, Jian Chen had already disappeared from his bed into the skies.

Chapter 588: A Battle That Entrances the Entire City

Above the skies of the Cloud Capital, the two Heaven Saint Masters from the Blue Wind Kingdom towered over the ground like two gods watching over the mortal realm.

And on the streets below, countless of bystanders craned their necks to look up. For these two Heaven Saint Masters, everyone could only look at them with expressions of admiration and uncontained worship.

The realms of Heaven Saint Masters was a realm that mercenaries could only look at in yearning. Talks of reaching this realm was merely just talk. Out of the millions of people in the Blue Wind Kingdom, not even ten of them were Heaven Saint Masters.

Suddenly, an azure streak of light zipped into the skies. In the blink of an eye, the light had already risen five hundred meters to near the two Heaven Saint Masters. The speed of this light had been so fast that the bystanders on the streets hadn't even seen it clearly or where it had even come from.

"Everyone, look! Another Heaven Saint Master has appeared, do you think he's the captain of the Flame Mercenaries?"

"He has to be. But I didn't think that there'd be another Heaven Saint Master here."

"What speed that captain has! I didn't even see where it was coming from, he has to be a very powerful one!"

"Hmph, this time there's two Heaven Saint Masters from our kingdom to greet him. No matter how strong this captain is, there's no way he'll be a match for two Heaven Saint Masters."

Right now, the eyes of everyone in the city had been glued to the sight in the skies. No matter what it was they were doing, everyone could only stare at this splendid sight for them and discuss to one another furiously. No matter where one went in the city, the streets were jam-packed with people that stood transfixed.

Inside his mansion still, the lord of the Cloud Capital concentrated his eyes onto the third Heaven Saint Master. "So, the Flame Mercenaries had a Heaven Saint Master as a captain!" He muttered.

The leaders of every single faction within the city had stood entranced at the sight as well. Staring at the three ant-like objects in the sky, each and every single one of them had found a sudden desire to see what type of battle the three Heaven Saint Masters would perform for them.

Up in the skies above, Jian Chen and the two Heaven Saint Masters stood twenty meters apart from one another.

"I am the captain of the Flame Mercenaries. Was there something you wished to know?" Jian Chen sneered with narrowed eyes.

Rooted to where they were in the skies, the two Heaven Saint Masters from the Blue Wind Kingdom could only stare with rigid wide eyes at the dreadfully familiar face of Jian Chen. Already had their faces gone slightly awry--between the two sides was already a pre-existing grudge.

"The captain of the Flame Mercenaries was you?" One of the Heaven Saint Masters spoke, the expression he had before had disappeared without a trace.

Jian Chen laughed coldly, "Correct. It is this one. Since you were so adamant on calling me out, was there something you wished to tell me?" The eyes on Jian Chen's face suddenly gained a spark of killing intent in them.

Sensing the killing intent from Jian Chen's eyes, the two Heaven Saint Master felt their hearts tense up in vigilance. They had first seen each other in the battle with the Gesun Kingdom, and it was there that they saw this youngster kill the Heaven Saint Masters from the Qiangan and the Blue Wind Kingdom

himself. In the end, only four out of the eight Heaven Saint Masters from the Blue Wind Kingdom had escaped with their lives.

Despite the tender age of this youth, these two heaven Saint Masters knew better than to belittle him for his age. There was absolutely no way possible that they could win against this man.

“This is an unfavorable situation, we’re leaving!” The two heaven Saint Masters had immediately resolved to leave the area when they sensed the killing intent from Jian Chen grew heavier and heavier. It went without a doubt that should they stay here, the skies above the Blue Wind Kingdom would become a battlefield sooner or later. And under no circumstances did either of the two wish to partake in a battle with a man who could kill Heaven Saint Master after Heaven Saint Master consecutively.

“Leaving? What makes you think that you can do that so easily?” Jian Chen laughed; he had no plans on allowing these two to leave so easily. Clenching both of his palms, two swords made of fire suddenly materialized out of thin air and shot towards the two escapees.

Detecting the abnormality behind them, the two Heaven Saint Masters thought to themselves, “It seems that a battle is unavoidable.”

The two of them had reacted quickly to the attack and so with a thought, a wave of earth and water suddenly gathered in their hands. Within a mere second, a dragon made of earth and water had formed between the two men.

Seeing that the two men were seemingly competing with him in a battle of elements, Jian Chen let loose a sneer on his face. “Fire is the strongest of the six elements in strength; even the light and dark elements would be unable to compare. If you wish to fight me with the elements, you will surely be the ones to eat the loss.”

The Heaven Saint Master controlling the earth dragon had not said a word and instead pushed out his hands. With that action, the earth dragon flew out with a roar to charge towards Jian Chen.

“Fire is indeed the strongest element of the six, but my water will put out your fire nonetheless!” The other Heaven Saint Master barked out. The aquatic dragon let out a roar of its own before flying towards the blades of fire to devour it.

“Bang!”

The earthen dragon made contact with one of the flame swords with an explosive bang. In an instant, the dragon had been reduced to dust before fading away in the skies while the sword had continued onwards albeit being smaller than before. Before the impact, the sword had been five meters long, and now, it had been reduced to a single meter.

Another explosion rang out through the skies shortly afterwards as the second flame sword collided with the water dragon. In a brilliant display, the water dragon exploded apart to turn into a spherical ball of water to try and drown out the flame sword within it.

“Ssssshhhh.....”

Water and fire were in nature contrasting elements. So when the two elements intertwined with one another, a sizzling sound could be heard while vapor rose up from the sphere to cover the visibility of

the three combatants with the smoke. From either side of the battlefield, neither person could see the other.

The Cloud Capital had been a cacophony of sounds that erupted this way and throughout the city. But now, the city had transformed into a ghost city without a single bit of life to be seen. Not a single person had said a word as they watched the spectacle above them. Even the rooftops of the buildings had people standing on top of it, but not a single of them had dared let out a breath of air as they watched the battle.

Ming Dong, Dugu Feng and the others stood on top of the roof of the inn to look up at the battle. Not a single one of them had looked worried for Jian Chen however, they did not need to worry about any danger that might befall Jian Chen as they were all confident in his strength. Two Heaven Saint Masters weren't nearly enough to harm him, and even if that number were to be multiplied, Jian Chen would not be harmed still.

Only Bi Lian had been nervous about Jian Chen since she did not know his full strength. She knew that her older cousin was a Heaven Saint Master as well, but the fact that he was going up against two other Heaven Saint Masters worried her greatly about Jian Chen's life.

Just like Bi Lian, Tie Ta had worried for Jian Chen too.

"Bang!"

A muffled explosion rippled through the airs once more as the Saint Weapon of the controller of the earth dragon smashed against the flame sword. This time, the sword had disappeared into wisps of fire before disappearing from the world itself/

At the same time, the battle between fire and water had ended as well. The steam from the struggle had grown fainter and fainter, but no sizzling sounds could be heard anymore. Finally, the three Heaven Saint Masters could see that the water dragon had disappeared without even a drop of water to be seen while the flame sword had decreased by half its size.

"What a flame!" The Heaven Saint Master had cried out. But even before he could finish his speech, the flame sword had shot straight at him with a velocity that was even faster than before.

Not daring to taking any careless risks anymore, the Heaven Saint Master took his Saint Weapon out and smashed apart the flame sword with narrowed eyes. "If sire wishes to be as aggressive as you are, then do not blame us two for being impolite! Ku Yun, let us use our battle skills together!"

Nodding grimly, Ku Yun knew that the battle today was undoubtedly a battle where they had to fight to the best of their abilities in order to survive.

And now that the two of them were on the same page, neither of the two hesitated to begin to use their battle skills. As Heaven Saint Masters, using an Earth Tier Battle Skill could be done with ease and did not need any additional time to charge up the power for it.

"Earth Tier Battle Skill--Hammer of the Earth God!"

"Earth Tier Battle Skill--Dimensional Sword Qi!"

As the two of them finished casting their battle skills, a tremendous sledgehammer ten meters long made completely from the earth element formed above Ku Yun. With a single movement of his hands, the hammer slammed downwards onto Jian Chen. By his side, the other man had exuded a tremendous fog of Sword Qi that shot forth the envelope Jian Chen within it.

From Jian Chen's eyes did two bright lights of azure and violet form. As they gleamed and twinkled, the two lights seemed as if they were two dancing will-o'-the-wisps made from the powers of a different world.

Suddenly, all sorts of stones, bricks, tiles, and even steel had begun to levitate up into the skies. From each object that flew up, a faint glow of azure and violet could be seen radiating from it.

At the same time, the Origin energy of the azure and violet sword spirits had formed into a single sword. Wielding it in his right hand, Jian Chen had seemingly transformed into a whole different person. With a sword in his hand, the aura around him had turned as sharp as his weapon.

Following a flash of azure and violet, a series of mirror images followed Jian Chen's figure as he streaked through the skies. Wielding the Origin energy, Jian Chen waved his sword and immediately sliced through the giant hammer as if it were made of tofu rather than earth. And so in a single stroke, the hammer had been split in two.

With the hammer destroyed, Ku Yun's battle skill had been broken up as well meaning that the earth element that had been materialized for it had disappeared back into the world.

"N-no! That's not possible!" Ku Yun cried out in fright and dismay--how had his Earth Tier Battle Skill be so easily defeated like this? But Jian Chen had continued to wield his Origin energy sword with blinding speed towards the man without pause. With an explosive power that was no less inferior to his Saint Force in the past, the azure and violet Origin energy had stabbed itself deeply into Ku Yun's chest and then out from it.

Chapter 589: Unrestrained Expansion

A short winded cough came from Ku Yun's mouth as the blood drained from his face.

The other man paled considerably when he saw Jian Chen pierce straight through Ku Yun's chest. With a loud shout, a large amount of his Sword Qi began to fly out to strike down the countless pieces of rubble flying at them. Then, with his Saint Weapon hoisted overhead, the man flew to attack Jian Chen to save Ku Yun.

Jian Chen turned to look at the man with a cold smile appearing on his lips, "Was it you that told me to come on out? Don't even think about leaving here today alive." Jian Chen pulled out the Origin energy sword from Ku Yun's chest and shot toward the second man like a bolt of lightning.

"Clink!" Upon contact with the azure and violet beam of light, the Saint Weapon of the other Heaven Saint Master let out a cracking sound. A piece of it broke off. Against the azure and violet Sword Spirits, the Saint Weapon of a Heaven Saint Master may as well be as strong as a roof tile.

"Pfft!" With his Saint Weapon damaged, the elder was seriously injured and spat out a mouthful of blood as well.

Jian Chen's hand did not slow down after the first blow. He swiftly moved his wrist to deliver his second slash with a speed like lightning. Under the powerful muscles of his arm, the sword traveled so fast that only the reflection of the blade was seen. Before the other man could even understand what was happening, the Origin energy had stabbed into his forehead. It pierced out the back of his head, extinguishing his soul and killing him completely.

"Ba La!" Ku Yun howled in grief and sorrow when he saw his friend pierced through the head. He knew that the Blue Wind Kingdom had lost yet another Heaven Saint Master.

With the Origin energy stabbing straight into Ba La's head, his spirit was utterly vanquished. The light in his eyes vacated and his body started to drop back down to the ground.

With hands as quick as his eyes, Jian Chen palmed Ba La's Space Ring before turning back to speak to the anguished Ku Yun. "I was planning to kill you, but I think I'll spare your life. Go back to your king and tell him that it'd be in his best interest to not interfere with the matters of the Flame Mercenaries. If he refuses to listen, then do not blame me for what happens next." Even as he spoke, the Origin energy formed by the azure and violet sword spirits faded from sight.

The muscles in Ku Yun's face twitched irregularly as he stared down this youth in front of him with a mixture of fear and shock. Even his voice quavered when he delivered his next line, "The war between the Gesun Kingdom and the Blue Wind Kingdom is finished, and we've doled out hefty compensation already. There is neither grievances nor hatred between you and Ba La. What reason did you kill him for?"

"A loose tongue causes plenty of troubles. You should remember in the future that less is more. Leave now, and don't forget to tell your esteemed king what I've told you." Laughing, Jian Chen turned to descend from the sky back to the inn.

Still in mute shock, Ku Yun remained floating in the air, desolately looking at the dead corpse of Ba La. Down in the streets, his corpse had not moved at all other than from the still-spreading pool of blood. A crowd of people had formed around the corpse, and not a single one of them could believe what they saw.

Dropping down from the sky, Ku Yun took Ba La's corpse with him and immediately left the Cloud Capital.

When they arrived in the Cloud Capital, the two of them had made an aggressive entrance. In the end, only one of those men left the city alive.

With the battle between Heaven Saint Masters finally finished, the entire city was left as still as a ghost town. Mercenaries and merchants alike stared at the sky in mute shock and disbelief even though not a single Heaven Saint Master remained.

A dozen figures were already running to the spot where Ba La had landed with as much speed as they could muster. Just barely stopping around the bloodstained spot, each one of them revealed a sluggish expression on their faces.

Included in this group was the lord of the Cloud Capital and several of the other leaders of the strongest factions. What was unknown, however, was what was running through their minds at that moment.

Jian Chen had already returned to the inn and onto the bed he had been sitting on before. The only difference this time was that a hole could be seen in the ceiling above him.

Ming Dong and the others were already back in the room, so when Jian Chen descended, Bi Lian came flying past the doors to greet Jian Chen excitedly, "Wow! Brother, you're amazing! Even the two Heaven Saint Masters of the kingdom were beaten by you." Bi Lian spoke. She looked up to Jian Chen with great big eyes of adoration. A single person being able to defeat two Heaven Saint Masters working in tandem without a single scratch was essentially an undefeatable entity to her. She was exuberant in her worship for Jian Chen since he had been able to prevail against two Heaven Saint Masters by himself without being hurt at all. A feat like this was practically on the same level of an unbeatable being.

Something like this was more than enough to make her realize in this moment that her older cousin was a far stronger person than she had initially thought.

"Wrong, he killed one and injured one. If Jian Chen didn't let that second one live, then neither of the two would have left this place alive!" Ming Dong corrected her.

Bi Lian was even more elated to hear what Ming Dong said. She rated Jian Chen higher on the pedestal now.

Even You Yue by Jian Chen's side revealed a slight tint of infatuation in her eyes. However, she looked up at the hole in the ceiling above Jian Chen and softly said, "Jian Chen, perhaps we should change rooms since you put a hole in the ceiling."

Jian Chen looked up at the hole he had created with an embarrassed smile, "Yes, perhaps I should change rooms."

Looking back at the ruined ceiling, Jian Chen gave an embarrassed smile, "Perhaps we should."

Not a single person within this room had bothered to pay attention to what was happening outside of the room. Thus, they were unaware of the pandemonium that was happening right now. The hottest topic in the city was about the fact that the captain of the Flame Mercenaries had successfully beat back two Heaven Saint Masters sent from the kingdom all by himself, and the fact that he had managed to kill one of them while injuring the other was something that everyone clearly witnessed. With that said, practically everyone within the city was in an uproar.

Having witnessed this sight, news of what transpired in the sky above the city spread throughout the entire kingdom with great speed. Within practically half a day, every nook and cranny of the kingdom would know about this ground-breaking news. The leaders that stood on top of the Blue Wind Kingdom would take this news seriously and would later send out their strongest to verify the truth of the rumors.

With everything said and done, the the Flame Mercenaries would cement their position within the Blue Wind Kingdom. The fact that the Flame Mercenaries had been able to subjugate an entire First Class city was enough to have the eyes of many on them, but the fact that this new situation had happened made everyone terrified at their strength.

Within the palace of the Blue Wind Kingdom, Ku Yun held the dead body of his companion Ba La within the halls where the king sat. Slowly, Ku Yun narrated what had happened to them both in the Cloud Capital while also describing Jian Chen to the king.

As soon as the entire story was recounted to him, the king sighed. In that sigh, he seemed as if to have aged years in a single moment.

For a while, the king was quiet before he finally spoke once more. "As we are powerless to stop them, it is pointless to even try anymore. Ai, our Blue Wind Kingdom had already grown weak because of the war. With this happening, our power is doomed to drop even further."

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Several days later in the Cloud Capital, a long procession of people passed through the gates of the city. Every single banner that was flown around this group displayed the exact same emblem of a circular sphere of fire.

This group of people all belonged to the Flame Mercenaries.

The Flame Mercenaries of today were definitely on a whole different scale than before. In the past, it had been a single person, but now, it had expanded to over five thousand people, becoming the strongest group of mercenaries within the Blue Wind Kingdom. Their cumulative strength was more than enough to contend with any other faction in the kingdom.

Leading the group at the very front was Jian Chen, Ming Dong, Tie Ta, Dugu Feng, You Yue, and Bi Lian. Each one of the six were seated on top of their own magical beast mount, but this time, they were no longer riding a Class 3 Magical Beast. They were now seated on top of a Class 4 Magical Beast. All of their mounts had been graciously donated by the heads of the faction they had just recruited.

By now, every single person had accepted their newfound status in the group and were now earnestly working for the Flame Mercenaries as a whole. Having a powerhouse like Jian Chen as their support wasn't an easy thing to find, and by joining the Flame Mercenaries, they could earn the chance to win the Earth Tier Battle Skill they had always dreamed of. They could even get a Heaven Tier Battle Skill that even Heaven Saint Masters would drool over. These three factors combined were a tremendous temptation to them. Even if the heavens were to drop a meat pie in front of them, it would not be as alluring. If anyone were to tell them that a Heaven Saint Master was capable of absorbing life from them, they would not care.

All in all, they were not regretting their new way of life. Most felt delighted to greet this change and did not feel displeased at all.

"Captain, where will we go next from here?" Zhan Tian asked from the side.

"Tianlong City isn't too far away, let's go there." Jian Chen replied.

In a short few days, the Flame Mercenaries had experienced a period of expansion with no restraint. Just like that, a First Class city had found itself annexed into the Flame Mercenaries, exponentially increasing their power.

After the entire matter with the Cloud Capital ended, the Flame Mercenaries possessed about three hundred thousand members and almost a hundred Earth Saint Masters, leaving the Blue Wind Kingdom practically desolate of its stronger population.

The Blue Wind Kingdom had no solution for the growth of the Flame Mercenaries. They had no one to stop them. They had no way to even try. All the king could do was sit within the halls of his palace with a miserable expression as he watched the Flame Mercenaries grow stronger and stronger while his kingdom grew weaker and weaker. By the time the strongest factions of the Blue Wind Kingdom had heard what Ku Yun had told the king, they were all absolutely convinced that the captain of the Flame Mercenaries could not be angered at any costs. For that reason, none of the factions came forward to stop the expansion of the Flame Mercenaries, and some of them had even prepared themselves to be annexed into the group as well.

Chapter 590: A Friend has Come

In the blink of an eye, two months passed. During these two months, the Flame Mercenaries had exponentially expanded and earned a place as one of the strongest mercenary groups in the Blue Wind Kingdom. A group that stood on top of the other leading factions and even the royal palace itself.

Up to this point, only the strongest families and factions had been able to prevent themselves from being subjugated by Jian Chen.

A large mansion was situated at the very center of a First Class city called Wanzhu City. This mansion had originally belonged to the strongest power within that city, but had now been reclaimed to become the living area of the Flame Mercenaries for the time being. Even the nameboard at the very front had been swapped for the emblem of the Flame Mercenaries.

At this current moment within the magnificent halls of the mansion, Jian Chen and the strongest hundred members were all gathered around a table to discuss several important matters. For the moment, the rest of the mercenaries were all stationed outside the city in a clearing since they could not all enter the city at the same time.

“Captain, only three out of the six strongest families in the Blue Wind Kingdom were willing to join our Flame Mercenaries. The other three would rather die than submit.” Zhan Tian dutifully reported. He was one of the first to join the Flame Mercenaries and was also one of the three Earth Saint Masters from the Carnage Mercenaries, and had been given the right to speak for the entire group.

From his seat at the very front of the table, Jian Chen revealed a small grin on his face as he took in the news from Zhan Tian. “Three of them were willing to submit I see. Not bad, I wasn’t expecting as much at first. Which three have agreed?”

Not long after he finished speaking, two middle-aged men and an elder came walking over with respectful salutes and greetings.

“This one is Shi Wanjun, representative for the Dayong clan. We of the Dayong clan would be happy to join the Flame Mercenaries and hope that we may follow the honorable captain into the brilliant light.”

“This one is An Situ, representative of the Domineering Heavens sect. We would be happy to join the Flame Mercenaries...”

“This one is Dick-Parosi, delegate of the Shuilan clan. We are willing to join your Flame Mercenaries...”

These three men were all Earth Saint Masters at about the Fourth or Fifth Cycle. The parties they represented were among the strongest powers in the Blue Wind Kingdom and once had a Heaven Saint

Master presiding over them. However, those Heaven Saint Masters had been killed in the war with the Gesun Kingdom.

Staring at the three humble and respectful men, Jian Chen nodded his head in satisfaction, "I welcome you into the family that is the Flame Mercenaries. From henceforth, we are all family. As long as you work with the Flame Mercenaries in mind, then I, Jian Chen, pledge to never treat any one of you wrong."

"I declare that the Dayong clan, the Domineering Heavens sect, and the Shuilan clan, will change their names to that of the Halls of Dayong, Domineering Heaven, and Shuilan. And you three will still lead your respective hall."

Jian Chen had no desire to expunge anyone of their power upon entry into the Flame Mercenaries. The only thing that would change would be their goals; their relative power would remain untouched, but any sect or clan would be changed to a 'hall'.

"A thousand thanks for captain's charity!" The three men clapped their hands together in salute. All three of them had been worried that their authority would be stripped away from them the moment they joined the Flame Mercenaries.

Sitting on his seat while deep thought, Jian Chen said, "Zhan Tian, take some people to Loess City and eliminate the Harido clan."

"A report for the captain. Rumors have it that the Harido clan vacated Loess City a long time ago. According to our same sources, they've fled the Blue Wind Kingdom already." A black-robed elder spoke.

"What? They've already left the kingdom?" Jian Chen's eyes narrowed for a moment before he waved his hand with a small smile. "They act quite fast. If I had known that they would flee earlier, I would have moved to deal with them sooner."

"Captain, why don't we dispatch a team to chase after them?" Zhan Tian asked.

Giving it a second to think about, Jian Chen replied, "No need. I will handle the Harido clan myself since they're no longer a threat to worry about. Unless their leader is able to become a Heaven Saint Master, they won't be able to do anything in the meanwhile. Even if he becomes a Heaven Saint Master in the next twenty years, our Flame Mercenaries will have grown strong enough to deal with them. Even if I'm not here, a single Heaven Saint Master won't be able to measure up to the strength of the entire Flame Mercenaries. They've decided to run away from the kingdom for now, so we don't even need to bother with them."

"Then captain, what shall we do about the three factions that chose death over submission?" An elder asked from the side.

Jian Chen leaned back in his chair while his fingers kneaded. He realized that leading the Flame Mercenaries was becoming more and more of a headache. It was no longer as easy as before where he could act as he pleased. Back then he was the only member and didn't require such heavy consideration.

"Everyone, why don't you inform me of your ideas." Jian Chen suggested.

“Captain, since the Flame Mercenaries have become so strong and those three factions refuse to submit, we shouldn’t let things lie there. We should eliminate them all. Let them serve as an example to the world of our strength.”

“Captain, we should avoid that at all costs. The remaining three factions still have two Heaven Saint Masters within their reach and a considerable amount of Earth Saint Masters. If those three join hands, then they will become an enemy that will deal a considerable amount of harm to us. Should we fight them, then we would anger even the kingdom itself. If they mobilize the entire army, then our Flame Mercenaries would suffer even more.”

“Captain, those three factions are not to be belittled. We have no conflict with them, and even if they would rather die than submit, it is not worth going to war with them only to suffer a disastrous result. The ends do not make up for the means.”

Everyone came to different conclusions about how to handle the situation. On one hand, some wanted to eliminate the group. On the other hand, some wanted to forgive and let them be.

From where she stood by the side, Bi Lian hesitated to speak for a brief second. Finally she gave her input, “Brother, there is no conflict between us and the three factions. We don’t have any real need to subjugate them, and we should forget about them for now since they’re willing to die rather than to submit. With two Heaven Saint Masters, they’d cause a lot of damage if they join together since our Flame Mercenaries have no other Heaven Saint Master besides you, brother.”

“Bi Lian and I share the same opinion.” You Yue agreed with her.

Everyone grew quiet when the two of them spoke. They all knew that these two women were both very close to the captain, and thus they were not willing to say anything else.

Jian Chen wasted no time to agree with the two of them, “If that is so, we’ll forget about this matter for now. Well, today’s meeting shall end here then. You may all leave and make the preparations for whatever necessities you need. In three days, we leave the Blue Wind Kingdom.”

“Yes, captain!” Everyone agreed before leaving the halls.

After the meeting was adjourned, Jian Chen returned to his own room. He lay down on the bed and closed his eyes. His fingers gently tapped against his temples. Now that the Flame Mercenaries had exploded in scale, it took even longer to consider and think everything through, causing Jian Chen some fatigue.

Suddenly, the doors opened to reveal You Yue wearing a pink long-skirt as she walked into the room. When she saw Jian Chen rubbing his temples, she revealed a concerned look on her face, “Jian Chen.” She softly continued, “Managing the Flame Mercenaries is a tiresome task, isn’t it?”

“Yes. It really is quite tiresome. Now that the Flame Mercenaries have grown, there is far too much to consider and far too many factors to think about. It is only now that I realize how tremendous a task it is to manage such an enormous group. Aside from having an equally tremendous amount of power, one must not neglect being able to control and manage everything.” Jian Chen replied while massaging his headache.

Choosing to sit on a nearby chair, You Yue said, "You could delegate these small affairs to someone else you know."

"There aren't many that I could trust. Aside from the group we travel with, there are no other capable people. Ming Dong is the vice-captain, but I know his nature — he isn't cut out for something like this. Dugu Feng does not have the power, and Tie Ta is further away from such a position. The only ones left would be you and Bi Lian." Jian Chen sighed. Then his eyes flew open as he looked to You Yue, "You Yue, I know that you've been an intelligent person since childhood and spent years learning in Kargath Academy while growing up in the palace. If I have you and Bi Lian govern the Flame Mercenaries, do you believe that you would be able to do the group well?"

You Yue was pleasantly surprised to hear the words that had come out of Jian Chen's mouth, "What? Jian Chen, do you really think Bi Lian and I should be governing the Flame Mercenaries?"

Sitting up, Jian Chen faced her with an earnest expression, "I do. If you have the ability to govern, then I would be willing to allow you to do so in my place."

"That would be great, Jian Chen. You may rest assured. Bi Lian and I won't let you down." You Yue excitedly replied.

Just then, Ming Dong walked into the room. When he saw the happy You Yue by his side, Ming Dong stared suspiciously at Jian Chen, "Brother, you've a friend here to see you."

"Who?" Jian Chen asked.

"You'll know when you come." Ming Dong smiled mischievously.

Suspicious of his actions, Jian Chen followed Ming Dong out of the room and into the open courtyards of the mansion with You Yue following him from behind.

Soon enough, Jian Chen arrived at the gates to the building, but when he saw just who this "familiar" person Ming Dong had referred to, the expression on his face solidified into one of astonishment.

The friend in question was Huang Luan.