

Tribulation of Myriad Races #Chapter 51: A Glimpse Behind the Curtain (2) - Read Tribulation of Myriad Races Chapter 51: A Glimpse Behind the Curtain (2)

Chapter 51: A Glimpse Behind the Curtain (2)

Su Yu wanted to speak but he hesitated. Eventually, he made up his mind and said, "Instructor, those so-called neutral races are merely opportunistic wolves. The moment humanity shows signs of weakening, these fellows will not hesitate to move against us and swallow up our Human Realm. I've heard of the major battles the Devil Subduing Army was involved in from my father. I agree that those races deserved to be killed."

"You're not alone in thinking that way," Liu Wenyan smiled. "Xia Longwu has a lot of supporters, including the soldiers at the front line. I did not say that he was wrong. However, it is also understandable that there are many divergent thoughts among the human race. What do you think?" magic

Liu Wenyan was satisfied with what Su Yu said. It was good that he had his own opinion. It would be bad if he was only a yes-man who only knew to follow others blindly.

"Each person has their own thoughts. Nobody is saying that the prefect was wrong, but nobody can deny that because of him, humanity has gotten dragged into even more conflicts than before. We found ourselves fighting more battles, with the battles being more intense as well."

Su Yu disagreed. "But we also managed to scare a bunch of races into maintaining their neutrality."

"I guess so." Liu Wenyan nodded, "We won't be talking about that for now since that's more of an issue for those at the front line. Returning to our topic, Prefect Xia is unhappy with the academy because some people in the academy have suggested that we need to know our enemy better to beat them, so they wanted to open the academy for the myriad races as well."

"What?" Su Yu was alarmed.

"Accepting the myriad races as students!" Liu Wenyan's voice turned solemn, "The current principal is an adventurous person. He proposed that rather than bitterly studying the various races, we might as well accept them into the

academy and learn from them. After all, who would know the other races better than themselves?

"Know yourself and know your enemy, and you will never be defeated. We will have them study the original texts of their own races and let them contribute the information related to their own races."

Su Yu exclaimed, "But that also means that we'll have to let them learn our ways as well, right?"

"Exactly. The myriad races aren't stupid. They won't voluntarily deliver us the ways to counter them. We want to learn more about them, but they also want to learn more about us. That idea is a double-edged sword. It cuts both ways. That's why it has never been approved. It has its supporters, but there are also a lot of people against it.

"Prefect Xia is one of those who is against that idea. Because of that, there is a split between the prefect and the academy. The prefect even...forget it. It's best not to mention that."

That only caused Su Yu to feel anxious. It was not nice to leave sentences unfinished.

"Instructor, what did the prefect do?" Looking at the agitated Su Yu, Liu Wenyan laughed and said, "That...is really not something I should speak about. It is a dark history. Remember to never mention it in the academy."

"Yes, yes, I'll remember."

Liu Wenyan shook his head and said, "Twelve years ago, the academy made the same proposal. The prefect did not say anything, nor did the prefectural government respond to the proposal.

"The principal thought that the prefect was tacitly agreeing with the proposal. Thus, he contacted several minor races to conduct his first attempt at accepting foreign students."

"In the end...right after those foreign students arrived, war broke out at the Allheaven Battlefield. Leading the Martial Dragon Guards, Prefect Xia ambushed the races involved and even raided their realms. Numerous cultivation methods and other resources were plundered.

"After that, the prefect didn't even bother visiting the academy. He only had the Martial Dragon Guards deliver tens of thousands of original texts to the academy. The meaning behind that action is obvious. The things the academy tried so hard to get can be directly taken on the battlefield."

Liu Wenyan sounded melancholic as he said, "With that, the academy's plan was completely ruined. After all, the races involved had their homes raided after sending their people to the academy. Would any other race still dare to get involved?"

"A project the principal had contacted various parties and planned for many years to launch was ruined just like that."

For some reason, Su Yu felt his blood boiling in excitement listening to that story. He said, "Isn't...that good?"

If he wanted something, he would take it himself. Rather take than beg.

"I'm not saying that the prefect was wrong. But what he did has indeed created a lot of fear among the myriad races," said Liu Wenyan softly. "Humanity can't face all the other races alone. This is what you need to understand."

"The minor and weaker races can be roped in. The minor races involved in that project were the ones we could have brought to our side. In the end, those races ended up destroyed by us. That would only cause the other minor races to fear us more."

"And if we turn them into enemies, one of them might not be our match, but what about ten or a hundred of them? You won't be able to kill them all."

Su Yu nodded. He understood that. But he had to admit that Xia Longwu's actions were truly inspiring and stirring.

"And thus, a split appeared in the capital." Liu Wenyan sighed. "Prefect Xia is very stubborn. He believes that severing heads was the better way of keeping the various races awed and fearful. But many also believe that doing so will put the human race in an even more difficult position. Fortunately, Prefect Xia was eventually ordered to never step foot on the Allheaven Battlefield again. Only then did we manage to placate the various minor races."

Su Yu was not reconciled to that ending. "So Prefect Xia can no longer enter the Allheaven Battlefield? Isn't that the same as crippling ourselves?"

"Not really." Liu Wenyan smiled. "That is merely a compromise made by the experts on the front line to placate the minor races. In practice, if the prefect wants to go there, nobody would care as long as he does not kick up a big ruckus. Who would be stupid enough to retire a super expert like that?"

"Also, that might not be a bad thing. By retiring him from the front line, he is given the time to temper his cultivation. At that time, he had been flying through his cultivation levels. A cultivator needs to advance a step at a time to eventually reach that realm.

"This isn't bad at all. The prefect himself knows that. Otherwise, with that temper of his, do you really think he's going to be so obedient? He'll stay in the prefecture just because he was told to do so?"

Liu Wenyan laughed, "You look down on our prefect too much. Although he has left the Allheaven Battlefield for many years, that's only what's on the official records. The battlefield is too massive. Nobody can keep their eyes on him at all times.

"The Martial Dragon Guards are also commonly sighted there. Even the Great Xia Army will frequently go there for training. By the way, that is why Great Xia is one of the strongest human prefectures."

Su Yu nodded silently. He finally understood what Xia Bing was trying to say previously.

Liu Wenyan heaved out a long breath and said, "Just think of all this as a story. You're far from qualified to take part in these matters. Not even Bai Feng or even his teacher is qualified to get involved. This is something for the higher ups to consider. It doesn't have much to do with us.

"Xia Bing only thinks that you're quite talented and don't want to see you affected by the bad practices of the academy. In truth, that is precisely what I want to see."

Liu Wenyan spoke slowly, "There are many aspects to life, and everything can be a form of training. A clean and pure environment suits soldiers. That is what the military needs. However, a true expert needs to be experienced and knowledgeable. Without witnessing the darkest tendencies hidden within the

human heart, without experiencing numerous conspiracies and schemes, a single scheme might put an end to you on the battlefield.

"Xia Bing does not understand. If Prefect Xia truly hates the academy, why didn't he restrict the academy's growth? Why did he allow the academy to keep growing?"

"He is stubborn, not stupid. Great Xia needs different trains of thoughts as well. That way, we will be able to nurture all sorts of experts.

"Without the cultural research academy, the various armies will not be able to recruit powerful cultural researchers anymore. In fact, there are many powerful cultural researchers on the front line leading our armies against our enemies."

Su Yu nodded. He was starting to get what Liu Wenyan was saying. Of course, he was still weak. A nobody. These conflicts were unrelated to him. He could only treat them as a story. Perhaps when he reached a sufficient height to get involved in those matters he would see and feel things differently.

"Instructor, will my father be fine in the Devil Subduing Army?"

"He will be fine. We still have many invincible experts at the front line. Nobody among the human race will dare to touch the Devil Subduing Army because of this little internal conflict."

Liu Wenyan shook his head, "The front line concerns the survival of humanity as a whole. Thus, we keep our internal struggles out of the battlefield. Nobody dares to bring that to the front line. Things are much more straightforward at the front line.

"War is war. Even if there is a big ruckus back home, those at the front line will still need to follow their military orders.

"Even Prefect Xia will need to report to the invincible experts in charge of the front line before he can carry out any military operations unless he is there alone on a personal business."

Su Yu's eyes flickered as he asked, "So that event from back then where the prefect led the Martial Dragon Guards and the Devil Subduing Army in an attack against the minor raids were approved as well?"

"Of course." Liu Wenyan's smile grew wide. "Do you really think Prefect Xia would start a war without any approval? Even among the invincible experts, he has a lot of support."

"I see."

Su Yu heaved a sigh in relief. He was worried that Xia Longwu would be isolated due to his extreme actions, but it turned out that he had been worried over nothing. He was only a tiny Source Opening cultivator. Why was he worrying about a super expert? That was really stupid.

"Let's move on." Liu Wenyan smiled, "You will come to learn what you need to know when the time is right. As for the things you shouldn't know, it's pointless to learn more. It won't bring you any benefits and will only disturb your peace of mind."

"You're already at the eighth-stage. I can feel the source qi undulations around you. Looks like you've been improving quickly."

Liu Wenyan was very satisfied. "Get ready. Later this afternoon, I'll write a willpower text for you. I'll be writing the Lightning Source Blade. Before that, read a regular copy of that technique and get familiar with it."

Su Yu was overjoyed, "Instructor, is that a martial technique?"

"Yes." Liu Wenyan nonchalantly said, "But I'm afraid you won't gain much if anything at all from the session. You're still only an eighth-stage Source Opening cultivator. That cultivation level is too low. Even if you manage to learn the technique, you might not be able to utilize it properly. The Lightning Source Blade requires a lot of opened acupoints to be used."

"Yeah. I understand." Su Yu hurriedly nodded, but he still couldn't stop feeling excited. He knew very well how beneficial a willpower text could be. Learning from a willpower text was akin to learning straight from someone's mind. That was an entirely different experience than learning from a normal book.

Of course, that also depended on the writer's mastery of the contents of the text. After all, when writing the text, the writer would be imprinting their comprehension in the text. If the writer did not know much, the reader wouldn't be able to learn much either.

Chapter 52: Storm Is Coming (1)

Great Xia City, capital of Great Xia.

While Liu Wenyan and Su Yu were having their talk, an argument was happening in the prefect's manor. There were only a few people in the spacious hall. Xia Longwu was seated with his back perfectly straight and looking straight down from his throne.

Below him, an old man was seated to the left. That was a military advisor in the capital. A smile was on his face as he listened silently. Seated to the right was a scholarly and amiable old man with white hair. He also had a smile on his face as he listened silently.

Apart from the two, there was a middle-aged muscular man who was standing alone while loudly rebuking, "Wan Tiansheng, stop promoting that worthless idea. This is Great Xia, not the Knowledge Seeking Realm."

The muscular man was shouting at the white haired old man on the right. The white-haired old man was Wan Tiansheng, the sixth principal of the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy. Wan Tiansheng had a friendly smile on his face. Even with the muscular man shouting at him, he appeared calm. His voice wasn't loud, but when he spoke, everyone could hear him clearly, "Zheng Ping, speak normally. Don't shout. I'm not deaf. I can hear you."

He smiled as though this was only a casual conversation between neighbors as he softly said, "The Martial Dragon Guards should return. You already fought the battle you wanted. In the battle against the divine skywing race, almost a thousand of the three thousand soldiers sacrificed their lives. That is a heavy loss.

"When it's time to fight, we shouldn't be pulling our fists. I don't have an issue with that. But are you really going to destroy the entire divine skywing race?"

Wan Tiansheng looked at Xia Longwu and said, "Prefect, you should understand. We won't be able to do so. The divine skywing race only has an army of ten thousand in the Allheaven Battlefield. That's far from everything they have.

"If we continue pushing, we might be able to get more results, but we will also pay more lives as the price. Do you intend to lose all three thousand of the Martial Dragon Guards?"

Wan Tiansheng shook his head, "There is no need for that. This is too rash. The fight is done. Now, it's time to talk. Talk to the divine skywing race. Make them pay a price for permission to withdraw their defeated army from the battlefield..."

The muscular man shouted in fury, "We have them surrounded! They're near the optimal encirclement spot. We can clearly destroy the entire army. Wan Tiansheng, what are your intentions? Why do you insist on releasing them? Did they bribe you?"

Wan Tiansheng wasn't angry. He smiled, "Zheng Ping, there is no need to launch personal attacks. I don't deny that we'll be able to take down that army. But the question is, is it worth it? Three thousand Martial Dragon Guards. An army Great Xia had paid a large price to build. We're going to lose them all only for a single army of ten thousand?"

"In that army, there are people from your war academy and people from our cultural research academy. These are all elites of humanity. Are we going to sacrifice them all just to exterminate a defeated army?"

Wan Tiansheng sighed, "Some people don't like to use their brain and can only use their muscles. These people should just remain a regular soldier instead of being in a commanding position."

The muscular man coldly said, "I've been in the army for thirty years. I started as a regular soldier and killed my way to my current rank."

Wan Tiansheng laughed. "In that case, you should just focus on your role as a muscle. Why do you insist on getting involved in strategic decisions?"

The muscular man roared, "I know you look down on me, but I do not need your respect. We only need to send the remaining two thousand Martial Dragon Guards in Great Xia to the battlefield to achieve our goal. We don't need to pay too much price to eliminate that army!"

"After losing a thousand soldiers, we have successfully pushed the enemies into desperation. Wan Tiansheng, you want us to withdraw our army now? Have you considered what the Martial Dragon Guards will think? Will the soldiers at the front line be willing to accept that?"

"I'm a military man. I know them best. They won't be able to accept it. They will not be satisfied. After losing one third of their own, they have finally gained the absolute upper hand. Nobody will be willing to stop now!"

The muscular man's eyes turned red in agitation, "We paid a high price for this victory! We must continue until we get our due!"

Wan Tiansheng softly said, "Fighting a war is not a matter of blind aggression. Zheng Ping, why do you not understand that after so many years in the military? At times, the number of enemies you kill does not determine the result of a war. Rather, our gains determine the result.

"I dislike Great Xia's combat doctrine. Never showing mercy and always pushing things too far. This is bad. Very bad. You will only provoke our enemies into making a last stand with us, ensuring that we will suffer alongside them.

"It is important to know when to stop. Let them pay for their lives with resources, cultivation methods, martial techniques, blood, and other treasures. magic

"That way, during the next war, they will be willing to surrender much earlier and buy their way out with treasures. We need to prioritize collapsing their will to fight, not arousing their will to fight."

Wan Tiansheng sighed, "Great Xia has been involved in so many wars over the years. Sure, we have been able to kill the most in every war, but each time, we're also the ones to suffer the biggest losses while gaining the least when compared with the other human prefectures.

"Our enemies' will to fight have all been aroused by you. The myriad races know that against Great Zhou, they can pay for survival if they can't win. But against Great Xia, they have to fight until the bitter end.

"In that regard, I think Zhou Potian did very well. Even Great Ming handled things better than us. Great Xia has powerful soldiers and commanders with unrivaled combat prowess. But what about our losses? What about the death compensation?"

Wan Tiansheng shook his head and sighed, "Zheng Ping, I really believe that the prefect should send you to our treasury. You can see for yourself how empty it already is."

Zheng Ping trembled. He looked up at Xia Longwu.

Xia Longwu had been remaining silent. When he saw Zheng Ping looking at him, he calmly said, "Our treasury is not very full at the moment, but it's fine. Great Xia's foundation is strong enough to withstand our losses."

Wan Tiansheng smiled, "So prefect, do you intend to continue the war?"

Xia Longwu looked at Wan Tiansheng and indifferently said, "Wan Tiansheng, some of the things you said are right. Great Xia has always been the one to kill the most and gain the least. I know that better than you. But even so, I've never listened to your suggestions. Do you know why?"

Wan Tiansheng wasn't surprised. He slowly said, "I understand. You want to forge the strongest human army, allowing humanity to possess a heroic vanguard army."

"It's good that you understand." Xia Longwu stood up and coldly said, "In the past, Great Zhou was the strongest. Their armies swept through the Allheaven Battlefield and were without rival. They did what you suggested, allowing their enemies to pay their way out of the war.

"That continued for a year, two years, ten years, and a hundred years. During one campaign, after pushing their enemies into a corner, they felt that it was time to stop again. It was time to reap their harvest. Alas, they were wrong. The elite army of the divine race they were facing had decided to make a last stand.

"With ten thousand soldiers, they defeated Great Zhou's army of one hundred thousand when they had their guards down. Great Zhou had forgotten how it feels to fight until the bitter end. They had forgotten how to fight with everything on the line. An army of a hundred thousand was defeated."

Xia Longwu sneered, "That battle came to be known as the Battle of Lazo Sea. Humanity suffered a crushing defeat there. An elite of a hundred thousand was defeated by a broken army. It was inconceivable. It shocked the myriad races. They discovered that the most elite army of humanity was merely a paper tiger."

Xia Longwu's face turned cold, "The unequaled Great Zhou Army has their legends shattered there. Why? Because they're used to it. They're used to not losing lives in war."

Xia Longwu looked at Wan Tiansheng and solemnly said, "The example of our predecessors is right before our eyes. Wan Tiansheng, do you still believe that there is no need to be harsh on the battlefield?"

"That was not what I meant." Wan Tiansheng shook his head. "But Great Xia is really on the verge of collapse. Prefect, we need a balance in everything. We can't deny everything the Great Zhou Army had done just because of a single defeat. They were able to rapidly rise up from that defeat. Their ample harvest from their past wars played a great role in that, allowing them to rapidly rebuild another elite army.

"But for us...if we lose the Martial Dragon Guards, it will be too difficult to rebuild another elite army."

Standing in front of his throne, Xia Longwu stared at Wan Tiansheng from above.

Wan Tiansheng did not give up. Meeting Xia Longwu's gaze, he said, "Withdraw, negotiate, and allow them to pay for their lives."

"I am the soul of Great Xia. I can't step back!"

"You still need to do it!"

The scholarly Wan Tiansheng suddenly became overbearing as his eyes turned sharp. "If you refuse, the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy will no longer provide the Martial Dragon Guards with any manpower. You won't see a single cultural researcher in the Martial Dragon Guards after this."

"Are you threatening me?" asked Xia Longwu with an overcast voice.

Wan Tiansheng stood up and solemnly said, "If you refuse to take a step back, I would rather have our teachers and students seek refuge at Great Zhou than to let our children throw their lives away for the sake of your reputation!"

"Bastard!" Zheng Ping was furious. "Wan Tiansheng, are you betraying Great Xia?"

"No. I'm saving Great Xia. I'm willing to fight for the human race, but I'm not willing to fight for a dictator."

Wan Tiansheng then removed the official's hat from his head and said, "Wan Tiansheng hereby resigns as the principal of the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy."

Xia Longwu stared at Wan Tiansheng silently for a long while.

Suddenly, the old man to the left laughed and said, "Principal Wan, stop messing with Principal Zheng."

Zheng Ping frowned unhappily. What did that mean?

The old man said, "Like it or not, we still need to take that step back. Great Xia has been in war after war for decades. We have suffered and lost a lot. We have been gathered here today by the prefect to talk about this.

"Since you were able to guess the purpose of this meeting, what is the point of making the prefect lose face?"

Wan Tiansheng pretended to be confused, "What do you mean?"

The old man laughed and shook his head. "You're still the same. Why are you constantly arguing with each other? Can't you talk calmly?"

"The prefect wanted to take a step back as well, but he can't do so. He is a rallying banner of humanity. He is also the soul of Great Xia. If he takes a step back, what will our soldiers at the front line think? After all, he's not the same as that shameless Zhu Tiandao..."

At the mention of that name, the mood in the previously solemn room changed.

Even Xia Longwu with his perpetual solemn expression sat down and coughed awkwardly, "Stop talking drivel. Prefect Zhu...cough, cough. He still cares a great deal about his face when it's needed."

Everyone continued laughing. The old man said, "You're right. I was wrong. Let's not talk about that person and return to our topic. There is no changing the fact that we will need to pull our army back. The Martial Dragon Guards will not sacrifice thousands of lives to eliminate an army of ten thousand from the divine skywing race.

"However, the order can't be made under the prefect's name. After killing several divine skywing experts, the prefect urgently needs to enter a secluded cultivation session.

"Today, the two of you are gathered to talk about the appointment ceremony a few days later. With the prefect in seclusion, Marquis Xia will be appointed as the acting prefect. At that time...Wan Tiansheng, you can repeat your performance today."

A grin unfolded on the old man's face, "Have Marquis Xia make the order to withdraw. Since the prefect is in seclusion, the order will have nothing to do with him.

"Even if our soldiers at the front line are unhappy, it doesn't matter. Marquis Xia does not mind. He has always been a merchant. He will take charge in the talks with the divine skywing race, asking for compensation from them. Even the divine skywing race won't suspect anything. The myriad races won't be able to detect Great Xia's weakness."

Zheng Ping was hit by a realization. He scolded, "Old fart, is that really fine? Marquis Xia...he has been the fall guy way too many times. Nowadays, his reputation is terrible."

"Since he already has a bad reputation, why does it matter if his reputation drops further?" The old man smiled, "Principal Zheng, what Principal Wan said is true. Great Xia's treasury is nearly empty. We can't afford to keep fighting. We won't be able to afford building a second Martial Dragon Guards. And after losing our current Martial Dragon Guards, Great Xia would be left with no elites.

"It's only a divine skywing race, not the entirety of the divine race. What's the point of sacrificing everything we have for them? Since our prefect is entering seclusion, Marquis Xia who loves money more than his reputation will take charge. Even the myriad races are aware of his reputation.

"And with him in charge, who will suspect him when he decides to withdraw our army for money?"

The old man had a bright smile on his face, "The divine skywing race will even rejoice that Marquis Xia has taken office during this critical moment. If Prefect Xia was still in charge, they would probably lose this army of ten thousand entirely.

"The prefect is known for being unyielding. If he is the one to make this order, everyone will be surprised. They will all assume that Great Xia is in some sort of trouble."

Zheng Ping found himself speechless. After a while, he asked, "Are things really that bad?"

"Yes. The treasury is almost empty." The old man sighed. "Why else would we withdraw now after fighting for so many years? In the past, we will not stop attacking a race that has created trouble in our prefecture like the divine skywing race until we damage them lethally."

"But now, we have no choice but to stop and recuperate." The old man solemnly said, "This is why the prefect has decided to enter seclusion now. We can't keep fighting. That applies to not only the Martial Dragon Guards, but the Devil Subding Army as well. They have suffered so many losses that they have been recalling veterans year after year. They will need to stop and recuperate as well."

"Great Xia looks powerful, but in truth, we're losing manpower faster than we can replenish it. After spending so many years building a resounding reputation, it is time for us to rest. There is no avoiding that."

"The prefect will end his seclusion after Great Xia is done recovering. At that time, the prefect will also be making his debut as an invincible expert!"

Xia Longwu indifferently said, "I have been planning to enter the Allheaven Battlefield and slaughter a king to push myself into that realm. But...to be safe, we will withdraw our army and delay this battle for the future. I believe that Great Xia will only need a few years to make a full recovery."

"Wise choice, prefect." Wan Tiansheng praised fawningly, "I see a bright future ahead of Great Xia with this choice!"

Xia Longwu was having none of that. He asked nonchalantly, "Aren't you resigning? How about this, you can officially submit your resignation during the ceremony a few days later. Since Zhou Potian is willing to take you, feel free to go there."

Chapter 53: Storm Is Coming (2)

"The prefect is really humorous!" Wan Tiansheng remained completely calm as he said, "I was only practicing earlier! I can't let Marquis Xia and the others see through my performance during the ceremony! Zhou Potian? That's a crafty old fox! I am unwilling to associate myself with the likes of him!"

"Heh." Xia Longwu sneered. "Let Zhou Potian know what he said."

He looked at the old man to the left. The old man laughed. Looking at Zheng Ping, he said, "Principal Zheng, take charge of that. Do not miss a single word of what Principal Wan said about Prefect Zhou."

Zheng Ping had a dark expression. He remained silent.

Xia Longwu ignored them and started walking away as he said, "It's settled, then. The Martial Dragon Guards will withdraw. The divine skywing race will pay a price for that. I'll enter seclusion. The day I leave seclusion is the day I use the divine skywing race to test my blade."

The others voiced their agreement. Nobody objected.

Wan Tiansheng's face was brimming with a smile. Before leaving, he glanced at Zheng Ping and sighed, "It truly is a waste of time to talk strategy with a brute."

Zheng Ping had a dark expression as he said, "Old fart, during this year's academy exchange, I'll make sure to fill your academy with mournful wails."

Wan Tiansheng did not seem to mind. Instead, he happily laughed, "I'm waiting for you. Go for it. Don't hold back. In the past, the people from your war academy were too weak. I almost wonder if you were starving them.

"How about this? I'll provide you with ten thousand kilograms of meat for free. Feed your people well so that they have more strength. If your people can scare half our students away, I'll give you a velvet flag of honor as a gift. The cultural research academy is too crowded. What's the point of keeping so many people with us?"

Wan Tiansheng shook his head, "A bunch of mediocre fools. I've been meaning to cut down on manpower. If it wasn't for those old farts getting in my way, I would have reduced our yearly intake into only a thousand students.

"Old Zheng, I'll be relying on you. Work hard and kick at least a thousand of those students away. If you can do so, I'll personally visit your academy with a velvet banner of honor to thank you."

Zheng Ping's face turned even more unsightly. He had never won a verbal spar against this old bastard.

Wan Tiansheng laughed happily and strolled out of the room while lamenting, "The Great Xia War Academy...has declined. Sigh. The Martial Dragon War Academy, on the other hand, looks promising. As for your Great Xia War Academy...if you can't kick at least a thousand of our students out this year, I'll really start looking down on you."

Wan Tiansheng then vanished into thin air.

Only then did Zheng Ping helplessly mutter, "These old bastards are getting more and more difficult to deal with. Prefect, are we really going to stop?"

Beside him, Xia Longwu, who had left earlier, suddenly appeared.

Looking at the direction Wan Tiansheng had left, Xia Longwu remained silent for a while before softly saying, "We're not stopping. We're waiting. Waiting until we recover. Wan Tiansheng has been waiting so many years for this. Finally, the prefecture is weakened, allowing him to successfully push his agenda."

Zheng Ping sighed and said, "I'm slightly afraid."

"Of what?"

"I'm afraid that our people will lose their will to fight, their confidence, and their morale."

Zheng Ping looked at Xia Longwu with a complicated expression and continued, "I'm afraid that this withdrawal will also change the heart of Great Xia."

"What will happen, will happen." Xia Longwu calmly said, "We can't keep fighting until even our retired veterans are forced to return to the battlefield. Rest is required. It is better to rest now than to rest when we're no longer capable of putting up a fight."

"Old Zheng, the war academy has suffered great losses over the years. It's time to take a rest."

Xia Longwu then stopped talking and stood there bleakly. He had been unyielding for his entire life. Finally, he was forced to stop. He might have claimed that he looked down on Zhu Tiandao and Zhou Potian, but in truth, he actually admired and envied them somewhat.

"At the very least, much fewer of their warriors have perished compared to Great Xia..."

Xia Longwu muttered to himself with a bitter look in his eyes. He wanted to keep fighting, but reality forbade him from doing so. He had been too aggressive before. As a result, Great Xia was akin to a slab of meat in a boiling pot. It might look great, but danger surrounded it from all sides.

"Wan Tiansheng, we have been competing against each other for so many years. Let me see just what you can accomplish now that you're getting what you want."

Xia Longwu was also curious to see just what Wan Tiansheng could accomplish.

"Cultural research academy...hopefully things won't go wrong at the next step. Teacher, can you really keep everything under control?"

Xia Longwu smiled to himself. The person he called teacher was his first teacher. However, it had been so many years since they last met that he had almost forgotten that such a person existed.

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Nanyuan Secondary School.

Afternoon.

General office.

Apart from Su Yu and Liu Wenyan, there were many other people in the office. All the students with the potential to get into the cultural research academy were there. Including Su Yu, there were twelve of them.

Previously, Liu Wenyan had forced Bai Feng to teach two of his students. He couldn't send more students to Bai Feng because Bai Feng wasn't a part of the secondary school and he wasn't sure if Bai Feng would teach them anything about Divine Characters.

Today, he was going to personally write a willpower text. That was different. Even if he was biased toward Su Yu, this was still a rare opportunity for the other students. Thus, he had gathered all the students for the writing session.

Liu Wenyan and the principal were standing side by side. A large desk stood before them. There was no paper on the desk. Instead, there was only a beast hide unfurled on it. The hide was massive.

There was also a basin of red liquid on the desk. The red liquid was going to serve as the ink for the writing session today. Currently, Liu Wenyan was grinding the red liquid, preparing it for writing. The principal's heart was still aching from what he had spent. Everything on the desk had been purchased with a large number of merit points.

He had spent over a hundred points for this. The secondary school had truly paid a large price for this writing session.

"Everyone, stay focused when it starts. This is a rare opportunity. If you find yourself reaching your limit, shut your eyes and rest. Do not force yourself to keep going."

The principal reminded all the students sternly. In truth, it was still too early for most of these students to start studying willpower texts. Even the academy would not open any Divine Character lessons to students below twenty percent willpower.

Most students also wouldn't bother trying to study Divine Characters before then. That was basically a waste of time and money. After all, in the academy, reading a single willpower text, especially when it was being written live, was not something one could do for free.

In the academy, a single willpower text lesson would cost one at least five merit points. And that was only the cheapest lesson where it was conducted in a large group, with the price being a discounted price since they were the students of the academy.

It would cost an outsider far more to attend one of such classes. The cultural researcher's mood would also decide whether these outsiders could attend the lesson. After all, writing one such text would exhaust a large amount of willpower, so each lesson was invaluable.

"Today, Instructor Liu will be writing the Lightning Source Blade, a low-tier profound-grade martial technique. Try to see as much as you can," reminded the principal again.

After Liu Wenyan's willpower materialization, the people of Nanyuan had learned a lot more about cultural researchers than before. In the past, decades would pass before Nanyuan could see a single cultural researcher. People like Su Yu practically knew nothing about cultural researchers.

After all, nobody would talk much about something that had not appeared in their life before. With Liu Wenyan's advancement, things were no longer the same in Nanyuan. The students in the office appeared incredibly excited.

Willpower text!

A Skysoar cultivator was going to personally write the text for them, kickstarting their path of Divine Character cultivation. Beside Su Yu, Liu Yue's eyes were also brightly lit. She couldn't help but to glance at Su Yu. She knew that Su Yu was most likely the intended recipient of this session.

That was because apart from Su Yu, everyone else would not be able to gain much from this session. In fact, it would be quite wasteful for them to learn this at their current stage of cultivation.

As someone who had studied willpower texts before, she knew how valuable and expensive each text was. Disregarding the materials used, even a hundred merit points might not be enough to hire a cultural researcher to write a willpower text. After all, they could earn as much just by killing a Skysoar Realm enemy.

"His willpower is only ten percent full..."

Liu Yue was envious of Su Yu. She couldn't understand why Liu Wenyan looked so highly upon Su Yu. After all, her willpower was already fifteen percent full during their previous lesson with Bai Feng. And after her recent hard work, she was already starting to study incomplete original texts.

That signified that she was nearing or had reached twenty percent willpower. Even so, Su Yu was the one Liu Wenyan had chosen to bring around for the past month. She was never in his mind. She was envious, and she could only sigh. Perhaps Instructor Liu had never truly viewed her as his student.

But in truth, she was wrong. Liu Wenyan only believed that the other students wouldn't be able to learn what he had been teaching Su Yu. Killing Great Strength cultivators as a Source Opening cultivator? Staying a week in a warehouse filled to the brim with corpses? Learn more languages? magic

These students hadn't even finished mastering their existing lessons. And for lessons everyone could attend such as this writing lesson, he did not exclude anyone even if he believed that the others wouldn't be able to gain as much as Su Yu from it. But there was no helping that since willpower text was not something everyone was capable of studying.

If this was the cultural research academy, he could have charged them five merit points each just for this one lesson. No, not even five merit points would be enough. That was merely the payment for the most basic of lessons. Since he was writing a profound-grade technique, he could charge even ten or twenty merit points and the academy students would still not hesitate to attend the class.

Chapter 54: Lightning Source Blade

Liu Wenyan was silent as he slowly gathered his power. He had just achieved willpower materialization not long ago. In truth, writing a profound-grade martial technique so early was slightly beyond his ability.

Su Yu and the others would probably only understand how high a price Liu Wenyan had paid for this writing session after entering the academy. In fact, such lessons would only be conducted by full researchers in the academy.

"Silence!" Liu Wenyan opened his mouth, and the students who had been conversing softly instantly shut their mouths.

Liu Wenyan had a stern expression. His white hair started fluttering while his body glowed with a golden light.

"I am going to start writing now. Observe silently. When you reach your limit, shut your eyes immediately."

Everyone nodded hastily. Su Yu had a look of anticipation. This was a martial technique, a profound-grade martial technique at that. He was looking forward to learning it. A willpower text of this technique would be the equivalent of a master of the technique personally demonstrating their cultivation process and their knowledge to the learner.

The entire process would be dissected and taught to the learner step by step, a process that was much more efficient than a normal teaching process. It was understandable why willpower texts were so valuable.

Rustle. Rustle.

Winds started blowing. Source qi converged. The desks and chairs in the office started shaking. The only exception was the desk before Liu Wenyan that remained motionless. He was not using any writing tool. Since he was using blood essence as the ink, regular writing tools would not be able to withstand its power.

The cultural researchers in the academy had their personal writing tools, but that wasn't the case for him. Instead, he used his finger as the writing tool. After dipping his finger into the blood, he wielded it like a sword and started writing on the beast hide.

"Lightning Source Blade..."

Rumble!

Only three characters had been written and lightning bolts started appearing within everyone's visions.

"Ahhh!"

A female student couldn't control herself and exclaimed in shock. Fear was apparent in her eyes. She seemed to have seen herself getting struck by a bolt of lightning earlier.

Nearby, the principal frowned. He wasn't unhappy because of the noise. Rather, he was frowning when he realized how weak her willpower was. The session had barely started and she was already hitting her limit.

"Sigh. What a pity."

The principal was regretful. He wondered if this student would look back in regret for wasting this opportunity in the future. Since she had met her limit at the very beginning, she had basically gained nothing from the session.

"Shut your eyes!"

Seeing that the student was turning pale, the principal shouted, pulling the student back to reality. She hastily shut her eyes. Her face was still pale and she no longer dared to look at the beast hide.

Of the remaining eleven students, Su Yu and Liu Yue still looked the same. As for the other nine, some were starting to pale while some still looked normal. At the moment, Su Yu was too busy to pay any attention to the others. His attention was fully on the beast hide.

In his eyes, a different Liu Wenyan had appeared on that hide. He was practicing the Lightning Source Blade. Lightning bolts rained down as Liu Wenyan stood with his saber in hand. Ignoring the lightning, he swung his saber one time after another. The speed of each swing was slow, slow enough that Su Yu had the time to get impatient for the next swing.

"Lightning Source Blade, forty opened acupoints are required for the final move.

"There are nine moves in total, with each move being stronger than the previous, and each move requiring more opened acupoints than the previous. At your present stage, even if you can comprehend this technique, you won't necessarily be able to use it.

"At the Source Opening Realm, you will be able to barely use the first move if you have reached the eighth-stage.

"By connecting your eight acupoints, or even better, nine acupoints, a single swing will drain all your source qi. This technique was never meant for those in the Source Opening Realm.

"It's not recommended to use it at the eighth-stage. At the ninth-stage, you are recommended to absorb some external source qi before connecting your nine acupoints and unleashing the move. Using it with eight acupoints might result in injuries."

Those words were not spoken by Liu Wenyan. He was completely focused on writing and his entire body was drenched wet with sweat. The principal was the one reminding everyone, especially Su Yu.

In truth, this Lightning Source Blade was slightly beyond Su Yu's capability. However, there was also a benefit to teaching him early. He would be able to continue practicing this technique until the Great Strength Realm or even the Infinite Strength Realm. This was not a technique that he would need to discard too early.

Boom!

Su Yu had been mostly ignoring the principal's words. He was fully focused on the "Liu Wenyan" who was practicing the saber moves on the hide. At that point, Liu Wenyan had written dozens of characters. With that, more "Liu Wenyan" appeared on the hide, each of them with a saber in hand.

All of them were practicing the same move. The first move of the Lightning Source Blade.

"Hiss..."

Someone could be heard inhaling deeply nearby. That person hastily shut his eyes. With this first move, a total of six students were forced to shut their eyes. Apart from Su Yu and Liu Yue, the other three remaining students were greatly pale.

As Liu Wenyan continued writing, the other three eventually reached their limits and shut their eyes as well. At that point, Liu Yue's head was starting to hurt as well. Her willpower had grown recently, but this profound-grade martial technique was really a tad bit too much for her to withstand.

Before long, Liu Wenyan moved on from the first move.

First move: Lightning Strike.

Second move: Rumbling Thunder.

It was as though a storm was really coming. Rumbling sounds resounded as the "Liu Wenyan" on the hide moved even faster. Their acupoints glowed brightly as the rumbling sounds echoed around them. A swing of a saber was akin to a stampede of ten thousand beasts.

"The second move utilizes twelve acupoints. A Great Strength cultivator can start practicing it."

The principal continued his explanation. By now, Su Yu was his sole recipient as even Liu Yue was drenched wet with sweat. She was on the verge of stopping as well. As for Su Yu, although his face was slightly pale, his eyes were brightly lit. He was fully immersed in the writing session and he did not look like he was going to reach his limit anytime soon.

"No wonder Old Liu looks so highly upon him..."

The principal muttered to himself in astonishment. In truth, he was more optimistic about Liu Yue as she had a stronger willpower. However, the gap between Liu Yue and Su Yu was not really that big.

But now that Liu Yue was being directly compared against Su Yu, the difference between the two revealed itself. Directly observing willpower text being written was something that required more than willpower. Tenacity was required as well.

When you were immersed in a willpower text, you would feel as though the people in the text were swinging at you. You would also feel as though the lightning bolts within the text were raining down upon you. You would be scared. You would feel pain. You would not be able to withstand what you see from the text. Willpower strength alone would only give you the chance to see more, but that was not absolute.

"Liu Yue is still an inexperienced girl. Su Yu, on the other hand, is a person who has truly killed someone before."

The principal sighed. Su Yu was someone whose hands were already bloodied. Even excluding what he had experienced while hunting the Myriad Race Cult with Liu Wenyan, that would still be the case. The principal was certain that the kill Chen Hao had claimed previously was actually Su Yu's work.

A mere secondary school student was actually courageous enough to ambush a seventh-stage Great Strength cultivator at the Source Opening Realm. As far as the principal was concerned, that was courage. That was vitality. Naturally, that was also...rash.

"I hope Old Liu did not misjudge his character."

The principal was not a strong expert, but he had been on friendly terms with Liu Wenyan for forty years. Because of that, he had come to know a lot more than the others. The principal had played a great role in enabling Liu Wenyan to stay peacefully in the secondary school for so many years.

Forty years ago, the principal had retired from the front line due to his injuries and was appointed the principal of Nanyuan Secondary School. At that time, he was a weak ninth-stage Great Strength cultivator. He was also rather clueless about the world at that time. The only thing he knew was that the people working for him needed to be those he could entrust his life to.

He did not care about the past of the people in the Nanyuan Secondary School. They needed to all get in line after entering the school. Slowly, he formed a close friendship with Liu Wenyan who was also working in the same school.

While reminiscing about the past, the principal suddenly moved and pulled Liu Yue aside. With a frown, he said, "Don't force yourself!"

"Principal..." Liu Yue looked distraught. Looking at Su Yu who was still observing attentively, she nearly fell apart mentally. "I can't even...finish the second move...principal...I..."

She had always thought that she was better than Su Yu. Previously when Bai Feng was writing the Source Opening Codex, she hadn't been able to perform better than Su Yu. But she had at least finished the entire text before stopping.

This time, the gap between them was too obvious. She couldn't even finish the second move. Meanwhile, Su Yu was only slightly pale. His eyes were still bright as he continued observing.

Meanwhile, Liu Wenyan was starting to write the third move. At that point, he was sweating all over and was starting to turn pale as well.

"Lightning!"

At that moment, Su Yu stopped observing the third move. He found himself somewhat unable to comprehend what he was looking at. Furthermore, the "Liu Wenyan" on the hide was moving too fast for him to see. But at the same moment, one of the characters in the text suddenly came alive for him.

Lightning!

The "lightning" in the Lightning Source Blade. In fact, the lightning character had the highest number of appearances in the text, surpassing even the blade character.

The Lightning Source Blade was a saber technique an expert had created through observations on lightning. Lightning was powerful, fast, and destructive. After witnessing a mountain peak being turned into scorched land by lightning, the expert decided to create the technique.

Su Yu was also looking at lightning. Only lightning remained before his eyes. Lightning was destroying everything. It was blasting a mountain peak. It was flooding the universe.

"Lightning...is truly powerful..." magic

That was Su Yu's conclusion, but he wasn't feeling any fear. Lightning seemed capable of inciting fear in others, but Su Yu was unaffected. That was because he still remembered the lightning monsters that had appeared in his dreams while he was younger.

Back then, he was incredibly scared. But he was no longer the same person. Over the years, he had experienced being struck by lightning, being torn apart by claws, being swallowed, having his heart dug out, being torn apart inch by inch, and so on. He only needed to get used to it. He had experienced over three thousand dreams and over three thousand methods of death.

After experiencing over three thousand deaths, if one was still mentally stable, that signified that one had matured. The price of maturity wasn't low. When he was younger, he had nearly killed himself from the lack of sleep. But after getting used to being killed, he was able to handle his dreams better.

Thus, when the lightning character tried to intimidate him, he only found it comical. So what if it could strike him to death here in this illusion?

'It's not like I haven't been struck to death by lightning before...'

With his previous experience, he knew that he had discovered yet another Divine Character that was suitable for him.

Su Yu proceeded to capture the character, and he managed to grab its...leg? Yeah that part of the character looked like its leg. Then again, this was just a character. He wasn't exactly sure if a character actually had legs. In any case, he felt like he had grabbed its leg and was dragging it into his mind.

Liu Wenyan, who was busy writing, trembled as he looked up. Despite his tired eyes, he couldn't help smiling at what he saw. This kid had once again discovered a suitable Divine Character. Not all characters could serve as a Divine Character. And not every willpower text would provide one with a Divine Character.

First and foremost, the character must be compatible with the cultivator. Even a genius like Bai Feng had only been able to form his first Divine Character after studying willpower texts many times.

Some students had to pay a high price to study dozens of willpower texts and numerous original myriad race texts before they could form their first Divine Character.

And many more had only been able to form their first at the Mental Tempering Stage or beyond. All that was because they weren't able to find any compatible Divine Characters fast enough.

As for Su Yu, he had only studied willpower texts twice and he was able to find a compatible Divine Character each time. Liu Wenyan was pleasantly surprised to see that.

'Incredible...!' Liu Wenyan praised inwardly. Suddenly, he realized that the short distraction had caused him trouble.

He had exhausted too much of his willpower and was having a hard time continuing to write. He was nearing his limit after writing the third move. But he could still force himself to continue.

After thinking about it, he clenched his teeth and decided to finish the fourth move. That would be enough for Su Yu until the peak of the Great Strength Realm or even the Infinite Strength Realm.

As for the rest of the text, he would just pretend they were willpower imbued as well. He would still write the correct content, but he would just not add any willpower to the characters. In any case, this kid wouldn't be able to use the

fourth move before reaching the Infinite Strength Realm. He could always write a new willpower text for this kid at that time if he had the opportunity.

Liu Wenyan continued writing while Su Yu repeated what he did with his previous Divine Character: beating up his little brother. This little brother was much harder to deal with. It kept striking him with lightning. I

Chapter 55: Nearing the Limit (1)

Liu Wenyan quickly finished writing the fifth move before stopping and letting out a long breath.

Sensing the principal's gaze, a composed expression appeared on his face as he muttered to himself, "Wow, after getting into the flow, writing this feels much easier than before."

The principal did not know much about willpower texts. That was something from the world of cultural researchers. It wasn't something he had many chances to learn about. In fact, most of what he knew about cultural researchers came from Liu Wenyan.

Upon hearing those words, his expression changed as he looked at Liu Wenyan with excitement. When Liu Wenyan saw the gaze, he blanked out. Why was the principal so excited?

"So...you can write more?"

Liu Wenyan's heart thumped nervously.

"Old Liu!" The principal rushed over and softly said, "So you can keep writing? My heavens. So it's this simple? A single willpower text written by a Skysoar cultural researcher can be sold to a rich merchant for at least three hundred merit points! They will be more than willing to buy some for the juniors in their family!

"And by writing a hundred willpower texts, you can clear your debt! At that time, wouldn't you be able to return to the academy?"

"Of course, you will need to take the cost of writing into consideration, but you won't spend more than a hundred merit points for that. Including the cost, you'll only need to write a hundred fifty willpower texts to repay your debt!"

The principal was getting excited. Liu Wenyan was dumbstruck. He...was only bluffing! This fellow seemed to have taken his words seriously. Not to mention one willpower text, just writing four moves was enough to utterly drain him of his energy. Willpower texts weren't that simple to write.

Firstly, he needed to be a cultural researcher with a deep understanding of the Lightning Source Blade. But cultural researchers generally did not have a lot of time to study things like martial techniques.

Secondly, the willpower exhaustion was too great while willpower recovery was too hard. It was much slower than source qi recovery. Three hundred merit points? He could probably write only one every few months. If he had to write everyday, he wouldn't be able to do it no matter what.

He was still capable of writing about three or four willpower texts at the level of the Source Opening Codex per year. But if he had to do the same for something at the Lightning Source Blade's level, it would exceed his capability. He would no longer have any energy to spare for cultivation or doing other stuff.

"Old Wang..." While cursing inwardly, Liu Wenyan smiled and softly said, "Don't talk drivell! Us cultural researchers have our own rules. There are things we can't easily leak to outsiders! We have to prevent the myriad race spies from getting hold of our trump cards!

"Sure, the Myriad Race Cult probably has copies of martial techniques like the Lightning Source Blade. But apart from their own cultural researchers, the cultural researchers of the various prefectures are strictly prohibited from leaking the willpower texts to outsiders.

"Even the leaked willpower texts would not be freshly written ones. These would be the ones that had been kept for so long they were as good as mundane texts. Those texts are not too useful and are not worth much."

Liu Wenyan smiled and said, "Don't ever mention this again lest the higher ups hear about it and start making trouble for you."

The principal froze slightly before saying with a regretful tone, "I see. Yeah, I should have guessed so. If merit points can be earned so easily, cultural researchers would have no lack of merit points. Why would Bai Feng need to steal a fourth-stage Skysoar from us otherwise?"

That was merely a sudden idea he had thought of after seeing how easily Liu Wenyan had been able to complete the text. But now, he realized that there were restrictions in place. He felt enlightened.

Liu Wenyan heaved a breath of relief. Yes, there were definitely some restrictions in place, but they weren't restricted from selling to the rich. However, that wasn't something he could do. In fact, even someone in the Cloudbreach Realm or the Mountainsea Realm would not be able to write a hundred willpower texts a year.

Even if they could, they wouldn't. They also needed to cultivate and work on other projects. Excessively exhausting their willpower will result in the lack of willpower to nourish their own Divine Characters. Who could they blame if some trouble appeared in their cultivation because of that?

Liu Wenyan decided to ignore the principal and turned his head to look at Su Yu.

Su Yu was still struggling with the Divine Character. His attention was no longer on the blade technique. Rather, it was on the Divine Character he was capturing. Liu Wenyan had a look of expectation on his face, but he also felt troubled.

"With a weak willpower, even nourishing one Divine Character will be difficult. And now, he's capturing his second...Sigh. If this continues, his willpower growth will be dragged down by his Divine Characters."

Liu Wenyan was both happy and worried about Su Yu. It was not a good thing to have too many Divine Characters. Of course, not having a single character was even worse. magic

How was Su Yu supposed to nurture them if he had too many of them? He had limited willpower, but he couldn't afford to stop nourishing his Divine Characters as they would simply dissipate away without nourishment. But nourishing them would exhaust him faster than he could recover, eventually causing a collapse of his cultivation.

"His willpower is now nineteen percent full. He's reaching twenty percent. Since his character 'blood' can be nourished with blood, he should have enough willpower to nourish two Divine Characters.

"However, he definitely can't form a third Divine Character before the Mental Tempering Stage."

Liu Wenyan was troubled. At times, geniuses could be very troublesome as well. Su Yu's speed of Divine Character formation was too fast. He could easily go over his limit and kill himself from the backlash. Or he could get stuck at the same cultivation level without much progress for decades. That was basically the same as destroying his own future.

"All of you may leave." Liu Wenyan said. His face turned solemn as he said, "Do not spread the Lightning Source Blade to outsiders. Every profound-grade martial technique is not something that can be taught to outsiders. Even a mundane copy of a martial technique of this level can be priced at no less than a hundred merit points in the cultural research and war academies."

Previously, the principal had been focusing too much on the value of the willpower text. He had neglected the value of the martial technique itself. Thus, the reminder hit the principal hard as well.

He hastily said, "Yes! You definitely can't teach this to outsiders! Most of the martial techniques in the war academies are mundane copies. Willpower texts are extremely rare. Leaking a profound-grade martial technique will bring you great trouble."

One did not necessarily need a willpower text to learn a martial technique. One would only cultivate slower when using mundane copies as one had to rely on themselves to comprehend the technique. Willpower texts had the special function of having a top expert explaining the technique with great clarity, deepening one's comprehension of the technique.

At the thought of that, the principal looked at Liu Wenyan worriedly. That old fellow had been talking so much about willpower texts that the principal had forgotten that even the mundane copy was very important.

In fact, that wasn't a martial technique of their school. It was something Liu Wenyan had contributed out of his own pocket. Would he be fine leaking the technique to these students?

However, Liu Wenyan was not as worried. Seeing that the students were starting to get nervous, he smiled and said, "You are free to cultivate the technique yourself since I've personally taught you the technique. But outsiders, including your family, can't learn it."

"The human race does not encourage one to reap a harvest without sowing. To gain something, one must pay the relative price. Only parasites will try to gain something without paying anything. Consider this Lightning Source Blade my graduation gift to you all. Even if you can't master it today, it doesn't matter. You have a long path ahead of you. Take your time with it."

"Thank you, Instructor Liu."

The students promptly thanked their instructor. Although they hadn't been able to see much of the willpower text, they had all been shown a mundane copy of the technique.

"Alright. Go back and take a good rest. It doesn't matter if you didn't manage to see anything as this is your first time. With experience, you will be able to gain more in the future. The academy does not lack cultural researchers capable of writing willpower texts. You only need to work hard to learn what you want there."

"Thank you, instructor."

They thanked again before leaving joyously. Many of them turned around to look at the trembling Su Yu before leaving. They were curious. How many moves did Su Yu manage to see?

They weren't really surprised that Su Yu was able to learn more than them. After all, he had been following Liu Wenyan around for private lessons. There was nothing they could do except feeling envious.

Chapter 56: Nearing the Limit (2)

Half an hour later, Su Yu woke up. He looked around and saw that only he and Liu Wenyan were left in the office.

Alarmed, he hurriedly said, "Instructor...I didn't manage to observe all..."

He was annoyed with himself. He was too focused on beating up his newly recruited little brother and had forgotten to focus on the subsequent moves. He wasn't stupid. He understood that writing a willpower text wasn't an easy task. He had wasted the session.

Liu Wenyan did not seem to mind. He smiled and asked, "How many moves did you see?"

"Three. I wasn't able to see the fourth move in time."

Su Yu was feeling very regretful.

"Hu!"

Liu Wenyan let off a long breath. He was relieved that Su Yu had only managed to see three moves. If this fellow continued until the subsequent moves, he would probably be confused when the miniature figures stopped appearing on the text.

"It's fine. Even if you had managed to see more, you wouldn't be able to master them. Take this text back. Don't leak it. Hide it carefully. Read it when you have time. Of course, the longer you wait, the less effective it would be. I'm only a Skysoar cultivator, not a Mountainsea cultivator. I can't keep my willpower in the text for too long."

Liu Wenyan was managing Su Yu's expectations, telling Su Yu in advance that the longer he waited, the weaker the willpower text would be. It would be Su Yu's responsibility to study as much as he could from the text before it failed, not Liu Wenyan's. As a teacher, Liu Wenyan had already given Su Yu the best he could.

Liu Wenyan then changed the topic, "Did you form a new Divine Character?"

"Yes. It's the lightning character."

"How many strokes did you form?"

"I think...the entire character. Wait, I think I almost got the entire character..."
With an embarrassed tone, Su Yu added, "I think I missed a stroke."

"Huh?"

Liu Wenyan was surprised. This student of his had successfully formed a Divine Character yet again...again?

Fine, he decided to just forget about his student's abnormal talent and asked, "Missed a stroke?"

"Yeah. When I was capturing it, it resisted fiercely..."

"That's because your willpower is not strong enough, making it so that you can't capture it in its entirety. You should have given up or aimed to capture only one stroke and stop there. Next time, you can't force yourself like this. Understand?"

Liu Wenyan was stern. "Once or twice, you might succeed with luck. But you could have easily suffered a backlash from pushing yourself too far. But of course, I was at fault too. I did not expect you to be able to form a second Divine Character so soon so I forgot to remind you.

"Also, prior to the Mental Tempering Stage, do not attempt to form your third Divine Character."

"Alright!" Su Yu asked, "Instructor, I feel like I'll need at least ten days or half a month to complete the character."

"That's normal. In fact, it's very normal for a cultural researcher to take half a year or even one year to complete a Divine Character."

This time, Liu Wenyan did not try to keep Su Yu grounded by playing down the feat of forming two Divine Characters so soon. Instead, he sternly warned, "Your speed of forming Divine Characters is too fast. This is very abnormal. I don't know if this is good or not, but it is not necessarily a good thing to have too many Divine Characters. Like I said before, too many Divine Characters might result in weak Divine Characters."

"I understand, Instructor."

Su Yu nodded. He wouldn't be able to test his new Divine Character since it was incomplete. That would have to wait. Of course, if he had to guess, it probably had the ability to electrocute his opponents.

After all, that character had done exactly that to him earlier. He wouldn't have been forced to break a "leg" of that character otherwise. The electrocution was rather painful, so he wasn't able to hold back.

Liu Wenyan was relieved to see that Su Yu was taking his words seriously.

After thinking for a bit, he slowly said, "At this point, I've taught you almost everything I can. As for the basic knowledge you need to know, you'll be able to learn them in the academy."

"Things like complicated cultivation methods, usage of Divine Characters, formation and nourishment of Divine Characters, and more myriad race languages are all part of the regular lessons in the academy. You can spend a few years slowly learning them all after entering the academy. That will be a way to strengthen your foundation."

Suddenly, Liu Wenyan turned solemn again, "Early on, don't get distracted and focus only on building your foundation. Us cultural researchers need to be patient. Those in the war academies can enter the Great Strength Realm in about half a year or one year after entering the academy."

"But us cultural researchers will normally be stuck for years before entering the Skysoar Realm at one go."

Su Yu hurriedly nodded before softly asking, "Instructor, I feel like I can reach the Great Strength Realm in a few months."

"..."

Liu Wenyan's words were stuck in his throat.

Damn it! He forgot that this kid was already at the eighth-stage!

As a student preparing to join the cultural research academy, he had five years in secondary school to learn various languages. He had to learn everything from scratch. In that context, was five years really a long time?

Apart from languages, these students still had to learn many other things as well. For example, mathematics, structure of basic weapons, geography, history, and so on. The secondary school had a stacked curriculum.

With the heavy curriculum, a student could be considered hard working just practicing the Source Opening Codex after school. Not many of them could actually go beyond the fourth-stage.

Students like Chen Hao who were not aiming to join a cultural research academy were different. They did not need to learn too many different languages. They only needed to learn the three compulsory languages.

Even so, that was enough to cause these students massive suffering. They would want nothing more than to abandon all the language classes altogether.

Su Yu was remarkably talented in terms of Divine Characters. Because of that, Liu Wenyan had even forgotten that this fellow was already at the eighth-stage. In fact, this entire lesson today was for the sake of helping this newly advanced student of his.

His intention was never to help Su Yu form a second Divine Character. Liu Wenyan found himself speechless.

Initially, he wanted to tell Su Yu to not envy those fellows from the war academies. Many of them could reach the Great Strength Realm after one year. He had to be patient. After a few years, they would still be stuck in the Great Strength Realm while he was already in the Skysoar Realm.

But he was unable to say those words anymore. This kid was already at the eighth-stage Source Opening Realm.

Liu Wenyan coughed to cover his awkwardness and calmly said, "Yes, your cultivation level is decent. But so what if you can reach the Great Strength Realm? That is a worthless realm. At the academy, you will discover that some of your senior brothers are already in the Skysoar Realm..."

Su Yu hurriedly said, "Instructor, I have a question."

"Ask it."

"I have checked many documents. I can't seem to find a record of the actual number of years a student will take to graduate from a cultural research academy. I can't find a single record with that information..."

Su Yu was very curious. Just how long is a student going to be studying there? magic

"Years?" Liu Wenyan blanked out. After a while, he laughed and said, "I almost forgot to tell you that the students in the academy are not graded by years. Rather, those below twenty percent willpower are all grouped into the junior grade. These students are still incapable of studying Great Strength original texts.

"Those between twenty to fifty percent willpower that are already capable of studying Great Strength original texts will enter the intermediate grade. At fifty percent and above, also the Mental Tempering Stage, one could enter the senior grade.

"And at the Skysoar Realm, you'll be able to graduate. Of course, not everyone will be able to reach the point of graduation. Many will stay there for a few years before leaving after failing to make any headways in their cultivation. Some will return home, some will join a different academy, some will go to the battlefield, and some might find a different thing to do. At that point, the academy will stop supporting you.

"At the Skysoar Realm, you can also decide to stay in the academy. Bai Feng is one such example. Staying in the academy, he took the position of an assistant researcher. However, only a genius would be able to do so. If you only manage to reach the Skysoar Realm at fifty years old, it is unlikely that you'll be able to stay. You will have to look for an alternative yourself, but you will still be able to do well outside of the academy considering your cultivation level.

"Generally, most people will leave if they fail to reach the Skysoar Realm by thirty."

Liu Wenyan sighed. "At thirty...one can still change their focus from willpower into physical cultivation. But after that, it will be too late. The golden period of cultivation would be over. For example, you're currently eighteen. You'll be in the academy for more than ten years. If you still can't reach the Skysoar Realm then, you'll give up as well."

So many people had entered the academy with outstanding talent and great ambitions. Unfortunately, many also ended up wasting over ten years without being able to reach the Skysoar Realm. Ultimately, these people were forced to give up on willpower cultivation. This had happened many times before.

"You might even find some people in their fifties or sixties in the academy. They aren't even your teachers. They're only your senior brothers. These will probably be the ones teaching you some of the basic lessons. Through the lessons, they can earn some merit points and provide for themselves. That way, they can at least still support their family despite their stunted cultivation.

"These people aren't even assistant researchers. But of course, you won't have to address them as senior brothers. Just address them as instructors. After all, calling them senior brothers would be the same as rubbing salt to the wound. If you're unlucky enough to encounter a less magnanimous person, they will start creating trouble for you."

Liu Wenyan laughed, but his laugh was somewhat bitter.

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"I...would have been one such instructor if I had stayed in the academy. I'll be your senior brother, not your teacher. An old fart over seventy years old will be considered your peer."

Apart from themselves, nobody could understand how bitter that felt. Not one person who had managed to enter a cultural research academy was a fool. Alas, these intelligent individuals had all ended up wasting decades of their lives there without anything to show for it. Nobody could imagine how they felt.

Su Yu was still young, so he couldn't fully understand that feeling. But just hearing about these people from Liu Wenyan was enough to cause him to shiver. Wasting decades without achieving anything. Being the peer of a bunch of teenagers.

'I won't suffer the same fate!'

Su Yu vowed inwardly. He wouldn't allow that to happen to him. He didn't want that to happen to him. Today, he learned that apart from geniuses, there were also a group of pitiful individuals in the cultural research academy. Sure enough, where there was light, there would be darkness.

"Go, go back and take a few days of rest. Study the Lightning Source Blade, nourish your Divine Character, and wait for the exam."

"Instructor, about the middle-stage Great Strength cultivator I need to kill..."

"Forget about that. You don't have enough time."

Su Yu thought about it and insisted, "Instructor, why don't I continue trying. I'll spend a few days practicing the Lightning Source Blade before trying. I'll give up if I fail."

"Sure."

Liu Wenyan did not try to stop Su Yu. Stubbornness could be a virtue as well.

After tossing the beast hide with the Lightning Source Blade on it to Su Yu, Liu Wenyan walked out with his hands clasped behind him. But before he could leave, Su Yu said, "Instructor, I'll come and learn more from you tomorrow morning. I'll practice the blade technique in the afternoon..."

Liu Wenyan nearly staggered and fell.

I told you to rest at home and study the blade technique. Are you thinking that I'm doing that because I'm feeling generous? What a foolish kid!

I've exhausted too much willpower. I'm the one needing the rest. I can't be showing my pale face at school everyday, right? People will think that I have been indulging excessively in debauchery if they see me like that! Can't you read between the lines, kid?

With his back facing Su Yu, Liu Wenyan's face fell as he said with a flat tone, "There is no need for that. I have something to take care of for the next few days. I'm trying to push my physical body to the Skysoar Realm as well. I'll be occupied."

Su Yu came to a realization and hurriedly said, "Ok, Instructor. I won't be bothering you."

"Alright."

With the look of an unfathomable expert, Liu Wenyan drifted away. He was afraid that he wouldn't be able to keep maintaining his dignified appearance if he stayed in the office any longer.

Chapter 57: Winds of Change (1)

"Hah!"

A loud shout resounded alongside the sound of a blade being swung. Since Su Yu had broken his closet previously, he did not dare to practice the even more powerful Lightning Source Blade home. He was afraid that he would damage his house or even worse, cut the floor apart and ended up beaten by the grandpa downstairs with his massive fists.

The standard military saber in his hands moved rapidly as it whistled through the air. After a while, he stopped swinging the saber while panting for breath. A frown was on his face.

Difficult.

A profound-grade martial technique was still too difficult for him. It was too early for him to learn something like that. That was the case even though the first move, Lightning Strike, only required a connection of nine acupoints.

"I know the move, but the issue is source qi."

That was Su Yu's conclusion. The move wasn't actually difficult.

His issue was the connection of acupoints and eruption of source qi. He needed to gather all his source qi on the saber before swinging the blade with the speed of lightning. He had only opened eight acupoints. He could utilize the source qi within his body but not the ambient source qi around him.

"I still can't gather my source qi onto the saber fast enough."

Su Yu frowned. It had been three days.

Three days on a single move wasn't a long time, but even though he had been studying the Lightning Source Blade several times per day, he still wasn't able to properly gather his source qi.

That signified that he hadn't achieved even a basic mastery of the first move. To reach that point, he had to at least be able to gather all his source qi as one before channeling the source qi onto the blade.

Further mastery would be achieved through his familiarity with the move and the speed with which he could gather and channel his source qi. He had spent three days without even achieving a basic mastery, so there was definitely no way for him to increase his familiarity or speed.

"Must I reach the ninth-stage before I can use this move?"

Su Yu sighed. He wanted to reach the ninth-stage as well. However, during the past three days, he had cultivated once with blood essence but it was no longer as helpful for him. The final acupoint was opening at a very slow rate.

With his current speed, he would need at least one month to reach the ninth-stage. He had spent twenty days entering the eighth-stage. Thus, taking a month to enter the ninth-stage could actually be considered a fast speed.

Even so, that would only happen if he continued using blood essence to help with his cultivation. He only had two drops of iron-winged bird blood essence on him. He was keeping them for emergencies.

"How do I channel my source qi onto the blade with only eight acupoints?"

He found his source qi somewhat stubborn as he wasn't able to freely move it around. He stopped practicing and sat down. While taking a drink, he sank into contemplation.

"The Rip ability of the iron-winged bird activated through the book works on a similar principle. With that ability, I need to gather source qi on my palm and turn my fingers into sharp claws capable of tearing into my enemy's defense.

"But that isn't an ability I have mastered. The book was the one activating it for me.

"Now, I need to do the same myself by gathering source qi onto the blade. The book utilized the power within the blood essence to do what it did instead of external source qi. That...is similar to my current situation where I have no access to external source qi..."

Su Yu's heart ached at the thought of spending more money. He had an idea as to what he needed to do to achieve basic mastery in the technique. He would have to use blood essence and activate the Rip ability so that he could observe how source qi was being channeled for the ability.

His body would give him the best impression of how things were done. No matter how clear Liu Wenyan's willpower demonstrated the technique to him, it wouldn't be as clear as trying it with his own body.

"I need to spend money again."

A drop of blood essence would cost him thirty thousand dollars. That was only enough for one attempt. Was that worth it? For a lot of people, that would be worth it. For Su Yu, it wasn't that he was stingy. He didn't mind spending money, but the issue was that he really didn't have much to spend.

"Screw it. I'll try using a drop. I'll be able to earn the merit points back by killing a Great Strength cult member. If I can learn the first move, this will be totally worth it."

He had not activated that ability ever since the battle at the school. At the time, he was only at the fourth-stage. Now, he was already at the eighth-stage. He stopped hesitating and took out a bottle from his pocket. He had been keeping the blood essence on him for emergencies.

After making his decision, he did not delay. He swallowed a drop of blood essence and activated the Rip ability instead of the Source Swallowing Technique. Unlike his previous activation, he had a much clearer goal in mind for his activation this time.

This time, he had a much clearer sense as to what was happening inside his body. He could feel a new type of power appearing within his body. That was the power from the blood essence. It was similar to source qi, but it also felt much closer to the natural essence of power within a living being's body.

That power started circulating through his acupoints before gathering on his right hand, causing his right hand to rapidly swell. He did not unleash the power in his hand. Rather, he silently immersed himself in the sensation of power. This level of pain was still something he could endure. He was experiencing the sensation of having his source qi gathered and studying the profundity behind the movement of source qi.

One minute. Two minutes...

He kept holding the power back and the swelling on his right hand grew worse and worse. His physical body was not strong enough for this kind of power. After all, he was currently wielding a power comparable to the strength of a seventh-stage Great Strength cultivator. His arm felt like it was going to burst apart from all that power.

He continued his study while using his own body as the test subject. In truth, this was a common sight among cultural researchers. If Liu Wenyan and Bai Feng saw what he was doing, apart from scolding him, they would probably praise him as well. What he was demonstrating here was very close to the spirit of cultural researchers: the desire for knowledge.

Desire for knowledge.

There were too many unknown quantities in the myriad realms. Countless civilizations existed, and many of them shone as bright as the sun. Humanity might be strong, but not strong enough to dominate the myriad realms. Only through the constant search for knowledge and exploration of the unknown would humanity be able to rise in power.

Countless cultural researchers served as the pioneer of knowledge. Testing new cultivation methods, adapting and improving the cultivation methods of the myriad races, consuming the various natural treasures, modifying one's

body to work alongside the cultivation methods and martial techniques of the myriad races, and so on. Generation after generation, many cultural researchers had perished when exploring the unknown.

However, these people had also achieved extraordinary accomplishments. After the Anping Calendar, humanity had been able to rapidly grow. The cultural researchers had played a massive role in that rise.

There was a place called the Knowledge Seeking Realm. That was the holy land of all cultural researchers, a place where they sought the unknown. magic

Su Yu was still unaware of the existence of that place. He wasn't thinking of any grand aspirations when doing this. He only wanted to understand the Lightning Source Blade better and achieve a basic mastery in the technique.

However, what he did here, forcing a power far beyond his level as an eighth-stage Source Opening cultivator into his body just to comprehend the secrets behind the circulation of source qi was completely in line with what the spirit of cultural researchers entailed: the desire for knowledge. Of course, there was no doubt that his ignorance had also played a part in his courage.

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Five minutes later, the power dissipated from Su Yu's body. His right hand had swollen so much that it looked more like a pig trotter than an arm.

He clenched his teeth. There was no avoiding the pain that accompanied this experiment, but not even the pain could mask the joy he was feeling. He felt like he had understood something during the experiment.

"I neglected something previously. To gather source qi, I not only need my acupoints, but I also need my physical body to do its part as well. My meridians, my muscles, and the other parts of my body need to get involved in the process.

"I've been focusing too much on the acupoints, but that's wrong. The acupoints only exist to serve the physical body. The circuit of acupoints is merely the engine."

Su Yu's understanding on the movement of source qi had deepened. Acupoints were the tools to absorb source qi into his body. They were the

engine of the vehicle that was his body while source qi was the fuel for the vehicle. He had to remember that his body was the actual vehicle, the wheels, and the steering wheel.

Previously, he had only been burning the fuel in his engine without steering his vehicle. Thus, the issue did not lie on his acupoints. His lack of control over his physical body was the issue.

"In this case, I am the bad driver. I have everything I need to make this work. I have been failing to channel source qi onto the blade because I was the bad driver..."

Su Yu finally came to an understanding, and it brought him a deep sense of satisfaction that made him forget about the pain in his right hand. In truth, his teachers had told him everything he had just learned before. But theory was clearly not as useful as experience.

For example, if one wanted to learn how long it would take to fill a leaking swimming pool with water, actually performing the test once would leave a far deeper impression in one's mind than to perform the calculations a hundred times on paper.

Naturally, the premise for that was for one to actually have a swimming pool at home and to not be afraid of being beaten by one's parents. If both those boxes were ticked, then one could freely perform that test.

All those random thoughts did not stay long in Su Yu's mind. He couldn't wait to try out the Lightning Source Blade one more time. It was then that he started feeling the pain in his right hand again.

"I won't be able to do it today. I'll try tomorrow. Since I already understand what I need to do, I only need to keep practicing to familiarize myself with it."

Su Yu wasn't only happy because he had managed to understand how to effectively channel source qi. He was also happy because he had discovered an additional use of the book in his mind.

At a glance, the book could only help him absorb source qi and activate different abilities and techniques. But through the ability activation function, he had gained understanding on the proper way to channel source qi. Additionally, he had also discovered the secret of the acupoints the iron-winged birds needed to use that ability.

"This is an iron-winged bird technique. Their bodies are too different from human bodies, so I won't be able to pry too much into their secrets. What if this is a divine or devil race technique? Won't I be able to see even more?"

...

Su Yu returned home to do more reading. He would try the technique again the next day after his hand healed.

It was already the 8th of June. The entrance examination was seventeen days away.

At the same time.

Great Xia Cultural Research Academy.

Within a massive hall.

Wan Tiansheng had gathered the academy's higher ups in a meeting. He was slowly speaking, "Prefect Xia is entering seclusion and Marquis Xia will be the acting prefect while the prefect is away. You are all aware of what happened during the appointment ceremony earlier in the morning. I suggested that we withdraw our army and recall the Martial Dragon Guards back to Great Xia."

Right after he said those words, an old man stood up and angrily rebuked, "Wan Tiansheng, both you and Marquis Xia are villains colluding together to ruin our Great Xia! We have been fighting for so many years but we have never withdrawn our army before! Both of you are traitors of humanity! Traitors of Great Xia! You should be executed!"

Wan Tiansheng was not angry. He calmly said, "According to your logic, everyone in Great Zhou and Great Ming are traitors. To forget how to fight will bring peril. But to recklessly pursue aggression will bring destruction!"

"How can you lump us with them?" The old man angrily rebuked, "Recklessly pursue aggression? If humanity stops fighting, the Human Realm will become the new Allheaven Battlefield! If Great Xia stops fighting, if Great Zhou stops fighting, if all the prefectures stop fighting, how will the Human Realm survive?"

"Wan Tiansheng! You're a sinner!"

Wan Tiansheng swept his gaze through the crowd below him. Many of them appeared unhappy. His proposal during the appointment ceremony to withdraw their army and allow the divine skywing race to pay for peace had courted many discontent.

He sighed inwardly, but he was already used to this.

To recklessly pursue aggression would bring destruction. Many people were familiar with that saying, but how many truly understood it? Was Great Xia powerful? Yes. It was very powerful.

But after so many years of war, its income could no longer keep up with its expenses. In each war, it would gain the least compared to other prefectures, so it couldn't even sponsor its war through war like the other prefectures.

They needed to support the Martial Dragon Guards, the Great Xia Army, and pay the compensation to the families of the soldiers that had sacrificed themselves on the battlefield. Great Xia was a prefecture where everyone viewed dying in battle as one of the greatest honors one could achieve.

But by dying in battle, they would lose their lives while Great Xia would lose its wealth. Way too much of their wealth had been spent in this manner.

Over the years, millions of Great Xia soldiers had perished in battle. As someone who loved his soldiers, Xia Longwu had insisted on paying hundreds of thousands of dollars for each dead or crippled soldier as compensation. Apart from that, the families of the dead or crippled soldiers were also eligible for numerous other benefits.

Due to that policy, the people of Great Xia were fearless in battle. There were even a lot of old soldiers fighting like they were trying to throw their lives away just to give their descendents a better future.

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None of these people understood that the Great Xia was already eating into the foundation built during the reign of Great Xia King instead of using what they were making themselves. After so many years with Xia Longwu at the helm, Great Xia had exhausted a large portion of its accumulated wealth.

Many thoughts appeared in Wan Tiansheng's mind, but he was able to quickly calm his emotions. He slowly spoke, "Sinner? Whether I have sinned or not is

not up to any of you. Furthermore, I was merely the one making the proposal. That was Marquis Xia's order."

"Marquis Xia..." The old man's expression changed as he cursed, "He's a pig! Apart from lining his pockets, what else can he do?"

"Cough, cough, cough!"

Wan Tiansheng interrupted the old man by coughing loudly before saying "Senior Hong, there is no need to disguise the target of your criticism..."

"I'm not disguising shit. I'm directly scolding the person I want." The old man was still furious. "Even if he's standing in front of me, I won't hold back from pointing at his nose before scolding him!"

"The Xia Trade Company dominates the cultivation resources of Great Xia. Is that not profitable enough for him? That pig is still greedy for more, to the point he's stretching his grubby hands to the battlefield as well. Someone like him should be executed!"

At that point, the mood of the meeting was starting to change.

A younger individual suddenly said, "Principal, will Marquis Xia reduce our salary and bonus after becoming the acting prefect?"

"Principal, why don't you tell Marquis Xia that Xia Trade Company's price is too high. Can you get him to reduce the price of the products sold? We can get the same products for a much cheaper price at Great Ming!"

"Principal, how long will Marquis Xia stay the acting prefect? A few years ago when he became the acting prefect after the prefect left for the battlefield, he was so stingy that we needed to pay just to use the academy washrooms."

"..."

Chapter 58: Winds of Change (2)

Everyone's attention was shifted to Marquis Xia.

Wan Tiansheng was relieved to see that. This was good. Marquis Xia...was naturally here to be the fall guy. Of course, Marquis Xia wasn't really as bad as these people made him out to be.

The Great Xia government had been spending more than they earned for a long time. Xia Longwu did not care about the economy and was only focused on cultivation and war. Without Marquis Xia, the treasury would have emptied out five years ago.

As far as Wan Tiansheng was concerned, Marquis Xia was more suited to be the prefect than Xia Longwu. Marquis Xia was the reason Great Xia had been able to remain standing for so long. Naturally, not many people were aware of that.

They only knew that Marquis Xia was an unreliable and stingy person. Many believed that if it wasn't for the fact that Marquis Xia's father was the Great Xia King, he would have been beaten to death in some dark alley long ago.

Ignoring the crowd, Wan Tiansheng said some placating words before saying, "Since Marquis Xia is now the acting prefect, things will be rather tight for everyone this year. He told me that the treasury is empty. We need to save money.

"Therefore, we will only be accepting five hundred new students this year. Additionally, we are also looking to cut some fat from the academy.

"More importantly, those above fifty that have yet to achieve willpower materialization and are also not teaching in the academy will no longer be given an allowance."

That final sentence was akin to a bomb being thrown into the crowd.

"Impossible!"

"How can we do that?"

"Principal, you're betraying the entire academy!" An old man shouted, "In the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy, there are over twenty thousand students above fifty that have yet to achieve willpower materialization. Less than five hundred of them are teaching in the academy. How will the rest of them put food on the table without the allowance?"

Hearing that, a sharp look appeared in Wan Tiansheng's eyes. Over the years, the academy had turned into a bloated machine. During the past fifty years, the academy had grown considerably, with numerous experts among their ranks.

But there was no denying that alongside growth, numerous problems had also cropped up within the academy. A bunch of old students that had yet to achieve willpower materialization were slowly pushing the academy to the brink of bankruptcy.

He knew that his idea would face a lot of resistance. The tens of thousands of deadweight in the academy were given an allowance of over a hundred thousand dollars each on a yearly basis. The academy was spending billions per year just paying these people.

Of course, these old students had a lot of connections in the academy. Some had their descendents in the academy. Some had their teachers and seniors with high positions in the academy. The cancellation of their allowance would cause a big ruckus. magic

However, they had no choice but to control their expenditure. He could no longer put up with that. When Xia Longwu was around, his idea had been rejected again and again. That was because Xia Longwu believed that even these people who had yet to achieve willpower materialization had contributed a lot to the prefecture. He couldn't let them down.

But by trying not to let anyone down, it would only be a matter of time before everyone was brought down together. If even a single Great Xia Cultural Research Academy had such a large expenditure, then the expenditure of the entire Great Xia would be an astronomical number.

Not even Marquis Xia, with his incredible talent in making money, could make enough to pay for all that. This was something they had to do. It was only a matter of time. Wan Tiansheng could only hope that the people affected could understand why they were doing so.

A lot of the people among the crowd had benefited from the previous generous policy. He did not change his mind despite their objections. He spoke with a voice that was calm yet strong enough to suppress all other voices in the room, "This has been decreed by the prefectural government. If you're unhappy, go look for Marquis Xia.

"Apart from that, the research funds will be reduced by thirty percent. Some of the more useless research can be stopped. The Audit Office will need to take responsibility for this. You can't approve any research proposed to you. You're only wasting money for no result.

"For example, why are we even studying the fire hog race? How many years have we wasted on that? That race is cannon fodder in the Allheaven Battlefield. We have killed tens of millions of them already. What is there to study about them? Ridiculous!"

If they had so much time and energy, they might as well research something more useful.

"Also, those planning to do research should focus on their research. Stop messing around in the academy."

Without waiting for the crowd to voice their objections, Wan Tiansheng threw another bomb into the crowd, "After some consideration and a discussion with Marquis Xia, I've decided to reopen the Foreign Student Faculty."

That single announcement surpassed everything he had announced previously.

Even the few experts that had been remaining silent throughout the meeting started speaking. One of them coldly said, "Foreign Student Faculty? Principal, this proposal was vetoed many years ago. Back then, the prefect personally went to the Allheaven Battlefield to eliminate several races in a row. Why are you reopening the faculty? Do you think that the prefect will stay in seclusion forever?"

Wan Tiansheng calmly said, "Everyone, even if we don't accept foreign students, there will still be Myriad Race Cult spies in the academy."

"That's different!" Someone shouted coldly, "The cult members are still humans. What's the point of accepting foreign students?"

"Money." Wan Tiansheng spoke bluntly, "Rather than have them send Myriad Race Cult spies into the academy, we might as well accept them directly. Firstly, the foreigners will be right under our eyes. We can easily monitor them.

"Secondly, we can charge them an expensive school fee. Thirdly, apart from money, we will also be charging them a large amount of resources and secret techniques. If they want to join the academy, they will have to pay the price for it. That way, they will reduce their support toward the Myriad Race Cult. Instead, the resources meant to go to the cult will fall into our hands.

"Fourthly, we can show our sincerity to the myriad races, telling them that so long as they aren't absolutely hostile toward us, there is always a possibility of alliance. The human race is a top ten race among the myriad races. Not everyone can harm us. For some races, cooperating with us might be a better choice than to stand against us."

Wan Tiansheng continued, "In fact, the divines and devils are doing the same, roping in the minor races to their side. They have even granted those minor races access to some of their more unimportant secret grottos and sacred lands to help those races grow, turning them into the vanguard in the war against humanity."

"Super experts of the minor races can even be found in the armies of the divines and devils. Each time we clashed, only humans will die from our armies while the divines and devils might only lose some experts from the minor races. The divines and devils themselves have remained relatively unscathed by the conflict."

"Since the other races can place spies among our ranks, creating something like the Myriad Race Cult, we can do the same as well. For example, these foreign students can be bribed, brainwashed, or threatened. There are steps we can take to bring them to our side."

"Many years later, these foreign students could very well become the vanguard of our army pointed toward the other races."

"I admit that there are disadvantages to this plan. There are a lot of disadvantages to it. But think about this. Are the disadvantages enough to offset the advantages or is it the other way around?"

"As long as we oversee the plan properly, things can be better. At the very least, you can stop worrying whether the fellow human beside you is a spy from the Myriad Race Cult or not."

"After gaining the ability to openly join us, the size of the Myriad Race Cult will decline steeply. Incidents where we spent large amounts of resources to nurture a human that turned out to be a spy will no longer happen."

"..."

Wan Tiansheng had helmed the academy for many years, so he had a lot of supporters as well. The crowd started discussing among themselves.

At the corner, Bai Feng was yawning with a bored expression. This had nothing to do with him. It also wasn't his place to voice an opinion. As a mere assistant researcher, he had no voice here.

Beside him, Liu Hong smiled and said, "Bai Feng, the student intake has been reduced this year. Will your personal student end up failing to even enter the academy? Also, that Martial Uncle of yours seems to be among those to be affected by the cost-cutting..."

Bai Feng looked at Liu Hong like he was staring at a fool. He said, "My Martial Uncle has achieved willpower materialization. Don't you know that? Unfortunately for you, he's not going to be affected."

"He materialized?"

Liu Hong was unaware of that. After all, that wasn't a big deal in the academy. Even after willpower materialization, one would only be a first-stage Skysoar cultivator.

Liu Hong did not linger on the topic. He smiled and said, "With the cut in research funds, it looks like the academy is on the cusp of a reform. The tests for people like us will probably be even more strict than before..."

"What are you trying to say? Just get to the point. I don't feel like guessing. It's too tiring."

Liu Hong took a deep breath and said, "Open Senior Hong's research center to me. I'll inject some funds into the research center. We can use the research center together. I can even provide you with the resources you lack. We can share the results of the research. Bai Feng, it will only harm the both of us if we continue competing."

Liu Hong solemnly said, "Senior Hong's research center has not been able to submit any research results for years. If this continues, some people will start pushing to shut it down."

"Piss off." Bai Feng scolded with no trace of politeness. But after giving it some thought, he said, "Well, that's not impossible..."

Liu Hong was overjoyed.

"Send me a few Mountainsea corpses of the divine or devil race. We can continue our negotiation after that."

Bai Feng said seriously, "I'm being serious. Since you want to join us, you will definitely need to pay a price. After all, we have been researching the same subject for so many years and are on the verge of breakthrough."

"|—"

Liu Hong cursed inwardly. This fellow must be taking him for a fool.

Bai Feng merely sneered. If Liu Hong wasn't a fool, who was? Bai Feng then ignored Liu Hong. He glanced at Wan Tiansheng and thought to himself that the academy was going to be in chaos soon. He wondered if that was good or bad. The prefect had entered seclusion while Marquis Xia had been appointed the acting prefect. No matter how he looked at it, major changes were coming.

"There won't be any troubles, right?" Bai Feng sighed. He could only hope that nothing would go wrong. He also wondered about Su Yu's recent progress in cultivation.

Chapter 59: Marquis Xia's Fault (1)

10th of June.

Early in the morning, Chen Hao arrived at Su Yu's house in a rush. The moment Su Yu opened the door, he hastily said, "Yu, something happened!"

"Speak slowly."

Su Yu appeared calm and unhurried. It wasn't like the sky was falling. Someone like Chen Hao couldn't possibly encounter something too major.

During the past two days, he had achieved basic mastery over the Lightning Source Blade. He was busy practicing the technique and increasing the speed in which he gathered source qi. Thus, his mind had been rather occupied when Chen Hao found him.

After opening the door for Chen Hao, Su Yu turned around and returned to the noodles he had just cooked for breakfast. Without his father around, his meals had been rather simple and bland. Furthermore, he did not have much money left. With only around thirty thousand dollars, he had to be mindful and save enough for his expenses in the academy.

Attending an academy wasn't free. Although the registration fee wasn't expensive, he still needed to make a one-time payment of over ten thousand dollars. And even after entering the academy, he still needed money for his daily necessities.

When Chen Hao saw Su Yu's noodles, he swallowed. He had only eaten a small breakfast earlier. After running all the way to Su Yu's house, he was hungry again. Su Yu ignored Chen Hao's gaze. He only had a bowl of noodles here. He had not prepared enough to feed Chen Hao as well.

"Yu..."

Chen Hao sat down opposite Su Yu and moved his gaze away from the bowl of noodles. He said, "My father said that something has changed at the capital. This year, the academies might reduce the number of the students they accept."

"Alright."

"They're reducing the number of students!" Chen Hao emphasized.

Su Yu looked up helplessly. "And how does that concern me? As for you, although you're still at the fourth-stage, you're not far from the fifth-stage. On top of that, you also have the bonus thirty marks from the kill you claimed. Do you think this reduction will affect you as well?"

Su Yu was unbothered by the news. He was somewhat speechless when he saw how nervous Chen Hao was.

"Do you think that they will recruit zero students from Nanyuan? If the capital dares to do so, Nanyuan will immediately separate from Great Xia and join Great Ming instead."

Nanyuan wasn't too far away from Great Ming. In fact, Great Ming was only about three hundred kilometers to the north of Nanyuan. Nanyuan was basically one of the closest Great Xia cities to Great Ming.

Sure, Nanyuan was a small city, but it still had a population of one million. It also had over ten thousand battle ready soldiers. Including the retired veterans, Nanyuan could easily raise an army of tens of thousands if it wanted. Thus, even if the capital was cutting costs, Nanyuan's benefits would not be harmed.

In any case, the capital had never accepted too many students from Nanyuan anyway. Su Yu really wasn't too bothered by the reduction of students. He said, "It doesn't matter if this news is true or not. Those at the capital are the ones that will be crying. The academies have always recruited heavily from the capital. This reduction will hit them the hardest."

Su Yu appeared indifferent. However, Chen Hao had a sullen look as he said, "I know that. My father told me the same. But he also said that because of this, some of the students from the capital are no longer so sure of their ability to get into the academies. Thus, those with decent backgrounds will start taking the exams from the smaller cities."

"..."

Su Yu blanked out, realizing that he had been too naive. Chen Hao's father had been able to see more than him. That was true. The reduction would hit the capital the hardest, so what would the students there do?

Well, they could just take the exams from the smaller cities. Nanyuan was one of the twenty-eight cities of Great Xia. Although it did not have that many acceptance slots, it still had some.

These people might not be the best students in the capital, but in Nanyuan, things were different. The acceptance requirements for Nanyuan were definitely not as strict as the capital.

Each year, only about a dozen students from Nanyuan would be accepted to the capital. Even the reduction would not reduce the slots by much since what Nanyuan had was already the bare minimum.

If they dared to further reduce the slots, they would incite the fury of the masses. Nanyuan students were inferior not because they were less talented. They had simply grown up in an inferior environment. This was a place with low source qi density and insufficient cultivation resources. It was unfair to compare Nanyuan students with those from the capital. Thus, the acceptance slots of Nanyuan were basically fixed. They wouldn't increase, but neither would they drop.

Su Yu frowned, "Are all the academies reducing the intake?"

"Yes!" Chen Hao was vexed, "It's the fault of that marquis! The prefect has entered seclusion. Otherwise, this wouldn't have happened! That shitty

marquis never does anything good for the prefecture. He only spends his time thinking about money!"

Chen Hao had a gloomy expression. He felt very threatened by this new policy. Su Yu laughed. He knew who the marquis Chen Hao was talking about.

Marquis Xia, Xia Longwu's uncle, son of Great Xia King. He was a well-known individual in Nanyuan, in Great Xia, and even in the entire Human Realm. Xia Trade Company was founded by him.

Marquis Xia wasn't his actual name. Nobody knew his real name, but everyone called him Marquis Xia at his request. Since his father was the Great Xia King, nobody found it unacceptable to call him a marquis. Thus, from a long time ago, everyone started referring to him as Marquis Xia.

"And how is this related to Marquis Xia?"

"Don't you know? He gave the order!" Chen Hao complained, "I heard that Marquis Xia was unhappy with how much money the academies were spending, so he reduced their funds by thirty percent this year."

"And that's not the worst..." Chen Hao's face fell as he said, "I heard...no, my father heard that Marquis Xia is even selling slots!"

"That person is actually selling slots! Not the academy slots, but the residence slots of the other twenty-eight cities in Great Xia! To take the entrance exam from a city, one needs to be registered as a local residence. Therefore, those people need to purchase a residency slot in the city!

"And that's not enough. One also needs to buy a house in the city. In total, one needs to spend no less than a million just to take the exam outside the capital!

"You don't know this, but many people are selling their houses recently. The real estate price is growing madly. Even your house is now worth ten thousand per square meter!"

"..." magic

Su Yu blanked out. ?So he was now living in a million dollar house as well? Previously, he had been willing to sell his house for only five hundred thousand dollars!

"Tell me. Isn't that scummy! The entire prefecture is scolding him now!"

Chen Hao was still complaining, but Su Yu couldn't help but to laugh. "Marquis Xia is truly interesting. In the past, everyone was busy trying to enter the capital. With what he did, the reverse is happening now."

"What do you mean interesting? Isn't he increasing our competition for no reason?"

Chen Hao sounded resentful, "Just a million or two is enough for them to get a residency slot. There are so many rich people in the capital. This city is going to be filled with them!"

Su Yu smiled, "It won't be that bad. The truly rich and powerful ones will not lack source qi liquid. Their children will be able to compete even in the capital. Those running to the smaller cities are mostly the middle class. And do you think all of them can take out a million and two in cash?"

"Even if there will be more competition here, it won't be that much more."

Su Yu could see things clearly. However, Chen Hao was right as well. No matter what, the entrance examination had just become more difficult for Nanyuan students. In the capital, the students at the fifth or sixth-stage Source Opening Realm would only be considered second-rate students. But in Nanyuan, they would all become first-rate students.

Those with the money to do so would most likely be coming to the smaller cities like Nanyuan. That would bring more competition to the local students. Of course, Nanyuan itself would profit from this. Hundreds of thousands of dollars could be made just by flipping a single property. Su Yu could only say that Marquis Xia was truly...ingenious.

"If I'm Marquis Xia, I'll build up a new district and force them to only buy from that district. Each unit will be sold at no less than a million dollars. The entire district will easily make me billions of dollars."

Su Yu's emotions were complicated as he said, "If even a single city can earn that much, the twenty-eight cities will stand to earn an unimaginable amount

of money. If they make this a yearly event from now on and make a policy forbidding the properties bought in this manner to be sold within ten years...they can continue squeezing money out of these rich people next year."

Chen Hao was stunned. After a long while, he said with a bitter face, "Yu, I'm here to talk about important business, not asking you how to make money. What are you thinking?"

Su Yu smiled, "It will be fine. Don't worry. Things won't be so simple. If they really take over all our slots, do you think Nanyuan will agree? I believe there will be a new policy to help us survive this mess."

"Really?" Chen Hao was rather confident in Su Yu. However, he was still uncertain. "So will this affect me?"

"I doubt so."

Su Yu was unsure as well. He could only guess, "If I'm Marquis Xia, I will launch a few other policies. For example, if Nanyuan has twenty slots, then fifteen of them would be preserved for the actual locals while the remaining five would be given to the transfer students. That way, he can earn money, provide more opportunities to the students from the capital, and protect Nanyuan's benefits as well.

"And the transfer students will probably be those who are supposed to be able to get through the exam before the reduction. In the end, the academies will still end up accepting the same number of students. The only difference is that the government will make billions out of this. Not even the parents can complain since they are the ones willingly spending their money. The students can only blame themselves for not having the ability to take the exam in the capital."

Su Yu smiled, "In short, this plan has basically created a problem for a bunch of middle class families whose children were already supposed to be able to get into the academies and forcing them to solve the problem with money. The parents will end up injecting tens of billions into the economy. Marquis Xia will receive the money before spending it again. In the end, hundreds of billions will be generated in the economy."

Chapter 60: Marquis Xia's Fault (2)

Chen Hao was confused. Wasn't it tens of billions? How did it become hundreds of billions?

Su Yu did not bother explaining. He said, "Don't worry. The higher ups aren't stupid. They won't do anything that will incite unrest. The prefect is only in seclusion. He is still around. Are they not afraid that they will get in trouble with the prefect if they push things too far?"

Su Yu was confident that Marquis Xia would not create a big trouble for himself. If Marquis Xia was really that stupid, the Xia Trade Company wouldn't have been able to monopolize the market of cultivation resources in Great Xia.

Of course, his background also played a role in the monopoly, but without the ability, the other players in the market wouldn't sit idle while he took over the market.

"Yu, tell me. What is the reason for this? Why does Marquis Xia need all that money? A lot of people in Great Xia are feeling like beating him to death. His Xia Trade Company is so profitable. He can make money just by selling things there. Why do this?"

Su Yu shook his head, "Nobody will say no to more money. Maybe Marquis Xia enjoys counting money. You can't do anything about that."

Nobody knew that Great Xia's treasury was emptying rapidly. Even though Wan Tiansheng had said as much during the meeting, everyone still believed that he was lying to scare them into following his proposal.

What joke was that? Great Xia was one of the strongest human prefectures with countless experts and a developed economy. Their citizens lived in peace and harmony, and they also dominated the battlefield. How would they be running out of money?

If they were really running out of money, would Xia Longwu still be spending so much? In fact, even if Xia Longwu personally announced that Great Xia was broke, everyone would still laugh and say that the prefect was funny. As far as they were concerned, that wasn't possible.

Su Yu would never consider that possibility. Neither would Chen Hao. After hearing Su Yu's words, Chen Hao was somewhat relieved. He said, "Good, it's good that we won't be affected. My father was considering selling our old house..."

Su Yu cursed inwardly. The Chen family sure was rich. They had an old house in the neighborhood he was staying in. They had not done anything with that house. If they could sell it this time, they could probably make at least a million dollars.

Su Yu rubbed his chin and said, "Hao...is it really very profitable to sell properties now?"

That was a million dollars in cash! Back when Su Long bought this house, he had the military discount and only needed to pay around seventy to eighty thousand dollars for it. The sale restriction period for those purchasing through the military discount was already over. Not too long ago, the house was worth about five hundred thousand. But in the blink of an eye, the house had doubled in value. That was too scary.

Even Su Yu was itching to sell his house. There was too much profit to be had.

Chen Hao looked at Su Yu doubtfully and said, "Yu, you're still thinking about that? Uncle Su will beat you to death after he returns. If you lack money, I'll have my father lend you some."

"What are you thinking?" Su Yu smiled. "I was just wondering. I won't be able to sell it. Even if I want to do it, I need to get my father's approval first. Too bad. This is such a good opportunity to make money."

Chen Hao did not really care. He did not need to pay for his own expenses so he was still unaware of how hard it was to earn money.

Returning to the previous topic, Chen Hao spoke with a somewhat worried tone, "Even if this matter won't affect us, I'm afraid there will still be a lot of people from the capital around during the exam day. I heard that there are a lot of geniuses there. They have a bunch of fifth-stage and sixth-stage Source Opening cultivators. Even seventh-stage and eighth-stage cultivators are commonly seen. Yu...will they laugh at us for being too weak?"

Su Yu was indifferent, "What is there for them to laugh about? If they have to grow up in Nanyuan as well, they might be even worse than you. Sure, we have a bad starting point. But things will even out when we get to the capital. At that time, they might not be able to continue growing faster than us."

He did not overestimate those from the capital. Neither was he underestimating those from Nanyuan. Those from the smaller cities had a harder start, but at Great Xia, everything would be equal. As long as they stay clear to their goal and work hard, many of them would be able to do well. There were plenty of examples of such individuals.

"Fine." Chen Hao stopped talking about the examination. Instead, he asked curiously, "Yu, what are you planning to do now? The school holidays will start in a few days. Why don't we go on a trip somewhere?"

"No thanks." Su Yu still had a lot of things to do. He still needed to complete the character "lightning", practice the Lightning Source Blade, kill a middle-stage Great Strength cult member, read, and grow his willpower. He was very busy. magic

"You! Focus on your cultivation. Don't go anywhere! I was only speculating, but nothing is absolute. You better reach the fifth-stage before the exam. That will help you during the exam. It's very normal for some of the weaker students to be removed when they need to reduce the accepted students by one or two. That might be you."

Chen Hao's father had given Su Yu three drops of source qi liquid. He had not used a single drop of them. During the past few days, he had been practicing the Lightning Source Blade and hadn't been able to recover his source qi. Since he hadn't opened his One Hundred Openings acupoint, he was unable to actively absorb external source qi, making his recovery slow.

Thus, he was planning to use a drop of source qi liquid soon. He could also use that opportunity to help Chen Hao with his cultivation.

"Fine."

Chen Hao had a sullen expression. He was being forced to read again. If he had known that this would happen, he wouldn't have visited.

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/p>

At the same time.

Nanyuan mayor's manor.

Mayor Wu Wenhai, Martial Dragon Guards Squad Leader Xia Bing, Liu Wenyan, principal of Nanyuan Secondary School, chief of Windcatcher Department, and many other higher ups of the city were gathered.

Wu Wenhai waited until everyone sat down before saying, "Everyone knows what's happening. The capital intends to sell one house and one residency slot per exam taker. In short, a family with two children will need to purchase two houses and two residency slots for their children. Each house must not be smaller than a hundred square meters."

The principal stroked his beard and hissed before saying, "The marquis is...too scummy."

Wu Wenhai ignored that comment and continued, "Also, we don't have much time before the exam. All outsiders trying to get a slot in Nanyuan will be charged extra ten percent tax."

"..."

Liu Wenyan asked, "So will Nanyuan be making that money or will the money go to the capital?"

"Fifty-fifty split." Wu Wenhai smiled, "This is good for us. The marquis will be taking all the blame while we only need to line our pockets. We won't be affected. Only those from the capital will suffer. But if they're unhappy, they're free to not come. We won't lose anything."

The principal looked anxious, "I'm only afraid that they will steal the slots that are supposed to be ours."

"That won't happen. The higher ups intend to recruit the same number of local students from Nanyuan. At most, they will reduce the intake by one or two students.

"This is actually good for us. The capital initially intended to go all out in their cost-cutting. Even Nanyuan will have about a quarter of our original slots cut.

But now, we get to maintain our original slots and even make some money on top of it. Nanyuan isn't a rich city. If we take this chance to earn some money, we will have more funds to allocate when required."

Everyone nodded. Wu Wenhai continued, "This is settled then. Our objection won't do anything anyway. I'm gathering everyone to tell you to let your students know that they shouldn't feel pressured. The higher ups won't make a plan without taking our well-being into consideration.

"Also, things will be chaotic at the capital for a while. We will also receive a lot of visitors. The Windcatcher Department and city guards need to be ready to maintain order in the city. We can't allow the Myriad Race Cult to take advantage of the chaos and incite public outrage."

Wu Wenhai solemnly said, "Some people don't know what's going on and will start spreading false news. The moment the locals get the impression that their benefits are encroached upon by outsiders, chaos will erupt. We need to be on alert."

Everyone agreed. Wu Wenhai let off a long breath and said, "Also, the higher ups want us to try our best to keep these rich people in Nanyuan. Our development has always been slow. With the limited resources here, our economy has never been able to grow much. This is a good opportunity. To be precise, this is money dropping from the sky.

"If we can keep these people around, it will help with Nanyuan's development. Additionally, our secondary school can take this chance to make some money as well."

"What?"

Wu Wenhai smiled, "The marquis said that all exam takers need to be registered as a student of a local school as well. In other words, they will need to enter our secondary schools before taking the exam. You guys decide for yourself how much you're going to be selling a single student slot for. As long as you're not too excessive, everything will be fine."

Liu Wenyan took a deep breath as he said, "That fatty, cough, cough, I mean that Marquis Xia is really not letting go of any avenue of money making. Increasing taxes, selling student slots, selling properties, selling residency slots...He won't stop before making a couple hundred thousand dollars from each family."

Wu Wenhai laughed helplessly, "That's how Marquis Xia is. He made things very clear. The parents are free to reject spending the money. He's not going to force anyone. They can always have their kids take the exam in the capital. He won't stop them. So...nobody can do anything to him."

"The marquis's money making ability is truly..." the principal clicked his tongue in praise. "I wonder if Great Xia King is aware of this. Would he beat the marquis to death if he finds out?"

"Well, that's not our business." Wu Wenhai nonchalantly said, "The marquis will have to take the blame himself. Then again, he's already used to being the fall guy. It's not like this has never happened before. Back then, he sold merit points at the black market and scammed billions of dollars from those rich families. But in the end, the entire scandal was swept under the rug."

Everyone had odd expressions on their faces upon hearing that. There were different tiers of merit point owners. There were things that would not be available to purchase regardless of how many merit points one had.

A few years ago, a black market appeared in Great Xia. In that market, everything was available for purchase so long as one could afford it, sidestepping the tier system set by the government.

Naturally, the things in the black market were excessively overpriced. Furthermore, the black market only accepted merit points. At that time, the value of a single merit point grew beyond a hundred thousand dollars. Things that could be purchased with merit points also doubled in price.

In the black market, sellers could earn ten times the profit of selling outside the black market. Even with the excessive price, many rich individuals were still willing to throw their wealth into the black market. Eventually, it was revealed that Marquis Xia was the culprit behind the black market.

The black market was busted and the merit points the rich individuals bought in the black market went to waste. The bust was carried out by Xia Longwu himself.

It wasn't like the merit points of the black market customers had been frozen or confiscated by the government, but without the black market, these rich individuals were no longer capable of buying the things they had intended to buy with their merit points.

After all, they did not have sufficient original earned merit to purchase those items legally. Thus, they ended up with hundreds of thousands of merit points in their possession but could only buy items worth hundreds of merit points. The merit points in their pockets were basically worthless.

And they couldn't even sell those merit points away as Xia Longwu had all their names. They did not dare to rashly sell their merit points lest they accidentally sold to some cult members and got themselves in trouble.

After that incident, Marquis Xia had remained low profile for many years. But now, he was out and about lining his pockets everywhere again.

It was rumored that he had earned tens of billions of dollars through the black market. Nobody knew where the money went, and nobody dared to ask. In any case, the money had only been earned from some rich families instead of the common people so the masses were unbothered by it.

Liu Wenyan and the others did not remark on the incident. In fact, if it wasn't for the fact that Xia Longwu had always been known for his discipline, many would suspect that the entire black market incident was a trap of the prefect to make some money off the rich individuals.

But since only the few rich individuals were affected, the incident had remained relatively unknown among the masses. During that period of time, Marquis Xia's reputation was terrible among the rich. It was also then that he came to be known as Pig Xia.

Everyone started laughing as they talked about the marquis. Liu Wenyan was laughing as well, but suddenly, he sighed. That fatty was now a professional fall guy. Nowadays, there were probably very few people that still remembered the elegant and handsome little marquis from fifty years ago.

In truth, this so-called Pig Xia was the person single handedly keeping Great Xia operational. If someone was keeping the sky from collapsing upon the Great Xia, then it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that this Pig Xia was the one propping half the sky up.

Alas, the masses were ignorant and quick to believe in rumors. Very few were aware of Marquis Xia's contributions to the prefecture.

Face of a pig, a heart as bright as the sun. That was a saying that was incredibly fitting for the infamous Marquis Xia.

