

Chapter 81: Good Person

Seeing that Lu Yin wasn't responding to his impassioned rant, Long Chu continued, "Your Majesty, do you know who controls the second ring's army?"

Lu Yin stared back at the man, who continued to rage, "On the surface, that army is a reserve of the Thirteen Imperial Squadrons. In reality, it's a war machine to monitor us. They're the real guardians of the Capital Star, but they guard against its oldest allies!"

"So what do you want me to do?"

"Reassume military authority over the Zishan Family, become our commander. We are soldiers, not toys for nobles, and definitely not enemies of the Empire!"

Lu Yin smiled bitterly, "You place me on too high a pedestal, Commander Long. You're a smart man and should understand my circumstances. Yes, I'm King Zishan, but only as a pawn of His Imperial Majesty used to show his kindness to my ancestors. Him giving me the title is his restitution to the Zishan Family; reassuming power will be difficult."

"How will you know if you don't try, Your Majesty? We soldiers support you!" Long Chu shouted.

Lu Yin gestured for him to lower his volume, "This isn't an urgent matter. Do you have any other issues, Commander Long?"

Long Chu sighed and sat down, looking troubled, "There is one more thing I hope for your help with, Your Majesty."

"What?"

"General Sigmund Mathers was a supporter of the Zishan Family, but he has been arrested in the aftermath of Earth's trial. The man was definitely framed, I hope you can try to save him."

Lu Yin frowned, "Why are you so sure?"

Long Chu was gloomy, "His Imperial Majesty did not give General Mathers any opportunity to defend himself, and he sealed any news once he learned that Barudar had defected. Someone is evidently afraid of having new issues surfacing, and slandered General Mathers in front of him. They must mean harm towards the General, or His Imperial Majesty would not have convicted him so readily. Your Majesty, please save him."

Lu Yin's fingers drummed on the table as he fell deep into thought, while Long Chu stared at him with bloodshot eyes. It seemed like he hadn't had a good night's sleep in a long time. A long while later, Lu Yin looked back at the man, "Alright, I'll go to His Imperial Majesty immediately and do what I can."

Long Chu was pleasantly surprised, "Thank you, Your Majesty."

Lu Yin nodded and had Xu San escort the man out. It was only once the commander was out that his gaze frosted over, "This is the second time they've dared to act against me, they really think I'm a pushover."

Silver had passed him a note on the Perseverance that not only contained information about the old factions of the Zishan Family, but also certain defectors. This Long Chu was one of them, and was an underling of Sicar at that. The man's aim was simple; it was to coerce him to try and rescue Sigmund, which would lead to no good end with his current power. Not only would he fail to save the General, but he would also invoke suspicion from the Emperor that he was trying to gather the old subordinates of the Zishan Family once more. Others would laugh at his ignorance, and his title would be useless if they thought of him as blind, arrogant, and ignorant.

But now, not helping would offend those who truly did consider themselves subordinate to the Zishan Family still. Although Lu Yin was unclear why Home had asked him to act out in this role, the title was definitely useful and the followers he gained from it would be future helpers. Offending them wouldn't bode well in future moves. Thus, neither solution was a good one; this was a good play by Sicar.

Lu Yin squinted and muttered crossly to himself before leaving the Zishan Residence for the palace. News of King Zishan pleading for General Sigmund quickly spread across the Capital Star, lighting up countless faces with ridicule.

"27 Corpse Kings escaped, and this seems to be the Neohuman Alliance's style. His Imperial Majesty obviously knows Sigmund is innocent or he wouldn't return, but a scapegoat is required or the Great Yu Empire would face pressure from the Inniverse. The Neohuman Alliance is a universal enemy across domains, and poses a threat as great as any individual domain. His Imperial Majesty cannot bear it, but this King Zishan wants to act recklessly. He's just courting death!" Sicar sneered.

Raas was elated, "This will just make His Imperial Majesty uneasy. As long as Sigmund is alive, His Imperial Majesty will have to bear a huge pressure. Lu Yin is unclear of the circumstances and really assumes that the former subordinates of the Zishans respect him. In reality, the family has long lost its power."

Sicar shook his head and smiled, "It's not that he's unclear of the situation, but he simply cannot understand it. King Zishan? Who would recognise him? Even the crown prince showed him some face to act benevolent, but he will soon realise his own downfall due to this arrogance," Sicar looked at Raas and his face sank, "I heard you lost to Wukai in last night's race?"

Raas was stunned and nodded in embarrassment, "There won't be a next time."

Sicar snorted, "What did you promise him?"

Raas was in a difficult position.

"Speak!"

Raas hesitated, "For you to plead for Sigmund in the royal court."

THWACK! The Vice-Treasurer slapped his son back a few meters, "You useless son, daring to make such gambles. The court is for the Empire to discuss national affairs, and every resolution concerns countless planets. How did you turn it into child's play, do you think you can explain this to His Imperial Majesty if he finds out? Go kneel in the courtyard, you're not to move for three days."

Raas covered his mouth and ran off with an ugly expression. Meanwhile, Sicar massaged his throbbing temples. He wasn't the only one taunting Lu Yin's ignorance that night.

In a pink room, the little girl Peach was staring at a screen with bright eyes. There were countless snacks all around, and she was almost drooling.

A soft knock at the door was followed by a sweet voice, "Captain, there's news that King Zishan Lu Yin is going to plead for a pardon for General Sigmund."

Peach blinked, "Good man."

There was a brief silence, "What did you say?"

"I said he's a good man," she stated, "Sigmund was obviously wronged here, and no one else dared to plead on his behalf. Lu Yin is a good man, and I wasn't very nice to him in court. I should find a chance to apologize to him."

The person outside the door remained speechless.

Within the palace, The Undying Yushan closed his eyes. He had already been standing for two hours. No one dared to interrupt, but he suddenly opened his eyes on his own, "What's the matter?"

The palace maid that had just arrived bowed down, "King Zishan requests an audience."

"Let him in."

Lu Yin followed the maid while Bronsen had to wait outside. Prince Dorren and Prince Duke had just arrived as he walked in, and the former smiled at the latter as they saw Lu Yin's figure, "Why are you here, too, Royal Brother?"

"To see Royal Father. You?" Duke replied lazily.

"Me too."

"Then why aren't you going in?"

"What about you, Royal Brother? Why aren't you entering?"

Duke's lips curled, "Don't smile that much, it's disgusting."

Dorren sighed, "What good will that do? Don't strain yourself so much, Royal Brother, it's difficult."

The Second Prince's ears perked up, "You should tell that to yourself, but with me right behind, things will be tiring even if you don't want them to be."

"Is the throne really that important to you? Even as your elder brother, I can't tell," Dorren said softly.

Duke ignored him and stepped in, "Let's go, any slower and Royal Father will be infuriated to death by that King Zishan. It wouldn't be good for him to collapse before I become the crown prince."

Dorren sighed and followed, while the watching Bronsen remained calm. The fight for any throne was always a bloodbath, but the Great Yu Empire was an exception. The Undying Yushan had five children. The third and fourth had died in the Inniverse, leaving the Crown Prince Dorren, Second Prince Duke, and Fifth Princess Wendy. The position had to be given to one of the three, but the Fifth Princess had no

interest in it at all. The Crown and Second Princes had always been fighting for it, but they seemed too open and even talked about things in public without doing anything threatening. He had grown used to it long ago.

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“Lu Yin pays his respects to Royal Uncle.”

“Come, look. This plant is from a strange planet, and does not have a name yet.” The Emperor was looking at a shining purple plant. Lu Yin drew closer upon his beckoning and observed; finding it strange. The bulbous, segmented organism was emitting an unclear aura, leaving him unable to tell if it was weak or strong.

“Don’t get too close,” the Emperor said with a smile, “It’s too powerful for the current you.”

Lu Yin was lost, “Too powerful?”

“It can strangle Explorers.”

Lu Yin’s gaze changed in an instant, and he retreated immediately while staring in awe, “That strong?”

The Undying Yushan laughed and looked on at the purple plant, approaching it step by step. He then touched it under Lu Yin’s amazed gaze and turned around, “Do you want to try? It feels very soft.”

Chapter 82: An Act Of Merit

Lu Yin’s eyes flickered as he stepped forward, and reached out a hand to touch the purple plant. It was very soft indeed, and touching it even made him feel like his stamina was recovering a little with every whiff.

The Emperor looked at the plant and was moved, “The laws of nature can be very cruel. This plant knows how to restrain its power in the face of powerhouses. No matter how it is touched, it will not attack, and even remains motionless while all the other beings around it may resist. That’s why this was the only plant that survived from that planet and was brought into my presence. When I’m around, it’s just a pretty thing to look at. It might have an Explorer’s strength, but that is of no use.”

Lu Yin squinted at the clear warning, but the Emperor continued to ask, “Do you have anything to discuss?”

“I accidentally unearthed some news during Earth’s trial and decoded some coordinates from it. There might be corpse kings hidden there.”

The Undying Yushan was shocked, “What? You know the location of corpse kings?”

“I’m not certain that that’s what they are, the details were fuzzy.”

“What coordinates?” the Emperor’s voice boomed. It was only after passing those coordinates to the army that he smiled, “Sit for a while, there will be results soon.”

Lu Yin nodded and sat. It was at that point that Dorren and Duke arrived, looking at the scene with astonishment. Wasn’t King Zishan pleading for leniency on General Sigmund? How was Royal Father not furious?

“Why are the two of you here too?” The Undying Yushan was puzzled, but after the two made their salutations, he nodded, “Since you’re here, sit and wait with us.”

The two felt suspicious, but asked no questions as they calmly sat beside Lu Yin who simply nodded without further interaction. They ate some snacks from the maid as they waited, half an hour passing before the Emperor’s gadget rang out. He looked at it and smiled, turning to Lu Yin, “Good job, a total of three corpse kings. This is your first great merit.”

Lu Yin immediately got up, “Royal Uncle’s troops are invincible, that is why they got the corpse kings.”

Dorren was stumped, “Royal Father, what corpse kings are we talking about?”

The Emperor explained the matter to the two, who stared at Lu Yin in amazement. The Neohuman Alliance was quite capable, and exterminating even a single escaped corpse king was a deed of merit. This was why the escape of 27 had forced The Undying Yushan to shift the blame to Sigmund. Even if this didn’t cancel out the pressure entirely, it would recover some of the Empire’s lost reputation.

“Good job, Royal Brother,” the Crown Prince commended. Meanwhile, Duke measured Lu Yin up once more. He had assumed him to be a fool, but this newcomer actually had some brains. No wonder he played around with everyone and defeated a Nightking during Earth’s trial. This was interesting.

The Undying Yushan laughed, “You’ve served your country well, Little Yin. Feel free to ask for anything you want; I will do whatever is within my power.”

Lu Yin took a few steps back and bowed again, “Royal Uncle, General Mathers rescued me once on Earth. I beseech you to announce publicly that he was the one who provided these coordinates.”

Everyone fell silent. Dorren met glances with Duke, both astonished. It had come to Sigmund as expected, but this wasn’t a plea for mercy. It was a request to shift the credit!

The Emperor remained silent for a while, and Lu Yin maintained his bow with twinkling eyes. He’d learnt that three corpse kings was a big deal; capturing any single one was an amazing feat in itself. This was an adequate pretext to gain some power, but he had not sought to do so. Sigmund wasn’t just one person; he represented the former subordinates of the Zishan Family and his own reputation in returning favors. Public opinion of oneself was vastly important in this day and age, and a good reputation was worth more than a modicum of power. Lu Yin understood clearly that his current strength left him unable to take on any true status. He was just a tiny Sentinel that no one would notice; so what if he was given authority over military affairs? No one would listen to him. What he needed now was a good reputation and inside information.

The Undying Yushan finally spoke after a while, “You must think carefully, do you really wish to do this?”

Lu Yin was firm, “I hope you allow it, Royal Uncle.”

“I can, but this will not offset Sigmund’s crimes. At most, it can spare his life.”

Lu Yin was touched, “Thank you, Royal Uncle.”

The Emperor nodded and looked at Lu Yin deeply, then asked the two princes to leave. He walked over, “Are you really returning the favor by saving Sigmund? Give me an honest answer.”

Lu Yin looked at the man and replied sincerely, "Yes, Royal Uncle."

The Undying Yushan stared into Lu Yin's eyes, then smiled, "You really are Zishan's descendant. He also knew how to show gratitude where it is due. Alright, I'm tired, you can leave."

Lu Yin nodded and left, while the Emperor looked at his back and sighed towards the skies, "Your descendants are really like you."

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Lu Yin hadn't even reached the Grand Astral Gate before the imperial edict had been sent out, "Owing to amendments for his crimes, Sigmund Mathers is pardoned from capital punishment. He will be detained temporarily due to insufficient evidence of his treason."

Many high officials of the Empire were stunned by this order, unable to understand just why this had happened. Only those on the Capital Star knew that King Zishan had gone to the palace.

"How is this possible? Amendments for his crimes? What amendments? What did that brat do?" Sicar stared at his screen blankly, an emotion mimicked by many people across the Empire.

Even at the Grand Astral Gate, Bronsen was staring at his own screen in similar disbelief. He had never spoken out of turn towards Lu Yin because his job was to ensure King Zishan's safety, but he hadn't felt that pleading for mercy would have worked. Now, he had to reevaluate this King Zishan who'd brought about a miracle. It seemed like this guy wasn't arrogant and oblivious; he had the brains to match his guts.

"Boss, you're out!" Xu San was excited.

Lu Yin frowned at the wording that made him seem like he was being released from prison, "Bronsen, do you know where Vice-Treasurer Sicar lives?"

Bronsen was distracted, "Yes."

"Bring me there."

Bronsen nodded and set the route on the plane, which dashed off the runway only a few moments later. This was Lu Yin's first time to the capital, and it was quite different from what he had imagined. There certainly was technology everywhere, but there were some ancient buildings as well. A large section of the place was covered in greenery, which was a stark contrast from the planes that constantly flew by and the stunned expressions of those within. His transport was far too eye-grabbing here.

Not far away, a giant screen was showing a lively young girl singing, and there were people crowding around it both on the ground and on the bridges. The three rings could be seen clearly in the sky, circling in the air like clouds.

"Boss, look. So many beauties!" Xu San exclaimed as he surveyed the city below, but Lu Yin was wholly uninterested. The Great Yu Empire was a far cry from the Innerverse.

A plane suddenly dashed across their front and turned sharply to move beside Lu Yin's, and a pretty girl threw him a flirtatious glance through the glass, "Hey, handsome. Let's have a race to see who's faster."

"Sure, let's bet," Lu Yin's lips curved up.

Her eyes flashed, "How much?"

"Five cubes of star crystals."

Her jaw dropped, "Five cubes? You must be crazy! Do you even have that many?"

"Don't play if you can't afford it," he dismissed, and she snorted and left in another direction.

"She was such a pretty girl, Boss. You shouldn't scare them." Xu San felt it was a shame.

Lu Yin laughed it off. Everyone was beautiful when technology reached a certain point; unless there was someone as pretty as Bai Xue, he didn't care. Still, his starting offer had been far too vicious; the school leaders on Earth's trial had only averaged one cube and that was due to Raas and Jenny pushing up the numbers. This girl was just an average student with a few cubes on her at best. Five was too steep a figure for her to bet.

Chapter 83: Welcome Gift

Since they were on the topic of betting, Lu Yin realized it was rather inconvenient to have no star crystals on his person at all. He didn't even have any credits, so he decided to find a Mavis Bank soon and see how much the Emperor had given him. Hopefully, he hadn't been too stingy.

The Capital Star was very big, but most officials lived near the royal palace. It only took ten minutes for Lu Yin and Xu San to arrive at the luxurious manor that was Sicar's home, with Bronsen stepping out of the void. When they were stopped from entering by the guard, Lu Yin said indifferently, "Inform Sicar that King Zishan is here to visit."

The guard was shocked and immediately ran inside to relay the message. It didn't take long for Sicar to run out with Raas while making a show of berating the guard, "You shameful creature, how could you not allow His Majesty to enter? Forgive me for not being present to meet you personally, Your Majesty."

Raas bowed to give his respects, but his eyes were seething with hatred. Lu Yin smiled, "I took the liberty of paying an unannounced visit, my apologies for the disturbance."

"It is my honor to be visited by King Zishan. Please come in, Your Majesty."

Lu Yin did not stand on ceremony, nodding and taking the initiative to walk in. Sicar's manor was certainly grand, but it was only an average sort of grandeur. The building did not exceed the man's position as a Vice-Treasurer, an indication of someone with an abundance of caution. The man was even acting so respectfully towards a powerless king, behaving appropriately with superiors and subordinates alike. Lu Yin had to admire him a little. Many had one attitude in front of the Emperor and another behind him, but Sicar was different. He lived as if he was constantly under The Undying Yushan's eye, and he thought of the Emperor in everything he did. No one could pick out a single fault of his; that was what made him such a fearsome person.

Lu Yin thought of the introduction that Silver had given him. Although Sicar was the Vice-Treasurer in name, Finance Minister Bailey was just a figurehead. This was the person who controlled the Empire's finances; that was why the Twelfth Squadron valued him so. Most would find it a headache to deal with this sort of person, but Lu Yin liked the smart ones the most.

"My son has committed many errors during the trial on Earth. We seek Your Majesty's forgiveness," Sicar apologized at the first opportunity, forcing Raas to do so as well.

Lu Yin smiled, "You are too courteous, Lord Sicar. Trials are by nature competitive; I was about to ask you not to blame me for being too ruthless with your son."

"Haha, it was an important lesson from Your Majesty. If this brat had stayed in Yu Academy, he'd continue to believe that he was the best. It's good for him to attain some experience and learn that there are always stronger people in the world, geniuses with innate gifts like Your Majesty," Sicar laughed. Lu Yin smiled just as facetiously.

Lu Yin's visit came out of the blue, and Sicar did not know what the goal was. The incident where Raas had compelled Veron to intimidate Lu Yin had put him in a difficult position, but he was confident that there was no way for anyone to know of his relationship with Long Chu. So why was Lu Yin here? To condemn him? That was unlikely.

"Lord Sicar, I've heard that your home planet has beautiful scenery," Lu Yin asked out of curiosity.

Sicar smiled, "That's right, I was born in..."

An hour quickly passed, leaving Xu San bored to death behind Lu Yin. he didn't know what his boss was up to, and Raas was the same. Both of them watched Lu Yin and Sicar chat all over the place.

Fresh to the Great Yu Empire, Lu Yin had countless topics to talk about. However, Sicar was different; as the Vice-Treasurer and the true controller of the Empire's finances, he had many other matters to attend to. And yet, he couldn't outright reject Lu Yin's queries, helplessly answering everything in detail. His planet's environment, customs, local conditions, training methods, even gossip... Two more hours passed quickly.

It was soon unbearable for Raas, and Sicar himself coughed and lifted his teacup. This was a simple indication to the visitor that they had overstayed their welcome, but Lu Yin pretended not to notice and lifted his own cup to take a sip. One more hour slipped by before the man coughed again, "Your Majesty, is there any purpose to your visit?"

"No, I just wanted to visit you and learn from your insights. I've had some contact with your son before, and Long Chu mentioned that you're a well-known scholar. I was here hoping some of your wisdom rubbed off on me."

Sicar's eyes flashed as he nodded, muttering something to himself before whispering to Raas. The youth gritted his teeth and left the room, returning with a cosmic ring.

Sicar smiled at Lu Yin, "It must be inconvenient for Your Majesty to do so many things on your first visit to the capital, so you can hire some servants to run errands for you. I once received a favor from the Zishan Residence, so I hope you would kindly accept this small token of my appreciation."

“This is embarrassing!” Lu Yin pretended to be stunned even as he accepted the ring without hesitation. Contempt was written all over Raas’s face.

Sicar laughed, “No need to be courteous, Your Majesty.”

Lu Yin got up, “Then I’ll take it. Thank you once more, Lord Sicar.”

Sicar stood as well, “Let me escort you out, Your Majesty.”

It was when Lu Yin stepped out of Sicar’s mansion that he suddenly looked back at the door, “When will you be available next? I’ll come by for another visit.”

Sicar smiled, “Forgive me, Your Majesty, I’ve been rather busy recently. If there is anything you need, we can meet after court sessions at the Grand Astral Gate.”

“Alright, thank you.”

Sicar finally allowed his face to droop as Lu Yin left.

“Father, what did this brat mean? He still wants to come again?” Raas was infuriated.

“He’s trying to probe me, and sending a warning, too. He’ll return if I act against him again.”

“So what? He’ll leave if we just give him a little money. What can his title do to us anyway?”

While Raas continued to mock Lu Yin, Sicar grew even more downcast as he realized this person was beyond his control. How did he know Long Chu was one of his? No one knew that except himself and the Second Prince, not even his own son. This kid had even rescued Sigmund recently, he wasn’t simple at all.

“Send someone to see where he’s gone,” Sicar ordered.

A short while later, a soldier returned to report, “My Lord, His Majesty is headed towards Minister Bailey’s residence.”

Sicar’s gaze changed and he gripped his fist. First his manor, and then Bailey’s. It was evident that Lu Yin knew that Bailey was just a figurehead, he wouldn’t have messed up the sequence. King Zishan definitely had some backing, or he wouldn’t have such an understanding of the Capital Star already. This was no simpleton.

“Remember not to provoke him for now,” Sicar said in a low voice.

Raas didn’t understand, but wouldn’t dare refute his own father.

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Bailey’s mansion was not far from Sicar’s. The Finance Minister talked with Lu Yin for only half an hour, being much more straightforward and giving him a cosmic ring directly. While Sicar had his misgivings, Bailey knew that he was just a puppet with nothing but money. He readily handed over a crystal card that looked even more valuable than the one from the Vice-Treasurer.

“It is my honor for Your Majesty to have graced us with your presence. Please take care of us in the future,” he smiled and sent Lu Yin off.

“You are too kind, Lord Bailey, please go home.” Lu Yin smiled.

Bailey nodded and followed Lu Yin’s departure with his own eyes until he was out of sight. Then he spat in contempt, “What the... Such extortion. You’ll be ripe for the picking soon; we’ll see how long you can maintain this complacency.”

Lu Yin was in a good mood, a very good mood indeed. He had this idea of going house to house for a bribe when the Crown Prince gave him a welcome gift. Right, these weren’t bribes, they were welcome gifts. He would stay until they understood, and leave the moment he got the gift. He had too much time on his hands anyway. He was an idle prince with no real power, so anything went. Who would dare report that he was taking bribes, and so what if they did, anyway? Why would anyone bribe a Sentinel?

The Undying Yushan had also given his promise that he would not let others bully him as long as he was on the throne. This promise had to be made use of quickly; who knew when the old man would die. As for reputation, he did not care what these courtiers. Which of them weren’t greedy, but the Emperor tolerated them anyway. Why? It was because they were capable. Greed wasn’t frightening unless paired with incompetence. Sicar’s was astronomical, but no one dared point it out because he managed the Empire’s finances well. On the other hand, Lu Yin was someone with no power, but that meant he also had nothing to lose. In fact, this act served to lower the guards of the courtiers against him. He had spent so much work and energy to become this descendant of the Zishan Family. He reasoned that he’d be letting himself down if he didn’t get something in return.

Chapter 84: Mavis Bank

Lu Yin spent a full three days collecting bribes, and gained a substantial return on his time. Five Mavis Bank crystal cards, twelve crystal cards from Yu Imperial Bank, and 200 star crystal cubes had left Xu San gaping in amazement, and even Bronsen’s cheeks were stretched wide at the sight of unprecedented shamelessness. This was the first time the soldier had seen someone visiting people at their homes to ask for money.

The criminal himself was grinning from ear to ear; none of the 10+ courtiers he’d visited in the past three days had given him too much on their own, but it added up quickly into a tidy sum. He had to do this more often, but unfortunately, most of the other courtiers had quickly closed their doors and declined visitors. No hurry, there would be plenty of opportunities in the future.

That train of thought reminded him that he still had to go to Mavis Bank and withdraw some money. It always felt like he was missing something without any on him. As someone who’d just gone from rags to riches, he turned to Bronsen in high spirits, “Set a course for the Mavis Bank.”

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Within the royal palace, a few courtiers were making a joint report to the Emperor, “Your Imperial Majesty, King Zishan is using his identity without restraint to request bribes. Please investigate him.”

“Your Imperial Majesty, please investigate.”

The Undying Yushan lethargically sipped a mouthful of tea, “Did you pay him off?”

“Of course not, Your Imperial Majesty!” one of them grew agitated, “I did not meet him, for I didn’t have the money to bribe him with.”

“Then how do you know that he is asking for bribes?”

Another spoke up, “This humble servant has heard that Lord Bailey, Lord Sicar, and even Lord Garope have been extorted.”

“*Heard?* Do my courtiers want to accuse King Zishan based on rumors? Did Sicar or anyone else admit it?” the Emperor asked sternly, leaving all of them cowering in silent fear. How would anyone admit to something like that? He took another sip, “I know that King Zishan visited some courtiers, and from what I know, some of them gave him welcome gifts. A welcome gift for a child is not too much, do you not agree?”

“Yes, Your Imperial Majesty, it is not too much.” The ministers didn’t dare to speak further; the Emperor was clearly covering for King Zishan.

“Alright, you can leave,” he waved them off, and they left in a hurry. He couldn’t help a laugh when they were gone, his screen lighting up with information about how Lu Yin had robbed dozens of students in Earth’s trial. He shook his head and smiled, “This kind of lust for money wasn’t Zishan’s style. Perhaps it’s just the youth.”

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The Mavis Bank branch on the Zenyu Star was actually quite close to the royal palace; these transdomain companies had far greater influence than an empire in a single weave. However, the building wasn’t too tall out of respect for the Great Yu Empire. While it wasn’t even top five in height, however, no one dared look down on it. Anyone who could enter those premises was an influential figure.

As they approached from a distance, Lu Yin noticed that the building was constructed like a large tree, with each branch densely packed with tens of millions of credits. These were genuine notes, some of them even floating down after the occasional gust for people to pick up. The property prices close to any Mavis Bank branch were normally exorbitant, likely even surpassing the royal palace. Countless people strolled around every day, hoping to pick up some free money.

The bank had bought all the land within a thousand miles, planting trees rarely seen in the Outerverse. They had their own specialized security force with Explorers and even greater powers, and some rare creatures flitted across on occasion. Atop the tree was even a space station reserved for the Mavis Family; this place exuded luxury in every way.

A well-mannered young lady walked over to Lu Yin the moment he got off his plane, giving him a brief introduction of the bank before taking him to a counter. When they entered the large tree trunk that led directly to the top floor, he surveyed the dozen counters in his surroundings; there wasn’t much traffic at all. Behind him was a dumbstruck Xu San, wondering if money could just be picked up here. He had already grabbed one note from the floor.

The counter was entirely automated, and the woman only stood nearby and offered beverages and all sorts of other refreshments as she tended to Lu Yin’s needs. He first scanned through all the Mavis cards

he'd gotten from the courtiers, acquiring a tidy sum of a little over one million credits. The exchange rate to Yushan credits was ten to one, so that meant he had ten million. It definitely wasn't a small amount, but it wasn't enormous either. In addition to the modest 300,000 credits from the Emperor, he drew close to 1.5 million. The Yu Imperial cards also translated to about 500,000 more universal credits, leaving him with a net worth of 2 million.

Lu Yin's mouth twitched at this number; they were too stingy! One cube of star crystals was normally worth about a million credits, so he didn't even have 20 cubes' worth on hand. Still, it made sense once he thought about it. The courtiers hadn't dared give him too much money to avoid investigation, but star crystals themselves could be crushed to avoid that complication any time.

"Damn, three days of work and this is all I get? Looks like they spent all their money on the star crystals, I should find a way to get some more," he muttered to himself.

"Boss, where to next? Are we going to continue with the extortion?" Xu San asked cautiously as they walked out of the bank.

"Stop it with the bullshit, those were welcome gifts," Lu Yin glared back, and the embarrassed lackey giggled. Still, he considered it for a moment but mumbled to himself that he ought to take a break. There was no use in finding all those officials now; no one would open their doors for him. It was time to train his battle techniques.

It was at this point that his hand reached out naturally, grabbing a bill that was floating down from the sky. It was manufactured with a special material, star crystal threads weaved into a special design of the universe on top that made it look elegant while still feeling soft. He looked up and saw the giant tree with countless such bills fluttering on the branches, his gaze filling up with greed. How much would he get if he robbed this bank? He suddenly thought of Lulu Mavis, wondering if she was here.

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King Zishan returned to his residence, telling Bronsen that he would enter isolation for five days and that no one was to disturb him. The man strangely released a sigh of relief, "Yes, Your Majesty."

"Boss, what about me?" Xu San asked expectantly.

Lu Yin simply passed a card to him, "Buy me some furniture, whatever you see fit. Don't train."

Xu San was puzzled about why he was forbidden from training, but didn't question further.

Lu Yin was considering whether he should report Xu San's innate gift to the Empire. That would give this lackey of his a formcast remodeling opportunity, but then he wouldn't be a lackey anymore. But did that mean he had to raise him forever? He couldn't stop Xu San from training much longer.

At this point, he thought back to how he'd wasted Gift Copy before, forgetting about Xu San's Farsight gift. So focused on Bai Xue's innate gift of Frost, he had forgotten that it wasn't the only kind.

There were three types of innate gifts in the universe; elemental, biological, and exotic. Elemental gifts were quite straightforward, giving their owner grasp over powers such as ice and fire. They included all sorts of natural phenomena; there were legends of a cultivator who had once awakened an innate gift

of Black Holes; they were unequaled for a long time. Biological gifts were related to the vast array of creatures across the universe, with myths of a phoenix that had burnt down the walls of the universe itself. Meanwhile, exotic gifts were the 'other' and included modifications to the body, and even things like Lu Yin's die that could not be explained directly. Xu San's gift was exotic as well.

There wasn't a specific hierarchy of the three categories of innate gifts; world-dominating abilities came from all types. This was why the Universe Youth Council allowed such one-in-a-million characters to join their subsidiaries directly.

Lu Yin had originally planned to sell Xu San to some powerful organization, but that was still shortchanging himself. He had already brought the man all the way to the Great Yu Empire, and wasn't quite willing to let go of him. Money could always be earned, but one couldn't always find cultivators with innate gifts to follow them. Xu San didn't know his own importance yet, but he would learn soon enough.

Still, after some thought, Lu Yin sent a message to the Emperor informing him about Xu San's situation. The reply didn't take long; Xu San would be given a remodeling chance and entry into Yu Academy. The Seventh Squadron had apparently even indicated their interest already.

He thought back to the introductions from Bronsen. The Seventh Captain was Batson, and his weapon of choice was an antiquated gun. Had he taken a fancy to Xu San's innate gift?

Chapter 85: Fourth To The Throne

"Boss, someone is trying to take me away!" Xu San cried over a call.

"I've informed the Empire about your situation," Lu Yin explained, "You can go through formcast remodeling like Zhang Dingtian and the others; you'll have to depend on yourself in the future."

Outside the Zishan Palace, Xu San carefully swallowed his saliva as he recalled the scene of Zhang Dingtian's suffering, "Formcast remodeling? Boss, I wouldn't dare."

"Haha. Who asked you to absorb energy crystals before you met me? But then, you wouldn't have unlocked your innate gift. Alright, work hard and you might compare to Dingtian and the rest in the future," he laughed and hung up. Now, everyone from Earth had found their own home here, where they could forge their futures from. As for himself, he had to get stronger quickly; Astral-10 would arrive anytime. With his current power, it would be difficult for him to enter.

There was an entire training facility in the Zishan Residence, but it was a shame that Lu Yin was alone. He entered the gravity training room and turned it up to 40x by habit, directly crushing a cube of star crystals and starting practice on the Daynight Punch and Skybeast Claw. Most people weren't so extravagant as to use star energy for training like this, but to him it was a trifle.

.....

Lu Yin didn't step out of his residence for seven consecutive days, and many guessed that he had been berated by the Emperor. At the end of that week, Zhang Dingtian arrived at the second ring around the Zenyu Star where the Thirteen Imperial Squadrons were stationed. He looked up at a giant 5 as his identity was verified, quickly being led into the Fifth Squadron's camp. There were innumerable auras surging around him that could all crush him with ease, but he maintained a steady gaze.

The Thirteen Imperial Squadrons were the most powerful faction within the Great Yu Empire, and every official member was a Melder at a minimum. Each squadron had multiple Explorers, and the Cruisers in charge represented the peak of the Empire's prowess. The Fifth Captain was Huo Qingshan, a man who had once ventured into the Inverse alongside The Undying Yushan. He was also the Huo Family's patriarch, Xiaoling's father.

Zhang Dingtian was brought below an enormous volcano that was constantly rumbling, lava shooting into the sky like fireworks before crashing down and melting into the earth. He remained motionless as a molten rock shot towards him, guaranteed to crush and melt him to ashes if they touched. Just before the heat could burn him, however, it was suddenly absorbed by a terrifying voice, "You come from Earth?"

Zhang Dingtian was forced back and his skin had already been singed, but he showed no fear, "Yes."

"Why did you step out?"

"To become stronger."

"You will die."

"Remaining a weakling is a more tragic fate than death!" he howled under the pressure, his legs almost unable to withstand it any longer. Even his clothes were being burned off.

"You will join the Fifth Squadron from today, and you will be under me. I'm Huo Qingshan." These words pushed the Bladesage over the edge. He spat out a mouthful of blood and fell to the ground.

Within the volcano, a middle-aged man opened his eyes to look at his new subordinate. His hair was even redder than the lava around, and while he'd seemed milder in court, it was here that he revealed his scorching heat.

.....

Elsewhere in the second ring, Bai Xue was brought into the Sixth Squadron that was entirely different from the Fifth. A majority of the people here were girls, and the environment was graceful and pretty, filled with all sorts of fragrant pink plants. Bai Xue hadn't expected to enter such a place at all, and assessed her surroundings curiously.

Peach walked out with a tall woman several meters behind her, floating up when she was ten meters away herself and looking at Bai Xue curiously, "You must be Bai Xue, King Zishan's friend?"

"Yes!" Bai Xue hurriedly saluted.

The girl nodded in satisfaction, "You really are beautiful. Alright, you'll be a part of my squadron from today. Remember to use my name if anyone bullies you, the great Captain Peach!"

Bai Xue was stunned. This was the Sixth Captain? A cute little girl? It couldn't be! She suddenly felt like she'd embarked on a hopeless adventure.

"Why, you aren't willing?" Peach's displeased voice rang out behind her, and her gaze narrowed even as her head shot around in an instant. She then bobbed between Peach's current location and the old one, where a phantom image still existed. Why hadn't it vanished yet?

Peach smiled craftily, "Now you see, even space itself can't react to my speed. It's only going now."

Bai Xue stared dazedly at the phantom that started to dissipate. She couldn't understand how this happened, but she knew that it was terrifying. "Yes, Captain!"

Peach smiled.

.....

In an isolated section of the second ring, the barracks of the Eleventh Squadron was witnessing a strange scene. The Blind Monk and Seruzen sat opposite each other without speaking a single word, simply looking at each other without end. Many were sending furtive glances at the accursed place; they'd thought their captain was scary, but Seruzen was even worse. This was their first time seeing someone beat the Blind Monk in appearance. That withered arm was just too awesome, how many years had it been raised?

Within the Seventh Squadron's grounds, a panicked Xu San was observing his surroundings as he thought, 'Boss, it's too scary! I don't want to stay here, take me away!'

.....

Seven days had passed by the time Lu Yin left the Zishan Residence, heading out at night to balance work with rest. He had noticed that the gravity rooms weren't great for training his battle techniques, especially the Daynight Punch. Such things didn't just improve with practice; they needed a comprehension of the cycle of day and night.

Not far from the Zishan Residence was a bar. It wasn't the largest of establishments, but it was quite refined. Lu Yin heard cheers and merriment as he walked in, with many youths dancing to their hearts' content. He hadn't taken more than a few steps before he decided to leave, turned off by the clamor.

Lu Yin didn't know where to go after he walked out, but a man approached and bowed, "Your Majesty, His Highness invites you for some wine."

He followed the man's gaze to a small open-air tavern some distance from the bar, where Second Prince Duke raised his glass. He was amazed by the coincidence and nodded, "Sure."

The small tavern was much simpler in appearance than the bar, with the cold winds blowing over from the distance. Duke was eating and drinking by himself; had he not seen this personally, Lu Yin wouldn't believe that the Second Prince would come to such a place.

"You seem to be doing well, Brother," he greeted, not standing on ceremony as he took a seat opposite Duke and poured himself a glass of wine.

Duke smiled, "Never thought I'd bump into you when I came out to drink. You don't like the bar?"

Lu Yin shook his head, "Too noisy. It's more comfortable here, a glass of warm wine for the cold winds, and a variety of small delicacies."

"I was a little afraid that you wouldn't like it. This tavern's boss was a stowaway from a primal planet with no special abilities, but his wines are in a league of their own. You should try," the Prince raised his glass in toast.

Lu Yin pursed his lips after a mouthful. He honestly wasn't a wine expert, but the glass flowed smoothly down his throat and quenched thirst without any parching. While it was obviously a warming wine, a refreshing chill rushed to his head. "It's good."

"So long as you don't hate it," Duke smiled, pouring another glass.

"So how come you're drinking here?" Lu Yin asked.

"Tired," Duke shook his head. While astonished, Lu Yin kept silent until he drank another mouthful and continued, "Squabbling over the throne is exhausting."

Lu Yin nearly choked on the wine and stared at Duke in shock; this was too direct! The Prince laughed, "What, first time hearing this?"

Lu Yin couldn't help a laugh, "It really is. You're as forward as they come."

"You're not the only one I've said this to. In fact, I even said this to Royal Father," Duke's lips curled, leaving Lu Yin stunned. Was the fight for the throne so open? With his understanding of Earth's history, contests over the throne were always cruel, with constant politics and treachery. He had never seen someone like Duke who was so direct, leaving him wondering how big this brother's heart was.

"The Empire is huge, containing others with the royal blood, the Thirteen Squadrons, Yu Academy, and so many other powers. Everyone is focused on the throne, focused on us. There are currently four people who can vie for it; Elder Brother is the closest, but there are always some people who don't want to see his ascension. Many of them support me, like Sicar. There are others who support Wendy, but pity; her aspirations aren't limited to the Great Yu Empire anymore," Duke said matter-of-factly.

"You said four people, who's the last?" Lu Yin was curious. He only knew three of The Undying Yushan's children; Dorren, Duke, and Fifth Princess Wendy. Who was the fourth?

Duke stared him straight in the eye, "You."

Chapter 86: Battle Force

Lu Yin's heart froze as he heard Duke's words, "Me?"

Duke Yushan nodded, "That's right, you're fourth in line to become the Great Yu Emperor."

Lu Yin blinked, "Don't pull my leg, Royal Brother I'm just an idle lord, not even from the Yushan Family. How could I qualify?"

The Second Prince smiled, "I'm not spouting nonsense. Did you know what His Imperial Majesty promised The Undying Zishan before the two of them stormed the Inniverse?" He paused for a moment, "Should we not perish this time, you and I will each own half the Empire. The Great Yu Empire will belong to both the Yushans and the Zishans."

Lu Yin squinted and gazed into Duke's eyes before smiling and picking up some vegetables, "Tastes pretty good."

Duke averted his gaze, "Then eat as much as you want. The people beneath me aren't sensible; I apologize on their behalf."

Lu Yin knew he was speaking about Sicar, but did not mind, "Royal Brother, do you have any news on when Astral-10 will arrive?"

Duke shook his head, "I don't, there's only one person of the Empire who has access to such news. Fifth Sister, your fiancée."

Lu Yin rolled his eyes; Wendy Yushan, his fiancée? She wouldn't even bother looking at him. To her, the Great Yu Empire wasn't important.

His thoughts were brought to a halt by a thump of a cosmic ring on the table. Duke stood up, "This is my welcome gift to you, Brother, I hope you don't hate it. I'll take my leave."

Lu Yin's eyes gleamed at the sight; he knew that the Second Prince wouldn't hold back with his gift. Duke smiled and was about to leave, but suddenly paused, "There's a rumor that the Zishan Family has a hidden treasure, Brother, there should be no harm in trying to find it. Perhaps it might be an unexpected harvest."

The Prince's figure vanished, and Lu Yin's eyes flickered as he picked the ring up. Hidden treasure? What did that mean? Find it himself? The Undying Yushan hadn't mentioned a single word about this hidden treasure; the man clearly didn't want anyone getting involved in this pie. If he went to look for it himself, wouldn't that be courting death? Did Duke really think he was so greedy that he was digging this kind of hole? These royals loved to create problems out of nothing.

Within the cosmic ring was a set of ring armor, and given the gifter, it was certainly at least Melder armor. This was rather generous, but the implications were also quite dark. Still, Lu Yin lost himself in thoughts of the Zishan Family's qualifications to inherit the throne. Was that why Sicar tried to suppress him? Impossible; even if he was qualified, there was no chance of success. He had nothing in a competition against the Princes who had run the Empire for centuries, and wouldn't even make for a worthy opponent. Was it because of the Zishan Family? The clues lay in Duke's apology. Evidently, Sicar had acted on his own initiative. Or rather, Duke wasn't the only one behind the man.

"Bronsen," Lu Yin called.

"Your Majesty," a shadow stepped out of the void.

"Have you heard of the hidden treasure of the Zishan Family?"

"Yes, but it was several centuries ago. No one mentioned it in recent times."

"Do you know if Sicar has any grudges against the Zishan Family?"

"I'm not sure."

Lu Yin started mumbling to himself. The Great Yu Empire's water ran rather deep as the Emperor aged, especially with rumors of an old injury's relapse. The man wasn't likely to live long, so how would the

struggle for the throne end? He sat down and pondered for a while before heading back to his residence. All these things were unrelated to him for now; when the situation erupted, he might already have entered the Astral Combat Academy.

There were many books within the Zishan Residence, but none of them detailed any battle techniques. Tomes of such worth would likely have been taken by the Zishans when they disappeared, so Lu Yin focused his energies on looking for books related to Melder breakthroughs. This realm was a turning point for cultivators; many books said that a person's potential could be seen at this point, but he didn't know what that meant. All he knew was that the road to power was paved with realms and battle techniques. What else could there be?

"Bronsen, have you gone to the Innerverse?" Lu Yin asked, to which the man shook his head. He felt it a pity; the Innerverse had always been far stronger than the Outerverse. While he'd lived there himself before, he'd been stuck in one place and didn't really understand the world; he'd learnt nothing about being a Melder during his stay. Should he ask The Undying Yushan? He shook his head after giving it a thought; the man was still the Emperor, and even if he spoiled him a little, it wasn't right to look for him for everything. Dorren seemed gentle on the surface, but he was just as scheming as Duke. Mira? He had to maintain as little contact with her as possible. The more times they talked, the more his value would drop in her eyes.

"Are you considering your breakthrough to a Melder?" Bronsen asked, one of the rare occasions he spoke up without being asked.

Lu Yin shook his head, "The breakthrough is a natural process. I'm considering what the source of a Melder's strength is."

Bronsen muttered, "Within the Great Yu Empire, the source of a powerhouse's strength is their battle techniques. But I have heard of another strength called battle force, it is supposedly very powerful."

Lu Yin's eyes gleamed; he had heard of battle force himself. A powerful warrior was someone with a clear conscience and determination which stemmed from the heart; they could manifest that will for attack or defense, even breaking through their limits to crush the heavens or tear the skies apart. Battle force was an incomprehensible power that everyone had the potential to unlock, but few ever did. He had heard of it multiple times in the Innerverse, but even there, techniques to train it were a secret protected more tightly than formcast models. In the Outerverse, there was simply no way to train in it. Even the fact that Bronsen knew of its existence was a testament to his status, but that was the extent of it.

Lu Yin gazed at the sky, watching the three rings around the Zenyu Star. His eyes suddenly gleamed; how had he forgotten about the Skybeast Claw? He immediately thought of asking for the approval of all five hall masters to learn the first twenty forms. The first order of business was to contact Gerlaine and ask her to help with Gerbach, but he stopped after opening his gadget and thought about her for a while before brushing off that idea. With her personality, it was already good enough that she wasn't looking to make trouble for him. He could only take the initiative himself, sending out requests to the hall masters as a member of Yu Academy.

Tianming was the first to agree. This guy was easy to talk to; he'd already said so at the formcast pool. The second was Logan, while the third was Huo Zhong. It was Huo Zhong that surprised Lu Yin the most; he'd thought the Huo Family would have been antagonistic due to Xiaoling. Unfortunately, Gerbach and Schutz refused. It was a pity, but it was also within expectations; three approvals was already a good deal.

As he was wondering how he'd get the other two to agree, Lu Yin received a notification that Gerbach wanted to see him. He was stunned by the request, and his thoughts immediately rushed to Gerlaine; that brat had snitched! Still, this would reveal the man's thoughts about the approval anyway, so he decided to go quickly. He left for the first ring the same night; cultivators didn't have strong circadian rhythms, and it was easy to go a few days without sleep.

Gerbach's residence was a bit distant from the formcast pool, taking nine hours of travel in total from Lu Yin's residence. The sky was already bright by this point; if he had used a normal plane, it would have taken days to arrive.

There was a lake on the first ring around the Zenyu Star, large enough to be considered an ocean. Its surface area exceeded all of Earth's, and at the center of it all was the hall Gerbach managed. There were enormous towers stacked all around, with the occasional person zooming through the skies. Marine life swam freely in the ocean, the ones that dared to attack the tower from time to time being obliterated in moments. The place was guarded by Explorers.

As his plane sped towards the highest tower, Lu Yin looked down and watched as students from Yu Academy hunted at the surface of the water. He didn't notice a youth at the top floor of the tower opening his eyes and grinning from inside a spacious stone house. As an outsider, Bronsen was blocked from entering; Lu Yin had to go in alone.

The tower was tall enough to pierce through the clouds. Students from Yu Academy entered and left regularly, many sending curious glances towards Lu Yin. This was where the most powerful youths of the Empire gathered, and none of them were simple; any one here could very well be an opponent in the future.

Chapter 87: Gerbach

Lu Yin headed to the center of the tower and climbed up the spiraling stone staircase. Flying was forbidden on these premises. A youth walked over just as he started the climb, looking at him curiously, "Where you going, bro?"

"Which floor is Gerbach on?" Lu Yin asked, attracting surprised glances in an instant.

"You're looking for the Hall Master?" the youth was surprised.

"He's looking for me."

Everyone sized Lu Yin up at that moment, and a shorter man among the crowd glared at him. This was one of those from Yu Academy who'd gone to the trial on Earth and been robbed by Lu Yin; he had a very strong impression of the thief, and was one of the few who knew Lu Yin's identity. He really wanted to cause trouble, but considering the identity of the King Zishan, it wasn't worth it.

“He’s on the top floor,” the youth who’d blocked Lu Yin spoke up, clearing the way. Lu Yin thanked him and headed up.

As he climbed, Lu Yin found that some of the floors were completely empty. The higher he went, the fewer people there were as well. Nobody else stopped him on the way, and by the time he started seeing clouds, there was no other person at all. When he leapt up to the top floor, he found Gerbach with his back turned to him, staring at the fierce winds through a stone window. The young man’s back was ramrod straight and he radiated an aura of discipline; this was one of the strongest fighters of his generation in the Great Yu Empire, one of the hall masters of Yu Academy that people considered a monster.

As he thought to himself that Gerlaine and her brother looked quite alike, the youth in question suddenly turned and sent him a chilling glare that was like an arrow streaking through the sky.

“You took care of my sister during the trial,” Gerbach trained his eyes on Lu Yin. With his entire being straight as an arrow, he seemed quite overbearing. Each of the hall masters of Yu Academy seemed quite different. Tianming was gentle and polite, while Gerbach was incredibly fierce.

Lu Yin frowned but did not back down, “It’s all about survival of the fittest.”

Gerbach smirked, “Exactly. Since you know what, why did you help her?”

Lu Yin froze. Help her? When did he do that? Didn’t he rob her?

Gerbach said dryly, “Although the trial on Earth wasn’t a success, Gerlaine’s marks put her even in front of Eddy. I know my sister; it’s impossible for her to get there on her own. She helped you rob dozens of students to get ahead of everyone else.”

Lu Yin raised an eyebrow; it seemed like Gerlaine hadn’t told her brother that she was robbed as well. But that made sense; given her personality, she was someone who’d never admit to something shameful. And while Gerbach had high status in Yu Academy, that power did not extend outside this system; he couldn’t find out about the situation himself. This was all a glorious misunderstanding.

“Is that the reason why you’re not letting me learn the first twenty forms of the Skybeast Claw?” Lu Yin asked.

Gerbach directed his gaze outside the tower, “I just wanted to meet you. You might be the King Zishan, but you participated in the trials as a native. As a native, you defeated dozens of students, including the best of Yu Academy. It made me curious.”

He shifted his attention back to Lu Yin as he spoke, eyes filled with a desire to fight, “I’d like to know more about your strength. There are rumors that you can learn the Skybeast Claw just from battling someone using it; I don’t believe it.”

Lu Yin grinned, “Let’s try it out, then.”

Gerbach grunted in approval before suppressing his star energy to the level of a Sentinel, “Careful. Once I’m in battle mode, I don’t hold back.”

“Me neither,” Lu Yin answered, and the two charged towards each other at the same time. Fists clashed and shockwaves surged in all directions, both combatants retreating in tandem before darting back

quickly. Gerbach truly didn't hold back, launching a Skybeast Claw that was much stronger than Tyson's. Even with Sentinel strength, the Hall Master could use battle techniques beyond most Melders.

Lu Yin seemed hesitant and stopped, eyes fixated on Gerbach's Skybeast Claw. The five stars of his Cosmic Art formed their unique defensive forcefield, allowing him to see every little form of the attack. One, two, three... The attack consisted of fifteen forms, possessing terrifying power as a bestial cry resounded through the air. The surroundings almost froze in place, but Lu Yin's eyes narrowed and his body curved unbelievably to dodge the attack that covered a hundred-meter area. All the strike accomplished was an enormous claw imprint on the ground.

"You actually managed to dodge that? Nice!" Gerbach looked at Lu Yin in shocked delight, but Lu Yin only frowned. He'd gotten to the ninth variation, but that wasn't enough and he wanted to go again. The Hall Master obliged, trying to defeat Lu Yin with his attack, but Lu Yin managed to dodge every single one.

It was after the fifth exchange that Lu Yin's eyes lit up; he'd gotten all fifteen. He raised an arm in the next instant, fingers curving as it shot towards a startled Gerbach. Gerbach fought back with the same attack, and the resulting rumble drew the attention of people even at the bottom of the tower.

Lu Yin and Gerbach retreated at the same time, leaving behind deep imprints in the ground. When the dust settled, a shocked Gerbach commented, "You really can copy... no, learn the Skybeast Claw on sight. Only five times and you got it."

Lu Yin gasped hard, nursing his stinging hand. While the Melder had suppressed his star energy, the body was still the same. If he wanted to keep this going, he was certainly the one who'd lose.

"I didn't think you really were such a genius. The Skybeast Claw is carved into the stone walls, and even the best of Yu Academy take ages to learn it. Some never manage to learn the fifteenth form in their lifetime, but you can do it like this," Gerbach sighed in admiration.

Seeing no envy in the youth's eyes, Lu Yin found himself liking this man even more, "I think this battle technique just suits me very well."

Gerbach nodded and sighed ruefully, "Yes, one can learn a technique very quickly if it is suitable."

"Do you want to keep going?" Lu Yin asked.

The corners of Gerbach's lips curved up, "My best move isn't the Skybeast Claw. Since I said I wanted a battle with you, it can't end so easily. Be careful; I'll use a technique that suits me next, so don't blame me if you die."

"Come at me," Lu Yin answered, but he felt slightly apprehensive. Gerbach was a hall master after all, and at the peak of the Melder realm. His other battle techniques must be terrifying,

Gerbach grinned and a strange fruit appeared in his hand with lightning markings all over. This fruit was somewhat similar to an energy crystal, and it thundered as he crushed it, bolts of lightning scorching the ground and startling a few people as they flashed outside the window.

"The Hall Master is fighting? Who?"

“Could it be that person that just went up?”

“That’s impossible. That guy was just a Sentinel.”

As he saw the violent lightning, Lu Yin took several steps back subconsciously. This scene reminded him of Gerlaine’s armor, although that had been much more terrifying. Deciding not to wait, he shot out a Spacerender Palm with a cold look in his eyes.

Gerbach merely snorted, the lightning bursting forth with a wave. It tore apart the Spacerender Palm’s shockwaves and shot towards Lu Yin like an arrow, barely missing as he dodged. The wall behind him was pierced through and a searing shockwave pushed him aside, his body numbed by the electricity.

“This is my battle technique, Lightning Arrow. Let me see what you can do!” Gerbach shouted as he took one step forward. The lightning turned into a bow and arrow and was pointed at Lu Yin, sending a chill down his spine. It wasn’t just lightning that appeared before his eyes; there was another force approaching that he couldn’t even begin to fathom. The entire world became a sea of plasma that made an enemy of everything in its path.

Outside the tower, Bronsen solemnly stared up at the sky. So long as nobody was killed with intent, he couldn’t interfere in any battles at Yu Academy. He hoped the King Zishan wouldn’t die; hall masters were much more powerful than ordinary melderers even after suppressing their strength.

Lu Yin stared hard at the approaching force amidst the lightning; the threat Gerbach currently posed to him far exceeded what he’d felt from Qingyu. Qingyu had been severely wounded, suppressed in energy and unable to use most battle techniques. Gerbach was different; with nothing holding him back, he could use even the Sentinel power to its limit. Seeing the approaching force, he knew he wouldn’t be able to avoid it. All he could do was raise a palm with five stars, activating the Cosmic Palm.

The entire tower rumbled.

Chapter 88: Overbearing Fiancee

Shockwaves broke through the tower walls and dispersed the clouds, lightning dissipating in all directions. At the top, Lu Yin managed to block Gerbach’s full-power attack with his Cosmic Palm, but that wasn’t all. The fifth star’s explosion even suppressed the lightning arrow and dispersed it, scattering the battle technique entirely. The man himself was fine, but this was an automatic defeat.

Lu Yin put his own hand back down, watching the black on his palm. This was the power of the lightning; while it wasn’t all that serious, his entire palm had been charred.

“You won,” Gerbach stated.

Lu Yin took a deep breath and lifted his palm, “It’s a tie. I’m injured.”

Gerbach burst into laughter, “I needed a lightning fruit to power my technique; that was cheating. I don’t believe you went all-out, either. I’m not someone who can’t take a loss.”

Lu Yin didn’t argue. He truly hadn’t gone all-out here; at the very least, using Bai Xue’s innate gift alongside the Cosmic Palm would have led to a stronger strike.

Gerbach sighed happily. "It doesn't feel good to fight while suppressed, but this isn't half bad. You should be top ten in Yu Academy."

"What? Doesn't the Academy have more than ten Melders?" Lu Yin was shocked.

Gerbach chuckled, "Melders? You know that means nothing, right? No more than ten people in the Academy could have blocked that arrow; you're definitely up there."

Lu Yin recalled Tyson who had challenged him at the formcast pool. That was a Melder as well, but the Cosmic Palm had beaten him easily. Then there was Munoor, whose result would likely be the same. This made sense; he was a realmbreaker, after all. Were Melders weak? No, they were quite strong, but not in the Great Yu Empire. Even Gerbach wasn't all that much when compared to the average Melder in the Innerverse; that was just the extent of the disparity. This thought suddenly dissipated all anticipation of becoming a Melder. He realized that he needed to understand more about what becoming a Melder meant, not just rush into the stage and become a weakling like Munoor.

Lu Yin was snapped out of his thoughts when Gerbach agreed to his request for the Skybeast Claw. He nodded, "Thanks a ton."

"Mm. Schutz is the only one left. How will you get him to agree?"

Lu Yin shrugged; he hadn't planned this out yet. Schutz was indisputably the strongest youth in the Great Yu Empire, the top fighter in Yu Academy who was much stronger than Tianming and Gerbach. He was a member of the former Great Yu Empire Youth Council, possessing so many dazzling titles that even an ordinary person would be pushed to the top, but Lu Yin had no idea what kind of person he was.

Gerbach chuckled, "Since I'm already at it, might as well go all the way. You've already gotten to fifteen forms of the Skybeast Claw, it isn't all that different to go to twenty but the price is huge. Have you thought this through?"

Lu Yin was curious, "It'll depend on what I have to pay."

Gerbach was astounded, "I thought you'd do it regardless of the consequences."

Lu Yin shrugged, "Like you said, there isn't a large difference whether I have the next five variations or not. There's no point in losing more than I gain."

Gerbach sized Lu Yin up, "Honestly speaking, I've met a lot of people who aren't afraid of death to obtain a powerful technique, especially in this academy. Your practicality is a rare trait."

Lu Yin chuckled. He was willing to give up a great many things for the entirety of the Skybeast Claw, but not for a mere twenty forms. It wasn't even like that was his biggest hope; his focus was the Cosmic Palm. What he actually wanted was for Gerbach to show him the twenty forms, but that request was unreasonable. Nobody liked their battle techniques being stolen, even if it was one that everyone had access to. It was an invasion of privacy. Now that Gerbach knew he could learn the Skybeast Claw in battle, he would never use it again.

Gerbach switched on his gadget and a hologram appeared, depicting a youth with a cold glare and red sword on his back, bare upper body filled with scars. Schutz looked quite ordinary, but was a step beyond numerous youths across the Great Yu Empire.

“What’s up?” Schutz’s hoarse voice rang out, boredom filling his tone.

“I was beaten.”

“By whom?” Schutz’s eyes glinted.

“Lu Yin, King Zishan.”

Schutz sighed, “He’s a Sentinel.”

“I suppressed my combat level, but I still lost. He also managed to learn the fifteenth form of the Skybeast Claw during combat, and recreated it perfectly.”

Schutz went quiet.

“By the looks of it, he’s invincible amongst Sentinels; at the very least, there’s no match in Yu Academy. Even overall, he’s top ten; he might be a threat to become a hall master the moment he becomes a Melder. What do you think?”

Schutz watched Gerbach, “Where is he?”

“He just left. Why? Do you want to meet him?”

“I want to fight with him, as a Sentinel.”

Gerbach said, “He might not have the time. You know he’s King Zishan, not just any ordinary student in the academy. He isn’t a part of any of the halls, either.”

Schutz turned serious, “Tell him that I’ll agree to him learning the first twenty forms of the Skybeast Claw as long as he has the guts to fight me.”

Gerbach thought it over, “Okay, I’ll ask him.”

Schutz didn’t say another word, simply switching off the hologram.

Gerbach turned towards Lu Yin and grinned, “It’s done. What do you think? Do you have the guts to do it?”

The corner of Lu Yin’s lips turned up as a hint of excitement shone in his eyes, “It’d be my honor to fight the strongest in the Empire. When will it be?”

Just as Gerbach was about to speak, both of their gadgets dinged in a tone that could only be a major announcement. This sort of notification couldn’t be muted; they had to read it. It was just like the news regarding Astral-10. The two looked down simultaneously, exchanging shocked glances with each other. Fifth Princess Wendy Yushan of the Great Yu Empire had joined the Outerverse Youth Council as a formal member. She would also hold a position as a member of the Great Yu Empire Youth Council, and had complete authority over selections.

“There’s going to be chaos,” Gerbach said gravely.

Meanwhile, countless people in the empire got the same news. After finding out that Wendy Yushan would join the Outerverse Youth Council and take charge of the Empire’s Youth Council, most people cheered in joy. Finally, there’d be somebody from the Empire with a say over the Outerverse. However, there was a fair number of people that sighed. These people were ones who knew her well, and included The Undying Yushan.

Within the imperial palace, The Undying Yushan sighed and smiled wryly, “There’s going to be trouble.”

Within his residence, Crown Prince Dorren stared at the hologram in shock, and then sighed ruefully just like his father had, “Is there anyone in the Empire that can handle her?”

Duke chuckled, “This is fun. The Empire’s going to be lively very soon.”

Many people had similar remarks.

On the top floor of a building in the first ring, Lu Yin was confused, “Why do you look like that? Isn’t Wendy joining the Outerverse Youth Council a good thing? She’ll even be in charge of the Empire’s Youth Council.”

Gerbach smiled wryly, “Do you know the Fifth Princess well?”

Lu Yin shook his head. He didn’t know anything about her at all, and what he’d heard was that she was doing very well in the Innerverse. Her nose was always in the air and she didn’t think much of anyone in the Great Yu Empire, and nobody could control her.

“Princess Wendy is...” Before he could finish speaking, there came another notification, “The Great Yu Empire is in need of talents. The council will temporarily stop all recruitment and let the members of the Outerverse Youth Council take control. These members will soon reach the Zenyu Star.”

Lu Yin looked at the notification blankly. What did this mean?

“Do you see now? This is Princess Wendy. Nobody amongst the younger generation in the Empire are good enough for her. This includes us five hall masters. In her eyes, we don’t even have the right to enter the council, which is why the Empire just doesn’t have a Youth Council at all and has someone else in charge.” Gerbach said wryly.

For the first time, Lu Yin could sense how tyrannical Wendy Yushan was. One woman could decide everything, and it was a decision that nobody could disobey; not even The Undying Yushan.

Was this the person he might be arranged to marry? He felt a chill going down his spine at the thought. The woman wouldn’t send him a notification like this to end the arrangement, right? While he was a fake, that would be humiliating.

“How strong is this woman? How can she ignore you?” Lu Yin asked.

Gerbach looked troubled and said in a hushed voice, “I’m sure you’re aware that she’s the second captain of the Thirteen Squadrons.”

Lu Yin nodded. He’d heard this from Bronsen before.

“She won that spot in combat,” Gerbach stated in admiration.

Lu Yin’s expression changed. “What? She won it?!”

Chapter 89: Marriage??

Gerbach nodded with an almost-reverent gaze, “What do you think? Inconceivable, right? But those are the facts. There are rules to the Thirteen Imperial Squadrons; anyone who can defeat a captain can replace them. Beating the Second Captain was the only thing she did since coming out of the Inverse; no one else knows how strong she is, because no one in the Empire is worth her time.”

Lu Yin was shocked, and incredulity welled up in his heart. The Thirteen Captains were all Cruisers; their combat level were over 50,000. That woman had actually reached that sort of standard? How was that possible? Gerbach and the other hall masters were just Melders! They couldn’t even begin to compare. It was no wonder that woman didn’t bother with the younger generation of the Empire; she was a genius above the rest across the entire universe.

“Top 20 in the Astral Combat Ranking, terrifying power that can sweep through the Frostwave Weave, and the capability to push the older generation down with force. Not many people in the Great Yu Empire can beat her; she’s earned the right to look down on us,” Gerbach sighed.

At this point, the screen lit up again; it was Schutz, “Gerbach, defer my battle with Lu Yin. I want to test how strong the Outerverse Youth Council members are.”

Gerbach nodded, “I want to try it too. They must be powerful if Wendy fancies joining them. You need to adjust yourself accordingly; our Great Yu Empire cannot be looked down upon.”

Schutz ended the call, and Gerbach looked at Lu Yin, “You can leave for now. The battle with Schutz will take some time, at least until after the Outerverse Youth Council members have arrived.”

Lu Yin acknowledged with a grunt, and left with complicated feelings. His fiancée was a little too powerful, a sensation not just in the Great Yu Empire. Foreigners might think it was a good thing; she was the Empire’s princess after all.

It was perhaps due to this abrupt rise in power that the Huo Family suddenly rejected the Fireforge Planet’s marriage proposal.

“Your Imperial Majesty, Young Master Yan Feng and the Huo Family’s eldest daughter had been arranged into marriage a long time ago, and they suddenly back out of the deal today. Are they looking down on the Fireforge Planet?” Yan Gang thundered in the royal court.

The courtiers in the audience looked on with cool gazes as Crown Prince Dorren spoke, “The Great Yu Empire has always been on good terms with the Fireforge Planet, and a marriage would only solidify that relationship further. But this is the Huo Family’s own decision, and it won’t be good for the Empire to involve itself.”

Yan Gang gritted his teeth, “Your Highness means that the Empire is not concerned?”

“It is simply an internal matter of the Huo Family, and not within our jurisdiction. His Imperial Majesty does not dictate such things, and this is not a large diplomatic issue. Both sides can dictate results by yourselves,” Dorren said with a smile.

Yan Gang glared at the man with fiery red hair just below Dorren Yushan. This man was none other than Huo Qingshan, the Fifth Captain. Unlike when he was testing Zhang Dingtian with blazing aggression, he seemed somewhat normal now, "I never agreed to marry Xiaoling into the Fireforge Planet. Your young master speaks for himself, and that has nothing to do with me."

Yan Gang clenched his fists tightly and felt extraordinarily humiliated. When did the Fireforge Planet ever receive such humiliation? And yet, he had to endure this, especially now that Wendy Yushan had entered the Outerverse Youth Council. It was not wise to make the Great Yu Empire his enemy. He raised his head towards The Undying Yushan and saluted respectfully, "Your Imperial Majesty, since the Huo Family has deemed it appropriate to alter our agreement without warning, the Fireforge Planet has nothing to say. I will replace my master and bear this humiliation."

The Emperor seemed tired, "Don't be too rash, young friend. This is no humiliation, only a difference in views on love amongst youths."

Yan Gang was left without choice, and he suddenly looked behind Huo Qingshan at the man who was emitting a frostiness all over his body. His eyes brightened, and he spoke with a deferential tone, "The Huo Family's betrayal will make my Young Master the laughingstock of the entire Frostwave Weave. I wonder if this humble servant can ask for a different partner on his behalf?"

Everyone was flabbergasted and looked at Yan Gang. A mere Melder bodyguard of Yan Feng had such power to make decisions on behalf of his master? Duke glanced over, "I heard you and Yan Feng have been friends since youth, master and servant in name, yet brothers in reality. Looks like those rumors had a basis, you actually dare to help him pick another partner in marriage."

Yan Gang replied grudgingly, "The entire Frostwave Weave and even Grandtop Weave know that the Fireforge Planet has proposed marriage with the Great Yu Empire. If that is not completed, my planet will become a joke. I trust His Imperial Majesty does not wish for that to happen, either."

"Who are you proposing?" the Emperor asked.

Yan Gang bowed, "Miss Jenny Auna."

Everyone was shocked, and the man behind Huo Qingshan glared coldly at Yan Gang, "No."

Yan Gang had a blank look, "Why?"

The Undying Yushan and the rest also looked at the man—Rocky Auna, the Ninth Captain and Jenny's uncle, "Jenny has a long-standing marriage contract with someone else."

Yan Gang smiled, "Captain Rocky must be mistaken. I've just participated in Earth's trial with Miss Jenny and can be considered acquainted. I also asked her, and she's said she isn't engaged yet."

Rocky's gaze frosted over, "That was before. My Auna Family has a marriage contract with the Zishan Family; everyone in the Great Yu Empire knows this, you can try asking around."

Yan Gang could not help but look at The Undying Yushan, who glanced at Rocky and nodded, "That is correct."

Yan Gang frowned, "Your Imperial Majesty, from what I know, Miss Jenny does not want to be married to King Zishan as there is animosity between them."

“As if she can make a decision on something as big as her marriage!” Rocky barked.

Yan Gang was furious, but his hands were tired, “Since that is so, I understand. I will report back to my superiors and Young Master. He has just caught wind that Princess Wendy Yushan has joined the Outerverse Youth Council, which he has always looked forward to. He will participate in the selections in a few days, and might have an opportunity to work with her. They can discuss matters again then.”

Everyone was startled as they heard this news. Was Yan Feng qualified to join the Outerverse Youth Council? They didn’t know, and if it was true, it would be troublesome. Hold on. They suddenly all realized what had happened here; the Fireforge Planet had been targeting Wendy all this while! Huo Xiaoling and Jenny Auna were just excuses, those refusals by the Great Yu Empire made it easier for them to chase after her. The Great Yu Empire had already rejected Huo Xiaoling and Jenny Auna to be wedded to the Fireforge Planet, but if Yan Feng successfully wooed Wendy Yushan, it would be difficult to reject them again.

It was more possible the more they thought about it. Many looked at The Undying Yushan, though he remained calm and showed no signs. Yan Gang still seemed to seethe with anger. Huo Qingshan and Rocky Auna looked at Yan Gang with icy gazes. They had been used as tools in this matter, and would not let it slide.

“Alright, I’m tired, you can leave,” the Emperor lethargically waved his hand, and the audience left the court. “Summon King Zishan to the palace to meet me.”

Not long after, Lu Yin’s plane flew over to the palace. The Zishan Residence was far too close to the palace, so he had arrived before the courtiers were even out of the Grand Astral Gate. With Bronsen about ten meters away, he greeted several of them. Sicar even smiled and was extremely polite.

Quite a few officials were unhappy after being extorted by Lu Yin, and a few hid from him to prevent being targeted. Lu Yin waited until they’d all left before walking in without a hurry.

“Your Majesty,” a voice rang beside his ear.

Lu Yin turned and saw an indifferent Rocky Auna, “Captain Rocky, good day.”

“Be more earnest in handling things, and cautious in both word and action. Don’t trust others too readily; you can always look for my family if you need help,” he stated. He had personally mentioned the marriage contract in the royal court, so Lu Yin was now the Auna Family’s future son-in-law. He left a chill behind in the air as he turned to walk away.

Lu Yin was stunned. What was that supposed to mean?

“Your Majesty, His Imperial Majesty is awaiting you,” the palace maid reminded, and Lu Yin promptly followed her in.

A short while later, Lu Yin’s cry rang through the courtyard, “What? Engaged to the Auna Family?”

The Undying Yushan smiled and nodded, “Yes, this was the agreement between the Zishans and the Aunas. Rocky personally confirmed it in the royal court today; you should prepare for the marriage and look for a good day, you’re not that young anymore.”

“With whom?” Lu Yin asked.

“The direct heir, of course. Jenny.”

The image of an arrogant woman sprang up in Lu Yin’s mind, in a scene where she’d been tied up and was being used by him to threaten Sigmund after the decisive battle with Qingyu. That woman hated him to the core, and didn’t even look at him properly once on their way back. Marriage? He was doomed!

Chapter 90: Misunderstanding

Lu Yin felt himself in a dilemma, “Your Majesty, is it possible to cancel this marriage?”

“Do you have another sweetheart?” the Emperor asked curiously. Lu Yin almost instinctively shook his head, but quickly caught himself and nodded, which prompted a laugh, “Then forget her. Rocky Auna brought this marriage up personally, and rejecting it would humiliate the Aunas and turn the Fireforge Planet into a laughingstock.”

“Err... I actually don’t fancy Jenny.”

“Feelings don’t last a lifetime, especially for cultivators who live for hundreds of years. Emotions don’t last long; you two just have to get along and live your lives together, no need to overthink.”

Lu Yin was left in a bind, but the Emperor seemed to come up with something before he could think of a retort. The man leaned over, “Little Yin, tell me the truth; do you have any ideas about Wendy?”

Lu Yin blinked without a direct response, but this only convinced the Emperor that he’d guessed correctly. He started massaging his temples, “I promised Zishan that my family would be engaged to his, and through direct descendants. That does mean you and Wendy are engaged, but I simply cannot make the decision for her. You’ll have to fight for her hand in marriage yourself; the best I can offer is that I won’t oppose it.”

As Lu Yin looked down, The Undying Yushan sighed, “I’m not trying to bring you down, Little Yin, but Wendy is formidable even across the Inniverse. You should know of the Astral Combat Ranking, a list compiled by the Astral Combat Academy ranking the prodigies across the universe. She’s in the top 20 of that list, no more than 20 people in her current generation can match her across the universe. Even I cannot underestimate her power, and I definitely don’t plan to use her as a pawn in a political marriage to stabilize my Empire. Her goals are too high for me to touch; if you want to win her over, you have to get into the top 50 at least.”

“I’m confident in myself, Your Majesty,” Lu Yin looked up again.

Undying Yushan laughed, “Confidence is a good thing. Since that is so, I’ll help you speak to the Auna Family. There won’t be an outright rejection, but I will postpone the marriage by three years. Three years; if you haven’t wooed Wendy by then, you have to be obedient and marry Jenny, okay?”

Lu Yin nodded solemnly, “Three years, then. I’m confident Her Highness will sit up and take notice of me by then.”

The Undying Yushan nodded and watched Lu Yin leave, muttering to himself, “Sit up and take notice? Young ambition. Wendy is a disciple of the Myriad Swords Peak of the Inniverse, not someone

groomed by the Great Yu Empire. Her noticing you isn't just difficult, it's impossible. Nevermind, three years is long enough to temper him."

Lu Yin huffed after exiting the courtyard. Fortunately, he'd managed to use Wendy to defer the engagement, but three years? What a joke! He wasn't the real King Zishan anyway, and in three years, he might not even be in the Great Yu Empire anymore. Who'd care about the engagement then? Still, the news of him trying to marry the Fifth Princess spread throughout the Zenyu Star within moments of his exit, inviting endless ridicule. The average person did not comprehend Wendy Yushan's strength; she was a captain of the Thirteen Squadrons—someone who had defeated a Cruiser in her life—and a disciple of one of the Inniverse's greatest powers. No one in the younger generation of the Great Yu Empire even deserved her attention, even those like Schutz or Gerbach. His desire for her left many considering him a lunatic. This matter swiftly became a joke on the Zenyu Star.

Within the Auna Family's study, Patriarch Xueshan slammed the table, "A mere Fireforge Planet dares to make use of my family? I'll repay this debt one day!"

Rocky Auna seemed indifferent, "Jenny seems to like Yan Feng."

"So what if she likes him? The environment of the Fireforge Planet is unsuitable to our family. If this marriage goes through, how will we retain our independence in the Great Yu Empire?"

Rocky's gadget was suddenly pinged by a message, and his brows furrowed as he read it through. Unhappiness filled his gaze.

"What happened?" Xueshan asked.

"King Zishan wants to marry Princess Wendy."

Xueshan sneered, "He does not know his place; even someone like Schutz would not have the courage to say something like that. What, does he not fancy Jenny?"

"He utterly defeated her on Earth."

The mere mention of this left the man angry, "Such a disappointment, couldn't even beat a simple native. Pass down my orders, she better not think of leaving the manor before breaking through to the Melder realm."

"What about King Zishan?"

Xueshan muttered to himself for a moment before speaking, "You already confirmed this engagement in the royal court, but the royal family also had its marriage agreement with the Zishans. No one will think less of us for this, but this boy is too much. He even dared to openly accept bribes a few days ago. Someone should knock some sense into him, or who knows what sort of din he'll create if he enters our family?"

Not long after, Jenny was dragged home from a bar. Torry gave her a bitter smile, "Sorry, Miss, you won't be able to leave the manor from today until you break through to Melder."

Jenny Auna glared back, "I heard my uncle married me off to that bastard Lu Yin in the court, right? And he doesn't even want to wed me, but wants Princess Wendy."

Torry could only spread out his hands, as he did not know how to answer her.

Jenny was furious, "That bastard dares to slight me. I'll never marry that pathetic native; he's a thief, a despicable bastard! You can beat me to death, but I won't agree to this wedding. Just watch, I'll become a Melder and return all the humiliation he gave me!"

Torry sighed as she stormed off, wondering whether he should thank Lu Yin for firing up the Young Lady. If not for him, Jenny would likely still be immersed in her adoration of Yan Feng, without any motivation to train. He felt a hint of appreciation for that youth who dared to confront and even threaten him back on Earth; not every native dared to negotiate with the Empire, especially against an Explorer. Pity; a person's talent was fixed at birth. Even if the boy had an innate gift, it was limited to the Great Yu Empire. Wendy was a recognized genius across the universe, and even Yan Feng could not match up to her.

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Lu Yin did not think that this engagement would draw such strong reactions from everyone. Although most people ridiculed him, some grew really expectant, especially the army in the third ring. Although they weren't in contact, they had always been following his actions closely.

Within the imperial prison, Sigmund Mathers was bound to his cell by light. A youth across the room was looking at him with a pained expression, his son Wukai.

"He wants to wed Princess Wendy? Too difficult," Sigmund sighed.

Wukai replied, "If it happened, it would shake the Outerverse."

"No, it would shock all the heavens. Princess Wendy is top twenty in the Astral Combat Ranking, a disciple of the Myriad Swords Peak whose name rings throughout the universe. Every action of hers is scrutinized by countless people, and people were already investigating Lu Yin the moment he was conferred his title. The wedding agreement is no secret, and with this high-profile claim, countless people will be discussing this."

"What about us, Father? His Majesty saved your life."

Sigmund looked at him, "Don't speak about this in the future. Go home now, and don't do anything. Stay away from people like Raas."

Wukai nodded.

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A beam of light charged out from the depths of the universe, a medium-sized spaceship in silver and white with a design of flying winds and swords. Around the emblem were ten lofty silhouettes, forming the crest of the Universe Youth Council. Those ten shadows represented the Ten Arbiters.

Within the spacecraft, dozens of servants were fighting to suppress shivers as an enormous man who was nearly three meters long was doing push-ups with a single finger. Sweat dripped onto the floor from his cheeks, already having formed a puddle on the ground. The sweat flowed into the dent formed by

his finger, which was widening with every push. Not far away, a screen flashed with the value of the gravity in this training room: 150.

The man's gaze trembled and he suddenly flipped up with a push from his finger. A maid at the side immediately crushed a water crystal and scrubbed his body as he asked, "King Zishan publicly proclaimed he wants to marry Councillor Wendy?"

The others bowed, "Yes, news spread out from the Great Yu Empire just now, and The Undying Yushan hasn't denied it."

The man sneered, "Such a brave dog. Just a savage native wanting to swallow the skies."

One person stepped forward and spoke softly, "Representative Bazeer, this native may be puny, but this is disgusting. It wouldn't be good if word of this spreads to Councillor Puyu."