

The Heavens 281

Chapter 281: Ranking of the Eighteen Horsemen

“Follow me. There might be something interesting going on nearby!” Mister Bu said before heading in a certain direction.

Shang Xia followed behind the man hastily.

Not too long after they emerged from the forest, Shang Xia noticed a small hill that was covered in a layer of wilting weeds.

Gesturing for Shang Xia to remain silent, Mister Bu carefully climbed up the hill. When Shang Xia arrived beside him, they used the tall weeds as cover to stare at the scene below. Several Scarlet Cloud Horses were strolling about as they munched on the grass below. There was a small fire burning nearby, and several cultivators were huddled around it as they discussed something among themselves.

From their appearance, it was clear that many of them were weary travelers who just completed a long journey.

As they spoke to each other, some of them would look in the direction of the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range as though they were expecting someone else.

Shang Xia’s eyes widened in shock when he saw two familiar faces among them and his reaction was clearly noticed by Mister Bu. “Brat, do you know who they are?”

Without turning his head, Shang Xia muttered, “Eighteen Horsemen of the You Continent...”

“Huh?!” Mister Bu gasped lightly. “How do you know about them?”

Shang Xia chuckled softly, “I’ve heard their name so many times in the past few days that my ears are about to rot from hearing about them.”

Grunting softly, Mister Bu continued, “Oh right, you probably heard that their third in command was captured by Yang Hu. You should be able to guess their objective then. They’re probably gathered here to start their rescue operation...”

Shang Xia noticed several riders coming from another direction, and he quickly ducked into the weeds. “Hehe, they might even start fighting among themselves...”

“How do you know that too?!” Mister Bu stared at Shang Xia in shock.

Realizing something, Shang Xia turned his head to look at Mister Bu with his eyebrows raised. “Mister Bu, are you planning to take these guys under your command?”

At this point, Mister Bu was no longer surprised that Shang Xia had guessed his intentions. He replied Shang Xia with a question of his own. “Why not? Yang Hu has been controlling the Changfeng City for twenty years. Now that he chose to work with the White Deer Paradise and the Changbai Holy Land of the Azure Spiritual World, we need all the help we can get, don’t you think?”

“You’ve been hiding here for so many years. Don’t tell me you don’t have subordinates of your own!” Shang Xia snorted in disbelief.

“Do you think I’ll be able to hide anything from Yang Hu if I manage to bring up my own power?” Mister Bu sneered.

Even though Shang Xia didn’t quite believe the man, he couldn’t do a thing about it if Mister Bu was adamant about not spilling the beans.

Seeing as only thirteen of the Eighteen Horsemen had arrived, Shang Xia knew that they wouldn’t be starting anything soon. Sighing softly, Shang Xia turned to Mister Bu. “Mister, how do you know that they will be of use to us?”

“Do you know their identities?” Mister Bu didn’t answer his question immediately.

Shang Xia thought about it for a second before he continued, “Are you referring to their backer? Because I know now for a fact that it’s the Tongyou Institution...”

“That’s not exactly true. All of them were criminals who were released by the institutions. In order to make up for their mistakes, they were sent out to become part of the Eighteen Horsemen.” Mister Bu explained.

In that instant, a lot of Shang Xia’s doubts cleared up. He continued to ask, “Won’t that mean that they would bear a grudge against the Tongyou Institution? With the current troubles we’re facing, Yang Hu finally found a chance to convert them to his side...”

“It’s just trouble we’re facing. The Tongyou Institution seems to be unable to protect itself any longer. To everyone who thinks they understand the situation in the Tongyou City, all of them feel that the institution is finished. Even the four other institutions feel that the Tongyou Institution is too stubborn and domineering. They won’t be willing to lend their full strength to help them tide through their troubles.” Mister Bu sighed.

Shang Xia wanted to ask some more, but his train of thought was interrupted by Mister Bu. “They’re pretty much all here. Let’s take a look at their preparations before deciding what we should do.”

Shang Xia turned back to the party sitting around the fire and saw several figures coming over.

Looking at the group, he discovered that there were only sixteen of them in total. Who would have thought that everyone would get to their feet when the last person arrived? All of them are wearing a thick cape, and they quickly wore a mask to block off their facial features. From afar, they looked like some sort of cultish presence.

“Huh? Why are there only sixteen of them?” Mister Bu’s confused voice rang in Shang Xia’s ears.

Even though he already knew the last person who was missing, he maintained his expressionless face as he turned to Mister Bu, “Do you know who hasn’t arrived?”

“All of them covered their facial features. I can’t be certain who hasn’t arrived...” Mister Bu replied after a short hesitation.

Shang Xia raised his eyebrows in surprise, but he didn't say anymore. He turned his attention to the gathering below.

At that moment, things played out like Shang Xia said. They broke out into an argument.

Even though Shang Xia and Mister Bu couldn't hear their conversation, the body language they were using made it obvious.

From the way they were standing, Mister Bu could tell that the sixteen horsemen gathered there were split into three groups. One of the groups had four people, the other had five. Those were the two groups that seemed to be arguing the most intensely. The rest seemed to be neutral for the time being.

All of a sudden, one of the leaders of the group tore off his mask and revealed his large bald head that had two scars running across them. He roared with rage, "I said all that should be said. All of you know the repercussions of any choice made. Let's make the decisions now."

He turned to another person and asked, "Boss Sha, what do you say?"

Even though the argument seemed intense earlier, Shang Xia could barely make out a few words. Once the bald man took off his mask, his voice was projected out instantly. It seemed as though their masks weren't ordinary items either. Coupled with their capes, there seemed to be a barrier surrounding them to hide their voices.

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"Tranquility Cape?" Shang Xia muttered to himself.

Mister Bu's voice rang in his ears once again. "Not really. The capes on their body might be able to isolate their voices, but that's not the real Tranquility Cape. The actual Tranquility Cape is said to belong to their third in command. The woman you saw at the restaurant the other day spying on those people should be the daughter of their third in command."

Shang Xia nodded his head silently in response. However, Mister Bu didn't stop there. "That bad guy is the fourth horseman. His cultivation has already reached the large completion stage of the Martial Intent Realm. He's a good fighter."

"All eighteen horsemen were punished by the Tongyou Institution, and they were sent to cause trouble in the Ji Continent to make up for their mistakes. However, most of them didn't like using their real names. They eventually started referring to each other from their ranking order. The baldie is ranked fourth, and the person he called Boss Sha is the leader of the Eighteen Horsemen."

As the words left Mister Bu's lips, the person the baldie referred to took off his mask to reveal his appearance. He was a middle aged man who wore an eyepatch.

Grunting once, there was still a trace of hesitation on his face as he said, "We definitely have to save our third brother. However, what Second Brother and Fourth Brother said makes sense. This... We need to make another plan. Regardless, Third Brother won't be in danger for the time being... Sixth Sister, what do you think?"

A helpless expression appeared on the baldie's face, but he turned to their Sixth Sister for her response.

She didn't think that she would be used by their leader to take on the pressure, but she eventually took off her mask to reveal her pale face. A chuckle left her lips. "You guys can discuss among yourselves. I'll follow whatever arrangements you come up with."

The situation turned awkward in an instant. The attitudes of both the bald expert and the leader were clear. The leader wasn't willing to offend anybody, and the baldie wasn't able to come up with a decision.

"The Eighteen Horsemen of the You Continent might be considered a cohesive team. However, most of the power lies in the hands of the six Martial Intent Realm experts among them. Out of the six, their leader, Boss Sha, might have the highest cultivation level among them, but he's not a good decision maker. Their sixth sister just condensed her divine sense, and she is unable to rally the rest of the group with her limited authority. Usually, the second to fourth ranked members of the Eighteen Horsemen would make the decisions. Now that their third in command has been captured, there's only three of them with actual power in the group." Mister Bu introduced the Eighteen Horsemen to Shang Xia. At the same time, he summarized the power structure to Shang Xia.

Two more people took off their masks at that moment and Shang Xia recognized one of them as Uncle Cen who came to visit Hai Min earlier.

The last person who revealed his appearance looked slightly younger than forty, and he had a gentle demeanor. Shang Xia could tell that the man was probably the most meticulous one among the group from the profound look in his eyes. With the explanation from Mister Bu earlier, Shang Xia guessed that he was the second in command of the Eighteen Horsemen.

Chapter 282: Great Performance

"Fifth Brother, we made our arguments. All of us understand the implications behind what action we will be taking. As long as we choose to serve under the Changfeng City, our problems will be solved. They will release Third Brother immediately too. What's stopping us now?" The second in command spoke, and his tone was shockingly gentle. However, there seemed to be no room for discussion when he made his statement.

Uncle Cen growled, "Second Brother, if we do that, we'll betray the Tongyou Institution. No one will believe a group of traitors anyway. Even if we enter the service of the Changfeng City, they'll use us like how we've been used by the institution!"

The bald expert snorted in response, "As you said, we're also being used right now. No matter which side we stand on, they're only using us to do their dirty work. Why don't we choose the stronger backer anyway? Fifth Brother, don't forget, we're a bunch of bandits!"

“I told you before that the Changfeng City isn’t just working with the Ji Continent. They’re colluding with the members of the Azure Spiritual World! You’re right, we’re bandits and we’re a bunch of criminals. However, we’re members of the You Continent at the end of the day! If we choose to work with the Changfeng City, we won’t be betraying the institution, we’ll be betraying our identity as members of the You Continent!” Uncle Cen snapped.

All of them fell silent as soon as the words left his lips.

Only after some time did their second in command speak up. “When the Eighteen Horsemen was first formed slightly more than ten years ago, the Tongyou Institution managed to establish themselves as the only power guarding the entrance to the battlefield between the two worlds.”

No one knew why their second in command was bringing their history up, and everyone turned to look at him.

“In the years that passed, we have always maintained the number of experts in our group. There were many who gave up, died, and were replaced. Some of them were called back to the institution, and some of them disappeared completely. How many times have our members changed since then?”

Their leader frowned and asked, “Second Brother, what are you implying?”

The man didn’t answer his question immediately. He swept his gaze across the other horsemen before sighing, “In the years that passed, we were the weapon of the institution. We risked our lives countless times. We have already paid for our crimes.” Pausing for a moment, he continued, “In other words, we don’t owe the institution anymore! Have you ever thought about it? None of those who have ever been called back to the institution were rewarded! Have you heard of any of those who left being rewarded with advancement formulas to break through?”

When he saw the looks on the other’s faces, he increased his volume accordingly. “That’s right! None of them were rewarded! To put it bluntly, none of us sinners are trusted by the institution anymore! Even if we return to the institution in the future, we wouldn’t be able to take a step further in our cultivation!”

He turned to look at their leader and continued, “Boss, you have already reached the grand completion stage of the Martial Intent Realm. You’re not even fifty years old this year! You’re more than capable of stepping into the Martial Extermination Realm in the future! Are you willing to return to the institution only to be abandoned?”

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The leader of the group grunted softly, and his expression fell. However, he didn’t say a word in response.

Their second in command then turned to Uncle Cen. “Fifth Brother, the city lord has already made me a promise. The moment we agree to serve them, he’ll do everything in his power to assist us to break through to the Martial Extermination Realm...”

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On the hill, Mister Bu snorted softly, “Nonsense. He’s just lying to them at this point. Yang Hu doesn’t even have a rank four advancement formula. He can’t help them break through.”

Shang Xia nodded subconsciously.

“However... Yang Hu chose to work with the White Deer Paradise. He might have requested for a rank four advancement formula in return! Even so, the herbs required to make a portion of advancement medicine aren’t something he can gather easily. Does he think they’re cabbages that grow at the side of the road? Even if he has some herbs, why would he give them to outsiders like the Eighteen Horsemen?” Mister Bu continued his deduction.

“?” Shang Xia wanted to say something, but Mister Bu’s expression changed slightly and he stopped Shang Xia with a single gesture.

In a low voice, Mister Bu whispered, “Wait, someone is coming.”

Shang Xia wanted to use his divine sense to inspect his surroundings when Mister Bu stopped him yet again. “It’s the people from the Changfeng City. Fuck, they actually surrounded them so precisely. Looks like someone among the Eighteen Horsemen is a traitor.”

Shang Xia caught sight of the threat closing in and he frowned. “Should we warn them?”

“Relax. There’s nothing to worry about. No Martial Extermination Realm expert came along. We’ll decide our next course of action after seeing what happens.” Mister Bu smiled.

Shang Xia finally recalled that the expert squatting beside him was a true blue Martial Extermination Realm expert. Due to their interaction earlier, Shang Xia almost forgot that he was speaking to the expert the Tongyou City hid in the Changfeng City.

As long as Mister Bu decided to protect the Eighteen Horsemen, it didn’t matter how many people the Changfeng City sent. Unless Yang Hu came personally, everyone else would be buried in the sand once Mister Bu made up his mind to attack.

However, the expert seemed more interested in rooting out the traitor who sold the others out to the Changfeng City.

Patting Shang Xia’s shoulders, Mister Bu indicated that it was time for them to change locations. The two of them used the cover of the tall weeds to run out of the encirclement, but they remained close enough to observe the huge battle that was sure to take place.

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“Second Brother, don’t tell me you believe that bullshit! Also, when did you meet Yang Hu to hear his conditions? Aren’t you afraid that the Tongyou Institution will deal with you in the future?” Uncle Cen growled.

Before the second in command could reply, a voice rang through the air.

“A wise man submits to his circumstances. If Brother Liu can try to persuade you, my father will definitely do as he promised. As for the institution, they can’t even deal with their own troubles at the moment. Why would they care about you guys?”

“Who?!” The leader of the Eighteen Horseman, Boss Sha, roared before turning his head to the source of the voice. Countless rays of blade intent filled their surroundings, tearing everything to shreds.

A figure tore through the air before a huge fist made from heaven and earth qi tore a path into the blade qi in the air. The figure drifted slowly back down after he was done.

“I’ve long since heard of Leader Sha of the Eighteen Horsemen. With your Manifestation Collapse martial intent, not many opponents in the Martial Intent Realm can match up to you. Your reputation is well deserved indeed. I am Yang Zhenbiao of the Changfeng City and I greet the Eighteen Horsemen!”

Yang Zhenbiao stood opposite the sixteen experts with an expressionless face.

After he spoke, dozens of experts from the Changfeng City revealed themselves behind him. They formed a tight encirclement around their target.

The horses that belonged to the members of the Eighteen Horsemen present neighed loudly all of a sudden, and they collapsed on the ground in unison. It was clear they had been drugged earlier.

The members of the Eighteen Horsemen present reacted differently. Boss Sha, Uncle Cen, and a few others got ready for battle. However, their second in command, Brother Liu, walked towards Yang Zhenbiao with his fists cupped together. “Young City Lord, please treat them well!”

Uncle Cen roared with rage, “Second Brother, did you leak our position? How dare you betray us and work with the Changfeng City?”

“Shut up! I didn’t betray us! I gave all of us a way out of this!” Brother Liu turned around and snapped.

Uncle Cen sneered coldly in response. “Bullshit! How do you explain this? If we don’t accept your suggestion today, will we be walking out of here alive?”

Brother Liu sank into silence. However, the awkward situation was broken with a laugh from Yang Zhenbiao. “Everyone, please don’t misunderstand. Brother Liu really gave you a chance. If he really wishes to betray all of you, he can rally everyone here to mount a rescue operation on your third brother in the city. When that happens, all he has to do is to tell us your plan and we’ll capture all of you anyway. The only reason we’re taking such a reasonable approach is because he convinced my father that he will be able to convince you guys.”

Turning to look at Brother Liu, Yang Zhenbiao continued, “From the looks of it, his goodwill is going to go up in smoke. I guess it’s still up to me to clean up the mess today.”

Brother Liu gave Yang Zhenbiao a deep bow and sighed, “I hope Young City Lord can show them some mercy. Capture those who are unwilling to serve City Lord Yang, and I believe they will see the light in the future. There’s no need to kill anyone. In the future, we will be part of the Changfeng City’s strength.”

Glancing at Brother Liu from the corner of his eye, Yang Zhenbiao looked at the members of the Eighteen Horsemen they surrounded before sighing, "Naturally. How can I say no to Brother Liu's request? Please."

Brother Liu took a step forward and yelled, "Fourth Brother, Seventh Brother, Eighth Brother, what are you waiting for?"

Those he called out looked at each other before leaving the group. There were a few others who followed to stand behind Brother Liu.

The only person who hadn't moved was the bald expert. Brother Liu glared at him and snapped, "Fourth Brother Zeng, what are you waiting for?!"

The bald expert who was supposed to be a part of them chose to remain in the group at that moment. His expression turned complicated but he shook his head resolutely, "Second Brother, we can always fight among each other due to our differences. Even if we have to part ways eventually, I believe all of us won't blame the other party. However, you didn't ask any of us before making the decision for us as a whole. You shouldn't have colluded with outsiders against your brothers."

"Fourth Brother, you agreed with me previously. Are you regretting your decision now?" Brother Liu growled.

With a resolute look in his eyes, Brother Zeng raised his bald head and glared at Brother Liu. "If we don't agree, it looks like none of us will be walking out of here today, right?"

"Fourth Brother..."

"Since that's the case, there's no need for more discussion. I won't be leaving with you today!" Brother Zeng roared.

"Hehehe..." Chuckling in amusement, Yang Zhenbiao waved his hand. The cultivators who came from the Changfeng City got ready to attack.

Brother Liu yelled, "What are the rest of you waiting for? Boss, Are you going to let the others..."

"Sigh..." A soft sigh interrupted him. Under the shocked gazes of those present, Boss Sha stepped out and cupped his fists towards Yang Zhenbiao. "Are you really willing to give us a rank four advancement formula?"

Raising his hand to top the experts of the Changfeng City, Yang Zhenbiao muttered, "Of course! However, we're still locating some of the herbs required to make the advancement medicine. I hope Boss Sha can wait for two more years."

"I have the time. I hope City Lord Yang doesn't forget his promise today." Boss Sha muttered.

After he spoke, he stood beside Brother Liu with his eyes closed.

Despite his actions, Brother Liu tossed over a glance full of doubt. Regardless, it didn't matter. Seeing as their leader had already chosen to submit, two others emerged from the group to stand beside Brother Liu.

At that moment, only seven of the original sixteen members of the Eighteen Horsemen remained in the middle of the encirclement. They were the bald expert, Brother Zeng, Uncle Cen, Sixth Sister Gu, Ninth Brother Huang, Tenth Brother Zhao, Seventeenth Sister Yuan, and Eighteenth Brother Mao.

Seeing as they were basically done, Yang Zhenbiao's gaze turned chilly. "Take them down. If they resist, kill them!"

Brother Liu hesitated for a second and he wanted to say something. However, he was stopped by Yang Zhenbiao.

Boss Sha remained expressionless as though the fate of his fellow Eighteen Horsemen had nothing to do with him.

Dozens of feet away, Shang Xia sighed softly, "This is a great performance indeed."

Chapter 283: Help From Afar

None of the Eighteen Horsemen were amateurs. Even though a good portion of them chose to submit to the other side, those who remained didn't lose their cool.

With the number of enemies they were facing, the remaining seven experts of the Eighteen Horsemen huddled with their backs against each other.

They tried to fight their way out in one direction, but the enemies they were facing were too strong. They soon found themselves back in a tight encirclement. Luckily, Yang Zhenbiao was still hoping to capture them alive. His order earlier to kill anyone who resisted was there to strike fear in their hearts, but he clearly ordered his men to show some restraint. Otherwise, some of the weaker ones would have already died.

As the battle raged on, Shang Xia turned to stare at Mister Bu. They seemed to be locked in a stalemate as the corners of their eyes twitched in annoyance.

"Aren't you going to help them?" Mister Bu growled.

"You're my senior. You should make the first move. Didn't you wish to take them under your command?" Shang Xia frowned.

Mister Bu shook his head slowly and sighed, "I can't make a move now. The Changfeng City is right there! If I make a move, Yang Hu will definitely discover my presence. When that happens, my strength will definitely be exposed. It will be difficult for me to continue my mission."

Shang Xia raised his eyebrows in shock. From what Mister Bu was saying, he seemed to have a hidden identity in the city. Also, the hidden identity he was using seemed to be well acquainted with Yang Hu. If he was able to remain hidden without exposing his strength, it was possible that Yang Hu had no idea a Martial Extermination Realm expert like him was hiding under his nose!

However, Shang Xia shook his head too. "You know the identity I'm using to stay hidden in the city. I can't make a move either. I believe you know the implications if my identity is exposed..."

Without even mentioning the fact that Shang Xia was Shang Bo's grandson, he was the last person to interact with Kou Chongxue! Every single power was out hunting for him to get a better grasp on the situation!

Were they supposed to watch as the members of the Eighteen Horsemen were killed?!

When they were hesitating, a wretched cry came from one of the seven surrounded. Turning to stare at the battle in unison, they saw a youngster who was barely twenty falling to the ground. He was killed by a Martial Intent Realm expert from the Changfeng City!

With the death of their brother spurring them on, the remaining six felt endless rage burning in their hearts. They lost control of their emotions and the reluctance to go all out disappeared. All of them released their full strength at once. In their eyes, it didn't matter if they didn't leave the place alive. They would drag their enemies down with them.

As they attacked recklessly, the injuries on their body increased steadily.

“If you're not going to do anything, it's going to be too late.” Mister Bu sighed. From the look in his eyes, he was urging Shang Xia to make his move.

Shang Xia knew that he couldn't really watch them die. The sole fact that Uncle Cen and Brother Huang cared about Hai Min ensured that Shang Xia had to make his move. Moreover, those people could be considered a part of the Tongyou Institution's fighting strength.

“Why don't you hide your face? You can suppress your cultivation to the Martial Intent Realm and cover your faces before going out there. You can launch a sneak attack and catch them off guard.” Shang Xia suggested.

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As long as Mister Bu didn't reveal his cultivation at the Martial Extermination Realm, it was possible to not alert Yang Hu.

Staring at Shang Xia incredulously, he snapped, “Do you know how many Martial Intent Realm experts there are in the Changfeng City?! There are eight of them. With the two who entered the city, there's a total of ten! Even if I seal off my cultivation base to the Martial Intent Realm and avoid exposing my identity as a Martial Extermination Realm cultivator, they'll still take me as a cultivator in the Martial Intent Realm! And what's with you suggesting that I go out there to sneak attack them? Aren't you going to do anything?”

“Of course I am.” Shang Xia slapped the bow he was holding before giving Mister Bu some words of encouragement. “You can rest assured and fight all you like. I'll cover you. With the cover I have here, my identity won't be exposed.”

Raising both eyebrows, Mister Bu wanted to scoff at Shang Xia but he couldn't come up with anything. Seeing as the remaining members of the Eighteen Horsemen were about to fall, he could only slap a handkerchief over his face to hide his appearance. With his body bent, he charged silently towards the battlefield.

No matter what, his true cultivation base was at the Martial Extermination Realm. Even if he used the strength possessed by a Martial Intent Realm expert, his battle sense and experience were something that impressed Shang Xia.

Being impressed was one thing. Shang Xia didn't forget to draw his bow.

The moment Mister Bu sprang into action, Shang Xia released the essence metal arrow he had drawn. It pierced straight into the shoulder of a Martial Intent Realm expert from the Changfeng City.

“Ah!” His scream pierced through the air. The person Shang Xia aimed at wasn’t anyone else, it was Qin Yuyuan who had accompanied Yang Zhenbiao the other day in the restaurant. Even though he managed to detect the arrow at the last second and twisted his body to avoid it hitting his vital points, his shoulder was completely crippled. He could no longer feel it, and he fell to the ground in pain.

No one around him expected to be sneak attacked from behind, and the two experts beside him lagged slightly.

Mister Bu made his move in that instant. Leaping out of the weeds, Mister Bu’s palm struck the back of a Martial Intent Realm expert. Spitting out a mouthful of blood, he fell to the ground, never to recover.

The members of the Changfeng City finally realized what was happening.

Yang Zhenbiao looked at the two Martial Intent Realm experts who fell and his eyes turned bloodshot. He brought several men over and yelled loudly, “Who are you and how dare you interfere with the matters of my Changfeng City?!”

The only thing that replied him was the whistling of another metal essence arrow.

The Martial Intent Realm experts around Yang Zhenbiao were prepared, but Shang Xia didn’t aim for him. Instead, his arrow flew towards a Martial Extremity Realm cultivator who was fighting the remaining members of the Eighteen Horsemen.

After practicing his archery in the past few days in the forest, Shang Xia improved significantly. However, he wouldn’t say that he could snipe a Martial Intent Realm expert with 100% certainty. At the very best, he was able to injure them like what he did to Qin Yuyuan. However, when it came to Martial Extremity Realm cultivators, Shang Xia wouldn’t run into any problems.

With the death of the Martial Extremity Realm cultivator, an opening was formed. Fourth Brother Zeng and Uncle Cen weren’t fools. They might not know who was helping them, but they would take the opportunity to escape nonetheless. With the opening close to Shang Xia and Mister Bu, the remaining six Horsemen ran towards them.

Mister Bu moved in perfect harmony with Shang Xi’s arrows. When Shang Xia’s second arrow killed a Martial Extremity Realm cultivator, Mister Bu’s palm came crashing down on another one.

Their target was clear. They weren’t willing to cause a huge number of casualties to those from the Changfeng City, but they wanted to open up a route for the six to escape.

“Fuck! Stop them!” Yang Zhenbiao roared with rage. He soared into the skies and stomped down on Mister Bu.

Watching Yang Zhenbiao rise higher into the skies, Shang Xia shot an arrow over at him.

Already expecting the archer to carry out a sneak attack, Yang Zhenbiao dodged it without much suspense.

As a Martial Extermination Realm expert, Mister Bu had plenty of battle experience. He stepped forward slightly, dodging Yang Zhenbiao's stomp.

Wanting to chase after the masked opponent who came out of nowhere to spoil his plans, Yang Zhenbiao barely took a single step when another arrow came from Shang Xia. He had no choice but to retreat.

The step he took backwards to dodge the arrow gave Mister Bu a chance.

He worked with Fourth Brother Zeng, Uncle Cen, and two other Martial Intent Realm of the Eighteen Horsemen experts to push back a Martial Intent Realm expert of the Changfeng City and several weaker cultivators.

Eventually, he managed to put himself into their group of six.

"Sixth Sister, leave with the rest. I'll stay behind with Uncle Cen to hold them off."

Fourth Brother Zeng roared before getting into position.

Watching the tense situation play out before him, Mister Bu could only cover their escape.

Luckily, the party sent by the Changfeng City couldn't ignore the threat that was Shang Xia's bow. A hidden archer was truly too dangerous.

Whenever anyone tried to circle around Mister Bu and the other two to stop the escaping members, Shang Xia's arrow would force them back.

Fighting while retreating, they eventually managed to enter the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range which was quite a distance away from the Changfeng City. With the complicated terrain and dense coverage, Mister Bu managed to heavily injure another Martial Intent Realm expert from the Changfeng City. Yang Zhenbiao had no choice but to give up.

Chapter 284: Act 2

Shang Xia knew that it was impossible to become a true archer with his short training. He might be able to shoot decently, but he used a large portion of his Origin True Qi to brute force his control over his bow.

He was clearly unable to bring out the full power of the graded bow he looted after killing the expert from the Azure Spiritual World looking to kill him. Of course, with his strength, it was more than enough for his arrows imbued with his Origin True Qi to kill any cultivator in the Martial Extremity Realm or below.

Next, they had to talk about Mister Bu. He was working with Fourth Brother Zeng and Uncle Cen. The members of the Changfeng City instantly felt the pressure against them mounting, especially with Shang Xia shooting arrows from the side.

Shang Xia's ranged assistance caused the members of the Changfeng City to restrain themselves. That was what allowed them to retreat into the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range.

Currently, there were only five of the original Eighteen Horsemen left. All of them were riddled with injuries, and Fourth Brother Zeng and Uncle Cen fared the worst. After all, they were the targets of focus by most of the experts of the Changfeng City.

Looking at the remaining comrades around him, Uncle Cen sighed, "From today onwards, the Eighteen Horsemen of the You Continent will cease to exist."

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Fourth Brother Zeng wanted to say something, but all that emerged from his lips was blood.

Fluster broke out among the remaining members and eventually, a bottle of medicine was handed over to Fourth Brother Zeng.

When that was done, Sixth Sister Gu, who was in the best condition out of all of them, cupped her fists towards Mister Bu. "Many thanks to senior for the help. How can we address you?"

As Mister Bu had already concealed his appearance before entering the battle, none of them recognized him. He waved his hand casually and said, "You can call me 'Mister Bu'. As for the reason behind my assistance... You can consider it my reluctance to see my fellow comrades of the Tongyou City dying in the hands of others."

They stared at him in shock. "Mister Bu, are you also someone from the institution?"

"You can think of it as such..." Mister Bu chuckled.

Not hearing the strange tone in his voice, most of them accepted it as a matter of fact. Well, even if they found it strange, all of them chose to overlook it at that moment.

Uncle Cen's expression turned into one of excitement after learning that Mister Bu came from the institution. "Senior, I wonder if you have news on the institution right now?"

"All of you aren't strong enough to deal with the matters concerning the institution at the moment. Also, you better not try going to the Tongyou City now. It's a death trap at the moment. Now, all you need to do is to stay in place and ensure your safety."

"Oh..." Sixth Sister Gu nodded slowly and muttered, "Many thanks for senior's guidance..."

Sixth Sister Gu wasn't able to see through the intricacies and didn't hear the hidden meaning behind Mister Bu's words. However, Fourth Brother Zeng and Uncle Cen were clearly sharper. They looked at each other silently and due to Fourth Brother Zeng's heavy injuries, he was in no position to speak. Uncle Cen eventually sighed, "All of us are indebted to Mister Bu for the life-saving grace. If you have any instructions for us, we'll carry it out without any hesitation!"

A chuckle left Mister Bu's lips. "The most important thing right now is to locate a quiet place for you to recover. I will definitely need your help in the future. Of course, I'm not commanding you to do my dirty work. Instead, they're missions from the institution."

The inner strife among the Eighteen Horsemen earlier was about leaving the control of the Tongyou Institution. Since those standing beside Mister Bu at that moment chose not to betray the institution, they could be said to have passed the test. Mister Bu wouldn't suspect them at all and he chose to reveal some information.

Even so, his gaze was locked on Fourth Brother Zeng. After all, he admitted to agreeing with Second Brother Liu earlier.

The only reason he chose to stand against the Changfeng City was because their second in command colluded with Yang Zhenbiao and he detested their actions.

As such, Fourth Brother Zeng's position in the matter was slightly problematic. He wasn't truly loyal to the institution. He only helped the rest due to his hatred for Second Brother Liu's actions.

Fourth Brother Zeng's injuries were serious and he failed to notice Mister Bu's subtle actions. However, Uncle Cen seemed to have caught on and he added quickly, "Fourth Brother only wanted a way for us to survive. He never intended to betray the institution."

Nodding slowly, Mister Bu handed a map and a piece of jade talisman over to Uncle Cen. "Alright. I marked out a secret region in the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range you can use to recuperate. I'll look for you in a little bit. If anything comes up, crush the jade talisman and I'll arrive as quickly as possible."

"Many thanks!" Uncle Cen received the jade talisman and kept it carefully before asking, "There was another senior who helped us earlier with the bow. I wonder if it's possible for us to express our gratitude to them?"

Glancing behind him, Mister Bu chuckled, "He's not willing to show himself at the moment. I'm sure you will meet in the future."

Sixth Sister Gu seemed to have heard Mister Bu's intention to leave from the way he spoke and hurriedly added, "Mister, we don't wish to trouble you any further, but our third in command is stuck deep in the Changfeng City. I wonder if we can trouble Mister Bu to..."

Mister Bu interrupted her before he could finish her sentence. "Since Yang Hu captured them, their life won't be in danger for the time being. I will need your help in the future to launch a rescue operation too. Right now, all you need to care about is recovering."

Uncle Cen and the others rejoiced after hearing what he said. They thanked him profusely.

"Alright, we'll call it a day today. We'll see each other soon." When he was done talking, he turned around and his figure disappeared into the snowy white forest.

When they saw him leave, Ninth Brother Huang who had been silent all this time muttered, "Uncle Cen, even though he saved us earlier, why are you so respectful to him?"

Sixth Sister Gu spoke before Uncle Cen could say anything. "He's no ordinary expert. If I'm not wrong, Uncle Cen and Fourth Brother Zeng could tell that he had a special identity."

"That's right. If we're not mistaken, he's an expert at the Martial Extermination Realm." Uncle Cen nodded.

"Martial Extermination?!" Ninth Brother Huang gasped, but he seemed to have realized that his reaction was too loud and he quickly suppressed his voice. "Why would he pretend to be a Martial Intent Realm cultivator?"

There were traces of rage in his voice.

After all, he felt that Mister Bu could have saved all of them if he revealed his true strength. He might even be able to save the life of one of their brothers as they had their escape.

“Little Huang!” Uncle Cen could tell what Ninth Brother Huang was thinking about, and he warned, “All that matters is that he lent us a helping hand. Since he chose to step in to save our lives, we need to express our gratitude. You need to understand that if he chose to remain on the sidelines, we would have suffered a lot more casualties. He might have even chosen to watch us die!”

“Relax... I understand. I just have to release my emotions a little...”

Uncle Cen sighed and chose to remain silent.

All of a sudden, Sixth Sister Gu added, “There might be another reason he chose to hide his cultivation!” Seeing as Ninth Brother Huang had turned to look at her, she continued, “He might be trying to prevent Yang Hu from noticing his presence!”

Fourth Brother Zeng, who was recovering with his eyes closed, opened his eyes slowly. He nodded his head slightly when the attention of the others turned to him to indicate his agreement with Sixth Sister Gu’s deduction.

Sighing softly, Ninth Brother Huang’s emotions calmed down a lot.

“We can’t enter the Changfeng City any longer. Moreover, we have no idea what is going on in the Tongyou City. We can only choose to believe what Mister Bu said. After all, he seems to have some sort of relationship with the Tongyou Institution.” Uncle Cen explained.

However, Sixth Sister Gu seemed to have thought of something. “He’s able to determine that Yang Hu won’t do anything for the time being... Moreover, he chose to hide his cultivation. Wouldn’t that mean that he’s extremely close to Yang Hu in the Changfeng City?”

...

On a small hill some distance away from where the battle took place...

By the time Mister Bu arrived, he noticed a Mutated Rain Swallow leaping off Shang Xia’s shoulders and flying into the skies. Next, it started circling the air above the hill.

“Since you know about the situation with the third in command of the Eighteen Horsemen, you definitely have someone close to Yang Hu. Unless... You have a hidden identity as a spy hiding beside the city lord!”

Chuckling softly, Mister Bu didn’t answer Shang Xia. Instead, he asked a question of his own. “Why are you unwilling to show your face earlier? Is there someone among the five who can recognize you?”

Shang Xia felt that there was no need to hide something like that and he nodded casually. “I’m staying with their thirteenth sister, Hai Min, in the city. I met Uncle Cen and Ninth Brother Huang earlier. However, they don’t know who I am.”

“So that’s it...” Mister Bu nodded. He clearly didn’t expect Shang Xia to give such a straightforward reply. He quickly changed the topic. “Your bird is pretty good. Where did you get it?”

Even though he raised his eyebrows slightly in response, Shang Xia wasn’t surprised that Mister Bu wasn’t willing to answer his question. If he was in the other man’s place, he wouldn’t reveal his secret identity either.

However, a sudden impulse took over Shang Xia and he chuckled, “She’s called Yan Ni’er. I brought her back from the battlefield between the two worlds. I’m afraid she’s about to transform into a Lightning Bird soon.”

Opening his eyes in shock, Mister Bu gasped. “You brought a creature out from the battlefield between the two worlds? Didn’t they say that Yu Duhe was the only fellow who managed to tame a few scrappy birds in there?”

The smile on Shang Xia’s face grew wider and he continued, “Looks like my luck isn’t too bad then!”

Seeing the stupid expression on Shang Xia’s face, Mister Bu knew that the kid was feeling exceptionally proud of himself. He played along and continued asking, “Are you using the bird to do something right now?”

“I knew I couldn’t hide it from you!” Shang Xia smiled. “I got her to follow someone in secret previously. Since you brought me here to watch the great performance, I feel the need to return the favor. I heard that another great play is about to begin. Would you like to take a look?”

Chapter 285: Familiar Voice

In the forest that was covered in a thick layer of snow, two figures flew across the land, leaving behind a fuzzy afterimage. They didn’t leave much traces in the snow as they passed.

A grayish shadow could be seen flying above the blurry figures. Occasionally, the gray streak would release a loud chirp to direct those traveling across the land.

“Brat, how far more do we have to travel?” Even though the two of them were moving very rapidly through the forest, Mister Bu’s voice rang clearly in Shang Xia’s ears.

“I have no idea.” Shang Xia muttered. His voice didn’t seem strained at all as he ran through the forest alongside Mister Bu.

A frown formed on Mister Bu’s face. “Didn’t the bird tell you how far we have to travel?”

With a strange look on his face, Shang Xia replied, “Do I look like I speak bird? I can only communicate with Yan Ni’er in basic terms... Do you think she can talk to me like a normal human or something?”

“Why didn’t you say so earlier?!” Mister Bu snorted. “This old man needs to return to the Changfeng City before night falls... You better arrange it properly...” Pausing for a moment, he continued, “Where in the world is your bird planning to go anyway? If

we're only going there to take a look, I'll head over there myself. You can wait for me here. I move faster alone anyway."

Mister Bu was a Martial Extermination Realm cultivator at the end of the day. He could fly through the air and move a lot faster than if he had to wait for Shang Xia.

"That's not a good idea. There's more than one Martial Extermination Realm expert there! If you fly through the air, they'll notice you before you get close!" Shang Xia muttered.

"WHAT?" Mister Bu's expression changed instantly. His figure faltered unsteadily and growled, "What are you playing at you little brat? Are you crazy? You're trying to spy on Martial Extermination Realm experts at the Martial Intent Realm... Are you tired of living?"

Shang Xia chuckled in response. "Relax. Yan Ni'er is smart. She won't be detected by any of them. Moreover, who would expect a bird to be tracking them?"

"Brat, let me give you some advice. You should stop relying on luck. What if they actually detected your presence? I might be able to avoid their divine sense, but what can you do?" Mister Bu growled with an ugly expression.

Shang Xia expected him to say that and he laughed softly before merging his divine sense with the world around him. Mister Bu could no longer feel his presence. If not for the fact that he was staring at Shang Xia who was running beside him, he wouldn't know that anyone was there.

Staring at the kid from head to toe, Mister Bu reevaluated Shang Xia. He muttered softly, "Your Shang Clan's Providence Chapter doesn't seem to possess a special ability like that... I never saw Shang Bo or Shang Ke doing anything like this..."

"Do you know them personally?" Shang Xia asked suddenly.

Mister Bu released a snort in response. "Hmph, brat, you're still too inexperienced to be fishing for information from me."

Shang Xia couldn't help but snigger silently.

"Since that's the case, we'll take a look. If you reveal yourself on accident, you better not blame me for not saving you." Mister Bu growled. When he was done with his warning, he continued, "Anyway, who is the Martial Extermination Realm cultivator you're tracking?"

"They're from the Azure Spiritual World!" Shang Xia followed up with an explanation of what happened with Chen Sanyang the other day.

An uneasy look appeared on Mister Bu's face and he sighed eventually. "Indeed..."

Shang Xia didn't understand what he meant, but before he could ask about it, Yan Ni'er released a loud cry. Shang Xia raised his head and saw her circling around before descending towards them.

“We’re here.” Shang Xia muttered.

Mister Bu couldn’t be bothered with questioning Shang Xia any further and he ordered sternly, “Stay here and remain hidden. Don’t go anywhere. I’ll go and take a look.”

After he spoke, his figure flashed and he appeared dozens of feet away.

Shang Xia stretched out his hand to stop Mister Bu, but he was a little too late. Mister Bu seemed adamant about doing it alone this time, and he didn’t give Shang Xia a chance to say anything.

Shang Xia understood that the Martial Extermination Realm expert was doing it to protect him and he couldn’t really say anything about it.

Moreover, Mister Bu’s concerns were understandable. Shang Xia’s actions were really too reckless. Was he really capable of spying on them without being discovered? Even the act of getting Yan Ni’er to track them was too risky.

Shang Xia looked in the direction where Mister Bu disappeared and he clenched his jaw. After thinking about it for a second, he decided to ignore Mister Bu’s instructions. He started to walk forward.

After traveling close to a hundred feet forward, he discovered signs of activities behind a distant hill. Just as he was about to take a closer look, a hand reached out from behind a tree to cover his mouth.

“Wu...” Shang Xia wanted to gasp in fright, but no sound came out. He retrieved the Origin Light Dagger and stabbed viciously to the side.

“Shut up! It’s me!”

Shang Xia seemed to have discovered Mister Bu’s presence right as he spoke and he quickly withdrew his dagger. Luckily for the Martial Extermination Realm expert, the dagger disappeared before it could pierce through Mister Bu’s waist.

“What the fuck! You’re an insidious bastard!” Mister Bu released Shang Xia and he stared at the weapon in his palm. “You have so much good stuff on you...”

With a flick of his wrist, The Origin Light Dagger disappeared into his sleeves.

“Look. Are those the Martial Extermination Realm experts you were tracking?” Mister Bu’s voice rang softly in Shang Xia’s ears.

With the cover of the trees around him, Shang Xia looked in the direction where Mister Bu pointed. He noticed Youshang, who tracked him previously along with another black-clothed man. The two of them seemed to be discussing something in secret, and neither Shang Xia nor Mister Bu could hear their conversation. They didn’t dare to extend their divine sense over for fear of getting detected.

Even so, the two of them could tell that the black-clothed man was a cultivator of the Azure Origin World from the way the heaven and earth qi moved around him. The man clearly didn’t cultivate any bloodline powers.

Without a doubt, that was a member from the Azure Origin World who was colluding with the members of the Azure Spiritual World!

From the energy fluctuations around him, Shang Xia and Mister Bu eventually deduced that the black-clothed man was a Martial Extermination Realm expert. There was no way he would be a nameless expert with such a high cultivation level!

All of a sudden, Shang Xia discovered that Mister Bu's expression had changed.

Turning to look at the expert beside him, Shang Xia noticed that a look of suspicion was forming on Mister Bu's face. His lack of composure also caused his qi to leak out slightly.

Before Shang Xia could say anything, the two of them noticed the anomaly. They turned to stare in the direction Shang Xia and Mister Bu were hiding.

"Sneaky bastard, get out here!" The expert from the Azure Spiritual World roared. The resulting sound waves caused Shang Xia's mind to shake.

It didn't matter if it was Shang Xia or Mister Bu. Neither of them could remain hidden any longer.

A bloody mist extended towards Shang Xia as the roar faded, and a giant palm made from blood came crashing down. It shattered every tree in its path and it pressed down viciously.

"Kid, leave!"

That was all Shang Xia heard before he felt a strong force pushing him away.

Before he landed, Shang Xia heard a loud roar coming from Mister Bu as he rose into the skies. With his middle finger and index finger pointing up into the air, Mister Bu extended his arm upwards.

A grayish-white extermination origin emerged and it tore a hole through the giant palm in the air.

Mister Bu's figure trembled slightly and he escaped from the gap in the palm.

Shang Xia finally crashed into the ground thirty feet away and he tumbled a few times. However, he remained silent.

He had merged his divine sense into the world around him the moment he landed. As long as no one sees him, not even a Martial Extermination Realm expert would be able to detect his presence.

Even though Mister Bu wouldn't be able to take the both of them down, it shouldn't be a problem for him to escape.

However, Shang Xia discovered a shocking fact. Instead of running away, Mister Bu was closing the distance between himself and his opponents! There was no doubt about it, Mister Bu was buying time for him to escape! After all, Shang Xia would be nothing but a burden if he remained.

Without hesitation, Shang Xia leaped to his feet and started running.

The moment he started moving, a roar tore through the air. "Painting Finger?! That's the Sima Family's special technique! Hmph! It's someone from the Rose Party! We cannot allow him to leave!"

The voice didn't sound like Youshang of the Azure Spiritual World. Instead, it came from the black-clothed cultivator.

Shang Xia almost fell over as he found the voice slightly familiar.

Turning to look in the direction of the black-clothed man, Mister Bu's voice boomed through the air. "You?"

He didn't have a chance to continue as the two of them continued their attacks. With Youshang's extermination origin tearing through the air, Mister Bu felt his heart palpitating. He also seemed to have lost control of his inner qi.

He had to defend both their attacks while regulating his inner qi. There was no way for him to talk.

Realizing that the situation just took a huge turn for the worst, Shang Xia suppressed his suspicions for the time being and he continued to run.

He didn't manage to get far when a terrifying ray of energy tore through the air. "Brother You, let me assist you!"

A three-colored extermination origin appeared in the distance and it flew straight for the battlefield. It belonged to Liang Shuangren of the Changbai Holy Land, and the situation that Shang Xia thought couldn't get any worse just went to shits.

"Shit!" Shang Xia's heart pounded against his chest and his expression changed.

Chapter 286: Sike

"Evil Remnants?" Shang Xia was obviously capable of telling who they were referring to.

The voice sounded even more familiar in Shang Xia's ears. However, he was still unable to identify the person who spoke!

The only problem was... Mister Bu was part of the Evil Remnants? Shang Xia would rather believe that it was their attempt at framing Mister Bu than to believe their words.

However, why would the three Martial Extermination Realm experts start yelling so loudly during their fight? Were they there to fight, or were they there to quarrel with each other? No one would brother screaming so loudly about stupid facts like that when they were battling. Especially since they were close to the hideout used by the Azure Spiritual World.

When the three-colored extermination origin appeared in the air, Shang Xia's heart sank.

"Shit!"

If Mister Bu was able to forcefully resist the combined attack of two Martial Extermination Realm experts, the arrival of the third one would overwhelm him for sure! He might not be able to run away with his life intact anymore!

Moreover, Shang Xia could tell that in the short exchange between Mister Bu and the other two, all of them were experts who had barely stepped into the Martial Extermination Realm.

The person who was coming was a true expert at the third layer of the Martial Extermination Realm! An existence at that level could decide the outcome of the battle alone! Even if the other two retreated and left the newcomer to deal with Mister Bu, there would only be one ending to the battle. Mister Bu would die!

A feeling of guilt had already overwhelmed Shang Xia at that moment. If not for the fact that he chose to bring Mister Bu over, the Martial Extermination Realm expert wouldn't be forced into such desperate straits!

Of course, he didn't expect Mister Bu to lose his composure after noticing a hidden meeting between Youshang and a mysterious cultivator.

Since things had already happened, there was no point for Shang Xia to regret his actions. In contrast, the best thing he could do was to escape! He couldn't allow Mister Bu's actions to go to waste!

As he was running away, Shang Xia missed the part where the black-clothed man seemed to have gone crazy after seeing that Liang Shuangren was coming. He utilized all his strength to congeal an ice mountain in the air before slamming it down towards Mister Bu.

Mister Bu roared loudly and his extermination origin emerged once again. It crashed heavily against the ice mountain, shattering it to bits.

However, Youshang wasn't there for decoration. He found the opportunity to bypass Mister Bu's defense and struck his palm into Mister Bu's stomach. He heard two loud snapping sounds and it was clear that he broke his opponent's ribs.

Grunting loudly, Mister Bu retreated in mid air to prevent the black-clothed man from following up with another attack.

It seemed as though Youshang and the black-clothed man had practiced their combination attack before. However, Mister Bu realized that the black-clothed man didn't follow up as he expected. Instead, the black-clothed man descended into the forest below before hiding his extermination origin to make his escape.

Before Mister Bu could make sense of the situation, Youshang was back with another attack.

This time, Youshang seemed to be the one to go crazy. He attacked as if his life was on the line, and he wanted to prevent Mister Bu from leaving.

From their actions, it was more than certain that Youshang and the black-clothed man were trying to hide a secret they didn't want anyone to know about.

The black-clothed man made his escape the moment Liang Shuangren started moving towards the battlefield, and Youshang's frenzied attacks on Mister Bu pressured him so hard that they couldn't even talk. Clearly, he didn't wish for Mister Bu to say anything about what he saw earlier.

In fact, it seemed as though Youshang wanted to silence Mister Bu from the intensity of his attacks. Even though Mister Bu saw through their intentions, he couldn't do a thing about it!

As the three-colored extermination origin bloomed in the air above, Mister Bu fell into despair.

"No... I'm going to die if this keeps up. Even if I lose my life today, I have to fuck with them as much as I can!" Mister Bu decided in his heart. He knew that his fate was sealed the moment the three-colored extermination origin appeared. Since there was no way out, he had nothing to lose anymore! Pushing his inner qi to the limit, he summoned his only ray of extermination origin, the Frosted Extermination Origin,

and met Youshang's attacks head-on. He released twelve palms that landed accurately on Youshang's strikes.

Since he was injured earlier, he felt that defending and wasting his opponent's time was the best way to mess with them.

Death was of no consequence to him any longer. If he had to die, he would try to cause the greatest harm to his enemy.

After unleashing twelve palms consecutively, his inner injuries seemed to have gotten worse. He spat out three mouthfuls of blood and retreated even further. Youshang was surprised by Mister Bu's strength as his palm technique seemed to complement his Frosted Extermination Origin well. He frowned when he saw Mister Bu opening up the distance between them, but his pupils constricted when he saw the blood Mister Bu spat.

"Not good!" Seeing the pleased look on Mister Bu's face, Youshang understood what he was planning to do. He panicked instantly. "I can't let him reveal what happened earlier!"

In a state of desperation, Youshang finally revealed his true cultivation level. A second extermination origin emerged and it suppressed the glow around Mister Bu completely.

It seemed as though it was his first time showing off his true strength. However, he couldn't be bothered with keeping it a secret any longer seeing as his secret was about to be revealed.

The palm he released when he discovered people spying on them reappeared in mid air, but this time, it had a sinister glow around it. The palm extended its fingers that resembled five long spears that shot straight towards Mister Bu.

"You wish to silence me..." Before Mister Bu could complete his sentence, Youshang's Blood Finger Spears arrived!

"Brother You, spare his life! He might know something now that he came looking for us! Let me interrogate him!" Liang Shuangren yelled at the critical moment.

How could Youshang agree to his request? He didn't stop as his Blood Finger Spears continued towards their target. Mister Bu managed to shatter two of them forcefully, but he exhausted all his energy as the third spear approached.

Who would have thought that a wave of frost would emerge at that moment to destroy the other three spears?

"Why would you..." Youshang gasped.

Mister Bu, who had submitted to his fate, snapped his eyes open in shock. That was because the person who arrived to save him was the black-clothed man he found familiar earlier!

Just a second ago, the black-clothed man released three Mysterious Frost Swords to shatter Youshang's Blood Finger Spears. At the same time, the shockwaves of the collision destroyed the heaven and earth qi around them.

Mysterious Frost Sword?!

Even though Mister Bu had accepted his fate earlier, his feelings were starting to change in that instant.

He widened his eyes in shock but he paused for a second. Hesitation, shock, and excitement eventually flashed through his eyes in succession.

A complicated look appeared on Mister Bu's eyes when he looked at the black-clothed man.

"Who is he?" Youshang asked with a trace of suspicion in his voice.

However, Liang Shuangren finally arrived before anyone could answer the question. "Huh? Who is this? Why are there so many experts of the Azure Origin World here? Youshang, did they hide here to ambush you?"

Waving his hand to release a formless strike, Liang Shuangren separated Youshang from the black-clothed man.

As the techniques utilized by those from the Azure Spiritual World were filled with their bloodline powers, their attacks would contain a lot more killing intent than Martial Extermination Realm experts from the Azure Origin World. When they got stronger and refined more strands of extermination origin, the killing intent behind their attacks would be a lot more subtle.

When someone at Liang Shuangren's level attacked, it became difficult to tell the difference between him and someone from the Azure Origin World!

Of course, the black-clothed man and Mister Bu found it difficult to withstand the casual strike sent out by Liang Shuangren. Their cultivation level was far from the other party, and they had to give it their all in order to resist the attack!

A giant shockwave swept through the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range, and the clouds in the skies broke into countless pieces. An obvious sign of battle could be seen from far away, and the light produced by the extermination origins decorated the skies with a multitude of colors.

"Heh... Two cultivators from the Azure Origin World. Since you came, there's no need for you to return!" Liang Shuangren growled. He knew that he could take on both of them at the same time, and he shot a casual glance at Youshang. "Brother You, don't tell me you know them?"

Liang Shuangren was no fool. He could obviously tell that something was wrong with their previous interaction. As Youshang was his comrade from the Azure Spiritual World, he wanted to give his friend a chance to prove his innocence.

"Of course not." A snort left Youshang's lips. His gaze solidified and he charged towards Mister Bu after he spoke.

"I'll take them down before we discuss this matter further!" Youshang roared. However, they noticed that after Liang Shuangren arrived, Youshang had retrieved his second strand of extermination origin.

“Haha! Alright! Since you already injured that guy, you can deal with him! I’ll settle the other.” Liang Shuangren chose to deal with the black-clothed man after seeing Youshang’s actions.

Who would have thought that the moment Liang Shuangren moved, Youshang and Mister Bu would join hands to launch a sneak attack against him?

Chapter 287: The Road Is Narrow Among Enemies

As Youshang rushed towards Mister Bu aggressively, Liang Shuangren decided to trust him for now and allow him to deal with the heavily injured Mister Bu. He chose to fight the black clothed expert from the Azure Origin World.

Who would have thought that Youshang and Mister Bu would cooperate so seamlessly at the moment? They unleashed their strongest techniques in unison with Liang Shuangren as their target!

Also, Youshang no longer hid his cultivation at the second layer of the Martial Extermination Realm. A blood-red streak of extermination origin was followed by a silvery-gray one, bringing Youshang’s attack power to the next level.

Mister Bu’s Frosted Extermination Origin also possessed shocking power. He sent out a punch in the air, freezing the air around him. A thick layer of ice formed on the ground below, and the trees surrounding the battlefield turned into ice sculptures.

That wasn’t all. When the two of them made their move, the black-clothed man didn’t remain idle. He pushed himself to the limit and his extermination origin turned into a giant ice sword beside him.

In an instant, the battlefield changed. Mister Bu, who had been surrounded by Youshang and the black-clothed man earlier joined them to launch a deadly assault on Liang Shuangren.

The sudden change in the situation was something Liang Shuangren didn’t expect. Who would have thought that the comrade he chose specially for the mission to the Azure Origin World to work together with his enemies?

“Huh...” Liang Shuangren snorted in the face of the ambush. A trace of self-mockery could be seen on his face, but not a trace of anger could be seen.

As an expert at the third layer of the Martial Extermination Realm, he was able to react even when faced with such a terrifying lineup.

A ray of extermination origin emerged beside him to form a shield of light to block the black-clothed man’s giant frost sword.

Next, he twisted his body suddenly, releasing a huge surge of energy along with his other extermination origins. A huge twin-headed snake appeared in mid air and each head clashed against Youshang’s and Mister Bu’s attack respectively.

“Crack!” The black-clothed man’s frost sword was torn apart as the light shield created by Liang Shuangren’s extermination origin shattered. Heaven and earth qi swept through the lands after the exchange.

After suffering from his injuries previously, Mister Bu clearly wasn't doing too well. His giant fist looked impressive, but it was swallowed by the giant snake without much fanfare.

Surprisingly, Youshang's blood-red spear possessed frightening power. The twin-headed snake swallowed the tip of the spear, but it exploded the next second. The blood spear seemed to have lost some of its power, but it still flew straight towards Liang Shuangren. It sped up in mid air and it went straight towards Liang Shuangren's back.

"You..." Grunting in surprise, Liang Shuangren quickly gathered his inner qi to block the blood spear from striking him.

Youshang's cultivation level might have surprised Liang Shuangren, but the latter still felt that he was strong enough to deal with it. What truly shocked Liang Shuangren was Youshang's second extermination origin. It seemed different from the extermination origin produced and refined by cultivators in the Azure Spiritual World!

He didn't know who this 'old friend' of his was any longer! Close to ten years ago, Liang Shuangren discovered this 'old friend' of his and they were tight ever since.

The scene where they first met flashed across Liang Shuangren's mind. When he received the mission to infiltrate the Azure Origin World, this 'old friend' of his even volunteered to accompany him despite knowing the dangers they would face!

At that moment, he finally understood he was merely a tool that had been used by Youshang!

The screen of inner qi he mustered to defend himself at the last moment was pierced through mercilessly, and Liang Shuangren instinctively raised his hand to block the spear. A hole was torn through his palm. Luckily for him, he managed to twist his head away at the last second and the blood spear scraped his shoulders. Blood sprayed through the air the next second.

Even though Mister Bu and the black-clothed man couldn't do anything to Liang Shuangren, Youshang was different! They injured Liang Shuangren during their first exchange, and the battle that was about to break out didn't seem hopeless after all!

Since things had progressed up to that point, the identities of the three had already been exposed to Liang Shuangren. In order to prevent their identities from being leaked to the outside world, they had to silence this elder from the Changbai Holy Land forever!

The three of them might have reservations about each other, but one thing they could come to an agreement on was that they had to kill Liang Shuangren today!

In order to do so, they would have to give it their all. Even if they had to risk their lives, they had to bury Liang Shuangren in the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range!

No longer restraining themselves, the skies above the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range flickered with a multitude of lights.

Heaven and earth qi rampaged and even with the cover of the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range, the shockwaves still alerted everyone in the surroundings.

...

When Liang Shuangren arrived at the battlefield, Shang Xia lost his ability to spy on them with his divine sense.

The terrifying skirmish that erupted next turned the region around them into a mass of chaos. Even with Shang Xia's guts, he didn't dare to venture near the place.

Even though he had run some distance away from the battle and missed a part of it earlier, Shang Xia realized that the three who were fighting originally teamed up against Liang Shuangren when he arrived.

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Initially, he felt that he was mistaken. However, seeing as the battle was getting more and more violent, he could basically confirm that the three of them had chosen to join hands to deal with Liang Shuangren. Otherwise, the battle would have long concluded.

As for the intricate details that happened throughout the battle, Shang Xia couldn't learn a single one!

Even though he was still feeling a little guilty about dragging Mister Bu into the mess, he had to get as far away as possible. After all, he was a Martial Intent Realm cultivator at the end of the day. With the Martial Extermination quartet going all out, the shockwaves that resulted would be more than enough to turn him into dust.

He could hide his presence to observe the battle, but he had to ensure his safety by staying far away from them. Without hesitation, he started to move further in the direction he came from.

When he arrived at a small hill that was a distance away from the battlefield, he suddenly heard a clear chirp coming from the skies above.

The little bird disappeared earlier when Mister Bu was discovered by the two of them. Now that Shang Xia also managed to escape from the complete shitshow that was going on, she quickly met up with him.

When Shang Xia was about to get Yan Ni'er to look for a clear path to escape, she released several short chirps that caused a frown to appear on his face.

Some people were approaching, and from the looks of it, there was more than one of them!

Yan Ni'er's communication with Shang Xia improved a whole lot since their time in the battlefield between the two worlds, but the things she could tell him were still limited. Her message was simple. Those people who were approaching were attacked by the shockwaves of the battle and when they came, they were running on land. None of them were Martial Extermination Realm experts.

Even though the battle had been raging on for some time, they were in the depths of the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range. For a group of people to arrive so quickly, they had to be spies of the Azure Spiritual World who were hiding in the depths of the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range after passing through the spatial barrier!

After a series of considerations, Shang Xia decided to get Yan Ni'er to lead the way as he avoided running into them. He hid his aura and presence and allowed them to pass. Meeting several Martial Intent Realm experts head-on wasn't the smartest choice he could make anyway.

With his current skills, even Martial Extermination Realm experts wouldn't be able to sense his presence after he merged his divine sense with the world around him, much less cultivators in the Martial Intent Realm. They wouldn't be able to detect Shang Xia unless they actually saw him!

When the group of four cultivators of the Azure Spiritual World passed him, Shang Xia widened his eyes slightly. He recognized two of the four and a trace of killing intent sprouted in his heart.

Those two were the ones who attacked him after he left Kou Chongxue's place!

Of the four, one of them was at the grand completion stage of the Martial Intent Realm, and another had completed his third divine sense transformation. He was a step away from entering the grand completion stage. The other two were in the large completion stage of the Martial Intent Realm having experienced two divine sense transformations. The two he didn't recognize passed through the spatial barrier with Liang Shuangren, and there wasn't much need to introduce the two he had seen before.

As they said, the road is narrow among enemies. They were destined to cross paths.

As for the reason behind Shang Xia's killing intent, he was curious about the ambush he faced when he left Kou Chongxue's secret cultivation grounds. How did they know to ambush him there? He had to get to the bottom of the matter.

When he was still deciding to carry out a sneak attack, the four of them who had just passed the hill stopped.

They stared into the air where the four Martial Extermination Realm experts were fighting and sighed. The region where the four experts were fighting was twisted and they couldn't see a thing.

"What do we do now?" One of the cultivators who came along with Liang Shuangren started to panic. "What in the world happened?! Can Martial Uncle Liang be in danger?"

Another cultivator who was holding a huge axe in his hand muttered, "Elder Liang is a third layer Martial Extermination Realm expert. He has an inheritance from the holy land, and experts from the Azure Origin World in the fourth layer Martial Extermination Realm might not be his match. How can he be in any danger?"

Shang Xia recalled this axe-wielding cultivator as Yuan Gang, and he was one of the two who was at the large completion stage of the Martial Intent Realm.

"Brother Yuan is correct." Another one of the four spoke. Clapping his hands behind his back, a smile appeared on his face, "Martial Uncle Liang will definitely be alright. I wonder who would be crazy enough to fight him anyway? Also, does this mean that our hiding spot is exposed?" With his cultivation at the grand completion stage of the Martial Intent Realm, his opinion carried a lot of weight.

"Brother Lin, your words make sense." Shan Dao, the other cultivator who ambushed Shang Xia previously, spoke.

"Senior Brother Lin, what should we do now? We can't possibly wait here for the battle to end, right?"

“This...” Senior Brother Lin stared into the distance and didn’t know what to say at that moment.

Liang Shuangren’s voice tore through the skies at that moment and he roared at the four of them, “What the fuck are you standing there for? Hurry up! Use the... Use the Essence Harmony... Formation! Get in here!”

Chapter 288: Surprise, It’s Me!

“What the fuck are you standing there for? Hurry up! Use the... Use the Essence Harmony... Formation! Send an attack in here!” Liang Shuangren’s roar caused the four cultivators to panic.

“Martial Uncle Liang... What did he mean by that? Is he calling us to back him up?” Senior Brother Lin scratched his ear in disbelief.

Liang Shuangren’s yell earlier seemed to be disrupted by the fluctuation of heaven and earth qi, but he managed to get a part of his message across.

“He should be telling us to use the Essence Harmony Pulse Formation to send a powerful attack towards him, right?” Shang Dao explained.

From his voice, the four of them could tell that he was in a bad spot.

In fact, it was so bad that he had to ask a bunch of Martial Intent Realm cultivators to back him up!

“Sending an attack in there blindly? What if we accidentally hit someone from our side?” Yuan Gang scratched his head and looked at the others.

Finally, someone else spoke. “Even if we manage to lay down the formation and send an attack in there, our strike won’t be as strong as something unleashed by a Martial Extermination Realm expert. Martial Uncle Liang is at the third layer of the Martial Extermination Realm. How could we be of assistance?”

“Wait. Junior Brother Di and Junior Brother Yuan, you make sense!” Shang Dao looked at the chaotic air in the distance and muttered, “All of us can tell that Martial Uncle Liang might be in trouble. Since he told us to send an attack in randomly, we can tell that he might be facing more than one opponent. He needs our help, and it doesn’t matter who we hit.”

“Yeah...” Senior Brother Lin nodded slightly. It was as though Shan Dao had spoken his thoughts out loud.

Glancing at Senior Brother Lin from the corner of his eye, Shan Dao continued, “Since we can be certain that Martial Uncle Liang is currently facing more than one enemy, we can also say that they’re not as strong as him since he’s able to last for so long under their combined assault.”

“Yeah.” Senior Brother Lin clapped once and took over. “Martial Brother Shan took the words right out of my mouth. Since Martial Uncle Liang needs our help, we’ll do as he says. Our combined strength might be able to reach the standard of a first layer

Martial Extermination Realm expert and that might be enough for him to turn the situation around.”

Tilting his head slightly to the side, Senior Brother Lin revealed a haughty expression as though he managed to see through Liang Shuangren’s thoughts.

“You... Hurry... Hurry!” Liang Shuangren’s voice became more hurried, and he barely managed to force out a few words.

This time, the four of them no longer hesitated. They got into position immediately. According to what they learned in the Changbai Holy Land, they circulated their inner qi before merging them with each other.

“All of you... You... You’ll die today...” Liang Shuangren’s voice seemed to boom through the air. He sounded much more casual all of a sudden, and a trace of excitement could be heard in his voice. It was as though the pressure on him lessened significantly.

Standing nearly forty feet away from the four of them, Shang Xia could also hear Liang Shuangren clearly. He might not know what was happening in the battlefield, but he could tell that Mister Bu’s side held the slight advantage from the strained breaths Liang Shuangren was taking. However, he also knew that once the stalemate was broken, Mister Bu would be in grave danger.

Unless... Mister Bu was on the same side as Liang Shuangren!

Of course, Shang Xia didn’t quite believe it was possible for a third change to happen in the battlefield. He wasn’t willing to believe it either. However, the Painting Finger Mister Bu unleashed at the start of the battle aroused Shang Xia’s suspicions.

As someone who had experienced the weaker versions of the Painting Finger against members of the Rose Party, Shang Xia clearly recognized the move.

A conflict was raging in Shang Xia’s heart at the moment. He eventually managed to keep his head clear, and he looked at the problem objectively. He didn’t interfere with the cultivators of the Azure Spiritual World when they were setting up their formation. Instead, he patiently waited for them to link their inner qi.

His divine sense might not be able to spy on the battle with the four Martial Extermination Realm experts, but it was more than enough to detect what the four Martial Intent Realm cultivators of the Azure Spiritual World were doing. He could feel that the four of them finally fused into a single entity.

It seemed as though their inner qi broke through the upper limits of what was achievable by a Martial Intent Realm cultivator. Shang Xia could see that a blurry halo appeared above the four of them, and the space started to tremble.

Shan Dao, who was the strongest among the four, stood at the very front. He slowly unsheathed his sword.

Their merged qi entered Shan Dao’s blade slowly, and a terrifying pressure descended on Shan Dao’s physical body.

With all his strength, he sent out a single strike towards the chaotic battlefield. However, that one attack seemed to suck all the energy out of their bodies at once. A huge blade made of heaven and earth qi flew towards the battlefield, and it seemed to resemble a single ray of extermination origin.

From the looks of it, Shan Dao wasn't far from breaking through to the Martial Extermination Realm.

The instant the blade emerged and flew towards the battlefield, Shang Xia knew that his opportunity had arrived!

With the Scarlet Star Spear in hand, he leaped over the hill and released the fourth move of his Providence Spear Art, Void Evasion. It was the strike that was the hardest to avoid, and with their weakened states it was the perfect attack.

The secret art that allowed the four of them to display the power of a Martial Extermination Realm expert proved to be their downfall. After expending most of their energy in the strike, they were basically wooden targets waiting for Shang Xia to reap their lives.

With a single stab, the tip of Shang Xia's spear went straight into Yuan Gang's back. As the tip emerged from his chest, Yuan Gang lowered his head slowly with blood pouring out of his mouth. Darkness started to encroach on his vision.

"I... I... What's happening to me?" Those were the last words he could mutter before his vision went completely black. He fell to the ground, never to get up again.

"Brother Yuan!"

"Junior Brother Yuan!"

Shan Dao and Senior Brother Lin roared with rage, but they couldn't do a thing as Yuan Gang fell before their eyes.

Since their secret formation had to be maintained by four Martial Intent Realm experts, Yuan Gang's death signified that they wouldn't be able to use the formation any longer.

Fortunately for them, the formless blade that they sent towards the battlefield wouldn't dissipate because of that. However, they would suffer a heavy backlash from the sudden broken connection.

Shan Dao suffered the most as he took on the brunt of the backlash. The others felt the inner qi in their body fluctuating violently, but they could calm it down in a second. However, time wasn't on their side at the moment. After killing Yuan Gang, Shang Xia's second attack arrived!

He needed to kill another one before they recovered!

With time of the essence, Shang Xia used the fastest strike he comprehended, Lightning Stonefire!

Of the moves he comprehended, it possessed the weakest offensive ability. However, it was the fastest!

The Scarlet Star Spear flashed like lightning and it went towards Junior Brother Di who had the next weakest cultivation. The last thing Junior Brother Di saw was a frosty light that drew a perfect arc across his neck.

With his eyes wide open in shock, the light slowly faded from them.

Due to their limited cultivation level, Shang Xia managed to instakill the two of them.

However, his actions weren't without consequences. Senior Brother Lin and Shan Dao were enraged. Releasing a guttural cry, hatred filled Senior Brother Lin's face. He glared at Shang Xia, wanting nothing more than to tear the person before him into pieces. His originally calm and dignified demeanor was nowhere to be seen.

"It's you!" Shan Dao yelled as he recognized Shang Xia.

In the past, his ambush failed. He even allowed Shang Xia to kill one of their members before escaping!

He wasn't just angry at the whole situation. He felt utterly humiliated!

Watching two of his junior brothers close their eyes for eternity, he ignored all his injuries as he swung his blade at Shang Xia.

Even if he had to die, he wanted to drag Shang Xia with him!

His crazed and desperate attack couldn't be more well-timed. In order to ensure that every one of his strikes slayed his enemy, Shang Xia didn't hold back on his Origin True Qi expenditure. After killing the two of them, he had to regulate his inner qi and it was the perfect time for Shan Dao to launch his counterattack.

Chapter 289: And Another One

Shan Dao's crazed attack actually allowed him to grasp the greatest opportunity to deal damage to Shang Xia!

With him jumping into action at that moment, Shang Xia would be suppressed by his maniacal attacks. He couldn't ignore Senior Brother Lin who was also an expert at the grand completion stage of the Martial Intent Realm!

Under Shan Dao's frenzied attacks, Shang Xia had to take two steps back to steady himself. By the time he found his footing, Senior Brother Lin joined in the battle, forcing Shang Xia into a dangerous situation.

They might have forced him into a corner, but not a trace of panic could be seen in his eyes. Facing Senior Brother Lin's first strike, Shang Xia retreated while dragging his spear through the ground. He created a huge space between himself and the cultivators of the Azure Spiritual World.

Even though that gave Shan Dao more time and space to gather his inner qi, Shang Xia gained the same opportunity! He retrieved two completed talismans from his Embroidered Cloud Case and tossed them at the two.

One shouldn't forget that Shang Xia was an actual rank two talisman master!

Even though talismans only contained a certain amount of power, Shang Xia created them with his special martial intent! They were sword talismans that had never been seen before!

Even though the power contained in them was far from a rank three talisman, they contained Shang Xia's unique sword intents.

In mid air, one of the talismans transformed into a rain of sword light that fell on Senior Brother Lin. That was his Cloud Drizzle Sword Talisman!

The other was a little more special. It was something Shang Xia created after fusing fire and ice qi with softness and strength qi. The power contained in the talisman could be said to have reached the peak of any rank two talismans.

“Hmph, petty tricks!” Senior Brother Lin yelled and he drew a circle around himself with his sword. A blood-red line appeared and it expanded slowly around him. The rain of sword light fell into the bloody ring that was growing bigger and bigger and they eventually disappeared.

Compared to Senior Brother Lin who used some sort of special technique to nullify Shang Xia’s sword talisman, Shan Dao’s approach was a lot more tyrannical.

With a loud grunt, his blade slashed downwards, cleaving the sword intent that emerged from the jade talisman in two. He didn’t even care about the remnant energy battering against him as he charged straight at Shang Xia. He didn’t wish to give Shang Xia an opportunity to catch his breath.

Shang Xia expected such an ending. His sword talismans were strong, but the two of them were freakishly powerful cultivators at the Martial Intent Realm. Shan Dao was at the grand completion stage of the Martial Intent Realm and there was nothing much to say about him, and Senior Brother Lin completed three divine sense transformations and was a step away from the grand completion stage! Those puny talismans weren’t going to stop them! However, Shang Xia’s main goal was to waste their energy and time by distracting them with talismans.

Raising his Scarlet Star Spear, Shang Xia’s attitude changed. A serious look returned to his face and facing Shan Dao who had entered his attack range, his spear stabbed out ruthlessly.

Shang Xia growled once as a deep wound that reached down to his bones appeared under his left rib cage. Blood flowed down his body and stained his clothes a deep crimson.

Shan Dao, who had just arrived before Shang Xia, widened his eyes in shock and fear.

In the instant Shang Xia stabbed his spear forward, fear filled Shan Dao’s heart. He felt as though the world was collapsing on him.

The giant phantom of a praying mantis behind Shan Dao was supposed to fuse with his blade. However, it started to act differently at that moment. It lunged in the opposite direction of Shan Dao.

Feeling a wave of irritation rising in his heart at that moment, Shan Dao nearly spat out a mouthful of blood. His blade almost made contact with something, but it eventually missed its target.

Before he could reflect on what happened, a sharp pain shot up the left side of his body. A bloodied hole appeared in his shoulder as blood sprayed out like a fountain. Even though he was wounded, he didn’t notice how it happened!

Of course, it had something to do with Shang Xia. But from the looks of it, his spear hadn’t even connected!

Luckily for him, the evasion of the praying mantis behind him earlier acted like some sort of warning. Due to the abnormal reaction of the giant phantom he created, he shifted his trajectory slightly. If he went through with his original attack, the wound that was slightly above his heart at that moment would have gone straight through it!

Facing two experts at their level, Shang Xia didn't dare to be careless. He had been making strategic retreats in order to recover enough energy to unleash his attack. Finally gathering enough inner qi, he released the fifth strike he comprehended, the Woundless Spear!

Even though it was called the woundless spear, the hole in Shan Dao's shoulder was self-explanatory. It was terrifyingly strong!

When Shang Xia unleashed the strike, he would injure himself before the enemy.

He only used it once in the past. As such, he hadn't been able to deepen his understanding of the strike and improve on it.

The reason he chose to use his fifth strike was because of the effect it had when he used it on Youshang when he was being followed the previous time. It was able to force Youshang, a Martial Extermination Realm expert back, it would definitely be able to cause considerable damage to a Martial Intent Realm cultivator.

Of course, Shang Xia understood that his fifth strike wasn't exactly omnipotent. When he unleashed it on Youshang previously, he suffered more damage than the Martial Extermination Realm expert.

Shan Dao, who was his target this time, managed to avoid it slightly with his battle instincts.

Circulating his inner qi, Shang Xia closed the wound on his body. He experienced it before and he knew that sealing his wound would only provide a temporary solution. Recovering would depend on how strong his physique was.

Of course, the same applied to Shan Dao.

Shang Xia saw how Shan Dao was tapping on various points on his body while tossing medicine into his mouth like they were candy. No matter what he tried, he would only be able to stop the bleeding at best. The injuries would heal unless he took some time off to rest. Naturally, there was no time to rest in such an intense battle.

Even though Shan Dao was injured, Senior Brother Lin wasn't! He took Shan Dao's place and started to attack Shang Xia.

With Shan Dao's injuries, Senior Brother Lin could tell that if Shang Xia struck at that moment, his comrade would be done for. He had to do something and he drew a blurry arc in front of him with his sword. A gray sword light forced Shang Xia to retreat.

Advancing towards Shang Xia, Senior Brother Lin quickly placed himself between his opponent and the already injured Shan Dao. He unleashed his sword technique, causing a wave of frost to rush towards Shang Xia.

The sword technique he was using was called the Avalanche Sword Art, and it was part of an inheritance he received from the Changbai Holy Land. It possessed tyrannical might.

Shang Xia's expenditure of inner qi couldn't be said to be negligible after killing two Martial Intent Realm cultivators and heavily injuring Shan Dao. With Senior Brother Lin pressing down with his sword art and his divine sense, Shang Xia felt a sense of pressure like never before. Helpless, he could only choose to retreat once again.

Watching his opponent retreat, Senior Brother Lin didn't let up. He even started pushing his divine sense to the extreme as the heaven and earth qi around him fluctuated wildly. Joy filled his heart as

he felt his cultivation slowly increase. Shang Xia was like a stepping stone he could use to push himself to the peak of the Martial Intent Realm before forming his extermination origin!

Even though his opponent killed two of his comrades and heavily injured another one, everything would be alright if he managed to turn the situation around.

The more he thought about it, the stronger his attacks became. The feeling of breaking through grew stronger! Was he really going to experience a breakthrough?

Examining himself, Senior Brother Lin felt a wave of comfort washing through his mind. His thoughts cleared up and the world before him seemed to have turned a little brighter as he submerged himself into his thoughts.

If he managed to use the opportunity to comprehend his martial intent, he would step through the gates and enter the grand completion stage of the Martial Intent Realm!

It was a shame the situation at hand didn't allow him to do so. He was trying to suppress his enemy, the sinner who killed two of his comrades and heavily injured another!

Who would have thought that Shang Xia would give up on their fight at that moment? Senior Brother Lin wanted to use the battle to comprehend his martial intent, but Shang Xia turned to flee.

What the fuck?! He ran?!

Senior Brother Lin was right at the edge of his comprehension. Just a little more and he would have succeeded. Who would have thought that Shang Xia would take the opportunity when he was slightly distracted earlier to run?

The feeling Senior Brother Lin got was probably comparable to a man on his wedding night who was about to reach his climax when the bed collapsed. Senior Brother Lin roared with rage. "Stop right there, get back here!"

Just as he was about to give chase, he realized that he wasn't as fast as the kid. Even if he had the ability to catch up, he wouldn't dare to chase. He could only release his enraged cry, but all he received in return was a stare from Shang Xia like was looking at a dumbass.

"You... You're going too far! No, wait!" Senior Brother Lin seemed to have recalled something and he quickly turned to look behind.

"Oh no, Brother Shan Dao!"

When he turned to look at Shan Dao, he was greeted with a reluctant gaze from his fellow comrade. Not a shred of vitality was left in his body and a small flying knife could be seen sticking out from his neck.

That was a low-grade weapon, the Fleeing Wind Dagger he obtained when he killed the members of the Rose Party in the Mountain and Sea Fantasy Spiritual World.

Chapter 290: Courting Death With a Passion

When Senior Brother Lin was immersed in the miraculous feeling that almost allowed him to break through earlier, he completely forgot about Shan Dao who was behind him. He didn't even notice when Shang Xia threw out his flying knife.

It went without a doubt that Shang Xia had been toying with Senior Brother Lin the whole time. Senior Brother Lin might be from the Changbai Holy Land, but it seemed as though his battle experience was a little lacking.

Moreover, Shang Xia's goal was to kill Shan Dao anyway. He had to take revenge for the ambush the other day.

As a direct disciple of the Changbai Holy Land, Senior Brother Lin was extremely proud of his status. However, all that ego and pride was ground to dust by Shang Xia who killed three of his fellow disciples in front of him.

Senior Brother Lin, who was a step away from entering the grand completion stage of the Martial Intent Realm, felt his body shivering violently as all the energy left him.

Luckily for him, he managed to maintain his last shred of rationality. He knew that it wasn't time to be crying over the death of his comrades. He quickly acted to retrieve their bodies.

Even though the battle between the Martial Intent Realm cultivators had ended, the Martial Extermination experts in the distance were still going strong. Liang Shuangren was still at a massive disadvantage and he needed to bring his fellow cultivators over to utilize the Essence Harmony Pulse Formation.

Reaching down to pull out the flying knife stuck in Shan Dao's throat, a sharp whistle came from behind, causing the hair on his body to stand erect.

Luckily for him, he was prepared for any type of ambush. The moment he discovered the threat, he twisted his body to the side.

The metal arrow that appeared from the depths of the forest around them pierced straight through Shan Dao's corpse. The strong force dragged the body several feet across the ground.

Several dozen feet away, Shang Xia lowered his bow and released a soft sigh. He was lamenting the fact that his sneak attack missed, but he didn't stop there. He started rushing towards Senior Brother Lin.

The arrow was supposed to bury itself deep in Senior Brother Lin's body, but the man was clearly prepared for Shang Xia's sneak attack.

After the short break he received when Senior Brother Lin collected the bodies of his comrades, Shang Xia managed to recover slightly. He wasn't afraid that he would be suppressed mercilessly like before.

Moreover, the arrow he shot out earlier had a second purpose. He wanted to stop Senior Brother Lin from retrieving his Fleeing Wind Dagger.

The dagger might be small, but it was still a low-grade weapon nonetheless. Shang Xia wasn't a wastrel who wasted resources!

It didn't take long for Shang Xia to close the distance between them. He didn't slow down as he sent another arrow flying towards Senior Brother Lin.

Ready to take the attack on, Senior Brother Lin sliced it in half. However, the remnant energy in the arrow forced him back. With Senior Brother Lin distracted, Shang Xia moved even closer.

“That... That’s Yin Lian’s Bow!” Senior Brother Lin gasped as a twisted expression appeared on his face.

Facing the fast-approaching Shang Xia, Senior Brother Lin knew that he wouldn’t be able to defeat such a monster. Even though he wanted nothing more than to tear Shang Xia to shreds, his last remaining bit of rationality told him to run.

After missing his first arrow, Shang Xia didn’t expect the next to hit. However, stalling Senior Brother Lin was enough. The loot on the corpses belonged to him and he couldn’t allow Senior Brother Lin to take them away.

It went without saying that Shang Xia had noticed that the other three were carrying a variety of precious items on them. Just their weapons alone were worth a huge fortune. All of them were carrying graded weapons and Shang Xia couldn’t allow such goodies to slip away from under his eyes.

When Shang Xia was about to enter striking range, Senior Brother Lin finally made the rational decision to leave. In order to save himself, he couldn’t retrieve the corpses of his fellow martial brothers.

Shang Xia didn’t plan to hunt Senior Brother Lin down. Instead, he went to retrieve his Fleeing Wind Dagger immediately. After grabbing his dagger, he discovered that Shan Dao’s blade was missing! Earlier, Shang Xia noticed that his blade was a mid-grade weapon.

Sweeping his divine sense across the corpse, he discovered that everything was missing! There could only be one explanation. Senior Brother Lin retrieved them earlier when he grabbed Shan Dao’s corpse.

A trace of irritation filled Shang Xia’s heart. If he acted a little earlier, he might have been able to stop Senior Brother Lin from taking away the items.

The person who was supposed to possess the largest fortune among them was Shan Dao, but Shang Xia only managed to retrieve his dagger from the corpse.

The items on the other two experts might not have been retrieved by Senior Brother Lin, but they didn’t possess a spatial artifact. The most valuable items on them were Yuan Gang’s axe and Junior Brother Di’s short hammer.

Shang Xia’s sneak attack was too successful. Junior Brother Di died without drawing his weapon. However, when Shang Xia tried sending some of his Origin True Qi into the weapon, he felt a sense of rejection.

If he was unable to send his inner qi into the weapon, it would be less useful than an ordinary sword he picked up at the side of the street. Unable to decipher the reason behind the rejection, Shang Xia could only store it in his Embroidered Cloud Case to bring it back for future research.

Luckily for him, he was able to use Yuan Gang’s axe with no problems. The axe was a low-grade weapon, and Shang Xia took it as his consolation prize. At the very least, he received something after killing the three of them.

Naturally, Shang Xia was probably the only person who could say something like that. Receiving two graded weapons would make anyone else jump for joy. If Shang Xia's attitude was seen by anyone from the five institutions, they would probably drown him in spit.

When everything was done, Shang Xia waved his hand and tossed the three corpses into a nearby hole in the ground. When he was done, he turned to look at the chaotic battlefield in the distance.

From the time Shang Xia carried out his sneak attack to the time Shang Xia disposed of the three bodies, not too much time had passed.

With the intensity of the battle going on among the Martial Extermination Realm experts, they might not even notice what happened over at their side.

Dealing with the Martial Intent Realm cultivators of the Azure Spiritual World, Shang Xia didn't know what to do next. He couldn't help the Martial Extermination Realm experts on his side even if he wanted to. After all, he was unable to observe the situation happening in the huge battle between the four.

He didn't even know that out of the four Martial Extermination Realm experts who were fighting, which of the other three were on his side. The only enemy he knew was Liang Shuangren.

Whoever it was up there would be able to notice him eventually.

Indeed, not too long after, he heard an enraged cry coming from Liang Shuangren.

With a confirmed enemy yelling his guts out, Shang Xia knew that the only smart move was to retreat. Also, from the urgent cries for help from the group of Martial Intent Realm cultivators of the Azure Spiritual World, Shang Xia could tell that Liang Shuangren wasn't in a good spot.

Since Shang Xia's confirmed enemy was in a pinch and he didn't know who his allies were, he could only run as far as he could before waiting for the situation to clear up. Leaving would allow him to stay safe while not affecting the outcome of the battle.

However, the moment he turned around to leave, a bad premonition filled his heart.

Mister Bu's identity might be suspicious, but Shang Xia couldn't deny that the expert took care of him previously. If not for the fact that Mister Bu pushed him away when they were discovered, he might have already lost his life to the cultivator of the Azure Spiritual World.

Of course, the main trust Shang Xia had in Mister Bu came from the Tongyou Institution. They were the ones who sent him to meet Mister Bu in the first place!

Thinking up to that point, he turned back to look at the chaotic battlefield once again. He measured the distance visually and realized that even after drawing his bow to the maximum, he wouldn't be able to shoot his arrow at anyone fighting. Even if it was possible to shoot an arrow in there, it would be useless against a Martial Extermination Realm expert.

The most likely scenario was that the arrow would be ripped to shreds by the shockwaves from their clashes long before it reaches the battlefield.

Realizing there was nothing more he could do at his current location, he leaped off the hill and did something absolutely insane. He started running towards the battlefield.

The distance between him and the fight wasn't large, but Shang Xia found it difficult to make much progress. Strong winds pushed him back as the chaotic fluctuations of heaven and earth qi obstructed his way.

When he tried his hardest to approach, a loud blast rang through the air and he nearly lost control of his inner qi. If not for the fact that his foundations were solid, he might be crippled by the sudden disturbance. Regulating his inner qi, he started to push himself forward.

When he started feeling the impact of the shockwaves on his body, he finally made out a few of the figures fighting above.

Glancing at the four of them once, Shang Xia had no choice but to take a few steps back in retreat. He discovered that his inner qi was exhausted after a short glance at the battle!

It was the effect of the various extermination origins controlled by the four of them.

However, that also told him one important fact. He was close to the heart of the battle if their extermination origins could affect him so heavily!

To put it bluntly, he was able to notice them, but any of the four would be able to kill him with a single thought! Gritting his teeth, Shang Xia chose to risk it all.

Gripping his Scarlet Star Spear in his hand, he barged his way into the area covered by their extermination origins. He locked on to Liang Shuangren as soon as he could before pushing his Origin True Qi to the limit to release one strike.

There was only a single move Shang Xia knew that could cause damage to Martial Extermination Realm experts. That was his fifth move, the Woundless Spear!

After unleashing his strike, Shang Xia didn't even have time to keep his spear in his Embroidered Cloud Case. Holding his spear, he fled hastily from the scene.

The instant he left the destructive region, a new wound appeared under his right rib. The wound was once again seven inches long and one inch deep.

His clothes were stained an even deeper shade of red.