

Chapter 301: The Tournament Of The Strongest

Lu Yin was shocked. “The same as the Great Yu Empire?”

“I don’t know, but it could be. Nobody knows for sure.”

“So you sent me to Earth after that incident and even fabricated my identity as a descendant of King Zishan all so that I could infiltrate the Great Yu Empire and find out if they’re actually from the Yu Court?” Lu Yin slowly began to discover the truth of why he had been sent to the Great Yu Empire.

“Yes. We weren’t the only ones poking around either. The Neohuman Alliance never gave up on trying to find them either, and they put quite a lot of effort into investigating the Great Yu Empire.”

“Wait. Since the Court of Seven Names are one of the Three Dark Hands, then why are you investigating them? Aren’t you afraid that you’ll die?” Lu Yin was quite curious as to his uncle’s answer. He knew how powerful the people back home were, but even some of the more powerful Inniverse organizations would be difficult for them to handle, not to mention a peak group like one of the Three Dark Hands.

“If the Seven Courts were at their prime, then nobody would have the guts to investigate them. However, they’ve since deteriorated, and quite a few of the courts have disappeared. You don’t need to know why. All you need to know is why we sent you to the Great Yu Empire. Though from the looks of it, the Yushan family has nothing to do with the Yu Court. Otherwise, they would’ve already been massacred by the Neohuman Alliance.”

Lu Yin fell silent. He was quite certain that the Yushan family was actually from Yu Court—where else could that secret art have come from? It was no wonder why Silver had paid so much attention to the Great Yu Empire. Undying Yushan had also nurtured quite a few experts in the empire. If he were a descendant of one of the Three Dark Hands, then it would be a trivial task to raise some local experts.

“If it weren’t for the commotion that the Undying duo caused in the Inniverse back then, nobody would have set their sights on the Great Yu Empire. Many infiltrated the empire and then laid low in the Great Yu Empire seemingly in order to obtain the Immortal Manual, but what people were truly after were people of the Yu Court. If it were confirmed that the Yushan family was part of the “Yu” surname from the Seven Courts, then things would have gotten interesting. I doubt you can fully understand how amazing the technique passed down by the Yu Court truly is.”

I know! I know it very well, and I even learned it. Lu Yin wanted to shout this out, but he didn’t dare to speak up. Somebody might be listening in on this call. He trusted his family, but not his gadget’s technology, or else his sister wouldn’t remain so quiet.

“Since it’s been confirmed that the Yushan family isn’t a part of the Yu Court, do I still need to stay in the Great Yu Empire?” Lu Yin asked.

“Just stay there for now. Your sister said that it’ll be good for you to learn how to rule an empire well, get a wife, and have some kids. That’s better than some other options and will even allow our family line to continue on. By the way, Wendy Yushan’s not too bad either. Your sister asked me if you wanted her to grab Wendy for you and take her by force. When it comes to women, you just need to complete that last step, and they’ll be yours.”

Lu Yin was rendered speechless. “And here I thought she was a woman—she’s more like a man.”

“She heard you.”

“You tricked me!” Lu Yin cried out mournfully. He could already imagine how that brutish woman would deal with him the next time they met, and it definitely wasn’t going to be pretty.

“Alright, enough of that. Let’s talk about you. It isn’t easy to obtain influence in the Outerverse Youth Council. Puyu isn’t someone easily dealt with, and we can’t do much for you either. Don’t rush things and just take it one step at a time. We’ll talk again once you get more settled. We’ll help.”

Lu Yin replied, “Got it. Don’t worry, I’ve already thought of some plans, and I can handle him. I’ve left something nasty near him.”

“What? How?” Uncle Reuben was shocked.

Lu Yin smirked. That nasty “thing” from the Neohuman Alliance was definitely enough to send Puyu into total despair.

“Whatever it is, be careful of Puyu. Don’t underestimate him. There isn’t much time left, so I won’t say any more about that. Oh, one more thing—there’s going to be a joint battle of the strongest between the Human Domain, Astral Beast Domain, and the Technocracy. The final four from your Astral Combat Academy will face off against students from the Astral Beast Domain’s Spiritual Academy and some modified beings from the Technocracy. More importantly, some people from the Cosmic Sea might participate as well. One of them has even been publicly acknowledged as a Ten Arbiters’ candidate! Be careful! You have to be careful.” After saying that, the call ended.

Lu Yin was completely confused by this last bit of information and wanted to ask some more questions, but he quickly realized that the call had already ended. He had no choice but to put his gadget down. Is the battle of the final four finally about to arrive? This was a tournament spanning the entire universe where power would reign supreme. Could this be an opportunity for him?

To be honest, Lu Yin was very excited about this upcoming tournament. He felt that he had already accomplished everything possible for a Limiteer. Many had said that he was comparable to the Ten Arbiters when they had been Limiteers, but he had no idea if that was actually true. The Ten Arbiters were incredibly powerful, and ever since they had appeared, nobody had been able to match up to them. However, some so-called Ten Arbiters’ candidates had recently popped up, which almost made it sound like reaching the Ten Arbiters’ level was an easy task.

However, Lu Yin felt that this kind of thinking didn’t make much sense. The Ten Arbiters were a product of the changing times. If it were that easy to reach their level, then they wouldn’t just be the Ten Arbiters. He really wanted to take this chance to fight against some of the most powerful Limiteers in the universe. Then, he would be able to see if he could truly take another step further and possibly step onto the same level as the Ten Arbiters or even surpass them compared to when they had been Limiteers.

After undoing the screen blocking off the Ghost Monkey’s senses, the monkey, who had become accustomed to such treatment, tiredly said, “I’ve told you this so many times, bro. We share one body, so your secrets are my secrets. Why do you keep blocking me off when I’m so innocent and kind?”

Lu Yin abruptly asked, "Have you heard of the Court of Seven Names before?"

"The Court of Seven Names? That sounds familiar. I think I've heard of it before." The monkey sounded rather surprised, but also a bit confused. Some time later, it blurted out in shock, "I remember now! I saw this name mentioned in some records that included a powerhouse's biography. It mentioned the Seven Courts, but just the name and nothing else. What's up?"

"The Seven Courts is one of the Three Dark Hands," Lu Yin answered gravely.

The Ghost Monkey was surprised. "One of the Three Dark Hands? No wonder it was so tough to get into that powerhouse's grave." As if realizing that it'd let something slip, the monkey awkwardly coughed twice. "So, what kind of connections do you have, Seventh Bro? Tell me! I might have heard of them before."

"What was that powerhouse's surname?" Lu Yin asked.

The monkey considered the question. "I don't remember, but there was a word on the cover of his biography—'Ku.'"

Ku? Is that one of the Seven Courts? Lu Yin wondered if there were any primeval surnames among the Seven Courts.

"Hey, you didn't tell me about your connections, bro. Are they powerful? Wait, if they know about the Three Dark Hands, then they have to be doing well in your Innaverse," the monkey rambled on.

"Tell me about the other four lords from your Spiritual Academy," Lu Yin suddenly asked.

The Ghost Monkey was bewildered by this question. "Why are you asking about them? They all lost to me, so don't even bother about them."

With a beep, a notification popped up on Lu Yin's gadget. It was the type of notification that would come through no matter what filters he had set up. The last two times he'd received something like this was when Astral-10 was about to arrive in the Outerverse and when Wendy Yushan had become an Outerverse Youth Council member.

'Lu Yin of Astral-10 must immediately return to the Astral Combat Academy and prepare for the battle between the strongest academies in the universe, which will take place in two months. The participants will be the Human Domain's Astral Combat Academy, the Astral Beast Domain's Spiritual Academy, the Technocracy's modified beings, and the Cosmic Sea's people. You must perform well on behalf of the Human Domain and achieve great results.

Best of luck,

Ten Arbiters Council.'

Lu Yin sucked in a cold breath; the official notice had finally arrived. "Look at this yourself."

“What? Those four from the Spiritual Academy are going to participate in this tournament that involves the other two Domains? That’s weird, why didn’t anyone inform me? I’m the strongest of them all! Those bastards...” The monkey was enraged at being neglected and kept cursing.

Lu Yin frowned, ignored the monkey, and immediately contacted Mira.

Not too long after, he gave up. The Ten Arbiters Council had already sent him an official notification, so Mira would definitely take care of matters in the Outerverse Youth Council in his stead for now. She was currently located in East Saint Dios as well. Lu Yin changed route to go straight to Astral-10, which was currently located in the Frostwave Weave. He would prepare for the upcoming tournament there.

There weren’t that many people involved in the tournament, but the fact that the Ten Arbiters had sent an official notification meant that this tournament was much more important than the Astral Combat Tournament. These participants would be the strongest from the best academies in the universe, and this tournament would be viewed by not just those in the Human Domain, but also those in the Giant Beast Astral Region, Technocracy, and even the Cosmic Sea.

The rewards were naturally extremely generous as well.

If he achieved good results in this tournament, Lu Yin had a feeling that his status would rise yet again. He would be making a vital contribution to humanity, so perhaps he would be able to get another Honor Point.

Two Honor Points would make a world of a difference. Lu Yin remembered that Uncle Reuben had mentioned that this was a very rare opportunity.

“Alright. Since they’re so heartless, they shouldn’t blame me for doing this.” The monkey was finally done cursing at this point. He paused and then informed Lu Yin, “I’ll give you an introduction to those four, Seventh Bro. Heh, those guys have no idea how well I know them. Feng Jiu, in particular... every time she transforms, that body, that face, and those sacred three-colored rays... It’s beautiful...”

“Hurry up!” Lu Yin rushed the monkey.

The Ghost Monkey coughed awkwardly. “First up, there’s Hua Yi. He’s a mouse with gold-green eyes. He’s only as big as a fist, but he can eat anything. His greatest weapons are his teeth, and he can also fit things that are multiple times his size into his mouth. His father once ate some of the phoenixes from your human’s Phoenix clan, and the Phoenix clan now see these mice as their mortal enemies. Hua Yi’s extremely quick, and that’s exactly what he makes use of the best. But with your speed, you’ll be completely fine.”

“Next up is Embermane, who is a Karmic Flame Sable. He’s a fire sable, but it’s said that he was born from a gem. When he was first born, he was apparently a bundle of fire that incinerated everything near him. This guy isn’t going to be easy to deal with. You’ll have to be careful and not let those flames get on you.”

Lu Yin interrupted, asking, “A Karmic Flame Sable? Why does that name sound so similar to the Blaze Realm’s Karmic Flame Sword?”

“Hehe, you’re asking the right person! Others might not know about this, but I secretly investigated him a bunch of times. He’s obsessed with the human’s Blaze Realm, so he really might know a secret about that Karmic Flame Sword.”

Lu Yin frowned. He still hadn’t forgotten about the Karmic Flame Sword that Arikar had tried to use, but never revealed as Feng Shang had defeated him before Arikar could even use the move. It was a fact, though, that just a single move from that technique was very powerful. If it had actually been used, then Feng Shang wouldn’t have been able to block it. If the Karmic Flame Sable had a move related to that technique, then he would be very dangerous.

“Go on,” Lu Yin ordered.

“The third is Feng Jiu, who is an Celestial Ice Phoenix, which are numbered seven on the Celestial Beast List. They’re a unique race since Celestial Ice Phoenixes have antlers on their heads. What’s more terrifying is that their antlers constantly emit tri-colored rays that can melt anything! Think about it— they have ice that can seal everything and rays that can melt everything! And yet, the tri-colored rays won’t melt her own ice, so I’m sure that you can already tell how troublesome she will be,” the monkey gravely explained.

Chapter 302: A Woman’s Trap

Lu Yin felt a headache just thinking about it. It seemed that there were all kinds of monsters in the universe. A phoenix with antlers? What the hell? And one that shot out tri-colored rays of light as well? And that race is only ranked seventh on the Celestial Beast List? It appeared that there was a reason why the Astral Beast Domain had been able to withstand Human Domain’s assault for so many years.

“Um, if you get matched with Feng Jiu, do you think that you could show her some mercy?” the monkey asked hesitantly.

Lu Yin was surprised by the request. “Why? Is she your friend?”

“Ahem. The only thing left for us to do is confess,” the Ghost Monkey whispered.

This shocking statement made Lu Yin’s eyes widen like saucers. “You? A ghost monkey and an ice phoenix? How would that even work?”

“Why not?” the monkey fiercely rebutted.

Lu Yin was rendered speechless. Fine, I guess I have nothing to say about that. “So Feng Jiu likes you?”

“Of course!” The Ghost Monkey was very confident in himself.

“Tell me about the last one of the five academy lords.” Lu Yin said. He wasn’t going to argue with the monkey over this matter.

“The last one is called Tian Hou. He’s the only one of the four that I don’t know much about. I once snuck onto his area, but I was quickly found out. There’s only one thing that I know, which is that he’s Skymender’s disciple,” the monkey earnestly answered.

Lu Yin’s eyebrows jumped up. “Skymender? As in the imperial tutor from the Celestial Beast Empire? Are you talking about that mysterious beast that’s comparable to Starsibyl?”

“Yes. Within the Astral Beast Domain, Skymender holds a supreme position—even the emperor of the Celestial Beast Empire addresses him as teacher. No one knows what species he is, only that he possesses unfathomable strength. Tian Hou is his disciple, so you can basically think of him as the Astral Beast Domain’s Starsibyl,” the monkey simply said.

Lu Yin frowned. These four astral beasts sounded pretty troublesome; not a single one of the Spiritual Academy’s four lords would be easy to deal with. There was also the Technocracy. Lu Yin had no idea what to expect from this domain since they had the best technology that originated from ancient times. Modified beings—just these two words alone already sounded intimidating.

Finally, there was also the Cosmic Sea. That was a place with more unknown powers than even the Innerverses. His family had also warned him that the Cosmic Sea might even send out a few ultra powerhouses who had been publicly acknowledged as Ten Arbiters candidates. They would probably be at least as strong as Liu Shaoqiu.

This would truly be the Tournament of the Strongest. The academy leaders who had been defeated, such as Liu Xiaoyun, did not even qualify to participate. The only ones who did were the absolute top Limiters among the entire universe’s younger generation.

“Your real opponents this time should be Starsibyl and Tian Hou. The rest don’t seem like much to me,” the monkey commented.

Lu Yin shook his head. Han Chong would not be an easy opponent, and the same went for Grandini Mavis. The Mavis family definitely had innate gifts beyond their brute force. Every stage of this tournament would be a huge challenge for Lu Yin, and he had no room for complacency.

Five-lined battle force was no longer enough to guarantee victory. He had very recently comprehended a domain, so he wasn’t very familiar with it yet. The tournament would be held in a trial zone, so he would not be able to use the Giant Emperor’s third eye, which also meant that Lu Yin would not be able to use the Secret Sidestep or his Cosmic Art. His abilities would be seriously restricted, which did not bode well for him.

By the looks of it, this upcoming competition would be quite similar to the Astral Combat Tournament; Lu Yin would only be able to use his stacking technique on the Shockwave Palm, but Thirteen Stacks wouldn’t be enough to defeat these people.

Lu Yin looked up at the starry skies. It was about time he went to the Rain Observatory and tried to leave his name on the list. That would allow him to win some guidance from the Rainmaster, so it was definitely worth a try.

The Tournament of the Strongest was going to be broadcast differently from the Astral Combat Tournament. It wouldn’t be broadcast to the entire Human Domain; rather, one could only watch if they possessed a certain amount of power.

Thanks to Lu Yin, the Great Yu Empire was among those eligible to view the tournament. Five of the empire’s ministers made the arrangements for Earth so that the Earthlings would be able to watch the tournament.

Back in Astral-7, Yue Xianzi had been feeling unwell ever since she had returned to the academy. She had essentially been pranked by Lu Yin during the Outerverse trials on the Shenwu Continent, but the conversation that they had had in the space station had caused a lot of people to become annoyed with her, and she didn't even have a chance to explain herself.

"We're back, Young Mistress!" A pair of beautiful twins appeared and respectfully called out to Yue Xianzi. They were Can Xue and Can Mei, the twins who had sealed Blackwater Lake back when Yue Xianzi had taken control of the training zone.

Yue Xianzi opened her eyes. "What do you need?"

"We just got word that the Astral Beast Domain's participants in the Tournament of the Strongest will enter through our academy's trial zone mountain," Can Xue said.

Yue Xianzi was surprised. "Our academy's?"

"Yes. Our academy is the closest one to the Erudite Flowzone, so they'll enter the trial zones through our trial zone mountain," Can Mei replied.

Yue Xianzi nodded. "Got it. Don't cause any trouble."

"Apparently a lot of people want to challenge the participants coming from the Astral Beast Domain before the tournament starts. They believe that the four lords of the Spiritual Academy hold empty titles and that their academy is merely a shadow of an imitation of our Astral Combat Academy."

Yu Xianzi disdainfully answered, "The Spiritual Academy was created by the Celestial Beast Empire, so how could those four have empty titles? The power of those lords is definitely comparable to us ten student leaders. Ignore those people. If they want to die, then let them."

This manner of thinking was very similar to how the Astral Beast Domain thought nothing of humans—many humans likewise thought nothing of the Astral Beast Domain. In fact, many of Astral-7's students were eager to fight against these four contestants, hoping to beat up the lords of the Spiritual Academy.

A personal spacecraft gently touched down in Astral-10's space station. Lu Yin had returned, and the first person who he saw was Xia Luo.

"It's been a while. You've grown stronger yet again." Xia Luo sighed in admiration after looking Lu Yin up and down.

This time, Lu Yin could sense a very obvious and unique aura emanating from Xia Luo. It was a domain, which was something he hadn't sensed before. "Why are you here?"

"I'm headed out to complete a mission," Xia Luo spoke gently.

Lu Yin nodded and did not say more. Time was of the essence. "I'm heading in."

"Wait!" Xia Luo shouted. As he stared at Lu Yin, he slowly said, "Silver's gone missing."

Lu Yin's eyes flashed. "What are you talking about?"

Xia Luo explained, "He suddenly left the academy. He didn't take any missions or tell the mentors—he simply left. I haven't been able to contact him either."

Lu Yin narrowed his eyes and tapped his gadget, only to find that all information on Silver was now unavailable. He had really disappeared. "When did this happen?"

"It was while you were participating in the Outerverse trials. To be more precise, it was after the Great Yu Empire's emperor, Undying Yushan, died," Xia Luo gravely answered.

Lu Yin looked baffled. That didn't sound right; he had contacted Silver after leaving the Shenwu Continent. If what Xia Luo said was true, then Silver must have left Astral-10 right after Undying Yushan's death, blocked off all contact with the people from Astral-10, but not blocked off Lu Yin's calls. But now, Silver had also blocked Lu Yin's calls.

Lu Yin wasn't completely stunned. Silver was originally from the Neohuman Alliance, and the death of Undying Yushan must have allowed the Neohuman Alliance to confirm that the Yushan family wasn't related to the "Yu" of the Seven Courts. Naturally, after that, they had paid Lu Yin no further mind, so it made sense that Silver had left. "Got it. Let's just leave things be for now. He's always been the mysterious type."

Xia Luo smiled, nodded, and then flew away in his personal spacecraft.

Lu Yin stepped into the teleportation device, wanting to head straight to the Rain Observatory. But then, all of a sudden, he paused and turned to observe the spacecraft that Xia Luo was in. He fell deep into thought.

He had missed something. Nobody should have noticed that Silver had left Astral-10 that quickly, but Xia Luo had even known that Silver had left right after Undying Yushan's death. How had he found out? There was only one possibility: he had been observing Silver this entire time. As Lu Yin recalled Xia Luo's attitude towards Silver, Lu Yin found the entire matter rather strange. Xia Luo must have known something. But if Xia Luo knew about Silver, then why hadn't he reported the matter? It had always been very apparent that he had disliked Silver.

Also, Lu Yin had managed to improve very quickly from his time during the trials on Earth to the Astral Combat Tournament. It had all been thanks to his luck as well as his innate gift. As for Silver, he had managed to do so with help from the Neohuman Alliance. But what about Xia Luo? He was definitely not weaker than either of them, and was actually somehow even more powerful than Silver. Where had he come from? Who was backing him?

If Xia Luo had the guts to keep his eye on someone from the Neohuman Alliance, then the organization behind Xia Luo must be rather powerful as well. Xia Luo also looked quite similar to Xia Ye from Astral-5, and they were most likely from the same organization. What organization was it? Why had he been in the Great Yu Empire? Had he been investigating the Court of Seven Names as well?

Lu Yin stood next to the teleportation device, seemingly lost in thought. The more he thought about this, the more suspicious Xia Luo seemed. What exactly did he represent?

"Xia" was a primeval surname. The first time he had seen Xia Luo outside of Beijing, he had felt that there was more to Xia Luo than met the eye. Even now, Lu Yin had no idea as to what the youth's true identity was.

While Lu Yin was deep in thought, someone else arrived in the teleportation device a few centimeters away. Lu Yin stared at the person in a complete daze.

It was Michelle. She had accepted a mission and was about to leave, but had run into Lu Yin by chance. The two were so close to each other that they could feel each other's breath.

Michelle immediately took a step backwards and glared at Lu Yin. "Why are you blocking the way?"

Lu Yin took a few steps backward as well and awkwardly responded, "Sorry, I was just about to go in."

Michelle glared at him, snorted, and then passed by. She suddenly paused after taking a few steps and turned around to glower at him once again.

Lu Yin was confused. "What's wrong?"

Michelle narrowed her eyes and coldly asked, "Do you really think my sister's prettier than me?"

Lu Yin froze, blinked, and then gulped. "Uh, that's obviously false. You're obviously much prettier than Mira! I just said that to appease her. She can't be compared with you, you know."

Michelle eyed him seriously. "Really?"

Lu Yin quickly nodded. "Really."

Michelle grinned and lifted her gadget. "I've recorded your answer and sent it to my sister. Good luck!" With a flick of her long hair, she departed, leaving a slight fragrance in her wake.

Lu Yin was rendered speechless. What was this? Were they just harassing him?

"You're so dumb, dude. It's a woman's trap. A trap, you hear me?" the monkey screeched.

Lu Yin scowled at the beast. "Shut up." After that, he headed to the Rain Observatory with a slightly depressed feeling.

Lu Yin could no longer remember how many times he had visited this training ground in the academy. But every trip here was like a brand new experience. This was the place where he had morphed from a child from the fringes of the universe who knew nothing to one of the top four fighters in the Astral Combat Tournament. He had broken through here twice, becoming both a Melder and a Limiteer here. This place held a special meaning to him.

There was an endless soft drizzle of rain here. A thick layer of deep green moss covered the slippery, rocky platform.

When Lu Yin stepped out of the teleportation device, the first person he saw was Little Pao, who immediately flew over.

"You're back, Lu Yin!" Little Pao greeted.

Lu Yin nodded. "You've gotten stronger!"

Little Pao burst into laughter and landed in front of him. "It's all thanks to you stealing the Heavenly Drum. We've all benefited from it, but you haven't actually gotten anything out of it yet."

Lu Yin chuckled. "I'll head over soon. Where are you headed to?"

Chapter 303: Leaving One's Name On The Rain List

Little Pao answered, "The Sand Ocean, I'm going there to upgrade my battle force. Two-lined battle force is still too weak, and it's vastly inferior to yours. It's very embarrassing as a senior."

Lu Yin laughed. "Then I'll wish Senior good luck in improving your strength sooner."

Little Pao nodded when he seemed to remember something. He turned to Lu Yin and asked, "Was your grudge with the Daynight clan resolved?"

Lu Yin felt it was a little strange for Little Pao to suddenly ask him this. "For now. What happened?"

Little Pao muttered. "Nothing much, but if someone from the Chaos Flowzone contacts you, then just ignore them. That place does not suit you."

Lu Yin was puzzled. "The Chaos Flowzone? Senior, are you talking about Cang Shi?"

"Not only him. The Chaos Flowzone represents the dark side of the Innerverse. Those people are very skilled at targeting and enticing desperate experts. Since you are an enemy of the Daynight clan, they will see you as the perfect target to seduce into joining them. Do not contact them casually, or you will find that you won't be able to fling them away," Little Pao warned before walking away with a complex look on his face.

Lu Yin watched Little Pao leave, but did not pay it much mind. The Chaos Flowzone was too far away for him, and he had even rejected the Sword Sect's invitation let alone the Chaos Flowzone's.

But Little Pao's reminder had caused Lu Yin to think of Cang Shi. He admired Cang Shi's instinctive reaction speed that gave him the ability to easily dodge all sorts of fatal threats. In a battle against opponents of the same realm, the advantage was glaringly obvious. Although Tiankong Daynight had tried his best, he had not been able to land even a single strike on Cang Shi. It was a very fearsome ability, and Lu Yin wanted to learn it.

Little Pao wasn't the only one who was at the Rain Observatory; Schutz was there as well. He had stayed in the Rain Observatory for a long time after he had decided to retrain from the very basics and walk forward one step at a time.

Lu Yin randomly chose a limestone platform and sat down cross-legged. He immersed himself in his meditation and acutely sensed the infinitesimally small world within each scattered raindrop. The world of star energy was deep and profound, and he had already comprehended a domain, which he had initially thought that meant that he had already walked to the end of this path. Now, however, he realized that his understanding of star energy had only reached the beginning.

Every raindrop was unique in its own way. Previously, Lu Yin had not been able to perceive these subtle differences, but he could now. He remained motionless as the raindrops penetrated his domain, bringing a slight chill with them. He then looked up and gazed into the distance. He had a vague feeling that, perhaps, the entire Rain Observatory was a sort of domain in and of itself.

Each domain was unique; some enhanced a cultivator's five senses, others upgraded an individual's power level, aided one during their lockbreaking, or even boosted their defenses. Some individuals'

domains were based on their natural surroundings, while others comprehended theirs at the brink of death. Just like sourceboxes, every domain in the universe was different, belonging uniquely to a single person.

Lu Yin felt that his own domain acted to enhance his five senses. He could hear extremely soft voices and even sense the changes in another human's body through their heartbeat. However, he had only taken the first step in his comprehension of his domain.

He did not know how to upgrade his domain, but perhaps the Rainmaster could give him an answer. That was, given that Lu Yin could leave his name on the Rain List.

Since ancient times, of all who had visited the Rain Observatory, only the top hundred with the deepest understanding of star energy could leave their name onto the Rain List. Lu Yin took a deep breath, wondering if he was qualified to succeed this time.

He slowly raised his hand and carved "Lu Yin" in the void before pushing it out into the curtain of rain.

At that moment, the Rainmaster opened his eyes. He could feel the aura of a domain, and he looked at Lu Yin in wonder. "Five-lined battle force, and he's also able to comprehend a domain. Could this person possibly inherit Wujiang?"

The name "Lu Yin" pushed through the curtain of rain while traveling steadily forward. The raindrops could penetrate Lu Yin's domain, but that was under the premise that Lu Yin allowed it to do so. The characters flying out contained most of his understanding of star energy, as well as the essence of his domain. It glistened within the curtain of rain as all the raindrops automatically avoided the writing.

The Rainmaster saw this scene and shook his head. "Not enough, still not enough. To leave one's name on the Rain List is to compete against not only the previous generations of Astral-10's students, but against the entirety of Wujiang. Within one generation, Wujiang will always give birth to the most geniuses. From the perspective of star energy, this kid cannot yet enter the top hundred, even if he relies on the Cosmic Art."

Lu Yin stared with wide eyes ahead and frowned. How? He had already comprehended a domain. Did this mean that everyone from Astral-10 who had left their names on the Rain List had a deeper understanding of their domains than him? That was inconceivable, as that would imply that there had been more than a hundred people of the younger generation in the past who had surpassed his understanding. That was impossible! After all, in the current ten branches of the Astral Combat Academy, almost no one could surpass Lu Yin's comprehension of a domain, let alone just among Astral-10's students.

Lu Yin was not convinced, and the Cosmic Art revolved around his body. Nine stars surrounded him, and once again he wrote out "Lu Yin" and pushed it into the rain, shattering his previous attempt.

The Cosmic Art allowed one to see through even the smallest of energy fluctuations, and this "Lu Yin" was much sturdier than the previous one, and it even distorted the void.

The Rainmaster shook his head. "Still not enough!"

Lu Yin stood up, stunned. Why? When he used the Cosmic Art to write his name while being supported by his domain, only Starsibyl and Han Chong from the ten academies stood a chance of surpassing him.

Dao Bo did not even have the Cosmic Art to supplement him, so why could Lu Yin still not enter the Rain List? Was his current self still unable to join the top hundred?

Astral-10 had been driven out of the Inniverse, but even if it had had its glory days in the past, it could have at most rivaled the current top three academies. With Lu Yin's current abilities, he could stand arrogantly even in Astral-1, but for some reason, he could not enter the top hundred of Astral-10's lineal Rain List. Moreover, the formcast model was a recent product of an evolving universe that had not existed in the past. Why was he unable to enter the top hundred on the Rain List? This was just the Rain List, not a ranking of all Astral-10 students since ancient times.

Lu Yin clenched his fists; he did not want to give up. He widened his eyes. The Giant Emperor's third eye appeared in his left hand, and he stared closely at the curtain of rain. In the rain, he could see the raindrops, and past that, he could even see something even deeper. This was not true rain, as each raindrop was composed of energy, just like the Astral River. These were raindrops formed from pure liquid energy, and there was even an ancient charm about them, which was what gave the Rain Observatory its mysterious atmosphere.

This should be the predecessor's domain. This person should long be dead, yet their domain still persists even after countless ages. This must be the work of one of Astral-10's previous almighty powerhouses.

The Rainmaster stood up, and with a respectful tone, said, "The apex of former generation powerhouses have found their way into the rankings. Getting onto the list is harder than scaling the heavens."

Lu Yin's eyes turned bloodshot, and he raised his right hand yet again, writing his name and pushing it out for the third time. He could feel the trace of an ancient charm, and his body flashed as his fingers continuously gestured within the void. He did not write his name in a single place, but rather wrote it while surveying the entire Rain Observatory.

The Rainmaster widened his eyes at this sight. This kid is actually able to see the ability of the predecessor. Is this a result of the combination between the Cosmic Art, his domain, and a lockbreaking tool? No wonder... Despite being slightly suspicious that Lu Yin had used some tricks, it didn't really matter as it was not against the rules.

When the words "Lu Yin" reappeared within the curtain of rain for the third time, the rain stopped everywhere, and a formless radiance distorted within the void. A list finally appeared, which was the Rain List. On it were the names of the top hundred with the deepest understanding of the Rain Observatory's star energy in the history of Astral-10.

Lu Yin did not scrutinize the list. Instead, he stared solely at the top and saw a name—Shao Chen.

A moment later, the Rain List vanished after Lu Yin's name barely squeezed in.

The Rain Observatory returned to normal, and the rain once again fell incessantly, sprinkling the limestone platform.

Lu Yin relaxed and put away the Giant Emperor's third eye away and discontinued his Cosmic Art. He had an agonized expression, as he had never expected that getting into the Rain List would be so

difficult. He had done his utmost, but even then, he had nearly failed to get onto the list. How had that topmost name, Shao Chen, done it?

“Although you used a couple of tricks, you still got onto the Rain List. That’s a fact. Lu Yin, what do you wish to obtain from the Rain Observatory?” the Rainmaster calmly asked Lu Yin as he walked out of the rain curtain.

Lu Yin respectfully replied, “This student wishes to increase my overlaying stacks.”

“Thirteen Stacks isn’t enough?” The mentor was astonished, as he had helped Lu Yin derive Thirteen Stacks not too long ago.

“No. Since the Tournament of the Strongest is fast approaching, I wish to improve one step further.”

The Rainmaster nodded. “Very well.”

Lu Yin raised his arm, and just like before, the mentor pressed against Lu Yin’s arm and caused the void to explode. The Rainmaster immediately started with Thirteen Stacks, which caused cracks to appear in space. This was just a simulation, and not the actual attack. Fourteen stacks, fifteen, all the way up to—Twenty Stacks.

The Rainmaster had simulated the overlaying stacks path all the way up to Twenty Stacks, which Lu Yin’s arm found hard to bear, but he was excited by what it represented. Twenty Stacks would be enough, although, with his current physical body and battle force, Fifteen Stacks was his limit. Going beyond that would be very troublesome.

The Rainmaster gasped in amazement at Lu Yin. “Human life and the universe do not revolve around the individual. There are countless living things in the universe, so there will definitely be a way of life that suits you. Your training style is too independent.”

Lu Yin was lost. “Please enlighten me.”

The mentor gazed at the sky. “Among the Ten Arbiters, there’s a person known as the Divine Fist. It’s rumored that, before he broke through to become an Explorer, he had mastered Thirty Stacks.”

Lu Yin was stunned. How is that even possible? His physical body was already very strong, to the point where, except for Zhanlong Daynight who could not be killed, there was no one within the same realm who could rival him. Even so, his physical body, with the support of his battle force, could only withstand Fifteen Stacks. Thirty Stacks? How?

“Mentor, how did that Arbiter manage to attain Thirty Stacks?” Lu Yin asked curiously.

The Rainmaster raised his hand, and star energy appeared within his palm. It then formed itself into unusual diagrams. There were tree leaves, fruits, waterfalls, mountains, oceans, and even boiling magma. “I’ve said this before, but your training style is too independent. Humans are not complete individuals, and occasionally, they need to draw on external support. It’s just like how, when you left your name on the Rain List, you borrowed a lockbreaking tool.”

Lu Yin looked at the Rainmaster’s palm and at the diagrams. He had always neglected the fact that the universe had birthed countless natural treasures that could be used to aid one’s cultivation. Many disciples of great powers were so strong precisely because of those treasures; they had not relied solely

on their innate gifts. Hence, part of the credit for their achievements had to be given to those treasures. And amongst mercenaries, there were specialized treasure hunters who provided the great powers with various natural treasures.

Some could upgrade one's physical body while others could raise one's spirit. There were countless other mysterious effects, but Lu Yin had actually neglected them all.

"Thank you for your guidance." Lu Yin was moved, as he now saw another path shortcut to strengthening himself. This shortcut could only be used by him because of his die, as Enhance could upgrade any item.

The Rainmaster nodded, as he had come to acknowledge Lu Yin. After so many years, this youth was the first student to put his name on the Rain List.

Lu Yin suddenly thought of something and retrieved the five fruits that he had upgraded with his die's Enhance. They all emitted a golden radiance now. "Mentor, could you please check what use these fruits have?"

The Rainmaster took one and puzzlingly examined it, not quite understanding what he was holding. After a while, he gave Lu Yin a strange look. "Where did you get these from?"

"On the path during Astral-10's entrance examination."

Chapter 304: Little R10's Chip

The Rainmaster's eyes flashed. "During Astral-10's examination, there were a few plants that were transplanted from the Sand Ocean that could indeed strengthen the physical body. They were placed there for the students to compete over them while also improving some students' chances of passing the examination. However, those plants were very normal, so how did this happen?"

Lu Yin blinked. "Student doesn't know what happened either."

The Rainmaster immediately contacted the Sandmaster. When the Sandmaster saw the five gleaming fruits, he was left rather speechless. "Kid, tell me the truth. Where did you get these toys? These are definitely not from the examination grounds since we only moved a batch of very average strengthening fruits back there. I would guess that these fruits have survived for over ten thousand years, which is rather rare."

Lu Yin was delighted. "Do they have any use for the physical body?"

"Obviously. These things are used to temper the physical body. Those ordinary strengthening fruits would only be effective on Sentinels and Melders, but these ones will help even you. It will have a considerable effect, but it's a pity. If they were improved just a step further, they would become top-notch strengthening fruits, which would greatly enhance your physical body. They might even allow your body to approach the physique of an Explorer who has adapted to the universe."

"Where can one obtain such top-notch strengthening fruits?" Lu Yin was curious.

The Sandmaster shook his head. "Those strengthening fruits can only be found in the herbal gardens of certain great powers after maturing for 50,000 years. They aren't something that you can wish for, so obtaining a strengthening fruit at this level is already pretty good." With that, he tossed the five fruits

back to Lu Yin and left, not bothering to ask Lu Yin any more questions about where the fruits had come from.

“Rainmaster, are the effects of every natural treasure better the older the natural treasure is?” Lu Yin asked expectantly.

The mentor nodded. “Theoretically, yes. However, the universe is constantly changing. Even if you ignore what humans may do, many natural treasures cannot survive for very long and will end up becoming sourceboxes.”

Lu Yin instantly understood. It was like the scent shrub that he had once unlocked for a client; that plant had been uncommon during some era of the universe, and hence, it had been turned into an sourcebox. In the current era, however, it was no longer as rare. If not for its ancient age, that scent shrub would not have even been worth the cost of the lockbreaking.

The Ten Arbiters’ Hand of God had been able to use Thirty Stacks of the Overlaying Stacks Path when he had been a Limiteer, but nobody knew how many natural treasures he had eaten. Lu Yin envied him, but it was still alright as Lu Yin had his die. As long as he had money, even the worst strengthening fruit could be upgraded to the extent where it would arouse others’ suspicions.

“Any other questions?” the Rainmaster asked.

Lu Yin thought of his domain. “Mentor, how can we cultivate our domain?”

The Rainmaster muttered, “Neither domains nor battle force have any fixed methods of cultivation. You have upgraded your battle force to five lines, but that didn’t happen one step at a time. A domain is the same—fated coincidences could cause it to become exaggeratedly powerful, or it could remain at the same level for your entire life.”

“Mentor, is the Rain Observatory a domain?” Lu Yin asked as he raised his head.

The mentor smiled faintly. He rarely smiled, and he looked at Lu Yin with approval. “That’s right, the Rain Observatory was created by a predecessor’s domain. It allows you to display your own domain, and it can even forcefully alter the environment and force the environment to cater to you. It can even be expanded limitlessly and encompass a planet, a filament, or even the entire universe. Of course, that last part is just a theory as nobody knows if anyone’s domain can truly encompass the universe.”

Lu Yin was excited. It would be too mysterious if a single domain could hold the universe!

Lu Yin left the Rain Observatory after that. He had originally wanted to head to the Sand Ocean to cultivate his battle force, but he had changed his mind. He needed some money to finish upgrading his strengthening fruits to the peak level. Then, he would be able to upgrade his physical body and use more overlaying stacks. If he could use Thirty Stacks, there would be no need to worry about the Tournament of the Strongest.

His previous conjecture had indeed been correct, as the title of Ten Arbiters’ candidate was just an overstatement. The Hand of God Arbiter had been able to display Thirty Stacks while still at the Limiteer realm, which was a power level that definitely surpassed the current Lu Yin. If he had reached such heights, then what about the other Ten Arbiters? They should all have been at around the same level;

thus, the current so-called Ten Arbiters' candidates were still quite far from the Ten Arbiters' level of strength when they had been in the Limiteer realm.

He wondered how powerful Liu Shaoqiu's Fourth Sword had become by now. Perhaps that technique would display a strength that could rival the power of the Ten Arbiters when they had been Limiteers.

There had been 450,000 star energy crystals left in Lu Yin's Mavis Bank card. Lu Yin had withdrawn them all, and it had reached a point where his cosmic ring could barely hold them all, and there was not much space left. He needed to spend some time acquiring a bigger cosmic ring, though one of higher quality could not be obtained very easily.

It hadn't been long since he had rolled the die, so Lu Yin wondered if he could even roll three pips— Enhance.

Lu Yin felt rather confused after returning to Astral-10. It was difficult to roll, and that was true the more frequently he rolled his die. He recalled his previous experience in the Great Yu Empire when he had to enter Time Stop. It had been very painful for him, and he had to rest for ten days after each roll, or else he would have fallen unconscious for five days.

Lu Yin thought about it, but he still decided to attempt it in the end. He randomly found an abandoned piece of land and sat down cross-legged on the ground.

"Seventh Bro, you can't be planning to screen me off?" the Ghost Monkey suddenly spoke out, as if he had felt a bad premonition.

Lu Yin grunted in the affirmative. "Brace yourself, I'm about to screen you."

"Seventh Bro, please! What secret do you have that you do not wish for me to discover? We've even shared the secret of Progenitor Wushang, so what secrets could there be that surpass the Progenitor's inheritance? No, please no! Please don't screen me," the monkey begged desperately, but Lu Yin ignored his pleas and immediately blocked him.

Progenitor Wushang's inheritance was indeed the greatest secret that he had, but it was useless to Lu Yin since it was too distant at the moment. The secret of his die also might not be any worse than Progenitor Wushang's inheritance; it could freeze time, enhance and upgrade material objects, and steal items from other peoples' cosmic rings. These abilities exceeded that of a normal cultivators' innate gift, and if this information were to be revealed, Lu Yin believed that he would have nowhere to hide no matter how vast the universe may be.

He tapped on the die, which quickly spun before stopping on one pip: Pilfer. Lu Yin was not surprised, as Pilfer was a common roll.

Thump! Lu Yin looked at the ground, and his eyebrows jumped in surprise. Who puts roasted meat in their cosmic ring?! There was even steam coming off of the meat; who would be this senseless? He obliterated the meat with one hand. Again.

The second roll was Pilfer once again, and a piece of clothing dropped out. It was a beautiful set of women's clothes. Lu Yin subconsciously looked around and felt that he was extremely lucky that no one was around to witness this. He destroyed the clothing immediately. Again.

The third time was Pilfer yet again, and he was rendered speechless at the result. Why is it always Pilfer? Although, this was to be expected when he rolled the die too often.

However, something unique fell out of the space channel this time.

Lu Yin picked up the chip that had fallen on the ground and inserted it into his gadget. Countless unknown symbols appeared on his screen, all surrounding a humanoid shaped machine that had a very refined appearance. Even as a technologically inept person, he could tell that this machine was quite sophisticated and complicated. The entire memory bank of the chip was filled with a few designs of humanoid machinery technology and even more strange symbols.

Lu Yin put the chip aside. It didn't really matter that he could not understand the information; he could just hand it over to Ban Jiu when he returned to the Great Yu Empire. He should be able to decipher the information.

At the same time, in the depths of the universe, within the Technocracy's territory, enormous machines populated the heavens.

This was an important day for Little R10. He was going to show those people his blueprints for the latest model of human transformation technology that he had successfully developed. He wanted to obtain the highest allocation of resources and make his name known throughout the universe.

Since a young age, Little R10 had been known as an inventor. He had created many things, though not many had practical uses. Finally, ten years ago, he had coincidentally chanced upon some plans for human transformation. From that point forward, he had decided to devote himself to this research subject. Ten years of blood, sweat, and tears had passed, but he had finally succeeded in his research.

His proposal to transform humans would surpass the other trash. In the future, those transformed humans that waged war against the Human Domain would come from his own hand. He wanted to be known everywhere, and he wanted the entire universe to worship him!

He became more agitated as he thought about the possible future and stood motionless as he tried to suppress his emotions. He had even revised his speech multiple times; of course it had needed to be looked through. He was certain that this speech would change the structure of the entire universe.

Hold on, where's the proposal chip? Little R10 searched through his cosmic ring. Eh, it's gone? Really gone? Where did it go? Where's the proposal chip?!

Little R10's face turned deathly pale white; had he not brought it? Impossible, he had checked his ring a dozen times before he had left. How could he have left it behind? Could he have dropped it? Was his cosmic ring that unreliable?

Meanwhile, Lu Yin took a deep breath as there was only one roll left after his third one. He tapped the die, causing it to slowly spin around. Then, the scenery before his eyes changed and he appeared in the Time Stop Space.

Lu Yin was rather disappointed, but this was still a good outcome.

He did not think about any more what-ifs and quickly extended his time in the space to thirty days, consuming over a thousand star energy crystals in the process. He then recited the Stonewall Scriptures and quickly fell asleep.

Within the Time Stop Space, ten days quickly passed by. He opened his eyes and raised his hand, allowing his die to reappear. He tapped on it, and it landed on five pips: Gift Copy. Useless. He continued to recite the Stonewall Scriptures, falling asleep, and then rolling his die.

Just like that, he repeated this cycle several times, and soon, fifty days had passed in the Time Stop Space.

Lu Yin had already resolved to himself that this would be his last roll, and that no matter the result, he would leave afterwards. He could not handle this space anymore, and the lonely environment was too unbearable.

The die slowly spun, and when it finally stopped, two screens appeared, one above another. Lu Yin was ecstatic; he had finally rolled three pips: Enhance.

When he had upgraded these fruits in the Great Yu Empire, it had cost him 1500 star crystals for the strengthening fruits' last upgrade, and that had improved the five fruits to the point where they had taken on a golden sheen. This time, Lu Yin did not plan to upgrade all five at once, as each consecutive upgrade would only consume more and more resources. Instead, he would upgrade them one at a time from now on.

He placed one strengthening fruit on the upper screen and casually threw out more than 10,000 star crystals. The strengthening fruit landed on the ground with a thump, and the golden radiance intensified even brighter while more than half of the crystals had been depleted. Again, and again, and again. For the fifth upgrade, Lu Yin threw out another 200,000 star crystals, and this was enough to cause the strengthening fruit to drop more than halfway down. At this point, Lu Yin only had about 180,000 star crystals left.

He grit his teeth and threw out another 100,000. This caused the fruit to move a bit more, but it needed a little more to finish its upgrade, so he threw out 20,000 more crystals. The fruit finally completely fell through the screen, and it no longer emitted a golden radiance. Instead, it seemed transparent, and just its presence caused the void to distort. There was also the indistinct sound of blood pumping through veins.

Thrilled, Lu Yin snatched up the fruit. He had no more money to upgrade the fruit any further, and it had taken him nearly 400,000 star energy crystals to upgrade just one strengthening fruit to this level. Any further upgrades would cost him multiple times what he had spent on this last upgrade, and he wouldn't dare to try it unless he had a billion star energy crystals. Still, this level of a strengthening fruit should be effective on him.

It had only taken him 30,000 star energy crystals to upgrade the four-stage formcast model to the fifth stage; in comparison, this strengthening fruit had consumed much more.

Lu Yin was rather exuberant. He briefly considered his options and then increased the time in the Time Stop Space by ten more days before swallowing the strengthening fruit in a single mouthful.

Chapter 305: Battle Force

Lu Yin's heart suddenly let out a violent thump, and he spat out a mouthful of blood. His entire body hurt terribly, as if someone had stabbed him a thousand times. It wasn't just his flesh that was in pain, but rather, it felt as if his very veins were on fire. The experience was oddly similar to breaking through, though even worse.

Across the surface of his body, Lu Yin's veins bulged out like wriggling worms as his body went through a transformation that seemed to alter even his veins.

Lu Yin drew a single ragged breath and grit his teeth before he started reciting the Stonewall Scriptures.

Some time later, the pain finally subsided. He opened his eyes, and it looked like he had just been dragged out of a pool of water; his entire body was drenched in sweat. He looked down at his hands, clenched his fists, released his strength according to the Overlaying Stacks Path, and felt an explosive bang in the void.

Some time later, Lu Yin sighed. Thankfully, he hadn't endured all that pain for nothing. His limit before ingesting the fruit had been Fifteen Stacks, but now, he had just used Seventeen Stacks without any complications at all, and it didn't even feel like he had touched his limit. His physical limits had been expanded once again, and he was able to move even faster now.

As he eyed the other four strengthening fruits, Lu Yin carefully stowed them away. Before he could obtain better natural treasures, these strengthening fruits would be good enough to enhance his strength.

He raised his hand, causing the die to appear once again, and Lu Yin sighed in admiration at it. Every time he saw his die, it astonished him. Others would have needed to spend excessive amounts of effort to get an ingredient like the strengthening fruit he had just consumed, but all he needed to do was throw money at it. While it had cost him quite a bit, it meant that anything was possible.

Based on what the Sandmaster had said, a strengthening fruit needed to be at least 50,000 years old before it would be useful for a Limiteer. Many large organizations could not wait that long, but he had managed to obtain one for merely 400,000 star crystals. He was much luckier in comparison.

After his body was strengthened once more, Lu Yin was now heavily anticipating the Tournament of the Strongest. He wondered what kind of expression Nightqueen Yanqing and the others would have when they saw him use Fifteen Stacks. When he defeated her, he had used less than Thirteen Stacks. Actually, he had only used Nine Stacks, Seventeenfold Shockwave Palm. He was clearly much stronger now than before.

Lu Yin took a few days to rest and then left the Time Stop Space. When he breathed in the outside air for the first time in a long while, Lu Yin felt incredibly refreshed.

To others, it might seem as if only a second had passed, but it had been a long time for him. It had been nearly two months. In two more months, the Tournament of the Strongest would begin.

After Lu Yin removed the screen on the monkey's senses, it tiredly spoke up, "We share the same body, Seventh Bro. You shouldn't go so far."

Lu Yin was currently in a very good mood. "From what you know, what kind of power should the strongest Limiteer possess?"

The Ghost Monkey was baffled. "The strongest? What do you mean?"

"I'm talking about the strongest Limiteer since ancient times," Lu Yin clarified.

The monkey thought it over and then replied, "I don't know. Those monsters on the Skymender List were already unimaginably powerful when they were Limiteers, but you humans' Ten Arbiters were basically the strongest since ancient times as far as Limiteers are concerned. There's no question about that. They're the result of the advancements made in the universe."

"How do you know about all this?" Lu Yin was surprised.

"It's obvious. Rather, is there anything that I don't know? I'll tell you this as well—the Ten Arbiters were not all born during the same time period. Some of them were frost-sealed and only released when there was a huge change in the universe. Those ones are the worst," the monkey explained.

Lu Yin paid no mind to that last bit. He was now incredibly confident in his abilities, so all he wanted to do was fight the strongest Limiteer around. He wanted to know if anyone was willing to take on his most powerful attack.

Actually, no. His current level was still far from enough. The Ten Arbiters' Divine Fist had been able to use Thirty Stacks while in the Limiteer realm. Lu Yin's current strength still wasn't enough. He then contemplated earning more money so that he could upgrade the rest of the strengthening fruits until he could use Thirty Stacks.

However, this wasn't the time for that. That had to wait until after the tournament. He looked around himself before deciding to head to the Sand Ocean in an attempt to upgrade his battle force.

When he arrived, Lu Yin found out that there were only seven levels beneath the Sand Ocean. The seventh level corresponded to five-lined battle force, which meant that this place would no longer be of much help to him anymore.

For a student, five-lined battle force was practically the maximum that one could achieve. When the Ten Arbiters had attended the Astral Combat Academy, they had only raised their battle force to five lines as well.

"Battle force corresponds to its wielder's aura. It can be upgraded through experience in battles as well as by cultivating in certain areas. However, even without those, a person's spirit can achieve the same results," the Sandmaster earnestly told Lu Yin.

Lu Yin was confused. "A person's spirit?"

The Sandmaster grinned. "Amongst the younger generation, the Ten Arbiters possess the boldest spirit, as they want to control the next generation of the universe with the power of ten people. That requires a tremendous amount of tenacity. Even I don't have such ambition. That is what we call "spirit," and it can upgrade your battle force. Back then, the Ten Arbiters had no more than five-lined battle force, but nobody knows how far they've gotten now. Nobody can predict how large the spirit of someone who can surprise the universe in such a manner is."

Lu Yin could feel his excitement surging. After all, it made sense. What sort of spirit must ten people who desire to rule over an entire generation of people possess? It was to the extent where they were even able to affect the universe! He started becoming excited just thinking about it. With such spirit, how could one's battle force not be upgraded? The best way to understand it was that one's spirit alone could take over the universe.

They were unspeakably strong because they were the Ten Arbiters, and they were the Ten Arbiters because of their strength. This was a tenacity that only humans could have.

While the Astral Beast Domain had Skymender's List and although the individuals on the list were said to be comparable to the Ten Arbiters, Lu Yin was absolutely certain that they were not comparable in the slightest. The Ten Arbiters were a product of the universe's changes, and nobody knew how powerful they actually were.

However, it was impossible to estimate how powerful the Ten Arbiters were just from their battle force alone.

The Sandmaster sighed. "Compared to people from ancient times, the Ten Arbiters can be considered to be monsters. Nobody amongst the younger generation can best them." After saying that, he looked at Lu Yin. "You may be called a Ten Arbiters' candidate, but you're still far from approaching their strength when they were in the Limiteer realm. Nobody can replicate their achievements."

"But I can best them," Lu Yin interrupted. After saying that, he froze, and yet for some reason, he really felt as if he could do it.

The Sandmaster stared at Lu Yin with a strange look and then burst into laughter. "Young people need to have ambition! Try your best to surpass them, and you should indeed train your battle force with the intention of surpassing them. You really might be able to do it then." After that, the mentor left.

Lu Yin could tell that the Sandmaster had merely been joking and that he didn't really believe that Lu Yin was capable of surpassing the Ten Arbiters. It made sense, because who in the universe was capable of doing so? Lu Yin was about ten years younger than them, and there were already quite a few candidates around his age. However, all of them were rather commonplace. The Ten Arbiters were clearly far and above any candidate.

After leaving the Sand Ocean, Lu Yin headed to the Stargazing Deck. He'd been there once before, which made this his second visit.

There was definitely a reason why the Astral Combat Academy was considered to be the top academy in the universe, and the Stargazing Deck was something that existed in all ten branches. Perhaps there was something special about this place.

When he had first come there, the Starmaster had told Lu Yin something that he still remembered. "Go down. The Stargazing Deck shows you the stars, your gratitude and grudges, the world through the ages, the cycle of causality, and the part of the heavens that belongs to you." Remembering the words was one thing, but understanding them was an entirely different matter altogether. Lu Yin had no idea what the words actually meant.

Did those huge, ancient warships and those mournful battle songs have anything to do with him? Also, what was the Endless Weave? What about that jade finger that had pierced through the universe towards him? How were any of those things related? Or did the future that he had seen have nothing to do with him?

“Sir, I am Lu Yin, and I would like to enter the Stargazing Deck,” Lu Yin respectfully called out.

“A person can only enter the deck once. It’s pointless to enter a second time. What you see will be either nothing or what you saw before,” the Starmaster replied.

Lu Yin looked up. “I’d like to see what I saw before. I didn’t manage to clearly see what was there my first time, and I would like to take a look once more.”

The Starmaster widened his eyes, stared at Lu Yin, and then nodded. “You can give it a try.”

Lu Yin bowed and then slowly climbed up.

He sat down cross-legged, calmed himself down, closed his eyes, and modulated his breath. Nine stars began revolving around him, and as he held onto the Giant Emperor’s third eye, undulations from his domain began to spread out.

The Starmaster was shocked at the sight. Not much time had passed, but Lu Yin had improved by a great deal.

Just like before, it was hard for Lu Yin to tell if he was awake or asleep. He once again saw that unfamiliar space that had an ancient, desolate feel to it. There was also a battle chant pounding in the distance, where he saw an enormous warship. Ahead was still the Endless Weave.

One ship after another passed by and flew ahead. Where are they going, and who are they fighting?

Lu Yin could now see even further than before. While he still saw the same scene, he could tell that there were a few figures on the ship who were stained red with blood. A jade finger burst through space, and Lu Yin felt a strange sense of fury overtake him, and he unconsciously shouted, “How dare you!”

All of a sudden, he seemed to remember something, and he ignored the finger. Instead, he stared at the deck and realized that there was a familiar clawmark there: it was from the Skybeast Claw.

The clawmark had been imprinted deeply within the deck, and blood flowed along the mark before spreading.

After a moment, Lu Yin was startled.

“How dare you!” he shouted again as he stood up, fury blazing within him.

“Shut-” A booming voice started answering, but Lu Yin was pulled out of the vision by the Starmaster. While still panting, he bowed to the mentor before slowly descending down the stairs. Before he left, he asked, “Do people see the same vision in each of the astral academies’ Stargazing Decks?”

Starmaster widened his eyes. “Perhaps. Perhaps not.”

Lu Yin nodded and left.

He had managed to see even more during this visit to the Stargazing Tower. He had seen that Skybeast Claw imprint on the deck, and he was certain that he had not been mistaken; he was very familiar with the sensation of that technique.

Lu Yin lifted his hand and shaped his fingers into claws. The 96th form of the Skybeast Claw technique was very familiar to him by now, but this time, there was a slight difference in his Skybeast claw compared to before. He was now demonstrating the 108th form: the complete version from the Great Yu Empire. However, this was still far from enough. Compared to the clawmark on that warship, his version was still far, far too weak. What he had seen in the vision was the true Skybeast Claw, something that could endure the passage of time just from being carved into the ship's deck.

Why did the Great Yu Empire have the Skybeast Claw? Or rather, why had Undying Yushan had the Skybeast Claw? No, he hadn't been Undying Yushan, but rather Undying Yu. Yu, one of the Court of Seven Names, which was one of the Three Dark Hands. With the truth in mind, it was actually of no surprise that he had possessed the Skybeast Claw.

Lu Yin sank deep into thought. The Skybeast Claw clearly had more than 108 forms. It was impossible to take another look from Astral-10's Stargazing Tower, as the chances of the Starmaster allowing him to go in again were slim to none, but what about the other academies? He had a feeling that the Skybeast Claw might be extremely powerful if he ever managed to comprehend it in its entirety, and he might even be able to find out a bit about what had happened in the past.

Chapter 306: Experts From The Cosmic Sea

There was less than a month remaining before the tournament started. In the Human Domain, at the borders of Erudite Flowzone, there was a gigantic, white bone soaring through space. It was headed across the border and towards the Erudite Flowzone. The white bone was the spacecraft that had come from the Astral Beast Domain and was carrying the beasts as it headed to the competition in the Human Domain.

Shui Chuanxiao watched as the giant bone disappeared into the distance with a pondering look in his eyes.

"Do we really not need to check them, sir? Things will get bad if there are strange beasts onboard like those Sheng Ao from before," Enya anxiously asked from behind Shui Chuanxiao.

Shui Chuanxiao shook his head. "There's no need for that. They're not that stupid. The Erudite Flowzone is under surveillance by many epic powerhouses, and every single thing they do is under heavy surveillance. They won't be able to fool anyone. Don't worry."

Enya was confused. "Why was this Tournament of the Strongest scheduled all of a sudden?"

Shui Chuanxiao narrowed his eyes. "The war has to stop for a time."

Enya was surprised. "We're stopping the war?"

"This tournament is just an excuse for the Astral Beast Domain and the Technocracy to enter the Human Domain and conduct negotiations. The border wars that have gone on for countless years have reaped a large number of casualties from both sides, and both sides also have matters that they must deal with. That's why the war will be temporarily stopped, but exactly who will be heading the efforts is an

important matter that must be negotiated,” Shui Chuanxiao answered. He was saying quite a bit, which was rather unusual for him. It was as if he was instructing her.

Enya was still confused. “I don’t think that there’s anything in our domain that we need to handle. Won’t they take this opportunity to attack us?”

Shui Chuanxiao snickered. “Who said that we’re fine? The truth has merely been concealed. Once the cunning party dies, another one will be cast aside.” At this point, Shui Chuanxiao seriously said, “Remember this well, Enya. No matter when or how, do not ever let your guard down when it comes to defending the border. Never let that happen.”

Enya nodded and glanced at Shui Chuanxiao with a strange look in her eyes. The commander was acting very strangely today.

Within the Erudite Flowzone, the white bone moved just like a universal spacecraft as it shot through space, catching quite a bit of attention as it did so. Ripples formed around the bone as it traveled through space, and they prevented the beings within the bone from making direct contact with the outside universe.

Not very far away from the bone, a massive, pen-shaped spacecraft slowly drew closer to the bone. Within it were students from the Erudite Flowzone’s Lost Radiance Academy who were about to take part in certain trials.

Not too long after that, the two spacecraft met, making for quite a strange sight. Both ships had unique structures; one was a bone, the other was a pen, and both were on the same path, although it appeared that neither was willing to give way for the other.

At the foremost tip of the bone, a purple-haired beauty lazily opened her eyes. Then, she lightly tapped out with a single finger, causing the entire local region of space to be covered with snow as everything froze. The other spacecraft was also frozen, after which it slowly dropped down.

Within the frozen spacecraft, Ying Tang was shocked. As a mentor of Lost Radiance Academy, he had the strength of a Cruiser. However, there was absolutely nothing he could do against this seemingly delicate snow. He could only watch on as the academy’s spacecraft fell down, giving way to the other spacecraft.

“Have mercy, Lilac Snow,” a voice boomed through outer space, causing ripples to spread out and melt the snow into nothingness.

At the end of the bone, the purple-haired beauty disdainfully replied, “Why are you hiding? Is this the so-called character of a cultured person?”

A middle-aged man walked out from within the void and fearfully gazed at the beauty. “I didn’t think that you’d come, Lilac Snow.”

“I didn’t think that your family would have sent you here either, Wen Yao. Or perhaps... Are you here to keep an eye on us?” Lilac Snow lazily answered with a completely nonchalant expression.

“I’m not keeping an eye on you. I’m just helping you finish the tournament without any issues,” Wen Yao stated.

Lilac Snow sneered. “How hypocritical. Enough of that. Stop blocking us. Make them leave.”

Wen Yao waved his arm, gently lifting and pushing the huge spacecraft aside, and making a path for the bone vessel from the Astral Beast Domain.

At this point, Ying Tang walked out from within the spacecraft and whispered something to Wen Yao. Wen Yao's eyes shone as he glanced at the bone spacecraft. "There's a youth who would like to challenge someone from the Spiritual Academy. Would you be willing to permit that?"

Lilac Snow was rather interested as well. "You humans are so hypocritical. Are you trying to test the waters before the tournament? Fine." After speaking, she glanced at the bottom of the bone spacecraft. "Who wants to fight? It'll just be for fun." After that, with another casual wave of her hand, white snowflakes appeared in the void, forming an icy white route that extended into the distance. This would be the battlefield.

A young man exited the giant spacecraft. He looked quite similar to Han Chong.

"Who is he?" Wen Yao asked.

Ying Tang answered in a hushed tone, "That's Han Kui, Han Chong's younger brother. People call him the Little Art Saint."

Wen Yao was caught off guard. "He's Han Chong's brother? What a surprise."

"He's always wanted to surpass Han Chong, which is why he asked to challenge a student from the Spiritual Academy," Ying Tang explained.

Wen Yao shook his head. "The Spiritual Academy has no easy targets. Even Han Chong might not be able to win. This kid's in trouble."

A green-eyed golden mouse climbed out from within the bone spacecraft, slowly made its way towards the ice platform floating in space, and then turned to face Han Kui.

Han Kui was furious to see that he was facing off against a mouse. To him, this was a clear sign that these astral beasts were underestimating him! He immediately struck out, using his star energy to draw pictures of huge mountains to pressure the mouse.

This mouse was Hua Yishou, and he stared at Han Kui with beady green eyes that were filled with contempt. Against the huge mountains that were exerting pressure on him, the mouse simply opened its mouth, causing a suction force that was so astonishing that it distorted the void and caused spatial cracks to appear. Han Kui was startled by the sight and felt his scalp go numb. This mouse was able to create spatial tears just by opening its mouth? Creating spatial tears was the mark of a powerhouse amongst Limiters.

The large mountain formed from star energy was swallowed by Hua Yishou in a single gulp. After that, Hua Yishou disappeared.

Han Kui's eyes widened and he hurriedly dodged. The place where he had been standing looked as if something had bitten through it, leaving only a black hole behind. Hua Yishou disappeared once more, and while Han Kui had been able to avoid the first attack, he was unable to do so for the second one. He could only watch on, unable to move, as Hua Yishou closed in on him with a gaping mouth.

Nearby in space, Wen Yao waved his arm and stopped Hua Yishou. "Enough. We admit defeat."

Han Kui panted heavily as he gazed at the disproportionately huge mouth of the tiny Hua Yishou. That mouth was able to burrow through the void and he couldn't do anything to block it. This was the first time in his life that he had felt himself be so close to death, since it was clear that he had nearly been eaten.

Back atop the bone spacecraft, Lilac Snow contemptuously said, "If you don't fear a fight, then you shouldn't be afraid to die. I can't believe that you saved him. This is the reason why you humans keep getting weaker with each newer generation."

"Don't speak too soon," Wen Yao shot back.

Before long, the white bone spacecraft left.

Within the spacecraft, Han Kui's expression was incredibly bitter. The difference between him and the mouse was just too big. He had always held the belief that he would one day surpass his brother, Han Chong, and that the gap between them wasn't that much. However, it was only now that he understood that it wasn't that the gap between them wasn't large but rather that his brother hadn't made the difference between the two of them clear. One could say that Han Kui was not even able to see the difference between him and his brother. It was no wonder why he was stuck in Lost Radiance Academy while his brother was one of the most powerful students in the Astral Combat Academy.

"That's the power of the universe's cream of the crop. Don't feel down. You still have a chance to surpass your brother," Ying Tang said to console the youth. He thought very highly of the young man.

Han Kui blankly nodded and stared at the starry skies with a complex look in his eyes. The universe was huge, and that mouse was definitely not the strongest within the Limiteer realm.

The Astral Beast Domain was located in the extreme east, while the Technocracy lay to the extreme west. These two domains were separated by a huge astral river, and the Technocracy shared a border with the Chaos Flowzone.

The spherical spacecraft from the Technocracy passed by the Human Domain's border armies there and appeared on the astral river's huge ark.

The humans did not know very much about the Technocracy because, since ancient times, nobody had been able to enter it, regardless if one tried to sneak in or barge straight in. This was because there were rumors that, within the Technocracy, there was a large, primordial brain that was able to scan everything in the entire domain at all times. That rumor was very exaggerated, but it was not impossible. After all, it was a fact that nobody had ever successfully entered the Technocracy.

This meant that the humans knew very little about them.

Within the spherical spacecraft, a half human, half robot female stared at the passing scene of outer space from within the spacecraft. Deep within her eyes, there was a strong sense of disdain and contempt that originated from her very soul. She was not looking down upon the Human Domain specifically, but rather, she was looking down upon the entire known regions or even the entire universe.

Next to her, a wolf-shaped robot lay on the ground, seemingly very obedient to her.

"I wonder if there'll be anyone who can block me once I unveil my true form. All of them are nothing but useless ants in front of me," the girl said with a slight grin. The Tournament of the Strongest was merely a game to her.

The Sword Sect was definitely the leading sect in the top flowzone. The Thirteen Swords were famous throughout the entire universe, and while their disciples might not be able to inherit all Thirteen Swords, they still possessed powerful techniques that were enough to shock the universe.

The Lightning Sword Technique was considered to be one of the most difficult ones to learn, and its power was second to none.

Amongst the many disciples of the Sword Sect, very few had actually managed to learn it. Of those who had, Yan Hua was one of them. He was a Limiteer from the Sword Sect who was second only to Liu Shaoqiu. He even stood above Liu Tang and held the same status as Liu Xiaoyun.

It was a pity that he was a bit old; he was about a decade older than Liu Xiaoyun and the rest. While he could still be considered as a member of the younger generation, nobody mentioned him anymore. In just a few more days, he would have to retire from that title. It would be fine if he had become an Explorer, but if he was unable to do so, then he would be nothing more than a joke.

Yan Hua sat atop the peak of a lofty mountain with a complex expression. He had given up too much for the Lightning Sword. With his talent, he could have easily become an Explorer if he had chosen to learn a different technique. However, his choosing the Lightning Sword meant that he had no way out. He could either succeed or fail and become forgotten. Those were his only choices.

As he stared at the sword in his hands, Yan Hua tightly clenched the hilt. Lightning flashed in the sky above him as a reaction. Yan Hua was powerful, but unfortunately, he was out of time.

All of a sudden, the void in the distance shattered. An arrow streaked towards Yan Hua after piercing through the void. Yan Hua's eyes widened, and he immediately counterattacked with his sword. Thunder boomed as a frightening streak of lightning struck the ground. The arrow was turned to dust while the lightning was simultaneously dispersed.

Yan Hua stood up and gazed into the distance in shock. That arrow had been shot by a Limiteer, but since when was there such a powerful expert in the Sword Sect? That arrow had been released from a great distance away, but it had still destroyed his attack. Even Liu Xiaoyun wouldn't be able to achieve that.

With this in mind, Yan Hua soared into the sky and charged in the direction that the arrow had come from.

Far away, quite a few disciples were standing around the Sword Sect's space station as they glared intensely at a young man.

The young man was half-naked, and the few bits of clothing that he did have were extremely casual. His body was covered with scars, and his demeanor was arrogant and snobbish as he glanced around at his surroundings. "So you all are the best of the Sword Sect? What a joke."

Right after he said that, a female disciple stepped out and glared at the young man. "I request a duel with you."

The young man snorted. "You're not my match, little girl."

"How dare you!" she yelled as she swept out with her sword horizontally. Sword qi spread out and froze the void. This attack wasn't weak at all and was practically able to tear through the void. This young woman was comparable to an Area Master from the Astral Combat Academy.

A glimmer of surprise flashed through the young man's eyes, but his figure disappeared like a fish swimming through the ocean as he dodged the sword attack. By shaking the void, he had effectively dispersed all of the star energy and sword qi in the area that had been sealing the void. He then shot out another arrow at the female disciple.

At that moment, an indescribable sense of danger could be felt. The void broke down as an arrow shot into the distance.

The girl's face turned deathly pale. She wasn't able to defend against this attack, and perhaps even her beloved seniors from the sect would not be able to either.

Chapter 307: Heavenly Drum

The youth arrogantly declared, "Remember my name. I am Nate, a member of the Arcadian Arrow Crew. I can't be compared to spoiled disciples like you all from the Innerverse." He then released the string in his right hand, and although the arrow did not move, the sharp aura still left a cut across the young female disciple's cheek. After that, the arrow flew out.

All of the disciples were dumbstruck by this scene. This arrow targeted not only the female disciple, but also all the other disciples of the Sword Sect.

In the sky, multiple disciples who could explore space were about to act, but they suddenly stopped. A sudden clap of thunder roared as a bolt of lightning crashed down and smashed that arrow to pieces, causing an intense explosion to burst forth. The lightning flickered, dazzling many people and tearing the void apart. However, the space quickly restored itself in the next moment, and the deafening sound transformed into shockwaves that swept out in all directions, pushing the Sword Sect disciples aside. The person called Nate was also pushed back a step, and he looked on in shock.

There was now one more person on the battlefield. Thunderbolts were wrapped around his entire body, and he carried a long sword on his back as he stared coldly at Nate. This person was Yan Hua.

Nate quickly grew serious. "Who are you?"

"Sword Sect disciple Yan Hua."

Many disciples started to whisper behind Yan Hua. "It's actually him. He still hasn't broken through to the Explorer realm after a dozen years and is still waltzing about as a Limiteer."

"Shh, regardless of his cultivation level, Senior Yan Hua has learned the Lightning Sword technique and can't be underestimated."

“When Senior Yan Hua first learned the Lightning Sword, he was full of energy and was second only to that female senior. It’s such a pity that he gradually fell more and more behind. While that senior became one of the Ten Arbiters, Senior Yan Hua is still a Limiteer.”

“Even so, he’s second only to Liu Shaoqiu.”

...

Yan Hua heard the furtive discussions around him, but he had long since grown accustomed to it. His senior whom he held in high esteem had climbed to unreachable heights. But in comparison, he was just Yan Hua, a Sword Sect disciple. No matter what the people from his own sect said about him, he still had to protect the sect’s dignity. He could not allow it to be trampled upon by some stranger.

“Senior Yan Hua, thank you.” The female disciple who had attacked Nate before looked at the newcomer appreciatively.

Yan Hua ignored the crowd and stared at Nate. “You’re from the Cosmic Sea?”

Nate arrogantly replied, “That’s right. Compared to the Cosmic Sea, your Innerverse is too peaceful. People like you wouldn’t survive past a few days in the Cosmic Sea.”

Yan Hua frowned. “Surviving in a harsh environment is not the only factor that determines one’s strength.”

“But it’s the most important factor,” Nate coldly retorted as he aimed his bow at Yan Hua. “You’re pretty good since you were able to receive one of my arrows. Let’s see if you can take another one.” Then, the arrow unleashed such a terrifying aura that even Yan Hua’s scalp turned numb. At that moment, he realized that he was not this person’s opponent. Of the Sword Sect’s Limiteers, perhaps only Liu Shaoqiu could defeat this person. He truly lived up to the hype of hailing from the Cosmic Sea.

But Yan Hua would not retreat. He was a disciple of the Sword Sect; he was Yan Hua!

Crack!

Lightning exploded forth, and a dazzling radiance covered the area once again. The void shattered in a spider web-like pattern. Meanwhile, the arrow pierced through the void and distorted the storm of lightning before arriving in front of Yan Hua’s eyes. Yan Hua had nowhere to run, and he did not intend to dodge the arrow either.

Whoosh!

The arrow skimmed past Yan Hua’s cheek and into the void, gradually vanishing.

Yan Hua continued to stare straight at Nate.

Nate looked at Yan Hua in amazement, and respect appeared within his eyes. “You lost, yet you didn’t retreat. I admire that.”

Yan Hua was not satisfied, but he was completely powerless against a powerhouse from the Cosmic Sea.

“You’re the Sword Sect’s strongest Limiteer?”

Yan Hua shook his head. "The strongest is Liu Shaoqiu. You can wait for him to return."

Nate shook his head. "I admire your spirit, but your power is lacking. Nevermind Liu Shaoqiu—none of the Sword Sect's Limiteers are my opponent. The only worthy opponents are still only those from the Cosmic Sea."

At that point, another youth appeared. "Nate, it's time to go."

Nate looked at Yan Hua. "If you have the guts, then come to the Cosmic Sea and leave your mark there. That place is a paradise for powerhouses. This Inniverse is too peaceful." And with that, he left.

The purpose behind the two's appearance seemed to be to probe the strength of the Sword Sect's disciples. The two of them were from the Arcadian Arrow Crew of the Cosmic Sea, and they were representing the regiment in the Tournament of the Strongest. However, they did not seem to care about the competition in the slightest.

The environment of the Cosmic Sea was extremely harsh, and the two people from the Arcadian Arrow Crew felt that neither the Inner nor the Outerverse could ever produce powerhouses that could match up to them.

Many Sword Sect disciples were left unsatisfied, but no one could stop the two from the Cosmic Sea. Even Yan Hua, who was second only to Liu Shaoqiu, had lost. There was no need to even mention the rest.

Yan Hua watched on as Nate and his companion left the Sword Sect on their spacecraft. He shook his head; the two were way too arrogant. The Thirteen Swords was not a battle technique that he could even dream of matching with just his Lightning Sword. If the two used him as a standard to measure Liu Shaoqiu, then they would suffer a terrible fate; Liu Shaoqiu was much stronger than him.

Be it the Astral Beast Domain, the Technocracy, or the Cosmic Sea, a flood of experts came to the Inniverse one after another. However, Lu Yin did not know about all these individuals appearing since he had entered the Undying Realm. That was where his territory lay, the Heavenly Drum that he had snatched away from Nightqueen Yanqing. He was the Realm Master of the Undying Realm.

The Heavenly Drum stretched across a thousand kilometers, and it was set flat within a mountain range. The beating of battle drums rang out from it once a month, which allowed everyone within range to see an ancient battlefield and experience all sorts of battle techniques. The luckier ones would even be directly pulled into the battlefield and experience firsthand the battle techniques of that ancient battlefield. This was the inheritance of the Heavenly Drum.

There had originally been many Daynight clan members training around the Heavenly Drum, but they had all left by now. They were too ashamed to appear in this area, unless Nightqueen Yanqing managed to defeat Lu Yin and reclaim the training zone.

Lu Yin had become the Realm Master of the Undying Realm, which meant that all of the Undying Realm now belonged to Astral-10. It was a pity that there were too few people from Astral-10 to utilize it. Additionally, Xia Luo was not interested in the trial zones, and Silver had vanished. Thus, the Area Masters of the Undying Realm had barely changed.

There were only two Astral-10 students at the Heavenly Drum when Lu Yin arrived. One was Darkvoid and the other was Meng Yue. The other students present were not from Astral-10.

Boom!

A loud sound filled the air, signalling that the monthly beating of the battle drums had started.

Many students' eyes grew fervent.

Darkvoid and Meng Yue stood at the front of the crowd. Darkvoid was qualified to be here, but Meng Yue's presence was rather forced. Still, no one caused trouble for him due to their fear of Lu Yin.

The battle drums sounded out, and the ancient battlefield appeared. An endless bloodlust swept out and pervaded the entire mountain range.

The battle drum was a thousand kilometers across and seemed large, but it was still much smaller than a grand battlefield of the universe. This was just a miniature battle, but many strange battle techniques were displayed within it as it was from the ancient times. Just its aura caused many students to feel overwhelmed.

Each battlefield that appeared would be different from all the others, and the time that they lasted for would vary as well. The longest had lasted for several months while the shortest no more than a fleeting moment.

Meng Yue stared hard at the Heavenly Drum battlefield. Suddenly, the scene before his eyes transformed as the solemn sounds of hand-to-hand combat resounded around him. He had managed to enter the battlefield as a soldier.

At the same time, Lu Yin arrived at the Heavenly Drum and directly landed at the front, where he also stared at the battlefield. He didn't even have time to react before his body vanished, as he had similarly been pulled within the battlefield.

He also merged into the body of a powerhouse, but a different one than Meng Yue's—this one was an Explorer.

Lu Yin could not control this body, and he could only witness everything from a first-person point of view.

The Explorer that he was in raised his hand, causing a peculiar star energy to take the form of a horrifying imprint that suppressed the entire battlefield. Ahead, another powerhouse tore through the void and sliced at the Explorer carrying Lu Yin's consciousness with a sword.

The powerhouse whom Lu Yin had merged with battled against this swordsman for five days.

At first, Lu Yin was not very used to the strength of an Explorer, but after spending five continuous days basking within the slaughter of the ancient battlefield and hearing the painful cries from those beside him, he slowly became accustomed to the battlefield. Additionally, he also became used to the sorrow from the deaths surrounding him.

He gradually forgot his own identity; it was as if this battlefield had become his home.

Finally, the swordsman was killed on the seventh day. The Explorer that Lu Yin had merged with roared at the heavens as blood continuously flowed down like rain.

This Explorer was not extremely powerful and had no strong battle force, outstanding domain, or even any mysterious innate gifts. He had relied purely on his battle techniques to carry himself through the battle.

Lu Yin could sense this Explorer's passion and enthusiasm.

Suddenly, Lu Yin's perspective changed; he had merged with another body, and from his new perspective, he could see the roaring Explorer with whom he had merged with before.

At that moment, the powerhouse whom he had merged with pointed out with a finger. Stars exploded from his fingertip and reduced the roaring Explorer to a mere puddle of blood.

The difference was too great. Now that he had merged with another Explorer, Lu Yin could feel the power of this person. He possessed a domain that allowed him to survey the entire battlefield. With a light tap of his finger, he could cause the void to collapse. This finger carried a strange, ancient charm to it, and the domain around his body surged. This was a personal forcefield.

The Rainmaster had once mentioned to Lu Yin that, once one's domain grew strong enough, they could develop their own forcefield. The strength of the forcefield depended on one's spirit, and this person's forcefield was able to suppress the entire battlefield. He truly possessed a spirit that could quell an entire area.

The greater one's forcefield, the greater the suppressive effect upon one's enemies. At an extreme level, even the environment would be altered to better suit oneself, rather than the cultivator adapting to their surroundings. These alterations were a real, physical effect.

The entire battlefield was suppressed by this Explorer's forcefield, and the Explorer flipped his palm over to crush the earth. One finger of his could pierce through the void, causing countless to die at his hand. The more that died, the stronger this person's forcefield became. Within his domain, Lu Yin could sense the Explorer's bloodlust. It fed on the battlefield's murderous aura, and this aura strengthened his domain over and over again.

Lu Yin's entire being was immersed into this person's powerful domain as he experienced the killing intent emanating from the battlefield.

Without their notice, a few days had passed before the battlefield vanished. Lu Yin, Meng Yue, and a few other students were standing atop the Heavenly Drum. They were the lucky chosen ones who had been drawn into the battlefield.

Some students had grasped battle techniques through the battlefield while others had seen a path to growing stronger. Lu Yin had grasped a strand of killing intent, and his domain had taken a dramatic change, as it now caused others to shudder.

The students closest to Lu Yin felt numb, almost as if they had returned to that ancient battlefield. In just a moment, all of them left.

Meng Yue looked at Lu Yin in shock. This person was just too powerful, almost excessively so. Is this his current strength?

In the distance, Darkvoid similarly stared at Lu Yin in shock. During Astral-10's new students competition, he had not felt such a disparity between himself and Lu Yin, but now, he felt that he could no longer even see how wide the gap between them was. Darkvoid thought of the mission that his company had given him, and felt his hopes of completing it fading. This person would never become that desperate.

Atop the Heavenly Drum, Lu Yin closed his eyes. He was still immersed in that battlefield. Even if it was invisible, his domain had been strengthened by a significant amount and had been incorporated with that ancient battlefield's bloodlust. It now caused everyone who came in contact with it to feel a chill. Through experiencing this battle, Lu Yin had seen the path he should take to develop his domain.

Chapter 308: Provocation

On the other end of the Human Domain, the Astral Beast Domain's bone spacecraft finally arrived at Astral-7's space station. The astral beast competitors would enter the Lifeseek Realm through Astral-7's trial zone mountain and then head to the specific area inside the realm where the Tournament of the Strongest would be held.

The average Astral Combat Academy student would only head to the border warfront after graduation or expulsion, so most of the present ones had not had any contact with any of the beings from the Astral Beast Domain. Thus, their curiosity was piqued when they heard the news that students from the Spiritual Academy would be visiting their academy.

A few were rather worked up by the desire to beat down the astral beast students. They were just savage beasts, but they wanted to compete against the top four of the Astral Combat Academy? Dream on.

Many students had gathered at Astral-7's space station and were gazing at the bone spacecraft in wonder. This toy was a spacecraft?

Atop the white bone, Lilac Snow stretched lazily and stood up. Her beautiful face was exposed to the crowd of onlooking students.

Many were stunned; weren't the visiting students supposed to be beasts? What was this beauty doing on the beasts' ship? Was she human?

Lilac Snow frowned at the crowd of low-grade humans. "You guys should take care of yourselves. Ask if you don't know the way, but play nice."

From within the spacecraft, a green-eyed golden mouse jumped out. It was Hua Yishou, who was about the size of a palm and had an adorable appearance, but many girls were freaked out by it.

The students were stunned again. A mouse? What's going on?

Embermane followed closely behind Hua Yishou, revealing his appearance as a blazing red sable.

Many were now rendered speechless. First, it was a mouse, and now, a sable. Were these the so-called astral beasts?

“Excuse me, but where’s the trial zone mountain?” Embermane asked. The beasts’ mouths did not move when they spoke, as they “talked” by making the air around them vibrate, which seemed very strange.

No one answered.

Embermane grew unhappy. “Humans, answer me or be burnt to death.”

“Embermane, be more amiable. You can’t be too excessive when dealing with weaker creatures,” a blue-haired beauty said as she walked out of the spacecraft behind the sable. This was Feng Jiu, whose appearance seemed much more normal compared to the beastly mouse and sable.

“Who are you calling weaker beings?” a female Astral-7 student barked unhappily.

Feng Jiu glanced at her. “You’re too weak.”

That female got angry. “Let’s duel!”

Hua Yishou spoke up, “You humans are really interesting. You’re clearly trying to probe our strength, and yet, you’re still looking for excuses to do so. Whatever, I’ll take on anyone who wishes to fight.”

“Hua Yishou, you’ve gotten a battle. It’s my turn next,” Embermane growled.

Feng Jiu frowned. “Elder was right. Humans are just asking for a good spanking. No one answers when we ask politely, so they all can only be beaten into obedience.”

Atop the bone spacecraft, Lilac Snow had already fallen asleep again.

This exchange had thoroughly riled up the Astral-7 students. They had tried to use the pretext of being insulted for a duel, but that no longer seemed necessary. They could have an open fight the way the situation was developing.

“Whoever wants to fight, just come on up. Order doesn’t matter—we can take all of you on at the same time if you so wish,” Feng Jiu said as she glanced at the crowd.

At that point, a figure clad entirely in black walked out from behind her. “Don’t cause trouble. Just ask for directions.”

Feng Jiu seemed very afraid of this black-garbed figure, and she did not speak any further.

Hua Yishou and Embermane also fell quiet. This was Tian Hou, the one who the Ghost Monkey had said was the strongest Academy Lord of the Spiritual Academy.

“Oh, another one that acts all mysterious. This one’s just a savage beast with a bizarre shape. Why even bother acting like that,” a student disdainfully insulted with a sneer.

Feng Jiu, Hua Yishou, and Embermane simultaneously looked at that student with sympathy written all over their faces.

Tian Hou raised his head from beneath his black robes. No one was able to clearly see his appearance, but the student who had ridiculed him suddenly turned deathly white while his pupils instantly constricted and he was paralyzed.

“Please, how do we get to the trial zone mountain?” Tian Hou quietly asked.

The many students of Astral-7 looked at him in fear without moving. They hadn't even felt a tremor of star energy, but a Limiteer of the Astral Combat Academy had been scared so thoroughly that they had lost their fighting strength. Whatever method Tian Hou had used, it was too crafty.

"I can guide you," Dai Ao said as he walked out from the crowd with a serious expression and looked at Tian Hou.

The cloaked figure nodded. "Many thanks." He then walked out of the space station, following behind Dai Ao.

The appearance of the Astral Beast Domain's four competitors attracted even more students, and even some mentors watched the procession below from the void above.

The mentors of the Astral Combat Academy's various branches only had one role: to act as guides. Thus, they did not meddle in the management of the academy, and the administration was handled entirely by the students. The mentors had not even appeared to welcome this group from the Astral Beast Domain.

Dai Ao escorted Tian Hou and the rest through the teleportation device, after which they arrived at an empty grassland. Dai Ao then turned to Tian Hou. "I want to challenge you guys, and I will take you all to the trial zone mountain after the challenge."

Hua and the others were not surprised. Feng Jiu coldly asked, "Are these your conditions?"

Dai Ao shook his head, and with a somber expression, said "It's fine if you don't accept. I can take you there now if you wish."

Feng Jiu sneered and started to walk away, but Embermane leapt out in front of Dai Ao before she could leave. "I'll bite."

Feng Jiu did not argue. To the astral beasts, their true battle would be at the Tournament of the Strongest. The people they were currently meeting were just failures of the Astral Combat Academy, and they were not even qualified to touch them.

"Show some mercy," Tian Hou softly said.

Many students gathered nearby and looked on in excitement. They wanted to get an idea of the so-called "four lords" of Spiritual Academy's power; what were these four relying on to challenge the top of the Astral Combat Academy?

Embermane was rather small in size. He was just slightly larger than Hua Yishou and did not appear very threatening. However, when Dai Ao stood in front of the sable, he felt an intense chill cover his entire body. He had the preposterous notion that he could be turned into nothingness at any moment.

The air around them became scorchingly hot, and Dai Ao's expression grew solemn. He then relaxed both fists to expose his palms before he charged at Embermane. "Starburst Palm."

Embermane seemed indifferent to Dai Ao's attack and merely thrashed out with his tail. The seemingly delicate tail carried an indescribably intense heat with it, as well as a strange force. Embermane released a battle technique through his tail to directly clash against Dai Ao's Starburst Palm.

With a bang, the inferno soared into the skies and burnt the void away, causing it to violently erupt. In the next moment, a boundless heat melted almost all of the spatial cracks while Dai Ao was blasted backwards by the heat wave. A bit of his right palm had even been charred.

He looked at Embermane in shock, as that intense heat had nearly melted him into nothingness.

Embermane flew into the skies and stared down at Dai Ao. "Human, you're not my match."

Outside the battle zone, most of the Astral-7 students were taken aback. Dai Ao's power was obvious, and he could rival an Area Master in power. His performance in the Astral Combat Tournament's Three Academies Guarding the Gate had been dazzling. The Starburst Palm was also Astral-7's top technique, but it had been dispersed by a mere flick of the tail.

Dai Ao raised his head and inhaled deeply. A trace of unwillingness ran through his eyes. "Gravity."

An indescribable darkness extended across the ground, and a terrifying force descended upon the grassland. Embermane had been flying in mid-air, but he was suddenly pulled down by a strange gravitational pull, causing him to crash into the ground. Dai Ao raised both hands. "Gravity—Starburst Palm."

Boom!

The grassland split apart as a giant fissure extended in all directions. Dai Ao's star energy followed along the cracks and swept up into the sky. The smoke was scattered, and the very air warped, causing the area to become fuzzy.

Many were knocked back by the aftershock and felt a giant wave of pressure blow past them.

Everyone's gaze was focused on the battlefield. This was Dai Ao's strongest attack, so the battle should have ended with that.

Feng Jiu stared at Dai Ao in astonishment. "Not bad! He actually has an innate gift of gravity."

Tian Hou silently stood to the side.

Dai Ao was panting heavily outside the crater. He had put everything into that palm, and all of his star energy had been drained, but he still felt uneasy for some reason.

Suddenly, Dai Ao's chest tightened as he reflexively dodged to the side. A fiery blaze burned the space where he had previously been standing to a crisp. He felt numb; if he had been just an instant slower, then he would have been fried.

The blazes coalesced into the shape of Embermane, and he stared at Dai Ao with fury in his eyes. "Human, you've angered me! Burn to death!" He then raised his tail as an incomparable conflagration streaked towards Dai Ao. The high temperature formed a cage that sealed off all directions, and even Dai Ao could not stop it despite his power. He could only watch on as the flames burned across the grassland; they were more than sufficient to reduce him to ash.

Tian Hou raised his head as if he were about to prevent a death, but then, he suddenly looked to the other side. At the same time, Feng Jiu and Hua Yishou looked in the same direction as well; a sharp sword aura had rushed out from the void in the direction of the battlefield. The target of the sword attack was actually not Embermane but rather Dai Ao.

The appearance of the sword attack was so sudden that Embermane did not even have any time to react. Not only was the timing of the attack exceptional, but it also sliced straight through the burning cage that had trapped Dai Ao, allowing him to break free at the last moment and avoid being roasted to death.

“Who is it? Get out here!” Embermane shouted as he stared in the direction that the sword attack had come from.

Dai Ao panted heavily as he fearfully looked at Embermane. He then looked towards the other end of the grassland. There was only one person in their academy who was both that powerful with a sword attack and also qualified to intervene in this battle. It was Astral-7’s student leader, Liu Xiaoyun.

Liu Xiaoyun slowly walked across the grassland with her sword in hand. A powerful sword aura composed of star energy swept out from her, leaving aftershocks in the wake of her domain. What a powerful woman! Her appearance shocked Feng Jiu and the other Spiritual Academy Lords.

Embermane warily gazed at Liu Xiaoyun; he could also feel that she was very formidable. That aftershock was, without a doubt, from a domain. This woman was far stronger than the man with the innate gift of gravity that he had been fighting.

Dai Ao gazed at her. “Thank you.”

Liu Xiaoyun glanced at him. “Leave with the other students. These are guests from far off, so do not act disrespectfully towards them.”

Dai Ao nodded and left. The other students grudgingly dispersed as well. Liu Xiaoyun’s word was law within Astral-7; after all, she was the academy leader.

“Woman, is it your turn?” Embermane said as he stared at her.

She frowned. “My apologies, your hosts have been rude. I’ll escort everybody to the trial zone mountain where you can enter the Lifeseek Realm.”

“There’s no rush. You just cut me with your sword, but you want to leave just things just like that?” Embermane was unsatisfied with Liu Xiaoyun’s response.

Tian Hou did not stop him, as Liu Xiaoyun had piqued his interests as well. This human female was the strongest human Limiteer that he had encountered so far.

“What do you want?” Liu Xiaoyun’s voice was cold.

Embermane, however, was in high spirits. “Let’s duel, or you can take one of my attacks.”

Liu Xiaoyun looked over at Tian Hou and the rest, and then back at Embermane. “Alright.”

“You’re pretty direct, so let me warn you beforehand—there’s no way you humans can withstand my flames. Offense or defense, it’s up to you,” Embermane haughtily declared before rising up.

Liu Xiaoyun had never looked down upon Embermane and the rest of the astral beasts, as she had been to the border warfront and personally witnessed too many powerful astral beasts. Many of them had strange innate gifts and were no weaker than humans. Additionally, she had heard of the Spiritual Academy’s reputation before. She felt as if she were facing an Astral Combat Academy student leader now that she was directly facing this Spiritual Academy Lord.

A heavy atmosphere suppressed the entire grassland while the loitering students further away looked back at the battlefield. Dai Ao was still there as well. He had not underestimated Embermane, but he had still been easily defeated, so he wished to witness the disparity between them.

Sparks suddenly appeared from the void and spread out, causing the temperature to spike dramatically. Many looked at the skies in shock, but all they could see was the sky distorting.

Chapter 309: Regiment

Embermane looked at Liu Xiaoyun, and the strange inferno from before moved to cover his body. Liu Xiaoyun instinctively felt that this blaze was very dangerous, and she automatically swept out with her sword. She had instinctively responded to Embermane’s threat by attacking rather than defending. However, her sword qi was nonetheless burnt to nothingness when it approached Embermane.

The next moment caused the onlookers’ hearts to tremble as they felt an intense pain overtake their bodies. The formless conflagration had covered the entire region and even caused the sky to turn dark red.

Dai Ao’s eyes popped open when he saw this familiar scene. The feeling that Embermane was emitting was the same as Arikar’s during his battle against Feng Shang in the Astral Combat Tournament. This feeling was exactly the same as when the Karmic Flame Sword had been accumulating power. It was a scorching heat that could burn everything away to nothingness.

Liu Xiaoyun noticed the peculiar similarity, and her gaze turned cold. She was a hundred meters away from Embermane and sliced out towards him with her sword. This technique was her imitated technique of the First Sword of the Thirteen Swords. It sliced through the void and bypassed the flames to directly strike at Embermane.

Feng Jiu was startled.

Tian Hou’s eyes gleamed with surprise under his black robes. What a powerful sword technique.

Hua Yishou blinked; this sword was intimidating.

Embermane was struck by Liu Xiaoyun’s attack, and a sword scar appeared on his red fur. Fresh blood dripped out only to instantly evaporate into steam. He stared at Liu Xiaoyun in shock, as she had actually bypassed his blazes to strike at him.

Liu Xiaoyun frowned and gripped her hilt tightly. What a sturdy defense! Even her strongest attack had not been able to truly harm the fire sable.

Embermane's eyes widened, and he opened his mouth. A red flame that burned through the void shot towards Liu Xiaoyun, and she once again struck out with her strongest attack to clash against the fire. An unbelievable explosion erupted and caused the void to collapse as countless shockwaves swept in all directions, burrowing through both the earth and the void while numerous spatial cracks appeared. Despite the bedlam, the inferno still descended upon Liu Xiaoyun before her own eyes.

Liu Xiaoyun tightly clenched her blade to defend herself from the blast, but her sword was transformed into molten iron before it evaporated away. Her entire body was struck by the flames, and she spat out a heavy mouthful of blood. She was flung more than a thousand meters backwards, and a good deal of her clothes was burnt away. Her right arm was charred, and her skin had been scorched as well.

She had been defeated by this one strike, by the sheer power of that fire.

Across from her, Embermane marvelled, "Human, you're still alive, and although I'll admit that you're strong, you're not my match."

Many of Astral-7's students were stunned; their student leader, Liu Xiaoyun, a Sword Sect disciple, had been defeated. Was this the power of one of the Spiritual Academy's four lords? It was no wonder why they were challenging the top four of the Astral Combat Academy.

Multiple mentors shook their heads when they saw that scene from above the grassland. Liu Xiaoyun had tried her best, but she had barely defended herself. The disparity between them was so large that even after she had attacked to defend herself, she had still been defeated. The sword scar on the sable's skin also gradually recovered. He had taken Liu Xiaoyun's full force attack without any real defensive measure, making the disparity between them even more apparent.

Liu Xiaoyun's right hand was injured, but she endured the pain as she looked at the sable. "I lost, and you guys are indeed qualified to participate in the Tournament of the Strongest. I look forward to watching your matches."

The sable contemptuously replied, "The Tournament of the Strongest? You humans aren't even qualified to enter my sight since none of you can withstand my inferno. Your top four will be no exception."

"Alright, since things have ended, let's go to the trial zone mountain," Tian Hou quickly said as he intervened.

The fire sable did not provoke the students any further, as he feared Tian Hou. Truthfully, the entire Spiritual Academy feared Tian Hou, who was the strongest Academy Lord.

Five days later, the Technocracy's competitors reached Astral-5, where they were similarly challenged by Astral-5's students.

The results were shocking. Astral-5's Namu, Rou Daynight, and Astral-5's leader Kuang Wang all lost without question, just like how Liu Xiaoyun had been thoroughly defeated.

These results instantly made all the humans feel gloomy about the upcoming Tournament of the Strongest. Both Liu Xiaoyun and Kuang Wang were academy leaders who could rank among the Astral Combat Academy's top sixteen students. They were even strong enough to match up against some of the champions from the tournament's previous seasons, and yet, they had been easily defeated. Many

were unable to accept this outcome, and it was an ominous portend for what the upcoming competition would be like.

Many had assumed that the top four from the Astral Combat Academy would win this competition after watching the Astral Combat Tournament. They believed that the finals would be between two human participants. However, quite a few had changed their minds after witnessing the newcomers' power, especially since the strongest Academy Lord, Tian Hou, had not even shown his skills yet. Additionally, some random fire sable was capable of defeating Liu Xiaoyun. Reality was quite frightening.

Not long after the Technocracy arrived at Astral-5, the Cosmic Sea's Arcadian Arrow Crew arrived at Astral-3. However, Nightqueen Yanqing had forbidden the academy students from challenging the visitors, which was much different from Astral-5 and Astral-7. The two from the Arcadian Arrow Crew seemed to have some history with the Daynight clan, and their interactions with Nightqueen Yanqing were rather cordial.

Although Nightqueen Yanqing was Astral-3's student leader, she could not control everyone, and Cang Shi was one of those whom she could not control.

Cang Shi had no personal desire to challenge the visitors, but he had received an order from Chaosgod Mountain to probe the strength of the Cosmic Sea's two participants. This was because the Arcadian Arrow Crew's motives in sending these two people to the Inniverse were not as simple as participating in the tournament.

Cang Shi did not know much about the Cosmic Sea, but he had still heard some rumors about it. It was divided into various territories governed by different regiments, with four at the very top. These four regiments were so strong that they could even cause the Inniverse powers to feel fear. They were known as the Four Pirate Crews, and the Arcadian Arrow Crew was one of the few regiments that stood independent of the big four. Chaosgod Mountain had a suspicion that the Arcadian Arrow Crew was planning to withdraw from the Cosmic Sea and that they had joined the Tournament of the Strongest to both allow the Inniverse powers to see their strength and to attempt to find powers that were qualified to accept them. The Daynight clan had their eyes on them, as did the Chaosgod Mountain.

"Chaosgod Mountain? You're someone from the Chaos Flowzone's Chaosgod Mountain?" Nate looked at Cang Shi in amazement.

Cang Shi faced Nate. "Yes, please guide me."

Nightqueen Yanqing's eyes flashed murderously from beside Cang Shi. "Cang Shi, as Astral-3's student leader, I order you to back down. Otherwise, I will have to use my authority to put you on trial."

Cang Shi frowned. He was not Nightqueen Yanqing's match, especially since she had recently changed and become stronger. She was now worthy of ranking amongst the top four of the Astral Combat Academy, and he could not compare to her.

Nate's lips curled up in interest. "Miss Yanqing, there's no need to worry. Since this disciple of the Chaosgod Mountain wants to know the power of my Arcadian Arrow Crew, I am happy to oblige." And with that, he walked out to face Cang Shi. "You can attack now."

Cang Shi did not dare to be careless against someone who hailed from a fabled Cosmic Sea regiment. Nate was right when he claimed that the Inniverse was too peaceful and that it could not compare to the cruelty of the Cosmic Sea. Anybody who could survive there was terrifying, which was why Nate despised those Sword Sect disciples.

However, Nate would not dare to look down upon the Chaosgod Mountain, as the cruelty of their training far surpassed what the Sword Sect subjected their disciples to.

The Sword Sect relied on their powerful sword techniques to lead the First Flowzone, and it was very powerful. However, to the people of the Cosmic Sea, they were more impressed by the Chaosgod Mountain as their disciples' survival capabilities far outstripped those from the Sword Sect.

There was a whoosh as enormous air waves blew apart. Cang Shi's four-lined battle force shot out as his terrifying strength distorted the void and caused traces of spatial cracks to appear.

Behind Nate stood another expert from the Cosmic Sea, and his eyes gleamed as he looked at Cang Shi. "Allow me."

"Four-lined battle force, not bad. Silus, you can have fun." Nate smiled and slowly backed off.

The youth called Silus stepped out, and four-lined battle force similarly shot out from his body, though his battle force appeared to be more condensed and deeper than Cang Shi's.

Boom!

The two attacked simultaneously. Their collision was almost exactly the same as the scene from the Astral Combat Tournament when Cang Shi had collided against Xia Ye, both using four-lined battle force as well.

Compared to Xia Ye during the Astral Combat Tournament, Silus appeared to be a lot more relaxed. Chaosgod Mountain's disciples were known for their abnormal instinctive reaction time, but Silus's reflexes were no worse. His movements were strange but very effective.

Nightqueen Yanqing's eyes gleamed. She did not care about four-lined battle force, but this Silus's defensive movements smoothly flowed from one to the next; it looked as if he was always one step ahead of Cang Shi's attacks, who had the reactions of a Chaosgod Mountain disciple.

"We face constant danger all year round in the Cosmic Sea, to the point where life and death crises have been engraved into us. Be it the atmosphere, liquid energy, native beasts, or other powerful regiments, grave danger can appear at any moment. Hence, there is no rigid structure to our battle style—it remains simple and effective out of necessity," Nate explained, seemingly having read Nightqueen Yanqing's thoughts.

The Daynight clan had more of an understanding of the Cosmic Sea than others, but that place became more terrifying the more they learned about it. It was a mysterious place, situated between the Inniverse and the Neoverse. Aside from the regiments that perpetually dwelled in the Cosmic Sea, others would find it hard to even safely pass through. Just like the Neoverse, this was a place that existed independently from the rest of the universe.

Still, even if it was the smallest regiment, it was no simple feat for them to survive in the Cosmic Sea. Each regiment had an expert with at least a power level over 200,000 overseeing them, or else they simply would not be able to survive within the Cosmic Sea.

It was precisely because of her respect towards the Cosmic Sea that Nightqueen Yanqing had put aside her status to try to form a relationship with these two. Otherwise, she would not have even bothered to speak with such people. They were much older than her, and if they had been students of the Astral Combat Academy, their age would have forced them to either break through to become Explorers or be expelled. Either way, they would have had no chance to participate in this competition.

Still, these two were very powerful among the Limiteer realm, and Cang Shi was rendered helpless against Silus. The reflexive dodging that he was so proud of was useless in this battle, and he could not even take advantage of his four-lined battle force. He felt exceptionally stifled.

Silus marvelled as he blocked another one of Cang Shi's kicks. "No wonder you're a Chaosgod Mountain disciple. You qualify to train in the Cosmic Sea, and you're much stronger than those disciples from the Sword Sect."

Cang Shi retreated rather grudgingly, but he was truly at his wit's end against Silus.

Silus's lips quirked up in amusement. "Don't take things to heart. I hadn't even comprehended four-lined battle force when I was your age. You're pretty good, but you're still too far from the current me." The battle force surrounding his body suddenly morphed into a dark golden color. A terrifying strength exploded and launched Cang Shi backwards.

Nightqueen Yanqing and Cang Shi were stunned; it was five-lined battle force.

"Do you want to keep going?" Silus said with a smile as the dark golden radiance enveloped him, making him appear mysteriously profound.

Cang Shi's battle force dissipated around his body, and he shook his head. "I've lost."

Silus similarly dissipated his battle force. "You'll be able to comprehend five-lined battle force in a few years."

"I heard that someone in the Astral Combat Academy has already comprehended five-lined battle force. Is that true?" Nate suddenly asked as he turned to Nightqueen Yanqing.

Nightqueen Yanqing's expression became ugly as she duly replied, "Yes, it's true."

"That's good. When the Ten Arbiters were in the Astral Combat Academy, they also comprehended five-lined battle force. This person has been hailed as a Ten Arbiters' candidate, so I want to see if he is qualified for such a reputation." Silus raised his head, and some displeasure appeared in his eyes.

Chapter 310: Looking Down

Back in his youth, Silus had wished to comprehend five-lined battle force at a young age and be comparable to the Ten Arbiters. Unfortunately, he had only succeeded several years later, so he really wanted to test himself against this youth from the Astral Combat Academy who had already comprehended five-lined battle force.

“That person’s name is Lu Yin. He should be at the Heavenly Drum in the Undying Realm. You can go look for him there,” Nightqueen Yanqing offered.

Silus smiled coldly. “Thank you.”

Cang Shi glanced at Nightqueen Yanqing. He then exchanged some pleasantries with the two Cosmic Sea individuals and left. Nightqueen Yanqing was just trying to instigate things and have these two to make trouble for Lu Yin. However, all Cang Shi had to do was watch things unfold. The Chaosgod Mountain welcomed all sorts of desperate experts with open arms.

Five days later, at the Heavenly Drum in the Undying Realm, in addition to the originally present Meng Yue and Darkvoid, Michelle also came since she had completed her mission.

When Lu Yin saw her, he grew rather embarrassed as well as a little upset since he had been toyed with by this pair of sisters.

“When will you help me comprehend battle force?” Michelle coldly asked Lu Yin.

Lu Yin thought about it. “After the competition.”

Michelle glared at him and headed to another area.

“Eh, why does this girl look so familiar? She looks pretty similar to that woman from the battlefield,” the Ghost Monkey asked curiously.

“She’s Mira’s younger sister,” Lu Yin quietly explained.

“No wonder they are so similar.” The Ghost Monkey then chuckled as he seemed to think of something. “Seventh Bro, a man must have great ambitions and dreams. Do you know what mine is?”

“To be an unknown tomb raider forever?”

The Ghost Monkey was momentarily left speechless. “Of course not, and how could an archeologist stay unknown forever.” The Ghost Monkey paused, coughed, and then answered, “My dream is to acquire the entire Celestial Ice Phoenix clan as my harem, hahaha!”

Lu Yin rubbed his temple. A monkey and an ice phoenix. Just what’s going on there?

He stood up as it was time to leave. He had wanted to attend two beatings of the battle drums, but it seemed that he wouldn’t be able to make the second one. The previous session had already helped him greatly. Should he travel around and visit all of the trial zones once? It might be rather offensive, but was he afraid of offending anyone? Lu Yin seriously considered it.

At that point, a man stepped onto the Heavenly Drum amidst many shocked gazes, attracting Lu Yin’s attention.

The Heavenly Drum was Lu Yin’s territory, so no students besides those from Astral-10 were allowed to step onto it. And yet, there was a stranger who dared to step on it in front of Lu Yin. This was clearly a provocation.

Meng Yue spoke first. “Who are you?”

The man glanced at Meng Yue with contempt in his eyes before turning to Lu Yin. “You’re the Undying Realm’s Master?”

Lu Yin frowned. “That’s me.”

“Too bad. I’ve taken a fancy to this Heavenly Drum, so let me have it,” he coldly declared.

Lu Yin glared at the arrogant man and felt something strange—this person gave off the air of a wandering nomad.

“Who the hell are you?” Meng Yue stepped forward with the intention of obstructing the man, but he was stopped by Lu Yin.

“Who are you and where are you from?”

“Silus, from the Cosmic Sea.”

The Cosmic Sea? Lu Yin was stunned, and everyone else who heard this man’s origins was shocked as well. Many from the Inniverse knew of the Cosmic Sea; it was an ominous place with an unnaturally high death rate. Every year, many experts were buried there. It was difficult for any to survive in that place.

Among the many students present, those from Astral-5 and Astral-7 looked at Lu Yin with worry etched on their faces. They had witnessed the strength of the Astral Beast Domain and the Technocracy, whose competitors had soundly defeated both Kuang Wang and Liu Xiaoyun. Now, it was the Cosmic Sea experts’ turn, and they had decided to challenge Lu Yin. Once this academy leader was defeated, the reputation of the top four would become a laughingstock.

Although quite a number of students detested Lu Yin, despite everything, he was still from the Astral Combat Academy, so they hoped that he would emerge victorious.

Michelle stared at Silus in astonishment when she heard that this person was actually from the Cosmic Sea. She had heard her sister speak of that place more than once before, and especially about the Four Pirate Crews. The top organizations of the Cosmic Sea were so strong that even the Ten Arbiters Council feared them, and they were not to be trifled with despite their low member count.

The deeper within the universe one ventured, the more powerhouses would be birthed. The Cosmic Sea was even deeper than the Inniverse, and intense battles and deaths was commonplace for those who lived there. Anyone from that area was undoubtedly abnormal.

“What, are you scared?” Silus condescendingly asked Lu Yin.

Lu Yin raised his brows. “If you want the Heavenly Drum, then sure. Come and take it.”

Silus sneered. “Rather big talk.” After saying that, his battle force appeared around his body. Many students gasped in wonder when they saw a dark gold radiance appear—five-lined battle force.

Meng Yue, Michelle, and Darkvoid all backed away since a five-lined battle force user had appeared.

Lu Yin squinted. This guy sure lived up to the reputation of the Cosmic Sea.

“Let me show you the terror of the Arcadian Arrow Crew,” Silus growled as he charged forward at Lu Yin. He punched out, and Lu Yin’s eyes widened. Five-lined battle force erupted from Lu Yin with a bang, and the majestic power was no weaker than Silus’s as Lu Yin responded to the attack with a punch of his own.

Heaven and earth seemed to collide, and an intense rumbling sound accompanied the fierce shockwaves that swept out across the Heavenly Drum, driving Michelle and the others to the edge. Even the students outside the Heavenly Drum were affected by the aftershocks of the battle.

After one exchange of punches, the two fighting atop the Heavenly Drum simultaneously retreated. They then looked at each other in amazement.

“You’re actually able to withstand my blow.” Silus was shocked. He was quite a bit older than Lu Yin, and he had originally assumed that Lu Yin’s five-lined battle force would barely be at the initial stages and that Lu Yin’s physique would be incomparable to his own. However, not only had this person taken his punch, but he also appeared to be extremely skillful. It was to the extent where Silus could not even see Lu Yin’s level.

Lu Yin looked at his fist. His punch carried a ferocious power, and more importantly, it had been imbued with several stacks, but it had all been completely dissolved. This person seemed to have an abnormal reaction time ability that was similar to that of the Chaosgod Mountain’s disciples, although his was unique in that only those who spent their lives in the Cosmic Sea possessed it after their sense of danger developed to an extreme.

Whoosh!

Silus kicked out at Lu Yin and carefully observed Lu Yin’s eyes, as Silus was able to sense his opponent’s next move from their eyes.

Lu Yin did not avoid the attack and responded with a kick from his own leg. A loud bang sounded out, and a shockwave shot upwards as a giant spatial crack similarly extended from the point of impact. It was as if the skies had split into two halves. The scene was breathtaking.

Bang bang bang bang!

A chain of intense explosions rang out atop the Heavenly Drum. There had never been a case of students battling with five-lined battle forces in the history of the Astral Combat Academy. It was almost impossible for students to comprehend five-lined battle force, so the peak battle force was usually four lines. Hence, a collision between two five-lined battle force users was practically never seen, and more and more students gathered at the Heavenly Drum to watch the spectacle.

Lu Yin once again blocked Silus’s strike. Thus far, he had only relied on his five-lined battle force and had not used his domain, Cosmic Palm, or even any overlaying stacks. He wanted to experience the fighting ability of an expert from the Cosmic Sea, but he had finished testing the waters now. He then glanced beyond the Heavenly Drum, after which his eyes flashed. Someone would definitely describe this battle in detail afterwards, which would not be favorable for him in the upcoming competition. He did not like

being thoroughly investigated, and he forcibly suppressed his desire to use the Cosmic Palm or his domain. Instead, he raised a hand and unleashed a Nine Stacks, Seventeenfold Shockwave Palm.

Silus's gaze changed, and he moved like a fish to slip past the attack as he violently struck out with an elbow in a counter against Lu Yin.

Lu Yin raised his knee to clash against Silus's elbow. The impact resulted in an explosion, and a rippling shockwave pulsed out with the two of them at its center.

Throughout all the battles Lu Yin had fought in, few had been able to dodge his attacks. His speed was extraordinary, and he could sense his opponent's movements through his Cosmic Art, the combination of which meant that his strikes had always landed true. Now, however, Silus was actually evading Lu Yin's attack and had even forcibly taken one strike. It was an uncomfortable feeling, but Silus was not actually powerful enough to injure Lu Yin with his current strength.

The two struck out and backed away simultaneously again, glaring at each other as they panted heavily.

Silus exclaimed, "No wonder you're a Ten Arbiters' candidate. For you to comprehend five-lined battle force so deeply at your age is not easy. It's a pity that you won't be able to continue with just this reputation."

Upon hearing these words, Lu Yin suddenly recalled what his family mentioned to him: a publicly recognized Ten Arbiters' candidate from the Cosmic Sea would participate in the Tournament of the Strongest.

"How many people have come from the Cosmic Sea?" Lu Yin asked.

Silus did not bother to hide the truth. "Two."

"Is the other one at the same level as you?" Lu Yin enquired.

Silus frowned. "Why bother asking? You'll naturally witness it for yourself during the competition. Do you really think that I'm using my true power?" Then, he raised his hand, formed a bow and arrow out of star energy, and pointed it at Lu Yin. "I'm from the Cosmic Sea's Arcadian Arrow Crew, and every single member is a divine archer. This... this is my true strength."

Lu Yin was in awe. He had a numb feeling just from Silus's bow being aimed at him. This feeling intensified even further when Silus's dark gold battle force enveloped the bow, and the void even began to split open. The arrow had not been fired yet, but the void already was not able to endure the pressure any longer, and Silus was just a Limiteer.

"You must be Lu Yin. The top four of the Astral Combat Academy are indeed not bad, but it's a pity that there's still a huge disparity between us. Things may be different in a few years, but there's no such thing as fairness in the universe," Silus spoke coldly as the arrow was enveloped by his dark gold battle force. It naturally caused a spiraling turbulence that spun upwards to form, causing many students to turn pale.

This was too powerful; this arrow would absolutely be earth-shattering. Could Lu Yin handle it?

In the distance, a veiled lady dressed in white clothes silently watched the Heavenly Drum.

From beside the Heavenly Drum, Michelle and the rest grew nervous.

Not far from Michelle and the rest, Xi Yue and Yue Xianzi were watching as well, as was Liu Xiaoyun and the others from even further away. Many had been attracted by this battle and their attention was focused here. The other star domains and the Cosmic Sea's competitors had consecutively challenged Astral Combat Academy students, and many from the Astral Combat Academy had been defeated. They hoped that Lu Yin would not be beaten as well.

Lu Yin truly felt danger when facing Silus's arrow, but it was just a slight sense of danger; this attack was not enough to warrant his defeat. Although this arrow was powerful, it was useless if it could not strike its target.

Twang!

The arrow pierced through the void, faster than anything Lu Yin had ever seen—even faster than Lu Yin's Flash Step. From Silus's perspective, no Limiteer could evade his arrow, and even an Explorer would find it hard to dodge and be forced to meet it head-on. He had concentrated his strongest battle force on it as well. Silus believed that even an Explorer would be hard-pressed to forcibly receive the attack.

The arrow successfully struck Lu Yin and continued traveling through the void afterwards, leaving a large spatial crack in its wake that looked like a dark river flowing across the skies. Everyone was shocked by what had just happened.

All eyes were on Lu Yin. Was he dead?

Silus's bow vanished from his hands, and his lips arrogantly rose up. No one had ever managed to receive his arrow, unless they were a six-lined battle force user.

Just as Silus was about to speak, a face appeared in front of him, not even half a meter away. His pupils shrank in shock, and he instinctively cried out, "You—" only for an intense pain to explode from his abdomen. His body curled up like a dried shrimp as his face paled and he spat out a mouthful of blood.

Lu Yin looked down at him from above. "You're no match for me."