

The Heavens 101

Chapter 101: Zoom Zoom

The two different types of qi formed a clear separation in the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool.

One side shone a brilliant red, like smoldering hot coals. The fiery qi caused the air on one side of the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool to distort.

On the other side, the air was frigid as the icy qi did its magic. It was so cold that a layer of frost covered half the stone hall Liu Qinglan and Sun Haiwei were in.

The heaven and earth qi in the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool started to transform into fire and ice qi.

In the middle of the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool, a vortex formed due to the vastly different types of qi.

There, the two different types of qi fused to form a mysterious stream of energy that slowly descended into the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool...

Throughout the process, a strange diagram was formed on the surface of the crater as the two types of qi swirled around each other. They seemed to resemble two fishes that were chasing each other's tails in the eyes of Sun Haiwei and Liu Qinglan.

"Junior Brother Shang adapted really quickly... He managed to find the equilibrium point between the two extremities instantly! He has even started to absorb them!" Sun Haiwei gasped as a smile slowly formed on her face.

She might have changed the way she addressed Shang Xia from her student to her junior brother, but in her eyes, he would always be her student! In fact, he was like a little brother to her.

She was truly happy to see that he was able to adjust his state so quickly!

"Hmm... There's something interesting about this diagram." Liu Qinglan muttered as she studied the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool.

She was a Martial Extermination Realm cultivator after all. Her cultivation level and insights had reached an extremely high level!

Because of the difference between the Azure Origin World and the world Shang Xia came from, she might not know the meaning behind the Yin and Yang Diagram, but she might be able to learn the principle behind it if she received a stroke of inspiration! It was clear that she had realized something the moment Shang Xia started cultivating.

Of course, she was merely shocked by the discovery. Her interest in it quickly waned.

That was because her cultivation had long since surpassed the Martial Extremity Realm. Shang Xia's experience was like a breath of fresh air, but that was it. She wouldn't change her entire cultivation process because of it.

She wasn't the only one who noticed something different. Sun Haiwei managed to discover that there was something special about it.

As it turned out, Sun Haiwei hasn't broken through to the Martial Intent Realm! Instead, the martial intent she comprehended had reached the grand completion stage. Her combat strength was comparable to a cultivator in the Martial Intent Realm, and that was the power she displayed in the war that went down previously. Now, Liu Qinglan gave her the opportunity to stay by the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool, hoping she could gain some benefits or insights.

If she could use the chance to step into the Martial Intent Realm, that would be perfect!

Any Martial Intent Realm cultivator was a huge asset to the Tongyou Institution. They were a source of huge fighting strength and the institution wouldn't hesitate to pour resources into cultivating them.

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As the heaven and earth qi became denser and denser in the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool, Shang Xia found the pressure on his body increasing.

The heaven and earth qi might not be something tangible, but it was like a mysterious stream of energy that streamed into his being.

One had to say that Shang Xia's physique was much better than cultivators his level. Facing the torrent of energy pouring into him, he could direct it smoothly to every part of his body before refining it effectively. If anyone else was in his position, they would panic when met with the sudden influx of energy.

Shang Xia recalled Liu Qinglan's warning and paused after he got a general feel of the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool. He had to wait for the density of both qis to reach equilibrium before starting his cultivation!

Even so, with the short burst of qi he took in, he felt a huge increase in his strength. He could tell that cultivating in the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool was at least twice as effective as cultivating on the Tongyou Peak.

That was because the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool specifically produced the type of heaven and earth qi the cultivator within required!

Just as the thought formed in Shang Xia's mind, he discovered that the heaven and earth qi around him started to transform.

The change that happened at the top of the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool when Liu Qinglan poured both liquids in started to happen at the bottom of the crater. The heaven and earth qi around Shang Xia slowly separated, and he soon experienced extreme temperatures on both sides of his body.

A searing pain shot through one side of his body and he felt as though he was turning into a human barbeque. Despite the sharp pain, his skin and clothes didn't show any signs of burning up.

On the other half of his body, the opposite happened. He felt a bone-chilling pain stabbing straight into his bones, but his body showed no signs of freezing.

At that moment, a soft ripple traveled through the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool and rang in his mind. "Focus on circulating your energy and absorbing the fire and ice qi! Do not be distracted by anything else!"

Even without her reminder, Shang Xia would have done the same. He started to circulate his inner qi.

Every time it made a cycle around his body, he would absorb a portion of the qi around him. The pain that he felt would be slightly alleviated.

After the short moment of respite, the searing pain returned. This time, with greater intensity.

Shang Xia had to circulate his inner qi as quickly as he could in order to avoid the suffering.

The cycle continued on and on, and the inner qi in Shang Xia's body started to move at an increasingly fast rate. Every time the density of fire and ice qi around his body increased, the more he would absorb. His cultivation seemed to advance with the speed of a rocket zooming into space.

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The faster he refined the fire and ice qi around him, the greater the effects on his body. He was like a black hole that sucked up heaven and earth qi endlessly.

Above the crater, Liu Qinglan and Sun Haiwei could feel that the circulation of the fire and earth qi in the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool was growing faster and faster. The vortex that formed on the surface seemed to extend even deeper as the strange phenomenon of the rotating fishes at the surface became even clearer.

Liu Qinglan turned to Sun Haiwei and asked, "When the three of you entered the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool, how long did each of you manage to last in there? How much essence qi stones did you guys use up?"

Sun Haiwei thought for a second and replied, "I managed to stay there for six hours and I used one-third of the essence qi stones. The two of them stayed for five hours and used up the remainder of the essence qi stones. However, the heaven and earth qi produced by the formation wasn't fully absorbed by us. A portion of it remained after we were done."

"Take a guess. How much do you think he would use?" Liu Qinglan smirked.

"Junior Brother Shang is a genius and his foundations are incredibly solid. He might be able to stay down there for a much longer time than me, and he should use up a lot more of the essence qi stones. My guess is that he would be able to stay there for eight hours and he would use close to forty percent of the heaven and earth qi alone."

Liu Qinglan smiled and nodded slowly. "That might be a little exaggerated, but I think it's close. The brat is pretty strong. However, he might not be strong enough to outdo all of you."

As the two of them spoke, the essence qi in the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool dropped by an entire level. The essence qi stones on the second layer were revealed.

The essence qi stones at the very top started to fade and cracks formed on their surface.

The sudden change caused the faces of Liu Qinglan and Sun Haiwei to change dramatically.

"What?! That's too fast! Not even two hours had passed since he started, and the heaven and earth qi in the first layer had already been used up!" Sun Haiwei gasped.

She turned her head to look at Liu Qinglan, only to be met with a look of amazement on the instructor's face.

Muttering to herself, Liu Qinglan tried to reason it out with herself. "It probably has something to do with his cultivation method. He might be able to absorb heaven and earth qi quicker than other people... Yep, that's an effect of the Triple Mystery Polarity Art..."

Confident that her guess was right, Liu Qinglan continued, "Everyone's dantian has a limit. They can only contain so much inner qi! From the looks of it, his dantian would be filled soon. He might emerge from the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool in less than six hours."

Sun Haiwei thought about it and felt that Liu Qinglan's reason made sense.

Chapter 102: Zoom Zoom, Cultivation on a Rocket (cont)

Liu Qinglan felt that Shang Xia's cultivation method could allow him to increase the speed at which he absorbed the heaven and earth qi around him.

Regardless, there was a limit to how much inner qi one could contain in their body. It had to be something the cultivator could control too. Otherwise, they might experience cultivation deviation and die!

Close to two hours passed, and the surface of the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool was the same as before. There was a massive vortex leading to the bottom.

From the looks of it, Shang Xia's refining speed had reached a stable state.

"This is weird... He's absorbing it so quickly! Can he actually transform it into his inner qi so quickly? Isn't he afraid that he would absorb too much?" Sun Haiwei frowned.

Liu Qinglan had an unnatural expression on her face as she muttered, "Did I make a mistake in my estimations previously?"

It didn't take long for the third layer of essence qi stones to be revealed.

The essence qi stones in the first layer completely crumbled and turned into dust.

There were 64 essence qi stones in the second layer, and they dimmed tremendously.

"Has he... Has he refined 30 percent of the energy already?!" Sun Haiwei cried.

When she entered the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool, it took her six hours to refine 30 percent of the energy contained within.

Even though the essence qi stones at the top were of the lowest grade, there were lots of them! There were 81 in the first layer and 64 in the second. Now that the essence qi stones in the first layer had turned to dust, it signified that Shang Xia had refined close to 30 percent of the energy.

"Teacher, do we operate the formation as usual?" Sun Haiwei muttered softly.

A trace of hesitation flashed through Liu Qinglan's eyes. "We should be able to... It's not likely for him to absorb more than 40 percent of the energy in the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool himself!"

The corners of Sun Haiwei's lips twitched, but she remained silent.

According to the usual operation, they would reverse the flow of the energy after Shang Xia completed his absorption. The energy released by the essence qi stones would return to where they came from, and that would prevent excessive leakage of heaven and earth qi.

Of course, they would still experience some wastage.

In order to reverse the flow of the heaven and earth qi, the fire and ice qi would have to be completely absorbed or removed from the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool. Otherwise, more energy would dissipate.

That was the rule set by the institution. Every time the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool was opened, there would be an enforcer to reverse the flow of the energy before they could all go to waste. After all, the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool was an extremely precious resource.

Even Sun Haiwei, an expert who was heavily nurtured by the institution, wasn't able to enter the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool whenever she pleased! There was no way the institution would allow the energy contained in the pool to be wasted!

Liu Qinglan did her a great favor by bringing her down to the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool. She could utilize the dissipating energy after Shang Xia was done to cultivate, and that could be considered a reward for her great service to the institution.

When they looked at the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool, a seed of doubt formed in their minds. After he was done, there might not be much energy left!

One had to know that reversing the flow of the heaven and earth qi would waste some of the energy contained within. The lesser the energy left after Shang Xia's cultivation, the less they would waste. Whatever... Letting him absorb more might not be a bad thing either

As another hour passed, Liu Qinglan heaved a sigh of relief when she saw that the vortex wasn't as strong as before. "It's finally slowing down!"

It was true that Shang Xia slowed down slightly, but from what Sun Haiwei knew, the deeper they were in the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool, the denser the energy contained. Shang Xia might have slowed down in his absorption, but the quality of the fire and ice qi he absorbed was still of extremely high purity!

Sun Haiwei felt a sense of defeat coursing through her. Shang Xia had absorbed more than 30 percent of the energy contained within!

He would be able to surpass 40 percent soon!

All of a sudden, Liu Qinglan's voice rang in her mind. "How strong were you when you entered?"

"I was at the large completion stage of the Martial Extremity Realm!" Sun Haiwei felt the corners of her lips twitching.

"Shang Xia should probably still be at the small completion stage, right?" Liu Qinglan frowned.

How long had it been since he entered the Martial Extremity Realm?!

Even if he directly absorbed energy from the essence qi stones, his cultivation couldn't have reached the large completion stage of the Martial Extremity Realm, right?!

Instructor Liu, can't you think about my feelings before asking that question?! I was still his teacher a month ago!

Sun Haiwei felt her confidence crumbling. What do you mean still at the small completion stage? I've been at the Martial Extremity Realm for so long now!

She couldn't find it in herself to answer the question.

...

The cultivation method Shang Xia used was completely different from the rest of the cultivators!

Not only could he increase his mastery over both types of opposing qi, but he could also transform them into any type he liked!

It was true that cultivators who practiced the Triple Mystery Polarity Art would be able to absorb energy much faster than everyone else, but Liu Qinglan didn't know that Shang Xia had already fused the cultivation method into his own!

As the fire and ice qi poured into his body, they were instantly refined by the Yin Yang Diagram.

"When cultivators at the Martial Extremity Realm cultivate, they are unable to maintain a perfect balance between the two opposing types of qi... In order to increase their cultivation level, they would choose to only train in one. When they reached the large completion stage in one type, they would seal away the qi in their body and try to increase their mastery of the other one, finally reaching an equilibrium..."

"Cultivators who had reached the large completion stage in one type of qi would be considered small completion stage cultivators at the Martial Extremity Realm. Those who reached the large completion stage in both types of qi would be considered to have reached the large completion stage of the Martial Extremity Realm!"

"Now, neither type of qi in my dantian has yet to reach the large completion stage. With the sudden influx of so much energy, controlling my inner qi is getting a little difficult! I should be reaching my limit soon!"

"Well... Haste makes waste. It's true that I can increase my cultivation by a lot through the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool, but I should consolidate my foundations. If I absorb too much and lose control of my inner qi, the risk of experiencing cultivation deviation would increase by several times!"

Shang Xia thought to himself before slowing down considerably.

All of a sudden, an idea crossed his mind. His Yin Yang Essence Qi started to transform to that of the yang attribute as the Yin Yang Diagram in his dantian sped up.

In that instant, the amount of yang attributed qi in his body reached an incredible level! He discovered that his mastery over the yang attributed qi in his body reached the large completion

stage, and according to the definition of cultivators in the Azure Origin World, he reached the large completion stage of the Martial Extremity Realm!

Chapter 103: Reappearance of the Blood-Red Tablet

With the help of the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool, Shang Xia's cultivation took a huge leap forward.

Naturally, there were drawbacks to his sudden increase in strength. As the amount of inner qi in his dantian grew larger, the control he had over it decreased proportionately.

He even had the Yin Yang Diagram to keep his inner qi in check, but even so, it was getting tough to keep it under control.

If that wasn't the case, his inner qi would have shown signs of going out of control way earlier!

Right before he concluded his cultivation session in the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool, he got a sudden hit of inspiration. He transformed all his inner qi into yang attributed qi and officially reached the large completion stage of the Martial Extremity Realm!

From the amount of time he had been in the battlefield between the two worlds, Shang Xia could tell that it hadn't been a month since he entered the Martial Extremity Realm!

In one month, he progressed to the Martial Extremity Realm and the large completion stage at that! If anyone claimed to be able to do what he did, they would be laughed out of existence.

However, that was the truth! With the use of the Tongyou Peak's Polarity Essence Gathering Pool, he managed to achieve the impossible!

Shang Xia smiled as he transformed the yang attributed qi to the yin attributed qi.

After reaching the large completion stage, he could freely transform his qi with the help of the Yin Yang Diagram!

Not only was he much more flexible when it came to his use of qi. At the critical moment, he would be able to transform his qi to scare his opponents away!

A loud blast rang through his mind, and the excitement he felt faded instantly. The blood-red tablet in his sea of consciousness reappeared and he couldn't be bothered with anything else. He focused completely on it.

Light flashed across the surface of the tablet as rows of words started to appear on its surface.

Martial Intent: Yin Yang Sword Formation (Can be advanced)

Prerequisite Cultivation Technique: Yin Yang Mysterious Art

Prerequisite Martial Art: Vigorous Sword Art, Formless Sword Art, Flexible Sword Art

Subsequent Martial Art: None

Requirement: Yin Yang Diagram

Medicine Required: Meridian Tempering Powder, Meridian Replenishing Powder

Required Item: Yin Yang Sword Talisman

Success Rate: 75%-80%

Shang Xia's expression turned a little weird when he read the words on the tablet.

The way the technique appeared this time was completely different from when the Chaos Essence Lightning Palm was displayed!

Shang Xia was cultivating sword techniques after entering the Martial Extremity Realm, but the technique that appeared on the tablet was a sword formation!

It was the first time he had heard of a sword-based martial intent being referred to as a formation!

Moreover, what did 'can be advanced' mean?! It was the first time Shang Xia had seen something like that!

"..." As he continued to read the words on the tablet, Shang Xia discovered that it was teaching him a way to advance.

The Yin Yang Mysterious Art was something he created after fusing the Triple Mystery Polarity Art into his cultivation method.

As for the prerequisite martial arts, he reached the large completion stage of both the Vigorous Sword Art and the Formless Sword Art. Since the Flexible Sword Art was a combination of the two, he was somewhat confident that he could comprehend it in a short period of time.

Well, other than that, there was nothing noteworthy other than the Yin Yang Diagram.

The medicines were things he could obtain after spending a little bit of time, and he had a basic understanding of what the two medicines were.

The Meridian Tempering Powder was able to strengthen his meridians such that it could withstand a greater amount of inner qi surging through them, and the Meridian Replenishing Powder could allow him to quickly restore himself to his peak state.

With the requirements of the two medicines, Shang Xia could tell that his journey to the next cultivation level was fraught with dangers.

Turning his eyes to the Essential Secret Art, Shang Xia had no idea what it was. However, it was clear that the Yin Yang Sword Art was extremely critical to his advancement.

When Shang Xia completed his cultivation of the Chaos Essence Lightning Palm previously, he managed to obtain a secret art called the Lightning Collection Blood Art

He eventually managed to comprehend the technique, but it wasn't without any risks. He used the power of the heavenly lightning that struck him during the tribulation as the basis of his understanding! After his successful cultivation of the technique, his Chaos Essence Lightning Palm became much stronger than before!

From the looks of it, that was what comprehending the Yin Yang Sword Art would do! Without the essential technique, one would be able to comprehend the martial intent. However, the success rate would be abysmal, and the might produced by the martial intent would be much weaker! There was even a chance for cultivators to experience a severe backlash if they tried to comprehend the martial intent without the essential technique!

With all the techniques and medicine out of the way, Shang Xia looked at the success rate. Even so, he wasn't too concerned about that.

He knew that the tablet would optimize the way to advance!

Shang Xia looked at the prerequisite techniques again and frowned. He was clearly improving through his cultivation of yin and yang. Why in the world did it require the softness and strength attribute of the Flexible Sword Art? That made no sense to him!

However, he forgot to think about the part where the martial intent could be advanced!

Since the attributes of softness and strength were only a minor path of the yin and yang, Shang Xia felt that it could be a foundation of the Yin Yang Sword Art!

As soon as he thought about it, the words on the tablet changed.

Martial Intent: Sword River

Prerequisite Cultivation Technique: Triple Mystery Polarity Art

Prerequisite Martial Art: Vigorous Sword Art, Formless Sword Art, Flexible Sword Art, Flexible Twin Sword Art, Flexible Dual Sword Formation

Requirement: River Sword Seal

Medicine Required: Meridian Tempering Powder, Meridian Replenishing Powder

Success Rate: 40%-50%

With the River Sword Policy as the base, that was another martial intent he could comprehend!

He learned that the martial intent followed the way of the sword and that it was called the Sword River intent from one of the instructors of the institution, and once he comprehended it, the strength he could display was phenomenal!

Throughout the process of comprehending the River Sword Policy, Shang Xia learned that there was an inheritance called the Sword Seal! It was a crucial part of the manual, and it could bring the sword policy to a whole new level!

The missing Sword Seal was why the technique was reduced to the River Sword Policy. If it wasn't, the River Sword Policy would be renamed to the River Sword Scripture!

Shang Xia looked at the blood-red tablet in his sea of consciousness and sighed. It seemed as though he had revealed the complete cultivation method for the River Sword Scripture!

Through the assessment of the tablet, Shang Xia would only possess a 40%-50% chance of comprehending the Sword River intent.

Of course, in the cultivation world, the success rate was considered pretty damn high. The cultivation method of the Chaos Essence Lightning Palm he gave to the institution before didn't even boast a 50% success rate! Even so, they were more than happy to accept it!

Now, he received the complete inheritance of the River Sword Scripture.

“Hehe, after I comprehend the Yin Yang Sword Formation, I can bring out the River Sword Scripture and pass it over to the clan or the institution. The rewards from both sides would be astounding!” Shang Xia chuckled in his heart.

Well, there was no way he would pass on his Yin Yang Sword Formation. From the name and prerequisites, Shang Xia could tell that it was much stronger than the Sword River intent!

The technique contained a secret that he couldn't afford to pass on to the members of the institution!

If he did, the Yin Yang Diagram wouldn't even be his biggest problem. It was difficult for him to explain his comprehension of the Yin Yang Diagram, but it would be a bigger pain in the ass to explain where his knowledge came from!

A wave of relief swept through his heart when he finally gathered his thoughts.

His path of cultivation was clear now. There was nothing stopping him from charging to the grand completion stage of the Martial Extremity Realm!

In his excitement, Shang Xia felt his control over his inner qi improving slightly. His dantian that had reached the limit seemed to expand once more, allowing him to absorb even more heaven and earth qi.

The Yin Yang Diagram continued to spin and the energy that surrounded him was forcefully absorbed. Once again, the vortex of heaven and earth qi formed above him.

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Liu Qinglan and Sun Haiwei stood at the side of the crater and saw that the energy had returned to normal and heaved a sigh of relief. It seemed as though Shang Xia had reached his limit and was about to end his cultivation session.

"45 percent... That should be all..." Liu Qinglan heaved a sigh of relief.

Even though she expected Shang Xia to absorb more heaven and earth qi than cultivators his level, the amount he sucked in had already exceeded her expectations!

"Junior Brother Shang is only at the small completion stage of the Martial Extremity Realm. If he manages to refine two more pairs of qi, his foundations would surpass us completely!" Sun Haiwei said in an extremely envious tone. There was even a slight trace of jealousy behind her words.

Liu Qinglan naturally heard her unhappiness and she chuckled in response, "That might not be the case. Shang Xia's foundations are solid, but that would cause his cultivation speed to fall far behind. Moreover, you have already comprehended your martial intent and you're about to charge into the Martial Intent Realm. You're pretty impressive too!"

Sun Haiwei laughed, "Teacher, there's no need to comfort me... I can control my emotions..."

"That would be for the best." Liu Qinglan smiled before turning back to the pool.

"Let's wake him up soon. He should be at his limit. No matter how long he stays, he won't be able to take in any more energy."

As soon as the words left her lips, the energy contained in the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool sank.

Sun Haiwei gasped in fright, "50... 50 percent!"

Chapter 104: Swordmaster of the Shang Clan

When Shang Xia finally emerged from the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool...

“Did your cultivation reach the large completion stage?” Sun Haiwei asked when she felt the energy fluctuations around his body.

Liu Qinglan glanced at Shang Xia and snorted softly, “Hmph! Of course he managed to enter the large completion stage of the Martial Extremity Realm. He absorbed half the energy in the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool alone! Anyone else who did the same would probably be close to breaking through to the Martial Intent Realm!”

Sun Haiwei giggled at the side. “Teacher Liu, other people wouldn’t be able to absorb as much energy as he did!”

He thought of a proper excuse for his rapid increase in cultivation before emerging. He wanted to blame it on the Scarlet Crystal he ingested during the war, but from what they were saying, it seemed as though they thought his increase in strength was too little!

Turning to look at the remnant energy in the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool, he thought of something.

“Did I... Did I absorb a lot of energy?”

In Sun Haiwei’s eyes, Shang Xia was obviously bragging.

Liu Qinglan snapped at the side before Sun Haiwei could say anything. “Brat, stop acting like you don’t know what’s going on! Scram! Stay away from our Polarity Essence Gathering Pool! Didn’t you experience a rapid increase in strength? Go back to the Shang Pavilion and consolidate your foundations! Get as far away from our Polarity Essence Gathering Pool as you can!”

Shang Xia examined himself and discovered that the control he had over his inner qi was indeed lacking. He only managed to forcefully keep them under control with the Yin Yang Diagram. Otherwise, he would have exploded a long time ago!

Liu Qinglan reversed the energy flow in the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool while Shang Xia fell deep into thought. There was no way she was going to allow any energy contained within to go to waste. As the heaven and earth qi contained in the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool started to return to the essence qi stones, those stones that dimmed considerably started to glow brightly once again. Of course, there was no saving those stones that turned into dust.

Shang Xia was in no rush to leave the room. He just entered the large completion stage of the Martial Extremity Realm and managed to get a reaction from the blood-red tablet! Countless doubts remained in his heart.

There was a great expert at the Martial Extermination Realm standing right in front of him! If he didn’t make full use of the chance to get some pointers from her, wouldn’t he be wasting the heaven-sent chance?

He turned to look at the energy contained in the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool before turning to Liu Qinglan, “Instructor Liu, I cultivated the Triple Mystery Polarity Art and learned that the three types of qi can be transformed into each other. After learning the River Sword Policy to complement the soft and strength attributed qi, I have a question. I wish to train in another sword

technique to deepen my understanding of ice and fire attributed qi. I hope Instructor Liu can point me in the right direction...”

Liu Qinglan didn't bother turning to look at him and she muttered, “You should head over to the Scripture Depository for this...”

Shang Xia sighed helplessly, “I won't be able to return to the Scripture Depository in the institution anytime soon. Moreover, the Scripture Depository in our Tongyou Peak doesn't contain the full inheritances...”

Finally turning her head, Liu Qinglan glanced at Shang Xia from the corner of her eye. “Even if there's someone who managed to learn what you wish to know, they wouldn't be able to teach it to you without the institution's permission. If you wish to look for a suitable sword technique, you have to return to the institution...”

Because of his desire to start comprehending the Yin Yang Sword Formation as soon as possible, Shang Xia couldn't afford to wait for his return to the institution. He could only bite the bullet and continue to pester Liu Qinglan. “Is there no other way?”

Liu Qinglan raised an eyebrow and stared at the kid. “You seem to be in a rush. Even so, you came to look for the wrong person. Your Shang Clan has deep foundations and there should be something for you there. From what I know, there was once a swordmaster who hailed from your Shang Clan. Shouldn't he have left some inheritance behind?”

“What?! A swordmaster from our Shang Clan? Why didn't I learn of it?!” Shang Xia gasped in shock as he looked at Liu Qinglan.

For Liu Qinglan to classify him as a swordmaster, the expert's cultivation was definitely in the Martial Intent Realm or higher.

How could he remain an unknown figure in the Shang Clan?

Shang Xia's mind moved quickly. If such a famous figure was hidden in the history of the Shang Clan and remained unknown to someone like him, there had to be some complications. Things might not be as simple as they seemed.

Noticing the impatient look on Liu Qinglan's face, Shang Xia quickly bade his farewell before she flew into a rage.

Before he left, Sun Haiwei spoke to him, “There's another expert who uses the sword on the Tongyou Peak!”

“Is he Chief Shang of the Contribution Division? I don't think anyone wants to be dragged into the mess and be associated with him now...” Shang Xia muttered.

However, Sun Haiwei rolled her eyes in response, “Not him! I'm talking about Mu Jianyin of the Outreach Division! After you left to chase after Jin Guanchao, she joined forces with your aunt to kill another spy in the Martial Intent Realm!”

A look of surprise appeared on Shang Xia's face. “Mu Jianyin?”

“I think she has some weird connection with your aunt... You can try looking for her!” Sun Haiwei nodded seriously.

Understanding that Sun Haiwei had good intentions for telling him that, Shang Xia thanked her before leaving.

As for the relationship between Mu Jianyin and Mu Qingyu... Well, he'll deal with it when the time comes.

...

As he left the Polarity Essence Gathering Pool, an uneasy feeling crept into his heart. He felt as though the appearance of the beast tide was too coincidental! There had to be something strange about it.

The beast tide was insanely large, and there were several weird beasts among the ranks. Even so, they didn't charge at the Tongyou Peak en masse. In fact, they didn't even start fighting with each other like what happened during an ordinary beast tide! As time passed, there were even signs that the beasts were forming different factions.

"These beasts seem to be split into several different ranks. Beasts that had a strong bloodline controlled beasts of weaker bloodlines. With their instructions, the lower-tiered beasts didn't form an all-out offensive against the Tongyou Peak!" Shang Xi brought Shang Xia around the frontline and explained everything to him. The protection formation in the region was strong. It was why they had the confidence to open the formation from time to time to let in some beasts.

"Do the stronger beasts all possess high intelligence?" Shang Xia seemed to have caught the crux of the problem.

Shang Xi nodded, "Indeed. After the beasts reach a level equivalent to our Martial Intent Realm, they would start to develop their own intelligence. Beasts at the level of a Martial Extermination Realm cultivator has the ability to rally weaker beasts. The beasts are split into several factions, and they are led by several Martial Extermination Realm beasts."

"That doesn't add up... Since the beasts at the Martial Extermination Realm developed a high level of intelligence, why would they join their subordinates in the beast tide?"

"Maybe because of the appearance of our divine weapons, or there might be other factors at play. The entire population of beasts might be affected by something and they lost all sense of reasoning, creating a beast tide. The Martial Extermination Realm beasts would definitely recover quickly, but the creatures under them are still going crazy. They might have been dragged into it by accident, or something..."

"They are most likely trying to protect their most trusted subordinates from running into trouble by charging alongside their faction in the beast tide..." Shang Xi guessed.

Shang Xia came to a sudden realization and he exclaimed, "Oh! That's why the giant snake joined the battle the other day! It probably lost control of its emotions at the last second!"

Shang Xi nodded. "That's right. That's one unlucky snake... It ran too far into our territory and it was killed by your grandpa and a few of the others. If it was in a perfect state of mind, we wouldn't be able to kill it! Killing a Martial Extermination Realm beast is too freaking difficult! Of course, the super experts on our side aren't to be messed with as well. That should be the reason why we're not besieged by the beasts..."

"Then... Are we supposed to wait for the beasts to leave on their own?" Shang Xia asked.

"Yeah. The beasts at the Martial Extermination Realm are all hiding among their respective factions. They wouldn't dare to try anything funny right now. They should leave the moment the creatures under their control regain their sanity." Shang Xi sighed.

As they spoke, the two of them arrived at the foot of the two mountains.

"Junior Sister Shang!" Someone ran over happily when he spotted the two of them.

"Senior Brother Gu!" Shang Xi grinned. "Why are you here? Are you in charge of the frontlines today?"

Waving the bow in his hand, he laughed, "It's easy for me to take care of the beasts. Especially with my fighting style." He turned to look at Shang Xia and continued, "What's the matter? Are you planning to join the battle today to work your muscles?"

Shang Xia recognized Senior Brother Gu instantly. He was another expert in the Tongyou Institution who used the bow and arrow! After Shang Xi's introduction, he learned that Senior Brother Gu's name was Gu Yi, and he was at the large completion stage of the Martial Intent Realm! His cultivation was slightly above Shang Xi!

"Hehe, I increased my cultivation a little and my control of inner qi is falling behind. I plan to train myself through combat! I can earn some silver essence in the meantime..."

Gu Yi roared with laughter. "Earn some silver essence? Why would you care about that little bit of money? Of course, training yourself is a must. Say no more! I'll ensure your safety with this bow in my hand!"

"Many thanks, Senior Brother Gu!" Shang Xia cupped his fists before leaving for the front lines.

There were already eight cultivators who were waiting for the protection formation to open up slightly when he arrived.

Shang Xia heard Shang Xi's voice faintly in the background as he left. "What about the snake tendon? Is Instructor Liu willing to give it to us? What did they say?"

"According to some sources, Instructor Liu only requires one tendon to..."

“Even if she completes creating the eighth segment of her whip, it won’t become a high-grade weapon!”

“There’s no point in taking two snake tendons to make it a nine-segmented whip! Instructor Liu’s ambitions are clear. She definitely planned to craft the nine segments with the tendons of nine different beasts! When that happens, her weapon would rank among the top few even among the high-grade weapons!”

“She’s definitely ambitious... However, this is your chance! That’s the tendon of a rank four snake! You only need some leftovers to make a bowstring! When that happens, you’ll be able to craft a low-grade weapon... Did she come up with any conditions for giving you a piece of tendon?”

“Yeah... She wants me to return to the institution to become an instructor...”

“Hah... You expected as much... It’s not too much actually.”

“If I manage to gain Deputy Patriarch Shang’s support when I return...”

“Heh! That’s what you were planning all along!”

“...”

Chapter 105: Getting Lucky

The protection formation around the Tongyou Peak was starting to recover, and the repair works were already underway. However, they wouldn’t be able to restore it to the peak in a short amount of time!

The Martial Extermination Realm cultivators on the Tongyou Peak seemed to have reached a silent agreement with the rank four beasts in the beast tide. Both sides wouldn’t interfere with the battle.

Of course, that only stopped the higher ups from taking part in the battle. The Tongyou Peak wasn’t going to let the beast tide surround the mountain without doing anything. In their eyes, the beast tide was a walking treasury!

Every so often, they would open up the formation to let a bunch of beasts enter. They could also use the chance to temper the students of the institution!

The beasts that entered would usually be below rank three. They had close to no intelligence, and after the beast tide, they might not even return to the control of the rank four beasts.

Rank four beasts hiding in the tide were waiting for the bulk of the lower ranked creatures to calm down before leaving.

In order to prevent anything from going wrong, there were Martial Intent Realm cultivators guarding the entrance ready to strike. The Martial Extermination Realm experts on standby were paying attention, but they wouldn’t take action unless something went really wrong.

Martial Intent Realm cultivators like Gu Yi would join in the battle eventually to train themselves.

...

After the beasts advanced to the third rank, they would be comparable to Martial Intent Realm cultivators and they would be classified as Rare Beasts. Their intelligence would start to develop.

Of course, that didn't mean that they were comparable to old monsters like Yuan Zhen at the Martial Intent Realm. At the best, their intelligence was comparable to young kids.

...

Naturally, the rank four beasts noticed the Tongyou Peak's actions. The disciples of the Tongyou Peak would hunt only within the protection formation of Tongyou Peak, and they would kill several dozen ordinary low-leveled beasts at best. The rank four beasts couldn't be bothered with them in the least.

When Shang Xia finally arrived, he noticed several familiar faces among them.

"Shang Xia, why don't we compete on how many beasts we kill?" Ju Hang called out to Shang Xia the moment he appeared.

Shang Xia waved his hand casually and snorted, "There's no point!"

"Are you afraid?" Another voice came from the side and Shang Xia noticed Zhang Jianfei standing nearby.

The two of them were once his greatest opponents in the outer division, and they managed to comprehend their respective martial intents.

If there wasn't an existence as perverted as Shang Xia, the two of them would have been the shining stars of their batch!

Of course, the two of them were still held in high regard by the institution. However, no one liked to be overshadowed by their peer. Because of the attention the institution placed on Shang Xia, the two of them were extremely displeased.

How mature were teens who were barely eighteen?! It was natural for them to compete with each other for glory and recognition.

Shang Xia snorted in contempt. "Are the two of you stupid or something? The difference between our cultivation is huge! What's there to compete? Are you telling me to bully you guys? I couldn't tell in the past, but the two of you have really weird preferences!"

Ju Hang sneered softly, "Hah... You definitely won us in terms of cultivation and combat strength. However, you might not be able to kill the beasts as quickly and efficiently as us!"

Zhang Jianfei added, "We'll make it fair for the both of us! We'll team up to compete with you. It'll be a two against one. We can also change the targets... You can hunt rank two beasts and we'll kill rank one ones! Let's see which side does better in an hour!"

Shang Xia stared at Zhang Jianfei and laughed, "Joining forces with someone again? Did you forget how you were betrayed in the past?"

The smile on Zhang Jianfei's face froze but Ju Hang interrupted the two. "Just tell us if you dare to compete! What are you going on about?"

Shang Xia sighed in response, "Alright, alright, since the two of you are so adamant, I'll play with you. You can choose however you want the competition to be. Since this is now a competition, there has to be a prize..."

Ju Hang saw the look in Zhang Jianfei's eyes and he realized that there was no way they could join forces anymore... "Fine! We won't team up... We'll hunt rank one beasts and you can kill rank two ones. As for the prize..."

"Hold up. There's no need to take out anything that will embarrass yourself. Bring out the good stuff!" Shang Xia stopped him mid-sentence.

The sides of Ju Hang's lips twitched, and he turned to look at Zhang Jianfei. "You can start..."

Tossing a cloth bag from his sleeves, Zhang Jianfei snapped, "I don't have any good stuff. Let's just use fifty silver essence as the bet."

The cloth bag burst open all of a sudden, and a dazzling light threatened to blind the other disciples present.

"You..." Ju Hang didn't expect Zhang Jianfei to toss out a bag of silver essence. He could only smile helplessly.

A single piece of silver essence was obviously not good enough to be taken seriously by Shang Xia. However, the amount he took out was definitely substantial!

Fifty silver essence could buy half the ingredients required for a cultivator at the Martial Realm to break through. It was half of Zhang Jianfei's annual salary!

If he were to live on that alone without using it to purchase ingredients to create medicine, he could live for close to three years!

Shang Xia glanced at Ju Hang from the corner of his eye and laughed, "Are you planning to bring out fifty silver essence too?"

Ju Hang shook his head and tossed over a scroll that seemed to be made out of beast skin. He said softly, "This is a blank talisman scroll I obtained after killing a cultivator of the Four Spiritual Peak. It's made from some sort of beast hide..."

Pausing for a second, he continued, "This is a scroll capable of inscribing rank three talismans!"

Like the talismans he obtained from Shang Xi and Shang Ke, the scroll had the ability to contain the divine sense of a cultivator of their level!

Just the scroll itself was definitely worth fifty pieces of silver essence.

Narrowing his eyes slightly, Shang Xia wanted to raise an eyebrow in suspicion. Was it really a coincidence that Ju Hang brought out a scroll capable of withstanding divine sense?

Since he was practicing the art of talismans, he didn't even have enough raw materials to create rank two talismans. There was no way the institution or the Shang Clan would give him rank three ingredients to play with.

Was it truly a coincidence?

Seeing the hesitation on Shang Xia's face, Ju Hang snorted softly, "With everyone as our witness, these will be our stake! Senior Brother Shang, please."

Shang Xia gave Ju Hang a deep stare before making a piece of feather appear in his hands.

"A feather from the Lightning Bird!"

Gasps of shock came from the crowd around them. Many people felt their breaths getting heavier when they saw the silvery feather in his hand.

To be absolutely fair, the feather of a Lightning Bird was merely a rank one ingredient.

However, it was nearly impossible for cultivators below the Martial Intent Realm to obtain a feather from the Lightning Bird as it flew extremely quickly!

The price of the feather would easily reach a hundred pieces of silver essence, and one might not be able to buy it due to its scarcity!

Naturally, that only applied to people other than Shang Xia. Everyone knew that he could control a flock of Mutated Rain Swallows now, and their leader, the Lightning Bird, was somewhat obedient towards Shang Xia!

It wasn't too difficult for him to obtain one of its feathers.

He didn't even have to pluck the feathers off its body! He could just use those that fell naturally.

"If you win, you can split this among yourselves." Shang Xia yawned.

Ju Hang and Zhang Jianfei looked at each other and noticed the fire of desire burning in each other's eyes. No matter what, they had to obtain the feather!

They cried out in unison, "Deal!"

"The protection formation is about to open..." Someone in the crowd said, and everyone's attention turned to the barrier.

Before long, a portion of the barrier started to tremble as a hole appeared in it. One of the cultivators had long since placed a bucket of fresh blood near the entrance, and the stench quickly drifted into the nose of the wild beasts waiting outside.

As howls filled the air, the ground under their feet started to rumble.

"The beasts are about to come! Everyone, prepare yourselves!"

Other than Shang Xi and Gu Yi, there were two other Martial Intent Realm cultivators standing behind the disciples. One of them was Wu Tinghai of the Protection Division, and the other had a foreign face. He should be a lone cultivator of the Azure Origin World and Shang Xia didn't really have an impression of the man.

There were close to twenty disciples on the frontline ready to battle, not counting the Martial Intent Realm experts.

No one knew how many beasts would charge in, or if the twenty-odd disciples would be enough to hold them back.

A loud cry filled the skies as a black figure was the first to rush through the gap in the barrier. In the blink of an eye, it arrived.

Shang Xia frowned. “Wolf Eagle... Heh, looks like it’s destined for enemies to cross paths!”

Just as he was about to leap into action, a frosty light flashed above his head and the bird released a wretched cry before falling to the ground.

Shang Xia saw a flying dagger stuck in the body of the Wolf Eagle, and he raised an eyebrow in shock.

“Hehe, your wager might be interesting, but looks like I’m going to be taking the first kill of the battle!”

Shang Xia turned to look at the person who spoke and a strange light flashed in his eyes.

He had some impression of the person who moved, and it was Tang Youqian! His cultivation had reached the large completion stage of the Martial Extremity Realm.

Shang Xia heard Shang Quan mention him before. Tang Youqian was a pretty interesting cultivator. He seemed to be able to see things other cultivators couldn’t!

Chapter 106: Basis of their Confidence

“Who do you think will win?” Shang Xi asked Gu Yi with a mischievous smile on her face.

In contrast, Gu Yi frowned. “He was tricked by them. Ju Hang and Zhang Jianfei only have to hunt down rank one beasts. The two of them are close to breaking through to the Martial Extremity Realm! Shang Xia has to take on rank two beasts! How long has it been since he broke through? The competition isn’t fair at all...”

A chuckle left Shang Xi’s lips. “So... Do you think the little brat is going to lose?”

Gu Yi thought about it for a second before replying, “Of course I hope he wins... However, his chances of winning seem pretty low now. Don’t forget, Ju Hang and Zhang Jianfei entered the Protection Division for quite some time now. They tempered themselves through battle and their abilities are slightly higher compared to cultivators with the same level of cultivation.”

However, Gu Yi quickly changed his tone. “Right... Your nephew might possess some sort of special technique I don’t know about!”

Shang Xi giggled in amusement, “Well... You’re not taking anyone’s side...”

The battle started all of a sudden, and Tang Youqian grabbed the first kill when they were still talking.

“Oh shit.” Gu Yi gasped. A helpless look appeared on his face as he turned to Shang Xi. “I forgot that there were still other strong members of the Protection Division taking part in the battle...”

Shang Xi’s expression wasn’t too good either. It was clear she also overlooked them. “Hah... Are they really going to interfere with the competition?”

“Of course it won’t be possible for them to cheat openly. None of us here are blind... However, they can always block off the stronger beasts. If they stopped rank two beasts from entering and held back the stronger rank one beasts, things would be much easier for Ju Hang and Zhang Jianfei. No one can say anything about their behavior...”

...

When the two of them were conversing, a full-scale battle broke out.

Shang Xia made a half-foot gash in the body of a rank two Spotted Scarlet Eyed Beast, but a rank one Mud Blaster Rat appeared beneath him and tried biting at his ankles.

Having no choice but to retreat, the rank two Spotted Scarlet Eyed Beast managed to run away quickly. Two cultivators at the Martial Extremity Realm appeared out of nowhere and killed the beast easily.

Shang Xia stabbed his sword straight into the ground, and a fountain of blood sprayed up into the skies. He might not be able to count the Mud Blaster Rat into his battle records, but he wouldn’t allow them to get the kill either.

After Shang Xia finished off the rat, Ju Hang’s halberd stabbed deep into the skull of a Lone Horned Bull while Zhang Jianfei’s sword pierced through the brains of a Four Eared Monkey.

“Shang Xia, you’re falling behind!” Ju Hang roared with laughter as the halberd in his hand stabbed towards a Stone Pig that was running his way.

“Huh? They’re both wielding low-grade weapons!” Gu Yi noticed all of a sudden.

“When did the Protection Division grow so rich? Two ordinary cultivators who had yet to reach the Martial Extremity Realm managed to get their hands on graded weapons! Wait a minute... Even I feel like joining them now!”

Shang Xi also managed to feel the uniqueness of their weapons, but it was too late to say anything. She rolled her eyes at Gu Yi. “Yeah... Your way of thinking is probably why the Protection Division started to hand out graded weapons to their disciples...”

“What are you walking about?” Gu Yi chuckled, but when he saw the serious look on her face, he frowned, “Wait... There’s no way, right?”

Shang Xi snorted in contempt. “Don’t forget... Tang Yuan is dead. Yuan Zilu gave up his life to control the protection formation during the war and Sang Youqi turned out to be a traitor. The number of Martial Intent Realm cultivators of the Protection Division decreased by a whole lot... Now that Liu Qinglan asked you to become an instructor of the institution, do you think Deputy Patriarch Ji is going to leave you alone? He’s probably trying to tempt you to join the Protection Division instead!”

“No way! According to the rules, Instructor Liu Qinglan is holding the fort down at the Tongyou Peak. The deputy patriarchs shouldn’t be butting in, right?” Gu Yi gasped.

“Heh... The rumor of Patriarch Kou’s injury hasn’t even been verified. The undercurrents in the Tongyou Institution might be hidden, but it’s raging on as strong as ever...” Shang Xi sneered softly.

With his jaws dropping in shock, Gu Yi nodded his head mutely. Since the establishment of the institution, the battle between the patriarch and the deputy patriarchs hadn’t stopped. The patriarch represented the interest of the institution as an independent organization, while the deputy patriarchs represented the authority of the four great clans!

Shang Xi’s deduction caused his mind to spin. If Ji Wenlong was trying to suppress Liu Qinglan and replenish the strength of the Protection Division, where did Deputy Patriarch Shang Bo stand?

Well, of course he wasn’t stupid enough to ask Shang Xi about it at that moment.

By the time they were done, Shang Xia managed to corner a rank two beast.

Even though the Delicate Jade River Sword was a soft sword, Shang Xia’s use of the Vigorous Sword Art had reached a high level! With his inner qi transforming into strength attributed qi, a terrifying power emerged from the tip of the sword!

As a ray of light shot out towards the rank two beast, deep cuts formed on its body and blood filled the air. Taking advantage of its misery, Shang Xia’s sword stabbed straight through its heart and a burst of qi shredded its organs.

Pulling his sword out, Zhang Jianfei’s voice came from the side. “Chief Shang, it’s 2 to 1 now!”

Shang Xia looked over and saw another rank one beast lying by their feet. They had already started to fight the third rank one beast they found!

He finally noticed something off. There were several other disciples at the Martial Extremity Realm standing in a formation around the two. Every time a rank two beast or a stronger rank one beast appeared, they would be directed away!

“Hey... That’s a little too obvious... Shang Xia needs to look for rank two beasts to kill, but they’re diverting them away. The two in the middle are being fed with weak rank one beasts constantly...” As there were many people observing the battle, the actions of those from the Protection Division were quickly seen through.

Gu Yi looked at Shang Xi and muttered, “Should I help him out a bit?”

“What’s the point?” Shang Xi snorted.

“Oh... Looks like the little brat still has something up his sleeves if you’re so calm about it...” Gu Yi raised an eyebrow in shock.

Shang Xi sneered in contempt. “You’re thinking too much... That little brat has too many feathers from the Lightning Bird anyway. Giving away a single feather doesn’t mean anything.”

“...” What the f...

All of a sudden, dozens of beasts rushed through the protection formation at the same time. Out of those that appeared, two of them were rank two beasts and they ran straight towards Shang Xia.

“Nice!” Shang Xia yelled happily before rushing towards the incoming beasts.

When he was several feet away from the beasts, he leaped into the air and stabbed towards one of them. A ray of red lightning emerged from the tip and one of the rank two beasts fell to the ground. Its body twitched uncontrollably.

He stepped lightly on the ground as his body shot outwards once again. His figure started to blur and his movements became unpredictable. The other rank two beast was unable to follow his actions!

Before it could react, he appeared beside it and his sword shot through its mouth. The tip of the blade emerged from the top of its skull.

Pulling it out abruptly, he slashed at the other beast that had been incapacitated earlier. A ray of sword light tore through the air. However, it was stopped by a flying arrow that had been shot from another direction.

Shang Xia’s sword didn’t stop there. It made a beautiful arc through the sky and skewered the beast he failed to slay with the sword light.

Staring in the direction of Tang Youqian, he sneered, “Captain Tang, I’m afraid your interference is a little inappropriate...”

An awkward smile hung on his face as he replied, “I was afraid that Junior Disciple Shang wouldn’t be able to handle both of them at once. I had good intentions when I shot out that arrow! Looks like I was worried for nothing...”

A snort left Shang Xia’s lips. “Looks like I have to thank Senior Brother Tang for the good intentions!”

“There’s no need...” The awkward expression on his face didn’t fade. “Junior Brother Shang’s sword qi is really powerful! I didn’t think that you would have already broken through to the large completion stage of the Martial Extremity Realm...”

Tang Youqian’s words struck deep in the hearts of Ju Hang and Zhang Jianfei.

Chuckling under his breath, Shang Xia ran off to the other side of the battlefield.

When he first started attacking, he was afraid to go all out as he couldn’t exactly control his strength. Now that he understood how strong a rank two beast really was, he planned to go on the offensive and hunt them down.

The moment he showed his strength, he killed two of them, raising his kill count to three! He easily reached the same number of kills as the other two.

When they killed their third beast and watched Shang Xia running off to the other side of the battlefield, they stared at each other in shock. Roaring loudly, they rushed out of the protective encirclement of the few captains.

“Shattering Light Halberd!”

Ju Hang slashed downwards, directly slashing a bear-like creature into two.

The light on the halberd didn't dim in the slightest. He slashed out again, cutting off the limbs of another creature beside him. He followed up with a kick, causing the beast to fall on its back, exposing its weak belly.

Stabbing into it, he killed another rank one beast.

Zhang Jianfei kept up with him. His sword drew several arcs in the air. Sword light bloomed around him and they swallowed a rank one beast nearby. When the sword light faded, all that was left were the bones on its body.

It was his sword intent, Blooming Flower Sword Qi!

After killing the beast, he continued to behead another one nearby.

“Shattering Light Halberd, Blooming Flower Sword Qi... The two of them comprehended a martial intent and managed to fuse them into their attacks! It's no wonder they're confident enough to issue him the challenge!

Chapter 107: Risking It For One Strike

Seeing how Shang Xia killed two beasts at once to close the distance between them and revealed his cultivation level at the large completion stage of the Martial Extremity Realm, the two of them were unwilling to fall behind.

They revealed both their martial intents and killed two more rank one beasts in an instant.

In a split second, the number of beasts they killed increased to five, once again opening up the distance between themselves and Shang Xia.

At that moment, the two of them had already left the funnel provided by the disciples of the Protection Division. They revealed their strength, receiving some acknowledgment in the process.

“The second form of their martial intent... Who would have thought that they would learn to fuse their martial intents into their technique so quickly? No wonder they had the confidence to challenge him... They probably wish to take the chance to show their value to the institution and outshine Shang Xia!” Gu Yi sighed. “If we kept the protection formation open for longer, we might actually bring in some stronger beasts and enrage the rank four Rare Beasts... If their anger causes them to lay siege on our Tongyou Peak, we would lose a lot more than we gain! Too bad we had to close the protection formation after luring in a few creatures... It won't be easy for him to win against those two with the conditions they set...”

...

Even though they seemed to kill the beasts really quickly, it wasn't the case for every other cultivator. Ordinary cultivators would take a long time to defeat beasts of the same cultivation level. After all, the life force of the beasts was extremely powerful.

Also, cultivators of the Tongyou Peak had the chance to temper themselves in the safety of the protection formation. They would drag the battle out as long as they could in order to practice their techniques!

If Shang Xia didn't bet with Ju Hang and Zhang Jianfei, the battle between the beasts and cultivators would take a much longer time!

...

"Maybe not... Don't you see that Shang Xia's martial intent is much stronger than the other two? He uses it so much more naturally too..." A voice came from behind. When Shang Xi and Gu Yi turned to look, they saw Mu Jianyin walking towards them.

"Oh? Senior Sister Mu... Long time no see! I didn't think that you would also be on the Tongyou Peak..." Gu Yi laughed.

Unlike Gu Yi, Shang Xi had a weird expression on her face and she asked, "Why are you here?"

Mu Jianyin greeted Gu Yi with a laugh, but her expression returned to normal when she spoke to Shang Xi. "I came to let you know that there's something off with the beast tide. The stronger beasts might be making their retreat soon. The moment the rank four beasts leave, the lower-leveled beasts that lost their mind wouldn't have a leader. They might start an all-out attack on us. We should make our preparations."

Shang Xi frowned, but she didn't say anything in response.

Gu Yi sighed softly, "Alright. Let's end this battle soon... Wait... Senior Sister Mu, do you think that Shang Xia will come out on top?"

"The power displayed by his Chaos Essence Lightning Palm has already exceeded the level of martial intents comprehended in the Martial Realm. He might not lose to the two of them!" Mu Jianyin muttered.

"Well... The power displayed by one's martial intent will increase with their cultivation level. Shang Xia has already entered the Martial Extremity Realm. The martial intent he comprehended in the Martial Realm will definitely grow stronger! If the martial intent one comprehended in weaker levels failed to grow stronger, what's the point of training?"

Mu Jianyin shook her head and sighed, "You don't understand what I mean... Of course one's martial intent will grow stronger with their cultivation. However, the martial intents they comprehended are from the time when their cultivation was still at the Martial Realm! The three of them might have instakilled their targets, but Shang Xia killed rank two beasts while the other two killed rank one beasts. According to our logic, a martial intent comprehended at the Martial Realm should be enough to kill a rank one beast. Martial intents comprehended at the Martial Extremity Realm would be enough to kill rank two beasts! Shang Xia's Chaos Essence Lightning Palm was comprehended when he was in the Martial Realm, but he wields it with extraordinary power!"

Gu Yi finally realized the problem. "Wait... Even if one grows stronger, their martial intent won't grow that much stronger! How is his Chaos Essence Lightning Palm so powerful?!"

He continued, "Right... I heard that the kid provided the institution with the way to comprehend the Chaos Essence Lightning Palm. Do you think he hid some parts of it?"

Shang Xi sneered in contempt. "Of course he did! Training the Lighting Collection Art alone requires a piece of a five hundred year old Lightning Tree. If you're feeling it, you can always go look for a thousand year old piece. In fact, go find a ten thousand year old piece! The martial intent comprehended will definitely possess a terrifying amount of power. As long as you can find it and withstand the lighting power contained within, you can even go look for heavenly lightning if you're up for it."

Gu Yi snickered softly at the side as Mu Jianyin replied, "I heard about the time when Shang Xia was struck by lightning when he was in seclusion. Do you think that's the reason behind this? Also, do you think it was caused by the spies of the Rose Party?"

"Heh... We won't be able to know for sure. The spies of the Rose Party were killed when they revealed themselves during the war. The only one left is Jia Yuntian... Oh, I mean, Murong Yuntian..."

The change in the battlefield happened all of a sudden. The attention of the three was drawn towards Shang Xia in an instant. At that moment, he was close to the border of the protection formation and he would leave the protection radius if he took a few more steps.

The sudden burst from Ju Hang and Zhang Jianfei caused him to be slightly uneasy even though he had already expected it.

Before Shang Xia comprehended his Chaos Essence Lightning Palm, his cultivation level and strength barely surpassed the two of them.

Strictly speaking, the three of them were in a state of constant competition.

There were even some who said that Shang Xia only managed to maintain his lead because of the Shang Clan's support.

The rumors only started to die down after Shang Xia comprehended his martial intent. When he advanced into the Martial Extremity Realm, the rumors were finally quashed.

With their talent comparable to his when they were still in the Martial Realm, Shang Xia wasn't surprised that they managed to comprehend a martial intent too.

After rushing close to the border of the protection formation, Shang Xia managed to kill another rank two beast. He took care of several rank one beasts along the way but that did nothing for him.

As for Ju Hang and Zhang Jianfei, they didn't need to copy what Shang Xia did. Even without rushing all the way to the edge of the formation, they ran into several rank one beasts. Killing one, they maintained their lead of two beasts.

A group of close to a hundred beasts charged their way through the gap between the barrier all of a sudden, and the beasts who led the charge were at the third rank! There were three of them in total

"Shit! Hurry up and retreat!" Several yells came from the experts of the Martial Intent Realm who were responsible for defending the frontlines.

"Didn't they say that the rank three beasts wouldn't barge into our Tongyou Peak?" Shang Xia cursed in his heart.

With the ferocity of the beasts charging into the Tongyou Peak, retreating was easier said than done.

Of course, it was still possible. But for Shang Xia, retreating at that moment would mean that he would have lost!

With the Delicate Jade River Sword stabbing into the ground before him, a ball of lightning started forming between his palms as he pressed them together.

His inner qi started to circulate and the ball of lightning in his hand soon turned into a pulsating mass.

“Shang Xia, what are you doing?!” Shang Xi’s cries rang through the skies, but it was ignored by Shang Xia.

“Everyone under the Martial Intent Realm is to leave right now! Retreat!” Gu Yi roared.

With his accumulated power reaching the maximum amount he could contain, the pack of beasts arrived.

“Go!” Tossing out the massive ball of lightning in his hand, it detonated instantly. Arcs of lightning tore through the skies and broke through the void. The lightning web quickly extended to contain the first thirty beasts in the pack.

The orderly formation they came in was quickly shattered by Shang Xia’s lightning blast. They started to scatter in panic.

Of course, it wouldn’t be easy for him to deal with a rank three beast. Charging out of the lightning web, the rank three beasts were barely injured.

However, the same couldn’t be said for the other creatures. The rank two beasts that followed behind their leader suffered great casualties. Four of them were heavily injured. Rank one beasts had it the worst. Four of them died instantly and countless more were injured.

Their injuries weren’t the worst part. The destruction of the formation was the main effect of Shang Xia’s attack.

Beasts at the back who were charging with all their might crushed those affected by Shang Xia under their feet, killing a few of their comrades in the process.

Out of the four injured rank two beasts, two of them were crushed to paste by the rampaging beasts behind them.

Shang Xia’s sudden attack wasn’t deadly, but the effects it brought about to stall the charge of the beasts bought the Martial Intent Realm experts of the Tongyou Peak a lot of time.

Mu Jianyin, Shang Xi, Gu Yi, and the other cultivators quickly joined the battle.

Seeing as things were brought under control with the addition of the Martial Intent Realm cultivators, Shang Xia retrieved his sword and charged into the fray.

Chapter 108: Earning A Pretty Sum

As long as one was a living creature, there would be an inherent fear of lightning somewhere hidden in them.

Shang Xia's Chaos Essence Lightning Palm was strong, but after he used it as a wide area attack, a lot of the power was lost. Even so, it managed to achieve a magnificent effect.

Not only did it affect the rank three beasts, but it also caused the beasts at the forefront to fall into chaos!

Raising his sword, he rushed into battle.

"What the fuck?" Ju Hang cursed instantly. He turned to look at Zhang Jianfei and muttered, "Do you dare..."

"Fuck you! Would you dare to charge into that?!" Zhang Jianfei snapped at him instantly.

Ju Hang shook his head instantly. "Nope. Not unless it's a matter of life and death..."

"Obviously! Even then, you need to survive before you can do anything else!" Zhang Jianfei mocked.

Ju Hang quickly added, "Yeah! It's completely unnecessary! There are so many Martial Intent Realm cultivators here. It's not worth it to risk our lives for fifty pieces of silver essence and a rank three talisman scroll..."

Zhang Jianfei nodded in agreement. Turning to look at Shang Xia whose figure was fluttering about the battlefield, a trace of dejection appeared in their hearts. He believed that Ju Hang felt the same way.

They were unable to do what he did and they could only look for excuses to explain their lack of action.

Of course, Shang Xia didn't charge into the pack of beasts without a plan. He was definitely confident of his ability to survive.

Piercing into the heart of the beast pack, Shang Xia changed his method of fighting. He no longer fought with brute force. Instead, he turned into a slippery loach that swam around the battlefield. He was always able to look for gaps in their attacks while running circles around them. The more they tried to kill the annoying human that was Shang Xia, the greater the chaos their pack fell into.

Displaying his understanding of the Shang Clan's Irregular Steps to the best of his abilities, the Delicate Jade River Sword in his hand drew beautiful arcs through the sky. At times, it would slash out with unrelenting force and the next instant, it turned into a soft flowing river that claimed the lives of the beasts in its way. As Shang Xia's figure flashed through the pack, countless wounds appeared on the bodies of the beasts.

With the cover of chaos, Shang Xia transformed his inner qi at will. The Vigorous Sword Art and the Formless Sword Art were used interchangeably to the deadliest effect.

In his hand, the River Sword Policy showed its strength.

According to the theory stated in the manual, one would have to be at the large completion stage of the Martial Extremity Realm with both their qi at a high level and in equilibrium before one could bring out the true power of the sword art.

The techniques recorded there assisted one in training both softness and strength attributed qi, but they were useless to Shang Xia who had the Yin Yang Diagram in his dantian. He could change his qi at will, skipping most of the requirements of the River Sword Policy.

“Is your nephew really training both types of qi simultaneously?” Mu Jianyin asked Shang Xi while they were fighting one of the rank three beasts.

They couldn't help but take note of Shang Xia's terrific performance.

None of them heard of any cultivator who managed to change their qi at will before reaching the late stages of the Martial Extremity Realm.

“Is the Triple Mystery Polarity Art really as strong as the rumors say? I heard that the technique came from the Murong Clan and it's extremely difficult to successfully cultivate it. If I knew that it was so powerful, I would have chosen this technique when I entered the Martial Extremity Realm...” Wu Tinghai chuckled at the side.

The cultivator who wasn't a disciple of the Tongyou Institution was pretty close to Wu Tinghai and the two of them took on a single rank three beast together. He added sullenly, “Was I the only one who thought that he had reached the large completion stage of the Martial Extremity Realm when he arrived?!”

Roaring laughter greeted him from those who already knew Shang Xia.

“Yeah, it's pretty deceiving at first glance. Not many people can change their inner qi at will.” Wu Tinghai chuckled.

Gu Yi released an arrow and it pierced deep into the body of a rank two beast that was about to sneak attack Shang Xia from behind. “No matter what we say, he's acting too recklessly.”

Gu Yi didn't join in the battle. Instead, he stood on one of the vantage points and supported the rest of the disciples with his bow in hand.

The beast pack was starting to fall under control and the three rank three beasts were suppressed by Shang Xi and the rest. The best pack behind them was in complete chaos due to Shang Xia's actions.

“What are you waiting for? Hurry up and kill them all!” Gu Yi yelled at the rest of the disciples who were watching the battle unfold before their eyes.

The moment he yelled, Ju Hang and Zhang Jianfei rushed towards the beast pack.

“We can't admit defeat so easily! Shattering Light Halberd!”

“Yeah! Even if we can't win, we can't give up! Blooming Flower Sword Qi!”

The two of them were of the same mind. They used their strongest techniques to charge into the heart of the pack.

Of course, they were quickly overtaken by the rest of the disciples who were at the Martial Extremity Realm.

Tang Youqian, Ji Sheng, and several other captains weren't to be messed with. In the blink of an eye, they unleashed their techniques and cleared eight beasts.

The rest of the disciples soon arrived and the pressure on Shang Xia was greatly reduced.

At his current position, Shang Xia was standing right in front of the gap between the protection formation. A thought crossed his mind. He stood his ground, planning to stop any more beasts from flooding in.

His actions immediately threw him into a dangerous situation.

Luckily for him, several arrows tore through the air and took care of the beasts planning to attack him. Not even rank two beasts had the ability to dodge the arrows, showing how powerful they actually were.

Ji Sheng and the rest charged through the pack to arrive at Shang Xia's position. Very quickly, the group of disciples stopped the advancing beasts and saw the gap between the protection formation close up.

With no new beasts to back them up, the fate of the beast pack that rushed into the Tongyou Peak was decided.

Shang Xia hid his strength the moment the others arrived. Even so, his ability to transform his inner qi at will caught their attention.

"Even though the transformation might take some time, it's still extremely effective when it comes to real combat. I heard that you cultivated both types of qi at once... Wouldn't that slow down your cultivation speed?" Ji Sheng asked while striking a beast beside him.

Tang Youqian coughed once and sneered at Ji Sheng, "Look at him. Does it look like his cultivation speed has slowed down?"

"..."

...

The beast pack was eventually killed. Those who took part in the battle started to split up the parts of the beasts that were worth something.

Shang Xia didn't bother participating, and he quickly found a place to rest. With the comfortable sunlight beating down on his body, he dozed off.

A loud slap beside his ear eventually woke him up.

He turned to stare at a sack that was tossed beside him.

Tang Youqian tutted softly at the side, "There's your prize... Fifty silver essence and the rank three talisman scroll."

A grin formed on Shang Xia's face. "Where's the two of them? The situation was so chaotic earlier that I failed to keep track of how many rank two beasts I killed... Was there someone counting for all of us?"

Tang Youqian pressed his lips together and snorted, “The competition lost its meaning the moment you rushed into the beast pack. It was clear who the victor was. Anyway, the two of them might have lost the competition, but they gained quite a bit during the battle. They might be able to step into the Martial Extremity Realm soon. Since you’re cultivating both types of qi at once, your training speed might not be as fast as the both of them! Let’s see how long you manage to keep your lead for...”

Shang Xia chuckled softly and grabbed the sack. “I’ll have to thank you for bringing this over then.”

Chapter 109: Cloud Drizzle Sword Manual

“That pack of beasts was probably used to draw our attention as they make their leave...” Shang Bo stared at the retreating beast tide from the peak of the mountain.

There were several large factions contained in the beast tide, and every one of them was led by a rank four rare beast.

“Do these animals actually know the art of war?” Liu Qinglan frowned slightly. She didn’t believe that the beasts were intelligent enough to send out a squad to occupy the members of the Tongyou Peak while they made their retreat.

“They’re a lot smarter than we think...” Shang Bo muttered.

“They might have left because of the thinning heaven and earth qi around our Tongyou Peak, or they might have sensed that our protection formation has finally recovered. Seeing as there was no chance of doing anything else, they chose to retreat. After all, they’re afraid that we might rush into the beast tide and start killing to our heart's content now that the protection formation is fully restored.” Shang Lubing analyzed. Shang Bo and Ji Wenlong nodded slightly, acknowledging his deduction.

From the look of it, the relationship between Shang Lubing and the other three became a lot more friendly than when he just revealed his identity.

“So... What are your thoughts? Should we head out there and hunt them down?” Liu Qinglan might be the one to call the shots on the Tongyou Peak because of the rule laid down by the institution, but her cultivation was the weakest among the four Martial Extermination Realm cultivators. In terms of seniority and experience, she was also ranked dead last.

However, her question was met with silence. The three of them would still adhere to the rules of the institution. They could give her their analysis of the situation, but they wouldn’t make a decision on her behalf.

Shang Bo eventually broke the silence. “It’s incredibly hard to kill Rare Beasts at the fourth rank. Moreover, all of them control a huge army of beasts. Our Tongyou Peak will need to pay a huge price if we wish to hunt one of the packs down. If we fail to kill the rank four beast in a short

amount of time, they might call for reinforcements from other factions, stalling our attempt and increasing the number of casualties.”

Liu Qinglan sighed softly, “Looks like we lucked out when we killed the giant snake...”

Ji Wenlong’s sneer rang in their ears suddenly. “Heh... I’m more interested in the situation on the Four Spiritual Peak!”

“Chief Ji, even if they react slowly, there are still several Martial Extermination Realm cultivators holding down the fort. The Four Spiritual Heaven Locking Formation is still active... It won’t be easy for them to be attacked. If the beasts really go crazy and attack them, the Azure Spiritual World will definitely send down their reinforcements!” Liu Qinglan muttered.

Shang Bo heard the conversation and he knew that Ji Wenlong was referring to something else. “Chief Ji, are you walking about... The Coral Forest?”

A deep chuckle left Ji Wenlong’s lips. “Let’s see how deep the relationship between the Evil Remnants and the Four Spiritual Peak is...”

A frown formed on Shang Lubing’s face. “Wouldn’t it be a little too hasty for us to move now?”

“No... Since Brother Kou isn’t able to show his face right now, we are unable to bring over any more experts from the institution. The Four Spiritual Peak might be able to call upon more reinforcements from the Azure Spiritual World, and when they come, things might get worse. This is the best time for us to strike!” Shang Bo sighed.

Shang Lubing didn’t seem too convinced, and he continued, “Shouldn’t we wait for him to...”

“Haven’t you discovered what has happened? The distance between our Tongyou Peak and the Four Spiritual Peak became even closer!” Ji Wenlong interrupted him before he could complete his sentence.

The faces of Shang Lubing and Liu Qinglan changed as soon as he spoke.

“...”

...

“I heard that your nephew is searching for a sword art for cultivators at the Martial Extremity Realm?” Mu Jianyin’s sudden question caused Shang Xi to stare at her in stunned silence for a moment.

“How did you find out?” Shang Xi frowned.

It was true that Shang Xia asked his aunt to keep a look out for suitable sword arts. However, she hadn’t even started to ask around when Mu Jianyin mentioned it to her!

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A chuckle left Mu Jianyin's lips. "I heard it from Instructor Liu... He practiced the Triple Mystery Polarity Art and if our estimations are right, he should be looking for a sword art to complement his void and reality qi training."

"What about it? Are you planning to impart your Nine Peach Blossom Sword Art?"

"Hah... I obtained it from the Scripture Depository. Without permission from the institution, I won't dare to teach it to anyone else. After so many years of working for the Outreach Division, I ran into several fortunes out there. I obtained an inheritance that had the Cloud Drizzle Sword Art. I tried to practice it along with my Nine Peach Blossom Sword Art but failed miserably. It requires a specific type of martial intent, and I don't think the brat in my family will be able to learn the sword art."

Shang Xi turned to Mu Jianyin and sighed, "Alright. What do you want in exchange."

"About my niece..."

"Nope." Shang Xi interrupted her before she could finish. "The two of them can make their own decisions on matters regarding their relationship. You shouldn't think of butting into their business. Change your condition."

A flash of annoyance flashed across Mu Jianyin's face, but she sighed in exasperation, "My niece is currently trapped in the Coral Forest! I hope that you can help me out when the time comes!"

"Oh..." Shang Xi raised an eyebrow slightly. "Who would have thought that she would go along with them? It's no wonder you came over to the battlefield between the two worlds... I thought that our institution was running out of experts to be recalling you people of the Outreach Division..."

A snort left Mu Jianyin's lips. "Qingyu's talent surpasses even mine. She's extremely important to my Mu Clan! We're placing all our hope on her!"

Shang Xi giggled softly in response. "Hehe, do you really think that I don't know what's going on in your mind? When she put on the show of breaking off the engagement in the city, you definitely had something to do with it. I bet your niece considered Shang Xia in her schemes. Don't tell me your plan was to drag him into your Mu Family..."

Mu Jianyin's expression didn't change in the slightest as she continued, "If the two of them really managed to get together, our Mu Clan will be able to grow stronger with the Shang Clan standing behind us. It doesn't matter if he enters my Mu Clan or if my niece enters your Shang Clan..."

"Heh. Instead of finding a strong clan to support me, I'd much rather become the pillar that supports my family!" Shang Xi growled.

An unnatural laugh escaped Mu Jianyin's lips, but she didn't seem to be laughing at what Shang Xi said. Instead, she seemed to be laughing at herself.

"What are you going on about?" Shang Xi frowned.

Shaking her head, Mu Jianyin snapped back to reality and tossed over a manual. “This is the Cloud Drizzle Sword Art I told you about. I added some things I comprehended when practicing the sword art. You can pass it to your nephew. Remember our deal. You have to help me save my niece.”

After she spoke, she turned to leave.

“What if she doesn’t need me to save her? Or what if she already ran into trouble?!” Shang Xi couldn’t help but ask.

“Well too bad. Take it as compensation for the grace the kid’s father showed me.” Mu Jianyin said while walking away.

A cold snort left Shang Xi’s lips. “It’s easy for you to say! Do you think a single sword manual is enough compensation for his life?!”

...

“What?! Only twenty silver essence for a rank two beast?! It’s too little!” Shang Xia frowned as he spoke to the disciple from the Warehouse Division.

“Outer disciple, is this your first time here?”

Shang Xia stared at him in shock before nodding slightly.

The disciple smiled and explained, “No wonder you’re shocked. Killing beasts in the special region maintained by the Tongyou Peak is meant for you to get used to your strength and for you to practice your techniques against real living enemies. Obtaining the bodies of the beasts is just a little extra fortune you get.”

Shang Xia muttered, “But you can’t pay me a third of its worth!”

Snorting in his face, the disciple of the Warehouse Division continued, “Do you think the use of the protection formation is free? We need to maintain the protection formation too! Moreover, there were Martial Intent Realm cultivators out there to ensure your safety, right? Have you heard of anyone dying when killing beasts within the confines of the protection formation? We need to pay those Martial Intent Realm cultivators too! Do you want to get the full amount for the beasts you killed? Go out of our Tongyou Peak and hunt the beasts yourself!”

“Oh... I didn’t think so much about it...” Shang Xia chuckled. He wasn’t someone who refused to listen to logic. He might have gained a lot of credit back during the battle, but it was true that he received a ton of help from Gu Yi and the others. He killed six rank two beasts on his own, but with their help, he managed to gain credit for killing ten of them.

“Ten?!” The disciple of the Warehouse Division stared at Shang Xia in shock. He didn’t quite believe his eyes when Shang Xia tossed his battle records out.

Too bad the record was made by a Martial Intent Realm disciple at the scene of the battle. He had to believe it even if he didn’t want to.

Seeing as Shang Xia wasn't planning to explain himself, the disciple quickly followed up, "Would you like silver essence or rare ingredients?"

"Exchange everything for the equivalent amount of rank two talisman paper..." Shang Xia said after thinking about it.

Once again, the jaws of the disciple dropped. He turned around to bring out a stack of rank two talisman paper and counted them one by one. "Ten silver essence per talisman paper of the second rank. Here. Twenty sheets of rank two talisman paper!"

"It's so expensive!" The corners of Shang Xia's lips twitched and he kept the talisman paper before turning to leave.

The moment he left the Warehouse Division, he saw Shang Xi walking towards him.

"Heh. Here. A sword art for cultivators at the Martial Extremity Realm. It's useful for cultivators comprehending the qi of void and reality, just like you asked." Shang Xi tossed a book towards him before adding, "There are several tips regarding void and reality qi. Take a look at them."

Shang Xia grabbed the book and a massive smile appeared on his face. Looking at the title 'Cloud Drizzle Sword Art', he exclaimed, "Wow! Where did you find it?"

Shang Xi chuckled softly. "You don't need to care about that... Just practice hard."

Chapter 110: Rank Two Talisman Master

"These... These are ordinary rank two talisman paper..." Shang Quan frowned after grabbing the stack of it from Shang Xia.

A bitter smile formed on Shang Xia's face. "Uncle Quan, I didn't know previously that talisman paper was so expensive! I used the high grade ones you provided, but today I learned that even the ordinary ones cost ten silver essence each!"

Shang Quan chuckled in amusement. "Now that you're trying to advance to a rank two talisman master, you have to try your best in order to create the runes of a rank two talisman. You can keep the ordinary talisman paper for when you actually advance. For now, use the ones I gave you. Our Shang Clan is more than capable of supporting the growth of a rank two talisman master."

Shang Xia thought about it for a second and shook his head. "It's alright! Now that I know how expensive they are, it's better for me to use the ordinary talisman paper I traded with the institution."

"Sure. Do whatever you like. You managed to create a rank one talisman before, and learning how to make a rank two talisman is a matter of time and practice." Shang Quan laughed.

"Well... I still need rank two talisman ink in order to create rank two talismans..." Shang Xia pressed his lips together and said sheepishly.

Shang Quan smiled. "That's easy. You might not know, but I'm capable of creating rank two talisman ink myself."

...

Shang Xia crushed up the ordinary talisman paper after his failed attempt at creating a rank two talisman and he tossed it into a specialized waste paper basket beside him.

Looking at the basket, there were more than ten balls of failed crushed talismans contained in them.

Thinking about the cost of each raw material contained within the basket, it would far surpass the amount required to create a medicine for a cultivator at the Martial Realm to advance into the Martial Extremity Realm!

If Shang Xia included the time, effort, and inner qi he drew upon during his attempts, the cost was extraordinarily large!

"You won't know how expensive it is until you pay for it yourself... In the past, I used the ingredients without worry as Uncle Quan provided them all. He never brought up how much it cost, and I used as many resources as I wanted without a care in the world..." Shang Xia sighed as he gathered up his lost inner qi in his previous attempt. "I was so happy when I created the Stimulation Talisman previously, thinking that I was close to reaching a rank two talisman master... From the looks of it, I'm nowhere near! The difference between a rank one talisman master and a rank two talisman master is truly huge..."

After so many attempts at creating a rank two talisman master, Shang Xia gained a better understanding of his own abilities.

He might have failed more than a dozen times recently, but his confidence didn't wane in the slightest. Instead, he could feel that he was getting closer to becoming a rank two talisman master.

With the recovery of his inner qi, his mind moved a lot more quickly.

Taking out another piece of talisman paper, Shang Xia's Thorny Brush was dipped into the ink provided by Shang Quan. The ink was made from a rank two material called the Blood Pine, and it was a great material to craft rank two talismans.

The moment his brush touched the paper, Shang Xia's mental state reached its peak. He felt a wondrous rush of adrenalin and a thought formed in his mind. "This is the time to succeed."

Suppressing the thought, Shang Xia's mind focused completely on the talisman paper before him. The only thing in his mind was the brush and rank two talisman paper.

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The Thorny Brush flowed like water, and several complete runes were formed.

Even though the brush was still dancing about the piece of talisman paper, the complete talisman had already appeared in Shang Xia's mind.

He didn't know what state he was in, but his soul seemed to have escaped his body. He watched on as the runes appeared on the paper one by one.

With the final stroke, the ink on the Thorny Brush was used up and a complete rank two talisman was formed!

On the table before him laid a Piercing Golden Sword Talisman

Also known as the Golden Sword Talisman, a golden ray of sword qi would appear when it was used. The offensive ability was pretty strong, and it was a fairly common talisman of the second rank. It contained the qi of softness and strength, something Shang Xia was familiar with.

As there were countless types of talismans, one wouldn't be able to learn all the different types of rank two talismans even if they were rank two talisman masters.

Moreover, talismans masters might not be able to craft talismans that required different types of qi. The type they could create was greatly impacted by the type of qi they trained in.

The Golden Sword Talisman might be difficult for other rank two talisman masters to create, but Shang Xia created it in order to step through the ranks.

“With my Yin Yang Essence Qi as the foundation, I should be able to create any type of talisman. However, it would take too long to learn all the different types of talismans. It won't be possible for me to learn how to make them all.”

“Whatever the case, the number of talismans I can craft will be much more than an ordinary rank two talisman master!”

“With the large number of talismans I can craft, I should be able to quickly make a ton of money to purchase other ingredients. The speed of my mastery should be much quicker than usual too! This way, my cultivation speed won't be affected much even when practicing the art of talisman refining!” Shang Xia smiled.

Taking advantage of the fact that the remnant qi after creating the talisman, Shang Xia familiarized himself with the feeling of creating the talisman.

Pulling out another talisman paper beside him, he realized that he only had seven pieces left! Even the ink given to him by Shang Quan was depleted by half!

Shang Xia couldn't help but sigh. It seemed as though he would have to go bother his Uncle Quan yet again.

A basic rank two Golden Sword Talisman could be sold for thirty silver essence, and Shang Xia hoped that he would be able to create a few more of them in order to make back whatever he spent.

Of course, he was thinking too highly of himself. After becoming a rank two talisman master, Shang Xia was too excited to think straight.

The moment he started creating his second Golden Sword Talisman, the runes shattered due to the uneven fluctuations in qi. A shockwave emerged from the talisman paper, blowing it to bits.

Luckily for him, he quickly raised his pen and protected the tip of the Thorny Brush with his inner qi. Otherwise, the tip might be completely damaged from the impact.

His next attempt wasn't too successful either. Because of a moment of folly at the end, the runes shattered and the materials were wasted.

After failing twice, Shang Xia was no fool. He tried again, and this time, he didn't make the same mistake as before. Even though it wasn't as successful as the time he finished the talisman in one smooth motion, he managed to create his second completed Golden Sword Talisman after taking a short break.

When he was done, Shang Xia took a short rest to recover his inner qi before taking out another piece of talisman paper.

Failing two more times, he eventually managed to create another Golden Sword Talisman on his third try.

Since he had one last talisman paper, Shang Xia decided to use it to make his final Golden Sword Talisman of the day.

With his mind much more at ease, a flash of inspiration crossed his mind. He no longer focused on creating the talisman with one type of qi at a time. Transforming his Yin Yang Essence Qi to possess both softness and strength attributes, he made his final attempt with his last talisman paper.

Even though he failed, a trace of excitement filled his heart.

He could tell that his actions were on the right path. It was possible to create the talisman that way.

The reason he failed was because it was the first time he tried anything like it. He wasn't able to perfectly control the two types of qi.

The moment he created the Golden Sword Talisman with the fusion qi, the power contained in the strike released would be a lot stronger than ordinary Golden Sword Talismans. No one other than him would be able to create the strengthened version of the Golden Sword Talisman!