

The Heavens 21

Chapter 21: Zhu Family

“In the past, our disciples found a corpse that was wearing the clothes of the Zhu Family too...”

Jin Guanchao’s revelation managed to pique Shang Xia’s interest.

“Zhu Family?!”

Meng Liangchen gasped in fright. “Are you talking about the Zhu Family that reigned supreme in the You Continent twenty years ago?”

Meng Liangchen’s looked at both Tian Mengzi and Jin Guanchao, expecting them to continue their explanation.

However, Jin Guanchao seemed to be done talking. Everyone could only turn to Tian Mengzi, the more friendly of the two.

Tian Mengzi forced a smile and he muttered, “Indeed... However, that’s a rumor going around the Tongyou Peak.”

“I got it!” Huang Zihua yelled suddenly.

When everyone turned to look at him, they saw a contented smile on his face. His voice deepened and he muttered, “Did all of you forget how Zhu Ying challenged Chief Shang the other day?”

Before they could react, he continued, “Don’t you find it weird? Zhu Ying wouldn’t normally provoke anyone. He even remained in the outer division for another year. How did he break through to the Martial Extremity Realm without any warning to challenge Chief Shang?”

The look in the eyes of everyone present turned weird. Wasn’t it because of Mu Qingyu?!

Shang Xia’s expression remained the same, but the look in his eyes turned gloomy. “Brat, are you trying to badmouth me here?”

Huang Zihua felt a formless pressure pressing down on him suddenly, and he didn’t dare to look in Shang Xia’s general direction.

Jiao Haitang followed up, “Didn’t he improve quickly because of Teacher Liu Zhifei’s support?”

Huang Zihua could tell that she was trying to help him change the topic there, and he was more than happy to avoid p*ssing off Shang Xia even more. “Of course... However, if Zhu Ying received help from Custodian Liu, he wouldn’t have remained in the outer division for one extra year.”

That was true. With the Liu Family’s resources, they could make a useless fool enter the Martial Realm in a year. If Liu Zhifei was hell bent on helping Zhu Ying, he would have entered the inner division a year ago!

Of course, it was even less likely for him to be able to increase his cultivation to the Martial Extremity Realm in half a year! One had to know that Zhu Ying was barely at the peak of the Qi Gathering Realm when they last saw him.

Wasn’t that itself a clear indication that there was a huge problem?!

The Liu Family was strong, but they wouldn't throw unlimited resources into training an outsider! No matter how great the relationship between the Zhu Family and Liu Family, such a situation was impossible!

Unless...

A light flashed in Meng Liangchen's eyes. "There were signs of the Zhu Family's inheritance on Zhu Ying! In order to get to the bottom of the matter, the Liu Family chose to help Zhu Ying cultivate!"

Shaking his head slowly, Meng Liangchen sighed, "Wait, that's not right. Even if the Liu Family covets the Zhu Family's inheritance, they wouldn't do it so openly! The only reason behind Zhu Ying's sudden increase in strength was because he discovered the Zhu Family's inheritance himself! He even managed to hide it from the Liu Family!"

Jiao Haitang followed up, "Did Zhu Ying enter the battlefield between two worlds previously?"

"Haha! It's not impossible for him to do so as an outer disciple! With the Liu Family's influence, sneaking a disciple into the battlefield between two worlds is as easy as pie!" Meng Liangchen snorted.

"From the looks of it, Zhu Ying might not be working as closely with the Liu Family as we thought. The Liu Family wants the inheritance left behind by the Zhu Family, but Zhu Ying has his schemes too. He won't allow them to do as they wish." Meng Liangchen seemed to have thought of something more and he continued, "I heard that Zhu Ying entered the battlefield between two worlds again..."

Silence filled the air. Now that Zhu Ying has entered the battlefield between the two worlds again, his objective was clear for all to see.

Huang Zihua coughed dryly and he muttered, "Is it really alright for us to be making so many deductions behind his back?"

Hold up... Didn't you start it?!

Their discussion wasn't as private as they thought. Tian Mengzi, Jin Guanchao, and several disciples of the inner division had long since taken note of their discussion.

One had to know that the Liu Clan was part of the four great clans in the Tongyou City. The patriarch of the Liu Clan was another deputy patriarch of the institution, and their roots ran deep. Who knew if there were spies of the Liu Clan among them?

Realizing the severity of the matter, the three of them revealed unnatural expressions. It was especially so for Meng Liangchen.

When they had their conversation earlier, the three of them spoke as if they knew exactly what was going on. They reveled in the attention they were getting, but after realizing how serious the accusations were, they felt as though their butts were on fire.

Huang Zihua and Jiao Haitang fared a little better than Meng Liangchen. At that moment, Meng Liangchen squirmed around his seat.

...

As the convoy continued, the temperature in the air spiked without any warning. It didn't take long before everyone felt as though they were stuck in a giant oven. The umbrellas that shielded them from the rain earlier reappeared, preventing them from turning into human bbq.

The dirt that was slightly moist dried up instantly. A dust cloud was kicked up by the carriage as they proceeded onwards.

Shang Xia looked at the cage hanging at the side of the carriage and saw that the Mutated Rain Swallow was pretty much recovered. It closed its eyes while laying still in its new home.

Seemingly able to feel Shang Xia's gaze, the bird leaped into the air and chirped loudly.

"Chirp, chirp!!"

It seemed to be verifying something with Shang Xia.

Didn't they say that it would self-destruct after realizing that it was captured?

Shang Xia looked at the Mutated Rain Sparrow and he couldn't see any signs of it trying to kill itself. Instead, it seemed to be yelling at him repeatedly.

"Hmm why does this bird seem like some sort of masochist..." Huang Zihua looked at the Rain Swallow in the cage before looking at Shang Xia.

One had to admit that Huang Zihua was someone with balls of steel. Not only did he 'reveal' the conspiracy behind the Liu Clan, he even dared to crack jokes on Shang Xia.

Couldn't he see that Meng Liangchen was still shivering with fear in the corner?

Shang Xia glared at him in response.

"Hey! Why are there two shadows?" A yell from someone in the convoy saved Huang Zihua from Shang Xia's attention.

Looking down, everyone saw two giant shadows shaking in the ground.

"Look! There are two suns in the sky!"

Everyone soon discovered the reason behind the weird phenomenon.

Regardless of their status, everyone in the convoy ignored the blazing sun and looked at the sky. Yuan Zilu was no exception.

Even though there were many weird events that happened in the battlefield between two worlds, it was a rare sight for them to see two suns.

The rarer the phenomenon, the greater the opportunity!

"All those who cultivate fire arts, what are you waiting for?!" Yuan Zilu's voice boomed in the ears of those present.

With two suns in the sky, the fire qi in the air had reached a whole new level.

The appearance of two suns signified the best time for cultivators who absorbed fire qi to improve their cultivation!

One had to know that one of the most common paths to walk down was to cultivate the qi of water and fire! According to a study done by the institution, nearly two thirds of cultivators did so!

It was a pity that there were only three of them among the disciples in the convoy.

The others could only watch enviously as they managed to grasp the opportunity to absorb the dense fire qi in the air.

Shang Xia saw Yuan Zilu sitting down on top of his carriage, absorbing fire qi without a care in the world. Even though Instructor Yuan had already surpassed the elementary level of controlling the elements, it didn't stop him from consolidating his foundation.

Shang Xia leaped on top of the carriage as he circulated the inner qi in his body.

"Huh? Didn't you walk down a different path?" Tian Mengzi's voice came from behind him.

With a smile spreading on his face, Shang Xia explained, "The fire qi in the air is also a type of heaven and earth qi. You don't need to cultivate fire arts in order to absorb it."

"Oh my, why didn't I realize that?" Tian Mengzi slapped his forehead in embarrassment.

Even though the appearance of two suns would allow the density of fire qi in the air to reach the peak, it didn't mean that only cultivators who cultivated fire art would be able to benefit from it.

Shang Xia's Chaos Essence Manual allowed him to successfully refine any type of heaven and earth qi. Even though he might not be able to break through to the Martial Extremity Realm immediately, he could still use the fire qi to strengthen his foundations.

Tian Mengzi looked at Jin Guanchao with a helpless look in his eyes.

The two of them were at the Martial Extremity Realm, but they were unable to be like Shang Xia. The cultivation of cultivators in the Martial Extremity Realm was different, and they didn't walk down the path of fire and water qi. Absorbing the fire qi in the air would actually be detrimental to their cultivation.

A phenomenon like the appearance of two suns naturally wouldn't last for long. After a short hour, the two fireballs in the skies started to fade. The fire qi in the air weakened slightly.

Eventually, one of the suns could no longer be seen. The other turned extraordinarily dim. Even so, it remained in the air. The fire qi in the air returned to their ordinary level.

Disciples who were cultivating opened their eyes slowly and they revealed reluctant expressions.

"If only it can last for a long time..." Shang Xia was one of them, and he sighed softly. When the disciples who couldn't absorb the fire qi in the air heard what he said, the urge to punch Shang Xia in the face reached a whole new level.

Chapter 22: Control of Gravity?!

“Who would have thought that we would run into such a lucky encounter?” Yuan Zilu whistled with a contented expression on his face. He seemed to have gained quite a lot in the short hour.

Shang Xia and the others could guess that chances like that didn't come often in the battlefield between the two worlds.

As soon as the words left Yuan Zilu's lips, the disciples who were unable to refine fire qi stared at each other awkwardly. It was especially so for Tian Mengzi and Jin Guanchao.

If Shang Xia was the only one gloating in their faces, they could let him off seeing as he was their junior. However, Yuan Zilu was an instructor in the Protection Division! Yet there he was, rubbing it in their faces.

Where is your pride as an instructor?!

Even though Shang Xia and Yuan Zilu gained quite a lot during the short hour, they weren't the ones who benefited the most. Two disciples of the inner division who cultivated fire related arts gained the most! The two of them took a step closer to the next cultivation realm.

For disciples of the outer division who had yet to break through to the Martial Realm, encountering such a miraculous opportunity was as good as moot. They couldn't feel the presence of fire qi anyway.

As the convoy traveled onwards, Shang Xia asked Tian Mengzi about the phenomenon.

His reaction wasn't out of Shang Xia's expectations. “Every single region in the battlefield between two worlds experiences random changes. No one knows what will happen next. The suns we saw a moment ago belong to our Azure Origin World and the Azure Spiritual World respectively.”

“As the space here is twisted, anything can happen. The sun might appear in one region, but one might stumble into the endless night the next moment. The sun above us right now might even belong to the other world!”

Shang Xia nodded slowly. “It's no wonder it's rare for both suns to appear in the same place...”

Tian Mengzi chortled, “Of course. In fact, it's a miracle that they appear both at once! From what I know, the occurrence of such a phenomenon in the past twenty years can be counted on both hands!”

“It might have happened several more times when no one was present...” Tian Mengzi added.

Shang Xia took the chance to ask another question. “Since it's possible for two suns to appear, is it possible for us to run into two moons?”

“Absolutely!” Tian Mengzi exclaimed, but he sighed soon after. “I heard of it from others, but I've never seen it myself. What we experienced a moment ago was my first encounter with two suns!”

Shang Xia thought for a moment and thought out loud, “I wonder if it's possible for all four celestial bodies to appear at the same time... If there are two moons and two suns...”

Tian Mengzi was close to slapping Shang Xia's head and he snapped, "Do you really think it's possible?! Even if it is, how many of us will be able to see it?!"

A bitter smile formed on Shang Xia's lips. He was aware that his expectations were a little too unrealistic.

The voice that came over from the side broke their train of thought. "Even though what you just said isn't too possible, there is a time when a sun and moon appeared simultaneously."

Shang Xia and Tian Mengzi turned to look at Jin Guanchao in confusion. Shang Xia asked, "Is it during an eclipse or...?"

"No. They appeared at the same time in the sky."

Shang Xia sucked in a cold breath in response.

Even though it wasn't rare to see an eclipse, it was the first time he had heard that both celestial bodies were shining in the skies together.

In an ordinary world, that was something that would never happen. However, that was the battlefield between two worlds they were talking about! Anything was possible.

Shang Xia didn't let up. "Senior Brother Jin, is there a way to predict what we would see next?"

Shang Xia understood that running into a chance encounter like that was based completely on luck. He also knew that Jin Guanchao might not understand the specifics behind the phenomena either, but it didn't hurt to ask.

Indeed, Jin Guanchao shook his head decisively. "Nope. I have no idea what we'll run into next. However, there's one thing for sure. These chance encounters only happen after a small eruption of an origin tide."

Shang Xia wasn't the only one who was surprised. Tian Mengzi's jaws were wide open when he looked at Jin Guanchao. He didn't expect his soft spoken martial brother to be so knowledgeable.

Of course, even if they could detect the eruption of any origin tide, they might not be able to catch the phenomenon that it brought about. However, knowing that was much better than running around like headless flies.

Ever since Shang Xia received Zhang Haogu's guidance on the crossroads of purification, he had been thinking about the difference between clear qi and turbid qi.

In the past, he was completely clueless.

Even Zhang Haogu didn't have a complete picture of what to look for. However, he had his experience from his original world. In addition to the weird phenomena he ran into on the battlefield between the two worlds, he seemed to have thought of something...

The carriage rolled slowly across the dirt and he was suddenly alerted by the sound of chirping coming from the side.

"What's going on?"

Shang Xia looked at the Rain Swallow that was behaving abnormally before turning to look at Huang Zihua.

Huang Zihua shook his head and sighed, "It was behaving normally just a moment ago. Is it trying to kill itself?"

Shang Xia turned to look at the cage with a frown on his face. However, he looked at the Mutated Rain Swallow that seemed to go crazy. It was jumping about and chirping frantically.

"It's trying to leave..." Tian Mengzi muttered at the side.

Shang Xia could feel that Tian Mengzi's concern for the Mutated Rain Swallow was something else from the attention he gave.

"Looks like a live Mutated Rain Swallow might be worth a lot more than I thought..." Shang Xia whispered to himself while approaching the cage.

He looked at the bird silently, trying to understand the reason behind its actions.

Before he could discover anything unusual, Yuan Zilu's warning came from the front. "Keep your guards up. Something seems to be coming towards us."

His warning seemed to come a little too late. No one reacted in time when a silver streak of lightning tore through the defensive barrier around the convoy.

Yuan Zilu hadn't moved when the silver light shot past his head.

"What is that?!" Countless attacks flew into the skies in an attempt to slow down the unknown figure, but to no avail.

By the time their attacks arrived, the silver light had long since traveled past them.

Under the pressure of countless strikes, the silver light managed to dodge every single one of them to arrive at the core of the convoy.

Rattle...

When it flew past one of the carriages, the light dipped slightly and it crashed straight into it.

The Embroidered Cloud Carriage that was carefully crafted by a master craftsman of the institution was shattered instantly. Exploding into countless pieces, the supplies contained within scattered all around.

With the carriage shattered, the items contained within didn't fare much better. They were completely wrecked.

Naturally, no one could be bothered with the loss now that they were facing a much bigger threat.

The silver light continued to fly towards the end of the convoy. Other than the two disciples from the upper division, everyone else there was from the outer division!

"He's coming... Brother Jin..." Tian Mengzi's voice barely left his lips before they leaped into action. Flying towards the silver light, they revealed their strength.

This time, Shang Xia could finally watch them in action!

Meng Tianzi made the first move and his right hand stretched forward. There didn't seem to be much power in his palm strike. However, his left fist didn't remain idle. A heavy punch was thrown at the silver light.

The deferring attacks caused a sense of disharmony, but that was exactly the type of technique Tian Mengzi cultivated!

With both agile and forceful techniques, Tian Mengzi possessed extraordinary strength! He seemed to be cultivating the power of gravity!

A thought flashed through Shang Xia's mind, but he couldn't ponder over it as he saw the silver light trembling under Senior Brother Tian's assault.

Jin Guanchao moved at the exact moment, and his punch swept up a storm that complemented Tian Mengzi's attack. When it did, the silver light felt as though it fell into a quagmire. Its speed was seriously affected, and the trembling became a lot more serious.

Before anyone could heave a sigh of relief, a loud whistle rang through the skies. The silver light that was struggling a second ago released a silver bolt that tore through Tian Mengzi and Jin Guanchao's barrage. With the small opening it created, it flew out of their encirclement.

Chapter 23: You Snatched His Spouse!

After tearing a path through the resistance of the two upper division disciples, the silver light charged towards Shang Xia.

A familiar qi entered his senses, but without any time to think about it, Shang Xia circulated all the inner qi in his body and sent a devastating strike towards the threat.

"What are you doing?! Dodge!" A yell came from the side, but Shang Xia didn't react. It was too late to dodge anyway.

He didn't even have time to think about the person who warned him.

A reddish gold lightning bolt emerged from Shang Xia's hand and crashed straight into the silver streak.

A terrifying explosion enveloped the land and three different colored sparks flew across the lands.

The carriage Shang Xia was in was torn apart instantly, and copious amounts of supplies were thrown onto the ground.

As the lightning that filled the sky slowly dissipated, Shang Xia felt his arms going numb. Luckily, he suffered no other injuries.

"Chirp, chirp!"

When the convoy was thrown into chaos by the silver light, two different warbles rang through the skies.

Was the objective of the silver light the Mutated Rain Swallow?

A strange feeling formed in Shang Xia's heart. However, he couldn't do a thing about it as he turned to face the enemy.

Like Shang Xia, the silver light didn't suffer much injuries. Making a beautiful arc in the air, it turned towards the bird cage at the side of the carriage.

Indeed... It was there for the Mutated Rain Swallow!

"That's a Lightning Bird! All of you, leave!" A roar resounded through the air and the next thing Shang Xia knew, Yuan Zilu was flying through the air.

Lightning Bird!

Shang Xia's thoughts spun, and he thought about the Lightning Bird Feather that was imperative to his advancement.

That explained the familiar feeling he felt when facing the creature!

Rage filled Yuan Zilu's heart as he rushed over. As an expert in the Martial Intent Realm, he allowed a mere bird to wreak havoc in the convoy!

That was utter humiliation!

Releasing his aura completely, the heaven and earth qi around started to boil.

Shang Xia could feel Yuan Zilu's anger by the intensity of heaven and earth qi that gathered around him.

That was what an expert in the Martial Intent Realm was!

At their level, their martial intent was enough to influence the world around them!

Reaching out with one hand, a giant palm formed in the skies above. It was tens of feet tall, and it crashed down towards the silver light.

Right before the Lightning Bird could save the Mutated Rain Swallow from its cage, Yuan Zilu's palm arrived. With an unwilling cry, the silver light around it shattered. A feather that was close to half an inch long fell from the skies.

As soon as the silver light around the bird scattered, everyone saw its true appearance.

It looked much sturdier than the Mutated Rain Swallow Shang Xia caught!

Flashes of lightning surrounded it when it traveled, and it eventually turned into a silver streak that shot through the skies.

It was no wonder people would draw a connection between Lightning Birds and Mutated Rain Swallows.

Due to Yuan Zilu's interference, the Lightning Bird was unable to maintain its protective layer of silver lightning. Now that its appearance was revealed, something clicked in the minds of those present.

Could the Lightning Bird be born from a second mutation of the Rain Swallows?

Feeling the dangerous aura coming from Yuan Zilu, the Lightning Bird no longer thought of rescuing the mutated Rain Swallow. It started to make its escape.

"Chirp, chirp!"

An unwilling cry came from the Mutated Rain Swallow in the cage. Its dreams of freedom were dashed with the appearance of an expert in the Martial Intent Realm.

When everyone was still stuck in a state of shock, one person managed to react. It wasn't Tian Mengzi or Jin Guanchao, nor was it Instructor Yuan who barely vented his anger. Instead, Shang Xia, a cultivator at the Martial Realm, activated his martial intent and he rushed in the direction of the Lightning Bird.

Faint traces of lightning gathered around Shang Xia and when they gathered around his feet, his speed reached a whole new level.

Even so, the distance between him and the Lightning Bird didn't decrease. The bird flew further and further away from him.

Decisively circulating all his inner qi, a ball of lightning formed in his hands as he sent it flying towards the Lightning Bird in the distance.

The moment it left his hands, Shang Xia knew that it wouldn't be able to damage the creature in the slightest.

As an explosion rang through the skies, a ray of reddish gold lightning bolt tore into the silver light in the distance.

A wail left the Lightning Bird's lips and it twisted around in mid air. However, that was all Shang Xia could do before it escaped. As its speed increased once again, it disappeared into the horizon.

In mid air, a delicate feather slowly drifted into Shang Xia's palm.

Holding it in his hand, he felt a faint current running through the feather and he sighed, "It's too damn fast..."

"If Junior Brother Shang is able to learn a movement art in the future, you will definitely be able to catch up to the Lightning Bird once you activate the second form of your martial intent." Tian Mengzi appeared beside Shang Xia without him noticing, and he looked in the direction where the bird escaped.

Shaking his head slightly, Shang Xia didn't reply.

With the speed of the Lightning Bird, Shang Xia knew that he wouldn't be able to catch up even if he learned the best movement art in the institution.

Regardless, Tian Mengzi's words made Shang Xia remember that training a movement art was extremely important in his path of cultivation.

"Chirp, chirp..."

A pitiful cry came from the cage and the Mutated Rain Swallow sounded like an abandoned toy.

When Shang Xia and Tian Mengzi turned to look at the cage, they saw Yuan Zilu picking it up from the floor carefully.

A complicated gaze could be seen in Yuan Zilu's eyes and he spoke to Shang Xia, "Looks like you stole another person's spouse..."

He didn't forget to shake the cage slightly after speaking.

This...

Dark lines appeared on Shang Xia's face after hearing what he said.

"What are you guys waiting for? Pack everything up. We're leaving..." Yuan Zilu no longer bothered with Shang Xia and he yelled at the other disciples.

With two Embroidered Cloud Carriages broken, there was much to pack even after discarding the supplies that could no longer be used.

Luckily for them, they emptied an entire carriage at the sentry post.

After packing up everything that could be used, they managed to fill up the empty carriage.

Yuan Zilu's expression was dark when he saw the number of high-level herbs and treasures that were blown to bits by the Lightning Bird.

Ever since the Tongyou Peak was captured, the institution sent out countless experts to clear the path between the institution and the Tongyou Peak. Everything was to ensure the safe passage of the resupply convoys that would travel to and fro.

As the Tongyou Institution increased in strength, the path to the Tongyou Peak became extremely safe. Other than several times when they ran into freak accidents, there had been no incidents where supplies were lost. The only trouble they would run into were the undead corpses that roamed the lands. However, those corpses would be easily defeated by the disciples of the Tongyou institution.

Yuan Zilu would definitely take the blame for their missing supplies this time. Cursing his luck for running into the Lightning Bird, Yuan Zilu eventually sighed, "Luckily, it wasn't all bad..."

He looked at the Lightning Bird Feather in his hand and thought about it for a second before shaking his head in defeat. "... But this isn't enough..."

He looked at the cage that hung on one of the carriages at the back of the convoy.

"Actually, the value of the Mutated Rain Swallow should be more than enough to make up for the losses we suffered. With this Lightning Bird Feather... No! The brat has another one!"

Yuan Zilu turned to look at Shang Xia and a bitter smile formed on his face. "We couldn't have obtained so many treasures without this kid... Looks like the Contribution Division will be taking note of him when we arrive..."

Yuan Zilu's expression sank even further when he thought about it.

When he was still sulking, Tian Mengzi walked over with a doubtful expression. "Hasn't the journey to the Tongyou Peak always been safe? The appearance of the Mutated Rain Swallows seems a little unusual."

Yuan Zilu harrumphed, "When we arrive at the Tongyou Peak, I'm going to have a nice chat with the person in charge of patrolling the route we took!"

With the reorganization done, Yuan Zilu wanted to order the convoy to advance when he saw Jin Guanchao rushing towards them. In order to ensure everyone's safety, Yuan Zilu sent him out earlier to scout the road ahead. Who would have thought that he would return so quickly?

Before Tian Mengzi could say a word, Yuan Zilu's countenance turned serious. Jin Guanchao's yell rang through the air. "Enemy attack!"

Chapter 24: Grab The Handsome One

First, they were attacked by the swarm of Mutated Rain Swallows. Next, a sudden assault by the Lightning Bird caught them off guard. Yuan Zilu had long since realized that their journey wouldn't be as peaceful as he thought.

Sending Jin Guanchao out as a scout proved to be the smart move.

However, he didn't expect them to run into trouble so quickly!

"Enemy attack!"

Hearing the panicked tone in Jin Guanchao's voice made it all the more worse, considering he was someone who didn't speak most of the time.

In a flash, Jin Guanchao arrived back at the convoy.

Approaching Jin Guanchao, Yuan Zilu asked, "What's going on?"

Before Jin Guanchao could explain, a group of experts appeared from behind the mountain range in the distance.

"It's the members from the Azure Spiritual World!" Yuan Zilu discovered their origins before Jin Guanchao could say a word.

Panic started to set in the hearts of the disciples following the convoy.

Tian Mengzi knew that Jin Guanchao wasn't a coward. From the looks of it, only experts who were stronger than him could cause him to escape so frantically.

"Prepare yourselves! Protect the carriages at all costs! Get ready to light the Cloud Piercing Rainbow Arrow to request for assistance the moment they try anything funny!"

Yuan Zilu could feel the danger approaching and he looked at the experts from the Azure Spiritual World coldly. His orders were transmitted quietly into the ears of the disciples from the institution.

When the cultivators of the Azure Spiritual World ran into Jin Guanchao, they were more than willing to hunt him down. After all, how much trouble could a lone individual bring? However, things were different when facing an entire convoy. They didn't dare to attack randomly.

Even after noticing the hesitation in their eyes, Yuan Zilu didn't relax. Instead, his expression turned even more serious.

There were several experts from the Azure Spiritual World who were eyeing the convoy cautiously, but they didn't seem scared at all.

That could only mean that there might be even more experts on their way over.

"There's nowhere to run now... Light the Cloud Piercing Rainbow Arrow and request for assistance!" Yuan Zilu yelled. His judgment proved to be correct. Rumbling came from behind them as more experts from the Azure Spiritual World arrived.

“We can’t escape! We have to hold out until our men come!” Yuan Zilu warned. There was no way out. They could only choose to hold their ground until help arrived. If anyone tried to run, their defenses would crumble instantly.

Moreover, they couldn’t abandon their supplies! With several disciples from the outer division in the Qi Gathering Realm, they wouldn’t be able to escape no matter what! They were far too weak!

Realizing that they held the advantage, the cultivators who were chasing Jin Guanchao earlier started to swagger around while laughing at the opposing party.

Sighing slowly, Yuan Zilu knew that things were about to go completely out of control. Instead of losing his cool, he became extremely calm.

“Those who reached the Martial Extremity Realm, stand out now.” Yuan Zilu ordered.

Tian Mengzi and Jin Guanchao stood by his side, ready for battle.

Among the inner disciples, several disciples approached the frontline. That included Guo You, who had messed with Shang Xia earlier.

A pillar of light tore through the skies, and the signal was visible for dozens of miles as the Cloud Piercing Rainbow Arrow exploded in midair.

Shang Xia was a little rattled by the sudden attack, but he found it a little weird that Yuan Zilu was taking things so seriously.

There were slightly more than ten experts from the Azure Spiritual World, and the members of the Tongyou Institution had already lit the signal to ask for reinforcements.

If a massive battle broke out now, both sides would suffer serious losses, and no one would benefit!

Why were they acting as though they were about to fight with everything on the line?

With Yuan Zilu, an expert at the Martial Intent Realm, they definitely possessed some sort of fighting power. There were five disciples who reached the Martial Extremity Realm, and fourteen of them who were in the Martial Realm. Their strength should be comparable to the enemy at the very least!

No matter how suspicious Shang Xia was, he couldn’t do a thing. After all, it was an order from the leader of their convoy. Yuan Zilu might have only called for disciples at the Martial Extremity Realm, but everyone moved forward in unison.

Looking at the outer disciples who were approaching, Yuan Zilu’s gaze stopped on Shang Xia for a second and he said, “The moment the battle begins, I’ll hold them back. Find a chance to escape!”

Yuan Zilu’s order caused much unrest among the disciples, and a frown formed on Shang Xia’s face.

“Enough! Do as I say. We’re not strong enough to challenge them. If you don’t escape, all of us will die here.”

Looking at Tian Mengzi and Jin Guanchao, the disciples saw the grim expression on the upper disciples’ faces. They couldn’t help but realize things weren’t as simple as it seemed.

“What... What about those who haven't reached the Martial Realm?”

Yuan Zilu sighed reluctantly. “Just follow my orders. Focus on escaping!”

Did he mean that they would be unable to save the outer disciples?!

Shang Xia might not agree with his decision, but deep down, he knew that trying to escape with the outer disciples who hadn't broken through to the Martial Realm meant that they would be dragged down eventually.

From the looks of it, Yuan Zilu had already determined that they weren't a match for the experts of the Azure Spiritual World!

Shang Xia looked at the experts on the other side and wondered if there were several experts in the Martial Intent Realm.

Why else would Yuan Zilu be so afraid?!

Moreover, the look on Tian Mengzi and Jin Guanchao's face showed their uncertainty in winning the upcoming battle.

Shang Xia wanted to clarify his doubts, but the appearance of a newcomer interrupted him.

“Hahaha! Our luck is great indeed! Even though we failed to locate the swarm of Mutated Rain Swallows due to the interference of the Lightning Bird, we managed to run into a supply convoy of the Azure Origin World! Looks like we're rich!”

Her voice sounded really sweet, but her words were anything but. “What are you guys waiting for?! Kill them and snatch their carriages!”

The moment her voice fell, twelve figures charged down the mountain. Every single step they took allowed them to travel tens of feet. It was as though they were flying across the land.

Out of the twelve of them, the woman on the lead was especially eye-catching. She might not be moving the fastest, but every step she took made her look like she was walking on air. An invisible pressure surrounded her.

“Not good... They're from the Wind Swallow Race and should be here for the Mutated Rain Swallow!”

Tian Mengzi recognized them from the techniques they used, and his expression changed.

Her voice and her secret arts allowed them to single out the race they came from, and they learned of her intentions.

Shang Xia wanted to ask more about the origin of the Wind Swallow Race, but a glare from Yuan Zilu stopped him. “Go right now! Bring the bird with you!”

“What?!” Shang Xia exclaimed.

Allowing him to escape right before the battle began... Wasn't his actions a little too biased?!

Didn't he see the looks on the faces of the disciples around him?!

Tian Mengzi hurried, "Don't think too much about it. Our opponents are from the Wind Swallow Race. They're here for the Mutated Rain Swallow. If they see that we captured a live one, we'll be in deep shit! Leave!"

Shang Xia didn't want others to curse him for his actions in the future, and he made several suggestions on the spot. "Why don't I set it free? I can even kill it right now..."

"Don't be stupid!" Yuan Zilu cried. Seeing as the enemy was approaching, there was no time for explanations. "Get out of here!"

Shang Xia no longer hesitated. His speed was comparable to the cultivators of the Wind Swallow Race even without using his martial intent. Grabbing the cage, he turned to look at his fellow cultivators. There were looks of desperation and fright, but there were also some who were glaring at him with hatred in their eyes.

"Run towards the tallest peak in the distance! That's our Tongyou Peak!" Tian Mengzi's voice traveled through the air and into his ears.

His fellow disciples knew that Shang Xia didn't have a choice, but their upcoming fate left a bitter taste in their mouth when they thought about how they had to sacrifice their life for his escape.

Huang Zihua broke the silence after some time. "Brother Shang, good luck."

Shang Xia nodded solemnly. "Good luck."

Leaping in the opposite direction of their attackers, Shang Xia held the cage in his hand as he made his escape.

Increasing his speed, he startled the Mutated Rain Swallow that released a frightened cry.

By the time that happened, the battle had already started. The Embroidered Cloud Carriage beside Yuan Zilu exploded and items filled the air.

The woman might be the leader of those from the Wind Swallow Race, but she wasn't the strongest. The battle started without her as the cultivators around her found a suitable opponent for themselves.

When the chirp entered their ears, the woman felt a wave of emotions rushing through her mind.

"What was that?! Did I hear wrongly?"

.

Turning to look in the direction of the chirps, she saw Shang Xia's escaping figure. No... To be exact, she saw the cage in his hands.

That was a living Mutated Rain Swallow!

A surge of joy filled her heart and excitement burned in her veins.

Ignoring everyone else, she stared directly at Shang Xia.

Turning around innocently to check if anyone was after him, Shang Xia met her gaze.

"Grab the handsome kid! There's no need to bother with the rest!"

Hearing what she said, Shang Xia increased his speed even further.

Pushing away the cultivators around her, the woman flew towards Shang Xia.

“Protect the young lady!” A cry came from an elderly expert behind the woman and four experts broke off from their opponents to follow behind her.

Chapter 25: Slicing Through Lightning

Even though Shang Xia made his escape under orders of Yuan Zilu, he still felt a little bad. However, he soon realized that they were starting to pursue him.

With four experts by her side, the woman quickly arrived at the back of the convoy. Noticing the outer disciples, a smile formed on her face.

“Two of you, stay behind and watch them. We’ll be able to extort the Tongyou Peak soon!”

Her voice rang in the air, and Shang Xia heaved a sigh of relief. Nothing else mattered as long as they could keep their lives!

Tossing away the last of his worries, Shang Xia pushed himself to his limit. He continued to run further away from the battle.

Even without training in any sort of movement art, Shang Xia’s speed wasn’t any slower than cultivators who did. After all, his body was extremely sturdy after being refined by heavenly lightning. Moreover, his qi reserve was much larger than disciples his level.

“With the amount of inner qi I have, cultivators who learned a movement art will only be able to catch up with me if they were right in my face. I’ll outlast them any day. If they try to catch up with Scarlet Cloud Horses, the distance between us will only increase...”

Shang Xia heaved a sigh of relief after running for quite some time. Feeling no one behind him, a trace of delight formed in his heart.

“Handsome man, why did you slow down? Are you tired already?”

Shang Xia felt all the hair on his body standing on end when he heard the voice. Pushing even more inner qi into his legs, he couldn’t care less about the pain shooting through them due to the overload. His speed increased by onefold all of a sudden.

The confidence he felt earlier quickly withered.

Turning back, he saw a lady flying towards him while unleashing a strange movement technique.

Her feet barely touched the ground, but her body would be propelled several feet forward every time it did. Her movements were graceful, and her speed was extremely quick.

Even after pushing himself to his limit, the distance between them was closing fast.

According to his calculations, she would catch up soon.

“Little brother, place the cage down and I promise to let you live!” Even while traveling at high speeds, her voice didn’t seem strained.

Shang Xia yelled without turning back, “After releasing the Cloud Piercing Rainbow Arrow, my reinforcements from the Tongyou Peak will head over as quickly as they can! They are rushing here as we speak! You can continue chasing me if you’re tired of living... Don’t you know where you are right now?!”

“Hehe...” Her laughter rang in his ears before she continued, “If the teams stationed around here are actually doing their job, will we be able to get so close?”

Shang Xia glanced back once again and noticed that the distance between them had shortened.

There were two other experts following closely behind her, and Shang Xia could only curse them in his heart while focusing on his escape.

Seeing how he ignored her, her verbal assault continued.

As the distance between them closed, she seemed to be able to hear the heavy panting from the exhausted Shang Xia in front of her.

All of a sudden, a massive platform that was half a feet tall appeared in their sights.

Due to the randomness of the battlefield between two worlds, a stone platform like that appearing wasn’t out of the ordinary. Shang Xia could leap across it as long as he wanted to.

However, it hit him suddenly. The woman behind wasn’t trying to catch him... She was wasting his energy! If their chase continued, he would eventually be too exhausted to go on! They’re not trying to get their hands on the Mutated Rain Swallow! They want the method to capture one!

Since that was the case, he would risk it all!

Shang Xia didn’t leap across the platform as planned. Instead, he kicked off the side, using the rebound to charge straight towards the woman.

She obviously didn’t expect something like that to happen. After all, who in the right mind would counterattack when they had no chance of winning?!

Shang Xia used up the entirety of his energy behind his final strike.

Floating in mid air, a ray of golden light converged in his palm before shooting straight towards her.

“Preposterous!” A flash of rage crossed her face. She didn’t think that Shang Xia would attack her, much less the possibility that he had already comprehended his martial intent!

Luckily for her, she was stronger than him.

Without another word, a golden hairpin shot out from her top bun and emitted an eerie scarlet glow. The phantom of a giant scissors appeared in the sky, and it snipped thrice, cutting Shang Xia’s golden lightning into four.

What the fuck?! How can scissors cut through lightning?!

Shang Xia didn't have time to ridicule the situation. Instead, he quickly unleashed another move, Fearless Storm, in preparation to take the scissors head-on.

He could count his lucky stars as the scissors that formed in the air seemed to lose all power after cutting through his golden lightning. The hairpin fell to the ground powerlessly.

A trace of fear lingered in the female cultivator's heart when she realized how close Shang Xia's sneak attack was to working.

However, her heart started to ache when she thought about the hairpin lying on the ground. It was a life-saving treasure that couldn't be replaced!

Facing Shang Xia's second barrage of attack, a tinge of resentment formed in her heart and she released two thin strands of silk towards his neck. "Pay me back for my hairpin!"

Shang Xia's attack might be strong, but the strands of silk danced around him gracefully.

While controlling the strands of silk, the lady used another type of movement art that allowed her to dance in mid air. An elegant dance of death was performed in front of Shang Xia.

As the two of them exchanged several moves, Shang Xia started to fall to a disadvantage.

Her cultivation realm was much higher than him, and it was a foregone conclusion that she would gain the upper hand.

Knowing that he wouldn't be able to last for long, Shang Xia changed his approach again. He unleashed his Lightning Palm, challenging her in terms of speed.

"Chasing Wind, Racing Moon, Wild Lightning, Capturing Lightning..."

All four moves were used to the best of his abilities and whistling could be heard in the air. As streaks of lightning filled the skies, Shang Xia barely managed to keep up with her.

By that time, the two experts behind her arrived. They joined the battle wordlessly and surrounded him immediately.

Even though they were slightly weaker than the woman, they were more than enough to tip the scales of battle.

Shang Xia cleared his mind of all random thoughts and focused on the battle. One careless move and he would suffer a disastrous defeat!

The more they fought, the more Shang Xia realized that something was wrong. All three of them seemed to be holding back, but he quickly discovered the reason. They were afraid of harming the Mutated Rain Swallow in his possession!

There were several instances in the battle where the three of them withdrew their strike at the last moment, allowing him to remain in battle.

Hold up... are they actually here for the Mutated Rain Swallow?

Taking a hit to his shoulder, Shang Xia removed the cage from his waistband.

Watching the female cultivator's palm extending towards him, Shang Xia tossed the cage over.

If they tried to grab the cage, he would kill the Rain Swallow without hesitation.

A frown formed on the woman's face as she avoided the cage at the last second.

In stark contrast, Shang Xia revealed a brilliant smile. Beating back one of the other two, the other almost landed a strike on his back.

Tossing the cage behind him, he heard a yell.

“No!”

The other cultivator was clearly aware of the importance of the Mutated Rain Swallow and he stopped himself. As his inner qi flowed backwards from the abrupt withdrawal, he suffered some slight internal injuries.

The Mutated Rain Swallow chirped anxiously in the cage after being tossed around like a toy.

“You're despicable!” The female cultivator yelled. “Hand it over and I'll let you live!”

“Let me leave, or I'll kill it right now!” Shang Xia harrumphed.

“Impossible.” The female cultivator snorted as anger filled her heart. With her advantage in cultivation, there were times when she could have killed him directly. However, she stopped herself in order to avoid harming the bird. The humiliation she felt couldn't be described in words.

“Looks like we have nothing else left to discuss then!” Shang Xia sighed. No matter how tired he was, he knew that he couldn't reveal the slightest weakness. With the Mutated Rain Swallow in his possession, he had a chance to live.

Catching on quickly, the female cultivator spoke to the other two. “Hong Que, Hui Que, do not allow him to escape. He has already comprehended a martial intent...”

Their expressions changed slightly, and the look in their eyes changed when they looked at Shang Xia.

Shang Xia cursed her silently. However, his gaze drifted behind her and a smile returned to his lips.

“Chirp!”

A cold whistle came from behind as a familiar silver light reappeared.

The female cultivator's expression changed drastically and she leaped to the side desperately.

Shang Xia did the same, and the silver light tore through the skies.

One of the silk threads in her palm was torn to shreds by the Lightning Bird as it flew towards the cage.

Chapter 26: Lightning Formation

The cage in Shang Xia's hand was nearly shattered by the Lightning Bird.

It wasn't just trying to sneak attack the woman. It was also trying to save the Mutated Rain Swallow.

Attacking the female cultivator from behind before shooting for the cage in Shang Xia's hand was really a way to kill two birds with one stone... Or perhaps, that wasn't the most appropriate quote to describe the little Lightning Bird's action but who cares.

Regardless, Shang Xia realized that it was the best time for him to get away with the distraction from the Lightning Bird.

When the female cultivator dodged the attack, a gap formed between the three of them. Moreover, the other two cultivators were too distracted by the threat of the Lightning Bird to pay attention to Shang Xia.

Circulating his inner qi, a bolt of lightning appeared under his feet as he charged out of the encirclement without hesitation. In the blink of an eye, he traveled tens of feet away.

"Stop him!" The female cultivator yelled in a fit of rage, but she was promptly interrupted by the Lightning Bird.

Oh right, they messed with the Lightning Bird before...

It was no wonder the bird chose to attack the female cultivator previously.

However, when he thought about the Mutated Rain Swallow in his hand, his expression changed.

As the chirps of the Lightning Bird echoed behind him, Shang Xia knew that it had already arrived.

Allowing himself to fall face first into the dirt, he barely managed to prop himself up when he heard the whistling of wind above his head.

Cursing the Lightning Bird in his mind for not stalling his enemies, Shang Xia got back to his feet. He knew that he wasn't out of the woods yet and he continued to escape.

When Hong Que and Hui Que tried to obstruct him, they realized that they were a step too late. They could only give chase like the little annoying flies they were.

If only the damn bird can turn around to stop the woman...

"You can't escape from me!" The female cultivator's voice rang in his ears, and Shang Xia felt his scalp going numb.

He reached down instinctively to hold his jade pendant while imbuing a trace of qi. A ray of light emerged from the pendant and it formed a solid barrier around him.

Without even turning his head, he could feel the energy fluctuations coming from behind.

Feeling more confident with the barrier of light around him, Shang Xia decided to risk a glance behind him. A green colored light chopped towards him and the impact sent him flying dozens of feet forward. Crashing into a massive tree, the ball of light surrounding him trembled violently without popping.

A large crack appeared on the pendant hanging around his waist.

Even with the protection of the light barrier, Shang Xia felt a sharp pain shooting through his body.

As the leaves fell from the violent rustling, Shang Xia gnashed his teeth and growled, "Martial intent!"

Without a doubt, the green light that slammed into him was something like a martial intent that cultivators of the Azure Spiritual World practiced.

If not for the protective jade pendant, he might have died from the strike!

“What a ruthless bitch...” Shang Xia cursed in his heart while turning to run away.

He had to remind himself that the Lightning Bird was probably after him instead of the three cultivators from the Azure Spiritual World.

Shang Xia might be shocked by the female cultivator’s strength, but she was equally as surprised by the fact that he survived her previous strike.

Even though Shang Xia was strong, she knew that he wasn’t her opponent!

She thought that she could use her bloodline intent to seriously injure her opponent, but she didn’t expect him to possess a defensive treasure!

It seemed as though his identity wasn’t simple!

“Interesting... Capture him!” She yelled at the two other cultivators. Shang Xia had successfully piqued her interest.

“Young lady, we’re about to head into a forest...” Hong Que hesitated.

“That’s alright! With obstructions everywhere, the damn bird won’t be able to use its full strength. We’ll take care of it when we’re done with the brat!” The female cultivator muttered.

As Hong Que and Hui Que returned to her side, the three of them rushed into the forest in unison.

Shang Xia heaved a sigh of relief as soon as he stepped into the covers of the trees. “Luck is finally on my side.

The moment he crashed into the tree before, he noticed the forest and realized that his only chance to escape would lie in there.

Rushing through the thicket, he forcefully cut a path through, leaving tons of damage around him.

Such an obvious path was quickly noticed by the cultivators of the Azure Spiritual World, and they sneered in contempt. “That brat is starting to panic!”

“Look at him... This is probably his first time coming into the battlefield between two worlds...” The female cultivator snorted.

However, a frown formed on Hong Que’s face. “Could he be luring us into a trap?”

“Nonsense. You overestimate the brat. He managed to comprehend martial intent and he has a jade pendant to protect himself. He definitely comes from an impressive background... Humph. People like that don’t have any battle sense!”

“Young lady, we still need to take precautions.” Hui Que persuaded.

“If you’re so afraid, you can follow further behind.” The female cultivator said before increasing her speed.

Chuckling bitterly, the two of them kept up with her in case anything happened.

...

Leaping past a giant crater five by three feet wide, Shang Xia stared at it with interest. Waving his sleeves casually, an item fell into his palm before he slapped it on the tree beside him. He repeated his actions several times before stopping.

Carefully erasing the trace of whatever he had done, he continued to run ‘frantically’ through the forest.

After getting several dozen feet away from the crater, he stopped dead in his tracks and hid behind one of the massive trees beside him for cover.

It didn’t take long before he heard hurried footsteps and leaves rustling all about.

Estimating the distance between his pursuers, Shang Xia felt that it was about time and he started to make his way back.

As the female cultivator followed his tracks, she could tell that the distance between them was shrinking.

Entering a clearing that contained the crater Shang Xia traveled across, she could tell that someone leaped across it several moments ago.

Her body soared through the air gracefully and her destination was the opposite side of the crater.

Hong Que and Hui Que followed closely behind.

However, a change in situation happened. Shang Xia charged through the thicket and arrived right on time. All three of them were in mid air when he arrived.

Circulating his inner qi, the Chaos Essence Palm and Lightning Palm he unleashed in each of his hands fused with each other and a brilliant reddish gold bolt shot towards the female cultivator’s head.

That was one of the strongest martial intents anyone could comprehend! Chaos Essence Lightning Palm!

“How dare you show yourself?!” The female cultivator yelled before summoning her treasure. A thin gauze appeared to protect her.

Her sleeves flapped outwards and they resembled a pair of wings that flapped aggressively towards Shang Xia. A ray of green light tore through the air once again.

As their martial intents clashed in mid air, the female cultivator suddenly realized that something was wrong! Shang Xia’s attack broke into a thousand parts and scattered all around the crater. The surrounding trees were charred black instantly.

Before she could react, pillars of reddish gold light shot into the skies and formed a massive web that trapped the three of them. Lightning rained down upon them.

Chapter 27: A Man, A Woman, A Bird

Shang Xia hid four charms around the crater several moments ago and it became a simple ambush he used against them.

After his intricate planning of making his tracks as obvious as he could, he knew that they wouldn't bother checking for traps. Of course, they wouldn't believe that Shang Xia was courageous enough to launch a counter attack.

The charms he laid down contained enough power to unleash an attack no weaker than his Chaos Essence Lightning Palm!

With his assistance, the might released by the lightning charms wasn't just impressive... It was downright terrifying!

Catching them off guard, there was nothing they could do!

A sense of familiarity appeared in Shang Xia's mind. It seemed as though the lightning web was responding to his will!

Even though it was only a slight connection, he could feel that there were ways to improve it. It was a different feeling from unleashing his martial intent directly, but comprehending it at the moment wasn't too likely.

As the rain of lightning continued to bombard the three of them, Hong Que and Hui Que released a wretched cry before their bodies were burnt to a crisp. Crashing into the crater with their status unknown, they managed to buy a breath of time for the female cultivator!

Even though her defensive treasure was torn into shreds, she managed to toss out the strand of silk she had left. As it latched onto one of the giant trees around her, she pulled herself out of the lightning web.

It was a pity that Shang Xia couldn't control the formation as he wished. Otherwise, none of them would be able to escape!

Of course, Shang Xia had already been prepared for such an outcome when he laid down the lightning formation.

Taking on her desperate strike, the jade pendant around his waist shattered completely.

Shang Xia expected that as well, and he charged towards the female cultivator while slapping his waistband.

Mid-grade weapon, Delicate Jade River Sword!

When his sword slashed towards her, she knew that there was no avoiding it. Instead, she raised her arm to greet the strike.

The sound of metal scraping against metal rang through the air and even though one of her sleeves was cleanly sliced off, he failed to do any damage to her.

Shang Xia looked at the short knives hidden in her sleeves and he sucked in a cold breath. It was a pair of low-grade weapons!

In contrast to Shang Xia's cold gaze, the female cultivator was enraged! Her chest heaved up and down as killing intent raged in her heart.

Leaping into the air, her knived chopped towards Shang Xia.

She didn't expect him to turn around to run the moment she jumped.

Shang Xia might be using a mid-grade weapon, but he didn't enjoy using swords. In fact, he didn't know much about them in the first place! The reason he brought it along was to act cool in the first place. He placed all his focus on the Chaos Essence Palm and Lightning Palm! Shang Xia didn't even know how to use the fan he carried around normally, much less the sword!

Other than the jade pendant that could protect his life, the original Shang Xia used the other graded weapons to give himself a more dignified image!

Now that he successfully made the battlefield an even one, he could tell that her cultivation was at the Martial Extremity Realm. Her martial intent was in no way weaker than his Chaos Essence Lightning Palm.

“You're not going anywhere!” She screamed before chasing him relentlessly.

He might be slower than her, but under the cover of the dense forest, he managed to make up for the lack of speed.

As the two of them ran through the forest and exchanged blows from time to time, massive blasts rang through the air. Trees fell everywhere and animals scattered.

If anyone were to look at the forest from the skies, they would easily see the path the two took.

While the two of them were playing a violent game of tag, a silver light circled above them.

With no idea how large the forest actually was, Shang Xia could only run around aimlessly. He couldn't stop to confirm his location as the female cultivator behind him wasn't in the mood to talk about a truce. As such, the two of them fought their way forward.

Seeing a clearing appearing along with a peaceful river that flowed in the distance, Shang Xia yelled in his heart before turning around to run back into the forest.

It was too bad the female cultivator sealed off his retreat the moment he turned. With a sinister smile on her face, she sneered, “There's nowhere else left to run...”

Shang Xia could use the forest to hide from the female cultivator's blows, but the moment he ran into the fields, his chances of escaping became close to zero.

As she approached him slowly, Shang Xia once again brought the cage up to his chest. “I know this is what you came here for. Do you want to make a bet with me? Let's see if you manage to capture me first or if I kill the Mutated Rain Swallow before you come close?”

Her expression turned green and flames of rage burned in her heart. Indeed, the Mutated Rain Swallow was of extreme importance to her.

She wasn't the only one who was angry. Shang Xia, who had been chased around like a dog, was countless times more annoyed.

Looking at the complex emotion on her face, he rejoiced silently.

So what if you can chase me around? You can't do anything to me anyway!

Of course, he was really curious about the reason behind her persistence. Was the bird really that important to her?

“Are you a man?! Stop using a tiny bird as your shield! If you want to call yourself a man, put down the cage and we’ll fight one on one!” She snapped at him.

“There’s no need to fight one on one... We can do other things when it’s just the two of us...” Shang Xia sneered.

“You... You... You’re a hooligan!” Her face flushed red.

“...”

The bright chirping of the Mutated Rain Swallow woke both of them up. When Shang Xia saw the female cultivator’s gaze behind him, his heart sank.

“Not good!”

Leaping to the right, a ray of silver light flew past the place he once stood.

The female cultivator who was gloating in Shang Xia’s misfortune wasn’t spared. The Lightning Bird shot towards her the next instant.

It seemed as though the bird knew the best time to attack!

Regaining his footing, Shang Xia looked at her and noticed that she managed to dodge the Lightning Bird too. Raising his head in the direction where the bird flew, Shang Xia noticed it perched on top of a tree. The female cultivator followed his gaze, and soon, the three creatures were staring each other down.

A man, a woman, and a bird stood at a deadlock.

“Hey, Lightning Bird, why don’t we work together to deal with this little bastard? We’ll save your little lover from the cage before deciding what else to do.” The female cultivator broke the silence and started the negotiations first.

Flapping its wings, the Lightning Bird seemed to be thinking about her suggestion.

With his heart trembling slightly, Shang Xia interrupted, “Don’t listen to her! Didn’t she mess with you previously? She’s a venomous bitch! Think about it! If you work with her, she’ll take advantage of you once I die! When that happens, you won’t be able to save your lover! You might even turn into her dinner!”

Flapping its wings violently, it recalled what she had done to its flock before.

“Nonsense!” Leaping towards Shang Xia, she waved the knives in her hand once again.

The Lightning Bird seemed to have thought it thought and it shot towards her back silently.

Pulling out the Delicate Jade River Sword and his Ivory Fan, a chuckle left his lips as inner qi ran through his body.

Since she wanted him dead, there was no point holding back!

When a bolt of lightning emerged from the Ivory Fan, the Mutated Rain Swallow in the cage released a strange cry.

Lowering his head, he saw the Mutated Rain Swallow with its feathers ruffled and a look of enjoyment on its face.

Thinking back, it seemed to be the same expression Mu Qingyu had!

What the hell?!

Before he could ponder further, an enraged cry came from the Lightning Bird in the air. Ignoring the female cultivator, it charged straight at him.

What the fuck?! Did the Mutated Rain Swallow really...

Slapping the silver light as hard as he could with the Ivory Fan, Shang Xia turned tail and ran.

Things went south the moment the bird changed its target to him. There was no way he could fight the two of them at once.

Chapter 28: Sun and Moon in the Sky, Appearance of the Origin Tide

Not wanting to take them both on at once, Shang Xia chose to escape.

Unable to run back into the forest, he could only flee towards the river in the distance. He could only hope that he could make it before they caught up.

With all the knowledge he learned from Tian Mengzi, he knew that any type of water body would contain an endless amount of danger. Even so, there was nowhere else to go. He could only take the gamble and hope that approaching the lake would give him a chance at living.

He didn't forget to hold the cage up in the air and taunt the other two while making his escape. "Are you really going to let it die?!"

A loud cry and the whistling of air from the female cultivator's knives were all he received as a reply.

Shang Xia didn't dare to turn around. Shooting two bolts of lightning to protect himself, he didn't stop running.

As soon as the lightning appeared, another long cry came from the Mutated Rain Swallow.

Wasn't he just making things worse?!

Shang Xia felt a thousand alpacas running through his mind as the Lightning Bird became even more enraged.

As the lake grew larger and larger, Shang Xia could see faint black figures darting under its surface.

Swallowing a mouthful of saliva, Shang Xia thought if he should really jump in.

Taking a closer look, Shang Xia saw the mouths of countless fishes appearing under the surface.

Fish of all sizes lined the side of the lake.

Crying out frantically, the Mutated Rain Swallow crashed into the cage repeatedly.

The Lightning Bird that was close to catching up turned at the last second, drawing a beautiful arc through the skies as it returned to the forest.

Even a brainless person could tell that something big was about to happen.

Stopping dead in his tracks, Shang Xia noticed that the female cultivator did the same.

Noticing a sudden change in the weather, Shang Xia raised his head to look at the sky. The sun that was originally hidden behind the hazy clouds emitted brilliant rays that lit up the earth below.

Feeling the temperature rising dramatically, the grass beneath his feet started to wither. Cracks formed in the ground and the water in the lake started to evaporate.

A lizard-like creature that was covered in black scales leaped out of whatever water remained in the lake before running away from it.

Shang Xia looked at the female cultivator and saw the look of confusion in her eyes.

Deciding to return to the forest, he knew that it would be much better than staying out in the open.

The moment he started walking, she went over to block his path.

“Are you done?!” Shang Xia snapped at her. He had to admit that he wasn’t her opponent. However, without the Lightning Bird, there was no way she could defeat him.

Anyone with half a brain would choose to give up on the chase now that their life was in danger. The sudden change in weather was a bad sign. She had to be actually crazy if she wanted to continue the pursuit.

Pointing at the cage on Shang Xia’s waist, she sighed, “Let’s make a deal.”

She wasn’t stupid. She also knew that it was impossible for her to snatch it from him. However, there was no way she could let him walk away like that.

The moment he left, there was no way she could obtain the bloodline of the Mutated Rain Swallow.

If she made a deal with him, there was a chance for her to reach her goal!

She could tell that Shang Xia was also in a rush to leave, and she could play to his emotions.

Despite the ugly expression on his face, Shang Xia could only growl, “What do you propose?”

Holding out the pair of knives in her hands, she muttered, “What do you think of these? They’re called ‘Red Sleeves’ and they are both low-grade weapons.”

Shang Xia was slightly taken aback. He didn’t expect her to trade her weapons away. He could tell that she was really desperate.

However, that only told him how much she valued the Mutated Rain Swallow.

Tapping his Delicate Jade River Sword, he snorted, “Do you really think I lack low-grade treasures?”

A trace of rage flashed through her eyes, but it quickly disappeared. “Alright, I’ll add on fifty pieces of silver essence!”

Silver essence was the common currency in the battlefield between two worlds and it was made from pure silver that contained a trace of heaven and earth qi.

In the Azure Origin World, they called it silver essence.

In the Azure Spiritual World, they called it spiritual silver.

It has lots of uses, and it had some supplementary effects that could assist cultivation. That was how it became the common currency in the battlefield between two worlds.

From the looks of it, the Azure Origin World and Azure Spiritual World didn't share an enmity that would result in the extermination of the other world. At the very least, they came to an agreement on some matters.

Shang Xia felt a strangely cool sensation washing over his back as the heat subsided.

Ignoring the feeling, he chuckled in amusement when he heard her price. "Are you throwing scraps at a beggar? Do you think I won't turn the bird into barbecue because of a little bit of silver?"

"You!" Realizing that the negotiations were going nowhere, a sneer appeared on her face. She retreated several feet in an instant.

Shang Xia thought that she was finally going to give up, but the smile on her face caused him to turn uneasy.

Discovering a trace of cold air blowing behind him, his bones turned chilly.

Turning around abruptly, Shang Xia saw the presence of a giant moon beside the brilliant sun!

With the presence of the sun and moon, half of the water in the lake started to boil while the other side started to freeze.

A layer of frost appeared on one side of the plains while the other side remained cracked like before.

This...

Sun and Moon in the sky... It was the sign of an Origin Tide!

Tian Mengzi's earlier explanation rang in his mind as panic started to set in his heart. Shang Xia knew that he had to leave.

However, a ray of frosty light shot towards him the moment he moved.

Suppressing his shock, he turned to look at the source of the light. Seeing two knives flashing in mid air, the female cultivator's voice entered his ears. "Are you still thinking of leaving? It's too late now."

Realizing that he had fallen for her trick, he wanted to kick himself. From the start, she had seen the appearance of the moon! She was buying time with her stupid offer!

By the time the moon had fully appeared, she retreated in order to stop Shang Xia from running away!

"What do you want?!" Shang Xia could feel the energy fluctuations coming from behind him, and he could tell that the Origin Tide was about to erupt.

“Hand over the cage and I’ll let you leave.” She crossed her arms and sneered coldly.

“Is there no way to negotiate?” Shang Xia asked.

“What do you think?”

Raising her chin, she chuckled smugly, “You better hurry up and make your decision. The Origin Tide is coming...”

As soon as the words left her lips, a giant explosion rocked the lake. When he turned his head, he saw lava spewing into the skies.

There was actually a giant volcano hidden under the lake!

The strange thing was that part of the lake remained frozen. The lava didn’t manage to melt it in the slightest.

A strange scene played out before him as an imaginary screen formed in mid air to separate the fire and ice.

Dense heaven and earth qi started to gather around to form strong currents.

“Hey, the Origin Tide is about to arrive. If you don’t wish to lose control of your inner qi, do as I say!” The female cultivator yelled. Was the brat tired of living?!

Her words fell on deaf ears as Shang Xia stared directly at the strange scene before him. She even thought of carrying out a sneak attack to snatch the Mutated Rain Swallow.

As the inner qi in her body started to rampage around, she quickly got rid of her thoughts.

Before anything else could happen, the heavens darkened as the qi in the air disappeared. Everything returned to chaos!

The Origin Tide had arrived!

Chapter 29: All In

With the arrival of the Origin Tide, she turned to run.

In the blink of an eye, she appeared tens of feet away as she approached the forest they came from.

Turning to look behind her, she didn’t see Shang Xia and she snapped angrily, “What an idiot...”

Disappointment filled her heart when she thought about the Mutated Rain Swallow. “Our race ?lost a chance to improve our bloodline... However, no one in the battlefield between two worlds caught a live Mutated Rain Swallow before. How did he do it?”

“If there really is a way for him to get his hands on one, he’s definitely hiding a lot of secrets... Our race might have to start reevaluating our relationship with the Tongyou Peak...”

The more she thought about it, the more serious she became.

...

Shang Xia, who was thought to be dead, was slowly trudging forward towards the Origin Tide.

Tian Mengzi told him that the inner qi in his body would go out of control, but all he could feel was his inner qi disappearing from his body.

However, Shang Xia wasn't afraid. When Tian Mengzi told him about the Origin Tide, a guess appeared in his head. He felt that it had to be the Crossroad of Purification the blood red tablet was talking about! He had to find it before his inner qi ran dry!

According to his memories in his past life, he felt that the Crossroad of Purification had something to do with the crossing of Yin and Yang!

Even the naming of cultivation realms didn't make sense to Shang Xia. What they called the Martial Extremity Realm in the Azure Origin World and the Second Limit Realm in the Azure Spiritual World were both supposed to be called the Yin Yang Realm!

However, cultivators in the two worlds would only specialize in one type of qi when they just entered the Second Order Primary Realm. As such, they couldn't call it the Yin Yang Realm.

With the appearance of the sun and moon, there was nothing more Shang Xia could think of that embodied both yin and yang.

Without a doubt, it had to be what he was looking for! The Origin Tide was what he needed to break through!

Of course, a trace of doubt still remained in his mind. He might have memories of his past life, but when facing a tribulation at the level of the Origin Tide, anyone would hesitate!

No one could march straight towards their death even if they knew a huge fortune was hiding behind it!

As such, his first reaction was to test the waters instead of throwing himself in completely. However, the female cultivator from the Azure Spiritual World blocked his way right before he could escape, forcing him into the path of no return.

Taking a step forward, he felt his body breaking down slowly. If he were to keep it up, he might disappear completely into the Origin Tide.

Too bad there was no way to retreat now. He could only throw caution to the wind and go all in.

Walking towards the tiny separation between the lava and ice, it was the place that was most likely to be the Crossroad of Purification!

At the very least, that was the only place that looked like a crossroad of anything!

As his thoughts ran wild, Shang Xia felt his body turning lighter as he stepped into a whole new world.

"Shang Xia, it's time to go home!" A voice boomed in his mind.

"Home? What home?" A complicated expression appeared on his face. What home were they talking about?

"Did you forget where you came from?" The voice seemed to echo in the distance, but it slowly warped into countless different voices. It was trying to hurry him home.

With a headache that wrecked his brain, he felt countless spikes stabbing into them.

Two different sets of memories started to surface. Even though he was in both sets, everyone else was different. The memories of the original Shang Xia and himself filled his mind.

“Who am I?”

“Which Shang Xia am I?!”

...

Shang Xia felt his soul tearing into two separate pieces as he argued with himself.

With his brain on the verge of exploding, the two sets of memories continued to play out with no end.

In the Origin Tide, Shang Xia had long since stopped his movements. His expression would shift from time to time, and he grabbed his head and released a blood-curdling scream.

His clothes were drenched in cold sweat as the inner qi from his body nearly dried up.

He was close to losing control of himself, but a bolt of lightning sundered both sets of memories in his mind.

As a tablet fell from the skies, it suppressed all the fragments of his memories before fusing them together.

The scene where he opened his eyes in the Tongyou Institution for the first time flashed through his mind.

Opening his eyes, the cloudy light in them was replaced by a terrifyingly sharp gaze.

He understood the reason behind the Origin Tide’s power to make one lose themselves. However, it was far from enough!

Despite his body being extremely frail from the lack of inner qi, his mind was clear. Nothing could stand in his way!

I, Shang Xia, will walk my own path! No one can stop me!

No matter how strong the waves of energy coming from the Origin Tide, they failed to obstruct Shang Xia’s will to grow stronger!

Reddish gold lightning surrounded his body and he took another step. It sliced a path through the chaotic qi that remained in the air and the thin layer between the lava and ice was revealed.

Stepping onto the frozen water, layers of ice formed around his shoes.

The sun and moon hung high in the sky, but at that moment, their luster was focused on a single person.

Finally stepping into the band between the lava and ice, Shang Xia sucked in a cold breath. He retrieved a jade bottle before pouring out its contents. That was the Powder of Purification made with his unique recipe!

Even though the institution gave him a set to assist in his breakthrough, Shang Xia wouldn’t bother with it. There was no way they possessed the optimal formula used to create the Powder of Purification!

He didn't even provide the complete recipe to the chemist of the Shang Clan!

He made the entire set of medicine himself after gathering all the herbs he needed discreetly. The Powder of Purification didn't leave his side the moment he entered the battlefield between two worlds. His decision proved to be right as he ran into the perfect opportunity to break through!

There wasn't a trace of hesitation in his actions as he emptied the Powder of Purification into his mouth.

He didn't have time to savor its taste as two different sensations welled up in his body. A trace of fire and a trace of frost shot through him.

The two types of qi were just a guide. They served to draw in the surrounding heaven and earth qi as he charged into the Martial Extremity Realm.

Along with the appearance of both types of qi, his body started to swell as the differing elements clashed against each other.

Hold up...

Shang Xia realized that he made a miscalculation! The Powder of Purification served as a guide, but it didn't mean that he would break through the moment he took it! There had to be some sort of intermediate step!

As the different types of qi clashed in his body, his already withering inner qi became even weaker.

No matter how prepared he was, he wasn't prepared for the effect of standing in the Crossroad of Purification!

Exhausting the inner qi in his body would allow the clash between the qis to weaken, but standing in the Crossroad of Purification allowed him to rapidly replenish his inner qi! As his body sucked in both types of qi greedily, he felt as though his body had turned into a ticking time bomb!

Chapter 30: A little Inspiration, Three Times the Comprehension

He might be entering the Martial Extremity Realm for the first time, but Shang Xia didn't lack knowledge. He had records of experts when they tried to break through previously!

According to the experiences left behind by some seniors, the inner qi in their bodies would start to separate when they refined the Powder of Purification.

When the process was complete, a cultivator's dantian would appear. It would signify that they had successfully entered the Martial Extremity Realm!

Of course, when their inner qi separated, it didn't mean that it experienced a fundamental transformation.

Shang Xia realized that the problem lay with the pure qi pouring into his body. The separation couldn't be completed due to their never ending invasion into his body.

As the separation couldn't be completed, the formation of his dantian couldn't be accomplished! Stepping into the Martial Extremity Realm would be an impossible task!

The amount of inner qi Shang Xia could contain in his body was limited. As his dantian wasn't forming, the two different types of qi started to clash against each other. If that kept up, Shang Xia would explode from the excess qi!

If only Shang Xia had a secret art suitable for cultivators at the Martial Extremity Realm, he could forcefully suppress his inner qi. Learning and using any random secret art at that time might not be in his best interest in the long run, but it was enough to save his life!

Alas... Shang Xia was promised a set of secret art from the institution, but he failed to make his choice in the short amount of time he had before leaving for the battlefield between two worlds! Now, he was really in deep shit...

What am I supposed to do?!

Looking down desperately, he suddenly thought of the blood red tablet. "Oh right, a flash of inspiration!"

Perhaps that was the key to everything!

Looking at the long path before him, he realized that he might have to venture even deeper into the Crossroad of Purification in order to obtain his flash of inspiration!

With the bubbling lava and endless frost beside him, a soft chuckle left Shang Xia's lips as he took another step into the Crossroad of Purification...

...

As the eruption of the Origin Tide only covered a tiny area, the female cultivator wasn't affected in the slightest after retreating into the forest.

Looking at the lake, she tried to peer through the curtain of rampaging heaven and earth qi. Other than a screen of chaotic qi, she failed to see anything else.

"Did he really die?!" Muttering to herself, she eventually sighed, "Well, he deserved it... However, the little bird..."

Seemingly able to hear her thoughts, a high-pitched cry came from the skies above.

Raising her head slightly, she saw a flash of silver light as the Lightning Bird flew towards a tree beside her.

"Are you also here to see if that brat died?" She said as she took several steps towards the tree.

A cautious chirp was all she received as a reply.

Ignoring its warning, she continued to move forward. "Is that Mutated Rain Swallow really your lover? Are Lightning Birds and Mutated Rain Swallows from the same race?"

Flapping its wings, the Lightning Bird warned her not to get any closer.

Too bad for the creature, she had already entered her attack range. Leaping up towards it, the knives in her hands started to dance. "Get down here!"

...

Shang Xia looked at his feet in confusion. Even though he was standing on a strip of water, his feet were completely dry! It might not be difficult for cultivators to walk on water, but the current Shang Xia was nowhere near capable enough to do it!

Moreover, he felt as though he was walking on solid ground.

He soon thought of the reason behind it. The chaotic qi in the Crossroad of Purification formed a mystical equilibrium with the qi in his body, allowing him to stroll casually on top of the river.

The chaotic qi running amok in his body suddenly calmed down, allowing Shang Xia to avoid certain death.

Was that the flash of inspiration he needed?!

Shang Xia seemed to have captured a key point in his journey of cultivation.

Even after he opened his dantian, it seemed as though finding a balance was the key to everything!

What comes after balance?

Shang Xia reached out to grab a droplet of water as he pondered over his question.

Looking at the clear droplet in his hand, he felt that it perfectly contained both the essence of yin and yang.

The chaos around him seemed to fade. The appearance of the water droplet didn't just signify balance between the two sides. What would happen when extreme yang fused with extreme yin? The heat and frost on either side perfectly integrated with each other and it gave birth to harmony!

That was the flash of inspiration he needed!

As the doubts in his mind disappeared, he swallowed the droplet of water. The two differing types of qi in his body started to come together. Unlike last time when they clashed with each other violently, it started to show signs of fusion.

Without any type of interference from Shang Xia, the inner qi in his body started to move again.

A loud blast rang through his body and a separate space was formed. His dantian appeared, and he finally entered the Martial Extremity Realm! At that moment, he truly stepped into the Second Order of the Primary Realm!

The energy in his body surged towards his dantian, forming a thin layer of mist. As soon as it formed, it started to churn. Very quickly, it started to separate. A portion of it started to rise while the other part started to fall. His dantian expanded slightly, and before he knew it, the mist was gone.

Raising an eyebrow curiously, he felt that the size of his dantian was larger than what those who entered the Martial Extremity Realm in the past described.

Whatever the case, he wasn't too concerned about it. After all, his foundations were extremely solid when he entered the Martial Realm. The energy contained in his body was dense and pure, and that was probably behind the reason behind his larger dantian.

A sudden pang of emptiness struck Shang Xia. He wanted nothing more than to devour an endless amount of energy in order to fill his newly created dantian.

Taking a deep breath, a whirlpool formed under his feet. Throughout the entire process, he didn't need to control the energy entering his body as it traveled straight into his dantian.

Boom!

Another loud blast came from inside it.

With his face turning pale, Shang Xia felt his entire body trembling. Taking in too much energy at once caused his dantian to become unsteady. Trying to stop the intake of energy, Shang Xia realized that he messed up once again. His dantian was like an endless black hole that sucked up energy endlessly. However, it wasn't strong enough to bear the load!

Regret filled Shang Xia's heart again when he thought about how he didn't find a secret art to practice.

His intestines were turning green in anguish. Everything could have been avoided if he wasn't so picky!

Did other cultivators suffer from the same fate?! Shang Xia refused to believe that he was the only case.

However, the most important thing was to deal with the danger he was currently facing. The moment his dantian failed to contain the amount of energy rushing into his body, it would crumble! His hopes of cultivation would end there!

Thinking of solutions, Shang Xia seemed to chance upon a brilliant idea. Fusing the two different types of energy in his body, he was several steps ahead of cultivators his level. That was also the reason behind his predicament.

Ordinarily, transforming the qi in his dantian would take quite some time! He would have to slowly strengthen his dantian to contain more and more energy.

He barely formed his dantian and he was trying to absorb pure yin and yang qi from the Crossroad of Purification! It was no wonder he was about to lose control.

Without a secret art to divert the power, he could only hope to strengthen his dantian enough to contain the energy within.

In order to accelerate the process, he would have to use the heaven and earth qi he already absorbed to temper it even further.

He would have to separate the qi once again, but the question was whether he had the time to do it!

Separating after fusion, returning to its origin...

When the thought flashed through his mind, Shang Xia knew that he had truly stepped onto the path of cultivation.