

Star Odyssey

Chapter 6: The Die And The Cosmic Art

A long time passed before Lu Yin coughed out some more blood, a shockwave rippling out from his body that overturned his tent. The blast destroyed equipment and knocked over trees for hundreds of meters in all directions, prompting the arrival of two captains who were looking for the source of the disturbance.

“Are you Lu Yin, the new captain?” Feng Hong’s voice rang out, a questioning gaze directed at the ruins of Lu Yin’s tent.

Lu Yin quickly emerged from the ruins, walking with unsteady steps. He was pale as a ghost, but still noticed the woman next to Feng Hong as well as the soldiers who were looking on cautiously, “Yes, I’m Lu Yin. Sorry for the disturbance.”

“Why are you so weak?” The two captains stared at him in shock.

Lu Yin smiled bitterly, “I saw the Executioner display his battle technique a while ago, and it made me want to try mine as well. Unfortunately, I failed and hurt myself.”

Feng Hong immediately relaxed and chuckled, “Brother Lu, try to hold back a bit. Battle techniques are difficult to train and take patience. We captains have the occasional fortune to train with the Executioner, so I suggest you wait for him.”

Lu Yin nodded with understanding, “I see. Thanks for your advice, Brother Feng.”

Feng Hong waved him off, “You’re most welcome. After all, we’re all brothers in this camp and will need to rely on each other to face future disasters. I’ll have someone clear out another tent for you, so get some rest. Right, do you need a doctor?”

“Oh no, these are just superficial wounds. I’m just tired.”

“Good, then we’ll head out. Rest well, Brother Lu,” Feng Hong nodded before sending a glance towards the woman. Nodding herself in acknowledgment, she took one more look at Lu Yin and left.

Lu Yin followed some soldiers to a nearby tent where one soldier saluted him, “I will take my leave now, Commander Lu. Just give us a shout if there’s anything else you need.” He nodded and entered his tent as the soldiers left, eyes sparkling with excitement and anticipation. The formcast model had succeeded, and even given him an enormous surprise. A six-sided die appeared in his palm as he raised his hand, sparkling with starry energy. It looked completely ordinary, but he knew it to be an innate gift, something few cultivators got with their first use of a formcast model.

Innate gifts were odd things that many scholars considered the biggest mystery of existence. No one knew where they came from, and the popular belief that they were connected to one's origin were speculation at best. However, Lu Yin couldn't care less about said origin; he was only concerned with the properties of the innate gift itself.

Before coming to Earth, Lu Yin had heard of many types of powerful innate gifts. Every cultivator with a unique one was a prodigy who would be recruited eagerly all over the universe. Perhaps the most well-known detail about them was the fact that any cultivator with one would gain instant membership amongst the Universe Youth Council. While that was an immense advantage on its own, however, the actual utility of the innate gift was important as well. Lu Yin eagerly poked the die that was gently floating in the air, starting it on a quick spin before it came to a halt. The pips on five sides blanked out, leaving only one visible: he'd rolled a five.

He instantly knew that this side's use was Pilfer, its details randomly appearing in his mind. The use of this side could steal any item that a random individual had in their cosmic ring, and before he could react a beam of light formed a passage in mid-air. A crystal fragment fell out from within, after which the die blurred and vanished with the passage.

'This is something that was stolen—no, recovered for me?' Lu Yin stared at the crystal fragment blankly, eventually picking it up and studying it. Realizing its use, he grabbed Vesta's watch from his cosmic ring and inserted the fragment within. A single ray of light drew two words in front of him: Cosmic Art.

The dazzling images that followed left him dazed. Silhouettes, images of the universe, galaxies, and palm prints all flashed across his vision for half an hour before the crystal exploded, rousing him from his trance. After a few more minutes of shock, he finally acknowledged that he had received something truly powerful.

The Cosmic Art was a technique that could allow one to absorb energy from the stars. It imitated the movements of the celestial bodies, and theoretically, each addition to the imitation would increase the speed of energy absorption. Even though the Cosmic Art technique that he had received was incomplete, it could still allow him to imitate up to eight orbiting celestial bodies. In other words, if he succeeded in learning this technique, his energy absorption would increase eightfold. Furthermore, the technique also included a battle skill called the Cosmic Palm that could allow the user to release star energy from their palm, which was a very powerful ability. This was astonishing!

Lu Yin stored his personal gadget and excitedly started to review the Cosmic Art. This was something that he had never heard of before, but he had no doubts as to how powerful it was. With such power, it probably even originated from the Inniverse! He was ecstatic at his unbelievable luck. For the die to land on Pilfer was already rare, but he had no right to expect anything more than a random pair of underwear. A powerful technique like the Cosmic Art was enough to secure his future! It was a pity it was only the introductory level of the technique...

He shook his head and let out a laugh; he was overthinking things. This type of technique would be a powerhouse's treasure. The safeguards would be extremely complicated, and there was no way that someone would put its entirety in a single crystal fragment. What he had received was clearly just a partial recording of the complete technique that must have been taken from some poor fool. Trying to retrieve the entire technique would be a monumental task.

Lu Yin dismissed this train of thought and left his tent. Leaning against a tree, he gazed up at the sky and pondered about how he would start training this new technique. If he had to imitate celestial orbits, he had to first enter the sky.

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In the depths of the universe was a massive mountain surrounded by a dozen stars, its flaming summit making it look like a cigarette butt that pulsed bright and dark every few seconds. The smoke shooting out from this peak seemed like a ribbon sent to wrap around the world.

"You WHAT?" a voice roared within the massive mountain, "You stupid brat, how could you have lost the technique? Did you give it to some wench? Get over here!"

In the darkness, a young man could be seen fleeing in a pitiful state as he covered his buttocks and cried, "Master, please! This is an unjust accusation, it wasn't me! It just disappeared!"

"Do you take your master as a fool? Who could steal something from right under my eyes, come out at once."

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"Master, please! Damn it!"

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Lu Yin had little success with the Cosmic Art over the course of the night. As the sun started to rise, he eventually made his way back towards Zhongshan with tired steps. At the highest point of Zhongshan, many people were seated inside a meeting room. Once again the seat for the chief was left empty, but as Lu Yin entered the room he became the center of everyone's attention. Some people looked at him with curiosity, other looks were friendly, while still more were suspicious.

"Brother Lu, come sit over here," Feng Hong called out, an invitation that Lu Yin accepted. He ended up sitting between Feng Hong and the beautiful woman he'd seen the night before, and across the other side was the woman with glasses whom he'd met out south. Although most of the people here were captains, some researchers were also present.

When Zhou Shan finally entered the meeting room, he scanned through it and paused on Lu Yin with a hint of suspicion before taking his seat and smiling, "Let me introduce you all to Lu Yin, our newest captain."

Lu Yin rose from his seat nodded his head in greetings to the other individuals in the room before sitting back down. The meeting quickly moved on to actual issues the camp was facing, forcing him to listen for more than half an hour before it finally ended. Even then he wasn't dismissed, being asked by Zhou Shan to stay behind for a private conversation, "It felt like you had never trained with energy crystals yesterday. I wanted to ask you about that, but it looks like you were just completely spent."

Lu Yin nodded solemnly, "That alien was very powerful. Even severely wounded, fighting him forced me to use all my energy."

"I could tell. He was someone in the Realm of Sky, so killing him was clearly no easy feat," Zhou Shan laughed. Lu Yin laughed but otherwise stayed quiet, so the Sage spoke up once more, "I heard you wanted to leave the camp yesterday, why is that?"

"I like my freedom, and the atmosphere of the military camp was too stifling for me," Lu Yin answered

Zhou Shan nodded his head and sighed, "Many people feel the same way, but when faced with annihilation, we humans should unite together. That requires some sacrifices."

"I understand, Executioner." Lu Yin replied.

Zhou Shan grunted in acknowledgment, "How are your injuries?"

"Nothing serious, I'll heal quickly."

"We cultivators are lucky in this regard. We have amazing healing abilities compared to regular humans. True, we are also more at risk, but once you have experienced power, you never want to be weak again. This drives you to work even harder to grow stronger. Many people have died in pursuit of strength, I don't know when I myself might meet that fate."