

Chapter 671: Lockbreaker Competition

“Oh, that’s right—Patriarch Xueshan, I’m not too clear on what the specific responsibilities of the thirteen captains are. Could you tell me a bit about the specific duties of the Ninth Squadron?” Lu Yin curiously asked in a gentle tone.

These words caused Xueshan Auna to completely panic, as he had a premonition that some great disaster was about to befall his family, and his panic caused him to involuntarily stand up. “Your Highness, has Rocky Auna done something wrong?”

Lu Yin raised a hand and pressed down. He smiled at the older man. “Don’t overthink things, as I’m just asking. Of course, I have my own thoughts.”

Xueshan Auna nervously replied, “When His Majesty, Undying Yushan, originally established the Thirteen Imperial Squadrons in the past, it was with the intention of using them to take control of the thirteen filaments of the empire and to prevent the government officials from growing too ambitious. However, ever since His Majesty died, the empire’s territory has expanded, and there are now also the four ministries. The Thirteen Imperial Squadrons have gradually shifted to the Zenyu Star, and strictly speaking, they no longer have any sort of true mission.”

Lu Yin nodded. “It looks like the Thirteen Imperial Squadrons should be given more specific roles. Does Patriarch Xueshan have any suggestions?”

Xueshan Auna replied, “Your subject wouldn’t dare.”

Not even the four ministries had the authority to meddle with the Thirteen Imperial Squadrons, and there was no way that Xueshan Auna would dare to speak up here, as that would be overstepping his bounds by far.

Lu Yin smiled. “The Second Squadron has developed into an intelligence force while the Twelfth Squadron now specializes in research and technology. However, the other squadrons don’t really have any specific responsibilities at the moment. For the Ninth Squadron, what does Patriarch Xueshan think of having the squadron police the corruption and abuse of power for government officials?”

Xueshan Auna’s eyes flashed, and he was momentarily stumped as he could not determine if this new set of responsibilities would be a good or bad thing.

Investigating corrupt officials meant that the squadron would wield great authority, but Lu Yin did not seem like someone who would hand his authority over to another so casually. So then, what did this proposal mean?

“Patriarch Xueshan, I have decided to appoint the Ninth Squadron to oversee the empire’s bureaucracy and to purge the corruption in its ranks. What do you think?” Lu Yin repeated his question, though a little louder this second time.

Although Xueshan Auna had not had a chance to think this proposal through yet, he still replied, “We will obey Your Highness’s orders.”

Satisfied with the response, Lu Yin nodded. In the end, Rocky Auna was from the Auna family, and without Xueshan Auna's approval, it would not be a good thing to forcibly order him around. Of course, Lu Yin could also order Xueshan Auna to yield, but he had summoned Xueshan Auna specifically to avoid this option as Lu Yin wanted the Auna patriarch to yield and become someone who would be willing to block arrows for Lu Yin.

"I already have a name list prepared. Here, take a look, Patriarch Xueshan. If you agree to this proposal, then please have Captain Rocky take action." Lu Yin passed Xueshan Auna the namelist that Gavin had given him earlier in the night. Most of the names had already been removed, as they still had to rely on the merchants to revive the empire's economy. What Lu Yin currently needed to do was punish a few individuals and have them serve as an example for the rest.

Xueshan Auna glanced over the list of names, and everything suddenly became clear to him. Lu Yin wanted to deal with these corrupt officials, but the Royal Regent did not want to act himself. This was why he had mobilized the Auna family—it was to resolve this predicament. This was the same as setting the Auna family up against all of the other government officials.

This was the same as pushing the Auna family into the depths of hell.

Xueshan Auna instinctively wanted to refuse, but when he saw Lu Yin's grim expression, the Auna patriarch ultimately did not reject, as he had no leeway to choose. The Auna family had deep roots in the empire and had established many relationships with various parties and officials. This was why Lu Yin was not comfortable leaving them alone. He would only feel at ease after forcing them to investigate various officials for corruption; only then would he reemploy them once again. With the network that the family had built up over the many years, they were the most suited to handle such a task.

Xueshan Auna remembered how the Auna family's hall had fallen quiet and bleak and the various rumors circulating about his family as well. At that point, Xueshan Auna grew determined to agree to have Rocky Auna handle this project. "This subject understands. Rest assured, Your Highness, your subject knows what to do."

Lu Yin was happy with this response. "Patriarch Xueshan, rest assured, I will not let the Auna family work for nothing. As long as the Auna family doesn't make any fundamental mistakes, the Ninth Squadron will always belong to the Auna clan."

Xueshan Auna was delighted, as this was the promise that he had most wanted to hear. The Thirteen Imperial Squadrons were incredibly influential, and so long as there was someone from the Auna family leading one of the squadrons, their family would never collapse.

After leaving King Zishan's palace, Xueshan Auna took a deep breath. From this time onwards, the previous Auna family would no longer exist, and a new Auna family would be born.

After Xueshan Auna left his home, Lu Yin contacted the beautiful Madam Nalan.

The enchanting figure of Madam Nalan appeared on the screen, but this time, she looked rather exhausted. Even though she had a lethargic expression, a trace of her charm still shone through. Madam Nalan had never once needed to act seductively as her natural charm was already overwhelming. If it wasn't such an innate characteristic of hers, Lu Yin would not have viewed Madam Nalan as such a

temptress. Still, at this moment, the woman's charm had been magnified ten times, and even Lu Yin felt a little thirsty.

"Your Highness, what's the matter?" She smiled at Lu Yin as she licked her red lips.

Lu Yin coughed dryly. "Nothing much. I just wanted to check if your joint ventures with the aristocratic families and the Empire are going well."

She blinked. "My apologies, Your Highness. You will have to ask Lord Gavin about this, as I've already handed over all matters of our ventures with the Great Yu Empire to him. Thus, I am not too clear on the details."

Lu Yin nodded. "So that's how it is. I've seen the symbol of the Nalan family all across Zenyu Star, and I had thought that you were the one giving the orders. Speaking of which, your family's symbol is quite appealing."

She smiled. "That's for sure, since it's a symbol that's been passed down through many years." She suddenly thought of something. "Your Highness, are you planning to go to Sourcepeak Planet?"

"Sourcepeak Planet?" Lu Yin paused. "Are you referring to the Lockbreaker Society's Outerverse headquarters?"

"Of course."

"Why would I go there?" Lu Yin asked.

Madam Nalan felt puzzled. "Didn't Your Highness receive news that the Lockbreaker Competition will begin soon?"

Lu Yin shook his head. "No, what Lockbreaker Competition?"

The alluring Madam Nalan then explained, "Every ten years, the Innaverse and Outerverse will organize a Lockbreaker Competition both to raise the position of Lockbreakers in the hearts of the commoners and also to uncover any hidden Lockbreaking geniuses. Didn't Your Highness receive any notification at all?"

Lu Yin searched through his messages on his gadget and then shook his head.

"That's strange." She could not understand this situation.

"I'm sorry to bother Madam Nalan so late at night. Rest well," Lu Yin said before disconnecting. He wanted to investigate a bit into the situation surrounding this Lockbreaker Competition.

After Lu Yin hung up the call, Madam Nalan's smile faded, and she activated her gadget. Soon after that, a middle-aged man appeared on her screen who respectfully bowed to her.

Her face remained frozen. "Does every place on Zenyu Star show the symbol of our Nalan family?"

He nodded. "Yes, mistress."

"Who had you do this?" she asked sternly.

The middle-aged man was puzzled by this. “Mistress, your subordinate didn’t intentionally do this, but there were too many aspects to our various collaborations, and we are cooperating with many different merchants. Thus, the family wants the symbol to be shown whenever we cooperate with someone. So at a glance, it will look like the family’s symbol is everywhere on Zenyu Star.”

She frowned. “Many aspects to the cooperation? Be specific.”

She was similar to Lu Yin, in the fact that she had assigned many tasks to others and then cleanly washed her hands of all related matters. The Nalan family had existed for many years, and it naturally had its own system of management. There was no need for her to directly meddle in most matters. All she had to do was set the general direction for the family.

Initially, she had assumed that the cooperation between them and the empire would be largely geared towards technology, resources, military equipment, and possibly communications. She had not expected that the collaborations would also include food, clothing, and even snacks. It was no wonder why her family’s symbol was plastered everywhere on Zenyu Star.

Lu Yin had not made such a fuss about this matter, but there was a reason to how she had survived in the business world for so long, and she had easily sensed Lu Yin’s displeasure.

“Reduce the amount of cooperation that we have with the Empire. There might be various changes in the Great Yu Empire during this next period,” she said. She understood Lu Yin, and while he had not directly said anything to her, she was able to infer that he would simply take action from the Great Yu Empire’s side. It would seem that these joint ventures had many aspects that did not seek out the Empire’s benefits itself, but were rather benefits for more select individuals.

She answered, “Let’s see how the Great Yu Empire reacts first.”

“Yes, mistress.”

“Also, have the family show a better attitude towards the Great Yu Empire. Don’t forget—we are indebted to Lu Yin, and without him, our family would have already been devoured by Enlighters,” she ordered.

The middle-aged man immediately acknowledged her instructions. “Your subordinate will send these orders down.”

Lu Yin had only mentioned something to Madam Nalan in passing, but her intelligence and experience allowed her to easily understand the whole situation. Also, she was certain that his focus would switch to the Lockbreaker Competition, as he was already a four star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker. But strangely, he had not received any notice concerning the competition so far.

Fortunately, Lu Yin was familiar with other Lockbreakers, so he was able to contact them through the Lockbreaker network.

Also, there should be some news related to the competition on the Lockbreaker network. Lu Yin casually entered the network to take a look, and sure enough, there were many announcements about the

Lockbreaker Competition. It would begin in twenty six days on Sourcepeak Planet, though the actual rules were still unknown. The reward was True Insight.

This was Lu Yin's first time hearing of True Insight, and he naturally searched for it on the net next, but nothing came up. He finally had to use the clearance provided by his eleven Honor Points before he managed to find anything.

True Insight was a Lockbreaker's supreme treasure, though the network did not mention what it was specifically. There was only one sentence in the description, which said that this treasure could only be used by a Lockbreaker at the Boundless Advanced level.

Its value was basically priceless, and it even surpassed the value of the Secret Sidestep Technique or a lockbreaking tool.

There was an incident recorded on the network that was cited as an example; someone had once tried to trade a secret technique for True Insight, but the deal had been rejected by the Lockbreaker Society's headquarters.

This incident clearly demonstrated the value of True Insight's value, and it showed that True Insight was in no way inferior to a secret technique.

A secret technique was something that had been created by a Progenitor and each one had the ability to turn the rotten into something miraculous. Lu Yin had comprehended and could use the Yu Secret Art, and he knew full well how helpful that technique was. If True Insight could not be bought even when a secret technique was offered, then its value was unimaginably high.

The reward for the Outerverse Lockbreaker Competition was naturally not the entire True Insight. True Insight was made up of thirty six pages, and the entire copy was stored securely in the Lockbreaker Society's Neoverse headquarters. The reward for the Outerverse competition was only three pages of True Insight.

Although it was only three pages, it was still enough to attract countless experts. The Lockbreaker Competition was only held once every ten years, and the champion was able to obtain three pages of the True Insight, which could then be sold for extraordinary sums.

Lu Yin studied the information for half an hour and then released a pent up breath. The entrance qualifications for this Lockbreaker Competition was to formally be a one star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker. As a four star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker, it was only reasonable that Lu Yin should have been sent notice of the event; however, nobody had contacted him. Could the society have forgotten about him?

He thought about it and then contacted Xi Qi. The two had met up in the Ironblood Weave during the Astral Beast Domain's invasion.

He tried to call her for a while, but it didn't go through. Perhaps because it was already too late. Lu Yin set his gadget down and began to silently recite the Stonewall Scriptures.

The next morning, Lu Yin tried to contact Xi Qi again, but he still could not get in touch with the girl. However, Hai Qiqi arrived at his residence instead.

“True Insight? Why are you asking about that?” Hai Qiqi asked. Her visit this time was to urge Lu Yin to take care of Old Gu De, but Lu Yin had asked her something before she could even speak.

“The Lockbreaker Competition is about to begin, and I want to participate,” Lu Yin said.

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When she heard what Lu Yin said, Hai Qiqi looked at him in a ridiculing manner. “You? Compete? Are you joking? Just go and play around on your own.”

Lu Yin was left speechless. That poisonous tongue of hers was really quite familiar. “I’m a genuine four star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker. Do you really think that I don’t have any hope of winning?”

“Obviously. The Lockbreaker Competition is held once every ten years, and participants at the level of a four star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker are a dime a dozen, though there are some who are young and others who are old. There are also Lockbreakers at the Perceptive Intermediate level. A Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker like you wanting to take first place is simply dreaming.” Hai Qiqi rolled her eyes.

“The Inniverse and Outerverse are separated,” Lu Yin commented quietly.

Hai Qiqi paused and then sighed. “That’s true, the Outerverse has been cut off from the Inniverse. Many Lockbreakers are still in the Inniverse, and there aren’t too many left in the Outerverse. Hold on—” She paused as she looked at Lu Yin. “Since the Outerverse has been isolated from the Inniverse, what’s the prize? What about True Insight?”

“It’s being held at the Lockbreaker Society’s Outerverse headquarters: Sourcepeak Planet.”

Hai Qiqi was stunned. “There’s really such a coincidence? Right, I recall now—during the Lockbreaker Competition ten years ago, True Insight was stored in the Inniverse, and this time around, it’s the Outerverse’s turn.”

She quickly understood the details, and she looked back at Lu Yin. “Your luck is pretty good for you to even encounter a situation like this.”

“Have you watched the Lockbreaker Competition before?”

“Yep, a live broadcast. It’s very impressive.”

“Did the Sea King ever mention anything about True Insight to you?” Lu Yin asked.

Hai Qiqi nodded. “Yes, that thing’s an absolute supreme treasure. Any Lockbreaker who has a few random pages will have their power spike by several levels. The more pages that they get a hold of, the more terrifying they’ll become. Rumor has it that if anyone completely comprehends all thirty six pages of True Insight, then not even a powerhouse with a power level of 1,000,000 will be their opponent. That person will also infinitely approach the power of a Progenitor. However, that’s just a rumor, and Father doesn’t believe it.”

Lu Yin’s eyes lit up. “Then there’s three pages of the True Insight over there.”

Hai Qiqi looked at Lu Yin. “Your luck’s good. Go and get some money ready.”

“For what?”

“To buy it, of course! Every year, the champion of the Lockbreaker competition sells off the three pages that they win. You don’t actually think that you’ll become the champion, right?”

“I plan on competing for it, but why do the champions have to sell it? That thing’s a priceless treasure.”

Hai Qiqi sneered, “Do you really think that just anybody can hold on to such a priceless treasure? Boundless Advanced Lockbreakers aren’t allowed to compete in this competition, but True Insight is only useful for Lockbreakers at that level. Do you think that those old monsters won’t move to grab those pages? Let me tell you something—there was a champion from a previous competition who was the disciple of the president of the Inniverse’s Lockbreaker Society. He didn’t sell the pages after winning the competition, and he ended up being murdered. After that, any Lockbreaker who managed to become the champion always sold off the three pages of True Insight or gave them to someone else. But regardless of what they do, not one winner has kept the prize for themselves since. This has become the tradition.

“With your current position in the Outerverse, you have a status that allows you to buy it. Of course, there will also be many others who will try to fight you for it.”

“What if I become the champion?” Lu Yin asked.

Hai Qiqi looked at him with pure condescension. “Don’t think too much about this. Even if the Outerverse is isolated from the Inniverse, there are still many powerful hidden Lockbreakers out here. Any random Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreaker will definitely beat you, so taking first place is practically impossible for you. Even the Lockbreaker Society’s Distinguished Five were defeated when they participated.”

“Who beat them?”

“That season’s champion, of course.”

Lu Yin considered how he could get his hands on True Insight. At the present moment, only Enlighters in the Outerverse were able to stand up to Lu Yin. If hidden powerhouses were not considered, Lu Yin could almost be considered an uncrowned king, but those old monsters definitely would not hold back as long as something appealing enough appeared; even the Hall of Honor might get involved.

“This season’s Lockbreaker Competition might be the worst line-up ever, as the competition was supposed to include Lockbreakers from both the Outerverse and the Inniverse, but since the two have been separated, there will only be a few qualified people participating. It’s just pointless,” Hai Qiqi said, but then she turned back to Lu Yin. “Even still, there’s no way for you to take first place.”

Lu Yin frowned. “I have a lockbreaking tool, and I’m confident in unlocking a Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox.”

“Is that so? Then which step are you at in terms of star energy control?” Hai Qiqi looked at him with disdain.

“Star energy control? Forcefield, I’ve comprehended a forcefield.”

“Hmph! I knew that you’d be clueless. You’re talking about the steps of controlling star energy for combat, which go from dispelling impurities, to forming something substantial, to the realm of infinite

change, to changing colors, and then finally to comprehending a domain. But what I'm talking about is the steps for measuring the star energy control that is used in lockbreaking. Lockbreakers have to unlock sourceboxes and resolve the energies within them, so their control of star energy has to be meticulous, and it's completely different from combat applications.

"The more meticulous one's control of star energy is, the more things they can do as they please, and the faster they'll be at lockbreaking. The Lockbreaker Competition is about testing one's lockbreaking speed."

"Give me some more details," Lu Yin asked solemnly.

Hai Qiqi took a moment to recall the specifics before saying, "A domain is extremely useful for lockbreaking, and that's why many Lockbreakers hope to comprehend one, but many of them fail. Not all Lockbreakers are domain experts, which begs the question: how do those Lockbreakers who haven't comprehended domains improve themselves? Naturally, it's through their star energy control, and the Lockbreaker Society has published six realms of control: Intricacy, Cloudwalk, Skywise, Divine Gaze, Worldliness, and Profound Creation.

"The higher one's realm of control, the stronger one's control of star energy will be. Legend has it that the Lockbreaker Society President, Geoffrey, has attained Worldliness and that his star energy is capable of forming a world. With his star energy control in that realm, he's able to resolve the energies of a sourcebox extremely quickly."

This was Lu Yin's first time hearing of such a differentiation in star energy control. Did the Lockbreaker Society keep such information internal? All this time, he had not placed much attention on Lockbreakers, but it was possible that he had neglected a lot of things.

"How do you know about all this?" Lu Yin could not contain his curiosity.

Hai Qiqi proudly declared, "Father is a Boundless Advanced Lockbreaker."

"No wonder. Your domain is very powerful, and your control over star energy shouldn't be too bad either," Lu Yin probed.

Hai Qiqi was pleased. "Intricacy realm."

"Just the Intricacy Realm?" Lu Yin's eyes grew wide.

Hai Qiqi became unhappy at his reaction. "What do you mean, 'just the Intricacy Realm?' Do you know how difficult it is to enter the Intricacy Realm? It's the same as using a lockbreaking tool! Let's see if you can emulate one without actually using one!"

Lu Yin suddenly had a better understanding, and this allowed him to make a direct observation: if entering the Intricate Realm was the same as having an additional lockbreaking tool, then what about the Cloudwalking Realm? And what about the highest, the Profound Creation Realm? Just the name Profound Creation gave him a feeling of how incredible its power was.

However, this sort of control was not too helpful in combat, or else this classification system would have been circulated everywhere.

"Could you let me experience the degree of control that the Intricacy Realm has?" Lu Yin asked.

Hai Qiqi nodded. "Of course! I'll let you worship me for a while."

Lu Yin was rendered speechless, but he still raised a hand and released his star energy. It then materialized and transformed above his palm. It formed rain, then wind, then a snarling creature.

Hai Qiqi pressed a hand against Lu Yin's palm, and Lu Yin saw the star energy that he had released from his hand be invaded by a foreign thread of star energy before quickly falling apart. The entire process was so smooth that it almost seemed as if the star energy had dissipated naturally. He intently stared at his palm with both eyes, unleashed his domain, and even took out the Giant Emperor's third eye with his left hand. Only then did he see two strands of star energy encircling one another over his palm. One of the two strands appeared lifelike, and it incessantly dissolved his star energy.

He could forcibly gather more star energy to dispel Hai Qiqi's star energy, and it would not even be that difficult to do so. Perhaps, this was the reason why the Intricacy Realm's degree of star energy control did not have a great influence over fighting, as it could be easily countered. However, it was incomparable in terms of aid when lockbreaking. If Lu Yin had such exquisite star energy control, then his lockbreaking speed would definitely undergo a transformation.

"Alright." Lu Yin lowered his hand and looked at Hai Qiqi. "How can I cultivate my control to that degree?"

"Just use star energy more, such as using it to control minuscule items. Father initially trained me by having me use star energy to control seawater to write an essay, and then I had to ensure that it would not dissipate for ten days. After that, I had to make the words smaller—the tinier the better—and ensure that the writing still won't dissipate. Gradually, by repeating that, you'll enter the Intricacy Realm," Hai Qiqi explained. Upon mentioning the Sea King, her mood grew depressed again.

This sort of cultivation was effective, but it was extremely time consuming. Still, that was the cultivation method that Lu Yin was the least afraid of.

He had Hai Qiqi leave and then ordered Gavin to contact Madam Nalan to purchase some sourceboxes. In addition to that, Lu Yin also went ahead and bought some more from various places in the Outerverse. After that, he went to a secret room in the palace, raised his hand, and brought out his die. It was time to use Timestop again to practice, as this time, he had to cultivate his star energy control.

He screened the Ghost Monkey off, raised his hand, and summoned his die. It had been a long time since he had last rolled it, and as usual, he placed his cosmic ring aside before starting to spin it.

The die slowly stopped, showing three pips: Enhance. The two light screens appeared.

Lu Yin had nothing to do, as this time, he had nothing that he needed to upgrade. He rolled his die again, and this time, it stopped on four pips: Timestop. He snatched up his cosmic ring in an instant as the scenery before his eyes changed. He had entered the Timestop Space.

It would definitely take a lot of time to cultivate his star energy control, so he immediately used more than 400 star essence to increase the time in the space to six months. He would test it out first!

What entered one's vision could be large or small, and not seeing something would cause one to assume that it didn't exist. But in reality, there existed countless structures in space that were essentially invisible. Hai Qiqi's training method was to use star energy to control a substance that grew gradually smaller and smaller as one trained, until it was no longer visible. Then, upon reaching that degree of control, one could be said to have entered the Divine Gaze Realm. Did that mean that, upon attaining that realm, even one's normal physical vision could see the ambient star energy? Would that not rival a domain?

Lu Yin used his star energy to simulate water that he then used to write words in the air, making sure that the writing was very small. He wrote an essay of several thousand words, after which he continued to control them, making the characters float in the air without dissipating. He wanted to train with Hai Qiqi's cultivation method. The Sea King was a Boundless Advanced Lockbreaker, and his training method would definitely be effective, or at the very least, it would be better than Lu Yin blindly stumbling around on his own.

One day, two days... Five days passed.

Maintaining the writing in the air turned out to be much more difficult than what he had expected. Lu Yin had always felt that his star energy control during battles was sufficient, but he had never tried to manipulate star energy so meticulously for so long before. The star energy incessantly tried to dissipate, only to gradually coalesce once again.

Ten days later, the essay written with star energy finally dissipated.

After maintaining it for ten days, Lu Yin felt more beaten than even after a round of battle. For some reason, he felt that star energy was no longer star energy, and he had become a little numb.

Still, he continued.

This time, he maintained the writing in the air for fifteen days.

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Day after day passed by, and although it wasn't overly difficult to raise his star energy control, it proved to be more draining than Lu Yin could have ever imagined. It was like trying to get an uncultured brute to write by with a delicate brush that could be casually crushed. It would take a long time for the brute to learn to control their strength.

It was an arduous process to say the least.

The scenery before Lu Yin's eyes changed, and he finally reappeared inside the secret room in King Zishan's palace. After half a year of training in the Timestop Space, his perception of star energy had completely transformed compared to before. His comprehension of star energy had risen to another level, and aside from attaining the Intricacy Realm in terms of star energy control, he had unexpectedly increased the number of stars that he could manifest with the Cosmic Art to fifty.

It seemed that the fastest way of cultivating more stars for the Cosmic Art was to observe the operation of stars while also practicing his star energy control at the same time. Lu Yin remembered that the Trialmaster had once said that the Cosmic Art was the most desired cultivation technique for Lockbreakers. It seemed that the Cosmic Art could not only assist in lockbreaking, but that Lockbreakers

could also cultivate the Cosmic Art through improving their star energy control, and the rate of cultivating with that method was quite a bit faster than when simply observing star charts.

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Lu Yin exited the secret room and unscreened the Ghost Monkey, after which he instantly heard it angrily cursing.

He had cultivated for half a year in the Timestop Space, but to the outside world, just a fleeting moment had passed.

Gavin had only just made contact with the stunning Madam Nalan on Lu Yin's behalf.

As soon as she learned that Lu Yin wanted to buy sourceboxes, she sold three of them to Gavin, all of which were at the five star Discerning Elementary level. The average price was 300 star essence for a sourcebox at that level, which totaled up to 900 star essence.

For a five star Discerning Elementary sourcebox, it wasn't a hefty price, and it could even be considered a little low; after all, it was the most reduced price that Madam Nalan could give for a five star Discerning Elementary sourcebox. As far as the Great Yu Empire's treasury was concerned, 900 star essence was equivalent to about 90 million star crystals, which was a huge expense. Despite the heavy financial pressure, Gavin still completed the purchase.

Madam Nalan did not shirk away from this transaction. If she helped another party too often, there was a chance that it would become a habit. She had been in the business world for a long time, and she was well aware of when she should help someone out of charity and when she should accept their money.

After buying three sourceboxes from the Nalan family, Gavin weighed the remaining funds in the treasury and decided that he could not buy any more sourceboxes without affecting the empire's finances.

At this moment, Gavin received a message from Lu Yin, and so, he hurried over to King Zishan's palace. He felt that this summons was strange; he had only just left, so why was he being summoned back again already? He hoped Lu Yin had not suddenly changed his mind about the sourceboxes since Gavin had already paid for them.

"Your Highness, your subject has already purchased three five star Discerning Elementary sourceboxes from the Nalan family for a total of 900 star essence, which is about 90 million star crystals," Gavin immediately reported the transaction to Lu Yin the moment he saw the Royal Regent, as he was truly afraid that Lu Yin might have changed his mind about this matter.

Lu Yin acknowledged the purchase with a grunt and quickly retrieved 900 star essence from his cosmic ring and passed them over to Gavin. "These sourceboxes are for my personal use, so there's no need to use the treasury's resources."

Gavin accepted the funds, as the Empire was indeed almost completely broke.

The average Discerning Elementary sourcebox usually sold for at least ten star essence, and that was just the starting price for a sourcebox. As the sourcebox's grade increased, the price would actually

multiply. A five star Discerning Elementary sourcebox was worth at least 300 star essence, and the Nalan family had sold three of them to Lu Yin at a very reasonable price.

“Your Highness, should we continue to purchase more?” Gavin asked.

Lu Yin thought about the idea. “Look for sellers, and we’ll see if we should buy more.”

“Yes.”

“You can leave for now. I’ll be heading to Sourcepeak Planet for a while, so arrange a spacecraft for me.”

“Yes, Your Highness.”

While this was happening, a luxurious mansion on Zenyu Star had been surrounded by the Ninth Squadron. There were many people watching the situation unfold since they all knew that this mansion belonged to a certain influential official of the empire, and the onlookers seemed to be enjoying the man’s misfortune.

“Rocky Auna, how audacious! You actually dare to raid my mansion! I will report this to the top!” an elder screamed at Rocky Auna as he stared furiously at the captain.

Everyone in the mansion had been detained by the Ninth Squadron, and they were all glaring angrily at all their captors.

Rocky Auna could only sigh to himself. The Auna family was about to step onto a path of no return. But if they did not do this, they would gradually fade away to nothing. Thus, they could only stake everything on this gamble and hope that His Highness would protect them.

“Apologies, my lord. You are under suspicion of colluding with merchants, corrupt behavior, and accepting bribes. The evidence is absolute. Take him away,” Rocky Auna ordered.

“Rocky, I’m being framed! I wish to see the Royal Regent! I wish to see the Royal Regent!” the old man shrieked, but his voice gradually faded into the distance.

Many outside the mansion excitedly watched everything take place.

Rocky Auna’s eyes narrowed, and then he waved a hand. The mansion was sealed off as the soldiers hurried on to the next residence.

In the short period of a single day, the Ninth Squadron raided four relatively influential families on Zenyu Star. The merchant organizations related to these families quickly stopped their collaborative activities, and almost all of these activities happened to be connected to the Nalan family’s joint ventures with the empire.

A middle-aged man from the Nalan family who was responsible for the trade on Zenyu Star received the news, and his expression quickly changed. He immediately flipped through the related agreements with these specific merchant organizations, and he instantly discovered that they were all related to basic resources and necessities such as food and clothing. These collaborations were not too important, but they were still able to influence the common people’s livelihoods. What’s more, these types of joint

ventures were able to spread extensively, and they were how the Nalan family's symbol had spread all across Zenyu Star so easily and quickly.

The middle-aged man wiped away the sweat that had beaded up on his forehead and immediately had the various business ventures stopped before he then requested to meet with Finance Minister Gavin.

In the Auna family's estate, Xueshan Auna was sitting in his office with his eyes closed, deep in thought. That night, Rocky Auna arrived to meet with him. "Patriarch, it's finished."

Xueshan Auna opened his eyes and raised a pen. He then struck away four names that had been written on a piece of paper, which were the four families that had been captured during the day.

Rocky Auna watched him, bewildered by the action. "Patriarch, what is this?"

Xueshan Auna looked at the paper with a complex expression on his face. There were many names written on the paper, and almost half of them had already been struck away. "This is a list of His Majesty Undying Yushan's councillors from when he was in power. Take a look."

Rocky Auna looked over the list, and his face went pale. "The Royal Regent has removed half of them."

Xueshan Auna raised his head and sighed. "Each new chief will select his own aides. The Royal Regent's methods are decisive and ruthless, and he will not allow any of his dealings to have any openings since he has a supreme power that can suppress all others. The Empire has already completely fallen under his control, and the Empire's authority no longer rests solely in the hands of the Thirteen Imperial Squadrons, as it has been divided into the four ministries and King Zishan's palace as well. You must remember, from this day forward, that our Auna family only listens to His Highness, the Royal Regent."

"I understand, Patriarch," Rocky Auna answered solemnly. He felt a slight chill when he thought of the list of names on that slip of paper.

Within the Great Yu Empire's imperial palace, there was a massive courtyard. In the past, Undying Yushan had often summoned Lu Yin to this courtyard for meetings. However, after the intense battle that had taken place on Zenyu Star, the courtyard had become rather desolate.

When Lu Yin arrived at the courtyard, he quickly ordered for people to seal off the area. He then looked at the three sealed cases in the center of the courtyard. Each one was a different size, and they had been laid out with a large distance between each one. Each case was made out of Spiritual Thread, and they contained the three recently purchased five star Discerning Elementary level sourceboxes.

Aside from their star rating, the other greatest difference between sourceboxes was whether they were harmful or harmless. Not only were harmless sourceboxes uncommon, but they were also extremely expensive. Although the possibility of a harmless sourcebox containing a treasure inside was reduced, such sourceboxes guaranteed the safety of any Lockbreaker who attempted to unlock them. This allowed the Lockbreaker to raise their own experience, which was of immense value all by itself.

The Nalan family had provided him with a harmless sourcebox for winning the Astral Combat Tournament, and it had been a Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox. It was still in Lu Yin's cosmic ring as

he had not attempted to unlock it yet; he was planning on first unlocking these three sourceboxes before he attempted that Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox.

He walked to the closest sourcebox and then reached out to open the Spiritual Thread case. A howl suddenly roared out without any warning, startling Lu Yin. Gavin had told him that one particular sourcebox would release a beast's roar that had the power to affect one's mind. Lu Yin had mentally prepared himself, but he had still been startled. The instance he heard the roar, he seemed to see a boundless beast reclining in space howling at him.

He shook his head and refocused his mind. There was only a beast-shaped stone laying within the Spiritual Thread case, and although it seemed normal, it was actually the sourcebox.

The beast's roar reappeared in Lu Yin's ears as he pressed a hand against the Spiritual Thread case. The case responded with a thumping noise, as if it was shattering apart, before an even fiercer roar burst forth from within the sourcebox. It was powerful enough to freeze space and even form a giant beast that swatted at Lu Yin.

There was a thump as the ground quivered. A deep claw imprint had suddenly appeared.

Lu Yin was shocked, as this sourcebox's danger was actually able to take on a physical form. He was also certain that whatever was sealed inside the sourcebox was related to the beast that had appeared. Anything that could become a sourcebox had existed for countless ages, and the time required to become one was at least hundreds of thousands of years. If the item in this source box was able to retain such might even after that much time, then this beast had definitely been a terrifying existence when it was alive.

However, it was of no threat to Lu Yin. He had checked and seen that these three sourceboxes' rune lines could not threaten him.

Lu Yin raised a hand, and a gale swept out, causing the newly-formed beast to dissipate. As the image disappeared, the roar also grew softer.

Lu Yin then walked over to the sourcebox and unleashed his domain. His eyes went wide as fifty stars began orbiting his figure. If someone saw him at this moment, they would be astounded as Lu Yin looked like he was the center of a small universe with all these stars revolving around him.

After some observation, Lu Yin decided to start unlocking the sourcebox from its center; there was less energy in that part, making it relatively easier to unlock.

The Intricacy Realm implied a qualitative change in his degree of star energy control, and Lu Yin was able to resolve the sourcebox's energy much more smoothly than before. His technique was no longer as crude as when he had been on the Savage Ape Planet. If he had possessed this degree of control at that time, then he would not have been looked down upon by Casanova.

Once a lockbreaking session stepped onto the right track, it became a dull affair, especially when the Lockbreaker knew that the sourcebox posed no threat to them.

Time passed in this dull manner during Lu Yin's lockbreaking session.

From outside the courtyard, Kayze occasionally looked over, and he seemed rather shocked. He hadn't known that Lu Yin was such an incredible Lockbreaker, as he was unlocking a five star Discerning Elementary sourcebox. Once it was successfully unlocked, wouldn't the Royal Regent be able to challenge the Perceptive Intermediate level? Not only was this person terrifying in his combat talent, but even his lockbreaking talent was exceptional.

Lu Yin had not unlocked any five star Discerning Elementary sourcebox before, as this was his first time attempting one. The complex energy composition made him feel dizzy, and he recalled his first lockbreaking experience which had taken an entire twenty seven hours to finish. With his current abilities, it would take him at most an hour to successfully unlock that same sourcebox.

Lu Yin estimated that he would need at least fifteen hours to finish unlocking this five star Discerning Elementary sourcebox.

Maintaining peak concentration for fifteen hours was not easy, as he had to devote his full attention to the task at hand and could not relax for even a single moment.

As the sky turned from black to white, Lu Yin was still focused on the beast-shaped sourcebox in front of him. Then, there was a pop—the energy seal that had formed the surface of the sourcebox completely vanished, and a scent reeking of blood surged forth. Lu Yin's expression changed, and he immediately sealed off the area around him and retreated several steps before staring at the beast corpse that had fallen out of the sourcebox.

It was actually the same beast whose image he had seen in the air before he had started lockbreaking, as this sourcebox had actually been sealing the creature's corpse. Well, half of it anyways.

The fact that the creature had been sealed within a sourcebox was proof that the beast had been amazingly powerful when it had been alive. Lu Yin slowly approached the body, as this sort of powerful creature could be very useful just in terms of its flesh, blood, and bones.

"Seventh Bro, be careful! Don't spoil it. This was a powerful astral beast, and it was definitely much more ferocious than whatever Elder Lohar you met," the monkey excitedly cautioned him.

Lu Yin carefully approached the corpse when, suddenly, a gust of wind blew through the courtyard. It caused the remaining half of the corpse to dissipate into dust that floated into the sky, and even the scent of blood disappeared.

The Ghost Monkey wailed, "Oh, by Monkey's treasured blood! That was the blood of a powerful astral beast, and now it's gone just like that!"

Lu Yin also felt that it was a pity, as any powerhouse's blood was something that was very valuable.

"Seventh Bro, hurry up and unlock the rest! Let's see what other treasures are inside," the monkey urged Lu Yin.

Chapter 674: A Woman's Thoughts

Lu Yin was exhausted. "I want to rest first. Also, don't get too excited—lockbreaking is always a gamble, and the chances of getting any kind of treasure are extremely low. Besides, the Lockbreaker Society doesn't judge a Lockbreaker's ability on whether or not they get any treasures."

“Monkey obviously knows this, but I just can’t accept it! That kind of powerful astral beast’s blood could have been of great help to me.”

Lu Yin’s gaze trembled. “You don’t even have a physical body, but you’re trying to say that the blood still would have helped you?”

The Ghost Monkey quickly gave an explanation. “Of course! The blood of some powerhouses can even possess a kind of inheritance or other valuable information, such as battle techniques or secret arts. It’s just like how, when you became an Explorer, your blood also became different from others’. The more powerful you become, the greater the possibility of certain things leaving a trace within your body. If you one day reach the level of an Envoy, it’s possible that other people would even try to study a strand of your hair in hopes of finding some inheritance.”

Lu Yin frowned, as he did not like those words. They sounded as if even the dead had to be studied. “So you raided tombs to obtain the corpses of powerful astral beasts?”

“What tomb raiding? This monkey here is a proper archaeologist!” The Ghost Monkey didn’t like that accusation.

Lu Yin did not bother with the monkey any longer. He had inferred many different things from the monkey’s words, and his desire to quickly find a Beast Tamer to understand this monkey’s situation was even stronger than ever.

Right, there was also the Greatsword Dynasty. Lu Yin would help them when he returned from Sourcepeak Planet, and then he would conveniently be able to get some hidden treasures.

He rested for a day before approaching the second sourcebox. According to the information that the Nalan Family had given Gavin, while this sourcebox was not too dangerous, one would feel an oppressive aura that grew more intense the closer they drew to the sourcebox. This was not the same effect as increased gravity; rather, this oppression seemed to stem from the air itself becoming several times more dense, and it was even possible for people to pass out from excess oxygen.

There was a thump as the case of Spiritual Thread opened. Lu Yin looked at the sourcebox that appeared to be quite ordinary. However, in the next moment, his entire body felt as if he had been suddenly submerged within a swamp, and tremendous amounts of oxygen flooded through his body with each breath as his mind dulled and became heavy. He immediately stopped breathing, which resolved this sensation.

This sourcebox could only be approached by cultivators who were at least Explorers, as otherwise, the oppressive air around the sourcebox would kill them.

This sourcebox was smaller than the first one he had opened that had been beast-shaped. Lu Yin studied it for a moment, and then chose a position and began to lockbreak.

In the Vastdearth Sect, at where the Sect Elder was in seclusion. Meng Tianlong had been waiting in this place for several days in hopes that the elder would emerge.

Elder Angio walked over from behind Meng Tianlong and sighed. "Sect Leader, you should head back. The Sect Elder has secluded himself for good. And even if his body is still fine, who knows how long it will take for him to come out."

Meng Tianlong was feeling rather down. "How's our relationships with the other weaves?"

Elder Angio felt embarrassed. "Leader, do we really have to do this? It'll be problematic if we provoke Lu Yin."

"No, this is just a friendly competition. I don't have any intentions of overthrowing him," Meng Tianlong explained.

"We've already reached out to them, and they have all agreed. During the Alliance Conference, we'll pull out all sorts of elites and have them challenge members of the Great Yu Empire."

Meng Tianlong nodded, but he did not speak any further.

"Leader, will it really be useful to handle things this way?" Elder Angio asked.

Meng Tianlong's gaze trembled. "The establishment of this alliance may allow the Great Yu Empire to gain benefits, but that's because Lu Yin is the one behind them. If one day, something happens to him, then the party to benefit the most from this alliance may not end up being the Great Yu Empire. What we have to do right now is display our own power while also suppressing everyone from the Great Yu Empire aside from Lu Yin."

"So is this the reason why our sect has not resisted the alliance formation too much from the start?" Elder Angio came to a realization.

Meng Tianlong looked up. "It's indeed true that the Outerverse needs an alliance, but the decision-maker should not be Lu Yin, but rather us. Once our Sect Elder awakens, our Vastdearth Sect may even rival Lu Yin's position within the alliance. Lu Yin is arrogant and has made too many enemies, so something is bound to happen to him sooner or later. At that moment, the entire alliance will become ours. Hence, we need to coordinate with him and properly arrange this alliance in preparation for our future."

Elder Angio left without asking the question that had been on his mind for a long time. The foundational premise behind Meng Tianlong's plans was that something would eventually happen to Lu Yin. But what if nothing ever happened to the youth? Would that not mean that the alliance would always be controlled by him? Lu Yin was still very young, and he could definitely outlive old cultivators like themselves.

Meng Tianlong had not mentioned anything about this, and this seemed to imply that he knew that even if the Sect Elder emerged, not even that old monster would be able to suppress Lu Yin.

When most people were overwhelmed by external pressure, they would subconsciously look for excuses. Elder Angio felt that Meng Tianlong was searching for an excuse for the Vastdearth Sect to yield to the alliance, though of course, it was also possible that the excuse would even prove to be true.

In Bard Weave, there was a pavilion beneath one of the waterfalls within Evenground Palace. At this moment, the Evenground Palace Mistress, Mu Nichang, was sitting in that pavilion along with the Young Mistress, Doro.

“Master, what did the people from the Vastdearth Sect have to say?” Doro was curious. She always acted very reservedly in front of all the elders and never asked too many questions, but she behaved much more casually when she was alone with Mu Nichang.

Mu Nichang was even more casual than the younger woman. She sat there with a hand propping her chin up as she observed the waterfall from an angle. Her current demeanor was very different from the calmness she always exhibited in front of all the elders, and it seemed as if she was an entirely different person. Doro had long since become accustomed to such behavior, as her master acted like a dignified Sect Mistress to outsiders, but she acted like an ordinary young girl when all alone. No, some of her behavior was even more puerile than that of an ordinary girl.

“What can they say? They want to ally to cause trouble for the Great Yu Empire,” Mu Nichang casually replied as she rolled her eyes about in a beautiful manner.

Doro’s eyes went wide. “Meng Tianlong doesn’t want to keep living! He actually dares to make trouble for Lu Yin? Lu Yin is someone who won’t even hesitate to kill an Enlighter.”

“There’s nothing to be afraid of. The power vessel that he used to kill those Enlighters has been destroyed, so it would be impressive if he still has something that can kill Hunters,” Mu Nichang replied.

“If that’s the case, then why did Master agree to join the Great Eastern Alliance?” Doro asked.

Mu Nichang sighed. “It’s not Lu Yin’s power level itself that is terrifying, but rather his schemes and methods that are so frightening. He schemed Darkstar Gorge into oblivion, and who knows if the brat has any methods in place to deal with us. Every sect has had some shady dealings, and who knows if he has our Evenground Palace’s information in his hands.”

“Master, this Lu Yin always places his own benefits first. Since he went ahead and established this alliance, he must have his own plans as well. We can’t possibly work for him if he betrays us,” Doro clenched a fist.

Mu Nichang grunted. “Those were my thoughts as well, but—” Her brows furrowed and she looked quite aggravated as she suddenly paused. “I’m not good at coming up with such schemes, so what can we do?”

Doro also felt helpless, and both women propped their chins with their hands and stared at the waterfall with troubled expressions.

Suddenly, Mu Nichang cried out, and she looked at Doro happily. “Master has a plan!”

“Tell me, Master!” Doro was delighted.

Mu Nichang stared at Doro, and her lips curled upwards. “You can marry Lu Yin and then you’ll become Master’s secret informant! This way, even if Lu Yin plots against others, he’ll end up being circumvented by the Evenground Palace. What about that?”

Doro's mouth gaped open. "Master, even if this is just you trying to play a joke on your disciple, don't try to act like such a proposal is a proper plan! Your disciple won't go along with it!"

Mu Nichang leaned forward and stared at her disciple. "You won't go along with it? Are you sure?"

Doro nodded decisively. "Definitely not."

"You don't have any confidence in being able to seduce Lu Yin?"

"Of course that's not it! That brat's nothing but a country bumpkin—it'll just take me a few moves to bait him in."

"Master doesn't believe you."

"Hmph! Regardless of whether you believe it or not, your disciple is quite charming."

"If you don't go, then Master will go myself. Then you can become the Palace Mistress, and Master will be your secret informant."

Distressed, Doro facepalmed. "Master, please stop joking. At most we'll just ignore whatever Lu Yin tells us and pretend like we never heard anything. Since Vastdearth Sect's Meng Tianlong contacted us of his own initiative, he'll definitely contact the powers in the other weaves. Let him take the lead, and that way, he can also take the fall if anything happens."

Mu Nichang clapped. "That's right, precious disciple! You're smart."

"Master, you're really disgusting," Doro said contemptuously, but then, her expression suddenly changed. "Not good, someone's coming! Get back in character."

Mu Nichang straightened her body and rearranged her expression, suddenly regaining a solemn dignity. Doro hurriedly stood to the side of her master in a respectful manner as an elder slowly approached the two of them from behind. "Mistress, a guest has come for a visit."

"Understood," Mu Nichang answered quietly.

Eleven hours. It took Lu Yin eleven hours to completely unlock the second sourcebox. He looked expectantly as the outermost layer of energy shattered. There was a crack, and then Lu Yin fervently watched the sourcebox open up. A puff of green smoke floated out, but then, there was nothing. There was truly nothing inside the sourcebox, which was even more nauseating than what had come out of the beast-shaped sourcebox from last time.

"Seventh Bro, your character is too rotten. Let this monkey handle the last step next time," the Ghost Monkey mocked Lu Yin.

Lu Yin sighed. His mood had fallen hard and fast. Eleven hours of hard work had resulted in nothing, and all he had gained was that he had pushed his Lockbreaker ranking up to a five star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker.

Two sessions of successfully lockbreaking five star Discerning Elementary sourceboxes was enough to increase his rank.

He could tell that, even though it had only been two sessions of lockbreaking, which wasn't very much, the experience that he had gained from these two sessions alone had been considerable. Also, he was much more at ease when handling five star Discerning Elementary sourceboxes, which meant that it was time to try unlocking a Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox, though not before resting for a while.

Right after Lu Yin left the courtyard, he received a message informing him that Wendy Yushan had left seclusion.

Lu Yin immediately headed over to the princess's residence. He barged straight into Wendy Yushan's home without even announcing his arrival, and he found her leisurely sitting in the garden, enjoying some tea.

Lu Yin's sudden appearance caused Wendy Yushan to frown, and she flung out the tea from her cup at him. It formed itself into a sharp tip that swept towards Lu Yin with enough force that it caused the void to distort. Lu Yin raised a hand and made a grabbing motion, instantly crushing the blade formed from tea water.

"I've told you to announce your arrival before you enter my home." Wendy Yushan calmly looked at Lu Yin, but there was a trace of dissatisfaction in her eyes. Still, it was only a trace as the predominant emotion was that of helplessness.

Lu Yin walked over to Wendy Yushan with a solemn expression and told her, "I've told you not to go into the Daosource Sect on your own. That place has become a battlefield, and it's too dangerous!"

Wendy Yushan practically ignored Lu Yin and simply poured herself a cup of tea. "I know."

"And yet you still went in?" Lu Yin frowned. He could not control his temper at this moment as he truly valued Wendy Yushan's safety.

Wendy Yushan also felt his emotions, and her heart became warmer as she poured Lu Yin a cup of tea. "Sorry."

Lu Yin's anger dissipated slightly. This woman was proud and completely unyielding, and she also had a respectable status on top of that. However, she had now apologized to him twice. To commoners, an apology was a very normal thing, but an apology could hardly ever be heard from this woman. But now, she had easily given such a thing to Lu Yin.

It was possible that Lu Yin was the only person in the entire universe who could teach this woman a lesson. Their relationship had developed further and had become different. Was it as friends? Partners? Perhaps he had already regarded her as family.

Chapter 675: A Different Feeling

Lu Yin sat down. "How was your trip this time? It looks like you didn't encounter any danger."

Wendy Yushan hesitated a moment, but then she slowly exposed her shoulder. There was a wound on her shoulder that had recently started recovering, but it was obvious that her entire arm had been

nearly severed. The wound didn't just stop at her arm, and it continued, snaking down to her chest and further beyond. Lu Yin couldn't see exactly how far it extended.

Lu Yin could feel the danger she had met just by looking at the wound. Almost—this woman had almost died.

"Who did it?" Lu Yin asked, his eyes suddenly ice cold.

Wendy Yushan didn't answer.

Lu Yin stared into her eyes. "Who did it?"

Wendy Yushan focused on her tea and said, "I bumped into Nightking Zhenwu at the Budding Terrace after entering the Daosource Sect. If one of the territory's top seeds from the Sixth Mainland hadn't shown up to fight him, I wouldn't have been able to return." She then looked at Lu Yin. "You were right—the ruins of the Daosource Sect truly are incredibly dangerous, and I was injured on my very first day there. I found a place to hide for more than ten days and didn't dare to expose myself. Lu Yin, am I completely useless?"

Lu Yin's eyes narrowed. Wendy's wound was still so severe even after she had rested for more than ten days. This showed just how serious her initial injury had been.

Wendy Yushan was a proud person who wouldn't retreat even in the face of death. However, she had ended up hiding for more than ten days, which revealed just how seriously Nightking Zhenwu had injured her.

"How's your injury doing now?" Lu Yin asked.

Wendy Yushan calmly answered, "I'll need half a year to fully recuperate."

Lu Yin's gaze sharpened. "Did Nightking Zhenwu realize who you were? What about the secret technique? Did you not use it?"

Wendy Yushan looked at Lu Yin and then seriously answered, "Don't rely only on that secret technique. Other people might have one too."

Lu Yin was shocked. "Nightking Zhenwu has a secret technique too?"

Wendy Yushan shook her head. "I'm not sure, but even my secret technique wasn't enough to make up for the difference in power. As for whether or not he recognized me, what do you think?"

Lu Yin's gaze was glacial. Wendy Yushan had joined the Myriad Swords Peak through White Knight's recommendation, and she was also an Outerverse Youth Councilor. Lu Yin didn't believe that Nightking Zhenwu hadn't recognized her, and since he had attacked her despite knowing her identity, his intention to kill Wendy was clear.

The Daynight clan seemed to be Lu Yin's natural enemy. From Nightking Qingyu back on Earth to Nightqueen Yanqing in the Astral Combat Academy, the Daynight clan had always been Lu Yin's greatest obstacle along his cultivation journey. Arbiter Zhenwu had been the reason why Lu Yin hadn't initially been allowed to join the Council of Astral Academy, and the Arbiter had also issued orders that allowed Nightqueen Yanqing to deal with Lu Yin with the Daynight clan's resources. Furthermore, Arbiter

Zhenwu had also been the person who had appointed Liu Shaoge to the Outerverse Youth Council as a councilor.

Although Lu Yin had never actually met Nightking Zhenwu, he had caused Lu Yin tremendous difficulties. That Arbiter was truly Lu Yin's nemesis.

Perhaps the decision regarding the massacre of those with the Lu surname had also been made by that Arbiter.

Lu Yin's eyes flickered when he looked at Wendy Yushan's pale face. This incident was yet another strike against Arbiter Zhenwu.

"What are you thinking about?" Wendy Yushan asked.

Lu Yin's expression softened. "Nothing much. Rest well, and don't go back to the Daosource Sect for now."

"Lu Yin!" Wendy Yushan called out. Lu Yin turned around and saw a gentle look on her face. She softly said, "I thought that I was going to die at that time, and the only person I thought of was you. Promise me that you won't go up against Nightking Zhenwu until you are absolutely certain of defeating him."

Lu Yin's heart skipped a beat as he looked at Wendy Yushan's vulnerable side. He instinctively hugged her as her scent filled his mind. "Alright, I promise you, but I'll also guarantee that I'll never forget this incident."

A servant nearby shattered a tea cup, and Wendy Yushan quickly shoved Lu Yin away. She turned around and calmly said, "You can go now."

Lu Yin felt dejected, as he had just discovered that he held special feelings for this woman.

"Oh, alright." He then left the princess's home.

After Lu Yin left, Wendy Yushan turned back around with a complicated expression on her face.

Lu Yin had no intention of resting after seeing Wendy's injury. His mind was inundated with the sensation of embracing Wendy. He had felt like he had been hugging a relative, which was entirely different from what he felt when he held Ming Yan, but it was still a very memorable experience for him.

Lu Yin shook his head to clear his mind. He returned to the palace courtyard and took out the Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox that he had received from the Nalan family for winning the Astral Combat Tournament and immediately started unlocking it.

"Seventh Bro, are you sure that you should be lockbreaking right now? Do you even know what you're doing?" the Ghost Monkey teased.

Lu Yin snapped back, "Shut up! Otherwise I'll screen you off again!"

"Ha, you disloyal person," the monkey sneered.

Lu Yin ignored the monkey and took a deep breath. He exhaled slowly and sharpened his focus onto the sourcebox. He saw the complex energies surrounding it and could instantly tell that they far exceeded the level of five star Discerning Elementary sourceboxes.

“Seventh Bro, don’t say that I didn’t warn you. Accidents are more likely to happen when you’re not focused during a lockbreaking session,” the monkey warned.

Lu Yin’s eyes flashed. “I know.” He closed his eyes and remembered the scene of when he had entered the Daynight clan’s inheritance corridor. There had been a stone tablet outside the corridor covered with the names of the powerhouses of the Daynight clan and Nightking clan. The name in the highest position had been Nightking Zhenwu: an imposing and arrogant man.

Lu Yin grew furious as soon as he thought of Nightking Zhenwu, but he was still too far away from the Arbiter.

He opened his eyes and cleared his mind so that he could focus on his lockbreaking. He didn’t have the right to think about such matters with his current strength.

Although the Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox didn’t hold any formless dangers, it was still very difficult for Lu Yin, whose degree of star energy control was only in the Intricacy realm. Unravelling such complex energies was very tiring.

Lu Yin was unlocking this sourcebox purely to gain more experience in lockbreaking.

Although there was a low chance of finding any sort of treasure inside a harmless sourcebox, the mere experience of unlocking this sourcebox wasn’t something that could compare to what might be inside a normal Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox.

Ten hours later, Lu Yin was feeling giddy and had developed a headache. He felt like he was lost in the middle of a boundless ocean without a way to return to the shore.

After twenty hours had passed in total, Lu Yin had gone pale, and his hands were shaking. Fortunately, the monkey yelled at him to keep Lu Yin awake; otherwise, he would have already fainted.

Huo Qingshan, Xueshan Auna, Wendy Yushan, and Peach all appeared outside the courtyard and left one after another.

By this time, the sourcebox had shrunk to two thirds of its original size.

Lu Yin felt like his soul had left his body and that his vision had gone blurry.

The energy surrounding the Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox was too complicated, and it was very hard to remove the energy. The convoluted conglomeration of energy resembled an endless maze, and it completely crushed Lu Yin’s spirit.

Perhaps this was the true threat of a Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox, and it might also explain why Dao Bo was so much stronger than Charon. Although they were both five star Discerning Elementary Lockbreakers, it wasn’t easy to unlock a Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox.

Ten hours later, Lu Yin had reached the point of collapse. He really wanted to take a break, but he also didn’t want to stop.

He hadn't realized that the lockbreaking had become simpler compared to when he had first started working on this sourcebox. By continuously lockbreaking for an extended period of time, he had slowly integrated lockbreaking methods into his instincts, which showed that he was gaining experience in lockbreaking.

"Seventh Bro, don't give up! You just need a few more hours," the monkey encouraged.

Lu Yin opened his eyes wide and continued staring at the sourcebox.

Two hours later, the energy surrounding the sourcebox finally shattered, and a bit of rusty metal fell out with a clang.

Lu Yin's eyes gleamed as he carefully picked up the metal piece. He had finally obtained his reward after thirty two straight hours of lockbreaking. He had nearly fainted during the process, but he had finally gotten his first treasure from a Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox.

Lu Yin suddenly felt dizzy as he stared at the piece of metal in his hand. He steadied himself as he sat down on the ground, and a moment later, he was asleep.

He was too exhausted. Although lockbreaking wasn't the same as fighting, it could sometimes be even more tiring than fighting as lockbreaking exhausted one's spirit. Thus, overexertion during lockbreaking attempts could cause a person to faint.

There were stories of lockbreakers who went crazy or committed suicide after lockbreaking for too long. Generally, most Discerning Elementary lockbreakers would make plenty of preparations before trying a Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox. Lu Yin had unlocked a Discerning Elementary sourcebox shortly before he had started on this Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox, and he was actually very fortunate to have survived.

"Don't die from this without even getting to fight Nightking Zhenwu," the monkey teased.

People came and left the entrance of the courtyard.

Lu Yin slept for three days and only woke up on the morning of the fourth day.

When he opened his eyes, it seemed that the air around him had become much fresher.

"Seventh Bro, how are you? You're not crazy right?" the Ghost Monkey joked.

Lu Yin kneaded his temples. "I'll remember to kill you even if I do go crazy."

"Nah, I want to enjoy my life a while longer," the monkey said. He then reminded Lu Yin, "Check out the piece of metal that fell out. It's probably something good!"

Lu Yin suddenly remembered that he had received a piece of corroded metal from the Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox.

The piece of metal was under his foot. He picked it up and carefully studied it, but there were no words or images on it. "Is this thing something good?"

"Yeah, it took me quite some time to remember what this thing is, but let me test you first: do you know what this thing is?" the monkey asked with a sneer.

Lu Yin gripped the fragment tightly and scratched at it. There was not a single mark on the piece of metal, and not even the corroded bits were affected.

This metal felt like the cauldron in the ruins of the Daosource Sect. The metal of that cauldron had been indestructible despite being almost completely corroded.

“So what is this?” Lu Yin asked.

The monkey answered, “Normal metal.”

Lu Yin frowned. “Tell me the truth.”

“That is the truth—it’s just a normal piece of metal, though there is something that’s been added into it. Seventh Bro, look at the green spots on the metal that look like rust,” the monkey explained.

Lu Yin carefully looked at the fragment and saw the green spots. “Keep going.”

Chapter 676: The Fourth Imperial Squadron’s Captain

The Ghost Monkey paused for a bit before continuing his explanation. “Those green spots are something known as Ancient Scarlet Copper, and it is an extremely rare material. Any weapon fortified with just a trace of Ancient Scarlet Copper will increase its hardness to an unimaginable level. Just look at this normal piece of metal that you are unable to even scratch. It’s nothing more than an ordinary piece of metal that’s been fused with a tiny amount of Ancient Scarlet Copper.”

“Ancient Scarlet Copper? Is that some kind of metal?”

“You can say that. The idiot who fused the Ancient Scarlet Copper with this ordinary metal must have had a few screws loose,” the monkey said angrily.

Lu Yin’s eyes lit up. “It seems like this fragment has quite a high concentration of Ancient Scarlet Copper.”

“Probably enough to form a piece the size of a fingernail. If you think about how rare Ancient Scarlet Copper is, the one who forged this was incredibly generous since they used this extremely rare material. It’s a shame that it can’t be used anymore. There’s no way to extract the Ancient Scarlet Copper from this piece of scrap anymore. To make you understand just how much of a waste I think it is, let me put it this way: Ancient Scarlet Copper is one of the primary materials required to build items that can withstand an Envoy’s attacks.”

“This metal can be used to create items that can withstand attacks with power levels of 500,000?” Lu Yin asked in astonishment.

“Yep, so you now understand its value and how much of a waste it is to have used it like this. If Ancient Scarlet Copper is used in high concentrations, then the items made from it can even withstand attacks that have reached power levels of 700,000. I’ve read about this material a bunch of times in powerhouses’ journals. The Sea King’s Trident that you grabbed a hold of back then most likely has some Ancient Scarlet Copper in it as well,” the monkey commented.

Lu Yin was all smiles as he stored the piece of metal away. He was glad to have gotten a hold of something so valuable.

“Seventh Bro, why are you smiling? Why do you want to hang on to such a useless object?” the monkey asked disdainfully.

“Even though I might not be able to refine it right now, I might be able to in the future,” Lu Yin said happily. With his die and a roll of two pips, the Blackhole Disassembly would be able to easily refine the metal. This Ancient Scarlet Copper was good stuff.

The monkey replied, “When you have the ability to refine that, you won’t have any more interest in it. To put it bluntly, you might not even live to reach such a stage. Do you want to be buried with that thing?”

Lu Yin immediately screened the monkey off. He did not like the way the beast was speaking to him.

After surveying his surroundings, he saw that there was one more sourcebox that he had not opened yet. Lu Yin was in no rush, so he walked out to the courtyard and met with En Ya, Xueshan Auna, and the others. He had polite conversations with them all, enjoyed a sumptuous meal, and after that, he finally returned to the imperial palace’s courtyard.

He checked his gadget, and to his pleasant surprise, he saw that his Lockbreaker level had been upgraded to five stars.

The two videos of him lockbreaking five star Discerning Elementary sourceboxes had indeed come in handy. If he uploaded the video of him unlocking the Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox onto the network, then there was even a possibility that he would be immediately recognized as a Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreaker. Of course, there was only a remote possibility of that happening, as usually, he would have to unlock at least one more Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox before leveling up again.

But Lu Yin was in no rush. His status as a five star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker was enough for the moment. It was a shame that unlocking a Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox was not a simple endeavor. After all, the sourcebox that he had just unlocked had actually been a harmless one.

He was thankful for his previous experience of lockbreaking in front of the Trialmaster at the Astral Combat Academy. At that time, the Trialmaster had intimidated Lu Yin with the dangers of lockbreaking, and if not for that lecture, his attempt to unlock a Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox would have ended badly.

There was still one last sourcebox, and Lu Yin did not want to wait any longer, so he approached it.

According to the description of this sourcebox that Gavin had provided, it seemed to have the ability to repel anyone who drew close to it. Lu Yin opened the Spiritual Thread case, and a strong, repulsive force exploded from within. Lu Yin’s entire body shook for a moment before he managed to stabilize from the blast.

This repelling force was enough to send an Explorer flying, but it was still ineffective against him.

It was time to get started! He exhaled loudly as he activated the Cosmic Art and began the lockbreaking process.

This lockbreaking session felt much different compared to Lu Yin’s previous attempts. Not only was he progressing faster, but he also found that he had an instinctive sense for choosing the most effective

way to neutralize the sourcebox's energies. His actions felt like they had been practiced thousands of times before.

A single Perceptive Intermediate sourcebox lockbreaking attempt had allowed him to make qualitative leaps in terms of advancing his lockbreaking abilities. Even though he had not become a Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreaker yet, he could still be considered a top level Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker. Even Dao Bo was no longer a match for Lu Yin.

In the past, the only aspect that Lu Yin had fallen behind when compared to Dao Bo, Charon, and the other elite young Lockbreakers was his experience. He had now caught up with them with just a single sourcebox. That, combined with his Cosmic Art and his transformed eyes, meant that he was confident in being able to unlock any Discerning Elementary sourcebox.

It was a pity that he did not have incredible luck. Charon had obtained the Unveiled Sword from an unlocked sourcebox whereas Lu Yin had only managed to get a small amount of impure Ancient Scarlet Copper which he needed to refine on his own.

The lockbreaking process for this session was smooth sailing for Lu Yin, and it took him an unprecedented mere five hours to successfully unlock the sourcebox despite working on a five star Discerning Elementary sourcebox.

However, once the object within the sourcebox touched the outside air, it evaporated away. It was a stone that had an image engraved on it, but Lu Yin wasn't able to make out the image before it disappeared.

"Seventh Bro, you are so clumsy," the Ghost Monkey muttered.

Lu Yin stretched his body as he checked the time. He could now head towards Sourcepeak Weave.

Lu Yin had made plans to take a trip to Sourcepeak Weave a while ago, but he had decided afterwards that he wanted Aden to accompany him. Aden had finally arrived at the Great Yu Empire two days ago, while Lu Yin had been sleeping, and so, the two had not managed to see each other yet.

When Lu Yin finally saw Aden, he could feel that the older man had grown stronger.

"It looks like you've already absorbed all your gains from the battles in Ironblood Weave," Lu Yin said with a laugh. During the Astral Beast Domain's invasion, Aden had been in the vanguard of every battle. A large bulk of the credit for the successful defense belonged to the Hunter, and he had subsequently redeemed his Ironblood Points for resources and easily boosted his strength.

Aden sized Lu Yin up with astonishment. "Your strength has grown considerably."

"Of course, I've already broken through and become an Explorer."

"No, I'm not referring to that. It's not like I haven't seen you after you became an Explorer. Your strength has increased remarkably after you left Ironblood Weave."

Lu Yin chuckled, as he had constantly been absorbing star energy after his breakthrough in cultivating the Cosmic Art, and that wasn't even mentioning how he had improved his fine star energy control. He had unwittingly gone through huge transformations.

“How is it for you to be back in the Great Yu Empire? Are you used to it yet?” Lu Yin asked with a smile. The two men towered high in the starry sky as they waited for the spacecraft that would take them to Sourcepeak Weave.

Aden laughed. “I’m not the one who wanted to come back. You wanted me back here.”

“I’m sorry about that. There’s simply no one that I can count on here in the Great Yu Empire. Leaving someone as strong as you in Ironblood Weave is just a waste. However, I promised Elder Lohar that I would let you go back to Ironblood Weave if war erupts there again,” Lu Yin said.

“You should know that I am a free man with no connections. The Hall of Honor has no hold over me either, so I can go anywhere I please,” Aden declared.

Lu Yin nodded and gave him a serious look. “It’s indeed your choice. You can choose to either leave or stay.”

Aden stared at Lu Yin for a moment and then turned his head around. “What do you have planned for me?”

“I want you to be the captain of the Great Yu Empire’s Fourth Imperial Squadron,” Lu Yin told him seriously.

“Alright then, but let me make myself clear on one thing: I can leave as easily as I came, and at any time I want,” Aden said.

Lu Yin nodded. “That goes without saying.”

Very soon, a radiant-grade Aurora arrived that both men boarded.

There were still ten days left before the Lockbreaker Competition, and the journey to Sourcepeak Weave would only take five days, so Lu Yin was in no rush.

At this same time, on a distant planet, a fashionably dressed man had a dejected expression on his face. “What a bummer! We actually encountered a place where the void was unstable. The spacecraft’s ruined, and it will be too exhausting to fly directly to Sourcepeak Weave on my own. Besides, the competition will most likely already be over by the time I get there. Who can give me a lift?” the man muttered as he looked around.

By a stroke of luck, he suddenly saw a distant spacecraft traveling swiftly through outer space.

The fashionably dressed man’s eyes lit up, and he stepped out. He next appeared right in front of the spacecraft as he foolishly sped straight at the spacecraft.

In the control pit of the vessel, everyone stared on in astonishment as the man rushed over. This man had to be nuts!

With a whoosh, the man vanished the exact moment the spacecraft was about to smash into him. Following which, the people aboard the spacecraft heard the sound of someone knocking on the hatch.

Everyone on the vessel looked at one another. The captain of the spacecraft gritted his teeth. “He’s a space-exploring powerhouse, so let him in.”

The fashionably dressed man entered the spacecraft, and he excitedly gave the captain a hug of gratitude. “Thank you so much! You must be the captain—thank you so much for letting me in.”

The captain was embraced with enough force that it hurt. This stranger had a steel-like grip. “You are most welcome, brother.”

The man released the captain, and he again thanked the man. “Captain, you are such a good man. Not only did you let me in, but you even offered to take me to Sourcepeak Weave! You are a great man!”

Everyone around was confused. Sourcepeak Weave? When did we say that we’re heading there?

The captain replied, “Brother, are you headed to Sourcepeak Weave? Unfortunately, we are-”

There was a loud boom as the entire spacecraft jolted. The man had just slapped the hull of the spacecraft with a great deal of force, even leaving a deep palm print. “There was a bug.” After that, he looked at the captain. “What were you just saying?”

The captain swallowed his saliva. “Nothing. Sourcepeak Weave just happens to be on our way as we were headed nearby.”

The fashionably dressed man grinned from ear to ear, and he slapped the captain’s shoulder hard. “Thank you brother, you are such a good man. Hahaha! My name is Ku Wei. Everyone calls me Big Brother Wei, but there’s no need for you to be so formal with me. Hahaha!”

Everyone fell silent.

In the Astral Wilderness, there was a spacecraft headed back towards the Outerverse at top speed. A middle aged man was inside the craft with closed eyes.

Suddenly, an alert sounded from the spacecraft. The middle-aged man opened his eyes to look ahead, and he saw a beast-like figure with its claws raised high, ready to swipe down. The middle-aged man shouted in fright, “No!”

With a bang, the entire spacecraft exploded, and the middle-aged man was sent flying from the impact, after which he helplessly floated in space. He looked straight ahead, and being an Explorer who had comprehended a domain, he could accurately sense the power of the beast-like figure.

Is that a modified machine? The middle-aged man rubbed his eyes to take a closer look and saw that it was indeed a mechanical beast.

The large, beast-like machine once again swiped its claws down at the middle-aged man. He grit his teeth and tried to escape, but he was captured in an instant. The beast-like machine then released two metal chains to tie up the middle-aged man before a giant bolt of electricity shot out and lit up the entire sky, which also caused the middle-aged man to faint from the shock.

The beast-like machine moved closer to the middle-aged man's body and then released some mechanical probes. The probes quickly removed the middle-aged man's brain and replaced it with a chip.

In the Great Yu Empire, in the classified Technology Department, a dozen people burst out in cheers. Ban Jiu excitedly looked at the simplified control core that was in front of him. He had finally succeeded.

The most challenging technical problems had been resolved, and they had again obtained another batch of resources from some of the eastern weaves. He could now start modifying the androids a month ahead of schedule and would be able to use the available materials to upgrade his research subjects. It was all wonderful news.

Shalosh, the Twelfth Imperial Squadron's second in command, hurriedly offered his congratulations to the captain. Everyone in the Technology Department who was involved in the development of the androids broke out in raucous cheers.

Only those who had first hand experience in the design knew that these particular androids allowed for infinite possibilities. This was a landmark moment for weapons manufacturing.

Ban Jiu drew closer to the control core as he watched it absorb star energy. He broke into a hearty laughter and then locked the doors of the research department. He could not allow anyone to get close. He wanted to complete the other components for manufacturing an android as quickly as possible.

That night, a figure entered the research lab and sneakily placed explosive devices at various strategic locations throughout the research center. A proud, sinister smile spread across the figure's lips as they sneaked back out.

Right as the figure just left the underground of the Technology Department, a hand landed on the figure's shoulder.

Chapter 677: Assassination Attempt

The figure felt their blood turn cold, and they turned around to see Ban Jiu's gloomy face. "Cap-captain?"

Ban Jiu exerted some force through his hand, causing the figure to wail as he crushed their shoulder. The person's entire body was pressed against the floor, and they stared up at Ban Jiu in terror. "Captain, spare me!"

"The rules of the Technology Department don't allow anyone to bring their cosmic rings in. Given that you came here so late at night and even brought your ring in, I knew that something was up. I only expected you to try to steal some things, but I never imagined that you would actually try to destroy the androids. Speak up! Who ordered you to do this?" Ban Jiu interrogated, his words in a strange rhythm and his voice glacial.

The figure lowered their head and appeared to have fallen into despair.

"What? You don't want to speak? You are fully aware of the Twelfth Squadron's methods," Ban Jiu said slowly.

The figure trembled. They suddenly seemed to recall something that caused them to shiver in fear. "Nobody ordered me. The Royal Regent ordered the Ninth Squadron to eradicate my family! I wanted revenge, so I made these plans."

Ban Jiu suddenly remembered that this person didn't come from some insignificant background and that they were actually related to one of the empire's influential officials. It had been precisely because of that relationship that this person had been able to join the Twelfth Squadron. It was no wonder why they wanted revenge, as that official had been eliminated by the Ninth Squadron just a few days earlier.

"Just like that?" Ban Jiu asked coldly as he crouched down.

That person fearfully stared at Ban Jiu. "Captain, I understand your methods, and I know that there's no one you can't get to talk. I wouldn't dare try to hide anything from you, so I'll only beg you for a quick death."

Ban Jiu's eyes narrowed, and a gentle breeze blew across, bringing him his white coat.

Beads of sweat rolled off of the person's forehead. "Captain, even if I haven't made any major contributions to the Twelfth Squadron, I have still always worked hard! I'm only asking for a quick death, so please grant me that much, captain."

Ban Jiu stood back up and stared down at the figure on the floor. He raised a hand and struck down. The person's forehead split open. They were dead.

"It looks like it's time to clean up the Twelfth Squadron," Ban Jiu muttered to himself. If not for his vigilance, months of his hard work would have been destroyed. Not only would he not be able to accept such a thing, but there would also be no way for him to give an account of himself to the Royal Regent. Given Lu Yin's current attitude towards certain families within the empire, the people who had entered the squadron through their family backgrounds were no longer reliable, and Ban Jiu had to come up with ways to replace them.

On Shenwu Continent, ever since Lu Yin left, Ming Yan had firmed her resolve to handle her administrative duties well. After many days of practice, her personality had also quietly transformed.

Sometimes, it was not that a person had no ability, but rather that they had never been pushed to the point of showing it.

Rebellions had broken out all across the Shenwu Empire, and Ming Yan had been more benevolent than her father when handling the conflicts. However, her leniency had led to a second wave of rebellions, forcing Ming Zhaoshu to personally take action to quell the new insurrections. He had buried 20,000 people alive, shocking the entire continent and causing the people of Shenwu Continent to become nervous.

Ming Yan had witnessed the massacre herself, and it left an unimaginable impact on her. After that single event, she started making much firmer decisions, and her vision, attitude, and personality all underwent profound changes. And that wasn't even mentioning how the way she viewed her father had also changed.

Ming Zhaoshu looked at Ming Yan's memos that littered the floor. On some of them, he could see the words, 'No pardons, kill.' Ming Zhaoshu's gaze then landed on his daughter and exchanged glances with her. Her gaze had previously been filled with a gentle kindness and even some nervousness. But now, that nervousness had vanished, and that kindness had also dissipated by a great deal. There was now a steely glint to her gaze and also a touch of something unfamiliar.

Ming Zhaoshu's heart ached, as Ming Yan's transformation had been catalyzed by him killing those 20,000 people; that number had become a wedge that would forever remain between the father and daughter, as it was something that could never be resolved.

Still, Ming Zhaoshu did not regret his actions. Since his vitality was rapidly draining away, he did not have long before he died. The chaotic Shenwu Empire required an iron-fisted ruler, not a benevolent one. The universe was cruel, and the previous Ming Yan would not have been able to survive there.

"Yan'er, do you blame Father?" Ming Zhaoshu could not resist asking this question.

Ming Yan trembled slightly, but she shook her head. "Daughter is tired, and I wish to rest."

Ming Zhaoshu nodded. "Go on, and don't overthink things."

Ming Yan left the study and looked up at the sky. The radiant sunlight was dazzling, but she enjoyed this bright lighting. Ever since she had witnessed those 20,000 people being massacred, she no longer dared to sleep at night since she would see those 20,000 people staring at her from the darkness. The grief and hatred that she saw in their eyes gripped her heart in a vice, and she felt as though it would pull her into the abyss.

"I'm sorry, I'm truly sorry," Ming Yan muttered to herself. She curled up alone on her bed as she faced the sun. Tears streamed down her face.

In the study, Ming Zhaoshu sighed. "Yan'er, Father is sorry to you."

Outer space was always dark, but it was also eternally illuminated by the stars.

Lu Yin sat in his spacecraft and drank a specially produced fruit juice that was unique to the Lars Weave. He was feeling quite tranquil at this moment.

"I just received a notification that our route is going to change again and that our journey will be extended by another day," Aden said.

Lu Yin grudgingly asked, "Is this still because of the higher energy levels?"

Aden nodded. "The Astral River swelled dramatically when it separated the Outerverse and the Innerverse. Many areas of the Outerverse have had similar energy surges, and the eastern and western regions have practically been completely isolated from each other. Fortunately, Sourcepeak Weave is situated in the center area. Otherwise, we might not be able to make the trip."

"Have you ever been to Sourcepeak Planet?" Lu Yin asked.

Aden shook his head. "Never."

“I wonder what sort of place it is, and if there are a lot of sourceboxes there.” Lu Yin walked to the front of the vessel. He had come to rather enjoy lockbreaking. It was like searching for mysteries, as each and every sourcebox potentially contained something ancient. Lockbreaking felt akin to transcending time and conducting transactions with those from ancient ages. It was very interesting, though of course, it was also very dangerous.

Aden looked at Lu Yin. “Actually, I rather admire you. You’re so young, and yet, not only do you have powerful strength, but you can also lockbreak. You’re an absolute genius.”

Lu Yin smiled. “I don’t deserve that much praise.”

“You’re very similar to Undying Yushan,” Aden stared out into outer space as he spoke, a look of reminiscence on his face.

Lu Yin’s heart leapt, and he looked over at Aden. “What did you say? I’m very similar to Undying Yushan?”

Aden nodded. “Undying Yushan was someone who had an amazing talent for cultivation as well as lockbreaking. It’s as if you are his carbon copy.”

Lu Yin frowned. “Undying Yushan was a Lockbreaker? Where did you hear that?”

Aden laughed. “I didn’t have to hear it from anyone—I could tell. Although he intentionally did not reveal anything, a Lockbreaker’s star energy control is different, and I could recognize his ability with just one look.”

Lu Yin’s eyes flickered; Undying Yushan had been a Lockbreaker? Nobody had mentioned this before. Still, it didn’t matter since the old emperor was already dead, so there was nothing more about it worth mentioning.

Ahead of them, a spacecraft flew along, evidently headed towards them.

Lu Yin’s expression changed the moment he saw the approaching spacecraft. “Be careful.”

Aden instantly grew vigilant. “An enemy?”

Lu Yin squinted at the spacecraft ahead of them; he could see three enormous groups of rune lines within it, and the largest group was even able to rival Xueshan Auna, which meant that there were three Hunters inside the spacecraft approaching them. The strongest of the three was a peak Hunter who could rival Kong Shi, and they would not be much weaker than Aden.

When the spacecraft passed by the one that Lu Yin was in, the three clusters of rune lines sped across the gap between the vessels in the blink of an eye, and Lu Yin’s eyes went wide. “Attack!”

Aden reflexively released his thunder shield in front of their spacecraft, and three attacks struck it head on, but they were unable to breach its defense. All they could do was blast the shielded spacecraft 10,000 meters away.

Assassins. Lu Yin donned his universal armor and exited his spacecraft, and Aden appeared by him at the same time while solemnly looking ahead. The three enemy Hunters did not speak, instead unleashing one attack after another as their peculiar innate gifts and powerful battle techniques accompanied the flood of attacks. Their assault shattered the void into fragments that then formed a blackhole that nearly devoured the spacecraft.

Fortunately, under Lu Yin's orders, his own vessel had already escaped at top speed.

"Thunder Mountain Breach." Aden roared as he attacked, his thunder shield flickering and rumbling. There was a loud crack as a powerful shockwave swept out, overwhelming the three Hunters with amazement. This was their first time encountering such a terrifying Hunter, and his power was not much weaker than an Enlighter's.

Although Aden's attacks had not reached the power of the Enlighter realm yet, his defenses were absolute, and he could even withstand an Enlighter's attacks.

The thunder shield expanded outwards endlessly as it enveloped the surrounding space. Aden then pushed forwards and charged towards the three Hunters.

The three exchanged looks, and one of them said, "You guys hold him back."

With that, the Hunter tore through the void and vanished.

The thunder shield was firmly raised in front of Aden, and the two Hunters acted in unison without using any battle techniques. They already knew that it was impossible for them to break through Aden's defense, so it didn't matter whether or not they used their battle techniques. They then raised their hands and blocked the advance of the thunder shield.

Aden was right behind the thunder shield, and his expression changed the moment the two Hunters collided with it. He could feel the star energy that was his thunder shield being rapidly depleted, and it felt like it was being broken down. His battle technique was being dissolved, or rather, it was being lockbroken. The two Hunters were both Lockbreakers.

Not good, there's one more. Aden whirled around. "Be careful!"

Lu Yin turned to his right, as he had long since seen the other group of rune lines approaching him; the last Hunter was tearing through the void towards Lu Yin. This person was the strongest of the group, a peak Hunter, and they unleashed a palm at Lu Yin from a distance. It appeared to be a very ordinary attack, but for some unknown reason, it gave Lu Yin a sense of absolute danger. The feeling of crisis bypassed his universal armor, but Lu Yin was still fearless since he had already equipped it.

He confidently stepped up and swatted at the peak Hunter assassin at the same time as the Hunter's attack landed.

Two palms collided, and at that moment, Lu Yin's palm immediately shrank back, as the star energy within it had suddenly vanished. This was due to it being dissolved. "You're a Lockbreaker!"

A battle between Lockbreakers was unique, as they could use their lockbreaking techniques to the fullest by dissolving their opponent's battle techniques and arts. Both of those abilities, and even innate

gifts, required star energy to be used, and once that star energy was broken down, the power of the attack would drop precipitously.

This was also one of the reasons why Lockbreakers held such a high status within the universe, as any Lockbreaker would be a powerhouse within their own realm. This was common knowledge.

Lu Yin himself was also a Lockbreaker, and he had even reached the standard where he could unlock Perceptive Intermediate sourceboxes. However, the Lockbreaker in front of him was able to dissolve star energy at such a rapid speed that Lu Yin was caught unprepared, which meant that they were at least a three or four star Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreaker.

Lu Yin's domain had also been seen through by the assassin, so it was also useless.

Lu Yin pulled back. He did not feel any sense of danger while he wore his universal armor, but despite that, this Hunter was leaving him with no other choice. This Lockbreaker was so powerful that even Lu Yin's Dream Finger would probably have its power sapped away. The Hunter had not used any battle technique yet, which meant that Lu Yin wasn't able to use the Yu Secret Art.

The assassin pressed his advantage and grabbed at Lu Yin. The hunter quickly realized how strong the universal armor's defenses were, but that did not matter. The plan was not to kill Lu Yin, but rather to merely take him away.

Lu Yin snorted. Since his star energy was ineffective, then he would use his physical strength.

"Hundredfold Shockwave Palm." There was a soft thump, but not a single speck of star energy was used as Lu Yin swatted a palm at the assassin. The Hunter had not expected Lu Yin's physical might to be so terrifying, and Lu Yin's palm shattered his assailant's arm.

The assassin stared at Lu Yin in shock.

Chapter 678: Power Struggle Within Sourcepeak Planet

Lu Yin sneered, as his attacker had turned out to be physically weak. He struck out again without any hesitation, but the assassin hurriedly evaded, causing Lu Yin's palm to miss. The tremendous power of his attack distorted the void, which caused the assassin's scalp to turn numb.

Then, one palm after another flooded the area: Shockwave Palm, Spacerender Palm, and other battle techniques that could be used with pure physical strength. The unending barrage prevented the assassin from approaching Lu Yin at all.

However, Lu Yin could not hit the Hunter either, and even though his opponent was within the increased range of the Cosmic Art's scope, all of Lu Yin's attacks were being detected and avoided. This Lockbreaker was too sensitive to star energy, and not even Lu Yin's domain could lock onto this person.

"You wanted to kill me with just this?" Lu Yin barked.

The attacker's eyes trembled, and a round sticker appeared on their palm that they quickly slapped onto their forehead. Then, the assassin looked closely at Lu Yin, which caused the youth to tremble.

Lu Yin's heart lurched; was that a lockbreaking tool?

The assassin suddenly disappeared before a single hand appeared next to Lu Yin out of nowhere, attempting to grab him. Lu Yin turned around and unleashed a punch, using nothing but his physical power. The assassin remained close to Lu Yin's arm and continued advancing, their right hand grabbing at Lu Yin's neck. Lu Yin grunted, and he barely dodged the Hunter's hand. The two continued simultaneously attacking and dodging the other's attacks, leaving them pressed up against each other.

Lu Yin used Secret Sidestep while the killer used their lockbreaking tool to reach a movement speed that was similar to Secret Sidestep. This person was extremely difficult to deal with.

"You're definitely not some unknown person. Who are you? Why do you want to kill me?" Lu Yin shouted as he stared at the Hunter who had hidden their appearance. This assassin was clearly afraid of being recognized, so they were likely some famous character.

With such an impressive lockbreaking ability, it was even possible that Lu Yin himself would be able to recognize his attacker.

Suddenly, there was an explosion in the distance that was quickly followed by the crash of thunder. The two Hunters delaying Aden were blown back simultaneously, and they each spat out a mouthful of blood. Nine lined battle force shrouded Aden's form.

"Retreat," growled the peak Hunter who had attacked Lu Yin. Then, that person tore through the void to escape.

The other two Hunters also escaped without hesitation.

Aden wanted to give chase, but after looking at Lu Yin, he held himself back from chasing after the assassins.

"Anything happen to you?" Aden asked as he floated up to Lu Yin.

Lu Yin shook his head and removed his universal armor, though his face was gloomy.

"They're Lockbreakers, and not just average ones at that. They were even able to dissolve my thunder shield, so they should at least be at the Perceptive Intermediate level. If not for my nine lined battle force, it would have been extremely difficult for me to take care of those two," Aden said in a low voice.

Lu Yin stared off into the distance. "This one-off operation involved three Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreakers. Who has that kind of resources? Even the entire Outerverse Lockbreaker Society doesn't have very many Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreakers, or could it be-" Lu Yin suddenly stopped what he was about to say.

Aden patted his shoulder. "Let's head back to the spacecraft for now. We'll know when we get to Sourcepeak Planet."

Lu Yin nodded.

Although Lu Yin had only been ambushed by three Hunters this time around, the attack had been far more dangerous than the past one with five Hunters. If not for Aden, the battle would have continued on for some time. Neither Huo Qingshan nor the Blind Monk would have been able to single-handedly face off against a Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreaker, and they would have been badly outclassed.

Lu Yin returned to the spacecraft and fell deep into thought. Did the Lockbreaker Society and Lockbreaker Competition have any relation to this attack? Or could there be someone in the eastern weaves who had invited these three Lockbreakers to assassinate him? That shouldn't be the case, as Lockbreakers were generally not assassins. Unless it had been the Daynight clan who had hired them...

Lu Yin's eyes grew cold, as it was certainly feasible for the Daynight clan to send out three Lockbreakers to deal with him.

Three Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreakers moving out together was a huge scale attack. Back in the battles in Ironblood Weave, not a single stronghold had been able to boast having a Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreaker.

Humans could be very shrewd at times, but they were also very selfish. The Outerverse was not as weak as Lu Yin had once imagined.

Not long after the three Lockbreaker assassins left, another spacecraft appeared nearby. This time, it was a personal spacecraft, and the number of rune lines in it were not too high, so Lu Yin paid no heed to the vessel.

That spacecraft flew towards Lu Yin's spacecraft's control center and sent a request to dock with the larger ship. When Lu Yin heard this news, his heart jumped. "Let them in."

Before much time passed, a familiar figure appeared in front of Lu Yin: Tong Mi'er. This person had been present on Savage Ape Planet during the lockbreaking trial. Tong Mi'er had been heralded as a lockbreaking genius of the Outerverse. He was an Explorer as well as a four star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker.

"Tong Mi'er greets Mr. Lu," Tong Mi'er appeared before Lu Yin and looked at him respectfully, the arrogance that he had displayed back on Savage Ape Planet completely gone.

Lu Yin stared at Tong Mi'er. "What's the matter?"

"During Mr. Lu's journey, I expect that things haven't gone smoothly," Tong Mi'er said as he studied Lu Yin's reaction.

Lu Yin gestured for the other youth to sit and had someone serve two of the fruit juices from Lars Weave. "Try this, the taste is decent."

Tong Mi'er's gaze shifted. "Doesn't Mr. Lu wish to know who attacked you?"

Lu Yin set his glass of fruit juice down on the table with a clang and looked at Tong Mi'er coldly. "We were attacked just a short while ago. Barely any time has passed. You couldn't have possibly seen anything with the speed you were traveling, so how did you know that I was attacked?"

Tong Mi'er replied, "Mr. Lu, please don't be mistaken. The people who attacked you were not related to us."

"Us? Who's 'us?'" Lu Yin asked. Tong Mi'er had apparently met with him to explain the situation that had led to him being attacked by other Lockbreakers.

“‘Us’ includes me and the Outerverse Lockbreaker Society’s executive, Lady Felynn,” Tong Mi’er answered solemnly.

Lu Yin’s brows rose, as he had heard of the name Felynn before. There were three executives in the Outerverse’s Lockbreaker Society, and they were the four-star Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreaker, Yi Feng, three-star Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreaker, Mr. Jun, and three-star Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreaker, Felynn. All of this was information that could be easily obtained from the Lockbreakers network.

“The people who attacked you are actually from the Lockbreaker Society as well, and they attacked you on the orders of Vice President Saul,” Tong Mi’er said.

Lu Yin frowned. “Vice President Saul? He isn’t trapped in the Innerverse?”

“It’s true that there are many rumors claiming that, but in reality, he never returned to the Innerverse and has actually always been in the Outerverse. To avoid being drafted to defend Ironblood Weave, he spread rumors saying that he had taken several Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreakers back to the Innerverse. We only learned the truth of the matter after the battles in Ironblood Weave had ended,” Tong Mi’er explained.

Lu Yin laughed grimly. This Saul actually turned out to not be very far-sighted; if Ironblood Weave had lost the war, then the Astral Beast Domain would have invaded the entire Outerverse, and Saul would have died alongside everyone else. No, it was also possible he would have cast his lot in with the Astral Beast Domain in that case.

“Saul has always wanted to wield power in the Outerverse’s Lockbreaker Society, but President Geoffrey has always suppressed him. Now that the Innerverse and Outerverse have been separated, President Geoffrey is truly stuck in the Innerverse. Thus, Saul has begun to push his schemes forward, and he has managed to capture multiple Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreakers in a short period of time. He wants to use this Lockbreaker Competition to allow his disciple, Deng Pu, to publicly win the True Insight. Your participation threatens him, and so he sent some people to capture you,” Tong Mi’er explained.

Lu Yin felt that the whole matter was rather strange. “As the vice president, can’t he just take the True Insight if he wants to? Why does he have to scheme around the Lockbreaker Competition?”

“Of course he can’t do that, as the Lockbreaker Society is too important. President Geoffrey has always been on guard against Saul, and he has laid down quite a few rules. So long as Saul doesn’t want to rile up the masses, he has to follow these rules. Moreover, there’s also the Honorary Vice President, who people call Fiend Li. He’s the one who counters Saul,” Tong Mi’er said.

“Then what kind of strength does his disciple, Deng Pu, have?” Lu Yin was curious.

“One star Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreaker,” Tong Mi’er solemnly replied.

Lu Yin frowned. “He’s a Perceptive Intermediate while I’m only a Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker. Does someone of my level really require him to send three Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreakers to kill me?”

Tong Mi'er shook his head. "You're different, as you are the person who wields the true power of the Great Eastern Alliance, and you've even killed Enlighters before. Your existence itself is something unexpected, and even if you were only a one star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker, Saul would still want to eliminate you."

Lu Yin felt strangely honored when he heard this. If he was truly such a threat to others, then it seemed likely that this Saul had been the one pulling strings to make sure that Lu Yin hadn't received any notifications about the Lockbreaker Competition. "Why are you telling me all of this? What does the Lady Felynn who's behind you wish to gain from me?"

Tong Mi'er seriously answered, "Lady Felynn wishes to cooperate with you to deal with Saul."

Lu Yin laughed. "You just said that I have the strength to kill an Enlighter. If I find proof that this Saul sent someone to kill me, then I'll just deal with him myself. Why would Felynn want to meddle in this? Wouldn't sitting back and reaping the benefits be better for her?"

Tong Mi'er smiled bitterly. "You really don't understand Saul's power. He's a peak Hunter, as well as a Boundless Advanced Lockbreaker."

Lu Yin's eyes narrowed: Boundless Advanced. That was a level that even sounded intimidating. Reportedly, once one reached the Boundless Advanced level, they would have grasped an unimaginable lockbreaking ability, and their personal strength would also undergo a fundamental change. A Boundless Advanced Lockbreaker was equivalent to an Enlighter, let alone when that person was already a peak Hunter like Saul.

"Saul has been able to break through and become an Enlighter for a long time, but he's always been biding his time for the True Insight. Once he obtains and studies it, he'll most likely use it to become a very powerful Enlighter. Then, he'll have the strength to rival President Geoffrey. This sort of person is not someone who can be compared to those Enlighters you killed in the past," Tong Mi'er explained.

He paused for a moment, but he quickly continued once he saw Lu Yin's calm expression. "Let me put it this way: President Geoffrey once fought and killed five Enlighters from the Technocracy by himself, and not a single hair on his head was harmed."

Lu Yin's eyes narrowed as a chill ran down his spine. A person capable of killing five Enlighters and leaving unharmed was truly a freak.

Even in the cruelest battlefield of Ironblood Weave, no one had been able to simultaneously kill five Enlighters, as each powerhouse at that level would be targeted, just like what had happened to Elder Lohar. Despite his strength being sufficient to kill multiple Enlighters, it had been useless as he had been constantly held back by the other Astral Beast experts. If Geoffrey could kill five Enlighters under those circumstances, then that was simply terrifying.

"You mean True Insight can give Saul the strength to rival President Geoffrey?" Lu Yin asked.

Tong Mi'er nodded. "That's what Lady Felynn said. The contents of True Insight are useless for us, and it's not even effective for Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreakers. It's only useful for Boundless Advanced Lockbreakers, and any one of them who can comprehend it will have their power multiplied several times over. President Geoffrey was able to understand the contents of True Insight, and that is why his

power is so terrifying. In Lady Felynn's own words, we can not allow Saul to ever obtain the True Insight, as if that actually happens, then not even the Hall of Honor will be able to stop him."

Lu Yin considered all of this information, as just that peak Hunter realm Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreaker had been incredibly hard to deal with, and this Saul would definitely be even more fearsome. This was not just a difference of a single level, and Lu Yin realized that he would not be able to take on Saul even after utilizing the entire Great Eastern Alliance. It seemed like the only way to deal with this man was for Lu Yin to cooperate with Felynn after all.

However, Tong Mi'er's words might not be entirely true, and Lu Yin had to be careful about differentiating between friend and foe.

Chapter 679: Sourcepeak Planet

"What does Felynn want to do?" Lu Yin asked.

When Tong Mi'er saw that Lu Yin was interested, he relaxed a bit. "Lady Felynn doesn't want to attract Saul's attention before the Lockbreaker Competition begins, so she would like for you to disguise yourself when you arrive on Sourcepeak Planet. After that, Lady Felynn will help you join the competition."

"Once I reach Sourcepeak Planet, Saul can't possibly deal with me publicly, right?" Lu Yin asked.

Tong Mi'er smiled bitterly. "The three executive members have managed to keep Saul under control, but quite a large number of other Lockbreakers are under the vice president. He doesn't need to personally make a move to deal with you, and he could just as easily send someone to make trouble for you and cause you to be unable to compete."

"I still have the same question: what does Felynn want from me? Just to team up and deal with Saul?" Lu Yin asked.

Tong Mi'er replied, "This is something that only Lady Felynn can discuss with you."

Lu Yin nodded. "Alright. I'll do as you suggest. I'll disguise myself before I arrive at Sourcepeak Planet."

Sourcepeak Weave was located slightly to the east of the Outerverse's center, and it was also quite close to the Astral River. It was a very busy weave since the Lockbreaker Society's headquarters were in it, and that had naturally led to Sourcepeak Weave containing the most Lockbreakers out of the entire Outerverse, and it stood a cut above the rest.

Sourcepeak Planet was situated in the southern region of Sourcepeak Weave, and it was a massive, green planet filled with plants. The climate on the planet was wonderful. It was also different from all the other planets; there were three mainlands that protruded out from the planet's surface, making it look like a massive gear from a distance.

These three mainlands were where the Lockbreaker Society conducted its examinations, and each mainland was supervised by a different executive member. Every year, countless people visited Sourcepeak Planet to be evaluated in hopes of qualifying to become a Lockbreaker, but only a rare few actually succeeded.

After the Outerverse was cut off from the Innerverse, quite a few Lockbreakers had been left stranded in the Innerverse. Even so, there were still quite a number of Lockbreakers on Sourcepeak Planet.

The entire Lockbreaker Society consisted of 630,000 registered Lockbreakers, but there were nearly 10,000 of them on Sourcepeak Planet at any time. Although the vast portion of them had never successfully had a lockbreaking session, there was a portion of them that had been graded, and nearly ten of them had reached the Perceptive Intermediate level. However, the exact details of the Lockbreakers on the planet were not very clear to the outside world, and only the president and vice president knew all the details.

Sourcepeak Planet was huge, and there were Lockbreakers scattered all over it. These Lockbreakers' greatest desire was to visit the Hall of Insight, which was the holy land of the Lockbreaker Society's Outerverse headquarters. Only Lockbreakers who had reached the Perceptive Intermediate level were allowed to enter, and legends said that there was a sourcebox array that had been arranged by a Boundless Advanced Lockbreaker inside. Anyone who entered could attempt to comprehend the array, and there were some Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreakers who stayed in the Hall of Insight all year round specifically to comprehend the array and therefore become Boundless Advanced Lockbreakers.

The Hall of Insight was a shortcut to reaching the Boundless Advanced level, as an almighty Lockbreaker from the past had paved this path forward for Lockbreakers who were still at the bottom.

Behind the Hall of Insight were many interconnected courtyards. This was where the president and vice presidents resided, and each courtyard was enormous.

Within one of the courtyards, Mr. Jun stood next to a stone table with his hands clasped behind his back.

As a Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreaker, he was one of the headquarters' executive members. Mr. Jun held a high status within the Outerverse Lockbreaker Society, his reputation was impressive, and Wang Wen had even drafted him to participate in the defense of Ironblood Weave. But at this moment, Mr. Jun had a rather apprehensive look on his face, which revealed the respect he had for the owner of this courtyard.

The void before Mr. Jun distorted as an aged man suddenly appeared.

Envy shone through in Mr. Jun's eyes. The space on Sourcepeak Planet was extremely stable, and it became even more stable the closer one drew to the Hall of Insight. Here, it had reached a point where even a Hunter like Mr. Jun could not tear the void apart. There were only a few who had the ability to tear space apart and travel through the void here, and the person in front of Mr. Jun was one of them: the Outerverse Lockbreaker Society's Vice President Saul.

"Greetings, vice president." Mr. Jun bowed respectfully.

Saul looked towards the Hall of Insight, where the grand building stood while being propped up in midair by four giant trees that surrounded the structure. Those four trees were actually sourceboxes, and he had once tried to comprehend the sourcebox array that the ancestor had left behind, but he had never achieved anything whatsoever. Since long ago, looking over at the Hall of Insight had already become a habit for Saul.

“You failed?” Saul’s tone was deep, and he sounded a little imposing.

Mr. Jun replied, “Yes, we failed.”

Saul stared at the Hall of Insight as he quietly spoke. “You’ve already been a Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreaker for many years, but you have made no further progress. Now, you can’t even deal with a child. I’m growing ever doubtful of your abilities.”

Mr. Jun’s face turned fearful. “My apologies, vice president. That kid has external items that allow him to withstand an Enlighter’s attacks, and he even has a subordinate who can defend himself against Enlighters.”

Saul looked over at Mr. Jun. “I don’t need explanations. You just need to tell me if you can deal with him or not.”

Mr. Jun gritted his teeth. “I can.”

“Alright. I only care about the results. This is your only opportunity: take care of him, and I’ll help you become a Boundless Advanced Lockbreaker. I can even lend you the True Insight for a look. However, if you can’t deal with him, then you will continue to be an executive member and will remain mediocre for the rest of your life. You’ll forever be a well-respected, three star Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreaker.”

This sentence motivated Mr. Jun. After he had become a three star Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreaker, he had not been able to make any more progress, and centuries had already passed by. He was sick of his stagnation, and thus, he had dabbled in some shady undertakings to receive Saul’s support.

And now, the opportunity to advance was finally in front of him. His expression firmed, and he became determined to trample over anyone who stood in his path. He had once appreciated Lu Yin’s talent, and he had even wanted to take the youth in as a disciple. But now, the youth was just an obstacle in his mind.

He left the courtyard and immediately pulled up the route that Lu Yin would use to travel to Sourcepeak Planet. Mr. Jun had to take care of this brat before he arrived at Sourcepeak Planet, and it seemed like he would have to call in all his favors to finish this.

Back in the courtyard, Saul silently stared at the Hall of Insight, his expression calm from start to end.

Not long after, a youth entered the courtyard. “Master.” This person was Saul’s disciple, Deng Pu. He was a genius who had become a Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreaker at a young age, and his reputation in the Outerverse even surpassed that of Charon and the other elites. In the entire Lockbreaker Society, he was one of the select few existences who was second only to the Distinguished Five.

Saul did not reply, and the atmosphere was a little silent.

“Master, must you deal with Lu Yin? He’s only a five star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker, and he was only just recently promoted. He shouldn’t be any threat to this disciple,” Deng Pu said respectfully.

Saul frowned. “I don’t like the word ‘should.’”

Deng Pu hurriedly amended his words, "This person is definitely of no threat to this disciple. Please rest assured, Master."

Saul quietly answered, "Throughout life, one will meet many destined opportunities. Some can grasp those opportunities while others can't. This Lu Yin has turned his misfortunes into blessings, and he was even able to survive the storms of Tempest Flowzone. He also obtained the Sea King's appreciation, seized control of the pyrolyte mines, and survived through Ironblood Weave's war. Now, he has already become someone who is protected by the Hall of Honor, and his destiny has greatly surpassed yours. This sort of person will have his own protection, and becoming enemies with such a person is the same as fighting against the heavens themselves. It's simply not worth it. Even if he's no threat at all to you, he still has to be quickly dealt with."

Deng Pu did not understand his master's words, as perhaps only those that were at the level of a Boundless Advanced Lockbreaker could see the universe so clearly.

"If Mr. Jun takes care of that person, then does Master truly intend to help him become a Boundless Advanced Lockbreaker?" Deng Pu felt suspicious.

Saul's lips curled upwards. "He's just a clown, and at best, he'll be able to become a four star Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreaker. If he doesn't get a lockbreaking tool, then he won't even be able to reach four stars, so he can just forget the Boundless Advanced realm. This sort of person needs a dream, and so what if we give it to him."

"Then what about True Insight?"

"You ask too many questions," Saul replied sternly.

Deng Pu hurriedly lowered his head and acknowledged his mistake.

"Although there aren't many Lockbreakers in the Outerverse who pose a threat to you and Master has taken care of the older ones who can, you still have to take note of a few others, such as Xi Qi. That fish of hers is very crafty, so it's best to not let her attend," Saul said firmly.

Deng Pu immediately acknowledged his master's words.

The Lockbreaker Competition was only held once every decade, and every time, it always attracted many Lockbreakers to participate, and even the worst ones would at least be three star Discerning Elementary Lockbreakers. However, this particular competition was different, as even one star Discerning Elementary Lockbreakers had decided to participate. This was specifically because the Outerverse was currently isolated from the Innaverse, and so, many Lockbreakers felt like their opportunity had finally arrived. There would not be nearly as many strong Lockbreakers competing, so the competition was greatly reduced.

At Sourcepeak Planet's space station, one spacecraft after another queued up to enter, and the line extended far into outer space.

Lockbreakers weren't the only ones who would gather at the Lockbreaker Competition, as this was also an opportunity to expand the Lockbreaker Society's influence. Hence, the society also invited many important figures to spectate each competition, such as the famous Four Corporations of the Outerverse and the representatives of the leading powers of certain weaves.

Inside one small spacecraft, there was a youth who was looking up with an arrogant expression, and he had several juniors taking turns to flatter him.

"Brother will definitely be able to become an overnight celebrity, and he'll win first place! He'll become the youngest champion in the history of the Lockbreaker Competition."

"That's right, Brother will definitely suppress everyone with his ability, and he'll be able to raise his status and gain the President's attention. He'll later be able to enter the Hall of Insight, wed beautiful geniuses, and rise up to the pinnacle of life."

"Brother, at that point, don't forget your juniors who have served you well. Your juniors wish for you to quickly gain success and amaze the universe with your name."

"Swift success! Famous throughout the universe!"

"Hahaha," the youth laughed as he patted the head of the junior beside him. "Don't become too proud—pride comes before the fall. Your brother is just at the level of a two star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker, and that's not enough. Not enough, hahaha."

The bootlicking from the surrounding juniors continued to flow like a waterfall, making the youth elated.

Suddenly, the youth looked out into outer space, and an amazed look appeared on his face as his expression slowly changed.

The surrounding disciples were all puzzled. "What did you see, Brother? Let us help you."

The youth pointed at a man who was standing outside the spacecraft. "He, he—"

One of the juniors stepped forward and hollered, "Hey brat! Our Brother is shouting for you, so come over here!"

The youth was almost frightened out of his wits, and he pushed his junior down and then bowed apologetically towards the man outside. The man outside the vessel only glanced over, not bothering with the group. He then stepped forward and vanished.

The junior had been nearly suffocated by the youth, and his face was flushed red. "Br- brother, what's going on?"

The youth watched the man disappear before finally relaxing and glaring fiercely at his junior. "You almost got me killed!"

The surrounding juniors blinked at him, as they were all at a loss.

"Do you guys know who he is? That was Straight Metallic Man!" the youth hollered with an ugly expression on his face.

The surrounding juniors' eyes went wide. "That's actually a name?"

“It’s a title—who knows what his name is!? He’s a five star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker as well as a Cruiser! Fortunately, your brother’s reaction was fast, or else we might have been eliminated without even knowing what had happened!” The youth was feeling horribly stressed.

The crowd of juniors stared at their senior brother blankly. “A five star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker? Isn’t the Outerverse isolated from the Innerverse? How is there still such a freak competing?”

The youth hollered at them, “Who the hell knows? There’s a bunch of freaks that won’t go to the Innerverse and instead stay in the Outerverse. My True Insight is gone, gone!”

The surrounding juniors quieted down. “Our hope is gone.”

“Shut up!”

Chapter 680: Evaluation

At Sourcepeak Planet’s space station, there were countless people there waiting, and many of them were staring at the people arriving. Any random person here might be someone from one of the four conglomerates, someone from a great power, or someone who simply worked for an important person. Everyone present had come to observe the competitors for the upcoming competition. True Insight was too valuable, and whenever people felt like others might be able to threaten them, it was possible for them to use underhanded means; such things were very common.

Outsiders would not act against Lockbreakers, as they would face an investigation from the Lockbreaker Society if that happened. However, nobody would get involved in internal conflicts that occurred within the Lockbreaker Society itself. This was especially true since President Geoffrey was not around, and some Lockbreakers had become even more unrestrained than usual.

“It seems like there won’t be much worth watching during this season’s Lockbreaker Competition, as no Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreakers will appear.”

“It’s not just Perceptive Intermediate Lockbreakers—not even a five star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker has arrived yet.”

Someone in the crowd suddenly shouted, “Look over there! It’s Straight Metallic Man.”

The crowd gazed at the sky. “So it’s Straight Metallic Man. There’s finally going to be a show worth watching. It really is true that the important figures always show up last. Straight Metallic Man is a five star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker. If it weren’t for the fact that he only unlocks sourceboxes that contain metal, then he might have already reached the Perceptive Intermediate level. This person is a worthy contender for the championship.”

“I’ve heard that Straight Metallic Man’s forcefield is actually able to cause the air to transform into metal! I wonder if it’s true.”

“He’s from Planet Ketan, and that place is full of metallic lifeforms, so that’s not completely impossible. He might not even be considered as a pure human anymore.”

...

Before long, there was another outcry as a beautiful woman attracted the crowd's attention. "No way, she's actually here! Wasn't she in the Innerverse?"

"Bro, you know that lady?" The crowd seemed doubtful, though there was someone who constantly seemed to be recording something.

"You guys might not recognize her by her appearance since she's always stayed in the Innerverse, but you'll definitely recognize her name! That's Serpent Queen!"

"Serpent Queen?" The crowd was stunned, and many people turned to look at the beautiful lady.

The Serpent Queen was a very famous five star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker. She had obtained an ancient, multi-colored snake through an intense lockbreaking session, and such a beast had shaken the heavens. The multi-colored snake was a very precious astral beast, and it would become a Hunter once it matured, and it could even reach the strength of an Enlighter if it was nurtured well. Her possessing this ancient, multi-colored snake meant that there might be an Enlighter level astral beast protecting this woman in the future. In the entire universe, how many Enlighters were there?

After she had obtained the ancient, multi-colored snake, the woman had started to be known as Serpent Queen.

The beautiful lady glanced through the crowd, but her attitude was clearly quite arrogant, and she quickly moved on.

...

Some more time passed, and another spacecraft docked at Sourcepeak Planet's space station. Inside, there was a youth waving fervently at the captain. "Thank you, all! You guys are really good people. Not only were you willing to send this bro to Sourcepeak Weave, but you also brought me all the way to Sourcepeak Planet yourselves! I will repay this gratitude in my next life. Thank you!"

Within the spacecraft, the captain and the others appeared to be crying, though there were no tears to be seen. The truth was that they had been forced to deliver this person! He was a devil, a scoundrel, and completely shameless.

"Isn't that Brother Wei?" someone cried out. This person's face was pale, and there was a black nose hair fluttering about in his nose. It looked very comical, but also disgusting.

A bystander was puzzled. "Who's Brother Wei?"

"You don't even know who Brother Wei is? He's a very famous, five star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker. His real name is Ku Wei, but he likes to make others call him Brother Wei, and his personality is rather nasty. Anyway, just take a wide detour if you see him. If you get caught up with him, you'll easily end up bankrupt, and you might even lose your life."

"He's that terrifying? He doesn't seem like it."

"He really doesn't look like it, so you can go ahead and see if it's true for yourself. I guarantee that it'll be an experience you'll never forget," the man with the fluttering nose hair urged the bystander.

Ku Wei suddenly turned to look at the crowd, and the expression of the few people who had been discussing him all suddenly changed as they hurriedly tried to retreat.

Ku Wei smiled and raised a hand. "Nosehair Bro, come here."

In the crowd, a group of people backed away to reveal the man who had one strand of black hair coming out of his nose.

The man pointed at himself as he looked at Ku Wei in terror. "Are you calling for me?"

Ku Wei smiled very brilliantly. "Yes, Nosehair Bro, it's you! Come over here."

The man was about to cry, but he was too afraid to not walk to Ku Wei. In hopes of improving his chances, he tried to curry favor. "Is there anything that I can help you with?"

Ku Wei hooked an arm around the man's neck and passionately said, "I never would have thought that you actually know about Brother Wei. That means that we must be acquaintances! Come on, show Brother Wei someplace good to stay, and also take care of Brother Wei's entertainment issue. You're so good looking, so there's no way you'll say no."

"Wha- what if I decline?" the nosehair man carefully probed.

Ku Wei's smile grew even wider, to the point where his back teeth were exposed. "Decline? You wouldn't."

He raised a fist and clenched it with so much force that the space around it started to quiver and distort. This caused the nosehair man's pupils to shrink. They were on Sourcepeak Planet, and the space on this planet was extremely stable, but Ku Wei was actually able to warp it so easily. The nosehair man's small physique could not take such a punch, and Ku Wei's eyes also glanced towards the man's lower body. The nosehair man didn't think twice, and he could only seriously reply, "Even if Brother Wei didn't speak up, I still would have arranged for a good place for you to stay. Being able to meet Brother Wei can only be due to the luck from my past life. I will definitely cherish this moment."

"Hahaha, you're a good brother! Let's go, Bro will let you play all across Sourcepeak Planet. Ah, right, Bro is broke, hahaha!"

The nosehair man was really about to cry at this moment.

Lockbreaker after Lockbreaker appeared at the space station, and aside from the most famous five star Discerning Elementary Lockbreakers, there were also a few two star, three star, and even the occasional one star Discerning Elementary Lockbreaker who had come to compete.

Deng Pu stared coldly at a screen showing the space station. These people were of no threat to him, and not even the Serpent Queen could attract his attention. The ancient, multi-colored snake would indeed be powerful once it matured, but it was not actually that useful for lockbreaking, and it could not hold a candle to Xi Qi's wretched fish. However, where was Xi Qi? Why hadn't she appeared yet?

At this moment, Deng Pu's gadget beeped with a notification, and when he glanced at it, his expression warped into a very ugly sight. Xi Qi had finally arrived, but she had already been taken away by Fiend Li.

Fiend Li was the honorary vice president, and he enjoyed the same status as Saul in the Outerverse Lockbreaker Society.

“So what if we let you compete? You were only able to reach the Perceptive Intermediate level with the help of that wretched fish while I relied on my own, true capabilities,” Deng Pu coldly said to himself. He then turned to leave.

There were three mainlands that had been joined to Sourcepeak Planet, and each one of them was overseen by a different executive member of the Lockbreaker Society.

Even right as the Lockbreaker Competition was about to start, there were still countless people who wanted to undergo the Lockbreaker evaluation.

“Next,” a middle-aged man called out gravely while looking at the long queue in front of him. There were so many applicants that the end of the line couldn’t even be seen.

A youth stepped out from the crowd while nervously clenching his numbered plate. He swallowed his saliva and bowed to the man. “This student greets Mentor.”

The middle-aged man raised a hand. “Has your star energy control reached the realm of infinite changes?”

The youth nodded, and he raised his hand. The star energy over his palm then changed to simulate wind, water, and fire.

“Begin your evaluation. The starburst orb is in front of you. If you can settle all of the berserk star energy inside it within ten seconds, you pass.”

The youth appeared determined, and he raised his hand to cover the starburst orb that had been covered by a metal membrane. Star energy shot out of the youth’s palm, and his eyes went wide as he stared closely at the berserk star energy inside of the starburst orb.

One second, two seconds, even after eight seconds had passed there was no reaction from the berserk energy. The young man’s face had turned deathly pale, but even after ten seconds passed, the berserk star energy still had not settled down.

The middle-aged man waved a hand. “Unqualified. Next.”

The youth’s face was devoid of all color, and he knelt on the ground and looked at the middle-aged man as he pleaded, “Mentor, please let this student try once more! Just once more, please.”

The middle-aged man’s gaze was filled with loathing. “You don’t have the aptitude to become a Lockbreaker. Leave immediately or else you will be banished.”

The youth collapsed limply to the ground. He continued to plead in an unwilling tone, but it was useless. His only choice was to climb back up and leave.

Following him, dozens of other people attempted the evaluation, but not a single one was able to pass.

Lockbreakers held the most esteemed profession in the entire universe. Every year, countless people would be evaluated, but only a handful of them would pass. How many people were there in the universe? It was an uncountable number. Actually, forget the entire universe; even the population of a single weave could not be calculated. However, despite such enormous numbers, there were only 630,000 Lockbreakers, and the probability of someone passing the evaluation could be extrapolated from that.

The middle-aged man was already accustomed to this situation. Even if there was an endless line of people in front of him constantly attempting the evaluation, it was normal for several months to pass without anyone passing, so he did not carry much hope.

“Demonstrate your star energy,” he said.

A beautiful lady was in front of him this time. She had rather bright eyes, which caused people to be attracted to her whenever she blinked.

“Yes, Mentor.” The young lady raised a hand, and the star energy over her palm whooshed to form a hurricane, quickly returned to a calm state, and then formed a torrent.

There were some in the crowd who marveled at her skillful display, as only a few cultivators in the Outerverse could exhibit such excellent control over their star energy at such a young age. This was especially impressive because the rain that she had created had a light green color, which showed that she had reached the level where she could change the color of her star energy, which was above the realm of infinite changes. At that point, there was only a single step left before a person comprehended a domain.

The middle-aged man was also surprised, and he looked at the young lady with some appreciation. “Not bad, not bad. Begin your evaluation with the starburst orb in front of you. If you settle all of the berserk star energy inside it within ten seconds, you pass. Do your best.”

The girl acknowledged his instructions with a crisp voice, peeled the metal membrane away, and used one of her hands to cover the starburst orb. The berserk star energy quivered for a moment, but then it started to gradually settle down at a visible rate until it grew completely silent. The entire process only took five seconds.

The crowd went into an uproar: success! Someone had succeeded.

The middle-aged man was pleasantly surprised. Five seconds—this result could be considered outstanding, and he had not expected such an excellent Lockbreaker to appear on this day. “Young lady, what’s your name?”

She smiled at him happily. “Wei Xin'er.”

He nodded and then gently told her, “Next we need to verify your identity. There shouldn’t be any issues, right?”

Wei Xin'er stood there looking very lovable. She placed her hands together and stood still, allowing a beam of light to sweep over her. Her identity was immediately displayed on the examiner’s gadget. The examiner checked it, only to suddenly look back up in shock. “You’re from the Wei family.”

“Wei Xin'er greets Mentor.”

The middle-aged man raised a hand to stop her and then smiled. “I’m not the Mentor—I’m only an examiner. The actual mentor is Lady Felynn, and I will take you to meet her and let her make the arrangements for you.”

Wei Xin'er smiled sweetly. “Thank you.”

The middle-aged man looked back over at the crowd. “Everyone, wait here.”

After giving this order, he led Wei Xin'er away from the examination area.