

### **Chapter 171: The Reappearance Of The Scarlet Eyes**

There were numerous trial takers and only one Giant Emperor. So despite its overwhelming strength, it wasn't able to block all of their attacks. Injuries steadily accumulated all over its body, and even its back had been slashed open. The Giant Emperor howled in fury and slammed the ground with both palms, each hand instantly killing a person. Blood and water intermingled in the swamp as it unleashed another attack at the trial takers in front of it, this time targeting the two beautiful girls.

Their expressions immediately changed, and they quickly retreated. However, the Giant Emperor seemed to be hellbent on killing them, and it appeared to be willing to forcefully take some of the attacks from the others in order to kill the two girls.

"Hey, over there. Save them!" somebody called out, hoping that Lu Yin would intervene.

Ah Mu was startled and immediately glanced at Lu Yin, but Lu Yin didn't answer the call.

One person grew anxious and continued attacking the Giant Emperor as he shouted, "Hey, they're from the Umbral Butterfly Tribe! If you save them, you'll gain the Umbral Butterfly Tribe's favor. Besides, I've got money, too! I'll give you everything in my cosmic ring!"

Lu Yin still didn't move.

Zhuo Daynight glanced at him with a calm look in her eyes.

"Hey-" But this time, before the anxious trial taker could say anything more, he was smashed to bits by the Giant Emperor, and the entire swamp seemed to shudder slightly. The Giant Emperor then turned as it searched along the bottom of the swamp for something. A moment later, his hands emerged with a large, bizarre-looking snake that he tossed at the two girls. They were shocked, which allowed the snake's body to strike them, sending both of them flying and coughing up blood. One of them even died on the spot.

Lu Yin merely watched on calmly. Since he had promised Ah Mu not to help, he would keep his word.

"Let's attack together!" someone yelled. Dozens of trial takers attacked simultaneously and many of their attacks successfully struck the Giant Emperor. By now, its body was riddled with multiple holes from numerous powerful and fearless attacks, and it cried out one last time in resignation. The Giant Emperor's knees hit the ground, and its head hung down low while it panted for breath.

"Keep going, he can't hold out for much longer!" the same person yelled in excitement, prompting everybody to attack together again.

Lu Yin watched the Giant Emperor closely. Where is his third eye? Since Old Cai said that I needed to retrieve the third eye, it must exist. But why haven't I seen it yet?

Just as the Giant Emperor was about to die to the incoming barrage of attacks, however, a dark figure flashed through the battlefield. An instant later, at least ten trial takers fell to the ground, dead, with black feathers stuck in their foreheads. The figure continued flitting past everyone to grab the Giant Emperor's head.

The Giant Emperor looked up and bellowed fiercely. Shockwaves swept through the area, and the figure twisted around before disappearing into the void. The figure then reappeared less than ten meters away from where it had originally disappeared.

The Giant Emperor had actually never run out of energy, and it was just as strong as it was in the beginning. It had been faking its weakness all along.

Many of the trial takers were shocked by this scene. The mysterious figure attacked once more, and Zhuo Daynight joined in at this moment, slashing at the Giant Emperor with her red sword. Lu Yin left Ah Mu at the edge of the swamp and rushed forward to attack as well, using his Nine Stacks Ninefold Shockwave Palm right from the get-go.

Each of the three incoming attacks were troublesome for the Giant Emperor, and it instinctively tried to dive back into the swamp. None of the attacks struck their targets and instead hit the empty air, causing a huge crack to appear in the void. Everyone who saw this crack felt a shiver run down their spines. Those were spatial cracks, and the fact that those three people's attacks had shattered the void showed that they were very powerful.

Lu Yin's Nine Stacks Ninefold Shockwave Palm caused both Zhuo Daynight and the mysterious figure to retreat together during the ninth explosion. The three of them landed on the ground after the Giant Emperor ran away. It was at this moment that Lu Yin finally managed to see the face of the figure that had flitted into the battlefield. It was a man with a very pale face

Zhuo Daynight gazed at the man in black clothing in shock. She had never expected that two people who were as powerful as her would appear in this tiny weave trial out here in the Outerverse. It was quite a surprise.

The man in black clothing was expressionless as he focused on the bottom of the swamp. His body then began to sink down.

Lu Yin had no intention of letting the pale man attack again. The Giant Emperor might be powerful, but it was no match for any of them three. Whether it was Zhuo Daynight or the man who had just arrived, both of them had enough power to kill the Giant Emperor by themselves. Things would get troublesome if the man was able to attack again.

With this in mind, Lu Yin used Flash to appear by the man's side before attacking with the 96th form of the Skybeast Claw technique. The man's expression did not change in the face of this sudden attack, and he responded with his fist. With a loud boom, shockwaves rippled out in all directions, destroying the top layer of the swamp. The resulting shockwaves even forced dozens of trial takers to take several steps back.

Zhuo Daynight stabbed her sword deep inside the swamp while Lu Yin and the man were engaged in battle. Multiple images of the sword appeared in the area around her—the White Phantom sword had appeared again. With this sword technique, the area within a circumference of a hundred meters of her had been sealed off, making it akin to a domain.

This attack cut through the swamp and even chopped off one of the Giant Emperor's arms, leaving it howling in pain.

The pale faced man vanished, retreating from his battle with Lu Yin, before he charged at Zhuo Daynight. Her red sword swept horizontally and slashed at the man, who countered by throwing out several black feathers straight at her, which Zhuo Daynight rapidly dodged. At this moment, the Giant Emperor leapt out of the swamp and tried to rush away.

Zhuo Daynight and the man switched targets to the Giant Emperor at the same time. The red sword and the black feathers landed on the Giant Emperor and mercilessly pierced through its body. It fell to the ground powerlessly, causing the swamp mud to splash everywhere.

Zhuo Daynight and the man were both desperate to land the killing blow on the Giant Emperor. Lu Yin did not know why, but his intuition said that it had something to do with the third eye. He watched as the two of them landed on the Giant Emperor's back and then headed into the forest while still fighting on the Giant Emperor's back. Lu Yin used Flash and appeared in the sky. Elsewhere, ten or so trial takers tried in vain to deal the final blow to the Giant Emperor.

Lu Yin swept out his arm and star energy rushed through the area, injuring those ten or so Melders. "If you go there, you will die."

His calm voice echoed throughout the swamp and left the trial takers trembling in fear. They could not understand why, even when they were all at the Melder realm, there was such an insurmountable gap between their power levels. With Lu Yin's power, he could easily crush the Giant Emperor that was as strong as a peak Limiteer. Within the Umbral Butterfly Region, perhaps no one could compare to him.

A bit away from the Giant Emperor and the battlefield, Ah Mu drew closer to the Umbral Butterfly Tribe girl who was still alive. He had an icy look in his eyes. His initially cowardly gaze had since begun burning fierce as he glared malevolently at her. The girl was severely injured and alone, and so was unable to move. Fear filled her eyes as she watched Ah Mu approach. "Stop! Don't come near me, you bastard. Stop!"

Ah Mu walked over to her, revealing a broken sword in his hand. He clenched it tightly, and without a second thought, thrust it into her heart.

Red blood mixed in with the black mud of the swamp.

The girl's eyes were stunned, and she seemed to be in excruciating pain. She stared at Ah Mu venomously until her eyes glazed over as she died.

Ah Mu crumpled to the ground and closed his eyes. "Mother, she's the first, but she will definitely not be the last. Don't worry. Ah Mu will definitely avenge you."

Rumble!

A huge rumble shuddered through the swamp as the forest on the Giant Emperor's back collapsed. Zhuo Daynight was driven backwards by a huge force, until she regained her footing in mid-air. Her red sword dropped to the ground, causing phantom swords to appear in a hundred meters radius around her. One of the swords was aimed at the man in black clothes who was still standing on the Giant Emperor's back.

The man turned around with a cold glint in his eyes that was so chilling that it left many of the trial takers trembling in fear. He lifted his arm and something black extended from it, gradually engulfing the

area until it reached Zhuo Daynight. Her red sword let out a terrible creaking noise when it collided with the black mass that was emanating a chilly aura.

Lu Yin was shocked—this was ice! To his surprise, the man had an innate gift of ice. Even more surprisingly, it was no ordinary ice. It was black and frighteningly cold.

Zhuo Daynight shattered the black ice with a single slash from her sword that then went on to strike at the man. However, it had lost too much power from shattering the ice, and the pale-faced man easily knocked it aside. Zhuo Daynight couldn't handle the sudden change in force, and her sword flew out of her hands, landing far away in the swamp while still vibrating.

Zhuo Daynight had lost.

After defeating her, the man punched the Giant Emperor again. Only then did Lu Yin get close to him to kick out. The man anticipated Lu Yin's attack and smoothly altered the course of his punch towards Lu Yin. This attack was different from all his other attacks, as even the air around it was distorting.

With a boom, shockwaves radiated out through the swamp and slammed into the Giant Emperor that was at the bottom. Even the trial takers far away felt a wave of dizziness wash over them, and all of them coughed out some blood before retreating even further away.

Zhuo Daynight looked on in shock as blood dripped out the corner of her lip. The punch that had sent her flying had been terrifying, but it had done almost nothing to the person before her. He had still not used his full strength.

Lu Yin and the man in black clothing fell into the bottom of the swamp alongside the Giant Emperor. Turbulent star energy forcefully repelled the swamp waters while the two of them stared intently at each other.

The man did not expect that Lu Yin would be able to block his punch. When the two of them reached the bottom of the swamp, he immediately rushed forward with a palm soaring at Lu Yin. Sharp, black ice immediately shot forth and sealed off the bottom of the swamp, causing an intensely cold fog to form above the swamp. Many of the trial takers were left shivering.

Lu Yin was encased by the black ice. It was remarkably hard and cold. Any other Melder and even many Limiteers from the Astral Combat Academy would be rendered helpless in this situation, but not Lu Yin. He merely lifted his right hand and covered it with battle force. Then, he violently grabbed the ice, exerted some force, and caused the ice to explode with a ringing sound.

The man was shocked and muttered in a hoarse voice, "Battle... force."

Lu Yin frowned. This person before him spoke in a very strange way. It was almost as if he had just learned to talk. However, Lu Yin disregarded this peculiarity and Flashed near the man before lifting his palm. Eight stars sparkled above his circulating battle force, creating the perfect combination of his Cosmic Palm technique and his battle force. When faced with this attack, the man's pupils constricted and his body was immediately slammed to the bottom of the swamp. Even the Giant Emperor was pushed aside.

A loud clashing sound was heard from within the swamp, and the area around them collapsed. The mud surged in from all sides, creating a whirlpool

From above, Ah Mu watched on in shock while the rest of the trial takers didn't even dare to approach the maelstrom.

Zhuo Daynight watched the marshes closely.

During Astral-10's New Student Competition, Lu Yin had used his Nine Stacks Ninefold Shockwave Palm combined with battle force to defeat Darkvoid in one blow. That Nine Stacks Ninefold Shockwave Palm was at most comparable to his seven star Cosmic Palm, and it was definitely much less powerful than the eight star Cosmic Palm. Lu Yin believed that this pale-faced man would absolutely lose to the combination of his eight star Cosmic Palm and battle force combination attack.

Lu Yin landed on the back of the Giant Emperor and was wondering where the third eye could be when a terrifying force emanated from deep underground.

Lu Yin's expression changed and he looked at the ground seriously, only to see the man slowly crawling out from the mud. His robes had been torn apart, revealing a firm set of well developed muscles. A red palm print was visible at the place where Lu Yin had struck, but the muscles writhed strangely, causing the palm print to disappear.

When he saw this, Lu Yin's face darkened. It was a huge surprise that this person's physical body was this strong. Lu Yin didn't know the upper limits of his own body yet, but this person's physical defenses would not be easily penetrated.

The man suddenly looked up and revealed a pair of scarlet eyes.

At that moment, Lu Yin felt a shiver go down his spine, and every part of his body stiffened. Those eyes caused his expression to drastically change. This is a Corpse King from the Neohuman Alliance. He's a Corpse King from the Neohuman Alliance!

Roar!

An inhuman cry filled the sky out as the man charged at Lu Yin. The Corpse King then punched out, causing the air to crack again.

## **Chapter 172: Present**

The Corpse King's attacking pattern was simple yet brutal. Lu Yin avoided it by Flashing away, while the Giant Emperor was pushed even further underground. It had been knocked out previously, but this new round of beating awakened him again. Its body was also pierced through, causing blood to gush out of its wounds.

The black-garbed man's attack was fruitless. But he merely turned around to stare at Lu Yin with his chilling scarlet eyes and slitted pupils before rushing at him again.

Lu Yin's eyes also burned with rage; the Neohuman Alliance was the greatest enemy of the human race. He wanted to test the strength of a trained elite Corpse King. With that intent in mind, Lu Yin swung his fist in reply. He still didn't know his own physical limits, and this Corpse King was a great opponent to test his limits against.

Bang!

The entire swamp trembled as a terrifying shockwave that rocked the entire swamp erupted from the bottom of the swamp and nearly covered the entire sky. Everyone, including the Giant Emperor, was swept away by the force and thrown into the distance.

Ah Mu's legs were so numbed by the shockwave that he was rendered immobile. He could not even begin to fathom the level of the battle taking place below the ground right now. He had once witnessed a battle between Limiteers of the Umbral Butterfly Tribe, but even that had not been as terrifying as this.

The black-garbed man had exposed his identity as a Corpse King. He had an extremely strong physical body, but even so, Lu Yin's punch stunned the Corpse King. It was so powerful that the Corpse King felt like he was being sent to hell as he was forced back.

Lu Yin had a strange expression on his face as he remained standing in his original spot, having not moved an inch. It seemed that this bastard was actually not capable of pushing Lu Yin's physical abilities to their limits.

In the ported battles, he had always wanted to test his physical limits with his opponents, but he had always been unsuccessful. Since the ported battles only valued the ultimate result, once Lu Yin's opponent sensed the terror of his physical body, they would generally change their method of attack as few were willing to go head to head against him in terms of physical strength. Even now, Lu Yin's physical body had yet to be severely injured and only his internal organs had been slightly rattled.

"You're from the Neohuman Alliance," Lu Yin called out, trying to probe into this person's background.

The black-garbed man had been staring intently at Lu Yin with his scarlet cat eyes. But when he heard Lu Yin's words, his murderous intent dramatically rose in his eyes and he threw a vicious leg sweep at Lu Yin. His impressive strength caused the space to distort, causing a small spatial crack to appear again. Lu Yin narrowed his eyes. He had already lost interest in this fight. Outside of the swamp, that Daynight clan woman had crept up beside the Giant Emperor, and she seemed to be trying to sneakily accomplish something.

Lu Yin opened his right hand, causing eight stars to sparkle while the vague image of a ninth appeared as well. They revolved around his palm to form the image of a perfect galaxy, which he then slammed towards the black-clothed man. This attack was on a completely different level from the previous attacks. If an eight star Cosmic Palm was still an attack that belonged in the Melder realm, then this pseudo nine star Cosmic Palm was freakish enough to belong in the Limiteer realm.

Lu Yin's palm landed squarely on the man's body, and his mouth dropped open as he spat out a mouthful of blood. His tough and sturdy muscles tore apart like paper, and his entire body seemed to be on the verge of disintegrating into dust. He fell onto the ground miserably and coughed out another mouthful of blood. His scarlet cat eyes lost their fire, and he seemed to be completely defeated.

Lu Yin walked beside the man and carelessly wondered if he should finish the Corpse King off. A Corpse King was not a human as every one of them had a terrifying physique, and they could also swallow elemental energy crystals to obtain Innate Gifts. They walked a completely different path of cultivation and could become abnormally strong in their own right. The Ten Arbiters Council had also declared that

anyone who killed a member of the Neohuman Alliance would receive a great amount of glory as a reward.

Honor and glory were very important to Lu Yin, and they would greatly help him regardless of what region of the universe he was in. But for Lu Yin, this reward wasn't the most compelling incentive. With his status as a Lockbreaker, he did not lack for any amount of glory. But when he considered it from the perspective of the human race, he really should dispose of this Corpse King.

Lu Yin crouched down, took the fallen Corpse King's cosmic ring from his hand, and then accessed it by swiping some of the defeated man's blood onto it. There were a few hundred star energy crystals and a bunch of black crystals that emitted a biting coldness. There was also a heap of unrecognizable items, but there was really only one item that attracted Lu Yin's attention: a ring. The ring was pitch black with an inlaid center of silvery grey metal. Engraved onto the silvery metal inlay was a delicately carved pair of flying wings and a sword with ten shadows around it. This was an Outerverse Youth Council member's ring.

The Ten Arbiters Council's ring was a black border with a silver-white center inlay while the Outerverse Youth Council's was a black border and a grey-silver center inlay. This Corpse King actually joined the Outerverse Youth Council? What a joke. How could no one notice it?

Aside from the ring, Lu Yin found another familiar item; it was an artificial scarlet eye identical to the ones from the skull he had taken from Silver.

This Corpse King was indeed from the Neohuman Alliance. Lu Yin breathed out heavily and he looked at the gadget on the man's hand. There was a familiar name attached to the bottom-most notification—Puyu.

'Go to the Umbral Butterfly Weave and obtain the third eye of the Giant Emperor—Puyu.' These were the black-garbed man's orders. Lu Yin's eyes brightened when he saw this message as it meant that this Corpse King was actually Puyu's subordinate.

Does this mean that Puyu also belongs to the Neohuman Alliance? No, that can't be right. If Puyu really was a member of the Neohuman Alliance, then he wouldn't have brazenly given this Corpse King a mission, and he definitely wouldn't have admitted him to the Outerverse Youth Council. It would be meaningless to have two members from the same organization in the same location. That meant that, if this person really was Puyu's subordinate, then the only possibility was that Puyu did not know his true identity as a Corpse King.

Lu Yin's eyes flashed as he pondered over the ramifications of this new discovery. Puyu was Bazeer's backer, and the humiliation that he had suffered from Bazeer could only have been ordered by Puyu. That made Puyu a great enemy of Lu Yin's, and if that was so, then he could not simply finish off this Corpse King.

Lu Yin didn't know how his future interactions with Puyu would go if he allowed this Neohuman Alliance Corpse King to continue working with Puyu. So the majestic Outerverse Youth Council member had actually roped in a Neohuman Alliance Corpse King. Lu Yin hoped that Puyu would like this present, and a smile appeared on Lu Yin's face as he anticipated that day's arrival.

Lu Yin was in no hurry to rise up from the bottom of the swamp. After all, he didn't know where the Giant Emperor's third eye was. However, there was a high probability that both the Corpse King and Zhuo Daynight knew, which was why Lu Yin had left the girl alone when she tried to surreptitiously approach the Giant Emperor's corpse.

Back above the swamp, Zhuo Daynight carefully observed the Giant Emperor before finally thrusting her sword into the back of its head. After digging around for a few seconds, she retrieved a white, half-moon shaped crystal. She glanced beneath her and then dashed off into the distance without any hesitation.

Lu Yin's eyes brightened and he charged out, instantly Flashing next to Zhuo Daynight.

Zhuo Daynight saw Lu Yin's seemingly teleport next to her and frowned. She had wanted to use her extreme speed to escape, but her speed was far inferior to Lu Yin's. Theoretically, Lu Yin's Flash had no upper limit to its speed. He had once observed the Sandmaster use his own Flash to tear open the void, and Lu Yin effortlessly caught up to Zhuo Daynight.

Zhuo Daynight swept out with her longsword and slashed at Lu Yin, immediately using her White Phantomsword technique. Lu Yin wasn't polite either, and he covered his hand with battle force before slapping the blade aside. The blow forced Zhuo Daynight to retreat and the remnant force jostled her organs. She had already been injured by the black-clothed man, and now, she had been struck again with a battle force infused blow. She spat out some blood and stumbled back several steps, turning paler by the second.

Lu Yin stood before her and stretched out his hand. "Hand it over."

Zhuo Daynight's gaze was chilly but also filled with helplessness. "This is useless to you. I can buy it from you, since you seem to be rather lacking in star crystals."

"I am indeed extremely lacking, but this is useful to me. Hand it over." Lu Yin's tone turned cold.

She gritted her teeth as her eyes blazed indignantly. Then, for lack of a better choice, she threw the white crystal at Lu Yin and turned to leave.

"Wait," Lu Yin said as he moved to block Zhuo Daynight again.

"What do you want?"

"What use does this have?"

"I don't know."

Lu Yin sneered disdainfully. "You don't know? You rushed here from the Inniverse's Daynight clan, across an endless distance to this small Umbral Butterfly Weave, all for this thing. And yet, you don't know what it's used for? I don't appreciate people who lie to me. Speak."

Zhuo Daynight gripped her sword tightly and resentfully muttered, "This is the Giant Emperor's third eye, and it is what awakens the Giant Emperor's intelligence. No other giant race member has this. My clan's elder asked me to bring it back for research as he may be able to uncover the source of human intelligence with it."



Lu Yin frowned. He did not believe it, but Zhuo Daynight's words seemed logical on the surface. Humans had been trying to discover the source of their own intelligence for countless years. How do humans think? Or how are thoughts created? These questions have plagued the human race for eons and there was nothing wrong with researching the subject. Lu Yin thought about her answer for a brief moment and then allowed Zhuo Daynight to leave. This was something that Old Cai wanted, so he didn't spend any more energy on thinking about its uses. Also, he could not try to force her to reveal anything as she was still someone from the Daynight clan. Lu Yin might not have liked the Daynight clan, but he still had to concede that the clan's absolute might was not something he could contend against.

In the monitoring room in the heavens above the planet, most of the displays showed normal scenes of the trial takers, but the feed of the top-class trial takers in the swamp had been interrupted some time ago. When the feed was repaired, the Giant Emperor had already been killed, and no one knew who had killed the Giant Emperor.

Many trial takers claimed that they were responsible for the Giant Emperor's death, but no one could verify their claims. After much debate, this weave trial ended in everyone's failure. The best results ended up going to Ah Mu, as he had publicly released the location of the Giant Emperor's tracks. Ah Mu had never, even in his wildest dreams, thought that he would attain the best results; he had only wanted to survive the trial. Honestly, he felt like he was still dreaming.

Ah Mu had nothing but praise for the calm Lu Yin beside him. "Seventh Brother, let's be friends."

Lu Yin was speechless, and he gently patted Ah Mu on the shoulder. "Take care. We'll meet again if fate wills it."

Ah Mu nodded.

Before long, the duo returned to their own respective spacecraft. Lu Yin did not say much to Ah Mu and immediately left on his Aurora spacecraft since he was afraid of being discovered by the trial observers. Although they would not do anything to him, it would be a troublesome situation since he had interfered in their weave's trial, and that was not even mentioning the fact that he had extorted quite a few of the trial takers.

His cosmic ring now held over 5,000 star crystals, all of which had been extorted. It was a pity that it was still too little for Lu Yin's appetite. For him, he would not feel secure about his finances unless he had at least 10,000 star crystals. Otherwise, every die roll would be useless except for Possession. This was also why he had not rolled his die in a long while.

It had been nearly two months since he had left the Frostwave Weave, and about three months since he had left Astral-10. It was time to return.

His harvest this time was quite good. Not only had he become a one star Junior Lockbreaker, but he had also indistinctly manifested the ninth star of his cultivation technique, and he had even found a backer for the trial zone in the form of Charon. He could not wait to see the Area Master's expression when they finally met.

Ah Mu finally relaxed after Lu Yin's Aurora spacecraft left. He took out an object that did not seem to follow any laws and emitted a faint green radiance. This was what the Giant Emperor had taken from

the central giant tribe, and it was also why the ant colony had been searching for the Giant Emperor. Ah Mu had covertly obtained it, and even Lu Yin was unaware of this fact.

“This is useful to me, so please pardon me, Seventh Brother. I can’t give it to you.” Ah Mu then swallowed the object in his hand, and a trace of burning ambition flashed in his eyes. His heart snarled, “But-ter-fly-We-ave.”

No one knew how large the universe was, and the so-called “Inniverse” and “Outerverse” were just the divisions of the humans’ territory. The four great star Domains were similar in that humans had not explored beyond those areas yet.

### **Chapter 173: Promise**

Lu Yin had long since noticed that his Cosmic Art’s simulation of the stars’ orbits had become much faster, and the ninth star was already distinctly visible. With just a bit more effort and time, he would be able to stabilize the ninth star. A month seemed about right, and that was coincidentally how long it would take him to travel back to Astral-10.

He didn’t know how far his fellow students back in Astral-10 had progressed in their cultivation, as he had been absent for about four months in total. They should have all experienced a rather huge jump in improvement, and some of them had perhaps already entered the trial zones. When he thought of what the other Astral-10 students’ experiences in the trial zones would be, Lu Yin felt a hint of schadenfreude surface in his heart. He had suffered so badly as the top student—the others would definitely have it much worse.

Not two days later, while Lu Yin was cultivating his Cosmic Art, alarms suddenly rang throughout his spacecraft. “Warning, a spacecraft is obstructing the route ahead. Warning, a spacecraft is obstructing the route ahead.”

Lu Yin looked out and saw a warship standing in his path. His heart sank, as he had previously witnessed the terror of a warship; it had destroyed a planet along with all the Explorers on it in a single strike. Generally, warships were the strategic weapons that belonged to the various great powers, so why would one appear here? And it was even obstructing his path as well!

A sound emitted from his spacecraft, indicating that the other party wanted to communicate. Lu Yin frowned, but still pressed the button to receive the call.

“Hand over the Giant Emperor’s third eye,” said a calm female voice through the communication device. Lu Yin was furious. So it was the woman from the Daynight clan! She had somehow gotten a warship and was using it to block Lu Yin’s path and rob him of the third eye.

“Zhuo Daynight, don’t you think that it’s a bit too shameful to use a warship to threaten me?”

“I repeat, hand over the Giant Emperor’s third eye, and I’ll let you go. If not, you can turn into a pile of space trash.” Zhuo Daynight’s tone remained cold. When she finished speaking, Lu Yin felt a rising sense of danger from the opposing warship, and his heart rate spiked. The warship had locked onto his spacecraft; its attack would obliterate him if he didn’t agree.

Lu Yin had no choice. “Zhuo Daynight, if you kill a Lockbreaker that has no animosity towards you, will you be able to bear the consequences?”

“Lockbreaker?” Zhuo Daynight was shocked by Lu Yin revealing his status. “You’re a Lockbreaker?”

Lu Yin smiled. “That’s right. And not just any Lockbreaker, but a one star Junior Lockbreaker at that. I’ve already made some contributions. The Lockbreaker Society will definitely not let you off if you murder me.”

Back on the warship, Zhuo Daynight fell silent. Beside her, the soldiers were all shocked. They were troops from a nearby weave’s empire. They had lent their warship to her because of the Daynight clan’s reputation as they thought that it would be used for some trivial matter. They never imagined that this woman actually wanted to use it to deal with an Astral-10 student. Discovering that had made them afraid, but not terrified since the Daynight clan would bear the responsibility. However, attacking a student who was also a Lockbreaker was something unimaginable.

This was a Lockbreaker, a treasured talent among the entire human race. It could be said that a Lockbreaker represented how deeply the human race had explored the universe. No one dared to kill a Lockbreaker, especially one who had made contributions. There weren’t many of them in the entire universe, and killing one would doom the soldiers’ empire. They were sure that the other party was already recording a video; it was already too late to hide this matter from the Lockbreaker Society.

“Confirm your status.” Zhuo Daynight stubbornly refused to give in.

Lu Yin smiled. The Lockbreaker Network let outsiders browse through the network as guests, and they could also message the Lockbreakers. He sent a message to Zhuo Daynight through the Lockbreaker Network to prove his identity and to force her to drop her demands. “Alright, let me go now. This farce has gone on for long enough.”

She clenched her fists and spoke in a low tone. “That’s not possible. Hand over the Giant Emperor’s third eye, or I’ll bury you here in outer space.”

Lu Yin raised his brows. “You’re crazy if you want to kill a Lockbreaker.”

“That Lockbreaker identity isn’t enough to protect you. I’m from the Daynight clan, and the Lockbreaker Society will not cause my Daynight clan that much trouble for just a tiny little one star Junior Lockbreaker like you.”

“You’re right. They won’t go after the Daynight clan... but what about the owner of that warship? Can they withstand the Lockbreaker Society’s vengeance? Don’t even try to spout any nonsense about controlling such a large warship by yourself.”

Zhuo Daynight’s eyes narrowed and she looked to the side at a middle-aged man in a military uniform with a gloomy expression. When he saw Zhuo Daynight look over, he shook his head.

She was helpless as Lu Yin was right. The Daynight clan might not fear the Lockbreaker Society since he was only a Junior Lockbreaker, but the commander of the warship was different. There was no Outerverse power that could withstand the wrath of the Lockbreaker Society. Once they killed a Lockbreaker, the society would definitely investigate. They could not trivialize the death of a Lockbreaker, as that would affect their reputation of overprotecting all their Lockbreakers. Even the Daynight clan would have to bear some responsibility to fully settle this matter, and it was too steep a price to pay for the Giant Emperor’s third eye. Zhuo Daynight could not afford the risk.

The conversation fell silent.

Lu Yin was certain that Zhuo Daynight would not dare to act; the Giant Emperor's third eye could not possibly be so valuable that it could offset the price that her clan would need to pay to suppress the Lockbreaker Society's wrath. He was in no rush and was willing to wait.

But this matter was also a sufficient wake-up call for him. He was powerful, but that was only within the Melder realm. He had not become an Explorer yet and could not wander the universe freely. Once he entered outer space, any random second-rate traveler could use any number of methods to eliminate him if they truly wished to.

Just like Zhuo Daynight. She had clearly left Gigastar Planet after him, but she had still been able to overtake him and block his path with the warship. The reason was that his spacecraft was just too slow as it had not been upgraded, and this oversight had ultimately endangered his life. An Aurora spacecraft without any upgrades was barely different from just an ordinary spacecraft.

Lu Yin secretly decided that, after he got back to Astral-10, he would immediately upgrade his spacecraft and focus on improving its speed as much as he could. He could not afford to allow himself to fall into such a precarious situation again since not everyone would be cowed by the Lockbreaker Society's reputation. Furthermore, this region of the universe held many lunatics, and Lu Yin held no desire to gamble with his life.

"You must be lacking money." Zhuo Daynight's voice came over the intercom again.

Lu Yin rolled his eyes. "You've already tried this back on Gigastar Planet. I'm not selling."

"You can keep the third eye, but I want to make a deal."

"What's the deal?"

"I have 50,000 star crystals. I'll give it all to you in exchange for a single Lockbreaking attempt by you. This will take whenever and wherever I demand it."

Lu Yin sneered. "Lady, you must be crazy. 50,000 is an appropriate payment for the lowest level Junior Lockbreaker to attempt to unlock a Sourcebox. But to demand it whenever and wherever, that's just impossible. Even 100,000 star crystals would not be worth it. A Lockbreaker is not a servant that you can call upon at will."

"Then I'll waste both of our times here. I won't kill you, but I can keep you here for quite a while. One, two, maybe even three years. I seem to recall that the Astral Combat Academy has its Astral Combat Tournament coming up soon. I don't know if you can afford to wait for long."

Lu Yin was angered by Zhuo Daynight's threat. "I will report this matter to the society and have them step in."

"It won't matter. My Daynight clan has elders who are members of the society and their statuses are much higher than yours. As long as I don't kill you, restraining you in this manner is quite easy."

"I can agree to your deal, but I have some conditions of my own."

"Speak." Her voice betrayed a trace of expectation.

“You must give me six months of forewarning.”

“No more than one month.”

“No, five months.”

“Two.”

“The universe is so big that even getting to your location could take more than two months. How about four.”

“Three, and that’s all I’ll concede. We just keep waiting here until you agree.”

Lu Yin finally agreed. “Fine, three months then. But I won’t go to a dangerous place that’s beyond my abilities.”

“You’re stronger than me. If I can go, then you’ll be able to go there too,” Zhuo Daynight said. After these final words, she disconnected the call.

Lu Yin had a sullen expression; he had been threatened for no reason and had even been forced to make a promise. He may have gained 50,000 star crystals today, but he would rather not have them. A promise to the Daynight clan was definitely not going to be easily fulfilled.

Back aboard the warship, Zhuo Daynight looked at Lu Yin’s profile on the Lockbreaker network. She had a curious expression on her face, as he was clearly a genius who had succeeded in his first Lockbreaking attempt. In fact, the Lockbreaker Society had only approved of his qualifications a month ago, and before that, he had not had any connections to the society or Lockbreaking in general. He was an absolute genius, and he was worth far more than the Giant Emperor’s third eye. What a profit.

Soon after, Lu Yin received a transfer of Zhuo Daynight’s 50,000 crystals. It was his first time realizing that money could burn him as well.

Lu Yin ground his teeth as the warship moved aside. Girl, it’s a small universe. We’ll meet again someday.

Zhuo Daynight’s cold eyes held a trace of anticipation as she watched the Aurora spacecraft disappear into the darkness.

Ever since Earth’s trial, Lu Yin had always been suppressed by one person or another. Most had done so through their own overwhelming personal strength, but Zhuo Daynight had suppressed him while being weaker than him. The situation even caused Lu Yin to pout over the situation as this seldom happened. There was only one other time when he had felt like this. It had been when he had first arrived at Earth, and it was a vivid memory that still bothered him to this day.

In the end, this had only happened because his spacecraft was too slow. Otherwise, Zhuo Daynight would have never caught up to him.

“Open the material conversion equipment.”

Soon after he gave the command, a silver vortex half a meter in diameter appeared behind Lu Yin. This was the sole energy source that the Aurora spacecraft relied on for protection while it flew and jumped through space. Other spacecraft required a remodelling for its upgrades, but the Aurora spacecraft was able to take uncommon materials and disassemble, absorb, and integrate them into the spacecraft's composition, allowing the spacecraft to continuously upgrade on its own. This was also the foundation that had popularized the Aurora Company in the first place.

No one knew even the exact theory behind this material conversion device, not even the Aurora spacecraft technicians themselves. This technology actually hailed from the ancient ages, and the Aurora Company had only coincidentally stumbled upon it. They were merely distributors and disseminators of the technology and were not its manufacturers. Even so, this unique technology had allowed them to become a powerful organization that could rival the Mavis Bank.

Lu Yin placed the materials that he had previously disassembled into the device. There were some he recognized and some he didn't, but they all went into the material conversion device. He even included the grey metal that he had received from his first Lockbreaking attempt.

Rather than upgrading the spacecraft, it felt more like he was venting his anger.

The material entered the device and disappeared. There was no sound as it happened; it was as if he had just thrown it all into the void through a hole in the spacecraft.

There was a strange sensation as Lu Yin felt the spacecraft slowly decelerate before entering an idle state in the middle of outer space. It remained motionless as the blinking control panel displayed, "Processing material conversion."

#### **Chapter 174: Madam Nalan**

Lu Yin was struck speechless. He had forgotten that, if too many materials or too rare of a material was used to upgrade the spacecraft, then the spacecraft would stop operating to complete its upgrade. There were no issues with most of the materials that he had tossed in, but that grey metal was definitely uncommon. After all, it had been locked away in a primordial treasure and was able to withstand the erosion of time.

The materials were now being converted and then integrated into the spacecraft, but the problem was that he had no idea how long the spacecraft would be out of commission for. Was he really going to just float in the middle of outer space like this? That was obviously a very dangerous choice because all sorts of disasters could occur anywhere in the universe at any given point in time, such as black holes. Who knew what might appear? Something could even appear right in front of him right now...

The person who was nearest to his location was Zhuo Daynight. How could I let that woman save me? That would be too humiliating.

While Lu Yin was feeling extremely frustrated about his vulnerable situation, a luxurious spacecraft appeared. He had concluded that it was luxurious because it was plated with an outer layer of rare metallic material called Polarium. This material was very recognizable as it was one of the key materials for creating cosmic armor, and it was very expensive.

Before one became an Explorer, it was nearly impossible to freely move about through outer space with one's own power. The only option was to wear a set of cosmic armor, which was very expensive in its own right. These armor sets were also generally considered unnecessary since most people at that level did not need to freely move about in outer space. This was a key reason why few pieces of cosmic armor even existed, and only a large spacecraft would carry them.

Polarium was not only a construction material, but also a key maintenance material. However, this was Lu Yin's first time seeing it being used to plate the outside of a spacecraft. And that wasn't even mentioning the fact that the spacecraft before him was massive, which meant that an enormous amount of polarium must have been used.

As he watched the spacecraft draw closer, Lu Yin quickly sent out a distress signal and included the fact that he was a student from Astral-10. Under most circumstances, unless they were mortal enemies, most people would choose to save him as helping him would increase their favorability in the eyes of the Astral Combat Academy.

Within the command center of the luxurious spacecraft, an operator looked up. "There's a distress call coming from a personal Aurora, one that can convert materials. He's requesting entry."

"Find out who he is," the middle-aged pilot said quietly.

"He's a student from Astral-10 by the name of Lu Yin."

The middle-aged pilot was shocked, "A student from Astral-10? Ask him to give us a moment." He then walked out of the command center.

On the top level of the spacecraft, there was a lounge that had completely transparent walls. When inside the room, one would feel as if they were walking through space itself. All sorts of projections flickered across the walls, imitating various celestial phenomena. Currently, the pilot was asking for approval to rescue Lu Yin to an individual in the lounge. Only the beautiful silhouette of a female's back could be seen while her red lips took a sip of fruit juice. With an enchanting voice, she replied, "Very well, let him aboard."

"Yes, Madam," the pilot answered politely before making his exit.

Lu Yin had no idea that the luxurious spacecraft that he had run into belonged to the Nalan family. The Nalan family was publicly acknowledged as the most wealthy family in the entire Outerverse with businesses in dozens of regions. If one said that the Mavis bank and Aurora Company were huge, powerful organisations that were renowned throughout the entire universe, then the Nalan family was a powerful organization renowned throughout the entire Outerverse. Nobody knew the true extent of their wealth.

The Nalan family was a legendary family that had become an economic powerhouse in the Outerverse over the course of several millennia. However, while they seemed to be blessed by the god of wealth, their family members also seemed to be plagued by a terrifying curse. Over several millennia, the family's descendents had continually died from this curse, their numbers steadily dwindling. The last survivor of the family had been the Nalan family head, Nalan Jun, who had unfortunately died on the day of his marriage. His bride had thus become the official head of the Nalan Family even though she had none of the family's blood flowing in her veins.

That woman became Madam Nalan. Both beautiful and sexy, she was regarded as the wealthiest widow in the Outerverse.

Lu Yin's Aurora entered the luxurious spacecraft while the pilot himself approached to welcome and escort Lu Yin to the reception room; Lu Yin was a student of Astral-10 and deserved a certain level of respect. Also, the Nalan family had never been arrogant and had always treated people with respect. This was an ironclad rule that the family always obeyed.

"Would you like something to eat, Mr. Lu? I can have my men to prepare something for you." the middle-aged man asked with a smile. His tone was respectful, but not overly humble.

Lu Yin was very thankful. "Anything would be great. Thank you so much for letting me enter, sir. Otherwise, my spacecraft would have been stuck there for who knows how long."

The pilot grinned. "Unless you drastically upgrade it, an Aurora will take at most a full day to disassemble all of the metal it's been given. Your spacecraft should be operational in one day as usual."

Lu Yin immediately asked, "May I know who this spacecraft belongs to? I will definitely repay you for all the help I've been given."

The middle-aged pilot smiled. "It's not a big deal so don't mind it too much, Mr. Lu. We're from the Nalan family."

"The Nalan family?" Lu Yin's eyes twinkled. He had heard of this family before as it was the wealthiest in the Outerverse, but it was quite a coincidence for him to accidentally run into them. "Once again, thank you, sir. I'll remember this."

Before long, the middle-aged pilot left and arranged for someone to bring Lu Yin some food and beverages. A large portion of the food was dishes that Lu Yin had only heard of and never seen; such as a caviar that emanated white rays and had a fresh scent to it. If he was not wrong, this was Endless Weave's famous Woody White Fish Caviar. There was also a food that looked like dried beancurd but constantly flickering with multicolored light. It must have been made with the ingredient called the jumping bean, which had the ability to conceal itself. These beans were rather difficult to catch.

And the beverage in his cup had colored spots and gentle breezes wafting from it. Lu Yin had heard of this beverage before and knew that it came from the Innerverse. There were also ribs that flashed with golden light on the plate. Could this be meat from some gigantic astral beast?

The table was filled with food, but those few dishes were the only ones that Lu Yin was able to recognize. He didn't know what the rest were, but he was certain that they were all exquisite delicacies. Every dish here cost over several dozen star crystals to make since the ingredients were all very rare.

After realizing the cost of each dish, Lu Yin faltered. These dishes combined were probably worth at least a few hundred star crystals. If it were converted to universal currency, then they'd cost tens of millions, which was shocking. Of course, the cost could not be calculated that simply, as universal currency was what ordinary people used. Cultivators rarely used universal currency as their medium of choice because the amount would be unnecessarily large. Usually, powerful organizations used star crystals as their preferred currency. For many, they were easily obtainable. The Nalan Family, for



instance, was rumored to own quite a few star crystal mines, so it would be rare for them to ever use universal currency.

When Lu Yin saw a Mavis Bank for the first time, he had been in awe of how the bank hung universal currency up on the trees and let anyone pick up what the wind blew down. At that time, he had been shocked by how loose the Mavis Bank seemed to be with its money, but as he explored more of the universe, the scene no longer surprised him. This was because, in the eyes of the Mavis Bank, universal currency was nothing more than scraps of paper. That's right, they were merely scraps of paper.

For this reason, only red and blue Mavis Bank crystal cards could carry universal currency. Cards that were black or any other color used star crystals, as most of the bank's business was done with star crystals.

For huge organizations that primarily dealt in star crystals, universal currency was a hyperinflated currency—it was just another economic tool.

When greeted with a whole table of delicacies, Lu Yin did not hold back and began eating and drinking without caring for his image. Besides, it was all free. The Nalan family regularly ate meals of this standard.

Within the lounge on the top level, Madam Nalan had a smile on her face as she looked to the side. "What an interesting little guy. Have you determined what his background is yet?"

From behind her, a young girl walked over and politely said, "Yes. Lu Yin is from the Frostwave Weave's Great Yu Empire and holds the title of King Zishan. He passed the entrance exam there and entered Astral-10. He is currently the leader there."

"The leader?" Madam Nalan was shocked by this last piece of news and looked at the young man on the screen again. "It's only been about half a year since he joined Astral-10, right? In less than a year he's already become the leader. What's his background before that like?"

The girl shook her head. "We have yet to find anything there. There's no information from before he entered the Great Yu Empire."

Madam Nalan was surprised. "Keep searching."

"There's something else, Madam. He's a one star Junior Lockbreaker. It took him less than a month to go from being initially verified to successfully completing his first Lockbreaking."

Madam Nalan turned around, her eyes shining like the stars. A smile appeared on her beautiful face as she remarked, "He's a genius and a Lockbreaker with contributions already. It looks like I'll need to get to know our little guest a little better."

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Lu Yin had no idea that, the moment he got on this spacecraft, his identity had undergone a thorough investigation, and that even his identity as a Lockbreaker had been uncovered. The Nalan family had their fingers in all kinds of industries, and the workers under the family consisted not only of

businessmen, but also of quite a few regional organizations, empires, assassination squads, mercenaries, and even Lockbreakers. Uncovering everything on Lu Yin was a walk in the park for them.

Not long after, Lu Yin finished his meal, finally full. He had polished off all of the food and was a little embarrassed about it, but it didn't matter as he would be leaving in a day anyway.

After enjoying a good meal, he decided that it was a good idea to move around a little. Lu Yin left the room and headed towards the hallway. After thinking it over for a moment, he took out the Giant Emperor's third eye; it was a white, half-moon shaped crystal. He inspected it closely. Zhuo Daynight and Puyu had both wanted it, so what should he do with it? Old Cai had suddenly ordered him to rush to the Umbral Butterfly Weave for it, so it had to be valuable.

He gripped the third eye as he continued inspecting it. While he wasn't able to unravel its usage, Lu Yin quickly realized that he was able to see the entire universe a little clearer. It was as if a film had somehow been lifted from his eyes. It didn't extend forever, but things were somehow just clearer. He was suddenly inspired and gathered some surging star energy on his palm and allowed the third eye to absorb it. In the blink of an eye, everything he saw became much, much clearer, to the point where he could see the ambient star energy of the universe.

Lu Yin's eyes widened like saucers. Is this for real? I can actually see the ambient star energy! He was usually only able to see this sight when he activated his Cosmic Art, but now, he was now able to do so with the aid of the Giant Emperor's third eye. This was amazing!

At this very moment, Madam Nalan rounded the corner of the hallway. Lu Yin turned to look at her, his eyes still shining.

The moment he saw Madam Nalan, he was stupefied. The woman had a maturity to her that was impossible to replicate. And yet, her appearance also had a refreshing quality to it. The stark contrast caused Lu Yin's mind to feel numb. However, he also saw a grey layer covering Madam Nalan's body.

Lu Yin quickly retracted his star energy and stored the third eye away, causing his vision to return to normal. It felt like the light was now brighter, and Madam Nalan's appearance was even clearer to him now.

It had to be said that this woman was very alluring to young men of Lu Yin's age. It wasn't just her external appearance—just her elegance alone outshone most girls. Even Bai Xue's beauty was nothing compared to the tantalizing maturity of the woman in front of him. She was like a peach: delicious, juicy, and any man would want to take a bite.

"Greetings, Madam Nalan." Lu Yin was stupefied for a short moment, but he quickly regained his senses and offered his greetings.

The woman smiled, "How did you know that I'm Madam Nalan, Mr. Lu?"

Lu Yin smiled. "With your bearing, I don't know who else in this universe who would be suited to be called Madam Nalan."

Madam Nalan burst into laughter as she stared right at Lu Yin with bright eyes. She wore no make-up, but her face was still incredibly seductive. She did not strike any poses, but anyone would think she was enchanting at all times. The gaps in her clothing revealed teasing glimpses of her beautiful and fair skin,

and she had an intoxicating aroma that intensified in Lu Yin's brain as she approached him step by step. This woman was definitely a tease.

### **Chapter 175: Spacecraft Upgrade**

"You'll always be welcome to visit the Nalan family, Mr. Lu." Madam Nalan stopped about a meter away from Lu Yin and naturally stood in such a way that he could view her enchanting figure from a very tempting angle.

She was not deliberately trying to seduce Lu Yin and was only acting normally. Yet despite her intentions, every step she took tested him. If Mira's beauty was rooted in her physical appearance and movements, then the beauty of the woman in front of him was all natural—no, it was ingrained into her very bones.

Lu Yin forcefully calmed himself down. He was a young and energetic man, so he found it a little difficult to handle this bewitching woman. He quickly said, "May I know who gifted you the pendant on your neck, Madam Nalan?"

Madam Nalan was surprised by his question and smiled. "A good friend of mine."

Lu Yin nodded as he continued, "It appears that your friend isn't as good of a friend as you believe them to be."

Madam Nalan's eyes glinted and she asked in a confused tone, "Why do you say that?"

Lu Yin sighed before saying, "Since you saved my life, I won't keep this a secret. I am a Lockbreaker and I was able to detect something that most would not be able to."

With that, he waved an arm. "I have a minor stomach ache, so I'll have to excuse myself now, Madam. I'll see you later." He then left hastily.

It was truly difficult for him to handle this woman. She had only taken two steps towards him, but just that had flustered him. He suddenly remembered she was a widow. Did this woman tempt her husband into an early grave? It certainly seems to be possible.

Madam Nalan did not mind Lu Yin's abrupt departure and immediately yanked the pendant off. She had a cold glint in her eyes that seemed capable of freezing the entire universe. It was difficult to imagine how a person who had never cultivated could make such a chilling gaze. "Look into this. I want to know what's special about the pendant."

A young girl appeared behind her and received the item politely. "Yes, Madam."

Madam Nalan did not completely believe Lu Yin, but there was no harm in checking his words as they had the possibility of being true.

Meanwhile, Lu Yin walked into a private lounge and immediately called Old Cai. The Frostwave Weave wasn't that far away from the Umbral Butterfly Weave, so it was possible to contact Old Cai through his gadget.

"What is it?" Old Cai asked exasperatedly.

"I retrieved the Giant Emperor's third eye, Old Cai," Lu Yin said.

"Ok. Are you trying to show off or something?" Old Cai was obviously annoyed by Lu Yin's call.

Lu Yin answered, "I'd like to know what it does."

Old Cai made a sound of surprise. "You still haven't figured it out? You're so useless! How did you ever manage to successfully unlock a Sourcebox?"

"You know I'm a Lockbreaker?" Lu Yin was astonished.

"Obviously. How could I not know what my student is doing? By the way, the mission this time must have been a little tough. Quite a few people must have been competing for that third eye," Old Cai said with a sly snicker.

Lu Yin nonchalantly answered, "Not really. There weren't a lot of people aiming for it."

"That's impossible! The news of the Umbral Butterfly Weave's trial was made public at all of the major planets and should have attracted quite a lot of attention. People definitely would not have missed out on a chance to acquire the Giant Emperor's third eye. There should have been quite a few talented Melders who joined in to compete for it," Old Cai said.

"There were just two people who stood out. One was from the Daynight clan and the other from the Outerverse's Youth Council," Lu Yin stated blandly. He didn't mention the Neohuman Alliance. He was planning on concealing the fact that Puyu had a Corpse King under his supervision as a trump card for the future.

Old Cai replied, "That makes sense. So the Outerverse Youth Council interfered and nobody else had the guts to contest it, huh? You're pretty good if you were able to snatch that third eye away from someone in the Council, haha."

"You still haven't told me its uses," Lu Yin reminded.

"What an idiot. Haven't you heard of Lockbreaking tools?" Old Cai said sarcastically.

Lu Yin's eyes lit up and he asked in excitement, "Are you saying that the Giant Emperor's third eye is a Lockbreaking tool?!"

"Obviously. Once you pour your star energy into it, your vision will be somewhat different. What would it be if not a Lockbreaking tool? Alright, I've got more important things to do." After saying that, Old Cai disconnected without waiting for a response.

Lu Yin stared at the third eye with renewed excitement. He had already formed his own hypothesis after he had tried pouring some star energy in it, and now, Old Cai's words had verified his guess. It seemed that this third eye was quite similar to Master Wusheng's two leaves. Lockbreaking tools were invaluable, so it was no wonder why the Daynight clan and the Outerverse Youth Council had both wanted it.

Half an hour later, in the top level lounge, the young girl walked over and deferentially said, "Master Su has inspected all the other accessories that Madam Liv has gifted you. One of them was found to have a

substance that is harmful to you. It can cause you to feel fatigued and gradually deprive you of your sight.”

Madam Nalan’s gaze grew cold. “How long has it been there?”

“Three years. Master Su said that there are only traces of the harmful substance and that it would take at least ten years for it to start taking effect. Because of this, he would not have recognized its perniciousness unless he paid special attention to it, and he apologizes to you for this. Also, Master Su would like to meet the young Lockbreaker who saw through the problem in a single glance,” she answered respectfully.

“Tell him that he shouldn’t take this matter to heart and that the young Lockbreaker has already left,” Madam Nalan said.

The young girl replied, “Yes, madam.”

Madam Nalan clenched her fists. “How dare that bitch try to lay a hand on me. She laid a ten year plan to ruin me. How cautious! I’ll make her wish that she was dead!”

A day soon passed, and during that day, Lu Yin did not see Madam Nalan again. A crew member asked him if he had any requests when bringing him food, to which he answered no. Instead, he fixed his eyes on the luxurious meal before him; it was clearly even more extravagant than the meal that he had been given before, and even the quality was a lot higher than before. Lu Yin started to salivate just from looking at it.

After the meal, he went to the pilot and asked about his spacecraft.

The pilot smiled. “Your spacecraft will need seven days to complete its upgrade, Mr. Lu.”

“Seven days? To complete its upgrade?” Lu Yin was shocked. The amount and quality of materials that he’d put in the spacecraft shouldn’t have merited that large of an upgrade.

“This is the madam’s way of showing her gratitude to you. You can discuss it with her in more detail yourself,” the pilot told him courteously.

Gratitude? So Madam Nalan’s pendant really did have a hidden problem. How extravagant! And to show her thanks, she had upgraded his spacecraft for him. Lu Yin was aware that a large amount of resources were needed to upgrade an Aurora spacecraft from the elementary grade to the radiant grade. Of course, this upgrade also came with a similarly large boost to its capabilities, and it would be ten times better than before in every aspect. That was the definite characteristic of a radiant spacecraft—a speed ten times faster than a regular spacecraft’s.

But what did “ten times” really mean? If it took him around a month to travel from the Frostwave Weave to the Umbral Butterfly Weave with an elementary spacecraft, then he could have made the same journey in a few days with a radiant spacecraft. That was the difference.

Lu Yin had originally thought it would take him an exceptionally long amount of time to upgrade his spacecraft to the next grade, but in the end, all it had taken was a comment from him and an order from Madam Nalan.

It was no wonder that Lockbreakers held high statuses; they could see what most couldn't. If he wasn't a Lockbreaker and merely a student of Astral-10, Madam Nalan might not have even bothered meeting him despite his position as Astral-10's leader. Lu Yin was finally getting a taste of the exalted status that Lockbreakers held, and he was delighted to see that he had made the right decision.

Lu Yin straightened his clothes in preparation to meet and thank Madam Nalan. The woman may be extremely seductive, but he still needed to show some basic manners.

Before Lu Yin could even request to meet her, however, someone led him all the way to the lounge on the top level. Everything in front of him was transparent and it seemed as if he could reach out and touch space itself. Before him sat Madam Nalan, smiling at him.

Compared to the day before, Madam Nalan was now wearing a more conservative set of clothing, and her dazzling figure was hidden. Although she was still seductive, Lu Yin let out a quiet sigh of relief.

"Your gift is too generous, Madam Nalan. I'm afraid that I won't be able to pay you back," Lu Yin said with a wry smile.

Madam Nalan grinned and gestured for him to take a seat. "Have a seat so that we can talk."

Lu Yin nodded and did so without a second thought, sitting down opposite her. Like the previous day, the two of them were now less than a meter apart, and a tempting fragrance drifted over from her body.

"You saved me, Mr. Lu. Upgrading your spacecraft cannot quite express the gratitude that I have for you." Madam Nalan sounded earnest. While her smile was the same as always, Lu Yin could tell there was a hint of sincerity to it now.

The Nalan family depended primarily on trade, and everyone in that industry was cunning to the extreme. No matter what kind of person Madam Nalan had been before, the fact that she had successfully taken control of the Nalan family's wealth showed that she knew how to maneuver around the industry and that she would unconsciously put on a facade in front of others. If a businessman wanted to get rich, then sincerity was the very foundation of their activity. Putting on a mask was only meant to deal with small fry, but there was no way around it because there were simply too many of them. Madam Nalan rarely ever treated people with complete sincerity, but with Lu Yin, that mask of hers seemed thinner than usual.

"The value of a gift depends on who it is gifted to. For me, an upgraded spacecraft is already an enormous boon," Lu Yin said earnestly.

Madam Nalan covered her mouth and laughed. Her eyes curved up like bright crescents. "Are you always so formal when you talk to people, Mr. Lu?"

Lu Yin froze and then laughed awkwardly. He had indeed gone a little too far with his words. He had intended to talk with her formally so that he could retain his self control, but he had ended up overdoing it to the point of blatantly exposing his intentions.

Madam Nalan laughed again, personally poured a drink, and then offered it to him.

Lu Yin took it. "Thank you."

Madam Nalan looked at Lu Yin and the corner of her lips curved up again. "I actually want to apologize to you."

Lu Yin was about to take a sip, but after hearing her words, he stopped and looked at her in confusion. "What for?"

"I investigated you," she answered honestly.

Lu Yin's eyes flashed and he resumed sipping his drink without saying a word.

Madam Nalan stared at Lu Yin and something shone in her eyes. "In just half a year or so, you went from being an ordinary Sentinel in the outer regions of the Outerverse to becoming the leader of Astral-10. You even became a one star Lockbreaker with contributions. You are quite interesting, Mr. Lu."

Lu Yin put his cup down and gazed at her. He said in a low voice, "I don't appreciate it when people investigate me."

Madam Nalan merely smiled.

"But since I'm on your spacecraft, it would make sense for you to do that," Lu Yin said brightly, his tone changing rather abruptly.

Madam Nalan's lips arched up beautifully. "That may well be, but I was still in the wrong. I am willing to make up for it."

Lu Yin shook his head again. "You're being very kind, Madam Nalan. You've already upgraded my spacecraft for me. You really don't need to do anything else."

"Not even help you in the Astral Combat Tournament?" she asked enticingly.

Lu Yin was surprised. "The Astral Combat Tournament?"

"The tournament this time will be a little different from the ones in the past. Humanity's defeat in the border wars of the star expanse region has enraged certain people. As a response, the Astral Combat Tournament is being held to restore morale. However, while some people have higher statuses, they cannot determine everything that happens in the universe," Madam Nalan said as she poured herself some more fruit juice. She licked her red lips before continuing, saying, "Usually, a gadget can be linked across several regions. However, if the distance is greater than ten regions, then there will be some difficulty. Only specially-made gadgets can connect that far. The upcoming tournament will require a network that covers the entire universe, and that needs money. Hence, the Nalan family is one of the tournament's sponsors."

## **Chapter 176: Thirteen Swords**

Lu Yin's eyebrows arched up in surprise; he had never expected that the Astral Combat Tournament would actually have sponsors. It seemed that the people at the Astral Combat Academy were smarter than he had given them credit for.

“Mr Lu, since you’re Astral-10’s top student, you’ll definitely be taking part in the Astral Combat Tournament, correct? Would you like to know what the Nalan family has prepared for the Astral Combat Tournament?” Madam Nalan asked temptingly.

Lu Yin smiled confidently. “There’s no need to tell me anything. No matter what the rewards are, they’ll be mine if I win, or they’ll mean nothing to me if I lose.”

Madam Nalan enticingly continued, “The reward that we’ve contributed is something that suits you very well.”

Lu Yin finally grew curious.

Madam Nalan lifted up a finger, “One harmless Sourcebox that’s suitable for Intermediate Lockbreakers to unlock.”

Lu Yin was shocked. A Sourcebox that was suitable for Intermediate Lockbreakers was already something uncommon, but for one to also be harmless was extremely rare. The previous Sourcebox that he had unlocked had immediately rewarded him with a one star contribution. If he could become an Intermediate Lockbreaker, then having an Sourcebox like this in his possession would almost certainly allow him to instantly become a one star Intermediate Lockbreaker. It was no wonder why she had said the reward was suitable for him; rather, it was suitable for all Lockbreakers.

“The Nalan family is truly a prosperous clan of the Outerverse. You are very generous,” Lu Yin praised.

Madam Nalan smiled. “This is but a small contribution. However, Mr. Lu, the Nalan family has some connections with the Sword Sect of the Innaverse. I can give you some inside information about the sect to apologize for my earlier actions.”

“How is the Sword Sect related to me?” Lu Yin asked.

“Isn’t Mr. Lu interested in becoming the champion of the Astral Combat Tournament?” Madam Nalan enquired with a smile.

Lu Yin laughed. “Madam, do you really believe that I can defeat those top geniuses and become the champion?”

“The universe is filled with mysteries, but that’s what makes it interesting, no? There’s nothing wrong with learning more, and this information might be of great use to you,” Madam Nalan said persuasively.

Lu Yin nodded. “I’m listening.”

Madam Nalan explained, “There are countless disciples in the Sword Sect, but only two of them are monstrously talented. One of them is a member of the Ten Arbiters who rules over the universe, while the other remains reclusive, training in the clan. However, I suspect that one will join one of the Astral Combat Academies in order to participate in the Astral Combat Tournament. Hence, he will be one of your opponents.”

Lu Yin’s eyes glinted fiercely. “There’s someone from the Sword Sect among the Ten Arbiters?”



Madam Nalan explained, "I cannot name a member of the Ten Arbiters—that's a rule as well as a sign of respect for them. If Mr. Lu wishes to learn more about the Ten Arbiters, you need to first join the Astral Academy Council as it is a subsidiary part of the Ten Arbiters Council."

Lu Yin's finger twitched reflexively, but he stayed quiet,

Madam Nalan observed Lu Yin's expression as she continued explaining. "There's an ancient battle technique in the Sword Sect called the Thirteen Swords. However, nobody can learn this technique as they wish. Instead, the technique actually chooses a suitable inheritor of its own volition."

"It will choose someone to inherit it?" Lu Yin was stunned. He had never heard of anything like this before.

Madam Nalan continued solemnly, saying, "No one knows where this technique came from, but everyone is aware of how powerful it is. In the past, one of the former leaders of the Sword Sect defeated three of his peers using this technique. He also relied on the technique to contribute greatly to the border war. One could say that the most valuable experience for a Sword Sect disciple is to interact with the Thirteen Swords in hopes of receiving the inheritance. Normally, only one person from each generation can receive the Thirteen Swords inheritance. However, in this generation, two disciples have managed to receive the inheritance. One is a member of the Ten Arbiters while the other is the reclusive person that I mentioned previously: Liu Shaoqiu."

Lu Yin narrowed his eyes; he had heard of the Sword Sect's Liu family before. They were a clan with a primeval surname that faced hostility from countless people. They had never received an official status, but despite that, they had still managed to climb to the peak of the universe. This was a terrifying family. Liu was originally a royal surname. The Liu family was a noble family for sword wielders, and anyone who used a sword as their weapon yearned to join them.

"Liu Shaoqiu. The first thing he saw when he was born was neither his mother nor his relatives. He was abandoned beside a door and a rusty sword. From the moment he opened his eyes, that rusty sword became his companion weapon," Madam Nalan said in a reminiscing tone.

Lu Yin glanced at Madam Nalan in surprise.

"It was just a normal sword that could be easily broken by any cultivator. Nonetheless, this sword has defeated numerous powerhouses in the hands of Liu Shaoqiu. However, this sword hasn't been unsheathed ever since he inherited Thirteen Swords. None of his peers in the Sword Sect were worthy of him using his sword. He will be a scary opponent to face during the Astral Combat Tournament," Madam Nalan said earnestly.

Lu Yin took a deep breath as he felt a mounting sense of pressure. "What realm is Liu Shaoqiu at, and how many swords of the Thirteen Swords can he use?"

"He should be at the Limiteer realm, but no one knows how many swords he can use. Some say that he has only learned two, while others say that he has learned three; the only thing everyone can agree on is that no one besides Liu Shaoqiu knows the actual number. However, he once injured an Explorer while he was travelling through the universe."

Lu Yin closed his eyes; this was a truly powerful opponent. Explorers could traverse outer space without a spacecraft. Lu Yin was still unable to interact with people of this realm, and yet, here was someone who could cross realms to challenge an Explorer!

Madam Nalan clinked her glass against Lu Yin's, causing a light sound to ring out which nudged Lu Yin out of his daze. "Mr. Lu, I'm not telling you this to cause you excess concern. Rather, I wanted to inform you of the Astral Combat Tournament's top participants' abilities. Personally, I don't like taking a battle without making any preparations. You saved my life, so I will try to help you with the tournament. However, if you become paralyzed from fear of your opponents, then any preparations will be useless."

Lu Yin laughed wryly. "Madam, don't worry. No matter how powerful my opponents are, I will not be daunted. It doesn't matter if I'm defeated as I'll always have another chance to rise in the future. Moreover, the date for the Astral Combat Tournament still hasn't been decided yet. I was able to become Astral-10's top student in just a few months, so I might still have a chance to catch up to these geniuses too."

"Well then, here's to Mr. Lu becoming the tournament's champion," Madam Nalan said as she raised her glass. Lu Yin lifted his glass, too, and gently touched it to Madam Nalan's glass.

The starlight shining through the room was refracted by fruit juice into a gorgeous glow that seemed to fill the room.

After Lu Yin left, Madam Nalan was looking at the starry sky thoughtfully when a young girl approached from behind. "Madam."

"What are your impressions of that young man?" Madam Nalan casually asked, her voice filled with an unspoken dignity.

The girl answered, "A genius."

"Is he only a genius? If he had been born in the Inniverse, then he might have already become incomparable to everyone in the Sword Sect besides Shaoqiu. It's a shame that he was born in the Outerverse, and that he has only trained for such a short time. It's caused him to fall behind," Madam Nalan muttered.

"Madam, since you already know all that, then why did you still inform him of the Sword Sect?" the young girl curiously asked.

Madam Nalan smiled. "I just don't want him to be too depressed if he loses. As long as he focuses on Lockbreaking, he will definitely have a bright future. Although the Astral Combat Tournament is important, it's a stage reserved only for the top geniuses. He doesn't belong there as Lockbreaking is where he'll truly shine."

The young girl softly replied, "There are still geniuses like Dao Bo even in the Lockbreaking world."

Madam Nalan lifted her head. "You're right. The universe is too vast and has given rise to too many geniuses. I just hope that he can continue to survive."

Seven days soon passed, after which Lu Yin bade farewell to Madam Nalan after a huge feast. He then boarded his own spacecraft and continued flying towards the Frostwave Weave.

The Nalan family's spacecraft had been travelling at a relatively fast pace over the past seven days, and Lu Yin quickly realized that it would only take him twelve days to reach the Frostwave Weave with his newly upgraded Aurora spacecraft. The speed of his spacecraft had increased tenfold; the previously month-long journey could now be completed in just five days. The additional seven days were due to the seven days that he had spent traveling in the opposite direction while aboard the Nalan family's spacecraft, which also meant that the speed of their luxury spacecraft was the same as an Aurora spacecraft.

They really are rich, Lu Yin thought to himself as he rubbed his belly with the suspicion that he had grown fatter.

The twelve days quickly passed by as Lu Yin spent most of his time studying his star chart. He could feel his ninth star becoming clearer and clearer with each day, and he could also feel the increase in power when he activated his Cosmic Art with all nine stars. If he combined his Cosmic Palm with both battle force and his physical strength, even he himself didn't know exactly how strong he would be, though he felt confident about going against an Area Master.

He still clearly remembered Frankfurt's attack. He had been able to block it back then, but had been well aware that he wouldn't be able to withstand the second attack. Thus, he had chosen to bite the bullet and conceal his full power for the time being. Now, however, he was confident that he could hold his own against Frankfurt after he fully recovered his star energy.

Lu Yin felt troubled whenever he thought about star energy as he was burning through star crystals too quickly. The Possession roll from his die was like an endless void; he felt like even if he gathered all of the star crystals in the Great Yu Empire together, he would be able to use it all up in a single instant.

Beep beep beep

The spacecraft started beeping, causing Lu Yin to lift his head up and see that he had arrived at Astral-10.

He hadn't expected that this trip away would take almost four months to complete or that so things would happen: the Great Yu Empire, the Umbral Butterfly Weave, the Daynight clan, and even the Nalan family had gotten involved. He had gone through numerous incidents, and they all felt too complicated. Astral-10 was still the best place to be; he could peacefully train there without worrying about anything else.

As Lu Yin's spacecraft landed, he stretched his legs. He felt as if he had come home.

"It's you?" Hui Daynight, who was nearby, glared at Lu Yin with blazing eyes.

Lu Yin glanced at him. "What are you doing here? Are you leaving for a mission?"

Hui Daynight sneered as arrogantly declared, "Luckily, I ran into you here. Give up your position as top student. You don't have the right to hold that position."

Lu Yin nodded. "Fine, here you go."

Hui Daynight was stunned.

Lu Yin looked at him with an amused expression. "So what if I give it to you? Can you keep it?"

Hui Daynight was infuriated by Lu Yin's taunts. "You're just a vagabond in the training realm! How dare you speak to me like that?!"

Lu Yin's expression turned cold. "You're still as annoying as ever."

"Am I wrong? The Blaze Realm has spread the news that you were killed by Frankfurt in one move and that you're the embarrassment of Astral-10," Hui Daynight bellowed.

Lu Yin narrowed his eyes; now he was infuriated. Frankfurt, the Blaze Realm, Jared.

"You've embarrassed Astral-10, and you're not fit to be the top student," Hui Daynight roared as he charged at Lu Yin. Hui Daynight pointed his finger at Lu Yin; the finger gave off a sensation that was completely different from the Daynight Soul Finger, but the soul-tearing feeling of that technique was even stronger this time.

A cold glint flashed across Lu Yin's eyes as he lifted his hand and crushed Hui Daynight's finger in the same manner as before. Hui Daynight was astonished by the outcome; he had improved greatly under the guidance of the Trialmaster and had even learned a new battle technique from the Daynight Clan. Why had it still turned out like this? This person's physique was just too monstrous, to the point where the Daynight Clan's battle techniques were completely ineffective against him.

### **Chapter 177: The Tournament Approaches**

Lu Yin exerted more strength through his arm and forced Hui Daynight's entire body to the ground. His voice was cold as he said, "Remember, don't challenge me again. Otherwise, I'll cripple you the next time."

He unceremoniously tossed Hui Daynight aside, sending him crashing heavily into the wall.

Hui Daynight clutched his finger in pain as he stared at Lu Yin in shock. How was it that every time he faced Lu Yin, he wasn't strong enough to even retaliate? He was a member of the Daynight clan. This was not how things should be!

Lu Yin calmly walked to the teleportation device, but stopped when he recalled something. He turned to Hui Daynight. "In your clan, is there a woman named Zhuo Daynight?"

Hui Daynight replied through his pain, "I don't know."

Lu Yin's gaze turned cold. "I don't like it when people lie to me."

Hui Daynight snorted. "I can't be bothered to lie about this."

Lu Yin studied his face for a while, but didn't say anything more before he stepped into the device and headed directly to the treasury to see Old Cai.

Old Cai beamed with joy as he fiddled with the Giant Emperor's third eye. "Not bad. This emperor's third eye is a great lockbreaking tool." He then tossed it back to Lu Yin as he said, "Take it. It's very suitable for you."

Lu Yin caught it and stored it in his cosmic ring, but he was still puzzled. "Mentor, how did you know this thing is a lockbreaking tool? It appears that the Daynight clan and Buyou also knew, which is why they sent their underlings, though the people of the Umbral Butterfly Weave did not know. If they had, I doubt that they would have set the trial's mission objective as the Giant Emperor's death."

Old Cai stroked his massive mustache. "There are many useful things in the universe, but they might not always be mature when we discover them, just like this Giant Emperor's third eye. Do you think that it's easy for this treasure to develop? This thing has been passed down for many generations of Giant Emperors, and it was immature when we first discovered it. Even if it was useful at that time, it hadn't reached the level of being a lockbreaking tool. It worked out well for you that it matured this generation."

"There was a Giant Emperor who became an Explorer and tried to break through the Umbral Butterfly Weave's blockade but was killed. So how was this thing still passed down to the next Giant Emperor?" Lu Yin was curious.

Old Cai's gaze turned serene. "Kid, make sure that you remember to never underestimate any lifeform. That space-exploring Giant Emperor was just cannon fodder that had reached the end of his natural life. He passed the third eye to the next Giant Emperor before he made that attempt in order to allow the successor to thoroughly understand their situation. In other words, he used himself to probe the Umbral Butterfly Weave's response. The organization controlling the Weave didn't fully understand the situation and assumed that everything would be fine as long as no Giant Emperor became an Explorer. The truth is, since that time, no other Giant Emperor has become an Explorer. It wasn't because they couldn't, but rather because they didn't dare to."

"No wonder the Giant Emperor was the first to escape when the trial takers descended," Lu Yin murmured as he suddenly realized what had happened, causing a shiver to run down his spine. While the giant tribe wasn't sapient, the intelligence of the Giant Emperor could not be underestimated.

Old Cai slowly said, "The meaning of life is simple, and its existence is logical. There is only ever one Giant Emperor in the giant tribe, and the third eye is pivotal to their understanding of the meaning of life. Keep it safe. It must not have been easy to snatch it from the Daynight clan and the Outerverse Youth Council."

Lu Yin nodded obediently. "Old Cai, what should I do next?"

He looked at Lu Yin and burst into a weird laughter that lasted for so long that Lu Yin felt afraid. "Astral-10 has been quiet for too long. The mentors will give you a mission, so to go to the trial zones and snatch up a training ground."

The look in Lu Yin's eyes changed. "Snatch up a training ground?"

Old Cai's lips quirked up. "That's right. Go on and grab a training ground for yourself."

Lu Yin was momentarily struck speechless. "Old Cai, do you really think that I can go against those Area Masters?"

He studied Lu Yin with a steady gaze. "I don't know. But just try it since you won't really die anyways."

"They may have helpers."

Old Cai rolled his eyes indifferently. "And you don't? Kid, don't you know the meaning of being the student leader of Astral-10? You're the leader of all the students here, so you're qualified to lead them."

"They may not listen to me."

"That's your problem, but the academy will close an eye to your actions due to your status as the student leader."

Lu Yin's eyes lit up as the idea of the academy closing an eye sounded very appealing. He immediately thought of what had happened with Hui Daynight; if he didn't listen, then Lu Yin would simply beat him into submission. As long as the mentors did not intervene, it was acceptable!

"Right, I also need to remind you to finish this mission quickly. The Astral Combat Tournament is quickly approaching. Those old fogies even got the Ten Arbiters to round up a bunch of sponsors, and they've pushed the date forward greatly to implement the universal network."

Lu Yin frowned; just the knowledge of Liu Shaoqiu was already rather pressuring, but now, the timing of the tournament had been pushed forward as well. How troublesome. However, it didn't seem logical to mobilize so many people and use so many precious resources to finish the universal network for a mere Astral Combat Tournament. He had already guessed this before, but perhaps things were even more complicated than he had initially assumed.

He was just about to leave the treasury when he suddenly thought of something. He looked back at Old Cai. "I remember that the list of missions had quite a few lockbreaking missions. Are those Sourceboxes in our academy?"

"Clear those thoughts away and go to the training grounds first."

Lu Yin thought Old Cai's response was strange, but he still turned around to leave.

Old Cai rolled his eyes. "What a joke. If those Sourceboxes were still in our academy, then that trial zone fellow would have unlocked them long ago. You wouldn't have had even a chance to look at them."

Lu Yin left the treasury and headed to the trial zone entrance. There was no one under the teleportation stone, and he only saw Little Pao there, chewing a blade of grass, with a bored to death expression.

"Senior Little Pao, it's been a while," Lu Yin greeted.

Little Pao's eyes gleamed. "Lu Yin, you're back! I haven't seen you for a few months. You've grown stronger."

Lu Yin smiled. "Senior Little Pao, what are you doing here?"

"I'm bored," Little Pao replied with a smile. "Right, did you come here to enter the trial zones?"

Lu Yin nodded. "Senior, Xia Luo should have gained access now."

"Not just Xia Luo. Everyone has entered."

Lu Yin was astonished by this news. "That fast?"

“Fast? Not really, it just takes a hundred victories to enter—not even a hundred consecutive victories. You guys have been in the academy for more than half a year, and even if you only meet one Sentinel a day in the teleportation battles, you would be able to obtain a hundred victories in around three months. Besides, they’ve been training under the mentors’ personal tutelage for several months. If they still couldn’t reach a hundred victories after that, they would be utter trash. Though their winrate is a little bad, they have still qualified to enter.”

Lu Yin agreed with what Little Pao said; although there were few Sentinels in the teleportation battles, it was still possible to meet one a day. But if a student relied on such luck to rack up a hundred victories, then that was quite pathetic.

“How’re they doing?” Lu Yin asked. He had been killed off quickly when he had first entered the trial zones, and he was even the student leader of Astral-10. The others should have fared even worse than him.

“Not bad. They’re making their way through pretty well.”

Lu Yin blinked in astonishment. “Not bad? How? Didn’t they get surrounded and attacked?”

“Well, that did happen, but only to Schutz and Meng Yue. Everyone else has their own backing: Ten Thousand Swords Peak, the Mavis clan, the Outerverse Youth Council, Windrift Hall, the Daynight clan, and so on and so forth. Most of them have at least an Area Master supporting them,” Little Pao explained with an envious tone.

Lu Yin hurriedly asked, “What about Xia Luo? And Silver?”

“Xia Luo? His brother is Xia Ye, a crazy character and the Area Master of the Dao of Heaven’s Machine Burial Mound. Silver has a sworn brother named Sha, who’s a freakishly strong character as well as the Dao of Slaughter’s Ice Domain Area Master,” Little Pao said as he patted Lu Yin’s shoulder and sympathized with him. “Out of the twelve new students, only the three of you have no backings, which is why each of you were surrounded and killed. Though, you have a backer now, too: the Dao of Purgatory’s Whitebones Gorge Area Master, Charon. He has announced that whoever touches you will die. Good for you.”

Lu Yin felt depressed. Each of those brats had a smoothly paved path in front of them, but their student leader had the roughest path of them all. If not for the twist of fate that had given him the opportunity to blackmail Charon, he still would not have a backer in the trial zones. Such was life.

“Senior, I’ll go in first.”

Little Pao grunted. “Go ahead.”

Lu Yin turned around, retrieved the Giant Emperor’s third eye, and poured star energy into it. He then turned back around towards Little Pao, but he was nowhere to be seen. Lu Yin was astonished. “He left pretty quickly.”

He had always suspected that Big Pao and Little Pao were not simple, and that they might be surprisingly powerful. He had wanted to observe them with the Giant Emperor’s third eye, but he had

no such luck. He was about to store the third eye away when an elder suddenly appeared in front of him, startling him quite badly.

“Good day, Trialmaster,” Lu Yin immediately greeted when he recognized the mentor in front of him.

The mentor stared at the round, white, moon-shaped crystal in Lu Yin’s hand and exclaimed, “Not bad. Kid, did you retrieve this?”

Lu Yin nodded.

The mentor grunted before saying, “Use it well. It has many uses.” And with that, he returned to his normal position.

Lu Yin bowed again before stepping past the mentor and into the trial zone mountain.

This was his second time entering the mountain. Previously, the mountain had been empty, but this time, he met Schutz as soon as he entered. Schutz was on his way out and had an agonized expression on his face.

“Killed?”

Schutz nodded. “How’s the empire doing?”

“It’s stabilized, and it’s doing okay for now.”

“Most of the Yu Academy students should have left. The second prince scouted out many talents for Yu Academy, so all of them should have left with him.”

“Do you still think that Yu Academy has talents even after coming here?”

Schutz fell silent. He had been the strongest back at Yu Academy, but he was the bottom student here. The rest of the students from Yu Academy did not even need to be mentioned as none of the five Hall Masters had entered the Astral Combat Academy. Those Yu Academy students couldn’t compete here as any random Sentinel in the teleportation battles would be able to sweep through them.

“There’s too big of a gap between the Inverse and Outerverse,” Schutz said with a sigh before turning around to leave.

“Don’t be in such a rush to leave. The mentors gave me a mission to take over a training ground. Why don’t you team up with me?”

Schutz laughed sardonically. “Lu Yin, I thought that you were smart. When you last entered the trial zone, you were killed by the Spear Mountain Area Master. Don’t you know the difference between you and them? Do you really think that you can do something with just Charon’s backing?”

“It’s you who hasn’t noticed the difference.”

Schutz was shocked. What does that mean? Could he have grown strong enough to challenge an Area Master already? How is that even possible? It’s only been four months!

“You really want to try and snatch a training ground away? Those Area Masters are the top students of their various academies. You’ve personally witnessed the power of Spear Mountain’s Area Master.



Furthermore, they don't act alone and have assistants. Any student who trains in their area can be considered their underling."

### **Chapter 178: Astral River and Flowzones**

Lu Yin laughed. "I didn't say that I'd do it by myself. Although Astral-10 only has a few students, each one has obtained a hundred victories in the ported battles. We aren't inferior to the other students at all."

Schutz ruefully shook his head. "Those people won't bother helping you. Aside from Meng Yue and myself, everyone else already has their own backers. They have their own training grounds, so they won't feel any need to stir up trouble."

"I'm Astral-10's student leader, and I naturally have my own ways to get them to help me."

"Alright, if this is what you want, then I'll join you. Besides, it's not like I can actually die."

"That's more like it! That's the Great Yu Empire's younger generation's number one powerhouse, Schutz, in my memories! Be fearless! I still vividly remember that scene of you challenging the Outerverse Youth Council," Lu Yin marvelled as he reminisced about the past.

Schutz laughed bitterly; he had been too ignorant back then. Like Lu Yin had said, they could not even comprehend the vast difference that existed between the Outerverse Youth Council and themselves back then. Looking back, Ghostfire was just a failed examinee who could not even enter Astral-10, but he had still forfeited his Hall Master position at Yu Academy without any hesitation. The man behind him, Bazeer, was even an Explorer. While he wasn't an Explorer of the Astral Combat Academy, his strength shouldn't be too far off from one since he had joined the Outerverse Youth Council. Their vision had truly been too limited before.

"So which Dao are we headed to?"

Lu Yin unhesitatingly replied, "The Dao of Purgatory, Whitebones Gorge."

"Whitebones Gorge's Area Master is Charon, your backer, right?" Schutz asked in shock. Charon had announced that Lu Yin was under his protection, shocking many. To the public, Lu Yin was someone who had taken liberties with Xi Yue, beaten up other academy students before extorting and threatening them, and also completed the most difficult Sentinel mission. He was not some random unknown character, but rather the leader of Astral-10's students.

At the mention of Charon, Lu Yin laughed again. "He's my brother, a very good brother." No one in the universe knew Charon better than Lu Yin did.

Schutz nodded acceptingly. "I was just killed inside. You enter first, and I'll look for you after I've recuperated."

Lu Yin walked up the trialzone mountain and looked into the distance. He vaguely saw Xia Luo's figure, who was sitting in a rather careless position. The rest had looked for secret spots to hide themselves even though their physical bodies would be protected after they entered the trial zones, but Xia Luo obviously did not care about that at all.

Lu Yin wasn't concerned, either, and he chose a random place to sit down before closing his eyes and entering the Dao of Purgatory. When he opened his eyes, he saw darkness all around him and a jet-black pair of eyes. Lu Yin jumped in fright and immediately shot backwards. When his eyes finally adjusted to the darkness, he saw that there was a war spirit in front of him. The war spirit had no features and simply looked like a mass of darkness with black eyes. It was easily recognizable. Lu Yin felt that his luck today was horrible since he had encountered a war spirit the moment he entered the trial zone. They had strong offensive abilities and were usually very powerful.

When it sensed Lu Yin's arrival, the war spirit immediately acted, materializing a black sword. The blade trembled, causing countless shadows to rush out from the sword in a hundred meters radius around it.

Lu Yin was shocked. He knew that war spirits were powerful as they were remnant memory impressions of former powerhouses who had battled in the trial zone, but he had never imagined that the one before him would be this powerful. Its attack did not lose out to Zhuo Daynight's White Phantom sword in the slightest, and it was also able to mimic a domain. He believed that, when this war spirit's powerhouse had been alive, he had definitely grasped a domain.

Lu Yin was about to act when his expression suddenly changed. He dodged aside with Flash and reappeared a hundred meters away. Three students suddenly appeared and looked at the war spirit with delight. "Charge! Leave the last strike for me," one of them shouted while the other two attacked the war spirit together.

Lu Yin's eyes flashed: spirit hunters. Though he had not browsed through all of Charon's memories during his Possession, he had still seen some. Those select memories meant that this spirit hunter team was not completely foreign to him.

Although he understood what spirit hunters were, he still did not understand why they existed. While the leaders of the spirit hunter team may not be top-tier powerhouses, they definitely had a respectable background. Clearly, some of these elites would rather organize these hunting teams than compete for the status of an Area Master, and they would even insist on delivering the last blow. It was very strange and there were all sorts of rumors as to their motivation.

The spirit hunter team before him was a bit different from those in Charon's memories. The hunters that Charon knew were all very powerful, as all of the team captains were at least as strong as an Area Master. Otherwise, they would not dare to hunt war spirits. However, none of the trio before Lu Yin seemed impressive, and they would rank at the bottom of Astral-10's students at best.

With a loud bang, the black ground shattered as the two students pincer-attacking the war spirit were heavily injured and thrown back. Their faces paled as they said, "Gu Er, this war spirit is too strong. It can even use a domain. We can't handle this one."

That leading student grew flustered as he continued to evade the war spirit's blade. He saw Lu Yin and immediately shouted, "Hey you! Come over and help us kill the war spirit, but remember, leave the final blow to me."

Lu Yin raised his brows. "Why should I listen to you?"

Gu Er snorted derisively. "You either kill this war spirit with us, or we abandon it and kill you. Make your choice."

Lu Yin's expression turned from one of fury to ridicule. This man was using such a domineering form of intimidation when he wasn't even that strong himself. This guy really knew how to sink his own ship.

Lu Yin considered the situation some more, and then moved to join in on the attack against the war spirit. This wasn't because of Gu Er's threat, but rather because he wanted to kill the war spirit. This captain badly wanted to deliver the killing blow, and Lu Yin simply wanted to see why.

Gu Er truly believed that his threat worked and secretly had the other two to retreat. He wanted Lu Yin to act as bait while they waited for an opportunity to counterattack.

After fighting against Zhuo Daynight, Lu Yin now knew the signs of an incomplete domain. He immediately used his Nine Stacks Shockwave Palm technique, causing nine explosions to ring out. It first shattered the war spirit's black sword, and then it directly exploded against the war spirit, completely destroying it.

This scene shocked Gu Er's trio. They were incapable of defeating the war spirit even after working together, but this person had killed it in just one blow.

The moment the war spirit perished, it shattered into numerous black fragments that vanished before Lu Yin's eyes. This was nothing abnormal, but on a whim, Lu Yin activated his Cosmic Art. Nine stars revolved around his body, forming a perfect galaxy. With his Cosmic Art, he saw something different as the final black fragment was about to vanish. A strange symbol appeared, or rather, a diagram formed from multiple lines. The black fragment consisted entirely of these diagrams, but it quickly vanished into nothingness .

Lu Yin frowned. What was that? Was that what war spirits are made of? They are formed from the battles of previous powerhouses that took place in the trial zones. Do these strange diagrams somehow capture the strength of the powerhouses and form them into war spirits? How strange...

No matter how Lu Yin thought about what he had just witnessed, he still lacked too much information to know anything. There was nothing he could understand for now, but he did need to deal with the wrath of the trio behind him.

Gu Er clenched both fists and stared at Lu Yin. "You dare to steal the final blow?! I told you to leave the final blow to me!"

Lu Yin turned around and looked at Gu Er with a bemused expression. "Buddy, there must be something wrong with your head. Why should I listen to you? Do you think that just the three of you can deal with me?"

Lu Yin's words caused a guttural reaction within the other two as a flash of fear passed through their eyes. The person in front of them had instantly destroyed the war spirit, and he should be extremely close to the level of an Area Master. This was not someone who they could casually provoke.

Gu Er also understood this and forcefully suppressed his rage. He had grown too accustomed to his arrogance and had even forgotten to check the power behind the person. But then, his gaze swept across the backs of Lu Yin's hand and saw a "10."

Gu Er was blown away and did a double take. Sure enough, it was a “10.” He smiled and his arrogance resurfaced. “You’re from Astral-10?”

Lu Yin didn’t deny it. With his current power, as long as he didn’t meet an Area Master or Realm Master, no one else could even hope to kill him.

Gu Er’s lips curled up, and he stared at Lu Yin with renewed arrogance. “Do you know who I am?”

Lu Yin squinted. This person’s attitude had changed many times throughout the past few minutes, but the largest change was after he discovered that Lu Yin was from Astral-10. At that point, his arrogance had spiked even higher than before. It seemed that he had some background, and it might even be connected to Astral-10.

“Please, tell me more,” Lu Yin answered casually.

Gu Er snorted and raised his head proudly. “My father is Elder Gu De, the current Astral River Flowzone Envoy. Listen carefully. I said, ‘Astral-Riv-er-Flow-zone-En-voy.’”

Lu Yin’s eyes widened in surprise as he looked at Gu Er. This was too much of a coincidence. Then, Lu Yin’s gaze started turning colder by the second.

The Human Domain was split into the Inniverse and Outerverse, and the Outerverse was further separated into seventy two vast weaves, but the Inniverse was not small by any means. These two regions of humanity’s territory were separated by an incomparably large Astral River that flowed like a ribbon. This Astral River was formed from various liquid energies and was not a true river of water; it was just a visible flow of liquid energy that coursed through the universe. This Astral River was the border between the Inniverse and Outerverse.

The Astral River was chaotic and no spacecraft could pass through it. Only a special large vessel could cross the Astral River and connect the Inniverse with the Outerverse.

The Outerverse had no Astral River, but the Inniverse was filled with the Astral River’s tributaries. These tributaries divided the Inniverse into countless regions which were termed Flowzones, with the tributaries of the Astral River between each Flowzone.

The only known way to cross the Astral River was to use a giant vessel that could navigate across the Astral River. A person who controlled one such vessel was known as a Flowzone Envoy, and the controllers of vessels that traveled across the Inniverse’s tributaries were known as Flowzone Tributary Envoys. The individual who controlled the largest vessel that moved across the Astral River between the Outerverse and the Inniverse was the Astral River Flowzone Envoy. Elder Gu De was the current Astral River Flowzone envoy, and he had the unique privilege of controlling the Outerverse’s gate. Unless one had a special identity, anyone who wanted to leave or enter the Inniverse required his approval. Although he was just a doorman, his authority was vast. The person who held this position was always at least at the Cruiser or even Hunter realm.

It was no wonder why Gu Er acted so arrogantly; his father controlled something that countless people of the Outerverse could only dream of: the opportunity to enter the Inniverse.

Gu Er was quite pleased with himself as he looked at Lu Yin and waited for Lu Yin to apologize. It was quite pleasurable to force powerhouses to submit to him, and this was not his first time forcing one to

do so. When he was on his father's Astral River ark in the Astral River, an Outerverse Explorer had once even kneeled down to enter the Innaverse. Gu Er did not care about one's personal power; as long as they did not have a special status, his father could suppress them all.

Lu Yin looked deeply at Gu Er. "How much longer will your father hold his position as the Astral River Flowzone Envoy for?"

Gu Er sneered as he replied, "My father hasn't even been there for ten years. It will be at least fifty years more before he retires, and even then, he may continue to control the Astral River's giant vessel."

Lu Yin nodded. "That's great news to hear. I was afraid that I wouldn't get a chance to chop him down on the Astral River's giant vessel."

Gu Er was furious. "What did you say?"

Lu Yin's gaze turned cold. "Remember this: I'll kill you every time I see you." He then Flashed over, pressed down on Gu Er's head, and exerted some strength. Gu Er's head instantly shattered as he died without a chance to resist.

Gu Er's two companions felt their skulls go numb. This person obviously wanted to sow discord with Elder Gu De. They rushed to escape, but Lu Yin easily chased them down and finished them off with a single palm each.

### **Chapter 179: Conflict**

After watching Gu Er's body gradually fade away, Lu Yin looked up. He gazed at the dark skies with a ferocious glint in his eye. If Elder Gu De hadn't intentionally stalled for time back then, he wouldn't be in this state right now. Lu Yin would take revenge sooner or later.

This interaction with Gu Er put Lu Yin in a bad mood. He looked around for another student and asked some questions before finally finding out that he was about two days away from Whitebones Gorge.

The trial zones were very interesting. Whenever someone reentered after dying, the location that they appeared at would be random. However, if someone left the trial zones willingly rather than dying, they would reappear exactly where they had left the trial zones.

Lu Yin did not waste any more time dawdling around and headed straight to Whitebones Gorge after hearing that it was two days away. The Dao of Purgatory was pitch black for as far as the eye could see, and its scenery quickly became boring.

The Dao of Purgatory was a good fit for Lu Yin since nobody would want to go against him once they found out that he was a Lockbreaker. The Dao of Purgatory's Realm Master was Dao Bo, a talented Lockbreaker who was even better than Charon. Hence, in the Dao of Purgatory, Lockbreakers had a higher status than in any other trial zone.

However, Lu Yin did not want to reveal too many of his cards. The Astral Combat Tournament was quickly approaching, and he was certain that the tournament would not be set up in an impartial manner. Many of the stronger contenders would be analyzed and targeted before the tournament, just like Liu Shaoqiu whom Madam Nalan had informed Lu Yin of. The moment he revealed too much of his strength, others would take notice of him and start devising effective strategies against him.

A Lockbreaker did enjoy a very high status, but it was far too easy to hatch clandestine schemes against someone. Lu Yin was of the opinion that keeping a low profile before the tournament and avoiding gathering unnecessary attention from other people was his best course of action.

Unfortunately for him, Old Cai had given him a mission to steal a training ground, which was considerably difficult and eye catching. Every Area Master was strong enough to be in the top ten or even top five of their academy. These top students were certainly being observed day and night before the tournament, and if he defeated one of them, then trouble would definitely come for him. What should he do? Lu Yin had a headache just from thinking about it.

Half a day later, Lu Yin saw at least thirty students fly past him, all of them headed in the same direction. It was slightly off from the direction that Lu Yin was traveling in, but he was unable to restrain his curiosity and followed them

Before long, a vast, dark lake filled with oddly lucid black water appeared before him. There were dozens of students hiding around the lake and staring intently at the lake's center, where five individuals were fighting and splashing water everywhere. Their stray attacks that landed on the shore created small tears in space.

Lu Yin was shocked. This was a battle at the level of Area Masters, or perhaps even Realm Masters.

The only Area Master that he had faced before was Frankfurt. Even now, he could still recall the power of that lance as if it had happened yesterday. That person also had two lines of battle force. Although Lu Yin was confident that, with the strength of his physical body and his Flash technique, Frankfurt wouldn't be able to beat him, he knew that it was also impossible for him to defeat Frankfurt. The people who were currently fighting above the lake seemed to be slightly weaker than Frankfurt.

Lu Yin looked around, found a student, and asked him some questions. Of course, the process didn't go that smoothly, but when threatened by Lu Yin's iron fist, the student ended up telling Lu Yin what he wanted to know.

This training ground was known as Blackwater Lake. The previous Area Master had ascended to become an Explorer and left the academy, which meant that this area no longer had a master. The people fighting above the lake were battling for the position of Area Master.

This information caused Lu Yin's eyes to light up. Old Cai had ordered him to get a training ground, but he had never specified that Lu Yin had to defeat an Area Master to get it. And now, there was now a masterless training ground before him, ripe for the taking.

The problem was that too many people were vying for the training ground. While Lu Yin wasn't afraid of a one-on-one battle against any of the battling students, even he would find it troublesome to fight against all of them at once. After all, each of them were nearly as powerful as an Area Master, and they were all peak Limiteers.

While Lu Yin was still thinking about how he should proceed, a strange ripple spread out from the bottom of Blackwater Lake. At that same moment, chanting could be heard. Lu Yin's expression quickly changed, and he looked closely at the lake's depths.

Everyone around the lake heard the chanting, and they all directed their focus towards the bottom of the lake. This was a phenomenon. Within the trial zones, there were often ancient phenomena, and they often represented an inheritance from the primordial era. Many students had obtained powerful battle techniques or deep insights from these phenomena, and they were the most valuable experience one could find in the trial zones. Right now, one such phenomenon was happening right before their eyes.

Everyone rushed in without a second thought, and Lu Yin did not hold himself back either.

The five who were battling at the middle of the lake also charged in. However, now, they started working together to delay the other students as much as they could. Their coordination was so impeccable that it felt like they'd planned this out beforehand.

Within the Blackwater Lake training ground, the number of people in the region rapidly decreased as the phenomenon became increasingly clear. Lu Yin could hear and feel things more clearly. The reason why he had been first attacked in the Dao of Purgatory was because of this clarity that always accompanied phenomena. Now, for the same reason, everybody was being driven away by these five.

All the spectators were either killed or tossed to the bottom of the lake. The five whose strength approached an Area Master's were not people that the other students could handle.

One of them targeted Lu Yin, moving behind him and launching an attack by jabbing his spear at him through the water. Lu Yin frowned and dodged with Flash. He then grabbed the spear, causing the attacker to snicker insidiously. The spear became scorching hot to the point of boiling the surrounding lake water. A thin thread of gas twined around it and tried, though in vain, to wrench the spear away from Lu Yin.

Lu Yin was shocked. Battle force! This person could use battle force and, like him, was at the elementary grade. It made sense that this spear-wielder had the guts to fight for the position of Area Master.

Boom!

The lake waters were forced away, creating a vacuum as Lu Yin and the spear user both retreated.

The attacker was a male in grey clothing. He looked at Lu Yin in shock, most likely because he could not imagine that a Melder could match him.

Lu Yin shook his numb hands to restore some feeling. Using just his physical body and not his own battle force to contest against his opponent's battle force filled move meant that he had been at the disadvantage. However, he had managed to hold his own.

The man stared at Lu Yin before attacking once again. The spear still had battle force coiling around it, and its tip jabbed forward with a startling speed, even tearing space apart. Lu Yin flexed his calf muscles and dodged by a hair's breadth, the tip almost touching him. His body and the spear brushed past each other as he then aimed a palm strike at the man. The man quickly retrieved his spear back and held it horizontally to defend himself. Lu Yin lifted his palm as stars appeared around it. Nine stars began revolving; it was the perfected Cosmic Palm.

With a boom, huge waves broke the lake's previous calm. The sheer air pressure differential pushed everyone away, including the four vying for the position of Area Master. They retreated with shocked looks in their eyes.

The man's spear had been bent in half by Lu Yin's Cosmic Palm, and his entire body was smashed into the lake.

Only after a long while did the lake returned to its original, calm state.

The other four stared at Lu Yin in shock. A Melder who could defeat one of them was surely a monster.

At that moment, a chilling sensation surged from above. They looked up and saw a "sky" filled with white ice crystals.

"Crap, that's Mystifying Ice. The twins are here!" someone shouted before launching an attack at the ice that had sealed off the lake's surface as the rest quickly followed suit.

At the bottom of the lake, the spear-wielder in grey was enraged as he charged out. Lu Yin's Cosmic Palm was powerful, but it was not able to seriously injure someone who had almost reached the level of an Area Master.

"Stop fighting. Everything can wait until after we get out!" someone else yelled. The man in grey glanced at Lu Yin, unresigned to his defeat, but then aimed his spear at the ice barrier.

Lu Yin attacked as well. He had a bad feeling about this because, while he was battling with the man in grey, the phenomenon at the bottom of the lake had vanished.

A deafening sound echoed across the surface of the lake. However, the attacks of these six who were nearly at the level of an Area Master were unable to destroy the layer of ice on the surface, which meant they were all trapped inside of the lake.

After attacking for a while, they stopped. At that point, two beautiful girls appeared atop the lake. One wore a white dress while the other wore a light pink one. What made Lu Yin surprised was the fact that they were identical in appearance. Twins?

"Hehe, you all fought so hard in there. How is it? Is the water cold?" The girl in a white dress asked with a smile.

Not too far away from Lu Yin, a man with a crew cut was furious. "Can Xue, was that phenomenon at the bottom of the lake caused by the two of you?"

They weren't stupid. The phenomenon had vanished right before the Mystifying Ice appeared. They could all guess that the phenomenon had been nothing more than bait to lure them to the bottom of the lake and that this pair was the mastermind behind the scheme.

Can Xue burst into laughter. "Please don't malign me, Gus. I just saw you fighting and causing such a ruckus that I was afraid that you'd destroy the tranquility of Blackwater Lake. So, I sealed off all the stray attacks."



“If that’s the case, then let us out now,” the man in grey said in a low voice.

Can Xue smiled but did not reply. Instead, the girl dressed in pink next to her spoke out. Her name was Can Mei and her tone was much colder. “We can let you out. You just have to leave Blackwater Lake and leave this place to our young mistress.”

“Your young mistress? Yue Xianzi? I don’t think she entered any branch of the Astral Combat Academy,” a man not too far from Lu Yin said.

“She just entered one. This is our gift to her,” Can Mei stated matter-of-factly.

Lu Yin frowned unhappily. The tournament had enticed a large number of powerhouses. Liu Shaoqiu from the Sword Sect and these girls’ young mistress, Yue Xianzi, were likely only a few of the hidden powerhouses that had emerged to participate. These twins were able to create a mystifying ice barrier that even all of the students gathered together could not destroy.

Another man with a pale face and a cold look in his eyes said, “Your young mistress needs you to gift her something? She just needs to seduce a Realm Master, and she’ll get a training ground. Isn’t that what your Frostmoon Sect is the best at?”

Can Mei disdainfully glanced at him. “Pfft, you’re just a loser who got chased out of the Daynight Flowzone. You’re too weak to get revenge so all you can do is talk.”

“You shouldn’t say that. If you have the strength, then let him out and you can fight him as many times as you want,” Gus said, fanning the flames.

Can Xue grinned as she replied, “Don’t waste your breath, Gus. You can leave Blackwater Lake or be sealed within ice. Though there’s another way out—kill yourself.”

“Kill myself? Why would I do that? The next time I come to Blackwater Lake, the Area Master will be someone else.” Gus rolled his eyes.

The man in grey suddenly said, “Your Frostmoon Sect is pretty bold to mess with a Lockbreaker here in the Dao of Purgatory.”

Everyone was shocked. A Lockbreaker? There was a Lockbreaker here?

Lu Yin saw the man shift his gaze to him and froze; this person shouldn’t have known that Lu Yin was a Lockbreaker.

“You’re Lu Yin from Astral-10, right? I saw you at Spear Mountain,” he said icily.

Everyone else looked at him.

Lu Yin’s eyes narrowed.

“Lu Yin? That name sounds a little familiar. I might’ve heard of it before.” Gus was doubtful.

Above the ice, Can Xue and Can Mei’s expressions changed and they exchanged a pensive look. They recognized his name. Isn’t Lu Yin the person that Charon announced was under his protection? Crap, this means that Charon is going to get involved.

This situation normally wouldn't be a concern, but Charon was a Lockbreaker, and Lockbreakers were not to be trifled with in this realm. If they messed with one, a second or third one might come. More importantly, the Dao of Purgatory's Realm Master was Dao Bo, a Lockbreaker. He was also someone who took care of his own.

"I remember now. He's Charon's lover!" Gus shouted. Everyone shot strange looks towards Lu Yin.

Lu Yin immediately glared at Gus. "Charon is my friend. Don't spout nonsense."

Gus was embarrassed. "Sorry, the words just slipped out of my mouth. That's wrong, I meant to say soon-to-be lover. Wait, no, that's not right either. Sorry, haha..."

Lu Yin clenched his fists. This guy was looking for a fight.

### **Chapter 180: Inheritance**

"You should let us out immediately. I'm sure that you can't handle Charon's wrath. Don't forget, there's Dao Bo as well," the man in grey threatened. The twins' eyes gleamed and they looked at Lu Yin. This person was the crux of the issue.

"That's alright. I'm fine where I am right now. I don't really want to leave quite yet," Lu Yin said nonchalantly.

The rest immediately stared daggers at him. "Hey, are you crazy? Don't spout nonsense." Gus was growing anxious and the man in grey glared at Lu Yin. He really wanted to become the Area Master, and being stuck under the lake wasn't a part of his plans.

Lu Yin snickered. He hated being used by others, especially someone from Spear Mountain.

"If you help us, the Frostmoon Sect will remember what you've done for us," Can Xue said as she smiled at Lu Yin with shining eyes.

The man in grey glared at Lu Yin. "Think this through. With Charon backing you, they don't dare to keep you sealed in here. If you let us out, then we can help you absolve your grudge with Frankfurt."

"Oh, Frankfurt? I know him, too. I can say a few words on your behalf if you want," Gus said. The others also spoke up, clearly desiring to escape from the lake.

Lu Yin contemptuous spat back, "Frankfurt? Who does he think he is? Does he have the guts to lay his hands on me?"

The man in grey grew even more furious, but he couldn't say much in response. It was true that, with Charon backing Lu Yin, Frankfurt really wasn't much of a threat to him anymore. The rest were at a loss for what to do as well as well. Lu Yin had a backer, and nobody could force him to do anything.

After waiting for a while, Lu Yin stared at the complicated expressions on the twins' face and suddenly said, "It's not that hard to get out. I have a way to escape even without asking Charon for help. However, why should I bring you with me?"

"What are your terms?" the man in grey asked coldly.

Lu Yin casually answered, "Give me two hundred thousand crystals per person, and I'll take you all with me."

"Fine," Gus agreed immediately. Two hundred thousand crystals wasn't a small amount, but for the elites from the Astral Combat Academy, it was an acceptable sum. They'd be able to earn this amount of money by just completing a few missions.

The rest agreed as well. Lu Yin wasn't afraid that they would go back on their word since they were all powerful elites. If they went back on their word, it would actually cause them unnecessary problems by affecting their cultivation. This was a matter of the mind and nobody was willing to let a mere two hundred thousand crystals affect their path to the peak.

Lu Yin whispered his method to the other five, causing them to freeze in place. Will that actually work?

His idea was straightforward. Just as the twins had baited them into the lake's depths, they would now create a phenomenon of their own at the bottom of the lake.

Phenomena were quite common everywhere within the trial zones, not to mention a training ground like Blackwater Lake. The moment a phenomenon occurred, the twins would definitely come in to check it out even if they were almost entirely sure that it was fake. A phenomenon was far too important to discount because it could allow one's strength to rise meteorically.

This was a clever scheme because, even if Lu Yin told the twins that they had faked the phenomena, the two girls might still break the Mystical Ice on the lake surface to check it out for themselves. This was just the mentality of humans. The method was simple, but the most difficult part was identifying it.

There were a total of six people trapped at the bottom of the lake. To prevent the twins from growing too suspicious, they quickly separated after discussing the plan.

Back above the layer of Mystical Ice, the twins exchanged doubtful glances before staring at the bottom of the lake. They were fairly certain that the trapped students would not be able to break through the ice, but their sudden, coordinated movements were making them feel uneasy.

"When will the young mistress arrive?" Can Xue asked quietly.

Can Mei shook her head in response. "I don't know the exact time, but she should be arriving shortly."

"Each one of them is powerful enough to contend for the title of Area Monster. Who knows, they might actually have a way to break through the Mystical Ice formed from our combined Innate Gifts. I hope that she gets here soon." Can Xue was worried about the situation.

Right after she said that, a burning light flashed at the bottom of the lake. There seemed to be a figure pushing at the water with an ancient aura surrounding the scene. Above the ice, the air started to distort and synchronize with the movement at the bottom of the lake, forming a huge tornado.

Everybody around Blackwater Lake was surprised by this scene and watched on, shocked. Is this a phenomenon?

At the bottom of the lake, Lu Yin was appalled as this seemed a little too real. They must be real geniuses... Wait, no!

Lu Yin suddenly realized that there was something strange about the phenomenon. Is this actually real?

He immediately glanced around and saw that Gus and the pale-faced man had not returned yet. They were the ones who were in charge of creating the phenomenon, and according to the plan, they were supposed to return as soon as the phenomenon appeared so that the twins wouldn't discover the truth. However, they had yet to appear, which meant the phenomenon was real!

Lu Yin immediately swam towards the bottom of the lake, and the others all reacted in the same way as well. The man in grey stabbed his spear into the waters, swimming to the bottom of the lake as his spear pushed the water in his way apart.

Above the surface of the lake, the twins exchanged astonished gazes before immediately breaking the Mystical Ice and charging into the water.

Many of the spectators in the surrounding area darted forth as well. The various phenomena in the trial zones could make a cultivator very powerful, and the quality of these images meant that there must be something powerful in the lake.

At the bottom of the lake, Gus and the pale-faced man excitedly watched the area in front of them. The water had gathered into a vortex, and a vague figure quietly stood up inside of that vortex. It was impossible to make out that figure's details, but it was clear that it was the source of the huge commotion at the bottom of the lake. The water vortex shifted as it merged into the figure, causing the occasional spatial tear to streak past it as it did so. Lightning seemed to be flashing within the water as well.

The pale-faced man charged forward, intent on merging with the figure so that he could comprehend this amazing battle technique.

Gus did the same, but was slightly slower.

But right as the pale-faced man charged into the vortex, he was instantly torn to shreds. The shocking sight caused Gus' expression to change as he immediately retreated. Meanwhile, Lu Yin and the others had just arrived in time to see the pale-faced man's death. They were shocked because every single person here was almost as strong as an Area Master, but one of them had been easily killed by the ancient phenomenon. It was a terrifying sight.

Soon enough, the twin sisters appeared behind them shortly after. This time, nobody bothered with them and they all merely stared at the developing phenomenon.

More and more people appeared and stared at the figure in the distance in excitement. All of them hoped that they would be able to obtain the inheritance and see their cultivation soar, allowing them to rush to the peak of the Astral Combat Academy.

The ancient figure stood at the bottom of the lake as the vortex around it grew increasingly larger, until it eventually covered the entirety of Blackwater Lake.

Lu Yin and the others had long since retreated to the safety of the shore, but their eyes were still glued to the figure.

More and more people tried to charge in and merge with the figure, but they all failed. The man in grey had also made his attempt, with the result being both him and his spear being torn to shreds.

The twins had similarly tried to test the waters with their Mystical Ice, but even that was not able to withstand the vortex's sheer force. At this point, the revolving streams of water had become the most powerful weapons in the world in that figure's hands. Nobody could go up against them.

Lu Yin had long since activated his Cosmic Art to better observe the phenomenon. What everyone else saw as streams of water, he saw as a horrifying, indescribably concentrated form of bloodlust. It was shaped like a vortex, but it was actually the manifestation of a battle technique. By remaining unchanging, the battle technique could actually adapt to any changes. Anybody who entered the vortex would be torn apart, regardless of their battle technique. This was a battle technique that had been designed by the wisdom of ancient, intelligent minds, and it was likely a simplified version of something even more profound and powerful.

Lu Yin was growing antsy; if he could somehow merge with that figure and experience the battle technique for himself, then his power would immediately soar. At the very least, his method of using battle techniques would transform, but unfortunately, he was not sure if he could break through the vortex.

Yet another student was torn apart by the deadly vortex, but the crowd could only watch on; their frustration and anxiety were simply indescribable.

Lu Yin was no different, and he also wanted to give it a go. In the end, the worst that could happen would be dying, but even that just meant being forced out of the trial zone. After steeling himself, Lu Yin charged into the vortex. Gus moved forward at the same time since the figure was starting to grow indistinct. If they missed this opportunity, then they might never have another chance like this ever again.

Many students charged at the same time, like moths flying to a flame. Even though they knew that they were rushing in towards almost certain death, they still chased after that sliver of light. For cultivators, strength was their sole pursuit. The universe was cruel and practical, but that was just the reality of their world; sometimes, cultivation meant running towards death.

Lu Yin activated his Cosmic Art and his battle force. He charged straight in, intent on reaching the figure in a single leap, but he was forced back by a huge force. His battle force was blown away as was his Cosmic Art. The nine stars exploded, but not even that managed to mitigate the vortex's ripping force in the least. The next moment, extreme pain shot through his nerves as his body began to be shredded apart.

Gus was already gone, and everyone else who had been fighting to become the Area Master of Blackwater Lake had died as well.

Lu Yin yelled as he barely managed to hold on for a second. The muscles in his calves tore apart as he forcefully used Flash. At the same time, he struck himself with Nine Stacks. That, combined with his Flash backwards, was enough to force himself out of the vortex and send him crashing into the shore.

Aside from Lu Yin, everyone else who had entered the vortex had died. Not a single other person had managed to escape. This scene shocked everyone once again.

The twins narrowed their eyes as they stared at Lu Yin in shock. This person had managed to survive for two seconds within the vortex, which was even better than Gus and the others. Furthermore, he was a mere Melder. What a monster!

Lu Yin wiped the blood from the corner of his mouth, but his entire body was streaked with blood. This was the first time that he'd been this badly injured after becoming a Melder. He had no idea what the limits of his body were, and his physique had even surprised the Sandmaster. However, this vortex had been able to injure him seriously in just two seconds. Thankfully, he had held on for those two seconds, which was more than the others had been able to do.

Injuries taken inside a trial zone healed very quickly, and he didn't need to worry even if that weren't the case. Everything would be fine as long as he didn't die.

At this moment, a white figure flitted past everyone staring at the figure and charged straight into the vortex. Everyone assumed the white figure would be torn to bits like everyone else, but the ancient figure within the phenomenon forced the vortex to stop the moment the white figure made contact with the vortex. The white figure easily crossed the vortex and merged with the ancient figure, and a moment later, the vortex resumed spinning once more.

This sudden development left everyone shocked. Someone had received the inheritance, or to phrase it differently, the inheritance had been waiting for that person.

Lu Yin narrowed his eyes. Was this opportunity set up for that person? He couldn't make out any details inside the vortex, and the only thing that he was able to determine about the white figure was a veil and a beautiful side profile. It was a girl.

"Young Mistress!" the twins exclaimed in delight as they stared inside the vortex.

Lu Yin's eyes widened into saucers. Young Mistress? Is this Yue Xianzi from the Frostmoon Sect whom Gus and the others were talking about? She's received the inheritance, which means that Blackwater Lake is fated to be hers.

After realizing this, Lu Yin stood up and left despite it causing him extreme pain. This opportunity did not belong to him, and there was no need to force things as such behavior would only bring him trouble later on.

Lu Yin found an area to rest and heal not too far away from the lake. He took no more than half a day to fully recover. As long as one didn't die in the trial zones, one would be able to regenerate from their injuries very quickly. No one here was using their real body, after all, and between their increased healing abilities and the properties of the trial zones, it meant that battles here typically resulted in death. Battles had two options: fight to the death or not fight at all.

Two hours before Lu Yin finished recovering, the phenomenon in Blackwater Lake disappeared. From that point onwards, the Area Master of Blackwater Lake was officially Yue Xianzi, a powerful person who had entered the Astral Combat Academy to participate in the Astral Combat Tournament.