

# High-Level Martial Era

- Chapter 1: 1 Li Yuan

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Seven Stars Calendar, September 2042, Xia Country, Jiangbei Province, Jiang City.

A city known as the furnace, where most of the year is winter or summer, and early September is the hot season.

Guan Mountain District's Number One High School.

In each classroom of the senior high building, similar banners hung behind the blackboard: "No fight, no survival in third year," "Struggle for one year, have no regrets for life," "No toughness in third year, how can you stand firm?"...

And one classroom on the first floor to the east was exceptionally large, nearly a thousand square meters. Unlike ordinary classrooms, there were no desks or chairs; one side was lined with swords, spears, sabers, staffs, and many other cold weapons, while the other side was fitted with various special instruments, as well as a track paved with dark red metal.

This is the Martial Arts classroom.

At this moment, over a hundred students are practicing standing postures, each performing different movements.

Some resemble monkeys, others are like flying birds, some appear tiger-like... their vitality and spirit are exceptionally strong.

"It originates from the feet, activated through the legs, governed by the waist, uniting the force of the hundred skeletons into the fingertips..." a burly middle-aged man in a black Martial Path uniform walked among the students.

His face was stern, nearly two meters tall, with a voice like a bell and eyes like a fierce tiger, scrutinizing every student.

What drew the most attention was his right arm, which was actually a silver metallic limb that could move as naturally as a real arm, perfectly integrated with the severed limb.

"In theory, these are the key points of the Basic Cultivation Method that you should've mastered in your second year, but what do I see?"

Your postures are still sloppy in the third year," the burly man scolded angrily as he walked, and a casual slap from his metal arm would knock a sweat-drenched student to the ground: "If the stance is stable, the center of gravity will be difficult to shift, and the Basic Cultivation Method is the foundation of Martial Path!"

"One day's practice for one day's worth of skill, miss a day of practice and you're a hundred days behind; I bet you all completely relaxed during the half-month summer vacation and didn't practice at home."

"You're in third year and still thinking about relaxing? You're ordinary class students without awakened Spiritual Nature; if you don't work hard, how will you be admitted to Martial Arts University?"

"Even if you're not aiming for the Martial Arts University, taking the cultural route, martial arts scores still account for 30%..." the burly man kept berating.

Yet the group of students didn't dare to breathe heavily, practicing with even more dedication.

"Report."

"Report." A series of similar voices suddenly echoed at the classroom door as a group of students in Martial Path uniforms appeared at the entrance.

"Group Two back from the Spiritual Aptitude Test?" the burly man glanced toward the doorway.

Immediately, the burly man's sharp gaze fell on one of the students.

This student was nearly one meter eighty tall with a buzz cut. At first glance, he didn't seem too extraordinary, but upon closer inspection, one could see he stood straight, with a spine that was almost perfectly aligned, exuding an unshakable presence with a casual stance.

Clearly, this student had integrated the 'carry the head suspended from above, sink the tailbone' principle of the Basic Cultivation Method into his everyday movements.

He truly achieved the state where intention leads and spirit conveys.

This level of understanding of the Martial Arts Realm surpassed all other students practicing postures in the classroom.

"Li Yuan, how did it go?" the burly man looked at him.

The nearly hundred students practicing posture couldn't help but sneak glances at the student named Li Yuan.

"Teacher Xu, I didn't awaken," Li Yuan replied calmly, shaking his head without showing disappointment.

The burly man frowned upon hearing this.

Li Yuan was the most promising student in his class to awaken Martial Spirit.

"Li Yuan couldn't succeed?"

"At the end of the second year's exams, his martial arts score was in the top thirty of his grade. His Physical Quality had already reached level 6 at that time, and now must be even stronger, yet he still hasn't awakened Martial Spirit?"

"Awakening Martial Spirit, it's really difficult!" The nearly hundred practicing students couldn't help feeling privately shocked.

Nowadays, across the whole Xia Country and even the entire Blue Star, talent is selected in two ways—academic courses and Martial Arts Cultivation.

And all students have been taught Basic Cultivation Methods by the state and practice martial arts from middle school onwards.

At Guan Mountain District Number One High School, there are over two thousand students in the third-year grade, spread out across twenty classes.

But there's only one Martial Arts Elite Class; all the others are ordinary classes.

The Martial Arts Elite Class has more than sixty students, all of whom have awakened Martial Spirit, and often the top fifty martial arts scores in the grade are held by them.

For Li Yuan to make it into the top thirty in martial arts in an ordinary class was indeed surprising.

"What about the others? Did anyone awaken their Spiritual Nature?" the burly man swept his gaze over the rest.

Silence ensued.

"Come on in," the burly man said, unfazed.

In truth, most who would awaken their Martial Spirit often did so in their first year of high school, if not earlier, in middle school.

Awakening in the third year? The chances were very slim!

The burly man had only held hopes for Li Yuan, and with a wave of his hand he instructed: "Group Three, go to the Martial Arts Building for the Spiritual Aptitude Test."

Boom~

One row of students practicing posture, their legs already sore and feet in pain, quickly got up at these words and rushed out of the classroom.

Meanwhile, Li Yuan and his group had returned to their spots to continue their practice.

"Brother Yuan, Teacher Xu seems a bit disappointed," muttered Li Yuan's classmate with a short goatee, looking quite mature: "But you, Brother Yuan, you don't seem saddened at all by the results of the Spiritual Aptitude Test."

"Stop it."

"Let's continue training; practicing the basic method for four hours a day is a fundamental requirement." Li Yuan said indifferently, foreseeing the outcome and feeling no disappointment.

"Four hours?" The mature-looking classmate mumbled, "No wonder you're the second-record-holder in our class."

Hearing this, Li Yuan smiled and no longer engaged with his classmate, closed his eyes gently, stood in his place, knees slightly bent, and his presence changed immediately, resembling a boulder, and the unshakable air about him grew stronger.

## Chapter 2: 1 Li Yuan\_2

"Solid Rock Cultivation Technique." Li Yuan's mind conjured up the many actions of this cultivation method.

He had practiced these actions tens of thousands of times, mastering them by heart.

In this era, the Martial Path was prevalently practiced.

The Seven Fundamental Cultivation Methods, publicly disclosed by the Seven Star Alliance to all citizens of the Seven Great Planets, had no hierarchy of quality, only suitability.

Whether they be rich and powerful or commoners, anyone who practiced martial arts started with the Basic Cultivation Method.

The "Solid Rock Cultivation Technique" was precisely the method Li Yuan had chosen.

He had been cultivating it for over five years.

Each Basic Cultivation Method could greatly stimulate the potential of the human body, continuously enhance physical quality, and even fully awaken Spiritual Nature.

Not to mention Li Yuan's Physical Quality had not yet reached the 7th level.

Even Martial Artists whose Physical Quality had surpassed the 9th level and reached the Entry Rank would continuously practice the Basic Cultivation Methods.

"Huf!"

"Huf!"

Each Basic Cultivation Method consisted of thirty-six training movements, accompanied by an exclusive Breathing Technique.

Li Yuan's breathing was sometimes rapid, sometimes prolonged, coordinating with his limbs' movements, causing a faint sound to emerge from within his body.

Muscles and bones resonating in unison!

"That feels great." Li Yuan immersed himself in this training.

He could feel every muscle and bone in his body being stimulated and becoming stronger.

This was the evolution of life.

In this era, ordinary youths all had the potential to break the century-old sprint world records.

And they did it with Cultivation Methods.

"It's a pity, the last semester-end assessment didn't get me into the top twenty of my grade. Otherwise, besides the five thousand in scholarship money, I would have gained some Qi and Blood Elixirs this term." Li Yuan's thoughts drifted, "With more Qi and Blood Elixirs, my Physical Quality would progress faster, and it would alleviate some of the financial pressure on my uncle and auntie."

Li Yuan was an orphan; it was his uncle and auntie who raised him.

His uncle was a state enterprise employee, while his auntie was a middle school teacher.

In theory, such a family would not be rich, but it should be more than comfortable.

But Li Yuan had been frail and sickly since childhood, and to treat his illnesses, his uncle and auntie had spent a lot of money.

Likewise, on the recommendation of a doctor, from junior high onwards, they invested heavily in Li Yuan's Martial Arts Cultivation, even more than they spent on their own children.

Fortunately.

Li Yuan had a good talent, and his cultivation was diligent. He passed the middle school entrance exam and got into Guan Mountain District's top high school, improving his academic performance even further after entering high school, and by his second year, he had entered the top hundred of his grade and closed the semester-end assessment within the top thirty.

This brought great joy to his uncle and auntie.

However, Martial Arts Cultivation requires talent and even more so, money.

Especially since his Physical Quality had reached the 6th level, the food from the Star Realm needed to increase Physical Quality, the medicinal elixirs to supplement Qi and Blood, medicated diets, special equipment, and so on, all were like money pits.

When compared with other students in the top thirty of his grade, Li Yuan's external conditions were quite ordinary, or even it could be said they were poor.

Yet in his heart, Li Yuan understood that his uncle and auntie were already doing their best to support him.

He still had younger brothers and sisters at home, and he couldn't ask for more.

"But, six times now,"

"Since the first year of junior high, every annual Spiritual Nature test, I've failed." Li Yuan contemplated, "If the Spiritual Nature within me could awaken, I'd get a 10% bonus on my exam scores, and I could easily break into the top ten of my grade."

"With an awakened Martial Spirit, I'd also receive a national subsidy."

Whether one has awakened their Martial Spirit.

Across the entirety of Blue Star and even among the Seven Great Planets, it was the most important indicator for assessing one's Martial Path talent, without exception.

Yet, Li Yuan had never managed to awaken his Martial Spirit.

"Over the years, the number of students from our school who got into the top five prestigious institutions has never exceeded five." Li Yuan silently reflected, "With my current performance, getting into a normal Martial Arts University wouldn't be a problem."

"But to get into one of the top five institutions, without awakening my Spiritual Nature, the chances are extremely slim."

The population of Xia Country was nearly two billion, with twenty-four provinces, each having a Martial Arts University that only enrolled students from within the province—these were the targets for most students aspiring to the Martial Path.

However, the top five institutions, established by Xia Country, are the prestigious Martial Arts Universities that enroll students on a national scale.

In normal Martial Arts Universities, although the students receive considerable cultivation resources, much still depends on themselves.

But students at one of the top five Martial Arts Universities, each one, would receive extensive resources from the country.

"With national resources for cultivation, my Martial Path can go much further, and someday I'll become an Entry Rank Martial Artist like Teacher Xu, or even stronger than him," Li Yuan silently vowed.

His goal for the college entrance exam was one of the top five prestigious institutions.

However, the top five Martial Arts Universities also had extremely high score requirements.

"One step at a time, there are still nine months until the college entrance exam." Li Yuan quietly practiced, with fewer and fewer extraneous thoughts in his mind.

...

Soon after, waves of noise came from outside the classroom; over a dozen students from the third group returned to the classroom door, their faces all bearing a trace of excitement.

"Teacher Xu, Wan Xiao has awakened his Spiritual Nature."

"Teacher Xu..." Before the husky man could inquire, many students couldn't help but blurt out.

The classroom immediately erupted into commotion.

"Wan Xiao, he's awakened his Martial Spirit?"

"Is he going to the Elite Class now?"

"Students in the Elite Class, I heard they can start practicing High Rank Cultivation Methods earlier." Most classmates couldn't help but show envious looks.

Only with an awakened Martial Spirit can one enter the Elite Class.

Otherwise, even if someone like Li Yuan made it into the top thirty of his grade, he would still have to stay in a regular class.

"Wan Xiao?" Li Yuan opened his eyes, involuntarily looking toward the tall and husky figure at the classroom door with a slightly flushed face.

He was nearly one meter ninety tall, with an extremely burly figure, resembling a bear, with astonishingly thick arms, but his face still bore traces of youthfulness.

## Chapter 3: 1 Li Yuan\_3

He was the only student in the class, aside from Li Yuan, whose martial arts scores were in the top hundred of the grade—Wan Xiao.

"Li Yuan," called out an excited Wan Xiao, seemingly catching Li Yuan's gaze, he looked over at Li Yuan and smiled.

Li Yuan smiled back.

In terms of martial arts scores, Li Yuan was better than Wan Xiao.

In terms of family background, Wan Xiao was much better off.

As the top two performing students in class, Li Yuan and Wan Xiao seemed to often compete for scholarships, but their relationship was actually quite good.

The friendship between classmates is often very pure.



"Damn! Brother Yuan, you didn't awaken, but that Wan Dumb Bear did—it's just dumb luck," muttered the mature-looking boy standing next to Li Yuan, "With that, his martial arts scores, with the spiritual nature bonus, are almost catching up to yours, Brother Yuan."

Wan Xiao's nickname was Dumb Bear.

Li Yuan whispered with a laugh, "Old Zhou, are you jealous?"

The boy speaking was named Zhou Qi, nicknamed 'Old Zhou' because of his abundant body hair and mature appearance.

He had been Li Yuan's classmate since junior high, and they had both tested into Guan Mountain First High School, ending up in the same class.

After five or six years, they were akin to good brothers.

"Jealous my ass," Zhou Qi muttered, "My cultural course grades are good enough for a key university. As for martial arts classes, they're mainly for building physical strength, can't be a wimp forever, can't fall behind even Lingling... I'm speaking out for you, that's all."

Li Yuan just smiled.

Zhou Qi's physical quality was average, still falling short of level 4, but his academic scores were pretty good, ranking within the top fifty of the grade.

National resources are limited, and Martial Arts Universities only recruit a minority of students.

Ultimately, the majority of students still get into different universities based on their academic scores.

"Wan Xiao has good physical quality; it's very normal for him to awaken his Martial Spirit," Li Yuan said with a smile. "Besides, college entrance exams are a competition among all senior high school students in the province, or even the nation, not just against Wan Xiao."

Li Yuan was happy for Wan Xiao's awakening of the Martial Spirit.

Already over sixty seniors in their school had awakened their Martial Spirit. Looking at the whole province, the whole country... there were too many.

Rather than worrying about others, it's better to improve oneself. This was something Li Yuan had understood from a young age.

...

Wan Xiao's successful awakening provided a great stimulus to the other students, and those who hadn't been tested yet began to feel a slight sense of expectation.

The fourth group, the fifth group... failed, failed.

In the end, after all the students in Class 3-2 had been tested, only Wan Xiao had awakened his Martial Spirit.

Once all the students returned to the classroom.

Teacher Xu, a burly figure, swept his gaze across the room and spoke in a deep voice, "Good, that's enough basic training for today, stop there."

Rustle~

Rustle~ Immediately, all the students stopped, many with their legs aching and weakening.

But out of respect for Teacher Xu's strictness, no one dared to lie down on the floor.

The Basic Cultivation Method was very draining on one's physical strength.

Even though the seniors' physical quality generally reached level 4, after two hours of practice, most were still finding it challenging.

"Having students awaken their Martial Spirit is a good thing, but don't be disappointed if you didn't succeed," said Teacher Xu.

"There will be another Spiritual Aptitude Test organized by the school during the mid-term exams in January, and the standard exams in April."

"Before the college entrance exams, there will also be a national Spiritual Aptitude Test."

"As long as you're awakened before the entrance exam, you'll get bonus points on your martial arts scores," Teacher Xu said in a deep voice. "But remember, your exam scores are the foundation. Only with a high base score do bonus points matter."

"Even in the Elite Class, not everyone will get into a Martial Arts University."

"How do you get good scores? Hard work!"

"Take Li Yuan for example, without the spiritual nature bonus, his martial arts scores still surpass 800, beating the majority of the Elite Class students," Teacher Xu declared. "And his diligence, well, that goes without saying."

Many students couldn't help but look towards Li Yuan, most of them showing admiration in their eyes.

Li Yuan's dedication to training was somewhat renowned throughout the senior year.

"Brother Yuan, Teacher Xu is drawing hatred for you again," whispered Zhou Qi from the side.

Li Yuan could only offer a wry smile.

Ever since his martial arts scores entered the top hundred of the grade, he had become accustomed to being 'that kid from someone else's family.'

Teacher Xu's full name was Xu Bo. He was the homeroom teacher for their martial arts class at Guan Mountain High School and was one of only two top-tier Martial Arts Teachers at the school.

As Li Yuan knew, Teacher Xu's physical quality had surpassed level 15, which was quite a respectable existence even among entry-rank martial artists; he had been a military martial artist before retiring due to injuries to teach at Guan Mountain High School.

It is worth noting that surpassing level 9 in physical quality brings one into the category of entry-rank martial artists, whose status in society is extremely high.

The average adult's physical quality generally hovers around levels 5-6.

"You are currently in a critical phase where your physical quality is rapidly improving. Senior year is also the year that will decide your destiny," Teacher Xu continued to speak. "You must not slack off."

"Now, rest for half an hour, and then I will conduct the skills assessment in turn," Teacher Xu finished speaking and turned to leave.

"Ah?"

"Skills assessment?"

"About to be utterly defeated by Teacher Xu's class again, I bet you won't last three moves."

"Do you think you can last more than three moves?" Many students whispered amongst themselves, all quite excited.

In Li Yuan's eyes, a trace of inexplicable light also flashed.

Blue Star, and even the Seven Great Planets, have always faced the threat of war, where powerful martial artists play an important role.

Therefore, it's a general consensus for everyone to train in the Martial Path.

In human society, the status of top martial arts masters is extremely high.

For students like Li Yuan, there is immense admiration for martial arts masters.

Xu Bo is one of the top martial arts masters these students can come into contact with in reality.

"Brother Yuan, skills assessment is your forte," Zhou Qi said excitedly.

"Worry about yourself first. I watched you doing standing stakes just now, and you haven't progressed since last semester," Li Yuan said with a smile. "Don't get knocked down by Teacher Xu with a single stick later; that would be embarrassing in front of Peng Lingling."

Peng Lingling is the object of Zhou Qi's unrequited love.

Zhou Qi's face stiffened, and he said sheepishly, "I'm not planning on applying to Martial Arts University, Lingling won't care."

...

In the classroom, every student took out their own weapon from the weapons cabinet behind the classroom's weapons rack.

After that, they all put on their protective gear.

In this era, each high school student is provided by the nation with one or two unsharpened cold weapons for training purposes, mainly swords, spears, and shields, with a few opting for axes, halberds, and swords.

As for weapons such as hammers, battle-axes, hooks, forks, whips, and maces? Almost no students would choose them.

In the practice of cold weapons, sword and spear are mainstream.

The martial arts exam consists of a basic score of one thousand points, which comes from physical quality, martial arts skills, and academic performance, accounting for 50%, 40%, and 10% respectively.

If one awakens their Spiritual Nature, there will be additional bonuses.

Therefore, skills assessment is incredibly important and is the focus of the students' daily training.

If one only has good physical quality but lacks skills, they won't be able to get into Martial Arts University.

Whoosh!

Li Yuan also took out his weapon from his personal weapon cabinet, a black spear nearly three meters long, weighing about five kilograms.

Though called a spear, the tip was just for decoration, closer to a long stick, as they were issued by the state for practice, not for actual combat.

Whoosh!

Li Yuan held the spear shaft and made what seemed to be a casual thrust.

Swoosh! The spearhead punctured the air, creating a sensation of tearing through the void, causing the expressions of his classmates nearby to change slightly.

With Li Yuan's strength, even a casual thrust, though not sharpened, was quite powerful.

"No one else in our class can handle such a large spear like Li Yuan can."

"Li Yuan wielding a spear gives me the feeling he's going to face Teacher Xu," many classmates whispered among themselves, showing eyes full of envy and admiration.

There were many in the class who practiced spear technique, but most were reluctant to train with such a long spear.

"A longer reach means greater strength."

But the longer the shaft, the harder it is to control.

A weapon is something to train and nurture for a lifetime; what suits one best is the best.

"Number one in skills! Brother Yuan's martial arts skills assessment score at the end of his sophomore year was 356 points, the only one in the grade to exceed 350 points," Zhou Qi said with a grin. "Even Teacher Xu said Brother Yuan's spearmanship is very solid."

Many classmates couldn't help nodding their heads.

Without the bonus points from Spiritual Nature and with physical quality that isn't the best of the best, how could Li Yuan's martial arts scores break into the top thirty of his grade?

It was because his spear technique was far superior to his peers.

On the single subject of martial arts skills, Li Yuan was widely acknowledged as first in his grade.

Shortly after.

Teacher Xu, broad-shouldered and stout, casually carrying a long stick, re-entered the classroom.

His gaze lingered a bit longer on Li Yuan.

"For the test, I will adhere to the standards of the college entrance exam," Xu Bo said in a deep voice, holding the long stick and speaking very seriously.

"Take each test seriously, treat every test as if it's the college entrance exam, and when the real exam comes, it will just be another test," he instructed.

"Based on student numbers, go in reverse order. One at a time."

"Number 112, Zhou Qi."

## Chapter 4: 2 Physical Quality Level 6.5

"Why are we going in reverse order based on student numbers this time? Is Teacher Xu targeting me?" Zhou Qi shrank his neck.

He had thought he would be the last to be tested, by which time, he guessed, the other students would probably not pay much attention and he would not lose face as a result.

But to do it in reverse? Zhou Qi felt an urge to die.

"Go on." Li Yuan patted Zhou Qi on the shoulder with a smile, "A cut comes whether you stretch out your neck or retract it."

Zhou Qi made a face, "Even if you're going to decapitate me, at least give me a moment to wash my neck."

Muttering under his breath, Zhou Qi was very honest with his actions, fearing a reprimand from Teacher Xu Bo, he quickly took his long spear and walked to the center of the classroom.

In the center of the classroom was a huge silver metallic circle, distinctly different from the rest of the floor material.

The silver circular ground had a diameter of about 12 meters, giving the impression at first glance of an arena.

Li Yuan, Wan Xiao, and the hundred other students tacitly stepped out of the limits of the silver round.

"Management authorization." Teacher Xu suddenly spoke in a deep voice, a device similar to a smartwatch on his left wrist emitted a faint red light, "Class 3 (2), Martial Arts Skills testing, Physical Quality detection, record simultaneously!"

Immediately.

Whoosh~ The many devices above the classroom, previously inactive, instantly flickered with white light.

The white light came down, covering the silver circular area perfectly.

"Tss~" One of the devices suddenly shot out two beams of red light, which spread to envelop both Zhou Qi and Xu Bo.

Everyone was accustomed to this scene.

Merely three seconds.

"Swoosh!" The electronic screen at the back of the classroom suddenly lit up, displaying two very conspicuous lines of white text—

"Zhou Qi (student), Physical Quality: 3.9 level (previous test 3.7 level)"

"Xu Bo (teacher), Physical Quality: 12.0 level (beyond the detection limit)"

...

"Huh, it's been so long since the last test, and I've actually improved by 0.2 level?" Zhou Qi's face showed a hint of smugness, "It seems that the effort of the past few months has paid off a bit."

"Physical Quality still not at level 4?" Xu Bo frowned slightly.

A Physical Quality of 3.9 level, looking at the millions of third-year high school students in the whole province, was actually not bad, even average.

But you see, in Guan Mountain District's top high school in the capital, such physical quality was at the bottom.

"It seems Zhou Qi says he's laying low, but his body is very honest." Li Yuan couldn't help but smile.

Their age was the stage where physical quality could skyrocket, and an increase of 0.2 level in three months meant Zhou Qi was indeed working hard behind the scenes.

With this rate of progress, by the time of the college entrance examination, Zhou Qi's Physical Quality reaching 4.5 levels was hopeful.

"It's just that the school's Life Vitality Detector is a bit low-grade and can't measure Teacher Xu's real Physical Quality," Li Yuan thought quietly.

The Life Vitality Blood Testing Instrument was an extremely common device in this era, frequently found in schools and various Martial Halls.

Many people also had it in their homes, with complex sensing principles, specifically designed to detect the strength of life's vitality and then convert it into the corresponding Physical Quality level.

5.0 level was the standard for a normal adult.

10.0 level was the minimum threshold for an Entry Rank Martial Artist. Only Entry Rank Martial Artists were truly considered Martial Artists, who could receive benefits like government subsidies and many other rights.

The school's Life Vitality Blood Testing Instrument, mainly serving students, typically had an upper limit of 12.0 levels. It might seem basic, but it was very reliable and not easily damaged.

For an instrument with such high usage, durability was most important.

Of course, the Physical Quality assessment for the college entrance examination wasn't solely based on instrument measurements but also included specialized tests of speed, Fist Strength, and many other aspects, with a final comprehensive score being given.



"For the test, I will assess your scores against the college entrance examination standards, using about 5.0 level of strength and speed. I hope you can demonstrate a level of 300 points under the rating system," Xu Bo spoke.

Martial Arts Skills total 400 points. Scoring 300 points in just the Martial Arts Skills category was the threshold for admission to a Martial Arts University.

Zhou Qi, standing ten meters away, was already sweating in his palms.

Level 5?

In other words, Xu Bo would employ speed and strength much stronger than his own.

"What are you waiting for? Attack!" Xu Bo scolded.

"Yes."

Zhou Qi held the spear in the central position and suddenly lunged forward with impressive speed, covering the ten meters in the blink of an eye; his two-meter-long spear danced swiftly, aiming directly at Xu Bo.

Spear Technique relies on a single thrust.

Zhou Qi's Physical Quality may seem not high, but his Fist Strength had exploded beyond one hundred fifty kilograms.

And having practiced Spear Technique for two years, even if his Comprehension was average and he wasn't especially diligent, he still had a solid foundation.

At least his thrust looked competent.

That's why students were required to wear full-body armor during tests.

In cold weapon combat, even if the weapon was not sharpened, without any protection, you could be seriously injured or maimed.

Whoosh!

Xu Bo, who was tall and burly and not wearing any armor, seemed to casually step to the left. His movement wasn't fast, but he easily dodged Zhou Qi's fierce spear thrust.

The spear's tip missed his body by a hair's breadth.

At first glance, it looked extremely dangerous.

"That movement technique?" Li Yuan's eyes brightened as he noticed the sophistication in Xu Bo's step.

Not an inch too much or too little.

A perfect conservation of energy.

It was an absolute control over one's body coupled with precise prediction of the opponent's attack, admitting no margin for error.

"Dodged again?" Zhou Qi didn't hesitate, withdrawing his spear and following with a turn of the spearhead, flicking out a series of spear flowers before stabbing towards Xu Bo once more.

Yet Xu Bo simply retreated one step, seemingly narrowly avoiding the attack once again.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Zhou Qi wielded his long spear with all his might, either stabbing, slashing, or sweeping, but before Xu Bo's exquisite movement technique, all his attacks fell short.

"So close, just a bit more." Zhou Qi gritted his teeth.

"It's not just a bit, it's far off," Li Yuan lamented quietly from the sidelines.

He could see clearly, it wasn't that Zhou Qi's spear technique was poor, but that Xu Bo's movement technique was too exquisite.

His steps, appearing unhurried, were alarmingly precise, calculating all of Zhou Qi's long spear movements in advance.

And after more than ten consecutive spear thrusts, Zhou Qi was also under a great burden, feeling weakness in his arms, causing his spear momentum to slow.

It was in that moment.

"Rip!"

The sound of air tearing apart, the constantly evading Xu Bo suddenly stepped forward, his left hand thrusting out the long stick with a bang, the head of the stick moving like a venomous snake, instantaneously deflecting Zhou Qi's spear parry, and sending the long spear flying.

"Bang~"

The head of the stick chopped down, lightly tapping the back of Zhou Qi's hand, causing a surge of pain that made him release the long spear instinctively.

Clang~ The long spear hit the ground.

The stick was already withdrawn.

Inside the classroom, it was dead silent, all the students looking at the scene.

Xu Bo, who had only taken over their class's Martial Arts teaching since the last semester.

And in the skill test at the end of the previous semester, Xu Bo had not revealed such amazing body movement and control.

"Is this Teacher Xu's true strength?"

"Clearly, Teacher Xu's speed is very slow, probably even slower than mine, but his footwork..." More than a hundred students in the class were shocked; many had Physical Quality over 5.0.

In past teachings, these students knew that Xu Bo's Physical Quality was extremely strong, knew that Xu Bo's Martial Arts Skills were profound.

But when instructing them, Xu Bo had never fought against them with the speed and strength of a level 5 Physical Quality.

Teaching drills and actual combat are two different things.

Perhaps many students had seen far more amazing battle videos on the internet.

But watching videos and the impact brought by witnessing a fight at close range are different.

Tick-tock!

On the screen at the back of the classroom, a number had appeared—"245 points".

The score was determined by a program that evaluated data, the process of combat, and the results, all calculated together.

For the college entrance exam, each student's skills assessment would also include manual evaluation.

"The score, actually lower than last semester?" Zhou Qi muttered to himself but didn't feel too embarrassed.

At least, he had launched so many thrusts.

... In order of student numbers.

One after another, students underwent the test, with most having Physical Quality between 4.5 and 5.5.

As for the Martial Arts Skills assessment?

The process of the tests, much like Zhou Qi's, followed a similar pattern.

It began with the students attacking, while Xu Bo easily dodged each assault with his movement technique, and finally, a stick thrust out. Even though many students demonstrated superior speed and strength, they still couldn't block it.

The scores, mostly struggling to surpass 300 points.

Even for Wan Xiao, student number 2, with a Physical Quality test score as high as 6.0, his burst of speed and strength was a significant cut above level 5.0.

Yet he held out against only three of Xu Bo's strikes.

In the end, Wan Xiao's skills score was 322 points.

He was also the only one in the class to exceed 320 points so far.

"Wan Xiao, last semester's final was 329, right? Why have you regressed?"

"It's not that he has regressed; it's that the assessment standards have increased significantly. Haven't you noticed that most of our scores have dropped?"

"Last semester's final exam was according to the high school junior year standards, this test is according to college entrance exam standards."

"Only Li Yuan is left."

"I wonder how many strikes he can withstand from Teacher Xu." All the classmates' gazes were focused on Li Yuan, and even many of the girls showed anticipation.

In Martial Path achievements, Li Yuan was within the top thirty of the whole grade, but in senior class (2), he was undisputedly number one.

Good performance and a likable personality naturally made him more popular.

During student life, most are not as opportunistic as in society.

"Li Yuan," Xu Bo's eyes flashed with a barely perceptible expectation.

"Teacher Xu," Li Yuan, holding his long spear, stepped into the circular area paved with silver metal.

Whoosh!

A beam of red light shot over, enveloping Li Yuan completely.

Three seconds later.

On the screen at the back of the classroom, data appeared—"Li Yuan (Student), Physical Quality: 6.5 (Last check 6.0)"

## Chapter 5: 3 Unawakened Higher Spiritual Nature

"I'm not seeing things, am I? Li Yuan's physical quality has reached level 6.5? It's improved by 0.5 since the end of June?"

"Improved by 0.5 level in less than three months?"

"Even Lin Lanyue, the current top student in martial arts and a hopeful for Starry Sky University admission, couldn't have improved so quickly, could she?"

"Is the machine broken?"

"The school uses it but never seems to fix it; it would be normal if it's broken." More than a hundred students were surprised, their gazes shifting between Li Yuan and the screen.

Most people actually understood that the likelihood of the equipment being damaged was almost zero.

The key was that the speed of Li Yuan's improvement in physical quality was indeed frightening.

In the elite class, even students who had awakened their Martial Spirit and came from wealthy families couldn't improve at such a monstrous rate.

"I've been working so hard lately, spending the vacation soaking in the cultivation room and consuming all sorts of supplements every day, and my physical quality has just barely reached level 6.0. I thought I could close the gap with Li Yuan." Wan Xiao, big as a bear, couldn't help but think: "And now, the gap is even wider?"

The relationship between the two was good; Wan Xiao had always set Li Yuan as his target, hoping to catch up to him.

"Level 6.5! Brother Yuan is awesome!" Zhou Qi couldn't help shouting, instinctively feeling happy for Li Yuan.

Ten meters away.

"Level 6.5? How could Li Yuan progress so quickly?" Teacher Xu Bo also became a bit unsettled.

Having not sensed an awakening of the Martial Spirit in Li Yuan during today's test, he felt somewhat disappointed.

An awakening in Wan Xiao was a pleasant surprise.

Now, the level of Li Yuan's physical quality was a shock.

"If he had awakened his Martial Spirit and was practicing a high-rank cultivation method, then improving by 0.5 level in less than three months wouldn't be too rare... But he underwent testing at noon and clearly hadn't awakened his Martial Spirit," Teacher Xu thought with many ideas racing through his mind. "Besides, he hasn't had the time to cultivate."

As an entry-rank martial artist and one who had crawled through the ranks in the military, Teacher Xu saw things the students could not.

In a matter of seconds, he thought of numerous possibilities.

"Li Yuan." Teacher Xu spoke in a deep voice: "Don't rush to test your skill level. First, go to the track to test your burst speed, and then test your fist strength again."

"Yes," Li Yuan nodded, understanding Teacher Xu's intentions.

The Life Vitality Detector hardly ever malfunctioned, but there were ways to trick its sensory system, resulting in false data.

There was a possibility of cheating.

However, the speed and strength one could explosively unleash were impossible to fake.

"It seems to be a comprehensive test."

"Looks like Teacher Xu isn't absolutely sure either."

"What will Li Yuan's burst speed be?"

"Hard to say, the Life Vitality Detector provides composite data, and everyone's situation is different. Even if two people have the same physical quality level, some may be faster, others might have higher fist strength, and some stronger endurance." All the students were whispering to each other, and most were attentive.

They were all curious.

If Li Yuan's physical quality was indeed level 6.5, how high would he rank in the martial arts performance of the entire grade?

"Activate permissions for the sprint speed test and fist strength test, and record," Teacher Xu ordered coldly, a flicker of red light glowing from his wrist.

"Hum~" White light projected down from above the classroom, illuminating the roughly 40-meter-long dark red metal track to the left side of the classroom.

Above the track, faint lights twinkled.

This was why martial arts classrooms needed to be so spacious.

The large amount of technological equipment used to test physical data required space.

For instance, the martial arts classroom for the elite class covered an even larger area, like a small sports arena.

"Testing burst speed?" Li Yuan placed his long spear on the silver metallic floor and came to the start of the track. He took a deep breath and quickly calmed down.

The speed test wasn't just running.

During the martial arts college entrance exam, sequential tests for forty meters, one hundred meters, one kilometer, and ten kilometers would be conducted.

The forty-meter speed test had the highest score weight, followed by the ten-kilometer long-distance run.

One tested instantaneous burst speed, and the other endurance.

"In martial combat, life and death are often determined within two or three moves, or even a single exchange. Since life and death hang by a thread, instantaneous burst

speed is the most crucial," Li Yuan quickly adjusted his condition: "But in war, one often faces more than one enemy, and battles can last a long time, making endurance equally important."

Li Yuan was clear that the establishment of the martial arts college entrance exams was closely related to war.

In this era, human civilization on Blue Star and the Seven Great Planets all faced enormous survival threats.

War, was the main theme of society.

Whoosh!

Using the Breathing Technique to regulate himself, Li Yuan quickly relaxed with each inhale and exhale. His spiritual power was strong enough to faintly sense the beating of his internal organs, the steady flow of the heart's blood supply, and the strands of vigor throughout his limbs.

The next instant!

"Boom!" With the spine as his core, Li Yuan's overall strength suddenly tensed in unison, as if drawing a bowstring fully back, his vigor was transmitted through the hips directly to his legs. Like an arrow released from the bow, he instantly sprinted forth.

The source of vigor is in the feet, activated by the legs.

The explosive power of the thighs is far stronger than other body parts.

Swish!

Li Yuan sprinted across the forty-meter track in seconds, slamming into the buffer wall at the end of the track.

The buffer wall, akin to a sponge but with more specialized material, was custom-made by the school to protect the students.

Tick-tock!

Data appeared on the screen on the wall at the end of the track — "14.2 meters per second."

This was Li Yuan's finish line speed, not the average speed.

"That's fast."



"It seems Li Yuan's physical quality has indeed reached level 6.5," the spectating students spoke to each other, now thoroughly convinced.

They all knew that the Basic Cultivation Method Li Yuan practiced was the Solid Rock Cultivation Technique, which specialized in strength.

If Li Yuan was that fast, what about his strength?

"14.2 meters per second? Not bad," Teacher Xu nodded slightly and directly instructed: "Now, test your fist strength."

The fist strength testing area is much smaller, located in the corner of the classroom, rather inconspicuous.

Li Yuan stood on the testing ground.

Whoosh~ Several white beams of light were projected downwards from the equipment overhead, enveloping Li Yuan to check if his movements were standard and qualified.

The fist strength test was not about pursuing extreme explosive power, but rather the strongest force that could be unleashed by one arm when steadying oneself in place.

If one's posture couldn't even be maintained while throwing a punch, then no matter how strong the power released, it would be meaningless. In a life-or-death fight, it would only give the enemy an opportunity to kill with one strike.

"Relax first." Li Yuan adjusted his breathing, his tense body gradually relaxed, his feet spread apart, knees slightly bent to generate more propelling power the moment he punched.

Following that, at the sigh of his exhale, Li Yuan's spine was like a great dragon, his left foot stepping slightly to the side, the right foot pushing off the ground, through the twisting of his waist and abdomen, instantly drawing the power of his waist and back, transmitting all the strength in his body from the bottom up to his right arm.

Five fingers came together to form a fist!

His right fist, like a cannonball fired from a chamber, fiercely struck the giant sandbag hanging in front.

"Bang!" A dull booming sound.

In an instant.

The screen above the fist strength testing area clearly displayed: "424 kilograms (movement qualified)."

"Damn!"

"424 kilograms! Awesome!"

"With that kind of fist strength, he's not far from the 7th level physical quality standard. I remember for the 7th level physical quality, the fist strength requirement is 450 kilograms." There was a stir, and Li Yuan's classmates were thoroughly shocked.

Martial Path isn't just about nurturing the body; the data from the Life Vitality Detector can only ever be a reference.

What's shown in actual combat is what truly convinces people.

Across the entire Blue Star, and even within the Seven Star Alliance, there are strict divisions regarding physical quality levels corresponding to burst speed and fist strength:

Level 5: 10 meters per second, fist strength 200 kilograms

Level 6: 13 meters per second; fist strength 300 kilograms

Level 7: 15 meters per second, fist strength 450 kilograms

Level 8: 18 meters per second; fist strength 800 kilograms

Level 9: 20 meters per second, fist strength 1000 kilograms

...

Despite individual talent differences and different Cultivation Methods leading to various tendencies, the discrepancies from the standard for each level aren't too large.

Li Yuan's Life Vitality Detector displayed 6.5 level, with burst speed within the normal range.

But his fist strength was very close to the 7th level standard.

"My fist strength peak is still short of 300 kilograms." Wan Xiao subconsciously clenched the Combat Saber in his hand: "Is the gap between Li Yuan and myself already this big?"

"Training involves being tight within relaxation, and employing strength within flexibility, only using true tightness can one deliver powerful and explosive strikes. It seems my student has really grasped the essence of the Basic Cultivation Methods," said Teacher Xu Bo, his eyesight was sharp enough to see the crux of it.

Normal people find it difficult to channel all of their body's strength; managing to exploit ninety percent of it is already very admirable.

One must fully understand the vigor in their body and condense this vigor to exert one hundred percent of their strength.

Li Yuan, evidently, had almost achieved this.

"Not bad," said Teacher Xu Bo, revealing a rare smile.

This scene caused many students to marvel silently.

You should know that when Wan Xiao awakened his Martial Spirit, Teacher Xu Bo didn't smile.

Li Yuan, hearing the sounds around him, maintained a calm exterior, but inwardly, he felt somewhat unsatisfied.

"According to the Divine Palace panel, my instantaneous burst speed should reach 14.4 meters per second, and my fist strength peak should be 426 kilograms," Li Yuan frowned slightly: "It seems like I still haven't perfectly executed my physical quality."

At that moment.

In Li Yuan's field of vision, there was an almost transparent screen that others couldn't perceive but he could see.

---

[Life Level: 6.6 (unranked)]

Physical Quality Index: 72 (Indicates Explosive Power, Endurance, Speed, Physique, Spiritual Power, etc. Comprehensive Assessment.)

Fist Strength: 426 kilograms

Speed: 14.4 meters per second

Spiritual Power: 12.4 level

Physical Body Cultivation Method:

Mind Cultivation Method:

Skill Realm: Spear Technique (Third Stage 36%), Movement Technique (Third Stage 21%), Fist Technique (Third Stage 88%)

[Note: A certain high-rank Spiritual Nature lies dormant within the body, yet to awaken.]

---

Li Yuan could make the entire screen appear before his eyes with just a thought in his mind, clearly displaying his Martial Arts Cultivation.

This was something that had awakened suddenly when Li Yuan's Physical Quality reached level 5.0 in his second year of High School.

At first, Li Yuan thought it was similar to 'systems' or 'data panels' that he had seen in some novels.

Later, after repeated experiments and confirmation, he discovered that the screen itself only had a detection function, akin to an extraordinarily precise 'Cultivation Detector'.

It wasn't capable of directly enhancing Li Yuan's Martial Arts Cultivation.

"However, the Mind Spirit Divine Palace's has already given me ample help," Li Yuan thought silently.

As he pondered.

Li Yuan returned to the silver metallic floor and picked up his black Long Spear.

His gaze fell upon Teacher Xu Bo, who stood ten meters away. The panel before his eyes shifted, displaying a string of text messages:

[Target individual, Life Level exceeds detection limit (current Life Level detection limit is 16.6)]

"Teacher Xu, please enlighten me." Li Yuan first saluted, then his figure suddenly darted forward, crossing several meters in an instant, and with an explosion of strength, the Long Spear, like a dragon with the screeching of tearing air, headed straight for Xu Bo.

"Hm? This Spear Technique!" Xu Bo's eyes lit up completely.

## Chapter 6: 4 Spear Technique, Scores

The spear tip tore through the air, bringing a sharp whistle.

"So fast!"

"Li Yuan's spear." Most of the students held their breath as they watched, all feeling that Li Yuan's long spear was too fast, covering several meters in the blink of an eye.

To know, Li Yuan and Teacher Xu Bo were less than ten meters apart, and Li Yuan's long spear was nearly three meters in length, plus Li Yuan's burst speed... the spear tip, aimed directly at Teacher Xu Bo's chest.

"A mid-level thrust?" Zhou Qi clenched the long spear in his hand, recognizing the move from Li Yuan.

Spear technique can vary infinitely, but the fundamental styles are no more than blocking, seizing, stabbing, thrusting, cleaving, collapsing, poking, entangling, and twisting, with all spear skills being derived from these basic moves.

A mid-level thrust can be considered the most ordinary of spear techniques, and yet it is also the most crucial.

So-called mid-level thrusting means thrusting straight and level, taking the shortest distance between two points, the assault swift as an arrow.

What it contests is precision, speed, and power.

"It's the same move, but Brother Yuan's thrust could probably pierce me dead," Zhou Qi thought in awe.

In the arena.

"Straight thrust? Using the weapon and strength advantage?" Xu Bo discerned Li Yuan's intent.

As the saying goes, 'the knife is like a fierce tiger, the sword like a roaming dragon, the stick sweeps across widely, and the spear picks a single line.'

The stick is shorter than the long spear.

In such a straight confrontation, the long spear will undoubtedly strike first, and the speed and strength Li Yuan possessed are far greater than Xu Bo's explosive 5.0-level power.

"Boom!"

Facing Li Yuan's attack, Xu Bo no longer started with an evasion like before but instead took the initiative to strike. With one step forward, he swung his long stick in the air, drawing a smooth arc, whip-fast as it struck the tip of the spear, borrowing the force to alter its direction sharply.

He dodged Li Yuan's ferocious strike.

"Hiss~!" As if he had expected it, Li Yuan instantly utilized the forceful rebound of his spear shaft and, with his waist as the core, violently twisted his body and powered through, turning the spear shaft a full one hundred and eighty degrees, chopping down towards Xu Bo with the force of an ax blade.

This time they were closer, and the burst speed was even faster.

"Haha!" Teacher Xu Bo suddenly laughed, as if he possessed foresight, dodging backward and avoiding Li Yuan's fierce chop.

"He can dodge that too?" Li Yuan was slightly shocked in his heart, the teacher's reaction speed was just too fast.

Without giving him time to think.

"Whoosh!" A blurred stick shadow had already taken advantage of the spear's missed swipe to slam down fiercely.

"Retreat!" Li Yuan immediately changed his footwork to retreat explosively while he simultaneously tried to block the incoming stick with his long spear horizontally.

"Bang~" Weapons collided.

Yet Li Yuan didn't feel the impact from the opponent's long stick, as if his long spear was stuck to it.

Very uncomfortable.

Whoosh!

Xu Bo suddenly advanced a step, closing the distance with Li Yuan yet again, wielding his long stick in a deceptive thrust, fast and fierce.

"Swish!" Li Yuan was forced to retreat and dodge; the long spear, being a long weapon, required space to unleash its full power.

But what shocked Li Yuan was that even though there was nothing wrong with his movement technique, he simply couldn't back away. Teacher Xu Bo's long stick always managed to land just right, forcing Li Yuan's long spear into defensive parries again and again, disrupting his full force.

The long stick sometimes turned wild, sometimes gentle, unpredictable.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Their weapons collided lightning-fast over a dozen times, and Li Yuan was already forced back to the edge of the silver floor.

"Boom~" Another stick shadow swept through, and Li Yuan only felt a slight pain in his chest, his body retreating uncontrollably backward.

Taking several steps back, he finally stopped.

With full body armor and Teacher Xu Bo not exerting strong force, a single training stick strike wouldn't cause any real harm to Li Yuan.

"I lost." Li Yuan held his long spear upright and said helplessly, "Teacher Xu, even with my advantage in speed and strength, I couldn't withstand even twenty of your moves."

This only indicated that the gap in their cold weapon skills was large.

Around them, it was as silent as death.

All the students stared dumbfounded at the match between Li Yuan and Teacher Xu Bo.

The exchange was short but extremely intense, almost like a real combat, far above the level of the skills test they had just undergone.

"You have already blocked more than ten of my moves," Teacher Xu Bo said, a rare smile emerging on his usually cool face. "Your spear technique has improved greatly since the end of last semester's exams. I also had to go all out to win against you."

All out?

Li Yuan sighed inwardly; this was merely Teacher Xu demonstrating full effort at a Fifth Level Physical Quality.

If both sides unleashed their power and speed to the fullest, he probably wouldn't be able to withstand three moves.

This was the difference in skill level.

"At the end of last semester's exam, my Spear Technique and movement technique were both at Second Stage 99%, breaking through only after the test," Li Yuan thought to himself. "By that estimate, Teacher Xu's Skill Realm must be at least at a Fourth Level standard."

Without other points of reference, Li Yuan wasn't too clear on the specific differences between First Stage, Second Stage, and Third Stage as indicated on his dashboard.

But he could vaguely discern that among his classmates, only a very few like Wan Xiao had achieved the Second Stage standard in cold weapon skills.

At the same time, Li Yuan was certain of one thing.

If his Spear Technique and movement technique improved, it would definitely be reflected in the data on his panel.

Drip-drop!

On the screen at the back of the classroom, Li Yuan's Martial Arts Skills score had appeared—"365 points."

"So high?"

"It's over 360 points," Zhou Qi's eyes shone brightly.

"This is the difficulty level of the high school entrance exams, and Li Yuan's Martial Arts Skills score has risen so much just entering senior year?"

"With such a single subject score, he's probably among the best in the city."

"By the time of the college entrance exams, maybe Li Yuan could vie for the city's top scorer in Martial Arts Skills."

"Li Yuan will definitely get into Martial Arts University."

"If only my Spear Technique was as formidable as Li Yuan's..."

"Who's peeing yellow, give him a wake-up splash."

These classmates were both shocked and envious, whispering among themselves.

If Li Yuan's score had been only 320 or 330 points, these classmates might have been jealous of him, as the gap wouldn't have been so outrageous.

But with such a large difference, most people could only admire.

Most people are aware of their own limits, why be envious of someone clearly not on the same level?

Moreover, Martial Arts Skills and Physical Quality are different.

If one comes from an extremely well-off family that can afford to hire a dedicated Dietician and Physiotherapist, and set up a specialized training plan, and moreover if



one awakens the Martial Spirit... it's possible to elevate one's Physical Quality to Level 7 or even higher during senior year.

But improvements in Martial Arts Skills can't simply be bought with money.

...

With Li Yuan's assessment concluding, the time had come to 5:30 in the afternoon.

"Alright."

"Looking at today's test, most of you have been working hard after entering senior year," Teacher Xu Bo spoke again, his voice regaining its coolness. "But there are also some students who have regressed instead of progressing."

"You are senior year students now. The college entrance exam does not, I say, decide your life's destiny, but it is certainly a significant opportunity in your life... The day after tomorrow afternoon, I will come again to supervise your Martial Path practice, class dismissed," Teacher Xu Bo turned and left.

Behind him, another voice drifted over: "Li Yuan, Wan Xiao, both of you, come to my office."

The many students, already with sore feet from practice and drenched in sweat, immediately scattered.

Many boys, while gulping down water, called out to each other to rush for a spot in the cafeteria.

Some girls discussed going to the restroom first.

"Brother Yuan, I'll head to the cafeteria with Yan Zhou and the others first, and save seats for you! We'll also grab a nutritional meal for you," Zhou Qi shouted.

"Old Zhou, Brother Yuan's meal needs to be double the portion," the robust male student named Yan Zhou laughed, then called out to Li Yuan, "Brother Yuan, leave the meal to us; you better hurry to the office."

"Thanks, I'll transfer the money to you guys later," Li Yuan said with a smile.

"No, no, you've bought me breakfast a few times, and I haven't paid you back yet. Let's call it even with tonight's dinner," Yan Zhou laughed.

Li Yuan chuckled.

Apart from Zhou Qi, he had several good friends in the class.

"Li Yuan, let's go," the burly Wan Xiao called out to Li Yuan: "What does Mr. Xu want with us?"

"If he's looking for you, it's probably to transfer you into the Elite Class," Li Yuan said with a smile.

As for why Mr. Xu was looking for him? Li Yuan had his guesses, but wasn't yet certain.

## Chapter 7: 5 I Believe in You (Thanks to the Wandering Silver League for their All-In Support!)

...

The setting sun cast a slanting glow, enveloping the campus in golden twilight.

The students, having just finished class, moved in groups, dressed in the uniform martial attire, as they made their way out of the classrooms towards the cafeteria, their voices filled with laughter and chatter.

Li Yuan and Wan Xiao exited the senior high school building, circumvented a large flower bed, and entered the office building.

At the end of the corridor to the left on the first floor was Teacher Xu's office.

Though called an office, it was in fact a martial arts room of astonishingly vast proportions.

"Reporting."

"Reporting." Upon arriving at the door, Li Yuan glanced around and estimated that this martial arts room exceeded five hundred square meters.

This was his second visit.

Equipment such as life vitality detectors and fist strength testing areas were placed around, and noticeably more advanced.

On one side of the wall, cold weapons like spears, sticks, and axes were displayed, most of them unsharpened.

But there were also sharpened cold weapons.

Even more, Li Yuan caught sight of an independent restroom and physiotherapy room at the far end of the office.

"Li Yuan, this is what a true warrior cultivation room looks like. Entry rank warriors can practice here in peace," whispered Wan Xiao from beside him, a hint of envy in his eyes, "My family's cultivation room is less than a hundred square meters, not even one-fifth the size of Teacher Xu's place here, and we don't have a dedicated physiotherapy room."

"Normally, if I need to treat my body, my dad has to drive me to the Martial Hall. It's quite troublesome."

Li Yuan remained silent.

Physiotherapy room? His own home didn't even have a separate cultivation room.

As for going to the Martial Hall? That was even more out of the question financially.

As far as Li Yuan knew, a warrior cultivation room of several hundred square meters, like the one before him, would cost tens of millions of Blue Star coins just for the interior decoration.

In Jiang City's housing market, even a moderately good location would cost over twenty thousand Blue Star coins per square meter.

By Li Yuan's estimation, the total price of this martial arts room was at least twenty million Blue Star coins.

What was the average monthly salary in Jiang City? Li Yuan remembered seeing a figure not long ago on the news; it should be about 11,342 Blue Star coins.

The median income was even lower.

"You two, come in." Teacher Xu Bo stood at the center of the martial arts room, his presence like that of an iron tower, especially that metallic right arm which was tremendously intimidating.

Teacher Xu's aura seemed more restrained than it had been in the classroom earlier.

Yet it exuded a more dangerous feel.

"Teacher," greeted Li Yuan and Wan Xiao obediently.

"Wan Xiao, I've submitted your class transfer application. It should be approved before six this evening. After approval, report directly to the elite class tomorrow," Teacher Xu said to Wan Xiao.

Known as Bear, Wan Xiao was burly in stature, yet appeared somewhat diminutive in front of Teacher Xu.

"That fast?" Wan Xiao was caught off guard.

"Don't worry, I'm not rushing you out," said Teacher Xu with a cool voice but patiently, "After your spiritual awakening, you can practice high-rank cultivation methods, which are far more efficient than basic ones."

"The college entrance exam is drawing near, and your awakening to the Martial Spirit came quite late. It's better for you to join the elite class sooner; maybe it will give you an extra point in the exams."

Teacher Xu continued, "Later, when the application is approved, the entry-level texts that you tried during the test and which suit you will be sent to your school account. I remember your family has a cultivation room, so don't bother with the self-study session tonight. Go home and try practicing them one by one."

"After you report tomorrow, the teachers in the elite class will give you one-on-one guidance until you've mastered them completely," Teacher Xu concluded.

"Thank you, Teacher," Wan Xiao said gratefully.

He now understood that Teacher Xu was not trying to get rid of him, but was actually considering his situation seriously.

"You may go," Teacher Xu waved his hand.

Wan Xiao saluted and left.

"Li Yuan," Teacher Xu looked at Li Yuan again, curiosity in his eyes, "your spear technique and movement technique should have reached the Third Stage."

The Third Stage? Li Yuan was momentarily stunned.

In the standard high school curriculum, there were no such terms as First Stage, Second Stage, or Third Stage.

Only scores for skills.

"Oh, I forgot," Teacher Xu remarked upon seeing Li Yuan's expression, coming to a realization, "That is the terminology for entry rank martial artists. Then let me phrase it differently. Have you reached the Gold Stage on the Starry Skies Fighting Network?"

...

"I arrived just half a month ago," Li Yuan said.

Blue Star, as well as the Seven Great Planets, all have virtual networks that span their respective planets, with a simulation realism exceeding 70%, and the most popular game within these virtual networks is the 'Starry Skies Fighting Network'.

"The Starry Skies Fighting Network is quite special, and it's not just a simple game," Xu Bo said, looking at Li Yuan. "It primarily tests a person's martial arts skills, and it's very training-intensive."

Li Yuan nodded in agreement.

The prevalence of the Starry Skies Fighting Network, heavily promoted by the entire Seven Star Alliance on each planet, is inseparably linked to its significant promotional impact on reality.

"Being able to stand firm in the Gold Stage indicates that your spear technique and movement technique must have reached the Third Stage," Xu Bo said. "For your age, reaching this level in martial arts skills is quite impressive."

Li Yuan smiled and said, "It's because of the good teaching I have received."

A rare smile squeezed its way onto Xu Bo's usually stern face.

"Your physical quality is also improving quickly," Xu Bo said, his eyes reflecting a hint of curiosity. "Can you tell your teacher the reason?"

He was indeed curious.

"I've just been practicing normally," Li Yuan shook his head and said. "Teacher should know my family's situation; I can't afford those special medicines."

"Don't worry, your teacher isn't suspecting you of using forbidden medicine that stimulates life's potential," Xu Bo said.

In this era, there are some special treasures that can rapidly enhance physical quality, but most of them overdraw life's potential and are counterproductive.

After use, they would have serious side effects; at best, one's strength would be hard to improve further, and at worst, it could lead to a shortened lifespan.

Decades ago, when martial arts college entrance exams first began, many students would use these in secret, hoping to get into a good university.

Latterly, as the rules of the martial arts college entrance exams were refined, these types of medicines and fluids have been listed as forbidden and cannot be produced and used at will.

Before the college entrance exam, various devices would be used to perform comprehensive checks on the students.

"Normal practice leading to such progress? Very good!" Xu Bo revealed a rare smile. "I have high hopes for you becoming a martial artist."

"High hopes for me?" Li Yuan was taken aback.

Since the other party took over as the homeroom teacher, he did indeed receive a lot of attention.

But it was limited to the attention a teacher gives to a good student.

Having high hopes for him becoming a martial artist? This was the first time Teacher Xu had said so.

Becoming a martial artist was very challenging!

"Teacher, I still haven't awakened my Martial Spirit," Li Yuan couldn't help saying.

"Is Spiritual Awakening that important?" Xu Bo asked in return.

Li Yuan was puzzled. Was it not important?

"It is very important," Xu Bo said on his own. "But in a certain sense, it's also not important."

Li Yuan's confusion intensified.

"What is Martial Spirit? Essentially, it is the compatibility with the Seven High-Rank Cultivation Methods," Xu Bo explained.

"Only with a compatibility over ninety percent can one start practicing high-rank cultivation methods in advance, which can significantly increase the efficiency of enhancing physical quality," Xu Bo continued. "This would greatly increase the chances of becoming a powerful martial artist."

"This is why the Seven Star Alliance puts such great importance on Martial Spirit."

"Including the five prestigious national schools, they all prefer students who have awakened their Martial Spirit for the same reason."

"After all, practicing high-rank cultivation methods earlier increases the likelihood of reaching Entry Rank as a martial artist, and the younger one becomes a martial artist, the greater the hope of achieving great success."

Li Yuan nodded without a word.

When young, vitality is robust, making martial arts cultivation breakthroughs easier.

"Martial arts cultivation is the miraculous evolution of life," Xu Bo said, his eyes gleaming. "In reality, we humans still know very little about life cultivation, whether it's the Seven Fundamental Cultivation Methods or the Seven High-Rank Cultivation Methods... all of them have been gradually summed up by the numerous high-rank martial artists of the Seven Star Alliance over hundreds of years."

"More than eighty years ago, during the first martial arts college entrance exam, the Seven Star Alliance only published three high-rank cultivation methods."

Li Yuan's eyes lit up.

He was not very clear about much of the information that Teacher Xu spoke of before.

"All cultivation methods aim to drive life evolution, to continuously improve our physical quality," Xu Bo said, looking at Li Yuan. "And you, merely practicing the basic cultivation methods without any precious resources, are progressing faster in improving your physical quality than most students in the elite class."

"What does this imply?"

"Your true talent may be very high," Xu Bo sighed lightly. "It's just that you don't fit any of the Seven High-Rank Cultivation Methods."

## Chapter 8: 6: The Den of Swallowing Metal

"Could it be that my talent is very high?" Li Yuan's pupils contracted slightly.

He couldn't help but think of the note on the Mind Spirit Divine Palace data panel: "Contains some kind of high-rank Spiritual Nature yet to awaken."

Li Yuan trusted the Divine Palace panel's detection; it had never been wrong over the past year.

It should be more reliable than Teacher Xu's estimate.

The information Teacher Xu revealed today also gave Li Yuan more to ponder.

Previously, although Li Yuan had searched multiple times on the virtual network, he couldn't find much information due to insufficient permissions.

"My talent is high? Having the Mind Spirit Divine Palace may also be a kind of talent," Li Yuan murmured to himself.

Over the past hundred years, as many Cultivation Methods have gradually become available, and with the development of technology, a large number of Martial Artists have been born into human civilization.

And those exceptional Martial Artists who could soar into the sky and survive nuclear explosions, which one of them didn't have a growth journey filled with legends?

Li Yuan didn't believe that his Mind Spirit Divine Palace would be an exception.

"Teacher, what should I do?" Li Yuan asked proactively.

He was smart; given that Teacher Xu had called him over, he surely intended to do more than encourage him.

"Persevere," Xu Bo advised, looking at Li Yuan. He originally wanted to say "proceed step by step," but he changed it at the last moment.

Seeing Li Yuan's surprised expression, Xu Bo continued, "Your progress is already very fast, and there's no need to be too anxious about the Martial Spirit not awakening yet. With your results, it's easy to get into Martial Arts University."

"If you practice normally, in at most two to three years your Physical Quality should be able to reach level 10.0."

"Once you become an Entry Rank Martial Artist, High Rank Cultivation Methods will no longer be your restraint."

"Who knows, in the future you might even create a set of High Rank Cultivation Methods unique to yourself," Xu Bo said with a smile.

"Create Cultivation Methods?" Li Yuan couldn't help asking, "Can I?"

"Haha, what's this about being able or not?" Teacher Xu laughed. "How old are you? When you're young, you have endless possibilities."

"Even the founders of the three great Martial Halls, who could have known about their achievements when they were young?" Xu Bo looked at Li Yuan with a smile. "The



founders of the three great Martial Halls are far-fetched, but do you not even have the ambition to surpass me?"

"My Physical Quality is only level 19," he added.

Li Yuan held his breath.

Ever since Xu Bo became his Martial Arts class's homeroom teacher, Li Yuan had always seen him as a target to strive for.

Now, knowing his strength, a Physical Quality that reached as high as level 19, it was no wonder he was a First Class Martial Arts Teacher.

"Let's talk about something more practical," Xu Bo said to Li Yuan, "Although you haven't awakened your Martial Spirit, your Physical Quality and Martial Arts Skills are quite good. Combining that with your family situation... I will apply to the school for a Third Class scholarship for you."

"A Third Class scholarship?" Li Yuan's eyes lit up.

Martial Arts Cultivation consumes a lot of resources.

Therefore, for students with excellent Martial Arts results, the country provides various awards and subsidies starting from the first year of high school.

As a provincial key high school, Guan Mountain District Number One High School receives more state funding than ordinary high schools.

For each large-scale standardized test, students who rank within the top hundred in Martial Arts receive additional rewards.

The top fifty get a reward of two thousand Blue Star Coins.

The top thirty get a reward of five thousand Blue Star Coins.

The top twenty receive on top of the previous reward two Basic Lifeblood Elixir portions.

The top ten in the grade will, on top of the top twenty's basis, also be allocated a separate Martial Arts Cultivation Room.

These are examination rewards.

Scholarships are even more special; they are allocated based on academic results in combination with family circumstances and also require a teacher's recommendation to have a chance of being granted.

Those who receive a scholarship are few.

"You have made considerable progress, but after all your Martial Arts results are only within the top thirty of the grade. If you want to apply for a Second Class scholarship or higher, it's quite difficult," Xu Bo said. "But there is still hope for a Third Class scholarship. Of course, even if the application is successful, the money isn't much, just twenty thousand; don't think it's too little."

"Teacher, you're too kind," Li Yuan felt immensely grateful in his heart.

Twenty thousand? That's equal to two months of his aunt's salary.

All the scholarships he had received since starting high school, when added up, didn't even amount to twenty thousand.

"Is there anything I can do for you, Teacher?" Li Yuan followed up with another question.

"There's nothing you need to do, just earnestly cultivate and get good grades," Xu Bo waved his hand, "Go have your meal. When the application goes through, I will let you know."

"Yes," Li Yuan replied as he left, closing the door behind him as he exited.

He watched Li Yuan leave.

"This kid, does he still think I want some kind of reward?" Xu Bo shook his head with a laugh.

Suddenly his brows furrowed slightly.

This man, who was as tough as an iron tower, now showed a fleeting expression of pain.

"Time for medicine again?" Xu Bo suppressed the pain and walked towards the therapy room.

...

Upon leaving the office building.

"Good," Li Yuan couldn't help but clench his fist, struggling to contain his joy.

Before entering the office, he had guessed it was something good.

But he hadn't expected it to be this significant.

"Did Teacher Xu not tell me these things before because, although my past grades were not bad, he didn't think they were outstanding enough?" Li Yuan thought to himself, "Was my performance today sufficient?"

Li Yuan had read many books.

In those stories, many seniors liked to promote their juniors.

But the precondition was also that the juniors were worth promoting.

"If one doesn't try hard enough, or isn't talented enough, then even if opportunities come by, they will be missed," Li Yuan reminded himself.

"Should I send a message in the family group?" Just as the thought appeared in Li Yuan's mind, he immediately suppressed it.

Phew!

A gust of wind blew by, helping Li Yuan to calm down further.

"No rush," he told himself.

"Teacher Xu is a First Class teacher, but he's not part of the school management. Even if it goes through, it probably will take some time," Li Yuan reasoned in his mind. "And if it doesn't happen, it would just be a false hope."

"I'll wait until the scholarship is really granted before I tell my uncle and aunt," he decided.

"Yes, I shouldn't tell the other students either," Li Yuan had thought it through. "Teacher Xu called for me alone and had Wan Xiao leave first; he probably doesn't want others to know."

"If the school wants to publicize it, I'll wait for the school to announce it in the future."

All his experiences up to this point, combined with the books he had read, made Li Yuan understand the saying, "Success is achieved in secrecy, while failure is caused by loose talk."

Don't boast about things that haven't happened yet.

"First, let's get something to eat," Li Yuan regained his composure and ran towards the cafeteria.

...

The Guan Mountain District's First High School has over six thousand students, so the cafeteria is quite large.

Li Yuan had just entered the cafeteria.

"Brother Yuan, over here." Zhou Qi, who was squatting in the distance, called out, sitting with Wan Xiao, Yan Zhou, and over a dozen other boys, occupying two large tables and eating.

Seeing this, Li Yuan walked over with a smile.

The boys in his class really liked to gather and eat together.

"Brother Yuan, here are your two nutrition meals," Zhou Qi said while eating, pushing two specially prepared meal boxes in front of Li Yuan.

"Who swiped their card? Was it Yan Zhou?" Li Yuan asked with a smile as he sat down to eat.

"I told you I was paying you back," Yan Zhou said with a smile.

"The breakfasts I brought you a few times were just hot dry noodles, eggs, and soy milk, all together less than fifty coins," Li Yuan shook his head, "These two nutrition meals alone cost one hundred and fifty."

There was a big difference in the price of meals among all the boys present.

For ordinary meals with two meat dishes and two vegetable dishes, or three meat and two vegetables, a meal costs less than twenty coins.

Zhou Qi and Yan Zhou were eating this kind of meal.

Because they were going to attend cultural classes in the evening, they wouldn't have any intense physical activity, and their energy consumption would be low...

But for someone like Li Yuan, who still needed to undergo high-intensity martial arts cultivation in the evening, ordinary meals wouldn't suffice. Over time, this would lead to a deficiency in his body's vitality.

He must eat the specially prepared nutrition meals from the cafeteria, which were much more expensive.

One meal cost seventy-five Blue Star coins, and Li Yuan needed two of them.

To be precise, Li Yuan's normal three meals a day would end up costing nearly three hundred coins per day.

At least eight thousand Blue Star coins a month.

And that was still not enough to support Li Yuan's normal cultivation; he occasionally had to consume various expensive vitality potions and supplements.

If you include physiotherapy, his monthly expenses were a startling number.

This was also because Li Yuan was a student and could always cultivate in the school's martial arts classroom, where various training equipment like cold weapons, sandbags, and areas for practicing spear technique were well-equipped.

The effects couldn't compare to a private martial arts cultivation room, but the advantage of the school's martial arts classroom was that it was free.

If one were to go to a formal martial hall in society? The rent was charged by the hour, and ordinary families simply couldn't afford it.

The martial path is a gold-swallowing beast; it's not just a saying.

This was also the reason Li Yuan longed to be admitted to one of the top five prestigious schools.

Because supporting his martial arts cultivation had already become very difficult for his uncle and aunt to continue.

...

Leaving the cafeteria.

"Brother Yuan, we're heading off to the academic building, see you tomorrow," Zhou Qi and Yan Zhou said to Li Yuan.

"Okay," Li Yuan nodded.

In this era, starting from freshman year, students would study academic courses in the morning and engage in martial arts cultivation in the afternoon.

In the evening? It was up to the students to choose, depending on the path they wanted to take.

There are only twenty-nine Martial Arts Universities across Xia Country.

While there are more than a thousand cultural universities nationwide.

If one applies for Martial Arts University, their academic scores are converted and account for 10% of the total.

If one chooses the academic course route, martial arts scores are converted and account for 30% of the total score.

Though the decision to pursue the martial path or the academic path is made at the time of choosing preferences, the vast majority of students start leaning towards one since their freshman year.

Li Yuan returned to the martial arts classroom.

Glancing around, he saw that there were less than ten people left in the classroom, which was empty.

Most of the students from Class 3 (2) were focused on academic courses, which was the choice of the vast majority of students.

"Getting into Martial Arts University is indeed difficult," Li Yuan thought to himself.

Every year, there were millions of students taking the college entrance exam in Jiangbei Province.

The only Martial Arts University in Jiangbei, 'Jiangbei Martial Arts University', admits no more than ten thousand students each year, making up less than 1% of all applicants.

As a key school in the province, the Guan Mountain District's First High School also rarely sees its students exceed a hundred admissions to Martial Arts Universities each year.

The sky was not yet dark.

Most of the ten or so people in the classroom were idly chatting with each other.

The evening martial arts practice was unsupervised by teachers; it relied entirely on self-discipline.

"Li Tianyou." Li Yuan's gaze flicked towards a figure in the corner of the classroom.

The boy was about 1.8 meters tall, with a somewhat thin face, wearing a martial outfit, silent, and seriously practicing the Basic Cultivation Method.

He wasn't disturbed at all by the chatter of others.

Seeing the sweat dripping from his forehead, it was evident that he had been cultivating for a while.

"He's such a studious one!" Li Yuan sighed inwardly, "Deserving of being the top studious person in the class."

Without disturbing the others,

Li Yuan took out his spear from his weapon locker, chose an open spot in the classroom, and began practicing his spear technique.

Why not practice the Basic Cultivation Method?

Because Li Yuan would get up at around 3 am every day to come to the school and practice the Basic Cultivation Method alone in the empty martial arts classroom for more than two hours.

Then, shortly before 6 am, he'd go to the cafeteria for breakfast, then to the academic classroom for self-study.

In the afternoon, he'd practice the Cultivation Methods for two hours with everyone else.

Every day's cultivation should be divided into two to three sessions, lasting four hours for optimal results; this has been verified by numerous martial arts experts through repeated experiments.

Life evolution and the tempering, recovery, and growth of the body and bones take time.

Too much can be as bad as not enough.

With the remaining time, Li Yuan was able to delve into his spear technique and movement technique.

Two hours later,

The school bell echoed through the campus, and the students in the classroom had already left one by one. Aside from Li Yuan, who was still practicing his spear technique, the only other person left was Li Tianyou, still cultivating his sword technique.

Suddenly,

In Li Yuan's field of vision, a message popped up that only he could see.

[Your spear technique realm has increased from Third Stage 36% to Third Stage 37%.]

## Chapter 9: 7 The Home at Midnight (Seeking Monthly Tickets for Binge Reading)

"Improved to 37%?"

"I haven't even noticeably felt it myself, yet the Divine Palace panel has already sensed it with precision," Li Yuan's eyes gleamed faintly.

The Divine Palace panel couldn't directly enhance Li Yuan's martial arts cultivation.

But its greatest benefit was to reflect Li Yuan's effort and progress in a numerical form, like a progress bar.

Absolutely positive feedback.

No one doesn't want to succeed, it's just that many people worry that their efforts won't yield results.

With the Divine Palace panel, being able to clearly see one's own progress made Li Yuan's motivation to cultivate even greater.

Cultivating was very exhausting.

"But the rewards of cultivation are great," Li Yuan suddenly exerted himself, and the spear in his hand became a blur as he thrust it forward fiercely.

"Whoosh!"

"Whoosh!" "Whoosh!"

Faint, ear-piercing shrieks exploded, forming streaks of blurred spear shadows in the air.

"The practice of martial arts, trying over and over to break the limits of life, is indeed thrilling," Li Yuan suddenly retracted his spear, revealing a trace of a smile.

Over a hundred years ago, before the cultivation methods were popularized and traditional martial arts prevailed, even ordinary people would get addicted to fitness.

What more for high-level martial cultivation?

Li Yuan, in particular, relished the process of his body growing stronger.



It was exhausting, but very cool.

"Li Yuan, your spear technique is really amazing," an earnest voice of admiration suddenly sounded.

Li Yuan turned his head and smiled, "Tianyou, your sword technique isn't bad either. I remember you had a martial arts skills score of 312 today."

Li Tianyou, standing to the side, had a thin face, but bright eyes.

"I can't catch up to you," Li Tianyou said with a smile, standing tall.

"It's nine o'clock, everyone else has left." Li Yuan's gaze swept around: "Aren't you going home?"

The Ministry of Education had stipulated that early self-study began at seven in the morning, and evening self-study ended at nine.

Six days of classes a week.

Lower-level cities and counties might be more competitive, but, as a key high school in the provincial capital, it was natural to strictly enforce the schedule.

"I'll practice a bit more," said Li Tianyou.

"Alright," Li Yuan smiled, "I'll head back first."

"Mm-hmm," Li Tianyou nodded.

Li Yuan placed the spear back in the weapons cabinet and walked out of the classroom.

Watching Li Yuan leave,

the smile on Li Tianyou's face vanished as he muttered to himself, "Why isn't my sword technique as formidable as Li Yuan's spear technique?"

"If only I could awaken the Martial Spirit, that would be great."

In Senior 3 (2) Class, Li Tianyou's martial arts grades were consistently in the top five, occasionally even third, but there was a definite gap between him and Wan Xiao, let alone compared to Li Yuan.

Shaking his head to dispel the multitude of distracting thoughts, Li Tianyou picked up his long sword and continued to earnestly practice his sword technique.

Outside, the night lingered long.

Most classrooms had already turned off their lights.

Only this martial arts classroom remained lit, with Li Tianyou's slim figure looking somewhat lonely in this moment.

...

Under the night sky, on Luoyu Street,

Li Yuan, having practiced all day and his clothes soaked with sweat, finally boarded the driverless '517' trolley.

There were very few people on the bus.

In an era of a highly developed virtual network and abundant material resources, most people's work is completed online.

Even those with offline jobs, most laborers had finished their day and were home.

"...In late August, national authorities and the Starry Sky Martial Hall's Xia Country branch conducted a joint operation, successfully eliminating a group of Star Realm aquatic races in the Jiangbei Province Xiang River basin, but some did escape, please residents along the river stay alert..."

"Next, here's coverage on the ongoing wars in the Northern Border Province's Second Level Star Realm 'Rob Sea' and the 'Aust Moon Sea' of the 'Firefly' Second Level Star Realm..."

The electronic display above the driverless trolley continuously broadcast the latest news.

Li Yuan sat on a single seat, pushed open the window, and the wind blew in through the window, looking at the streetscapes passing by outside.

Very comfortable!

"Starry sky and love should always advance tirelessly, Star Sea World reminds you that Spring Eye Station is upon us," suddenly, the stop-arrival announcement sounded, pulling Li Yuan's thoughts back to reality.

"Star Sea World sure advertises a lot," Li Yuan shook his head secretly.

He stepped off the bus.

A few meters away was the entrance to Li Yuan's residential community—the Wanhua Platinum Mansion.

The community's name sounded grand, but the buildings were quite ordinary, even somewhat run-down compared with the neighboring new community 'Xiongchu World.'

"Welcome home, owner," a gentle female voice sounded.

Li Yuan entered the community after facial recognition.

There wasn't even a security guard at the entrance to the community, just two intelligent robots standing off in the distance.

Within the community, all buildings were modest 11-story high-rises.

Due to the constant threat of war over the past decades, the construction of super-tall buildings has been disallowed for years, with most structures around ten stories high and no taller than eighteen stories.

Although over twenty years old, the Wanhua Platinum Mansion was still relatively well-maintained.

Li Yuan's home was in building two, unit two.

"Little Yuan, classes are over?" An elderly couple was jogging slowly along the green belt of the community.

"Yes, Granny Sun, you're exercising again huh?" Li Yuan replied with a smile.

Although this was a commercial district, most people who bought homes here years ago were employees of the same state-owned enterprise, enjoying a discounted price.

So, in some sense, this neighborhood could be considered a welfare housing community provided by the company.

With so many years passed,

many residents in the community knew each other well.

"Granny Sun and her husband are almost ninety years old, but they're still strong and even haven't purchased a home robot," Li Yuan thought to himself. "According to the books, over a hundred years ago, the average lifespan was only seventy or eighty years."

Thanks to the widespread practice of cultivation methods, except for accidental deaths, the average lifespan of people on Blue Star had surpassed one hundred years, with the average lifespan in Xia Country being even closer to one hundred and ten years.

For those who became Entry Rank Martial Artists, their lifespan was even more astounding.

Li Yuan had just reached the foot of his building.

"Brother?" A surprised young girl's voice rang out from not far off.

"Bro~" Another young boy's voice sounded.

Thump~thump~thump~ Two youngsters around the age of twelve or thirteen, both dressed in loose martial arts uniforms, jogged over from a shadowy area not far away.

"Qian Qian, Muhua," Li Yuan smiled. "Why haven't you gone home yet?"

The girl was pretty and lively, with fair skin and bright eyes.

The boy had a youthful face, but he was almost as tall as Li Yuan and half a head taller than the girl.

Li Qianqian and Li Muhua.

They were indeed the fourteen-year-old twin son and daughter of Li Yuan's uncle and aunt, both in their second year of junior high.

"Brother, we just came back from the Martial Arts Room," Li Qianqian said cheerfully, clinging to Li Yuan's arm and swinging it.

Li Yuan nodded with a smile, "How was it?"

Each neighborhood has a public sports hall, as mandated by the government. Funded by the state, managed and operated by property management companies, it is free for residents to use.

"Not so good, there were too many people, not much space to practice," Li Muhua shook his head.

"At your age, you should still focus on building a foundation, practice more standing poles, and contemplate the cultivation methods," Li Yuan advised. "Especially you, Muhua. You've already awakened your Martial Spirit; you should be even less hasty in your practice."

Li Muhua had a high martial arts talent.

Li Qianqian's talent was much less, but her academic performance was very good.

"Mhm," Li Muhua nodded, then as if he recalled something, he said, "Brother, I remember today was the day your school tested for Martial Spirit, right?"

Li Qianqian also looked at Li Yuan.

"No success," Li Yuan said indifferently, not seeming to care too much.

Li Qianqian and Li Muhua exchanged glances.

"Brother, don't be discouraged. Even without a Martial Spirit, you can still get into Martial Arts University," Li Qianqian giggled. "Let's go home first, Mom was just messaging me, asking when we would be back."

"Brother, go get the package from the property management,"

Li Qianqian tugged at Li Yuan's sleeve, heading towards the elevator.

"Sis, I got the package last time, it's your turn this time," Li Muhua said helplessly.

"Good little brother—."

"Qian Qian, go with Muhua," Li Yuan patted Li Qianqian's head.

"Brother!!"

...

"Click~" The door opened.

"Mom, brother came back with us," Li Qianqian called out even before entering the door.

"Is everyone back?"

A voice also came from inside the house.

Li Yuan followed his younger siblings into the house, entering last after scanning the room, which was not small.

Four bedrooms and a living room, spanning a hundred and thirty square meters.

It was clearly visible that various decorations were somewhat outdated.

"Uncle, Auntie," Li Yuan saw his uncle and aunt coming out of the bedroom. The auntie was wearing a long-sleeved nightgown, her face without makeup.

The uncle was somewhat overweight, his skin was dark, but his clothes were very neat, wearing a black short-sleeved shirt, long pants, and sports shoes meant for going out.

"Ah Yuan," the auntie smiled when she saw Li Yuan.

"Qian Qian, go back to your room and wash up. Your dad and I need to speak with your brother," the auntie instructed.

"Okay."

"Brother, don't open my package, I want to open it myself later," Li Qianqian dragged Li Muhua, dropping off the package and heading into her room.

In the living room,

only Li Yuan and his uncle and auntie remained.

"Uncle, another business trip?" Li Yuan asked quietly, having noticed the big suitcase in the living room.

The uncle worked for a state-owned enterprise in civil engineering construction and was constantly traveling across the country, so business trips were a normal part of life.

"Yes, I just got the notice this afternoon," the uncle nodded.

"Where to? Why the rush?" Li Yuan inquired.

A flicker of hesitation crossed the auntie's face.

"What's there to hide? Yuan is all grown up now," the uncle laughed, then looked at Li Yuan. "I'm going to the Northern Border."

"Such a rush to go, and to the Northern Border again," Li Yuan was initially surprised, then seemed to realize something, his expression growing tense. "To the Second Level Star Realm 'Rob Sea'?"

## Chapter 10: 8 Some things, someone always has to do

...

"You saw the news too?" Uncle said.

"Yes," Li Yuan nodded.

The Seven Great Planets are far apart from each other, with numerous Star Realms appearing on each planet.

The number of Star Realms on Blue Star is considered low compared to the other Seven Great Planets.

A Star Realm can lead to the deep reaches of the starry sea and foreign civilizations; it is the frontline of the war between human civilization and foreign domains.

Wars are common there.

The highest level Star Realm within the borders of Xia Country is the 'Rob Sea Star Realm' in the Northern Border Province, a Second Level Star Realm that is garrisoned by a large military force all year round.

In the past few days at school, Li Yuan heard that war had broken out in the Rob Sea Star Realm, but he was not clear about the severity.

Now it seems it's quite dire.

"The Rob Sea war broke out quite suddenly, and headquarters has ordered us to go and support the construction," Uncle said with a smile, appearing very relaxed.

"We are leaving tonight, on the high-speed train at three in the morning," Auntie said from the side, her eyes filled with worry.

Li Yuan looked at his uncle with similar concern.

In Li Yuan's memory, the impression of his parents is now very vague, since they passed away when he was only two or three years old.

Li Yuan was raised by his uncle and aunt, who treated him as their own child,

In Li Yuan's eyes, his uncle and aunt are equivalent to his parents.

Uncle, named Li Changzhou, had a decent talent for the Martial Path. He graduated from Jiangbei Martial Arts University and also earned a degree in 'Civil Engineering in Hydraulics & Ocean Engineering.' After graduation, he worked his way up to middle management in a state-owned enterprise, with quite an impressive salary.

Auntie, named Chen Hui, is a high school math teacher.

The couple should have accumulated a considerable estate over the decades. Why then do they still live in an old neighborhood?

Li Yuan knew it was because of him!

The expenses of his illness and surgery as a child accumulated to over a million Blue Star Coins; later on, the cost of recuperation, various tonics, health care expenses, and biological medicines were substantial.

Since middle school, cultivating the Martial Path has also been like a gold-eating cave.

Take his cousin 'Li Muhua,' for example; he revealed a Martial Spirit talent surpassing that of Li Yuan in middle school, even awakening it in the first year of junior high.

But even now, the variety of cultivation resources Li Muhua receives isn't as much as Li Yuan had back then.

His uncle and aunt never said anything about it.

His younger brother and sister also never felt that Li Yuan was taking their resources.

But Li Yuan himself felt some guilt towards his uncle and aunt and even his siblings.

This was also an important reason why Li Yuan began to consciously practice the Martial Path fervently starting in middle school.

He did not want his uncle and aunt's hopes to turn into nothing; he was determined to achieve something significant.

Especially after entering high school, he became even more clear about his goals, hoping to repay his uncle and aunt with his own efforts in the future, and to make up for his brother and sister.

Just after entering his second year of high school, Li Yuan's physical quality reached the 5.0 level, and he then awakened the miraculous Mind Spirit Divine Palace, which accelerated his Martial Arts Cultivation tremendously.

"The Mind Spirit Divine Palace is indeed miraculous, but without personal effort, it's all in vain," Li Yuan realized this after awakening the Mind Spirit Divine Palace.

Therefore, he dared not slack off even more.

"Getting into a Martial Arts University."

"And even to be admitted into one of the top five prestigious schools, ultimately becoming a High Rank Martial Artist." This has always been Li Yuan's aspiration.

Not just for himself, but for his family as well.



When he just learned that his uncle was going to the Rob Sea, Li Yuan's heart trembled.

Uncle Li Changzhou spoke lightly of it.

But Li Yuan, who frequently followed the news, knew that soldiers and Martial Artists defending against the invasion from foreign civilizations across the Star Realms, were the most dangerous.

Next were the workers engaged in various military defense constructions.

This trip for Uncle Li Changzhou was essentially as an engineer.

You should know, powerful Star Realm Creatures are not stopped by ordinary heavy weapons; only some cutting-edge technological weapons or High Rank Martial Artists can handle them.

It's very dangerous.

"If I hadn't fallen ill back then, or if the expenses for Martial Arts Cultivation weren't so high, Uncle could have stayed comfortably in the city, maintaining municipal works, instead of opting for an external assignment just for that extra subsidy to his salary," Li Yuan thought, his heart feeling even more unpleasant.

...

"Xiaoyuan, come into the bedroom, I'll talk with you slowly," Uncle Li Changzhou called Li Yuan into the master bedroom.

There were two small stools in the master bedroom, and Li Yuan sat down.

Uncle sat on the edge of the bed.

"Clang~" Auntie gently closed the door.

Li Changzhou's hair was already somewhat sparse, and though he was a bit overweight, he still exuded an air of scholarly grace.

...

"Originally, your aunt advised me not to tell you, worrying that it might affect your senior year studies," Li Changzhou smiled as he looked at Li Yuan, "but I believe that the sons of the Li family should be able to withstand any pressure."

Aunt Chen Hui remained silent, sitting beside them.

"Uncle, go on," Li Yuan said softly.

"According to the information I received, several entry and exit points of the Rob Sea defense system have been severely damaged. The casualties of the military and the Starry Sky Martial Hall are significant," Li Changzhou said indifferently, "This attack was held back, but if attacked again, there's a risk of a complete breach."

Li Yuan held his breath—A complete breach?

The entrances and exits to the Star Realm are critical gates for human civilization to resist invasions.

If breached, it would be an absolute disaster.

Years ago, his parents died in a Star Realm disaster.

"There's a risk of death for me this time," Li Changzhou looked calmly at Li Yuan, "In war, where is there no death?"

"Uncle, is there no way for you to avoid going?" Li Yuan couldn't help but ask.

"Headquarters has requested our presence, but if one truly wishes not to go, there are ways, after all, the country has only issued a level three alert," Li Changzhou laughed.

Li Yuan listened closely.

Xia Country had divided its wartime danger response into three alert levels, with level three being the lowest and level one the highest.

Once a level one alert is activated, it means the entire country will enter a state of war, with a comprehensive mobilization: all citizens and all resources must be ready to obey conscription orders.

In the past hundred years, Xia Country has only activated level one alert once, in the year 2028.

Above level one alert is the "Civilization Alert," which can only be issued by the joint decision of the highest council of the Seven Star Alliance and the three major Martial Halls.

Once issued, it signifies that at least one human planet has fallen into a life or death situation, needing full support from other planets.

In the centuries since the Alliance was formed, a Civilization Alert has been activated only once.

However, even the lowest "level three alert," once issued, signifies a significant consumption of resources and a high number of casualties.

"Little Yuan, I can choose not to go," Uncle Li Changzhou said with a smile, "But if I don't, someone else will have to take my place."

"Someone has to be a part of this war, don't they?"

Li Yuan fell silent.

"Am I the only one capable? Such a large company, and it can't do without me?" Aunt Chen Hui suddenly shouted, her eyes faintly red with emotion.

Li Changzhou had already discussed this with her earlier.

And in the living room, fearing that Li Qianqian and Li Muhua would notice something amiss, she had held back, showing nothing.

But now, hearing Li Changzhou's words, she finally couldn't hold back and vented out.

Li Changzhou was taken aback for a moment, then silently reached out to gently hold his wife Chen Hui's waist, comforting her.

Chen Hui bowed her head, her eyes red-rimmed, and said no more.

After a moment.

"Little Yuan, don't worry too much," Li Changzhou said after comforting his wife, then turned to Li Yuan, "After all, I'm not going to be fighting hand-to-hand like other martial artists; it's not that dangerous."

"Besides, I am at least an Entry Rank martial artist and have some self-protective strength," Li Changzhou said with a smile.

Li Yuan remained silent.

His uncle had graduated from Martial Arts University, and at his peak, his physical quality surpassed level 12, but after years of working, he was probably at level 10 or 11 now, and many of his combat skills were likely rusty.

Martial Path is not about immortality; it requires daily diligent practice.

Suddenly.

"Beep!" Li Yuan instantly felt a vibration at his wrist and subconsciously looked at it.

"Your account ending in 1486 has received 56,000.00 Blue Star Coins... Transferred to the account ending with... Balance of 58,324.12 Blue Star Coins," The display clearly showed a line of text.

"Uncle?" Li Yuan was startled.

He recognized at a glance that the transferring account ended with his uncle Li Changzhou's number.

"That's your living expenses for September and October."

"With me gone to the Northern Border Province, the network may not be smooth. I've sent it all to you today, manage it well," Li Changzhou laughed, "Before, I took you to buy basic Blood Qi Medicinal Liquid from Uncle Zhong; you should have some experience."

"I've made arrangements with your Uncle Zhong."

"When you have time over the weekend, go to the Martial Hall and see him," Li Changzhou said, "Your aunt will transfer the living expenses to you in the future."

"Aunt," Li Yuan looked towards his aunt.

"Listen to your uncle," Chen Hui's mood had somewhat stabilized, her voice cooling down again, "Take the money, and don't worry about the family."

Li Yuan was silent, asking no further.

Right now, his cultivation indeed required money.

"By the way."

"Have you thought about the direction of your college entrance exam?" Li Changzhou looked at Li Yuan.

## Chapter 11: 9 Qi and Blood Medicines

...

Logically, with the pressure of being a senior in high school already immense, it wouldn't be appropriate to ask such a sensitive question now.

Besides, there were still nine months left until the college entrance exams.

It was only because Li Changzhou was about to travel far away, and he believed Li Yuan wouldn't be affected, that he inquired.

Auntie Chen Hui couldn't help but look towards Li Yuan, as she'd always taken care of his daily life and was naturally concerned.

"College entrance preferences?" Li Yuan pondered for a moment and said, "Uncle and auntie, I still plan to become a full-time martial artist. My first goal is the nation's five major Martial Path colleges."

"If I don't get admitted, then I'll strive to enter the 'Warrior Class' at Jiangbei Martial Arts University."

A full-time martial artist?

Li Changzhou and Chen Hui exchanged a glance, a hint of worry passing between them.

Not all graduates from Martial Arts University necessarily end up as full-time martial artists.

Like Li Changzhou, who attended Martial Arts University with decent results, but eventually also majored in other subjects.

The advantages of a martial artist over ordinary people are comprehensive; even in everyday work, a martial artist's energy and speed of thought are far superior, increasing the likelihood of making greater achievements.

However, full-time martial artists, as the name implies, devote themselves entirely to the Martial Path, seeking to go further in it, but it is far more dangerous.

Because as martial artists train further, advancement often requires enduring various life and death struggles...

"Xiao Yuan, can't you take up another major simultaneously? After graduating, becoming a civil servant or a martial arts teacher isn't that good," Chen Hui couldn't help saying.

In her eyes, there was no difference between Li Yuan and Li Muhua.

She saw herself like a mother, most worried about Li Yuan's safety.

To her mind, becoming a civil servant or a martial arts teacher was among the best jobs.

"A full-time martial artist?" Li Changzhou didn't argue, but instead he pondered and asked, "Can you get admitted to one of the five prestigious Martial Path colleges? Doesn't your school only manage a few admissions a year, and have you awakened to Martial Spirit today?"

Li Changzhou was very aware of the difficulty in being admitted to any of the five prestigious Martial Path colleges.

Jiangbei Martial Arts University admits ten thousand students a year in Jiangbei Province.

Yet the five major Martial Path colleges combined only admit about ten thousand students nationwide each year.

In Jiangbei Province, historically they've only admitted a few hundred students per year.

"I haven't awakened." Li Yuan shook his head.

"You haven't awakened, then you..." Li Changzhou frowned.

"But in today's school test, my physical quality was grade 6.5." Li Yuan said, "And my Martial Arts Skills score was over 360 points."

Li Changzhou's eyes brightened, and he couldn't hide the excitement on his face.

He understood the significance of what Li Yuan was saying.

"Really?" Chen Hui was also quite surprised.

She remembered that although Li Yuan's scores were also excellent at the end of the previous semester, they seemed not nearly as high as now.

Especially the physical quality, which had improved by 0.5 grades so suddenly? It was quite astonishing.

"Xu Bo teacher personally conducted the assessment, and the Martial Arts Skills score is based on college entrance examination standards," Li Yuan added.

Xu Bo's assessment?

Li Changzhou nodded slightly.

He knew Xu Bo, who even in the entire Guan Mountain District, had some fame.

Previously, Li Changzhou had heard that Xu Bo became Li Yuan's teacher in charge of the martial artist class and was very pleased, believing Li Yuan had found a good teacher.

"Good!"

"Xiao Yuan, if you continue like this, not to mention getting into one of the top five colleges, there's a great chance to get into the 'Warrior Class' at Jiangbei University," Li Changzhou smiled and said, it was the best news he'd heard all day.

Li Yuan looked at his uncle and aunt, sighing slightly in his heart.

He had originally planned to surprise them during the January mock tests.

But now, with his uncle about to travel, Li Yuan thought it over and still wanted his uncle to have some peace of mind.

For parents, the greatest concern is the safety of their children, followed by their children's futures.

"We're not in a rush to decide on college entrance preferences or whether to become a full-time martial artist; we'll wait until you get into Martial Arts University and decide in college," Li Changzhou advised, "For now, just focus on working hard."

"I understand," Li Yuan nodded vigorously.

"My trip to the Northern Border, for now, just you be aware of it," Li Changzhou added, "After I'm gone, when you have time, help your aunt take good care of your younger siblings... Alright, you've had a long day, go back to your room and rest."

"Hmm." Li Yuan pondered for a moment but in the end didn't mention the matters of the Third Class scholarship.

He got up and left the master bedroom.

The door closed.

"Old Li," Chen Hui turned to Li Changzhou, with a hint of anger in her tone, "just now, were you supporting Xiao Yuan in becoming a full-time martial artist?"

She was indeed angry.

"Didn't you hear his scores?" Li Changzhou shook his head, "A Martial Arts Skills score exceeding 360 points, with such a rate of progress... I remember our eldest brother's Martial Arts Skills score during his college entrance exams was not even this high."

"You still remember your elder brother." Chen Hui gritted her teeth, "Our elder brother and his wife, back then to save us..."

"Enough," Li Changzhou frowned.

"You don't want me to talk, but I have to," Chen Hui suddenly stood up, staring at her husband, her eyes slightly red, "Our elder brother and sister-in-law helped us so much, and left only Xiao Yuan behind. Don't you know how dangerous it is to be a full-time martial artist?"

"How many of your former classmates who chose the path of a full-time martial artist are still alive?"

"I know what you mean," Li Changzhou looked at his wife and sighed softly, pulling her down to sit.

"But the child is grown up and has his own will."

"We can only advise, not force," Li Changzhou said, "After I leave, you can try to persuade him slowly."

"Besides, the path of a full-time martial artist is not easy to walk."

"How many students admitted to Martial Arts University don't aspire to become full-time martial artists? But in the end, very few choose that path."

"Once he enters university and understands there are always greater talents out there, without us needing to urge him, he will come to his senses," Li Changzhou said.

Chen Hui finally nodded reluctantly.

"Wife, keep me company for a bit longer," Li Changzhou pulled his wife into his embrace.

Chen Hui calmed down, resting against her husband's chest.

Time passed.

Approaching midnight.

"The kids must all be asleep by now," Li Changzhou finally stood up, whispered, "Wife, I have to go now, or I'll miss the high-speed rail."

...



"By the time I get to the Northern Border, the government-promised subsidy of five hundred thousand will come through, and then I'll transfer it to you."

"The family... I'll leave it in your hands."

...

Inside Li Yuan's room.

The lights were out, with only the faint streetlamp light and moonlight streaming in through the window.

In the room of less than twenty square meters, besides two wardrobes, there was a miniature home virtual network capsule occupying about two square meters.

The rest of the area was empty.

One side of Li Yuan's wardrobe concealed a Murphy bed designed to be foldable.

The purpose was to save space, making it convenient for him to practice simple exercises at home.

However, ever since awakening the Mind Spirit Divine Palace in his sophomore year, Li Yuan seldom used the Murphy bed, mostly sitting directly on the wooden floor.

Today was no exception.

"Hmm?" Li Yuan, seated on the floor, perked his ears slightly.

His strong physical quality gave him hearing beyond that of ordinary people, coupled with the profound silence at night, he was sensitive to the slightest sounds.

"Uncle is leaving?"

Li Yuan heard the faint sound of the door closing, and like a cat, he got up without making a sound.

He approached the window.

Half a minute later, Li Yuan saw his uncle, Li Changzhou, carrying his suitcase, hurriedly walking out the apartment door.

After taking a few steps, Li Changzhou paused, looked back at the building upstairs, and then without lingering any further, disappeared around the corner of the street.

Li Yuan stood by the window for a long time.

"Uncle, are you truly willing to go to the Northern Border?" Li Yuan sighed inwardly.

That one phrase "Someone has to go" from his uncle had greatly moved him.

From a young age, his uncle had been full of patriotism and had always been guiding Li Yuan.

Yet, in Li Yuan's view, the situation in the Northern Border didn't seem to warrant such a step yet.

"Uncle is going, not just because of the nation's call, but perhaps also for that very high subsidy." Li Yuan's eyes dimmed slightly, "Muhua and I are both practicing Martial Path, and the financial pressure on our family is huge."

He raised his hand.

Whirr~ Silently, a glimmer of light shot out from Li Yuan's wrist, forming a transparent holographic projection in front of his chest.

Displayed was a wealth of war report news regarding the 'Rob Sea Star Realm,' including news about 'combat subsidies' and 'support subsidies.'

"I must get admitted into one of the top five Martial Arts Universities." Li Yuan murmured to himself, his resolve growing stronger.

Whoosh!

Li Yuan went to the wardrobe near the window and gently pressed it; the door, spring-loaded, popped open.

In front of Li Yuan, besides clothes, was only a specially crafted metal box with the pattern of an endless starry sky shining brightly on it.

This was the symbol of the 'Starry Sky Martial Hall,' one of the three great Martial Halls.

He opened the box.

"Basic Qi and Blood Elixir." Li Yuan gazed at the two rows of ten bottles of elixir in the box, nine of which were empty, with only one full bottle remaining.

He took out the last bottle of elixir and held it in his hand.

"Two thousand per bottle." Li Yuan looked at the exquisite bottle in his hand; its nearly transparent and smooth surface felt slightly cold to the touch.

This was a specially designed bottle, capable of preserving the effects of the medicine for a long time.

Through the bottle, one could see the flowing red liquid inside, faintly reddish under the weak moonlight, giving off a sense of vitality and vigor.

This was the universally used Basic Qi and Blood Elixir.

Even ordinary meals, including nutritional meals, could only ensure that one's qi and blood would not be depleted during high-intensity physical training.

But to improve the speed of physical evolution? That required the use of various precious elixirs and treasures.

As far as Li Yuan knew, many precious medicines were more effective than the Basic Qi and Blood Elixir, but their prices were far more exorbitant.

In terms of cost-effectiveness, the Basic Qi and Blood Elixir was among the highest in auxiliary cultivation medicines.

Yet even so, it cost two thousand Blue Star Coins a bottle.

Li Yuan needed a bottle every three days for his cultivation.

Every month, he spent nearly two thousand Blue Star Coins just on Basic Qi and Blood Elixir.

Plus the cost of daily meals.

Each month, Li Yuan nearly spent close to thirty thousand Blue Star Coins on cultivation supplies.

Not to mention clothing expenses, tuition fees, and other costs.

And with Li Qianqian, Li Muhua... One could imagine the financial pressure his uncle and aunt bore.

"According to the schedule, I have to drink a bottle today." Li Yuan pulled the stopper off with ease.

A strange scent wafted through the air.

"Glug~." Li Yuan skillfully tipped his head back and drank the entire bottle of Basic Qi and Blood Elixir.

Ensuring not a drop was left.

He then placed the empty bottle back in the box.

Soon, Li Yuan felt streams of warmth emanating from within his body, gradually spreading to all parts, eagerly absorbed by his muscles and bones.

It was very comfortable.

"After three days of intense cultivation, the effect of the last bottle of Qi and Blood Elixir has mostly worn off, and my muscles and bones are craving for more." Li Yuan was very satisfied with the medicinal effect.

"Hmm."

"It's past midnight, time to practice the 'Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture.'" Li Yuan sat cross-legged, closed his eyes.

Gradually, his mind emptied and his spirit receded inward.

His consciousness focused on his mind.

Boom!

Silently, his consciousness arrived at a mysterious place.

There, a strange palace floated.

## Chapter 12: 10 "Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture

This mysterious place, boundless and endless, had no terminus.

"Mind consciousness."

"Every time my consciousness comes to my mind world, I am still somewhat shocked," Li Yuan murmured to himself.

The mysterious place was what he had awakened when his physical quality reached Level 5.0.

After many attempts.

Li Yuan finally confirmed that this should be the source of his own mind consciousness, that is, the mind world.

The so-called mind world, as described in the vast number of Martial Path books bestowed upon Li Yuan, was referred to by powerful martial artists with various names such as the Upper Dantian Palace, the Brain Sea, the Sea of Consciousness, and many others.

In simple terms—brain!

It is the core of life and soul consciousness.

If Li Yuan wanted to leave, a thought was all it would take.

"Divine Palace," Li Yuan's consciousness focused on the strange Divine Palace within the mind world.

This Divine Palace seemingly had four layers from the outside.

This was the biggest aid to Li Yuan's rapid increase in strength over the past year.

Humm~ In the mind world where distance is irrelevant, with a thought from Li Yuan, he had already entered the strange Divine Palace.

The inside of the Divine Palace was vast and boundless.

"Divine Palace panel." With a thought from Li Yuan, the data panel immediately appeared within his field of consciousness.

The Divine Palace panel appeared when Li Yuan's consciousness first perceived the mind world and then entered the Divine Palace.

It was the first benefit he received from this Divine Palace.

But Li Yuan's consciousness did not enter the Mind Spirit Divine Palace just to wander around aimlessly.

His consciousness had already taken notice of the only piece of furnishing in the vast palace—the Jade Platform.

All red in hue, crystal clear, and upon close observation, engraved with many mysterious patterns that seemed to follow certain special rules, it subtly contained a kind of indescribable magical power.

"Great Sun Jade Platform," Li Yuan said to himself, the name he had given to the Jade Platform.

The next moment, Li Yuan's consciousness converged directly upon the Jade Platform, as if he were seated on the peculiar Jade Platform.

"Boom~" Li Yuan's originally active consciousness immediately began to quiet down, and soon the environment around his consciousness changed.

Beneath him was no longer the Jade Platform, and around him was no longer the first layer of the Divine Palace.

It had transformed into an infinite starry sky, within which was a resplendent Great Sun, illuminating the endless expanse of stars.

"Visualize within the heart mansion!"

"Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture," the contents of this Visualization Method involuntarily surfaced in Li Yuan's heart.

"Recorded in the Mysterious Chronicles, 'Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture,' is profound and its imagery boundless... The Great Sun hangs high, its flames fierce like a raging fire forging steel, enough to hone one's will, making it as firm as a rock, fearless in the face of tribulations, an observation of the Great Sun implying shining virtue, dazzling, and invincibly powerful."

"Ideas extend to stars, filling the heart's universe, with focused examination bringing all celestial maps within grasp, connecting the threads of latitude and longitude, simulating the laws of heaven and earth, a conception of the Starry Sky containing infinite changes and vibrant life."

"The Great Sun and Starry Sky merge as one, nurturing the spirit and mental state within the Divine Palace..."

Li Yuan's consciousness had unwittingly learned the 'Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture' the first time he perceived the Jade Platform.

It was a magical Visualization Method that could temper the mind consciousness.

At that moment.

Li Yuan's consciousness was faced directly with the blazing Great Sun, as if subjected to the scorching fire, and intense pain instantly swept across his whole body, causing his physique to tremble involuntarily... the agony was immense.

"This is the torment of the soul, not actual pain, my body will not suffer any injuries," Li Yuan was already familiar with this and tried his best to endure.

To know, since starting his Martial Arts Cultivation in junior high school, the practice of Martial Path was very strenuous, involving both sweat and blood, especially so with Spear Technique.

Tired or sleepy? Continue training!

Hot weather? Train!

Cold weather? Train!

After a continuous month of cultivation, and then wanting to lazily rest for a day? No way!

It could be said that since Li Yuan began Cultivation Methods in Martial Arts with the intention to become a powerful martial artist.

His determination and willpower far exceeded that of ordinary people, even more so after several years of cultivation.

Even so, a year ago, when he first trained with the 'Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture,' Li Yuan only lasted less than ten seconds.

The pain was truly unfathomable.

Over the past year, doing so almost every day, not only did it strengthen his spiritual power but also tempered his will.

"Ideas extend to stars, filling the heart's universe..." While enduring the pain, Li Yuan began to exercise the Visualization Method.

Humm~ Silently, a gentle force emanated from the endless Starry Sky, nourishing Li Yuan's mind consciousness, gradually restoring his fatigue.

Enabling him to withstand the scorching of the Great Sun.

...

Time ticked away, second by second... Li Yuan finally managed to hold on for about three minutes.

Boom! His consciousness shattered.

"Hmm?"

Li Yuan opened his eyes, as his consciousness had just returned to clarity. He briefly calmed his mind, then closed his eyes again, concentrating to enter the Mind Spirit

Divine Palace once more and began to repeat the process... it was almost like self-torture.

A quarter of an hour!

Half an hour.

An hour.

Suddenly, Li Yuan received a prompt from the Divine Palace panel:

[Your spiritual power level has been raised from 12.4 to 12.5]

...

"Finally raised another 0.1 level," Li Yuan thought to himself, and then without further ado, he continued his persistent cultivation.

Another hour later.

"Hmm?" Li Yuan tried again, only to find that his consciousness could no longer converge on the Jade Platform.

He opened his eyes and looked down at his smart ring.

"It's 2:11 in the morning."

"Another two hours of cultivation?" This was also something Li Yuan had figured out.

Cultivating the Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture, he could only continue for a maximum of two hours each day, after which he would no longer be able to carry on.

Li Yuan hypothesized that cultivating this Method was so painful, with repeated forced exits from the spiritual world, it probably wasn't completely without cost, it was just that he hadn't noticed it yet.

Cultivating for a maximum of two hours per day was very likely a form of self-protection by the Mind Spirit Divine Palace.

"Enough."

"Just one year of cultivating the Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture and my spiritual power level has grown from 5.9 when I first entered my second year of high school to now 12.5," Li Yuan noticed another change in his body.



Compared to the extreme fatigue he felt two hours ago, his body had now completely recovered.

Symptoms like muscle soreness had disappeared entirely.

It was as if he had slept deeply for ten hours and then received the most professional physical therapy.

This was another benefit of cultivating the Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture — deep restoration.

"Comfortable."

Li Yuan stood up, a smile appearing on his face.

In addition to his physical state returning to its peak, he could sense that his awareness of his body and his sensitivity to his surroundings had become much clearer.

"The stronger the spiritual power, the stronger the control over the body."

"In that case, whether I am practicing Spear Technique, movement technique, or the Basic Cultivation Methods, the efficiency will be much higher," there was a glint in Li Yuan's eyes.

Why had he progressed so rapidly this past year?

First, it was because of the Divine Palace panel, which let him always know his progress, filling him with motivation to cultivate.

Second, it was the acquisition of the Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture — this Visualization Method.

Spiritual power surpassing ordinary people!

Higher efficiency in cultivation!

Also allowing his body to recover to its healthiest state in a short time every day, at an extremely fast pace, saving a large amount of physical therapy expenses.

"People like Wan Xiao and some elite students would go for electric therapy, massage, medicinal baths, and other means of physical therapy to maintain and recover their bodies after arduous training," Li Yuan thought to himself: "But I reckon none of that can match the additional effects of my cultivating the Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture."

This was a very magical Visualization Method.

"But no matter how magical the Method, one still has to put in the effort to cultivate it step by step," Li Yuan was clear about this truth.

Many people have opportunities and encounters.

For example, being born into the Blue Star's richest family, isn't that an opportunity?

For example, if born into the family of the mightiest warrior of the Seven Star Alliance, isn't that an opportunity?

But.

No matter what kind of opportunities one may have, if one becomes complacent and neglects their cultivation because of them.

Then in the future, it would be difficult to reach the pinnacle.

"In this world."

"Many people are born into wealthy and powerful families, have resources, possess high talent, and also work hard," Li Yuan mused to himself: "If I don't work hard as well, how can I compare to them?"

Thinking this, Li Yuan stood up.

"Time to study for the academic subjects," Li Yuan entered the virtual network capsule within his room.

...

## Chapter 13: 11 Martial Path is Me (Four more updates for monthly passes)

Li Yuan wore a 'smart ring,' which was similar to early mobile phones but had more powerful functions, such as holographic projection and body condition monitoring. However, it couldn't connect consciousness to the virtual network.

And the virtual network pod, as an electronic device essential in every household of this era.

Only by using it could one connect their consciousness to the virtual network.

Its appearance resembled those early space capsule gaming consoles.

"Iris verification!"

"Consciousness connection." Li Yuan laid back in the pod's chair and put on the neural connection device, feeling the cool metal against his scalp.

In an instant, consciousness connected to the virtual network.

The Blue Star virtual net!

The Seven Great Planets, separated by the vast expanses of starry sky, hence each planet's virtual network is relatively independent... at least Li Yuan had no access to the virtual networks of other planets.

Hu!

Li Yuan's consciousness had arrived in a special space.

He could leave at will, should he choose to.

"Although the virtual network allows for consciousness connection, it always feels somewhat surreal, unable to achieve a hundred percent realism," Li Yuan thought to himself. "Not to mention achieving a one-to-one replication of body data scanning as depicted in some novels."

"After all, the virtual can never replace the real."

However, a virtual network with a realism of up to 70% was already incredibly magical.

In the few decades since its inception, human civilization underwent an earth-shaking transformation.

Hu! Hu!

In Li Yuan's view, numerous options appeared:

Study Space (Virtual School/Classroom/Laboratory/Library/Martial Arts Room...)

Virtual City (Jiang City/Capital City/Hacheng/Sucheng...)

Social Space (Music/Friends/Dating/Games...)

Commerce (Virtual Mall/Real Estate/Hotel Reservations)... a myriad of options.

The vast majority of the options were in color, indicating they were accessible.

But there were also a few grayed-out options.

For example: Adult Series (Prohibited for Minors)

...

Li Yuan had just turned seventeen not long ago and was not yet an adult.

"Enter personal study room." Familiar with the process, Li Yuan directly entered his personal study room.

He began to review academic knowledge.

Theoretically, students could complete all cultural course learning online, but the virtual network ultimately couldn't achieve 100% realism.

Moreover, tangible materials are the hardware, the basis of all virtuality.

Therefore, places like schools, office buildings, and service halls still existed in reality, and students still needed to attend school.

Of course, most office work, cultural examinations, company interviews, etc., were completed online.

For students' self-study, if they had high self-discipline, they could be more efficient online.

Li Yuan was one of those highly disciplined individuals.

After an hour of efficient self-study.

"The total score for the cultural courses is 1000 points. I scored 658 points in the second-year finals. I aim to reach 700 points this year in my senior year," Li Yuan muttered to himself. "I just don't want to fall too far behind."

Everyone's energy is limited.

Li Yuan had considerable talent in the Martial Path, especially in Spear Technique, where he exhibited great comprehension.

Even before encountering the Mind Spirit Divine Palace, his Spear Technique was already of Second Stage quality, clearly indicating his aptitude.

But in academic learning, his talent was admittedly average, definitely not on par with Zhou Qi and Yan Zhou, especially since he devoted little energy to it.

It wasn't a surprise that he hadn't yet managed to score 700 points.

Even if he did score 700 points, it would still be below average at Guan Mountain District's top high school.

This was despite the fact that Li Yuan's academic performance had improved over the past year as his spiritual power level rose, boosting his study efficiency.

Otherwise, he wouldn't even be confident of scoring 700 points on the college entrance exam.

"A polymath?"

"How many polymaths can there be? What I need to do is to fully unleash my strongest point, to be the master of one," Li Yuan had a clear understanding of himself.

Why did he want to pursue a full-time career as a Martial Artist?

The first reason was his deep love for it.

The second reason was that after awakening the Mind Spirit Divine Palace, Li Yuan believed he had much greater hope for major achievements on the Martial Path than on the academic route.

...

It was past three in the early morning.

"It's time to go to school," Li Yuan stepped out of the virtual network pod.

He slung his bag over his shoulder.

Without disturbing his aunt, brother, or sisters, he quietly left the house.

...

Driverless trams and subways operate 24 hours a day, but after midnight, the intervals between trips become much longer.

So, Li Yuan often chose—to run to school.

He considered it a warm-up exercise.

In the streets at just past three in the morning, aside from street lamps and the occasional passing vehicle, everything was deserted.

Passing by the corner 'Fook Wei Noodle Shop', he could see the owner had already woken up and started preparing for the day.

"Boss, good morning," Li Yuan greeted with a smile.

"Running at night again, eh? Be careful out there," the apron-clad owner stood up and greeted Li Yuan with a smile.

They often bumped into each other.

Not knowing each other's identities or names, but over time, they had become familiar 'strangers'.

...

Twenty minutes later, Li Yuan arrived at school.

Face recognition to enter.

He went into the classroom, and the lights were on.

"I'll start with two hours of Basic Cultivation Method," Li Yuan said as he stood in the corner of the classroom, calming his mind and quickly entering a stance practiced in martial arts.

His posture was as solid as a rock, coordinating 36 forms of movements with breathing techniques.

He began a new day of cultivation.

Solid Rock Foundation Initiation, Rock-breaking Slide, Stance as Steady as a Pillar, Sky-shattering Stone, Hard Smash like Diamond, Mountain Firm as Abyss... These 36 forms were essentially derived from the Solid Rock Fist Technique.

It was divided into practice method and combat application.

In reality, Li Yuan even devoted more effort to the Solid Rock Cultivation Technique than to the Spear Technique.

"Spear Technique can be pondered slowly."

"But my Martial Spirit is destined not to awaken in a short time, and none of the seven high-rank cultivation methods suit me," Li Yuan thought to himself. "In that case, I must continue to cultivate using the Solid Rock Cultivation Technique."

"Even after becoming a Martial Artist, I may still need to rely on this very cultivation technique, so I must diligently study the Solid Rock Fist Technique." Li Yuan was clear in his thoughts: "The higher my Fist Technique Realm, the more efficient my physical cultivation will be."

Physical quality is the foundation; Spear Technique and movement technique are the weapons that unleash physical quality.

"Moreover, Spear Technique, movement technique, Fist Technique are essentially the combination of body and mind. Progress in one aspect of martial arts skills can lead to faster improvement in other skills."

Time passed by.

Li Yuan practiced tirelessly, and gradually, a faint warm current flowed from his dantian in the waist area, spreading throughout his body to be devoured and absorbed by muscles and bones.

The basic qi and blood medicinal solution he had taken a few hours earlier was gradually taking effect.

Muscles became firmer, bone density further increased, and the internal organs were growing more robust... Only with crazy cultivation could the medicinal solution's effectiveness not be wasted.

Li Yuan cultivated without showing any signs of fatigue.

In his mind involuntarily surfaced the famous words of the first martial arts powerhouse of human civilization, 'Dongfang Ji':

"What is the Martial Path?"

"The Martial Path is not about surpassing others; it's about pouring every ounce of your blood and passion into daily training, day and night, practicing sixteen hours a day, consistently over a hundred years, and when you look back after another hundred years, you will find that you are the Martial Path!"

"The Martial Path is me."

...

Just after four in the morning, the sky still dark.

"Boom!" An intelligent off-road vehicle drove in through the school gate.

It parked automatically.

A figure towering like an iron tower and a black-clad woman with a robust figure stepped out of the car.

Both headed towards the office building.

"Tie Ta, is this the school you work at?" The woman with a firm face and sharp eagle-like eyes gazed across the campus. "This is my first visit to see you since your retirement."

Xu Bo smiled rarely: "You're really in a hurry this time, passing through Jiang City and can only stay for four hours."

"I'm here particularly to check on your medication," the black-clad woman glanced at him. "Otherwise, with such urgent tasks, I wouldn't have stopped in Jiang City at all. Come on, take me to your therapy room for a preliminary examination."

"If your nerve injury has worsened, the supervisors will have to come up with a new solution for you."

Suddenly, the black-clad woman halted her steps.

"A student is already here to practice so early? And he seems to be doing pretty well, his Basic Cultivation Method is nearly perfected, with a high level of control over his body," the black-clad woman said with slight surprise.

Her gaze drifted toward a nearby building.

In the entire high school building, only one classroom on the first floor was lit.

Through the window, one could see a student inside focused on cultivating Fist Technique.

Each movement was as unmoving as a rock towering on the land, exuding an unshakable aura.

"Li Yuan?" Xu Bo frowned slightly to one side: "He's already practicing at school this early?"

"Can his body handle that?"

Cultivation should be in moderation.

In Xu Bo's view, it was necessary to ensure sufficient sleep, rest, diet, and treatment for efficient cultivation.



"Considering his vibrant spirit, blood filled with energy, and seemly well-rested state, it appears he's been resting very well." The black-clad woman commented with a smile: "Tie Ta, do you know him, is he your student?"

"He is my student," Xu Bo said, looking thoughtfully at Li Yuan.

"Let's go, we will first visit my Martial Arts Room."

## Chapter 14: 12: The Ultimate Move "Hidden Dragon in the Gorge

Xu Bo and the woman in black passed by the classroom. Their breaths were so well concealed, and because they did not observe for long, Li Yuan did not notice them at all.

He was completely immersed in his own cultivation.

Although Li Yuan was serious when studying his academic courses, he essentially did it with the mindset of 'completing a task', so it was difficult for his efficiency to reach the highest level.

But when cultivating his fist technique or spear technique, feeling his physical quality and martial skills gradually improving filled Li Yuan with heartfelt joy.

Utterly focused.

Doing one thing well only happens when one is fully immersed and loves it from the bottom of their heart, which is the only way to make the greatest progress.

Time passed, minute by minute, second by second.

Suddenly.

[Your Fist Technique Realm has increased from 88% at the Third Stage to 89% at the Third Stage.]

[Your Fist Strength has increased from 426 kg to 427 kg.]

[Your Speed has increased from 14.4 m/s to 14.5 m/s.]

Three prompts appeared out of nowhere in Li Yuan's vision, and his Divine Palace panel data changed accordingly.

But so engrossed was he in his cultivation that he didn't even notice the slight improvements to his physical quality.

It wasn't until his intelligent wristband suddenly vibrated.

"Is it already 5:30 am? How time flies," Li Yuan was startled awake.

He was already sweating profusely.

"Hm? My physical quality has improved again?" It was only then that Li Yuan noticed the reminders on the Divine Palace panel.

He felt even more satisfied in his heart.

"A little progress every day, as long as it's consistently maintained," Li Yuan thought to himself.

Ever since awakening the Mind Spirit Divine Palace a year ago and learning the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture, Li Yuan only needed to meditate for two hours each day. If he could endure the hellish torture of his psyche, his physical exhaustion would vanish completely, rendering better recovery than sleep or deep therapy.

Since then, he had cultivated the habit of arriving at the school for cultivation at around 3:30 am.

Even during holidays, he would find a place to cultivate alone at the bottom of his apartment complex.

Striving to the utmost.

Only by doing so had he managed to make such rapid progress in the Martial Path over the past year.

Li Yuan wiped the sweat from his body and put back his towel.

Suddenly sensing something, he turned to look back.

"Tianyou? You're here so early?" Li Yuan smiled at the slim figure with the backpack.

"You got here even earlier than me," Li Tianyou said, also looking surprised at Li Yuan.

"I just got here a while ago, just put my bag down," Li Yuan, while taking out his long spear, laughed and said, "I left evening self-study earlier than you yesterday, so I need to work harder in the morning."

"Is that so?" Li Tianyou looked at Li Yuan, puzzled.

He could no longer remember how many times this had happened.

Every time after evening self-study, he was the last one to leave the classroom, which is why he was called the 'First Study King' by his classmates.

But!!

Li Tianyou alone knew that no matter whether he arrived at the classroom at 6:30 am, 6:15 am, or even 6:00 am, one figure was always there before him—Li Yuan.

Today, he deliberately arrived at 5:40 am.

Li Yuan was already standing in the classroom.

"Pfft!"

Not far away, Li Yuan took out his long spear and silently began to practice his spear technique.

"Could it be that Li Yuan arrives at school every day at 5:30 am, or even earlier?" Li Tianyou couldn't help but think as he watched Li Yuan.

He immediately shook his head.

Impossible!

"My home is just a street away from school, pretty close."

"When I occasionally arrive around 5 am, I feel a bit sleepy during the day," Li Tianyou thought to himself. "If I want to stay fully energized throughout the day, I should get up at 6:15 am."

Li Tianyou was equally disciplined.

"Li Yuan's family is only slightly better off than mine, so he can't afford high-level therapy, and he lives so far away... If he wants to get to school by 5:30 am, he has to get up at 5 am. His body can't handle that."

"He must be like me, only occasionally coming to school for practice early in the morning."

"It's just that these few times, we happened to bump into each other," Li Tianyou guessed.

He didn't dwell on it and started practising the Basic Cultivation Method on his own.

Until 6:30 am.

It was broad daylight by then, and a few classmates began to trickle into the Martial Path classroom.

"You two study kings are here again?" Several classmates teased, and then they all began to practice on their own.

It wasn't that the students of Class 3(2) didn't work hard; rather, most of them focused on academic courses, and even if they arrived early, they would likely head to an academic classroom to review.

"Clang!"

Li Yuan put his long spear back into the weapon cabinet and left the classroom to go to the canteen.

It was time for breakfast.

Eating three meals a day, at set times, adjusting for snacks or portions according to what the body needs.

That is the basic code of conduct for a Martial Path student.

After breakfast.

Li Yuan went straight to the cultural classroom, beginning a morning of cultural lessons.

...

Day after day.

Li Yuan practiced methodically.

For senior year students—whether they focused on cultural studies or the Martial Path.

The process was incredibly dull and depressing.

But Li Yuan was clear, there were no actual geniuses in the real sense.

"Genius" has always been 99% perspiration plus 1% talent, and sometimes, when breaking through a bottleneck, that 1% of talent is indeed more important.

However, without the 99% perspiration, no matter how high one's talent, it would ultimately be a castle in the air.

Because the world never lacks geniuses.

What is always lacking are hardworking geniuses.

...

Day after day, time flew, and it was suddenly mid-September.

During this time, Li Yuan made time to visit the 'Starry Sky Martial Hall Guan Mountain District branch' and purchased a whole box of basic blood Qi liquid from Uncle Zhong for 19,000 Blue Star Coins.

Uncle Zhong, a friend of his Uncle Li Changzhou, was an Entry Rank martial artist and a member of the Starry Sky Martial Hall, who helped to buy the basic blood Qi liquid with a discount.

Even so, this expense still made Li Yuan's heart ache.

But it had to be spent.

If he didn't have the basic blood Qi liquid, his progress in physical quality would be at least halved.

Even his body might not be able to withstand such frantic training, resulting in a deficit.

The Martial Path required not only talent and effort but also financial investment.

All three were indispensable.

And now, it had been over ten days since Teacher Xu Bo promised the "Third Class scholarship".

Li Yuan was eager at heart.

But during this period, whether it was during his Martial Path classes or when he encountered Teacher Xu Bo during the breaks, Li Yuan never mentioned it.

It was as if such a conversation had never taken place between them.

"This scholarship, I can only wait for it, I must not ask for it," Li Yuan sighed inwardly.

Because, he wasn't entitled to it.

If Teacher Xu Bo had kept silent all this time, he must have encountered some difficulties.

To ask proactively would only displease the other party.

...

Before long, another five days had passed.

The moonlight was hazy, scattering a cool brilliance over the oil cypress path outside the senior teaching building.

In the spacious Martial Path classroom of senior year (Class 2), a dozen students were each practicing on their own.

On one side of the field, Li Yuan was immersed in practicing his Spear Technique.

Standing there, his entire presence was like an immovable rock, emanating an invisible pressure, with both hands holding the spear.

He repeatedly practiced various techniques with the long spear.

"Pff!"

"Pfft!" The tip of the spear drew invisible arcs through the air, creating afterimages, swift as a gale with aggressive, straight thrusts.

"Boom!" Suddenly, firm as a Solid Rock Pillar, the spear shadows flowed endlessly.

Each turn, lift of the spear, thrust, and parry by Li Yuan landed precisely on the points he had envisioned in his mind.

With his spine arching and waist twisting, the muscles and bones throughout his body moved along with the long spear, reaching a high realm of unity between body, heart, and weapon.

Suddenly.

Li Yuan, who had just taken a defensive stance with his spear, suddenly lunged forward with a powerful thrust as if a dragon lurking in a myriad of rocky ravines unleashed its power.

The might of this thrust was hidden to the extreme before its burst.

But when the thrust exploded forward, its ferocity reached the ultimate extreme.

"Boom!" The spear shadows instantly blurred, and the air itself seemed to crackle.

This scene.

Astonished all the surrounding students, who couldn't help but turn their heads to look at the move Li Yuan had just executed.

"Finally, I've fully perfected this killing move."

"Dragon Hidden in the Gorge!" Li Yuan retracted his spear, a faint light flickering in his eyes: "With this move, combined with the killing move 'Solid Rock Pillar' I created before, one offensive and one defensive supporting each other."

"I am now fully capable of surpassing 500 points in the Gold Stage on the Starry Skies Fighting Network."

The Combat Network had long established a rule.

If one could reach 500 points in the Gold Stage before the age of eighteen, they would be rewarded with 50,000 Blue Star Coins.

"Hmm?" Li Yuan suddenly noticed a reminder on the Divine Palace panel.

[Your Spear Technique Realm has progressed from the Third Stage at 40% to the Third Stage at 46%]

## Chapter 15: 13 Xu Bo's Test

"Creating this unique move, my Spear Technique Realm has increased by 6%?" Li Yuan revealed a trace of a smile at the corner of his mouth.

Such an improvement was within his expectations.

Li Yuan remembered that during the second semester of his junior year, as the final exams approached, his Spear Technique Realm had been stuck at 99% at the Second Stage, unable to break through.

Teacher Xu, at that time, had given him three pieces of advice.

First, both Fist Technique and movement technique are combinations of body and mind. As you gradually improve control over your body to mobilize its strength to the utmost,

both Fist Technique and movement technique will often continue to improve, and vice versa.

Second, Spear Technique is a weapon! The essence of practicing Spear Technique is the integration of body, mind, and weapon. As the weapon is an external object, not an inherent part of the body, it is more difficult to cultivate; however, a weapon can exert terrifying fighting power beyond the body's strength.

Third, when you hit a bottleneck in spear practice, try transforming fists into spears!

"Historically, the 'Xingyi Quan' in traditional martial arts evolved from spear skills," Li Yuan thought silently. "Integrating the force and technical variations of Spear Technique into bare-handed Fist Technique truly transforms the spear into a fist."

"In this era, with Cultivation Methods like stance practices and Breathing Techniques complementing each other, the efficiency of body cultivation far exceeds that of the ancients.

The entire human civilization has embarked on the road of Life Evolution, repeatedly breaking the limits of life, and ultimately giving rise to Martial Artists capable of soaring through the heavens and earth, but the fundamental principles of Martial Arts Skills remain unchanged." Li Yuan reviewed the past.

"The 'Solid Rock Fist Technique' and the traditional Xingyi Quan have a similar ingenuity and can also be transformed into Spear Technique."

This was the direction that Li Yuan chose after receiving guidance from Teacher Xu Bo.

It was also one of the reasons why Li Yuan had so fervently studied the "Solid Rock Fist Technique."

Fist Technique, Spear Technique, and movement technique were never independent of each other but promoted each other.

During the final exams of his junior year, Li Yuan had not managed to break through.

Therefore, during the vacation, he did not relax at all and kept pondering relentlessly.

With his spiritual power further enhanced, finally, in the half-month before school resumed.

Li Yuan took the basic spear skills as the cornerstone and combined the core secrets of the "Solid Rock Fist Technique" to create his very first real Spear Technique move—Solid Rock Pillar.



This move combined the two moves from the Solid Rock Fist Technique, 'Solid Rock Foundation Initiation' and 'Force like a Steady Pillar,' into Spear Technique.

Both the "Solid Rock Cultivation Technique" and the "Solid Rock Fist Technique" prioritize the foundation and energy from the ground, and they are the strongest in defense among the Seven Fundamental Cultivation Methods.

This Spear Technique move was also a defensive one.

Creating 'Solid Rock Pillar' enabled Li Yuan's Spear Technique Realm to break through from 99% at the Second Stage to the Third Stage in one fell swoop.

At the beginning of the school term, during the test and the sparring with Teacher Xu Bo, it was also because of this unique move that Li Yuan was able to withstand more than ten moves.

A defensive spear move would only save your life.

To kill an enemy? You must attack.

Therefore, in these two months, Li Yuan had been thinking about how to create an attack move.

"Solid Rock Fist Technique excels in defense, so creating a defensive ultimate move is easy, but creating an attack move is difficult."

The Seven Fundamental Cultivation Methods include seven Fist Techniques, like the "Blazing Flame Fist Technique" and the "True Gold Fist Technique," which are good at attacking and can more easily create attacking ultimate moves.

Through repeated practice of both Fist Technique and Spear Technique.

As his Skill Realm rose higher, it was only after referencing the concept of 'Turnabout Spear' that Li Yuan finally had a breakthrough.

"Turnabout Spear is about feigning weakness before an enemy, pretending to retreat and then suddenly turning around to counterattack—it's a mounted spear skill," Li Yuan thought silently. "My Solid Rock Spear Technique excels in defense, whether it's in the circulation of vigor, footwork, or the way I hold the spear, there's an innate tendency towards defense."

"Then, the moment I take the initiative to attack, during the switch between spear moves, it's easy for the enemy to discern the feint from the real attack."

"The only way is to counterattack."

"To use defense as offense, waiting until the enemy is careless or becomes weary after a fierce attack, then suddenly strike with a lethal move." Li Yuan's eyes shone with determination.

On this principle, Li Yuan finally created the killing move 'Hidden Dragon in the Gorge.'

"Based on the single sessions of Martial Arts lessons these past two weeks and Teacher Xu's personal guidance," Li Yuan thought. "The First Stage and Second Stage are the foundation of skills."

In the most recent lessons.

Teacher Xu Bo always provided personal guidance to Li Yuan.

"The Third Stage Realm emphasizes the integration of body, mind, and weapon, striving to use one hundred percent of the body's strength," Li Yuan thought silently. "The Spear Technique and Fist Technique that I normally execute instinctively can't fully utilize my strength."

"Only when I find the opportunity to apply an ultimate move can I achieve it."

Only those moves that can fully unleash the body's strength can be considered ultimate or killing moves.

So far, the ultimate moves that Li Yuan had created were only two.

"Moving forward, if I can create more ultimate moves," Li Yuan gradually clarified his future path. "Even to the extent that someday, every punch or spear thrust I make could achieve perfection in the circulation of vigor and weapon power without wasting any strength, then my Martial Arts Skills will be able to break through to the Fourth Stage Realm."

In the lectures by Teacher Xu Bo.

The so-called 'Fourth Stage Realm' has another name—Unity with the Weapon.

Also known as 'Body-Mind-Weapon Integration.'

In ancient times, if one's skills reached the Fourth Stage, they could barely qualify to be called a 'Spear Technique Master' or 'Fist Technique Master.'

"Unity with the weapon? That's a bit far off," Li Yuan shook his head slightly. "Step by step, let's continue to ponder more ultimate moves."

Each ultimate move is essentially a specific way for the body to exert force perfectly.

The more ultimate moves created, the more perfected the body's overall power-generation techniques become, and ultimately, one would naturally step into the Fourth Stage Realm.

"Whew!"

...

"Tssk!" Li Yuan continued to practice his Spear Technique, becoming more familiar with the "Dragon Hidden in the Ravine" move.

"The day after tomorrow."

"The day after tomorrow is a holiday, I'll have enough time, so I'll work hard to get my points up to the Gold Stage with 500 points," Li Yuan resolved.

Can't wait for the scholarship.

If he wanted to lessen the financial burden on his family, he'd have to find his own way.

The prize money of fifty thousand from the Starry Skies Fighting Network had been on Li Yuan's mind for quite some time.

...

Office building, first floor.

Teacher Xu Bo's office was exceedingly spacious.

"This kid, he's progressing really fast," Xu Bo, standing in the middle of the Martial Arts Room and built like a tower, dressed in a martial arts uniform, remarked.

In front of him.

A mass of light coalesced to form an image on a light screen about two meters high and two and a half meters wide.

The screen displayed the martial arts classroom of class Senior Three (2).

And the enlarged image showed Li Yuan practicing his "Dragon Hidden in the Ravine" Spear Technique.

"He really can keep his cool, hasn't asked me about it after all this time; the kid sure is steady," Teacher Xu said, a hint of teasing in his smile.

As the homeroom teacher and a special-grade instructor of the school, he had high-level access and could freely pull up class surveillance footage.

Thus, upon seeing that Li Yuan arrived at school past four o'clock that day.

He began to pay special attention to Li Yuan and pulled up a significant amount of past surveillance records.

This investigation, even for someone accustomed to big scenes like Xu Bo, was somewhat surprising.

He found that Li Yuan had been coming to school after three o'clock every day for a year.

Without ever taking a break.

"Determined, persistent, he's a promising student," Teacher Xu thought. "Moreover, my previous speculation was correct; his family's conditions are only average. The fact that his body can withstand such intense training demonstrates that his physical talent is truly remarkable."

Teacher Xu was unaware of the existence of the "Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture."

He attributed Li Yuan's ability to endure daily arduous training, yet still be full of vigor, to 'exceptional talent.'

His standards were incredibly high, and he knew that there are many unique geniuses in this world.

The abilities that Li Yuan displayed weren't anything special to him.

What Teacher Xu valued most were Li Yuan's persistence and comprehension.

"Having talent isn't everything," he said.

"But it's crucial to make the effort to realize that talent," he added.

However, even after thoroughly investigating, besides providing normal guidance in his teaching, Teacher Xu had yet taken no particular action.

He wanted to observe and test Li Yuan further.

Should he use his resources and connections to nurture someone with talent just because he had it? Who said he had to? Li Yuan wasn't Teacher Xu's own son.

Just a student.

That was why he was going to use the issue of the 'scholarship'.

To see what kind of character Li Yuan had.

If Li Yuan couldn't wait more than a few days and became impatient to inquire, Teacher Xu would understand, as it's human nature. He would apply for the scholarship, and even help get a Second Class Scholarship, fulfilling his duty as a teacher.

But he wouldn't do more than that, because the talented individuals worthy of Teacher Xu's attention shouldn't just be 'ordinary people.'

"It's about time."

"Since it's his Senior year, I can't delay him too long, and besides, he's still a kid after all, my demands can't be too harsh," Teacher Xu gazed at the light screen and said, "Black Dog, help me connect with Principal Tan."

"Yes, Master."

"Beep—beep—" The projected image changed.

Shortly after.

An office scene appeared on the screen, where a middle-aged man in his forties was sitting in front of a desk.

If Li Yuan saw the man, he would definitely recognize him as the school's principal, 'Tan Zhenlong'.

Tan Zhenlong, his actual age over seventy years old.

In this era, the normal retirement age is eighty; if one is a Martial Artist, they may choose to delay retirement to a hundred years old.

"Old Tan," Teacher Xu said bluntly.

"Xu Bo," Principal Tan smiled and asked, "Calling me this late, what's the matter?"

"I want to apply for a Special Scholarship spot, approve it," Teacher Xu said straightforwardly.

...

## Chapter 16: 14 Special Scholarship

...

"Special Scholarship?" Principal Tan, who was going through documents, had his smile freeze on his face.

He doubted his ears, "Xu Bo? Did you say special?"

"What else?" Xu Bo glared, "Old Tan, cut the chatter and just hurry up and approve it."

Principal Tan felt a headache coming on.

As a principal, his power was substantial; in theory, all teachers were his subordinates... but Xu Bo had a special status.

"Xu Bo, it's not that I don't want to approve it for you." Principal Tan lifted his eyelids and said helplessly, "A Special Scholarship isn't just a First Rank Scholarship. A First Rank Scholarship is only a hundred thousand Blue Star Coins, which I can approve directly."

"A Special Scholarship is five hundred thousand Blue Star Coins. Even if I agree, it still has to be reported up to the Education Bureau."

"I know." Xu Bo nodded as if it were a matter of course, "After you approve it, I'll give Director He a call."

Principal Tan was startled.

The Director He that Xu Bo mentioned was his immediate supervisor.

Principal Tan understood that Xu Bo wasn't terrifyingly powerful; after an injury, his Physical Quality was just at the level of 19, but having survived in the Star Realm for over twenty years and still coming back alive... his connections were unfathomably deep.

To Principal Tan's knowledge, when Xu Bo first came to Guan Mountain District's Number One High School, it was Director He who personally escorted him.

"Xu Bo." Principal Tan shook his head, "If you want me to agree, you at least have to tell me why. Which student is it? Or is it a promising seedling from some middle school?"

Principal Tan knew Xu Bo well.

He was very strict in teaching students, but equally responsible, often considering the students' welfare.

He was the school's leading star teacher.

Otherwise, even with Xu Bo's extensive connections, Principal Tan wouldn't care much about him.

As for suspecting that Xu Bo would embezzle the five hundred thousand Blue Star Coins? That had never crossed Principal Tan's mind.

You see, Xu Bo's office... he had spent millions of Blue Star Coins to renovate it himself... the wealth accumulated by a powerful Martial Artist who had wandered the Star Realm for many years is quite astonishing.

"There is a promising seedling, but not from middle school." said Xu Bo, "He's from the third year of high school."

"A high school third-year promising seedling worthy of a Special Scholarship?" Principal Tan was slightly surprised.

He didn't recall such a student.

The scholarship took into account many aspects like academic performance, family background, talent, and political connections.

"I'll send you the information." Xu Bo said.

Soon enough, Principal Tan received the online data and immediately began reviewing it. With over fifty years of experience working in the education field... his capabilities were strong.

"Xu Bo, this Li Yuan is indeed a promising seedling with great potential. It's to your credit that you discovered him." Principal Tan first praised Xu Bo's eye for talent.

Immediately afterward, he switched tones, "But to be nominated for a Special Scholarship? To be honest, Li Yuan is still lacking a bit."

"What is he lacking?" Xu Bo's face showed displeasure, "Didn't you see his Spear Technique video?"

"I saw it, it's impressive."

Principal Tan shook his head, "But the scholarship is issued by the state, and it's not just up to me and Director He to approve, the Intelligent Supervision Bureau also has to pass it."

"The Intelligent Supervision Bureau doesn't have manual reviews, they only acknowledge official exam results, and whether Martial Spirit has awakened is also a significant indicator."

"In the last term exam, he just made it into the top thirty of his year, and he hasn't awakened his Martial Spirit... it'll be difficult to pass the final review." Principal Tan explained.

"With his current strength, he has the potential to break into the top twenty of his year." Xu Bo glared.

"That's your claim." Principal Tan shook his head, "The Intelligent Supervision Bureau only recognizes official exam results; we'd at least have to wait until the January re-examination."

"January re-examination?" Xu Bo showed displeasure, "That's still several months away, the iron's going to get cold."

"Old Tan, you're also a Martial Artist, you know how important this age is." Xu Bo said, "What resources can you directly allocate now?"

"Now?"

Principal Tan thought for a moment, "Second Class Scholarship, I can directly approve that."

"Fifty thousand Blue Star Coins? Not enough." Xu Bo flatly shook his head.

"That's all the authority I have on hand." Principal Tan spread his hands and then added, "Alright, how about this, I'll also give him access to an independent Martial Arts Room, which is the treatment for the top ten in the grade."

Xu Bo frowned, seemingly still not satisfied.

"Xu Bo, that's enough."

"For a third-year high school student, fifty thousand is enough to buy two or three months' worth of basic vitality fluid." Principal Tan said, "Wait until the January re-examination, if he can break into the top twenty of his year, I'll help apply for a First Rank Scholarship."

"Top twenty of his year? Old Tan, I have to say, you really undervalue people." Xu Bo shook his head, "Li Yuan has a complete chance of breaking into the top ten by the January re-examination."

This time, Principal Tan laughed.



"He hasn't awakened his Martial Spirit."

"It's almost impossible for him to aim for the top ten of his year," said Principal Tan with a laugh, "If he can really do it... well, I'll do my best to help him apply for the Special Scholarship."

"If the application doesn't go through, I'll sponsor some of it out of my own pocket." Principal Tan laughed.

"It's a deal."

Xu Bo's eyes lit up, revealing a sly gleam, "You said it, and I've recorded it... Alright, I've already sent the Second Class Scholarship application to you, hurry up and approve it."

"I have other things to attend to, so I'll hang up now."

"Beep—"

Xu Bo had hung up the video.

Leaving Principal Tan in his office, who hadn't quite recovered, staring at the 'pending approval document' that had just appeared on his work screen.

He paused for a moment.

Principal Tan needed no further explanation.

He had been outmaneuvered.

If Xu Bo truly intended to apply for a Special Scholarship, why would he send a Second Class Scholarship application in a split second?

It was clearly prepared in advance.

Xu Bo's real target was the Second Class Scholarship... mentioning the Special Scholarship was just an opening gambit to highball.

"This Xu Bo..." Principal Tan smiled wryly and said, "Number Nine."

"Open the pending approval document."

"Approved."

...

In the office building, inside Xu Bo's office.

"Special Scholarship?" Xu Bo revealed a cryptic smile, "Call Director He? I'm not that foolish."

Xu Bo knew clearly that, with Li Yuan's current situation, there was no chance of passing the Intelligent Supervision Bureau's review.

"That's enough."

"And I even earned an independent Martial Arts Room." Xu Bo chuckled, "This old Tan, he's just too rigid, always hemming and hawing when it's time to release some funds."

...

"It's like he treats the government funding as his secret stash of money tucked away behind his wife's back, as if I would waste it..."

"Hmm? Agreed?"

"He was quite agreeable this time." Xu Bo thought for a moment and said, "Black Dog, send a smiley face to Principal Tan."

"Oh no, send that selfie with my smile I saved last time."

"Yes, Master."

...

9 o'clock in the evening.

The sounds of the evening self-study session were echoing through the campus as students gradually left.

Inside the Martial Arts Room of Class 3-2.

Only Li Yuan and Li Tianyou remained, both practicing with cold weapons.

"Li Yuan, aren't you leaving?" Li Tianyou couldn't help but shout.

"It's fine, you go ahead." Li Yuan smiled and said, "I'm going to practice a bit longer."

Li Tianyou was stunned for a moment.

He had arrived at school at 5:45 this morning, thinking of going home early to rest tonight... but now he hesitated.

"Li Yuan arrives earlier than me and leaves later." Li Tianyou gritted his teeth, "I can't match his talent, but surely I can match his effort?"

"Continue practicing."

In the distance, Li Yuan hadn't noticed the change in Li Tianyou's expression; he was examining the data on the Divine Palace panel.

—

[Life Level: 6.7 (Unranked)]

Physical Quality Index: 74 (A comprehensive measure of explosive power, endurance, speed, physique, spiritual power, and many other aspects.)

Fist Strength: 445 kilograms

Speed: 14.7 meters per second

Spiritual Power: 12.9

Physical Body Cultivation Method: "Solid Rock Cultivation Method"

Spiritual Cultivation Method: "Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture"

Skill Realm: Spear Technique (Third Stage 46%), Movement Technique (Third Stage 29%), Fist Technique (Third Stage 94%)

[Note: A certain higher Spiritual Nature is hidden within the body, not yet awakened]

—

"Compared to the beginning of the month, both my physical quality and spiritual power have been steadily improving." Li Yuan was quite satisfied.

He firmly believed that if he persisted in his cultivation like this,

one day, he would become a powerful Martial Artist.

What excited him most today was creating the unique move 'Dragon Hidden in the Gorge'.

"Just created, it's not very smooth to execute yet."

"These next few days, I need to ponder over it more." Li Yuan was deep in thought.

Suddenly.

"Li Yuan." A cold voice, like a resounding bell, came from inside the classroom.

Li Yuan and Li Tianyou both turned their heads.

"Teacher Xu?" Li Yuan was slightly surprised.

"Come to my office." Xu Bo spoke gravely, then turned and walked away, disappearing into the night.

"Tianyou, I won't be coming back to the classroom later," Li Yuan said hurriedly, placing the spear back in the weapons cabinet.

He grabbed his bag and quickly left the classroom.

"This late."

"Teacher Xu has come to find Li Yuan?" Li Tianyou's eyes flashed with envy, "No wonder Li Yuan was in no hurry to leave, was Teacher Xu planning to give him special guidance?"

Li Tianyou shook his head and muttered to himself, "Li Tianyou, oh Li Tianyou, don't worry about others."

"Focus on yourself!" His gaze sharpened and he earnestly began practicing Sword Technique again.

...

Inside Xu Bo's office.

"A Second Class Scholarship? 50,000 Blue Star Coins?" When Li Yuan heard this good news, he was first stunned, then filled with endless joy.

Even with his composure, he could hardly contain his exhilaration.

For Li Yuan, the 50,000 Blue Star Coins could not only help relieve his family's financial pressure,

but also ease the pressure in his heart.

It could alleviate some of the guilt he felt towards his uncle and aunt.

"This happy?" Seeing Li Yuan's unabashed joy, Xu Bo was quite surprised.

Xu Bo instantly realized that this scholarship was probably more important to Li Yuan than he had anticipated.

"It's so important to Li Yuan,"

"yet he hasn't come to me without so much as a word for more than half a month, quite steady." Xu Bo thought to himself, his estimation of Li Yuan rising a notch.

Once Li Yuan had completely composed himself,

"Thank you, Teacher Xu," Li Yuan gratefully said.

Li Yuan was aware that his scholarship being upgraded from Third Class to Second Class was likely the reason Xu Bo had taken so long.

"The scholarship will be transferred to your account next Monday," Xu Bo said, "Also, I have two more pieces of good news for you."

"Good news?" Li Yuan listened intently.

More good news?

"First, I begged the principal with this face of mine five or six times before he agreed to allocate a separate Martial Arts Room for you, so you can concentrate on your cultivation," Xu Bo said seriously.

A separate Martial Arts Room? Li Yuan was shocked; this privilege was nearly exclusive to the top ten students in the grade with hardly any exceptions.

"Teacher, you've gone to great lengths." Li Yuan felt increasingly grateful.

"Second, the principal has agreed that if you can break into the top ten in the grade during the January exams, I can help you apply for a First Rank Scholarship, 100,000 Blue Star Coins," Xu Bo looked at Li Yuan, "If you can reach the top five, there's a chance to apply for the Special Scholarship."

"The Special Scholarship is 500,000 Blue Star Coins!"

"The opportunity is given to you."

"Whether you can seize it is up to you."

## Chapter 17: 15 The Goal of 860 Points

Li Yuan's heart raced as he listened.

To break into the top ten, one hundred thousand Blue Star Coins for a First Rank scholarship?

Top five, five hundred thousand Blue Star Coins for a Special Scholarship?

It was Blue Star Coins!

Li Yuan remembered correctly, his aunt, a middle school teacher, made about one hundred thousand Blue Star Coins a year.

Like his uncle, if he chose not to be stationed in some dangerous places, he'd make a few hundred thousand Blue Star Coins a year.

"Teacher, really?" Li Yuan asked subconsciously.

It wasn't strange for Li Yuan to react this way.

Even though he was mature and had a good temperament,

he was still only a seventeen year old boy. To him, one hundred thousand Blue Star Coins was already a significant fortune.

"Would I lie to you?"

Xu Bo's voice was still cold, "The rewards are certainly real, but forget about the top five in the grade, can your Martial Path results break into the top ten in the January mock exams?"

Li Yuan calmed down as well.

Yes, no matter how good the rewards were, it had to be in his hands to count.

If it was the top twenty in the grade, Li Yuan still saw some hope, but the top ten? The chances were indeed very slim.

The most important reason was Martial Spirit... Students who had awakened their Spiritual Nature enjoyed a 10% bonus to their Martial Path scores, a significant advantage.

If Li Yuan scored 900, a student from the Elite Class only needed 820 raw points to surpass him.

"Getting into the top ten is indeed difficult, but you still have some hope."

"Besides, I've also worked hard with the principal on your behalf. Even if you can't make the top ten, as long as your raw score is second in the grade," Xu Bo looked at Li Yuan, "we will still give you some aid, it's just that, of course, it won't be as good as the scholarship."

"Raw score, second in the grade?" Hope flared up in Li Yuan's heart again.

Last semester, his raw score was already sixth in the grade.

The second in raw score? The chances were actually greater than being in the top ten in total score.

"Thank you, teacher." Li Yuan expressed his gratitude sincerely, feeling that teacher Xu Bo, though seemingly cold, was actually warmhearted on the inside and treated him very well.

"It's late, go home and rest."

"When you come to school tomorrow, you will have access to the Independent Martial Arts Room. I'll send you the specific room number tomorrow," Xu Bo waved his hand.

"Yes," Li Yuan nodded and left the office.

And closed the door behind him.

Listening to the faint footsteps of Li Yuan as he walked away, a smile cracked on Xu Bo's cold face, "He who strives for the utmost reaches the middle, he who strives for the middle reaches the bottom, and he who strives for the bottom achieves nothing."

"Kid, don't blame me when you find out the truth."

Having observed Li Yuan for a long time, Xu Bo knew he was steady in temperament and worked hard in his cultivation.

But Xu Bo knew human nature even better, that a certain amount of pressure and temptation was needed to bring out even greater motivation.

Simply put— dangle a carrot!

The carrot just couldn't be hung too high, or else it would lead to discouragement if unreachable. Therefore, Xu Bo set another goal for Li Yuan, 'second in raw score'.

"Three goals."

"Kid, as long as you reach the medium goal, you'll be effectively reaching the high one," Xu Bo thought silently, "I hope you don't disappoint me."

Out of the two thousand students in this cohort, Li Yuan was the second one to catch his eye.

...

Muhua Platinum Mansion, Building Two.

"Muhua, we need to spend twenty thousand Blue Star Coins this month?" Li Yuan was in his room.

He felt a heavy weight in his heart.

Although Aunt Chen Hui had avoided Li Yuan earlier and quietly talked with his younger brother Li Muhua in the master bedroom, deliberately trying not to let him overhear... Li Yuan's hearing was too good now.

Standing in the living room, he still overheard a little.

"I need at least thirty thousand a month, Muhua also needs about the same, and Qian Qian will need nearly twenty thousand. Add up the daily expenses..." Li Yuan had counted this sum countless times in his heart.

The household expenses amounted to at least ninety thousand Blue Star Coins a month.

In reality, the three children could have been supported without practicing the Martial Path, based on the condition of his aunt and uncle... but the expense of purchasing various supplements and potions to assist Martial Path cultivation was staggeringly high.

"Moreover, Qian Qian and Muhua aren't like me."

"I have awakened the Mind Spirit Divine Palace, the 'Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture' provides relaxation and healing effects on the body, which can probably match the effects of high-level therapy that costs tens of thousands of Blue Star Coins a month," Li Yuan was very clear about this, "While for Qian Qian and especially Muhua,"

"if they want to achieve great success in the Martial Path, the resources currently invested are not enough."

"This scholarship comes with a hundred thousand Blue Star Coins."



"By the weekend, I must surge to five hundred points in the Gold Stage, then grab another fifty thousand Blue Star Coins," Li Yuan resolved quietly.

As for the three promises made by the teacher Xu Bo?

On the electric train ride home, Li Yuan calmed down and had thoroughly thought it through.

"Five hundred thousand Blue Star Coins!"

"If I could get them, the financial pressure on my family would be relieved by a large extent at once."

"But, top five in my grade?" Li Yuan thought about it and his heart sank to the bottom.

On the way home.

Using his smart wristband, Li Yuan reviewed the final exam rankings of the second year once again.

His overall Martial Spirit score was 802 points, ranked sixth in the grade by raw score and twenty-ninth by total score.

The students in the top five of the grade were all from the Elite Class. Their raw scores alone were over 800 points, and with additional points... the total score of the top one even reached an astonishing 962.5 points!

"The top one in the grade is too strong; there's no hope for me."

"Without an awakened Martial Spirit, my raw score is my total score."

"To break into the top five of the grade, my raw score must at least reach 860 points to have a sliver of hope," Li Yuan thought to himself, "Even for the top ten, a raw score of around 840 points is nearly necessary."

A raw score of 840 points.

In the final exams of the second year, that would have already been the second-highest raw score in the grade.

"Work hard."

"By the January mock exams, strive to get over 410 points in Physical Quality, strive to get over 375 points in Martial Arts Skills, and strive to get over 75 points in academics," Li Yuan set three individual subject goals for himself.

All of them must be met.

Only then would there be a faint hope of reaching the top five in the grade.

...

In the master bedroom, Chen Hui was having a video call with Li Changzhou.

"Wife, did you receive the money?" Li Changzhou's face looked even darker.

"Mhm."

"Don't worry, I'll plan everything at home," Aunt Chen Hui nodded, "With these five hundred thousand, plus what we had before, it should be enough until next year around February or March."

"Mm-hmm," Li Changzhou smiled and said, "Wife, don't worry too much. There will be a subsidy from the company at the end of the year, and there's my salary... life will be easier after Xiaoyuan's college entrance exams."

Chen Hui nodded and tried to smile lightly to appear relaxed.

Suddenly.

"Buzz~" The other end of the video call shook violently; Li Changzhou, who had been sitting, suddenly stood up.

"Clang~" In the video, a door that was ajar got knocked open, and faint yet massive explosion sounds could be heard from outside.

"Manager Li, hurry! Quick!" A worker clad in a uniform smeared with dirt rushed in frantically and said urgently, "The higher-ups told our team to end our break and go up immediately."

"Alright."

Li Changzhou nodded repeatedly and turned to Chen Hui on this end of the video, saying, "Wife, I need to work overtime. I'll call you back later."

Buzz——The video call ended.

"Old Li." Chen Hui's face showed a trace of worry, immediately shutting off the smart wristband.

Closing her eyes.

When she reopened them, Chen Hui's face had regained its relaxed expression, and she stepped out of the master bedroom, "Qian Qian, Xiaohua, you two should go to sleep."

"Xiaoyuan, don't stay up too late either."

"Okay, mom!"

"Got it, aunt."

...

The following day at noon.

In the school cafeteria, students were eating their lunch, occasionally glancing up at the news on the large electronic screen.

"...Last night, the 'Second Level Star Realm Rob Sea' in the Northern Border Province erupted in intense conflict once more, our national defense forces, and the alliance support armies were fearless and brave..." the news kept playing.

"It's always fighting."

"There hasn't been any let-up recently, I've heard that many people have died; some Star Realm Creatures even broke through the defense lines."

"I hope they can hold on." The students spoke quietly among themselves while eating.

Li Yuan sat next to Zhou Qi, silent, only glancing occasionally at the news, a flicker of worry passing through his eyes.

## Chapter 18: 16: Independent Martial Arts Room (Requesting Monthly Votes for Third Update)

This past half-month.

Li Yuan, aside from diligently practicing his cultivation, had been closely following the war in Northern Border Province.

After all, his uncle was constructing defense facilities in Northern Border Province.

According to the news, the human allied forces were winning victory after victory, each time with great success, causing significant casualties among the Star Realm Creatures.

However, Li Yuan keenly sensed that something was amiss.

"Battle reports can deceive, but the front line won't," Li Yuan murmured as he ate, glancing at the news playing on the electronic screen.

"Based on past experiences, if our human civilization truly had the advantage, then after facing the first wave of attacks, we would quickly organize a large army and Martial Artists to infiltrate deep into the heart of the Star Realm..." Though Li Yuan's science grades were average, his humanities grades were quite good.

He was particularly adept at both history and geography.

Especially modern history.

"The war in the Rob Sea Star Realm, it's been half a month, and it seems like the front line has been stuck in a tug of war at the several major entrances to the Star Realm," Li Yuan said, worry filling his eyes.

What does that indicate?

The human allied forces have been unable to push back!

The war, it must be very fierce.

"I hope my uncle can come back safely," Li Yuan thought to himself. These days, his uncle would occasionally call or send messages, telling him not to worry.

Sigh!

"Old Zhou, Yan Zhou, I've finished eating—I'm heading out first," Li Yuan said, picking up his meal box and preparing to walk toward the collection table.

"Brother Yuan, wait for us—we're about to finish, too," Zhou Qi called out. "Let's go to the Martial Arts Room together."

"I'm heading to the Elite Building, it's not on the way," Li Yuan said softly.

The Guan Mountain District's top high school covered a vast area, with the teaching buildings divided into four types: the Cultural Building, Martial Hall, Office Building, and Elite Building.

The so-called Elite Building consisted of three extra-large Martial Arts Rooms and dozens of independent Martial Arts Rooms.

It was specifically for the use of students from the three Elite Classes ranging from freshman to senior year.

In total, there were less than two hundred students.

"Going to the Elite Building?" Zhou Qi and Yan Zhou were caught off guard for a moment.

"Looking for someone? Wan Xiao?" Yan Zhou asked, puzzled.

"From now on, I'll be training there," Li Yuan pondered before saying: "The school approved an independent Martial Arts Room for me. I'll practice there during Martial Arts self-study from now on."

Martial Arts classes only happened every other day for their class.

The scholarship, if the school didn't publicize it, no one would know—Li Yuan wasn't about to invite envy by revealing it.

But an independent Martial Arts Room? It was there for all to see; it was bound to spread sooner or later, so Li Yuan decided to just tell them upfront.

"An independent Martial Arts Room? Holy shit!"

"Is it Brother Yuan's?"

"Definitely approved by Teacher Xu!"

"Brother Yuan is awesome!" Yan Zhou, Zhou Qi, and the rest of the dozen or so boys exploded with excitement, shouting fervently.

This immediately drew the attention of many other students around them.

"Keep it down, I'm only telling you guys—don't spread the word," Li Yuan said in a low voice.

"Understood."

"Brother Yuan, we want to check it out; I've never been inside an independent Martial Arts Room before."

"An independent Martial Arts Room, I've never even dared to dream of that," the boys lowered their voices, but their curiosity remained.

They didn't envy Li Yuan; even if a few of them had thoughts, they weren't foolish enough to show it.

After all, their group of more than a dozen boys had Li Yuan as their implicit leader.

Moreover, they all knew that Li Yuan's Martial Path grades were excellent, with his bare score already ranked in the top ten of their grade.

"I haven't been there either," more people shouted.

"Alright, I'll take you guys sometime in the future," Li Yuan said with a smile. "But not today, it's my first time going, and I need to get familiar with it."

Everyone nodded in agreement.

...

The Elite Building and the senior year Martial Hall were separated by a small playground, and one had to cross the Office Building to get there—it was relatively independent.

As a result, the area was very quiet.

Tree-lined roads flanked both sides, with a gentle breeze blowing, quite refreshing.

"The Elite Building," Li Yuan quickly arrived at the bottom of the grand building, glancing around, noting the rather classic decoration.

In front of the building stood a statue of a person.

"Dongfang Ji." Li Yuan recognized the statue.

The first strongest of human civilization, the strongest in Xia Country, founder of the Starfire Martial Hall... he was also the first extraordinary martial artist to walk out alive from the center of a nuclear explosion.

He was the idol Li Yuan admired most.

"The Martial Path is me." As Li Yuan approached the statue, he saw the famous quote engraved beneath it.

At one o'clock in the afternoon, it was time to return to the martial arts classroom for self-study practice, so there were quite a few students coming and going.

However, nobody paid much attention to Li Yuan.

First-year students thought Li Yuan was in second or third year, while third-year students thought he was a second-year student.

Perhaps, Li Yuan had a little fame in the third year, but it was limited to being 'famous by name'.

Apart from his classmates, students from other classes rarely recognized him.

Suddenly.

"Li Yuan." A voice tinged with surprise called out, and Li Yuan turned his head to look.

A burly figure resembling a bear, dressed in martial arts attire, walked up the steps.

"Wan Xiao, long time no see," Li Yuan said with a smile, waving his hand.

The person who came was none other than Wan Xiao, who, after awakening his Martial Spirit, had transferred to study in the Elite Class.

"It's been a long time indeed," Wan Xiao said with a smile.

Although they were in the same school, being in different classes made it very difficult to encounter each other.

"How's the Elite Class?" Li Yuan asked with a smile.

"Not bad," Wan Xiao nodded. "The high-rank cultivation methods are indeed extraordinary, everyone in the class is very skilled, and sparring with each other has great effects..."

"You'll have to work hard, don't let me surpass you in the next exam," Wan Xiao said half-jokingly.

"I'm waiting for it," Li Yuan said with a smile. Their relationship was good, and he didn't take it as a provocation.

"By the way, I haven't asked you yet, what are you doing at the Elite Building?" Wan Xiao asked, puzzled. "Looking for someone?"

"Looking for a classroom," Li Yuan replied with a smile. "How do I get to Martial Arts Room 4011?"

"4011?" Wan Xiao was startled. "The fourth floor? That's a senior-year independent martial arts room, but room 11 hasn't been open, has it? There's nobody there."

"There's nobody yet." Li Yuan said with a smile. "Once I arrive, there will be."

Wan Xiao's pupils narrowed. He wasn't stupid and couldn't help saying, "Your independent martial arts room?"

Li Yuan nodded with a smile, "It's my first time here, so you can show me the way."

...

On the fourth floor, in front of the independent Martial Arts Room 4011.

Watching Li Yuan open the door to the martial arts room with 'face recognition,' Wan Xiao finally believed what Li Yuan had said was true.

His face still couldn't hide his shock.

"Impressive, was it granted by Instructor Xu?" Wan Xiao said, standing at the entrance to the martial arts room.

Li Yuan simply smiled.

"That's right," Wan Xiao continued, "Aside from not awakening your Martial Spirit, based on raw scores, you indeed qualify to be here."

Deep down, Wan Xiao truly admired Li Yuan.

Li Yuan stood inside the martial arts room, looking around. The room was about one hundred and fifty square meters and very clean.

He drew open the curtains.

Sunlight poured in, making the room bright.

Fist strength testing area, life vitality detector, projector, camera... even a virtual network pod.

Except for the space issue not having a speed test track, the room had all the technological equipment one could ask for.

"Starting today, this is my independent martial arts room?" There was a trace of joy in Li Yuan's eyes.

With an independent martial arts room, there would be no disturbances, and naturally, his training efficiency would be higher.

Wan Xiao stood at the door of the martial arts room with a hint of envy in his eyes.

An independent martial arts room? He actually didn't care about it!



His family's martial arts room was not inferior to the school's independent martial arts room.

What Wan Xiao cared about was the honor that came with it.

Suddenly.

"Wan Xiao, what are you doing here? Who let you open the door to Martial Arts Room 4011?" An icy voice echoed down the corridor.

## Chapter 19: 17 Bets Protected by Law

"It wasn't me who opened it," Wan Xiao quickly waved his hand.

The soundproofing of the Martial Arts Room was excellent, but with the door wide open, plus Li Yuan's sharp ears, he naturally heard the voice that had come through.

He couldn't help but turn his head to look.

He saw a youth in a black martial outfit, well-proportioned, and with a buzz cut, who took a few quick steps and arrived at the entrance of Martial Arts Room 4011.

The youth was half a head shorter than Wan Xiao, about the same height as Li Yuan, and had a rather delicate-looking face.

"Wan Xiao, how could you jump out the window... Eh! How come this Martial Arts Room now has an owner?" The youth was about to speak when he noticed the green sign on the door of the Martial Arts Room.

There are three types of signs at these Martial Arts Rooms' doors, indicating different statuses—occupied, empty, or invaded.

A green sign signifies that it was opened normally by the owner.

"4011 wasn't empty... Who are you? How do you have access to 4011?" For the first time, the youth noticed Li Yuan inside the Martial Arts Room and looked at him with a puzzled face.

The youth wasn't stupid.

He had thought that Wan Xiao had opened the Martial Arts Room by jumping through the window.

But from Wan Xiao's words, coupled with the green sign at the door, he instantly deduced—Li Yuan was the owner of the Martial Arts Room.

"Wan Xiao, aren't you going to introduce us?" said Li Yuan with a smile.

He could tell that the youth harbored no ill will; he was simply straightforward and unsophisticated.

"That's Gu Qianghan from Class One, Year Three." Wan Xiao laughingly introduced the youth: "Nickname 'Not-So-Strong'."

Class one of every grade level is the Elite Class.

"Wan Xiao, I'm telling you again, call me Gu Qiang, and if you call me by my full name next time, I'm really going to lose it," the youth said with displeasure.

Wan Xiao just laughed it off and didn't pay any mind, then pointed at Li Yuan and said, "Gu Qiang, didn't you keep talking about Li Yuan after Teacher Xu's class the other day? Look, this is Li Yuan."

The youth, who was previously unhappy, instantly brightened up and stared at Li Yuan: "You're the Li Yuan that Teacher Xu Bo mentioned, the one with the extremely impressive spear technique?"

"Uh, an impressive spear technique?" Li Yuan said with a smile: "I wouldn't say my spear technique is that impressive, but if Teacher Xu Bo was referring to Li Yuan from Class Two, Year Three, then it must be me."

Li Yuan already knew who the youth was.

When checking the end-of-term rankings for the second year, he naturally took notice of the top ten students from the previous grades.

Gu Qianghan was indeed the third in martial arts performance at the end of the second year.

However, his appearance was a bit unexpected for Li Yuan, having a delicacy that didn't quite match his name.

"If Teacher Xu says you're good, then it must be true," said Gu Qianghan, his eyes shining: "I checked, and at the end of last semester, your score in Martial Arts Skills was the highest in the whole grade."

"Mhm," Li Yuan looked at the youth with interest.

"I want to challenge you," stated Gu Qianghan, excitedly fixing his gaze on Li Yuan, eager to try.

"Li Yuan, don't underestimate him."

"This guy is quite crafty. When I first got to the Elite Class, I was fooled by his looks," Wan Xiao hastily added.

"What do you mean fooled by me, I didn't ambush you, I challenged you fair and square," Gu Qianghan said with disdain: "You look like a bear but couldn't even take ten punches from me, and you still have the nerve to say that."

Wan Xiao was taken aback.

And was left speechless.

When he first arrived in the Elite Class, he encountered Gu Qianghan challenging him. Misled by the other's delicate features and assuming he was easy to bully, he ended up... suffering a terrible defeat.

"Ten punches?" Li Yuan nodded slightly, not surprised.

Just based on the end-of-year results in the second year, Gu Qianghan's raw score was even higher than his own, so defeating Wan Xiao was normal.

"How about it?" Gu Qianghan fixed his eyes on Li Yuan: "We'll fight in full armor. I want to test your spear technique."

Gu Qianghan's eyes shone with a fighting spirit.

Li Yuan just smiled.

From the conversation between the two just now, Li Yuan had guessed the reason why the other wanted to challenge him.

Probably, Teacher Xu had used his spear technique as an example in the Elite Class and made some unflattering remarks.

For instance, "You call yourselves the Elite Class? I don't see any of you living up to Li Yuan from Class Two, Year Three."

"A Li Yuan who hasn't even awakened his Martial Spirit, his spear technique alone is enough to take all of you down."

Using students from other classes as examples to suppress students from the class they are teaching is a common tactic used by many teachers.

Similarly, it has inadvertently drawn a lot of animosity toward Li Yuan in the Elite Class.

"Li Yuan, if you are a Martial Artist, then accept my challenge," Gu Qianghan looked at Li Yuan.

Li Yuan looked at Wan Xiao with an odd expression, it had been a long time since he had heard such a melodramatic phrase.

Wan Xiao spread his hands as if to say 'he has always been this melodramatic'.

"I do not accept," Li Yuan shook his head.

Gu Qianghan's eyes widened: "Li Yuan, do you lack the spirit of a Martial Artist?"

"I'm not even a Martial Artist yet, so naturally, I don't have the spirit of one," Li Yuan rolled his eyes at Gu Qianghan.

"Alright, this is my Martial Arts Room. I'm going to start training," he declared.

In fact, Li Yuan's refusal to fight was not because he was scared of the opponent.

It was meaningless and carried risks.

Sparring with Teacher Xu Bo was different—the teacher's strength greatly surpassed that of the students, able to control the entire scene, ensuring no one would get hurt.

But when two students with similar strengths sparred using cold weapons, it was impossible to fully control endangering oneself.

Even fully armored and using dull cold weapons, one could easily suffer serious injuries or even death.

Such incidents were not uncommon.

Li Yuan was not willing to risk any danger for a cause that had no benefits.

"You..." Gu Qianghan was about to speak again.

"Gu Qianghan, who gave you the audacity to engage in a private duel?" A stern voice suddenly came from outside the door.

Gu Qianghan's expression stiffened, and instead of getting angry at being called by his full name, a trace of fear flashed through his eyes.

"Sis—" Gu Qianghan suddenly turned around, placing his hand on Li Yuan's shoulder, his face now filled with a smile: "I was just joking with Li Yuan, right, Li Yuan?"

Li Yuan was momentarily stunned, somewhat caught off guard.

Wan Xiao shrugged, indicating that this was nothing new to him.

Gu Qianghan shook Li Yuan's shoulder vigorously, frantically gesturing to Li Yuan with his eyes.

But Li Yuan stood his ground, immovable as a rock, his gaze had already fallen on the figure at the door.

A girl roughly seventeen or eighteen, wearing a crimson tight-fitting martial arts uniform, her face delicate yet strong, with bright eyes and white teeth, her brows and eyes exuding a sharp and resolute temperament.

Her jet-black hair was swept up high behind her head, giving her an especially capable appearance.

However, the most eye-catching thing was the fiery red longsword hanging at her waist.

"Hello, Li Yuan, I am Lin Lanyue from Senior Class 3 (1)." The girl also looked at Li Yuan and took the initiative to say, "I apologize on behalf of my brother for his crazy streak; I hope you won't mind it."

"I'm fine," Li Yuan said with a handshake and a smile.

The girl nodded, her gaze becoming sharp again as she turned it back to Gu Qianghan, making his scalp tingle.

"Sis!" Gu Qianghan involuntarily removed his hand from Li Yuan's shoulder.

"If I catch you in a private fight again, even calling for your mom won't save you," the girl said coldly.

Gu Qianghan awkwardly touched his head without daring to utter a word.

Since childhood, Gu Qianghan had always harbored an innate fear of his cousin, who was only half a year older than him.

"It's all trivial stuff."

"Don't blame him; none of us has any problems," Li Yuan said with a smile.

Li Yuan instantly recognized the person before him.

She had spoken more than once at school-wide assemblies.

From the time she enrolled, her name had constantly been on the honor roll.

She was the top Martial Path student in the senior year, recognized as the most likely candidate to get into Starry Sky University—a martial arts prodigy—Lin Lanyue.

"As long as you don't blame him, that's fine."

The girl nodded, still focusing on Li Yuan: "It's wrong for my brother to seek a private duel with you, but Teacher Xu said your martial arts skills surpass everyone in our class, and it's not just my brother who is dissatisfied."

"Frankly, I'm not convinced either."

Li Yuan was startled.

Wan Xiao was also taken aback.

Gu Qianghan's eyes lit up with excitement, fully aware of his cousin's personality.

She seemed affable on the surface, but was actually very tough at heart.

"I would also like to learn from you and see for myself how impressive the person that Teacher Xu said has spear technique close to 'Unity'. But it won't be a real combat," the girl set her sights on Li Yuan, "how about a match on Starry Skies Fighting Network?"

Starry Skies Fighting Network was a virtual fight; nobody would get hurt.

"What's in it for me?" Li Yuan shrugged and smiled, "I never do anything without benefits."

"Benefits?" Lin Lanyue frowned.

"How about this, we make a bet," Li Yuan said with a smile, "If you win, I will publicly acknowledge that you have the best martial arts skills in the entire grade."

"If I win, you give me two thousand Blue Star Coins, how does that sound?" Li Yuan smiled.

"What kind of bet is that?" Gu Qiang scoffed, "A sure win, you're thinking too beautifully."

"Up to you."

"If you don't agree, please leave and don't delay my training," Li Yuan said with a smile.

"Fine, I agree," Lin Lanyue said, looking at Li Yuan.

"Sis!" Gu Qiang was astonished.

"Shut up," Lin Lanyue frowned.

"Let's make it next Sunday afternoon at two, how about that?" Li Yuan said with a smile, "Let's add each other as V friends first, then I'll send you my account name."

"Fine."

Soon, they became virtual network friends.

"Gu Qiang, let's go," Lin Lanyue turned and walked away, with Gu Qiang reluctantly following her.

That left Li Yuan and Wan Xiao alone.

"Li Yuan, that was a huge loss," Wan Xiao said, unable to hold back, "You don't know, Lin Lanyue's family is very wealthy; if you had bet five thousand or even ten thousand Blue Star Coins just now, I think she would have agreed."

Li Yuan shook his head, "Foolish."

"The law of Xia Country states that bets on Starry Skies Fighting Network cannot exceed two thousand Blue Star Coins for minors."

"Any amount over two thousand Blue Star Coins is not protected by law."

## Chapter 20: 18: Starry Sky University

"Protected by law?" Wan Xiao was stunned for a moment, then gave a thumbs up, "Li Yuan, I'm impressed by you."

"To accomplish great things, you have to study the law first," Li Yuan said with a smile.

Immediately afterward, Li Yuan shifted the topic, "Lin Lanyue and Gu Qianghan are siblings?"

"Yeah," Wan Xiao said, "They seem to be cousins, not bearing the same surname anyway. They have a good relationship. Gu Qianghan isn't afraid of anyone except his sister."

"According to him, it's because he can't beat his sister that he's afraid. Once he can, he definitely won't be anymore," Wan Xiao said with a laugh, "But I feel like he will never be able to beat her in this lifetime."

"Even if it were you in full armor combat, I reckon you wouldn't stand a chance against Lin Lanyue," Wan Xiao said seriously.

Li Yuan nodded slightly.

If you say I had a bit of fame in my senior year, then Lin Lanyue was truly a household name.

Being beautiful was just a small part.

In the entire Guan Mountain District's Number One High School, with thousands of students, could you not find a few beautiful girls? As a key provincial school, there was never talk of 'campus belles or beaux.'

Most students actually don't pay too much attention to other people in their class, let alone in other classes.

Lin Lanyue, as the sole 'public figure,' was mainly because of her cliff-like leading martial arts achievements.

The absolute first.

Since her freshman year, in every large or small test involving martial arts, she was essentially always at the top.

At the end of her sophomore year, she scored 875 points raw, and her overall score was even more astounding at 962.5, leaving the second place trailing by more than fifty points.

The only exception was the last martial arts skills test of her sophomore year.

For the first time, it was taken by Li Yuan.

"Full armor combat?" Li Yuan pondered for a moment: "What's her Physical Quality level?"

"It should be over 8.0 levels," Wan Xiao said, "That's my guess, since I haven't had any minor tests in the Elite Class since I joined."

Li Yuan nodded slightly.

Based on Lin Lanyue's Physical Quality scores from last term, along with her rate of progress, you could roughly estimate... she should be between 8.0 and 8.3 levels.

This was already terrifying.



By the college entrance exam standards, Physical Quality has a full score of 500 points, 10.0 levels is the full mark.

9.0 levels are 470 points.

8.0 levels are 440 points.

7.0 levels are 400 points.

6.0 levels are 360 points.

5.0 levels are 300 points.

"At least 8.0 levels? Given her rate of improvement, by the time of the college entrance exam, her Physical Quality might have a chance to reach 9.0 levels," Li Yuan thought with a silent sigh, "No wonder everyone says she has the potential to be admitted to one of the top three martial arts universities in the world, Starry Sky University."

"The world's top three martial arts universities – Starry Sky University, Starfire University, and Black Stone University – are better than the five famous universities in Xia Country," he added.

Li Yuan never dared to underestimate others.

Lin Lanyue, in terms of talent, was one of the most formidable among the tens of thousands of senior students in Guan Mountain District; her family background was also excellent, and crucially, she herself was diligent enough... A true hard-working martial arts prodigy.

"Teacher Xu in the Elite Class uses your spear technique as a benchmark," Wan Xiao said with a smile, "But he never mentioned your scores, and I haven't leaked your last test spear technique score either. Lin Lanyue probably doesn't know it yet."

Li Yuan nodded slightly.

Martial arts skills had a full score of 400 points; according to the college entrance exam standards, 320 and 360 are major thresholds, which are hard to cross.

"To exceed 320 points, your martial arts skills should be at the Second Stage," Li Yuan silently contemplated, "To surpass 360 points, both the spear technique and movement technique should probably be at the Third Stage."

As for what's required for a full score? Li Yuan was not clear about that.

Li Yuan also didn't ask his teacher Xu Bo, so as not to give the impression that he was aiming too high prematurely.

"In full armor combat, her Physical Quality is nearly two levels higher than yours; your chances of winning are slim," Wan Xiao said, with a hint of excitement, "But in virtual combat? Heh, I believe in your spear technique."

"When it's time for the Zhou Tian fight, I want to come and watch. Remember to send me the room number," Wan Xiao said.

"Alright," Li Yuan replied with a nod.

...

After seeing Wan Xiao off, Li Yuan closed the door to the Martial Arts Room.

All became completely quiet.

"Xiao Yu, connect via Bluetooth, take over the smart management authority of Martial Arts Room 4011, the authorization code is..." Li Yuan suddenly began speaking.

Rapidly.

"Master, I have taken control of the Martial Arts Room authority. I'm very pleased to serve you," a gentle female voice rang out.

"Open the martial arts skills evaluation system."

"Open the video analysis system," Li Yuan continued, then opened the nearby weapons cabinet.

It was filled with a large number of weapons, among which there were six long spears, each varying in length and weight.

Li Yuan took out the regulation long spear he used the most and placed it on the weapons rack beside him.

Then, he began to silently practice the "Solid Rock Cultivation Technique."

"A bet of two thousand Blue Star Coins?" Li Yuan let his thoughts drift as he felt the subtle changes in his muscles and sinews, all the while pondering the events of the day.

Li Yuan had never really taken this match to heart; he was never worried about losing.

Losing was not shameful.

The other was the top student of his grade, a martial arts prodigy.

Win or lose? As long as it led to progress in his martial arts and didn't result in any losses, what did winning or losing matter?

"Dongfang Ji, the strongest warrior of human civilization, also lost more than once on his path to growth," Li Yuan reflected inwardly, "Martial path is my path; external things shall not disturb my inner peace."

"Failure will just be a stepping stone on the path to growth."

Li Yuan had read many biographies of Dongfang Ji.

The 'Martial Path is my path' proposed by him didn't mean that he himself represented the martial path, but rather 'Martial Path is the way I go.'

"As long as you devote yourself to the martial path, you needn't care about others' judgments, you don't have to mind their praise or scorn," Li Yuan's eyes were clear, "By following my own path, my heart and thoughts are the true essence of the martial path, and that is my way."

In simple terms, walk your own path and let others talk.

The martial path is about surpassing oneself.

"However,"

"College entrance examination admissions are determined by ranking, sparring with Lin Lanyue once will also let me know the current level of martial arts skills of these top senior students," Li Yuan pondered.

...

In the Martial Arts Room 4001.

"Sis, do you really want to compete with him? He doesn't lose anything if he loses," Gu Qianghan complained from the sideline.

"Two thousand Blue Star Coins doesn't mean much to me," said Lin Lanyue, her voice cold and clear as beads falling on a jade plate.

She was practicing a set of fist techniques, with each movement of her fists and palms subtly releasing a wave of air with a resonating sound.

"It's not about the money."

"It's about face," Gu Qianghan shook his head and said, "You're the top of the grade, while he's ranked only in the twenties. It would be so embarrassing to lose."

"Face?"

Lin Lanyue suddenly stopped her movements, her sharp gaze fixed on Gu Qianghan, "You practice the Martial Path for face?"

Gu Qianghan shook his head repeatedly, "Of course not, but..."

"Shut up."

Lin Lanyue frowned and said, "Aunt has spoiled you, you spar with people every day just to show off your strength, for face? No wonder you even dare to engage in private fights."

"Sis, I really won't do it again," Gu Qianghan quickly said, although in his heart he muttered to himself, 'Aren't you also challenging someone to a duel?'

"Don't think I don't know what you're thinking."

"I want to spar not because I want to defeat him, but because I want to see how good the spear technique that even Teacher Xu praised is," Lin Lanyue said coldly, "As for winning or losing?"

"If I lose, will it hinder me from getting into Starry Sky University?"

"It's two o'clock, go back to your Martial Arts Room and cultivate," Lin Lanyue said with a frown.

"Okay there," Gu Qianghan turned and left, unwilling to stay for another second.

...

Just before the end of class, inside Martial Arts Room 4011.

[Your Spear Technique realm has increased from 47% of the Third Stage to 48% of the Third Stage.]

Li Yuan suddenly became aware of the notification in his field of vision and abruptly stopped his spear.

"Improved by another one percent?"

"Ever since I created the 'Dragon Hidden in the Gorge' spear move, the progress of my spear technique seems to have accelerated," Li Yuan thought to himself, "However, to create the 'Myriad Mountains' move that I've been conceptualizing, it's probably going to take some more time."

Such moves that perfectly harness the body's strength become relatively easier to create after the first or second one.

Until one day when every move reaches Perfection, that will be the Fourth Level Spear Technique.

Before long.

Li Yuan walked out of the Elite Building. Before he reached the cafeteria, he saw a crowd of students gathering from afar.

It was Zhou Qi, Yan Zhou, and the others, seemingly having waited for a while.

"Brother Yuan, I heard you're going to compete with Lin Lanyue to decide who's number one in Martial Arts Skills?"

"No, I heard it's to determine the real number one in the grade."

"Huh? How come I heard that Brother Yuan was the one who challenged Lin Lanyue..."

"I heard if Brother Yuan wins, Lin Lanyue will agree to date him..." the crowd was buzzing with various comments.

Li Yuan: "..."

"Stop!" Li Yuan suddenly shouted, and the surroundings immediately quieted down.

"Who told you that?" Li Yuan asked.

"Wan Xiao, I guess, he was the first to talk about it in the class group. Didn't you see the group message, Brother Yuan?"

"Anyway, it has spread," Zhou Qi said with a grin, "Brother Yuan, tell us, do you really want to pursue Lin Lanyue?"

Everyone else was also curious.

"There is indeed a bet," Li Yuan frowned, "But it's just a normal spar, nothing else."

"I'm off to eat, I still have to cultivate later," Li Yuan turned and headed for the cafeteria.

The crowd exchanged glances.

A normal spar?

"If it's a normal spar, why would Brother Yuan keep it a secret? And hurry off so quickly," Zhou Qi shook his head, "There must be something going on."

"Hmm, I think so too."

...

Weekend, 1:50 PM.

On the virtual network of Blue Star, the Starry Skies Fighting Network.

Personal challenge platform, room number 8673795.

"369 spectators?" Li Yuan, incarnated in the virtual world with a long spear in hand, stood on the platform. He frowned upon seeing the number of spectators and the dense virtual figures filling the spectator platform displayed on the screen overhead.

"Brother Yuan, good luck, take down Lin Lanyue."

"Brother Yuan, smash her."

"Class Senior Third Year (2), Brother Yuan is the strongest."

"Lin Lanyue, beat Li Yuan to a pulp!"

"Li Yuan looks so arrogant, he's asking for a beating."

"I think he's pretty handsome, even more than both my boyfriends." Various messy comments were spreading from the spectator platform.

In the virtual world, people's speech and behavior tend to be more unrestrained than in reality.

Li Yuan didn't understand why a simple virtual fight had turned into this situation.

But now, Li Yuan just felt that the high realism of the virtual network might not be such a good thing after all.

"Li Yuan, prepare yourself," Lin Lanyue stood at the other end of the platform, holding a long sword.

Her virtual appearance was quite similar to her real-life appearance.

Only her hair had changed from long to short and dyed red, less solemn but more untamed.

## Chapter 21: 19 The Gold Master

"Wan Xiao and Zhou Qi, they all have big mouths." Li Yuan felt quite helpless in his heart.

On the day he and Lin Lanyue arranged their duel, the news spread throughout the entire senior year before night self-study even began.

Lin Lanyue was a celebrity, and Li Yuan also had some reputation.

There were all sorts of rumors.

The most important reason was that Lin Lanyue had never challenged another student to a duel in recent years, and Li Yuan was the first.

At first, Li Yuan held the idea that 'the clean do not need justification,' and couldn't be bothered to pay attention, but later on he realized how naive he was.

Today, over 300 people have come to the Starry Skies Fighting Network to watch their battle, and they were mostly classmates.

And the number was steadily approaching 400.

This was already an astonishing number, considering it was just a personal duel, and no one was live streaming it.

"Brother Yuan, see how awesome I am? I brought the whole class to cheer for you!" Zhou Qi, with his blonde spiky hair and leather pants, waved and shouted from the spectator stands.

The virtual network's 70% realism made the entire ring and its surroundings nearly identical to reality, with hundreds of people gathered around the ring creating a bustling scene.

"Keep it up."

"Brother Yuan, your long spear must be hungry for action by now."

The noisy voices all around, many people also took out banners and glow sticks, all of which were props provided for free by the system.

Quite a few were supporters of Li Yuan.

But most of the audience was still rooting for Lin Lanyue. Good grades, pretty, very popular... mainly among the boys.

The boys were mostly quite loyal, only liking pretty eighteen-year-old girls.

Even more so since Lin Lanyue was only seventeen.

...On the ring.

"Ready." Li Yuan's thought moved.

Suddenly, the lights around the ring about 30 meters in diameter changed from red to green in an instant.

The virtual bodies of Li Yuan and Lin Lanyue disappeared instantly.

At the same time, a huge countdown appeared above the ring: 30, 29, 28...

"Both parties in the duel are below the Fallen Star Stage, so the system has set physical quality at level 8.0 for the battle."

"You have 24 seconds left, please choose your weapon, otherwise it will be automatically selected based on your preference after time runs out."

In the preparation space, the system's voice echoed in Li Yuan's ears.

"Physical quality of level 8.0." Li Yuan felt the change in his body's strength, already quite used to it.

"Weapon plan number one." Li Yuan said directly.

As an 'old bird' who had been through over a thousand battles on the Starry Skies Fighting Network, he chose different weapon plans for different types of battles and different opponents.

Li Yuan had set up five different weapon plans.

"Selected weapon: Standard Long Spear number 9, length 2.3 meters, weight..." A large amount of data flashed before Li Yuan's eyes.

A 2.3 meters long spear was considered a shorter one, and Li Yuan would be at a disadvantage if he faced other long spear experts.

An inch longer, an inch stronger.



Since Lin Lanyue's weapon was a sword, a spear that was too long would not be nimble enough, and thus not necessarily advantageous... it was fine to have a slightly longer weapon.

"Even when hunting a rabbit, the lion uses all its might, not to mention the 2,000 Blue Star Coins at stake," Li Yuan mused.

Li Yuan never wasted.

...

The crowd around the ring was surging, with the number of spectators exceeding 400, and not all were students. There were also a few outsiders.

For example—Teacher Xu Bo, Principal Tan Zhenlong.

"Quite a lively atmosphere."

Principal Tan stood in a corner, wearing a hat that made him look different from his real appearance. No students could recognize him.

"It's lively," Xu Bo said with a smile. "Look, it's about to start."

Principal Tan nodded. He was brought along by Xu Bo, mainly because he had nothing else to do.

As Lin Lanyue was the top seed of the senior year, Principal Tan naturally took some interest in her.

On the ring.

Countdown 3, 2, 1... swoosh! swoosh!

Li Yuan and Lin Lanyue reappeared on either side of the ring, both in combat armor and armed with their weapons.

The most eye-catching was the golden emblem above their heads.

"Gold Stage?"

"Gold experts?"

"Both are at the Gold Stage?" Suddenly, a series of exclamations erupted from around the ring.

"Brother Yuan reached the Gold Stage? He was still at the Silver Stage when we last played the great escape together," Zhou Qi, Wan Xiao, and the others all widened their eyes.

"He's been secretly leveling up without us?" Yan Zhou said, "Next time we have to get Brother Yuan to take us for a great escape."

"Gold experts? Both of them?" Li Tianyou stood in a corner, looking at the insignias above the two on the ring, "Lanyue also reached the Gold Stage?"

Lin Lanyue didn't know Li Tianyou.

But that didn't stop Li Tianyou from falling for Lin Lanyue at first sight.

There were quite a few senior year boys who had secret crushes on Lin Lanyue, but very few had the courage to actually confess.

"Damn, Li Yuan is also at the Gold Stage?" Gu Qianghan stared at the emblem above Li Yuan's head, "No wonder Teacher Xu praised Li Yuan so much."

The revelation that both parties to the duel were at the Gold Stage instantly cranked up the atmosphere.

"Oh? Both at the Gold Stage?" Principal Tan was also slightly surprised, "I wonder if they have reached 500 points. If so, they're both qualified for special admission."

"Old Tan, I told you, these two students are extraordinary," Xu Bo said with a smile. "Otherwise, why would I bring you here?"

Let alone senior year students.

Even many students at Martial Arts University didn't reach the Gold Stage.

...

"You've reached the Gold Stage?" Holding his long spear, Li Yuan stared at the red-haired Lin Lanyue, quite surprised.

The Starry Skies Fighting Network classifies into nine stages: Bronze, Silver, Gold, Fallen Star, Bright Moon, Sun Eclipse, Transcendent, Legendary, Martial Sage.

For minors to reach the Gold Stage was extremely rare.

Even many of the self-proclaimed martial arts experts who are big streamers are mostly at the Bright Moon Stage, with very few reaching Sun Eclipse Stage.

Transcendent Stage and above? Those who reached it were already top martial artists in the real world and wouldn't be streaming.

At least, Li Yuan had never seen any Transcendent Stage masters when watching streams.

He had only seen them in some combat videos.

"Just you can break through?" Lin Lanyue asked, looking at Li Yuan with a cold voice.

Lin Lanyue wasn't surprised that Li Yuan had reached the Gold Stage, she had anticipated it.

"You have animosity towards me?" Li Yuan sensed vaguely.

The next instant.

"Boom!" Lin Lanyue made her move.

Her armor was also a fiery red, making her look like a blaze as she charged toward Li Yuan like lightning.

With a physical quality of level 8.0, her burst speed reached 18 meters per second, and her standard fist strength was 800 kilograms.

And the diameter of the arena was only 30 meters.

From initiation to closing in, Lin Lanyue could reach Li Yuan in no more than 2.2 seconds.

"Chi~" A fiery red long sword struck at Li Yuan like lightning.

"Rip~"

Li Yuan cracked a smile and gripped his long spear, his body moving in an instant, fiercely thrusting forward.

Central level thrust!

"Clang!" The fiery red long sword collided with the long spear, and the spear trembled, deviating in direction, while the sword turned in mid-air like a viper striking back.

"This swordsmanship."

"It's a bit bizarre. Its explosive power is so strong. It's even stronger than my spear's straight thrust. Could it be a move associated with the high-rank cultivation methods?" Li Yuan wondered in surprise.

He had heard early on that Lin Lanyue practiced the Blazing Flame Burning Heaven Cultivation Method from among the seven high-rank cultivation methods.

Each method is divided into many parts, such as stance-practice methods, breathing techniques, and fist techniques.

Li Yuan had never come into contact with high-rank cultivation methods.

But he knew it was an advancement of one of the Seven Fundamental Cultivation Methods, the Blazing Flame Cultivation Method.

"The 'Blazing Flame Cultivation Method' excels in attacking, and this high-rank cultivation method should be the same. Head-on attacks are not my strong suit, and her swordsmanship level is also at the third stage." Li Yuan's spear technique changed in his hand: "I must be careful."

The long spear was swiftly retracted, switching from attacking to placing the spear in defense.

At the same time, Li Yuan started to move, using his movement technique to unload force.

"Clang!" "Clang!" Sword light and spear shadow collided rapidly, striking over ten times in the blink of an eye.

"How steady are his steps and foundation?" Lin Lanyue was also surprised: "My use of 'Sea of Fire Sinking Boat' was actually unloaded by him with a single spear stroke."

In Lin Lanyue's view, Li Yuan, who was all about defense, seemed like a tortoise.

She couldn't break through at all.

...

"So fast!"

"How did Li Yuan block Lin Lanyue's continuous sword attacks?"

"Awesome!"

"His stepping technique is so exquisite."

"Li Yuan's spear technique, so stable." Most of the spectators were amazed.

They had mostly seen higher-level live duels and recorded fights.

But subconsciously, they viewed those as martial path masters, not expecting a classmate to be so strong.

"Do you know what it means to be the top martial arts student of the year?"

"I always said Lin Lanyue was no match for Brother Yuan."

"Come on, Brother Yuan, finish her."

"Brother Yuan's spear is always enduring!"

"He can even block several strikes from Teacher Xu's class. How much more so Lin Lanyue?"

The students of class 3 (2) were excited.

They weren't highly skilled, but they understood a simple truth of martial arts: the longer one's attacks are unsuccessful, the greater their energy consumption tends to be.

"His defense is indeed good."

"This sword technique, it should be derived from 'Sea of Fire Sinking Boat', attacking fiercely." Principal Tan also commented, with a touch of surprise: "Li Yuan actually blocked it. His spear technique is really stable. He should have comprehended a defensive move."

"Xu Bo, you've taught a good disciple," Principal Tan said with a smile.

"Old Tan, since you said that, why don't you quick approve his first-rank scholarship." Xu Bo said with a laugh.

Principal Tan immediately shut his mouth.

"Hmm?" Xu Bo smiled and said no more, continuing to watch the fight, when suddenly his eyes lit up, and he shook his head, saying, "Lin Lanyue has been careless."

...

Above the arena, Lin Lanyue continuously unleashed her sword techniques, her attacks like relentless flames, applying constant pressure.

"Clang!" "Clang!" "Clang!"

Li Yuan's long spear, whether it was sweeping, flicking, retreating with footwork, or occasionally thrusting straight to force a retreat.

Lin Lanyue was unable to get close.

After mastering the technique 'Solid Rock Pillar', Li Yuan's focus on defense had the essence of an immovable mountain.

"The fifty-seventh sword," Li Yuan silently counted in his mind: "She has been on the attack, her energy is depleting, and her sword force weakening."

"She's getting anxious."

"In a fight to the death, once you become hasty, you're prone to making mistakes, just wait."

On the fifty-ninth sword, Li Yuan keenly captured a slight change in the threat of the opponent's sword technique.

The sixty-third sword.

"Whoosh!" The sword light flared like fire, swift and fierce.

Lin Lanyue was still launching fierce attacks, bent on breaking through Li Yuan's defense. Her swordsmanship was sharp, but unbeknownst to her, she had somewhat relaxed her own defense.

After all, from start to finish, Li Yuan had never gone on the offense and had been strictly defending.

"Now is the time!" Li Yuan's eyes suddenly shone brightly,

"Boom!"

Li Yuan completely disregarded Lin Lanyue's strike, his long spear vibrating fiercely as if it were a giant dragon hidden amidst countless rocky cliffs, exploding forward with a piercing thrust.

Spear technique killing move—Dragon Hidden in the Gorge!

"Not good!" Lin Lanyue immediately realized something was amiss, feeling Li Yuan's momentum change in an instant, as if a ferocious beast had bared its fangs.

The force was formidable.

"It's too late to retreat." Realizing this, Lin Lanyue's eyes gleamed with cold light, without any hesitation.

Instead of retreating, she thrust her sword even more fiercely.

"Thump!!"

The long spear pierced through the armor, directly penetrating Lin Lanyue's chest, blood streaming down as her body dissipated into nothingness.

The light armor couldn't block Li Yuan's spear.

"Rip!"

The next instant, the fierce long sword also struck Li Yuan's shoulder, blood splashing.

"Clang~" The long sword fell to the ground.

On the arena, only the injured Li Yuan remained.

"The spear is longer than the sword, so I had an extra 0.1 second of reaction time." Li Yuan shook his head, then revealed a slight smile.

"One minute, two thousand Blue Star Coins in hand."

"What a thrill!"

## Chapter 22: 20 Rewards of the Fallen Star Rank

"Congratulations on your duel victory, Guardian·Yuan, your account has received 2000 Blue Star Coins, transferable to..." Li Yuan had already received the notification from the Starry Skies Fighting Network.

The stakes for both sides were agreed upon before the match, and Lin Lanyue had transferred the funds in advance.

Therefore, as soon as he won, the money was credited to Li Yuan's account.

"The near-real combat, where I don't have to worry about injury, is indeed more satisfying than solitary practice in reality," Li Yuan grinned, "It's just a pity that it's not 100% realistic, so it's not as thrilling."

In this era, why do Martial Path strongmen emerge one after another?

The virtual network plays an irreplaceable role.

Take the Starry Skies Fighting Network, for instance; it has many flaws, such as not being able to fully simulate real moves, with some data becoming distorted.

Additionally, it can't scan everyone's real body data, so the data for the conscious body and the real body are different, and it can't achieve a perfect fit.

But!

Through consciousness connection, participants can still engage in a large number of fights and moves that are difficult to experiment with continuously in reality.

In real combat, one mistake can mean death or severe injury.

How many real battles could martial artists of the past experience in a lifetime? Most practice alone, and it was already good if they had a few sparring partners.

But in this era, every Martial Artist, before fighting with Star Realm Creatures in actual combat, can go through thousands, even tens of thousands of virtual battles, not only vastly improving their training efficiency.

It also hones their mindset, courage, and skills.

In the battle between Li Yuan and Lin Lanyue, both had reached the age of 16, hence the blood, severed limbs, and other effects were realistically simulated.

However, since they were underage, the pain was only set to 10%.

If it were adult competition, the pain would be at a minimum of 20%, with the highest setting being an astonishing 80%, closely resembling a life-and-death battle.

"Starry Skies Fighting Network."

"Essentially, it's a real combat training camp for Martial Artists," mused Li Yuan to himself.

Human civilization as a whole now revolves around 'war'.

...The battle between Li Yuan and Lin Lanyue was intense.

It ended in less than a minute.



After all, each random strike from their spear or sword exerted thousands of kilograms of force. Grasping just one small opening in the opponent's defense usually resulted in a deadly blow.

Before Li Yuan's spear exploded forward, aside from the teacher Xu Bo, who had noticed the signs early on, many students still felt that Lin Lanyue had the upper hand.

"Li Yuan has been retreating all along, a prolonged defense is bound to fail! Can such defense really hold up?" a boy questioned.

"You know nothing!" Zhou Qi scoffed, "Brother Yuan is the strongest."

Zhou Qi might not understand, but he knew that Li Yuan had the highest Martial Arts Skills scores.

"Lin Lanyue's attack is very aggressive. If Brother Yuan slips even the slightest, he will lose," Wan Xiao, with better observation, said, "But Brother Yuan's defense is flawless... I feel his Spear Technique has gotten stronger than during the last test."

"Who should I be rooting for?" Li Tianyou watched, his heart still torn.

Then, suddenly.

"Brother Yuan is awesome!" Zhou Qi, wearing leather pants, suddenly jumped up, punching the air wildly, overwhelmed with excitement, "He won!"

"What?"

"A sudden Spear Thrust? Lanyue lost?" Li Tianyou's eyes widened, watching the scene in disbelief.

"Damn!"

"That's ruthless, how could he stab her in the chest?"

"Sister actually lost?" Gu Qiang held his breath in shock, "This Li Yuan, he really didn't hold back at all."

"So fast, Li Yuan is so brutal." A buzz of astonishment circulated among the Spectator Platform, as these students were all amazed.

They had thought that even if Li Yuan were to win with a defensive counterattack, it would take dozens more moves at least.

Nobody expected a sudden reversal at the peak of Lin Lanyue's offensive.

The Straight Thrust burst forth.

Lin Lanyue's body got pierced, even her Combat Armor was penetrated, showing the dominion of the spear.

It was incredibly brutal.

"Li Yuan won!"

"So what if it's the Elite Class? They still got knocked to the ground!"

"Brother Yuan, number one in skill." The students of High School Year 3 Class 2 were quite excited and took pride in his victory.

So what if it was the Elite Class? So what if you awakened your Martial Spirit? Countering and bringing down the so-called favored children of heaven is the hot-blooded tradition engraved in the bones of the people of Xia Country.

It's also the most enjoyable story to witness.

"Li Yuan doesn't show any mercy, not even to women, that's Lin Lanyue for goodness' sake!" Some of the boys were somewhat indignant.

"Are you joking?"

"Idiot, huh!"

"Fool, in a life-and-death fight, you expect to be spared? Not enough of a lapdog yet?"

"Flirting at a time like this?"

"If you're so capable, go have a match with Li Yuan."

"To like someone is to respect her," which drew more retorts from students, "In a fight to the death with Star Realm Creatures, do you also spare the pretty ones?"

Most of the boys came to support Lin Lanyue.

But they wouldn't really consider Li Yuan's actions cruel, at most they saw him as fierce and domineering.

When Li Yuan was victorious, they cheered just the same.

In a fight, you have to give it your all. Carelessness and underestimating the opponent is irresponsible to oneself.

The purpose of the fight is victory!

This is the first lesson every student learns in Martial Path class.

"The greatest respect you can show your enemy is to go all out to kill them. Only the person who wins and survives is worthy of talking about spirit and honor." This is a quote from Lant, the world's second strongest fighter.

At this moment.

The system announced, already echoing above the challenge platform: "The moment of glory has arrived; victory belongs to 'Defender-Yuan.' His long spear was like an insurmountable barrier, successfully defending his honor and becoming the ultimate victor."

...

"The challenge space will close soon, 60, 59..." Text appeared on the screen above the platform.

Many people quickly began to leave.

Whoosh! Lin Lanyue, who had just been eliminated, reappeared on the platform, no longer wearing her combat armor.

She had reverted to her original attire.

The wound on Li Yuan's shoulder had also healed, and his weapons and armor had vanished.

In a non-combat state, in a non-combat space, it was impossible to harm others.

"Lin Lanyue, thank you for letting me win," Li Yuan said with a smile.

Lin Lanyue frowned slightly and said, "Your spear technique is indeed powerful; I am not your match."

A little over ten seconds after the battle had ended.

Lin Lanyue reviewed it right away and understood that Li Yuan's martial arts skills really were superior.

Otherwise, her relentless assault with dozens of strikes could not have been so effortlessly blocked by the opponent, who ultimately counter-struck with a single thrust to kill her.

This could only mean that there was indeed a gap between them.

"But there is one thing, I hope you will explain clearly to me and the other students," Lin Lanyue said, staring at Li Yuan.

"Explain?" Li Yuan was startled, immediately thinking of the hostility Lin Lanyue had shown at first.

"Are you referring to what the others were saying?" Li Yuan shook his head, about to explain, "It has nothing to do with me, it's them who..."

Bang!!

A figure rushed onto the platform.

"Brother Yuan, you won today. What's our next step?" Zhou Qi excitedly ran onto the platform.

Li Yuan was surprised: "..."

"It has nothing to do with you?" Lin Lanyue glanced at Li Yuan and then at Zhou Qi with a slight frown but did not say anything else.

She left the virtual space directly.

"Eh? Why did Lin Lanyue leave?" Zhou Qi realized belatedly, "Brother Yuan, did I ruin the mood between you two? I just got too excited, didn't I?"

Li Yuan was silent for three seconds before he slowly said, "Old Zhou, I want you to do something for me."

"What is it? Just say the word, Brother Yuan," Zhou Qi said confidently.

"Be my sparring partner."

"Fight me in ten matches," Li Yuan said with a hint of a smile; "Otherwise, I won't feel at ease."

"Sparring partner?" Zhou Qi turned and tried to slip away.

..."He's so cool!"

"How come I didn't notice this before in school?"

"I kind of want Li Yuan to be my third boyfriend. I'll ask him out at school tomorrow."

"Let me have him; I only have one." A few girls were still discussing in low voices, seemingly worried others might overhear.

The 60-second countdown ended, and the combat space closed.

...

After practicing (and dominating) in three matches with Zhou Qi and Wan Xiao, Li Yuan let them go.

He returned to his personal combat space.

All was quiet.

"Next, it's time to start ranking up," Li Yuan thought, and a light screen appeared in front of him:

Ranking Match: Gold Stage.

Points: 112 (1000 points needed for promotion match)

Win Rate in Stage: 52%

Overall Historical Win Rate: 57%

...

"According to the rules, underage players who reach 500 points in the Gold Stage get a reward of 50,000 Blue Star Coins," Li Yuan mused. "If I can reach the Fallen Star Stage, I'll get a reward of 500,000 Blue Star Coins."

"My birthday is in August, and it's going to be tough to reach the Fallen Star Stage in the coming year."

"However, with my two trump cards, there is still hope of reaching 500 points in the Gold Stage," Li Yuan said as he clicked to begin.

Ranking match matchmaking.

"Win a match, earn 1-12 points; lose a match, lose 1-12 points," Li Yuan recited in his mind. "The more points you get if your opponent's rank is higher than yours and you win."

"If your opponent's rank is lower and you lose, you'll lose a lot of points."

"I hope I can make it in one go today," Li Yuan thought to himself.

Beep—Match found.

"You are about to enter a ranking match, your opponent is in the Gold Stage (322 points), please prepare for combat," the system reminded.

"Entering combat space, countdown starting at 10, 9..."

## Chapter 23: 21, 192 games! 496 points!

...

The Starry Skies Fighting Network has over ten different multiplayer combat modes, including battle royale for a thousand players, Star Realm Survival, ranked matches, matchmaking fights, and individual duels.

Modes like the battle royale and Star Realm Survival typically involve teams of 3-10 players, challenging not only individual strength but also teamwork, and they are extremely popular.

Many martial arts streamers spend years in these two modes of combat.

If they co-operate well, they can completely achieve victory against stronger opponents.

Li Yuan, Yan Zhou, and Zhou Qi would often form teams during their leisure time only to face crushing defeats...

But the true martial arts masters who aspired to push the limits of their lives and hone their martial arts skills...

would focus more on 'ranked matches'.

With exactly the same physical quality and a random combination of cold weapons... the contest is about the combatants' martial arts skills and their awareness in battle.

The purest form of martial combat.

Only the victor survives.

Since his junior year of high school, aside from practicing in reality, Li Yuan spent almost every holiday, summer vacation, and winter vacation participating in ranked matches.

His main goal was to sharpen his own martial arts skills through these virtual duels that were close to real fights.

...In the ranked match arena, a huge platform with not a single spectator.

Shua! Shua!

Li Yuan and a fiery red figure appeared simultaneously on opposite sides of the platform.

"Li Yuan?"

"Lin Lanyue, you're also in ranked matchmaking?" The two stared at each other, both somewhat taken aback.

Neither expected to be matched again just two minutes after their duel had ended.

It was extremely rare.

Both ranked and matchmaking fights paired fighters with equivalent ranks from around the globe.

Just how many were at the Gold Stage worldwide?

At least ten million.

Both fell into an uncomfortable silence, then three seconds later.

"I'm not going to lose."

Lin Lanyue was the first to speak, her eyes fixed on Li Yuan as she coldly said, "You may be slightly better in martial arts skills, but that doesn't mean I'm bound to lose."

"Mm-hmm, you're right," Li Yuan nodded.

42 seconds later.

On the platform.

"Puchi!"

His long spear was like a dragon, as Li Yuan once again suddenly erupted, ruthlessly piercing Lin Lanyue's chest with his fierce long spear.

"You..." Lin Lanyue, enduring the intense pain of being impaled by the spear, only managed to shout one word.

Before her entire being turned to nothingness.

"You've gotten a bit smarter, refraining from rash attacks, always probing," Li Yuan retrieved his spear, gently shaking his head: "It's just a pity, I only revealed a single flaw, and you were duped again."

"You really want to win against me too badly."

"The more you want to win, the easier it is to lose," Li Yuan murmured to himself: "Always keep a steady mindset."

"Steady as an old dog, you advance unstoppable."

At this point.

Li Yuan had received a system notification: "Congratulations, Guardian Yuan, you've won this Gold Stage match, points +10!"

"Her rank points were higher than mine."

"So the system considers my win bonus points?" Li Yuan thought.

Winning a fight and earning 10 points was a significant amount.

"Continue matching," Li Yuan willed.

...

In another private space.

"So annoying!!"

"Damn Li Yuan, it must have been on purpose, aargh!!"

Alone in a space with a starry sky backdrop, the red-haired Lin Lanyue couldn't hold back any longer, grinding her teeth as she murmured to herself: "I curse you to never find a wife in your life."

For Lanyue, losing wasn't something she cared about.

She didn't even know how many times she had lost in ranked matches.

If it were just two simple losses to Li Yuan, she wouldn't be so angry.

She was prepared for the possibility of defeat when she agreed to the duel.



What mattered was how she lost.

Twice she had been pierced through the chest by a long spear; once might be coincidence, but twice? Still coincidence?

"Calm down! Lin Lanyue, you need to stay calm," Lin Lanyue took a deep breath, striving to calm herself down: "In martial arts cultivation, the first thing is to remain calm, not to panic in any situation."

Suddenly.

Drip— A communicative call.

Seeing the name displayed on the communication projection.

"Big Brother?" Lin Lanyue hesitated, then murmured softly, "Xiao Qing, answer the call."

Buzz—the projection changed, revealing a young man wearing blue martial arts attire, quite handsome.

The man's features bore some resemblance to Lin Lanyue.

"Little sister," said the man with a smile.

"Big Brother," Lin Lanyue suppressed the irritation in her heart, revealing a small smile: "What made you suddenly contact me?"

"What, I can't get in touch with you?" the young man said with a smile.

"Hmph!"

Lin Lanyue couldn't help but snort, "Big Brother, think about how long it's been since you last got in touch with me."

The young man smiled indulgently and said, "I heard from Xiao Qiang that you lost a duel with a classmate on the Starry Skies Fighting Network, so I came to see how you were right away."

...

"Gǔ Qiánghàn, that loudmouth." Lin Lanyue frowned. "I'll go teach him a lesson at school tomorrow."

"Xiao Qiang is just worried about you, so he told me." The young man smiled. "As an older sister, don't be too hard on him."

"I know—" Lin Lanyue elongated her tone.

But in her mind, she was figuring out how to deal with Gu Qiang tomorrow at school.

"I watched your fight video." The young man spoke seriously. "It's normal for you to lose, aside from being at a disadvantage with weapons, that boy's spear technique is also much higher than yours, I reckon he must be at the Third Stage Intermediate Rank."

"Third Stage Intermediate Rank?" Lin Lanyue was slightly surprised, aware of the ranking divisions of Martial Arts Skills.

Lin Lanyue could sense that Li Yuan's Martial Arts Skills were higher, but she hadn't expected him to be so much stronger than her.

"His movement technique should also be at the Third Stage level, I fear he might have a chance to be listed in the 'Blue Star Youth Rankings'." The young man said. "That's enough to qualify for special recruitment."

"Blue Star Youth Rankings?" Lin Lanyue was even more astonished.

With her family's vision, she naturally understood the significance of this list.

"How about his Physical Quality?" the young man asked casually.

"So-so, I reckon just over level 6, hasn't awakened his Martial Spirit yet." Lin Lanyue shook her head.

She had some understanding of Li Yuan's situation.

"Hasn't awakened his Martial Spirit?" The young man was taken aback, then shook his head. "That's a bit of a pity."

The young man had only asked casually, without truly caring.

To him, whether Li Yuan was good or bad didn't matter.

"Little sister, your Swordsmanship should have just broken through to the Third Stage," the young man laughed. "In a normal sparring match, you'd have a hard time winning against that boy even out of a hundred attempts."

Lin Lanyue involuntarily bit her lower lip.

She was unwilling to accept it at heart, but she also knew her second brother's judgment was possibly even more astute than Teacher Xu Bo's.

"Having such a Martial Arts Skills genius as a classmate is a good thing," the young man smiled. "It's also a warning for you, so you won't get overly proud thinking you're the top of the middle school grade."

"I wasn't," Lin Lanyue frowned. "Second Brother, did you come to comfort me, or to lecture me?"

"Haha, okay."

"My mistake, I won't scold you anymore." The young man laughed. "You focus on honing your Swordsmanship, there's still half a year's time, strive to break into the Blue Star Youth Rankings."

"With that qualification, when you enter Starry Sky University, you will be given more attention, and dad can also apply to the family for more resources for you," the young man said.

"Yeah, I know." Lin Lanyue nodded.

She wasn't young anymore, soon to be of age, and was very clear on how the family operated.

When there are many children, only those who are sufficiently excellent can receive the family's resource investment for cultivation.

Otherwise, even upon reaching adulthood, you'd barely get fifty thousand Blue Star Coins per month for living expenses.

Forget about anything else.

"In two weeks, after Big Brother and I come back from the United States, we'll come visit you specifically," the young man smiled.

"Your matters are resolved? Is dad not coming?" Lin Lanyue was quite surprised.

"Dad has to go to Ross Country, there are still military affairs to attend to," the young man shook his head.

"Oh!" Lin Lanyue pursed her lips, rather disappointed.

Before long.

Lin Lanyue ended the call with her second brother.

"Third Stage Intermediate Spear Technique, Third Stage movement technique?" Lin Lanyue murmured to herself: "This Li Yuan, he progresses so fast."

She remembered very clearly.

In freshman year, there was no mention of Li Yuan in the grade rankings; he rose suddenly in sophomore year.

In just one year, by the end of the sophomore final exams, he had burst into the top thirty of his grade, even surpassing her in the single Martial Arts Skills score.

In reality, losing a single top score had minimal impact on Lin Lanyue.

But it made her take note of the name Li Yuan.

"In that exam, I was only a few points behind in skill score, which means the gap wasn't big." Lin Lanyue clenched her teeth. "Now, he has become so much stronger than me in Martial Arts Skills?"

Lin Lanyue didn't quite understand.

She had received excellent Martial Arts education since childhood, had the guidance of a dedicated Swordsmanship teacher, and she practiced diligently... yet, she was rapidly overtaken and surpassed by him.

"Perhaps."

"Just as dad said, there are always some geniuses in this world." Lin Lanyue shook her head to herself. "It's just a pity that without awakening Martial Spirit, it's too hard to achieve great success in the Martial Path."

She was verbally annoyed, feeling that in both bouts, Li Yuan had done it on purpose.

But deep inside, Lin Lanyue felt some regret for Li Yuan.

"Let's continue."

"Following the 'Mind Method' dad helped me with, I can almost go through forty ranking matches at one time." Lin Lanyue resumed matchmaking.

Ordinary people get a headache from playing video games for too long.

The virtual fights on the Starry Skies Fighting Network are much more taxing on the spirit.

Especially when injured or defeated, that intense pain is extremely stimulating for the mind.

So, virtual duels can't go on indefinitely.

...

Night, nine o'clock.

In the virtual network, Starry Skies Fighting Network, inside Li Yuan's personal space.

"Finally, almost there." Li Yuan took a deep breath, eyes scanning over his ranking match panel:

Ranking Match: Gold Stage.

Points: 496 (1000 points needed to participate in promotion matches)

...

From two o'clock in the afternoon until nine at night.

For seven hours, Li Yuan had hardly rested, fighting a total of 192 matches.

He won 120 matches and lost 72.

And had pushed his points from 112 to 496.

Only one victory away from reaching 500 points.

## Chapter 24: 22 Global [4684] Name

The ranking battle mode, with consecutive wins, would occasionally match Li Yuan with those masters above 500 points in the Gold Stage,

but those were still the minority—most of the time, he was prioritized to match with players who had nearly the same amount of points.

"After creating 'Hidden Dragon in the Cleft,' my Spear Technique has greatly improved. Now, when I face the Martial Arts masters in the lower levels of the Gold Stage, my win rate has increased significantly," Li Yuan said with a hint of exhaustion but still brimming with fighting spirit.

His points had been soaring up until now.

"Ordinary adults, with insufficient spiritual power, would probably need to rest after six or seven battles, and can fight a maximum of twenty to thirty bouts per day at most; otherwise, they would strain their energy and affect their real-life cultivation," Li Yuan's eyes twinkled with light.

"But me, I can experience up to two hundred virtual battles in a single day and still maintain my peak condition."

Why had Li Yuan's Martial Arts Skills skyrocketed over the past year?

Aside from his innate comprehension in Spear Technique,

it also had an inseparable relationship with his continuously strengthening spiritual power.

The stronger the spiritual power, the more control he has over his body during daily practice, the faster the improvement in his Spear Technique.

Similarly, in the virtual Combat Network battles, he could fight more bouts.

His year of virtual fights was equivalent to the training many others would accumulate over three or even five years.

With such conditions, how could Li Yuan's Martial Arts Skills not improve rapidly?

"The last battle, I must win,"

"Five thousand bucks, they're mine," Li Yuan clicked on the option box—Start Matching.

Beep—Match Successful.

"Entering the ranking match soon, your opponent is in the Gold Stage (499 points)... Countdown 10, 9..."

...

Inside a broadcasting room on the Starry Skies Fighting Network, the live stream title read, 'Martial Path Champion's Road, Furiously Rushing to 500 Gold Stage Points.'

In the broadcasting room was a young elf-dressed girl, about seventeen or eighteen years old, and... a middle-aged commentator.

"Brothers,"

"Xiu'er, who is aspiring to be the Martial Path champion of South Bright City, surpassed 360 points in Martial Arts Skills during the last school Martial Path test... today, she attempts to rush to 500 points in the Gold Stage,"

The girl occasionally tossed her head, looking quite adorable as she awaited the match.

But the middle-aged commentator was very excited.

"Reaching 500 points in the Gold Stage, not to mention South Bright City, even in the whole of Jiangbei Province, there are still fewer than 50 people under 18 who can reach this stage... Let's see if Xiu'er can succeed in her third attempt," the middle-aged commentator quickly said.

"Oh! Match successful!"

"The opponent's points are 496, another Martial Arts master aiming for the Gold Stage,"

"In her previous two attempts today, the opponents both had over 600 points. This time, with only 496 points... let's watch with anticipation... 5, 4..." the middle-aged man said excitedly.

There were plenty of Martial Arts livestreamers in the Gold Stage.

But for underage broadcasters to reach the Gold Stage was quite rare. The additional appeal of battling for the top spot in the college entrance exam, an elven young girl, attractiveness... these gimmicks attracted even more attention.

This broadcaster named "Xiu'er" was quite popular on the Starry Skies Fighting Network.

At the moment, the viewing count had already surpassed two thousand people.

Of course, as a minor, she couldn't broadcast alone; at least not until over 16 years old, and even then, a guardian must accompany her and there's a time restriction on weekly broadcasts... all mandated by law.

"This time, I should succeed,"

"The opponent's 496 points seem much weaker than the last two,"

"Knock out the opponent."

"Xiu'er has fought over 30 matches today, with a win rate of 56.6%, which is very good. I'll tip her."

"I've been watching Xiu'er's broadcasts for two years,"

"It's nurturing! Raising a Martial Path champion, I'm just waiting for the day Xiu'er becomes one,"

"She'll definitely win," a torrent of text bullet comments, voice bullet comments, image bullet comments flashed by... along with various tips.

Suddenly,

Whoosh! The live broadcast scene shifted, forming a fighting arena, and a young man with a long spear appeared on the other side of the stage.

"A young man?"

"The opponent looks so young; could he also be a minor?"

"Definitely an adult, this is just a virtual image. If he were also a minor, wouldn't he be vying for the top spot in the college entrance exam too?" the audience discussed among themselves.

...

On the battle stage,

"Hm? So many people?" As soon as Li Yuan stood on the stage, he realized that the previously empty Spectator Platform suddenly filled with a massive crowd, teeming with thousands of viewers.

"A big broadcaster?" Li Yuan glanced around, and his gaze finally rested on the elven girl holding a silver long spear twenty meters away.

Normally in Gold Stage matching, even if you encountered a broadcaster, having a hundred spectators was considered good.

Meeting a big broadcaster with thousands of viewers? It was the first time Li Yuan had encountered such a thing today.

Li Yuan could completely block out the sound from the Spectator Platform and ignore the external audience... but he chose not to.

"A broadcaster?"

"Seems to be an underage girl broadcaster?" Li Yuan heard some of the audience's voices, "Let's see how strong she can be."

In fact, Li Yuan had tried broadcasting before; he had thought about earning money through live streaming to ease his family's financial pressures... but he soon realized.

This industry was deeply complex.

Unless one was a super-high-level expert in the Sun Eclipse Stage, becoming popular as a broadcaster was very difficult.

Those who did become popular broadcasters had more than just Martial Arts Skills to thank.



Being good at fighting did not guarantee proficiency in broadcasting.

Making money was never simple in any field.

Moreover, Li Yuan was very clear in his understanding that virtual battles were ultimately just an auxiliary means for honing Martial Arts Skills, and real-life cultivation was the core.

The purpose of making money, too, was for cultivating the Martial Path.

One should not lose sight of the essence by focusing on the superficial.

"Xiu'er?" Li Yuan looked at the name of the elf girl, vaguely recalling having scrolled past her live broadcast videos.

But the impression wasn't deep; she likely wasn't one of the top broadcasters.

"Hello."

"May I take a turn with this?" asked the elf girl, holding a silver long spear with a giggly smile, quite adorable.

Li Yuan slightly furrowed his brows.

Whoosh!

Suddenly, the elf girl moved with the speed of an 8.0-grade Physical Quality, like lightning as she charged toward Li Yuan.

"Xiu'er starts playing dirty again."

"Stab him!"

"This guy must have been tricked, probably hasn't watched Xiu'er's livestream." The Spectator Platform erupted with numerous voices.

"Pfft!" The silver long spear thrust straight!

"Straight Thrust?"

Without the slightest hesitation, Li Yuan gripped the spear with his left hand and supported it with his right, thrusting straight with a midline stance as well.

It was as though both were using a mutually destructive move.

But the long spear Li Yuan had chosen was nearly three meters long, about half a meter longer than his opponent's... and Li Yuan's character model was taller with longer arm reach.

It was destined that Li Yuan's spear would be the first to strike the opponent.

An inch longer, an inch stronger.

"Bang~"

At the moment their spear tips crossed, the elf girl's Silver Spear suddenly trembled, unleashing terrifying strength in an attempt to knock Li Yuan's long spear aside... clearly, she had realized her weapon's disadvantage.

"Bang~"

However, Li Yuan, as if foreseeing her move, similarly shook his long spear with equal hardness.

Then, with a glance from the corner of his eye, he swiftly backpedaled, landing and neutralizing the impact of the force.

"Whoosh!" A violent rush of air from the spear wind.

The elf girl's follow-up thrust came up empty, the spear tip just an inch from Li Yuan's head.

"Despite the continuous collisions, she still maintains the stability of her spear for consecutive attacks... This must be some kind of killer move," Li Yuan dodged the thrust and made a judgment, "I must be cautious."

In a usual scrimmage, repeated impacts cause recoil that transmits through the spear, affecting the fighter, making many maneuvers difficult and requiring adjustment.

If the opponent can attack consecutively, it indicates that the combination is very special.

Such killer moves are those that perfectly harness Vigor, allowing for defense and attack combinations that ordinary people can't achieve.

"Such quick reflexes, such strong movement technique," the elf girl said, equally surprised at her pretty face.

This combination was one of her killer moves, which often took her opponents by surprise and allowed her to resolve fights in just a few moves.

..."Such impressive movement technique."

"Very steady!"

"The common folk includes a true master."

"Xiu'er just got outplayed," laughed many spectators on the Spectator Platform; they weren't really concerned about winning or losing.

...

"Clang!" "Clang!" "Clang!"

With each collision, both sides proved to be masters of Spear Technique, constantly moving at high speed and probing for opportunities.

Each was trying to find the other's weakness and seize the chance.

But Li Yuan was very steady, scarcely initiating an attack, preferring not to attempt glory but to avoid fault, his defenses repeatedly blocking the elf girl's Silver Spear.

"Virtual combat is for honing Spear Technique, fighting one more or one fewer battle makes little difference," Li Yuan thought calmly, not in a hurry.

But desperation gradually grew in the elf girl.

She could hear the murmurs of the surrounding audience, many making light of her with comments like 'kind of boring,' 'won't you fight,' 'charge in,' 'just circling around,' 'are these two putting on a play,' 'Can you still be called Xiu'er if you can't put on a show,' 'Where's all that bragging now,' 'told you she's not up for it'..."

While the elf girl wanted victory, the race to 500 Points and the associated rewards, she was also looking for an impact on her livestream.

"This guy, like a turtle."

"If this keeps up, the fight won't end in five minutes, probably half the spectators will leave, not waiting any longer," the elf girl gritted her teeth and took the initiative to attack.

"Clang!" "Bang~"

Mere moments after the spear shaft and tip collided several times, Li Yuan kept retreating while the elf girl advanced with each step.

"Here's my chance," the elf girl's eyes sparkled.

In less than ten exchanges, as Li Yuan was almost backed to the edge of the ring and the elf girl thought she was about to win.

"Whoosh!" The normally defensive Li Yuan suddenly exploded into action, his long spear thrusting swiftly.

"Rip~"

The long spear tore through the air, emitting a sharp whistling sound!

"Not good," 'Xiu'er,' the elf girl's pupils contracted. Just as she thought of retreating, the spearhead pierced through her throat.

It was simply too fast!

The skirmish had lasted nearly two minutes, with her dominating the scene for over ninety percent of that time.

But as she launched a continuous attack at the moment when her old strength was spent and new strength had not yet emerged, Li Yuan seized the opportunity for a decisive blow.

"The Martial Arts livestream is popular with spectators, who will tip with gifts for entertainment, allowing one to profit."

"Sometimes those spectators can also ignite one's passion for battle," Li Yuan silently retrieved his spear, glancing toward the now bustling Spectator Platform nearby: "But acting on momentum can also result in being constrained and troubled by it."

"Life-and-death battles should be pure."

"Fighting isn't for show, it's about determining life and death."

"Your Martial Arts Skills are not inferior to mine, but you didn't focus your heart entirely on the battle," Li Yuan stared at the spot where the elf girl had vanished: "That is why you lost."

Life-and-death battles have never been determined solely by Physical Quality or Martial Arts Skills.

It's also about mentality.

Practicing the Solid Rock Cultivation Technique, Li Yuan had a frighteningly stable mentality.

"Congratulations, Defender·Yuan, you've won this Gold Stage match, Points +10."

"Congratulations, Defender·Yuan, you've reached 500 Points at the Gold Stage, eligible to claim a reward of 50,000 Blue Star Coins."

"Congratulations, Defender·Yuan, you have entered the 'Starry Sky Youth Ranking,' placed at number [4684] globally, number [1224] in the Xia Country District, and number [47] in the Jiangbei Division, detailed rankings can be checked through the following methods..."

## Chapter 25: 23 Special Admission Qualifications

Starry Skies Fighting Network, Personal Space.

Li Yuan's consciousness had just returned to his body.

Rustle~ Countless lights and shadows converged, coalescing into the figure of a young girl dressed in a green ancient costume.

"Guardian Yuan, congratulations on your entry into the Youth Rankings of Blue Star. Your status within the Starry Skies Fighting Network has been elevated," the girl in the green costume said with a slight smile. "From today onwards, I will be your dedicated artificial intelligence customer service in the Starry Skies Fighting Network, at your service throughout the entire process. You may name me."

"Dedicated artificial intelligence customer service?" Li Yuan was slightly taken aback.

AI intelligence in this era was already very advanced.

As far as Li Yuan knew, usually only when a user had charged up a certain amount of money into the 'Starry Skies Fighting Network' and purchased many additional services could they get their own dedicated AI customer service.

Unexpectedly, simply being listed on this so-called Youth Rankings of Blue Star also had this benefit.

"Xiaoyu," Li Yuan said directly. His own AI wristband was named Xiaoyu as well.

One size fits all.

"Xiaoyu is pleased to serve you," the girl in the green dress said with a small bow, looking very innocent.

"I want to view the Youth Rankings of Blue Star as well as the order of the list," Li Yuan said directly.

"Understood," the girl replied with a wave of her delicate green hand, as a light screen projection appeared before Li Yuan.

It contained a great deal of text description, along with various videos and images.

Li Yuan quickly understood.

"The Youth Rankings of Blue Star are compiled by the 'Starry Skies Fighting Network.' Anyone who reaches 500 points at the Gold Stage is eligible for entry," Li Yuan thought to himself. "According to rumors, behind the Starry Skies Fighting Network are the Seven Star Alliance, the three Great Martial Halls, and various powerful nations...

It serves not only as a high-intensity method to hone martial artists' martial arts skills, but also to select martial arts prodigies."

Now it seemed, the rumors were not unfounded.

"The Youth Rankings of Blue Star purely evaluates martial arts skills," Li Yuan nodded slightly. "That makes sense; the Starry Skies Fighting Network can easily filter candidates without expending additional resources."

"If they were to assess both martial arts skills and scrutinize physical quality and talent... that would essentially be a college entrance examination," Li Yuan couldn't help laughing.

Whether it's all of human civilization or just a single country, efforts are made to screen out talents in technology and martial arts... The college entrance exam is the most extensive and comprehensive evaluation method.

The Starry Skies Fighting Network, by contrast, is about selecting for a single criterion: martial arts skills.

"The Youth Rankings of Blue Star cover the entire Blue Star region. The list resets every year on September 1st," Li Yuan continued to read.

"Any youth who has not reached the age of 18 before the deadline on September 1st is eligible to enter the next year's Youth Rankings of Blue Star."

Li Yuan immediately realized that this so-called Youth Rankings of Blue Star did not comprise only minors.

The oldest on the list might be nearly 19 years old.

For example, those born on September 2nd.

However, if they were indeed martial arts prodigies, they could reach the Gold Stage and amass 500 points at the age of 14 or 15, allowing them to be listed on the Youth Rankings of Blue Star for four or five consecutive years.

"So by this calculation, the current list of the Youth Rankings of Blue Star hasn't even been updated for a month?" Li Yuan thought to himself. "Less than a month, and there are already 4,684 individuals listed?"

And that was just within the region of Blue Star.

Looking at the civilization of the Seven Great Planets, how many must be listed?

If one were to wait until next year, how many more would be on the list by August?

Let alone those from Blue Star who emerged as martial arts prodigies within a year.

"Anyone who can surge to 500 points on the Gold Stage won't have martial arts skills inferior to mine," Li Yuan shook his head slightly. "My martial arts skills are unmatched in the Guan Mountain District's First High School."

"But on a global scale? It's nothing special," Li Yuan calmed himself.

He felt the insignificance of his own achievements.

The world was indeed vast.

"But every journey begins with a single step, and at least I've made it onto the list," Li Yuan then chuckled to himself. "In the entire Jiangbei Province, including me, there are only 47 people — probably most of them are sophomores or juniors in high school."

In Jiangbei Province, there were over a million high school seniors.

In terms of martial arts skills, Li Yuan had already surged to the top echelon of a million high school seniors.

A year ago, Li Yuan would not have dared to imagine achieving such success.

After reading through all the contents,

"Stage rewards?" Li Yuan's gaze fell on the last page, his eyes lighting up.

—Stage Rewards (Before turning 18):

1. Reach 500 points at the Gold Stage, receive a reward of 50,000 Blue Star Coins.
2. Reach the Fallen Star Stage, receive a reward of 500,000 Blue Star Coins.

3. Reach the Bright Moon Stage, receive a reward of 20 million Blue Star Coins.

—Stage Rewards (Ages 18 to 30):

1. Reach the Fallen Star Stage, receive a reward of 10,000 Blue Star Coins.

2. Reach the Bright Moon Stage, receive a reward of 200,000 Blue Star Coins.

3. Reach the Sun Eclipse Stage: receive a reward of 5 million Blue Star Coins.

...

"It's so extravagant," Li Yuan muttered to himself. "A reward of 20 million Blue Star Coins?"

Twenty million! That's what an average person would hope to earn in a hundred years of work.

But Li Yuan had to admit, the difficulty was indeed high; to reach the Bright Moon Stage before the age of 18.

If they surpassed 18 years of age, even if they reached the Bright Moon Stage, the reward would only be 200,000 Blue Star Coins.

"Never mind the Bright Moon Stage, reaching the Fallen Star Stage before the age of 18 would probably be difficult too," Li Yuan shook his head, casually asking, "Xiaoyu, how many on the Youth Rankings of Blue Star have achieved the Fallen Star Stage by now?"

"As of today, there are 44," the girl in the green dress, Xiaoyu, replied, "but the specific list cannot be disclosed."

Li Yuan nodded.

He had already found when attempting to view the list that he could only see general statistical data.

But the specific names? Who had made it onto the Youth Rankings of Blue Star?

Unable to query.

"Perhaps, this is a form of protection," Li Yuan thought darkly. "In some sense, those who are on the list are all martial arts powerhouses of the future, though they have not yet matured."



Though one could find a wealth of information through various countries' school exam results, college entrance exam scores, and so on...

But the difficulty of gathering information in either case was clearly not on the same level.

"Rewards." Li Yuan looked at the three-stage rewards listed on the page, deep in thought.

"Bright Moon Stage? That's too far off, somewhat unrealistic."

"But Fallen Star Stage?"

"My birthday is on August 29, and I have about eleven months to hone my martial arts skills."

"Even if I don't reach it before the college entrance exam, it doesn't matter, I can continue to work hard after the exam."

"As long as I reach the Fallen Star Stage, there's a reward of 500,000 Blue Star Coins," Li Yuan set his goal in his heart.

He was full of anticipation, brimming with motivation.

Because this was a goal he truly had hopes of achieving.

As long as he reached 1000 points in the Gold Stage and then won the promotion match, he would be in the Fallen Star Stage.

"Let's try a few more matches," Li Yuan couldn't help but click 'Stage Matching'.

Six minutes later.

"Lost!"

"Lost!"

"Three consecutive losses, all against experts with over 600 points, I lost them all," Li Yuan returned to his personal space, feeling somewhat helpless.

Not only did he not gain points, but he had dropped back down to 491 points.

Li Yuan calmed down as well.

"It seems that 500 points is indeed a threshold. With my strength, I have a winning rate of over 80% against those under 500 points," Li Yuan reviewed today's battles. "Facing

experts with 500 points, especially those over 600 points, my chances of victory are less than 30%."

"This means, to dominate at the Gold Stage with my martial arts skills, I'm still far off."

To think about reaching the Fallen Star Stage without being nearly unbeatable at the Gold Stage?

It's practically a fool's dream.

The gap between each rank in the Starry Skies Fighting Network is vast, almost insurmountable.

"Little Jade, my points fell below 500, that won't affect my reward, right?" Li Yuan asked.

"It won't affect it."

"The Blue Star Coin reward is based on your historical highest score," the girl in green said with a smile. "The 50,000 Blue Star Coin reward will be issued to your bank account after a unified review on Monday."

"Good," Li Yuan nodded his head.

The Starry Skies Fighting Network, as the number one game in the virtual network, is also endorsed by the authorities...trustworthy.

"Log out," thought Li Yuan.

He left the virtual network.

...

After leaving his room.

"Bro, come and have an apple, I've cut it for you," his sister Li Qianqian called from the sofa.

"Sure," Li Yuan smiled. "Watching a projection? What's this show?"

"Bro, it's not a drama series; it's a documentary, 'Exploration of the Rob Sea Star Realm,' by our country's first explorer who first entered the Rob Sea..." His brother Li Muhua quickly explained, reciting the details like it was precious knowledge.

"Oh?" Li Yuan nodded, sat down, and watched the documentary with his brother and sister while eating apples.

The interior of the Star Realm is very unique; many technological devices fail to function.

Added to that, numerous Star Realm Creatures roam freely, putting one in constant danger... Over the decades, human civilization has been fighting, but there is not much footage about the depths of the Star Realm.

"These explorers are all martial artists, huh? They leap up cliffs tens of meters high as if it were nothing," Li Muhua couldn't help but say.

"Without the strength of a martial artist, who would dare to venture into the Star Realm? Isn't that suicide?" Li Yuan laughed. "Moreover, they are not ordinary martial artists."

At the very least, their physical quality must exceed level 20!

...

After watching the documentary for half an hour, their aunt came out of the master bedroom and urged everyone to go to bed.

After washing up, Li Yuan returned to his room.

He was in no rush to tell his aunt about reaching 500 points in the Gold Stage.

"I'll wait until both sums of money are truly in my account," Li Yuan stood barefoot in the room.

"I've spent the entire day in the virtual network."

"Can't neglect the Basic Cultivation Method."

"Two hours of 'Solid Rock Cultivation Technique' first, then the 'Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture'," Li Yuan quickly made a decision.

For Li Yuan, having a snack with his brother and sister and watching a projection show was already a rare relaxation.

Martial Arts Cultivation had no shortcuts.

It's about daily accumulation.

...

Late at night.

When Li Yuan got up at three in the morning and quietly left home to rush to school.

In Jiangbei Province, at the Martial Arts Hall.

The smart system and the duty personnel had already received an unremarkable file pending review.

"Blue Star Youth List 2042-2043 period, entry number [4684], name 'Li Yuan,' place of residence 'Guan Mountain District, Jiang City, Jiangbei Province'... Please conduct a comprehensive assessment of this individual within 10 days to confirm whether he qualifies for the special recruitment of Martial Artist Students."

## Chapter 26: 24: Arrived! Joy!

...

At eight in the morning, at Guan Mountain District's Number One High School.

Li Yuan was frowning, twirling his pen while working on the math test paper in front of him, feeling waves of headache, derivatives, limits, continuity, indefinite integrals, linear transformations... College content from over a century ago, now they had all become high school math exam topics.

People in this era are much stronger physically, and their learning efficiency is higher, so exam difficulty has increased as well.

"Math is really difficult."

"Memorizing history and biology is way easier than this," Li Yuan muttered to himself, yet he was seriously working on these math problems.

Since his junior year, Li Yuan's spiritual power had been continuously improving, which significantly increased his thinking speed and memory... As a result, even though he only spent four hours a day on his academic studies, his grades were still not left behind by his classmates.

Even among the whole grade, his academic performance had improved.

Keep in mind, Guan Mountain District's Number One High School is a key school, and an average student there would be considered a top student in some regular high schools.

However, this was also approaching the limit of Li Yuan's academic study potential.

An increase in memory greatly improved Li Yuan's performance in subjects like language, history, and biology, which require a lot of rote memorization... But subjects like math and physics were difficult.

Unfortunately, in the current college entrance examination, math and physics are the subjects with the highest score weighting.

"I must study hard and try to get full basic scores in math, physics, and chemistry." Li Yuan resolved.

Just then.

Buzz~

Li Yuan's smart ring vibrated twice in quick succession.

"Hmm?" Li Yuan glanced out of the corner of his eye, his eyes lighting up.

"Your account ending in 1486 has received 50,000.00 Blue Star Coins... transferred into account ending with... balance 83,124.64 Blue Star Coins."

"Your account ending in 1486 has received 50,000.00 Blue Star Coins... transferred into account ending with... balance 133,124.64 Blue Star Coins."

Two sums of money, fifty thousand was a reward from the Starry Skies Fighting Network.

Another fifty thousand was an award for a Second Class scholarship.

"Good!" Li Yuan couldn't help but clench his fists; if it weren't for being in class, he would probably have jumped up in excitement.

100,000 Blue Star Coins!

From childhood till now, Li Yuan was receiving such a large sum of money for the first time.

Most importantly, in a way, this was a reward gained through his own efforts.

It's fundamentally different from what his uncle and aunt gave him.

Just like many people remember receiving their first paycheck after growing up and starting work, even if they later obtained ten times, a hundred times more wealth... it couldn't replace the significance of that first paycheck.

The first time is always special.

"Brother Yuan, what's up? You seem so happy? Did you solve a big problem?" Yan Zhou, who was sitting beside, glanced at his own test paper and whispered, "Let me see."

"No."

Li Yuan calmed down, subconsciously glanced up in the direction of the teacher to see if the teacher had noticed him, "I only answer the first question every time."

Suddenly.

"Some students, don't think the teacher can't see you, it just that I don't want to call out your name," a cold voice sounded, "Do it yourself! Can you cheat like this during the college entrance exams?"

Li Yuan and Yan Zhou both lowered their heads and closed their mouths at the same time.

...

At nine in the morning, in the principal's office.

The principal, Tan Zhenlong, who was working, suddenly looked up at a flickering light screen projection not far away.

"Master, it's the 'Director Wang' from the Education Bureau," a gentle voice rang out.

"Number Nine, answer the call," Principal Tan set down his pen, "Activate reception mode."

"Yes."

Woosh~ The principal's office immediately changed as beams of light swept across, significantly altering the decor of the office, making it visibly more comfortable through the change in lighting.

"Director Wang," Principal Tan said with a smile.

In the projection, a young man wearing a jacket appeared, looking to be about thirty years old.

"Principal Tan, sorry to disturb you," Director Wang said with a smile, "I need to trouble you with something, it's about a student at your school."

"A student?" Principal Tan became curious instantly.

"Yes, this morning the city's Martial Arts Hall notified us that we need to report information about a student from your school named Li Yuan, he should be a senior," Director Wang said, "Yesterday, he just broke into the Blue Star Youth Rankings..."

"Li Yuan? I know of this student, he is a good prospect," Principal Tan nodded repeatedly, "I understand, I'll compile the data and send it to you right away."

Having worked in the education sector for decades, he had encountered similar situations more than once.

Principal Tan already understood the implications and knew what he needed to do.

"Alright, it's all routine, I won't keep you any longer," Director Wang said with a smile, "Go ahead with your work."

Ending the video call.

"Li Yuan?"

"The Blue Star Youth Rankings? He made it on so quickly?" Principal Tan was surprised as he sat at his desk.

Yesterday, he had been invited to see the match between Lin Lanyue and Li Yuan and felt that the latter might make it onto the Blue Star Youth Rankings.

But he didn't expect it would happen so quickly.

After thinking for a moment.

"Number Nine, contact Teacher Xu Bo," Principal Tan spoke, and the connection was quickly made.

"Old Tan, you looking for me?" Xu Bo appeared in the video, smiling, "What's up? Hurry up and say it, don't delay my cultivation."

"Cultivating during work hours?" Principal Tan glared.

"No Martial Arts classes this morning, what else would I do if not cultivate?" Xu Bo replied with conviction, "My diligent cultivation is also so I can do my job well."

Principal Tan couldn't help but smile helplessly, "Let's not digress, I have something to tell you."

Quickly.

...

Principal Tan explained the relevant situation.

"The Blue Star Youth Ranking? Martial Arts Department? It must be about the special recruitment by the five prestigious schools." Xu Bo shook his head lightly, "Based on my experience, it's probably impossible to get the special recruitment qualifications."

In this era, the Martial Arts Department within Xia Country, responsible for managing martial artists, held astonishing power.

The subordinate Martial Arts Hall and Martial Arts Offices were also extremely influential.

"Yes, that's what I think too," Principal Tan sighed lightly, "Not awakening the Martial Spirit means you're not suitable for any high-rank cultivation methods. Future physical quality improvements will fall far behind those of other martial artists. Indeed, it's difficult to get directly recruited by one of the top five schools through special recruitment."

Xu Bo nodded slightly, without saying much more.

Although he had a suspicion that Li Yuan's physical quality had improved remarkably and he had high actual talent... that was just his guess.

Over the years, not just throughout all of human civilization, but even within Xia Country alone, there had been many students like Li Yuan. Strong in martial arts skills, decent physical quality, but never able to awaken their Martial Spirit...

Very few ultimately stood out.

"Let's just focus on training him well," Principal Tan pondered, "Even if the special recruitment isn't successful, with his results, it won't be difficult for him to get into a Martial Arts University. His future won't be bad."

"In the future, he might even catch up to you," Principal Tan suddenly said with a smile.

"I hope so," Xu Bo changed the subject, "By the way, Old Tan, since the special recruitment selection is going on, why don't you just give him..."

Xu Bo was interrupted before he could finish speaking.

"Hang it up!" Principal Tan's face lost its smile as he waved his hand, "Hang it up!"

...

"Special recruitment?"



Xu Bo, dressed in his martial arts uniform, stood in his office and pondered, "Forget it, it's just a pipe dream, no need to tell Li Yuan about it. It'll just make him uneasy."

Xu Bo continued to practice his Basic Cultivation Method.

"After my arm was severed, the nerve toxin wasn't completely cleared out, my Origin Power isn't flowing smoothly, and my dantian is also damaged, causing my physical quality to drop by four levels." Xu Bo reflected silently, "All these years, I've only been barely able to maintain at level 19."

"But at least, I'm still alive."

"As long as I don't give up, there's always a glimmer of hope." Xu Bo's eyes shone with light.

...

Li Yuan was completely unaware of his selection for the special recruitment qualification screening by the top five prestigious schools.

It was noon, and classes were over.

"Old Zhou, you guys go ahead to the cafeteria, I've got something to do," Li Yuan told Zhou Qi and the others to go ahead.

One by one, the classmates left until Li Yuan was the only one remaining.

He approached the classroom door, glanced at the corridor, and confirmed that there was no one in the nearby classrooms.

Unable to hold back any longer, Li Yuan immediately activated his smart ring, "Xiao Yu, connect me to auntie."

"Beep—Beep—"

A full six seconds passed.

The hum of a holographic screen projected in front of Li Yuan, visible only to him—a privacy screen.

"Li Yuan, what's the matter? Why the urgent video call?" Aunt Chen Hui looked at Li Yuan anxiously, from what could be seen in the background, she was at her office.

Chen Hui was a middle school teacher.

"Auntie, put on the headphones," Li Yuan said with a smile, "I have some good news for you."

"Good news?" Aunt Chen Hui was taken aback.

Soon she put on the headphones.

"Auntie, it's about the scholarship and..." Li Yuan promptly explained the situation, and concluded with emphasis, "Don't worry, auntie, I'm not lying to you, both amounts have already been deposited into the account."

As he spoke, Li Yuan sent a screenshot of the account to his auntie.

"100,000 Blue Star Coins?" Chen Hui was a bit surprised, her mouth hanging open slightly.

This was almost the equivalent of her annual take-home salary.

"Good!"

"Good!" Chen Hui repeated, her eyes slightly moist with emotion, and she instructed, "Li Yuan, go ahead and eat. Remember to call your uncle after lunch, before one o'clock, they rest from one to two in the afternoon."

"He'll definitely be very happy when he knows about it."

Ever since her son and daughter entered middle school, adding Li Yuan on top of that, these past few years Chen Hui had felt a tremendous financial pressure.

Particularly this month, her husband Li Changzhou had gone to the war front in Northern Border Province for a high compensation package.

Chen Hui often lay awake at night, worried sick, dreading suddenly receiving a certain kind of news.

But she couldn't show it in front of the children.

Chen Hui knew that the 100,000 Blue Star Coins Li Yuan just received wouldn't solve the family's problems.

But at that moment, Chen Hui finally saw a glimmer of hope.

...After hanging up the phone with his auntie.

Li Yuan tried to call his uncle, Li Changzhou, to share the good news with him.

Beep—Beep—

No answer.

"No answer?" Li Yuan was taken aback and couldn't help but feel a bit worried, then he reassured himself, "Uncle must be busy with something."

Leaving a detailed message on the communicator and sending the screenshot of the deposit to Li Changzhou, Li Yuan had done everything he needed to.

With that, Li Yuan finally felt a bit more at ease as he walked out of the classroom.

The September sun poured down on the corridor and on him too.

It was warm and comforting.

"Today's sunshine is really nice." Li Yuan smiled as he went downstairs toward the cafeteria.

## Chapter 27: 25 Message from the Martial Hall

They had lunch.

Students exited the cafeteria in groups of three or two, walking along the tree-lined path, all heading towards the Martial Path building.

Senior year was exhausting, but during the rare free time at noon, most students still had smiles on their faces, brimming with youth and endless longing for the future.

This contrasted starkly with off-duty workers.

Li Yuan and Wan Xiao were on their way to the Elite Class building.

Zhou Qi and Yan Zhou? They took different paths, so they split up after eating.

"That's Li Yuan, isn't it?"

"Seems like it."

"Wan Xiao was in the same class as Li Yuan before; the two of them together, the other one must be Li Yuan."

"Is he the one who defeated Lin Lanyue?"

"I heard he likes Lin Lanyue, and he didn't hold back when striking." Many senior year (class one) students passing by took note of Li Yuan and Wan Xiao.

They all turned their heads to look.

"Li Yuan, after this fight, you've truly made a name for yourself." Wan Xiao said in a low voice with a laugh, "Just now in the cafeteria, there were quite a few people looking at you."

"The entire grade, even the freshmen and sophomores, are spreading your fame." Wan Xiao exaggerated.

"Envious, huh? Isn't it all because you were spreading rumors?" Li Yuan glanced at him, "Want to practice again?"

Wan Xiao choked.

Yesterday on the Starry Skies Fighting Network, he was 'sparring' with Li Yuan for three rounds.

It was a nightmare.

"I've said it wasn't me; it was Zhou Qi..." Wan Xiao shook his head repeatedly.

"You initiated it, and he amplified it," Li Yuan had a clear train of thought.

Wan Xiao suddenly changed the subject, "By the way, Li Yuan, do you really have no feelings for Lin Lanyue? I see a lot of boys in the Elite Class are interested in her, but only a few dare to express it. Could it be that she's not pretty?"

"Lin Lanyue is quite pretty," Li Yuan said casually, not noticing someone behind him.

After all, there are so many people coming and going in the school; one can't always be aware.

Suddenly.

Two girls walked past Li Yuan and Wan Xiao, one of them dressed in practice attire, tall and slender, her long hair tied up high, and she glanced at Li Yuan from the corner of her eye.

It was Lin Lanyue.

"Heard that? Wan Xiao did that on purpose," Li Yuan immediately understood.

"Li Yuan, don't be a coward, if you like her, then say it out loud." Wan Xiao yelled.

At the same time, he was already laughing madly as he ran to the back.

Li Yuan shook his head helplessly, not bothering to chase Wan Xiao, but instead waved his hand and greeted Lin Lanyue openly.

This scene made Lin Lanyue freeze for a moment.

Just now, she had indeed heard Li Yuan's words, but she didn't expect that Li Yuan would take the initiative to greet her.

Looking at Li Yuan's smiling face.

Lin Lanyue couldn't help but think of yesterday's virtual combat, subconsciously touching her chest.

"Lanyue, he's greeting you," the girl beside her, with waist-length hair, made faces, deliberately bumping Lin Lanyue's waist.

"Qiqi, let's go," Lin Lanyue said softly, her slender fingers straightening out a lock of hair by her temple, quickening her pace.

She didn't respond to Li Yuan.

Nor did she look at him again.

"This Lin Lanyue, she was quite polite the first time we met, but today she ignored my greeting," Li Yuan laughed.

He wasn't the type to shrink back in the presence of a pretty girl.

He watched Lin Lanyue and the others enter the Elite Class building.

"Li Yuan, how was my assist?" Wan Xiao popped up from somewhere.

"Nicely done."

"As a token of my gratitude, let's go to my Martial Arts Room first; I'll give you some free extra training," Li Yuan said, draping his arm around Wan Xiao's shoulder with a firm grip that he couldn't break free from.

"Li Yuan, let go of me, I'm not interested in you."

...

It was almost two o'clock.

Inside Martial Arts Room 4011, Li Yuan stood by the window, his gaze falling into the distance.

A fine layer of sweat was seeping through his skin.

Li Yuan had just finished half an hour of Basic Cultivation Method, and his physical quality had improved slightly.

Suddenly.

"Drip—" The sound of the smart bracelet rang.

Li Yuan walked to the side and picked up his bracelet, revealing a pleased expression, "Uncle?"

The call connected.

Hum~ A holographic screen projected in front of Li Yuan.

On the opposing screen was Li Changzhou, wearing a helmet.

"Uncle," Li Yuan said with a smile, a trace of worry in his heart settling down.

"Xiao Yuan."

"Your aunt has already called and told me," Li Changzhou said, sitting on a work chair and smiling, "Good lad, you've done well. I, your uncle, haven't reached 500 points in the Gold Stage on the Starry Skies Fighting Network in decades."

Li Yuan felt warmth in his heart.

It wasn't because he had surpassed his uncle, but because of his uncle's recognition.

"How are things on your end, uncle?" Li Yuan asked.

"No worries, don't be concerned," Li Changzhou replied with a smile, "The Starry Sky Martial Hall has received a large batch of people. I reckon in a few days, we'll be launching a major counteroffensive... I'm calling you because there's another matter, related to you."

"What is it, uncle?" Li Yuan asked immediately.

"It's about your Uncle Zhou. He specifically called me," Li Changzhou looked at Li Yuan, "It seems like he wants to recruit you into the Starry Sky Martial Hall."

"Join the Starry Sky Martial Hall?" Li Yuan was slightly surprised.

Human civilization had three great Martial Halls—Starry Sky Martial Hall, Black Stone Martial Hall, and Starfire Martial Hall.

Starfire Martial Hall, founded by Dongfang Ji, the strongest person in human civilization.

Black Stone Martial Hall, created by Lant, the second strongest person in human civilization.

The Starry Sky Martial Hall, in no way inferior to the other two great Martial Halls.

The three great Martial Halls represented the three most terrifying forces within the Martial Artist community and served as the main force against Star Realm Creatures.

The divisions of the three great Martial Halls were spread across the Seven Great Planets.

According to information Li Yuan gathered from the virtual network and books, at the Seven Star Alliance's highest council, the combined influence of the three great Martial Halls faintly eclipsed that of the major nations on each planet.

Within Xia Country's borders, only the divisions of Starry Sky Martial Hall and Starfire Martial Hall were present, and their power was immense.

"Aren't the three great Martial Halls only joined by Martial Artists?" Li Yuan expressed his confusion.

"You'd become a reserve member first," Li Changzhou said, "Your Uncle Zhou probably got wind through some channel that you've become a member of the Blue Star youth rankings... It's quite common."

Li Yuan listened attentively.

His Uncle Li Changzhou was a Martial Artist, and as far as Li Yuan knew, his uncle had apparently been a member of the Starry Sky Martial Hall in his early years and was well-versed in this area.

"There are three types of membership when joining a Martial Hall."

"One type is a registered member, which basically just means registering without many benefits or rights," Li Changzhou said with a laugh, "Like me, I'm still just a registered member of the Starry Sky Martial Hall even now."

"In name, all Martial Artists in human civilization will join one Martial Hall, but most Martial Artists maintain this kind of relationship with the Martial Halls."

"Registered members are not hindered from joining other big groups, some Martial Artist organizations, or from joining the military or special state departments."

Li Yuan nodded to himself. Registered?

It wasn't very useful.

"The second type is an internal member," Li Changzhou continued, "like being an employee of a company. You must sign a contract with the Martial Hall, get paid by the Martial Hall, be cultivated with the Martial Hall's resources, and in key moments, you must obey the Martial Hall's orders to fight."

"Like your Uncle Zhou, he is an internal member of the Starry Sky Martial Hall," Li Changzhou said.

Li Yuan nodded slightly.

Uncle Zhou had a very good relationship with Uncle Li Changzhou.

Every time he bought Basic Qi and Blood Elixirs, it was through Uncle Zhou, as he could get them at an internal price, with a 5 percent discount.

"Internal members are also ranked differently. If one's strength is too weak, such as below level 15, the assessments are usually very strict," Li Changzhou explained, "It's not something you can join if you want to."

Li Yuan understood.

It was like some big corporations hiring employees, requiring high education, work experience, and interviews... It was normal for an internal member of a Martial Hall to have high criteria.

"The third kind is a reserve member."

"Even before becoming a Martial Artist, you can sign up early, which is usually reserved for martial path geniuses." Li Changzhou said with a smile, "For your Uncle Zhou to seek you out means he sees great potential in you."

"As a reserve member, the advantage is that you can get a substantial amount of Cultivation Methods resources ahead of time, mentoring by masters, Qi and Blood Elixirs, etc., all for free."

"For free?" Li Yuan's eyes lit up.

"Hear me out," Li Changzhou said, "There's no such thing as a free lunch. There's always a price to pay for what you gain."



"Once you sign to become a reserve member of the Martial Hall, when you become a Martial Artist, you must join the Starry Sky Martial Hall and become an internal member."

"Besides,"

"Ordinary Martial Artists who join a Martial Hall as internal members can terminate their contracts at some cost."

"But if you sign up early, the conditions for canceling the contract in the future will be much harsher," Li Changzhou cautioned seriously, "So, think it over."

## Chapter 28: 26 He's Somewhat Special

After listening to his uncle's words,

Li Yuan immediately thought of the trainees at numerous entertainment agencies.

It seemed like a common tale.

When big stars switch agencies, the contracts they sign are often very lenient.

Trainees? A 9:1 split in their favor was considered quite good.

Even more so, many agencies had no intention of nurturing trainees, instead planning to profit from their breach of contract fees.

"Don't worry too much."

In the holographic projection, Li Changzhou seemed to notice Li Yuan's concerns, and with a smile said, "Martial Artists accumulate personal might within themselves, the more powerful they are, the harder they are to restrict. A peak Martial Path master possesses the might to destroy heaven and earth... Even if you sign a contract early, it's not as dark as you imagine."

"In fact, if you can sign early, the benefits outweigh the drawbacks." A rare trace of regret appeared on Li Changzhou's face as he sighed, "Your aunt and I have limited abilities."

"Uncle, don't talk like that, what you've done is more than enough," Li Yuan interrupted Li Changzhou, then asked, "What should I do now, Uncle?"

"According to your Uncle Zhong, he wants to talk to you in person," Li Changzhou said. "I guess he wants to take a closer look at your Martial Path talent... This is a good thing."

"Set a time to meet with your Uncle Zhong first, then talk."

"But no matter what terms they offer, do not agree to anything. Wait until they put out their terms, then get in touch with me," Li Changzhou instructed. "You've just turned seventeen... you have talent in Martial Path, keep working hard and maybe Starfire Martial Hall will approach you too."

"Additionally, with you entering the Blue Star Youth Rankings, the country should also reach out through the school, and there's a chance they'll recruit you early."

"You should think about it carefully first, and I'll also contact some classmates to find out more about the situation."

"This will determine the path of your life."

Li Yuan nodded.

He had understood what he needed to do; it was to showcase his talent and then choose the best contract to sign.

"Alright, let's stop here for today, I need to start work," Li Changzhou said with a smile.

The communication was cut off.

"Special recruitment?"

"Early signing with Starry Sky Martial Hall?" Li Yuan put down his smart wristband, muttering to himself as he calmed down, "No rush."

"I've only awoken my Mind Spirit Divine Palace a year ago."

"From now until the college entrance exam, as my spiritual power increases, my Martial Arts Skills will improve even faster, and my control over my body will become even greater." Li Yuan's eyes sparked with a light, "Hence, my efficiency in practicing the 'Solid Rock Cultivation Technique' will be higher."

"Unable to cultivate High-Rank Cultivation Methods? The rate of my physical quality improvement is still not slow."

Over the past year, Li Yuan's physical quality had been improving faster and faster, surpassing most students in the Elite Class.

Why?

It was due to his rapidly improving Martial Arts Skills and his continuous cultivation of the 'Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture'.

"Practice spear."

Li Yuan calmed his mind, took out a large spear from the weapon cabinet at his side, and silently pondered over his Spear Technique.

More than an hour later.

[Your Spear Technique level has increased from Third Stage 48% to Third Stage 49%]

"On weekdays, I ponder over the Spear Technique in reality."

"Every weekend, I hone my skills in virtual combat. The combination of the two indeed provides a rapid improvement," said Li Yuan with a hint of a smile. "Since the start of school up to now, my Third Stage Spear Technique has improved nearly 20%."

This kind of progress within less than a month would be terrifying to share.

...

The Martial Hall is a very special organization.

It is somewhat akin to a multinational corporation, but not exactly the same.

The three major Martial Hall branches are highly independent within their respective nations.

Ordinary departments have no authority over them; only the Martial Arts Department does.

Starry Sky Martial Hall, Guan Mountain District branch.

This is a twelve-story, incredibly large circular building that is much larger than an average commercial complex and not too far from Guan Mountain District's First High School.

In an office on the twelfth floor, the decoration is quite luxurious.

"Dong~ Dong~" The sound of knocking on the door.

"Master, it's First Rank Martial Artist 'Zhong Cheng'." A gentle voice echoed in the office.

"Open the door, let him in," a slightly cold female voice emanated from the resting area.

Click~ The door opened.

A middle-aged man in a black suit entered the office and came to the center, giving a slight nod and said, "Vice Hall Master Song."

If it were an insider from the Starry Sky Martial Hall's Guan Mountain District branch, they would immediately understand who the office's owner was — one of the three vice hall masters, 'Song Yi'.

The Guan Mountain District branch was only a five-rank branch of the Starry Sky Martial Hall.

Even so, the power of a vice hall master was astonishing and not within reach of an ordinary martial artist.

A young woman with a slender figure, whose loose martial attire couldn't hide her shapely body, walked out from a side resting room.

She wore no makeup, but her skin was fair, with a melon seed-shaped face, and her eyes were extremely sharp.

In her every move and stance, she exuded an invisible aura that revealed her extraordinary martial arts cultivation.

"Zhong Cheng, how is the contact going?" Song Yi asked the man in the suit, her gaze sharp.

"I've spoken with Li Yuan's guardian today, and they agreed to our contact," Zhong Cheng nodded and said, "Additionally, I've had two encounters with Li Yuan and am familiar with his situation... The young man is decent and quite diligent in his training."

"However, it seems that neither Starfire Martial Hall nor the Martial Arts Hall has reached out to Li Yuan," Zhong Cheng said.

"It's better that they haven't made contact." Song Yi's red lips curved into a smile, "If the Martial Arts Hall had reached out, wouldn't our hopes be much reduced?"

"In Xia Country, most martial arts prodigies eventually choose special recruitment," Song Yi said, "For us to recruit, we mostly have to wait until they graduate from university."

Zhong Cheng couldn't help but nod.

"Vice Hall Master Song," Zhong Cheng hesitated before saying, "I have a good relationship with Li Yuan's family, but objectively speaking, I've specifically looked into Li Yuan's data."

"Starfire Martial Hall and the Martial Arts Hall haven't made any moves for a reason... Li Yuan has not awakened his Martial Spirit, and while his martial arts skills are not bad, they aren't exaggerated either," he explained.

"Hundreds of youths emerge every year on Blue Star's youth rankings in Jiangbei Province alone."

"And there are other age groups of martial arts prodigies..." Zhong Cheng expressed his doubt, "Is Li Yuan worth the great expense to sign him early?"

The laws of the Seven Star Alliance stated explicitly:

To sign a contract with a minor before term, the individual must be at least twelve years old.

Next, they must provide cultivation resources worth at least one million Blue Star Coins each year, for no less than six years.

Moreover, the one million Blue Star Coins provided yearly cannot include so-called 'instruction by a master' or 'training premises.'

At least half of it must be monetary rewards, and the rest must be tangible resources like qi and blood potions.

It was designed to prevent Martial Halls from signing people indiscriminately.

This meant.

Signing early would cost the Starry Sky Martial Hall at least six million Blue Star Coins or more, not including other indirect expenses — a truly astonishing price.

"Under normal circumstances, Li Yuan indeed wouldn't be worth us signing early," Song Yi said slowly, "However, he has something special about him."

"Special?" Zhong Cheng was taken aback.

Whoosh~

Suddenly, an abundance of light shot down from the ceiling, forming a projection screen displaying copious amounts of data, text, images, and videos.

"What's this?" Zhong Cheng was puzzled.

"The Starry Skies Fighting Network, which our Starry Sky Martial Hall directly controls," Song Yi said with a mysterious smile, "We're also the primary shareholders in the entire virtual network's controls."

"By the Seven Star Alliance's agreements, a lot of information from the Starry Skies Fighting Network must be shared with the other two major Martial Halls and the host country."

"So, whether it is the Starfire Martial Hall or the Xia Country Martial Arts Department, they would know immediately if Li Yuan entered the Blue Star youth rankings... but specific match intelligence, winning rates about Li Yuan, we would not pass on to them," she said.

"Just take a look, and you'll understand," Song Yi pointed at the projection.

Zhong Cheng immediately started clicking through the screen, browsing through Li Yuan's data.

Soon.

Zhong Cheng realized something was amiss.

"He completed 196 virtual battles within a single day?" Zhong Cheng was a bit shocked, "How did he manage that? Can his mental consciousness endure it?"

He immediately scrolled forward through the history records.

He was shocked to discover.

In the past three months, nearly every weekend, Li Yuan would engage in high-intensity virtual combat, the fewest being around ninety battles, and sometimes exceeding two hundred.

"This? This!"

"Li Yuan's spiritual power?" Zhong Cheng's eyes lit up, already realizing, he blurted out, "Is it at a martial artist level?"

"A ninety percent probability," she said.

"Although we haven't conducted a detailed test yet, by my estimation, his spiritual power is at least level 11," Song Yi said with a smile, "Add to that his martial arts skills."

"Do you think he is qualified for us to sign him early?"

## Chapter 29: 27 C-Level? D-Level Contract

...

"Enough."

"His martial arts skills are improving rapidly, and it's definitely related to his strong spiritual power, but the most important factor is his comprehension of the spear technique," Zhong Cheng, dressed in a black suit, said somewhat excitedly.

"The kid is barely seventeen... It's very different from those who only made it onto the Blue Star Youth List close to nineteen."

"So young, and his spear skills are already so high."

"Normally speaking, there's a great chance that his spear technique will break through to the fourth level in the future." Zhong Cheng took a deep breath, "His spiritual power is so strong that once his body becomes even stronger, his spiritual power will probably quickly surpass level 20."

"For Li Yuan, the two major difficulties in becoming a Prime Warrior aren't going to be problems at all in the future," Zhong Cheng said as he looked towards Song Yi.

As an official member of the Starry Sky Martial Hall, Zhong Cheng was well acquainted with the operation mode of the Martial Hall.

He was aware that the value paid for signing a prospective member in advance was at least ten million Blue Star Coins.

Perhaps even more.

But to spend such a huge sum, just to cultivate a first-rank martial artist with a physical quality of barely over ten levels?

It simply wasn't worth it.

The goal of signing in advance and focusing on cultivation was only one—to cultivate a Prime Warrior.

Song Yi was such a Prime Warrior.

Because of her formidable strength, Song Yi was able to secure her position as the Vice Hall Master of Guan Mountain District's division.

"To become a Prime Warrior, there are three major difficulties," said Song Yi with a slight smile, "For most people, the hardest part is spiritual power, as it mostly depends on innate talent."

Zhong Cheng couldn't help but nod.

Physical quality not high? That can be enhanced through external means, there are many such treasures, and theoretically, as long as one has enough money, anyone can meet the physical requirements of a martial artist.

Martial arts skills? That depends greatly on comprehension, but with instruction from a renowned master, improvement can be swift.

Spiritual power? The treasures that can enhance spiritual power are unimaginably expensive, beyond even what Prime Warriors would dare to contemplate, so it largely comes down to talent.

And now.

In the eyes of Zhong Cheng and Song Yi, Li Yuan was one of those with exceptional talent for spiritual power.

Combined with his level of spear skills.

He was very much worth cultivating!

"Shall we contact him this week?" Zhong Cheng asked, "Ask him to come to the Martial Hall?"

"That's too hasty," shook her head Song Yi.

Zhong Cheng was taken aback, anxious.

Did she not ask him to contact Li Changzhou immediately? And now she's saying it's too rushed?

"I asked you to contact him promptly for fear that the Martial Arts Hall and Starfire Martial Hall might detect something fishy and beat us to it," Song Yi explained as she picked up her coffee from the side and stirred it gently, "But now, we're pretty sure no one has reached out to him yet."

"Li Yuan is a kid; he might just agree impulsively, but his uncle, Li Changzhou, isn't foolish."

"If we reach out now, they will definitely ask to raise the terms of the contract."



"So, let him cool his heels for a few days."

"Once they realize that we're the only ones interested, negotiations will naturally go more smoothly," Song Yi said with a smile.

"Trying to lower the price?" Zhong Cheng frowned slightly.

Driving down the price isn't a good choice.

Because, martial artists represent martial power, and martial power is the source of all authority.

Pushing for a lower price during pre-contract negotiations could lead to backlash once the other party grows stronger.

"Start by lowering the price," Song Yi said with a faint smile, then she spat out three more words: "Then, raise it."

"Create a difference in treatment."

"In this way, we can show off Starry Sky Martial Hall's regard for talent, and make Li Yuan feel grateful," Song Yi smiled, "Besides, leave the matter of this contract to you."

"You have my authorization for a C-level contract at most; don't disappoint me."

"Thank you, Hall Master Song," Zhong Cheng nodded continuously, "I will definitely handle this matter well."

...

Late at night, just past nine o'clock, Li Yuan finished his cultivation practice and took the unmanned train back home from school.

His aunt had been sitting on the couch waiting for him.

"Aunt!" Li Yuan called out.

"Back? Drink your high-energy milk first, it's on the table, just made a while ago," his aunt said.

"Alright," agreed Li Yuan with a nod.

Except for Sundays when he ate at home, his three meals during weekdays were basically all at school.

Worried about his high expenditure of energy during nighttime cultivation, his aunt would always calculate the time and prepare a cup of high-energy milk for him every night.

Picking up the cup from the dining table, Li Yuan sat down in the living room.

"Aunt, with my allowance from Uncle for the last two months, plus the money I got today, I think I can make it till February, so there's no need to give me any for now," Li Yuan spoke up as he drank his milk.

"Okay," Chen Hui said with a smile, watching Li Yuan as he guzzled down the milk.

She had always been very satisfied with Li Yuan.

Obedient, sensible, and sometimes showing maturity beyond his years, he always made her feel at ease.

As he grew older, Li Yuan began to show noticeable talent in martial arts.

What used to worry Chen Hui was that she and her husband could not provide sufficient financial support for Li Yuan.

This time, Li Yuan earned two bonuses on his own, which also gave her a bit more peace of mind.

"Your uncle sent me a message," Chen Hui said, "that Starry Sky Martial Hall is interested in signing you in advance. What do you think about it?"

"It depends on the terms that Starry Sky Martial Hall offers," Li Yuan put down his empty cup and pondered, "However, if the Martial Arts Hall is willing to recruit me specially, I would prefer to go that route."

"Right."

...

"The best would be a special recruitment," Chen Hui said quite satisfied, "Special recruitment is akin to having a reserved spot in one of the top five schools, and after graduation, a job assignment is guaranteed. You might even directly enter the city's Martial Arts Bureau."

As a high school teacher, Chen Hui had a clear understanding of special recruitment and hoped most of all for Li Yuan to be specially recruited.

In her view, special recruitment by the state not only guaranteed job placements but also was much safer than enlisting in the military—at least if one stayed out of military ranks.

But if you sign a contract with a Martial Hall, the future is uncertain.

Members of a Martial Hall are those who will charge into the front lines of the Star Realm battlefield, with casualty rates no less than those of military martial artists.

"Mm-hmm, I'll listen to you, Auntie," Li Yuan said with a smile, understanding his aunt's concerns.

Li Yuan had his own considerations as well.

The three major Martial Halls, each gathering a large number of martial artists, were the most powerful communities of martial artists, surpassing even the nation.

In terms of martial arts cultivation, choosing a Martial Hall could lead to faster progress, but it's often more dangerous.

On the other hand, opting for the special recruitment from the Martial Arts Hall would mean administrative positioning, which would be best for his family in the future.

With state resources for cultivation, the pace of martial arts progress wouldn't be slow either.

...

When Li Yuan was full of anticipation,

The ensuing developments were entirely beyond his expectations.

The day after he made it onto the Blue Star Youth Ranking, Starry Sky Martial Hall contacted his uncle Li Changzhou once.

After that, there was no more news.

It wasn't just the Starry Sky Martial Hall that went silent; neither the Martial Arts Hall nor the Starfire Martial Hall showed any signs of interest—no one came looking... Time passed, day by day.

In the blink of an eye, more than half a month had gone by.

The time came to mid-October.

Even with Li Yuan's calm disposition, after waiting so long, he was somewhat perplexed.

That afternoon, his uncle Li Changzhou made a video call.

"Li Yuan."

"Your Uncle Zhong messaged me again today; he felt a bit embarrassed, so there's been no news for so many days. He's responsible for signing contracts at the Martial Hall," Li Changzhou said seriously in the video projection, "He really hopes to sign with you."

"Mm," Li Yuan nodded slightly.

Zhong Cheng and Uncle Li Changzhou were undoubtedly good friends for many years.

"But he was frank with you—your issue is with Martial Spirit. Hence, his application for you was stalled during the second review, and now the higher-ups of the Martial Hall are discussing it," Li Changzhou looked at Li Yuan, "But the result should be out in the next couple of days."

"A result in the next couple of days? Because of Martial Spirit?" Li Yuan listened quietly.

Was it again because of Martial Spirit?

"Don't be discouraged; your Uncle Zhong said he would do everything he can to fight for you," Li Changzhou said, "We might have been overly optimistic about this. Even if it doesn't work out, don't be disappointed."

"Don't slack in your cultivation either," Li Changzhou advised.

"Don't worry, Uncle, I'm not cultivating Martial Path just to sign early with the Starry Sky Martial Hall," Li Yuan said with a smile, "When the time comes, even if they want to sign, I might not be willing to."

He ended the video call.

The smile on Li Yuan's face was gone.

Standing inside Martial Arts Room 4011.

"Martial Spirit?"

"Because I haven't awakened it, do neither the Martial Arts Hall nor the Starfire Martial Hall give me a chance?"

"Perhaps, without Uncle Zhong, there wouldn't even be a glimmer of hope with the Starry Sky Martial Hall," Li Yuan gripped his long spear, silently thinking, "Without a suitable high-rank cultivation method, is there no hope of becoming a powerful martial artist?"

Neither Li Yuan nor Li Changzhou had ever considered that the Starry Sky Martial Hall might be doing this on purpose.

After all, with the Starfire Martial Hall and Martial Arts Hall for comparison, there was no word from either party.

"Rip!"

Li Yuan suddenly thrust his spear, a terrifying force erupted, nearly casting a residual image, followed by multiple spear shadows transforming, bursting through the air with piercing screeches.

Suddenly, two notifications flashed across Li Yuan's vision.

[Your Spear Technique realm has advanced from Third Stage 56% to Third Stage 57%]

[Your Life Level has increased from 6.8 to 6.9]

...

The next day, close to 10 p.m.,

Li Yuan, who was in his room, suddenly received a video transmission.

"Uncle Zhong?" Li Yuan's eyes brightened slightly.

He answered the call.

Buzz—the projection immediately revealed a middle-aged man dressed in casual home attire, looking very spirited.

"Uncle Zhong," Li Yuan said with a smile.

"Li Yuan." Zhong Cheng chuckled, "Calling you so late, I didn't disturb you, did I?"

"No."

"That's good." Zhong Cheng smiled, seemingly a little sentimental, "I have some good news for you. Your contract application has been approved in the meeting. It's a D-level contract."

"It's passed?" Li Yuan's eyes lit up, "Thank you, Uncle Zhong."

He had already prepared for the possibility of not being approved.

"No need to thank me; it was your own excellence."

"Come to the Martial Hall at nine o'clock on Sunday morning, and we'll discuss the specific terms," Zhong Cheng said with a smile, "No problem, right?"

"No problem."

## Chapter 30: 28: I, Li Changzhou, Am Not Yet Dead (Four Updates for Monthly Pass)

He ended the video call with Zhong Cheng.

Li Yuan contemplated for a moment, afraid of disturbing his uncle Li Changzhou's rest, and chose not to make a direct video call. Instead, he first left a message.

He briefly explained the situation.

Just five minutes later.

Beep—beep—Li Changzhou initiated the video call back. Li Yuan immediately answered.

"Uncle." Li Yuan looked at Li Changzhou in the projected video, covered in dust, as if he had just finished some work.

"I roughly know what's happening." There was no joy on Li Changzhou's face that Li Yuan had anticipated, but rather his eyebrows were deeply furrowed, "If the Starry Sky Martial Hall really only offers a D-grade contract in the end, then whether you sign it or not is another matter."

"Oh?" Li Yuan was slightly puzzled.

Special recruitment by the Martial Arts Hall had always been Li Yuan's first goal, yet there had been no news for the past half month.

Actually, at the start, Li Yuan had not been so eager about signing with a Martial Hall ahead of time.

But in recent days, Li Yuan had searched online for a lot of information and found that early signing with the major Martial Halls was generally good, apart from being quite binding, there weren't any pitfalls.

Most importantly, as long as one signs early, no matter the grade, it indeed could greatly reduce the financial pressure on his family.

He could even get cash rewards to support his family.

In his heart, Li Yuan felt indebted to his uncle and aunt.

He always felt that his uncle ventured to the Northern Border Province because of him.

"Through some connections, I've pretty much figured it out." Li Changzhou patiently explained, "Over the years, the early signing contracts offered by the three grand Martial Halls have been divided into D, C, B, A, and S grades, five levels from low to high."

"The contracts of the same grade from different Martial Halls are almost identical in terms."

Li Yuan nodded slightly. It seemed that in the eyes of Starry Sky Martial Hall, he belonged to the lowest tier?

However, being able to sign early already marked him as extremely outstanding.

"A D-grade contract provides one million Blue Star Coins annually for six years," Li Changzhou said somberly. "It sounds good, but you need to understand."

"The resources you currently need for your cultivation and the resources you will need after entering university and becoming a Martial Artist are two different concepts."

"Take the basic blood essence potions, for example, one bottle costs just 2000 Blue Star Coins, and currently, you only need to spend twenty thousand Blue Star Coins a month on them."

"After becoming a Martial Artist, just the First Rank blood essence potions used by a First Rank Martial Artist will cost 10,000 Blue Star Coins per bottle, and in a month you may need at least ten to as many as twenty or thirty bottles," Li Changzhou said earnestly. "Just this most basic item alone will cost at least a million Blue Star Coins a year."

"Then there's the 'auxiliary divine spirit treasures.' If you aspire to become a Second Rank Prime Warrior in the future, these are indispensable, and they cost several million Blue Star Coins a year at the very least..."

"And there's physiotherapy..."

"And the purchase of weapons, various types of auxiliary equipment. Martial Artists have to fight with Star Realm Creatures, can their equipment be ordinary? It's expensive and easily damaged." Li Changzhou looked at Li Yuan, "One million, for you right now, is a lot."

"If you're not focused on the Martial Path but want to study other majors in the university."

"Then you don't have to spend too much on the Martial Path. You can slowly cultivate at the university, aiming to become a level 15 Martial Artist, and this contract could even be considered generous. You might even be able to save a few million Blue Star Coins," Li Changzhou said.

"After graduating from university, according to the contract, Starry Sky Martial Hall will still have to provide you with a job."

"By then, like your Uncle Zhong, you can be an ordinary member in the Martial Hall. The benefits and treatments are no worse than those of a civil servant."

"If Starry Sky Martial Hall initiates the termination of the contract and does not provide a job, you take those few million Blue Star Coins and find a new job, it's sure to be profitable."

"This is a broad and bright path for those who wish to take it easy." Li Changzhou stared at Li Yuan.

Li Yuan was shocked.

He had not thought that there was such a way to play the game.

"But Xiao Yuan, are you really content with being an ordinary person? An ordinary Martial Artist?" Li Changzhou stared at Li Yuan.

Li Yuan fell silent.

"You're not satisfied," Li Changzhou shook his head and sighed. "I've watched you grow, how could I not understand? Your frenzied cultivation, besides wanting to help the family, importantly, you have the heart of a Martial Artist."

"From the second year of junior high to your senior year of high school, have you ever taken even one day off on weekends, or during the summer or winter breaks? You were even cultivating during the New Year's."

"You're harsh on yourself."



"I've never seen such determination, I'm not your match, and your father wasn't either," Li Changzhou said slowly.

Li Yuan's eyes flickered. For so many years, his uncle rarely spoke so much, let alone mentioned his late father.

"Your aunt has always wanted you to take the civil service exam or become a teacher in the future. She's always blamed me, thinking I shouldn't have supported you."

"Why don't I object to you becoming a full-time Martial Artist?" There was a hint of excitement in Li Changzhou's voice, "I don't want you to end up regretting like I did at the age of forty."

Li Yuan was shaken, looking at his uncle with amazement.

"Being a full-time martial artist is dangerous,"

Li Changzhou replied with an open smile, "But since ancient times, which hero didn't dream of galloping across the battlefields and pursuing the limits of the Martial Path?"

"To stand shoulder to shoulder with the divine with the body of a human! To explore the limits of life."

"My time for that has passed."

"But you still have the chance," Li Changzhou said with a smile, looking at Li Yuan, his helmet covered in much mud, making him look rather unkempt.

Li Yuan listened with bated breath.

"If you want to walk the path of a full-time martial artist, this money, the money from this contract, is far from enough," Li Changzhou continued, "but this contract will bind your future."

After hesitating for a moment, Li Yuan couldn't help but say, "Uncle, according to the information I've found, if I perform well enough, Starry Sky Martial Hall will upgrade the contract."

"But what if Starry Sky Martial Hall doesn't upgrade it?" Li Changzhou countered, "Why should you leave your destiny in someone else's hands?"

Li Yuan realized the truth.

"Uncle Zhong is a good man, but many things are not his to decide as an ordinary member," Li Changzhou said, "Moreover, as far as I know, once you sign a contract

with the Martial Hall in advance, your development will be restricted when you get to Martial Arts University."

"Restricted?" Li Yuan was taken aback, this was something he didn't know.

"For example, the five prestigious schools of Xia Country, they are funded by the state," Li Changzhou said, "If you sign with the Martial Hall in advance, you're destined to join the Martial Hall after university graduation... Do you think when some special resources arrive at the school, and they have to choose between you and another student specially recruited by the Martial Arts Hall, whom will they choose?"

Li Yuan's eyes flickered.

Signing with the Martial Hall in advance was indeed a kind of bondage in a sense.

"This contract."

"You go to the Martial Hall on Sunday, first learn more from Uncle Zhong, and if you can be promoted to a C-level standard and have passive upgrade clauses, such as reaching a certain standard before a certain age will directly automatically upgrade you to B level or even A level, then signing is no harm," Li Changzhou patiently explained.

"If you want to be a full-time martial artist, the Martial Hall is indeed a better choice, but if the restrictions are too great, there's no need to sign."

"Li Yuan, I know what you're thinking, you want to help your family," Li Changzhou stared at Li Yuan, "But remember, your uncle is not dead yet."

"The time for you to fully support this family has not come yet."

"At least, before you go to university, have no worries, what you need to do is to devote yourself to training wholeheartedly, understand?" Li Changzhou said solemnly.

"Yes, Uncle," Li Yuan nodded firmly.

"I believe in you, I can't be wrong," Li Changzhou looked at Li Yuan.

"Now that Starfire Martial Hall and Starry Sky Martial Hall are not signing, it's their lack of foresight."

"When the college entrance exam results come out, or even when you enter university, naturally you will receive better contracts."

"It's never too late to sign then."

...

Uncle Li Changzhou's words calmed Li Yuan down completely, and he could think about the matter more calmly.

"Uncle is right."

"What's the rush? In the end, they will be the ones in a hurry," Li Yuan revealed a hint of a smile.

He continued with his training.

In the blink of an eye, it was Saturday, two days later. Li Yuan kept to his routine, going to school and then back home.

Saturday afternoon.

All the senior year students had Martial Path classes together in the martial arts classroom today.

At the school gate.

Several black cars arrived slowly, and six figures descended from the vehicles one after another.

Five of them were dressed in black suits, while one of the middle-aged men wore a black Tang suit, seemingly ordinary, yet exuding an indescribable presence.

"Lord Wan."

"Lord Wan, welcome to our school," Principal Tan Zhenlong and several vice principals all came forward with smiles to greet him.

"Tie Ta," the middle-aged man looked directly at Xu Bo standing in the distance and smiled, "It's been a long time since we parted in the Star Realm."

"Old Wan," Xu Bo then stepped forward with a wide grin, "I didn't expect that the new Hall Master of the Starfire Martial Hall's Guanshan branch would be you."

"Welcome!"

## Chapter 31: 29: The Shocked Xu Bo

...

Seeing the middle-aged man in Tang attire dismiss him and speak directly to Xu Bo, the expressions of several vice-principals changed slightly.

They couldn't help but turn to look at Xu Bo.

Previously, although the vice-principals had heard many rumors, they had never witnessed Xu Bo's abilities firsthand, so they still harbored some doubts about him.

Now? There were no more doubts.

Only Principal Tan Zhenlong remained composed, as he was the one most aware of Xu Bo's background, which was why he had specifically called Xu Bo to meet at the school entrance.

And the outcome had been exactly as he expected.

"Tie Ta, your hand, I've heard..." The middle-aged man in Tang attire glanced at Xu Bo's silver mechanical right arm.

"Old Wan, that's all in the past."

Xu Bo waved his hand with a smile, "Today you're here for the first inspection of your tenure at our school, let's talk business first."

"This is Principal Tan."

Xu Bo took the initiative to introduce him.

"Principal Tan." Lord Wan smiled slightly.

"Lord Wan, hello, I have long heard of Lord Wan's prestige in the Star Realm." Principal Tan slightly bowed and extended his hand.

Principal Tan lowered his posture.

As the Hall Master of Starfire Martial Hall in the Guan Mountain District, Lord Wan held an extremely high status.

This status stemmed not just from the power of the Martial Hall, but also from Lord Wan's own strength.

"Principal Tan, let's enter the school," Lord Wan said with a smile. "I've just come back from the Star Realm, and am not familiar with many things, so let's do everything according to standard procedure, starting with a look at the students from the three elite classes."

"Sure."

"This way, please, Lord Wan, the students from the three elite classes are all waiting in the martial arts classroom," Principal Tan said with a smile.

A crowd surrounded them as they entered the school.

...

Two hours later, a group of people emerged from the elite building, surrounded by Lord Wan, Principal Tan, and Xu Bo.

"Principal Tan and all the teachers, excellent teaching,"

Lord Wan said with a smile, "The students from the elite classes are all outstanding, especially the seniors in the third year. I see many of them have the hope of being admitted to the top five prestigious schools."

"I believe that in a few years, our Guan Mountain District will see a surge of entry-rank martial artists," Lord Wan praised.

"Lord Wan flatters us," Principal Tan said with a laugh. "But I wonder, have you taken a liking to any of the students?"

The vice-principals and teachers all looked towards Lord Wan with anticipation.

Why do Martial Halls conduct inspections?

Essentially, they invite the decision-makers of the Martial Halls to see if any students qualify for early recruitment.

For the school, being specially recruited by the Martial Arts Hall would be the best outcome, but such opportunities are scarce.

If the students could sign early contracts with the Martial Hall and receive its training, their chances of being admitted to the top five prestigious schools would greatly increase, which would also be a significant accomplishment for the school's leaders.

In fact, why are there only the Starry Sky and Starfire Martial Halls within Xia Country, and why do these two halls hold so much power?

In a sense, even though these two Martial Halls seem independent, they both possess some official character.

"These students are all excellent, but some decisions aren't mine to make alone," Lord Wan said with a smile. "When I get back, I'll have the Martial Hall conduct a comprehensive assessment of these students. I believe there will be favorable results."

A hint of disappointment flashed in the eyes of the school leaders.

Clearly, Lord Wan had not taken a particular liking to any student, at least not at first sight.

"Lord Wan, would you like to take another look at the students from the regular classes?" Principal Tan's smile remained unchanged. "Among the regular class students, there are some who are exceptional too."

Lord Wan smiled without answering.

"Principal Tan, the Hall Master has limited time today, and it's getting late," a man in black clothes whispered. "What do you say?"

"Oh, alright, sure, we'll wait for another opportunity," Principal Tan said, nodding repeatedly.

This was the norm. The regular class had too many students, and their chances of becoming martial artists were low... Whether it was Starfire or Starry Sky Martial Hall inspecting, they rarely visited the regular classes.

You see, inspecting school students is only a small part of a Martial Hall's duties.

And just in the Guan Mountain District, there were dozens of middle and high schools combined, so there wasn't enough time to visit each one, and most assessments were done by directly reviewing martial path results.

"Old Wan."

Xu Bo, who had been silent all this time, suddenly spoke up, "I've selected a few good seeds from the regular class, do you want to stay a bit longer?"

Everyone turned to look at Xu Bo.

"Xu..." Principal Tan was just about to speak.

"Are these the ones Tie Ta takes an interest in?" Lord Wan revealed a hint of curiosity, smiling, "Selected from the regular class? If Tie Ta you have noticed them, they must have some potential. Alright, I will take a look."

Lord Wan was willing, first because he wanted to give face to Xu Bo.

Secondly, he truly wanted to achieve something noteworthy as the new Hall Master, but none of the students from the three elite classes he saw today had satisfied him.

"Alright, Teacher Xu, lead the way," Principal Tan said, seizing the moment to reply with a smile.

"This way," Xu Bo said, walking ahead of everyone else.

...

"Today, Teacher Xu asked me to come here and specifically instructed me not to go anywhere else, but why?" Li Yuan wondered inwardly as his gaze swept over the other three students.

Two were second-year seniors, one was a first-year senior, and none of them were acquainted with each other.

...

With Li Yuan included, there were only four people in the martial arts classroom.

Suddenly.

"Hmm?" Li Yuan's ears twitched as he heard the noisy sounds coming from the end of the hallway.

It was the voice of Teacher Xu.

"Hall Master Wan?" Li Yuan heard a title in the voices.

Before he could ponder further.

Very soon.

Teacher Xu, Hall Master Wan, Principal Tan, and a group of people walked into the martial arts classroom.

Faced with this scene.

The other three students all showed nervousness, while only Li Yuan, who was prepared, remained the most composed.

"Hall Master Wan, is it the Hall Master of the Starry Sky Martial Hall or the Starfire Martial Hall?" Li Yuan's peripheral vision fell involuntarily on the middle-aged man in traditional attire, and a series of text messages appeared in his field of view.

[Target individual, Life Level exceeding sensory limit (current Life Level sensory limit is 16.9).]

The man stood at the front, dressed most distinctively, clearly with the highest status.

Moreover, just one glance at this middle-aged man in traditional attire gave Li Yuan an intense sense of danger, especially those calm eyes that seemed like knife edges, making one involuntarily want to look away.

"What a powerful martial artist, he might even be stronger than Teacher Xu," Li Yuan thought in shock.

Every use of his Divine Palace panel required mental energy, after many uses he would feel fatigued, as if having gone through numerous virtual battles, so Li Yuan seldom used it in daily life.

"A Martial Hall's Hall Master? Accompanied by the principal and Teacher Xu? What are they here for?" Li Yuan's thoughts raced through his mind.

At the same time.

Li Yuan and the other three students were already calling out, "Principal, Teacher Xu."

"Teacher Xu."

Several vice-principals? Li Yuan and the others only recognized them by face, knowing they were school leaders, but had no idea what their surnames were, so naturally, they did not address them by name.

"Alright."

"Listen, all of you. Today is a very important opportunity for you. Later on, show us all your Physical Quality and Martial Arts Skills," Teacher Xu said solemnly, "Xiong Yifan, you come first for the triple test."

The triple test referred to the Life Vitality Detection, Fist Strength test, and Burst Speed test.

Immediately.

The high first-year student stepped into the range of the Life Vitality Detector...

Lord Wan didn't pay much attention to this high first-year student. He seemed to have noticed something, his gaze involuntarily falling on Li Yuan as he quietly asked, "Tie Ta, what's this student's name?"



Teacher Xu took notice of Lord Wan's gaze and said, "His name is Li Yuan, Old Wan, do you find him impressive?"

"Li Yuan?" Hall Master Wan's eyes flickered as if remembering something, and he said with a smile, "Let's take a look first, no rush."

"Hmm," Teacher Xu nodded.

Soon after.

The three students from the first and second year of high school had completed their tests, and their Physical Quality data, when compared within their respective Elite Classes, ranked in the upper middle range.

Only, that was it, not enough to change Lord Wan's mind.

Finally, everyone's gaze settled on Li Yuan.

"Is he Li Yuan?"

"I've heard of him."

"Seems to have quite the Martial Arts Skills."

"However, having not awakened his Martial Spirit upon entering his third year, the chances for early signing don't look very good," a few school leaders whispered among themselves. They didn't know that Li Yuan had entered the Blue Star youth ranking, but they had all heard of Li Yuan's name.

After defeating Lin Lanyue in virtual combat, Li Yuan had become somewhat of a minor celebrity at the school.

"Li Yuan, go," said Teacher Xu in a deep voice. "Be serious, and bring out all your strength."

Out of the four students selected from the regular class, Teacher Xu valued Li Yuan the most.

Or perhaps, in his eyes, Li Yuan was the one with the most promising chance of signing early with a Martial Hall.

"Yes."

Li Yuan nodded and directly stepped onto the silver circular floor in the center of the martial arts classroom. This circular area served both as the skill-testing ground and the Life Vitality Detector's sensing range.

Whoosh!

A beam of red light shot over, enveloping Li Yuan's entire body.

Three seconds later.

On the screen at the back of the classroom, data appeared - "Li Yuan (Student), Physical Quality: 6.9 (last measured at 6.5)."

"Historical data: September 5th: 6.5."

"Historical data: June 25th, 6.0."

...

"6.9? It improved by 0.4 since a little over a month ago?" Teacher Xu's eyes revealed a hint of surprise as he looked at Li Yuan, quite astonished.

"Interesting," Lord Wan showed a smile.

## Chapter 32: 30 B-Level Contract

"6.9 grade? Just over three months ago, he was at 6.0 grade? A little over a month ago, 6.5 grade? His physical quality has improved this fast?" Principal Tan Zhenlong was also extremely surprised.

Because of Xu Bo's multiple recommendations, and the fact that Li Yuan's special admission information had been summarized a few weeks ago.

Therefore, Tan Zhenlong had a deep impression of Li Yuan.

It's just that, in his estimation, Li Yuan's physical fitness would probably have reached 6.6 grade.

After all, under normal circumstances, the further you get in your cultivation, the slower the improvement in physical quality.

"In just over two months, from 6.0 grade to 6.5?"

"And in a little over a month, another 0.4 grade improvement?" Several vice-principals and Martial Hall martial artists were all very shocked.

A sole 6.9 grade in physical quality? Not enough to surprise anyone.

Among the many people present, except for Li Yuan and a few other students, almost everyone else was a martial artist.

The several school leaders present had the lowest physical quality at 9.8 grade.

In this era, martial artists have a much greater chance of holding positions of authority than non-martial artists.

Even compared to students, in the senior year elite class, there are several students with a physical quality over 7.0 grade.

Lin Lanyue, with the strongest physical quality, had already reached 8.5 grade.

But what was shocking about Li Yuan was the speed of his progress.

After all, everyone present knew that Li Yuan hadn't awakened his Martial Spirit.

He could improve so fast just by practicing the Basic Cultivation Method?

"Good." Xu Bo's eyes lit up slightly.

He often observed Li Yuan through monitoring and knew that Li Yuan had made significant improvements in his physical quality.

But he didn't expect it to be so remarkable.

"Li Yuan," Xu Bo's voice boomed like a bell, "continue with the other two tests, focus."

"Yes." Li Yuan wasn't foolish; he could tell from everyone's reaction that he performed very well.

Moreover, Li Yuan was also aware.

No matter where this mysterious Hall Master came from, this was an opportunity for him.

"Today, I should have heard before that the Martial Hall comes to inspect the school once a year," the thought flashed through Li Yuan's mind, "but in the past, they seemed to only inspect the elite class."

"This opportunity was fought for by Teacher Xu."

"Many times, good opportunities often only come once or twice."

Without much thought.

Li Yuan had already arrived at the Fist Strength testing area, got into position, adjusted his posture, and then suddenly unleashed a punch with all his might.

"Bang~" Accompanied by a dull explosion, his fist fiercely struck the huge sensor sandbag.

In an instant.

The screen above the Fist Strength testing area clearly displayed: "454 kilograms (Action Qualified)".

After testing his Fist Strength.

Li Yuan didn't stay still; after a brief adjustment, he proceeded to the track's starting point.

The forty-meter-long test track!

The white light from above the classroom shone down, reflecting on the dark red metallic track.

"Hu!"

After a brief adjustment and taking a deep breath, Li Yuan tensed his legs and his entire body suddenly sprinted forward.

Whoosh!

Like a passing shadow, Li Yuan had already dashed across the track, slamming into the buffer wall at the end of the track.

Tick Tock!

The electronic display at the end of the track now showed the data—"15.1 meters/second".

"What fast speed."

"Could the Life Vitality Detector have made a mistake?"

"How could Li Yuan's empirical data be so high?" a series of low-voiced discussions were exchanged among the school leaders and the five Martial Hall martial artists, all a bit surprised.

Why were they surprised?

Because Li Yuan's Fist Strength data and Burst Speed data had both exceeded the 7.0 grade physical quality standard set by the Seven Star Alliance.

7.0 grade standard: 15 meters per second, Fist Strength 450 kilograms.

Normally, it's quite common for actual data to be slightly higher or lower in one aspect.

Like Li Yuan? Both aspects are higher?

Unusual.

"Good." Xu Bo and Tan Zhenlong exchanged glances, smiles appearing on both of their faces.

"Teacher Xu, I've finished the tests," Li Yuan walked back to the center of the classroom from the far end of the room.

"Old Wan," Xu Bo looked toward Lord Wan.

"Don't rush."

Lord Wan's face carried an unfathomable smile as he turned to several people behind him, "Instructor Xing, what do you think? Does he qualify?"

The five Martial Hall martial artists looked at each other.

"Lord," Instructor Xing spoke in a deep voice, "this young fellow's physical talent is not bad... it shouldn't be difficult for him to become a martial artist, but he hasn't awakened his Martial Spirit, so signing him early... might still need to be considered."

Instructor Xing saw the close relationship between the Lord and Xu Bo, so he didn't make a definitive statement.

However, everyone present was shrewd enough to understand Instructor Xing's real meaning—not qualified.

"No rush, take another look," said Lord Wan with a smile before turning to Xu Bo, "Tie Ta, your student's strongest aspect should be his Martial Arts Skills, right... Let's test that and see."

"You noticed?" Xu Bo said with a smile.

"Life Vitality Detector usually doesn't make mistakes," Lord Wan said with a smile, "but he has managed to exhibit extraordinary strength and Burst Speed... this suggests he has a very high level of control over his body, and his Vigor deployment is probably close to Perfection."

"From his walking posture, his Basic Fist Technique should also be nearly perfected."

"I estimate that his Martial Arts Skills are the strongest among the students at your school," Lord Wan said casually, "and most likely, it's a case of leading substantially."

Xu Bo and Principal Tan exchanged glances and couldn't help but laugh.

"As expected of Old Wan, your judgment is still sharp," Xu Bo said with a laughter.

Xu Bo knew that Lord Wan had been in his position for less than a week.

Without looking at previous data, it was likely he didn't know about Li Yuan's selection for the Blue Star youth list.

"Li Yuan, take out your Long Spear," Xu Bo looked at Li Yuan and commanded, "Let's proceed with the skill test."

"Yes."

Li Yuan walked towards the nearby weapon cabinet; he had already prepared the weapon in this classroom at noon as instructed by Xu Bo.

Meanwhile.

Li Yuan couldn't help but look again at the middle-aged man in the Tang suit, "Such impressive eyesight."

Li Yuan had also heard Lord Wan's speculation.

...

Once ready with his Long Spear, the Martial Arts Skills test commenced, with many devices above the classroom activating.

Li Yuan, holding the Long Spear, stood facing Xu Bo ready for the test.

"Come, attack me. Show me all that your spear technique has to offer," Xu Bo said in a deep voice, holding a long stick in his hand.

"Yes," Li Yuan nodded, knowing that his teacher wanted him to reveal his full strength.

Without hesitation.

"Boom!" Li Yuan's body was like lightning, already showing improvement, stabbing out with his spear fiercely and relentlessly.

"Clang!"

The long stick met the attack, striking the tip of the spear.

If this were a little over a month ago, Li Yuan probably would have had trouble withstanding even this single collision.

But now, his spear technique had taken another step forward.

"Whoosh~" The shaft of the spear followed the motion downward, the rear hand pulling back, followed by a strong push forward, causing the tip of the spear to tremble and draw a large circle, seemingly creating dozens of shadow spears in an instant.

"Teacher Xu's physical quality seems to be around level 7, attack," Li Yuan charged forth ferociously.

There's a saying, 'the spear fears the shaking head.'

It refers to the bewildering changes when the spear shaft wavers, making the spearhead's movements unpredictable and marking the most terrifying moment of a spear attack.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

One thrust followed another, a relentless barrage, lightning-fast jabs targeting Xu Bo, each thrust powerful and accurate.

This was indeed Li Yuan's newly developed killer move—Mountain Ranges and Myriad Forms.

It was a deceptive attack suitable for a spear technique, also apt for group combat.

"Haha, not bad," Xu Bo laughed, wielding his stick in his left hand, poking out with each strike precisely timed to hit the spearhead of Li Yuan's attacks.

This prevented Li Yuan from fully unleashing his power.

In the blink of an eye, the two exchanged dozens of moves.

"Li Yuan, be careful," Xu Bo suddenly roared, changing his footwork as the long stick thrust forth like a spear with lightning speed.

The timing was too good.

This stick thrust came precisely when Li Yuan's spear had failed to hit and he was withdrawing his power.

"Not good," Li Yuan's spear technique immediately adapted, switching from offense to defense, displaying a proficiency in his moves that surprised the martial artists watching from outside the arena.

Without hesitation.

Li Yuan directly employed the 'Solid Rock Pillar,' standing firm like a massive boulder, fiercely blocking Xu Bo's assault.

Dozens more attacks and defenses followed.

Whew!

Xu Bo suddenly backed off, creating distance from Li Yuan and said with a smile, "Alright, that's enough."

Only then did Li Yuan stop, his vitality boiling within him.

It had been too fierce.

Teacher Xu's attacks, seemingly slow, were actually stable, accurate, and ruthless, leaving him with no power to fight back.

"But at least, I've defended for so long, much better than last time," Li Yuan took a deep breath.

At this moment, Xu Bo had already fiddled with his smart ring and said in a deep voice, "Skill assessment over."

Beep—

On the screen at the back of the classroom, a score appeared—"374 points (College Entrance Exam Standard)."

"374 points?"

"That high!"

"College Entrance Exam Standard, over 370 points?"

"I remember Lin Lanyue scored only 361 points, right?"

"Last year, the top scorer in the Martial Arts Skills section for Jiang City's college entrance exam scored just over 380 points," a few vice-principals were thoroughly shocked.



Lin Lanyue scored 361 points.

Li Yuan scored 374 points.

The difference seemed to be just over ten points, but unlike academic subjects, martial arts scores are more definitive; strong is strong, weak is weak, rarely influenced by fluctuations in performance.

Once over 360 points,

Nevermind 10 points, even a 5-point gap represented a clear distinction in Martial Arts Skills.

A 10-point difference meant that if the two were to engage in virtual combat, the outcome would nearly be a given.

"Our school, could it produce a city's top scorer in a single subject? There's still so much time until the college entrance exam."

"Our district's educational quality has always been mediocre at best within the city," the vice-principals exchanged glances, all harboring the same thought.

Especially the vice-principal in charge of 'teaching,' who had the brightest smile on his face.

"Alright, Li Yuan, put the weapon back," Xu Bo said.

Li Yuan obediently returned the long spear to its place.

"Lord Wan, what do you think?" Xu Bo placed the long stick aside and walked over.

"Instructor Xing? What do you all think?" Lord Wan smiled, still not giving a direct answer.

The martial artists from the Martial Hall looked at one another.

"If he can awaken his Martial Spirit, he'll qualify for a Grade C contract; but without awakening the Martial Spirit, it falls short, though still enough for a Grade D contract," Instructor Xing hesitated before saying.

In reality, in Instructor Xing's opinion, Li Yuan was slightly lacking even for a Grade D contract.

High in Martial Arts Skills?

Without the awakened Martial Spirit, that's a significant flaw.

"A Grade D contract?"

Lord Wan nodded slightly and turned to say, "Tie Ta, Principal Tan, could I have a word alone with Li Yuan, if you don't mind?"

A private talk?

Principal Tan and Xu Bo exchanged a glance, both seemingly contemplative.

"Sure," Principal Tan didn't refuse, smiling, "If Lord Wan wishes to speak with Li Yuan alone, that's his good fortune."

"We'll head out first," Principal Tan beckoned the other school leaders to leave the classroom.

"A private talk?" Only Li Yuan, who had just walked over, was still confused.

What's going on?

"Li Yuan, this is Lord Wan from the Starfire Martial Hall's Guanshan branch. Have a good talk," Xu Bo whispered to him.

Starfire Martial Hall Guanshan branch's Hall Master? Li Yuan was inwardly startled but remained composed on the outside.

In his view, this was an important figure.

Soon,

The school leaders, martial artists from the Martial Hall, and the three students all left the classroom, leaving only Li Yuan and Lord Wan.

The classroom door closed.

"Li Yuan, my name is Wan Qinghe," Lord Wan said with a smile.

"Lord Wan," Li Yuan was inwardly nervous, unsure of the other party's intentions.

"I would like to invite you to join the Starfire Martial Hall and sign a contract in advance," Lord Wan said with a smile as he looked at Li Yuan, "A Grade B contract, an upgraded passive model."

"The moment you awaken your Martial Spirit, it will immediately upgrade to a Grade A contract."

"What do you think?"

## - Chapter 33: 31: It's Just Too Much

### Chapter 33: 31: It's Just Too Much

"A B-level contract?"

"Once I awaken my Martial Spirit, I'll be directly promoted to an A-level contract?" Li Yuan felt somewhat dizzy.

It was like being suddenly knocked out by happiness.

After all, even after making it onto the Blue Star youth leaderboard, there had been no word from the Starfire Martial Hall or the Martial Arts Hall, with the only interest coming from the Starry Sky Martial Hall.

And even then, after half a month of hesitation, the best they were willing to offer was a D-level contract.

The difference between a D-level contract and a B-level contract was not a tiny bit.

Whew!

Li Yuan took a deep breath and did not let his head be swayed by the excitement; he instantly recalled the teachings of his uncle, Li Changzhou, from when he was young: "Even in overwhelming joy or anger and pain, before making a significant decision, you must calm down and ask yourself three questions."

What is it!

Why is it!

How to do it!

Four words in summary—steady! Don't be rash!

In just a few seconds, Li Yuan had calmed down again and identified the core question, "Why?"

Why would Lord Wan offer me a B-level contract? It was a contract worth tens of millions, with nearly ten million in Blue Star Coins provided in cash alone.

I am not Lu Bu; I do not have that many adoptive fathers to love me.

"Lord Wan."

Li Yuan said calmly, "A B-level contract is very good, better than I expected... but why would you offer me such a contract, Lord Wan? I haven't even awakened my Martial Spirit."

There must be something abnormal when things deviate from the norm.

Because of my good physical quality? There are not too few elite class students who are better than me.

Martial arts skills? I'm not bad, but not to the extent of being unparalleled in the world.

"The boy is steady, not blinded by benefits," Lord Wan smiled at Li Yuan, raising his opinion of him another notch.

Lord Wan smiled and said, "I don't want to hide it from you. I am willing to offer a B-level contract because you have strong spiritual power, which can probably compete with that of a First Rank Martial Artist."

Spiritual power? Li Yuan was inwardly startled.

The other party can sense the strength of the spiritual power?

Yes, I have been practicing the 'Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture' every day, continuously enhancing my spiritual power, which has reached level 13.2, not too weak even among Martial Artists.

Usually, the spirit is enhanced in tandem with the body.

"Of course, I can only feel it vaguely, and my judgment is not precise," Lord Wan continued. "Technological instruments can't directly test spiritual power. To detect it, you generally need a Third Rank Martial Artist to do it personally... I am just a Second Rank Prime Warrior, with a special method of cultivation.

Plus, your weak strength means you can't fully conceal your spirit, which is why I could sense a bit."

"If you were a Martial Artist, with your spiritual power contained in the sea of consciousness, I would have difficulty sensing it." Lord Wan spoke very frankly, displaying none of the airs of a superior.

He treated Li Yuan as if they were chatting casually, which felt very comfortable.

Lord Wan's words cleared many doubts in Li Yuan's mind but also raised new ones.

"Strong spiritual power is enough for a B-level contract?" Li Yuan couldn't help asking.

Li Yuan knew the importance of spiritual power but wasn't clear on just how important it was.

There was no detailed information available online.

"Whether it's important depends on the person," Lord Wan smiled and said. "If you want to become a Second Rank Prime Warrior, then spiritual power is essential. But if you're just a First Rank Martial Artist... whether your spiritual power is a bit stronger or weaker isn't a big deal."

"After all, no matter how strong your spiritual power is, if someone chops off your head with a sword, you're still going to die."

Li Yuan nodded slightly, thinking to himself, "Prime Warrior? So Lord Wan is a Prime Warrior? Indeed stronger than Teacher Xu."

A First Rank Martial Artist?

A Second Rank Prime Warrior?

The classification of ranks among Martial Artists was not entirely secret in society, and students like Li Yuan, about to graduate from high school, also took a keen interest in it and mostly understood it.

Martial Artists are classified by their physical quality.

Levels 1-9.9 are considered ordinary people.

Levels 10.0-19.9 are known as Entry Rank Martial Artists or First Rank Martial Artists.

Levels 20.0-29.9 are called Second Rank Martial Artists.

Prime Warrior is a term of respect for those above Second Rank Martial Artists.

First Rank Martial Artists, with physical qualities between levels 10-19, often need to use hot weapons to contend with Star Realm Creatures.

Prime Warriors, with at least level 20 physical quality and the ability to wield the miraculous Origin Power, are incredibly strong; ordinary hot weapons are nearly useless against them.

They use cold weapons combined with Origin Power to fight powerful Star Realm Creatures... but Prime Warriors are exceedingly rare.

At least, in the past decade or so, Li Yuan had never encountered a Prime Warrior in real life, only through various videos and images.

Lord Wan was the first.

"The rapid recent improvement in your martial arts skills and physical quality must be directly related to your spiritual power," Lord Wan said with a smile. "Spiritual power is challenging to measure directly, and those with exceptional spiritual talent are extremely rare... For instance, among the twenty million people in Jiang City, not even one emerges in a year."

"Therefore, assessments like the college entrance exams or even special admissions at other times do not include spiritual power in their testing scope."

"Moreover, generally speaking, even if we don't go testing for it, those with exceptional spiritual talents will gradually reveal themselves in university, where they can then receive specialized training without delay."

Li Yuan suddenly understood after a little thought.

Testing for spiritual power? You'd generally need a Third Rank Martial Artist, but even Second Rank Prime Warriors are extremely rare.

The strength of a Third Rank Martial Artist...is beyond the comprehension of ordinary people. How could such figures have the time to do such things?

Input and reward are not proportional.

"And you, Li Yuan," Lord Wan smiled, "are one of those with spiritual power talent one in a million."

Li Yuan was speechless.

Spiritual power talent? He feared he was not.

"However, I can cultivate the 'Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture'. My limit, compared to those with natural talents, will only be stronger." Li Yuan muttered to himself.

From Lord Wan's attitude,

Li Yuan had realized just how precious the 'Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture' was—could it directly enhance spiritual power? It definitely belonged to that category of inconceivable methods.

Just that, Li Yuan hadn't intended to expose it yet.

Because, from his own experience, having the method seemed useless.

"Every time I can cultivate, it is when my consciousness is focused on the Great Sun Jade Platform in the Mind Spirit Divine Palace," Li Yuan thought: "If I hand over the method? It is very likely to jeopardize my safety first."

"How do I explain the origin of the method? Say that I awakened it?"

Who would believe that?

Would he be taken by powerful figures for experiments? Entirely possible.

Only two seconds.

Li Yuan had already made up his mind, before he understood the real secret of the 'Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture',

before he had sufficient strength to protect himself, he mustn't reveal the secrets of the Mind Spirit Divine Palace.

"In the future, when I cultivate the 'Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture', I'll have to be careful not to be detected by anyone." Li Yuan resolved privately.

"Li Yuan."

"How do you feel?" Lord Wan smiled, "A Grade B contract is the highest authority I can offer, a cash payment of 9 million Blue Star Coins, resources and treasures worth a total of 9 million Blue Star Coins, plus a total value of '18 million Blue Star Coins' in mentorship, Spear Technique Manual, and Origin Power Manual."

"Granted in six increments over six years."

"If you're still not satisfied, I am willing to personally sponsor you a one-time cash bonus of one million." Lord Wan smiled at Li Yuan.

Li Yuan held his breath, suspecting he had heard wrong.

He had thought a Grade B contract would be good, but never imagined it would be this good.

The value of 18 million Blue Star Coins in mentorship guidance and manuals not to mention, those things aren't tangible and their value is quite abstract.

But just cash + treasures alone already amount to a total value of 18 million Blue Star Coins.

It's three times that of a Grade D contract!

Even if it's spread over six years, it's still incredibly extravagant for Li Yuan, a high school senior.

Moreover, is Lord Wan willing to provide a personal sponsorship of one million Blue Star Coins? In cash?

Even more unbelievable to Li Yuan.

Right.

With a Grade B contract worth tens of millions of Blue Star Coins, that's what the Martial Hall offers, not Lord Wan spending his own money.

But personal sponsorship means Lord Wan is really forking out his own cash.

"Phew!"

Li Yuan took a deep breath, finding it hard to calm down for a long time.

It wasn't that Li Yuan wasn't steady; rather... the offer was simply too generous.

Lord Wan wasn't in a hurry either, watching Li Yuan with a smile.

"Lord Wan."

Li Yuan finally spoke, "The conditions you offer are indeed so favorable I can't refuse... It's just that I still need to discuss it at home."

"No problem, you're not of age yet, and to sign the contract early on, your guardian's signature would be needed anyway," Lord Wan nodded in agreement.

"Additionally," Li Yuan hesitated, then said: "The Starry Sky Martial Hall approached me two days ago with an early contract signing as well, but it's just a Grade D contract, I haven't agreed."

"I was planning to go talk to them this weekend." Li Yuan chose to tell the truth without exaggeration.

"The Starry Sky Martial Hall?"



"Approached you for an early contract signing? How did they?" Now it was Lord Wan's turn to be stunned.

Only a second.

Lord Wan seemed to realize something.

"Li Yuan, wait a moment." Lord Wan raised his hand to activate his smart ring, quickly searching for something.

Soon, Lord Wan stopped scrolling through the light screen.

"So that's how it is."

Lord Wan suddenly smiled: "Li Yuan, you have already entered the Blue Star Youth Ranking, I just took office, I didn't know about this document before."

"The Blue Star Youth Ranking, originating from the Starry Skies Fighting Network... The Starry Sky Martial Hall really played a good game."

"They must have discovered it."

"But with your qualifications, even if you sign early, they should at least offer you a Grade C contract."

"A Grade D contract? That's simply an insult to a Martial Path genius like you." Lord Wan shook his head slightly.

"An insult to me?" Li Yuan was astonished.

## Chapter 34: 32 The Greatest Sincerity

Insult?

Li Yuan hadn't expected Lord Wan to use such a word to describe the Starry Sky Martial Hall.

Actually, from their initial encounter until now, Li Yuan had a very good impression of Lord Wan... As a Hall Master and a powerful Prime Warrior, he had treated a high school student like himself with nearly equal respect.

The terms he offered for signing the contract were what Li Yuan considered sky-high.

How much did his uncle earn over the years of working in the most dangerous regions? Around a million Blue Star Coins annually, at most.

"Lord Wan... but so far, only the Starry Sky Martial Hall was willing to sign a contract with me in advance," Li Yuan said with a hint of hesitation.

Li Yuan still felt grateful towards the Starry Sky Martial Hall and Uncle Zhong.

"Haha, it seems you really don't understand the details about the Starry Sky Martial Hall," Lord Wan laughed. "Let me have Teacher Xu explain it to you, he understood as soon as I mentioned it."

Lord Wan did indeed want to press down on the Starry Sky Martial Hall to show his high regard for Li Yuan.

But he knew even better that to recruit a genius like Li Yuan, signing a contract based on benefits was only the first step; it was best to also cultivate a mutual emotional bond.

To disclose the truth himself? It would make him seem petty.

Very soon.

Lord Wan invited both Teacher Xu and Principal Tan over.

In front of Li Yuan, Lord Wan quickly clarified the situation to them, openly discussing the Level B contract, talking about Li Yuan's exceptional talent in spiritual power, and also mentioning the Starry Sky Martial Hall's private discussion with Li Yuan.

"Exceptional talent in spiritual power? A Level B contract?" Principal Tan was extremely surprised, looking at Li Yuan in utter shock.

He, too, was a First Rank 16-level Martial Artist and understood the importance of spiritual power for becoming a Prime Warrior.

Exceptional talent in spiritual power? Principal Tan had heard of it before but had never seen it.

It was too rare.

"Lord Wan, you're offering a Level B contract? The Starry Sky Martial Hall privately contacted Li Yuan for only a Level D contract?" Upon hearing this, Teacher Xu's expression changed, revealing a trace of anger, "It's probably that Song Yi fellow!"

"Song Yi? The Vice Hall Master of the Starry Sky Martial Hall?" Lord Wan pondered. He had just assumed his position and had only met the Chief Hall Master of the Starry Sky Martial Hall's Guan Mountain District branch.

The Vice Hall Masters? Lord Wan knew their information, but he hadn't actually met them yet.

"Yes." Teacher Xu nodded. He had been mixed up in the Guan Mountain District for several years and was familiar with the leaders of the area.

"Li Yuan."

Teacher Xu looked towards Li Yuan, who still seemed a bit confused, and spoke softly, "Did you enter the Blue Star Youth Rankings so quickly because you had consecutive duels on the Starry Skies Fighting Network exceeding a hundred matches?"

"Right," Li Yuan began to understand a bit.

"You made it into the Blue Star Youth Rankings, and the Martial Arts Hall, Starfire Martial Hall, they only know of this news, but they don't know your detailed data on the Combat Network," Teacher Xu explained directly. "But the Starry Sky Martial Hall would know, because they directly control the Starry Skies Fighting Network."

The Starry Sky Martial Hall?

The Starry Skies Fighting Network?

Li Yuan understood instantly and suddenly realized why only the Starry Sky Martial Hall was willing to sign a contract with him.

So, there was an information gap?

"Li Yuan, to think I am the headteacher of your Martial Spirit class, I thought you excelled due to your physical talent, never did I expect you had such exceptional spiritual power..." Teacher Xu shook his head.

"If it really is Song Yi, based on what I know about her, it is very likely that when you go to the Starry Sky Martial Hall and are in the process of negotiating, she will appear and directly upgrade your contract to a Level C."

"In doing so..."

"You would naturally feel grateful to her, and it is very likely you would immediately agree to sign," Teacher Xu looked at Li Yuan. "Once you've signed, even if you find out the truth later, first, she hasn't wronged you, and second, as someone who guided you, she would have many excuses, and you wouldn't really hold it against her."

Li Yuan held his breath.

He had never imagined that there were so many schemes behind a single contract.

But Teacher Xu was right.

If the Starry Sky Martial Hall really intended to do so, and there hadn't been any complications today, he most likely would have agreed to the contract.

"This Song Yi, she's too used to playing tricks, now even on my student," said Teacher Xu, his expression growing colder.

After his injury, his strength never fully recovered, but his strong connections meant that most of the Second Rank Prime Warriors in the Guan Mountain District respected him a great deal.

To him, Song Yi's actions were a slap in the face.

"Li Yuan."

Lord Wan remained calm, smiling and said, "I invited your principal and Teacher Xu here just to make you understand... the terms I've offered for the contract represent my utmost sincerity."

"I believe that even if your principal reports this to the Martial Arts Hall, the Martial Arts Hall's special recruitment terms would have difficulty reaching Level B," Lord Wan said openly.

Li Yuan nodded lightly.

"Li Yuan, I will report your situation again, but based on my experience, the Martial Arts Hall will most likely only offer you a Level C contract." Principal Tan nodded and said, "The Martial Arts Hall's special recruitment is usually much more stringent... The final decision is still in your own hands."

The special recruitment by the Martial Arts Hall requires much stricter standards?

Li Yuan was deep in thought.

"Li Yuan, don't worry, I will give you time to think it over, to go back and discuss with your family." Lord Wan smiled and said, "The specific details of the contract will be sent to you by your Teacher Xu tonight."

"Within a month, whenever you're willing, contact me."

"My virtual V number is..." Lord Wan said with a smile.

"Li Yuan, aren't you going to write it down?" Xu Bo said.

"Yes." Li Yuan promptly opened his smart wristband, quickly noted it down, and added Lord Wan as a friend.

Immediately, Li Yuan also realized that this was not Lord Wan's work V number, but his private number.

"Alright."

"Principal Tan, Tie Ta, I only asked the two of you to come here; you should understand my intention," Lord Wan said with a smile.

Principal Tan and Xu Bo exchanged glances.

"Mm." Xu Bo nodded, "Rest assured, I will keep it confidential."

"Lord Wan, rest assured," Principal Tan said solemnly as well.

"Good, I have other matters to attend to, so I'll take my leave now."

"Oh, and Principal Tan, Tie Ta, that Lin Lanyue, if she's willing, my Starfire Martial Hall can offer her a Level C contract, but her family... Please relay the message to them," Lord Wan said with a smile.

"Rest assured, Lord Wan," Principal Tan said with a smile.

Lord Wan nodded, then he turned to Li Yuan, "Young friend Li Yuan, I hope I can see you training at the Starfire Martial Hall."

Right after that, Lord Wan left the martial arts classroom and headed outside the school.

After seeing him off to his car.

Xu Bo took Li Yuan back to his own office.

"Li Yuan, the terms offered by Lord Wan are quite good," Xu Bo pondered for a moment and said, "If your spiritual power talent is reported, the Martial Arts Hall will definitely recruit you specially, but the conditions won't be this favorable."

"Teacher, why not?" Li Yuan couldn't help asking.

Shouldn't it be roughly the same?

"You don't understand." Xu Bo smiled and said, "The Martial Arts Hall's special recruitment is funded by taxpayers' money, and the official audit is extremely strict..."

The folks at the Martial Arts Hall don't really care if you get the best training; they want political achievements, but they aren't willing to take responsibility either, so the students they recruit specially are ones they are absolutely sure will succeed."

Li Yuan understood that without an awakened Martial Spirit, there was too much uncertainty.

The Martial Arts Hall would not easily take big risks.

"Actually."

"Lord Wan's willingness to give you a Level B contract is most likely related to his recent appointment," Xu Bo said with a smile, "He's just taken office and certainly wants to achieve something notable."

"Your contract carries a bit of a gamble."

"A Level B contract... If you haven't reached the 16th rank of Martial Artist by the age of 30, he would bear the consequences."

"Of course, with his strength, he wouldn't mind that, but if you really choose to sign, you have to live up to the expectations."

"Signing early is just a way to make your Martial Path progress faster," Xu Bo advised.

"I understand," Li Yuan nodded.

If Teacher Xu hadn't explained, he wouldn't have known the complex intricacies behind it all.

Beep—

Li Yuan's smart wristband vibrated, indicating an incoming file awaiting receipt.

"This is the Level B contract sent from Lord Wan, just forwarded to me, he indeed values you, showing the utmost sincerity. Perhaps as soon as he got in the car, he ordered someone to draft it," Xu Bo remarked, then looked at Li Yuan, "It's almost dinner time."

"Eat your dinner, don't go to evening self-study, go home and discuss with your family, and make a decision as soon as possible."

"Of course, if you want to wait for the results of the Martial Arts Hall's special recruitment, or want to talk with the Starry Sky Martial Hall again... that's fine too," Xu Bo hesitated for a moment without fully persuading.

After all, he was just Li Yuan's homeroom teacher, not his personal master.

Such significant life decisions, he could not make directly for Li Yuan.

## Chapter 35: 33: Treating Me as a Statesman of the Nation (Vote for Monthly Tickets and Catch-up Reading)

...

Walking out of Xu Bo's office.

Li Yuan didn't rush to the cafeteria to eat; instead, he first returned to the Elite Building, to Martial Arts Room 4011.

He waited for a while.

Li Yuan calculated the time, then made a video call to his uncle, Li Changzhou.

Quickly.

Drip—the video connected, and Li Changzhou was having a meal.

"Uncle," Li Yuan began.

"Xiao Yuan, why are you suddenly calling me?" Li Changzhou asked with a smile while taking big mouthfuls of food, "Have you had your meal?"

"Not yet," Li Yuan shook his head, "Uncle, listen to me, there's something important..."

Quickly, Li Yuan recounted the events of the afternoon in detail to his uncle.

At the same time, he sent the documents of the Grade B contract to Li Changzhou.

Initially, Li Changzhou continued to eat while listening, but after a while, he put down his chopsticks and began to look through the document seriously.

Occasionally, Li Changzhou would ask about some details and then fall into deep thought.

When Li Yuan had explained everything.

"Uncle!"

Li Yuan finally said with slight hesitation, "I was thinking of calling you later tonight, but I feel like it's better to make a decision earlier."

"That's right."

"You've thought it through well," Li Changzhou looked at Li Yuan with approval and said earnestly, "This matter indeed needs an early decision. Go now and find your teacher Xu Bo, and tell him you've decided to sign with Starfire Martial Hall."

"Once your teacher agrees, send a message to Hall Master Wan right away, saying you agree and are very satisfied with the Grade B contract, and are willing to sign at any time."

"Tonight works," Li Changzhou spoke resolutely.

"Right away?"

"Tonight?" Li Yuan was a bit confused by his uncle's decisiveness.

He still remembered that previously, his uncle had advised him to shop around.

Li Changzhou, seemingly understanding Li Yuan's confusion, said patiently, "Xiao Yuan, you're good at language studies, do you remember an old saying?"

"If he accords me the respect due to a man of worth, I repay him with the same; if he treats me as an ordinary person, I repay him the same."

"With your principal and Teacher Xu vouching for you, I believe they wouldn't conspire to deceive a child like you."

Through the video, Li Changzhou looked at Li Yuan, "Moreover, Starry Sky Martial Hall controls the Starry Skies Fighting Network, and I know a bit about it. I just didn't expect your spiritual power talent... Back in the day, I was only a level 12 Martial Artist, and now I'm not even considered a real Martial Artist anymore, so many things are indeed unclear to me."

Li Yuan listened attentively.

His uncle's Martial Artist level wasn't high, but he was indeed insightful about many things.

"On this matter."



"Starry Sky Martial Hall has treated you with insincerity," Li Changzhou said, shaking his head, "Your Uncle Zhong is a good person, but it's normal for him to have his own motivations... It's understandable, everyone has to make a living."

Li Yuan nodded slightly; he didn't blame Uncle Zhong.

The latter wasn't a senior figure in the Martial Hall, without the power to make decisions.

"But this Lord Wan has shown you the greatest sincerity, even willing to sponsor you personally," Li Changzhou spoke gravely, "If we wait for the Martial Arts Hall or Starry Sky Martial Hall's response... it would make us seem greedy."

"Sometimes, interests are important."

"But sometimes, one must stay true to their heart," Li Changzhou said, "Especially as you are about to embark on the path of Martial Path."

"Remember this phrase, 'A Martial Artist seeks clarity of thought and a conscience free of guilt.'"

"Clarity of thought and a conscience free of guilt." Li Yuan nodded, taking the words to heart.

"You've made a commitment," Li Changzhou continued, "Not just Lord Wan, but your teacher Xu Bo, even Principal Tan and others... they'll all think you act decisively and with sincerity."

"Maybe when you become powerful, you won't care."

"Maybe you won't see direct benefits."

"But, as the saying goes, 'Three men make a tiger, and a multitude of voices can melt metal.' We have to look at the long term... when you make your way in Star Realm, having a good reputation among Martial Artists can be crucial; at a critical moment, it might even save your life," Li Changzhou advised.

"I understand," Li Yuan nodded firmly.

Starting from middle school, especially after high school, his uncle often instilled in him the principles of interpersonal conduct through small matters.

"Alright, go ahead."

"I'll send a message to your aunt right away," Li Changzhou said, "If you're to sign the contract tonight, I'll have her come over."

His uncle and aunt were both Li Yuan's legal guardians.

"Okay," Li Yuan nodded.

He ended the video call.

...

Without having his meal, Li Yuan went straight to Xu Bo's office and knocked on the door.

...

"Come in," a deep voice called out.

The door was pushed open.

"Teacher Xu," Li Yuan said as he opened the door, going straight to the point, "I just communicated with my family, and both my uncle and I are willing to sign with Starfire Martial Hall."

"Shall I send a message to Lord Wan right now, Teacher? Do you think that's appropriate?" Li Yuan got straight to the point.

"You're willing to sign the contract now?" Xu Bo's eyes flashed with a hint of surprise, "Not waiting for the Martial Arts Hall's decision?"

"No waiting."

Li Yuan shook his head, "The terms Lord Wan offered are very satisfactory to me and my family; we see no need to wait."

"We can sign anytime, even tonight," Li Yuan added.

"Haha."

"That's fine," Xu Bo said with a rare smile on his normally cold face, "You're thinking correctly. Alright, I'll make a video call to Lord Wan right now; he's probably not home yet."

"Remember not to speak."

Li Yuan nodded.

Immediately, Xu Bo made a video call to Lord Wan in front of Li Yuan.

The light condensed and projected.

The call connected.

"Old Wan," Xu Bo said with a smile.

"Tie Ta, what's the matter?" Lord Wan said with a trace of mirth in his voice as he sat in his car.

From Lord Wan's perspective, Li Yuan was not visible.

"I have some good news for you," Xu Bo said with a laugh, "Just now, Li Yuan and his aunt and uncle communicated; originally they wanted to wait and see the Martial Arts Hall's terms, but this sensible young man persuaded his family to agree to sign with your Starfire Martial Hall."

"On the terms of the contract you drafted, nothing needs to be added."

"When would be a good time to sign?" Xu Bo asked with a smile, "Tonight or tomorrow works for us; which do you prefer?"

"He decided so quickly?" Even Lord Wan was a bit surprised, but his smile grew wider, "Good, it seems I did not misjudge him."

"Since the young fellow trusts me."

"Alright."

"The contract terms will remain unchanged," Lord Wan deliberated briefly, "Personally, aside from sponsoring him with one million Blue Star Coins, I'll also gift him an additional one million Points."

"Haha, truly worthy of being a Hall Master—such generosity," Xu Bo laughed, "One million Points are worth about the same as one million Blue Star Coins outside."

"Before you left, you praised the young man highly," Lord Wan said with a light smile, "If Tie Ta sees potential in him, I trust him. Besides, you know that these Points aren't of much use to me—who better to give them to?"

"Alright."

"Then I'll thank you on Li Yuan's behalf," Xu Bo said with a smile, "Don't worry, the young man is grateful; he won't disappoint you."

Lord Wan smiled.

"Tonight, I have a dinner... Let's schedule the signing for tomorrow morning at ten o'clock," Lord Wan thought for a moment, "You can give your student a half-day off, no problem, right?"

"No problem at all," Xu Bo responded with a smile.

Afterwards, the two ended the communication.

"Li Yuan, you heard it all clear," Xu Bo looked at Li Yuan with a smile, "Points are used within Starfire Martial Hall for internal exchange; they can get you quite a few good things. One million points in value is not less than one million Blue Star Coins."

"Thank you, Teacher," Li Yuan said sincerely; he had heard the conversation.

If Teacher Xu hadn't intentionally spoken highly of him, he probably wouldn't have received such benefits.

"What are you thanking me for?"

"Isn't it a teacher's job to consider their students?" Xu Bo waved his hand and laughed, "If not so, why would I have become a teacher?"

"Helping you also requires you to be capable," Xu Bo said with a laugh, "You haven't had dinner yet, right?"

"Let's go eat first."

"For the signing tomorrow, come to the school first. I will accompany you there."

—

## Chapter 36: 34: The Rights of Martial Hall Members

The next morning at half-past ten.

In the Guanshan branch of the Starfire Martial Hall, on the sixth floor.

Inside a meeting room decorated quite simply.

"Li Yuan, sign your name here, here, and here..." the instructor Xing, whom he had met yesterday, pointed out each spot on the contract that required a signature.

Li Yuan, listening, sat down with his aunt Chen Hui and began to sign his name in each designated place.

Li Yuan and his aunt had already checked this contract thoroughly last night.

Everything was clear and there were no issues.

Once Li Yuan and Chen Hui finished signing, instructor Xing handed the documents to Lord Wan, who was standing by.

A B-level contract requires the Hall Master's signature.

As soon as the signatures were completed, the staff members who had been waiting for a long time immediately took photos and recorded videos.

They then uploaded the files to the virtual network.

"Buzz~" Li Yuan's smart wristband vibrated, he looked down to see a message from the virtual network - the notarized document.

It was sent by the Martial Arts Hall of Jiangbei Province.

"Such quick speed," Li Yuan muttered to himself.

"Li Yuan, save a copy of the document. You should have also received the electronic contract in the virtual network, it has been notarized by the Martial Arts Hall,"

"It officially carries legal effect now." Lord Wan stood up, smiled, and extended his hand, "Welcome, you are now officially a member of the Starfire Martial Hall."

"Thank you, Lord Wan." Li Yuan stood up to shake hands.

Li Yuan was extremely grateful to Lord Wan in his heart.

"According to the contract, each year we will provide you with 1.5 million Blue Star Coins, 1.5 million Martial Hall Points, and 3 million Martial Hall Cultivation Points for six years," Lord Wan said, "Today, the cash will be transferred directly to your card, and the points and cultivation points will be under your name once you complete the 'Martial Hall Member Authentication' process."

"Additionally, my personal sponsorship of 1 million Blue Star Coins and 1 million points will also be in place by today, so don't worry," Lord Wan said with a smile.

"Okay," Li Yuan nodded.

"Instructor Xing will handle the specifics for you next," Lord Wan said with a smile. "If there's anything you don't understand, or instructor Xing can't solve, contact me and I'll help you handle it."

"Understood." Li Yuan nodded, his gaze subconsciously shifting to instructor Xing.

The last two sentences from Lord Wan seemed to be directed at instructor Xing.

But instructor Xing's face was filled with smiles, betraying no sign of any emotional changes.

Straight away,

Lord Wan exchanged a greeting with Chen Hui and then left with a couple of subordinates.

"Li Yuan, the contract signing is complete."

"You've just joined Starfire Martial Hall today, so there's no need to go to school," Xu Bo, who had been silent up until now, spoke in a deep voice. "First get familiar with the environment of the Martial Hall, and come to school tomorrow."

"Okay," Li Yuan nodded repeatedly, as he wouldn't make it in time for the morning cultural classes anyway.

The afternoon and evening? They were for self-study of Martial Path, which could be done anywhere.

"Old Xing, I'll trouble you with this student of mine," Xu Bo said to instructor Xing.

"No trouble at all," instructor Xing enthusiastically replied. "It's my honor to guide Li Yuan."

Now, the meeting room was left with only Li Yuan, his aunt, and the three members of the Martial Hall including instructor Xing.

"Li Yuan, Ms. Chen," instructor Xing said with a smile. "Follow me, let's get your identity authentication done first, then I'll show you around the entire Martial Hall building."

"Do I need to do it too?" Chen Hui was momentarily stunned.

"Ms. Chen, normally, when someone joins our Starfire Martial Hall, they can apply for two family cards which also allow the family to enjoy some rights of the Martial Hall," said a black-clad martial artist with a smile. "For example, free lunch and dinner, free weekend Martial Path classes, access to Martial Arts Rooms, complimentary therapies, and so forth."

Li Yuan felt a silent sense of appreciation.

He had heard about the numerous benefits for official members of the Martial Hall while in school.

Now it seemed that just the perks of having a family card were quite valuable.

"That's so generous?" Chen Hui first rejoiced, then hesitated, "Are there only two cards available?"

"Yes, Li Yuan is an L3 level member of the Martial Hall, which comes with the privilege of two family cards," confirmed the black-clad martial artist with a nod.

"Let's forget about it, I won't apply," Chen Hui said, shaking her head.

She wanted to keep the two spots for Li Muhua and Li Qianqian.

"Ms. Chen, don't worry," instructor Xing said with a chuckle. "I'll gift you two W3 level membership cards. You just need to bind one to yourself; the benefits are the same as the family card's, for a period of six years,"

"In six years, Li Yuan might have been promoted to L4 level or even higher, so naturally there will be more family slots available. How does that sound?" instructor Xing said with a smile.

Chen Hui looked toward Li Yuan.

"Auntie, instructor Xing means well, accept it," Li Yuan spoke, intuitively understanding the situation.

This was instructor Xing's way of showing favor to him.

Not to accept would actually be impolite.

...After completing the identity and membership card authentication, Li Yuan officially became a provisional member of the Starfire Martial Hall.

Chen Hui looked around for a while and then left first.

Li Yuan was left alone.

He accompanied instructor Xing to the seventh floor.

"The whole building."

"What we saw from the first to the sixth floor are open to the public, such as various auxiliary cultivation treasures for sale, charged therapy rooms, Martial Arts Rooms, Martial Path classes, weapon classes, and so on," instructor Xing introduced to Li Yuan.

"Floors seven to twelve are usually only accessible to internal members of the Martial Hall."

"Among the official members, only L1 and L2 levels are equipped with public Martial Arts Rooms for shared use."

"For L3 level members, apart from Martial Path geniuses like you who signed a B-level contract, it's middle management and high-level martial artists, and by high-level I mean at least 16th level," instructor Xing said with a smile. "They are provided with individual Martial Arts Rooms."

Saying this,

instructor Xing had led Li Yuan to the front of Martial Arts Room number '7024' and, after identity authentication, opened the door.

Immediately,

a rather spacious Martial Arts Room appeared in Li Yuan's line of sight, its area definitely exceeding 400 square meters.

"So big." Li Yuan's eyes flickered slightly.

This was much better than the independent Martial Arts Room at school.

The area was more than double in size, with a more complete array of technological equipment, as well as dedicated rooms for therapy and rest.

Even though it still didn't quite compare to Instructor Xu Bo's office, it was very close.

"The background identity authentication has been completed, starting from today, for the next six years, the right to use this Martial Arts Room will belong to you," Instructor Xing said with a smile, "Of course, there's a one-month trial period, and if you feel uncomfortable, you can request a change."

"It's for my use?" Li Yuan felt quite pleased in his heart.

A six-year usage right, that was enough.

Ordinary wealthy families, like Wan Xiao's with assets of at least several tens of millions, could not build such a Martial Arts Room.

Time passed.



After having lunch and another hour and a bit, through Instructor Xing's introduction and explanation, Li Yuan gradually understood the entire workings and personnel structure of the Martial Hall... and what he had to do next.

"Li Yuan, the specific rules within the Martial Hall are all available on the virtual network," Instructor Xing said with a smile, "If there's anything unclear, you can come directly to me."

"Okay, thank you for your hard work, Instructor Xing," Li Yuan said with a smile, "If there's a chance, I will speak to Lord Wan about this."

"Haha, thanks a lot," Instructor Xing laughed.

After seeing the visitor off.

Li Yuan returned to Martial Arts Room 7024. Though it was a fully enclosed room, the air was exceptionally fresh.

"My spiritual power matter has been kept confidential; no wonder Instructor Xing doesn't understand why I could sign a Grade B contract," Li Yuan shook his head secretly, "Maybe he thinks I have some special relationship with Lord Wan, so he is being so cautious."

Otherwise, as the chief instructor of the entire Guanshan sub hall, with status only below the true and Vice Hall Masters.

Why be so polite to a high school student like me?

Suddenly.

"Ding-dong—" The doorbell rang, and the display screen at the door showed the scene outside.

It was a meal delivery robot, precisely the meal Li Yuan had ordered ten minutes ago.

After retrieving his meal, Li Yuan went to the table at the end of the Martial Arts Room to eat.

"I really am hungry."

Li Yuan feasted, "Two nutrition meals, only for 40 Points? It's even better than the nutrition meal at school for 50 Blue Star Coins."

"Instructor Xing was right, inside the Martial Hall, Points are more useful than equivalent Blue Star Coins."

...

After the meal.

Li Yuan didn't rush to cultivate but used the high-level virtual network pod inside the Martial Arts Room.

Entering the Virtual World.

"Enter Starfire Space," Li Yuan's consciousness connected, giving the direct command.

Hum~ The space transformed.

"Respected L3 member, welcome to Starfire Space, I am your exclusive AI..." a pleasant voice rang out.

"Change the steward's name to 'Little Jade', with the appearance of an ancient girl," Li Yuan directed immediately.

"Yes." A girl in purple attire appeared in front of Li Yuan: "Little Jade will serve the master."

Li Yuan paid her no mind, instead starting to inspect this virtual space that he had just gained access to.

Starfire Space is the 'exclusive space' of Starfire Martial Hall.

Only members and clients of Starfire Martial Hall could enter.

"My Starfire level." Li Yuan's gaze fell on the adjacent panel:

Name: Li Yuan (ID 2042100806492)

Affiliation: Xia Country—Jiangbei Province—Jiang City

Level: L3

Points: 2,499,960

Cultivation Points: 2,800,000

...

"2.5 million Points, of which 1.5 million Points are provided by the Grade B contract, and the other 1 million Points were gifted by Lord Wan," Li Yuan silently thought.

Through consulting the user manual, combined with Instructor Xing's previous introduction, Li Yuan quickly understood.

Points, fundamentally, are the internal currency of Starfire Martial Hall, which can be used to purchase various items and services.

From all sorts of auxiliary cultivation treasures, such as Basic Vitality Potions, First-Rank Vitality Potions, Spirit Nourishing Potions, Origin Power Essence Pills... to all kinds of precious weapons, Spear Technique Manuals, Origin Power Manuals, and so on.

This was in terms of Martial Arts Cultivation.

In daily life aspects, such as financial management, renting or buying villas, purchasing luxury cars, private jets, yachts, legal representation, buying daily necessities, priority hospital beds... everything connected to life, the Martial Hall could help to solve.

The prerequisite is, you are willing to spend enough Points.

"Points, in many affairs, indeed are more useful than money," Li Yuan reflected in his heart.

The experiences of the day had a great impact on him, truly opening up Li Yuan's eyes.

Letting him have an initial contact with... the world of a Martial Artist.

"Earning Points, one way is to take office, to hold a position in the Martial Hall, and like a salary, you receive an amount every month," Li Yuan thought quietly, "The second way is to complete various tasks for the Martial Hall, like going into the Star Realm..."

Li Yuan only glanced over and didn't focus on the methods of obtaining Points.

It was temporarily unrelated to him.

"Me, a little guy with only 7th Level Physical Quality, what Points can I earn?"

"I'm merely a reserved member, not yet a formal member."

"The Martial Hall let me in just to spend money."

"What I need to do now," Li Yuan's eyes sparkled, "is to use the Points and money gifted to me by the Martial Hall."

"To improve my family and... enhance my strength," Li Yuan's eyes sparkled, "Strive to get into one of the top five prestigious schools and become a Martial Artist."

## Chapter 37: 35 Training Plan

After communicating with Teacher Xu and Instructor Xing,

Li Yuan understood that signing a contract in advance didn't mean he could forgo attending university.

An early contract was essentially an investment by the Martial Hall; they would provide Li Yuan with some guidance in his cultivation but wouldn't cover everything.

For him, the best path was still to take the college entrance exam and attend a Martial Arts University.

"According to Teacher Xu, the Martial Hall is a gathering place for martial artists and in the grand scheme of human civilization, its role is to be combat-ready, not necessarily to nurture talent,"

"What the Martial Hall needs more is immediate combat power," Li Yuan mused quietly, "The responsibility for nurturing lies with the Martial Arts University. That's where the most comprehensive training for martial artists is available."

"Be it the nation or the Seven Star Alliance, all sorts of precious resources are poured into Martial Arts Universities."

"Many invaluable resources are provided for free in universities, but inside the Martial Hall, you have to spend a fortune to acquire them."

"Even some priceless resources aren't available in the Martial Hall."

Attending a Martial Arts University would mean receiving the best martial artists' education.

Many top martial artists would take turns serving and mentoring students at various Martial Arts Universities.

"Only through systematic study at a Martial Arts University can one proceed more steadily and farther on the path of a martial artist," Li Yuan didn't dare overestimate himself.

It's true he had awoken the Mind Spirit Divine Palace by chance, but the more he saw, the more he realized how insignificant he was.

"Just like uncle said,"

"On the road to growth, sometimes you need the support of influential people, and sometimes you need opportunities," Li Yuan murmured, "Teacher Xu is my benefactor."

"Signing a contract early with Starfire Martial Hall is my opportunity."

"What I need to do is to make good use of them to help me enter a broader domain."

...

Inside the Starfire Space,

"Little Jade, weren't my cultivation points 3 million?" Li Yuan asked in confusion, "Why does it show 2.8 million now?"

"Master,"

"As an L3-level member, you enjoy many privileges from the Martial Hall every year, like the family card and your exclusive Martial Arts Room... You have to pay 200,000 points for these, which are automatically deducted," the girl in purple said playfully, "Cultivation points are unique to martial arts prodigies who have signed early contracts."

"They work similarly to points but can only be used to purchase non-physical martial arts cultivation services."

"The 200,000 points you need to deduct will be taken first from your cultivation points," the girl in purple added.

Li Yuan immediately understood.

If points are considered the internal currency of the Martial Hall, then cultivation points... are like 'coupons' for early signees, with many restrictions.

"It can only be used for paying annual fees, mentorship from famous teachers, skill secret manuals, Origin Power manuals, cultivation video tutorials..." Li Yuan browsed the uses of cultivation points.

All of which were non-physical.

"No wonder the Martial Hall is so generous," Li Yuan muttered, "3 million cultivation points? In name, they're worth 3 million Blue Star Coins, but items like various secret manuals and cultivation videos... the Martial Hall could recreate numerous copies if they were willing, with almost zero cost."

Some cultivation resources, being replicable, aren't genuinely precious, so the Martial Hall can afford to be more generous with them.

But physical resources, like qi and blood elixirs, truly require a substantial use of resources to create, so the Martial Hall would strictly control the distribution of these.

Of course, even though cultivation points aren't as good as points, they're still quite useful.

...

"The higher the rank within the Martial Hall, the greater the privileges and the fewer points needed for the same services?" Li Yuan examined the Starfire ranking explanations, "At L3 level, I'm not doing too badly among all Martial Hall members."

He learned this after talking with Instructor Xing.

L1 level is for trial members.

L2 is the rank for most members of the Martial Hall. At this level, the members, mostly martial artists under level 15, and those with D-tier or C-tier preliminary contracts, fall under this category.

L3 usually consists of basic-level Martial Hall managers or members on preliminary B-tier contracts.

To reach L4 or L5 levels, one usually has to be a Second Rank Prime Warrior.

For someone like Lord Wan, he's an L5-level member.

"Unless I upgrade to an A-tier contract, I'll remain an L3-level member until I become a Second Rank Prime Warrior," Li Yuan reviewed the requirements for his B-tier contract.

Want to move up in Starfire ranks? It depends on your innate talent and strength, as well as your contributions to the Martial Hall.

Provisional members with an A-tier contract belong to L4 level.

And S-tier contract's provisional members? Directly L5 level members!

If Li Yuan wished to move from a B-tier to an A-tier contract? According to the contract stipulations, there are three ways to do that.

"First, awaken the Martial Spirit."

"Second, get into Starfire University."

"Third, reach the Fallen Star rank with 300 points on the Starry Skies Fighting Network before the age of 18." Li Yuan frowned slightly.

The first and second routes were nearly the same in Li Yuan's eyes.

"If I can awaken the Martial Spirit and get a 10% score bonus, with eight months of hard work and training, my chances of getting into Starfire University are extremely high." Li Yuan thought to himself, "Without awakening the Spiritual Nature, the chances of getting into Starfire University are basically zero."

Starfire University is globally known as one of the top three elite martial schools, alongside Starry Sky University and Black Stone University.

From their names alone, one can hear the inseparable relationship these top three elite martial schools have with the three major Martial Halls.

The difficulty of gaining admission to them is far higher than the top five famous schools of Xia Country.

The top five famous schools of Xia Country together enroll about ten thousand students each year within the country.

Looking globally, there are more than a dozen Martial Arts Universities comparable to Xia Country's top five.

However, as far as Li Yuan knew, Starfire University only enrolls less than a thousand students globally each year, and no more than three hundred within Xia Country.

Those in Xia Country who can gain admission to one of the top three elite martial schools are, with few exceptions for specially recruited students, at least among the top ten martial talents of their province.

"Legend has it, those who successfully graduate from Starfire University are mostly Second Rank Prime Warriors." Li Yuan shook his head slightly.

Provincial Martial Arts Universities, the top five famous schools of Xia Country, and the top three elite global martial schools... these represent three distinct levels.

"Martial Path grades, top ten in the province?"

It's not that Li Yuan didn't dare to dream, but without awakening the Martial Spirit, was he supposed to just wish for it?

Even if Li Yuan were to score 1000 points in his Martial Arts Skills, it would still be hard to break into the top ten of his province.

The others have a total score of 1100 points.

One must be realistic in life.

"My score isn't even in the top ten within my school year, let alone the whole province." Li Yuan didn't ponder further, "Compared to the first two routes, the third one seems more realistic."

Reaching the Fallen Star rank with 300 points on the Starry Skies Fighting Network before the age of 18.

This path was difficult as well, but considering the rate of improvement in Li Yuan's Martial Arts Skills, there was a glimmer of hope.

...

After clarifying everything.

Li Yuan spoke softly, "Xiao Yu, I need a training guidance plan tailored for me."

"Okay."

"First, please fill out your personal information again, and be sure to provide accurate details," Xiao Yu said. "This way, the Martial Hall's intelligent system can make the best plan."

Hu~

With a wave of Xiao Yu's hand, a light screen immediately appeared.

It displayed many fields waiting to be filled out.

Age, gender, Life Level, Fist Strength, Burst Speed, weapon used, Martial Arts Skills, Cultivation Techniques... there were more than a hundred items.

"The Martial Hall should have my information, but it probably wants to double-check," Li Yuan thought, as he filled out each item.

With the Divine Palace panel at his disposal, the accuracy of the information Li Yuan provided was destined to be far beyond what other reserve members could offer.

"Please wait a moment, Master," Xiao Yu said. "I am requesting to utilize the intelligent resources to develop a cultivation plan for you."

Ten minutes later.

"Master, it is complete," Xiao Yu announced. "Please review it."

Weng~



Quickly, a huge light screen appeared in front of Li Yuan, filled with densely packed text and explanations.

"To aid the improvement of physical quality, the main recommendation is to take a Basic Blood Medicine every two days... Due to the lack of high-rank Cultivation Techniques, one must take at least one Essence Pill of Origin Power per month." Li Yuan read the first item, "The monthly cost is about 130,000 Blue Star Coins/points."

"Basic Spirit-Nourishing Elixirs, three bottles a month, cost about 90,000 Blue Star Coins/points..."

"Deep Medicinal Baths, once every ten days, with a monthly cost of about 30,000 Blue Star Coins/points..."

"Purchase the Second Rank Spear Technique 'Stellar Spear Technique' for 1 million Cultivation Points."

"Purchase the Second Rank movement technique 'Dragon Movement Technique' for 1 million Cultivation Points."

"For mentorship, hire a Second Rank Prime Warrior to provide guidance on spear technique and movement technique once a month, each session costing 100,000 Cultivation Points/points/Blue Star Coins..."

## Chapter 38: 36: Essence Pill of Origin Power (Three more for monthly votes and followers)

According to the information provided by Li Yuan, the intelligent system used its vast database to come up with a very detailed training plan.

It was also highly targeted.

Moreover, for every plan it formulated, there was an extremely detailed explanation, explaining the reasons.

After reading through the entire thing.

Li Yuan had to admit that the intelligent system's analysis made a lot of sense.

"AI intelligence based on big data is indeed extraordinary," Li Yuan reflected internally.

The only problem was that the plan was very costly.

"If I follow this full set of plans by the intelligent system, I'd have to spend about 400,000 Blue Star Coins/Points each month," Li Yuan calculated and felt his scalp tingle: "That's nearly 5 million a year."

How much were the Blue Star Coins and points given by the Martial Hall in total?

3 million a year.

It wasn't until this moment that Li Yuan truly understood what his uncle Li Changzhou had said.

Full-time Martial Path?

No money? What Martial Arts can you practice?

To become a strong Martial Artist, you have to pay a hefty sum.

"I'm not even an Entry Rank Warrior yet, and if I become a First Rank Warrior, the costs will only get higher," Li Yuan shook his head slightly.

Of course, Li Yuan was also aware that the training plan provided by the intelligent system belonged to the very high-end category.

It could assist in maximizing the efficiency of the enhancement of Physical Quality, Martial Arts Skills, and spiritual power.

Improving all three aspects together would greatly increase the hopes of becoming a Prime Warrior in the future.

The only problem was the cost.

Even for wealthy families like Wan Xiao's, they probably would only dare to engage in this kind of spending during the sprint phase of the High Third Rank.

"Lin Lanyue's family background seems better than Wan Xiao's, maybe her cultivation resources can reach that level," Li Yuan sighed internally: "No wonder her progress far exceeds that of other students."

Decent talent, effort, plus the boost from resources.

How can an ordinary person compare with Lin Lanyue?

"My advantage lies in the Mind Spirit Divine Palace," Li Yuan pondered: "With the 'Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture,' not only can I rapidly increase spiritual

power, but I can also experience deep sleep, eliminating all fatigue, worth the highest level of physical therapy."

The rapid enhancement of Li Yuan's Physical Quality owed much to the 'Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture.'

"Therefore, items such as Spirit Nourishing Potion, top-tier physical therapy... these can all be discarded," Li Yuan decided.

If he were to purchase and use them, perhaps the training efficiency would be higher.

But then again, who asked Li Yuan to be poor?

"Being poor, I have to choose the most cost-effective method."

Li Yuan's gaze swept over the other items: "That way, the main expenses that require points are threefold: first is the enhancement of Physical Quality, Basic Vitality Potion, Origin Power Essence Pill."

"Another item is the Deep Medicinal Bath."

"Then there's sparring practice, accompanied by a Level 15 Warrior, twice a week, costing 20,000 Blue Star Coins each week," Li Yuan thought to himself.

Adding all that up.

In a month, it would cost approximately 240,000 Blue Star Coins/Points.

With that, by the time of the college entrance exam in June next year, the total cost would be around 2 million Blue Star Coins/Points.

"The next gift from the Martial Hall won't be until October next year," Li Yuan thought: "Moreover, I also need to save some points for after becoming an Entry Rank Warrior."

After entering the university, there will be many cultivation resources from the school, but they are not yet in sight!

Li Yuan had to plan for himself.

"As for Cultivation Points, Spear Technique, movement technique, guidance from a master, I will ask Teacher Xu when I go back to school," Li Yuan decided.

Time slipped away by the minute and the second.

Suddenly, Li Yuan received two bank alerts, directly displayed on the virtual network.

"Your account ending in 1486 has received 1,000,000.00 Blue Star Coins..."

"Your account ending in 1486 has received 1,200,000.00 Blue Star Coins..."

Two deposit notifications.

"Hmm? Two sums of money, one should be the gift from Lord Wan, and the other should be the contract reward from the Martial Hall." Li Yuan felt slightly puzzled, "But why is the contract reward 1.2 million Blue Star Coins?"

"Could it be that another 300,000 Blue Star Coins are still owed to me?"

Li Yuan was about to inquire with Xiao Yu.

"Master, this year's cash reward from the Martial Hall has been deposited according to the contract. All contract rewards for the 2042-2043 fiscal year have been fully accounted for," Xiao Yu took the initiative to speak.

"Why is the cash from the contract reward short by 300,000?" Li Yuan couldn't help but ask.

"Taxes!"

"Such contract rewards from the Martial Hall are made through a public account and are subject to state supervision. Taxation is mandatory, and the Martial Hall has already paid it on your behalf. Master, you can check this in the virtual tax space," Xiao Yu immediately explained. "Normally, for large income like this, any amount exceeding 1 million must have an income tax of up to 50% deducted."

"However, contract rewards are considered privileged income, and there are tax reliefs from the state, so only 20% is deducted."

"Reminder, Master, you must not evade or under-report taxes. Once discovered, the fine starts at ten times the amount," Xiao Yu said cheerfully.

"But rest assured, Master, the other 1 million Blue Star Coins are a private gift and not subject to tax," Xiao Yu added.

"As for points, cultivation points, they are internally disbursed by the Martial Hall, covered by the Martial Hall's running costs... The Martial Hall will handle the tax calculation and payment, so Master doesn't need to worry about that," Xiao Yu informed.

Li Yuan was already feeling overwhelmed.

Taxes?

300,000 Blue Star Coins just gone like that? Li Yuan felt a sting of pain.

He fell silent for a while.

"That's right, taxes should be paid." Li Yuan consoled himself inwardly, "With the wars in the Star Realm, basic infrastructure, education, civil welfare... the state needs funds. Paying taxes is the duty of every citizen."

Since childhood, Li Yuan had been educated in such a manner.

In the past, it was just slogans, but this time he truly understood.

"For cultivation, best to use points," he decided.

"Cash, after all, has a wider range of uses," Li Yuan thought to himself, with a hint of anticipation, "Moreover, it's time to give some cash to Auntie."

He had worked hard for so long, if not for today?

Relieving his family's financial stress had always been one of Li Yuan's motivations.

...

Li Yuan didn't stay too long at the Starfire Martial Hall. By four in the afternoon, he had already returned to school.

He found Xu Bo in his office.

"Back so soon?" Xu Bo was a bit surprised and asked with a smile, "How do you feel?"

"The Martial Hall is very good," said Li Yuan sincerely.

"The Martial Hall's conditions for cultivation have always been top-notch," Xu Bo said with a smile, "You've come back to me so quickly; there must be something you need, right?"

"Yes," Li Yuan confirmed.

"I'd like to ask for Teacher's guidance," Li Yuan said respectfully, and he promptly relayed the cultivation plan from the intelligent system to Teacher Xu.

"The cultivation plan made for you by the AI is very comprehensive. It's just that they are all quite costly, and you do not have enough wealth to afford all of them, so you must choose the ones with the best cost-effectiveness," Xu Bo advised. "I'll just point out two things."

"Please, Teacher," Li Yuan listened attentively.

"Firstly, try your best to exchange for the Basic Source Energy Essence Pills," Xu Bo said gravely.

"The cultivation plan suggests taking one pill a month, but in reality, it's best to see how much your body can handle... If your body can withstand it, taking two pills a month is optimal."

"The Basic Source Energy Essence Pills are expensive, costing 100,000 Blue Star Coins each," Xu Bo looked at Li Yuan and continued, "But their effects are extremely good."

"You haven't awakened your Martial Spirit and cannot practice high-rank cultivation methods. Taking the Essence Pill can greatly make up for this drawback."

"Your physical talent is already formidable."

"If the results are good enough..."

"By the time of the college entrance exam, your Physical Quality could be elevated to 8.5 or even 9.0 level, surpassing Lin Lanyue is a possibility," Xu Bo said earnestly.

Li Yuan's eyes flickered with excitement, suddenly feeling a rush of aspiration.

But he also felt a wave of pressure.

He had become a millionaire, so why did it feel like he was poorer than ever?

## Chapter 39: 37 The Magical Origin Power

"Two pills a month?" Li Yuan sighed inwardly.

Basic Source Energy Essence Pills cost 100,000 Blue Star Coins/Points each, and if he were to take two, it would greatly increase his monthly budget.

"You haven't taken Source Energy Essence Pills before, have you?" Xu Bo looked at Li Yuan.

"No." Li Yuan shook his head. His family couldn't afford such precious cultivation treasures.

Families like his uncle and aunt, who could provide their children with basic vitality potions on a long-term basis, were already in the minority.

Source Energy Essence Pills? Only billionaires would dare to purchase and use them regularly.

"Then let me explain to you that Source Energy Essence Pills are essentially substitutes for High Rank Cultivation Methods," Xu Bo said. "Do you know the fundamental difference between Basic Cultivation Methods and High Rank Cultivation Methods?"

"Cultivation efficiency," said Li Yuan.

"That's the outcome, not the reason," Xu Bo said. "Basic Cultivation Methods efficiently absorb the energy produced from the food we eat, thus promoting life's progress."

Li Yuan couldn't help but nod.

The modern human being's most fundamental difference from the traditional martial arts of the past lies in the Cultivation Methods.

They are the keys to unlocking life evolution.

"But Basic Cultivation Methods have their limits," Xu Bo continued. "No matter how strong our digestive system is, we can eat ten pounds of nutritious meals a day, but can we eat a hundred pounds?"

"We can't," Li Yuan shook his head.

"Right, even with high-energy food, there will be impurities, and eating too much would be more than the body can handle," Xu Bo continued. "But for a powerful Martial Artist, not to mention pushing the body to evolve further, even to maintain the body's state requires massive energy consumption."

"It's like an electric car, the more powerful it is, the more electricity it consumes."

"Like me, your teacher."

Boom!

With one step, Xu Bo moved as if a phantom, the air instantly exploding, the airflow surging into wind.

Xu Bo stopped at the other end of the office.

"This?"

"Is this what a 19th rank Martial Artist is like?" Li Yuan watched, holding his breath, a hint of excitement in his heart.

He was certain that Teacher Xu just now erupted with a burst speed definitely exceeding 50 meters per second.

To know, this was an on-the-spot burst, not Xu Bo's maximum burst speed.

This was what truly powerful Martial Artists were like.

Xu Bo walked back slowly and said as he walked, "Every day, to maintain my strong body, if I relied only on eating, I would have to consume several tens of pounds of high-energy food."

"This is still in urban life, if I were to fight with Star Realm Creatures, the consumption would be greater, two hundred pounds of high-energy food wouldn't be enough."

Li Yuan was speechless.

He thought of elephants and giraffes, which spent most of their day eating.

If they exercised, their consumption would be even greater.

"That's why we have produced vitality potions," Xu Bo said. "Vitality potions are essentially extracted from food, easier for the body to absorb, and almost free from impurities, though they come at a costly price."

"By taking them, one can reduce the demand for food."

Li Yuan nodded slightly.

By using vitality potions, the burden of eating would be reduced and the efficiency of cultivation could be at least doubled.

"But as one progresses, becoming a 15th rank Martial Artist or even stronger, vitality potions alone are no longer enough."

"In recent decades, Source Energy Essence Pills have emerged, allowing us to directly absorb Origin Power."

"What is Origin Power?"

"Since the alteration of the Six Great Star Bridges hundreds of years ago, the most mysterious energy 'Origin Power' appeared in the Starry Sky," Xu Bo said, somewhat emotionally. "Once we can absorb Origin Power, the speed of our body's evolution will increase tenfold, a hundredfold."



Li Yuan listened intently.

Origin Power was exceedingly magical.

Powerful Martial Artists could, in just a few decades, achieve flying through the heavens and the earth, and even walk out unscathed from the center of a nuclear explosion... all because they absorbed Origin Power and promoted their body's evolution.

With the body of a human, they rivalled the Divine.

"There are three methods to absorb Origin Power."

"First is to have a Physical Quality of at least 19th rank, with sufficiently profound skills, and a perfect unity of body, mind, and intent to barely perceive Origin Power and achieve initial absorption," Xu Bo said gravely. "This is the most primitive absorption method, very inefficient, but the first generation of Martial Artists became strong step by step using this method."

"Later on."

"As the number of Martial Artists grew more and more, and became stronger and stronger, the first High Rank Cultivation Technique was finally deduced, drastically increasing the efficiency of absorbing Origin Power by more than ten times," Xu Bo said. "Subsequent techniques, the second, the third... until now, our human civilization has developed seven major High Rank Cultivation Methods."

...

"Even ordinary people can achieve preliminary absorption of Origin Power and greatly increase the efficiency of enhancing their Physical Quality if they resonate with corresponding High Rank Cultivation Methods." Xu Bo said with a hint of regret as he looked at Li Yuan.

...

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Li Yuan understood what Teacher Xu meant.

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Awakening Martial Spirit wasn't as mystical as the 'Spirit Root' depicted in novels.

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Its essence is about compatibility with the seven High Rank Cultivation Methods.

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A compatibility over 85% is considered an awakening.

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Why does human civilization place such immense importance on Martial Spirit?  
Because ordinary people who practice High Rank Cultivation Methods can gradually absorb the Origin Power from the universe to strengthen their bodies.

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As a result, the efficiency of Life Evolution spikes, and the hope of becoming a Prime Warrior greatly increases.

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This is why the students in the Elite Class generally possess formidable physical qualities.

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Secondly, Origin Power exists everywhere in the Starry Sky of the universe.

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It is not only much more potent than any medicament for Qi and blood, but also inexhaustible, saving a vast amount of resources for the entire human civilization.

...

...

"Absorbing Origin Power through High Rank Cultivation Methods is the second method, and it's the best method," Xu Bo shook his head, "but you can't do it now... Li Yuan, if you want to absorb the Origin Power from the universe on your own, you can only use the most primitive absorption method."

...

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"That would require your Physical Quality to be elevated to level 19."

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Li Yuan nodded slightly.

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Not absorbing Origin Power yet raising your Physical Quality to level 19? You can imagine how difficult that would be.

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You must resort to a great deal of external resources.

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"Of course, if you become an incredibly powerful Prime Warrior in the future, you might be able to create a High Rank Cultivation Method that suits yourself."

...

...

"Even to create High Rank Cultivation Methods that a large number of ordinary people can practice." Xu Bo said emotionally, "In doing so, you would become a significant benefactor to human civilization."

...

...

"The world's number one Martial Artist, 'Dongfang Ji', once said that every person is uniquely endowed and should have a suitable High Rank Cultivation Method."

...

...

"If our human civilization could give birth to a hundred High Rank Cultivation Techniques, then everyone will find a High Rank Cultivation Method that suits them from their youth, and the concept of Martial Spirit would no longer exist."

...

...

"By then, the speed at which Martial Artists are born in our human civilization will be more than ten times faster than it is now," Xu Bo quoted Dongfang Ji, "and this will require generations of Martial Artists to struggle and strive for."

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"A hundred High Rank Cultivation Methods?" Li Yuan sighed inwardly.

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Human civilization, from the era of Life Evolution, has only spawned seven universal High Rank Cultivation Methods in nearly two hundred years.

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However, compared to the three High Rank Cultivation Methods more than eighty years ago,

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the pace at which Martial Artists are born in this era has increased several times.

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The more Martial Artists there are, the larger the base, the increased number of powerful Martial Artists, which in turn accelerates the speed at which High Rank Cultivation Methods are created.

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This cycle is virtuous.

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And it constantly strengthens human civilization.

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"The third method to absorb Origin Power is through Essence Pills; this emerged in the last two to three decades," Xu Bo explained, "Essence Pills contain traces of Origin Power, which can be absorbed immediately upon consumption."

...

...

"It's just that Origin Power is domineering."

...

...

"Without the aid of High Rank Cultivation Methods to help with the assimilation, the absorption will be very difficult," Xu Bo said, "Therefore, an ordinary person should suffice with one pill a month."

...

...

"Your natural Physical Quality actually belongs to the very top tier; it's just that you don't have a fitting High Rank Cultivation Method." Xu Bo looked at Li Yuan with a touch of regret, "And with your strong spiritual power, perhaps you could manage two pills per month."

...

...

"Thank you for the guidance, Teacher," Li Yuan nodded and replied with a candid smile, "If I don't have a High Rank Cultivation Method that suits me."

...

...

"Then in the future, I will strive to create one."

...

...

"Ha ha," Xu Bo laughed upon hearing this, "That's the spirit; your Teacher awaits."

...

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...

"This 'Stellar Spear Technique', along with the 'Dragon Movement Technique', are inherited from the same lineage as the 'Solid Rock Cultivation Technique', which I suggest you switch to," Xu Bo continued, "Both of these Secret Manuals are highly reputed among Martial Artists, pointing directly to the Fifth Stage of skill."

...

...

"Pointing directly to the Fifth Stage of skill?" Li Yuan pondered.

...

...

His own skill was only at the Third Stage.

...

...

"Teacher, can't you teach me a Second Rank Secret Manual?" Li Yuan couldn't help but ask.

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"Me?" Xu Bo was first taken aback and then he smiled, "Indeed, I have practiced many Second Rank Secret Manuals, covering Spear Techniques, Sword Techniques, and movement techniques."

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"But I can't teach you," Xu Bo shook his head, "Have you not noticed that I've never advised you to practice a Second Rank Secret Manual?"

...

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"Why not?" Li Yuan was astonished.

...

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"I only have the right to learn, not the right to instruct." Xu Bo explained, "Like the Fist Techniques, Spear Techniques, and movement techniques you are currently studying—all of these are First Rank Secret Manuals, suitable for students with First Stage and Second Stage skills."

...

...

"A vast number of First Rank Secret Manuals and Cultivation Methods are completely public and free for all citizens."

...

...

"But from the Second Rank Secret Manuals onwards, there are copyrights," Xu Bo said, "They must be purchased before they can be used."

...

## Chapter 40: 38 Xu Bo's Assistance

"If you don't have a purchase record and are caught learning or spreading it, you will be found guilty of violating the law."

"Once verified, you will be punished jointly by the Martial Arts Hall and the Culture Hall, starting at ten times the cost," Xu Bo shook his head and said, "In serious cases, you might even be sent to prison."

Prison? Li Yuan held his breath.

"Teacher, could this approach be detrimental to the evolution of human civilization's martial path?" Li Yuan hesitated slightly, "What about the poor?"

No money, no right to learn high-rank skill secret manuals?

"Your thoughts are correct, indeed this is somewhat unfair to the poor," Teacher Xu said, "Copyright protection is a double-edged sword."

"Too much protection can stifle innovation."

"But without any protection, innovation can also be stifled," Teacher Xu said, "Therefore, after many social experiments, the current situation has been established."

"Cultivation methods, whether basic or high-rank, are completely open, and a large number of first-rank secret manuals are also completely free."

"This is enough to allow ordinary people to try the martial path for free," Teacher Xu said.



"For most people, reaching the third stage in skill would be extremely difficult."

"If one truly is a martial path genius," Teacher Xu said, "with astonishing talent for technique or an extraordinary body, then the nation or even the Seven Star Alliance have various channels to find talents, providing cultivation resources for free."

"Striving to discover all martial path geniuses is the purpose of all human civilization forces."

"Like you, being offered a contract by the Martial Hall in advance is one of the channels for discovery," Teacher Xu smiled and said, "Similarly, students at Martial Arts University have free access to many second-rank and even third-rank secret manuals in the 'Martial Knowledge Web'."

"The cost of the secret manual royalties is paid by the nation on behalf of Martial Arts University students."

Li Yuan suddenly understood.

The nation, or rather the whole of human civilization, had long considered this point.

"With copyright fees."

"Under the drive of interest, powerful martial artists are more motivated to create new skill secret manuals and cultivation methods," Teacher Xu said, "Paying copyright fees is also an encouragement for martial artists to share their creations instead of hoarding them."

"With mutual exchanges, every martial artist can learn the fruits of others' wisdom, and they would grow faster."

Teacher Xu looked at Li Yuan and said, "In the future, if you create some powerful skill secret manuals, you can also upload them to the Culture Hall and collect copyright fees."

"You can make money while sitting at home."

Li Yuan smiled, his mind drifting to the many unique skills and teachings in history that were passed on to only one or two people per generation and would be lost if any mishaps occurred.

The continuous strengthening of human civilization comes from the passing down of knowledge from generation to generation.

The martial path is the same.

"With your current martial arts realm, learning two second-rank secret manuals is enough," Teacher Xu instructed, "Wait until your spear technique and movement technique both break through to the fourth level, then it won't be too late to learn more second-rank secret manuals."

"Yes," Li Yuan nodded.

Without a high enough martial arts realm, trying to learn everything without mastering anything is a joke.

"Of course."

"In your cultivation plan, the monthly guidance from a master doesn't need to be included," Teacher Xu said, "My guidance will suffice."

"If you've purchased the copyright to a manual, my guidance won't count as a copyright infringement."

"Not seeking guidance from a Prime Warrior?" Li Yuan hesitated slightly.

Getting guidance from Teacher Xu was undoubtedly a great opportunity, but Teacher Xu was only 19th level.

Could he really match the guidance of a second-rank Prime Warrior?

"What, you doubt your teacher?" Teacher Xu, seeing through Li Yuan's thoughts, revealed a smile, "Rest assured, my martial arts realm is not weaker than most Prime Warriors, if back then... Never mind, let's not talk about that."

Teacher Xu suddenly sighed, his smile fading, seemingly with a hint of lost interest.

"Teacher, I was wrong," Li Yuan quickly apologized.

"It's not your fault, it has nothing to do with you," Teacher Xu shook his head, then continued, "From now on, on Wednesday evenings in my office, I will guide you once in spear technique and movement technique."

"No extra charge."

"Thank you, Teacher," Li Yuan felt grateful in his heart.

Once a week?

"However, the twice-a-week martial artist sparring sessions for actual combat, you need to find someone yourself," Teacher Xu said, "I don't have that much time."

"Yes," Li Yuan nodded.

Having the teacher personally take time out to guide him in spear technique and movement technique was very fortunate.

He couldn't ask for more.

You should know that to invite a second-rank Prime Warrior for guidance would cost 100,000 cultivation points for just one session.

Suddenly.

"Hmm?" Teacher Xu frowned deeply, gritting his teeth, showing a look of pain.

"What's wrong, Teacher?" Li Yuan was shocked.

"It's nothing," Teacher Xu said somberly, his voice even seemed a bit shaky, "An old problem from the battlefield."

"Alright, that's enough."

"Martial arts cultivation, no matter how much guidance you receive, ultimately relies on your own practice," Teacher Xu said.

"Don't worry, I'll just take some medicine and it will be fine, you should go back, and think it over," Teacher Xu said, enduring the pain.

"Yes," Li Yuan left with worry in his heart.

But he was smart and noticed that Teacher Xu didn't want to show his vulnerability in front of him.

Once Li Yuan left the office.

"The effects of the medicine are lasting shorter and shorter," Teacher Xu clenched his teeth, "I couldn't help but use Origin Power to demonstrate to Li Yuan just now, and it accelerated the onset."

Teacher Xu slowly walked to the rest area, taking out a delicately packaged small bottle from the refrigerator.

He opened it and took the medication.

The pain in his body quickly eased.

"It's unknown how many more years I can live," Xu Bo murmured, a hint of ferocity in his eyes, "If I'm really close to death, I will apply to return to the Star Realm."

"I, Xu Bo,"

"if I am to die, must die on the battlefield."

It was quite a while before Xu Bo entirely recovered. Suddenly his smart ring vibrated with an unread message.

"Hmm? A message from Li Yuan? Asking about my health?" Xu Bo felt a touch of warmth in his heart, "This kid, he does care."

Xu Bo guessed that if he didn't respond, Li Yuan would likely come to his office to check on him again.

"Black Dog,"

"reply to Li Yuan saying I'm fine," Xu Bo said sternly.

"Yes, Master."

...

"It's good that Teacher is fine," Li Yuan, in the school's independent Martial Arts Room, received Xu Bo's reply.

He turned off his smart ring.

"Let's enter the virtual network." Li Yuan entered the virtual network capsule beside him.

Connecting consciousness, he directly arrived in the Starfire Space.

"Master," a purple-clad young girl appeared out of thin air.

"Use Cultivation Points to purchase the Second Rank Secrets Manual 'Dragon Movement Technique' and the Second Rank Secrets Manual 'Stellar Spear Technique'," Li Yuan immediately said, "Also, exchange points for an Origin Power Essence Pill."

Basic vitality medicine? There were still a few bottles at home, no rush to buy them.

"Master, please confirm the purchase list." Xiao Yu waved her hand, and a screen appeared in front of Li Yuan, listing the items.

Li Yuan glanced over and confirmed they were correct.

"Confirmed."

Quickly,

"Obtained use rights for the Second Rank Secrets Manual 'Dragon Movement Technique', registered in the Martial Arts Hall and Culture Hall, inquiry code is... 1 million Cultivation Points deducted."

"Obtained use rights for the Second Rank Secrets Manual 'Stellar Spear Technique'... 1 million Cultivation Points deducted."

"Received one Origin Power Essence Pill, please fill in the delivery address... 100,000 points deducted."

Li Yuan directly received three reminders from 'Starfire Space'.

"Delivery address, let's go with home," Li Yuan pondered a moment, "As for the delivery time, let it be ten o'clock tonight."

As a Martial Hall L3 level member, he could have delivery within 24 hours.

"Master, the Origin Power Essence Pill will be delivered to your door tomorrow," Xiao Yu said cheerfully, "According to copyright law, all Secret Manuals above the Second Rank must be studied in the virtual space; there are no physical copies."

"Master, you now have access to all the data of the Secret Manuals and may choose to enter your personal space to study."

"Alright," Li Yuan nodded slightly.

If there were physical manuals, private dissemination would be too easy. If disseminated through the virtual network?

The entire virtual network is under the supervision of human civilization.

"I have to see just how impressive these Second Rank Secrets Manuals are," Li Yuan thought with anticipation.

...

While Li Yuan was studying the Skill Secret Manuals in the virtual network,

in the office of Song Yi on the twelfth floor of the Starry Sky Martial Hall's Guan Shan branch.

"Pong~"

The teacup was crushed instantaneously, and tea splashed everywhere.

But Song Yi, dressed exquisitely, didn't seem to mind, the glass shards not harming her fingers in the slightest.

Song Yi's eyes were piercingly sharp, with a hint of coldness, "What did you say? Li Yuan refused tomorrow's meeting? Why?"

"Yes."

Zhong Cheng, clothed in black, stood, replying with a wry smile, "I only received Li Yuan's message this afternoon. I sent him a message, he didn't respond."

"So, I contacted his uncle, and only then I found out he has already been signed by the Starfire Martial Hall in advance," Zhong Cheng said softly.

"Starfire Martial Hall?"

"They poached the person I had my eye on?" A flicker of anger crossed Song Yi's eyes, "We invited him first, how could the Starfire Martial Hall be so unscrupulous?"

"And this Li Yuan!"

"We already had an arrangement, and he suddenly refused, without giving you a reason," Song Yi's gaze turned icy, "Is this the promising candidate you spoke of?"

At that moment, a trace of dissatisfaction surged in Zhong Cheng's heart.

Blaming me for your plan?

"Hall Master Song," Zhong Cheng said softly, "As far as I know, there's a good reason why Li Yuan directly turned us down."

"A good reason? Whose side are you on, defending him?" Song Yi glared at Zhong Cheng with an extremely sharp look.

"The Starfire Martial Hall offered him a Grade B contract," Zhong Cheng said quickly.

Song Yi's pupils constricted.

In the room, there was a deadly silence.

After a long pause,

"Get out," Song Yi suddenly ordered harshly.

"Yes," Zhong Cheng nodded, turned, and left, apparently even forgetting to shut the door.

## Chapter 41: 39 Stellar Spear Technique

"A B-level contract?"

Song Yi sat on the sofa, murmuring to herself, "In a fifth-rank branch of the hall, only the hall master is qualified to sign a B-level contract, and there are at most two quotas per year."

"To obtain more quotas, one must apply to the Jiang City branch or even the Jiangbei Provincial branch."

Whether it's Starfire Martial Hall or Starry Sky Martial Hall, the rank of each branch is basically equivalent.

The Guan Mountain District branch is a fifth-rank branch, also the most basic level branch.

The Jiang City branch is a fourth-rank branch.

The Jiangbei Provincial branch is a third-rank branch.

Further up, there is the Xia Country headquarters as a second-rank branch, and the Blue Star headquarters as a first-rank branch.

"Wan Qinghe?"

"The rumors are indeed true, he has a gambling nature." Song Yi whispered to herself, "Just arrived, and he is already showing me his power."

"Just you wait."

"A little guy with decent spiritual power whose Martial Spirit hasn't even awakened, at best is worth a C-level contract, and you actually give a B-level contract—I'm going to watch your joke."

Being a Prime Warrior herself and the Vice Hall Master, Song Yi didn't truly care about missing out on signing a martial arts prodigy.

It was just that this matter made her feel embarrassed.

...

It was past ten o'clock at night, at the Wanhua Platinum Mansion, the Li household, where usually at this time, Li Qianqian and Li Muhua would have already washed up and gone to bed.

Today.

The living room lights were on, and the whole family was present.

"Qianqian, Muhua." Li Yuan sat on the sofa, the holographic screen of his smart ring opened, his fingertips moving across the screen, swiftly filling in the information.

Li Qianqian and Li Muhua were both excitedly standing next to Li Yuan, staring at the screen.

Suddenly.

A pop-up window on the screen jolted, displaying — Dependent's Card review passed.

"Great." Li Yuan showed a smile, "Your two dependent cards are set up now, tomorrow you can just use facial recognition to enter the family area of Starfire Martial Hall."

"Wow! The Martial Hall!!"

"I only visited during a school activity last time, the venue is so huge."

"Practicing there must be way better than in the residential area's Martial Arts Room."

"Brother, is everything really free?" Li Qianqian and Li Muhua asked with great excitement and enthusiasm, pestering Li Yuan.

Sitting on a small stool, Chen Hui watched this scene with a smile.

"Not everything is free."

"But things like fruits, drinks, basic physiotherapy, the public martial arts room, and the weekly public martial arts classes... these are all free. There are a few things that cost money, such as nutritional meals, but your dependent cards are linked to my account already.

If you want to buy something small, just swipe the card." Li Yuan said, "From now on, have dinner every night directly at the Martial Hall, then practice in the public Martial Arts Room."

Middle schoolers don't have evening self-study sessions.



"At nine o'clock in the evening, come to the entrance of the Martial Hall building and wait for me; we'll ride home together." Li Yuan looked at his younger siblings.

L3 members, the Martial Hall will provide a 'private electric car' free of charge, with right of use, and available on call within Jiang City.

"Yay."

"Last time, my classmate even bragged to me that he got a W2 level membership card of the Martial Hall." Li Muhua's eyes lit up with excitement: "Brother, from what I read, the permissions for a family card are even higher, comparable to the W3 level membership card."

"And there's physiotherapy." Li Qianqian also said excitedly, "After I practice each time, my whole body aches to death..."

The siblings discussed more and more animatedly.

Li Yuan looked at the excitement of his brother and sister, feeling joy in his heart.

He had been wholly devoted to cultivation since the second year of junior high.

All to improve the family conditions like today, wasn't it?

Li Yuan always felt that he occupied the resources and affection meant for his younger siblings, and being able to compensate them was the happiest thing for him.

"Okay, the cards are taken care of." Chen Hui reined in her smile and said seriously, "This is because your brother worked hard and risked his life to get an early contract."

"I don't expect you to be as outstanding as your brother, but you must work hard to cultivate while in the Martial Hall, understand?"

"We know, Mom." Li Qianqian said with a smile.

"Mom, I'm definitely going to learn from brother and strive to sign a contract with the Martial Hall in advance too." Li Muhua said with a determined expression, "Then I'll get you a big house."

"Okay, okay, I'll wait for when you can take care of me later, now go wash up." Chen Hui hurried them to the bathroom.

A few minutes later, Chen Hui returned to the living room.

"Aunt, I just transferred one million Blue Star Coins to you, you received it, right?" Li Yuan spoke softly.

"I've told you, we still have money at home." Chen Hui said helplessly, "Once you become a martial artist, you'll have no end of places to spend money."

"Aunt."

"This money is for Qianqian and Muhua's preparation." Li Yuan spoke earnestly, "Muhua has awakened his Martial Spirit; following the standard procedure, it won't be difficult to get into Martial Arts University."

"But for Qianqian... she hasn't awakened her Martial Spirit, and she must not be cut off from basic Qi-blood potions, otherwise, she won't be able to keep up with martial arts cultivation."

"Qianqian's martial arts talent..." Chen Hui hesitated, as she hadn't planned to let Li Qianqian pursue deep martial arts training.

"Aunt,"

Li Yuan interrupted Chen Hui's thoughts, "Qianqian's talent for the Martial Path may indeed be low, but that's exactly why we must strive to cultivate her all the more. For the college entrance exam, even if she takes the academic route, the martial arts score still accounts for 30%."

"Qianqian has good academic grades. As long as her martial arts grades are slightly better, she has a chance of getting admitted to a C9 university." Li Yuan stressed.

"As for me?"

"The money I have left is enough for now."

"After the January mock exam, the school will have scholarships." Li Yuan said with a smile, "If I get into university, there are various state awards."

After a lot of persuasion, Chen Hui finally agreed to accept the money reluctantly.

...

Late at night, upon returning to his own room.

"I gave Aunt one million Blue Star Coins."

"I have 1.33 million left in cash." Li Yuan glanced over his account balance.

The next cash deposit from the Martial Hall, '1.2 million Blue Star Coins', wouldn't arrive until next October.

One could say.

Li Yuan's current cash and Martial Hall points, used for purchasing various martial arts resources, may not last until then.

But Li Yuan had no regrets.

"In martial arts cultivation, money is never enough. If you want to make excuses not to give, there's always an excuse." Li Yuan's eyes shone fiercely, "But for my brother and sister, these years are also the most critical."

"Resources not enough?"

"Find another way."

"There are still three months until the January assessment test, give it your all, and break into the top five." Li Yuan had not forgotten Teacher Xu Bo's promise.

Breaking into the top ten of the grade, one hundred thousand Blue Star Coins.

The top five, a Special Scholarship of five hundred thousand Blue Star Coins.

"Let's start with learning Spear Technique." Li Yuan sat inside the virtual network pod, connecting his consciousness to it.

He arrived at his personal cultivation space.

It was empty, with both length and width exceeding 200 meters, and the height was also over 50 meters.

"Learn the 'Stellar Spear Technique'." Li Yuan said loudly, "First time learning."

Immediately.

"Boom~" A large amount of light converged, eventually forming the figure of a burly man in a black battle garment, wielding a long spear with a sharp gaze.

He looked straight at Li Yuan.

The intangible aura he emitted caused Li Yuan to instinctively tense up, but it was only momentary.

"Virtual teaching, huh?" Li Yuan looked at the man in black.

"The 'Stellar Spear Technique' is a Second Level Spear Technique, an advanced evolution of the First Rank 'Solid Rock Spear Technique'."

"The 'Solid Rock Spear Technique' originated from the 'Solid Rock Cultivation Technique', embodying the steadiness of a boulder, immovable as a mountain." The man in black spoke deeply, "It emphasizes defense over offense, turning the enemy's momentum into nothingness..."

"Whoosh!"

As he spoke, the man in black swung his long spear, performing various moves—retracting, thrusting straight, slamming down in fury, whipping, and parrying with the spear... The seemingly simple techniques appeared so familiar to Li Yuan.

Indeed, it was the 'Solid Rock Spear Technique' that he had practiced countless times, and within it, he also saw shadows of the unique spear moves he had derived.

Solid Rock Pillar, Cavern-Hiding Dragon, Myriad Mountain Vistas... one technique flowed into the next.

They all looked quite ordinary, but in the hands of the man in black, there was a transformative magic to them.

"This!"

"This! This!" Li Yuan's eyes widened, "I've been practicing spearwork for several years, first mastering the basic techniques, then cultivating the 'Solid Rock Spear Technique,' eventually breaking through to the Third Stage, and deriving a few unique moves."

"But my techniques, how could they be as coherent? Perfectly impregnable." Li Yuan held his breath.

So formidable!

It was the same technique, but the power varied greatly depending on the practitioner. The man in black was far stronger than Li Yuan.

"Fourth Stage."

"The Spear Technique demonstrated by this man in black is definitely of the Fourth Stage Realm, truly unifying all of his body's vigor as one. He is the spear, and the spear is him." Li Yuan realized, "This is the realm of a Spear Technique Master."

"The 'Solid Rock Fist Technique' has eighteen forms."

"The 'Solid Rock Spear Technique' also has eighteen routines." The man in black's practice grew faster, but his energy was powerful, his voice resonant as a large bell, "But as you continue practicing, you must try to gradually simplify the eighteen routines."

"Ultimately forming five major killing moves."

"Solid Rock Pillar, Cavern-Hiding Dragon, Myriad Mountain Vistas, Cloud Layered Peaks, Rock-Stabilizing Heaven and Earth." The man in black listed consecutively.

The first three killing moves he mentioned were also exactly the ones Li Yuan had independently realized.

"What I've realized is the same as the foundational part of the 'Stellar Spear Technique'?" Li Yuan felt greatly excited in his heart.

This was enough to show.

His Spear Technique cultivation had been on the most correct path all along.

Of course, Li Yuan was aware that those few killing moves were not entirely realized by himself. In some sense, it was Teacher Xu Bo's repeated guidance that had kept him from straying.

"Once you master the five major killing moves, your Spear Technique should approach Third Stage Perfection, which also means completing the foundational cultivation of the 'Stellar Spear Technique'." The man in black said, "At that point, you can try to cultivate the 'Stellar Five Moves'."

"As long as you learn any one of those moves, it represents that your Spear Technique has stepped into the Fourth Stage Realm."

"If in the future,"

"you manage to fully comprehend the 'Stellar Five Moves,' even reaching the Stellar Realm... that will be the Fifth Stage Spear Technique Realm."

"The skill level will be nearly divine, ranking as a master among all of human civilization." The man in black continued, "Now, follow me and practice the 'Solid Rock Spear Technique's five major killing moves."

Subsequently, the man in black persisted in his demonstration, and Li Yuan too materialized a long spear.

And began to practice along with him.

The man in black would break down every move of the 'Solid Rock Spear Technique', practicing them part by part.

Through observing Li Yuan's standard of Spear Technique, he would lead him in his cultivation, assisting Li Yuan in comprehending the nuances of force transition between the changes in spear moves.

This man in black was clearly an intelligent teacher.

And as his practice deepened, Li Yuan could feel the power of this Second Rank Secret Manual.

It was several times more efficient than his solitary contemplation.

"One million Cultivation Points, worth it!" Li Yuan was extremely excited in his heart.

What he purchased was not merely a manual.

But also the full guidance of an intelligent teacher.

"However, practicing in virtual reality is just mental learning. To truly learn with the physical body, there needs to be extensive training in reality." Li Yuan was very clear about this.

Mind and body must learn together; only then is something truly learned.

...

After studying the 'Stellar Spear Technique' for an hour, Li Yuan began to learn the 'Dragon Movement Technique' in the virtual space.

This was also a very exquisite movement technique.

...

In the early morning after 1 AM, Li Yuan exited the virtual network and came to the window, the world silent.

"Virtual cultivation is an aid."

"The key is still reality, first cultivate the 'Observing the Great Sun and Stars Scripture' for two hours, then head to the school for practice." Li Yuan thought to himself as he sat cross-legged, his mind's consciousness already entering the Mind Spirit Divine Palace.

At past 4 AM, Li Yuan finally left home and ran towards the school.

It had been a long time since he went to school that late.

...

Senior year learning was tedious, yet Li Yuan found joy in it, constantly moving between school, home, and the Martial Hall.

Feeling his own strength increase day by day.

Day after day.

In the blink of an eye, over two months had passed.

## Chapter 42: 40 Li Yuan's Strength

Late December in Jiang City has descended into winter, with temperatures lingering around zero degrees.

Inside the Starfire Martial Hall branch in Guanshan, the temperature is kept at a constant 20 degrees Celsius, making it exceedingly comfortable.

Martial Arts Room 7024.

Two men clad in full protective gear, even with helmets fitting tightly, each brandishing a cold weapon, are engaged in fierce combat.

"Kill!" One of the figures, nearly one hundred and ninety centimeters tall in his shoes, wielding a silver long spear, moves in a motion reminiscent of a swimming dragon. The spear suddenly swings out, leaving a blur as it thrusts towards his opponent.

Fast! Accurate! Ruthless!

The other figure nearly two meters tall, extremely burly, wields a sword in one hand and a shield in the other.

Reacting even faster, acting later but striking first.

The large shield brutally smashes forward, like an indomitable copper wall and iron barrier, slamming hard against the incoming spear thrust.

"Boom~" Li Yuan, holding the long spear, feels as though he struck a steel plate. The terrifying force rebounds through the spear; a normal martial artist would probably find their arm numb from the impact.

"Stick!" Li Yuan's long spear is incredibly flexible, as he retreats accordingly, even pulling back the shaft of the spear to shed as much of the force as possible.

Retreating does not mean falling behind.

Sometimes, only by shedding force can one minimize the damage sustained.

"Whoo!"

The long spear thrusts again, suddenly whooshing through the air. In an instant, it seems to create dozens of phantoms, covering the sky as it envelops the opponent.

The Solid Rock Spear Technique's five major deadly moves include 'Myriad Mountain Phantasms.'

Skilled in group attacks, skilled in confusion.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Bursts of blade light flare up, colliding with the spear shadows in an instant; the figure in black armor alternates between swinging his sword and using his shield to block.

Retreating eight steps consecutively, he barely withstands Li Yuan's full set of deadly moves.

"Be careful now."

Li Yuan roars suddenly like thunder.

Fortunately, it's a soundproofed room; otherwise, there would certainly be complaints of disturbing the peace.

You should know, after firing more than twenty consecutive spear thrusts, Li Yuan's aura reached its peak. Accompanying his roaring shout, his spear transformed into a great dragon, howling as it brought down a terrifying force.

Solid Rock Spear Technique's five major deadly moves — Ground and Sky!

This move treats the spear like a heavy club or a battle halberd, as unstoppable as a rolling boulder, it's the most ferocious burst of power.

Switching between the two deadly moves is extremely fast.

The black armored figure, in this moment of danger, seems to only be able to raise his shield instinctively, doing his best to block the falling spear.

"Bang~"

After the brutal impact, the figure in black armor looks somewhat disheveled, but his body easily withstands the impact before retreating.

"Stop!"



"Li Yuan, you've won." The figure in black armor suddenly speaks, his voice tinged with resignation and a trace of emotion.

Li Yuan stops and stands still with his spear.

Click~

Click~ Both remove their helmets.

"Li Yuan, your spear technique has advanced frighteningly fast. That final continuous attack must have been two deadly moves, right?" The man holding the shield is a bearded brute in his forties with a scar on his face.

"Right."

Li Yuan nods with a smile, "It's the basic chapter deadly moves from the Second Rank Secret Manual 'Stellar Spear Technique.' I've just gained control over the integration of these two moves."

Indeed, Li Yuan had only recently attained preliminary control over the last of the five deadly moves 'Ground and Sky' in the virtual network.

Today was the first time he practiced it in real combat.

"Impressive."

"I've been sparring with you for two months, and your progress in spear technique is truly terrifying. I've never seen a spear technique prodigy like you before.

I was able to suppress you with my sword technique at the beginning, but now you've surpassed me in skill level," the bearded brute reflects, "Just now, I used about a level 8.0 Physical Quality, clearly stronger than you in speed and power, but I still couldn't dominate you."

"That last spear thrust, I had to use almost a level 9 strength, or I definitely wouldn't have withstood it."

Li Yuan smiles.

To execute 'Ground and Sky,' if you directly engage, it's easy for the opponent to evade.

The best way is to build momentum with Myriad Mountain Phantasms and then strike the final blow to crush the enemy.

"Your spear technique," the bearded brute looks at Li Yuan, "has already surpassed my sword technique by a margin, and should be close to the Fourth Stage Realm."

"Not quite," Li Yuan shakes his head. "I haven't fully mastered the basic chapter of the Second Rank Secret Manual yet. I still need Uncle Hu to spar with me more."

"Haha, no problem," the bearded brute laughs. "Next, shall we switch it up, and I attack while you defend?"

"Sure," Li Yuan nods.

This bearded brute named 'Fang Longhu' is a regular instructor at Starfire Martial Hall, a Level 15 martial artist, and he was recommended to Li Yuan by Instructor Xing as a sparring partner.

Twice a week, for an hour each session, at a cost of 10,000 Blue Star Coins per session.

A sparring partner in actual combat must be far stronger than oneself.

A martial artist of at least Level 15 is necessary to better manage the fight when sparring with Li Yuan.

Half an hour later.

Li Yuan finishes today's combat session and sees off Fang Longhu.

"Whew!"

"Real combat is indeed more exhilarating than virtual fighting," Li Yuan mutters to himself, quite excited.

Virtual fighting can comprehensively train various techniques, but it ultimately lacks a sense of reality.

Actual combat is the ultimate goal.

"Every time I engage in real combat, I feel that my Spear Technique and movement technique improve much faster." Li Yuan reflected, "It's just a pity that actual combat opportunities are extremely rare."

First, getting injured is easy in actual combat; once injured, just healing takes a long time and seriously delays cultivation.

Second, good sparring partners are hard to find and expensive; ordinary people simply can't afford them.

"Professional sparring partners like Fang Longhu, aside from their day job at the Martial Hall, can earn several hundred thousand Blue Star Coins each month just from sparring." Li Yuan thought to himself.

You should know that Fang Longhu has basically given up on becoming a Prime Warrior, spending very little on the Martial Path and just maintaining his physical quality.

Therefore, it's quite easy for him to earn a few million a year.

"Martial Arts Cultivation is a gold-consuming pit, but if you achieve a little success, you can also earn a lot, and without taking risks." Li Yuan thought, "If a 15th-level Martial Artist earns like this, what about a Prime Warrior? No wonder Hall Master Wan gave me 1 million Blue Star Coins without a second thought."

"My Spear Technique."

"It improved by 1% tonight, and recently, progress has been getting slower." With a thought from Li Yuan, the Divine Palace panel appeared in his view.

---

[Life Level: 7.7 (Entry Rank)]

Physical Quality Index: 80 (A comprehensive assessment of various aspects including Explosive Power, Endurance, Speed, Physique, Spiritual Power, etc.)

Fist Strength: 724 kg

Speed: 17.3 meters per second

Spiritual Power: 14.2

Physical Body Cultivation Method: Solid Rock Cultivation Method

Mental Cultivation Method: Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture

Skill Realm: Spear Technique (Third Stage 88%), Movement Technique (Third Stage 65%), Fist Technique (Third Stage 99%)

[Note: There is some kind of high-level Spiritual Nature latent within the body that has not been awakened.]

---

"Judging by the rate of progress over the past half a month, it will take at least one more month to increase the Spear Technique to Third Stage 99%," Li Yuan thought to himself, "And transitioning from Third Stage to Fourth Stage will be a major bottleneck."

"This step has stumped countless formidable Martial Artists."

Over the past few months at Starfire Martial Hall, Li Yuan had met many Martial Artists.

And with his own cultivation, he gradually came to understand the significance of Fourth Level Martial Arts Skills.

"At the Martial Hall, I know more than a dozen Martial Artists above level 16."

"Apart from Instructor Xing, none have managed to cultivate their skills to the Fourth Level and above," Li Yuan shook his head slightly.

First Rank Martial Artists mostly have Third Stage standard Martial Arts Skills.

Most people's skills don't even match Li Yuan's current level.

"Xu Bo's Stick Technique easily crushes mine," Li Yuan couldn't help recalling the past two months.

Receiving guidance from Xu Bo once a week.

"With such high-level skills, why didn't he become a Prime Warrior? Was it because of an injury?" Li Yuan had many speculations in his heart.

Feeling fully rested, Li Yuan suppressed the various thoughts.

"Never mind."

"Continue with the Spear Technique practice."

"I've just mastered the five major killing moves of the Solid Rock Spear Technique, and if I can connect them perfectly, I estimate it'll reach Third Stage 99%." Li Yuan was extremely excited, "I will strive to bring my Spear Technique close to 99% before the January Evaluation."

Only ten days left until the January Evaluation.

"Hoo!"

"Hoo!" Li Yuan continued to practice his Spear Technique, and another hour passed in a blink of an eye, bringing the time to past eight in the evening.

He put away the Long Spear into the weapon cabinet.

Drenched in sweat, Li Yuan first took a satisfying hot shower in the rest room.

Then, he retrieved a delicately packaged medicine bottle from the treatment room.

"Origin Power Essence Pill."

"It's been 20 days since the last time I took one, it's about time to take another," Li Yuan took out an Essence Pill from the bottle.

He was very careful.

After all, this single pill was worth 100,000 Blue Star Coins.

The Origin Power Essence Pill, covered in thin wisps of purple glow, thumbnail-sized with waves of fragrance wafting out as if to entice one's cravings.

He swallowed it directly.

Li Yuan returned to the center of the Martial Arts Room and stood in a posture as immovable as a boulder, focusing his spirit.

Soon.

Wisps of rather fiery and overbearing energy gradually spread from Li Yuan's chest to his limbs and throughout his body, causing him to shiver involuntarily.

This was Origin Power.

"Ah~ So comfortable!" Li Yuan enjoyed the sensation immensely.

"Hiss~"

"Hiss~" The muscles, tendons, and bones within Li Yuan's body hungrily devoured every bit of Origin Power roaming through him, becoming stronger and tougher.

[Your Life Level has increased from 7.7 to 7.8.]

[Your Fist Strength has increased from...]

[Your Burst Speed has increased...]

## Chapter 43: 41 Why is he a B rank when I'm only a C rank?

Half an hour later.

Li Yuan finally felt the rampaging, dominant, and scorching energy coursing through his body gradually fade away.

"Each time I take an Origin Power Essence Pill, my body undergoes noticeable changes," Li Yuan mused inwardly. "Today, my life level has actually improved by 0.1 level."

Feeling the amazing transformation of his body step by step was indeed exhilarating.

"In just over half an hour, my maximum fist strength has advanced further, reaching 732 kilograms?" Li Yuan glanced at the Divine Palace panel.

The effects of the Origin Power Essence Pill had not been fully digested, but had become hidden within him.

For the next ten days or so, Li Yuan would have to practice diligently to ensure his muscles and bones fully absorbed it, without wasting even a bit.

"I wonder if I can raise my physical quality to 7.9 levels before the January evaluation exams," Li Yuan thought to himself.

From mid-October to now, over two months.

It seemed his physical quality had only improved by 0.9 level, apparently the same speed as before taking the Origin Power Essence Pill.

But the improvement of life levels is not linear, the further you go, the more astonishing the gap between each level.

The standard for fist strength at physical quality level 6 is 300 kilograms.

The standard for fist strength at physical quality level 7 is 450 kilograms.

And the standard for fist strength at physical quality level 8 is 800 kilograms.

In other words, in just over two months, Li Yuan's fist strength had increased by nearly 300 kilograms.

"Up to level 10 of physical quality, the gap from level 7 to level 8 is the largest, and the data indicators for various attributes almost double," Li Yuan said to himself. "Many students at Martial Arts University, if they do not awaken their Martial Spirit, might not even reach level 8 by the time they graduate."

Interacting with many Martial Artists at the hall gave Li Yuan more insight.

Over eighty percent of Entry Rank Martial Artists have awakened their Martial Spirit.

"My improvement has been so quick."

"The Origin Power Essence Pill has the greatest effect," Li Yuan thought. "The capacity of my body to endure and digest... Although it's not as strong as what Teacher Xu said, digesting one every month, being able to digest one every twenty days is quite astonishing."

Over the past two months.

Li Yuan had ingested four Origin Power Essence Pills.

The cost was enormous, but its effects were outstanding.

Without the Origin Power Essence Pills, just taking basic blood and energy potions, Li Yuan estimated his physical quality would now be around level 7.3 or 7.4.

"Teacher Xu wasn't wrong."

"Once the physical quality is strong to a certain extent, it's not just about continuing to improve—just maintaining it is difficult," Li Yuan suddenly swung his hand.

"Whoosh!"

His hand, like a blade, tore through the air.

Since breaking through to life level 7.5, Li Yuan clearly felt the effects of the Origin Power Essence Pill weakening.

Eating nutritional meals? Taking basic blood and energy potions? The effects were even weaker.

Li Yuan could foresee.

Once he became a Martial Artist, if he only ate nutritional meals and took basic blood and energy potions, it would be difficult to continue improving his physical quality.

By then, the auxiliary effect of the Origin Power Essence Pill in cultivation would be reduced by more than half... The more powerful the body, the more energy consumed in cultivation and combat.

Continuous rapid improvement? Firstly, you need to use higher grade treasures, and secondly, your body has to be able to withstand it.

"Martial Spirit!"

"If I could practice high-rank cultivation methods, I would be able to directly absorb the Origin Power from the universe," a flicker of light passed through Li Yuan's eyes. "No wonder, this parameter of Martial Spirit is considered so crucial by the Seven Star Alliance."

Practicing high-rank cultivation methods would greatly save on resources.

Not just for the individual, but for the entire human civilization as well.

Thinking of this.

Li Yuan raised his smart ring to check the balance of his National Bank and Martial Hall accounts.

Bank Balance: 1,125,124 Blue Star Coins

Martial Hall Points: 1,946,880

Martial Hall Cultivation Points: 750,000

...

At nine o'clock in the evening, Li Yuan changed his clothes and left the Martial Arts Room, heading toward the elevator.

"Li Yuan, you're leaving now?"

"Uncle Wang."

"Brother Liu."

Martial Artists greeted Li Yuan from time to time with enthusiasm, and he responded to each one.

"Li Yuan, heading back? Your brother and sister just went downstairs," said a young man in an instructor's uniform with cropped hair, who happened to walk by and greeted Li Yuan with a smile.



"Alright, thanks, Brother Liu," Li Yuan replied with a smile.

The cropped-haired youth had just graduated from Martial Arts University and had not long become a Martial Artist. He was responsible for teaching the public free martial arts classes.

Li Qianqian and Li Muhua were both his students.

As a result, he had a close relationship with Li Yuan.

Over the past two months, in the Martial Artist circles of the Starfire Martial Hall's Guanshan branch hall, basically everyone knew that Li Yuan was a B-level Martial Path talent signed in advance by the Martial Hall.

A B-level contract indicated that the future was at least that of a level 16 Martial Artist with a certain chance of becoming a Prime Warrior. His potential was enormous.

Furthermore, every time Instructor Xing, the head instructor, met Li Yuan, he was extremely enthusiastic and polite, let alone these ordinary Martial Artists and instructors?

"In the past, I was just an ordinary student. When I came to the Martial Hall building, I couldn't even get through the door, and no one would give me the time of day," Li Yuan thought to himself.

"Now? When Brother Liu points out something for Qian Qian and Muhua during their practice, he is more enthusiastic than when teaching other junior high students."

When one is powerful, everyone around becomes friendly and kind.

...The elevator doors opened, and as Li Yuan was about to enter, his gaze suddenly sharpened.

There was a familiar face.

"Li Yuan?" The girl standing in the elevator also seemed surprised.

"Lin Lanyue, long time no see," Li Yuan greeted her cordially.

A few months ago, their virtual match at school had caused quite a stir.

But as time passed, Li Yuan had made no further moves, and with the increasing demands of their senior year studies, all the rumors had dissipated.

Instead, the two would greet each other when they occasionally met at school.

Today, Lin Lanyue wasn't wearing her Martial Arts uniform. Instead, she was in casual clothes, a cashmere long coat covering her upper body and a form-fitting turtleneck sweater underneath, showing off her fair, blush-tinged skin. She wore pale blue jeans that outlined her long and beautifully curved legs.

The attire was markedly different from her usual student look.

"Li Yuan, what are you doing at the Martial Hall?" Lin Lanyue asked, slightly puzzled.

"Just some stuff," Li Yuan said with a smile, without going into detail.

The fact that he had signed with Starfire Martial Hall ahead of time wasn't mentioned by either the principal or Teacher Xu Bo.

It wasn't spread around the school at all.

Li Yuan did not want to attract unnecessary attention with matters that brought him no advantage, so naturally, he wouldn't discuss them.

"Yue Yue, is this your classmate? I feel like I haven't seen him before." A young woman in her thirties, clad in a mink coat, eyed him with a hint of wariness.

She remembered Lin Lanyue rarely took initiative to greet male students.

"He's from Class 3 (2)," Lin Lanyue explained.

"Class 3 (2)?" The young woman frowned slightly.

A student from a regular class?

How did they get to know each other?

"Li Yuan, this is my aunt," Lin Lanyue introduced him proactively.

Lin Lanyue internally approved and admired Li Yuan for his prowess in Martial Arts Skills, having been beaten by him herself.

Moreover, Li Yuan had never approached her again over the past few months, making Lin Lanyue realize that he was indeed different from those other boys who tried to pursue her.

"Hello, Auntie," Li Yuan greeted her as it was natural to do so.

The young woman was taken aback. Auntie?

Do I really look that old?

Ding~ The elevator doors opened.

"I've got something else to do, so I'll be going now," Li Yuan said with a smile. "See you at school later."

He stepped out of the elevator.

"See you at school," Lin Lanyue nodded, then leisurely walked out of the elevator with the young woman.

They weren't in a hurry to leave but watched Li Yuan walk away.

"Yue Yue, you should minimize contact with ordinary class boys in the future," the young woman said with a frown.

Lin Lanyue was momentarily startled, then she laughed and said, "Auntie, do you remember when I was defeated on the Starry Skies Fighting Network last time?"

"Hmm? Xiao Qiang has mentioned it," the young woman recalled. "Was it him?"

"Yes," Lin Lanyue nodded, watching Li Yuan leaving. "His Spear Technique is formidable; I'm no match for him in virtual combat."

"So what if his skills are strong?"

"Without a Martial Spirit, the best he can do is to get into Jiangbei Martial Arts University. Does he think he can get into one of the top five academies?" The young woman snorted.

Lin Lanyue smiled and made no retort.

She knew that her aunt's temperament was not to underestimate Li Yuan, but she was simply dissatisfied that Li Yuan had called her 'Auntie.'

"Oh, there's Instructor Xing over there," the young woman suddenly brightened up. "Come on, let's go and say hello."

"Oh," Lin Lanyue nodded.

She seldom came to the Starfire Martial Hall and didn't really care about any instructor.

Suddenly.

"That boy?" The young woman raised her eyebrows in confusion. "Instructor Xing stopped to greet him?"

"Really?" Lin Lanyue was also surprised and looked over.

Not far away.

Instructor Xing had stopped Li Yuan and was smiling as he talked with him, giving off the impression, to outsiders, more of a peer-to-peer exchange rather than a senior interacting with a junior.

After a while.

Instructor Xing waved as he saw Li Yuan out of the building and then moved towards the elevator.

The young woman, dragging Lin Lanyue along, greeted him proactively.

"Instructor Xing," the young woman said with a bright smile.

"Ms. You," Instructor Xing recognized the young woman and smiled back. "Are you here for physical therapy again today?"

Instructor Xing looked at Lin Lanyue. "You... must be Hall Master Lin's daughter, Lin Lanyue, right?"

"You know me?" Lin Lanyue asked, surprised.

"I remember."

"When Hall Master Lin was in Jiang City, I met you when you were a child," Instructor Xing said with a smile. "I was present at your school for an inspection last time, but there were too many people, so I didn't greet you."

"Later on, our Martial Hall sent you a Class C contract invitation, which you didn't accept."

Lin Lanyue couldn't help but smile.

Her father was a member of Starry Sky Martial Hall, so naturally, she wouldn't accept an advance contract invitation from Starfire Martial Hall.

"Instructor Xing, that boy just now, who is he?" The young woman pointed at Li Yuan, who had just left the building.

"Oh?"

"You mean Li Yuan?" Instructor Xing looked back and said with a smile. "He goes to the same school as Xiao Lin. Don't you know him?"

"Not really," Lin Lanyue shook her head.

"He's a Class B contract member of our Martial Hall," Instructor Xing said with a smile. "This young man is quite outstanding."

...

Instructor Xing got into the elevator.

"Yue Yue."

"You're lying to me? Didn't you say he was from a regular class? How could he have a Class B contract with Starfire Martial Hall?"

The young woman was stunned for a moment and looked at Lin Lanyue with a skeptical expression: "Is there something going on between you two? Otherwise, why would you lie to me?"

"Auntie, I really didn't lie to you," Lin Lanyue said, her bright eyes also filled with confusion, and she asserted, "Li Yuan really is from Class 3 (2)."

"I've never heard of someone who hasn't awakened their Martial Spirit securing a Class B contract in advance," the young woman shook her head. "Your grades are so good, and even on the last assessment, you just qualified for Class C."

Lin Lanyue was too lazy to respond to her aunt anymore; she lowered her head and frowned, lost in thought.

Yeah, I'm only Class C!

Why would Li Yuan sign a Class B contract?

## Chapter 44: 42: The wise man does not stand under a tottering wall

"Could it be because his martial arts skills are high?"

Lin Lanyue could only think of this possibility, then said, "Auntie, let's go home. I have to do some problems when I get back."

"Alright." The young woman nodded, and as they walked, she looked at Lin Lanyue, "Yue Yue, you really didn't know that Li Yuan signed with the Starfire Martial Hall early?"

"I really didn't know." Lin Lanyue shook her head.

"Why don't you ask him about it later? A Grade B contract, the Martial Hall only has two or three slots each year." The young woman said curiously, "It seems you have a good relationship with him."

"I won't ask." Lin Lanyue shook her head decisively, "If he doesn't say it himself, there must be a reason he's keeping quiet."

"Right, don't talk about this in the parent's group chat, and definitely don't use it as gossip material," Lin Lanyue warned her aunt with a glance.

She knew her aunt was quite the blabbermouth.

"Sure." The young woman replied noncommittally.

"I'm serious," Lin Lanyue said sternly, "otherwise, I won't help you with the card later."

"Okay, okay, my little ancestor, I promise not to blurt it out," the woman in the mink coat surrendered immediately with a wave of her hands.

...

When Li Yuan was taking his younger brother and sister home in the Martial Hall's designated car.

In the twelfth-floor office of the Martial Hall's building, decorated in a simple style.

"Hall Master."

Coach Xing entered through the door.

In front of the huge floor-to-ceiling window, a middle-aged man in traditional Chinese garb stood with his back to the door, looking down at the night view outside.

"How is it?" Lord Wan asked without turning around, his voice very calm.

"I asked, and I also pulled the data from the testing equipment in various martial arts rooms. The six members who signed ahead of time all performed well," Coach Xing reported respectfully, "The one who performed the best and made the most progress should be Li Yuan."

"According to Fang Longhu, Li Yuan's physical quality should be close to Level 8; his skill level has even approached the perfection of the Third Stage," said Coach Xing, "Compared to two months ago, his progress is astonishing."

"Oh?"

"So, the progress is quite rapid." It was then that Lord Wan turned around, smiling, "Coach Xing, what do you think?"

"Hall Master has discerning eyes," Coach Xing replied, bowing his head.

"Old Xing, relax, don't worry that I have any schemes," Lord Wan said with a smile, "I know what you're thinking. In your heart, based on Li Yuan's current performance, he would barely qualify for a Grade C contract, right?"

"Subordinate wouldn't dare," Coach Xing replied hurriedly.

"Don't worry," Lord Wan laughed, "I have my reasons for giving him a Grade B contract. You just keep track of the data."

"Yes," said Coach Xing.

But inside, he muttered to himself, it doesn't matter since you're the Hall Master. As long as you don't blame me later, you decide how to proceed.

After Coach Xing had left.

"The person recommended by Tie Ta is indeed not bad," Lord Wan sighed inwardly, "but if in the end he cannot awaken the Martial Spirit, his development after level 10 might be somewhat difficult..."

He shook his head gently, then pushed the thought aside.

The early signing of martial arts prodigies was just a small part of his duties, requiring his attention once a month.

Half an hour later.

"Beep beep—alert—" A voice suddenly sounded in the office.

Hum~

Red lights started flashing on Lord Wan's smart ring, changing his expression instantly as he checked the message, "Star Realm creatures? At least nine of the First Rank, with the strongest nearing the Second Rank? Appeared in the area from Southeast Lake to Binhu Road, causing at least thirty-five deaths?"

"Could it be remnants from the last sweep along the Xiang River basin?" Lord Wan thought immediately of the previous operation.

Each martial artist was registered with the Martial Arts Hall.

Their identity information was bound to their smart rings.

Whenever Star Realm creatures appeared and were detected by Xia Country's 'Sky Net' system, the first to be informed would be the nearby martial artists, requesting assistance.

As a Prime Warrior, Lord Wan's smart ring had a maximum sensing range of 100 kilometers.

That is, any Star Realm creatures of Entry Rank discovered within a 100-kilometer radius would send a notification to him.

Without hesitation.

"Dahe, send a message immediately to the combat-ready martial artists of the Martial Hall. First and Second Teams, deploy, coordinate with the military for a kill and containment," Lord Wan issued orders one after another, "Bring me my weapon."

"Yes, Master," the voice of the assistant AI echoed in the office.

One of the important duties of the Martial Hall was to protect the local residents.

Each basic level Martial Hall had martial artist squads on combat-ready duty, able to deploy at any time.

Whoosh! Whoosh!

Two furniture robots dashed out from the nearby weapons room, one carrying a shield and the other a combat saber.

Lord Wan grabbed the shield and saber, then gently pressed a metallic button on his chest.

Immediately.

Before the naked eye, the previously loose-fitting traditional Chinese attire transformed rapidly into a thin layer of metallic battle garment that completely covered his body, with the entire garment black in color.

It radiated a sense of coolness and oppression.



"Master, the single-person flying vehicle has arrived," the intelligent voice rang out.  
"Should I open the window?"

"Open the window," Lord Wan commanded coldly.

"Rumble~" The floor-to-ceiling window that was originally closed quickly opened outward, fully exposing the interior to the elements and allowing gusts of wind to blow into the office.

Whoosh!

With a faint exertion of force in one leg, Lord Wan's figure shot out, traversing dozens of meters in a lateral movement, tracing an arc through the air like a cannonball plummeting towards the ground.

This building was twelve stories high—over forty meters above the ground!

Boom!

A booming sound filled the air as a single-person flying vehicle resembling an assault boat whizzed past at an incredibly low altitude and at a breathtaking speed.

Precisely timed, it caught Lord Wan in mid-air.

The flying vehicle soared into the sky, reaching about a hundred meters above the ground, and rushed toward the scene of the incident at top speed.

...

The next day, after training for the entire night, Li Yuan stepped out of his home leisurely just after four in the morning.

Walking on the street.

In the winter, it was still pitch dark around five in the morning, with a light drizzle falling, making the ground slippery.

"Hm?" Li Yuan had just left his residential complex when he sensed something amiss—he saw an armed military patrol in the distance.

Along with two patrolling soldiers.

Occasionally, unmanned aerial vehicles flew by overhead, conducting surveillance patrols.

The security was extremely tight.

"Is this a manhunt for fugitives? No, could it be..." Li Yuan instantly thought of a possibility.

Without a moment's hesitation,

he immediately opened his smart wristband, clicked into an app 'Star Realm Creatures Alert', and the location was directly marked as Jiang City's Guan Mountain District.

His eyes scanned the dozens of alert messages that had been posted in succession.

"Could it really be Star Realm creatures? Daring to show up in Jiang City?" Li Yuan thought in shock, "But according to the news, so far, there have been dozens of casualties?"

"Over thirty Star Realm Creatures have also been killed."

"And now, suspected Star Realm creatures are still at large, and the entire Guan Mountain District is under martial law, with a comprehensive manhunt underway?"

After a moment's thought,

Li Yuan turned around.

He went back upstairs, to his home.

"Though there are military vehicles and drones on the streets, appearing to offer safety, walking alone like this is too conspicuous," Li Yuan mused, "Binhu Road is less than ten kilometers from here."

"Bad luck on the road, and I might really encounter a fleeing Star Realm creature."

"At home,"

"There are alert systems overhead and underground in the residential area, the buildings and doors and windows are reinforced, and the stairwells require facial recognition for entry—home is very safe," Li Yuan thought to himself, "The chances are slim, but it's still not worth the risk."

Yes!

As an elite student, Li Yuan's martial prowess was stronger than most adults... but against firearms, they were in vain, not to mention Star Realm creatures?

The wise do not stand under a wall that is in danger of collapsing.

This was something Uncle Li Changzhou had always taught Li Yuan since he was little.

Similarly,

From an early age, all students were taught the rule: if you lack the strength of a Martial Artist, scatter and run at the sight of Star Realm creatures! Call for help immediately and report to the authorities at once!

In fact,

All Martial Artists received the same warning: without the strength of a Prime Warrior, do not engage a Star Realm creature alone lightly, wait for heavy weapons! Wait for attack drones and combat robots!

...

Back at home, Li Yuan was not too panicked.

Instead, he opened the door to his room.

Then, in his bedroom, he stood in quiet contemplation, practicing his punches and training in the Basic Cultivation Method.

Ever since he could remember,

Jiang City, where Li Yuan lived, suffered attacks from Star Realm creatures every half a year or so, sometimes even less.

It couldn't be helped.

Jiang City, with its convergence of large rivers and many lakes and its extensive water system, was one of the cities within Xia Country most frequently attacked by Star Realm creatures.

Most of these attacks were small in scale, and it was best to calmly wait for the military and Martial Artists to clear the threat.

As for large-scale attacks? Li Yuan had only experienced one when he was very young, and his memories of it were quite vague.

Soon, it was past six in the morning.

"The alert has been lifted?" Li Yuan received a message notification on his smart wristband.

## Chapter 45: 43: Martial Path, For the Sake of Killing the Enemy (Third Update, Requesting Monthly Votes)

"The all-clear for the alert has been issued, it should be safe now," Li Yuan pondered for a moment before leaving his room.

Auntie and his younger siblings were still in bed.

"I'll head to school first," Li Yuan left home and exited the residential complex.

The military vehicle that had been stationed at the end of the road at four in the morning was nowhere to be seen.

Neither were the patrolling soldiers.

However, with sharp eyes, Li Yuan could see about a few hundred meters up in the sky, there was a drone hovering.

It seemed to be on alert.

Li Yuan went straight to the bus stop to take the trolley, but after waiting for quite a while, no trolley came.

"Forget it."

"I might as well run to school," Li Yuan turned around and started jogging towards school along the street.

With Li Yuan's physical quality, his so-called jog could maintain a pace of about eight or nine meters per second.

In less than ten minutes, he could arrive at school.

On both sides of the street, many shops were beginning to open, and there were many people who looked like they were on their way to work.

The more people there were, the safer it felt.

Just as he turned another street corner.

Suddenly.

"Young man, looks like you've started your morning run a bit late today," a cheerful voice rang out.

"Weren't there attacks by Star Realm Creatures last night? I waited until the alert was lifted before heading out," Li Yuan slowed his pace considerably and replied with a smile, "You're opening the shop today, boss? Aren't you taking a break?"

The person calling out to Li Yuan was the owner of the Lucky Flavor Noodle House.

He was busy moving things around.

The two had encountered each other many times and were very familiar strangers.

"Got to pay the rent, can't afford to stop," the boss replied cheerfully, his figure slightly plump but with strong arms as he easily lifted a large table.

"Wishing you wealth, boss," Li Yuan casually said and continued running forward.

He passed by a narrow alleyway, dark and foreboding.

Subconsciously.

Li Yuan glanced inside.

Following that, Li Yuan saw a blurry figure, darting out from the sewer drain at the end of the alleyway.

Looking at its path, it seemed poised to burst out from the alley toward the main road on this side.

"Hm?" Li Yuan's heart suddenly tightened, feeling a sense of instinctual danger.

But his running body, out of inertia, had already charged another twenty or so meters forward.

Then.

Li Yuan finally came to a complete stop, turned around, and stared intently at the mouth of the alley, his feet subconsciously backing away.

"Boom~" "Boom~" Li Yuan's keen hearing picked up a series of light, hurried noises coming from the alley.

"Huff!"

"Huff!" Apparently, there were also sounds of heavy, hastened breathing.

Subconsciously.

Li Yuan backed up next to a closed shop by the roadside because there were two hollow metal sticks leaning against the wall, seemingly used to prop up goods.

Inexplicably, something was reminding Li Yuan that he needed to run immediately.

But before Li Yuan could react.

Boom!

A tall, thin figure suddenly sprang out from the narrow alley and stood on the sidewalk.

With Li Yuan's exceptional vision, he saw it instantly.

It was a nearly two-meter-tall humanoid creature with four arms, its skin a deep ocean blue, like the color of the sea, with a head of emerald green hair, red eyes that simultaneously reflected intelligence and wisdom.

It was as if the creature had run straight out of the water.

Its limbs were slender and more elongated than those of humans, giving it an elegant appearance. The tips of its hands and feet had evolved into sharp, webbed claws, but the most striking feature was the tail fin-like structure on its back, resembling both a fish fin and tail.

"Fish Spirit Clan? A Star Realm Creature!" Li Yuan recognized it instantly, feeling the hairs on his body stand on end.

The Star Realm Creatures are incredibly diverse, with some resembling the various animals found on Blue Star, humanoid creatures, and some like enlarged insects... but about one-third of them are humanoid.

And the Fish Spirit Clan is a famously distinguished type; they can live amphibiously on land and in water.

In Jiang City's history with multiple attacks, the Fish Spirit Clan was a major force.

"How could there be Star Realm Creatures slipping through here?" Li Yuan was on high alert, as if facing a great enemy, "Wasn't the alert called off?"

Almost instinctively.

[Target creature, Life Level 10.2, Entry Rank, in a critically wounded state, currently around 9.2, killing it will yield Spiritual Nature nutrients]Li Yuan's thoughts stirred, his

consciousness feeling waves of fatigue, and he had gained the information about the creature's life level.

10.2!

That's Entry Rank, equivalent to a true Martial Artist.

However.

In the information obtained, what slightly lifted Li Yuan's spirits was the creature's critically wounded state.

The physical quality it could exert seemed to be only at 9.2.

"Shot?" Li Yuan then noticed a bullet wound in the chest of the Fish Spirit, but not much blood had flowed out, so he didn't see it at first glance.

Once the physical quality reaches the level of a Martial Artist, the body becomes robust; small caliber bullets, if not hitting a vital point, cannot be fatal with a single shot.

Apart from noting the creature's wounded state, Li Yuan also paid attention to the last part of the inquiry message: "Killing it will yield Spiritual Nature nutrients."

What is that?

Li Yuan had previously inquired about the Life Level of many Martial Artists but had never come across such a prompt.

It seems slow to describe.

But in reality, within a second of the Fish Spirit Clan member charging out of the alley, Li Yuan had already finished identifying and appraising the enemy.

Subconsciously at the same time,

Li Yuan grabbed the hollow metal rod next to him, faintly adopting an attacking stance, and stared intently at his opponent.

In all the materials about Star Realm Creatures that Li Yuan had studied since he was young,

these Star Realm Creatures were incredibly brutal, and an encounter would inevitably lead to a fight.

However, contrary to Li Yuan's expectations,

"Boom!"

The injured Fish Spirit Clan member, sensing Li Yuan was not easy to provoke, instantly turned and swiftly darted away, its flippers clawing over the paved ground, as it lunged toward the owner of the Fuwei noodle shop dozens of meters away.

The speed was astonishing.

Clearly, in its perception, Li Yuan was not someone to mess with.

"Star Realm Creature?" The noodle shop owner, who had also noticed the Fish Spirit Clan member lunging at him, felt a rush of adrenaline and instinctively picked up a kitchen cleaver!!

Just then,

"Whoosh!" The air burst with a low, whistling roar!

A hollow metal rod nearly three meters in length shot through the air like a giant arrow, aiming straight for the Fish Spirit Clan member.

The Fish Spirit Clan member was fast, but the metal rod came faster and fiercer!

"Roar~"

The Fish Spirit Clan member instinctively sensed the danger and tried to dodge subconsciously, but on land its speed was somewhat slower, and it was injured as well.

"Bang~"

The metal long rod struck the shoulder of the Fish Spirit Clan member with a terrible force, slamming its nearly two-meter-tall slender body directly to the side of the ground.

Bricks shattered.

Its body rolled on the ground.

Blood seeped from what looked like fish scale shoulder skin, then quickly stopped!

"Hah! Boom~~"

The Fish Spirit Clan member suddenly flipped over, emitting strange low growls as if filled with rage, staring at Li Yuan, who stood dozens of meters away, completely ignoring the closer noodle shop owner.



Its forearms slightly raised, the sides of its arms shimmered with a chilling gleam, like bone knives.

"You want to kill me?" Li Yuan, now holding the last metal long rod, glared fiercely at the Fish Spirit Clan member.

Just a moment ago,

seeing the noodle shop owner in danger, Li Yuan had almost subconsciously hurled the metal rod in his hand.

Li Yuan was always very cautious in his actions, not willing to rashly court danger.

Because Li Yuan knew, there was only one life to live.

But to turn a blind eye to someone in distress, to watch someone die, especially an acquaintance?

Li Yuan asked himself, he truly could not do that.

And as he flung the metal rod,

faced with the Fish Spirit Clan member and its bloodthirsty gaze, there was no fear in Li Yuan's heart.

Or rather, there was no time for further thought, just instinct.

"Martial Path is for killing enemies," only indescribable courage and passion remained in Li Yuan's heart.

"Roar~"

The Fish Spirit Clan member let out a low growl and suddenly leaped forward, its speed astonishing.

"Boom!"

Without the slightest hesitation, Li Yuan's form shifted as he executed the "Dragon Movement Technique," like a swimming dragon aggressively advancing towards his opponent.

A long weapon required sufficient space to wield.

"Whoosh" "Whoosh!"

The Fish Spirit Clan member had already realized Li Yuan was not easy to defeat, and it didn't attack with the casualness it would use against ordinary humans, swinging its arms like dual blades trying to cleave Li Yuan.

"Puchhh!"

The metal long rod, like a great spear, surged in speed at the moment of near contact with the Fish Spirit Clan member's arms, casting dozens of afterimages, causing the Fish Spirit Clan member to be momentarily distracted.

Following that, the metal long rod already shot through the gaps of the Fish Spirit Clan member's arms like lightning.

Striking directly at its head and eyes.

Solid Rock Spear Technique's one of the five major killing moves—Vast Mountain Grandeur.

"Bang~" Like a grape being crushed, its eyeball burst instantly.

Fluid and blood splattered!

"Bang~" The impact of the collision also caused Li Yuan's arm to tremble, his figure shot backward suddenly.

Offloading the force.

"Ahhhh~" The pain of an exploding eyeball caused the Fish Spirit Clan member to feel excruciating agony, and its vision darkened involuntarily.

Subconsciously, one hand covered the injured eye.

"Bang~"

But the metal long rod in Li Yuan's hands remained incredibly agile, striking again like lightning, mercilessly hitting its other eye.

Bursting!

Blinded!! Its entire body howled in wild agony.

"Your skills are too poor, not even reaching Third Stage," Li Yuan murmured to himself.

Raising the heavy rod high, his arm forced down vigorously, smashing fiercely toward the crown of the opponent's head.

## Chapter 46: 44 Two Hall Masters

...

In this era, material science had advanced, so even a metallic hollow stick had great strength and toughness.

Most importantly, this member of the Fish Spirit Clan had a Physical Quality of only 10.2 levels, just at Entry Rank. Although their bones and muscles were tough, they weren't yet immune to common weapons.

"Whoosh!"

"Bang~" "Bang~" Li Yuan swung down the first two strikes like lightning, both wielded one-handed with the flow.

With two consecutive, precise, heavy strikes, he caved in the skull of the Fish Spirit Clan member, blood spurting out.

They lay completely horizontal on the ground, their slender body still twitching.

Li Yuan didn't stop; he knew well the importance of a finishing move.

The third strike was now a two-handed grip, the most suitable position for exerting force with a heavy stick.

There are many similarities in the force application between spear technique and stick technique.

"Whoosh!" Li Yuan's vigor burst forth instantly, calmly unleashing the "Stable as Earth", with the stick head chopping down like the head of a spear.

"Splat~Bang!!!"

Over a thousand kilograms of terrifying force erupted, striking precisely the same spot as before... and completely burst open like a watermelon.

Blood and fluids splashed widely, scales scattered about, some of the blood even splashing onto Li Yuan himself.

The body of the Fish Spirit Clan member was no longer moving.

"Whoosh!"

"Whoosh!" Li Yuan gripped the long stick tightly in his hand, still not daring to relax, watching the Fish Spirit Clan member before him: "This time, it should be over, right?"

This was Li Yuan's first life-or-death battle.

But with thousands of life-or-death struggles in the virtual network, as well as numerous practical exercises with Fang Longhu.

Especially the daily trials of pain from the "Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture".

Li Yuan's heart had long become incredibly tough.

Spear technique, movement technique, combat instincts in the face of life and death had unknowingly become ingrained deep within Li Yuan's bones.

"I, Li Yuan, can kill Star Realm Creatures one-on-one?" Li Yuan took a deep breath, hands gripping the metallic long stick even tighter.

In his heart, an inexplicable emotion arose.

It was as if he had gone through a major event in life, a purification of the soul.

Sometimes, certain transformations in life come unexpectedly, impossible for anyone to anticipate.

All one can do is prepare well in advance.

Clearly, through years of practicing the Martial Path, Li Yuan was internally and physically ready for a life-and-death struggle; he had indeed given a satisfactory answer to himself.

No cowardice! No fear!

Only courage, decisiveness, and caution.

He stepped back five paces.

Li Yuan still faced in the direction of the Fish Spirit Clan's corpse, while his peripheral vision scanned all around, remaining alert for any sudden appearance of Star Realm Creatures.

"Young man, are you a Martial Artist?" The noodle shop owner, holding a kitchen knife, watched Li Yuan with utter shock.

He had never expected that the youth he often saw in the mornings could be so formidable.

In just two encounters.

The strong and fierce Star Realm Creature was brought down, seemingly lifeless now.

Instinctively, the noodle shop owner thought the youth must be a Martial Artist.

In his understanding, in close combat with cold weapons, only a Martial Artist could defeat Star Realm Creatures.

"Not a Martial Artist." Li Yuan responded.

"Then you?" The noodle shop owner swallowed hard, about to say something.

Suddenly.

"Rustle~" From the alley from before, two small figures darted out abruptly; Li Yuan's pupils slightly contracted, followed by a moment of relaxation.

They were two small combat robots, less than half a meter in height, shaped like large spiders, quite compact, equipped with gun barrels.

"Whoosh! Whoosh!"

The two combat robots scanned their surroundings and quickly gathered around the corpse of the Fish Spirit Clan, projecting red beams, seemingly scanning.

Li Yuan stepped further back and completely relaxed.

He could tell that the gunshot wounds on the leading Fish Spirit Clan member were most likely inflicted by the combat robots during pursuit.

In the whole of Jiang City, there were countless such combat robots, large and small.

Apart from a few extremely powerful Star Realm Creatures, most Star Realm Creatures could be annihilated by the combined forces of combat robots and unmanned fighting drones.

"Now, should I leave?" A thought just arose in Li Yuan's mind.

The next moment.

"Boom!" "Boom!" There was a sudden roar of explosions in the sky; Li Yuan instantly looked up, and two flying vehicles shaped like assault boats appeared in his vision.

In today's cities, the tallest buildings do not exceed 12 floors, so flying vehicles operating dozens of meters above the ground are quite safe.

"Single-person flyers?" Li Yuan held his breath.

Before the flyers landed.

"Whoosh! Whoosh!"

Two figures clad in black battle garments had already jumped down from the flying vehicles.

Like phantoms, their speed terrifyingly fast, yet when they touched the ground, they were incredibly agile and nimble, not causing any breakage on the surface.

Effortlessly.

They then came walking directly towards him.

...

"At least thirty meters, jumped right down?" Li Yuan held his breath as he watched the two approaching figures.

With Li Yuan's current strength, the most he could do was jump down from five meters, and even then he'd have to roll to unload the force to ensure he wouldn't get injured.

The two martial artists only showed their eyes, with the rest of their bodies completely wrapped in black battle garments.

The invisible aura they emitted, however, caused Li Yuan's heart to race, prompting him to instinctively activate the Divine Palace Inquiry.

[Target person, Life Level exceeds sensory limit (Current Life Level sensory limit is 17.8)]

Both individuals exceeded Li Yuan's sensory limit, which further drained his spirit.

"We were hunting down that Second Rank leader, and missed this little guy, who is actually dead?" The battle garment on one figure's head contracted, revealing a large bald head.

It was a bald man, his features as if chiseled with a knife and ax.

The other, comparatively frail figure, also saw his battle garment contract to reveal a face, and it turned out to be a brown curly-haired woman, looking to be about thirty years old, with an exotic charm.

"Foreign martial artists?" Li Yuan muttered to himself.

"Young man, I am a bona fide citizen of Xia Country," the brown curly-haired woman spoke fluently in Mandarin and laughed, "My family has been naturalized since my great-grandfather's generation."

Li Yuan fell silent, realizing that high rank martial artists do indeed have excellent hearing.

"Kid, the combat robot told me you killed this Star Realm creature? Are you a student from Martial Arts University?" The bald man approached Li Yuan, inquiring as he opened his smart ring: "Let me check the nearby surveillance."

"I killed it," Li Yuan said directly. "Senior year, from the first high school in Guanshan."

The bald man didn't respond, turning to look at the holographic projection and began to check the surveillance.

The brown curly-haired woman also looked on.

Less than ten seconds passed.

"Hmm?"

"What? This stick technique? No, it looks like spear technique!"

"It's spear technique." Both powerful martial artists showed surprise and couldn't help but look at Li Yuan.

They had initially thought that the Fish Spirit Clan member had been gravely injured nearly to death and thus fell to Li Yuan as an easy target.

Only after viewing the surveillance did they discover... the Fish Spirit Clan member had indeed been injured but still retained most of its strength.

And Li Yuan, in a single encounter, punctured the creature's eyes with a metal pipe.

He then proceeded to smash its head with ferocity.

This strength, this ferocity.

Both the bald man and the brown curly-haired woman were taken aback.

A high school senior? Since when had high school students become so formidable?

"What's your name?" the bald man looked at Li Yuan.

"Li Yuan." Li Yuan replied.

"Li Yuan? Would you be interested in signing a contract with my Starry Sky Martial Hall?" The bald man revealed a smile which he assumed was kind, "I'm 'Lu Huai', the Hall Master of the Guanshan branch of the Starry Sky Martial Hall."

Li Yuan was startled.

This bald man was a Hall Master, his position possibly comparable to that of Lord Wan?

He must be a Prime Warrior.

"Good to meet you, Hall Master Lu," Li Yuan shook his head. "I've already signed a pre-contract with the Starfire Martial Hall."

After thinking, Li Yuan added, "A B-level contract."

"Starfire Martial Hall? A B-level contract?" The bald man was taken aback, "I haven't heard of this, have I?"

"A B-level contract? Li Yuan, from the first high school?" The brown curly-haired woman's eyes lit up as she teased the bald man with a wink, "Oh Lu, I remember now."

"Last month, Xing Zixuan mentioned to me once that Lord Wan signed a B-level contract with a high school student."

"Supposedly, it was poached from your Starry Sky Martial Hall, must be him."

"I was intending to ask Lord Wan at the end-of-year meeting." The brown curly-haired woman smiled indulgently at Li Yuan, "No need to ask now, your courage for taking initiative, facing danger fearlessly, and your spear technique that's close to the Fourth Level is enough to justify a B-level contract."

Li Yuan grew increasingly confused as he listened.

But he vaguely sensed that the brown curly-haired woman seemed quite familiar with Lord Wan.

"Poached by my Starry Sky Martial Hall? I wasn't aware," Lu Huai, the bald man, frowned slightly.

He looked at Li Yuan unconsciously.



"Don't stare at Li Yuan. Don't scare our little guy from the Martial Hall," the brown curly-haired woman glared at the bald man, "If you want to know, go ask your people at the Martial Hall."

"Fine, I won't ask him anymore," the bald man shook his head in resignation.

"Li Yuan."

"Come, let's take a photo, sign your name," the brown curly-haired woman smiled at Li Yuan while opening her smart ring: "Don't worry, I'll report your deed of killing the Star Realm creature soon, and then notify your school. I'll strive to get you an honorary title and a reward."

"I appreciate it, senior," Li Yuan was still somewhat dazed, but let her lead.

He quickly took a photo with the corpse of the Star Realm creature.

And signed his name on the light screen of the woman's ring.

"Don't call me a senior, my last name is Zuo." The brown curly-haired woman looked at Li Yuan: "I'm the Vice Hall Master of the Guanshan branch of the Starfire Martial Hall, in charge of battle readiness patrols and retrieving Star Realm creatures."

"Vice Hall Master Zuo?" Li Yuan was slightly startled.

He had heard other martial artists from the Starfire Martial Hall speak of her before, but he hadn't paid much attention and didn't look up her information previously.

"You know me?" Vice Hall Master Zuo smiled at Li Yuan, "Killing a Star Realm creature must be a first for you, right? Do you want to take a day off and rest at home?"

Killing a Star Realm creature for the first time, especially one of a humanoid species, could make many people nervous or even lead to psychological barriers.

"No need to take leave."

"Vice Hall Master Zuo, I should go to school," Li Yuan said seriously. "I still have classes today."

"School?" Vice Hall Master Zuo was surprised, then she smiled, "I'll give you a ride."

## Chapter 47: 45 This world has never been peaceful

Li Yuan refused the Left Hall Master's kind offer and, after a few more words, set off for school alone.

However.

Perhaps to protect Li Yuan, the Left Hall Master ordered two spider combat robots to follow him all the way, only leaving his side as he was about to enter the school.

As for the school's interior? In large cities nowadays, places like schools, research institutes, government buildings, and mega-malls are all stationed with combat robots.

There are also numerous combat robots patrolling along the streets and through the residential areas.

This is precisely why, despite some casualties, small-scale Star Realm Creature attacks are quickly exterminated once they are detected, and they hardly ever cause any significant commotion.

This has become the urban defense system gradually established over the past hundred years, accompanied by the advancement of human civilization's technology and the accumulation of experience.

Entering the school, it was nearly seven.

Li Yuan headed straight for the cafeteria.

Despite the turmoil outside, it didn't affect the cooks from preparing the meals on time.

"Brother Yuan, over here." Zhou Qi called out to Li Yuan.

Li Yuan bought soy milk and two bowls of hot dry noodles and sat down with his classmates.

"Li Yuan, I've noticed that you've been arriving later and later these days," Lǐ Tianyou said while taking big bites of his food.

"Isn't it because of the Star Realm Creature attack warnings? I only came out after the alerts were lifted," Li Yuan said with a smile. "Aren't you the same?"

"I also waited for the alert to be lifted."

"My dad drove me to school, afraid of running into danger," others chimed in. "I heard that last night, a lot of people died on Binhu Road."

"Sigh!"

"Hopefully none from our school."

While his classmates sighed over a Star Realm Creature attack that caused dozens of casualties, happening right in Guan Mountain District, they have also grown somewhat accustomed to it.

The frequency was just too high.

"Li Yuan," Lǐ Tianyou said seriously, "It's not just today, but for the past two months you've often arrived later in the morning than even me."

"Are you slacking off a bit?"

"Tired of studying, huh?" Li Yuan replied jokingly. "You're the real study bug of our class."

Ever since signing with Starfire Martial Hall and learning two Second Rank secret manuals, Li Yuan often practiced his Spear Technique and movement technique late into the night in the virtual internet.

Therefore, he no longer arrived at school before five every day, and occasionally it would even be past six.

"Tianyou, who do you think you are, waking up earlier than chickens and sleeping later than donkeys?" Zhou Qi teased. "Look at you, you've become thinner than when school started. Take it easy."

"Yeah, Tianyou, you're pushing yourself too hard. Remember to eat more vitality and blood potions. In Martial Arts Cultivation, that's an expense you can't skimp on," Yan Zhou added.

"Yes, I know," Lǐ Tianyou replied softly, his head lowered as he ate.

Li Yuan casually glanced at Lǐ Tianyou.

He could clearly see the Physical Quality Level of the other party...Lǐ Tianyou's training was indeed intense, but his physical quality hadn't improved much.

It was clear his nutrition was lagging behind.

Li Yuan would occasionally give a side comment or two, but Lǐ Tianyou only took it to heart in words...after enough times, Li Yuan chose to stay silent.

Each person has their own fate, and one can only be responsible for oneself.

"Brother Yuan, the January exams are coming up soon, and there'll be another Spiritual Aptitude Test," Zhou Qi said, putting down his cutlery. "What do you think about it?"

"Spiritual Aptitude Test?" Li Yuan was taken aback, soon shaking his head, "I don't know."

The other students had already begun discussing it.

The Spiritual Aptitude Test adds 10% to the total score of the Martial Arts exam, which is enough to change one's destiny and potentially allow students with no previous hope for Martial Arts University to reach its gates...

In this era, unless one's cultural exam scores could challenge the top universities, most students are well aware that the path of the Martial Path holds more promise than that of cultural studies.

It's just that Martial Arts University is extremely hard to get into.

"[You have slain an Entry Rank creature and obtained Spiritual Nutrients, achieving a Spiritual Awakening Level of 0.6%]" Li Yuan quickly finished his breakfast and was engrossed in the recent message that appeared on his Mind Spirit Divine Palace panel.

This notification.

He received it after killing a member of the Fish Spirit Clan, and it even brought changes to the Divine Palace panel.

---

[Life Level: Level 7.8 (Unranked)]

Physical Quality Index: 81 (Evaluates explosive power, endurance, speed, physique, spiritual power, and many other aspects.)

Fist Strength: 732 kilograms

Speed: 17.4 meters per second

Spiritual Power: Level 14.2

Spiritual Awakening Level: 0.6% (Current upper limit: 20%)

Physical Body Cultivation Method: "Solid Rock Cultivation Method"

Mind Cultivation Method: "Observing the Great Sun Starry Sky Scripture"

Skill Realm: Spear Technique (Third Stage 88%), Body Technique (Third Stage 65%),  
Fist Technique (Third Stage 99%)

[Note: When the Spiritual Awakening Level reaches 25%, 50%, 75%, 100%, 125%, you will gradually receive Spiritual Guidance.]

---

"Spiritual Awakening Level, what is that?" Li Yuan mused silently, "Is it related to how well-aligned it is with High Rank Cultivation Methods?"

The Divine Palace panel did not offer an explanation.

Or rather, ever since he became aware of the Mind Spirit Divine Palace, Li Yuan had hardly received any explanations.

Most of his understanding came from his own interpretations.

"Judging by the last sentence on the Divine Palace panel, if my Spiritual Awakening Level reaches 25%, will I receive Spiritual Guidance?" Li Yuan frowned, "But my current limit can only reach 20%."

What is Spiritual Guidance? Li Yuan wasn't sure.

However, Li Yuan had a hunch that the high-level Spiritual Nature shown on the Divine Palace panel, and the Martial Spirit valued by human civilization, didn't seem to be the same concept.

"If I want to increase the Spiritual Awakening Level." Li Yuan thought reflectively, "Do I have to kill Entry Rank Star Realm Creatures? To obtain Spiritual Nourishment?"

"Nourishment, is it to nurture my own Spiritual Nature?"

With only one example, Li Yuan had no way to verify his guess.

Nevertheless.

With a Spiritual Awakening Level of 0.6%, Li Yuan felt as if he hadn't changed at all.

"Most likely, I need to raise the awakening level to 25% before any significant change occurs, and maybe I will receive benefits similar to the 'Observing the Great Sun Starry

Sky Scripture'." Li Yuan also held a sliver of hope in his heart, "But how do I increase the upper limit of Spiritual Awakening from 20% to 25%?"

"Physical Quality? Or is it spiritual power?"

"Or is it a breakthrough in Martial Arts Skills?"

Li Yuan knew nothing.

...

Regarding changes on the Divine Palace panel.

After pondering without result, Li Yuan decisively ignored it.

Up to this point, the Divine Palace panel had only recorded his Martial Arts Cultivation, it had never directly increased his strength... power still had to be obtained through Li Yuan's step-by-step cultivation.

"Regardless of what Spiritual Awakening is."

"For now, I'll follow the set routine for cultivation, and maybe I'll understand when I am stronger," Li Yuan thought silently.

Conducting experiments by killing Star Realm Creatures? Li Yuan dismissed this idea instantly.

This time, the killing of the Fish Spirit Clan was partly because of Li Yuan's strength and partly because of luck, as the enemy was injured.

If he encounters an uninjured Entry Rank Star Realm Creature, even just level 11 or 12, Li Yuan would almost certainly lose, given their absolute advantage in Physical Quality.

Moreover.

Even if Li Yuan wanted to kill, where would he go?

"No rush, I'll think of a way when the upper limit reaches 25%," Li Yuan was very calm.

...

"I have a piece of bad news to share with everyone."

"Last night, the Star Realm Creatures attacked, and one student from both Senior Year 2, Class 16 and Senior Year 3, Class 8 has been confirmed dead," the cultural class head teacher, Mr. Chen, stood at the lectern and announced solemnly.

Silence fell over the room.

Even a few students who had been whispering stopped.

It wasn't the first time, and those who passed weren't classmates... but belonging to the same school was enough to touch all the students.

"Star Realm Creatures," Li Yuan's gaze sharpened as he subconsciously clenched his fists.

Since childhood, almost everyone had lost friends and classmates to such incidents.

"The school will initiate a fundraising activity. The supervisory account has been published on the school's website," continued Mr. Chen, "The amount is not tallied, donor names will not be disclosed, no third parties are involved, and after the deadline, the funds will be directly transferred to the families of the two students."

"Please donate according to your own situation, there is no obligation."

"Alright, let's continue with the lesson."

"Everyone, look at the second-to-last major problem. This question is a popular type this year and is definitely going to appear in the college entrance exam. I have explained it many times, and many students are still getting it wrong. Today I will explain it one last time, it's fifteen points I'm giving you, so listen carefully..."

...

"About this Star Realm Creature attack."

"The two students who passed away." Inside the Martial Arts classroom, the teacher Xu Bo, stood like a tower, his voice resounding like a bell, "I hope you understand."

"This world has never been peaceful."

"I don't expect all of you to get into Martial Arts University, nor do I force you to join the army and go to the frontline, but I hope you don't slack off in your Martial Path."

"Be a little stronger."

"In the future, if you encounter similar dangers, the hope of surviving will be a bit greater."

...

The Star Realm Creature attack in Jiang City ultimately left eighty-six people dead.

But it didn't cause much of an uproar, and it didn't even stay on the hot search list of Xia Country's virtual networks for a full day.

Because.

At the Rob Sea, another unprecedentedly large battle erupted anew, with Star Realm Creatures attacking like a tide, and in just one day, the military reported over three thousand deaths...

...

January 3, 2043, Jiang City, the January Mock Exam for Senior Year 3, was held as scheduled.

## Chapter 48: 46 January Adjustment Exam (Third Update, Requesting Monthly Votes)

The mid-year exam in January lasted for three days.

From the first day to the second day's morning, cultural subject exams were conducted, and in the afternoon of the second day, the "Spiritual Aptitude Test" took place.

The Martial Dao Assessment was scheduled for the third day.

...Li Yuan did not disrupt his cultivation plan because of the exam; he still arrived at school a little after four as usual to practice the Basic Cultivation Method.

At seven o'clock, after showering in the Martial Arts Room, he hurried to the canteen for breakfast.

Then he rushed to the examination venue with Zhou Qi, Yan Zhou, and the others.

The January mid-year exam was one of the two most important large-scale standardized tests before the college entrance exam; both the Education Bureau and the schools took it extremely seriously.

All the standards were strictly modeled after the college entrance exam requirements, such as not being able to bring smart rings and other devices into the exam halls, among various other checks... The 20 classes were divided into 40 exam venues in total.



The seating arrangement in the cultural exam halls was determined by the rankings from the last major exam's cultural subjects.

"Brother Yuan, we're heading upstairs," Zhou Qi waved, laughing.

"Brother Yuan, do well in the exam; we'll be waiting for you upstairs."

A group of classmates teased Li Yuan as they went up, where higher floors signified higher rankings.

"These guys," Li Yuan shook his head with a smile.

Suddenly, Li Yuan glanced at the admission ticket in Li Tianyou's hand and smiled, "Tianyou, I'm in exam room 29, and you're only in room 33, huh? Do well, I'll be waiting for you upstairs."

With that, Li Yuan too ascended the stairs.

Leaving behind a disheveled Li Tianyou.

...Students in exam room 29 belong to the lower-middle ranks in terms of cultural subjects at Guan Mountain District's top high school.

However, as a key high school, even students from exam room 35 have hopes of being admitted into a first-tier university specializing in cultural studies.

After sitting down, Li Yuan looked around and saw many familiar faces.

Apart from classmates from his own class, it seemed that quite a few were from the Elite Class.

Students of the Martial Arts Elite Class generally didn't score high on cultural subjects.

Energy is limited for everyone; without investment, it's hard to achieve good returns.

"Gu Qianghan, you're here too?" Li Yuan smiled at the person next to him.

"Just call me Gu Qiang," the handsome youth responded stubbornly.

"Alright, Xiao Qiang," Li Yuan laughed, "I remember your sister called you by that name a few days ago."

Li Yuan and Gu Qianghan often encountered each other as they both had private Martial Arts Rooms on the fourth floor of the Elite building.

The handsome young man glared and stood, as if he wanted to dispute this with Li Yuan.

"The invigilator is here, your homeroom teacher," Li Yuan pointed towards the distance, sitting upright.

The young man quickly sat down and turned his head, finding no one; annoyed, he turned back to Li Yuan, "You fooled me."

"She's really here this time," Li Yuan said seriously, "Your homeroom teacher."

"I don't believe you," Gu Qianghan showed Li Yuan the middle finger, his face filled with contempt.

"Gu Qianghan!"

"Sit down! The test papers are about to be distributed!" A stern voice suddenly exploded from the entrance of the classroom; Gu Qianghan shivered and immediately bent his head and sat down.

The homeroom teacher of the senior year Martial Arts Elite class was a female Martial Artist.

At Guan Mountain District's top high school, she and Xu Bo were known as the 'Cultural Martial Asuras'.

...

The cultural subject exams that lasted a day and a half were uneventful for Li Yuan.

For over a year, Li Yuan's spiritual power had steadily increased, making it extremely easy for him to memorize rote learning material.

However, an increase in spiritual power did not directly translate to an increase in intelligence, and since he spent very little time on cultural subjects... Li Yuan was clear-headed about this.

"People like Zhou Qi, with their good academic performance and the amount of time they spend studying."

"My ranking in cultural subjects should improve slightly compared to the last exam... but I'm not expecting a dramatic change," Li Yuan mused. "Just do my best."

...

After finishing the cultural subjects exam, all the students returned to their classrooms where many began comparing their answers.

"What was the answer to the last multiple-choice question in math? Was it B?" a conspicuous student eagerly asked.

"It should be C," replied a student who normally scored nearly perfect on math.

"But I guessed randomly, so maybe I'm the one who's wrong," the math prodigy added.

"Damn, I initially calculated C, but then changed it to B... I feel like I won't score over 150 in math again," the conspicuous student said, frustrated.

With a total of 200 points, math was the most significant subject.

In the midst of the noisy discussions,

Li Yuan sat at his desk, lost in thought.

He never compared answers.

Not out of confidence, but indifference.

Cultural subjects totaled 1000 points, but if one chose to apply to Martial Arts University, the cultural score would be converted to 100 points, accounting for only 10%.

For Li Yuan, there was only a 10-point difference on the total score between scoring 700 and 800 in cultural subjects.

But the amount of effort required was vastly different.

"According to tradition, the difficulty of the January mid-year exam is higher than that of the college entrance exam," Li Yuan calculated silently, "This time, I should've got all the basic points; scoring over 650 in cultural subjects would mean success."

Suddenly.

Chen, the homeroom teacher of the cultural class, entered the room with a stern expression, "Everyone sit down; we have the schedule for the Spiritual Aptitude Test. Our class starts at 2 PM; we're the first to be tested."

The senior year (1) class was the Elite Class and had all awakened their Martial Spirit, so there was no need for retesting.

The senior year (2) class was the first one to be tested.

"After the test, we'll have self-study," Chen instructed, then left the class.

"The Spiritual Aptitude Test! It's coming again."

"I wonder if I can change my fate."

"Stop dreaming."

"Wake up, it's senior year; I'm not peeing yellow enough to sprinkle you," the students once again began discussing among themselves.

Many top cultural class students had already silently taken out their books to resume studying.

If choosing the cultural path, even if one awakened the Martial Spirit, it wouldn't grant any extra credit.

"Brother Yuan, your physical quality seems to have surpassed level 7.0; you must have awakened," Zhou Qi said cheerfully.

"Maybe," Li Yuan replied thoughtfully.

He wasn't certain if a 0.6% Spiritual Awakening Level would bring any change.

...

An hour and a half later.

"I've awakened the Martial Spirit?" Zhou Qi walked out of the testing room, both shocked and baffled, staring at his test result in disbelief.

This caught the attention of the surrounding classmates.

"Zhou Qi, he has actually awakened?"

"This?" A buzz of discussion arose, almost all the students found it unbelievable.

Zhou Qi's Martial Path grades in class were known to be among the lowest.

"Zhou Qi has awakened?" Li Yuan cracked a slight smile, glancing at the 'unawakened' marked on his own test slip.

He had anticipated his own lack of awakening, as the Divine Palace panel had basically explained.

But how could Zhou Qi's compatibility with high-rank cultivation methods exceed 85% in the senior year?

"Some pursue tirelessly and fail to attain, while others gain without even hoping for it." Li Yuan glanced at the doorway of a distant testing room.

Li Tianyou was looking enviously at Zhou Qi, who had become the center of attention.

"Sometimes, it really is about fate," Li Yuan remarked with a sigh.

...The testing for Class 3 of the senior year concluded.

In the end, only Zhou Qi succeeded in awakening.

As one gets older, with the body and skeleton becoming set, the hope of attaining compatibility with high-level cultivation methods grows bleaker.

For Class 3 of the senior year to witness the continuous awakening of two students' Martial Spirits within a single term was already a rare occurrence.

...

In the Martial Dao Assessment, the tests for Qi and blood, Fist Strength, and Martial Arts Skills were all closed tests; other students wouldn't learn of the specific data immediately.

But the physical quality tests such as forty meters, one hundred meters, one kilometer, ten kilometers.

These were public.

On the third day of the January exams.

The students of Class 3 of the senior year followed behind the Elite Class students, arriving at the school's largest playground.

There, they could undergo a ten-thousand-meter running test.

However, the first physical test was the forty-meter sprint.

"The speed of those in the Elite Class is so fast."

"14.5 meters per second!"

"That one, reaching 15.7 meters per second, his physical quality is definitely over level 7."

"Damn! Damn! 17.2 meters per second? That's close to level 8."

"Well-deserving of the Elite Class." Next to Li Yuan, classmates watched as the Elite Class students crossed the finish line, bursting into exclamations from time to time.

No wonder the students of Class 3 were so amazed; their physical qualities were generally just over level 5.

In the Elite Class, after half a year of cultivation in their senior year, even the weakest had surpassed level 6, and quite a few were over 7.0.

Cultivating high-level methods, even if one could only absorb traces of Cosmic Origin Power each time, conferred a massive advantage over average people.

Of course, among the Elite Class students, those with a Physical Quality of level 8.0 were still few and far in between.

"Look, it's Lin Lanyue."

"First in Martial Arts Skills among the grade."

"It's her."

On the track, the girl in red training gear, with bright eyes and white teeth, immediately drew everyone's gaze.

No help for it, Lin Lanyue's fame was too great among the senior year.

"Lin Lanyue?" Li Yuan also turned curious and looked over; it was true that her physical quality was extremely strong.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

On the track, six figures burst into a sprint at once, with the crimson silhouette unleashing a terrifying speed.

In just over two seconds, Lin Lanyue had already crossed the finish line, far ahead of the other students.

On the distant display, Lin Lanyue's final result also appeared—"19.7 meters per second"

"Holy shit."

"Is this a high school student?"

"She's almost a Martial Artist."

"Damn, she's twice as fast as I am; one punch from her could definitely kill me." Waves of astonishment rose amongst the crowd, filled with shock.

Li Yuan's eyes fell upon Lin Lanyue and with a thought, the inquiry results appeared before him [Target person, Life Level: 9.0]

"Level 9.0?" Li Yuan was inwardly astonished.

Upon a slight comparison, Li Yuan concluded, "Her body's rate of improvement doesn't seem slower than mine."

Logically, as one progresses, the rate of physical quality improvement should slow down.

Yet, Lin Lanyue's physical quality improvement showed not a hint of deceleration and there was even a trend of accelerating.

The 40-meter test proceeded very quickly.

It wasn't long before it was Class 3's turn.

"Random student numbers, first group, number 36, number 1, number 8..." The proctor rapidly announced the exam numbers.

Li Yuan, as the top martial arts student of the class, was number 1.

He took his place at the starting line.

"Is Li Yuan being tested?"

"What's his level of physical quality?"

"Don't know."

"Should be over level 7, I think he was 6.5 at the start of the semester," Li Yuan's appearance also drew many students' attention.

Even many Elite Class students looked over.

Li Yuan, with the ability to make it into the top thirty of the general class and recognized as the first in Martial Arts Skills.

Especially after defeating Lin Lanyue in the last virtual fight, he had gained a considerable reputation at the school.

"Lanyue, look, it's Li Yuan... Oh, you're already watching him." The slightly plump girl beside her was about to call Lin Lanyue.

She then realized that Lin Lanyue had already stopped walking.

"Li Yuan?" Lin Lanyue watched intently; she was quite curious.

How did Li Yuan manage to sign a B-level contract with Starfire Martial Hall?

Perhaps this exam period might reveal some reasons.

"Lanyue, what do you think Li Yuan's physical quality level is now?" her chubby best friend asked curiously.

"Him?" Lin Lanyue hesitated, "Maybe it's 7.4."

"That high?" The best friend was a bit surprised; that level of physical quality would almost break into the top ten of the Elite Class.

At that moment,

Whoosh! Whoosh!

Whoosh! The six on the track had already burst from the start, Li Yuan like an arrow, instantly leaving the five classmates far behind.

Pulling nearly double the distance, he crossed the finish line directly.

"Beep—"

On the electronic display, Li Yuan's result instantly appeared—"17.8 meters per second"

## Chapter 49: 47: Only Wishing for No Regrets

"17.8 meters per second?"

"I didn't see that wrong, did I?"

"How can he be so fast? That's ridiculous, is he from the ordinary class?"

"Brother Yuan is awesome!"

"Li Yuan is too impressive." Outside the testing area, hundreds of students burst into exclamations.



The students of Class 3 (2), being Li Yuan's classmates, were mostly shocked and excited. If one had to describe it in a sentence, it would be 'Li Yuan is getting more and more awesome.'

But for the students in the Elite Class, although they were also shocked, their reactions were more like 'This Li Yuan is this awesome?'

"He really hasn't awakened his Martial Spirit?"

"With that kind of physical quality, he's almost at level 8.0, perhaps he is already at 8.0." Students of the Elite Class discussed fervently, some in disbelief.

As Elite Class students, when it comes to ordinary class students, they mostly feel a sense of superiority.

Before, they knew Li Yuan was impressive, especially his Martial Arts Skills, even Lin Lanyue couldn't compare to Li Yuan.

However, not having awakened the Martial Spirit meant in their subconscious that the cultivation speed would be much slower.

But Li Yuan's current performance? It's already crushing most of the students in the Elite Class.

"What the hell! He's even slightly faster than me, his physical quality is almost the same as mine? How did he improve so fast?"

Gu Qianghan's eyes widened: "Doesn't that mean his raw score is going to outstrip mine?"

Gu Qianghan, at the end of his second year, ranked third in the grade for Martial Arts performance.

However, Gu Qianghan's forty-meter burst speed test was only 17.6 meters per second.

"Lanyue, him?"

The plump girl standing next to Lin Lanyue gaped: "With that burst speed, he'd be ranked third in our class, right?"

Lin Lanyue ignored her best friend, falling into contemplation: "How did he do it? Is this why he was able to sign with Starfire Martial Hall?"

A winter's day, the sunshine was just right, with a gentle breeze that wasn't too dry.

The girl stared at the handsome young man in the crowd, dressed in a white Martial Arts uniform.

The young man had a radiant smile on his face as he accepted the enthusiastic cheers from his classmates, yet he did not look towards the girl.

"Lanyue, stop daydreaming."

The plump girl couldn't help but nudge the girl's hand: "I admit Li Yuan is very handsome, seemingly more so than any of the boys in our class, but you don't have to moon over him this much."

"You're the one mooning over him." Lin Lanyue shot her friend a glance: "I'm just curious how he could improve so quickly."

"Curious?"

Plump girl Peng Qiqi chuckled mischievously: "Curiosity is the first step to falling, if you don't want the handsome guy, I won't be polite."

"It looks like you're the one about to fall." Lin Lanyue raised her head slightly: "Besides, I don't think Li Yuan is handsome. We are Martial Artist Students, we first look at strength, appearance is not important."

"You don't find him handsome?" Peng Qiqi teased: "Then, you wouldn't approve of any of the boys in our school."

"To get my approval, they at least have to first get to the podium," Lin Lanyue said with the corners of her mouth curved slightly, pulling her friend's hand: "Let's go, it's time to gather for the 100-meter test."

"Podium?"

"Lanyue, listen to what you're saying," Peng Qiqi exaggeratedly exclaimed: "Only the top Martial Arts performer in the grade can get to the podium, who can compete with you? Oh, I get it, you've got your eye on the junior boys from the first and second year?"

"So you like them young!"

...

"Young man, are you truly from the ordinary class?" Two proctors from other schools, similarly astonished by Li Yuan's strength, asked.

Among the third-year students, not having awakened the Martial Spirit and having physical quality surpassing 6.5 is extraordinarily rare.

Not to mention standards like 7.9 or 8.0.

The two teachers paused the test temporarily to check the equipment while reconfirming Li Yuan's identity from afar.

"Yes," Li Yuan nodded.

"Impressive, Guan Mountain District has produced another promising youngster," commented one of the older Martial Arts Teachers, unable to help himself: "Young man, work hard, even without the Spiritual Nature bonus, with your physical quality, you have a chance to get into the Warrior Class of Jiangbei Martial University."

"Thank you, teacher," Li Yuan smiled and said.

The Warrior Class at Jiangbei Martial University, similar to the Elite Class, would receive the best cultivation from Jiangbei Martial University.

But that was not Li Yuan's goal.

...

Time passed, and the physical testing of one hundred meters, one kilometer, and ten kilometers were conducted in succession.

Lin Lanyue was the most notable.

Her displayed physical quality was truly leading by a steep margin, not only far surpassing all the Elite Class students but also well ahead of the second place.

And the one who garnered nearly as much attention as her was Li Yuan.

In terms of physical testing data, there were several students like Gu Qianghan in the Elite Class who were no less than him.

However, Li Yuan was too special; he was just an ordinary class student, unable to practice High Rank Cultivation Methods... yet his physical quality had already surpassed more than ninety percent of the students in the Elite Class.

"Li Yuan's improvement is too exaggerated."

"He really hasn't awakened the Martial Spirit? How could his physical quality increase so fast?"

"I just checked, by the end of second year, based on score conversion, his physical quality should have only been at level 6.0."

"In just half a year, his physical quality has improved by almost 2 levels, even more exaggerated than the top students of the Elite Class."

"By the time of the college entrance exams, how high will his physical quality be? Level 9? He's not going to become a Martial Artist already, is he?"

"With Martial Arts Skills, he is first, and his physical quality is also this impressive?"

...

"How high will his Martial Arts Score be after this assessment exam? I feel he can make it into the top twenty of our grade."

"The top twenty for sure, maybe even the top ten."

"The top ten? Impossible."

"He hasn't awakened his Martial Spirit, and it's normal for those in the top ten to receive bonus points for their Spiritual Nature. For Li Yuan to reach the top ten is too difficult, no matter how high his Martial Arts Skills score is, it can't be perfect." Many students in the senior third grade were discussing this.

For a time, Li Yuan virtually became a famous figure in the school, attracting much attention.

The underdog's counterattack has always been the most popular topic amongst the masses.

Li Yuan was not weak, but his lack of an awakened Martial Spirit resonated with most ordinary students and made them favor him.

Even engendering a sense of vicariousness—so what if he hasn't awakened? He's still awesome.

...The three-day January assessment exams came to an end.

That evening was self-study class, and the exam results would be posted the following day during class.

Around seven in the evening.

Inside Martial Arts Room 7024 of the Guan Mountain District's branch of the Starfire Martial Hall.

"Boom!"

"Hoo!" "Bang!" Li Yuan, dressed in a loose martial arts outfit, was practicing the Solid Rock Fist Technique.

This Fist Technique was in harmony with the Solid Rock Cultivation Technique, or one might say, the Fist Technique was a direct evolution of the Cultivation Stance Practice and Practice Method.

Each movement, though seemingly slow, was fiercely explosive in its action.

"Fist Technique is about control over one's body."

"Spear Technique is about control over one's weapon."

"When my Spear Technique broke through to the Third Stage, it was actually my Fist Technique that had broken through first." Li Yuan concentrated on his cultivation, glancing unconsciously at the Divine Palace panel: "My Spear Technique has just broken through to 90% of the Third Stage, but my Fist Technique has long reached 99% of the Third Stage."

"Spear Technique at Fourth Level emphasizes Body-Mind-Weapon Integration."

"Yet for Fist Technique at Fourth Level, it's simply about Body and Mind Unity." Li Yuan pondered silently, "If I can't even achieve perfect Body and Mind Unity, how can I manage to achieve Body-Mind-Weapon Integration?"

Body and Mind Unity is the foundation for Body-Mind-Weapon Integration.

The spear and fist are inseparable.

Practicing the spear essentially means practicing the fist, but Li Yuan would still occasionally focus on practicing his Fist Technique.

"According to the Divine Palace panel, my Physical Quality level is 7.8, but based on the real data I've demonstrated today, I should be similar to the other students at level 7.9." Li Yuan's thoughts roamed: "Based on the university entrance exam standards, my score for Physical Quality should be around 435 points."

"For Martial Arts Skills score, I didn't make any mistakes today, so I'm definitely over 380 points." Li Yuan sighed inwardly.

360 points is the benchmark for the Third Stage.

To reach 380 points, Li Yuan estimated, one would have to attain at least Intermediate Rank Third Stage skills.

With his own Spear Technique skills close to Perfection of Third Stage, how many points he could get was unclear to him.

"However."

"Even by the most conservative estimate, as long as I score over 65 points in the academic subjects, my total Martial Arts Score should exceed 880 points." Li Yuan recited inwardly, "Hopefully enough to break into the top ten."

Breaking into the top ten of his grade, Li Yuan was fairly confident.

But the top five?

"Small hope, not going to be presumptuous." Li Yuan threw a punch with such force that it made the air around him seem to explode.

There was no sense of loss in Li Yuan's heart.

What had to be done had been done to the fullest; the rest was waiting.

"Whatever the result, I have no regrets, so why should I create more worries for myself?" Li Yuan's heart was as calm as still water as he continued to practice his Fist Technique in silence.

The heart of a martial artist seeks only to be without regrets.

...

At nine o'clock in the evening, at the principal's office of Guan Mountain District's top high school.

Principal Tan Zhenlong was still working overtime.

"Beep—" The sound of the intelligent assistant rang out, "Master, Teacher Xu Bo is calling you on video."

"Xu Bo?"

"That guy really can't wait even a quarter of an hour," Tan Zhenlong shook his head with a smile, put down the performance list in his hand and said, "Xiao Jiu, connect the call."

Whirr~ An assembly of light converged, forming a screen.

The imposing figure of Xu Bo appeared in the screen projection.

"Old Tan, have you seen the January assessment exam results?" Xu Bo's face was full of smiles.

"I have."

Tan Zhenlong nodded slightly and spoke indifferently, "Why are you looking for me so late, Teacher Xu?"

"It's about Li Yuan." Xu Bo replied.

"Li Yuan?" Tan Zhenlong nodded, "He performed quite well."

"So what?" Xu Bo looked at Tan Zhenlong.

"So what?" Tan Zhenlong's mouth curled with a smile as he looked at Xu Bo.

"What's with that attitude." Xu Bo glared, "You old rascal, don't pretend to be clueless with me, I have video proof from last time."

"Hurry up."

"I've already sent you the scholarship application, get it approved quickly."

...

## Chapter 50: 48: 900 Points? Final Rankings

January 6, 2043.

Li Yuan did not practice "Stellar Spear Technique" or "Dragon Movement Scripture" in the virtual network today.

So, as usual, he left the house a little after three in the morning.

"It's been several days since I last saw the night of Jiang City at three in the morning," Li Yuan looked up at the pitch-black sky, "I still cannot slack off in my daily practice."

He arrived at his personal martial arts room at school.

As usual, he first practiced the Basic Cultivation Method for two hours before starting to practice with the spear.

"Shua!"

"Shua!" The shadows of the spear moved unpredictably as Li Yuan manipulated his long spear in his hand.

As he moved with the steps, sometimes the spear was like a sudden gust of wind or torrential rain, sometimes dreamy and elusive, and sometimes fierce and violent.

Sometimes a sudden straight thrust would cause the speed of the spear's tip to soar, making the air roar and explode.

The eighteen routines of "Solid Rock Spear Technique" had long been perfected to the extreme by Li Yuan.

"I have fully grasped the five deadly moves of the Solid Rock Spear Technique," he said to himself.

"Following Teacher Xu Bo's guidance, what I need to do now is to practice over and over, engraving the flow of vigor from the five deadly moves deep into my bones," Li Yuan thought. "In the end, without deliberately using any particular move, any spear technique I execute should reach a state of flawless vigor."

"Body and mind as one."

"Then that's Fourth Level Spear Technique," Li Yuan mused. "Improvement in skills can only rely on oneself."

"According to the intelligent teacher, the breakthrough from the perfection of Third Stage to Fourth Level is a mysterious one, a breakthrough in the spiritual consciousness' perception of the body."

"Some martial artists may break through just by having a sleep and feeling it."

"Some may have an epiphany during a life-and-death battle, leading to a breakthrough."

"But many more martial artists are stuck at the perfection of Third Stage for their entire lives."

"There is no absolute path to success from Third Stage to Fourth Level," Li Yuan pondered. "What I need to do now is to practice over and over again."

"If a thousand times is not enough."

"Then ten thousand times it is!"

"First, I'll train my spear technique to 99% of the Third Stage," Li Yuan's heart was filled with longing. "Then go and fight in virtual combat, go to real battle."



Years of spear practice told Li Yuan.

If you can't break through?

Then it's not enough accumulation! Just keep training!

"Read a book a thousand times, and its meaning will appear," Li Yuan swung the large spear in his hand. "The same goes for the spear."

"You only ever hear about Spear Technique Masters who practiced their way there."

Over an hour later.

[Your Spear Technique realm has increased from 90% of the Third Stage to 91% of the Third Stage.]

...

Around seven o'clock, Li Yuan arrived at the classroom.

Most of the students had already arrived.

However, compared to the usual scene where most students were earnestly studying on their own, the atmosphere in the classroom today was much more somber, with most people distracted.

"Old Zhou, why the long face?" Li Yuan sat down, pulling out his test papers while asking.

"Brother Yuan, the results for the January mock exams are about to be announced," Zhou Qi said glumly. "Aren't you nervous?"

"Not nervous," Li Yuan shook his head. "It's just a few points difference."

"I forgot you're a martial arts student; cultural classes only account for 100 points," Zhou Qi sighed. "But I'm a cultural student, if I do poorly, I'll get skinned alive when I get home."

"Then you'd be 'Zhou the Skinner,'" Li Yuan said offhandedly.

Zhou Qi gave Li Yuan a helpless look, too lazy to even retort.

"You haven't told your family about your awakening of Martial Spirit, have you?" Li Yuan inquired.

"I told them," Zhou Qi replied. "But what good does that do? My dad just asked me one question: with only a few months left, can you make it into Martial Arts University?"

"A person must be self-aware. I didn't even hope to get into Martial Arts University," Zhou Qi said. "So, I've decided not to go to the Elite Class."

"Just learn the High Level Cultivation Method and that's enough."

Li Yuan was speechless.

Indeed, Zhou Qi's physical quality was only at 4.3 levels up till now, and his martial arts score was quite terrible.

Not going to the Elite Class couldn't be called wrong.

"It's good too," Li Yuan smiled. "With the awakening of Martial Spirit, you can cultivate High Level Cultivation Method, and your martial arts score will improve much faster."

"Even if you go the cultural route, martial arts still account for 30% of the score."

"Mm-hm," Zhou Qi nodded.

At that moment.

The homeroom teacher of the cultural class, dressed in a small chanel-style jacket and pencil pants, appeared at the front door of the classroom.

Teacher Chen's face was as dark as water, holding a stack of papers and two ranking lists in his hands.

Instantly!

The classroom fell silent, everyone knew that the rankings were about to be unveiled.

Especially the students who chose the cultural path, each of them became nervous, many involuntarily bowed their heads.

All were inwardly chanting 'don't call my name.'

Of course, there were also a few with excellent grades, hoping in their hearts 'maybe this time I did well, I can improve by a few ranks.'

For martial arts students like Li Yuan, they were relatively calm by comparison since, at least, they had a rough idea of their own martial arts scores.

"Bang~" The test papers were thrown onto the podium.

The atmosphere grew even more tense.

"This January mock exam really revealed your true levels; hanging around all nonchalant, not studying culture properly, not practicing martial dao diligently..." Teacher Chen's voice was icy. "All of you think that just being in Guan High will get you into a first-tier university? Dream on!"

"Based on the citywide rankings this time, some of you would struggle to make it into a second-tier university, and I won't call out any names - you know who you are!" Teacher Chen scolded like a machine gun.

Many students bowed their heads even lower.

The January mock exam.

As the first major standardized test of the final year in high school, the cultural paper was intentionally difficult, aiming to undermine the students' confidence, to get them to settle down and review better.

At this stage, Teacher Chen, as the homeroom teacher of the cultural class, would not allow her students to develop any sense of pride.

She scolded relentlessly for more than ten minutes, without repeating herself once.

Even Li Yuan, with his strong psychological fortitude, started to doubt if he was one of the 'very few people, rotten mouse droppings, certain individuals' that Teacher Chen was referring to.

Finally.

"But there are very few students who have made significant progress, and they deserve encouragement," Ms. Chen said lightly, "Okay, I'll start with the academic scores now. Everyone listen carefully."

In high school, there is no emphasis on protecting students' grade privacy.

"Li Shutong, 889 points," Ms. Chen paused: "Second in academic performance for the grade."

This immediately caused a burst of exclamations. A score over 850 points in academics is a clear indication of a top student.

"Li Wanxing, 868 points."

...

"Zhou Qi, 849 points."

Zhou Qi, with his head bowed, suddenly lifted it slightly, his face full of pride. His academic performance was quite good.

One by one, the students' grades were announced, some beaming with joy, others showing frustration on their faces.

Where there's ranking, some rise and some must fall.

There are always half dissatisfied.

"Li Yuan, 742 points," Ms. Chen added when she read Li Yuan's name: "Not bad, a great improvement."

Instantly, many students turned to look at Li Yuan, which made him somewhat embarrassed.

They don't praise the ones with over eight hundred points.

Praise his score in the seven hundreds?

"Brother Yuan, didn't you score just over six hundred points last time?" Zhou Qi widened his eyes at Li Yuan: "An increase of nearly one hundred points?"

"Yeah, I've spent more time reviewing recently," Li Yuan said with a smile.

"You're full of it," Zhou Qi immediately retorted: "When have you ever attended the academic study sessions in the evening?"

"I was reviewing in the Martial Arts room," Li Yuan said frankly.

The scores of each student were read out.

Li Tianyou's score was 586 points, which was near the bottom of the class. As for the academic performance ranking for the grade, it likely fell short of the last time.

In fact, among the ten or so Martial Artist Students, Li Yuan's academic performance was already a steep lead.

...

After the academic grades were announced, Ms. Chen didn't pause and went straight on: "Now I will read out the Martial Arts scores, listen carefully."

All ears perked up to listen.

The academic results were known, and knowing the Martial Arts results meant they could calculate the overall score and see where they stood.

Ms. Chen looked at the second transcript and unconsciously glanced at Li Yuan, seemingly hesitant.

"Li Yuan," Ms. Chen paused for a moment before slowly saying: "827 points."

Boom!

The entire classroom exploded in an instant, and many people looked at Li Yuan with a shocked gaze.

They doubted if they heard that right.

You should know, this Martial Arts score doesn't include the academic conversion points. In other words, the total possible score is only 900 points.

Li Yuan exceeded 800 points?

And by several tens of points!

It was known that although Li Yuan had stolen the show at yesterday's Martial Dao Assessment, he hadn't dominated quite like Lin Lanyue, but now this result was truly exaggerated.

"827 points? Brother Yuan, you have 74 points added for your academic conversion. Adding that up," Zhou Qi already started calculating for Li Yuan: "Holy shit! Brother Yuan, your total Martial Arts score exceeded 900 points!!"

"A raw score of 901 points," Zhou Qi couldn't help but exclaim.

"901 points?"

"A raw score over 900 points? Li Yuan." All students were shocked.

It was just too fierce.

Academic performance might be boosted substantially in a short time, but improving in Martial Arts generally happens very slowly.

"Cough, cough, quiet!" Ms. Chen coughed twice, regaining calm in the class.

"Li Yuan really did well this time."

"Physical Quality score of 438 points, third in the grade," Ms. Chen said: "Martial Arts Skills... 389 points, first in the grade."

"This single score in Martial Arts Skills is also the first in Guan Mountain District and second in Jiang City."

Boom!

All the students in the class were once again excited and shocked.

Whether it was the 389 points in Martial Arts Skills or the second-in-city ranking for that category.

Both were somewhat beyond their comprehension.

Normally, such martial arts scores shouldn't appear in their ordinary class.

It was practically fantasy.

"389 points?" Li Yuan remained very calm in his heart, muttering to himself: "Not bad, it seems that to surpass 390 or even get close to a perfect score, I'll probably have to reach the Fourth Level in Spear Technique."

With a total Martial Arts score of 901 points, the result was way better than Li Yuan had expected.

"Teacher, Li Yuan has a total Martial Arts score of 901, what rank is he in the grade, did he make it into the top ten?" Suddenly, a student couldn't help but speak out.

The others, too, were looking at Ms. Chen with curious and expectant gazes.

A total score over 900 points.

Even without extra points for Spiritual Nature, the ranking for the grade must be quite astonishing.

Li Yuan also looked towards Ms. Chen, his fist clenched slightly.

Could he be in the top five?

"In terms of the raw score, Li Yuan is second," Ms. Chen said directly: "The first place in Martial Arts raw score is from the Elite Class, Lin Lanyue, with 929 points."

"As for the final total score, Li Yuan ranks sixth in the grade and two hundred and twelfth in the city," Ms. Chen's face revealed a rare smile: "Based on the rankings from previous years, this score gives him a chance to break into the top five famous schools."

Clearly, Ms. Chen was extremely satisfied with Li Yuan's performance.

"The top five famous schools?"

"A citywide ranking, reaching over two hundred names?"

"Sixth in the grade?" The other students were even more stunned and couldn't help but look at Li Yuan.

"Brother Yuan, that's freaking awesome!!" Zhou Qi was even more excited than Li Yuan.

"Sixth in the grade?" Li Yuan's face only showed a slight smile as he sighed inwardly:

"Still short by one rank, huh?"