

Chapter 1241: Bright Starry Sky

In a far off place, but still in the Upper Realm, there were two cultivators high in the sky, one fat and one thin, but both were excited. "Fat Bro, we're going to become disciples of both the Progenitor of Bloodlines and the Progenitor of Combat!"

"That's right, Skinny Bro. The day has finally come. We just need to place in the top ten of this ZENITH, right? That's too easy."

"Fat Bro, I've decided that I won't eat before the competition. I'll get even thinner. That way, I'll definitely make it into the top ten."

"Skinny Bro, you're already very thin. Hey, you actually look a lot thinner than yesterday."

"Really? Fat Bro, you're definitely a lot fatter than yesterday."

"Hahaha, really? Skinny Bro, let's work together to become disciples of the two Progenitors. When the time comes, we'll roam the universe. Forget the Fifth Mainland—not even those monsters will be our opponents."

"Fat Bro, let's work together."

"Skinny Bro, you've inspired me! Let's work together."

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At this moment, another voice was heard throughout the Upper Realm that rendered everyone from the Sixth Mainland utterly speechless. "I am the Progenitor of Secret Arts."

When the Progenitor of Secret Arts spoke, everyone from the Sixth Mainland felt numb. Of their three Progenitors, the Progenitor of Secret Arts had always been the most mysterious, and he rarely ever appeared openly. He had created more secret techniques than the other two Progenitors combined.

Many people wished to worship the Progenitor of Secret Arts as their teacher. Even if they were unable to learn any of his supreme battle techniques or receive the greatest inheritance, they would definitely still be able to learn at least two secret techniques under his tutelage, which was enough to change defeat into victory in most situations.

It was common sense in the Sixth Mainland that people from the Progenitor of Secret Arts' Territory should not be provoked because fighting against them was simply too infuriating.

"My home has been stolen away, and my life will be decided within a few days. However, the people of my Sixth Mainland will not be affected by fate. They will definitely take back their homeland, and everyone will retain their strength. The Fifth Mainland's ZENITH is about to start, and those who can successfully enter the top ten will become the disciples of us three Progenitors and will be able to accept the inheritance of all three Progenitors."

The words of the Progenitor of Secret Arts sent the flames within the hearts of all of the Sixth Mainland's cultivators into overdrive. All of the youths immediately registered for ZENITH while the older cultivators decided to do everything possible to improve their younger generation's strength.

Although the Sixth Mainland cultivators originally had not cared about ZENITH, their passion had now burst into full flames.

An arrow pierced through the dark vacuum of space. It was impossible to know how far that arrow traveled, but it might have even left the region of the known universe.

Little Arrow Saint raised his head, his eyes blazing with an unprecedented fire. The opportunity to become a disciple of all three Progenitors was something that could not be sought, but rather only stumbled upon.

Back then, he had wanted to hunt Lu Yin down to prove that he was worthy to be a Progenitor's disciple, but unfortunately, he had failed. Little Arrow Saint did not want to fail again at this junction. Regardless of if he had to go up against the Sixth Mainland's Realmings, the Daosource Three Skies, the Fifth Mainland's Ten Arbiters, or the geniuses from the Neoverse, he would defeat every single one of them in order to climb to the top ten.

In another region of the space above the Upper Realm, a man dressed in white clothes with a faint smile on his face walked along. "The disciple of all three Progenitors? What's the point? Their path of cultivation is different. Still, this ZENITH sounds very interesting, and it's been quite a long time. The final ten?"

This man was Mr. Bai, whose true name was Wu Taibai. He was one of the Daosource Three Skies.

Some distance away, Zhi Yi opened her eyes, revealing a cold light. She stood up and respectfully said, "This disciple will follow her orders."

She had just heard the Progenitor of Bloodline's words, letting her know that she had been appointed as one of the gatekeepers of ZENITH, and she immediately understood her purpose as a gatekeeper.

"Don't worry, Master. Your disciple will definitely stomp on everyone from the Fifth Mainland," Zhi Yi resolutely declared.

Elsewhere, Bu Kong had received a message from the Progenitor of Secret Arts, learning that he had also been appointed as a gatekeeper for ZENITH. However, Bu Kong did not think that these matters were as simple as they appeared to be. He had a deep impression of the Fifth Mainland's powerhouses after the battle in the Cosmic Sea, and he knew that there was only one thing to be done as a gatekeeper: allow the Sixth Mainland cultivators to pass through and no one else.

When it came to the combat power of the average cultivator, Bu Kong felt that the Sixth Mainland far outclassed the Fifth Mainland.

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A large crowd had already gathered around Zenith Mountain, and they were all watching the mountain from a distance. The live broadcast of the competition would also be broadcast across the entire network.

One name after another continuously appeared on Zenith Mountain, and the speed at which they appeared was astonishing, especially the names of the people from the Sixth Mainland. It felt as if thousands of people were simultaneously registering at any given moment.

This was true of not just the Sixth Mainland, as there were many people signing up from the Astral Beast Domain, the Cosmic Sea, the Neoverse, and even the Astral Wilderness.

Slowly, the people of the Human Domain realized that they would not be the only participants in ZENITH.

The people at the top had already known about this, but the people at the bottom had been completely unaware that the Astral Beast Domain, the Technocracy, and even the Sixth Mainland would be sending youths to compete. This news created huge waves throughout the entire Human Domain.

Countless people objected to such an open competition, and the entire network was full of comments revealing people's dissatisfaction. Naturally, there were countless insults made against the Astral Beast Domain, the Technocracy, and the Sixth Mainland, forcing CyNet to consider implementing a public perception campaign even as they frantically deleted numerous comments.

However, ZENITH was something that the Hall of Honor had started promoting long ago. Thus, any information about the competition at all would create a stir, let alone a huge matter like other territories participating.

Far away from Zenith Mountain, countless people stared at the names that appeared on the side of the mountain one after another, as they all wanted to know which famous powerhouses would be competing. Many people had a gambler's mentality, and therefore, they wanted to make a list of competitors to produce a ranking and determine the odds.

"Who's that? Yao Go? Isn't that person on Skymender's List from the Astral Beast Domain? I heard that the beings on Skymender's List are able to compete for the top ten places and that each one is practically peerless within their generation," someone commented, and their comment immediately sparked a flood of responses.

At this time, another name appeared. "Cursewind? That's another powerhouse on Skymender's List."

"Tian Hou? Do you see that name? Tian Hou? Do you remember the Tournament of the Strongest that took place several years ago? Tian Hou was a participant from the Astral Beast Domain, and he was a legend."

"When I think about it, any attack made against that creature was useless, and now, he's appeared once again."

"The victor of the Tournament of the Strongest was Lu Yin, who's now one of the Ten Arbiters. No matter how powerful this Tian Hou, Arbiter Lu already beat him back then, and now, Lu Yin has defeated two of the other Ten Arbiters. If Tian Hou ends up meeting Lu Yin in this competition, he'll just be defeated once again."

"Things aren't the same now. A unique lifeform like a Cosmic Hou grow increasingly powerful as they improve, and they can even develop strange abilities. I hope that Arbiter Lu won't be careless."

"Don't just pay attention to the Astral Beast Domain. Let's see who's going to be participating from the Sixth Mainland."

"What about the Technocracy?"

"Why bother even looking at the names from the Technocracy? Not even a ghost would know anything about that place, so we clearly don't have anything to go off of."

"During the Tournament of the Strongest, the participants from the Technocracy were certainly not weak."

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Although many people had heard that the Sixth Mainland would be sending people to participate, few knew the names of any of the people from the Sixth Mainland.

The major forces of the Inniverse had known for a long time that the Sixth Mainland would have a place in ZENITH. Thus, they were not surprised by their presence. However, what was truly shocking was the sheer number of registrants from the Sixth Mainland.

Lu Yin was also browsing the network at the moment and reading through the names on Zenith Mountain while thinking about the upcoming contest.

His gadget beeped with a notification. Lan Si was calling.

"Have you seen Zenith Mountain?" Lan Si asked.

Lu Yin grunted, "Are you getting nervous?"

"Of course! I've faced or at least heard of them all. I already saw Yuhua Mavis's name on the list along with Yōu Qin, Xia Jiuyou, and more. Also, I saw that the Sixth Mainland's Bai Ling is competing. No one expects the Realmings to lose, and that's not even considering the Daosource Three Skies," Lan Si said.

Lu Yin quietly listened.

"Are you confident? I mean, about getting to the top ten?" Lan Si asked.

Lu Yin considered the question before replying, "90%."

Lan Si was stunned and stayed silent for an entire minute. "I don't want to meet you in ZENITH. I suspect that you'll be one of the scariest participants in this contest."

Right after Lan Si finished speaking, five more names appeared above the five mountain passes on Zenith Mountain. These names were written in a much more impressive manner than any of the others, and they radiated a golden light that caused countless people to stare at them.

The name that had appeared over the southern pass was Bu Kong. Above the western pass was Zhi Yi, the northern pass Yao Xuan, and the eastern pass Lu Yin.

Then, there was a final pass that stood above the other four mountain passes that had to be crossed regardless of the path if one wanted to approach the top of the mountain. Above this central pass, the name Shang Qing appeared.

Ever since news of ZENITH had been released, many rumors had spread about the gatekeepers, and everyone had been eager to find out who the gatekeepers would be. At this moment, the five seeded contestants had finally been announced.

Lu Yin's brows rose as he stared at Zenith Mountain. He had really been appointed as a gatekeeper, and he would be standing guard over the eastern pass. During the competition, he would definitely be assaulted by countless people.

At the other end of the call, Lan Si was left speechless. He had just mentioned that he felt that Lu Yin would be one of the most terrifying opponents in the competition, and now, it had just been revealed that Lu Yin was a gatekeeper.

It was impossible for the Hall of Honor to randomly designate a gatekeeper, as they were responsible for filtering out at least half of the participants. If their gatekeeper was defeated, then it would be humiliating for the Hall of Honor. To put it simply, the Hall of Honor would only appoint gatekeepers who were considered invincible. Additionally, there was a ninety nine percent chance of the gatekeepers ending up among ZENITH's top ten.

"I was completely right." Lan Si smiled wryly.

Lu Yin suggested, "You should break through and become an Enlighter. It's already expected that the Sixth Mainland's Realmlings will all break through before ZENITH."

"Yeah, this isn't something I can deal with without becoming an Enlighter," Lan Si said before ending the call.

Right after Lan Si hung up, Lu Yin heard Ku Wei's voice call out. "Seventh Bro! Great Seventh Bro! You are too impressive! You're one of the five gatekeepers, and you will be standing as the protector of the first stage. You are the most powerful of our generation, and the Sixth Mainland's best will all be shocked! The Astral Beast Domain will be dumbfounded! Seventh Bro..."

Lu Yin rolled his eyes, as this guy's words were getting even more shameless with time. Lu Yin felt that Ku Wei had started to become unpredictable in terms of his development, but it was true that Ku Wei had never been one to look back.

There was another shameless one right next to Ku Wei, who was Elder Tan. He was not the same as Ku Wei, and Elder Tan felt that Ku Wei was just spouting hot air. As soon as Elder Tan saw that Lu Yin had really been announced as one of the five gatekeepers, he immediately accessed the network and commanded everyone who was logged in to cheer for Lu Yin. Elder Tan sang praises to Lu Yin's virtues, and he stunned people by claiming that Lu Yin was the most powerful participant in ZENITH. Elder Tan wanted to flatter Lu Yin without being noticed, though he also needed to find a way to show Lu Yin how much of an abomination his competitor, Ku Wei was.

The people of the Human Domain had already been disgusted to learn that the Sixth Mainland would also be participating in ZENITH, but after learning that two of the five gatekeepers were from the Sixth Mainland, countless people grew infuriated.

However, despite their anger even spreading to the Hall of Honor, nothing could affect ZENITH itself. Out of desperation, someone started a petition begging the masters of the Human Domain to force the competitors from the Sixth Mainland, Astral Beast Domain, and Technocracy to leave the competition.

In truth, many people had become enraged by the recent news, and even in the Neoverse, there were many people ranting about how they wanted the invaders from the Sixth Mainland to be kicked out of ZENITH the most.

The entire Human Domain erupted in passionate anger.

The Sixth Mainland had been bewitched by the allure of becoming a disciple of all three Progenitors, but this excitement was completely thrown off track after the revelation that Lu Yin had been appointed as a gatekeeper.

Chapter 1242: Mentor's Help

In the Upper Realm, Autumnfrost Qing stared blankly at the information on the network, utterly focused on the word above the eastern pass. How had that person had actually managed to become a gatekeeper? Truly, how? Could he really compare to the Daosource Three Skies? Or was it that the Fifth Mainland had lost all of their younger powerhouses?

In the Upper Realm, outside a place where lava flowed up into the starry sky, a group of people were grilling food.

A savory aroma filled the air as it drifted out from the meat of a giant beast that was in the process of being roasted, the scent making the nearby people drool.

Sixteenth was quite clever, and he attentively offered the roasted meat over to Xu San, leaving the young man quite content. "Sixteen, I'm guessing that your mind alone will be enough to get you into the top ten of ZENITH. It's almost guaranteed."

Sixteenth offered a flattering smile. "I must ask Master San to speak well of me before the elders and ask the elders to teach and instruct me so that I can work hard towards entering the top ten."

"Hahaha! That's easy enough, plenty easy. We're old friends." Xu San laughed, sounding very happy. The truth was that only he was aware of his inner turmoil.

I thought that by clinging to Ancestor Lingtong, I'd have nothing that I'd ever need to worry about ever again. Who could have known that some group of monsters would suddenly invade the Sixth Mainland?! If not for my luck, I would have died there! Xu San trembled as he remembered that incident. I wonder, what happened to that guy? Did I save him, or did he save himself? Xu San felt a bit confused about some things, but there was one thing that he was very clear on: that person was someone from the Fifth Mainland, and they were also incredibly strong.

"Xu- Xu- Xu San, look!" Sixteen suddenly shouted while pointing at a page on the network.

Xu San glanced at the screen, and he promptly dropped the leg that he had been eating.

What had shocked him so much? It was precisely the two golden characters written on Zenith Mountain: Lu Yin. Boss! Boss!

Sixteen stared blankly at the screen as a storm tore through his mind. That kid from before had become a gatekeeper? What a joke! How could he compare to any of the Daosource Three Skies?

Meanwhile, Xu San held a fervent gaze. Boss is getting better and better. Xu San decided that he could not go back to the Sixth Mainland and had instead decided to return to the Fifth Mainland. Regardless, Boss was in the Fifth Mainland, and with him around, no one would dare to bully Xu San. As for Ancestor Lingtong, Xu San just sighed. The old man was too good to Xu San, but if possible, perhaps Boss would be able to take care of the old man too.

He still did not understand just how terrifying a Cosmic Imprinter was.

In another part of the Upper Realm, someplace that was not too far away from Xu San, Nong Zaitian stared at his screen and sighed. His home was gone, along with so many treasures. Also, he did not have the other hoe; just where had it gone? Nong Zaitian had searched all over the ruins of the Fifth Mainland's Daosource Sect, but he had been unable to find that bastard anywhere. He couldn't be dead! He still had Nong Zaitian's hoe.

At this moment, the person from the Sixth Mainland who was the most concerned about Lu Yin was actually Tong Zhan. After all, he knew who had attacked him from behind and taken him out in an instant: Lu Yin. As a result, Tong Zhan had lost his impressive cultivation talent and been abandoned by his Tong family afterwards.

Looking at the name written on the side of the Zenith Mountain, Tong Zhan's eyes radiated a deep hatred. In ZENITH, he had to do his best to destroy Lu Yin.

Zhi Yi had the same idea as Tong Zhan. She had never expected Lu Yin to become a gatekeeper, but it was both hilarious and lucky to her. "Is there no one better than you in the Fifth Mainland? If that's the case, then just forget about it. You'll be taken out during ZENITH."

The Sixth Mainland shook from the news concerning the gatekeepers, but the same reactions occurred in the Neoverse.

Although they had been brilliant in the Mountain and Seas Zone, Yuhua Mavis, Xia Jiuyou, and the others had not qualified to become gatekeepers, but Lu Yin had. This was no different than all of them being told that Lu Yin had surpassed them, and it immediately caught their attention.

Yuhua Mavis was on the back of the massive turtle as she stared at the bright characters that made up Lu Yin's name that was etched onto the side of Zenith Mountain. "I look forward to comparing strength with you again. I don't know how many punches you can match up to, but the Hall of Honor has to have confirmed your strength in order for you to become a gatekeeper. I hope that I won't be disappointed by your power."

The revelation that Lu Yin had become a gatekeeper created quite a stir, but that was not the only piece of sensational news. Zhi Yi, Bu Kong, and Yao Xuan had all been confirmed as gatekeepers, which also created quite a stir. Many people throughout the Human Domain criticized this announcement and hoped that the three outsiders would all be badly beaten .

As for Shang Qing, he had been given the position of the most important gatekeeper. The reputation of the Tri-Yang Ancestral Qi Technique had even spread to the Sixth Mainland, and they were well aware that the Tri-Yang Technique could transform the three strands of qi into clones of a Progenitor with the same realm of strength as the user. It was also known that two of Shang Qing's qi strands had taken on the form of Progenitor Chen's nine clones, but there was a great deal of speculation concerning the third strand.

No matter which Progenitor was cloned by the final strand, Progenitor Chen alone was already a challenge to deal with.

Who could be confident of defeating Progenitor Chen at the same cultivation level? Was there anyone from the Fifth Mainland? No one. The Sixth Mainland? They did not even dare to record Progenitor Chen down in their history.

After the Sixth Mainland learned that Shang Qing could borrow the power of two of Progenitor Chen's clones, the youth became the number one enemy of everyone from his generation in the Sixth Mainland.

The five golden names that had appeared on Zenith Mountain shook the entire universe.

Lu Yin disconnected from the network soon after. No matter how the rest of the universe shook at the news, it had nothing to do with him. He even considered trying to roll Timestop in order to enter that space and cultivate for several years, perhaps even a decade or more.

However, even the thought of attempting such a thing gave him a headache. If he trained in seclusion for more than a decade, he believed that he would change, and he would likely mentally age tremendously.

His gadget sounded with an alert, and he simply glanced down to check. He had received a tremendous number of calls recently.

Huh? Someone was actually calling through the Astral Combat Academy's internal network?

Lu Yin connected, and he instantly heard an old voice. "Little guy, do you still want to graduate?"

This voice sounded both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time, and it sent Lu Yin back ten years into the past. When he had last heard this voice, he had still been a student at Astral-10. "Student Lu Yin greets the Trialmaster."

"How flattering, this little guy still remembers me." The Trialmaster gave a slight smile.

Lu Yin respectfully replied, "A student would never dare to forget what they are taught at the academy."

When Lu Yin had been in the academy, he had not understood just how powerful Astral-10's mentors actually were. But the further he had progressed, the more clearly he had come to understand the Astral Combat Academy's hidden depths, as each one of the academies had been able to fight against the universe's superpowers. Lu Yin would never forget how Astral-9 had managed to block Ancestor Autumnfrost's attack during the attack on the border, nor had he forgotten that Astral-10 had actually intimidated the Sixth Mainland. The Astral Combat Academy was incredibly strong, but Astral-10 stood out amongst them all.

"I don't have the time to just chat with you. Your fellow cohorts have already all graduated. When do you plan to graduate?" the Trialmaster asked.

Lu Yin helplessly replied, "Teacher, this student is really short on time at the moment, as I need to prepare for ZENITH."

The Trialmaster said, "Well, I saw that you're going to be one of the five gatekeepers. Are you confident?"

Lu Yin wanted to reply confidently. Facing his alma mater, he wanted to show off a bit. It would be even more perfect if he returned to the academy and was able to show off to those junior students, but suddenly, Lu Yin felt something was wrong. Those words—just what did the old man mean by them?

Lu Yin thought of a possibility, and he bitterly replied, "The Hall of Honor is placing too much on this student, and I have actually been dealing with a great deal of pressure."

The Trialmaster replied, "The Hall of Honor really does put too much on you. How long have you been cultivating? The time you've spent cultivating probably can't compare to even a quarter of the participants in ZENITH. Still, it's better to train and practice. Will you soon become a Boundless Advanced Lockbreaker?"

Lu Yin answered quickly, "Yes, this junior has already achieved that."

"Have you tried to comprehend a sourcebox array?"

"It's rather difficult."

"Since you haven't graduated yet, then it means that you still belong to my Astral-10. The academy will give you some support. Although this old man has no real skills, I still have some achievements when it comes to lockbreaking. I'll give you a sourcebox array so that you don't humiliate yourself in ZENITH. As long as you comprehend a little of this array, you should have a much easier time as a gatekeeper," the Trialmaster said.

Lu Yin was overjoyed. "Thank you, Mentor."

"You'll receive the sourcebox array in no more than three days, so do your best to comprehend it. I don't expect you to fully comprehend it, but do your best to achieve at least some bit of success. Also, hurry up and come back to graduate." The Trialmaster hung up as soon as he finished speaking.

Lu Yin continued staring at the screen, the ecstasy in his eyes unable to dissipate.

What was this? Had fortune flown straight into his lap?

He had never expected his alma mater to deliver such a big surprise to him. They were giving him a sourcebox array, not some battle technique.

All sourcebox arrays were extremely precious, as there was no other way that Saul would have schemed and plotted so desperately to get his hands for even a single page of True Insight. Lu Yin had several sourcebox arrays in his possession, and now, he was actually being given another one! Mentor!

Ever since Lu Yin had escaped from the Neohuman Alliance, he had found that his luck had become nothing less than absolutely amazing.

As for the matter of graduating, that was impossible. He would never graduate in his entire lifetime.

Before graduating, he was still considered a part of Astral-10, and Astral-10 would not forget their own. If Lu Yin ever encountered something in the future, they would be one more source of support.

Lu Yin had always felt that Astral-10 was a bit unpredictable, but the one who had cared the most for Lu Yin had always been the crazy director.

Previously, Lu Yin had been unable to understand just how powerful the director was, but as Lu Yin had grown stronger, he had gradually gained a bit of understanding.

The mad director had actually been able to deduce the Cosmic Art! The Cosmic Art was something that had been created by Progenitor Chen, but the director had managed to deduce it. Although he had only managed to deduce the first layer of the cultivation art, it was still an accomplishment that ordinary people could not fathom.

The madman was clearly very powerful.

News of ZENITH shook the universe, and many people sped up their plans to explore, compete for resources, and other similar activities. At the same time, many organizations dedicated all of their resources to raising up their most talented disciples, even if they were aware that none of their youths could reach the top ten. As long as their name could remain written on the mountain for even just a little bit longer, that was already enough.

That was Zenith Mountain. It was the location of the first youth competition that was open to the entire universe, even the Sixth Mainland. If a youth's name was able to remain on the side of the mountain for even a bit longer than average, then it would be enough to raise waves in their home territory.

The most simplistic way of explaining this was that it was advertising. Zenith Mountain was basically a giant billboard that the entire universe was focused upon, and each contestant's name was an advertising slogan. The longer a name remained on the mountain for, the more effective it would be, and the greater the benefits that the power behind the youth would receive.

In this situation, countless people signed up for ZENITH, even in the Outerverse, which was widely regarded as the weakest territory. People wanted to see their name appear on Zenith Mountain, even if only for a moment. That alone would be worthy of bragging about to future generations. Of course, there were also people who signed up with no intention of ever participating in the competition.

Numerous names appeared on the side of Zenith Mountain at any given moment, and there were all kinds of bizarre names. There were some that were just a series of numbers while others were a simple paw print or some other strange mark. Many people were stunned.

However, after a few days, there were a number of names that distinctly stood out on the mountain, as all the participants had been compiled into a list of those favored to enter the top one hundred, as well as those expected to enter the top ten. Of course, that second list included the names of all five gatekeepers. Additionally, the Neoverse's Yuhua Mavis and Xia Jiuyou, the Astral Beast Domain's Star

Devourer, and the last of the Daosource Three Skies, Wu Taibai, had been placed as the favored candidates for the final ten contestants.

Of course, everything was based off of who had signed up so far, and many people had not done so yet. Additionally, there was not only one such list, but rather many, many lists made by different people, and their lists were all different.

Chapter 1243: Big Gamble

Some of these lists include prospects for all ten finalists, which were being called the top ten. Others added Lei Nü, Yōu Qi, and Qiu Shi, and still others left Lu Yin out of the seeded contestants. Their logic was that, even if a Hunter was incredibly gifted, it would still be impossible for a Hunter to stand out amongst numerous genius Enlighters.

They believed that the reason why Lu Yin had been able to join the Ten Arbiters was because originally, none of the Ten Arbiters had broken through to the Enlighter realm. However, ZENITH was about to start, and any of the Ten Arbiters could break through at any given moment. Lu Yin had only just become a Hunter, and it was clearly impossible for him to become an Enlighter so quickly.

It had to be admitted that many people felt that this was the truth of the matter.

Of course, Lu Yin was not the only one who had been removed from some of the lists of the expected top ten. Almost all of the Ten Arbiters were removed, as well as the Neoverse's Yōu Qi and Yuhua Mavis. Only Shang Qing and Xia Jiuyou stayed on these lists. This was because one of them cultivated the peerless Tri-Yang Technique while the other one used Progenitor Chen's Nine Clone's Technique. Actually, there was one other person who had been added to the list of predicted finalists: Starsibyl. After all, she also cultivated the Nine Clones Technique.

There were all kinds of lists, and it was possible to find hundreds of variations of rankings for the competitors at any given moment.

However, no matter which list was checked, Lu Yin was not ranked highly due to his cultivation only being at the Hunter realm. Despite his strength being impressive and receiving the position of gatekeeper from the Hall of Honor, everyone considered him to be too weak due to his cultivation realm.

Lu Yin was not even angry about these lists. Rather, Ku Wei and Elder Tan were infuriated on his behalf. One of the two desperately tried to raise Lu Yin's fame and hold him up as being invincible while also doing his best to slander the people who created the ranking lists. The other coerced others into singing Lu Yin's praises across the entire network.

They both felt that these lists were nothing less than a slap in the face, and they were both so angry that they wanted to hunt down whoever had created the ranking lists.

Ku Wei visited Lu Yin once again, jeering and cursing the people who had drafted the ranking lists.

"Seventh Bro, those stupid mortals don't understand your power at all! They actually put you beneath Xia Jiuyou and Wu Taibai. What a joke! Even a mere beast like Star Devourer ranks above you, Seventh Bro. It's an insult to our Great Eastern Alliance!" Ku Wei shouted angrily.

Lu Yin skimmed through the different lists. It was true—although he was ranked within the top ten on most of the lists, he was never a top seed.

Shangqing was almost always the highest ranked contestant, and Wu Taibai was generally second only to Shang Qing. Bu Kong, Zhi Ti, Xia Jiuyou, and the others all followed closely behind. Each list was different, but each one gave ample reasoning for their particular chosen order.

It was a point of great pride to even be listed on a ranking of the ten favored contestants. However, even if getting onto that list was difficult, Lu Yin's record certainly allowed him to join it. Unfortunately, he was always perceived in the same way, as someone who relied too much on items. The only truly exceptional feats of combat that he had accomplished were defeating Lan Si and Nightking Zhenwu, but that was not enough for Lu Yin to earn recognition from everyone.

After all, he had been nothing more than a spectator during the final battle in the Mountain and Seas Zone in the Neoverse.

"With Seventh Bro's strength, even without mentioning the championship, it's only right for you to be listed as one of the top ten. Seventh Bro, Little Wei has already mobilized a lot of our people to promote you. You have to enter the final ten. The betting odds are one to two, which is quite high, but don't worry. Little Wei will definitely support you," Ku Wei firmly declared.

Lu Yin was looking at a list when Ku Wei's words startled him. A flash of inspiration entered his mind, and he looked at Ku Wei with fervent eyes. "Show me the odds."

Ku Wei felt embarrassed. "Seventh Bro, don't look at them. You'll get angry."

"Cut the bullshit and just show me," Lu Yin ordered.

Ku Wei accessed the network and brought up a dense list of names that was separated into each region. The Outerverse was divided into seventy two sections, which corresponded to the seventy two weaves, and the Innerverse, Cosmic Sea, and Neoverse were all divided in similar ways.

"This bookmaker listed almost all of the younger powerhouses whose names have appeared on Zenith Mountain. For example, Seventh Bro, your name is right at the top. If you enter the top ten, then the odds are one to two. The top five is one to five. Top three is one to ten, and winning the entire competition is one to twenty. By the way, this is Lan Si..." Ku Wei explained the entire system to Lu Yin.

Lu Yin was surprised that this bookmaker could list so many people and that they even had odds posted for people to bet on. This was not a small amount of work!

"Do you know who this bookmaker is?" Lu Yin asked.

Ku Wei shook his head. "Nope. No one knows. I've heard that it's some major force in the universe, and some people are even claiming that the Mavis family is behind this. How else could they target such a large market? Regardless, there are a bunch of rumors."

Lu Yin's eyes began blazing when he learned that this bookmaker was covering both the Innerverse and Outerverse. Just how much money with this would it take to set this up? Even with Lu Yin's current finances, this was far beyond his means, so who could it be?

After thinking for a while, Lu Yin shook his head. No matter who was behind this, they were still looking down on Lu Yin too much. If that was the case, then there was no reason not to play. After thinking of this, Lu Yin turned to Ku Wei. "Do you want to make some money?"

Ku Wei was stunned for a moment, as well as a bit confused. Still, he reflexively nodded. It had become a habit for Ku Wei to agree when Lu Yin was the one speaking.

The corners of Lu Yin's mouth curled up. "Let's place a bet. If you place a larger wager, then we'll bet on me ending up in the top three."

Ku Wei pursed his lips. Although he had wildly praised Lu Yin in public, it did not mean that Ku Wei actually held absolute confidence in Lu Yin's chances of making it to the top three. Ku Wei had actually just wanted to place a small wager as a show of support, but based on Lu Yin's words, it seemed that a significant amount would have to be shelled out.

"Start a rumor that says that I, Lu Yin, secretly suffered an injury during the attack on the Blaze Realm and that I need at least two years to recover," Lu Yin suggested.

Ku Wei's eyes lit up, and he stared at Lu Yin with admiration. "Seventh Bro, that's big, that's really big. This will make your odds spike up like crazy! We'll bet on you getting into the top ten, and then we'll strike it rich! Seventh Bro, you really are too amazing! Your wisdom is unmatched throughout both the ancient and modern universe. This..."

"Alright, fine, but not the top ten. The top three," Lu Yin repeated.

Ku Wei hesitated. "That- Seventh Bro, the top ten is a much sagacious choice. Isn't that better than the top three?"

"Are you doubting me?" Lu Yin glanced at him.

Ku Wei immediately and firmly stated, "Of course not! Little Wei's admiration for you is like the endless stream of galaxies throughout the universe! It's overpowering like a black hole. We'll take the highest odds then."

Properly leaking rumors would be a rather delicate task, as it could not be too deliberate. Fortunately, Ku Wei had a bit of experience in such matters, as he had frequently done such things when he had been roaming the universe on his own.

Before long, a very special channel leaked a secret message regarding Lu Yin's recent injury. This intelligent channel was known for its exceptionally accurate information.

Of course, despite the reliability of the source, not many people really believe the information, especially not the hidden forces behind the online bookmaker. Not everyone was stupid.

In order to cooperate with Ku Wei's efforts, Lu Yin deliberately left the Blaze Realm and returned to the outer Outerverse to meet with Yuan Shi. This meeting was a secret, and before leaving, Lu Yin announced that he was going into seclusion to train.

When Lu Yin's plans were leaked yet again, many people believed the matter about his secret injury, thinking that he intended to seek help from Yuan Shi.

Ku Wei constantly kept an eye on Lu Yin's odds on the bookmaker's page, waiting to see if Lu Yin's odds would change, but unfortunately, the odds never changed. The numbers seemed to have been determined and did not fluctuate.

Lu Yin felt quite helpless after hearing this news. This must not be the first time that the organizers behind the online bookmaker had set up such schemes, and they must have already seen through all sorts of tricks and scams. They would not change the odds, as the risk was too great, not unless they were the ones who had injured him.

"Seventh Bro, these guys are too timid! You still have ten to one odds of entering the top three," Ku Wei helplessly complained.

Lu Yin said, "If you lose ten, then you lose ten. Place bets on me in batches with staggered times. Each bet should be 100 million star essence."

Ku Wei was stunned, as this was essentially forcing the other party's hand. Seventh Bro had to be exceptionally confident of entering the top three. If he succeeded, then the bookmaker would have to pay out a billion star essence on each wager that Lu Yin placed. Just the thought of this left Ku Wei's scalp numb.

However, for someone to set up an online bookmaker page that accepted bets from the Outerverse and Innerverse, then they must have invested at least a billion star essence to get things started. Was there any top Innerverse powers that did not have a billion star essence? Still, losing such an amount would definitely cut them to the bone.

Ku Wei did not even consider the possibility of what would happen if the bookmaker defaulted on paying out, as that was simply impossible. The powers standing behind Lu Yin guaranteed that not even the top Neoverse powers would dare to default on a payment to Lu Yin.

At this moment, Ku Wei had a vision of looking at a billion star essence, and it was overwhelming.

It was not that Lu Yin did not want to place a bet on himself with all of the funds at his disposal, but rather that there was still a bit of time before ZENITH started. Just in case, it would be better to keep some funds in reserve.

Inside his spacecraft, Lu Yin stared at a star chart, but it did not take him long to arrive in Southside Weave.

Although Lu Yin had been putting on a show with Ku Wei, since he had traveled all the way to Southside Weave, it would be best if he at least greeted Yuan Shi.

Southside Weave had become a border weave, so it was completely sealed off and could not be freely entered by most people.

As the nominal commander-in-chief of the Outerverse's Allied Forces, Lu Yin was naturally qualified to enter and inspect the border.

When Lu Yin arrived at Southside Weave, Elder Daggs was immediately informed of Lu Yin's arrival, and the elder grew a little nervous. However, he also remembered some rumors that he had recently heard about Lu Yin, and the elder had some expectations. So he quickly met up with Lu Yin.

"Elder, it's been a long time." Lu Yin smiled.

Elder Daggs replied with a smile, "Isn't Alliance Leader Lu in seclusion? How is it that you have time to visit my border?"

"As the commander-in-chief of the Outerverse's Allied Forces, I can't just leave everything to Elder Daggs," Lu Yin said with a smile.

Elder Daggs had a bad premonition the moment he heard the title "commander-in-chief of the Outerverse's Allied Forces."

"By the way, Elder, I've been the commander-in-chief of the Outerverse for such a long time, but I've never seemed to have received any salary." Lu Yin continued to smile.

Elder Daggs pursed his lips, and his smile grew a bit dry. "I will have to ask Alliance Leader Lu to discuss this with Yuan Shi. You are my boss, and subordinates can't decide on their boss's salary."

Of course, Lu Yin was not actually concerned about the salary from his position, and he was just making small talk. Still, it was always better if he had more money.

"I'd like to ask to meet with Yuan Shi. Could you please ask the elder and lead the way," Lu Yin said.

"Please, Alliance Leader Lu."

"Please."

On their way to where Yuan Shi stayed, Lu Yin continued to have a casual conversation with Elder Daggs. Elder Daggs mostly asked about Lu Yin's time in the Honor Zone, and Lu Yin naturally obliged the elder.

Elder Daggs exclaimed, "It's acceptable for you to cultivate death energy? Alliance Leader Lu is truly held in high regard."

Lu Yin smiled and replied, "It's the Chief Justice and Arch-Elder Zen who are taking care of me, not to mention that it really is fine for me to use death energy."

Chapter 1244: Master's Order

Elder Daggs smiled bitterly. "Alliance Leader Lu, do you think that you are the only one who has been put on trial for cultivating death energy throughout all these years? Anyone who is found to cultivate death energy will be immediately executed without exception. You are the first person to be acquitted, and Arch-Elder Zen even stepped forward to verify your freedom himself."

Lu Yin had been unaware of any of this. It was no wonder why Bu Laoweng had been so confident that he would be able to incarcerate Lu Yin with his privilege as an overseer. If not for Arch-Elder Zen appearing, then even if the Chief Justice ignored the matter of him cultivating death energy, Lu Yin might still have been imprisoned. At the very least, he would have been placed under observation.

"Arch-Elder Zen really is taking care of Alliance Leader Lu, which is truly enviable. Alliance Leader Lu, do you still remember our visit to the border warehouse?" Elder Daggs looked at Lu Yin with eager eyes.

Lu Yin smiled and said, "Elder, don't worry. As long as there is an opportunity, I will have you transferred back to the Honor Zone."

Elder Daggs quickly expressed his gratitude. "Thank you, Alliance Leader Lu."

When he saw Yuan Shi once again, Lu Yin's emotions were different from before. In the past, he had been completely ignorant. At the present moment, Lu Yin felt that there was an ethereal aspect to Yuan Shi, as though he did not belong to this universe.

Yuan Shi also felt amazed upon seeing Lu Yin. Throughout the countless years, Yuan Shi had taught many students, all with various degrees of talent. Although he had just casually taught many of these people, the old man had still seen some of the most elite geniuses among all cultivators. Despite that, he felt that he had never seen a genius comparable to Lu Yin before.

"It's no wonder why the Hall of Honor chose you as a gatekeeper. In both the past and present, there are perhaps very few people who could be considered your rivals while still being your peers, and all of those people have written some of the most splendid pages in history," Yuan Shi said admiringly.

Lu Yin respectfully replied, "Senior, there are too many outstanding members of my generation, and with this junior's current strength, I am not confident about ZENITH."

Yuan Shi smiled gently. "You aren't confident of taking the championship?"

Lu Yin did not hide anything about this matter, as there was nothing worth hiding in front of an ancient powerhouse like Yuan Shi. "This junior really wants to be the champion."

Yuan Shi nodded. "It's normal for young people to be competitive. I don't know what kind of geniuses are in your generation, but they all have their own elders supporting them and teaching them. All I can offer you is merely this." With that, Yuan Shi took out a power vessel and tossed it over Lu Yin.

Lu Yin was overjoyed, as it was another one of the precious walnut-shaped power vessels. He quickly grabbed it. "Thank you, Yuan Shi."

Yuan Shi said, "Even though you were imprisoned, I could not help you given my position. All I can do is offer you some power vessels as compensation. If you ever do go astray in the future, then I will personally move to take care of you, so you must remember this."

Lu Yin understood that Yuan Shi was talking about the Neohuman Alliance. The Chief Justice and Arch-Elder Zen had both verified that Lu Yin could not be controlled by death energy. However, this matter was one of common sense, and not even Yuan Shi could defy such common knowledge. At his level, the Chief Justice and Arch-Elder Zen were merely stronger cultivators, so it was impossible for Yuan Shi to blindly trust their words.

"Yuan Shi, please rest assured. I, Lu Yin, will never go astray," Lu Yin firmly declared.

Yuan Shi nodded.

Lu Yin wanted to leave, but then he suddenly remembered something. Though it seemed unlikely, he at least wanted to give it a try. "Yuan Shi, this junior would like to ask for your help with something."

Yuan Shi asked, "With what matter?"

Lu Yin carefully organized his words before solemnly saying, "This junior nearly died at Nightking Zhenwu's hands because of the Champions' Stage, as this junior was actually the one to retrieve that stage."

"What do you want with that stage?" Yuan Shi asked in an odd tone. Although his expression looked normal, there was a hint of questioning and confusion, as well as other complicated emotions that could not be deciphered.

Lu Yin did not see any of this, and he respectfully explained, "That was the first time that this junior has ever come so close to death, and I almost died. This junior would like to keep a memento to remind me to remain wary at all times."

Yuan Shi grew serious as he stared at Lu Yin, and Lu Yin lowered his head. Highsage Wudi was unable to help Lu Yin obtain the Champions' Stage, and he had even warned Lu Yin to forget about it, which showed just how much importance the Hall of Honor placed on the stage. However, Lu Yin had no choice. His innate gift was the Champions' Stage. Thus, he desperately wanted to obtain the existing Champions' Stage and study it in hopes of perhaps finding some clues related to his forgotten past.

Yuan Shi considered this matter for a bit. "The Champions' Stage is not as unimportant as you seem to think. Not only is it a symbol, but it also has other meanings. If this were not the case, then there is no way that the reward for recapturing it would have been a guaranteed spot within the Cosmic Five."

Lu Yin's heart sank; was it still impossible?

"However, the Hall of Honor has held the Champions' Stage for many years, but no one has been able to discover anything. You can do with it as you wish, though it will only be lent to you from the Hall of Honor," said Yuan Shi.

Lu Yin was overjoyed. "Thank you, Yuan Shi."

"Head on back for now, and I will retrieve the Champions' Stage for you," Yuan Shi said.

Lu Yin respectfully bade farewell to Yuan Shi. Sure enough, if you wanted something from the Hall of Honor, then you needed to go through someone who was part of the Hall of Honor. Although Lu Yin had been told he could only borrow the stage, Yuan Shi had never mentioned when it would need to be returned, so Lu Yin had not asked.

After Lu Yin left, Yuan Shi activated his own gadget. He rarely used the thing, but he had to admit that it was very convenient on certain occasions.

"That little guy wants to borrow the Champions' Stage? To what end?" An old voice was heard from the gadget.

Yuan Shi replied, "He claims that he wants it as a memento to remain wary."

"Hehe, that child never does such things, so there should be some other reason."

"Anyways, the stage has remained there for so many years, but none of us can solve its mystery. Just let this child borrow it. Maybe he can figure something out," Yuan Shi suggested.

"We can do that."

After separating from Yuan Shi, Lu Yin was in a good mood. The excuse that he had given for asking for the Champions' Stage was a bit ridiculous, but he had not been able to come up with anything more reasonable. Also, he had no idea how much time he would need to properly study the stage.

He could not wait to study the Champions' Stage and see if it had anything at all to do with his own past.

Lu Yin did not return to Southside Weave. Instead, he made his way straight towards the Blaze Realm. With ZENITH about to start, he intended to move a bit closer to Chaos Flowzone.

When Lu Yin returned to the Blaze Realm, the sourcebox array that Astral-10's Trialmaster had sent had just arrived.

The Diversion Diagram? When Lu Yin stared at the sourcebox array's name, he felt that it sounded quite common. Still, he started to seriously study the array designs.

After a day, Lu Yin raised his head, let out a long breath, and muttered to himself, "It's no wonder why the Trialmaster said that this will help me guard the mountain passage."

The so-called Diversion Diagram used the danger zones of sourceboxes to form a channel or a node to transmit the power of the sourceboxes around and create an isolated realm of star energy.

With his control of star energy already in the Worldliness realm, Lu Yin had exquisite control. Thus, this isolated realm would give him an exceptional advantage when fighting against others at his level. He was already able to suppress and resolve their star energy, but this Diversion Diagram would vastly increase the area that he could control.

With this Diversion Diagram, the more sourceboxes with danger zones that Lu Yin had on hand, the larger the area of control that he could form. Within this area, he would be able to sense every movement and ignore distance and space by sending his attacks through the sourceboxes' danger zones. With this array, one person would be able to hold back thousands of people. No, a million people.

This seemed similar to the effects of a domain, but a domain was a unique and separate ability. With this Diversion Diagram, even battle force could be transmitted through the danger zones.

This essentially meant that each sourcebox used in this array would act as an additional guard to protect the region.

Lu Yin's eyes blazed with excitement. He had started to understand the Diversion Diagram's profundities, but it would not be easy to reach a level of comprehension where he could set it up. The Trialmaster had sent him a very clear set of instructions with this sourcebox array, but it would be impossible for Lu Yin to achieve any sort of useful mastery of this array without devoting at least a few months to studying it. In fact, it was normal to take a few years to comprehend a sourcebox array like this one.

Lu Yin put down the instructions for the Diversion Diagram, already having decided to roll his die and take advantage of the Timestop Space to comprehend the array.

However, just as he was about to lift his hand, everything around him suddenly turned gray. He was in a secure room, but this gray color covered everything. Lu Yin was able to see outside of the room and off into the distance, but everything outside was also gray.

The sky, the scorching sun, flames, the ground—everything had turned gray. Up in outer space, a spacecraft had frozen, and down on the planet, the waves in the ocean had also frozen. It seemed as though time itself had been frozen.

Lu Yin was shocked. Looking outside of the secure room, he saw a figure quietly standing off in the distance with his back facing Lu Yin. It was Mister Mu.

Lu Yin quickly exited the room and moved closer to greet Mister Mu. "Master."

Mister Mu lightly replied, "It's been such a long time since I last saw you. You've improved tremendously."

Lu Yin replied, "Your disciple did not dare to slack off."

Mister Mu turned around to look at Lu Yin, and the older man's eyes lingered at Lu Yin's heart, his eyes narrowing. "You've actually cultivated this kind of power."

Lu Yin glanced down, and then he respectfully explained, "Your disciple was helpless and taken away by the Neohuman Alliance. I was left with no option but to cultivate death energy. Master, rest assured, your disciple will never be controlled by death energy."

Mister Mu looked at Lu Yin. "There are thousands of cultivation paths, but the destination remains the same. You've simply altered your cultivation method."

Lu Yin released a sigh of relief. He was not concerned about other people, but he had been afraid that Mister Mu would hold the death energy against him.

Even if Lu Yin had met with Yuan Shi, the Chief Justice, Shaman God, Highsage Grandmaster, and even Arch-Elder Zen, Lu Yin still felt that Mister Mu was the most mysterious person that he had ever met. Thinking back to the past, when Mister Mu had shifted half of Endless Weave, Yuan Shi and the other powerhouses had not been able to sense anything. Even with his new experience and strength, Lu Yin still had no idea how powerful Mister Mu truly was.

If not for the fact that the Fifth Mainland had no Progenitor, Lu Yin would have suspected that Mister Mu was a Progenitor himself.

Also, there had been Arch-Elder Zen's attitude towards Lu Yin, which only made him more confused.

"Since you've cultivated this kind of power, I ask that you take first place in this ZENITH that is coming up. Fail, and you will be expelled as my disciple," Mister Mu said.

Lu Yin was startled. "Expelled as Master's disciple? Master, your disciple's cultivation of death energy is not enough."

"Since it is insufficient, then take advantage of it as soon as possible. You have the ability to manipulate time, but you're telling me you have no time to train?" Mister Mu said indifferently.

Lu Yin felt helpless, and he could only lower his head. He was somewhat confident about taking first, but ZENITH would not be full of simple prey for him. Shang Qing had the Tri-Yang Technique, the Astral Beast Domain had Star Devourer and Yao Xuan, the prince of the Celestial Demon Empire, and there were still the Sixth Mainland's Daosource Three Skies. All of them had to be Enlighters.

Lu Yin could not simply use Timestop to cultivate all the way to the Enlighter Realm. At the very least, others would become suspicious.

"Step back and look at things from a distance. What you have seen so far may not be all of your enemies, and your true opponents may be individuals who you are not even able to see at this point in time." Mister Mu said something that Lu Yin was not able to understand very well. Then, the older man pressed a hand to Lu Yin's chest before turning his palm to the right. Lu Yin did not react, and he felt a heat rise from his chest. It was as if his heart had caught on fire.

He did not resist and allowed Mister Mu to act.

Even though it was only for a few seconds, Lu Yin felt as though entire years passed, and he was able to hear boiling beads of sweat fall from his forehead.

Mister Mu withdrew his hand.

Chapter 1245: Master's Gift

Lu Yin looked down at his heart, and he was pleasantly surprised to see that the rest of his fatesand had all merged together, which now completely hid the black and white mist in his heart.

He immediately used his fatesand. Although his fatesand still took the form of a clod of dirt, it was much larger, and its durability should have increased correspondingly.

Lu Yin still had not forgotten about he had used his fatesand to block a Hunter's attack in the past. At that time, his fatesand had been too small to be of much use, and most of his enemies had been too powerful. Thus, his fatesand had not been very useful. However, things had changed now. His fatesand was now large enough to protect half of his body.

However, there are not many situations where he would be forced to use his fatesand, simply because his physique alone was extremely robust.

Eh? As he looked at the fatesand in front of him, Lu Yin felt like something was a bit off; it seemed as if his fatesand was starting to take a specific shape.

Mister Mu looked at Lu Yin's actions and casually said, "At the moment, your fatesand is not very useful. It may become useful in the future, or it may become completely useless. It depends entirely on chance."

Lu Yin remembered something and looked over at Mister Mu. "Master, um, your disciple has already become a Hunter, but it seems that my physical strength has not reached the limit for my current cultivation yet."

Mister Mu knew what Lu Yin was about to ask. "After becoming an Explorer, you can only cultivate by relying on yourself. Using the strength of others will only become an obstacle in your future, and you must remember this."

Lu Yin felt helpless. "I understand, Master."

Mister Mu raised his hand, and something familiar entered Lu Yin's vision, and his eyes lit up. "A Root of Intelligence?"

Mister Mu had just taken out a Root of Intelligence. This was something that Lu Yin was familiar with. However, this root was not withered, but rather a normal Root of Intelligence. It looked just like the one that Lu Yin had gained after upgrading the withered one that he had found.

"This is the only thing that can help you as a guide. Borrowing outside assistance is never the right path. You must know that, in the future, if you want to improve your strength, you can only rely on yourself," he said as he handed Lu Yin the Root of Intelligence.

Lu Yin was ecstatic as he received it. As far as he was concerned, even being taught a battle technique or a secret technique by Mister Mu could not compare to receiving a Root of Intelligence. The moment Lu Yin saw this Root of Intelligence, he had already decided how to use it.

"Master," Lu Yin looked up, about to speak, but everything had already returned to normal. The spacecraft shot away, the sea churned, and chattering voices filled the air once again. It was as though everything that had just happened had been nothing but an illusion.

Lu Yin was annoyed, Mister Mu had walked away too fast. He still had a lot of questions to ask, and he didn't even have time to ask him for a piece of jade. Without that jade, he couldn't take the initiative to contact Mister Mu, which was a pity.

Shaking his head, Lu Yin sighed. He thought about what Mister Mu had just said while staring at the Root of Intelligence. Lu Yin's eyes lit up; it was time for him to improve once again! ZENITH—his only goal at the moment was ZENITH.

At the same time, in another place in the Inniverse, Lu Yin's image was still prominently displayed atop the stone plaque in the Daynight clan's ancestral grounds. No one could challenge his position. On top of that, the image directly below Lu Yin's was that of Zhuo Daynight, followed by Zhanlong Daynight.

These three people were the Daynight clan's most hated individuals at this time. Having one's image displayed on the stone pillar was one of the most respected positions possible for the members of the Daynight clan. And yet, the highest positions were all held by their enemies and traitors. This was a humiliation to the entire Daynight clan.

All of the Daynight clan members were working hard at their cultivation, and they were completely unconcerned with what was happening in the outside world.

Nightqueen Yanqing was no longer in the ancestral grounds. Nightking Dijiang had taken her away in order to help her prepare for ZENITH. The Daynight clan was still one of the greatest powerhouses of the Inniverse, and ZENITH was an opportunity that could not be missed.

Nightqueen Yanqing was currently ranked fourth on the ancestral plaque. Everyone in the Daynight and Nightking clans believed that she would soon replace Zhanlong Daynight and become one of the top three on the plaque before eventually overtaking Zhuo Daynight as well. As for Lu Yin, the Daynight clan subconsciously ignored him. He was an absolute freak, and unless Nightking Zhenwu was somehow resurrected, they had no one who could compete with Lu Yin.

Suddenly, a cry split the air. "Who's that? They're rising so fast!"

Many of the Daynight clan members opened their eyes and looked up at the ancestral plaque, searching for what had triggered such an exclamation. They watched as an image suddenly jumped from a place in the teens to fifth place, right beneath Nightqueen Yanqing. The image looked very unfamiliar.

The appearance of this person's image on the stone plaque not only caused numerous clan members to start talking about it, but it also aroused the attention of the elders protecting the ancestral grounds. They quickly asked whose image had appeared, but there was no answer, as no one in the Nightking clan knew.

At this moment, a youth from the Daynight clan approached the elders protecting the plaque, and he tremblingly said, "Seniors, this junior knows who that person is."

One of the guardian elders, Zuocheng Daynight, stared at the youth. "Who is he?"

"Liu- Liu Shaoge," the youth answered in terror.

Zuocheng Daynight and Dwayne Daynight, one of the other elders protecting the plaque, looked at each other. "Liu Shaoge? Why does this name sound so familiar?"

Dwayne Daynight's eyes narrowed as he looked over at the last inheritance stone. "One of the three inheritance stones was taken from Zhenwu by Lu Yin and never returned. The other inexplicably disappeared after that entire fiasco. Nightking Qingyu may have taken it away, but he disappeared long ago."

"The last person to see him was Liu Shaoge!" Zuocheng Daynight blurted.

Dwayne Daynight nodded. His expression was dignified as he looked up at the tall plaque. "He is indeed Liu Shaoge. I've investigated him before. He was brought here from the Outerverse by Nightking Qingyu, but there was nothing special about him, and at first, no one cared about him. I never even considered that he might have been the one to steal the inheritance stone from my Daynight clan. How despicable."

Liu Shaoge's image had appeared on the plaque, and it was obvious that he had an inheritance stone with him. The disappearance of the second inheritance stone suddenly made sense.

"But how could such a child steal an inheritance stone from you and me? And he is not from our Daynight clan, so why is he able to enter the inheritance corridor?" Zuocheng Daynight was puzzled.

Dwayne Daynight solemnly replied, "Perhaps Nightking Qingyu is working with him."

Zuocheng Daynight nodded. "Yes. Nightking Qingyu was able to steal the inheritance stone before, so he could have done so again. However, his image has long since disappeared and is no longer anywhere to be seen on the stone plaque. He should already be dead."

Dwayne Daynight could not understand this matter. "If he was already dead, then how could Liu Shaoge have stolen an inheritance stone from you and me by himself? Not even Lu Yin could have managed that."

"Unless..." Zuo Cheng Daynight seemed to have thought of a possibility.

Dwayne Daynight grew far more serious. "Unless he happens to have the same innate gift as Nightking Qingyu and can ignore space."

Zuo Cheng Daynight solemnly said, "Liu Shaoge should still be in the Outerverse at East San Dios. I will immediately send someone to capture him."

Dwayne Daynight nodded. They now had conclusive evidence that Liu Shaoge had stolen the Daynight clan's inheritance stone, so how could they simply let things go?

Back when Nightking Qingyu had first stolen one of the Daynight clan's inheritance stones, the Daynight clan had been completely unbothered by the matter as they had been utterly confident that no one in the entire universe would dare to try to take away one of their inheritance stones. However, things had changed, and they now needed to send someone out to retrieve the stone, though they could not be too public about it. After all, the Outerverse was closed to the Daynight clan, and if news of the Daynight clan sending someone into the Outerverse leaked out, then the Great Eastern Alliance would definitely stop them.

Lu Yin had already become their mortal enemy.

Neither of the two elders mentioned this detail, and they both acted as though the other was ignorant of the matter. Neither of them wanted to admit how far their Daynight clan had fallen.

In the Blaze Realm, after Mister Mu disappeared, Lu Yin began his last session of secluded training before ZENITH started. This time, he really did enter into seclusion, because ZENITH was right around the corner.

Although Lu Yin was no longer paying attention to matters regarding ZENITH, he did know that the outside world had already erupted. ZENITH had created a commotion in both the Fifth and Sixth Mainlands.

Mister Mu's words continued echoing in Lu Yin's ears. An unseen opponent, an unseen enemy... in ZENITH?

He lifted his head, and his die appeared. Lu Yin took a deep breath and tapped the die. It slowly spun in place before finally stopping at five pips: Gift Copy. It was useless, as there was no one within ten seconds of him who had an innate gift. Thus, Lu Yin simply rolled the die again, and this time it landed right on four pips: Timestop.

Upon entering the space, Lu Yin calmed himself down. His current assets were enough for him to stay in this space for a long time, and he casually waved a hand to add two hundred and forty days to his time in the space before taking out the Skyblaze Stone.

Although he could not become an Enlighter before ZENITH started, there would be no issue if he completed a few more cultivation cycles by utilizing the high temperature flames that the Skyblaze Stone had absorbed along with the star essence that he had accumulated in his cosmic ring.

At present, the Skyblaze Stone had absorbed the flames from the sixteenth layer of the darkflame barrier protecting the Dark Phoenix Clan, Monster Chi's Fire Spirit, Madam Lan's Blazing Sun, and finally, Leader Hong's Fire Spirit. Lu Yin had used up all of the flames that had been previously absorbed.

Lu Yin held the Skyblaze Stone as lines appeared on his arm due to the high temperature. The pain of his flesh being burned assaulted him continuously, and the star essence that he had brought out was quickly incinerated by the high temperature, forming a red shroud that wrapped around Lu Yin.

This fire was from Leader Hong's Fire Spirit, as that was the greatest heat that the Skyblaze Stone had absorbed, and it was on a similar level as the sixteenth layer of the Dark Phoenix family's darkflame barrier.

The heat from these two flames was comparable to the heat of a burning star, and all across Lu Yin's body, his skin suddenly cracked apart, though that actually accelerated the speed at which he absorbed star energy.

Even when a shortcut appeared, it would not be something that everyone could use. For example, using the Skyblaze Stone's heat to speed up one's cultivation speed in this manner. Even an average Enlighter would be consumed by this heat, and Lu Yin was only able to withstand the heat due to his freakish physique. Still, such a torturous shortcut yielded great returns.

Lu Yin had relied on death energy to break through to the Hunter realm. After the death energy had merged and formed the strange black and white fog, it had started consuming the star energy within Lu Yin's body, and thus, it needed to be constantly replenished. Additionally, he had used up far too much star energy when summoning the Giant Emperor as his champion to fight against Leader Hong. Lu Yin had not even managed to complete even a single cycle after becoming a Hunter.

He needed almost 1.2 million star essence to complete a single cycle.

However, Lu Yin's star energy reserves had also started replenishing themselves much faster after he became a Hunter.

The combination of the Skyblaze Stone, the Cosmic Art, and Worldliness realm star energy control allowed Lu Yin to absorb star energy incredibly quickly.

After just a few days, Lu Yin had replenished his depleted star energy, and so, his next step was to complete his eleventh cultivation cycle, which cost him nearly 1.45 million star essence. This was far more than what other cultivators needed, but it worked perfectly with Lu Yin's second innate gift.

After several days of roasting himself within the high temperature, Lu Yin acclimated to the temperature, and he even began to grow numb to it

He had no idea how long it would take him to complete this cycle, but Lu Yin only opened his eyes again after completing his eleventh cycle. There were only eight cycles left until he became a peak Hunter. Then, he would need to break through once again in order to become an Enlighter.

Breaking through to the Enlighter Realm seemed like it would be a massive obstacle, but Lu Yin was still far from that step.

After thinking about it, Lu Yin continued to absorb star energy by relying on the Skyblaze Stone.

Chapter 1246: Pinnacle Of Comprehension

Lu Yin had less than five days remaining in the Timestop Space when he opened his eyes and let out a long breath. The air that he let out warped the void, as its temperature was simply too high.

His skin had been burnt so badly by the high temperature flames that he was no longer able to feel any pain.

The Skyblaze Stone finally began to cool down, and Lu Yin stored it away.

Despite the number of flames that the stone had absorbed, they were only enough to allow Lu Yin to complete three cycles as a Hunter. Thus, he still had six cycles to go before reaching the apex of the Hunter realm. His seventh breakthrough was not too far away.

As for star essence, he had absorbed the star energy of about seven million star essence. This was a ridiculous amount, but fortunately, Lu Yin still had quite a bit more in reserve.

After resting for a long while, Lu Yin raised a hand and brought his die out to roll.

After being tapped, the die spun around and eventually stop on one pip. Useless.

Lu Yin was in no hurry. He checked his time and saw that he still had four days remaining, which was not enough. His first instinct had been to extend that time, but that would not be cost-effective. Whenever ten days were added, the cost would double. Adding even ten more days would be too much for him to bear.

Since he was in no hurry, Lu Yin began to silently recite the full Stonewall Scripture. He had already made it a habit to recite the scriptures anytime he had nothing else to do. This scripture was absolutely amazing.

As the scenery changed before his eyes, Lu Yin returned to a secure room, where he continued to recite the Stonewall Scriptures.

After three days, he was able to roll the die once again.

This time, Lu Yin did not have good luck. He rolled Pilfer three times in a row and only received useless items. When he rolled the die for a fourth time, he rolled one pip yet again. Speechless, he stared at the trash covering the floor of the room.

There was a magazine with Luo Shen on the cover, who was an acquaintance of Lu Yin's.

After rolling the die five times, it was necessary to wait at least ten days before rolling it again.

These ten days quickly passed by, after which Lu Yin raised his hand to bring out his die. This time, he needed to roll a four. He tapped the die.

He was always afraid of rolling six pips, so he had set his cosmic ring to the side.

His fears were proven true, as he really did roll a six.

If he had not set his cosmic ring aside, then the star essence he had inside would have already been all consumed.

The second time he rolled the die, he finally got what he wanted: four pips.

Lu Yin entered the Timestop Space once again.

It only took a mere 20,000 star essence for him to extend his time in this space to 240 days. If he had not left the space when he had, then he did not even want to know how much it would have cost to extend his time by another 240 days.

While in the Timestop Space, Lu Yin wanted to roll three pips, but his luck was against him, and he did not get it.

Without anything else to do, Lu Yin made the Root of Intelligence into a tea.

The size of each Root of Intelligence varied. The root that Mister Mu had given him was not as big as the withered one that he had obtained from lockbreaking, and this one was only enough for three sips of tea. The previous root had been enough for five.

As the tea brewed, the pleasant fragrance spread out. Lu Yin felt his mind clear up, and no matter if he focused on the present or the past, all of his memories were exceptionally clear. It was similar to watching a movie and being able to examine all of the details.

His mind had improved dramatically all at once.

This was the magic of tea made from a Root of Intelligence.

Lu Yin had already decided to use the tea made from the Root of Intelligence to deduce more of the Overlaying Stacks Path.

Even when considering all of the techniques that he had learned, Lu Yin's most effective attack was still his Vacuum Palm, which combined his physical strength with the Overlaying Stacks Path to continuously raise the power of an attack. Lu Yin's physical strength was constantly and passively increasing, and a Vacuum Palm was enough for him to defeat most of his peers. Given his increased strength, his Vacuum Palm should even be enough to threaten the Mavis family's inheritor now.

The truth of the matter was that Lu Yin had hoped that he would also have enough tea to comprehend more of Daynight Praises and his various sourcebox arrays, but unfortunately, he was limited to only three mouthfuls of the tea.

After the first sip, Lu Yin's whole body felt like it was floating. He raised a hand and struck out with a palm. The void twisted and rippled in layers like waves. He stared at the waves and saw palm after palm.

When he had been fighting against Nightking Zhenwu, Lu Yin had managed to deduce up to 170 Stacks, but at this time, he quickly deduced 180 Stacks and then 190.

The Overlaying Stacks Path was based off of one's physical strength, and Lu Yin's physical strength had spiked after he broke through to the Hunter realm. The increase was truly rather absurd, and it meant that he could deduce up to 220 Stacks before reaching his limit.

If Lu Yin ever faced Lan Si again, then a single Vacuum Palm with 220 Stacks would be enough to instantly defeat Lan Si.

By Lu Yin's estimation, even if Lan Si became an Enlighter, the number of stacks that he could unleash would be 200 at best, and it was impossible for the Arbiter to exceed that. As for Yuhua Mavis, he judged that her strength was a bit better. She was definitely capable of using more than 200 Stacks, but not much more.

Of course, 200 Stacks was not Lu Yin's limit. He had just completed his thirteenth cycle, and his strength continued to rise dramatically with every breakthrough.

After taking another sip of the tea made from the Root of Intelligence, Lu Yin continued to deduce the Overlaying Stacks Path.

The void trembled with a vibration that sounded like the beating of drums echoing down across the long river of time.

250 Stacks. He was able to deduce a full 250 Stacks with the second sip of the tea.

Lu Yin took a deep breath and looked down at his palm. Right now, he even felt terrified of himself. He did not know if even Yuhua Mavis could withstand such an attack, but he really hoped to be able to compare strength with that woman once again.

Next time, he intended to find out just how many stacks she could endure.

With the last sip of Root of Intelligence tea, Lu Yin's eyes locked onto his heart, and he peered past his fatesand to look at the black and white mist.

This mist was the primary reason why Mister Mu had ordered Lu Yin to take first place in ZENITH. Lu Yin had tried to test the black and white mist when he had been on the Royal Frost Continent, but its power had been beyond him at that time. However, even if it was still beyond his current capabilities, he still had to master this power, as he did not want to be expelled from Mister Mu's tutelage.

With this thought, Lu Yin downed the last of the tea and directed the black and white mist to exit his body.

...

There were less than a hundred days remaining within the Timestop Space when Lu Yin finally returned to himself after drinking the tea made from the Root of Intelligence. His next task was to bring out his die once more, as he needed to roll a three this time!

With this goal in mind, the die slowly came to a stop, revealing five pips. Lu Yin was rendered speechless.

After his luck failed him again, twenty days passed, which meant that he had only eighty days remaining in the Timestop Space. Only then did he finally roll three pips, Enhance.

He heaved a sigh of relief as he stared at the two light screens. It had not been easy to get this roll!

The first thing that Lu Yin intended to upgrade was his formcast model.

His body had consumed the formcast model that he had possessed when entering the Hunter realm. It had been a sixth stage formcast model, which was widely known as the limit for formcast models in the current universe. However, Lu Yin wanted to see if he could upgrade one to a seventh stage formcast model. If such a thing was possible, then just how would it change his body?

Lu Yin placed a formcast model on the top light screen. This was merely a fourth stage formcast model, which made it a very common one. He quickly upgraded it past the fifth stage and to the sixth stage by throwing out numerous star essence.

Once it became a six stage formcast model, Lu Yin observed an amazing number of rune lines from it. Only Envoys were capable of creating such a formcast model, and they could be sold for astronomical prices.

He had once considered selling upgraded formcast models to generate income, but there were too many drawbacks to doing such a thing. For one, he could potentially improve his enemies' strength, and for another, he would definitely expose himself.

There were certain methods that could be used to generate money, but there were others that would simply burn the one behind them.

After upgrading the formcast model to six stages, Lu Yin grew solemn as he set it back atop the upper screen of light. He desperately hoped that it could be upgraded yet again.

Lu Yin immediately threw out 10,000 star essence.

The formcast model fell down slightly, but only a tiny bit. Despite the fact that the formcast model had barely moved, Lu Yin was pleasantly surprised. This proved that the formcast model could be upgraded to seven stages, which meant that his improvement upon becoming an Enlighter would be absolutely insane.

A key contributor to Lu Yin's incredible increase in strength after becoming a Hunter was definitely because of his sixth stage formcast model.

He believed that almost no one had a seventh stage formcast model, even when among the Ten Arbiters and the Neoverse's top talents.

A long time ago, Lu Yin had asked Hai Qiqi about formcast models, and he had been told that sixth stage formcast models could only be made by Envoys whereas seventh stage formcast models could theoretically only be made by a super expert with a power level of at least a million or more. Just how many such monsters were there in the Fifth Mainland? A handful?

Lu Yin's advantages were growing greater and greater.

This thought prompted Lu Yin to continue trying to upgrade the formcast model to seven stages.

When he looked at the formcast model again, he blinked. Lu Yin had not paid much attention a moment ago, and he had only cared about if the formcast model could be improved again. However, now that he was taking a serious look, his pupils shrank. No way!

He had indeed seen the formcast model drop down a bit, but it seemed as if it had only completed a thousandth or even ten-thousandth of a full upgrade!

Lu Yin was stunned. This was just too much. How could it be so expensive?

Just how much would it cost to upgrade the formcast model from six stages to seven?

He did some quick math and sucked in a sharp breath. 100 million. This upgrade was guaranteed to cost him hundreds of millions of star essence.

Lu Yin's whole body went cold. It was true that he had hundreds of millions of star essence, but this would essentially bankrupt his entire savings! Why was it so expensive?

He then thought the matter through for a bit. It had cost him 300,000 star essence to upgrade the formcast model from four stages to five, and upgrading it again to six stages had cost him eight million star essence. This was more than a 26-fold increase. If it did indeed cost hundreds of millions of star essence to upgrade it to a seventh stage formcast model, then it simply meant that it was even more than a 26-fold increase in cost, which was not too extreme.

Formcast models were magical things that allowed the younger generation to improve to levels comparable to their seniors. They were a magical discovery that had shortened the potential gap between the current generation and their ancestors. Each breakthrough would allow them to have an amazing increase in strength, and spending hundreds of millions of star essence to obtain something as rare as a seventh stage formcast model was not actually an expensive price to pay.

Lu Yin smiled wryly. Cultivation consumed resources, which was why ordinary people could not cultivate at all. Even if a person had talent, they would be useless without the resources to support them.

Fortunately, Lu Yin still had means to make more money.

He silently put the formcast model away. Since it would take hundreds of millions of star essence to upgrade it, he would not worry about it for the moment. He had already given Ku Wei hundreds of millions of star essence to use to place wagers on ZENITH, so Lu Yin only had 50 million left on his person. It was not enough!

Since he did not have enough star essence to fully upgrade his formcast model, Lu Yin thought for a moment before taking out the froststone. This was what he should upgrade at the moment.

If what the Frost Emperor had said was accurate, then this stone was potentially capable of freezing even time. Naturally, Lu Yin needed to get it to that point.

However, if this froststone had a connection to time, then the amount of star essence needed to upgrade it would definitely be a painful sum.

Lu Yin thought about this as he set the froststone on the upper light screen and threw out a large number of star essence.

At this point in time, anything that Lu Yin wanted to upgrade would be extremely expensive, and each upgrade could easily cost him hundreds of thousands of star essence. This prompted Lu Yin to immediately throw out 100,000 star essence, but the froststone only dropped about ten percent of the way through the screen.

Chapter 1247: Upper Realm

Lu Yin opened his mouth, but he actually did not know what to say. He had had a hunch that his 50 million-plus star essence would be unable to upgrade his formcast model to the level that he desired, but now, it seemed that he would not be able to upgrade the froststone either.

The first upgrade alone required a million star essence, which was the highest cost he had ever seen for an initial upgrade.

However, since he had started, he did not want to stop before finishing. Thus, he continued to throw out more star essence.

Eventually, the froststone fell through, but it had only been upgraded once.

After being upgraded, the froststone had changed slightly. Its color was a bit whiter, and it looked a bit colder as the void around it had started to freeze over.

When Lu Yin picked the stone up, he only felt that his palm was cold with the cold being biting and a little painful.

This cold was actually enough to cause him pain, which was a bit much. He estimated that this cold could freeze Enlighters with power levels of more than 300,000.

Still, it was far from freezing time.

Lu Yin put the froststone back on the upper light screen and upgraded it again.

The second upgrade for the froststone cost him five million star essence.

Lu Yin felt his heart ache.

As he looked at the froststone, he saw that it had changed once again, becoming even whiter. Strangely, this color actually seemed to not belong to the universe.

Black holes were able to absorb light, and the white of this stone also seemed capable of absorbing light as well. Besides white, all other colors were absorbed and could no longer be seen.

Lu Yin gently touched the stone, and the tips of his fingers froze like when an ordinary person suffered an electric shock.

He was pleasantly surprised. Even if the froststone was still unable to freeze time, it could definitely be used as a weapon, and whoever touched it would definitely suffer.

Lu Yin wanted to upgrade it a third time, but after considering it for a moment, he gave up on that idea.

Time was an illusory concept, and even if he could upgrade the froststone to the point where it could freeze time, he had no idea of just how much star essence that would cost. If he did not consider the

hundreds of millions of star essence that he had used to place bets on himself, he still had more than thirty six million star essence left, but he could not afford to use it all.

Lu Yin thought for a moment and put the froststone away before checking all of the various items that he owned. In the end, the item that he felt was best suited for being upgraded at this point was his universal armor.

He had no clue just how far this set of universal armor could be upgraded. It had been made from materials that had been fabricated in the Technocracy, and Lu Yin expected that, even if the armor could not be upgraded to the point where its runes matched up to the mechanical monsters that the Technocracy had sent after Brother Hui Kong, it should still be close.

After thinking about it, he put the cosmic armor on the upper light curtain, and then started to throw in star essence.

He had already upgraded this universal armor nine times, and the ninth upgrade had taken more than six million star essence. Thus, Lu Yin estimated that the next upgrade might possibly require tens of millions of star essence.

It turned out that the next upgrade took fourteen million star essence.

Lu Yin's heart ached as he stared at his upgraded universal armor.

The further he went, the more star essence he needed for everything. Based on the ratio of the recent cost increases, Lu Yin's current income was completely insufficient.

He wanted to upgrade the universal armor once more, but after considering it, Lu Yin decided not to.

His remaining twenty two million star essence might not be enough to finish!

He let out a long sigh, hoping that he would be able to gain a little more from ZENITH. Otherwise, he would really be out of money, and all the money that he had gained from the Blaze Realm would be gone.

Actually, the least valuable thing in the Blaze Realm's treasury had been the star essence, and there had been many other items that could be sold. After a bit of thought, Lu Yin had had everything sent over to Bei Qing.

With the rise of Lu Yin's status and his obscene use of star essence, the income from Lu's Grand Auction was no longer enough to support him. However, if the auction opened a branch in the Innerverse, then it would be able to sell off the Blaze Realm's treasures, and it should also be able to attract a crowd of buyers who could afford decent prices. Also, if Lu Yin was not able to sell the items for a decent price, then he could just use them himself.

As he thought about ways to earn more money, Lu Yin recited the full Stonewall Scriptures. In this manner, time quickly passed by.

The scenery changed before his eyes, and he reappeared in the secure training room that he had been using in the Blaze Realm.

His gadget beeped with a notification. When Lu Yin glanced down, he was overjoyed at what he saw and rushed off to the space station.

The Champions' Stage had been sent from the Neoverse two days ago. Yuan Shi was quick and efficient in what he did.

Lu Yin had originally thought that the large stage might not be delivered until after ZENITH, and he certainly didn't expect it to arrive so soon.

The Champions' Stage had been towed here from the Neoverse by a blackhole grade Aurora, according to a surprised Ku Wei. "Seventh Bro, what is that thing? It's so big that it can't even be stored in a cosmic ring."

Lu Yin himself had only just learned that the Champions' Stage could not be stored in a cosmic ring, which explained why the Sixth Mainland had not done that when they had first stolen it. Otherwise, it might have been impossible to retrieve even if the Chief Justice himself had moved out.

Lu Yin stared at the huge platform before him and jumped onto it. Suddenly, he felt something familiar. He seemed to hear some sound. Roaring? Wailing? Howling? Despair?

There was a thud as Ku Wei punched the stage next to Lu Yin, rousing Lu Yin. "Is it that hard?"

"You can head out," Lu Yin said.

Ku Wei quickly spoke up, "By the way, Seventh Bro, I've already placed your bets, and they were done in batches."

"What was the bookie's reaction?" Lu Yin asked.

Ku Wei showed a strange smile. "Due to the large wagers, the bookie actually panicked and sent someone to investigate, but they couldn't find us."

Lu Yin casually said, "Let them investigate and make sure that things are traced back to either the Neoverse or Leon's Armada."

Ku Wei was confused for a moment, but then he figured it out. Lu Yin was doing this because he was afraid that the bookie would default on the bets. With the bookie accepting such large wagers, the power behind the betting site could not be underestimated. Thus, Lu Yin wanted to make sure that they would not dare to default on payouts.

"In that case, they'll know that it's Seventh Bro. By the way, will doing this change your odds?" Ku Wei asked.

Lu Yin said, "It doesn't matter since the bets are based off of the odds when we placed the bets."

Ku Wei nodded and quickly left.

If the bookie discovered that the bets were placed by Leon's Armada, then they would absolutely think of Lu Yin. However, even if they realized what the situation was, it did not matter; the bets had already been placed and could no longer be changed.

All Lu Yin had to do at this time was keep an eye on the bookie and prepare for ZENITH.

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Half a month passed, after which a large, radiant-grade Aurora set off from the Blaze Realm, headed towards Chaos Flowzone.

Lu Yin, Ku Wei, Zhuo Daynight, Zhanlong Daynight, and Cool Sis were all aboard the vessel, as they were all participating in ZENITH.

Cool Sis had already become the captain of the Great Yu Empire's Fifth Imperial Squadron. She had been ranked tenth on the Top 100 Rankings, but with nowhere to go, she had followed Lu Yin back to the Great Yu Empire.

Ku Wei did not even need to be mentioned.

Zhuo and Zhanlong Daynight both intended to participate in ZENITH as well.

Lu Yin had finally met Zhuo Daynight for the first time after they had parted ways back in Daynight Flowzone.

The two had a very complicated relationship. Calling them friends did not seem to be quite appropriate as they had both risked their lives for each other, but calling them lovers was also wrong as those emotions did not exist between the two.

Even Ling Gong could be thought of as being closer to Lu Yin's lover than Zhuo Daynight.

Lu Yin himself did not know exactly what his relationship with Zhuo Daynight was, but when he looked at her, the woman's face remained indifferent.

Looking out at the stars shooting by, Lu Yin remembered the markings that he had seen on the Champions' Stage. There had been images of both astral beasts and people. If that Champions' Stage was the same as his second innate gift that had the same name, then those images should be the champions who had been anointed to that stage.

Despite studying the Champions' Stage for half a month, Lu Yin was still unable to summon any of the champions. It had been useless even when he had tried to use his own blood.

Could an innate gift last forever? Perhaps the owner was not actually dead.

Lu Yin's thoughts on the matter were complicated. The Champions' Stage had to be connected to him. If it was actually someone else's innate gift, then that person was almost definitely related to Lu Yin by blood. However, he had no idea who that person might be.

"Seventh Bro, have you heard of this? In the western region of Chaos Flowzone, the place that used to be called the Floating Realm has been renamed as the Upper Realm. The people living there are all from the Sixth Mainland, and now, the entire Innerverse and Outerverse know about it," Ku Wei walked over and spoke in a low tone like a thief.

Lu Yin had actually not known anything about this matter. "How did the people of the Innerverse and Outerverse react to this?"

"It's messed up. Although the Upper Realm has been sealed off by the Hall of Honor, many people from the Inniverse have still gathered nearby. I've also heard that several very fierce fights have broken out," Ku Wei said.

Lu Yin did not respond, and he just quietly considered the situation. The Sixth Mainland would gradually move into the Fifth Mainland, and no one could change that fact. Their future lay in the Outerverse, and the Outerverse was his territory. Sooner or later, he would clash with the Sixth Mainland, and it was possible that things would erupt right after ZENITH ended.

Lu Yin did not know how many powerhouses the Sixth Mainland had, but any random Imprinter would be powerful enough to deal with Lu Yin. No matter who was supporting Lu Yin, they could not match up to the entire Sixth Mainland. Yuan Shi had been the guardian of the Outerverse for his lifetime, but even he was left powerless in this situation.

The Sixth Mainland was not the various Inniverse powers who had masterminded the Purge. Any thoughts of resisting the Sixth Mainland was nothing more than a dream. Lu Yin's only way out of the matter was to gradually move the entire Great Eastern Alliance into the Inniverse.

This was also one of the reasons why Lu Yin had been so eager to occupy the Blaze Realm. Frostwave Weave had to have an escape route.

Still, if there was an option, Lu Yin would prefer not to leave the Outerverse.

Also, if a place could be found for the Sixth Mainland to settle, then they might not take over the Outerverse.

Lu Yin thought about it and opened a star chart, only to quickly shake his head. It was easier said than done to find another place for the Sixth Mainland to settle.

His eyes were then drawn to the Technocracy on the star chart. He remembered the moment when he had rolled a six on his die and Possessed that mechanical ant. Even thinking back to that time gave Lu Yin chills; where were those mechanical ants? Who had created them?

Humans were always fearful of the unknown, but Lu Yin hoped to have the Sixth Mainland explore the unknown regions of the Technocracy. It would definitely be better if those mechanical ants could be forced out.

After thinking about this, Lu Yin sent a message to Wang Wen, roughly sharing his thoughts. He hoped that Wang Wen could come up with some way to redirect the Sixth Mainland into the Technocracy. Not only would this challenge the Technocracy, but it would also save the Outerverse.

ZENITH would start in two more months, and Lu Yin and his party would reach Chaos Flowzone in half a month at most.

At this time, a series of videos appeared on the network that drew the attention of countless people. These videos featured the highlights of battles of the various talented youths participating in ZENITH, and CyNet was behind the appearance of these videos.

CyNet controlled the entire Fifth Mainland's network, and they had access to everything that had ever been recorded.

Appearing alongside these videos was the most publicly accepted list of the predicted ten finalists, and the list was accompanied by a collection of videos featuring each of the ten favored youths.

"This is so unreasonable! I'm furious at myself!" Ku Wei shouted loudly, his voice spreading throughout the entire spacecraft.

Zhanlong Daynight and others all looked over at him.

Ku Wei brought up a screen and shared it with Lu Yin. "Seventh Bro, these people are so tricky! They actually ranked you thirteenth! They aren't showing you any respect at all!"

Lu Yin glanced at the screen, and Zhuo Daynight and others all looked at it as well.

The list predicting the ten finalists was not a list of just ten people, but rather of fifteen youths.

Chapter 1248: Predicted List

Shang Qing was naturally listed first. The information about him was very simple: Tri-Yang Technique—Invincible. There was also a video available, and it showed Shang Qing's fight against Shu Jing, and throughout the entire video, Shu Jing was utterly helpless against Shang Qing's Tri-Yang Technique.

Shang Qing looked like a spirit or a god in the video with the two strands of qi twirling around him. Shu Jing was not even able to approach him, and he had ultimately been struck and defeated by the third strand of ancestral qi.

During the battles in the Mountain and Seas Zone, Shang Qing had proven himself to be truly invincible among his peers with his three strands of ancestral qi. Originally, none of his peers had been able to force him to reveal the true power of the Tri-Yang Technique, but then, Corpse Beast had appeared and overpowered everyone. Only then had Shang Qing finally revealed the true strength of his technique.

The Tri-Yang Ancestral Qi Technique allowed one to produce three Progenitor incarnations that were at the same cultivation realm as the technique's user. There really was no way to counter this technique, which placed Shang Qing firmly in first among the predicted list of finalists. Almost no one voiced any complaints about this, except for the Sixth Mainland.

Second place belonged to Bu Kong, one of the Sixth Mainland's Daosource Three Skies. There was almost no information provided about Bu Kong, as he was someone from the Sixth Mainland. However, his innate gift was mentioned, along with the fact that he had already become a Boundless Advanced Lockbreaker who had even comprehended a sourcebox array. These three aspects combined made him ranked second.

A person who was one of the Daosource Three Skies was practically peerless, and Bu Kong had also managed to comprehend a sourcebox array. This really did qualify him to be ranked second.

There was a video available of Bu Kong's battle in the Cosmic Sea, and it especially focused on how Bu Kong had used a sourcebox array to knock everyone else off of the Champions' Stage. This scene was something that people would remember for the rest of their lives.

Yao Xuan was ranked third, the crown prince of the Astral Beast Domain's Celestial Demon Empire. The description had essentially nothing about him the individual, but was rather an introduction to the Celestial Demon race.

The Celestial Demon Race was ranked first in the Astral Beast Domain's Celestial Beast List. Anyone born into the Celestial Demon Race was born at the Hunter Realm. The species consumed spiritual force, and whatever they devoured could never be recovered.

There was no video available for Yao Xuan or the Celestial Demon Race, as this was something that was even beyond CyNet's means. There were rumors that the crown prince had been in cryostasis for many years and that he had only awoken after ZENITH had been announced. It was quite clear that he had only come out for the tournament.

No one knew just how strong Yao Xuan was, but as the representative of the Astral Beast Domain, as well as the crown prince of the Celestial Demon Empire, it did not seem excessive for him to be ranked third. After all, the Astral Beast Domain had managed to compete with the Human Domain for countless years, and they had even managed to stop the Sixth Mainland's invasion. This proved that the Astral Beast Domain had an unfathomable foundation.

Zhi Yi was ranked fourth. She was another one of the Sixth Mainland's Daosource Three Skies, and when the Sixth Mainland's invasion had reached the Cosmic Sea, Zhi Yi's Vitality Qi had left a strong impression on many people. At that time, everyone participating in the battle had only been at the Hunter realm, but Zhi Yi had used her Vitality Qi to virtually hold everyone back.

However, her use of Vitality Qi was not the reason why she was ranked fourth. The core reason was because the Sixth Mainland's fundamental path of cultivation was significantly different from the Fifth Mainland's. The people of the Sixth Mainland had access to imprints and bloodlines, which was why both Zhi Yi and Bu Kong were rated so highly.

Cultivators from the Sixth Mainland possessed a natural suppression when facing their Fifth Mainland peers who were at the same cultivation realm as them. And that wasn't even mentioning how they had their imprints, bloodlines, secret techniques, and martial prints. It was simply too difficult for someone from the Fifth Mainland to defeat their corresponding peer from the Sixth Mainland.

All of the Daosource Three Skies were Enlighters, which meant that they had already surpassed many people in the Fifth Mainland. It was possible that only people like Yuhua Mavis and the other elites from the Neoverse had become Enlighters before the Daosource Three Skies.

The Sixth Mainland had dared to invade the Fifth Mainland, and they had also replaced the Fifth Mainland's sky in the past, which amply demonstrated their strength. The Daosource Three Skies were truly invincible within the Sixth Mainland.

If not for the fact that Shang Qing cultivated the Tri-Yang Technique, which was too well known for being peerless, and that Yao Xuan was too mysterious, Bu Kong and Zhi Yi might have taken both first and second place in the rankings prediction.

There were not that many videos of Zhi Yi's battles, but the most viewed video was of her battle against Liu Tianmu. Many people knew of the Sword Sect's inheritor, as she was one of the Ten Arbiters. However, she was only ranked eleventh—not even able to break into the top ten.

Although the Thirteen Swords were incredibly powerful, the battle in the Mountain and Seas Zone had already revealed Liu Tianmu's full strength, and she was much weaker than Shang Qing. That was why she ranked so low on this list.

Xia Jiuyou was in fifth place, and there was only one reason why he was able to place fifth: Progenitor Chen's Nine Clones Technique. During the battle in the Mountain and Seas Zone, Xia Jiuyou had revealed a level of strength comparable to Yuhua Mavis after only merging with two of his clones at that time. Everyone believed that Xia Jiuyou would merge with more clones before ZENITH, and the Nine Clones Technique was also famous for being invincible.

If the technique had been created by someone else, then that claim might not be believed. However, no one dared to underestimate Progenitor Chen. This alone was enough to place Xia Jiuyou fifth.

There were a few more videos of Xia Jiuyou's fights, and even without the video of his battles in the Mountain and Seas Zone, there were many other videos of his battles during more normal situations, and these videos showed both wins and losses. However, his strength in these videos were not enough to qualify him for his rank, and he had been given this rank entirely because of the Nine Clones Technique.

In sixth place was Yuhua Mavis. The Mavis surname was not unfamiliar to the people of the Fifth Mainland, or even to people from the Sixth Mainland. Their surname not only represented wealth, but also strength.

The Mavis family were known to be unmatched among the human race when it came to physical strength, and their family also had an innate gift that allowed them to control others. No matter what era, even during the time of Progenitor Chen and the Rune Progenitor, the Mavis family always had been an existence that could not be ignored.

There were no videos of Yuhua Mavis's battles, as the Mavis family's Treeheart Descendant had only ever gone out for the Astral Tower. However, no one had any objections to her being ranked sixth, and many people even believed that her ranking was too low.

Wu Taibai was ranked seventh, another one of the Daosource Three Skies. There was only one line to introduce this person, and it could not even be considered a full sentence: 'He likes to play.' Not even the people of the Sixth Mainland knew much about Wu Taibai, and no one knew anything about his battle techniques, combat style, or innate gifts.

But despite the lack of information, he was still ranked seventh. This was simply because he was one of the Daosource Three Skies. There was no other reason, but these three words alone were enough. Naturally, there were no videos of him.

Ranked eighth was the Astral Beast Domain's Bai Mai, which was a carrion bug.

There is no information about Bai Mai at all. Rather, the description was an introduction to the carrion bug race. It was rumored that these insects had been born from the body of an ancient Progenitor, and many people regarded them as parasites.

The term "parasite" was a bit derogatory, but no one dared to underestimate the carrion bugs. Not all creatures were able to parasitize the body of a Progenitor. In Progenitor Chen's Mausoleum, the guardian giants were unable to penetrate the tomb, and the thousand meter long worms had similarly been unable to dig deep at all, which showed the toughness of a Progenitor's body even in death. And yet, the carrion bugs had been able to parasitize the ancestral Progenitors. Their physical strength had to be beyond imagination.

It was all because of their connection to a Progenitor that the carrion bugs were ranked second on the Astral Beast Domain's Celestial Beast List, second only to the Celestial Demon race. If not for the fact that there were too few carrion bugs and that they had been in isolation for hundreds of thousands of years, it was possible that they could actually surpass the Celestial Demon race and taken the top position of the Celestial Beast List.

This was how, despite there being absolutely no information regarding Bai Mai, he was still ranked eighth. It was just because of his race's connection to an ancient Progenitor.

The person ranked ninth was Qiu Shi, the Cosmic Sect's senior disciple. She was known as the All Rounder Fairy, and there was a bit more information about her. She was an Enlightener, had received the Cosmic Sect's secret technique, and was also a Boundless Advanced Lockbreaker who had comprehended a sourcebox array.

Just these three accomplishments alone were enough to shock people. Qiu Shi's achievements were very similar to Bu Kong's, but unfortunately, she was from the Fifth Mainland. If she were from the Sixth Mainland and also had an imprint like Bu Kong, then she would not have been ranked so lowly. She had actually set up a sourcebox array to teleport the Champions' Stage away along with Lu Yin just so that the Sixth Mainland would not succeed in stealing it.

During the events in the Mountain and Seas Zone, she had once again teleported Wen Sansi away by using a sourcebox array, and she had also stood alone against Wen Sansi and Starsibyl.

The only reason why Qiu Shi was ranked lower than Yuhua Mavis was because Qiu Shi was a regular human and not a Mavis.

However, there was something else about Qiu Shi that people were looking forward to, which was the fourth aspect of her strength that had granted her the title of All Rounder Fairy. It should be an innate gift, but no one had any information on what it was.

The Cosmic Sect's elders had granted her the name of All Rounder Fairy, and it was well known that three of the four aspects behind that title were her cultivation realm, her lockbreaking skills, and her secret technique. It was also possible that she had a terrifying innate gift, but people could only imagine.

There were many videos of Qiu Shi's battles, but what drew the most eyes were not her fights, but rather her impressive bosom. Quite a few people maliciously spread rumors that her fourth strength was her chest. After all, she also had another title: Queen Jugs.

The tenth name on the list was Wang Yi. When Lu Yin saw this name, his expression changed, Wang? That was a primeval surname.

Lu Yin was not the only one to pay attention to this name, as Wang was a rare surname in the universe, and no one had thought that a Wang would appear in ZENITH.

Wang Yi was from the Technocracy, and there was no further information provided, and there were no videos either. He was only ranked tenth because he was the Technocracy's representative for ZENITH.

The Fifth Mainland's three domains were all forces that stood on the same level. Thus, no matter what an individual's strength might be, if they represented the Human Domain, the Astral Beast Domain, or the Technocracy, then they deserved a place in the list predicting the top ten finalists.

However, because there was no information about Wang Yi, they could only rank him tenth.

As he looked at the name "Wang Yi," Lu Yin somehow felt that he wanted to meet this person.

Right below Wang Yi was Liu Tianmu, at eleventh. This was no surprise. The Thirteen Swords were famous, and Liu Tianmu had used the Thirteenth Sword to injure Shang Qing. If not for how freakish the people in the top ten were, Liu Tianmu would have been placed much higher.

Wen Sansi was listed right below Liu Tianmu at twelfth. There was no need to look at Wen Sansi's information, as he was very well known. However, his strength should not have been enough to push him to twelfth. Although Lu Yin clearly had a stronger battle strength, Wen Sansi had a truly infuriating innate gift. It was a barrier that not even Qiu Shi or the other Neoverse powerhouses had been able to break. This barrier had even helped Shang Qing block an attack. Wen Sansi's innate gift was the reason why he had been ranked twelfth, as the creators of this list did not believe there were more than a dozen people participating in ZENITH who could overpower Wen Sansi's barrier.

Lu Yin was ranked thirteenth, and there was simply too much information about him. There was an entire list of titles that he had been given, and there were simply too many videos of his battles to even count.

Chapter 1249: Coincidence

The Hall of Honor had given Lu Yin a position as one of the five gatekeepers, which should have been enough for him to be listed among the top ten predicted finalists. However, his cultivation was simply too low, and all of the people predicted to emerge in the top ten had been recognized for their strength. Lu Yin's dazzling performances had been recognized by even the Hall of Honor, but there were simply too many people in the universe who did not acknowledge Lu Yin's strength, especially those from the Sixth Mainland, the Astral Beast Domain, and the Technocracy. It was impossible for them to acknowledge Lu Yin's power.

There were many reasons why Lu Yin could only be ranked thirteenth. In fact, even if the creators of the list personally believed that he should be ranked in the top ten or even the top five, they could only rank him thirteenth.

After all, for a ranking list predicting the finalists to be acknowledged, most people had to accept the accuracy of the list.

The only people who recognized Lu Yin's true strength were the Inverse and the Outerverse. There were many people even in the Neoverse who did not acknowledge Lu Yin's power. While it was true that Lu Yin had stepped upon the highest stage within the Mountain and Seas Zone, afterwards, he had been beaten down while Wen Sansi and others had remained fighting on that golden stage.

Similarly, Yōu Qi had been defeated by Lu Yin, and he could not even be listed among the predicted fifteen finalists.

Wu Dan was right below Lu Yin.

If not for the ranking list, Lu Yin would have almost forgotten about Wu Dan and his arrogant declaration about showing everyone the strength of a Boundless Advanced Lockbreaker. Still, it was true that he was a young genius who had mastered a sourcebox array at a young age.

Wu Dan did not have much information attached to his name, just that he was from the Lockbreaker World.

Not many people knew of the Lockbreaker World, and there was no public information available on it. Still, the reason why Wu Dan was ranked fourteenth was because he had mastered a sourcebox array. He was an Advanced Lockbreaker who had comprehended a sourcebox array, which was certainly enough for him to enter the predicted list of the fifteen finalists.

This showed that most people still viewed Lockbreakers as elites, as Wu Dan did not even have any videos available.

Finally, the last of the predicted fifteen finalists was Starsibyl.

Starsibyl had been ignored for a long time; whenever anyone thought of the name "Starsibyl," they would think of fortune-telling. She looked like she had a frail body that was unsuited for fighting.

However, Lu Yin could never forget the scene of when he had still been in the Astral Combat Academy and seen how Starsibyl had used divination to predict her opponent's movements and preemptively launch her attacks. During the battle in the Mountain and Seas Zone, she had also fought right up until the end. If not for her and Unseen Light, the Ten Arbiters might not have been able to hold out until the very end.

Starsibyl's divination was only one of her strengths, as she also had quite the impressive combat experience.

Still, the foundational reason for why Starsibyl was ranked fifteenth was because she also cultivated Progenitor Chen's Nine Clones Technique.

Progenitor Chen's invincible technique had been acquired and learned by two people: Xia Jiuyou and Starsibyl. No one knew how they had managed to do so, but the Nine Clones Technique alone qualified Starsibyl to be ranked fifteenth.

These were the names of the people who were predicted to make it to the end of ZENITH, and the last five people were also acknowledged to have a high chance of placing in the top ten.

Out of everyone, Lu Yin was the one who was looked down upon the worst. He was a gatekeeper, but people were not even optimistic about his chances of entering the top ten. However, his true goal was to take first place.

"What a bunch of blind idiots! Seventh Bro, let's make our own list! You will definitely take first place. What is this Tri-Yang Technique? Bah!" Ku Wei shouted angrily, as he was the most infuriated person in the room.

Lu Yin did not actually care. Back when he had defeated Lan Si and Nightking Zhenwu back to back, it was true that he had stirred up quite a commotion throughout the universe. But at that time, everyone who he had faced had only been Hunters. In the Mountain and Seas Zone, Lu Yin truly had been more of

a spectator, so it was quite normal for people to ignore him. If the Hall of Honor had not selected him to be a gatekeeper, then he would have never qualified to even be listed as one of the fifteen predicted finalists.

Who among the fifteen listed youths was not some well known figure? Even if the Celestial Beast Empire's Prince Yao Xuan and the Technocracy's Wang Yi had almost no information listed about them, their origins were enough to speak for them.

Not a single one of the Ten Arbiters had made it onto the list of the predicted ten finalists. This was enough to reveal the strength of the young geniuses participating in ZENITH.

Lu Yin's eyes slightly paused on the name "Wu Taibai" as he remembered Mr. Bai. That young man had actually been Wu Taibai. At one point, Wu Taibai had fought against Nightking Zhenwu in the ruins of the Fifth Mainland's Daosource Sect while Lu Yin had almost been burned to death.

After that, his eyes lingered on the name "Wang Yi." Lu Yin remained quite focused on this name. He had almost forgotten about the primeval surnames, but each time that happened, another person with such a name would appear in an unforgettable manner.

Cool Sis stared at the name "Shang Qing" at the top of the list and asked in surprise, "Is that Tri-Yang Technique's ancestral qi really invincible? Is just that really enough to put him above all these people?"

"Bullshit! How can a technique really be invincible?" Ku Wei rolled his eyes.

Ku Wei's words were not technically wrong, as there was no truly invincible technique in the universe, but his next words left Cool Sis unhappy.

"Whoever believes that Tri-Yan Technique is invincible is an idiot. Our Seventh Bro is the invincible one! The word 'invincibility' was specially made for Seventh Bro." Ku Wei was proud.

Cool Sis glared at him, and his words actually convinced her that the Tri-Yang Technique was indeed invincible.

Zhuo Daynight casually said, "Nightqueen Yanqing is also participating in ZENITH. She's actually the only person from the Nightking clan."

Lu Yin looked at where both Zhuo Daynight and Zhanlong Daynight were looking at a screen. This screen showed the statistics of all of the contestants. On the list, there was a single Nightqueen Yanqing from the Daynight clan. She was the only person that the clan had sent out.

"I'll deal with her," Zhanlong Daynight said solemnly.

Zhuo Daynight shook her head. "Nightking Dijiang has made his move, and Yanqing is the only person in the entire Daynight clan who has a chance of having a good showing in ZENITH. They must have put their full efforts into raising her up, and she will not be the same person as before."

Zhanlong Daynight's eyes narrowed, and a trace of fear appeared.

Only someone from the Daynight clan could truly appreciate just how terrifying the clan's foundation was.

Even ordinary people were aware of how important ZENITH was, and there was no way that the Daynight clan would allow such an opportunity to slip away from them. They might be desperate or had given up if they were only sending Nightqueen Yanqing, but she would absolutely have undergone a complete transformation when they met again.

The ranking list that they had all read through was simply the one acknowledged as the most accurate one available on the network. There were still countless other lists compiled by qualified individuals, and Lu Yin's name was on every such list. He was a Hunter, but everyone acknowledged that he deserved a place on the predicted rankings. This proved that he was not someone to be underestimated, but his competitors were just too powerful.

Ku Wei browsed through the network, but the more he saw, the angrier he became. "Seventh Bro, someone's claiming that the Hall of Honor designated you as a gatekeeper in order to keep the stronger people hidden away. They're saying that, because you weren't able to stay on the golden stage in the Mountain and Seas Zone back then, you aren't even as powerful as Lei Nü. In fact, some accuse you of using back-handed methods to sneak in. These people are going to hear it from Brother Wei!"

Lu Yin was also browsing through the network, though he was not checking the predicted rankings, as they were meaningless. Would the contestants actually reveal their greatest strengths? It was possible, but regardless, he was not interested in these rankings. Rather, what had captured his interest were the battle videos that CyNet had released. These videos not only featured the people who were listed on the ranking lists, but also many unknown powerhouses.

For example, there was a girl named Feng Liu¹ from the Celestial Ice Phoenixes. Their race was also listed on the Celestial Demon List, and she was a substitute representative for the Astral Beast Domain. She was only a Hunter, but she was not weak at all.

Also, Luo Yu from the Jasper World stood out. She had used a needle attack to kill an Enlighter while only at the Hunter realm.

Also, there was someone known as Lightson, who was from the World of Light. Lu Yin had actually seen this hidden world when he had been traveling with Mu En, and the Judicial Commissioner had spoken with the leader of this hidden world.

These were also other unknown powerhouses that Lu Yin managed to casually find. As far as he knew, there was still Xiao Qing from the Sixth Mainland as well as the Brahman Realm's Realmling who had never shown themselves. There were simply too many unknown experts.

"Your Highness, there's a Northline Flowzone vessel up ahead," a voice alerted.

Lu Yin looked up ahead and saw a large spacecraft also en route to Chaos Flowzone that was traveling in the same direction as them. It was also a radiant-grade Aurora, but it seemed to be purposely slowing down. The symbol of Northline Flowzone could be seen on the hull, as well as the Barthe Jacques family's emblem.

It was not unusual to see a ship from Northline Flowzone at the intersection of Blazing Mist and Northline Flowzones.

Northline Flowzone had a complicated relationship with Lu Yin.

They had initially helped him sneak onto Planet Pyrolyte, and he had in turn helped protect their forces on that planet. Based on this event, it would seem that Lu Yin was a friend of Northline Flowzone. However, he had later killed one of their Enlighteners, Granny Chan. She had grown jealous of him and betrayed him, which had nearly led to Lu Yin's death.

Her death had ended any grudge that Lu Yin held against them, but he had recently occupied Blazing Mist Flowzone, and Northline Flowzone had been one of the powers to immediately jump out and oppose Lu Yin's actions. Still, Lu Yin felt that it was only right for them to declare their position. After all, the two flowzones shared a border, and they were worried about becoming the Great Eastern Alliance's next target. But then again, they had tried to block Lu Yin's path, and that meant that, for the moment, they were enemies and not friends.

"Your Highness, the Northline Flowzone vessel has sent us an invitation. They request that you move to their ship for a meeting," someone on the ship reported to Lu Yin.

Lu Yin had originally wanted to simply pass by the Northline Flowzone spaceship, as he did not want to get involved with them. After hearing the report, he considered the situation for a bit before answering, "I got it."

Ku Wei approached and sneakily said, "Seventh Bro, do you want to kill them? They've been the fiercest opponents to you occupying the Blaze Realm."

Lu Yin glared at Ku Wei. "Stay here."

He wanted to leave after that, but then he looked back at Ku Wei once again. "Actually, come with me."

Ku Wei's eyes lit up. "Yes, Seventh Bro."

The Northline Flowzone vessel belonged to the Barthe Jacques family. They were an extremely wealthy family that supported the economy of the entire Northline Flowzone all by themselves.

Although the Barthe Jacques family had no powerhouses, they used money as a weapon. They had used their wealth to hire Tie Sa, a powerful Enlightener, as well as the entire Scarlet Mercenaries. Thus, the Barthe Jacques family was just as famous as the Lily family or the Northgate family.

If one looked at both the nearby large and small flowzones, the Barthe Jacques family was the best representative of wealth around.

Upon boarding the Northline Flowzone spaceship, Lu Yin was greeted by Northgate Taisui, whom he had met before.

Northgate Taisui was an expert with a power level of over 400,000, and he was the strongest member of the Northgate family. It was expected for him to be the guardian of Northline Flowzone's youths as they made their way to ZENITH.

Northgate Taisui had been the first powerhouse with a power level of over 400,000 who Lu Yin had ever seen. Initially, Lu Yin had been terrified of Northgate Taisui, unimaginably terrified. A powerhouse on his level could lock down an entire region of space and render it impossible for Lu Yin to escape.

At that time, Lu Yin had been dragged back by Northgate Taisui and had been utterly helpless.

It could be said that Northgate Taisui had opened Lu Yin's eyes.

However, only ten years had passed, but now, Lu Yin's impression upon seeing Northgate Taisui had completely changed. This old man was no longer scary, and he actually just seemed ordinary.

As Northgate Taisui looked at Lu Yin, who was boarding the vessel, the complexities in the old man's eyes were beyond words.

He still remembered the first time that he had seen this little guy. Back then, this youth had been nothing more than an ant before him. If not for the Daynight clan intervening, Lu Yin would never have qualified to even speak to Northgate Taisui.

How many years had passed since that incident? For a powerhouse like Northgate Taisui, it was around the time needed to take a nap, but the child had already climbed to a level where the Northgate family's ancestor had to meet with Lu Yin in person and show him the proper respect.

Chapter 1250: Resolution

Northgate Taisui had been completely stunned when he had heard news of Lu Yin defeating Daynight Flowzone. The young man standing before the ancient powerhouse had relied on powerful people to protect himself when he had been younger, yet he had already grown into his own power and had accomplished countless feats.

Northgate Taisui had paid close attention to Lu Yin's actions over the years and was extremely wary of the youth. This was also why Northline Flowzone had responded so strongly when the Great Eastern Alliance had taken over the Blaze Realm. Northgate Taisui, a powerhouse with a power level exceeding 400,000, was scared!

"It's nice to see you again, Senior," Lu Yin boarded the spacecraft and spoke calmly.

Northgate Taisui's eyes flashed as he stepped forward. "It's been a while, Alliance Leader Lu."

Lu Yin smiled. "Senior, you look as healthy as ever."

"Haha, thank you, Alliance Leader Lu. Please, follow me." It had been a very long time since Northgate Taisui had needed to pretend to show someone respect, and it felt very awkward.

Northgate Taisui was followed by the Northgate family's patriarch, the family's inheritor, Northgate Kong, Northgate Lie, Northgate Gang, and the Northgate family's Enlighter powerhouse, Elder Northgate. Also present was the Lily family's matriarch, Lily Liana, and her heir, Lily Anne, and Lily Shu'Er. Finally, the Barthe Jacques family's patriarch, Henry, and his heir, Harold, was present along with Banico and Tie Sa.

Almost all of Northline Flowzone's important characters had appeared to welcome Lu Yin.

This was a huge honor for anyone.

Lu Yin was already aware that the current Northline Flowzone could not compare in any way to the Great Eastern Alliance. Also, since Northgate Taisui had referred to Lu Yin as Alliance Leader, Lu Yin intended to interact with them as the Alliance Leader of the Great Eastern Alliance.

Naturally, Lu Yin ignored Northgate Kong and everyone else present, as only Northgate Taisui was qualified to speak with Lu Yin. This also helped Lu Yin demonstrate his status as the Alliance Leader while also flaunting his power to Northline Flowzone's top individuals since they were still enemies.

Northgate Kong and the rest did not reveal any displeasure and simply stood there silently, watching as Lu Yin followed Northgate Taisui deeper into the vessel.

Ku Wei arrogantly followed behind Lu Yin, looking like a lackey.

Lily Anne watched Lu Yin with a complicated expression. In just ten years he had climbed to such impressive heights. If only she could have seen this coming, as she would have made sure to reach a partnership with Lu Yin no matter what.

Lily Anne had learned about Granny Chan's actions only after the connection between the Inverse and Outerverse had been restored. Lily Anne had been furious, as she had been friends with Lu Yin, yet her family had become Lu Yin's greatest enemy from Northline Flowzone's three families.

Within the ship's guest lounge, Northgate Taisui sat across from Lu Yin as Lily Anne stood behind the elder.

"Alliance Leader Lu, it's been ten years, hasn't it?" Northgate Taisui smiled.

Lu Yin replied, "Yes, it's already been ten years."

"My Northline Flowzone has had some history with you, and I still remember when Alliance Leader was placed in charge of our Youth Council and you were a witness during the competition at Northgate Platform." Northgate Taisui tried to establish some rapport with Lu Yin.

Lu Yin laughed. "That's right, I also used Northline Flowzone's ships to get to the fight on Pyrolyte Planet." He paused and swirled his teacup. "However, I don't understand why Northline Flowzone has expressed so much animosity towards me recently."

Northgate Taisui's eyes flashed. "Animosity? Where did you hear that, Alliance Leader Lu?"

Lily Anne carefully watched Lu Yin.

Ku Wei, who was standing behind Lu Yin, shouted back, "Old man, are you just acting dumb? Does His Highness need people to tell him about such things? As long as he wants to find out about something, who can hide anything from him?"

Northgate Taisui frowned and glared at Ku Wei, and put a tremendous amount of pressure on the obnoxious youth.

Ku Wei's face went red, but he simply snorted and kept his head high.

Northgate Taisui was shocked. He had assumed that Ku Wei was just a simple lackey, and had not expected the youth to be able to withstand such pressure. Even Northgate Lie, who was Northline Flowzone's most elite youth, was incapable of such.

The elder seriously appraised Ku Wei seriously, and asked, "Young man, where are you from?"

Ku Wei just sneered.

Lu Yin reprimanded him, "Ku Wei, don't be rude to Senior Northgate."

Northgate Taisui's brows rose as soon as he heard Ku Wei's name. 'Ku' was not a typical surname. The older man looked back at Ku Wei before turning to Lu Yin. "Alliance Leader Lu, there have been quite a few misunderstandings. I'm sure you understand Northline Flowzone's position, and your Great Eastern Alliance's occupation of the Blaze Realm has incited chaos for us."

Lu Yin put down his teacup. "So, are you saying you want the Great Eastern Alliance to leave the Inniverse?"

Northgate Taisui anxiously replied, "Of course not, I merely wanted to clear the air. Northline Flowzone wishes to be on good terms with you, Alliance Leader Lu."

Lily Anne smiled and spoke up, "Alliance Leader Lu, please believe our Northline Flowzone's sincerity."

She stepped forward and offered Lu Yin a cosmic ring.

Lily Anne was the person in Northline Flowzone who knew Lu Yin the best, and she was aware of how much Lu Yin loved money.

Lu Yin didn't move, and instead Ku Wei took the offered ring. He glanced at it and tossed it back towards Lily Anne. "Lady, since Northline Flowzone is such a small place, His Highness won't blame you for this, but how could you believe that a mere million star essence would be enough to remove past grudges?"

Lu Yin turned towards Lily Anne and smiled. "Miss Anne, we're old friends; what need is there for you to do this? The Great Eastern Alliance will not attack your Northline Flowzone, so you have no need to worry."

Lily Anne bowed. "This is my fault, and I hope you won't blame me, Alliance Leader Lu."

She then turned to look at Northgate Taisui.

Northgate Taisui made a gesture to her.

Lily Anne left the room and Lily Shu'er entered. She had a huge smile on her face, and her actions were the complete opposite of Lily Anne's.

Lily Anne appeared elegant and knowledgeable, while Lily Shu'er was active and vibrant.

She carefully took out ten cosmic rings after entering the room, and she placed them on the table. She grinned at Lu Yin and stuck out her tongue at him before running back out of the room.

Lu Yin shot a curious look at Northgate Taisui.

Northgate Taisui looked at Lu Yin. "Alliance Leader Lu, my Northline Flowzone has no significant grudges with you, and these are just some small gifts we prepared for you. I hope you will accept them and forgive any past actions of Northline Flowzone that might have offended you."

Lu Yin glanced at the cosmic rings. "Are all these being offered to remove old grudges?"

Northgate Taisui answered sincerely, "That's right. We have no further intentions."

Lu Yin remained sitting while Ku Wei stepped forward and silently collected the cosmic rings.

"Senior Northgate, how many people from the Northline Flowzone are participating in ZENITH?" Lu Yin asked.

Northgate Taisui showed a bitter smile. "Only three: Lily Anne, Lily Shu'er and Northgate Gang. The other youths simply aren't ready."

Lu Yin smiled. "There are four."

Northgate Taisui was confused.

Lu Yin continued, "Ah Fan graduated from your Northline Flowzone's Shangwu Academy, and he's currently based at San Dios and serves my Great Eastern Alliance."

Northgate Taisui had not even known of Ah Fan's existence, but as soon as he heard that this person served the Great Eastern Alliance, Northgate Taisui smiled. "I didn't realize we had another elite. Thank you, Alliance Leader Lu, for your help."

Lu Yin answered, "It was nothing. By the way, your ship isn't very fast."

Northgate Taisui explained, "We don't want to travel too quickly as things are already so chaotic at Zenith Mountain. Everyone in the entire universe wants to leave their name on the mountain, and some of our enemies are already there. Northline Flowzone is not very strong, so we don't want to arrive too early. Additionally, with so many geniuses participating in ZENITH, I don't want Anne and the others to be discouraged."

Lu Yin understood how the man felt. Judging by the strength he had observed Lily Anne and the others possessed, they would not be able to do anything during ZENITH. If they arrived too soon, people would be able to discover their weaknesses, and they might even attract their enemies' attention.

Lu Yin and Ku Wei returned to their own vessel once matters were resolved.

Lu Yin had resolved his grudges with Northline Flowzone, but that was only past grudges. He had not made any mention of grudges that might be made in the future, and he had never promised to leave Northline Flowzone alone. It was just a matter of time before the Great Eastern Alliance needed to expand.

Ku Wei passed Lu Yin the ten cosmic rings after they returned to their own spacecraft. "Seventh Bro, was this really just trying to smooth things out between you and them? They're paying a massive price, as there's almost ten million star essence here. That's basically a tenth of the Blaze Realm's treasury."

Lu Yin stored the star essence. "That old man wants me to take care of his people from Northline Flowzone during ZENITH."

"How?" Ku Wei hesitated. "Let them past the gate?"

Lu Yin nodded. "This is a competition open to the entire universe. No matter how many people sign up, as long as someone is able to get past the first level, they will be able to have their name on Zenith Mountain for another day, which will bring greater glory to their family. Although Northgate Taisui said that he doesn't have any hope for his family during this competition, he still would like to see their names remain on Zenith Mountain even just a bit longer."

"That's true. Seventh Bro, as long as you cut them some slack during the competition and don't make things too difficult for them, they should be able to make it through," Ku Wei said.

The reality was that what Lu Yin was saying was just one of the reasons behind offering such wealth. Another big motivation was the Lily family trying to apologize for the incident with Granny Chan. The three families might not have offered up equal amounts of money for this peace offering, and the Lily family might have needed to supply the majority.

No matter what was behind the gift, Lu Yin was happy just to receive ten million star essence. This also seemed like a good way of earning money.

Lu Yin looked at space. As long as he was powerful, he would have no need to fight for what he wanted, as it would simply appear before him.

...

In Chaos Flowzone, after Zenith Mountain had appeared, many planets had begun to appear around the mountain, as well as many strange buildings. Various major powers had sent these structures, and many of the elder generation's powerhouses began to appear.

More and more people gathered at Zenith Mountain, and they were from the Innerverse, the Outerverse, the Cosmic Sea, the Neoverse, and even the Sixth Mainland.

Countless different styles of spacecraft could be seen, and some did not even look like spaceships.

Also, whenever people gathered together, conflicts would arise.

Nearly a hundred fights broke out on a daily basis due to all sorts of things.

At this moment, An Shaohua was fighting against Xun Jiong on one planet.

One of the two was from Watermoon Villa, while the other was from the Xun family. Their strength was comparable, and they had already been fighting for many hours.