

The Heavens 771

Chapter 771: Crystal Vein

Reinforcements on both sides arrived and they exchanged blows at the surface of the ocean. Both sides possessed the same level of strength and the situation was forced to a stalemate again.

However, the students of the Tongyou Institution not only defeated their opponent earlier, they even showed mercy at the very last second.

Even though the expert from the Ji Continent from the once Azure Spiritual World knew of the existence of the underwater island, he didn't make a move immediately when he saw the 3 ladies of the Tongyou Institution standing over it.

Both sides knew that even though the Tongyou Institution held the advantage, the only ones who could decide the ownership of the underwater island were the Martial Extermination Realm experts from their respective factions.

Regardless, Hai Yuanyuan's final act of showing mercy gave both sides a lot of room for negotiations. If she really killed a direct disciple of the Triple Frost Palace, there wouldn't be much left to talk about. In fact, the reinforcements from both sides would probably go all out right away until the other side was completely eliminated.

High in the air, Shang Xia glanced at whatever was happening down below with no intentions of stepping in. The Martial Extermination Realm expert from the Triple Frost Palace understood his intentions and he felt much more relieved.

It was then that Shang Xia glanced in his direction. There was a faint smile on his lips before he finally turned to stare at the cultivators down below.

The elder from the Triple Frost Palace felt a horrifying pressure pressing down on him when Shang Xia glanced at him and breathing became difficult. Luckily, a familiar aura appeared behind him the next moment and released the suppression on him.

A voice rang softly in his ears the next moment. "I know what happened here. Let those down below settle the matter themselves. Whatever it is, the cultivators of the You Continent obtained the advantage and it's just a single underwater crystal island. There's no need to make things difficult for everyone because of a mere island. Don't trouble yourself over it."

The elder of the Triple Frost Palace nodded slightly and stretched his joints now that he had an opportunity to. The fear he felt when Shang Xia's aura oppressed him earlier was nowhere to be seen as he descended with an unfettered expression.

The moment he appeared, an aura that possessed similar strength appeared on the side of the You Continent. A plain-looking expert who looked similar to Shang Xia in age flew over at high speeds.

"Elder Min of the Triple Frost Palace!"

"Hmph, you're Dou Zhong from the Tongyou Institution!"

Both sides yelled out each other's identities the moment they appeared. Obviously, it wasn't their first encounter and they were pretty familiar with each other.

Despite how imposing he appeared to be, Elder Min glanced at the air above him with a trace of embarrassment. Only when he recalled that there was also a Martial Dipper Realm expert backing him up did his confidence return.

Dou Zhong cast a suspicious glance at the other party and understood that something probably happened. However, it wasn't time to get into details and he looked in the direction of the cultivators down below. He chuckled coldly, "Elder Min, you came early. Should I be thanking you for maintaining the agreement between Martial Extermination Realm experts like ourselves even though you arrived earlier?"

When Ji Wenlong, Shang Bo, and Shang Xia integrated the Tongyou Island and the fragments they gathered into the Azure Ascension World, they didn't think that the Triple Frost Palace would have the same idea and place their island in the same area. Even though the Tongyou Institution lost control of several islands, a majority of them were still located close to the You Continent.

Surprisingly, when the disciples of both sides came into conflict and called for backup, Dou Zhong, who was supposed to be closer to the area, arrived later than Elder Min. Things seemed pretty interesting.

From what Dou Zhong understood about Elder Min's character, he knew that the other party wasn't one to follow the rules.

Elder Min's expression sank and he growled, "Shut up. There's no need for all this nonsense. Even though the underwater island hasn't surfaced, our disciples discovered it together. Finders keepers. In order to prevent unnecessary bloodshed, we'll split the benefits down the middle."

By the time Elder Min was done speaking, Dou Zhong had already learned of what happened from Hai Yuanyuan. A complicated gaze flashed through his eyes when he looked at the young lady who was barely 16. However, a look of contempt appeared in his eyes when he turned to glance at Elder Min again. "Heh, I didn't know that you would be that shameless. As an elder in the Triple Frost Palace, you should have many disciples. Aren't you afraid that they will laugh at you for your shameless behavior in the future?"

Elder Min's face flushed red and he muttered coldly, "Little brat Dou, you better not go too far!"

"..." Dou Zhong merely stared at him with his brows raised.

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With his hands clasped behind his back, Shang Xia stood in mid air. He looked at the situation playing out with a trace of amusement while enjoying the argument between the Martial Extermination Realm experts from both sides.

It was then that a figure clad in white fur robes appeared. His eyes were long and narrow, and anyone he set his sights on would feel as though a poisonous snake had their eyes on them. He didn't appear too far away from Shang Xia.

"Are you Shang Xia, the Young Master of the You Continent?" The person was slightly surprised when he looked at the youngster before him.

It was the second time Shang Xia heard that title. However, he knew clearly when he gained a title like that.

In the past, he used to be the Shang Clan's Young Master or the Young Master of the Tongyou City. he didn't really care too much about the titles, and he didn't even know if anyone else had the same title as him in the past.

Turning to glance at the person who appeared, Shang Xia immediately recognized him. After all, the Tongyou Institution had a detailed record of the appearance of the Martial Dipper Realm Ancestors of other factions. He greeted immediately, "Ancestor Yin Dezheng of the Triple Frost Palace... it's my honor to be meeting you for the first time!"

A frosty intent flashed through Yin Dezheng's eyes when he heard Shang Xia's superficial greeting. Sizing Shang Xia up, he eventually muttered softly, "Looks like heroes are born from the younger generation indeed... This old man has to thank you for going easy on Min Zongxin."

Shang Xia shook his head in response. "Since all of us plan to show some restraint during our contest of the islands, my Tongyou Institution wouldn't go too far and break the rules. Moreover, I'm still too young and I will follow the instructions set by the elders of the institution."

Yin Dezheng became even more gloomy after hearing what Shang Xia said. He was unable to keep his calm and he snorted, "Alright, if that's the case, we'll just let them settle it on their own."

After he was done, he turned to leave.

Looking at the space that barely rippled when Yin Dezheng left, Shang Xia muttered to himself, "What an impressive method of traveling through space! This... Did he freeze the spatial disturbance with his inner qi when he left earlier? Hmm... That was probably a Fate Dipper Clone. It's no wonder I didn't feel the slightest bit of threat from him.

After Yin Dezheng left, the situation beneath changed once again.

Perhaps it was because Dou Zhong and Min Zongxin couldn't reach an agreement, or it might be because they wasted too much time there, but another Martial Extermination Realm expert from both sides made their way over.

The person who came from the Ji Continent was an expert much younger than Min Zongxin. The expert from the You Continent was someone Shang Xia was pretty familiar with! It was the young patriarch of the Swallow Race, Yan Ming!

Shang Xia was already surprised when Dou Zhong came earlier. He found the situation even more interesting now that Yan Ming had come. He remained in the air to watch the confrontation.

They might have realized that they couldn't drag matters out any longer now that the second Martial Extermination Realm expert had come. They didn't wish to attract the experts of the Changbai Holy Land in case they would have to split away another portion of the benefits.

Reaching a verbal agreement, the 4 Martial Extermination Realm experts took their leave. The Martial Intent Realm cultivators in charge of the region were left to settle matters. They needed to create a gathering point in the area and wait for their factions to send disciples over to harvest the benefits.

The Eastern You Island was one of the largest islands in the region and it was dozens of miles wide. It was where the Martial Extermination Realm experts of the institution were stationed.

2 streaks of light returned and landed one after another. Dou Zhong and Yan Ming returned and they looked pretty serious. After glancing at each other, they started to walk towards the core region of the island.

They detected someone when they arrived and they seemed to have already guessed his identity. Even so, they revealed looks of surprise and a trace of discomfort when they saw him.

“Brother Dou, Young Lady Yan, long time no see! I hope you have been well.” Shang Xia didn’t seem to notice the awkward looks on their faces and he greeted them with a wide smile on his face.

Dou Zhong quickly adjusted his thoughts. He chuckled in response, “Brother Shang, were you there at the Ocean of Three Crossroads?”

“Ocean of Three Crossroads?” Shang Xia raised an eyebrow and realized that it was probably what they called the region where Hai Yuanyuan and her squad fought earlier. He laughed, “Yeah, It was really coincidental. I was making my way back from the Tianya Pavilion and I noticed 3 students fighting against a Martial Intent Realm cultivator of the Triple Frost Palace. That was why I stayed to watch.”

Shang Xia’s feats and miracles were no secret in the institution. Even though very few people agreed with his path of cultivation and cultivation philosophy, it definitely led to a lot of research on their own end. Shang Xia didn’t plan to hide anything either when he discovered what they were doing.

As such, cultivators from the same generation as Shang Xia such as Dou Zhong and even Yan Ming, were really familiar with him and his style of cultivation.

The 3 extremities displayed by Hai Yuanyuan were more than enough for everyone to identify her as someone who possessed Shang Xia’s inheritance. Experts like Dou Zhong and Yan Ming barely needed to identify what she was using to be sure of it.

Yan Ming had also adjusted her mentality as she spoke to Shang Xia, “It’s no wonder the experts of the Triple Frost Palace are keeping themselves in check earlier. Looks like Min Zongxin suffered slightly at your hands. Their Martial Dipper Realm Ancestor definitely showed up earlier too, right?”

Shang Xia chuckled while nodding. “Yeah. Yin Dezheng sent a Fate Dipper Clone over. He left after we spoke briefly to each other.”

Dou Zhong nodded once and continued, “We heard about Martial Dipper Realm Ancestor Yin Dezheng. It’s said that he’s extremely narrow minded and he would protect those on his side no matter what happens. He’s extremely revered in the Triple Frost Palace. However... He didn’t do anything today and it’s surprising considering his attitude. Looks like this Fate Dipper Clone isn’t a match for you.”

“Brother Dou, you seem to have a great understanding of the Triple Frost Palace. You even know so much about their Martial Dipper Realm Ancestor.” Shang Xia muttered after glancing at Dou Zhong.

He chuckled in response. "I had to learn about our enemies so that we can be prepared for any scenario. Moreover, I only managed to learn all these due to Young Lady Yan's assistance."

Shang Xia continued to ask. "What is the situation like with the underwater island? Have you made further investigations?"

Dou Zhong brought out 2 pieces of crystals that were roughly the size of his fists. "We can basically confirm that the underwater island used to be one of the fragments of the Many Continent. However, it's not too big and it wasn't revealed even after sinking into the ocean. During the fusion of our worlds, it experienced some transformation due to the nourishment of 3 different world origins. These crystals seemed to have formed in it and our students found these 2 crystals before clashing with the cultivator from the Triple Frost Palace. The crystals were also the reason behind their conflict."

Shang Xia examined the crystal in his hand while listening to the explanation. He discovered that the crystal contained abundant Metal Element essence qi and he mumbled, "Are there many crystals like this? I mean... How many crystals like these do the underwater island hold?"

No matter how calm he tried to make himself, Dou Zhong and Yan Ming could hear how seriously he treated the matter.

Glancing at each other, Dou Zhong eventually responded, "It's hard to say how much there is, but from what we can gather, A good portion of the island might have already crystallized and I believe there should be a sizable portion."

Nodding slightly, Shang Xia seemed to mutter softly to himself.

Yan Ming couldn't help but ask, "Brother Shang, are the crystals really important?"

"Very!" Shang Xia responded before turning to look at them again. A smile appeared on his lips. "These are essence crystals! How can they not be important?"

Dou Zhong arranged his thoughts before replying, "These crystals can be considered essence crystals, but the spiritual qi they contain is extremely skewed to a single element. Not many cultivators will be able to make use of it and they might suffer cultivation deviation if they absorbed the energy contained within recklessly. Even if that doesn't happen, stray spiritual qi might be mixed into their dantian. As such, many cultivators don't really want to make use of them. After all, the essence crystals produced in our Tongyou Paradise can easily be used by all of them..."

Dou Zhong heard that Shang Xia had been to the Tianya Pavilion previously and might have learned something new. However, Shang Xia also noticed what Dou Zhong was implying earlier. "Brother Dou, from what you have said, have there been a lot of crystals with strange spiritual qi in them?"

Grunting once, Dou Zhong continued, "We located a good portion of them, but it can't be considered a lot. Those we discovered from the underwater island are the first of their kind."

Yan Ming seemed to have thought of something and she asked, "Do you have some way to get rid of the elemental spiritual qi within these crystals so that people can absorb them?"

Dou Zhong was greatly taken aback and he gasped, "If that is true, the value of the underwater island mine will multiply several times! The Triple Frost Palace would have lost out big time!"

Shang Xia was tongue-tied by their sudden 'epiphanies'. Obviously, he was also shocked by what they thought about.

Whatever it was, that was a natural metal essence crystal vein...

Chapter 772: Talisman Grandmasters?! Two of them?!

The ascension of the world might have failed, but after the fusion of the Azure Origin World and the Azure Spiritual World, the various factions also poured in world origin and origin essence from the Manyu Continent.

Throughout the process, a huge amount of world origin was also scattered throughout the world. A large amount of resources was thus produced in the Azure Ascension World.

The appearance of the metal essence crystal vein was probably because of some mythical transformation of the island that had undergone due to the interaction with 3 different world origins.

Experts of the Azure Ascension World knew how to refine essence crystals. All they had to do was to concentrate the world origin produced by their Holy Lands or Elysiums in order to form essence crystals. After it was produced, experts could use those crystals to carry out trades. They knew how to produce those crystals, but they didn't know how essence crystals were formed naturally.

Of course, that didn't mean that they didn't know the value of such crystals. It was just that before they knew the exact use of those crystals, the crystals would only be useful to certain cultivators. They wouldn't be as versatile as those produced by Holy Lands or Elysiums.

It was why Dou Zhong said what he did earlier. They would drain out the metal spiritual qi before using it as an ordinary essence crystal.

That wasn't actually a joke no matter how silly it seemed to Shang Xia. It was an idea most experts had and even Yan Ming was full of expectations as she listened to the conversation between them.

Shang Xia was afraid that he would have to use a lot of time to explain things to them, and due to the differences in their understanding of how cultivation worked, it might be even more difficult to understand what he was talking about. No matter what, it would turn into a debate and it might even cause one side to question their knowledge of cultivation. It wasn't something Shang Xia was willing to see, and he no longer harped on the matter.

He shook his head and chuckled bitterly before changing the topic. "Brother Dou, didn't you say that there were some sightings of essence crystals like that with strange elemental qi within? Do you know what other types there are?"

Dou Zhong didn't think that Shang Xia would ask something like that and he had to think about it for some time. After a little while, he replied, "I have been roaming the oceans these years and the most common types of essence crystals I have seen are Water Essence Crystals. There are some that were born from the crazy winds, and they were called Wind Essence Crystals. I even heard of some Lightning Essence Crystals that were born during intense lightning storms. There should be other strange essence crystals appearing, but I haven't been able to verify the authenticity of those claims."

Shang Xia nodded slightly in response and he reached for the Fire and Water Essence Crystals in his sleeves. "I obtained these from the Tianya Pavilion."

He spoke about his experience there briefly before he continued, “Even though I reached an agreement with Pavilion Master Yu Yu such that we would be able to deal with essence crystals of these types, I would need to trouble Brother Dou and Lady Yan to pay attention to these special crystals. Fire and Water Essence Crystals aren’t the only ones to note. Try to obtain as many different types as you can and as many of them as possible. Now that we have discovered the Metal Essence Crystal Vein, we have to protect it with everything we have!”

Dou Zhong and Yan Ming saw how serious Shang Xia was treating the matter and they immediately agreed to send out a portion of disciples under them to protect or mine the Metal Essence Crystal Vein.

When the matter had been settled, Dou Zhong asked again, “Brother Shang, are these special essence crystals useful? What do you need them for?”

Shang Xia hesitated slightly before giving a short explanation. “I do have some uses for them, but I would need to carry out some experiments before I can be sure of my conjecture. I’ll tell you then and I will have to trouble you to understand my actions.”

After all, Shang Xia was already a Martial Dipper Realm expert. Anything he needed to verify himself had to be something related to the core of the institution. Even though he didn’t go into an in-depth explanation, Dou Zhong and Yan Ming could understand his reasoning.

Because of the matter with the Metal Essence Crystal, Shang Xia stayed at the Eastern You Island for several more days and discussed matters of cultivation with Dou Zhong and Yan Ming.

Even though it was a discussion, Dou Zhong and Yan Ming obviously asked Shang Xia for pointers for a majority of the time.

Shang Xia didn’t plan to hide anything either as he taught them everything they wanted to know to the best of his abilities.

Even though their understanding of the dao path clashed, Shang Xia’s cultivation had always been higher than theirs. From his point of view, he was more than capable of giving them some fresh suggestions.

After some time, Shang Xia also discovered that despite their cultivation level being similar in the second layer of the Martial Extermination Realm and Yan Ming having the support of the institution and her grandmother, a peak existence in the Martial Extermination Realm, Dou Zhong’s foundations were actually better than hers!

There were times when resources couldn’t make up for talent!

After their discussion, Shang Xia could basically be sure that Dou Zhong was merely missing extermination origins that suited him. He could also tell that Dou Zhong probably wouldn’t meet any sort of bottleneck all the way up to the fourth element of the Martial Extermination Realm!

During their ‘discussion’, they actually brought up a request and hoped that Shang Xia could help them obtain rank three talisman seals through the Talisman Hall.

“We are extremely lacking in manpower at the moment and the production of talismans from the Talisman Hall can’t possibly all go to the Eastern You Island...”

“Even though most of the islands are closer to our You Continent, we are unable to occupy them due to our lack of low-level cultivators! Many of them have been taken by the experts of the Liao and Ji Continents...”

Even though talisman seals could only be created by Shang Xia, they felt that they had to make an application through the institution in order for them to be provided.

Of course, convincing the Talisman Hall to agree to their request was nothing more than a single order from Shang Xia.

At the end of the day, it was the production of the talisman seals that was the problem. They were hard to craft, and they required constant nourishment from an expert's soul. It could be said that every rank three talisman seal would be bound to a cultivator of the Martial Intent Realm or higher.

Shang Xia could only promise them to craft the first talisman seal as soon as possible. They would have to wait sometime for the second one.

Several days later, the first batch of Metal Essence Crystals was harvested and sent back to the Eastern You Continent. Shang Xia brought the largest piece he could find back to the Tongyou City immediately.

Just as he left, he recalled that he should pay a visit to Yun Jing, who was in charge of matters regarding the eastern front of the You Continent.

He might be an expert in the Martial Dipper Realm and from an outsider's point of view, he was considered an ancestor of the institution, but he had the demeanor of a junior disciple before Deputy Patriarch Yun Jing.

Several years had passed since their last meeting and Yun Jing's cultivation was stagnant in the large completion stage of the Martial Extermination Realm. From what Shang Xia could tell, other than her strengthened soul and accumulations of her dipper qi, she didn't improve in any other aspects.

Shang Xia didn't plan to dig deeper into the matter at the moment, but he knew that if Yun Jing were to attempt a breakthrough to the Martial Dipper Realm at that very moment, the entire Tongyou Institution would go all out to assist her. From Kou Chongxue down to every other Martial Extermination Realm cultivator, no one would oppose her desire to break through.

Actually, Kou Chongxue had already given her a suitable Origin Dipper in the past and everything was prepared for her advancement.

Yun Jing learned about everything above the Ocean of Three Crossroads some time ago. However, Shang Xia still recounted everything that happened after he met her. He then spoke about things that happened in the Tianya Pavilion. He didn't hide anything he told Dou Zhong or Yan Ming either. He could tell Yun Jing everything that transpired without any reservations.

As for the cooperation with the Tianya Pavilion, Shang Xia had more than enough authority to establish their relationship but he still wanted to gain Yun Jing's approval as she would be the one who would be in charge of matters then.

After returning to the Tongyou City, Shang Xia made a trip over to Hai Min's courtyard and told her about how Hai Yuanyuan managed to comprehend her martial intent and enter the grand completion stage of the Martial Extremity Realm. He only returned to the Tongyou Institution the next day.

Since he became a Martial Dipper Realm Ancestor, he hadn't been back to the Shang Clan much. He would spend most of his time in the Tongyou Paradise or the Talisman Hall. The last time he returned was because Shang Xi requested for his help to think about her second extermination origin.

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When he finally returned to the institution, he took a trip over to the Talisman Hall. It was where his influence truly lay.

The moment he stepped foot into the Talisman Hall, he received 2 pieces of good news. After many failures, Lou Zizhang and Fan Yuanhui managed to craft a rank four talisman each. They might have used slightly less than a month, but it was still a rank four talisman nonetheless.

Rank four Talisman Grandmasters had finally matured! Moreover, 2 of them appeared at once.

They just stepped into the fourth rank and everyone could basically ignore their success rate.

Shang Xia summoned them the moment he heard the news and started to look through the talisman they made.

Lou Zizhang chose to craft the Space Shattering Golden Blade Talisman while Fan Yuanhui crafted a Thousand Yang Sword Talisman.

Back when Shang Xia left behind his inheritance in the Talisman Hall, those with the lowest difficulty of crafting were the Golden Sun Inferno Talisman, the Thousand Yang Sword Talisman, and the Space Shattering Golden Blade Talisman.

Shang Xia listened to their experience when they crafted the talismans and he asked several questions about the time they failed. In the end, he gave them a few possible suggestions.

He also instructed them to continue placing their attention on those talismans they crafted previously. Only when they reached a success rate of 30 percent should they attempt to craft other rank four talismans.

That could prevent unnecessary wastage while allowing them to gain enough experience while crafting talismans.

For many rank four Talisman Grandmasters of the Azure Ascension World, it would be amazing if they were able to master a talisman or two in their lives.

For individuals like Lou Zizhang and Fan Yuanhui, Shang Xia could tell that that was pretty much their limit. However, he wished to assist them in any way he can in order to raise their abilities to the best it could be.

After they left, Shang Xia summoned Ren Bainian, Ren Huan, and Shang Quan.

He brought out the essence blood he gathered after killing the rank five sea beast and asked, "Take a look at the bone, skin, and blood of the beast. Do you think you can use any of them?"

Chapter 773: Vision of the Rank Five Formation

“Rank five sea beast?!” Ren Huan stared at the corpse in shock before asking again, “Did you kill it alone?!”

“Nope. I was assisted by a friend who is also in the Martial Dipper Realm. Because I helped her with some other matters, she gave the entire corpse to me.”

If not for Shang Xia working together with Lady Yu, it would be impossible for either of them to hunt down the sea beast alone.

In the great ocean, a rank five sea beast possessed a massive geographical advantage. If not for the fact that the expert of the Muhai Sect wasn't thinking straight, the 2 of them would still have to waste a lot of effort to kill the beast.

Of the 3, Ren Bainian was amazing at repairing weapons. Ren Huan could craft talisman paper, and Shang Quan was a talisman ink maker.

Their opinions would weigh the most in their respective fields, but Ren Huan seemed to have the most say among them. After examining the corpse, he muttered with a tinge of regret but also in slight celebration, “The corpse isn't small at all, but it suffered a lot of damage externally. The skin of the beast will definitely be affected but this is a rank five sea beast at the end of the day. It's not a random fish. If it was, it wouldn't be easy to turn the skin into rank five talisman paper.”

Shang Xia asked hurriedly, “What's the matter? Can't you make the skin of fishes into talisman paper?”

“It's not that you can't do it. It's just that they aren't as good as beast skin. Rank five fish skin might not be able to transform into rank five talisman paper, but it won't be too difficult to turn them into rank four talisman paper!” Ren Huan tutted.

Shang Xia seemed a little disappointed and he mumbled, “I thought that I could go around killing high rank fish and sea creatures so that we can obtain a steady supply of talisman paper resources. From what you say, it's not entirely feasible.”

Ren Huan chuckled in response, “I might not have gone to explore the oceans, but I managed to learn from some records out there that the scales of those creatures will be extremely useful. It's just that they aren't good enough to be used to craft talisman paper. They can still be made into artifacts. Moreover, the oceans are endless and there are too many sea creatures to count. Of course, because the oceans are endless, it won't be easy to find those high-level beasts anyway.”

Shang Xia nodded in agreement. However, he added, “No matter what, it seems like we have to prioritize hunting down those sea creatures.”

“We can try to obtain some special methods to hunt them from the factions that are stationed in the ocean. Those sects there definitely tried them in the past but it doesn't seem like it's extremely useful... Otherwise, our Azure Ascension World wouldn't have 0 Holy Lands from the ocean. Whatever... Learning how to hunt those creatures is better than going in blind.” Ren Huan suggested.

Thinking about the secret region that contained the Tianya Pavilion, and the Muhai Sect that had a way to control rank five beasts, Shang Xia couldn't help but mutter, “It's not as though those sects

in the ocean are completely useless. Now that the Azure Ascension World obtained 3 different types of world origin and origin essence, it strengthened greatly even though we couldn't ascend into a Spirit World. Also, a ton of resources have been created due to the great influx of world origin..."

He sank into contemplation for a second before he continued, "The situation on land is basically set. Our You Continent is controlled by our Tongyou Institution, but it's not impossible for us to continue expanding in the future. Now, the only way we can grow is to spread our influence into the ocean."

Due to the lack of population in the You Continent, they had more than enough cultivation resources to go around.

Many resources in the You Continent had yet to be fully developed and utilized, but as a member of the Tongyou Institution with enough authority, Shang Xia continued to push for the expansion of the You Continent in order to obtain more resources.

His goal was simple and clear. The resources within the You Continent was finite. Even though it might not have been fully uncovered and utilized, the Tongyou Institution had basically controlled everything. There was no need to rush to develop them. They might as well continue to expand outwards in order to gather more streams of resources!

Shang Xia turned to Ren Bainian before speaking. "Senior Ren, do you think the bone of the beast can be used to replace the shaft of the White Bone Brush? Will the brush grow to become of a better grade when that happens?"

Forcing a smile, Ren Bainian chuckled, "I'll do my best. However, I'm afraid I will have to waste a lot of spiritual bone when doing so. I will also need the help of the blacksmiths of the institution."

Shang Xia pointed at the corpse and gave his order. "Alright then. Senior Ren, you and the talisman hall can use as much of the corpse as you require."

Ren Bainian cupped his fist in response and no longer said anything else. He seemed to be thinking of how he should improve the White Bone Brush.

Shang Xia then handed the blood of the beast to Shang Quan. He laughed, "Uncle Quan, the blood is extremely important when crafting ink. You can try to use this to craft rank four talisman ink..."

"I apologize. I barely managed to craft rank three talisman ink. I'm afraid you will be wasting the blood of a rank five sea beast by giving it to me." Shang Quan laughed bitterly.

Shang Xia didn't seem to care. "Nonsense! Uncle Quan, use it however you like. Oh right. I have to congratulate you on becoming a rank three talisman ink craftsman!"

Shang Quan waved his hands immediately as a show of humility. "Actually, the timing is pretty coincidental. I discovered some sort of crystal powder recently and tried mixing it into some talisman ink. I didn't think that I would be able to succeed in creating a batch of rank three talisman ink easily the moment I did so."

Shang Xia seemed pretty excited. "Oh?! How did that happen?"

"It seems like the powder only worked for a certain type of talisman ink. I tried it on 2 other types of ink and it failed miserably." Shang Quan explained.

Shang Xia seemed to have thought of something and he asked, "Uncle Quan, what type of crystal powder did you use?"

"It's something like essence crystals, but the one I used seemed to possess some frigid yin spiritual qi. It's not as mellow as a normal essence crystal." Shang Quan introduced.

"Uncle Quan, where did you find such crystals? Do you have more of them? Are you able to find their source?" Shang Xia asked immediately.

Something that could excite a Martial Dipper Realm expert like Shang Xia would definitely not be an ordinary treasure.

Shang Quan immediately recognized the fact that the crystal he used might have far surpassed the value he estimated and he spoke quickly, "Little Xia, is the crystal important? Our clan managed to get our hands on it by chance and it came from the Liao Continent."

"Liao Continent?!" Shang Xia thought for a second and muttered, "Can you inform the person from our Shang Clan in charge of trades with the Liao Continent to obtain these crystals with everything in their power? Oh right, don't make it too obvious."

"In recent years, crystals like this have been appearing in the Azure Ascension World. Not many people know of their true value. It's a great opportunity for us!" Shang Xia said to Shang Quan after passing down his instructions.

He then turned to Ren Huan and Ren Bainian. It was clear he was planning to explain what he was doing to them. "I only have some clues for the use of the crystals. However, I believe that they will be much more useful than they let on. We will have to work on it to discover how its full potential can be unleashed."

Shang Xia grunted once and concluded, "In the future, when you try crafting, or repairing anything, you can try adding some powder shavings of the crystals. Try to look for more ways to use them. Even if you waste some resources doing so, there's no need to worry. I'll explain what happened to the deputy patriarchs."

With Shang Xia's confirmation, the 3 of them revealed looks of ecstasy.

It didn't matter that they could still use those strange essence crystals. What got them was the fact that they could go all out and ignore any losses while carrying out their experiments!

They felt that they would have to try to use those crystal powder whenever possible!

Shang Xia also understood that a huge amount of resources would be wasted in the near future due to their need to verify the uses of those crystals. However, everything would turn out to be worth it in the long run.

Finally sending them away, Shang Xia rushed over to the Formation Hall. He heard that Chu Jia hadn't been around for a long time and she had been modifying a small island in the Beyond Heavens Pavilion for some time now.

Without a word, he rushed over to the Beyond Heavens Pavilion and discovered what Chu Jia was doing. She had the assistance of 2 other rank three Formation Masters, along with several Martial Intent Realm or higher cultivators of the Formation Hall. There were even 2 rank three Talisman Masters of the Talisman Hall among them. They seemed to have reached a dead end with a tiny fragment of land that was honestly too small to be called an island at that point.

The moment Shang Xia arrived, Chu Jia, who had been extremely annoyed, found someone to vent her anger on.

“What are you doing here?! Is the great Talisman Grandmaster here to watch us embarrass ourselves?” Chu Jia snapped.

Everyone else started to take their leave as they didn't want to be caught up in the wrath of the little ancestor from the Formation Hall.

Shang Xia seemed to ignore their actions and he continued to approach the structure. “Did you run into some problem you can't solve again?! Why the hell are you so angry?”

Chu Jia snorted heavily before turning around to ignore him. She felt that her intuitions were right and he was really there to make fun of her.

Shang Xia could only sigh helplessly when he saw that she wasn't planning to respond. “I came here to ask you for help. I didn't think that you would have also run into a problem here.”

“Nonsense! This isn't a problem at all!” Chu Jia declared haughtily the next second. “How can this be a problem? It's just modifying an island to ferry our low-level cultivators to and fro the Three Unity Island. I'm just thinking of a way to reduce wastage of resources!”

Shang Xia glanced at his surroundings and saw the expressions the others were revealing. He might be a Formation Master, but he knew the basics...

A moment later, he adjusted his tone and muttered, “Looking at the size of this island, you should be able to bring 80 or so people on it, right? How many people do you need to maintain its flight?”

Shang Xia seemed to have hit the nail on the head as Chu Jia acted like a cat whose tail had been stepped on. She became even more unwilling to speak now that Shang Xia had accurately pointed it out.

“According to our estimates, even after we complete the modifications, we will need at least 3 Martial Extermination Realm experts to move the island. It won't be able to move quickly either. I'm afraid before reaching the Three Unity Island, those experts will probably die from exhaustion. In order to ensure the flight of the island, we will need at least 6, or maybe even 7 Martial Extermination Realm experts to share the burden of powering the island.”

Shang Xia recognized the person who spoke. It was Bai Luming, a rank three Formation Master of the Formation Hall.

Chu Jia sounded extremely exasperated as she sighed, “Bai Luming, no one will take you for a mute if you don't talk...”

Obviously, he was someone who knew her temper really well. He went to hide behind the others the moment he completed his explanation earlier.

Shang Xia chuckled in response. “What if you use essence crystals to power it? Or perhaps, if you use the strength of those you are transporting?”

Bai Luming didn’t even need to say anything when Chu Jia replied. “It’s easier said than done. How many essence crystals will we need if that’s the case? We might not even be able to earn enough essence crystals to cover the cost of going there. Don’t forget, those who wish to head over to the Three Unity Island still need to borrow the power of our Tongyou Paradise to arrive at the Beyond Heavens Pavilion before heading over. Otherwise, they won’t be able to board this moving island.

“As for getting them to chip in... All of them are low-level cultivators to begin with. It doesn’t matter if they’re in the Martial Extremity Realm or the Martial Intent Realm. They won’t be able to do much! Not to mention the fact that they already paid to use our services. If they need to provide the energy required to make the trip there, it will be too...”

Shang Xia nodded slightly before turning to Chu Jia to speak in an extremely grave tone. “I might have a way to solve this problem.”

Widening her eyes in surprise, she didn’t seem too convinced and she snorted softly, “What ideas can you have?! Are you planning to use a talisman to solve this?”

“I have a concept of a rank five formation that can do that, but I need your help in order to complete the preparations.” Shang Xia smiled.

“Rank five formation?! Do you actually know how to use formations?!” Chu Jia stared at Shang Xia with her pupils trembling slightly.

Chapter 774: One Man, One Formation

The modification of the island was put on hold as Shang Xia dragged Chu Jia back to the Beyond Heavens Pavilion. When they entered the pavilion that shielded them from the senses of the outside world, he described in detail the meaning behind the mutual restraint and amplification of the 5 elements. He also displayed his Five Element Source before speaking about the possibility of laying down a Five Element Formation.

Chu Jia listened to him silently and only after Shang Xia had poured out everything he knew did she reveal a brilliant smile. “This was how you saved Patriarch Kou when he experienced an imbalance in his fate dippers, right?”

“How do you know?” Shang Xia was stunned for a moment.

Glancing at Shang Xia from the corner of her eye, Chu Jia tutted, “You’ve greatly underestimated me. Not only do I know that, I also know that he chose all the fate dippers after that incident with your suggestion. It even affected how Deputy Patriarch Ji and your grandfather choose their fate dippers.”

Putting aside his cultivation at the Martial Dipper Realm, Shang Xia’s status didn’t seem too much higher than Chu Jia...

Choosing not to speak about it, Shang Xia continued to ask, “Why don’t you tell me if it’s possible to deploy the Five Element Formation?”

“Taking it from your perspective, it’s definitely possible to create the formation. However, I don’t know if it will be successfully deployed. I will have to try for myself in order to be sure.” Chu Jia chuckled.

Nodding slightly, Shang Xia responded, “That’s true. I was too hasty.”

“From what you said earlier, it’s possible for us to use the Five Element Essence Crystals to lay down the formation. Of those, we already gathered the Fire, Water, and Metal Essence Crystals. We’re missing Wood and Earth Essence Crystals, but we can make some preparations for now. I also need some time to design and refine the formation you came up with.” Chu Jia replied.

Shang Xia knew that he thought about things too simply when he requested for her to create the formation earlier. “Of course!”

After thinking about it for a moment, Chu Jia couldn’t help but add, “If you truly wish to help the preparation process, I suggest that you prepare yourself. This is going to be something completely new and it’s a fresh perspective on the art of formations. You have to be patient and we won’t be able to see much success anytime soon.”

Shang Xia nodded in understanding. “I get it. You should do what you need to and I’ll need some time to find a source for those essence crystals.”

Finally bidding Chu Jia farewell, Shang Xia quickly informed the Protection Division and the Outreach Division to pay attention to the sources of those 2 types of essence crystals.

Unfortunately, he learned that other cultivators would only be able to determine if those essence crystals were of different attributes. He would have to verify if they were of the Wood or Earth Element himself.

It wasn’t difficult to see that he wouldn’t have much time in the foreseeable future. He would have to spend a huge amount of time verifying the type of essence crystals others located.

That was why Shang Xia felt that he had to sort out his current state of cultivation before he started on the task.

Back in the Tianya Pavilion, Shang Xia managed to shorten the time needed to complete one cycle of inner qi circulation to 4 hours. He could shift the yin and yang alignment of the elements as he wished, and the most direct impact of that was that he could gather a fourth set of fate dipper essences.

The refinement process would take a long time, and while that was going on, he would still have to improve his rank five martial arts and better refine his Five Element Ring.

The Five Element Ring might seem perfect for Shang Xia and it possessed frightening power when he faced his enemies, but Shang Xia still had some ideas on how he should use it. There was still a slight misalignment between the weapon and his martial art and his combat ability wasn’t at its peak yet.

After entering the Martial Dipper Realm, Shang Xia realized that time would pass extremely quickly whenever he entered seclusion.

In the blink of an eye, the latter half of the 856th year of the Divine Martial Calendar rolled about.

A good half a year had passed, and Shang Xia, who had been in seclusion a majority of the time, managed to refine more than half of his fourth batch of fate dipper essences.

The Protection Division and the Outreach Division sent out their disciples to carry out Shang Xia's instructions and gathered a certain amount of Wood and Earth Essence Crystals.

After digging around the old battlefield between the two worlds in the northern region of the You Continent, they actually managed to find an Earth Essence Crystal Vein!

They might not have mined a lot of it yet, but they at least obtained a steady source of crystals.

As for Wood Essence Crystals, they could only rely on luck. In the dense Thousand Leaf Mountain Range, cultivators who went out for training or exploration managed to gather a good number of them.

They might have gathered enough crystals, but the greatest limiting factor was Wood Essence Crystals. Shang Xia and Chu Jia couldn't realistically verify Shang Xia's idea of creating a stable spatial tunnel using the Five Element Formation. After all, that would be a massive project by itself. Just confirming the idea would be feasible would waste an astronomical amount of elemental essence crystals. However, that only applied to the teleportation formation. They had more than enough to solve the problem with the island they were modifying.

The formation outline had already been prepared and all that was left to do was to place the elemental essence crystals to activate the Five Element Formation. It could greatly reduce the consumption of energy once it is active.

Even though everything was ready, Shang Xia and Chu Jia wasted dozens of elemental essence crystals during the first attempt.

They might have forcefully activated the first Five Element Formation, that was because Shang Xia was present and he directed the flow of energy personally. That was how it could maintain operation for some time. The moment he stopped pouring his dipper qi into the formation, the crystals turned to dust.

Their attempt might have ended as a failure, but there was no trace of loss on Chu Jia's face. Instead, a smile lit up her face.

She continued to arrange the distance and positions of where the crystals should be placed in the formation before modifying the formation slightly. She drew new paths for energy to flow and everything seemed to change from Shang Xia's initial idea.

When she was done, she placed the elemental essence crystals in their position and continued to verify the viability of the formation. The process continued and the energy connections became more and more complicated before she eventually simplified them one after another. Eventually, the formation took shape and the most elementary Five Element Formation was created for real.

"This formation isn't able to sustain itself and it requires a cultivator's inner qi to continue operating..." Shang Xia seemed a little disappointed by the result. When he

thought about the formation, he felt that it would be able to continue the energy circulation on its own.

Unlike the discontented Shang Xia, Chu Jia was a lot more excited. She retorted immediately, “What the hell does a Talisman Grandmaster like you know about formations? Even if it requires someone to maintain the flow of energy, it already reduces the difficulty of powering the island! We would be able to use the power of one man to replace a job that requires 4 to 5 Martial Extermination Realm experts!”

Shang Xia obviously knew that the situation had already improved greatly but he couldn't help but remind her, “The activation of the formation also has a requirement on the individual doing it...”

Chu Jia didn't seem to care. “Of course I know that. However, according to your philosophy about the 5 elements, it's not too difficult to find Martial Intent or Martial Extermination Realm experts who reached the requirement.”

...

They might have completed the most elementary design of the Five Element Formation, but they continued to refine and improve the formation.

If Chu Jia had been working together with Shang Xia earlier in order to develop the formation earlier, his job would have already been done. The person truly in charge of modifying and refining the formation further became Chu Jia, and she was extremely excited to do it.

What they produced was an elementary and crude Five Element Formation, but Chu Jia seemed to have seen an entirely new path of formations within it. It could even be the key to her improvement in the path of formations!

Even if Shang Xia told her to stop researching the Five Element Formation, she would immediately jump out to reject his suggestion.

She had always been someone who worked eagerly when the task was something she was interested in. Now that she discovered ways to improve the Five Element Formation, she was ready to try out all her new ideas on the floating island outside the Beyond Heavens Pavilion.

Shang Xia planned to slow down a little as he felt that they were moving too quickly at the moment. He wanted to take things step by step in order to properly expand the new path of formations and make it less complicated.

To that, he was met with a loud yell from Chu Jia. “Do you know how low the requirements are to start on the path of the elemental formations you created?!”

“Huh? Is it really that easy?” Shang Xia was slightly taken aback.

Casually pointing out several points to the fellow Formation Masters on the floating island, Chu Jia seemed a little too busy to entertain his question. Only after she gave out her orders did she turn around to reply. “It's pretty easy to pick up, but it's difficult for anyone to learn the essence of it. I barely started to understand it, but I can already see what it will progress to in the future.”

Clearly, she was even more confident about the Five Element Formation than Shang Xia.

Seeing how Chu Jia placed 10 elemental essence crystals on 5 key spots, that would mean that they already used 50 in that single attempt. Shang Xia couldn't help but mutter softly, "If this experiment fails, we would have wasted 50 elemental essence crystals..."

Chu Jia sighed helplessly, "Oh great Talisman Grandmaster Shang, you're a Martial Dipper Realm expert. In our Azure Ascension World, you're akin to an ancestor-level existence. Can you act a little more like one?! Do you have no balls or something? It's just 50 elemental essence crystals! Why are you acting so heartbroken?!"

Opening his mouth slightly, Shang Xia didn't know how to respond.

Chu Jia went off to do her own tasks after speaking earlier and she didn't expect Shang Xia to reply anyway.

Because Chu Jia already did some work on the floating island, the Five Element Formation could be quickly integrated into the grand formation.

Before that, Chu Jia had to do further experiments with the formation. The Martial Dipper Realm expert who came up with it was obviously dragged into matters as well and he was used as the final layer of protection in case anything blew up.

As Chu Jia activated the complicated Five Element Array she modified on the island, dozens of elemental essence crystals emitted dense spiritual energy and they started to interact with each other according to the principles of the elements. It didn't take long before the spiritual qi managed to make a complete cycle.

"It... It succeeded?" Shang Xia gasped at the sight.

Glancing at him from the corner of her eye, Chu Jia didn't bother hiding the look of disappointment in them. "The Five Element Formation might be activated, but the elemental crystals in the formation aren't being used to their fullest potential. The cycling of spiritual qi isn't pure enough and a huge amount will still be wasted. The formation won't be able to sustain itself for long. You should make your move and take over."

Shang Xia could feel the dissipation of energy, but he felt that it was a natural occurrence.

With slight suspicion, he started to guide the energy again. He sent a portion of his inner qi into the formation and controlled the flow of energy.

By the side, Chu Jia's eyelids twitched violently when she saw what he was doing.

"This... This... He became a part of the formation and he's doing it alone!" Bai Luming who was standing at the side couldn't help but mutter to himself.

Chapter 775: Preparation!

Shang Xia's intervention allowed him to discover something. There were a lot of problems with the Five Element Formation, and if not for the fact that Chu Jia urged him to make his move, the entire formation would probably crumble.

"Hehe... Looks like a Formation Grandmaster is a Formation Grandmaster alright. She knows what she's doing." Shang Xia muttered inwardly while following Chu Jia's instructions to slow the energy down.

He managed to stop the formation from breaking down completely and prevented a huge loss of resources and possible death. He could also make use of the energy contained in those elemental essence crystals.

Shang Xia gained a sudden epiphany. The reason Chu Jia wanted to test out the formation on the floating island wasn't because of how confident she was of succeeding. It was because she was sure that Shang Xia would be able to handle it.

"To be able to get a great Martial Dipper Realm to be our helper, don't you guys think that it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity? What's more, the person cleaning up our mess is the great Talisman Grandmaster of our institution!" Even though Chu Jia was speaking 'softly' to the disciples she brought, she didn't seem to care that Shang Xia could hear her too.

The Formation Masters of the island were working extremely hard, but they shot strange looks at Shang Xia from time to time.

"Hey, don't you at least feel a little bad for saying this in front of me?" Shang Xia muttered in annoyance.

"Sigh..." Chu Jia turned to look at Shang Xia and continued, "I have no choice! The trade fair on the Three Unity Island is about to take place. Don't you wish to complete this before it starts so we can send a portion of cultivators over? It's something that will boost the prestige of our You Continent..."

Shang Xia couldn't refuse her claims and could only obediently deal with the spiritual qi in the surroundings.

In the Azure Ascension World, it would be hard to find another Martial Dipper Realm expert like that who was willing to act as a mere tool. Actually, he was probably the only one.

Because they had the ultimate protection that came in the form of Shang Xia, a Martial Dipper Realm expert, no one held back. They made constant progress and it seemed to be getting better every day.

3 months passed in a flash and the year was about to end. The deployment of the foundation also neared its last stages.

Hmm... At least that was what it seemed to be in the eyes of Chu Jia, their Formation Grandmaster.

"Is that it? That's all?!" Shang Xia couldn't help but ask after another test drive of their modified island. Seeing how they were about to conclude it as a success, he was about to rush at them with his guns blazing. He snorted with dissatisfaction. "The circulation of the Five Element Formation still has a lot of room for improvement. We can also increase the efficiency of energy use from the elemental essence crystal. If we achieve this, not only will we be able to fly faster. We will expend less essence crystals and save a lot of resources. Why are we stopping now?"

Chu Jia giggled softly while staring at Shang Xia who was yelling impatiently. However, she didn't give an explanation.

Helpless, Bai Luming could only brace himself and take on the question. "Young Master Shang, with the assistance of the elemental essence crystals, we are able to carry 100 passengers on the island. Our speed has also increased by 30 percent and we can make a trip by using 50 elemental essence crystals. We would only need to station 2 to 3 Martial Extermination Realm experts on the moving island, which is much fewer than the 8 we originally planned for. They don't even need to be responsible for powering the formation completely. All they have to do is to ensure that it maintains a safe amount of energy..."

After the other rank three Formation Masters saw that Bai Luming had spoken, they quickly continued, "It's just as Master Bai has said. Moreover, it's not like we're no longer improving the formation. We will keep up the research after returning to the Formation Hall. After all, this is a new path of formations. We barely stepped into it and we can't give it up easily!"

The others continued to speak after Bai Luming and the other rank three Formation Master had spoken.

"Yeah! Young Master Shang, even if you don't allow us to use this Five Element Formation in the future, we will continue to research the topic secretly! We won't give up on it!"

"The moving island isn't fully complete yet anyway. We will have to add some structures to it. After all, we can't possibly let those traveling on it roam around while it's moving, right?"

"The year is ending and the trade fair is about to begin... We don't have any more time to complete more modifications!"

"Young Master Shang, the principles behind the Five Element Formation are profound. Why don't you take the chance to conduct a lecture about it?"

"The Five Element Formation is truly profound, why don't..."

"..."

Shang Xia's head was starting to hurt after their flurry of comments and he glanced at Chu Jia who was gloating beside him. She seemed to be reveling in his misfortune!

He quickly extricated himself from the mob that was gathering around him and he arrived beside her. "Can you do something about this?!"

"Hehe..." Chu Jia mumbled, "I heard that the 3 year patrol mission given to our Tongyou Institution is about to begin again. When are you planning to head over?"

"Oh no! I almost forgot..."

...

One year ago, Shang Bo ended his task of patrolling the space around the Azure Ascension World. A year had passed and according to the agreement between experts of the 4 Elysiums, the Tongyou Institution would have to send another Martial Dipper Realm expert over to continue keeping watch for any traces of the Spirit Abundance World.

Shang Xia returned to the Talisman Hall in a flurry and learned that not even a month was left before he had to report for duty.

Once they learned of his return, Fan Yuanhui and Lou Zizhang, the rank four Talisman Grandmasters, along with Ren Huan, came to pay him a visit. Even Ren Bainian from the Weapons Hall heard the news and rushed over.

Shang Xia saw that Fan Yuanhui and Lou Zizhang had pretty good attitudes and he asked casually, “How are your talisman crafting skills now?”

Exchanging a glance, Fan Yuanhui chuckled softly. “We probably improved a little. Even though we haven’t reached the point where we can craft a talisman in 3 attempts, we should be able to reach the level soon after the turn of the year.”

Lou Zizhang also laughed, “Everything is thanks to the agreement you made with the Tianya Pavilion. We managed to obtain a steady flow of beast skin from them and thus were able to gain a stable production of talisman paper. Otherwise, we wouldn't be able to improve so quickly!”

Shang Xia smiled in response.

He knew that the improvement they were talking about only referred to their ability to craft the Space Shattering Golden Blade Talisman and the Thousand Yang Sword Talisman.

He long since recognized that unless another Talisman Grandmaster was like him and could craft all sorts of talismans, they would focus on a few of them.

Fan Yuanhui added, “We also have a piece of good news. We gained another rank three Talisman Master.”

That was indeed something worth celebrating.

Counting the new rank three Talisman Master, the Tongyou Institution would possess 9 rank three Talisman Masters or higher. In total, there was 1 rank five Talisman Grandmaster, 2 rank four Talisman Grandmasters, and 6 rank three Talisman Masters. There were many ordinary rank two Talisman Masters and Talisman Disciples that made up the rest of the Talisman Hall.

Their foundation was enough to allow the Tongyou Institution to surpass many other factions in terms of Talisman Masters. Even an Elysium might not possess more experts than them when it came to talisman crafting. At the very least, Shang Xia knew that the Yuanchen Sect which was the last to become an Elysium, had no rank five Talisman Grandmasters.

Lou Zizhang also spoke up suddenly. “According to our tradition, anytime a new rank three Talisman Master appears, you would hold a public lecture to celebrate. Today, everyone is looking forward to that opportunity and hope that you can craft talismans for all of us to observe again.”

That was their true motive in looking for Shang Xia.

Unfortunately, Shang Xia revealed an expression of discomfort as he muttered, “This is bad timing indeed. I have to head out to patrol the space around our world in less than a month and I will only be back in 3 years. I’m afraid I won’t be able to hold it this time. Why don’t you guys...”

Bitter smiles appeared on their faces and Fan Yuanhui sighed helplessly, “Without you present, there’s no point to hold a public lecture in the Talisman Hall. It’s fine. Isn’t it just 3 years? Let’s talk about this again when you come back!”

It wasn’t as though any rank four Talisman Grandmaster could give public lectures. Only with Shang Xia’s perverse success rate would he be able to teach everyone in the Talisman Hall. Even the 2 of them had lots to learn from him. If they were to do what he did and craft talismans in front of everyone, they would only be embarrassing themselves.

Shang Xia didn’t feel too good that he had to miss the session. After all, he made it a tradition himself. He could only sigh softly before taking out a near-complete rank three talisman seal from his sleeves. “Originally, I planned to craft a few rank three talisman seals for the guardians stationed in the east. This is an additional piece and I hope that you can help me to give it to the new Talisman Master as a gift. After I return 3 years later, I will hold another live crafting session and every Talisman Master in our You Continent will be permitted to attend.”

Fan Yuanhui examined the talisman seal he had never seen before and revealed a look of envy. “A rank three talisman seal... This is a truly valuable gift indeed. Even I have to envy him...”

After they left, Shang Xia looked at Ren Bainian and laughed, “Senior Ren, how is the modification of the White Bone Brush?”

“I overestimated myself... I’m great when it comes to repairing stuff, not replacing and modifications. We did find a suitable spirit bone in the corpse of the beast, but it’s no longer a problem of just changing the shaft. Even the blacksmiths of the Weapons Hall are not capable of doing it.” Ren Bainian forced a chuckle.

Shang Xia was disappointed, but he understood that his request was extremely tough to fulfill in the first place. He muttered, “It’s alright. I was too hasty. You can take your time to modify the brush. I have the Purple Bamboo Brush that can be used for now.”

Ren Bainian hastily added, “Actually, it’s not like we don’t have another idea...”

“What is it?” Shang Xia’s eyes brightened slightly.

“I heard that you went to the ocean and got acquainted with 2 Grandmaster Blacksmiths of the Tianya Pavilion. Why don’t you look for them?” Ren Bainian asked.

“Hmm... I was planning to give our guys the chance to modify the brush. Looks like I can only...” Shang Xia mumbled softly.

After Ren Bainian left, Ren Huan was the only one left. He presented 3 pieces of rank five talisman paper made from the skin of the sea beast.

Chapter 776: Test Drive, Guest from Afar

“Three pieces?” Shang Xia revealed a face full of joy. “Brother Ren, did you improve again?”

“It’s not that amazing. It’s just that I got used to crafting talisman paper from beast skin.” Ren Huan replied.

Shang Xia chuckled in response, “That’s already amazing enough.”

“About the spiritual beasts in the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range...” Ren Huan seemed to have thought of something.

Shaking his head slightly, Shang Xia mumbled, “The time isn’t ripe yet. Even though a majority of the beasts from the battlefield between the two worlds managed to establish themselves in the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range, there are too few creatures in the massive mountain range.”

Ren Huan added, “But... If we let them roam around freely and slowly grow their population, a disaster might happen in the future!”

Shang Xia laughed mirthlessly, “Spiritual beasts aren’t like ferocious beasts. They have their intelligence and know how to avoid danger. They wouldn’t dare to leave the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range.”

Ren Huan still didn’t seem too convinced. “Even if that’s the case, what about the Ji and Bing Continents? What if their cultivators enter the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range and start hunting beasts before us?”

Shang Xia thought about it for a second before deciding to reveal something to Ren Huan. “The Ji Continent is filled with undercurrents at the moment as the White Deer Paradise and the three great families there are plotting against each other. The powers in the Ji Continent can’t even take care of themselves, much less set their sights on the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range. The strength of the Bing Continent isn’t comparable to us at the moment. With Deputy Patriarch Ji stationed at the border of the continents, they wouldn’t dare to mess around.”

Staring at Shang Xia for a long time, Ren Huan finally sighed, “Brother Shang, are you planning to use the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range to rear spiritual beasts?”

“We have too little manpower at our disposal at the moment. We are unable to fully control the different beast hordes in the mountain range and we can only rely on the Mutated Rain Swallows to assist us. However, I can tell you one thing. In a few years, the Thousand Leaf Mountain Range might see the birth of a rank five spiritual beast!” Shang Xia didn’t respond to Ren Huan’s question directly. Instead, he spoke about something else.

“What...” Ren Huan’s eyes widened in surprise. He took some time to digest the news before staring at Shang Xia with a complicated gaze. He sighed after some time.

“What about heading out to sea to hunt sea beasts?”

“We need to work on the matter. Even though the institution reached some sort of initial understanding with the Tianya Pavilion and we’re building up some trust

between us, there is no harm in also forming a connection with the Muhai Sect. Let's see if we can reach them." Shang Xia muttered in response.

When he thought about the Muhai Sect, Shang Xia couldn't help but think about the envoy the other day who had the ability to control rank five sea beasts even though he was only in the Martial Extermination Realm.

According to Yu Yu, the cultivators of the Muhai Sect are adept at controlling spiritual and ferocious beasts. As such, they would also be out in the great ocean searching for those creatures..."

After entering the Martial Dipper Realm, Shang Xia might not have been promoted to a deputy patriarch, and neither was he able to point out the direction where the institution should develop, he realized that he was able to direct many things related to the institution's operation just through the Talisman Hall alone.

Of course, Shang Xia had his limits. Everything he pushed to happen couldn't clash with the direction of their growth.

When Ren Huan finally left, Shang Xia started to craft talismans again.

With only 3 pieces of rank five talisman paper, Shang Xia needed to be extremely careful as he wasn't confident in his skills to craft rank five talismans yet.

He was stumped by the type of talisman he wanted to craft and he fell into contemplation.

The number of talisman papers he had was limited and he could only choose to attempt a single type of rank five talisman. He only knew how to craft 3 different types at the moment, but he still had to think it through.

A rank five Abyssal Emptiness Talisman was basically useless to Shang Xia at his current level.

Even though it could assist him to a certain extent when it came to traveling through the void or breaking restrictions, Shang Xia's Five Element Dipper Qi could also do the same. In fact, it was much better when it came to doing both those things.

Of course, the talisman would still be extremely useful to other experts.

As for the Substitution Talisman, Shang Xia already had 1 on him. However, life-saving methods like those would be extremely useful for him before he could create Fate Dipper Clones.

Naturally, the Substitution Talisman would also be important even if he could create clones. One could never be too careful. After all, no one wished to pay the price of a Fate Dipper Clone in desperate situations.

After thinking about what he should do, Shang Xia decided to craft a rank five Teleportation Talisman.

It was because he was still thinking about the stable teleportation formation he planned to create and crafting a rank five Teleportation Talisman would give him a lot more insights and understanding of the runes required.

Another reason was also because when Shang Xia worked together with Chu Jia to create the Five Element Formation on the moving island, she showed him their ultimate technique, Empty Mountain.

During their expedition to the Manyu Continent, it allowed the Tongyou Island to enter a separate, stable space.

Be it Chu Jia or Shang Xia, both felt that they could learn a lot from the ultimate technique.

Now that he was making another rank five Teleportation Talisman, Shang Xia was a lot more familiar with it than before. The only factor making it not perfect was the fact that Shang Xia didn't have rank five talisman ink. He could only use rank four talisman ink during the process despite it affecting the success rate and the effect of the complete talisman.

Fortunately for him, Shang Xia managed to craft a rank five Teleportation Talisman with the talisman papers and gained another life-saving trump card.

...

The Tongyou Institution prepared to send 50 Martial Intent Realm cultivators and 30 Martial Extremity Realm disciples to the Three Unity Island for the trade fair that was about to take place for the year.

Due to the fact that it was the first time they were using the island to shift their members over, the Tongyou Institution didn't go about promoting their plan. They chose 40 members from the institution and 40 scattered cultivators from the You Continent and brought them to the Beyond Heavens Pavilion. They only took 2 essence crystals as the fee to bring them up there.

As the 80 cultivators entered the Beyond Heavens Pavilion through a specially created spatial tunnel in the Tongyou Paradise, they were led to the floating island by 4 Martial Extermination Realm experts. Among them was Chu Jia.

If everything went according to Chu Jia and Shang Xia's plan, 3 Martial Extermination Realm experts would be more than enough to direct the island over. 2 of them would have to pour their inner qi to maintain the operation of the Five Element Formation while the other would be there to prevent any mishap.

Whatever it was, it was their first official trip. Their Formation Grandmaster, Chu Jia, didn't just personally take charge of matters to prevent any accidents from happening. Shang Xia was also monitoring things in secret.

As Ge Qingzhu activated the Five Element Formation, the grand formation also seemed to come to life. A formless barrier shrouded the island and it started to leave the Beyond Heavens Pavilion while slowly increasing its speed.

A separate space was carved out in the center of the island, and it was heavily reinforced. It was where the core of the formation lay.

Ge Qingzhu was currently sitting in the eye of the formation. The 5 connection points were all around him and they used 20 elemental essence crystals at each connection point. As the island increased its speed, those crystals lit up one after another.

After 10 of them were glowing with rays of resplendent light, the speed of the island seemed to reach its peak. The other crystals were there just in case.

Outside the Five Element Formation, Chu Jia asked, "Brother Ge, how do you feel?"

Ge Qingzhu slowly brought his attention back after hearing the question and he chuckled in response, “The formation is operating smoothly and it’s not difficult to maintain the circulation of energy. After the initial phase, the formation seems to be operating on its own and I won’t have to place too much attention on it. I feel that I would be able to control the island alone.”

Chu Jia heaved a sigh of relief and she laughed, “It’s better to station 2 people here in case anything goes wrong. After all, there is a long way to go before arriving at the Three Unity Island.”

Ge Qingzhu smiled and no longer spoke. He nodded slightly at Chu Jia before turning his attention to the formation he was controlling.

Even though everything seemed to be going smoothly, it was their first time using the island. They wanted to be really careful.

Seeing as there was nothing for her to care about at the moment, she strolled out of the secret chamber that contained the eye of the formation.

The 80 low-level cultivators were completely captivated by the sights around them. They gathered in groups as they stared deep into space.

The island might have only started moving not too long ago, but they looked extremely excited.

In actuality, other than meteors that would fly past from time to time and stars in the distance, space contained nothing but desolation and loneliness. There was nothing much for them to see.

However, to those cultivators who were leaving the Azure Ascension World for the first time, everything was new and fresh.

Fang Kewei, another Martial Extermination Realm expert on the island, approached all of a sudden and reminded, “We’re really eye-catching by the way.”

“Huh?” Only then did Chu Jia realize that the island was glowing in 5 different colors.

As the island flew through space, it left behind a long trail of magnificent light.

Fang Kewei couldn’t help but ask after seeing the look of shock on Chu Jia’s face, “What’s the matter? Are we unable to get rid of the light trail?”

Chu Jia chuckled helplessly, “We will, but we will slow down a lot. Forget it. We’ll adjust the formation after the trade fair.”

In the depths of space, Shang Xia, who had been following the island from behind, stared at the light trail while shaking his head in disbelief. All of them forgot about the most fundamental problem when coming up with the moving island! Obviously, the magnificent light trail was completely out of line with the Tongyou Institution’s usual practice of keeping themselves low-key.

In one of the meteorite belts outside the Azure Ascension World, space trembled slightly and a figure tumbled out before smashing into the nearest meteorite and becoming one with it.

Chapter 777: I’m Going On A Trip On My Favorite Rocket Ship

Like before, the trade fair held on the Three Unity Island was an event where cultivators of the Azure Ascension World rushed to attend.

It was a shame the Three Unity Land was drifting in space. The reasoning was something a majority of ordinary cultivators would never understand. In fact, those cultivators probably detested the factions that chose to hold the trade fair up there.

After Shang Xia entered the Martial Dipper Realm, he discovered the scheme thought out by the 3 Elysiums of the past.

Of course, the 3 Elysiums had now become the 4 Elysiums. However, Shang Xia had no idea if the existence in the Sixth Order of the Primary Realm of the Yuanchen Sect knew the reason behind their actions.

The Three Unity Island was somewhere the cultivators of the Azure Ascension World could deal freely and secretly. Naturally, the various factions that could take part in it would benefit greatly. However, the busiest time was actually before the descent of the Three Unity Pagoda.

Other than cultivators who entered the Three Unity Island through many different methods, it was a time for the various powers to show off their foundations and strength.

In the past, the Tongyou Institution had never attracted too much attention to themselves. In fact, one could say that they were pretty unremarkable.

The Auspicious Cloud Cape would allow them to bring 10 or so cultivators to the island, and they were only able to do that because Shang Xia gave them the treasure back then. It went through some improvements in order to carry a little more people, but that was it. If it hadn't, the cape would only be able to ferry 5 experts whose cultivation had to be in the Martial Extermination Realm or above!

Anyone who could attend the trade fair wasn't too surprised by the Tongyou Institution's lack of abilities. After all, they had barely established their Holy Land. There were even some factions who mocked the Tongyou Institution for being 'rich upstarts of the cultivation world'.

Actually, those people weren't exactly thinking straight. Even the newest Elysium could only ferry a hundred or so people to the island with their rank five Cloud Roc. They surprised everyone with their achievement in the first year the roc appeared. The Xiangyang Elysium thus solidified its position as the Cloud Roc could return to the Azure Ascension World quickly and complete another trip. They could send close to 200 ordinary cultivators to the Three Unity Island.

The other factions were racking their brains to come up with a way to send their low-leveled cultivators to the island. They came up with many methods, but no matter how hard they tried, they would only be able to carry 5 to 10 cultivators.

Several factions with deeper foundations would be able to reach close to 100 cultivators, but none of them could actually cross the 100 mark.

Also, it wasn't as though all the factions would only start bringing their disciples over a day before the trade fair started. They could start anytime they liked.

Like the Tongyou Institution that could only send 10 members with the Auspicious Cloud Cape. When the fair approached, they would take multiple trips over and send dozens of low-leveled cultivators to the island.

Of course, they had to do it multiple times and couldn't match up to the larger factions out there.

However, things were about to change. Under the gaze of everyone on the island, a moving island that left behind a trail of resplendent light quickly approached the Three Unity Island. It quickly became the center of attention.

The light trail following them was tens of miles long. The tiny island was covered in an eye-catching five colored light as it arrived. When everyone discovered that the moving island belonged to the Tongyou Institution, a large commotion broke out.

...

When the trade fair was about to happen, several Martial Dipper Realm experts gathered close to the Three Unity Island according to their agreement. They were the group of experts who would be patrolling the Azure Ascension World.

“If I dare ask, is this really Brother Pang Jingyun of the Yuanchen Sect?” A ray of light stopped abruptly as a young man who was bursting with excitement asked.

“Hehe... I noticed the Pine Sled of your Changbai Sect arriving on the Three Unity Island earlier. Looks like Brother Shen also arrived. Greetings!” A person shorter than Shen Baisong, clad in cloud-embroidered robes revealed himself. He cupped his fists at Shen Baisong who was approaching.

“Brother Pang, did you come along with the Cloud Roc? It’s a pity I came a little too late and failed to see what it looks like.” Shen Baisong revealed a look of regret. It didn’t matter which world they referred to. It was difficult to see a rank five spiritual beast in the Azure Ascension World.

Pang Jingyun laughed in response, “The Cloud Roc will have to take another trip to the Jing Continent. It will definitely return. With its speed, it shouldn’t take long.”

Shen Baisong sighed again, “An Elysium truly possesses strong foundations. When I arrived earlier, I heard that your Cloud Roc could carry 120 people!”

“That’s nothing to marvel at. Back then, the Cloud Roc just advanced and could ferry 80 or so people. A spiritual beast boasts an incredible lifespan and it will only grow stronger. The number of people it can bring will naturally increase.” Pang Jingyun smiled.

In a helpless voice, Shen Baisong could only mumble softly, “Our Pine Sled is far from comparable. We can bring 50 or so cultivators, and it moves extremely slowly. If not for my help in secret, they wouldn’t have been able to bring another 10 disciples. We can barely transport half the number of cultivators of your Cloud Roc!”

A voice interrupted them right after Shen Baisong had spoken. “Close to 70 disciples... You can be considered above average among all the factions. The Star Cloud Board of my Heavenly Star Palace can barely bring 50 people over.”

Shen Baisong broke out into laughter the next second. “Oh? Junior Sister Yi, you’re here. The speed of the Star Cloud Board is really fast. It’s no wonder you can’t bring as many people.”

Yi Jingzi stepped out from the void and nodded slightly at Pang Jingyun before she continued, “3 of us have already arrived. Do you guys know who the other 2 are?”

Shen Baisong laughed and looked at Pang Jingyun. “Brother Pang, I believe you already know!”

Instead of telling them, Pang Jingyun decided to build the suspense a little. “Both of you are really familiar with the others. Why don’t we wait a little?”

Shen Baisong and Yi Jingzi were slightly taken aback as they revealed curious looks. Silence quickly filled the space around them.

A sharp divine will arrived from not too far away and alerted the 3 of them.

Pang Jingyun revealed a look of surprise, but he chuckled in response soon after. “Lady Xinlan, you came really quickly.”

A heroic looking lady appeared not too far away as a trace of shock flashed through her eyes as she stared at the others. “What are you talking about? Didn’t you 3 arrive before me? Heh, actually, I came alone and my trip was a lot more convenient. From the looks of it, you 3 seemed to have assisted in transporting your disciples over to the Three Unity Island, right?”

They nodded slightly and Shen Baisong broke the silence with a laugh. “Looks like Lady Xinlan has arrived. Now, I feel like I am able to guess the identity of our final member.”

Yi Jingzi turned to look at Pang Jingyun.

As the Azure Ascension World organized teams of Martial Dipper Realm experts to patrol the world and intercept any foreign expert, they obviously had to assign a leader for each team. The 4 Elysiums would naturally have to send out their Martial Dipper Realm experts to take charge of matters.

There were 4 teams in total, and the Martial Dipper Realm experts who made up those teams would swap from time to time. They came from many different factions, with the exception of those from the 4 Elysiums.

Not only did they serve as a model for others by sending out their experts, but they were also displaying their foundations for all to see. Even the Yuanchen Sect which had only promoted to an Elysium not too long ago did the same.

Pang Jingyun was the leader of their squad, and he clearly knew who would be coming. However, everyone else seemed to have already guessed the identity of the last person.

Pang Jingyun smiles, “It’s a shame I didn’t attend the great war 4 years ago. I heard that anyone who managed to survive experienced an increase in strength. I heard about some matters there, and I used some connections to pull all of you together.”

An awkward smile appeared on his face as he continued, “Because Yu Yu had to shift her sect, she wasn’t able to join us this time. In order not to drag out matters, I had to get Lady Xinlan to take her place.”

Shen Baisong glanced at Yi Jingzi and they exchanged a glance. When Gong Xinlan arrived earlier, Pang Jingyun didn’t seem too familiar with her from the way he addressed her. Moreover, Gong Xinlan was pretty friendly with Yu Yu and his explanation made sense.

Be it Shen Baisong, Yi Jingzi, or Gong Xinlan, all of them were part of the same squad in the past. They knew that the true core of their battle formation was Shang Xia! He was definitely the last person!

Shen Baisong chuckled under his breath. "Looks like Brother Shang is the last to arrive."

Gong Xinlan immediately followed up, "He will probably have to bring the members of the Tongyou Institution over to the Three Unity Island. I heard that they've always been using a piece of rainbow cloud to ferry their members over. They can't bring too many either. He should be late because he had to bring as many people over as possible..."

"No matter what, the Tongyou Institution has only established their Holy Land for a few years. Their entire history stretches back 30 or so years at most and it's not that easy to build one's foundations." Shen Baisong laughed. He seemed to be helping Shang Xia to explain his tardiness.

Yi Jingzi added, "The Tongyou Institution grew too rapidly. Other than Kou Chongxue, the crazy anomaly, their other Martial Dipper Realm experts seem to be carried by him all the way. Of course their foundations wouldn't be as solid..."

Her view perfectly corresponded with what many experts of the Azure Ascension World were feeling about the Tongyou Institution.

"Lady Yi, you're not exactly wrong. However, Shang Xia's cultivation method seems different from the other Deputy Patriarchs..." Pang Jingyun muttered.

"Wait! Take a look at that!" Gong Xinlan interrupted their conversation all of a sudden.

She didn't even need to point out what she was referring to. A giant ball of light seemed to be moving extremely quickly through space towards the Three Unity Island while leaving behind a giant light trail.

"This... This seems to be a transport tool used to ferry cultivators to the Three Unity Island!"

All of them identified the use of that glowing ball but the next moment, the same question appeared in their minds.

Which faction does that belong to?!

Chapter 778: Coming Up with Something New

Above the Three Unity Island, the five colored lights finally dissipated. The floating island was revealed and the cultivators of the You Continent streamed into the Three Unity Island.

Unlike before, there was a trace of confidence in their eyes as they made their way onto the island. They were empowered by the floating island the Tongyou Institution created to bring them over to the Three Unity Island, and everyone who was staring at them fell into silence for a moment.

After counting the number of people who emerged from the Tongyou Institution's floating island, they broke out into an uproar.

80! There were 80 of them!

After the Yuanchen Sect produced their Elysium, they were only able to transport 100 people over to the Three Unity Island!

The number of cultivators the Tongyou Institution could ferry over this time was second only to the 4 Elysiums!

Was that really the power of a Holy Land that was born several years ago?!

Many cultivators on the Three Unity Island stared at the island that had been cleared out before falling deep into thought. It didn't seem too massive, but 80 people was far from its limit.

If they squeezed a little, they might be able to pack a hundred or so cultivators on it.

The disturbance the floating island brought to the Three Unity Island didn't fade for a long time. One could even see that the effect would spread through the large factions in the Azure Ascension World before long.

...

In the void around the Three Unity Island, Shang Xia no longer concealed his aura and he made his way over to Pang Jingyun and the others.

"I apologize for coming late. I made all of you wait..." Shang Xia muttered.

Shen Baisong stared at Shang Xia who was cupping his fists while rushing over before muttering in a profound tone, "Brother Shang, you truly surprised all of us this time!"

"Haha!" Shang Xia naturally wouldn't pretend he couldn't tell what Shen Baisong was referring to and he continued, "We barely completed the creation of the floating island and I had to follow them for fear of something going wrong. If anything goes wrong, it will probably crumble after a few uses."

Gong Xinlan pressed her lips together and pouted, "That island doesn't look like it will crumble easily..."

Yi Jingzi also fell deep into thought as she mumbled, "The five colored glow around the island seems really familiar. From the looks of it, Brother Shang, you did a lot of work on it."

Smiling at Gong Xinlan, Shang Xia turned to Yi Jingzi and replied, "Lady Yi, that's too high of a praise. Everything was created by the Formation hall. I merely assisted them slightly."

'Assisted slightly' was different from not being involved. Everyone immediately stared at Shang Xia with a sly look.

Shang Xia could only chuckle helplessly.

Pang Jingyun cupped his fists towards Shang Xia and did a self-introduction before adding to the conversation, "Brother Shang, if I may ask, how many people can your floating island carry?"

The others quickly perked up their ears in anticipation of Shang Xia's reply.

"Around 80 or so?" Shang Xia muttered.

"80 or so..." Shen Baisong shook his head while forcing a light.

Even Pang Jingyun was shocked.

Yi Jingzi kept her cool and asked, “Brother Shang, were they able to carry so many people because you were helping them in the dark?”

Shang Xia shook his head and explained truthfully, “This is the first time we’re using the island and there are many places we need to modify and improve. Our Formation Grandmaster told me not to interfere with the process and just be ready to deal with anything that might come up during the flight.”

Shen Baisong sighed yet again while Yi Jingzi glanced at him from the corner of her eye. She continued to ask, “Are you saying that the number of people your floating island can carry will rise in the future?”

“It’s possible, but we might not be able to bring so many people up here either. After all, every trip costs us a lot of resources. If the cost is too high, there will be no point in bringing so many people up here.”

Yi Jingzi fell into contemplation and nodded slightly. She didn’t say any more.

Instead, Shen Baisong spoke up all of a sudden. “Brother Shang, your Tongyou Institution shocks the world time and time again!”

Extending his hands outwards, Shang Xia mumbled helplessly, “We have no choice but to try our best. After all, our foundations are far too lacking!”

Everyone present felt a trace of depression washing over them and none of them felt like talking any longer.

In the end, Pang Jingyun gave a dry laugh and shifted the topic. “Brother Shang, did your Tongyou Institution bring Spatial Pouches for the trade fair this time? My Yuanchen Sect has been planning to obtain several high-grade Spatial Pouches this time.”

“Of course we have Spatial Pouches. Hehe... If you wish to obtain them, you’ll have to see how much you’re willing to pay.” Shang Xia smiled at the side.

Shen Baisong also broke out into laughter. “The Tongyou Institution isn’t just famous for Spatial Pouches! You can even bring out a bunch of high-level talismans and it’s amazing indeed. I heard that Brother Shang is a Talisman Grandmaster and took charge of your Talisman Hall. Did you manage to produce another batch of Talisman Grandmasters?”

“Of course not! Hahaha! We only managed to produce several rank four talismans and it only looks impressive on the surface!” Shang Xia laughed.

However, that wasn’t really accurate. After all, rank four talismans were considered extremely rare battle resources. Unless they managed to fulfill the needs of their own factions, no one would be willing to sell them!

Now that the Tongyou Institution was offering rank four talismans, everyone could imagine that they had more rank four talismans than they needed. Moreover, they seemed to be able to bring out many different types of rank four talismans. In a world where a majority of rank four Talisman Grandmasters would only master a few talismans, it wasn’t difficult to come to the conclusion that

the Tongyou Institution had a horrifying number of Talisman Grandmasters! From the number of talismans they brought out, they might have 4, or even 5 Talisman Grandmasters!

That was a truly terrifying number. No one dared to believe what they concluded, but if they didn't, they wouldn't be able to explain how the Tongyou Institution could bring out 8 or 9 different rank four talismans for sale!

It wasn't possible for the Tongyou Institution to possess a Talisman Grandmaster who could craft 4 or 5 different talismans, right?

If that were the case, it would be even more frightening news than if the Tongyou Institution had 4 to 5 Talisman Grandmasters!

Shen Baisong's probe actually touched on the secrets of the Tongyou Institution and his intention was to learn about the institution's true strength.

Shang Xia naturally expected a question like that when he allowed them to bring the talismans to the trade fair. If not for the fact that the Tongyou Institution required a lot of resources, they wouldn't have done that.

With his astounding success rate when crafting rank four talismans, it was the most cost-effective method for them to obtain enough resources. The Tongyou Institution was far too lacking compared to other older powers and Shang Xia had no choice but to do what he did.

Shang Xia had been prepared to answer questions like that since a long time ago. He planned to confuse them with a mixture of truth and lies.

Even so, Shang Xia had no choice but to admit something and that was the fact that the Tongyou Institution knew at least 9 different rank four talisman inheritances.

That was a point that shocked even old-time factions like the Heavenly Star Palace, Changbai Sect, and even the Yuanchen Sect who possessed their own Elysium.

Glancing at everyone present, Shang Xia chuckled and quickly shifted the topic. "My Tongyou Institution has shallow foundations and we can only offer stuff like Spatial Pouches and rank four talismans. We can't possibly compare to Brother Pang's Yuanchen Sect! You have a lot of medicine that can improve one's cultivation. Every time one of them appears during the trade fair, it will fetch an astronomical price!"

Shen Baisong quickly added, "Yeah! In the past, when the Azure Spiritual World learned of the Bing Continent of the Azure Origin World, we always referred to it as the land of resources. It's said that there's a giant lake filled with treasures. Geniuses have been nurtured in that place and the number of treasures extracted are limitless. It's truly an amazing place. It's no wonder your Yuanchen Sect managed to ascend to an Elysium during the fusion of the worlds."

Yi Jingzi also added, "Yeah! The Yuanchen Sect always deals in completed advancement medicine and stuff like that."

Pang Jingyun responded immediately, "No, no... Regardless of talents or resources, the Jiao Continent is always a notch higher than us."

"The Jiao Continent is as poor as can be! The cultivators there are nothing but scattered mess and there's no need to bother mentioning them. We can't compare to

the mineral reserves of the Liao Continent and the amazing advantages of the Yi Continent!" Gong Xinlan snorted.

Shen Baisong could only laugh helplessly in response. "It's a shame my Changbai Sect isn't the biggest faction in the Liao Continent. Brother Shang, you should know that the four... No, three great races have always been independent. Even as a Holy Land, we can't interfere much in their matters."

Yi Jingzi also sighed, "My Yi Continent is truly lacking in population..."

Finally, Pang Jingyun felt that it was meaningless to have such conversations and he quickly interrupted them, "Everyone, all our continents have their advantages. Even as Martial Dipper Realm cultivators, it's hard for us to properly appraise each other's territories. Since we're already gathered together, we should talk about each of our duties and responsibilities. We need to patrol the Azure Ascension World for the next 3 years and we have a lot more time to understand each other..."

Everyone agreed immediately. They also felt that their conversation earlier was meaningless.

Pang Jingyun first introduced the area they were in charge of, before telling them about the other squads responsible for guarding the other areas. He also spoke of the way to contact the other squads and some matters that happened recently.

Shang Xia and the rest already knew some things he was talking about, but they managed to learn something as well. Some of the information Pang Jingyun revealed might have been instructed by the Sixth Order existence from the Yuanchen Sect and Shang Xia and the others didn't have to bother filtering much information. They just took what Pang Jingyun said at face level and shocked them all into their minds.

When he was done, Pang Jingyun revealed an awkward expression and said, "Oh, there's one more thing. It's about working together. You guys have fought together back then but I'm a new addition to your squad. I hope you can guide me well..."

Shen Baisong laughed in response, "Brother Pang, there's no need to act so reserved. The key to our battle formation doesn't lie with me, Yi Jingzi, or Gong Xinlan. Brother Shang is the sole person in charge of matters."

Pang Jingyun obviously knew as much and he was merely putting up an act. He quickly followed up, "Brother Shang?"

"It's not difficult at all. I believe Brother Pang is more than familiar with the battle formation we learned back then. All of us only need to practice a few times before you can get the hang of it. However..." Shang Xia smiled in response.

"Is something the matter? Brother Shang, please speak your mind. As long as it's within my abilities, I'll do my best!" Pang Jingyun followed up in panic.

Shang Xia waved his hand casually before he continued, "It's nothing like that. I noticed that everyone has refined their second fate dipper and I might have some new thoughts about our battle formation."

“What do you mean?” Shen Baisong was slightly taken aback.

Instead of replying directly, Shang Xia asked another question. “Are you guys able to create a Fate Dipper Clone now?”

Chapter 779: Asteroid Belt

Shang Xia couldn't help but feel a little regretful when he looked at those around him.

In the 4 years that passed, Shang Xia tried his hardest to lower the difficulty of cultivation by improving his rank five arts. He racked his brains to gather fate dipper essences of the 5 elements in order to grow as strong as possible.

However, he had yet to completely refine his fourth set of fate dipper essences.

His cultivation improved nonetheless, and it was a pretty satisfactory increase if he had to evaluate it himself.

When he arrived, he discovered that even though he grew stronger, so did the others! In fact, some of them grew even quicker than himself! The arrogance that had built up within him was immediately shattered.

Pang Jingyun, Shen Baisong, Yi Jingzi, and Gong Xinlan had already refined their second fate dipper and entered the second element of the Martial Dipper Realm!

If Shang Xia ignored the first 3 due to their affiliations with powerful factions, Gong Xinlan came from the Jiao Continent and she could be considered a scattered cultivator! Even she managed to advance.

Of course, their improvement was because of the great battle against the Spirit Abundance World back then and after many Martial Dipper Realm experts fell, their fate dippers were left behind. An opportunity came for everyone to grow stronger.

However, it wasn't that easy to refine an Origin Dipper.

All 4 of them managed to gain proper control of their first fate dipper before refining their second fate dipper in 4 short years. That in itself was an amazing feat.

When Shang Xia was shocked by their improvement, they were equally as surprised.

After they gathered earlier, all of them concealed their true cultivation in some way or form. After all, they still had to be careful.

That was why none of them asked about each other's cultivation after meeting. As such, none of them knew how strong each other had become.

Who would have thought that Shang Xia would point out their cultivation now that he arrived? What mattered even more wasn't the fact that Shang Xia was right. It was the fact that they couldn't properly tell his cultivation level.

That didn't seem fair...

The atmosphere between them started to turn a little awkward, but Pang Jingyun eventually laughed softly and tried to alleviate the situation. He teased slightly, “Brother Shang, this doesn't seem fair! You noticed our cultivation level but you seem to have hidden yours well!”

Shang Xia got rid of the protection barrier around him and laughed, “Actually, all of you should have seen through my cultivation a long time ago!”

“First element of the Martial Dipper Realm? How is that possible? Haven’t you been able to refine your second fate dipper?” Pang Jingyun gasped.

Shen Baisong also continued, “That’s not possible. Why does it seem like you haven’t even completed the refinement of your first fate dipper?”

Shang Xia extended his arms helplessly and sighed, “That’s precisely the case.”

“Don’t tell us you have some strange and special secret art that allows you to conceal your true cultivation level. Your cultivation level doesn’t seem to have improved much in the last 4 years! It’s a little too fake...” Gong Xinlan muttered.

Shang Xia remained serious and swore, “I swear, everything you are seeing is real!”

Even though Shang Xia had been doubling down time and time again, Yi Jingzi couldn’t help but say, “There has to be something we don’t understand.”

The others nodded in unison and they clearly didn’t believe that Shang Xia hadn’t refined his first fate dipper.

A thought filled Shen Baisong’s mind all of a sudden. “Brother Shang, I heard that when you entered the Martial Extermination Realm, you refined 4 extermination origins simultaneously. Even though it’s something never done before, could you have chosen to refine 5 fate dippers at one go?”

Yi Jingzi added, “I heard that the Tongyou Institution has been gathering a large amount of fate dipper essences...”

“That’s right! Originally, fate dipper essences were considerably cheap. However, it’s getting more expensive during the trade fairs in recent years and the Tongyou Institution is the cause of that...” Pang Jingyun laughed.

Shang Xia wasn’t surprised that they could guess that he was walking down that path from the actions of the institution. It wasn’t likely for him to be able to hide it either. Unless he hid in the Tongyou Institution and never showed himself, otherwise, others would definitely pick up on what he was doing.

He could only laugh in response. “Our institution’s inheritance isn’t really complete and it didn’t really seem suitable for me. I could only choose to walk down my own path. Luckily, I succeeded.”

Gong Xinlan gasped in shock. “Are you really doing it?! How did you manage to accomplish something like that?”

Obviously, the question wasn’t exactly appropriate. It touched on Shang Xia’s secrets but Gong Xinlan was always one to speak before thinking. As such, Shang Xia wasn’t too offended.

He didn’t really refine all 5 fate dippers at once anyway but he didn’t have to prove them all wrong if that was what they thought.

Yi Jingzi nodded slightly and sighed, “It really is related to the fate dipper essences...”

Pang Jingyun sighed at the side, “Brother Shang, looks like you started a new path of cultivation!”

Shen Baisong's expression was complicated as he mumbled, "I truly admire you!"

...

After interacting with each other for some time, they understood a little more about each other.

Under Pang Jingyun's lead, the 5 of them arrived at a location in space 80000 miles away from the Beyond Heavens Pavilion. It was where an asteroid belt lay and even though it wasn't exactly dense, it stretched thousands upon thousands of miles.

Along their way, they practiced their battle formation multiple times.

Pang Jingyun might not have worked with any of them in the past, but he was still a genius of the later generation in the Yuanchen Sect. After getting over the shock he felt when he noticed Shang Xia's exquisite way of controlling and fusing their dipper qi, he quickly immersed himself into the battle formation.

By the time they arrived, they could work extremely well with each other.

During their practice, Shang Xia learned that Pang Jingyun also refined a Water Element Fate Dipper.

There might not be any concept of the 5 elements in the Azure Ascension World, but since Pang Jingyun could lead the team and replace Yu Yu in their battle formation, those people who sent him there naturally had some sort of understanding about Yu Yu's fate dippers.

Thinking back to what they said back then, Shang Xia even suspected that they had some sort of understanding towards the way he cultivated.

As they arrived, Pang Jingyun turned and introduced the situation. "The 4 Sixth Order Ancestors of our Azure Ascension World can somewhat control what happens 50000 to 60000 miles away from the Beyond Heavens Pavilion. They are able to vaguely sense what is happening out here, but they won't be able to interfere directly."

Shang Xia and the others became serious once they heard that the Sixth Order existences were involved.

"In the space 60000 to 100000 miles away from the Beyond Heavens Pavilion, there are 3 special regions. The asteroid belt in front of us is one of them. During the battle 4 years ago, many of the experts of the Spirit Abundance World hid in these 3 special regions without returning to their world. The Spirit Abundance World has also been secretly sending their members to these regions in order to keep an eye on our world. Our mission is to clear out this area of experts from the Spirit Abundance World and stop them from spying on us!

Chapter 780: Patrolling the Vast Sea of Stars

Obviously, they couldn't possibly fly around aimlessly along the asteroid belt.

Before entering the region, the 5 of them came up with a rough plan. All of them would be within 1000 or so miles from each other before traveling through the region.

With their abilities, they would be able to gather up quickly in case anything happened.

The moment their battle formation was formed, they would be able to fight against even a fifth element Martial Dipper Realm expert from the Spirit Abundance World.

Of course, if they ran into a supreme existence like Kou Chongxue, they could only blame their luck and accept their fate of being annihilated.

Fortunately, those existences wouldn't dare to appear so close to the Azure Ascension World. The moment they were detected by the existences in the Sixth Order of the Primary Realm, they would basically be considered massive treasure troves.

Even though Pang Jingyun said that the Sixth Order existences could only extend their influence 60000 miles away from the Beyond Heavens Pavilion, anyone who believed it would be an absolute idiot.

It didn't matter if it was because of their battle formation or because of Shang Xia's cultivation being the lowest among them all. He was located in the center as they made their rounds to ensure that they would be able to form the battle formation with the quickest speed the moment anyone ran into trouble.

Now that they had arrived, none of them would be foolish enough to just stroll about without doing anything else.

Before Shang Xia left, Shang Bo instructed him that the asteroid belt was a region where resources were abundant.

As they looked for traces of foreign experts, they could locate several chunks of rocks that possessed certain value and make a marking on them so that they could be used in the future.

It was why the 5 of them chose to split up in the first place. It wasn't just to increase the efficiency of their search. It was also so that they could look for resources freely.

The asteroids flying around were of different sizes and most of them would possess some type of mineral reserve. The quality also differed greatly. Most of them contained ordinary resources and even if they could be considered resources that could assist in cultivation, they would be considered low to mid-grade treasures at best. There wasn't a need to care about usefulness to Martial Dipper Realm experts like Shang Xia. They might not even catch the eye of Martial Extermination Realm experts.

Even so, Shang Xia spread his divine will out carefully and examined every chunk of rock no matter the size. Any time he noticed one with resources that could be used by the Tongyou Institution, he would mark them out.

Even though there were very little chunks that he found useful, there were tons of them flying around. If they were all added up, they would be pretty valuable.

Of course, they would occasionally discover asteroids that had been marked by other factions. They were clearly left behind by experts who patrolled the area in the past.

Those markings had been generally agreed on by the great factions of the Azure Ascension World. They were made extremely discreetly, and if one didn't inspect it carefully, even Martial Dipper Realm experts would find it difficult to notice them.

The asteroid belt contained stray chunks of rocks flying around and even though they had a predetermined path, Shang Xia and the others chose to enter the belt from another direction. Even so, they ran into pieces that already contained markings.

No matter how precious the resources are on the marked asteroids, Shang Xia and the others wouldn't convert them since others already chose it.

Obviously, the cultivators who made the markings would come back for them in the future.

Martial Dipper Realm experts naturally wouldn't be involved with the retrieval of those low to mid-grade resources.

Shang Xia couldn't help but think back to the Three Unity Island where the various factions were comparing their spatial transport. All of them seemed to be upgrading their means of transport. Perhaps, retrieving resources from the depths of space was their true goal all along.

In the future, methods to transport their lower-level members into space were probably going to be very important.

Moreover, those asteroids that were marked played a special role. They seemed to possess some means of monitoring the region around them.

The moment anyone destroyed the markings or the asteroid itself, those who placed them would immediately learn of it.

The person who did it would definitely be discovered...

The vast sea of stars might not possess much energy one could use to cultivate, and the heaven and earth qi was thin beyond imagination. Under such circumstances, no one would wish to waste their dipper qi. After all, they would only be able to restore their inner qi by refining essence crystals.

With their current abilities, those patrolling the area would need mid-grade essence crystals at least if they wished to recover some energy. Low-grade essence crystals were basically useless to them at that point.

In order to prevent accidents from happening, everyone would usually travel through space for 3 days before taking 1 day to restore their energy. It would ensure that they started to recover after expending 20 percent of their energy so that they would be able to deal with any unexpected encounters.

The mid-grade essence crystals they brought with them would obviously be expanded at a rapid rate.

What Pang Jingyun and the others didn't know was that Shang Xia wasn't actually using much inner qi when traveling across space.

If everyone would use 20 to 30 percent of their inner qi after 3 days, Shang Xia would barely spend 10 to 20 percent of his dipper qi.

The reason was simple. After Shang Xia could change the alignment of his Five Element Dipper Qi, he was able to reduce the expenditure to the minimum even in such nasty environments.

Shang Xia would be able to spend half a day on his cultivation when everyone was using the time to recover their inner qi. He could even use it to think about other matters.

One couldn't underestimate the half a day he had to do his own thing. With the extra time he had, Shang Xia managed to complete the refinement of his fourth batch of fate dipper essence in the first year of their patrol.

At that point, he managed to refine a total of 40 fate dipper essences!

If they were to compare a single Origin Dipper to 10 strands of fate dipper essences, Shang Xia could be said to have refined 4 Origin Dippers!

Throughout the year, he also managed to catch up on his cultivation. Even though he only had half a day to do so every time, he managed to think of another cultivation method based on Chu Jia's suggestion back then.

It was for him to use the elemental essence crystals of the Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth Elements to supplement his cultivation. He would activate them at the same time and turn it into something like the Five Element Formation they laid down on the floating island in order to cultivate.

The only difference was that he wasn't laying down a formation. Instead, his body would act as the activated formation to absorb all the energy those essence crystals contained!

That way, he wouldn't need to make use of mid-grade essence crystals. All he would need are low-grade elemental essence crystals. Not only would he be able to restore his inner qi, he would also be able to increase his cultivation!

Without a doubt, that allowed Shang Xia to save an astronomical number of essence crystals!

Of course, if Shang Xia managed to get his hands on mid-grade elemental essence crystals, his cultivation efficiency would shoot through the roof.

Naturally, the way he was cultivating and recovering had its downsides. He was the only one who could do something like that.

Moreover, the number of elemental essence crystals produced in the Azure Ascension World was far from their essence crystal production.

During the process of using those crystals for cultivation, Shang Xia discovered something interesting. After he activated those elemental essence crystals with his Five Element Dipper Qi, heaven and earth qi would gather around him.

The heaven and earth qi around him might be thin, but that was precisely why it was extremely obvious!

With his sharp senses, Shang Xia discovered that he had already confirmed something Chu Jia had been thinking about. It was something related to the Five Element Formation but he was stuck patrolling the Azure Ascension World for several years and would be unable to inform her of it. If he informed her of it after he returned, she would very likely be able to come up with a whole new Five Element Formation! In fact, it would probably be called the Five Element Qi Gathering Formation!