

The Heavens 391

Chapter 391: Lizards and The Lizardmaster

Entering the marsh, Shang Xia discovered that that light couldn't easily pierce through the thicket. The stench of something rotting quickly assaulted him and dense mist quickly clouded his vision.

"Poison miasma?" Shang Xia frowned. Even though it couldn't affect him at his current level, he knew that he would have to be ever more careful when venturing deeper into the marsh.

Well, the poison miasma was a form of heaven and earth qi anyway. Gathering enough of it would probably allow them to condense to form a complete strand of extermination origin, but there was no point trying to gather it. One would need to use a lot of time in order to gather the miasma and even more effort to refine the poison within. Only after a lengthy process of purification would they be able to obtain a strand of extermination origin.

There was no way Shang Xia would have the time to refine the poison from the miasma. Moreover, it didn't seem as though the gourd would be able to do so.

The Spirit Extermination Gourd was able to store extermination qi and collect extermination origins, but it didn't possess the capability of purification.

When he returned, he would probably report the presence of the marsh to the institution anyway. The institution would send several cultivators over to collect and refine the miasma to produce an extermination origin. The only problem was how long it would take.

From the amount of miasma in the air, Shang Xia knew that it was truly an undiscovered region. Since that was the case, it was possible for there to be precious treasures that haven't been plundered from the land. If he was lucky, there would be no need to care about the poison extermination origin that he could obtain from the miasma. There might just be several strands of stray extermination origins laying around.

Thinking up to that point, Shang Xia wanted to extend his divine sense out and use the assistance of the Crimson Soul Tablet to look for those treasures. However, he quickly discovered that his divine sense was facing a strong suppression in the marsh. It was even being corroded by the poison miasma in the air.

Retracting his divine sense, Shang Xia felt a trace of unease wash over him. He knew that his combat abilities and his ability to sense danger would be greatly reduced since he couldn't use his divine sense as he wished. That would open him up to a lot more dangerous sneak attacks.

Naturally, Shang Xia wasn't one to give up. He decided to push his way deeper into the marsh. Opening the cap of the Spirit Extermination Gourd once again, the small sword qi appeared and pointed in a certain direction.

No longer hesitating, Shang Xia started to move in that exact direction. Treading carefully, he didn't wish to step into any sort of trap. Unfortunately, he hadn't advanced for more than a hundred feet when the ground below him started to bulge.

A powerful aura came from below and Shang Xia immediately determined that it was a rank three spiritual beast.

His Scarlet Star Spear trembled slightly and he pointed it towards the mound that had formed. Right before he could stab it deep into the ground, his instincts told him that something was wrong.

Ignoring the corrosion of his divine sense, Shang Xia released it quickly to observe the situation around him.

In that short second that he released his divine sense, he discovered no less than four auras of rank three beasts that were starting to surround him.

Indeed... It was a trap! Shang Xia discovered that in the undiscovered marsh, he had turned into the prey of its original inhabitants.

During his short hesitation when he released his divine sense, the creature that was underground attacked. A poison water arrow emerged from the ground and it shot towards Shang Xia's face. Feeling the power contained in the poison arrow, Shang Xia didn't dare to take it head on. Pushing his divine sense a little more, he increased his concealment and disappeared from his assailant's detection. His figure flickered slightly as he avoided the poison arrow from touching his body. At the same time, the Scarlet Star Spear in his hand trembled. It created a massive spear phantom in the air that shot accurately towards the ground below.

A guttural roar rang in his ears as the mound of earth exploded. The body of the beast hiding under the earth that was close to fifty feet in length burst forth and a long tail swept at the spear phantom that was created, shattering it. At the same time, a rotting stench filled the air and the odor of blood followed.

Even though the creature managed to shatter the spear phantom, it was clearly hurt while doing so.

The creature might have just emerged from the ground and was covered in layers of mud, but Shang Xia still managed to identify it. It was a massive swamp lizard!

One had to remember that the lizard wasn't the only threat against Shang Xia at the moment. When the other creatures discovered the commotion, they moved in unison. As it turned out, the other auras also belonged to fellow swamp lizards! They quickly moved to the source of the commotion, and their speed could be said to be much quicker than the first lizard!

In the blink of an eye, the four swamp lizards appeared before Shang Xia and their tails swept at him.

Leaping into the air, Shang Xia knew that he might have hidden his presence, but the creatures were still able to see him! He jumped back tens of feet to avoid their attacks, and he circulated his inner qi at the same time to drift through the air to fully leave their range.

Who would have thought that five different poison water arrows would shoot towards him as he flew through the air? They sealed off any routes of retreat he had.

Shang Xia was shocked to discover that not only were those swamp lizards able to lay a trap for him, but they were also able to work together flawlessly to prevent him from escaping!

Unfortunately for them, they seemed to have messed with the wrong person. Shang Xia wasn't just some prey that they could turn into lizard feed!

Seeing as there was no way to escape, Shang Xia knew he could only break through with brute force. His hands trembled slightly and the Scarlet Star Spear shook dangerously. The heaven and

earth qi in the air was drained quickly as a massive spear formed. The poison water arrows that were sent out by the swamp lizards lost their power and the heaven and earth qi contained in them was sapped away to make Shang Xia's spear even stronger.

Gathering enough heaven and earth qi in the air, Shang Xia released his sixth spear strike, Flow Recompensation!

The key behind his sixth move was to incorporate offensive and defensive might and it was the perfect move to use when stuck in a sticky situation. In his hands, the Scarlet Star Spear became capable of attacking and defending at the same time!

Grunting softly, the huge spear in the air separated into five different parts that stabbed at the swamp lizards below.

Waving their tails, those lizards quickly swatted his attack away. It seemed as though the power contained in his spear wasn't enough to deal with the lizards after he split it up.

Whatever the case, he managed to achieve his goal by sending out that spear strike. All he wanted to do was to distract the swamp lizards so that he could regain the initiative of the battle.

That was right, even though he was facing five swamp lizards with each one of them comparable to a martial intent realm expert, Shang Xia wasn't thinking of running away! He wanted to counter attack and kill all five of them!

When the lizards were still distracted, Shang Xia released his Void Evasion Spear and aimed it at the first swamp lizard. When Shang Xia caught on to their trap earlier, he managed to injure it slightly. It made sense for him to take out the weakest link immediately.

Void Evasion wasn't a strike that could be defended against easily by other cultivators. The swamp lizard wasn't a human cultivator, and facing a tricky strike like that, it was at a loss of what to do! Eventually, it was pinned into the ground by a spear light that emerged from the tip of the Scarlet Star Spear.

The five swamp lizards laid a trap for Shang Xia, but in their short exchange, not only were they unable to scratch Shang Xia, one of them was even killed in exchange!

Despite Shang Xia's strong offensive, the four swamp lizards weren't deterred in the slightest. Instead, they seemed to attack even more frantically.

By the time Shang Xia landed on the ground below, the four swamp lizards had already approached. At the same time, they caused a huge wave of mud to rush in Shang Xia's direction to prevent him from escaping from the opening caused by the death of one of their companions.

That wasn't all. Shang Xia felt that the poison miasma in the air was getting thicker the more they fought. His divine sense was being corroded at an even faster rate.

Were the swamp lizards able to manipulate the poison miasma in the air?

The thought flashed in Shang Xia's mind for a moment but he realized it wasn't time to think about such matters.

By the time everything had happened, the four swamp lizards had already closed in on him. They seemed to want to fight him in close combat in an attempt to kill the human who intruded on their territory.

For how smart they were, Shang Xia had a hard time believing they were merely rank three spiritual beasts!

No matter what, Shang Xia wasn't planning to let them do as they wished. As he got ready to deal with them even more questions ran through his mind. Ordinarily, spiritual beasts would only develop intelligence after entering the fourth rank. Unless they underwent some sort of mutation like the Mutated Rain Swallows, otherwise, they wouldn't be able to possess such abilities!

An even more dangerous thought appeared in his mind the next moment. If those swamp lizards hadn't undergone mutation, there could only be one possibility left! They were following the orders of an even stronger swamp lizard of the fourth rank that was lying in wait somewhere!

However, the more he thought about it, the more confused he became. If there truly was a rank four swamp lizard hiding somewhere, why did it send out rank three lizards instead of making a move itself?

The thoughts might be running through Shang Xia's mind, but his hands weren't idle. Seeing as the four beasts had entered his attack range, Shang Xia slung his Scarlet Star Spear behind him before bringing out his Jade River Sword. Ever since entering the Martial Intent Realm, he rarely used the sword but he felt that it was time to unleash his sword skills once again.

In mid air, Shang Xia didn't release his Seven Laceration Sword on a single target. Instead, he laid down the Seven Laceration Sword Formation!

Even though he changed the name of his martial intent to the Seven Laceration Sword in the past, it was built on the Yin Yang Sword Formation he comprehended through the Crimson Soul Tablet. He managed to perfectly fuse all seven pairs of sword qi into one to create a powerful attack.

Now, he had separated them when releasing his Seven Laceration Sword Formation and sword qi filled the region around him. Opposing pairs of sword qi rained down on the land as they formed a massive sword formation.

With the sword formation active, multiple pairs of qi would smash into the bodies of the swamp lizards at the same time. One had to know that the power contained in a single pair of sword qi was terrifying enough. With several different pairs striking the bodies of the swamp lizards, the might contained in them increased exponentially as many different combinations of qi could be used at the same time!

No matter how tough the bodies of those swamp lizards were, they suffered multiple injuries and were beaten into a sorry state.

With the seemingly endless amount of sword qi raining down on their bodies, the four swamp lizards couldn't care less about locating where Shang Xia was. They were like blind flies that were desperate to run away from whatever hell they were trapped within!

Not going to give up the amazing opportunity he had in front of him, Shang Xia released his grip on his sword and poured his inner qi into the Scarlet Star Spear hanging behind him. With a beautiful twist of his body, he grabbed his spear with both hands before releasing Celestial Disruption!

As starlight filled the skies, they turned into spears that shot into the bodies of those swamp lizards who were still being tortured by the multitude of sword qi. One of the swamp lizards was turned

into a lizard-sieve and without it standing in his way, Shang Xia quickly leaped out of their encirclement.

Chapter 392: Miasma Frog and the Swamp Lizard King

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Wu Tianfang and Huo Wuji of the Tongyou Institution had been working together since they entered the battlefield between the two worlds and with their cooperation, they managed to track down a cultivator of the Azure Spiritual World at the Martial Intent Realm.

However, their opponent didn't go down without a fight. During their hunt, they chased their opponent over to a peak that was covered in colorful mist.

As seasoned cultivators, their instincts told them that the mountain peak was filled with dangers. When they tried to extend their divine sense into the colorful mist to inspect the area, they discovered that it was cut off abruptly before they could learn about the situation within.

The colorful mist seemed to separate the mountain peak from the rest of the battlefield between the two worlds to make it an independent space that stood strong on its own.

Looking at each other, Wu Tianfang and Huo Wuji saw the look of shock in each other's eyes. However, they also saw the look of curiosity hidden behind it. They started to hesitate and wondered if they should charge in to uncover the mysteries within.

At that moment, Huo Wuji seemed to have caught sight of something. He discovered that there was a hill nearby that had been destroyed at an unknown time. They didn't know when it happened, but they could tell that it was several short miles away.

From the ruins that remained, he could see that the top half of the hill was missing.

Huo Wuji seemed to have thought of something and he quickly took several steps back. Estimating the actual distance between himself and the destroyed hill, he stared at Wu Tianfang abruptly.

Wu Tianfang didn't seem to have noticed the collapsed hill. Instead, his gaze was fixed on the mountain before him as he felt a sense of familiarity towards it.

When Huo Wuji turned to look at him, Tian Wufang felt his heart trembling slightly and the two of them seemed to have reached the same conclusion. "This... Is this the Yuxi Peak?!"

"It's the Yuxi Peak and the Pinxin Peak!" After they spoke, they quickly turned to look at the mountain peak that was covered in colorful mist. It seemed as though the Yuxi peak in front of their eyes was the only remaining structure of the Tongyou Peak!

"What do we do now?" Wu Tianfang muttered.

Snorting coldly, Huo Wuji quickly broke down the situation. "The distance between this place and our new spatial tunnel isn't considered too far. It's not like this place is really secluded either. If we're able to find it, the members of the Azure Spiritual World can do the same. Moreover, the situation is extremely chaotic right now and from the looks of it, the colorful mist around the Yuxi Peak makes things even more complicated. It's not something the two of us can deal with along." Pausing for a second, he continued, "We'll retreat. Let's make a report to the Martial Extermination Realm experts of the institution and get them to take a look at this after the situation stabilizes."

Nodding slightly Wu Tianfang agreed. "That sounds like a good plan. Moreover, that asshole who ran in there probably had his fate sealed the moment he entered."

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Blackish-red blood poured out of the swamp lizard's body before it fell back into the mud below. It was swallowed by the blackish mud that covered the marsh region and the stench of rotting flesh in the air became even stronger.

After killing two of the five swamp lizards, Shang Xia finally managed to break out of their encirclement. However, a strange light shot towards his back the moment he managed to find his footing again.

Shang Xia didn't discover the hidden attack immediately, and by the time he realized what was going on, he could only swing his Scarlet Star Spear behind him desperately in an attempt to block the ray of light.

When his spear came into contact with the ray of light, he felt as though he struck a springy ball of rubber. He felt a huge backlash coming from his spear. However, instead of sending him flying backwards, the ray of light seemed to want to pull him towards its original location.

This amount of force...

Shang Xia gasped silently before releasing his spear altogether. In that instant, the spear was dragged away from him.

When the spear landed in the mud not too long later, Shang Xia made his move. Jumping into the air, he reached out to send a bolt of reddish-gold lightning bolt towards his spear. It struck both the spear and the ray of light that dragged it away from him.

Crackle...

Making a pulling motion with his hand, the Scarlet Star Spear quickly returned to him. The weird creature or object that struck his spear earlier returned to the mud but before anything else could happen, a massive frog that was sixty feet tall emerged from the ground below. Huge swathes of mud and earth flew through the air and it rained back down on the land.

"Croak..."

When the frog croaked, Shang Xia felt as though someone had slammed a massive sledgehammer into his brain. The three swamp lizards that were injured from his sword formation earlier froze completely and their bodies turned stiff. From the looks of it, their mind was also affected by the croak and they fell unconscious.

Is this... Is this the Poison Miasma Frog?!

What the hell... It's a rank four spiritual beast?!

Shang Xia didn't hesitate. Enduring the pain that was threatening to tear his mind apart, he turned to leave. He flicked his wrist once and a Lightning Fire Jujube that was deep red in color appeared in his palm.

Turning to look at Shang Xia for a second, the frog decided not to waste its effort on the kid. After all, Shang Xia was like a teeny tiny little snack. Even if it wanted to eat Shang Xia, it might not be

able to fill its belly. Instead, its tongue shot at the corpse of the swamp lizard Shang Xia killed earlier. In a smooth motion, it ate half the lizard.

The moment its tongue went to grab the corpse of the swamp lizard, Shang Xia caught sight of the weird object that tried pulling him in earlier. It was the frog's damn tongue!

Heaving a sigh of relief that the frog was choosing to eat the swamp lizards, Shang Xia didn't plan on staying. He continued to make his escape.

Behind him, the poison frog didn't stop after eating the corpse. It continued to kill the three who fell unconscious when it appeared.

From the moment it appeared, the swamp lizards were unable to move. It seemed as though the Poison Miasma Frog was a true counter to those swamp lizards!

With a strange feeling overcoming him, Shang Xia slowed down to take a look behind.

Right as the frog swallowed those swamp lizards, a thunderous roar in the distance rocked the air and the rage contained in it rang clearly in the ears of everyone who heard it.

Leaping into the air, the Poison Miasma Frog jumped hundreds of feet out the moment it heard the void. By the time the soundwaves of the roar dissipated, the frog was nowhere to be seen.

Lowering his head slightly, Shang Xia grunted softly as a trace of hesitation flashed across his eyes. However, he quickly made up his mind and decided to run in the direction where the frog left.

Luckily, the frog seemed to be the overlord of the region and the path that it took seemed to be pretty safe. Shang Xia didn't have to worry about running into dangerous situations when following the creature.

Despite not being able to see the giant frog, another loud roar came from the distance, pointing him in the right direction.

Fluctuations of heaven and earth qi came in that direction and it didn't take long for the giant frog's enraged croak to ring through the air. Shang Xia could hear the smoldering rage in its voice as it confronted the source of the roars.

From the shockwaves and fluctuation in heaven and earth qi, Shang Xia could tell that a battle between the terrifying frog and an existence of the same level had begun.

Was that the real reason why the frog allowed Shang Xia to leave? Did it already discover the presence of the other creature and was preparing for battle after replenishing its energy with the swamp lizards?

From the giant frog's decisive actions of killing the three swamp lizards and the loud roar that followed soon after, it was very likely that the creature that the frog was doing battle with was a rank four swamp lizard!

Even though Shang Xia was busy letting his thoughts run through his mind, he didn't forget to conceal his aura the best he could. Things might get messy if he was discovered by both rank four spiritual beasts.

Playing safe, Shang Xia chose to take a detour when he was closing in on the battle. Since he was close enough to determine where it was, he decided to approach it from another direction

When he finally approached the battle after taking all his precautions, a strange feeling filled his heart. As he extended his divine sense, the Crimson Soul Tablet in his sea of consciousness started to tremble slightly.

His movements turned a little sluggish when he felt the change, but he sucked in a cold breath the next second. Did I finally find something useful?!

Raising his head, his gaze pierced through the thick miasma that covered the marsh. He seemed to have caught sight of a strange cloud floating in the distance but no matter how hard he tried after that, he couldn't observe the contents within. Even so, he could tell that it definitely had something to do with the world origin since his Crimson Soul Tablet was acting up.

Not too far away from the strange cloud he was looking at, the battle between two rank four spiritual beasts were starting to heat up.

Shang Xia knew that the smartest thing he could do at the moment was to hide himself and wait for the battle to be over. If the two beasts could injure each other, he would be able to swoop in at the last minute and reap all the benefits. The only problem with that was that he would be forced into a passive position. He could only pray that the two rank four spiritual beasts would be crazy enough to go all out against each other.

After growing so much stronger, Shang Xia wasn't the weakling he once was. He would avoid falling into a passive state and hoping for others to complete all the hard work for him. Moreover, with the intelligence of rank four spiritual beasts, they knew when to stop. Moreover, their grudge at the moment wasn't intense enough that one of them had to die.

Also, from what Shang Xia saw earlier, the Poison Miasma Frog seemed to be a natural counter of those swamp lizards. That would mean that if the giant frog's opponent was indeed a rank four swamp lizard, the lizard would fall into a disadvantage before long.

Once the rank four swamp lizard discovered that it wasn't the frog's opponent, it would definitely start to run away.

If that were to happen, Shang Xia would have to face the rank four Poison Miasma Frog who would probably retain a huge amount of combat strength if he wished to obtain the item in the strange cloud-like object his Crimson Soul Tablet was responding to.

To make the situation as favorable as possible, Shang Xia would have to make his move quickly! Taking the chance where the two rank four spiritual beasts were locked in combat, he pushed his divine sense to the limit to hide his presence even further. When he was done, he started to slowly approach the cloud.

Shang Xia was never one to hesitate. The moment he made up his mind about something, he would take action immediately!

Making yet another detour, he avoided the battlefield where the two monsters were duking it out and he quickly approached a thousand feet radius from the cloud. At that distance, he also managed to catch sight of the two rank four spiritual beasts who were fighting. He was right, the giant frog was stuck in battle with a huge swamp lizard that was close to a hundred feet long.

Chapter 393: Caught Off Guard

As he approached the mysterious cloud he was aiming for earlier, Shang Xia could confirm that the elusive world origin he had been looking for was definitely present.

Concealing himself to the best of his abilities, he got even closer to the strange cloud. The nearer he got, the clearer the battle between the rank four beasts became. As he watched the battle play out before him, he could guess who had the upper hand.

The marsh he was in seemed to be a prime hunting spot for the Poison Miasma Frog, and its main food source was very possibly the swamp lizards Shang Xia had seen it eat earlier.

Because of the Tongyou Institution's actions of drawing in energy from the Origin Tide and causing traces of world origin to return to the battlefield between the two worlds when they forcefully closed the spatial tunnel during the war for the Tongyou Mysterious World, the rank four giant swamp lizard seemed to have seen a trace of hope. If it could refine the world origin that was contained in that weird cloud, it might finally be able to get rid of its fate of being the Poison Miasma Frog's prey!

Because of the little ray of hope it had, the swamp lizard chose to take the risk and approach the frog's hiding spot! Despite it being in the fourth rank, Shang Xia could tell that it had broken through not too long ago! It might have been attempting its breakthrough earlier as it sent those rank three swamp lizards to secure the area around it.

That was how Shang Xia fell into their trap in the beginning. Luckily, his strength could be said to be at the pinnacle of the Martial Intent Realm. Even when faced against five rank three swamp lizards, he wasn't suppressed at all. He even managed to kill two of them.

Who would have thought that the giant frog would appear and start hunting those poor little swamp lizards from out of nowhere? Shang Xia, who had just escaped their encirclement earlier, ran into the lizards' natural predator! Now that the rank four Poison Miasma Frog had arrived, the Swamp Lizard King that was breaking through was naturally discovered.

With a trace of rage in its heart that the prey it has been hunting all along was starting to play tricks on it and was trying to break free of their fate, the Poison Miasma Frog decided to take action immediately.

It didn't hold back and killed the three remaining swamp lizards immediately before ignoring Shang Xia a mere human. Rushing over to the cloud containing world origin, it started to do battle with the swamp lizard king immediately!

The reason behind the frog's action wasn't anything too deep. It wanted to stop the swamp lizard king from advancing even further and posing a threat to its position as the king of the marsh! Well... Obtaining the world origin that could allow itself to grow stronger was also one of the reasons behind the frog's action.

Entering a hundred feet radius from the cloud, Shang Xia's heart trembled and he discovered that the Crimson Soul Tablet had the ability to attract the world origin at such a close distance.

With his divine sense extending over to the cloud despite the corrosion of the poison miasma in the air, the Crimson Soul Tablet released a strong force of attraction. It was like a starving beast that hadn't eaten in years when it discovered the world origin. The moment the world origin was drawn over, it was devoured in an instant.

Before any creature could react, the world origin that was contained in the strange cloud disappeared! Not even a smidge of it was left.

Shang Xia didn't expect something like that to happen, much less the two beasts who were locked in combat. Their actions froze in an instant and their gazes landed in the direction where the world origin seemed to have moved to and they quickly discovered the little ant that was Shang Xia who was wearing a helpless expression on his face.

God damn it, brother tablet, what the hell was that?! I'm in deep shit now...

Cursing silently, Shang Xia didn't freeze up completely. Tossing out a Lightning Fire Jujube that was shining a deep golden red, he turned around to flee.

The detonation of the Lightning Fire Jujube could be heard behind him as he ran away and the enraged croak of the Poison Miasma Frog boomed through the air. It was followed by a miserable cry from the swamp lizard king.

Shang Xia didn't dare to turn his head and he poured inner qi into his legs desperately. Pushing himself to the limit, he only prayed that he would be able to move faster. At the same time, his divine sense was operating in overdrive to conceal his aura to avoid detection.

While making his escape, he didn't forget to curse his movement techniques once again. He swore that he had to obtain a better movement technique no matter what.

However, there was one thing he forgot. It was entirely possible for him to break through to the Martial Extermination Realm by the time he returned. When that happened, he would be able to soar through the air with the use of his extermination origins. Movement techniques would be completely useless then!

As he made his frenzied escape, he was unable to place his attention on the Crimson Soul Tablet that was in his sea of consciousness. At that moment, it was undergoing an extreme transformation.

Anyway, back to the Lightning Fire Jujube, it deserved its reputation as a miraculous treasure born from the heaven and earth. The moment Shang Xia tossed out the rank four Lightning Fire Jujube, neither the Poison Miasma Frog nor the swamp lizard king could remain unaffected. The Poison Miasma Frog was stopped dead in its tracks and it couldn't chase after Shang Xia immediately while the weaker swamp lizard king suffered injuries.

Earlier, when the world origin disappeared abruptly, the frog's first instincts told him to chase after the culprit immediately. Unfortunately, the Lightning Fire Jujube was too strong. It forced the frog to defend itself and bought Shang Xia some time to escape. However, his actions only caused the Poison Miasma Frog to become more determined to obtain the world origin that was taken away.

It didn't expect the swamp lizard king to be injured by the surprise attack earlier and the frog quickly fell into a dilemma. It could choose to quickly deal with the obstruction from the Lightning Fire Jujube and chase after the little thief who had stolen the world origin, but it could also take the chance to eat the injured swamp lizard king! That was another rank four spiritual beast and it definitely had the ability to threaten the frog's position in the future!

The world origin concerned the frog's future achievements and the height it would be able to reach while eating the swamp lizard king would provide the Poison Miasma Frog with a huge strength boost immediately!

Also, the world origin was getting further and further as it continued to weigh its options. However, the injured swamp lizard king was right in front of it! Killing and devouring it wouldn't be a problem.

A rank four spiritual beast might be a lot more intelligent than spiritual beasts of lower ranks, but its intellect was still far from an old monster cultivator of the human race. To make a huge decision like that, the Poison Miasma Frog's bestial instincts quickly took over.

"Croak!" A shadow shot out from the mouth of the frog in the next instant and went straight for the swamp lizard king.

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Running close to five miles without so much as slowing down, Shang Xia finally felt secure enough to turn around. He was shocked but pleasantly surprised to see that there was no rank four spiritual beasts on his tail.

With the luxury of time to gather his thoughts, he seemed to have understood the situation. He couldn't help but heave a sigh of relief and thank his lucky stars.

Loud roars came from where he originally was and Shang Xia quickly made up his mind to continue running. The swamp lizard king seemed to be buying him some time as it held on for its dear life against the Poison Miasma Frog who was determined to kill it, but Shang Xia didn't wish to risk his life for the threat of the Poison Miasma Frog that would descend at any time.

The distance of five miles was something it could cover in several leaps, and with the marsh being where the frog hunted most of the time, Shang Xia made the smart choice to run. He ran towards the outskirts of the marsh, and after ten or so miles, he finally noticed some disturbance in the heaven and earth qi in the air around him. It seemed as though the swamp lizard king who was injured by his Lightning Fire Jujube earlier was no longer able to hold on. It eventually died in the hands -or tongue- of the Poison Miasma Frog.

Since it dealt with the swamp lizard king who had the ability to threaten its position as the king of the marsh, the Poison Miasma Frog's thoughts quickly returned to the little ant who had the guts to seal the world origin from right under its nose. Not to mention the fact that Shang Xia threw out a Lightning Fire Jujube earlier to disrupt the frog's movement. Its instincts were telling it to kill the damn human! Moreover, the world origin concerned its future too!

Without devouring the body of the swamp lizard king, the Poison Miasma Frog leaped in the direction where Shang Xia escaped.

Shang Xia could barely make out the huge figure that was bouncing in the distance as it started to grow bigger and bigger. Estimating the distance he had run, Shang Xia felt that there was close to 34 miles between himself and the location where the two rank four spiritual beasts did battle earlier.

With the speed at which the shadow was growing, Shang Xia could tell that it was moving extremely quickly!

He had seen Martial Extermination Realm experts in the past, and he experienced how fast they were first-hand. Some of them were fast, and some of them were slow. However, their speed seemed proportional to their cultivation level!

With how fast the damn fat frog was moving, Shang Xia estimated that it was definitely comparable to a third layer Martial Extermination Realm expert.

According to his calculations, it wouldn't take long before the frog caught up!

Pushing himself to the limit, Shang Xia continued to make his escape. In the blink of an eye, Shang Xia could feel the fluctuations in the air that were caused by the frog's movements.

With the pressure that brought with it the weight of a mountain crushing down on Shang Xia, he felt that the Poison Miasma Frog could descend at any moment and crush him to bits. However, lady luck seemed to be shining on him at the moment as the scenery before him started to change once again. The mountains range where he came from could be vaguely seen in the distance!

With a burst of joy filling his heart, Shang Xia knew that he was finally about to emerge from the damned marsh. Behind him, the giant frog was trying its best to catch up to Shang Xia as if it was trying to make it before Shang Xia left the marsh completely. It would take three to four more leaps before it could chase down the little ant who dared to mess with it, but seeing as Shang Xia was about to leave the marsh, it circulated its inner qi desperately. In an instant, its aura nearly strengthened itself onefold!

Opening its mouth, a thunderous croak rang through the air as a wave created from the mud and sludge from the marsh was formed before striking at Shang Xia.

The abrupt disturbance was naturally unable to avoid Shang Xia's detection and his expression changed drastically.

Reacting the best he could, he reached for a handful of Lightning Fire Jujubes in his Embroidered Cloud Case and tossed them at the wave.

Four rank three Lightning Fire Jujubes that were the size of a chicken's egg exploded when they came into contact with the wave, greatly reducing the power behind the Poison Miasma Frog's attack. As it continued on to Shang Xia, the power contained in it no longer possessed a threat. However, Shang Xia felt an ache in his heart. One had to know that he only had 6 rank three Lightning Fire Jujubes! In an instant, he lost two thirds of them!

Chapter 394: Four Seasons Samsara Wine

In a single breath, Shang Xia tossed out 4 rank three Lightning Fire Jujubes and destroyed the wave of mud and sludge behind him. He managed to buy even more time for him to escape with his actions.

Behind him, the Poison Miasma Frog noticed that Shang Xia was at the edge of the marsh, and with a final leap, it landed heavily in the marsh while sending out hundreds of arrows created with the muddy water below towards Shang Xia.

Realizing what had happened, Shang Xia turned around helplessly and unleashed Celestial Disruption with whatever power could be mustered in his Scarlet Star Spear. Spears created with starlight shot at the approaching mud arrows.

With soft clattering sounds ringing through the air behind him, Shang Xia felt his arms hurting from the backlash that came from the power contained in those arrows. By the time he had blocked all of them, he felt his arms going numb and he had a feeling his Scarlet Star Spear had reached its limit.

In the time he took to block the mud arrows, the Poison Miasma Frog seemed to have discovered an opportunity to make its move. It made another quick leap to close the distance even more.

Puff... With its divine sense locked onto Shang Xia, its tongue shot out at Shang Xia with terrifying speed. It was comparable to a huge spear that flew straight for Shang Xia's chest.

In a state of panic, Shang Xia retrieved a talisman and tossed it towards the approaching tongue. With a formless dagger forming in the air, it paused for a second before landing accurately on Poison Miasma Frog's tongue.

The Spiritual Yin Knife Talisman was one of the three types of talismans Shang Xia made back in the Shang Clan Manor. It was the talisman with the strangest attacking ability and it was the hardest to defend against.

Despite being a rank four spiritual beast who had sturdy defenses, Shang Xia's sudden attack struck accurately on its tongue, a part that had lower defense compared to the rest of its body! With pain shooting up to its mind, the frog quickly retracted its tongue.

With his life at stake, Shang Xia couldn't be bothered with the price he had to pay. He brought out another Lightning Fire Jujube that was deep red and filled with golden lines. Without a second thought, he tossed it directly at the Poison Miasma Frog.

With a ferocious cry filled with pain and anger resounding through the air behind him, Shang Xia finally made his way out of the marsh. By the time he emerged, he had nearly exhausted his inner qi and he was looking extremely disheveled.

He might have left the marsh, but he didn't know if the Poison Miasma Frog would be crazy enough to chase him outside of its territory. Forcefully holding back the intense lethargy he was feeling, he continued to run towards the dense forestry that covered the mountain range before him.

As Shang Xia made his escape, the Poison Miasma Frog croaked angrily in the direction where Shang Xia had left. With burn marks all over its slimy skin, the frog didn't look to be in such a good state either.

However, the Poison Miasma Frog seemed to be unwilling to take a single step out of the marsh. No matter how loudly it croaked, it could only watch as Shang Xia's figure disappeared into the distance.

Finally entering the forest he was aiming for without the pursuit of the Poison Miasma Frog, Shang Xia heaved a sigh of relief. With fatigue overwhelming him, his body swayed slightly and he felt his vision starting to turn dark.

No... This doesn't seem right!

Shang Xia held on to the last bit of consciousness he had and realized that something was off. The fatigue he was feeling didn't seem to come from the battle from before! After all, he had been in more intense battles for a far longer period of time! At his current level, he wouldn't lose consciousness simply because of a short getaway like that! Thinking back to the Crimson Soul Tablet and the world origin it devoured earlier, Shang Xia felt that it was possible for the tablet to be undergoing some sort of transformation.

Forcing himself to stay away, he stumbled through the forest and finally located a large tree with a hole in the trunk. Forcing his way into the hole, he was finally satisfied that the location was hidden away from plain sight and allowed himself to fall asleep.

The moment his vision turned dark, his consciousness returned to his sea of consciousness. Every single bit of his attention was placed on the changes that were occurring to the Crimson Soul Tablet.

Shang Xia's guess was right. Due to the intense change happening to the Crimson Soul Tablet, he was forced into a deep sleep.

Other than the changes to the words on the surface of the Crimson Soul Tablet, the cracks were repairing themselves. However, the cracks would reopen from time to time. A new crack seemed to be forming as the words on the surface of the tablet continued to change, but it didn't take long for it to be sealed up.

Luckily for Shang Xia, he didn't forcefully use the tablet to produce the recipe for his rank four advancement medicine back in the Changfeng City. He stopped right after comprehending his third martial intent, preventing the tablet from being severely damaged.

Now that the Crimson Soul Tablet had absorbed a huge amount of world origin and was starting to repair itself, Shang Xia finally had the confidence to use it to produce his rank four advancement medicine. The incomplete medicine he obtained from the Scripture Depository was finally put into use!

As the Crimson Soul Tablet studied the medicine and made its changes, the words on its surface changed at a terrifying rate. It was comparable to the speed at which thoughts flew in one's mind.

Throughout the process of the deduction to create a complete formula from whatever Shang Xia provided, the Crimson Soul Tablet would use up a huge amount of energy. That was the reason behind the additional crack that formed, but with the injection of word origin, it quickly restored itself.

Shang Xia noticed the changes happening to the Crimson Soul Tablet and felt that the amount of world origin he obtained from under the noses of the two rank four spiritual beasts earlier wasn't truly enough.

It might be barely enough for the world origin to repair the crack that was forming, but it would be far from enough to repair the two earlier cracks.

That didn't stop Shang Xia from completing the deduction of his rank four advancement formula. Since there was enough world origin to complete it, there was no use in delaying it any further.

With a single thought, the words on the tablet started to become visible.

Looking at the words on the tablet that were no longer changing, Shang Xia observed the crack that had formed to ensure that the tablet wasn't going to shatter any time soon. After all, the moment it did, his consciousness would go with it. When that happened, there was no doubt about it as his life would also come to an end.

To his surprise, his little experiment seemed to have worked! As long as he willed it, the tablet would stop its deduction process and so would the destruction to it. The world origin that hadn't been used fully would also be stored in his body, waiting for him to use it eventually. As such, Shang Xia finally discovered a way to control the speed of destruction of the tablet!

Following which, he turned to look at the words that had appeared.

Advancement Medicine: Four Seasons Samsara Wine

Advancement Criteria: Grand Completion Stage of the Martial Intent Realm

Main Ingredient: Spirit of the Four Seasons

Supplementary Ingredients: 1x Jade Peach Blossom harvested in the Spring, 1x Nine Leaf Lotus harvested in the Summer, 1x Glass Daisy Chrysanthemum harvested in the Autumn, 1x Dragon Headed Wintersweet harvested in the Winter

Shang Xia's heart sank the moment he saw the ingredients required. He knew that the rank four advancement medicine wouldn't be easy to create!

Thinking back to the incomplete medicine he brought out of the Scripture Depository, he wondered what the hell he had gotten himself into. One had to know that the Crimson Soul Tablet was usually only able to modify and optimize formulas that were complete. Now that he was using an incomplete medicine as the base, Shang Xia didn't know how the tablet would react.

The main reason he was using the bottle of incomplete medicine was because of the high compatibility he had with it. Of course, he was also confident that the tablet would be able to restore the complete recipe of the advancement medicine, but he didn't know if there were any other side effects.

Now that the recipe had been slightly restored, Shang Xia stared at the recipe with his jaws agape. What in the world had the four seasons had to do with the Martial Extermination Realm? At the very most, the Martial Extermination Realm should be connected with the four divisions of the twenty-eight constellations! Namely, the Azure Dragon, White Tiger, Vermillion Bird, and Black Tortoise... Could the four seasons be actually connected to them?

With his brain bogged down by a sea of thoughts, he eventually decided to just go with whatever the tablet said. After all, there shouldn't be anything wrong with it.

Luckily, the ingredients required were only connected to the four seasons. If the Crimson Soul Tablet really required him to look for the four mythical beasts or to obtain their blood essence or something like that, Shang Xia would actually smash his head into a wall. Even if they existed, where was he supposed to start looking?

Even so, his head was already starting to hurt when he saw the main ingredient recorded. 'Spirit of the Four Seasons'...

That would mean that he would have to capture the essence of the four seasons experienced throughout the world. There were many ways the essence of each season could appear and trying to capture it was frighteningly tough!

The Spirit of the Four Seasons could appear as a simple spring breeze or it might be contained in a droplet of rainwater that fell during a short summer rain. It could even be a fruit that appeared on a certain tree in the autumn and it might just be contained in a random rock that was blown around in a winter storm. Moreover, those would only be the spirit of one season! Obtaining four of them

Even though the Spirit of the Four Seasons might not be something that only appears once in a blue moon, it was extremely elusive. If one wasn't prepared for it to appear, it would be extremely difficult to grab a hold of it.

What made it worse was the storage aspect. Even if one managed to obtain it, it was a near impossible task of keeping it safe.

Shang Xia might not have completed the full recipe of his rank four advancement medicine, but from what he could already see, it wouldn't be easy for him to enter the Martial Extermination Realm. After all, the problem of obtaining the Spirit of the Four Seasons was already causing him a massive headache. He still had no idea how he was supposed to collect all four and mix them together or whatever it was.

Chapter 395: -I need my brains to think for a better name- (cont)

Shang Xia had a sneaking suspicion that his rank four advancement medicine wasn't going to be easy to create at all!

It wasn't that he hadn't seen the recipes of other rank four advancement medicine in the past. However, none of those he had seen before even came close to the Four Seasons Samsara Wine described on his Crimson Soul Tablet!

Just obtaining the Spirit of the Four Seasons alone would probably be comparable in difficulty to crafting other rank four advancement medicines.

Moreover, the recipe recorded on the Crimson Soul Tablet was only the start. Shang Xia hadn't completed the entire recipe due to his fear of damaging the tablet beyond repair. He didn't know how much more difficult it would be once the complete recipe was produced.

Shang Xia's headache didn't end after looking at Spirit of the Four Seasons. Instead, he turned to look at the assistive ingredients and discovered that they were all precious rank four herbs.

Gathering them wouldn't be a walk in the park.

All of a sudden, the crack that had been sealed up earlier broke apart in full force again. That wasn't all. Another thin crack that had the width of a hair appeared on the fourth surface of the Crimson Soul Tablet, extending down a third of its surface. At that instant, Shang Xia could feel the tablet trembling violently as though it would break apart at any time. His sudden decision to continue deducing the rank four advancement formula didn't seem too smart, but he did it anyway.

Only then did Shang Xia think about the situation from another direction. The Crimson Soul Tablet's ability to improve on recipes and formulas might not only exhaust world origin. It also used up some sort of special essence that was unique to the Crimson Soul Tablet itself.

Well, it was also entirely possible that the enhancement and completion of a rank four advancement medicine was too taxing on the Crimson Soul Tablet which resulted in the damage at the end. However, Shang Xia didn't care too much about that at the moment.

He continued to look at the words that appeared on the second face of the tablet.

Assistive Treasure: A Pot of Hundred Year Old Inexhaustible Spring Water, 1x Hundred Year Old Violet Ningpo Wigfort, 1x Hundred Year Old Windchime Grass, 1x Hundred Year Old Yang Fire Stone.

Assistive Ingredient: Crimson Crystal Valley Brewer's Yeast

Feeling the additional destruction to the Crimson Soul Tablet, Shang Xia could tell that the deduction of the assistive treasures and supplementary herb didn't damage the tablet as much. After reading the contents on the tablet, Shang Xia also realized that the treasures and herbs required on the second face of the tablet weren't as precious as those on the first.

At the very least, he had heard of them.

By that time, only two of the four faces had words on them. According to how the Crimson Soul Tablet operated in the past, the complete recipe would only be produced after all four faces were filled.

Moreover, the last two faces would contain the way to use the medicine and things like the success and compatibility rate. All of which were extremely important.

Looking at the damage on the tablet, Shang Xia gritted his teeth and finally decided to continue the deduction process.

Along with another round of heavy trembling, the Crimson Soul Tablet became even more damaged. This time, Shang Xia felt as though someone had stabbed a sharp spike straight into his soul. He felt as though his divine sense was about to rip in half, causing a loud scream to escape his lips.

Shang Xia's body that was hidden in the trunk of a tree shook violently as pain shot through it. His body curled up like a cooked shrimp in pain but he forced himself to keep his consciousness locked onto the Crimson Soul Tablet.

The crack on the fourth face of the tablet extended by another third as the words on the third face finally became visible. Shang Xia quickly stopped the Crimson Soul Tablet from further deduction and the pain abruptly disappeared. He felt a wave of comfort washing over his body. Without time to waste, he turned his attention to the third face of the Crimson Soul Tablet.

Remarks: One can only use the medicine in a location that experiences all four seasons at once. At the same time, one can use the opportunity to carry out a joint refinement of the Four Seasons Extermination Origin.

Only a single line was recorded on the third face of the Crimson Soul Tablet.

After reading that single line, Shang Xia felt a trace of despair filling his heart.

How is this possible?!

What the fuck is this?!

He didn't know if it was possible for all four seasons to appear at the same time, and there was no need to start on the next sentence. What in the world did it mean for him to carry out a joint refinement?! Was he supposed to refine all four strands of extermination origins that corresponded to the different seasons at the same time? Was it even possible?

One had to know that refining a single strand of extermination origin was a tall task for any cultivator trying to enter the Martial Extermination Realm. If he had to refine four at once...

Shang Xia had never heard of anyone refining more than a single strand of extermination origin when breaking through, much less four!

And there was another question. He didn't understand what the Four Seasons Extermination Origins meant in the first place.

Irritation and despair filled Shang Xia's heart in equal parts as he tried to think of the various possibilities.

He knew that the Crimson Soul Tablet wouldn't make up nonsense to mess with him and that accomplishing whatever was stated on it would definitely be possible, but the difficulty of making it happen seemed to be on a whole other level.

After giving himself some time to calm down, Shang Xia finally started to think through the matter properly.

First things first, he had to awaken from his slumber in case he ran into any trouble. After all, he was still deep in the forestry in the battlefield between the two worlds. He didn't know if the Poison Miasma Frog would appear again or if there were other dangers in his surroundings.

Regardless of how difficult it was for him to obtain whatever was recorded on the Crimson Soul Tablet, waking up to ensure his own safety was the most important thing at the moment.

In the darkness of the hole he had been hiding in, he forced his eyes to open as a wave of aches and pain swept through his body. Several yelps escaped his lips and when he was finally awake and aware of his surroundings, he gathered his thoughts and went to observe the words on the Crimson Soul Tablet again.

The last face might still be empty, but Shang Xia didn't wish to exhaust and damage the tablet even further. If he forcefully completed the deduction, the Crimson Soul Tablet would likely shatter.

According to his previous experiences in the Martial Extremity Realm, the last face would only state the compatibility rate and success rate anyway. At that point, there was no reason for Shang Xia to refer to them.

The only use they had was to boost his confidence when he was advancing. The recipe was complete and as long as Shang Xia was confident in himself, he could ignore the rates calculated by the tablet.

From the rest of the information recorded in the tablet, there was no way for Shang Xia to gather all the ingredients he required in a short period of time. As such, it goes without saying that he wouldn't be able to craft his advancement medicine any time in the near future.

Without the advancement medicine, he wouldn't be able to break through to the Martial Extermination Realm anyway. Or according to what he knew and the knowledge he gained from his previous world, the Four Constellation Realm!

Since he wouldn't be breaking through any time soon, the success rate and the compatibility rate didn't matter too much at the moment.

Even though it was useless for him at the moment, the success rate had its uses. For example, he could modify the formula as he saw fit to affect the success rates like he did with his Chaos Essence Lightning Palm. Thinking back, he gave the institution a weaker version of the formula he used to comprehend the Chaos Essence Lightning Palm which had a lower success rate than what he could comprehend.

With the recipe of the rank four advancement medicine and his unique way of cultivation, Shang Xia had the ability to create an inheritance that recorded his way of cultivation the moment he stepped into the Martial Extermination Realm! He could record the recipe of the advancement medicine he used up to the techniques he learned. Through some manipulation of the techniques or recipe with the Crimson Soul Tablet, Shang Xia might be able to develop a way for cultivators with his inheritance to smoothly increase their strength even though he might need to compromise the strength they would possess.

Choosing not to complete the fourth face of deduction at the moment, Shang Xia felt that it wouldn't be too late to finish it after finding more world origin and repairing the tablet slightly.

Making up his mind, he fed the tablet with the remaining world origin that was stored in his body when he stopped the restoration process earlier. The crack on the fourth face of the tablet slowly started to close up.

Unfortunately, the restoration stopped after a small part of the crack was sealed up.

Taking a long breath, Shang Xia couldn't help but lament silently. If he wasn't able to repair the Crimson Soul Tablet, he wouldn't be able to rely on it after entering the Martial Extermination Realm. He might no longer be able to receive help from the tablet to comprehend his fourth martial intent like he did with his previous ones.

Looking at the different criteria and treasures, Shang Xia looked at the part where he had to advance in a location that experienced all four seasons simultaneously and felt that it wasn't exactly impossible for a place like that to exist. Also, he hadn't heard of anyone trying to refine four strands of extermination origins at once but that didn't mean that no one had tried it before.

With the bottle of incomplete medicine in his hand, it was enough proof that someone had been thinking in the same direction.

The Azure Origin World was massive and Shang Xia was a mere Martial Intent Realm cultivator. Even if he had his knowledge from his past life, that didn't mean that everyone else was completely useless.

There were Martial Extermination Realm experts who had lived a long life and there were even Martial Dipper Realm ancestors who left their legacy behind on the continent. Even though he hadn't heard of anyone who had entered the Sixth Order of the Primary Realm, that didn't mean that it was absolutely impossible for someone like that to exist.

With the knowledge he learned from Kou Chongxue and other sources, he knew that the Azure Origin World was merely one of the many worlds out there.

Everything that he felt was impossible was merely because he was a frog at the bottom of the well! Just because he hadn't heard of it yet didn't mean that things were unachievable!

The reason he didn't think to ask his various seniors in the institution and the clan was because he was trying to safeguard his secret of reincarnation! He was afraid that the others would lust after his knowledge and do him harm, but his way of thinking was truly a little lacking. Of the true powerhouses, which one of them didn't possess any heaven-shaking secrets? Even if he didn't wish to reveal the secret of his Crimson Soul Tablet and his reincarnation, he could approach the problem from other angles!

Finally realizing that his thinking was the source of most of his problems, Shang Xia felt a huge weight lifted off his chest. It seemed as though he finally broke through the mental barrier that had been holding him back all that while and he finally completed a type of transformation to his mental state! He finally possessed the mindset that cultivators should have in the first place!

Chapter 396: Contemplation and Meeting

Four Constellation Realm Advancement Medicine

Advancement Medicine: Four Seasons Samsara Wine

Advancement Criteria: Grand Completion Stage of the Martial Intent Realm

Main Ingredient: Spirit of the Four Seasons

Supplementary Ingredients: 1x Jade Peach Blossom harvested in the Spring, 1x Nine Leaf Lotus harvested in the Summer, 1x Glass Daisy Chrysanthemum harvested in the Autumn, 1x Dragon Headed Wintersweet harvested in the Winter

Assistive Treasure: A Pot of Hundred Year Old Inexhaustible Spring Water, 1x Hundred Year Old Violet Ningpo Wigfort, 1x Hundred Year Old Windchime Grass, 1x Hundred Year Old Yang Fire Stone.

Assistive Ingredient: Crimson Crystal Valley Brewer's Yeast

Remarks: One can only use the medicine in a location that experiences all four seasons at once. At the same time, one can use the opportunity to carry out a joint refinement of the Four Seasons Extermination Origin.

Success Rate: ??

Compatibility Rate: ??

That was the final result that was displayed on the Crimson Soul Tablet after Shang Xia risked it all to complete most of the restoration of the incomplete medicine's recipe.

Even without the final rates calculated by the Crimson Soul Tablet, Shang Xia was able to start his preparations.

Other than locating the ingredients and herbs required to craft his advancement medicine, Shang Xia also had to locate more world origin to restore his Crimson Soul Tablet.

After weaseling his way out of the hole he was hiding in, Shang Xia observed the area around him. He could see the marsh far in the distance that was covered in a thin fog of poison miasma and he couldn't help but gasp in shock. As it turned out, he managed to run more than ten miles after leaving the marsh before diving into the trunk of a tree and losing consciousness.

Looking around, he realized that he had lost all sense of direction after he lost consciousness. He had no idea what direction he should be traveling in at the moment and he also didn't know how long he had been out for. Naturally, he had no idea about the progress of the war between the cultivators of the Azure Spiritual World and the Tongyou Institution.

Taking stock of all the treasures he had, Shang Xia realized that he only had one Golden Spear Talisman and one Spiritual Yin Knife Talisman left. Those were the only rank three ones left but he

still had several rank two ones left. After all, in the battles he had taken part in, rank two talismans were pretty useless.

He had a total of 8 Lightning Fire Jujubes left and of them, 5 were of the second rank, 2 were of the third rank and he only had a single rank four Lightning Fire Jujube left.

The Spirit Extermination Gourd was also a treasure he could no longer rely on. Ever since he used it to deal with the giant rat and the Martial Extermination Realm expert from the Changbai Holy Land, Kou Chongxue's sword qi was on the verge of disappearing.

He didn't know the exact way to restore it, but he had a vague idea of how he should go about doing it. When he plucked the final fruit from the Lightning Fire Jujube Tree, the sword qi gave a slight indication that he could suck up the strand of extermination qi that returned to the earth but Shang Xia chose not to do so.

He knew that the moment he absorbed the strand of extermination qi to restore the sword qi, the Lightning Fire Jujube Tree that was born in that location would never appear again!

At the moment, there were two strands of extermination origins in the gourd. He obtained them from the giant rat, but he had no idea what they were. He would have struck the jackpot if they had anything to do with the seasons.

He truly wondered if he was lucky enough for that to happen.

Seeing as there were no other threats to his life, Shang Xia thought back to the situation in the marsh and felt that it was a pity that the Poison Miasma Frog got a free strand of extermination origin from the swamp lizard king.

He wondered how strong the Poison Misama Frog would become after devouring the swamp lizard king and the swamp lizards, but he was sure that it would receive a huge boost to its strength.

When he thought about the corpses of the swamp lizards and their corpses, he found it a pity that he wouldn't be able to harvest ingredients to craft rank three talisman paper. After all, the skin of those swamp lizards was great material to make rank three talisman papers.

Speaking of talisman materials, Shang Xia wasn't exactly going off empty handed. The skin of the rank four giant rat in the past was a great ingredient! If he ran into a great craftsman, he might be able to turn the skin into rank four talisman paper!

The more he thought about talismans, the greater the urge for him to craft talismans nearly overwhelmed him.

He might be a rank three talisman master that was rarely seen in the You Continent, but other than his ability to craft talismans, everything else seemed to be restricted. He never seemed to have enough resources as his talisman paper, talisman ink, and even talisman. Even his ability to do battle seemed to be held back by the lack of proper resources.

High-leveled talisman masters seemed glorious on the surface as they were able to create powerful talismans. However, their situation was also really pitiful. They never had enough resources to make full use of their abilities!

As for Shang Xia's battle prowess, it was also limited by his weapon. His Scarlet Star Spear had been heavily damaged due to the various battles and trials he had been through and even though his

Jade River Sword was still usable, his sword techniques were more suitable for group combat. In a one on one fight, his Providence Nine Spears came in much more handy.

Those two weapons were those that could withstand his inner qi at the moment. He still had low-grade weapons, but those wouldn't allow him to bring out his full strength.

Speaking of graded weapons, Shang Xia actually had another mid-grade weapon. It was the metal ruler he gained after killing Senior Brother Zhou of the Changbai Holy Land. Unfortunately, it was damaged after he struck it with his Scarlet Star Spear. Even if it wasn't damaged, Shang Xia didn't really know how to use it and it could basically be disregarded.

When he was done lamenting his sad fate with resources and weapons, Shang Xia's attention returned to the five spatial artifacts he obtained after killing a whole lot of his enemies. Those weren't weaklings in the slightest and their spatial artifacts should contain some precious treasures. One of them came from the Martial Extermination Realm Sima Zhanxing, and two of the five came from direct disciples of the Changbai Holy Land. One was from Chu Chen and the other came from Senior Brother Zhou. The final two spatial artifacts came from Senior Brother Yue and Junior Brother Xiang who he killed before Senior Brother Zhou while allowing Junior Brother Qi to escape.

He was clearly unwilling to break them open forcefully as more than half the items in them would be completely destroyed. He didn't wish to waste a single piece of treasure contained in those spatial artifacts! There wasn't a need to mention if there were precious treasures in Sima Zhanxing's spatial artifact. He might have been stranded in the Azure Spiritual World the whole time, but Shang Xia believed that he still had some treasures on him. As for Chu Chen and Senior Brother Zhou, they were direct disciples of the Changbai Holy Land and from the looks of it, they had a mission to scour for treasures in the battlefield between the two worlds! They definitely had some good stuff on them.

If Shang Xia wanted to open those spatial artifacts without damaging their contents, he knew that there were only two ways about it. One was to use a rank three talisman called the Bamboo Void Breaking Talisman, and the other was to gain primary control of space which could be achieved by Martial Extermination Realm experts. Martial Extermination Realm experts could break through simple artifacts like Embroidered Cloud Cases and stuff like what Sima Zhanxing and the others had. Only when it came to Spatial Pouches were they somewhat helpless.

Looking at all the artifacts he had, Shang Xia didn't want to head back to deal with the artifacts. Only when he was back in the safety of the Tongyou Institution would he be able to break through the spatial artifacts in peace. He still wished to look for opportunities in the battlefield between the two worlds. After all, that was the best time for him to find any remnant world origin.

The moment the battle between the Azure Spiritual World and the Tongyou Institution ended, the remaining Martial Extermination Realm experts would definitely turn their focus to the rank four beasts and world origin that remained in the battlefield between the two worlds. A Martial Intent Realm cultivator like him wouldn't be left with dregs.

Making up his mind, Shang Xia decided to continue his journey. Skirting a huge round away from the marsh where the Poison Miasma Frog nearly killed him, he became even more careful with his actions.

He didn't get too far this time when he heard a clear cry ringing through the skies.

With his eyes widening in shock, a look of joy appeared on his face when he heard a second cry in the distance.

Facing the source of the cries in the skies, Shang Xia charged over as quickly as he could.

...

When that was happening, a fat youth was running away at a speed extremely disproportionate to the size of his body.

A golden streak tore through the air as a bird that was close to eight inches, long after extending its wings, appeared above him.

Following a sharp cry, the bird descended as a streak of silver light.

The fat youth screamed in terror while tossing a shield above his head.

The shield shattered the moment the silver streak came into contact with it, but the silver streak showed no signs of slowing down. It struck heavily into the fat cultivator, causing his body to tremble violently and his movements to stop.

Another clear chirp came from the skies all of a sudden, and the fat cultivator's expression turned into one of despair.

Indeed... Following the second chirp, the skies started to turn noisy as a multitude of chirps came from another direction. They seem to be answering the cry of the first bird.

With a look of dismay filling his eyes, the fat cultivator saw hundreds of Mutated Rain Swallows filling the skies. In the span of a few seconds, they formed a huge blanket in the air that surrounded the larger bird that attacked him in the first place.

When the third cry rang loudly in his ears, the rest of the birds descended at a terrifying speed. Closing his eyes, the fat cultivator seemed to have accepted his fate.

Who would have thought that a long whistle would tear through the skies in that instant? The whistle covered the noisy and messy chirps and seemed to suppress them completely.

A newfound light flashed through the fat cultivator's eyes when he heard the whistle and felt no birds pecking on him. He was silently praising the strength of the person who whistled, but he was also thanking the heavens that he was saved. Opening his eyes slightly, he saw that only a dozen birds were still charging at him with their wings open to slash his flesh open. Their talons which were tougher than essence steel were reaching out to tear him to shreds.

Seeing as there were only a few of them left, a newfound strength filled his body. Roaring softly, his fat body glowed a deep bronze. He seemed to have turned into a statue of bronze as the dozens or so birds left descended on him.

After those dozens or so Mutated Rain Swallows completed their first wave of attacks, they retreated and the next wave of attack failed to arrive.

Squatting down, the fat cultivator saw several shallow cuts on his body and heaved a sigh of relief. Luckily for him, those scratches were the most serious injury he suffered.

After checking out his injuries, he finally discovered that something was off. The noisy chirps had stopped and the regions seemed to have returned to an unprecedented calm state. Raising his head

carefully, his gaze landed on a young cultivator who had appeared on the other side of the desert he was running through.

Getting to his feet, the bronze color on his body faded and his skin went back to its original state. The rotund fatty had skin as pale as snow.

He noticed that the leader of the birds that had been hunting him down was perched on the shoulder of the young cultivator who had just appeared and the damn bird was looking at him with disdain.

The flock of Mutated Rain Swallows that had been circling in the air nonstop soundlessly changed their motion to fly around the head of the young cultivator.

“I am Shang Xia of the Tongyou Institution. I don’t think this is our first meeting. I wonder how I should address you?” The young cultivator with the bird on his shoulder smiled and cupped his fists towards the fat cultivator.

Chuckling softly, the fat cultivator scratched his head slowly and muttered, “I... I am Ren Huan. I don’t seem to have seen you before?”

Laughing softly, Shang Xia brought out his Golden Spear Talisman that was made from a piece of metallic sheet.

“Hey! That... That’s a piece of talisman paper I made!” Ren Huan seemed to have thought of something and he pointed at Shang Xia while stuttering, “You... You... I know! You’re the person who sold me that spiritual deer!”

Shang Xia nodded and seemed extremely content that he managed to run into the fatty again. After all, from what he said earlier, the fatty was able to craft rank three talisman paper!

Chapter 397: Nesting Grounds

Shang Xia was extremely happy to hear the fatty admit that he was the one who refined the talisman paper. However, what made him happier was the discovery of the Lightning Bird and the flock of Mutated Rain Swallows!

When the Tongyou Institution schemed to obtain world origin from the battlefield between the two worlds, they knew that the Tongyou Peak was going to fall. As the flock of Mutated Rain Swallows were unwilling to leave the battlefield between the two worlds, the experts on the Tongyou Peak chased them away from the Pinxin Peak in case they were annihilated completely when the experts of the Azure Spiritual World arrived.

Shang Xia had been worried about the Lightning Bird and the rest of the flock during the War of the Tongyou Mysterious World, but now that he reunited with them, he could see that the birds gained quite a lot of benefits from the Origin Tide that passed.

After getting over his initial shock, Ren Huan couldn’t help but ask, “Wait... I was wearing a mask the other day. How did you recognize me? It can’t be because I’m fat... There are more fatties out there and you can’t possibly recognize me from my body shape!”

Pointing at his clothes that were slightly torn, Shang Xia laughed. “You’re wearing the same thing you did in the gathering back in the city!”

With his eyes widening in shock, Ren Huan couldn't help but chuckle in embarrassment. "Oh yeah... Looks like I need a change of clothes soon!"

Wait a second... Don't tell me this fatty hasn't changed since the day of the gathering?! Eww!

Ren Huan didn't notice the judgmental look on Shang Xia's face as his gaze was stuck on the bird on his shoulder. "Is this Mutated Bird your spirit pet?"

He couldn't conceal the look of admiration and envy on his face.

Shang Xia tilted his head to look at the fat bird that was resting on his shoulder and he chuckled, "This is a Lightning Bird. He's not my spirit pet though. However, he can be considered... he can be considered my friend! Yeah... The flock of Mutated Rain Swallows are his partners and children."

Gasping in shock, a trace of greed flashed in his eyes for a moment while he praised in admiration. "Brother Shang, you are really lucky!"

"Because he is unable to leave the battlefield between the two worlds with his entire flock, we lost contact for a period of time. This is the first time we're reunited. However, I didn't think that he would be close to breaking through to the fourth rank. Then again, I have to thank Brother Ren. If not for you, I wouldn't have reunited with them so quickly!" Shang Xia laughed. Pausing for a second, he then continued, "However, from what I saw earlier, you seem to have some misunderstanding with my old friend over here..."

A helpless look appeared on Ren Huan's face as he tried to explain himself, "I... I found an ancient tree under a cliff and I discovered that there were faint traces of wind lightning energy contained in its leaves. Those leaves were invaluable as they could be used to craft talisman paper and I decided to grab a few of them. I didn't expect to anger the flock of birds nesting there when I tried to pluck a few leaves! Well... You know what happened next. They chased me all the way over here and I ran into you. If not for Brother Shang, my three hundred pound body would have turned into bird food..."

"A tree that contains the power of wind and lightning?" Shang Xia's eyes lit up and he turned to look at the Lightning Bird. Unwilling to trust the fatty completely, he wanted the Lightning Bird to confirm the news.

Feeling Shang Xia's gaze, the lightning bird chirped softly to confirm the news.

Seeing the smile that was appearing on Shang Xia's face, Ren Huan continued, "Brother... Brother Shang, since this fat... I mean, since the Lightning Bird is your friend, can you get him to allow me to pluck a few leaves from the ancient tree? I know that Brother Shang is an accomplished talisman master. After obtaining the leaves, I'll refine them into talisman paper and I'll give half of them to you. How's that?"

Shang Xia didn't respond immediately. Instead, he turned to the Lightning Bird and asked, "Is that tree really useful to you?"

Several soft tweets left the Lightning Bird's beak and Ren Huan had no idea what the bird was saying. However, he saw Shang Xia nodding his head from time to time but he didn't know if the young cultivator truly knew what the bird was talking about or if he was just messing with him.

Regardless of whether Shang Xia really knew bird language, Ren Huan knew that he couldn't offend the man. Ren Huan might look like a foolish fatty, but that was merely the outward appearance he portrayed to the world. He wasn't actually stupid.

Thinking about Shang Xia's identity, he quickly recalled Shang Xia's background and the rumors that he heard in the past.

As a trace of hesitation started to appear on Ren Huan's face, Shang Xia turned around and muttered, "Brother Ren, are you willing to return to the cliff face to take a look with me?"

"Huh?" Ren Huan quickly gathered his thoughts and nodded furiously, "Yes, yes! I'll go!"

With the Lightning Bird and the flock of Mutated Rain Swallows leading the way, Shang Xia and Ren Huan quickly made their way over to the ancient tree.

Along the way, Shang Xia seemed to have thought of something and he asked, "Brother Ren, I've been running away from people who want to kill me all this while. I also went into seclusion for some time and was wondering how long had passed since the Tongyou Institution entered the battlefield between the two worlds. Also, do you know the situation right now? Is the battle still ongoing?"

Ren Huan looked at Shang Xia in confusion and muttered, "It's difficult to keep track of time in the battlefield between the two worlds, but there's a special method to do so. From the time the Tongyou Institution entered the battlefield between the two worlds, half a month had passed. The battle between the experts of the Tongyou Institution and the Azure Spiritual World ended eight days ago. The Azure Spiritual World lost two Martial Extermination Realm experts and we lost one. From the looks of it, we won. However, we merely managed to gain a foothold in the battlefield between the two worlds after this battle. Now, they're probably going to clear out some of the territory of beasts who made their base in the central region. The area controlled by the Tongyou Institution at the moment is merely the size of that controlled by the Azure Spiritual World."

After hearing the explanation, Shang Xia could pretty much calculate how long he had been asleep.

It seemed as though his guess was correct regardless. The outcome of the battle between the Martial Extermination Realm experts on both sides decided the duration of the war.

Regardless if they were the Tongyou Institution, Changbai Holy Land, or the four great races of the Liao Continent, the death of a Martial Extermination Realm expert wasn't something they could withstand easily.

Moreover, the deaths of the two Martial Extermination Realm experts on the side of the Azure Spiritual World had something to do with Shang Xia.

The thought barely flashed across his mind when he seemed to have recalled something. "Which expert of the Tongyou Institution fell?"

“Senior Kang Ci fell. It was said that he managed to refine a poison-type extermination origin in the past and the threat he posed to lower-leveled cultivators was astounding. He was focused fired the moment he entered the battlefield between the two worlds.” Ren Huan sighed.

Shang Xia could only shake his head with a bitter smile on his face. Kang Ci was indeed a troublesome fellow to deal with. When the Four Spiritual Peak tried to sneak attack the Tongyou Peak when their experts were stuck in the Coral Forest, Kang Ci managed to hold them off with his abilities. In the end, She Zhihong had to order a retreat before being killed by the rank five undead corpse back at the Four Spiritual Peak.

It seemed as though Kang Ci was truly plotted against this time he entered the battlefield between the two worlds.

As they conversed, they quickly traveled across the land and two hours flew by like it was nothing. With the Lightning Bird and the Mutated Rain Swallows leading the way, the two of them eventually caught sight of the cliff.

The ancient tree was actually located along a wind gap in a valley that extended out at the bottom of the cliff and the two of them quickly made their way over to the narrow walls.

“Brother Shang, you have to be careful. The wind that is ripping through the wind gap is really terrifying and powerful!” Ren Huan gave Shang Xia a kind warning before taking a step deeper into the valley.

Shang Xia smiled casually before following the fatty.

As the two of them ventured deeper into the narrow valley, Shang Xia could feel that the wind blowing against him was growing stronger and stronger as it bellowed in his ears.

The deeper they got, the stronger the winds became. The howling of wind quickly overpowered their voices and the two of them could only choose to transmit their voices to each other with the use of their inner qi.

Even so, their voice transmissions would sometimes get lost in the wind as though it was ripped apart by a violent force.

Thinking of something, Shang Xia brought out his Spirit Extermination Gourd and used his inner qi to surround himself as he opened the cork. The moment he did, the strand of sword qi emerged and spun around the gourd once before shooting into the depths of the valley.

Ren Huan’s voice rang in Shang Xia’s ears as the sword qi sped away. “Brother Shang, you should have discovered that the wind contains extermination qi...”

Raising his head to look at Ren Huan, Shang Xia saw that the fatty had barely moved his gaze away from his Spirit Extermination Gourd.

Ren Huan didn’t stop there. “Unfortunately, the extermination qi in the air is so thin that you will need to gather them for a long time before being able to create a strand of extermination origin.”

Ren Huan’s knowledge showed Shang Xia that he wasn’t an ordinary cultivator. He might also have some special treasure on him that allowed him to retrieve extermination origins.

With his heart trembling slightly, Shang Xia asked, “Brother Ren, what do you mean?”

Shaking his head, Ren Huan’s fat belly shivered slightly and a trace of fear appeared in his heart. “Me? I don’t mean anything! After all, Brother Shang’s friend seems to have its eyes set on this place...”

Nodding slowly, Shang Xia understood that the Lightning Bird had its reason for nesting in that spot.

There had to be a reason for the Lightning Bird to hunt down the fatty. Stealing some leaves didn’t seem to be enough of a reason to do so, but protecting the source of extermination origin seemed to be reason enough.

All of a sudden, a bolt of lightning tore through the skies in the distance and it tore through the land. It eventually dissipated into nothingness.

Ren Huan’s figure paused for a second and he growled, “There seems to be some sort of void lightning here... It’s no wonder the power of wind and lightning can be contained in the tree... That’s also the reason behind the ripping winds and bolts of lightning filling the area...”

All of a sudden, Shang Xia discovered that the sword qi had returned to the gourd before he knew it. It flickered unsteadily while trembling and it eventually pointed in the direction of the end of the valley.

As someone who was extremely close to breaking through to the Martial Extermination Realm, Shang Xia could feel that there was something else that appeared in the wind that was battering against them.

At the same time, the Lightning Bird who had been keeping pace with the two of them sped up and tried to fly deeper into the valley.

Shang Xia could see the trace of faint gray lightning bolts that surrounded the bird as it forced itself forward.

In that instant, Shang Xia recognized the new feeling that appeared in the wind. It was a type of lightning extermination fused well with the wind around it!

The reason behind the Lightning Bird’s choice to nest there wasn’t because of the wind-attributed extermination origin that Ren Huan had identified! Instead, it was because of the presence of a lightning-attributed extermination origin!

Chapter 398: Stormy Lightning Leaf

During his reunion with the Lightning Bird, Shang Xia could tell that the bird was extremely close to breaking through to the fourth rank.

When he felt both types of extermination qi in the air around him, he understood the reason behind the Lightning Bird’s choice to make a nest there. He also knew the importance of the ancient tree to it.

What surprised Shang Xia even more was that the Lightning Bird was not only absorbing the wind-attributed extermination qi in the air. He was also absorbing the lightning-attributed extermination qi! That would mean that the Lightning Bird was trying to refine both types of extermination origins in its body at once!

One had to know that Shang Xia had found refining multiple extermination origins incredulous when he looked at the process indicated on the Crimson Soul Tablet earlier.

Now, the Lightning Bird was doing exactly that!

Looking at the fat Ren Huan who was standing in front of him, Shang Xia knew that since the fatty could feel the presence of the wind-attributed extermination qi in the air, he would also be able to discover the lightning-attributed extermination qi that just appeared.

Ren Huan didn't seem to be a disciple of the Tongyou Institution, but for him to be able to venture around the battlefield between the two worlds at that moment, he had to be part of the You Continent! He probably also had his network in the institution in order to get himself a slot in the expedition.

Since that was the case, Shang Xia wasn't afraid that the presence of both types of extermination qi would be leaked by the fatty. They were all on the same side anyway. That would also mean that the Lightning Bird could cultivate in peace.

At the moment, the Lightning Bird hadn't entered the fourth rank but he was close. With his huge family backing him up, existences in the Martial Extermination Realm or other rank four spiritual beasts wouldn't dare to mess with him.

As the extermination qi in the valley had to be collected slowly, it would be extremely detrimental to the Lightning Bird if the news was leaked to the four great races of the Liao Continent or the Changbai Holy Land. Luckily, the Tongyou Institution managed to gain a foothold in the battlefield between the two worlds after the lengthy battle, and with Shang Xia's presence in the valley, the institution should be able to retain control over it.

The two of them didn't stop moving even though thoughts were running through their minds. They forced their way through the howling winds to arrive at the foot of the cliff where the flock had nested.

Peering through the strong curtain of distorted wind, Shang Xia could vaguely make out a short tree that had sturdy branches surrounding it. He saw the leaves Ren Huan was talking about and noticed that they were close to the size of his palm.

What piqued his interest was the location of the tree. It grew in such a way as to avoid being directly in the path of the gale that swept through the valley, but the winds that blasted against it couldn't be considered too weak either. Even so, the leaves on the tree remained completely motionless.

When Shang Xia's gaze turned to look at the depths of the valley once again, his expression changed drastically.

Even though he knew that he had been venturing around the outskirts of the battlefield between the two worlds for some time now, he had never seen the edge of it! Now, it seemed to be situated right in front of him!

The space there was hazy, and there were occasional streaks of lightning flashing within. The bolts of lightning appeared out of nowhere, but they disappeared soon after. Deep within the hazy space seemed to house a giant hole that releases the terrifying winds and lightning that is filling the area.

Even though Shang Xia was extremely interested in the hazy space, he knew his current cultivation level was far from enough to explore the region.

He wondered if he would be able to explore the region even after entering the Martial Extermination Realm. The only thing he knew for sure was that Martial Dipper Realm experts would be capable of entering the hazy space. Otherwise, Kou Chongxue wouldn't be able to enter the battlefield between the two worlds as he wished.

Turning his attention back to the ancient tree, he trudged forward with Ren Huan to approach the tree.

The winds finally died down a little as they were no longer in its direct path and the two of them were finally able to speak normally.

However, Shang Xia discovered something strange before either of them could say anything. The inner qi in his body became a lot more lively now that he no longer had to withstand the strong winds.

Could the gale that was blowing through the valley be suitable for tempering one's inner qi?

The thought barely formed in his mind when he decided to report the location to the institution. A way to temper one's inner qi didn't come by often and he felt it would be appropriate for him to inform the institution about such a wonderful location.

One had to know cultivators would usually experience cultivation deviation when they lost control of their inner qi. That was one of the greatest dangers when cultivating. If cultivators were able to strengthen the inner qi in their body with the help of the strange wind in the valley, they would be able to gain better control over it.

Just that point alone would allow the strange wind to become more important than the wind and lightning attributed extermination origins.

“There are a total of 113 leaves on the ancient tree. Of them, 43 can be used to make rank three talisman paper. The others need a little more time to mature. Hehe... I guess I will have to congratulate the institution for gaining a treasure land that produces precious artifacts in the future!” Ren Huan's voice entered Shang Xia's ear.

He was clear that if the leaves were the only treasures present, he would be able to convince Shang Xia to hide the location.

Unfortunately, the Lightning Bird's existence and the usefulness of the wind in the valley were also discovered by him. Reporting the location to the institution would gain them a terrifying amount of benefits!

Shang Xia chuckled in response. “Of course we have to report this to the institution. However, those leaves will belong to us. Moreover, the institution will definitely reward us after they take over this region. I'm a rank three talisman master. Some of the leaves here will probably be allocated to me and when that happens, I'll have to trouble Brother Ren to turn them into talisman paper. Of course, Brother Ren, you won't have to work for free...”

A trace of joy flashed through the fatty's eyes when he heard what Shang Xia said and he slapped his chest happily. “Of course! You can count on me!”

Very quickly, the two of them came to an agreement. Shang Xia also found his source of talisman papers outside the institution. As for Ren Huan, he managed to find another avenue of profit. With the leaves Shang Xia promised to provide, he would be able to raise the mastery of his skills too.

With a wide smile on his face, he reached out to harvest the mature leaves on the trees. From what Shang Xia could see, the leaves couldn't be harvested randomly. One needed to pluck the leaves without damaging the source energy of the tree. That would also ensure that the leaves retrieved would be able to contain the maximum amount of heaven and earth qi.

Obviously, Shang Xia had no idea how to do so. He could only watch as Ren Huan made himself busy around the tree.

With the fatty dealing with the troublesome matter, Shang Xia turned to observe the area around the ancient tree. He discovered a fallen branch not too far away and he picked it up while swinging it around. He quickly discovered the strength of the branch while messing around with it.

When Ren Huan saw Shang Xia waving the stick around, he couldn't help but ask, "Brother Shang, what are you doing?"

"Huh?" Chuckling in embarrassment that his childish actions had been seen by someone, he continued, "Oh. I was wondering if I could turn the branch of the tree into a bow."

Ren Huan's expression darkened the moment he heard what Shang Xia said. The branch in his hand had dropped from the tree, and even if it couldn't be considered a rank four treasure, it was definitely at the peak of a rank three treasure. However, Shang Xia would have to obtain a longer and sturdier branch from the tree if he wanted to turn it into a proper bow. When that happened, he would definitely injure the tree. The number of leaves that could be obtained would definitely decrease too.

Realizing that his intentions were getting inappropriate, Shang Xia chuckled awkwardly. "Brother Ren, don't take what I said too seriously. I was just playing around to see how strong the wood is!"

With his expression loosening up slightly, Ren Huan sighed, "It's difficult for this tree to grow and in the future, it might even produce some leaves capable of being made into rank four talisman paper! Brother Shang is a genius to be able to enter the rank three talisman master realm at such a young age. After breaking through to the Martial Extermination Realm in the future, you should be able to become a rank four talisman master too. Brother Shang, I'm sure you don't wish to harm a treasure that can produce rank four talisman paper, do you?"

Shang Xia's expression turned serious and he nodded. "Of course. Brother Ren, you can rest assured that I won't let my intrusive thoughts win..."

Nodding slightly, Ren Huan went back to collecting the leaves.

A trace of regret appeared in Shang Xia's heart after that conversation. He had a low-grade bow in his inventory, and due to his practice in the past, his bow skills had improved greatly. With his current strength and inner qi, the low-grade bow wouldn't allow him to show off his true skills. The moment he stepped into the Martial Extermination Realm, he was afraid that the bow would shatter before he could fire off a single arrow. Obtaining a high-grade bow had always been on his mind.

Of course, creating graded weapons wasn't easy, much less a high-grade bow! Just the material required to craft a high-grade bow would be terrifyingly hard to locate!

As random thoughts filled his head, Shang Xia roamed about the area slightly and heard a loud chirp coming from the skies. The Lightning Bird dove straight onto his shoulder and pushed a ball of fur into his face.

“This... Is this Mutated Swallow Fur?!” Ren Huan’s voice rang through the air and Shang Xia could see the look of envy on the fatty’s face when he turned to look.

“Brother Ren, do you recognize this treasure?” Shang Xia smiled in response.

Glancing at Shang Xia, the fatty started to ramble on. “This... This is the main ingredient used in crafting spatial pouches! Even the most elementary of spatial pouches possess ten cubic feet of space within! To make one, we’ll probably need three taels of Swallow Fur! Brother Shang, the ball of fur in your hand is close to a tael or maybe slightly more... It’s not enough...”

Chuckling in response, Shang Xia kept the ball of fur carefully.

Ren Huan had no idea that Shang Xia already had three taels of Swallow Fur. He had more than enough to make a spatial pouch.

When the birds nested on the Pinxin Peak, the institution managed to gather a portion of Swallow Fur. It might not be much, but due to their schemes, they had to chase the birds away and thus ended their avenue of collection.

The ball of fur in his hand was what the Lightning bird managed to gather after they made their new nest in the area!

Chapter 399: Dun Dun Dunnnn

The space contained in his Embroidered Cloud Case was limited but it was enough for ordinary cultivators.

Unfortunately, Shang Xia was no ordinary cultivator. Even the largest Embroidered Cloud Case that had five cubic feet of space wasn’t enough for him!

With the experience of running out of space many times before, Shang Xia became smarter now that he was entering the battlefield between the two worlds. He brought more than a single Embroidered Cloud Case with him.

It was exactly as he predicted. The corpse of the giant rank four rat might have been left behind, but Shang Xia managed to harvest its skin before its body rotted away. He even managed to collect a portion of blood essence and those items filled an Embroidered Cloud Case that was three cubic feet large.

If not for the fact that he was unable to harvest the corpses of the swamp lizards back in the swamp before the Poison Miasma Frog went to town on them, he would use up even more space.

As such, Shang Xia’s desire to obtain a spatial pouch became stronger than before.

It was too bad that it took extremely high expertise to create one. From what Shang Xia knew, only the Tongyou Institution had an incomplete inheritance to produce a spatial pouch. Due to the lack of Swallow Fur, no one had ever tried to complete the inheritance.

Only after Shang Xia brought back the flock of Mutated Rain Swallows did the Tongyou Institution regain their focus on the inheritance to create the spatial pouch. It was a pity the gathering of Swallow Fur took too long. The news of Shang Xia's possession of Swallow Fur quickly reached the ears of the higher ups of the Tongyou Institution and the Warehouse Division and Scripture Depository. They wanted him to hand it over to the Warehouse Division for the institution to carry out experiments with it.

Naturally, Shang Xia wasn't willing to give out his items for free. Not to mention a ball of Swallow Fur that he would have great uses for in the future. As such, he gave them a firm rejection. He was the one who brought the flock of Mutated Rain Swallows to nest at the Tongyou Peak back then. His identity wasn't ordinary either. Regardless if they were men from the Warehouse Division or the Scripture Depository, they couldn't go overboard when treating Shang Xia. That was how the entire event blew over in the past.

Also, by then, Ren Huan managed to obtain all 43 leaves from the tree and Shang Xia quickly asked, "Brother Ren, do you know how to create rank four talisman paper?"

Staring at Shang Xia in shock, Ren Huan paused for a second before he replied. "I was planning to look for a job in the institution... Only then would I be able to learn how to craft rank four talisman paper."

Only then did Shang Xia realize why Ren Huan was so willing to work with him. It was probably because Ren Huan understood who Shang Xia was after his introduction earlier and was planning to borrow Shang Xia's influence to successfully enter the Tongyou Institution.

Thinking about Ren Huan's talent in creating talisman paper, Shang Xia felt that it wouldn't be a problem to assist the fatty to enter the institution. Not to mention the fact that Shang Xia also needed Ren Huan to create talisman paper for his own use!

A smile appeared on Shang Xia's face and he chuckled, "Brother Ren, why didn't you say so? I'm pretty familiar with the current head of the Scripture Depository and the Warehouse Division. With Brother Ren's talent, you will definitely be well-received by both of them!"

"I have to thank Brother Shang in advance then!" Ren Huan couldn't help but cheer. It seemed as though his goal of joining the institution wasn't too far from his reach now.

"Naturally... With Brother Ren's talent, it would be a waste not to help you! After all, the institution won't turn talents like you away!" Shang Xia continued.

All of a sudden, Ren Huan took out something from his sleeves and he took out a scroll before handing it over to Shang Xia. "I managed to obtain this recipe for rank three talisman ink on my adventures in the past. Brother Shang, you look like you can really use it."

Raising an eyebrow in shock, Shang Xia pressed his lips together while saying, "How... How can I take this?"

"Brother Shang, please accept it. Unless you think that my gift is too lousy..." Ren Huan pouted.

Helpless, Shang Xia could only accept the recipe. He maintained his neutral expression, but a burst of joy filled his heart.

Seeing Shang Xia's reaction, Ren Huan heaved a sigh of relief.

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Getting a recommendation to enter the institution was his goal from the start. Even though Shang Xia didn't bring up Deputy Patriarch Shang Bo throughout their conversation, having Shang Xia's promise was enough.

If Shang Xia spoke up for him in the institution, many people would make the connection with Deputy Patriarch Shang Bo. Even if they had to take his expertise into account, the heads of the various divisions would definitely allow him to enter the institution.

Liu Jitang was the previous head of the Warehouse Division. After he died in the Coral Forest, the Warehouse Division was temporarily commanded by Shang Lubing who was already the head of the Contribution Division.

However, the position was eventually passed back to Liu Zhuyuan in order to solidify his foundations in the institution.

When Ren Huan entered the institution with Shang Xia's recommendation, he would probably be taken in as a regular talisman paper craftsman. He wouldn't be regarded as a talisman master due to a very simple reason. He could only craft talisman papers!

Even if Ren Huan was able to create rank four, and even rank five talisman paper, he would only be regarded as an ordinary craftsman! His authority would be raised in the institution when he could make higher-leveled talisman paper, but only slightly.

The same could be said for Shang Quan! Shang Quan was considered an ink craftsman in the institution. Even if he could produce rank three ink in the future, his title wouldn't change!

There might be people who called him an 'Ink Master', but that was merely a formality.

That might be the case for Shang Quan and Ren Huan, but things were extremely different for Shang Xia. As a rank three talisman master, he commanded a much higher level of prestige!

The same principle applied to blacksmiths and chemists. If one was only able to refine the material and herbs, they would never be treated equally to blacksmiths and chemists!

Taking Duan Hong as an example, he was only regarded as a material craftsman when he could carry out slight repairs on graded weapons. Only when he crafted a graded weapon himself was he considered a blacksmith!

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Shang Xia could pretty much understand Ren Huan's desire to enter the institution. Other than obtaining a way to craft rank four talisman paper, it probably had something to do with Kou Chongxue's prestige. Everyone wanted to stand under the terrifyingly strong protection umbrella known as the Tongyou Institution! Ever since Kou Chongxue revealed his strength and went over to the Ji Continent to raise hell in the White Deer Paradise, the entire Azure Origin World was shaken! The members of the You Continent developed a strengthened sense of confidence in the Tongyou Institution.

Ever since the incident, there had been a lot of people trying to gain a spot in the institution!

The reason so many people were allowed to enter the battlefield between the two worlds with the experts of the Tongyou Institution was because they were using it as a test! It was both a test of strength and loyalty!

When Ren Huan saw how Shang Xia's gaze had returned to the hazy space on the other side of the valley, he couldn't help but ask, "Brother Shang, are you planning to leave?"

"Yeah, there's nothing much left for us here. The next thing we have to do is to inform the institution about this location." Shang Xia muttered after thinking for a short while.

Signaling to the Lightning Bird who was still perched on his shoulder, Shang Xia bade him farewell before starting to take his leave with Ren Huan.

The Lightning Bird turned into a streak of light that soared into the skies. Messy chirps came from the flock of birds and they looked like they were giving him a proper send off.

As the two of them turned to leave, soft tinkling entered the ears. The sound was carried by the strong gale and it rang clearly in their minds.

"Huh?" The two of them couldn't help but stare at each other in shock before turning to look at where the sound came from.

Ren Huan frowned. "It sounds like it's coming from the other side?"

The ancient tree was located under a cliff face that made up one side of the valley, The sound they heard seemed to come from the other cliff face.

The same thought appeared in their minds at the same exact time. If the ancient tree could grow under one cliff face, was it possible for another precious treasure to grow under the other cliff face?

Both of them were too distracted by the ancient tree and the presence of the flock of Mutated Rain Swallows to think of the other possibility. Neither of them went to take a look at the other cliff face ever since they arrived!

As someone who was a lot more experienced with treasures as cultivators in the same realm, Shang Xia thought of a possibility and asked out loud, "Listen to that? Could that actually be the Windchime Grass?"

The fatty's voice rang in his ears right as he completed his sentence. "Brother Shang, do you also think that it could be the Windchime Grass?"

Raising his eyebrow slightly, Shang Xia wondered if the fatty was supported by some hidden power. It didn't make sense for him to know so much otherwise!

Thinking about how the fatty wanted to enter the Tongyou Institution, Shang Xia couldn't be bothered with his hidden identity. Since he wanted to enter the institution, his background would be dug out regardless.

From Ren Huan's anxious tone earlier, Shang Xia also realized something. "Brother Huan, do you need the Windchime Grass?"

Glancing at Shang Xia from the corner of his eye, a trace of hesitation appeared on his face. “I don’t wish to hide anything, but the Windchime Grass is the main ingredient for my rank four advancement medicine... Whatever the case, let’s go check it out...”

Shang Xia understood that unlike his cheat code of a system, the Azure Origin World would usually only record the main ingredient of the advancement medicine and several other auxiliary herbs. It wouldn’t be as detailed as the information on his Crimson Soul Tablet. As for the preparation process, it would usually be kept secret by those Chemists who made it.

Hearing that it was the main ingredient in Ren Huan’s advancement medicine, Shang Xia frowned inwardly. However, he nodded and smiled in response. “Since that’s the case, I’ll head over with you to take a look.”

“Many thanks, Brother Shang. Let’s split it like how we’re splitting the leaves. As long as there’s more than a single stalk of Windchime Grass, we’ll split it evenly. If the herb isn’t mature yet, Brother Shang can report it to the institution.” Ren Huan chuckled.

Shang Xia laughed too. “I’ll report that you were also part of this. It will definitely assist in your integration into the institution.”

The two of them laughed heartily as they quickly approached the other cliff face. They planned to take a direct path through the rushing winds in the valley in order to reduce their travel time and as a cultivator who was on the verge of breaking through to the Martial Extermination Realm, Shang Xia wasn’t worried about the wind.

Ren Huan’s cultivation wasn’t too low either. He completed all three divine sense transformations and he was also not afraid of the strong winds.

Unfortunately for them, they didn’t notice that the Lightning Bird had also charged into the frighteningly strong winds. It was as though he was chasing something.

The valley was more than a hundred feet wide and it didn’t take long for them to pass through the column of wind again. When they finally broke through the stream-like gale that filled the valley, they noticed a cluster of faint-silver grass swaying in the wind. As they moved, the sound of windchimes rang clearly through the air.

Chapter 400: Joint Effort

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“The battle should have ended the moment the Martial Dipper Realm Ji Wenlong appeared...” In the Beyond Heavens Pavilion, Ancestor Luo Baixu muttered while giving Kou Chongxue a strange stare.

Chuckling in amusement, Kou Chongxue replied, “Of course I know that there’s no point in our little skirmish. Disciples from both sides are no longer fighting with one another. Those in the Martial Extermination Realm stopped a long time ago. I believe the two of you also managed to learn of the situation down there.”

Luo Baixu looked at the short cultivator, Xu Bailing, and exchanged a gaze. Xu Bailing yelled in indignation soon after, “Why didn’t we not fight in the first place?!”

Glancing at the shorty, Kou Chongxue raised an eyebrow like he was looking at a dumbass. He was even starting to wonder if Shorty Xu only managed to break through to the Martial Dipper Realm due to some sort of compensation the heavens were giving him for being stupid.

Enraged by the way Kou Chongxue was looking at him, Xu Bailing leaped into the air and tried to charge forward. Luckily, Luo Baixu was prepared for it and dragged him back.

In a low voice, Luo Baixu growled, "Patriarch Kou, there's no need to beat about the bush. If you have something to say, just say it. You probably haven't given the order to stop in order to hide your true intentions, right? Why don't we just talk normally?"

Kou Chongxue stared deeply at Luo Baixu and his expression became one of unprecedented seriousness. "Alright. I'm sure you discovered that broken continent there..."

The moment the words left his lips, the ancestors of the Changbai Holy Land froze and their expressions changed.

"How do you..." Xu Bailing couldn't help but struggle free and he wanted to charge at Kou Chongxue. This time, Luo Baixu grabbed him firmly and increased the strength he used to hold his companion down.

A look of realization dawned on Kou Chongxue's face when he looked at the two of them again.

"Bloody hell! You asshole! Were you messing with me?!" Xu Bailing roared when he realized that his reaction gave Kou Chongxue the answer he wanted and a smirk slowly appeared on Kou Chongxue's face.

Xue Bailing wasn't the only one whose expression was ugly beyond comparison. Luo Baixu didn't look too friendly either. Silence descended between them, but Kou Chongxue seemed completely unruffled.

After a short moment, Luo Baixu sighed. "Looks like the news of you barging into the White Deer Paradise isn't made up. It's no wonder you managed to discover so many things so quickly!"

Nodding, Kou Chongxue replied, "Brother Luo, you're quick to understand what happened indeed. Even today, not many people believe that I managed to kill my way into the White Deer Paradise and it's just a rumor I made up. Haha. None of them will guess that I would be able to catch a glimpse of that broken continent above their holy land either."

Xu Bailing glared at Kou Chongxue but he managed to remain uncharacteristically quiet this time.

Xu Bailing had always been rash, but he knew when to let Ancestor Luo do the talking when things got serious.

After staying silent for a short while, Luo Baixu sighed, "What do you plan to do?"

Understanding that his goal was pretty much accomplished after what Luo Baixu said, Kou Chongxue chuckled softly. "I heard that the Liao Continent was forcefully carved out from your Changbai Holy Land 20 years ago. Am I right?"

It didn't seem to fit the topic he was driving at, but Luo Baixu and Xu Bailing quickly understood what he was talking about.

“Patriarch Kou seems extremely familiar with what happened back then...” Luo Baixu growled.

“Haha. Isn’t that the case with you guys too?” Kou Chongxue sneered.

Even though they knew that Kou Chongxue was trying to rile them up for fun, Xu Bailing couldn’t help but snort angrily when he thought about the events that happened 20 years ago.

Luo Baixu gave two chuckles before responding. “Patriarch Kou, your words seem to be demeaning your status a little. Why don’t you speak your mind?”

“Alright. We’ll join hands and split the benefits from that place. How’s that?” Kou Chongxue said a matter of factly.

Unable to remain silent any longer, Xu Bailing snorted in contempt, “Hmph, Kou Chongxue, you’ve been the greatest enemy of my Azure Spiritual World in the past 20 years! Do you think we’ll believe that you wish to work with us on this matter now? Haha! Go ask everyone else and see if anyone believes that you’re serious about working with us.”

This time, Luo Baixu remained quiet at the side as he allowed Xu Bailing to yell as he wished.

With his gaze sweeping across the two of them, Kou Chongxue muttered, “That was then. This is now. Times have changed.”

Luo Baixu thought for a second before responding, “So is your Tongyou Institution going to give up on the battlefield between the two worlds?”

“Huh?” Kou Chongxue seemed to have heard the funniest joke in his life and he sniggered, “The battlefield between the two worlds belongs to whoever is capable. What has that got to do with our cooperation?”

Luo Baixu and Xu Bailing stared at each other and Luo Baixu eventually spoke up. “Hehe. Patriarch Kou, I don’t think anyone will believe that you’re the one who said that. If not for the fact that we’re standing right here, we won’t believe it either.”

His words seemed a little awkward, but everyone who was present knew what he was talking about.

Nodding, Kou Chongxue understood that the two of them basically accepted his proposition with the way they were acting. He chose not to continue talking.

However, Xu Bailing spoke up once again. “Wait! If we manage to gain anything, how are we splitting it?”

“Other than what we obtain in the borders of our continents, everything else is free game.” Kou Chongxue explained.

Xu Bailing continued, “That doesn’t answer my question,”

“If we work together to get it, we’ll split it evenly. We keep whatever we get individually.” Kou Chongxue answered.

Luo Baixu who had been silent for quite some time spoke all of a sudden, “Deal!”

Xu Bailing wasn't in any position to say anything else and he could only agree to the terms. In the space above the battlefield between the two worlds, the three Martial Dipper Realm experts came to an agreement and silence fell upon the space again.

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In the border of the battlefield between the two worlds, under the other cliff face...

Shang Xia and Ren Huan noticed clusters of silvery grass swaying in the wind as they emitted soft chimes.

"It really is the Windchime Grass!" Ren Huan yelled. However, he wasn't the only person whose eyes lit up when he saw the grass.

"Congratulations, Brother Ren!" Shang Xia cupped his fists towards Ren Huan and revealed a trace of envy in his eyes. Regardless of the type of rank four advancement medicine, obtaining the main ingredient was always an accomplishment for its user!

Ren Huan might not have reached the peak of the Martial Intent Realm, but he had already located the main ingredient for his advancement medicine. His preparation wouldn't be easy, but he lucked out on that day!

Unlike Ren Huan who seemed to know what he was looking for, Shang Xia who was standing at the peak of the Martial Intent Realm had no idea what he was going for. His mind was basically all over the place. From the preparation of both parties, he was far too lacking when compared to Ren Huan. The longer he took to locate all his ingredients, the longer it would take for him to enter the Martial Extermination Realm.

"There might seem to be a bunch of Windchime Grass here, but only the one in the middle of each cluster can be considered the true Windchime Grass." Ren Huan explained. The way he spoke became a lot more spry than before. He continued, "Only one of them can be produced in each cluster. There are only two of them that matured out of so many clusters out there. I'll take one and Brother Shang, you can keep the other one well. In the future, you might be able to trade with others for something you need. We can only leave the four remaining stalks to the institution as they're nowhere near maturing."

When he was done, Ren Huan harvested both stalks of Windchime Grass before handing one over to Shang Xia.

Perhaps it was because he was in an amazing mood after harvesting the herb, he went ahead and gave Shang Xia another nugget of information. "Brother Shang, it's said that the Spirit of Wind will appear where Windchime Grass grows. Looking at how there are six clusters around, it's really likely for the spirit to be somewhere in the area.

The person who spoke might not know the implications, but Shang Xia seemed to have thought of something.

He was still confused about the Spirit of the Four Seasons recorded on the Crimson Soul Tablet, but after hearing what Ren Huan said about the 'Spirit of Wind', something clicked in his mind.

“Brother Ren, what is the Spirit of Wind?”

“The Spirit of Wind is the essence of wind itself. I haven’t seen it myself as it’s rumored to be something formless. It’s said to only exist in windy locations but unlike an extermination origin, it’s something that doesn’t contain the source of wind.” Ren Huan explained.

Shang Xia seemed slightly disappointed, but he still thanked Ren Huan for the explanation. At the same time, the evaluation he had for Ren Huan became higher. The fatty should possess some impressive inheritance or backing for him to know so much.

After the two of them were chatting, a loud cry tore through the air and caught their attention.

Raising their heads, they saw the Lightning Bird soaring through the skies as he made beautiful arcs through the howling winds.

“Hey! Brother Shang, doesn’t the Lightning Bird look like he’s chasing something?” Ren Huan asked curiously.

Shang Xia also discovered that the Lightning Bird was flying a little weirdly and he seemed to be chasing some sort of prey.

Releasing a loud cry, thin bolts of reddish-gold lightning surrounded the Lightning Bird’s body and he accelerated at a frightening speed. He reached out his claws and grabbed before opening his wings to soar high into the air.

“He seems to have caught something!” Shang Xia was more aware of the Lightning Bird’s situation than Ren Huan and he explained. “Brother Ren, did you notice any changes in the wind? There seemed to be some sort of change before the Lightning Bird grabbed the object and soared into the skies...”

Ren Huan raised both his eyebrows at Shang Xia. He was shocked that Shang Xia’s divine sense was able to make sense of the situation even through the violent wind. At his level, he was unable to discover a thing, much less discover the change Shang Xia was talking about.

Before he could say anything, a loud cry came from above. By the time both of them raised their heads, they saw the bird rushing down at a terrifying speed with something in his claws.

Shang Xia grunted once and the Scarlet Star Spear appeared in his hands.

It trembled slightly as he stabbed outwards. The tip of the spear miraculously avoided the bird before causing an explosion with a rampaging gust of wind behind him.

As the flow of the wind was disrupted, it swept out in all directions.

Shang Xia unleashed his sixth move earlier, the Flow Recompensation Spear to protect the Lightning Bird from the hidden threat that was following behind!

Without anything threatening his life, the Lightning Bird became a lot more relaxed. However, he didn’t perch on Shang Xia’s shoulders this time. Instead, he started circling slowly in the air above. Chirps left his lips from time to time.

Shang Xia noticed the anomaly as the Lightning Bird would extend his claws from time to time before retracting them quickly. He seemed to have caught something, but Shang Xia couldn't see shit!

“Did you catch something for me?” Shang Xia asked.

The Lightning Bird chirped twice as it tried to indicate for Shang Xia to keep the item he caught properly.

A light flashed in Ren Huan's eyes and he exclaimed, “Spirit of Wind! The thing in the Lightning Bird's claws is formless but it seems to resemble the Spirit of Wind!”

Shang Xia's heart trembled slightly and he asked quickly, “How should I store it?”

“Brother Shang, do you have any sort of spiritual restraining pouch or spirit containing bottles?” Ren Huan replied without delay.