

### 321 CONTRAC

"All of you must be looking down on the students of Daoyuan Class!" Lu Shu thumped the table of the village head's office loudly. "Why can't you rent out just one mu of land to us?!"

The village head looked at Lu Shu, bewildered, "It's not that! Boy, please put down your spear first..."

"From Liu Weidong's distress, +333..."

Lu Shu only knew after coming to Liujiazhai village beside 310 National Highway that when people contracted farmland, it was usually in hundreds of mu. To only undertake the contract of one mu of land was indeed rare.

"One mu of land is six hundred over square meters. In the city this is nothing. Why can't I have it? I came here in goodwill to aid the village's development, how can you let me leave empty-handed?!"

Liu Weidong, the head of Liujiazhai village, was befuddled. He explained patiently, "Friend, we really do not contract out our land by a single mu. Please put down your spear first and we can discuss nicely..."

To be elected as the village head, Liu Weidong must be a powerful and influential person. Even though pressed hard by higher ups for cultivated land protection, a single mu of land was still slightly spurned.

To be honest, the country was serious about cultivated land protection. Layers upon layers of tasks exerted a downward pressure and the size of farmland could not be decreased. That was the unchanging theme year after year, such as ensuring the red

line of farmland protection is not crossed.

Even high school students knew that the country's grain reserve have always been maintaining at a stable but also tight level. In actual fact, it was not merely as simple as having a tight reserve. If not for the fact that imports were generally free from pressures, food security would be a big issue.

Moreover, Liujiazhai village was too close to the city. Any youths with the slightest aspiration would all have left for work in the city, who would be willing to stay behind and work the land?

Every day on the news there would be reports about somebody striking rich after planting some crop. Those were all nonsense... and only "shocking news" would report that.

A while ago, Luo Cheng came up with a target to strive for the annual income of Luo Cheng farmers to hit 9100 yuan... this was annual income, not monthly.

Liu Weidong actually hoped fervently for people to undertake contracts for the land. 600 yuan a year for one mu was not considered expensive. But to only obtain contract for one mu, what was going on?!

He had initially not wanted to be bothered with this youth who seemed to be a student. With his hair dyed a light blue, he was giving off gay vibes...

In the end, Liu Weidong lost his patience and shouted for a few youths to get ready to drive him out. The people of the village must still be valiant and firm at times.

Lu Shu realised nice talks would not work. The teenagers came up and started to

shove him around. Seeing that a fight was imminent, Lu Shu smacked down upon a millstone beside him and it split into two.

Liu Weidong almost wet his pants, "Let's talk things out nicely!"

They had therefore proceeded to discuss the issue in the office.

Still, Lu Shu had no use for so much land. He had already discussed with a farmer. The farmer's son was working in Luo Cheng in a renovation team. He had earned a sizeable sum of money and would like to bring his whole family into the city, therefore leaving behind this plot of land. It was exactly that plot of land opposite their house which caught Lu Shu's eyes.

The courtyard was at the fringe of the village and was fairly remote. In this way, Lu Shu would not attract any unwanted attention if he used his special powers to till the land or something.

On the other hand, the place was 1.4km south of the Beimang remains. In general, a university would expand significantly and when that happens, the entrance will definitely be facing the city. If nothing goes wrong, the entrance to the college may not be far from the place.

The price of the courtyard was very low, 70,000 dollars. Hence, everything was suitable.

However, the details could not be agreed upon... to Lu Shu, it was all because of the difficulty in agreeing to the details.

Liu Weidong also hoped to delay Lu Shu's departure. His own grandson was now

studying in the city. He would try to see if his son knew any Daoyuan Class students and learn something about Lu Shu from them.

As it turned out, his grandson did enroll in Daoyuan Class, but was later transferred to Luo Cheng School of Foreign Languages.

However, he learnt from the person he asked that there was indeed a Lu Shu, and also verified his military rank. As for all other information, he did not breathe a single word...

So secretive?! Liu Weidong's grandson was completely befuddled. Why so discreet?

Could it be that this student has a terrifying background?

The grandson reported everything honestly back to Liu Weidong. Liu Weidong pondered deeply, What if this student before him really do have an extraordinary history and comes from a special background?

However, Liu Weidong was no fool. He stalled Lu Shu while secretly asking someone to go check on the situation, "Go see if there is anything out of the ordinary at Liu Yuli's place!"

Liu Weidong suddenly realised something. A student with special background would come over here all of a sudden to buy a courtyard and only obtain contract for one mu of land in front of the doorway. Could that be the fabled blessed land?!

Liu Weidong heard from his son and grandson how much the price of blessed lands had been hiked up. If one such land were to appear in the village, no matter how extraordinary the person might be, he would still keep it until an opportune time to

make huge profits.

No matter your background, can you extend your authority into this village?

Liu Weidong's lackeys trotted all the way and called him less than half an hour later, "The plants are alright, so are the livestock. Everything is normal."

Liu Weidong was slightly perplexed. Did you really come all the way here to aid in the development of our village?

Actually, it was not that one mu of land could not be contracted out to give him face. Liu Weidong cleared his throat, "Here, Lu Shu... how long do you wish to have this contracted land for?"

"80 years," Lu Shu answered.

Pah! The old village head spat, "What the hell?!"

"80 years!" Lu Shu was unwilling.

"30 years?" Liu Weidong said nicely. "Why do you need it for so long..."

The law of the land states that contracts are at most 30 years long.

"30 years then," Lu Shu accepted without a second thought.

Liu Weidong was stunned. He only realised now that Lu Shu was using the tactic of starting at a high asking price then respond with a low bid.

It was all because he was confused for a moment by Daoyuan Class and Lu Shu's prowess. It was because he had never had any dealings with such people before.

This feeling was similar to when he was making business deals with foreigners a long time ago. During negotiations, he would be easily overwhelmed. Come to think of it, was he not still like that?

When confused, he was easily beguiled by Lu Shu. Now that he had come back to his senses, wasn't Lu Shu just a student, why was he so timid? The country also had laws, Lu Shu could do nothing about it. He was nothing more than a schoolboy.

Signing over the land for 30 years was not a big deal. After all, 92% of the contracted land in the country had a lease of 30 years. But the price...

"800 yuan for a mu!" Liu Weidong said solemnly. This price was 200 yuan higher than any other contracted land in the village.

### **322 ENTERING THE CAPITAL FOR PROGRESS REPOR**

Liu Weidong thought to himself, Just a student. Even if you have almighty powers, you still have to abide by the rules right? In this village, he, Liu Weidong, is the rule!

As for the follow-up lines to say, Liu Weidong had already thought them through. No matter what, 800 dollars a mu!

800 yuan? How can you just raise the price like that? Lu Shu was unhappy.

Ka! Lu Shu crushed the mug. "So sorry, held it to hard. I heard that other contracted lands are 600 yuan a mu?"

"From Liu Weidong's distress, +399!"

Lu Shu had done his research before coming. Why would he come before doing proper research? How dishonest of this guy!

Liu Weidong looked sorely as Lu Shu crushed the porcelain mug into powder. Alright, alright, 600 it shall be... Liu Weidong realised that with his prowess, it would not be a problem for him to come back at midnight to destroy his house...

Liu Weidong sighed deeply, "Yes, the land can be contracted out...but can you put down the spear first?"

"30 years. 600 a year, a total of 18000 yuan. Let's sign the contract," Lu Shu was also highly efficient. He wanted to complete everything fast and begin the gathering of magical power.

Both Big Kitty and Naughty Pig had arrived, and there was no space at home for them. He could only find Li Yixiao to help keep them in the Beimang remains camp.

Xi Fei was already furiously hurrying him to lead them away multiple times. Big Kitty was better, as long as there was meat to eat, it would not make a fuss. But Naughty Pig was different, this clumsy oaf had already upturned a few tents!

Naughty Pig did not mean any harm, it only wanted to find out what was in the tents...

To Naughty Pig, this activity was similar to opening treasure chests. Upturn a tent, oh there are ten people inside. Upturn the other tent, oh there's nine in this one. Interesting, interesting...

Xi Fei and the rest really felt like slaughtering Naughty Pig. But this was Lu Shu's,

and they honestly did not want to do such a thing.

The students of Daoyuan Class were a little ostracising towards Lu Shu, but those in the inner circle of the Heavenly Network were actually pretty close to him. This was because they respect all who are powerful. This was a habit long since cultivated.

Is Lu Shu powerful enough? To Xi Fei and the others, Yes, absolutely.

Lu Shu had brought Lu Xiaoyu to the Beimang remains yesterday specially to reassure Naughty Pig and tell it not to cause any trouble. Everyone discovered that this clumsy pig only listens to Lu Xiaoyu.

Lu Shu's plan was to get the land as soon as possible. Coalescence of souls still required twenty odd days. Cultivation of land was not an urgent task, but they must at least have a place for Naughty Pig to roam.

As a Daoyuan Class student, Lu Shu coming to buy land would surely raise some suspicions. However, it was just an ordinary piece of land. Before Lu Shu utilise the Seal of Lands, he was sure Liu Weidong would not discover anything.

As for how this place would be transformed in the future, Lu Shu did not care too much. Now that magical energy rejuvenation was ongoing, there were many places that were once not blessed lands but later became one after there was a rise in magical energy.

When that happen, Lu Shu had to at most admit that he was a sensory type. What was the big deal?

After signing the contract, if Liu Weidong were to go back on his words or anything,



legal measures aside, Lu Shu could also revert the land back into an ordinary farmland any time.

With his Seal of Land, wherever Lu Shu goes, the place will become a blessed land...

Everybody was highly efficient. In three days, everything was settled. The items belonging to the original tenant was not removed and were all given to Lu Shu.

In the courtyard, there were also grape vines. They heard that in summer, the grapes here were especially nice. Lu Xiaoyu's mouth watered just thinking about it. Lu Shu thought that with magical energy, the grapes would probably be even nicer...

In the afternoon three days later, Lu Shu rode on the over two meters tall Naughty Pig while Lu Xiaoyu rode on Big Kitty, also almost two meters tall, as they went down the mountain together... this was indeed a bizarre scene.

When the two arrived at the village, Liu Weidong, who was enjoying a cigarette while chatting with others at the entrance, was stunned. What the heck! What's happening!

A few villagers retreated unconsciously. Big Kitty and Naughty Pig seemed really ferocious!

Liu Weidong stared at Naughty Pig. Never in his life had he saw this type of wild boar. The old village head's mouth trembled, "Look out for your livestock, don't let them be taken..."

He summoned up his courage to ask from afar, "Lu Shu, this is...?!"

"Oh, just to guard the place. No need to worry, everybody..."

As Lu Shu was saying that, Naughty Pig upturned a stone seat at the village entrance that must have weighed a few hundred kilograms...

"From Liu Weidong's distress, +499..."

"From..."

Lu Shu saw no need for politeness towards Liu Weidong. Honest or not, he had no plan to interact with the village head anymore. It was imperative that they both mind only their own business. He would surely not let Naughty Pig and Big Kitty harm the villagers, but if the one mu of land were to really become a blessed land, he would also not want them to have any ideas.

Under usual circumstances, Liu Weidong, as the lord of his village, would try to prevail over others from the first encounters, In the end, he was badly frightened by a wild boar...

It was as if, they were indeed not on the same level in this world.

"You must restrain them well, cannot harm people. They must not cause damage in the village, nor the farmland of others. Let them play in the mountains in the day and return to sleep at night." Lu Shu told Lu Xiaoyu.

Lu Xiaoyu nodded.

Now that Anthony's soul had not coalesce, Lu Shu had no plan to tire himself out working the land. He would just settle Naughty Pig and Big Kitty there.

Just at that moment, he received a call by Li Yixiao: Get ready to go to the capital for progress report.

This meant that Nie Ting had returned to the capital.

Li Yixiao said just now that 82 fighters with Tier A aptitude would be there to report their progress. With Lu Shu included, it would be 83. He better not embarrass Yuzhou.

There are really few people with Tier A aptitude. According to the Population Census, the population now stands at 1.3 billion, but isn't it already 1.4 billion? Lu Shu did not know the actual figures, Population Census was itself a difficult task.

Among 1.4 billion people, only 82 Tier A aptitude geniuses emerged. What was the proportion? It was frightening to just think about it.

However, Lu Shu had the impression that the two Tier A geniuses in Qingzhou were still far from Class D peak ability. In other places without remains, the level should be similar. Why do they all need to go to the capital for progress report?

Lu Shu had a hunch that this time round, the progress report would not be that easy. Unexpected things may happen.

However, he was not the least worried. To walk with the geniuses across the country was definitely a good thing.

Compared to meeting Nie Ting alone, Lu Shu would rather go with many people. Just have to go with the flow.

One more point. Li Yixiao said not to be the disgrace of Yuzhou. Could it be...that the Heavenly Network wanted to let pit the geniuses against one another?

After all, in the first state, the first batch of chosen geniuses had all risen. The batches following that would surely require grooming. Lu Shu was not sure what would Nie Ting be up to this time. Just take it one step at a time.

### 323 THE ASCETIC

"There's money in your card, remember to have your meals on time..."

"Put your clothes in the washing machine and hang them up quickly to dry..."

"Don't watch cartoon all the time, remember to get up and move around after some time..."

Lu Shu was like a parent about to go on a long trip overseas but could not stop worrying over his child. Lu Xiaoyu caressed Little Fury and said calmly, "Lu Shu, you promised to bring me to the capital."

"But they don't allow family members!" Lu Shu said helplessly.

"Lu Shu, you've changed," Lu Xiaoyu said coldly. In her arms, Little Fury looked as if there was no more meaning in life. Lu Xiaoyu would rub it when she was at a loss. Little Fury was still not quite capable of resisting...

"Hey! I said not to watch romance dramas anymore!" Lu Shu said, anger rising.

The Heavenly Network instructed them not to worry about anything on this trip to the capital for progress report. They had already prepared the tickets, and all basic necessities had also been settled. Most importantly, Li Yixiao reminded them

specially to bring their weapons along.

Lu Shu would be meeting Cao Qingci at the terminal in the provincial capital. Zhong Yutang would be there to bring them northwards to the capital.

Lu Shu was increasingly certain that this trip to the capital for progress report would not be a simple one. Why could he not shake off the feeling that they were going there to fight?

Everything was planned in a tight schedule and Lu Shu had no time to care so much. He was home the same night to pack his luggage and had to leave the following morning at 6 for the provincial capital to catch a train. The trip would take an hour and a half.

By then, with proper documents, the Heavenly Network could already bring their cold weapons onto transportations. The transport system nationwide had given them the green light.

The next morning, Lu Shu planned to leave alone quietly, but Lu Xiaoyu was adamant about sending him off. She even prepared a present for him...

"What's this?" Lu Shu was surprised.

"Just open it and you'll know!" Lu Xiaoyu grinned. "I had it made to order online!"

With that, Lu Xiaoyu went back into the house. Lu Shu opened the wrapping and saw a black T-shirt with white prints on it.

In front, Lu Shu is here...

At the back, Lu Shu is gone...

At this moment, Lu Xiaoyu emerged from the house. She, too, had changed into a new T-shirt.

In front, Xiaoyu is here...

At the back, Xiaoyu is gone...

He had seen this before. "The foreigner is here, the foreigner is gone". Can't believe Lu Xiaoyu used it straight to make T-shirts...

"Too childish," Lu Shu took this opportunity to get back at Lu Xiaoyu for what she did a few days ago. You're right, I, Lu Shu, bear grudge really well!

"Heh heh...fine, I'll wear!" Lu Shu put the T-shirt back on. Only then did Lu Xiaoyu smile once again, "Let's go. I'll send you to the train terminal."

The pair hailed a cab to the train terminal. At home, Lu Shu would remind Lu Xiaoyu earnestly to eat her meal regularly while she listens with impatience. On the car, Lu Xiaoyu became the one reminding Lu Shu to stay safe and be careful no matter what...

At the terminal, Lu Shu realised that Jiang Shuyi was also already waiting at the entrance to the hall.

Lu Shu was momentarily stunned, "Shuyi, you are going for the progress report too?"

Jiang Shuyi saw Lu Shu and smiled. "Nope, I am here specially to send you off." Right after that, Jiang Shuyi lowered his voice and said, "This time, the progress report in the capital is unlike usual. Do your best. The Heavenly Network will be reviewing all of you in various aspects. You must be careful in all that you say and do. You will be constantly monitored."

Lu Shu finally understood. So that's how it would be? When organizations such as the Heavenly Network pick newcomers to groom, they were indeed even more cautious. So many people mobilized.

As for what would be reviewed and how to do so, Jiang Shuyi said that he had no idea himself.

Lu Shu was slightly touched. He did not expect Jiang Shuyi to come all the way here specially to send him off just so to inform him. Lu Shu thought of the magical energy gathered and felt a wave of pride. He too had given Jiang Shuyi great assistance, right?

Come to think of it, Jiang Shuyi still owed him a favour. After all, the magical energy was really strong!

Lu Shu tested water while feigning nonchalance, "Now, magical energy are still growing. Blessed lands are sprouting out in many places. That being said, how is the blessed land at your house?"

Unexpectedly, Jiang Shuyi's face suddenly darkened...

Jiang Shuyi went on to say with his teeth gnashing, "I have no idea why the magical energy in my house boomed all of a sudden and a potted plant at home grew so big

that it destroyed the house. It is now being rebuilt!"

Heh heh. Lu Shu felt that he could carry this secret to the grave... Who was it who said that a person had to keep a few secrets for a life well lived? That person is indeed wise...

You may not believe if I admit. I did not know that your potted plant is so powerful...

Just at this moment, Cao Qingci, carrying a black backpack, alighted from the morning bus. She went down calmly towards the terminal. Nobody was sending her off, nor was she like other girls who needed to drag along a huge luggage when going to some distant place. Inside, everything would be inside, just like moving house, as if they could not survive if one item was absent...

In this age whereby high school girls have started to put on light make-up and boys wear skirts... Cao Qingci seemed to never have cared much about her image, only that her clothes should be clean and neat.

Cao Qingci arrived at the waiting hall. She seemed not to want to greet Lu Shu at all as she walked right by him, despite them being the only two travelling together from Luo Cheng.

"So cold," Jiang Shuyi sighed. "I'm afraid she is the subject of focus this time during the progress report. In her heart, this girl seemed to care only about cultivation. In the Daoyuan Classes across the country, her cultivation aptitude seems to be the highest. Also, among the Tier A aptitude geniuses, she was the only one to have distinguished herself in battle."

"So hard to see what she's thinking," Lu Shu shook his head. He realized that he might



not have received any distress points from Cao Qingci at all?!

Either her heart was like still water and would not produce any negative feelings, or she had ways to isolate herself from the outside world.

Such an exclusively special feeling made Lu Shu curious. If Cao Qingci really had a way to isolate herself from the outside world, Lu Shu really wanted to find out more.

After the documents Lu Shu produced were checked online, he did not even have to go through any security check. The terminal let him pass through straight without any red lights.

When he placed his identity card on the scanner, what came out were words like "confidential" and "free passage". It did not reveal that he was a Daoyuan Class student.

In the car, Lu Shu and Cao Qingci sat beside each other. She would forever be with her eyes closed, cultivating. Even though she was already at the peak of Class D, she never stopped exercising the sun's rotation to stabilise her own state.

As for Lu Shu, he took out his Japanese language self-study material he had bought previously to study.

### **324 WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DISTRESS POINTS?**

For the entire journey, there was no conversation between Lu Shu and Cao Qingci, as though they were two strangers whose seats were adjacent by chance.

Lu Shu would become very focused once he concentrated on learning, even if it was Japanese which he would use together with the head-twisting gourd for name revelation purposes in the future.

Some students were even better. They sat in front of their desks but actually taking in nothing. When they were done, they packed up their learning materials so seriously as if they had just finished a news broadcast...

As soon as Lu Shu alighted from the bus, he saw Zhong Yutang already waiting at the platform. Behind him, there were four students with swords in their hands, looking like Class A geniuses too.

Lu Shu had met most of them outside the Beimang remains and he knew they were all native geniuses from Yuzhou. He could still recall that previously, one of the girls had no makeup at all, but now she was wearing thick gold-color eye shadow and a pretty blush, looking like Monkey King!

Lu Shu was frustrated... Wouldn't the Heavenly Network please do something about it?

That same girl was wearing simple outfit last time, but now even her backpack was branded.

Likely she had been recruited by some family. Now that she's rich, she could easily show off, Lu Shu thought.

Although he did not entertain the idea, it was none of his business. After all, every one could make their own decisions.

Actually, the girl was studying his blue hair too while he was examining her makeup... Despite the fact that much of the color had already faded and black hair emerged visible again, the light blue in his hair was so obvious as though it was glowing...

They two were pretty much the same.

"Long time no see," Lu Shu greeted Zhong Yutang casually. He was well disposed towards this Chief Manager of Yuzhou Heavenly Network for his work attitude. If not for the burden, Li Yixiao, Lu Shu thought that Zhong Yutang could have done even better...

"From Zhong Yutang's distress, +66..."

Lu Shu was stunned for a moment-how come you felt distressed the second you saw my face?! This was so wrong!

Speaking of which, Zhong Yutang must have been nearing the peak of Class C the last time they met half a year ago for him to do his job well as the Chief Manager of Yuzhou. Then why hadn't him ascended yet? Was it really so difficult to upgrade from Class C to B?

However, when Lu Shu studied him closely, he sensed the weakening in Zhong Yutang's waves of Spirit Qi. Lu Shu was shocked. Could it be that his cultivation abilities had regressed due to overwork?

It couldn't be. Lu Shu suddenly felt that something was not right. Instead of weaker, Zhong Yutang's waves were actually more condensed, which gave the illusion that Lu Shu felt previously.

Eh, this was a bit weird.

After that, Zhong Yutang stepped aside to make a phone call to some unknown person, leaving behind the six people talking awkwardly at the platform.

A thought suddenly struck Lu Shu-was it really okay for such a big group of Class A aptitude geniuses to gather on the same train? After all, the Beijing-Guangzhou line was a densely populated area. It was possible that half of the Class A aptitude geniuses from the entire country were clustered on this railway line.

If something happened to this train full of geniuses, the competence of the Heavenly Network might experience an awkward gap in the future.

To the Heavenly Network, it was highly likely that geniuses of Class A aptitude were one of their most important resources.

After self-introduction, Lu Shu learned that the makeup girl was He Xie and the other girl was Liu Xueruo. The two boys were Wang Li and Qiu Qiao, who was very tanned.

Lu Shu was amused upon his first sight of Qiu Qiao... Louis Koo, was that you Louis Koo?

Despite their dissimilar appearance, they were equally dark...

Judging from then, Yuzhou's Class A aptitude geniuses consisted of three girls and two boys, excluding Lu Shu. Just a while ago, there was discussion on the Golden Foundation Forum about whether boys had a better chance at cultivation, which was contrary to the actual observation now.

But of course, one could not make a sweeping statement solely based on the five people from one single state.

Zhong Yutang hung up the call when he saw a train arriving from afar, "Still, please be reminded that you are representing the honor of the entire Yuzhou. Thus, you are expected to be in your optimal state all the time. Also, although Lu Shu's aptitude is only at the lowest level, I hope you can still feel free to approach him for help whenever necessary. I can't go further about that."

Lu Shu was unhappy. What did he mean by he couldn't go further about that? Wasn't he intent on mocking him by only mentioning his aptitude but not his abilities?

But before Lu Shu could protest, Zhong Yutang pulled him aside, "The superiors have said, your abilities and military ranking are confidential."

Why on earth must he hide it since he awakened to his powers by himself... Could it be the Heavenly Network had some special arrangement for him?!

Moreover, Lu Shu was a little confused. Why did everyone keep referring to them as the representatives of Yuzhou? Were they going to compete against students from other states or what? They must be joking!

Zhong Yutang arranged them to board the No. 12 carriage once the train arrived and everyone started looking for their own bed according to their tickets in the soft sleeper carriage.

Immediately, Lu Shu noticed that it was as if his ticket number was purposely separated from the rest of Yuzhou students-they were at the head while he almost the rear...

Not sure whether it was Zhong Yutang's plan, Lu Shu was on the brink of frustration. He would never believe it if Zhong Yutang denied any awareness of it.

Based on the fact that there were already a number of students in the carriage, it seemed that the entire soft sleeper section had been booked by the Heavenly Network. When Lu Shu made his way along the long aisle, he received several curious stares from students in other compartments. They were all aware that this carriage was full of teenage geniuses just like themselves.

When Lu Shu found his own bed, he was about to jump. Other people's compartments all had at least four people, but why his was totally empty?!

Why? Worried that I might disturb their cultivation?! Lu Shu almost flipped his table.

What happened to the distress points?!

Could it be another arrangement from the Heavenly Network...?

Sitting in his compartment alone, Lu Shu was in deep thought for ten minutes. Damn the arrangement! Apparently those people did not want him to distract those geniuses from their cultivation!

Did someone report him? Lu Shu went back to deep thought again...

### **325 CHASING THE FLOODS**

Lu Shu froze for a moment and answered subconsciously, "Hello. My name is Liu Li."

Yi Ran did not ask for Lu Shu's name in the first place... Stunned, he stared at the "Lu Shu is coming" and "Lu Shu is gone" on Lu Shu's T-shirt. After pondering for a full thirty seconds, he asked, "Isn't your name Lu Shu?"

"Hahaha," embarrassed, Lu Shu shot another glance at his T-shirt and smiled, "Lu Shu

is my name but Liu Li is my nickname."

"From Yi Ran's distress, +199!"

Fine, I believe you, Yi Ran thought to himself. At that time, Yi Ran already felt that Lu Shu was not a very reliable fellow.

Lu Shu was not the only person Yi Ran had greeted, he had greeted those in other compartments too. As though making friends in a forum, he did not have the air of a genius at all.

Take a look at the other soft sleeper compartments. Other geniuses seemed rather arrogant with their powers but Yi Ran was a rare exception.

Well, one could not deny it seemed very impressive that they were fetched by people from the Heavenly Network, assigned soft sleeper seats and moreover, they were going to the capital to make a progress report.

It was the same as some girls who thought they were from royal families whenever they walked along a long spiral staircase and those teenagers that saw themselves as MV stars when looking outside the window from a car seat. Or even those who dreamed of being CEOs the moment they stepped into a car, with the illusion that someone in the front passenger seat would report to them immediately.

Haha, bullshit.

Now, all those geniuses put on airs and turned their noses at one another. Just like how the saying went, people of the same trade seldom agree.

Basically, the situation was that it was extremely rare for a Class A aptitude genius to know another Class A genius. This was because a single city could rarely produce more than one Class A genius and Cao Qingci, for example, was the only one of her kind in the entire Luo Cheng.

Maybe people like Yi Ran would see everyone as brothers and sisters and to him, more friends meant a broader social network. But Lu Shu disagreed.

First off, it was already a wrong start to make friends for their potential usefulness and a wrong start would certainly lead to a wrong end.

Furthermore, some people claimed that they had friends from all over the country but in practice, they would all disappear when needed.

After Yi Ran left, Lu Shu still did not bother to go meet the other geniuses. He was fine with reaping a round of distress points, but socializing? Not interested.

It was not that he was unwilling to make friends, but he always remained passive in such relationships. For instance, Chen Zuan, the little fatty, was now a friend to Lu Shu.

The train soon went past six to seven stations and another six students came aboard. At the current rate, there would really be more than thirty Class A aptitude geniuses on that train.

After another round of learning Japanese, Lu Shu started watching Naruto.

All thanks to Lu Xiaoyu's influence!



However, Lu Shu thought watching Naruto could more or less help him improve his Japanese. Moreover, he could learn about Mid-Water Escape too.

Honestly speaking, it was the first time that Lu Shu had the mood for anime. In the past, where could he find the time?

Now it seemed that he was starting to get addicted too.

But the problem was, the use of water elements in Naruto was not applicable in real life.

For example, the Water Techniques could be used to release water after condensing it into a shark. Yet, in animes it could be justified as the sheer power of ninjutsu (special techniques used by Japanese ninjas) but in reality, water is water. It would be wiser to condense water into high-pressure water blades than sharks!

Actually, there was one that was rather useful, transforming oneself into water to avoid harm. Though Lu Shu had yet to acquire the ability of changing himself into water elements, Anthony seemed to have it. If not, how did he perform Mid-Soil Escape?

However, at that moment, Lu Shu suddenly sensed an immense wave of Spirit Qi arise from outside the window located in the front-left of the train.

There lay a huge river, over which there was a bridge that the train was about to cross.

...

In the wilderness, a group of twelve Caucasians silently stared at the slowly

approaching train on the horizon.

To them, a train traveling at eighty or even over a hundred kilometers per hour was indeed slow.

"Cleared. They are all students. No masters."

"Hehe, don't be fooled. Last time, Mengze and six other morons went upstream from Asan and now their bodies are nowhere to be found. I suspect they were ambushed," one sneered.

"We are not like them. Having been hidden for so long, what we have been doing all day is just endless business. This is so boring! All I want to do now is simply get the job done and go for a good holiday! How about going shark fishing?"

"Don't underestimate them. One of the students is Class C, strength type. His performance was exceptional at the Salt Lake remains. He has to be captured alive. I suspect he is related to Chen Baili's breakthrough."

"Interesting. 27, we will go and handle him."

"Okay. 11, you send us to the bridge later."

It seemed that they were all named after numbers.

These could only be code names, since such names were unlikely to exist in the entire world.

"What are we waiting for?"

"For someone to go upstream."

"Is he coming personally?"

"Yes."

When the train was one kilometer away from them, an eerie spray suddenly welled up amidst the rapid currents. Shockingly, a transparent human figure rose up vertically from the river surface. It asked in a husky voice, "Is there any change in the plan?"

The twelve people on the shore all showed humble respect. The leader lowered his voice, "No. Please do as you wish."

The water man nodded, "Proceed as usual."

Then, he returned to the water, as though nothing had ever happened. But the twelve people all went quiet.

In Lu Shu's speculation, he was not able to transform himself into water elements, but someone in Class B should be able to.

Following this line of thought, that person must be Class B or above!

As the train thundered towards the bridge, it seemed to not yet notice the impending danger.

Defenseless, the long train drove onto the bridge, like a lamb waiting to be slaughtered.

All of a sudden, following a deafening roar upstream, the currents became rapid again. The rolling spray could almost be felt on people's faces more than ten meters away on the shore.

Like a tsunami, the flood that peaked as high as over twenty meters, swept towards the bridge.

One person's eyes were full of yearning and admiration, "His... His power has increased!"

### **326 AN EYE FOR AN EYE**

The instant Lu Shu sensed the Spirit Qi waves, he looked outside, only to see a humongous flood peak rise and swell towards the bridge, like a giant water wall. It was only over twenty meters away and it would not be long before it would crush the train.

The water wall was so condensed that even foam was trapped inside. Lu Shu could even foresee that should this wall fall on them, the entire bridge would collapse in a split second.

Was that the power of water wielding? Surprisingly, the first thought that occurred in Lu Shu's mind upon the sight of it, was the hope that one day the terrific power could be his.

Although one could not compare rivers with seas, it was already frightening enough. Imagine a river pouring down from the sky, as though aiming for total destruction!

"Enemies!" Lu Shu loudly shouted.

At this moment, the temperature suddenly dropped in the sweltering heat. Lu Shu watched his breath turn into white vapor before it froze on the window glass.

The twelve people ran towards them at full speed, each demonstrating their own skills.

Suddenly, a buff guy jumped from the riverside and then, as if manipulated by a mysterious force, was shot straight towards the 12th carriage where Lu Shu was seated. He looked like a crazy flying bomb from Guns&Steel!

Ashore, another person fully extended his hand, his chestnut-colored hair flew backwards in the wind. He emitted huge blasts of cold waves from his body, which instantly turned all the remaining vapors splashed out from the flood peak into sharp ice blades, which tore everything along their path apart.

The rest ran along the railway. Their mission was to kill everyone in the 12th carriage in ten minutes.

In this instance, Lu Shu was still staring at the massive flood peak outside. They would soon engulf the world like undefeatable monsters. Everything seemed to fall into silence.

The sparkling ice blades were yet to cease.

The flowing and ebbing of the sea.

The rising and setting of the sun.

Gone and returned with the wind.

The elements were the sole truth in this world. The rest were nothing but illusions.

Lu Shu raised his hand. Instantly, the glass in front of him shattered. All celestial strength from his celestial map gushed out, like the invading soldiers in the War of the Century as they charged all-out.

They were in a frenzy!

The elemental power in Lu Shu was rapidly depleted due to his seemingly easy action of raising his hand. But that was no issue at all. There was still his celestial strength!

His celestial strength was converted into the power of water elements at a crazy speed as it thundered towards the giant wave. In the empty compartment, Lu Shu's pupils changed from black to aqua-blue, in which a sea of stars permeated.

Stillness!

Absolute stillness!

This scene was almost miraculous.

No one had any idea of what was going on. Even the other confused and frightened students on the train were dumbfounded by the stillness outside. How could a flood peak possibly stop? This was nonsensical.

All of this gave them the illusion that the world had stopped moving.

At that moment, calmness was all that Lu Shu felt. But in his calmness, he sensed the

intrusion of another force that was helping him.

That force was inexplicable. It was that inexplicability, which made it more like a rule than a force.

However, in this instance, a startling glint of swords shot up into the clouds, slashing up towards the hanging waterfall in the sky! The flash was from none other than the 13th carriage, the one at the rear.

The gash cut through the full length of the flood peak, as it almost tore the world apart.

The universe also faded, as though all the stars and galaxies had been slit open.

Suddenly, a mysterious force shattered every piece of the last two carriages. To everyone's astonishment, a person in a black cloak rose to the sky and something in the river fled for their life. Under the cloak, Nie Ting sneered, his handsome face covered in frost, "You made me wait for too long! We, the Heavenly Network, have 21 lives waiting for you in the netherworld. An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth!"

The glare of the sword was as cold as snow. It could seemingly freeze all the rivers in the world.

As though there appeared a gigantic rock out of thin air, the torrential yellow river was divided into two!

Lifeless, a chopped human form suddenly revealed itself and flowed downstream with the current.

This left Nie Ting hovering alone in mid air, while his cloak flapped in the shrieking wind.

Class A... That was the flight ability attainable only in Class A!

The remaining twelve took to their heels as soon as they saw Nie Ting. In the information given to them, there was only mention of goods in the 13th carriage, but no single word about the person they dreaded the most!

Lu Shu had recalled all his celestial power the moment the flash appeared. Even for him, the feeling of exhaustion was unavoidable. No matter how strong he was, Lu Shu could never defeat a Class B opponent.

If Nie Ting had not appeared, he might not have been able to sustain another three minutes before everything would be destroyed.

After all, all of the Class A aptitude geniuses were just bait in Nie Ting's grand gambling game of revenge.

How spiteful was his hatred!

And how bold of him?!

But when the carriages were crushed, Lu Shu was shocked to see that Cao Qingci held her hand up at the flood peak just as he had done. Could it be that the incredible power earlier was actually from this girl?

Lu Shu was aware that she was a Metahuman. But her power... What type of power was it to give it its unworldly attributes?



He knew very well that if he himself were Nie Ting, he would never have the courage to do such things. But what he could not imagine was that Nie Ting had successfully ascended to Class A after his short disappearance.

Thus, with two Class A masters in charge, the country's Heavenly Network was indeed invincible.

But the problem was, for someone as superior as the leader of the Heavenly Network, why did he keep playing the role of an assassin? It was damn scary!

The raiders might have expected to meet a Heavenly King there, but never had they ever anticipated Nie Ting, who had just returned to the capital but suddenly appeared on a train moving up north. Moreover, he had long since hidden in the 13th carriage.

Their false information had also led to their ignorance of Nie Ting's ascension to Class A.

Truth be told, Lu Shu was rejoiced that Nie Ting was on the train. Had he not been there, it was too risky for him to confront a Class B head on. If his celestial power was completely drained, he might need to rely on his physical strength in the fight.

If he had been brought into the water by the flood peak, his chances of survival would have been extremely slim, given the Class B abilities of his water Metahuman opponent.

Nie Ting finished the twelve people neatly and quickly. After he was done, he flew back above the bridge and told Cao Qingci calmly, "Remember to file a report on the hidden Metahuman's power."

Then, he turned to everybody, "Everyone, there will be people coming to fetch you. See you in the Capital."

After he finished his sentence, Nie Ting soared into the sky, immediately disappearing into the horizon.

### **327 GAINS**

The train stopped after the fight. Although the damage to the last two carriages were not serious enough to interfere with the smooth operation of the rest of the train, the staff did not dare to drive it any further.

Only passengers in the 11th carriage saw the gigantic flood peak just now. But that carriage was a dining section and most passengers there were train personnel, who would not cause much trouble.

Other students from the Daoyuan Class obediently retreated to the riverside, waiting to be picked up by the Heavenly Network.

However, at that moment, everyone was startled by a scream. When they turned, they saw Lu Shu falling into the river, as if he had failed to maintain his balance. But no one was close enough to catch him.

Lu Shu fell into the river with a loud splash.

"What happened?" the people around were utterly confused.

"Let's go down to save him!" a group ran down the slope, but Lu Shu failed to emerge from the river.

Lu Shu felt at home the instant he fell into the water. The current flowed around him

at his command. He could use his willpower to effortlessly dive tens of meters underwater.

Initially, he was still deeply shocked due to Nie Ting and the speculation about the power that Cao Qingci had awakened to. But to his surprise, he sensed a wave of Spirit Qi from the river bed under the bridge. Could it belong to the dead Class B master?

Though rapid, the river was not very deep. Lu Shu's vision was obscured by the turbid water, but his control over the water element offered him another eye to see through the water.

After the undercurrents handed the item on the riverbed to Lu Shu, he stored it into his Seal of Lands without a single glance. It was not the right time to experiment with it.

Then, he swam towards the bank. Once his head emerged above the surface, he saw a group of Daoyuan Class geniuses waiting on the side. There were two guys removing their shirts, about to jump into the water.

"I'm fine! I'm fine!" Lu Shu walked ashore.

Seeing that he was safe and sound, the geniuses returned to their conceited selves and walked back up the shore.

The carriages were smashed open. A pile of luggage were gathered together to be kept for their owners but others were scattered in the river, beyond one's reach.

Nie Ting was indeed terrific to use such a big bargaining chip as his bait. What if he had failed? Did his boldness stem from his supreme skills? Or did his hatred cloud his

judgment? Lu Shu could not decide.

As for the twenty-one lives taken by the Class B as claimed by Nie Ting, no one knew when it happened.

It seemed that the Practitioners and the Metahumans already had a lot of unknown disputes.

Lu Shu felt a bit sorry. Xiaoyu should have unlocked her Stage 2 nebula recently, so if she could siphon away the spirit of this Class B fighter...

Something was not right. No matter how low-quality the Class B fighter's possessions were, they should be of some use to the Heavenly Network. Take for example what he got from the riverbed just now, it was definitely as powerful as the deep sea white sand. But Nie Ting did not even bother to pick it up and flew away without hesitation!

The Heavenly Network could not be so dazzlingly rich!

Or, could it be Nie Ting purposely left the item to Lu Shu since he already knew his abilities?

It was not totally impossible. Lu Shu decided to bury it in the bottom of his heart and take effort to verify it someday.

But then why did he tell Zhong Yutang to remind himself that his military ranking and power were confidential? What's the point?

After the incident, the geniuses were more willing to communicate with one another. After all, they were still middle school students with the psychological need of

venting their pent-up emotions through communication.

"Do we have to join such battles in the future?"

"Of course. The teachers have said before, that the Heavenly Network does not train useless people."

"It's relatively easy here. What if someone wants to attack us in a crowd? How do we tell whether he is a good or bad guy?"

Lu Shu was happy that those geniuses were quite naive. He laughed, "Based on his background music, of course."

"From Cheng Qiuqiao's distress, +101..."

"From..."

Screw your background music, do you think you are watching a TV series?!

After three hours, a fleet of motorcars finally came to take the Daoyuan Class geniuses to the Capital.

...

Lu Xiaoyu rubbed Little Fury at home and held a grudge about Lu Shu's refusal to bring her to the Capital. Suddenly, her heart shuddered, the abrupt increase in her rubbing strength made Little Fury scream in pain.

But that shudder was quick to come and quick to go as well. When she called Lu Shu,

he could not be reached too.

This made Lu Xiaoyu really want to give the old man Li Xianyi a call and drag him back from overseas to save Lu Shu. Although she had no idea where Lu Shu was, the old man surely knew.

What Lu Shu was not aware of was that Lu Xiaoyu had already called the old man's emergency line a long time ago. Their conversation was not that meaningful, but the old man was very pleased to receive Xiaoyu's call.

At first, the phone was safely kept by Auntie Liu. But now, the old man brought it with him wherever he went.

Luckily, Lu Shu was able to communicate with her soon after. He told Lu Xiaoyu about the attack and assured her that he was safe.

Lu Xiaoyu felt guilty that she was not there for Lu Shu when he was in danger.

Little Fury trembled and gestured that he was in pain.

"Oh," only then did Lu Xiaoyu loosen her grip on Little Fury and pretend nothing ever happened.

Little Fury pointed at the girl inside the TV drama, "Look at how gentle and sweet the girl in the drama is! And look at you!"

Lu Xiaoyu was confused for a second, "Who gave you the guts to say that?"

"From Little Fury's distress, +299..."

Could I ever talk some sense into her?!

This would not work, Little Fury was in deep thought. Things could not stay like this. Otherwise, Lu Xiaoyu would have rubbed him to death before he was crowned the Squirrel King.

Honestly, he suddenly started to miss Lu Shu. Although that fellow kept forcing him to do homework everyday, he would never inflict physical abuse!

I must think of a way!

He took out a notebook with all seriousness and started writing with a pencil between his arms, "Girls must be more gentle. You see, other girls speak with softness and even their way of speaking is so cute, like going to eat, sim ni da, going to sleep, sim ni da, going to shower, sim ni da, going to drink, sim ni da... People surely like these kind of girls!"

Lu Xiaoyu sneered on the sofa, her arms folded, "I can, too."

Little Fury was shocked, "Huh?!"

"Shut up, sim ni da."

### **328 A MISFI**

The place where the incident occurred was actually not very far from the Capital, only four hours by train. But the location was slightly tricky as it was hard for the Heavenly Network to deploy any emergency assistance there in a timely manner.

Moreover, after the completion of their mission, the opponents could easily go downstream with minimal delay, leaving almost no trace behind for the Heavenly

Network to track.

However, they had made a very serious mistake and had lost their lives.

The air was suffocatingly tight aboard the military truck. Everyone was slowly putting back on their airs but Lu Shu was still pondering whether Nie Ting's help was intentional.

His own take was a yes. First of all, he was not someone who always took chances. It was never wrong to expect the worst and strive for the best.

To Lu Shu, it was his positivity towards life, always think about the worst case scenarios but never lose hope.

If Nie Ting had indeed intended on helping him hide his power and even give him a magical item of the same level as deep sea white sand, then he must have even bigger plans for Lu Shu later on.

But the thing was, as a Class C strength-type newbie, what was the use of him even if the other party was aware of his double awakening?

The truck drove straight to the Capital station. A person from the Heavenly Network jumped on board, "Surrender all your personal belongings, including your wallets, hand phones and weapons, now. Remember what I said, ALL your belongings."

Some people were reluctant, "We are here for progress report, not imprisonment. Why must we hand up our phones!"

The Heavenly Network person smiled, "Don't worry. All of you will be the future



mainstays of our Heavenly Network. I won't mind if you want to remember my face and give me a hard time then. But right now, you have to do as I say. Else, I will take it as your withdrawal from the Heavenly Network."

Everyone's face froze. Actually, all of them had been reminded by high-position masters like Zhong Yutang to behave and not to disgrace their hometowns.

Everyone was clear that they were in the Capital for some assessment. Could it be the start of the assessment already? At the train station?! To help other people carry their bloody luggage?

Despite their grudges, they still had to do as instructed. Now, they were wondering, would the unauthorized possession of items be reflected in the performance report too?

Originally, as Class A aptitude geniuses, they could even obtain Class D techniques without any military contributions. Thus, they had the feeling that they were receiving special treatment in the Heavenly Network. All of them thought that such treatment would continue in the Capital.

After everything had been surrendered, the person smiled, "Very good. These items can be claimed after the completion of your task."

Someone hesitated, "Task? What task?"

"The task is, to survive 15 days in the Capital on your own. No restrictions on what you can do. Now, alright, everyone," then, the person got off the truck. After everyone had alighted, the truck drove away.

No teachers, no friends, no communication devices, no money. How to survive 15 days in the Capital like this?

"Didn't he say no restrictions? Haha, it doesn't seem a big deal to us. I'll go and find a place to make a phone call," the makeup girl He Xie laughed.

Lu Shu complained in his heart, could you please use your brain? Apparently the Heavenly Network wanted to examine everyone's character?!

Perhaps none of them had ever gone through poverty. But Lu Shu knew that only in adversity could one manifest their true nature.

If the Heavenly Network wished to test them this way, besides a character evaluation, there should not be a second reason.

Some might see it as a piece of cake, but you would think otherwise when problems arose. Without your identity card, you would not be allowed to even get a legal job. But if you worked illegally, would you fight back when bullied?

Lu Shu looked around. Who the hell would know whether there were talented people from the Heavenly Network acting like pedestrians and monitoring them.

No, he could not follow his team. It would make an easy target. Furthermore, in terms of survival, this bunch of geniuses might become his burden.

Also, to tell the truth, Lu Shu had the least concern about the Heavenly Network's character evaluation on him. He did not aspire to be a Heavenly King after all!

Unlike the geniuses interested in furthering their career in the Heavenly Network, Lu

Shu did not need to care about the Network's comments on him at all.

Now, knowing that Nie Ting might have other plans for him, Lu Shu was certain that it would not cost him much if the Heavenly Network had a bad impression of him. In any case, he was already a Major.

Without money, the group of geniuses who had never stepped into society were suddenly flustered.

With money, they could always find food and accommodation wherever they were. But now, it remained a question as to where they should go to eat or stay.

No money, no sense of security. This was also applicable to the Daoyuan Class geniuses.

"In my opinion, since the Heavenly Network put us together, they certainly hope we can work together to figure out a way. So, let's brainstorm. What can we do?" most of the geniuses were not stupid.

"Also, I think the Heavenly Network always discourages us from getting what we want by using our power in front of civilians. So, we'd better not show our own abilities," someone suggested, "Maybe this can add bonus points."

Yi Ran laughed, "How about we state our own strengths? So that we can plan out what we can do. I don't believe a group of geniuses together can be defeated by life."

"Piano!"

"Piano!"

"Accordion!"

"Painting!"

The group listed a long string of talents. Unsurprisingly, there were some similarities in the geniuses' families as their hobbies were all about cultivating their temperament.

Lu Shu mused, maybe this bunch of kids could really form a band! Then what could he do? Whistling?

But they didn't even have any musical instruments!

It was Lu Shu's turn, but he did not know how to play any instruments. While other people were all talking about Western instruments, would it be too degrading if he said he could whistle?

Lu Shu went quiet. Yi Ran urged, "What is your talent, Lu Shu?"

He pondered for a while, "Breaking a rock with my chest?"

This should be high-level enough?

### **329 CHEATING**

The group of geniuses were amidst a heated discussion about how to make their ends meet. One proposed to join a band at a Backsea pub, another suggested private tuition, but its payment would take longer.

However, why would anyone hire some amateur kids? Their standard was far below that of professional musicians.

Lu Shu did not want to waste his time hearing them out. Ever since he expressed his talent of "breaking rocks with his chest", the rest seemed unwilling to include him in their discussion. He was a misfit!

Cao Qingci did not speak a word throughout the entire discussion. Still quiet, she saw Lu Shu walk towards a newsstand.

"Hey, I want to make a call," Lu Shu shouted at the newsstand owner. The middle-aged man looked up at Lu Shu and wondered who would still use fixed-line phones nowadays. Even he seldom touched it.

But Lu Shu looked like an ordinary student, not a migrant worker. Maybe he had his phone stolen.

Lu Shu recalled the number with incredible memory and dialed the phone immediately. The call was picked up at once and a voice called out in surprise, "Hello?"

"It's me, Lu Shu, calling... Uh hm, Zuan, quickly come and fetch me at the train station. Be fast and be cool," Lu Shu said.

"Brother Shu!" Zuan was pleasantly surprised, "You are really in the Capital for progress report? Wait a minute, I'm on my way!"

Lu Shu stood in front of the newsstand after he hung up the call. The owner cast a brief glance at him, "Forty cents per minute."

"I've got no money," Lu Shu replied with great confidence as he stood outside the door of the newsstand.

"From Wang Bin's distress, +99..."

Before the owner got angry, Lu Shu said, "My friend's coming in a minute. He will certainly pay."

After he heard that, the owner did not question further as he thought Lu Shu did not look like a rascal.

On the other hand, the geniuses continued to discuss with full enthusiasm, "Tonight we can stay in the ticket hall. They have chairs. Plus, it shows we can endure hardships, doesn't it?"

"I don't mind. How about tomorrow then? The thing is we can't even afford our dinner. Shall we go carry luggage or something?"

"Carrying luggage is such a brainless job... Through that the Heavenly Network can't see our intellectual abilities. Will that be a minus point?"

In the end, no conclusion was reached after the long discussion.

Actually, it was a well-known fact that in business, the number of decision-makers in the team should not exceed three. Otherwise, they would be screwed. At present, although the geniuses were quickly bonded together by adversity and let go of their pride and indolence, the question still persisted, as no one could be convinced by the others. Each and every one of them wanted to do something impressive to capture the attention of the Heavenly Network.

Lu Shu only looked at them cheerfully. Out of the good will of including Lu Shu, Yi

Ran tried to engage him, "Lu Shu, come and join the discussion."

"It's fine. You can discuss among yourselves."

Other people were a bit annoyed by Lu Shu's attitude. Why was everybody trying so hard to think of a plan, but he, for whatever reason, chose to wait and reap the fruits of their collective wisdom?

However, in less than 20 minutes, a luxurious car roared past and stopped nearby. Stunned, all of them could only stare as Lu Shu sat next to the driver after greeting the person in the car.

"He can do this?!" someone was in shock.

"This is absolute cheating!"

No wonder Lu Shu refused to join their discussion, because he had already found his way out!

"Why do I not have any friends in the Capital..."

"Begrudge him for what? My uncle is in the Capital too! But think about it, how will the Heavenly Network think of you if you rely on external help to pass the assessment?"

"Indeed. An assessment is an assessment. How can one go with the shortcut!"

"I expected better from him. But it is better to not play this kind of trick in the face of the Heavenly Network."

"Wait! You said your uncle was in the Capital. Can you remember his number?"

"Er... No," in the modern age, who would actually remember other people's numbers besides their parents' or lover's? That person was actually boasting when he mentioned his uncle in the Capital. He did not even know where his uncle stayed, let alone his number.

Someone said in a sour voice, "But Lu Shu remembered..."

As for Lu Shu, Zuan was a bit curious, "Brother Shu, it's pretty obvious that they want to assess your character by taking away all your stuff. Are you sure it's okay that you are cheating like this?"

"It's fine," Lu Shu could not care less, "I'm interested in neither the Heavenly King, nor the Chief Manager of some state. What's the use of a good character record?"

"Indeed..." Zuan paused for a second, "Brother Shu, I'm so touched to know that you actually remembered my number!"

"Of course, we are friends!" Lu Shu laughed.

After all, you promised to take care of my food and accommodation, didn't you? If not, honestly I might not have been able to remember it at all.

"Where are we going now?" Lu Shu asked.

"Haha, I'll show you the prosperity of our Capital, of course! There will be feasting and revelry too!"



...

Lingjing Lane, the Capital.

Though the name of the lane was absent in all existing documents, its existence was real.

At the end of the narrow lane there was a different world altogether.

Despite the seeming lack of pattern, the arrangement of the buildings exuded a sense of completeness. Endless routes hidden between the eaves and houses, that extended in all directions with an air of tranquility.

Further down the road, in a corner there was a staircase that led underground. The staircase was unguarded, as though the people inside were unconcerned about any uninvited visitors.

One of the underground buildings was extremely spacious and futuristic, with one wall as tall as four meters and more than ten meters in width, installed with a giant screen.

Numerous monitor recordings were shown on the screen. In the center of the room located a control panel with buttons and joysticks, which seemed to be used to control all the images on the screen.

At that moment, Nie Ting sat quietly in front of the control panel and stared mindlessly at the screen in front of him. It was as if he was looking at something, but at the same time nothing at all.

Shi Xuejin entered, "Is there really a need for this?"

"Yes."

"We are in severe shortage of manpower," Shi Xuejin said, after some consideration.

"We don't need wretches. They are capable of nothing but terrible mistakes," Nie Ting calmly replied, his eyes indecipherable.

Shi Xuejin sighed. What he meant was that character building could be trained and practiced and that it was too absolute to throw the baby out with the bathwater like that. After all, those were all Class A aptitude geniuses with the potential of ascending to the top.

To give up any one of them would be a great loss to the cultivation realm.

In this aspect, Shi Xuejin disagreed with Nie Ting, but he still respected Nie Ting's choice. Without saying anything more, he sat beside Nie Ting quietly and indulged in his reading.

To Shi Xuejin, reading was more important than anything else.

...

The scenes on the screen were constantly changing. For an outsider, they might think that Nie Ting only sat there staring into the blank space.

But the scenes were continuously projected into his unfocused eyes, as though nothing

could escape his attention.

This room had long been a secret of the Heavenly Network. The only thing that was made known was that all information was handed to Shi Xuejin, who would bring it to Nie Ting inside.

People were only aware that Nie Ting's power was ranked third in the entire world, and that his hard-fought combat abilities from his cultivation were terrific.

However, it never occurred to anyone that someone like him would awaken to other incredible powers again.

Really, no one was willing to entertain the thought. He was already scary enough. Had he awakened again, it would be indeed unimaginable.

Suddenly, Nie Ting pointed to a footage in the bottom right corner of the screen, "Chen's kid drove Lu Shu away. Undisguised cheating."

Shi Xuejin cast a glimpse at him and smiled, "Why so much attention on him?"

Nie Ting did not reply.

"You think that... he can become the ninth?" Shi Xuejin's interest was elicited, "But he resorted to such a foul means. What will you do?"

Nie Ting removed his eyes from the screen, sighed heavily and gathered his cloak together, "The apocalypse is coming. It's not good if one always abides to conditions. Also, taking foul means doesn't mean he has no principles."

### 330 THE CLUB

When Zuan mentioned feasting and revelry, Lu Shu's heart was itching. Although he did not plan on doing anything, he had never been to those places after all.

It was normal for one to experience a surplus of hormones in his puberty years. But Lu Shu actually had no guts for anything, even if he was told to do it.

Conflicted, Lu Shu sat in the front passenger seat and thought, if they were really heading to that kind of place, how could he pretend that it wasn't his first time there? That was the burning question!

However, their final destination was a rundown factory-looking building, situated in the suburbs. There were even weeds outside its courtyard. Lu Shu was confused, why did this not seem right?

At the entry, Lu Shu suddenly saw six security guards standing in the yard. A young man, dressed in a Chinese cotton shirt, was sitting next to them with his eyes closed, composed. To Lu Shu's surprise, there were energy waves from the young man.

After the car stopped within the gates, Chen Zuan lowered his window and flashed his VIP card. Only when Chen Zuan showed up, the young man opened his eyes and smiled at the latter, but still remained seated.

He was probably the coolest security guard Lu Shu had ever seen.

Chen Zuan murmured, "Though he's a Class D Metahuman, strangely the Heavenly Network doesn't pay much attention to him. Actually that's pretty normal, but people like him who dare to walk around brazenly are still a rarity."

"If you don't think he's self-conceited enough. Before I got promoted to Captain and

ascended to Class D with my rewards, he wouldn't even bother to greet me," Chen Zuan complained.

After the incident at Salt Lake remains, the greatest credit was given to Lu Shu in the end. But Chen Zuan was already fully satisfied, his ranking as a Captain was enough for him to hold his head high.

Lu Shu nodded. As the saying went, one who is too clever has no friends. Before he got in touch with the real world, his judgment could only be based on the Golden Foundation comments. Now, however, he started to realize that the Heavenly Network did not have full control over every Practitioner and Metahuman in the country.

But... What happened to the feasting and revelry?

The abandoned factory was rather spacious as it occupied more than one hundred hectares of land. Young men and women were gliding to and fro among the buildings, but there were no pretty and cute girls in revealing clothing as Lu Shu had imagined. Most of them were dressed in sportswear...

Lu Shu felt cheated.

After Chen Zuan parked his car, Lu Shu suddenly heard a gunshot from one of the buildings. The shot definitely did not sound like one from an ordinary gun... Was it a rifle?

Lu Shu was dumbfounded for a few minutes. Since Practitioners could get free membership, he could roughly guess the function of the place. Speaking of which, they changed their activities to keep up with the new fashion, but Lu Shu had no interest in violence. To Lu Shu who had already ascended to Class C, those activities

had no appeal at all. He still preferred unfashionable stuff...

What about those pretty and cute girls? Huh?!

Chen Zuan brought Lu Shu to the shooting range first, where two people were playing with guns. There were a pile of guns on the counter, but Lu Shu could not name any.

Chen Zuan smiled, "Actually many were disappointed, as not everybody had the aptitude for cultivation. At first, people went with the flow, starting with guns and boxing but suddenly, violence gained popularity. Then, some people realized that the fear of death could stimulate awakening, so things like extreme-sports and parkour began. After that, the club has been holding professional training sessions for parachuting, including certificates and scheduled skydiving outside with chartered planes. Would you believe me if I said a girl really awakened to her power while parachuting?"

Lu Shu could imagine that, since the rest would certainly risk their lives for that slim glimpse of hope following someone else's success. After all, so many people went for arm wrestling with Liu Li.

Everything here was challenging Lu Shu's beliefs. Initially he thought people like Chen Zuan would enjoy alcohol and flirt with pub girls all day, but it turned out that the life of the rich was beyond the imagination of someone as poor as him...

However, for an ungifted individual, the chances of awakening might be unthinkably faint.

Under the disguise of the dilapidated facade, the interior was very modern, forming a stark contrast with the weathered walls outside.

The pavement inside were rather advanced as well, with the road surface made of materials permeable to water.

"Let's go. Guns are boring, let me show you actual combat," Chen Zuan smirked, "Practitioners are the boss here. You'll know it later."

Following Chen Zuan, Lu Shu walked towards the innermost factory building. He actually heard waves of cheering inside.

Lu Shu took a look inside. Surprisingly, there were as many, if not more, girls than guys. He expected the former to be uninterested in those activities, but the reality showed otherwise.

They looked like fan-girls of some celebrity.

When Chen Zuan entered, one person brightened up and came to greet him, "Good to see you, Zuan! Wanna have a fight in the Lower Realm?"

"Haha, not today. I'm Class D anyway, my rivals will be begging for mercy if I fight in the Lower Realm," Chen Zuan smiled faintly, but there was a tinge of overbearingness in his voice.

Lu Shu cast a glance at Chen Zuan, hehe, look at how proud he was!

Unexpectedly, in response to the provocation, the other person only smiled politely, "Indeed. They will be begging for your mercy, haha."

Begging? His mercy?! You gotta be kidding me! Lu Shu was shocked, how weak

were those people?!

Even Chen Zuan was considered an ace here?

At first, with the impression that the club members were all sky-divers and snipers, Lu Shu held them in high regard. But now... their image suddenly plunged.

The man turned to Lu Shu, "This is?"

Chen Zuan grinned, "Haha, this is my guest, a pro!"

The man was curious, "A pro? Even better than you?"

Chen Zuan's face froze for a second, and then he burst into hearty laughter, "Hahaha, about the same!"