

Myriad 421

Chapter 421: Martial Uncle (1)

Books depository.

Top floor.

After a momentary silence, Chen Yong sighed and said, "Stay indoors for now. Enter seclusion and focus on cultivation until the opening of the Willpower Grotto. You will then resume your cultivation in there."

"Teacher!"

Wu Jia furiously said, "They are spreading the rumor all over the academy!"

She was very furious. Those bastards were too excessive.

"They are trying to ruin you. Do you understand?"

Chen Yong sighed.

Wu Jia said, "I know. I want to fight Huang Qifeng in a match to the death."

"Huang Qifeng might have been crippled by your junior brother, but he still has his physical cultivation. You might not be his match..."

"I will just fight him with all I have and end this matter with the death of one of us."

"..."

This was so troublesome. Chen Yong looked at his stubborn student. She was too inflexible with her thinking.

Wu Jia said, "Teacher, since they are also slandering you, can't you do something as a researcher? Previously, Xia Yuwen was able to give Junior Brother a fine for being rude."

Chen Yong softly said, "They did not mention me by name..."

"But they are saying that in front of my face!"

She disagreed. They were already being very obvious about it.

Chen Yong rubbed his head and said, "I can do something, but I won't be able to do much apart from slapping some fine on them. Do you understand?"

Wu Jia looked at him in confusion. She only cared about revenge. Even a fine was better than nothing.

When Chen Yong saw his student's confused expression, he sighed and said, "It is very tiring to talk with you about these things."

Wu Jia suddenly felt sullen. This time, she could clearly understand the meaning behind her teacher's words. He was looking down on her!

Chen Yong exhaled and waved his hand. "Go back and take a rest. Stay indoors for now."

"Teacher..."

"Are you not listening to me anymore?"

Helpless, Wu Jia could only stomp off. Too bad her junior brother wasn't around. If he was around, he would definitely beat those bastards to death. What a pity that she was too weak. This was so infuriating!

After Wu Jia left, Chen Yong shook his head. He was also lamenting the fact that Su Yu wasn't around. Su Yu would be a lot easier to talk to if he were here. After a short silence, Chen Yong took out a jade talisman and played with it for a bit before putting it away.

This student of his really needed more patience.

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Somewhere in the academy.

"Have you heard?"

"What?"

"This is big! Do you know this? In the academy, male researchers will only accept female students for perverse reasons. I heard that this is applicable to even female researchers with male students. I can't believe this. The reputation of our academy is ruined!"

"For real?"

"Yeah! This rumor came from the single character faction. For example, that person from the books depository! There's also Elder Yu-cough, a certain female elder with male students...and a lot other examples! Dang! I finally understand why I still don't have a teacher!"

"Is that really the case? No wonder all those students with teachers are either handsome or beautiful."

"I guess the reputation of our academy is ruined. No, not only our academy. I heard that this is the common practice in all academies."

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15th of October.

Early in the morning, a series of rumors exploded throughout the academy.

Not only that, the rumors were also spreading all over the capital.

The rumors claimed that as long as the teacher and the student were of the opposite genders, there was definitely an improper relationship between them.

These rumors weren't spread by a random nobody. Rather, they originated from the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy's single character faction. The rumors were very convincing, and there were even witnesses to back up these rumors. A certain person in the books depository was quoted as an example.

And the more the rumors spread, the more exaggerated they became. Apart from that person from the books depository, a lot of people were also engaging in such improper relationships, such as Elder Wu Yuehua and Elder Qi. There were also some unsavory rumors involving Principal Wan.

Wan Tiansheng did not have a female student. It had been years since he had last accepted a student. As for Wan Mingze, nobody viewed that person as Principal Wan's student.

According to the rumors, Principal Wan had improper relationships with several female elders and female teachers of the academy.

So long as one had a student or a teacher of the opposite gender, one would not be able to escape this slander. That included Ji Xiaomeng of the Ji Family.

The rumors rocked the entire capital. free.c om

Even some random non-cultivators had heard of these rumors. This was the biggest scandal that had ever happened in Great Xia. The moment these rumors were verified, all the academies in Great Xia would be reduced into a joke of the Human Realm.

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"Bastard!"

"What nonsense!"

Heart Cultivating Pavilion.

Several elders were raging. They had visited the principal's office early in the morning.

The one with the worst temper among them had even turned an entire table into dust with a single slap. He furiously said, "What is this nonsense? I won't accept this! Their conflict is their business. Over the years, we have not meddled in these affairs. Apart from teaching some students, we have not gotten involved in anything. Are they going to get rid of us alongside the multiple character faction as well?"

"What is the single character faction trying to do? Erase all factions? Don't tell me they don't have any students of the opposite gender?"

"..."

The elders were furious.

Wan Tiansheng remained calm. He softly said, "Old Zhou isn't this stupid. Everyone, how would this even benefit him?"

Elder Qi scolded, "Benefit? Why else? Those idiots are trying to use this rumor to drag Chen Yong down. But their dumb lackeys messed it up and lost control of the rumors."

They naturally wouldn't believe that this was Zhou Mingren's original intention. But it wouldn't surprise them if this was done by the dumb lackeys under Zhou Mingren. Originally, they had probably only spread rumors about the multiple character faction. But how could such rumors not twist and change the moment they started spreading?

Since Chen Yong and Wu Jia were in an improper relationship, how about the others? How would the imagination of the masses not run wild?

Elder Qi said, "And now, the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy has turned into a joke. Wan Tiansheng, do you know what the people outside the academy are saying? They are saying that the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy should change its name to Great Xia Loving Teacher Academy. Do you think this is good?"

A different elder said, "Damn those people. How can they be saying these things lightly? Old Wan, if you don't do something today, you won't even be able to survive the scrutiny of the Talent Fostering Bureau. You need to find the main offender and execute that person. The punishment must be strict."

They were infuriated.

These rumors had evolved into something much more complicated. They are being spread all over the capital. If this continued, the reputation of their academy will be ruined. Would anyone still dare to join their academy in the future?

As for the elders like them, they would probably be treated as clowns during their visits to the other prefectures and the Knowledge Seeking Realm in the future. A rumor had a way of being taken as the truth as long as enough people believed in it.

A different elder said, "Why hadn't those bastards from the single character faction included Zhou Mingren in these rumors? That Xia Chan from the Xia Family is his student. Why are there no rumors about them? So we are the only ones suffering while everything is still fine for Zhou Mingren?"

Wan Tiansheng was having a headache.

He softly said, "Stop shouting. In a span of one night, these rumors have been spread all over the capital. This can only be done intentionally. There is a possibility that this is done by the Myriad Race Cult to create chaos..."

"Are you going to blame the Myriad Race Cult for everything?" Elder Qi said, "I refuse to believe that you won't be able to find the culprit. Dispatch the academy guards and the Discipline Hall. Get them to investigate this. I want to know the name of the culprit. Wan Tiansheng, don't even dream of smoothing things over. If I find out that it was really done by someone from Old Zhou's side, I won't spare them."

The other elders voiced their support. "The truth will ultimately be uncovered. Investigate this thoroughly. If they can't even do this much as cultural researchers, they should just retire."

"Find the culprit and cut their head off. Using the academy's reputation as a weapon against their opponents? Someone willing to destroy the reputation that has been built over a period of hundreds of years should not be kept around."

The elders were basically mad with rage. They weren't going to let this slide. As long as they put their minds into it, they would definitely be able to uncover the truth. If it wasn't the single character faction, the single character faction would be fine. But if it was really them, these elders would definitely not let this slide.

Wan Tiansheng shut his eyes and sank into thought. After a moment, he said, "Since you want to investigate this, let's do it. You are right. We can't allow the academy's reputation to be ruined by a few parasites. The Discipline Hall and the academy guards will start an investigation. After we find the culprit, we will hold a meeting of elders to decide on the punishment."

"Hmph!"

The elders were unhappy. What was the point of a meeting? Just kill the culprit and be done with it.

Elder Qi coldly said, "Finding the person who had spread the rumors is not enough. We also need the name of the one who had ordered this to happen. Old Wan, they are slandering the researchers and genius students of the academy. If we let this slide, don't be surprised if the teachers and students start losing their respect and reverence for the academy. You should stop smoothing things over all the time."

Wan Tiansheng was speechless. Had he smoothed anything over this time? Hadn't he agreed to investigate this matter? He only felt that the single character faction wasn't dumb enough to drag the entire academy and Great Xia along while attacking Chen Yong. Wasn't that the same as courting death?

These elders were too impatient. They didn't even give him a chance to speak his mind. It wasn't like he was trying to speak for the single character faction. It was better to investigate things properly before assigning blame, right? This was so troublesome.

He had nothing else to say to these old fellows so he waved his hand, "Start the investigation. Old Qi, you guys will take the lead. We will talk more after concluding the investigation."

The elders wasted no time and left immediately. They were definitely not going to put up with this.

Chapter 422: Martial Uncle (2)

Before long, chaos engulfed the entire academy.

Discipline Hall.

Old Huang was forced to take up his new post in advance to work on the investigation.

One student after another was taken in. The elders were personally leading the investigation with the assistance of the guards and Discipline Hall.

Inside a large hall.

A lot of elders were present.

After the students were brought in, Elder Qi questioned, "When did you hear the rumors? Who told you these rumors? What did they tell you? Tell us everything. Don't even dream of lying. You are very clear on the means available to cultural researchers. Anyone caught lying will either be expelled or even executed as members of the Myriad Race Cult."

The students trembled with fear.

None of them had expected that they would be arrested by the guards and the Discipline Hall just for gossiping in private. Not only that, but the elders were even personally interrogating them. None of them dared to hide anything.

One name after another was given, and more and more students were brought in. The investigation proceeded as they chased after the source. Eventually, the single character faction students were arrested.

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Single character faction's building.

Inside a large office, Zhou Mingren was sitting there silently. A few elders with unsightly expressions could be seen around him.

Just a moment ago, the guards and Discipline Hall had arrested a few of their students right in front of them. They were in the middle of a meeting with these students when that happened. The guards had merely charged in and dragged the students away without care.

Among the crowd, Zhou Pingsheng had a pale expression. He did not dare to utter even one word. This time, only a few students outside the Top 100 Ranking had been arrested. But the situation seemed to be getting more and more serious.

Zhou Mingren looked at the crowd silently. After a long while, he calmly said, "Gather all the teachers and students of our faction. I want to see who else they are going to arrest."

"Old Zhou!" Yu Hong said, "Have the Discipline Hall and academy guards gone mad? How dare they arrest those students in our presence?"

Zhou Mingren shot her an indifferent glance and said, "I think I have an idea about what happened. Initially, I thought that although we have members of different qualities, none of them are absolute idiots. Looks like I was wrong. Yu Hong, are you really not aware of what has happened?"

"There are many ways you can suppress the multiple character faction. But this has involved the entire academy and even the entire capital. We have been reduced into clowns." Zhou Mingren sighed, "I thought that none of us could possibly be that stupid. But now, I have to wonder if some people are really too stupid to be saved."

As he said that, he glanced at his own student: Zhou Pingsheng. Was this student of his really that stupid? Even if he was stupid, how was he stupid enough to involve even people like Wan Tiansheng and Ji Hong? Did this dumb student really believe that the single character faction was already the strongest in the Human Realm?

Zhou Mingren was tired. Of his students, Zheng Yuming was the smart and shrewd one. Thus, things had been smooth for the single character faction for the past few decades. They had been able to grow bigger and stronger while keeping the multiple character faction suppressed.

But after Zheng Yuming fell victim to that ploy...yes. He considered that a ploy. Zheng Yuming had regained consciousness and Zhou Mingren had asked about the incident that day. Zheng Yuming had not intended to make a move against Su Yu at all. Clearly, this was either Chen Yong's scheme or Wan Tiansheng's deliberate action.

Ever since Zheng Yuming was crippled, the single character faction had been in a mess. First, they had spent 100,000 merit points on a ridiculous blood essence formula. Then, due to a mistake he made, he was forced to pay over 100,000 merit points to solve the incident involving the willpower texts.

He had just settled the previous incident when yet another trouble came knocking. How was he supposed to focus on his breakthrough? He couldn't even focus on his cultivation. They had lost a Mountainsea and a genius student. Even their partner, Xia Yuwen, was currently half dead. They had also lost nearly 200,000 merit points. And now...were they going to suffer yet another loss?

Nobod dared to disobey Zhou Mingren's order.

The teachers and students of the single character faction arrived one after another. Before long, the room was too full, leaving the newcomers standing outside.

As a Skysoar, Liu Hong was lucky enough to get a spot in a corner of the room. He stood there and observed silently. The single character faction was declining. After several losses, their faction was

starting to fall. He could see that the single character faction only appeared strong, but inwardly, they were weak. The multiple character faction hadn't even done anything toward them yet they were already starting to fall apart by themselves.

"Rumors?"

Glancing at the pale Zhou Pingsheng, Liu Hong resisted the urge to curse. Was that dumbass the culprit? How did that fellow mess something so trivial so badly? Liu Hong couldn't help but start admiring Zhou Pingsheng for his sheer ability to screw things up. Not a single person from the multiple character faction had said anything this time. Yet for some reason, the single character faction had still suffered a loss.

While he was thinking, someone shouted outside, "Huang Qifeng, Di Feng, Zhu Hong, and Qiu Yi. Come out here. We need you to take a walk with us."

Inside the room, Di Feng's face changed as he hurriedly said, "Grandteacher, we didn't spread those rumors! It really wasn't us! Grandteacher..."

Zhou Mingren indifferently said, "Go. Take a walk with them. The truth will be found sooner or later. Old Qi and the others can investigate this matter if they want, but if they try to make my people the scapegoat without proof, then that would be an attack on me."

"Grandteacher..."

They grew even more nervous when they heard that.

"Go." Zhou Mingren stood up and said, "I'll go with you. I want to know which idiot did this as well."

He was also getting furious. If it was found out that this was really the work of someone from the single character faction, then he could only start cleaning up their ranks. With too many fools among them, the others could be dragged down easily. Before this, Zheng Yuming had done very well. He had ensured that their only enemy was the multiple character faction. He was able to face everyone else, including Wu Yuehua and company, with a smile. He wouldn't fully offend them despite not being friendly with them.

He would be willing to take a step back on certain matters for the others and stayed firm for matters involving the multiple character faction.

Because of that, the elders slowly came to understand that they only needed to avoid the conflict between the single and multiple character factions to not cause themselves unnecessary problems. This was a foundation Zheng Yuming had painstakingly built. But that foundation had been broken. In a short period of time, they had offended one elder after another.

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Discipline Hall.

Zhou Mingren arrived, followed by Yu Hong and the other elders.

Elder Qi ignored them. With a calm expression, Old Huang said, "Since you're here, please listen silently. Faculty Head Zhou, I hope you won't disturb the Discipline Hall and academy guards when we are performing our duties. This matter might seem minor, but if we ignore it, the prestige we have spent over 300 years building will be ruined. In the worst case scenario, this might be the trigger that would cause the academy to decline and eventually shut down."

Di Feng and the others had arrived as well.

Elder Qi ignored all the visitors and focused on the suspects. With a harsh tone, he said, "Di Feng and Huang Qifeng. Some people have identified the two of you as the origin of the rumors about the relationship between teachers and students. Is this true?" free.c om

"No!"

"Nonsense." Elder Qi slapped the table in front of him. His aura soared as he said, "You dare lie? Mere Mental Tempering Stage students are trying to lie to us? What do you take Mountainseas for?"

With an imposing expression, Elder Qi scanned his surroundings. Finally, his gaze landed on Zhou Mingren's group. He coldly asked, "You should be able to see that they are lying, right? Old Zhou, as a pseudo Sunmoon, you can see this, right? If you really can't, perhaps you aren't really qualified to be a faculty head anymore."

Zhou Mingren said nothing. He could naturally see that the students were lying. Mental Tempering Stage students were trying to lie to Mountainsea cultural researchers...These students were really treating Mountainseas as idiots. Both Yu Hong and Elder Sun had unsightly expressions as well.

Di Feng hurriedly said, "We're speaking the truth! We're not lying!"

"Audacious!"

Rumble!

Elder Qi lashed out, causing Di Feng to collapse and cough a mouthful of blood. Di Feng paled.

Elder Qi coldly said, "You are already here. How dare you lie? Tell me! Who ordered you to do this? How impudent! Getting mere Mental Tempering Stage students like you dare to slander Mountainseas and even Sunmoons? Do you really think that you're untouchable because you have a backer?"

"Old Qi, don't use this as a chance to attack someone else indirectly." Zhou Mingren said, "There is no need for me to order something this foolish. If I'm that stupid, I wouldn't have been able to become a pseudo Sunmoon."

Elder Qi snorted coldly. He couldn't be bothered to argue. Looking at Huang Qifeng, he shouted, "Huang Qifeng, confess! Who ordered you?"

"Nobody..." Huang Qifeng's face changed as he hurriedly explained, "We didn't slander any Mountainseas or Sunmoons! Elder Qi, I admit that I have said something to Wu Jia because of my hatred toward her. I was trying to force her to fight me. But I have really not spread any of those rumors!"

Huang Qifeng's brain was working overtime as he hurriedly added, "I confess that I did somewhat attempt to slander Head Manager Chen Yong, but I didn't even mention him by name. According to the academy rules, I will be punished for disrespecting my teachers and seniors. I am willing to take the punishment for that. Please be lenient, Elder."

"Hmph!" Elder Qi snorted and looked at the other students. He coldly asked, "Huang Qifeng has confessed. How about the rest of you? Also, have you slandered only Chen Yong?"

After saying that, he ordered, "Bring him in."

Shortly after, a different student was brought in. The student had a pale face. The moment he entered the room, he dropped to his knees and said while trembling, "Elder, it wasn't me! I was only following orders! Di Feng and his group were the ones who had told me to spread the rumors! They paid me five merit points to do so! You can check my merit card for the transaction record! It was really them! I made the mistake of accepting this job because I thought it was easy money. I admit that I am guilty, Elder!"

When Di Feng saw the newcomer, his face changed as he hastily said, "Elder, I only...I only told him to spread some rumors related to Wu Jia! Nothing else! Huang Hao, speak clearly! Isn't that the case?"

The face of the student called Huang Hao sank as he countered, "Nonsense! You clearly told me to drag everyone in and force the other elders to stay uninvolved to prove their innocence! But the thing got out of control and spread outside the academy..."

The expressions of Di Feng and company changed.

Chapter 423: Martial Uncle (3)

Qiu Yi furiously said, "Huang Hao, you dare slander us? Yesterday, we only told you to spread the rumors about Wu Jia. We mentioned nothing about the other elders! This is slander! Damn it! You're trying to kill us!"

Huang Hao was getting anxious. He denied, "Nonsense! That clearly wasn't what you said yesterday! Elder Qi, I wasn't lying! I have no grudge with Wu Jia and the multiple character faction. I only wanted to make some money. There is no need for me to target them. I only did what I was paid to do!"

Huang Hao was sweating all over from anxiousness as he continued his explanation, "I guarantee that these rumors came from them! First, the rumors were only aimed toward Wu Jia. But after she started hiding, I recalled what they told me and spread the rest of the rumors as well. Without their order, why would I provoke the elders for no reason? I wasn't crazy! Five merit points were a lot. I thought that spreading some rumors wouldn't be that big of a deal, so I decided to do it. Who would have guessed that this matter would devolve into this mess?"

"Bullshit!"

Even with his injured body, Di Feng was so furious that he stood up and tried to attack Huang Hao.

Rumble!

A palm attack sent Di Feng crashing into the wall. Elder Qi shot Di Feng a cold gaze before looking at Zhou Mingren. "The students of your faction sure are gutsy. They actually dare to attack a witness in the middle of questioning."

Zhou Mingren shut his eyes and sighed inwardly. That was truly idiotic. He had a vague feeling that Di Feng and company had probably only ordered to have rumors concerning Wu Jia spread. But...Di Feng was a total idiot. He had actually tried attacking the witness in front of all of them. That was the same as suicide. Even if Elder Qi and the other elders were doubtful about Huang Yao's words, this single action was enough to anger all of them.

After a long while, Zhou Mingren said, "Check Huang Hao's mind for any tampering. Di Feng might be stupid, but it really is completely pointless to drag the other elders down while slandering the multiple character faction. Huang Hao does not seem to be telling lies either. Old Qi, check his mind. We will admit to all wrongdoings that we have actually done. But we won't accept being framed and punished for it."

Elder Qi frowned. After thinking about it, he called a different elder over and said, "Let's check his mind together. Old Huang, you should join us as well. Let's see if his memories have really been tampered with."

Huang Hao's testimony had clearly conflicted with the testimony of Di Feng and company. But they had already confirmed that Huang Hao was the first person who had spread all the rumors while Di Feng and

company were the culprits. With that, two Mountainseas and one ninth-stage Cloudbreach stepped forth to inspect Huang Hao's memories.

Of course, reading memories was a feat out of their reach. But they could check Huang Hao's sea of willpower for any signs of tampering. When an expert modified the memories of a person, some traces would be left in the sea of willpower. So long as it had happened, they would be able to find something.

After a long while, Old Huang shook his head, "I'm too weak. I found nothing out of place."

Old Qi and the other elder exchanged gazes before shaking their heads.

Elder Qi looked at Zhou Mingren and said, "If you don't trust us, you can check yourself."

Zhou Mingren stood up and said nothing. He placed his palm atop Huang Hao's head and performed a detailed check. After the first scan, his heart thumped as he hurriedly performed another scan.

Nothing out of place was found!

But suddenly, the look in his eyes changed as his gaze landed at the wound on Huang Hao's arm. He coldly asked, "How did you get this wound?"

Huang Hao was trembling in fear while he replied, "I fell down last night..."

"You fell down?" Zhou Mingren said, "You're a Mental Tempering Stage cultivator. How can you fall down so easily?"

A small wound could be seen on Huang Hao's arm.

Huang Hao hastily explained, "It's true! Yesterday, I was busy spreading rumors everywhere and fell down because I wasn't watching where I was going..."

Zhou Mingren silently studied the arm and softly muttered, "Fell down..."

He sighed and said, "I suspect that his memories have been changed. Instead of doing through the sea of willpower, this person has extracted his blood essence, modified his memory imprint, before returning the blood essence to him, modifying his memories."

He looked at Huang Hao and asked, "When you woke up this morning, did you experience dizziness and a weak feeling all over your body?"

Huang Hao replied, "Yeah..."

Suddenly, Elder Qi said, "Enough! Zhou Mingren, can you do something like this? Can even Sunmoons do something like this? Are you telling me an Invincible has personally modified his memories?"

"There is no need for an Invincible to do this. There are people below that realm who are also capable of this."

Zhou Mingren's eyes turned cold as he looked outside the window. "Hong Tan, Chen Yong, Bai Feng...anyone from the multiple character faction might have the ability to do this..."

Elder Qi was furious.

Old Huang frowned, "Where's your proof? Vice Principal Zhou, at this point, your word alone is no longer enough. Where is your proof? Are we supposed to arrest the entire multiple character faction and interrogate them through torture?"

Elder Qi ignored Zhou Mingren and lifted the badly injured Di Feng and coldly demanded, "Tell me! Who ordered you to do this!"

Zhou Mingren frowned, but he could only sigh inwardly.

How cruel and ruthless.

This was not Hong Tan's style. Bai Feng was too injured to do this. Could it be...that person?

Extracting blood essence and modifying the memory imprint...was it the handiwork of that person? Had that person reached this far in his research? Or had he misunderstood everything?

Zhou Mingren lowered his head and returned to his seat. He no longer said anything. This time, they were going to take a loss no matter what. Unless they could prove that Huang Hao's memories had indeed been tampered with, there was no way they could escape the blame this time.

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Books depository.

Wu Jia was still sulking while Chen Yong was acting like nothing had happened. With a smile, he asked, "Are you still angry? They're not only talking about you. The entire academy and the capital have been thrown into chaos as well. These people enjoy talking drivel too much. Just look at how they're all going to suffer now."

"Teacher, are those people stupid? They deserve everything that is happening to them right now!"

Chen Yong said, "That's because they are too stupid. You need to pay a price for running your mouth too much. Don't be angry anymore. I'll teach you something new today. You can learn the way to squeeze more power out of your cultivation..."

"Squeeze?"

"A self-harm technique. A technique requiring you to burn your blood essence."

Chen Yong sighed and said, "You can be provoked into a fight to the death too easily. I shouldn't be teaching you something like this, but you're too stubborn and straightforward. You don't know when to take a step back. Something will happen sooner or later. Today, I'll be teaching you something you can use to preserve your life in the future."

Chen Yong started nagging, "Like the myriad races, we humans have blood essence as well. Your martial uncle has been researching the blood essence and abilities of the myriad races. You know this. Blood essence can be extracted from both the dead and the living. Of course, extracting from someone alive would be harmful for one's body."

Chen Yong softly explained, "For humans, different amount of blood essence can be extracted depending on the target's cultivation level. Someone at the Mental Tempering Stage can survive having ten drops of blood essence extracted or a drop or two ignited. But that person will suffer a heavy injury and be weakened..."

Wu Jia curiously asked, "Teacher, will the increase in strength from doing this be significant?"

"Of course." Chen Yong said, "As a Mental Tempering Stage and ninth-stage Great Strength student, you can increase your strength by 10 percent or more after igniting a drop of your blood essence. But after that, you will need to spend some time recuperating or you will suffer from some side effects in the future."

"Blood essence is very important and mystical. It even contains the instincts and memories of the body it comes from. The blood essence abilities your martial uncle is able to use are basically a method of utilizing the ability imprints in blood essence. Apart from ability imprints, memory imprints can also be extracted from blood essence. That is one of the main research subjects of your martial uncle."

As Chen Yong explained, a figure suddenly appeared outside the window.

Wu Jia did not notice the figure.

Chen Yong shot the window a glance. Outside, Wan Tiansheng was staring at him. "Chen Yong, you should have stopped at experimenting on cultists. If you dare to do this on a student ever again, I will personally end your life."

Chen Yong nodded and gave no reply. He continued his lesson with Wu Jia.

Wan Tiansheng stayed outside, staring at Chen Yong for a very long time. The multiple character faction was truly a faction filled with freaks. But when these freaks turned into monsters, it would be time to put them down.

After a long while, when Wan Tiansheng was about to leave, Chen Yong said, "Principal, I always repay those who have shown me kindness. Jia's parents were killed by the cult back then when they were trying to help me. I saw the incident myself. Those who dare to run their mouths deserve nothing less than death. I have already restrained myself this time."

Wan Tiansheng frowned, "This is the first time. I hope it's also the last time."

"There won't be a second time. I had remained silent the previous time they injured Jia. She was partly to blame for that. I am a reasonable man. But this time, they tried killing her. If this happens again, I will make sure to kill all of them before you kill me."

Wan Tiansheng frowned and turned around to stare at Chen Yong again. Meanwhile, Chen Yong continued seriously teaching Wu Jia on the intricacies of blood essence.

"Chen Yong, just enter the Mountainsea Realm as early as possible. If you can reach the Mountainsea Realm, they will naturally stop targeting Wu Jia."

"That is my business. It is unrelated to Jia. Principal, I am a very patient person. But when a patient person loses his temper, he can be very scary." Chen Yong looked at Wan Tiansheng with a smile and said, "I want Zhou Pingsheng's life for this. If he doesn't die, I won't let this rest."

"..."

Wan Tiansheng looked at Chen Yong coldly. He said nothing and vanished into thin air.

As for Chen Yong, he continued his lesson with a gentle look on his face. "Jia, remember this. There are many ways you can use to kill someone. It is not necessary to fight someone head on every single time. Learn more from your junior brother. He is shrewd. When an Invincible tries to kill another Invincible head on, that Invincible might get killed instead. But using some other methods, he might be able to kill several Invincibles."

"Methods?" Wu Jia complained, "Teacher, I don't like to scheme and plot."

"You...sigh." Chen Yong was greatly troubled. "Fine. Keep being you. It's not like our multiple character faction is relying on you. Just cultivate properly. I will try to bring you and your junior brother together. He is smart. He will be able to protect you well..."

"Teacher!" Wu Jia said, "I...have never thought of that! Why are you suddenly talking nonsense?"

"..."

Chen Yong laughed and nodded. "Fine, fine. I'll stop. We'll let fate decide if the two of you will get together in the future."

Inwardly, he sighed. A day would come when he grow old or die. How long could he keep taking care of her?

Su Yu? He was someone with the potential to enter the Sunmoon Realm. As for himself, was he really capable of stepping into the Sunmoon Realm? With a laugh, he decided to stop worrying too much. It was still too early for that.

Chapter 424: You Need A Cold Heart (1)

Discipline Hall.

Huang Hao insisted that Di Feng and company were the ones who had instructed him to spread the rumors.

Di Feng and company had also admitted to that, but they denied involvement in the spread of the rumors involving everyone else. They only admitted to targeting Chen Yong and Wu Jia. There was a great difference between the two.

If they had only targeted Chen Yong and Wu Jia, they were doing it out of personal grudge. They would be punished for disrespecting a teacher, but the punishment would be much more lenient.

As for the other rumors, the matter involved the entire Great Xia. If they took the blame for that as well, they might really be executed.

Questioning room.

Huang Qifeng was pale as he loudly said, "Elders, we have really not slandered the other elders. Huang Hao is lying. We haven't done any of that!"

Qiu Yi was also greatly frightened. He looked at Zhou Mingren and said, "Grandteacher, that really wasn't us! We weren't crazy! We can act against Wu Jia, but there is no need for us to provoke the other elders!"

The elders ignored them.

Elder Qi looked at the other elders involved in the investigation before looking at Old Huang. He solemnly said, "None of them are lying."

Yes. These elders were able to easily see that these students were telling the truth.

But there were two versions of truth.

Nevertheless, they had indeed created a rumor to slander Chen Yong. And Chen Yong was a ninth-stage Cloudbreach and the head manager of the books depository. Even if they had only slandered him, they would still be punished.

Meanwhile, Zhou Mingren kept his eyes and mouth shut.

Old Huang said, "Would these people dare to attack Chen Yong for no reason? Someone else must be behind this."

Elder Qi looked at him before looking at Di Feng and company. He said, "Tell the truth. Who instructed you to do this?"

"Nobody!"

"Think properly before you answer." Elder Qi calmly said, "It is not a great offense for a researcher to slander a colleague. But a student slandering a higher up of the academy is a very big deal."

He was telling the truth.

This was an era where strength was everything.

A Mental Tempering Stage slandering a Cloudbreach was very different from a Cloudbreach slandering another Cloudbreach.

Suddenly, Zhou Mingren opened his eyes and said, "It was me. I only instructed them to think of a way to deal with Wu Jia and remove Chen Yong from the books depository. As for the spreading of rumors, I wasn't involved in it."

Elder Qi and the other elders looked at him.

Old Huang coldly said, "Vice Principal Zhou, some words can't be lightly said. You need to pay the price for it."

In truth, they already had a guess that the mastermind was probably an idiot called Zhou Pingsheng.

Yu Hong and Elder Sun also looked at Zhou Mingren. He calmly said, "I will naturally take responsibility for this. Since I have accidentally caused this incident, I will face the consequences. I will be resigning from my position as the vice principal. Is this acceptable?"

He was resigning as a vice principal!

The other elders frowned. What was the difference between a vice principal and an elder? The biggest difference was succession in the event of Wan Tiansheng's death. Additionally, vice principals also had the power to interfere in the affairs of all the academy faculties.

For example, a vice principal was allowed to interfere in the affairs of the Talisman and Pillmaking Faculties.

If Zhou Mingren resigned, he could no longer interfere in any affairs outside the Character Faculty. This was actually quite a harsh punishment.

Old Huang's eyes were cold as he said, "Vice Principal Zhou, you need to be responsible with your words. It is not a good look for you to be taking the blame for someone else. You're the vice principal. If you insist on taking the blame, we naturally won't be able to continue our investigation..."

With Zhou Mingren confessing to the offense, they naturally couldn't continue with their investigation anymore.

It would be pointless to do so. Even if they could find proof of Zhou Pingsheng's involvement, he could simply claim that he was acting under Zhou Mingren's orders. It was much harder to deal with a Cloudbreach than a Mental Tempering Stage student.

They could easily see through the lies of a student. But even Sunmoons would have a hard time seeing through the lies of a Skysoar. At the Skysoar Realm, one's willpower would grow massively. It wouldn't be so easy to read them.

Zhou Mingren indifferently said, "Like I said, they were acting on my orders. Feel free to punish me as you wish. What else do you want to know?"

Elder Qi frowned.

He looked at Zhou Mingren and frowned. "Old Zhou, both of us know the truth very well. You are someone on the cusp of entering the Sunmoon Realm. We both know these petty tricks are beneath you. When Zheng Yuming was running your faction, everything he did had been done within the bounds

of the rules. Your faction might have been somewhat messy, but it wasn't chaotic. Back then, everyone still followed a set of rules. But now...hehe."

Those words stabbed into Zhou Mingren's heart like needles.

Was he not aware of that?

He was perfectly clear!

But were these people not aware that Yuming was already a cripple?

Indifference returned to Old Huang's face as he said, "Since Vice Principal Zhou has admitted to being the mastermind, we will decide on the punishment in a meeting with Principal Wan. As for Di Feng and the rest..."

Zhou Mingren had already taken the blame. But they still couldn't verify if these people had also spread the rumors about the other elders.

After a short silence, Old Huang said, "People who have directly spread the rumors like Huang Hao have ruined the academy's reputation and slandered their teachers. From today onward, they will receive no benefits from the academy. They will no longer be allowed entry into the grottos, books depository, and library. They will each be subjected to 30 whips and fined 100 merit points. A demerit will also be left in their profiles."

Nobody objected.

Old Huang continued, "People who have created the rumors like Di Feng, Huang Qifeng, and Qiu Yi will receive 100 whips and a fine of 1,000 merit points. All their benefits within the academy will be canceled..."

Zhou Mingren interjected with a sigh, "I was the mastermind. They are only following my orders. They can be whipped, and even have a demerit left in their profiles. As for their academy benefits, I hope the

Discipline Hall can be lenient on account of their status as top 100 students. They are basically future Skysoars."

If all their benefits were cancelled, they would no longer be able to enter the Willpower Grotto as well. As for the whipping punishment, it was actually a lot more painful than it sounded. A demerit in their profiles would also cause them a lot of problems in the future. A fine of 1,000 merit points each was actually quite large.

But none of that could compare to the cancellation of all benefits. If that happened, these students would miss out on a lot of opportunities within the academy. Weren't these benefits the reason why they joined the academy?

Removing these benefits was the same as expelling them. These were the elite students of the single character faction. He couldn't allow all of them to be destroyed at once.

Old Huang said, "They deserve this. At the very least, I have allowed them to remain in the academy. If they make a great contribution in the future, they might be able to cancel these penalties."

"Great contribution?"

After a short silence, Zhou Mingren asked, "Does eliminating Myriad Race Cult strongholds count?"

"Yes." Old Huang's eyes flickered as he asked, "Are you sure, Vice Principal Zhou? Remember that you can't falsely assign battle merits to someone else. Anyone caught doing that will be subjected to the death penalty."

"I understand." Zhou Mingren looked at Di Feng and the other students before softly saying, "There is still hope. Great Xia places great importance on battle merits. You guys are not far from the Skysoar Realm. If you can eliminate a few cult strongholds, you will be able to recover from this."

He sighed inwardly. This was a heavy loss for their faction. What a bunch of idiots! As for his position as the vice principal, so be it. At this point, it was time for the single character faction to withdraw the scope of their activities. Previously, when they were at the peak of their power, they could interfere in the affairs of the other faculties. But now, he wouldn't be able to continue doing so even if he wanted.

Old Huang continued, "Additionally, for being incompetent teachers, Zhou Pingsheng, Yang Chao, Min He and the others will stop receiving merit points for one year. They are also forbidden from applying for promotions for three years."

"Huang Chen!" Zhou Mingren stared at Old Huang while the look in his eyes changed repeatedly. He said, "They know nothing about this. Forfeiting their salary for a year is enough. Forbidding them from all promotions for a period of three years is too excessive."

That punishment would only mean that even after becoming the head manager and faction master, Zhou Pingsheng would not be promoted into an elder. Why? Because the lowest requirement for an elder was to be a senior researcher. And Zhou Pingsheng was still not a senior researcher.

Old Huang looked at Zhou Mingren and indifferently said, "If Vice Principal Zhou is dissatisfied with our handling of this, you are free to file a complaint. But before that, we of the Discipline Hall will still carry out our duties as we see fit. We are already giving them a lighter punishment out of respect for you."

Zhou Mingren frowned and said nothing else. Three years...for three years, these researchers would not be able to apply for a promotion.

Zhou Pingsheng was not the only researcher who was on the verge of a promotion. A few other researchers were also in a similar position. With this punishment, the single character faction's influence would be further curtailed.

He looked at Huang Chen with an unsightly expression. The Discipline Hall had acted like this before.

Old Huang ignored Zhou Mingren and said, "The teachers should also be held responsible for the lack of morality the students have displayed. During the year end evaluation, the Discipline Hall will conduct a thorough investigation. We really want to see if these teachers have actually been putting any effort into their duties."

The moment those words were said, the faces of Yu Hong and the others changed. Yu Hong demanded, "Huang Chen, what is the meaning of this?"

"What do you mean?" Old Huang looked at her and indifferently said, "We are the Discipline Hall. Don't you understand? We are duty-bound to supervise the academy for any wrongdoings. Elder Yu Hong, are you trying to interfere in our duties? If you are clean, why are you afraid of an investigation? I also hope that all of you will remind the others of their duties after this. The review this year will be strict. Our investigation will extend to the warehouses, the accounts, the class hours, all the research subjects, all the fund allocations, and so on."

Old Huang coldly said, "I am very curious. The academy has been allocating ample funds to all the faculties each year. Why is it that some students are still suffering from a lack of cultivation resources? I don't think our academy actually lacks cultivation resources. Even if we don't have enough willpower texts to allow all students to read one every day, we still have enough for each student to read at least one willpower text every one or two weeks. But I have discovered that a lot of students can barely get to read one willpower text every six months or even a year."

"This applies to the pillmaking faction, the talisman faction, the weaponsmithing faction, and the beast taming faction. You better get your books in order. Don't let me discover anything during the year end review."

Chapter 425: You Need A Cold Heart (2)

Old Huang scanned the crowd and coldly said, "I hope that all of you can still remain as elders after the year end review. Don't get yourself exiled to the Vanguard Regiment after the review or even removed as an elder. That would be embarrassing."

The expressions of several elders changed upon hearing that. Even some of the Discipline Hall elders paled slightly. Huang Chen was never so strict before!

Old Huang said, "Everyone, remember my words. We also need to hold the meeting of elders and come to a conclusion for this incident as soon as possible. I will be making a public announcement and the students will be whipped in public. We will let the world see that order still exist in the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy. It is fine to compete among ourselves. But those who cross the line will be punished severely."

Nobody said anything.

Public announcement and public whipping.

An intensive year end review.

This would change even the existing power structure in the academy.

...

The Discipline Hall was efficient. The Great Xia Cultural Research Academy was also efficient.

By the evening of the 15th, a consensus was reached.

And the decision was announced to the entire Great Xia.

As a pseudo Sunmoon and vice principal of the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy, Zhou Mingren was actually involved in this scandal. Thus, he became the center of attention.

It was announced that he would forfeit his salary for three years and be removed from his position as a vice principal. Zhou Pingsheng and the other researchers involved would forfeit their salary for one year, blocked from all promotions for three years, and have a demerit left in their profiles.

Di Feng, Huang Qifeng, and the other students would be subjected to 100 whippings, a fine of 1,000 merit points, and the removal of all their academy benefits.

Even people like Huang Hao were punished.

The various students who had been involved in the spreading of rumors were also punished. Some were only fined a few merit points while some were fined hundreds of merit points. Some of the students who were more heavily involved were even banned from all grottos.

...

This shocked various parties.

Nobody was shocked that the students were punished.

More importantly, a pseudo Sunmoon had actually been removed from the position of vice principal. This was no small matter. A pseudo Sunmoon was already one of the strongest existences in Great Xia.

A single scandal had nearly ruined the future of a top expert like this.

The Great Xia Cultural Research Academy had handled this scandal with great efficiency. In half a day, everything had concluded. The masses of Great Xia had greatly enjoyed this show.

Zhou Mingren had suffered a huge loss of reputation.

As a pseudo Sunmoon, he had actually lowered himself to do something like this.

Compared to his loss of reputation, all his other losses seemed negligible.

...

Afternoon.

Dao Preaching District.

A multitude of people had arrived there. Today, the public whipping was going to be held.

The massive square was surrounded by countless students and teachers.

Chen Yong had arrived as well. Beside him was Wu Jia. He merely stared at the students in the middle of the square indifferently. Not far away, Zhou Pingsheng was watching with a pale expression. All his students were there, waiting to be whipped.

His teacher had been punished. He had been punished. And his students were going to be fined and whipped in public. This was a great humiliation for Zhou Pingsheng.

That was not the extent of his losses. In the eyes of the elders, he had been reduced into a piece of trash. His teacher and the elders were naturally aware that he was the real mastermind.

Looking at his kneeling students, he had both fear and fury in his eyes. He had only told these bastards to deal with Wu Jia. How had things escalate into this? They had attracted the attention of all the experts in the academy and even the capital.

A stricter year end review.

What did that mean?

Basically, they would have to plug all the holes in their books. And that wasn't a small sum of money. That was a much bigger loss than a fine of several thousand merit points.

Just for the books depository alone, he would need to spend around 30,000 merit points to plug the hole. And that was not the only hole they had to deal with. There were also the treasury, the research center, the Missions Department, the currency exchange center...

The entire single character faction would need to spend at least 200,000 merit points to plug the various holes they had created.

But prior to this, they had already lost a lot of merit points. After today, the single character faction would truly be in a terrible financial situation. They had to maintain some of their research centers. And some of their research projects couldn't be stopped.

And that was not all. Some of their researchers might even be exiled to the Vanguard Regiment. The lucky ones would be able to return alive. The unlucky ones...would be buried in the Allheaven Battlefield.

He had turned into the public enemy of the single character faction. Even the researchers of the other factions were viewing him with hostility. Because of him, all the researchers had to start living in fear.

Just why was all this happening?

Before today, Zhou Pingsheng was still dreaming about becoming the faction master, head manager, and an elder this year. But none of that was happening anymore. At this time, Old Huang had finally arrived. This was his first public appearance as the master of the Discipline Hall.

He coldly ordered, "Start the punishment."

Pa!

The guards held nothing back as their whips lashed out toward the students.

"Ahhh!"

Miserable wails resounded throughout the square. Their backs split apart as wound after wound appeared.

Old Huang scanned the crowd and coldly remarked, "There are rules in the academy. The military has their own rules. Great Xia has its own rules. And the same apply to the academy.

"Student or researcher, nobody can ignore the rules. These rules are why the human race has been able to become a top 10 race. Without rules, our soldiers will be doing whatever they want. Will we still be able to enjoy our current place?"

"If we are unfair in punishing transgressions and rewarding contributions, who would still be willing to strive hard for the human race? Put more strength into it!"

With his cold order, the guards applied even more strength in their whipping.

The Discipline Hall had the authority to supervise the academy. If they deliberately held back when carrying out a public whipping, they would be punished as well.

Blood spilled everywhere.

The students were not allowed to resist the whipping with their source qi and willpower. Since cultural researchers were already weak physically, they were suffering greatly. Huang Qifeng, who had yet to recover from his previous injuries, had fainted after a few whips.

He was not the only one who had fainted. The weaker students such as Huang Hao had fainted as well. The whips continued landing on their unconscious bodies.

...

Further away.

After a while, Chen Yong shot the nearby Zhou Pingsheng a glance before leaving with Wu Jia.

She softly asked, "Teacher, are we leaving so early?"

"Yeah. They have been taught a lesson for running their mouths. They won't dare to do this anymore. What a pity that someone has still escaped the punishment he deserves."

Zhou Mingren?

Chen Yong glanced toward a distant tall building. There, a standing figure could be seen.

Chen Yong smiled. He couldn't deny that Zhou Mingren was a good teacher. For his student, he had shouldered such an offense.

Inside the building.

Zhou Mingren was also looking at Chen Yong with a deep gaze. He realized that he had underestimated Chen Yong all these years.

This time, the single character faction had suffered a great loss. And they had also lost a lot of reputation. An expert like him would rarely be subjected to public punishment. And he had created history as the first in Great Xia.

He withdrew his gaze from Chen Yong and looked at the person seated beside him. He softly asked, "Yuming, has the single character faction been ruined? There are so many of us yet we can't even do anything to a few individuals..."

The older ones weren't Hong Tan's match. The generation below them wasn't Chen Yong's match. Their Skysoars weren't Bai Feng's match and their students weren't Su Yu's match.

Numbers?

What was the point?

With only a few people, the multiple character faction had given the single character faction numerous setbacks. A Mountainsea had been crippled, a vice principal had been removed from the position, several researchers had been blocked from all promotions, and several students were being whipped in public.

And there was also the enormous amount of money they needed to pay before the year end review.

After plugging all the holes, they would probably find it hard to even open the Willpower Grotto. But they had no choice but to proceed with it since a promise had already been made. The elders who had been given the grotto slots would not allow them to cancel the plan.

But even after opening the grotto, their elite students like Di Feng would not be allowed to enter. The issue was the price of opening this grotto. It would practically exhaust all their savings.

Zheng Yuming sighed and replied with a helpless tone, "Teacher, we underestimated them. As a result, we have been turned into a joke by them. We have even offended all the other factions. And there's also the year end review..."

Zhou Mingren nodded. They had harmed everyone's benefits. The others wouldn't put their blame on the Discipline Hall. The blame would only fall on them. Why would the Discipline Hall decide to intensify their year end review for no reason?

"Teacher, the loss of merit points and resources can be easily solved. We can get reimbursements from Great Zhou."

Chen Yuming clenched his teeth and said, "Great Zhou needs to compensate us for our losses."

Zhou Mingren sank into a momentary silence before nodding his head.

"Also, time to call Elder Fang and Elder Zhao back..."

"Old Ma has been exiled to the Vanguard Regiment. That's good, I suppose. He can watch over you there. I'll think of a way to transfer Old Fang back."

"Elder Ma has been punished?"

Zheng Yuming had no idea. Zhou Mingren nodded, "He received the punishment on the same day Hong Tan returned. I suppose that's not a big loss as I've been intending to have one of them watch over you. I haven't been able to find an excuse to send him to the Vanguard Regiment, but I don't have to worry about that anymore."

"I have troubled you, Teacher." fr(e)

Zheng Yuming sighed again.

Zhou Mingren said, "It's not that big of a trouble. By the way, are you sure Chen Yong was the one who had schemed against you?"

"Yes." Zheng Yuming sighed, "I was observing the fight. But what I saw wasn't an injured Qifeng. Instead, I saw a dead Qifeng. Out of anger, I moved out to get an explanation. As a result..."

"So he was able to interfere with your willpower?"

"Yeah." Zheng Yuming nodded, "He was the strongest individual present. Nobody apart from him could have done so. He must have produced an illusion. Instead of affecting my willpower direction, he could have overlapped an illusion over the ring."

Zhou Mingren nodded and stopped asking. Since they had no proof, it was pointless to say more.

Just like how it was clear that Huang Hao's memories had been tampered with, but nothing could be done without proof. They would only be able to discover something if an Invincible personally performed an investigation.

Without proof, they couldn't do anything to a ninth-stage Cloudbreach. Not to mention that Hong Tan was also around.

"Teacher, the multiple character faction has been laying low for so many years. But this year, they have been hitting back repeatedly. Is it possible that Great Zhou has reached the limits of their suppression?"

Zhou Mingren said, "It has been 50 years. It isn't that they can't maintain the suppression anymore. But they have already done all they could. Liu Wenyan and the others are returning one after another. Hong Tan is on the verge of advancement. And there are also some people pulling strings in the background, allowing the multiple character faction to keep hitting back against us."

"In that case..." Zheng Yuming thought for a bit and said, "Do we continue doing this?"

"Yes."

Zhou Mingren said, "Risk and reward go hand in hand. This is an opportunity for us. Without the multiple character faction, we wouldn't have been able to reach our current height. We will lose a lot if we can no longer suppress the multiple character faction..."

Zheng Yuming nodded and said, "We'll continue, then. At the very least, we have to prevent them from registering their faction once again. Teacher, we need to get more support from Great Zhou. Otherwise, it would be hard for us to continue doing this."

"I know. Zhou Polong won't let Shan Tianhao's death go unanswered. But since Great Xia is not his territory, he can only rely on us. Since the academy is preventing our people from using the grottos, we will get our own grottos. I'll get Great Zhou to send us a few Eternal characters."

Zheng Yuming's eyes flickered. His teacher had quite a big appetite.

"Willpower texts, pills, cultivation methods, cultural weapons...we want all of them." Zhou Mingren said, "We have suffered too much this time. They have to compensate for our losses."

Zheng Yuming nodded.

Zhou Mingren said, "Who do you think is more suited to be the new faction master?"

Zheng Yuming looked at the distant Zhou Pingsheng and sighed. This junior brother of his was too useless to take on that role.

"Let's leave the position vacant for now. We can have a few people to act as the acting masters instead."

"What do you think of Liu Hong?" Zhou Mingren asked.

Zheng Yuming frowned, "Teacher, he's only a Skysoar. Also...he's too crafty."

"That's the kind of people we need." Zhou Mingren said, "The other candidates represent the other elders. But Liu Hong's teacher, Old Zhao, is in a sealed seclusion. Liu Hong has no backer. We can have the elders manage the Cloudbreach cultivators while Liu Hong will be allowed to manage those at the Skysoar Realm and below. What do you think?"

Zheng Yuming thought about it and said, "He is actually quite suitable for that. But I have a feeling that he doesn't really care about who we suppress. He only cares about his own growth. He is a perfect example of a selfish person. He will only put effort into things that can benefit him."

"We can simply align his personal benefits with the benefits of the faction. That way, he would work hard for us." Zhou Mingren wasn't too worried. "Let strength and research results decide everything. Without actual ability, nothing matters."

Zheng Yuming nodded and asked, "Teacher, how about the books depository? Are we still trying to get the position of the head manager?"

"Chen Yong..." Zhou Mingren looked in the direction Chen Yong had left and said, "It's time for our people to stop making moves against them. Or perhaps they will only be allowed to move within the bounds of the rules. I'll look for Xia Yuwen after this. If he no longer wants that position, we will let go of it."

Xia Yuwen was going to recover from his injuries soon. His biggest issue right now wasn't his physical injuries. Rather, it was the damage to his mind. That sword of Bai Feng had destroyed his confidence. That was the scariest damage a cultivator could suffer.

An eighth-stage Skysoar had defeated him. That was the biggest blow to Xia Yuwen. If Bai Feng was a third-stage Cloudbreach instead, Xia Yuwen wouldn't have been so badly affected.

Zheng Yuming nodded.

He would need to leave the academy next month. Even now, he had yet to fully recover. His main Divine Character remained destroyed. He didn't even know if he could leave the Allheaven Battlefield alive.

After a while, Zhou Mingren said, "So the rumors have spread all over the capital in one night? Just how many people are there in the multiple character faction? Huang Hao is the culprit in the academy due to the modification performed on his memories. How about the rumors outside the academy? Some people are helping Chen Yong outside!"

Zheng Yuming nodded, "Definitely."

"As the saying goes, old institutions die hard."

It would seem like the multiple character faction still had some people outside the academy. Some of them had appeared to help Chen Yong. They only needed to follow this line of investigation to dig out more of their hidden members.

Out of nowhere, Zheng Yuming said, "Teacher, keep a close watch over Junior Brother Zhou."

"Hmm?"

"You know the story behind how Wu Jia came to be Chen Yong's student. Even before joining the academy, Chen Yong had been sponsoring her studies. She is akin to a daughter for him. Junior Brother has touched something that is sacred to Chen Yong. I'm afraid that something bad might happen to him soon."

Zhou Mingren frowned and continued staring in the direction Chen Yong had left without saying anything.

After a long while, he said, "Will Principal Wan let it slide if Pingsheng ends up dead?"

Zheng Yuming's heart trembled. He didn't dare to say anything. There were a lot of implications behind that remark. Was it possible that...his teacher...intended to...

Zhou Mingren started to leave. While walking away, he said, "Not only is he incapable of getting things done, he also constantly brings us trouble. Of course, I am not heartless enough to watch him die. Unfortunately, I will be entering seclusion soon. If he's fine, good. If he continues doing stupid things, not even I can save him."

Sacrificing Zhou Pingsheng to remove Chen Yong. Zheng Yuming's expression changed. Was this worth it?

Probably.

Chapter 426: Out of Seclusion, Encounter, Annoying Each Other (1)

Su Yu was still unaware of everything that was happening in the academy.

He received no further message. After receiving the previous message, he had only told Xia Huyou to watch over his senior sister so that she wouldn't fall into someone's ploy.

His acupoints were being opened one after another. This had continued for several days. He had also completed the cultivation of the Body Strengthening Art. It had greatly increased his acupoint opening speed.

One ought to admit that this cultivation method of the mountainbreak bulls was really too suitable for opening acupoints.

Yet the mountainbreak bull race was at the bottom of the top 100 races. What a waste of the amazing cultivation method they had. Then again, opening acupoints faster might be pointless for them since they didn't have enough top experts. That was understandable.

A faster acupoint opening speed would only grant them some advantages at the realms below Mountainsea. Beyond that level, one's advancement would start relying on many other factors.

260 acupoints.

This was the total number of acupoints Su Yu had opened. He had long finished all his blood essence. He had been forcefully opening his acupoints with source qi alone. The five elemental blood essence had also helped him opened four apertures. That put his total opened apertures to 44.

He had yet to finish opening all the acupoints of the Sky Sundering Saber. He remained calm as he studied the Sky Sundering Saber's willpower text repeatedly. He had been reading this text for several days. Slowly, a character appeared in his sea of willpower.

"Break!"

After blood, lightning battle, kill, deceit, and saber, Su Yu welcomed another character: the break character.

Since this willpower text was written by Xia Longwu, this break character was also extremely powerful.

After absorbing the intent of the crushed Eternal characters previously, all six of Su Yu's characters had improved significantly. Among them, the blood character had reached a level where it could withhold its presence. Although it had yet to become a third-tier character, it had still grown much stronger than before.

The lightning character had successfully become a second-tier character.

In total, Su Yu had three second-tier characters and four first-tier characters, including his newest break character, a peak first-tier character.

"Xia Longwu..."

Su Yu exhaled deeply. He was slightly surprised. Xia Longwu was actually a cultural researcher.

That alone wasn't too surprising. A lot of warriors cultivate their willpower as well. That was very common. But since Xia Longwu's willpower text could help him form a peak first-tier character, then that could only mean that Xia Longwu had reached no lower than the Mountainsea Realm in willpower cultivation.

For someone cultivating both paths, that was actually very impressive.

"Seven characters."

Recently, he had not been able to find enough time to study willpower texts. Even so, he had still been able to form seven characters. And a decent number of them were at the second tier. Even the weakest of them was already at the peak first-tier.

From tiers alone, he was already comparable to some regular Skysoars.

His willpower had reached around 80 percent. He was confident that his willpower was stronger than even those with 99 percent willpower. Only those who had also tempered their willpower could compare with him.

260 acupoints and 44 apertures...

Su Yu felt like with his current strength, he could even enter the top 10.

Some of the weaker Skysoars, such as his father who would only be able to enter the Skysoar Realm with 36 acupoints, would not have more than four acupoints fused per stage. Su Yu felt like even if his father was already a Skysoar, he could still defeat his father with his current strength.

"I have only been in the academy for less than three months."

Su Yu himself was alarmed by his growth. Of course, he was aware that he had exhausted a large amount of resources to reach this level. But he was still quite surprised by the fact that he could now challenge the weaker Skysoars. It was no wonder that those super geniuses could easily challenge those above their level.

Powerful cultivation method, powerful martial techniques, powerful physical body, powerful destructive force...

If he couldn't defeat those who had advanced with some weak cultivation methods with all that, he would be truly useless.

"I still need 28 acupoints."

The Body Strengthening Art also had a lot of overlapped acupoints, so he had been able to finish cultivation this art relatively easily. Now, he was only 28 acupoints away from completing the Sky Sundering Saber's cultivation.

That would push his total opened acupoints to 288.

He even wondered if he should open all the acupoints for the second level of the Time technique as well. That would bring his opened acupoints up to 300.

"It's already the 16th today..."

After some thought, Su Yu decided that he still had enough time. The tournament was still a few days away.

This time, some of those old students would also be joining the tournament. And those were the people who were truly at the peak of the Mental Tempering Stage. Without enough strength, he might not be able to defeat them.

There was no way he was going to miss out on the Willpower Grotto. He had opened 44 apertures, but he didn't have much options in willpower absorption. The willpower in the fragment room was too impure. Furthermore, he also didn't want to empty that room of willpower.

"Willpower Grotto. With five slots up for grabs, I need to enter the top five during the tournament. Even the elders who already have a slot will probably still send their stronger students to participate in the tournament.

Even people like Zhan Hai might be in the tournament. With someone as strong as him, the elder would be able to get another slot from the tournament. Nobody would refuse the chance to get more slots.

Zhan Hai was the number one student in the top 100. He was someone who had fought a Skysoar without suffering a defeat. He was a peak Mental Tempering Stage and ninth-stage Infinite Strength cultivator. He was very strong.

And there were other students as strong as him in the academy. Su Yu naturally had to grow as much as he could before the tournament.

Even ignoring all the old students, new students such as Wan Mingze and Xia Huyou were probably near the Skysoar Realm as well. People like Zheng Yunhui were slightly weaker than the likes of them, but you never knew what trump cards they were hiding.

These were all people with strong backers, powerful backgrounds, and ample resources. Su Yu refused to believe that they wouldn't stop improving while he himself was improving.

Thus, he continued opening acupoints.

261...262...

Time passed slowly.

Without blood essence, Su Yu's absorption speed was slower than before even with the Body Strengthening Art. He could only open one acupoint per hour on average. Of course, this was already an incredible speed compared to the other cultivators.

Large amount of source qi continued converging on him as he cultivated. The acupoints within his body constantly worked to absorb and purify the source qi around him.

...

Outside the grotto.

A student walked out sullenly and asked, "Teacher, is there a Skysoar cultivating at the Infinite Strength Zone? That person's absorption speed is way too fast. It almost felt like all the source qi in the zone was rushing over toward that person. This is...too...unfair!"

He wanted to curse at someone. He had paid 200 merit points to enter. But before he could cultivate much, someone started plundering all the source qi in the area. How was he supposed to continue cultivating?

Thus, he was forced to leave not long after entering. The source qi in the area was moving way too fast for him to do any proper cultivation.

Old Nie was also feeling quite helpless. He could only smile and said, "Someone must have entered the wrong zone. I'll issue that person a warning. Since the efficiency of your cultivation this time has dropped by around 50 percent, I'll give you a refund of 100 merit points."

"Thank you, Teacher."

The student was overjoyed to hear that.

This was actually a generous compensation. Although his cultivation had been interrupted, he had still lasted several hours in there. Thus, with this refund, one could even say that he had profited.

After the student left, Old Nie frowned.

It would seem like he really needed to send that kid to the Skysoar Zone next time. With hundreds of acupoints, the kid could absorb source qi as fast as those Skysoars. If this continued, the other students in the Great Strength and Infinite Strength Zones would have no way of cultivating.

Even more annoying was the fact that the little bastard had paid only 100 merit points to enter each time. Why? Because the little bastard was still a Great Strength cultivator! A Great Strength cultivator with hundreds of acupoints!

Old Nie didn't know whether to laugh or cry. He had never encountered a person like this before. Apart from the human experts that had lived during the time when humanity had first started cultivating, very few people would waste their time opening hundreds of acupoints. They might as well put that effort into entering the Infinite Strength or even the Skysoar Realm.

"Is the kid really planning to reach a point he can punch above his level and fight a Skysoar?"

Old Nie shook his head. In his opinion, this was pointless. The kid would be better off focusing on his 144 acupoints and enter the Infinite Strength Realm directly. With Su Yu's talent, he would have reached around fifth-stage Infinite Strength Realm by now if he hadn't delayed his advancement.

After six more months, the kid could probably even enter the Skysoar Realm with just his physical cultivation alone. And he wouldn't even be one of those weak Skysoars with terrible foundations. He would be a powerful warrior with 144 acupoints.

While Old Nie was thinking, Old Huang arrived.

The moment Old Huang entered the room, he grumbled, "Life here is so much better. The Discipline Hall has too many trivial affairs to handle. And the first case I encounter after joining is that troublesome scandal. After I announced the changes of the year end review, those elders have been glaring at me everywhere I go. If they could kill with eyes, I would have died a hundred times over by now."

The previous hall master, Old He, was someone who would always smooth things over and not offend anyone. He had been living a rather relaxed life despite his position as the hall master.

He had plenty of time to engage in all sorts of hobbies like raising birds, drinking tea, and walking his dog. He had the reputation of being a friendly old man. Everyone was already used to the easy-going Discipline Hall. But the moment Old Huang took office, he announced a strict audit. Everyone was naturally having trouble adapting to his style.

Chapter 427: Out of Seclusion, Encounter, Annoying Each Other (2)

Old Nie smiled, "Hadn't you complained that life here is too boring? Well, your wish has been fulfilled. You can finally live a busy life. Aren't you happy?"

"Nonsense." Old Huang changed the topic as he solemnly said, "You heard as well, right? So what's your opinion?"

"Zhou Mingren isn't so stupid. Zhou Pingsheng also isn't that dumb. It is normal for them to provoke Wu Jia and Chen Yong. But do you believe that they would drag the entire academy into this as well?"

"No, I don't."

Old Huang shook his head. He was no fool. How would he believe that?

Not even Elder Qi believed that.

That was why only the students were subjected to harsh punishments in the end. Everyone else was let go since Zhou Mingren himself had taken the blame and allowed them to remove him from his position as a vice principal.

Despite the apparent conclusion of the matter, everyone knew that it was very possible that Huang Hao's memories might have really been altered.

Old Huang said, "Who do you think did it?"

Old Nie thought for a bit and said, "Someone from the multiple character faction. Maybe it was Hong Tan. Maybe it was Chen Yong. Or...maybe it was that person."

As he said that, he pointed in the Heart Cultivating Pavilion's direction with his chin.

Either it was someone from the multiple character faction or that fellow was doing something in the shadows again.

"I suspect the same."

Old Huang nodded and said, "That was why I ended the investigation. Even if we continue, it would be hard to find the truth. It's better to calm the disturbance and set an example out of someone first."

Old Nie nodded and said, "As long as you can give a fair judgment, it is enough. We can't be too biased. We only need to follow the rules. There might be some holes in the rules. And people might make use of the rules. But we shouldn't be the ones to challenge the rules."

"Don't worry. I understand." Old Huang moved on from the topic. He asked, "Is that kid still in there?"

"Yeah."

Old Huang exclaimed, "He sure is tenacious. He is clearly intent on squeezing every last worth out of the 100 merit points he paid to enter. I won't be able to stay here for long. It's not proper for me to say much to the multiple character faction, but remind the kid on my behalf when he comes out. Tell him to not do anything stupid. I won't spare them if they cross the line. If someone has really altered Huang Hao's memories, that would be greatly illegal."

Old Huang's eyes turned aggressive as he said, "We can't do anything now since we have no proof. And there is no way for us to find the truth without the help of an Invincible. But if it was really someone from the multiple character faction, tell the kid to be careful."

He would not tolerate having the memories of their students tampered with.

Even if he was personally biased toward the multiple character faction, the bottom line was still very important. Without the bottom line, the academy or even the Human Realm would descend into chaos.

It was all thanks to the bottom line that Liu Wenyan had been able to live this long.

Otherwise, he would have died long ago despite Great Xia King's protection.

Old Nie nodded, "I'll remind him."

"Good. I'll be taking my leave now."

Old Huang wasn't staying for long. He was only here to deliver Su Yu this reminder. Since Su Yu was still in the grotto, there was no need for him to stay any longer.

Seeing how busy Old Huang was, Old Nie laughed. After staying in the Grotto District for decades, Old Huang was finally able to find something to get busy with. That old man must be pretty satisfied with his new job.

"Hong Tan...Chen Yong..."

Old Nie sank into thought. Was it them?

Or was it Wan Tiansheng?

...

18th of October. Early in the morning.

Initially, Su Yu had planned to enter seclusion for only three days. But he ended up extending his seclusion.

He had spent five full days in the grotto.

Early morning of the 18th, when Old Nie was sipping on a cup of tea, his eyes flickered as the door leading to the grotto opened.

The instant Su Yu stepped out, the look in Old Nie's eyes changed. He felt like he was looking at a burning stove instead of a human. A raging storm of source qi that was as blinding as the sun accompanied the figure stepping through the door.

When Su Yu approached him, it was as though a primordial beast was approaching him instead.

"Hmm?"

Old Nie recovered from his reverie after a short instant. When he looked at Su Yu again, the kid seemed to have returned to the usual friendly Su Yu with a smile on his face and an elegant white outfit.

Old Nie gave Su Yu a deep look.

Meanwhile, Su Yu was slightly absent-minded. Five days. Finally, he was out of the grotto.

"Teacher, has Teacher Huang left?"

"Yeah."

Old Nie spent some time studying the kid before softly asking, "You completed your cultivation?"

"Yeah." Su Yu nodded, "The cultivation has been smooth. The Source Qi Secret Grotto is such a great place."

It was an awesome place!

Old Nie laughed. Of course it was a great place. The kid had paid only 100 merit points to cultivate in there for five days. This was only a treatment he could get in the academy.

After checking the condition of the grotto, Old Nie said, "When you grow strong, don't forget to repay the academy. You have consumed too much source qi. This grotto is not your personal cultivation ground. If all our students start doing the same thing, the grotto will collapse sooner or later."

Su Yu felt somewhat embarrassed to hear that. He hurriedly said, "I will! Thank you, Teacher!"

"Don't thank me." Old Nie took a sip from his cup of tea before slowly saying, "This is the way of the academy. Geniuses will get more than the others. But these geniuses will also repay the academy in the future. This is a virtuous cycle that can go on forever. It doesn't matter if you can take a lot more than others right now. Just remember that you are also enjoying the things left behind by your predecessors."

Su Yu nodded.

All these grottos were formed by the characters of their predecessors. He was aware of that, so he did not object to Old Nie's words. As for the matter of repayment, he had to grow strong first, right?

Suddenly, Old Nie said, "Remember to follow the rules when you're in the academy. These rules aren't here to restrict you. They are here to protect you. Rules are the best protection for the weak. Without the restriction of rules, the experts will be able to do everything they want. The weak will be completely helpless."

Su Yu nodded.

"When you're weak, you enjoy the protection of the rules. When you grow strong, the rules will restrict you. Do not think that this is unfair. And do not think that you are the only one who is suffering from injustice in the world. Because the experts are the ones who the rules are restricting the most."

Su Yu nodded. He was starting to get what Old Nie was trying to say.

Old Nie calmly said, "We can't really do too much. But at the very least, we still have some power in the academy. If you want to kill or make a move against someone, that is your prerogative. But never forget the rules."

Su Yu nodded.

"This applies to you, to your teacher, to the multiple character faction, and to the single character faction. Otherwise, Zheng Yuming wouldn't have been injured and exiled to the Vanguard Regiment. That is the price he has to pay for breaking the rules. You guys will also pay a price for breaking the rules."

Su Yu nodded before saying, "Teacher, I don't intend to break the rule. You're saying this because..."

"Just a reminder. That's all."

"I understand."

Su Yu nodded. Had someone from the multiple character faction broken the rules during his absence? He could guess why Old Nie was telling him all that.

"Is it grandteacher or martial uncle?"

His teacher was still injured, so he doubted it was his teacher. And when he recalled what he heard about his senior sister, he wondered if it was his martial uncle.

Seeing that Su Yu was about to leave, Old Nie decided to say one more thing, "You must have left your seclusion to join the tournament for the slots. But a lot of people are aiming for the slots as well. Su Yu, where it is possible to let people off, one should spare them. Some of the old students view this as their final chance. They might end up somewhat heavy-handed. But try to be less heavy-handed yourself if possible."

Su Yu nodded and flashed his honest smile, "I will! Apart from those who are intentionally trying to harm me, I will be lenient toward the others. I understand that everyone needs to strive hard for their own opportunities. If I'm an old man who is still stuck below the Skysoar Realm, I would be even more anxious than them. It is understandable that they won't let go of this chance."

"Good. You can leave now."

Old Nie waved his hand, sending Su Yu off. As long as Su Yu understood what he said, everything would be fine.

He was worried that Su Yu would be needlessly cruel and harsh during the tournament and ended up crippling some old students. Sure, those people weren't strong and were generally viewed as trash, but being too cruel wouldn't be good for Su Yu's reputation.

As for why Old Nie was confident Su Yu was stronger than those old students...he didn't even want to think about it anymore.

A Mental Tempering Stage and Great Strength student was actually capable of giving him the illusion of facing a primordial beast after exiting seclusion. Would someone like that be weak?

The kid had spent only a few days to cultivate the Sky Sundering Saber, a cultivation method requiring 144 acupoints. That was simply scary.

He could only hope that the single character faction would stop doing stupid things. They better let the tournament proceed normally instead of rigging the matches and sending some people after Su Yu. It was very likely that they would be the ones to suffer.

Chapter 428: Out of Seclusion, Encounter, Annoying Each Other (3)

"Junior Brother Su!"

"Junior Brother, you were missing for a few days! Did you go into seclusion?"

"..."

While walking, Su Yu encountered some other students. Many of them took the initiative to greet him. And he returned the greetings with a friendly smile on his face.

Suddenly, his voice transmission talisman vibrated. He did not take it out and continued heading back to the research center.

But after taking a few steps, someone appeared in front of him. With a wide smile, that person said, "Su Yu, you have skipped classes for several days. Why hadn't you applied for a leave?"

Su Yu narrowed his eyes and plastered a smile on his face as well. "Teacher Liu! You sure have a lot of free time nowadays! It almost feels like I can encounter you everywhere I go!"

Liu Hong replied, "Not at all. I've been very busy. After all, I'm in charge of organizing the tournament. This is a mere coincidence. By the way, are you signing up for the tournament? If you are, just tell me directly. You don't need to waste your time taking the trip over there to sign up."

"There is no need to trouble you, Teacher. I can go there and register myself."

Su Yu said nothing else after that.

Liu Hong's tone shifted as he said, "Aim to enter the Skysoar Realm as early as possible. That is the real start of the path of cultivation. Don't you think that it's boring to keep staying at the Mental Tempering Stage?"

"I will."

"Good. By the way, Shan Tianhao's grandson is on his way to Great Xia. What a pity that your teacher is now a cripple. I wonder if that fellow will challenge me when he arrives now that Bai Feng is already a cripple. I'm quite worried, you know? Both Wu Qi and Hu Wensheng are on the verge of advancing, leaving me as the only suitable target in the Skysoar Realm. This is really quite scary..."

Su Yu smiled, "Teacher Liu is mighty and formidable. How would you be afraid of a little kid?"

A toying look appeared on Liu Hong's face as he said, "However...he's your enemy. Not mine. Su Yu, why don't you take him on? It might be fun."

"You overestimate me, Teacher. I am only at the Mental Tempering Stage. Why throw my life away like that?"

"What a pity."

Liu Hong smiled and started walking away. Before leaving, he said, "Oh yeah, I'm planning to change the tournament rules into something more fun."

Su Yu turned his head and looked at Liu Hong.

Liu Hong continued walking away while indifferently saying, "To make things interesting, I have decided to change the format into team battles. Thus, the final winning team will get all five of the slots. Wouldn't that be a lot more fun? With this format, even a weakling stands a chance to get a slot. Won't things be a lot more unpredictable this way?"

Liu Hong smiled, "That way, no single strong individual will be guaranteed a slot. I am not allowing strong individuals to dominate the tournament. I am forcing everyone to fight in teams of five. If I want to go even crazier, I can even force everyone to fight with random teammates. For example, I can get you into a team with Di Feng. Won't that be fun?"

"..."

Su Yu stared at Liu Hong, his eyes turning cold.

Liu Hong continued smiling as he said, "Of course, that's only an example. Di Feng has been banned from all academy grottos. But the single character faction does not lack students. Meanwhile, your faction does not have enough student. Secret Character Grotto...isn't this an interesting tournament?"

"You will have to take your enemies alongside you as you crush all competition and win the slots. How fun."

"..."

Su Yu frowned. Just what was this fellow trying to do?

Liu Hong said, "How about taking Yang Sha, Liu He, and Lin Yao with you? Win and get a few slots for them. What do you think?"

Su Yu's eyes turned frosty.

This bastard!

Liu Hong continued, "This is interesting, right? If you win, I will benefit from it. If you lose, I won't lose anything. It's not like they would be able to win anything if they join the tournament alone. I can even tell the others that I'm doing this to drag you down. Tsk tsk. What a beautiful plan."

"..."

Fuck!

Su Yu wanted to punch someone in the face.

How could someone be so shameless?

Liu Hong was right. By assigning those students to Su Yu's team, the single character faction would believe that he was deliberately dragging Su Yu down. With these teammates, there was no way Su Yu could win a slot.

All by himself, he had to carry four trash teammates to victory during the tournament. How could someone even win in such a situation? And even if Su Yu ended up winning, nobody would blame Liu Hong. They would only blame Su Yu's opponents for being too useless.

After all, with his trash teammates, each match was akin to one versus nine. If they could lose even in that situation, what would they be except trash?

Su Yu gloomily asked, "Just what are you trying to do, Teacher Liu?"

"Nothing."

Liu Hong smiled and explained, "We are enemies. Isn't this normal? However...the truth is that I am giving you an opportunity."

Su Yu frowned.

"Think about it. With such weak teammates, you have to be more heavy-handed in order to protect your teammates, right? Nobody will blame you if you hurt your opponents too much. After all, with four deadweights dragging you down, nobody can expect you to hold back, right? But if you fight alone and harm an obviously weaker opponent too much, your reputation will be ruined."

At this point, Liu Hong switched to voice transmission, "We're on the same side. Have you forgotten? Those fellows dare to rob my teacher's grave. I have to take revenge, right? Little Su Yu, I'm doing this for your own good!"

Su Yu cursed inwardly. Good his mother! This bastard was obviously laying down a trap for him. In this situation, regardless of his result, Liu Hong would be the one to benefit.

If Su Yu won, his people would win some slots. If Su Yu lost, he could claim the credit of suppressing Su Yu. Thus, regardless of the result, Liu Hong would not be blamed.

On the other hand, if the tournament was held with the regular format and Su Yu won, as the organizer, the single character faction would definitely place the blame on Liu Hong.

"Teacher Liu, do you want me to start loudly announcing your plan?"

"Feel free to do it." Liu Hong grinned, "Will anyone trust you? Stop dreaming. Su Yu, who would believe that an ally would assign four deadweights to your team? I'm the only one who will do this. Because I trust you. I am confident you can win. Can't you see the trust I'm placing on you?"

"..."

Su Yu felt like he was going to get a heart attack from his anger. He really wanted to beat this bastard to death.

"Don't worry. How about this? I'll assign three of them to you instead. You can decide on the final member. Don't pick someone too strong and I will be able to get it done. If you win, you can get someone on your side a slot as well. Do you feel better now? I only want three slots. In any case, I already have a slot for myself so I don't really care."

With an unfriendly gaze, Su Yu said, "Teacher Liu, you're too smart to stay a teacher. You should join the Myriad Race Cult instead. I believe you can even become a sect master in the cult."

Liu Hong replied, "You're right. I can really give this a try. Maybe I can establish a sect and scam some resources from the myriad races. Yes, I can really do this. In fact, a lot of people are doing this. Thanks for the reminder. Do you want to join me? Let's found a small sect together! What do you think?"

"..."

Su Yu was getting tired of talking to Liu Hong. He felt like he was already quite a smart person. A lot of people in the academy felt like idiots to him. But this fellow...had he won even once against this fellow in a battle of wits?

Sure, he had scammed a lot of merit points with his fake formula, but one should remember that Liu Hong had participated in that transaction with zero cost. The single character faction was the one paying while Liu Hong himself had earned a lot as well.

"Don't look at me like that." Liu Hong smiled, "We're on the same side. I will keep the final spot of your team empty. Feel free to contact me when you make up your mind. If you don't contact me, I'll have no choice but to assign the final team member for you as well. Don't worry. I'm a fair person."

Su Yu ignored Liu Hong and walked away.

Behind him, Liu Hong laughed and said, "Remember to win! I only have one little brother and two students. Their lives have been too hard. I am not capable enough to send them into the grotto. I'll have to trouble you. Thank you, Student Su Yu!"

"..."

Su Yu cursed endlessly as he stomped off.

Bastard! Asshole! Scoundrel!

He swore to beat that fellow to death one day!

He would definitely do it!

No one was better at annoying others than that fellow.

He had planned to fight steadily and grab a slot for himself. But with this arrangement, how could he still guarantee a victory? Even if he did win, he still needed to let Liu He and the others benefit from his hard work. That wasn't even a victory he would celebrate. He would only be willing to carry his teammates to victory if all of them were his own people.

"Right, Lin Yao can already be considered my own people. As for Liu He and Yang Sha..."

Looking in Liu Hong's direction, Su Yu snorted. Fine. Since they were going to compete in acting, so be it! He could play the game as well. He would turn everyone around Liu Hong into a member of the Mutual Aid Club! Let's see how Liu Hong would like that!

Follow current s on fre(e)

Chapter 429: The Final Member (1)

While walking, Su Yu was deep in thought.

Liu Hong...

What an interesting person.

Was Yang Sha and the others assigned to him because Liu Hong believed that he could win? Or was it simply for the sake of dragging him down?

At this moment, Su Yu was finally sure that neither the single or multiple character factions mattered to Liu Hong. He only cared about himself. As long as he could benefit from something, he wouldn't care about both factions.

"Single character faction...heh."

Su Yu snickered. There were actually quite a lot of people like Liu Hong in the single character faction. But that was also understandable. The bigger a faction was, the more trouble one would be able to find in it. That was normal.

Back when the multiple character faction was at the top, such internal struggles would probably happen frequently as well. They were only united now due to their small size. Internal politics would definitely start happening once they reached a certain size.

...

Wentan Research Center.

Su Yu had been away for a few days. He wondered if Bai Feng was still in the research center. But when he saw the dusty living area, he concluded that Bai Feng had probably left.

Hong Tan was probably not around as well. Perhaps he had left to help Teacher Liu get his characters in order. Only Bai Feng and Hong Tan had the skills required to do something like that.

Su Yu wasn't too bothered by their absence. Suddenly, he recalled something. Had his teacher and grandteacher fed the beasts while he was away? It had been quite a while since he last visited them.

Su Yu had been busy after the return of his grandteacher. Subsequently, he had entered seclusion. It had been nearly 10 days since he last fed them. During his last visit, he was there to ask the water elemental some questions. A few of them had been fed, but the mountandrill bull and the others had not been given anything.

"Is the suanni still alive?"

Su Yu decided that it was time to pay them a visit. What if his grandteacher had forgotten about the beasts as well? It wouldn't do to let those beasts starve to death.

...

Prison zone.

The door swung open. When Su Yu walked in, the suanni was silently sprawled on the floor with fear on his face. When he saw that it was Su Yu, he exhaled in relief.

Good.

Su Yu looked at the suanni curiously and remarked, "Wow, you're still alive."

"..."

The suanni wanted to roar, to curse at someone, to tear this bastard apart. But he didn't have the courage to do any of that. He sorrowfully said, "I'm still alive. After all, the suanni race is quite valuable as a research subject."

"True." Su Yu nodded.

The mountandrill bull hurriedly said, "Su Yu, give me a drop of source qi liquid. I still have an old hideout at the Allheaven Battlefield. I hid a lot of treasures in there. I can give you the map for only a drop of source qi liquid!"

The fire crow also shouted, "Give me a drop as well! I have a lot of treasures! Do you want the fire of the fire crow race? You can use it to burn the willpower of your opponents! I have a lifebound fire. If I refine your cultural weapon with it, you will be able to attach the flame to your weapon for a willpower-burning effect."

Su Yu said in astonishment, "Why didn't you say that earlier? What a pity. I already have the Soul Devouring Art. You know what that is, right? That's the cultivation method of the soul devouring bugs..."

"That's a trash race!" The fire crow said, "I know that race. Apart from the mother bug, all the other bugs are useless. They need tens of thousands of them to kill only one Skysoar. But the lifebound fire of my race is capable of directly burning one's sea of willpower. That trash race is incomparable with us. They can only corrode one's willpower, not the sea of willpower. We can harm the root of power while they can only harm the power itself. It's different."

The fire crow was getting very anxious. It had been a few months. He was really on the verge of being starved to death. Su Yu really wasn't afraid of starving him to death. Since Su Yu took over the task of feeding them, he had only been given two drops of source qi liquid. And it had been quite a while since he was last fed.

Su Yu raised his brow, "Really? You can burn seas of willpower directly? Why isn't your race a top 100 race then?"

The fire crow replied, "We are quite good at dealing with cultural researchers, but our bodies are too weak. We can't handle strong warriors. All the top 100 races have powerful warriors and cultural researchers. But we are definitely the bane of all cultural researchers."

In fact, the fire crow race wasn't weak. They had a rank of 418 among the various races.

And they had relied only on their willpower to reach that far.

The fire crow said, "Our Fire Crow King once killed an Invincible cultural researcher just with his lifebound fire. He is incredibly powerful. Even a cultural researcher with a higher cultivation level won't be our match..."

Su Yu curiously asked, "But won't it be much easier for you to kill warriors with their weak willpower?"

"It doesn't work that way." The fire crow explained, "Warriors have thick source qi and powerful bodies. It will be very hard to kill them just by burning their seas of willpower. As for cultural researchers, they will be rather helpless with their weak bodies after having their seas of willpower burned..."

He was desperately trying to please Su Yu. He said, "I can't give you my lifebound fire. There is also no way for you to learn our racial abilities. But I can refine your cultural weapon for you. After the refinement, your weapon will gain the ability to burn seas of willpower."

"So is this burning ability a source qi technique?"

"No, it's a soul technique..." The fire crow explained, "In the Myriad Realms, the techniques used by cultural researchers are collectively known as soul techniques since they rely on soul apertures. As for warriors, their techniques are known as source techniques since they rely on source acupoints."

Su Yu rolled his eyes, "Do I need you to tell me something so basic? Do you think I don't know something like that? Also, can your refinement help me burn even the seas of willpower of Skysoars?"

"Sure." The fire crow said, "I am a seventh-stage Skysoar. Although I am the weakest here, I can give your cultural weapon the ability to burn the seas of willpower of those at the first three stages of the Skysoar Realm. Each refinement will last a month. Of course, if you use your weapon frequently, the power of the fire will deteriorate faster."

"Are you sure?" Su Yu wasn't convinced. He asked, "Are you telling me that your race is capable of helping weaker cultivators fight those above their level by refining their weapons?"

The fire crow said with indignation, "I'm telling the truth! But generally, we will only use our lifebound flame when we are fighting to the death. And we won't easily offer to refine the weapons of others. But I want to stay alive! So I'm making this offer!"

Yes. It was that simple. He wanted to keep his life. As for the exhaustion of his lifebound fire, it was pointless to talk about that. What was the point of having a robust lifebound fire if he was dead?

In a nearby cage, the mountindrill bull hurriedly said, "My race, the mountindrill bull race, has powerful bodies. We are the best for physical chores. Do you want me as a mount? The mountindrill bulls are the best mounts you can find."

As a ninth-stage Skysoar, the mountindrill bull was stronger than the fire crow. Among the prisoners, he was ranked fourth. At this point, face and prestige no longer mattered to him. If he didn't think of something, it was only a matter of time before he starved to death. The fire crow could help with weapon refinement, but he did not seem capable of anything else.

The mountindrill bulls were known for their powerful bodies, but the mountainbreak bulls were better in regards to that. And their racial abilities also weren't too powerful. Strictly speaking, this was a race without anything special about them.

Nevertheless, they were pretty good at surviving. The human race needed to reach the Sunmoon Realm before they could regrow their bodies from a drop of blood. Meanwhile, the mountindrill bull race could start doing so at the Skysoar Realm if one was lucky.

"Mount?" Su Yu laughed and said, "I'm afraid of death. Who knows if you'll turn against me the moment I release you?"

"No, I won't!" The mountindrill bull promised, "The beast tamers of the human race are very powerful. I am willing to accept a beast tamer contract..."

"We'll see."

"Su Yu..."

Su Yu impatiently said, "You're too ugly to be my mount. Do you understand now? You don't look mighty enough. With one look, everyone knows you're from a weak race. The suanni race is better in that aspect. They have a good physical appearance..."

The suanni stared at Su Yu blankly. No! Absolutely impossible! He would rather die than be a mount!

Su Yu was unbothered. He said, "Stop wasting time. We'll talk about this again some other time. I still needed you guys previously, but honestly, you are no longer useful to me now."

Su Yu spoke with an indifferent tone, "I'm starting to find you guys weak. Even the water guy is only a seventh-stage Cloudbreach. There really isn't anything special about that. Recently, your Grandpa Su has provoked a lot of enemies. And these enemies aren't even Great Strength or Infinite Strength cultivators. I can deal with such weaklings myself. But my recent enemies have all been Mountainseas and Sunmoons..."

The mounts were all dumbfounded.

Su Yu smiled and said, "You guys continue serving as blood suppliers. I will continue finding time to feed you guys. I might not be your match now, but it won't be long before I surpass all of you. Honestly, what's the point of keeping beasts who are even weaker than me around? Am I supposed to raise you like livestock and slaughter you for meat?"

The water elemental couldn't stay calm anymore. He assumed a humanoid form and asked after some hesitation, "You're...near the Skysoar Realm?"

"Yes." Su Yu smiled and said, "If I hadn't stopped to cultivate a powerful cultivation method, I would probably be a Skysoar warrior already."

As he said that, his body shook.

All the acupoints in his body activated. A total of 300 acupoints were shining brightly inside his body.

This was the result of cultivating the Sky Sundering Saber and the second level of the Time technique.

300 acupoints!

Su Yu nonchalantly asked, "Do you see this? I have opened 300 acupoints. This is what a true genius looks like. The weakling in your eyes might not be a true weakling. When I finish fusing my acupoints and enter the Infinite Strength Realm, even regular Skysoars might not be my match."

All the beasts were shocked.

Chapter 430: The Final Member (2)

The shadow hurriedly revealed himself and asked, "You must be messing with us, right?"

"What a joke." Su Yu sneered. "You're a bunch of prisoners. Why do I need to lie to you? I have only been spending so much time here with you guys because I happen to have some free time. If it wasn't for the sake of practicing the Soul Expanding Art, my willpower would have reached the Skysoar Realm long ago."

After saying that, a powerful burst of willpower erupted from him. His willpower was much stronger than regular peak Mental Tempering Stage cultivators. With 44 apertures and a sea of willpower that had been tempered for about a dozen times, his 80 percent willpower was almost as strong as second-tier willpower.

The only reason his willpower was still at the first-tier was because it had not achieved materialization. Next, a thick killing intent rippled out, electrical currents cackled, and illusions danced around him.

Su Yu smiled and continued, "I have even obtained several second-tier characters. For me, the Skysoar Realm is nothing special."

"..."

The beasts stared at him and sank into silence. With this display, Su Yu was definitely near the Skysoar Realm.

The water elemental softly asked, "You have been hiding your strength from us since the beginning, right? You're not a new student, right?"

"Wrong. I'm a new student." Su Yu smiled, "I am merely a much bigger genius than you have imagined. Also, my backer is much stronger than you have imagined. My first teacher killed a Sunmoon with a single strike just a few days ago. He is Liu Wenyan of the multiple character faction and the first student of the fifth principal. I wonder if you know his name.

"That is only my willpower teacher. As for my physical cultivation, the Xia Family regards me highly enough to have Prefect Xia, someone on the cusp of entering the Invincible Realm, personally teach me the top-tier Sky Sundering Saber."

As he said that, a saber appeared in his hand. This was the cultural weapon he had named the Sealing Saber.

"Kill!"

With a roar, an intense killing intent surged out. Without even swinging the saber, the entire room was flooded with source qi, willpower, and killing intent.

The water elemental sighed.

Freak!

Just this killing intent alone was enough to directly crush the seas of willpower of ordinary Mental Tempering Stage cultivators.

Strong.

This person was probably already the strongest within the same cultivation level.

The water elemental and the shadow were finally taking Su Yu seriously. Their contempt from before had vanished completely. The water elemental said, "Looks like we have underestimated you. It is clear that you have never trusted us from the beginning. That's understandable. If you're that stupid, you wouldn't have been able to win the favor of those experts.

"Su Yu, since you're not hiding your strength anymore, be frank with us. Tell us what you want. We only want to live. What do we need to give to keep our lives?"

Su Yu smiled, "That's more like it. Before this, you guys have been really arrogant just because you're in the Skysoar and Cloudbreach Realms. When I become a Skysoar myself, I can kill even Cloudbreach cultivators! I am only here because I am still slightly interested in you guys. When I lose interest, you guys will all turn into food."

The suanni was no longer arrogant. He solemnly asked, "What do we need to give to live on?"

Su Yu said, "There is no rush. I have already asked my grandteacher to register all of you as mounts. I will come again when I need you. For example, I might need to leave the academy for missions. At that time, I can take you guys with me. Of course, you guys are too crafty. I might not be able to trust you guys. It is very likely that you will turn against me after leaving the academy. Sure, you won't be able to leave the Human Realm alive after killing me, but my life is much more valuable than pieces of trash like you guys. That won't be a fair trade."

The beasts were visibly angered by that statement.

Su Yu coldly said, "Am I wrong? What are you within your respective races? Are you the elites of your races? The royals of your races? The descendants of Invincibles? If you're really that special, you wouldn't have ended up here. As for me, I have the backing of the Xia Family and the multiple character faction. Mountainsea, Sunmoon, and Invincible experts regard me highly. Is there a need to compare the worth of our lives?"

The beasts said nothing. They might be geniuses, but the Invincible Realm was too far away from them.

Su Yu flicked a few drops of source qi liquid to the beasts before saying, "Alright. Don't be angry. That was just a joke. We'll talk more next time. Don't die. You will have hope as long as you stay alive. Hope will only truly extinguish when you lose your life."

After saying that, Su Yu turned around to leave. The fire crow hurriedly said, "How about my offer?"

"I'll think about it. If possible, I can take you to Grandmaster Zhao Li, the son of the fourth principal, for a checkup to prevent any tricks from you. You know who Zhao Li is, right? That's my teacher as well."

The fire crow hesitated slightly and said, "The descendant of Great Xia Cultural Research Academy's fourth principal, Three Days Zhao?"

Three Days Zhao?

Su Yu frowned. The fire crow saw the displeased expression and hurriedly explained, "That's what the myriad races used to call him. He had a source character that could provide him with unending source qi. He also had a robust willpower. He once fought a peak Sunmoon for three days and three nights before exhausting that opponent to death. Of course, he had also suffered greatly from that battle. Ultimately, he perished. This is a title given out of respect, not disrespect."

Su Yu was shocked to learn all that. He really didn't know about that. The fourth principal had actually perished together with a peak Sunmoon. When experts fought, a result could often be decided instantly. A fight that could last three days and three nights would usually only appear in legends.

Yet the fourth principal had actually achieved such a feat. He wasn't even a peak Sunmoon, right?

"I see. Yes. It's him. He's my weaponsmithing teacher." Su Yu smiled and said, "Looks like the fourth principal is still quite famous. It's good that you know who he is. Teacher Zhao is an expert in weaponsmithing. Since you're offering to refine my weapon...If you can catch Teacher Zhao's attention, I'll send you to him as a helper. You can become his little fire pet. What do you think?"

The fire crow didn't know what to say. Little fire pet? What was that?

He could only helplessly said, "If Lord Zhao does not mind having me around, I am naturally willing to serve him."

"We'll see."

Su Yu did not give a definite answer. These beasts needed to have their pride tempered. They had always felt superior when facing him, viewing him as a weakling with no experience. They believed that they only needed to give him some small benefits to win him over.

Today, Su Yu had told them that they were nothing. And after some time when he grew more, they would be even more useless.

...

Su Yu left.

After he left, the shadow sighed, "We have been tricked. He had known our intentions since the beginning. He had only been playing around with us. Everyone, time for us to find our own way out. He is right. When he reaches the Skysoar Realm, would he still need us?"

"Look at Bai Feng. Before entering the Skysoar Realm, he was very interested in us. But after reaching the Skysoar Realm, we had turned into blood suppliers. When Su Yu becomes a Skysoar, the same will happen."

Their value would only drop the stronger these people became. In Hong Tan's eyes, they were only blood suppliers and test subjects of his students. They were probably more useful to him as food than anything else.

As one's strength changed, one's knowledge would grow. And the way one viewed the world would change as well. When Su Yu reached Hong Tan's level, a few Skysoar and Cloudbreach beasts would be nothing for him.

"Shadow, what do you mean?"

The shadow said, "Nothing. But I am a natural assassin. I am not suited as a mount. And the human race does not have the habit of taking humanoid life forms as mounts. Thus, this isn't the path for me. I'll have to see if this person has any dirty deeds he needs done. If he does, then I will have something to offer."

The water elemental said, "I am also great at assassinations."

The white civet's flirtatious voice rang out, "I'm good at it as well."

The shadow said, "Let's see if he intends to do something like that. I think he does. Otherwise, there wouldn't be any point in telling us clearly about his background, his backers, and his talent. But it's clear he also has a lot of enemies."

"Would he dare to raise his own assassins within the Great Xia capital?"

The mountaindrill bull had just asked the question before the suanni chided, "You are truly stupid. As long as he conducts his business outside the cities, why would the authorities care? This kid is too good at acting. Maybe he's acting weak to bait some of his enemies outside the city. At that time, we would be put to use. The multiple character faction is too small. Their members are strong, but they have too many eyes on them. It is clear he's trying to create a secret force that can be used to protect himself or stab someone in the back."

The shadow said, "Exactly. I believe this is what he intends to do. He might be young, but he is as crafty as an old fox. He is also patient. This is a much harder person to deal with than Bai Feng."

The suanni rolled his eyes and said, "Do we need you to tell us that? At the very least, Bai Feng would be afraid of starving us to death. But this kid really doesn't care one bit. In his eyes, as long as we lose our value, we no longer exist. All of us can see this."

"I didn't realize that..."

The mountaindrill bull muttered softly. How had they realized all that?

The suanni was speechless. He decided to ignore the dumb bull.

The shadow said, "Time for us to think about our own futures. I am thinking of finding a job for myself as well. It has been too many years. I'm already sick of this cage..."

If they failed to earn Su Yu's favor, would there be a next new student for them to curry favor with?

They didn't have much time left.

Su Yu might really completely lose interest on them after reaching the Skysoar Realm. They had to fully submit to him before that time. This was their final opportunity.

...

Upstairs.

Su Yu had a smile on his face. He wasn't too bothered about the beasts. It was pointless to keep acting dumb in front of those beasts. Being honest with them would only make things more interesting.

Two of them were at the Cloudbreach Realm while the other four were Skysoars. The weakest of them was a seventh-stage Skysoar. This was actually quite a formidable force to have.

The multiple character faction was too small. That was the truth. Even if Su Yu was considered an important student, it would be a dream to receive protection if he needed to leave the academy. They simply didn't have enough manpower. Thus, taming those beasts would be a good option.

But it wasn't easy to tame these ferocious beasts. Thus, he had to be careful around them. He tossed the matter out of his mind and took out a voice transmission talisman.

"Brother Lin, have you registered for the tournament?"

"No. Brother Su, I can't win so what's the point? I'm too weak..."

"It's fine. Just register for it. I already made some arrangements. This tournament will be in the form of team battles. Teams of five will be formed. You will be assigned to my team. I will lead you to victory."