

Myriad 351

Chapter 351: Just Ask For It! (1)

"Alright, let's stop talking about all that. You still owe me around 4,000 merit points. I told you to gather some blood essence for me. Have you done so?"

"I did. I got you 100 drops of late-stage Infinite Strength mountainbreak bull blood essence for 2,000 merit points. I also got you 500 drops of Great Strength soul devouring bug blood essence for 1,500 merit points. With the remaining 500 merit points, I got you 10 drops of fire elemental blood essence."

Just like that, all the money he had earned through Xia Huyou was gone. Su Yu was feeling rather helpless. This fatty was truly quite efficient in helping him spend his money. Each time, this fellow would buy just enough for him to finish spending all his money. Just like that, his pocket was emptied yet again.

"Are the mountainbreak bulls in the battlefield not going crazy from all the blood essence we are gathering?"

Xia Huyou smiled, "What are you thinking? It's only some blood essence. We haven't even killed that many of them. The mountainbreak bull is only a top 100 race. Don't overestimate them. The human race is a top 10 race yet we still have so many people dying each year. The lives of the mountainbreak bulls are definitely not comparable to the lives of humans.

"In truth, there aren't a lot of mountainbreak bulls in the battlefield. But they are born at the Great Strength Realm. In the early stages, they are stronger than the human race. After all, we still need to go through the Source Opening Realm. In fact, many of the stronger races do not need to even go through the Source Opening Realm."

Su Yu did not have anything to say about that. He only knew that he had finished spending the money he had recently earned.

After thinking about it, he said, "My teacher told me that at the Skysoar Realm, I can cultivate the Myriad Text Sutra and start opening my soul apertures. But by absorbing willpower, my apertures will be filled with impurities like what would happen to my acupoints after consuming blood essence. Since you know so much, do you know of a way to purify willpower?"

"You asked the right person!" Xia Huyou smiled, "There are a lot of ways you can purify your willpower."

"Firstly, pills. The pillmaking faction has a special pill capable of purifying willpower called the Soul Congealing Pill. It is split into several grades. The second grade corresponds to the Skysoar Realm, but it is very expensive at 100 merit points per pill. Its effect is decent as you can purify around three to five apertures with one pill.

"Secondly, talismans. The talisman faction has a type of purification talisman. These talismans are one-off talismans that can be used to cleanse your apertures. Its price is similar to the Soul Congealing Pill.

"Thirdly, cleansing your willpower with a different willpower of high purity.

"Fourthly, some rare natural treasures can also be used to purify your willpower.

"Fifthly, cultivation methods..."

"Cultivation methods?" This was what Su Yu have been waiting for, "There are actually cultivation methods capable of solving this issue as well?"

"Yes." Xia Huyou said, "Naturally, I don't have this cultivation method. And I can't even get my hands on one. But I'm sure that something like this exists out there. It is rumored that the Great Ming King has one such cultivation method. Those from the main branch of Great Ming's Zhu Family are probably all taught this cultivation method. Those from their family are known for their pure apertures."

Great Ming King...Su Yu decided to forget about it. This was the cultivation method of a family with an Invincible expert. There was no way this cultivation method would leak.

"How about the myriad races? Are there such cultivation methods among the myriad races?"

"There probably are some out there, but I'm really not sure. Some of those races specializing in willpower probably have these cultivation methods. Maybe the five elemental race has one such cultivation method. I don't know..."

Su Yu himself was not too sure. He only knew the foundation cultural art and racial ability of the five elemental race. But that didn't mean that he knew everything about the five elemental race.

After all, he could only activate the foundation cultural art and racial abilities with blood essence. The other cultivation methods and techniques they cultivated would not be activated. The book in his head would be way too scary if it was capable of activating even the additional methods and techniques cultivated by the myriad races.

Su Yu did not ask further. He would try to look for more information himself or check with Bai Feng later. He was in no rush. Even though he might accumulate impurities in his apertures, he was still nowhere near breakthrough so that wasn't something he needed to worry about for now.

After thinking for a bit, Su Yu said, "Huyou, if I want to enter the Infinite Strength Realm, what do you think can help increase the speed of my advancement?"

"You're preparing to enter the Infinite Strength Realm already?"

Xia Huyou was astonished. But his surprise did not last long. Since Su Yu was already at the ninth-stage Great Strength Realm, it wasn't too surprising that he would start planning for his breakthrough.

"You're already aware of this. The advancement into the Infinite Strength Realm is essentially the process of acupoint fusion. But only if you fuse 10 or more acupoints would you be considered a true Infinite Strength cultivator. The number of acupoints fused will have a very big effect on your combat strength.

"The best option is to fuse the maximum number of acupoints required by your cultivation method. For example, the War God Art allows you to fuse up to 12 acupoints for the first stage. It would definitely be much better if you can do so. That way, when you're attacking, your source qi will flow smoothly. Things like clogged source qi circulation will not happen."

Xia Huyou did not elaborate too much as Su Yu himself was already aware of all that. After the short introduction, Xia Huyou continued, "The best item to help someone enter the Infinite Strength Realm is something called the lapis fruit."

"Lapis fruit?"

Su Yu couldn't recall hearing about this fruit before. Compared to those from the major families, he still knew too little. It was simply impossible for him to know everything from reading alone.

"Yes. It is a fruit that can make your body as pure as a precious stone. After consuming this fruit, your acupoints will undergo a certain level of materialization. During this period of time, the repelling force between your acupoints will be at its weakest, making it the best opportunity for you to fuse your acupoints."

"Reducing the repelling force between acupoints..." With a pensive look, Su Yu said, "When fusing acupoints, the acupoints will repel each other. Is it possible to replace the lapis fruit with Divine Characters or other methods capable of weakening the repelling force to help with the fusion?"

"Yeah." Xia Huyou nodded, "If you have a Divine Character with such an ability, you can naturally use it to help with your breakthrough. The issue is more on actually obtaining such a Divine Character."

"I understand." Su Yu did not say anything else. When he saw that the sun was going to rise soon, he said, "I won't be taking the blood essence from you right now. Just deliver it to the research center for me. Too many people are paying close attention to me recently so I need to take precautions against robbery."

"Sure."

Xia Huyou readily agreed. He was in a good mood after finalizing yet another deal with Su Yu. And as far as he was aware, Su Yu still had a decent amount of money left. Thus, he would be able to do even more business with Su Yu.

After Su Yu left, Xia Huyou muttered to himself.

"Infinite Strength Realm..."

This fellow was clearly a cultural researcher yet he was cultivating his physical body like he was a warrior. Was he not afraid of affecting his willpower cultivation by focusing too much on his physical cultivation?

...

As dawn arrived, Su Yu slowly walked through the academy.

Xia Huyou was most likely Xia Longwu's son. He wouldn't have possessed a cultural art usable at the Mental Tempering Stage otherwise. Of course, there was always the possibility that Xia Huyou was already a Skysoar cultivator. If that was really the case, then Su Yu would really have nothing to say about it.

But if Xia Huyou was really a Skysoar cultivator, then he was a freak among freaks. That would make it even likelier that he was Xia Longwu's son.

"Sure enough, those from the big families are all very good at hiding themselves."

Regardless of Xia Huyou's cultivation level, the true strength of his willpower was definitely higher than what he had displayed. Su Yu had no way of determining Xia Huyou's actual strength. Perhaps Xia Huyou was even stronger than Wan Mingze. Su Yu even wondered if he was actually Xia Huyou's match.

"Just what are all these people doing? Why are all of them hiding their strength?"

Su Yu started grumbling about all these mysterious students. There were a few other students in his class who were just as mysterious. He had no way of accurately judging their strength. Those people hadn't even participated in the top 100 challenges. Su Yu really couldn't understand why they were insisting on hiding their strength.

But when he thought about it, he decided to stop worrying about the secrets of others. After all, he was hiding plenty of secrets himself. For example, nobody knew that he had actually opened 20 soul apertures. After roaming randomly in the academy, the sky was finally bright. Su Yu started heading toward Zhao Li's research center.

...

"Ahhh, what a rare visitor you are."

Zhao Li teased with a smile when he saw Su Yu visiting.

Su Yu looked awkward. It was true that he would only be here when he was in need of help. He might be minoring in the Weaponsmithing Faculty, but in truth, he hadn't even been attending their basic classes.

"Teacher, I..."

"It's fine." Zhao Li did not mind, "If you still have time to attend our classes, then I'll have no choice but to admire you. You need to cultivate, form Divine Characters, grow your willpower, and even challenge the top 100. And you have only been in the academy for two months."

He was really fine with Su Yu's absence. Everyone would understand how busy Su Yu was. That was especially true now that Su Yu had also been participating in some research projects. With how busy he was, it was already very impressive that he could continue progressing his cultivation at such a rapid pace.

If Su Yu could also find some time to focus on weaponsmithing on top of all that, then he would be more than a human. He would be a deity.

Zhao Li shut the door and walked while asking, "So why are you here today? Do you need to reforge your cultural weapon? There is no rush. You have probably only formed a few Divine Characters, right? After our previous forging session, your weapon should be good enough until you have more than 10 Divine Characters."

"Teacher..." Su Yu hesitated slightly and said, "I'm here to ask you about a way to enter the Source Qi Secret Grotto without enough total earned merit."

"You have enough total earned merit, right?" Zhao Li asked in astonishment, "Even I am aware of that. Kid, are you trying to enter for free?"

Su Yu smiled bashfully, "Well, if you can really help me enter for free, I'll gladly accept your help."

Chapter 352: Just Ask For It! (2)

"Kid..." For a moment, Zhao Li was speechless. He said, "You must have learned about something. I'll be frank, my father was the fourth principal. I have been ignoring that Divine Character he left behind. Why? Because he had grown thanks to the support of the academy. He represented the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy."

"Of course, strictly speaking, that grotto should be mine. If I refuse to acknowledge that, some Invincible families would probably have some issues with me for being the one to renounce the benefits brought by my seniors. For these people, what is the point of being the descendents of an expert if they can't enjoy the benefits brought by their seniors?"

"You only need to pay 100 merit points per entry. That is actually very cheap. You need to know that the academy needs to spend money maintaining the grotto as well. The academy is earning some money from running the grotto, but in truth, the profit is negligible."

Su Yu nodded, "Teacher, it doesn't matter if I can't enter for free. I only wish to gain the right of entry for a few of my close friends. We can pay for their visits, but they don't have enough total earned merit. You know this. It is too hard for someone to earn total earned merit before reaching the Skysoar Realm."

"Looking at you, it doesn't seem difficult at all." Zhao Li joked. "Sure. The payment is for the sake of ensuring the operation of the grotto. As long as they are willing to pay the entrance fee, I don't mind giving you a special treatment when it comes to the required total earned merit."

He then searched a shabby couch in the room. After a while, he fished out a black token and said, "With this, you can send the people you want inside. Little Huang and Little Nie who are in charge of guarding the grotto will know what to do after seeing this token."

Little Huang...and Little Nie. Su Yu felt incredibly awkward hearing how Zhao Li was addressing the two seniors. Little Nie was still somewhat acceptable, but Little Huang reminded him of the dog of a grandpa next door back at Nanyuan.

"Thank you, Teacher."

Su Yu hurriedly accepted the token with a joyous expression. This was a great gift! With this token, he would be able to send his friends into the grotto. They would still need to pay, but this token would still save them a lot of trouble.

People like Hu Zongji and Lin Yao would probably take a very long time to gather enough total earned merit. After all, these were the people who couldn't get top 10 in the monthly examinations, couldn't get into the Top 100 Ranking, and were unqualified to even accept the regular missions of the academy.

The token felt somewhat cold to touch. The surface of the token only had a single hammer and the character "Zhao" on it.

Su Yu thanked happily, "Sorry for troubling you, Teacher. By the way, I found that my willpower has grown greatly after being hammered by you previously. When I tested my willpower, I found that it has reached the peak of the first tier."

"Peak first-tier?" Zhao Li nodded, "Not bad. But my hammer isn't that al. It's thanks to yourself. Your willpower was already well-tempered before that. I only further solidified your willpower."

"Teacher, was that the effect of the Soul Expanding Art?"

"Yeah."

Zhao Li wasn't surprised that Su Yu would know about this. He would be a fool to still be clueless after all this time.

He smiled, "Do you regret your option? If you had decided to major in the weaponsmithing faction, I would have taught you the Soul Expanding Art. You will be enjoying the benefits of being hammered at all times. You need to know that after cultivating the Soul Expanding Art, your sea of willpower will be able to form a hammer by itself. You can use the hammer to temper your sea of willpower every single day."

Su Yu looked at Zhao Li with an odd gaze. Did this mean that...Teacher Zhao spent every single day hammering himself?

Zhao Li was somewhat speechless when he saw Su Yu's gaze. He said, "What are you looking at? Only a sea of willpower that has gone through countless temperings can be considered a true sea of willpower. Not even those at the Mountainsea Realm can hope to destroy my sea of willpower. This is the benefit of cultivating the Soul Expanding Art.

"Willpower can be split into tiers. Those at the Mental Tempering Stage have first-tier willpower, those at the Skysoar Realm have second-tier willpower, those at the Cloudbreach Realm have third-tier willpower, those at the Mountainsea Realm have fourth-tier willpower, and those at the Sunmoon have fifth-tier willpower. Currently, the highest tier a human can reach is the peak of the fifth tier. I might be a Cloudbreach cultivator, but my willpower has long reached the fourth-tier."

Su Yu asked in astonishment, "Why are you not in the Mountainsea Realm already?"

"Mountainsea..." Zhao Li shook his head and sighed, "It has been a while since you entered the academy so you should be aware of some things. To advance into the Mountainsea Realm, one's willpower, Divine Characters, and apertures need to reach a certain level. Back then, I had failed to forge an earth-grade weapon. Because of that, my main Divine Character was stuck at peak third-tier. Back then, in order to step into the Mountainsea Realm in one fell swoop, I had even fused my main Divine Character into that weapon. Since I had failed the forging of that weapon...I am probably stuck below the Mountainsea Realm for life."

In truth, there was still hope for him to advance, but the hope was too small. But he was no longer too bothered about it. A few years ago, he would still feel sad whenever he thought of this. But now, he was happy with letting everything happen naturally.

Perhaps one day, that weapon would suddenly finish its advancement. He would then be able to borrow that momentum to push his main Divine Character into the next tier and step into the Mountainsea Realm.

Su Yu finally understood why Zhao Li was still below the Mountainsea Realm. What a courageous option. Zhao Li had actually decided to fuse his main Divine Character into his cultural weapon. No wonder. It was no wonder that at the age of 120-cough, cough. It was no wonder that he was still stuck.

"But why aren't you at the ninth-stage Cloudbreach Realm, Teacher?"

Zhao Li replied, "It's because of the Soul Expanding Art. I was already at the ninth-stage, but after my failed advancement, I can't keep enlarging my sea of willpower. However, my Soul Expanding Art has been continuously tempering my sea of willpower and compressing it. Eventually, my cultivation dropped to the seventh-stage due to the compression of my willpower."

Su Yu finally understood.

So this person was actually a ninth-stage Cloudbreach cultivator previously. But after his failed breakthrough, he had been compressing his willpower so much that his cultivation dropped to the seventh-stage Cloudbreach Realm.

"Will...you keep lowering your cultivation?"

"Nope." Zhao Li smiled, "There is a limit to everything. If I keep compressing my willpower, it will probably turn completely solid. This is probably my limit."

Su Yu was curiously, "After compressing your willpower so much, wouldn't you be a super expert among those in the Mountainsea Realm right after entering that realm?"

"That is unlikely..." Zhao Li laughed, "But in terms of willpower strength alone, not even a regular third-stage Mountainsea cultivator will be my match after I enter the Mountainsea Realm. As for the middle-stage Mountainsea Realm, that is an entirely different level."

"Teacher, what happened to your weapon? Why did the forging fail?"

Seeing that Zhao Li was quite talkative today, Su Yu took the chance to ask more questions.

Zhao Li sank into contemplation. After a while, he said, "Back then, I ran out of energy during the forging process. Supposedly, an earth-grade weapon requires 73 golden veins. I was capable of forging a weapon with 73 golden veins. But I was too ambitious and greedy. I believed that I could forge a weapon with more golden veins."

Zhao Li shook his head and sighed, "I was too arrogant. I used the best materials I could find to build the foundation for my weapon's future advancement into the heaven-grade. Because of that, the difficulty of forging increased. And after I fused my main Divine Character into the weapon, I further increased the difficulty of the forging. At the 72nd golden vein, I ran out of steam. I failed to produce the 73rd vein and my weapon failed to break through. And because the materials used were too strong, my main Divine Character ended up stuck in the weapon after that..."

Zhao Li exhaled deeply, "The only way to get my main Divine Character back is by destroying the weapon, but destroying the weapon will also heavily damage my character. I am also unwilling to do so to this weapon, so I have been nourishing the weapon all these years. Perhaps I would get lucky one day and the weapon would complete the advancement by itself."

"..."

Su Yu scratched his head and asked, "Teacher, can't you reforge your weapon?"

"Of course I can." Zhao Li glanced at Su Yu and said, "But I am even weaker than I used to be. You have witnessed the process of reforging golden veins previously. You know how hard it is. I can only do so if I receive help. In Great Xia, there is that one fellow with the ability to help me..."

"The sole earth-grade weaponsmith in Great Xia?"

Zhao Li curled his lips, "Yes. But I can't be bothered to waste my time talking to him. That fellow has been coveting my main Divine Character and Soul Expanding Art. I would rather be stuck in this realm forever than to seek his help."

Zhao Li looked at Su Yu regretfully, "Kid, you have a powerful willpower. If you cultivate the Soul Expanding Art, you might be strong enough to help me after reaching the Cloudbreach Realm. Why don't you join us after your multiple character faction is destroyed?"

"..."

Su Yu smiled awkwardly. That was...really straightforward. Destroyed? How destroyed would the faction need to be?

Su Yu scratched his head and said, "Teacher, why don't you teach me the Soul Expanding Art? I promise that I will help you reforge your weapon after reaching the Cloudbreach Realm. I can cultivate very fast. I will be at the Cloudbreach Realm in no time!"

Zhao Li looked at Su Yu stupefaction. Holy shit! This kid...was truly shameless.

Su Yu gave a hollow laugh, "Don't look at me like this, Teacher. I'm being serious. I can cultivate really fast!"

"Fuck off." Zhao Li said, "You're not even my direct student. What am I supposed to teach my final student if I teach you my secret technique?"

Su Yu smiled, "Teacher, I don't see you accepting a new student anytime soon. You might as well consider me as a temporary final student. Officially, the multiple character faction no longer exists. Technically, I am already majoring in the weaponsmithing faction. Are you not aware of this?"

"..."

Zhao Li was completely dumbfounded. Was that the case? So this kid was now a member of the weaponsmithing faction? That...seemed to make sense? After all, the multiple character faction no longer existed. In the academy records, Su Yu was actually registered as a member of the weaponsmithing faction even though he was still a student of the Character Faculty.

Zhao Li grabbed his white hair in confusion. Did this count? Was the kid already a member of the weaponsmithing faction instead of the multiple character faction? But why did that logic feel so off?

Chapter 353: The Powerful Soul Expanding Art (1)

Zhao Li had not expected Su Yu to be so shameless. This was too straightforward. He had thought that Su Yu would beat around the bush and try to obtain the inheritance indirectly. He had even thought of the tricks Su Yu could use.

For example, Su Yu could visit him more, learn more about weaponsmithing, and even spend some time fawning on him by cleaning the place and doing odd jobs for him. But instead of all that...this little bastard was directly asking for it without sacrificing anything! Zhao Li stared at Su Yu who was maintaining a simple and honest expression.

"Teacher, do my words make sense?"

"..."

"Sense my ass! Screw your sense!"

Zhao Li was getting really speechless.

He made his final struggle, "But you're not talented in weaponsmithing."

Teaching this kid would basically sever the Zhao Family's weaponsmithing legacy.

"Teacher, I believe I am still quite talented in weaponsmithing. I am capable of forming a lot of characters so I only need to dedicate a few of my characters to weaponsmithing and I'll be able to become a weaponsmith."

"..."

That...actually made sense. But Old Zhao still struggled with himself. Deep inside, he wanted to teach Su Yu as well. He would have chased Su Yu off otherwise. But he just couldn't accept the fact that he was going to teach someone who wasn't his direct student.

"You might not even be able to learn it. And advancement has never been easy for you as a member of the multiple character faction. After learning my cultivation method, you will be tempering your sea of willpower every single day. I reckon you can forget about entering the Skysoar Realm anymore. How are you supposed to help me complete my weapon?"

Su Yu smiled, "Teacher, I can do it. I'm very smart. As for the compression of my willpower, it doesn't matter. I only need to grow faster than the speed of compression."

"Su Yu, you're making it sound so simple, but prior to the Skysoar Realm, willpower can only grow slowly."

"Not at all." Su Yu said, "Teacher, look at me. I'm already at 70 percent willpower. After you hammered me previously, I dropped back to 50 percent but now, I'm back at 70 percent again. I feel like I'm growing too fast. I have been worrying about accidentally entering the Skysoar Realm before forming enough characters. Just look at me! I have grown by 20 percent in less than a month! Teacher, your hammering was too weak!"

Zhao Li's face changed. Only then did he realize something. Last month. Was it the 18th? On that day, Su Yu visited. At that time, he had hammered the kid, pushing the kid all the way back to the bottom of the Mental Tempering Stage. It had been 20 days since then.

In 20 days, the kid had grown his willpower by 20 percent? This was his growth after having his willpower compressed? Only then did Zhao Li start to realize something extremely important. Looking at Su Yu, his willpower spread over toward Su Yu. His powerful willpower wrapped around Su Yu and started charging Su Yu's willpower. Su Yu's willpower started counter-attacking and defending automatically.

Zhao Li maintained the pressure on Su Yu's willpower. He gradually increased the pressure, and eventually, Su Yu was drenched with sweat. At that moment, a layer of shadow that had been covering Su Yu's apertures finally dissipated.

When the first aperture appeared and revealed a weak absorptive force, Zhao Li instantly withdrew his willpower. He stared at Su Yu silently. Su Yu said nothing either.

After a long while, Zhao Li asked, "Have you sworn fealty to the Xia Family?"

But he answered his own question, "No, that won't give you something like that. Are you Xia Longwu's illegitimate child?"

"..."

Su Yu didn't know what to say.

Clearly, Old Zhao had discovered something. And that something might be his opened apertures. Zhao Li had not performed a deep scan on Su Yu, but he knew that even in the entirety of Human Realm, there were very few cultural arts capable of opening apertures at the Mental Tempering Stage. Even the Xia Family of Great Xia would probably only have one such cultural art. In that case, where had Su Yu learned his cultural art?

Zhao Li stared at Su Yu for a while and asked, "You have an Invincible ancestor?"

Su Yu shook his head.

"You know an Invincible?"

Su Yu shook his head again.

"You're from the Myriad Race Cult...no, wait. Not even the Myriad Race Cult has something like this. The divines and devils will definitely not be willing to share such cultivation methods with their human worshippers."

He rejected that possibility. After exhaling lightly, he asked, "Is this your own fortuitous encounter?"

Su Yu said nothing.

"I'll consider that a yes." Zhao Li did not keep asking. He said, "If you want to learn the Soul Expanding Art, I can teach you. But...I won't acknowledge you as my direct student."

"Why, Teacher?"

Su Yu could not understand that decision. Hadn't Old Zhao been trying to get him as a student?

Zhao Li said, "I am not blind. I can see the conflict between the single and multiple character factions. Even 50 years ago, I was already an old man. If that person is still alive, he would be as old as me..."

Su Yu knew that Zhao Li was speaking about the fifth principal.

"I have known that fellow for many years. My father had even taught him before. I am very familiar with all his students. People like Liu Wenyan and Hong Tan are no fools. And they are definitely not weak.

"The multiple character faction has been forced to such desperate straits because they have not counterattacked instead of failing in their counterattack.

"Hong Tan is not a pedantic bookworm. Back then, Liu Wenyan was determined to walk the path of character inheritance. Hong Tan had the chance to walk the same path as one of the Sunmoon experts had picked Hong Tan as the successor. However, Hong Tan rejected the offer.

"I was present when that happened. I was the one who had stripped that expert's character from his destroyed weapon. He wanted to transmit his character to Hong Tan, but Hong Tan said that he wasn't going to walk this path. Since Liu Wenyan had decided to walk that path, the multiple character faction would still require someone to hold the fort in case Liu Wenyan failed.

"Not long after Liu Wenyan left, Hong Tan entered the Skysoar Realm. He is very young. He isn't even 70 this year. He entered the Cloudbreach Realm at 30, reached the Mountainsea Realm at 45, and stepped into the seventh-stage Mountainsea Realm at 60. Now, he is a peak eighth-stage Mountainsea cultivator..."

"In fact, he is of similar age to Xia Longwu. They are actually from Xia Longwu's generation. In the eyes of the public, there is a misconception that Hong Tan is very old. Many even think that he is older than me."

Su Yu blanked out. Yeah. Even Su Yu himself had the same misconception. Hong Tan was very old. But if he actually thought about it, Hong Tan wasn't that old. He wasn't even 70!

Zhao Li said, "He has been able to remain patient for 50 years. All by himself, he has focused on only his research. So is he a sage or a pedantic fool? Or is he something else entirely?"

Su Yu did not say anything.

Zhao Li continued, "Therefore, what is the multiple character faction waiting for? What are they afraid of? I am an old man, so I like to think more. Since you insist on remaining with the multiple character faction, I can still teach you, but I definitely won't acknowledge you as my direct student. I don't want to drag the weaponsmithing faction into the path of destruction."

"Teacher, I...I'm not learning anymore..."

"Why not?" Zhao Li smiled, "What's wrong with teaching a cultivation method? I even have some cultivation methods of Invincible experts. Are people going to make me a target of their anger just because of who I choose to teach? It's not that complicated. As long as the students I teach aren't my direct students, it doesn't matter who I teach. But remember this. Do not drag the weaponsmithing faction into your conflicts."

Su Yu did not know what to say.

Zhao Li exhaled and said, "It's fine. I can teach you the Soul Expanding Art right now if you want. I am only reminding you that you shouldn't assume that you are the only capable member of the multiple character faction. Don't think that you can change everything. You are just a weakling. You're not even a Skysoar cultivator. Don't think too much. People like Hong Tan and Liu Wenyan have been remaining patient for decades. People like Xia Yunji, Hu Ping, and Zhao Mingyue are still alive. The multiple character faction won't be destroyed so easily.

"If it really is going to be destroyed, they will definitely be able to shine one last time and dazzle the world before their destruction. The multiple character faction will only be truly destroyed when all these people are dead. As long as one of them is still around, then there is still a chance for the multiple character faction to rise again. If you don't see anyone doing anything, it can only mean that they are still patiently waiting for something."

Su Yu nodded and sank into deep thought. True. He had overestimated himself and underestimated those seniors. Even Teacher Liu was a Skysoar cultivator who was far stronger than him.

"I understand, Teacher."

"Good." Zhao Li exhaled, "Come with me."

He then stood up and went deeper into the building.

...

A few minutes later, Su Yu and Zhao Li arrived in an underground room. Su Yu had not expected that this research center would have such a large underground room under it. He was quite surprised. He had thought that Zhao Li's research center was built entirely above ground.

"The Soul Expanding Art is quite simple. You saw it in action before. It is essentially a hammer."

Hammer! Su Yu was inwardly rolling his eyes at the term. What a poor naming sense. It was totally uncool.

"Focus!"

Suddenly, a massive, shiny hammer appeared in front of Zhao Li.

"This is the foundation of the Soul Expanding Art. You need to forge a large hammer in your sea of willpower. With this hammer, you will be able to temper your willpower and strengthen your sea of willpower.

"A regular hammer won't work. It's not as simple as getting a cultural weapon in the form of a hammer. This hammer needs to achieve resonance with your sea of willpower. Only then can it temper your sea of willpower instead of damaging it when you hammer yourself..."

Zhao Li spent a long time giving a long explanation, but Su Yu still looked confused.

When Zhao Li saw that, he had a regretful expression as he said, "Forget it. You're too dumb. You're a little clever, but you lack wisdom. Fine, fine. I will stop talking. I'll split a small hammer out of my large hammer and give it to you. You can simply use my hammer and nurture it with your willpower. It is only a matter of time before it grows strong and large..."

Su Yu's mouth was agape. Had he been insulted? Teacher Zhao believed that he was too stupid to learn the cultivation method and had decided to simply give him a small hammer instead?

So was this little hammer an idiot-proof method of cultivating the Soul Expanding Art? Was learning this cultivation method so easy?

"Teacher, is this really fine?"

"Yeah." Zhao Li wasn't too worried, "As a weaponsmith, I am very proficient in splitting a single tool into multiple tools. You only need to adjust the frequency of the little hammer and ensure that it can resonate with your sea of willpower. It is actually very simple. After I split the little hammer out, you only need to take it into your sea of willpower and adjust the frequency in a direction that you feel comfortable with. I will teach you the adjustment method. And then, you only need to keep adjusting the frequency until you feel good. That is when you know that you have achieved resonance.

"Simply put, you need to reach a state where your sea of willpower will feel comfortable instead of suffering when hammering yourself. The tempo of hammering must feel as natural as breathing."

Su Yu nodded. He finally understood.

Chapter 354: The Powerful Soul Expanding Art (2)

"Teacher, is the Soul Expanding Art so easy to cultivate?"

"Easy?" Zhao Li rolled his eyes, "You are the second generation cultivator. That's why it feels easy. Because you have me providing you with a seed. As the first generation cultivator, I nearly destroyed my sea of willpower while forming this hammer back then."

Su Yu scratched his head and softly asked, "Teacher, why hadn't you agreed to teach my teacher as well? My grandteacher once visited you about this..."

"Bai Feng?" Zhao Li thought for a long while before answering, "If he was given such a hammer as well, he would probably still be in the Mental Tempering Stage right now. This cultivation method is not for everyone. Also, in the initial stages, the hammering process might be comfortable. But in the later stages of compression, it can get very painful. Can you even withstand the pain?"

Zhao Li personally believed that Su Yu would have no problem withstanding the pain. Since the kid had been able to endure his hammering previously, the kid would probably be fine in the future.

Su Yu nodded confidently. He was certain that he could withstand the pain.

"That's more like it. Very few youngsters can withstand the torture of willpower compression. Most of the youngsters nowadays have never suffered before. I tried hammering a few students before. Every one of them fainted after a few strikes. How am I supposed to teach them anything?"

Old Zhao's voice was laced with disdain. The hell was he supposed to teach those students? If they couldn't even last a few strikes from him, they would only defile his cultivation method.

In fact, the only reason he had placed so much importance on Su Yu was because during their first meeting, the kid had squeezed his willpower dry yet still behaved like everything was normal. The kid had been able to remain standing and even converse even in such a state. In Zhao Li's mind, that was how a cultivator should be like.

He wasted no time and started working on his hammer. It was as though the hammer was giving birth. Su Yu could see that slowly, a small hammer was being squeezed out of the large hammer.

At that point, Zhao Li had turned somewhat pale. Clearly, this was quite a tiring process for him. He explained, "The Soul Expanding Art can not only temper your sea of willpower, but it can temper your Divine Characters and cultural weapon as well. Strictly speaking, this hammer is very powerful as you can even use it as an offensive technique.

"For example, one hammer strike from me had been able to put you in so much pain. If that was a fight, would you still be able to fight back? Even if the hammer could strengthen the willpower of your target, so what? You would be able to kill your opponent during the combat. Your opponent wouldn't even have the chance to enjoy the benefits of willpower tempering."

Su Yu blanked out. Offensive willpower technique! Yes! Wasn't this basically a willpower technique?

Sure, it was strictly speaking, a supportive cultivation method. But when Su Yu recalled how he felt when Zhao Li hammered him previously, he realized that this cultivation method could also serve as a powerful willpower technique. He started to have a feeling that the Soul Expanding Art was actually an incredible cultivation method.

"Teacher, what is the grade of this cultivation method?"

"I don't know." Zhao Li replied indifferently, "I created it. Who knows what its grade is? It's not like it requires apertures or acupoints to be used so it's really hard to assign it a grade. It can be considered a purely supportive cultivation method. Such cultivation methods have always been hard to grade."

"It was merely something I had created because of a spark of inspiration while I was forging weapons. My initial goal was to create something that can help with weapon forging. You know that regular hammers won't cut it when it comes to cultural weapon forging..."

Yes. This cultivation method could even be used to forge weapons! Su Yu was greatly alarmed. The more he learned, the more incredible this cultivation method seemed. One shouldn't underestimate it just because it was merely a hammer.

"Teacher, can my little hammer give birth to an even smaller hammer?"

"..."

Old Zhao stared at Su Yu. What was this choice of words? Give birth? What the hell?

But when Old Zhao looked at his large hammer that was indeed giving birth to a small hammer, he had nothing to say. He decided to just answer the question, "Yes, but you can't do it without my permission. You can only do as you wish after I die."

Zhao Li asked, "Do you know why so many people insist on hiding their cultivation manuals these days? Kid, you never know the true nature of others. It is always a good idea to keep a trump card for yourself. If you share everything you know with everyone, you might end up getting yourself betrayed by someone who knows all your weaknesses. Kindness might not necessarily invite kindness."

"If it is really beneficial to be selfless, those Invincible experts would have taught everyone their secret techniques long ago. Don't think that they are being selfish. Think about it. After kindly teaching your foundational cultivation method, your enemy ends up learning about your weaknesses and comes up with all sorts of ways to counter you in combat. What are you supposed to do next?"

Su Yu nodded. That made sense. His way of thinking had been too simplistic. This was not a society where everyone was living in peace. Humanity was faced with countless enemies internally and externally. While they were talking, a little hammer finally split out of the large hammer. Zhao Li's face turned deathly pale.

"Teacher, you..."

"I'm fine. I'm only slightly tired..." Zhao Li panted, "This is a good example. Without sufficient strength, don't think of giving birth-bah. I mean don't think of splitting the Soul Expanding Hammer. You won't be able to withstand it. You can only consider doing it after reaching the Cloudbreach Realm. Before that, you will only destroy your hammer in your attempt."

Su Yu nodded. He was feeling very grateful.

In the academy, he had witnessed the annoying and disgusting experts of the single character faction. But he had similarly seen some individuals who were truly worthy of being called a teacher in the same academy.

Zhao Li, the two old men watching over the grotto, and some experts who he didn't know. These people did not have complicated thoughts. Their main goal in the academy was to nurture more talent and guide the students of the academy.

In the academy, there was both darkness and light. Perhaps this was a reflection of human society.

"What are you waiting for? Take it into your sea of willpower."

Su Yu did not dare to waste any time and hurriedly released his willpower. In the blink of an eye, the little hammer vanished and entered his sea of willpower. The moment it entered, Su Yu sensed something changing.

Rumble!

Right after entering his sea of willpower, the little hammer started arrogantly charging toward the golden book.

The book completely ignored the little hammer. After a while, the little hammer discovered that it could never reach the golden book. Thus, it switched its target to the nearby character technique frame that had taken the form of a little saber.

The blood, lightning, and other Divine Characters flew out and clashed against the little hammer.

Boom!

The little hammer struck the characters untiringly, forcing them to retreat repeatedly. In fact, they seemed to have shrunk slightly from the repeated strikes. A terrible headache assaulted Su Yu. He felt like his brain was going to split apart. He spat a mouthful of blood out.

His characters kept shrinking and retreating from the beating. The blood character, in particular, looked miserable. It was as though the character was bleeding. As it shrunk, some chaotic substances started separating from its body.

Before long, Su Yu sensed something else. His Divine Characters...seemed to have turned purer and more compact than before.

After beating the characters to submission, the little hammer still seemed unhappy. It flew high into the air and started hammering the empty air instead. At that moment, something greatly shocking to Su Yu happened.

The hammer was actually hammering his aperture. With one strike, some of the willpower in that aperture dissipated in the form of some black smoke that was coming out of Su Yu's head.

A regular person wouldn't be able to see the black smoke, but Zhao Li could. The black smoke was essentially some impure willpower.

When he saw that, he cursed, "Have you been absorbing any willpower you can find? Kid, don't absorb willpower that is too chaotic and impure. You bastard! You are polluting my secret room!"

The black smoke dissipated into thin air. Meanwhile, the little hammer continued its work. It gave all the opened apertures a strike each. Eventually, the little hammer ran out of steam. It descended and flew toward the mythic destruction beast skull before smashing down on it.

Su Yu was trembling in pain when he was suddenly roused awake. He looked at Zhao Li and said, "Teacher, the hammer is hammering my mythic destruction beast skull..."

"Huh? You actually have something like that?" Zhao Li said in astonishment, "That is a treasure. Who gave it to you?"

"Teacher, the hammer is going crazy. It's hammering the skull. What should I do? Why can't I control it?"

"What are you panicking for?" Zhao Li was not worried, "The hammer is a newborn. It still has plenty of energy. After all, it was split from my hammer so it carries some of my strength. It still has a little bit of Cloudbreach strength in it but it won't stay energetic for long."

"This is a rare chance for you. Why are you panicking? The mythic destruction beast skull's function is to stabilize your sea of willpower. It is a unique item with a unique substance in it. Thus, it has successfully caught the attention of the little hammer. The hammer can crush the skull and absorb the substance to stabilize itself. This will save a lot of time as you don't need to stabilize the hammer yourself."

Su Yu felt like crying. The skull was very expensive! What a domineering little hammer! It was actually trying to crush the skull and absorb it to stabilize itself. What an asshole! Sure enough, after a few minutes of hammering, the skull broke apart with a loud rumble.

The hammer hurriedly absorbed the substance coming out of the crushed skull. The remainder of the skull was hammered into black smoke before leaving through the top of Su Yu's head. Just like that, the mythic destruction beast skull was gone.

At that point, the little hammer had gained a sparkling crystal body. Satisfied, it sank into silence. It looked like it was sleeping.

Su Yu opened his eyes and looked at Zhao Li with an expression of heartache. The skull was gone!

When Zhao Li saw Su Yu's expression, he laughed, "This is good. The mythic destruction beast skull functions as a stabilizer of your sea of willpower. In truth, it isn't that useful. With this hammer, you can temper your sea of willpower every single day, ensuring its stability. You won't even need the skull anymore. Alright, let me teach you how to change the frequency of the hammer and control it..."

Su Yu couldn't resist asking, "Teacher, why do I feel like this hammer can even purify apertures?"

"That has always been one of its abilities." Zhao Li said, "It basically treats your sea of willpower as a slab of metal that it needs to temper. And when you are forging ironware, it is perfectly normal to remove the impurities during the forging process."

"..."

Su Yu stared at Zhao Li, wondering if the old man understood the implications of that.

"Teacher, I heard that only Great Ming's Zhu Family has a similar cultivation method. And that is a cultivation method that will never be transmitted to outsiders. Your Soul Expanding Art is actually capable of purifying willpower as well?"

Zhao Li was naturally aware of that. He indifferently said, "Yeah, the Zhu Family has something similar. So what? Can't my Soul Expanding Art do the same? What's so special about purifying willpower? If you have weak willpower, it won't matter how pure your willpower is."

"That's not what I'm talking about. Teacher, your willpower should be very pure..."

"Bullshit!" Zhao Li berated, "Like I said, I can last even 10 hours when forging weapons. Are you dumb? If my willpower isn't pure enough, can I even last that long?"

Chapter 355: The Powerful Soul Expanding Art (3)

Su Yu was completely speechless. Yeah. That made so much sense. If Zhao Li's willpower was impure, how would he be able to last 10 hours during a forging session? Clearly, Zhao Li's willpower was very pure.

As far as Su Yu was concerned, this Soul Expanding Art was definitely more valuable than even a heaven-grade cultivation method. It was terrifyingly useful.

Zhao Li was actually capable of creating a cultivation method like this. That was incredible. But the old man was being...too casual about it. Just like that, the old man had taught him this cultivation method? Su Yu found himself in disbelief.

Zhao Li did not seem to care that much. He sighed, "Kid, cultivation methods are meant to be learned. I have been wanting to find a successor, but there are too many untalented fools around. For these people, learning this cultivation method might not be a good thing. Just take the ability to purify willpower. Not everyone might want their willpower to be too pure. Imagine a Mountainsea cultivator hammering himself back into the Cloudbreach Realm. Do you think he would enjoy that?"

"For them, it doesn't matter if their willpower is impure. At the very least, they are still Mountainsea cultivators. It doesn't matter how pure your willpower is. You are still below them."

"Just take your multiple character faction as an example. Everyone knows that a character technique will make you stronger. But so what? Does that mean that everyone needs to form a character technique as well? In the time I take to complete my character technique, my peers in the single character faction might have reached the Cloudbreach or even the Mountainsea Realm already. Meanwhile, I am still stuck at the Skysoar Realm. Why bother?"

"It's the same concept." Zhao Li sighed, "Thus, how useful a cultivation method can be depends on the cultivators. There are no cultivation methods that are absolutely powerful for everyone. You can try making an untalented individual cultivate this cultivation method. See if they will bother. After all, they need both time and money to cultivate their willpower.

"Perhaps that person has only been aiming to reach the Skysoar Realm. And you go and tell that person that their path of cultivation is not beneficial for his future advancement into the Invincible Realm. That person will probably spit on your face."

"..."

Su Yu was completely speechless. He felt truly enlightened. Teacher Zhao made a lot of sense. Even when he was picking someone to learn the Pure Source Art, he had picked someone like Hu Zongji who was a high-middle genius. Someone like that would have no problem opening 36 acupoints.

But if he had told a low-tier student to learn the Pure Source Art, that student would probably tell him he was crazy. The student was already having a hard enough time trying to get into the Great Strength Realm. They could probably only open one acupoint per month. And Su Yu was telling them to open a bunch of extra acupoints? That was absolutely crazy.

For someone like that, the purity of their source qi didn't matter. So what if their source qi was pure? They would still be stuck as a first-stage Great Strength cultivator. What was the point?

Rather than opening 36 additional acupoints, that person might as well put the effort into reaching the seventh or the eighth stage. As for impure source qi, that was really not a big deal.

Su Yu started reflecting on himself. Not everyone was a genius. And not everyone was like him, capable of utilizing large amounts of resources in cultivation. He had to be careful with his mindset in the future. He had been spending way too much time with geniuses, to the point his perspective had skewed.

Someone like Hu Zongji was naturally able to handle opening more acupoints to cultivate the Pure Source Art. Hu Zongji would even thank him as someone like that could truly appreciate the value of the Pure Source Art.

But if he looked for someone only capable of cultivating a yellow-grade cultivation method to cultivate the Pure Source Art, that person would probably tell him to go screw himself. Rather than opening 36 acupoints for the Pure Source Art, that person would rather open the acupoints of their yellow-grade cultivation method and reach the ninth-stage Great Strength Realm. Su Yu's own father was one such person.

His father had only opened 36 acupoints. Even if he gave his father the Pure Source Art, his father wouldn't cultivate it. Instead, he would probably give Su Yu a beating for trying to mislead him.

From this short conversation, Su Yu learned a lot. He said nothing and gave Zhao Li a solemn bow.

Zhao Li accepted the bow. He was getting tired after the exhaustion. While yawning, he said, "Go back and take your time nurturing the hammer..."

He then taught Su Yu the control method of the hammer and gave him some tips regarding the hammer.

Finally, he reminded, "Remember, don't claim that you're my direct student. I won't acknowledge you. Don't involve me in your conflict with the single character faction. I won't help you..."

"When your faction finally ends up defeated and if you have not offended an Invincible, you can claim that you're actually a member of the weaponsmithing faction. This old man can try to protect you from further harm

"But if you have already offended an Invincible cultivator from your conflicts, well, I can't afford to challenge an Invincible as well. In that case, I suggest you dig yourself a hole and bury yourself."

Su Yu smiled helplessly. This old man was really not very tactful. But he understood what Old Zhao meant. There was no need for him to say more. He gave Old Zhao another deep bow. This old man was basically telling him that in his desperation, he would still have one final path he could take. And he could consider taking that path even if he would end up bringing a lot of trouble to Old Zhao.

"Teacher...thank you. I will reduce the frequency of my visits here."

Su Yu exhaled deeply and started leaving. When he reached the door, he looked back and said, "When I reach the Cloudbreach Realm, I will come back to help you complete your weapon!"

"I'll be waiting." Zhao Li yawned, "Reach the Cloudbreach Realm first before making promises like this."

"Thank you for your guidance, Teacher."

Su Yu then walked through the door. After today, he would reduce his visits here. Granted, from the start of the semester, he had only visited this place three times. Only three visits...yet Zhao Li had given him a cultivation method that could very well change his entire life.

Outsiders had no idea just how powerful this cultivation method actually was. It was capable of tempering sea of willpower, purifying apertures, tempering Divine Characters, and serving as a willpower technique during combat.

...

Zhao Li was left alone in the room. He could only shake his head and sigh.

But soon, he smiled again, "At the very least, my inheritance has been passed on. Sigh."

Chaotic times were coming. Liu Wenyan was returning. Hong Tan was probably returning as well. The single character faction was preparing something. That genius from Great Zhou who had roamed the Human Realm defeating numerous experts was also on his way to Great Xia.

Furthermore, Great Zhou was going to welcome a brand new Invincible. And that was also the case for Great Xia. There was also Wan Tiansheng. What exactly was that fellow planning by luring the myriad race students into the academy?

Meanwhile, Old Jia and a few other elders claimed that they were in seclusion. To hell with that! Zhao Li dared to bet his life that the damn fatty called Jia Mingzhen was basically Old Jia in disguise.

"It's so messy. What a pity that the fifth principal is dead."

Zhao Li sighed regretfully. If the fifth principal had survived and successfully affirmed his dao to enter the Eternal Realm, all the cultural researchers of humanity would be united under his banner. At that time, it would no longer matter whether you were from the single or multiple character faction. As long as the fifth principal said that all cultural researchers were the same, nobody would dare to say no.

But with the death of the fifth principal, all sorts of cracks were emerging in the cultural research community. Most of the Invincibles of humanity were in the front line. Only a few were left within the Human Realm, but even these Invincibles were not united.

Each of them had their own plans, and some were even waiting to see if the fifth principal had really left something behind. Under such a situation, it was perfectly understandable that there would be chaos.

"Wan Tiansheng..." Looking in the direction of the Heart Cultivating Pavilion, Zhao Li muttered, "Just what is that fellow planning?"

He kept having a feeling that Wan Tiansheng was definitely planning something big. And a lot of people were going to suffer from it.

Zhao Li even suspected that despite the friendly facade Wan Tiansheng was showing the myriad races, he could very well be the one to suddenly go crazy and kill all those myriad race experts in the Human Realm. That would set the entire human race against the myriad races, forcing the human race to truly unify against the external threats.

"He can't be that crazy, right?"

If Wan Tiansheng was really planning to do that, then the end result would be his death. Of course, that would not be so absolute if Wan Tiansheng was actually an Invincible in disguise. Zhao Li shook his head and decided to stop guessing.

He used to be quite familiar with Wan Tiansheng. But it had been too many years so he was unsure if Wan Tiansheng had changed. There was also Su Yu. Just who had taught the kid a cultural art?

"Why do I care?"

Zhao Li decided to stop thinking. Maybe he should accept some mission and go far away from the academy. He could smell that the academy was going to start being unpeaceful in the near future.

It had been a busy night for Su Yu. By the time he walked out of Old Zhao's research center, the sky was already bright. The students were starting to attend their classes.

Meanwhile, Su Yu was busy observing the little hammer in his head. That hammer was very domineering. It even pushed the character technique aside as it rested in a comfortable spot in the sea of willpower.

Incredible.

That wasn't too surprising since the character technique was something Su Yu had formed himself while the hammer came from a seventh-stage Cloudbreach who was once a ninth-stage Cloudbreach.

"Everything is ready."

Finally, Su Yu felt that he was done with his preparations. Next, he could start growing rapidly. Reading willpower texts, forming Divine Characters, strengthening his willpower, and entering the Infinite Strength Realm

As for his meeting with Wan Tiansheng He was going to ignore it. He had no idea what the principal wanted from him. And the principal was too strong. He decided to drag this out as long as he could. He would think about it after his grandteacher was back. Either that or he would drag it out until Wan Tiansheng looked for him again.

...

While Su Yu was getting ready for class.

Outside the Great Xia City.

A shabby car that had traveled for two days had just arrived.

Before the massive city gate.

Today, a suffocating silence enveloped the area.

The city guards were standing to the two sides of the gate. All around, the members of the Martial Dragon Guards were leading the public to the other gates of the city. The largest road leading in the city was left unused.

Numerous experts were standing around the checkpoint. Some were blood-soaked, some were brimming with tears, some had complicated expressions, while some were waiting expectantly.

"He's here!"

Suddenly, someone shouted. The shabby car stopped and Principal Wang got out of the car. Looking at the group standing ahead of him, he smiled and stepped aside. Inside the car, Liu Wenyan opened his eyes.

He stepped off the car and looked at the old friends ahead of him. There were about a dozen of them. Suddenly, he had the urge to turn around and run away.

I'm back. It has been 50 years. Once again, I am going to enter the Great Xia City. Teacher, I am back. But...I am not returning as an undefeatable expert.

At the same time.

Not far away, atop a certain building, numerous experts were gathered. They were watching silently. The pale Elder Yu was among them. The Elder Sun with a complicated expression was there. The people

from the Nine Heavens Cultural Research Academy were there. The people from the Daoseeking Cultural Research Academy were there.

Somewhere else, there was another group of people. Those from the Talent Fostering Bureau were among them. Those from the war academies were among them. Those from the military were among them. These people were also silently looking in the direction of the gate.

All of them were looking at the grizzled old man. When he left 50 years ago, he was still in his prime. He had returned, but he no longer had the grace and elegance he used to possess.

Chapter 356: Liu Wenyan's Return (1)

At the gate.

Looking at the old friends that he nearly couldn't recognize anymore, Liu Wenyan smiled. It was a bitter smile.

"I...have returned..."

"Good."

The middle-aged man who had helped Wu Yuehua stop Elder Sun earlier grinned. He was behaving just like how he was in the past.

"It's good that you're back. You should have returned long ago..."

Wu Yuehua stood loftily and looked at the old man before him. He had changed. He had changed a lot. He no longer resembled him from the past.

When she met him previously, she had not thought too much about it. But when she looked at him again and recalled the scene 50 years ago where she had bid him farewell at the same spot, her emotions turned complicated.

"So you still know your way back?"

Her words sounded like a complaint. At the same time, she also sounded like her heart was aching for him. A few people around her sniggered. Slowly, the sorrow in the air receded. It was good that he was back! He had returned alive. That was the only thing that mattered!

Liu Wenyan looked around. He saw Elder Sun and the others. He saw the people from the Talent Fostering Bureau. He also saw those from the Martial Dragon Guards. He even saw the distant Marquis Xia and Administrator Hu. The bitterness from his face faded. He smiled and nodded at everyone in greeting.

"Let's go to Ruoling's place. I wish to...visit him."

He then started walking in a certain direction. He did not waste any time catching up with these people. He walked through the crowd and entered the city before heading toward the Eighteenth Secondary School where Zhang Ruoling's grave was. There, someone who used to be a freak was buried. How many people were aware of that?

Wu Yuehua and the rest instinctively followed behind him. Not one person walked beside or in front of him. Just like how it was in the past. Even today, when so many of them were already at the Mountainsea Realm and that man was only a Skysoar, that had not changed.

Silently, the group walked.

Those around them remained silent as well.

After some time, someone finally spoke. The voice resounded in the air, "Liu Wenyan, back when you were expelled by the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy, you promised to not step into the Great Xia City anymore. Why are you breaking your promise today?"

"You're too noisy."

Wu Yuehua's eyes turned frosty. A massive cauldron appeared in the sky. With a rumble, a distant hill collapsed. Out of the crumbling hill, a Mountainsea cultivator stepped on thin air and walked forward.

With one hand, the cultivator blocked the cauldron and said, "Wu Yuehua, don't attack for no reason. Your temper is still as bad as ever."

Wu Yuehua looked at the newcomer with an unsightly expression. In the crowd, a few other Mountainsea cultivators looked eager to fight as well.

Liu Wenyan smiled and looked at the newcomer. He waved his hand at Wu Yuehua and said, "So it's you? I thought you were dead long ago."

The old man in the air said, "I'm still alive. I can still live for a while longer. Liu Wenyan, are you breaking your own promise?"

Liu Wenyan smiled, "I don't intend to break my promise. Don't worry. I'm not stepping into the main city. I'm only visiting an old friend at the Eighteenth Secondary School. Of course, if you want to say that I am not even allowed to visit an old friend, then I'll have to break my promise. What...can you do about it?"

He was completely calm and indifferent. He was basically saying that he would go where he wanted. What could this person do?

The old man ignored Liu Wenyan. Instead, he looked at those from the Talent Fostering Bureau and Elder Sun's group before saying, "What does Great Xia have to say about this?"

A middle-aged man from the Talent Fostering Bureau stepped forth and said, "This is your personal grudge. Do not drag Great Xia into it. Do not try to drag anyone else into it either. Since Liu Wenyan is a citizen of Great Xia, he naturally has the freedom to travel within Great Xia. We won't stop him."

They wouldn't stop him. Because they had the confidence to handle any disturbances that might arise.

"Personal grudge?" The old man's tone changed as he said, "That year, Liu Wenyan and the others weren't expelled because of personal grudge. They were expelled because they nearly ruined the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy. Back then, the Talent Fostering Bureau had a hand in expelling them as well, declaring that they are not allowed to return for life."

The middle-aged man frowned, "Are you sure? You must have remembered wrongly. We said that before paying back their debts, they can't return. Since someone had recently paid Liu Wenyan's debt for him, the Talent Fostering Bureau has no issue with his return."

"Settled his debt?" The old man furrowed his brow, "Who did it? How much was paid?"

He had barely finished his words when a massive seal descended from the sky. A massive rumble resounded as the old man was smashed into the ground. With a wave of her hand, Wu Yuehua recalled her cauldron. She glanced at the direction the seal had come from while cursing inwardly that the seal had nearly damaged her cauldron as well.

"You sure talk a lot." Someone appeared in the sky and chided, "Since this is a personal grudge, deal with it yourself. Shan Tianhao, who gave you the qualification to question the Talent Fostering Bureau? Get Zhou Polong to personally come if you want to question us. If you dare to question the Talent Fostering Bureau again, I'll kill you right where you stand."

The old man climbed out of the ground with blood dripping from the corner of his mouth. Instead of raging, he looked at the empty air and said, "Director Ji, I will accept this lesson from you. Since the Talent Fostering Bureau is saying that his debt has been settled, I will accept that. But that is not the only debt Liu Wenyan has. I want to see if he can repay his other debt as well."

The old man glanced at Liu Wenyan before stepping away.

Liu Wenyan smiled indifferently and cupped his hands at the thin air and said, "Thank you, Director Ji."

Nobody replied.

Liu Wenyan did not mind that. He looked at the departing old man and sighed, "Even Shan Tianhao is already a ninth-stage Mountainsea. I used to look down on this fellow. When I was at the Mental

Tempering Stage, I was able to defeat him with only three moves even though he was already a Skysoar..."

He shook his head. Things still seemed the same, but the people had changed completely. Even a defeated foe from back then was already a ninth-stage Mountainsea.

He then looked at Wu Yuehua and the others before sighing, "Why...have none of you reach the ninth-stage Mountainsea Realm?"

Even Wu Yuehua was only a fresh eighth-stage Mountainsea. Wu Yuehua merely rolled her eyes. Were they slow? Their cultivation speed was actually quite fast!

Nearby, the middle-aged man from before grinned, "Big Brother Liu, we're still young!"

"Young..."

Liu Wenyan sighed. No. They were no longer young. Fifty years had passed.

He looked at the middle-aged man and asked, "He Ji, what is your strength now?"

The middle-aged man awkwardly replied, "Seventh-stage Mountainsea."

"Not bad."

Wu Yuehua finally ran out of patience. She said, "Are you done? You're only a Skysoar. Why are you criticizing our cultivation?"

A few people in the crowd laughed.

Liu Wenyan also laughed. He continued walking while saying, "I think I have forgotten something...whatever. It doesn't matter."

He knew what he had forgotten. He had forgotten about Old Wang. Whatever. This was good as well. Old Wang should take this chance and leave as quickly as he could. Old Wang would not be able to get involved in this matter. Old Wang should return to Nanyuan, become principal for a few years before retiring. That was a beautiful life that should not be ruined.

Behind them, Principal Wang gazed at the departing group and smiled before getting back on his shabby truck before going back where he came from. He did not look displeased or unhappy. He only felt somewhat regretful. He could only wish Liu Wenyan the best.

What a pity. After today, there would be nobody complaining about him being a stingy principal. There would also be nobody making him a scapegoat for a trouble someone else had courted anymore. He could only wish Liu Wenyan the best for his subsequent journey.

The shabby truck slowly departed. The young-looking Liu Chuan that had appeared earlier reappeared and slowly followed the truck, escorting the old principal back to Nanyuan. Meanwhile, the group of people slowly walked further away from the gate.

...

Not far away.

Marquis Xia also decided to leave. While leaving, he tossed the watermelon skin in his hand away. This had been a boring show. There wasn't even a fight. Only Shan Tianhao had arrived. That was only the vice principal of the Great Zhou Cultural Research Academy and the faculty head of their Character Faculty. Not even Zhou Mingren was present. How regretful. There was no great show today.

He walked while thinking. Suddenly, he stopped and turned to look at Administrator Hu. He asked in astonishment, "Why are you following me?"

"..."

Old Hu was really tired of Marquis Xia. Was this fellow not aware that they were returning through the same path? If they didn't walk together, how was he supposed to return? Could this fatty stop making trouble for him?

"Prefect..."

"I'm only an acting prefect. Just call me marquis."

"Marquis!" Old Hu said tiringly, "Has Old Ji broken through into the Sunmoon Realm?"

"How am I supposed to know that?"

"Shan Tianhao had actually failed to stop that seal. Old Ji is getting stronger and stronger."

"Yeah. He's quite strong." Marquis Xia gave a perfunctory reply as he walked, "What a pity. I was expecting a big show today. Did Wan Tiansheng put Zhou Mingren in house arrest or something? I thought that Zhou Mingren was going to dig out the grave. Why is nothing happening?"

He then laughed, "The moment he starts digging, a fight will break out. And I'll get to enjoy a big show."

"Marquis!" Old Hu said, "Even as the acting prefect, you're still a prefect. You shouldn't be enjoying the show here. You should advise Faculty Head Zhou to give up on his plan. Otherwise, things will get very messy."

Marquis Xia said, "Why should I? Would he even listen to me? He has the backing of Zhou Polong. He's not afraid of me. Let me tell you something. They claimed that they wanted to dig out the grave yet nothing has happened until now. Why is that? Because they are waiting for Liu Wenyan! As long as Liu Wenyan remains hiding, he won't be digging anything."

Old Hu frowned, "So this is just bait?"

"Not really. He is merely hitting two birds with one stone. His student is seriously injured and he needs to dig out the grave. At the same time, he can try to use the matter to lure Liu Wenyan out of hiding. And look, it is a success. Liu Wenyan is here."

Marquis Xia smiled, "Zhang Ruoling? Nah. His main goal is Liu Wenyan."

Old Hu nodded, "I have always thought that it isn't right to dig the grave of the dead. Looks like he's actually waiting for Liu Wenyan. But why? Is he really going to start a war with them? Marquis, we can't just do nothing."

"Who says we're doing nothing?" Marquis Xia said, "They have been fighting each other from the shadows for so many years. It's time for their fight to be brought to light. They are to be fined 1,000 merit points for every square meter they damage in the capital. Right, get Shan Tianhao to pay up for the previous fight. There's also Wu Yuehua and Old Ji. All of them need to pay up. They need to be fined for any damage in the city.

"Also, those from the other prefectures are free to visit. But they are going to be charged 100 merit points each day they stay. That is the price for a Skysoar. A Cloudbreach will be charged 500 merit points per day. A Mountainsea will be charged 1,000 merit points per day. As for the Sunmoons...they are rich so we're charging them 5,000 merit points per day."

Marquis Xia started thinking again. After a while, he said, "Remind them to not injure any unrelated individual. They will be fined 10,000 merit points for any citizen injured. If they caused the death of one citizen, we will execute someone three realms above."

The so-called execution of someone three realms above was one of the strictest punishments of Great Xia. Essentially, for each Skysoar dead, they would kill someone three realms above. Thus, the enemy would lose a Sunmoon for each Skysoar they killed. Great Xia would not let the matter rest until the debt was paid.

And Marquis Xia had decided to utilize that punishment without any worry whatsoever. For every unrelated Skysoar they killed, those from the killer's side would compensate with the life of a Sunmoon. As for whether Great Xia had the strength to enforce this punishment, one would be wise to not doubt them.

Old Hu's face changed as he asked, "Are we going to let them fight?"

"What else can we do?" Marquis Xia asked in astonishment, "Don't you understand that it's even worse letting them fight in the shadows? Everyone would be busy stabbing each other in the back. That's even more annoying. Isn't it great that we can make them solve their conflict with one fight? Those dying from this conflict can only blame themselves for being unlucky. As for those alive, we will punish them according to how many humans they kill during the conflict. We will capture all the victors and have them compensate one life with ten lives. For each human Skysoar they kill, they will have to kill ten Skysoar enemies in the Allheaven Battlefield. Isn't that the convention? This is our house. What are you afraid of?"

Marquis Xia smiled, "The Vanguard Regiment will be able to welcome a lot of new members soon. Those old fossils over there will probably be overjoyed with all these new suicide soldiers they are going to get soon. These soldiers that are sent there as punishment don't even need to be paid. All their spoils of war have to be submitted to the army as well. These are basically free labor!

"For the purpose of our punishment, Liu Wenyan will be considered a Mountainsea. The one to kill him will need to kill 10 Mountainsea enemies as compensation. This fellow is worth that much."

"..."

Old Hu was completely speechless. He walked in silence for a while before asking, "Are we really letting them fight?"

He was still quite worried. If those people were allowed to fight, the issue might escalate beyond control.

Marquis Xia impatiently said, "What can we do? Suppress their conflict? Or send them all to the Allheaven Battlefield? Since they don't get along well with each other, they will only bring their conflict to the battlefield. That will create more trouble. They might as well die here while fighting each other. We can punish the survivors and they will naturally give up from fear. There are too many of them. Are we going to spend all our time suppressing their conflict? We have been doing so for the past 50 years. How is that working?"

This wasn't the first time those people were at each other's throats. Their grudge had persisted for 50 years. Instead of settling down, the conflict had only grown more intense. In that case, they might as well let those people fight it out.

Chapter 357: Liu Wenyan's Return (2)

"If we really let them fight, the multiple character faction would stand no chance..." Old Hu shook his head, "I'm just worried that Yunji would return because of that. I'm also worried that Ping will decide to get involved as well."

Marquis Xia rubbed his chin. That was a reasonable worry. This matter actually involved someone from the Xia Family as well!

After thinking about it, he said, "Yunji...can do what he wants. The person to kill him will need to kill 10 Sunmoons to compensate. The life of someone from the Xia Family is more expensive. If Yunji really ends up dead, there is nothing I can do. I would have to bury him. But I suppose the lives of 10 Sunmoons is worth his life. The Zhou Family is filled with experts, right? They can send Zhou Polong to the battlefield. If Zhou Polong fails to return with the heads of 10 Sunmoons, Longwu will be allowed to kill Zhou Polong to affirm his dao. This would be perfect as Longwu wouldnt even need to visit the battlefield for his advancement anymore."

"..."

Old Hu was completely speechless. For this fellow, everything could be reduced to gains and losses. Including those from his own Xia Family. He must have gone mad. Just what was this damn fatty thinking?

"I suspect you're cursing me inwardly..."

"No."

Old Hu denied.

"You are definitely doing it. Hu, you are scolding me!"

"Have you reached the Sunmoon Realm, Marquis?"

"No." Old Hu exhaled in relief, "In that case, you can't prove that I'm scolding you. Since you're not a Sunmoon, how can you know if I'm scolding you or not?"

Marquis Xia glared at the old man. Well well. This fellow had learned to talk back.

He couldn't be bothered to keep arguing so he kept walking in silence. After a while, he said, "By the way, give me a list of the names of everyone who has arrived. As for the ones who have been fanning the flame, investigate everything about them."

"And there's that kid called Su Yu in the academy. He had created something called the Soul Devouring Art recently. Pay attention to him as well. Have the Martial Dragon Guards move out and do some work. We're not paying them to sit around doing nothing. Get them to arrest some cult members for execution. There has been no breaking news recently and the masses are getting bored with the news. It has been hard to get new advertising deals recently.

"We can execute these newly captured cult members on TV and use the chance to advertise the blade of the Xia Trade Company during the livestream of the execution. Remember to say that with Xia Trade Company's blade, you never have to worried about failing to cut your enemy's head off anymore."

When they were near the prefect's manor, he turned around to look at Old Hu's troubled face and said, "By the way, it is still taboo to sully the grave of the dead. Damn these people. Because of them, the experts are going to start worrying about their own graves. It would be fine if they fail to dig the grave, but if they succeed, we have to do something. You'll go dig out the Zhou Family's ancestral tomb as a response...wait. Their ancestral tomb is in Great Zhou. Forget it. Just dig the ancestral tomb of Zhou Mingren's branch. We can't touch their main ancestral tomb or Great Zhou King will probably hack me to death."

Marquis Xia yawned and lazily said, "He's already dead. And he's dead within Great Xia. I can't allow someone to dig his grave, right? Zhang Ruoling...that's my ex classmate. Damn those assholes. They have to show me some respect, right? Why would they set their sights on Zhang Ruoling? He's so pitiful."

"I understand." Old Hu replied. "Anything else?"

"Of course." Marquis Xia said, "Business has been bad recently. Finally, we have two big customers coming to spend money here. Don't stop them. After their fight, remember to send some people and measure the damage. We must charge them for every damage they cause. Make sure they pay up after the fight. If anyone dares to renege on the debt, raid their home and confiscate their possessions.

"Right, that genius kid from Great Zhou. That's Shan Tianhao's grandson, right? What stage of the Skysoar Realm is he in right now?"

"Sixth-stage."

"Sell him the Golden Dragon Pill in our warehouse. With the pill, he can open eight apertures in one day. Isn't that amazing? Sell the pill to him at the price of 50,000 merit points. He is not allowed to refuse. If he refuses to buy, ban him from entering Great Xia. If he dares to enter, break his legs. If he dares to sneak through the borders, treat him like a cultist and kill him."

"..."

Old Hu was completely speechless. This fellow had really gone mad from thinking about money. How did he come up with something like that? Opening eight apertures in one day? What the fuck? He would be lucky to open one or two in one day. And this fellow was selling that pill for 50,000 merit points?

Could that little genius refuse to buy? If that person refused, he would really have his legs broken if he dared to enter Great Xia.

Old Hu was really tired of dealing with Marquis Xia. With Marquis Xia as the acting prefect, the entire Great Xia was on the verge of turning into an unscrupulous company that would not let go of any chance to scam someone.

That was not all. Marquis Xia continued, "I almost forgot something. Zhou Mingren still owes me 398 peak Mountainsea willpower texts. I doubt he can afford it. Get the receipts and pay Zhou Polong a visit. I can't be bothered to waste my time on a broke guy like Zhou Mingren."

"Marquis!" Old Hu frowned and said, "If you want to help the multiple character faction, just be honest about it. You are clearly being prejudiced against the single character faction. There is no need to offend the Zhou Family for no reason. You might as well make your position clear or simply stop them from fighting."

"Helping the multiple character faction?" Marquis Xia rubbed his chin, "Am I helping them? But I'm not even thinking about that..."

After a while, he said in realization, "I understand now! The single character faction is simply too rich! I covet their money! No wonder. I was curious why I was being so biased. But it's simply because the multiple character faction is too poor!"

He really had a look of realization, as though he had just achieved enlightenment. Old Hu frowned. Was this fatty telling the truth? Not even he could read Marquis Xia's mind. He still had a feeling that Marquis Xia was prejudiced against the single character faction. But he had no proof.

Marquis Xia smiled, "Just do as I say. Be a good boy. A whale has arrived. Time to slay the whale. As for the Zhou Family...are you trying to say that Zhou Polong speaks for the entire Zhou Family??"

"Are you kidding me? You need to at least be Zhou Potian to have that much sway. But Zhou Potian can't be bothered to get involved in this matter. I just called him not long ago. By the way, that fellow is really good at doing business. Despite his domineering name, he is actually the same type of person as me!"

Marquis Xia said, "You should learn from him. That fellow is amazing. Not long ago, he did a transaction with the divine race and bought 10,000 fire hogs to be reared. Now, you can freely buy fire hog flesh in Great Zhou. They're selling fire hog flesh like regular pork. I need to learn from him."

Old Hu's head ached. He felt like he should just leave. He couldn't stand talking to this fellow anymore.

"Marquis, I still have something to do so I'll be taking my leave."

"Fine."

Marquis Xia waved his hand. After Old Hu left, Xia Xinyi walked over and softly said, "Father, Hong Tan has entered the Human Realm. He will be back soon."

"How about Yuwen?"

"He's going to be back soon too."

"Yunji?"

"We still don't have any news about him."

Marquis Xia nodded, "Do not allow them to fight before Hong Tan is back. Get someone to keep Zhou Mingren busy for now. Right, we can get our people to collect the debt from Zhou Mingren. Keep bothering him to pay up."

"Alright."

"Deploy all the Secret Martial Dragon Guards as well. The Myriad Race Cult will not remain idle while all this is happening. They will definitely try something. Keep an eye out for them. This will be the best chance for us to clean up the cult presence in Great Xia."

"Alright."

"As for that Su Yu kid, he wants to open an auction or something like that, right? Tell Huyou to urge him on. Don't keep dragging this out. It would be even better if everything can happen at the same time. Hasn't the cult issued a bounty for him? That bounty is too low. Who would dare to kill someone in Great Xia for that little money? Get someone to increase the bounty to 5,000 merit points."

"Father, this..."

Xia Xinyi was alarmed. That was too high.

Marquis Xia smiled, "Why? I'm fishing. Isn't fishing fun? As for the identity of the bounty issuer, just get our people to pretend to be someone from Zheng Yuming's side. Even a Mountainsea like that was nearly dead from his encounter with Su Yu. Isn't it normal that Zheng Yuming would be willing to spend 5,000 merit points to get Su Yu killed?"

"..."

"If that identity is not suitable, we can use the identity of someone from the Huang Family. Huang Qifeng was nearly killed from his encounter with Su Yu as well. Using 5,000 merit points for revenge is perfectly normal."

Marquis Xia inhaled deeply and said, "Go. Pay your elder brother a visit. Tell him to come out and stop pretending to be dead. If Zhou Polong really dares to come, get your elder brother to hack him to death."

"..."

Xia Xinyi said blankly, "Big Brother Longwu is still in seclusion. Father..."

"You idiot. Why would I have a son like you? What an embarrassment. Even your nephew is smarter than you. Just do as told. You can forget about the Xia Trade Company. If Huyou fails to become the prefect in the future, he can get the Xia Trade Company. If he manages to become the prefect, I would rather dissolve the trade company than let you run it."

"Father..."

Xia Xinyi had a helpless expression. Was he really that bad? But Marquis Xia couldn't be bothered to say more. He didn't feel like talking to a fool. Big Brother Longwu was in seclusion? That brain of his...why couldn't he learn to use his brain?

"Father, it won't be good to dissolve the Xia Trade Company, right? I think Chan is a decent candidate as well..."

Xia Xinyi still didn't wish to give up. If his father thought that he wasn't suitable, there was still a granddaughter, right?

Marquis Xia stopped walking, thought for a bit, and said, "Chan...sigh. Why must everyone from the Xia Family be a simpleminded fool? You are obviously my son. She is obviously my granddaughter. Why are the both of you so similar to my elder brother instead? Did we mistake Huyou for Chan when they were babies?"

"..."

Xia Xinyi was speechless. There was no way they would mistake the babies. These people were either Mountainseas or Sunmoons. How could these people mistake their own juniors? Furthermore, the two weren't even born on the same day! They were born months apart!

...

While the father and son were busy worrying over their juniors.

Liu Wenyan spoke to his group, "We don't have a Sunmoon with us. There is no way we can contend against Sunmoons. Zhou Mingren is nothing. I'm only afraid that some Sunmoons will get involved. A lot of people are waiting for the show to unfold. Wu Yuehua..."

"Are you addressing me by my full name?"

"..."

Liu Wenyan rolled his eyes, "Yuehua, this time, we must fight it out and let them suffer somewhat. We won't be able to protect the graves of Ruoling and the others forever. We need to let them feel some pain this time. You still have a Sunmoon in your Wu Family, right? Is your mom still alive?"

"..."

Wu Yuehua's face darkened.

Liu Wenyan coughed awkwardly and said, "Don't misunderstand. I was afraid that she had gone to the Allheaven Battlefield. Can you get your mom to be our backer for a few days? I'll repay her after I become an Invincible."

"..."

The group pretended they didn't hear that.

Wu Yuehua glared at Liu Wenyan and said, "My mom is in seclusion. She has been in seclusion for many years."

"A sealed seclusion?"

"You can say so."

"Then...can you try calling her out? If not, just tell her you're getting married. Your mom might decide to leave seclusion from sheer joy that her daughter is finally getting married..."

"Cough...cough...cough..."

A bunch of coughs rang out around them. Amazing. Big Brother Liu was truly remarkable. He had remained the same even after so many years. They had thought that he would have changed after his failure all those years ago.

"Are you taking me as your wife?" Wu Yuehua looked at him with burning eyes and said, "If that's the case, I'll tell her that."

"..."

Liu Wenyan bashfully said, "At our age, it's not proper to talk about this topic..."

"I knew it! Liu! Are you still thinking about Hu Ping and Zhao Mingyue? You heartless man!"

"..."

Liu Wenyan pretended he heard nothing and kept walking like nothing had happened.

Was Little Yu seeing this? This was a woman. An obstacle on the path of cultivation. Obstacle! She was already over 70, for heaven's sake! Why was she still thinking about things from over 50 years ago?

Then again, that Old Hu was quite strong too. Why was Hu Ping not around? Old Hu could serve as a decent backer as well! As for the Zhao Family, that Silly Zhao was pretty incredible as well! He was a peak Mountainsea so he could still be somewhat useful. And he was even a deputy general of the Martial Dragon Guards! He would serve as a deterrence just standing there!

Liu Wenyan started considering contacting the other two tigresses. But with Wu Yuehua around, it would be hard for him to contact them. He sighed, troubled. He had been away for 50 years yet he still needed to face these obstacles. How terrifying.

Behind him, Wu Yuehua snorted when she saw how fast Liu Wenyan was running away. She was very dissatisfied.

But looking at that bleak back, sorrow and helplessness emerged from her heart. He was not this pitiful 50 years ago. Back then, Shan Tianhao wasn't even qualified to clean his shoes. Back then, he wouldn't even need them to protect him against the likes of Shan Tianhao.

Chapter 358: Bai Feng Ran Away (1)

Liu Wenyan had arrived at Great Xia City. Su Yu did not know the exact details of what had happened, but he knew that Liu Wenyan and the old principal had left together the day before.

Books depository.

Su Yu had decided to talk to his martial uncle about this. No matter what, his martial uncle was still a ninth-stage Cloudbreach. As for his teacher...well, his teacher should stick to research. After all, his teacher was really kind of weak.

Tenth floor.

Wu Jia was away attending a class. When Chen Yong heard about Liu Wenyan's possible arrival, he looked calm.

When he saw Su Yu's worried expression, he said, "It's fine. Martial Uncle won't be alone after returning. I am aware of the departure of Elder Sun and the others. But their group has just returned without any gains"

"Martial Uncle, you know about this?"

Su Yu was surprised. He had thought that Chen Yong was still in the dark.

Chen Yong said, "No. Martial Uncle told me nothing. But this is an incident that had caused multiple academy elders to leave before returning with injuries. It is very likely that Martial Uncle has returned."

He smiled, "Don't worry. There are still a few elders in the academy that are supportive toward Martial Uncle. They are his good friends. Elder Wu from the Pillmaking Faculty, Elder He from the Beast Taming Faculty, Elder Fan from the Talisman Faculty, and Faculty Head Su who seldom shows himself. All these people were Martial Uncle's good friends back in the days."

Su Yu was quite surprised. Teacher Liu had so many Mountainsea friends? He was slightly relieved to hear that. In that case, things should be fine? After all, Teacher Liu had so many good friends who were experts.

"Martial Uncle, I thought Teacher Liu isn't returning? Why is he suddenly returning?"

Chen Yong exhaled, "Someone forced him to return."

"Zhou Mingren?"

"Not necessarily." Chen Yong sighed, "There is really no need for you to view Zhou Mingren with too much hostility. He isn't exactly a generous person, but he is easily content. In truth, he is already happy with the status of the single character faction today. He is also content with his status as the vice principal. But he couldn't resist the people pushing for action behind him, such as Zheng Yuming, Xia Yuwen, and some people from Great Zhou."

Chen Yong thought for a bit and continued, "Perhaps someone promised him something, such as an advancement opportunity. In the beginning, Zhou Mingren had not intended to completely erase us."

Su Yu nodded and did not ask anything. All that was too far away from him.

Since Liu Wenyan had help, he was feeling much more relaxed. He said, "Martial Uncle, there is nothing I can do about that. I should just focus on my cultivation."

"Exactly. Your sole mission is to cultivate. Ignore everything else. If something is really going to happen, as a Mental Tempering Stage student, there is nothing you can change."

"I understand." Su Yu nodded and curiously said, "Martial Uncle, can I ask you a question? What is it that you lack for your advancement into the Mountainsea Realm?"

"Mountainsea..." Chen Yong smiled, "The Mountainsea Realm isn't hard to reach. Fourth-tier Divine Character, fourth-tier willpower, and the fusion of apertures like the fusion of acupoints in the Infinite Strength Realm. When all three are achieved, you can enter the Mountainsea Realm. Thus, it isn't actually hard to fulfill the requirements to become a Mountainsea."

It wasn't hard? Su Yu had a look of astonishment. His Martial Uncle sounded so relaxed, but what would those stuck below the Mountainsea Realm think? Also, his martial uncle wasn't even a Mountainsea!

Chen Yong smiled, "Don't you understand? It's the same as the Infinite Strength Realm. Some people will only advance with a fusion of 12 acupoints. Some are happy with fusing only 2 acupoints. That's the case

for Mountainsea Realm's aperture fusion. Thus, every Mountainsea cultivator will be different from each other depending on their fused apertures."

Su Yu nodded and looked at Chen Yong. The Myriad Text Sutra would allow one to open a total of 72 apertures. In that case, the limit for this cultivation method was a fusion of 8 apertures. Those hitting this limit would be a top-tier Mountainsea among all cultivators of this cultivation method.

Was his martial uncle aiming to fuse eight acupoints? Was that why he had remained below the Mountainsea Realm?

"Martial Uncle, that is the case for cultural researchers. How about warriors?"

"Warriors?" Chen Yong smiled, "Things are much simpler for them. At the Skysoar Realm, they will temper their bones, change their blood, and cleanse their marrow.

"At the Cloudbreach Realm, they will transform their source qi. They will undergo one transformation per stage. At the ninth transformation, their source qi will turn into heavenly source qi."

"At the Mountainsea Realm, they will continue fusing acupoints. At the Infinite Strength Realm, they will fuse their acupoints until they have nine acupoints left. At the Mountainsea Realm, they will fuse their remaining acupoints into a single acupoint. That is the realm where you can truly reach a level of utilizing one acupoint as a hundred acupoints.

"As for the Sunmoon and Eternal Realms, that's not something for me to know."

Su Yu nodded. He had learned something new again. All those realms were still very far away for him. He only needed to know a little bit about them. There was no need to know too much.

After the conversation, Su Yu decided to not worry that much since his martial uncle appeared unworried.

...

Outside the books depository.

After a slight hesitation, Su Yu called a number again. Had Teacher Liu arrived at the capital? Perhaps...Teacher Bai Feng could really solve Teacher Liu's issue with his Divine Character blocking his cultivation.

If the pressure of the fifth principal's Divine Character could be relieved, wouldn't Teacher Liu be much stronger? This time, he was not being told that there was no signal on the other end.

After a while, the call connected. Liu Wenyan's cheerful voice rang out, "Su Yu, you're looking for me?"

"Teacher..." Su Yu thought about it and said, "Teacher Bai Feng told me to invite you back for a visit to the Wentan Research Center. We have recently derived a powerful cultivation method called the Soul Devouring Art. It can allow one to alter one's source qi. But Teacher Bai said that he has yet to perfect the cultivation method and he hopes that you can provide him some guidance."

"Soul Devouring Art?" Liu Wenyan exclaimed at astonishment. When he looked at Wu Yuehua, she nodded and transmitted her voice, "It is the source art of the soul devouring bugs, capable of altering the source qi of the cultivator."

Liu Wenyan nodded. He asked in astonishment, "You guys actually managed to derive the cultivation method of some bugs?"

He was really quite surprised. The cultivation methods of bug races were extremely hard to derive for the human race. That was because the bodies of bugs were too different from humans.

"Teacher, Teacher Bai is very good at researching. But he has been stumped by a few issues. Therefore, he wishes to ask for your guidance..."

"Me?" Liu Wenyan laughed, "What guidance can I provide? Bai Feng...looks like I have underestimated him. But I don't have the time to visit you for now."

He couldn't go. It was fine staying in the sub-city. But if he wanted to enter the Wentan Research Center, a lot more people would try to stop him. After all, there was Wan Tiansheng, who was a stickler for rules, in the academy. Thus, Liu Wenyan could simply hide in the Wentan Research Center to enjoy the protection of Wan Tiansheng. Wan Tiansheng would not allow fights to break out in the academy.

"Teacher, if you can't visit, should I have Teacher Bai visit you at Nanyuan?" Su Yu said, "Teacher Bai is in quite a rush. It's my fault. Not long ago, I promised to auction that cultivation manual out. Only after that did I find out that the cultivation manual is not perfected yet. Because of that, Teacher Bai is in a rush..."

"Kid..."

Liu Wenyan was somewhat speechless. This kid dared to offer the cultivation manual for auction before it was even ready?

Also, Bai Feng seemed to be treating this kid quite well. He had even allowed Su Yu to get involved in such a project. And auctioning the cultivation manual was probably the kid's decision. Even with that, the kid had not been punished by Bai Feng?

After thinking about it, Liu Wenyan said, "I'll give you a reply when I have some time. I'm really quite busy right now."

"Alright, Teacher. I'll contact you again next time."

"..."

After ending the call, Liu Wenyan asked, "Yuehua, you know Su Yu right? Is Bai Feng attaching a lot of importance to this kid?"

"Su Yu?"

The middle-aged guy called He Ji smiled and said, "Big Brother Liu, I know Su Yu. Very few people in the academy don't know him. So he's Big Brother Liu's student? No wonder. I knew Bai Feng is incapable of producing a student this excellent."

Liu Wenyan laughed. In truth, he hadn't taught Su Yu that much either. He had only taught the kid some basic knowledge. Why was this guy saying that Bai Feng wouldn't be able to produce a student like that?

"Su Yu...is quite popular?" Liu Wenyan got curious, "Has he entered the top 100?"

"More than that." He Ji laughed heartily, "That kid is impressive. Not only has he entered the top 100, he has even embarrassed Zhou Mingren and his cronies and tossed a pile of shit their way. Zhou Mingren wasn't around when you arrived, right? He was probably busy dealing with the shit Su Yu had thrown his way."

After hearing about Su Yu's feats in the academy, Liu Wenyan asked in astonishment, "Has he actually changed this much?"

Was that still the same Su Yu he remembered? The kid had only been in the academy for a short time. Why had he changed that much? He had even reached the ninth-stage Great Strength Realm! He had defeated a student ranked 38th and gave Zhou Mingren all sorts of troubles. That was really quite surprising.

Liu Wenyan had complicated emotions. Previously, Su Yu had said that he was doing decently in the academy. But he seemed to be doing even better than that. Liu Wenyan did not ask more. He had no way of entering the academy.

There was also no need for Su Yu and Bai Feng to get involved in this matter. Those two were too weak. Even an eighth-stage Skysoar like Bai Feng was not strong enough.

Chapter 359: Bai Feng Ran Away (2)

Inside the academy.

After ending the call, Su Yu thought for a bit and started rushing toward the research center. Was there any special reason why Teacher Liu was not coming to the academy? Since Teacher Liu wasn't coming,

Su Yu would just let Teacher Bai go. When he arrived at the research center, he went straight to the third underground floor.

As usual, Bai Feng was working on his research untiringly. He was truly paying zero attention to the matters of the world. Perhaps he would still remain oblivious even when the sky was falling outside the research center.

When Bai Feng sensed Su Yu's arrival, he looked up and said with joy, "Little Yu, your teacher discovered something new! Just earlier, I managed to take my Dragon Slaying Sword apart!"

Su Yu nearly got a heart attack from that. Had Bai Feng gone crazy? That was his character technique!

"Teacher, relax. Don't get yourself killed..."

"Stop talking nonsense."

A tiny sword appeared above Bai Feng's palm as he said, "Kid, watch carefully."

He then dismantled the sword. Yes. He had actually taken the sword apart. Su Yu was completely stunned. Could character techniques be taken apart like this?

Bai Feng laughed, "Amazing, right? I'm not taking individual Divine Characters out. Rather, I have taken the entire technique apart. Isn't this incredible? Character technique? The template can't be changed? Bullshit! I can dismantle and reassemble it anytime I want!"

With that declaration, he started putting the dismantled sword back together.

"I can even change its shape as I wish!"

As he played with the sword, it turned into a saber.

"As long as the main nodes are around, I can alter the technique as I wish."

Bai Feng continued working on his character technique as he said, "But I discovered an issue with this. When taking the form of the Dragon Slaying Sword, I don't feel any sense of discomfort. But the moment I change it into a different form, I will feel a sense of disharmony."

"Firstly, the Divine Characters originate from different races. Secondly, the Divine Characters are of different tiers. Thirdly, the strength of the Divine Characters of different races are different as well..."

He looked at Su Yu and said, "You need to persevere in using only human characters. I have discovered that the repelling force among the human characters is the weakest. The repelling force of the divine and devil characters are the strongest."

"I suspect that the divine and devil characters have an innate rejection toward us humans. My divine and devil characters have always carried a repelling force with them. I have merely not noticed it before."

Bai Feng continued muttering, "Are human characters too weak to even generate the repelling force? Or is it possible that the divine and devil characters have never been suitable for the human race?"

"If I do not reassemble my character technique, I won't be able to sense the repelling force. Even at the Cloudbreach or the Mountainsea Realm, it would probably be the same. But I suspect that at the Sunmoon Realm, this repelling force would intensify, to the point where human cultivators wouldn't be able to reach the Invincible Realm with these characters."

"Does the problem lie on human characters? Have human characters been weakened somehow? Or is there a problem with the divine and devil characters? Because they are not suitable for the human race?"

"..."

Bai Feng continued talking to himself. He had completely forgotten about Su Yu's presence. Meanwhile, Su Yu was also in a state of shock. After he had given his teacher the idea that Divine Characters might

be related to racial abilities, his teacher seemed to have entered a state of enlightenment, becoming better and better at research.

"Teacher!"

"Oh." Bai Feng was roused awake. He looked at Su Yu and exhaled, "Don't worry. You need to form 18 Divine Characters so you have plenty of time. I'll keep working on my research. If I have no choice, I'll destroy some of my characters and try to cultivate new characters."

Su Yu was alarmed. Destroying his own characters? Would his teacher kill himself with these experiments?

"Teacher, relax. Don't hurt yourself because of your research."

Su Yu never intended to say too much about his teacher's research, but his teacher was already thinking of destroying his own Divine Characters. Su Yu couldn't hold back anymore and decided to tell his teacher the truth.

He said, "Teacher, you can't get yourself killed yet. A lot of troubles are coming for us."

"Has Martial Uncle arrived at Great Xia City?" Bai Feng raised his brow, "As mentioned previously, we are not exactly the targets of some people. We are merely the tools they use to force Martial Uncle to reappear. And looks like they have succeeded."

Bai Feng did not know too much, but he was no fool. He snorted coldly and said, "A bunch of bastards. They have all these excuses, but ultimately, they are all coveting the Divine Character of the fifth principal. Perhaps the fifth principal had really discovered the secrets of reaching the Eternal Realm as a cultural researcher."

Su Yu frowned, "Those people are too shortsighted. If there is really a way to reach the Eternal Realm as a cultural researcher, I doubt any cultural researcher will hide the method."

At the very least, he believed that he wouldn't do so. After all, the first cultural researcher to do so would be a trailblazer. That person would be the one to open up a path for countless Sunmoons who had been forced to focus on physical cultivation.

There was no need for someone to hide something that would benefit anyone as long as it wouldn't expose that person's core secrets. After all, the myriad races actually had their own Eternal cultural researchers.

Only the human race was without Eternal cultural researchers. In such a situation, was there even a need to hide something like a method to reach that fabled realm?

Bai Feng exhaled, "Who knows? Perhaps it's not a lack of foresight. Instead, they simply do not wish to see the human race with our own Eternal cultural researchers?"

"This..."

Su Yu recalled what his martial uncle said about the potential thief that had stolen the data left behind by the fifth principal. He really couldn't argue against what Bai Feng said.

Bai Feng inhaled deeply and said, "Since Martial Uncle is here, then I no longer have to worry about my lack of research subject. Very good. Now, I don't have to worry about accidentally killing myself while experimenting on myself anymore. Kid, you won't be able to inherit my wealth after my death anytime soon."

Su Yu wanted to tell Bai Feng to wake up and remember that he had no wealth to speak of. The most valuable belonging here was the research center, but it belonged to his grandteacher, not Bai Feng.

Thus, if Bai Feng really died, he would die leaving nothing behind.

Bai Feng was naturally unbothered with what Su Yu was thinking. He said, "I'll go look for Martial Uncle. I might be away from the academy for some time so you need to be careful. Stay in the academy and don't leave no matter how messy things get outside."

Bai Feng solemnly said, "Since even Martial Uncle has been forced to leave Nanyuan, something is definitely happening soon. Things will get unpeaceful soon. Just stay in the academy and cultivate. If you encounter any trouble, look for your martial uncle. He can't leave anyway since he needs to watch over the books depository."

"I know. Be careful, Teacher."

"Don't worry. I'll be fine."

Bai Feng wasn't too worried about himself. He started packing up his stuff, including some of the devices he needed for his research.

While packing up, he said, "Remember this. The character technique is most likely the initial form of a racial ability. And the racial ability character might be one of the keys behind a cultural researcher's advancement into the Eternal Realm.

"It is definitely not easy to enter the Eternal Realm as a cultural researcher. I suspect that all your Divine Characters need to be of the same race to accomplish that. Additionally, all your Divine Characters need to be at the sixth tier. Only then can you truly step into the Eternal Realm.

"The fifth principal is very strong. Terrifyingly strong. I guess that some of his Divine Characters have reached the sixth tier. Meanwhile, for the human race, we have this habit of calling fifth-tier characters Eternal characters. But that is actually inaccurate. The fifth principal definitely had a lot of fifth-tier characters and some sixth-tier characters. But since not all his characters were at the sixth tier, he had failed his advancement.

"The ambush is probably not the only reason the fifth principal had failed his advancement. I also need to take this chance to take a look at the fifth principal's main Divine Character. I will be updating you through the communicator, but I can't be too direct in it. I will only say enough for you alone to understand.

"If the fifth principal's sixth-tier characters are human characters, then that means that the human race is actually capable of becoming Eternal cultural researchers. The fifth principal had probably been mistaken about some other aspects, resulting in his failure..."

Bai Feng's line of thought seemed to be jumping all over the place. He looked like he was trying to tell Su Yu everything he had learned from his research.

Su Yu frowned, "Teacher, you don't have to tell me more. You'll be fine."

He knew what Bai Feng was thinking. Bai Feng was afraid that he wouldn't be able to return alive.

Bai Feng chided, "Cut the crap. Back then, the fifth principal was also fully confident with himself. Because of that, he had left nothing behind prior to his attempt. But instead, he failed and brought the multiple character faction down with him. Do not repeat the fifth principal's disastrous policy. One more thing. If you're really in big trouble, seek Wan Tiansheng's help."

"What?"

"Wan Tiansheng!" Bai Feng said, "Before your grandteacher left, he said that we can look for Wan Tiansheng if we encounter any trouble. Thus, I believe that he isn't an enemy. Back then, he had a good relationship with the fifth principal. But he had not remained in the academy the entire time. There was a period of time where he went to the Knowledge Seeking Realm for his cultivation. He had only returned after the fifth principal's death.

"One of the reasons he had returned was the Knowledge Seeking Realm's request. I don't know if his return involves an exchange of benefits as well. But you need to remember that he might also be a member of the multiple character faction."

"What?"

Su Yu was dumbstruck. Multiple character faction? In truth, he did not know about the principal's path of cultivation. He did not have much information about the principal. He had only heard that the principal could actually be considered a member of the single character faction, the part of the faction that believed in forming a system of characters. Why was he suddenly a member of the multiple character faction?

"What's so surprising about that?" Bai Feng said, "There really isn't that much of a difference between the single and multiple character factions. When a single character faction member forms more than 10

characters and links those characters into a system before the Skysoar Realm, that person can actually be considered a multiple character faction member already. People like us are benefiting from the knowledge of our predecessors, allowing us to pick a template from the wall. Meanwhile, Wan Tiansheng might have formed his own character technique instead of picking one somewhere."

Su Yu was stunned. Forming his own character technique? Right! In truth, that was what he had done as well. Or to be precise, he had not inherited any existing templates in the wall. The golden book had instead formed a new template for him. Thus, it was really possible that Wan Tiansheng had formed his own template.

But if that was the case, then Wan Tiansheng was a true freak among freaks. One ought to know that the template had to be formed before the Skysoar Realm.

"Teacher, are those templates in the wall the creations of our predecessors before the Skysoar Realm?"

"Not all of them. Some were created after the Skysoar Realm. Even though they couldn't use these templates, that did not stop them from creating these templates."

At this point, Bai Feng had finished packing up. He inhaled deeply and said, "Just remember my words. Don't get involved in anything else. In the academy, you will be fine as long as you follow the rules. Nobody would dare to take the risk and act against you in the academy.

"Your martial uncle is still in the academy. If you are really left with no choice, just leave the multiple character faction. It's fine. Old Man Zhao has been trying to take you as a student, right? It's not a problem."

Su Yu didn't know whether to laugh or cry. He said, "Teacher, stop making this sound like your final words. You have to stop planting these flags or you might really jinx yourself."

Bai Feng glared at Su Yu.

After thinking about it, he said, "By the way, I need to give you the keys of the cages in the prison zone as well. When you're in trouble, you can release them for their help. They aren't stupid."

"Tell them that if they help you, they will be assigned the identities of tamed beasts. That way, they won't be killed for leaving the cages. If they refuse, they will definitely die before they can leave the Human Realm.

"They aren't stupid. They will know what to do. Not everyone can get the identifications for tamed beasts, but your grandteacher was prepared. He had used his identity as an elder to apply for some mount allocations. You only need to register those beasts as our mounts to make them your tamed beasts."

He then tossed a token over to Su Yu. It was a silvery white token. On it, the character Hong could be seen on one side. On the other side was the picture of the Heart Cultivating Pavilion.

"This is your grandteacher's identity token. You can use it for the registration process." Bai Feng exhaled and added, "If the situation becomes dangerous that you're worried about your safety, release the beasts. At the very least, you can get a few Cloudbreach cultivators at your side that way.

"As for the potential of their betrayal, you will have to deal with that yourself. If they escape, they will die. If they remain obedient, they can stay alive. As long as they aren't complete fools, they will know what to do. Be generous when making promises. For example, you can promise a timeline where they can eventually return to the Allheaven Battlefield..."

"Alright."

Su Yu was quite surprised. So his grandteacher had actually gotten the identity of mounts for these beasts. That way, these beasts would not be killed even after being let out of their cages.

After saying all that, Bai Feng hefted his heavy bag up and complained, "Su Yu, if you have the chance, try to get a storage Divine Character. We can do the same with Eternal characters, but all characters below that level can't do so unless that is the special ability of the character in question. You better get one or it would be too uncool for us to travel with so much luggages. Traveling with luggages simply doesn't fit our status as cultural researchers."

Su Yu's eyes lit up. That made a lot of sense! All cultural researchers should look graceful and ethereal. And dragging luggages around would ruin that image.

"Teacher, are there many characters with this ability?"

"There are, but not many. For example, the bag, carry, lift, space, and some other characters might come with a storage space. But it ultimately depends on your luck."

At that point, Bai Feng lost his patience again. He said, "I'll be leaving. Time for me to experiment on my martial uncle-no, I mean time for me to save my martial uncle!"

He then ran off unhesitatingly. Su Yu was completely dumbstruck.

Previously when Bai Feng was leaving his last words, Su Yu thought that his teacher was ready to face death. But looking at his teacher's current look of excitement, well, his teacher did not look worried at all. Instead, he looked more like a mad scientist who had stumbled upon the perfect test subject.

Su Yu started suspecting that Bai Feng wasn't worried of dying under the hands of the single character faction. Instead, he was worried of dying under the hands of Teacher Liu. He was basically treating Teacher Liu as a lab rat. At that thought, Su Yu reckoned that Bai Feng would really be unable to return.

What a troublesome fellow. Why was his teacher so unreliable? Forget it. He could only count on himself.

Chapter 360: More Friends, More Alternatives (1)

Su Yu had brought the news to his teacher. Bai Feng had left after hearing his news. And Chen Yong had been notified. Su Yu felt like he had done all he should do. As for everything else that was happening, he still couldn't get involved in them. His current priority was to form Divine Characters and cultivate.

Currently, he still had 100 drops of late-stage mountainbreak bull blood essence, 500 drops of soul devouring bug blood essence, and 10 drops of five elemental blood essence. Additionally, he also had dozens of willpower texts.

...

On the night of the 8th.

Su Yu met Hu Zongji again. He wasted no time and gave Hu Zongji the token he received from Zhao Li. He softly said, "With this thing, you can enter without enough total earned merit. But you still need to pay the entry fee."

With the token in hand, Hu Zongji was shocked. Was Su Yu...capable of even getting a backdoor to a grotto? Was this Su Yu's connection or was it someone else in the Mutual Aid Club?

These grottos were very important for the academy. The Grotto District was viewed with as much importance as the Heart Cultivating Pavilion. As for the Zhao character on the token, he naturally knew who it referred to.

He had heard some things from his second granduncle before. This token should belong to Zhao Li. But Zhao Li generally wouldn't concern himself with school politics. Why would he give his token to Su Yu?

Even if Su Yu was minoring in weaponsmithing, just how many times had Su Yu even been to the Weaponsmithing Faculty?

"Su Yu, this..."

"Don't ask, don't say anything, and don't let anyone know about it. Otherwise, it will be hard for me to explain this." Su Yu warned, "Grow strong as fast as you can. A storm is coming. I'm afraid the Human Realm will be unpeaceful in the near future. Both you and me are nobodies. This is both a crisis and an opportunity for us. If we don't gain enough strength and miss this opportunity to gain more, we will probably need to wait decades for another opportunity like this to appear."

"I understand."

Hu Zongji did not ask more. But inwardly, he was extremely shocked. Su Yu had really accomplished it! Just what sort of members did the Mutual Aid Club have?

...

After separating with Hu Zongji, Su Yu went to the Grotto District again.

Source Qi Secret Grotto.

The two old men no longer felt like grumbling about Su Yu. Here they go again. The kid was here again. This place was starting to become the kid's second home.

"It's occupied."

Old Huang said, "A few people are growing inside. Do you want to wait a bit?"

He couldn't even be bothered to ask Su Yu how long the kid was going to cultivate this time anymore. And he also couldn't be bothered to ask about the blood essence the kid was bringing this time.

"Occupied?"

Su Yu was surprised. This place was mostly empty during these hours.

"Yeah. They are all new students." Old Huang complained, "The students of this batch are all troublesome individuals. They enjoy visiting the grotto way too much."

"Who's inside?"

"Zheng Yunhui, Wan Mingze, and Xia Chan..." Old Huang shook his head, "These kids have all gained over 100 total earned merit points."

Those people had obtained a decent amount of points from the Divine Character tournament. Coupled with their rewards from the monthly examinations, they had earned enough to enter the grotto.

Su Yu nodded. He wasn't surprised. He wanted to grow strong, but that was also the case for the others.

When Old Huang saw that Su Yu was sitting down instead of entering, he smiled, "Are you not entering to spy on them?"

"Nope." Su Yu assumed a simple and honest expression before saying, "Cultivating is a personal journey. It is pointless to look at others."

"You're really..." Old Huang sighed before asking, "Are you preparing to enter the Infinite Strength Realm this time?"

"Not really. I'll see. I'm planning to test my Soul Devouring Art."

"That's a good idea too." Old Huang nodded, "Don't rush it when you're fusing acupoints. Take your time. This is not too important in a cultural research academy. If you're in a war academy instead, your teachers will probably be telling you to open all the acupoints of your martial techniques before fusing acupoints."

"Hmm?" Su Yu was surprised to hear that.

When Old Huang saw Su Yu's confused expression, he smiled, "Open the acupoints of your martial techniques during the Great Strength Realm. That way, you can also fuse those acupoints at the Infinite Strength Realm. You might even be able to reach a level where you only need one acupoint per technique. If you don't open all your acupoints and continue opening them at the Infinite Strength Realm, the fusion will be much harder. You can still fuse your acupoints, but the difficulty will increase."

Su Yu nodded, "Is it because the acupoints opened at different levels have different levels of strength as well?"

"You can say so. In truth, the strength of the acupoints are similar. But if one is an acupoint tempered by Great Strength source qi while the other is an acupoint tempered by Infinite Strength source qi, there will still be a difference between the two. Of course, even with increased difficulty, you will still be able to fuse it if you take your time slowly grinding it down."

Su Yu nodded in understanding. In that case, should he open the remaining acupoints required by the Time technique before entering the Infinite Strength Realm? Up until now, he had only opened the acupoints for the first level of the Time technique.

For the second level, 44 acupoints were required. But taking the overlap acupoints into consideration, he only needed to open around 20 additional acupoints. And after that, there was the third level.

If he really opened all of them, he would end up opening over 200 acupoints in total. He wasn't too worried about it. If he really couldn't do it, he would simply continue opening acupoints at the Infinite Strength Realm. It would only result in a slight increase in the difficulty of acupoint fusion.

Since Su Yu wasn't going to enter the grotto immediately, he did not waste his time. After greeting the two teachers, he took out a willpower text and started reading it. Time was very precious for him. He had too many things to do.

On top of his cultivation, he also needed to spare some time to attend the basic lessons and strengthen his mastery over the various languages. After all, each new page activated in his book came with a different language.

If he rashly activated the abilities or cultivation methods of some pages with unknown languages, accidents might happen too easily. Who knew if one of them was a suicidal self-destruct ability.

He was reading a common yellow-grade technique. It wasn't too valuable a technique. It was the Rampaging Tiger Saber, a trash technique requiring only 16 acupoints. Of course, it was actually a decent technique for a Great Strength cultivator when compared against other yellow-grade techniques.

With the willpower text opened, a silhouette appeared before Su Yu's eyes. With a saber in hand, the silhouette demonstrated several moves that were slow yet powerful. This was a technique that was suited for the battlefield.

To form a Divine Character from a text, one needed to first comprehend the technique or method in the text itself. This applied to cultivation methods and techniques like the Source Opening Codex, Lightning Source Blade, and Skybreak Technique.

All the willpower texts Su Yu had gained Divine Characters from were something he had comprehended even if his comprehension was shallow. Only then would he be able to form Divine Characters out of those texts. If he was completely unable to understand what he was reading, forming Divine Characters would basically be impossible.

...

"This kid...is really quite hardworking. But why is he reading some trash technique?"

Old Huang and Old Nie were chatting through voice transmissions. This was a trash technique with only 17 acupoints. It was a middle-tier yellow-grade technique. For a genius like Su Yu, reading a technique like this was pointless. He wouldn't really cultivate it.

"He must be reading it for Divine Characters." Old Nie guessed, "Looks like he's trying to specialize in human characters?"

Old Huang shook his head. He couldn't be bothered to guess. That might be the case. Human characters were weaker yet easier to form. But they were really quite weak. Just what was Su Yu thinking?

The two chatted for a while before both of them suddenly fixed their gaze on Su Yu. What was going on? Had he read this text many times? Was that why he could form a character so easily? In the text, a certain character slowly dimmed. It was the saber character.

Su Yu was completely indifferent. He shut his eyes for a short while before opening it and exhaling. He then put the text away and took out a different willpower text to read.

"..."

The two old men were completely dumbstruck. Kid, you just formed a new Divine Character. Were you aware? And the kid had successfully formed it so shortly after he started reading. Why was the kid not showing any excitement or joy? He threw the matter out of his head just like that? He hadn't even bothered talking about it!

"Su Yu..."

Old Huang called out. Su Yu looked at Old Huang doubtfully. What was it?

"Yes, Teacher?"

"..."

Old Huang started wondering if he had been seeing things. He asked doubtfully, "Did you just form a Divine Character?"

"Yeah, I did."

"..."

Old Huang found himself completely speechless. What should he say here? He wanted to say that the kid was being way too nonchalant about it.

"Have you read the Rampaging Tiger Saber many times?"

This was actually Su Yu's first time reading this technique. But since he was quite familiar with saber techniques, he was able to understand it easily. But he knew what Old Huang was thinking.

Thus, to calm this elderly man, he nodded, "Well, I read a lot..."

He didn't specify what he read. In any case, he was telling the truth when he said that he read a lot. Old Huang exhaled in relief. He had thought that the kid had successfully formed a character after a single read. That would be too shocking.

Then again, this was a kid with a lot of potential. He could stay so calm even after forming a Divine Character.

"Is it the saber character? That's a decent character. You're a saber user, right? That's a good character for you. But too bad it's a human character or you can even use it as your main Divine Character. If you have a matching weapon and main Divine Character, your offensive power will be greatly enhanced."

Old Nie interrupted him, "That might not necessarily be true. The ability of the character might not suit him. Maybe this saber character only has the ability to form a saber for him or something like that."