

Chapter 261: Powerful Innate Gift

Timestop's usefulness needed no explanation.

Gift Copy was not often utilized since he did not dare to roll the die where there were people nearby. The ten seconds he had to find someone were too short, but the roll did have a remarkable effect when used properly.

Possession was often surprising and could allow him to improve his power by leaps and bounds, and it even had the possibility of providing unexpected results.

And yet, others could use their innate gifts in the trial zones, but he could not use his die. Was this only in the trial zones, or did it also hold true in other, similar areas? This was important to find out.

"Hey monkey, I've got a question for you."

The Ghost Monkey was pleased. "So you're finally realizing this monkey's importance! Go ahead and ask, as long as you don't seal off my senses for no reason."

"You've mentioned that the trial zones are the ruins of the Rune Technology legacy, so how can people use their innate gifts in there?"

"An innate gift is a part of the body, so they can naturally use it in there. Why? Do you want to analyze it? It's not just you, but even your Human Domain can't analyze it."

"Then are there any innate gifts that can't be used there?"

The Ghost Monkey paused. "That's unheard of. The Runemasters' powers were absolute, and they could duplicate anyone, any technique, and any innate gift bloodline without exception. There was never a recorded case where they were unable to duplicate something."

"What if there is?" Lu Yin continued his line of questioning.

"Then that means that that person's innate gift is simply too powerful and that it has exceeded their Rune Technology's scope and abilities."

Lu Yin's eyes narrowed, as he did not doubt this explanation; he was fully aware of how powerful his die was.

"Wait, does the innate gift that's unusable in the trial zones belong to you?" the Ghost Monkey asked probingly.

"Not me, but someone else."

"Who?" The Ghost Monkey was shocked. "That's impossible. There's nothing that the Runemasters couldn't duplicate. They could even clone the universe's stars."

"How do you know so much about all this?"

"I've mentioned this before—I like to investigate history, and I've studied records of these events."

“Is that so...” Lu Yin found this hard to believe. The Ghost Monkey knew too much for his status, but he avoided Lu Yin’s questions about how he had gained his knowledge every time Lu Yin asked. Lu Yin did not trust the Ghost Monkey, although the Ghost Monkey did not ask anymore questions about the strange innate gift either.

Not much later, a set of coordinates was sent to Lu Yin’s gadget. It was from the Sandmaster, with the following message. “Head to this location and participate in the Outerverse trial.”

Lu Yin stood up; it had finally begun. This trial was already unfair to the other participants even before it started; all he had to do was make it back alive. However, things would be different if his aim was to hinder the Daynight clan.

Lu Yin had a plan, though it possibly required using Wu Xia’s identity.

Lu Yin quickly arrived in the treasury and started looking for Old Cai.

“Old Cai, I’m headed to the Outerverse trial. Can I borrow a personal spacecraft?” Lu Yin was embarrassed to make the request, as his personal spacecraft had vanished at the pirate port, and he did not know where it had gone.

Old Cai wasn’t happy with the request either. “You can’t even protect your items, so be careful to not lose your life as well. Go on, but remember that you’re just borrowing it and that you must return it later.”

Lu Yin did not mind, as an average personal spacecraft only cost a few tens of thousands of star energy crystals, which was an amount that he could afford.

When the spacecraft entered outer space, Lu Yin checked to see about how long it would take to arrive. He had visited the Darkmist Weave once before, but the universe was an unpredictable space, and routes often had to be recalculated. This time, it would take him nineteen days to travel from Astral-10 to the location of the coordinates, which wasn’t too long.

He thought for a moment and then took out the Giant Emperor’s third eye, grasping it in his palm. He stared at the passing outer space as battle force shrouded his body and he started silently reciting the Stonewall Scriptures.

Time slowly passed in this manner, with eighteen days flying by as the personal spacecraft sailed across six regions.

Lu Yin initially wanted to find somewhere to rest and roll his die, but in the end, he decided against it. He would use it in the Shenwu Continent so as to prevent any possible accidents from occurring.

Another day passed, and Lu Yin finally reached an isolated area of space that matched the coordinates that he had been given. A strange ripple swept through on occasion, as this area of space had been severed from the universe.

Lu Yin passed through after his identity was successfully authenticated, and he entered without any trouble. Upon entering the isolated space, he saw a giant space station that was made entirely out of metal, such that it looked like a steel fortress floating in the heavens. It was many times bigger than a super-large spacecraft.

Many terrifying auras filled the region, every last one belonging to a space-exploring powerhouse. There were also many more hidden auras, and they also caused Lu Yin to feel numb, as those auras belonged to the powerhouses beyond his imagination.

This was the front line of the universe's invasion into the Shenwu Continent, and it was this space station that prevented the Shenwu Continent from connecting to the rest of the universe.

A middle-aged man, Cang Yu, greeted Lu Yin. He was an Explorer.

"I never thought that I would be able to see Student Lu, one of the top four fighters in the Astral Combat Tournament. It is my honor," Cang Yu said with a smile at Lu Yin, acting very courteously. The man was only an average Explorer and had originally been from the Darkmist Weave. He had never been to the Inniverse and had had no chance to enter a top tier institution such as the Astral Combat Academy. When greeting a top student like Lu Yin, this Explorer even sounded as if he was trying to win the youth's favor.

Lu Yin smiled. No matter how strong the average cultivator was, the difference between them and a person of status would become obvious when they came face to face. Even though Lu Yin himself was not Cang Yu's match, he still had to be very accommodating towards Lu Yin. What's more, Lu Yin had absolute confidence that he could defeat an average Explorer such as Cang Yu. After all, he had even held his own against an astral beast Explorer like Zi Tie, who prided itself on its defense.

"Sir Cang Yu, you don't have to be too courteous. However, could I trouble you to give me a brief introduction to the Shenwu Continent?" Lu Yin smiled and spoke politely as well.

Cang Yu nodded and smiled brightly. "Student Lu, you must have done some general research before arriving, so I will not overly elaborate on the general situation. There are a few matters, however, that you should take note of." He paused, and when he saw that Lu Yin was listening attentively, he continued, saying, "The first is your attire, as the Shenwu Continent's culture still has ancient outfits. We will provide Student Lu with an outfit that you can change into. The next, is its technology." As he spoke, Cang Yu unfolded his hand.

Lu Yin looked and blinked, but he did not see anything.

Cang Yu smiled. "There's a dust-sized camera in my hand. This tiny item can be installed into a person's muscles and avoid all forms of detection. During the trial period, all advanced technology such as gadgets must be removed, because the Shenwu Continent is antagonistic towards the greater civilizations. Anyone who's discovered to be colluding with us will die without exception."

"I've heard of this before."

Cang Yu nodded and continued. "The third is star energy, as the star energy that we use to cultivate is different from the martial power that is cultivated on the Shenwu Continent. Upon arriving, it's best that you first hide in the countryside for a bit so that you can ensure your safety by dispersing your star energy and then recultivate using martial power. Otherwise, the Shenwu Continent's specialized organization will quickly track you down and instantly kill you."

Lu Yin knew that Cang Yu was referring to the Ming Constables, but why did he not directly reference the name? Lu Yin understood it more as he thought about it. This was a trial, so it was not possible to explain everything. The meaning of a "trial" lay in separating the strong from the chaff, and a true training experience was always accompanied by many deaths.

"The fourth point is that the trial's outcome will be judged based on the video recorded by the dust-sized camera. It's up to the individual trialtakers to think of various ways to improve their results. However, I believe that Student Lu must know about the two permanent missions for any trial on the Shenwu Continent. Completing either one of them will naturally be a great merit," Cang Yu said, with a tone that hinted at his expectations. "I believe that Student Lu has great hope of completing those missions."

Lu Yin grimaced. "Sir Cang Yu thinks too highly of me. I'm only a Limiteer."

Cang Yu marveled, "Ever since the Shenwu Continent was discovered, the trialtakers have arrived continuously, but no one has ever managed to complete those two missions. I believe that Student Lu will be able to do it, as your wonderful battles during the Astral Combat Tournament were truly stunning."

Lu Yin smiled, but spoke no more.

"In a bit, we will ask someone to tear open a spatial crack in order to send Student Lu to the Shenwu Continent. The descent point will be at one of the thirty six islands in the Shenwu Empire. As we are unable to completely control where you arrive, you must be fully prepared for all kinds of events. Historically, there have been situations where trialtakers were discovered upon landing." Cang Yu was solemn.

Lu Yin nodded before asking, "How do I return?"

"I will provide a few locations to you, and they are all very hidden. We will have powerhouses appear there and retrieve all the trialtakers."

"Then why not directly send us to those points?"

"The locations change sporadically and cannot be reused. The people of the Shenwu Continent may discover them as well, so the main goal is to ensure everyone's safety."

Lu Yin understood; this was a war. He silently reminded himself that although this was a war between humans, to the people of the Shenwu Continent, he was an invader. There was no real difference between this war and the war between the Human Domain and Astral Beast Domain.

At that moment, Cang Yu's gadget made a beeping noise. He looked at it and was shocked. "There's actually someone from the Blaze Realm here as well. They sent trialtakers too?"

Blaze Realm? Lu Yin's heart jumped as he asked, "Who is it?"

"Someone named Arikar. Right, wasn't he defeated during the Astral Combat Tournament by Astral-8's student leader?" Cang Yu had only just remembered this, and he profusely apologized to Lu Yin. "Please wait here a moment as I bring him here. We'll be sending a few trialtakers into the Shenwu Continent together since tearing open the spatial crack is extremely difficult."

Lu Yin nodded and watched Cang Yu leave. His eyes flickered, as he didn't expect someone from the Blaze Realm to actually come here. He wondered what Arikar's expression would be when he saw Lu Yin.

It was not strange for someone from the Blaze Realm to participate in the Outerverse trial, and Arikar was the strongest among the Blaze Realm's younger generation. Him coming here was very normal.

He was much more arrogant than Lu Yin and was not very courteous to Cang Yu. In his eyes, an average Explorer such as Cang Yu wasn't worthy of his notice as this sort of person needed to curry favor with the Flowzone Envoy if he wanted to enter the Innerverse.

Cang Yu could sense Arikar's arrogance, though he paid no heed to it. During every trial, he would bump into geniuses from both the Innerverse and the Outerverse. Actually, receiving courtesy from top geniuses like Lu Yin was a strange occurrence.

"Student Arikar, another student had arrived before you. We'll wait for a few more and then we can send you all to Shenwu Continent," Cang Yu smiled.

Arikar grunted in assent. "Who else is here?"

"You should know him since he's also a student from the Astral Combat Academy: Lu Yin."

Arikar stopped walking and stared at Cang Yu in astonishment. "What did you say? Lu Yin? He's here?"

"Yes, he arrived about ten minutes before you."

Arikar's expression soured as he did not want to be grouped with Lu Yin. Everyone participating in a trial was an enemy, and Arikar would rather be lumped in with unknown Explorers than provoke Lu Yin. He already knew of the animosity between the Blaze Realm and Astral-10, so he considered things carefully. After a moment, he said, "I'll wait for a few days before entering the Shenwu Continent. You can arrange for Lu Yin to enter first."

Chapter 262: Initial Encounter

Cang Yu was placed in a difficult position when he heard Arikar's words. "That won't do. Lord Tyrial has stated that, as soon five people gather, they must enter. This is one of the rules of this trial."

Arikar frowned, but he still followed behind Cang Yu and soon saw Lu Yin.

Lu Yin also noticed Arikar and smiled at him. "Are you the only one from the Blaze Realm who's participating in this trial?"

Arikar had once dared to challenge a Realm Master, but when he faced Lu Yin now, there was not a single trace of arrogance on his face. Apart from some slight distaste, his expression was rather calm. "Just me."

"Jared isn't coming?"

"No."

Lu Yin did not ask more questions. Although his conflict with the Blaze Realm was not as deep as the one that he had with the Daynight clan, it was by no means superficial either. However, this was not the

time to provoke them, as the Great Yu Empire was already facing the assault of the Ross Empire. It would be troublesome if the Blaze Realm got involved as well.

For his part, Arikar similarly did not want Lu Yin to take revenge against him in the Shenwu Continent, so he stopped speaking as well.

Actually, the two of them did not have any conflicts between them, as Jared was the one who had started the dispute with Lu Yin. Arikar had been sullen about this, and he had cast countless curses upon Jared, hoping that the idiot's grudge with Lu Yin would not end up implicating him.

Cang Yu saw that the two were not conversing, so he brought them to a room with transparent walls near the edge of the space station. "Could the two of you remove your gadgets and put on the clothes of the Shenwu Continent? We'll leave once there are five people."

Lu Yin and Arikar quickly donned the clothes. The long gowns had an ancient feel to them, and the two trialtakers would have had a very scholarly demeanor if they had had a fan.

It was Lu Yin's first time wearing such antique-looking clothes, and it felt rather novel.

Arikar seemed to be quite preoccupied with something, and he glanced at Lu Yin from time to time. He felt like a mouse that was trapped within the same room as a cat. He did not have the courage to resist Lu Yin, a freak of unknown origins who had five-lined battle force.

The time that they spent waiting for the others to come was not pleasant, and the space station did not allow the trialtakers to enter and leave as they pleased either. Thus, Lu Yin could only sit down, cross-legged, and begin to meditate.

Half a day later, someone else arrived and was stunned when they saw Lu Yin and Arikar. They recognized the two of them, but did not speak much and went to their own corner.

Another person arrived soon after; it was a girl with average looks and a large figure. She seemed rather detached, and only glanced briefly at the others before sitting down to meditate as well.

After some time, a chill swirled through the air. Lu Yin opened his eyes and glanced to the side. Cang Yu had brought an ashen-faced youth to the room, and Lu Yin stared closely at the newcomer. Lu Yin felt strangely apprehensive about this person, as they seemed to give off a similar vibe to Liu Shaoqiu.

Amongst the four people present, only Lu Yin felt this sensation from the youth, as Arikar and the rest did not pay too much attention to this youth.

"Lord Thalia will soon send the five of you to the Shenwu Continent. Let me give you all a final reminder; the Shenwu Continent is very dangerous and holds many experts. Although most of them are concentrated near the five sealing planets to defend them, you should not be careless. Countless trialtakers have died on this continent over the past thousand years, and we are not an unknown existence to the people there." After Cang Yu finished speaking, he installed the dust-sized cameras for the five people before leaving.

Lu Yin kept observing the youth who had arrived last throughout this whole time, as he felt a slight bit of fear from this person.

The youth sensed Lu Yin's gaze and turned around to face Lu Yin. His colorless eyes stunned Lu Yin; was this why was this expression and aura felt so familiar? His eyes was eerily similar to the Corpse King's from the Neohuman Alliance that Lu Yin had encountered on the giant planet.

The youth casually glanced at Lu Yin before turning away again.

Lu Yin frowned. Was this person really a part of the Neohuman Alliance? They already had someone in the Outerverse Youth Council, so why would they attempt to send another person in? Logically, he couldn't be from the Neohuman Alliance. And after all, there were many organizations in the universe whose members had similarly cold emotions to the Neohuman Alliance's members. There were many techniques that could cause one to develop the same demeanor as well. Also, some people were just naturally very cold, and Lu Yin could not rely on just their aura to determine if someone was from the Neohuman Alliance.

At this point, the transparent room trembled slightly as a great strength descended. The five trialtakers' hearts jumped; it had begun.

Outside the halo, a crack appeared. It was small but enough to accommodate a few people. "Go in now," someone's voice barked at them.

Arikar charged in without hesitation, as he was unable to remain patient. Lu Yin and the rest followed closely behind. Lu Yin only felt an intense tearing force when his body went inside the spatial crack. Truthfully, he was not fond of entering in this kind of manner due to the inherent dangers, but they had no other options.

Suddenly, a palm appeared in the void and swatted towards the trialtakers. The five people's pupils shrank; a terrifying powerhouse had just arrived and they were suddenly thrust into a dreadful crisis.

"Ming Zhaotian, you can't block me," an angry howl sounded in the void. From Lu Yin's side, a palm appeared and slapped against the first palm. At that instant, the void distorted, and one of the five youths was crushed in a flash. Lu Yin was also affected, as none of the five were powerful enough to withstand the blow.

"I can't take this anymore! I'm going to go into hibernation for now. Be careful with yourself! Don't die and drag me down with you," the Ghost Monkey's voice sounded out in his head.

A shockwave swept out when the two palms met. As it rippled outwards, it scattered Lu Yin and the rest apart and fractured the void into multiple cracks. No one knew which one was safe, but regardless, they had no choice which one they were thrown into. They couldn't even lift a finger before the frightening shockwave separated them and they were helplessly swallowed by the spatial cracks. Before he vanished, Lu Yin managed to see an imposing man. He was the current emperor of the Shenwu Empire, Shenwu Emperor Ming Zhaotian.

Lu Yin temporarily lost consciousness when he passed through the spatial crack. As his consciousness returned, he opened his eyes. Is this water? There was a brilliant white scenery before him. Is this a person? Lu Yin lifted his head and was immediately stunned when an exquisitely beautiful face came into view. He became utterly immersed within the entrancing visage. He did not know if any artist could preserve this face, though it would be an everlasting regret if it could not be preserved.

Within the room, in a tub with soft petals sprinkled about, one man and one woman exchanged gazes. Both were stunned.

The man was enraptured in the woman's beauty.

The woman was shocked by the man's sudden appearance.

Both of them remained motionless for a few seconds, but then there was an alarming cry. The girl had finally reacted, and it was in the most normal reaction possible—she released a shrill cry.

Lu Yin immediately covered her lips and very awkwardly tried to say, "Look, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to—"

Suddenly, a group of people charged into the room, shouting, "Mistress—" Lu Yin was about to do something when a loud boom sounded from above, and Arikar crashed down as well. Lu Yin hurriedly retrieved the girl's clothes from a nearby rack, wrapped the girl up in them, and then used Flash while holding onto her tightly.

While still in midair, she gave him a rather blank look. Her beautiful, star-like eyes stared at Lu Yin's face as petals fell around her.

"Outrageous! You actually dare to be indecent towards the young mistress!" There was an angry roar, and an enormous shockwave surged towards the falling Arikar.

Arikar was in a miserable state, as he did not know anything about a young mistress; he had simply been tossed out of a spatial rift and had happened to land inside the tub.

By now, Lu Yin had already wrapped the girl up tightly and thrown her onto a nearby bed. With a quick "Sorry," he grabbed a scarf, covered half of his face, and then rushed out of the room.

"Who dares to barge into the Reverent King's estate?" an angry shout sounded out as a terrifying force descended upon the area.

Lu Yin and Arikar were both stunned by this presence; this was an Explorer! They quickly evaded.

Thump!

The void shuddered as a furious man appeared. He stared intently at Lu Yin and Arikar, who were escaping in either direction of him and raised both of his palms; one for each fleeing youth.

Arikar gritted his teeth. He was a top member of the Blaze Realm's younger generation, and although he had been a Realmbreaker, fighting against an Explorer was different. It was too difficult for a Limiteer to jump realms and face off against an Explorer, but it was no issue for Arikar to preserve his life.

"Darkgold Palm." A palm erupted with black flames and then struck out at the middle-aged man. The dark gold palm was instantly vaporized, but the middle-aged man's palm strike remained strong and continued traveling through the void to viciously strike at Arikar. The Blaze Realm genius's pupils shrank to pinpoints. How is this possible? This man is just a native! He spat out a mouthful of blood and then fell to the ground with a thump.

At the same time, Lu Yin clashed against the palm that had been sent after him. He responded with a Nine Stacks, Fifteenfold Shockwave Palm that was supplemented by five-lined battle force. The void rumbled intensely as the terrifying collision compressed the ground and caused many of those who were pursuing Lu Yin to be forcibly scattered. Lu Yin borrowed the strength of the man's palm and retreated even faster.

The man was shocked that this person had actually directly received his palm. This child was not simple. A large part of the estate had been ruined by their exchanges, causing many to gather.

The middle-aged man hurriedly rushed into the house to check on the girl and then dismissed the attendants.

"Father!" the girl cried out with reddened eyes and a wronged expression.

The man rushed to hug her. "Yan'er, are you alright?"

The girl nodded, tightly hugged her quilt, and then responded, "I'm okay."

The man finally relaxed. "Everything is fine as long as you're alright. Rest assured, father will definitely not let that person off."

The girl responded with a soft sound of assent.

In another area, after directly receiving that man's palm, Lu Yin quickly escaped by using Flash to flee into the woods. This was not the city, but rather the outskirts in the country. Apart from that single sprawling residence, there were only about a dozen peasant families' homes.

Lu Yin was glad that he had not landed in the city, or else he would have faced the Ming Constables' pursuit. That organization had a unique item called heavenly globes that could detect star energy. It would have been very difficult for him to escape from such a situation.

No one was pursuing Lu Yin, so he was finally able to relax. He removed the scarf that he had used to hide his face and thought of the girl who he had just encountered. She was too beautiful, and he had previously only ever seen that dazzling of an appearance in Bai Xue's face. Even Mira, Michelle, and the beautiful Madam Nalan and Yue Xianzi were all lacking in comparison to this remarkably beautiful woman.

Furthermore, this girl had a pure appearance, and Lu Yin could not even imagine trying to be flirtatious with her. It was like seeing the world's purest face, and it made him feel inferior.

He looked at the silky cloth in his hand, and his nose could still vaguely smell her fragrance. It was fresh, elegant, and also rather intoxicating.

Unaware of his own thoughts, Lu Yin carefully stowed the scarf away. He did not place it in his cosmic ring, but rather in his robes and by his bosom.

His most urgent task right now was to find some martial crystals, which were similar to the star crystals. They would allow him to conveniently and rapidly replace his star energy with martial power. After doing this, he would no longer be detectable by heavenly globes and would thus be able to enter the cities.

In the manor that Lu Yin had just fled from, Arikar was painfully curled up within some ruins. The surrounding soldiers had all left, and there was a lone young man towering over the tormented youth. He was Tang Si, a powerhouse at the Martial King realm, which was the equivalent of the Limiteer realm, and he belonged to the Reverent King's residence. They were currently outside the main palace of the Reverent King's estate. The person who had attacked Lu Yin and Arikar was Ming Zhaoshu while the girl whom Lu Yin had encountered was the princess of the Reverent King's estate—Ming Yan.

"You're an alien from outside the continent?" Tang Si's voice was low as he stared at Arikar.

Chapter 263: The Cosmic Sea And The Court Of Seven Names

Arikar suddenly attacked, flames erupting from his palm as he aimed at Tang Si. His Darkgold Palm could defeat even Explorers, so he was sure that a Limiteer realm native definitely wouldn't be able to withstand his attack.

Tang Si's eyes glinted, and his spear darted forward, shattered the Darkgold Palm, and then pierced straight into Arikar's abdomen. Blood splattered onto the ground from the spear's shaft.

Arikar turned pale. How is this possible? How could a Limiteer realm native be so powerful as to be able to shatter Arikar's Darkgold Palm with a single attack? This native was so strong that he was comparable to the top students from the Astral Combat Academies. At that moment, Arikar remembered a warning he had received from a Blaze Realm elder—Do not underestimate the Shenwu Continent! This continent had been able to defy the entire Darkmist Weave, and even powerful forces from the Inniverse hadn't been able to defeat it. This was a very strong continent.

Splat!

Arikar spat out a mouthful of blood and slowly crumpled to the ground. He was in great pain and had nearly fainted due to the wound in his abdomen.

The Reverent King, also known as Ming Zhaoshu, walked over and coldly looked at Arikar. "Revive him and then bring him to my study once he's awake."

"Yes, Your Highness," Tang Si replied respectfully.

When Lu Yin entered the Shenwu continent, a battle broke out in the Great Yu Empire when a mysterious powerhouse suddenly ambushed Undying Yushan. The battle caused half of the city to be destroyed, and even changed Zenyu Star's weather, to the point where one of its three rings were slightly fractured. In the end, Undying Yushan was heavily wounded while Huo Qingshan and some of the other Thirteen Imperial Squadrons' captains were slightly injured as well. Fortunately, there were no fatalities from this battle.

Not long after the battle, Undying Yushan announced that he would be going into seclusion to recover from his injuries and ordered Dorren Yushan, Wendy Yushan, and all of the other remaining members of the Yushan family to return to Zenyu Star.

The Great Yu Empire was thrust into a state of panic and rumors began circulating that Undying Yushan didn't have long to live and that he would soon be passing his throne down.

Lu Yin was also included among the list of Yushan family members who were summoned; however, he had already entered the Shenwu Continent by that time and didn't receive the message.

Back in Astral-10, Silver thoughtfully said to himself, "You old fox, this only proves that you are one of the seven. Yu, you cannot escape."

The Cosmic Sea was formed from very similar elements as the Astral River and was filled with surging liquid energy. But compared to the Astral River, the Cosmic Sea was way larger, and many people believed that the Astral River actually originated from the Cosmic Sea.

In a corner of the Cosmic Sea, an old man walked across a warship that was surrounded by the aggressive energies of the sea. Roars rang out from within the inundating sea from time to time, and shadows of huge beings frequently swam past the ship.

If Lu Yin were here, he would have definitely recognized the man as Uncle Reuben.

"Undying Yushan might die after this last battle that took place within the Great Yu Empire. The person who attacked him hasn't been identified yet," Reuben muttered in a low voice.

"Do we actually have to investigate this? It must have been someone from the Neohuman Alliance—only they would keep investigating the Court of the Seven Names," an icy voice responded from the cabin. It was the high pitched voice of a woman.

"Could it be the Daynight clan?" Reuben asked.

"That's impossible. Little Yin's actions aren't enough to cause the Daynight clan to send out a Hunter realm powerhouse. Moreover, they are focused on their expansion into the Outerverse, so they won't initiate any battles without a serious reason. The Ross Empire's attack on the Great Yu Empire shouldn't have been the Daynight clan's influence either, since they wouldn't be so nearsighted. Oh right, where is Little Yin?"

"He went to the Shenwu Continent," Reuben replied.

"It seems that he still hasn't forgotten his initial mission. We cannot give up on the Great Yu Empire. If he really is one of the Seven, then this is a huge matter. Once we discover the truth behind that issue, we'll be able to return home."

Reuben's eyes gleamed. "Understood, captain."

In the Shenwu Continent, crowds of people bustled about in the broad streets. Five planets covered the sky above the passersby's heads while a huge sun radiated warmth, bringing life and energy to the continent.

The monotone chirping of cicadas was enough to cause drowsiness within anyone.

Lu Yin was lying under a tree and helplessly looking at his hand.

The Shenwu Continent had its own ecosystem, which would cause one's star energy to gradually weaken and their combat ability to slowly decrease. Martial power completely suppressed star energy here, and Lu Yin had been able to feel that from his previous fight with the Explorer. The effect of the

star energy suppression was actually quite significant here. If it weren't for his five-lined battle force, then he would have suffered the same fate as Arikar.

He definitely needed to get some martial crystals as soon as possible.

He wondered how Arikar was faring. Information about Lu Yin would definitely be leaked now that Arikar had been captured by the natives. Lu Yin had immediately used star energy to change his appearance and also decided to assume a false identity. From now on, his name here would be Lu Qi.

Crack crack.

In the distance, a convoy was slowly rolling through the streets. There were quite a few people following it, and apart from some laborers, the rest were mostly soldiers responsible for protecting the convoy.

The animal dragging the carts resembled cows, but they were much larger than any cow Lu Yin had ever seen. They had a gentle look to them, but they were probably quite strong since each of them was dragging a cart covered with white cloth towards the west.

Lu Yin's eyes gleamed as he hid his aura and tailed the convoy from within the forest.

Half a day later, the convoy stopped when the sun set. "We will reach Taicang City in Qiong Zhou in half a day's time, so let's take a ten minute break for now. We'll continue on after that," someone from within the convoy ordered.

The group paused to take a break.

The soldiers automatically spread out and kept watch on their surroundings.

Lu Yin slipped into a cart while the guards weren't paying attention. Since each cart was completely covered by a piece of white cloth, no one besides the animal pulling the cart would be able to notice him under the cloth.

A few tired laborers were eating their rations near Lu Yin's hiding spot.

"This work is inhumane. It's unpaid, and we even have to bring our own food! I hope that that damn city lord dies soon," a laborer ranted.

Someone next to him sighed and replied, "We don't have a choice. It's just our rotten luck to have a city lord like this. Sometimes, I wish that these tributes would be stolen and cause some trouble for the city lord."

"His Majesty's birthday is almost here, and these are tributes for His Majesty. Who would dare to steal these things? Besides, we're almost at Qiong Zhou and will reach Ming Zhou soon. That's the empire's capital, and it's filled with powerhouses. No one'll dare to touch this stuff."

"You're right.

"By the way, I heard that the people from Ming Constables were sent out again. It seems like there are more aliens running around nowadays. The world is too chaotic now."

"I just want to get home quickly after we're done with transporting this stuff."

...

Lu Yin leaned against a crate while his eyes lit up. This convoy was carrying tributes! He was quite lucky with his find this time. There were probably some martial crystals in this convoy, and even if there weren't, there would still be some precious items that he could trade for martial crystals. This wasn't a bad haul at all; he hadn't stolen anything for quite some time either, so it was a good opportunity to refresh his skills.

"Alright, let's head out and try to reach Taicang City before curfew," the leader shouted as the laborers all stood up.

At that moment, Lu Yin suddenly attacked, slamming his palm into the back of the leader's neck. Although the leader was a Limiteer, he could not even begin to compare to Lu Yin. He fell unconscious from just one attack, causing everyone around him to be shocked before they all started attacking Lu Yin.

Lu Yin looked around him with disdain. He knocked all the guards into a daze within ten seconds, causing all the laborers to run away in fear.

Lu Yin walked to the first cart and pulled the white cloth away. He then opened the crates to reveal many gleaming metal items, which looked similar to the jewellery back on Earth. All of these items were useless to him. The second crate was filled with antiques, but the third crate was filled with martial crystals.

Lu Yin was overjoyed at the sight of the martial crystals; this was exactly what he had been hoping to find. There were more than ten carts, and the other carts were all filled with martial crystals. After all, it was the perfect item to offer up as tribute.

However, the more than ten crates of martial crystals only amounted to the equivalent of two star crystals, leaving Lu Yin sorely disappointed. Although it seemed like a huge amount, it was actually very little and it wasn't even enough to reach the Sentinel realm. However, Lu Yin assuaged himself and decided to take it slow; this was just the tribute from one city. Furthermore, martial crystals were quite rare in the Shenwu Continent and were restricted items. It was already quite lucky that he had found this much already.

Lu Yin stored around two hundred martial crystals into his cosmic ring and ignored the rest of the items. He didn't have time to trade all of them away, and it would probably be faster for him to just go and rob more people. However, Lu Yin still had his principles, and he would only rob those who had a bad reputation, such as the lord who owned this current convoy. He wouldn't touch anything from people who carried a good reputation.

He could only start absorbing the martial power after he had around ten thousand martial crystals, as that would ensure that he could battle for a solid period of time. Otherwise, he would be forced to absorb stray martial power from the environment, which would just be too slow.

News of the robbery quickly spread, and troops from Qiong Zhou immediately blockaded the roads and started questioning the soldiers who had been robbed in hopes of finding some leads. However, Lu Yin

was too quick, and between his speed and the dim light of dusk, no one had seen him clearly. Thus, the authorities could only blindly search for the criminal.

Lu Yin didn't dare to enter a city, as he had learned some information about the heavenly globes from Wu Xia's memories. Each city had its own heavenly globes that could sense star energy. Because of their existence, Lu Yin would definitely be detected as soon as he entered a city. He didn't want to be chased around by the people of Ming Constables, as there were Martial Emperor powerhouses in that organization, which were equivalent to Explorers. It would be very troublesome for him if his identity as an alien was revealed, as those people from Ming Constables were very familiar with the greater universe.

It was completely dark when Arikar was led to the prince's study within the Reverent King's estate. His face was pale, and his abdomen had been bandaged, covering his heavy injury.

The Reverent King, Ming Zhaoshu, looked at him coldly. "Name, identity, and purpose."

Arikar panted heavily and honestly revealed everything.

Ming Zhaoshu was surprised. "So you're from the Blaze Realm. It's been a long time. The last time the Blaze Realm sent anyone here was a hundred years ago."

Arikar wasn't surprised by this reaction. After all, he had been informed about this before arriving. The Blaze Realm had sent someone into the Shenwu Continent a hundred years ago and never heard from that person again.

"Who was the other person?" Ming Zhaoshu asked with a stern gaze. This was what he was the most concerned about, since there weren't many people below the Martial Emperor realm who could withstand his attacks. That person had clearly been in the Martial King realm, and yet, he had been able to escape unscathed, which was proof that he was very powerful. Besides, that person had even done something unforgivable; he had seen the Reverent King's daughter bathing and even emerged from her tub. If this incident ever spread, then the entire the Reverent King's household would be humiliated.

Arikar betrayed Lu Yin without any hesitation and told Ming Zhaoshu everything he knew about Lu Yin. He was very detailed and even told him about Lu Yin's battle style that had been shown during the Astral Combat Tournament.

Ming Zhaoshu was shocked. "He comprehended five-lined battle force while still in the Martial King realm? It's no wonder he was able to stand my attack. What is his personality like?"

Arikar effortlessly slandered Lu Yin. "He's despicable."

Ming Zhaoshu's gaze turned cold and a huge pressure suddenly descended upon the room, shattering the tables and chairs around them. Arikar was crushed to the ground as blood dribbled out of his mouth. He looked up at Ming Zhaoshu in fear.

"I don't like it when people lie to me. Tell me the truth," Ming Zhaoshu coldly demanded.

Chapter 264: Lu Yin And Ming Yan

Arikar hurriedly responded, "I'm sorry, but I don't know him that well. I've only heard rumors about him, and he has some enmity with my Blaze Realm. He even scammed some disciples from my Blaze Realm, which is why I said that."

"Scammed?" Ming Zhaoshu's eyes flashed.

Arikar nodded and then recounted how Lu Yin had ripped off Craynor and all the other students.

Ming Zhaoshu muttered, "I understand now. Take him away, but don't let him die."

Not long after Arikar was taken away, Tang Si entered the office.

"My King, the matter about the princess has been leaked and cannot be covered up anymore."

Ming Zhaoshu was furious. "Those people whom Ming Hao planted in my home are too brazen! They are definitely acting on his word to smear Yan'er's reputation. They are taking this too far!"

Tang Si had cold eyes as well. "Our top priority is to capture the alien, Lu Yin, and use his death to prove our princess's innocence."

Ming Zhaoshu's eyes flickered as he sank into deep thought. Tang Si remained silent.

"You can retire first and then continue looking for that Lu Yin. But remember, do not ever endanger his life," Ming Zhaoshu ordered.

Tang Si immediately acknowledged his orders and withdrew.

Ming Zhaoshu thought to himself for a while before walking out of his office and heading towards Ming Yan's room. "Yan'er, may I come in?"

"Please enter," Ming Yan said softly.

Ming Zhaoshu opened the door and saw his daughter staring blankly into the mirror. The Shenwu Continent placed great importance on a woman's purity. If a girl's body was seen by anyone before marriage, then there would be severe ramifications and impede their ability to get married. This was a custom of the Shenwu Continent.

Ming Zhaoshu was furious when his thoughts reached this point. That foreigner just had to choose Yan'er's bath to appear of all places! And now, the news was already being spread far and wide by Ming Hao's subordinates. This matter had not only caused Ming Zhaoshu's house to lose face, but it could even destroy Yan'er's life.

"Yan'er, are you alright?" Ming Zhaoshu tenderly asked as he walked behind her.

Ming Yan shook her head sadly. "Father, what happened to that person?"

"He escaped, but rest assured. I will definitely capture him and make him pay the price."

Ming Yan fell silent, but it seemed like she was considering things.

Ming Zhaoshu looked at the side of her pale face and sighed. "Yan'er, do you remember that person's appearance?"

Ming Yan's body trembled and then she shook her head.

But Ming Zhaoshu remained unconvinced. "Father knows that you have had an excellent memory ever since you were young as you are skilled in the arts. How could you not remember his face?"

Ming Yan blinked and pursed her lips. "I don't remember—it was just too chaotic at that moment."

Ming Zhaoshu looked at his daughter and nodded. "Alright, it will be fine. Rest well and don't overthink things."

"Okay," Ming Yan agreed as she watched her father leave. The scene of Lu Yin standing in her bath and looking at her floated up in her mind, as well as when he wrapped her up in her clothes. It was embarrassing, but he was very interesting, although he also seemed a bit foolish. Ming Yan smiled involuntarily, but she quickly restrained herself. What was happening to her? She touched her fingers to her lips, as that was where he had touched her.

She had resided in the Reverent King's estate since birth and rarely seen anyone from the outside. The schemes of the royal descendants had left her friendless, and the Reverent King was her only relative. She did not have any deep understanding of the outside world and had only ever had the arts to accompany her. Lu Yin had been the first man to ever get that close to her, and he was actually the first man to ever see her. Ming Yan could not erase the stain that he had left on her heart.

The next day, everyone from the Reverent King's household set out on the journey towards Qiong Island.

Lu Yin remained in a distant forest, as all the soldiers from the Reverent King's estate were combing through the countryside for him. Still, it was all in vain. Even if the Reverent King Ming Zhaoshu, who was a powerhouse in the Martial Emperor realm, personally came out, he would not be able to deal with Lu Yin, let alone the lower ranked soldiers. However, Lu Yin had still already run into an expert at the Limiteer realm who could rival the Astral Combat Academy's student leaders, causing him to be both shocked and impressed.

Information flowed both ways, and since the Reverent King's estate was looking for Lu Yin, he was naturally also able to learn some things about the Reverent King's estate from those who were searching for him. Lu Yin learned that Arikar had been captured, and thus, his abilities must have been exposed as well since he did not believe that someone from the Blaze Realm would cover for him.

"How strange—no one has shown up since yesterday. Did they leave?" Lu Yin muttered to himself as he looked in the direction of the estate. He was somewhat disappointed by this outcome, and he once again started reminiscing about that girl with the ravishing face. She was too beautiful, and although Bai Xue was also very beautiful, Bai Xue could not move Lu Yin's heart the same way. This girl was different, and her purity was unforgettable. It was so impactful that he had been emotionally affected.

He shook his head and told himself not to overthink things. This was the Shenwu Continent, a great power that could rival the entire Darkmist Weave. If he was not cautious enough, then death would inevitably take him. Some feelings could not be allowed to bud, as they were fated to never bloom. Forget it, he told himself as he refocused on his own matters and continued to loot martial crystals.

Coincidentally, a convoy arrived at that very moment.

Qiong Island was right next to Ming Island, at the very center of the Shenwu Continent. Out of the thirty six islands, at least seven of them required one to pass through Qiong Island to reach Ming Island, and how many cities did these seven islands hold? Lu Yin did not know, but the number should be quite large. He was planning on watching over this place for a few more days and carrying out some more robberies. With his power, as long as he did not run into a Martial Emperor powerhouse, he should be fine. Throughout the entire Shenwu Empire, most of the Martial Emperor powerhouses were gathered on the five sealing planets, so he should be safe as long as he acted cautiously.

More than ten days later, when the Qiong Island troops completely sealed off the border, Lu Yin left. He knew that he couldn't wait any longer. By this point, he had plundered five separate shipments of tribute and drawn a decent chunk of attention to himself. If he stayed any longer, then the people from the Daming Court might be drawn out.

Taicang City was the gate to Qiong Island, so entering Taicang City was the same as entering Qiong Island.

Lu Yin curiously observed his surroundings and looked up. The giant gates towered above him with an ancient style to them. Above them, there was a glassy, lamp-like object emitting a faint fluctuating radiance that constantly emitted sweeping beams of light. This was a Heavenly Sphere, and it used martial power to constantly scan the city. The sphere would react the instant it detected star energy.

During the time after the great battle a thousand years ago, many trialtakers had arrived at the Shenwu Continent, which had left the Shenwu Empire with no choice but to develop this Heavenly Sphere, which had resulted in the deaths of countless trialtakers.

The heavenly globe's martial power scanned Lu Yin, but it had no reaction. He had dispersed all of his star energy and replaced it with martial power, so there was naturally no rejection.

He had used some random person's ID to enter Taicang City. The place was bustling, and he could see that the Shenwu Continent had developed significantly since the great battle from a thousand years ago, and there were almost no traces of that war. Peddlers were selling their wares on the streets, and a hotel that was almost as tall as the city walls proudly stood in the distance. Lu Yin was in no hurry, and he slowly sauntered along the main street.

Troops charged past him, letting out a harsh aura.

"Did you hear? Someone is targeting the tributes and five shipments have already been plundered. The king's residence is furious and has ordered the soldiers to thoroughly investigate and seal off the territory from the neighboring cities. Even the king's household has been searched! I even heard that there was a battle."

"Shh, speak softer. The plundered tributes have nothing to do with the king's household. There was an alien that peeped at the princess while she was bathing, and I even heard that he was discovered in the same bath as the princess. That's what caused the battle to break out."

"What? So isn't that princess's reputation gone now? Who would dare to marry her after that?"

"Right? It's such a pity. One of the empire's twin beauties has been ruined just like that. No matter how pretty she is, this incident is more than enough to dissuade countless suitors."

...

Lu Yin was stumped; was the incident really that extreme? He had only taken a look, though he frowned as he tried to sift through Wu Xia's memories. It seemed that the Shenwu Continent placed great importance on a girl's reputation, which was troubling. Did this mean that he had harmed that girl?

Lu Yin absent-mindedly walked into the hotel. He chose a position near a window and sat down before ordering some dishes. The news that he had just heard upset him greatly, and the girl's countenance kept appearing in his mind. He felt rather apologetic now.

The Shenwu Continent's war technology had advanced extremely quickly, and it could even rival an Outerverse weave's, but the continent was much more conservative in its social ideology. This matter must have left an unerasable scar in the girl's heart.

"Your food is here," a waiter said politely as he poured some wine for Lu Yin before turning and leaving.

Lu Yin looked at the troops dashing by outside the window as they kicked up a cloud of dust. He frowned and reached over to close the window.

"Friend, don't close the window," a voice sounded from behind Lu Yin.

Lu Yin paid no heed to the voice and continued moving to close it.

Behind him, the man raised his hand and pushed against Lu Yin's arm. "Let me repeat myself—don't close the window."

Lu Yin finally glanced at him. The man was in his thirties and had an experienced air, though he had a beaten expression as well. His entire body gave off a rebellious attitude, and he did not seem like a good person.

At this point, the dust had settled, so Lu Yin no longer cared about the window. He withdrew his hand and went back to minding his own business.

The man similarly withdrew his hand and did not cause any more trouble.

Suddenly, a glaring light reflected off of something and into Lu Yin's eyes. He curiously looked out into the distance. Is that an arrow?

Whoosh! The arrow sped quickly through the air. It was aimed not at Lu Yin, but rather the man behind him.

The man lunged towards Lu Yin, wanting to use him to block the arrow. Lu Yin was infuriated by his bold maneuver, and he immediately raised his fist to block the man's palm. A soft echo rang throughout the room as the shockwave split the table and caused all the railings on the second floor to splinter. The man was pushed back by Lu Yin's palm, leaving him startled. At that moment, the arrow streaked past the man's shoulder and into the second floor of the hotel, where it was embedded straight into the floor, causing it to split apart.

“Heng Luoshun, surrender,” a loud voice sounded out from outside. From above, outside the window, and from everywhere else, many people charged at the man, who was apparently named Heng Luoshun.

Heng Luoshun gave a deep look to Lu Yin before he leaped out the window. “What a joke, the Shenwu Court Guard’s lackeys want to catch me, Heng Luoshun. Dream on! I’m not seventeenth on the List of Tempering for nothing.”

Not long after, a battle could be heard off in the distance.

The hotel had met with an unexpected disaster, and there had been a great deal of damage to the building. The boss had to come out and offer his apologies to the customers with a forced smile.

“I’m sorry, sir. I hope that you weren’t too startled,” the boss apologized to Lu Yin.

Lu Yin was curious. “What’s this List of Tempering?” He recalled no such list from Wu Xia’s memories, though those memories had been very extensive, and Lu Yin had only had a limited amount of time to review them. Hence, he had missed this bit.

“You don’t know?” The boss was shocked.

Lu Yin smiled. “I was raised in the wilderness from a young age, and this is my first time here.”

“It’s no wonder why you don’t know about the List of Tempering. It’s a list compiled by the Crown Prince Ming Hao using information from the Demon Hunters Society. It includes everyone under the Martial Emperor realm regardless of age. It ranks them according to their level of cultivation, and that Heng Luoshun from earlier is ranked seventeenth on the list,” he explained.

Lu Yin instantly understood. A list like this could easily incite competitiveness and even encourage people to grow stronger, regardless of whether it was in the universe or on the Shenwu Continent. However, it was definitely not easy for the Crown Prince Ming Hao to compile a list like that. “Boss, where can I buy the List of Tempering?”

Chapter 265: Murder From The Sky

The boss immediately had someone go buy one for Lu Yin. This list was available everywhere in the Shenwu Empire and was not expensive at all.

Lu Yin left a piece of martial crystal as a tip and left the hotel afterwards.

There were other ways for the trialtakers to obtain results in the Shenwu Continent trial apart from completing the two permanent missions. Leaving one’s name on the List of Tempering could improve one’s results by quite a bit since this was the most prestigious list on the Shenwu Continent for those below the Martial Emperor realm, which meant that it was a list for those who were not at the Explorer realm yet.

For this Outerverse trial, there were quite a few who were participating. There were definitely more than a few cultivators who had likely set their sights on getting their name on the list, so Lu Yin’s goal was to find those from the Daynight clan and cause them to fail. In that way, they would be wasting their time with the Outerverse Youth Council and their attention would be split.

The top name on the List of Tempering was... hidden?

Lu Yin was shocked, as the top name of a ranking list was seldom hidden. The second name on this list was Li Zimo, and it was also noted that he was a commander of the Ming Vanguard, which was the division of the Ming Constables that slaughtered the outsiders. The fact that this person could become the commander of that division indicated that he was very strong and that he should be able to match up to the Astral Combat Academy's student leaders. With Lu Yin's current power, he reckoned that he should be able to reach the top eight on the list fairly easily, as there was someone among King Mu's followers who ranked eighth. That was the expert that he had been cautious of. What was his name again? Tang Si?

The third on the List of Tempering was Dai Zong, and the notes stated that he was the commander of the Demon Hunters Society.

Lu Yin laughed, as it seemed that this List of Tempering was less of a way for Crown Prince Ming Hao to gather powerhouses, and more of a means to showcase the Shenwu Empire's power. The top name definitely belonged to someone from the empire, and the next three were clearly official powerhouses of the empire as well. Just this list's existence was a huge mental blow to the surviving members of the clans that had been nearly exterminated a thousand years ago.

Lu Yin headed west after leaving Taicang city. He wanted to go to Ming Island, which was the Shenwu Empire's central zone. All the trialtakers would eventually congregate there.

Lu Yin quickly moved around on his own, while King Mu's entourage was much slower. The caravan would remain in each city that it passed through for two days, and with such delays, Lu Yin easily caught up to their convoy in Bo City.

The troops cleared the way as many experts oversaw the convoy. There were both overt and covert forms of protection, as well as Ming Zhaoshu's Explorer level strength that would sweep out occasionally to intimidate any seeking to cause trouble.

Lu Yin set down his wine glass and watched the convoy move past. Incidentally, he spotted Ming Yan through a gauze curtain; her breathtaking face could not be hidden.

The procession quickly passed by. The next city was Shanhai City, which was the capital of Qiong Island. The Reverent King's palace was within Shanhai City.

Lu Yin set down a martial crystal as payment and booked a room to rest in for the night. The next day, he would head towards Shanhai City as well.

At night, the Shenwu Continent's skies were pitch black with only the five sealing planets offering any light in the sky. They looked just like giant pearls hanging above the continent as they emitted a faint radiance.

As he looked at the heavens, Lu Yin suddenly thought back to his days on Earth when he had led a peaceful life before the trial had started.

At this same time, on the other side of Bo City, Ming Yan suddenly woke up from a dream. She had a flustered expression and blushing cheeks. She had once again dreamed of that day when the two had met in the bath. It was so shameful! She looked up at the skies. Her gaze was naturally bright and unstained without a trace of impurity. She was intoxicatingly beautiful.

She stared at the night sky and then stared some more until her gaze dimmed. Perhaps they would never meet again!

He was a stranger whose name she did not even know, but he had barged into her heart in an unforgettable accident. It was impossible for the average girl to forget such a thing, but it was even more so for Ming Yan. In her entire life, that man was the only one who had gotten so close to her, and it had given her an indescribable shock. It was disgraceful, yet also novel, and she silently complained to herself.

Ming Zhaoshu also had a headache since his daughter Ming Yan was covering for Lu Yin. He could understand her kindheartedness, but she was young and did not know the repercussions that this event would cause for her future. This concerned her entire life, and this matter could very possibly cause her to suffer heavily.

Ming Zhaoshu had a cold glint in his eyes as he looked at the sky. If not for Ming Hao's subordinates intentionally leaking news of the matter, the rumors definitely would not have spread as far as they had.

Under the pure dark night, many were looking at the skies. Suddenly, signs of a crack that connected the heavens and the earth appeared before multiple figures spilled out, shocking Ming Zhaoshu. Foreigners?

At the city gates of Bo City, the heavenly globe rippled, causing signs of rejection to emerge on the bodies of those who had emerged from the spatial crack. Their bodies shone with a radiance that made them light up like a light bulb.

Countless cries rang out. "Aliens! Seal the city! Leave none alive!"

"Kill the aliens!"

...

Regardless of if they were officials of the empire or wandering cultivators who were unbound, aliens were an enemy to everyone from the Shenwu Continent.

Lu Yin was shocked. This group was just too unlucky as they had directly landed within a city. Their entry must have been somehow influenced by the experts of the Shenwu Continent, much like Lu Yin's own entry, and had thus appeared in the city.

Boom!

A loud explosion resounded through Bo City as a fierce battle erupted. Those who had joined the Outerverse trial were all extraordinary people; the weakest of these new arrivals was at the Limiteer realm, and one of them was even an Explorer.

Ming Zhaoshu was forced to act, seeing as he was the only Explorer in Bo City.

High up in the sky, Ming Zhaoshu initiated an intense battle with the alien Explorer. Below them, many other similar fights broke out as well. The entire city was roused to deal with the intruders, and since their bodies had been marked with the rejection of martial power, the trialtakers had nowhere to hide.

In the blink of an eye, two were killed. One of them died no more than a kilometer away from Lu Yin.

Suddenly, the heavenly globe on the city gate exploded. Lu Yin was shocked, as someone had actually managed to hide from the detection of the heavenly globe. He retrieved the Giant Emperor's third eye and looked towards the city gate. He indistinctly saw a familiar figure sweeping past the gate and rushing away from Bo City. Was that Han Chong?

The heavenly globe had been destroyed, and the remaining trialtakers immediately hid themselves. Only the Explorer was blocked by Ming Zhaoshu and left unable to escape.

Bang!

A rumble shook the skies as a strong gale swept through the earth, crushing many houses. The soldiers took out their shields to withstand the blast.

"You natives clearly are seeking death by daring to obstruct me," a loud voice shouted as a strange force pressed downwards.

Ming Zhaoshu was furious. "All foreigners must die!"

Lu Yin stood beside the window and gazed upwards. The Explorer had used a battle technique that Lu Yin had never seen before, and it was not a familiar energy either. Ming Zhaoshu did not use any battle techniques. Instead, he thrust forward with palm after palm as he brutishly used martial power to reinforce his battle prowess in an unsophisticated manner. Even the Explorer's battle techniques could only barely fend off Ming Zhaoshu's rush of attacks.

"How is this possible? Your palm technique is so simple! Why can't this space be torn apart?" The Explorer was stunned.

Ming Zhaoshu snorted, "It looks like you don't understand the Shenwu Continent at all. You're all brawn and no brain.

"Time to die."

"You're just a native!" the Explorer bellowed fiercely while forcing out his full strength.

Bang!

A shockwave pulsed out from the epicenter of their battle, destroying over a hundred soldiers' shields. A giant fissure was torn open in the ground as the shockwave continued to sweep out over for thousands of meters, crushing countless buildings in its path.

At this same time, on the five sealing planets high in the sky, a beam of light flashed out. In that instant, the Explorer stopped moving as his body was split into twain before his fresh blood splattered onto the ground.

It was a shocking scene where a strike from the stars wiped out an Explorer.

Lu Yin raised his head to look at where the five planets lay. The Shenwu Continent had gathered almost all its experts on those five spheres to defend against external forces. That strike just now had been from someone the equivalent of a Cruiser or even a Hunter. It was just too terrifying! This trial was

unimaginably dreadful; countless dangers could appear from above at any time, and even Explorers could be wiped out without any resistance.

Ming Zhaoshu raised his head and snorted once before descending.

Lu Yin closed his window and inhaled deeply. He lay on his bed and secretly reminded himself to maintain a low profile and not be exposed.

The matter that had taken place this night was just an interlude to the people of the Shenwu Continent and something that happened often.

The next day, the city's troops expertly sealed off the battlefield and rescued the injured. It was all methodically handled, and the city master even personally thanked Ming Zhaoshu before sending them off from the city's gates.

Lu Yin left several hours later. After the previous night's battle, the city guards had become much more stringent. Fortunately, Lu Yin's stolen ID still allowed him to easily pass through the security check.

Was it Han Chong who had destroyed the heavenly globe last night? Lu Yin suspected that it was him as the silhouette was too familiar. The top four of the Astral Combat Academy were all participating in this trial, so Starsibyl and Grandini Mavis should be here somewhere as well. Lu Yin did not know if they would meet on Ming Island, but he was looking forward to it.

Shanghai City was Qiong Island's largest city, and it had an immense moat and hundreds of thousands of troops stationed within it. There were countless experts, and it was rumored that more than ten experts from the List of Tempering resided in this city. The list consisted of 200 names, so for Shanghai City to house ten of them was fairly decent.

Lu Yin had only been in the city for a short while when he heard that King Mu's entourage was recruiting experts to protect the caravan of tribute carts for their journey to the capital, Mingdu. He immediately made his decision and rushed towards the convoy.

The convoy was resting in the central region of Shanghai City, and it had taken residence in not just a singular mansion, but rather a large property with a scenic landscape. The river around King Mu's property was not much narrower than the moat encircling the city. It occupied a large area, and it was rumored that the average person could not walk its circumference in a single day.

Shenwu Emperor Ming Zhaotian was celebrating his birthday, so King Mu naturally had to attend and offer his congratulations. Hence, the king had to enlist experts for protection as well as coachmen to drive the carts.

Lu Yin applied for the coachman position, as the requirements were not too high and the examination was not very strict either. It would be troublesome if he joined as a protecting expert and then had to meet Ming Zhaoshu.

"Kid, do you even know how to feed horses? If you don't, then get lost and don't waste my time," a man shouted at Lu Yin. This person was the head coachman of King Mu's household. He was called Butler Seven. The responsibility of selecting coachmen had fallen onto him.

Lu Yin lowered his brows and looked at the horse before him. He really did not know how to feed them, but he saw that Butler Seven was quickly growing more unhappy. He immediately shook his hand and dropped something on the ground with a soft thump.

“Butler Seven, are these five-fortune coins yours?” Lu Yin pointed at the ground in astonishment.

These coins were the common currency used in the Shenwu Empire.

Butler Seven greedily looked at the five-fortune coins and picked them up. He smiled. “They’re mine, they’re mine. Luckily, you saw them. Otherwise, it would have been troublesome if I lost them, haha!”

Lu Yin smiled apologetically. “It’s Little Seven’s honor to be able to serve with Butler Seven.”

Butler Seven was stunned. “You’re called Little Seven?”

“Yes, I’m Lu Seven, but many call me Little Seven.”

Butler Seven sized him up and down, and then marvelled, “Not bad, I guess it’s fate. Alright, you don’t have to feed the horses, but do you at least know how to drive a cart?”

“Yes, yes, yes, I’m the best at it,” Lu Yin immediately replied. Driving was too easy; he just had to whip the animal if it wasn’t being obedient, and he could even use martial power to forcefully control it as a last resort. Driving was definitely easier than feeding the horses.

Bribing his way into gaining work as a driver in exchange for a stack of five-fortune coins was something that Lu Yin felt was beneath him. Still, it was a good thing that he had managed to infiltrate Prince Mu’s caravan. All he needed to do now was to follow the caravan to Mingdu.

However, a driver had an extremely challenging profession, or at least, that was how Lu Yin saw it.

Chapter 266: Driver Little Seven

Lu Yin had already been at the Reverent King’s palace for two days. Just the afternoon before, the convoy from the Reverent King’s estate arrived. The convoy stretched on for several kilometers and even had watercraft carrying countless supplies within it, and it was all headed towards the capital. On both sides of the convoy, there were guards from Shanhai City’s military as well as the king’s private army. They were fortified in the outer perimeter by skilled warriors recruited by Ming Zhaoshu. There were easily over a thousand people in this convoy, and almost all of them were highly skilled individuals in the Martial King Realm.

Lu Yin did not understand how the Shenwu Continent could produce so many highly skilled warriors. If it solely had martial crystals as a cultivating aid, then it should have been impossible to produce this many skilled combatants in the Martial King Realm. Even though the Great Yu Empire was made up of thirteen filaments and contained countless planets, it would still be challenging for it to gather over a thousand Limiteers and let them cultivate freely. Credit should be given to the natives of this continent for their speed in absorbing the ambient martial power; it was possible that the Shenwu Continent’s natives absorbed martial power much quicker than they aliens.

As his mind wandered, Lu Yin found that his carriage had become slightly uncentered from the rest of the convoy. Lu Yin raised his hand to crack the whip, realigning the carriage to its correct position within the convoy once again. He had gotten to know the horses better over the past few days, and although

they had initially been so hard to control that he had been forced to use martial power, with some practice, he had found that the horses were actually not that difficult to guide. In fact this had ended up being quite an interesting experience for him. Since he could not train during his time with the king's entourage, he decided to just immerse himself in his role as a coachman.

His performance had even won praises from Butler Seven, who was slowly growing fonder of Lu Yin as they spent more time together. He had even approached Lu Yin with the intent of persuading him to stay on as a member of the king's household.

Three more days passed without incident. By then, the Reverent King's convoy had already left Shanghai City. They were now making their way towards Ming Island. The roads were flat and the convoy was also protected by additional regional troops along the way.

Lu Yin did not see Ming Yan at all during the past three days as she remained in her private carriage the entire time.

Her carriage was being operated by a gentle beast known as the He beast, and they were usually used by the Reverent King Ming Zhaoshu. During this journey, Ming Yan stayed with Ming Zhaoshu in the private carriage.

There was also a hierarchy among the drivers in the king's entourage. Lu Yin was in the lowest caste as he was a cargo vehicle driver. There were other drivers in charge of operating the supply vehicles, military wares, and driving the carriages of noble families. The highest caste were those who drove the private carriages. Lu Yin had initially wanted to drive a private carriage, but those drivers were all elites and cultivators. Even Butler Seven had to defer to them, so it was a post that was currently out of reach for Lu Yin.

While he was deep in thought, a sudden wave swept across them. It was a wave of martial power emitted by a heavenly globe. This wave was something that Lu Yin had already experienced many times. All of a sudden, a tea stall at the roadside glared with light. This was a negative response to the heavenly globe, and it caused Lu Yin to look over in astonishment.

A young lady suddenly stood up from where she had been seated at a tea stall. Her expression abruptly changed as she rushed off into the distance.

"Grab her!" Ming Zhaoshu's low growl sounded out from inside his private carriage.

Tang Si immediately leaped up and swung the lance in his hand. It made an arcing motion, and the space within the arc rippled like a wave as it pulsed out and ferociously charged towards the fleeing woman.

The lady gritted her teeth, and she turned around while brandishing her sword as a whistling sound rang out. Right after, blinding sparks filled the air, and her sword was shattered by the lance, the tip of the lance continuing to strike the woman's arm. It caused her to bleed, and she was flung several meters backwards before landing hard on the ground and spitting out blood.

Lu Yin narrowed his eyes; this woman was far too weak compared to Tang Si. Tang Si was as strong as the Astral Combat Academy's student leaders, whereas this woman's abilities didn't even match up to an Area Master's. She was likely someone from the Outerverse, and it appeared that she was doomed.

Tang Si landed on the ground with his lance in hand as he inched closer to the woman.

Her face held a pained expression, and she was regretting joining the trial this time around. The Outerverse trials were indeed only meant for truly exceptional individuals. While she might have been the most outstanding cultivator in her home planet, when it came to trials of this magnitude, she was just too weak.

“Surrender or prepare to die,” Tang Si said in an icy voice. The tip of his lance was just a mere inch away from the woman’s face. The woman had no choice, and she helplessly rose to her feet, unwilling to die.

At that very moment, various shadows could be seen rushing over from the distance. Tang Si looked at them, and a glint of panic could be seen in his eyes. He quickly turned around to look at the private carriage. Ming Zhaoshu lifted the drapes to see several figures appear. These people were the Ming Vanguard from the Ming Constables.

There were five of them in total, and they were all powerful individuals in the Martial King Realm; none of them were weaker than the captured woman. When they looked at the private carriage, they respectfully said, “The Ming Vanguard pays their respects to the Reverent King.”

“Why are you here?” Ming Zhaoshu asked curiously.

“We have been pursuing this alien. Thank you, Your Highness, for helping us to capture this fugitive.”

Ming Zhaoshu closed the drapes once more. “Leave.”

Tang Si swept a cold glare across the Ming Vanguard before walking away from the woman without another word.

The woman’s face turned a deathly white. She might have been granted the opportunity to live if she had been captured by the Reverent King. However, there was absolutely no such chance of surviving with the Ming Vanguard. She had already been on the Shenwu Continent for half a month and had heard many rumors about this organization, and she knew that they were a bloodthirsty group whose sole goal was to kill all trialtakers. When her thoughts reached this point, the woman felt as if she had fallen into a completely hopeless situation.

Lu Yin looked at her with pity, as he knew full well how cruel the Ming Vanguard could be. This woman was bound to suffer horrifically, and yet, there was nothing that he could do to save her.

The convoy continued to move forward, and very soon, the woman and the few members of the Ming Vanguard disappeared from Lu Yin’s view.

At this time, Lu Yin focused on Tang Si, who was ranked eighth on the List of Tempering. This man was very powerful, and if he had competed in the Astral Combat Tournament, then he would have likely reached the round of the top sixteen, making him comparable to the various student leaders. The Shenwu Continent was a mystical place with martial power that surpassed the stars. It was home to many powerful warriors, and when its forces combined, it was no surprise that they were able to stave off the Darkmist Weave and even the powerful forces of the Innerverse.

The more he learned about the Shenwu Continent, the more Lu Yin wanted to get more out of his time in this trial. The Shenwu Continent was not too far away from the Frostwave Weave and the Great Yu Empire. It was even closer to the Astral River, which made it a very strategic location. Making a name for himself here would only put Lu Yin in a more advantageous position.

The only thing that this continent lacked was technology. When the technology of this place caught up with the rest of the universe, the power that this continent would hold would be enough to raise the entire Darkmist Weave to the next level.

As night approached, the convoy stopped to rest as they were still quite a distance away from the next city. They had to cross two mountains to reach that city, and it was impossible to do so before dusk. It looked like they would have to spend the night where they were.

The space in this continent was so stable that even Explorers were unable to tear through it. To the invaders from the Darkmist Weave, however, this was not a good thing. Another reason why this sturdier space was not a benefit for the Shenwu Continent was that it meant that spatial storage items could not be made there. Thus, items such as Cosmos Rings could not be produced there. Hence, people could only carry their belongings on their person, which was a real hassle.

As night fell, the cries of beasts could be heard everywhere in the distance. Large flying creatures sometimes flew by, raising violent gales as they did so.

Lu Yin rested inside his cargo cart, and before long, Butler Seven walked over.

“Damn it! That snobbish prick. If it wasn’t for my recommendation back then, he would have never been able to rise up and become a private carriage driver. But now, he has the gall to tell me not to go near him. Ugh!” Butler Seven angrily spat on the ground and sat down beside Lu Yin.

Lu Yin was curious, “Who would dare offend you, Butler Seven?”

“That private carriage driver! I wanted to pay my respects to the king and princess, but he turned me away. Ugh!” Butler Seven was so angry that his face had turned ashen.

Lu Yin glanced over at the huge private carriage some distance away where he saw a middle aged man behind the He beast. He was the private carriage driver. “Why do the king and princess not want to get down?”

Butler Seven distractedly replied, “It’s to protect the princess’ reputation.”

“What’s wrong with the princess?” Lu Yin asked. He then suddenly recalled the rumor that he heard back in Taicang City.

Butler Seven carefully checked the surroundings before quietly answering, “The princess’ innocence was compromised, so she doesn’t dare to come out during this journey. Her main fear is that Crown Prince Ming Hao might get a hold of her and try to use her as a bargaining chip to cause trouble.”

“Crown Prince Ming Hao? He is from the younger generation compared to His Highness, right? Do they have some conflict?” Lu Yin asked, now completely interested in the conversation. As he asked the question, he pulled out a jar of wine that he had specially bought to gain Butler Seven’s favor.

When he saw the wine, Butler Seven smiled and took a giant swig. He wiped his mouth before continuing to explain, saying, “This isn’t a secret in the empire. Ever since His Majesty went to the central planet to fight off the foreigners, all state matters were placed under the Crown Prince’s authority. The excessive authority that his household now holds is something that some of the older

members of the royal family are unhappy about. These people feel that the authority should still rest with the emperor's palace and not anywhere else. Because of this, many of the older members have started trying to push the king aside. As a result, Crown Prince Ming Hao started to hate His Highness and now often goes against His Highness."

Lu Yin pondered all this information for a moment as none of this had been in Wu Xia's memories. Even though Lu Yin could not remember all the details within those memories, he could still remember most of it. He recalled that Crown Prince Ming Hao had been using various methods to instill fear into some person. If the person really did turn out to be the Reverent King, then this was no ordinary feud; the fear was being instilled to restrict the competition for the throne.

"In the Reverent King's household, there are many people who work for the Crown Prince. His Highness is aware of this, but he does not investigate it either. He never imagined that a foreigner would break in and rob the princess of her innocence. This event was made known to the Crown Prince by some spies, and he then spread the news widely. This in turn caused her highness' name to be dirtied, and now, no one knows what will happen," Butler Seven explained with a sigh.

Lu Yin felt very sorry upon hearing this; a mere accident on his part had caused an innocent girl to be pulled into a power struggle. This was something that she would now have to deal with for her entire life since the Shenwu Continent was very conservative in how they treated a woman's reputation. This was the trouble with narrow-minded viewpoints.

"Oh yes, what's the deal with Tang Si? He seems like a formidable person," Lu Yin casually asked.

Butler Seven nodded his head in agreement. "No one knows much about where he's from, but he is indeed very formidable. There's probably no one who can match him in the Martial King Realm—his rank of eighth on the List of Tempering is no exaggeration. Do you know how many powerful figures there are in the Martial King Realm? The members of the older generation who are still in the Martial King Realm are far superior to the younger generation in terms of both experience and ability, and yet, Tang Si is still more powerful than many of them. Achieving the eighth position is no mean feat. Within the entire household, he's second only to the Reverent King in terms of his strength."

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The roads were bumpy, but the troops paving the way in front made the journey quicker. After a day, the king's convoy entered the city.

"After we pass Fan City, we will enter Ming Island next. After another month of travel, we will finally arrive at the capital." Butler Seven was delighted as he informed Lu Yin of the news. He enjoyed talking to Lu Yin as he felt that Lu Yin was smart, generous, and knew how to properly flatter himself. He liked Lu Yin so much that he was determined to bring the youth into the king's household after they returned and even held thoughts of grooming Lu Yin as his successor.

Lu Yin looked up at the lofty city in front of them. As he gazed above, he saw a heavenly globe that occasionally let out waves of martial power. He did not know if there would be other trial-takers in this city as well.

Fan City had already prepared accommodations for the king's convoy, and right after Lu Yin finished his meal, Butler Seven pulled him aside. "Little Seven, His Highness just asked me to get a few drivers to accompany the princess out for a short walk to clear her mind. Do you want to go?"

Lu Yin was overjoyed upon hearing this request. "Of course I will go! Thank you so much, Butler Seven!"

Butler Seven chuckled happily. "Any excursion involving the princess must be taken with extra caution. Apart from Tang Si, there will only be one handmaid and a few drivers. Remember, be on your toes and do not cause any trouble!"

Lu Yin hurriedly agreed with everything that he was told.

Chapter 267: Yue Xianzi

"A coachman's main job is to carry items for the princess. Do not look at her, speak to her, and watch the surrounding people at all times..." Butler Seven gave Lu Yin a lot of instructions. Before long, Lu Yin went outside and saw Tang Si standing silently in front with a serene expression.

Lu Yin lowered his head and quietly moved to stand behind Tang Si. A few other coachmen followed his lead and stood beside Lu Yin.

Not long after, the princess walked out with a veil covering face and a maid following after her. She glanced at her surroundings curiously, as she hardly ever was allowed to step out of the house. If not for the king sensing her poor mood, he would not have let her out this time either.

Ming Yan cherished this opportunity to see the world. Even though Fan City was not big and could not compare to Shanghai City, it was still very exciting to her, and she was delighted with whatever she saw.

Tang Si closely followed behind Ming Yan and did not dare to move even half a step away from her. Lu Yin and the other coachmen followed closely behind, and all the items that the princess bought were given to them to carry.

Lu Yin was only five meters away from Ming Yan, but Tang Si stood in between the two. Lu Yin dared not approach them for fear that Tang Si would sense something off. Although Lu Yin's Invisible Aura Technique was effective, he did not want to test its limits since he was not familiar with martial power.

While Ming Yan was happily strolling about the town, there was a hubbub of activity ahead of them, and Ming Yan was immediately drawn towards it.

Lu Yin and the rest hurriedly dispersed the people in her path and then looked inside the crowd. Lu Yin's pupils shrank. What is this?

There were several burly men in front of them, and they had surrounded a woman and were loudly scolding her and even occasionally punching her. The people around them were all pointing at them, but no one dared to step forward and intervene.

Ming Yan pitied the woman and looked at her maid, who then went forward to stop them. Soon enough, the group of people was dispersed, and the bullied girl was brought to Ming Yan.

"Your humble servant Yue'er thanks Young Miss for her kindness in saving me," the girl gratefully said as she kowtowed and expressed her thanks through tears.

Ming Yan could not bear the pitiful sight and immediately helped the girl up. "What's the matter? Why was that group bullying you?"

"This servant came to Fan City to look for her relatives, but they were long gone when she arrived. This servant was even poisoned mid-journey and lost all of her cultivation. They even wanted to sell this servant to a brothel! If not for Young Miss, then this servant would have been done for." Yue'er expressed her gratitude and then kneeled down again.

From behind Ming Yan, Tang Si suddenly grabbed Yue'er's arm with a cold look. Ming Yan was angry. "Brother Tang Si, what are you doing?"

Yue'er looked at Tang Si in alarm.

Tang Si stared at Yue'er and then placed his thumb on her wrist. He palpated her pulse for a moment before releasing her hand. He then respectfully said, "Miss, this girl's cultivation was not weak, but she was indeed poisoned, and her martial power has dissipated."

"She already said that. Look at you, hurting others." Ming Yan was obviously upset with Tang Si's actions, and she then turned and looked at Yue'er apologetically. "Yue'er, I'm sorry, but that's just how he is. He does not realize how forceful he is being sometimes."

Yue'er replied, "Dangers lurk behind every corner. Could Young Miss not blame her brother? He was just trying to protect Young Miss."

Ming Yan nodded and looked at Tang Si. "Can Yue'er's poison be neutralized?"

In a deep voice, Tang Si replied, "Yes, but the antidote will need to be verified by the king before she can use it."

"Then let's go. I'll look for my father, His Highness," Ming Yan had no further thoughts of shopping and immediately took Yue'er away.

Yue'er immediately spoke up, "Young Miss, did you just say, 'His Highness'? Are you the princess?"

Ming Yan stuck out her tongue and smiled. "Yes! I forgot to tell you that. Let's go and see my father."

Yue'er was starting to panic, but she was still dragged away by Ming Yan.

Ming Yan was elated. She had heard many storytellers talking about this sort of matter, but she had never thought she would actually be able to personally save a girl from prostitution. This was too fun! The princess grew happier the more she thought about it.

Tang Si and the rest hurried along behind Ming Yan.

Lu Yin looked at Yue'er and felt like cursing. Damn it! Isn't she just Yue Xianzi? She had slightly altered her appearance, but it wasn't enough to prevent Lu Yin from recognizing her. This woman had come to Mingdu and directly charged towards the Reverent King's palace, but what were her intentions? She could not possibly think that this silly ploy would be enough to deceive the king.

However, the facts revealed were beyond Lu Yin's wildest expectations. Everything that Yue Xianzi had said was proven to be true, and even her relatives who were supposed to provide her with shelter were found to be in Lin City! There were no problems with her story.

Lu Yin was left speechless, and his eyes flickered with a thoughtful light. It appeared that these great powers had settled down in the capital and taken root here long ago, possibly even several hundred years ago, just to make their future trial takers' cover stories more believable. Yue Xianzi had the Frostmoon Sect behind her, and they had people who had stepped onto the Shenwu Continent so long ago that they now even had some semblance of a lineage. It was always good for one to have some supporting power behind themselves.

Yue Xianzi's story caused Ming Yan to express her sympathy. "My father has found your relatives. Do you still want to go to them?"

Yue Xianzi bitterly shook her head, "They're only concerned with themselves. It's no use for me even if I look for them." She then bowed towards Ming Yan. "Thank you, princess, for your kindness in saving me. Yue'er is unable to return the favor, so my next life will be used to repay your kindness."

Ming Yan then looked at Ming Zhaoshu. "Your Highness."

Ming Zhaoshu looked at Yue Xianzi. "Where did you cultivate your strength?"

Yue Xianzi replied, "I was tutored at home by Pingshan Shuiguai."

Ming Zhaoshu was shocked. "The same Pingshan Shuiguai who challenged a Martial Emperor while still at the Martial King realm?"

"Yes."

"Where is he now?" His interest was piqued.

Yue Xianzi revealed a pained expression. "He died over a year ago and was buried at Pingshan."

Ming Zhaoshu nodded and sighed. "What a pity. Your master was a rare breed for him to be able to cross realms. Although he lost that battle, it was still an honorable defeat. His death may be related to that battle back then."

Then, Ming Zhaoshu looked at Yue Xianzi. "You're Yue'er, right? Are you willing to stay in the Reverent King's household?"

Yue Xianzi was stumped for a moment, but then she looked at Ming Yan. She bowed her head in gratitude. "Yue'er's willing to use her remaining life to repay her gratitude to the princess."

"That's great, Yue'er! From now on, you'll follow me," Ming Yan was delighted and she looked at Yue Xianzi with gleaming eyes.

Yue Xianzi smiled back at the princess.

Ming Zhaoshu watched the two girls leave and then ordered, "Go and investigate Pingshan—not just Pingshan Shuiguai. Include this Yue'er's family history and search back for a thousand years."

"Is Your Highness afraid that she's an alien?"

Ming Zhaoshu snorted disdainfully. "These aliens have rooted themselves so deeply in the Shenwu Continent that forging a simple identity is no longer difficult for them. I'm still not sure if she's an alien, so let's just investigate."

"If that's the case, then why is Your Highness allowing her to stay with the princess?" Tang Si could not understand Ming Zhaoshu's reasoning.

Ming Zhaoshu did not reply, and Tang Si left, not daring to speak any further.

Lu Yin and the rest set down Ming Yan's purchases and left as well.

After they all departed, Yue Xianzi suddenly looked over towards Lu Yin. That person seemed to have intentionally avoided her, and his aura also felt rather familiar. However, she could not recall if she knew this person. Is he also a trialtaker?

Lu Yin had not altered his appearance too much, so he was afraid that Yue Xianzi might recognize him. He had subtly avoided her, but the woman's intuition was just too sharp. Lu Yin's small actions might have escaped the detection of experts, but they could not escape from this woman's eyes. Although she had not recognized him, she had noticed his irregularity.

Ming Island was the central island of the Shenwu Empire as well as the central region of the entire Shenwu Continent. Ming Island was also entirely encircled by a giant river called the Ming River.

"The Ming River encircles Ming Island and countless tributaries extend from it. After Fan City, it will take us about two days before we reach the Ming River. After we cross that, we'll be within the boundaries of Ming Island," Butler Seven explained in a puffed-up manner. He was rather proud that he had visited Ming Island before.

No matter where it was, discrimination would always exist. The people from Ming Island looked down upon those from the other thirty five islands, just like how the people of the Shenwu Empire looked down upon the other regions of the Shenwu Continent.

Every island in the Shenwu Empire was massive, and many had never even ventured beyond the boundaries of their island throughout the entire course of their life. Butler Seven was no martial expert, but he had entered Ming Island and was rightfully proud of it.

Lu Yin immediately flattered him, causing Butler Seven to become extremely happy.

"Right, Butler Seven, since the princess is one of the empire's twin beauties, has no one proposed marriage to her?" Lu Yin asked curiously.

Butler Seven rolled his eyes. "Of course there have been some, but not many have done so ever since His Highness's relationship with Crown Prince Ming Hao soured." Butler Seven then carefully moved closer to Lu Yin's ear and softly whispered, "Think about it. No matter how pretty the princess is, it won't matter if you're dead."

"Are you saying that Crown Prince Ming Hao will attack His Highness?"

"Shh! Don't spout nonsense. I don't know either," Butler Seven's face paled and he stopped speaking.

At that moment, Butler Seven was called away by someone, and Lu Yin continued to drive the cart.

Not much later, a fragrance blew by, and Lu Yin's expression changed, though he continued to drive the cart. A girl rode up beside him on her horse. It was Yue'er, or rather, Yue Xianzi. "Haven't we met before?" she inquired as she stared at Lu Yin.

Lu Yin gave a humble smile. "I'm just a coachman, so how could I have had the honor of meeting miss before?"

Yue Xianzi sized him and still felt that he gave a familiar vibe. She was relying on her woman's intuition, and felt that he was purposefully avoiding her gaze. "Raise your head."

Lu Yin slowly looked up as he had no choice.

At that point, Butler Seven arrived. "Little Seven, a coachman behind us is sick and can't move. Go and take his place."

A burden lifted from Lu Yin's heart as he bowed to Yue Xianzi and then immediately left.

"Miss Yue'er, I hope that Little Seven was not rude to you," Butler Seven tried to probe into what had just happened.

Yue Xianzi gave a faint smile. "Of course not. Butler Seven is being too harsh. I just felt that he seemed familiar."

"Oh, then I'll rest assured. After all, Little Seven's a rural person who doesn't know the customs of us city folk."

"Butler Seven, has Little Seven always been in the Reverent King's household?"

"He joined us just a few days ago. I accepted him since he seemed to have some skill in taming horses."

Yue Xianzi nodded, smiled at Butler Seven, and then left.

Butler Seven took a deep breath, seemingly infatuated. "She's too fragrant. It's a pity that she wasn't sold, or else I would have played with her even if I had to sell everything I own. Such a pity..."

Yue Xianzi was very pretty, and many cultivators had become infatuated with her back at Blackwater Lake. Even if she had altered her appearance, she was still a top-tier beauty and was naturally extremely attractive to people like Butler Seven.

Joined just a few days ago? Yue Xianzi looked at Lu Yin who was eagerly driving a different cart. Her eyes sparkled. Is he another trialtaker? If so, then why did he seem to have no cultivation? Had he hidden it? It would be terrifying if he could truly conceal his cultivation so well. She tried her best to match him to all the experts that she had met, but she ended up drawing a blank. After all, she was the young mistress of Frostmoon Sect and had met far too many young elites. She naturally could not recall all of them.

Chapter 268: Probe

Even if Yue Xianzi could not recall Lu Yin's true identity, she saw no harm in probing him. Every so often, she would seek him out and chat with him, leaving Lu Yin helpless. He wondered if he should start thinking of a way to get rid of this girl.

However, trouble wasn't the only thing that Yue Xianzi had brought to Lu Yin. For example, at this moment, Lu Yin was currently situated right behind the private carriage and was only a few meters away from Ming Yan. Yue Xianzi had purposefully arranged this placement for him since Ming Yan treated her extremely well, and she was even allowed to enter the private carriage. She had ultimately declined because of Ming Zhaoshu's existence and was instead riding alongside the carriage by horseback.

"Is there anyone else in your family?" Yue Xianzi asked Lu Yin as she rode alongside.

Lu Yin's face twisted into a grimace. "No, there was an epidemic in my hometown, and they all died."

"Oh... How old are you this year?"

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Within the private carriage, Ming Yan occasionally glanced out in astonishment. "Father, it seems that Yue'er treats that coachman pretty well."

Ming Zhaoshu was going through his scrolls and smiled at his daughter. "Perhaps they were brought together by fate."

Ming Yan did not really understand what was happening between the two and sneaked another glance at Lu Yin. She blinked; this man seemed quite familiar for some reason.

By this point, Lu Yin was itching to stuff Yue Xianzi's mouth shut with a smelly sock. They were right next to the private carriage with Ming Zhaoshu inside! Lu Yin would be discovered the instant he answered incorrectly; however, this woman just kept asking questions as if they were on a blind date. She was so nosy, but he could not ignore her. It was nauseating.

"The way you steer the cart seems rather strange. You don't seem like an ordinary person. Have you cultivated before?" Yue Xianzi asked and stared at Lu Yin.

Lu Yin's heart dropped. At that moment, Tang Si happened to come over and say, "Your Highness, we've reached the Ming River. The boat's been prepared for us beforehand."

"There's no rush. Yue'er, repeat that question again," Ming Zhaoshu's voice was heard from within the private carriage. At that moment, Tang Si carefully looked at Lu Yin as well.

Lu Yin's finger twitched, and Yue Xianzi repeated herself.

All those nearby turned to look at Lu Yin.

Lu Yin calmly replied, "I haven't cultivated. All that I've learned is from Qianshan village. His Majesty once passed through that village, and his entourage demonstrated a few forms to the villagers there, which I learned a bit from later."

The drapes of the private carriage were drawn back, and Ming Zhaoshu looked at Lu Yin. He was shocked. "You've been to Qianshan village?"

Lu Yin bowed respectfully. "Yes, I passed through it in my youth. I learned a few moves under an old tree to better protect myself."

“What did you learn? Demonstrate the forms that you learned.” Ming Zhaoshu seemed rather intrigued by Lu Yin’s supposed chance encounter.

Lu Yin did not dare to refuse and immediately displayed it in the open. It was just three simple movements that appeared to be very ordinary, but Ming Zhaoshu took on a reminiscing expression as he watched. This form had been created during Ming Zhaoshu’s youth when he collaborated with Ming Zhaotian. And now, it had spread even to that little village. Ming Zhaoshu looked at Lu Yin with a much warmer gaze after he finished demonstrating the forms. “It must be destiny that you were able to learn these forms. After His Majesty’s birthday celebration, you can remain within my household.”

Lu Yin gratefully replied, “Many thanks, Your Highness, for the offer.”

Ming Zhaoshu nodded in satisfaction. “Let’s cross the Ming River now.”

Ming Yan cast a curious look at Lu Yin with pursed lips before dropping the curtain.

Yue Xianzi frowned. This person couldn’t be a trialtaker, as why would he know about such a trivial matter if he was? Forget it, this was just a waste of my time. She thought about the matter a bit more, but then shook her head as she had no further interest in Lu Yin.

Lu Yin relaxed. Luckily, Wu Xia had seen Crown Prince Ming Hao practice and demonstrate those forms for Ming Zhaotian before. It was practically monkey see, monkey do; fortunately, he had somehow managed to hoodwink the Reverent King. If not for this, then he had no other way to bring Yue Xianzi’s meddling to an end. He looked at her and decided that she would need to be put in her place one day.

In the depths of the universe, inside the Daynight clan’s prison, a grating sound woke Zhuo Daynight up. She raised her head, her face completely drained of blood.

An elder walked in and looked down at her. “What relationship do you have with Astral-10’s Lu Yin?”

She looked at the elder and shuddered. “None.”

“Why are you helping him?”

“Because he saved me.”

“You should be aware that the Daynight clan will not allow any marriages with an outsider.”

“This junior has no such relationship with Lu Yin. We’ve only met thrice.”

“Very well, I’ll believe you. Still, he was willing to tell us the hidden location of the Third Nightking to save you, so he isn’t completely lacking in feelings for you. From today onwards, you are the disciple of me, Nightking Yuanjing.”

She raised her head, shocked. “The Third... Nightking?”

His lips quirked up in amusement. “That’s right, he provided the Third Nightking’s information to me in exchange for your release, and I agreed.”

Zhuo Daynight was stunned. The Third Nightking...

The Ming River was wide, and its surface was glimmering with light. It was divided in multiple channels, and each held boats made to transport people and goods.

The Reverent King's household alone took up five channels. The military cleared the way as they floated towards the gate of Ming Island: Antai City.

As the boat crossed the bobbing river, Lu Yin walked across the deck. To his surprise, it was very smooth and steady even as it floated across the water.

Lu Yin was a coachman and technically not important enough to be aboard the same vessel as Reverent King Ming Zhaoshu. However, since it required manual labor to move some of the valuable goods on the boat, Lu Yin had the honor of being selected for the task.

Butler Seven's attitude towards Lu Yin had completely changed after he had demonstrated those basic forms to Ming Zhaoshu. From initially appreciating Lu Yin, to being friendly, Butler Seven was now even a bit fawning towards Lu Yin.

Lu Yin found it amusing; this was the perk of authority. Ming Zhaoshu had only shown a little kindness to Lu Yin, but just that small amount was enough to cause many in the household to try and get into Lu Yin's good books. Even the butler was doing the same! Authority was a good thing to have.

Just as the ship was about to set off, a group of riders on giant beasts charged over, kicking up a cloud of dust in their wake.

"Student Bei Qing requests a meeting with the Reverent King." Lu Yin and the rest all turned around to see a young scholar. He was good-looking, wore a white gown, and carried a fan as he smiled gently at the people aboard the boat.

Bei Qing? Lu Yin vaguely recalled him being the son of someone important.

"So it's nephew Bei." Ming Zhaoshu walked out and smiled warmly at the man. He raised his hand, and a giant plank was placed down. "If nephew Bei is also going to the capital, then we can travel together."

The scholar, Bei Qing, was delighted and bowed. "Thank you, Your Highness." He then stepped aboard the boat without a second thought.

At the other end of the vessel, Ming Yan frowned within a luxurious cabin, appearing rather unhappy.

"Princess, what's the matter?" Yue Xianzi asked.

"This Bei Qing once asked my father for my hand in marriage, but I don't like him."

"Why not? I recall that you shouldn't have had much interaction with the outside world since you were young, right?"

Ming Yan tightly clasped her teacup and tightly pursed her lips. "He has a poor reputation—he often visits the red light districts!"

Yue Xianzi nodded sagely. "Princess, if that's the case, then let's not go out in order to avoid bumping into that sort of person."

Ming Yan agreed and turned to face the river. Suddenly, her eyes were attracted towards some movement in the river. "Yue'er, look over there. Why are there branches on the river?"

Yue Xianzi's expression immediately shifted. "Not good! There are assassins under the water!" Right at that moment, the entire boat swayed as wave after wave of energy swept up from below the river surface and pierced holes through the bottom of the boat. The white shockwaves even burst out onto the boat's deck, forcefully sweeping across it.

Ming Zhaoshu's face changed; he had been too careless. He moved his right leg, causing a majestic martial power to shoot out from his feet and straight into the bottom of the river. There was a dull echo as the entire Ming River began to boil over.

At that moment, Ming Zhaoshu seemed to become a deity with total control over the nearby area. The air grew heavy, and even Bei Qing nearly fainted from the sight.

The surface of the river quickly reddened, and corpses floated up from below like dead fish. They had all perished without exception after just a single attack. Ming Zhaoshu was a Martial Emperor and could crush all the present opposition.

Lu Yin looked at the river and saw that there were only about a dozen corpses, although they were widely strewn about, and there was even one in the next channel. They seemed to have wanted to destroy the boat, but they had not been able to do so in time as they had vastly underestimated Ming Zhaoshu's power.

To a powerhouse like the Reverent King, numbers held no meaning.

"Quickly, go and check if there are any more evil sect members in the other channels," Ming Zhaoshu ordered. The surrounding troops immediately leaped into action and sealed off the Ming River. Even Antai City's troops moved out to investigate.

Bei Qing was supporting himself on a railing and let out a relieved breath. He had thought that he was doomed; the pressure had been too intense for him to bear.

"Nephew, are you alright?" Ming Zhaoshu looked at the scholar with concern.

Bei Qing bowed graciously. "With Your Highness around, rabble such as these are mere ants. I am fine." He then suddenly added, "That's right, Your Highness, where is the princess? Is she alright?"

Ming Zhaoshu shook his head. "Yan'er is fine, so don't worry. I'll arrange for someone to take you to your quarters where you can rest."

Bei Qing nodded, his face still a little pale.

He was actually not that weak and was actually a Martial King himself. He had used countless resources to climb his way up to the 132nd position on the List of Tempering. However, he was too inexperienced and had not fought many battles throughout his entire life. Being that close to a Martial Emperor and experiencing their strength himself was something that was difficult for him to adapt to.

Ming Yan's face was also a bit pale within her cabin, where she was being consoled by Yue Xianzi. "Princess, don't worry. Everything's fine."

Ming Yan nodded, although she still felt a lingering fear in her heart. "Thank you, Yue'er. If not for you, I would have been in danger."

Yue Xianzi smiled brightly. "If not for the princess, Yue'er would have been sold into prostitution. Please don't be polite, as Yue'er's life belongs to you."

Ming Yan forced a smile onto her face and clenched Yue Xianzi's hand harder.

The ship was slightly damaged by the ambush, but there were no major setbacks since Ming Zhaoshu had acted so quickly, preventing the attackers from causing any real harm. It only took them half a day to repair the boat before they were able to peacefully cross the river.

"These evil sects are unending, and they'll do anything. They even dared to try to assassinate His Highness." Butler Seven was still rather nervous about the whole affair since he had almost been killed by the energy wave.

Lu Yin acted as if he was fearful as well. "Bu- Butler Seven, how do you know that they're from the evil sects?"

Butler Seven angrily replied, "If it weren't them, who else could it be? A thousand years ago, the empire's strongest person, Lord Ming Taizhong, founded his dynasty and swept aside all the sects. Since then, there have been no more sects in the entire continent, and all battle and cultivation techniques were handed over to the empire. Although Lord Ming Taizhong perished together with the foreign invaders, His Majesty, the current emperor, is even more powerful than the previous one. Everyone around here acknowledges his superiority, and no one dares to resist the empire. Only the evil sects would continue to hide like mice and still cause destruction."

"I heard that there are Demon Hunters Society who specialize in dealing with the evil sects, right?" Lu Yin was curious.

Butler Seven nodded. "That's right, but I don't know what the Demon Hunters do for a living. They haven't exterminated these few remaining evil sect members even after all these years. How useless!"

Lu Yin's eyes twinkled. Useless? Not necessarily... The Demon Hunters Society would be disbanded once they served their purpose. Once the evil sects were completely eradicated, there would be no further use for the Demon Hunters. Hence, they would never go all-out in their assignment unless they were truly foolish.

Chapter 269: Lu Yin's Revenge

The Ming River was wide, but the convoy quickly crossed over it. Not long after, Antai City came within sight of the entourage, and they also saw large-scale troops sealing off the shore.

"How unfortunate! Ming Island's been sealed off, and no cultivators can enter. Even our Reverent King's household will have to wait for two days," someone explained.

Lu Yin's expression changed. Ming Island had been sealed, which made Yue Xianzi's motivations for sneaking in and joining the Reverent King's entourage clear. She was planning on following them onto Ming Island so that she could escape detection while also gathering some information at the same time.

The extent of the Frostmoon Sect's influence in the Shenwu Continent had finally been considered exposed to Lu Yin. They must have received information about Ming Island being sealed off far in advance, to the point where they were even able to forge an identity for her so that she could join the king's entourage. It seemed that their influence was quite impressive.

The convoy had to wait for two more days aboard the boat. Reverent King Ming Zhaoshu stepped off first and entered Antai City alone. He did not take anyone along with him, and even Princess Ming Yan was left on the boat.

Lu Yin leaned against some supply goods and stared into the sky. Without him noticing, the sky had darkened considerably, and it seemed like it was going to rain any time now!

On the deck of the boat, Ming Yan was staring at the river's surface. There was no sunlight, and the atmosphere was gloomy, but it was still better than being trapped inside the cabin; she could not bear that stuffy room anymore. Yue Xianzi was standing silently by her side.

Bei Qing walked over to them, and his eyes brightened when he saw Ming Yan. He immediately approached to pay his respects. "Bei Qing salutes the princess."

Ming Yan turned her head around, and her beautiful face hidden beneath the thin gauze veil made Bei Qing's gaze turn even more heated. Ming Yan frowned and smoothly retreated two steps. "So it's Brother Bei. I heard that Senior has received an appointment as an official, so how do you have the time to return to Mingdu?"

Bei Qing smiled. "It's His Majesty's birthday celebration, so I must be here no matter how busy I may be. In fact, my father has repeatedly implored me to come and personally congratulate His Majesty."

"Lord Bei is earnest," Ming Yan politely responded. She then turned away and stopped speaking.

Bei Qing's eyes swept across her back. What a beautiful woman. She definitely lives up to her reputation as one of the empire's twin beauties. She's much more beautiful than when she was younger. I must obtain this woman. He was the son of the cabinet minister of defense, someone who even the crown prince had to show some face to. It should not be too difficult for him to win over this beautiful princess.

Ming Yan frowned as she could feel Bei Qing's lustful eyes sweeping over her back. She was immediately put into a foul mood and turned to head back into her cabin.

Bei Qing bowed again to send her off. "My regards, princess."

Yue Xianzi glanced at Bei Qing, and he coincidentally raised his head at the same time to exchange glances with her. He nodded amicably while Yue Xianzi smiled faintly before walking away with Ming Yan.

This woman isn't bad either, and she is very pretty as well. Bei Qing's breath had been taken away by Yue Xianzi's appearance, and his heart skipped a beat as thought began to swirl in his head.

Lu Yin was standing at a nearby corner, watching all this happen, and was rather unhappy that this person seemed to be scheming against Ming Yan. Lu Yin grew increasingly dismal the more he thought about it. Eventually, he decided to casually wave a hand and cause a gust of wind to sweep under Bei

Qing's feet. The gust was created through pure strength, but it still was enough to cause Bei Qing to fall to the floor. Lu Yin left after venting his displeasure.

Bei Qing cried out in alarm as he fell onto the deck. He had a strange expression on his face. What just happened to me?

Ming Yan and Yue Xianzi were still nearby and they naturally glanced back when they heard Bei Qing fall onto the deck. They exchanged delighted glances at his small misfortune and quietly discussed something before returning to the cabin.

"My Lord, are you okay?" someone asked with concern as they lent Bei Qing a hand from behind to help him up.

Bei Qing shook his head and looked around. What had just happened? He had been tripped by a strange wind, but no one else had felt anything? The gust couldn't have been caused by martial power, so it wasn't from a cultivator. How strange.

Bei Qing quickly dismissed the incident in his mind as his thoughts once again moved towards how he should approach Ming Yan. He also considered Yue'er in his scenarios, who seemed to have a different flavor.

He tried inviting Ming Yan for a meal at midday and again in the evening, but it just made her feel even more pestered.

Lu Yin's mood grew even worse as he was forced to continue watching someone else flirt and ogle a woman he was interested in. It was an unpleasant feeling. Lu Yin's lips curled in disdain and an irresistible, mischievous mood overcame him. "No, I can't let you continue so happily like this."

The sky grew dark as the lake reflected a white, round circle. The occasional fish broke through the surface of the water, creating splashes in the night.

A dejected Bei Qing was drinking his wine alone in his room. His various invitations had all ended in failure. It would be alright if just Ming Yan had rejected him, but that Yue'er had not given him any face either; how ridiculous!

"Who's there?" he called out when he heard someone quietly step up to his cabin.

"I'm here on Miss Yue'er's orders to gift something to Lord Bei."

Bei Qing's eyes brightened. "Let him in."

Lu Yin entered Bei Qing's cabin and respectfully lifted his hand. In it, he held an exquisite-looking, scented sachet. "Lord Bei, Miss Yue'er instructed me to deliver this to you."

Bei Qing was delighted as he received the sachet. "Yue'er? Why didn't she bring it herself?"

"I couldn't say."

Bei Qing looked at the sachet, and his lips greedily curled up. It was no big deal if a girl was shy and embarrassed. The empire placed great importance on a girl's reputation, so it was already not easy for her to gift him this sachet. It was normal for her to not make more of a move. "Alright, I understand.

Here is your reward.” With that, he tossed a martial banknote to Lu Yin. It was a note that was worth five fortune coins.

Lu Yin delightedly accepted the banknote. “Thank you, sir. Ah, right, the miss also requested that sir keeps this matter a secret. She will not admit to it even if you say something to her.”

Bei Qing smiled. “Don’t be concerned, I understand.”

Lu Yin then left.

Bei Qing inhaled deeply, breathing in the scent of the sachet with an infatuated expression. He knew how desirable he was towards girls who came from modest backgrounds. After all, he was the son of the empire’s sole minister of defense. This sort of background was far out of reach of those common girls. That, coupled with his handsome looks and eloquent words, made many girls in the empire desire him. Yue'er could be considered to be quite tactful, as she had made her advances when he was lonely. As long as she performed well, he could still accept her.

Right, he could even use this girl to improve his relationship with the princess, which was the more important matter. “Can somebody send one of the curated wines from my collection to Miss Yue'er’s cabin?”

“Yes, My Lord.”

Lu Yin smiled in the distance. Yue Xianzi had caused him no small amount of trouble before, so he was just returning the favor now. That scented sachet was indeed hers, and now, he just had to patiently wait for a good show to play out.

The next day, the sky remained overcast. In fact, it had grown even darker off in the distance, as if foreshadowing troubled days ahead. The lake had also cooled down substantially.

Ming Yan was talking to Yue Xianzi when Bei Qing suddenly arrived at their door. “Princess, this Bei Qing has come to specially invite the princess to have lunch together. I hope that the Princess will not decline.”

Ming Yan frowned. “Very well. Thank you, Senior. Yan’er will be there shortly.”

Bei Qing was delighted. “I’ll be waiting patiently.”

“Yue'er, that man’s detestable,” Ming Yan complained quietly.

Yue Xianzi smiled. “If you despise him so much, then why did you agree to dine with him?”

Ming Yan helplessly replied, “My father and his elder brother, the Crown Prince, have a bad relationship. Although this Bei Qing is detestable, his father’s authority permeates all levels of the government, and he has a certain level of influence. Even if I don’t like him, I can’t create trouble for my father. Furthermore, we’ve already rejected quite a few of his invitations, and it would be offensive if we continued to decline.”

Yue Xianzi looked at Ming Yan with pity in her eyes. She seemed like a noble princess, but she did not even have a say in her own future. Her words had forced Yue Xianzi to view her in a different light. She had originally assumed that this princess was not well-versed in worldly affairs and that was only a pretty face and destined to be used as a tool in marriage. However, these self-aware words proved that Ming Yan had her own thoughts and understanding of the situation. Although her thoughts were rather simple, that was only because of her limited interaction with the outside world. Still, there was a strong perseverance within her heart.

“Princess, don’t worry about it. We’ll just treat the lunch as dealing with him,” Yue Xianzi reassured the held Ming Yan as she held the princess’ hand.

Ming Yan nodded and stood up, causing even Yue Xianzi to marvel at her figure. Perhaps only these undeveloped, archaic civilizations could produce such a wonderful specimen of a girl. Yue Xianzi was envious of the person who would eventually end up with this princess; he would definitely be the world’s luckiest man.

A cold gust of wind blew across the deck. Bei Qing had rearranged the area for dining. As he waited for the two girls to arrive, he recounted the various histories of the Ming River and verbally described the future, as if he were determined to fix the world. When the girls were just about to arrive, he had even waved his hand and started boldly reciting some of his poetry.

“My Lord’s poetry is amazing and will definitely impress the residents of the capital in the future,” a servant marvelled.

Bei Qing smiled and then saw Ming Yan and Yue Xianzi arrive. He immediately approached and gestured at the chairs. “Princess, Miss Yue'er, please be seated.”

Yue Xianzi immediately declined the invitation. “My Lord is too courteous. I’m merely a maid and will stand aside to wait upon you two.”

Ming Yan hurriedly pulled Yue Xianzi towards the table. “Yue'er, you’re no maid.” She then escorted Yue Xianzi to a seat.

Lu Yin was one of the servants who had been called upon to wait upon the diners. Bei Qing had mistakenly taken Lu Yin to be Yue Xianzi’s confidant, and based on his experiences in courting girls, he naturally knew how to quietly demonstrate that he was attentive to what they held important.

He had even arranged for someone to change Lu Yin’s attire so as to make him seem more spirited.

To Bei Qing, this was an important meal that would decide if he could gain these two girls’ favor or not. During the meal, he constantly racked his brain on how he could show his best scholarly side, and the servants beside him would praise him from time to time as well. Lu Yin was internally rolling his eyes the entire time. What an idiot this person is, performing a play all by himself.

Ming Yan and Yue Xianzi were truly only eating and could not bother to respond to Bei Qing’s acts. At best, they would give him a slight smile to save him some face so that he would not feel too awkward.

Bei Qing felt that something was amiss, and even though the meal was about to finish, he felt like he had not made any progress yet. Thus, he clapped his hands and had a servant retrieve an exquisite wooden box that was handed to him. He then placed it on the table and slid it towards Ming Yan. He

fervently said, "Princess, this is a treasure of the highest quality from the endless Eastern Sea—the purple rose love pearl. They are very rare and I wanted to give this one to you."

Ming Yan was stunned, as she had indeed heard of these purple rose love pearls before. According to the legends, it could be used to pray for one's loved ones when worn, and it was a treasure prized by many girls. She slowly opened the box, and a ray of purple light shone out. She saw a small, brightly-colored pearl that seemed transparent with even fog mysteriously drifting around it.

"This gift is too extravagant. Please take it back. Yan'er cannot accept this." Ming Yan resisted the temptation and immediately closed the box before pushing it back towards Bei Qing.

Bei Qing smiled. "There are only a few of these pearls in the world. Aside from you, I cannot think of anyone else who would deserve to wear this treasure."

"This was found only after our lord combed through the endless seas. It's rumored that even His Majesty back then could not find one to give to his beloved," a servant behind Bei Qing praised. But almost immediately afterwards, everyone's faces changed, as this was using Ming Zhaotian as a foil for Bei Qing; this servant was being too audacious!

Lu Yin looked at that servant in admiration.

Bei Qing was just about to scold the servant, but another servant was a beat quicker. "Shut up! Are you suggesting that His Majesty is inferior to our lord?! Or that His Majesty's sincerity was lacking? Scram!"

Lu Yin was left speechless, as this person was even more ruthless than the first, although their sharp retorts did define the situation. These two were geniuses with their words, and they pushed Bei Qing closer to death with each successive sentence that they uttered.

Chapter 270: Lu Yin And The Reverent King

Bei Qing was so furious that he was almost rendered speechless. "Get out, the both of you! Remain silent for ten days!"

"Yes, My Lord," the two said before immediately retreating in fear.

After the comparison between Bei Qing and Ming Zhaotian was made, the precious purple rose love pearl could no longer be given out under any circumstance. Bei Qing was not foolish enough to give it away anymore, as that would be plainly disrespecting Ming Zhaotian. He inwardly hated those two idiotic servants for ruining his plans.

"Senior, Yue'er and I have finished eating. We'll retire to rest first," Ming Yan spoke courteously.

Bei Qing hurriedly stood up to bow. "Stay well, princess."

He watched as the two girls vanished from sight before loudly verbally abusing the two idiots who had ruined this important opportunity. If this matter spread to those who wished to cause problems for him, it could bring misfortune upon his family. Those foolish slaves!

Lu Yin coughed to break the tension. "Lord Bei, don't be angry. Those around us are all from the Reverent King's household."

Bei Qing's heart jumped—that was right, they were all subordinates of the king's household. They were far from the capital and were far removed from his family's enemies, so this matter should not spread.

"However..." Lu Yin hesitantly spoke up.

Bei Qing was taken aback by Lu Yin's words. "However what? Hurry up and speak."

"However, it was reported that there are some people hidden within the Reverent King's household who belong to the crown prince, but we haven't verified the veracity of those reports."

Bei Qing's heart sank, and he had the feeling that he had just been trampled over. His father had steadily sat in his seat as cabinet minister for such a long time precisely because of his neutral position. If the crown prince caught wind of this matter, then it would definitely spell trouble for both him and his father. Although the incident was nothing threatening, the crown prince was no longer a young, naive man. It would be hard for him to avoid conflicts with His Majesty if the rumors from the capital were to be believed. It was said that the crown prince wanted to push the date of his succession closer as much as he could and that he already had the support of quite a few ministers. Once a conflict broke out, Bei Qing's father's position would be vitally important to both sides.

Bei Qing now had a headache, as he had actually brought two dunces along to the dinner, and now, they had dug such a huge hole for him. He continued to think, and he even felt a rash impulse to throw the purple rose love pearl into the river.

Forget it, this isn't the time to think about this right now. He looked around; were there really any people of the crown prince here?

"You've done well. Here is your reward." Bei Qing passed Lu Yin another martial banknote, which had a value much greater than the previous one. Lu Yin hurriedly thanked him.

"Right, why did Miss Yue'er have no reactions towards me today?" Bei Qing asked with a puzzled tone.

"She was accompanying the princess."

"Oh, that's right, the princess was here as well. Then, should I look for Miss Yue'er by herself?" Bei Qing asked in a hesitant manner.

"I've been with Miss Yue'er for a while, and she once mentioned that she's looking for a man who's either stronger or more educated than her. Otherwise, how could he overcome her?"

Bei Qing's eyes brightened at Lu Yin's words. "Very well, I do enjoy a challenge. Here is your reward for the information." He then passed Lu Yin yet another martial banknote and left.

Lu Yin was amused. This aristocratic lord was no fool, but his ego was simply too large. He actually believed that a girl would fall in love with him at first sight! Still, this was the Shenwu Continent, and Bei Qing had a unique status, so it was not completely impossible.

Not long after, news spread that Bei Qing had challenged Yue'er.

Lu Yin was speechless; Bei Qing had actually been this direct?

Yue Xianzi, on the other hand, felt like she was cursed; Bei Qing had ridiculously confronted her and challenged her to a battle. What a madman!

“Yue'er, what did you do to provoke Bei Qing?” Ming Yan quickly summoned Yue Xianzi and questioned her.

Yue Xianzi shook her head, completely at a loss as to how the situation had developed. “I don't know. He approached me himself and then requested to compete with me.”

Ming Yan was furious with what she heard. “What is wrong with this person? Yue'er, you aren't an expert on List of Tempering, so what's he challenging you for? I'll go and speak to him.”

Yue Xianzi quickly stopped Ming Yan. “Forget it, princess, I've already rejected him, so just leave him be.”

Ming Yan snorted; this person was too insane.

However, Yue Xianzi had underestimated Bei Qing's patience. From the moment she rejected Bei Qing, he had set his sights on subduing her. Thus, he continued to entangle himself with her all the way until they entered Antai City. He had a never-give-up attitude that caused Ming Yan endless exasperation while Yue Xianzi herself wished to slaughter him.

The night after they entered Antai City, a downpour rained down upon the city, trapping the king's convoy who had originally wanted to immediately depart.

Ming Island was sealed off, and no cultivators could enter, to the extent where even those from the Reverent King's household were thoroughly checked before being released. Yue Xianzi saw the uninterrupted rain, but she had already achieved her goal of mixing into the king's household to enter Ming Island. Her next step was to leave.

Thud thud thud

“Miss Yue'er, are you there? It's Bei Qing.”

Yue Xianzi was irate at the disturbance. This despicable bastard, why is he bothering me so much? She had already changed her appearance and was incomparable in terms of appearance to the princess, so why could he not just leave her alone? One moment he wanted to compete by fighting, and the next moment, he wanted to compete in a literary contest. He was a complete nutjob!

“Lord Bei Qing, Yue'er has a weak constitution and is merely the princess' maid. Why does my Lord keep pestering Yue'er about competing?”

Bei Qing was taken aback. He really could not understand this girl. It had already been two days; hadn't he shown her his sincerity by giving her all this attention during this time? She had even been the first to show interest by giving him her scented sachet. Very well, since she was putting up such an attitude, then he couldn't be blamed if he were more upfront. He was about to take out the sachet to question her, but at that moment, the city master of Antai City arrived to seek an audience with Bei Qing.

“Miss Yue'er, please take a rest. I must go and meet with a guest,” Bei Qing spoke courteously.

Yue Xianzi nodded and closed the door. This person was getting on her nerves.

Antai City was the closest city to the Ming River, and so, it had an abundance of aquatic products. This was especially true during downpours, as oolong fish, which were a great delicacy, would swim up from the bottom of the lake, encouraging many to fish for them.

Lu Yin was loudly summoned by Bei Qing. "What's going on? Is this sachet really hers?" Bei Qing demanded with an ugly expression.

"Of course it's hers."

"If that's true, why does she refuse to acknowledge my attention?" Bei Qing was unhappy.

Lu Yin lowered his head, "I don't know about that. However, I have a plan that may be worth a try."

"Quick, tell me."

Lu Yin's eyes flickered. He had been pondering his next step since the previous day. He could not continue hiding in the Reverent King's household for the entire duration of this trial, or else it would become meaningless. He also would not be able to find anyone from the Daynight clan this way. It would be better to rely on others and walk another path, and Bei Qing was the path that he had chosen.

Initially, he had only wanted to tease Bei Qing and Yue Xianzi, but now, Lu Yin truly wanted to elevate his worth in Bei Qing's eyes. This person was the child of an influential minister whom even Reverent King Ming Zhaoshu had to treat with respect.

"During this timely rainfall over Antai City, my lord can invite the princess and Miss Yue'er to go fishing. I have heard that the Oolong fish in this area is quite famous and also delicious. Miss Yue'er has come from afar, so she will definitely be moved by it. I can help deliver a letter to Miss Yue'er on your behalf to express your sincerity."

Bei Qing's eyes lit up. "Good idea. Alright, we'll do as you say." He then sized Lu Yin up. "You're pretty good and are much more competent than my two idiots. Any interest in joining me?"

Lu Yin was delighted to hear his question. "Thank you, my lord, for favoring me so. I am willing."

Satisfied, Bei Qing nodded. "You can seek me out in the Crown Prince's palace after His Majesty's birthday celebration."

"Thank you, my lord." Lu Yin immediately expressed his gratitude.

Lu Yin smiled as he watched Bei Qing leave. If he entered the Martial Residence, then he would have no fear of lacking results in this trial. In the worst case scenario, he could just steal some secret documents, which would definitely improve his performance.

However, his plans were destined to not bear fruit. Lu Yin had racked his brains before finally deciding to disguise himself as Yue Xianzi to lead Bei Qing on, but Bei Qing left Antai City and headed for Mingdu, the capital, that very same night, causing all of Lu Yin's efforts to be washed down the drain.

“Bei Qing’s sudden departure must be related to the letter he received. It should be a letter from his father, Bei Hong, instructing him to not have too close a relationship with the Reverent King,” Tang Si said to Ming Zhaoshu as he stood nearby.

Ming Zhaoshu’s eyes were cold. “There’s more to it. Someone must have told him about the incident with Yan’er.”

Tang Si was shocked. “Could it be someone from the crown prince’s residence?”

Ming Zhaoshu nodded in agreement. “Ming Hao doesn’t want us to establish a relationship with Bei Hong. This is the most effective manner of ensuring that.”

A girl’s reputation was exceptionally important in the Shenwu Continent. No matter how much Bei Qing liked Ming Yan, once her reputation was stained, he would not longer be able to court her, so he had simply left.

“Your Highness, then-” Tang Si was in a difficult position.

Ming Zhaoshu raised a hand and looked at him. “Go and call Lu Seven here.”

Tang Si was confused. “Lu Seven? The coachman?”

Ming Zhaoshu’s lips curled up. “Go get him.”

“Yes.”

Not long after, Lu Yin was brought to an office. He did not understand why Ming Zhaoshu wanted to see him. “Coachman Lu Seven pays his respects to His Highness.”

“Come in,” Ming Zhaoshu’s voice sounded out, seemingly rather stern.

Lu Yin pushed the door open and entered. He immediately bowed. “Your Highness.”

Ming Zhaoshu waved his hand and the door closed on its own. A formless wave then swept out and sealed the office.

At that moment, Lu Yin nearly acted to defend himself, but he forcefully suppressed the urge. He trembled as he asked, “Your Highness, do you have any instructions for me?”

Ming Zhaoshu looked at Lu Yin and then coldly said, “Bei Qing views you with importance.”

Lu Yin was shocked. “Your Highness, I beg your pardon. I don’t understand what your meaning is.”

Ming Zhaoshu raised his hand, and in it was a scented sachet.

Lu Yin’s pupils shrank, and all of his muscles turned taut, ready to escape at any given moment.

“I’ve seen all that you’ve done during this time and heard everything as well. Do you really want to keep trying to hide it from me?”

Lu Yin lowered his head and his eyes glinted with surprise. Seen? Heard? Could this be... a domain? This person had actually comprehended a domain! This was something that only a few out of the countless experts of the Inniverse were capable of. There were less than twenty domain users in the entire Astral

Combat Academy, which included the top elites of the entire younger generation. He could not figure out how this Ming Zhaoshu had actually achieved such a feat.

The atmosphere became strangely silent.

Lu Yin did not speak and only adjusted his own breathing. He was ready to act at any time.

Ming Zhaoshu studied him for a moment and then set down the sachet. "You're not bad."

Lu Yin raised his head in astonishment and looked at Ming Zhaoshu with a puzzled expression.

An expression of bemusement entered Ming Zhaoshu's cold eyes. "You were able to create a rather good relationship with Bei Qing in such a short time. If not for him leaving over an unexpected matter, you might have built an even deeper relationship. You're smart, and you're not willing to settle down and live in seclusion."

Lu Yin hurriedly replied, "I know my mistake."

Ming Zhaoshu shook his head. "You're not wrong. No one is willing to remain impoverished for their entire life. You've walked out of a small world and learned the styles that His Majesty created together with me. All of this is your own destiny, but to be able to build a relationship with Bei Qing is your own ability. You are someone with both destiny and ability."