

The Heavens 781

Chapter 781: Finding Traces

The true mission they had been assigned to do was to locate the experts of the Spirit Abundance World who had been hiding in the region. Finding cultivation resources was something they did along the way as an added benefit.

In the year that passed, they managed to move pretty quickly through the meteorite belt and complete their investigation over a vast space.

As they made their way through the asteroid belt, they concealed their aura the best they could. Other than the trace they left behind to tell their companions where they were, it wasn't quite possible for anyone else to detect their presence.

Unfortunately, throughout their year of duty, Shang Xia and the others didn't run into anyone from the Spirit Abundance World. They didn't even find traces of one.

They would feel disappointed if things were like before, but after listening to the experience of those who patrolled the region before them, all of them were prepared to face something similar. As such, they were able to remain relatively calm.

“Hey! A year passed just like that!”

“I wonder if we will be able to achieve anything in our 3 years of service...”

“It's hard to say. Even though we're being careful, it's hard to say if they would pass through places we looked through before.”

“It's not as though we didn't leave anything in the places we passed... Whatever it is, we just have to do our best.”

“...”

The 5 of them would transmit their voices to each other for a chat every once in a while. There were times when they would simply stop patrolling for some time to gather for a chat. They would discuss their thoughts and even confirm some of their philosophies of cultivation.

For experts at their level, they might already have formed a set thinking for their path of cultivation and it wouldn't change easily, but they could always gain inspiration from somewhere else to improve themselves. Doing so would allow them to widen the path they could take in the future without shaking their current foundations and possibly allow their future cultivation to be a little smoother.

It was then that Shang Xia understood that the 4 of them before him weren't ordinary experts either.

Due to his unique cultivation method, Shang Xia was able to save a lot of time during the recovery process and spend it on his cultivation. Because of that, he completed the refinement of his fourth set of fate dipper essences and made some progress in his cultivation.

The others might not have as much time as him to cultivate as they needed to restore their energy, but they managed to improve to a certain extent too!

When they released their aura, Shang Xia could tell that all of them grew stronger. When they concealed their aura, even Shang Xia was finding it difficult to see through them.

One could see how strongly they were affected if they worked so hard on their cultivation after their initial meeting back then. The shock Shang Xia brought them was simply too large and they tried their hardest to catch up.

Other than that, Shang Xia suspected that Pang Jingyun and Yi Jingzi might have already completed their refinement of their second fate dipper and could control it perfectly. They should be able to split off a Fate Dipper Clone, but Shang Xia wasn't sure of the second part.

Shen Baisong and Gong Xinlan might not have reached that stage, but their strength increased considerably.

In the blink of an eye, another half a year passed. Ever since Shang Xia completed the refinement of his fourth set of fate dipper essences, he was unable to raise his cultivation any further. He placed his attention on his rank five secret art and martial arts.

As his cultivation couldn't increase any further, improving his martial arts was the only way for him to raise his combat abilities at the moment.

Shang Xia thought of a way to progress some time ago, but since he obtained his Five Element Ring, the entire process could be accelerated.

One fine day, when Shang Xia was carefully examining an asteroid that was close to 3000 feet wide, he felt a special spatial fluctuation from the distance.

Surprised, Shang Xia realized that it was the signal they decided on before, but it was the first time he had felt it in over a year.

He didn't dare to dally as he concealed his aura the best he could before disappearing from his position.

After traveling close to 1000 miles to his left, he noticed Shen Baisong's figure flickering unsteadily. He stared at a tiny asteroid in the distance with a serious expression.

Shang Xia was the first to arrive, and he quickly stepped out from the void. He asked immediately, "What's happening here?"

Turning his head to look at Shang Xia, Shen Baisong muttered, "There's something strange about that place. I discovered an asteroid that had its marking destroyed!"

Shang Xia glanced at the region of shattered rocks and realized that all the pieces came from a giant asteroid that had been destroyed.

Soon after, the void beside Shang Xia trembled as Pang Jingyun appeared.

The moment he saw Shen Baisong's flickering figure, he gasped, "You managed to create a Fate Dipper Clone too?"

Shang Xia wasn't surprised. He could tell that the Shen Baisong in the distance was a mere Fate Dipper Clone the moment he appeared.

Shen Baisong repeated everything once more before he continued, "I rushed over the moment I felt the destroyed marking. There are minute spatula fluctuations happening all around the central region of the destruction."

By the time he had spoken, Yi Jingzi and Gong Xinlan also arrived. The 5 of them were positioned in a way they could deploy their battle formation in case anything happened.

Pang Jingyun's gaze swept across Shen Baisong's clone before looking in the vicinity of the destruction before asking, "Where is your true body right now? Have you entered the region of destruction?"

"You have to be careful. If that region is where the expert of the Spirit Abundance World chose to hide, he will definitely place restrictions or other means of protection around. You need to be wary of walking into a trap." Yi Jingzi reminded.

Gong Xinlan frowned and muttered curiously, "Why didn't you send your Fate Dipper Cone in there to take a look? Wouldn't it be more dangerous to head in with your true body?"

Shen Baisong's clone merely laughed without saying anything more.

Soon after, Yi Jingzi muttered in realization, "Brother Shen, you should have just created your Fate Dipper Clone and it doesn't possess strong combat abilities. It might not even be comparable to a newly ascended Martial Dipper Realm expert."

A figure rose rapidly not too far away from the region of destruction and he didn't conceal himself. He flew over to meet up with the others. It was none other than Shen Baisong's true body."

If he didn't appear voluntarily, no one would realize that he was actually hiding within one of the broken-off chunks of rock flying through the region of destruction.

Shen Baisong actually blended in with his surroundings in order to conceal himself, and he managed to do so pretty flawlessly.

By the time he arrived before the others, the Fate Dipper Clone he created returned and fused back into him.

Shang Xia asked immediately, "Did you see anyone inside?"

"It seems like a temporary gathering spot they forsaken. Of course, it might be one of the safe spots they designated for their operation. There were many restrictions to ensure that the shattered rocks would fly away and I wasn't confident of destroying those restrictions without leaving a trace." Shen Baisong nodded slightly in response.

Shen Baisong possessed some sort of secret art that could allow him to discover people's presence even through restrictions.

Even though it wasn't exactly the best secret art they could find and it possessed lots of weaknesses as it couldn't accurately determine the situation within the pile of destruction, it was enough for an initial assessment of the situation.

After thinking about it and reaching the conclusion that there was nothing else they should pay attention to, everyone split up again.

This time, they acted even more cautiously. There was also a trace of excitement buzzing in their minds.

At the end of the day, they had been patrolling for a year or so. They were starting to get anxious that they hadn't discovered anything.

They might have found several rare treasures within the asteroid belt and interacted with each other to entertain themselves. But their mission was to locate the remnant experts of the Spirit Abundance World at the end of the day.

The radius of 3000 miles might be large, but they were Martial Dipper Realm experts. They weren't slow at all and they managed to scan through the area before long. It was a shame they didn't discover anything.

They didn't give up. They quickly expanded their search radius and finally discovered something strange on an asteroid 5000 miles out that was less than a thousand feet wide.

The person who discovered the anomaly was Shang Xia, and everyone quickly made their way over. With Shang Xia's guidance, they quickly discovered a hidden entrance stacked with multiple restrictions.

Shen Baisong muttered, "It's definitely the same person. The methods and restrictions left are the same!"

Yi Jingzi observed the restrictions and muttered, "The restrictions here seem a lot newer than those Shen Baisong discovered. This gathering point seems to have been constructed after the region was destroyed."

Gong Xinlan turned to Shang Xia and asked directly, "How did you locate this place? I scanned the area with my divine will earlier and I didn't notice this entrance at all. Much less the cave that was created within this asteroid..."

That was the reason why Pang Jingyun and the others were unable to discover anything despite scanning through the area alongside Shang Xia.

"I was just lucky." Shang Xia chuckled before looking at Shen Baisong. "Brother Shen, are you able to determine when the restrictions have been opened last?"

"The heaven and earth qi in the area is thin, but those within the restriction is circulating extremely quickly. I am unable to make the determination based on what I learned in the Azure Ascension World. However, I can roughly guess that it hasn't been a month since it was last active. In fact, it might be even shorter than that..."

Everyone was stunned by his revelation. It seemed as though they finally caught a trace of the foreign cultivator!

Chapter 782: Clone Still a Clone

Once again, Shang Xia understood that his fellow cultivators were also amazing.

When they discovered traces of the expert from the Spirit Abundance World in the asteroid belt, Shen Baisong was able to determine how long ago the restrictions were active. He also had the ability to discover the presence of life through those restrictions.

Pang Jingyun also seemed to possess some sort of method to break restrictions. He also had a deep understanding of the art of formations. If he wasn't afraid of alerting the expert from the Spirit Abundance World, he would have already destroyed the restrictions.

Yi Jingzi had some special way to position herself in space. Shang Xia discovered that if he didn't use his Five Element Ring and Teleportation Taisman, she would possess the best movement methods among the 5.

If all of them ignored movement arts and ability to shift space, Gong Xinlan would be able to fly the fastest among them. She possessed some sort of special technique that was closely related to 'Fire Escape' and she would leave behind a rainbow when she flew at her quickest speed.

She was allocated the largest area when they went to look for traces of the foreign expert because of that. It was a shame she was unlucky and the region she was responsible for had no traces of the foreign expert.

Shang Xia wasn't exactly useless among the team either. His divine will could expand the furthest, and it was the most sensitive among them.

The restrictions placed at the entrance to their secret hiding spot were exquisitely crafted. The entry point was also located in a blind spot. Unless one crawled deeper and deeper into an ever-narrowing hole, they would never find it!

Too bad for them, they couldn't hide the entryway of their secret hideout under Shang Xia's powerful divine will.

"Are you sure the person who used this hideout is the same as the person who used the hideout we found before?" Yi Jingzi asked.

After inspecting the restrictions, Pang Jingyun replied with absolute certainty. "The methods they used are exactly the same. It is true that there might be some difference between individual restrictions, but everyone has their own style of laying it down."

Gong Xinlan continued, "Are you able to determine which direction he left from the traces here?"

"The person who did this is extremely careful. I can't find any traces of him in the surrounding area." Yi Jingzi shook her head and mumbled.

Shen Baisong seemed to have thought of something and he asked, "The reason why we discovered the first hideout was because of the destroyed markings. That would mean that the previous hideout was created after the last squad examined the area and before we came. Where would the foreign expert have gone? Could he have several hideouts in the region?"

"Has it been less than a month since this person left?"

Pang Jingyun's expression sank slightly. "Does that mean that he left this place coincidentally? Or did he know when to leave after discovering that we were looking for him? If things are really coincidental, would that mean that he would be back soon? Or would he head to another hideout to play safe? If he's going to be back soon, what's the reason behind leaving in the first place? Where could he have gone? Are there other experts working with him? Should we stay behind here and ambush them when they come?"

Frowns appeared on the faces of everyone present after Pang Jingyun bombarded them with questions they were also troubled by. If the foreign expert managed to escape with his life during the war 4 years ago and remain hidden the whole time, it would mean that they possessed some special skills.

Shang Xia thought about it for a second before he continued, "Whatever it is, we will need some time to search thousands of miles around this region. Why don't we leave someone behind to ambush the expert in case he comes back? The person in charge of that will be responsible for holding him down as long as possible for the others to return. The moment we all regroup, the foreign expert will be trapped like a turtle in a jar."

Gong Xinlan muttered, "If the foreign expert is working with someone else and all of them come at once?"

Shang Xia smiled as he wondered out loud, "Young Lady Gong, do you mean..."

"Fate Dipper clones! We can leave our Fate Dipper Clones to maintain surveillance on this place while our true bodies continue the search. Wouldn't that be better?" Gong Xinlan raised her chin slightly and declared.

Yi Jingzi was surprised and she gasped, "Sister Xinlan, are you also able to create a Fate Dipper Clone?"

Yi Jingzi might not be a woman of many words, but throughout the time they spent on their duties, the ladies seemed to have formed a better relationship.

Gong Xinlan pressed her lips together and pouted, "Would you not compare me to the others? It's really depressing, you know... It takes away from my achievement!"

Pang Jingyun didn't seem to care about the conversation going on as he turned to Shang Xia to ask, "I recall Brother Shang mentioning something about creating a second battle formation if we manage to create Fate Dipper Clones..."

Shang Xia rubbed his teeth together and thought for some time before replying, "We would need to see what type of fate dippers all of you possess. It's possible it your fate dippers are of the appropriate alignment."

Pang Jingyun couldn't help but ask, "Would that mean that you can also create Fate Dipper Clones?"

"No, but I have another idea... Brother Pang, you will know when the time comes." Shang Xia chuckled bitterly in response.

Pang Jingyun didn't stop there as he continued to ask, "What if our Fate Dipper Clones don't possess the quality you need?"

Shang Xia wasn't opposed to Pang Jingyun's questioning at all. After all, they were facing a common enemy at the moment. Even if they didn't ask him about it, he would still have to mention some of the things he was about to say.

None of them could be careless when going up against an enemy of the Spirit Abundance World. They needed absolute trust in each other to bring out the best of their battle formation anyway.

Shang Xia replied patiently, "If they aren't suitable, we can still deploy a basic battle formation. The only downside is that I might not be able to last for long."

Just like that, the matter was concluded. The 5 of them decided to carry out their plan and they decided that Shang Xia, along with their fate dipper clones, would be in charge of keeping an eye on the secret entrance.

The reason was simple. After Shang Xia displayed his ability to conceal himself, even Shen Baisong had to admit that it was better than what he could achieve.

The others decided to examine the area 3000 miles away from the hidden entrance. They were looking for possible traces of the foreign expert while preparing to head back to assist Shang Xia and their Fate Dipper Clones.

Close to 100 miles away from the hidden entrance, a five colored light emerged from Shang Xia's body before filling the area around him. When it finally dissipated, Shang Xia and the 4 Fate Dipper Clones were completely concealed.

Waiting was a boring game anyway. It was especially so when the others who were patrolling the region were intentionally keeping their contact to a minimum in order not to be discovered. Half a month eventually passed as they stood in place.

When everyone was gradually losing their patience and was wondering if there was a need to continue waiting, a gray robed figure appeared within Shang Xia's divine will. None of the other 4 managed to detect anything else.

"It's finally here!" Shen Baisong's Fate Dipper Clone muttered. His clone was pretty similar in looks to his true body while having pretty pale skin.

The yin aura around him was pretty strong and along with his strange skin tone, he looked like a zombie who had been frozen for some time. Unlike Shen Baisong who seemed cultured and cool-headed, his clone looked a lot more impulsive. That might be because of the difference in personalities between his clone and his true body.

Shen Baisong wasn't the only one. The other clones seemed to have the same problem. Perhaps, Pang Jingyun's condition was better than the rest. It wasn't hard to tell that he was the first of the 4 who managed to create Fate Dipper Clones...

Their weak control over their clones was also one of the reasons Shang Xia chose to remain behind. After using his Five Element Dipper Qi, he not only managed to hide their tracks completely, but he could also prevent the aura they emitted from leaking as they had poor control over it.

"What are we waiting for? That person doesn't look to be in the best condition anyway! He's pale and it's clear he suffered serious injuries. Wouldn't it be a piece of cake for us to deal with him?" The person who spoke this time was Yi Jingzi's clone. She seemed to be in a hurry, and the personality of her clone was far from her true body.

Shang Xia became slightly curious. He wondered why Shen Baisong and Yi Jingzi's clones were so different from their main bodies.

He came into many clones during his time, and it was especially so for Kou Chongxue who produced more than 1 clone. Unlike those standing before him, Kou Chongxue's clone seemed to be a lot more in line with the true body.

Shang Xia couldn't help but wonder to himself if it was because their control over their fate dippers wasn't exactly great. Perhaps after some time, their clones would eventually be affected by their true bodies and become like them.

Even though those thoughts were filling Shang Xia's mind, they didn't affect what he was doing.

He reached out and stopped them from doing anything while growling softly, "Wait! There might be something wrong with him."

"What's the matter?" Pang Jingyun's clone asked.

Shang Xia glanced at the figure that was approaching the hideout and muttered, "That's a fake. It's probably a clone created by a rank four Clone Talisman used to confuse other people."

Gong Xinlan's clone whispered softly, "How can you tell that it's a clone?"

Shen Baisong's clone chuckled at the side in response, "Oh, I believe him. Lady Xinlan, do you not know that Brother Shang is a Talisman Grandmaster? He's not just any regular Talisman Grandmaster... He's one of the few rank five Talisman Grandmasters in our Azure Ascension World! If he can tell that it's a clone created from a talisman, it has to be the case!"

Yi Jingzi's clone was also greatly taken aback. She gasped, "As it turns out, Brother Shang is a rank five Talisman Grandmaster! I always thought that you were a rank four Talisman Grandmaster... My apologies!"

Shang Xia waved his hands to dismiss them while indicating for them to relax.

It didn't take long for the clone to arrive at the entrance of the hideout.

Yi Jingzi's clone couldn't help but speak up again. "Brother Shang, is the clone actually able to replace the foreign expert? Wouldn't that mean that they wouldn't have to show their face?"

"Nope." Shang Xia didn't turn his head as he replied as his attention was placed on the clone. He turned serious as he examined its every move.

The next moment, the clone arrived at the entrance to the hideout and Shang Xia heaved a sigh of relief. Fortunately, they didn't try to break the restrictions forcefully when they arrived. Neither did they try to leave any warning mechanisms behind. Otherwise, the cultivator who arrived would probably discover something and make his escape.

Now that the clone had arrived before the entrance, the real deal should be appearing. After all, the clone made from a Clone Talisman wouldn't be able to undo the restrictions.

Just as the thought appeared in Shang Xia's mind, a spatial fluctuation appeared in the opposite direction where the clone first appeared. A similarly gray robed man appeared within the asteroid belt.

“We should make our move now, right? He can’t possibly have another Clone Talisman...” Shen Baisong rubbed his fists together and from the looks of it, he was itching to make his move.

Fortunately, none of them moved recklessly. They knew that they had to ask Shang Xia before they did anything despite all of them being eager to attack.

The frown on Shang Xia’s face deepened as a five colored light filled his eyes.

“Brother Shang...” Pang Jingyun’s clone was the most careful and he could see the doubt Shang Xia had.

“No... That shouldn’t be the cultivator from the Spirit Abundance World.” Shang Xia spoke suddenly. “Huh? No... It should be a mere Fate Dipper Clone. The true body hasn’t shown itself.”

Gong Xinlan gasped softly in shock, “You can even tell something like that?”

“Oh no!” Shang Xia’s expression sank all of a sudden.

The clones around him raised their heads in shock as they wanted to see what would happen next.

4 powerful auras appeared from different directions a thousand or so miles away. They rushed towards the gray robed man instantly.

The void trembled as their dipper qi was released completely.

As they rushed over, they blocked off all routes of retreat.

The only problem was that they were targeting a Fate Dipper Clone when the true body was nowhere to be seen!

They fell for it!

When Shang Xia was plotting against the other party, the expert of the Spirit Abundance World was also thinking of how to avoid being caught.

With things progressing up to that point, Shang Xia also discovered a serious problem.

A strange gaze could be seen in Pang Jingyun’s eyes as he muttered, “Brother Shang, your dipper qi might be able to conceal our presence, but it also blocked off the connection we have to our true bodies... Did you not know that?”

Chapter 783: Accident Still an Accident

When Shang Xia concealed their presence, he also severed their connection with their true bodies.

Shang Xia could think of it before the expert from the Spirit Abundance World appeared as he would release the cover occasionally for them to communicate with the others.

After the appearance of the clone made from the rank four Clone Talisman, Shang Xia increased the concealment and completely erased the connection they had with their true bodies.

Pang Jingyun and the others who were a thousand or so miles out could feel that something had happened, and at their distance, they couldn’t tell the difference between a clone and a true body.

Since they couldn't tell, and the connection they had was severed, all of them were able to trust Shang Xia when the first clone appeared. They believed in his judgment and didn't act immediately.

However, when the second gray robed man appeared, Shang Xia and the others still showed no signs of moving. As they still couldn't communicate with their clones, they started to waver.

It was especially so when they couldn't feel the connection to their Fate Dipper Clones.

In the end, they had to expect the worst. They assumed that Shang Xia and the others fell for the other party's trap and had fallen. They might have been killed in a separate space!

If their guess was correct, there was no need for the expert from the Spirit Abundance World to hide himself any longer. The second gray robed figure was most likely the true body.

As such, they immediately made their move and surrounded the second figure who appeared.

Shang Xia discovered his mistake after Pang Jingyun's clone reminded him and he quickly reduced the effect of the Five Element Barrier around him. The clones quickly communicated to their main bodies that the person they were chasing was a mere clone.

Under such circumstances, there was actually no point in saying anything more. However, the bow had already been drawn and they had to release the arrow.

Shang Xia continued to maintain the Five Element Barrier while concealing their tracks to the best of his abilities.

Noticing his actions, Yi Jingzi's clone turned to Shang Xia and snapped, "Since they already discovered our ambush, there's no need to hide any longer. Hurry and release us so we can go help our true bodies!"

Shang Xia shook his head in response. "If that's just a Fate Dipper Clone, the 4 of them are more than enough to deal with it."

Pang Jingyun's clone frowned. "No. They can't form a perfect encirclement and the moment the true body appears, they would be able to escape. It would be harder to find traces of him in the future."

Shen Baisong's clone also yelled in annoyance, "Hurry up and let us go!"

Not only did Shang Xia not let them out, he even increased the strength of the barrier. Of course, he did it in such a way that they could still connect with their true body.

He explained calmly, "Do you think that person who appeared would put in so much effort for a mere hiding spot he can give up at any time? He not only used a Clone Talisman. He even used a Fate Dipper Clone..."

Gong Xinlan's Fate Dipper Clone muttered in a soft voice, "That person might be cautious because he thinks that we have already discovered him..."

Even though he was nodding, Shang Xia continued to explain, "If that were true, sure. However, he chose to return even though he knew that we were waiting for him. What do you think that tells us?"

With the connection the clones had to their true bodies, Shang Xia was actually speaking to the rest directly.

Pang Jingyun's clone muttered in a low voice, "Do you think that the person had to return because of something inside the secret hideout?"

Shang Xia merely nodded without saying any more.

Shen Baisong's clone, who looked to be the most reckless out of them all, finally turned serious and asked, "Brother Shang, have you thought about it? If that person had been hiding in the asteroid belt for so many years, he would know that the experts of our Azure Ascension World moved about in groups of 5 in order to deploy our battle formation..."

In other words, even though Shang Xia hadn't appeared, Pang Jingyun and the others had! The expert from the Azure Ascension World would know that someone was missing!

That was indeed something he had missed.

Without a change in expression, Shang Xia could only mutter softly, "We can only take the gamble to see if the treasure within the hideout is precious enough for him to take the risk..."

After he spoke, a massive explosion happened thousands of miles away and a powerful spatial fluctuation affected the area they were in. However, a connection seemed to form close to the entrance of the hideout.

Someone was clearly trying to travel through space!

In order to prevent the other party from escaping, Pang Jingyun and the others could only disrupt space the best they could!

For someone to risk it all and successfully create a spatial tunnel despite the disturbance, it could only mean that they had some sort of treasure or secret art that provided them the ability to do so.

"He actually came!" Yi Jingzi had a face full of shock as she eagerly awaited their next move.

Shang Xia's hesitated slightly as he started to feel his palm heating up slightly

Because of Shang Xia and the others in hiding, Pang Jingyun and the others weren't affected by the spatial fluctuations as they couldn't be confused by the changing space. They continued to head straight for the gray robed clone.

The next moment, with a radius of 70 miles around the hideout, space started to crumble. A sorry figure that was covered in blood fell out from the void as he tried to escape.

Soon after, chaotic spatial storms swallowed a good portion of asteroids in the region and turned many others into smaller fragments.

Shang Xia couldn't help but widen his eyes in shock. The mark on his hand wasn't just heating up. The feeling was so strong he felt as though he had placed his hand on a brazier.

"How is he..." Shang Xia mumbled to himself.

"He actually came!" The other fate dipper clones were extremely excited as the person they were waiting for showed himself. At the same time, Shang Xia's guess that the hideout had something precious was proven.

“He’s injured after falling through space! Let’s make our move!”

Without waiting for Shang Xia’s instructions, Shen Baisong was the first person to rush out of the barrier.

Yi Jingzi and Gong Xinlan followed soon after and Pang Jingyun’s clone was the only one to turn and stare at Shang Xia before leaving.

Shang Xia had half a mind to stop them, but he suppressed the urge and rushed out along with them.

Retrieving the Five Element Barrier, Shang Xia’s figure was quickly revealed to the outside world.

By that time, Pang Jingyun and the others also managed to trap the gray robed clone.

Their clones continued to rush at the figure who fell out from space earlier and Shang Xia swept his gaze across the surroundings. He clapped his hand before him and the Five Element Ring appeared as it started to spin with a soft hum.

As it sped up, the hum spread across the battlefield and a five colored light ring emerged. As it continued to spread outwards, the light didn’t fade.

The next second, Shang Xia lightly tapped the surface of the Five Element Ring.

“Clang!”

Following a clear ring, the Five Element Ring stopped spinning suddenly. The light ring that appeared earlier quickly retracted and turned solid, appearing to become another Five Element Ring.

It didn’t look different from the actual weapon, but the fundamental qualities were different. One could say that it was a Five Element Ring that possessed completely opposite properties from the original, or it was easier to call it the Reverse Five Element Ring!

From the time the clones rushed out to the time he summoned the Reverse Five Element Ring, only a second had passed despite how chaotic everything seemed.

Shang Xia held the rings in his hand before tossing one at Pang Jingyun and the others who had surrounded the gray robed clone.

The true bodies were enough to deal with a mere fate dipper clone. However, when Shang Xia noticed the blood-soaked figure, he realized that it wasn’t related to the gray robed figure! That would mean that there was another hidden expert from the Spirit Abundance World who could move against them!

Shang Xia didn’t throw the Five Element Ring over to help them kill the clone. Instead, it was to prevent them from suffering a sneak attack from the other party’s true body!

When the ring arrived above Pang Jingyun and the others, a majestic stream of Five Element Dipper Qi emerged as brilliant rays of five colored light scattered and filled the area.

Everything that it touched lit up, and nothing could remain hidden.

Even though the light started to dim as it traveled further, it didn’t dissipate completely. It gathered again to form a faint light barrier around Pang Jingyun and the rest.

The moment the barrier was formed, Pang Jingyun and the others felt the world around them splitting off, forming an independent space!

A gray glove that was really massive in size appeared above Pang Jingyun and the others and tried to scoop them up. Unfortunately, other than a hundred or so irregularly shaped asteroids, it didn't manage to catch anything else.

Chapter 784: Asteroid Shower

"Divine weapon!" Pang Jingyun and the others felt their hearts trembling in fear as they saw the giant hand retreating through space.

All of them came from impressive backgrounds. Obviously, they could tell that the gray glove was a divine weapon.

Which meant to say, their opponent wasn't just 2 Martial Dipper Realm experts from the Spirit Abundance World. One of them even had a divine weapon.

If not for Shang Xia tossing out the Five Element Ring to create a barrier to create a separate space, the glove might have grabbed a few of them!

That was right. None of them present doubted the strength of the user of the gray gloves.

The pressure they felt earlier when the glove appeared told them that they were facing an expert at the third element of the Martial Dipper Realm at the very least.

If they were to fight one on one, none of them would even come close! The third element Martial Dipper Realm expert from the Spirit Abundance World would be able to kill any of them!

Fortunately, Shang Xia's strange five colored barrier had the ability to shift them into a separate space, even if it was only for a moment!

When everyone was still shocked, the barrier dissipated and they were brought back to their original location along the asteroid belt.

However, with the gray gloves scooping away a huge number of asteroids, they stood in a giant patch of emptiness.

From the time they surrounded the clone to the time Shang Xia protected them from the giant gloves, only a second had passed.

The sudden change didn't affect their abilities as they managed to kill the Fate Dipper Clone before long.

With Shen Baisong and Pang Jingyun joining hands to lock the clone down, Yi Jingzi sent a golden pillar of light over and exterminated its consciousness. Next, Gong Xinlan summoned a ball of flame that turned him into dust that contained the clone's essence.

When the gray robed clone was killed, 3000 miles away, an enraged roar emerged along with a burst of tyrannical aura. However, the person was smart enough not to charge over.

At the same time, Shang Xia met up with Pang Jingyun and the others' clones. He discovered that the situation was pretty annoying to deal with.

The person who fell through the region of space to arrive might look like shit and had 2 of his ribs broken, but he was a true blue second element Martial Dipper Realm expert. He possessed extraordinary combat abilities.

Even though the 4 clones also possessed combat strength at the Martial Dipper Realm, the experts who produced it barely gained the ability to do so. Their combat strength was also split into different levels. The clones' abilities were at the bottom of the barrel when compared to every single Martial Dipper Realm expert out there.

They unleashed everything they had as they rushed towards their target. Not a shred of cooperation could be seen among them. Even though the disturbance they caused was massive, the expert from the Spirit Abundance World easily dodged them all. Just like that, all their energy had been wasted.

If their target was anyone else, they would have started a counterattack with whatever strength they had left after dodging all their attacks. If they took advantage of the fact that the clones were unable to cooperate well, he would most likely be able to heavily injure one before breaking through their encirclement.

Surprisingly, that wasn't what he did. He continued to rush towards the asteroid that contained his hideout and ran into Shang Xia who was rushing over with the Reversal Five Element Ring in hand. The clones behind him moved about in a fluster as they tried to surround him again.

The cultivator from the Spirit Abundance World not only didn't try to escape, but he even threw himself headfirst into their trap.

Shang Xia stared at the person before him with an expressionless face as the Reversal Five Element Ring beneath his feet glowed with renewed intensity. The ring of light that was produced not only swallowed the expert from the Spirit Abundance World, but it also engulfed the clones who were flying at him.

No matter how dumb those clones were, they were still produced by Martial Dipper Realm experts. They were able to coordinate with Shang Xia to deploy their battle formation.

The next instant, the battle formation was formed, and the clones immediately felt the flow of energy in their body becoming smoother. Their control over their inner qi also grew stronger as their combat strength was immediately raised by 30 percent. The amount of energy they were wasting also dropped by a significant amount.

Other than Pang Jingyun's clone, the others already knew the strength of the battle formation when Shang Xia was controlling it. However, they were still shocked by the sudden boost they received when Shang Xia acted for real.

The 4 clones were created from the second fate dipper each of their true body possessed, and they were similar to the Metal, Wood, Water, and Fire Elements to a certain extent.

As Pang Jingyun and the others just managed to create their fate dipper clones, none of the clones worked together in the battle formation before. Even under such circumstances, Shang Xia managed to smoothen the flow of their inner qi. It was an unbelievable feat.

Now that they formed the battle formation, it wasn't really possible for the expert from the Spirit Abundance World to escape.

From the looks of it, the other side wasn't planning to run either. He continued to head for the hideout despite being surrounded.

The clones might be sure that there was something strange about the hideout, but they didn't rush at it mindlessly like before. Under Shang Xia's head, they continued to shrink the battle formation and limit the other side's movement before making the preparation to kill or take the other party alive.

Rumble...

The asteroid where the hideout was located was shattered instantly and it seemed as though the expert didn't care about the treasure within.

Or perhaps... Could the treasure be the asteroid itself?

Shang Xia's gaze never left the expert from the Spirit Abundance World, but the other party hadn't glanced at him since he first appeared.

After shattering the asteroid, the expert from the Spirit Abundance World finally stopped. He turned around and glanced at Shang Xia meaningfully with a trace of a smile in his eyes.

With his expression sinking, Shang Xia revealed a sinister expression as he roared, "Attack!"

The moment the word left his lips, Shang Xia's Chaos Essence Lightning Palm passed through the Reversal Five Element Ring before turning into a giant bolt of lightning that shone the color of the five elements. It flew straight at the head of his target.

Martial intents one comprehended weren't just a way for them to enter the grand completion stage of their respective cultivation realms. Many cultivators would also call their martial intent 'True Fate Martial Arts'. That was because it would grow alongside them and always be useful regardless of their cultivation level.

Of course, the strongest it could grow to was proportional to one's current cultivation realm and be at the level of martial arts they comprehended. It couldn't replace the martial intent required to step into the grand completion stage of their current level.

Surprisingly, the growth of one's martial intent seemed to be a little different for Shang Xia.

To be more exact, Shang Xia wasn't the direct factor. It was because of his Five Element Dipper Qi and Five Element Ring that greatly increased the power of his True Fate Martial Arts.

His Chaos Essence Lightning Palm which used to be a single attack, turned into 5.

Even though every strike only had 60 percent of its original power, all 5 bolts of lightning landed at once. It also seemed to possess the power of different elements within and when it landed, a miraculous change happened.

A miserable scream came from the expert of the Spirit Abundance World and his figure flew about in a haphazard manner as thought to dodge Shang Xia's strike.

Unfortunately, he was surrounded and the space around him was sealed off by the other 4 clones. He couldn't run as the lightning bolts snaked directly at him.

Helpless, he could only turn around and give it his all.

Along with a massive explosion, a golden spear light with traces of azure color tore through the void. A soft grunt left the lips of the cultivator as he shattered the lightning bolts.

No matter what, he was a second element Martial Dipper Realm expert at the end of the day. Shang Xia couldn't kill him with 5 mere strands of five element lightning bolt.

Whatever it was, Shang Xia's intention wasn't to kill him directly anyway. He wanted to stall the person for some time and stop him from moving about so that they could surround him a little better.

During their clash earlier, the 4 clones managed to press a little closer and the pressure of their battle formation on him increased greatly. His movements became greatly limited.

If no accidents occurred, there would only be 2 outcomes for the expert of the Spirit Abundance World. The first would be to die in combat and the second was that he would be taken alive.

Shang Xia's gaze never left the foreign expert, but he discovered that the other party didn't seem to panic at all.

Not too far away, where Pang Jingyun and the others killed the gray robed clone, they didn't rush over immediately to assist Shang Xia and the others. Instead, they yelled hastily, "Be careful, the asteroid..."

Shang Xia seemed to have thought of something and so did the other clones. They knew what the true bodies were referring to.

"Asteroid shower, asteroid shower!" Gong Xinlan's clone yelled.

Shang Xia noticed a trace of a smile appearing on the foreign cultivator's face and the look of satisfaction when their gazes met again.

The originally peaceful asteroid belt started to speed up the next moment because of some sort of foreign influence. The chunks of rocks started to smash into each other while moving in all sorts of haphazard directions. There were even several massive asteroids that flew directly at Shang Xia and the others as the disturbance continued to grow.

Chapter 785: Setback

Shang Xia tried to move chunks of land floating in space back during the expedition to the Manyu Continent. In order to stall the Northern Sea Mystic Island, Shang Xia made a giant obstacle from land fragments that he moved with his own strength.

Back then, Shang Xia was still a mere cultivator in the Martial Extermination Realm.

Now, the person causing the asteroid shower was someone who reached the Martial Dipper Realm!

One could only imagine how terrifying it would be!

Shang Xia and the clones might have surrounded the expert from the Spirit Abundance World, but facing a massive asteroid shower, they had no choice but to choose to protect themselves.

The clones quickly merged back into their true bodies as they returned, and the expert from the Spirit Abundance World suffered even more injuries. Despite how shitty he looked, he looked extremely pleased with himself. He actually managed to get a chance to escape.

Shang Xia grunted softly before reaching his hand into the void. The Five Element Ring fell from the void, straight into his hand.

Compared to the bodies of cultivators, a divine weapon was much sturdier. It could travel through the void without much problems.

The moment the Five Element Ring returned to him, it fused with the Reversal Five Element Ring before sending a massive ring of five colored light shooting into the distance. It destroyed everything in its path, creating a region of space that wasn't affected by the flying chunks.

That wasn't all. Everywhere the light passed, the fluctuating space would stabilize.

Making a vertical slash in the space before him, a spatial crack was created before another ray of light came from the Five Element Ring to solidify a spatial gate.

He stepped through the spatial gate without hesitation, but it remained in place with the support of the five colored light that came from his Five Element Ring.

The cultivator from the Spirit Abundance World who was relieved because he found a chance to escape felt something strange behind him. When he turned his head to take a look, he noticed a path of five colored light emerging from nowhere before forming a stable spatial gate. A familiar figure stepped out from within.

The cultivator was shocked, and he sent out a palm strike instinctively.

Shang Xia, who just appeared, matched his actions and sent out a palm strike of his own.

Smack!

A massive shockwave spread from the exchange and the asteroids in their surrounding were blown into tiny pebbles.

With a loud blech, the cultivator from the Spirit Abundance World spat out a mouthful of blood. He, who had originally been injured, looked to be in an even worse state.

Shang Xia was also forced back into the spatial tunnel he created.

The cultivator from the Spirit Abundance World tried to escape again and he vomited blood as he flew. The spatial gate that appeared earlier was destroyed by the shockwave.

In the region that was cleared out by Shang Xia hundreds of miles out, countless asteroids filled up the area again. However, the spatial gate still stood strong.

Shang Xia's figure backed out from within as he felt the blood draining from his face. His inner qi fluctuated wildly within him, and he stared at his palm instinctively.

Panicked voices came from beside him the next moment.

"Brother Shang, what's going on?"

"Hurry up and leave the region affected by the asteroid shower!"

"Yeah! They're extremely crafty. We need to regroup and think of another plan!"

"..."

Shang Xia didn't hesitate as his figure started to blur as he started to make his way out. In half the time it took to steep a cup of tea, he emerged from the asteroid belt and went to meet with the rest.

Seeing how Shang Xia didn't suffer any serious injuries, Pang Jingyun and the others heaved a sigh of relief.

"It's never too late to take revenge. We managed to catch them once, and we'll be able to do it again. Brother Shang, there's no need to be annoyed."

"It's not like we didn't receive anything from this. At least we killed a Fate Dipper Clone."

"No one expected that 2 experts from the Spirit Abundance World would appear at once. One of them even had a divine weapon. Heh... They got lucky we just managed to create Fate Dipper Clones and are unable to unleash our full abilities. Otherwise, Brother Shang would have been able to seriously injure his opponent!"

All of them continued to speak as they seemed to understand what Shang Xia was thinking at the moment. They were persuading him to make it too hard on himself.

Shang Xia nodded slightly after a short moment of contemplation. However, he never bothered to explain anything.

After the asteroid shower died down, everyone found a place to restore their energy and reflect on the battle that passed.

...

Eventually, Shang Xia asked, "Oh right, now that we destroyed one of their hideouts, where do you think they will go?"

Everyone glanced at each other quietly and none of them responded for a long time.

Eventually, Shen Baisong broke the silence. "Brother Shang, they definitely ran far away after what happened earlier. It won't be easy to locate them anytime soon, but we have only been patrolling for a year and a half. We might be able to find them again..."

Gong Xinlan pressed her lips together and mumbled, "The massive fluctuations earlier extended for thousands of miles. The asteroid belt will definitely have experienced significant changes. We don't know if they will take the chance to hide in places we have been to before..."

Pang Jingyun stared at Shang Xia before chuckling softly, "Brother Shang, what do you think?"

Shang Xia replied in a soft voice, "Finding the 2 of them again will prove to be a tall task. However, did you forget that we discovered a location we suspect they might use as a secret meeting point?"

"Where?" Gong Xinlan wondered out loud. "That place seems deserted for a while now and it might have been abandoned by them."

Yi Jingzi didn't think so. "That's not entirely impossible. All of you best not forget that even though it looked abandoned, the restrictions around were still active."

Shen Baisong laughed and added, "Like what Brother Shang said, we might not be able to find them easily. Why don't we take the chance and head back? It won't waste too much of our time..."

With that, everyone turned into streaks of light before flying towards the spot they found previously.

Actually, none of them knew if the location was still intact after the asteroid shower earlier. Many of them merely planned to head back and try their luck.

They didn't break the restrictions before and they had no idea if anything valuable was kept within.

If the asteroid they found back then had been blown in their general direction, they could take the chance to check it out without wasting much time. They would take the chance to destroy the restrictions around it to see if there was anything valuable within. After all, the experts of the Spirit Abundance World shattered their previous hideout despite being surrounded by their enemies.

After some time, they noticed a region of shattered asteroids floating towards them. There were a lot of changes to the surroundings, but the overall shape still remained.

“There has to be a problem with this!” Pang Jingyun was the fastest among them and he was the first to discover the situation in the pile of rocks. He reminded those behind him, “Looks like we need to forcefully break through the pile of rocks to see what is hidden beneath...”

As they flew over to meet up with him, Shang Xia felt his palm heating up slightly and he stared at the pile of rocks, his expression turning grim. “Something is wrong! Everyone, be careful!”

All of them had been working together for some time now, and now that they heard Shang Xia's reminder, they released their dipper qi protection barrier before caring about anything else.

The restrictions holding the pile of rocks together started to expand and so did the many chunks of rocks that formed it. When it reached the limit, a loud blast could be heard as rocks were sent flying everywhere.

Pang Jingyun and the others made their preparations, and they wouldn't be hurt by the destruction. However, they were still forced into a pretty miserable state as chunks battered against their protection barriers. It also managed to distract them slightly.

Shang Xia's voice rang in their minds once again. “Lady Yi, be careful!”

Several large chunks of rocks were forced away before they could touch Shang Xia and he could clearly see 2 figures dashing out the moment the pile exploded. They rushed towards Yi Jingzi who was the closest to them.

Originally, Pang Jingyun was taking the lead. However, he retreated quickly when the explosion happened while maintaining his protection barrier. As such, Yi Jingzi was revealed to their enemies.

Yi Jingzi wanted to retreat earlier, but she didn't move as decisively as Pang Jingyun.

Despite hearing his cry, Yi Jingyun didn't panic. Instead, she drew a short golden knife and slashed at the space before her.

A golden blade qi shredded the void before her and dyed everything several miles around her a shade of brilliant gold.

Before the golden color could stretch to the limit, it was swallowed by a gray cloud that appeared not too far away. The tear in space she caused was quickly sealed up by some sort of gray bridge created from dipper qi.

The rocks and fragments that were flying everywhere might have blocked Yi Jingzi's sight and the fluctuating space might have disrupted her senses, but she was no newbie. She was the pride and joy of the Heavenly Star Palace of the Yi Continent and she was a seasoned fighter. She had plenty of combat experience.

After she slashed at the space before her with her short golden knife, a golden disc appeared before her body.

A resplendent ray of golden light emerged from the disc and fused into her dipper qi protection barrier. The next instant, it shone a brilliant gold.

The next instant, a figure flashed across the grab bridge and rushed at Yi Jingzi. The spear in his hand shot out in a majestic manner as though it was a flood dragon crossing the seas.

The spear phantom was eventually stopped by her protection barrier, but it managed to create a tiny opening in it.

When the spear pulled back, a huge palm that was covered in a gray glove appeared in the void and it pointed at the tiny opening in Yi Jingzi's protection barrier.

A faint grunt left her lips as a blurry figure was sent flying out from within her body.

After a short struggle in space, the blurry figure condensed into a body. However, grayish qi emerged from her body and stopped her attempts to recover.

With a loud pop, Yu Jingzi's Fate Dipper Clone was eventually destroyed.

Chapter 786: Scattering

With the price of a Fate Dipper Clone, Yi Jingzi managed to avoid her fate of being slain. With that, her cultivation dropped back to the first element of the Martial Dipper Realm.

The expert who used the gray glove-like divine weapon didn't seem too impressed after killing a single Fate Dipper Clone. His fingers curled up as he clenched his fist together before punching straight at Yi Jingzi whose body was still glowing a brilliant gold.

Fortunately, everyone else got over the initial distraction as they charged forth to assist their teammate.

The person who arrived first was naturally Pang Jingun. He held a long whip in his hand as he made his move, and it shone a bright sky blue. It was called the Cloud Water Whip.

As it snapped through the air, it quickly wrapped around the fist formed by the gray gloves.

Gong Xinlan sent a powerful punch through space to get the glove using cultivator off Yi Jingzi and Shen Baisong had the same idea. Unfortunately, he was intercepted by the spear-wielding expert.

Pang Jingyun's whip might have wrapped around the gloves, but his body was unable to hold steady as he was pulled around. He looked to be in pretty bad shape. However, he managed to distract their opponent and split off a part of his strength.

Shang Xia's Five Element Ring descended at that moment and increased the strength of the golden Dipper Qi Protection Barrier around Yi Jingzi.

Buzz...

A dull hum filled their ears as the fist that was formed from the glove slammed into the golden barrier.

It stopped a good portion of the power contained in the fist, and Shang Xia's Five Element Dipper Qi continued to shave away at the remaining energy it contained.

Yi Jingzi could easily have retreated at that moment to avoid taking on the blow, but she chose to stand her ground. She didn't retreat, not even slightly!

The Five Element Ring continued to spin rapidly. It continued to suppress the fist while eating away at its strength. It didn't seem weaker than the glove by any means, and along with Pang Jingyun's Cloud Water Whip wrapped tightly around the gloves, there was only one thought in their minds at the moment.

The divine weapon is ours!

Gong Xinlan's fist also landed on the other party's protection barrier at that moment.

A scarlet dipper qi burst forth like a sea of flames on his protection barrier and when it did, a bright yellow flame flickered for a moment and the protection barrier around her target seemed to catch on fire. It burned an alternating scarlet red and bright yellow as it was slowly being shaved away.

Before it could completely destroy his protection barrier, the expert grunted and a gray robe emerged and landed on the flames. It extinguished the fire the moment it appeared.

The expert from the Spirit Abundance World was someone who used to be at the third element of the Martial Dipper Realm. Even though they destroyed one of his Fate Dipper Clones earlier and forced him to regress back to a second element Martial Dipper Realm expert, he still possessed frightening means.

Fortunately, Gong Xinlan wasn't a weakling. Her cultivation didn't lose out to him in the slightest. With Gong Xinlan's attack holding him down, he was clearly unable to split off too much of his attention to care about his divine weapon. Pang Jingyun's Cloud Water Whip tightened around the gloves a little more and Shang Xia's Five Element Ring pressed down again by around 3 inches or so.

The moment the ring landed on the glove, Shang Xia was confident that he would be able to sever the connection it had to the gray robed cultivator and completely suppress the weapon.

The experts of the Azure Ascension World outnumbered their opponents. Yi Jingzi, who was forced to retreat earlier, returned and she leaped forward with a delicate cry before slashing her swords at the gray robed cultivator.

Finally unable to hold on, he tossed out talismans to stop the golden blade coming his way. They turned into shields, screens, and whatever defensive treasure one could think of as he screamed in panic, "Huang Yu, hurry up and help me!"

The words barely left his lips when his protective treasures were torn apart. His protection barrier was also shredded by the blade qi and he was revealed to the cultivators of the Azure Ascension World for the first time.

They barely spared a glance at him before Yi Jingzi's blade destroyed another Fate Dipper Clone he created before following up to kill him for real.

It was then when the other expert from the Spirit Abundance World who was held up by Shen Baisong sprayed a mouthful of blood on his spear after hearing his comrade's yell.

Even though Huang Yu had already suffered some injuries and seemed to become even weaker after spitting out the mouthful of blood, a strange glow covered his spear.

Shen Baisong could tell that his opponent was really strong after their exchange earlier. If his opponent hadn't already suffered some injuries, he would easily be defeated.

Looking at his current state, Shen Baisong obviously understood that his opponent was about to use some secret skill. He immediately became a lot more careful.

It was then that Huang Yu's spear stabbed straight at Shen Baisong.

Feeling his divine will attracted to the tip of the opponent's spear, Shen Baisong had a strange urge to push himself directly at it.

Understanding that the move was one that could affect one's divine will, Shen Baisong's heart trembled as he hastily backed away.

That was precisely what Huang Yu had been aiming for as he flew towards his fellow cultivator without being obstructed by Shen Baisong.

It was a shame his actions were exactly what the Martial Dipper Realm experts of the Azure Ascension World wanted.

Back when Yi Jingzi was attacked and everyone was in a state of panic, Shen Baisong had to force Huang Yu to the side in case he grouped up with his fellow cultivator to kill her. Now that the situation had stabilized and the gray robed cultivator was about to be slain by Pang Jingyun and the others, they wanted to look for a chance to gather the experts of the Spirit Abundance World together to prevent any of them from escaping.

That was why Shen Baisong retreated decisively when he saw that Huang Yu was about to help his fellow cultivator.

The second Huang Yu flew past Shen Baisong to regroup with the gray robed cultivator, Shen Baisong followed closely behind and completed the encirclement with the modified Five Element Battle Formation Shang Xia came up with.

Huang Yu forced Yi Jingzi back with a sweep of his spear before stopping Gong Xinlan from pressing forward. He quickly saved his companion from certain death.

Just as they were about to inspect the situation, they noticed a five colored light linking each expert from the Azure Ascension World together. They were also surrounded by a five colored light.

"Go!" There was no need for any of them to communicate with things progressing to that point. They could only fight till one side was completely eliminated.

During the great battle 4 years ago, Shang Xia's squad managed to kill a second element Martial Dipper Realm expert and a third element Martial Dipper Realm expert.

Now that Shang Xia was also in control of the formation and his squad mates were a lot stronger than before, it didn't matter if the other side also had a divine weapon. Shang Xia had one of his own, and it was the Five Element Ring that was perfectly suited to his abilities.

Working together, the 5 of them quickly forced the experts of the Spirit Abundance World into a passive state. Huang Yu's injuries got worse, and he seemed as though he would fall the next second.

The other cultivator seemed to possess a much stronger foundation as his techniques changed continuously to deal with the dangers he faced. Unfortunately, with the situation he was in, he was barely able to hold on. There was no chance of fighting back at all.

That was also because Pang Jingyun and Shang Xia had split off a portion of their consciousness to try to obtain the divine weapon. If they were fully focused on the battle, it would have been over a long time ago.

Realizing that they wouldn't be able to hold out for long, the gray robed cultivator sent a few voice transmissions to Huang Yu who was beside him.

No one knew what they were talking about, but Huang Yu revealed a shocked expression and froze for a split second.

Everything might have happened extremely quickly, but Shang Xia found a point of weakness during that pause. Reaching out to tap his Five Element Ring, a soft chime rang through the battlefield as the Reversal Five Element Ring emerged once again. It shone with crimson, a mud-yellow, gold, blue, and dull-green light as it amplified the dipper qi around. By the time the final glow was released, the energy it stored up greatly surpassed the strike Yi Jingzi released back then.

The stored-up energy transformed into a jade-green blade qi that flew towards Huang Yu.

The horrifying power it contained destroyed the other party's dipper qi protection barrier and a miserable cry rang through the air. The blade qi that was created from the jade-green ray entered his body.

It was created from Shang Xia's fourth martial intent, the Four Constellation Samsara Nether Blade.

Huang Yu's figure froze in mid air, and a Fate Dipper Clone emerged from his body and was promptly destroyed. It transformed into a dull-yellow Origin Dipper that was the size of a fist.

He tried to split off the Fate Dipper Clone while transferring all his inner injuries to it, but it clearly failed. He looked even worse than before as though all his life force was about to be exhausted.

Huang Yu's cry seemed to stimulate his companion as he made up his mind to let go of his divine weapon that was wrapped up in the Cloud Water Whip and Five Element Ring.

Shang Xia seemed to be struck by a backlash after heavily injuring Huang Yu, and he seemed to be sapped of strength. He was unable to follow up immediately.

In contrast, Pang Jingyun rejoiced as he tugged his Cloud Water Whip violently towards himself as he wanted to grab the divine weapon.

It was then that the divine weapon that was no longer under the gray robed man's control started to swell.

Shang Xia's voice rang loudly in a state of panic. "Oh no! He's about to detonate his divine weapon!"

Detonation of a divine weapon?! How can that... What a waste...

Those were the thoughts that flashed through Pang Jingyun's mind. But he seemed to realize what was going on as he quickly retrieved his Cloud Water Whip while retreating quickly.

What he didn't notice was how Shang Xia and the rest retreated way faster than him!

When the glove bloated to a massive size, it exploded in the vast sea of stars! A formless shockwave tore through the void and swallowed every single asteroid in a hundred mile radius. Going out a little further, any asteroid 300 miles away was shattered into powder as the destruction continued to spread.

The Martial Dipper Realm experts of the Azure Ascension World tried their best to block the effects of the shockwave and only after running for a thousand miles did they get out of the danger zone.

Due to how critical the situation was earlier, everyone had to care for their own lives. They fled in all directions, and all of them were separated!

Chapter 787: Schemes, Ambush, Interrogation

Even though Shang Xia realized something was wrong when the divine weapon started to inflate earlier, the power behind the detonation truly exceeded his expectations.

However, he was a little more curious about the fact that a divine weapon could actually be detonated.

He felt a wave of disappointment after thinking about how they had a chance to snatch the divine weapon for themselves.

The detonation of the divine weapon pushed Shang Xia hundreds of miles further after he escaped from the danger zone. Along the way, the twisted and torn space posed no danger to him as he was protected by the Five Element Ring.

After flying out there, he wasn't in a rush to locate his fellow companions. Instead, he reached out his hand and tried to find something. He turned to face a certain direction and ignored the effects brought about by the detonation of the divine weapon. He concealed his aura and sped in that direction.

He needed to make full use of his time to deal with something.

The shockwave of the detonation spread for close to 2000 miles and with the battle earlier, anyone in the Azure Ascension World who was paying attention to the situation outside the Beyond Heavens Pavilion would have noticed something wrong. The other squads who were patrolling the area would also be making their way over.

Shang Xia felt a faint connection to something and after concealing his aura to the limit, he rushed straight into a region packed with the remains of shattered asteroids.

"Heh, this fellow ran really quickly..." Shang Xia chided in his heart. Even though they already made an agreement to meet there, he didn't dare to be careless. He slowed down as he approached the space filled with debris and he released his divine will to their maximum range in case of any hidden dangers.

After half the time it took to steep a pot of tea, Shang Xia traveled close to 1000 miles through the region and he was starting to feel a little impatient.

The detonation of the divine weapon earlier caused everyone to scatter, but they were merely thousands of miles apart. All of them were Martial Dipper Realm experts and it wouldn't be difficult to meet up again.

If he dragged things out because of the current matter, he might easily arouse the others' suspicion.

It was then that he noticed a faint trace of life in a certain pile of rocks in the distance.

His consciousness trembled but he didn't immediately increase his speed to head over there. Instead, he slowed his speed down to a crawl and continued to restrain his aura. He even increased the concealment around himself before making his way forward.

Dodging several asteroids flying his way, he traveled a dozen or so miles before catching the faint trace of life again. At the same time, he also felt a foreign aura.

The closer he got, the clearer the chaotic auras felt. It was obvious the owners of the auras weren't in the best of condition and they were so heavily injured they couldn't even control their inner qi properly.

Of course, they could also be acting that way intentionally to attract someone over to a trap.

Shang Xia wasn't affected by it, and perhaps it was due to the confidence he had in his skills, he continued to draw closer to the 2 foreign beings.

He felt the mark on the back of his hand growing hotter as faint runes appeared on them. It eventually showed some sort of strange diagram.

Not too far away, the voices from the foreign cultivators grew clearer.

"... I destroyed it..."

"... At least... What... Going back..."

"... Actually sent you here!"

"Brother Lu, how are your injuries?"

"I ran into a crazy fucker along the way. The female cultivator who used the golden blade actually wanted to sacrifice herself to drag me down after I detonated my divine weapon... She even planned to ignore the dangers of the fluctuating space!"

"Huh? From the looks of it, she didn't succeed..."

"Hehe... Argh, my only Fate Dipper Clone has been seriously injured. Even though it's not completely destroyed, I won't be able to summon it in the near future."

"Oh? That's great!"

"You... What do you mean by that?! Huang Yu, how dare you...."

Thump!

A dull blast caused the rocks and debris in the surroundings to scatter.

A hasty yell quickly filled the skies. "What are you waiting for?! Hurry up and make your move!"

Asteroids that were stacked close to each other separated suddenly, forming a huge path that revealed Shang Xia's figure. On the other side was Huang Yu, who was sent flying by a palm strike. There was also an expert from the Spirit Abundance World with a short spear stabbed into his abdomen.

Shang Xia remained indifferent as he approached. He pressed his hands down at the same time as reddish-gold lightning bolts appeared soundlessly and slammed directly at the man's head.

"Huang Yu, how dare you collude with those barbarians from lower worlds!" The expert from the Spirit Abundance World roared. Even though he suffered serious injuries, his figure started to blur as he tried to avoid Shang Xia's Chaos Essence Lightning Palm.

It was a shame the spear in his abdomen acted like a lightning rod that directly attracted the terrifying bolts of lightning towards his heavily injured body.

Amidst the flickering lightning, the expert from the Spirit Abundance World convulsed. However, it didn't affect his attempt to run away.

The physique of a Martial Dipper Realm expert was on full display at the moment. Even after suffering such a powerful strike, he was able to run.

Unfortunately, he suffered a direct hit from Shang Xia's Chaos Essence Lightning Palm. His agility was affected and he was unable to break away from Shang Xia's pursuit.

"Collude? Why would I need to collude with them?" The figure who had spat out god knew how many mouthfuls of blood struggled to stabilize himself as he stared at the expert from the Spirit Abundance World with a look of mockery flashing through his eyes. He still warned Shang Xia while he was at it. "You can't let him escape! Otherwise, my identity will be revealed!"

"You... You were one of them?!" The expert from the Spirit Abundance World finally understood what was going on. His shock even caused his movements to slow down slightly.

Shang Xia's divine will locked onto the foreign expert and no matter where he ran, he couldn't avoid being detected.

Slapping the void heavily, the spear that was lodged in the foreign expert's abdomen pushed further and pierced deeper into his back.

"Pfft..." The tyrannical spear intent continued to wreck the foreign expert's innards, and sustaining flight became a little more difficult.

He was already exhausted from the previous battles. One of his Fate Dipper Clones was destroyed by Pang Jingyun and the others, and another was heavily injured by Yi Jingzi. After suffering the sneak attack from Huang Yu, his injuries got even worse. Now that Shang Xia took action, he was a spent force.

Even at that point, Shang Xia didn't dare to be careless. He started to launch a fearsome assault that increased with intensity as time went by.

The expert from the Spirit Abundance World tried ways and means to unleash secret arts to escape, but Shang Xia's Five Element Ring locked down the space around them to the point where not an ant could escape. Realizing that his fate was sealed, he wanted to sacrifice himself and drag Shang Xia along with him. Unfortunately, Huang Yu yelled an appropriate reminder at the right time and wasted his efforts. The dipper qi in his dantian was completely scattered despite his attempts to condense it before detonation.

Eventually, Shang Xia's Five Element Dipper Qi condensed into a Temporal Blade that severed his vitality forever. A wave of energy burst forth and his course turned into dust.

After reaching the Martial Dipper Realm, unless one had the intention to maintain their body after their death, they would eventually scatter and turn into cosmic dust.

"Heh... he's finally dead!" Huang Yu struggled to travel to Shang Xia's side. He glanced at the treasures the foreign expert left behind before muttering, "Oh right. What was the name of the blade you used earlier? It actually had the ability to restore my inner qi! If you didn't help me recover, it wouldn't have been easy for me to stab him with the sneak attack..."

Before the expert from the Spirit Abundance World detonated the divine weapon, Shang Xia condensed a blade with the purest form of Yi Wood Dipper Qi. It might seem to cause grievous injuries to Huang Yu, but it actually assisted in his recovery.

Shang Xia quickly grabbed everything the foreign expert left behind before tossing the faint yellow crystal at Huang Yu. He asked, "Oh yeah, what was contained in the hideouts you destroyed?"

Chapter 788: Stargazer, Star Map

Huang Yu retrieved the crystal from Shang Xia and revealed a dazzling grin. "I didn't think that you would have grabbed it. Hehe. I won't have to use that much effort to recover now..."

"I might have retained a huge portion of it, but the destruction of a Fate Dipper Clone would have caused some essence to be lost. You have to think of a way to restore it yourself before refining it again..." Shang Xia muttered.

Huang Yu played with the crystal happily before replying, "It's good enough. I was prepared to sacrifice a Fate Dipper Clone when I came over. I didn't think that I would be able to get it back before I left. It won't be long before I restore my cultivation!"

With a deep gaze, Shang Xia turned to Huang Yu and asked again, "What was hidden in those hideouts you destroyed? How did you come back here anyway?"

Under Shang Xia's gaze, Huang Yu finally kept the crystal properly. After arranging his thoughts, he explained, "Those locations might hide the true location of the Spirit Abundance World in the vast sea of stars!"

With his eyes widening in surprise, Shang Xia couldn't help but cry out in shock. "How is that possible? He's just a Martial Dipper Realm cultivator! How does he know the exact position of the Spirit Abundance World? Did a Sixth Order expert tell him?"

"Heh. If Lu Yuanming knew a Sixth Order Ancestor, he would have been brought back to the Spirit Abundance World a long time ago! Why would he need to secretly deduce the position of the Spirit Abundance World here?" Huang Yu chuckled to himself.

"Deducing the position of the Spirit Abundance World?" Shang Xia raised an eyebrow when he noticed Huang Yu's choice of words. "Are you here because they were trying to deduce the position of the Spirit Abundance World? How did you know they were doing something like that?"

Huang Yu displayed a gratified expression when he realized Shang Xia was able to make the connection so easily. He chuckled while giving an explanation, "Back when the Spirit Abundance World failed their invasion of the Azure Origin World and Azure Spiritual World, those who survived were given the task of maintaining surveillance over the Azure Worlds. They were told it was so that the Spirit Abundance World would be able to accurately grasp the situation during their next invasion. However, these people were actually pawns that were abandoned."

Shang Xia nodded slightly and also seemed to understand something. He couldn't help but laugh, "Oh right, you might not know this yet, but the Azure Origin World and the Azure Spiritual World completed the fusion and it gave itself a new name. We're called the Azure Ascension World now."

"Azure Ascension World?" Huang Yu muttered to himself as a strange look flashed across his face. He eventually continued, "Oh yeah, Lu Yuanming was supposed to be one of the abandoned chess pieces but he ran into some luck. He obtained a divine weapon from one of those who fell during the battle and even managed to get his hands on partial information about the location of the Spirit Abundance World in the vast sea of stars. He even knew how to draw star maps. He stayed in this asteroid belt for several years and after some deduction, he actually obtained the true location of the Spirit Abundance World."

"Did he threaten a Sixth Order Ancestor to pick him up after getting the actual coordinates of the Spirit Abundance World?" Shang Xia gasped.

Huang Yu nodded slightly, but he suddenly shook his head after a short moment of contemplation. "It's true that he wished to leave this place. If he wished to return, a Sixth Order expert would have to make a move to pull him back. However, he didn't have the balls to threaten them so openly. If he did, he would suffer a fate worse than death when he returned."

Thinking about it for a moment, Shang Xia came to a realization. "Could it be... Did he use his ability to draw star maps as a bargaining chip?"

Huang Yu nodded with a wide smile on his face. "To be able to construct a star map from mere observation, and to be able to determine the location of a world with several clues, he would be

considered a Stargazer. Even in the Spirit Abundance World, there aren't too many of them. Even though Lu Yuanming is a half-baked Stargazer and only managed to determine the location of the Spirit Abundance World with a lot of help from the information he picked up, it's still enough to move the Sixth Order Ancestor of the Emptiness Drifting Mountain."

"Emptiness Drifting Mountain?" Shang Xia asked while glancing at Huang Yu. "Is that the name of your faction?"

Shang Xia might have been asking a question, but he was thinking about the Observatory he discovered back in the remains of the Starry Marsh Elysium and the vast, unobstructed space separated by a strange barrier above it.

The vast space should be in the other direction of the Beyond Heavens Pavilion, and Shang Xia hadn't discovered which part of the vast sea of stars it actually represented.

He wondered if the Starry Marsh Elysium back then also had a Stargazer and was trying to deduce the secrets that lay in the depths of space.

Huang Yu spoke and interrupted Shang Xia's train of thought. "Exactly. The Emptiness Drifting Mountain is one of the 9 strongest powers in the Spirit Abundance World. Its position in the Spirit Abundance World is comparable to the Elysiums on the Azure Ascension World."

Huang Yu knew about the existence of those Elysiums and he also knew that the Azure Ascension World had 4 Sixth Order Ancestors at the moment. With the number of Sixth Order Ancestors, he could easily make the connection about how a fourth Elysium had been born.

Shang Xia followed up with another question. "The Spirit Abundance World actually has 9 Elysiums? It's no wonder they're a Spirit World... Even after the fusion of the Azure Origin World and Azure Spiritual World, Liu Jingsheng of the Yuanchen Sect barely managed to step into the Sixth Order of the Primary Realm. Right now, we only have 4 Elysiums..."

Huang Yu stared at Shang Xia with a strange gaze and mumbled, "Seems like you're mistaken about something. The Spirit Abundance World has 9 Elysiums, but that doesn't mean it only has 9 Sixth Order Ancestors."

With a face full of shock, Shang Xia didn't know how to respond.

Huang Yu sighed softly in his heart and handed a jade book over to Shang Xia. "This contains an overview of what I learned while living in the Spirit Abundance World. There are introductions of many powers, both big and small, but they're mostly superficial information. I am unable to confirm many things, but I know for sure that my Emptiness Drifting Mountain has 2 Sixth Order Ancestors. Moreover, we're ranked in the lower-middle ranks of the top 9 factions..."

Shang Xia felt the book in his hand turning incomparably heavy as he fell silent for some time. Eventually, he thought back to the main problem. "If that's the case, why did the Spirit Abundance World's offensive fail?"

"It's not like the Spirit Abundance World has no enemies of their own. Moreover, the 9 Elysiums aren't bonded together at all. The news of the Azure Worlds was locked down and only the Emptiness Drifting Mountain, Azure Island, and the Solitary Peak Heavenly Lake knew about it. They gathered a bunch of experts in secret to start the

invasion. Moreover, they had to cross the vast sea of stars in order to fight, and the odds were stacked against them. With the Azure Ascension World producing a fourth Sixth Order Ancestor, their plans eventually fell through.” Huang Yu sighed.

Shang Xia personally took part in the battle and he knew that they had been pushed to their limits. Even with Liu Jingsheng successfully breaking through at the final moment to force their invaders away, the Azure Ascension World achieved a miserable victory.

Now that he learned the truth from Huang Yu that the battle that nearly destroyed the Azure Ascension World was a mere secret mission conducted by 3 Elysiums, despair nearly overwhelmed him. He even thought that they should just give up.

Fortunately, he suppressed the thought quickly. However, he knew that the moment he brought the news back to the Azure Ascension World, chaos would ensue.

Huang Yu had been observing Shang Xia’s facial expression the whole time and he spoke up once again, “After their failure, the news of the Azure Ascension World can no longer be hidden. Practically every expert in the Spirit Abundance World knows of your existence now. The Spirit Abundance World wouldn’t give up a chance to swallow a world that is closing in on a Spirit World and their next offensive will probably be a joint operation by all 9 Elysiums...”

Shang Xia sucked in a cold breath and muttered in a low voice, “I know.”

Nodding slightly, Huang Yu laughed, “Anyway, we strayed too far off topic. I was planning to tell you about Lu Yuanming and the matter of him being a Stargazer.”

“Oh right. Were you here to bring him back? But... He’s dead now...” Shang Xia laughed.

“No. A Sixth Order Ancestor creating a spatial tunnel across the vast sea of stars to bring back a single person will definitely cause a huge commotion. In order not to attract too much attention, the Emptiness Drifting Mountain’s ancestor, Lou Chongshan, made the decision to bring Lu Yuanming back to the Spirit Abundance World alone. The other ancestor has no idea. As such, I was supposed to bring Lu Yuanming to a certain location before using it as a transit point to return to the Spirit Abundance World. That way, we wouldn’t alert the other experts.”

With the revelation of the name of one of the ancestors of the Emptiness Drifting Mountain, Shang Xia recalled how the person Huang Yu saved back then in the Manyu Continent was called Lou Yi. It was said that he had a huge background back in the Spirit Abundance World. Could he be related to the Sixth Order Ancestor?

If that is true... Huang Yu wouldn’t just have grabbed onto a huge thigh in the Spirit Abundance World. He would have grabbed onto a mega golden thigh back there.

For him to be sent over to receive Lu Yuanming, it was obvious he had already gained their trust and was an important part of their faction.

Shang Xia thought about it for a moment and said seriously, “For so much effort to be put into him... Looks like Lu Yuanming is really important!”

Huang Yu chuckled, "He's not what's truly important. It's the inheritance of the Stargazer that's of value."

Casually flipping through the treasures he obtained from Lu Yuanming's corpse, Shang Xia muttered, "Oh, everything is here. Feel free to take a look at them."

Huang Yu already knew what he was looking for, and he quickly retrieved a piece of yellow jade that was covered in a thick layer of patina. He laughed, "Right. This is the item I'm looking for. Lu Yuanming showed it to me back then and he was stronger than me. He had a divine weapon and he wasn't too wary of me."

After he spoke, he tossed 2 pieces of somewhat broken stone plaques to Shang Xia. "These are the fruits of his labor. I secretly kept them after destroying the hideouts."

He couldn't help but laugh after he had spoken. "Luckily, you guys arrived with perfect timing. Otherwise, it wouldn't be easy to hide what I have done from Lu Yuanming!"

Shang Xia finally understood that Huang Yu had a plan all along and he heaved a sigh of relief. He didn't continue down the line of questioning even though he had many doubts.

Huang Yu glanced at their surroundings before turning back to Shang Xia. "Oh yeah, we've been here for some time now. If you don't leave soon, they might start to suspect something."

"Senior, are you really not able to return to the institution and regain your old identity?" Shang Xia sighed suddenly.

The gaze in Huang Yu's eyes softened when he looked at Shang Xia, but it only lasted for a split second. It transformed to one of complete freedom and he sniggered, "I'm not doing too bad myself in the Spirit Abundance World. Even though I'm not a direct disciple of the Emptiness Drifting Mountain yet, the Lou Family trusts me. At the very least, I wouldn't have been able to enter the Martial Dipper Realm so easily if I had been in the institution. If I'm not mistaken, Kou Chongxue hasn't been able to fully restore his rank five advancement formula, right?"

"It's too dangerous..." Shang Xia shook his head while replying.

Huang Yu didn't seem too surprised. "One can only find an opportunity in the cracks of danger. If I manage to bring back the Stargazer inheritance, I will definitely be greatly rewarded."

As he spoke, he tossed the jade that contained the inheritance back to Shang Xia. "Here. Make a copy of the information recorded within. Anyway, the jade book I passed you earlier contains the cultivation method of those in the Spirit Abundance World. It's especially so for those in the Martial Dipper Realm. I hope it can help to supplement the Tongyou Institution's inheritance..."

Pausing slightly, he continued, "It's a pity. The Spirit Abundance World's cultivation system might be relatively more perfect, but the rank five inheritances are strictly confidential among the various sects. I only managed to act as Lou Yi's faithful subordinate, but all they gave me was a complete advancement medicine when I tried to break through. They are keeping their rank five advancement formulas as confidential as possible..."

Huang Yu took the chance when Shang Xia copied the information from the piece of jade over to inform him of many things he had been through.

Even though he made the time he spent in the Spirit Abundance World as a spy seem as casual as possible, Shang Xia knew that he had to endure unimaginable pressure.

Now that he found an outlet to vent his feelings, he never stopped talking.

Only until Shang Xia completed copying the Stargazer inheritance and tossed the piece of jade back to him did he stop. Shang Xia said, "Senior Wei and her son are living a good life. Everyone is taking good care of them and there's nothing for you to worry about."

Shang Xia's sudden reminder caught Huang Yu by surprise. A slightly awkward smile eventually appeared on his face when he thought about them. "Is that so? That's great! I really troubled you then..."

Shang Xia naturally didn't think so. "It's what we should do. I'm not the only one taking care of them. There are several close friends and relatives in the institution who are very friendly towards them. The only thing is... Your son chose to follow his mother's family name for now. He's called Wei Zheng. Actually... My aunt, Shang Xi, chose the name for him."

"Oh? Hahaha! That's a great name! It's a good name indeed!" The awkward look on Huang Yu's face was quickly covered up as he roared with laughter. "I'm relieved..."

"Are you leaving right now for the location of transit back to the Spirit Abundance World?" Shang Xia asked.

Wiping the smile off his face, Huang Yu nodded. "Yeah. I imprinted the location of the land of transit onto the back of your palm back then. It's a central location that leads to many worlds. You should head over for a look when you get the chance. I also recorded the way to get over there in the jade book."

A longing sigh escaped his lips the next moment. "It doesn't matter if it's the Azure Ascension World or the Spirit Abundance World... We're too small in the limitless sea of stars..."

Chapter 789: Suspicion and Disregard

As they had many considerations and weren't in the best of situations, their meeting was short.

Huang Yu left the jade book and ran off in a hurry after recounting his experiences and telling Shang Xia about the reason behind his appearance.

After sorting out some of the gains he made, Shang Xia decided to leave the region of concentrated asteroids to meet up with his fellow cultivators.

The location they used as a battlefield back then was completely destroyed due to the detonation of a divine weapon. Fortunately, after some time had passed, the area of fluctuating space shrank to only fill several hundred miles or so.

Close to 1000 miles away, Pang Jingyun, Shen Baisong, Yi Jingzi, and Gong Xinlan had already met up.

"Is Brother Shang not coming?" Shen Baisong, who was the last to arrive, asked while staring at the others.

Pang Jingyun forced a smile and said, "Lady Xinlan was the first to arrive and she called us all here. I was the second to arrive, and I didn't see Brother Shang..."

Pang Jingyun received Shang Xia's reminder earlier, but as he was the closest to the divine weapon, he could only care about running away. He was blown close to 2000 miles away from the shockwave even after escaping, and he was still feeling heartache for his Cloud Water Whip. He retrieved it as soon as he could back then, but it was still affected by the detonation of the divine weapon. Even after he repaired it, it might not remain as a pseudo divine weapon.

Gong Xinlan shook her head immediately. "I didn't see him."

Shen Baisong saw how Yi Jingzi had closed her eyes to meditate by the side as the aura around her fluctuated unsteadily. It was clear she was injured, and he couldn't help but ask, "How is she?"

"After the detonation, she tried to chase after the cultivator from the Spirit Abundance World and got into another fight with him." Gong Xinlan muttered.

Shen Baisong revealed a shocked expression. He opened his mouth, but no words came out.

At that moment, all of them gained another insight into Yi Jingzi's personality. It seemed as though the proud daughter of the Heavenly Star Palace was someone who wouldn't leave her grudges overnight...

It was then that Ji Jingzi, whose eyes had been closed the whole time, finally responded. With her eyes snapping open, she mumbled, "I dealt heavy injuries to his other Fate Dipper Clone. I was almost able to destroy it..."

Shen Baisong quickly chimed in to comfort her, "It's alright. He was at the third element of the Martial Dipper Realm and we managed to severely weaken him. He even lost his divine weapon. His losses far exceed ours..."

Pang Jingyun added, "Don't forget, there's another expert from the Spirit Abundance World whose Fate Dipper Clone was also destroyed by us. His true body should also have suffered serious injuries. If not for the detonation of the divine weapon, that person would have died in our hands."

"Huh?" Gong Xinlan turned to stare in a certain direction. "Is that Brother Shang rushing over to meet with us?"

Everyone turned to stare in the same direction and noticed a tiny speck of light speeding towards them.

If Shang Xia didn't intentionally conceal his tracks, he would be surrounded by an eye-catching glow that shone 5 different colors. It would be extremely easy to spot.

As the speck of light made its way closer, Pang Jingyun gasped softly and forced a smile. "That's not Brother Shang. It's another squad that is patrolling the space around our Azure Ascension World. They definitely noticed the giant disturbance caused by the detonation of the divine weapon and came to investigate what happened."

Clearly, Pang Jingyun had a way to communicate with the other squads.

The various squads were probably separated by tens of thousands of miles, but with the disturbance caused by the explosion spreading more than a thousand miles, it wasn't difficult for the others to notice what happened.

...

Shang Xia received a signal for the others to meet after leaving the region of asteroids.

As he rushed over, he noticed that there were other people other than his original squad.

"Fellow cultivator, why did you arrive so late?" The leader of the other squad questioned the moment Shang Xia arrived. He wore a suspicious gaze and spoke in a calm voice. However, Shang Xia could tell that he was looking for trouble.

The members of the other squad stared at Shang Xia with cold gazes as they awaited his reply.

With a placid gaze, he stared at the people who appeared before glancing at Pang Jingyun who wasn't far away.

Pang Jingyun revealed an awkward expression but eventually forced a laugh. "I forgot to introduce Brother Shang. This is Master Qing Pingzi from the Northern Sea Mystic Sect. That's Jin Delin from the Triple Frost Palace, Shen Qiuming from the Desert Gate, Xiong Yuanfeng from the Hengling Sect, and Master Tian Jun from the Dongjun Palace."

After he was done, he turned to the rest and introduced, "Everyone, this is Shang Xia from the Tongyou Sect in the You Continent."

Even though the Tongyou Institution also ascended to the ranks of Holy Lands in the Azure Ascension World, the other factions still had the habit of calling them the 'Tongyou Sect'. They were a little reluctant to accept the way the members of the Tongyou Institution called themselves.

Shang Xia nodded slightly at the others as a show of greeting. Not a trace of fluctuation could be seen on his face as he turned to his squadmates and explained, "I discovered one of their tracks after the explosion and hunted him down. I managed to slay the foreign expert and came back slightly later than all of you. I apologize for the inconvenience."

A series of commotion broke out among those present and the look of suspicion some people were looking at him with immediately weakened.

Shen Baisong laughed, "Oh? Looks like we gained a lot more than we thought from this battle. I wonder which foreign expert Brother Shang killed?"

Tossing out the gray robes that Lu Yuanming left behind, Shang Xia muttered, "It's the person who detonated his divine weapon. He suffered serious injuries and he suffered a massive backlash after causing his divine weapon to explode. He was no longer able to resist when I chased him down. However, he chose not to leave his body behind after his death and it turned to cosmic dust. I'm not used to keeping the bodies of my enemies and I simply grabbed whatever drifted in space before returning."

Gong Xinlan chimed in the next moment. "The person you killed was probably the one Sister Jingzi severely injured earlier before the blast! Who would have thought that you would run into him?"

Shang Xia revealed an expression of shock, but he turned to look at Yi Jingzi who was looking at him with a steady expression before laughing out loud. "It's no wonder! Looks like I lucked out by running into him! Heh... The foreign expert is really unlucky..."

Gong Xinlan and the others chuckled softly, and even Pang Jingyun chimed in.

Soon after, Yi Jingzi turned her body towards Shang Xia and whispered softly, "Many thanks, Brother Shang!"

Shang Xia was slightly taken aback by her show of gratitude. "Lady Yi, there's no need for such formalities between us. We formed a squad to patrol the region and if you didn't deal serious injuries to him, I wouldn't have been able to kill him. Right, Lady Yi, were you able to retrieve a portion of your fate dipper when your clone was destroyed earlier?"

She nodded slightly and continued in her soft voice, "I managed to retrieve about 60 percent of it. The power from the blast was extraordinary indeed..."

Those from Shang Xia's squad agreed unanimously and the gray gloves truly left a deep impression on them.

Finally, an unwelcome voice interrupted their conversation. "If I'm not mistaken, the experts of the Spirit Abundance World probably escaped once they detonated the divine weapon. They should have arranged for a place to meet. If Brother Shang could be patient and regroup before reporting the situation to everyone else, all of us might have been able to sweep both of them up when that happened."

Shang Xia turned to stare at Qing Pingzi who had spoken and a sneer formed on his face. He didn't hide the mockery in his voice as he spoke. "Oh... You're Qing Pingzi, right? If I may know, how long have you been a member of the Northern Sea Mystic Sect? You're a Martial Dipper Realm expert, right? Why do you reek of immaturity and naivety?"

Qing Pingzi was like a cat whose tail had been stepped on and he nearly exploded with rage. Flames of anger burned in his eyes as he glared at Shang Xia.

Shang Xia couldn't help but shake his head in disappointment when he looked at Qing Pingzi who was getting all worked up. He turned back to Shen Baisong and the others and continued to joke around with them. He didn't forget to show off the loot he received.

Qing Pingzi's squad was totally ignored...

Chapter 790: Duty Period

"Brother Shang, what's the point of offending that group of people?" Pang Jingyun sighed after Qing Pingzi and the others left.

Both sides didn't break out into conflict. Even though Shang Xia's final comment completely humiliated Qing Pingzi and caused him to fly into a fit of rage, he was eventually persuaded by his squad mates to leave.

Shang Xia chuckled and asked a question of his own. "Brother Pang, why do you look even more on edge than me? Your Yuanchen Sect has a Sixth Order Ancestor and you're an Elysium just like them. Is there a need for you to be so afraid of Qing Pingzi?"

“Why would I be afraid of him?” Pang Jingyun exclaimed, but his voice sounded a little unnatural. It was clear his forced reaction revealed his true thoughts, and he quickly lowered his voice as he continued, “I’m afraid for you! Brother Shang, the Northern Sea Mystic Sect is the strongest Elysium in our Azure Ascension World. Their accumulation and strength far surpass the Divine Capital Sect and the Eternal Palace. It’s not a smart move to offend Qing Pingzi...”

Shang Xia waved his hands and chuckled, “Many thanks for Brother Pang’s reminder. I am eternally grateful.”

It was clear Shang Xia wasn’t taking his reminder seriously and Pang Jingyun eventually shot him a look that told him to fend for himself before no longer speaking of the matter.

Shang Xia wasn’t actually disrespecting Pang Jingyun. It didn’t matter if he offended Qing Pingzi. After all, the Tongyou Institution was already at odds with the Northern Sea Mystic Sect. The grudge was formed a long time ago. In fact, it started when Shang Xia obstructed the Northern Sea Mystic Island during the expedition to the Manyu Continent.

Speaking from the perspective of the Tongyou Institution, the Northern Sea Mystic Sect, along with the Divine Capital Sect and Eternal Palace, had created the grudge ever since they tried to merge the worlds. A good portion of the You Continent was destroyed because of their actions, and the Tongyou Institution wouldn’t forget what happened.

If they had to mention something even more recent, it would be the alliance the Tongyou Institution formed with the Changbai Holy Land against the Triple Frost Palace. The Triple Frost Palace was backed by the Northern Sea Mystic Sect to begin with...

When Shang Xia offended Qing Pingzi earlier, the happiest person among them was probably Shen Baisong.

After Pang Jingyun’s attempts at reminding Shang Xia to not offend the Northern Sea Mystic Sect fell on deaf ears, Shen Baisong asked excitedly, “Brother Shang, how do you think the other squad fares in terms of combat abilities?”

Shang Xia glanced at him from the corner of his eye and muttered, “I can’t tell exactly, but I can pretty much understand why the Northern Sea Mystic Sect is the strongest Elysium in our Azure Ascension World. Oh right. I’m feeling a little curious. Why didn’t your Changbai Sect lean towards the Northern Sea Mystic Sect back then?”

Shen Baisong forced a chuckle but remained silent. It didn’t seem like he planned on answering Shang Xia’s question.

Shang Xia didn’t press the issue after seeing his reaction. He started to circulate his inner qi in an attempt to restore as much energy as he could.

A moment later, Shen Baisong sighed softly. In the end, he gave in. He looked as though he was thinking of what to say and after arranging his thoughts, he mumbled, “According to some records, the founding father of our Changbai Sect was a cultivator that was chased out from the Northern Sea Mystic Sect.”

In that instant, several versions of what might have happened formed in Shang Xia's mind about the events that transpired between the Northern Sea Mystic Sect and the founding ancestor of the Changbai Sect. From secret grudges to nasty betrayals, Shang Xia thought of them all.

Shen Baisong quickly continued, "After hundreds of years, no one knows who was right. It didn't matter either. Even Seniors Luo Baixu and Xu Bailing refused to say anything. From what I know, the Northern Sea Mystic Sect seems hell-bent on taking us as shameless thieves who stole their inheritance. According to them, they wish to take back whatever inheritance it was. However, we feel that all they're doing is to take the chance to suppress us and attempt to sever our inheritance. They can strengthen themselves and show off their might at the same time."

Shang Xia obviously didn't take Shen Baisong's word for it. After all, there seems to be a lot of information missing in his version of what happened. Of course, he didn't plan to try poking holes in Shen Baisong's story as well. All he needed to do was to understand that the Tongyou Institution already formed an alliance with the Changbai Sect and they had a certain amount of trust for each other.

"Brother Shen, there's no need to feel too pressured by that. The Northern Sea Mystic Sect might be large, and they might have many Holy Lands under their banner. However, did you notice how none of Qing Pingzi's squadmates spoke up for him earlier?"

Shen Baisong was also someone who could adapt to the situation quickly. He immediately reacted after hearing the prompt from Shang Xia. "Qing Pingzi is obviously someone who hasn't seen much of the world and lacks experience. That's why he could say something so foolish. His squadmates seemed to be on his side, but none of them reminded him. Thinking about it, the others seem to be sitting on the fence when you chided him earlier."

Shang Xia chuckled softly in response. "Brother Shen, you're exactly right. The Northern Sea Mystic Sect is too strong and even before the merger of our worlds, it could challenge the Divine Capital Sect and Eternal Palace at the same time. They always operated in a tyrannical manner, and your Changbai Sect isn't the only one who is wary of them. The Heavenly Star Palace and other factions are bound to feel the same. Everyone is just pretending to get along with them..."

Shang Xia closed his eyes near the end of his sentence and continued to circulate his inner qi. He needed to restore the energy he expended during the earlier battle as soon as possible.

Shen Baisong stood at the side as he carefully thought about what Shang Xia said. The more he thought about it, the more reasonable he thought what Shang Xia said was. However, a stray thought flashed through his mind. When Shang Xia had a verbal spar with Qing Pingzi earlier, Qing Pingzi's squadmates were standing at the side silently. However, wasn't he the same? He didn't speak up for Shang Xia either.

He thought about his attitude when everything happened earlier and realized he didn't wish to offend Qing Pingzi. He was also quietly anticipating matters to blow up.

Only after Pang Jingyun mediated the situation did it eventually get better. Even though they seemed to be on the weaker side, Pang Jingyun obviously seemed to side with Shang Xia a lot more.

In that case, wasn't Shang Xia indirectly mocking him earlier?!

Shen Baisong couldn't help but stare at Shang Xia who started to cultivate with a trace of anger in his eyes.

Back then, Shang Xia and the rest destroyed Lu Yuanming's clone at the first hidden hideout and everything it left behind would naturally be split evenly among them.

In the battle that happened at the second location, Yi Jingzi lost a Fate Dipper Clone but the others managed to destroy one of Huang Yu's Fate Dipper Clones.

Of course, Yi Jingzi would keep the remains of her fate dipper. However, the remains of Huang Yu's fate dipper would also have to be split evenly among them.

After that, everyone scattered due to the explosion from the divine weapon and they no longer operated in a team. Shang Xia killed Lu Yuanming alone, and he deserved everything he obtained.

However, before Shang Xia killed Lu Yuanming, Yi Jingzi severely wounded him and Shang Xia felt that he should at least give her something as a sign of goodwill. However, Yi Jingzi adamantly refused to take it.

Shang Xia thought about it for a second and he retrieved the Origin Dipper Fragment he received from Lu Yuanming's clone. "This fragment is relatively complete. There are at least 8 strands of fate dipper essences within. The Origin Dipper Fragment from the other cultivator only has 6 strands of fate dipper essences but it's a lot more useful to me. I am willing to use this to replace the Origin Dipper Fragment from the other guy."

Pang Jingyun raised an eyebrow and reminded, "Brother Shang, won't you be losing out in that case?"

"Actually, they were weakened before I made my move. I already got an extra 6 strands of fate dipper essences and I already took advantage of everything that happened." Shang Xia chuckled.

Actually, Shang Xia already returned Huang Yu his Origin Dipper Fragment and that was why he had to make the exchange.

With the Stargazer inheritance Shang Xia handed over after making a copy, Huang Yu would obtain huge merit after returning to the Emptiness Drifting Mountain. Regaining what he lost would be the least of his worries. In fact, they might just bestow him another Origin Dipper!

If anyone insisted that he bring out the other Origin Dipper Fragment, Shang Xia's lie would immediately be exposed.

Fortunately, Shang Xia cooked out some story about how they deserved to gain more. No one would try reducing their profits now that Shang Xia brought out more than they deserved.

There was a total of 16 fate dipper essences after they destroyed 2 Fate Dipper Clones and they would be able to obtain 3 strands each minimally. Everyone tacitly agreed to give the extra to Yi Jingzi who lost a Fate Dipper Clone as some form of compensation.

The fate dipper essences were split into 2 different elements and one of them was of the Wood Element! Shang Xia purposely chose 2 strands of Wood Element Fate Dipper Essence as he would be able to change their yin yang alignment as he wished.

When everyone was recovering, Qing Pingzi and his squad were looking through the region for traces of the other cultivator.

Unfortunately, they failed to find anything. From Shang Xia's estimations, Huang Yu would probably have reached the land of transit and returned to the Spirit Abundance World with the Stargazer inheritance by then.

When Shang Xia and the rest finally restored themselves to their peak state, a little over a month had passed. Pang Jingyun made a detailed report about the battle that happened before sending it back to the Azure Ascension World through some secret method. The report would very likely be read by the 4 Sixth Order Ancestors before being spread to the various Holy Lands.

Shang Xia and the others continued their task, but after the battles that happened along with the explosion caused by the detonation of the divine weapon, they didn't know where to start.

Under such circumstances, there probably wouldn't be any experts of the Spirit Abundance World left in the asteroid belt.

That was precisely the case as they finished up the rest of their patrol duration without running into another foreign expert. They couldn't even find any traces of them! They could only mark out asteroids with resources like they had been doing all along.

When 3 years were up, they started to make their way back to the Beyond Heavens Pavilion. Along their way, they stopped when they closed in on the Three Unity Island as the trade fair was about to begin and the various factions were sending their low-level cultivators up with their specialized methods again.

The 5 of them basically understood why the various factions were fighting over their method of transporting people through space, and they observed the means every faction was using to transport their cultivators to the Three Unity Island.

Compared to 3 years ago, the various factions improved in both their methods and number of people they could ferry up to the island. However, there didn't seem to be any significant breakthrough.

Shang Xia quickly discovered that the number of cultivators the Tongyou Institution could send up numbered close to a hundred. It was clear the Five Element Formation underwent some modifications and improvements. The amount of energy wasted was much less than before.

Of course, the protection barrier around the moving island also became a lot more restrained. It no longer left behind a massive rainbow when it moved through space that could attract everyone's attention.

After seeing the methods, everyone felt a wave of disappointment.

The Azure Ascension World seemed to be far from being able to head out to the depths of space on a large scale.

The Three Unity Pagoda descended again, and the trade fair that happened once a year started.

Hundreds of miles away from the Three Unity Island, Shang Xia and the others bade each other farewell as their excitement waned. They returned to their respective factions.

Not too long after Shang Xia returned to the You Continent, a random rumor that came from nowhere threw them straight into another massive storm.

Kou Chongxue had gone missing!