

Chapter 181: Whitebones Gorge

The Blaze Realm could not even compare to the Frostmoon Sect. One general characteristic of the universe was that, the closer one was to the Innerverses' center, the greater the likelihood that stronger powerhouses and scary geniuses would appear. The Blaze Realm was in the peripheral Blazing Mist Flowzone, and it shared the flowzone with the Ross Empire and the sylvan dragon clan. To the Innerverses, however, while the Blazing Mist Flowzone was the largest of the eight Great Flowzones, it wasn't much better in quality than the Outerverses and it was treated as nothing more than the Innerverses' doorman.

The Frostmoon Sect, on the other hand, was located in one of the most central flowzones, the Daynight Flowzone. Even though there were many rumors that the Frostmoon Sect relied on marital ties to survive in the Daynight Flowzone, the fact that they were able to survive nonetheless meant that they had some degree of power. No matter what, Yue Xianzi's status was far above Jared's, and she was comparable to a genius disciple of Ten Thousand Swords Peak or the Daynight clan.

Lu Yin had no plans to fight Yue Xianzi for the title of Blackwater Lake's Area Master; who knew what inheritance she had received from the recent phenomenon. But what worried Lu Yin even more was that she had entered the Astral Combat Academy to participate in the Astral Combat Tournament.

Lu Yin regained his bearings and headed for Whitebones Gorge after he recovered.

One day later, Lu Yin finally arrived at Whitebones Gorge. He looked at the freezing valleys before him and the white bones that were scattered everywhere haphazardly. This place caused people to shiver involuntarily, and Charon was the Area Master of this place.

The Whitebones Gorge was littered with countless bleached bones. There were rumors that, every full moon, these white bones would start dancing of their own accord, and that they might even display battle techniques. Others said that the dance was a sacrificial offering, and many thought that it was just an ordinary song and dance routine. No one knew why this strange phenomenon occurred, but Whitebones Gorge was the only one of the Dao of Purgatory's training grounds where a strange phenomenon regularly occurred.

From Charon's memories, Lu Yin knew about the desperate fight to control Whitebones Gorge. To obtain the title of Area Master Frankfurt and his cohorts had acted, and other people with the strength of an Area Master from other academies had also joined in. Finally, the Dao of Purgatory's Realm Master, Dao Bo, had intervened and chased away the rest, allowing Charon to become the Area Master of Whitebones Gorge. Without Dao Bo's aid, it would have been extremely difficult for Charon to succeed.

A Lockbreaker did enjoy a high status, but they were not above all other living beings. Also, this was a trial zone, a place of battle and conflict.

Charon was a genius Lockbreaker and those who trained in Whitebones Gorge were mostly Lockbreakers from the Astral Combat Academy. There were only a few of them, but each one of them was an elite.

Lu Yin's arrival quickly attracted the attention of the students training in Whitebones Gorge. When Charon first saw Lu Yin, his face visibly darkened, but he quickly forced a smile onto his face. "Brother Lu, welcome to Whitebones Gorge."

When Lu Yin saw Charon's insincere smile, he stepped forward and passionately replied, "Brother Charon, I thought that you'd forgotten about me!"

"How could I? Once I found out that Brother Lu entered Astral-10, I immediately ordered that no one harm you on pain of continuously being hounded to death." Charon emphasized the last few words quite heavily. He seemed to hold a great hatred, and it was quite obvious that it was directed towards no one else besides Lu Yin.

Lu Yin smiled happily. "It's all thanks to Brother Charon. Ah, right, my uncle sends his regards as well."

Charon's face twisted and he instinctively grabbed Lu Yin's clothes out of rage before he came back to his senses. He laughed hollowly as he patted Lu Yin's shoulder. "How is he? Not dead yet, I hope."

Lu Yin laughed and patted Charon's shoulder back. "Of course! He's doing quite well. The darkness of night is his quilt, and the stars are his bed. He's living a very carefree life now and goes for strolls in a blackhole whenever he's free."

Charon stared at Lu Yin's eyes as if he was trying to interpret something, but he couldn't make anything out.

"Please pass my wishes to your uncle that he takes care of himself and that he is not swept away by a blackhole. The universe is large, and it is not limited just to the Human Domain," Charon spat out through ground teeth even as he beamed widely. His expression looked rather strange, and it made the surrounding people tremble and back away.

After the surrounding people left, Charon stared at Lu Yin and quietly snarled, "Brat, let me warn you to not run your mouth. Else, I'll show you the true terror of offending a genius Lockbreaker. You won't be able to hide, even inside Astral-10."

Lu Yin's brows quirked up. "Is that so? Are you saying that, after those letters become public, you'll still be a genius Lockbreaker?"

"You!" Charon was furious.

"Alright, I have no interest in those trivial personal matters of yours," Lu Yin said as he pushed Charon aside before glancing sideways at him. "While your love life is quite unlucky, as long as you cooperate quietly, I won't do anything to you."

Charon snorted and fell into a foul mood. He had been blackmailed, and he would never be freed unless he was willing to let his hidden affections be publicized. Otherwise, he would be stuck under Lu Yin's thumb forever.

Lu Yin looked around and saw an endless trail of white bones. He didn't know why, but these bones gave him a sense of deep sorrow, and he could vaguely hear what sounded like the wails of countless people beside his ears fading in and out. This was a strange place.

"Charon, what enlightenments have you had here?" Lu Yin was curious.

This was an extremely rude question that could easily start a fight as this was equivalent to asking someone to reveal their secrets and their strength. However, Lu Yin already knew Charon's biggest secret, so he didn't care. "Domain."

Lu Yin was shocked: a domain was a strength that could rival battle force and innate gifts. Zhuo Daynight's battle technique had imitated a domain, as had that war spirit that he encountered earlier. When he had Possessed Charon earlier, he didn't have much time, so he had only been able to review his memories and experiences that were related to Lockbreaking. As such, Lu Yin only had a vague impression of Charon's battle memories, so Lu Yin was unsure about what Charon's domain actually was.

A domain was very mysterious and something that only apex elites could develop as a domain would give the wielder absolute control within their domain's sphere of control.

A domain could not be measured and divided into levels like battle force, as every person's domain was unique. Those who had developed one could perceive everything in their vicinity with heightened senses. They could also lower their heart rate, merge with their surroundings, or even manifest unique abilities, though that was nothing but a rumor.

The Rainmaster had given Lu Yin a chip that contained an introduction to star energy. It had listed the realms of star energy control from the first step of absorbing star energy to cleansing impurities, materializing the energy, and finally, reaching the realm of infinite changes, which was Lu Yin's current level control. After that, one could infuse their star energy with their own willpower, altering the color of their star energy. The final step was establishing one's domain, where only the wielder would reign supreme.

As for domains, the chip had only mentioned them briefly. Too few people had mastered one, and they perhaps numbered even fewer than the number of those who had mastered battle force. Needless to say, each and every domain user was an absolute powerhouse.

Lu Yin recalled the circumstances of when Charon had unlocked that sword-shaped Sourcebox. It was no wonder that, with his familiarity of star energy, he had succeeded in his lockbreaking. In fact, this should be the foundation of Charon's domain.

"What's your domain?" Lu Yin asked curiously.

"Don't go overboard."

Lu Yin turned away and stopped questioning Charon, as he had indeed gone too far.

Charon suddenly thought of something and beamed before asking, "Do you really want to know about my domain?"

Lu Yin turned back with an astonished gaze.

"It's possible, but only if we have a duel. That way, you can experience it yourself." A strange smile crept up Charon's face, clearly not an amicable one.

Lu Yin wisely decided to reject, as he did not enjoy being beaten one-sidedly. Although he really wanted to duel against a domain wielding expert, that could wait. He had his die, and he was hoping that he would be lucky enough to Possess an expert with a domain the next time he rolled Possession.

Charon was disappointed. "You don't have a warrior's spirit."

Lu Yin just ignored him. His dedication towards training was greatly lacking when compared to people like Zhang Dingtian or Schutz.

"Schutz should have arrived by now," Lu Yin muttered to himself before asking, "Charon, am I free to wander about in Whitebones Gorge?"

"It's up to you. Just don't bother me."

Lu Yin heard more screams as he walked across the dry bones. Madness, sorrow, desperation—all sorts of negative emotions permeated Whitebones Gorge. He did not know if other people could hear them as well, but he definitely could. This sort of environment was not suitable for people to live in, lest they ran the risk of going mad.

Lu Yin found a protruding valley and sat down within it. He circulated his Cosmic Art and patiently waited for Schutz.

Two days passed, during which no one sought out Lu Yin. Charon left the trial zone, and those training within Whitebones Gorge all kept their distance and did not interact with Lu Yin.

Lu Yin could not afford to continue waiting for Schutz, and he even felt that it was strange that he had waited so long. So, he left the trial zone and reappeared back at the trial zone mountain. He saw Schutz wiping his blade when he opened his eyes.

"You haven't entered yet?" Lu Yin was flabbergasted.

"I entered. Then I died."

"That fast?"

"I appeared in the center of a group of war spirits."

Lu Yin blinked, speechless. Schutz's luck was just too horrible. Even Lu Yin himself would be helpless if he was surrounded by war spirits. He watched Schutz calmly clean his blade as he muttered under his breath.

All of Astral-10's students had obtained a hundred victories in the ported battles, but they were only stronger than the average student from the other academies. Schutz, Coco, Zora, and the rest were not much stronger than the other academies' students at their same level. If they fought against an opponent with powerful innate gifts, then they would be defeated easily. Astral-10 only had a few students who could compete against the other academies' elites.

It hadn't been the best idea to ask Schutz for help to snatch a training ground. He would not be able to contribute much help, and could be easily killed after he entered the trial zones. Lu Yin could not afford to continue waiting around.

This new development gave Lu Yin a headache. There were twelve new students, and less than half of them could even stand up against the elites of the other academies. Even Hui Daynight was not strong enough to do so.

After thinking his predicament through, Lu Yin decided to not ask for Schutz's help in his quest to snatch a training ground. However, since he had already asked Schutz for his help, rejecting him now would just humiliate him.

Coincidentally, Michelle entered the trial zone mountain right then. She was still as enchanting as ever, and her red eyes swept across Lu Yin and Schutz before she indifferently headed to another area of the mountain.

"Wait," Lu Yin suddenly called out.

She paused and turned to look at Lu Yin. "What?"

Lu Yin stood up and walked to Michelle. He looked her straight in her red eyes and seriously said, "I want to snatch a training ground. Interested?"

"No."

"How about battle force? Interested?"

Her eyes lit up. "Battle force?"

Lu Yin smiled, he raised his hand, and let a translucent stream of air flow around it. He saw Michelle's passionate gaze as there was no one who did not want to learn battle force. "Xi Yue also comprehended battle force."

This sentence immediately changed Michelle's mind. The two of them had had a terrible fight when Michelle was chosen to enter the Ten Arbiters Council over Xi Yue. They had been equally matched, and while Michelle appeared indifferent, she actually acknowledged Xi Yue as her main rival. She had thought that, with her recent improvements, she had completely surpassed Xi Yue since their battle. But if Xi Yue had truly learned battle force, then that might not necessarily be true.

Chapter 182: Selection

"How do you know this?" Michelle's voice was cold and a little anxious.

Lu Yin dissipated his own battle force. "I helped her comprehend it at the second level of the Sand Ocean."

Michelle stared at Lu Yin before asking, "What are your conditions?"

He smiled. "Help me snatch a training ground."

Michelle frowned as she replied, "You should know how scary an Area Master is since you've experienced Frankfurt's power for yourself."

A cold glint flashed through Lu Yin's eyes; everyone knew that he had been killed by Frankfurt. He needed to repay this debt one day. It was a pity that Spear Mountain was not suitable for him. Otherwise, that training ground would have been his first choice. "Are you afraid?"

Michelle indifferently replied, "At worst, I'll die. I'm alright." Her tone then turned serious as she continued, "But I'll only help you once. I can't help you forever."

He smiled at her agreement. "Sure, just once will do."

"Where are we headed?"

Schutz also looked over.

Lu Yin's eyes flashed before he said, "The Dao of Purgatory, the Fathomless Pool."

The Fathomless Pool was the worst training ground of the Dao of Purgatory, though "worst" merely referred to its scope. In reality, the Fathomless Pool was very useful as it helped cultivators develop and refine their battle force; the deeper they went into the pool, the greater the pressure they would face. However, its small size could only accommodate two people at a time. Thus, not many students practiced there. Also, there were other trial zones that were also suitable for training one's battle force. Thus, the Fathomless Pool garnered relatively little interest, as almost no one trained there besides its Area Master, Uro.

However, Lu Yin had another motive for choosing the Fathomless Pool; Uro was a good friend of Jared.

"The Fathomless Pool might only have the Area Master Uro, but he is very strong and has a biological innate gift—huan qi. He also has one line of battle force and he won't be easy to deal with. Who else have you found to help you?"

Lu Yin looked at Schutz. Michelle frowned as she thought to herself, This person is useless.

"The Sand Ocean's second layer can help one comprehend battle force?" Schutz suddenly asked.

Lu Yin nodded. "That's where I picked it up."

"Then I won't help you snatch a training ground this time."

Lu Yin sighed. Schutz had the heart, but not the strength. "You're going to head to the second layer of the Sand Ocean?"

"I'll help you after I learn battle force," Schutz said with a nod before he left.

Lu Yin frowned, as the second layer of the Sand Ocean was no trivial place. Even Xi Yue had to rely on his help before she was able to withstand the ravaging winds that eroded at one's body. Schutz definitely wasn't strong enough to endure those winds, but Lu Yin knew that anything he said would be useless as Schutz had a fighter's heart, just like Zhang Dingtian.

"You should just forget it if the helpers you'll have are all like that. Uro has truly reached the level of an Area Master, and his innate gift is also very powerful. He's not much easier to deal with than Frankfurt, and just the two of us won't be his match."

"Don't look down on other people. He may be able to master battle force before he returns."

Michelle's gaze shifted; she obviously did not take Schutz seriously. Although her words were harsh, they coldly reflected reality. Only the top few elites in Astral-10 could face an Area Master, and Lu Yin needed to find people like Xia Luo, Yin, Darkvoid, or Lulu to help him.

"First, go in and head twenty kilometers north of the Dao of Purgatory's Fathomless Pool. I'll gather the rest before we start."

Michelle was puzzled. "Twenty kilometers north? What's there?"

"I don't know."

"But you're making me go there regardless?"

"Why don't you choose somewhere else nearby the Fathomless Pool that you're familiar with then?"

Michelle was struck speechless by Lu Yin's casualness, and she directly stepped towards the trial zone mountain. "I'll wait there for five days at most. The deal is off if you don't appear within five days, but you'll still have to help me comprehend battle force."

Lu Yin was helpless; this girl was difficult to deal with.

After Michelle entered the trial zone, Lu Yin walked around the trial zone mountain and found the areas where Xia Luo, Yin, Lulu and Darkvoid had accessed the trial zones. Now that he had located them all, he would not need to search around aimlessly. He sat down at the entrance of the trial zone mountain and waited for them to awaken.

Half a day later, someone woke up, but it wasn't who Lu Yin was waiting for. Rather, Coco and Zora, the two disciples of Windrift Hall, walked out. There were other experts of Windrift Hall in the trial zone, and even though none of them were an Area Master, Coco and Zora experienced no issued under Windrift Hall's protection. The Hall had an excellent reputation within the Inniverse. That, combined with Coco's cute appearance and eager kindness, meant that the two were not bullied inside the trial zones.

Coco was glad to see Lu Yin. "Brother Lu, you've been gone for a long time. Where have you been?"

Lu Yin smiled as he answered, "Out for missions. Coco, congratulations on obtaining a hundred victories in the ported battles."

Coco stuck out her tongue. "Don't make fun of me, Brother Lu. My record is bad."

"To attain a hundred victories is already an improvement."

"Coco, which Dao did you guys go to?"

"The Dao of Heaven, but we're headed to the Dao of Slaughter next, or perhaps the Dao of Purgatory."

Lu Yin was envious. Having a backer was completely different from not having one. If Lu Yin hadn't managed to find a backer in the form of Charon, he would have been murdered regardless of where he went.

"Let's go, Coco. The mentor's waiting for us," Zora said as she nodded at Lu Yin in greetings.

Lu Yin watched them leave as he had no plans of recruiting them for his mission. Although a healer was important, they lost their value in the trial zones. As long as one didn't die, they would quickly recover to their peak state without any external aid. With Coco and Zora's strength, they might be even less useful than Schutz against an Area Master.

Not long after, Darkvoid woke up and glanced at Lu Yin before indifferently walking out of the mountain.

Lu Yin asked, "Darkvoid, are you interested in snatching a training ground with me?"

"No," Darkvoid replied simply. He was a man of few words.

"I can help you comprehend battle force and allow you to train at Whitebones Gorge." Lu Yin offered up many incentives in his attempt to tempt Darkvoid, but he remained unfazed and walked towards the exit of the mountain without a word before vanishing before Lu Yin's eyes.

Lu Yin felt helpless. If it had been Hui Daynight, then Lu Yin would have simply beaten him into submission, but with Darkvoid, Lu Yin felt like he held absolutely no authority over this fellow student. This person was like a steadfast rock; no one knew what he was thinking.

A student leader could supervise and even discipline the other students within reasonable limits, but Lu Yin did not feel that forcibly conscripting them for his personal mission would fall within those limits.

However, Lu Yin was not disturbed by his failure to recruit Darkvoid. He never expected to actually succeed, and his hopes were much more focused on the rest. He had to succeed with them.

Another day passed, and Lu Yin finally managed to encounter Silver.

He was still wearing that fox's smile, not letting a single sliver of emotion slip through. During the New Students' Tournament, he had easily eliminated Hui Daynight with a butterfly knife attack that Lu Yin hadn't been able to understand at all. While the knife hadn't moved that quickly, it had still sliced through Hui Daynight's battle technique as if it weren't there. It was a very strange attack.

Lu Yin still could not forget that moonlit night back on Earth when his Cosmic Palm had clashed against that butterfly knife. That moment seemed to have locked their fates together.

"Long time no see, Student Lu," Silver beamed as he stretched his body.

Lu Yin still needed to be courteous to Silver, so he asked, "I want to grab a training ground. Want to join?"

Silver smiled. "Alright, I can spare a third of my strength to help you."

Lu Yin sneered before replying, "A fifth will be more than enough."

"A tenth will probably be fine."

Their meaningless banter was pointless, so Lu Yin simply said, "Go to the Dao of Purgatory. I'm planning to take over the Fathomless Pool. Head twenty kilometers north of there and wait for me there."

"Twenty kilometers north? What's there?"

"I don't know. It's just a random place."

Silver shrugged, sat down a dozen meters away from Lu Yin, closed his eyes, and reentered the trial zone.

After Silver, Lulu was the next to awaken. When she came out, her eyes flashed when she saw Lu Yin. "Come on, let's compare our strengths!"

"Sure, but the loser has to agree to one condition."

"No problem."

They walked out of the mountain to the trial zone mountain's entrance.

There were many ways to compare strength, but for Lu Yin and Lulu, the simplest was a pushing contest.

Astonishment flashed through Lu Yin's eyes when he clasped Lulu's soft, white hand. There was a different feeling about it, as if her hand was more tenacious. This was a strangely familiar sensation—could it be? Battle force?

Lu Yin stared at Lulu in shock, and she merely grinned in response. Her already beautiful face became even more vibrant as she said, "Let's go. The Mavis clan will not lose to anyone in terms of strength." With that, battle force erupted from her body and distorted the void.

Lu Yin instinctively responded in kind, and their battle forces intertwined as they challenged each other. After just a split second, their terrifying strength caused a dull explosion to ring out, and with the two at the center, the earth suddenly sank down as sparks flickered dangerously in their surroundings. The air was calm around the two of them, but a turbulent stream of air spun upwards before blasting down at the area a hundred meters away from them, heavily pressuring the surrounding plains.

Lulu's strength had greatly increased, reaching a freakish level, but Lu Yin's physique was even more terrifying. He still had not reached the limits of his physical body yet, but he had witnessed a glimpse of its power during the Blackwater Lake phenomenon. He had withstood the whirlpool for two seconds while that same whirlpool had torn the students who were almost as strong as an Area Master, like Gus, to shreds. This proved that his physical abilities had already surpassed an Area Master, and Area Masters were among the top ten students of their respective academy. This clearly demonstrated the terrifying strength of his physical body.

And Lu Yin's body was still improving. Lulu possessed the Mavis clan's innate gift and was constantly growing in strength, but Lu Yin was the same. Ever since he had broken that seal after breaking through to become a Melder, his physical innate gift had shocked even the Sandmaster.

Lulu's eyes widened when she didn't instantly flatten Lu Yin, and she looked at Lu Yin as if he was a freak. She had used all her strength, but her opponent was still standing.

Their battle forces were nearly the same, with Lulu's being slightly stronger. She had, after all, trained with the Sandmaster for nearly four months. But even with her advantage in terms of battle force, she still couldn't beat Lu Yin and was being slowly pulled over by him.

Suddenly, the two were blasted back without any warning. In the distance, the clearly unhappy Trialmaster said, "I've told you this multiple times. Don't wreck the grass, and don't fight here."

The two students shook hands as they exchanged a stare, both thinking that the other was a monster.

“I’ve lost. So what do you want from me?”

“Help me snatch up the Dao of Purgatory’s Fathomless Pool.”

Lulu was shocked but then quickly grew excited. “You want to snatch a training ground? Great! I’ve wanted to do so as well for a long time. The Fathomless Pool, huh? I’ve heard that it’s an excellent place to cultivate battle force.”

Michelle, Silver, Lulu, and Lu Yin. There were now four of them, and they were only missing Xia Luo.

Lu Yin would never underestimate an Area Master. He was confident that he would not be defeated even if he went by himself, but he knew that it was basically impossible for him to win alone. Only by combining forces could Astral-10 students snatch a training ground away.

Chapter 183: The Academy’s Tabloid

While Lu Yin was busy recruiting students to help him snatch a training ground, above the Sand Ocean, Big Pao and Little Pao both faced the Sandmaster with solemn looks on their faces.

“Have you both made your decision? This is no joke. With your abilities, it will be almost impossible to win,” the Sandmaster said in a concerned tone as he looked at the both of them.

Little Pao was determined. “Mentor, we have decided. My brother and I are orphans who were taken in by Astral-10. Astral-10 is our home, and we won’t allow some new disciples who have been here for less than a year take up this responsibility.”

Big Pao then said, “Old Cai gave Lu Yin a mission. As long as he completes it, we will proceed, even if we can’t win. We need to find out their true abilities, no matter what.”

The Sandmaster nodded his head in understanding. “There are too many young powerful people in the universe. It turns out that some of them have concealed their abilities, so having the two of you probe their abilities is a good thing. This recent batch of new students are all quite promising, and it might be possible for Astral-10 to move back to the Inniverse in the future.” After he said that, however, the Sandmaster’s gaze turned stern. “However, the two of you must remember this; you will both be thoroughly exposed after this, and it will lead to both of you being studied in great detail by the other academies in anticipation of the Astral Combat Tournament. Do you understand this?”

Big Pao and Little Pao looked at one another, smiled, and then answered, “We’ve already thought it over. We’re ready.”

In the Inniverse, there was a barricaded region beside an Astral River tributary. This was where Astral-6 was located.

Inside Astral-6, Frankfurt looked at Liu Ji with admiring eyes as he said, “This is the first time I’ve seen the Lockbreaking process from up close. You’re truly a genius Lockbreaker.”

Liu Ji frowned. “It’s a pity that this Sourcebox’s contents were destroyed by time long ago and that there was no harvest.”

"It doesn't matter," Frankfurt replied with a laugh, "You've already fulfilled your duty by showing me your lockbreaking abilities."

Liu Ji looked at Frankfurt. "Senior, what do you think about Astral-10?"

Frankfurt was surprised at his question. "Astral-10? The banished academy? Why do you ask?"

"I just wanted to understand them a bit more." She could still remember the shock she had received during her visit to Astral-10. Xia Luo, Darkvoid, Silver, and Lu Yin were all extraordinarily talented.

Frankfurt considered her question for a bit before letting out a wry chuckle. "I don't know much about them, but I do know that the students there have some backers. The Daynight clan, the Mavis family, Windrift Hall, and various other organizations. Oh, and also, there are some who rely on the Lockbreaker Society for protection as well."

"Who?" Liu Ji asked, eager to find out. The first people she thought of were Xia Luo and Lu Yin. Both of these two were Lockbreakers.

"I think that his name is Lu Yin," Frankfurt said as a cold glint flashed across his eyes. He was not unfamiliar with the name. To appease Jared, Frankfurt had been tasked with killing Lu Yin. And after the students of the Blaze Realm spread the news of him defeating Lu Yin, the two of them had become irreconcilable enemies. Not that it mattered—Lu Yin was just some random student from the Outerverse.

Liu Ji was not surprised by this news at all. Lu Yin had become a member of the Lockbreaker Society, so having them as a backer was completely within her expectations. However, she was actually not aware that Lu Yin had not revealed his status as a Lockbreaker to the others. Frankfurt was also unaware that the Outerverse student that he had become enemies with was also a Lockbreaker with contributions.

Two more days passed before Xia Luo woke at the trial zone mountain, leaving Lu Yin with only two days of the agreed upon five day period that he had with Michelle.

Upon seeing Lu Yin, Xia Luo was astonished. "You're back."

Lu Yin replied, "Brother Xia, I need your help to snatch a training ground."

Xia Luo paused to think. "Who else is involved?"

"Michelle, Silver, and Lulu are also joining me," Lu Yin answered.

Xia Luo nodded his head. "Alright then, when do we leave?"

"Right now. We will meet up around twenty kilometers north of the Dao of Purgatory's Fathomless Pool," Lu Yin said

Xia Luo was just about to say something, but he was immediately interrupted by Lu Yin. "I don't know what's there either."

Xia Luo smiled gently and then reentered the trial zone.

Wherever there were people, there was always news, and where there was news, there would always be journalists. Wu Da was one such journalist. It had been his ambition since childhood to be the best

journalist in the universe. To fulfill his dream, he had trained very hard and had finally managed to enter the Astral Combat Academy with his innate gift. Everything seemed to be going according to plan for him.

However, after he entered the Astral Combat Academy, Wu Da had discovered that he was too naive. He wanted to report on the news, but what kind of news would there be in the Astral Combat Academy? There was no celebrity gossip or neglected periodicals; there were only constant battles between powerful figures. What was there to report on with these battles? The answer was nothing. Nobody wanted to let others know too much about them or their battle techniques, especially with the Astral Combat Tournament fast approaching. Wu Da thus felt miserable, as if his dreams had all been dashed away. He even reported on two battles in great detail once. After that... he had been pursued by assassins for a month.

However, Wu Da did not give up and he had even established the Astral Academy Journal in order to fulfill his dreams. Even though he was currently the only staff member, he refused to give up.

Since he could not report current events, Wu Da decided to focus his attention on the trial zone, which also had many battles going on. Besides, so what if people tried to kill him there? He had no fear of such a death and his only regret would be if he was unable to record the battle. Unfortunately, no devices could be taken into the trial zones, but Wu Da wasn't concerned about such limitations. He had great confidence in his ability to accurately describe a battle with only a few words while allowing his readers an in depth look into a battle.

On this day, Wu Da decided to go to the Dao of Purgatory, but his mind was still ruminating over the article that he had recently published. The news regarding Blackwater Lake was one that had garnered a lot of attention. More specifically, the news that Yue Xianzi had gained an inheritance had caused countless people to become alarmed, which meant that the sales of the Astral Academy Journal had gone through the roof.

Even though the people of Frostmoon Sect were after his life, he wasn't very concerned about that. More importantly, he had finally received some financial backing; a group of network companies had extended an olive branch to him. To Wu Da, their financial support was secondary. What he cared about more was their recognition. He felt that he was mere inches away from realizing his dream of becoming the universe's greatest paparazzi.

He grew increasingly excited as he continued to think about it. Wu Da stood at the same spot and scanned the scenery intently. After mumbling to himself for a moment, he turned to sprint off in a specific direction. His journalistic intuition was saying that there was hot news to be found in that way.

The Fathomless Pool seemed like an unremarkable pool, but the water inside was pitch black. If it were not so far away from Blackwater Lake, then many would have thought that the two were connected.

Twenty kilometers north of the Fathomless Pool, Michelle and two others sat, resting calmly against a huge black tree. In the distance were a group of wandering war spirits. Lu Yin was not aware of this, but the location that he had chosen at random was actually a gathering ground for war spirits.

When Lu Yin appeared, he was surprised to see the roaming war spirits there.

"You picked a good spot," Michelle said coldly.

Lu Yin was slightly embarrassed. "Keep your voices down! We want to keep a low profile. They are war spirits after all."

Michelle grunted, but did not speak.

A few hours later, when Xia Luo arrived, he looked at the group of war spirits in astonishment. "What a good place for spirit hunters."

"It is unlikely that any spirit hunters would dare to do anything here," Lulu said.

Xia Luo shook his head, "You don't understand the longing the spirit hunters have for war spirits. These war spirits must have only started to gather here very recently, otherwise, they would already have become a target for the spirit hunters."

"Why do spirit hunters hunt these war spirits?" Lu Yin asked, puzzled.

"I do not know either. It's said that they hunt war spirits as a tradition that has been practised for ages," Xia Luo responded.

"Alright then, let's head to the Fathomless Pool. We have no time to waste," Michelle said as she started walking toward the Fathomless Pool.

With their speed, they reached their destination very quickly.

The Fathomless Pool was within a secluded valley, and it had been initially discovered purely by coincidence. At this time, there was only one man inside the pool: Uro. He was one of only three Area Masters from Astral-6.

The Dao of Purgatory's training grounds were Spear Mountain, Blackwater Lake, Fathomless Pool, Whitebones Gorge, and the Sky Platform. Four out of the five training grounds were occupied by Astral-6, and only Blackwater Lake had been snatched away by the Frostmoon Sect.

The number of Area Master-level combatants in each training ground was around the same, but that was only because there were not that many training grounds to begin with. This was also the main reason why Lu Yin had decided to snatch the Fathomless Pool. Snatching a training ground would likely escalate to war against the powerful figures from the academy that used to own the training ground, and in severe cases, Realm Masters could even get involved. The only exception to this was the Dao of Purgatory. This was because Lu Yin, like the Realm Master, Dao Bo, was a Lockbreaker.

"Attack," Lu Yin growled lowly before immediately charging viciously at the Fathomless Pool without giving any indication that he was about to attack. This was a trial zone where only the strongest survived, and there were no rules to speak of.

A few meters away from the Fathomless Pool, a half naked man with messy hair suddenly looked into the direction of Lu Yin and his cohort. When he saw Lu Yin rush at him with the intent to attack, his gaze turned icy. "You don't know who you're messing with." As he spoke, he stretched out his right palm, causing translucent streams of air to circulate around his body. Soon, visible currents enveloped his entire body like tattoos. This was his battle force.

Lu Yin raised his palms into the air, activating the Skybeast Claw technique. A bestial roar caused the void to tremble as the Ninety Sixth form of Skybeast Claw swept down upon Uro.

With a loud bang, the Skybeast Claw was easily shattered as Uro swiped at Lu Yin. The Area Master's star energy then soared out from his palm as it transformed into a scorching wave of flames. The high temperature instantly scorched the ground black as it radiated in all directions.

Lu Yin took a step back as a silver shadow slid past him. Silver's butterfly knife flashed and the star energy flames from Uro's palm rushed towards the knife, attempting to deflect it, but they were unable to do so. A look of astonishment shot through Uro's eyes and he forcefully changed the direction of his palm strike, slapping the ground. At the same time, his battle force surged and forced Silver to retreat.

From above Uro's head, Lulu released a loud yell as she pounded down with a heavy fist.

Uro narrowed his eyes and evaded her attack, causing her to strike the ground. But then, starting from Lulu's fist, the entire valley split in half, visibly shocking Uro.

"Don't run!" Lulu cried out. She snapped out with her leg, revealing a slender calf that carried a tremendous strength within it. While her leg looked deceptively fragile, Uro didn't dare to underestimate the girl's physique after just witnessing the strength of her fist. He lifted his leg to counter her kick. Since both legs were charged with battle force, a violent explosion rang out, nearly deafening everyone's ears.

Uro and Lulu both retreated at the same time.

Uro was shocked by how powerful these strange people who had just appeared out of nowhere were. They all had the strength to rival an Area Master. Could it be that another academy is trying to snatch this training ground in the Dao of Purgatory away?

After receiving the diligent instruction of Astral-10's few mentors over the past four months, all of the students had seen their abilities rise meteorically. They were no longer the green, inexperienced novices that they had been before. Even Lu Yin was stunned by his fellow students' improvements as their natural talents that already allowed them to fight those above their levels had been amplified even further.

It could be said that the gains that Astral-10's students had made over the past few months equaled what students from the other branches of the Astral Combat Academy would need several years to attain. After all, the other academies did not have dedicated mentors who would personally instruct the students. Being admitted to Astral-10 had indeed been an exceptional bit of good luck for them.

"Who the hell are you people?!" Uro cried out in confusion. Just as he finished speaking, however, a numb feeling crept across his back and he hurriedly dodged to the side. A red lotus arrow pierced the ground, causing him to squint into the distance to see who had shot it. Was that Senior Red Lotus Witchbow Mira just now? No, if it was Senior Mira, then I would've died by now. That woman must be Mira's younger sister, Michelle. That means that this group of troublemakers is from Astral-10.

Chapter 184: Battling Against an Area Master

Lu Yin appeared in front of Uro with a Flash. "Sorry, but please give up the Fathomless Pool to us." He then slapped out with a palm that had stars revolving around it and battle force flowing over it. Uro's

gaze changed sharply as he blocked the attack with both arms. There was another loud bang, and his body was hurled against the mountain wall, causing him to barrel straight through it before finally slamming heavily into the ground. Uro pushed himself to his feet even as an intense spike of pain shot through his shoulder.

He was infuriated and gritted his teeth in rage. A battle force user! How does Astral-10 have so many talents?

Suddenly, a shadow flitted above him as another palm pressed down upon him. It was Xia Luo's turn.

Uro growled and raised his palm to use a battle technique of the Blaze Realm—the Heavenly Sea of Flames. He used flames composed of star energy to engulf Xia Luo and the area a thousand meters around him in a sea of fire, as if he wanted to burn the entire valley down. Uro had targeted Xia Luo with his attack, but as his palm neared Xia Luo, his star energy was inexplicably dissolved.

If he were from another academy, then Uro would have been stumped as to what had happened. But he was a student of Astral-6, which was home to nearly all of the Astral Combat Academy's Lockbreakers. He was familiar with this scene, as this was how a Lockbreaker dissolved star energy. So these challengers even had a Lockbreaker among their ranks.

Uro was once again forced underground.

The five continuously attacked this peak Limiteer with a never ending barrage of attacks. Even if they were surpassing realms to challenge him, any Area Master would find it difficult to deal with this onslaught of attacks. In some sense, it was very impressive that Uro had not already perished.

Lu Yin and his group stood silently as they all looked at the hole in the ground. Uro had a strange biological innate gift, and they had just felt him activate this power.

Uro's Huan Qi manifested into a mutant beast with red fur that looked similar to a fox. Its body was covered with licks of flames, and it also had a third eye on its forehead. Extremely high temperatures radiated from its body, and it was clearly very powerful.

There was a piercing cry as the earth split asunder and flames leapt up from within the cracks. Uro's hair was even more dishevelled than before as he rushed up to the surface with a sinister look on his face. His huan qi formed a phantom behind him.

"You Astral-10 trash! I'll slaughter all of you!" he cried as his one line of battle force became even more distinct around him. He then ferociously charged at Lu Yin since he could tell that Lu Yin was the person who wanted to snatch the training ground.

Lu Yin's vision shook, but he still countered with his Cosmic Palm that had nine revolving stars and his battle force winding around it. He clashed head-on against Uro. When their battle forces collided, a shock wave rippled across the earth and traveled far into the horizon, shredding the black ground wherever it went.

Wu Da stared at the scene before him in shock, even though he was more than ten kilometers away from the center of the battle. A crack had appeared below him, and he was excited at the prospect of reporting on a huge battle, so he immediately charged over.

Bang!

The earth collapsed, and Lu Yin was forced underground along with Uro. Lu Yin's battle force was inferior to Uro's by one level, but his Cosmic Palm made up for that difference and more. In the end, Lu Yin's attack was actually stronger than Uro's.

Uro's organs shuddered as he forcefully endured the force of Lu Yin's attack. His eyes grew serious as, behind him, the third eye of the huan qi phantom closely followed Lu Yin's figure. Lu Yin felt threatened by the huan qi and tried to escape with Flash, but Uro grabbed onto him, refusing to let go.

Just as the huan qi phantom shot out a red beam of light at Lu Yin, Silver's butterfly knife flickered again, sending a brilliant white attack at Uro. He didn't target Uro directly and instead aimed towards the red beam, slicing at it and causing its trajectory to deviate by several inches. It swept past Lu Yin's forehead and into the ground, causing the black earth to directly melt away.

Uro was furious that his attack had been interrupted and sent a palm strike towards Silver.

Another red lotus arrow was fired at Uro from behind. Its scope of attack was aimed not only at the Area Master, but also Silver. Silver did not retreat, but rather endured Uro's palm while he held onto him tightly. He smiled faintly as he whispered, "Let's die together."

Uro's pupils shrank. What a lunatic.

The huan qi phantom behind him turned its head so that its third eye's red beam of light shone upon the red lotus arrow, melting it. Uro then kicked Silver away, but at the same time, Lu Yin's palm smashed into Uro's abdomen. Lu Yin's battle force was blocked by Uro's battle force, but the explosion of the nine stars revolving around the palm heavily injured Uro.

Uro's body was sent flying once again. This time, he spat out a mouth of blood in midair before crashing onto the ground.

Xia Luo and Lulu simultaneously appeared at Uro's side and attacked with all their might. Uro's mouth was filled with blood again, and he growled angrily. The phantom image made from huan qi exploded behind him, causing an extremely high temperature bubble to distort the space around him and show signs of cracking, forcing Xia Luo and Lulu to retreat. Uro quickly absorbed this extreme heat as his body burst into flames. He raised his hands into the air and condensed a fireball that melted the ground away.

Wu Da had just arrived and was shocked by the scene. He easily recognized Uro, the Fathomless Pool's Area Master and someone who ranked within Astral-6's top five students, and yet, he was being beaten this badly.

"You all are not qualified to kill me," Uro howled as he flung the fireball in his hands towards Xia Luo and Lulu.

The fireball condensed by Uro's innate gift had reached an extremely high temperature, and it even scorched the void as it flew forth, causing cracks to appear in its wake as all the water in the air evaporated away. This was Uro's full powered strike, and there were even some traces of battle force twisting around the fireball, compressing its power even further. Only someone who was truly at the level of an Area Master could withstand this attack.

Wu Da was shocked to witness an Area Master's full force attack.

Xia Luo expression turned grave as he jumped up to face the fireball with a palm. His arm seemed to move randomly, but his actions immediately slowed down the fireball a great deal. At the same time, he disintegrated the battle force revolving around the fireball while he himself was forced backwards several hundred meters by the fireball. But by ceding this distance, the fireball shrank substantially.

Uro was stunned as even a normal Lockbreaker could not disintegrate his attack that easily. This person was definitely not normal. Is he really from Astral-10?

A green figure flashed past Xia Luo as Lulu appeared in front of Uro. She then raised her leg up and slammed it down fiercely in an axe kick.

Uro had depleted most of his strength and battle force in his previous attack. His reaction speed was also delayed, and he couldn't dodge Lulu's kick, which left him with no choice but to raise both of his arms in an effort to defend.

With a bang, the fissure in the ground widened again. Uro was sent even deeper underground as the surrounding valley shattered.

Wu Da was nearly buried alive by the attack, but he still stared excitedly at the scene. A battle at the Area Master's level was rarely seen, and yet, he had managed to observe the contest over Blackwater Lake's Area Master title, not to mention this battle now.

The moment that Uro was pushed into the ground again, Silver reappeared near him, and his butterfly knife flashed radiantly as he crossed by Uro's body, causing a trace of blood to appear around his neck. This blade had not been excessively fast, and Uro had seen it, but he was still unable to defend against it for whatever reason. Silver had completely seen through Uro's weaknesses. At the same time as when Silver attacked, a beastly howl traveled through the void as a Skybeast Claw pressed down upon him while a red lotus arrow shot from the distance blasted the ground, causing the entire area to tremble.

By this point, Xia Luo had completely dissolved Uro's full strength fireball after retreating 300 meters.

The battleground fell silent as they all looked underground and inhaled in unison. Uro could not have survived that last combination attack, even if he was an Area Master.

Even though they were all only Melders, every one of them could challenge cultivators above their rank, and it was not a normal sort of bypassing ranks. They were all crazy geniuses, and while they may not individually be an Area Master's match, their combined force could not be underestimated.

The Sandmaster had once said that Astral-10 had recruited a batch of true geniuses who would fare excellently even in other academies.

At this point, in a sunken area somewhere on Astral-6's trial zone mountain, Uro opened his eyes, his eyes bloodshot with rage. In a frenzy, he howled, "Astral-10, Astral-10..."

Uro's cries shocked many on the trial zone mountain as they looked up.

There were unwritten rules for the trial zone mountain; the stronger one was, the higher they could go. Only the strong could climb above the rest.

Uro was one of the strongest students in Astral-6, and he was actually second only to the Realm Master. He ranked among the top five in Astral-6, and thus, his position on the mountain was naturally among the highest.

Not far below Uro, Gus rolled his eyes; such an insane reaction had startled him. He once again calculated how much time had passed and happily noted that he would be able to reenter in a little while. He had been unlucky and had actually died during the chaotic battle at Blackwater Lake.

In the valley surrounding the Fathomless Pool, all of Astral-10 students confirmed Uro's death. Lu Yin could finally relax. Fortunately, he had been smart enough to gather all these people together as, in the end, he had not needed to do too much in this assault. If he had recruited students like Schutz and Coco, then he would have had to be the primary attacking force himself.

"Brother Lu, what's next now we've snatched the Fathomless Pool? Uro won't accept this lying down," Xia Luo said with a normal expression. He gave off the impression that he hadn't used much of his strength during the battle against Uro.

The rest also turned to look at Lu Yin.

In general, snatching a training ground had to be done as an individual, and it was rare for students to band together to do such a thing. Even if an Area Master was defeated, they could return any time for revenge. Even if a group snatched a training ground, they would not be able to stay together forever, rendering their accomplishment meaningless.

Lu Yin shrugged aimlessly. "Old Cai's mission was just for me to snatch it. He never said that we had to defend it. If Uro returns, then we can just give it back."

Silver grinned. "Then all of our efforts would go down the drain."

Lulu snorted before declaring, "There's no logic in giving away what belongs to me."

Michelle didn't speak, but her attitude was obvious; she also had no intention of returning the training ground.

These few were proud elites. Since they had snatched this place, it would be embarrassing if they meekly returned it afterwards.

"Since it's like this, then the only way is to leave some people here to guard the Fathomless Pool. Who's willing?" Lu Yin asked.

Xia Luo smiled. "I can, since I wanted to comprehend battle force anyways. It's very useful."

Lulu held her head high. "I'll stay. The Fathomless Pool is suitable for me as well."

Silver smiled. "I can stay too."

Michelle looked at Lu Yin and merely said, "Honor your deal."

"I'll go report to Old Cai and whoever wishes to stay, can. This is now our territory," Lu Yin simply said as he waved his hands before exiting the Dao of Purgatory.

Michelle immediately left as well.

Xia Luo and the rest looked at each other before walking towards the Fathomless Pool that now belonged to Astral-10.

In the distance, Wu Da was excited beyond belief. He constantly muttered words under his breath, as if he was reciting and repeating the quotes that he was about to publish. He made sure to memorize everything down to the letter, as the results of this battle for the Fathomless Pool would definitely cause a stir. These people even hailed from Astral-10, and now it was time to check out their backgrounds.

In the treasury of Astral-10, Old Cai raised his brows. "You snatched the Fathomless Pool?"

Lu Yin nodded. "Yes."

Old Cai grunted. "Good, it looks like you've completed the mission." He then stared at Lu Yin and asked, "Brat, do you know why we gave you this mission?"

Lu Yin shook his head.

"The Astral Combat Tournament is not just about fighting. Besides determining the strongest students of the ten academies, it also serves to determine the rankings of the ten academies themselves." Old Cai saw that Lu Yin did not understand and continued explaining. "The Astral Combat Academy is, at its foundation, still an academy. It's not just a fighting organization. The most important thing for an academy is education, and that encompasses not just an individual, but rather the entire group. An academy's education can only be considered successful if it produces a sufficient number of successes."

Old Cai nodded. "Of course. Even if you are publicly recognized as the strongest in the ten academies, you won't even be able to reach the final battle without the other students' help."

Lu Yin mulled over this new revelation.

Chapter 185: The Geniuses Of Astral-10

"The Astral Combat Tournament is divided into four rounds. First, every academy will designate one of their students as a seed individual, who will directly enter the fourth round. This is also when the lots are drawn.

"The first round is called Three Academies Guarding the Gate. Three academies are chosen at random and each one will send one participant to guard a region. Competitors from the other academies will then go on the offensive and try to break into the guarded region, though they are barred from using any battle techniques or innate gifts. As long as the attacking students can break into the guarded area, they move to the next round. If more than half of the participating competitors break through, the three guarding academies will be judged as to have failed and will drop out of the tournament."

Lu Yin's eyes narrowed.

Old Cai paused before continuing, saying, "The second round is called Knocking on the Dragon's Door—it is also known as Sounding the Battle Drums. The battle drums represent the origins of the Astral Combat Tournament, and every academy will station someone at the drums. After all of an academy's participants arrive from the first round, the stationed student must successfully beat their drum. Those who cannot make any sounds will be judged to have failed, and their academy will be kicked out.

“The third round is known as Tribute to the Ancestors. Like the previous one, every academy must station one student for the third round. Once the first two rounds have concluded, the students stationed at the third round must light incense sticks and pay tribute to the ancestors of the ten academies. Those who cannot light their sticks will be judged to have failed, and their academy will be knocked out.

“As for the fourth round, it consists of drawing lots and deciding the strongest of the academies.”

“The battle drum and incense stick rounds must not be as simple as they sound, right?”

Old Cai laughed strangely. “Of course not. The battle drums are made from the leather of giant astral beasts. To beat one and make a sound is no simple task. One needs to have at least comprehended battle force. Otherwise, the drum will not make a single sound.”

Lu Yin’s brows rose. “What about the incense?”

“The same idea goes. Those who have not reached a certain level of strength will not be able to even touch one.”

Lu Yin’s expression turned solemn. “Between the seeded individual, the one to break through the three academies, the one to knock on the dragon door, and the one to pay tribute to the forebearers, every academy will be, at the least, short their three strongest individuals while three academies will be short four.”

“That’s one way of understanding it, which is why we gave you the mission of snatching a training ground. Otherwise, you wouldn’t even know who’s capable of what. If that were the case, how would you even compete in the Astral Combat Tournament?” Old Cai admonished as he rolled his eyes.

Lu Yin silently calculated their chances and concluded that Astral-10’s current formation was enough. “Old Cai, what should I do now?”

“Conceal your strength and bide your time. Don’t let others see through you before the Astral Combat Tournament begins, and always activate your battle force without letting others perceive it.”

Lu Yin nodded in understanding. He could revolve his battle force around his body and then constrict it so that it would not show through his clothes, preventing others from sensing it. But maintaining it in this form was very tiring.

Michelle was waiting not too far from the treasury when he exited.

“Do you want me to help you comprehend battle force now?”

She muttered, “Give me a month. I’ll see you at the Sand Ocean then.”

“Alright.” Lu Yin readily agreed as one month was enough time for him to earn some star crystals, and he had not rolled his die for a while now. Without enough money, it would just be a waste if he rolled Possession, so he needed to gather at least 100,000 crystals. Possession could allow him to fundamentally transform himself, so he should do his best to not waste it.

The next day, some shocking news rocked the Astral Combat Academy. The Fathomless Pool in the Dao of Purgatory had been snatched away by Astral-10’s students.

This news was published by the Astral Academy Journal with the headline, "Astral-10's Resurgence to Glory: Snatching the Fathomless Pool!"

This article vividly described the battle between Uro and Astral-10 students. The editor, Wu Da, had penned down a lively battle scene with his seasoned experience and his flowing words made the readers feel as if they had witnessed the battle themselves. More importantly, the introductions of Astral-10 students shocked many others from the other branches of the Astral Combat Academy.

Xia Luo is a new student of Astral-10's. As a newly minted Lockbreaker, this rising star easily dissolved a full force blow from Area Master Uro and played a pivotal role in Uro's defeat. This author believes that, without Xia Luo, victory would not have been secured that easily. He dealt the decisive blow to Uro and received Uro's most formidable attack as well. His power can rival an Area Master, and more importantly, he is still just a Melder, a superb genius buried in Astral-10.

Silver, is another new student of Astral-10's. He is a smiling killer with a deceptive butterfly knife that injured Uro multiple times and cut off all paths of escape. His final slash beheaded Uro and his smile provokes the fear of death in his enemies. His blade can rip through the void and it's impossible to know when or how he will attack. This author believes that he has obtained the strength of a domain. He was the student who limited Uro's attacks and prevented him from freely attacking. He is also a Melder, another superb genius left disregarded in Astral-10.

Lulu Mavis is a female genius of the Mavis family who inherited the terrifying innate gift of the Mavis family. Every strike of hers can shatter heaven and earth, and her beautiful and delicate appearance belies the strength of a deity. Her strikes could not be blocked by Uro, and she even beat Uro into the ground multiple times. And that's not even mentioning the fact that she drilled a hole through a mountain in a single blow! Her participation made Uro helpless, and even more terrifying, her mastery of battle force makes her incomparably powerful. She is also just a Melder, another superb genius of Astral-10.

Michelle, AKA the Red Lotus Witch. She needs no introduction as she is the younger sister of the Red Lotus Witchbow, Senior Mira. She has a charming appearance but an icy cold heart. An exception was made for this female genius, allowing her to join the Ten Arbiters Council as a Melder. Additionally, her red lotus arrows can penetrate the void. That, combined with her ability to precisely calculate every one of Uro's steps, allowed her to deliver Uro a final, decisive blow. She's the goddess in this author's heart with her perfect looks, and it's worth mentioning that she's also a Melder. Astral-10 has concealed too many geniuses. What a pity.

Lu Yin, the supposed student leader of Astral-10 who is well known for defeating Hart Phoenix, a strong individual on the Blaze Realm Rankings. He also is known to have taken liberties with Xi Yue. His power's not bad, but he did not exhibit any decisive or remarkable strength in the battle against Uro. This author believes that Astral-10 is just using him as a smokescreen to conceal the other existences. If his performance in the battle with Uro is used as a benchmark, then this person may not even be within the top five combatants of Astral-10. Of course, his power is not too bad, and he can definitely compete against the average students from the other academies. However, his battle results were too different from his reputation, so this author believes that the results from before need to be reevaluated.

These were Wu Da's introductions of Astral-10 students in the academy's tabloid in an article describing the battle at the Fathomless Pool. These words completely elevated Astral-10's reputation and exposed Xia Luo, Silver, Lulu, and Michelle's abilities to the entire Astral Combat Academy. Of course, Wu Da had long since learned that he should not describe anyone's unique battle characteristics in detail, but his vivid description of the battle was very interesting in and of itself, and many students viewed the article like a comic.

It was a pity that Wu Da had only appeared when the battle was about to end and thus had to fabricate the first half of the battle. This also meant that he had not seen Lu Yin's exchange with Uro. There was some exaggeration in Xia Luo and the rest's introduction, but this was not important as his tabloid had finally become popular.

Be it celebrity gossip or battle news, there would always be high and low-rankings. For example, Xia Luo and most of the other Astral-10 students had been elevated by Wu Da, but Lu Yin was the sole person to be denounced. The point of the story was to be as eye-grabbing as possible. And Wu Da really did not think that Lu Yin was strong to merit a detailed investigation. His Skybeast Claw technique had not been shocking, and Wu Da did not believe that his observations were wrong; Lu Yin had obviously been used by Astral-10 to mislead the other academies. How could anyone from Astral-10 possibly suppress the terrifying Xia Luo and the other strong individuals that Wu Da had observed?

In Astral-2, Liu Tang looked at the report with some interest. "Not bad! Astral-10 defeated Uro, even though they had to join forces to do so. They're all Melders and can be considered to have some power. But I thought that this Lu Yin was also a genius Lockbreaker! Didn't she say that? Why didn't they mention his identity as a Lockbreaker?"

In Astral-6, Charon laughed delightedly. He couldn't personally do anything to Lu Yin, so he felt ecstatic when he saw how the article belittled Lu Yin. "Very good! This tabloid has great potential."

Liu Ji, meanwhile, frowned when she finished reading through the article. She only recognized Xia Luo and Silver from the report, and their appraisals seemed to be rather on point. But the introduction for Lu Yin seemed way off the mark, though she had never expected this brat to actually be Astral-10's leader. Why did they not report that he's a Lockbreaker? And he's a one star Junior Lockbreaker at that. This writer must be rather irresponsible.

Liu Ji hadn't been able to properly assess Lu Yin's strength. To her, it was entirely possible that Astral-10 might really be using him to mislead the other academies. Her impression of Astral-10's true terrors were the smiling Silver and that black-haired male.

In Astral-8, Craynor firmly closed the newspaper. This idiot Wu Da better not show himself in front of me if he knows what's good for himself. He dared to state that Lu Yin's battle history should not be believed, but Craynor himself had been crushed by Lu Yin. That person's power was definitely not as simple as this article made it out to be.

In Astral-10, Big Pao, Little Pao, and the others had also seen the article and were delighted to see that Astral-10's fame was taking a step back towards what it used to be.

Michelle knotted her brows since she did not think that someone would have been spying on them. Moreover, Lu Yin's power had been severely underreported. If he hadn't depleted Uro's battle force at

the very beginning, the battle would not have gone that smoothly. Uro's first severe injury had been caused by Lu Yin, but Lu Yin had not been injured despite the chaotic battle. His power could not even be measured, to the point where he could have conceivably defeated Uro by himself. And yet, he had been libeled harshly. Did that paparazzi not see the first half of the battle at all?

At the same moment, Uro was in a horrid mood. The article's description had basically made him out to be the villain. He vowed that he would kill this scoundrel, Wu Da.

He glanced through the newspaper again before he finally focused in on Lu Yin's introduction. Others might not be aware of Lu Yin's true strength, but Uro knew full well how much trouble this person had brought him. His battle force powered blows had not harmed this person even when he used all of his battle force, and Lu Yin possessed battle force himself and a very sturdy physical body on top of that. The palm that had severely injured Uro was etched deeply in his memory. He could not stand it; this Wu Da was truly blind.

Uro closed the newspaper and focused on plotting out his revenge. He wanted to snatch the Fathomless Pool back, so he ignored his splitting headache and reentered the trial zone.

While many of the Astral Combat Academy's students were discussing this article, Lu Yin left Astral-10 and appeared in outer space. When he saw the article, he couldn't stop himself from bursting into laughter. He had wanted to pass the time smoothly, and Wu Da's article would tremendously help him with this. Even if Astral-10 announced that Lu Yin had won the position of student leader with his own power, no one would believe it!

However, the evaluation of Xia Luo and the rest was also rather accurate. Wu Da had thought that he had exaggerated their introductions, but conversely, Lu Yin felt that their introductions were still underestimating them. He had a feeling that Xia Luo and Silver were both still hiding various trump cards. At the very least, Lu Yin had never seen them use their specialized battle techniques.

Chapter 186: Challenging A Realm Master

In the Dao of Purgatory, near the Fathomless Pool, Uro appeared, planning on secretly attacking whoever was there.

Due to the recently published news article, many students were now paying attention to this area. If he was discovered, then he would immediately attract unwanted attention. Obviously, he did not want a large crowd following behind him when he went to snatch the Fathomless Pool back.

Currently, Xia Luo and Silver were standing near the Fathomless Pool while Lulu was already submerged within its depths.

A chill flashed through Uro's eyes when he saw the duo. They were not easy to deal with, and even though his battle against the five Astral-10 students had been exaggerated by Wu Da, it wasn't by much. These two were truly strong, and after Uro contemplated the situation some more, he left the Dao of Purgatory to look for Frankfurt.

"You need my help?" Frankfurt was shocked.

Uro's face sank. "If those Astral-10 students join forces, I can't do it myself."

Frankfurt laughed before saying, “I guess it won’t be easy then. Was the report true? Did those Melders really beat you to a pulp?”

Uro’s expression turned gloomy as he replied, “I’ll be frank, they aren’t my match individually, but together, they’d kill you too.”

Frankfurt was arrogant and of the few Area Masters from Astral-6. In his mind, he believed that Uro was at the bottom, ranking wise, followed by Charon. Frankfurt personally saw himself as second only to Astral-6’s Realm Master, Dao Bo.

“There’ll naturally be a reward if you help me, so just make your decision,” Uro impatiently urged.

Frankfurt sighed. “I’m sorry, but I don’t want to create internal strife within Astral-6.”

Uro was infuriated. “What do you mean?!”

Frankfurt looked at Uro as he said, “You must have heard that, among the five that attacked you, one is named Lu Yin. Charon is backing him, so if I attack, Charon won’t simply watch from the sidelines.”

Uro was shocked as he really did not know about this since he had been cultivating non stop in the Fathomless Pool previously. “Why is Charon helping him?”

“I don’t know. You could invite Jared—don’t you have a good relationship with the Blaze Realm? Your battle technique even comes from there.”

Uro left without answering since Frankfurt evidently did not wish to lend a helping hand; there was no need for him to continue pleading. Did he really need to resort to asking the Blaze Realm? His relationship with the Blaze Realm was indeed good, but it was a relationship of equals. If he asked Jared to help for this matter, then it would be troublesome down the road.

He thought about it some more before finally deciding to go to Jared for help. The Fathomless Pool was very important to him, and with the Astral Combat Tournament fast approaching, his foremost priority was to achieve a good ranking there and become known throughout the universe.

Not long after, near the Sky Platform in the Dao of Purgatory, Jared appeared where he had previously left the Dao of Purgatory. A complicated gaze entered Jared’s eyes as he stared at the distant Sky Platform. He had initially wanted to fight for the Sky Platform, but he had ultimately been rendered helpless in front of that freak, Dao Bo.

Whoever occupied Sky Platform would be the Dao of Purgatory’s Realm Master. Jared was not satisfied with merely being an Area Master; his true goal was to become a Realm Master. However, regardless of whether it was the Dao of Purgatory’s Dao Bo or the Dao of Illusion’s Feng Shang, their power was beyond his comprehension. Currently, he could only stare at the distant Sky Platform.

“Sooner or later, I will become the Realm Master,” Jared determinedly muttered before gazing into the distance one last time. He lifted his feet and headed towards the Fathomless Pool. He had agreed to Uro’s request and had come to help him teach those Astral-10 people a lesson.

He had initially wanted to smother the students of Astral-10 because of Lu Yin, but each one’s background was even more intimidating than the next, forcing him to personally take action—the Blaze Realm was not timid.

Suddenly, Jared stopped in his tracks when he noticed a person in front of him. A man was leaning on a black tree trunk, looking at him with a smile. Jared's eyes blazed as he instinctively clenched his fists, but he then unclenched them and lowered his hands. "Realm Master Dao Bo."

The person before him was Astral-6's strongest student as well as a member of the Astral Academy Council—the Dao of Purgatory's Realm Master, Dao Bo. He was a widely accepted genius of the Lockbreaker Society, one who greatly surpassed Charon, and a freak who had defeated Mira once, before she broke through and became an Explorer.

Dao Bo had silvery-grey hair and an ordinary appearance. A cursory glance at him would not attract anyone's attention, but this was the same person who had beaten all of Astral-6's students into submission until no one even dared to think about rebelling. One look at him now left Jared involuntarily trembling with fear; this person was a real freak. Dao Bo could obviously break through and become an Explorer and graduate from the Astral Combat Academy, but he chose not to. Many of the Realm Masters in the Astral Combat Academy were the same. Only few people could cause Jared to feel despair, and normally, he would not have stepped into the Dao of Purgatory unless it was absolutely essential.

"Long time no see, Jared." Dao Bo continued to lean on the tree trunk with a smile as he stared at Jared. Despite his seemingly harmless appearance, Jared only saw a monster who could kill him on a whim.

"Realm Master Dao Bo, long time no see," Jared hoarsely replied.

Dao Bo's smile didn't change in the slightest. "Why are you in the Dao of Purgatory?"

"I'm helping out a friend."

"Uro?"

"Yes." Jared did not dare to lie.

"Go back. There's nowhere left for you here," Dao Bo said in an overbearing manner.

"Under the Astral Combat Academy's rules, everyone is qualified to step into any trial zone they wish without being suppressed by the Realm Master's jurisdiction. Realm Master Dao Bo, I have the right to step into the Dao of Purgatory."

"Of course, rules are rules. You can enter... but I can also kill you."

Upon hearing those words, Jared's pupils shrank, and he clenched his fists while staring directly at Dao Bo's face. However, Dao Bo couldn't care any less as killing any Area Master was a trivial matter to him.

After a while, Jared lost his courage. "I got it. As long as Realm Master Dao Bo is in the Dao of Purgatory, I will not return." He then exited the Dao of Purgatory.

Dao Bo continued smiling, though his gaze had long since turned cold. "Trash. How foolish to even think that you can bully the people of my society."

When Jared exited the Dao of Purgatory, a shocking event jolted the rest of the Astral Combat Academy. The impact of this event far surpassed that of Lu Yin and the rest snatching the Fathomless Pool.

Astral-10's Big Pao and Little Pao had combined forces to challenge the Dao of Heaven's Realm Master.

Realm Masters were individuals who could look down upon everyone else in the Astral Combat Academy. Even a genius of the Blaze Realm like Jared could only avoid Realm Masters; they had no hope of competing against them at all. Every Realm Master was created from a bloody process that included the massacre of multiple geniuses of their generation, allowing them to truly disdain any and everything under them. Many looked up to them, and any Realm Master could break through to become an Explorer and be directly accepted into the Ten Arbiters Council. They would have a certain level of authority even after they left the Astral Combat Academy. This was a Realm Master; an existence who could converse even with the Ten Arbiters.

The Dao of Heaven had the Ocean of Death. Anything that landed in the ocean would sink, and no one could walk across it. Even birds would find it hard to fly over it, and only extremely powerful beings could through it.

On the opposite shores of the Ocean of Death, it was rumored that there was an island buried under the bones of countless powerful individuals, as well as an ancient inheritance. But rumors were merely that, and no one had ever proved or disproved it as no one had ever crossed the ocean and stepped foot onto the island. Even the Ten Arbiters avoided speaking about it after they crossed the Ocean of Death.

The Ocean of Death was the largest training ground in the Dao of Heaven, and it was also where it's Realm Master resided.

At this moment, dozens of people were gathered at the Ocean of Death's shore. They were all students who cultivated in the Dao of Heaven, and they were all staring at the seaside in shock, feeling like they were dreaming. In front of their very eyes, the Dao of Heaven's Realm Master was being suppressed.

Boom!

The coast shook again as Big Pao leaped into the air with a stern gaze, his demeanor completely different from his usual self. He carried an ancient pike on his shoulder as he dashed along the coast. His pike shot out countless bullets that emitted steam and tore the void apart as they sped towards the coast. The rain of bullets caused the earth to shatter and the coast to lower as the water from the Ocean of Death flooded over.

Little Pao similarly jumped up and raised his palm. The veins in his palm seemed to transform into black flames that spread out from the center of his palm. It formed an enormous black blaze that suppressed everything as it slammed into the coast, leaving a giant black palm imprint behind in the shoreline. This was Little Pao's battle technique—the Black Blazes Palm.

The coast fell silent even as more and more students appeared and were stunned by the scene. The Dao of Heaven's Realm Master was actually being suppressed, and by the widely accepted trash of Astral-10 no less. It was rumored that these two had had such poor aptitudes that no other academies would accept them. But how could such talentless people possibly suppress a Realm Master?

In the sky, Big Pao and Little Pao exchanged doubtful glances; would the Dao of Heaven's Realm Master really be suppressed by just this? Could it really be that easy? The Realm Masters were all freaks, and

the Dao of Heaven's Realm Master was no exception. He hailed from one of the eight large Flowzones of the Inniverse—the Beast Tamers Flowzone. His tamed beast was an Azure Dragon, and it had not even appeared yet.

A strong gale blew through the battlefield and churned up waves in the Ocean of Death as it swirled around the coast.

Everyone stared as a figure slowly rose up from within the waves. He bent his back and coughed several times, scattering the waves as he stood up. He revealed his coarse and powerful face before he laughed at the heavens. He was the Dao of Heaven's Realm Master—Kuang Wang.

“Arrogant Kuang Wang.” This was a nickname that he would never deviate from, and one that he never even considered changing. He was the Dao of Heaven's Realm Master.

“I never understood why anyone would ever want to hide their powers. The two of you are obviously strong, so why did you hide it all the way until now?” Kuang Wang raised his head and stared at Big Pao and Little Pao with an excited gaze.

Big Pao and Little Pao landed beside the coast. “It's our nature.”

“And so why have you exposed it now?” Kuang Wang was curious.

Little Pao shrugged before answering, “Our juniors have created such a stir—how could we seniors continue holding back? We want to show everyone that Astral-10 is not empty and that anyone who overreaches against us will be chopped up.”

Little Pao's words caused an ugly expression to appear on one of the onlooker's face. He was from the Blaze Realm, which had become a great enemy of Astral-10's.

“Hahahaha,” Kuang Wang laughed before replying, “Well-spoken! Your words are to my liking. With such a magnificent attitude, I'll allow you to experience the difference between a Realm Master and the normal students like you today.” He raised up his arm as everyone stared at the tattoo on it. That was where cultivators from the Beast Tamers Flowzone sealed their tamed beast in their body, and it was where Kuang Wang had sealed his beast, the Azure Dragon.

A resonant dragon-like roar shook the earth, dazing everyone present. Kuang Wang stood beside the coast as the tattoo on his arm gradually expanded until it became a hundred meters long Azure Dragon. The beast had appeared in an instant, and its majesty astonished everyone. With its appearance, even the space around them seemed to solidify slightly. The Azure Dragon seemed to be around the same size as a sylvan dragon, but there was no growth on its tail, and its entire body was colored silver-grey. It was also much more dominant and imposing than a sylvan dragon. This was the Azure Dragon.

Many retreated, dumbfounded at the shocking scene. This Azure Dragon was a type of giant astral beast and was extremely powerful. It was not something that the average cultivator could handle. Even in the Beast Tamers Flowzone, only freaks from the Divine Grade Hall could tame such beasts, which of course, Kuang Wang was from.

Chapter 187: Robbed

Big Pao and Little Pao's expressions were incomparably solemn. They had investigated Kuang Wang before this fight and naturally already knew about the Azure Dragon's existence. But when they actually met this enormous creature face to face, they could not stop themselves from being shocked.

The Azure Dragon rose into the sky and settled into a coiled stance above the coast, its two massive eyes glaring at Big Pao and Little Pao as it cast a massive shadow over the duo.

Kuang Wang pointed his finger at them, causing the Azure Dragon to roar and smack its gigantic tail towards the two challengers. The onlookers went numb with terror and they all instinctively backed away, afraid of being smashed to pieces.

Big Pao and Little Pao both dodged to the side as a giant crack formed along the coast before quickly being filled with the waters of the Ocean of Death. The Azure Dragon brandished its claws and the air visibly condensed into a terrifyingly sharp blade that sliced towards the duo, tearing through the void as it did so. To the Azure Dragon's claws, the void was just like paper.

Big Pao pointed his pike at the Azure Dragon and let loose. Countless bullets rained down upon the Azure Dragon's body, causing it to tremble. However, the dragon merely snarled and turned to face Big Pao's attack; its body was completely undamaged.

Kuang Wang laughed as he proclaimed, "Throughout the entire Astral Combat Academy, no more than twenty can hurt this Azure Dragon. This is what it means to be a Realm Master. Do you two understand now?"

Big Pao was still determined to win and desperately attacked the Azure Dragon. The beast was infuriated by his attempts and pushed down with its claws, causing the entire coast to quake.

Right at this moment, Little Pao appeared above Kuang Wang with a raised palm before smacking downwards with his Black Blazes Palm. This was the brothers' strategy; one would hinder the Azure Dragon while the other dealt with Kuang Wang.

Of the nine Realm Masters, only Kuang Wang came from the Beast Tamers Flowzone. Cultivators from that flowzone typically concentrated most of their power in their tamed beasts' thus, as long as the beast could be stalled, defeating the opponent would become much easier. The Azure Dragon should contain the majority of Kuang Wang's strength, so Little Pao was confident that he could defeat the unaided Kuang Wang.

At this point, the spectating students also understood the duo's strategy of one distracting the Azure Dragon while the other attacked Kuang Wang. These two from Astral-10 had come well prepared.

More importantly, Little Pao had still been hiding his true strength throughout the course of the battle. This Black Blazes Palm was accompanied by black veined lines that flowed across his body. These lines were battle force, and two lines of battle force at that. His battle force had reached the same level as Frankfurt's.

Boom!

Little Pao's Black Blazes Palm knocked Kuang Wang to the bottom of the coast once more, and Little Pao charged downwards to follow up on his strike. He seemed intent on determining victory and defeat right then and there.

“Little Pao! Watch out!” Big Pao suddenly shouted.

Little Pao’s face suddenly twisted and he instinctively changed his offense stance into a defensive one as he blocked with both of his arms. In the next instance, his entire body was struck by an enormous force, and even his two lines of battle force were directly shattered. A crack could be heard from both of his arms, and his pupils shrank. Through the smoke, he could make out Kuang Wang’s cold smile and the purple veins on his black battle force. It was three lines of battle force.

Little Pao had never expected that Kuang Wang would have actually cultivated his battle force to three lines—in fact, no one in the entire Astral Combat Academy was aware of this. Little Pao was directly tossed into the Ocean of Death by the terrifying force. No one could survive in the Ocean of Death, and falling into it meant certain death.

Big Pao’s face paled, and he used the force from the Azure Dragon’s claws to fly a hundred meters away before he turned around and stared at Kuang Wang in shock.

It wasn’t only Big Pao who was stunned but everyone. When had the Dao of Heaven’s Realm Master achieved three lines of battle force?

Kuang Wang slowly rose into the skies, his dazzling black battle force with its purple lines striking fear into everyone. This was a Realm Master, a frightening existence that far surpassed an Area Master. He was a member of the Astral Academy Council and a genius who was qualified to meet with the Ten Arbiters.

They did not know how strong the other Realm Masters were, but the Dao of Heaven’s Realm Master made them acutely feel the difference in power between them all. An unbeatable Azure Dragon and a cultivator with three lines battle force; how could anyone defeat such a terrifying combination?

Big Pao and Little Pao were very strong in their own right, and they would be top-notch even among the Area Masters. But even though they had joined forces, they still could not defeat a Realm Master.

Kuang Wang looked at Big Pao and marvelled, “You guys are pretty good. I don’t like hiding my strength, but it’s a pity that Astral-5 has nothing but trash. No one there was able to force out my true strength, but you people from Astral-10 have succeeded in doing so. Not bad at all.”

Big Pao replied in agony, “We’ve long known that Realm Masters were all freaks, but no one ever knew to what extent. Is this the true extent of your strength?”

Kuang Wang laughed. “Come find out for yourself if you can. You two are still too weak.” He then waved his hand, prompting the Azure Dragon to roar as it clawed a hole through Big Pao’s body.

Now, Astral-10’s Big Pao and Little Pao were both dead: they could not defeat a Realm Master. But no one belittled them for their attempt, as they had nonetheless forced the Realm Master’s hand to a never before seen extent. Not many students in the Astral Combat Academy could do this. It was clear to everyone that even if two, three, or even four students at Uro’s level worked together, they might still not be enough to force Kuang Wang to such an extent. These two “pieces of trash” from Astral-10 could obviously compete against the best of the Area Masters, and they had proved with their strength that Astral-10 still had talented fighters.

The dark void of outer space was as entrancing as it always was, and the beautiful scenery was only enhanced by meteorites streaking through it. Lu Yin was holding onto the Giant Emperor's third eye, but he stored it away as he gazed at his surroundings.

After leaving Astral-10, he enveloped his body with battle force and activated the Giant Emperor's third eye as he observed the cosmos. He was using this time to cultivate his battle force and further improve his understanding of the stars. His ninth star had also become more distinct from before, and it had already stabilized. The universe that he currently perceived was completely different from what others saw. He was confident that if he attempted to unlock something in this state, he would have a great chance of success.

Right now, he was headed to Darkmist Weave to complete a Lockbreaking mission there. He had a whole month of free time, and it would be ideal if he could improve his Lockbreaking abilities in this time.

What shocked Lu Yin the most during the most recent group battle against Uro was Xia Luo's improvement. He had dissipated Uro's all-out attack, and his control over star energy far surpassed Lu Yin's own. While it was rather unlikely for Xia Luo to already comprehend a domain, he should be quite close with how precise his control of star energy was. His natural talent was monstrously high compared to Lu Yin, who had to Possess Da Lei before his control over star energy had reached the realm of infinite changes. But despite Lu Yin's fortune, Xia Luo had still surpassed Lu Yin in the aspect of star energy control. His talent was truly terrifying, but Lu Yin still did not want to fall behind.

There was a medium-sized spacecraft ahead of Lu Yin that was slowly ambling along. There were hundreds of people on the spacecraft, though most were Seekers carrying weapons. There were only a few Sentinels, Melders, and a single Limiteer aboard.

"Captain, there's a signal coming from up ahead. There's a spacecraft approaching us at a fast speed," a villainous-looking man excitedly reported as he leaned over the control panel in the control room.

The middle-aged man, the "captain," had a fierce face. He held a machete in his hand and seemed to emanate a villainous aura. His eyes gleamed as he listened to the report. "How fast?"

"At least seven to ten times faster than our spacecraft."

He was delighted by the answer. "Alright, make preparations to rob him. Seems like we've landed upon a cash cow."

"Yes, captain."

After the orders were given, the hundreds of people in the spacecraft began bustling about. They were a recently formed group of pirates which had not even conducted five pirating raids yet. Although they were not even close to being experienced pirates, their strength was not bad, and they at least had a Limiteer among their ranks.

Generally, most small-scale interstellar pirates did not have any Limiteers, as only experienced, large-scale groups would have any Limiteer pirates. Sometimes, such groups would even have Explorer level powerhouses. Thus, for an inexperienced pirate group, their strength was not too bad. Of course,

because they were not experienced, their knowledge was poor. At the very least, they did not recognize the Astral-10 insignia that was emblazoned on Lu Yin's personal spacecraft.

"Warning, warning, the region ahead has been sealed. Warning, warning, the region ahead has been sealed. Please make preparations. Please make preparations."

Lu Yin was astonished and looked outside the spacecraft. Did someone seal me in?

Pirates had a way to seal space, and many pirate spacecraft had undergone modifications to seal a large area. After all, they had to have some tricks up their sleeves if they wanted to plunder others for a living.

Through the spacecraft's communications device, Lu Yin heard the middle-aged pirate captain speak. "Friend, give up and do not resist. You should know who we are by now, and as the captain, I guarantee that we will not hurt you so long as you cooperate. Listen, immediately fly your spacecraft into mine. And I do mean 'immediately.' Don't make me repeat myself."

Lu Yin was flabbergasted; he was being robbed! He looked into the distance to see a medium-sized spacecraft silently hovering in the middle of outer space. It seemed sinister on the outside, but there was also a strange design on it. It was a pirate ship.

A strange fluctuation filled the space around him. These were the fluctuations that were sealing the void. His ship would be damaged the moment he tried to barge his way through this area since these fluctuations would interfere with the spacecraft's system and cause it to malfunction. Thus, he had no choice but to stop here.

"Friend, are you testing my patience? Immediately bring your spacecraft over." The middle-aged pirate captain's tone had become more stern.

Lu Yin inhaled deeply and guided his spacecraft towards the pirate ship.

His spacecraft swayed, but it landed firmly. When the cabin door opened, Lu Yin immediately saw dozens of star energy guns aimed at him. There were a dozen pirates ready in formation for him, and there were at least five Melders among them.

"Get out," someone barked as they all fiercely stared at Lu Yin.

Lu Yin calmly walked out as a cruel-looking man approached to frisk him.

Lu Yin frowned. "Brother, I don't have a habit of being touched by another man."

"Behave yourself," the man barked dismissively before reaching out towards Lu Yin while another man went to search the small spacecraft.

Lu Yin couldn't hold himself back any longer. He lifted his leg, kicking the man approaching him and sending him flying before he turned around to kick another pirate. The next moment, the dozen surrounding star energy guns were trained on him. "Don't move, kiddo, and don't bother trying to resist."

Lu Yin glanced at his personal gadget and saw that the highest local power level indicated was 7,000: a Limiteer, and not even a peak Limiteer at that. His lips rose arrogantly. "Sorry, but you only invited trouble onto your ship." He then unleashed his star energy and knocked all of the pirates around him unconscious before heading straight for the control room.

At that moment within the command room, the middle-aged pirate captain stared at the screen in disbelief. The ruffian beside him was dazed as well. "Captain, this brat's definitely not simple. It looks like you'll have to intervene personally."

The middle-aged captain's face was twisted, as he had noticed a crucial detail; that brat had glanced at his gadget before acting. He must have been looking at the local power levels. The captain had not hidden his power level, so that meant that his opponent definitely knew his power level. If this kid still dared to act, then it could only mean that he was confident in his own abilities and that he was not afraid of a Limiteer. This brat was clearly only a Melder, but he was confident about battling above his rank? Those who could do so were known as Realmbreakers and were rarely seen, but each one was a genius.

The captain was regretting his actions as he realized that they should not have provoked such a genius. There was an adage in their pirate circles that said that they should not provoke any young or extremely old people who travelled alone. He had only remembered this saying now, but it looked like he had already angered one of those geniuses.

"Captain, he's here!" the ruffian screamed in shock.

The captain grit his teeth and walked out of the control room. He had to defuse the situation that was on the verge of blowing up in his face. He did not have to wait for long before Lu Yin appeared in his sight, with a trail of unconscious pirates in his wake.

Chapter 188: I Am Seven

Lu Yin was not fond of killing, and he had also not sensed any bloodlust from these pirates. This indicated that they only plundered and rarely killed, which meant that their crimes were not a capital offense.

"Friend, this is just a misunderstanding," the middle-aged captain said. Behind him, the frightened ruffian licked his lips.

Lu Yin laughed. "There are no misunderstandings here."

"Friend, we were in the wrong in this matter. Conducting operations in the dark will result in accidental mistakes sometimes. Your humble servant is willing to serve some wine and give you a toast to allow this matter to pass. How about that?" the captain spoke as he looked pleadingly into Lu Yin's eyes.

Lu Yin smirked; this bastard was probably probing him. If Lu Yin really did not pursue the matter, then the captain would definitely think that Lu Yin was an arrogant pushover and might even poison the wine. "I've already said it; there are no misunderstandings here. This is a robbery, so hand over all of your assets and I can spare your lives."

This sentence stunned the middle-aged captain and the ruffian. Robbery? Isn't that our line?

“You’re also a pirate?” the captain spoke in equal parts shock and disbelief as he studied Lu Yin’s face.

Lu Yin sneered darkly. “The strong prey on the weak in this universe. Since you can’t rob me, then it’s my turn to rob you. Your money or your life. Make your choice.”

“Kid, since we’re all in the same profession, you shouldn’t go overboard. Otherwise, it’ll be awkward when we meet again.”

“You can try and see if you have the means to embarrass me.” After Lu Yin finished speaking, a beast howled through the void as a Skybeast Claw clawed out at the captain’s face.

The Skybeast Claw was not a powerful technique in the eyes of Uro or the other elites from the Astral Combat Academy, but it was still a battle technique passed down within the Yu Academy by the Great Yu Empire. When the captain’s sidekick saw the 96th form of the Skybeast Claw, he was nearly frightened to death. Although the captain was a Limiteer, he had just become one, and he did not know how to defend against Lu Yin’s Skybeast Claw. The claw mercilessly slammed into the pirate captain, throwing him against the wall and leaving him in a sorry state.

Lu Yin retracted his hands in astonishment; this man was so weak that he could barely be considered a Limiteer.

The reality was, after entering the Astral Combat Academy, Lu Yin’s perception had changed drastically. Before, even when he was a Realmbreaker, the Skybeast Claw had been one of his more powerful attacks. Now, his Skybeast Claw had reached the 96th form, which was more than anyone else in Yu Academy. How could these mere pirates even begin to withstand this top-notch battle technique of Yu Academy?

Even if Uro was unfazed by the Skybeast Claw, he still had to defend against it as the attack was strong enough to injure a typical Limiteer from the Astral Combat Academy. This pirate captain, on the other hand, was just an average Limiteer. He could not even compare to Gerbach, let alone a Limiteer from the Astral Combat Academy. The difference was just too overwhelming.

Lu Yin immediately realized this, and his face held a complex look. He now understood why Wendy Yushan could not even be bothered to look at the Great Yu Empire’s younger generation, as they were just too lousy compared to her. Even though Schutz had already trained at the Astral Combat Academy for a time, he was still only second-rate in Lu Yin’s eyes, let alone Gerbach and the rest of them back in the Great Yu Empire, where the difference was even bigger.

Countless youths in the Outerverse had thought that Astral-10 would be a stepping stone that would propel them to power. Their beliefs weren’t without merit. For example, Schutz, if he returned to the Great Yu Empire, would be able to make even Bazeer take notice of him now. Schutz had surpassed the Outerverse’s standard during his time at Astral-10 and could compare to those of his level in the Innerverse.

Of course, not everyone from the Outerverse was like Gerbach and the others; there were bound to be some monsters, like Darkvoid. Although they had not entered the Astral Combat Academy, their innate gifts allowed them to roam unhindered and for others to take note of their strength as well.

The ruffian was stunned when he saw Lu Yin injure his captain with just one blow. He fell to the ground in shock, depressed, From the moment he joined the pirates, he knew that he would not have a good death. He had thought he could at least enjoy life for some time, but damn, how long had it been? They had only robbed others five times. Just five, but now they were caught between a rock and a hard place. What rotten luck.

Lu Yin walked behind the ruffian, towering over him.

The ruffian looked up at Lu Yin with a fearful expression. "Friend, no, Boss- Big Boss, this is a misunderstanding. Please, let us off. We are a newly established pirate group and we haven't killed anyone yet."

"Hand over all of the loot that you've plundered."

The ruffian immediately agreed, taking the cosmic ring from the captain with a swipe of his hands. He then used the unconscious captain's blood to open the ring before pouring out a pile of items. The majority was a messy assortment of medicines, furs, ores, along with a few bank cards from the other weaves. The star crystals that Lu Yin cared about the most only totaled to around 2,000.

He frowned. Are pirates this poor? They must have hidden it. His eyes swept over the ruffian with an unkind expression.

The ruffian was very smart, and he immediately said, "Boss, we've only plundered others five times, and this is all we have. Oh, right-" He seemed to remember something and quickly flipped up the captain's collar to reveal a hidden Mavis Bank crystal card. Lu Yin's eyes brightened as he recognized the black card; the card that he had Pilfered with "Yao Gu" embossed on it had yielded 10,000 star crystals. This type of card used star crystals as its medium and not universal currency.

"This was plundered from a merchant ship. Apparently, there's 10,000 star crystals in it with no need for a genetic password," the ruffian introduced as if it were a priceless treasure.

Lu Yin was delighted as he took it, beaming. "Really? 10,000?"

"Yes, definitely," the seedy pirate assured.

Lu Yin nodded and swept through the messy pile of items on the floor, but found nothing useful. He stood there with his flickering eyes as he considered his situation. He had looted the pirates and had made much more money than he would working. They were pirates, after all, and he had no qualms about robbing them.

The ruffian waited for Lu Yin, not daring to move and only occasionally glancing at him nervously with a pained expression. If the captain woke up now and saw this scene where he was being robbed, the thug did not know how Lu Yin would handle it. The ruffian's thoughts stopped at that point as he felt like the sky was falling down around him. In the end, nothing mattered until this monster was persuaded to leave.

"You," Lu Yin said as he turned to the ruffian. "What's your name?"

The goon smiled accommodatingly. "I'm Little Seven, boss."

Lu Yin frowned. "No, that name's no good. From now on, you are Little Eight."

The ruffian stared at Lu Yin blankly, seemingly at a loss for what to say.

Lu Yin coldly asked, "Why? You're not willing?"

"No no no, I'm Little Eight. Thank you, boss, for giving me a new name. I'll be called Little Eight from now on," he hurriedly said after Lu Yin's expression gave him a bad premonition.

Lu Yin nodded. "I am Seven. From now on, this ship will be under my command."

The goon was stunned. "Your command?"

"This pirating profession doesn't seem to be that bad, and I believe that it has a bright future. I like it. So, take me to meet some other pirates."

The ruffian opened his mouth to protest, but then he saw Lu Yin's dazzling smile and he looked back at the floor. He suddenly understood that this brat wasn't satisfied after robbing them and now wanted to plunder other pirates. No, he couldn't do this. Pirates had their own principles, and they would not betray their brothers in the same profession. While a pirate could long for the death of their "colleagues," acting on that longing would mean being excommunicated from the pirate circles. If their actions went too far, they might even incite the wrath of the pirate king.

"Boss, please don't joke anymore. Us pirates are a bunch of vulgar scoundrels without any culture or manners. We smell bad, and our word is worthless. We can barely even be called people. You shouldn't seek us pirates out," he pleaded.

Lu Yin's eyes turned cold as he stared at the ruffian. "I'll only repeat myself once. Take me to meet the other pirates. If you don't comply, I'll just get someone else to take me. There are several hundred people on this ship, so I'm sure that there are a few who would definitely be more than willing to guide me."

The ruffian's face turned bitter as he cried without letting any tears out. There were only two options before him. The first was to choose life, betray his fellow pirates, accept being exiled from the pirate circles, and risk being chased down by any pirate crew he encountered in the future. The other was to choose death and be a valiant pirate who died in the line of duty. Of course, like he had just said, pirates were not really people, and he had no wish to die as a pirate. No one would choose death when life was an option, so the ruffian yielded.

The middle-aged captain was locked up, and from that point on, the thug Little Eight wielded the most power on the pirate ship. At the very least, he had satisfied his dream of becoming a captain. He even abused his authority and imprisoned the pirates who had offended him before this.

Lu Yin had no interest in these petty feuds and was instead staring at his gadget incredulously. Big Pao and Little Pao joined forces to challenge the Dao of Heaven's Realm Master? That's outrageous!

Astral-10 had definitely become known throughout the Astral Combat Academy after this news broke. First, everyone had heard of the five new Melder students who had joined forces to defeat Area Master Uro and snatch away a training ground. Then, two Astral-10 students had challenged the Dao of

Heaven's Realm Master and even forced him to expose his three-lined battle force, shocking the entire academy.

Not long ago, Astral-10 had been considered to be a banished academy that no one cared about; it had even been on the verge of collapsing. With the arrival of the new students from the Outerverse, Astral-10's reputation had started rising once again. Then, Astral-10's students had gone on to complete the highest difficulty Sentinel mission, defeat members of the other academies, become Lockbreakers, defeat an Area Master, challenge a Realm Master, and more. This shocking series of events forced the other academies to take Astral-10 seriously, especially the final exploit, which had caused Big Pao and Little Pao's prestige to definitely shoot up through the roof.

The Dao of Heaven's Realm Master, Kuang Wang, had said that the two possessed the power of a top-notch Area Master, and this appraisal was quoted by Wu Da in the Astral Combat Academy Journal, greatly increasing the sales volume once again. At this critical juncture, right before the Astral Combat Tournament, Astral-10 seemed to be working on catching up to the other academies.

In contrast to Astral-10's meteoric rise, the Blaze Realm seemed to be sinking into a swamp of embarrassment; someone had leaked that Jared from the Blaze Realm had entered the Dao of Purgatory to help Uro, but had been cast out in a pathetic manner. This news caused his region's reputation to drop greatly.

Lu Yin raised his head and seemed to have an excited gaze. As expected, those two seniors of his were not simple at all—they were actually as strong as Area Masters! They had even forced a Realm Master to reveal his true strength. Very powerful.

But the two of them had still been defeated despite them joining forces, which made Lu Yin's heart sink. Is a Realm Master really unconquerable?

Five students had joined forces to defeat Uro, and that team could probably defeat any Area Master. But if they tried to fight against a Realm Master, even with Big Pao and Little Pao helping them, it would probably be impossible for them to emerge victorious. The freakish nature of these Realm Masters was not just idle boasts.

The Astral Combat Tournament was approaching, and even though there was still no concrete date, everybody knew that it was going to take place within half a year. The Realm Masters were also students of the Astral Combat Academy, and they would be opponents just like the other students.

Actually, besides the Realm Masters, there were many other powerhouses in the ten academies. Due to the special nature of this Astral Combat Tournament, terrifying geniuses like Liu Shaoqiu would also enter the tournament. There were definitely more than nine super powerhouses with strength at the Realm Master level. In other words, one needed the strength of a Realm Master to even dream about ranking in the top ten of this Astral Combat Tournament.

Chapter 189: Graduation And Expulsion

The power level of a Realm Master was too difficult to reach. Lu Yin was confident that he could attain the level of an Area Master in half a year, and even surpass it after that. However, reaching the strength of a Realm Master was just too difficult. Could it be that he was destined to lose in this Astral Combat Tournament?

The Astral Combat Tournament took place once every twenty years, which meant that a member of the younger generation could generally only participate once. But with Lu Yin's young age, he could participate in the next one as well, though he did not wish to wait for twenty years.

While considering his options, he raised his hand and caused his die to appear. "Hopefully, you'll be able to bring me a miracle."

But right at that point, the thuggish Little Eight rushed in and excitedly shouted, "Boss, we've found some other pirates!"

Lu Yin casually dismissed the die and stared coldly at Little Eight. "In the future, knock before you enter. Next time, I'll chop your hand off."

The thug jumped in fright and immediately acknowledged the order.

"Pirates? How large is their group?"

Little Eight nervously replied, "There's a pirate group about half a region ahead of us called the 'Flying Fish.' This group is several years older than ours, and they can be considered professional pirates."

Lu Yin was amused. "Professional pirates? So are there amateur ones?"

"Boss, most pirates are actually not real pirates. Being a pirate is somewhat like putting on a mask. Someone might be broke, have poor cash flow, or have some other special goal, but there are always new pirates rising to the occasion. Once they've completed their goals, these pirates usually disappear back to their old life. This is a very normal occurrence."

Lu Yin's gaze twinkled as he remarked, "The dark side of the universe."

Little Eight nodded in agreement. "Boss, so what do you think of this Flying Fish group?"

"Approach them and then rob them," Lu Yin said simply before walking out towards the control room with Little Eight hurriedly following behind. This amateur pirate had decided that, since he could not resist, he might as well put on a good performance. If he was lucky enough, he might even find some opportunities in future to make some profit for himself.

The various great weaves of the Outerverse had never relaxed their clean-up operations of the roaming pirate groups. The presence of pirates severely hindered the finances of the various weaves, and quite frequently, news would emerge of some important figure being killed by pirates. Hence, each weave had its own set of professional troops that specialized in exterminating pirates. But the pirates were just too sneaky. Besides the exceptionally strong pirate groups that were difficult to fight against, the smaller scale groups never stayed in one place for too long, and the Flying Fish pirate group was no exception to this rule.

"What methods do they employ?" Lu Yin asked as he looked at the medium-sized pirate spacecraft in the distance.

"They're not much different from us. They only plunder and never kill."

"I wouldn't have been able to tell, but it seems that you people still have some principles," Lu Yin remarked, somewhat astonished.

Little Eight grimaced. "Boss, being a pirate is already hard enough. Plundering has its risks, but killing is even riskier. Due to the weave's clean-up troops, many pirates have an iron rule to plunder and never to kill. If we ever violate that, the weave's troops would place us on their must-kill list. Thus, any killing on our part would attract the attention of powers we can't contest. The risks are just too large for a little group like ours to even think about taking them on."

Lu Yin nodded, as Little Eight's words were logical. Though the universe was cruel, that was only true for cultivators and those who walked in the dark, like pirates. For the average person, aside from natural disasters, they could expect to live a long and uneventful life. In short, the great weaves were closely linked and had developed robust systems to protect themselves and their denizens.

Not long after, Lu Yin leisurely stretched out as he looked at the two fallen Limiteers in front of him. He was now on the Flying Fish pirate spacecraft, and in the middle of plundering it.

These small-scale pirate groups did not have many powerhouses, the couple of Limiteers that they did have were only as strong as the average Melder from the Astral Combat Academy, roughly around Gerbach's level. They were just too weak compared to Lu Yin.

"Boss, here's our harvest," Little Eight said as he obsequiously handed Lu Yin a Mavis Bank black card as if he were presenting treasure, earning him a furious look from the Flying Fish's captain.

"How much?" Lu Yin's lips twitched upwards.

"Hehe, 60,000 star crystals."

"So little? Hasn't this group been running around and looting for a couple of years?"

"Boss, a pirate group's expenses are quite high. Besides the costs that go along with a crew member's death, there's also the constant cost of maintaining their weapons and spacecraft, medicines and information, paying off the stronger pirate groups, and even paying the cultivators within their own group. 60,000 is a pretty decent haul, all things considered."

Lu Yin's gaze swept across the pirate captain and grunted when he saw his ashen face. He kept the card. "Not bad. Go ahead and split everything else among your men."

Little Eight was delighted. "Thank you, Boss!"

Lu Yin's way of doing things truly shocked Little Eight, as Lu Yin had not claimed everything for himself. This was a good way of accumulating goodwill among the crew and showed that Lu Yin wasn't a fool despite his youthful appearance. The pirates all cheered and they gave their all in completing their assigned tasks.

Lu Yin couldn't care less about the rest of the loot, but he did care about the money. He had not become so desperate that he would act unscrupulously for money, but he was willing to use force when necessary. He was expecting these pirates to have a large fortune; otherwise, he wouldn't be able to gain a good harvest from robbing all these pirates. He was willing to face the additional risk. Although this pirate group could no longer offer him any benefits, they did represent the risk of spreading the news about his activities and causing him to be chased around by the other pirate crews.

Over the next half month, Lu Yin visited multiple regions with Little Eight's lead. There were ninety seven regions in the Dark Mist Weave, and according to Little Eight, this was the weave where most of the pirates in the Outerverse gathered. In just half a month's time, they had already robbed more than ten pirate groups. They were practically sailing through a den of thieves, and their harvests reflected it. Lu Yin himself had already obtained about 700,000 star crystals, which sounded like an enormous fortune. Every pirate following him had also obtained enough wealth to live extravagantly for the rest of their lives. They could even quit being a pirate and live as a rich commoner if they so desired it.

"Brother Eight, isn't the territory of Knight Pirates ahead? Let's go rob them!" a pirate exclaimed excitedly in the command room.

Little Eight smacked the pirate heavily on his head. "Are you crazy?! You want to rob the Knight Pirates? Scram!"

Lu Yin was coincidentally walking by and overheard the conversation. "Why can't we rob the Knight Pirates?"

Little Eight jumped in fright when he heard Lu Yin's voice, and he quickly turned around to explain. "Boss, the Knight Pirates are the strongest pirate group in this entire region. They have at least five Limiteers in their ranks, and their captain, the Mad Viper Knight, is an absolute powerhouse. He graduated from the Astral Combat Academy."

Lu Yin was stunned. "He graduated from Astral Combat Academy? He's an Explorer?"

Little Eight shook his head. "No, there's no way an Explorer would linger in this poor region. He's a peak Limiteer."

Lu Yin relaxed. As long as the opponent wasn't an Explorer, he would be fine. It must be a false rumor that this captain had graduated from the Astral Combat Academy, as the rules stated that a student could only graduate after they became an Explorer. Anyone who could not reach that stage would be expelled when they came of age, which was not considered graduating.

The Astral Combat Academy was split into ten academies. Aside from Astral-10, the other academies had an average of a thousand students each. Not even a third of those students would be able to successfully graduate, and each graduate was an absolute elite of the universe. Even those who had been expelled were not weak. Becoming an Explorer required both fortuitous opportunities and innate talent. Without a five-stage formcast model, it was too difficult to become an Explorer by the academy's required age. But even their expelled students would remain outstanding wherever they went. There should be no need for one to ever become a pirate, which meant this Mad Viper Knight was probably a fake.

"Let's go. We'll plunder these Knight Pirates. Since they've been able to dominate the few surrounding regions, they should give us a decent harvest." Lu Yin held high expectations for the upcoming loot.

Little Eight's face turned bitter. "Boss, these pirates really can't be provoked. They were once surrounded by soldiers, but they slaughtered almost half of them. Their blood even turned the oceans of

the planet beneath them red! The Mad Viper Knight even managed to sneak in and kill an Explorer! This guy's scary!"

Lu Yin beamed as he replied, "That's our target! Let's go!"

Little Eight was left helpless, and he could only glare furiously at the pirate who had opened his mouth earlier. The spacecraft changed course and headed straight at the Knight Pirates' territory.

It was no easy task to find a pirate group, as they would not stay in the same place for long. It required some luck, but since both parties were pirates, Little Eight had a good chance of tracking their prey down.

By this point, Lu Yin had long since forgotten about his Lockbreaking mission. Although Lockbreaking was important to him, these star crystals were much more important. His die was his shortcut to rapidly increasing his strength. He had already gathered 700,000 star crystals, so after this last mission, he could head back to Astral-10 and patiently wait for the Astral Combat Tournament to start.

The Knight Pirates roamed across several regions, so Little Eight initially expected it to take awhile to find them. But contrary to his expectations, they spotted a large spacecraft in the middle of a meteoroid field after just a day. It was the Knight Pirates' spacecraft.

Under Lu Yin's stern gaze, Little Eight sent a docking request to the Knight Pirates. Quickly, their spacecraft was given permission to board by the larger spacecraft.

Lu Yin looked at his gadget when he heard the two spacecrafts connect. He could see the power levels of the various people on this large vessel and saw that there were nearly a thousand people here. There were three Limiteers, but more importantly, one had a power level of 10,000. This impressive number caused Little Eight to nearly faint in fear. This was a peak Limiteer and should be the Mad Viper Knight. It seemed that he was only a single step away from breaking through to become an Explorer.

Lu Yin's face became slightly grave, but he did not pay too much attention to this number. He had met many peak Limiteers and had even fought against some of them in the ported battles. While their superior star energy had strongly suppressed him, they were not unbeatable like an Explorer was. Uro had been a peak Limiteer, and so had Spear Mountain's Area Master, Frankfurt.

"B-boss, there's still time to retreat. I think that it'd be best if we don't provoke the Mad Viper Knight. We can leave after giving him some tribute," Little Eight nervously stammered out.

Lu Yin waved away the suggestion and calmly walked out of their spacecraft and onto the Knight Pirates' vessel. He had already made sufficient preparations before arriving, and if this Mad Viper Knight was too strong, he could still retreat. However, this pirate captain should still be within Lu Yin's capabilities. If the fight did turn out to be impossible, then he could use his status as a Lockbreaker to save his life.

He first used his status as a pirate captain to request a meeting with the Mad Viper Knight. This was not an excessive request, and Lu Yin was quickly taken to a lounge where he saw a Limiteer standing outside.

Just as the Limiteer was about to speak, however, his gadget beeped, and his face changed. His entire bearing shifted and he quickly left. The pirate who had escorted Lu Yin left in a hurry as well, leaving just

Lu Yin by himself. Lu Yin frowned, but did not pay the two's actions any mind. He directly opened the lounge door and stepped inside.

The Mad Viper Knight was a middle-aged man, of a similar age as most of the pirate captains. He wore an elegant aristocratic coat and clasped a cane in his hand. On his face was a fearsome snake tattoo, and his appearance was rather intimidating at a glance.

Lu Yin's entrance did not disturb the captain since he was looking at something on his gadget, but his eyes seemed to carry a trace of worry.

Chapter 190: The Palm In The Darkness

Lu Yin turned around to look around the lounge. He immediately noticed that there was a star chart of the surrounding regions, and it was stamped with the symbol that represented the Astral River, and the chart showed their distance from the Astral River. There was also a special symbol on the chart accompanied with the label, "pirate port."

Pirate port? Lu Yin looked at the area more closely and saw that they were no more than ten regions away. It would only take about five days of wormhole traveling to arrive. That port was most likely a secret harbor where countless interstellar pirates gathered and one of the dark pits of the Outerverse.

"Who are you?" a heavy voice sounded from next to Lu Yin. The Mad Viper Knight had stood up, and his face was stern as he spoke to Lu Yin.

Lu Yin turned around and smiled back. "I heard that Mr. Knight graduated from the Astral Combat Academy, so I wanted to learn a bit more about him."

The Mad Viper Knight's eyes widened and a flash of killing intent crossed through his eyes. "It's a good plan to use the light to hide the dark, but it won't be that easy to get rid of my Knight Pirates."

The star energy in his body exploded out at that moment, shattering the lights in the lounge. It was so thick that Lu Yin could, with his naked eye, see the Mad Viper Knight's star energy congeal into a python. The star energy python then opened its mouth and hissed at Lu Yin. He immediately retreated, and the place that he had just been standing in a moment ago shattered as it was struck by star energy. A viscous green liquid spread out in every direction, corroding the metal walls.

Poison? Lu Yin raised his brows and shifted sideways to avoid the Mad Viper Knight's cane as it thrust forward as the area had been sealed by star energy. Lu Yin was surprised by the Mad Viper Knight's strength. The fact that his control over star energy had reached the realm of infinite changes was evident of that. He was a Limiteer who must have received higher education, and he might truly be an alumnus of the Astral Combat Academy.

Bang!

There was a thunderous sound that accompanied the lounge's explosion. The vessel simply could not withstand the attacks of an Limiteer.

Lu Yin avoided using Flash. This Mad Viper Knight's strength was good, and he greatly surpassed every pirate that Lu Yin had encountered before. He had been able to crush every peak Limiteer that he had come across in the Outerverse as they were all of average strength. However, the Mad Viper Knight

hadn't only reached the realm of infinite changes; he also cultivated a powerful battle technique that released poison. Unfortunately, all of this was useless against Lu Yin as this level of power was not enough to threaten him. If the Mad Viper Knight had really been a student of the Astral Combat Academy, then he would have definitely been ranked among the weakest.

Lu Yin let out a fierce shout as he tore through the star energy python and slammed his hand into the Mad Viper Knight. The Limiteer ring armor that the pirate captain had just donned was shattered, and his star energy was dispersed. His body was forced up against the wall, and he spat out a mouthful of blood as a dumbfounded look surfaced on his face.

"Realmbreaker." The Mad Viper Knight finally realized the situation that he was in when Lu Yin's palm had caused him to recall his time in the Astral Combat Academy. The Mad Viper Knight had paled in comparison to those freaks who had made him despair whenever he saw them. And now, he had met another one yet again.

The lounge was shrouded in darkness, but Lu Yin steadily walked straight towards the Mad Viper Knight step by step by relying on the indistinct starlight to guide him, ready to obtain his spoils. At that moment, a stray strand of light flashed out from a sword blade, and Lu Yin evaded to the side. The lounge was cleaved in two by the blade strike, and Lu Yin felt a heavy aura behind him. It was an aura that desired to slice everything to pieces.

Lu Yin's gaze sharpened as he thought to himself, Is this a domain? He raised his hand and enveloped himself in battle force as a precautionary measure. He then activated his Cosmic Art as a sword stabbed towards him from behind. He easily evaded before retaliating with a Cosmic Palm.

The nine stars exploded, empowered by an overwhelming battle force, and Lu Yin snapped the attacker's blade in half before directly attacking their body. This person was sent flying out of the lounge and into the distance. There was no telling how many walls they had blasted through.

Bang!

The broken blade fell to the floor, attracting Lu Yin's attention. As he looked at it, he frowned. Red? It looks very familiar. Could it be Zhuo Daynight?

Lu Yin's face changed and he rushed out of the lounge in a hurry.

Back in the lounge, the Mad Viper Knight spat out another mouthful of blood before he peeled himself off of the wall with great difficulty. He panted heavily and stared in the direction that Lu Yin had taken off in fear. Where did all of these terrifying youths come from? One has a domain and the other battle force. With their young age, they must be freaks from the Astral Combat Academy!

He grit his teeth as a bone-deep hatred flashed across his eyes. He hated those arrogant, freakish geniuses as their very existence prevented people like him from making a name for themselves.

Cough cough.

The Mad Viper Knight dragged his heavily injured body out from the lounge.

At this moment, the entire vessel was permeated with a thick bloodmist as countless pirates had died. The corridor was painted with blood, and the other two Limiteers had already been beheaded.

Lu Yin dashed through a few shattered lounges before he finally saw Zhuo Daynight, fainted, a hundred meters away. Her face was pale and she was still clasping the hilt of her broken blade.

"It really is you," Lu Yin said with a grimace. He had not been able to see in the darkness of the shattered lounge and had thus retaliated with an excessive amount of force. However, he was not at fault as Zhuo Daynight had been the first to attack.

Lu Yin took out some medicine and fed it to Zhuo Daynight. She coughed twice and forced her eyes open. When she saw Lu Yin's indistinct figure, she mumbled, "It- it's you."

"Why are you here?" Lu Yin asked.

Zhuo Daynight looked at him despondently as a thin line of blood flowed out of the corner of her lips. Her pure face was devastatingly pale. "You- why are you here?"

"I happened to get robbed."

Zhuo Daynight looked around and saw her broken blade. She breathed out and coughed again, causing a fresh gush of blood to cascade down her lips. Her eyes glazed over and she fainted again.

Lu Yin immediately tried to rouse her, but it was useless. Her internal organs had been too heavily wounded by his attack. She had been struck with a terrifyingly powerful nine star Cosmic Palm. Even Uro had been overpowered by that palm, so there was no need to mention Zhuo Daynight. She was already lucky to not have died immediately upon direct.

Lu Yin was left helpless as he held her against his body. He could not let her die here. While it was true that she had schemed against him before, she was not a bad person at her core. With her background, she was probably cleaning up pirates while on her way back to the Inniverse. In fact, it was not that strange to have run into her here.

Wait, the Mad Viper Knight! Lu Yin suddenly remembered this person and carried Zhuo Daynight back to the lounge, but the pirate captain was nowhere to be found.

A personal spacecraft flew out of the pirate ship. The Mad Viper Knight had managed to drag his injured body into a personal spacecraft and was now gazing malevolently at his own pirate ship. "Go and die. Be buried with my spacecraft." He then pressed a button to destroy the entire vessel.

A red light flickered within the pirate's spacecraft. Lu Yin's expression changed drastically when he heard the urgent alarm, and he hurriedly carried Zhuo Daynight as he Flashed towards where he had docked his own spacecraft.

Little Eight and the rest had also seen the flashing red lights and had immediately realized that the vessel was about to explode. Little Eight had immediately given orders to leave, completely disregarding Lu Yin's current status, but fortunately, Lu Yin had arrived at the last moment.

Little Eight immediately welcomed him aboard with a rich expression. "Boss, it would've been too late if you didn't arrive just now. These people insisted on leaving, but I was the one who wanted to wait for you no matter if we lived or died."

"Shut up and find a doctor," Lu Yin barked.

Little Eight quickly ordered the crew to quickly leave the field of meteoroids and seek a doctor.

Not long after their departure, the entire cluster of meteorites exploded, and the Knight Pirates' spacecraft was vaporized. Apart from the Mad Viper Knight, not a single other from that pirate group survived.

Lu Yin sighed, as this trip had been a fruitless endeavor.

"Boss, we saw a spacecraft departing. That should have been the Mad Viper Knight," Little Eight spoke apprehensively.

Lu Yin nodded and then seemed to remember something. "I recall you saying that the Knight Pirates has more than five Limiteers, so why were there only three there?"

"The Knight Pirates have two pirating vessels. Normally, they only send one out at a time to raid other ships."

Lu Yin frowned. "They certainly are sly. This pirate group can't be regarded as strong in the scope of the entire universe, but they are rich enough to squander their money on two pirate ships. A sly individual can fall back since they have multiple plans. It's no wonder that they were able to orchestrate the death of an Explorer."

"It's a pity that he escaped. Otherwise, with his status, Boss's harvest should have at least doubled," Little Eight lamented.

Lu Yin felt his headache resurface when he heard this comment. His misfortune was all thanks to Zhuo Daynight. Things had been going so smoothly too; it was such a pity.

"Boss, Brother Eight, that woman's injuries are too heavy. We can't treat her with our equipment, and there are no nearby regions where her injuries can be treated either. Our only option is to take her to the pirate port," a pirate reported.

Lu Yin grunted. "Go to the pirate port."

"Ok."

"Boss, is she your woman?" Little Eight asked, trying to probe the situation.

Lu Yin derisively glared at him. "Why, did you recognize her?"

Little Eight knew he was being mocked and his eyes held some fear. He might be an inexperienced pirate, but he had still heard of the famous clans of the universe, and he had immediately recognized that this woman was from the Daynight clan. Why had a Daynight woman appeared among the Knight Pirates? Little Eight didn't dare to even wonder.

"It's best that you forget this matter, or else I don't know what trouble might befall you."

Little Eight put on a confused face. "Matter? What matter? I don't know anything."

Lu Yin smiled lightly—this fellow was quick-witted alright. "Tell me more about this pirate port."

Little Eight explained, “The pirate port is a safe harbor where pirates can replenish their supplies. It’s called a port, but it’s actually a planet, and all kinds of underworld powers of the universe have gathered there. Pirates, murderers, escaped convicts, rebels... You name it, you’ll find them there. Of course, you’ll also see people similar to the Daynight clan, disciples from powerful families such as the Mavis family training there...”

With Little Eight’s introduction, Lu Yin gained a greater understanding of the pirate port. In the end, it was a gathering point for people from all trades. The Dark Mist Weave was filled with seedy individuals, and the pirate port seemed to be the soul of the weave. Many there did not even bother using their real names, as if they were exposed, they would need to pay a steep price and might even be targeted by others for revenge.

Lu Yin curiously asked, “Doesn’t anyone care that the pirate port is so close to the Astral River?”

“Of course they care, but they can only occasionally mobilize some troops to intimidate the place. After all, the pirate port provides services for not only pirates, but also for the troops and travelers traveling to and from the Inniverse. As long as you have the money, you can find what you want there. So while it’s the pirate port for pirates, it’s also a popular resupplying point that’s under the protection of the Leo clan.”

“The Leo clan?” Lu Yin was puzzled.

Little Eight’s grew serious as he explained, “The pirate port was actually established by the Leo clan. This clan was once incomparably powerful and even governed a weave at one point. But as the number of their geniuses dwindled, their ancestors eventually came up with a daring idea. They moved their entire clan to the Dark Mist Weave and established a pirate port there. Think about it—who can destroy a pirate port that’s supported by a clan that was once strong enough to govern an entire weave? Moreover, at one point, the Leo clan had Hunters among its ranks. Even though their circumstances have deteriorated significantly since then, a Cruiser still guards the pirate port.”

Lu Yin now understood the situation better. No wonder the pirate port had been built in such an obvious place. The Leo clan, huh?

“Little Eight, you seem to be quite well informed.” This time, Lu Yin was doing the probing.