

## Chaotic 601

### Chapter 601: Ten Thousand Year Old Heavenly Resource

While Jian Chen could surmise that these three pieces had the possibility of being left behind by Mo Tianyun, he really couldn't begin to fathom the mystery behind it. If this was some sort of treasure map, then there was no hint of a path or marking to indicate so on it. It looked to be a regular tuft of animal skin, but it was completely unbreakable and hard to the touch.

Turning the three pieces around several times, Jian Chen finally saw no more benefit to doing so any longer and stored them back into his Space Ring. One of the three was what remained from the destruction of the Bi family, and Jian Chen had no intention on having that leak out.

Afterwards, Jian Chen stayed within his room for the next two days to when the annual auction would take place before finally leaving his room.

But during these two days, the one called Little Spirit hadn't come to him again.

Early that morning, Jian Chen took hold of the tiger cub and made his way over to where the auction house was to be held. With the purchase of an entry ticket for several purple coins, Jian Chen was able to enter the auction house with the throngs of other people.

The space within the avenue was extremely spacious and had seven levels to the main hall. Each level had a multitude of seats that spanned as far as the eye could see. There were at the very least ten thousand of them per level, and with there being seven levels, that meant at least seventy thousand people could be seated here.

The auction houses of Mercenary City did not have special guest rooms for people to enjoy had had instead ordinary seatings for everyone. Whether it was the head of an illustrious family or the traveling merchant from some unknown land, they could be seen sitting together despite the gap in status.

Still holding the sleeping cub, Jian Chen walked up to a corner of one of the levels and carefully waited for the auction to finally start.

Roughly two hours later, the entire hall had been filled up with people to max capacity. Despite it being filled with over ten thousand people, the entire place had been relatively silent with everyone patiently waiting for the event to begin. Not a single person had tried to start a ruckus, and even those who were conversing to one another were doing so with whispers. If anything, many of them were using their eyes to do the talking.

Just then, the last remaining strands of light within the room dimmed, plunging the entire area into darkness. For a while, this darkness persisted before several intense beams of light suddenly shot forth onto the frontmost podium for everyone to see clearly.

Standing on top of this podium was a beautiful young woman who seemed to have appeared out of thin air. Her appearance had told her to be around thirty years old. The azure-blue robes she wore gave her a type of allure that perhaps only the devil itself could offer. In this one moment, a small wooden mallet could be seen on the podium with her.

There had been no need for Jian Chen to even think to know that this beautiful woman right there would be the host of the auction. But what had surprised Jian Chen was the fact that this woman was an individual of the Heaven Saint Master level.

Heaven Saint Masters were individuals that if placed in the Gesun Kingdom, would enjoy an illustrious amount of fame. But for such an individual to be used to personally lead an auction house, this was a lavish opportunity that only Mercenary City would be able to afford.

With a few words of greeting from the hostess, the auction house had thus officially started. One by one, rare oddities and exotic treasures began to make the stage and be offered to the audience. The entire audience who had been silent before the auction had begun had finally started to make noise as they shouted out their prices.

“Middle Earth Tier Battle Skill for those with the fire Saint Force. Lowest bid is at fifty thousand purple coins....”

“A single Class 7 Radiant Spirit Pill that can heal even the most grave injuries of a person within minutes. Lowest bid begins at seventy thousand purple coins.”

“Class 6 Monster Core, a rare treasure that can rarely be obtained on the continent. A once-in-a-lifetime item! Lowest bid begins at forty thousand purple coins.”

One by one, the auctioneer would showcase rare items to the entire audience for them to bid and fight over. Each time the bid ended, the winning price was at least three times the original amount.

Soon enough, four hours went by before the auctioneer brought out an antique yet elegant box. As soon as the lid was opened, a fragrant aroma wafted through the air and covered every inch of the entire room, causing several people to grow excited at the smell.

From his own seat, Jian Chen concentrated his eyes to stare at the box in the auctioneer’s hand. He knew that this was something that he needed for himself.

“Dear audience, I presume that this is not a strange item to everyone here. The object I hold in my hand is an extremely rare heavenly resource. Its name is the Geofruit, a fruit that was grown with spirit dirt that was enriched by the energy of the world. For ten thousands of years, the Geofruit has existed in the world as an extreme rarity even amongst the other heavenly resources. Not only does it have a life-changing effect of power strengthening, it can also prolong the age span of the eater. Should an Earth Saint Master or Heaven Saint Master eat it, their life span will definitely go up by another two hundred years as well as elevate your power to a whole different realm.”

The appearance of the Geofruit had inflamed the eyes of everyone there with excitement. Each of the Heaven Saint Masters were not lacking in funds by any means, and they had also several large groups to help supplement their wealth should they need it. For those almost at the end of their life span, worldly items such as money were nothing important at all--their lives were far more important.

The auctioneer smiled towards the audience to conclude her speech, “Well, this servant will delay no longer with the auction. Everyone is well aware of the effects of the Geofruit I’m sure, and so it should go without saying that this is an opportunity that cannot be missed! With the starting price of five hundred thousand purple coins, with each successive bid defaulting to another ten thousand. Begin!”

“Five hundred and fifty thousand purple coins.” At the end of the auctioneer’s declaration, a person had already increased the bid by five times the stated default.

“Six hundred thousand.” A person to the side of Jian Chen had made a bid as well. He was a burly middle-aged man that wore a rich purple robe. His facial appearance was nothing special other than the two bright and spirited eyes of his and the tall sharp eyebrows over them. With those two traits and the powerful sword intent that exuded from him, he looked like a strong deity of the sword.

“Heaven Saint Master!” When he had sensed the man’s strength, Jian Chen had been secretly shocked. As expected, Mercenary City was a place where the strong gathered. It was rare to see Heaven Saint Masters elsewhere, but they were a common sight in the city.

“Seven hundred thousand!”

“Eight hundred thousand!”

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In the short moment after the Geofruit was announced, a war between the bidders had already brought the price up to a million purple coins. A price like this was already enough to buy several thousand year heavenly resources already.

“One million three hundred thousand.” An elderly voice called out from the first level. By now, the astronomical price of the Geofruit had already scared off many of the bidders so that only a few remained.

“One million three hundred and fifty thousand.” The man next to Jian Chen spoke with clenched teeth. It seemed as if this price was already nearing the limit of what he could afford.

“One million four hundred thousand.” The same elder from before immediately called out.

With a disappointed sigh, the man muttered to himself, “Forget it, I’ll wait for the next auction to buy one.” Even though he had given up, there was still regret to be found in his voice.

Jian Chen had clearly heard what the man had said and gave him a quick glance before looking back to the auction once more.

“One million seven hundred thousand....”

“One million eight hundred thousand....”

By now, the price of the Geofruit had already skyrocketed to almost two million purple coins. While it looked like the only difference between a thousand year old heavenly resource and a ten thousand year old heavenly resource was age, a ten hundred thousand year old heavenly resource was able to prolong the life of the one who ate one. With just this one factor alone, a ten thousand year old heavenly resource was far better than a thousand year old one.

Furthermore, ten thousand year old heavenly resources were extremely hard to obtain. The ones that had managed to survive the harsh winds and stormy rain in nature weren’t many, and many heavenly resources in the several thousand year old ranges were plucked by the magical beasts or humans already. Thus, raising heavenly resources to an ancient age like that was an extremely hard task.

“Two million eight hundred thousand.” At last did Jian Chen break his silence to offer a bid of his own that beat the previous bid by a whopping million. He knew that plenty of people were fighting desperately for the Geofruit, so in order to deter the others from bidding, he would have to bid an even higher amount.

This time, the auction house grew silent. Two million eight hundred? That was a sky-high price that would wash out the rest of the bidders.

Even the middle-aged man right next to Jian Chen had stared strangely at him. Chuckling, he spoke, “Brother, you are quite bold if you’re willing to spend so much money for the Geofruit. I presume you’ll be giving it to an elder of yours?”

With a silent smile, Jian Chen shook his head.

Laughing openly, the man replied, “I was mistaken it seems. Then, is it for your own use, brother? A ten thousand year old heavenly resource gives a considerable amount of power to the eater, a Great Saint Master can become an Earth Saint Master guaranteed with the help of one. One doesn’t even have to worry about the risk of becoming a cripple during that threshold either.”

Jian Chen’s eyes had lit up straight away when he heard those words from the man. Cupping his hands, he spoke, “Brother, is what you just said true? Can a Great Saint Master really become an Earth Saint Master with this?”

“Of course! This isn’t a secret by any means. Brother, if you don’t believe me, then feel free to ask any other man the same question. But because of the immense rarity of a ten thousand year old heavenly resource, not a single household would be willing to waste such a treasure on a single Great Saint Master.” The man spoke.

“Three million.” Just then, another offer was given.

“Three million five hundred thousand!” Jian Chen did not hesitate to increase the price again. For the sake of his younger cousin, he would take this heavenly resource with all his power.

## Chapter 602: Fantasy Star Ocean

When the price had gone to three million five hundred thousand purple coins, even more bidders had gave up on bidding. Even the other bidders who were still bidding had begun to balk about the price and started to have second doubts. Ten thousand year old heavenly resources were rare, but they appeared once every year in Mercenary City. If they didn’t get this one this year, there was always next time.

“Three million six hundred thousand.” For a while, the auction house was silent before another voice finally called out.

“Four million.” Jian Chen immediately gave an even higher bid. While it looked as if he was calm inside, his heart was starting to ache somewhat. Four million purple coins was more than enough to buy a hundred thousand year old heavenly resources.

“Brother, you must be very adamant on taking that Geofruit. Haha, I am Hu Xiaotian, what might be your name, brother?” The middle-aged man next to Jian Chen asked.

Jian Chen turned to look at Hu Xiaotian to study the man. Seeing how earnest and honest the man looked, Jian Chen had decided the man to not be one to act kind in order to gain trust for their own benefit. "This one is called Jian Chen." He smiled.

"Jian Chen! The very same one known as the number one in the Gathering of the Mercenaries and known as the King of Mercenaries, that same Jian Chen?" Hu Xiaotian exclaimed in surprise.

"I am he!" Jian Chen spoke.

Hu Xiaotian had been clearly startled by this announcement, but he had quickly regained his wits and cupped his hands in salute. "So you were Jian Chen, the King of Mercenaries. It is nice to meet you. What pity it was that I was preoccupied when the Gathering of Mercenaries happened and was unable to watch the battles. Otherwise, I would definitely have watched your match."

Afterwards, Jian Chen and Hu Xiaotian had spent the rest of the time chatting and bidding. And in the end, Jian Chen had managed to bid a high price of four million eight hundred thousand purple coins to win the Geofruit.

Whilst their conversation was going on, the eyes of the entire auction house had turned to look at the corner Jian Chen was in. Each one of them were curious on just which grand family had a son like this.

On the third floor of the auction house, a white-robed elder slowly creased his eyebrows as he went into deep thought.

"Strange, why does the voice of the one bidding for the Geofruit sound so familiar?" The elder muttered. Then, a second later, a brilliant gleam of light flashed across his previously dull eyes as he gave a small shout, "Jian Chen! That's Jian Chen's voice! But how? Did he not survive?"

Now that he had surmised that the bidder had been Jian Chen, the elder got out from his seat and hurried on over to the stairwell. Walking down to the first level, his eyes stared brightly through the dark auction house as he looked for the corner where Jian Chen would be.

Upon seeing Jian Chen, the elder began to tremble as a vicious smile seized his face. "It's him! It's really him! I didn't think that he had survived, but the Seal of Treasure Mountain must still be on him."

Feeling the sharp glare of the elder, Jian Chen had instinctively turned to look at the source of the stare. When he saw the elder, Jian Chen had been startled as well. But then a meaningful smile appeared on his face as he stood up from his chair as well and strode over to where the elder was.

It was with a swagger to his step that Jian Chen greeted the elder with a smile. "If this one's memory is correct, then you must be the third elder of the Shi family. I didn't believe we'd meet each other here, how coincidental."

This elder had been an elder of the Shi family with the wind affinity. Back when Jian Chen had been chased to practically the ends of the earth, this feeling of hopelessness caused by the elder had given Jian Chen an unforgettable memory of him.

"So you really are Jian Chen!" With that confirmation, the third elder was now completely convinced that this youth in front of him was the very same Jian Chen that had the Seal of Treasure Mountain on him.

But then now that he knew Jian Chen was alive, the man couldn't help but feel excited. Ever since Jian Chen's supposed death, they had never once stopped searching for the Ruler Armament. They had even spent countless of energy in order to use several secret methods to find the location of the Ruler Armament, but to no avail. And even worse, they had come out for the worse after it.

But then out of nowhere, he came across the culprit who had stolen the Ruler Armament on a random trip to the annual auction house. This accidental meeting had given the elder a rekindled hope and glee.

"Jian Chen, you are a resilient one. Even with such heavy injuries, you're still alive." The elder sneered.

Laughing in return, Jian Chen replied, "Perhaps King Yanluo himself was unwilling to give me shelter, so I escaped death."

"Hmph, it was a mistake on our ends I suppose to not dispose of your body. If we had, you would not be able to live as happily as you do now. Jian Chen, I don't wish to mince words with you. Since the Jiede clan isn't here, you may as well come back to my Shi family and return the Seal of Treasure Mountain. We will keep silent about your survival if you come with us." The elder spoke.

Still smiling, Jian Chen stared playfully at the man, "Third elder, you should go back. I have yet some things to buy so I won't have time to accompany you." And with that, Jian Chen turned around to return to his seat.

Glaring daggers at the back of Jian Chen, the third elder clenched his fist tightly in anger. If it were not the fact that they were in Mercenary City, he would have attacked Jian Chen a long time ago without giving him the chance to escape.

"Jian Chen, I'll see to it that you won't escape this time." The man laughed coldly to himself as he left the auction house. He was no longer in the mood to continue with the bidding.

"Brother Jian Chen, I can see that old man was giving you a fishy stare. Was there a problem between the two of you in the past?" As soon as Jian Chen sat back down, Hu Xiaotian had spoken to him.

Not caring to hide the truth, Jian Chen nodded, "Correct, he is an enemy of mine."

"Brother Jian Chen, you should be careful then. That old man is a Heaven Saint Master, that is an entity that an Earth Saint Master can't hope to contend with." Hu Xiaotian spoke seriously.

"Thank you for your concerns, this one will be cautious then." Jian Chen smiled. Because he had hidden his strength, Hu Xiaotian was unable to see just how strong he was.

"But brother Jian Chen, you shouldn't worry too much. If you ever come across an enemy, then you only just need to run to Mercenary City. Not a single person would dare to act out in Mercenary City, even Heaven Saint Masters are no exception to this. It's hard to come across a Saint Ruler as an enemy as well, but even they won't cause strife in the city." Hu Xiaotian spoke.

Jian Chen's heart had skipped a beat when he heard that. "Even Saint Rulers wouldn't dare fight? Is Mercenary City truly that terrifying?"

"Far more than you could possibly believe!" Hu Xiaotian's face had taken on a serious tone. Holding a hand out to point at the sky, he spoke, "Little brother, you've seen the barrier of Mercenary City for yourself I'm sure. Let me tell you, this barrier has existed for countless of years already from when Mo

Tianyun himself placed the barrier down. Protecting Mercenary City through the ages in silence, it has struck down any single person that dared to fight or injure another within its boundaries. The more offensive offenders had been killed. That is how terrifying it is.”

“I see!” Jian Chen remarked.

And so the auction had gone on for another hour with plenty of strange but rare goods were bought.

Some time after, the auctioneer had soon brought out a small glass bottle that was about the size of one’s fist. Inside, there was a small and faint glow that seemed to resemble the dazzling light of a star.

If one were to look carefully, then they would be able to see that within this bottle, there were a multitude of small particles of sand moving about just slightly. Each particle had let out a light that resembled starlight itself. And from afar, it looked as if the bottle contained the starry skies from up above, each light resembling an individual star from the universe.

Holding the bottle up above her head for everyone to see, the auctioneer started, “Audience, please allow me to introduce our next treasure to be sold. The item I hold in my hand will most likely be a first for everyone to see here. That is because this item is from one of the death zones of the Tian Yuan Continent--Fantasy Star Ocean.”

“What? Fantasy Star Ocean? I’ve heard that aside from the Death’s Nest, Fantasy Star Ocean is the most terrifying death zone! Even Cross Mountains isn’t as terrifying compared to it. A Heaven Saint Master stands no chance there, and even a Saint Ruler would find their deaths at hand there.”

“Who would have known that this would be an object from such a place? It has to be something that some Saint Ruler brought back with him.”

“But what use is there for it? If it’s from Fantasy Star Ocean, then there has to be some sort of use for it.”

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Like the rock that would cause a thousand ripples in a pond, the entire audience had begun to buzz with noise the moment they heard where the item came from. Each one of them were extremely interested in what the auctioneer was holding and begun to take curiosity in the bottle.

Looking seriously at the bottle himself, Jian Chen knew that this was the item that the two spirits had told him about. It was one of the extremely high quality materials, stardust.

“This is stardust! But it’s only a small amount. If we wish to forge the Azulet swords, then we’d need at least several kilogram worth of stardust.” Ziying spoke with disappointment within Jian Chen’s mind.

But those words had done no small amount of shock to Jian Chen who remarked, “What? Forging the Azulet swords would require that much stardust?”

“Yes, the more stardust, the better until we hit the limit itself. The amount of stardust here might be small, but it is good to hear that this Fantasy Star Ocean has plenty more of it. Master, you must go to that place and gather even more of it.” Ziying spoke.

Jian Chen couldn't help but feel a grimace overcome his face. He hadn't known how dangerous this Fantasy Star Ocean was before, but just hearing the others talk about it had given him a preliminary idea on the dangers.

A Heaven Saint Master was destined to die if they entered, and even a Saint Ruler would most likely fall to their death. That much was enough to tell him that he wouldn't even be able to take a step there.

Chapter 603: Followed

The auctioneer's voice continued to speak, "The item I hold in my hand has a very unique name, Spiritize Dust. Not only is it pretty to look at, but the effects it has will undoubtedly be shocking to anyone that hears it. It contains the energy of the world within the particles of dust, and when worn on the body, then one's cultivation speed will skyrocket! It is by no means inferior to when one uses a monster core to cultivate."

There had been a tremendous commotion from the entire audience from such a proclamation. From this, everyone knew just how much the dust was worth.

But then the next few words that came out from the auctioneer's mouth had caused everyone to go practically insane.

"The effects of the Spiritize Dust isn't limited to just that. As soon as this dust makes contact with the outside world, it will draw in the energy of the world around it in a never ending stream. If placed around one's home, then that home would become rich with such energy and transform the area into a holy ground for cultivation. Everyone, please take a moment to think about the great benefits of such an item. With this, what worries would your families have?"

The fires in everyone's eyes had practically ignited to full blaze with that. To them, this Spiritize Dust had an effect that many times better than what some ten thousand year old heavenly resource Geofruit could do. They could after all, make their homes into a powerful place of cultivation. Furthermore, this had also opened up the Fantasy Star Ocean as a potential source of revenue. Unfortunately, because of the difficulty of the location itself, obtaining Spiritize Dust was nearly impossible and put an end to mass exportation of the dust.

So in this one moment alone, everyone had made up their minds to get the Spiritize Dust no matter what the cost. For the sake of the growth of their families, this was a crucial item.

"Let us start the bid for the Spiritize Dust at three million purple coins. Each bid will increase the price by another ten thousand. If anyone has interest in the Spiritize Dust, then this is an opportunity that cannot be missed. This Spiritize Dust is an absolute must." The auctioneer smiled.

Afterwards, another herculean battle had taken place as everyone began to shout their prices one after another. Rising in price at an astronomical rate, the Spiritize Dust was already well over ten million purple coins within a few moments.

Jian Chen had been seated in his corner in silence without ever making a bid for himself. Since he knew that he now needed a tremendous amount of this stardust, there was no point in fighting for this small amount. It would do him no good to obtain such a miniscule amount for the major price.

“It would appear that I must go to Fantasy Star Ocean in order to obtain enough stardust in order to smelt the Azulet swords.” Jian Chen thought to himself.

For an hour, the stardust had been fought for by the entire audience before finally being bought out by a mysterious buyer on the second floor for a high price of eighty million purple coins. A sum like that was far more than enough to buy an entire nation.

And now that the auction house had finally finished all of its items, the event had ended and Jian Chen left the hall. By this time, the outside sky was already growing dark.

Hu Xiaotian walked up to Jian Chen’s side and looked up at the sky with him. “Somehow, an entire day has passed without me knowing it. Brother Jian Chen, which inn might you be staying at?”

“My inn is the one known as the Sweet Fate inn on the westward street. Sire Hu Xiaotian, it’s getting late, so I’ll be heading back first to rest. And so, I’ll be taking my leave here.” Jian Chen cupped his hands to bid farewell to him before turning around to leave.

“One moment. As things turn out, I haven’t an inn to stay in myself. Would it be possible for brother Jian Chen to take me there?” Hu Xiaotian laughed as he caught up to Jian Chen to walk by his side.

“Ah, brother Jian Chen, you’ve gone to the holy lands within Mercenary City I remember. That’s a place where even Saint Rulers dream of going to. Would it perhaps be possible to divulge just what bizarre or fantastic things can be found in there?” Hu Xiaotian asked in passing.

“There are many fantastical things to be found in there, but what truly interests the Saint Rulers are the Saint Tier Battle Skills.” Jian Chen had spoken honestly to Hu Xiaotian. Mercenary City was a strong place to be in, and there was no need for him to hide or worry about the secret at all. It was something that he believed all Saint Rulers already knew and wasn’t a secret at all.

“As I thought, I figured that there would be one of the Saint Tier Battle Skills they mentioned of in legend. But I didn’t expect that these battle skills would be so powerful to destroy even the heavens themselves. Only Saint Rulers are said to be able to start learning these ones due to the difficulty of comprehension. Each one of those who understands how to use a Saint Tier Battle Skill works however are all Saint Kings without exception. Or so I’ve heard.” Hu Xiaotian remarked.

Jian Chen had looked strangely at Hu Xiaotian before smiling, “It seems sire Hu Xiaotian is quite knowledgeable about these matters if you know about them to such an extent.”

But Hu Xiaotian had chuckled in response, “It is common knowledge, nothing more. As long as you travel the continent long enough, then things like this slowly come to you.”

The two had traveled for some time before they finally arrived back at the inn.

Jian Chen had only just walked into his own room and closed the door behind when he walked on over to the window and opened the boards. Looking outside, Jian Chen’s eyes slowly traveled to where a giant building was a little away in the distance. On the roof, a single white-robed elder could be seen sitting on it while staring at Jian Chen with gleaming eyes.

It was the third elder of the Shi family.

When he saw the elder, Jian Chen couldn't help but feel a small smile crawl onto his face. From the very moment he had left the auction house, the third elder had been stalking him from behind. But this time, the elder had been cautious and stuck close to Jian Chen in order to avoid losing him again.

"Third elder, are you not feeling tired?" Jian Chen smiled playfully at the elder.

With eyes that could leave a smoldering spot, the elder gave a level stare at Jian Chen, "Jian Chen, I advise you to return the Ruler Armament. You cannot escape this time, or do you plan to live your entire life within the confines of Mercenary City?"

Jian Chen had said nothing this time and had instead closed the boards to his windows. Sitting on his bed, Jian Chen began to think of the very next step in what to do. Should he kill the elder straight away to head Longevity Valley, or should he wait for the Saint Ruler of the Shi family to come so that he could have elder Xiu in Longevity Valley take care of him?

The only vexation that had crossed his mind however was the fact that he didn't know just how strong the Saint Ruler of the Shi family was. He didn't know whether or not elder Xiu would be able to handle the Saint Ruler either.

After going into consideration for a long period of time, Jian Chen had finally reached a verdict on what to do next before finally settling into a state of meditation to recover his strength.

Early next morning, Jian Chen had bid farewell to Hu Xiaotian before leaving for the outskirts of the city with the sleeping tiger cub.

Not too long after he left Mercenary City, Jian Chen continued for another ten kilometers before stopping. Turning to look at the third elder who had been stalking him, Jian Chen smiled, "Third elder, the barrier to Mercenary City stops here. Did you not wish to steal the Ruler Armament from me? How do you plan on doing that now?"

With both arms folded against his chest, the elder spoke, "Jian Chen, I presume you have called for help of some sort if you can stay so calm. Hurry and call them out, you can't hide anything anymore."

"If it's you, I have no need to call for anyone else to help me. You worry too much, third elder. I am by myself today. If you wish to take the Ruler Armament from me, then take it yourself." Jian Chen smiled. His presence had already been spread out for fifteen kilometers all around the area. If a Saint Ruler were to appear, Jian Chen would run straight for Mercenary City.

"How arrogant!" The third elder spat out. Looking at the open area around him, the man spoke out, "Everyone, come out and let us take the two Ruler Armaments from him." The elder had remembered that Jian Chen held the Duanyun Sword from the Jiede clan as well.

With his finishing sentence, four seventy-year old elders suddenly came out from the skies in each cardinal direction around Jian Chen so as to trap him in.

But Jian Chen had not been disturbed by their appearances at all. Thanks to his presence, Jian Chen had been fully aware of their existences. From the moment he had been in the city to now, there had been no way that someone could hide from him. No matter what they used, they were as visible to him as if it were normal.

There had been a faint azure-colored sword in the third elder's hand as he glowered at Jian Chen. "I'll give you one last chance. Will you or will you not return the Ruler Armament?" At the same time, the other four men brandished their own Saint Weapons.

With five Heaven Saint Masters against him, Jian Chen didn't dare be lazy either and resolved to use the Origin energy of the sword spirits. A beam of azure and violet light immediately shot forth from his right palm and formed a single blade.

The third elder had thought back to the last time he had fought Jian Chen to death when he saw the Origin energy. The look on his face solidified as he grew serious, "Fourth elder, be careful. Jian Chen isn't as simple as he looks on the surface."

"Third elder, worry not. The four of us all know of what happened to the Cai brothers. We won't be following them into the afterlife today." One of the elder laughed confidently. Afterwards, a surge of yellow-brown energy flowed forth from his body to form a protective layering over him like armor.

With this armor for protection, the elder's confidence had been bolstered as well and immediately flew off towards Jian Chen to strike.

#### Chapter 604: The Battle Outside the City

Jian Chen had only laughed. Without fear for his own life, he charged straight for the elder as well. With a thrust of his right arm, the Origin energy surging through out it had arced straight outwards in a brilliant gleam of light straight for the elder's chest.

From within his earthen armor, the elder had been startled by Jian Chen's course of action. He had no idea that Jian Chen would be that fast.

Up until now, the few individuals of the Shi family had figured Jian Chen to be an Earth Saint Master. It had been outside of their expectations to see that within such a short amount of time, Jian Chen would have gone from a Second Cycle Earth Saint Master to become a Heaven Saint Master. The speed at which Jian Chen had struck out with his sword had been far faster than what an Earth Saint Master with a wind attribute would even be capable of. Shocked by this, the elders were now reevaluating Jian Chen to be an even bigger threat.

Despite the speed of his stab to be out of their expectations, the elder wearing the earthen armor had been equally fast in his reaction. In a flash, his giant sword had exploded forth with a yellow light that originated from his body. The light on the sword had grown even larger with the amount of energy being fed into it before it finally smashed against the Origin energy Jian Chen wielded.

"Boom!" With the collision between Jian Chen's Origin energy and the elder's Saint Weapon, a tremendous amount of Saint Force had been expelled from the area and over the entire earth. With dust pervading the air from the blast, the area between Jian Chen and the elder had been completely blocked by the dust and had made visibility almost impossible.

The other four elders from the Shi family had used a thin layering of Saint Force protecting them from the incoming dust and had stared intently through it with stunned expressions.

"Third elder, is Jian Chen truly a Second Cycle Earth Saint Master?" One elder asked in disbelief.

The third elder gave a small hum as he tried to think. "One year ago when I fought him, he was only an Earth Saint Master. But with just barely a year after that, his strength has basically toppled the heavens to make a tremendous change. What's startling is the fact that he isn't a cripple even after his Saint Weapon was destroyed. His strength should be extremely low and not what it is now."

"Every man is destined for fortune after surviving a great disaster. I suppose that saying is true because of cases like these." Another elder sighed.

Within this moment, a single person came flying straight out from the dust and out towards the third elder.

The elder had narrowed his eyes for a moment before letting out a grim sound of laughter, "Unharmmed? It seems elder Ma hadn't left even a single scratch on you! Jian Chen, you really did grow even stronger than before." Surrounding his body with the wind element, the elder shot up fifty meters into the sky without a second to spare.

Jian Chen's figure had flown straight up into the sky as well. Aided with the wind element from the world, Jian Chen had chased after the third elder without reprieve.

"What? He's a Heaven Saint Master too?!" The other three elders had been astonished. Not a single one of them had expected or thought to see that someone that was only a Second Cycle Earth Saint Master would become a Heaven Saint Master that was capable of such a speed that could leave the three Heaven Saint Masters tongue tied in a single year.

Seeing Jian Chen fly through the air had caused no small amount of shock to the third elder as well. Stupefied, the elder couldn't help but remark, "But how?! Just a year ago, you were merely just an Earth Saint Master before you had your Saint Weapon destroyed, how did you become a Heaven Saint Master instead of becoming a cripple?!" The third elder was no longer as calm as before. His face was filled with abject disbelief and even in his heart, waves of shock had surged everywhere with great power.

Unable to stop himself from sneering after seeing the look on the elder's face, Jian Chen laughed, "Third elder, I should really pay you back for that debt from one year ago. Don't even think that you'll leave here alive today." With the final word spoken, Jian Chen had already closed in onto the third elder and brought his Origin energy sword straight at the throat of the other man.

The third elder was already aware of just how devastating the Origin energy was and knew better than to cross swords with it. Borrowing the speed boost his wind affinity gave him, the third elder tried his best to gain some distance away from him. Then, with his Saint Force pulsating into his sword, the elder shouted out loud, "Earth Tier Battle Skill--Cloud Piercer!" The wind attribute Saint Force that had been around the third elder had immediately condensed into a thicker wave of energy that helped propel his body towards Jian Chen with the speed of an arrow shot out from a bow in an attempt to spear him straight through.

Jian Chen had laughed coldly once more when he saw the third elder decide to approach him instead of retreating. With the Origin energy, Jian Chen moved to stab the elder when all of a sudden, something behind him had prompted him to turn around and stab at the empty space behind him.

"Ding!"

A crisp sound could be heard as from what was once an empty space in the air had now a single figure levitating over it--it was the third elder. The third elder that had been approaching him from the other side had been nothing more than a mirror image that disappear as soon as Jian Chen looked at it.

“What a strange battle skill.” Jian Chen praised with some astonishment. The Cloud Piercer that the third elder had used was nothing more than a diversion--the first body had been a mirror image that would move as he pleased while his actual body used some sort of strange method to hide himself. It had been a silent and strategic course of action that allowed the elder to traverse to behind Jian Chen to attempt at a fatal strike. If not for the presence that Jian Chen had spread out, then the third elder would have most likely delivered a fatal blow onto him.

“Pfft!” A mouthful of blood escaped from the third elder’s lips as his face paled due to the blood loss. Glancing at his Saint Weapon, there was now a new jagged chip to its edge.

“Elder Hunyuan! Elder Hunyuan is dead! Third elder, Jian Chen has killed elder Hunyuan!” From down below where the dust was finally beginning to recede, the first Heaven Saint Master that had fought with Jian Chen could be seen on the ground. From between his eyebrows, a single hole could be seen leaking blood from the spot.

“What! Elder Hunyuan is dead?” The third elder cried out. Turning to look down, his body grew rigid with shock when he saw the sight for himself.

Taking advantage of the elder’s period of shock, Jian Chen charged forward with the Origin energy to pierce through the elder’s eyebrows. In the blink of an eye, the distance between the two had closed to less than a meter.

Letting out a startled yelp, the elder swung his head as if his life was hanging by a thread. Despite just barely dodging the strike by a hair’s breadth, there had been a single gash on his forehead.

“Whoosh!” The second delivery of Jian Chen’s sword had been just as fast as the first and followed the elder’s movements without leaving him time to even breathe.

The elder had been dreadfully terrified of the Origin energy and wanted nothing more than to distance himself away from it. With no other choice but to rely on his own speed, he retreated backwards to widen the distance. Unfortunately for him, Jian Chen had harbored no desire to allow him such a course of action. Encasing himself within the wind from the world, he dashed towards the third elder in order to pressure him into a situation where he couldn’t even retaliate.

“Assist the third elder!” The other three elders had snapped out from their shock and immediately shot into the skies to help the elder.

“Don’t bother helping me, just use your Heaven Tier Battle Skills! Only those could hurt this bastard. Who would have known that a single year was enough to cause such a drastic change in his power?” The elder cried out in anger. His heart had been thrown into disarray with today’s events; this was a first in his three hundred years of living. A single youth not even fifty years old was giving him a thrashing that had not only affected his physical self, but his pride.

Without delay, the three Heaven Saint Masters immediately split off into three separate corners and began to charge up their Heaven Tier Battle Skills.

The usage of a Heaven Tier Battle Skill by three Heaven Saint Masters was more than enough to cause a tremendous influx of energy to surge around the area. The clouds in the skies above had already started to swirl around the area and the dirt on the ground was being thrown about due to the fierce wind blowing around. As if an angry dragon was about to awaken, the power that was beginning to unfold here had started to spread out to such distance that even the inhabitants of Mercenary City could feel the change in weather.

“This is a Heaven Tier Battle Skill! Only those can cause such a tremendous amount of pressure; a Heaven Saint Master must be doing battle somewhere!”

“There’s people outside the city fighting! Looks like they’re about to use a Heaven Tier Battle Skill--two or three of them I’d wager. That’s something that’s extremely hard to come by, let’s go watch!”

Mercenary City had instantly gone into a clamor with many of the people running out of the city to look where the battle was taking place from a distance.

From within an inn, Hu Xiaotian had been sitting by himself as he enjoyed a cup of fine liquor and a platter of cooked meat. When he sensed the influx of pressure caused by the Heaven Tier Battle Skill, his eyebrows narrowed together as he thought to himself, “There was a Heaven Saint Master following Jian Chen yesterday. And today Jian Chen had only just left the inn, could he be the one fighting?”

“Jian Chen participated in the Gathering of the Mercenaries as an Earth Saint Master, but that was barely four years ago. Did he perhaps become a Heaven Saint Master within those four years? No, that shouldn’t be possible--but only a Heaven Saint Master should be possible of using Heaven Tier Battle Skill like this. It has to be someone else that’s fighting; I should take a look for myself.”

Scattering several golden coins onto the table, Hu Xiaotian left the inn as well.

From the skies above Mercenary City, the sound of a young woman could suddenly be heard.

“Big brother? That’s big brother! He’s fighting someone! There has to be trouble then. Should Little Spirit help big brother then?”

“But...but....master told Little Spirit to not interfere in things like this. If Little Spirit interferes, wouldn’t master scold Little Spirit when master gets back? But...but big brother has the scent of master on him. Could Little Spirit really watch big brother get hurt without doing anything?”

“Aiyah. What to do, what to do? How is big brother doing? Should Little Spirit save big brother?” Little Spirit’s voice grew even more frantic by the second as if she was unsure of what decision to make.

Chapter 605: Enduring Four Heaven Tier Battle Skills

The sounds that were coming from above the skies of Mercenary City had gone completely unnoticed by the inhabitants of the city down below. With so many people riding on top of a magical beast mount to rush towards the scene of the battle, each one of them were in a hurry to watch the battle where even a Heaven Tier Battle Skill was being used.

The weather of the area was growing even more turbulent by the second due to the amount of pressure being created by the Heaven Tier Battle Skills, the air in the area felt as if it had solidified. Even Jian Chen

felt his body grow sluggish because of the three battle skills being used, giving the third elder ample time to escape.

The elder had let out a sigh in relief. Because of the injuries he sustained while evading Jian Chen along with the constant paranoia of being hit by the Origin energy, he had felt like his arms and feet had been shackled. His true strength couldn't be used and had made him feel rather sullen.

"Jian Chen. Let's see you try to be arrogant this time! Heaven Tier Battle Skill--Heaven's Execution Blade!" The third elder bellowed before unleashing his battle skill with a vow to injure Jian Chen and vent out his earlier frustrations.

Deadlocked by four different Heaven Tier Battle Skills, Jian Chen felt as if he was carrying a gigantic mountain on his back. Movement was extremely difficult for him in this very moment and did not allow for him to dodge them.

"Rah!" Suddenly, Jian Chen let loose a tremendous roar to the heavens that reverberated throughout the entire area. At the same time, two fierce glows of azure and violet began to blaze up in Jian Chen's eyes as if two demonic will-o-wisps were dancing in them.

With the squall that was going on, sand and dirt was being kicked around the entire area with pieces of stone and grass to be seen scattered about. In a flash, it had all converged around Jian Chen's position. Just two and a half kilometers away, a strange but attractive force of energy was somehow pulling at the trees in a forest before they too flew towards Jian Chen while basked in an azure and violet light.

In no time at all, Jian Chen's entire body had been covered by a dense amount of stones and tree. Under his control, four separate but gigantic blades made from these fragments were formed within an instant. Each blade had a faint azure and violet glow to it as it levitated around him.

In the same time that Jian Chen had finished his movements, the four elders had also finished charging up their Heaven Tier Battle Skills. With three of the Saint Weapons shining furiously with an eye-piercing light, the amount of energy flickering off their blades had already started to distort the space around them.

Commanding the swords with his mind, he had three of them shoot off towards the three elders coming at him so as to abate the strength of the Heaven Tier Battle Skill.

"Boom!" The three swords collided with the Heaven Tier Battle Skills while in midair, causing an explosion to occur. The blast had caused the ears of everyone nearby to twinge in pain while the shockwave continued to flow off into every direction. Even the clouds up above had been scattered apart while the remaining dregs of energy slammed into the ground and left a crater nearly a meter deep.

The three swords of Jian Chen had been like tofu in the face of the battle skills. Upon collision, they had been shattered apart while the Heaven Tier Battle Skills themselves had remained standing. Continuing onwards to Jian Chen with a slightly slower speed than before, it could be seen that the power had been weakened in comparison.

A wave of earth had converged around Jian Chen's body before forming an incomparably strong looking piece of armor. With the azure and violet Origin energy swirling around him, the originally two finger

breadth wide piece of energy had transformed into a sword about the wide of an entire palm and ten meters long in length. The iridescent light radiating off of the sword had dyed the area around it a vibrant color as well. In this moment, Jian Chen had brought his usage with the azure and violet Origin energy to its limits before shooting off three separate rays of Sword Qi to clash with the remaining battle skills.

The clash between the two had caused yet another explosion with the Sword Qi being blown apart while the three Heaven Tier Battle Skills weakened once more. With this one additional step, Jian Chen had all about run out of enough time to do anything else. The very last thing to do was to allow the three battle skills to hit him.

“Boom!” Following the third explosion, Jian Chen’s body had been sent flying away. Even though the three Heaven Tier Battle Skills had been weakened by several levels, its remaining power was still not to be trifled with. Even the armor he wore had been shattered into pieces from the blow.

“Pfft!” A mouthful of dark-red blood came escaping out from Jian Chen’s mouth. His face had already paled by several degrees.

If it were against one Heaven Tier Battle Skill, Jian Chen could probably escape from one without much harm, if any. But against the simultaneous blows of three of them, there was no way he’d be able to do that.

Jian Chen’s body had been catapulted away from the impact of the battle skill, but before his body had even stabilized itself in the air, another wave of pressure had already locked onto his body as the third elder brought both hands over his head. In his hands, a single giant sword about a hundred meters in length had materialized with a resplendent beam of light escaping from the blade.

“Heaven’s Executing Blade!” The elder bellowed before swinging his hands down. With that, the hundred-meter long blade came down like lightning onto Jian Chen’s head. From where the blade traveled, the space had shuddered slightly as if it was on the verge of being torn apart.

Without any time to even wipe the blood away from his mouth, Jian Chen had commanded the Origin energy to shoot forth from his hands with the utmost seriousness. Along with the ten-meter long blade, the remaining last sword made from stone and tree had shot forth as well to smash against the third elder’s Heaven Tier Battle Skill.

“Boom!”

The fierce explosion had rocked the entire area with the explosion sounding more like a crack of thunder impacting against the earth. Everyone had gone deaf for that one moment as the earth beneath them trembled incessantly. Several places on the ground had already started to fracture in a series of spiderweb-like cracks into the surrounding area.

The last remaining sword had exploded into a mighty show with barely any tree bark to be seen anymore. It was as if the Heaven’s Executing Blade had utterly decimated the tree bark out of existence while the blade itself continued onwards to Jian Chen.

It had been with a grim face that Jian Chen stared at the battle skill. The third elder’s usage of the Heaven’s Execution Blade had been several times stronger than when the other three Heaven Saint

Masters had used it. This was a fact that caused Jian Chen to feel even more somber than before. Up against such a powerful battle skill, his movements were limited once more and meant that there was no room nor time to dodge. His only remaining option was to endure this fourth battle skill.

A crazed glare crept into Jian Chen's eyes as he exhausted the very last vestige of his energy into using the Origin energy to defend against the mighty Heaven's Execution Blade. While reapplying another layer of his earthen armor onto his body. Although it was powerless to defend him from the Heaven Skill Battle Skill, it would still bolster his defenses by a small portion, allowing him to resist even more.

The Heaven's Execution Blade had been extremely fast in its travels and before Jian Chen could get any more than three bursts of Sword Qi out, it had collided onto his body and instantaneously shattered the armor he had been wearing. Suffering yet another heavy wound, Jian Chen's body had been like a bullet as he was blown away. With blood pervading into the air like a bloody mist from his mouth, his chest had been a mangled mess as well. Defending against four Heaven Tier Battle Skills was more than what he could take at a comfortable level.

He had flown for another three hundred meters before finally coming to a rest far away. His face was as white as sheet due to blood loss, but while he was injured, he was not so powerless as to stop himself from falling onto the ground and had somehow managed to stay afloat in the air.

"Jian Chen, you're as good as captured. Hand over what we want or we won't even let you die with your body intact." The third elder gasped out. The Heaven Tier Battle Skill had taken a lot of energy from him, and the Heaven's Execution Blade itself had taken more than half of his Saint Force.

The other three elders had convened around the third elder with gasping breaths as well. Each one of them stared at Jian Chen as if they were looking at some sort of monstrous person. Not once did they ever imagine that Jian Chen would be able to handle four Heaven Tier Battle Skills at once while still being able to stay afloat in the sky. This result wasn't within their expectations.

"What an unordinary brat he is. I had thought that after sustaining four Heaven Tier Battle Skills, he would be crippled, if not dead. But even now, he's still alive with manageable wounds. How inconceivable." One of the elders spoke with astonishment.

"He's deserving to be the King of Mercenaries I see if he can handle even that." The elder to his right sighed in admiration as well.

Staring deeply at Jian Chen, the third elder spoke, "The power he wields in his hand is extremely strong. With just him alone, the four Heaven Tier Battle Skills we used was weakened by him several times over. By the time it hit him, the power wasn't even at half of what it started out to be. Otherwise, there'd be no way he'd handle all that without damage."

"I wonder just what freakish power it is that he uses." The elder whispered with a small tint of envy in his voice.

"That's simple. Wait for when we capture him, we'll know all about this strange energy then." The third elder laughed before looking back to Jian Chen, "Well, do you still think you can face off against us?"

Remaining silent from his spot in midair, Jian Chen tilted his head to look down at his mangled chest. He knew that if not for the fact that he had tempered his body with Chaotic Force to make it even stronger

than before, then the third elder's battle skill would have most likely blown a hole straight through his chest. And if that were to happen, then it would be impossible for Jian Chen to survive for the remainder of the battle.

With such a grievous wound, then any other Heaven Saint Master would have most likely lose their ability to fight. But even now, he had still a considerable amount of fighting strength. The plethora of strength granted to his body had allowed him to take on this wound with enough energy to spare.

Glaring at the four elders in front of him, Jian Chen's body slowly began to seep with energy as if raring to fight. The Origin energy in his right hand grew brighter and brighter, allowing the beams of light to take on a more definitive type of form of energy.

A year ago, Jian Chen had been powerless against the third elder's Heaven Tier Battle Skill. But today, he was completely capable of withstanding four of them.

Sensing the intent to battle from Jian Chen, the third elder's expression had turned slightly stunned to see that Jian Chen was still willing to fight.

Jian Chen had been able to take on four Heaven Tier Battle Skills and still have energy. This type of capability was something that even a Sixth Cycle Heaven Saint Master was unable of pulling off. After all, this could kill any Heaven Saint Master!

#### Chapter 606: Imprint of Death (One)

By now, a large group of people had already gathered from Mercenary City. From far away, they watched the battle take place between Heaven Saint Masters. Several of the other Heaven Saint Masters had already flown up into the air to watch it from another perspective.

Hu Xiaotian had been with the Heaven Saint Masters, although they were all standing far away, their eyesight was strong enough to allow them to watch the battle with clarity.

When he saw Jian Chen floating in the air, Hu Xiaotian had been surprised, "Eh? Isn't that brother Jian Chen? So he really did become a Heaven Saint Master, I underestimated him. But isn't he amazing, he's fighting against four other Heaven Saint Masters and managed to withstand four Heaven Tier Battle Skills. Perhaps brother Jian Chen has become a Sixth Cycle Heaven Saint Master?"

"Look! The one fighting those four Heaven Saint Masters, isn't that the one who took first place in the Gathering of Mercenaries, Jian Chen?" Several figures had realized Jian Chen's identity had cried out in shock.

"Eh? It really is Jian Chen! But wasn't he an Earth Saint Master when he was in the Gathering of the Mercenaries? So why is he a Heaven Saint Master now after a single year?"

"Is that really him? Heavens, he's already a Heaven Saint Master. Whats more, he's able to fight against four other Heaven Saint Masters using their Heaven Tier Battle Skills? How inconceivable. Jian Chen was in the Gathering of the Mercenaries, so he can't be over the age of fifty!"

"What? Fifty? Have you seen how old he looks? According to what I know, Jian Chen's true age can't be over the age of thirty."

“You’re kidding? His age isn’t even past the thirties? Good heavens, becoming a Heaven Saint Master at that age is really unbelievable.”

“Those four Heaven Saint Masters used their Heaven Tier Battle Skills just now, but Jian Chen managed to defend himself from them. That’s really something else! I’d have to guess he’s a Fourth Cycle Heaven Saint Master at the very least.”

“Why just a Fourth Cycle? Even a Sixth Cycle Heaven Saint Master would be hard-pressed to survive four Heaven Tier Battle Skills. I say that Jian Chen has to be a Saint Ruler!” Another elder announced. His expression had been complex as he thought about just how Jian Chen had managed to defend against four Heaven Tier Battle Skill. A feat like that was bordering on the unbelievable.

“What! Saint Ruler! How could that be!”

Jian Chen’s identity had been quickly revealed to everyone there. But his revealment as a Heaven Saint Master had been especially shocking. Anyone that looked at him had now a new look of shock as they discussed to one another.

When someone had suggested that Jian Chen had already become a Saint Ruler, the entire area had gone deathly silent. Not a single one of them had spoke since news like that was far too incredulous to even imagine.

“Jian Chen becoming a Saint Ruler before he even reaches his thirties would be far too terrifying. With the entire continent as a scale, talent like that would be hard to come by every millenia.” After a very long time, another elder spoke with a sigh.

“Jian Chen entered the holy lands of Mercenary City, with his talent already, it would only be a matter of time before he becomes a Saint Ruler.” A frail looking elder exhaled slowly.

On another side, three black-robed men stood together as they watched the scene with calm expressions. One of the three had a single fan in his hands as he muttered, “A Heaven Saint Master before the age of thirty and can withstand four Heaven Tier Battle skills, that Jian Chen really is something special. His potential for the future is practically unlimited. If we rope him into our clan before he becomes a Saint Ruler, it’d be a great boon for us. Elder Zhou, go and make the inquiries on Jian Chen’s background later. See just what type of person he is and where he’s from.”

The middle-aged man standing behind the fan holder had nodded without hesitation, “It’ll be difficult, but I will try my best.”

With his strength revealed, Jian Chen’s overwhelming talent had caught the attention of the more influential households. It went without exception that every person was determined to be in his good graces no matter what. If they couldn’t then at the very least they wouldn’t be enemies with him.

Everyone knew that to offend Jian Chen was tantamount to offending a figure that was close to becoming a Saint Ruler! This person had a very good chance of becoming a Saint King in the future too!

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Meanwhile, in the skies, Jian Chen was injured, but he was still as imposing as ever. Just like a sword being unsheathed, the power emanating from him was filled with the intent to make battle.

The elders of the Shi family had all thought about the result of making an enemy with Jian Chen, but there had already been an unwashable blood debt between the two. The differences between them couldn't be solved amicably, so the only way now was to take advantage of the time before Jian Chen would become an actual threat to the Shi family and kill him first. Like killing the baby in the cradle, they would have to act now or be forced to witness a disaster to their family when it was too late.

"Everyone together now! We must make sure to capture Jian Chen today. If we cannot, then we must make sure he dies here instead. We cannot let him escape again this time!" The third elder shouted. Without giving Jian Chen anymore time to rest, he and the other three charged straight at him.

Jian Chen was not afraid, even with the situation. Instead of retreating, he dashed forward with the Origin energy ready to fight once more.

"Brother Jian Chen, I'm here to lend you a hand!" Just at that moment, a loud voice exploded forth from the direction of Mercenary City. Seconds after, Hu Xiaotian could be seen flying towards him.

"Jian Chen, we are here to help you as well!" Not even moments after Hu Xiaotian had spoke, the three black-robed men from earlier had flown through the air after him to help Jian Chen as well. The three of them wished to be in Jian Chen's good graces, so helping him out in this moment was an extremely rare opportunity that had to be taken advantage of.

"You have us as well!" Several more voices cried out from the crowd as another four Heaven Saint Masters shot forth. Each one bore an intent that was more than willing to fight with the four elders of the Shi family. They were all borrowing this opportunity to help create a bridge between them and Jian Chen to gain even more power. After all, helping someone in their time of need was the best way to start a friendship.

Within several seconds, eight different Heaven Saint Masters were flying through the skies to help Jian Chen fight off the four elders from the Shi family.

This sudden aberration had caused the four elders to grow extremely grim. They had never thought that such an event like this would happen.

"I appreciate everyone's willingness to lend me a hand, but I alone will be enough to deal with these four. Everyone, please just stay by the side and continue watching. Today, I will slaughter these four myself." Jian Chen spoke to the eight. Only the four Heaven Tier Battle Skills frightened him, but without that, then Jian Chen wouldn't fear these four at all. With his Origin energy helping him, he had nothing else to worry about.

He wasn't willing to be in debt to another person as well since he knew that their intentions wouldn't all be as pure as snow. The best option was to just refuse their kindness all in all.

Even as he spoke, Jian Chen was already closing in with the four elders and were just several hundred meters away from clashing.

When those eight Heaven Saint Masters heard Jian Chen, they could only just stop there midflight. They too wished to see the true strength of someone who had managed to withstand four Heaven Tier Battle Skills. Furthermore, they wanted to see just how an injured person like him could kill four Heaven Saint Masters.

“If brother Jian Chen wishes to kill those four himself, then I won’t stop him in doing so.” Hu Xiaotian smiled from his spot.

“Then if brother Jian Chen needs our help, you all just need to ask and the three of us will do our best to help out.” The fan-holding middle-aged man in black robes smiled as well. He had not cared at all for whom the four elders Jian Chen was fighting.

“If sire Jian Chen wishes to kill those four personally, then we won’t interfere with him. But sire Jian Chen, if you truly do need our help, just mention it.” The other Heaven Saint Masters repeated one after another politely. If these men dared to stand against the Shi family, that meant that their own statuses were perhaps quite considerable as well.

#### Chapter 607: Imprint of Death (Two)

Without another word to be said, Jian Chen began to do his best to fight the four elders.

Wielding the Origin energy, he chased down the four to stab at them with it. The unbelievable speed in which he swung his weapon had been fast enough for several mirror-images to be seen. Stroke by stroke, the Origin energy struck out accurately and swiftly. In the art of the sword, fast, accurate, and unrelenting were the three aspects to master to have a successful mastery over it.

While the four elders had the advantage in numbers, they were all deeply afraid of the power of the Origin energy and were thus limited in their ability to fight. Since they were handicapped as such, the result was that they were being completely overwhelmed by Jian Chen and had felt sullen about it.

Jian Chen had his presence to help him serve as a radar in every direction possible. No matter where they tried to turn about around Jian Chen, it was completely without success. Each and every time, Jian Chen would manage to evade their strikes or sometimes swing his Origin energy at their Saint Weapon instead. As a result, they would have to dodge as well.

“This bastard is clearly injured, so why can he still fight like this?” After several dozen exchanges, one elder had let out an angry curse as he dodged Jian Chen’s strike.

“We can’t go on like this! The four of us will have to use a Heaven Tier Battle Skill together now!” Another elder spoke. With one arm tied behind their backs, they could only resort to this.

But the third elder had refused, “No, a Heaven Tier Battle Skill is far too tiring to use at this moment. A single use of one is enough to take out fifty or sixty percent of our Saint Force. If we use it a second time, that’d use up the rest of it so we’d be powerless to fight. That serves us no use.” The third elder had been loathed to admit it, but if he had known that Jian Chen was this strong, then he would have notified the family to dispatch some people. And if he had sent a message to the Jiede clan, then the two households could fight Jian Chen together. There would have been no need for his own household to fall into such disrepair and lose a member.

“Ah!” Suddenly, a cry could be heard from one of the elders. The reason for this outcry was due to the fact that Jian Chen had speared his chest through with the Origin energy.

“Elder Mark!”

The third elder and the other two had let out a startled cry before they launched an Earth Tier Battle Skill at Jian Chen in order to save the elder.

But Jian Chen's mobility had been even faster than they thought. Just before they could unleash their Earth Tier Battle Skill, Jian Chen had already stabbed his Origin energy into the forehead of the elder and extinguished his soul.

"Elder Mark!" The three cried out in misery. It had been a very painful experience for them to witness the death of elder Mark in front of them.

Jian Chen hadn't bothered to stop after killing elder Mark. His right hand lashed out with three separate rays of Sword Qi to strike at the three dazed elders.

The death of elder Mark had weighed heavily on the remaining three elders. Only the third elder had been able to regain his wits in time to dodge the Sword Qi. The other two had been too late to react, resulting in the Sword Qi to pierce straight into their chests.

Knowing that this was a chance to kill the other two, Jian Chen immediately rushed forward with the Origin energy flashing in his hand. Swiftly, Jian Chen moved to slice down their necks.

"Pft!" Two jets of blood could be seen as the decapitated heads of the two elders fly through the air. Since their lives had not yet completely ended, looks of complete terror could be seen in their eyes.

With a flick of his finger, two bursts of Sword Qi erupted from his hands and stabbed a hole straight through the middle of their foreheads, extinguishing their soul.

In an instant, three Heaven Saint Masters had been killed from the four. Only the third elder was left.

At this sight, the third elder had lost all color in his face as well as all his fighting spirit. Turning around, he began to run away. With the four of them, they were already no match for Jian Chen, so with just him now, it would only be a matter of time before he too would die.

The Jian Chen of today was already vastly different to the Jian Chen a year ago. He was no longer the same Jian Chen that he could chase down to the ends of the earth with.

"Don't even think about running!" Jian Chen laughed. With the wind element wrapping around his body, Jian Chen flew off into the direction the third elder had been flying to. This speed of his was even faster than the third elder, and halfway through his flight, Jian Chen had unleashed a burst of Sword Qi to chase after the third elder.

"Whoosh!" The sound of the Sword Qi flying through the air could be heard before stabbing straight through the third elder's chest with lightning-quick speed.

A mouthful of blood escaped from the third elder's mouth, causing his face to pale even further. His figure shook slightly as it floated in the sky as if he was on the verge of losing control. But then, it was with a timely manner that he managed to slow his descent and regain his flight.

Seeing that escape was impossible, the third elder had given up on the notion. A resolute look appeared on his face as he turned to stare down Jian Chen. "Jian Chen! Even if I die, I won't let you live in peace after! My Shi family will never renounce our anger towards you, and you won't live to see yourself outlive it--Imprint of Death!" The third elder howled. In the next moment, a faint red mist began to arise

from his body while his body itself began to dry up. Within seconds, it looked as if his body had lost all of the moisture within the body, leaving him as a dried up husk of a skeleton.

This red mist had gathered above the third elder's body before forming a grotesque bloody pattern. And in the next second, it flew towards Jian Chen with unbelievable speed.

Jian Chen hadn't enough time to dodge the bloody pattern due to the unbelievable speed of it. It was almost as if it was made of lightning with how fast it had been going. In no time at all, it had embedded itself into Jian Chen's body and then out of sight.

Seeing that the blood pattern had laid true to Jian Chen's body, the third elder's eyes slowly closed as he fell down to the ground. His body resembled a mummy that had been deprived of moisture for an extremely long time.

Paling with fright, Jian Chen hadn't even bothered to look at how the third elder had been doing as he hastily checked his own body. From where the blood pattern had touched him, there had been some sort of seal on his body that looked as if he had been branded.

Grim, Jian Chen thought back to what the third elder said before he died. "Imprint of Death," He muttered, "What kind of black magic is this?"

"The Imprint of Death is something that makes use of the three vital energies of the human body to create to leave an unwashable mark on their enemy for easy tracking." As soon as Jian Chen had finished speaking, Hu Xiaotian's voice could be heard as he flew on over.

Staring at Jian Chen with a complicated expression, Hu Xiaotian's mind had been far more chaotic than what his expression showed. The fact that Jian Chen had killed four Heaven Saint Masters was something that he still found hard to believe.

Arriving by Jian Chen's side, Hu Xiaotian let out a long sigh as if trying to calm himself. Giving himself some time to think first, Hu Xiaotian said, "There is a huge cost for using the Imprint of Death. It is only when all hope is lost, and death is inevitable that one will use this technique. But once it is used, then the caster will have all of their energy sucked away and their spirit vanquished. All of the lifeblood in the body will evaporate, and the body will wither away just like that man just now. But the one marked with the Imprint of Death, wherever he might go, will be easily tracked by it. No matter how far he runs, he will be unable to evade detection."

Still staring at Jian Chen, Hu Xiaotian spoke, "Brother Jian Chen, you must pay attention to this next part. The people behind this elder will definitely use the Imprint of Death to find you. No matter how far you go, you cannot escape from them. If you can't handle this future, then you should hide in Mercenary City."

Jian Chen had felt his mind cloud over with those words. According to what Hu Xiaotian was saying, then the Saint Ruler of the Shi family would be able to find him with ease. There was no use in running to throw him off.

Chapter 608: Arrival of Two Saint Rulers (One)

Seeing the miserable expression on Jian Chen's face, Hu Xiaotian could infer that there was most likely no one supporting Jian Chen from behind that could handle the power behind the third elder. As if to

console him, he spoke, "Brother Jian Chen, don't fret too much. Mercenary City is considered the safest spot on the continent. If you can't deal with those people, then stay within the city. I'm sure these people here will be more than willing to help you out as well." Hu Xiaotian pointed to the Heaven Saint Masters that had been willing to help Jian Chen fight off the four Heaven Saint Masters a few moments ago.

"Hahaha, Jian Chen, you are truly powerful beyond imagination. I hadn't expected to see you kill those four with nearly a single strike! I can say now that my eyes are fully opened to the world now." The man in black-robos spoke. Holding his fan, the man laughed out loud as he spoke. But his words had been indeed spoken from the heart. They were all truly stunned by just how strong Jian Chen was.

"Sire Jian Chen, the Imprint of Death on you is something that the men behind the third elder could use to find your position rapidly. If sire Jian Chen can't fight them off, then my Vulcan Shrine would be more than happy to help you. Don't worry about the Shi family, our Vulcan Shrine have no fear for them." A red-robed elder smiled amicably to try and gain Jian Chen's favor.

"You have my Dayong clan. If sire Jian Chen requires it, then my clan would be more than happy to help you deal with the Shi family." The black-robed man had been unwilling to give up their chance to earn Jian Chen's favor as well.

Wiping away the blood from the corners of his mouth, Jian Chen cupped his hands to everyone. "I am thankful for everyone's willingness to assist me, but I will deal with this matter myself. I won't be imposing my troubles on you all." There was no such thing as a free meal in this world, and Jian Chen knew just what had prompted these people to be willing to help him. He would not let himself owe another a favor so easily.

"Well then, there isn't much use in chatting for now. Brother Jian Chen is injured something fierce. We should treat his wounds back in Mercenary City first." Hu Xiaotian spoke up. Taking a pure-white pill out from his Space Ring, he handed it over to Jian Chen, "Brother Jian Chen, this is a Class 6 Radiant Spirit Pill. It won't be enough to heal your wounds, but it should speed it up a bit. Take a bite."

Looking at the thumb-sized pill in Hu Xiaotian's hand, Jian Chen hesitated for a moment before finally taking it from him. With a word of thanks, he swallowed the pill. Jian Chen had a rather favorable impression of Hu Xiaotian and wouldn't refuse the pill offered to him. That would be impolite to Hu Xiaotian.

After taking the pill, Jian Chen had felt his wounds healing faster than before. Even his pale face was beginning to regain some of its red flush from before.

Afterwards, before the other people around Jian Chen left, Jian Chen was able to take the Space Rings from the corpses of the elders he had just killed. Together, they returned to Mercenary City, leaving behind a stunned audience still standing far off to the side to stare at the wreckage of the battle.

This time, Jian Chen's true strength had astounded every single person in attendance. It had been far beyond their imagination even. Soon, his name would spread rapidly throughout the entire continent with tremendous speed.

A man who had reached the Heaven Saint Master realm before the age of thirty. Furthermore, this same person was able to survive against not one Heaven Tier Battle Skill, but four. Even combined, those

elders had been no match for Jian Chen. This was a gargantuan piece of information that would spread across the continent with great fervor.

“Big brother, you’re hurt! Are you okay?” The very moment Jian Chen stepped across the barrier of Mercenary City, the clear sounds of a young woman could be heard echoing in his ear.

Jian Chen’s figure shook slightly as he looked around the place. But Little Spirit couldn’t be seen.

“Big brother, Little Spirit is right here!” Following the voice, the young figure of a woman suddenly materialized in front of Jian Chen. It was the very same Little Spirit that had appeared in his room the night before. But this time, her body was slightly transparent. One would be able to see straight through her body.

“Big brother, it’s good that you were able to beat those idiots! Otherwise, Little Spirit would have gone against master’s orders to not interfere with the world! Big brother, does your wounds hurt?” Little Spirit asked in concern from her perch a meter high in the sky. There had been a pained look on her face, as if she was looking at a hurt family member of hers.

The fact that this Little Spirit, a being that had only just been crying over the loss of her long-lost master yesterday, was so pained at his current situation, Jian Chen couldn’t help but feel slightly emotional as well. He had taken a liking to Little Spirit, and his feelings of her felt like a fellow orphan that was all alone in the world.

Stopping in his footsteps, Jian Chen smiled towards Little Spirit, “I’m fine. It was only a relatively minor injury, it won’t take long before I heal up completely.”

“Yea! Big brother, you have to make sure to heal up. Little Spirit feels really bad to see you like this.” She spoke in concern.

Seeing the expression on her face, Jian Chen couldn’t help but smile inwardly to himself.

“Hey, brother Jian Chen, who are you talking to? Talking to yourself like that, are you sure you’re fine?” Hu Xiaotian spoke from besides Jian Chen. He had been waving his palm in front of Jian Chen’s face with an odd look.

Jian Chen had stared blankly back at him as he turned away from Little Spirit. Looking at Hu Xiaotian and the other men, he could see that each one of them were looking at him rather strangely.

“I was talking with Little Spirit, can you not see her?” Jian Chen asked curiously.

Looking around the area, Hu Xiaotian answered, “Brother Jian Chen, have you gone blind perhaps? There’s no such Little Spirit anywhere. I can only see you standing off to yourself and speaking to no one but yourself. No matter where I look, I can’t see anyone else.”

“Big brother, Little Spirit doesn’t wish to let them see Little Spirit, only you can.” Little Spirit had spoken in the midst of his confusion.

Hearing her explanation, Jian Chen had realized what was happening and smiled towards everyone. Continuing to walk with everyone else, Jian Chen smiled awkwardly while trying his best to not ‘talk to himself’ any longer.

Looking for an inn to rest up in for the night, Jian Chen holed himself up for the night while Hu Xiaotian and the other two groups returned to their own rooms.

Shutting the door to his room, Jian Chen tore off the clothes he had been wearing with a pained grunt. Using a clean towel to wipe off the dried up blood on his chest, the wounds on his chest could now be clearly seen. In some parts of his chest, parts of his bones could be seen almost.

“How fortunate that my body was tempered by the Chaotic Force to become far stronger than before. If not, then I would have most likely not the strength to stand out anymore after that.” Jian Chen muttered. Placing down the tiger cub, he allowed for it to continue sleeping in peace on the bed.

Since the cub was sleeping off the heavenly resources it ate, the cub was completely unaware of the outside world. So when Jian Chen had been fighting those four elders, it hadn't been shaken awake and continued to sleep. Jian Chen himself had no solution on how to change that either.

Doing a simple treatment of his wounds, Jian Chen took out two Radiant Spirit Pills from his Space Ring and swallowed it down. There were plenty of experts and major families within Mercenary City, so he didn't dare use his Radiant Saint Force to heal himself. Furthermore, he was resolved that until he was a Saint Ruler, Jian Chen wouldn't disclose the fact that he was a Radiant Saint Master.

Just as Jian Chen closed his eyes to focus on healing, Little Spirit suddenly materialized within the middle of the room. When she saw the horrifying wound on Jian Chen's chest, Little Spirit had a pained look in her eyes. Reaching out with a finger, a small burst of energy emanated from her before entering into Jian Chen's body.

Following the energy entering Jian Chen's body, the wounds began to heal at an extremely accelerated pace. The speed at which the wounds were healing were far faster than if he were to use his Radiant Saint Force to heal.

Sensing the drastic change within his body, Jian Chen's heart had skipped a beat. Opening his eyes, he realized that Little Spirit had been in the room with him. From her appearance, he could infer just what had just happened.

“Big brother!” Seeing Jian Chen open his eyes, Little Spirit had revealed a sweet and affectionate smile.

“Little Spirit, thank you for your assistance!” Jian Chen thanked her.

“Hee hee, as long as big brother is fine, then Little Spirit will be happy to help.” She giggled.

With her assistance, Jian Chen hadn't needed to do a thing. His own body had been recovering at a terrifyingly rapid rate. What would have needed two or three full days to heal was taking only a single scant minutes before it had fully recovered, allowing Jian Chen to be shocked beyond belief.

“Big brother, Little Spirit wants to ask a question. Big brother better not lie to Little Spirit.” She stared carefully at him with apprehension.

“Little Spirit, what question is it? As long as I know, I'll be sure to help you.” Jian Chen asked.

Hesitating for a brief moment, she looked hopefully at Jian Chen, “Big brother, have you really not seen master before?”

There had been no hesitation when Jian Chen shook his head. "Little Spirit, I won't lie to you. I have never seen your master before." He sighed regretfully.

Little Spirit had turned melancholic as she listened to Jian Chen's denial and drooped her head down. She was more than aware that her master had been gone for plenty of years, but she was desperate to see her master once more since he was like a parent to her. He was an important figure that she longed to see.

"Big brother, Little Spirit will be leaving first then." She spoke as her body began to fade away from the room.

Looking to where Little Spirit had previously been in, Jian Chen let out another long sigh before washing away the rest of the blood trails on him. Changing into a new set of clothes, he sat on his bed and began to think about the Imprint of Death the third elder had placed onto him.

The Imprint of Death looked like a very complicated pattern formed from a series of abstruse runes that imprinted itself on his body as if it were branded deep into his skin. But there had been nothing out of the ordinary that Jian Chen could sense from it.

But the fact that he had it had made Jian Chen feel worried. Although he had killed the third elder, this blood debt did not leave any feeling of happiness in him.

Since the Imprint of Death was on him, Jian Chen had no other choice but to give up on going to Longevity Valley and stay within the confines of Mercenary City in order to evade on being killed by the Saint Ruler of the Shi family. While elder Xiu in Longevity Valley was a Saint Ruler himself, Jian Chen had no idea just how strong he was. In the case that elder Xiu stood no chance against him, then Jian Chen would have only allowed for harm to befall the entire Longevity Valley.

Furthermore, there was no guarantee that elder Xiu would even help Jian Chen fight the other Saint Ruler. Becoming the enemy to one Saint Ruler was after all something that would require a far closer relationship with elder Xiu before Jian Chen could even suggest it.

Chapter 609: Arrival of Two Saint Rulers (Two)

Meditating on his bed, Jian Chen tried hard to think of the best way to get rid of this Imprint of Death. If he couldn't then he would be unable to leave Mercenary City.

"The Imprint of Death is formed from the three vital energies that can be found within a person. Its importance is the fact that it will leave behind an unerasable mark on the body that can easily be tracked." Hu Xiaotian's words came to mind, causing Jian Chen to feel even more grim.

He knew that Hu Xiaotian knew far more about this than he did. If he said that there was no way to erase this imprint, then it was perhaps impossible to really erase the mark the third elder left on him.

If that was true, then Jian Chen had to become strong enough to not fear even a Saint Ruler. If he couldn't, then if the Saint Ruler from the Shi family came to dispose of him, he would be helpless to do anything but stay within Mercenary City. Even if he used a Space Gate to travel countless of kilometers away, the Imprint of Death on him would make him unable to hide. No matter where he would run, the Saint Ruler would give chase.

Jian Chen's mind raced to find a solution to his problems. Ming Dong's uncle and grand elder of Mercenary City, Tian Jian came to mind as well as the Saint Rulers from the Qinhuang Kingdom. Right now, only those two factions would be able to help him fight off the Shi family.

But Tian Jian was a person that was unwilling to interfere in most matters. The last time he had helped out with the Huang family was because of Ming Dong. Tian Jian was an extremely respectful figure within Mercenary City, so unless he personally called out to Jian Chen, there would be no way to meet him again for help. So he had been ruled out.

As for the Qinhuang Kingdom, there were four other Imperial Protectors, each one of them Saint Rulers. With their strength, even the Shi family would be afraid. But the Shi family was not his only enemy. There was still the Jiede clan with their own Saint Ruler. If the two of them were to unite against the Qinhuang Kingdom, then even the Qinhuang Kingdom would feel slightly pressured.

When Jian Chen thought about how two of the Saint Rulers had met the Saint Ruler of the Sect of Dragon and Tiger and then came back out with gloomy expression. This had caused some concern for him, as he didn't know just what had happened between the two in the first place. Whether it was some sort of invisible pressure or something else of importance, Jian Chen knew that whatever the case, it was just one disaster on top of another. Thus, having the Qinhuang Kingdom help him with the Shi family and the Jiede clan was not a desirable option.

Grim, Jian Chen spent almost half the day trying to think of a solution on the bed. Right now he had really no idea just how he would manage both the Shi family and the Jiede clan. But even though he could also ask the patriarch of the Huang family, it would without a doubt add to the troubles of their family. They had more than enough to deal with at the moment with their current feud.

"Am I really going to have to stay within Mercenary City and cultivate until I breakthrough to become a Saint Ruler?" Jian Chen thought as he massaged his temples in frustration. The promise he had made with little fatty was reaching a year by now with not much time left. If he were to delay any longer, then he would really go over the year long promise he made with him.

"Ziying, Qingsuo, would you two perhaps know of a way to erase this Imprint of Death?" With no other options, Jian Chen could only hope that the two sword spirits would be able to help. Although Hu Xiaotian said there was no way, Jian Chen was unwilling to give up.

This time, Ziying and Qingsuo had not replied to him. After waiting for a very long time, Jian Chen could finally hear Qingsuo's soft voice, "Master, Ziying and Qingsuo has the power to erase it, but our current power is far too weak for it to be optimal. The imprint on your body was made from the three energies of a person and not just pure energy, that means it won't be as easy and will take some time to do so."

But Jian Chen had been happy to hear it, "How long will it take?"

"With our current strength, I'm afraid it would take three months." Ziying spoke before continuing, "There is a second option. If master brings the Chaotic Force to a considerable degree straight away, then it will swallow up the imprint. That is because the Chaotic Body is something that will not allow any foreign thing to invade it."

"We'll go with the first option then. But I'll bring up the Chaotic Body another time." Upon mention of the Chaotic Body, Jian Chen felt a headache. The Chaotic Body was indeed strong, but it was also

extremely hard to get. The amount of Chaotic Force he needed for it was immense as well. A single Ruler Armament was equivalent to a sliver of Chaotic Force, and if he wanted to refine that into the Chaotic Body, then Jian Chen would be at a loss on just how many Ruler Armaments he needed for that. If he had to absorb the energy of the world, then it would perhaps be tens of years for him to gain that equivalent sliver of a Chaotic Force.

Afterwards, Jian Chen had made the discussions with Ziyang and Qingsuo to begin and start the three month process to get rid of the Imprint of Death. He had been oblivious to the fact that his feat of killing four Heaven Saint Masters by himself was already spreading all around the land with frightening speed. Many people and factions were hearing of Jian Chen's achievements, and so his name was growing farther and farther on the continent.

At this current moment within a mountain range, there stood a giant building made of wood. At the center of one of the rooms, a giant beast could be seen sitting peacefully on the ground. Also in the room were several men of considerable age seated at the side.

"Everyone, I've just received some unfortunate news. The third elder and the ones with him have all died." One of the elders with long hair spoke sorrowfully.

Upon hearing that news, everyone else had been startled.

"What? The third elder is dead? My lord, how could that have happened? The third elders and the others were all completely killed?" One of the elders asked in agitation. There was clearly some relationship between he and the third elder.

The man seated at the very front of everyone else sighed with sorrow. With a low voice, he spoke, "I am sure everyone remembers the one that stole our Ruler Armament, the Seal of Treasure Mountain."

"Of course! That man is the first ranker of the Gathering of the Mercenaries, Jian Chen. But he was killed by the combined efforts of the third elder and the ones from the Jiede clan. Even now, he has hidden the Seal of Treasure Mountain from us. We haven't found hint nor hair of it ever since. We even used countless of methods to try and forcibly recall it, but everything ended in failure." One elder spoke with clenched teeth from his hatred for Jian Chen.

"My lord, why do you mention Jian Chen now? Could the third elder's death bear relation with him?" Another middle-aged man spoke.

"Correct. It has to do with Jian Chen." The lord of the Shi family spoke with a now serious expression. "Yesterday, I manage to receive a report from the third elder using our closed line of communication. The Jian Chen who stole the Seal of Treasure Mountain is still alive. Furthermore, he showed up in Mercenary City once more. We had four elders go with the third elder to help him capture and reclaim the Seal of Treasure Mountain. But what I just received just now was very startling to hear. The third elder and the other four have all been completely killed. It was with great costs that the third elder used his life to place the Seal of Death onto Jian Chen."

After the man had finished speaking, everyone had gone deathly quiet. Each of them were far more than tongue-tied, they simply couldn't believe their ears. It was truly hard to believe that the third elder and the other four were all killed by Jian Chen's hand. They had heard of Jian Chen's strength before, but

seeing how his strength was now at his age, it was beyond their scope of prediction really. His future potential was just that dazzling.

“That Jian Chen is far too talented. That talent of his allowed him to kill five Heaven Saint Masters! It’s only a matter of time before he becomes a Saint Ruler then. My lord, our blood debt with Jian Chen is irreconcilable, we must not let this person live.” An elderly voice spoke out, breaking the silence of the hall. The one who had spoken was an elderly old man with wrinkled skin.

“Yes!” The leader of the Shi family nodded. “That’s right. Jian Chen cannot be allowed to live. Otherwise, when the day comes for when he becomes a Saint Ruler, he will come seeking our family for trouble. We must take advantage of the fact that he is still within our scope and exterminate him with the speed of lightning itself. Notify the Jiede clan of this information. Have them bring some men so that they could stop anyone that Jian Chen might invite. We must lessen the damage on our side as much as possible.

“Second elder, fifth elder, sixth elder, elder Shiqing, elder Shiming, elder Tianhe, and elder Gumu, prepare yourselves. Notify us when the men of the Jiede clan are here and we will go off to capture Jian Chen.”

“Yes, my lord!” The aforementioned people responded.

“We will adjourn our meeting here today. Everyone may leave.” The leader announced, allowing everyone else to leave the halls.

Just as they were about to exit the halls, a monumental amount of energy suddenly manifested within the area. Almost as if some sort of malevolent beast of antiquity had finally awakened from its slumber, the entire world had been basked within the power it brought with it, squashing the air of the Heaven Saint Masters back in their throats.

“That’s the aura of the patriarch! The patriarch has broken through!”

“The patriarch has broken through to the next layer!”

“Fantastic! At our time of need, the patriarch has overcome it!”

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The elders of the Shi family had been stunned by this change in events, but then this confusion had quickly gave way to joy.

#### Chapter 610: Arrival of Two Saint Rulers (Three)

The area to the back of the Shi family compound was a forbidden place for many people to enter. Only the lord of the Shi family and the elders could convene and gather there. One by one, they looked off to a hole in the mountain with a reverent gaze.

Following the sounds of stone being moved aside, the heavy stone gates to the mountain slowly started to rise up, revealing a pitch dark hole. From within, a middle-aged man dressed in white slowly made his figure known to everyone.

Upon seeing this middle-aged man, everyone--the lord of the Shi family included--genuflected to him and spoke out in respect, "Congratulations to the patriarch for breaking through and congratulations on becoming stronger!"

"Hahahaha, I've been behind closed doors for twenty years now. But I have finally reached one step further in the comprehension of the mysteries of the world. I've reached the Fifth Heavenly Layer. I've made yet another step to becoming a Saint King." The man laughed cheerfully.

"The patriarch is talented beyond all else. Becoming a Saint King is only just around the corner then. Our Shi family is only great because of the patriarch!" One elder smiled as he flattered the patriarch.

In return, the patriarch smiled, "Wait for when I reach the Ninth Heavenly Layer of the Saint Ruler realm and attempt to fuse with the Seal of Treasure Mountain. If I manage to do so, then my chances of becoming a Saint King will become exponentially higher." But then his expression went askew as he looked towards the group with suspicion. "Where is the Seal of Treasure Mountain? Why can I not sense its existence?"

His words had caused the high ranking elders of the family to grow nervous. Delaying to say anything for some time, the head of the Shi family spoke, "Patriarch, Because of our inabilities, the Seal of Treasure Mountain was lost to us."

"What! The Seal of Treasure Mountain was stolen?" The patriarch's face blanched. The joy that he had been feeling from making the breakthrough had instantly slipped off of his face.

Afterwards, the lord of the Shi family began to recount the entire tale of what happened to the patriarch without leaving a single word out. After all was told to him, the anger on the patriarch's face slowly drained away.

"It would appear my initial command for you to steal the Solunar Bow from the Huang family was a mistake. I had not thought that the barrier I placed on my great-grandson would fail him and lead to his death. The Seal of Treasure Mountain was taken as a result as well." The patriarch hummed softly.

"Patriarch, the third elder left an Imprint of Death on Jian Chen's body before he died. No matter where he may run, Jian Chen cannot escape from us. We will reclaim the Ruler Armament with most haste." The lord spoke nervously.

Slowly closing his eyes, the patriarch thought for a moment. His mouth opened soon afterwards, "I've already sensed his location. But what is strange is that I cannot sense the existence of the Seal of Treasure Mountain. It is almost as if my connection with it has been broken. Has this Jian Chen perhaps found a way to hide it from even my own perception? Not only can I not sense it, I cannot even recall the Seal of Treasure Mountain even if I exhausted a tremendous price for it."

The patriarch hummed. "There has been no conflict between us and the Jiede clan. They themselves are quite strong as well. Since we've already made enemies with the Huang family, it wouldn't do to make even more enemies. Go and notify the Jiede clan of this."

"Yes, patriarch!" The lord bowed reverently.

“You may all leave. I will go find Jian Chen. The Seal of Treasure Mountain must be returned as soon as possible to avoid any other unforeseen circumstances.” With that said, the patriarch’s figure instantly dissolved into a bolt of lightning that shot straight into the sky with speed just as fast as lightning.

Since he couldn’t sense the Seal of Treasure Mountain, it had filled the patriarch with some dread. He had feared that it would mean the eternal loss of the Ruler Armament. Without it, then when the time came for him to try and breakthrough to become a Saint King, the chances of a successful breakthrough would become all the harder.

After the patriarch had left, the lord of the Shi family had sent men over to the Jiede clan to spread the news and tell them of the whereabouts of the Duanyun sword.

The Jiede clan had actually received information at the very same time of the Shi family of what happened in Mercenary City. They had learned that the one who stole the Duanyun sword, Jian Chen, was still alive. Furthermore, they learned that it was he that killed five elders from the Shi family. When they heard the news, they had immediately sent out a group of people to run for Mercenary City as fast as possible. Even their Saint Ruler had set out when he heard the news to ensure that the operation would succeed without failure. In the eyes of the Jiede clan, Jian Chen killing five Heaven Saint Master was far too important to disregard.

In the blink of an eye, two days had past since Jian Chen killed the five Heaven Saint Masters. In those two days, Jian Chen spent all of his time within his room with the sword spirits trying to purify the Imprint of Death on his body. It had not been that easy, and even after two days, the sword spirits had only managed to get rid of a small speck of it. With this pace, it would take the entirety of the three months as they had initially projected to fully eliminate the Imprint of Death.

Two days after that, Jian Chen was only just opening his eyes when a wriggling sensation could be felt. Looking down, he could see the recently awakened tiger cub sprawled over Jian Chen’s legs in boredom.

As if sensing Jian Chen awakening, the tiger cub looked up to him with a pitiful glance. Opening its kitten-like maw open, the cub began to purr with a barely audible sound as it scratched one of its paws at the Space Ring Jian Chen wore on his finger.

Petting the head of the cub with a soft caress of his fingers, Jian Chen spoke, “You are beginning to want even more and more heavenly resources. You’ve eaten quite a lot of the thousand year old resources already, and you’re still a Class 4 Magical Beast. It seems that it’ll require plenty more heavenly resources before you can become a Class 5. That’s more than I have.” Despite that, Jian Chen was not too stingy with his heavenly resources and handed the tiger cub another five or six heavenly resources to eat.

The cub had let out an excited purr before immediately wolfing down the items given to it. In a short few seconds, it had already eaten them all.

With all six heavenly resources eaten, the cub laxed itself onto the bed in content and closed its eyes in order to fall back asleep.

Seeing the cub act this way, Jian Chen shook his head helplessly. But, he had allowed the cub to sleep while he walked out from the room.

Since he was in Mercenary City, Jian Chen wasn't worried about anyone harming the tiger cub. The cub hadn't attracted any outside attention so far, and the only ones that knew of it were Ming Dong and the others.

Arriving at the dining halls below, Jian Chen sat down by the table and spoke, "Waiter, a platter of roast meat and your finest wine."

The waiter had given only one look at Jian Chen before his eyes lit up with recognition, "Oh my! You're lord Jian Chen, the King of Mercenaries! Please wait one moment, lord Jian Chen, this server of yours will go notify the chefs to prepare your food with all haste!" With that said, the waiter flew off towards the kitchens as if the floor beneath his feet was slick with oil.

There had been a numerous amount of people in the area, so when the waiter had cried out, plenty of people turned to look over at the source. When their eyes landed upon Jian Chen, they too had let out a gasp in both shock and admiration.

At that moment, a middle-aged man and elderly figure came walking over from their own tables. Without even giving a greeting, the two of them sat down with hard looks at him.

This middle-aged man looked to be around forty years old and wore simple clothing--a cheap azure robe--and his hair was tossed freely behind him without anything to dress it. It had given him a sense of being a messy person, and there was not a sense of aura coming from him. From what it looked like, he looked to be just the average commoner.

As for the other elder, he wore white robes and had hair that was tied together. His seventy-year old face was peaceful looking and seemed to carry around a sagely presence to him. Yet, he too did not have any aura to him, but his face had spoke volumes of the man, marking him to be an extremely capable person.

Jian Chen had looked at the two without a single sound. But in his mind, he had grown serious. He had no way of ascertaining their strengths, even his presence had came up with nothing definitive. His presence was something that could even detect a Heaven Saint Master if they tried to conceal themselves from him. The only thing he knew that could overcome his presence was an expert at the Saint Ruler realm.

"Are you Jian Chen?" The middle-aged man spoke calmly. Not a hint of emotion could be heard from him.

"Correct. I am he. Who might you two be?" Jian Chen replied just as calmly. Although two Saint Rulers were seated in front of him, they were no different than to any other person in Mercenary City.

"We've waited for you for one whole day. At last you've finally come out. This must be the very first time a mere Heaven Saint Master has received such a treatment in history." The middle-aged man spoke. This time, his voice had carried a cold edge to it. "Jian Chen, I am from the Shi family, and he is from the Jiede clan. We are both Saint Rulers and came today to have you return our items back to us. You must know that much." The Saint Ruler from the Shi family spoke. He must have realized that Jian Chen knew the two of them were Saint Rulers and had thus mentioned it so readily.

But to his disappointment, Jian Chen had not reacted at all to this and remained as calm as was before as if this piece of information had no effect on him at all.

“So you are the predecessors of the Shi family and the Jiede clan, greetings!” Jian Chen smiled with his hands cupped together. Even up against two Saint Rulers with less than agreeable feelings for him, he had remained calm.

“Jian Chen. You know why we are here. So, are you willing to return what is rightfully ours? From here, we will write off our debts if you do and won’t seek trouble with you in the future.” The Saint Ruler from the Jiede clan spoke calmly.

Giving an apologetic smile, Jian Chen’s poke, “My apologies. But the items you wish are no longer within my possession.”

The two Saint Rulers grew rigid straight away as the Saint Ruler from the Shi family spoke, “Then where are they now?”