

## The Heavens 491

### Chapter 491: Valley Rain

Shang Pei immediately struck the 2 of them speechless with a few short sentences. Not willing to engage in conversation with the shameless Shang Pei, they decided to take action instead. Leaping into the air, a huge fist was created from heaven and earth qi as waves of snow appeared to sweep at Shang Pei.

The other expert sent a palm strike through the void, shattering the space beneath Shang Pei's feet. A huge pulling force soon followed and it locked Shang Pei in mid air.

They weren't weak in the slightest and with the 2 of them moving in unison, Shang Pei knew that a tough battle lay ahead. Luckily, she made her preparations.

She was extremely experienced when it came to fights. When they appeared earlier, she knew that she would only be able to find a chance to escape if she gave it her all and fought for her life.

Naturally, Ye Yifan and Zhang Luofei wouldn't let her do as she wished.

Knowing that they held the upper hand, they were clearly unwilling to fight her head-on and risk her life. All they had to do was to drag the battle out to exhaust her. Too bad for them, that was exactly what Shang Pei wanted. She might be giving it her all to break through the encirclement, but the longer the fight dragged out, the more likely she would be able to find a chance to run.

Shang Pei stabbed her spear under her feet, shattering the pulling force that came was locking her in place. Unfortunately for her, her actions also shattered the space around her and the strange force acted upon her from all directions. Her body was pulled in every single direction and she failed to stabilize herself. She staggered about in mid air as though she was drunk, but at that moment, Zhang Luofei's snowy waves arrived.

Unable to dodge the snowy waves, she could only counter it head-on.

Boom!

A flurry of snow scattered tens of miles away, covering the region in a blanket of white.

At that moment, every single cultivator in the Sixth Pass who was in the Martial Intent Realm or above, could tell that there was a massive battle going on.

The experts of the Five Peaks Alliance were no exceptions. They felt the shockwaves of the battle despite being a little over a hundred miles away and they stared at the skirmish that was going on. All five of them had left their territories at that moment and they were gathered together. Standing at a safe distance, they continued to observe the situation.

"I'm afraid that the Youyan Chief is in a pretty bad spot this time..." Zhonggu muttered, with his words directed at Yin Wanxiang.

"Brother Wanxiang, do you think we should make our move? Once we save her, she won't be able to reject our suggestion of joining our alliance." Jiang Weiyun added.

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“Wait... We'll wait a little more.” Yin Wanxiang started to hesitate all of a sudden as though he was brooding over a huge decision.

A frown appeared on Zhonggu's face as he growled, “There's no need for us to waste any more time. Since we chose to save her in the past, we'll just see things through and save her again! We shouldn't wait for her to be forced into a desperate situation. Our actions will seem intentional then and we'll look really bad...”

Jiang Weiyun glanced at Zhonggu with a raised eyebrow. He was thinking the exact same thing, but Zhonggu beat him to it.

The only reason he didn't back Zhonggu up immediately was because both of them hadn't exactly seen eye to eye since the formation of the Five Peaks Alliance. He didn't speak out immediately and chose to remain silent now that Zhonggu brought up the matter.

However, the two of them eventually noticed that something strange was going on with Yin Wanxiang. The alliance leader had his eyebrows locked tightly together as he muttered to himself. “This doesn't seem right... Why would she be intercepted by both of them at once? Something is fishy...”

Zhonggu and Jiang Weiyun looked at each other for a second before Jiang Weiyun spoke up, “Brother Wanxiang...”

“I get it!” Yin Wanxiang yelled suddenly.

Unable to hide his curiosity, Zhonggu asked, “What do you mean?”

With his expression changing slightly, he stared at Shang Pei, Ye Yifan, and Zhang Luofei and muttered, “It's here!”

Zhonggu and Jiang Weiyun didn't understand what he meant, but after a second, they seemed to discover the anomaly. They turned to stare at the void a hundred miles away and a look of shock was left on their faces.

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After slamming into the waves of snow that were thrown her way, Shang Pei felt her consciousness trembling slightly. The barrier of extermination light around her turned really dim and it seemed to be on the verge of destruction.

However, Shang Pei forcefully endured the blow. Even if she had to suffer some internal injuries and would be forced to spit out a mouthful of blood, she chose to eat the attack. After all, that allowed her to prevent Ye Yifan from striking her for fear of getting caught up in Zhang Luofei's attack.

During the months they had been hunting her down, they failed to corner her because of her vigilance. As such, they didn't have many chances to work together. Now that they were fighting Shang Pei, they failed to cooperate well.

Shang Pei understood that the chances of them messing up and getting in each other's way again would be hard to come by again. At the end of the day, they were seasoned experts in the Martial Extermination Realm. They noticed the problem and with several slight adjustments in the future, they would be able to complement each other's fighting style.

When that happened, Shang Pei would be hard-pressed to break out of their encirclement.

Because of that, Shang Pei didn't hesitate to take on Zhang Luofei's attack even if she knew she had to suffer slightly.

Blocked by Zhang Luofei's waves of snow and frost, Ye Yifan lost an amazing chance to attack Shang Pei. However, he wasn't too discouraged at the moment. Glancing at Zhang Luofei who was wearing an awkward expression, he rushed in another direction to prevent Shang Pei from escaping while yelling, "Youyan Chief, you won't be able to run away!"

Ignoring him, Shang Pei brandished her spear masterfully and smashed through all the obstruction of snow that was in her way. She seemed like she was about to break through from the encirclement, but Ye Yifan appeared in her way suddenly. He got ready to release a punch at her the moment she broke through.

At the exact same moment Shang Pei was about to emerge and Ye Yifan was ready to send a punch her way, a heaven-shaking change occurred.

Zhang Luofei's snowy waves were based on his Zhang Clan's rank four inheritance, the Icy Jade Palm. However, the snow seemed to melt in unison and it turned into water droplets in a single second.

Realizing that there was no way his technique could be broken so easily and suddenly, Zhang Luofei retreated hastily. At the same time, he released his divine perception to examine the area around him. Even after sweeping through his surroundings 8 to 10 times, he failed to discover what had happened.

Without the snowy waves to stop her, Shang Pei easily blew her way through the droplets of water.

The instant it happened, Ye Yifan released his punch with the energy he had been storing up for quite some time.

Surprisingly, the fist wasn't aimed at Shang Pei. Instead, he turned around and sent it straight into the void behind him.

"Huh? You actually found me!" Shang Xia gasped as he was forced out from the void several miles behind Ye Yifan. He got ready to counter attack.

He might sound pretty casual when speaking earlier, but a serious look remained in his eyes. A four colored extermination light spun around in his palm and he slapped at the void in front of him.

The moment he slapped out, countless layers of space folded together before slamming into the fist created by Ye Yifan.

With a loud rumble followed by several deep explosions, the space between the newcomer and Ye Yifan was torn to shreds.

In the eyes of low leveled cultivators, the destruction of space at that level would seem as though the world was splitting apart.

Those spectating the battle miles away might not be weak enough to think that the mere fracturing of space indicated the end of the world, but even so, their expressions changed when they saw what had happened.

The river of heaven and earth qi that followed Ye Yifan's fist intent was shattered in that instant as it couldn't advance an inch further.

Any river that wasn't flowing was nothing but a mere puddle. Ye Yifan gained his reputation as the Harmonious River Master a long time ago because of his rank four martial arts, the Racing Current Monarch Fist. He comprehended it on the river banks of the Harmonious River after a stroke of inspiration when observing the body of water. He was well known throughout the Taihang Mountains and the various continents in the surroundings because of the extraordinary power in his attacks.

Who would have thought that the famous fist intent would be stopped so easily? That wasn't the worst part. The palm strike that stopped Ye Yifan's fist intent didn't stop there. The energy it contained wasn't fully exhausted after obstructing Ye Yifan's attack. A huge palm condensed in mid air and went straight for the man himself. It connected the next instant and Ye Yifan was sent flying.

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More than a hundred miles away, the 3 members of the Five Peaks Alliance who had been watching the battle fell silent.

A moment later, Jiang Weiyun finally spoke. "Brother Wanxiang, how would you have dealt with Ye Yifan's fist intent?"

After thinking for some time, Yin Wanxiang shook his head and muttered, "If I went all out, I would be able to destroy his fist intent. However, if I want to slap him through the air and send him flying after..."

Yin Wanxiang couldn't help but sigh softly as he continued to shake his head. His meaning couldn't be more obvious.

On the other side, Zhonggu was still a little doubtful and he muttered, "Brother Wanxiang, you're at the fourth layer Martial Extermination Realm. Could that kid really be as strong as you?"

Jiang Weiyun pressed his lips together and shot Zhonggu a dirty stare, chiding him for what he was implying.

Yin Wanxiang, who was standing between the two of them, didn't really take his words to heart. Instead, he started to mutter to himself, "Young Master Shang's extermination origins seem a little strange..."

Despite hearing his words, a trace of disapproval flashed across Zhonggu's face as he didn't think that Shang Xia was as strong as they think.

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"Shang Xia..." Zhang Luofei finally noticed Shang Xia after Ye Yifan was sent flying.

However, he wasn't too flustered even with Shang Xia's appearance. He was a little stronger than Ye Yifan and he felt that his ability to flee was also a notch higher.

Now that the situation had turned bad for him, he turned around decisively to flee.

Back when the two of them joined hands to hunt Shang Pei down, they did so because of convenience's sake. There was no way they would risk their life for each other and now that things were going south, Zhang Luofei decided to run away alone. Ye Yifan was left to fend for himself.

What no one noticed was Shang Xia's face turning a little pale after sending out that one strike. Zhang Luofei didn't see it, Shang Pei failed to notice anything off, and neither did Yin Wanxiang and the others.

With Shang Xia's appearance, Shang Pei could finally vent her frustrations. They had been chasing her for the past 2 months relentlessly. Now that the tables have turned, Shang Pei wouldn't let them run away easily!

Seeing how Zhang Luofei wanted to run, Shang Pei wanted to ignore her injuries to give chase. However, she was quickly stopped by Shang Xia.

"Third Aunt, we shouldn't chase a cornered enemy!" Shang Xia's gentle warning came from behind her.

She stopped abruptly after hearing Shang Xia speak. She could hear the slight trace of weakness hidden within.

When she was stuck at a loss of what to do, Ye Yifan also gathered his thoughts after being slapped. Despite the extreme pain he was feeling, he also tried to escape.

"Are we also going to let this guy escape?" Shang Pei had been holding on forcefully earlier. Because of Shang Xia's warning earlier, her thoughts cleared up slightly and her desire to battle was quenched slightly. The aura around her also became slightly weaker.

"Of course we can't let this guy get away." Shang Xia's tone turned chilly all of a sudden and he flicked his sleeves violently.

The water droplets that remained in the air due to Zhang Luofei's technique earlier were blown away in that instant. Without the annoyance in their way, Shang Xia and Shang Pei started to give chase.

Because of his injuries, Ye Yifan's speed was severely impacted. He only ran slightly more than 4 miles when he felt water droplets falling on him.

A sudden realization dawned on him that those were no ordinary water droplets as his clothes were starting to dot away.

The droplets that were falling on him were like little blades. In fact, it was slightly more appropriate to call them tiny strands of blade qi. After tearing through his clothes, they started to cut into his bare body.

Disregarding his injuries, he quickly released his extermination origins to form a layer of protection around himself. It might have stopped those blade qi from stabbing into him, but his inner qi was also being used up at a rapid rate.

Several miles away, Shang Pei stood beside Shang Xia and stared at the blade qi rain falling on Ye Yifan. When Ye Yifan's inner qi was finally exhausted, the protection he put up disappeared. The

blade qi continued to rain down on him and they sliced up his body bit by bit. Even his bones and organs weren't spared as they were cut down to nothingness.

A frown appeared on Shang Pei's face as she asked, "What did you just do?"

Shrugging his shoulders, Shang Xia muttered, "It's a new blade move I created. It's called 'Valley Rain'."

"Valley Rain? Why didn't I see you swinging your blade when you unleashed the move?" Shang Pei continued to ask.

"I did it when I shattered the waves of snow earlier." Shang Xia replied.

Shang Pei coughed lightly and mentioned, "Oh... Anyway, your blade move seems a little disgusting..."

"Oh? Oh yeah. Right... It is a little..." Shang Xia sighed softly after seeing how the blade qi ate through Ye Yifan's entire body.

Chapter 492: Abyssal Emptiness Talisman

After dealing with Ye Yifan and cleaning up slightly, Shang Pei and Shang Pei continued to fly in the northern direction. Only after hundreds of miles did they stop. They arrived at an unremarkable looking village.

"Huh? When did all of you manage to construct a village here?" Shang Xia asked when he saw Fifth Uncle Cen and the others coming out to welcome them.

Shang Pei muttered casually, "A crafty rabbit has three burrows. Haven't you heard of it? It's just that we haven't been here for a long time."

As they made their way into the village, Fifth Uncle Cen continued, "Us Eighteen Horsemen of the You Continent have been messing around in the Ji Continent for more than ten years. There will be times when members suffer injuries or would have to deal with their personal matters. They could be planning to retire, they could have grown old, they could even have brought their families over to settle down. No matter the case, we need to find a safe place for them. After some time, we managed to gather enough people to form a village. This is one of the many villages we left behind and it happens to be in the Sixth Pass of the Taihang Mountains..

After they spoke, they arrived at one of the larger courtyards in the village.

"This is Third Sister's courtyard. In the past, Lady Hai Min and Yuanyuan remained here for quite some time in the past." Fifth Uncle Cen continued to introduce. Of course, he was basically talking to Shang Xia as Shang Pei didn't need his explanation. After stepping into the courtyard, a look of reminiscence could be seen on Shang Pei's face.

Entering the main room of the courtyard, Shang Xia asked, "Are the rest of the members of the Youyan Stronghold alright?"

“Haha, everything was pretty smooth when we made our way over. Anyway, the things here are pretty simple and crude. If Young Master Shang needs anything, please let me know. We’ll do our best to prepare them.” Fifth Uncle Cen smiled.

“I don’t have any...” Before he could complete his sentence, Shang Xia’s expression changed and he spat out a mouthful of blood.

“Are you alright?” Shang Pei yelled. She exhausted a lot of inner qi earlier and her countenance wasn’t great, but she wasn’t too heavily injured. Seeing Shang Xia spit out a mouthful of blood came as a shock to her.

Extending one hand, he stopped the two from panicking and muttered a little powerlessly, “It’s nothing serious, just a mouthful of stale blood. I’m much better after spitting it out.

Despite what he said, Shang Pei could vaguely feel that he was still injured and she frowned. “You haven’t fully recovered... Earlier, you pushed yourself too hard in the fight and caused your internal injuries to act up again. You held it in all the way and that’s why you’re vomiting blood...”

“What can I do? There were so many people observing us in the dark. The moment we show any weakness, they’ll be on to us like a pack of ravenous wolves.” Shang Xia wiped away the trace of blood flowing down his face and muttered.

Shang Pei nodded slightly before she continued, “Oh yeah. I wanted to ask you earlier, but what was that palm that struck Ye Yifan? It seems a little too tyrannical. Anyone who’s a little less knowledgeable would think that it’s a rank four martial intent.”

Shang Xia brought out an intricately carved flash from his sleeves before downing a mouthful of Hundred Flowers Spiritual Wine before replying. “I came up with it some time ago by accident. I think... I think I’ll call it the Four Constellation Palm. Actually, I was in no state to release a second palm like that earlier.”

“Four Constellation Palm?” Shang Pei found his naming sense a little weird but she didn’t dig too much into it. She eventually nodded in agreement, “Your Four Constellation Palm might be a lot more scary to the other experts compared to your Valley Rain earlier..”

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Finally settling down in the village, Shang Xia continued to recover.

Be it Shang Xia or Shang Pei, they needed some time to restore themselves to their peak state. It was especially so for Shang Xia since he hadn’t fully recovered earlier.

Not only did he have to recuperate, he was also in the midst of developing his rank four martial arts. Luckily, getting over the initial hurdle of creating the outline of his martial art was the hardest. Since the time he started to comprehend the Four Seasons Samsara Art and came up with his first move, Lightning Awakening, all he had to do was to progress down the same path while coming up and refining his other moves.

Shang Xia had to admit that the process was extremely complicated. There were endless trials and tests he had to come up with. However, every time he overcame a challenge, he would definitely progress and improve.

The process might seem slow, but every single improvement he had gave him a sense of accomplishment. Quickly getting addicted to the feeling of improvement, Shang Xia sank deeper into his engrossment with his comprehension. If not for Shang Pei who came over to disturb him in the midst of his cultivation, Shang Xia was seriously capable of hiding in seclusion in the tiny house for the next few years in order to fully complete the refinement of his Four Seasons Samsara Art.

Speaking of which, Shang Xia quickly discovered that it had been more than 3 months since he first arrived at the village. He had been in seclusion the whole time and it was already the middle of summer when he emerged. He could recall that it was barely spring of the 846th year of the Divine Martial Calendar previously and he couldn't believe how quickly time flew by.

In the months that passed, Shang Xia not only managed to recover fully, he even managed to gain some insights into his cultivation. He also refined a little more of his Four Seasons Extermination Origins.

Shang Xia had a sneaking suspicion that he couldn't confirm the whole time. Back in the mountain cave, Shang Xia used the Dao Comprehension Incense as a test to take a look at its effects. It only lasted 2 short hours, but he had a feeling that the effects were still lingering in his body. At the very least, he felt that his smooth cultivation in the months that passed had something to do with the Dao Comprehension Incense.

When he used the incense, he managed to shorten the time it took for him to complete one cycle of inner qi circulation to 7 hours. After that, he continued to shorten the time required.

In the 3 months of cultivation in the quiet mountain village, Shang Xia managed to shorten it once again. Despite the thinner heaven and earth qi in his surroundings, he only needed 6 hours to complete a single cycle.

Every time he shortened the time taken to complete one cycle, it would mean that his cultivation speed had increased slightly.

"Is something the matter?" Shang Xia knew that unless it was absolutely necessary, Shang Pei wouldn't interrupt his cultivation.

"News came from the institution. They want you to hurry up and return to the You Continent." Shang Pei hesitated slightly after she spoke and something seemed to be caught in her throat.

Shang Xia didn't notice the look on Shang Pei's face, but he understood the meaning behind her words. "Third Aunt, are you not planning to return to the You Continent with me? Is something with the Youyan Stronghold the matter?"

Taking a deep breath, Shang Pei eventually explained the situation. “Yin Wanxiang gathered the Martial Extermination Realm experts of the Sixth pass and created the Five Peaks Alliance. He made many invitations for me to join them...”

Shang Xia heard about how the Five Peaks Alliance helped Shang Pei when she was hunted down by Ye Yifan and Zhang Luofei. He quickly understood her intentions. “You don’t wish to join them, do you? But you feel like you owe them a huge favor...”

Shang Pei felt relieved that someone had said it for her, and she sighed softly, “I reported the situation to the institution too. However, their intention is for me to remain here and join the Five Peaks Alliance.”

Raising an eyebrow in shock, Shang Xia gasped, “The institution is actually planning something? The Abyssal Secret Region has already been destroyed... Could the institution be optimistic about the existence of the Five Peaks Alliance?”

“Looks like they’re planning for the future. Staying with the Five Peaks Alliance might not seem like a great strategic decision since they won’t be of much help in ordinary situations, but they might actually be a key to victory in case something happens...” Shang Pei muttered softly but she seemed to be mocking herself.

A frown remained on Shang Xia’s face as he maintained an expression of displeasure. After all, he could tell that Shang Pei didn’t want to remain in the Sixth Pass.

Seeing Shang Xia’s expression, Shang Pei eventually sighed and tried to make the situation a little better. “It doesn’t matter much actually. I’ve been getting used to living freely out here. I don’t have to care about many things and I can do whatever I want. If I were to return to the Tongyou City, I’d definitely feel a little uncomfortable...” Pausing slightly, Shang Pei continued, “... Besides, how well do you think the Tongyou Institution is faring at the moment?”

Shang Xia nearly gasped in fright as he raised his head to stare at Shang Pei.

“20 years ago, our worlds collided and the battlefield between the two worlds extended to the Shu, Liang, Bing, You, and Qing Continents. The cultivators of the Azure Spiritual World managed to invade us from time to time and the Evil Remnants definitely have a hand in their actions. Because of the Zhu Family’s actions and desire for their ancestor to enter the Martial Dipper Realm, they pushed the destruction of our You Continent even further. More than two-thirds of our continent was dragged into the mess. Of the 5 continents, we suffered the most.”

Shang Xia nodded slightly. He heard about what happened in the past. Now that Shang Pei was bringing it up again, he knew that she had more to say.

“In the years that passed, the Azure Origin World even contemplated giving up our Continent altogether before sending experts of the Ji and Bing Continents to take over the battlefield due to the lack of resources and experts in our You Continent. If not for Kou Chongxue messing about in the Beyond Heavens Pavilion all these years and abandoning the proper etiquette a Martial Dipper Realm expert should have, our

You Continent would have been taken over a long time ago. Because of his actions, everyone had to reconsider the consequences of their actions.” Shang Pei explained.

Shang Xia felt his heart thumping after hearing the explanation. “Is this why Patriarch Kou was injured in the Beyond Heavens Pavilion? Is the situation so bad that the institution would even choose to work together with the Four Great Races of the Liao Continent in the Azure Spiritual World that they had been at loggerheads with for the past 20 years? They even managed to borrow the Lingxuan Space Shattering Claw!”

Shang Pei nodded. “Even I couldn’t believe that Ji Wenlong managed to get his hands on the Lingxuan Space Shattering Claw. There has to be more than meets the eye, but one thing is for sure. He definitely owed a lot of favors in order to get his hands on that weapon.”

“What is the reason behind the Azure Origin World wanting to forsake the You Continent anyway? Did Patriarch Kou offend so many people out there?” Shang Xia wondered out loud.

Shaking her head, Shang Pei muttered, “How would someone like me who spent all her time outside the continent know? The only thing I can think of that is most likely the case is the distribution of world origin. That might be something that directly affects the number of Martial Dipper Realm experts in each continent...”

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They two of them spoke for quite some time after, and they even managed to exchange the fruits of their secluded cultivation. Eventually, Shang Xia learned the other reason Shang Pei had to join the Five Peaks Alliance.

“So... You haven’t completely refined your second extermination origin and you wish to join the Five Peaks Alliance so you can get access to return to the Cloud Water Gorge? Are you planning to continue absorbing the extermination qi there?” Shang Xia asked.

“Yup.” Shang Pei exhaled a long breath and admitted.

A frown appeared on Shang Xia’s face and he thought out loud, “The Cloud Water Gorge was mostly destroyed because of the battle between Martial Dipper Realm experts. Most of the extermination qi there has scattered. Where are you going to gather enough to complete your second extermination origin? Isn’t there another way?”

Shang Pei was equally as helpless as she sighed, “Let’s call my second extermination origin the Abyssal Mist Extermination Origin... It’s hard to find to begin with, and I might not be able to find it in other locations. Even if I could, I would need to use a lot of effort to scour through the lands for somewhere with the same type of extermination qi. The Cloud Water Gorge might be damaged, but I passed it a few times in the past. I could feel the presence of some extermination qi. I just need a little time to gather enough... After all, it’s better than nothing!”

“This... How long will it take?” Shang Xia asked. He knew that Shang Pei used the past two years or so to refine her extermination origin. She might have made great

progress, but with the state of the Cloud Water Gorge, her progress was sure to be greatly affected.

Shang Pei wasn't sure at all. "This... I have no idea. If it's quick, I might be able to finish it in 5 to 7 years. Otherwise, I might need ten years..."

There was something else Shang Pei didn't mention. She could tell that the extermination qi was slowly dissipating from the damaged Cloud Water Gorge and even if she remained there for 10 years, she might not be able to collect all the extermination qi she required.

In ordinary circumstances, a Martial Extermination Realm expert would need 3 to 5 years to gather enough extermination qi to obtain a single strand of extermination origin. Of course, that only applied to those who had already found a source of extermination qi.

For the others, they would be actively looking out for a source of extermination qi.

In Shang Pei's case, she managed to complete a greater part of her refinement when the Cloud Water Gorge was greatly damaged. All her efforts were basically wasted as gathering extermination qi was much more difficult than before. Her morale definitely took a great hit now that she was practically at an impasse.

"If only I had some way to gather the extermination qi from the fog quickly..." Shang Pei muttered.

Shang Xia's eyes lit up when he heard what she said. He seemed to have recalled something and he took out the pearl that was filled with mist. "What about this?"

"What is that?" Shang Pei turned to look at the item in his hand, but she quickly discovered its uses. A look of joy flashed across her face and she yelled, "Where did you get that?"

Understanding that he might have a solution to her problems, Shang Xia started to talk about how he obtained the pearl and the Dao Comprehension Incense.

"Dao Comprehension Incense?" Shang Pei sank into contemplation. "I seem to have heard of it before. I heard that it's an extremely precious and rare treasure. However, this pearl seems a lot more important than the incense to me right now."

"Is it really useful?" Shang Xia asked.

A look of satisfaction appeared on Shang Pei's face and she muttered, "I should be able to locate the remnant fog in the Cloud Water Gorge with this pearl. If everything goes smoothly, I should be able to complete the refinement of my second extermination origin in half a year! When that happens, I'll break through and enter the second layer Martial Extermination Realm. What's more, this pearl not only possesses the ability to create a sea of fog. It's something the Abyssal Sect used to gather extermination qi from different types of extermination mists!"

Heaving a sigh of relief, Shang Xia spoke. "It's great that it would be of use to you. However, it looks like you will still have to enter the Five Peaks Alliance..."

Chuckling in amusement, Shang Pei didn't seem to care too much. Instead, she brought up another matter. "Actually, I also managed to obtain one of those inheritance light balls from the Abyssal Secret Region. The treasure contained within should be useful for you!"

After she spoke, she handed over a jade plate the size of a palm.

Holding the plate, Shang Xia stared at it in slight confusion. He had no idea what he was looking at. "You need to use your extermination origins to activate it. Only then will you be able to see its contents." Shang Pei laughed at the side.

Sending a trace of his Four Seasons Extermination Origins into the plate, Shang Xia felt that it was reacting slightly. A ray of four colored light emerged on its surface and formed rows upon rows of words. The process of the words appearing on the jade plate was mighty similar to how a talisman would be created.

"Abyssal Emptiness Talisman!" Shang Xia gasped in shock. "This... This is a complete set of talisman inheritance!"

"When I read its contents, I was extremely shocked by how well-recorded it was! You can call this an inheritance for the Abyssal Emptiness Talisman, but it seems to be an entire set of talismans that lead up its creation! It starts from the rank one Abyssal Assistive Wind Talisman, followed by the rank two Abyssal Wind Assimilation Talisman. The rank three Abyssal Qi Resistance Talisman comes next. There's the rank four Abyssal Void Shattering Talisman next. Finally, the inheritance for the Abyssal Emptiness Talisman that hasn't actually been created by the person who left this inheritance behind... This is truly an impressive feat!" Shang Pei mentioned.

Shang Xia continued, "That's not all. Even the types of talisman paper, talisman ink, brush, ink slab, and even the time taken to craft every single talisman in the series had been recorded. Every single stroke of the brush has been analyzed along with every stroke started and stopped... The only thing that can beat this is the Talisman Master holding my hand and guiding me through the entire process!"

Shang Pei paused for a second before asking, "When I received this, I didn't look through it properly because I wasn't a Talisman Master. What exactly does the Abyssal Emptiness Talisman do?"

"Let's start from the bottom. A rank one Abyssal Assistive Wind Talisman can allow a cultivator to move a little faster. A rank two Wind Assimilation Talisman not only increases one's speed, it can also cause a hurricane that attacks their opponent. A rank three Abyssal Qi Resistance Talisman has the ability to allow one to soar through the air like a Martial Extermination Realm expert by using wind resistance. As for the rank four Abyssal Void Shattering Talisman, it has the ability to shatter the void. One can easily travel through mysterious worlds, holy lands, and even secret regions that exist in a separate space. Also, I believe that one can directly tear through the void to arrive at the Beyond Heavens Pavilion if they use the talisman..."

“What about the rank five Abyssal Emptiness Talisman?” Shang Pei asked.

After thinking about it for a second, Shang Xia shook his head and stated as simply as he could, “I don’t know.”

Chapter 493: Returning to the You Continent

Both Shang Xia and Shang Pei left the village one after the other.

Shang Xia went north as he headed for the You Continent. Shang Pei traveled south as she went towards the Five Peaks Alliance.

From what she learned, the Five Peaks Alliance was in a pretty precarious situation lately. Inheritance treasures had been found one after another in the Sixth Pass and someone seemed to be spreading rumors that the Five Peaks Alliance had been hiding a lot of treasures from the Abyssal Secret Region. They turned into a huge target in the Taihang Mountains at the moment. Members of the Five Peaks Alliance were starting to feel restless.

With the arrival of another Martial Extermination Realm expert to help stabilize the situation, things became a lot better than before. It also served as a warning for those who had malicious intentions towards the Five Peaks Alliance.

Not too long after Shang Pei entered the alliance, Fifth Uncle Cen and the others also left the mountain village to join her. They quickly became a core member of the Five Peaks Alliance.

Before Shang Xia left for the You Continent, he left behind a batch of rank two and three talismans. Every one of them managed to get their hands on a few of them to serve as life-saving treasures.

With Shang Xia's current cultivation and proficiency in the way of talismans, he could create several rank two talismans in a day as long as he had enough resources. In fact, he had the ability to craft a rank three one!

Of course, the crafting of rank three talismans didn't involve him cutting off a part of his divine perception. That was where Fifth Uncle Cen and the other Martial Intent Realm cultivators of the Youyan Stronghold came to use. They would take turns to help him, and they would supply the divine sense required to complete the talisman.

In reality, Shang Xia had a vast and profound divine perception. Even if he were to use it to craft rank three talismans, he would be able to complete one of them a day. However, if he did it himself, he would need to rest for a day. That was why it was more efficient to use the divine sense of the members of the Youyan Stronghold.

After crafting the batch of talismans, he basically emptied out the accumulations of Shang Pei and the rest. All the treasures they had gathered painstakingly after so many years had been used up!

After entering the Four Constellation Realm, Shang Xia didn't have much time for himself due to the sheer number of events that required his attention. Any time he could find for himself was used on crafting rank four talismans! He only managed to craft a single Golden Sun Inferno Talisman and one Spiritual Protection Substitution Talisman and he didn't think that he improved too much in the way of talisman crafting.

Only when he started to craft rank two and three talismans for the members of the Youyan Stronghold did Shang Xia understand how much he had actually progressed. He also managed to

understand the terrifying aspect of a rank four Talisman Grandmaster. He was basically a talisman printing machine!

...

On his way back to the You Continent, nothing special happened. After crossing the border, he didn't head back to the Tongyou City immediately either. Instead, he went to Hai Min's courtyard in the Changfeng City. he chose to stay there for some time, and he only went to visit Bu Jingshuang on his second day in the city.

At the moment, Shang Xia's identity was a mere Talisman Master of the Talisman Hall. The Talisman Hall wasn't exactly a major wing of the Tongyou Institution as it was governed by the Warehouse Division. As such, his status in the Tongyou Institution wasn't exactly too high up there. He would be comparable to ordinary instructors or high-leveled deacons, but that was it. In fact, instructors seemed to hold a higher status in the institution and were a little more respected than the others.

Naturally, one would be able to hold multiple posts at once as long as they don't come into conflict with each other. Shang Xia could take on a role as an instructor as long as he felt like it. Taking Chu Jia, the rank four Formation Grandmaster of the Formations Hall, Ma Mingzheng, or even Ge Wangchuan of the Medicine Hall as an example, all of them held posts as instructors in the institution.

It also went without saying that gaining the qualifications to become an instructor was a tall task in the institution. The simplest requirement was to be at the Martial Intent Realm, but there were several more criteria one had to meet.

Even with the institution increasing their recruitment, the requirements to become an instructor had never changed.

Obviously, it was difficult for ordinary cultivators to meet those requirements. However, there was no need to mention Shang Xia. He was not only a Martial Extermination Realm expert, he was also a rank four Talisman Grandmaster!

If Shang Xia was willing to take on a role as an instructor in the institution, every single teaching division would be fighting to recruit him.

That might be the case, but Shang Xia still wasn't an instructor of the institution. His position in the institution was actually a little awkward when they thought about it.

He was just too young compared to the rest! There wasn't a need to mention the Martial Intent Realm cultivators in the institution who used to be his seniors. Even some Martial Extermination Realm experts would feel awkward when they ran into him. The irregularity caused Shang Xia to be placed in a very strange spot. He wasn't considered a lone existence, but there was a feeling of estrangement even if people were treating him politely.

That was also one of the reasons Shang Xia didn't choose to return immediately.

Moreover, Shang Xia had a strange feeling that Kou Chongxue and the others were up to something after his breakthrough to the Four Constellation Realm back on the Yuxi Peak.

Almost every single Martial Extermination Realm expert in the institution, including those from the great families in the Tongyou City, had either chosen to remain in seclusion in the battlefield

between the two worlds or chose to fight against the experts of the Azure Spiritual World. Either way, they disappeared in the eyes of the public.

Originally, Shang Xia thought that Kou Chongxue's goal was the Abyssal Secret Region after seeing his appearance the other day. However, after the massive battle in the Sixth Pass, he discovered that the Abyssal Secret Region was merely something they dealt with in passing. It appeared more like a coincidence than anything else.

Perhaps, it was something they were using to draw everyone else's attention away from what they were actually doing!

If Shang Xia returned to the institution at that moment, he was afraid that not many people would be able to give him a proper answer on what was happening. At most, he would be given some half-assed task and be turned into some random tool for the institution. The only exception would be if he managed to meet Kou Chongxue or Ji Wenlong. That didn't seem too possible considering most people in the institution had no idea where either of them were.

Luckily, Shang Xia knew that he had another avenue to gain information at the moment. Bu Jingshuang, the Changfeng City Lord, was Kou Chongxue's sworn brother! Aside from Kou Chongxue and the four deputy patriarchs of the institution, he should be the other person who knew the most about what was going on.

Bu Jingshuang wasn't surprised by Shang Xia's arrival. However, he couldn't help but suck in a cold breath in admiration of Shang Xia's speed of growth.

The battle that took place for the Abyssal Secret Region shook the Azure Origin World since so many Martial Dipper Realm experts took part in it. However, anyone who was paying little attention to the event would learn that other than the Martial Dipper Realm ancestors who appeared, Shang Xia was actually the star of the show!

Obtaining the Abyssal Blade, origin dipper, and revealing his cultivation path where he refined four extermination origins to enter the Martial Extermination Realm. That wasn't all. He didn't just escape from a Martial Dipper Realm ancestor's avatar. He managed to keep his life even when up against Feng Yezi's true body! Any one of those feats was eye-catching enough, but Shang Xia managed to accomplish all of them!

The moment Bu Jingshuang saw Shang Xia, he wasted no time in telling Shang Xia that he had already entered the sights of every single superpower and super expert of the Azure Origin World.

Chuckling bitterly, Shang Xia muttered, "Do you think I should be glad or worried about them?"

Bi Jingshuang was too lazy to reply to the youngster. Instead, he followed up with another question. "Damn brat, why are you looking for me anyway?"

Adjusting his attitude, Shang Xia became a little more serious and asked, "Senior, do you know why the institution has called me back?"

Raising an eyebrow in surprise, Bu Jingshuang muttered, "Haven't they told you?! ... Right... you're not in the You Continent and they probably wouldn't leave behind too many details since transmission talismans might be intercepted by our enemies."

Shang Xia wasn't in a rush to continue as he waited patiently for Bu Jingshuang to resume his explanation.

After thinking for some time, Bu Jingshuang added, “This might be a chance for you to enter the Beyond Heavens Pavilion. You might also be sent to the foreign continent beyond the heavens.”

Shang Xia heard about the foreign continent from Zhang Haogu and he wasn't exactly shocked to hear about it again from Bu Jingshuang.

Thinking for a second, Shang Xia asked, “Is the institution not doing too well in the foreign continent?”

Feeling a little surprised that Shang Xia managed to grasp the situation so quickly, he nodded, “That's right. Originally, the institution wanted to sneakily split a portion of benefits from the foreign continent without alerting anyone. Because of that, we even formed an alliance with the Changbai Holy Land.”

“What's going on? Did something unexpected happen? Did our plans get leaked?” Shang Xia asked.

Shaking his head, Bu Jingshuang explained, “No. The members of the Changbai Holy Land were the ones who were exposed! Moreover, Ji Wenlong brought out the Lingxuan Space Shattering Claw back during the battle in the Cloud Water Gorge...”

“This... Is this why the other powers have a reason to suspect that we sent a portion of our experts into the foreign continent beyond the heavens?” Shang Xia seemed to understand what was going on.

Bu Jingshuang nodded. “Actually, the institution is really conflicted on how we should make use of your abilities. A portion of them feels that as a Talisman Grandmaster, you have no need to join the expedition. They feel that you should remain in a region rich in heaven and earth qi like the Beyond Heavens Pavilion to craft talismans. Your talismans would be used in the battle in the foreign continent to help members of the Tongyou Institution. Of course, the others think that you should take part in the expedition and go out there to fight.”

“So... Should I go or not?” Shang Xia chuckled.

Bu Jingshuang also laughed in amusement at Shang Xia's question. “That is why they called you back to ask for your opinion. However...”

“Mister Bu, please enlighten me.” Shang Xia muttered in response.

Turning serious, Bu Jingshuang muttered, “No matter your decision, you're a rank four Talisman Grandmaster of the institution. I feel that you should make your preparations to contribute. Even if you choose to enter the foreign continent eventually, you will need to pass through the Beyond Heavens Pavilion. That is where true experts gather. After all, only the Beyond Heavens Pavilion contains enough resources for experts like us to train.”

...

When Shang Xia finally emerged from the City Lord Manor, he decided to make his way back to the Tongyou City after dealing with some small matters.

When he was done, he quickly returned to the Shang Clan Manor in the Tongyou City. He learned that Shang Jian had entered seclusion in order to break through to the Martial Extermination Realm,

and Shang Ke was missing on the pretext that he was in seclusion. The person in charge of the clan was Shang Xi who had returned from the battlefield between the two worlds.

When he found her, she discovered that she was talking to Shang Quan about how they should send a mutated rain swallow with the Shang Clan's convoy that was heading to the Sixth Pass. With the mutated rain swallow's presence, Shang Pei would be able to communicate with the Shang Clan.

Looking at the bird they were talking about, Shang Xia realized that it was one of the 3 other birds Yan Ni'er had taken care of.

Back in the battlefield between the two worlds, Yan Ni'er laid a single egg that had golden runes on it. Shang Xia found 3 other mutated rain swallow eggs and got Yan Ni'er to incubate them all.

2 years had passed since then and those young mutated rain swallows had already grown to a rank two spiritual beast after constant care. None of them was weaker than the Yan Ni'er Shang Xia ran into the first time he entered the battlefield between the two worlds!

Their speed was also something no one could complain about. After reaching adulthood, those mutated rain swallows could give a Martial Extermination Realm expert a run for their money! Of course, they wouldn't be able to sustain flight at that speed for long, but a short burst would be enough to get them out of a lot of trouble!

Shang Xia couldn't help but approach them to ask, "Can't we use transmission talismans to communicate with Third Aunt?"

Turning around, Shang Xi muttered, "It wouldn't be difficult for others to intercept our transmissions if we use talismans. Even though we would be writing in code, we would consume too many resources if we use transmission talismans. We would probably need to send 3 or so talismans in order for one of them to arrive safely in her hands."

Actually, the Tongyou Institution made arrangements with the Shang Clan for the 3 ordinary mutated rain swallows after they matured. This was the last mutated rain swallow that hadn't been sent out, and once it was, the only birds that would remain in the Shang Clan would be Yan Ni'er and Yan Lei!

Chapter 494: Spatial Pouch, High-Grade Brush!

"Aunt, is our Azure Origin World lacking in spiritual beasts or something?" Shang Xia asked after Shang Xi and Shang Quan's conversation came to an end. He tossed out a really interesting question, surprising everyone.

Without raising her head, Shang Xi asked, "Who told you that?"

"When I was in the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range, I couldn't find many wild beasts, much less spiritual beasts. That's not all. Even in the Taihang Mountains, I failed to find traces of any spiritual beasts! The only difference between the Taihang Mountains and the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range was that the Taihang Mountains housed a lot more wild beasts..."

Chuckling in amusement, Shang Xi explained, "Did you come to your conclusion after exploring the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range and the Taihang Mountains?"

Grunting once, Shang Xia continued, “Well, there are many spiritual beasts in the battlefield between the two worlds. However, it probably has to do with the environment there. I also noticed some spiritual beasts in the Cloud Water Gorge. That’s also a special region and it might have something to do with the Abyssal Secret Region. Other than that...”

Shang Xi laughed lightly and didn’t say much more. Instead, Shang Quan spoke up at the side, “Actually, there are lots of spiritual beasts in our Azure Origin World. Before our worlds collided, they loved populating secluded regions like our You Continent. There were even more of them in those mountain ranges. There were so many spiritual beasts that they could rival our human population!”

Speaking of seniority, Shang Quan did indeed know a lot more than Shang Xi.

“Why...” Shang Xia paused for a second before he continued, “Is this because of the collision of our worlds?”

Shang Quan nodded slowly. “That’s right. During the collision, more than two thirds of our You Continent was thrown into chaos. Those beasts relied on their superior instincts to tell them that a disaster was about to strike and they started to migrate to the south before it happened. Because of that, the northern region of our Azure Origin World experienced large scale beast tides. In the end, not a single spiritual beast remained in the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range. A huge number of them even left the Taihang Mountains!”

“A huge number of them?” Shang Xia asked.

“Yeah. More than half of the spiritual beasts left!” Shang Quan continued, “After running to the south, they didn’t return even after the situation calmed down. Those that remained in the Taihang Mountains weren’t a match for the experts who populated the area soon after and were quickly killed. After that, the Taihang Mountains became populated with scattered cultivators, bandits, and all sorts of cultivators. That was how your Third Aunt managed to establish herself and find a place to grow the Eighteen Horsemen of the You Continent.”

“So that’s what happened...” Shang Xia muttered to himself. Seemingly having thought of something, he followed up, “So, after the beasts ran south, wouldn’t that make the southern region...”

“That is why the continents in the south never had any goodwill for us. Even though the collision of our worlds is what caused the beasts to run down south, they quickly found another target to blame... Hehe...” Shang Xi piped up all of a sudden.

“I see!” Shang Xia basically understood what Shang Xi left unsaid. From the looks of it, when Shang Ke and Shang Pei went down south to obtain the herbs he needed, their journey wasn’t as smooth as he had thought.

“Why are you asking about spiritual beasts anyway?” Shang Xi muttered.

Pulling out a gray pouch from his sleeves, Shang Xia pulled out a white bone brush that was close to a feet long.

Originally, the brush was a high-grade treasure. However, there was a long crack that extended 3 inches along the body of the brush. Because of that, the brush could no longer be classified as a high-grade treasure. It was only a mid-grade treasure at best, and the Talisman Master who used it would have to waste a lot of inner qi during the crafting process because it would leak through the crack.

However, neither Shang Xi nor Shang Quan could be bothered with the brush at the moment. They stared at the gray pouch that Shang Xia pulled the brush out from. Their eyes widened in fright and they gasped, "Spatial... Spatial Pouch?!"

Shang Xia was taken aback by their reaction.

"Where the hell did you get that?!" Shang Xi asked immediately.

"How big is it?" Shang Quan followed up before Shang Xia could answer Shang Xi's question.

Thinking for a second, Shang Xia replied, "I asked Changfeng City Lord Bu Jingshuang for a favor to make it... It should contain 7 to 8 cubic feet of space."

The best Spatial Pouch out there contained 10 cubic feet of space. As such, the one Shang Xia was holding was of a pretty high grade.

In the Tongyou Institution, only the deputy patriarchs and above were able to use Spatial Pouches. Even so, most of them were of the lowest grade and could only contain 5 cubic feet of space.

After playing around with Shang Xia's Spatial Pouch for some time, Shang Xi and Shang Quan were so engrossed in it that Shang Xia had to wave the brush in his hand about. "Aunt Xi, Uncle Quan, I was planning to get ideas from you to see where I can obtain the bones of high-level spiritual beasts. I wish to repair this brush!"

"Oh..." Shang Xi spoke casually while flipping the pouch around in her hand, "Don't waste your time on this brush. The Talisman Hall sent someone down here to tell us that they had obtained a fully intact high-grade brush. The only person who has the qualifications to use it is you, the rank four Talisman Grandmaster of the institution."

"When did they send someone over?" Shang Xia wondered to himself. He could guess that the brush came from one of those inheritance light balls Kou Chongxue or Ji Wenlong obtained from the Abyssal Secret Reigon and he continued, "They might say that I can make use of it, but it won't belong to me at the end of the day."

Shang Xuan continued, "I already kept aside the bones of spiritual beasts for you a long time ago. However, I don't think your problem can be solved because you have some raw materials. You need a proper craftsman to repair the brush."

Nodding slightly, Shang Xia understood what he had to do.

“Oh yeah, how long are you planning to say this time?” Shang Xi asked all of a sudden.

“Who knows? I’ll head over to the institution tomorrow to take a look. However, I don’t think I’ll be able to remain here for a long time.” Shang Xia replied before taking out several rare treasures he obtained in the Taihang Mountains. He handed them all to Shang Quan.

Most of the treasures there were obtained from the Jingxiu Peak. After all, Duan Liufeng had managed the place for tens of years. He gathered many treasures, and Shang Xia basically plundered the most precious of them when he tore through the protection barrier previously. The greatest loot he obtained was the batch of Hundred Flowers Spiritual Brew and a strand of extermination origin.

After handing the lesser treasures to Shang Quan, Shang Xia brought out the boulder from the Abyssal Secret Region that was used to hold the Abyssal Blade and the Abyssal Emptiness Talisman inheritance. He also took out several treasures Shang Pei had entrusted him to bring back to the clan. They were valuables she had collected in the two or so years during her time in the Taihang Mountains.

Looking at Shang Xia who brought out several Embroidered Cloud Cases, Shang Xi joked, “What the hell is this?! Which great family did you rob to get all of these?”

Shang Xia chuckled in response. She wasn’t exactly wrong. Actually, he plundered 2 different factions to get his hands on so many treasures. One of them was the Jingxiu Peak, and the other was the Abyssal Sect.

Storing the main boulder in the Shang Clan treasury, Shang Xia left a few palm sized pieces for himself to experiment with. He had some ideas about talisman crafting and those small pieces would be enough to test them out.

Taking out the portion of the Abyssal Emptiness Talisman inheritance that contained the method of crafting talisman ink, he handed it over to Shang Quan personally.

“Rank four ink?!” Shang Quan stared at Shang Xia in shock.

Even though he could be considered a talisman ink craftsman, Shang Quan knew that he wasn’t exactly very talented in the field.

He barely managed to craft rank three talisman ink because of his cultivation level and position in the Shang Clan. He had broken through to the Martial Intent Realm some time ago and he could be considered an expert in the You Continent. However, he knew how limited his talent was.

After entering the Martial Intent Realm and being recognized as a core member of the Shang Clan, he relied heavily on their support to craft rank three talisman ink. In order to complete his studies in crafting rank three ink, he used nearly 5 portions of resources before he crafted his first batch.

Without the power of the Shang Clan, Shang Quan would never become a rank three talisman ink craftsman!

However, Shang Xia had brought out the recipe for rank four talisman ink before he had even mastered the way to craft rank three ink!

“I... I really can't do this!” A troubled look appeared on Shang Quan's face as he admitted.

Shang Xia had become a rank four Talisman Grandmaster, and Shang Quan thought that his nephew was asking him to craft rank four talisman ink so that he could start crafting talismans.

Luckily, he was greeted with a bout of laughter from Shang Xia. “There's no rush to create the rank four Abyssal Talisman Ink. Uncle Quan, you can focus on creating rank three Abyssal Talisman Ink for now.”

Heaving a sigh of relief, Shang Quan suddenly thought of another problem. “Do I have to make rank three Abyssal Talisman Ink specifically?”

Previously, Shang Quan had been racking his brains to study the creation of another type of rank three talisman ink. If he had to start crafting another type, he would waste all his efforts!

By the time their conversation got to that point, Shang Xi had already scanned through the inheritance. She was ready to store the entire inheritance in the Shang Clan Treasury, but she asked, “Are you planning to craft the entire series of talismans?”

Shang Xia nodded in acknowledgment. “Yes, but not really... It's true that the Abyssal Talisman Ink is extremely suitable for me to craft talismans in the series, but it can also be used for other talismans. Of course, if I craft Abyssal Talismans with Abyssal Talisman Ink, I would be more likely to succeed!”

Shang Xi understood the situation, and Shang Quan could only release a bitter laugh. “I'm just afraid that I will end up wasting your resources...”

Shang Xi shook the Abyssal Emptiness Talisman inheritance in her hand and muttered, “Oh yeah, are you going to give the institution a copy of this?”

“No matter what, the intuition had their eyes on the Abyssal Secret Region. I have to give them a portion of my gains no matter what, especially an inheritance like this. Of course, any treasure I obtained before the appearance of the Abyssal Secret Region, like on the Jingxiu Peak, has nothing to do with them...” Shang Xia muttered.

“When are you planning to head over to the institution anyway?” Shang Xi followed up with another question.

“Should I go over tomorrow?” Shang Xia asked tentatively.

“Maybe not. You wouldn't be able to leave easily once you return to the institution. Just stay in the clan for several more days. Use up all the talisman paper we gathered so far before returning to the institution!” Shang Xi quickly came up with another plan for him. Obviously, she wanted to make use of the time when he was still in the Shang Clan Manor to craft as many talismans as he could.

Ever since Shang Xia first became a Talisman Master a long time ago, Shang Quan had been gathering talisman paper on his behalf.

After Shang Xia became a rank two Talisman Master, Shang Quan started nurturing the Shang Clan's own talisman paper craftsman.

However, Shang Xia's speed of improvement was too damn quick. He didn't take long to become a rank three Talisman Master. The moment that happened, the Shang Clan basically poured all their resources into the talisman paper craftsman they were planning to nurture in hopes that he would be of use to Shang Xia.

Who would have thought that Shang Xia's improvement in the way of talismans wouldn't slow down in the slightest? It advanced as quickly as his cultivation and before anyone could blink, he had broken through!

By the time Shang Xia crafted his first Golden Sun Inferno Talisman and became a rank four Talisman Grandmaster, the talisman paper craftsman the Shang Clan was nurturing had barely started making rank two talisman papers!

The Shang Clan was both elated and helpless at the speed of Shang Xia's growth.

By the time dawn broke the next day, Shang Xia managed to give the institution an excuse that he had to rest for a couple of days because of his tiring journey back to the You Continent. Shang Xi took his place and ran to the institution to obtain the high-grade Purple Bamboo Brush!

Chapter 495: 3 Talismans

The Zhu Family Talisman Scripture recorded 3 rank four talismans and the Golden Sun Inferno Talisman Shang Xia crafted previously was part of them.

As for the Spiritual Protection Substitution Talisman he crafted back in the Cloud Water Gorge, that came from the Talisman Hall's collection.

With the Purple Bamboo Brush from the institution, Shang Xia decided to practice a little before testing it out on high-level talismans. Who would have thought that the brush would feel amazingly smooth in his hands?

After crafting 6 different rank three talismans in a row without making a single mistake, Shang Xia realized that only 3 short days had passed.

Taking advantage of the fact that his condition was at its peak, Shang Xia sealed the courtyard he was in and started crafting rank four talismans. He wasn't too surprised when he quickly succeeded in crafting a Golden Sun Inferno Talisman.

Of the many rank four talisman inheritance and records Shang Xia learned, the Golden Sun Inferno Talisman was the one he was the most familiar with. He ran through it countless times in his mind when he made it previously and he succeeded in crafting it in the past. He didn't take long to finish it!

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After he was done, Shang Xia could still feel that his condition hadn't deteriorated. He quickly threw himself into another round of rank four talisman crafting.

It didn't come as a surprise that he failed on his second attempt.

After taking a break of 2 days, Shang Xia reentered his peak state and managed to craft another Golden Sun Inferno Talisman

Taking another short break, Shang Xia threw himself into another round of talisman crafting. This time, he started on another type of rank four talisman, the Spiritual Protection Substitution Talisman. He succeeded in crafting it back in the Cloud Water Gorge and he was confident he could do it again.

By the time he started, Shang Xia had already used the Purple Bamboo Brush for more than 20 days. The initial rush he had of obtaining a new artifact had disappeared, and the Spiritual Protection Substitution Talisman was more difficult to craft than the Golden Sun Inferno Talisman, his success rate quickly regressed to his ordinary state.

After experiencing two successive failures, Shang Xia finally completed a Spiritual Protection Substitution Talisman with his final piece of rank four talisman paper.

That was right... After returning to the Shang Clan, Shang Xia discovered that Shang Xi and Shang Quan had prepared 6 pieces of rank four talisman paper for him. They used a ton of resources to purchase those talisman papers some time ago, but they only managed to obtain 6 of them.

When Shang Xi received the Golden Sun Inferno Talismans and Spiritual Protection Substitution Talisman from Shang Xia along with a batch of rank two and three talismans, she revealed an expression of pure joy.

“You managed to craft 3 rank four talismans with 6 pieces of talisman paper.. That’s a success rate of 50 percent! You’re really amazing!” Shang Xi couldn’t help but praise. The smile on her face didn’t fade in the slightest.

“I was merely lucky this time round. The excitement from using a new high-grade brush and my optimal condition allowed me to hit such a high success rate. If I had to do it again, I might not be able to replicate this feat...” Shang Xia admitted.

Shang Xi’s elation faded a little after hearing what he said. “Hehe, I even thought that our clan would have struck it big if you managed to craft more than 2 rank four talismans this time. Looks like I will have to tone down my expectations a little...”

No one could blame Shang Xi for how she was acting as though she had never seen rank four talismans before. Every single rank four talisman was a trump card that could change the tides of battle when used correctly.

For a power like the current Shang Clan, rank three talismans were basically the highest grade talismans they could bring out. They represented the foundations of the clan, and with rank four talismans, they could finally stand their ground and threaten other factions!

Those rank four talismans Shang Xia made currently didn’t seem like much, but one had to understand that every time he used one in the past, it directly changed the outcome of the exchange.

Bringing over several spirit suppression cases, Shang Xi placed the rank four talismans into them before keeping them carefully.

Treasures like that could only be used by Martial Intent Realm experts of the clan, and only then, they were barely qualified to do it.

“How many years can these talismans last?” Shang Xi asked after keeping them.

Thinking for a second, Shang Xia explained, “If you keep them as they were, they wouldn’t last for more than ten years. The divine intent and extermination qi on the talisman would dissipate eventually. In fact, they should start deteriorating in 3 to 5 years. They would lose their effects completely if kept for longer. Even if you use methods like spirit suppression cases to keep them, they should last for 15 years at most.”

A sigh escaped Shang Xi’s lips. “The time they can be kept is really too short. Do you have any way of extending their lifespan?”

Shang Xia thought for some time before giving his reply. “I’ll try to look for a way if I have time. However, it won’t be something I can solve easily. I might think of something...”

After staying in the Shang Clan for close to a month, Shang Xia decided not to drag things out any longer and returned to the institution.

As soon as he got back, he discovered that the entire palace was much more bustling than before. However, there was a foreign element to it.

Strolling about the area, he discovered that there were a lot more students than before, but there weren’t many whom he knew.

“Shang Xia!”

Turning around when he heard his name, Shang Xia saw a young man who was similar to him in age and was surrounded by a group of 14 to 15 year olds. The young man was waving enthusiastically at him.

Taking several steps in his direction, Shang Xia chuckled softly, “Zhang Jianfei? You... Have you become a Custodian?”

Zhang Jianfei laughed in response. “I became a Custodian of the Fifth Outer Division. These are my students when I took over the duties of the previous custodian in the latter half of last year. Right now, we have too many students, and our original 6 Outer Teaching Divisions have expanded to 12.

After speaking to Shang Xia, Zhang Jianfei turned to those around him and introduced, “Take a good look! He was the Chief Disciple when I was still a student in the institution. From the Outer Division to the Upper Division, he was the strongest disciple. Today, he has already become a Martial Extermination Realm expert! He is the true role model you should have in the institution.”

A portion of the kids around him widened their eyes in shock. Most of them had a look of curiosity, worship, and adoration. However, there was also a portion who found themselves unwilling to compare themselves to him and a trace of indignance flashed through their eyes.

Shang Xia couldn’t help but roar with laughter.

Thinking back, Zhang Jianfei was also a genius that used to be compared to Shang Xia. He even fought Shang Xia for the position of the Leader of the Outer Divisions previously. Their relationship wasn’t too great back then. However, 2 to 3 years had passed since then and all the animosity they had for each other remained nothing more than a pleasant memory.

Shang Xia felt a sense of familiarity after seeing Zhang Jianfei who was from the same batch of students as him.

Calling for the students around him to cultivate on their own, Zhang Jianfei finally found some time to speak to Shang Xia alone. “We haven’t been able to catch you for the past 2 years. However, we have been hearing a lot of legends you created.”

“Haha, were there many students from our batch who managed to remain in the institution?” Shang Xia asked.

“Yeah!” Zhang Jianfei continued, “In the past years, the Tongyou Institution had been expanding rapidly. Many students chose to stay on as custodians or deacons in the institution. Even I managed to fluke my way to become a Custodian of the Outer Division with more than 20 new students in my charge!”

“Hahaha, you’re being too humble. You’re a Martial Intent Realm cultivator and you should be able to get a job as a deacon in the institution. Moreover, you were from the Protection Division. Why did you transfer to the Teaching Division?” In Shang Xia’s memories, the Custodians of the Outer Division were made up of outstanding members in the Upper Division. Most of them were in the Martial Extremity Realm back then. Only Custodians in the Inner and Upper Divisions would be in the Martial Intent Realm.

Waving his hand casually, Zhang Jianfei explained, “That’s in the past. The institution expanded rapidly and everyone improved quickly. The requirements for each post increased accordingly. In order to be a Custodian in the Outer Divisions, one has to be in the Martial Intent Realm.”

“I see!” Shang Xia was surprised to hear that.

Zhang Jianfei quickly added, “You might be in the Talisman Hall now, but have you thought of becoming an Instructor?”

“It shouldn’t be easy to become an instructor, right?” Shang Xia raised an eyebrow as he replied.

Not anyone could become an instructor in the Tongyou Institution. Other than one’s cultivation, one needed to be extremely knowledgeable and accomplished in their field. After all, every Instructor would be allocated resources by the institution for their service. That was why Instructors held more authority than the Deacons of the various divisions.

Staring at Shang Xia with a strange look on his face, he muttered, “Brother Shang, you’re the youngest and only Talisman Grandmaster in the institution. If you’re not qualified to become an instructor, no one else is!”

Shang Xia still shook his head in response, “What students learn are merely the most elementary theories of talismans. Instructor Fan Yuanhui is able to teach them everything they need to know. Moreover, he has vast teaching experience and it’s not something I can replicate even with my mastery in the way of Talismans.”

“That’s true...” Zhang Jianfei nodded his head in response. He didn’t seem like he was planning to give up easily though. “Brother Shang, I know that you’re a busy man and

you shouldn't have the time to become an Instructor of the institution. Why don't you come over and teach a couple of lessons when you have the time? Feel free to teach those kids anything you know. After all, any one of your experiences is more than enough to widen their horizons."

No matter what, Shang Xia was a Martial Extermination Realm expert. Anything he taught the students of the Outer Division would be a valuable lesson.

Moreover, with his status, Shang Xia couldn't possibly come empty-handed. He would have to give out some resources in order to keep the institution's image in place.

Zhang Jianfei might have said it really nicely, but Shang Xia saw through his plan with a single glance. However, he could also tell that Zhang Jianfei really had his students' interests at heart.

Realizing that he wouldn't be able to decline and that helping the institution was his goal anyway, Shang Xia accepted Zhang Jianfei's offer with a smile.

He seemed to have thought of something and asked suddenly, "Oh right, who's in charge of the institution right now anyway?"

Staring at Shang Xia in surprise, Zhang Jianfei quickly gathered his composure again after recalling that Shang Xia hadn't been back for some time. "Patriarch Kou is the same as before. It's hard to catch a glimpse of him. Deputy Patriarch Ji has also hidden himself away. Deputy Patriarchs Yun and Shang are said to be in closed door cultivation in order to raise their strength and none of us had been able to get a hold of either of them. Only Deputy Patriarch Liu is managing the institution at the moment. As Custodians, we wouldn't bother him anyway."

Shang Xia understood the outline of the situation after the short introduction.

Obviously, Deputy Patriarch Liu referred to Liu Zhiyuan who inherited the position after Liu Jitang was slain back in the Coral Forest several years ago.

Because of his junior status, he has been cultivating painstakingly in order to live up to his role. After all, his position seemed pretty worthless with his current abilities. Even the Warehouse Division that had been governed by his Liu Clan in the past had given up some responsibilities to Zhang Haogu of the Scripture Depository.

Now that Kou Chongxue and the others had placed their attention on the Foreign Continent Beyond the Heavens, Liu Zhiyuan finally found a chance to strengthen his influence in the institution.

The only thing that was starting to cause Shang Xia a headache was what Liu Zhiyuan was going to do now that he had regained some power. He would definitely solidify the position of the Warehouse Division, and Shang Xia's Talisman Hall was precisely governed by them.

#### Chapter 496: Disagreement

The Tongyou Institution looked bustling on the outside, but in actuality, all the Martial Extermination Realm experts had been secretly sent elsewhere.

To the world, the institution declared that their deputy patriarchs were in secluded cultivation while the other Martial Extermination Realm experts remained in the battlefield between the two worlds. Those in the battlefield between the two worlds were either there to deal with administrative

matters, or they were sent to fight the experts of the Azure Spiritual World. Only a tiny portion was left in the Tongyou Mysterious World.

On the surface, Zhang Haogu was the person in charge of the institution in the battlefield between the two worlds while Liu Zhiyuan was handling matters in the Azure Origin World.

Since the time the Tongyou Mysterious World had formed, it had been remodeled. At the moment, it remained in the core region of the Tongyou Institution and it was the true headquarters of the institution. Shang Xia's Talisman Hall was also somewhere in the core region.

Bidding Zhang Jianfei farewell, Shang Xia headed there immediately.

Because the situation in the battlefield between the two worlds had stabilized, the Talisman Masters on the Observation Peak had returned to the institution.

When Shang Xia arrived in the Talisman Hall, the entire place broke out into a flurry. Fan Yuanhui even brought several Talismans Masters and craftsmen out to welcome him.

"Mister Fan, this... This... You can't do this! It's a little too much..." Shang Xia jumped in fright when he saw the luxurious lineup. Turning his body to the side, he tried to move away.

Who would have thought that Fan Yuanhui would turn serious the next second? "Talisman Master Shang, you're the only Talisman Grandmaster in our Talisman Hall. Your accomplishments in the way of Talismans are truly boundless. As the leading figure, why wouldn't you accept our greetings?"

Shang Xia wanted to say something else, but Fan Yuanhui saw the awkward look on his face and quickly turned around to gesture to the others, "Alright, we have welcomed our Talisman Grandmaster back to the Talisman Hall. I believe all of you are busy. Please, return to whatever you were doing."

After everyone had left, Shang Xia finally noticed someone standing beside Fan Yuanhui.

As the two of them approached, Shang Xia turned to Fan Yuanhui and asked, "Mister Fan, this is..."

The smile on Fan Yuanhui's face faded slightly, but he wasn't disrespectful as he replied, "I'll make the introductions. This is Talisman Master Lou Zizhang. He's a new rank three Talisman Master and he has been sent by Deputy Patriarch Liu Zhiyuan to take on the role as the Deputy Hall Master of our Talisman Hall."

After the introductions, Lou Zizhang cupped his fists towards Shang Xia and greeted, "I greet Talisman Grandmaster Shang."

"There's no need for such formalities. It's great that we have another rank three Talisman Master among us!" Shang Xia waved his hand casually in response. His time in the Talisman Hall was limited in the first place and it was the first time he was meeting Lou Zizhang. He might be a little suspicious in his heart, but he still nodded his head politely towards the other party. Soon after, he turned to Fan Yuanhui with a strange smile on his face. "I didn't know that our Talisman Hall also had a Hall Master

and a Deputy Hall Master. Mister Gong Hang didn't tell me about this before either. Does this mean that the original Hall Master of our Talisman Hall is Mister Gong?"

"No. Talisman Master Gong is not the Hall Master." Lou Zizhang replied with a smile on his face.

Staring at him in shock, Shang Xia turned to look at Fan Yuanhui. He seemed to understand his knowledge was a little lacking and he asked, "Who might the Hall Master be then? Could it be you, Mister Fan?"

Fan Yuanhui forced a smile and shook his hand.

"Currently there isn't a candidate suitable to become our Hall Master. After all, the position of the Hall Master has to be approved by Patriarch Kou." Lou Zizhang interrupted from the side.

Shang Xia instantly understood what was going on and stared at Lou Zizhang with a look of mockery on his face. "Oh? Wouldn't this mean that I would have to listen to your orders, Deputy Hall Master?"

Grinning slightly, Lou Zizhang wanted to act a little more humbly when Shang Xia turned to speak to Fan Yuanhui. "I wonder where Mister Gong is right now? I haven't seen him for a long time. Is he still stationed in the battlefield between the two worlds?"

Shang Xia's open disregard of Lou Zizhang caused a trace of gloom to flash across his face.

Fan Yuanhui smiled slightly in response. "Even though the battlefield between the two worlds is extremely busy right now, the situation there isn't as bad as it seems. There is no need for so many Talisman Masters to stand guard there. He's currently living in the Tongyou Mysterious World."

"Mysterious World?"

Shang Xia was surprised, but he quickly understood what was going on. "So does this mean that the Mysterious World is about to be fully open?"

"It already has. However, it won't be easy for one to get in." Fan Yuanhui chuckled.

The way Fan Yuanhui and Shang Xia spoke was too casual, and Lou Zizhang was feeling extremely annoyed with the difference in treatment.

He was like an outsider as the two of them conversed, and he couldn't help but cough lightly to interrupt them, "Talisman Master Shang, may I ask if you have any reason for returning to the Talisman Hall at this time?"

A smile slowly appeared on Shang Xia's face, and Fan Yuanhui didn't wait for Shang Xia to speak. He replied on Shang Xia's behalf. "Talisman Master Lou, you must be kidding. Talisman Master Shang is from our Talisman Hall all along. Why does he need a reason to return?"

Lou Zizhang also smiled in response, "Brother Fan, I think you misunderstood me. I wanted to ask if Talisman Master Shang requires anything from me?"

"Deputy Hall Master, you've already made it clear earlier. I wouldn't dare to ask you for anything." Pausing slightly, Shang Xia continued, "However, there are two

important things I actually need to do. Firstly, I managed to borrow the Purple Bamboo Brush from the institution and I won't need the mid-grade brush anymore. I am here to return it..."

He retrieved the mid-grade brush from his sleeves when he was done speaking.

Even though he had a Spatial Pouch, he still carried 2 Embroidered Cloud Cases that were 3 cubic feet large on him. They contained a lot of miscellaneous items within and they also served the purpose of hiding his Spatial Pouch from the public."

Lou Zizhang's eyes lit up at the sight of the brush. He quickly reached out to receive the brush.

"Wait!" Fan Yuanhui stopped Lou Zizhang quickly and muttered, "Talisman Master Lou, you can't take it!"

Lou Zizhang's expression sank and he growled with displeasure, "Why not?! This brush belongs to our Talisman Hall in the first place. As the Deputy Hall Master, why can't I receive it?"

Stepping between Shang Xia and Lou Zizhang, Fan Yuanhui explained, "Well, Talisman Master Gong handed this brush to Talisman Master Shang previously. Moreover, he has been the one using it all along. As such, Talisman Master Shang should return it to Talisman Master Gong personally. Deputy Hall Master Lou shouldn't bother yourself with this."

With his expression turning slightly ashen, Lou Zizhang growled, "I can pass it to Talisman Master Gong on his behalf!"

A sneer emerged from Fan Yuanhui's lips the next moment. "Talisman Master Lou, you don't seem qualified to enter the Tongyou Mysterious World. How are you supposed to give it to Talisman Master Gong?"

"You..." A look of shame appeared on Lou Zizhang's face and glared daggers at Fan Yuanhui.

It was true that the Tongyou Mysterious World was open, but not everyone had the qualifications to enter.

Other than those who had broken through to the Martial Extermination Realm with the help of the Tongyou Mysterious World in the past, there were only 2 other groups of people who could enter the Tongyou Mysterious World. One of them was the current Martial Extermination Realm experts of the institution, and the other was the group of experts at the peak of the Martial Intent Realm who had great contributions to the institution.

The latter group wasn't limited to experts in the institution. Anyone in the Tongyou City who made enough contributions was included!

Of course, they would only be given a set period to stay in the Tongyou Mysterious World. It wasn't that the Tongyou Institution was stingy, but the Tongyou Mysterious World required time to recover. They couldn't possibly allow others to absorb energy with no end.

It was also somewhat detrimental for Martial Intent Realm experts to remain in the Tongyou Mysterious World for a long time. After all, one had to possess extremely strong divine intent before one could continue to comprehend the world origin that exists there.

Those that remained for too long without strong enough divine intent might be eaten up by the world origin in the Tongyou Mysterious World instead.

Lou Zizhang might not know how he gained the qualifications to become the Deputy Hall Master of the Talisman Hall, but he knew that he wasn't someone from the institution to begin with. He changed his professions sometime ago and because of his abilities to craft talismans, someone recommended him into the Talisman Hall. Moreover, he hadn't been a rank three Talisman Master for long. Along with his tiny contributions to the institution, he was a perfect example of someone who wasn't qualified to enter the Tongyou Mysterious World.

That was also the reason he couldn't establish his prestige as the Deputy Hall Master of the Talisman Hall.

Fan Yuanhui's words were like vicious slaps across his face and he nearly exploded in anger.

"Talisman Master Fan, Talisman Master Lou!" Shang Xia interrupted when he noticed that things were going awry. "Let's not embarrass ourselves outside the Talisman Hall!"

As the situation finally died down slightly Shang Xia continued, "There's no need for you two to get angry with each other. I'll personally return the brush to Talisman Master Gong in the Tongyou Mysterious World."

"Of course!" Fan Yuanhui replied immediately.

No matter how reluctant he was, Lou Zizhang knew that he couldn't do anything about it. He could only sigh helplessly, "So be it..."

"Oh right, Talisman Master Shang, what is the other thing you need? Is there anything I can do to help?" Fan Yuanhui asked.

In front of Shang Xia, Fan Yuanhui truly lowered his status. A look of disdain could be seen on Lou Zizhang's face when he looked at Fan Yuanhui. But he didn't dare to mock the other party. Instead, he awaited Shang Xia's reply.

Instead of replying immediately, Shang Xia discovered many people staring their way and he hurried, "Alright, we'll talk inside. Let's go!"

Finally entering the inner hall, Shang Xia didn't wait for any of them to speak up. "The second matter involves a series of talisman inheritances I retrieved from the Taihang Mountains. It's a series of rank five talisman inheritance and according to the rules of the Talisman Hall, you two have the qualifications to learn the first 3 talismans. I'll make a copy of the others and leave it with the Scripture Depository...."

"Wait!" Fan Yuanhui couldn't help but interrupt Shang Xia. His voice trembled slightly as he spoke, "Talisman Master Shang, did you just say a series of rank five talisman inheritance? Do you mean... Do you mean that the talismans we're not qualified to study are of the fifth... the fifth rank?!"

It was no wonder Fan Yuanhui couldn't speak properly. What Shang Xia revealed was actually a massive bomb.

Even the Tongyou Institution only had several rank four talisman inheritances at the moment!

There wasn't a need to mention a rank five talisman inheritance. Gong Hang and Fan Yuanhui hadn't even heard of the existence of one!

Lou Zizhang was equally as shocked. However, he seemed to snap back to reality to reveal a look of excitement.

With his voice still trembling, Fan Yuanhui continued, "What... What is the name of the rank five talisman?"

Lou Zizhang released a strange cry all of a sudden after realizing what Shang Xia said. "Wait! Shouldn't you leave the entire inheritance from the first to fifth talisman in our Talisman Hall?! The moment you send the remaining inheritance to the Scripture Depository, they'll be able to restrict the growth of any talisman master they desire!"

Chapter 497: The Responsibility of a Grandmaster?!

The way the Tongyou Institution passed down inheritance was different from the other factions and the four other border institutions.

The Tongyou Institution didn't bother keeping their rank one and two inheritances a secret, and even trials that existed before disciples could get their hands on those inheritances were basically simple tests that ensured one was capable of learning them. The institution never planned on making things difficult for disciples to get their hands on those low-leveled inheritances.

Because of that, the institution was able to supplement the low-leveled cultivators of the You Continent to look for anyone with enough talent and determination to walk down the path of cultivation.

From a certain perspective, the Tongyou Institution was casting a massive net in order to catch a little more fish.

Of course, their approach stopped there. The moment anyone entered the Martial Intent Realm, the Tongyou Institution would greatly tighten the control over their inheritances. Unlike before, the Tongyou Institution's requirement before handing out resources would increase severalfold!

If anyone wanted to obtain an inheritance from the institution from that point on, they would have to pass through countless tests. They would also need to contribute greatly to the institution in order to pass the Contribution Division's evaluation.

Even if they were successful, the inheritance they would receive would only be given to them verbally. They weren't allowed to copy anything down and they had to swear an oath to never pass it to others. That allowed the institution to prevent their secrets from leaking to the outside world.

Naturally, if that was how the institution passed down their inheritance all the time, the death of the expert would cause the inheritance to die out. That was why the Scripture Depository was established.

Inheritances of the institution would be marked with a special insignia and no matter what type it was, it would be copied and left behind in the Scripture Depository. Only then would they be able to ensure that those inheritances wouldn't be lost.

Naturally, the Scripture Depository was well protected to prevent the leakage of any knowledge.

The next problem as the Scripture Depository couldn't be opened as one pleased. If the person in charge of the Scripture Depository didn't wish to pass down the inheritance to someone specific, there was nothing anyone could do!

If Shang Xia chose to copy the inheritance of the Abyssal Emptiness Talisman to the Scripture Depository and if he wasn't willing to hand the inheritance over to anyone else, not a single person would be able to do a thing about it! He could also use his authority to stop anyone from learning about it from the Scripture Depository. If that happens, the inheritance of the Abyssal Emptiness Talisman would disappear completely.

Of course, there was another way around it. That was if Shang Xia were to die and the Tongyou Institution's patriarch, or several deputy patriarchs, forcefully opened the Scripture Depository to pass down the inheritance.

Because of that, Lou Zizhang wanted to voice his dissatisfaction. In actuality, he was only planning to say that it was unfair for the Scripture Depository to control their talisman inheritance. He completely forgot that as the Talisman Master responsible for bringing it back, Shang Xia also had the authority to pass it down to fellow members.

Now that Lou Zizhang had yelled about the inheritance being withheld from the members of the Talisman Hall, wasn't he also implying that Shang Xia was a selfish person who didn't plan on giving the others a chance to learn?

One had to know that Shang Xia had given the Talisman Hall a series of talisman inheritances all the way up to the fifth rank the moment he returned. Now, Lou Zizhang was implying that he was a selfish fool who would hide the inheritance he came back with. No one would be able to take the accusation lying down.

Fan Yuanhui saw how Lou Zizhang had dug his own grave and he smartly remained silent. He wouldn't chuck rocks at Lou Zizhang when he was down as that would only cause Shang Xia to look down on him.

Lou Zizhang was no fool either. He quickly understood that his words had insulted Shang Xia. With his intention only to go against the Scripture Depository initially, he quickly muttered, "Talisman Master Shang, I..."

At the end of the day, he had to try to salvage whatever reputation he had left.

"Enough. There's no need to say anymore. I was only doing things according to the institution's rules. Deputy Hall Master Lou, if you have any suspicions regarding my actions, please look for the master of the Scripture Depository and the patriarch to raise your grievances!" Shang Xia waves his sleeves impatiently. He wasn't planning to continue the conversation with any of them there.

Raise their grievances with the patriarch?!

That could only be done if they had the authority to meet Kou Chongxue!

"I... I... I didn't think my words thought. Talisman Master Shang, please forgive me!" Lou Zizhang sucked in a long breath before apologizing to Shang Xia.

Shang Xia didn't expect him to do that, and neither did Fan Yuanhui.

Shang Xia thought that Lou Zizhang was someone Liu Zhiyuan sent over to fight for some power in the institution, but he didn't expect the man to be willing to admit his mistake so quickly and decisively. Lou Zizhang's evaluation in Shang Xia's heart immediately became a little more dangerous.

"If there's nothing else, I won't stay here for long." Shang Xia glanced at the two of them indifferently and continued, "Please arrange for a secret chamber for me to rest."

He had already gotten to his feet and was ready to leave as soon as he spoke. As the only Talisman Grandmaster in the Talisman Hall, they would have long since arranged a place for him to rest and craft talismans.

"Talisman Master Shang, please wait a second!" Lou Zizhang's voice rang from behind him once again.

Stopping suddenly, he turned to look at Lou Zizhang expressionlessly.

The moment Shang Xia's gaze landed on him, Lou Zizhang felt as though a desolate beast had his eyes on him. His mind went blank and he couldn't move a single muscle.

"What's the matter?" Shang Xia growled.

With the shock he experienced, Lou Zizhang snapped back to reality. It was as though a long time had passed since he called out to Shang Xia and his back was drenched in perspiration by the time he regained his spirits. With his voice that hadn't stopped trembling, he muttered, "This... According to the rules of the institution, Talisman Master Shang has the responsibility to craft every single type of rank four talisman for aspiring talisman masters in the Talisman Hall to study."

It was true that the institution had such a rule. In order to ensure that inheritances weren't lost, it was their duty to leave behind examples and records once they reached a certain level.

Actually, that was also one of the reasons Shang Xia had chosen to return to the institution.

By this point, Shang Xia couldn't be bothered with Lou Zizhang any longer and he snapped, "Of course I'll do it. All you need to do now is to prepare all the resources I need to craft the talismans."

Shang Xia no longer hid the annoyance he felt with Lou Zizhang.

Gulping slightly, Lou Zizhang continued, "But... But... But... We need to record the entire process of how you craft those talismans too..."

"When did we ever have such a rule?" Shang Xia glared into Lou Zizhang's eyes as though he wanted to peer into the fellow's soul after hearing what he said.

Under his suffocating divine perception, Lou Zizhang couldn't resist in the slightest. "This... This, the Warehouse Division..."

"Liu Zhiyuan?!" Shang Xia said the name in his place and harrumphed, "Are you trying to spy on my talisman crafting style by coming up with useless rules like these?!"

Lou Zizhang could only try to explain desperately, "No... It's just to avoid walking down the wrong path!"

A look of ridicule appeared on Shang Xia's face. "Get him to talk to me personally. You're not qualified!"

Lou Zizhang's face flushed red with embarrassment. As the pressure that came from Shang Xia's divine perception disappeared abruptly. He felt his body crunching up and he looked like a fish that had been out of water for some time as he gasped for breath. Terror filled his eyes.

He wondered what he had said or done under the horrifying pressure earlier, and he realized that he had said everything without much filter.

His divine sense was completely suppressed... No, it wasn't suppressed. It seemed to have submitted to the other party without much resistance!

That was why he spoke without reservation when faced with Shang Xia's questioning. The feeling caused a chill to run down his heart when he thought back to the lingering feeling he had.

By that time, Shang Xia had long left the hall and so did Fan Yuanhui. Lou Zizhang was the only person left as he stood rooted to his spot as he thought of what he had just done.

...

As night fell, Shang Xia was casually resting in his secret chamber. Something seemed to have caught his attention as he opened his eyes and stared at the entrance. "Brother Ren, since you're already here, why don't you enter?"

The entrance to his secret chamber was slowly pushed apart and Ren Huan's bright chuckle rang through the air. "I was afraid I would disturb Talisman Grandmaster Shang's rest! That's why I didn't dare to enter!"

After he spoke, he quickly walked into the room.

Gesturing for the fatty to sit, Shang Xia muttered, "Haha, as long as I am not in the midst of talisman crafting, Brother Ren is welcome anytime."

Unlike before, Ren Huan was a lot more casual when he spoke to Shang Xia. That made Shang Xia feel a lot more refreshed when talking to the fatty.

Sitting down, Ren Huan was quickly served a cup of tea and he chuckled in amusement, "Brother Shang, if you activated the restrictions and started crafting talismans, the entire area of more than 300 feet would be sealed off. I wouldn't be able to come over even if I wanted to!"

Shang Xia laughed and indicated for the fatty to drink some tea as he continued, "This place isn't really quiet. I plan to enter the Tongyou Mysterious World in a day or two to start crafting talismans."

Staring at Shang Xia in shock, Ren Huan muttered, "Hmm, that's great too. The Talisman Hall is a little messy at the moment... However, I heard that the restriction to enter the Tongyou Mysterious World is pretty high! Oh wait, it shouldn't be a problem for you..."

Shang Xia didn't plan to interfere with the workings of the Talisman Hall. As long as they didn't affect him, he was willing to turn a blind eye to it.

Ren Huan also understood Shang Xia's intentions from what he said and he knew that Shang Xia wanted to see what Ren Huan's attitude on the matter was.

“I guess from today onwards, I’ll be someone from the Talisman Grandmaster’s camp!” Ren Huan cheered in his heart. He felt wild joy filling his heart when he thought about it.

Regardless of Fan Yuanhui, Lou Zizhang, or even Liu Zhiyuan, all of them forgot a fact when they were fighting for power. Strength was the basis of everything!

No matter who controlled the Talisman Hall, no one would dare to mess with Shang Xia! They wouldn’t dare to mess with the resources that belonged to him!

As the only rank four Talisman Grandmaster in the Talisman Hall, Shang Xia’s status was already set in stone.

Ren Huan believed that he was grabbing onto a huge golden thigh now that Shang Xia had officially recognized him as a follower.

Chapter 498: MOREEEEE

On the second day, the Talisman Hall broke out into a flurry of activity.

As the only rank four Talisman Grandmaster in the Tongyou Institution, Shang Xia had to prepare rank four talismans for other talisman masters to study. The news of that started to spread and the members of the Talisman Hall got really excited.

From top to bottom, batches of the best resources were delivered to Shang Xia’s secret chamber.

However, Shang Xia wasn’t back in his secret chamber to personally pick up the delivery. He was currently chatting with Zhang Haogu in the Scripture Depository.

“I thought that you would be stationed in the battlefield between the two worlds” Shang Xia muttered while being led deeper into one of the secret chambers of the Scripture Depository.

“It’s more than enough for us to leave Ge Qingzhu there. The cooperation between our institution and them is at a crucial point right now and no one will try messing around. The battlefield between the two worlds is extremely safe and the situation there is really stable.” Zhang Haogu explained while opening one of the cases in front of Shang Xia.

Watching how Zhang Haogu placed the inheritance of the Abyssal Emptiness Talisman into the case before sealing it up, Shang Xia sighed, “I didn’t feel like this the last time I came here. I didn’t think that the Scripture Depository is one entire structure that was contained in a separate space. Is it actually connected to the Tongyou Mysterious World?”

Zhang Haogu chuckled softly but didn’t reply. He eventually sighed softly before changing the topic. “I didn’t think that the institution would be able to gain one more rank five inheritance...”

“It’s just a rank five talisman inheritance. How can it be compared to Patriarch Kou’s rank five martial art and sword art?” Shang Xia asked.

Unable to help himself, Zhang Haogu pointed at Shang Xia and chided playfully, “Damn brat, are you doing this on purpose?! Do you know how precious a rank five inheritance is?! It’s the greatest

inheritance we have in the world! Every single bit of it contains the essence of our Azure Origin World. If you're looking down on a mere rank five talisman inheritance, do you have a rank five advancement formula or something?"

Of course this granddaddy here has a rank five advancement formula!

Obviously, Shang Xia wasn't going to say something like that. If he really did, he would probably poke a hole through the skies and cause a massive problem for the institution. When that happened, even Kou Chongxue was going to get a headache.

Shrugging his shoulders and putting on a nonchalant expression, Shang Xia snorted, "Damn it! How do you know I won't get my hands on a rank five advancement formula in the future?!"

Other than the Abyssal Emptiness Talisman, Shang Xia also passed down the Four Essence Abyssal Wine to the Scripture Depository.

The advancement medicine came from the Abyssal Secret Region and even though he got his hands on it, he decided that he should share it with the institution.

Shang Xia decided to hand over most of the things he learned from the Abyssal Secret Region. How they would split up the treasures like the Abyssal Blade and stuff in the future would be left up to Shang Xia's negotiations with the institution. However, formulas and inheritances were left behind before anything else.

When he was done, the two of them finally left the secret chamber and Zhang Haogu reactivated the defensive mechanisms and formations.

When they were finally back in the Scripture Depository, Zhang Haogu seemed to have thought of something and asked, "Oh, I heard you were planning to craft talismans in the Mysterious World?"

Shang Xia knew that Zhang Haogu wouldn't bring up something like that for no reason and he continued, "Instructor Zhang, is something the matter?"

"I'm afraid your progress might not be too smooth... You need to prepare yourself." Zhang Haogu muttered after thinking about it.

Laughing involuntarily, Shang Xia asked, "What's the matter? Is there someone who will try to stop me?"

"Is it really that difficult to stop you outside the Tongyou Mysterious World? I know that you don't really give half a shit about Liu Zhiyuan. I heard about what happened back in the Talisman Hall yesterday. However, you need to remember that he's a deputy patriarch at the end of the day. You're a Talisman Master of the Talisman Hall and even if you have already become a rank four Talisman Grandmaster, you have to follow the rules set by the institution! You can't do anything you wish, even if you're Kou Chongxue!" Zhang Haogu warned.

A look of contemplation appeared on Shang Xia's face and realizing that Shang Xia understood his meaning, Zhang Haogu turned to leave.

He didn't expect to be stopped by Shang Xia's cry coming from behind him, "Instructor Zhang, is Fan Yuanhui an acquaintance of yours?"

Without turning around, he chuckled, “Nope, that old fellow, Gong Hang, is my old friend. I don’t know Fan Yuanhui all that well.”

Looking at Zhang Haogu’s leaving view, Shang Xia muttered to himself, “So that’s the case…”

...

When Shang Xia returned to the Talisman Hall, he saw Ren Huan standing before his secret chamber and he laughed happily, “Brother Ren, what’s the matter?”

Ren Huan retrieved a ledger from his sleeves and quickly replied, “All the good stuff in the Talisman Hall has been gathered. Fan Yuanhui and Lou Zizhang instructed me to tell you to let them know if you need anything else. As long as you give the command, someone will prepare the items you need.”

Shang Xia looked at the ledger and revealed a look of shock. “We actually have 14 rank four talisman papers? That’s a lot!”

Was 14 rank four talisman paper really a lot? Not at all. In fact, it was far too lacking when compared to the amount Shang Xia required.

One couldn’t think back to his experience in the Shang Clan where he crafted 3 rank four talismans with 6 pieces of talisman paper. His condition there and luck was amazingly good, resulting in such a high success rate.

According to Shang Xia’s estimations, he would have to raise his success rate to around 30 percent before he could be considered a qualified talisman master. That success rate wasn’t considered too high, but it was enough to ensure that he would have many customers even if he didn’t possess the support of a superpower.

The 14 pieces of rank four talisman paper on the table truly didn’t look like much now that he had to craft different types of rank four talismans.

Back when he just became a rank four Talisman Grandmaster, Gong Hang handed over 7 pieces of rank four talisman paper to him. Back then, that was definitely all the rank four talisman paper the Talisman Hall had.

Since the time Shang Xia went down to the Taihang Mountains, several months had passed. The Talisman Hall actually managed to gather 14 pieces of rank four talisman paper and their efforts were commendable.

Rank four talisman paper wasn’t cabbage that grew at the side of the road. Even if they had enough material to craft them, it wasn’t easy to do so.

Ren Huan forced a bitter smile and continued, “Previously, Brother Shang might have taken away all the rank four talisman paper we had, but we still had a portion of resources used to make rank four talisman paper. In the past few months, all rank three talisman paper craftsmen joined hands to make rank four talisman paper. The institution also went outside to purchase rank four talisman paper at a high price. That’s how we gathered 14 pieces of rank four talisman paper.”

Shang Xia gasped softly before looking at Ren Huan in delight. “Brother Ren, have you become a rank four talisman paper craftsman? Did you personally craft any of these?”

The bitter smile on Ren Huan's face didn't fade as he whispered, "4 of these talisman papers came from me. 6 of them were crafted by everyone else and the remaining 4 were bought from outside the institution. Today, I can probably say that I have crossed the barrier to become a rank four talisman paper craftsman. I still need to thank Brother Shang for all the help. Otherwise, a newcomer to the institution like me wouldn't be given a chance to craft rank four talisman paper to reach my current level... After all, the resources that went to waste were too much!"

Shang Xia roared with laughter in response. "Nonsense! It's great news! No matter what, Brother Ren is a rank four talisman paper craftsman. I would feel a lot more assured when crafting talismans. Otherwise, I won't know if I will be able to get my hands on more talisman paper when crafting talismans and won't be able to completely immerse myself."

Ren Huan waved and sighed, "Actually, we brought out almost all our resources at this point. If you wish to use more than 10 rank four talisman papers to craft talismans in the future, you might not find a chance to do it."

"What do you mean?" Shang Xia asked.

"In order to craft the rank four talisman papers, almost all the beast skins of the rank four spiritual beasts in the battlefield between the two worlds had been taken out. That is why we had the guts to try making rank four talisman paper in the first place. After all, those skins were basically half completed rank four talisman paper in the first place. The process of crafting became much easier than before. We won't get the chance to obtain so many rank four spiritual beast skins in the future." Ren Huan explained.

"Moreover, the process to craft rank four talisman paper is extremely complicated. It's extremely reliant on the skills of the craftsman and I am the only one who is confident in my skills. That is why I dare to call myself a rank four talisman paper craftsman."

Ren Huan completed his explanation with the simplest terms he could think of, but Shang Xia could hear that the entire process wasn't as easy as he had described.

Not only did Ren Huan have to care about his skills, he didn't possess any help from the other members of the Talisman Hall due to his status.

Shang Xia's reputation wasn't going to help him back then.

If not for the fact that Shang Xia gave him a chance and brought him up to Gong Hang and Fan Yuanhui back then, he wouldn't have even been given an opportunity to craft talisman papers!

Ren Huan's explanation caused Shang Xia's heart to regain its original calm, and the excitement of crafting talismans was starting to fade away.

After thinking for a moment, Shang Xia brought out a bamboo scroll that was filled with words and handed it over to Ren Huan. "Oh right, is there someone in the institution who can craft rank four talisman ink?"

Ren Huan, who barely received the bamboo scroll, felt his hands trembling as he nearly lost his grip.

“Rank four talisman ink?!” Ren Huan yelled. Lowering his head to look at the scroll in his hand, he raised his head and sighed, “This... Our Talisman Hall never had a recipe for rank four talisman ink!”

This time, it was Shang Xia’s turn to be taken aback. “Then... Would it be possible for several rank three talisman ink craftsmen to work together to craft rank four Abyssal Ink?”

“It’s going to be difficult! Talisman paper is different from talisman ink in the first place. I might not be a talisman ink craftsman, but I know a thing or two. I’m afraid not many people will be able to do it!” Ren Huan muttered after thinking about it for a second.

Shang Xia knew that he was acting a little too hastily and he could only whisper to himself, “Since that’s the case, I’ll just leave the recipe for the ink in your care.”

“Sorry?” Ren Huan jumped in fright and tried to return the bamboo scroll. “This is too precious...”

Shang Xia reached out his hand to stop Ren Huan. “Brother Ren, I might not remain in the institution for too long. I might not return too often in the future either. Even so, I hope that I can maintain my position and not be restricted by anyone in the future. Brother Ren Huan, I require your assistance.”

Shang Xia’s intentions were clear. He wanted to use Ren Huan’s status as a rank four talisman paper craftsman now to pull even more experts over to his side in order to solidify his backing in the Talisman Hall!

#### Chapter 499: Entering the Mysterious World

There were 3 rank four talisman inheritances recorded in the Zhu Family Talisman Scripture but because they belonged to Shang Xia, he never handed them over to the institution.

Because of that, there were only 8 rank four talisman inheritances that belonged to the institution. One of them was the Abyssal Void Shattering Talisman Shang Xia just handed over to them.

Of the 8, Shang Xia only had experience in crafting the Spiritual Protection Substitution Talisman.

Naturally, it would be impossible for Shang Xia to craft all 8 different rank four talismans with the 14 pieces of rank four talisman paper he was given.

From what he estimated, he would be able to craft 4 or 5 of them at best.

Talisman crafting was an intricate task at the end of the day. Shang Xia needed to make his preparations and it was especially so before he could use his unique method of talisman crafting. He needed to run through every step of the crafting process before he even moved his brush before he could be confident of success.

In the following days, Shang Xia remained in his secret chamber to think about the crafting process for the rest of the talismans. He also waited patiently for the rest of the resources he required to arrive.

Like every other day, Shang Xia had been circulating his Four Seasons Extermination Origins while cultivating. Cultivation was a long and arduous process to begin with and Shang Xia's increase in strength had been too rapid previously. That was why he had been taking out time every day to consolidate his foundations.

He felt a disturbance from the corner of his divine perception all of a sudden and discovered Ren Huan approaching his secret chamber.

Slowly retracting his inner qi, Shang Xia calmed his breathing by the time Ren Huan arrived.

“Brother Shang, am I disturbing you?” Ren Huan's voice came from outside. His tone was extremely gentle and he didn't dare to raise his voice too much when he came. He might be able to call the Martial Extermination Realm Shang Xia his fellow brother, but he knew that he had to ensure his actions didn't go overboard.

Shang Xia chuckled in amusement, “I'm having a break right now. Brother Ren, please enter.”

The moment Ren Huan entered the room, Shang Xia saw a wooden plate in his hands that contained several stacks of talisman paper and several chunks of solidified ink.

A light lit up in Shang Xia's eyes and he gasped, “Brother Ren, how did you manage to craft so much Abyssal Talisman Paper and Ink so quickly? There are even rank four talisman papers among them!”

Placing the wooden plate down, Ren Huan chuckled bitterly, “Brother Shang, you're kidding. How can this be considered quick? These are rank one and two Abyssal Talisman Paper, but I managed to make them easily due to their low rank. There are only 3 pieces of rank four Abyssal Talisman Paper in here and there are only two chunks of Abyssal Ink. These are of the first and second rank. It's difficult for them to craft rank three Abyssal Ink...’

Back when Shang Xia handed Ren Huan the recipe for rank four Abyssal Ink, he also included the recipe for Abyssal Talisman Paper.

Both items would be able to greatly benefit the crafting of those talismans in the Abyssal Series but they could also be used to craft other talismans.

After mentioning the ordinary talisman paper and ink that Shang Xia had mentioned before that should be created as soon as possible, Ren Huan pointed to the 2 pieces of rank four talisman paper and muttered, “These are the treasures that I have been collecting for some time now. All of these are my personal property. Now that you have a need, please use them first.”

Shang Xia quickly rejected Ren Huan's goodwill, “This... I can't...”

Before Shang Xia could finish, Ren Huan interrupted, “Brother Shang, do you think I can do anything with 2 pieces of rank four talisman paper even if I kept them?”

Shang Xia stared at him in shock as he continued, “I will have to get someone to turn them into rank four talismans anyway. You might as well be the one to use them.”

“These... If I manage to turn them into rank four talismans, Brother Ren has to keep one!” Shang Xia muttered.

Ren Huan wanted to say something else, but Shang Xia waved his hands in dismissal. “Brother Ren, there’s no need to say anymore!”

After chatting for a little more, the two of them eventually started to talk about the crafting of tools.

Ren Huan might not know anything about crafting talismans, but he knew quite a bit about talisman paper, talisman ink, brushes, the paperweight that was used to hold the talisman paper, and even the incense Shang Xia burned during the crafting process.

Shang Xia’s knowledge in the way of talismans was deep, but there wasn’t much else. As a qualified talisman master, Shang Xia felt that he should at least learn a little about the others.

In the end, Shang Xia was the person who learned from Ren Huan most of the time. The fatty spent almost all his time teaching Shang Xia everything he wished to know.

Luckily, Ren Huan was a master at keeping track of the situation. Realizing that Shang Xia’s time was precious, he chose to take his leave even though they were having such a pleasant conversation. Before he left, he asked, “Brother Shang, do you know that our Talisman Hall might possess 14 rank four talisman papers, but there are more in the institution?”

“Huh?” Shang Xia stared at him in confusion for a moment before looking at the additional rank four talisman paper Ren Huan provided. A look of contemplation formed on his face.

...

Another two days had passed and Shang Xia slapped the Spatial Pouch in his hands. He thought about how he had basically gathered all the resources he required and decided to start heading for the back mountains of the Tongyou Institution.

That was where the entrance to the Tongyou Mysterious World lay and it was protected by the experts of the Protection Division. Unfortunately, Shang Xia didn’t run into Song You, the head of the Protection Division when he arrived.

Shang Xia heard that the institution had been increasing their support for Martial Extermination Realm experts after the events that happened in the battlefield between the two worlds. Yuan Zhen, Song You, and Qian Sitong who had broken through with the institution’s help were probably in the Tongyou Mysterious World to consolidate their foundations.

The person in charge of security was a Martial Intent Realm cultivator and even he naturally wouldn’t offend Shang Xia for the fun of it. He quickly sent Shang Xia on his way after some quick checks. After learning about Shang Xia’s identity, the disciple in charge of security even had some intentions of currying favor.

When Shang Xia arrived earlier, he had seen several familiar faces. They were students who studied in the same batch as himself but when they met him, none of them dared to meet his gaze. Shang Xia chose to ignore them too since he didn’t wish for things to get awkward.

After passing through the checkpoint, Shang Xia looked at the entrance of the Tongyou Mysterious World not too far away.

A middle-aged cultivator stood close to the entrance as he approached Shang Xia suddenly.

“Disciple greets Deputy Patriarch Liu.” Shang Xia wouldn’t show Liu Zhiyuan the slightest disrespect now.

Laughing in amusement, Liu Zhiyuan responded, “Martial Nephew, there’s no need for such formalities! There are no outsiders here and you can just call me Martial Uncle Liu!”

Shang Xia showed his respect and he wouldn’t lower himself any further. He smiled in response, “Martial Uncle, are you here to stop me from entering the Tongyou Mysterious World?”

A strange expression appeared on Liu Zhiyuan’s face as he replied, “Martial Nephew Shang, why would you think that? You have entered the Martial Extermination Realm and you’re a Talisman Grandmaster of the institution. I might be a deputy patriarch of the institution and the head of the Warehouse Division, but I can’t affect your qualifications to enter the Mysterious World.”

Shang Xia knew that Liu Zhiyuan had his reasons for waiting for them there and continued, “Then... Is something else the matter?”

Liu Zhiyuan grinned before handing a sealed wooden case over.

Opening it slightly, Shang Xia noticed 3 pieces of rank four talisman paper contained within.

“This...” Shang Xia stared at Liu Zhiyuan in confusion. Even though his first instinct was to reject the gift, he wasn’t willing to do so.

How could Shang Xia not understand the most precious treasure he could receive as a Talisman Grandmaster was rank four talisman paper? Trying to improve at his level didn’t have much to do with talent. He needed to practice and rank four talisman papers and high-level resources were something he couldn’t do without.

At the moment, he was truly lacking in resources. Every single piece of rank four talisman paper was extremely precious to him.

Liu Zhiyuan noticed the hesitation on his face and he couldn’t help but laugh in response, “Martial Nephew Shang, feel free to accept them. After all, our great families should help each other. You entered the Martial Extermination Realm and became a rank four Talisman Grandmaster. I haven’t given you anything to congratulate you yet and you can consider these talisman papers my blessing to you. I hope you don’t think they’re too little...”

Well, one would only give blessings when they had something to ask...

Shang Xia couldn’t find a reason to reject the gift and he needed those rank four talisman papers. Keeping the case, he smiled, “I will have to thank Martial Uncle Liu then. If you need anything in the future, feel free to let me know. I will try to accomplish them to the best of my abilities.”

A satisfied smile appeared on Liu Zhiyuan’s face. “It’s nothing too overboard. I heard that Deputy Hall Master Liu was a little rude and he didn’t think his words through when speaking with you. He’s just a little too hasty in reaching his goals and might have offended you unintentionally. He doesn’t mean anything bad. I hope Martial Nephew Shang can forgive him.”

“Of course! It’s nothing too serious. I only wish to craft talismans, nothing else. Moreover, I still need to thank everyone in the Talisman Hall for getting so many resources for me.”

“That’s great, that’s great! It’s no wonder you improved so quickly!” Liu Zhiyuan praised.

Shang Xia had already indicated that he didn’t wish to bother with the Talisman Hall’s workings with what he just said. He was only interested in crafting talismans and even though Liu Zhiyuan wasn’t able to gain the greatest benefit of pulling Shang Xia over to his side, it was enough. At least Shang Xia wouldn’t stand against him and cause trouble.

No matter what, Liu Zhiyuan had to admit that Shang Xia’s position in the Talisman Hall was something he had to pay attention to!

“But...” Liu Zhiyuan muttered softly. At the moment, he seemed to be afraid that he would offend the youngest Talisman Grandmaster of the institution and he thought about his words again. “Oh yes... This is a little difficult for me to say, but it is related to Deputy Hall Master Lou’s request to leave behind recordings of you crafting talismans. That will greatly assist future generations of talisman masters... Of course, if you feel that this matter will hinder your progress...”

“It’s alright.” Shang Xia broke into laughter all of a sudden.

Obviously, Lou Zizhang wasn’t the one who came up with the idea of recording the talisman crafting process. The person who wanted it was probably Liu Zhiyuan and he clearly didn’t expect Shang Xia to agree so quickly.

Staring at Shang Xia in shock, Liu Zhiyuan only managed to process what happened after some time. “Martial Nephew Shang is truly amazing! I have to thank you on behalf of all the other talisman masters of the institution!”

“Martial Uncle Liu, there’s no need to exaggerate. However, I like there to be peace when I craft talismans. I hate it when other people watch me. Why don’t you leave the recording to me?”

Liu Zhiyuan felt that Shang Xia was planning to alter the recordings slightly in order to hide some crucial steps but getting Shang Xia to agree in the first place was already a win for himself. Now that Shang Xia agreed, he couldn’t go too far. “Of course. As long as you leave them a recording of your talisman crafting process, it would be enough!”

What Liu Zhiyuan didn’t know was that Shang Xia wasn’t planning to let anyone observe him due to his personal habits. He wasn’t afraid that they would steal his unique talisman crafting method at all.

Leaving a recording behind wasn’t anything bad for Shang Xia. After all, his unique method of talisman crafting required him to become one with the talisman. How would watching a recording allow them to learn his technique? They would have to go through every stroke in their mind, along with the process of crafting the talisman from start to end.

Of course, they might not be able to learn his technique entirely, but they would still be able to learn a thing or two. Shang Xia wasn't against sharing those. After all, he felt that he was a member of the Talisman Hall and he should at least teach them that much.

As Liu Zhiyuan left in satisfaction, Shang Xia turned to make his way into the Tongyou Mysterious World with 3 more rank four talisman papers in his collection.

Chapter 500: Hehe you got me

In the Tongyou Mysterious World...

There were many secret chambers that had been arranged for experts of the institution, and Shang Xia chose one of the quieter ones.

As he completed the last stroke with his Purple Bamboo Brush, Shang Xia carefully kept his second piece of Abyssal Qi Resistance Talisman in a spirit restraining case.

Carefully washing off the remaining ink on his brush, Shang Xia heaved a sigh of relief.

He used rank two Abyssal Ink to complete a rank three Abyssal Qi Resistance Talisman. Even though the ink wasn't up to standard, it was nothing in the face of Shang Xia's skills. It wouldn't affect his success rate by much.

The piece of Abyssal Qi Resistance Talisman he just created could allow cultivators under the Martial Extermination Realm to fly through the air. Even if Martial Extermination Realm experts used them, they would be able to feel significant effects.

Shang Xia spent nearly 2 months in the Tongyou Mysterious World since the time he entered. During the time that passed, Shang Xia didn't immediately start crafting rank four talismans. Instead, he immersed himself in crafting rank one, two, and three talismans to prepare himself.

He wasn't dragging things out on purpose. Instead, he was planning to ensure he was in his peak state before crafting any rank four talismans. He wanted to use the chance to craft low-leveled talismans in order to get used to the surroundings in the Tongyou Mysterious World.

Naturally, no one would complain about having too many talismans. Especially those that Shang Xia had already created.

Walking across his room, several fragments of used talisman paper could be seen.

There was a small wooden table not too far away in the corner and several engraving tools sat on its surface. There were several larger pieces of racks that came from the boulder that contained the Abyssal Blade in the Abyssal Secret Region sitting close to the tools and some dust could be seen in the area.

Even though he had already become a rank four Talisman Grandmaster and his cultivation had reached the Martial Extermination Realm, Shang Xia found it a little difficult to achieve a 100 percent success rate even when making low-ranked talismans.

When crafting his Abyssal Qi Resistance Talisman, he used 3 pieces of talisman paper only to craft 2 of them.

Naturally, his first time making those talismans was also a part of the reason he failed.

...

Those carvings on the table were inspiration he received after seeing the Abyssal Seal in the past. He wanted to carve a talisman seal onto those pieces of rocks but it was clearly not as easy as he had thought. He had an idea of how to do them, but during the actual process, the rocks shattered time and time again.

Opening the restrictions in his secret chamber, Shang Xia eventually emerged from within. Looking at the Tongyou Mysterious World, Shang Xia felt a lot more refreshed after being cooped up in his secret chamber for so long.

As he took several deep breaths and circulated his Four Seasons Extermination Origins, he felt dense heaven and earth qi and world origin rushing into his body. It didn't take long for his exhausted inner qi to be replenished.

That was how special the Tongyou Mysterious World was.

Not only did it contain dense heaven and earth qi, it also contained world origin. It was extremely suitable for high-level experts to cultivate.

What was more important was that the Tongyou Mysterious World was located in the Azure Origin World and they were basically connected. High-level experts would be able to create their own martial arts or comprehend their divine intent all the same with the help of the world origin. They could even deduce incomplete advancement formulas like what Ji Wenlong did!

A Mysterious World could be considered a separate space that existed in the world, and any improvements would turn them into the Tongyou Paradise. It was rumored that there was something called the Heavenly Cave above that level but it was something Shang Xia hadn't heard of before.

In the time that he spent in the Tongyou Mysterious World, Shang Xia had been using most of his time to familiarize himself with talisman crafting. However, he also spent a significant amount of time cultivating.

Because of that, he could feel himself growing stronger. In fact, the time required for him to complete one cycle of inner qi circulation had also shortened.

The latter was much more important to Shang Xia. Even though his improvement with it seemed extremely small and he wouldn't have detected it without a keen sense of observation, it was something he desperately needed.

The improvement would benefit a cultivator after accumulation for a long time and it was one of the most remarkable aspects of the Tongyou Mysterious World.

From what Shang Xia learned, there were only 3 Martial Extermination Realm experts who were cultivating in the Tongyou Mysterious World. They were Yuan Zhan, Qian Sitong, and Song You. With Shang Xia, there were no other Martial Extermination Realm experts in the Tongyou Mysterious World at that time. Other than them, there were only Martial Intent Realm experts who had completed their second divine sense transformation or above.

Of the 4, Shang Xia was the only one there to craft talismans. Of the other 3, Yuan Zhen was there to consolidate his foundations. Qian Sitong and Song You both suffered some problems when cultivating. Qian Sitong suffered some internal injuries during his cultivation but Song You suffered cultivation deviation.

Qian Sitong was trying his best to recover while Song You was on the verge of having his cultivation regress.

When Shang Xia was immersing himself in the Tongyou Mysterious World, a streak of light tore through the skies and landed in his hands. It was a transmission talisman and he read through its contents instantly. He drew a horizontal line through the air in front of himself and connected itself to the entrance of the Tongyou Mysterious World in an instant.

“Hahaha, Martial Nephew, I hope I didn’t interrupt you with my sudden arrival!” A warm voice rang in his ears and a man who was slightly older than 30 stepped through the spatial tunnel. The void contained in the Tongyou Mysterious World was much weaker than the Azure Origin World, and experts in the Martial Extermination Realm were able to control them to a much greater extent.

Shang Xia cupped his fists and greeted, “Martial Uncle Yun, I wonder what brings you here today?”

Yun Yichen chuckled in response. “I heard that you don’t have enough rank four talisman papers when crafting talismans. Even though our Yun Family’s foundations aren’t that deep, the great families of our Tongyou City should help each other. I can’t sit by and watch you work without enough resources. I brought 4 pieces of rank four talisman papers for you. Even though it’s not much, I hope you can accept it.”

“How can I...” Shang Xia responded instinctively.

With his expression turning indifferent, Yun Yichen muttered, “What’s the matter? Martial Nephew Shang, do you think it’s too little?”

“Of course not!” Shang Xia yelled. “If my crafting journey goes smoothly, I’ll give you a rank four talisman when everything is done.”

Yun Yichen couldn’t help but break into smiles. “Martial Nephew Shang, what’s the meaning of this? I only hope these talisman papers can help you out a little. I don’t expect a rank four talisman in return!”

“Martial Uncle Yun, say no more. Otherwise, I wouldn’t accept these talisman papers.” Shang Xia insisted.

Yun Yichen muttered with a little embarrassment, “This... This... Look... You make it seem like I’m here to get a rank four talisman from you!”

Shang Xia replied with a straight face, “Even if you wish to ask for a rank four talisman, all you need is to provide a rank four talisman paper. You really lost out big time now!”

“...”

After sending Yun Yichen away, Shang Xia looked at the four pieces of rank four talisman papers in his hand before keeping them with the rest.

At that moment, the number of rank four talisman papers Shang Xia had in his secret chamber was far from the original 14 the Talisman Hall gave him. There were a total of 35 rank four talisman papers ready for him!

When the news of Shang Xia entering the Tongyou Mysterious World started to spread, the scene that played out with Yun Yichen happened several times.

Ji Yu of the Ji Clan sent 3 pieces of rank four talisman paper and Zhang Haogu personally gave him 2 pieces. Ge Qingzhu got someone to send over 2 pieces from the battlefield between the two worlds and Bu Jingshuang of the Changfeng City sent 2 more pieces. Zhao Fengchun of the Zhao Family brought 1 on orders of Zhao Hengchun, and Huo Wuji, the deacon of the protection division sent another piece. Sun Haiwei, an Instructor of the Outer Division of the Tongyou Institution, also got someone to send another piece over.

Every single one of those rank four talisman papers can be considered a favor they were doing him. Only the Liu, Ji, and Yun Clans sent relatively more rank four talisman paper and Shang Xia promised all of them a piece of rank four talisman.

Shang Xia expected that some people would send him rank four talisman paper in return for a favor or two, but he didn't expect to receive so many.

One had to know that even the Talisman Hall only managed to gather 14 pieces of rank four talisman paper for him.

Shang Xia couldn't help but sigh to himself. He definitely underestimated the power of the other superpowers of the You Continent!

He might have owed a lot of favors because of the talisman papers, but he had to admit that he would be able to improve a lot because of them.

One had to say that the collective ability of the experts of the You Continent truly soothed Shang Xia.

Not only did they provide him with the pressure to do better, he was also starting to feel a sense of excitement when it came to crafting talismans. The feeling caused Shang Xia to feel tons of motivation. He could finally not worry about the resources and go all out when crafting talismans!

With the excitement and stimulation he felt, Shang Xia returned to his secret chamber and activated the restrictions. He fully immersed himself in the process of talisman crafting.

He knew that a chance like this wouldn't come by often and with a strange feeling in his heart telling him it's the best time to craft talismans, he didn't hesitate to do so. Without any intention to save resources, he immediately brought out rank three Talisman Ink.

That was one of the best batches of ink the Talisman Hall provided and he dipped his Purple Bamboo Brush into the ink while counting something with his left hand. The image of the ink slab on his table remained in his mind as he started the crafting process.

Shang Xia's attention was placed on his brush and talisman paper before him and without taking a break for 3 days straight, he used a fifth of rank three ink to complete his first rank four talisman, the Spiritual Protection Substitution Talisman.

With his opening success, Shang Xia took a day to rest before capitalizing on the feeling that was still flowing through his veins to start his second attempt.

This time, he was going for a rank four talisman called the Space Shattering Golden Blade Talisman. It was his first time crafting the talisman and it didn't come as a surprise after his first attempt ended in failure after half a day.

Despite the failure, Shang Xia immersed himself in the strange state he was in, and taking a break of half a day, Shang Xia started another attempt.

This time, he failed after one entire day of drawing the talisman.

Falling deep into contemplation, Shang Xia's left hand danced about as he made his calculations.

After another day had passed, Shang Xia picked up his Purple Bamboo Brush and the process of crafting the Space Shattering Golden Blade Talisman ran perfectly through his mind.

3 days later, Shang Xia successfully crafted a new type of rank four talisman, the Space Shattering Golden Blade Talisman!