

Chapter 21: Bai Xue

Smoke pervaded the air around Nanjing as the city settled down into a never-ending battle. A wave of mutants rushed in from the west every few days, and nobody could make heads or tails of the situation.

In the skies, the flying mutant beasts formed groups to attack the assembly grounds in Zhongshan. Jeraldine flew over and lit them up with her Flame Palm, bombarding the skies and sending sparks everywhere to the tune of cheering spectators. Stood on the city walls, Lu Yin was gazing westward. The waves were far too frequent now; was a formidable beast in the vicinity?

“Jeraldine, southwest!” he barked, leaving the girl a little depressed. Here she was, someone from the greater universe being ordered around like a warslave. She had considered disobeying him multiple times, but Lu Yin’s icy gaze ensured that she remained wise. Her thoughts ran back to a scene from a few days prior; the morning after visiting Zhou Shan, Lu Yin had proposed a friendly duel. She’d only agreed when he agreed not to use a Shockwave Palm, but the bastard had actually used a Spacerender Palm and nearly crippled her! That incident had angered her so much that she swore to never duel him again.

Of course, she was also shocked by Lu Yin’s power. While the Shockwave Palm was not uncommon, the Spacerender Palm was entirely different. She only knew one other person of similar age that could use the technique; the top student in her academy, Veron.

Bang! The remnants of the Flame Palm slammed into the ground, crushing several formidable mutant beasts. Gasping for air up above, Jeraldine found it strange as well. It was normal for this number of mutant beasts to exist in a world undergoing evolution, but it was decidedly abnormal for them to attack humans so consistently. Beasts had primal tendencies, and as long as no one intruded on their territory, they hardly ever came out. This was also a key reason why there were so many survivors, but the beast waves had become far too common of an occurrence now. Her thoughts were interrupted by deafening howls as two more beasts snuck towards her; using the Flame Palm once more, she decimated them in a single strike.

Lu Yin frowned from the city walls. This woman relied too much on her battle techniques, which restricted her development. Her battle ability was halved when she wasn’t using the Flame Palm; she was perhaps only slightly above average in her school, a far cry from Terence and perhaps only a little stronger than Orton. However, as he continued to observe her, his gaze suddenly sharpened.

“STOP!” he shouted as he lifted his hand, forming ripples of energy by pressing down on the air. Jeraldine was shocked as she saw the attack flying straight for her but somehow managed to react the right way and stop in an instant. The Spacerender Palm swept past her and landed behind, blowing the air apart and sending a youth crashing to the ground. Lu Yin jumped and flew towards the ambusher, glowering at him on the floor.

Jeraldine heaved a sigh of relief, rejoicing at the sight of Lu Yin. This sneak attack would have landed on her squarely if not for his intervention, and the would-be assassin was a Sentinel as well. The best-case scenario would have been heavy injuries.

There was a giant crack on the earth's surface, and the youth clutched his chest as he stared at Lu Yin in shock, "Spacerender Palm? How's that possible?"

Lu Yin glared at the man, sweeping around the area with his peripheral vision. His gaze suddenly focused as he disappeared towards the beasts with Roving Step.

"RUN!" the youth shouted, but it was too late. Another young man within a beast's abdomen was shocked as Lu Yin's hand grabbed towards him. He grabbed his longsword and slashed out, but a loud explosion rang out as the bare palm shattered the metal with ease. The ground within a dozen meters split open as currents of air whirled outwards, tearing countless beasts to shreds. Lu Yin had just used two strikes to bring down two Sentinels, astonishing Jeraldine in the process.

She was sure that these two were students. Though not from the First Military School, they would not be weaklings if they could participate in this trial. That they had been so easily defeated was a testament to Lu Yin's current strength; his true battle prowess far exceeded his combat level.

The beast wave dissipated quickly once the two students were defeated, informing Lu Yin that they were the source of the problem.

"Where are you from?" Jeraldine barked, still reeling from the near-ambush.

The two stared fearfully at Lu Yin, but did not answer. Lu Yin waved the incoming soldiers away and coldly stared at them, "I'll feed you two to the beasts if you don't speak."

"We're fellow students, no need to be so cruel," one of the males squeaked with a pale face.

Lu Yin shrugged, "Sorry, I'm an earthling."

"Impossible!" the two shrieked, turning towards Jeraldine. Her silence shocked them further, "How can a native defeat us so easily? He can even use the Spacerender Palm!"

"Alright, less nonsense," Lu Yin barked, "Speak or die."

Around ten minutes later, Lu Yin ordered the two to be imprisoned while he sank into thought. These two had come from the Great Yu Empire's Blue Mountain Academy, which was situated on a planet full of wild beasts. These two had experience taming wild animals, but could only urge weak mutant creatures. As for mounting this sneak attack on Nanjing, they were the same as Jeraldine and wanted to occupy the city. Unlike her, however, they had a powerful backer in Anhui nearby.

Jeraldine was furious, "Why don't you kill them, they were plotting to steal Nanjing."

Lu Yin looked at her, "You can do it if you want."

"Err... I can't bear to do it," she was stunned and turned away

"This trial might not forbid murder, but too many deaths isn't a good look. This is the first time you've tried to act smart with me, it better be the last."

Jeraldine's lips twitched as she watched Lu Yin leave, a sense of pity filling her. She had wanted to make him the main antagonist of this first batch so she could escape control, but that had failed. The scoundrel was smarter than she'd thought.

"Boss, the beast wave has retreated!" Xu San cheered, his eyes glowing.

Lu Yin knew what he was thinking with one glance, "You finished using the energy crystals I gave you?"

Xu San was embarrassed, "Yes, and I've grown much stronger."

"No need to be anxious for a breakthrough, you still don't have the capacity yet. Try your best to immerse yourself in your body's energy and condense it."

"Yes, Boss!" Xu San could feel Lu Yin's concern.

While Lu Yin had initially wanted to get Xu San to the Realm of Sky quickly, he had changed his mind as of late. He didn't want an abundance of impurities to harm Xu San's potential, which would diminish his value. Many powerful entities had their own ways to completely cleanse someone's energy so they could start anew, but that process grew more difficult and expensive as one trained to higher realms. Xu San being in the Realm of Earth was just perfect; while his potential wasn't harmed too much, he could still survive on his own.

After dealing with the aftermath of the beast wave, Lu Yin headed to Zhou Shan's ward. He had given the Executioner some of Jeraldine's medicine, so he had mostly recovered from his injuries.

"What are you planning to do with those two aliens?" Zhou Shan asked.

"I'll keep them locked up for now, they'll be useful later. You can interrogate them if you want, it'll be good to learn more about them."

Zhou Shan nodded, "I hear they come from Anhui?"

"Yeah, which is exactly the direction I'm headed in. Might as well get rid of them."

Zhou Shan was puzzled, "Huh... I'm curious, why do you want to journey west so bad?"

"Want to hear the truth?" Lu Yin looked him in the eye.

"You don't say."

"I'm going to Hubei to look for someone."

"Hubei? A relative?"

Lu Yin laughed, "Kind of."

Zhou Shan nodded, "Alright. You're Nanjing's savior; if you want us to head west, we head west. You can connect with Liu Shaoge in Wucheng and join hands to fight the aliens there."

"The Radiance, huh. What's he like?" Lu Yin's eyes flashed.

"What do you mean 'what's he like'? Strength or personality?"

Lu Yin smiled, "Both."

"I don't know him all that well. Though we've worked together before, it wasn't for long. The Water Sage Bai Xue is the one who'd know him best; they were involved romantically at one point from what I've heard."

Lu Yin's brows furrowed for a moment, "Involved? Are they married?"

"No, but there's something there," Zhou Shan didn't seem to be sure either, but he quickly grinned, "Have you ever seen Bai Xue?"

Lu Yin shook his head.

Zhou Shan looked up at the sky and pointed at the clouds, "She looks just like that."

Looking up as well, Lu Yin was rather lost.

Zhou Shan sighed, "Bai Xue, fresh as a lotus blooming in water, beautiful as a goddess, pretty as a picture. Her looks are absolutely out of this world."

Lu Yin stared at Zhou Shan as if he'd seen a ghost, "Since when do you know how to pontificate?"

Chapter 22: Bloodlust Under Moonlight

Zhou Shan gave Lu Yin an odd look, "It's not just me. It's well known that Bai Xue is the most beautiful woman in all of China. No matter which celebrity or model you look at, no one can compare. Heh, I didn't believe it at first either, but once I met her I couldn't help but agree. This woman was born to be worshipped; it's no exaggeration to call her a goddess."

Lu Yin laughed, "That's not an exaggeration?"

"Goddess? Don't flatter yourselves, natives will always be natives. If you ever see Starsibyl, you won't be able to get off your knees," Jeraldine interrupted with a tone of ridicule.

This immediately prompted a cold glare from Lu Yin, "I never want to hear you say the word native again. Go guard the door."

Jeraldine snorted, but without the guts to challenge Lu Yin, she turned and left. Zhou Shan was embarrassed as he realized a woman had overheard such a discussion, but Lu Yin smiled, "Please continue, Brother Zhou."

Zhou Shan coughed several times, "There's actually nothing more. Liu Shaoge is handsome and Bai Xue is pretty. The two are a perfect match."

Lu Yin's curious eyes gleamed, "What about their power?"

The Executioner shrugged his shoulders, "Liu Shaoge and I are part of the four Sages, while Bai Xue is one of the three High Sages. He's supposed to be prudent and adept at hiding, but he can't be much stronger than me."

Lu Yin nodded in understanding. Zhou Shan did not seem to understand Liu Shaoge very well, but he could sense that the man's impression of Liu Shaoge was pretty decent. The Radiance seemed to deserve the greatest praise, and Liu Shaoge's external image did seem rather perfect. Only the dead and the one accidental survivor would know of the man's dark side. He had assumed he only had one enemy

amongst the Seven Sages so far, but if the Water Sage really was involved with Liu Shaoge, that assumption could prove false. And then there was a chance of a butterfly effect where all the Sages stood against him... Society worked in strange ways.

Drumming his fingers against a wall, Lu Yin sank deep into thought.

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It took until night for the beast wave to retreat completely, and Lu Yin left Nanjing after dark; he was running out of fire crystals and needed to dig up a few more. Powerful gusts could be heard under the yellow moonlight illuminating the cold earth, forcing one to focus if they wanted to hear the constant chewing that sent chills down the spine.

When Lu Yin finally arrived at the fire crystal deposit beside the old canals, he saw a shadow standing there in silence. It was a man with short silver hair, looking up towards the moonlight with a vacant gaze. His expression changed instantly the moment he noticed this person; the long-haired zombie king, the fire crystals, and that fearsome head. Was this person here by coincidence or on purpose?

He hadn't expected anyone to be around, so he hadn't bothered to conceal himself while flying over. Before he could do so now, the silver-haired youth noticed him. Lu Yin focused his gaze and looked over with a guarded expression; he didn't know how strong this person was, but he felt an extreme danger that made him want to keep his distance. His mind kept wandering back to that head, "Who are you?"

The corners of the youth's mouth lifted up in a faint smile. Right at that moment, the wandering clouds covered the moon and plunged the entire land into darkness. Lu Yin felt his scalp tingling as he saw a flash of white amidst the darkness, and he used the Roving Step to retreat. His right palm struck out at the same time, the sole moon flying around within. He noticed astonishment flicker across a cold gaze under a flash of white light, the illumination changing directions to collide with his palm. He faintly made out the outline of a beautiful butterfly sword, slicing the very air with a speed almost indiscernible to the human eye.

The youth's attack completely deflected the power of the Cosmic Palm, the air distorting as the resulting explosion sent both combatants flying backward. The moonlight peeked through the clouds once more, revealing expressions of surprise on both sides.

The silver-haired man rubbed his head and smiled, "Sorry, my bad. I thought you were a zombie and attacked by instinct."

Lu Yin squinted as his own mouth curled up, "It's alright, I only acted because I thought the same. Fortunately, I only used half my strength; I hope you weren't injured."

The silver-haired male's eyebrows rose, "Ah it's alright, how could that harm me? I only used a third of my strength, but that was more than enough to block your palm, haha."

Lu Yin looked at his own palm then smiled, "I'm sorry, I was mistaken. That was only a quarter of the palm's power, thankfully I did not injure you."

The silver-haired man laughed, "That's okay, I also remembered wrongly. I only used a fifth of my strength."

“Oh? I find that hard to believe, want to try again?”

The silver-haired man quickly waved his hands, “No, I’m just an elegant gourmet, and hardly like fighting with others. If you don’t mind me asking, what are you here for?”

Lu Yin calmly replied, “Looking for a fellow student. I’ve set the meeting point here.”

The silver-haired man grunted, “Me too, actually. I recall this place is near Nanjing, but it’s been marked blue. Maybe that was done by your fellow student?”

Lu Yin nodded, “It was.”

The youth tutted, “Aww, I wanted to take a look. But forget it, you can keep waiting here, I’ll head out.”

Lu Yin stared at his watch as the youth flew away, only letting go of a breath once he confirmed that the person had left. He had never felt such a grave sense of danger before; someone had actually blocked the full-power Cosmic Palm! This was an all-out attack with his full Sentinel power behind it; where had that person even come from? Was there really someone so strong in the first batch?

He walked through the area and looked at the fire crystal deposit. That youth had been standing where he’d found the head with vertical eyes, so he could very well have been its owner. He thought back to that skull, still failing to come up with a connection to anything he knew of. When Lu Yin had first picked up that head, he had felt he may have come into contact with an incredible object. And now, this feeling grew even more intense. Though that silver-haired male was only a Sentinel, Lu Yin did indeed feel like he hadn’t used his full power in that attack. That was unfathomable.

On the other side, the silver-haired man was flying under the moonlight with a strange expression on his face. His infallible killing strike had actually been blocked! He chuckled to himself, “There’s actually someone among the Sentinels that could withstand that strike, interesting. I thought such people would only appear with the second batch.”

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Yuxiang, the junction of the Jiangsu and Anhui provinces. Ever since Nanjing had focused its energies westward, it had become the major battle line for Lu Yin’s troops. Five prominent captains and 30,000 cultivators had set off to clear the path, saving many survivors and recruiting quite a few cultivators along the way. The camps at Yuxiang now had about 40,000 cultivators in total, and even had an added captain among their ranks. All these troops were under the command of Feng Hong, the captain Lu Yin was most familiar with.

The battle lines had originally been stable, but one day a figure appeared high in the skies above Yuxiang and looked down on Lu Yin’s troops. Tens of thousands of cultivators raised their heads from below.

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In Nanjing, Lu Yin was staring at his map. The distance to Wucheng was far too great, and the two were also separated by Anhui in the middle, which had countless zombies, mutant beasts, and even cultivators who weren’t on friendly terms with Nanjing. It would be extremely cumbersome to pave a

path all the way to Hubei, taking at least a few months, and now that the city was marked blue, he could very well end up meeting aliens instead of Liu Shaoge.

As he was wondering to himself, Luo Yi screamed and rushed over, "Hidden Sage, the barracks at the frontlines has been crushed, and everyone was captured including Feng Hong and the other captains!"

Lu Yin was shocked, "Did any aliens appear?"

Luo Yi nodded, "The soldiers who were allowed to escape were told four words: Blue Mountain Academy, Jaeger."

"Call Jeraldine over, now."

Lu Yin barked an order the moment Jeraldine arrived, "Use one of the Blue Mountain watches and contact a Jaeger. He's captured our soldiers."

Jeraldine nodded and retrieved the watches of the two students from her cosmic ring, clicking through it rapidly until a young man's figure flashed on the screen. He smiled politely, "Miss Jeraldine, long time no see. I hadn't expected we would meet in such a situation, but allow me to introduce myself. I am Jaeger, a student of Blue Mountain Academy."

Jeraldine hesitated, "You recognize me?"

Jaeger smiled, "You're the famous elite beauty of the First Military School. Our Academy is not very far, of course I recognize you."

"So you're the one who sent those two to ambush me?" her voice turned cold.

Chapter 23: The Class Divide

"Ambush you?" Jaeger laughed at Jeraldine's accusation, "I sent the two of them out to check out if we had any peers nearby. Did they sneak up on you? Don't worry, I'll teach them a lesson."

"No need for that, they've already paid for their mistake," Jeraldine replied coldly.

Lu Yin walked over to Jeraldine's side, casting a glance at Jaeger. The youth didn't seem surprised to see him, "The Hidden Sage of Nanjing? I guess you must be from the greater universe as well, Miss Jeraldine wouldn't want to work with you otherwise."

"My name is Yatar," Lu Yin said bluntly, "I come from the First Academy of the Pagoda Planet. My grandfather is the headmaster."

Jeraldine felt her face twitch at the mention of those words. Those were the very words that had made her underestimate this asshole.

"What are you trying to say?" Jaeger asked distractedly.

Lu Yin displayed a hint of arrogance, "I have more money than you could dream of. Release my people, and I can pay you in a lot of resources."

Jaeger let out a hearty laugh, "Pagoda Planet? Never heard of it. To be honest, I don't really care who you are; all I'm looking for is an alliance."

“An alliance?” Lu Yin asked in surprise.

“Yes,” Jaeger turned serious, “I discovered a mine of wind crystals nearby, but the place is occupied by a group of mutant beasts that are all Sentinels. I need assistance in dealing with them.”

“How much?” Jeraldine asked.

Jaeger shook his head, “I’m not certain, but a conservative estimate would be a dozen cubic meters.”

Jeraldine’s eyes blazed in an instant. A dozen cubes of wind crystals was no small amount; most planets had only a few cubes’ worth in total. She wanted to agree immediately, but stopped herself and looked at Lu Yin.

“I have money, I don’t care,” Lu Yin dismissed, something that surprised Jaeger. The youth hadn’t thought there was any student who would reject this offer; a dozen cubes of wind crystals were worth over a hundred cubes of star crystals at the right exchange, enough for one to master an entire branch of battle techniques or even accelerate one’s path to becoming a Melder. Even Jeraldine looked longingly at Lu Yin, but he continued, “Having said that, no one turns away chances to make money even if they’re rich. We’ll come look for you in two days; in the meanwhile, you aren’t to touch any of my subordinates.”

Jaeger nodded, “Alright, please bring those two juniors of mine as well. It would be best if we have a larger group.”

Lu Yin agreed, and Jeraldine immediately disconnected the screen.

“Is this Jaeger the one which the other two mentioned is the same level as Terence?” Lu Yin asked.

Jeraldine grunted in agreement, “I’ve heard of his name, he is one of the top three figures in Blue Mountain Academy, he may even be more powerful than Terence.”

“What is his family’s financial situation like?” Lu Yin asked.

Jeraldine was puzzled by the question, “Financial situation? I have no idea.”

Lu Yin’s eyes twinkled. He didn’t care for the wind crystals right now. No matter the quantity, he wouldn’t be able to exchange them for star crystals until he could enter the Great Yu Empire. On the other hand, Jaeger probably had a few star crystals on hand.

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Nanjing wasn’t very far from Yuxiang. When Lu Yin left for the town, even with Jeraldine carrying both students from Blue Mountain Academy, it only took him two hours to get there. Tens of thousands of cultivators were sitting around in the camp with their weapons seized, being watched by another group of cultivators all around. Poor Feng Hong was hanging from a tree nearby.

A powerful energy wave swept through the camp as the two reached the site, sending a violent vibration into the sky. Lu Yin realized the dual intent from that display; Jaeger was showing off his power, and at the same time trying to probe his own. However, such a display was actually useless, even posing the risk of ensuring the other party knew the exact extent of one’s power. Jaeger was quite powerful, slightly surpassing Terence, but this didn’t bother Lu Yin at all. To him, this was a dog with all

bark and no bite; the only person who'd ever left him feeling threatened so far was that silver-haired man.

Jeraldine stepped forward, her own energy buzzing as it stopped Jaeger's display. A crack suddenly appeared on the ground, splitting Lu Yin's group off from the rest of the camp. The resulting commotion drew the eyes of Feng Hong and the other captains, shame written all over their faces. Lu Yin didn't bother with them, his gaze focused on the man who was slowly floating into the sky.

Clap! Clap! Clap! "The reputation of the beauty of the First Military School isn't for nothing. Your abilities truly are astounding," Jaeger heaped praises upon her, eyes filled with unconcealable greed.

Jeraldine snorted, "Is this the way the Blue Mountain Academy treats their guests?"

"Ah, sorry for being brash," Jaeger laughed, finally turning his gaze to Lu Yin. Contempt flashed across his eyes as he noticed that Lu Yin had only recently become a Sentinel; this was something not even worth noticing.

"My two esteemed comrades, isn't it about time to let my juniors go?" Jaeger looked in Jeraldine's direction as he asked, under the impression that she was the leader of the two. The two captured students wanted to say something, but their mouths were sealed. All they could do was try to signal with their eyes, informing their senior of Lu Yin's might. However, he simply didn't understand what they were trying to express.

"We'll release them once we're convinced of your sincerity," Jeraldine said coldly.

Jaeger shrugged, "Alright then. Gather!"

Quite a few people walked out from all over the camp as he opened up a map, pointing to a mountain that was about a hundred kilometers away from Yuxiang, "The wind crystals are there, but they are surrounded by a flock of mutant birds. At least five are Sentinels, or what these natives call the Realm of Sky. The rest are Seekers, and we don't have a good count for those."

"What do you plan to do?" Jeraldine asked after glancing at Lu Yin.

Jaeger replied, "The five of us definitely can destroy the flock of birds, but that would take too much work. I have another plan; we can get the natives to lure the flock out. We can then blow up some of their explosives to take the beasts out; that would be the most efficient method."

Lu Yin's gaze immediately frosted over, while Jeraldine was taken aback as well, "That would kill the natives."

"Who cares if the natives live or die?" Jaeger laughed, "The only thing that matters is to make things easier."

"We can succeed even without risking their lives," Lu Yin said softly.

An amused Jaeger looked over, "Brother Yatar, the lives of these natives aren't worth our consideration. Once the trial has ended, their cultivators will be sent to battlefields all over the universe. Those with endowments might be fortunate enough to become slaves to some influential student, the prettier ones

can become servants, and the rest will just be cannon fodder. Heh, they might just be grateful for the opportunity to die here!”

Lu Yin didn't say anything to refute him. The Fate of Earth had been decided the moment evolution started; all the people of the planet were already under the surveillance of the Great Yu Empire and the Universe Youth Council; only a minority would be treated even remotely well.

“Alright, I've shown you my sincerity, can you release them now?” Jaeger turned back to Jeraldine.

She looked towards Lu Yin, who said plainly, “Wait, I have another question.”

A cold glint filled Jaeger's eyes, “What is it?”

“You can be considered a top-level figure in Blue Mountain Academy, why are you sitting around instead of moving to finish the mission?”

Jaeger's eyes filled with bewilderment and then bemusement as he looked between Lu Yin and Jeraldine, finally unable to suppress a laugh, “Right, I forget that people at your level don't have all the information. Let me break it down for you over refreshments.”

Jaeger sat down and had his subordinates serve tea, with Lu Yin and Jeraldine both obliging as they took their own seats. He took a sip and said profoundly, “There are three classes of students in this trial. The first class consists of individuals like my juniors; they're only entering to impress certain people; consider it gold plating. Survival alone is enough for them to have a bright future.

“The second class is people like us.”

“Like us?” Jeraldine was surprised. She had not imagined a top figure from Blue Mountain Academy like Jaeger would be in the same class as her.

Jaeger nodded, “You, me, Terence... all of us are the same. Our aim is to have some sort of result in this trial, be it occupying territory and turning it blue, discovering rare ores, or the like. Say, has anyone asked you to join their mission team since you landed?”

Jeraldine shook her head with a solemn expression.

Jaeger laughed and continued, “Exactly, that's because we aren't good enough. Only Veron from your academy and Borise from mine qualify for that.”

“The strongest individual in the academy?” Jeraldine asked.

Jaeger nodded his head, continuing in his serious tone, “There is no fairness in the universe. These people knew the details of what was going on when we first got news of the trial. The strongest individuals in each academy also have wide networks that they can leverage for the completion of the mission. For example, Veron isn't even in this region anymore.”

Jeraldine nodded with a pained look on her face, “I haven't seen him since the trial started.”

Chapter 24: Targeting The Capital

Jaeger smiled, “I know a little more than you, but even I barely have any news of that circle. Veron from your school and Borise from mine have teamed up with Parlie. They should be exploring the cause for

this planet's evolution, and are perhaps on their way to the capital. That area isn't somewhere we can go; I would be satisfied with just a province and some minerals. There's no need to fight those freaks."

Jeraldine paled, "Parlie? From the Third Gravitus Planet?"

Jaeger's gaze turned serious, "Yes, the very same one who almost joined the Empire Youth Council. He's already a peak Sentinel at 3k combat level."

Lu Yin was surprised that people so powerful would be among this batch. If Vesta and Orton were in the bottom tier, Jeraldine could barely join Terence and Jaeger in the middle. The strongest were already close to the capital, which would undoubtedly be the epicenter of the battles.

Jaeger said seriously, "From what I know, there are three top-tier teams in China, of which I only know Parlie's. Still, even the others are certainly going to be freaks that can compete with the second batch; their goal isn't even the planetary trial, they're just using it to warm up for the legendary territory trials."

Jeraldine fell silent at this juncture. Her own network was too weak to know much at this level.

"Alright, I've told you all I needed to. It's about time," Jaeger said suddenly.

"What time?" Jeraldine asked with suspicion.

"Time for you to be happy," he laughed weirdly.

She felt her heart drop immediately and looked at her teacup, "You poisoned the tea?"

"Of course not, your watch would have caught it. I actually gave you something quite good; powerburst powder." Jaeger retrieved a crystal vial from his cosmic ring with a dark green clover emblem on it.

"Shamrock Enterprises? What does this do?" she cried out.

"Find out for yourself. Try to activate your energy," Jaeger chuckled.

Lu Yin pressed down on Jeraldine's shoulder and stared at Jaeger, "Don't move. Powerburst is meant to allow Melders to activate all their star energy in an instant for explosive strength. Sentinels don't have enough star energy; we'll injure ourselves and wither up. Am I right?"

Jaeger was astonished, "You actually know? Right, you mentioned that your grandfather was a headmaster? Looks like you have some family background."

Lu Yin's gaze went cold, "People who aren't Melders yet can't activate their star energy for a while after consuming powerburst, but that's a huge price to pay. What are you pulling?"

Jaeger stowed the vial away and exclaimed proudly, "Nanjing is a decent place, and it has a unique position in this country. Occupying it myself would improve my results. And on top of that," greed flashed in his eyes as he looked Jeraldine up and down, "I've wanted to taste the First Military School's beauty for quite some time."

Jeraldine backed away, the blood draining from her face, "You bastard."

"Bastard?" Jaeger smiled, "How could you say that? I gave you a powerful supplement, you should blame yourself for not being able to use it."

The two students in the corner were writhing about, trying to raise the alarm, but he frowned as his gaze swept past them, "Useless things that still require my rescue."

A gale tore open their chains with a wave of his hand, and they shouted immediately, "Senior, watch out!"

Jaeger's gaze narrowed and he turned around, only to feel his stomach being crushed as a violent impact sent him flying out of the camp. He crashed into an abandoned field in the distance as Lu Yin jumped up and raised his hand, causing ripples in the air all around. Another motion of the palm gave rise to a second wave of energy that crumbled the earth, assaulting the fallen Jaeger once more. The youth could barely raise his hands to defend himself, but the force broke both his arm and forced out a mouthful of blood before he fainted.

Lu Yin stared coldly at him as he stretched his hand; both the Shockwave Palm and Spacerender Palm could be activated without star energy and were unaffected by powerburst. He cast a cold glance at the countless watching cultivators before shifting to the two other students of Blue Mountain Academy, whose faces paled as they froze in place. Jeraldine heaved a sigh of relief, but she was shocked as well. Even knowing the power of the Spacerender Palm, she wouldn't have thought it could defeat Jaeger. Lu Yin's physical strength alone could put him on par with the top three in most institutions. That rate of improvement was terrifying.

"Are the wind crystals real?" Lu Yin asked the two students. They had said so the last time he'd asked, but he didn't believe them anymore.

The two glanced at each other and finally spilled, "They're real, but it's hard to beat the mutant birds. There's a giant bird there that could be a Melder, one of our schoolmates was killed by it."

Jeraldine glared at Jaeger upon hearing that, but Lu Yin made his way outside the army camp, "The effects of the drug will pass in half an hour. We'll take these guys back to Nanjing after that."

Feng Hong and the other captains were already waiting outside, having surrounded another group from Anhui who had fallen under Jaeger's control. This group was not saddened by Jaeger's death, but instead heaved sighs of relief; he had only ruled over them with terror.

"Release them, and keep those who are willing to join our camp. The unwilling ones can leave."

Feng Hong nodded and started his arrangements, returning a short while later, "Apologies, Hidden Sage, we needed you to save us again."

Lu Yin smiled, "No matter, the opponent was in the Realm of Sky. How's the clean-up process?"

"Roger. We've already cleared up most zombies in Nanjing's countryside, as well as many mutants. We left the ones that were too strong for us to deal with, but managed to mark their territories on the map for warning. Further west is Anhui, where that other Realm of Sky powerhouse came from..."

Lu Yin dismissed Feng Hong after the report, falling into thought. He realized he had mixed up his thoughts. He had seen the intense ambition in Liu Shaoge's eyes when the city had been bombed, but the so-called Radiance had no understanding of the greater universe at this point. His ambitions then

were only directed at Earth, but with the first batch of students having appeared, he would have understood the heavens much better. Would his sights be limited to Earth anymore? That was impossible. It was 90% likely that Wucheng was in the same state as Nanjing; Liu Shaoge had suppressed some students to better understand the greater universe. He would not have much interest in China or even the Earth anymore; his ambition would have shifted to the skies.

Using Zhou Shan's soldiers to strike at Wucheng was a narrow-minded effort. The troops would have to spend a long time and give up many lives to reach the city, and the second batch of students would have already landed by that time, bringing great change to the world. It would be near impossible for him to pursue his vengeance this way; it wasn't even guaranteed that Liu Shaoge would be able to fend off the second batch at all.

Lu Yin breathed out and gazed towards the west, deciding to put his vengeance on the back burner while he focused on the corpse. He wanted to complete the mission of the trial, the same mission that could be completed by anyone from Earth. With all his other arrangements, that would make it possible to enter Astral-10.

Half an hour later, Jeraldine dragged Jaeger's trio back out. The two students had been bound once again, and Jaeger himself had been beaten within an inch of death. Lu Yin didn't stand on ceremony as he grabbed the latter's ring, using some blood to open it and pour everything out. Unfortunately, he didn't have much of value outside of some wind crystals, some unknown medicine, and a dozen star crystals. Pocketing what was useful, he turned around, "Let's go back."

Jeraldine nodded and followed behind him.

Those who had landed around Nanjing were mostly from the First Military School and Blue Mountain Academy. Their fates had varied between death, capture, and servitude to Lu Yin. Lu Yin believed there weren't any major threats to the city left nearby save for the silver-haired youth who could completely block the Cosmic Palm. That fellow's power far exceeded that of Jaeger and Terence, but he hadn't been able to obtain any information about him from Jeraldine. She simply didn't know anyone with that description.

Chapter 25: The Head Of The Seven Sages

Back in Zhongshan, Lu Yin informed Zhou Shan that he would be heading to the capital after all, which prompted some confusion, "Why now?"

"I want to find out the truth about the Apocalypse and that corpse," he lied to avoid talk of the mission.

Zhou Shan shook his head, "That explosion turned everything within ten kilometers to dust. We rushed some people there despite the Apocalypse, but we couldn't find anything then. Do you think you'll be able to find anything now?"

"Maybe not, but I'm still going."

Zhou Shan sighed and looked out at Nanjing with a complicated expression, "I have no way to stop you even if I wanted you. But, I wish you could return to Nanjing in case you don't find anything."

"I will," Lu Yin nodded.

Zhou Shan smiled and retrieved a small certificate from his chest pocket, "This is my official certification with the national army, it's my token. Each of the Seven Sages agreed on our tokens before departing; talking to the token's holder is the same as talking to the Sage themselves. Take this to the capital and find Zhang Dingtian, he'll help you."

"Zhang Dingtian? One of the Seven?" Lu Yin hesitated as he did not understand the seven well. Information was broken at best since the Apocalypse, and all his attention had been focused on Liu Shaoge. If he hadn't come to Nanjing, he wouldn't even have known that the Executioner was called Zhou Shan. The only sage he knew in the capital was the Bladesage.

Zhou Shan's face twisted strangely at the mention of Zhang Dingtian, "Lu Yin, I know you're strong enough to beat the aliens right now, but I suggest you don't belittle the Seven Sages. Don't use my power as a gauge, especially for the three High Sages. Zhang Dingtian is our head."

The Head of the Seven Sages? Lu Yin was amazed; that was no ordinary accomplishment.

Zhou Shan continued seriously, "Ever since the corpse was brought back to Earth, China secretly chose from countless people for its inheritance. Us Seven Sages are those who succeeded, and Zhang Dingtian is the strongest of all. His blade can suppress everything; those students are powerful, but no one in the same realm can defeat him, not even the lofty Water Sage. Many call him Bladesage, but his true title is the Frenzied Blade. He's the Sage of China."

Zhou Shan's words brought an image of a single dominant man to Lu Yin's imagination, his sole blade suppressing the entire capital. He asked, "How do you match up against him?"

Zhou Shan forced a smile and put up a single finger, "Besides the other two High Sages, all others can only last a single strike."

Lu Yin's expression changed; the ability to defeat Zhou Shan with one strike was terrifying. The man's true strength exceeded Orton's and Jeraldine's, and he could even give Terence a run for his money. In other words, Zhang Dingtian could defeat people on the same level as Terence with one strike, which would put him on par with school leaders. For such a person to exist on Earth...

Lu Yin presumed his Spacerender Palm or Cosmic Palm could defeat Zhou Shan in one strike as well. So how did he compare to Zhang Dingtian? He shook off the thought and received Zhou Shan's certificate, stowing it away carefully. The Executioner was doing him a huge favor with the hope that he would return to Nanjing, but that desire would only be met with disappointment. His future lay among the stars.

There were still a little under two months before the second batch of trainees arrived. Lu Yin was on a tight timeline if he hoped to confirm the corpse's identity within these two months.

"What? I'm supposed to follow you to the capital? Impossible," Jeraldine cried, rejecting him immediately.

"You don't have any authority to reject me," he replied.

"Didn't you hear Jaeger? Only the school leaders have gone to the capital. Those people are freaks! I've seen Veron crush Terence with my own eyes; even an ambush won't beat him."

“Let me repeat. You don’t have the authority to reject me.”

Jeraldine pleaded with shock in her eyes, “Yatar— no, Lu Yin— you have no idea what the school leaders represent. Terence was severely wounded by a single palm when he challenged Veron during a school competition. The difference between us is too great!”

“I almost crippled Jaeger with one palm myself.”

Jeraldine wanted to report, but she suddenly came to a realization. She had always known herself to be inferior to Terence, but she’d unwittingly dragged down her appraisal of Lu Yin’s power because of that thought. Finally considering things, she realized that before her was another freak of nature. Lu Yin had severely wounded Terence even as a Seeker, and inflicted heavy wounds on Jaeger without even using star energy. She took several steps backward and measured him warily, suddenly feeling like this fellow really could match up to the school leaders.

Lu Yin had never used his full force against Jeraldine, and she simply could not guess his true power level. However, what he’d already displayed was enough to amaze her.

“We leave for the capital tonight,” Lu Yin left, not giving her another chance to refuse. Jeraldine was helpless; the universe had so many territories with countless institutions, and even the Great Yu Empire had many schools. The so-called training mission was not for people on her level, but here she was getting dragged into the highest echelons of power.

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The vast Taihang Mountains of the Hebei Province were covered in a bloody mist that spread from horizon to horizon, dyeing the mountain stream red. The stinging odor of the bloody river attracted more and more mutant beasts, but their roars soon turned into howls of anguish as they were slaughtered. A short man was bathing in the middle of the river, exposing many scars and scabs on his sturdy back.

Up on shore, another man and a woman were silently measuring, “There won’t be any more beasts on this mountain if you keep playing around.”

The short man glanced ashore, “There are two Melder beasts that I haven’t provoked yet. We’ll slaughter them before we leave.”

“It’s time to head to the capital,” the woman refuted, “That’s our greatest chance to find the criminal; it’s very likely that the corpse these people brought back from Neptune is our target.”

A cold glint passed through the short man’s eyes, “Veron, where are the other two teams?”

The man ashore was Veron, the strongest student of the First Military School. The woman was Borise, the strongest of Blue Mountain Academy. At their head was Parlie of the Third Gravitax Planet. This trio was the elite group Jaeger had talked about.

“I believe Gerlaine’s team is in the grasslands north of the capital. Eddy should be in Shanxi, not far from the capital.”

Parlie walked onto the riverbank, a wave of energy drying him off in an instant, “Let’s go to the capital, then.”

The trio left behind a pile of slaughtered mutants in their wake, with a large number of Sentinels in their midst.

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The endless grass in Northern China was swaying in the wind, looking like green waves dancing under the sunlight from a bird's-eye view. It was exceptionally charming, prompting one young woman to stretch both hands and shout, "So this is how the grasslands smell. Sooo fresh!"

A two-meter-tall green-skinned man glanced at her from nearby, speaking in a low voice, "If you think this shit smells fresh, you're crazy."

"What did you say, Balaror?" the woman stared at him furiously.

The green-skinned Balaror quickly smiled, "Nothing much, it smells pleasant."

"Well, at least you're tactful," she smiled, "Let's head towards the capital. I heard this planet's people retrieved a corpse from another primitive planet, it should be the criminal."

"Alright," Balaror agreed, raising his head as the endless grass ahead of him parted abruptly like it was alive.

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Two people in black clothing were slowly walking through Shanxi, crossing an endless yellow plain. Strange beasts were constantly rushing out of the ground before vanishing again, prompting a frosty gaze from a man with a scaly face. The yellow soil turned incomparably dry with every step he took, as though the little water it had was sucked away in an instant. All the soil a hundred meters behind him had basically turned to dust, with any mutants that had wandered nearby dried into leather.

"I don't like this place. We should have landed in the ocean."

"No other choice, we have to come to the capital to complete our mission. I know you were born at the bottom of the ocean, but try to endure it a little more. We'll be able to leave soon."

"I've already sacrificed so much. I'll kill whoever dares to stop me from completing this mission. Even if all the natives from this planet must die, so be it."

"Of course, no one can stop us."

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In the northeast, ice and snow formed a white blanket covering heaven and earth. A pair of red boots was trudging through the endless sea of white, giving way to a face that was absolutely beautiful. The woman's eyes were bright as stars, almost able to melt the frozen land; this was Bai Xue, the Water Sage, and the surroundings were her Blue Camp.

Three figures were crouched in front of Bai Xue in the snow, their expressions distorted from extreme pain. It took great difficulty for one of them to raise his head and stare at the gorgeous beauty with absolute horror, eking out through trembling lips, "You, just a native... How are you so strong?"

Bai Xue watched the three of them calmly, “You’re students from the greater universe, huh? Not bad.”

“Who are you? You can’t be a native, a native can’t beat three academy elites!” one of them said in disbelief.

Bai Xue’s eyes gleamed brighter than diamonds as she ignored them, “Please mark the northeast blue, I don’t want to be disturbed.”

That student closed his eyes in pain and activated his watch. Moments later, the northeast turned blue on the map.

Chapter 26: Melder

Lu Yin grabbed Jeraldine and started his journey the same night. Taking a short rest about 100 kilometers north of Nanjing, they continued heading north until they reached Shandong.

“Hey, the northeast has turned blue,” Jeraldine said with surprise along the way.

Bai Xue was defeated? Lu Yin was curious about this, but before he could think further the duo came across a giant tree that was blocking their path. It resembled a willow that was more than a kilometer tall, countless branches covering a portion of Shandong’s sky. Both of them immediately halted and checked its combat level.

““4290,”” the two exclaimed in unison. The tree was a Melder!

“Let’s go around it,” Lu Yin promptly decided to avoid it, but a few vines stretched out from a river and whipped towards them. He pushed Jeraldine away before dodging the attack himself, a loud snap resounding through the air as the vines went taut. Jeraldine gasped with relief; she wouldn’t have managed to escape the attack if not for the push.

“Go around and try to avoid it,” he shouted even as countless vines whipped toward them from all directions. The tree could somehow attack them from quite the distance, and it soon became apparent that it would be too difficult to go around. They would spend at least ten seconds in its attack radius, and while he could manage that, Jeraldine could not. Noticing her defense faltering, he used a Spacerender Palm to deflect the branches and rushed towards her, lifting her up and rushing directly towards the tree.

“WHAT? YOU’RE CRAZY!” she screamed as they approached, eyes glued to its python-like vines and the piles of bone on the ground. It was a terrifying scene.

“Look behind you,” Lu Yin said calmly.

Jeraldine turned back and her face paled; the road behind them had been sealed off! An endless wall of branches had left them with no way to retreat. She groaned, “This is a Melder, we’re doomed!”

Lu Yin looked through his surroundings with an icy gaze, dodging the endless vines that shot towards them. He was now less than three kilometers away, and the closer he got, the more he realized that he’d underestimated its horrifying size. Its energy alone was distorting the space around, rendering the place devoid of sunlight. Thankfully, the creature seemed quite unintelligent, attacking purely based on instinct. Were it to have any skill at battle, the two of them certainly wouldn’t be able to persist.

Jeraldine took out more than ten fire crystals from her cosmic ring and smashed them, sending a wave of flames towards the ground.

“Uhh... are you trying to burn it?” Lu Yin asked.

She grimaced, “It might be scared of fire.”

She wasn’t wrong, technically. It was normal for plant-based creatures to be afraid of fire, but a tree as big as this one would need a volcanic eruption before it went up in flames. Even the full stash of fire crystals outside Nanjing would be insufficient. However, Lu Yin’s eyes suddenly narrowed and he ignored her; was that another person? He saw a tiny spot darting left and right under the tree, slowly growing larger and larger until it revealed itself to be another human. This person was even closer than them.

“He’s so strong!” Jeraldine exclaimed. She knew that she wouldn’t be able to bear the tree’s attacks if not for Lu Yin, while this other person was obviously quite relaxed.

Lu Yin’s gaze turned cold as they approached closer, recognizing the head of silver hair. This was the same youth whose butterfly sword had beaten his Cosmic Palm under the moonlight, something that he would never forget.

“We meet again, friend,” the silver-haired youth greeted cordially.

Jeraldine was bewildered; how did they know each other?

“What a coincidence,” Lu Yin said as he side-stepped another whip.

“It’s not a coincidence, I’ve been trapped here for quite some time. There’s a high chance that you would bump into me if you’re heading north, it’s fate.”

“How do you know that we’re heading north?” Lu Yin asked.

“Of course you’d be heading north. Isn’t your destination the capital?”

Lu Yin’s eyes narrowed and he tried to guess who this guy was. Was this one of the school leaders Jaeger was talking about?

“CAREFUL!” Jeraldine yelled suddenly as she saw dozens of branches shooting towards the youth. He just flashed a friendly smile as a beautiful butterfly sword appeared in his hands, facing the attack head-on. A loud explosion rang out as the branches were cut down, the youth himself emerging unscathed. He smiled at her once more before flashing a provocative grin in Lu Yin’s direction.

For his part, Lu Yin still held the frightened girl in one hand as the moon started flitting around the other, meeting the attack with the Cosmic Palm. The branches were blown away as he, too, emerged unscathed. He yawned, “I didn’t sleep well last night, so I only used 30% of my power.”

The silver-haired youth’s face twitched, “I only used 20%.”

“Oh sorry, did I say 30? I meant 10.”

“Hmph. I meant 5.”

Jeraldine was speechless at this exchange. They were competing? Now?

Lu Yin didn't know why he felt an intense threat from the silver-haired youth. It was as though that butterfly sword was hovering right above his head at all times, ready to drop down at any second. That was why he always strutted about; it was an act to make sure he wouldn't be the victim of a sudden attack. As countless branches appeared from all directions and sealed off the space that they were in, he finally turned serious, “Let's aim for the main body, or there'll be no end to this.”

The silver-haired youth nodded, “I spent too much energy playing in the last few days, or I could've just settled this alone.”

“If I weren't trying to get somewhere soon, I'd use this thing for training.”

The youth smiled and stepped on one of the branches, rushing towards the main body of the tree. Lu Yin tossed Jeraldine to the ground, warning her to take care of herself as he followed. Both of them quickly approached the trunk.

Becoming a Melder was an important step in one's training. That realm was the peak of the human body, where many cultivators would be stuck for the rest of their lives. It was only when they exceeded their own limits that they could advance and become Explorers. Most elite students were Sentinels, but there were still more Melders at that age than Sentinels who could face Melder-level beings. Although the tree wasn't exactly intelligent, it was huge and seemed to have infinite energy reserves. In some ways, it was far more difficult to defeat it than a normal Melder.

The silver-haired guy's butterfly sword turned into a white comet that shot towards the tree, while the vague image of a second star appeared in Lu Yin's Cosmic Palm. Both attacks landed at almost the exact same moment and struck the same spot, cracking the tough surface of the tree in an instant. The two of them pierced right through the tree and flew a hundred meters away as a loud explosion rang out behind them, the enormous creature collapsing to the ground as its vines covered the river.

The two looked at each other after that combined strike; they now had a better understanding of the other's strength. The same thought flashed across both their minds; this person had grown more powerful.

On the other side of the tree, Jeraldine was the most stunned of them all. A mutant plant was easy to dodge, but it was difficult to pierce their bark. Although she had never sparred with Veron, she was sure that even he didn't have the ability to wound this tree. Were these two even stronger than the top student of her school?

Chapter 27: Realmbreaker

Just who was this guy? Jeraldine stared hard at the silver-haired youth, but had no impression of him at all. That hair and the butterfly swords were identifying characteristics that she was sure she couldn't have forgotten, but she simply didn't know who he was. He couldn't be a native, right?

“Sigh, my knife is dull and I had no time to sharpen it, I only managed to use half of my strength,” the youth commented with a tut, glancing at Lu Yin.

Lu Yin stared at his own palm, "Tch, my hands were dirty. I could only show 40% of my strength."

How was that a valid reason? This response left the youth speechless, but he smiled like a fox, "This is our second meeting, let's introduce ourselves. My name is Silver."

Lu Yin flashed a faint smile, "I'm Yatar from the Pagoda Planet, my grandfather is the headmaster."

"Wow, a headmaster? Two, no three generations of scholars. Congratulations!"

Lu Yin smiled, "You're too kind, I like your silver hair too."

"Hahahaha, I like it too. Right, I still have something to do, see you again, Yatar," Silver said graciously.

Lu Yin smiled as the youth disappeared into the horizon, "See you again, Silver."

It was only then that Jeraldine flew over and asked, "What school is he from?"

He shook his head, "I don't know, let's go."

"Hang on, don't you want the energy crystal?" Jeraldine stretched her hand out, showing a dazzling white crystal the size of her finger, "These things might not be useful for us directly, but we can use them as an energy source or just sell them for a good price."

"Let's go," he said again as he grabbed it from her, taking off and heading north. The energy crystals of mutants were inferior and couldn't even be used on most soldiers; they had too many impurities and would affect training speed. His own die was picky as well, and refused to absorb inferior energy crystals. For now, he could only gather these kinds of things and hoard them until he could exchange them for star crystals.

After flying east for a while, Silver finally stopped and looked back with confusion in his gaze, "What battle technique was that? For a Sentinel to block my attack... It's a foreign technique, but it's pretty strong. I'll have to check it out when I go back."

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Once the Apocalypse struck, many people even within the capital had turned into zombies, while the leaders of the country had all died in that one explosion. The capital had descended into chaos at first, only brought under control by the Head of the Seven Sages— Zhang Dingtian. Despite that, the new capital only occupied a third of its original size, the outer districts completely filled with zombies. There had just been too many people living here, giving rise to millions of zombies that far exceeded the numbers near Nanjing. Even after half a year of constant battle, Zhang Dingtian and the thousands of cultivators under him simply couldn't destroy them all. The city was like a beast surrounded by countless ants; while it could crush any ants in sight, the sheer mass left it unable to move.

The vicinity of the capital was reinforced by a steel platform that was ten meters high, cultivators all over watching over the zombies roaming in the distance. The gates were mostly shut, only opening from time to time as cultivators in armored vehicles headed out to forage for resources.

As one armored vehicle wheeled back into the city, a captain on the walls mused, "Didn't that truck just leave?"

“Must have bumped into a beast and suffered casualties, happens all the time. They’re back for supplies and men,” the one next to him answered.

There were many survivors gathered near the steel walls, all dressed in rags and most starving. They quickly gathered around as they saw the vehicle driving in, but it didn’t stop at all as it almost drove over a few of them. Within the vehicle, Borise’s eyes gleamed, “I’ve only seen these kinds of things in books, I never thought I’d have the chance to drive one. Interesting...”

Veron laughed, “Bring one back if you like it.”

However, Parlie did not share the same levity. He was staring grimly into the city, worried about a chilling energy that he felt within. He hadn’t been worried at first, but now his mind was changed, “Veron, who’s the strongest person in the capital?”

“Someone called Zhang Dingtian, people call him the Frenzied Blade. He’s the Head of the Seven Sages.” Veron noticed Parlie’s gaze frosting over, “Don’t worry, even the Seven Sages are just Sentinels. They’re a little better than some elite students, but still far below our level.”

Parlie ignored Veron; he was the only one here who vaguely felt that chilling strength.

The armored vehicle ignored warnings from the soldiers as it headed towards the southern section of the city where the explosion had occurred. The region had been cordoned off long ago, but Borise simply tried to drive over the captain who tried to stop them.

“How dare you,” the man jumped up and attacked, but Veron glanced up and summoned a powerful gale with a snap of his fingers. The sharp wind pierced through the captain, dropping him to the ground and frightening the other soldiers in the area. The vehicle quickly came to a halt anyway, with Parlie and group walking out to examine the lava-filled pit in front of them. The air all around was distorted by the heat.

“This is the place. The planet’s evolution was kickstarted by an explosion here, but the corpse went missing as well,” Veron explained.

Parlie fell deep into thought. The lava had certainly eradicated any traces nearby, making it impossible to obtain any information here. “Well, it seems like we have to find the person in charge of the city, this Head of the Seven Sages.”

Veron smiled, “I’ll go and bring him over.”

Parlie was just about to speak when he froze and looked upwards, shrinking back with a grim expression on his face. Veron and Borise followed right after; a swordsman was standing silently in the air, glaring at the trio.

“When did he appear?” Borise was shocked.

“Bladesage!” the soldiers all around bowed as the swordsman drew his blade and descended, shocking Parlie and his followers. This was the Frenzied Blade!

“Retreat,” Zhang Dingtian commanded, and the soldiers all around withdrew in perfect order. Strangely, the man himself looked rather ordinary. There wasn’t much visible muscle, nor were there any overbearing scars, but he still had an overbearing aura that might have been because of the blade in his right hand.

“You come from the greater universe?” he asked them calmly.

Veron walked forward, “You’re right. We come from the heavens, and have some things to ask you.”

Zhang Dingtian glanced past him and looked at Parlie, “Leave the capital, you’re not welcome here.”

Parlie’s eyes narrowed, while Veron was outraged at being ignored, “I said I have some things to ask you, are you deaf?”

“Before you leave, the punishment for causing turmoil in the capital is one attack each.” Zhang Dingtian finally glanced at the youth, slashing out before the three could even answer.

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! Borise’s watch suddenly started screaming, and her expression warped as she saw the scanner reading, “CAREFUL, HE’S A REALMBREAKER!”

However, it was too late. Veron was shocked as everything around him seemed to disappear in the face of an ordinary slash, the blade approaching him quickly. He growled as he activated the Spacerender Palm, forming an energy wave to deflect the attack. An explosion of pressure crushed the earth in the vicinity, forcing Borise a few steps back as the residual energy blew the clouds apart and shook even the lava in the pit below. The soldiers watching this sight gasped in awe; every battle that the Bladesage participated in was inspiring.

Veron gritted his teeth and stared at Zhang Dingtian in disbelief. How could there be a freakish realmbreaker among the natives?

Parlie was the only one who could react quickly, rushing behind Zhang Dingtian and throwing out a punch. However, the back of the Bladesage’s sword smashed into his attack, sending out an energy wave that destroyed a distant building and left a gash in the ground. Veron was pushed back and spat out a mouthful of blood, while Parlie retreated as well.

Still in his original spot, even in the same stance, Zhang Dingtian looked towards Borise.

Chapter 28: Capital

Borise’s eyes narrowed at the sight of Zhang Dingtian’s blade. She retreated as quickly as she could, but she simply hadn’t expected him to be able to attack her so quickly after dealing with the combined force of Veron and Parlie. The blade glanced past her, leaving a gaping slash in her abdomen that quickly stained her shirt crimson. Her nerves immediately felt like they’d been set on fire, forcing her to her knees even as sweat started dripping from her forehead.

One man and one blade could control the entire capital. The Head of the Seven Sages, the Frenzied Blade. It was only now that Parlie’s trio understood why Zhang Dingtian deserved the respect he commanded; he could very well be the strongest person currently on Earth.

Realmbreakers were beings who could display power beyond their current realm. While one’s ability in a battle depended on a multitude of factors, even a peak 3,000 combat level Sentinel like Parlie couldn’t

actually get to 3,001 until he broke through to become a Melder. He could certainly use skill and battle techniques to fight Melders before then, but the difference between the two realms was a wall. Those who could break that wall were extremely rare even across the Great Yu Empire, and each one was a freak. Zhang Dingtian's combat level had jumped to 3,200 the moment he attacked.

"RUN!" Parlie barked, directly flying out of the capital. Veron and Borise were a little slower owing to their injuries, but Zhang Dingtian calmly watched them leave. He had been surprised by their strength; five students had attacked the capital before, but each one had died to a single strike. These three could endure the strength of a High Sage, especially the formidable shorty.

"Bladesage," a young woman in a suit walked out of an armored vehicle nearby, a concerned expression on her face.

"Send down orders to investigate all foreign cultivators immediately. Report back immediately about any that look like these students, and don't act against them."

"The ones you just traded blows with were from the heavens?" she asked.

Zhang Dingtian looked at her, "Don't overthink it, no one can match me."

The woman nodded respectfully, heading out to pass on his orders.

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"A native actually wounded me... I want him dead, I want him dead right now!" Borise growled as the trio landed outside the capital.

Veron wiped the blood on the corner of his lip, "There's an actual realmbreaker with the natives, quite extraordinary."

"No worries, combat level is the most unreliable means of measuring one's battle ability. Victory and defeat still depend on battle techniques and skill," Parlie tried to quell them, but Veron frowned and stared at the city. Unreliable? Indeed, combat level wasn't a reliable statistic in general, as many powerful people held themselves down in certain realms and focused on battle techniques. Those kinds of people were powerful, but realmbreakers were an entirely different story. Each one could enter one of the thirteen imperial squadrons without any test; that was the highest military organization in the Great Yu Empire, where realmbreakers were treated with the same kind of favor that those with natural endowments received. That native was proof of why; he hadn't even used a battle technique in that engagement, beating them back with simple slashes.

Parlie tried to act calm, but it was difficult to disguise the respect and envy in his voice. He was a peak Sentinel himself, capable of defeating Melders using his battle techniques, but he still couldn't break through the barrier and get to level 3,001. That one level had cut off countless geniuses, but this native could cross it at will.

"The bastard actually dared wound me, he's going to get it!" Borise was still immersed in her hatred, "I'm inciting a beast wave!"

Parlie's gaze focused and he did not speak. Beside him, Veron agreed, "The capital definitely has clues about the criminal. Zhang Dingtian might know himself, but a direct confrontation might not be a good idea. Send the beast wave and lure him outside; Parlie and I will look for clues."

Borise nodded and licked her lips, dashing into the distance.

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One day later, as Lu Yin and Jeraldine arrived at Hebei, they heard the news that the capital was under attack by a wave of beasts. The entire city was surrounded by mutant beasts.

"There are over 10 million zombies outside the capital, no beast wave wants to go there. Didn't Jaeger say his school leader Borise was around here?" Lu Yin guessed. If it was her, she couldn't be allowed to remain in the vicinity.

"It's possible. Everyone from Blue Mountain knows at least one kind of beast taming skill," Jeraldine replied, quickly following up, "But this is actually a good thing. The beasts will just go fight the zombies, the people will be safe as long as they stay inside."

Lu Yin started muttering to himself. If Jeraldine could think of it, so could Borise; why would she still send out a beast wave?

The soldiers within the capital were constantly shifting formations, ready for the off-chance that the beasts and zombies would join together and attack the capital. The occasional flying Sentinel beast would incite cries of fear from within the city. Upon a high building, two figures watched as one flying beast was beheaded with a single strike, sending a shower of blood to the ground.

"That's Zhang Dingtian, Head of the Seven Sages. Truly powerful!" Gerlaine exclaimed.

Balaror was solemn, "This person is stronger than me."

"Obviously, he's a realmbreaker. Even the two of us combined might not be a match for him."

"But I don't have to confront him directly, I can suffocate him over time," the green man clenched his fist.

Gerlaine changed the topic, "This beast wave should have come from that snake Borise. Looks like she suffered at Zhang Dingtian's hands, or she wouldn't incite a wave so massive. It must have cost quite a lot."

Balaror nodded, "It's attracted Zhang Dingtian's attention, so there's no one left in the city. Parlie and Veron are likely looking for clues right now."

Gerlaine activated her scanner at his statement, "Woah, five Sentinels! There's Zhang Dingtian on one hand, so the others should be Parlie, Veron, Eddy, and Hayden. We're all here, guess things will get lively soon."

Balaror's face sank, "Eddy being here could spell trouble."

“Mm. They made an exception for him to enter Yu Academy, and he recently defeated thirty school leaders... but no matter, what do you think will happen if we leak this news to Zhang Dingtian?”

“You want us to betray our peers?” Balaror frowned

Gerlaine rolled her eyes, “There are no peers here, only competition. The earthlings are perfectly valid trainees in the Empire’s eyes, we’re betraying nothing.”

Balaror nodded, “I can have the plants help stop the beast wave, and let Zhang Dingtian show his hand.”

“Then we’ve come to a great decision.”

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Elsewhere in the city, two figures in black gowns were within an abandoned hotel.

“Eddy, I just sensed Balaror’s plant smell,” one of them said with a cruel smile.

“There are seven Sentinels in this city, eight including Borise. It’s a little troublesome, but nothing too difficult to eliminate. The only problem is Zhang Dingtian; I didn’t expect a realmbreaker among the natives.”

“Leave him to me, I want to know what a realmbreaker is like,” the other person’s eyes twinkled green.

Up atop the steel walls, Zhang Dingtian stared solemnly at the fight between the zombies and beasts. This was a millstone of flesh and blood, dozens of creatures dying every second. The smell of blood stained the air. The zombies were weak enough for the beasts to tear apart easily, but their bodies were also toxic. Every beast had a limit to how many it could kill before it was poisoned to death.

Around ten kilometers to the east, Borise stared into the distance with excitement despite a pale face, “Go and bury this city. A bastard native actually had the gall to wound me, you’ll pay.”

She didn’t notice immediately when a chill started below her legs, nor did she see the occasional snowflakes in the air. Focused purely on the massacre in the distance, she pulled on her clothes and shuddered; why was it getting cold?

Chapter 29: Coincidence

For some strange reason, Borise’s heart clenched and her back turned cold. She whirled around, startled to discover a cold stare from a beautiful woman that she hadn’t discovered in however long. She passed it off as a side-effect of her injury, focusing on the appearance of this beauty in red boots and a snow white skirt, waist-length blue hair a stark contrast from the dark red earth, “Who are you?”

The stunning woman seemed devoid of all emotion as she asked a question of her own in response, “Are you the one who summoned the beast wave?”

Borise stared intensely at the woman, growing more and more jealous of her peerless beauty. Of all the women she had ever seen in her life, only Starsibyl could compare. How did such a pure and untouched beauty exist in this universe?

“I’ll ask once more; did you start this beast wave?” the gorgeous woman asked.

“Who are you?” Borise repeated herself, wariness growing in her gaze.

“Bai Xue,” the woman replied calmly.

“Bai Xue the Water Sage?!”

Bai Xue’s frosty gaze passed beyond Borise, landing on the bloody battlefield, “What was your goal with unleashing these beasts?”

“Hmph. A mere native has no right to speak to me. Watch me tear your face apart!” Borise grabbed forward, a bestial roar sounding from her palm that could send a chill down anyone’s spine. Layers of ice appeared in front of Bai Xue as she retreated.

“Did you think you can stop me with some dumb plant’s ice?” Borise charged right through, “You natives are so stupid.”

Bai Xue came to a stop and raised her palm towards the alien, causing the ground to freeze and the winds in the forest to change directions. Borise was unphased by the attack and raised her own palm, “You’re asking to die!”

Even though she hadn’t yet recovered from her injuries, Borise felt nothing but contempt for Bai Xue. She let out a low growl and the ice exploded, the impact ripping open the sleeve of Bai Xue’s blouse and spilling a few stalks of icy grass. This was the exact same plant that powered Zhao Yu’s Frost Palm, working in a similar way to fire crystals.

Anticipating a look of desperation, Borise stared down at Bai Xue with a gaze steeped with pride, “I told you that some plant ice would be useless!”

However, a frozen wind suddenly buffeted her from all sides, freezing the ground solid. A layer of frost solidified in the air, causing the blood to drain from Borise’s face, “No... That can’t be. This is the innate gift of Frost; you have an innate gift?!”

Bai Xue’s gaze remained unchanged as an endless sequence of gusts rushed towards Borise, freezing her arms in a moment. The girl squealed and tried to escape, but it was already too late. Her entire body froze solid in a mere two seconds and she toppled to the ground, shattering into a million pieces. The top student of Blue Mountain Academy had died just like that.

Borise’s death immediately returned self-control to the mutant beasts on the battlefield, prompting many of them to start retreating. Bai Xue let loose a sigh of fatigue; the girl had actually been quite powerful. If not for the previous injury, there was a chance that she could have struggled free. Even with the advantage of being underestimated, she herself had been forced to use her innate gift of Frost.

Back in the city, Veron and Parlie had already searched Zhang Dingtian’s residence as well as the office of the deceased Primary without finding anything. Lu Yin had reached the capital as well, entering the city with Jeraldine in tow. The two encountered a sober atmosphere, but one that lacked the chaos he’d expect from a city under attack. Even when terrified, the survivors of the capital remained confident in the Chinese troops.

No matter how prosperous China's cities had been during peacetime, they had all been ruined to the same extent by the Apocalypse. Bridges were broken, houses had collapsed, and most buildings were too ruined to live in. Just a place to sleep was now a luxury.

Lu Yin found a map of the capital and led Jeraldine straight to Zhang Dingtian's residence, his reasoning being the same as Veron and the others who believed Zhang Dingtian was most likely to know the whereabouts of the corpse. Said man was currently atop the steel walls, focused on a distant white fog that he knew was produced by Bai Xue.

"Bladesage, look there!" someone exclaimed, drawing the gazes of everyone nearby. A sea of white froze the ground in the middle of the battlefield between the mutant beasts and zombies, a gorgeous woman walking out of the fog and freezing every creature she passed.

"The Water Sage! Water Sage Bai Xue!" someone else shouted in excitement, prompting a chorus of cheers. The Seven Sages of China were upheld as the guardian angels after the Apocalypse, and Bai Xue was placed on a distinct pedestal as the only woman among their number. Her mere appearance renewed the vigor of the soldiers here, convincing them to give it their all in battle. Beauty could be considered its own form of strength; it could stir the potential in some individuals, causing them to ignore their struggles and pain. All of Beijing seemed to roar out in delight at Bai Xue's arrival, striking fear into the mutants that were still on the battlefield.

Bai Xue headed towards Zhang Dingtian who was still staring at the battlefield, "I took care of the one who triggered the beast wave. It was a student from outer space."

"Thank you," he said mechanically.

She continued coldly, "You're too soft. Even if you don't kill them, you should at least capture them. These people don't even see us as human beings."

Zhang Dingtian growled lowly, "I killed five. These last few proved to be quite difficult."

Bai Xue was taken aback, "Difficult? Enough that you couldn't kill them?"

Zhang Dingtian looked at Bai Xue, "Even we Sages are divided into the three High Sages and the four Sages. The students from outer space should also have their own divisions. The person you killed a bit ago was no pushover either."

Bai Xue remained silent. Borise had indeed forced her to use her innate gift, something even the four Sages could not accomplish. At her peak, that girl would likely have strength equivalent to a High Sage. Her attention was suddenly pulled to something about the Bladesage's statements, "You said last few. What happened to the rest?"

Zhang Dingtian suddenly narrowed his eyes, "I don't know."

Bai Xue took out the personal gadget that she had plundered, tapping it a few times to activate the scanner. The screen quickly started beeping and she gasped, "Eight. There are eight experts in the Realm of Sky here!"

The Bladesage's eyes went wide with towering rage; eight cultivators at that level were enough to destroy the entire capital! "They're looking to die!"

Across the city, as Lu Yin and Jeraldine were closing in on Zhang Dingtian's residence, the latter suddenly froze up in shock. Lu Yin followed her gaze to two men, one tall and one short, that were dressed far better than most survivors. More importantly, the shorter man looked truly unique at only a little more than a meter tall with quite a stocky build. This was a body that would be noticed anywhere. These two were Veron and Parlie, who had just emerged empty-handed from Zhang Dingtian's residence. About to head somewhere else, they had coincidentally bumped into Lu Yin and Jeraldine.

Veron and Parlie were quite distinct, and so were Lu Yin and Jeraldine. The girl was exceptionally eye-catching; women's rights had been trampled after the Apocalypse, so a woman as attractive as Jeraldine would definitely stand out in the crowd. Veron immediately recognized her.

"Veron!" she gasped, instinctively moving towards Lu Yin.

Veron? Lu Yin focused his gaze. He had heard the name of the First Military School's strongest student a number of times but hadn't expected to encounter him so quickly.

Veron was also surprised to see Jeraldine. The capital was the obvious investigation spot if one wished to actually work on the trial's mission, but he couldn't help but laugh at the idea of her trying to do so. He quickly moved his gaze to Lu Yin, but feeling the weak star energy of a new Sentinel, he believed this other youth was just trash.

"Do you know each other?" Parlie asked quietly.

"We're from the same academy."

"Bring them along, we need manpower," Parlie grunted.

Veron nodded and turned to the two, "Follow us."

A hint of fear flashed across Jeraldine's eyes and she looked at Lu Yin. Although the trials were open to everyone, anyone who wasn't a friend or relative could be considered an enemy even if they were from the same school. As far as she was concerned, although Lu Yin controlled her, he didn't make her fear for her life like Veron did; fellow students were far more ruthless.

"I told you to get over here! Are you deaf?" Veron shouted loudly, drawing several gazes.

Parlie frowned, "Lower your voice."

Veron gave Jeraldine an icy glare, but Lu Yin took a few steps forward and looked at him indifferently, "Who do you think you're talking to? Pipe down."

Veron was a little startled by this; he had never expected a new Sentinel to have the guts to speak out like this. He sneered in response, "I don't know which school you're from, but they'll have to remove your name from their records today."

He pushed his palm downwards, ripples spreading in all directions and affecting many nearby survivors. Lu Yin raised an eyebrow at the Spacerender Palm, copying the enemy's movements and synchronizing a forward thrust.

Two identical attacks clashed in the sky, and all that everyone in the area heard was a loud bang as gusts of winds blasted the walls apart and even collapsed the bridge nearby. The sky cracked where the attacks collided, forming a vacuum that sucked in air from all directions.

Chapter 30: Chaotic Battle

“You can use Spacerender Palm?” Veron stared at Lu Yin with a surprise. A shocked Parlie stared at Lu Yin, confused at the existence of someone else who could match up to Veron with the Spacerender Palm. Lu Yin himself shared the sentiment, but for the exact opposite reason. The exchange had taken far less power than he’d expected, and Veron’s hand was already shaking in the aftermath.

Meanwhile atop the steel walls of Beijing, Zhang Dingtian and Bai Xue were coldly gazing at the core of the city. Bloodlust was pouring out of Bai Xue’s eyes at the thought of the enormous damage these callous students could inflict on the people of Earth.

“Zhang Dingtian is heading over with another Sentinel,” Jeraldine called out in the city.

Lu Yin was unfazed, but Parlie frowned, “Hurry this up!”

Veron’s gaze sharpened as his ring armor covered his body, and he leapt up and kicked towards Lu Yin with blinding speed. However, Lu Yin lifted his own leg and stomped down on his calf, breaking the ground below and prompting a pained roar. Star energy erupted from Veron’s body, trying to force a contest of pure energy, but Lu Yin simply sneered. He had no way to match Veron’s energy reserves, but his absorption rate was more than twice that of anyone else here; he had no need to worry about running out.

Jeraldine fled the area to escape the effects of the clash of star energy, and Parlie raced forward in an attempt to grab her. She crushed several fire crystals in tandem to boost her Flame Palm, but the attack failed to even wipe the smirk off the short man’s face. A single blow dispersed all the energy; these flames were simply no match. This forced Lu Yin to send a Spacerender Palm his way, which he shattered before turning to Veron, “Let’s go.”

Veron laughed and rushed to leave, but Lu Yin snorted and gave chase using the Roving Step. The youth sensed the danger and went wide-eyed, turning to inspect Lu Yin’s palm. He could dodge the Spacerender Palm, but the Cosmic Palm was different. The movements of the stars created a huge pull centered around Lu Yin’s hand, as though everything in the vicinity was being drawn in by their gravity. The force behind the attack stunned even Parlie.

A loud explosion rang out as a last-second Spacerender Palm was shattered, and Veron’s body was smashed into the ground like a meteor. The bridge was destroyed completely, and a crater was formed in the ground below. Veron spat out a mouthful of blood and stared at Lu Yin in disbelief; he had never expected to even be injured, but the attack had destroyed his ring armor. Even Jeraldine was shocked at the easy defeat of her school’s top student.

“How dare you fight in the city!” A distant roar suddenly interrupted them, followed by a fierce slash directed towards Parlie. The short man activated his ring armor even as he dodged, leaving the attack to gust past and cut into the ground.

Zhang Dingtian took in the scene below him and swept his gaze past Parlie and Jeraldine to see Lu Yin on the ground near the injured Veron in the crater further below. His heart dropped; he had fought Parlie and Veron before and knew how strong the two were, but one of them had been injured by one of these new strangers. This was going to be extremely difficult considering the four other Realm of Sky experts who were still around.

Veron coughed up more blood as he walked out of the crater, casting a fearful gaze at Lu Yin as he headed next to Parlie, "Things aren't looking good."

"Not necessarily. This is going to become a chaotic three-way battle, so try to find a chance to escape." Parlie narrowed his eyes and sighed deeply, suddenly shoving Jeraldine towards Zhang Dingtian before anyone could react. The Bladesage slashed towards the terrified girl by reflex, prompting Lu Yin to jump up and push her out of the way. He used the Spacerender Palm to block the incoming attack, the meeting of slash and palm warping the air before sending Lu Yin barrelling to the ground once more, his feet sinking into the earth. He was stunned by the sheer power behind that strike.

Parlie and Veron had fled the moment they'd pushed Jeraldine over. Both were insufferably arrogant, but they weren't stupid. Zhang Dingtian could take on both of them alone, but with another strange newcomer on top, their only real option was to flee. However, Zhang Dingtian was no idiot either, and had already slashed towards Parlie right after his attack on Jeraldine. Parlie barely dodged the strike, "We don't want to fight, let us leave!"

"No one's leaving!" Zhang Dingtian shouted, continuing his frightening attack. The short man clenched his fist and turned around, throwing a punch towards the Bladesage, "Gravity Punch!"

Crash! The earth shook from Parlie's battle technique. He had originally been confident that this attack would be enough to injure Zhang Dingtian, but was shocked to find that Zhang Dingtian wasn't injured in the least. He wasn't even slowed down, the attacks coming with greater ferocity and pushing Parlie to the ground. The shockwaves washed over the area like a tsunami, crushing everything within a 1,000-meter radius of the attack. Veron reluctantly launched a Spacerender Palm towards Zhang Dingtian, who slashed it apart before once more directing his attention and sword towards Parlie, intent of facing both students simultaneously.

Just as Lu Yin was about to attack Veron, ice appeared under his feet. Bai Xue walked out from behind Jeraldine whose legs had been frozen and glared coldly at him, "Don't move."

Lu Yin stared at Bai Xue, awestruck by her astonishing beauty for the moment, "You're the Water Sage?"

"Seems like you've done your research," Bai Xue said coldly.

"No, Zhou Shan told me about you. He said your beauty is like the sky."

Bai Xue's gaze frosted over, "You attacked Zhou Shan?"

A slash from Zhang Dingtian brushed past Lu Yin before he could explain; the Bladesage was intent on pulling him into the battle. Lu Yin dodged, but seeing Bai Xue freezing Jeraldine, he used the Roving Step to blink over and grabbed the woman's cold hand, "Are you trying to kill her?!"

“So what?” Bai Xue asked, radiating an extreme chill from her body.

Lu Yin’s gaze changed, “Innate gift, you have the gift of Frost.”

Bai Xue didn’t answer, simply freezing Lu Yin’s palm that was holding her back. The ice inched up his arm, but a burst of star energy shattered the ice and blasted her more than ten meters away. Bai Xue was stunned as she felt the pain shooting up her arm; this was the first time someone had shattered her ice so easily.

Possibly because he saw Bai Xue forced back, Zhang Dingtian changed his target from Parlie and Veron to Lu Yin instead, slashing his sword in that direction. Lu Yin grew annoyed at this and threw out Zhou Shan’s certificate while dodging the attack, “I’m Zhou Shan’s friend, not an alien!”

The Bladesage grabbed the document in mid-air and glanced at it with surprise, “You’re from Earth?”

Lu Yin nodded, but before he could explain further, his expression suddenly changed. He used the Roving Step to blink after Veron, “They’re going to escape!”

Zhang Dingtian didn’t hesitate, attacking Parlie himself. He was the only realmbreaker present, and could defeat even the powerful peak Sentinel with ease. While Lu Yin’s Cosmic Palm was powerful, it still didn’t allow him to cross realms and match a Melder’s power. This was in part because his own combat level was barely above 1,000, and also in part because he had only trained it to two stars. Once he managed the third, he would likely have similar strength.

Veron had already been injured once by Lu Yin, so he was captured quite quickly. Zhang Dingtian’s endless attacks proved too much for Parlie as well, and he soon collapsed with a wound on his chest. The battle ended up being quite short, but it was quite shocking. Everyone involved had the power of a school leader at minimum; this kind of intensity was rare even across the various academies of the Great Yu Empire; those like Jeraldine couldn’t even participate.