

Myriad 341

Chapter 341: Returning (3)

Wu Yuehua's face changed. She clenched her teeth and said, "So what? Is he not going to take his revenge against that fellow from the divine race? The fifth principal wasn't the one who had killed his father. Does he only have the courage to take out his anger on the multiple character faction? What a joke."

Elder Sun calmly said, "I don't know if he will do so. But I do know that his father had perished helping the fifth principal back then. Prior to his death, the fifth principal had promised a copy of his research data to the Zhou Family. Unfortunately, the data had been swallowed by Liu Wenyan and his fellow apprentices."

Wu Yuehua roared, "Nonsense! There is no such data! Furthermore, during the fifth principal's final moments, he had only said that he was grateful toward everyone who had helped him. He had never promised anything. And he had most certainly not promised the Zhou Family anything."

Elder Sun said, "I wasn't the one claiming that there is such a promise. You need to understand that the Zhou Family is the one saying so."

"So what if it's the Zhou Family?" Wu Yuehua coldly said, "This is Great Xia. Are you serving the Zhou Family? Even Zhou Mingren is only from a branch of a branch family. He is a great peak Mountainsea cultivator. Is he really so eager to be the Zhou Family's dog?"

Elder Sun frowned, "Nobody is serving anyone. But the multiple character faction has declined. In Great Zhou, the multiple character faction no longer exists. Liu Wenyan's return will only restart the old conflict."

"Cut the crap. Since he wants to return, nobody can stop him!"

With a roar, a massive cauldron appeared in the air. The cauldron tore through space itself and created a loud rumble as it pressed down upon Elder Sun.

At the same time, the middle-aged man flickered and reappeared before Yu Hong. With a smile, he said, "Elder Yu, it is better if you don't get involved. None of you can stop Big Brother Liu from returning today."

At the same time, combats were erupting in multiple other locations.

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Atop a tall mountain.

Xia Huyou curiously asked, "Second granduncle, Liu Wenyan was not even a Skysoar cultivator when he left back then. How is he so well-connected? Why does he have so much prestige that so many people are still waiting for his return? Why have all these people been staying inactive when he was away?"

Marquis Xia lazily said, "Firstly, legitimacy. He is the direct disciple of the fifth principal. He is also the first disciple of the fifth principal. Thus, he is the successor of the fifth principal's will.

"Secondly, his peers from back then had all grown into experts. And back then, all these people were his close friends and fellow comrades.

"Thirdly, this fellow was a true freak. He used to be able to battle Skysoars at the Mental Tempering Stage. During the fifth principal's era, everyone below the Mountainsea Realm in the multiple character faction were basically his little brothers.

"Fourthly, before he was crippled, he was a blockhead. He did not treat the wealth of the multiple character faction as anything important and generously gave the wealth away. But he was lucky since all the wealth he had given out had ended up creating some experts.

"Fifthly, Liu Wenyan is not an orphan. In fact, he came from an influential family, the Liu Family."

"Liu Family?" Xia Huyou blanked out, "Which Liu Family?"

Marquis Xia rolled his eyes, "Which Liu Family can it be? It's the same Liu Family that nearly married their daughter to you back then."

"That Liu Family?" Xia Huyou exclaimed, "Liu Wenyan came from that family? But that Liu Family has already been destroyed..."

"Not all of them are dead." Marquis Xia said, "During that battle 50 years ago, they lost a Sunmoon. During the massive battle 30 years ago, they lost a few Mountainsea cultivators. During a battle 18 years ago, they lost a few more Mountainsea and Sunmoon cultivators. At that point, their family is near extinction. But some still survived. Liu Wenyan is one of them."

"The Liu Family had killed countless enemies and saved countless humans in the Allheaven Battlefield. Liu Wenyan is one of the few surviving members of the Liu Family. Thus, the gratitude those people felt toward the Liu Family will now be directed toward Liu Wenyan."

Xia Huyou said in astonishment, "So he's actually from the Liu Family...No wonder nobody dares to lay a hand on him all these years..."

Marquis Xia smiled, "Nobody dares to touch him because he's trouble. Touching him is the same as inviting trouble to yourself. Liu Wenyan would be fine if he continues staying in Nanyuan, but now that he has left, the various experts will hear of it. And many of them are unwilling to see the multiple character faction rise again. Do you understand?"

"But why is that the case?" Xia Huyou asked, "Just because of the Zhou Family? They are far away at Great Zhou. This is Great Xia, the territory of the Xia Family. Can the Zhou Family get too arrogant in our place?"

"Bullshit!" Marquis Xia said, "What do you mean by our place? The Xia Family's hands are tied regarding this matter. Back then, Zhou Zhan had indeed perished while helping the fifth principal. The Great Zhou King had stayed silent about that. Because of that, your great grandpa can't get involved in this conflict either. He can only let the youngsters resolve their own conflict."

"In the end, Liu Wenyan crippled himself while Zhou Zhan's son is now on the verge of reaching the Invincible Realm. What else can we do?"

Xia Huyou nodded. He gloomily said, "Yeah, that makes it hard for us to get involved. But the Zhou Family...is really too overbearing. Weren't they told that there is no such data? Why do they insist on bothering the multiple character faction and spend the past 50 years suppressing them?"

"Who knows if the data really exists?" Marquis Xia smiled, "I have been suspecting that the so-called data for a cultural researcher's advancement into the Invincible Realm is not some actual data. Instead, the secret lies in his character. And many people share the same thought. But all of them have too much misgivings to do anything toward Liu Wenyan."

Xia Huyou looked shocked.

Marquis Xia curled his lips, "Thus, the suppression of the multiple character faction is not the wish of only one group of people. Rather, numerous groups are trying to suppress them, forcing Liu Wenyan to hand over the character. Silly kid, don't only look at things from the surface. The Zhou Family might not really be that overbearing. But everyone has simply decided to do so while pushing the Zhou Family to the front as the scapegoat.

"And the Zhou Family probably covets the character as well so they haven't even bothered trying to explain themselves. Because of that, they somehow turned into the leader of the single character faction."

Xia Huyou nodded in understanding. He had learned something new today. So that was why.

Marquis Xia said, "Liu Wenyan has yet to fully return. The moment he completes his return, that will be a signal that he has given up on his peaceful life in Nanyuan. More trouble will come knocking in the future."

Xia Huyou frowned, "Second granduncle, is it proper to let the internal conflict between fellow humans escalate to such a level? This will only weaken the strength of Great Xia. Just look at how even the elders of the academy are fighting each other."

Marquis Xia inhaled deeply and said, "This...can't be considered a proper internal conflict. It is more like the final battle before the reorganization. The two holy lands are intending to reorganize the various prefectures and unify humanity, forming a single group that could fight together in the Allheaven

Battlefield. Thus, such internal fights will persist for a while. Only after a winner has emerged would the reorganization happen smoothly."

"What? That's happening?" Xia Huyou was astonished, "In other words, these intense conflicts are actually being supported by the various prefectures?"

"Of course." Marquis Xia nodded, "This is not only happening in Great Xia. Similar internal conflicts are happening in the other prefectures as well. The winners will be the ones to enjoy more power after the reorganization."

"Can't we come together without something like this?"

"Silly kid, you overestimate the human heart. It is not easy for so many different people to truly come together. Just let me give you an example. If the Xia Family is suddenly told to start obeying the Zhou Family, would you agree?"

"No!" Seeing how decisive Xia Huyou was, Marquis Xia laughed, "There you go."

"In that case, what is our family doing? Why do I feel like we're doing nothing?"

"Our family? Who says we're doing nothing?" Marquis Xia yawned, "Xia Changqing, Xia Yuwen, Xia Yunji...aren't all these members of the Xia Family? Our family is definitely involved in these internal conflicts as well."

"..."

Xia Huyou blinked. Why did he suddenly feel like he was actually Su Yu's enemy as well? Someone from the Xia Family, Xia Yuwen, was trying to snatch Chen Yong's position. After scratching his head, he decided to stop thinking about it. That had nothing to do with him.

Battles were still erupting everywhere. Some were trying to stop Liu Wenyan's return and some were trying to clear the path for him. On that day, a shabby old truck continued heading to the capital.

That day, numerous experts received news of his return. The experts of the various academies packed up and started heading toward Great Xia one after another.

A storm was brewing.

Fifty years ago, the fifth principal had failed. Liu Wenyan, the person once lauded to be the future sixth principal, had also failed and crippled himself.

Today, he was returning.

With his return, numerous people decided to visit Great Xia again, to once again set their eyes on the person called Liu Wenyan, to wait for that person one more time.

Chapter 342: Trouble Is Coming (1)

Great Xia Cultural Research Academy.

Wentan Research Center.

While things were getting intense and chaotic outside, it was peaceful and calm inside the research center.

While staying within the academy, Su Yu did not feel much threat. At the very least, there were rules in the academy. And the rules were very important for Wan Tiansheng. Even when he tried snatching Zheng Yunhui's blood essence previously, he had only done so in accordance with the rules. After all, the blood essence was used in an illegal transaction. It was well within his rights to snatch it.

Naturally, his act of breaking through Hong Tan's defenses to directly communicate with Su Yu was in a gray area of rules.

At present, Su Yu had entered the prison zone yet again.

...

Underground.

The creatures were already used to being starved. Thus, when they sensed Su Yu's arrival, they were even overjoyed at his early arrival. It had only been seven days! Normally, he would only come after ten days!

They were supposed to be fed once every three days, but that had been reduced into a beautiful dream. None of them believed that Su Yu would actually feed them so frequently.

While Su Yu walked down the stairs, the creatures all started moving in excitement. They had no choice but to move. The fire crow had remained still during Su Yu's previous visit and he still regretted it now. He had been fed one less time than all the other creatures.

The moment Su Yu arrived, the white civet said, "Little Brother Su Yu, did you manage to get any merit points from the cultivation methods I gave you?"

Su Yu slapped his forehead and laughed, "I completely forgot about that! I have been too busy conducting research with my teacher. I have completely forgotten to submit the cultivation methods. I'll do it next time."

The white civet turned dispirited. He forgot! She had been looking forward to getting more source qi liquid, but Su Yu had actually forgotten about it. This kid really had a terrible memory. It really wasn't so surprising anymore that he would often forget to feed them.

Su Yu did not waste his time saying anything. He fed the creatures a drop of source qi liquid each. Then, he looked at the cage housing the water elemental.

"Number one, do you want to have a chat?"

The water elemental assumed a faceless humanoid body and said, "What do you wish to talk about?"

"Water Path Art." Su Yu went straight to the point, "The research center is trying to come out with a foundation cultural art suitable for the human race. I'm talking about something those in the Mental Tempering Stage can use.

"The five elemental race seems to be quite proficient in this subject. Your Water Path Art is one such foundation cultural art that requires soul apertures instead of acupuncture points. You are aware of that, right?"

The water elemental replied, "Like I said, we know these cultivation methods innately. Our apertures are innately open. Thus, we don't really know much about those apertures.

"Furthermore, the seas of willpower of different races can be different as well. This method might be able to open more of my apertures, but it might not work for humans. You humans have killed a lot of five elementals before so you should be aware of this."

Su Yu nodded, "I understand. But I still wish to give it a try. This is how a true cultural researcher should be like. Who would be willing to give up without trying? The moment I succeed, this will be an accomplishment that will leave my name in the annals of history. Wealth, status, and fame will all come toward me."

The water elemental sank into silence.

After a while, he said, "Are you trying to get me to teach you the secrets of Water Path Art?"

"Not really." Su Yu smiled, "I don't need you to tell me about the aperture opening process. Just tell me how you feel about the art or something more vague. I am someone who enjoys reverse deduction. Perhaps your story might give me some new inspiration."

The creatures felt like laughing upon hearing that. This was only a Mental Tempering Stage student. How confident. He was actually trying to derive the cultural art of the five elemental race?

One ought to know that even Invincibles might have a hard time deriving something like that. If it was so easy, the cultivation methods of the myriad races would have been spread everywhere long ago.

Different races had a different body, and because of that, the cultivation methods of different races could be very different from each other as well. Not even the water elemental himself might know all 36 of the apertures required by a human cultivating the Water Path Art.

As this involved the sea of willpower, they had to be extremely cautious. Any carelessness might result in the collapse of the sea of willpower.

The sea of willpower was an extremely powerful existence. But at the same time, it was also quite frail. Opening the wrong aperture would be the same as drilling a hole through a bottle, causing leakage. Thus, soul apertures were much harder to open than acupuncture points. And it was also much more dangerous.

Otherwise, the Myriad Text Sutra wouldn't have been able to remain the sole cultural art for those in the Skysoar Realm even after so many years. These creatures had to resist the urge to laugh and sneer at Su Yu.

The suanni was the one with the worst temper among the group. In the past, he would have started throwing insults at Su Yu. But today, he was incredibly obedient. He remained silent and stealthily laughed when nobody was noticing.

What was he laughing at? He was laughing at Su Yu for being overconfident. He was laughing at Su Yu for being too ambitious.

Su Yu didn't really care. He needed more vague descriptions of this cultivation method. For example, things like the water elemental's personal understanding of the cultivation method, his personal experiences, and so on. With all these things, Su Yu would be able to write a proper cultivation manual instead of one that only pointed one to the apertures one needed to open.

At present, he didn't even know the actual reason for opening those apertures and the benefits of opening those apertures. During the past few days, he had read a lot of books and checked a lot of cultivation manuals.

He believed that he was already knowledgeable enough to write a decent template of a cultivation manual, but he still lacked the comprehension of an actual five elemental race member in his manual. Such a manual looked too fake and a true expert could very easily see some of his secrets through this manual. As for now, the water elemental was the perfect tutor for him.

One should never transmit cultivation methods too easily, but some manner of transmission was still required. Su Yu was already prepared to transmit some of his cultivation methods. The main issue he needed to be concerned with was the manner of transmission, the benefits he could gain, and staying safe after transmitting the cultivation methods. When the water elemental saw that Su Yu seemed really interested, he smiled. He didn't mind saying more.

"The sea of willpower is actually the same as the physical body. Both apertures and acupoints are merely the tunnels connecting you with the natural world. The more of these tunnels you open, the faster your cultivation will be.

"Why can't humans in the Mental Tempering Stage cultivate the Myriad Text Sutra? Because their sea of willpower is still too weak at that level. At that level, the sea of willpower of a human is actually weaker than the sea of willpower of someone from the five elemental race with the same cultivation level. Thus, humans might not be able to start opening apertures at the Mental Tempering Stage even if we can do so.

"The apertures opened by the Myriad Text Sutra are only usable for those in the Skysoar Realm. Different apertures are different from each other. Some are very hard to discover, some have an intense opening process, some would even destabilize your sea of willpower during the opening process..."

The water elemental did not mind chatting with Su Yu about these unimportant topics. Perhaps Su Yu might give him more source qi liquid if he enjoyed the talk enough. The water elemental was not worried that he would starve to death, but with more source qi liquid, he would be able to gather more strength.

Slowly, Su Yu developed a clear concept of the cultivation method in his mind. He took out a notebook and started writing his findings down. He looked like an obedient student with the water elemental being the teacher.

With Su Yu seriously writing and asking some questions every now and then, the prison zone looked more like a classroom than a prison.

"If we name the apertures of the Water Path Art into water aperture 1 through 36, how would you describe your feeling when opening water aperture 1?"

The water elemental paused slightly and said, "When opening the first aperture, nothing is more important than stabilizing your sea of willpower. Generally, the opening of the first aperture will also cause a destabilization of your sea of willpower. At that time, you will start feeling slight pain after absorbing some ambient willpower in the air."

"You can start absorbing willpower after opening the first aperture?"

"Yes. But it is still a passive absorption. It's basically the same as the Source Opening Realm where you can only passively absorb source qi. The aperture will only increase the speed of that passive absorption."

Su Yu nodded and continued asking more questions. The water elemental answered patiently.

After a long while, Su Yu tossed a drop of source qi liquid into the cage and said, "Thank you. If I have anything I don't understand in the future, I'll come look for you again. I will remember your contribution after completing the Water Path Art that is suitable for human practice."

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The water elemental didn't even feel like entertaining that remark. If this kid could really come out with the cultural art so easily, he...would be willing to start living as waste water from now on!

Su Yu was about to leave when the mountindrill bull hurriedly said, "Su Yu, you haven't fed me!"

Su Yu turned around and glared at the bull. This bull looked honest, but he was actually quite treacherous.

"You're getting nothing. I'm starving you for a month." Su Yu said, "I asked someone. Your blood essence is problematic. The royalties of the mountindrill bull are capable of attaching some willpower and life force to their blood essence and regrowing themselves from a drop of blood. And you had not said anything about that. Were you trying to plot against me? Do you take me for a fool? Even if I know nothing, I can ask others."

"You misunderstand me!"

The mountain drill bull wailed miserably. One month! Everything was over. He would really starve to death.

"I am only a Skysoar! How am I supposed to do something like regrowing from a drop of blood? Su Yu, that is not an ability I have!"

"Stop talking nonsense." Su Yu said, "The more honest one looks, the more treacherous one actually is. You're even worse than the suanni. Although the suanni hasn't been too honest either, he has at least given me a heaven-grade technique."

The suanni had nothing to say. How had he been dishonest? He had been extremely honest and obedient lately! He had even stopped roaring recently! He had only been obediently waiting for Su Yu to feed him!

Su Yu did not waste his time and left after he was done in the prison zone.

Silence descended.

After a while, the water elemental smiled, "Silly bull, it's your loss."

The bull didn't even feel like talking.

The shadow said, "He might not be too knowledgeable, but he was right. He can ask others. This Su Yu...isn't stupid. Also, have you noticed? He seems to have grown a lot in strength."

"Are you sure?" The suanni questioned, "From my observation, his physical body still isn't absorbing source qi too quickly. I can't directly scan him, but I can see that he is probably still at the middle-stage Great Strength Realm."

"Middle-stage Great Strength Realm?" The shadow said, "I doubt so. The water elemental must have sensed this as well. Su Yu seems to be hiding some of his opened acupoints. That is probably an effect of a Divine Character. It works similarly to the characters of our shadow race. Thus, his real strength is definitely higher."

The water elemental had turned into a puddle of water as he said, "Exactly. He is probably at the late-stage."

The other creatures sank into silence. That kid was growing too fast. With his heaven-grade technique, he could very well be one of the strongest Great Strength cultivators in the area. He was also extremely talented.

"Has he really been asking so much about cultural arts today because he's trying to make one?"

The shadow was still doubtful. That would be an extremely difficult task. In fact, even the Knowledge Seeking Realm had a group of experts focusing on this topic of research. Or to be precise, this was a topic of research the various academies were also engaged in.

Was Su Yu thinking of getting involved as well? Was he not worried about wasting too much time instead? But none of them had an answer. None of them knew what Su Yu was thinking.

Chapter 343: Trouble Is Coming (2)

While Su Yu was getting ready for his next phase of cultivation.

Heart Cultivating Pavilion.

Inside Zhou Mingren's residence.

Liu Hong was sweating profusely as he explained, "Faculty Head, it was my fault. I reported the price of 82,000 merit points to Senior Brother Zhou. In truth, the price is only 80,000 merit points. I took some of the money for myself."

Acting like he was unable to withstand the pressure of being stared at by Zhou Mingren, Liu Hong decided to “come clean”.

"80,000 merit points..."

Zhou Mingren reached his own conclusion. That was most likely the correct figure. Su Yu might not be fully trusted either. The issue here was that Zhou Pingsheng had reported a price of 100,000 merit points to them.

Zhou Mingren sighed inwardly. He came to the conclusion that his beloved student had swallowed 18,000 merit points all by himself.

How audacious.

How greedy.

That was a lot of money. What gave Zhou Pingsheng so much courage?

One ought to know that even a Cloudbreach cultivator would probably receive only around 1,000 merit points per year as salary without any additional income. Meanwhile, Zhou Pingsheng alone had swallowed over 10,000 merit points from a single transaction. If the other elders learned of this, things would get very troublesome.

Not letting any of his thoughts show, Zhou Mingren indifferently said, "It is understandable that you try to take care of your own benefits when carrying out a task for the faction. 2,000 merit points is actually a decent amount of money. I can forgive you for that. But I need to know if the data is real."

Liu Hong was still sweating profusely, "Faculty Head, I really have no idea. Back then, Senior Brother Zhou was present for everything. He is also much more knowledgeable than me. Furthermore, even Xia Xinyi from the Xia Family was present that day. Since Xia Xinyi had also tried to purchase the data, he had clearly believed that the data was real as well."

Xia Xinyi was Marquis Xia's son and Xia Chan's father. He was also a ninth-stage Cloudbreach expert. Additionally, he also had the identity of a member of the Xia Trade Company. If even someone like him believed that the data was real, was it possible that the data was fake?

Zhou Mingren rubbed his temple and said, "We'll continue studying the data. But if this whole thing is a plot by Su Yu, then it is very unlikely that the data would be real."

It was very likely that the data was fake. In truth, they were already more or less sure that the data was fake. Right now, they were merely grasping at straws, hoping that the data was actually real.

And Zhou Mingren couldn't directly declare that the data was fake either. After all, Zhou Pingsheng was the one in charge of the transaction. Doing so would only bring more trouble his way. The other elders would not let this rest. After all, around 100,000 merit points were involved here.

And that was not the only trouble waiting for them to solve. A bunch of people were still waiting for them to give out the promised willpower texts. They could renege on the debt to some people, but there were also some people that they absolutely must not renege their debt on. Su Yu had single-handedly thrown a pile of trouble their way.

At that thought, Zhou Mingren said, "I don't know if this is Su Yu's idea or if this is the plot of Chen Yong and Bai Feng. Or maybe it's Liu Wenyan teaching them from the shadows. No matter what, Su Yu had successfully humiliated the single character faction this time. We won't be able to maintain our prestige if we don't punish him sternly."

Liu Hong hurriedly said, "Faculty Head, he is still in the Mental Tempering Stage. And he's not even in the top 100 anymore. It would be too hard for us to do anything to him."

Zhou Mingren asked, "Can't you think of anything? Are all of you completely helpless against a single kid?"

Liu Hong's expression turned awkward as he said, "I actually have an idea...but I'm afraid that it might sound too crazy."

"What is it?"

"Allow him to enter the Skysoar Realm. It's too hard to stump him at the Mental Tempering Stage. But things will be different at the Skysoar Realm. We have plenty of teaching assistants in the Skysoar Realm. And as a Skysoar cultivator, he is no longer a student. There will be fewer restrictions as to what we can do to him. At worst, we can simply send him over to the Allheaven Battlefield.

"By the way, I believe it would be even better if we allow him to enter the Willpower Grotto as well. How many characters has he formed so far? It would be really funny if he accidentally enters the Skysoar Realm before forming enough characters. At that time, will the multiple character faction kick him out or keep him with them?

"For their faction, anyone entering the Skysoar Realm before completing their character technique can't be considered a true member of the faction. When Su Yu reaches the peak Mental Tempering Stage, can he resist the temptations of breakthrough? And once he breaks through, will they kick him out? If they keep him around, is the multiple character faction still the multiple character faction? They will turn into a joke."

Liu Hong seemed to be on a roll as he continued, "Su Yu has gotten used to rapid growth. Is he willing to be stuck at the peak Mental Tempering Stage for years or even a dozen years? Perhaps he might even turn hostile toward Bai Feng for forbidding him from breaking through."

Zhou Mingren frowned, "What if he is really so patient?"

"Faculty Head, he will also take some time to form Divine Characters..."

"Divine Characters..."

Zhou Mingren recalled something. Wan Tiansheng once suggested that Su Yu should focus on cultivating human characters. If Su Yu really did so, his cultivation speed would definitely drop. Walking this path, even if he managed to form other characters, he would have to shatter those characters. Thus, it would probably be very hard for Su Yu to actually form over 10 Divine Characters.

"Do you know the number of characters his character technique requires?"

Liu Hong shook his head, "No. But he feels even more talented than Bai Feng, so I suspect 12 or more. Just look at how even a turtle like Chen Yong is starting to move for his sake. This kid is definitely quite a talented one."

Zhou Mingren nodded. That was reasonable. To push that kid into the Skysoar Realm...what an interesting idea.

Liu Hong said, "Faculty Head, in truth, our current target shouldn't be Su Yu. His combat strength relative to his cultivation level is too high. His senior sister, Wu Jia, is the weak point. And to be honest, neither of the kids are our actual targets. Chen Yong is our true target. His position as the head manager of the books depository has been our target since the beginning."

Yes. Chen Yong was their true target. No matter how strong Wu Jia and Su Yu were, neither of them were even in the Skysoar Realm yet.

Zhou Mingren exhaled lightly and nodded, "You're right. We need Chen Yong to vacate his position. Xia Yuwen has already entered Great Zhou. In about a month or so, he will be here."

"Xia Yuwen is returning?"

Liu Hong was greatly alarmed to hear that, but he did not let his shock show on his face. He hesitated slightly and said, "Faculty Head, he is not a part of our faction. Are we really working with him?"

"He is very likely to be the next prefect. And in Great Xia, the Xia Family is the true ruler. Only by helping him become the prefect would the single character faction be able to grow even further."

Liu Hong had nothing else to say so he nodded, "I understand. Faculty Head, do we take strict precautions against Wu Jia to prevent her from returning to the top 100 next?"

"Yes. Cancel the previous mission. Have all the single character faction students focus on stopping Wu Jia from entering the ranking instead. If our students can't do so, then all their benefits for next year will be canceled."

They were finally going to threaten the benefits of their own students. Those incapable of carrying out their tasks would be penalized. After all, if these members couldn't contribute when required, what was the point of spending so much resources to nurture them?

Liu Hong cautiously said, "Faculty Head, I'll also submit the 2,000 merit points I took back to the faction as well later...But can you help explain this to the other elders? I really didn't take that much. The transaction is really worth 80,000 merit points. Su Yu was clearly framing me."

"I'm not that stupid."

Zhou Mingren waved his hand, looking dignified and stern. Was he the type of person who would believe anything Su Yu said? He only needed to check with Zhou Pingsheng to know if Liu Hong was really telling the truth.

But at the thought of Zhou Pingsheng, Zhou Mingren's head started aching. This student of his was too greedy. He actually asked for 100,000 merit points from the faction. If the other elders really pursued the matter, things could really get troublesome. That was especially true since they were trying to push Zhou Pingsheng into the position of the head manager.

As for the 2,000 merit points Liu Hong had misappropriated, that was really nothing for a Mountainsea cultivator. Liu Hong's share of benefits in the single character faction had always been lower than the others, so he didn't mind letting Liu Hong earn this little benefit this time.

A lot of trouble was really coming their way. A loss of 100,000 merit points, the return of Liu Wenyan, the willpower texts the students were waiting for, and Zheng Yuming's heavy injuries.

Zhou Mingren felt greatly troubled. He had been planning to enter seclusion and try his luck at the Sunmoon Realm. But after all these disturbances, how could he still enter seclusion? He wouldn't even have the time for that.

While rapping on the table, Zhou Mingren said, "Keep an eye on Bai Feng and Su Yu. As for your students, they are decently talented. And their seniors are from our faction as well. Remember to not be too stingy and put more effort in nurturing them..."

Liu Hong had an awkward expression as he said, "Faculty Head...I really can't afford to raise them. Just my little brother alone has exhausted a lot of my resources. And I need to enter the Cloudbreach Realm as well. I really can't spare any effort on them..."

"You!"

Zhou Mingren was finding this issue troublesome. If the researchers of his faction were so poor that they could no longer raise their own students, then what would be the point for those students to come under these teachers?

If this continued, would the students of the academy still have any trust toward the single character faction? Zhou Mingren even started wondering if he had been too stingy with Liu Hong all these years.

In Zhou Mingren's opinion, Liu Hong's student, Yang Sha, was quite promising. This was a student with the hope to enter the top 100 and the Skysoar Realm. As for the new student, Lin Yao, he was quite good as well. Furthermore, Lin Yao's grandfather was a Cloudbreach cultivator of their faction. Thus, he was already one of them.

"From now on, your students will receive 30 merit points each on a monthly basis. Don't even think of trying to take from your own students."

"I won't!"

Liu Hong was very surprised. That was actually a decent amount of money.

Even those in the Skysoar Realm would probably get only around that much in salary. One ought to know that even Chen Yong was only paid around 50 merit points per month. And he was a head manager and a ninth-stage Cloudbreach cultivator.

Of course, Chen Yong was only receiving the basic salary instead of other benefits. Generally, a Cloudbreach cultivator would not be as poor as he was.

Zhou Mingren exhaled lightly and grew even more agitated.

A lot of trouble was knocking. In truth, he had not been getting involved in all these affairs after entering the peak Mountainsea Realm. Previously, Zheng Yuming was the one who had been handling all these affairs.

Suddenly, he was forced to deal with all these troubles. To make things worse, he didn't even have a suitable candidate to replace Zheng Yuming as the faction master.

"By the way, how is Xia Chan doing recently?"

"Very good."

Zhou Mingren gave it some thought and said, "Tell Xia Chan to prepare herself. She will be allowed to enter the Willpower Grotto next month as well."

"Faculty Head, Xia Chan's line is different from Xia Yuwen's line. Would Xia Yuwen..."

"Don't worry." Zhou Mingren waved his hand, "We are diversifying our investment. Both of them are from the Xia Family. Nothing will really happen to the losers of the struggle. Even if Xia Yuwen ends up victorious, he still wouldn't dare to touch the losers. It's not like the Great Xia King and the current prefect can't live without him."

Even if Xia Chan's line lost during the struggle, they would still be perfectly fine.

Zhou Mingren knew that very well. It didn't matter how strong Xia Yuwen was. Even if he was already an Invincible, would he really dare to kill Xia Chan? Her grandfather was Marquis Xia. Her great grandfather was the Great Xia King. She hailed from the direct lineage of the Great Xia King. Was Xia Yuwen suicidal?

Liu Hong nodded, "Sure. I'll notify her. By the way, is Senior Brother Wensheng entering as well? He is only a step away from the Cloudbreach Realm. If he gets to enter this time, he might really be able to enter the Cloudbreach Realm. I'll have to congratulate him in advance."

At the mention of Hu Wensheng, Zhou Mingren couldn't help but to think about Bai Feng who had defeated Hu Wensheng with one hit. His headache returned. Why did he feel like nothing was going smoothly for him?

"We'll see. He's still in his seclusion." He said, "After two days, I'll be leaving the academy for a bit. If you have an emergency and no other elders are around, you can get help from Vice Principal Xia."

"Alright." Liu Hong nodded.

Inwardly, he was suspicious. Where was Zhou Mingren going? Since Zheng Yuming was still recuperating in the academy, there was no reason for Zhou Mingren to leave. Also, a few other elders seemed to be missing today as well. Where were they? He also kept having a feeling that Zhou Mingren was being rather agitated and uneasy today.

Was Zhou Mingren planning to leave with Zheng Yuming? Numerous guesses appeared in Liu Hong's mind, but since he lacked more information, he wasn't able to figure out the truth. He only felt like Zhou Mingren seemed to have lost his calm.

"Faculty Head, without you around, if some other people come after us..."

He was referring to the students who were still waiting for their willpower texts. Those capable of collecting this debt would definitely be no pushovers.

"Just try your best to delay them until we return."

Liu Hong was helpless, but he could only agree, "Sure. I understand."

He was only a Skysoar. Why did he feel like Zhou Mingren was using him like he was the faction master already? Was Zhou Mingren really thinking of making him the faction master? But he couldn't handle that position. He wasn't even a Cloudbreach yet. And the single character faction still had plenty of Cloudbreach cultivators. And he wasn't even from Zhou Mingren's line in the faction.

Seeing that Zhou Mingren had no other orders to give, Liu Hong carefully retreated. He heaved a breath of relief. Things were not as bad as he thought it would be. He had been able to turn Zhou Pingsheng into the main scapegoat.

That fellow had misappropriated a lot of money. However, he was also Zhou Mingren's student. With Zheng Yuming's condition, Zhou Pingsheng would become the sole pride of Zhou Mingren. Thus, this wasn't a good time to punish him.

Otherwise, Zhou Mingren would only further embarrass himself. Liu Hong sneered inwardly. He already expected this to happen. With Zhou Pingsheng as the scapegoat, no problem would be too big of a problem. Zhou Mingren would be there waiting to sweep all the trouble under the rug.

While walking, Liu Hong started thinking. Zheng Yuming had been crippled while Hu Wensheng was in seclusion. Meanwhile, Zhou Pingsheng was busy leading their research project. Thus, all the Cloudbreach cultivators directly under Zhou Mingren were no longer available for the faction master position.

The new faction master would probably be picked from one of the ninth-stage Cloudbreach cultivators in the faction. His little brother, Liu He, was also the student of a ninth-stage Cloudbreach cultivator. And this cultivator could potentially become the new faction master.

"What a pity that I'm not a ninth-stage Cloudbreach cultivator or I can probably try fighting for the position as well. Now that they are running out of manpower, they finally remember my students..."

Liu Hong shook his head. The single character was powerful and large. But they had been too busy competing against each other over the years. As a result, there was no unity whatsoever among fellow members. Even the elders themselves were engaged in all sorts of indirect conflicts against each other. Because of that, Zhou Mingren couldn't even put any trust into the students of the other elders.

Instead, someone who had been completely removed from the power struggles like Liu Hong was the one to start winning Zhou Mingren's trust instead.

Back when he found Liu He a teacher, he had also found him someone from the faction who was unaffiliated with any line. That was a ninth-stage Cloudbreach cultivator who was not the student of the

few elders of the faction. In their current situation, someone without a backer like him might really stand a higher chance at being appointed the new faction master.

Suddenly, Liu Hong thought of Su Yu. He immediately felt like laughing. All these troubles plaguing Zhou Mingren had originated from Su Yu. Without Su Yu, Zheng Yuming would still be perfectly fine. And with Zheng Yuming around, nobody could hope to become the faction master.

"Bai Feng is truly useless. After so many years, he has not managed to do anything. Su Yu is still the better troublemaker. But things would be even more fun if he can enter the Skysoar Realm.

"Willpower Grotto...I need to get that kid in it. Things would be a lot more fun if the kid can enter the Skysoar Realm in advance. I need to make sure they are aware of this opportunity."

He needed to notify Su Yu about it. As for whether Su Yu could ultimately win entry into the grotto, that would rely on himself. In any case, Liu Hong would not lose anything by leaking that information to Su Yu.

"Xia Yuwen is returning..."

Liu Hong then recalled that person who had been reigning above everyone from his generation. That was a troublesome individual, but fortunately, he wasn't a member of the single character faction. They merely had a cooperative relationship for now.

...

At the same time.

Some of the Myriad Race Cult hideouts within Great Xia had received some news.

Su Yu, a student of the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy, a ninth-stage Great Strength cultivator and middle Mental Tempering Stage with the combat strength of an Infinite Strength cultivator. He once defeated a ranked 38th student in the academy's top 100.

Mission: Kill Su Yu.

Reward: 500 merit points

500 merit points. This was enough reward to get even a Skysoar cultivator killed. Thus, the cult members within Great Xia were all shocked to learn about the reward. Then again, this was understandable. This was still a student who had yet to graduate.

And this was far from enough money to motivate someone to actually enter an academy to assassinate someone. That was basically a suicidal mission. However, would Su Yu remain in the academy forever? 500 merit points were actually a lot of money.

The mission was only open to those at the Skysoar Realm and above. Thus, many Skysoar cultivators were tempted by the reward. Just what had this Su Yu done to receive such a bounty from the higher ups?

Furthermore, there was an additional clause to the mission stating that one would get extra rewards for capturing him alive. But capturing someone alive was much more difficult than simply assassinating someone. After all, escaping alone was very different from escaping with an unwilling companion.

Chapter 344: Grandteacher Is On His Way (1)

A storm was brewing in Great Xia.

Su Yu was merely a tiny drop of water within the ocean that was Great Xia. Any random wave was enough to obliterate him. He was not bothered with what was happening. His main focus should still be his cultivation.

As for all those plots and schemes, all those were only for the sake of getting stronger. If one couldn't grow strong, it didn't matter how good one was at scheming. It would still take only a single slap to end one's life.

His current priority was the foundation cultural art. Although he had yet to receive the rest of the five elemental blood essence from Xia Huyou, he had still received 60 drops so far. That much should be enough for him for now.

Inside the fragment room.

Su Yu had decided to restore his attitude to how it was when he first joined the academy. He had to work even harder on his cultivation. As far as he was concerned, his growth was still not fast enough. He found it unreasonable that he still couldn't defeat the top 30 students.

As for the fact that he had only entered the academy for two months...well, that did not matter. The only thing that mattered was the fact that he had offended even a peak Mountainsea cultivator.

...

Inside his sea of willpower, the power of a drop of blood essence was being absorbed. 36 temporary soul apertures were opened. These apertures joined up into a complete system that started taking in the ambient willpower within the room like they were breathing.

"The willpower here is somewhat impure..."

That was Su Yu's first impression. The ambient willpower in this room was chaotic and impure. Because of that, absorption was hard. Even with 36 apertures opened, the absorption speed was still slow.

"But it's actually quite decent."

Su Yu was not too picky. Instead of strengthening his willpower, he utilized the absorbed willpower to temper his apertures. From the first aperture, he started the long process of aperture opening. He would be able to actively cultivate his willpower after opening 36 apertures. The absorption speed was still very slow right now.

Soul apertures were much harder to open than physical acupoints. Prior to this, Su Yu had already tried several times but he had not been able to open any. This time, he was trying to use the power of blood essence to absorb the willpower he required.

Gradually, the first aperture started showing signs of opening. The aperture initially looked quite dim as it had only been opened temporarily with blood essence, but it was slowly turning bright.

Finally, the power of the first drop of blood essence was fully exhausted. Su Yu wasted no time and consumed the second drop. By the time the power of the second drop was exhausted, the aperture was already incomparably bright.

Next, it trembled and created a rumbling sound in Su Yu's mind. As of that moment, he felt as though his soul had been separated from his physical body. It was as though he had arrived at a vast world. His soul, or to be precise, his willpower, was roaming this world. He had opened his very first soul aperture!

Su Yu was looking at his own body from a third party perspective, as though he was having an out-of-body experience. Out-of-body experience! He held that thought. Yes. Opening an aperture was basically the same as opening an acupoint of his soul. In a way, willpower was the same as soul.

"Willpower materialization...willpower acupoint opening..."

In his daze, Su Yu seemed to have reached a certain understanding. Why were humans only able to open apertures after willpower materialization? Because only then would a human cultivator be able to truly sense the existence of their willpower. Only then would they be able to locate their apertures. Was that why?

Without any prior experience, one would not know the location of those apertures. And one wasn't even able to sense those apertures.

"Thus, even if I can come out with a proper cultural art, without prior experience, this will still be something extremely difficult to cultivate. One will need to spend a lot of time and energy on it..."

With a thought from Su Yu, his soul returned to his body. And when he opened his eyes again, the world around him had changed completely. Before this, he was unable to see willpower. For him, willpower was similar to air. He knew that it existed, but he couldn't see it.

But now, he was able to see something else around him. Something misty could be seen surrounding him. That was willpower.

That was something he previously could only sense with his willpower. Now, he could see the mist with his eyes as well. Normally, a cultivator would only gain this ability at the Skysoar Realm.

It was no wonder that only those at the Skysoar Realm could properly see a student's willpower percentage. Because they could see willpower with their naked eye.

Su Yu was overjoyed. The clumps of mist were currently approaching him. For some reason, these clumps of mist gave him a dirty and impure impression.

"Is there no clean or pure willpower around?"

Suddenly, Su Yu thought of a place. Bai Feng's laboratory! That place was filled with purified willpower. Would the willpower in there feel different? At that thought, Su Yu stood up. He had decided to take a look. He wanted to see the difference between purified willpower and regular willpower.

...

Third underground floor.

Bai Feng had returned to his research on the assembly of characters of different races. He was completely focused on his research and was ignoring everything else. No outsider was able to enter this laboratory.

Those capable of entering would either be someone from his own side or an incomparably powerful enemy that could kill him with one slap. Thus, he didn't even need to be on alert against outsiders while doing his research. If an enemy could really go this deep into their research center, that enemy would be able to slap him to death no matter how alert he was.

While busy with his research, he sensed someone entering. He assumed that it was Su Yu and couldn't be bothered to double check. He continued focusing on his research.

What was Su Yu doing? He was salivating. Milky white. Yes. In his eyes, the laboratory was filled with a milky white mist that seemed really tasty. The willpower here was extremely pure.

The willpower here was basically as pure as his source qi. If the willpower in the fragment room was akin to his source qi before purification, then the willpower here was akin to his source qi after purification. It was incomparably pure. His sole opened aperture started slowly absorbing the milky white mist in the air.

Su Yu trembled. He was trembling from bliss. He felt so comfortable he nearly moaned. Holy shit. The difference was too big. When he was absorbing willpower earlier, he even felt disgusted. But here, the experience was incredible.

Since he only had one opened aperture, he wasn't able to absorb much. He looked at his teacher guiltily. His teacher wouldn't notice anything, right? He was only trying out the flavor of pure willpower! He was only doing this to learn the difference between chaotic willpower and purified willpower. And he could conclude that the difference was indeed very big.

...

Bai Feng was not paying any attention to the willpower in the air. As far as he was concerned, Su Yu couldn't even actively absorb willpower yet, so why should he bother?

But he did notice that Su Yu was remaining in the area. He assumed that Su Yu was here to check out his research, so he felt gratified. Finally, the kid had learned to worry about his teacher's research.

After a while, when Bai Feng was almost done with his research for the day, he turned around to look at Su Yu. And he was faced with a Su Yu who was smiling while staring blankly ahead.

"What are you doing?"

Bai Feng's question roused Su Yu from his daze.

Su Yu exhaled in relief. Fortunately, he had only been digesting the tiny bit of pure willpower he had absorbed and had not been absorbing more. If his teacher caught him absorbing the pure willpower here, he would get in trouble.

He did not dare to tell his teacher the truth. Instead, he flashed a silly smile and said, "My willpower feels very comfortable staying here. Can I cultivate faster by staying here?"

"Nonsense." Bai Feng said, "Of course you feel good here. And your cultivation will definitely be slightly faster here. But you are not allowed to cultivate here. If you study willpower texts here, the impure willpower will spread from your cultivation and taint the pure willpower in this room. This will make it harder for us to preserve Divine Characters in this room."

"Alright." Su Yu nodded and curiously asked, "Teacher, where can I find some pure willpower?"

Bai Feng looked at Su Yu with an odd gaze and said, "It's not like you can actively absorb willpower right now so why ask? It's the same wherever you cultivate since you can't absorb anything. Cultivating through a clash of willpower is enough for you."

"Teacher, I'm only asking because I'm curious. Don't keep telling me that I don't need to know."

That was true. Bai Feng nodded in agreement. As a teacher, it was his job to dispel the doubts of his student.

"Pure willpower can't be found anywhere. It can only be created through a purification process. Of course, different environments will still have willpower of different purity. For example, the willpower in our fragment room is slightly purer than the willpower in the books depository. As for the willpower in the books depository, it is better than the willpower in the shitty library.

"If we assign a percentage to the purity level, then our fragment room has a purity of 50 percent, the books depository has a purity of 40 percent, and the library has a purity of 30 percent. Meanwhile, this lab would have a purity of 100 percent. Naturally, the academy has a Willpower Grotto with a purity of 80 percent. That is actually quite a good place."

"Willpower Grotto?"

"Yeah." Bai Feng explained, "That can be considered a high-end grotto. It was left behind by the first principal. The first principal was also from the multiple character faction. And the Willpower Grotto is quite a special grotto. Instead of being formed by a single character, it was formed by multiple characters.

"One could even say that the Willpower Grotto is the first principal's sea of willpower. Due to the high number of characters in it, this grotto is very difficult to open. Each opening is also extremely expensive."

Su Yu nodded and asked expectantly, "So can we enter?"

"Sure." Bai Feng replied, "As long as you have the money, you can enter as you wish. For each entry...hmm...you'll need around 70,000 or 80,000 merit points. Yeap. It's not that expensive. Each time this grotto is opened, around 50 people can enter. Thus, you can charge all these people for around 1,000 merit points each and you will have enough to activate the grotto once. Yeap. You can give it a try."

Su Yu was speechless. Teacher, stop messing around.

Bai Feng then sneered, "Enter? Dream on. Apart from being expensive to activate, this grotto also requires several Mountainsea cultivators to keep activated. Do you think you can activate it so easily? Money alone won't be enough. Stop dreaming."

Su Yu turned gloomy. Why was his teacher so mean? He was just asking.

"Teacher, is purifying willpower hard?"

Bai Feng glanced at Su Yu and said, "Don't bite off more than you can chew. Purifying willpower isn't hard. You only need money. For example, you only need to destroy hundreds of willpower texts, extract the willpower within, and remove the impurities from the willpower repeatedly. After this process, you will obtain a tiny bit of pure willpower."

Su Yu was stunned. That sounded so luxurious. Was that also the origin of the pure willpower in this room? This was too expensive!

"Teacher, have you opened the apertures of the Myriad Text Sutra?"

Bai Feng was starting to have the urge to throw a bunch of insults at his student. The kid wasn't even at the Skysoar Realm yet. What was the point of asking all these questions? What was the kid trying to do?

Nevertheless, Bai Feng still patiently explained, "The Myriad Text Sutra requires 72 apertures. Apertures are hard to open. Generally, we only need 36 apertures at the Skysoar Realm to form a full cycle. At the Cloudbreach Realm, we can open the remaining 36 apertures and form a larger cycle."

"So 36 apertures are enough?" Su Yu asked in astonishment, "How about the stages of cultural researchers in the Skysoar Realm? Are the stages determined by the opened apertures as well?"

"More or less. The grade of one's willpower will be measured as well." Bai Feng explained, "For example, you have four opened apertures. That will give you a low-grade second-tier willpower. If you also have a second-tier Divine Character, that will make you a standard first-stage Skysoar Realm cultural researcher."

Su Yu blinked. Just that?

"Do I count as a first-stage Skysoar Realm cultivator if I fulfill all that without achieving willpower materialization?"

"Bullshit!" Bai Feng scolded, "Without materialization, how can you be considered a cultural researcher? Without materialization, your willpower won't be able to reach the second tier. Your apertures also can't be opened. Without all that, how can you be considered a proper cultural researcher?"

Chapter 345: Grandteacher Is On His Way (2)

Bai Feng was starting to wonder if someone had replaced his student. His student wasn't supposed to be so stupid. In that case, why was the kid asking him all these stupid questions?

Su Yu could only helplessly say, "But I have a feeling that my willpower is very strong. I feel like I'm already at the peak of the first tier. I also have second-tier characters. The only thing I lack now is an opened aperture. So would I be considered a Skysoar after opening my first aperture?"

"Open my ass." Bai Feng rolled his eyes, "If you can really push your willpower to the second tier, then your willpower would already be strong enough for willpower materialization..."

Su Yu blanked out slightly before asking, "Teacher, would that really make me a Skysoar? But I have yet to finish forming my Divine Characters! What should I do if my willpower accidentally reaches the second tier before I finish forming my characters?"

Bai Feng was also stunned when he heard that question. True. This kid's willpower was actually quite powerful.

But he soon shook his head and said, "Impossible. You have yet to fill your sea of willpower so your willpower won't overflow and achieve willpower materialization accidentally. At most, you will only have a willpower as powerful as second-tier willpower. However, your willpower will still be stuck below the second tier. Only when your willpower overflows will you be considered a true Skysoar cultivator that has achieved willpower materialization."

Su Yu exhaled in relief. That was good to hear. Bai Feng was somewhat speechless. Why did it sound like this kid was actually worried of accidentally reaching the Skysoar Realm? Was the kid thinking straight? With that tiny bit of willpower...

Suddenly, Bai Feng blanked out. He asked, "What's wrong with you? Why...has your willpower percentage increased suddenly?"

Su Yu flashed his trademark honest smile and said, "I cultivated a bit in the fragment room earlier and made some progress there."

He then assumed an enigmatic tone and said, "Teacher, I have been talking to the water elemental in the prison zone recently. The cultivation method of the five elemental race is actually capable of opening apertures at the Mental Tempering Stage. What if you can learn that cultivation method? Wouldn't that be amazing?"

...

All these questions were starting to drive Bai Feng crazy. He said, "Learn my ass. Everyone knows about the five elemental race's cultivation method. I know that as well. I even have a copy of the Water Path Art. The academy has some willpower texts of the Water Path Art and the other elemental arts as well. Why don't you try and learn these arts? If you really manage to cultivate them, you can be my teacher instead. How about that?"

What a load of nonsense. Piss off! This kid had been getting overconfident. He spent all his time dreaming instead of cultivating.

But suddenly, Bai Feng thought of something and blanked out. He asked, "Did you learn the racial ability of the five elemental race and open some acupoints from it? Is this why you believe that you can derive their cultivation method from their racial ability?"

It was necessary for Su Yu to slowly build a logical origin for his cultivation manual. Thus, he nodded, "I consumed some five elemental blood essence before. Their racial abilities are very unique, such as turning into water, metal, and so on. It is very difficult for humans to use these abilities. Relying on the flesh alone, we will never be able to use these abilities. But our willpower can actually be turned into the different elements in accordance with these racial abilities."

Su Yu continued speaking in an enigmatic tone as he whispered, "Thus, I wondered if I can derive the five elemental cultivation method through these racial abilities? Do you think it's possible, teacher?"

"Stop whispering."

Bai Feng was speechless. What was the kid doing? He was acting like a thief!

Bai Feng thought about it and shook his head, "It's different. But sure, if you're interested, give it a try. Even if you really manage to come out with their cultivation method, you might not be able to actually open an aperture with it. I'm warning you. Don't mess around about this. Cultural arts involve the sea of willpower. The sea of willpower is much harder to recover than the physical body once injured.

"Just look at your senior sister. She has been suffering from a willpower injury for several months. You don't want to waste several months of your time recovering from an injury, right?"

Su Yu nodded obediently and said, "Teacher, if I really manage to derive the cultivation method, can I teach it to Senior Sister?"

"No!" Bai Feng answered unhesitatingly, "Teach my ass. If you really manage to come up with something like this, you need to keep it secret. That might not be a bad thing. In fact, spreading this cultivation method might not necessarily be a good thing for you. You need to know that the myriad races have even more Mental Tempering Stage cultivators than humanity. What if the myriad races learn of it? Hehe...Your life would be over."

"How about the Soul Devouring Art?"

That was also a powerful cultivation method.

Bai Feng shook his head, "It's different. Your Soul Devouring Art is a martial cultivation method. It relies on the acupoints of the human body..."

"But that's the case for a cultural art, right? It will rely on the apertures of the human body..."

Bai Feng scratched his head and said, "Yeah, but it is still different since it involves the sea of willpower. Just remember that you can't spread it rashly if you manage to come out with it."

But suddenly, Bai Feng blanked out. The kid had yet to even come out with the cultivation method. Why was he answering all these questions? It was as though he was sure his student would be able to come out with that cultivation method. Was he the teacher here or was his student the teacher here? What the hell?

Bai Feng shook his head and rearranged his thoughts, "Cut the crap. If you can really come out with it, don't spread it rashly. Of course, if you're sure that you can withstand all the troubles and pressure that might arise after spreading the cultivation method, you are free to do whatever you want with it."

Su Yu had an awkward look. Forget it. He was definitely incapable of withstanding the consequences of spreading such a cultivation method around.

He had a look of regret as he said, "That would be a pity. I believe that the human race definitely has some powerful cultivation manuals that have been hidden away from the public for various reasons."

"It's not that bad." Bai Feng smiled, "When you reach a level where you finally start needing those manuals, someone will naturally appear to teach you. It depends on your performance. For example, our multiple character faction has a rather powerful cultivation manual as well. But it is still not time to teach it to you."

"What cultivation manual?"

Su Yu was curious.

"Soul Gathering Art. This is a manual specializing in nurturing Divine Characters. Without this manual, how are we supposed to grow our characters when we need to form so many of them? But forget about learning it for now. Focus on forming all your required Divine Characters first. If you learn it now, you will probably push all your existing characters into the second tier instead of focusing on forming more characters. Do you still want to complete your character technique or not?"

Su Yu was actually getting excited. So there existed a cultivation manual capable of nurturing Divine Characters?

"Teacher, Wan Mingze has three second-tier characters. He has more second-tier characters than me."

"Three?"

Bai Feng blanked out slightly. He said, "Three second-tier characters...Wan Mingze...someone from the principal's family?"

"I think he's the grandson of the principal's elder brother."

Bai Feng frowned, "There are examples of people forming a second-tier character at the Mental Tempering Stage. There are also examples of people forming two, such as you. As for three second-tier characters...You need to relax and stay far away from him."

"Why?"

"He might be one of those treacherous snakes. Since he is capable of nurturing three second-tier characters, his willpower is clearly strong enough to reach the Skysoar Realm. To suppress himself, he has used his willpower to nurture his characters instead.

"Someone like this is either aiming to be the strongest in the same level or is simply scheming against someone. It's pretty pointless to do so much to become the strongest in the Mental Tempering Stage. Sure, there is always a possibility that this kid has some grand ambitions. But it is more likely that he's scheming against someone with his suppressed cultivation."

"So who is he scheming against?"

"You," Bai Feng said confidently. "You're not at the Skysoar Realm yet so none of those in the Skysoar Realm can touch you. But he can since he's also still below the Skysoar Realm. Be careful. People like him are mostly nurtured for the specific purpose of targeting those below the Skysoar Realm. He might be a hidden arrow prepared by the principal, waiting to be unleashed against someone."

"Even so, I might not be the target, right?"

"Who knows?" Once again, Bai Feng spoke in an irresponsible manner, "If not you, is it those kids from the war academy or those bastards from the myriad races? In any case, that Wan something kid is definitely scheming against someone. He would have reached the Skysoar Realm already otherwise."

Su Yu found himself speechless. So there was such a thing? Wan Mingze was actually good enough to enter the next realm, but he had not advanced because he had spent all his willpower nurturing his characters into the second tier?

Bai Feng said, "There are too many weird individuals in your batch. What an abnormal batch. That Jia something guy is also very weird. Also, that Zheng kid is not a pushover either. He might be hiding something as well. Then there's also the Xia Family..."

Bai Feng suspiciously said, "I had thought that Xia Chan was Zhou Mingren's weapon against you, but she doesn't look like one anymore. I saw her once. Her strength is decent, but it's nothing special. The Xia Family actually doesn't have a super freak in this batch..."

Bai Feng then shook his head and decided to forget about the Xia Family. Who knew what they were planning? But Su Yu couldn't help but to think of Xia Huyou. For some reason, Xia Huyou felt even stronger than Xia Chan. That was the feeling he had.

"Teacher, have you heard of Xia Huyou?"

"Nope."

"Is there such a person in the Xia Family?"

"How am I supposed to know that? It's not like I know the Xia Family that well. I only know Xia Longwu, Xia Changqing, Xia Xinyi, and Xia Yuwen..."

Well. That was a waste of time.

"Does the prefect have any children?"

"I think he has a son." Bai Feng said with an uncertain tone, "He's a big shot. Your grandteacher might know more about him. I never cared about that. The Xia Family is quite good at hiding those from their main branch to avoid assassinations. After all, those who couldn't defeat the prefect wouldn't mind targeting the prefect's son instead. Generally, only those at the Mountainsea Realm will know more, but your teacher isn't a Mountainsea."

Su Yu nodded. Inwardly, he was wondering if Xia Huyou was Xia Longwu's son. But that seemed unlikely. Xia Longwu was wise, strong, bold, powerful, stern, and persistent. Would he have a son like Xia Huyou? Su Yu would not believe that!

After a short chat, Su Yu left his teacher and returned to his cultivation. He was going to focus on opening more soul apertures.

Apart from opening his apertures, he also needed to open more acupoints. For example, the acupoints required by the Soul Devouring Art. If he had already opened those acupoints, he would have been able to defeat Wang He much easier during his previous match.

With the unique burning source qi, he would be able to first cause his opponent to wail in pain before taking the chance to finish off his opponent with a kick.

After his previous matches, a lot of people were already aware of his strength. If people started targeting him, his future matches would definitely be much harder. Thus, he had to further strengthen himself.

He aimed to get himself a new trump card each time he disappeared from the public eye. Thus, anyone daring to target him based on his past performance would die a terrible death.

Chapter 346: Grandteacher Is On His Way (3)

"As long as I can grow fast enough, it won't even matter if you guys can keep gathering my information. Xia Huyou still owes me about 4,000 merit points while Martial Uncle will transfer me 5,000 merit points later. I can get 9,000 merit points in total."

Su Yu started considering entering the grotto again. In the grotto, he could open both acupoints and apertures. After opening some more acupoints, he would probably need to start considering acupoint fusion and breaking through into the Infinite Strength Realm.

"In terms of martial techniques, I have the Time, Skybreak Technique, and Lightning Source Blade. But I don't have any willpower techniques."

He might need to get himself a willpower technique as well. If he relied on only his Divine Characters, he didn't have a lot of ways he could gain an upper hand during willpower combat.

"After activating so many pages, there must be at least one willpower ability among them, right? I might be able to use one of them after opening enough acupoints. With willpower techniques, my offensive prowess will probably increase sharply."

But the more Su Yu thought, the more troubled he was. He kept feeling like he didn't have enough time. There were too many things for him to do.

In recent days, he had even started skipping his classes. He wondered if he could continue receiving the merit points for his position as the class monitor next month. It would be a pity to give up on that. Three merit points were still worth something, after all.

"Also, I need to do something about my willpower cultivation. I doubt my sea of willpower can withstand the pressure of 99 Divine Characters even after filling my sea of willpower up. So I need to consider the Soul Expanding Art..."

Su Yu wondered if he should pay Zhao Li a visit and get hammered a dozen or so times? He kept having a feeling that after the previous hammering session, his willpower had grown stronger and much more tenacious than before. Even its offensive strength had increased.

In that manner, Su Yu's mind continued roaming randomly while he cultivated. He needed the combat strength of a top 30 student. It would be even better if he could grow as strong as a top 10 student as such a student was already strong enough to fight Skysoar cultivators.

As for the Skysoar Realm...it was still too early for him to think about that. He still needed to form 99 Divine Characters. And he had not been forming any characters recently. It would seem like he needed to start spending more time to study more willpower texts as well. He had bought quite a lot of them. It would be a waste if he kept them around without reading them.

...

The night passed uneventfully.

In the blink of an eye, it was the 7th of October.

A shabby truck was slowly heading toward the Great Xia City.

...

At the same time.

Allheaven Battlefield, entrance to the Human Realm.

Hong Tan was walking over in excitement. At the entrance, he showed his identity card before preparing to leave. Right that moment, a Mountainsea cultivator in charge of guarding the entrance said, "Is this Senior Researcher Hong Tan from the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy?"

Hong Tan glanced at the guard. That was not someone he knew. He assumed that this person was here to relieve the previous guard so he didn't think much about it. He merely nodded at the question.

"A massive battle has erupted in the celestial eye race's region. According to the existing military command, you need to head there and assist our side in the battle..."

Hong Tan asked in astonishment, "The celestial eye race's region? Isn't the Great Zhou in charge of that area? I am a researcher from Great Xia..."

"This is the order from the front line. All Mountainsea cultivators are required to head over and help."

Hong Tan scratched his head. This was a military command. He had no choice but to go. If he dared to disobey a military command, one of those Invincible fossils guarding the front line would slap him to death.

"Fine. By the way, check if there are any messages for me from the Great Xia..."

"There are no messages..."

Hong Tan blanked out right after that person answered. Had that person even checked before answering?

The Mountainsea cultivator calmly said, "I have been here since the beginning so there is no need for me to check to know."

Hong Tan frowned. Suddenly, he asked, "Where is the military token for your so-called military command?"

The Mountainsea cultivator did not hesitate to take out a military token.

But when Hong Tan saw the token, he cursed, "Damn you! This isn't even the token of an Invincible. This is the token of the Great Zhou Army. Why the fuck should I follow the military order of the Great Zhou Army? What is the meaning of this? If the Devil Subduing Army summons a Mountainsea cultivator from Great Zhou, should the cultivator answer the summon?"

Hong Tan was furious. He had been worried for nothing. He had thought that this was an order from an Invincible. But it was merely the order of the Great Zhou Army. That army had nothing to do with him. The various prefectures had their own command system. Only the Invincible cultivators could order all humans around in the battlefield.

As for the military order from the Great Zhou Army, well, he could follow it if he was feeling like it since they were fellow humans. But if he refused to follow the order, nobody could do anything.

Hong Tan glared at the Mountainsea cultivator and snorted, "Don't try to mess with me. Are you trying to give me an order with a military token from the Great Zhou Army? Tell that fellow to enter the Invincible Realm first if he wants to order me around. Are you guys trying to pick a fight with me?"

The Mountainsea cultivator avoided answering the question and calmly said, "Even if this is not the order of an Invincible, are you intending to not help while your fellow humans are dying, Researcher Hong?"

"Take your moral high ground and shove it up your ass."

Something like this wouldn't work on Hong Tan. In fact, he was starting to wonder if something had really happened in Great Xia.

"Where is Great Xia's representative?"

Hong Tan roared loudly. Before long, someone else arrived.

Hong Tan glanced at the newcomer and said, "Ma, so you're actually here. I thought you were dead. Are you aware that Great Zhou is trying to order me around? You are an embarrassment to Great Xia. I'll be sure to file an official complaint on you after returning. Is Zhou Mingren playing one of his tricks again and you guys are trying to delay my return?"

The Mountainsea cultivator called Ma smiled and said, "How is that possible? Great Zhou has indeed encountered some trouble and your help is required. You should have more sympathy for your fellow humans."

"Fuck off. You look very happy. I suspect you are taking joy in the bad thing that is happening to someone else."

Hong Tan couldn't even be bothered to waste more time here. This person was an elder of the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy, but he was someone from the single character faction. They had never gotten along well with each other. Hong Tan decided to just leave.

Elder Ma smiled and said, "Hong Tan, the tunnel connecting to the Human Realm is under repair. You need to wait a few days for it to be reopened. Since you don't have anything to do anyway, you might as well check the request for reinforcements out. Maybe you can get some positive karma by saving some lives there..."

Bang!

Hong Tan slapped out.

With a rumble, Elder Ma was crushed into the ground by a massive mountain. No matter how he struggled, he couldn't get back on his feet. The disturbance caused numerous Mountainsea cultivators to show up, but none said anything.

Hong Tan furiously said, "Do you think that I'm a pushover? Repair my ass. Do you think I'm stupid? I can't do much to that Zhou bastard, but do you think I'm helpless against you as well? Do you really think an eighth-stage Mountainsea cultivator like me is a pushover? Do you want me to find an Invincible and get an answer for this? You guys actually dare to stop me from returning to the Human Realm? Are you tired of living?"

He then sent Elder Ma flying with a kick.

He glanced at the other person and said, "Don't push it too far, people from Great Zhou. Or else, I'll just go look for Great Xia King at the War Shrine. You guys have been bullying us for so many years. Don't cross the line. I haven't been bothered to do anything all these years but you guys are actually getting used to bullying us? For the sake of the past friendship of our seniors, I have been unwilling to quarrel with you guys. But are you guys going to keep pushing it?"

Hong Tan was furious.

"I'm warning you. If I go back to find that something has happened to my students, I won't spare any of you. There's also my senior brother. Don't even think of scheming against him. Face is still very important for those Invincibles. The Liu Family had saved so many people in the past. No matter what, some Invincibles still remembered their favor. They can stay indifferent as long as my senior brother remains fine. But if something really happens to him, I am going to throw all caution to the wind and make sure the entire humanity finds out about ungrateful scoundrels like you people who have actually schemed against the hero of humanity because of your greed over the belongings of my dead teacher."

Suddenly, a loud bang rang out. Hong Tan had vanished. He had actually been slapped all the way into the tunnel leading to the Human Realm. Then, another large palm descended from the sky. The Mountainsea cultivator who had tried to send Hong Tan away was slapped into pieces. Another palm appeared and descended, crushing Elder Ma's body as well.

"This is the Allheaven Battlefield. What are all of you doing here? If this happens again, the Great Zhou Cultural Research Academy can stop existing."

A cold snort resounded in the area.

A short while later, a voice rang out, "Great Zhou King, get your people under control. If the trouble behind the front line keeps spreading to the battlefield, you can pull all the armies from your Great Zhou back. The Great Zhou will be sealed for 100 years as punishment."

The moment those words were said, everyone sank into silence. Nobody dared to make a noise. Sealing a prefecture for 100 years was basically severing the prefecture of any external resources. That was the same as destroying the prefecture.

"Alright."

A sigh rang out. The two Mountainsea cultivators regrew their bodies, revealing their pale expressions. Another palm appeared and grabbed the two before tossing them deep into the Allheaven Battlefield.

"Kill a Mountainsea enemy to make up for your wrongdoing today."

Calm returned to the area. Only a group of Mountainsea and Sunmoon cultivators with looks of admiration were left behind.

Those were Invincible cultivators. They were the people in the Eternal Realm. As for the two Mountainsea cultivators who had just been tossed into the Vanguard Regiment, nobody cared about them.

It was normal that the two were punished. If Hong Tan had remained silent, the two would probably remain fine. But the moment Hong Tan started making a ruckus, there was no way the two would be able to get away with it.

This was the Allheaven Battlefield, not the Great Zhou Prefecture. This was a place where a random Invincible cultivator might pass by at any time. When someone created trouble here, the Invincible cultivators wouldn't even be bothered to smooth things over.

Their favorite solution for all issues was to toss everyone to the front line. If one could survive the experience, all wrongdoings would be forgiven. If one ended up dying, then nothing mattered anymore.

That fellow from the Great Zhou Cultural Research Academy wasn't even an Invincible yet. Even if he was, he still couldn't do as he wished here in the front line. But Hong Tan's actions today were rather surprising. Wasn't he known as an honest and simple man?

Why was his temper so terrible today? He even had the guts to drag Invincibles into his argument. Fortunately for him, the Invincible that had caught their argument had decided to put all the blame on the two Mountainsea cultivators instead of him.

Chapter 347: Expanded Mutual Aid Club (1)

Inside the fragment room, Su Yu was still unaware that his grandteacher was on the way back. He had basically assumed that he had already lost this grandteacher.

Since nobody knew when this grandteacher would be back, he would just pretend that his grandteacher was in seclusion. They had never seen each other so even if they did meet, they wouldn't recognize each other anyway. He was busy cultivating. He was cultivating without rest.

Drop after drop of the five elemental blood essence was used and one aperture after another was opened. However, there wasn't much growth in terms of his willpower. He had already used most of his willpower to temper his apertures, so his willpower had remained at around 70 percent full.

Late on the night of the 7th, Su Yu exhaled deeply. He had finished all his blood essence. The five elemental blood essence he had bought with 3,000 merit points had been used up. It had only been a day and a night.

With 60 drops of blood essence, he had opened 20 apertures. On average, he had opened one aperture with every three drops. The speed was decent, but like what happened when he opened his acupoints, there were a lot of impurities in his apertures, making them look somewhat dim and clogged. He felt like there was a need to purify these apertures.

The clearbright bird blood essence could purify source qi, but it couldn't do so for willpower. Su Yu had no idea what he could do to purify his willpower. He had yet to discover a suitable source or cultural art with such a function. Perhaps he could spend some time going through all the pages he had unlocked to look for one.

The 20 apertures he had opened were still working independently. They had yet to be linked into a single system. However, they were good enough to actively absorb some willpower. Even now, these apertures were slowly growing Su Yu's willpower.

"Things sure feel different with apertures opened."

Su Yu was impressed. With his apertures opened, even his senses were turning sharper. After opening so many acupoints, he was starting to encounter situations where his brain moved slower than the instincts of his physical body.

But with the opening of his apertures, this sense of imbalance had faded considerably. He now felt like he was capable of moving at an even faster speed than before.

And for his Time technique, speed was still its core. To pursue a speed that could give one an illusion of the passage of time. To pursue a speed that could crush Mountainsea cultivators and suppress Sunmoon cultivators.

"Since I'm out of five elemental blood essence, I can only slowly open my other apertures. Maybe I can ask Xia Huyou if he can get me more blood essence..."

The five elemental race was a small race. Generally, killing an Infinite Strength five elemental cultivator would grant one around 10 drops of blood essence. Su Yu had consumed 70 drops of their blood essence in total, which was basically the same as killing seven of their Infinite Strength cultivators.

Of course, Su Yu believed that he had probably caused the deaths of even more mountainbreak bulls. He had probably consumed nearly 1,000 drops of mountainbreak bull blood essence by now. That was basically nearly 100 mountainbreak bulls dying to satisfy his need for blood essence.

At times, he even wondered if the mountainbreak bull race had lost an entire 100-man squad in the Allheaven Battlefield because of him.

"I still need to open more acupoints and cultivate the Soul Devouring Art."

The Soul Devouring Art required 36 acupoints, but many of those acupoints overlapped with what he already opened. Thus, he only needed to open 12 additional acupoints.

...

Prior to meeting Xia Huyou, Su Yu paid a visit to the Prosperous Red Tea House.

Second floor.

This was already a usual meeting place for them.

Hu Zongji was there waiting for Su Yu. The moment the door opened, Hu Zongji smiled, "You have truly turned into a superstar in the academy."

It was already late at night. The tea house was already closed for the day. When Su Yu looked at the stairs curiously, Hu Zongji explained, "I already booked the whole place for us. The shopkeeper is a distant relative of the Hu Family. He looked pretty miserable before this so I found him a job here."

Su Yu nodded, "That's good to hear. I'm not afraid of being recognized, but since too many people know me, you can get implicated easily."

Hu Zongji nodded. He naturally understood that. He wouldn't have gotten the tea house under his control before their meeting otherwise. The two walked into a private room.

Once inside, Su Yu went straight to the point, "Did you find out about something? Is that why you're suddenly asking to meet?"

"Yeah." Hu Zongji nodded, "Yesterday, the single character faction elders were all missing from the academy. Only Faculty Head Zhou is left. Last night, Elder Li returned. He seemed to have sustained some injuries."

"Missing?"

Su Yu was surprised. Missing elders and an injured elder. What was happening? They were not on the battlefield. They were within Great Xia.

Su Yu's face turned solemn as he said, "What do you know? Tell me more."

Hu Zongji whispered, "I don't know the exact details. Not even my second granduncle knows that. But apart from the single character faction elders, some other elders have gone missing as well."

"There are 42 elders in the academy. 36 of them are Mountainsea cultivators. Principal Wan is excluded in that calculation. Eight of these elders are in the Allheaven Battlefield. Including Elder Hong, nine of them are away."

Basically a quarter of the academy elders were in the Allheaven Battlefield. That wasn't a big number.

Hu Zongji continued, "Of the remaining 27 Mountainsea elders, 8 are in seclusion. Only 19 of them are still active in the academy. Including the principal, we have 20 active Mountainsea cultivators in the academy."

Su Yu nodded again. Hu Zongji continued, "Yesterday, at least 6 of the 20 active Mountainsea cultivators departed at the same time. I heard that from my second granduncle. These days, I have been visiting him often. After hearing about something that might be related to you, I decided to stay a while longer when I learned of this."

Six Mountainsea cultivators had left at the same time. Did something major happen? What happened? Was that related to him?

Su Yu shook his head. That was unlikely. How would that be related to him? So many elders were gone. Were they out attacking the Myriad Race Cult?

"Do you know anything else?"

Hu Zongji thought for a bit and said, "I really don't know the exact details, but I know that when they left...no, to be precise, when Elder Li returned injured, my second granduncle heard of it and made one remark, wondering why had that person decided to return and bring chaos..."

"Return?"

Su Yu muttered. Who was returning? Clearly, Hu Youhui knew something and even knew that person. Someone was returning? Who was it?

Hu Zongji said, "This might be related to your faction so I'm letting you know just in case."

Su Yu looked at Hu Zongji with an odd expression. True. If the matter was entirely unrelated to him, there was no need for Hu Zongji to tell him all that.

"It's related to my faction? The multiple character faction?"

"Yeah." Hu Zongji nodded, "I tried to indirectly ask more from my second granduncle. He didn't tell me much, but he did talk about some expelled individuals that are not worth mentioning. When I thought about it, I started suspecting if this is related to the multiple character faction members that were expelled 50 years ago."

Su Yu's face changed. Expelled! That was such a familiar term. Liu Wenyan! Su Yu frowned. Were they talking about Teacher Liu? That shouldn't be the case, right? Teacher Liu had been in Nanyuan. And he didn't recall his Teacher Liu talking about returning. But when he tried calling his Teacher Liu the day before, his call couldn't connect.

At that thought, Su Yu said, "Give me a moment."

He then took out his communicator and called a number.

It was quite late. After a long wait, someone finally answered with a grumpy tone, "Who is this?"

"Uncle Chen!"

Su Yu was relieved. It was fine as long as the call was connected. He said, "Uncle Chen, it's me. Su Yu."

"It's Yu?" Chen Qinghe was roused awake. He hurriedly asked, "Yu, did anything happen?"

Why was Su Yu calling him in the middle of the night?

"Uncle Chen, I tried calling my teacher but the calls haven't been getting through. Since you're in Nanyuan, do you know if he's fine?"

"Are you talking about Instructor Liu?"

"Yes."

"He's fine. But he hasn't been around for the past two days, I think." Chen Qinghe sounded unsure, "Some of my subordinates even told me yesterday that Principal Wang drove his shitty truck out of the city. Instructor Liu was with him as well. I don't know if both of them had left the city."

"Left the city? Do you know where they're going?"

"I'm not sure. Maybe they went to Tianshui to do some shopping?" Chen Qinghe said, "How about this? I'll ask around for you. I have some friends in the school."

"Thank you very much, Uncle Chen."

"You're welcome."

The call ended. It was late at night, but after thinking about it, Chen Qinghe still decided to make some calls.

...

A few minutes later, Su Yu's communicator rang.

"Yu, I asked around. Both Principal Wang and Instructor Liu have applied for a long leave. All their lessons are being taught by other teachers. Nobody knows what they are doing with the long leave."

"Ok. Got it. Thank you, Uncle Chen. Sorry for the trouble."

After a short chat, Su Yu ended the call. Teacher Liu was no longer in Nanyuan! Su Yu frowned. The single character faction elders had suddenly departed. Someone had even been injured. Clearly, there had been a battle somewhere.

Could it be...that shouldn't be the case, right? Were these people really gutsy enough to make a move inside Great Xia? Teacher Liu was only in the Skysoar Realm. Were these Mountainsea elders going to personally make a move against him? Would they?

Despite all the thoughts running through his mind, Su Yu maintained a calm expression as he said, "Thank you, Zongji. Thank you for this information."

"Don't mention it." Hu Zongji said, "I'm just doing my part. I'm glad the information is helpful for you. Don't be too worried, Su Yu. To speak the truth, with our strength, there's nothing we can do anyway. If something is really happening, it is better for you to stay in the academy. I'm worried that something bad might happen to you if you leave the academy."

With Wan Tiansheng around, Su Yu would be safe as long as he remained in the academy. Outside the academy, things might be fine inside the city. But the moment he left the city, he would only be able to rely on himself.

"I understand." Su Yu nodded, "Help me ask about Di Feng and that Qiu Yi person who is ranked 24th in the ranking."

From the single character faction, there were four students from Zhou Mingren's line in the top 100.

Apart from Huang Qifeng, there were three other students. Di Feng was previously ranked 9th and was the strongest of the bunch. After that was Qiu Yi. Both of them were students of Zhou Pingsheng.

The third person was Hu Wensheng's student and Chen Qi's senior brother. But that person maintained a very low profile and could be hardly seen in the academy.

Chapter 348: Expanded Mutual Aid Club (2)

Hu Zongji asked in astonishment, "Su Yu...don't tell me you're already in the Infinite Strength Realm."

"Nope." Su Yu shook his head, "Just gather some information about them for me. At times, you can't trust the rumors you hear, you know?"

There was nothing much he could do about the events outside the academy. But if something really happened to Teacher Liu, he could still make things really difficult for the single character faction within the academy.

Di Feng, who was ranked 9th, had a combat strength near the level of a Skysoar cultivator. Su Yu still wasn't his match. But that might not be the case for Qiu Yi, who was ranked 24th in the ranking.

With the apertures Su Yu had opened, after opening a few more acupoints and cultivating the Soul Devouring Art, he might really gain enough strength to defeat Qiu Yi.

It was not his wish to implicate anyone with his anger toward the single character faction. But since they were the ones targeting his faction, he wouldn't mind teaching them a lesson they couldn't forget.

Within the academy, he feared nothing.

At that thought, Su Yu said, "Do the other elders have any students in the top 100 as well? If there are, gather their information for me as well. Thank you. Some of what I know are probably already outdated. I will be relying on you."

"That won't be an issue."

Hu Zongji nodded. Inwardly, he was actually quite shocked. Su Yu was someone who had joined the academy at the same time as him. But now, Su Yu was already setting his eyes on the top 30 students. What a terrifying individual. This person was growing at a crazy speed.

Su Yu asked, "How is your cultivation of the Pure Source Art?"

"I managed to cultivate it." Hu Zongji nodded, "I only cultivate it as a supplementary cultivation method. My main cultivation method is still the War God Art. I also entered the grotto once to break through into the Great Strength Realm. I now have 18 acupoints opened, but I have also opened a few of the Pure Source Art's acupoints."

With 18 acupoints, he was not even a second-stage Great Strength cultivator. In comparison with Su Yu, he was incomparably weak. But for a new student who hadn't even been in the academy for more than three months, he was actually doing quite well. Not everyone would enter the academy as Great Strength cultivators. And not everyone was Su Yu.

"The acupoint opening is a tad bit too slow..."

Su Yu remarked casually, but Hu Zongji felt awkward hearing that.

Su Yu wasn't saying so to destroy Hu Zongji's confidence. After thinking about it, he said, "In our circle, even if we can't grow strong, we must at least make sure that we aren't too weak. If you are too weak, nobody will attach any importance to you. You won't be able to enter the high-end circles of the academy, resulting in an inability to gather more important information. You can't rely on your second granduncle forever, right?"

Hu Zongji awkwardly said, "I...can't open my acupoints fast enough..."

"That won't be an issue." Su Yu said, "With the Pure Source Art, you'll be able to cleanse your acupoints. Thus, you will be able to increase your cultivation speed by consuming more blood essence. Others might destabilize their foundation after consuming too much blood essence, but you won't face the same problem. You can freely use things like blood essence and pills. It doesn't matter since you have the Pure Source Art."

Hu Zongji nodded in agreement. But he was too ashamed to tell Su Yu that cultivating this way would be too expensive.

"I'll challenge the Top 100 Ranking tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. Just look for Xia Huyou and bet on me winning. Bet as much as you can on all matches I'm fighting in. If you trust me, just bet on me..."

Hu Zongji had a helpless smile as he said, "I do trust you, but the others know that you're strong as well. This betting pool won't be able to last long."

"That's the case for the first few matches. But how do you think the others would react if I challenge Qiu Yi? Would people finally stop betting on me?"

"Definitely." Hu Zongji nodded, "But how confident are you?"

"Do you trust me?"

"Yes." Hu Zongji nodded, "Fine. I won't ask how confident you are. Just be careful. From what my second granduncle has been saying, things might grow chaotic in the academy as well. Of course, there will be a limit to the chaos in the academy, but things will definitely be slightly turbulent for a while. At times like this, strength is the most important."

"I'll keep that in mind. Remember, use all your winnings on blood essence and pills and cultivate inside the grotto..."

"I can't enter the grotto." Hu Zongji said, "My previous entry was the free chance given when I joined the academy. I don't have enough total earned merit to enter the grotto normally."

"..."

Su Yu felt like cursing. He had nearly forgotten about the total earned merit. Finally, he was reminded of the fact that very few of the new students could actually enter the grotto.

"Grotto..."

Su Yu rubbed his chin. The Source Qi Secret Grotto was very important. At the very least, it was very important for students below the Skysoar Realm. Each time he entered the grotto, his cultivation speed would be 10 times faster than his usual speed outside the grotto.

Even if he cultivated with an endless supply of blood essence, he would still encounter bottlenecks outside the grotto. Only by cultivating within the grotto would he be able to advance endlessly.

"I'll think of something." Su Yu said, "Maybe there is a way to get you some total earned merit and send you into the grotto."

"Su Yu, this..." Hu Zongji was getting somewhat uneasy, "Will that be possible?"

"I'll try."

Su Yu was unsure, but he could give it a try. And if he really managed to do it, he would be able to further impress Hu Zongji.

...

After the meeting was done, Su Yu wasted no time and left the room. Before leaving, Su Yu nodded at the shopkeeper with a friendly smile.

The old shopkeeper was shocked to see how friendly Su Yu was. When Hu Zongji came down, he said, "Second Young Master, that person...seems to possess the grace of a truly important individual."

Hu Zongji smiled, "Third Uncle, don't address me as the young master. You're sounding like a stranger. As for that person, you're actually right. As long as he gets through this obstacle in front of him, he will grow into an important individual. His strength is truly...sigh."

Even now, Hu Zongji was still in disbelief. It was as though Su Yu would turn into an entirely different person each time they met. It had only been a few days yet Su Yu was already considering challenging Qiu Yi. What a terrifying person.

"Third Uncle...do me a favor."

"What do you need, Second Young Master?"

"Like I said, don't call me the young master...forget it. Help me arrange for the sales of my businesses in Tianshui. Tell my mother that her son is in trouble and requires some money to solve the trouble. Get her to let go of the properties and lend me some money..."

"Second Young Master, this..." Hu Zongji said, "I need to take a gamble. Third Uncle, in our home, I am nothing but a wastrel. My elder brother is a genius. What about me? I suppose I have a decent talent as a high-middle student of a cultural research academy. But in the academy, I am nothing."

"If I don't grab any chance I get, what am I going to do with my life? Am I supposed to spend decades here before entering the Skysoar Realm and returning to Tianshui to get appointed as a minor official? What a boring life that would be.

"I'll first earn some money and use the money to push my cultivation up. As for my future, if I really end up doing badly, so be it. But if I end up doing well, I will have no lack of money in the future!"

"I understand." The old man nodded, "Second Young Master, you're actually quite talented. Just look at you. You're already at the Great Strength Realm..."

Hu Zongji didn't feel like saying anything. Great Strength Realm? Was that really so impressive? Sure, he had taken less than three months to reach the Great Strength Realm. He was also not far away from the

second stage. But what if he compared himself with Su Yu? He was so far away from even the bottom of the Top 100 Ranking.

There were so many geniuses and talented students in the academy yet Su Yu had picked Hu Zongji. Hu Zongji knew that Su Yu had his own plans and secrets. Su Yu might not be able to keep a stronger student under control, so that was probably one of the reasons he had picked Hu Zongji.

But he still couldn't be too weak. Otherwise, it would only be a matter of time before he lost all his value to Su Yu who was continuing to grow rapidly.

Just look at how Su Yu had reacted when hearing about his cultivation of the first-stage Great Strength Realm earlier. Yes. There was no reaction whatsoever.

Hu Zongji clenched his teeth and vowed to himself that he definitely couldn't lose Su Yu as a backer. This second granduncle of his wasn't exactly his grandfather. Was he supposed to rely on this granduncle for life?

As for Su Yu, no matter how hard his life was, he still had the backing of a proper eighth-stage Mountainsea cultivator.

Just the Pure Source Art Su Yu had randomly taken out was already something Hu Zongji could only treat as an invaluable treasure. In fact, this cultivation method would be treasured by any other group as well. After all, apart from those top-tier families, very few people actually had something capable of source qi purification.

...

Su Yu was completely unaware of what Hu Zongji was thinking. As far as Su Yu was concerned, it was already impossible for Hu Zongji to keep up with him. He was already happy enough if Hu Zongji could be helpful for now. For example, Hu Zongji could be the source of some information that Su Yu wouldn't be able to obtain himself.

"I need to recruit even more people."

His network of people was still too small. Only after recruiting someone with access to the higher ups would he be able to ensure that he could always stay updated with the latest ongoings.

...

Half an hour later.

Mental Tempering Garden. Beside a certain rock garden.

Within the darkness, Lin Yao asked curiously, "Brother Su, what are we doing here so late at night?"

He asked in excitement, "Brother Su, my teacher's status has grown in the faction! Even my senior brother and I are basking in the light of my teacher's promotion! We are each getting over 30 merit points per month!"

Su Yu blanked out slightly. Promoted? Don't joke around! Even after what he did, Liu Hong was actually still fine?

Su Yu had nothing to say. He could only admire how truly devious Liu Hong was. That fellow had definitely turned Zhou Pingsheng into the super scapegoat.

Despite his thoughts, Su Yu still smiled and said, "Congratulations. All this is within our expectation, including the injuries of that elder. Hehe, if he hasn't been injured, how would Teacher Liu get the chance to showcase his ability? In fact, even the disturbance I created during the challenge matches was for the sake of giving Teacher Liu a chance to perform."

"I guessed right!" Lin Yao said in excitement, "I knew that was an act by both you and Teacher. You were only saying all those things about Teacher to help win more trust from Faculty Head Zhou for my teacher! I knew it!"

Exactly. Holy shit. Su Yu only needed to come up with the first half of the lie and Lin Yao had already completed the story himself. What an incredible...brain.

Chapter 349: Expanded Mutual Aid Club (3)

"For now, I have to continue maintaining my distance from Teacher Liu..." Su Yu said, "By the way, your grandfather is from the single character faction as well. Will injuring Elder Zheng affect your grandfather..."

"It's fine." Lin Yao said, "We're not from their line. We're actually from Elder Fang's line. Faculty Head Zhou's line is already used to being overbearing in the faction. But since my grandpa is quite close with Faculty Head Zhou, he decided to stay in the middle and not side with anyone in the faction."

"That's good. We don't want to create more conflict between your line and the other lines." Su Yu nodded, "Brother Lin, to speak the truth, Teacher Liu, me, and a lot of people are trying to change something. But since we are still too weak, we can only stay in the shadows for now. Brother Lin, you're a student of Teacher Liu. We have built our friendship from rivalry. I approve of your character. If one day we decide to overturn some of the existing status quo, would you be willing to stand at our side?"

Lin Yao frowned, "Brother Su, you guys aren't trying to overthrow the entire single character faction, right?"

"Of course not. And we're not strong enough to do something like that anyway."

Lin Yao thought about it and said, "I am not a selfless person. As long as my grandfather is fine, I don't really care. As long as my teacher and you are victorious, I honestly don't care about the others."

Su Yu nodded, "In that case, I hereby officially invite you to the Mutual Aid Club. Don't ask me how many members we have. Don't ask me who our members are. I am your sole contact person from the club. Everything else will remain secret."

He then gave Lin Yao a short introduction to the Mutual Aid Club.

Lin Yao asked in excitement, "Is...Teacher a part of this Mutual Aid Club as well?"

"Like I said, don't ask me about the members." Su Yu solemnly said, "This is still a small circle for now. Do not tell anyone about it. Do not speak of this club openly. That applies to Teacher Liu as well. You are

not to speak with him about the club. You shouldn't be asking about his membership. He will not be aware of the fact that you're a member of the club."

"The moment you leak anything related to the club, we will have no choice but to kick you."

Lin Yao hurriedly nodded, "I understand. What do I need to do for the club?"

"Information transmission and gathering. Isn't your grandfather a Cloudbreach cultivator? He's quite close to Faculty Head Zhou as well, right? In that case, he definitely knows a lot. You only need to share some information that you think you can share with me.

"Naturally, you won't be working for free. In the Mutual Aid Club, fair exchange is extremely important. We will have someone evaluating the value of every information you bring to the club. With your information, you can trade for the things you need from the club."

"The things I need?" Lin Yao said after some hesitation, "But I don't lack any cultivation resources for now..."

Su Yu shook his head, "Brother Lin, you're too easily satisfied. Where is the Lin Yao who had looked for me for some mountainbreak bull blood essence? Aren't you aiming for the top 100? Are you giving up already? So many of our classmates have managed to enter the top 100. Don't you want to do the same?"

Lin Yao blanked out.

"I feel like after the end of the conflict between us, you seem to have lost all your fighting spirit. If I had known that this would happen, I would have remained as your rival. Brother Lin, don't forget that you're from the single character faction while I'm from the multiple character faction. From today onward, we will be rivals. You should be viewing me with hostility! That is what Lin Yao should be doing!"

Lin Yao blanked out slightly. After a short thought, he nodded and solemnly said, "Thank you for that. I seem to have gotten carried away, thinking that I have nothing to strive for since you are no longer an enemy. But now...I'm aware that I was wrong."

"That's right." Su Yu said, "We have plenty of good stuff in the club, such as a cultivation method capable of purifying source qi, the Soul Devouring Art i mentioned previously, ability blood essence, body-strengthening manuals, numerous willpower texts, and so on. You will definitely be able to find something you want. Only those in the club are allowed to obtain all these things."

Lin Yao swallowed and said, "Do you guys even have the rights to transmit all those things?"

"Why not? All those manuals are created by our fellow club members so we have all the rights for these manuals."

Lin Yao was greatly alarmed to learn that those manuals were actually created by the members of the club. Just how many members did this Mutual Aid Club have? And how many super experts did they have in the club?

It was very likely that a lot of multiple character faction members were already in the club. Some single character faction members were probably in the club as well. How about those from the other factions?

Lin Yao was getting increasingly alarmed. He was more and more confident that his teacher was probably part of the club as well. Some other students had probably joined the club as well. For example, that Xia Huyou fellow from the Xia Family.

Lin Yao had a feeling like he had been invited to an incredible organization. Perhaps an astonishingly powerful organization that not even the prefect knew about was hidden in the academy. The more he thought about it, the more excited he became.

Suddenly, Su Yu said, "But Brother Lin, you are still too weak. You have been in the Great Strength Realm since the 1st of September. Even now, you are still at the second-stage. This is too slow."

"Erm..."

Lin Yao looked awkward. But wasn't that actually quite fast?

"The Mutual Aid Club has a cultivation manual called the Pure Source Art. It specializes in clearing the impurities in your source qi. I used it before. You know how strong I am. With this cultivation method, you can grow rapidly by consuming blood essence and pills before cleaning the impurities in your body. Your cultivation speed will increase significantly. You will be able to reach the Infinite Strength Realm quickly."

Lin Yao's eyes lit up, "You're using this cultivation method as well?"

"Yeah."

"How many merit points to get this manual?"

"You can't get it with merit points. You need our internal currency, the mutual aid point. But you can only get these mutual aid points by contributing to the club."

Su Yu was busy making things up when he was suddenly stunned. Damn it. Why did it feel like he was starting a cult? But he hurriedly tossed that thought away. He was not setting himself against humanity. He was only creating this club to protect himself. Nothing else mattered.

"You only need 10 mutual aid points. As a fellow member, you can get the manual at a cheap price. If you're an outsider, you won't be able to get the manual for even 1,000 merit points."

"I only need 10 mutual aid points?"

Lin Yao was astonished. This Mutual Aid Club...was truly incredible. No wonder Su Yu was able to grow so quickly. This was too cheap!

"Can I get mutual aid points with any information?" Lin Yao hurriedly said, "I have some information, but I don't know if I can get any mutual aid points for it."

"What is it about?"

"A few months ago, the Divine Skywing Sect attacked Great Xia. During the attack, their sect master was killed by the prefect. The higher ups of the sect were all defeated, but their treasury remains undiscovered. I heard from my grandpa that even the Martial Dragon Guards had failed to find the treasury.

"My grandpa also said that if they keep searching, they might be able to find it. But the prefect disdains doing so. He left the sect master's corpse in the Myriad Race Pit. According to my grandpa, if you can get a drop of the sect master's blood essence, you will be able to separate the memory imprint in the blood essence and search the sect master's memories. Perhaps you can get the location of the treasury through it. Of course, very few people are actually capable of extracting memory imprints and the few experts that are actually capable of doing so don't really care about the treasury of the sect..."

Lin Yao nervously asked, "Is this information useful enough to get me some mutual aid points? It feels quite useless, but it is still something related to some big shots. Perhaps some other big shots in the club will find this information valuable?"

Meanwhile, Su Yu was blanking out. He had never heard of that before. Also, he was quite surprised to learn that Lin Yao actually believed that there were big shots in the Mutual Aid Club.

"Erm...is extracting memory very difficult?"

He was quite astonished. Was that so hard? Even Bai Feng knew how to do so! And he was also in the process of learning how to do that.

"Yes. It's very difficult." Lin Yao nodded, "According to my grandpa, very few experts in existence are capable of extracting memory fragments. Not even the prefect is proficient in that or he would have done so before tossing the corpse away. The faculty heads in the academy might know how to do it, but it would also be too embarrassing for people of their status to steal a corpse from the Myriad Race Pit for some blood essence..."

Too embarrassing? Su Yu had to disagree. Principal Wan was pretty shameless. Would someone like that feel embarrassed?

There were probably some other misgivings. After all, this involved extracting the blood essence of a human. Even if that human in question was a part of the Myriad Race Cult, it still wouldn't be proper for one to openly extract the blood essence of one such person.

Of course, if Xia Longwu knew how to extract memories, he probably wouldn't have any misgivings in doing so.

"Got it. I'll get someone to evaluate the value of this information. If it proves useful, you will definitely receive what you deserve. I think you can probably get enough to purchase a manual of the Pure Source Art. Of course, even after buying the manual, you won't be allowed to transmit it. Do you understand?"

"Of course. I understand."

Lin Yao nodded solemnly. He naturally knew that he had to keep something like this secret. Cultivation methods could not be lightly transmitted!

Most of these cultivation methods were created by big shots. One could easily get killed by carelessly transmitting these cultivation methods. It wasn't like something like this had never happened before.

...

That night, Su Yu successfully dealt with Lin Yao and obtained a piece of news that he still wasn't sure if it would be helpful. He exhaled in relief. As of now, the Mutual Aid Club had successfully obtained its third member. Not bad at all!

All these members were high-tier students. Even Hu Zongji was a high-middle student. In truth, Hu Zongji was actually quite an impressive student. He only looked weak in comparison to someone like Su Yu.

"Teacher Liu..."

He still couldn't contact Liu Wenyan. The single character faction was probably doing something against Liu Wenyan. Su Yu cursed inwardly and wondered if he should tell his teacher and martial uncle about it.

His martial uncle wasn't strong enough and still needed to protect his position in the books depository. If his martial uncle was lured out of the academy...sigh.

Their faction was still too weak. What a pity that his martial uncle still wasn't a Mountainsea cultivator.

"What do people need to reach the Mountainsea Realm from the Cloudbreach Realm? Do they need a new cultivation method or something similar? If it's cultivation method, I might be able to provide some."

Su Yu lacked everything except cultivation methods. And all his cultivation methods were guaranteed to be suitable for human practice. One ought to know that he had already activated over 80 pages so far.

His martial uncle had been stuck in the Cloudbreach Realm for many years. He wondered what the issue was. If his martial uncle could reach the Mountainsea Realm, their faction would be much stronger than before.

After entering the Mountainsea Realm, his martial uncle would be promoted into an elder and gain more weight to his voice inside the academy.

"There's also Teacher Zhao..."

Su Yu exhaled and ran straight toward Xia Huyou. By that time, it was nearly morning. The 8th was coming again so he should get ready to visit his Teacher Zhao again. If possible, he would try to get Teacher Zhao to hammer him a dozen times or so.

He could also try to ask if Teacher Zhao could give him a special privilege when it comes to entering the Source Qi Secret Grotto.

After all, the Source Qi Secret Grotto was something left behind by Teacher Zhao's father. He should have some special prerogative about the grotto, right? It would be a waste to not make use of the special prerogative he had.

Su Yu even started wondering if he should have a talk with Bai Feng and discuss having him officially come under Zhao Li instead. After all, on paper, the multiple character faction no longer existed.

Naturally, he would minor in the multiple character faction instead so they would remain on the same side. Bai Feng would be fine, right? If he did well, he would even share some of his wealth with Bai Feng!

If he really did that, the Source Qi Secret Grotto would be as good as theirs! Wouldn't that be wonderful?

Chapter 350: Just Ask For It! (1)

When Su Yu found Xia Huyou, he had just got out of bed and was still in a daze.

It was too early.

It was almost four in the morning.

Xia Huyou was in a daze because he had just woken up. But that wasn't the case for Su Yu. Just as Su Yu was about to speak, his heart thumped. What did he just see? A thin layer of mist was surrounding Xia Huyou, slowly being absorbed by him. Before long, that thin mist was gone.

"Opened apertures!"

As someone who had just opened 20 apertures, Su Yu was way too familiar with this sight. That thin layer of mist had clearly come from somewhere earlier. Skysoar Realm? Su Yu was alarmed. Was Xia Huyou at the Skysoar Realm? No, that didn't seem to be the case.

If Xia Huyou was a Skysoar cultivator, he would have a full willpower that was already materialized. He would also have a second-tier willpower. He would look slightly different from a regular student. The only exception was if Xia Huyou was already so strong that he could completely conceal his cultivation.

And if Xia Huyou wasn't a Skysoar cultivator, then that could only mean that this fellow had opened some apertures with a cultural art that could be used during the Mental Tempering Stage.

Su Yu was astonished. Wasn't he told that cultural arts suitable for human usage at the Mental Tempering Stage did not exist? No, he was told that such arts existed, but they were monopolized by the great families. So did Xia Huyou know this cultural art because he was an important figure in the Xia Family?

"Su Yu, it's the middle of the night. Can't we talk in the morning?"

Xia Huyou kept yawning. Did Su Yu not require sleep? He wasn't too worried about the tiny bit of willpower surrounding him when he woke up. Su Yu wasn't even a Skysoar cultivator so he was sure that Su Yu wouldn't be able to notice anything. And he only required a short moment to absorb that tiny bit of willpower. Even a Skysoar cultivator could easily miss that if the cultivator wasn't paying close attention.

Su Yu did not talk about what he saw and smiled, "I have too many things to do so I'll have to be troubling you. Huyou, I have a question. Do you sell foundation cultural arts? I'm referring to those arts that can be used during the Mental Tempering Stage."

"No." Xia Huyou said, "How can something like that be sold?"

"So something like that exists? You know more things than me. Can you confirm with me if such cultural arts exist in the Human Realm?"

Xia Huyou scratched his head and said, "Such cultural arts definitely exist, but generally, they are kept secret by their owners. With so many Invincible experts around, some of them must have already come up with a usable cultural art for humans..."

"Since those Invincible experts can create something like that, why haven't they spread these cultural arts like the source arts?"

"It's different." Xia Huyou shook his head, "Simply put, everyone is capable of being a warrior. But only a small minority of people can become cultural researchers. And that small group of people stand at the peak of human society. Those pursuing the path of cultural research are either those from major families or cultural research families.

"Sure, there are some unaffiliated cultural researchers around, but there are very few of them. Even if the cultural arts are made public, the commoners won't be able to get or learn them. In the end, these cultural arts will still end up in the hands of these major families."

At this point, Xia Huyou was finally starting to wake up. He said, "That will only further solidify the position and privilege of those in that special class formed by cultural researchers. At times, not spreading these cultural arts can also be beneficial for the human race. Of course, those people are also keeping these cultural arts private for selfish reasons. They wish to further strengthen their families like how those warrior families have been able to maintain the advantage of their families by keeping their cultivation methods secret."

Xia Huyou smiled, "It is impossible to make all cultivation manuals public. This applies to all races. Even the divines and the devils will keep some of their more powerful cultivation manuals secret from the rest of their population."

Su Yu nodded, "In other words, these cultural arts exist. Am I right?"

"I think so."

Xia Huyou gave an indirect answer.

Su Yu thought about it and asked, "What if someone spread a cultural art like this around?"

Xia Huyou gave it some thought and replied, "The number of cultural researchers will increase. The struggle over resources will intensify. And humanity will face a shortage of willpower texts. Of course, there are also advantages to it. Cultural researchers will be able to reach the Skysoar Realm faster. A cultural researcher can obtain sufficient combat strength in a shorter period of time, shortening the time required for a cultural researcher to reach a high level of cultivation."

"Su Yu, nobody will sell something like this. Stop thinking about it. Also, even if such cultural arts really exist, there definitely won't be a lot of them in existence. Generally, these arts are kept even a secret from those in the same family."

Xia Huyou shook his head, "I'll be honest. For now, it is still impossible to share everything with everyone. Perhaps in the future when the human race is on the brink of extinction, this might be possible since we will be forced to use everything we have against the myriad races. At that time, I suppose all these precious cultivation manuals will no longer seem so precious.

"But the truth is that the human race is still one of the stronger races. We are not in that good of a position, but we are still doing quite well in the Allheaven Battlefield. It is basically impossible for humanity to start sharing all these cultivation manuals at this time."

"Are we really doing well?" Su Yu coldly said, "If we're really doing well, the Devil Subduing Army would not have been forced to recall the retired soldiers several times in the past few years. My father wouldn't have returned to the battlefield at the age of fifty."

Xia Huyou coughed awkwardly and said, "The Devil Subduing Army is different. That is mainly because they have been involved in too many wars early on. You know that the Great Xia Prefecture is very warlike. My-our Prefect Xia is a very stern person that is unwilling to compromise. As long as anyone dares to provoke us, he will answer with his army. That results in disastrous losses among the Devil Subduing Army, forcing us to keep recruiting retired veterans back into the army."

Su Yu asked, "In that case, the other prefectures have actually not suffered as many casualties in all these wars?"

"Yeah." Xia Huyou said, "The other prefectures do fight in wars, but strictly speaking, they are mostly fighting the weaker races. Only our Great Xia Prefecture focuses on the powerful races like the divines and the devils."

"Why?" Xia Huyou sighed, "Why else? It's due to the Great Xia King. He is the kind of person that enjoys doing something nobody else dares to do. For example, he will insist on defending the locations nobody dares to defend. He will also insist on fighting in conflicts nobody dares to get involved in. For a few generations, that is the type of prefect we have been getting. Because of that, our army keeps going deeper and deeper into the Allheaven Battlefield. As a result, the enemies we encounter become stronger and stronger as well."

"Are the other Invincibles not doing anything about this?"

"Yes, they are. But the Invincible cultivators are only involved in the battles of Invincible cultivators. As for the battles below their level, they wouldn't get involved."

When Xia Huyou saw Su Yu's doubtful expression, he explained, "Of course, it is not necessarily a bad thing to be involved in more battles. By engaging in more battles, we have been able to produce more experts as well. The Great Xia is basically raising experts through slaughter..."

He didn't try to hide anything, "Survival of the fittest. Of the various prefectures, Great Xia is the prefecture with the highest rate of experts produced. We are actually among the strongest prefectures in the Human Realm. Of the 36 prefectures of the Human Realm, Great Xia is actually one of the three strongest prefectures."

"36 prefectures?" Su Yu frowned, "Why are there only 36 prefectures? The books say that there are 38 prefectures."

Xia Huyou scratched his head, "I'm referring to the major prefectures. Apart from the major prefectures, there are two small prefectures. The books aren't too clear about it, but one of the two is the Allheaven Prefecture. That is the prefecture with the tunnel leading to the Allheaven Battlefield. The other small prefecture is the Dual Holy Prefecture. That is the core of the Human Realm, the place where the two holy lands of humanity can be found. Both the War Shrine and the Knowledge Seeking Realm is located within that prefecture."

Su Yu nodded and said, "I know about all that. So you're excluding those two when you rank the prefectures? I was confused when you said that we're a top three prefecture. Doesn't that make us the strongest behind the Dual Holy Prefecture?"

Xia Huyou shrugged, "It's not like we're that far off. Ignoring everything else, in terms of military strength and the numbers of experts alone, we are at the top in the Human Realm. There is one other prefecture that is as strong as us, the Great Zhou Prefecture. They are much better at plundering the Allheaven Battlefield for resources. Thanks to their wealth, they have been able to produce a lot of experts as well."

"Apart from Great Xia and Great Zhou, which prefecture is in the top three?"

"Great Qin." Xia Huyou unhesitatingly said, "They are very strong as well. The Great Qin King is standing at the very top even among the Invincible experts."

Su Yu said, "In that case, there are actually 36 Invincible cultivators in the two holy lands?"

"I don't know." Xia Huyou smiled, "Apart from the Invincible cultivators themselves, nobody really knows. Firstly, some of them might have perished but the news has been hidden from the public. Some new experts might have broken through into the Invincible Realm without publicizing the news of the breakthrough. And not all Invincible cultivators will actually start their own prefecture..."

"If you check the history books, you should be aware that over 300 years ago, the various prefectures have only been founded out of desperation. Some myriad race experts had entered the Human Realm to create chaos everywhere. Left with no choice, some human Invincibles stepped forth and established the various prefectures to protect the humans living within those territories."

Su Yu nodded. He was aware of that. Of course, the history books were not detailed enough in their description of the events. In truth, history has not given any explanations for a lot of issues.

For example, the matter concerning the advancement of the first batch of human Invincibles over 300 years ago. How did that group of humans break through? Where did they come from? Where had they learned what they knew? Were there any human experts before them?

All these things were only mentioned passingly in the history books. Basically, anything involving the Invincible cultivators would be left ambiguous in the history books.

Su Yu did not push for more answers. He only needed to have a clearer idea of some topics instead of knowing everything. After hearing Xia Huyou's words, he was starting to suspect that this Xia Huyou could very well be Xia Longwu's son.

What a pity. Xia Longwu used to be Su Yu's idol. That was someone who would always look dignified and imposing on television. With one order, he would cause countless heads to fall. He was someone who had planted fear in the hearts of the Myriad Race Cult members. A person so noble and imposing would actually have a son like this? Su Yu found it hard to believe.

Naturally, Su Yu had no intention of exposing Xia Huyou even though he was already 80 percent sure of Xia Huyou's identity. It was fine to know about it, but there was no need to reveal the truth. Strictly speaking, this Xia Huyou was the crown prince of Great Xia. After exposing the truth, was he supposed to start saluting this crown prince each time they meet in the future?