

The Heavens 221

Chapter 221: Reunite

The death of a Martial Extermination Realm expert outside the city was a massive event. However, Shang Ke had to suppress his curiosity as the convoy of the Shang Clan had yet to return. Tossing the matter to the back of his mind, he ordered, “We can deal with it later. Let’s return to the manor before deciding on anything else!”

Even though many battles had taken place, the entire series of events didn’t take a long time.

The attack caught the members of the Shang Clan off guard initially, but they quickly managed to stabilize the situation.

When the convoy finally started to move again, the middle-aged man that was clad in clothes belonging to the Shang Clan approached.

His gaze landed on Shang Xia before turning to Shang Ke. “Fifth Uncle, how should we deal with Yu Wugou and Qiao Han?”

Waving his hand impatiently, Shang Ke snapped, “If they’re alive, send them to the institution. You can deal with the rest however you see fit.”

.

Cupping his fists, the middle-aged man turned to leave. However, he was stopped suddenly by a yell from Shang Ke. “Oh wait. Come back for a bit.”

Turning to look at Shang Xia, Shang Ke continued, “This is your second uncle, Shang Jian. He’s the son of your First Grandpa.”

Shang Xia was slightly surprised when the man called Shang Ke ‘Fifth Uncle’, and guesses started forming in his mind. All of his thoughts were confirmed then.

After the introductions were made, Shang Xia’s expression was a little rigid. However, he still greeted Shang Jian appropriately. As for Shang Jian, the smile on his face was even more unnatural when he returned the greetings.

The only reason Shang Xia greeted the man was just to be polite. Both of them seemed extremely distant from each other and it was their first time meeting. Shang Xia dug through the memories of the Original Shang Xia and discovered that he had barely any memory of the man at all!

“Your second uncle has always been away from the clan. He received news of the war on the Tongyou Peak and Patriarch Kou’s injury and decided to return. He rushed back as quickly as he could from the Ji Continent.” Shang Ke gave a simple explanation.

“Many thanks for your concern, Second Uncle!” Shang Xia added.

Nodding lightly, Shang Jian looked at Shang Ke and muttered, “I’ll go deal with the two of them.” As soon as he spoke, he turned to leave.

Seeing how Shang Jian was walking away, Shang Ke couldn’t help but sigh.

“Aren’t you curious? Don’t you have something you want to ask?” Shang Ke wasn’t too used to Shang Xia keeping silent. After all, the little brat had the balls to cut in when he, Shang Bo, and Ji Wenlong were talking.

“If you guys plan on telling me, I’m sure you’ll mention what I need to know. It’s the same with the situation about my father.” Shang Xia chuckled.

Taken by surprise, Shang Ke didn’t know how to respond. He fell silent instantly.

As the two of them followed behind the convoy, the gates of the Shang Clan Manor were eventually revealed in the distance. Shang Ke finally broke the silence. “You’re a smart kid. Even though you didn’t go around asking us about what happened, you should have guessed it. You know that we might not tell you even if you asked anyway...”

“Naturally... I know that my knowledge is limited by my lack of cultivation.” Shang Xia chuckled lightly in response.

A bitter smile appeared on Shang Ke’s face as he shook his head. “After everything that has happened, we seem to have taken absolute advantage of the situation in the battlefield between the two worlds. However, all we managed to do was to push ourselves into an even more precarious situation. In the following years, regardless if it’s the Tongyou Institution or our clan, we have to raise our strengths as much as possible in order to cope! We need to consolidate the strength of our Shang Clan as soon as possible. The other three great clans are doing the same. Your guess previously was also right. The Tongyou Institution will start a mass intake of students the moment the recruitment season starts!”

Shang Xia looked at Shang Jian who was standing some distance away and he asked, “Fifth Grandpa, did Grandpa Bo step down from his position because of them?”

With his jaws dropping slightly, Shang Ke only managed to respond after a short pause. “Not exactly. Well, at least, that’s not the main reason.”

“I understand.” Shang Xia nodded before urging his horse to travel faster towards the Shang Clan Manor.

Watching Shang Xia leave, Shang Ke sighed softly as he revealed an expression of distress.

Before Shang Xia even arrived at the entrance, he heard Shang Xi’s voice ringing angrily from the front of the convoy.

“Shang Yang, I guessed as much! Damn brat, you really came back! Why didn’t you come to help us when we were ambushed earlier?”

Shang Xia saw a youngster that wasn’t too much older than him who was waiting at the entrance of the Shang Clan Manor snap his fan shut. There was an imploring expression on his face as he jogged over to Shang Xi to help her off her horse. “You can’t blame me for this! No harm will befall our Shang Clan since we’re still in the Tongyou City. Didn’t Second Brother lead the troops over to help you out? I have to stay here to control the situation in case it’s part of the enemy’s plot to lure us all away.”

“You slippery brat...” Shang Xi slapped his hand away as he tried to help her dismount. Instead, she grabbed his shoulder and pressed down mercilessly as she leaped off her mount.

Gritting his teeth in pain, he pouted to show his dissatisfaction at Shang Xi’s actions. However, he chose to remain quiet like an obedient child.

After landing on the ground, she turned to stare at Shang Yang with a look of shock on her face.

He quickly swapped out his pained expression for a fawning smile. “Hehe, I was planning to give you a surprise. Oh right, I haven’t congratulated you for advancing. You should have already condensed your divine sense, right?”

She snorted in response. “Damn brat, you’re full of shit as per usual. What do you mean surprise? You were planning to show off to me. Hmph. If I didn’t break through in the battlefield between the two worlds, won’t you be laughing your head off now?”

“Of course not!” Shang Yang’s expression betrayed his true thoughts.

“Ninth Uncle!” Shang Xia leaped off his mount and ran over with a look of joy on his face.

Even though Shang Yang returned with Shang Jian, it was Shang Xia’s first time meeting his second uncle earlier. He wasn’t too familiar with Shang Jian, but it was a different story for Shang Yang. His ninth uncle left the Tongyou Institution ten years ago, and Shang Xia used to hang out with him all the time. In the past, Shang Yang was sent out to the White Deer Paradise to learn the arts and he would return to the Tongyou City from time to time to visit them.

Perhaps it was due to their similarity in age, the two of them got along really well.

“Haha! Little Xia, you grew so much in two short years! Hey! You’re going to be as handsome as me at this rate!” Shang Yang smiled when he saw Shang Xia running over.

Just as they were about to continue joking with each other, Shang Jian arrived at the entrance of the Shang Clan Manor. The harmonious air disappeared in an instant and it became slightly awkward.

Coughing lightly, Shang Yang was about to break the silence but Shang Jian beat him to it. A smile appeared on Shang Jian’s face and he turned to Shang Xi. “Seventh Sister, it’s been so many years... Do you still remember me?”

Chapter 222: Sealed Sword Essence

In a courtyard inside the Silver Hook Casino outside the Tongyou City...

Yu Changjin held his finger over Hou Yuchun’s dantian and only kept it after several moments. His expression was extremely sullen as he sighed softly to himself.

When one of the disciples standing nearby saw the elder’s attitude, a look of fury could be seen on his face. “I knew it! Shang Xia is extremely evil. They were merely exchanging pointers but he chose to cripple Senior Brother Hou’s cultivation!”

A light flashed through Yu Chengjin's eyes and he snapped at the disciple who spoke, "Nonsense! Who told you that his cultivation was crippled?"

The disciple who was clad in green robes stared at the elder in fright and he didn't know what to say.

Another disciple of the Jianmen Institution who was a little short in stature spoke up at the side, "Elder Yu, Senior Brother Hou isn't able to feel the situation in his dantian. How can he not be crippled? He can't even move his inner qi! All of us think that Shang Xia definitely caused some hidden damage to Senior Brother Hou on purpose!"

Despite all the commotion going on around him, Hou Yuchun was still staring blankly at the space before him. He clearly hadn't gotten over Shang Xia's final strike.

Yu Chengjin glanced at the despondent Hou Yuchun and sighed, "His inner essence is alright. His inner qi doesn't look damaged at all. Instead, there seems to be a strange force lingering in his dantian, causing his inner qi to be sealed. That's the reason behind his current state."

The short disciple piped up yet again. "Elder Yu, can't you try to undo the seal caused by the strange force?"

Yu Chengjin shook his head silently.

The green-robed disciple gasped in fright, "How is that possible? Elder Yu, you're at the Martial Extermination Realm! Shang Xia is merely a Martial Extremity Realm disciple. How are you unable to undo the seal caused by a weakling like that?"

"Senior Brother Lu, don't be rude!" The short disciple snapped.

Waving his hands, Yu Chengjin sighed, "It's alright. This old man is indeed incapable of undoing the seal. In fact, even other Martial Extermination Realm experts might not be able to do it."

The short disciple widened his eyes in shock. "How can that be? Is Shang Xia really that terrifying?!"

"You shouldn't think too much about it. Even I am surprised by the strength the kid possesses. As the saying goes, there's always a taller mountain. His martial intent is extremely weird. He managed to fuse six different types of sword qi into that final strike, and Hou Yuchun's dantian should be sealed by the weird power contained in the fusion sword qi." Yu Chengjin continued, "There are only two ways to undo the seal. One is to gather six experts who comprehended the same pairs of qi contained in Shang Xia's strike to shatter the seal. Even though it's a little difficult for us to do that, it's still possible. Since we're in the Tongyou City right now, I will have to request a lot of favors to make that happen."

A deep frown appeared on Yu Chengjin's face and he seemed to be deep in thought about something.

"What about the second method?" The green-robed disciple asked.

Sighing softly, Yu Chengjin continued, “The other method is to beg a Martial Dipper Realm expert for help. They can use their fate dipper to get rid of the seal on his dantian. That would be the most straightforward way to deal with the problem.”

“Martial Dipper Realm? Wouldn’t that mean that we would need Kou Chongxue to personally make his move? Didn’t they say that he went into hiding due to his injuries? There are countless parties with their eyes on him right now. The moment he appears, he would most likely be surrounded by his enemies. The Tongyou Institution won’t agree to our request!” The green-robed disciple muttered.

The short disciple couldn’t help but snap at him again. “Senior Brother Lu, just keep your mouth shut!”

The green-robed disciple didn’t seem to hear him and he got more agitated the more he analyzed. “Hmph, the Tongyou Institution is such a bully! It’s the first time we came over and our intention was to help them deal with the threat! Who would have thought that they would deal with it all on their own and keep all the benefits? That wasn’t all, they even crippled Senior Brother Hou! If it was up to me, we should just smash their institution right here and now! We’ll crush their inner division to get revenge for Senior Brother Hou. I refuse to believe that there will be another Shang Xia in their inner division!”

Even though he yelled so loudly, none of the disciples around him backed him up. His solitary appearance looked a little lonely and disappointed after he looked around him.

After watching the disrespectful scene play out in front of him, Yu Changjin hesitated for a second before muttering, “Actually, there’s a third way.”

Before anyone could ask him what the third method was, his figure disappeared from his original location after leaving behind a single sentence. “Wait for me here. I’ll be back soon!”

The disciples stared at each other in confusion, but the short disciple seemed to have connected the dots.

One of the disciples in the group turned to ask him, “Senior Brother Ai, what do you think the third way is?”

“Elder Yu definitely went to look for Shang Xia. Since he was the one who created the seal, he should be able to undo it.”

Hou Yuchun raised his head abruptly when he heard the name. However, the green-robed disciple interrupted everyone with an exaggerated gasp. “That’s it! That was his plan all along! Shang Xia definitely expected Elder Yu to look for him to undo the seal! Hmph, he made our deputy patriarch, a mighty Martial Extermination Realm expert, beg him, a mere Martial Extremity Realm disciple, to undo a seal! He’s planning on humiliating us! Hah. I bet he’s gloating happily right now with his disgustingly arrogant expression.”

His words managed to rouse the anger of the other disciples present.

Instead of questioning the reason behind the green-robed disciple's reason for defaming Shang Xia, all of them felt that it was indeed possible. Rage burned in their hearts when they thought about how their deputy patriarch was about to be humiliated by a weakling disciple.

Even the short disciple who was the most rational among all of them was feeling a sense of anger rising in his chest.

.

Hou Yuchun, who had barely opened his mouth to speak, was interrupted by the green-robed disciple yet again. Smashing his teacup on the ground, the green-robed disciple yelled, "Fuck it! I can't take this anymore! Disciples of the Jianmen Institution, listen to me. We'll head over to the Tongyou Institution right now and smash their inner division to the ground. We can't allow anyone to humiliate us like this."

Rousing the fighting spirit of every disciple present, they charged towards the Tongyou Institution immediately. The short disciple wanted to hold them back to discuss battle strategies, but seeing as everyone was already streaming out the door, he could only arrange for a few servants to take care of Hou Yuchun before running out behind them.

...

The moment Shang Xia returned to the Shang Clan manor, he requested permission to obtain a rank three advancement formula. Looking at a stone tablet surrounded by thick web-like runes, Shang Xia saw the majestic words carved on it. "Triple Loop Coalescence Needle."

Chapter 223: Triple Loop Coalescence Needle

As one of the great clans, the Shang Clan had complete formulas for their disciples up to the Martial Intent Realm.

Advancement formulas were just the beginning. With the foundations of their clan, they had techniques, secret arts, and all the recipes required for a cultivator to train all the way up to the Martial Intent Realm. Moreover, they weren't just random techniques or medicines. They were related in such a way that they could complement one another.

In fact, the inheritance of the Shang Clan was partially related to those in the institution. That was the reason Shang Xia could train in the Chaos Essence Manual provided by the Tongyou Institution when he was at the Martial Realm.

Now that Shang Xia had reached the peak of the Martial Extremity Realm, he decided to return to the clan to look for a way to break through.

After Shang Ke brought out the formula for the clan's Triple Loop Coalescence Needle, he asked Shang Xia again, "Are you sure you wish to use our advancement medicine? You need to know that the moment you go through with this, you won't be able to cultivate any other techniques in the Martial Intent Realm. You have to cultivate our clan's Triple Providence Chapter and your main fighting technique will need to be the Providence Spear. Without any of the three, you won't be able to reach your highest potential in the Martial Intent Realm. Think carefully. The moment you make your decision to advance with our Triple Loop Coalescence Needle, your path will be decided."

A chuckle left Shang Xia's lips. "Fifth Grandpa, you said this three times already! Since I already made my choice, I definitely understand what using the Triple Loop Coalescence Needle entails."

Staring deeply into Shang Xia's eyes, Shang Ke eventually sighed, "It's good that you understand. I'm just afraid that you're making a hasty decision. After all, everyone is saying that you have an exceptional talent in the way of the sword and you should be cultivating sword techniques in the

Martial Intent Realm. If you forcefully change your fighting style to our Shang Clan Spear Art, you will be affecting your future potential.”

Shang Xia couldn't help but laugh in response, “Fifth Grandpa, it's not about the technique, it's the cultivator!”

Seeing as Shang Xia was adamant about using the Triple Loop Coalescence Needle, Shang Ke decided to let him do as he wished. He handed over the stone tablet before leaving.

Only after Shang Ke left did Shang Xia get the chance to concentrate on the stone tablet. He started to memorize its contents.

As the knowledge poured into his mind, the blood red tablet reappeared once again and words started to appear all over it.

Advancement Medicine: Triple Loop Coalescence Needle

Prerequisite: Grand completion stage of the Martial Extremity Realm (Grand completion stage of the Yin Yang Realm)

Main Herbs: 1x Hundred Year Old Exquisite Grass, 1 inch of Heart Essence Tree Core, 1x Earth Magnetism Essence Light

Auxiliary Herbs: 1x Ebony Lingzhi, 1x Silver Thread Grass, 3x Cleansing Heaven Sand

Remarks: Use the three needles at the Guanyuan, Shanzhong, and Yintang acupoints. Effects will be enhanced if the needles are stained with the essence blood of a Martial Intent Realm expert.

Compatibility Rate: 70%

Success Rate: 65%

As Shang Xia studied the advancement formula, he tried to recall if he had prepared all the ingredients required.

As the most important advancement formula belonging to the Shang Clan, the herbs required to create the advancement medicine would definitely be collected. Most of them could be found in the Shang Clan's treasury.

However, Shang Xia's speed of advancement was too damn quick. He took less than three months to reach the peak of the Martial Extremity Realm from the Martial Realm! Even if the clan started to make their preparations earlier, they might not have been able to gather everything.

In fact, even if they did, Shang Xia was unwilling to let the clan provide everything for free. Instead, his sights turned to the Tongyou Institution.

Shang Xia might have gained a lot in the battlefield between the two worlds, but he knew who the ultimate winner was. The Tongyou Institution made it out like a bandit! Their gains could be said to be heaven-defying!

Of course, Shang Xia's shadow could be said to be hidden behind most of it. When he presented his guide to comprehending the Chaos Essence Lightning Art to the institution, he earned quite a bit. He managed to obtain an entire set of cultivation techniques and some treasures along the way. However, that was a mere speck of dust if they were to compare it with the merits he gained this time.

After making up his mind to mercilessly extort the institution, Shang Xia's attention turned to perfecting his advancement medicine.

The words around the blood-red tablet started to change once again.

“Crack!”

The soft sound produced by the fissure sounded deafening in Shang Xia's mind. He felt as though his bones were shattering.

A tiny crack appeared on another face of the tablet as it extended all the way down to the base.

When the crack finally reached the bottom, the words on its surface started to move once again. The optimal version of his advancement formula was created.

Advancement Medicine: Triple Loop Coalescence Needle

Prerequisite: Grand completion stage of the Yin Yang Realm

Main Herbs: 1x Hundred Year Old Exquisite Grass, 1 inch of Heart Essence Tree Core, 1x Earth Magnetism Essence Light

Auxiliary Herbs: 1x Ebony Lingzhi, 1x Silver Thread Grass, 3x Cleansing Heaven Sand

Assistive Treasure: 1x Intent Guarding Incense, 1x Essence Separation Liquid, A special bath containing Intent Gathering Powder dissolved in water.

Additional Treasure: Spirit Initiation Stone

Remarks: Burn Intent Guarding Incense, soak the needles in Essence Separation Liquid before applying them to the Guanyuan, Shanzhong, and Yintang acupoints. Soak in the special bath containing dissolved Intent Gathering Powder.

Compatibility Rate: 90%

Success Rate: 85%

Even though the formula was clearly described on the tablet, Shang Xia couldn't be bothered with it. Instead, his attention was on the second crack.

It was several times more serious than when the tablet cracked previously.

From the looks of it, neither crack affected the functionality of the tablet. After doing it twice, Shang Xia had pretty much confirmed the guesses he had. Every time he used it to optimize an advancement formula, a crack would form!

There was also a tiny voice in his mind telling him that the tablet would crumble completely the moment cracks filled its surfaces. When that happened, his soul would shatter and he would die. Yet, the burning question remained unsolved. He was unable to find a way to repair the tablet!

Only a single thought remained in Shang Xia's mind. No matter what, raising his strength was the way to go. The only way he could look for a way to fix the tablet was to grow stronger!

Finally snapping back to reality, he turned his attention to the formula produced by the tablet. He noticed that there were a lot of changes this time!

“Intent Guarding Incense? Essence Separation Liquid? Intent Gathering Powder?!
What the hell are those?!”

Chapter 224: Irregular Sword Manual

“Intent Guarding Incense? What is that?”

“Essence Separation Liquid... Even with my experience, I never heard anything like it.”

“Oh? The Intent Gathering Powder sounds familiar. Several bottles would appear in the institution from time to time. Master Ge Muchen took it for some experiments and managed to use it to replace an ingredient in a rank two advancement formula. As a result, it’s even harder to find a portion now...” Shang Xi explained the situation to Shang Xia. “Where did you hear about these weird medicines? Are you sure it’s useful for your advancement?”

“I heard about them back in the Coral Forest! They seem to be from the Zhu Family’s inheritance and they seem to be extremely beneficial for a cultivator who’s trying to form their divine sense.” Shang Xia started his bullshit show.

Hearing that it hailed from the Zhu Family, Shang Xi quickly left her doubts behind.

All of a sudden, a voice rang in their ears. “I heard of the Essence Separation Liquid before.”

Turning to stare at the source of the voice, Shang Xia’s expression turned a little disappointed.

However, Shang Xi quickly soothed the situation. “Second brother, this is your first time seeing your nephew, right?”

Turning to Shang Xia, she explained, “Oh, that’s right, I called him over.”

Nodding slightly, Shang Xia’s expression eased up slightly.

As Shang Jian approached them, they noticed how the aura he emitted was slightly diminished.

A greeting escaped Shang Xia’s lips after some time.

“Second brother, how did you hear of the Essence Separation Liquid?” Shang Xi asked.

Nodding slowly, Shang Jian explained, “I didn’t remain in the Ji Continent the whole time I was away. I also toured the Qing Continent, Bing Continent, and Yan Continent. The Essence Separation Liquid is something I heard of when I was in the Yan Continent. According to them, it can allow a cultivator to accelerate the circulation of their inner qi.”

Shang Jian turned to Shang Xi and continued, “You should know that when a cultivator enters the Martial Intent Realm, condensing their divine sense is key. If they focus too much on their circulation of inner qi, their first attempt at forming their divine sense would be a lot weaker.”

“Do you know where to get some?” Shang Xi asked.

Shaking his head in defeat, Shang Jian sighed, “You should know that any medicine used to increase the success rate of a breakthrough is guarded closely by the various superpowers. The

cultivator who revealed the uses of the Essence Separation Liquid was killed and his body was found in some random tavern.”

Shang Xi’s expression sank slightly when she looked at Shang Xia. However, a single sentence from him caused everyone to jump in fright.

“I have the recipe for the Essence Separation Liquid. Anyway, it’s a rank three medicine.”

“What?! How do you have the recipe?” Shang Xi yelled. She wasn’t the only one who was surprised. Shang Jian was equally as shocked.

However, they quickly suppressed their emotions and Shang Xi reached her hand out towards Shang Xia. “Hand it over!”

A mischievous smile already appeared on Shang Xia’s face and he chuckled softly, “Not only do I have the recipe for the Essence Separation Liquid, but I also know how to make the Intent Gathering Powder and Intent Guarding Incense. I don’t mind handing the recipe over, but my rewards...”

“Rewards... Damn brat, do I look like a thief who will shortchange you? Hand the recipe over! Once we make them successfully, you can use them for free. How’s that?!” Shang Xi snapped playfully at Shang Xia.

A pained expression appeared on Shang Xia’s face as he complained, “You’re scamming me! I can use a single portion of those medicines at most. Only the incense can be considered slightly useful after breaking through...”

Gnashing her teeth, Shang Xi growled, “Damn brat, you’re becoming a real money grubber...”

...

After receiving the recipe for the three medicines written by Shang Xia, Shang Xi scanned through them before tutting slowly. “Hmph, it’s going to take some time to gather all the ingredients required to make the liquid and the powder...”

Keeping the recipes carefully in her sleeves, Shang Xi finally returned to the main topic of the day. She started to explain the true reason she called Shang Jian over. “Kid, remember how I promised to look for a suitable sword inheritance for you in the battlefield between two worlds?”

“Who would have thought that you would touch on the Martial Intent Realm in three short months?! Your martial intent also reached an unbelievable level...”

Several days ago, Shang Xia’s revelation of his fusion sword intent shocked everyone who witnessed it. Even Martial Extermination Realm monsters like Yu Changjin had high praises for it.

A self-mocking smile appeared on Shang Xi’s face as she continued, “Even though you probably don’t need any more help, I have to fulfill my promise. In fact, our Shang Clan obtained a sword inheritance years ago. Your second uncle was the one who learned it.”

Laughing softly, Shang Xia changed the topic suddenly. “Aunt, didn’t I also ask you to get a portion of Tempering Meridian Powder?”

Staring at him in stunned silence, a jade bottle appeared in her hand. She tossed it over and muttered, “Oh yeah. That was another reason I was looking for you. I forgot about it after hearing about the medicines you brought up earlier.”

Grabbing the bottle, Shang Xia laughed happily. He kept it in his Embroidered Cloud Case and continued, “Actually, I do require another sword technique. Once I practice the last one, my martial intent will reach its limit.”

Shang Jian spoke before Shang Xi had the chance to say anything. He couldn’t contain his curiosity after hearing about Shang Xia’s sword intents from Shang Ke. “What martial intent did you comprehend exactly?” Realizing his mistake, Shang Jian quickly added, “ ... I’m sorry. I stepped out of line. It’s your secret...”

However, Shang Xia laughed in response and looked towards Shang Xi. “So... What are you going to use to trade for information on my martial intent?”

Naturally, Shang Xia was providing valuable information to the clan. The Shang Clan might own some sword manuals, but it didn’t possess a guide for disciples to comprehend sword intent at all.

As such, his revelation would also bring him a ton of merit from the clan. It wouldn’t be fair for him to reveal it for nothing as the clan wouldn’t give him cultivation resources for free either.

Of course, Shang Xi wasn’t in the best of mood after negotiating with the little money grubber for his medicine recipes. She snapped in irritation, “Hah... You took everything of value I can offer! I’m broke you damn brat! I have nothing left!”

“Fine, fine...”

With no other choice, Shang Xi could only turn to Shang Jian. “I would have to trouble second brother this time...”

Nodding slightly, Shang Jian turned to Shang Xia. “Our Shang Clan possesses a few sword manuals, but they’re nowhere near as complete as our spear manuals. From the time I left the clan, the Irregular Sword Manual seemed to have disappeared from our Shang Clan’s memory. I’ll teach you all I know about the Irregular Sword Manual. Cultivators at the Martial Extremity Realm who reached enlightenment in the sword manual might be able to comprehend a sword intent.”

After he spoke, he brought out a simple book and handed it over to Shang Xia. “This is the inheritance of the Irregular Sword Manual I recorded. I only managed to comprehend so much and everything is recorded within. You need to rely on yourself to peer deeper into the technique.”

Drawing his sword after handing the sword manual over, he decided to give Shang Xia a practical demonstration. A chilly sword light emerged from the tip of his blade as it shot to the skies above the Shang Clan Manor.

Chapter 225: Seven Laceration Sword

After displaying all the moves in the Irregular Sword Manual, Shang Jian took his leave.

Even though Shang Xia closed his eyes halfway through the demonstration, he was able to detect everything going on around him. He carved the memory of Shang Jian’s movements and the feeling of how the energy flowed deep into his mind.

Carefully running through the entire sequence in his mind, he finally opened his eyes. “What an amazing sword art!”

Shang Xi sighed at the side, “Hah... He actually chose to impart the technique to you through his divine sense. Even with his cultivation at the large completion stage of the Martial Intent Realm, he will only be able to recover after a few months.”

Shang Xia stared at her with his eyes wide open. He didn't expect his second uncle he hadn't seen since his birth to assist him in such a way. However, he quickly changed the topic. “Our Shang Clan actually had an inheritance for Martial Extremity Realm cultivators. Why didn't I know about this? Does that mean that we also have an inheritance for Martial Intent Realm experts?”

Shang Xi shook her head and sighed, “Of course not! Well, that was probably the reason behind his departure... He left the city to search for better techniques. After he returned, he seemed to have reached the limits of whatever technique he learned. He's currently stuck at a bottleneck and the moment he breaks through, he should be able to leave behind a complete Martial Intent Realm sword inheritance.”

“Aunt, are the both of you on good terms?”

Nodding her head slightly, she sighed, “Our relationship was great when we were kids. Anyway, the grudges of those in our generation shouldn't affect the next...”

Even though Shang Xia maintained a smile on his face, his expression remained somber. He chose to remain silent about the matter.

Seeing as the situation wouldn't change in a short period of time, Shang Xi decided to talk about something else instead. “You should be able to feel the similarity between the Irregular Sword Manual and our Shang Clan's famous Irregular Steps. Both of them are part of the same technique. When Shang Jian left, no one in the clan was able to attain the same achievements in the Irregular Sword Manual anymore. However, the Irregular Steps became a part of our clan's core technique.”

Shang Xia nodded in response. “Of course I realized...”

He noticed the similarities when he comprehended the technique, and he wouldn't dig into the details of how Shang Xi got Shang Jian to come over to teach him. He would only silently note down the grace Shang Xi had shown him.

In the following days, Shang Xia returned to his original routine of training.

Since his cultivation had reached the peak of the Martial Extremity Realm, the amount of inner qi in his body wouldn't increase anymore. He could only practice his sword arts and continue to create talismans.

No matter what, Shang Xia would find some time to practice creating talismans in his free time every day.

He could basically craft rank one talismans without mistakes every time now. As long as he put his mind to it, he would be able to make three of them a day!

The problem only started when he tried to craft rank two talismans. If he gave it his all, he might be able to create one a day. Of course, that was assuming he didn't fail at any step. As long as he made

a mistake, he wouldn't be able to gather enough inner qi to make a new rank two talisman from scratch.

Regardless, talisman crafting was only a complementary art he used to increase his strength. He wouldn't pour all his attention into it.

He would only make a few inscriptions on the talisman he was working on every day, only completing a rank two talisman every week or so.

Even though that was the case, pausing his attempts every day and picking up where he left off perfectly allowed him to hone his techniques even more. It didn't come as a surprise when he noticed his success rate of crafting talismans increasing significantly.

Most of his time was spent on the Irregular Sword Manual.

After Shang Xia refined the third portion of Tempering Meridian Powder, his meridians could be said to have reached the limit of their durability.

With his increased ability to circulate a larger amount of inner qi, sealing his sword intent into his newly invented talismans back in the battlefield between two worlds shouldn't be a problem.

...

As he trained in the Irregular Sword Manual, he discovered that once he used it in conjunction with the Irregular Steps, it would display its full might.

Out of the seven sword manuals Shang Xia trained in, the Dual Interference Sword Manual could be ranked number one in terms of raw power. His River Sword Policy would come in at a close second, and the Irregular Sword Manual would be ranked third.

If he took the intricacies of each technique into consideration, the River Sword Policy would take the first spot while the Irregular Sword Manual would come next.

After talking about the raw strength and intricacies of all his techniques, one had to mention the type of sword intent Shang Xia could comprehend behind each sword art. Surprisingly, the Quandary Manual that hadn't been ranked among them stood the highest with the dao of life and death. However, the Irregular Sword Manual would maintain its second spot.

Of all the sword arts he trained in, the Irregular Sword Manual would consistently rank in the top three in any aspect!

Like the Irregular Steps, the sword dao contained in the Irregular Sword Manual focused on distance.

It seemed as though Shang Jian was an impressive swordsman indeed. He not only displayed the moves in the sword manual, he also left Shang Xia with the insights he gained. He extrapolated his knowledge and touched on the basis of manipulating the distance between the user and his target.

Just that fact alone touched on the dao of space. As such, the Irregular Steps far surpassed the Dual Interference Sword Manual and the River Sword Policy.

Back when the Shang Clan's convoy was ambushed in the city, Shang Xia fought several promising cultivators in succession. Li Xi's Tide Sword Manual was far from ordinary as it allowed him to comprehend a secondary sword intent, Twilight.

Hou Yuchun was also a formidable opponent. He was able to touch on the theory behind crests and throughs, eventually comprehending the dao of elevation.

It was a pity he chose to appear when Shang Xia had already lost his patience. No matter how intricate his sword intent was, it was but a speck of dust compared to Shang Xia's fusion of six different sword intents. He didn't manage to show off a single move before he was defeated.

To speak truthfully, out of the four cultivators, Li Xi, Ma Qi, Yang Chao, and Hou Yuchun, Hou Yuchun was the strongest of the four. It couldn't be denied that his fighting abilities were much higher than any of the three before him. However, if Shang Xia were to give a proper evaluation, he felt that Yang Chao was the one with the highest potential.

Yang Chao's Agile Sword Art allowed him to walk down the path of movement and stillness. Seeing the potential behind the sword art, Shang Xia even gave him some tips from his original world.

If Yang Chao understood his advice and broke through his bottleneck, Shang Xia was afraid that he would have to use his full strength when facing the man.

Coming back to the Irregular Sword Manual, Shang Xia had to say that Shang Jian's insights were really useful. It allowed Shang Xia to cultivate with half the effort to achieve twice the effects.

The more he trained in the Irregular Sword Manual, the deeper his understanding of the dao. He recalled the insights he gained during his battle with the four cultivators of the other institutions and in a few short days, he managed to reach the large completion stage of the Irregular Sword Manual. The seventh sword in his dantian was starting to form.

The moment it was completed, Shang Xia's Yin Yang Sword Formation would experience a huge increase in strength! That would also signify that he had reached the true limits of his cultivation realm.

Even though the dao of Yin and Yang was supposed to be limitless, Shang Xia's cultivation was the one that stopped him from gathering more sword intents!

With his Yin Yang Essence Qi's ability to transform into seven different pairs of qi, other Martial Extremity Realm cultivators could only be left behind in the dust.

"The Yin Yang Sword Formation doesn't describe my martial intent well... With the formation of seven sword intents, I'll formally change the name of my martial intent to the Seven Laceration Sword! The name implies everything. Seven sword intents are contained in one attack."

Chapter 226: 300 Silver Essence

Ever since the battle along the street the other day, You Haibiao's death was confirmed and the city was thrown into a slight flurry.

Even though there were many rumors about the reason behind You Haibiao's death, the higher-ups of the various institutions chose to remain silent about it.

Under the guise of their indifference, more than half a month passed. The news of You Haibiao's death also started to fade.

In the half a month, the convoys of the Ji, Liu, and Yun clans returned to the city in succession. Every time one of them returned, a huge commotion would break out in the city.

It was especially so when the Liu Family returned. Liu Jitang's death spread through the city, bringing a huge amount of attention to the Liu Clan.

If not for the fact that Liu Zhiyuan's advancement to the Martial Extermination Realm was also revealed to the city, the Liu Clan might have already been flattened by their enemies.

That wasn't the only effect Liu Zhiyuan brought to the city. With the attention the Liu Clan was getting, the topic of Martial Extermination Realm experts quickly became all the rage. It didn't take long before the details of the war on the Tongyou Peak were dug up. The cultivators in the city finally learned about the true experts hidden in the Tongyou Institution. The upper division instructor, Liu Qinglan, Shang Lubing (Shang Bing) of the Contributions Division, and Dong Qianzui of the Scripture Depository were actually hidden experts in the Tongyou Institution!

After the events that happened in the battlefield between two worlds, Dong Qianzui and Liu Jitang sacrificed their lives. But it didn't end there. Liu Zhiyuan, Shang Ke, and Kang Ci broke through to the Martial Extermination Realm! Because of that, the Institution became even stronger than before!

After hearing the news, many cultivators finally realized an extremely important point. Shang Ke of the Shang Clan also broke through to the Martial Extermination Realm! That would mean that they possessed two peak-level experts in their ranks!

How could that not surprise the various powers in the city?

Was the ranking of the four great clans about to change?

One had to know that the Shang Clan was only able to rise because of Kou Chongxue's strong support. That reason alone caused many second rate families to develop a sense of hatred and jealousy for the Shang Clan.

Many people thought that the Shang Clan lucked out to be chosen by Kou Chongxue. They felt that if their clans were chosen instead, they would be able to achieve the same! However, Shang Ke's ascension shut them all up.

Now, the Shang Clan was really about to soar into the heavens. With two Martial Extermination Realm experts at their helm, along with Shang Bo being said to have reached the fourth layer of the Martial Extermination Realm, they could do as they wished in the Tongyou City.

When speculations were going around, another piece of news shocked the public. In fact, it was so sudden that even the higher-ups of the other institutions were caught off guard.

Shang Bo resigned as the patriarch of the Shang Clan and formally took on the role of the institution's deputy patriarch. Unlike before when he was holding both positions in the clan and the institution, he was solely focused on the institution now. Shang Ke would take his place as the patriarch of the clan, freeing him from his original responsibilities.

"What the hell! Did the original patriarch of the Shang Clan kick himself out of his clan?!"

"Hah. It's just for show. If the Shang Clan really runs into trouble, there's no way he will sit back and watch!"

“Are you stupid? There’s practically no difference between the Tongyou Institution and the four great clans at this point! So what if Shang Bo isn’t the patriarch?”

“If we don’t count Shang Bo as part of the Shang Clan’s strength anymore, wouldn’t that mean that the Shang Clan would still rank last out of the four clans?”

“Don’t forget about the allocation of resources in the battlefield between two worlds. The Shang Clan gained the most this time! The institution cleared out the Coral Forest and dominated the Four Spiritual Peaks and split some of the profits among the four great clans. From the number of carriages in each clan’s convoy, we can easily tell that the Shang Clan obtained close to three times the resources allocated to the other clans! If there’s no mistake, the Shang Clan’s strength will experience a sharp rise in a bit.”

“...”

As the city broke out into a flurry of discussion, Yu Chengjin appeared at the gates of the Shang Clan after speaking to the higher-ups of the institution and strategizing his approach.

“It’s our honor to host Elder Yu! Please come in!” Shang Ke welcomed Yu Changjin personally. Even though he was a little flabbergasted by his arrival, he still acted politely.

After the tea was served and the two exchanged several words of pleasantries, Yu Changjin revealed his actual intentions.

“I wonder if Young Master Shang Xia is currently at home? I have something I wish to request from him.” Yu Changjin asked.

Shang Ke’s eyebrows shot upwards and he couldn’t be more confused. What the hell did a Martial Extermination Realm expert want with a brat that was at the Martial Extremity Realm? It even sounded like he needed something from the kid!

A thought flashed through Shang Ke’s mind suddenly but he wouldn’t be dumb enough to speak of it out loud. He seemed to realize what Yu Changjin was there for.

He could guess that it had something to do with the battle back then.

Without asking for any more details, he yelled for someone to bring Shang Xia over.

When Shang Xia completed the last rune on his talisman, he heard a report coming from outside the door.

Placing his brush down, he gently blew on his newly refined talisman and watched as the ink dried. He chuckled to himself. “Hehe, he’s finally here. ?Mister three hundred silver essence... Hehe...”

...

When Shang Xia entered the hall where Shang Ke and Yu Changjin were waiting, Yu Changjin’s expression turned serious. He was unable to see through Shang Xia’s cultivation at all. Turning to

Shang Ke, he chuckled softly, “Your clan is about to welcome another Martial Intent Realm expert. Haha. This kid isn’t even twenty yet! When we were his age, our achievements were far from his!”

A tinge of admiration could be heard in his voice.

“Senior, you’re too kind. I don’t deserve your praise.” Chuckling softly, Shang Xia continued, “I wonder why you have summoned me? Is there something you require?”

Clearing his throat, Yu Changjin explained, “I won’t hide it from you. After watching you fight Li Xi and Yang Chao, I planned to let a disciple in my charge broaden his horizons. I summoned him over to challenge you but he acted too arrogantly and you taught him a lesson. He finally understood what it meant for there to be a taller mountain out there. Your great achievements in the way of the sword really impressed me. However, that little brat was too useless. Ever since he was defeated the other day, he can’t get over his defeat. He might not have suffered any external injuries but there seems to be a weird seal in his dantian. I had no choice but to come and look for you. Little friend, do you have any ideas on what I can do?”

Just the way Yu Changjin spoke to Shang Xia was shocking enough. For him to put down his pride as a Martial Extermination Realm expert to speak to Shang Xia so cordially, Shang Xia didn’t dare to reject the man at all! In fact, he might even start a massive feud between the Shang Clan and Yu Changjin if he dared to spout any bullshit like he was used to doing.

Without bothering with Shang Ke who was signaling him with his eyes, Shang Xia brought out the talisman he just created and handed it over to Yu Changjin. “Elder Yu, there’s no need for such formalities. This only happened because I was unable to control my strength properly. I injured fellow brother Hou on accident, and I hope that he doesn’t hold a grudge against me. Please take this sword talisman as a sign of my apology. Apply it to his Guan acupoint and he should be cured.”

Yu Changjin received the talisman with a strange look on his face. Seeing the sincere look on Shang Xia’s face, he felt that there was no way the kid would mess with him.

However, he gasped in shock when he studied the runes on the talisman. “This... This is a new type of talisman!”

Shang Xia nodded his head while ignoring Shang Ke who was gasping audibly at the side. “Indeed.”

Keeping the talisman hastily, a smile returned to Yu Changjin’s face and he asked, “How much would it cost to make a talisman like this?”

Chuckling out loud, Shang Xia replied, “I wonder if Brother Hou won his pai gow game the other day? Didn’t he bet 300 silver essence on it?”

Chapter 227: Shang 2, Shang 3, and Shang 6

The talisman Shang Xia created could barely be considered a rank two talisman, and it cost him 10 silver essence at best.

However, he merely valued it at 300 silver essence when asked by Yu Changjin. Even though he had already multiplied the value of the talisman by tens of times, he was still doing Yu Changjin a great favor.

After Yu Changjin had left, Shang Ke finally couldn't hold himself back. "Is that really a new type of talisman?!"

"Yeah."

"I heard from Shang Quan that you managed to create rank two talismans. How did you manage to create a new type of talisman so quickly? How are their effects anyway?" Shang Ke continued to ask.

A bitter smile formed on Shang Xia's face as he explained, "Well, the new talisman isn't easily refined. If I stick to my original training schedule, I can make one in about ten days. Anyway, the most important thing right now is not about how fast I can make it. I can increase the speed slightly, but I'm lacking the resources required to make them."

A sigh escaped Shang Ke's lips when he heard what the kid said. "Indeed. The Yun Clan is the main distributor of ingredients used to craft talismans in our Tongyou City. It's especially so for talisman paper. Even the institution has to request a portion of talisman paper from the Yun Clan each year. Even though it's possible for us to make our own talisman paper, the process is slow and our craftsmen can only make those up to the second rank. We can't match the Yun Clan in either quantity or quality..."

That was the difference between a clan with solid foundations and an upstart great clan like the Shang Clan. The Shang Clan's ascension might look mighty in the eyes of the commoners, but their accumulations and foundations were pretty tragic. Even though they obtained a huge amount of resources based on their contributions in the battlefield between the two worlds, they wouldn't be able to fully make use of them to create high leveled items.

After all, the craftsmen of the Shang Clan were much less accomplished than those in the other great clans or the institution. Taking Duan Hong for example... At that moment, he could only repair graded weapons. He wasn't good enough to create them yet, but the entire clan was betting on him to achieve a breakthrough the moment he crafted Shang Xia's spear. As for their chemist, they could only create medicine lower than the second rank. Their in-house talisman master was barely as accomplished as Shang Xia!

The major barrier in terms of weapons refinement was to create graded weapons, while the rank three level proved to be a huge bottleneck for the other arts.

If they overlooked the fact that they had two Martial Extermination Realm experts, the Shang Clan was basically a castle of sand.

Shang Xia hesitated for a moment before avoiding any more questions on the topic of talismans. "Fifth Grandpa, did you guys manage to uncover the mastermind behind the raid on our convoy?"

"Everything is confusing. Every great clan and power seems to be suspicious, but all of them could provide an alibi. It's going to be difficult to make any real progress in our investigation." Shang Ke shook his head in defeat.

"Right. What are the members of the other institutions doing in our Tongyou City anyway?" Shang Xia finally broached the topic.

“Hmph. They’re just here to fish for benefits.” Shang Ke chuckled before continuing, “The most important thing you need to do is to focus on breaking through to the Martial Intent Realm. Let us worry about the rest.”

...

Even after so much time in seclusion, Shang Xia could tell that the situation among the institutions wasn’t as calm as it seemed. Shang Ke could hide all he wanted, but Shang Xia knew that the undercurrents were brewing.

In order to arrive back at his courtyard, he had to cross a training plaza that was surrounded by lush greenery.

It was where disciples of the Shang Clan who hadn’t stepped into the Martial Realm would train.

The moment one was ready to step on the path of cultivation at the tenth year of age, they would train tirelessly in the training plaza, accumulating fighting experience while improving their cultivation. That was also where Shang Xia trained in the past.

“Sixth Young Master!”

Many disciples of the Shang Clan greeted him the moment he appeared.

Ordinarily, he would return their greetings with a smile on his face. However, he had a lot on his mind at the moment and he merely nodded before quickening his steps.

Among the direct disciples of the Shang Clan, Shang Xia was the sixth to be born, and thus his title.

He hardly saw his cousins, and there were even some he hadn’t seen before in his life.

Just as he was about to leave, a frosty light flashed in the corner of his eye and he raised his guard instantly.

He heard a panicky voice ringing through the skies, “Third Sister, wait!”

A snort left Shang Xia’s lips as he flicked his wrists to toss out a talisman.

As soon as it appeared, it burned with a bright yellow flame before turning into a golden screen that hovered in the air beside him.

It was one of the rank two talismans he learned in the Zhu Family Talisman Scripture, and it was the only proper defensive talisman he managed to craft! It was called the Golden Lantern!

The moment it appeared, a frosty beam smashed heavily into it. A dent several inches deep formed on the surface of the golden screen, but it was unable to penetrate any further.

As the light dissipated, the figure of a short sword was revealed.

Shang Xia’s gaze followed the trajectory the sword came from and his gaze rested on a lady who looked around twenty years old.

She gnashed her teeth as she tried to push the sword in further to destroy the golden screen.

No matter how hard she tried, the golden screen around Shang Xia remained firm. It didn’t tremble in the slightest.

Beside her stood a young man who possessed strikingly similar facial features. Unlike her, he had an awkward expression plastered on his face.

Clearly, he was the one who yelled earlier as he tried to stop her.

Shang Xia's gaze shifted yet again and he looked at a youngster who just arrived at the training plaza. The kid looked extremely anxious.

The two of them hadn't met in a long time but Shang Xia recognized him instantly. He was Shang Fu, Shang Ke's grandson! Well, Shang Ke was Shang Yang's father, and Shang Fu was Shang Yang's descendant! He was born later than Shang Xia, and everyone called him the seventh young master of the Shang Clan!

After glancing at Shang Fu, his gaze was drawn away by a mature-looking woman who exuded a dignified aura. She was standing behind the young lady who attacked him and the young man. When their gazes met, Shang Xia felt a trace of danger.

"Martial Intent Realm!"

Shang Xia's pupils constricted and his gaze landed on the long sword in the mature-looking woman's hand. It looked slightly familiar, but he had no idea where he had seen it before.

From the time Shang Xia was sneak attacked to the time he noticed the mature-looking lady, not much time had passed. The disciples in the plaza finally reacted.

"Hey! What are you doing?!"

"Assassin! There's an assassin in our Shang Clan Manor!"

"Sixth Young Master, be careful!"

"..."

There were many courageous young kids who rushed towards the young lady in a fit of anger. However, Shang Xia stopped them with a simple wave of his hand.

"Who are you?"

Shang Xia knew that intruders were unlikely to appear in the training plaza in the heart of the Shang Clan Manor. He had an idea of who they were, but he needed to hear it from them.

Naturally, his expression wasn't friendly when he spoke to them. After all, they just sneak attacked him. They should be thanking the gods that he hadn't counterattacked.

"Sixth... Sixth brother, let me do the introductions..." Shang Fu approached and stuttered.

Chapter 228: Scheming and Plotting

"Sixth... Sixth brother, let me do the introductions..." Shang Fu caught his breath before looking at the mature-looking lady behind the siblings. "This is your Second Aunt. She's called Xu Huizhu."

Pointing at the two in front of her, he continued, “They’re her children, and they’re fraternal twins. This is your second brother Shang Bei, and your third sister, Shang Dong. Second Uncle might have started his family when he traveled around the world, but they would return to the Tongyou City from time to time... We’re all family here!”

A forced smile hung on Shang Xia’s face when he heard Shang Fu’s explanation.

Because of his response, Shang Fu became even more awkward. Shang Bei and Shang Dong instantly felt that he was looking down on them when they saw his expression.

“This is a misunderstanding!” Shang Fu yelled loudly when he noticed the situation growing tenser and tenser. He quickly waved to the disciples who were gathering around them. “Go away, go away! We’re all part of the same family here! There’s nothing to look at here!”

Even though Shang Xia hardly came back to the Shang Clan Manor, many disciples recognized him.

When they heard that there were two more direct members of the clan, a look of suspicion could be seen in their eyes. However, they knew that it wasn’t time to speak up then.

Naturally, they weren’t the only ones who were confused. Shang Xia was equally clueless. In fact, he had no idea why he was called the sixth young master. Now, he finally saw two more members of the clan from the same generation.

He might have heard of them in the past, but this was their first time meeting.

Well, since his uncle had appeared, it made sense for there to also be an aunt... His second uncle couldn’t possibly remain a bachelor all his life, could he? By extension, the appearance of Shang Bei and Shang Dong started to make sense too.

Even though he was still irritated that Shang Dong sneakily attacked him, the initial sense of anger had already disappeared. After all, the sneak attack didn’t succeed. He was also unwilling to start a feud with members of the same clan because of a small incident like that. The smile slowly returned to his face and he withdrew the golden screen. The short sword clattered to the ground.

The more casual Shang Xia’s actions were, the more Shang Dong felt that he was looking down on them. After all, he didn’t even bother addressing them after withdrawing his defenses. She felt that he wasn’t giving them the respect they deserve!

“Hold it right there!”

Shang Dong’s sharp yell rang in his ears and a frown formed on his face.

“Forget it! You shouldn’t have attacked him in the first place.” Shang Bei quickly interrupted.

Shang Fu added, “Third sister, all of you just came back and you’re not familiar with the manor. Why don’t I bring you over to Uncle Jian’s place for now?”

As Shang Xia turned around, a chilly expression could be seen on his face. He didn’t harp on the matter of her sneak attacking him earlier, but it didn’t mean she could shout and yell at him however she liked.

“What do you mean by that? Are you looking down on us?” Shang Dong grabbed the sword that had fallen to the ground and pointed it at Shang Xia.

“Hehe. It really is the Fortification Sword Art.” Shang Xia snorted lightly. He might not wish to form a grudge against the other members of the Shang Clan the first time they met, but he couldn’t hide the slight sneer on his face.

“What’s the problem? Do you think you’re very impressive because you’re from the Shang Clan? Do you think that we really wanted to come back here?” Shang Dong snapped. She didn’t know why, but anger filled her heart when she saw the look on Shang Xia’s face.

“Third sister, enough!” Shang Fu’s expression turned serious, but none of them were paying him any more attention.

Hearing the disrespect she had for the clan, Shang Xia’s expression finally changed. A snort left his lips. “Our Shang Clan might not be impressive, but we’re not begging anyone to come back and act like they own the place. We don’t need people coming around to spout their bullshit and look down on us either.”

“Sixth brother, just... Just let it be...” Shang Fu chimed in weakly at the side.

“Spouting bullshit? Are you insulting me right now?” Shang Dong flew into a fit of rage before turning around. “Mother, look at this! I told you the Shang Clan doesn’t welcome us back! The moment we came back, people started looking down on us! Hmph!”

She conveniently forgot that she was the one who sneak attacked the other party in his own home as she complained incessantly towards her mother.

Shang Xia couldn’t help but shake his head in response. “I didn’t look down on you initially, but now, you’re asking for it.”

As soon as the words left his mouth, Shang Dong leaped towards him. “Asshole, eat my sword!”

A frosty light returned to surround her blade as it chopped straight towards Shang Xia’s chest,

If her sneak attack previously was considered half-serious, this time, she looked like she wouldn’t stop until he was dead.

Facing such a weak attack, Shang Xia didn’t bother moving even when the sword was about to reach him.

“Hmph! Who cares about your Shang Clan’s technique? I heard that he’s the leader of the outer division of the Tongyou Institution. What a disgrace!” Shang Dong sneered in her heart. “Even if I don’t kill him, I have to scare him so that he stays out of my way in the future! Hmph. I’ll just give him some rank two medicine in the future to get rid of his scars if I accidentally wound him...”

A triumphant scene played out in her mind. After suppressing Shang Xia, they would be able to raise their heads high in the family! She would prove to her father that she was better than someone of Shang Bo's direct bloodline! After all, her father couldn't stop talking about him!

It was an amazing feat for her to think so far before she even landed a successful blow. It was as though she had forgotten that her sneak attack failed miserably earlier.

A yell from her mother caused her to snap back to reality. "Be careful!"

"Hmph. Mother is still too kind. She's afraid that I'll make a mess of things and reminded him to be careful." Shang Dong chuckled to herself. However, she soon realized that she had lost control of her sword.

The world started spinning around her and the next thing she knew, her sword was flying back at her.

"Be careful!" Shang Bei yelled at the side as he drew his sword to protect her.

"Sixth brother, please go easy on her!" Shang Fu's yell came from the side too.

Shang Dong finally realized... "They were reminding me!"

"Clang!" The sound of metal scraping against metal rang in her ears and several swords flew through the air.

"Ah!" Shang Bei yelled as his palm was sliced open. Blood dripped to the ground below.

"Buzz..." The swords belonging to the two of them clattered to the ground while trembling violently.

"Preposterous!" A yell came from behind the two as Xu Huizhu drew her sword.

Chapter 229: Shang Clan's Past

Even when Shang Xia counter-attacked earlier, he had his mind on something else.

Only when he flung their weapons away did he realize that she was trying to establish her dominance in the Shang Clan by using him as an example.

He didn't know what happened twenty years ago, and the elders in the clan were reluctant to reveal anything to him. As time slowly passed, Shang Xia no longer bothered to press for an answer.

Even though he had heard the names of his various uncles before, it was the first time he was learning of Shang Jian's existence!

He wasn't the only one. Among the later generation disciples of the Shang Clan, many of them didn't know they had an elder called Shang Jian.

That was also why his relationship with the rest of the members of the clan was pretty estranged. Regardless, his sense of belonging towards the Shang Clan still remained. That was also why the older generation of the Shang Clan was more accepting towards him compared to those in Shang Xia's generation.

It was a pity the sense of belonging died with him. His children didn't feel the same way towards the Shang Clan. The feelings were mutual as the members of the Shang Clan found them a little foreign too.

Tossing their sense of belonging to one side, Xu Huizhu and her children's desire to be accepted into the clan was real. They had been wandering cultivators for as long as they could remember, and the feeling of joining a family was something they yearned for. It was too bad their sense of pride caused them to act in such a way towards Shang Xia. They felt that in order to be accepted and respected in the family, they would have to show off their strength!

One could argue that their method was correct, but the fact was that they had chosen the wrong target to establish their prestige!

Shang Bei and Shang Dong were both in the Martial Extremity Realm. As twins, they had a special set of techniques that would allow them to borrow each other's strength to display frightening combat abilities. It was a shame they couldn't even display it in front of Shang Xia. They were defeated in a flash!

Seeing as their plan was destroyed by the other party and her children had suffered some grievances at the hands of Shang Xia, Xu Huizhu couldn't hold herself back anymore.

The moment she drew her sword, Shang Xia realized why he had found it familiar before. It was similar to Shang Jian's sword! The only difference was that it was a little shorter.

As the blade left its sheath, the air around Shang Xia solidified. He knew that no matter where he ran, he wouldn't be able to avoid the sword.

From the feeling he was getting, Shang Xia felt that she was at least at the large completion stage of the Martial Intent Realm.

Even so, Shang Xia wasn't bothered by her superior cultivation. It wasn't the first time he fought a Martial Intent Realm cultivator at the large completion stage. To put it bluntly, he even killed a few of them.

Her cultivation was higher than Shang Xia, but when it came to sword techniques, she was far from Shang Xia who had comprehended seven sword intents! After she drew her sword, Shang Xia noticed that there was a serious flaw in her technique despite the power contained in it.

He started to hesitate. He didn't know if he should straight up defeat her, or if he should show her the flaw in her technique. Even though he didn't like the way she and her children were acting, she was still an elder in the clan.

Shang Xia was able to act as he pleased against Shang Dong as they were both from the same generation. If he defeated Xu Huizhu, people might perceive his actions as disrespectful regardless of the reasons behind them.

He was probably the only Martial Extremity Realm cultivator who could be thinking about so many things when up against a Martial Intent Realm cultivator.

Just as he was about to draw his Jade Creek Sword, a light flashed through his eyes. He closed the Embroidered Cloud Case that contained the sword.

“Hold it right here!” A commanding roar came from the skies and a frosty light descended to suppress the sword light surrounding Xu Huizhu’s blade.

“Old man, your son and daughter just got bullied by him and you’re stopping me?!” Xu Huizhu glared at the newcomer as she tried to break free from his restraint.

“Enough! Do you think we haven’t embarrassed ourselves enough? You’re threatening to bully someone of the younger generation with your superior cultivation!” Shang Jian was clearly enraged. He, who had always been a man of few words, said so much this time. He increased the pressure on Xu Huizhu and forcefully suppressed her sword light.

No matter what, they had been together for quite some time now. She could feel that there was a reason behind his action and she quickly regained her calm. However, she didn’t forget to shoot him a glare before calling for Shang Dong and Shang Bei to leave.

From the time she drew her sword, Shang Xia hadn’t been flustered at all. He merely stared at them calmly as the events unfolded.

Only after watching his wife and children leave did Shang Jian turn to face Shang Xia.

He didn’t know what to say.

Luckily, or unluckily for him, Shang Xia was too lazy to hear it even if he did have an explanation for what happened.

Unwilling to make the situation more awkward than it already was, Shang Xia nodded to indicate his understanding before turning to leave.

Shang Jian watched as Shang Xia got further away and he opened his mouth several times but no words came out. He eventually chose to remain silent.

“This kid might not know what happened in the past, and he doesn’t seem to care at all. Haha. From a certain perspective, his attitude reflects most of what the younger generation of our Shang Clan thinks.” Shang Ke appeared out of nowhere and approached Shang Jian.

Staying silent for a moment, Shang Jian muttered softly, “I understand.”

Surprisingly, Shang Ke shook his head in response. “You might not fully understand. You left for more than 20 years! Our clan awaited your return for so long, and your third uncle’s lack of insistence to pursue the matter of you running away from home gave you a proper reason to return. However, that can only provide you with a reason to return. It cannot change how the other members of our Shang Clan look at you. In their eyes, Shang Bo had to lower his head for a youth who didn’t know better. How do you think they feel after learning that? Shouldn’t you know better who was wrong?”

After speaking, Shang Ke chose to leave. Only Shang Jian remained where he was standing motionless as thoughts ran through his mind.

Compared to the flurry of emotions rushing through Shang Jian's mind, Shang Xia couldn't be more at ease.

To him, everything that happened earlier was akin to a joke. He seemed to have taken the role of a spectator as he watched everything unfold around him earlier calmly.

He didn't feel a trace of rage when Xu Huizhu drew her blade against him earlier, and it seemed as though something about him changed.

"Can this actually be considered a breakthrough in the state of mind?!" Shang Xia muttered. Ever since he entered the grand completion stage of the Martial Extremity (Yin Yang) Realm, he discovered the state of having an Ethereal Mind. He discovered that entering that state was commonplace for him now.

Shang Ke once told him that being in that state would be beneficial for him to congeal his divine sense, and it seemed as though he was starting to be able to control when he entered such a state.

When he finally returned to his courtyard, he decided to craft another rank two talisman when he heard hurried banging outside his door.

"Sixth brother, open the door! I'm Shang Fu! Let me in!"

Chapter 230: Triple Loop Coalescence Needle

When Shang Fu came to visit Shang Xia earlier, his hasty knocks made Shang Xia think that someone was out to beat the kid. After opening the door, he saw Shang Fu's mischievous smile.

According to Shang Fu, he actually had nothing important when he came to look for Shang Xia. His main intention was to reminisce with Shang Xia. As the two joked about, Shang Fu casually brought up someone else in the Shang Clan. They were the third oldest among those of the second generation.

Shang Fu was a little disappointed when Shang Xia brushed over the topic. After all, Shang Xia didn't feel too much for people he hadn't seen before.

After the time it took for them to finish a cup of tea, Shang Fu decided to take his leave.

Watching Shang Fu walk away from his courtyard, Shang Xia couldn't help but smile. He was truly amused by the kid's antics. Finally closing the door, he decided to change his plan. Instead of crafting his talisman, he chose to practice his sword art.

Thinking back to Shang Dong and the others, Shang Xia sighed inwardly. The larger the family became, the more complicated the relationship between each other. The way people think would differ greatly too. Shang Xia didn't think too much about it.

Moreover, in a world of cultivation, the way others think doesn't matter. They would have to submit to the will of the strong anyway.

Shang Xia understood why Shang Fu brought up the other member of the Shang Clan, but he wasn't really affected by it. Their thinking was on two completely different levels. Things that Shang Fu found important could barely pique Shang Xia's interest. Stuff that Shang Xia strove for couldn't even be comprehended by Shang Fu in his current state!

...

Returning to his task at hand, Shang Xia continued to practice his Irregular Sword Art. It was a sword art that made use of two swords, and Shang Xia's swords differed in length, easing his comprehension on the dao of distance.

According to the sword manual, one could choose to give up on dual wielding after they reached a certain achievement in the sword art. With only one sword, they could touch upon the essence of the dao of distance.

To go one step further would mean that the cultivator would comprehend the sword intent behind the Irregular Sword Art. That was also what Shang Xia was aiming for. When he comprehended his seventh sword art, he would master the Seven Laceration Sword!

It was too bad he was stuck at the final bottleneck of the Irregular Sword Art.

Initially, he thought that he would have to practice for some time before he caught the essence behind the Irregular Sword Art. Who would have thought that he would reach enlightenment when Xu Huizhu drew her sword earlier?

Strictly speaking, she wasn't the sole reason behind his understanding. Shang Jian's arrival also had something to do with his flash of inspiration.

After thinking deeper into their actions, Shang Xia could confirm that they didn't act that way on purpose. However, it also allowed him to notice a key point when Shang Jian appeared.

Before the enemy could react, one would strike. With the ability to manipulate distance, nothing is too far away!

Holding the Jade River Sword in one hand, Shang Xia stabbed it outwards slightly as a ray of sword light emerged. A hole was pierced in the wall on the other side of the courtyard!

Retrieving his sword, he couldn't help his smile.

In his dantian, the Yin Yang Diagram was rotating about lazily as per usual. However, with Shang Xia's final strike, he broke through the bottleneck. His inner qi transformed rapidly around the Yin Yang Diagram, forming the seventh sword above the Yin Yang Diagram.

At that instant, Shang Xia finally mastered his martial intent, the Seven Laceration Sword!

...

When Shang Xi entered Shang Xia's courtyard after kicking down the doors herself, she quickly discovered the lingering sword qi.

"Huh? This kid actually covered his entire courtyard in his sword boundary. This is weird... Didn't he reach the peak of the Martial Extremity Realm? How the hell is he improving so quickly? It's not like he had broken through..." Shang Xi muttered to herself.

The moment he showed himself, Shang Xi got to the point. "I heard you got into a scuffle with your second uncle's family. Is that true?"

Nodding his head, Shang Xia chuckled in amusement, "Did he look for you to mediate the situation?"

“How did you know?” Shang Xi stared at him in shock. However, her tone quickly changed. “Well... I just hope you can see the bigger picture and came here to make sure you don’t harbor any grudges against them.”

“I understand. Actually, they should be really worried about the situation right now, right? It’s not like they can actually affect me anyway...” Shang Xia chuckled softly.

Snorting softly, Shang Xi snapped at him, “Brat, can’t you put it in a nicer way?”

“It’s not like you don’t know what I mean...”

As the two of them joked around, Shang Xi seemed to have thought of something and she retrieved a jade box and placed it carefully in front of Shang Xia. “Triple Loop Coalescence Needle. Here, your advancement medicine has already been prepared.”

“What?! How did you guys complete it so quickly?” Shang Xia gasped. Opening the case, he saw three silver needles that were nearly five inches long. They were arranged neatly in the case and they were the key to Shang Xia’s promotion to a Martial Intent Realm expert.

Even though the needles looked metallic, they were crafted from many different types of rare ingredients. The moment he stabbed it into his acupoints, the entire needle would melt, releasing all the medicinal properties into his body.

“Of course we completed it quickly. Master Ge Muchen personally made it for us!”

“Why would he do it?” Shang Xia raised his eyebrows in shock.

As the only rank four chemist in the Tongyou Institution, Ge Muchen was extremely well respected.

The Triple Loop Coalescence Needle was only a rank three advancement medicine, and rank three chemists were more than enough to craft a portion of it! There were many rank three chemists in the Tongyou Institution and Shang Xia was surprised that the clan chose to hire none of them. Instead, they went for the only rank four chemist.

Shang Xi shook her head and teased, “Grand swordmaster Shang, your performance was too eye-catching the other day. Have you thought that it was the great chemist that wanted to form a closer relationship with you?”

A bitter smile appeared on Shang Xia’s lips.

However, Shang Xi wasn’t done. Retrieving another item from her Embroidered Cloud Case, she handed it over to Shang Xia. “This is a bottle of Intent Gathering Powder. I got it from the institution too. Luckily, they kept a portion of it in the treasury.” Pausing for a second, she continued, “The Triple Loop Coalescence Needle and the Intent Gathering Powder are provided by the institution. It’s your reward for your contributions in the battlefield between two worlds. Haha, the clan managed to save a lot of money this time! Oh right, that’s not all. The institution promised to upgrade any low-grade weapon you bring to them as long as you provide the necessary ingredients. Their craftsmen are more than capable of improving a low-grade weapon.”

Shang Xia couldn't help but ask, "That's generous of them... However, those are the rewards bestowed by the institution! What about our clan? Shouldn't I be getting some sort of reward too? Hehe."

"Due to our abrupt rise, our resources have been allocated to all deserving members of the Shang Clan. In order to get any rewards, you have to make a suitable amount of contribution." Taking out a jade bottle, she placed it before Shang Xia. "Didn't your Grandpa Ke already give you your reward? You get to choose any martial art or secret art after breaking through! Oh right, there's this too."

Shang Xia sniffed the bottle after popping the cork and a look of surprise flashed across his face. "Essence Separation Liquid! We actually succeeded in creating it?"