

## The Heavens 351

Chapter 351: Spirit Sword Gourd

“Divine Killing Spear?” Shang Xia’s heart trembled slightly when he heard the name. The words on the Crimson Soul Tablet changed once again.

Martial Intent: Divine Killing Spear

Prerequisite Secret Art: Providence Chapter

Prerequisite Martial Art: Nine Providence Spear

Requirement: Sufficient Heaven and Earth Qi

Medicine Required: Startling Soul Needles

Special Requirement: Man and Heaven Synergy Chapter

Evaluation: Exterminates Both the Physical Body and Soul.

The change caused Shang Xia’s eyes to widen slightly in shock.

Before he could take the time to examine the changes, the words started to transform once again. A new set of words seemed to want to emerge.

Realizing that the Crimson Soul Tablet was about to start developing a rank four advancement formula for him, Shang Xia felt a closer level of fusion with the tablet. Even though the feeling lasted for a mere second, Shang Xia was sure that the Crimson Soul Tablet achieved a deeper fusion with his soul. That was because he felt something coming from the tablet.

It sent a simple message to him, ‘danger’! Even though it was a simple word, Shang Xia understood what it was trying to tell him. If it carried out the deduction for a rank four advancement formula that suited Shang Xia the best, it would use up a ton of energy. It would bring the Crimson Soul Tablet to the edge of destruction!

Without question, the amount of energy required to make a deduction increased with his cultivation level. He lucked out during the deduction of his third martial intent, the Divine Killing Spear - Heaven Startling Spear previously - as he had the world origin from the White Deer Paradise to restore the Crimson Soul Tablet.

The endless tide of world origin was gone, and he couldn’t draw upon it to lessen the destruction to his Crimson Soul Tablet.

After snapping back to reality, Shang Xia forcefully stopped the Crimson Soul Tablet from whatever it wanted to do. Listening to Shang Xia, it started to calm down.

He also discovered the reason behind the Crimson Soul Tablet’s activation earlier. He had two rank four advancement formulas in his mind, and it would naturally build on the one he was more compatible with!

Strangely enough, it managed to give him a warning earlier. During the connection he had with the Crimson Soul Tablet, he also discovered something weird. It managed to gather Shang Xia’s divine sense and turn into something like a clone that possessed Shang Xia’s consciousness and transmitted its thoughts to him.

“Clone?” The thought flashed in Shang Xia’s mind and he turned to look at Kou Chongxue’s clone that wasn’t too far away.

He also turned to look at the Hidden Frost Sword that was swinging casually in the patriarch’s hand.

Shang Xia clearly recalled how the Hidden Frost Sword carried Kou Chongxue’s fate dipper and allowed him to transform into a clone. By that logic...

Could the Crimson Soul Tablet also be a divine weapon?!

The thought barely formed in his mind when he felt that something was off.

Even if it is, how can it perfect advancement formulas and come up with martial intents to guide my cultivation? If divine weapons were able to do that, the Tongyou Institution wouldn’t be lacking in inheritances!

Shang Xia shook his head silently before throwing away those random guesses he had. He turned his attention back to Kou Chongxue.

Even though many thoughts ran through his mind, a mere second had passed in the real world and Kou Chongxue barely noticed him zoning out.

“Hehe, you seemed to have figured it out. Do you know why I chose to help you change the name of that move?” Kou Chongxue snickered.

Shang Xia was slightly confused, but he wouldn’t suss himself out by asking for the explicit reason at that moment. He chose to cover it up with a peal of embarrassed laughter.

Kou Chongxue continued, “There’s no need to think too much about it. Your move definitely damaged my divine sense slightly earlier. Of course, you didn’t affect me too much. I’ll be able to recover in a few days.”

Shang Xia felt his heart trembling at Kou Chongxue’s revelation. His spear actually injured the Martial Dipper Realm patriarch before him! It was no wonder the patriarch renamed it for him!

“Then again, if your spear possesses the ability to damage my divine sense, you would be able to cause Martial Extermination Realm cultivators huge problems! Not to mention the fact that your attack can go through space...” Kou Chongxue added.

Shang Xia reacted quickly this time. “Many thanks for Patriarch Kou’s praise! I will continue to work hard to perfect my move!”

Nodding in acknowledgment, Kou Chongxue muttered, “That’s the spirit you should have. It would be great if you manage to enter the Martial Extermination Realm in a year or two!”

Seeing as he had almost wrapped things up, Kou Chongxue coughed twice and brought up a new topic. “Kid, you managed to gain huge merits this time. Pick any advancement formula you like. You can choose any as long as it’s compatible with you. It doesn’t matter if it’s from your Shang Clan or from the Tongyou Institution. The institution will spare no expense to create a set of advancement medicine for you.”

With a massive grin appearing on his face, Shang Xia quickly thanked Kou Chongxue. “Many thanks, Patriarch Kou, for your support!”

Kou Chongxue nodded slightly but he hesitated slightly before muttering, “We have other uses for the Multi World Anchoring Flag... I’ll bring it back to the institution.”

Shang Xia might not understand how the flag worked, but he knew that it was an important treasure. He wouldn’t be so foolish as to go against the patriarch for a treasure he knew nothing about in the first place.

However, he wasn’t stupid either. He quickly added, “Of course! It’s my honor to give up a treasure to the institution! Since the institution has uses for it, you can have it!”

However, an unexplainable strange sensation filled Shang Xia’s heart after he said it.

Bursting into laughter, Kou Chongxue chided. “Relax. This old man won’t steal your treasures without giving anything in return!”

Kou Chongxue’s eyes landed on the Spirit Extermination Gourd that was hovering above the deep pool. Shang Pei left it there after retrieving the extermination origin within.

Gesturing slightly, the gourd appeared in his hand. “This gourd is from the Changbai Holy Land... But the spiritual deer inside comes from the White Deer Paradise... Haha, kid, you’re really lucky to be able to fuse these treasures together. Well, the Changbai Holy Land and the White Deer Paradise aren’t the only ones who can use the treasures! Our Tongyou Institution is capable of doing it too!”

After he spoke, Kou Chongxue waved his hand in the air and a strand of jade green sword light emerged from the void. Shaking the gourd violently, the spiritual deer leaped out eventually.

The jade green sword qi slashed the spiritual deer in two the moment it emerged before turning it into a ball of hazy light.

The hazy light was devoured by the jade green sword light and after the assimilation was complete, Kou Chongxue pointed at the gourd. “Get in!”

When the sword qi entered the gourd, no inscriptions appeared on the body of the gourd. The image of the white deer also disappeared completely.

Corking the gourd, he tossed it back at Shang Xia.

Grabbing it, Shang Xia raised his eyebrows in shock.

Kou Chongxue’s voice rang in his ears soon after. “The spiritual deer and your gourd both suffered varying degrees of damage. It’s not as effective as before and I used the strand of sword qi to supplement its powers. It can discover extermination qi in its surroundings and it can also be used as a last resort to kill your enemies if you run into any danger. It can deal with anyone under the Martial Dipper Realm. Only extremely powerful individuals in the Martial Extermination Realm would be able to keep their lives after you use this. If you release the sword qi contained within, remember to nurture it again. The strand of fate dipper qi will be able to restore itself after absorbing enough energy.”

Chapter 352: Temporary City Lord

After receiving the gourd from Kou Chongxue, Shang Xia couldn’t contain the joy in his heart. It was as though a heavenly treasure had fallen onto his lap.

Without mentioning the ability of the fate dipper qi to regenerate, just the strength it possessed was terrifying enough!

“Anyone under the Martial Dipper Realm would find it almost impossible to withstand the sword qi!” Just that sentence from Kou Chongxue alone told Shang Xia how precious the strand of sword qi was! It was more than capable of threatening the lives of any Martial Extermination Realm expert!

The more frightening part of it was that Kou Chongxue actually left behind a part of a fate dipper in the gourd. That was what allowed the sword qi to regenerate even after it was exhausted.

That would mean that Shang Xia could utilize the sword qi over and over!

There was no other treasure in Shang Xia’s arsenal that would be able to match up to it at the moment. The sword qi became the strongest trump card he had!

Kou Chongxue’s sigh entered Shang Xia’s ears again. “It’s a pity your gourd isn’t strong enough. It’s only able to withstand a little of my Eternal Spring Fate Dipper. If it was able to take a strand of sword qi from my Primal Yang Copper Fate Dipper, you’ll be able to give any Martial Dipper Realm expert a run for their money. You can even kill them if the situation permits...”

Shang Xia’s hand trembled while holding the gourd and he quickly thanked Kou Chongxue, “Many thanks! Patriarch Kou, your gift is already precious enough!”

Turning to Shang Xia, Kou Chongxue nodded to himself half-heartedly. “Oh yeah. You’re not in the Martial Extermination Realm yet. Even if I manage to leave behind a strand of sword qi from my Primal Yang Fate Dipper, you won’t be able to use it. You can’t withstand the energy contained...”

“...”

After he was done speaking, his gaze turned to Shang Pei before addressing Shang Xia again. “This old man shouldn’t stay here for too long. I’ll return to the Tongyou City right now. The situation is still pretty chaotic after the battle. You shall remain in the Changfeng City and act as the Temporary City Lord. Hold the fort here and stabilize the situation. Wait for the institution to send someone over to take your place.”

Shang Xia waved his hand in panic and cried, “This disciple isn’t capable of that! One has to be a Martial Extermination Realm expert to be a city lord! That’s the only way to suppress the various cultivators in the city and those who wish to harm it. I seem somewhat lacking...”

Kou Chongxue didn’t bother about him and turned into a streak of light that returned to his Hidden Frost Sword. He snorted in disdain. “Heh, don’t undervalue yourself. Is there anyone under the Martial Extermination Realm who can be your opponent?” Pausing for a second, a trace of frost filled his voice as he continued, “As for those in the Martial Extermination Realm, which one of them will dare to jump out now and cause trouble?”

When he was done speaking, he didn’t wait for a response as he turned into a streak of light. All he left behind was his voice echoing through the spirit cave. “Alright, I’m off!” before disappearing into the space in front of Shang Xia.

Looking at the place where the sword disappeared, Shang Xia felt a sense of disappointment filling his heart. However, he eventually turned to look at Shang Pei who was sitting there with her eyes

closed. “Since senior is already awake, why don’t you greet the patriarch? It’s a little disrespectful for you to pretend not to see him... After all, he’s the patriarch of our Tongyou Institution and a Martial Dipper Realm expert! He’s one of the peak existences in our Azure Origin World!”

After a short period of silence and Shang Xia felt that Shang Pei was planning to ignore him completely, she eventually spoke. “This old lady’s body was completely frozen when he looked at me earlier! I couldn’t even get up!”

...

The Tongyou Institution’s act of bringing the Mysterious Coral World back to the You Continent and drawing over the Origin Tide to transform it into the Tongyou Mysterious World. It caused a huge battle to break out over the world origin and the treasures that came along with it. Eventually, Kou Chongxue’s frightening reappearance caused those who stood against the institution to retreat and he charged into the Ji Continent alone to take revenge on the White Deer Paradise. The three ancestors had to take the loss due to his sudden appearance, and with that, the events finally drew to a close.

Even though making the three ancestors of the White Deer Paradise take a loss seemed to be an overstatement, and Kou Chongxue only managed to do it because he caught them off guard, it was true that the White Deer Paradise suffered a loss because of him. Naturally, Xuan Lu only returned to join the battle at the end, but the huge hole Kou Chongxue blew in the White Deer Paradise overshadowed everything.

After causing enough damage to the White Deer Paradise, Kou Chongxue managed to escape in one piece. With that, the Tongyou Institution could be said to have achieved a one sided victory. Kou Chongxue’s prestige was like a sun that hung in the midday sky and everyone realized that the Madman of the You Continent was back!

As for little Shang Xia who was appointed as the temporary city lord by Kou Chongxue, he was swamped and he couldn’t leave the city for the foreseeable future.

Once he proclaimed his title and laid claim to the City Lord Manor, the city turned surprisingly calm. He passed down a few orders and discovered that his instructions were carried out exceedingly smoothly. His plan of killing the chicken to scare the monkeys fell through! The plan he came up with to deal with those who dared to openly oppose him became useless!

Of course, Shang Xia knew that everything that was happening had nothing to do with his individual prestige. It was just that no one in the city dared to cause any trouble at that moment. A huge battle had just passed, and everyone needed time to recover.

Shang Xia couldn’t be more pleased with the situation. He was more than happy to spend more time on his personal cultivation.

In a small courtyard in the eastern part of the city, Shang Xia was fully focused on crafting the talisman in front of him.

The room he was in wasn’t shabby at all, but it was extremely cluttered. There wasn’t much space to put other things.

Looking at the seemingly all-powerful Shang Xia, his fate was slightly laughable. He experienced so much in such a short amount of time and he had no time to practice talisman crafting during his cultivation.

His cultivation rose like a rocket, but he was still a rank two talisman master. It was extremely disproportionate to his cultivation at the Martial Intent Realm.

After taking on his position as the temporary city lord, Shang Xia couldn't allocate too much time to his cultivation as he was unable to use his Crimson Soul Tablet to optimize the rank four advancement formulas he had for fear of damaging it too greatly. There wasn't much to do anyway, and he decided to place more focus on the art of formations.

As he had the experience of creating his special rank two talismans, his speed of improvement was terrifying. His foundations were solid anyway. With his extraordinarily powerful divine sense that underwent some sort of miraculous baptism after he comprehended his Man and Heaven Synergy Chapter, he managed to control his energy to a greater degree when crafting talismans. It gave him an impressive success rate when crafting talismans.

Because of that, Shang Xia took one month to get into his peak condition before setting out his mind to craft a rank three talisman for real.

The difficulty of crafting a rank three talisman was a huge jump from crafting a rank two one. Even exceptional talisman masters wouldn't possess extremely high success rates when crafting a rank three talisman. That explained the rarity of it as battles involving Martial Intent Realm experts rarely involved the use of talismans.

There were many reasons behind that. One was because of the difficulty of crafting rank three talismans, and another was because rank three talisman masters were few and far between...

After Shang Xia started his attempt, he discovered the greatest challenge was the about of divine sense that it required! A cultivator's divine sense was somewhat connected with their cultivation and soul, and it was something that wasn't easily exhausted.

To give a context of what divine sense was, it was connected to a cultivator's soul and it represented how strong their will was. Like what cultivators usually say, "I can be defeated, but I cannot admit defeat!" That was probably a testament to their willpower...

Since one's divine sense was connected to their soul, any exhaustion to it would result in a much lengthier process of recovery. The possibility of experiencing cultivation deviation was much higher than when absorbing heaven and earth qi!

That singular reason forced many talisman masters to rethink their decision to craft a rank three talisman.

Even if they had successfully crafted one before and can be considered a rank three talisman master, they would still think twice before making one.

Shang Xia might be a young master of a great clan, but he didn't possess many rank three talismans! He currently had another one, and that was a Suspended Spear Talisman Shang Ke passed to him sometime previously.

Before Shang Ke entered the Martial Extermination Realm, he managed to request for a talisman master from the institution to assist him in sealing his divine sense into a talisman. After expending

a huge amount of divine sense, Shang Ke managed to produce two talismans. He gave one to Shang Xia before he entered the Coral Forest, and he gave Shang Xia another one after learning that he had used the first.

Shang Ke attempted the talisman creation thrice, but he only succeeded in making two talismans. After he recovered, he wanted to try again, but he was strictly forbidden from doing so by Shang Bo.

Using someone else's divine sense when crafting rank three talismans was a method used by rank three talisman masters to practice their craft while keeping their risk to a minimum.

One could practice the art of crafting talismans while the person who provided the divine sense would be able to receive a talisman after completion. It was a win-win situation!

The only problem with that was that the expenditure of divine sense was much more terrifying than if the talisman master created the talisman himself. The reason was simple too. Using someone else's divine sense was much less effective than using their own!

As for cultivators who separated a part of their divine sense, they might suffer hidden injuries or damages to their divine sense without their knowledge. That was the reason why Shang Bo strictly forbade Shang Ke from doing anything else like that.

Since Shang Xia wasn't keeping his plan to craft a rank three talisman a secret anyway, Shang Quan was specially dispatched from the Tongyou City by Shang Ke to warn Shang Xia. A severe warning came from Shang Ke. "No matter what, you are not to over exert your divine sense when creating talismans!"

Also, the higher the talisman rank, the stronger it would be. The ingredients used to craft such talismans would definitely be more precious than lower leveled talismans.

Looking at the rank three talisman paper in front of him, Shang Xia didn't need to ask to know that the entire Shang Clan wouldn't be able to find three rank three talisman papers even if they flipped the clan upside down. They might have one or two if Shang Ke and Shang Bo went around to ask for favors, but the Shang Clan itself had no capabilities of producing rank three talisman papers!

What a stroke of luck that Shang Xia managed to take on the position as the temporary city lord... Yang Hu had managed the Changfeng City for more than ten years. The Changfeng City was also a major chokepoint for those who wanted to travel to the You Continent, and that made them a trading hub. Yang Hu might be holding on to the extremely precious stuff himself, but the treasury in the city wasn't lacking either. Shang Xia managed to find some treasures that caught his eye in there. He also managed to find two rank three talisman papers that he was planning to use to push himself to the rank three talisman master level.

Shang Quan tossed out another idea to Shang Xia when he was there. He could put out a notice that the City Lord Manor in the Changfeng City was willing to purchase rank three talisman paper, and might solve a lot of problems.

Shang Xia implemented the plan quickly and to his surprise, someone came over to sell. Shang Xia managed to purchase 2 rank three talisman papers from him and a Golden Scale Qi Quelling Ink Slab and a Spirit Concentration Jade Press. He also managed to buy two pieces of Calming Incense.

Naturally, Shang Xia wouldn't take those items for free. He paid the man according to the market value of those items. He spent a huge half of the silver essence he obtained from all the experts he killed in an instant.

Even so, he understood that those items had no set value to them. He wouldn't be able to find them in the open market out there. Even if people wanted to buy, they might not be able to! Control of the City Lord Manor had its benefits indeed.

The person who came to sell had also been screened by Shang Quan. They were willing to sell such precious items to Shang Xia because they wanted protection from the Tongyou Institution in exchange for the favor. They wished to open a trading route with the Tongyou City after it was rebuilt. All they hoped for was for Shang Xia to remember them in the future so that they could do business easily in the Tongyou City.

With Shang Xia's current prestige and power, he could do many things like that with a simple statement. As long as he mentioned it in passing to his Grandpa Ke, the Shang Clan would help them out slightly. After all, Shang Xia's authority had risen a long way after he entered the Martial Intent Realm.

Luckily, Shang Xia knew how to deal with people like that. He couldn't give them too much and he needed to know when to stop. He wasn't an immature brat anymore. He understood that all the power he was wielding now was because of the overbearing existence that was the Tongyou Institution behind him.

Shang Xia might seem to understand how much more authority he gained, but in actuality, he was still underestimating himself. Even a senior like Shang Quan who had experienced much more of the world didn't know how terrifying of an existence Shang Xia was!

If one truly dug deep, they would realize that Shang Xia was a freakish existence who was on speaking terms with Kou Chongxue! That was the Madman of the You Continent they were talking about! A Martial Dipper Realm expert who stood at the peak of the power pyramid in the world! With all his contributions and talent, Shang Xia could actually get Kou Chongxue to back him up if anything were to happen! That was the true extent of Shang Xia's influence!

Even Shang Xia himself hadn't realized that!

#### Chapter 353: Rank Three Talisman Master

With that, Shang Xia managed to scrape together seven pieces of rank three talisman paper. He also obtained some news of treasures that would bring great assistance to his path of talisman crafting. He hid in the small courtyard before starting to focus on the creation of the rank three talisman.

He couldn't be bothered about leaving the City Lord Manor empty for the moment. After all, the prestige of the Tongyou Institution was at an all-time high at the moment. No one would dare to step out to cause trouble.

Naturally, if there was someone who was crazy enough to make their move, Shang Xia had taken precautions. One couldn't forget that there was a Martial Extermination Realm expert consolidating her foundations in the spirit cave under the City Lord Manor!

Next came crafting his talismans. No matter how talented one was, it was almost impossible to successfully craft a rank three talisman on their first try!



Not to mention Shang Xia who wasn't that talented in the first place.

He might have the knowledge and experience from the Zhu Family Talisman Scripture, but he still failed thrice in a row.

Just like that, he wasted three pieces of rank three talisman paper.

As for the other treasures that made up the ink and other assistive treasures, there was no need to mention that a lot of them went down the drain.

The greatest challenge Shang Xia had was splitting off his divine sense. He discovered that crafting rank three talismans was truly difficult, and it slightly affected his cultivation.

He split it off twice during his first two attempts, but before he could do it again, he already scrapped the third piece of rank three talisman paper. Splitting off their divine sense was a painful process, and weaker cultivators would be unable to withstand the effects. However, Shang Xia was an existence who was at the grand completion stage of the Martial Intent Realm and the effects it had on him weren't as large as he had thought.

He had solid foundations and even if his divine sense was exhausted slightly, it wouldn't affect him too much. Perhaps due to the way he entered the Martial Intent Realm with an optimized rank three advancement formula provided by his Crimson Soul Tablet, his divine sense was already leagues ahead of cultivators at the same level. His divine sense also experienced a fundamental transformation when he comprehended the Man and Heaven Synergy Chapter and it was far stronger than before.

That was why Shang Xia was able to attempt the crafting process so many times without adversely affecting his personal cultivation.

Shang Ke estimated that he would be able to split his divine sense off thrice in a month if he gave it his all. Since Shang Xia's divine sense was much stronger than Shang Ke, Shang Xia felt that he would be able to do it seven times before it affected his cultivation.

Of course, refining rank three talismans seven times in a month wasn't possible. Unless all of them failed, he would be unable to make so many attempts.

His three previous attempts that failed already cost him a month, but he learned an important lesson and that was to not overexert himself. He took another month to restore his divine sense to its peak state while summarizing the lessons he learned from his three failures.

Three months had passed since he took on the role as the temporary city lord of the Changfeng City when he made his fourth attempt to craft a rank three talisman.

In the months that passed, Shang Xia couldn't be bothered with what was happening in the outside world as he concentrated on the art of talismans. He didn't know why the Tongyou City hadn't sent someone to take over his position, but he couldn't care about it at the moment.

After all the preparations he made both physically and mentally, his fourth attempt went exceedingly smooth. Splitting off a portion of his divine sense affected his conduction slightly, but he was prepared. Shang Xia quickly maintained his focus while crafting. At that moment, Shang Xia's advantage was fully displayed. His thick reserves and solid foundations allowed him to split off a portion of his divine sense without affecting his attention!

It was the third straight day that he was crafting the rank three talisman, and the amount of inner qi he poured into it had reached a terrifying amount. Even so, he had to ensure that the amount he imbued in every step was perfect. His control of inner qi had already surpassed a huge portion of rank three talisman masters! With the acute senses he had due to his powerful divine sense, Shang Xia managed to accurately control every detail during the crafting process. When he finally raised his brush, he successfully created a rank three talisman, the Golden Lightning Spear Talisman!

It was one of the 6 rank three talismans recorded in the Zhu Family Talisman Scripture and it was one that possessed similar qualities to his cultivation.

The properties of the talisman could be compared to the first three moves in his Nine Providence Spear!

With that, Shang Xia stepped into the ranks of a rank three talisman master.

Thinking back to the situation in the Tongyou Institution, he realized that even with their foundations, there were two rank three talisman masters in total. One of them joined the institution from out of nowhere, and to put it strictly, the institution only managed to nurture a single rank three talisman master themselves.

Now that Shang Xia had successfully crafted his Golden Lightning Spear Talisman, he would be the third rank three talisman master in the Tongyou Institution, and he would be the youngest of them all!

As for rank four talisman masters... There wasn't a need to mention the Tongyou Institution. The entire You Continent didn't possess one either.

With the completion of his talisman, Shang Xia felt a huge mental load taken off. He heaved a sigh of relief and took a five day break before attempting it again.

It was a pity. He seemed too relaxed during his fifth attempt and failed halfway through the process.

Helpless, Shang Xia could only take a break for three more days before starting his sixth attempt. Unfortunately, it failed.

It was half a month since his successful attempt, and after exhausting so much divine sense, Shang Xia chose to call the rest of the month off and he started to recover to his peak state.

Four months had passed since he took on his role in the Changfeng City and after reaching his peak state, he no longer hesitated to start his seventh attempt. After all, that was the last piece of rank three talisman paper he had.

Recalling the same feeling he had during his successful attempt, he managed to complete another Golden Lightning Spear Talisman after three days.

His second talisman was of much higher quality than the first. The power contained in it was much stronger than the other one, and the talisman would be able to last for a much longer time before weakening.

Talismans couldn't be kept forever either. Rank one talismans would probably lose their effects after half a year if it was kept out in the open. If it was stored properly in a spatial artifact or with some sort of seal, it might be usable after a year or more.

However, that would be a complete waste if it was used for rank one talismans. The cost of a spatial artifact was hundreds of times more expensive than a rank one talisman.

Rank two talismans would be stable for about a year or so if kept outside, and they could last for up to two years if stored properly!

Rank three talismans were completely different. It would be stable for five years at the very least and if stored with special methods, it was possible to increase its lifespan to up to ten years!

The reason behind that was because of the cultivator's divine sense! With the divine sense stored in the talisman, it could last for a much longer time.

#### Chapter 354: Bu Jingshuang

After using seven pieces of rank three talisman paper to craft two Golden Lightning Spear Talismans and staying in his position for four months, Shang Xia successfully became a rank three talisman master.

The only blemish in his achievements was that the Thorny Brush that had accompanied him since the start of his talisman crafting journey was turned to scrap after he completed his second piece of Golden Lightning Spear Talisman.

Fortunately, he had seen it coming and managed the destruction from affecting his completed talisman. If the rank three talisman he toiled hard to complete was destroyed along with his brush, Shang Xia would probably bawl his eyes out.

With the completion of his second talisman, Shang Xia finally relaxed as he basked in the afternoon sun that shone in his courtyard.

When Shang Xia was about to drift off into sleep, the entrance of the courtyard creaked open and Hai Min entered while holding Hai Yuanyuan in one hand and a tiny basket in another. Yuanyuan's face was smeared with black sesame paste as she licked her fingers happily as she strolled in with her mother.

"Uncle, uncle, here! Have some black sesame cake!" The little brat giggled while handing over a half-eaten cake to Shang Xia.

Laughing out loud, he took a huge bite out of the cake. "Wow! It's so fragrant!"

Grabbing Yuanyuan, he raised her high into the air amidst her laughter.

Hai Min felt a strange sensation filling her heart when she saw the interaction between Shang Xia and her daughter. However, he eventually placed her down on the ground. Stepping forward, she spoke to the little kid. "Yuanyuan, uncle is tired. Why don't you go around and play on your own?"

After Yuanyuan made a beeline for her room, Hai Min giggled. "Do you like kids?"

Shang Xia looked at Yuanyuan who was waddling away like a cute little penguin and he smiled. He didn't turn his head as he replied, "I like daughters..."

Hai Min's gaze trembled violently but she quickly turned the topic away. "I heard that the Tongyou City sent a city lord over two days ago... As the temporary city lord, how are you still in the mood to sunbathe here?"

“Huh?” Snapping his head around, Shang Xia chuckled with embarrassment, “Why didn’t you tell me earlier?”

Two days ago, Shang Xia had been wholly devoted to creating his second Golden Lightning Spear Talisman and Hai Min naturally wouldn’t disturb him... Realizing his mistake, Shang Xia chuckled in amusement. It seemed like the conversation between the two of them was getting more and more casual.

Before she could say anything else, Shang Xia continued, “Looks like I have to return soon. I wonder which Martial Extermination Realm senior the institution sent. I shouldn’t keep them waiting.”

After he spoke, he turned to head out of the courtyard.

Following closely behind, Hai Min saw him out personally while asking, “When will you be back? If you don’t come back after a long time, Yuanyuan will probably start whining that her amazing snack-buying uncle is gone...”

Pressing his lips together, Shang Xia muttered, “Hmm, I don’t really know. You guys aren’t willing to head to the Tongyou City too... Oh well, at least you won’t have to move to another courtyard this time.”

Waving his hand casually, Shang Xia quickly headed for the City Lord Manor.

Standing at the entrance of the courtyard, Hai Min’s smile never faded as she watched Shang Xia’s leaving figure. Only after he disappeared into the crowd did she turn to return.

When she closed the door and went back inside, she discovered that Shang Pei had appeared at an unknown time.

With her eyes widening in shock, Hai Min gasped, “Mother... When did you come?”

“Hmph! I restrained myself and came over only after you guys were done with... Hmph. Why aren’t you willing to head over to the Tongyou City with him? You should know that the Tongyou City is the safest place to be right now.” Shang Pei’s expression sank slightly as she spoke.

Hai Min sighed helplessly, “You know that I’d rather live here quietly!”

“So... You’re not planning to come with me when I head down south, right?” Shang Pei snorted lightly.

Nodding seriously, Hai Min turned to look at the courtyard before whispering, “This... This is what I want.”

Shang Pei wanted to continue messing with Hai Min, but she decided against it eventually. “What about my granddaughter? Is she going to be like you? Are you planning to teach her your half-assed martial arts?”

Falling into silence, Hai Min thought for a second before sighing, “I plan on sending her to the Tongyou Institution in a few years...”

“Hmph, at least you’re not foolish. At the very most, you’ll be able to enjoy a peaceful life for a few more years...” Shang Pei snorted.

When she was done speaking, she turned to leave.

Hai Min’s voice came from behind her, “Where are you planning to go this time?”

“I’m going down south to Taihang. I have to repay the favor after receiving so many things from that little brat.” Shang Pei replied without turning around. However, her gaze flickered slightly before she turned around to glance at Hai Min. “Like father like... You might not be willing to leave this place, but he might not be thinking of returning...”

“I know.” Hai Min replied casually.

Snorting again, Shang Pei’s figure disappeared as she was walking to the door.

Seeing that Shang Pei had left, Hai Min went over to the room Shang Xia had been using and she saw two golden talismans sitting peacefully on the table. Golden lightning arcs seemed to be dancing about their surface...

...

“Mister Bu, why are you here?” Shang Xia thought back to all the Martial Extermination Realm experts he knew in the institution while walking over to the City Lord Manor but Mister Bu never crossed his mind. He didn’t expect the institution to send someone so familiar with him over!

Mister Bu chuckled in amusement, “There are too many talents in the institution. Hehe, too bad I’ve been living in the Changfeng City for the longest time and I’m extremely familiar with this place. That’s why they sent me over to take on the position of the city lord. However, I had to take the time to recover in the institution because of the injuries I suffered during the battle. Taking on that palm from Yang Hu wasn’t good for my health!”

Shang Xia’s eyes sparkled while joking with Mister Bu. “I see... I was thinking that the institution was starting to get inefficient after waiting for so long. This disciple has been working to the bone by taking on the position as the temporary city lord of the Changfeng City for so long... There’s so much to do! I’ve been waking up early and sleeping late every night...”

“Hahahaha!” Mister Bu roared with laughter and interrupted his bullshit show. “The hidden city lord who hands his responsibility to everyone else... The amazing Sixth Young Master of the Shang Clan who has been the temporary city lord of the Changfeng City for the past four months is something else alright! Not a single person has seen his appearance and rumors of how you govern the city have already spread to the Tongyou City. Worked to the bone my ass!”

With his face flushing red with embarrassment, Shang Xia snapped, “Which asshole out there smeared my good name? I definitely showed my face several times in the City Lord Manor...”

Mister Bu dismissed him with a sneer.

An awkward laughter appeared on Shang Xia's face when he realized that he only met those who came over to the City Lord Manor to sell him the stuff he was looking for.

Naturally, Mister Bu wouldn't dig deeper into Shang Xia's method of governance. He simply changed the topic. "Oh right, are you a rank three talisman master now?"

The smile on Shang Xia's face grew wider but he didn't say anything in response.

Extending his hand out, Mister Bu snapped, "Show me."

"I gave it away!" Shang Xia rubbed his nose and muttered softly in response.

"Oh? You gave it to your cousin?" Mister Bu hit the jackpot immediately. "Oi kid, you need to be careful. After all, the two of you are related in a way..."

"How did you know?" A frown started to form on Shang Xia's face.

A shit-eating grin appeared on Mister Bu's face and he continued, "Huh? Oh, I don't know anything. Don't worry about me."

Clicking his tongue, Shang Xia decided to change the topic. "Old man, can you act a little more seriously? Anyway, now that you're the Changfeng City Lord, you shouldn't use names like Mister Bu or Mister Si any longer..."

"Heh, you're still too inexperienced when it comes to changing the topic." Mister Bu sneered. However, his expression slowly turned serious. "This old man is called Bu Jingshuang. I believe you heard my name before."

"The Triple Frost of the You Continent!" Shang Xia widened his eyes in shock. "How long has Patriarch Kou been planning this for?!"

Chapter 355: Suspicious Medicine, Nameless Medicine

...

Half a year had passed since Shang Xia was stranded in the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range after the ambush he ran into after meeting Kou Chongxue for the first time. The original Tongyou City had been destroyed due to the battle for the Tongyou Mysterious World.

By the time he returned, all he saw was a newly rebuilt city.

It hadn't been long since Shang Xia returned to the Tongyou City when he headed towards the Scripture Depository.

During the great war that happened, the Tongyou Institution was protected with its own protection formation and when the Tongyou Mysterious World was formed, its protection formation also defended the institution. The Tongyou Institution might be damaged, but it wasn't too bad.

Because Dong Qianzui, the original head of the Scripture Depository was killed during the first war on the Tongyou Peak, the institution passed on his responsibilities to Instructor Zhang Haogu.

Shang Xia received Kou Chongxue's approval previously and he was quickly led by Zhang Haogu into the secret chamber in the Scripture Depository.

It was the first time Shang Xia was entering the legendary secret chamber that housed the institution's highest leveled inheritances and secret arts. That explained the thick layer of mist surrounding him when he entered. Even if he used his divine sense, it would be blocked off by the gray mist around him. Shang Xia could only see the faint outline of bookshelves behind the thick mist.

"There's no need to look at them. There are countless restrictions and formations protecting this place. Now that it's connected to the Tongyou Mysterious World, even Patriarch Kou won't be able to see through the mist." Zhang Haogu muttered without even turning back. It was as though he already knew what Shang Xia was doing.

"Instructor Zhang, since all the advancement formulas are kept here, how should we determine if we are compatible with one?" Shang Xia asked suddenly.

Turning his head slightly to look at Shang Xia, he muttered, "Who told you that all our advancement formulas are kept here? We have more than one secret chamber in our Scripture Depository... Also, we keep more stuff in there than advancement formulas. Today, our institution has nine rank four advancement formulas..."

"Don't we possess only six rank four advancement formulas?" Shang Xia interrupted him suddenly.

Stopping, Zhang Haogu stared at Shang Xia and muttered, "You know quite a bit... We had six in the past. After retrieving the Mysterious Coral World, we found two more from the Zhu Family's Inheritance. You brought back another from the Changfeng City. That makes nine."

Zhang Haogu didn't forget to praise Shang Xia after mentioning what he did. "With your contributions, it's acceptable for the institution to reward you with an advancement formula. However, you advanced too quickly and you're still a little too young... Well, there weren't any who were against rewarding you, but they were thinking of holding off a little while and giving the opportunity to a few of those seniors who had been waiting for quite a while now. However, you brought back a complete rank four advancement formula from the Changfeng City and Patriarch Kou personally vouched for you. No one had anything to say since then."

Approaching a shelf that was sealed with countless restrictions, Zhang Haogu released it so that Shang Xia could see its contents.

Shang Xia wasn't surprised by Zhang Haogu's revelation. Even though the Tongyou Institution was one complete entity, not everyone got along with each other. Resources were also limited. It made sense that there was some competition going around.

After the restrictions on the shelf were released, Zhang Haogu revealed a key in his hand that had been there since god knows when. He opened the shelf and revealed a stone slab that was covered in a thick layer of mist. Even though its physical body was there, Shang Xia was unable to read its contents.

Seeing the look of confusion on Shang Xia's face, Zhang Haogu explained, "In order to read the contents, Patriarch Kou has to appear personally to get rid of the restrictions. The three deputy patriarchs can also work together to lift the restriction for you."

"How am I supposed to determine if this advancement formula is suitable for my advancement?" Shang Xia asked once again.

Pulling out an inky jade bottle from under the slab, Zhang Haogu read. "This is the Multi Illusory Wine. It's what both Shang Bo and Shang Ke used to enter the Martial Extermination Realm. As for compatibility... Our Tongyou Institution has our ways of testing it."

After he spoke, Zhang Haogu brought out a silver needle that was thinner than a hair and close to a foot long.

Dipping the needle into the bottle, Zhang Haogu held it out before pricking Shang Xia's finger to draw a drop of blood towards it.

A ray of light emerged from the needle before extending along its body.

"This..." Shang Xia asked.

Casually turning his wrist, Zhang Haogu watched as the light slowly started to rise. When it reached a length of six inches, it finally stopped.

A deep frown appeared on his face. "Six inches? This old man heard that Deputy Patriarch Bo managed to get it to eight inches before the light stopped. Even your Shang Clan Patriarch Ke managed to get it close to seven inches..."

Shang Xia understood the uses of the needle and he couldn't help but ask. "Is that how you test for compatibility? Have you reused the needle before?"

"This needle is named the Root Needle by the chemists in the institution. It's actually a rank three treasure but it can only be used by one person. The longer the light extends, the greater the compatibility. The success rate will naturally increase according to how compatible one is with the advancement medicine. Six inches barely meets the requirements... Ordinarily, the institution would only recommend going through with the formula if the light reaches seven inches..."

Shang Xia's finger trembled as he sighed. "Alright, alright, I hope I don't have to test it all nine times..."

Opening another shelf, Zhang Haogu sneered without turning his head. "Nine times? If you're really unlucky, it's going to take a lot more than that."

With his eyes widening in shock, Shang Xia muttered, "What... Why is that?"

"Look at the amount of mist in here. Do you think there are only nine shelves contained in this secret chamber?" Before Shang Xia could say anything, Zhang Haogu continued, "Other than the nine complete rank four advancement formulas we spoke about, we have a lot of other advancement medicine here. With the hard work of our students and instructors, we collected two nameless rank four



advancement medicines and four questionable ones... We also have five that seem incomplete!"

"Huh?!" Shang Xia gasped. "Nameless medicine? Are the chemists in our institution unable to identify them? Is there anyone who would dare to use them to advance?"

Zhang Haogu glanced at Shang Xia from the corner of his eye and he muttered, "At our peak, we had four nameless medicines and seven we suspect to be rank four advancement medicine. Some of those we suspect to be rank four advancement medicine has been used. Of course, no one would dare to use those that we deem incomplete."

Shang Xia whispered curiously, "As for those who ingested those advancement medicines..."

"Two of them broke through successfully. One of them became a cripple and two more died instantly."

Chapter 356: Frightening Compatibility

"Two of them broke through successfully. One of them became a cripple and two more died instantly!"

Shang Xia's pupils shrank after hearing their fate. "It's so dangerous. Why would they..."

Before he could complete his sentence, Shang Xia discovered what was inappropriate about it.

Zhang Haogu's bitter laughter rang through the air. "Damn brat! Do you know how rare a rank four advancement medicine is? It's not something you can refine just because you have an advancement formula! You need to gather all the herbs and treasures in order to refine one! Every single one of them is extremely precious! There's also the matter of extermination qi..."

Shang Xia couldn't help but think about what Shang Pei said to him in the spirit cave. "It's good to be able to use an advancement formula, why would we be choosy about it?"

Zhang Haogu's voice rang in his ears again. "The situation looks a lot better now because we managed to withstand the various trials and assimilate with the Mysterious Coral World... Hmph... How long can our prosperous state last? Do you know how many people are eyeing our rank four resources? You've just touched the edge of the Martial Extermination Realm! Do you think that those seniors who have been waiting for many years to advance will be willing to give up their opportunity just because Kou Chongxue gave the word? Some of them have been waiting for ten years now!"

Zhang Haogu continued testing Shang Xia's compatibility with the advancement medicines while talking. Clearly, the kid's luck wasn't that good as the longest the light went was 6.4 inches.

"Kid, you're in trouble now..." Zhang Haogu shook his head and sighed. "Your compatibility with these medicines aren't that amazing. You still need a ton of extermination qi and other items to advance. Do you wish to continue testing with those nameless medicines or those we suspect are rank four advancement formulas? Or are you going to choose the Nanke Wine?"

The Nanke Wine was the medicine that Shang Xia was the most compatible with.

Looking at the needle, Shang Xia sighed helplessly, "Let's carry on."

Zhang Haogu wasn't surprised by Shang Xia's choice. It was too bad he had to keep getting pricked by the needle.

While Zhang Haogu continued with the tests, he asked casually, "I heard that the Institution is willing to give you a set of advancement medicine. However, you will have to prepare your extermination origin on your own. The Shang Clan will be allocated with one strand of loose extermination origin. Are you planning to use that?"

Shang Xia frowned as he looked at his arm which was full of tiny needle holes. "I don't know."

His confusion wasn't about whether or not the clan would give him the strand of extermination origin to break through to the Martial Extermination Realm. Instead, he didn't know whether or not the Shang Clan only had one strand of loose extermination origin.

Zhang Haogu completed the testing process for the nameless and suspected rank four advancement medicine quickly. Their expressions were unsightly as the highest the light got was 6.8 inches.

Pulling his beard, Zhang Haogu sighed, "6.8 inches... It's pretty close to 7, don't you think?"

During the testing process earlier, Shang Xia had already made up his mind. As long as the light didn't extend past the 7 inches mark, he wouldn't use any of the medicine.

He only agreed to continue the testing process as he wanted to prepare himself to get a formula and medicine that can be improved by the Crimson Soul Tablet.

Shang Xia grasped some sort of rule after he played around with the Crimson Soul Tablet in the Changfeng City. He discovered that the tablet couldn't create something out of nothing. It needed a base to carry out its deductions.

Unfortunately, there was no world origin for him to absorb at the moment. If Shang Xia allows the Crimson Soul Tablet to carry out its deduction, the tablet would be on the brink of destruction!

As such, Shang Xia wanted to reduce the burden on the tablet as much as he could. He wanted to look for a set of advancement medicine he was the most compatible with so that the tablet wouldn't need to exert too much effort to optimize it!

Even if he obtained a set of advancement medicine from the institution, Shang Xia was afraid that he was going to have to refine a whole new set according to what the Crimson Soul Tablet came up with.

He could only hope that the institution would have enough resources and herbs for him to refine a brand new set.

"Let's continue." Shang Xia sighed.

"Continue? What are you talking about?" Zhang Haogu nearly dug his ears after hearing what Shang Xia said.

"Aren't there still the incomplete ones?" Shang Xia chuckled.

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Turning extremely serious, Zhang Haogu warned, “Hey, don’t mess around here. We actually know that those medicines are incomplete. We left it here in order to examine them and do some research. You can’t use them to advance... It’s too dangerous!”

Shang Xia extended another finger and laughed. “It’s not every day that I get to come in. It would be great if I tested all of them. After all, I wish to see how unlucky I can get!”

Grunting softly, Zhang Haogu burst into a bout of sudden laughter. “Alright. This old man expected as much. With your talent, you won’t use any advancement medicine with such low compatibility with yourself. Luckily, you’re still young and can afford to wait a few more years. If you can’t find anything now, you can look for one slowly. Since you want to test out the five incomplete sets, let’s do it!”

Shang Xia looked at the bottle Zhang Haogu raised and he joked, “Who knows? I might even be able to come up with a way to refine these medicines by coming up with my own formula in the future...”

Coughing twice, Zhang Haogu no longer bothered with whatever Shang Xia said.

The moment they started the testing process, Shang Xia’s luck seemed to take a turn for the better. When they tested the second of the five bottles, the light extended to 7.2 inches.

“This isn’t bad!” Zhang Haogu muttered before taking out another bottle. He knew that even though it seemed suitable, Shang Xia wouldn’t dream of using an incomplete medicine.

When they tested the fourth bottle, the light reached a whopping 7.9 inches. That was pretty rare. Other than Shang Bo, whose compatibility with the Multi Illusory Wine reached 8 inches, it was almost the highest Zhang Haogu had seen.

Shang Xia raised his eyebrows in shock. However, he managed to swallow whatever he wanted to say as he awaited the result from the last bottle.

If he had no other choice, he would wait for an Origin Tide to erupt in the battlefield between the two worlds so that he could absorb the world origin. With enough world origin to prevent the Crimson Soul Tablet from shattering, he would optimize and fix the incomplete medicine Zhang Haogu was holding.

Even though it might take a long time for him to find an erupting Origin Tide and his cultivation might stay stagnant for a long time, his fate might be better than those described by Zhang Haogu who had to wait for ten years to be allocated resources from the institution to break through.

Opening the last bottle, Zhang Haogu sighed before pricking Shang Xia’s finger again. The two of them didn’t really expect the last bottle to be that compatible with Shang Xia. After all, two of the five bottles already caused the light to cross the 7 inches mark. What were the odds of there being three bottles of incomplete medicine with high compatibility?

The light extended slowly up the needle. It crossed the 4 inches mark easily as it rose to the 7 inches mark. It didn’t stop there! To their surprise, it broke through the 8 inches mark and extended slowly up to the 8.6 inch mark!

Chapter 357: Zhang Haogu’s Suggestion

The gates to the Scripture Depository closed silently behind Shang Xia as he held a greenish-blue bottle in his hand. A trace of worry could be seen on his face.

Zhang Haogu walked up to him and sighed, "There's no need to be too hard on yourself. You're still young and there's no rush to break through. You can wait a little while to see if an opportunity befalls you!"

Shang Xia knew that Instructor Zhang had misunderstood his depression. Naturally, he wouldn't correct Zhang Haogu as that would reveal his secret. He turned to the man and asked, "Instructor, do you mean what you say? If I really managed to restore the recipe for the advancement medicine, would the institution be willing to provide all the ingredients required for it?"

"Are you really planning to restore the recipe of the advancement medicine?!" Zhang Haogu stared at Shang Xia in shock. He eventually continued, "Alright. As long as you manage to do it, I promise you. Of course, if you manage to find other suitable advancement formulas, the institution will also provide all the ingredients required to make the medicine. After all, that was what Patriarch Kou personally promised you."

Zhang Haogu naturally didn't expect Shang Xia to be able to restore the recipe. He thought that Shang Xia was merely leaving a way out for himself.

Chuckling silently in his heart, Shang Xia felt pretty confident of restoring the recipe.

However, the herbs required after completing the recipe would be too precious. At the very least, a huge portion of them would be rank four herbs. Even with the abilities of the Shang Clan, Shang Xia might not be able to gather them all.

If he managed to borrow the might of the institution, gathering them wouldn't be as difficult as he thought.

Luckily, Kou Chongxue had already passed down the order for the institution to make a set of advancement medicine for Shang Xia. All he needed to do was to complete the recipe.

After thanking Zhang Haogu, the two of them continued on their way out of the secret region.

As they were walking out, Shang Xia thought of something and he asked, "Instructor, is there no other way to interact with the world origin outside of an Origin Tide? After all, an Origin Tide is hard to come by..."

Even though Zhang Haogu had taken on the role of the head of the Scripture Depository, his earlier role in the institution allowed him to make a name for himself. He had been teaching students for many years and Shang Xia's way of addressing him suited his ears a little more than being called the head of the Scripture Depository.

Shang Xia didn't think that it was inappropriate to ask him questions either. After all, Zhang Haogu was an extremely knowledgeable instructor. That fact had been widely proven by the members of the institution.

Hearing his question, Zhang Haogu raised an eyebrow in shock. "Huh? Why are you thinking about world origin now?"

Obviously not willing to reveal the secret about the Crimson Soul Tablet, a light flashed through Shang Xia's eyes as he made up a lie on the spot. "Disciple received Patriarch Kou's guidance previously and managed to understand a little more about my martial intent. I felt that my technique has something to do with world origin! I hope Instructor Zhang can enlighten me..."

"Wow, you're a lucky kid!" Zhang Haogu nodded slightly. Shang Xia didn't know if he was referring to the guidance by Kou Chongxue or the fact that his technique had something to do with world origin.

Stroking his beard, Zhang Haogu muttered, "Then again, the Origin Tide isn't the only way you can interact with the world essence. There are two other ways you can do so."

"So... There are three ways to do it?" Shang Xia felt a burst of joy. He wasn't expecting much when he asked the question, but he was pleasantly surprised to discover that there were so many more ways to come into contact with world origin."

Glancing at Shang Xia from the corner of his eye, Zhang Haogu snorted lightly. "Don't celebrate yet. There might be three ways to do it, but it's not easy to fulfill either one."

"Instructor, please guide me." Shang Xia wiped the smile that was forming on his face away and spoke.

Zhang Haogu nodded while explaining slowly. "Well, the first method is the one you know. It's also the one our institution used to form the Tongyou Mysterious World. During an Origin Tide, we weakened the spatial barrier separating us and the battlefield between the two worlds. In order to do this, one has to be able to withstand the terrifying amount of world origin. This..."

"This tyrannical method is obviously not suited for me... This disciple doesn't have a mysterious world to withstand the surge of world origin if I use this method!" Shang Xia completed whatever Zhang Haogu wanted to say. After all, he didn't think that he was comparable to the Tongyou Mysterious World!

"Well, that brings us to the second method. That's the head over to the Beyond Heavens Pavilion!"

"Beyond Heavens Pavilion?" Shang Xia seemed to have heard that name somewhere before. However, he didn't quite understand what it actually was. "What type of place is that?"

Zhang Haogu quickly picked up the explanation. "It's the location in our Azure Origin World that is closest to our world boundary! Naturally, it's the most dangerous region in our Azure Origin World. It's also where the greatest opportunities lie! From a certain point of view, the Beyond Heavens Pavilion can be considered a true entrance to our world. It controls the fate of our Azure Origin World by protecting it from everything else. The battlefield between the two worlds is comparable to a controlled environment that is only connected to the Azure Spiritual World, but the Beyond Heavens Pavilion protects us from the true dangers that lie outside. There is world origin there, but it's really thin. The amount of world origin might not be comparable to the amount in an Origin

Tide, but it's constantly present. As long as you stay in the Beyond Heavens Pavilion, you can absorb world origin to cultivate."

A trace of longing appeared on Zhang Haogu's face when he spoke about the Beyond Heavens Pavilion and things outside the Azure Origin World.

With his eyes lighting up, Shang Xia hurriedly asked, "Am I able to head over to the Beyond Heavens Pavilion?"

Coughing once, Zhang Haogu chuckled softly. "Only after refining an extermination origin would one's physical body be able to withstand the spatial forces that exist there. Only then will you be able to establish yourself in the Beyond Heavens Pavilion. Moreover, only Martial Extermination Realm experts will be able to refine world origin to cultivate..."

With a wave of disappointment washing over him, Shang Xia sighed helplessly. "What's the third method?"

"Every single mysterious world and holy land will contain a large amount of world origin..." A smile appeared on Zhang Haogu's face.

Shang Xia's mood was in the gutters after listening to the few methods and he couldn't help but interrupt, "Instructor, do you think the institution will allow me to use the world origin in the Tongyou Mysterious World?"

Coughing dryly, Zhang Haogu continued, "Well... Everyone knows that our Tongyou Institution plans on ascending to the Tongyou Paradise in the future. We can't allow our hard-earned world origin to be used up."

The Tongyou Mysterious World was the only one Shang Xia had access to at the moment. There was no need to mention other holy lands! Shang Xia wasn't Kou Chongxue who could break into one and steal their world origin!

Moreover, Kou Chongxue only managed to achieve what he did because the situation allowed. If not for the fact that he caught them off guard, he wouldn't be able to infiltrate into their territory so easily! Xuan Lu's absence was also another reason why Kou Chongxue managed to blow a massive hole in the White Deer Paradise. After accounting for all the factors, one could say that Kou Chongxue's solo victory against the White Deer Paradise was nothing more than pure luck! The situation would never present itself again. If Kou Chongxue dared to use the same method, he would be in for a great deal of pain.

Shang Xia felt extremely despondent after hearing Zhang Haogu's revelation. He sighed powerlessly. "Instructor Zhang, you might as well have not told me anything... I can't use any of the methods to access world origin!"

"Yeah? Not many people would know about these if they're not in the Martial Extermination Realm anyway. If not for your contributions to the Changfeng City, this old man wouldn't be telling you all these stuff." Zhang Haogu tutted while shaking his head.

By the time the two of them were done talking, they left the Scripture Depository. The moment they emerged, they saw a pillar of light shooting into the skies in the distance. Extermination qi filled the

air as a massive disturbance was felt. Countless disciples of the institution turned to stare in its direction.

Shang Xia was no stranger to these types of phenomena. He turned to look at Zhang Haogu before asking yet another question. “That’s an extermination origin... I wonder which senior broke through?”

A look of joy could be seen on Zhang Haogu’s face when he stared at the pillar of light. He chuckled happily, “That should be Instructor Gu Shou! Hehe, he’s the second Martial Extermination Realm expert born after the War of the Tongyou Mysterious World...”

Gu Shou was an instructor of the inner division and was also the one who went to look for Shang Xia in the Coral Forest when he went missing the other time.

During that time, Gu Shou suffered serious injuries due to the battle with Ouyang Zhaiyuan. Otherwise, he would have taken Shang Ke’s place to break through to the Martial Extermination Realm in the Coral Forest!

Speaking of which, Shang Xia was technically still a disciple of the inner division. Gu Shou was his instructor!

Shang Xia laughed, “Looks like our institution gained a lot during the formation of the Tongyou Mysterious World... With our strength rising to a whole new level, it’s truly a glorious time for our Tongyou Institution! If Gu Shou is the second person to break through... Who’s the first?”

“Of course we gained a lot! However, our losses weren’t small either...” Zhang Haogu muttered before glancing at Shang Xia from the corner of his eye. “Hehe. The first person in our Institution to break through after the war is standing right in front of you! Heheh!”

Gasping in fright, Shang Xia turned to stare at Zhang Haogu. It was no wonder he seemed a little more passionate when he was talking about the Beyond Heavens Pavilion earlier. Shang Xia didn’t notice it then as he was too engrossed in finding a method to obtain world origin, but it seemed as though Zhang Haogu had been dropping hints since a long time ago!

The grin on Shang Xia’s face became wider and he exclaimed, “Oh! This disciple has been rude. I sincerely congratulate Instructor Zhang on breaking through!”

At the same time, Shang Xia was feeling slightly bewildered. With his acute senses, he would be able to detect if someone was in the Martial Extermination Realm even if they were trying to hide their aura. However, he failed to notice that Zhang Haogu had broken through since they met.

A wide smile appeared on Zhang Haogu’s face after hearing Shang Xia’s congratulations. He might be an extremely conservative bookworm who was known to be a little lacking in the expression of his emotions, but he couldn’t help but reveal a proud smile.

After some time, the smile disappeared from his face and he continued, “Actually, there’s another way that might work if you’re looking to obtain world origin...”

“What is it?” Shang Xia’s eyes lit up and he asked impatiently.

Pointing in the direction of the Tongyou Institution, he muttered, “The institution is about to reopen the spatial tunnel that leads to the battlefield between the two worlds!”

Seeing Shang Xia falling deep into contemplation, Zhang Haogu continued, “Our Tongyou Mysterious World absorbed a huge amount of world origin during the Origin Tide that passed. However, there might be traces of it left in there. Even if there is, it won’t be easy to locate any. Moreover...” Pausing for a second, Zhang Haogu sighed before he added, “... Moreover, when we closed the spatial tunnel previously, it signified that we had given up on the battlefield between the two worlds. The Azure Spiritual World probably capitalized on that and established themselves there. Now that we’re going to throw our forces back in, it’s going to be a bloodbath when we fight the members of the Azure Spiritual World to regain some territory!”

#### Chapter 358: Venting Frustrations

After leaving the Scripture Depository, Shang Xia wanted to look for his Grandpa Bo to inquire more about the Beyond Heavens Pavilion. However, he was stopped by Song You of the Outreach Division before he could enter the Tongyou Mysterious World.

“The Tongyou Mysterious World is currently closed. Other than Martial Extermination Realm experts of the institution and formation masters of the Hundred Professions Pavilion, no one is allowed to enter!” Song You muttered expressionlessly.

Raising his head to look at the Tongyou Mysterious World above, Shang Xia saw that the rays of light in the skies were dying down and he knew that Gu Shou was already starting to consolidate his foundations. He looked at Song You casually and muttered in passing, “Chief Song, you should be close to entering the Martial Extermination Realm, right?”

After he spoke, Shang Xia tilted his head to the side casually and left.

Behind him, Song You’s gaze transformed into an enraged glare as he stared at Shang Xia’s leaving figure. His expression sank.

He didn’t know that Song You took his casual words as an insult, but he didn’t care even if he did as he went to look for Sun Haiwei.

Originally, he was planning to ask her more about the situation in the Inner Division. After all, he had been missing for the greater part of a year at that point.

Who would have thought that she would reveal an alarming situation out of the blue?

After Shang Xia received a promise from Kou Chongxue that the institution would provide him with a rank four advancement formula, a huge ruckus was kicked up in the institution.

There were many seniors who had been stuck in the Martial Intent Realm for a long time who expressed their dissatisfaction.

After the events that transpired, the institution eventually emerged as the ultimate victor. However, the amount of resources suitable to create rank four advancement medicine was far from enough to satisfy the demand of those at the peak of the Martial Intent Realm.

Even if they had several strands of extermination origin, they couldn’t create enough medicine for everyone who wanted to break through! As such, only two experts received the opportunity to break through. One was Zhang Haogu, and the other was Gu Shou. They received suitable extermination



origins and medicine from the institution and from the looks of it, both managed to break through successfully.

Before Shang Xia's return, the various divisions in the institution and several other great powers had basically decided on those who had the qualifications to receive help from the institution to break through to the Martial Extermination Realm. Zhang Haogu of the Scripture Depository and Gu Shou of the Inner Division no longer needed to be mentioned, but there were three others. Song You, Yuan Zhen, and Qian Sitong were also fighting for a spot to advance!

Who would have thought that because of a single sentence from Kou Chongxue to Shang Xia who wasn't in the Tongyou City during the war, another challenge would appear?

Naturally, they didn't know what happened in the Changfeng City. All they knew was that Shang Xia, a mere disciple who wasn't even twenty years old, managed to obtain a spot before them! They were seniors who contributed a ton to the institution and they felt that they were much more deserving of receiving the institution's help to advance.

Even though Kou Chongxue didn't promise to give Shang Xia a strand of extermination origin, the advancement medicine was what they truly desired! From a certain point of view, gathering the herbs required to make one set of advancement medicine might be more difficult than finding an extermination origin!

The five who were chosen weren't the only ones who were dissatisfied when the news reached them. There were numerous other seniors who felt that Shang Xia shouldn't be given so much support. All of them felt that they were more deserving of the resources!

In the end, Kou Chongxue stepped out personally to quell the situation. He announced that the resources required for Shang Xia's advancement medicine would be allocated separately and Zhang Haogu and Gu Shou would be allowed to advance.

Because of his interference, temporary peace was restored to the institution. However, now that Zhang Haogu and Gu Shou had successfully broken through, the others weren't able to sit still. There were many who were eyeing Shang Xia's resources, and Song You was one of them.

Song You was one of those who was actively trying to look for ways to take Shang Xia's resources for himself, but everyone who was a part of it seemed to have forgotten one thing. Shang Xia wasn't exactly lacking allies in the institution.

With Kou Chongxue's personal promise, no matter how high those causing a ruckus jumped or how noisy they were being, no one managed to snatch his resources.

After learning so many things from Sun Haiwei and his other sources, Shang Xia naturally didn't care about offending Song You. After all, he was no pushover. No matter what, he could be considered to be at the peak of the Martial Intent Realm too! That explained his behavior when he ran into Song You earlier when he tried to enter the Tongyou Mysterious World.

Shang Xia eventually left the institution. However, he didn't rush straight back to the Shang Clan Manor. Instead, he called Yan Qi over and started chatting about the recent happenings in the Tongyou City.

"Seventh Uncle, did anything happen with the Martial Extermination Realm experts after the great war?" Shang Xia asked.

Yan Qi thought for a second before replying, “After the war, the Martial Extermination Realm experts of the various factions started to leave. When things started to settle down, Zhang Haogu of the Tongyou Institution broke into the Martial Extermination Realm first, followed by Ji Yu of the Ji Clan and Yun Yichen of the Yun Clan. Just a moment ago, Gu Shou also broke through. Our Shang Clan seems to be pretty quiet as no new Martial Extermination Realm expert was born.”

Grunting once, Shang Xia nodded slowly. Yan Qi couldn't tell what he was thinking, but he continued, “However, our Shang Clan already has two Martial Extermination Realm experts. If we take things into perspective, we're slightly ahead of the other two clans.”

Shang Xia frowned thoughtfully. He seemed to understand why there would be people jumping out to challenge him for resources even after Kou Chongxue's promise.

Then again, the news of Shang Pei entering the Martial Extermination Realm was probably only known by a select few in the Tongyou City. Otherwise, the chaos that would rise would probably be several times the intensity!

Glancing at Shang Xia, Yan Qi hesitated slightly before asking, “Young Master, are you planning to enter the Martial Extermination Realm?”

Shang Xia chuckled softly in response. “Seventh Uncle, what are you trying to say?”

“It's nothing much... Wasn't our Shang Clan allocated a strand of extermination origin from the institution? If Young Master manages to obtain a set of advancement medicine, the extermination origin should obviously go to you!” Yan Qi muttered.

Smiling, Shang Xia tutted, “There should be someone in the clan who is eyeing the extermination origin, right?”

Laughing softly, Yan Qi didn't say anything in response. Of course, Shang Xia wasn't planning to harp on the topic either as he made his way back to the Shang Clan Manor.

When Shang Xia returned from the Changfeng City, he ran into Shang Ke who was rushing out to settle some matters. Since there was nothing much for him to do, he returned to the institution.

He was much calmer after he returned from the institution, the unpleasant taste in his mouth after his interaction with Song You finally disappeared. However, now that he returned, Shang Xia discovered that the situation in the manor was much more chaotic than before. There were tons of foreign faces.

He looked at a middle aged man who was berating two servants of the Shang Clan Manor and a frown slowly made its way onto his face. “Who are these people? They seem really annoying...”

In the Shang Clan Manor, there was no way Shang Xia would be wary of his words. His voice entered the ears of those present.

The middle aged man turned to look at Shang Xia, and a look of contemplation appeared on his face. He quickly discovered Yan Qi and he made the connection. His eyes widened in fright and he quickly bowed slightly. “I am Li Wufu from the Li Family. I wonder which young master I am speaking to?”

“Li? Did he come from the Changfeng City?” Shang Xia also connected the man's identity to someone he knew and he quickly turned to ask Yan Qi.

Before Yan Qi could say anything, Li Wufu smiled cordially. “That’s right. We are the Ninth Master...”

Before he could finish, he realized that Shang Xia wasn’t listening to him at all. Neither was Shang Xia looking at him.

Yan Qi whispered softly at the side, “Only a few of those people came with the Second Master when he returned. The others are from the Ji Continent and they came with the Ninth Master’s wife...”

The smile on Li Wufu’s face remained, but he started to straighten his back after hearing Yan Qi’s introduction.

“Heh...” Shang Xia snorted lightly and he continued, “So they are actually from the Li Family of the Ji Continent. “Oh right, wasn’t there someone called Li Tianshou from their family who was part of the White Deer Paradise?”

Li Wufu’s expression changed slightly and a trace of worry flashed across his face. However, he quickly regained his smile before responding to Shang Xia. “Hehe, that’s right! I didn’t think that Young Master Shang would have heard of Young Master Li!”

Shang Xia’s lips curled upwards before glancing at Li Wufu from the corner of his eye. “Oh. Yeah. He told me everything about himself when he was begging me to spare his life. What a shame...”

The blood drained from Li Wufu’s face after hearing what Shang Xia said, and he stuttered like a fool, “This... This isn’t possible! Young Master Li is a direct disciple of the White Deer Paradise. Why would he beg...”

“He’s dead.” Shang Xia muttered casually while staring into the distance. “That’s right. I killed him!”

“You... You... You...” With his body trembling like a leaf, Li Wufu continued to stutter. “You... Just you wait! ...” Before he could finish what he wanted to say, he turned around to rush towards a certain courtyard in the Shang Clan Manor.

Turning to Yan Qi, Shang Xia passed down an order. “Tell my Ninth Uncle that I am passing down an order to everyone in the Shang Clan right now. Other than his wife and children, no one who came from the Ji Continent can stay. Especially those who have ties with the Li Family. All of them are to leave the manor immediately.”

When he was done, a feeling of comfort washed over him. All the irritation he felt earlier was gone.

“But... Young Master, won’t this be a little insulting to the Ninth Master? After all, he’s your uncle...” Yan Qi revealed an awkward expression and said.

A sneer formed on Shang Xia’s face. “He didn’t think that it was an insult to me when he eyed my Scarlet Star Spear in the past. Hmph, don’t think that I don’t know about what happened. Also, his wife might have been made to stay in the Changfeng City by Li Tianshou, but she didn’t seem concerned enough to return to the Tongyou City when she heard that we were in trouble. She wasn’t willing to support us when we needed it the most and there’s no need to act all friendly now. Just

carry out my order. If anyone brings up a problem, I'll deal with it! If they wish to know, feel free to tell them everything I said!"

Yan Qi was planning to say something else, but he quickly swallowed his words after seeing the look on Shang Xia's face and he nodded hastily. "I'll deal with this immediately!"

Chapter 359: Rebuke

Not too long after Shang Xia returned, Shang Ke came back to meet with him.

"What? Why do you want to join the forces to enter the battlefield between the two worlds? What's with the sudden decision?" Shang Ke looked at Shang Xia in shock. "It's extremely risky to enter the battlefield between the two worlds right now. Originally, the instructors and teachers of the institution would lead the way and old fellows like us would head in with them to stabilize the situation. You're close to breaking through and you should stay here to cultivate peacefully and strengthen your foundations!"

"I didn't find a suitable advancement medicine in the institution..." Shang Xia mentioned what happened in the Scripture Depository before telling Shang Ke about Zhang Haogu's suggestion.

Pausing momentarily, Shang Ke sighed. "So, your plan is to head into the battlefield between the two worlds to look for traces of world origin that have been left behind to restore the recipe for that incomplete advancement medicine you took from the Scripture Depository?"

"Yeah." Shang Xia nodded.

"Your idea sounds feasible, but you might not be able to succeed. In fact, it's nearly impossible for you to succeed! Not everyone is as lucky as Kou Chongxue. Moreover, even if you find traces of world origin in there, it might not be enough." Shang Ke shook his head and sighed.

Strangely enough, Shang Ke merely analyzed the situation for Shang Xia. He didn't forbid Shang Xia from going directly. He merely emphasized the difficulty of Shang Xia's success and he wanted to give Shang Xia other suggestions. His expression returned to one of calm and he mentioned, "Since you don't have a suitable advancement medicine, I suggest you calm down and cultivate for the time being. If you strengthen your foundations now, you will be able to go much further in your cultivation in the future. After all, you advanced too quickly in the year and a half that passed. It's so quick that it terrifies me!"

Naturally, Shang Xia was planning to stand firm. "I wish to take my chances. World origin doesn't come by often and it's extremely difficult to locate any. If I waste this chance to find some, I will regret it for life!"

"Hehe. Even if I agree, your Grandpa Bo might not allow it." Shang Ke sighed.

With a huge grin appearing on his face, Shang Xia chuckled. "It's good enough with your agreement."

He was planning to leave after receiving permission from Shang Ke earlier, but he seemed to have thought of something. “Grandpa Ke, there’s something else I should tell you...”

Shang Ke laughed in response. “Are you planning to tell me what happened with your Ninth Aunt? Don’t worry. Even if you didn’t give that order, I would have. They didn’t consider our familial ties when she decided to stay in the Changfeng City instead of returning to the Shang Clan Manor. There’s no need for us to act too courteously with them either. Those who came with her will drag us down even if we didn’t do anything about them. Kicking them out will save us from a lot of trouble down the road. It’s just a mere Li Family from the Ji Continent. Kicking them out won’t affect us in the slightest!”

“I’m afraid Ninth Uncle will be unhappy with my decision...” Shang Xia finally admitted. He might have acted all tough when he passed down the order, but he was still a little hesitant about making things awkward between him and Shang Yang.

Shang Ke muttered. ‘If he is unable to understand the reason behind your actions, he’s no longer worthy of being a member of our Shang Clan! Hmph! We’ll see how he deals with this and his attitude towards the clan now!’

Heaving a sigh of relief, Shang Xia bade Shang Ke farewell. After he left, Shang Jian came over to look for Shang Ke.

“Fifth Uncle, were you talking to Nephew Xia about the matter of breaking into the Martial Extermination Realm?” Shang Jian asked. Even though he looked calm on the surface, waves were battering against his heart. He felt a trace of anticipation while waiting for the answer he wanted.

Seeing through his intentions instantly, Shang Ke chuckled. “He hasn’t found a suitable advancement medicine yet. Unfortunately, he has to delay his breakthrough for some time.”

Feeling a burning sensation in his chest, Shang Jian’s eyes lit up and asked, “Then... Can I...”

“You have to wait for a little while more...” Shang Ke replied before hearing the rest of his sentence.

“Oh...” Feeling despondent, A trace of reluctance appeared in Shang Jian’s heart. After all, no one could resist the temptation of being able to break into the Martial Extermination Realm. “Fifth Uncle, is there a reason for this? Shang Xia might have contributed a lot, but we cannot miss the chance to strengthen the clan! Today, the other great clans have produced a second Martial Extermination Realm expert. I have consolidated my foundation for a long time in the large completion stage of the Martial Intent Realm. Even though I haven’t been able to enter the grand completion stage, I should be ready to attempt my breakthrough! My chances of advancing are...”

Seeing that Shang Jian was turning more agitated the more he spoke, Shang Ke slapped the table before him and got to his feet. “How do you know our Shang Clan will miss the chance to strengthen ourselves?”

“Do you know that your Third Sister has already entered the Martial Extermination Realm? Our Shang Clan already has a suitable inheritor from your generation! You haven’t heard, but do you know where her advancement medicine and extermination origin came from? The little kid gave it to her without asking for anything in return!”

“You think that you have consolidated your foundations at the large completion stage of the Martial Intent Realm and should be given the extermination origin we have for you to try to break through. Do you know that Shang Xia has already entered the grand completion stage? His qualifications of entering the Martial Extermination Realm are much higher than yours. Our clan would only give you the extermination origin if he doesn’t need it! Either you stop acting like you deserve the extermination origin, or you can head out there and find another strand for your breakthrough! If you manage to find one, I’ll immediately arrange for the clan to prepare the Exquisite Muddled Liquid for your advancement...”

Smacking his forehead, Shang Ke added, “Oh yeah. I forgot to tell you about this. The Exquisite Muddled Liquid is the most suitable advancement formula you can find in our clan! Do you know where we got this new advancement formula? The kid brought it back himself after killing someone from the White Deer Paradise!”

Shang Jian was stunned into silence and he could only leave in embarrassment. He didn’t know that Shang Xia’s contributions to the clan were far greater than they could ever imagine.

Shang Ke sighed softly when he saw Shang Jian’s leaving figure. Actually, he was planning to give the strand of extermination origin the institution rewarded the Shang Clan with to Shang Jian. The extermination origin was called the Lingkong Formless Extermination Origin and even though it might not be extremely compatible with Shang Jian, one couldn’t be picky when breaking through anyway.

Shang Ke felt that Shang Xia was advancing too quickly and it would be good to slow down and temper himself a little before breaking through. That would allow him to progress further on the path of cultivation in the future. However, as the patriarch of the Shang Clan, Shang Ke had to be impartial. Shang Xia did indeed make great contributions to the clan and he deserved the extermination origin!

Even if he wanted to give it to Shang Jian, he would need a proper reason to do so! It was true that he could use it to push Shang Jian into the Martial Extermination Realm, but he couldn’t allow Shang Jian to feel entitled to the strand of extermination origin. To put it simply, Shang Jian’s attitude towards the entire situation was wrong!

...

In the southern courtyard of the Shang Clan Manor.

Li Tianxiu ran into the courtyard in a state of panic and she cried the moment she saw Shang Yang. “Ninth Brother, why are they chasing them away? Is your status in the Shang Clan really so low that even your nephew can humiliate you however he wishes? Hmph, if I had known that you were such

a wastrel, I wouldn't have married you in the past! I even traveled such a long way from the Ji Clan only to..."

"Enough!" Shang Yang snapped. He appeared in front of her in an instant and he shook her arm violently to wake her up to reality. "You caused this! This isn't my fault! You don't even know what you've done. What's the matter with Li Tianshou? Why was he with you in the Changfeng City?!"

Li Tianxiu realized that Shang Yang was serious when she saw the ferocious glare in his eyes and her imposing aura quickly crumbled. She muttered, "What's wrong with my cousin Tianshou? He said he wished to travel the world to look for suitable opportunities to break through. When he heard that I was heading to the You Continent, he became interested and decided to follow us."

"He decided to follow you because he was interested?! Preposterous!" Shang Yang was so angered that he broke out laughing. "Did he say something about his prominent status and he didn't wish to be noticed by everyone else? Did he ask to follow you so that he can hide his identity?!"

Seeing the look of confusion on Li Tianxiu's face, Shang Yang facepalmed himself before muttering, "Your family started it and you can't blame us for how we reacted. Since our families formed a grudge against each other, those you brought with you cannot stay. My nephew, Shang Xia, chose to kick them out of the city and left it at that. He has already shown me enough respect. Otherwise, hehe..."

Li Tianxiu's face was filled with terror after hearing his explanation.

Shang Yang sighed and looked at Li Tianxiu and sighed. "From today, you need to keep your head down in the clan. For our kids, you should know what you have to do!"

When he was done, Shang Yang turned to walk away.

Finally snapping back to reality, Li Tianxiu ran after him and yelled, "No! Ninth Brother, you can't do that! My cousin is a direct disciple of the White Deer Paradise and our Li Family is a prominent figure in the Ji Continent! Members of my Li Family can be sent into the White Deer Sect every few years..."

"Li Tianshou is dead!" Shang Yang turned around and snapped at the delusional Li Tianxiu. Unable to control his anger about her delusional behavior, he roared. "Heh, the White Deer Sect you're so proud of don't even dare to let out a fart after Kou Chongxue blew a hole in their territory. Stop thinking that their reputation alone will be enough to scare anyone in the Tongyou City!"

Feeling her legs go weak, she fell to the ground powerlessly...

...

Shang Xia returned to his courtyard in the Shang Clan Manor and he summoned Duan Hong after returning.

Duan Hong could be considered the best blacksmith in the Shang Clan at the moment. He played with the Scarlet Star Spear Shang Xia handed over to him and examined the damage it sustained.

Even though Duan Hong was far from being able to upgrade the Scarlet Star Spear into a high-grade weapon, Shang Xia felt that it shouldn't be a problem for him to fix those small damages.

“Sixth Young Master, there might be a difference in how the institution upgraded your spear, but I can't wrap my head around it. Why does your spear seem more damaged internally?”

Shang Xia chuckled in response. “The institution has nothing to do with this. I'm the problem. Do you think it's possible to fix it?”

After thinking for a second, Duan Hong muttered. “It's possible, but the spear is no ordinary weapon. The resources required to fix it are pretty rare...”

During his stint in the Changfeng City, Shang Xia killed many important people and obtained a ton of treasures. When he took on the role of the temporary city lord, he swept the treasury clean. There was probably no one with the same cultivation level as him who could even come close to the amount of treasures he had!

Waving his sleeves, six cases appeared on the table before him and all of them contained a piece of precious material that was of the third rank.

“Master Duan Hong, if you can use any of these to repair the spear, feel free to use them!”

Duan Hong gasped in fright when he saw the material on the table. His eyes lit up and he yelled, “Yeah! It's enough! These will definitely be enough to repair your spear!”

A smile formed on Shang Xia's face as he pushed all six cases towards Duan Hong. “Since it's possible, I will have to trouble you to fix it as soon as possible.”

Sending off Duan Hong whose grin was threatening to split his face in half, Shang Xia noticed Yan Qi entering his courtyard.

“Young Master, we kicked those from the Ji Continent out. Ninth Master has already placed his wife under house arrest for the time being...” Yan Qi reported.

Shang Xia nodded at his report. After passing down his order when he returned, he didn't really keep track of their progress. Now that everyone who came from the Ji Continent was kicked out with the exception of Shang Yang's wife and children, Shang Xia heaved a sigh of relief.

“Young Master, Custodians Sun Haiwei and Tian Mengzi from the institution have come to visit you. I have already arranged for someone to bring them to the Eastern Hall and for tea to be served!” Yan Qi made another report.

“Oh? That's rare?” Shang Xia might be a little confused about their sudden arrival, but he started to make his way over.

Before Shang Xia's figure entered the hall, his voice had already arrived. “It's this student's honor to host Teacher Sun and Teacher Tian today! I wonder what brought you guys over?”



Sun Haiwei and Tian Mengzi stood up respectfully the moment they heard his voice.

“We’re pretty similar in age to begin with! There’s no need to call us teachers... Shouldn’t we address each other casually as senior and junior brothers?” Tian Mengzi coughed awkwardly and quickly closed the distance between themselves. After he spoke, the relationship between the three became much closer than before.

By the time Shang Xia entered the hall, the three of them casually exchanged pleasantries before getting on to the main topic.

Tian Mengzi wasn’t one to beat about the bush anyway and he was a talkative one. He quickly got to the point. “Today, we came to visit Junior Brother Shang because we wish to invite you to join a gathering of Martial Intent Realm cultivators.”

“Gathering?” Shang Xia looked at the two of them in confusion.

Sun Haiwei quickly explained with a smile on her face, “Actually, it’s a private gathering organized by Martial Intent Realm cultivators. All of us will share some of our experiences in cultivation and it can be considered a way for us to improve!”

Shang Xia quickly gained interest after hearing her introduction. “Is there really such a thing? Why haven’t I heard of it?”

A bitter smile appeared on Tian Mengzi’s face as he responded. “Brother Shang, you’re a disciple of a great clan! Usually, there would be no need for you to take part in this gathering as you can gain a lot from your seniors... Also, you probably haven’t heard of it because your cultivation increased a little too quickly... No one managed to get a hold of you ever since you entered the Martial Intent Realm...”

#### Chapter 360: The Gathering

“Our Tongyou City can be considered a good gathering place for cultivators. It’s not rare to see many of them meeting each other to exchange pointers. Of course, the frequency cannot be compared to before the war over the Tongyou Mysterious World.” Tian Mengzi explained as they walked into the bustling city center.

The reconstruction work started a long time ago. It had been half a year since the battle ended, and most of the Tongyou City had been restored. The only part left was the city center, but it was getting there.

Shang Xia looked at the crowd with interest and he discovered that the Tongyou City was actually bursting with life.

Due to the war, a huge portion of the city was destroyed. Fortunately, not a lot of people were killed. After all, the various families had sent away a huge portion of their members before the battle started.

“Who are the people taking part in the gathering?” Shang Xia asked casually.

Sun Haiwei replied to him this time. “There should be all sorts of people there... There might be cultivators from the institution, and there should also be various scattered cultivators. There might

also be several from the great clans, but cultivators who have been living in seclusion outside the city might also take part. Even cultivators from other continents might come!”

Tian Mengzi added, “Actually, gatherings like that might take place openly, but there are also some that are carried out in the shadows. Many of these are organized by prominent factions and everyone would call people they know to take part in it. We can use it to network and form connections with other cultivators. Those that are properly organized are pretty safe.”

“What about those that are carried out in the dark?” Shang Xia asked.

Chuckling in amusement, Tian Mengzi continued, “Those usually involve unsavory deals. Many things that happen there cannot see the light of day. That is why most gatherings like that would be extremely well-guarded. Without someone who knows a way in, cultivators wouldn’t be able to take part. Also, killing and plundering are a common occurrence in those gatherings.”

Shang Xia found it hard to believe. “I understand that there can be some dark happenings in the city. However, with the influence the Tongyou Institution and the four great clans have over the city, killing and plundering seem to be going too far... Shouldn’t they control themselves?”

Sun Haiwei and Tian Mengzi looked at each other and bitter smiles appeared on their faces. Tian Mengzi muttered, “Junior Brother Shang, you’re not exactly wrong. Those happenings are much tamer compared to other cities due to the presence of the Tongyou Institution and the four great clans. However, underground meetings like that organized by those powers in the dark have their reasons to exist. One can say that it’s a necessary evil for there to be balance.”

Shang Xia fell into contemplation and realized that those hidden powers that organized those meetings were probably operating under the tolerance of the institution and the four great clans.

By the time their conversation was over, the three of them arrived at a tea house that seemed pretty newly built.

Without waiting for the attendant to greet them, the manager of the tea house quickly ran towards the group of three. “Young masters and young miss, are you Master Zhao’s guests? Please head upstairs to the third floor. Master Zhao has been waiting for some time now!”

The three of them were escorted by the manager directly to the third floor and they were welcomed by a middle aged man with a wide smile on his face.

“I didn’t think that the honored students of the institution would join us! Well met!” The middle aged man’s gaze fell on Shang Xia as he spoke.

Shang Xia might be a lot more famous than Sun Haiwei and Tian Mengzi in the institution, but not many people outside of the institution knew him. He was a foreign face everywhere else.

Seeing the looks of hesitation on Sun Haiwei and Tian Mengzi’s face, Shang Xia knew that they didn’t know if they should reveal his identity. He quickly introduced himself. “You can call me ‘Xia’. I wonder how I can address you?”

“Oh. Young Master Xia!” Shang Xia didn’t know if the middle aged man believed he was using his real name, but he couldn’t care either. The middle aged man continued. “I come from the Zhao Family and we own this tea house. It’s our honor to host Young Master Xia too!”

“I didn’t expect you to be the owner of this place, Owner Zhao!” Shang Xia greeted the man enthusiastically. Of course, Shang Xia wouldn’t flaunt his status in an event he didn’t know much about and he decided to take things as they went.

Tian Mengzi decided to chip in now that they have made their introductions. “Old Man Zhao, can’t you tell us how many people will be taking part in this gathering?”

“I didn’t send out many invitations this time. Due to the events that happened in the city and new faces that will be joining us this time, there should be around twenty people taking part in this gathering.” Owner Zhao paused for a second and continued, “I also received news that there would be scattered cultivators from outside the city taking part in this gathering.”

Tian Mengzi looked at Owner Zhao in shock. “Wow! Old Man Zhao, your network is growing really wide! If not for the fact that you held it at your teahouse, I would have thought that we were taking part in some shady gathering this time!”

“No, no, of course not!” Owner Zhao waved his hand to dismiss Tian Mengzi’s concern. The smile on his face didn’t fade and instead, it seemed to grow even wider.

When they were done talking, he brought them into the room behind him.

Sun Haiwei flipped open a basket outside the door before they entered and pointed at something within. “Little Xia, you’re here for the first time and there will be many people with questionable backgrounds. You should use this.”

Lowering his head, Shang Xia saw that she was pointing at a bunch of masks that were placed carefully in the basket.

Even though Shang Xia was getting curious, he didn’t ignore Sun Haiwei’s warning. He took a mask and placed it on his face quickly.

The moment he did, the aura around him changed completely. He fused his divine sense with the world around him and transformed into an ordinary person.

A look of shock filled the faces of Tian Mengzi, Sun Haiwei, and Owner Zhao. They didn’t expect Shang Xia to be capable of doing something like that.

Getting over their shock, Tian Mengzi and Sun Haiwei also put on their masks before walking into the room.

By the time they entered, they discovered that the room was pretty small. It didn’t seem to be able to house more than twenty of them for the gathering.

However, from the looks on Sun Haiwei and Tian Mengzi’s face, Shang Xia decided to remain silent as he observed what happened next.

Owner Zhao took several steps forward and tapped on a table several times before a hidden passage opened up on one of the walls.

“Please enter. I will be right with you.” Owner Zhao gestured towards the hidden passage and mentioned.

Tian Mengzi nodded towards Sun Haiwei and Shang Xia before taking the lead. With the two of them following behind him, the entrance soon closed up. Surprisingly, the passage remained lit.

“That’s Zhao Fengchun, and he’s from the Zhao Family in our Tongyou City. The Zhao Family Head, Zhao Hengchun, is at the large completion stage of the Martial Intent Realm. It’s said that he’s been looking for a way to enter the Martial Extermination Realm for several years now. He has been looking at the institution for a way to advance for some time.” Sun Haiwei whispered to Shang Xia as they made their way down the passage.

Shang Xia nodded slightly. He knew about the Zhao Family. In the Tongyou City, the Zhao Family could be considered to be in the middle of the power pyramid.

When he met Zhao Fengchun earlier, he had already examined the man from head to toe. He knew that Zhao Fengchun was also at the Martial Intent Realm, and he was pretty famous in the city. It was no wonder he had the ability to host a gathering like that.

The passage wasn’t too long and the three of them quickly arrived at the end. Pushing a bamboo door open, they entered a spacious hall.

Seats were arranged in an orderly fashion around the room, and there was an empty space in the middle of the room. By the time they entered, there were close to eight cultivators already waiting. It seemed as though the three of them didn’t arrive too late, but neither did they arrive too early.

The moment they entered, they attracted the gazes of everyone in the room.

Tian Mengzi didn’t bother with them and he quickly looked for a place they could sit before gesturing to Sun Haiwei and Shang Xia.

By the time they got to their seats, the gazes of many people had already left them. However, there were still several who were trying to examine the trio.

Regardless, none of them managed to discover anything due to the masks they were wearing. From their age, it wasn’t difficult to identify them as members of the Tongyou Institution. After all, they were pretty young compared to the others. For cultivators in the Tongyou City to be in the Martial Intent Realm at their age, they had to be students in the institution.

Tian Mengzi and Sun Haiwei didn’t seem to be bothered regardless. However, Shang Xia snorted once in annoyance. The bodies of those who were examining them trembled violently as they felt as though someone smashed a sledgehammer into their brains. A look of fear appeared on their face when they looked at the trio again.

Shang Xia swept his gaze across those present and this time, no one dared to meet his gaze. All of them looked away in fright.

Sun Haiwei heaved a sigh of relief and Tian Mengzi gave him a huge thumbs up.

It didn’t take long for the doors to open again and two people entered the hall. They looked around the room and their gazes paused on Sun Haiwei and the others before they found their seats.

Sun Haiwei sighed softly and she whispered to the other two. “That’s Huo Wuji from the Upper Division and Wu Tianfang from the Protection Division!”

Tian Mengzi nodded slightly to indicate his understanding.

Shang Xia glanced at them several more times and the two of them clearly detected it. They looked at Shang Xia and revealed a toothy smile.

“They seem to be able to tell that we’re from the institution!” Tian Mengzi’s voice entered Sun Haiwei and Shang Xia’s mind.

No one knew how many entrances there were in the weird hall, but six other cultivators eventually entered from other paths.

Zhao Fengchun eventually entered and he seemed to be the last person. By the time he entered, there were nineteen Martial Intent Realm experts seated in the hall.

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The moment he entered, he looked around the room before giving a short introduction. “It’s not easy to gather everyone here and I shall make this introduction speech as short as possible. I would like to thank everyone for giving me a chance to host this gathering. Let me get the ball rolling!”

Shang Xia didn’t expect Zhao Fengchun to be so direct and start the event off immediately, but curiosity quickly filled his heart.

Zhao Fengchun took out a lacquered box that was a foot in length and covered in talismans before opening it carefully. There were a total of 12 pearls carefully laid throughout the box and he continued, “These are 12 300-year-old Hazy Pearls. They are rank three treasures and they have extensive uses. They can be made into advancement medicine and can even be used to craft talismans. You can also use them when refining graded weapons or laying down formations!”

Pausing for a second, he added, “I wish to trade it for a bottle of Heart Cleansing Dew or a piece of Dancing Yang Blue Jade!”

As soon as he spoke, the atmosphere in the hall became slightly heated. Many people started whispering among themselves and looks of amazement could be seen on their faces.