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Chapter 91: Doubting The World (1)

The second examination venue was a big, empty room. The students from the other examination venues were also arriving one after another with their respective proctors. The proctor in charge of this test wasn't Bureau Head Sun. It was the same proctor from the war academy examination in the morning.

When the proctor in charge saw the students, he nodded at Bureau Head Sun before saying, "This test is much easier than its counterpart in the war academy examination. Only your cultivation level will be measured. Cultural research academies don't care about practical combat abilities. You only need to hit hard enough to get a pass."

Researcher Huang smiled and clarified, "Prior to the Great Strength Realm, any combat test is a joke. Thus, us cultural researchers don't waste our time with that. You will have the chance to test your combat prowess in the future." magic

Researcher Huang would definitely not fear anyone when it comes to a war of words. As far as the cultural researchers were concerned, testing a student's real combat ability during the Source Opening Realm was pointless.

The cultural researchers greatly looked down on this part of the test. In fact, all combat tests before the Skysoar Realm were pointless for them. For them, cultivation level was more important. After opening nine acupoints and achieving willpower materialization, their physical bodies would quickly reach the Skysoar Realm.

The proctor from the war academy coldly said, "Combat experience is something one needs to start accumulating early on. It isn't something you can gain instantly. There are Skysoar cultivators with zero combat experience. On the battlefield, they couldn't even kill Infinite Strength cultivators."

"It will be much safer for a Skysoar cultivator to gain experience compared to a Source Opening cultivator."

"If you're afraid of death, just stop cultivating. If you're so afraid, just hide at home until you reach the Mountainsea Realm before coming out."

However, Researcher Huang actually agreed and smiled, "And what's wrong if that? If one can keep progressing, it is definitely not a problem to cultivate in seclusion until the Mountainsea Realm. In fact, that happened before in the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy. Someone who has never taken a step out of the academy instantly gain fame and power the day he did it."

"Shut up, both of you!"

Bureau Head Sun was furious. The two academies had been antagonistic toward each other for a long time. They were only arguing here because they wanted to fight for more students. After all, the war academy also wanted some cultural researchers in their academy. This wasn't the first time they tried doing something like this.

"Just focus on the test. If not, you can leave and get someone else to do the job."

With that, the leader from the war academy finally stopped arguing and continued talking to the students, "Attack the dummy in front of you with your strongest hit. You can gain a total of 270 marks from this test. Your score will be displayed on the screen connected to the dummy after hitting it."

He personally felt that this method of test was dull and unreliable. It was as though they were simply going through the motions for this part of the examination. True strength was not something they could measure digitally like this.

For war academy examinations, students would be tested in various aspects such as determining directions from sound, mounted archery, and so on. But here, they only required a single hit on a dummy. The students were given as much time as they needed to gather strength before attacking.

He was unhappy with this test, but the cultural research academies had been doing things this way for many years. He could only follow the procedure. He continued, "Don't think that you can get 270 marks just because you're at the ninth-stage Source Opening Realm. Cultural research academies don't care about physical cultivation and intend to suppress the score one can get from this test."

"Thus, even a seventh-stage Source Opening cultivator might only get 100 marks for this part. Very few ninth-stage Source Opening cultivators can get 200 marks from this test."

Since the war academies restricted the score students could get from the language test, the cultural research academies naturally had restrictions for the score from the physical cultivation test.

A ninth-stage Source Opening cultivator should count himself lucky just getting 200 marks from this test.

Researcher Huang smiled and explained, "He's somewhat right, but not accurate. Students who are familiar with willpower can try using your willpower. That will grant you more marks here."

That was the difference between the two tests. The war academies did not encourage their students to use willpower during the test. It was the other way around for the cultural research academies. After all, if they could use their willpower well, they would only prove that they had learned some of the basics of being a cultural researcher.

At that moment, Wu Lan looked at Su Yu with a smile of victory on her face. He was at the ninth-stage while she was at the eighth-stage. But it didn't matter. Nobody knew which of them would get the higher score here. She might be able to get 270 marks with willpower while Su Yu might only get 200 marks. That would show the gap between them.

"The test will start now. Remain silent." The proctor shouted, stopping the students from talking among themselves. "Student number 1-104."

A student from the first venue walked out and stood before a dummy.

"Teacher, can I use my weapon?"

"It doesn't matter." The proctor indifferently said, "For a test like this, using a weapon won't change much. The strength of your source qi and willpower will be the main focus."

This test did not take into consideration the actual damage one did to the dummy. Rather, it tested one's source qi density and willpower strength.

"I'll use a saber..."

The student did not mind. A lot of them were already used to using weapons and they would perform better with a weapon in hand. A weapon rack was nearby. The proctor did not stop the student from picking up a weapon. Before long, the student walked over with a saber. After gathering power for a bit, he swung at the dummy. After the hit landed, the screen beside the dummy displayed the score.

"22 marks..."

The student was stunned. He couldn't help arguing, "Teacher, I'm a fourth-stage Source Opening cultivator. How can my score be so low?"

The proctor expressionlessly said, "This is how cultural research academies do things. They don't care about your cultivation. They only care about your source qi density and willpower strength. Do you understand now? If you're not satisfied with this, take the war academy examination next year."

"Enough." Bureau Head Sun was getting impatient. "Continue the test. The dummy provides the score based on fixed parameters. If you're unhappy, you can apply to retake the test. But you'll need to pay a fee for that. It's not cheap to activate this dummy. If you don't mind spending money, feel free to retake the test."

The student looked dispirited. With his cultivation level, he should have gotten 60 marks. But instead, he had only gotten 22 marks. That was far lower than his expectation.

"Student 1-139."

"Boom!!"

The second student did not hesitate. He walked forth and directly smashed his fist into the dummy.

"26 marks."

"Hehe, I'm only at the third-stage. This score is good enough for me."

The second student was feeling rather good. He might not feel that way without a comparison, but with the previous student as an example, he was extremely satisfied with his score.

"Student 3-009."

"Boom!"

"36 marks."

"..."

"Student 2-025."

"..."

Score after score appeared on the screen. Some were happy and some were sad. Su Yu frowned. It seemed impossible to determine the standards of this dummy. Some fifth-stage students were able to get 110 marks. Some fifth-stage students could only get 30 marks. Even now, the first student was still in disbelief, doubting his existence and doubting the entire world.

"Student 3-176."

Finally, Su Yu saw someone familiar taking the test. Liu Yue stepped forth, picked a sword, and stabbed forth with a roar.

"63 marks."

Liu Yue was happy with the result. She was only a fourth-stage student. Supposedly, she was only supposed to get 60 marks here. However, she had surpassed her supposed limit. At present, the person with the highest mark was the fifth-stage student with 110 marks. Not even some of the sixth-stage students could get a score that high.

"Congratulations!"

Su Yu congratulated her. That was a very good score for Liu Yue who was only a fourth-stage student.

In a good mood, Liu Yue walked over and whispered, "Channel your willpower to the weapon to get a higher score. You should be able to do that as well."

Su Yu was someone who had studied willpower texts before. He should be capable of that.

Su Yu nodded. He had been paying close attention to the other students, so he naturally knew what to do. In fact, he was quite confident. He didn't know if he could get full marks, but he would definitely get a high score.

"Student 5-179."

This was yet another student Su Yu was familiar with. The student looked rather nervous. Instead of choosing a weapon, the student attacked with a palm.

"14 marks."

"..."

That was probably the lowest score yet. 14 marks. Third-stage Source Opening Realm.

By the time the examination drew near, many of the students at the second and third-stage had broken through. Nowadays, there were very few second-stage students around. Most of them were at the third-stage. Of course, that referred to only the locals. There were plenty of fourth and fifth-stage students among the guest students.

When the student saw the low score, his face turned red as his mood crumbled. That was too low.

Even Su Yu sighed for that student. The better students could get around 400 to 500 marks just from the first two tests. As for the weaker students, they might not be able to get more than 80 marks after all the tests. The gap between them was too big.

The next student was a familiar face. It was Zhou Tianqi from the third venue.

"Boom!!"

A loud sound rang out. He had attacked with a dagger.

"180 marks."

A seventh-stage student was supposed to only get 170 marks here. But Zhou Tianqi had exceeded his theoretical limit to get 180 marks, living up to his reputation as a genius from the capital. Or to be more accurate, he was a little genius.

He had gotten 190 marks from the language test. Coupled with this test, he now had 370 marks. That was enough to make him a middle-tier student. This would probably be a decent result even in the capital. However, he did not look happy. His companions were all looking at him with an unfriendly look.

They had previously agreed that Zhou Tianqi would be taking the repeat examination in the capital. However, he refused. As a result, his family was forced to pay a great price to calm the anger of the other families.

Now, the other students were already sure that they wouldn't be able to pass the examination this year. They naturally would no longer stay polite to him. Severing one's future was basically the act of creating a massive grudge.

After Zhou Tianqi was done, Wu Lan was getting impatient. She wanted to see Su Yu's dark expression once again. That would be very interesting.

"Student 3-003."

Wu Lan walked out in excitement while trying to stay aloof. He did not look back. With a sword in hand, she shouted and stabbed at the dummy.

Swish! Swish!

Instead of a loud boom, only a sharp whistle accompanied her strike.

"265 marks."

Joy covered Wu Lan's face when she saw her score. She turned her head to once again look at Su Yu smugly. She now had 595 marks, only a tiny bit away from being a high-tier student. She had reached that far after only two tests.

Even Researcher Huang couldn't help but to praise, "Strong willpower. Not bad. There are probably less than 10 exam takers this year that can do the same. How long have you reached the Mental Tempering Stage?"

"Three months." Wu Lan was very excited, but she kept feigning calmness as she said, "I've never enjoyed cultivating before so I didn't spend much time doing so. Otherwise, I could have reached the ninth-stage and gotten 300 marks here."

Su Yu was stunned. He hurriedly asked, "Teacher, is it actually possible to get more than 270 marks here?"

"Of course." Researcher Huang answered, "However...ninth-stage Source Opening cultivators are generally not capable of doing so. Their willpower..."

He looked at Su Yu and did not finish his words. He was basically hinting that Su Yu was not good enough. His willpower was far weaker than Wu Lan's. She was after all a genius that had been trained since young. Su Yu, a random nobody, would not be able to compete against her. Her score of 595 marks was akin to a lofty mountain looming above him.

The look in the eyes of the other students when looking at Wu Lan changed. This was a true genius from the capital. Many of them couldn't even get 100 marks yet she already had nearly 600 marks. The gap between them was so big they didn't even consider catching up to her.

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Su Yu ignored the others and sank into thought.

Zhou Tianqi used a dagger and Wu Lan used a sword. Both gathered their willpower at a single point before letting it erupt. Those with low marks have their source qi and power mostly scattered and weak willpower...

If I'm going to use a saber, I need to gather my source qi if I want a higher score. I'm not familiar enough with the Lightning Source Blade to gather my source qi properly when using it...

He wanted to use the Lightning Source Blade for this test, but after thinking about it, he concluded that it might not be a good idea to do so.

"This test is unrelated to weapons, techniques, or stances. It mainly measures one's source qi and willpower control."

Su Yu had some prior experience doing so. Previously, he had activated the Rip ability in order to practice the Lightning Source Blade. During that time, he had slowly studied how to control source qi.

Now that he had reached the ninth-stage, he had gained the ability to connect with external source qi. His control over source qi had improved considerably as well.

If I use my fist, no, if I use my finger, I can gather my source qi to a single point. That will be easier to accomplish with a finger.

Su Yu made a choice. Even though he was still uncertain if that would work, he had still decided to not use a weapon or martial technique. He would use all his effort to gather source qi in his finger instead. Maybe he could get a higher score that way.

After a while, he finally heard his number being called.

"Student 3-015."

He stepped forth, attracting many gazes. He was the one who had created the ruckus outside earlier. Almost everyone present knew who he was. Many of them were curious. What would his score be?

"Even a ninth-stage Source Opening cultivator might not be able to do well here. He might get only 100 marks or something," said someone from the crowd, but that person had an envious expression while saying so.

Even 100 marks would be a higher score than his. However, it would still be embarrassing for Su Yu as the number one student for the war academy examination. Even some seventh and eighth-stage students could get a higher score in this test.

Su Yu ignored the crowd and started gathering source qi and willpower at the forefinger of his right hand. He had not learned how to properly channel willpower, but for people at his level, he only needed focus to control his willpower. It was the same case as the process of subduing a Divine Character.

The act of focusing itself was basically the same as gathering willpower.

He then lightly pushed his finger toward the dummy. A lot of the students looked astonished when they saw that. "Is this fellow trying to get a low score?"

Everyone else was attacking with all their strength. But this fellow here was merely softly poking the dummy with his finger. He might as well give the dummy his middle finger and be done with it. Even Wu Lan didn't understand what he was doing. However, the Skysoar cultivators saw everything clearly.

Bureau Head Sun laughed and transmitted his voice to the other proctors, "Interesting. This little fellow is a smart one. Nobody taught him that before, right?"

"I doubt so. Liu Wenyan doesn't look like he would bother. Even if someone did teach him this, it's a small trick. The main point here is that this little fellow is only a ninth-stage Source Opening cultivator yet he already has a decent control over source qi. His willpower is also very weak, but he is able to control it very well when focusing."

The proctor from the Great Xia War Academy who was standing beside the dummy suddenly said, "Idiots. Can't you see more than that? None of that is the main point here. He gathered his source qi on his finger, pushing his finger to the point where it nearly bursts apart. However, his expression is unchanged despite the pain. That is the main point here. His tenacity. A student like this should join a war academy, not that glorified library you call an academy."

After seeing what Su Yu did here, he was placing even more importance on Su Yu. If the Devil Subduing Army commander was here as well, he would probably be dragging Su Yu to the army right about now. A student like this was made for the military.

Bureau Head Sun and the others did not seem upset after being called idiots. However, that did remind them of something. This kid was only a Source Opening cultivator. They were all Skysoar cultivators with powerful physical bodies. They had forgotten about the pressure on one's body when gathering source qi.

The body of a Source Opening cultivator was too weak. Gathering source qi on a body like that would feel similar to slicing the body with a blade. One ought to know that only at the yellow-grade and above would a weapon be able to conduct source qi. Su Yu was doing so with his own finger. That might be able to increase his control, but he also had to suffer a lot more pain than Wu Lan and the others doing so.

This little fellow was risking everything just to get a higher score. His finger would probably take like seven or eight days to heal. With how sensitive fingers were, nobody would be able to understand the kind of pain he was feeling.

The proctors were conversing through voice transmissions, so none of the students heard them.

It was painful! Su Yu knew he would feel the pain, but he was already experienced with pain. Previously, his right arm had remained swollen for a few days from his attempt at studying source qi circulation.

Since he was willing to do that for no special occasion, he was naturally willing to do so for 20 merit points. He only needed to spend a couple hundred dollars to buy some ointment for his finger after this. That was nothing compared to what he could gain here.

If he wasn't going all out during an examination, when was he going to? Hissing sounds rang out as his finger landed on the dummy. The sounds weren't loud, but Su Yu could feel some resistance to his finger as the pain on it grew. He persisted until the pain reached the limit of his tolerance before pulling his arm back.

In the process, he maintained a completely nonchalant expression. There was no large movement. Neither was there a large sound. But when the students looked at the screen, they were stunned.

"327 marks." Wu Lan was completely dumbstruck. "How is this possible? He..."

How could Su Yu get such a high score? His cultivation level was nothing special. There were plenty of ninth-stage students who couldn't even get 200 marks in this test. If it was this easy, there would be a lot more cultural researchers around.

Zhou Tianqi was stunned as well. "327 marks...but his willpower isn't strong..."

How was this possible?

Bureau Head Sun smiled. The other proctors also nodded. That score didn't surprise them. Someone willing to put in the effort would definitely be able to taste the fruit of their hard work. They even wondered if he had crippled his finger doing that.

Seeing that Wu Lan and the others were in disbelief, Bureau Head Sun said, "Student Wu Lan, you can try using your finger. Maybe you can get 350 marks."

Wu Lan hurriedly asked, "Can I retake the test?"

"..."

Bureau Head Sun felt tired talking to her. Did her family not teach her well? What did they teach her at home? magic

"Cough." Bureau Head Sun said, "You can retry next time. For this exam, you only have one chance. Also, don't try that rashly."

He wouldn't be able to bear the consequences of breaking Wu Lan's finger.

Fining them 10 million dollars was no big deal. But tricking the young miss of Wu Family to break her finger was an entirely different matter. They would definitely not let that slide. They were merely here to oversee the examination. There was no need for them to plant all those weird ideas into her head.

Since the Wu Family had not taught her about that trick, they clearly didn't want her to hurt herself accidentally. It wasn't even that important as the trick would only give her a little bit of extra marks during the test. In any case, it wasn't like their family lacked powerful weapons for her to use.

Wu Lan was not reconciled to this result. With 327 marks, Su Yu now had a total of 527 marks. The gap between them was no longer as big. She was very unhappy. She had been looking forward to seeing the dark expression on Su Yu's face once more. But now, that fellow was looking exceptionally happy. He was even looking at her with a smug smile.

If Su Yu knew what she was thinking, he would feel wronged. He was merely smiling from the joy of getting a high score. What was wrong with that? How was that smug? Even if he was to have no expression on his face, Wu Lan would probably find another excuse to curse at him inwardly. Her brain simply worked differently.

There was only a difference of 68 marks between the two of them.

Su Yu had suddenly shortened the gap considerably, angering Wu Lan so much that she nearly teared up. She had thought that after this test, she would be able to gain a lead of over 150 marks over Su Yu. But instead, the lead had been reduced considerably.

When Su Yu saw her expression, he was confused. Why did she look like she was crying? That idiot wouldn't really cry here, right? He hadn't provoked her at all! He was only doing this for his 20 merit points! It wasn't like he was getting 20 points from her family.

"What the fuck was that?"

Ultimately, Su Yu decided to ignore her. His mentor, Liu Wenyan, was once again proven right. Women would only stand in his way of growth. Just look at this weird woman here. She was getting all emotional even when the two of them didn't really know each other.

"Not bad..." Bureau Head Sun smiled, "Those who have not studied willpower texts, Divine Characters, and original myriad race cultivation methods before can consider skipping the next test lest you hurt yourself."

Evidently, the next test was unsuitable for the regular students. For them, this was the end of their cultural research examination. And if they had scored badly for both the language and cultivation tests, then their road toward joining a cultural research academy would end here.

Su Yu gave it some thought and approached Wu Lan before whispering, "Idiot-I mean hello, how many non-language merit points do you have?"

Wu Lan merely glared at him silently.

"Forget it if you're unwilling to say. I doubt you have any. After all, you look like someone who knows nothing apart from some different languages. People like you will never get a chance to go out on missions..."

"Bullshit! Are you talking about yourself?" Wu Lan refuted, "I have additional merit points! Previously, I helped my teachers translate foreign races as well. Although I was only an assistant, I had earned six merit points for my work!"

"..."

Su Yu was dumbstruck. Wait a minute. A student could earn merit points that way as well? Was the capital really that amazing? They had their secondary school students work as translators? Was that true?

He couldn't help but to ask, "Did you get the position through the back door? Otherwise, why would they need a student to work as a translator? That's too unbelievable..."

"You're the one going through a back door!" Wu Lan raged. "Our army came into possession of a large number of original foreign texts from their raids not long ago. The experts didn't want to waste their time and energy on these low-level texts while our teachers were too busy. Thus, Mental Tempering Stage students like us were asked to assist with the translation. How is that a back door?"

She was furious. Very furious. "Even in a cultural research academy, they will also have their Mental Tempering Stage students help with translation works. You can even earn merit points doing those jobs. Isn't this how all cultural researchers earn their merit points? How did you earn yours?"

She was the one who should be suspecting whether Su Yu had gotten some job through the back door for his merit points. How could someone like him have additional merit points outside of what he earned from language certifications?

She was present in the morning examination so she remembered that Su Yu had quite a lot of additional merit points as well. He had...10 additional merit points! She was collapsing mentally. How did he earn that many points? She had forgotten to ask about the source of the points. Did Bai Feng help him earn them through a back door?

But when Su Yu heard her words, he finally understood. So it turned out that for cultural researchers, they wouldn't earn merit points through combat before the Skysoar Realm. But he...had been walking an entirely different path. So he was the oddity among the cultural researchers?

"Since you only have 6 points...then your total score is 655 marks. I have 627 marks."

Su Yu was happy. That was a small gap. Earlier, he was afraid that he wouldn't be able to bridge that gap. But now, it seemed like it wasn't so hopeless after all.

"By the way, how many marks can I get per Divine Character?"

"..."

Wu Lan decided to ignore him. She was really very angry. 28 marks. She only had a lead of 28 marks. Why? She was a genius who was going to get a high-high evaluation. Why did this random nobody from Nanyuan have over 600 marks as well? It seemed like this examination was even easier for him? He already had enough marks to get a high-tier evaluation.

Earlier, he claimed that he would do better if luck wasn't involved. She didn't take him seriously. But now...she couldn't accept it!

After spending a while seething in anger, she finally lost her patience and asked, "Do...you really have a Divine Character?"

"Secret."

"Hmph! What's the big deal? I have one too!"

Wu Lan was infuriated. What was the big deal about that? "So what if you have a Divine Character? I got mine a few years ago!"

"..."

But at this point, Su Yu was no longer interested in her. Since he had obtained almost all the information he wanted from the idiot, he could stop wasting time with her. He had to think of a way to catch up to her. It would be a waste to let that idiot place first here. After all, she didn't look like someone who actually needed the rewards offered.

At that time, Bureau Head Sun said, "Those who are done, come with me. The rest of you, continue. Remember, don't imitate what Su Yu did. But I guess it doesn't matter. Even if you want to, you won't be able to do it."

He initially wanted to warn the other students against trying that method and harming themselves, but when he thought about it, these people wouldn't even be able to gather their source qi. Without reaching the eighth-stage Source Opening Realm, they would not be able to even move their source qi, much less gather them at one spot.

Thus, there was no need to tell them too much and damage their confidence. However, the students left behind still looked sorrowful. What little Bureau Head Sun did say was already enough to damage their confidence.

What did he mean by they wouldn't be able to do it even if they wanted? Wasn't it just poking the dummy with a finger? How hard was that?

Chapter 93: What You Get Is Not Necessarily Yours To Keep (1)

In the examination building.

Very few students were following Bureau Head Sun. After all, only a small number of Nanyuan students had actually gotten the chance to study willpower texts and Divine Characters. In fact, secondary school students who had studied willpower texts and Divine Characters were rare even in the capital.

Of course, not all students here had studied both either. Some were unwilling to give up and some were only here to satisfy their curiosity. Su Yu noted that there were only around 100 students around him.

Before long, they arrived at the top floor of the examination building. Ahead of them was a sealed room guarded by city guards. There, Bureau Head Sun nodded at the two proctors from the cultural research academies.

Next, Researcher Huang turned around to face the students and solemnly said, "This test will mainly assess your willpower, Divine Character, and tenacity.

"Like we mentioned before, those who have never studied those subjects should be very careful here.

"The Divine Character of every single individual is different. Even the same character will have different properties. We won't be able to see much testing the Divine Character alone.

"If both Divine Characters are complete, how do we decide which is stronger? How should we grade them?

"Therefore, at this stage of the exam, we will be using a unique method to examine each student. Those who have formed incomplete Divine Characters will also receive some marks from this test."

A student asked, "Teacher, an incomplete Divine Character has no special properties. Also, we have not achieved willpower materialization so we won't

be able to make use of a complete Divine Character anyway. Does this test merely rely on us being honest about our Divine Characters?"

In other words, he was trying to say that nobody would know even if he lied in this test.

Researcher Huang laughed. "If you're here to try your luck with lies, I can only tell you to stop dreaming. Cultural research academies have existed for many years. There might be some loopholes early on, but over the years, they have all been patched.

"The prowess of cultural researchers are far beyond your imagination. Inside this room, you will find a Divine Character. That character will be used for this test.

"Those who have studied willpower texts before know that willpower texts are always accompanied by a certain level of pressure. That is the case for the Divine Character inside as well. Those with insufficient willpower or Divine Character level won't be able to last long under the pressure.

"You will understand what I mean soon. Remember to leave when you reach your limit. If you can't move, shout for help from a proctor. Don't force yourself. If you end up harming your sea of willpower and lose your mind, you won't even have the chance to regret your decision.

"I hope to see smart people entering a cultural research academy, not fools. If you're not even smart enough to know your limit, you are not qualified to be a cultural researcher. That is why we're using this method for the test even if it's somewhat dangerous.

"We hope to see courage, perseverance, and fortitude from our students. But we also don't want to see students who are blindly arrogant. Such students should not be in a cultural research academy as that will be a waste of resources."

Su Yu raised his hand. When he received the permission to speak, he asked, "Teacher, how will our performance be graded?"

"You'll know after entering the room." Researcher Huang did not provide any other explanation. He looked at the city guards and said, "Let them in."

The students started filing into the room. Su Yu was also among the crowd. The room was spacious and empty. It looked simple and crude. At the front of the room was a small desk. On the desk was something that looked like a bone slip scroll. Su Yu suspected that it was an original myriad race cultivation method.

A few proctors entered the room with them.

When the proctors reached the desk and all the students were in the room, Researcher Huang said, "Wait behind the red line. If you reach your limit, withdraw."

Immediately after, Su Yu felt the undulations of a deep and vast willpower. That was the sensation the willpower gave him. Researcher Huang seemed to have activated something. Perhaps that was the Divine Character he had spoken about earlier. A golden radiance rose up from the scroll on the desk. Su Yu and the other students only saw a golden flash before the world before them turned white.

"Those who wish to take this test, step forth. The further you go, the higher your score."

...

The voice was indistinct. Su Yu felt like he was in a dream. All the students around him had vanished. He widened his eyes and looked around. He seemed to have really entered a different world. A world of boundless white expanse.

"Is this...created by the Divine Character?"

Su Yu was stunned. Was this a dream or was this an illusion? His character "blood" could create illusions as well, but its illusions were so weak even he would not be fooled. Now, he felt like he had really entered a different world. As though he was in a dream. In fact, this environment felt very similar to his dreams.

"I only need to step forward for a high score?"

Su Yu grew even more curious about the world of cultural researchers. When Liu Wenyan spoke of a character forming a world before, he was unclear as to what that entailed. But now, a vague understanding dawned on him.

This was merely a small examination venue in Nanyuan. Thus, the Divine Character here was probably not even a particularly powerful one. It wouldn't have been brought to Nanyuan otherwise. It also did not seem like it belonged to Researcher Huang.

"Is this a Divine Character that has reached physical manifestation? That's not possible, right?"

Su Yu had heard that only a very powerful cultivator could physically manifest a Divine Character. Even among the previous principals of the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy, only one had managed to leave one such Divine Character behind.

There were many random thoughts in Su Yu's mind, but he quickly cleared them out. It was pointless to think that much. He only needed to walk forward. He would only place first if he could walk far enough. Only then would he get back his 20 merit points.

The moment he tried taking the first step, he felt something different. It was quite hard. He felt like there was a wall of air in front of him, preventing him from stepping forward.

"Willpower..."

He muttered to himself as the character "blood" in his mind stirred. It shook in excitement in his mind. Instantly, the incorporeal wall vanished. Su Yu started stepping forward. He remembered that he was less than 50 meters away from the proctors. It wouldn't take him long to reach them.

"But since I can't see, will I bump into a wall?"

Su Yu mused to himself as he walked. That was a short distance. It would take him no time to cover it.

...

At the same time.

The proctors who were standing beside the desk were observing the students before them. The eyes of these students were opened wide. Various expressions could be seen on their faces as they walked randomly in the room.

After scanning the room, Researcher Huang waved his hand and sent several red streaks forward. Instantly, red seals appeared above dozens of students.

"Take them out."

A different proctor entered the room and took the marked students out. Only after leaving the range of the Divine Character did these students wake up from their stupor. They looked around in stupefaction.

Where were they earlier? They were supposed to be in a room. Why did it feel like the entire world had changed?

"If you can't even last one minute, you won't get any marks. You may leave."

After Researcher Huang said that, the proctor outside started sending the students away. One of the students hurriedly said, "Teacher, this is not over yet. We wish t—"

"This is a test venue, not a theater. Leave." Researcher Huang's tone was cold as he said, "If you refuse, you will be banned from taking any other examinations."

The students no longer dared to say anything and followed the proctor out. Before leaving, all of them looked at the remaining students with envy. They knew very well that they had failed this test.

From their perspective, they could see that Su Yu and the others were actually walking in circles. A few of them had managed to actually move forward, but they hadn't been able to move far either.

Wu Lan was the most conspicuous one as she was ahead of everyone else. She had moved at least 10 meters forward. The person in second place was not Su Yu. Rather, it was Zhou Tianqi who had moved around seven meters forward. Su Yu felt like he had walked a long distance, but in truth, he had only covered around three meters.

... magic

After the failed students left, Researcher Huang's solemn expression was replaced by a smile as he said, "These little fellows must be thinking that they are lost in an unknown world. After all, they have walked for quite a while yet we're still nowhere to be found..."

Bureau Head Sun smiled, "I took this test back then as well. I only managed to walk 5 meters for 50 marks. I was lucky to get that far as I didn't even have a Divine Character yet at that time."

"That's normal. Very few students can actually form a Divine Character. Those with Divine Characters will generally have no problem walking around 10 meters."

Researcher Huang's gaze landed on Su Yu as he added, "He must have formed a Divine Character. It might even be complete. But his willpower is too weak, resulting in a weak Divine Character. A complete Divine Character can help him walk at least 20 meters if he's at the Mental Tempering Stage. This will be hard for him."

Bureau Head Sun sighed, "Yes, this should be hard for him. But he will probably end up slightly behind Wu Lan and ahead of Zhou Tianqi. Zhou Tianqi does not have a complete Divine Character, but he probably has an incomplete one."

Although Zhou Tianqi seemed to be ahead of Su Yu right now, the proctors weren't too optimistic about him. He was clearly near his limit.

Most of the students who could walk five meters and above were those with Divine Characters. At a glance, there wouldn't be more than 10 of such students here. In former years, this part of the examination wasn't even held in Nanyuan. If it wasn't for the guest students, Su Yu would probably be the sole student taking this test in Nanyuan.

Although Liu Yue had not formed a Divine Character, she had studied willpower texts several times and was able to walk about three meters.

While the proctors were conversing among themselves, the old man from the Nine Heavens Cultural Research Academy glanced at the golden bone scroll on the desk and lamented, "What a pity."

At that, the expressions of Bureau Head Sun and Researcher Huang changed.

"What do you mean?" Bureau Head Sun said. "No matter what, they are still better than us. Although they hadn't managed to truly manifest their Divine Characters, they had still managed to preserve their Divine Characters. They might have died, but their legends remain."

Each of these bone slip scrolls had a single preserved Divine Character within.

These scrolls were the true tomb of a cultural researcher. A tomb for their inheritance, not their physical body. They couldn't fully manifest their Divine Characters, so they could only utilize some special methods to preserve their Divine Characters and leave their names behind. In these scrolls, their biography would be written.

These pseudo-manifested Divine Characters were mostly left by Cloudbreach and Mountainsea cultivators. These were the treasures of the cultural research academies. Of course, a pseudo-manifested Divine Character would weaken considerably after the passing of its master. It would work against regular Great Strength cultivators, but it was completely harmless against Skysoar cultivators.

Even so, the greatest wish of people like Bureau Head Sun was to leave behind a bone slip scroll in the academy's Heart Cultivating Pavilion after their death. These scrolls were known as Marks of Culture.

Their conversation did not stop Researcher Huang from marking more failed students. Before long, more students were eliminated from the test. These students who had managed to last a minute would receive 10 marks even if they had moved less than a meter forward.

That was a reward for lasting this long. After all, these students had proven themselves by reaching this far without a Divine Character. Fewer and fewer students remained.

.

...

"Am I not there yet?"

Su Yu was getting more and more confused. Was he really in an illusion? Was this illusion or was this hypnosis? Or was it something else? It no longer mattered to him. He could still feel himself clearly so why had he not reached after so long?

"Was the world enlarged?" Su Yu considered. This world around him might be an enlarged version. After all, Divine Characters were too mysterious and he

didn't know too much about them. He was about to take another step forward when he noticed something. A group of beasts had appeared in the boundless white before him.

"What's going on? This really feels very similar to my dream...These are definitely illusions. We're still in the room. There won't be any real beasts in there."

The beasts started charging toward him. The character "blood" in his mind pulsed. Then, a blood-red Divine Character appeared in front of him. His little brother had left his mind! He didn't know if the others in the room could see this or not, but he could see it clearly. This situation was the same as his dreams.

"Huh?"

He blanked out slightly before his eyes lit up in excitement. The character "blood" had transformed into a bloody saber. He gripped the saber's handle and swung it at the incoming beasts.

Splurt!

The first beast was killed.

"Too weak..."

Chapter 94: What You Get Is Not Necessarily Yours To Keep (2)

At the exact moment the character absorbed something from the beast, Researcher Huang shivered before looking at Su Yu. He smiled, "Interesting. What Divine Character did this kid have? It is probably something with an absorption ability. He just absorbed a tiny bit of my willpower..."

He was the one who had activated the bone scroll with his willpower. A tiny bit of his willpower had vanished when encountering Su Yu. For him, that amount of willpower was negligible, but he could still feel it.

He instantly reached a conclusion that Su Yu's Divine Character had an absorption ability and had devoured some of his willpower.

At the same time, he noticed that a fearful expression had appeared on Wu Lan's face. His eyes flickered in thought before he transmitted his voice to her,

"These are fake. Wu Lan, Su Yu is already ahead of you. Are you going to embarrass yourself and place second?"

Bureau Head Sun glared at Researcher Huang.

Researcher Huang smiled, "I'm trying to provoke their competitive streak. It will be good to help them last longer. This is only a test. If they're afraid of even something like this, I'm worried about their future."

Bureau Head Sun coldly said, "A proctor is not allowed to get involved in the examination. Huang Sheng, I warned you before. The Talent Fostering Bureau will propose to the academy to cut your salary for three years as punishment. If you repeat your offense, I will propose to have you sent to the Devil Subduing Army's vanguard for three years instead."

Researcher Huang's face turned stiff. He bitterly said, "Head Sun, I...only spoke a single sentence to her..."

"Keep arguing and I'll make a report immediately and remove your position as an assistant researcher."

Huang Sheng no longer dared to say anything. He helplessly shut his mouth.

Liu Hong, you will need to compensate me for this! I lost a lot for you!

He wouldn't dare to actually practice fraud or suppress Su Yu. After all, he wasn't the sole proctor here. He had only given Wu Lan a tiny reminder. This youngster from the Wu Family had formed a Divine Character. She should have performed better.

He was only igniting her competitive streak. Strictly speaking, that couldn't even be considered fraud. Wu Lan would still need to rely on her own ability to walk further. Nevertheless, it was still taboo for a proctor to get involved in any way. If he had been standing among the students when he did that, Bureau Head Sun would have arrested him on the spot.

Wu Lan had walked about 15 meters initially, gaining 150 marks. Coupled with her previous marks, she now had 805 marks in total, just enough to gain a high-high evaluation. She was already a high-middle student before this. With her improvement, she was confident she could get a high-high evaluation in this examination. And she had proved her ability with her results thus far.

However, she had barely reached the score for a high-high evaluation. She was still inferior to some of the freaks in the capital. Despite this, as a high-high student, she was already among the best of the best.

Huang Sheng's words seemed to have worked. Wu Lan was visibly disturbed when she realized that she was going to fall behind Su Yu.

Impossible!

She shut her eyes and started waving her hands around. Nobody knew what she was doing in the illusion, but she looked like she was fighting something. In the blink of an eye, she walked two extra meters.

Bureau Head Sun looked at Huang Sheng again, his eyes frosty. She had gained 20 extra marks from the little advice of Huang Sheng. In fact, she was already on the verge of giving up earlier. Huang Sheng quickly looked away. He had already lost three years worth of salary from his advice. Why was his senior brother still glaring at him? That was too excessive!

To the side, the old man from the Nine Heavens Cultural Research Academy merely smiled silently. He was not interested in Wu Lan. She was someone who would definitely enter the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy. Su Yu was the one who had caught his eye.

At that point, Su Yu had walked 10 meters, surpassing Zhou Tianqi who was only about a step behind Su Yu. Most of the other students were starting to reach their limit. One after another, they were brought out by the proctors.

When Liu Yue woke up, she saw that she had walked three meters. And when she noticed that only Su Yu and a few others were left, she could only sigh enviously.

She had known Su Yu for a long time. Prior to this, although Su Yu was also a remarkable student, he was only the number two student in Nanyuan Secondary School. She was the number one student.

But in this examination, she had gained 240 marks in the language test, 63 marks for her cultivation, and 30 marks for the third test for a total of 333 marks. She had enough to gain a middle-grade evaluation, but her result was far worse than Su Yu's. magic

She didn't even have any bonus marks from merit points. As a fourth-stage Source Opening cultivator, there were no avenues for her to earn merit points in Nanyuan. With over 300 marks and a middle-tier evaluation, she was already one of the best if she was only compared against the previous batches of Nanyuan students.

In the past, Nanyuan would only produce one middle-tier student every few years. This year, Su Yu appeared. Even without his marks from this test, he was already a high-tier student. The gap between them was growing wider and wider. Liu Yue felt disheartened. She did not stay around and left with complicated emotions.

...

"Garbage..."

Su Yu scolded. He was panting heavily while the bloody saber in his hand had transformed back into the character "blood". His little brother gave off the feeling that it was totally exhausted. It was even demanding to go back and rest. It had evidently reached its limit.

Su Yu didn't know how far he had walked. He couldn't see any students around him. But he knew that he had definitely not walked as far as Wu Lan. That idiot might have formed a complete Divine Character. As a Mental Tempering Stage student, she had definitely walked further than him.

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"Looks like it's time to put little bro 'thunder' to use."

Looking at the endless beasts before him, he felt somewhat helpless. These beasts weren't dangerous, but with them in the way, he couldn't advance. He had exhausted quite a lot of willpower. At this rate, he wouldn't be able to last much longer.

"Come out!"

The character "lightning" appeared.

Rumble!

His second little brother started bombarding the beasts with lightning, blasting them apart and instantly clearing a path for him. Su Yu was overjoyed. This little brother was much more reliable than his first little brother. Unfortunately, it also demanded a lot more willpower in comparison.

Su Yu could feel that he was going to run out of willpower soon. But he could still persevere. These Divine Characters had been nurtured in his sea of willpower and had their own personal willpower as well. He hadn't even used the character's personal willpower yet.

At the exact moment he utilized his second Divine Character, all the proctors focused on him.

"He advanced three meters instantly..."

Su Yu had already walked 15 meters. He was going to catch up with Wu Lan soon.

Bureau Head Sun's expression changed as he asked, "Did any of you sense anything? Is that the second ability of the same Divine Character or a second Divine Character?"

Su Yu couldn't see what was happening out there. He was still trapped inside the illusory world. The proctors couldn't see his Divine Characters, but they could sense different abilities being used. So which was it?

Someone with Su Yu's willpower should reach his limit at 10 meters. He was still inferior to the students who had reached the Mental Tempering Stage. But now, he was actually on the verge of catching up to Wu Lan.

Huang Sheng was unsure. He shook his head and said, "How did Bai Feng find a gem like this?"

This was Nanyuan!

He was almost impressed at Bai Feng for being able to find a gem at a place like this. Great Xia was a large prefecture with a massive population. Meanwhile, Nanyuan was merely a tiny city in the prefecture. Just how lucky was Bai Feng to be able to find a hidden gem here?

Bureau Head Sun said, "Who says he's Bai Feng's? He will belong to whoever manages to recruit him."

"..."

Huang Sheng blanked out before asking, "Head Sun, are you going to steal this student?"

"Not me, but I have a lot of junior and senior brothers who are still at the academy. Even my teacher is still there."

Head Sun said, "Is this student Bai Feng's just because he found the kid first? Says who? Is his name stamped on Su Yu's face?"

Huang Sheng wanted to laugh, but he stopped himself. This was Bai Feng's business. It had nothing to do with him. He had never considered accepting Su Yu as his own student. He would have no chance of accepting a high-high student anyway. Only someone like Bai Feng who was a young genius in the academy could do so. Furthermore, Bai Feng also had a powerful teacher.

No other assistant researcher would have the ability to recruit high-tier students. Those students wouldn't pick these people as their teachers either. They might only consider it if the teacher in question was family.

Chapter 95: Everyone Has Their Own Choice (1)

The moment the lightning character appeared, it killed everything in its path and filled the world with destructive lightning. This Divine Character seemed to only have a single ability: to blast someone to death.

It was a fully offensive Divine Character and a very straightforward character to use. When Su Yu subdued it, he had been electrocuted badly. This was his first time using it in battle and it was indeed satisfying to use.

Su Yu's willpower was still weak and the lightning character was still new. Given enough time, this would be an extremely powerful offensive Divine Character.

"The willpower exhaustion is too high..."

Su Yu muttered to himself. He suddenly had an idea. If he could make the blood character transform into a saber and the lightning character meld with the saber, how would his Lightning Source Blade look like?

Looking at the endless beasts before him, he felt like he was going to reach his limit soon.

"Should I give it a try?"

His mind was starting to feel heavy due to his high willpower exhaustion. If this continued, he would fail soon. In that case, he might as well try his new idea. The blood character reappeared and transformed into a bloody saber.

Under Su Yu's control, the lightning character tried entering the saber. But the two characters rejected each other.

The blood character refused to let the lightning character in while the lightning character didn't seem too enthusiastic about melding with the other character either. This reaction was similar to the situation in Su Yu's mind where they each occupied their own territory and stayed away from each other.

"Be a good boy. Come on, don't make me whoop your ass."

Su Yu threatened his two little brothers, persuading them to work together. The two characters were already at their limits. If they didn't cooperate, how could they go further? How was he supposed to place first?

"Only by placing first and earning 20 merit points will I be able to buy some good stuff for you two. Both of you are so expensive to raise. If you don't help me make money, just wait to be starved and dispersed into nothingness."

Su Yu constantly threatened them. Either they fuse immediately or he would beat them up immediately. The two Divine Characters were still repelling each other, but after sensing their master's intentions, they started slowly fusing together.

Su Yu was still unaware that the fusion of Divine Characters wasn't something he could actually control. Even in the cultural research academies, Divine Character fusion was an extremely difficult subject. Furthermore, students were not the main crowd taking this subject. Generally, only those at the Skysoar Realm and above would attempt Divine Character fusion.

The path of cultural researchers had been growing for many years. Old and inefficient methods were constantly eliminated while new and better methods were constantly being discovered. The cultivation of Divine Characters was an important aspect of cultural research cultivation. Thus, this was a heavily studied subject.

Divine Character fusions generally involved only characters with similar properties. But the blood and lightning characters did not have any similarity with each other. It was perfectly understandable for this fusion to fail. And the moment a fusion failed, the destruction of the Divine Character was the least serious consequence for the cultivator. In a worst case scenario, the cultivator might even suffer a backlash to their sea of willpower.

Su Yu was unaware of all that. Neither Liu Wenyan or Bai Feng had expected that he would attempt something like this so early. His mastery in Divine Characters had been growing too fast. He had grown much more proficient at using his Divine Characters during the past two months.

Liu Wenyan and Bai Feng had never imagined that Su Yu would suddenly think of having his Divine Characters fuse and assist him in combat. This was merely a world created by the bone scroll. In truth, before reaching the Skysoar Realm, a cultivator would not be able to draw their Divine Characters out of their mind. And without doing so, there was no possibility of fusion.

But this unique environment had given Su Yu such an opportunity. In this environment, he was not truly drawing his Divine Characters out. Rather, he was projecting them out. The fusion was also happening between the projections.

This was a complicated subject and Su Yu still knew nothing about it. Nobody knew what he was doing. Even Bureau Head Sun and the other proctors were unable to see what he was doing in the illusory world.

...

The blood saber and lightning was finally done fusing. Su Yu prepared to clear a path forward. In the examination room, only he and Wu Lan were left. Wu Lan had stopped after walking around 18 meters. She couldn't advance, but she stubbornly refused to stop. Even though she was already sweating heavily from the exertion, she did not ask for help.

After using his lightning character, Su Yu was already less than a meter behind Wu Lan. Huang Sheng looked at Bureau Head Sun and asked, "Do we get Wu Lan to stop?"

"What's the rush?" Bureau Head Sun was calm. "She is at the Mental Tempering Stage with a complete Divine Character. She can walk a few more meters. The only reason she has stopped is due to fear. This is her first time

experiencing something like this so her willpower exhaustion rate is too high. Stopping there for a bit won't hurt her."

Wu Lan's foundation was strong. She only lacked experience. Or to be more accurate, she had no experience whatsoever. The Wu Family did not allow their cultural researcher trainees to take any risks for practical experience. Unlike Wu Lan, her elder sister, Wu Qi, was a true expert who was strong enough to suppress even someone like Bai Feng.

The Wu Family was a firm believer that a weak student should not take any risks before reaching the Skysoar Realm. That was also the mainstream belief among the various cultural researchers. Thus, Wu Lan's merit points had only been earned through administrative works such as translations and so on. She had not participated in any missions before.

Su Yu, as a commoner, was completely different from them. Commoners would start taking risks and getting practical experience early on in their path of cultivation. That was the only way they could keep growing. Huang Sheng did not object to what Bureau Head Sun said.

He looked at Su Yu and shook his head, "He won't be able to keep going anymore. But it's already very surprising for him to walk 17 meters. Despite having a complete Divine Character, he is being held back by his willpower. Otherwise, with his tenacity, he can walk even 20 meters here."

There might be a secret deal between Huang Sheng and Liu Hong, but he couldn't deny that Su Yu was extremely outstanding. Growing up in a place like Nanyuan, it was impressive for him to come this far. There was only so much help Liu Wenyan could give him. After all, the growth of a cultivator did not rely on resources alone. Other aspects were important as well.

Bureau Head Sun looked at Huang Sheng and smiled, "Do you think he will be the next Bai Feng after entering the academy?"

.

"Bai Feng?" Huang Sheng hesitated. "Su Yu is outstanding, but Bai Feng was one of the freaks of his batch. If it wasn't for the suppression of those from the Wu and Xia Families and the fact that he had been too focused on Senior Hong's research, he might have caught up to those people already by now. Su Yu...is still a tad bit too lacking compared to him, right?"

Huang Sheng changed the topic, "How is Senior Hong's research going? Do you know anything about that, Bureau Head Sun?"

"What a joke. I'm not even in the academy. You are the one who is a researcher in the academy. Why are you asking me?"

Bureau Head Sun couldn't be bothered to entertain that question and returned his focus to Su Yu. At present, Su Yu's face was flushed red while beads of sweat were raining down his face. However, he seemed incapable of feeling his exhaustion as there was a look of excitement on his face, as though he had just achieved a major goal.

"Su Yu should stop soon. He's reaching his limit."

Bureau Head Sun reached a decision. Su Yu was reaching his limit. If he continued, he would only harm himself. Bureau Head Sun wanted to see Su Yu place first and smash the monopoly of power enjoyed by the elites, but it wasn't worth harming an outstanding student for that. He was just about to have someone escort Su Yu out when the bone scroll shook.

The expression of Huang Sheng, who was powering the bone scroll, changed as he said, "What is that kid doing?"

All the proctors focused on Su Yu. Next, a faint golden glow appeared above Su Yu's head. Bureau Head Sun's expression changed as well. Did something happen? What was going on? This was the first time he had ever encountered a situation like this.

Golden light was actually shining from the head of a Source Opening student. The golden light was a symbol of a powerful willpower. Generally, it would only appear on those who had achieved willpower materialization. The same golden light had appeared when Liu Wenyan achieved willpower materialization. Su Yu's glow was much dimmer, but its appearance signified that Su Yu was actually releasing the little willpower he had, forcing it to materialize in advance.

"This is bad!"

Bureau Head Sun was alarmed. A term appeared in his mind: the final radiance!

Did this kid push himself too far to the point where he was erupting with the final radiance of his life before his sea of willpower collapsed? But this had never happened to a Source Opening cultivator before. Bureau Head Sun was about to escort Su Yu out when a faint golden light erupted from Su Yu's hand. His hand was raised before it swung down.

"Divine Character...he's using his Divine Character!"

The proctors immediately reached the conclusion that Su Yu had transformed his Divine Character into a weapon to withstand the willpower suppression.

"Do we stop him?"

Bureau Head Sun and Huang Sheng exchanged gazes in hesitation. Should they stop him? He was clearly mustering his final bit of strength for the test. It would be unfair if they stopped him now. But if they didn't, what if this kid ended up harming himself?"

"Liu Wenyan, Bai Feng, Senior Hong..."

Several names appeared in their minds. Their expressions turned gloomy. This was a hard decision to make. Then again, there was no longer any need for them to hesitate. Su Yu was already mid-swing. It was too late to stop him. Next, a loud rumble rang out in the room.

Crack! magic

The desk in front of the room broke apart while Huang Sheng staggered from a sudden drain of his willpower. He nearly fell to the ground as he had been caught by a complete surprise.

...

In Su Yu's eyes, he was using both his blood and lightning characters together to unleash the Lightning Source Blade. That one attack obliterated all the beasts ahead of him.

Bang!

The saber in his hand cracked before disintegrating into nothingness. The two Divine Characters returned inside his mind. Both were looking exceptionally dim. He had used a large amount of willpower for that one strike. His head

was tortured by intense pain, as though it was going to split apart. However, he did not forget to keep walking forward.

Keep...walking forward. Huh? The pressure is gone? The pressure is gone after the beasts are killed?

Su Yu was flabbergasted. He continued walking forward, and after a short while, several illusory figures appeared before his eyes. He shook his head in confusion. In front of him, Bureau Head Sun and the other proctors were looking at him with odd gazes.

The desk with the bone scroll on it had collapsed while the bone scroll was being held in Huang Sheng's hand. The glow emitted by the scroll was much dimmer than before.

Huang Sheng's heart ached as he realized that he was in trouble. Excluding his own willpower exhaustion, the Mark of Culture's willpower had also suffered a great exhaustion. If the exhaustion was excessive enough to destroy the Mark of Culture, he would be the one taking the blame.

This was an inheritance left by a deceased cultural researcher. Generally, only those in the Mountainsea Realm could leave something like this behind. This was their sole inheritance. If it was destroyed, he would never be able to pay for the loss.

Behind Su Yu, Wu Lan finally opened her eyes. The first person she saw was Su Yu, and when she checked the distance between them...it was no less than 20 meters. Her expression changed.

Impossible!

The gap shouldn't be that big! No matter how much of a genius Su Yu was, he shouldn't have been able to move so far ahead of her. That wasn't possible. She was in disbelief. She was dumbstruck. Her eyes turned red. She was going to...cry. She had never felt so aggrieved before. She was so sad. So very sad.

Her face was twisted as she resisted the urge to cry. She wouldn't allow that to happen as she would only embarrass herself further. But she really felt like crying.

...

Meanwhile, none of the proctors were in the mood to pay her any attention.

Bureau Head Sun raised his brow and looked at Su Yu before frowning, "Ridiculous!"

Su Yu was still confused.

"You were too rash!"

Bureau Head Sun was still frowning. He was both astonished and angry.

"Have you forgotten everything we told you before? You almost ruined your future for a single test. This is something only a brainless brute will do. I praised your intelligence before, but it seems like you're only a tiny bit clever, but you have no wisdom whatsoever."

Bureau Head Sun was furious. Su Yu's current condition was clearly caused by excessive exhaustion of willpower. If things had been more serious, he might have ended up fully draining his sea of willpower. He was risking his future for a worthless first place. This was a question of choice, and Su Yu's choice had infuriated him.

Su Yu was slowly regaining his clarity. When he opened his eyes and looked at the proctors before him, he saw that Bureau Head Sun was furious, Huang Sheng had an expression of regret, while the old man from the Nine Heavens Cultural Research Academy was pulling his beard hard in disbelief.

After a while, Bureau Head Sun asked, "How are you feeling? Is your sea of willpower fine?"

Su Yu's head was still hurting, but when he sent his senses inward, he saw that his two little brothers were in slumber. They were calm while his sea of willpower appeared fine. The golden book was still floating in his sea of willpower. Su Yu was confident that with the book there, he would be fine.

He shook his head, but that action only caused his head to hurt more. He hurriedly answered, "I'm fine. I think my Divine Character was too tired. I need to spend some time nourishing it."

"Good." Bureau Head Sun heaved a breath of relief before he sternly asked, "What did you do earlier?"

"Nothing..."

Su Yu wanted to deny that he had done anything. It wasn't that he wanted to hide the fact that he had two Divine Characters. But Huang Sheng had a look of heartache while he gently stroked the bone scroll. It was as though something dear to him had been broken. Su Yu was afraid that Huang Sheng would tell him to pay for the damage. He definitely wouldn't be able to afford it.

Su Yu nervously said, "D-did the Divine Character used for the test broke? Can it be repaired?"

"..."

The question was so ridiculous that Bureau Head Sun wanted to both rage and laugh. He stopped himself from rolling his eyes and said, "It's fine. It has merely exhausted its willpower too much. This Divine Character is prepared for Source Opening students like you. What did you do just now? Because of you, the Divine Character over exhausted itself. It will recover after some rest."

Su Yu heaved a breath of relief to hear that.

Huang Sheng finally stopped stroking the bone scroll. He looked up at Su Yu and helplessly said, "How did you do that? Your willpower eruption earlier was stronger than even someone in the Mental Tempering Stage. Nanyuan is only a small city. This scroll isn't a powerful one. It shouldn't have any trouble testing Mental Tempering Stage students..."

He really didn't know what to say anymore. He was going to be fined for the damage. Sure, if he could explain things clearly, he might be able to avoid the fine. But how was he supposed to explain it? Nobody would believe him.

They would only conclude that he had tried to save his own willpower and ended up damaging the scroll. Before coming to Nanyuan, he was already told the rules. Excessive exhaustion to the scroll would result in a fine. Huang Sheng looked at Bureau Head Sun, hoping that his senior brother would serve as the witness for him. He had clearly not held back when activating the scroll.

However, Bureau Head Sun didn't even pay Huang Sheng any attention. He wasn't the one who was going to be fined. Why should he get involved in that mess? Was he supposed to go to the academy and face those old fellows?

No way! As for having the old man from the Nine Heavens Cultural Research Academy serve as a witness, Huang Sheng could forget about it.

Bureau Head Sun ignored Huang Sheng and repeated his question, "Su Yu, what did you do earlier?"

Su Yu hesitated. When Bureau Head Sun saw that, he asked, "Is this your trump card? I'll be frank. What you did there won't be able to pose any threat to a Skysoar or even an Infinite Strength cultivator. I am only worried that you will rashly do that again. An accident can happen very easily."

He was telling the truth. The trump card of a Source Opening cultivator would pose no threat to someone like him.

Su Yu thought about it and said, "It's the Lightning Source Blade. I fused my Divine Character into my blade before using the Lightning Source Blade. I only used it once and this happened."

"Lightning Source Blade? Second move?"

If that was the case, then it would be understandable. But this kid was only a ninth-stage Source Opening cultivator. If he had actually mastered the second move at this stage, he would be a super genius in physical cultivation.

"No, the first move."

"Impossible."

Bureau Head Sun shook his head. The first move combined with Su Yu's willpower and Divine Character wouldn't be able to create a damage that big.

Su Yu scratched his head before finally saying, "I didn't use one Divine Character. I used two."

With a clueless expression, he continued his explanation, "I didn't know that would happen. I have two Divine Characters. One transformed into a saber while the other fused with the saber to give it a lightning element. And then that happened..."

"Huh?"

Six eyes widened. Three people were looking at him with six glowing, big eyes. Their eyes were glowing with a golden light.

As Skysoar experts who had achieved willpower materialization, when they stopped intentionally suppressing their willpower, their eyes started glowing. Su Yu felt his scalp going numb while all his limbs turned limp. This sensation was too scary. A moment later, the six glowing eyes returned to normal.

Chapter 96: Everyone Has Their Own Choice (2)

Numerous thoughts surfaced in the mind of the old man from the Nine Heavens Cultural Research Academy who had been indifferent previously. Before the other two could speak, he said, "Join the Nine Heavens Cultural Research Academy. You will get a Mountainsea expert as your teacher, 500 merit points, 100 drops of source qi liquid, and 3 chances to enter a secret grotto. Our principal is an expert in Divine Character cultivation. In fact, he is one of the pioneers of Divine Character cultivation in the Human Realm.

"Nobody has ever been given such an offer in the Nine Heavens Cultural Research Academy before. Just look at Huang Sheng. The Great Xia Cultural Research Academy does not lack top talents. If they are able to give you such an offer as well, I definitely won't stop you from joining them."

Huang Sheng blanked out slightly before his face turned awkward. The old man was right. That wasn't an offer the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy could match. Since they had no lack of geniuses, they wouldn't be willing to spend too much resources on geniuses who had yet to even materialize their willpower.

They were better off spreading their resources thinner to train more talented students instead of focusing their resources on the few genius students. True geniuses would usually be willing to join the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy even without being offered anything. That was why the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy was confident enough to not spend too much recruiting.

Bureau Head Sun did not say anything either. Clearly, the old man was right. After a while, Bureau Head Sun said, "Su Yu, the fusion of Divine Characters is not something you should try at this stage.

"Liu Wenyan and Bai Feng might not have taught you this before. Today, I'll let you know that this is extremely dangerous. This time, you're within some sort of willpower domain during your attempt. Therefore, you were fine. If you had attempted it anywhere else, you would have killed yourself.

"You can learn more about Divine Character fusions in the academy. You can pick some courses offered by researchers specializing in Divine Character fusions. That will be very helpful to you."

Bureau Head Sun frowned and continued, "After that exhaustion, you might need a long rest to fully recover your willpower. Your Divine Characters will also need a lot of time and resources to make full recovery. You were too rash."

"Also, since you have two completed Divine Characters...when did you start learning about Divine Characters?"

Su Yu lied with a flat face, "It has been a few years. Instructor Liu started teaching me a few years ago. But I wasn't able to form any back then. After studying about five willpower texts, I managed to form two Divine Characters."

"A few years?" Bureau Head Sun heaved a breath of relief. "Does Liu Wenyan have so many willpower texts?"

Su Yu shook his head, "I don't know. But he did give me those texts."

"That old fellow..." Bureau Head Sun coughed before saying with a laugh, "He better keep those stuff hidden well. Otherwise, the capital will come knocking to collect what he owes them."

To the side, Huang Sheng was speechless as well. So Liu Wenyan still had some willpower texts hidden? That old man was truly a patient one. He had been wailing to the capital about his poverty year after year, claiming that he didn't even have the money to pay for his meals. But it turned out that he still had extra willpower texts lying around.

But after thinking about it, Huang Sheng decided to not say anything. Liu Wenyan's junior brother was an old senior researcher in the academy. For people like him, willpower texts were nothing. Furthermore, there were also rumors in the academy that Liu Wenyan was quite popular with the ladies back then.

Maybe he was now living off a woman. That was always possible. Cough, cough. Even if that was really happening, nobody would dare to say anything as both Liu Wenyan and the woman he was supposedly living off from were no ordinary individuals.

The woman in question was absolutely someone nobody could afford to provoke. Huang Sheng decided to stay silent and pretend he knew nothing. He definitely didn't dare to get involved in this. But was Su Yu a sign to the academy that Liu Wenyan wanted to return?

"Two Divine Characters..."

While the proctors were deep in thought, Su Yu couldn't help but to ask, "Teachers...so...what is my score for this test?" magic

The proctors looked at each other in dismay.

After a while, Bureau Head Sun spoke with some hesitation, "That was our mistake. If we had known this would happen, we wouldn't have used this scroll. If we used the standards of the capital, that final outburst of yours is enough to let you walk 10 more meters forward."

Huang Sheng nodded, "The scroll used in the capital is much more powerful than the one we used here. Therefore, 10 meters on top of your original 17 meters will give you a total length of 27 meters."

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They could only estimate the score. Bureau Head Sun looked at Su Yu and said, "It was our fault for letting you reach us. We can even give you a result of 50 meters since the responsibility is on us, not you. The academy and the capital will punish us, not you."

"However...if you are actually given a result of 50 meters, some of the freaks in the capital will set their eyes on you."

Bureau Head Sun solemnly advised, "It is almost impossible for a student to walk until the end of the room during this test. Without the actual strength to do so, receiving the glory of the feat will only bring you trouble. You won't benefit from it."

"All cultural researchers pride themselves on being intelligent. I give you two choices. First, a result of 50 meters. Second, follow the capital's standards and get a result of 27 meters for 270 marks."

"The first choice will give you a total score of 1,127 marks. The second choice will give you a total score of 897 marks."

With a stern face, Bureau Head Sun said, "897 marks will give you a high-high evaluation. As for 1,127 marks, that will put you on the same level of those freaks in the capital. You will be put under a spotlight. Everyone will focus on you, and numerous challenges will come your way. If you want to stay under the spotlight, you need to be ready for all that."

Bureau Head Sun let out a long breath and said, "Are you ready to take on all that? As freaks, some of them are only a step away from the Skysoar Realm. That genius from the Great Zhou who had achieved willpower materialization after half a year in an academy was an example of a freak."

"In the capital, Wu Lan's elder sister, Bai Feng, and Xia Yuwen were considered freaks as well. Bai Feng is the weakest among them. In fact, he is starting to lag behind."

"Wu Lan's sister, Wu Qi, joined the academy at 18, reached the Skysoar Realm at 20, reached the fourth-stage Skysoar Realm at 22, seventh-stage at 25, and now, at 26, she is at the eighth-stage."

"She will be able to reach the Cloudbreach Realm before 30. She might even be able to do so as soon as next year or the year after."

Bureau Head Sun solemnly said, "Since this was our mistake, you can make a choice. We won't make you retake the test."

Su Yu considered and asked, "Teacher, will there be a difference in treatment between the two after joining an academy?"

"Not really. Freaks like them have long been accepted as someone's personal student. As for the basic benefits of the academy, these freaks don't even need them."

Bureau Head Sun smiled and continued, "Take you for an example. If you decide to join the Nine Heavens Cultural Research Academy, with so many benefits, will you still care about the little merit points they will give you every month?"

"Of course, there is still a difference in treatment. A high-high student can get three merit points per month while a freak can get five merit points per month."

Su Yu muttered, "In that case, I'll lose 24 merit points per year and 120 merit points after five years. And I haven't even taken all the other different benefits into consideration..."

Bureau Head Sun merely smiled without saying anything else.

Su Yu asked, "Teacher, if you guys are punished for this, how much will you be fined?"

Bureau Head Sun raised his brow and said, "At least 100 merit points. We need to kill a Skysoar cultivator to earn that many points."

They naturally needed to bear the responsibility for their mistake. Killing a Skysoar enemy would be about enough to make out for their mistake.

Su Yu scratched his head, "Teacher, that is not good at all! You guys are going to get fined for nothing! How about...uhm...you see...each of you pay me 20 merit points and we pretend this entire thing didn't happen..."

"..."

The proctors looked at Su Yu with odd gazes.

Good one, kid. Are you trying to negotiate with us?

Bureau Head Sun found it funny. He asked, "Don't you want to be a freak? The entire capital will know your name."

Su Yu had an innocent expression as he said, "But I'm not one. If I'm one, I'll definitely admit to it. But since I'm not, there's no point. I'll take what I want with my own strength when I have the strength."

"At that time, freak or not, it no longer matters. If I'm stronger, if I can beat him until he cries, will people still think that I'm not a freak? For now, I'm afraid that I'll be the one getting beaten until I cry. If they come looking for trouble everyday, how am I supposed to cultivate?"

Su Yu sighed, "You're right. I still can't withstand such pressure for now. There is no need to do that. Apart from some empty fame, I won't get anything else apart from a whole lot of trouble. Why trouble myself that way?"

Bureau Head Sun smiled, "It is a type of talent to be able to understand yourself clearly. However, forget about this trade. We can afford 100 merit

points. We won't deny that we have been careless. Luckily, this is not the battlefield. A mistake on the battlefield could very well result in the total defeat of an army.

"We will take the fine as a lesson for ourselves, reminding ourselves that we shouldn't take anyone lightly in the future."

Bureau Head Sun stopped smiling and solemnly continued, "This time, I didn't do my work properly and had not applied for a stronger Mark of Culture for this test as backup. That is my responsibility to bear. Forget about getting some merit points for free, kid."

"As for them..." Bureau Head Sun looked at the other two proctors. Huang Sheng hurriedly said, "I'll follow your lead, Bureau Head Sun."

"Good. There is no need to run from our responsibility. It isn't like we'll get executed for this mistake. You can get your points back by killing a Skysoar enemy."

Bureau Head Sun looked at Su Yu again and said, "You're very smart. Of course, for me, this is merely a low level of intelligence. There is no great wisdom in you."

"Of course, not even I would dare to claim that I am a person of great wisdom. Even with a low level of intelligence, that will be enough for me to live longer and better than many people."

"This incident ends here. You will get your rewards and we will accept our punishment. Apart from the standard rewards, you'll also get 20 merit points from Huang Sheng for placing first."

Su Yu was somewhat disappointed. He could feel that Huang Sheng and the old man were actually moved by the suggestion that they bury the incident with 20 merit points each. But the easygoing Bureau Head Sun was the one who had stopped them. Su Yu felt helpless. Just like that, 60 merit points were gone. Wait, if he included his previous loss, he would have lost 80 merit points in total. Because of that realization, he felt even worse.

...

Su Yu was merely sad, but behind her, Wu Lan's heart had basically been shattered. Everyone was ignoring her. With 655 marks and the newly acquired

180 marks, she was a high-high student with 835 marks in total. But even after standing there for so long, nobody even spared her a glance.

"I want to cry..."

She really wanted to cry. These people were too mean. None of them even bothered to comfort her.

Chapter 97: End of the Examination (1)

Outside the examination building. Both Su Yu and Wu Lan walked out with sad expressions. The students waiting outside were stunned. What was up with these two? Did both of them fail the test?

That wasn't right. These two had lasted until the very end. Some of these students remembered how these two had already walked very far ahead when they were eliminated from the test. Why did they look so sad?

Did Wu Lan place first? But why did she have such an expression? Did Su Yu place first? That didn't seem to be the case either. He was listless and pale with disappointment plastered all over his face. He looked like someone who had just lost hundreds of millions of dollars, not someone who had placed first in the examination.

All the students were confused. Zhou Tianqi, who was also waiting for the results, was confused as well. What was going on with those two? He had performed decently in the examination. After the three tests, he had obtained 470 marks in total. As for bonus marks from additional merit points, he didn't have any.

There were a lot of geniuses in the capital. Only those at the Mental Tempering Stage like Wu Lan would be able to get additional merit points. Zhou Tianqi was not at that level yet. And if he was actually at the Mental Tempering Stage, he wouldn't have taken the examination in Nanyuan.

With his score, he could get a middle-middle evaluation. Although he couldn't get a high-tier evaluation, a middle-tier evaluation was still pretty good. In fact, if he was lucky, he could have gotten a middle-high evaluation.

Generally, only those with complete Divine Characters could get a high-tier evaluation. His Divine Character was incomplete, so he was clearly not at that level yet.

Zhou Tianqi looked at the two in suspicion. He was the last student to leave before those two. When he left, the two were already very far ahead. But at that time, Su Yu was still behind Wu Lan. Logically, Wu Lan would be the one to place first.

But what was up with Wu Lan's expression? The crowd were getting uncomfortably curious, but they didn't know who to ask. Wu Lan had a bad temper while they didn't know Su Yu well. Very few of the students waiting outside were locals. Even Liu Yue was actually not that close to Su Yu, so it would be quite awkward for her to approach him and ask the question.

As the two ignored the crowd and continued walking away, one of the students couldn't hold back anymore and asked, "Su Yu, how did you do?"

That student did not dare to ask Wu Lan as she looked incredibly sad. From her expression, she looked like she would go crazy against anyone daring to talk to her. That was a terrifying prospect. In comparison, Su Yu looked much easier to approach.

"Not bad." Su Yu gave a short reply.

"Not bad?" That person was speechless. Su Yu was someone who was already a high-tier student even without the third test. And he said that his result was only "not bad"?

Su Yu did not say much. It wasn't like he would get more merit points if he talked to these students. In that case, why bother?

Someone else answered on his behalf. Wu Lan had finally recovered from her stupor. Looking at Su Yu, her face was filled with grief and indignation as she yelled, "Su Yu! I might have lost this time, but I will win next time! I'm returning to the capital. I'll be waiting for you at the academy!"

"..."

She then stomped away. She basically looked like someone who was stomping off in anger after being bullied. Su Yu told himself that he needed to get used to this. This idiot seemed to enjoy saying these words like someone with an eighth-grade syndrome. He only needed to get used to her.

On the other hand, all the other students were stunned. Su Yu won? That made zero sense! Previously, Wu Lan was still leading in total score. How did Su Yu surpass her? What happened after they left?

Zhou Tianqi's expression changed. Wu Lan was at the Mental Tempering Stage. She also had a complete Divine Character. But even someone like her had been defeated by Su Yu. What did that mean?

A completed Divine Character that was also extremely powerful. At the very least, it must be more powerful than Wu Lan's. Otherwise, Su Yu wouldn't have been able to win.

"Is this really the performance of someone with 20 percent willpower?"

Zhou Tianqi was having a hard time processing this. Someone with Su Yu's background could be considered a super genius even with only an incomplete Divine Character. How did he complete a Divine Character that was even more powerful than Wu Lan's?

And when he recalled Su Yu's threat earlier. His head started aching. He had a little bit of background, but his background was nothing before the academy. He had provoked a high-tier genius, or to be precise, a high-high genius before even joining the academy.

Wu Lan was most definitely a high-high student. Since Su Yu had won against Wu Lan, there was no doubt that he was a high-high student as well. How was he going to survive the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy after provoking a genius like this?

"Will he join the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy?"

Zhou Tianqi couldn't answer that question. But he had decided that if Su Yu was really joining the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy, he would be joining the Nine Heavens Cultural Research Academy instead. He would not stay in the same academy as this fellow. magic

In truth, he felt somewhat aggrieved. He hadn't even done anything much. He had only spoken a few words of praise toward Su Yu. He was even speaking the truth! He had merely chosen the wrong venue to say those words.

But Su Yu seemed like someone who would hold his grudge for a very long time. Zhou Tianqi cursed inwardly. How unlucky. What should he do now that he had attracted the hostility of so many people?

Bureau Head Sun, Su Yu, Wu Lan, the students who were in his group earlier, and even some people in his family. The more Zhou Tianqi thought about it, the more gloomy he felt. The entire thing felt incredibly unfair.

...

"Su Yu placed first?"

It was then that the students finally reacted to Wu Lan's words. All of them were in disbelief. Su Yu had won against Wu Lan, a genius from the capital? A miracle had appeared in Nanyuan! Su Yu was not in the mood to care about what these people think. He was very tired and he only wanted to go back and get a good sleep.

...

At the same time.

Great Xia Cultural Research Academy.

"Su Yu placed first? High-high evaluation?"

Bai Feng was dumbfounded when he received the news. What was going on?

He had been paying close attention to Su Yu.

A single Divine Character and a 20 percent full willpower. Someone like him wouldn't get more than 150 marks from the third test. If he could get 100 marks from his merit points, 200 marks from his language test, and probably 250 marks from his cultivation test, he would only get around 700 marks in total. The remaining 100 marks weren't so easy to obtain.

"How?"

Seated on his couch, Bai Feng sank into thought. He was not surprised that Su Yu could distinguish himself in the examination. In fact, his opinion on Su Yu would have dropped if Su Yu hadn't been able to stand out during the examination.

But now, Su Yu had exceeded his expectations, earning 100 more marks than he had expected. That was a complete surprise for him. Did he get extra marks from the cultivation test? He did place first in the war academy exam. It was either the cultivation test or the third test.

"But the third test is related to Divine Character and willpower..." Bai Feng's mouth twitched. "He couldn't have formed another Divine Character, right?"

He recalled how Su Yu had formed his first Divine Character from the first willpower text he saw. If he could do it once, could he do it twice?

"Did martial uncle show him another willpower text?"

Bai Feng was rather confident that his guess was correct. And the more he thought, the more troubled he felt. When he left Nanyuan, he had thought that Su Yu would focus on nourishing the single Divine Character he had formed. But now, it was very likely that Su Yu had already formed his second Divine Character. Was that good? Not necessarily.

"With too many Divine Characters, you might not be able to nurture them all. The burden might be too much for you to bear..."

Bai Feng frowned. Sure, he was pleasantly surprised to hear that Su Yu had formed two Divine Characters. But that might not be good for Su Yu.

"Martial Uncle is being too rash!"

If Liu Wenyan knew that Bai Feng was laying the blame on him, he would probably be complaining about injustice. He had given Su Yu a martial technique in the form of a willpower text, but he had not done so with the intention of letting this fellow form another Divine Character. This kid was the one who was too terrifying. He had actually formed a new Divine Character right after reading the willpower text. Liu Wenyan definitely couldn't be blamed here.

"But even with two Divine Characters to grow, that kid's willpower is still growing. That means two Divine Characters are still within his limit..."

Bai Feng was relieved. But his face sank again. High-high evaluation. Things would get troublesome! If he guessed correctly, Su Yu's information would have appeared before many researchers by now.

He took his communicator out and dialed a number. When he connected, he hurriedly said, "Spread news that Su Yu has only obtained a high-high evaluation due to my heartfelt efforts. Tell everyone that I gave dozens of willpower texts to him. Anyone trying to steal this student from me will have to compensate me for my expenses."

"..."

The other party sank into a short silence before saying, "Bai Feng, will anyone believe you?"

"I don't care. Just spread it." Bai Feng gloomily said, "I'm very surprised that the kid has managed to get a high-high evaluation as well. I did not expect him to reach the ninth-stage Source Opening Realm so fast. Neither have I expected him to get a high-high evaluation. The last time I saw him, even a high-tier evaluation was far from his reach. I was expecting a middle-high evaluation. That will be much less flashy than a high-tier evaluation. But now, my plan to grow a genius in secret is ruined."

He was feeling very gloomy.

"Did you instigate Teacher to leave because of this Su Yu?"

The person on the line asked suspiciously.

"Nonsense!" Bai Feng denied. "At that time, Su Yu was still an ordinary student. Why would I instigate Teacher to leave because of him? Stop wasting time. Go spread the news."

"You!" The other person helplessly said, "Su Yu has the right to choose whether he wants to follow you. Furthermore, it's not like you lack high-high students. If you want one, you can easily get one. What's the rush?"

Regular assistant researchers naturally didn't have the ability to do so. But Bai Feng was a genius assistant researcher. Things were different for him. He was a seventh-stage Skysoar cultivator in his twenties. In fact, his status was similar to an older intermediate researcher in the academy. The academy

placed even more importance on him than some regular Cloudbreach cultivators.

Chapter 98: End of the Examination (2)

Bai Feng grumbled, "That's a genius I found myself. Why must I give him to others?"

He was indeed the one who had discovered Su Yu. Without his willpower text, Liu Wenyan might not even bother writing a willpower text for Su Yu before the examination. After all, Su Yu's willpower was still quite weak.

Why should he give away a genius he had discovered himself? Furthermore, he had even incited his teacher to leave for this matter. It would be a great loss if he gave up now. Also, his good pal Liu Hong was still there waiting for him to work together. Su Yu was an integral part of their plan.

The person on the line couldn't be bothered to argue with Bai Feng. That person said, "Don't keep focusing on your student. You have a heavy mission on your shoulder. The academy might shut down the research center. But because of you, Teacher is not around to handle that! The research center has exhausted a lot of resources without any results for many years. You know how big of a loss we would suffer if the research center is shut.

"Teacher has put a lot of effort into the research center over the years. Almost all the resources available to our faction have been poured into it. Bai Feng, if the research center ends up shut, our future plans will be affected as well."

Bai Feng frowned, "There's an update from the higher ups?"

"Exactly. They are discussing it," the person sighed. "Teacher's reputation is worth a lot, but it has been so many years without any result. The academy has been allocating us funds every year, to the point where the resources meant for other projects have been used on us as well. The principal intends to stop our research for now..."

"Stop?" Bai Feng's face was unsightly. "How are we supposed to stop? We have paid a large price to reach this far. If we stop now, all our previous work would have been for nothing!"

"There's nothing we can do. Unless the research center shows a result immediately and convinces the higher ups, it's hard to change their mind."

"We can't." Bai Feng said, "We still don't have a result yet. There is nothing to show."

"The moment the higher ups pass the motion to shut the research center, we will have to hand up all our data. The research center might be assigned to other researchers instead..."

"That is unacceptable." Bai Feng was furious. "If they do that, all our hard work and Teacher's decades worth of effort will go to waste."

"That's why I said that you shouldn't focus on the student. Instead, you should focus on preserving the research center," said the other person with a sigh. "Pay more attention. Stop getting distracted by minor affairs."

"If you can't solve it, go look for Wu Qi or Xia Yuwen. See if you can get any support. At the very least, you can get some votes in the Heart Cultivating Pavilion."

Bai Feng sullenly said, "I can't. Those fellows don't have a good relationship with me."

"Geniuses place a lot of importance on each other, right? I believe in you. If you really have no choice...just use seduction on Wu Qi. Maybe it will work..."

"Are you looking for a beating?" Bai Feng rolled his eyes. He sighed and said, "It won't work. Wu Qi is strict and does not seem to have any hobbies. Seduction won't work on her. You can try if you want, but I promise you it won't work. Maybe...you can go to the Heart Cultivating Pavilion and seduce an elder instead?"

"Scram!"

After messing with each other for a bit, Bai Feng decided to return to the topic and sternly said, "Alright, let's get down to business. I'll try to persuade a few pavilion elders. Teacher is not around, but we can't stop the project. Otherwise, Teacher will kill me when he returns." magic

"Put more effort into it."

"I know," Bai Feng said. "Do you think we should get Martial Uncle to help? Although he had left for many years, he still has his network in the academy."

"That can only remain the last resort," the other person replied. "Things like network will only weaken the more you use it. That network is part of the reason Martial Uncle has been able to stay peacefully in Nanyuan for so many years. People are still wary of his network.

"If he uses his network for this, he will have trouble solving the next issue he encounters. Also, Martial Uncle has detached himself from the academy for so many years. It won't benefit him to get involved in this."

Bai Feng nodded. He asked resentfully, "Did the principal say nothing? Is he the one pushing for this or is it someone else?"

"I'm not sure."

"How hard is it to be sure?" Bai Feng complained. "The principal is most likely the culprit."

"That's not necessarily true. We haven't been able to submit any results for so many years. The principal could have shut down our project long ago but he didn't. I don't think it's him."

Bai Feng did not argue. At this point, it no longer mattered. He needed to visit the Heart Cultivating Pavilion and solve this issue. Otherwise, things would be very troublesome if the project was shut. After ending the call, he sank into thought.

He then called a different number. When it was connected, he said, "Try your best to veto the proposal to shut down our research center."

Liu Hong's voice rang out, "Are you really treating me like your underling now?"

"Cut the crap. If you don't help me, our plan will fail the moment the research center is shut. Your backers will take the chance to eat all of us up. And with our defeat, can you keep fishing for benefits from them?"

"Do you know what mutual profit is? Without us keeping them busy, as a mere sixth-stage Skysoar cultivator, you won't even be qualified to participate in these games."

"I—" Liu Hong felt like he had made an extremely wrong choice somewhere.

He helplessly said, "Bai Feng, even if that's the case, you're the one begging me for help, not the other way around. Why are you talking with such a cocky tone?"

"The result will be the same either way. I might as well be cocky."

After the arrogant declaration, Bai Feng smiled and said, "We're partners. That's just a joke. Don't take it seriously. Old Liu, you don't want to be stuck, right? With that little salary of yours, you will have no chance to step into the Cloudbreach Realm. Don't tell me you're planning to go to the Allheaven Battlefield instead?"

"..."

Liu Hong could only agree, "Fine. I can help you. But the moment your project is done, I want a share in the profits."

"No problem."

"Your promise means nothing. I'll wait for Senior Hong to return and talk to him myself. He cares a lot more about his reputation than you. He will agree...unless he is as shameless as you."

Bai Feng snorted disdainfully, "Is my teacher such a person? A little villain like you always thinks that everyone thinks like you."

"Bye." Liu Hong couldn't be bothered to argue and ended the call.

Bai Feng rubbed his chin and smiled, "You're getting a share of the profits...but you didn't mention the size of your share. Heh, I'll just give you a tiny share."

"But Liu Hong alone is still not enough..." Bai Feng looked outside the window as he contemplated. He still needed more help.

"I'll deal with Su Yu's matter after he joins."

He wanted to visit Nanyuan, but it looked like he wouldn't have the time to do so. The new semester was only a month away, so he didn't have to wait long for Su Yu to arrive.

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Nanyuan.

News was starting to spread that for this year's war academy and cultural research examinations, the same student had placed first.

It was Su Yu.

He had defeated the guest students from the capital, including some geniuses who were decently well-known even in the capital.

Su Yu's name spread all over Nanyuan. Of the four entrance examinations, the war and cultural research examinations were the most important. In comparison, the two other examinations that would be held the next day were much less important. Thus, Su Yu's performance shocked many people.

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Chen family's residence.

Chen Qinghe was also in disbelief. At the same time, he was in a melancholic mood. He had known that Su Yu was smart, but being smart was not the same as being capable. Placing first in the two major examinations was not something one could achieve just by being smart.

"Su Yu is going to rise rapidly..."

He then looked at his son who was giggling with a silly expression. He felt extremely helpless. With a wooden stick in hand, he glared at Chen Hao, "Why are you giggling here instead of cultivating outside? Come get your ass whooped!"

Chen Hao was dumbstruck. He had managed to get into a war academy. His father was still mad with joy earlier. Why did he change suddenly?

"You won't remember this if I don't beat you up. Remember, at the capital, stay low profile and don't stir up trouble.

"As for Su Yu, he might be your best friend, but take note of the limit of your friendship. It would be better if you can maintain some distance from him. Silly son, he's a genius. You're not."

While running from his father, Chen Hao complained, "Yu is not that kind of person! He won't look down on others! He won't care whether I'm a genius or not..."

"Foolish." After catching up to his son, Chen Qinghe started beating him up. After a while, he gloomily said, "Idiot! He is a genius. The cultural research academy has been in chaos recently. Everyone knows that. At the capital, his opponents will not be ordinary people. And if they can't do anything to him, won't they do something to you?"

"Su Yu does not have a lot of close acquaintances. His father is in the Devil Subduing Army so nobody would dare to touch him. Liu Wenyan is a Skysoar cultural researcher so not many people would dare to provoke him either. You're the exception! You're close to him yet weak and stupid. If you don't want to trouble Su Yu, you better be obedient!"

"As the saying goes, when the city gate catches fire, disaster will fall upon the fish in the pond. In this scenario, you'll be the fish! I'm not saying that you should act like a stranger. You just need to be careful and not let everyone know that you're his best friend. That will only trouble both you and him!"

"Father, in that case, just tell me! Why are you beating me?"

"Will you remember my words without a beating?" Chen Qinghe landed another strike on Chen Hao's ass and said, "Don't think that I don't know about that little diary you keep to record all the beatings you've received from me!"

"Father!"

Chen Hao exclaimed in shock! So his father had been reading his diary?

"Write this down in your diary as well. Write it down clearly. On the 25th of June, your father beat you up."

Chen Hao's wails resounded in the house. He definitely wouldn't forget this. His father was too mean! Why couldn't he talk nicely instead of beating him up?

...

Su Yu was naturally unaware of what was happening in the Chen family. He was also unaware of the chaos unfolding in the academy. His willpower and Divine Character exhaustion did not allow him to spare any energy to think about all that. The moment he was home, he went to bed. While sleeping, the golden book in his mind pulsed. Then, source qi started gathering around him.

A large amount of source qi entered Su Yu's body. However, it was the book that had absorbed all the source qi. After filtering the source qi, the book released gusts of numerous different energy into his sea of willpower.

The two dim Divine Characters seemed to have received some nourishment as they both started regaining their luster. Su Yu's drained willpower also started recovering. The frown he had instinctively maintained during sleep finally unfurled while the dull ache in his head slowly vanished.

Chapter 99: Getting To Know The Cultural Research Academy (1)

26th of June.

The internal affairs and scientific research examinations were being held. Of course, this event was unrelated to Su Yu. In fact, these examinations did not receive a lot of attention. This was an era ruled by the strong. Thus, the more mundane affairs were very easy to neglect.

Even though the mundane was part and parcel of life, the masses still couldn't help neglecting it. Only students who had failed in the war academy and cultural research examinations would consider taking the other two examinations.

...

At the moment, Su Yu was busy receiving guests.

He had a lot of guests. Some were from the cultural research academies. Some were from the war academies. Great Xia War Academy, Great Xia Cultural Research Academy, Martial Dragon War Academy, Nine Heavens Cultural Research Academy, Daoseeking Cultural Research Academy...Every single academy of some repute had sent someone to visit Su Yu today.

High-low evaluation for the war academy examination and high-high evaluation for the cultural research academy examination.

This was not the capital. In the capital, nobody would bother recruiting a genius like this. Why? Because such a genius would have been recruited long before their debut.

Wu Lan was a good example of that. Everyone knew she would join the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy. Nobody would bother recruiting her. But Su Yu was different. He had not been well-known for long.

For now, Bai Feng was the only person with eyes on him. Sure, Bai Feng was a genius, but he was still weak. The academy had plenty of Skysoar cultivators. Bai Feng still wasn't that important yet.

The visiting proctors started walking around Su Yu's house curiously. They appeared to be in high spirits. The commander from the Devil Subduing Army had been silently staring at Su Long's picture in the living room.

After a while, he muttered, "He comes from lowly beginnings, but he has his country in his mind. At his country's moment of need, he enters the battlefield with but a single command. A true hero of humanity."

The other proctors merely glared at him. Was he done? This guy was basically a brute. What was he doing acting all scholarly and reciting a shitty poem here?

The old man from the Nine Heavens Cultural Research Academy was more straightforward. With a smile, he said, "Su Yu, I already gave you my offer. I guarantee no academy in Great Xia can give you a better offer. Everyone, let us talk about the pros and cons of each academy.

"First, let's talk about the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy. They have plenty of experts, freaks, and geniuses.

"I'll be frank, Su Yu. Even with Bai Feng backing you, his faction isn't doing well at the moment. Senior Hong went to the Allheaven Battlefield and nobody knows when he's coming back. Bai Feng is the leader of their faction for now..."

The old man smiled, "Bai Feng is only a Skysoar cultivator. He isn't even qualified to voice his opinion in the Heart Cultivating Pavilion. What can he get for you? Can he help you enter a secret grotto? Can he get you more willpower texts?"

"It's different for the Nine Heavens Cultural Research Academy—"

Huang Sheng interrupted the old man, "He can always pick a different teacher in the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy. Bai Feng is only an assistant researcher. As a high-high student, he can easily get a senior researcher as his teacher."

Old Xie from Martial Dragon War Academy joined in, "Why must he join a cultural research academy? Su Yu is a genius in physical cultivation. He should join a war academy. He has the courage to help the Windchaser Department with an Infinite Strength cult member. This kid is like his father. A person's true nature will only be revealed on a battlefield."

Old Xie persuaded, "Su Yu, join the Martial Dragon War Academy. You can study during your first year and join the Martial Dragon Guards for practical lessons during your second year. There, you can slay the enemies of humanity and explore the countless secret grottos. Can you get this from a cultural research academy?"

The person from the Great Xia War Academy chimed in, "That's right. A true man should join a war academy. With one swing of your saber, you sever mountains and oceans. With a swing of your sword, you behead countless enemies. A true man should bathe in the blood of your enemies. How can you hide behind the frontline and spend your time writing and drawing?"

Those words instantly provoked the cultural researchers.

Huang Sheng and the others were staring at him in an unfriendly manner. The old man from the Nine Heavens Cultural Research Academy narrowed his eyes and said with a smile, "Good. Since you're so amazing, I guess the military does not need any cultural researchers anymore. We can disband the Cultural Research Regiment."

"I'm not referring to the cultural researchers in the military..."

"Are you talking about us, then?" Huang Sheng asked coldly. "Ask the tens and thousands of cultural researchers in Great Xia if they agree with your words."

"..."

"I have no time for this. You guys are being unreasonable," said the person from the Great Xia War Academy.

If he continued arguing, these cultural researchers would probably join hands against him.

All their gazes focused on Su Yu.

He nervously said, "Teachers...I'm still young. I know nothing. If it's up to me, I wish I can join all these academies..."

Su Yu carefully continued, "But...you are aware of this. I am Instructor Liu Wenyan's student. Instructor Liu already warned me last night that I must join the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy."

Old Xie and the others were furious.

"Damn that Liu Wenyan! A shameless old scoundrel! How can he mess with his student's decision making? Su Yu, ignore him. Your father is in the Devil Subduing Army. Ask him instead..."

Su Yu helplessly said, "Even if my father is home, he will listen to Instructor Liu. After all, Instructor Liu had taught me for five years. He is my first teacher. He has been teaching me tirelessly without asking for anything in return. Neither me nor my father are the type to forget favors and kindness."

Su Yu sighed, "Since the instructor said that the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy is better, I'll go there. My apologies, teachers."

They weren't upset with Su Yu. He was still a kid who had never even been to the capital. What did he know? This was all Liu Wenyan's fault! If they were going to be upset with anyone, it would be the shameless old scoundrel, Liu Wenyan!

Old Xie was unwilling to give up. "Su Yu, are you not going to consider the Martial Dragon Guards? At our academy, you will be able to join the army after a few years and become a part of the most elite army of Great Xia."

"Hmph!"

Those words provoked the Devil Subduing Army commander. He coldly said, "The Devil Subduing Army guards the front line and sweeps away all oppositions. Since when is the Martial Dragon Guards the most elite army?"

Old Xie merely rolled his eyes before shutting his mouth. If he continued talking, the military would probably start fighting among themselves.

As the two strongest armies of Great Xia, although the Devil Subduing Army was weaker when it comes to individual soldiers, they make up with quantity and experience. After spending all their time guarding the front line, they would not agree that the Martial Dragon Guards was the best army in Great Xia.

Su Yu pretended to not notice any of the argument. Instead, he poured tea to all the guests and gratefully said, "Thank you for giving me all these opportunities, teachers. I am overwhelmed by all this. My deepest apologies for disappointing you."

"This is not your fault."

Old Xie waved his hand. But he still wasn't willing to accept the fact that he was going to miss out on this talented student. He said, "Why aren't you asking about the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy's offer before agreeing to join them?"

Su Yu flashed a wide smile and said, "Instructor Liu said that there is no need for me to ask for benefits. The Great Xia Cultural Research Academy is filled with experts and rich with resources. They won't treat a new student unfairly. If I really start making demands and cause all of you to spend time giving me different offers just to end up rejecting them, wouldn't it be a waste of your time?"

The proctors couldn't help but to laugh.

Huang Sheng smiled and said, "Instructor Liu is right. The Great Xia Cultural Research Academy treats all their students fairly. We will never mistreat a genius. Even if you have been accepted as Bai Feng's student, that won't change. You will get what you deserve.

"Of course, you can also rethink your choice of a teacher. You don't really need to pick Bai Feng as your teacher."

He was pleased with Su Yu's choice here. This kid had not wavered in his determination to join the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy. Sure, Liu Wenyan had played a role there as well, but it was also good to see the lack of hesitation on Su Yu's part. That was much better than being all indecisive and wasting all the proctors' time arguing with each other to recruit him.

Since Su Yu had decided, the proctors could only accept his decision with regret. The old man from the Nine Heavens Cultural Research Academy stood up and said, "Su Yu, you are free to change your mind anytime before entering the academy. My offer still stands. You will no longer have the chance to change your mind after entering an academy."

Old Xie said, "Since you've made your choice, we won't waste your time. You're from a military family. You can always come to the Martial Dragon Guards after graduation. But I need to give you some advice..."

Old Xie paused slightly before saying with a wide smile, "The cultural research academies are worse than the war academies. There are too many old foxes, families, and powerful factions in the cultural research academies. On the other hand, physical cultivators can continue researching even without any inheritance. There are many such experts on the battlefield. As for the cultural research academies, inheritances are very important yet there are too many factions and powerful families around. Be careful in the academy."

Huang Sheng's face changed, but he didn't say anything. Old Xie was not lying. The path of a warrior was much more straightforward. As for the path of a cultural researcher, it split into a lot of smaller paths. magic

Some believed in the supremacy of Divine Characters, some believed in the prowess of willpower, some believed in a combination of both, and so on.

Some placed a lot of importance on studying the myriad races, and some believed in human supremacy. Some loved tools, such as unique combat armors and so on, while some loved body transformations, such as transforming parts of one's body into the body parts of a beast. In short, the path of a cultural researcher was extremely complicated.

There were a lot of experts walking this path. But there were also a lot of madmen walking this path. Strictly speaking, there were less top experts walking this path compared to the path of warriors. However, nine out of ten warriors would not be able to defeat a cultural researcher of the same cultivation level in true combat.

There were limited ways in which a warrior could fight. But for cultural researchers, each individual could be entirely different from the other. It was basically impossible to guess what a cultural researcher would be capable of.

Old Xie was merely advising Su Yu out of kindness. After all, Su Yu's background was too ordinary. His father was only a 100-man commander in the Devil Subduing Army. Meanwhile, there were a lot of cultural research families with inheritances spanning hundreds of years. In fact, some of the cultural researchers from Great Xia King's generation were still alive today.

As for the warriors, such inheritances were much less important. Each year, some new warriors would rise to prominence. Many of these new rising stars had appeared from the battlefield. And many of them also came from ordinary families.

"Thank you for your reminder, teacher."

Su Yu expressed his thanks but did not say anything else. Since there were cultural researchers present, it wouldn't be proper for him to comment on the internal conflict of cultural researchers.

"Just keep what I said in mind. I'll be taking my leave."

Old Xie was still regretful that he failed to recruit Su Yu. However, he didn't hesitate and left in a straightforward manner. The others also stopped pestering Su Yu and started leaving one after another. Finally, only Huang Sheng and a governmental staff member from Nanyuan were left in the house.

With all the other proctors gone, Huang Sheng smiled and said, "Su Yu, good choice. Ninety percent of the geniuses in the capital would choose to join the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy. That is a place where the strong compete against each other and freaks run rampant. In the path of great dao, you will be accompanied by a bunch of freaks. That way, you won't feel lonely during your journey to the top."

As Huang Sheng spoke, his mood turned melancholic. "There, you can witness the rise of heroes. There, you can witness the decline of geniuses. Many years later, you will feel proud of being an ex-schoolmate of some people. Someone else will also feel proud of being your ex-schoolmate or your teacher.

"Some of you will become the center of the myriad races, illuminating the world with your glory. Some of you will die early, returning to the soil. The Great Xia Cultural Research Academy will stand witness to all that."

Su Yu felt his blood turning hot from excitement after hearing all that, but he was able to quickly calm down. All that was too far away from him.

"Teacher, since I've made my choice, I won't regret it."

Instead of pretending to be clueless, Su Yu went straight to the point, "So when am I getting my rewards for placing first and the 20 merit points? Also, I remember that I can also get an original Great Strength myriad race cultivation method for placing first as well. When am I getting that?"

"Also, as a high-high student, I should receive some benefits for joining the academy, right? I won't receive nothing, right? Can you tell me more, teacher?"

Huang Sheng did not mind the honesty. He smiled and said, "I doubt Instructor Liu had actually forced you to join the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy. You made that choice yourself, right?"

"Yeah." Su Yu nodded, "I want to go further. Therefore, I'll naturally pick the Great Xia Cultural Research Academy. The Nine Heavens Cultural Research Academy and Daoseeking Cultural Research Academy might be able to give me better offers, but those are short term benefits. The Great Xia Cultural Research Academy will give me long term benefits."

"Smart choice." Huang Sheng smiled, "Let's speak frankly. You will receive your contribution points this afternoon, including the rewards for the war academy exam. You will also receive your source qi liquid soon."

"After joining the academy, you will naturally receive additional benefits from being a high-high student."

Huang Sheng's face turned solemn, "After entering the academy, you will get 100 merit points, one opportunity to study a willpower text for free, free one time entry into the source character grotto of the academy, and free one time entry into the battle character grotto."

Chapter 100: Getting To Know The Cultural Research Academy (2)

Su Yu knew about those two places. He had heard of them from Bai Feng. Both the third and fourth generation principals had each left a manifested Divine Character behind. Those characters had formed a pocket world each.

Su Yu gave it some thought and asked, "What will one get as a high-low student?"

"Only 100 merit points. Nothing else," Huang Sheng answered with a smile. "A high-middle student will get a chance to enter a grotto while a high-high student will get two chances." This is a very rare opportunity. The secret grotto promised by the Nine Heavens Cultural Research Academy is a far cry from our grottos."

Su Yu nodded. That was the type of confidence expected from the strongest academy. Multiple secret grottos of a different academy was not even the equivalent of a single grotto in their academy.

A high-low student would not even be given that chance. One was free to not join the academy if that was unacceptable. Those chances were only reserved for high-middle and high-high students.

"About the two grottos..."

"You'll know after joining the academy." Huang Sheng's tone turned stern as he said, "I suggest you use your ticket into the source grotto right after joining. To be precise, use it when you reach the peak of the ninth-stage Source Opening Realm.

"That place will be very helpful for your breakthrough. At the Great Strength Realm, you will start forging your body with your opened acupoints. Making your breakthrough in the grotto will be very beneficial for you.

"Generally, only students at the Mental Tempering Stage will opt to break through. You're a brand new student and might earn other opportunities in the future. It will be more beneficial to use that chance to gain more combat strength. Of course, the choice will still be up to you."

Su Yu nodded, "Teacher, can I ask something unrelated?"

"Yes."

"I heard the academy will be opening up a Foreign Student Faculty this year. Is that true?"

"Yes." Huang Sheng nodded. He sternly said, "This thing has been in planning for a long time. We tried launching it once before, but it eventually failed for complicated reasons."

"Because the prefect eliminated those races?"

"It's not that simple," Huang Sheng shook his head. "You must have heard that from Instructor Liu. The actual circumstances are much more complicated. But that's not important for you. It's all in the past.

"Things are different this time. The capital has tacitly agreed to the project. Marquis Xia made an excessive demand and demanded a large amount of resources from the foreign races. This time, nothing can go wrong. Great Xia's reputation is at risk here. Previously, the prefectural government had not accepted the plan. It was the academy's private project. We could use that excuse for the previous failure. But not anymore...

"I'm telling you all this because upon encountering foreign students in the academy, you are allowed to compete against them or even provoke them into a battle to the death. All that will be allowed. But dirty tricks outside of the rules will not be acceptable.

"But all this will probably not be related to you. Those freaks in the capital will be the ones we need to be watching out for. Some of them have never suffered a loss before. They will react badly the moment they suffer their first loss. And with the group of brainless underlings instigating them, they might create a big ruckus behind the scenes."

Su Yu understood what Huang Sheng was getting at. The so-called ruckus behind the scenes was probably the usage of some dirty tricks or assassinations on the foreign students. That would sully Great Xia's reputation.

And that definitely didn't apply to Su Yu. If he suffered a loss in the hands of these foreign students, he wouldn't be able to play any dirty tricks since he had no big families backing him.

But something else caught his attention. He solemnly asked, "Are the foreign students actually stronger than the freaks?"

"Some of them will be." Huang Sheng indifferently said, "That's normal. After all, some races do not calculate their age the same way humans do. Some of them will need hundreds of years to reach adulthood. Meanwhile, humans will reach adulthood after about two decades. There is nothing we can do about that. There are also races who are already at the Great Strength Realm at birth. What can we do about that?"

"Are there cultural researchers among the foreign races as well?"

"You can say that. But they don't call themselves cultural researchers. They have all sorts of terms for that. Some are known as mages. Some are known as spellmasters, and so on."

"Cultural researcher is a human term. And even among humans, there are diverging terms. Some humans call themselves divine character masters, some call themselves explorers, gatherers, reformers, destroyers, and all sorts of titles. But you don't have to worry too much about that."

Su Yu nodded. He understood that those different terms might actually be related to the paths of these individuals.

"Will there be a conflict between us and the foreign students in the academy?"

"Both sides will need to hold back and try to avoid each other. In fact, they will probably not be assigned to the main zone of the academy. We don't want there to be too many unnecessary conflicts between the two parties, after all."

"What will the academy do in the event of a dispute?"

Huang Sheng looked at Su Yu and smiled, "You have been asking the same question repeatedly. Are you going to look for trouble with those foreign students?"

"No. But I'm worried about disputes. Who knows if they will come after me?"

"You don't have to worry about that. This is Great Xia. After paying such a high price to send these people over, the foreign races won't send some fools that will create trouble for no reason. If you are actually able to lure them into a match to the death, then you'll be allowed to kill them.

"And if nobody collects the corpses, we can always use those corpses for our meals. We won't have trouble doing that. But don't think of doing anything to

the Foreign Student Faculty. Don't worry. They will be keeping a much lower profile than you think."

"I see."

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Su Yu asked a few other questions. Eventually, Huang Sheng recommended several researchers to him, telling him to consider picking a different teacher. Bai Feng was still too weak. Huang Sheng earnestly told him that Bai Feng was a very irresponsible person.

Before leaving, Huang Sheng repeated himself, "Bai Feng is a genius, and all geniuses are selfish. They will need to spend a lot of their time cultivating, exploring secret grottos, searching for treasures, and competing against their rivals. They don't have the time to properly teach a student. It will be better for newbies like you to find an old and reliable teacher.

"Bai Feng has a lot of opponents in the academy. Among the younger generation, he isn't even considered the strongest. He also has some conflicts with freaks like Xia Yuwen. Now that Senior Hong has left for the Allheaven Battlefield, he will probably have a hard time even taking care of himself. You need to consider your choices properly."

"Having a hard time taking care of himself?" Finally, Su Yu learned something different. He hurriedly asked, "What do you mean by that? Can people kill in the academy?"

"No..." Huang Sheng hesitated slightly before saying, "There are things that are more hurtful than death. Removing the benefits of a genius, giving a low evaluation, canceling one's qualification to enter the secret grottos, limiting the supply of resources, canceling some other important qualifications, and so on. Su Yu, since you've decided to join the academy, you need to know that there is no avoiding all those conflicts.

"The academy aims to cultivate geniuses and strong individuals. We follow the rule of the survival of the fittest. If you only cultivate obediently like me and aim to be a normal assistant, nobody will make trouble for you. People like us will not be worth their time. And if you want to start competing against the others, then you need to be aware that the availability of some things are limited..."

Huang Sheng's mood turned melancholic as he continued, "For example, the blood of divines and devils. Who doesn't want to forge their body with that? I want to do so as well. But I don't have the courage to fight for that opportunity. Why? Because I won't be able to win the competition. I can only be practical and use the blood of some weak races to forge my body. Nobody will care about that.

"If I decide to compete instead, do you think others will allow me to get what I want easily? The more you give, the more you stand to gain.

"The truly strong ones are really very strong. If you fail, it's not because everyone is prejudiced against you. It's only because you're too weak. It's because you have competed for something beyond your ability to get. Doing so will only get you in trouble." magic

Huang Sheng was very earnest. Although others might look down on him for reaching the Skysoar Realm at middle-age, nobody knew him better than himself. If he really had the ability, why would he even be wasting his time taking this job as a proctor in Nanyuan? Was it worth wasting so much of a genius' time for some merit points?

He did not have the ability to compete against people like Bai Feng and Liu Hong. Otherwise, why would he need to fawn on and work for Liu Hong? Both of them were Skysoar cultivators. He wasn't necessarily afraid of Liu Hong. However, a conflict with Liu Hong was simply not worth it for him. And he also couldn't afford to offend Liu Hong.

Su Yu was starting to see a clearer picture. The academy was definitely not a safe place. Or to be precise, no academy would be absolutely safe. If he did not have the value, why should the academy help him grow?

"So is Teacher Bai in a dangerous situation?"

"It's hard to say. But since Bai Feng is now a seventh-stage Skysoar cultivator, he will probably be coming up with new ideas. Some of the things he hadn't dared to fight for in the past will no longer be out of reach. At that time, his opponents will no longer be Liu Hong. Instead, it would be an entirely different group of people that are far stronger than Liu Hong."

"Liu Hong?"

Huang Sheng smiled, "That's Bai Feng's old rival. You will know after entering the academy. But Bai Feng has broken through recently while Liu Hong is still stuck at the sixth-stage, so you don't have to worry about him too much."

"I understand. Thank you, teacher."

"You're welcome."

After receiving some benefits from Liu Hong to give Su Yu a little bit of trouble during the examination, Huang Sheng naturally needed to balance the scale with Su Yu after the examination. After all, Bai Feng was also not someone he could afford to offend. People like him were far better at surviving than those geniuses.

"Also, it's better if you don't involve others in your rivalry with Wu Lan. You better don't try underhanded tricks on her either. The Wu Family is very powerful. Even Bai Feng can't afford to provoke her elder sister..."

Huang Sheng then left. Su Yu stood there scratching his head. After a long while, he muttered, "Rivalry?"

He spent a long time thinking but he just couldn't recall any rivalry between them. He had never considered that idiot a rival. How did Huang Sheng reach that conclusion?

Su Yu shook his head. This must be a misunderstanding. In his eyes, Wu Lan was a child who had yet to grow up. She seemed even dumber than Chen Hao. He wouldn't be bothered to compete against such a person. It would be too easy to deal with her. He only needed to provoke her with some words and that would probably be enough to make her go and challenge some freaks to a battle to the death.

"If I can crush her with my brain, why bother getting my hands dirty?"

Su Yu muttered as he shut the door behind Huang Sheng. This fellow was looking down on him too much. He wasn't that stupid.