

521 LU SHU'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Honestly speaking, even Lu Shu had not expected his newborn sword spirit to be this naughty. And Takashima too had never foreseen its unique attacking tactics...

By right, shouldn't a spirit born from a flying dagger be more aggressive? What's wrong with you, using that slap...

Yet, precisely due to the same reason, Takashima was distracted for a split second, which led to his defeat. It was also because he had yet to recover his full strength after countering Coral's harsh blow. In addition, Lu Shu's ability to breach so many layers of blood formation protection through his powerful sword energy was also beyond Takashima's imagination.

This time, both Coral and Lu Shu should receive the credits for Takashima's death. And during the battle, Lu Shu had unleashed incredible power far surpassing that of many Class B's at the instant his sea of chi was opened.

Then, Lu Shu watched with his own eyes as the sword spirit returned to Corpsedog triumphantly after the slap. Wow, how damned naughty...

A tinge of distress crossed Lu Shu's heart. It seemed that his swordplay skills were going in the wrong direction...

Other people could summon tens of thousands of sharp blades upon chanting "Come, my swords". That was just super awesome. How about him? What should he say? ... "Go and slap that dude?!"

Screw it!

The sword spirit was around two palms in size. Lu Shu had to investigate further on its other functions. But judging from the slap earlier, it seemed to have a strong hand...

With Takashima in his pseudo-Class A state, how hard must the slap have been to make him pause in shock?!

Regardless, Lu Shu thought the Japan trip was worth the effort. In addition to his personal gains of close to a hundred thousand magical stones, the Collection of Gods had suffered severe consequences, losing more than half of its elite powers.

In other words, the Collection of Gods would have to exit from the global limelight until the emergence of a new power. It would plunge from one of the top Practitioners organizations to a second-class nobody.

They would not even have been able to stay in the second class if not for the survival of the other Class C masters.

Roughly speaking, there had been an acceleration in the rate of advancement in the past six months due to the intensified regeneration of Spirit Qi. But there were only about five to six Class C's remaining in the Collection of Gods. Perhaps Lu Shu, in his optimal state, would even be able to overpower them altogether.

In fact, the causality therein was strange. If the Collection of Gods had not decided to go against the Heavenly Network, Nogiwa Takenobu would not have been killed in the Koh Chang remains back then.

Most importantly, it was totally unexpected that Lu Shu had succeeded in preventing Takashima's advancement to Class A, and equally unpredicted was the opening of his

sea of chi at that moment.

Currently, the sword energy was undergoing restoration inside Lu Shu's chi mountain. He had depleted over one hundred beams of sword energy in the last battle, and it would take around three days to replenish it all.

The sword energy seemed to be the basic form of swords after his 'years' of chi mountain scraping. Meanwhile, the prototype swords in the sea of chi was the upper limit of his sword energy, and time was needed for the prototypes to regenerate a new wave of sword energy in replacement of the used ones.

In other words, there were only about one hundred prototypes in Lu Shu's sea of chi at the moment. Thus, the maximum capacity for his sword energy was around a hundred beams too.

The number of prototypes would increase with further scraping of the chi mountain. The reason for his small amount of prototypes gained even after the flattening of the entire mountain was that his mountain had stopped growing due to his lack of practice. Take for instance, Li Xianyi's chi mountain was much loftier than Lu Shu's.

Besides, the old man scraped his mountain from any angle as he pleased, while Lu Shu aimed exactly at one side. They had differing aims...

Lu Shu found it understandable, though. Swordsmen and swordswomen would have been the most formidable Practitioners in the world if their sword energy were boundless, for in that case, they would have no weakness at all.

On the other hand, Lu Shu was unsure whether he could be considered as a Class B, strictly speaking. Probably yes, as his strength and speed in the past were both

comparable to those of Class B's. His only weakness lied in the attacking power and the diversity of his attacking techniques.

Now, things had changed. With over one hundred beams of sword energy, he was able to fight with any Class B in the world head-on.

Certainly, it would have been even better with the unlocking of his third nebula. In that case, even his strength and speed would be further improved as well.

But... Lu Shu suddenly learned a terrifying truth...

His chi mountain was gone! GONE!

How could he expand his prototypes by scraping a nonexistent mountain?!

Lu Shu was concerned about another question. If there was one sword spirit in every chi mountain, by right, the true descendants of the Hall of Swords would need only one of them. But that was clearly insufficient for Lu Shu.

He had no idea whether the chi mountain would rise again. If it did, would there be another sword spirit with the collapse of the new mountain?

It would be interesting if there was. In Lu Shu's twilight years, he could write an autobiography titled "Lu Shu And His Seven Dwarfs"... It sounded good...

Now, the Hall of Swords had been labeled as the least reliable organization in Lu Shu's heart...

At the moment, Lu Shu felt sorry for the great losses to the Collection of Gods

population. Be it due to Takashima's sacrificial ritual or Coral's rage, too many were dead. When those people were engaged in fights or the ceremony, how would they have the time to contribute distress points to Lu Shu?

Besides, Coral had replaced Lu Shu to become the target of public hatred with her invasion into the Collection of Gods. In comparison, the destruction of the Collection of Gods Mansion and the murder of Kitamura Kijitori had undoubtedly provoked much more distress than drawing weird symbols and killing Hakushun and Hirono...

Thus, Lu Shu was remorseful for the waste of the huge amounts of distress points, for he needed a whopping 2,700,000 points to open his third nebula...

At the moment, Lu Shu was still unable to move. Takashima's power gained from the ritual was far too immense, which inflicted great harm to Lu Shu during their confrontation earlier.

Lu Shu was anxious. What if he had been handicapped by the injuries? He could almost hear the approaching footsteps from other Practitioners scattered across Japan. They must be arranging their manpower right now. By then, even with the opening of his sea of chi, Lu Shu would not be able to defend against thousands of low-level Practitioners given his current state. He must find a hiding place to rest.

522 BRINGING LIU XIU HOME

At this moment, Lu Shu turned to see Coral stand up, she struggled to keep herself up. Her delicate face was covered in dust, and traces of dried blood remained on her body.

No matter how painful it was, she must stand up again. Then, slowly, she moved towards Lu Shu and collapsed beside him. Coral rested her head on Lu Shu's chest, her white golden hair spread across his chest. She murmured, "Thank God. You are alive..."

The God-slayer Coral just a moment ago was now a fragile little girl. She continued. "I'd been writing letters on my way home, planning to mail all of them to you once I reached back. Then, I heard the heartbreaking news about you. Luckily, I came here. And what a blessing that you are alright."

"They didn't let me come. But I thought there would be no reason to live on if I did not avenge you."

"Now, I am the Master of Gods of the Deities. Even Father has no control over me..."

Coral said everything in one shot. She had no intention to inquire about the reason for Lu Shu's fake death. The only thing that mattered to her was that Lu Shu was safe and sound.

Lu Shu drew a deep breath. "It's quite painful that you are pressing against my chest..."

"From Coral Odin Johnson's distress, +79!"

Now, all of Lu Shu's bones were fractured, and there were serious lesions on his internal organs and muscles. Thus, it indeed damned hurt when Coral laid her head on his chest...

The tinge of romance in the atmosphere immediately evaporated. Lu Shu was good at it.

But Coral did not generate many distress points. Struggling to support her upper body, Coral said, "I will send you the check once I get back."

Lu Shu paused for two seconds and replied, "Well, it's not that painful anymore..."

Coral chuckled. Her face was dirty. Perhaps strangers would never associate her with the Master of Gods of the Deities seeing her in her current state.

Then, she stood up with much difficulty and, clenching her teeth, carried Lu Shu on her back. Coral was tall with the commendable height of 170cm. But it was slightly awkward for her to carry Lu Shu, given Lu Shu's sturdy build.

Lu Shu was stunned. "Are you sure? You can let me down. This is not rejection. I'm just afraid your body cannot withstand any more weight."

He was pondering about possible ways to recover quickly, or to go all-out against the remaining forces of the Collection of Gods. But never had he expected to be carried away by Coral, whose conditions were no better than his.

Lu Shu felt sorry for her as she struggled to move forward. Then, for some reason, a sense of security wrapped around him. This girl seemed to be worthy of his trust.

The world itself was a cold and apathetic place. Thus, the trust and mutual dependence shared between Lu Xiaoyu and himself was all the more precious.

Lu Shu was unprepared for this.

But Coral did not respond to his question. She clamped her jaws and moved forward slowly. Then, she smiled. "Don't worry. My injuries are much better than yours."

That was followed by a long silence. Lu Shu knew that he could not persuade her out

of her determination. Suddenly he requested, "Please stop. I know this may be too much, but please bring me back to that man. Please."

Lu Shu felt guilty, because Coral's wounds were so serious that she could not even walk properly. But there was something he must do before he left.

Coral turned to see a man leaning against his katana. Even after his death, Coral could feel the imposing spirit of boldness in him.

His body was stabbed by three katanas, but he remained standing amidst piles of bodies.

Coral had no objection. She would do anything that Lu Shu felt was right. Out of curiosity, she asked, "Who's he?"

Lu Shu smiled. "Probably... my comrade-in-arms. Perhaps you don't know the word 'Tong Pao' but he died for me."

He said "Tong Pao" in Chinese. Lu Shu might not even have had the chance to open his sea of chi if not for Liu Xiu's selfless sacrifice for him.

And his last words about being comrades in the next life had been ingrained in Lu Shu's mind.

Coral carried Lu Shu to Liu Xiu's side. With difficulty, Lu Shu put Liu Xiu's body in his Seal of Lands. There, Liu Xiu stood silently, as if he would stand there for an eternity.

"Why did you..."

Lu Shu smiled. "I'm taking him home."

Coral carried Lu Shu towards the outside. After a long moment, she grinned. "Lu Shu, please stay with me for the rest of our lives. If you say no, I will wait till you agree. If not, I will think of other ways."

But there was no response. Coral tilted her head to see Lu Shu's head resting on her shoulder. He was fast asleep due to exhaustion.

He had given it all he had for the battle. Hence, he was unable to stay awake any longer when he felt that sense of security.

Just a few hours ago, the Collection of Gods' fortress was bustling with human activity. But now, all that was left was countless corpses and scenes of misery and suffering. Blood dried up quickly in the air, and its scarlet color soon turned into an abhorrent purple black.

Coral took every step carefully as she walked on the debris so as not to wake Lu Shu up.

She was tired too. But Coral knew that her injuries were nothing compared to Lu Shu's.

When she finally walked out of the hellish shadow that shrouded the fortress, Coral relished the orange-red glow of the setting sun. The sky was as beautiful as a work of art, and the clouds were picturesque.

Coral's spirit was lifted. To Lu Shu, he might have many gains from this trip, but to

Coral, there was only one thing worth mentioning and that was Lu Shu being alive.

Suddenly Coral's body froze. She was alerted by the appearance of a young lady from a blind spot behind the debris.

This was not a coincidence. Besides, even her clothes looked like a precious magical weapon. Murderous intentions were lurking in the pink sakuras on her kimono.

There was a short sword in her hand. It seemed that she had been waiting for a long time. Against the glow of the sunset, her sakuras were exceptionally splendid, and captivating.

523 BRINGING LU SHU HOME

Before she had advanced to Class B, Coral was a mid-tier Class D with impressive power.

The young girl did not wait for Coral to finish thinking. She suddenly spoke in English. "All those left of the Collection of Gods have gone to Nishinokyo. You cannot escape by the normal route, especially with your injuries. Follow me."

Coral stood still. She did not know who this girl was, let alone dare to trust her.

The young girl turned her head to look at Coral. "I am Sakurai Yaeko. You can call me Sakurai... the guy on your back. Is that Lu Shu-kun?"

This was Sakurai's first time seeing Lu Shu's actual appearance with her own two eyes. The delicate and pretty face was fast asleep. For some reason, Sakurai felt that Lu Shu's original appearance was much better than that of Kirihara Yousuke's.

Coral did not trust Sakurai, but looking at the expression in her eyes, her female instincts made her smile. "Lead the way. I'll follow you."

She felt that she had seen the shadows in her own eyes. Coral understood that Sakurai would not do anything that would hurt Lu Shu.

Yaeko drove here, her car was hidden by the road. Coral lightly lay Lu Shu on the back seat. His legs had to be bent because he was too tall.

Sakurai silently concentrated on Coral taking care of Lu Shu. She had to admit that Coral was prettier than her. Coral's ability level was also much higher than hers. She had the power to single handedly eliminate Kitamura at Nishinokyo, and to defeat two families in hiding, this was not something that anyone could do.

Coral was also the Master of Gods of the Deities. The difference between their position and influence was far too great.

But most importantly, she could feel the purity of Coral's adoration towards Lu Shu. It was so pure that it hurt.

Sakurai may have found the reason why Lu Shu did not succumb to her temptation. This feeling was very contradictory.

Yaeko sat in the driver's seat, while Coral sat in the passenger seat. Sakurai suddenly asked, "Are you and Lu Shu..."

Before waiting for Sakurai to finish, Coral replied with urgency and certainty, "Lovers."

As she finished speaking, she took a sideways glance at Lu Shu, who was still sleeping soundly. She was only relieved after checking that Lu Shu did not hear what she had

said. Coral always had a guilty conscience when she said this, she knew that Lu Shu's feelings were not on the same level as hers...

Sakurai stopped talking. Hugging herself with delight, Coral asked, "Are you a member of the Collection of Gods?"

"Yes," said Sakurai.

"How do you know Lu Shu?" Coral was somewhat curious.

Coral asked, "Now that the Collection of Gods is in decline... what are your plans from now on?"

For some reason, Sakurai had nothing to hide. "I want to stay behind and reorganise the Collection of Gods."

Sakurai did not know why she had made such a decision. It was very risky, yet there seemed to be a reason for doing so.

The Class B's in the Collection of Gods had been eliminated. Even the Class C's had suffered heavy losses. Sakurai thought about those families in hiding. Although this was a very difficult task, but it was not impossible. She wanted to try using the resources and inheritance from the Conservative Oda Tokuma that were now in her hands!

Someone suddenly fell from the sky and landed in front of the car. Her black coat fluttered in the cold January wind. Coral closed her mouth. She definitely knew who this person was. Sakurai did as well.

Nie Ting calmly said, "Please hand Lu Shu over to me."

Coral and Sakurai did not expect that Lu Shu could trouble the legendary top expert in the East to come and fetch him personally. The current situation in the Heavenly Network was not very stable either. Many people from the large organisations hid in the neighbouring countries and were held back by him, as they glared like a tiger eyeing its prey. Despite this, Nie Ting still came.

In reality, Nie Ting departed from the Capital as soon as he heard that Takashima was preparing for the sacrificial ritual in order to rapidly advance to Class A. He had come as quickly as he could.

But he did not expect everything to already be over before he had arrived. According to his calculations, Lu Shu should have been in great danger. This sort of danger was beyond what Lu Shu could handle. That was the reason why Nie Ting had rushed over.

But Nie Ting could not understand how the battle had completely ended the moment he rushed over.

He had just come from the fortress. When he saw the interior of the fortress, it was very difficult for him to make an accurate deduction over what had happened. Did Lu Shu kill Takashima? Why were there sword marks along the walls of the fortress?

Not only that, Nie Ting felt more clearly than Takashima. He was very sure that within a three kilometre radius, there had been the sound of Dao, as well as heaven and earth resonating. They had still not completely disappeared.

He had once focused his attention on this young man, who was previously selling

stinky tofu. How did he progress to where he was today?

It was not difficult for Nie Ting to link sword marks and the sound of the Dao to Lu Shu. Nie Ting had even guessed that these sword marks had come from Li Xianyi, from this Nie Ting could understand how Lu Shu inherited these.

Nie Ting suddenly asked, "Was it you guys who killed Takashima?"

Coral and Sakurai surprisingly answered in sync. "I don't know."

The two of them knew that Lu Shu was hiding a secret. Coral knew a bit more, and Sakurai knew a bit less. But the two of them had decided to keep their mouths shut, as Lu Shu was still unconscious, even if Nie Ting was Lu Shu's superior.

Nie Ting laughed. "Okay. I will bring Lu Shu away. You can leave by yourselves."

Without further ado, Nie Ting walked to the side of the car. He placed his slender index finger on Lu Shu's neck and checked for his pulse. After confirming that he had no problems, Nie Ting carried Lu Shu on his shoulder, ready to soar into the sky.

Coral suddenly said, "I, on behalf of the Deities, would like to be allies with the Heavenly Network. Heavenly King Nie, what do you think?"

Nie Ting looked at her calmly. "I can send Lu Shu to discuss this with you. From now on, he will be in charge of the Heavenly Network's external relations."

Coral was pleasantly surprised. "Really?"

"Yes." Nie Ting was a smart person. He knew that 80% of the reason why Coral had

come to Japan was because of Lu Shu. But he was not sure of the relationship between Lu Shu and Coral...

There was nothing in his information that mentioned this...

But no matter what, since Lu Shu would be in charge of overseas affairs from now on, it was only right for him to settle these kind of things.

Coral asked, "Where are you bringing Lu Shu to?"

"I'm bringing him home," Nie Ting said solemnly.

524 THE JOURNEY HAS BEEN WELL WORTHWHILE

"Why have you personally come here? Are the two of you 'comrades'?" Coral's pronunciation of the word "comrade" was awkward, but she had remembered it after Lu Shu had told her once.

Nie Ting was dumbfounded. "Did Lu Shu teach you this word?"

"I don't know."

Nie Ting was silent.

"From Nie Ting's distress, +199!"

Nie Ting was somewhat puzzled. How did Lu Shu make the leader of the Deities so confused? It was fine if someone else replied "I don't know" to his question, but even she replied "I don't know"?! But he clearly knew that the word "comrade" must have come out of Lu Shu's mouth.

He had once wished that Lu Shu showed more attachment to the Heavenly Network.

He had constantly felt that Lu Shu had constantly strove to drift away from this organisation. If Lu Shu himself had said the word "comrade", it would make Nie Ting very pleasantly surprised.

On the other hand, Coral kept the fact that she was involved with Lu Shu a secret, lest she let her tongue slip.

Nie Ting laughed and did not speak. He no longer hesitated. Carrying Lu Shu on his shoulders, he soared up high and flew back to his country.

Three days later, in the Liuhai Lane Courtyard House...

Lu Shu awoke in a guest room. In his alertness, he had realised that all the injuries on his body had healed. A refreshing scent filled the room. It smelled like herbal medicine, but Lu Shu had never smelled anything like it.

He lifted up his blanket and realised that the courtyard outside was an expanse of white snow. The outside was cold and snowy, but the inside was warm and dry thanks to the fire of a stove. Even a dry mattress could make one happy and free from worry.

Large snowflakes fell from the sky. The snowflakes were light and graceful. The wind blew the snow into the courtyard. Sometimes the snow did not simply fall from the sky, there were times it rotated within the courtyard.

He did not know what had happened to him after the affairs in the fortress. After he had become unconscious, he found himself here. But looking at the characteristics of the building, it became clear to him that he had returned back to his country.

Although he did not know exactly where he was, but thinking about how he had

returned back home put his mind at rest.

Just as Lu Shu had finished changing his clothes, Shi Xuejin brought in a bowl of medicinal soup. The snowy wind blew in as the door opened.

When Shi Xuejin saw that Lu Shu was awake, he became happy. "You're finally awake. Hurry and drink this medicine that I have prepared for you."

Shi Xuejin walked out once he had finished speaking, leaving Lu Shu dumbfounded. What was happening? Why was Shi Xuejin here the moment he opened his eyes?

Besides, Shi Xuejin, a Heavenly King, was taking care of him? He was too down-to-earth.

"Come, come. Eat it while it's hot." Shi Xuejin laughed.

Lu Shu's face darkened. "Eat the green onion pancake while it's hot?!"

"Ha ha." Shi Xuejin was not in the slightest embarrassed. He got straight to the point. "Nie Ting will be back soon. He was the one who brought you back from Japan. Once he comes back, he has something quite important to talk about with you."

"Oh." Lu Shu drank a mouth of the millet gruel. He was not used to eating the green onion pancake, so he simply left it there.

Shi Xuejin looked at him from the side. "Thank you for your hard work on this trip to Japan. You have helped us, the Heavenly Network, solve a big problem. Although this did not settle the matter once and for all, but it would be hard for them to fight back."

Lu Shu was suddenly aware that Shi Xuejin's tone was unusually natural as he spoke. It was as if he was talking to someone of the same level as he was.

But he did not continue the conversation. Lu Shu felt that Shi Xuejin was trying to probe his every action. He shook his head and said, "I didn't do much. What happened at the Collection of Gods? I lost consciousness, so I'm not too sure what had happened."

But in reality, he knew the details of the incident. Other than Coral, everyone else had died. He could make up the entire story from his mouth. If he said that Takashima had committed suicide, then Takashima had indeed committed suicide.

But Lu Shu observed Shi Xuejin's expression as he slurped the millet gruel. He was worried that Coral had easily let the cat out of the bag. He observed for a long time, but realised that there were no abnormalities in Shi Xuejin's expression.

Nie Ting suddenly pushed the door open and entered. He sat opposite Lu Shu and pushed a palm-sized box towards him. Then, he turned his head and asked Shi Xuejin, "Do you still have anymore millet gruel?"

"Yes. I'll get some for you." Shi Xuejin smiled and left.

Nie Ting's expression was calm. He pushed the unwanted green onion pancake to the side and said, "Inside the box is your medal for military merit from the Heavenly Network. But I reckon that you are not particularly concerned about this. There is also your new certificate inside the box. Congratulations, you have been promoted to Captain. But due to special circumstances, we will not be holding a ceremony to confer your new rank. Just know it in your heart. If you want to tell others, go ahead and if you don't want to, it's fine too."

Lu Shu opened the box and took a look inside. Being promoted was a good thing, his wage was higher too. But Lu Shu did not speak. He was aware that Nie Ting had other, more important things to say.

Nie Ting calmly said, "Are you a Class B now?"

"No, I'm not," Lu Shu seriously said. "I'm still a Class C."

"Was it you who killed Takashima?" Nie Ting was excited as he asked this question, as he was very curious about Lu Shu's current strength.

"It wasn't me. Heavenly King Nie, you've got it wrong." Lu Shu continued to deny.

Nie Ting did not express his opinion on Lu Shu's words. Lu Shu did not know whether Nie Ting believed him or not. But these questions were not important, Nie Ting did not wish to go deep into this matter now.

Shi Xuejin carried a bowl of millet gruel and walked in. Nie Ting took the bowl and finished it in one mouthful. He then asked, "Did you get anything from this trip to the Collection of Gods?"

When Lu Shu was asked this question, he instantly became alert. He thought seriously about it for a full 30 seconds before answering, "Yes."

Nie Ting was slightly surprised. Earlier when he had observed the blood formation in the fortress, the number of magical stones in the formation did not match with the information given by the Heavenly Network. Thus, Nie Ting had also thought about where the magical stones had gone.

He was very clear that the magical stones had all been transported into the fortress. But there was nothing in the fortress. Could it be that Lu Shu had taken them away? Nie Ting asked calmly, "What did you get?"

Lu Shu took out the half a piece of magical stone from his pocket. Kawayoshi had absorbed part of this magical stone earlier. His expression was solemn. "I got this from Takashima's hands after a lot of difficulty. One could say that the journey has been well worthwhile."

Nie Ting looked at the magical stone in his hand, which had been partially absorbed of its Spirit Qi. He was dumbfounded.

"From Nie Ting's distress, +666!"

He had gone all the way to the Collection of Gods, yet all he got was half a piece of magical stone? And here you are saying that the journey has been well worth it? Is that solemn look on your face real?

Lu Shu also felt sorry. At first he had vowed that he would hand over a hundred magical stones. But in the end he was not willing to do so. Furthermore, if he had handed over the magical stones, how would he explain himself?

525 THE NEW HEAVENLY KING

Nie Ting remained quiet for a long time, holding the half magical stone in his hand. He was trying to resist the urge to crush the stone, and then crush Lu Shu.

The world must be a joke if Lu Shu was honest about saying that the half stone was all he got. Nie Ting stuffed the stone into Shi Xuejin's hands and said calmly, "Store it."

Shi Xuejin was dumbstruck.

Neither of you are sane!

Nie Ting suddenly turned to Lu Shu and demanded, "Do you have invisible storage equipment?"

He certainly would not buy Lu Shu's explanation. Every piece of information of his pointed to the fact that Lu Shu was a true miser.

However the reality was, there was indeed nothing hidden in Lu Shu's pockets. Actually, out of the respect to his subordinate comrade, Nie Ting did not search Lu Shu's body even when he was unconscious.

But the question was, where was his divine water? Even if he could condense it into wearable armor, it would be nonsense to claim that Nie Ting had failed to notice its existence throughout the entire flight.

Besides, Nie Ting saw broken spears inside the fortress with his own eyes. There were at least 12 broken spear heads. Thus, how did Lu Shu enter the place with a bundle of spears? That was definitely not mentioned in the intelligence report!

Therefore, Nie Ting was suspicious that those lost magical stones were still in Lu Shu's possession. He had no intention to confiscate them, yet he was simply curious.

Lu Shu shook his head in denial. "Nope. What is invisible storage equipment?"

Nie Ting stared into Lu Shu's eyes, emotionless. Then, Lu Shu suddenly gave a slap to his own forehead. "Oh yea, I brought Liu Xiu back."

Having said that, Lu Shu took out Liu Xiu's corpse which he had obtained from the Seal of Lands and placed it carefully in front of Nie Ting.

Nie Ting was dumbfounded. And here you are, insisting that you do not have invisible storage equipment?! Can you please put in more effort in embellishing your lie, please? Do you purposely want to piss me off?!

"From Nie Ting's distress, +666!"

Nie Ting saluted to Liu Xiu and walked out with a darkened expression. "Tell him that I will ask someone to bury Liu Xiu."

It was Nie Ting's real concern that he might not be able to hold his urge of beating Lu Shu up if he were to stay any longer.

As a matter of fact, the 12 spears had already reminded Nie Ting that there must have been missed details in the Beimang remains. On their way back, he recalled all the reports related to Lu Shu and the quantity of items surrendered by this young man. The 12 spears were almost identical to those in the Beimang remains, meaning Lu Shu had had invisible storage equipment since then.

Therefore, the answer was apparent... The Seal of Lands was in Lu Shu's hands.

Due to the rarity of invisible storage equipment, even a rich and large organization like the Heavenly Network could not ensure that each and every Heavenly King could be equipped with that precious item.

Now, Lu Shu must be rewarded duly for him to assume the new responsibility. But since he already had it, the trouble could be saved.

Soon, a group came to bury Liu Xiu. Everyone of them solemnly saluted to Liu Xiu before they carried him away. Lu Shu watched from the side, speechless. He thought Liu Xiu was worthy of their respect.

Lu Shu articulated, "That time, Liu Xiu boosted his combat abilities temporarily by exhausting his vitality. Before he died, he killed NINE Class C's of the Collection of Gods, which bought me precious time. Without him, I would not have been able to kill Takashima Tairatsu."

Shi Xuejin listened from the side without a word. Earlier, Lu Shu refused to answer Nie Ting's questions seriously, which caused the truth of the battle to remain a mystery.

But now, unexpectedly, Lu Shu had spoken about it himself.

Shi Xuejin remembered the nine words he wrote for Lu Shu. "A heart of gold, and a fist of iron". At the moment, there were traces of grief glimmering in Lu Shu's eyes as he narrated his act of murder.

Shi Xuejin was shocked that Lu Shu had really killed Takashima. How did he overcome their huge gap in abilities? Nie Ting once told Shi Xuejin that Lu Shu was probably upping his level during the battle, and he might even create Heavenly Visions when he reached Class B, though this could only span a 3 kilometer radius, unlike Class A's who could cover a 10 kilometer radius.

Even so, it was still enough to earn Shi Xuejin's astonishment. He himself was traversing a road untraveled, valiantly hacking through thorns and thistles.

Similarly, Lu Shu had chosen another untraveled road, and he had surpassed Shi Xuejin in terms of his progress.

But Shi Xuejin held no grudges for that. There were countless ways to success in this world, and he only had to focus on the one he chose.

Shi Xuejin smiled. "Why are you willing to tell the truth now?"

"If I don't, Liu Xiu's heroic act would remain unknown. It is only justice that the name Takashima Tairatsu appears in the most prominent military credit carved on Liu Xiu's tombstone."

If he did not reveal the truth to the world, who would know Liu Xiu's extraordinary courage and spirit in that moment of time?

His fearlessness, even when sandwiched between more than ten elites and a pseudo-Class A, deserved to be remembered.

In comparison, Lu Shu felt that his own personal interest in hiding the matter was insignificant.

Shi Xuejin was relieved that Nie Ting's hard work finally paid off, though it would have been even better if Liu Xiu were still alive. Many warriors lived in depressed lives on foreign lands, shouldering immense risks all the time for the protection of their country. It was Shi Xuejin's sincere hope that they could return home safely.

Some might criticize him for being a hypocrite. After all, it was he who had sent them out. Why didn't he call them back if he was seriously concerned about their personal safety?

However, like Taniguchi Bunndai once said, there were some things in the world that must be done.

Shi Xuejin watched in silence as Liu Xiu's coffin was carried away. He suddenly uttered, "I know it may sound a bit abrupt, but it is time to let you know. The Ninth Heavenly King's position has always remained vacant."

Lu Shu went quiet. He had not seen it coming. But suddenly, everything started to make sense. Nie Ting had assigned him important missions on multiple occasions, intelligence agents lurking deep inside the Collection of Gods worked solely for him and his gut feeling also told him that his trip to Japan actually meant more than it seemed.

It turned out that Nie Ting's expectations for him were actually the role of a Heavenly King.

"Why me?" Lu Shu asked.

"Liu Xiu never asked us why it was him," replied Shi Xuejin calmly.

"The higher the position, the greater the responsibility. I think I am not competent for this job yet." Lu Shu rejected.

To him, the prestigious position meant much more than an international reputation, it was more of a heavy responsibility over the lives of tens of thousands of his comrades, including Liu Xiu.

Every act of his would determine the life and death of many "Liu Xiu's", and there would be numerous "Liu Xiu's" willing to sacrifice themselves for his vision.

526 THE LONER

Heavenly King. The title itself was the synonym of power.

Why did some mentally distorted foreign Practitioners consider murdering Heavenly Kings as a top achievement? It was precisely because of the inherent difficulty.

Until today, no one had the courage to answer to any of the murder warrants for Heavenly Kings posted on the Darkness Kingdom, because there would be a price to pay if they did. Should they fail, not only would their reputation and credit suffer, they would also be labeled as losers who thought too highly of themselves.

Moreover, all Heavenly Kings stayed in China, which left the ambitious killers with practically no chances. Certainly, though, there were those waiting for their opportunity in the darkness.

The title would also put one under the global limelight, and the word "famous" would be insufficient to describe them.

When Lu Shu heard about the offer, he was by all means surprised. Who would expect an insignificant boy, who used to get along by selling stinky tofu, to rise to the throne of a Heavenly King?!

Even so, Lu Shu chose to decline it despite the irresistible temptation. He did not want to see "Liu Xiu's" dying for him.

Shi Xuejin smiled calmly and said, "In this era, the chosen ones do exist. I am equally saddened by Liu Xiu's death, but same as him, I will not think twice if my sacrifice is necessary. Of course, I will not force you. But I suggest you to consider it carefully."

In fact, neither Nie Ting nor Shi Xuejin had expected the trip to Japan to affect and transform certain parts of Lu Shu's perspectives, which resulted in some contradictions in his own values.

Just like during the pledge of allegiance back then, some were uncertain, and some were inspired. They were merely simple minds in their teens, sheltered from the cruelty and the true face of the outside world. They had grown up under their parents' loving protection.

But it was a different case for Lu Shu. He had witnessed the good side, including people like Uncle Li and Li Xianyi and he had seen the bad side too, such as the coldness and the indifference of the world. Hence, he hesitated.

Lu Shu would never judge his own selfishness, as it was only a personal attitude in life.

However, at this moment, his long-held beliefs were toppled by Liu Xiu's and many others.

Now, he was even surrounded by a sense of helplessness. Liu Xiu had sacrificed his life for him, but could he return his life to Liu Xiu? He could not.

He could still repay Uncle Li and Li Xianyi's care for Lu Xiaoyu and himself, but how could he do the same to Liu Xiu? Could avenging him by killing Takashima Tairatsu be considered as reciprocation?

But the dead could not be brought back again!

To Lu Shu, being selfless was impossible, at least not for him throughout his entire life.

He could not return to Luo City now, because he had to attend Liu Xiu's funeral, to bid his last farewell to the hero, his savior.

Lu Shu declined Shi Xuejin's kindness and walked out of the courtyard. Heavy snow fell from the sky. Pedestrians walked gingerly on the streets, cautious about the slippery floor.

A boy gently wrapped a girl in a scarf, and the latter cheerfully slid her hands into the boy's overcoat pockets.

An elder was waiting for the bus, holding a basket of vegetables in his hands, a middle-aged man pressed a button on his car key, and the headlights of a car beside the street flashed in response.

In this worldly city, a tinge of loss rose in Lu Shu's heart, with a little helplessness.

Standing in the frozen world, Lu Shu phoned Lu Xiaoyu. The call was answered very shortly, but Lu Xiaoyu spoke angrily before Lu Shu could say anything, "Don't talk. I am furious right now, and you can't make me happy."

With that, Lu Xiaoyu hung up the phone. At a loss over what to do, traces of loneliness crept into Lu Shu's heart. It felt like something had clogged up his throat, and he was suffocating.

He did not call Lu Xiaoyu a second time. Instead, he moved forward slowly. He had no idea where to go, or what he could do.

He happened to walk past a noisy Internet cafe. People in their loneliest moments tended to be attracted to boisterous places.

Upon second thoughts, Lu Shu pushed open the door and walked in. Just when he had a good view of the rowdy scene inside, the girl at the counter yelled, "You! The one over there at the door! Close the door NOW!"

"Sure." Lu Shu closed the door. Then, he went to register for a guest card with his ID card. "How much per hour?"

"12 yuan per hour in the hall," the receptionist replied casually.

The billionaire Lu Shu was shocked. "What? Are you robbers?"

It only cost 2 yuan per hour in a Luo City internet cafe. In comparison, the price here was exorbitant, no matter how high the price of living in the Capital was!

The girl rolled her eyes. "So are you registering or not? If you aren't, leave."

Lu Shu clenched his teeth and decided. "I am!"

When he finally got a seat in the hall, he realized the internet cafe was a suitable place for him. At the very least, it was lively there, and no one would talk to him about life and dreams.

At this moment, Lu Shu received a message. Thinking that it might be Lu Xiaoyu, he quickly checked his phone, only to see it was from 10086...

No sooner than he put his phone back Lu Shu had received another message. His heart twitched again in hope. But, he checked his phone and realized that it was still not Lu Xiaoyu!

Lu Shu's heart dimmed again. It was a text from a stranger. "We should break up. No more contact onwards."

Puzzled, Lu Shu replied to the message, "Who the hell are you?! I don't know you!"

The person replied, "Freak. You win!"

Lu Shu was utterly confused.

I really don't know a damn thing about you, bro! Are you nuts?!

Lu Shu switched on his computer, but still had no idea over what to do. Thus, he binged on a few movies.

In the past, he could never find so much time for movies. But watching too many in one go would end up boring too.

In the latter half of the night, Lu Shu saw someone return to his seat from the counter with a bowl of cup noodles. The smell of pickled Chinese cabbage was simply too tempting. Thus, Lu Shu yielded to the urge and went to buy one for himself...

He was stunned, though, by the unreasonably high price charged for cup noodles. One bowl of cup noodles with pickled Chinese cabbage actually cost him eight bucks! Screw you, you penny-pincher boss of the cafe!

527 ANTIDOTE

Lu Shu looked at the fatty by his side. "I have never played this kind of game before."

He was speaking the truth. He didn't even have a computer at home, how was it possible for him to have played computer games? He was also not willing to go to an internet cafe. In the end, he had never played a computer game before.

The fatty laughed. "Brother, you must be kidding me. Have you never played CrossFire before? Just come and help us fill the numbers. We're short of one player for 8V8."

"I really can't," said Lu Shu.

"No worries. We are all experts in the game. Just come and win with us. All you need is to shout 666," the fatty said with glee.

"Oh." Since he had nothing else to do, why not play along with them?

Luckily, one could use their chat software number to directly log into this shooting game, thus Lu Shu did not even need to register his account. After adding the fatty as his friend, they prepared to play.

In the end, the fatty realised that Lu Shu really did not know how to play the same. He did not even know the controls. The fatty panicked. "Use the four keys WASD to control your direction. The mouse controls your visual angle. Do you see the front sight of the gun on your screen? Just aim the gun at someone's body and fire. If you hit their head, it's an instant kill. If you want to change your bullets, press..."

After his explanation, Lu Shu's character could finally move. Lu Shu immediately realised that this game certainly seemed very easy. With his current reaction speed

and muscle control, aiming his gun at someone was just too easy.

But Lu Shu furrowed his eyebrows. He was not familiar with the gun's recoil. He still had to play some more before he could get used to it.

The university student beside the fatty laughed. "Hey fatty, can you even move?"

The fatty held back and did not utter a word. It was not good to offend the person he had brought here. He decided to cooperate and play for now. Later on he would find an excuse to kick out this newbie.

In the end, not even five minutes had passed when the fatty suddenly realised that Lu Shu's killing streak was sharply increasing. There were times when the opponent knelt upon seeing the fatty.

The fatty shot a glance at Lu Shu's screen and shivered. "Were they all headshots?!"

The opponent was not happy. "Cheating even in an internal fight?! Do you have no shame?"

The fatty was dumbfounded. "We really did not cheat..."

Lu Shu played with great pleasure. After he got used to the gun recoil, it was simply too easy getting headshots. It was just like what the fatty had said, a headshot was an instant kill. It was very handy.

"Brother, is this really your first time?" The fatty was dumbfounded.

Lu Shu looked at the fatty in surprise. "This is really my first time. But you were

right. This game is really easy."

Lu Shu suddenly realised something. As long as he killed his opponent once, there would be a new income of distress points...

To Lu Shu, the joy he derived from playing games was not great. But if he could obtain so much distress points from just killing someone, then this experience would be very meaningful!

But the fatty called Wang Yang had never thought that Lu Shu was training for battle. He was able to train just by playing games, it was as if Lu Shu had discovered a new land...

Wang Yang did not have any morals either. "Great expert! Bring me along with you!"

...

Liuhai Lane Courtyard House, 6am...

In one hand, Shi Xuejin held a thread-bound book and was slowly reading it. In the other, he pushed white rice porridge mixed with mustard leaf strips into his mouth. Eating porridge with salted vegetables in the morning... how lovely.

He glanced at Nie Ting. "He has been in that internet cafe for almost one and a half days. From two nights ago all the way to this morning. Do you have anything to say?"

Nie Ting quickly glanced through the document in his hands. He finished reading and even memorised the two hundred thousand word-long document in a minute.

After looking through the document, he signed his approval. He then took another document and continued looking through it. One slowly reading his book, the other quickly reading his documents, the contrast could not be clearer.

Nie Ting calmly said, "Liu Xiu's death has affected him greatly."

"Are you not scared that he cannot stand the sudden pressure?"

"Who has not experienced any setbacks?" Nie Ting was nonchalant. "When he came out of the orphanage, far from his family, he survived. Survived very well, actually. There's no point being worried."

"True," Shi Xuejin said as he chewed his food.

Nie Ting suddenly passed a document to Shi Xuejin. "Take a look at this."

Shi Xuejin received the document. The more he looked at it, the more he furrowed his eyebrows. "Have they not fully investigated the identity of the Puppet Master? How had he hidden so deeply within the human world?"

"I don't know." Nie Ting shook his head. "Everyone had thought that the Golden Foundation had said frightening things just to cause alarm, but I believe them. It is not because I feel that their aspirations and belief are lofty, but because I had fought the Puppet Master face-to-face during the period with bare magical energy. I knew that he was not human then."

Shi Xuejin sighed. "What exactly are they planning to do?"

"Retreat," said Nie Ting.

"But it would be best if the people are not plunged into an abyss of misery," said Shi Xuejin. He suddenly changed the topic. "Do you want Hao Zhichao to speak with Lu Shu? See if he can find out what has made Lu Shu degenerate to such an extent."

"There's no need. There are some things that just cannot be comprehended. In this case, one will simply find something else to do as a respite. Everyone has these kinds of moments. Beside, there will be someone to talk to him." Nie Ting glanced at old automatic watch. "That person has probably reached him."

...

The young girl at the front desk of the Internet cafe lay on the table for a short rest. After staying up all night, she could not take it anymore. The customers' computers would automatically shut down after 7am. She could go home and sleep after someone came to take over her shift.

But the young girl was slightly irritated while taking her nap. These customers were especially noisy.

Bang! The door of the internet cafe suddenly opened wide. The large snowflakes blew into the internet cafe by the strong wind. The young girl immediately started complaining, as if she was scolding someone.

But she had not even said anything. She did not know why the customers were frightened stiff. She did not know what to say.

Lu Shu rubbed the sleeve of the person beside him and argued. "Ha ha, you are really interesting. Why do you treat the same organ differently? When I said that you are

diao, you are happy, but when I say that you play like a Japanese, then you are upset. Is this appropriate?"

"From Wang Yang's distress, +666..."

Lu Shu suddenly felt that something was not right. He turned his head around and saw Lu Xiaoyu coldly standing at the door of the internet Cafe. She was wearing the white down jacket Lu Shu had bought for her birthday last year, and a small hat with a pom-pom. She looked at Lu Shu. "Lu Shu, you've changed!"

Lu Shu was momentarily stunned. He never thought that Lu Xiaoyu, who had hung up on the phone with him, had come to the Capital by herself.

His tired eyes suddenly regained their vigour. He slowly broke into a grin and laughed. "Xiaoyu, why are you here?"

Nie Ting truly understood Lu Xiaoyu. He knew this fact more than Shi Xuejin did, people could say a thousand things, but it would be of no use. On the other hand, Lu Xiaoyu could become Lu Shu's antidote without even speaking a word.

528 THE CHINESE CHIVES SELLER, LU XIAOYU

There were people who became dejected because they had killed people or seen the death of their comrades with their own eyes. They grew weary of massacres and fights. The members of the Heavenly Network had many examples of this, even during the magical era.

In these cases, the Heavenly Network mainly made use of psychological counseling. But for severe cases, they would transfer them to logistics jobs. They would not insist on them continuing their jobs.

In reality, forcing this kind of people to the battlefield may bring about the effects of

reverse psychology. But Nie Ting and Shi Xuejin did not have the heart to do so. Everyone made their own decisions, there was no need to force them to do anything.

But Nie Ting was never concerned that Lu Shu would end up in the same situation, as he knew that it was not easy for him to live till today in this chaotic world. His tenacity was much better than most adults.

Furthermore, he knew that Lu Xiaoyu had gone to the North.

The moment Lu Xiaoyu hung up on the phone with Lu Shu, she knew that something was wrong. Lu Xiaoyu also felt that some things were better off said in real life to Lu Shu, even if it meant traveling a vast distance to meet him.

Lu Xiaoyu had never thought that Lu Shu was so strong that he did not need the consolation of anyone. In reality, Lu Shu also had times when he was weak. For example, when he first started selling hard boiled eggs, he could not sell everything. He ate hard boiled eggs for all three meals. The yolk was so dry that it almost choked him. Lu Shu, who had just left the orphanage, cried as he ate.

The Lu Shu then was just an ordinary boy.

If he had been summoned then under the Heavenly King's current standards, he would definitely not make the cut.

Lu Shu had always been growing. Only Lu Xiaoyu knew that she had the obligation to appear in front of Lu Shu when he needed her.

It was as if Lu Shu would always be a part of her life.

"Why are you here?" Lu Shu stopped his argument with Wang Yang. Lu Xiaoyu slowly walked to Lu Shu. "Come, I'll treat you to hotpot!"

Lu Xiaoyu was not free either. If she was not planting Chinese chives, she was selling them. Her income was not low, and her personal savings were accumulated through fair means...

When she had just started selling Chinese chives, people laughed at her. When a group of rough old men who were setting up their stores at Wen Wan City saw a young lady, they would definitely ask, "Young lady, have your parents abandoned you?"

What should Lu Xiaoyu say to that? From the start, she was not willing to talk nonsense with these kind of people. They were not superior to her.

The next day, when Lu Xiaoyu brought Little Fury along with her, all these people shut their mouths... they had no choice but to do so. Little Fury would give all of them a good beating.

The Heavenly Network had also raised their own magical beasts, thus they knew that ordinary people would feel very threatened, even if they were only Class F beasts.

Since the Practitioners' Public Security Department had been officially formed, many people would choose to directly report to the Heavenly Network if they had encountered any strange incidents. For example, their dog suddenly meowing, their husky suddenly howling like a wolf... they had insisted that this was a premonition that something odd would happen to their husky...

But after Xi Fei and his colleagues came to Wen Wan City and saw Lu Xiaoyu, they

were dumbfounded. "Xiaoyu... so the squirrel that attacked people just now... er..."

What the heck!

It was not that Xi Fei did not dare to deal with Lu Xiaoyu. But to them, Lu Shu was now sacrificing his life for the country. He had been assassinated by the Collection of Gods. Now, they shared a bitter hatred of the enemy.

No one wanted to trouble Lu Xiaoyu now. Furthermore, no one knew that Lu Xiaoyu was a regular visitor at the Mt Beimang base. Lu Xiaoyu had received the title of most welcomed temporary staff.

Xi Fei was curious. "Xiaoyu, what happened?"

Those who had teased Lu Xiaoyu had been badly battered by Little Fury. They thought that someone had finally come to help them vent their anger. But looking at the situation, they were wrong. Their "saviors" knew Lu Xiaoyu!

The old men suddenly had a vague premonition...

Four people had come with Xi Fei. A girl questioned closely, "Xiaoyu, explain the situation to us. If you have been wronged, we will help you fight back!"

The old men who had made the report were dumbfounded. "We were the ones who made the report..."

Lu Xiaoyu said with great injustice, "They said my parents have abandoned me..."

Xi Fei and his colleagues furrowed their eyebrows. But they could not just hear Lu

Xiaoyu's side of the story. He turned his head and asked, "Is she speaking the truth?"

The old men carelessly said, "We were just joking! You cannot go so far as to beat people up for a joke, right?"

Xi Fei coldly said, "Beat them up!"

The entire Luo City Heavenly Network was grieving over Lu Shu's death, and here there were people making fun of Lu Xiaoyu, the orphan of a national hero? Could they bear with this? Of course not!

After the old men were beat up one by one, Xi Fei adjusted his clothes and collar. "Let's go. Come with me to receive our punishment."

The Heavenly Network could not just beat up people like that. They were already mentally prepared to receive punishment.

Even if they were punished, it was worth standing up for Lu Xiaoyu! They were happy even if they had to be locked up in a small, dark room!

Xi Fei smiled and greeted Lu Xiaoyu. "Xiaoyu, we'll be going back first."

The old men gasped in shock. They had no tears left to cry, even if they wanted to. Who were these people?!

Lu Xiaoyu obediently said, "Brothers, sisters, goodbye. Thank you for your help."

Lu Xiaoyu waited for Xi Fei and his colleagues to leave. Her expression suddenly turned cold. She turned to look at the old men and laughed coldly. "Ha ha."

From that day onwards, the entire Wen Wan City Market knew that someone amazing had come to the city. And she was a rather pretty young girl!

But this also brought her some publicity. At the beginning, some people did not believe that the Chinese chives Lu Xiaoyu were selling were real. But now, they all believed her.

Since the Heavenly Network had appeared to support her, this feeling was as if she was selling Chinese chives at the Heavenly Network herself. Her business there was just too good!

That was why Lu Xiaoyu was now very rich...

Lu Xiaoyu looked Lu Shu up and down. There was fatigue and conflict in Lu Shu's eyes. But Lu Xiaoyu did not say any consoling words to Lu Shu. Instead, she stretched out her small hand. "Let's go. I'll treat you to hotpot."

Lu Shu smiled. "Then we can eat a bit better."

Lu Xiaoyu's greatest wish in the past was to wear a comfortable and soft sweater, as well as thick and heavy outerwear. She was now wearing a hat and a muffler that she really liked. She walked with Lu Shu on the creaking snowfield. She breathed in happily as she walked to eat hotpot with Lu Shu.

As they walked on the street, Lu Xiaoyu suddenly raised her head and asked, "Why did you get involved?"

Lu Shu was stunned. He said in a soft voice: "They want to make me a Heavenly

King."

"Do you want to?"

"I think..."

"No matter what, I will support you," Lu Xiaoyu said calmly.

529 A SINGLE SPARK CAN START A PRAIRIE FIRE

As of now, Lu Shu's triumphant return was still a secret known only to the elite few of the Heavenly Network. Lu Shu wondered if the Collection of Gods would provide him with another wave of distress points if they learned about his fake death and the deep sea white sand scam.

However, the entire organization had virtually been destroyed. Even if there were people unhappy about him, there would not be too many of them alive to generate distress points.

Meanwhile, thousands of kilometers away in Japan, Yaeko had paid her visit to many hidden clans consecutively. In merely three days, she had grown up under immense stress and had even earned unanimous support from those she had visited.

It was not only because of her possession of the remaining resources of the Conservatives, but also her competent mastery of skills inherited from Oda.

At the moment, the shocking news of the collapse of the Collection of Gods had been spread across the world. Despite their disadvantage in the absence of high-end Class A combat powers, the Collection of Gods, together with the Department of Faith Theory, the Phoenix Society and the Heavenly Network, were initially all on the same starting line.

Therefore, the sudden elimination of a potential external threat caught everybody off guard.

The news set the Darkness Kingdom in uproar for half a month. Coral's involvement in the actual battle was widely known too, but it seemed impossible that she alone could overthrow the whole Collection of Gods.

It made no sense. Various big organizations were looking for traces in support of an alternative possibility, but to no avail.

In fact, Lu Shu's involvement was completely unexpected. His identity and actions had been strictly confidential before Takashima's advancement to pseudo-Class A, and almost all witnesses of his participation in the fight were dead now.

Nie Ting's takeoff from the Capital towards the Collection of Gods was video-recorded. In the Capital, there were some people hired only to stay in rented rooms all day and watch Nie Ting's flying directions closely...

It was not very helpful, actually, because Nie Ting might have chosen to fly southward before going northward upon reaching a certain altitude. After all, his movement could not be captured outside the Capital or when he was high enough.

Besides, the job carried high risks. Usually, once their photos were uploaded, they would be arrested by Hao Zhichao's team before they had time to retreat...

Thus, Nie Ting's involvement in the battle was suspected by many. But his arrival might have been too late even with his Class A flying speed taken into account. Back then, by the time Nie Ting reached the fortress, few were still alive. And he had already left with Lu Shu when spies from other big organizations rushed to the place

for a closer look.

But that probably would not work well based on Lu Shu's personality...

From the start, no one associated the battle with Lu Shu's death. Although it was true that the Heavenly Network and the Collection of Gods were aged-long enemies and there were disputes over the credibility of Lu Shu's death news, it was certainly impossible for a mere Class C to be related to such wide-range disruption.

Coral took the greatest credits. Her combat power was now ranked one of the top among Class B's.

In the meantime, Lu Xiaoyu was barbecuing her beef slices as Lu Shu recounted the battle, down to every minor detail. Suddenly, she raised her head and asked, "Who's that again? Coral? Why did she appear in Japan? Is the Collection of Gods her enemy too?"

But Lu Shu had no idea!

"However, she can be considered your life savior. How are you planning to pay her back?" Lu Xiaoyu asked casually, dipping the cooked beef in her sauce plate and sending it to her mouth.

For steamed boat sauce, Lu Xiaoyu preferred a mixture of sesame oil and vinegar to peanut sauce or sesame paste, because the former had a more lasting flavor.

Lu Shu grinned. "Don't worry so much. Let's focus on the food."

Lu Xiaoyu shot Lu Shu a glance and kept silent. She was genuinely grateful for

Coral's act of saving Lu Shu.

They spent over 400 bucks on the food. But Lu Xiaoyu did not even hesitate when she paid the bill. As compared to Lu Shu, she was much more generous, like a new upstart...

Nie Ting and Shi Xuejin did not bother Lu Shu further about the matter of the Ninth Heavenly King. It seemed that they had purposely given Lu Shu some time to consider, neither hasty nor giving up on the prospect.

On the third day, Hao Zhichao came to inform Lu Shu of his participation in Liu Xiu's funeral. Lu Shu had planned to buy a set of black suits, because dress code did matter for that kind of occasions.

However, Hao Zhichao returned again with a set of Heavenly Network uniform made specifically for Lu Shu's size. It was the black cloak that Lu Shu once saw them wearing.

It was not the first time Lu Shu had visited the secret base in the Lingjing Lane. Besides Hao Zhichao, Nie Ting, Shi Xuejin, Zhong Yutang and You Mingyu, no one knew why he was there, as few were aware that it was Lu Shu who brought Liu Xiu back.

Zhong Yutang and You Mingyu came from Yuzhou specially for the funeral, because Liu Xiu was sent for the mission by Zhong Yutang, and he was also You Mingyu's comrade.

During the funeral, Nie Ting delivered a speech at the memorial. He glanced over the audience and said calmly, "In this mission, Liu Xiu claimed the credit for wiping out

Takashima Tairatsu, but he was martyred as a result. Liu Xiu was born in 1983 and he had been acting on a secret mission in the Collection of Gods for 11 years 2 months and 17 days. During his mission, he was unable to return for his mother when she passed away due to sickness. Last month, he requested to return home for a bowl of authentic minced meat noodle. I approved. But I never expected he would come home this way."

Nie Ting paused. His emotions could hardly be concealed under his composed facial expressions. Nie Ting continued. "In this era, fortune and fame are widely sought after, and many are no longer willing to bear hardships. They are concerned about job promotions and salaries. As for the safety and security of our country, they leave them to others."

"Since they are unwilling to fulfill those duties, we have no one else to turn to. It is our obligations. It is my honor to work with everybody present today, to be able to uphold our belief and passion, together, in this unpredictable world."

"Today, Liu Xiu stood up. Tomorrow, it might be me, Nie Ting. I, Nie Ting, may die, but the Heavenly Network and our country, China, will always live on and thrive."

530 REUNION WITH LIU LI!

For people like Liu Xiu, their existence were like beacons of light in the darkness. We walked in the darkness, surrounded by apathy and coldness, and we needed not be told how much more cheating, deception and ugliness lay ahead of us. What we needed was a reminder that we could become a more beautiful and positive version of ourselves.

Lu Shu stood in silence in the last row of the crowd. Hao Zhichao told him that Liu Xiu's standing posture in his death would be crafted into a bronze statue to be erected in Lingjing Lane and an account of Liu Xiu's life would be carved on the base of the

statue.

The Heavenly Network did not mind the world knowing that they killed Takashima Tairatsu. On the base, it was clearly written that Liu Xiu perished when he assisted his comrade in slaying Takashima.

However, no one could deduce the true identity of the so-called "his comrade".

Lu Shu brought Lu Xiaoyu forward to pay their last tribute to Liu Xiu. Lu Xiaoyu made a deep, sincere bow to Liu Xiu's coffin and said softly, "Thank you for saving Lu Shu."

Unfortunately, though, she could not sense Liu Xiu's spirit from within the coffin. It was also Lu Shu's reason for bringing her to the site, to test his hypothesis on his ability to revive the dead after the completion of his collection of the seven swords.

Although it was only a guess, he had to make some effort in proving it nonetheless.

Lu Xiaoyu shook her head at Lu Shu, whose expressions darkened slightly. Maybe it was better this way, because Liu Xiu's spirit could well be lost if Lu Shu's spirit reconstruction failed. He certainly did not want to take the risk before he was sure of what he was doing.

Many people were pleasantly surprised to see Lu Shu again. They had just sent a comrade away, and here returned another comrade.

In fact, although they grieved during the funeral, they were not weak. It would be fine to carry on from where Liu Xiu had left off.

Thus, Lu Shu made a brief explanation about his mission to obtain deep sea white sand by fraud. He did not go into details, though, because it was nothing glorious to get rewards through fraudulent means...

But, he had never expected people's response. "Good job! You did the right thing! You took their stuff and took revenge. That's good enough! Most importantly, you are safe!"

Lu Shu was speechless for a long while. They were model soldiers trained by Nie Ting, what could he expect...

But at this moment, he suddenly caught a glimpse of Liu Li!

Lu Shu took a long moment to recover from his shock. He pointed at Liu Li and asked You Mingyu, "Why is he here?"

You Mingyu asked in reply, curious, "Why, do you know him?"

"Nonsense. He's my Daoyuan classmate!" Lu Shu said, slightly annoyed.

Lu Shu was shocked. He had certainly not expected the relationship between Liu Xiu and Liu Li!

Now, his conscience was guilt-stricken, recounting on what a pain in the ass he had been to Liu Li.

"Wait for me for a second, Xiaoyu," Lu Shu said and walked towards Liu Li, who was startled too upon seeing him approaching!

"From Liu Li's distress, +999!"

"You... you are still alive!" Liu Li exclaimed, as if he had met a ghost.

Lu Shu was a tad awkward. Honestly speaking, he really did not want to upset Liu Li in this situation, though he had not been nice to him in the past. Hence, Lu Shu could only comfort himself by thinking that it was perfectly normal for one to be distressed upon meeting someone presumed to be dead...

It was an impulsive decision to approach Liu Li, and now, Lu Shu was suddenly at a loss of words. In order to break the awkward silence, Lu Shu apologized, "I am truly very sorry for what I did in the past. From now onwards, we are classmates and comrades-in-arms. So we must love and care for each other..."

Staring into Lu Shu's genuine expression, Liu Li did not know how to respond!

"From Liu Li's distress, +999!"

He had been planning to avenge Lu Shu ever since he found out about his death. In spite of the many unhappy memories between them, Liu Li had to admit that Lu Shu was kind at heart.

But now, he was pretty shocked by Lu Shu's behavior. What are you doing? So earnestly repenting for your past misdeeds? Please be normal, brother...

You Mingyu and Hao Zhichao were shocked too. Had that annoying kiddo suddenly undergone a change in temperament?! Indeed, Lu Shu's irritating personality had left too deep an impression on all members of the Heavenly Network.

Liu Li took a long while to reply, "Since you are still alive... why were you absent from the admission test of Luo Shen College? It's over now."

Lu Shu continued, as if he did not hear him talking. "... From today onwards, your trouble is my trouble too. Tell me if you get bullied or if you need money... Forget it. You are rich enough... Wait. WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?!"

He had missed the admission test of Luo Shen College?! He must have been tricked!

Lu Shu's expression darkened at once. He immediately left and walked towards Zhong Yutang. "I suppose I am eligible for a makeup admission test for Luo Shen Cultivation College, right?"

But Zhong Yutang ignored him and waved at You Mingyu. "You Mingyu, come here. I want to have a word with you!"

Before he could walk away, Lu Shu pulled him back forcefully. Based on his strength, Zhong Yutang's clothes would have been torn apart had he not stopped shortly...

"From Zhong Yutang's distress, +374..."

"Listen to me, Lu Shu. The admission test for Luo Shen Cultivation College is the same as High School Leaving Examinations. It's a national paper and no makeup assessment is allowed..." Zhong Yutang smiled, though his expression was kind of stiff. As the person in charge of Lu Shu's undercover mission, he had good knowledge of Lu Shu's actions in the Collection of Gods. The kid could even take down a bloody pseudo-Class A, so how was he, Zhong Yutang, a rival to him?!

But he had no choice too. During this period of time, he had turned down countless

people in power. There was no way to open the back door for Lu Shu!

Furthermore, Zhong Yutang was in no position to decide whether to open the back door. After some consideration, he said, "Little Shu, it's not a serious problem. Really. You can simply talk to Heavenly King Nie or Heavenly King Shi. There's no use to finding me..."

Lu Shu gave a cold laugh. "Ha."

"From Zhong Yutang's distress, +666!"

"Let me go first..."

"Ha."

"Are you not going to let me go..."

"Ha."