

ODYSSEY 1491

Chapter 1491: Another Team

The falling hand contained a peerless pressure. Due to its incomparable size, everyone felt like it would easily smash the entire headquarters to pieces. It was even possible to see every single pore on the hand due to its size.

Xia Yan shouted fiercely, "Long Laogui, RUN!"

The old man wielding the spear moved back without any hesitation. He grabbed the corpse king that had undergone a red-eyes transformation and then moved to flee.

The ground trembled, and the second base's sourcebox array activated. Spatial cracks filled the entire area, blocking off everyone's line of sight. What did the second base of the massive sourcebox array do? Massive amounts of blood spurted out of the hand, though it still maintained a tight grip on the corpse king as it tried to pull it back.

The ground of the entire headquarters was painted red.

The battle had ended, and with the exception of Lu Yin, who was a new arrival, no one seemed terribly surprised.

One by one, the cultivators moved to clean up the battlefield in an orderly manner. They burned the bodies of the corpse kings and cleared the ground, making sure that none of the corpse kings' poisonous blood was left behind.

Lu Yin put his universal armor away. When the swordsman noticed Lu Yin, he hurried over. "I am Liu Jing. Might I ask for this brother's name?"

Lu Yin quickly replied, "Junior Ah Qi greets Senior."

Liu Jing was taken aback, but Lu Yin clearly did not want to reveal his surname, and the Envoy did not particularly care either. Many others were the same. Some had joined the battlefield in order to gain accomplishments, and there were all sorts of different people in this place. Such details did not matter on the battlefield. If one stepped foot onto the battlefield, it proved that they had already passed a background check.

"Brother Ah Qi, there's no need to call me senior. Rather, I'll feel like you're looking down on me. Just call me Big Brother Liu since I'm older than you." Liu Jing smiled. He wanted to become friends with Lu Yin. Although he was an Envoy, Liu Jing was not confident that he could defeat this talented young Enlightener.

Lu Yin smiled. "Big Brother Liu, thank you for your help just now."

"I also want to thank you, Brother Ah Qi. Is this Brother Ah Qi's first time at the second array base?" Liu Jing asked.

Lu Yin nodded. "Yes. Actually, this is my first time stepping onto this battlefield."

Liu Jing sighed. "The Tree Realm was broken through some time ago when a Progenitor realm corpse king took action. Even though he was forced to retreat, he left behind a great number of terror ants. Brother Ah Qi must be here to deal with those ants."

Lu Yin replied in a helpless tone, "That's precisely it. I wouldn't have come to the battlefield if not for that."

Liu Jing nodded. "This battlefield is brutal, so Brother Ah Qi, you have to take care of yourself. Even though dealing with the ants means that you won't fight on the battlefield itself, that task still isn't any safer than the battlefield. In fact, it can even be considered to be more dangerous, as you'll need to deal with more than just the terror ants. They're being protected by powerful corpse kings and traitors."

This resonated with what Lu Yin had heard from the short man when he had first stepped onto the battlefield. Qing Chen had even ordered Lu Yin to pick out the best defensive treasure, which made it quite clear how perilous clearing out the terror ants was.

That thought reminded Lu Yin—he still needed to redeem that defensive treasure.

"Does Brother Liu hail from the Sword Monument's Liu family?" Lu Yin asked.

Liu Jing looked around at the people who were busy as he answered, "Yeah, though I haven't been back there in many years. The family's probably already forgotten about me."

"How long has Big Brother Liu been here for?" Lu Yin was surprised.

Liu Jing smiled. "I am staying here at the second array base voluntarily. This place always needs to be protected, and there's the general, the array itself, the various colonels, and us. All together, we add a bit of power to the second array base."

Lu Yin admired this kind of person.

There was a boom off in the distance as the huge corpse king's body exploded. Its blood splashed onto many cultivators, and they quickly received treatment to prevent them from being corroded by the toxic blood.

The cone-shaped sourceboxes also fell out one by one, though they had dimmed a great deal.

Liu Jing frowned. "That sourcebox array was destroyed, which is a problem. We'll need to look for that bunch of Array Masters again, but all of them are so arrogant, and we'll have to pay a steep price to get them to move."

Lu Yin was curious about this. "I heard that the Lockbreakers' Headquarters voluntarily set up a base here on the battlefield and that they are highly respected for their efforts."

Liu Jing sneered. "Sure, it's 'voluntary.' They're saying that because they don't have a choice in this matter. They can't wait to leave the battlefield as soon as they can."

As he spoke, he looked over at a group of people clustered nearby. "Look, those are the Lockbreakers from headquarters."

Lu Yin saw that the people in the indicated group were dressed in a manner that was completely at odds with the overall battlefield. Every single person seemed to consider themselves a superior creature, and they reeked of arrogance in both their speech and manners. They even had servants waiting upon them.

Seeing such people socializing on a battlefield where someone could die at any moment was truly disharmonious with everything else.

"Those are the Lockbreakers that their headquarters sent to be stationed here on the second array base. Do you see that man in the middle of the group?" Liu Jing asked.

Lu Yin looked. "Which one?"

There was actually a group of people in the middle of the crowd. Everyone at the center was a man, and the only women near them looked to be attendants, which seemed rather odd.

Liu Jing said, "The one pinching his fingers in a dainty fashion."

Lu Yin blinked and noticed that there really was a middle-aged man who had three raised fingers from pinching his middle finger and thumb together.

"That's Master Zan. He's an Array Master. While he's not that powerful of a cultivator, he's an excellent Lockbreaker. He must have come out to repair the sourcebox this time, though I can't even imagine how much the general will have to pay for this," Liu Jing Shen remarked.

"Doesn't it make sense to just repair the sourcebox array? Why does the general have to pay a price for it?" Lu Yin found this comment quite strange.

Liu Jing shook his head. "While that's true in theory, these people take their time and do things slowly if they don't receive sufficient compensation. For the sake of the headquarters itself, the general is compelled to pay them to get the array repaired as soon as possible."

Lu Yin frowned. "If they don't get the array repaired, they'll be in danger themselves the next time a corpse king attacks."

"They're able to keep themselves safe, and no one knows just how many sourcebox arrays are protecting their own residence here." It was quite clear that Liu Jing did not like the Lockbreakers.

Lu Yin curiously studied the cone-shaped sourceboxes. He was actually able to repair the array himself, and given the number of sourcebox arrays that he had already comprehended, he could actually be considered a Senior Array Master, which was a rank above this Master Zan. However, Lu Yin had only just stepped onto the battlefield, and he could not be too flashy right now. This second headquarters was located at the back of the battlefield, and it would be a problem if Lu Yin became entangled with these Lockbreakers.

"Brother Ah Qi, I'm going to go see the general. You can report in on your own. Good luck," Liu Jing said after glancing down at his communication crystal.

Lu Yin replied, "Brother Liu, can you take me to see the general? I actually need to report directly to him."

Liu Jing was momentarily taken aback, but then he said, "That makes sense. Given your strength, you qualify to directly report to the general. Let's go. I'll take you to the general's office."

The second array base's general's office was underground, or rather, it was within the array base itself. Liu Jing led Lu Yin down to the ground, past the ever-vigilant cultivators in front of them, who quickly allowed Liu Jing to pass.

As they descended, they passed by at least several thousand guards.

The underground office was well lit. Lu Yin looked around, but he was not observing the path to the general's office. Instead, he was studying the internal structure of the sourcebox array.

This sourcebox array was known as Ceaseless Impetus. After descending underground, Lu Yin realized that this formation might not be as simple as a mere sourcebox array. Lu Yin seemed to be looking at a fusion of multiple methods, which even included technology, into an indescribable defense with a sourcebox array as its foundation that protected humanity.

Lu Yin did not know who had designed and set up this sourcebox array, but their understanding of this subject did not seem to be any worse than Progenitor Hui's.

Wait! Lu Yin suddenly thought of a certain possibility—could Progenitor Hui have possibly been the Array Master behind this?

Progenitor Hui was known to be the greatest Lockbreaker to come from the Fifth Mainland. He was famous for designing seventy two sourcebox arrays, as well as establishing the Technocracy. Both of these legacies shared similarities with this particular sourcebox array.

As Lu Yin's mind wandered over certain possibilities, Liu Jing led the youth along. They soon met up with General Xia Yan, who was the middle-aged man that had fought against the red-eyed corpse king. Beside Xia Yan was the two people who had eliminated the huge corpse king: Long Laogui and Master Chun.

"Liu Jing greets the general."

"Ah Qi greets the general."

Lu Yin did not know what Xia Yan had been discussing with the other old men, as Master Chun had stopped talking as soon as he had noticed that Liu Jing was requesting to speak to Xia Yan. The general's brows rose when he looked at Lu Yin.

"Liu Jing, give us a moment."

Liu Jing obeyed and slowly withdrew.

"Chun, you as well," Xia Yan said.

Master Chun was surprised by this request, and he glanced at Lu Yin before slowly leaving.

After the two left, Xia Yan appraised Lu Yin in a serious manner. "Are you Long Qi?"

The old man next to Xia Yan stared at Lu Yin with a sudden interest.

Lu Yin replied in a respectful manner, "This subordinate is indeed Long Qi. I greet the general."

Xia Yan nodded. "I know your purpose here, as well as your importance."

He then took something that appeared to be a token out of his cosmic ring, and he tossed it over to Lu Yin.

Lu Yin accepted it.

"This is a colonel pass, and my second array base has five colonels. Normally, this rank is only given during combat in the battlefield, as it carries no authority outside of combat. From this moment forth, you are one of those colonels," Xia Yan stated.

Lu Yin was stunned. He had not expected to receive this much support from Xia Yan, let alone become a colonel immediately upon his arrival. "General, this subordinate is new to the battlefield, and I might not qualify for such a position."

Lu Yin did not want to be tied to the battlefield, as he intended to return to the Fifth Mainland after completing his current mission.

Xia Yan solemnly answered, "I saw how you performed during this last battle, and you directly caused the deaths of two corpse kings at the Envoy level. If not for you, Liu Jing would also have died. Given your personal strength, along with your power vessel, you truly do qualify to be one of the colonels, so there's no need to try to argue."

Lu Yin was left in a helpless position. "Understood. This subordinate will obey your orders."

Xia Yan said no more, and instead, he turned his attention to something else down below. This time, the old man beside him spoke up. "Long Qi, do you know who this old man is?"

Lu Yin answered respectfully, "Long Qi greets the elder."

The old man smiled gently. "Elder? It would appear that you do recognize me. Did Qing Chen mention me?"

Lu Yin replied, "The Supervisor merely mentioned Elder Laogui's name, and this junior felt the clan's energy from Senior's attack earlier. That allowed me to recognize Senior."

The old man nodded. "I've also heard of you. You showed no timidity down at Cloud Shuttle. Do you know that the goods were originally intended for me? Long Quan called you, but you ignored his call. That was quite bold."

"Long Laogui, head on back to discuss your family's affairs. This is the office of the second array base's general. If the several of you had not left without authorization, the array base would have been able to activate in time, and we would not be in our current situation," Xia Yan solemnly stated.

Long Laogui smiled in a carefree manner. It was as if the general's comment did not concern him at all.

Xia Yan then turned to look at Lu Yin once more. "You're dismissed for now. Liu Jing will arrange a team for you to use to clear out the ants in a bit. At that point, you can also decide whether to reveal your true identity or not. I'll leave it up to you."

Lu Yin bowed. "Understood. Your subordinate will take his leave."

With that, Lu Yin slowly left the office without looking back at Long Laogui.

Chapter 1492: Cloudguard Robes

After Lu Yin left, Xia Yan turned to look at Long Laogui. "That child is ruthless when he needs to be, and he has also done great things for Humility's Gate. He's been given an important task to fulfill at this place. You went too far."

Long Laogui replied in a strange tone, "I was just educating a junior."

"No one in this place is your junior. His name is Ah Qi, and he is the sixth colonel of my second array base." Xia Yan was very dissatisfied with the old man's response.

Long Laogui frowned as he stared at Xia Yan. "Your background and mine have nothing to do with each other. You're a part of the Xia family while I am from the White Dragon Clan. You have no business speaking about my clan's affairs."

"This is the office of the second array base's general!" Xia Yan shouted back.

Long Laogui was unconcerned. "So what?"

Xia Yan seethed with rage, but there was nothing that he could do. The Ceaseless Impetus sourcebox array had five bases, and the four ruling powers had been put in control of those bases. The controller of the array and the commander-in-chief were from different families, to prevent complete authority over it. However, if a general ended up in conflict with the core of the array, it would lead to many problems.

Xia Yan did not want to get embroiled in an argument with Long Laogui regarding this matter, so the General remained silent.

After leaving the general's office, Lu Yin's expression became much darker. He had clearly sensed that Long Laogui was unhappy with him. If Lu Yin was actually from the Perennial World, then he would do his best to make reparations to mend his relationship with both Long Laogui and Long Ke, but unfortunately he was not from this place.

So what if the old man was a Semi-Progenitor? Given Lu Yin's current status and position, not even a Semi-Progenitor could do anything to him unless he made some sort of terrible mistake.

Lu Yin took a deep breath. It was time for him to find the best defensive treasure available. Every array base headquarters had a place to exchange one's battlefield merit points, though Lu Yin had to search for a while before finally finding it.

The exchange center was not far from the headquarters itself. The building was a simple earthen hut, and it looked exactly like the headquarters building itself. While these buildings had a simple appearance, they were actually very durable, which was why the building had endured through the recent battle.

There were many people exchanging their battlefield merit points away. As Lu Yin walked into the building, he saw that each and every person had their communication crystal out. As long as a person activated their communication crystal, they would be able to see the list of items and the number of battlefield merit points that each option cost.

There were exotic treasures, battle techniques, materials, star essence, and many other things that could be traded. Lu Yin quickly glanced through the list, but even after spending some time, he never reached its bottom. He saw various exotic treasures, a great number of defensive treasures, and no less than a thousand different battle techniques.

While the battlefield behind the Mother Tree was a dangerous place, with luck and time, it could also be a place to greatly improve one's strength.

There was no shortage of resources in this place. There were high temperature flames, various planets, and even the great sourcebox array. There were also areas where a person could leave the battlefield and even take a person away with them. If it was imaginable, it could be found on this list.

Lu Yin scanned the list and focused on the power vessels.

Power vessels were not ordinary items, as they contained other people's power that had been placed within the power vessels while they were being made. While Lu Yin had seen many people with power vessels, all of those people had been from the four ruling powers, the Liu family, the Nong family, or some other great power that stood on that level. This made power vessels seem common, but in truth, most ordinary cultivators, even those who were close to the Envoy realm, had no power vessels.

The best treasure that Lu Yin saw that he could use battlefield merit points to exchange for was actually a box. As Lu Yin looked at the description, he was left speechless. Who was so bored as to make a box into a power vessel?

This box was called Little Haven, and the power vessel's description claimed that it was able to endure attacks from Envoys that had survived two stellar tribulations. This was impressive, but it was not enough for Lu Yin's needs.

Lu Yin had his die, and its Enhance option allowed him to upgrade all kinds of treasures and power vessels to freakish levels. Even if Lu Yin had nothing else, his universal armor had greater defensive abilities than this box.

Lu Yin shook his head. It was a pity that the listed power vessels were not a good option, so he simply switched over to the list of regular equipment.

Power vessels were made to contain a cultivator's power or innate gift while regular items were made from more common materials and no special effects. Still, some of these normal items were no worse than power vessels, and some could even be better. For example, Lu Yin had once watched a machine from the Technocracy fight against Brother Hui Kong, and there was also Lu Yin's own universal armor and mechanical right arm. None of those items were considered power vessels.

The list of regular equipment far exceeded the list of power vessels, and Lu Yin instantly found the item that cost the most battlefield merit points. It was a piece of mundane clothing that was called Cloudguard Robes. The material was extremely rare, and this clothing contained multiple sourcebox

arrays, which allowed it to defend against various attacks. This clothing was able to withstand attacks from powerhouses that had survived five stellar tribulations.

Five tribulations... That was an expert with a power level of more than 900,000. This clothing far surpassed Lu Yin's best defensive item. However, the number of battlefield merit points needed to trade for this item was accordingly sky-high.

Lu Yin glanced at the price, and the number caused his eye to twitch. This was something that was supposed to be purchased by experts with power levels of at least 800,000 or 900,000, though it was more likely to be bought by someone with a power level of more than a million. However, such powerhouses did not need the protection of the Cloudguard Robes, and no one else had enough battlefield merit points to even consider it.

The price was so high that no one had ever managed to buy it, even after all these years.

Lu Yin pursed his lips. He had found what he wanted, but how was he supposed to get it? He looked around the building.

Next to him, he saw a woman who was about to exchange for an item. She raised a hand, tapped on the introductory text on her communication crystal, and entered in her contact information. After that, she simply left.

Lu Yin copied the woman. He entered the contact information for his communication crystal, left the building, and then followed after the woman.

The woman only took a few steps before noticing that Lu Yin was following her. She whirled around and stared at him. "Why are you following me?"

The woman had average looks, and she was only an Explorer. On this battlefield, she could not even count as cannon fodder. Still, her eyes contained a stubborn and unyielding determination, as well as a certain wariness.

Lu Yin immediately apologized, "I'm sorry, but this is my first time trading for something, and I don't know where to go to pick it up."

The woman's eyes relaxed a bit. "Head towards the General's office and then turn right. You can pick up your exchange there."

"Thank you." Lu Yin smiled.

The woman did not move. Instead, she remained in place as she watched Lu Yin leave. Only once he was out of sight did she let out a sigh of relief and slowly leave as well.

Everyone on this battlefield was constantly wary. Their enemy was not only those monsters, but also internal traitors. After a long time, everyone on the battlefield had grown numb to the situation.

Lu Yin entered the headquarters again. Since he was not being escorted by Liu Jing, someone immediately stepped forward to ask what Lu Yin wanted. Lu Yin had reported directly to Xia Yan himself, so there was no visible way to verify his identity with the guards. Such unvetted people were typically not allowed to enter the headquarters, so Lu Yin was left with no other choice. He reluctantly took out his commander token, which startled many people. Only with that token was Lu Yin allowed to enter.

To the right?

Lu Yin made his way to the right after entering the headquarters, and he saw that someone happened to be coming out from the path ahead of him. Lu Yin walked in, and he was surprised to see Liu Jing.

Liu Jing had not expected to see Lu Yin visiting this place, so he was surprised to see the youth. "Ah Qi, what are you doing here?"

"Trading for some things."

"Do you have merit points?" Liu Jing was caught off guard.

Lu Yin nodded.

There was a grim looking old woman next to Liu Jing, and she suddenly locked onto Lu Yin. "Trading for what?"

As the woman spoke, her communication crystal information was offered to Lu Yin, and he entered his contact information. Instantly, the Cloudguard Robes appeared on the display.

The old woman and Liu Jing were both shocked, and they looked up at Lu Yin as though seeing a ghost.

"You want to trade for the Cloudguard Robes?" the old woman asked in shock.

Lu Yin nodded. "Yep. The Cloudguard Robes."

"Where did you get enough battlefield merit points? Are you trying to pull something?" The old woman became angry.

Liu Jing quickly spoke up, "Ah Qi, the Cloudguard Robes cost too many merit points. Do you even have enough?"

Lu Yin explained, "I asked Senior Qing Chen about that, and he told me that this junior would be able to make a purchase with his merit points."

Both people had heard of Qing Chen before, and this surprised the old woman even more than before. With this new information, she raced to investigate. Liu Jing gave Lu Yin a measured stare; this kid was actually able to borrow battlefield merit points from Humility's Gate's Supervisor of the Middle Realm Gates. This youth was becoming more and more of a mystery.

"Yes, you are indeed allowed to make a purchase by using Qing Chen's merit points," the old woman said in shock. She suddenly addressed Lu Yin in an entirely different manner, becoming very respectful.

Qing Chen was a Semi-Progenitor, which meant that he was a powerhouse on the same level as General Xia Yan and Long Laogui. Given Qing Chen's position as Humility's Gate's Supervisor, he had an exorbitant number of merit points, and it was certainly enough to trade for the Cloudguard Robes. Still, the most important detail was that this youth was allowed to use the supervisor's merit points.

Even the most elite heirs of the four ruling powers could not use their seniors' points. All those who were given such a privilege were extremely important, and they would at the very least have some great influence on the overall battlefield's situation. However, this youth was clearly quite young, and yet he was qualified to borrow a senior's merit points. This was not a normal person.

"Can this junior trade for the Cloudguard Robes?" Lu Yin asked.

The old woman grew embarrassed. "There are indeed enough merit points for the trade, but the Cloudguard Robes are a bit of a problem."

Lu Yin's expression hardened. He refused to believe that this woman would make things difficult for him. "What's the problem?"

The old woman patiently explained, "The Cloudguard Robes were already reserved by someone, and they even received approval from the first array base's general, General Bai Chi. Items like this are not common at any of the five array bases, and Master Bai Chi already agreed to let someone else reserve the Cloudguard Robes. And naturally, it's not easy for me to go around Master Bai Chi."

Lu Yin frowned. "Are there no other options?"

The next best equipment available was only capable of defending against the attacks of an Envoy who had survived two stellar tribulations, and that could not compare to even Lu Yin's universal armor.

The old woman grew increasingly embarrassed. "Unless Lord Bai Chi agrees to your exchange, or unless the other Generals agree, only the person who reserved the Cloudguard Robes can collect them, even if they don't have enough merit points yet."

Liu Jing spoke up in a low voice. "The fact remains that exchanging for goods has always been done with one's available merit points. Reserving an item before having the required points is not something that is allowed."

The old woman replied with clear irritation in her tone, "You aren't able to decide whether the rules get bent or not. It comes down to the fact that, unless the General himself speaks up, that trade can't happen here."

She then looked at Lu Yin and continued on in a softer tone. "Little brother, don't make things hard for this old woman. Even if that senior gave you the merit points, there are still certain things that you can't trade for. This old woman doesn't have access to everything that's listed."

Lu Yin understood that the old woman had been put in a difficult position. Who would dare to trade something after a General had ordered it to be reserved?

"Young man, it'd be best if you chose something else," the old woman suggested. She felt that this was an unfortunate situation. The Cloudguard Robes were immensely valuable, and this youth had even been given permission to use Lord Qing Chen's merit points despite his youth. Whoever got to wear it will be extremely safe on the battlefield. It was really a pity.

Liu Jing frowned. "If our General speaks up, can the trade be made?"

"Naturally. General Xia Yan's status is not inferior to General Bai Chi's. If Xia Yan speaks up, no one would dare refuse him."

Liu Jing looked over at Lu Yin. "Ah Qi, why don't you talk to the General? Maybe he'll be willing to speak up for you."

Lu Yin hesitated. He was not someone from the Xia family, and Xia Yan might not be willing to offend Bai Chi for Lu Yin's sake. Also, after hearing the name "Bai Chi," Lu Yin instantly associated the person with the Celestial Frost Sect.

"I'll think about it," Lu Yin replied, though he did not leave the room. The old woman allowed Lu Yin to see the list of items that could be traded, as she was happy to try to make things a bit easier for Lu Yin by allowing him to browse the list at his leisure.

She then turned towards Liu Jing and said, "You can go. You can't receive anything without merit points."

Liu Jing's face twisted. "You're also someone based out of the second array base. Do you really want to just watch on as our people are slaughtered by those monsters?"

Chapter 1493: Sourcebox Cones

The old woman snapped back, "Liu Jing, don't try to put that on me! I'll die the moment this headquarters falls, but rules are rules, and I won't break them. There are four more array bases in addition to this second array base, and if exceptions are made for each one, then all the resources will soon disappear."

"But right now we need to repair the sourcebox array, and no one knows when the next attack will come. The battle underneath the five array bases has never stopped, and those monsters are definitely doing their best to destroy the array, especially since the sourcebox array has been damaged now. The general even mentioned that the giant corpse king might have been specifically sent to take out the defensive sourcebox array," Liu Jing said urgently.

The old woman grew impatient. "No matter what, I won't break the rules."

Lu Yin looked up at her. "General Bai Chi reserved the Cloudguard Robes for someone before they had enough merit points. Isn't that already breaking the rules?"

The old woman's face turned ugly, but she fell silent.

Liu Jing solemnly stated, "Alright, I see that my words are useless. In that case, I'll have to ask the general to speak to you himself."

With that, he nodded to Lu Yin and made to leave.

Lu Yin quickly chased after the Envoy. "Brother Liu, what happened?"

Liu Jing felt completely helpless. "Master Zan and the other Lockbreakers have demanded compensation for repairing the sourcebox array. Over the years, many arrays here at headquarters and beneath the array bases have broken down, requiring the Array Masters' help to repair them, and we've pretty much used up everything that we can get for what we've already paid them. The general's merit points have all been traded away for items that have been handed over to Master Zan at various times, so now all I can do is overdraft merit points in order to trade for the items we need, but that woman won't allow it."

Lu Yin felt a bit dazed. "That old woman won't give even face to the general?"

Liu Jing's voice grew bitter. "I can't actually blame her. Overdrafting merit points to trade for items is a huge taboo, and if such a thing is discovered without a legitimate excuse, it could easily make many people upset. After all, aren't you upset that you can't get the Cloudguard Robes? If that sort of disgruntlement spreads throughout all of the troops, the consequences would be unimaginable."

Lu Yin understood what Liu Jing was saying. "Bai Chi was able to reserve the Cloudguard Robes, so why can't General Xia Yan do the same?"

Liu Jing explained, "Reserving an item and overdrafting merit points are two completely different things. Even if General Bai Chi wanted to overdraft his merit points to purchase an item, it would not be easy to do so. At this point, all I can do is report back to General Xia Yan and ask him to deal with this matter himself."

"Actually, there's no need to find Master Zan to repair the sourcebox array," Lu Yin suddenly said.

Liu Jing kept walking for a moment before looking over at Lu Yin in confusion. "What do you mean? Who else can repair the sourcebox array?"

Lu Yin pointed to himself. "I can give it a go."

Liu Jing was stunned. "You?"

Lu Yin nodded. "I've actually already mastered a few sourcebox arrays, so technically, I can be considered an Array Master."

Liu Jing was instantly overjoyed. "You've comprehended a sourcebox array? Are you serious?"

Lu Yin smiled gently, raised a hand, and caused the Channeling Diagram to appear. "Give it a try, Brother Liu."

Liu Jing waved his hand, which instantly destabilized the Channeling Diagram. Lu Yin had actually forgotten that Liu Jing was an Envoy, which meant that he normally used stellar energy. Lu Yin had set up the array with star energy, so naturally, the Envoy's attack had easily destabilized the sourcebox array. Still, Liu Jing was delighted. He was unconcerned with the strength of Lu Yin's array, only that it was an authentic sourcebox array.

"Brother Ah Qi, let's go! I'll show you the array, and if you really can repair the cone-shaped sourceboxes' array, you'll have done a great service to my second array base, and the general will be thrilled." Liu Jing was overjoyed, and Lu Yin followed behind the giddy Envoy.

They eventually arrived at the location where the giant corpse king's body had exploded. The two of them were about a hundred meters away from the site, and across from them was the group of well-dressed Lockbreakers. There were also two women with the Lockbreakers who were feeding them some fruit in a playful manner. Despite everyone else's irritation, no one dared to speak up against the Lockbreakers' behavior.

Lu Yin felt that they were going too far. These Lockbreakers from the Perennial World were behaving completely at odds with how they were expected to.

"Brother Ah Qi, first check to see if you can repair it, but don't say anything yet," Liu Jing said in a very quiet voice.

Lu Yin nodded. He naturally had no intention of saying anything. Even in the Fifth Mainland, the Lockbreakers Society had been notoriously short-sighted. His actions at this moment could even be seen as him stealing an opportunity from another Lockbreaker to work with sourceboxes or set up a sourcebox array, which was an unforgivable offense in the Fifth Mainland unless one received permission. Lu Yin expected this to be the standard practice in the Perennial World as well.

Liu Jing deliberately kept his distance, as he was worried that he would be discovered by Master Zan's group.

Meanwhile, Lu Yin stared in front of him. The area had already been isolated, and he saw a total of twelve cone-shaped sourceboxes that had been cattered across the ground. They occasionally trembled while also giving off a powerful danger field that randomly tore the void apart, which was why people were too afraid to move any closer.

These particular sourceboxes could be arranged into an amazingly powerful sourcebox array because of how they all complemented each other. To repair this array, Lu Yin needed to sort out the various sourceboxes and then rearrange them back to their original formation. He did not need to set up a new array, so this should not be too difficult.

Star energy filled Lu Yin's eyes. He had rarely done this after arriving in the Perennial World. There were no runes in this universe, so it was normally useless for Lu Yin to do this. However, it still helped him see these sourceboxes' danger fields more clearly. He also released his domain, bit by bit, until it tentatively made contact with the cone-shaped sourceboxes. He even went as far as dripping a bit of gemspring water into his eyes.

The cone-shaped sourceboxes were powerful enough to even wound Envoys, which meant that their danger field had entered the true universe. If Lu Yin attempted to interact with the sourceboxes without using any gemspring water, he would have to constantly move about and enter the true universe, which would draw far too much attention.

Each drop of gemspring water was enough to let Lu Yin observe the true universe for a minute. There were thirteen drops left, so Lu Yin would have to carefully ration them out.

Fortunately, the parts of the sourceboxes' danger fields that had spread into the true universe were not very complicated, so Lu Yin was able to understand the situation after just observing the danger fields twice.

Lu Yin slowly walked around the area that had been isolated by the cone-shaped sourceboxes' presence. After enough time for a stick of incense to burn passed, Lu Yin finally drew the attention of Master Zan and the other Lockbreakers.

A young man moved to block Lu Yin's path. Then, the young man stared at Lu Yin and asked, "What are you doing?"

"Just wandering around."

The young man shouted, "Stay away! The sourcebox array that's here could activate at any time! Do you want to die? We don't!"

Lu Yin nodded and answered in a sincere tone. "Got it. I'll leave."

The young man snorted and returned to his group.

However, Lu Yin continued to circle around the sourceboxes.

Master Zan glanced back at Lu Yin and frowned. "Xiao Li, why hasn't he left yet? Can you not even handle this?"

The young man named Xiao Li blushed. "Master, your disciple will go teach him a lesson."

Master Zan grew annoyed. "We're on the battlefield. Who can you teach a lesson with your strength as a Limiteer? Just go send him away."

Xiao Li let out a sigh of relief as he hurried back to Lu Yin, though his face had twisted into an ugly expression that was terrible to see.

He moved in front of Lu Yin, once again blocking Lu Yin's path. Xiao Li glared at Lu Yin. "Didn't I tell you to leave? Why are you still here?"

Lu Yin answered in a light tone, "I'm sorry. I'm a bit lost, but I'll leave now."

Xiao Li snorted derisively while trying to make his expression more intimidating. He deliberately leaned closer and threatened, "Kid, Master Zan's the one who wants you to get away from the array! Don't pretend to be stupid! With a single word from Master Zan, there won't be any way for you to survive here on the second array base. Get it?"

"I gotcha, don't worry. I'll behave myself. I don't want to cause any trouble," Lu Yin said.

Xiao Li snorted once more. He felt that Lu Yin did not have a bad attitude, so Xiao Li softened his tone. "Let's go."

He then took one more look at Lu Yin's back and returned to his comrades.

However, after enough time for another incense stick to burn passed, Xiao Li blankly stared on as Lu Yin made another lap around the blocked off region. The young man went stiff from surprise.

"Xiao Li, are you really this incapable? This is your last chance. If that person doesn't leave, then don't bother coming back." By now, Master Zan was furious. This person was willing to challenge his authority! Several people in the group glanced around with odd expressions; were there really still people in the second array base who refused to give Master Zan proper respect? At the same time, the people here also looked at Xiao Li with empathy. This person really had no luck at all.

Xiao Li rushed back over to Lu Yin and blocked Lu Yin's path. The young man was in a rage, and he shouted in a deep voice, "You're screwing with me!"

Lu Yin looked at the young man blocking his path. "Sorry, who are you?"

Lu Yin genuinely did not care about the person blocking his path. He had been entirely focused on studying the sourcebox array, so his responses to Xiao Li had all been reflexive and unconscious.

Xiao Li was absolutely furious, and he wanted to do nothing more than to beat someone, but after a moment's thought, he likely not be able to defeat this person. "Get out of here! Master Zan has told you to get lost, you hear me? If you don't, I'll go get the general, and then you can kiss your future goodbye! Kid, it would be better to die than face such a future."

Lu Yin blinked. "Quit messing around and trying to disturb me while I repair the sourcebox array."

Xiao Li laughed from his rage. "What did you say? Repair the sourcebox array? Do you want to say that again?"

"Let's see." Lu Yin raised a foot and took a step forward. A strong wind pushed Xiao Li back, and Lu Yin moved past the young man. Lu Yin looked over and shot a confident smile at the anxious Liu Jing. Then, Lu Yin stepped into the area that had been isolated off by the sourcebox array.

Master Zan shot to his feet from where he was watching nearby. His expression changed drastically. "Stop!"

Xiao Li had no idea what to do as he watched Lu Yin enter the sourcebox array. The young man's eyes were filled with terror, and he was deeply scared that the sourcebox array would be suddenly triggered and that he would die.

Liu Jing felt his heart tremble. Was Ah Qi already going in? Was the young man really that impulsive? Liu Jing had expected Lu Yin to first discuss the situation and even meet with the general so that they could confirm Lu Yin's abilities. And only after all that would they finally speak to Master Zan. But what was happening? Had the kid just barged straight in?

No matter what twists and turns he needed to take to get there, Lu Yin was absolutely confident in his ability to repair this sourcebox array. Even though it was a very complicated array, he only needed to reset the array that had been disrupted by the enormous corpse king. There was no need to redo the entire array.

If Lu Yin was completely honest, this sourcebox array was beyond his abilities to arrange at this point in time. To do so, he would need to study it for at least a year or two. In the end, this array was capable of slaughtering Envoys, and it could even influence the true universe. However, if it was just a matter of realigning the danger fields, then that was still within Lu Yin's means.

Outside the array, Master Zan nervously watched on. Just like Xiao Li, Master Zan was terrified that the sourcebox array would be accidentally triggered, wiping all of them out just like that group of corpse kings. Not even the corpse kings with the strength of an Envoy had been able to endure more than a few strikes from this array.

There was no one present who was more nervous than Master Zan, and that was because he was the only one who understood just how dangerous the situation at this moment was.

Just a few seconds went by, but Master Zan already felt like years had passed. His clothes were already soaked from his cold sweat.

The Array Master quickly noticed that the array had not been triggered, and Lu Yin was even avoiding the sourceboxes' danger zones. Master Zan felt tremendous relief; this person was not a normal person, but rather a Lockbreaker.

However, this revelation made Master Zan even more upset than ever. "Who is that? Find out! Make sure you discover who he is. We need to speak to the general! I demand an explanation!"

This sourcebox array was something that concerned the entire military stationed at the second array base, and Xia Yan and Long Laogui both realized what had happened the moment that Lu Yin entered the array. They both tore through the void, and somber expressions appeared on their faces when they emerged.

Master Zan rushed over as soon as he saw that Xia Yan had arrived. The Array Master suppressed his anger and whispered, "General, who is that person? I can't believe that he had the guts to enter the sourcebox array without permission! If he triggers it, everyone nearby will die!"

Chapter 1494: Talent

Liu Jing quickly arrived, his face pale. "General."

Xia Yan solemnly asked, "Who allowed him in there?"

Liu Jing was absolutely terrified. "It was this subordinate. Ah Qi has comprehended a sourcebox array, and this subordinate brought him here to examine the array. But I never even dreamed that he would walk straight in!"

Master Zan spoke up, furious, "Liu Jing, do you think that this array can be repaired by just anyone who's comprehended a sourcebox array? My master, Master Deng Guo, arranged this array! To repair it, I've studied it for a decade! How old is that child? Do you really think that he can repair it? Let me tell you, everything will be fine as long as he doesn't trigger the array, but the moment that happens, this array will most likely become far more complicated than before, and it will cost double to repair it."

Xia Yan's expression hardened, and he glanced over at Master Zan.

The Array Master suddenly felt a chill go down his back, and he stopped talking. He had been able to demand excessive amounts of compensation in an unscrupulous manner due to his status as an Array Master and the fact that his master was a Realm Array Master, but more importantly, it was because of General Xia Yan's tolerance. If he became angry, Master Zan knew he might not be able to endure it.

Liu Jing anxiously stared into the array of cone-shaped sourceboxes.

Long Laogui had a strange expression on his face. He had actually been ignorant that there was an Array Master among his own clan's juniors.

"Immediately clear the surrounding area," Xia Yan ordered. Even though he was not a Lockbreaker himself, he still understood how complex sourcebox arrays were. It was impossible for even an experienced Lockbreaker to repair an unknown sourcebox array without first studying it for several years. This was why Xia Yan had continued to tolerate Master Zan, as he was the only person aside from Master Deng Guo who was capable of repairing the second array base's defensive sourcebox array.

The general knew that he would have to once again increase the compensation that he gave to the Lockbreakers, which caused him to frown. That was even the best possible outcome, as the worst was the sourcebox array being severely damaged or Long Qi dying, which would spell no end of problems.

"Master Zan, please reach out to Master Deng Guo and ask him to come here," Xia Yan said.

Master Zan's face twisted. "General, my Master protects the array base, so it's not convenient for him to move out."

"Master Zan, please reach out to Master Deng Guo and ask him to come here." Xia Yan repeated his request, but with an iron tone this time.

Master Zan gritted his teeth. Still, he did not dare disobey the command of the general of the second array base. He raised his hand and used his communication crystal to call his master.

In Lu Yin's eyes, he was able to see every detail of the sourceboxes' danger zones. His star energy control had already reached the Worldliness realm, and his domain was touching upon the spiritual manifestation realm. On top of that, he had also received Gu Yue's journal that documented his understanding of sourcebox arrays. So, after just half an hour, Lu Yin had a clear picture of what needed to be done, and he started his repairs.

"Don't move!" Master Zan immediately tried to stop Lu Yin.

Lu Yin reacted as though he could not hear the outside world, and his star energy transformed into several delicate silk threads that shot out. They latched onto five of the cone-shaped sourceboxes that he moved simultaneously. He shifted their positions, but his manipulation calmed the sourceboxes' danger fields. After that, Lu Yin moved again.

After another half an hour passed, Master Zan stared at Lu Yin in utter shock. By now, all of the cone-shaped sourceboxes were standing upright, and everything appeared to be perfectly calm. Even people who were not Lockbreakers could see that the damaged array was in much better visual shape than it had been before.

Master Zan stared at Lu Yin's relaxed face. The older Array Master felt as though his entire understanding of the world was being overturned. How could this be possible? How could this person repair the sourcebox array by just shifting and turning the sourceboxes around? What did that say of Master Zan's years of study?

Xiao Li was also stunned; how could this person remain so relaxed? Not even Master Zan was capable of being so calm.

Xia Yan and Long Laogui glanced at each other. Neither of them was able to hide the hint of joy from appearing in their eyes. They then both looked back at Lu Yin as though seeing a precious treasure.

It was at this moment that the void distorted, and an old man slowly emerged. He had a ruddy complexion and gray hair, but despite his evident age, he appeared to be very energetic.

At the old man's appearance, even Xia Yan and Long Laogui stepped forward to greet the man. This new arrival was Master Deng Guo, a Realm Array Master. He was also an Envoy who had survived three

stellar tribulations; the combination of his cultivation and sourcebox arrays meant that even a powerhouse who had survived five tribulations might not be able to take on this old man.

"Master," Master Zan nervously greeted the old man.

Master Deng Guo clasped his hands behind his back and turned to examine Lu Yin, who was still in the middle of the sourcebox array. The Realm Array Master admired the youth. "He is very young, but his understanding of Lockbreaking is unique. He's reached the Worldliness realm of star energy control, and on top of that, he's supplementing it with his domain and other items. Even when this old man was his age, I could not come close to his abilities. general, can you tell this old man who that child is?"

Xia Yan opened his mouth, but no sound came from it. Instead, he sent a sound transmission to Master Deng Guo alone.

Master Deng Guo was surprised by the information. "That's quite a coincidence. Those people only know how to arrest people. What a pity that a Lockbreaker ended up within their numbers."

The old man then looked over at Long Laogui with a smile. "Congratulations."

Long Laogui eagerly asked, "Does Master Deng Guo intend to accept another disciple?"

Master Zan's expression instantly changed.

However, Master Deng Guo had a different reaction to the question. He seemed to consider it, and he thoughtfully looked back at Lu Yin. "This child has a unique sensitivity for lockbreaking, as without that, it would be impossible for him to understand this sourcebox array so quickly. He absolutely qualifies to become this old man's disciple."

Long Laogui laughed. No matter what complications might exist in their relationship, Long Qi was still a member of the White Dragon Clan, which meant that his prospects reflected upon the clan. The interest of a Realm Array Master was enough to completely change Long Laogui's feelings towards Long Qi. If this child received instructions from Master Deng Guo, then he would not be treated as an ordinary member of the White Dragon Clan.

"Master, that kid is too bold and reckless! He rushed straight into the sourcebox array! If he had triggered it, he could have killed many people," Master Zan quickly spoke up, hoping to dissuade his master from accepting Lu Yin as a disciple. What status would Master Zan be left with if that happened?

Master Zan knew that Master Deng Guo hated reckless people the most.

Master Deng Guo responded in a casual tone, "If you had done the same, it would have been reckless. However, he did it out of confidence."

Master Zan hung his head, his face twisting into an even uglier expression. When he next looked up at Lu Yin, the Array Master's eyes contained a terrible chill.

Inside the sourcebox array, Lu Yin was unaware of what was happening outside. Instead, he was completely focused on fixing the sourceboxes' chaotic danger fields. Finally, after two hours of work, all the cone-shaped sourceboxes automatically buried themselves back into the ground. The array had been restored to its original state.

Xia Yan's eyes finally relaxed, and he looked at Lu Yin with open admiration. He had never expected Qing Chen to send such a talented person here. If not for the mission that he had been given by Humility's Gate, Xia Yan would have wanted to keep Long Qi behind at headquarters and stop him from risking his life. It was not worth it to let someone this talented fight on the battlefield.

Long Laogui stared at Lu Yin with gentle eyes that seemed to radiate encouragement.

When Lu Yin saw the old man, he had to wonder if the man had turned silly.

Out of everyone present, Liu Jing was the happiest. Brother Ah Qi had lived up to his expectations and actually repaired the sourcebox array! Liu Jing was blown away.

Xia Yan glanced over at Liu Jing. The Envoy quickly said something to Lu Yin, and the youth stepped forward. "Subordinate Ah Qi greets General Xia, Senior Long, and Master Deng Guo."

Xia Yan felt satisfied. "Ah Qi, have you repaired the sourcebox array?"

"Yes, this subordinate was able to see that the sourcebox array was damaged, and I was bold enough to attempt to repair it. I ask for the general to deliver my punishment."

"Haha, you repaired the sourcebox array, so what is there to punish? Not only is there nothing to punish, but you also deserve credit for your accomplishment." Xia Yan was very happy at this moment.

Long Laogui was still smiling, and he asked, "Ah Qi, have you heard of Master Deng Guo before?"

Of course I haven't heard of him, Lu Yin internally thought, though he did not dare to say such a thing out loud. Instead, he replied with a voice that was full of admiration and respect, as well as a hint of longing. "I've heard that Master Deng Guo is one of the most respected senior Lockbreakers. He is like a mountain that this junior aspires towards as a goal."

Lu Yin's reasoning was that, since this man was referred to as a master and was also standing in front of Master Zan, he clearly was not an ordinary Lockbreaker.

Master Deng Guo was quite happy with Lu Yin's response, and he spoke up, "Is your name Ah Qi?"

Lu Yin quickly offered the old man a respectful bow. "Yes."

Master Deng Guo nodded. "How many sourcebox arrays have you comprehended?"

"Two," Lu Yin answered. Back at the Sword Monument, he had only revealed the Channeling Diagram, but during a later battle, he had also revealed the Teleportation Formation. He still had not revealed the Inception Array, so there was no need to mention it. He would only reveal that one in a terrifying situation.

Master Zan was shocked. How had this child actually mastered two sourcebox arrays?

Master Deng Guo was also stunned. "Could you demonstrate them for me to see?"

Lu Yin nodded and raised a hand to bring out the Channeling Diagram.

Master Deng Guo studied it and was amazed. "Ingenious. It takes advantage of a sourcebox's danger field to create a dispersion array to redirect an enemy's attack. While this sourcebox array is not particularly complicated, its usefulness in a battle is easily seen."

Lu Yin then used the Teleportation Formation.

This time, Master Deng Guo was taken aback. "So it's actually this sourcebox array!? Where did you learn this?"

"This junior obtained both of my sourcebox arrays from the Sword Monument," Lu Yin replied. He became a bit nervous after Master Deng Guo actually recognized the Teleportation Formation.

Master Deng Guo muttered, "The Sword Monument holds it as well? I do remember hearing that sourcebox arrays can be obtained from the Sword Monument."

After a moment, he refocused on Lu Yin. "Ah Qi, do you have a Lockbreaker master?"

Lu Yin shook his head. He was being honest, as he did not have a Lockbreaker master, and he also did not want one. After all, he did not see the need. If he really needed to find an expert who could guide his lockbreaking path, then Highsage Grandmaster was the most suitable option. However, only the disciples of Eversky Island could receive such guidance from Highsage Grandmaster, and Lu Yin did not have that status. Mister Mu was Lu Yin's sole master, and he would not accept any other person as his master.

Master Deng Guo smiled. "In that case, are you willing to learn from this old man? Of course, you cannot immediately become a disciple. This old man will need to first evaluate your personality. If you prove suitable, then this old man will accept you as one of my disciples. How about it?"

Long Laogui was overjoyed. This was already a done deal!

Lu Yin was unconcerned with Master Deng Guo and his offer, but he needed to maintain his alias, so his expression became sincere. "This junior will work hard to become master's disciple as soon as possible."

Master Deng Guo was happy with this response, though Master Zan went pale and silently ground his teeth.

Master Deng Guo left a short while later, and he took Master Zan with him.

Long Laogui spoke highly encouraging words to Lu Yin, and he acted much more amiable towards the youth now. He made it clear that he had completely forgotten about the matter of what Lu Yin had done at the Cloud Shuttle.

Lu Yin could only act grateful towards the old man.

One by one, everyone left, and Xia Yan took his leave as well. Before leaving, he reminded Lu Yin to get a better protective item. Without any hesitation, Lu Yin leaped at the opportunity. "General, this subordinate had a question regarding that. Might I be able to ask the general for help?"

Xia Yan casually replied, "What's the matter? We'll take care of it."

He was still thrilled to not have been exploited by Master Zan, as he had suffered a huge loss over the years due to the sourcebox array's repair cost. Naturally, Lu Yin had instantly become indispensable.

Lu Yin explained, "This subordinate wished to trade for the Cloudguard Robes, but they were reserved by General Bai Chi. Thus, this subordinate would like to ask the general for help."

Xia Yan frowned. "Reserved? Is that Bai Chi is trying to set something aside for his family again? Come with me."

With that, Xia Yan led Lu Yin to the bottom of the headquarters to speak with the old woman again.

Chapter 1495: Bai Zhen

"I greet the general." The old woman bowed as soon as she noticed Xia Yan.

Xia Yan straightforwardly said, "Exchange the Cloudguard Robes for him."

The old woman showed no hesitation. "Yes, General."

Lu Yin let out a sigh of relief. Xia Yan was also a general, and when it came to this matter that was already bending the rules, he stood on the same level as Bai Chi. While Bai Chi could order the logistical team to set an item aside, Xia Yan was just as capable of ordering them to carry out the trade properly, as long as there were enough merit points, of course.

After the old woman finalized the exchange, she reported in a respectful tone, "General, the Cloudguard Robes have been successfully redeemed for, though it will take up to a day for it to be delivered."

Xia Yan grunted in response and then turned towards Lu Yin. "You'll only have to wait a day. I'll have Liu Jing hold off on putting your team together until then."

"Thank you, General." Lu Yin felt quite grateful.

Xia Yan smiled. "I'm the one who should be saying thank you. If not for you, Master Zan would have acted even more arrogant than before. I really thought that there were no options aside from using him."

Since the general was mentioning a matter of conflict between himself and another Lockbreaker, it would not be appropriate for Lu Yin to make any comments.

"Master Deng Guo is a Realm Array Master, and he is an excellent Array Master even within the context of the entire Lockbreaker association. He is only beneath the Array Grandmasters, so if you are able to become his disciple, then you will gain a powerful voice within your own White Dragon Clan. Not to mention your clan, but Lockbreakers are uncommon throughout the entire Perennial World," Xia Yan casually mentioned before turning away from Lu Yin and walking out of the old woman's room.

Lu Yin stared at Xia Yan's back as the man left. He honestly felt grateful towards the middle-aged man. Even though Lu Yin's background was in the White Dragon Clan, the General was upright in his dealings with Lu Yin. The four ruling powers did not have amicable relationships, but Lu Yin could clearly sense that Xia Yan prioritized the second array base above all else.

The battlefield never lacked for upright characters who could recognise the true enemy on the battlefield. And most of these people could be only found in such battlefields. Regardless of how arrogant Lockbreakers like Master Zan might be, the man was at least still present on the battlefield, which was something that Lu Yin could respect. Because of that, Lu Yin did not hold much of a grudge against Master Zan.

At this moment, all Lu Yin needed to do was wait for the Cloudguard Robes to arrive. He looked up at the sky, feeling rather eager.

Each of the five array bases were shaped like a massive, upside-down cone, and the inclined portions leading to the top were absolutely massive. When the endless hordes of corpse kings attempted to assault the array bases, they were forced to either tear through the void to directly attack the headquarters or climb up the slopes. The inclined portions of the inverted cones were practically upside-down continents, and the inside of the cone was actually the center of its respective array base, which meant that they could launch an endless number of attacks to slaughter the climbing corpse kings.

It was the existence of these array bases and their unique layout that had prevented the monsters from directly assaulting the Perennial World even after so many years.

A few corpse kings climbed upwards along an inverted cone while an endless landmass extended above their heads. Suddenly, a massive gear rolled down the slope, followed by many more. As it fell, the first one easily tore through one of the corpse kings, which had possessed the strength of a Hunter, just like its companions. Despite their strength, all of them were destroyed by the various falling gears, but this was a commonplace sight here.

Each array base was capable of releasing countless gears, both large and small. The smaller ones easily shredded apart monsters that had the strength of Cruisers or Hunters while the larger gears were able to tear through corpse kings that had the strength of Enlighters or even Envoys.

After the gears tore through a few corpse kings, a nearby pair of eyes opened. They were underneath an overhanging cliff, and if one looked closely, they would see a tinge of cruelty and excitement lighting up the eyes. "Almost done. I just need to run that again. If I eliminate a corpse king with the strength of an Envoy, I'll have enough to trade for the Cloudguard Robes, and as long as I get those, my chances of surviving here will increase by at least tenfold. As long as my luck isn't too bad, I'll absolutely be able to complete his test and inherit that family's core battle techniques. With that, I'll be able to erase my past identity and rise up within the Celestial Frost Sect! I'll be famous throughout the universe! Soon. Just a little bit more."

Several hours passed. During this time, a few people passed by, and the occasional corpse king wandered by as well. The corpse kings were all destroyed by the gears, and Bai Zhen had no opening to attack.

Suddenly, his eyes snapped open, and a pair of scarlet eyes with slitted pupils simultaneously opened some distance away. The creature was moving incredibly fast, but a gear suddenly appeared and smashed into the corpse king. In response, the quickly moving creature diverted the gear with an upraised hand.

Bai Zhen's eyes lit up. This corpse king had the strength of an Envoy! He leaped forward and raised his hand to attack, using a technique that looked like the Celestial Frost Sect's Gap Between Heaven and Human.

However, unlike the true Gap Between Heaven and Human of the Celestial Frost Sect, this palm attack contained an indescribable energy that even caused the nearby void to wither. A spatial crack appeared in the attack's wake, quickly expanding.

The corpse king roared and waved a hand, slashing down with a blackened clawed appendage that was clearly highly toxic.

There was a bang, and the void shattered, forcing both Bai Zhen and the corpse king to retreat. The corpse king's arm had been broken and twisted unnaturally. As for Bai Zhen, black spots had appeared on his hand. He had been poisoned.

He let out a cold snort and stretched out a hand with his palm facing downwards. A moment later, a vortex appeared above the slope of the array base that gradually grew larger. During this time, the Envoy-level corpse king's twisted arm recovered, and it charged forward once more. At that moment, the center of the vortex condensed into a gray, needle-like object that then shot forward and pierced through Bai Zhen's palm. The toxin that had been spreading through his hand was instantly drawn out and dispersed into the void.

Bai Zhen waved his hand, causing another needle to appear and shoot towards the corpse king.

The corpse king's pupils fluctuated, and it swung its hands in an attempt to deflect the needle, but its efforts were completely useless. The needle easily pierced through the corpse king's forehead, and at the same time, a huge gear appeared above the creature's head, crushing and obliterating half of its body. Bai Zhen had made his move in unison with the falling gear, and he smashed the creature off by smashing its head to pieces with a palm.

He lifted his head, breathing heavily. He had succeeded. The battlefield merit points that he would get for killing this last corpse king would be just enough for him to trade for the Cloudguard Robes.

Satisfied, he looked up at the vortex overhead. He felt endlessly grateful that he had done his best to learn this particular battle technique, as it had saved his life multiple times.

It was time to return. He looked back and saw a group of corpse kings making their way upwards, but Bai Zhen had no interest in taking action against them. His only desire at this moment was to survive the battlefield and pass that person's test. As for the war itself, he was completely unconcerned about its outcome.

After a moment's thought, he moved closer to the landmass of the slope and then slowly merged into it. There was a transmission device that went directly to the general's office, but only humans could use this device. If a corpse king ever attempted to use such a thing, they would be instantly destroyed by a gear.

In the first array base's headquarters, Bai Zhen erupted in anger. "What did you say? The Cloudguard Robes are gone? Where are they?"

There was a young-looking woman in front of him, and she fearfully answered, "Someone already redeemed it."

"Who? The general reserved it for me! Who took it?" Bai Zhen roared.

The woman meekly answered, "Master Xia Yan, the general of the second array base. He approved of the exchange of merit points for the Cloudguard Robes."

Bai Zhen gritted his teeth as veins bulged across his forehead. He had desperately fought on the slope for so long to get those Cloudguard Robes, and he had even made a promise to Bai Chi. But in the end, the Cloudguard Robes had still slipped out of his grasp.

"It happened just yesterday," the woman softly muttered. Her words reignited Bai Zhen's anger, and he charged straight into General Bai Chi's office.

Bai Chi was also from the Celestial Frost Sect, and he was the general of the first array base. Compared to Xia Yan, Bai Chi was a bit more slender, but he also had a gloomier demeanor. "Xia Yan redeemed the Cloudguard Robes? That's impossible. He doesn't have enough merit points for that. The Lockbreakers who work with him drain him dry every time. Don't worry about this. I'll look into it."

On the other side of the room, Bai Zhen respectfully stood in place and waited.

After a while, Bai Chi lowered his communication crystal and sank deep into thought.

Bai Zhen could not help himself. "Sir?"

Bai Chi looked up. "Long Qi redeemed the Cloudguard Robes."

"Long Qi? Someone from the White Dragon Clan?" Bai Zhen frowned.

Bai Chi explained, "He's not just a member of the White Dragon Clan, but also a Middle Realm Gate Master from Humility's Gate. What's more, yesterday, he helped Xia Yan by repairing the second array base's defensive sourcebox array, and in doing so, he received the favor of Master Deng Guo, who's a Realm Array Master, and is likely to become his disciple in the future. In addition to that, Xia Yan also spoke up and demanded that Long Qi be able to redeem the Cloudguard Robes. This kid has a special status, and even though I asked for that item to be reserved for you, no one could have done anything about this."

Bai Zhen responded in a low voice, "Even if he fixed the sourcebox array, he's still just a Gate Master from Humility's Gate. There's no way that he had enough merit points to redeem the Cloudguard Robes. Most of my own merit points came from back when--"

Bai Chi raised a hand to stop Bai Zhen from saying anything more. "Nothing can be mentioned about that time. That matter is forbidden, or have you forgotten?"

Bai Zhen's expression changed a bit. "Yes, I remember."

Bai Chi continued to explain, saying, "Long Qi's merit points were supplied by Qing Chen, which allowed him to use more merit points than what he personally possesses. As I said, the kid has a truly special status for Humility's Gate's Supervisor to regard him so highly."

Bai Chi's patience was on full display at this moment. After all, he was the general of the first array base, and yet he was thoroughly explaining things to Bai Zhen.

But Bai Zhen refused to accept the situation. "Sir, you promised me! I've been fighting on this battlefield for all these years just to buy the Lu Cloud Clothing."

Bai Chi asked, "What is the most difficult criterion on that person's test?"

Bai Zhen gritted his teeth. "Survive on a battlefield slope for twenty years."

"How long do you still have to go?" Bai Chi asked.

"Eleven years."

Bai Chi responded, "Surviving for nine years is pretty impressive. Even I wouldn't be confident in my abilities to survive on the slope for nine years. There are many powerhouses among the monsters."

The more Bai Chi spoke, the more pain Bai Zhen felt. There were still eleven years left, but how would he spend them? During the last nine years, he had been hiding like a mouse, constantly afraid that he would attract the attention of an extremely powerful corpse king. He had also worked hard towards accumulating enough battlefield merit points to redeem the Cloudguard Robes. He firmly believed that no one had lived a more difficult life than him during these past few years.

"Sir, could you allow me to contact Long Qi? I would like to speak to him," Bai Zhen solemnly asked.

Bai Chi shook his head. "You know what the relationship between our Celestial Frost Sect and the White Dragon Clan is like. If possible, I definitely would have wanted you to receive the Cloudguard Robes, but this Long Qi is being watched over by Humility's Gate's Supervisor, and now, even Xia Yan and Long Laogui are paying attention to him. While I would love to take the Cloudguard Robes from him, that's not very likely. After all, he traded for it even after I reserved it for you, so clearly he's unconcerned about me."

"Then I-" Bai Zhen was truly upset, but he had no idea what to even say.

Bai Chi's eyes flashed. "Well, I still have an item with me here. While it's not as good as the Cloudguard Robes, it's not much worse."

He then took out a delicate and beautiful red flower.

Bai Zhen was stunned the moment he saw the flower, and his entire body shuddered. He felt as though he was once again seeing that scene of red flowers blooming and the petals raining from the sky. It was a scene that represented both beauty and death. As if dying in a dream, though the family that had once dominated everything had since disappeared.

Chapter 1496: Hidden Needle

Upon seeing Bai Zhen's expression, a smile crept across Bai Chi's face. "How will this do? You should already know about the power of the Fay Blossom, right?"

Bai Zhen was terrified at first, but after registering Bai Chi's words, he became incredibly excited, and he even started panting. "Really? Really?"

Bai Chi smiled. "Of course. However, this thing is not on the exchange list, and I have no need of your merit points. And naturally, I can't give you a Fay Blossom for free. So, how will you repay me?"

Bai Zhen struggled to tear his eyes away from the Fay Blossom to look back at Bai Chi. "What would you like?"

Bai Chi smiled gently as he put the Fay Blossom away. "Check the exchange list. Maybe you'll find a better defensive treasure listed."

Bai Zhen spoke in a rushed manner, "Sir, just tell me what you want."

Although the Fay Blossom was not a defensive object, they were actually even more useful than one, and they were far more valuable than the Cloudguard Robes. If Bai Zhen were able to choose between the Cloudguard Robes and the flower, he would absolutely choose the Fay Blossom without any hesitation.

The moment that Bai Chi had taken out the Fay Blossom, Bai Zhen had already known that the general had been prepared. Regardless of whether or not the Cloudguard Robes had been available, the Fay Blossom would have appeared. This was a choice, and it was not one that Bai Chi was offering, but rather that old man.

Bai Chi thought for a while as he stared at Bai Zhen. "Honestly, I don't actually know what I need from you, but you should already know. If not, I would never have a Fay Blossom in my possession."

Bai Zhen's eyes flashed, and he seemed to be struggling with something.

Bai Chi was in no hurry, so he simply waited.

After a long time, Bai Zhen finally said in a solemn manner, "Hidden Needle."

Bai Chi had to ask, "What?"

Bai Zhen stared at Bai Chi in an earnest manner and slowly repeated, "Hid-den Ne-edle."

Bai Chi was stunned. "The Lu family's Hidden Needle? You have it?"

Bai Zhen nodded.

Bai Chi looked Bai Zhen up and down. "How did you learn the Hidden Needle? That technique is unique to the Lu family, and they never let it leak out. You were just a mere retainer, so how were you able to learn that skill?"

Bai Zhen sneered. "Retainer? That's just a matter of who I follow. The person I follow is extremely powerful."

Bai Chi's expression sharpened, and he nodded. "That's not bad. It's no wonder why you were able to survive on the sloped land for nine years. With the Hidden Needle, forget nine years—even surviving for twenty years might not be impossible. It's no wonder why you were given that test."

Bai Zhen shook his head. "He doesn't even know that I learned the Hidden Needle when he gave me my test. He simply doesn't want to see anything that's even slightly related to the Lu family, but I will definitely survive and get everything that I want."

Bai Chi smiled. "The Hidden Needle is a wonderful skill." He then raised his hand, causing the Fay Blossom to reappear and slowly float over to Bai Zhen. "It's yours."

Bai Zhen received the Fay Blossom with a complicated expression. Was it really worthwhile to trade the Hidden Needle for a Fay Blossom? The technique could be considered a lost art, and Bai Zhen had no idea if anyone from the Lu family was even still alive. However, he would not change his mind even if it was for 10,000 Fay Blossoms. After all, the Celestial Frost Sect would never allow anyone to learn the technique ever again. Even if he dared to teach someone, who would dare to learn it?

It did not actually matter anymore; the Lu family was gone. Bai Zhen quickly shook away any remaining thoughts and looked up. Bai Chi's eyes were glistening as he waited to learn the Hidden Needle.

Over on the second array base, Lu Yin received the Cloudguard Robes. When he opened the package and felt the material, his first reaction was that it was too tough. This item was able to endure attacks from powerhouses who had survived five stellar tribulations! More importantly, it contained more than a single sourcebox array within it.

Lu Yin found this rather unbelievable; who could have set up a sourcebox array that fit within a mere set of clothing?

Lu Yin had seen many enormous sourcebox arrays, the first being the one that protected Shenwu Continent. Later, there had been the one in the Lockbreaker World, and there was also the Ceaseless Impetus that he was currently standing upon. All of them were beyond massive. However, the Lu Cloud Clothing in his hands contained the smallest sourcebox array that he had seen so far.

Big and small were two extremes. It was very difficult for something to be the largest, but it was also extremely difficult for something to be the smallest.

If someone else redeemed the Cloudguard Robes, it might be nothing more than a piece of defensive equipment, but this item had a completely different level of value in Lu Yin's hands. It was possible he could glean something important from it.

Lu Yin had specifically asked where the Cloudguard Robes had come from, but no one knew, not even General Xia Yan. All that the general had known was that the clothes had been accidentally left behind on the battlefield.

With the Cloudguard Robes successfully delivered, Xia Yan reached out to Liu Jing and told the Envoy to set up Lu Yin's terror ant team.

Lu Yin's team consisted of more than 3,000 people, and that was just his group. Before his team set out, another group of cultivators from the second array base had already traveled to the Mother Tree's trunk to start clearing out the terror ants, and more people would be sent in the future as well.

There were both powerful and weak cultivators within the 3,000-plus members of Lu Yin's team. Most of them were older ones, as it was not easy to find youths that could step onto the battlefield behind the Mother Tree, as most of them lacked the required strength.

However, there was not a single Envoy within Lu Yin's team, though there were several Enlighters on the cusp of becoming an Envoy. On the other end, the weakest members were mere Explorers.

Just this single team of 3,000 people alone is enough to sweep through the Fifth Mainland's Outerverse, Lu Yin thought to himself. Despite the strength of his team, Lu Yin's people were only tasked with clearing out ants in the Perennial World.

These 3,000 people were not a singular, cohesive team. Rather, they had been divided into multiple squads by Liu Jing. Each squad consisted of around ten people, and Lu Yin had been assigned to a squad of fifteen people, which included five Enlighters. Liu Jing had personally assigned all of the squad members. Lu Yin's squad captain was an old man who was also the most powerful expert within the 3,000 strong team. He was infinitely close to the Envoy realm.

"The squads have been assigned, and the captains have each been given the coordinates of the locations that you are responsible for clearing. Overall, you are to clear the section of the Mother Tree's trunk that lays closest to the second array base. Remember, you won't only face terror ants, but also monsters hidden within the ants as well as traitors. Be careful," Liu Jing said. He briefly glanced over towards Lu Yin, and then waved the army over towards the teleportation device, their destination the Mother Tree's trunk.

The array base's Ceaseless Impetus was connected to the Mother Tree's trunk, and it also extended away from the enormous tree. Thus, it was possible to reach the trunk by just traveling along the second array base's array formation.

While it was technically the trunk of the Mother Tree, from their perspective, it was actually a brown continent, no different from the branches that Lu Yin had seen up in the Dominion Realm. The primary difference was that, in the Dominion Realm, there had been countless piles of discarded bark on the branches, while the trunk had countless countless of corpses from both humans and corpse kings.

The corpse kings were constantly assaulting the Perennial World, endlessly trying to climb up to the array bases from one direction and climbing up the Mother Tree's trunk from the other direction.

As everyone emerged from the teleportation device, they looked around in curiosity. In addition to the cultivators standing guard over the teleportation device, there was also a temporary headquarters some distance away.

To the north, they could see the Mother Tree's massive trunk, as well as countless cultivators awaiting battle. This place was a frontline of the battlefield.

The team began to split up upon arriving, each squad making its way to the region that they had been assigned to.

Everyone had been given their own task. Explorers were required to eliminate a certain quota of ants, and Hunters had a different quota to meet. It was impossible for anyone to leave without completing their individual task, and it would also be impossible for them to find a place to hide and relax.

Lu Yin's squad moved along the tree trunk under the lead of the old man who was their captain. Meanwhile, several other teams stopped nearby to discuss something.

The old man also stopped. He looked at Lu Yin and the others before solemnly saying, "This old man is Shen Hai, and I was appointed as your captain. Even though the general ordered me to take this position, I still have to ask, are there any objections?"

Lu Yin and the others stayed silent.

The old man continued on in a satisfied tone, saying, "Since there are no objections, then this old man will take on the responsibility of being captain. We are on the battlefield behind the Mother Tree. This old man has been here once before."

Everyone was surprised by this reveal, and one of the middle-aged women asked, "Senior, you've fought on the battlefield before?"

Shen Hai nodded. "That's correct. I came here when I first became an Enlighter. I spent several years fighting here, and I was lucky enough to return alive. My name was left behind on the battlefield's records, and I was drafted just like most of you were. Most of us were recruited because of our strength, though there might be other reasons as well. However, this old man doesn't care about any of that. To make things brief, I'll warn you all once—obey everything that I say, and I'll do my best to get you all out of here alive.

"This battlefield is too big, and internal conflicts aren't uncommon."

The squad stayed silent.

The middle-aged woman finally spoke up in a respectful tone. "We will obey everything that senior says."

Shen Hai was satisfied by her response, and his eyes swept over everyone else's faces. Most of the people in the squad were clearly nervous and scared, which was normal. After all, this was the first time that they had stepped onto this great battlefield, so this was normal. Eh? The old man focused on Lu Yin. Why is this child so relaxed?

Lu Yin was not exactly relaxed, though his attitude could easily be interpreted as such. He had numerous precious items, especially the Cloudguard Robes, which made him feel safe, thus putting him in clear contrast to his squad mates.

Shen Hai frowned and carefully studied Lu Yin. This sort of ignorant person was Shen Hai's greatest fear on the battlefield. These people usually became overly courageous and arrogant after gaining a meager bit of cultivation. This youth was a very young Enlighter, and he was clearly highly talented, but that always came with the arrogance of the high heavens. This kind of person was the most difficult to order around, and to put it plainly, extremely selfish."

With this thought, the old man looked back at the middle-aged woman and indicated for her to look over at Lu Yin and pay attention.

The woman glanced at Lu Yin, and just like the old man, she was also unhappy with what she saw. Lu Yin stood out like a bright beacon within their squad, and he really did look careless.

Lu Yin was currently considering how he was supposed to uncover traitors. Were there any in his squad? He did not know, but he also had no plans to stay with this team the whole time. Rather, he intended to move on after making sure that there were no hidden traitors. Lu Yin had noticed Shen Hai's reaction, but he did not care.

Shen Hai quickly led the squad to where the second array base connected to the Mother Tree's trunk. Everyone looked down, but they were unable to see the bottom. If they jumped down, they might end up in the New World.

The New World was the main battlefield behind the Mother Tree, and it was also where one could find countless corpse kings. These creatures were always trying to climb up from the New World and reach the Mother Tree's trunk, or the sloping inclines of the five array bases. The New World was number one on humanity's list of places to conquer, as capturing the New World would mean that they had completely driven those monsters out of the Perennial World. It was actually for this reason that it had been called the New World.

"Let's go. Everyone, remember to follow orders!" Shen Hai shouted sharply. His aura as he stared straight at Lu Yin.

Lu Yin remained calm. He suppressed his relaxed attitude and followed the rest of the squad as they jumped down and landed on the trunk. Once again, Lu Yin was entering a new world.

...

Overhead, there was an endless brown landmass, and down below was the same. This was the Mother Tree's trunk.

Half a month had passed since the squad had arrived, and during this time, Shen Hai had led his people across the trunk and cleared away millions of terror ants. Still, they had only cleared away a minuscule portion of the ants, and there were so many left that they could not even be counted.

Fortunately, they had not encountered any corpse kings so far.

Chapter 1497: Humanoid Stellar Tribulation

One day, the squad of people were resting atop a piece of bark sticking out from the trunk of the Mother Tree. While it was nothing more than bark, it was still large enough to support an entire city.

Lu Yin leaned against the bark as he looked around. From this vantage point, he could see a dark starry sky, and overhead, there was the slope of the huge array base that was also

the most intense battlefield.

"Ah Qi, how many terror ants have you taken care of so far?" Shen Hai asked as he approached Lu Yin with a smile on his face.

Initially, the old man had hated Lu Yin's carefree attitude, but after spending some time clearing out the terror ants on the trunk, Shen Hai had gradually come to learn that Lu Yin was always prudent with his actions and never behaved recklessly. On top of that, the youth obeyed orders, and possessed an amazing strength. All in all, the old man had completely changed his attitude towards Lu Yin, and there was now even a bit of respect.

Lu Yin smiled. "A million. I still have a long way to go before reaching my quota."

Shen Hai nodded as he emotionally replied, "True, that's very far away. With our current speed, we'll need to spend at least a year to complete our given task, but that's not too bad. It's better to be sent here to clear out terror ants than have to fight the monsters on the battlefield. When I was fighting up there, I watched with my own eyes as an Envoy fought against a corpse king, only to be randomly smashed to pieces by an unknown power.

"We're much better off here. All we need is time to deal with these terror ants. As long as we don't run into a large group of corpse kings, we shouldn't face any real danger."

Lu Yin replied, "Actually, I feel like we've been going quite fast. I wonder how the other squads are doing."

Shen Hai smiled. "They can't compare to us. We'll be able to finish in no more than a year."

"We come here one batch after another, but I have no idea when these terror ants will be cleared out," Lu Yin lamented.

Shen Hai helplessly answered, "They'll never be completely cleaned up. Those monsters keep improving their ways of releasing the bugs. On top of that, there will always be traitors sneaking more ants past the Tree Realm. Honestly, what we're doing right now is completely pointless. I have no idea what Humility's Gate is doing."

Lu Yin fell silent.

Half an hour later, the squad set off once again. This time, they happened to encounter a swarm of terror ants. Terror ants were able to devour spiritual force and domains. Individually, their strength was negligible, but they were always grouped up in a swarm.

The moment the squad saw the terror ant swarm, every single member instantly attacked after setting their communications crystals to record them slaughtering the ants.

Thus far, they had only encountered smaller terror ant swarms. The one that Lu Yin had run into in the Lower Realm with Long Xi had been quite large, at least ten times larger than the swarms that the squad had encountered on the trunk so far. Back then, Lu Yin and Long Xi had been left with no choice but to flee from the ants.

Right after they finished eliminating all of the ants in the swarm, Lu Yin's expression suddenly changed drastically. Out of habit, his domain was always active in order to help them avoid any nearby people, and he had spread it out across a vast distance in all directions.

He had just detected a large group.

"Run! There's a large number of corpse kings coming!" Lu Yin shouted fiercely.

Shen Hai was shocked, but he showed no hesitation in ordering the squad to flee in the direction that Lu Yin had indicated.

At the same moment that Lu Yin had sensed the corpse kings, they had also sensed him and his squad. Thus, they immediately gave chase.

While the group of corpse kings was of comparable strength to Lu Yin's squad, the corpse kings had not exerted themselves while Lu Yin's group had just finished wiping out a swarm of terror ants. In this situation, the humans were already tired and could not run very far before they were forced to turn around and confront the corpse kings.

Shen Hai immediately engaged a corpse king whose strength was infinitely close to that of an Envoy while the rest of the corpse kings fell upon the other squad members. Lu Yin was forced to reveal his strength, and he attacked with more than ten Vacuum Palms in a row, eliminating a corpse king with each attack. Even Shen Hai was shocked by Lu Yin's true strength.

The corpse king fighting against Shen Hai turned its scarlet eyes onto Lu Yin and immediately shot past the old man. It raised a hand and punched at Lu Yin, but Lu Yin merely waved a hand and instantly crushed the corpse king's head, killing it.

The other people in the squad were all horrified, and they stared at Lu Yin in disbelief.

Shen Hai was just as stunned as everyone else. He had never even considered the possibility that Lu Yin might be keeping such a terrifying level of strength hidden. Not to mention, the youth was still just an Enlighter. Shen Hai's cultivation far surpassed Lu Yin's.

Half of the corpse king's body was still intact, so Lu Yin raised a hand to unleash another Vacuum Palm. As he did so, the middle-aged woman in the squad suddenly attacked him from nearby, but Lu Yin lifted his hand and fluidly caught an arrow. It had been a powerful attack, but Lu Yin had easily stopped it, and now, he turned to stare at the middle-aged woman.

The middle-aged woman went pale before turning and trying to flee. However, it was useless. Lu Yin raised a hand and launched an attack that struck the woman's back, killing her.

Shen Hai shouted, "She's a traitor! She's definitely a traitor."

Lu Yin replied, "And she's already dead."

Shen Hai complained, "That's a pity. You can always turn in a traitor for a great deal of merit points no matter where you are. You shouldn't have killed her."

Lu Yin was unconcerned. He had been sent here to capture or execute traitors, and he would still receive credit for his kills.

The last few corpse kings were quickly dealt with, as Lu Yin took action. Besides the middle-aged woman who was already dead, none of the other members of the squad were traitors.

Lu Yin's Vacuum Palm was too fast, and his domain had enveloped the entire area. Whenever someone was in danger, Lu Yin would always be there to save them with a Vacuum Palm. It could even be said that he had managed to save all of them.

After the battle, everyone looked at Lu Yin in a completely different manner. They could guess that Lu Yin had to be someone with an unimaginable background.

Shen Hai still remembered Lu Yin's behavior when the squad had first been put together. It was no wonder why the youth had been so relaxed back then. Not only was he powerful in his own right, but he definitely also had very powerful items. It looked like they would have no trouble clearing out the ants to fulfill their quotas.

Lu Yin had revealed his strength, which left the others much more confident in their squad's ability to fulfill their terror ant quota. However, that was only because they did not know that Lu Yin would be leaving soon.

In the second array base's headquarters, in Xia Yan's office, the command token vibrated. The command token was the general's symbol, but it also let the general communicate with their colonels so that reports could be submitted even during a heated battle.

Xia Yan glanced down, only to be surprised. "Already killed a traitor? His efficiency isn't too bad."

With that, he resumed his work.

Several days passed by in the blink of an eye. Shen Hai continued to lead the squad to search out and eliminate terror ants. Even though Lu Yin had revealed his terrifying combat power, he did not make the others feel superfluous, challenge Shen Hai's command, or even intervene in decisions. Shen Hai became more and more satisfied with the youth, and he could not help but want to introduce his granddaughter to Lu Yin.

Lu Yin felt quite helpless with no other option but to refuse several times. However, Lu Yin was very interested in Shen Hai's cultivation realm. This was not because the old man was incredibly strong, but rather because he only needed to take one final step to become an Envoy. The problem was, Shen Hai did not dare to attempt that last step.

"I won't say that I don't dare to make the attempt, but rather that I am just a bit scared," Shen Hai admitted.

Lu Yin laughed despite how tragic his words were. "Scared of the stellar tribulation?"

Shen Hai nodded. "Everyone fears the stellar tribulation. Disciples from big families like you are stronger than your peers, but because of that impressive talent, elites like you absorb more star energy and have greater reserves, which means that your stellar tribulations will be far more terrifying. Ordinary cultivators have smaller star energy reserves, so our tribulations are not as bad. Still, we receive fewer resources and are relatively weak.

"The power of the tribulation is directly proportional to one's star energy reserves, so for stellar tribulations, all are equal regardless of their status."

Lu Yin asked, "Senior, are you not confident in being able to survive your stellar tribulation?"

Shen Hai nodded in response. "I have no confidence at all. The tribulations do not have a fixed form. Someone once claimed that the true universe has its own awareness and that the stellar tribulations are actually an expression of battles that people have once fought in the true universe. They may have

used sword qi, a battle technique, or an innate gift. This essentially means that facing a tribulation is equivalent to fighting against an Envoy, and how can we, as Enlighters, survive such a fight?

"However-" As he spoke, Shen Hai's voice filled with anticipation. "As long as one survives their stellar tribulation, their lifespan and strength will rise sharply, which is what everyone desires."

"There might not be a lot of Envoys around, but there will always be at least some who are able to survive their tribulation," Lu Yin stated.

Shen Hai nodded. "True. A single Envoy may rise out of a hundred Enlighters. That is the generally accepted ratio."

Lu Yin had not expected Shen Hai to speak so much about the topic due to his fear of the stellar tribulation. "There's a legend that, many years ago, there was a senior who passed his tribulation, and he did so by opening his mouth and roaring so loudly that he blasted the tribulation away.

"There was another senior who passed his tribulation by waving his hand and willing it away, but I don't know how that worked."

"The most shocking legend that I've ever heard of is an account that I read about in a certain ancient record. Long ago, an ancient powerhouse attempted to survive his stellar tribulation, but do you know what form his tribulation took?" Shen Hai stared at Lu Yin as he asked this question.

Lu Yin shook his head, though he was very curious.

Shen Hai stated, "It was a person. The tribulation took on the form of a person."

Lu Yin was stunned. "Tribulations can have humanoid forms?"

Shen Hai nodded as he stared straight ahead. "According to what I read, that particular senior might have been too powerful, making the true universe feel as though there was no attack that could destroy the man. So instead, the true universe simulated ancient powerhouses to fight against that senior, and their battle was earth-shattering. A large region was destroyed, and no one knew how much of the void was shattered. Still, in the end, that senior failed and was taken out by the humanoid stellar tribulation."

Lu Yin's gaze turned sharp.

Shen Hai sighed from his various emotions. "That senior was incredibly talented. According to the records, there was a horrifying amount of star energy within his body, and it was at least a hundred times that of what normal cultivators possessed. The true universe was too enraged by the man's existence, and thus, it strove to eradicate him."

Lu Yin gulped. A star energy reserve a hundred times that of an average cultivator's? That was it? Then what about him? Lu Yin had at least two hundred times the amount of star energy as an average cultivator. If this story was true, then how could Lu Yin survive?

The more Lu Yin heard, the greater his panic became. He squinted as he stared at Shen Hai; was this old man trying to intimidate him? Was Shen Hai so scared of his own tribulation that he liked making others afraid so that he would not be alone? That had to be it.

"Unfortunately, a little while ago, an old friend of mine failed his stellar tribulation in Flying Armor Pass. Ah..." Shen Hai sighed as he remembered.

Lu Yin's eye twitched. "Someone who recently failed a stellar tribulation in Flying Armor Pass? Was that person an old friend of yours?"

Shen Hai was taken aback. "Brother Qi, you saw that as well?"

Lu Yin nodded.

"What a coincidence. I was also there, and I pity his granddaughter." Shen Hai then looked back at Lu Yin, the old man's eyes even more emotional than before. "Brother Ah Qi, this old man's granddaughter is both beautiful and very well-behaved. Let's talk. I can promise that you'll struggle to find another woman as virtuous as her. She is simply a model of what makes a good wife and mother."

Lu Yin pursed his lips. "But I like seductive types."

Shen Hai choked on his words and stopped talking.

The next day, as the squad searched for more terror ants, they came across a large number of corpses, and there were both ant and humans among the bodies.

"It's another squad that was sent to the trunk at the same time as us," someone commented.

Shen Hai's face twisted as he squatted down to examine the wounds on one of the human corpses. The longer he stared at it, the darker his expression became.

Lu Yin spoke up quietly, "These wounds came from humans."

"It's another traitor," Shen Hai confirmed.

Chapter 1498: Tracking

Lu Yin's gaze focused as he glanced around. A traitor must have killed this squad and then fled with some of the surviving terror ants, making them a hidden danger. To make things even worse, Lu Yin could tell that the void had been recently destabilized, and the local energy fluctuations were suppressing his star energy. In other words, this person was an Envoy.

This traitor was actually an Envoy.

In fact, this person might not just be a traitor, as they could potentially be a full Redback.

Shen Hai's hand snapped back, and blood appeared on his fingertips. He quickly warned everyone, "None of you should touch the wounds on the corpses. There's a powerful remnant energy left on them."

The old man stood up, his face solemn as he looked over at Lu Yin. "It's an Envoy."

Lu Yin nodded as he stared off towards an angle to his right. "We should go that way to give chase."

Shen Hai frowned. "Give chase? Brother Qi, we're talking about an Envoy here."

Lu Yin replied, "I know. As long as we can find a trace of the traitor and confirm their identity, we can then report back to the general. There's no need for us to personally arrest this traitor."

Shen Hai shook his head. "How could it be that easy to confirm an Envoy's identity? You'll be noticed before you even get close, and you'll never be able to catch sight of them. This situation does need to be reported, but the fact that the enemy is an Envoy means that this is out of our scope. Our task is to eliminate the terror ants."

Lu Yin thought for a while. "That's true. In that case, you all keep going, and I'll track down the traitor myself."

Shen Hai's expression changed, and the other squad members' faces grew ugly. "Ah Qi, the general appointed me as the captain of the squad, and you can't leave your squad without proper authorization."

After seeing the tragic fate that had befallen the other squad, how could Lu Yin's companions and Shen Hai possibly allow Lu Yin to leave?

"That's right. Brother Qi, we also want to arrest the traitor, but we have to clear out the terror ants. Dealing with traitors is Humility's Gate's job, and it has nothing to do with us. It's possible that Humility's Gate is already chasing after that traitor," someone suggested.

Everyone else in the squad agreed, as no one wanted Lu Yin to leave.

Lu Yin firmly stated, "I have to go."

Shen Hai clenched his fists. "Ah Qi, I'm the one who was appointed captain by the general. If you dare to leave without authorization, I'll have to report this matter to the general."

Lu Yin's face fell as he looked hard at Shen Hai.

For a moment, Shen Hai and Lu Yin stared at each other. Switching to a softer tone, the old man continued trying to persuade the youth, "People need to see the limits of their own strength. You're only an Enlightener while this traitor's an Envoy. No one will hold it against you if you don't try to track them down. Let's go. Trying to chase after the traitor will likely lead to nothing, so why bother? There are already methods in place for dealing with traitors, and they have nothing to do with us. We just need to focus on the bugs, and we'll be able to return in no more than a year."

"Yeah, don't go."

"That's right."

...

Lu Yin gently replied, "How do you know that I'm not one of those methods to deal with the traitors?"

Shen Hai's expression suddenly changed. "What is that supposed to mean?"

Lu Yin looked around. "I'm heading out. Everyone, take care."

“Wait!” Shen Hai quickly stopped Lu Yin. He then turned to the rest of the squad. “I’m going to go with him. What about the rest of you?”

The other squad members glanced at each other, somewhat hesitant.

Lu Yin grew curious. “Why the change of mind?”

Shen Hai felt helpless. “This old man has been training for my entire life. I already know that companionship is more important than raising one’s strength. With you, we might be able to survive. But without you, we’ll all be dead if we encounter another group of corpse kings like before. If that’s the case, then all we can do is follow you and help you chase after the traitor.”

Everyone else felt that the old man’s reasoning was quite sound.

Half an hour later, Lu Yin and his squad were following the remnant energy fluctuations that led diagonally and upwards to the right. They soon ran into a group of people who were surrounded by terror ants.

The various squads had been sent here to clean up the terror ants, but it was not unusual for a team to be surrounded and devoured instead.

Shen Hai led their squad to take action, but it took them more than half an hour to eliminate all of the terror ants.

The captain of the rescued squad was named Cheng Ji. He was another powerhouse whose strength was comparable to Shen Hai’s, and his weapon of choice was a bizarre scimitar. The ants had devoured a few members of his squad, not even leaving bones behind. Even after being saved, the rest of the captain’s squad mates were still numb from fear.

“Thank you, Captain Shen, for your help,” Cheng Ji said gratefully.

Shen Hai replied, “How long were you trapped for?”

As the old man spoke, he looked at the scimitar. This blade did not match the wounds that the slaughtered squad had suffered.

Cheng Ji sighed. “We were stuck here for two full hours. If not for Captain Shen and the rest of you showing up, we would have all been finished off by now.”

Lu Yin’s eyes swept over the squad. The traitor was not among them. Rather, they had just happened to be in the path of the fleeing traitor. Had that person deliberately passed by this squad? If so, that meant that the traitor was incredibly cautious. Just on the off chance that they were being pursued, they had purposefully passed by a squad. It was even possible that they had led the terror ants to the squad just to further delay any potential pursuers.

They were chasing after a traitor, who was trained in deception and subterfuge. There were many valid reasons as to why humanity had never been able to eliminate all of the traitors and Redbacks despite so many years of efforts; their targets were simply too shrewd and cautious.

Due to the Cheng Ji and the others' fight against the the terror ants, the remnant energy trail in the void had been dispersed, which meant that Lu Yin and the others were no longer able to continue tracking the traitor. They had no choice but to give up.

Shen Hai let out a sigh of relief. If possible, he had absolutely no desire to chase after an Envoy, so he felt immensely grateful towards Cheng Ji and his squad. With this thought in mind, Shen Hai felt that Cheng Ji had suddenly become much more pleasant.

Nearly half of Cheng Ji's squad had been wiped out, so they had no other option but to join Shen Hai's squad. The old man did not refuse, as this also made their squad stronger.

Lu Yin was unwilling to abandon his task, and so he suggested that the squad continue on in the direction that they had been traveling. Shen Hai had no objection to the proposal.

Cheng Ji glanced over at Lu Yin in surprise. It was very obvious that the larger squad had a great deal of respect for this youth.

Everyone continued traveling in the same direction as before, and after two days of travel, they encountered another squad that was surrounded by terror ants. Once again, Shen Hai and others immediately attacked.

Lu Yin acted the same as before. Before meeting up with Cheng Ji's team, he had asked everyone to keep his strength a secret, and during these battles, he also used clumsy moves to deliberately conceal his strength, which made everyone believe that Shen Hai was the strongest squad member.

It did not take long for them to rescue the second squad from the terror ants, but their captain had already sacrificed himself, and there were less than five surviving members.

After another day, the growing squad ran into yet another squad that was surrounded by bugs.

This did not feel right. These squads were tasked with eliminating terror ants, and they were not supposed to be fleeing from them. While it was expected for one or two squads to run into large swarms of terror ants and be devoured, running into three consecutive squads all facing the same crisis clearly indicated that something was wrong.

"They chased after us from below. There were too many of them, and we couldn't recklessly fight them with fewer than a thousand people," the third squad captain explained. While Cheng Ji looked middle-aged, this third captain was older and was actually from Shen Hai's generation.

There were also certain people who deliberately made themselves look older so as to not be looked down upon.

"Are there are a lot of terror ants down there?" Shen Hai had a bad premonition.

Someone from the second squad spoke up. "We ran into the terror ants from just above, but they chased us all the way down here."

Lu Yin still remembered the dead squad they had first met. Those ants had seemed to be making their way upwards. With this thought in mind, Lu Yin looked over at Shen Hai, and the old man's heart sank. "We need to go. We need to head upwards on a diagonal to the left."

Something occurred to Cheng Ji as well, and he agreed with the captain of the third squad. Soon, a group of more than thirty people made their way upwards on a left-leaning angle.

After three days, they ran into a dense swarm of countless terror ants.

When he saw the ants up ahead, Shen Hai bitterly said, "You were right. We've been surrounded by the ants. They've set up a massive encirclement, and all of our teams were trapped inside."

Cheng Ji gritted his teeth. "There has to be an ant queen. There's no other way the terror ants could be so coordinated with their movements as to actively surround us."

"It would be great if we found the queen. Without her, these terror ants will naturally disperse. However, who could find the queen within all this?" Shen Hai commented quietly while instinctively looking over at Lu Yin.

Lu Yin stared up ahead. "We need to temporarily retreat and avoid making contact with the terror ants. Then, we can contact the general to request help and also discuss our options. There might be other squads that can help us, and we'll only be able to break out after gathering enough people."

Shen Hai felt helpless, but this was truly their only option. Everyone had the same thought as they quietly retreated, and all of their faces were pale.

They were well aware that they would not be able to remain safe for much longer. The ants' encirclement would continue to tighten. Quite soon, not only would they face an endless horde of terror ants in one direction, but they would also be surrounded on all sides. Thus, the sooner they tried to break out of the encirclement, the fewer ants they would have to face.

Everyone fell into despair as they saw the black line off in the distance slowly draw closer.

This was not a situation that they could settle quickly. If it was that easy to deal with terror ants, then they would have never posed a risk to the Mother Tree.

With his domain, Lu Yin noticed another person. Lu Yin turned to look, and he saw a panic-stricken man who was about the same age as him running for his life.

Lu Yin had seen very few youths his age on this battlefield so far. In general, those as young as him on the battlefield had either been forced to come or had done so to gain experience.

The other people also noticed the man, but none of them were surprised. This person was most likely another survivor from some other team.

Shen Hai carefully observed the fleeing man, but the youth was not an Envoy. In fact, the man was not even an Enlightener. Shen Hai felt relieved, because he was still concerned about the Envoy traitor that they had been chasing.

"The gods are merciful! I've finally found other people! This is great! I'm saved!" The young man was ecstatic, and excitement was written all over his face. His eyes were even framed with red.

One person in the large squad unhappily muttered, "We're all about to die, so why are you so excited?"

The young man ran over, but when he heard the person's words, he blinked in confusion. "No way! How could such a large squad die?"

Cheng Ji quickly grew impatient. "Focus on what's important. Are you alone?"

The young man nodded as he mournfully explained, "Everyone in my squad died. There were just too many terror ants! If not for my innate gift, I would have died as well."

The large group of people quickly retreated a sufficient distance, and some of them did not want to pull back any further.

"We should keep going. We might find more people," Shen Hai pushed.

Cheng Ji frowned. "We can't go any further. The further we go in, the less space we'll have to maneuver, and the more terror ants we'll be forced to face."

"It's really a pity that we can't find the queen ant. If we could, it would be better to fight to the death than just wait here to die."

As things became more desperate, people would become more restless. However, the person who remained the most relaxed throughout the whole ordeal was Lu Yin. Even if he was directly thrown into the middle of the terrifying terror ant swarm, none of them would be able to wound him in the slightest.

"Well, are you going to go look for the queen ant? I know where she is," said the young man who had been the last to join the group. As he stepped out from within the crowd, he cautiously raised his hand.

Everyone turned to look at him in surprise.

Lu Yin's eyes flickered as he studied the young man.

Cheng Ji dragged the young man out front. "Do you really know where the ant queen is?"

The young man nodded. His neck ached from Cheng Ji's tight grip as he yelled, "Let go! Let go! You're about to strangle me to death!"

Cheng Ji quickly relaxed his hand, and the young man gasped for air as everyone stared at him.

Chapter 1499: Hua Family Beast Masters

"How do you know where the queen ant is?" Shen Hai asked.

The man gasped for air before responding, "I- My name is Hua Beibei. I used to be from the Hua family."

Everyone felt confused. It quickly became clear that no one had heard of the Hua family before.

Only Shen Hai and Cheng Ji, the older generation of powerhouses, seemed to have heard of it. "The Beast Masters? That Hua family?"

Hua Beibei nodded and responded, "Yes."

Lu Yin asked, "Have you heard of it?"

Shen Haidao replied, "The Hua family is a family that specializes in hunting mutated beasts, and they are also quite skilled at controlling such creatures. They rose to power in the Lower Realm, and they are the

foremost experts of the beasts in the Lower Realm. However, for some reasons that I'm unaware of, the Hua family rapidly declined decades ago. After that, it was said that the entire family joined the Celestial Frost Sect."

"Are you from the Celestial Frost Sect?" Cheng Ji asked as he stared at Hua Beibei.

The young man nodded. "Yes. I'm a part of the Celestial Frost Sect, as well as a member of the Hua family. Since you already know about my Hua family, then you should trust what I say."

Shen Hai nodded towards Lu Yin.

Lu Yin was staring at Hua Beibei. "So then, where is the ant queen?"

Hua Beibei pointed back in the direction that he had just fled from. Or, to be more precise, the direction of where he had hidden himself. "There."

Cheng Ji arched a brow. "Were you hiding with the ant queen?"

Hua Beibei pursed his lips. "I was a little ways away from the queen."

"Why didn't you say so earlier? We would have turned back!" Cheng Ji angrily demanded.

Hua Beibei felt quite offended. "You were already saying that a lot of people would die, so I assumed that you didn't want to try to deal with the queen. That's why I didn't say anything, and no one asked either."

Many people had to stifle their retorts and restrain themselves from beating up the youth.

Lu Yin felt that this matter was rather odd.

"Let's go and look for the ant queen. Hua Beibei, stay close to me, and I'll keep you safe," Cheng Ji said.

Hua Beibei shook his head. There was a bit of fear in his eyes as he looked at Cheng Ji. Then, he quickly ran over to Lu Yin's side and begged Lu Yin, "Big brother, please protect me!"

Cheng Ji felt the need to ask, "Do you two know each other?"

Lu Yin shook his head and turned to Hua Beibei. "Why are you asking me?"

Hua Beibei licked his lips. "My Hua family members are able to sense Beastmasters with just a glance because we're a family of hunters. Big brother, you're definitely this squad's Beastmaster."

Shen Hai felt truly amazed as he stared at Hua Beibei, as the young man's response had done a great deal to convince the old man.

Cheng Ji was taken aback, and he looked back at Lu Yin before glancing over at Shen Hai. When Cheng Ji saw Shen Hai's reaction, Cheng Ji was finally convinced. It seemed that the youth was a hidden powerhouse, and that aligned with Cheng Ji's earlier suspicions that stemmed from how much respect Lu Yin's original squad had shown him.

"Let's go. The terror ants are closing in, and their numbers are only going to keep increasing. We need to deal with the queen as soon as possible," Lu Yin said. He did not want to keep dallying any longer.

At Lu Yin's comment, Shen Hai and the others from Lu Yin's original squad naturally followed him. Cheng Ji and others had no objections, so the entire group raced back in the direction that Hua Beibei had fled from, and they quickly drew closer to the terror ants' encirclement.

The humans quickly started attacking the countless terror ants that appeared in all directions as they needed to be eliminated.

Cheng Ji asked Shen Hai, "When will the general's reinforcements arrive?"

Shen Hai shook his head. "They won't get here anytime soon. Even if they do show up, we'll still have to first clear a path through these terror ants. We can only rely on ourselves."

"Where's this Ah Qi from?" Cheng Ji asked.

Shen Hai replied, "I have no idea."

Cheng Ji stopped asking questions. Instead, he raised his hand and focused on swinging his scimitar and decapitating the terror ants.

"Mommy!" Hua Beibei shrieked as a large number of terror ants burst up from beneath his feet.

Lu Yin raised a hand and unleashed a Vacuum Palm that smashed the cluster of terror ants to pieces. "Don't be so jumpy."

Hua Beibei felt rebuffed. "I'm scared..."

Lu Yin was caught off guard. How could someone like this be a part of the Celestial Frost Sect?

"Did your squad run into the queen ant?" Lu Yin asked.

Hua Beibei replied, "We didn't see it. My squad didn't have the strength to get that far."

Lu Yin's eyes narrowed as he looked ahead. He had already spread his domain out, and there were more and more terror ants popping up around him. The ants, in turn, had sensed Lu Yin's domain and begun devouring it. The sensation was incredibly unpleasant for Lu Yin.

He raised a hand and let loose a continuous rain of attacks, emptying the region in front of him. Cheng Ji and the others who had not witnessed his full strength before were all momentarily stunned. This sort of palm attack was simply too powerful for a mere Enlighter to be wielding this casually.

"Mommy, that's scary!" Hua Beibei exclaimed again, startling Lu Yin. Lu Yin looked further ahead and saw that countless terror ants had started to gather together into singular mass, much like what he had witnessed in the Lower Realm. A sphere of terror ants like that was enough to even threaten an Envoy, and the sight caused everyone to go pale.

"Let's go, we can break through together!" Shen Hai shouted fiercely as he attacked together with Cheng Ji. However, the swarm of terror ants shifted about, dodging their attacks. They moved as though they shared a single consciousness.

Lu Yin's eyes darted about. "The ant queen is close."

He leaped forward, and then his body flickered. The next time someone saw him, he was already in front of the mass of terror ants, and everyone stared in horror as he continued rushing towards the ants.

Hua Beibei's pupils shrank; what was this? Did this person want to die?

Lu Yin charged straight into the horde. String hissing and snapping sounds came from all directions, making for a terrifying environment. Lu Yin could clearly see the ants' sharp pincers snap at him, and even though he was aware that they could not harm him, it was still very disturbing. His immediate reaction was to wrap his golden battle force around his hand and attack in all directions.

The sphere of terror ants was blasted apart, and Vacuum Palms destroyed most of the ants.

Even if the queen ant was able to help the other ants coordinate and direct them to dodge attacks, such efforts were useless against Lu Yin. He continued charging straight forward, and none of the ants could evade due to the speed of his attacks, and so, the sphere collapsed.

"Keep going!" Lu Yin looked back at Hua Beibei.

Hua Beibei grew excited. "Ex , Expert! You are really a Beastmaster!"

Lu Yin was irritated at this impromptu title. You're a beast master! Your whole family's a beast master!

There were more terror ants the closer the group drew to the queen ant, but the ants were completely unable to stop Lu Yin regardless of how many terror ants appeared. He was like an arrow for his other group members, and the entire squad fiercely charged towards the queen ant. Despite the presence of the terror ants all around, no one could take a single step back.

Eventually, people began to be picked off by the countless ants snapping at them. Not even Lu Yin could take care of everyone, and even Shen Hai lost an arm to the swarm, not to mention the others.

"Master, the queen ant is hiding under the pile of bark just in front of you. Be careful!" Hua Beibei instructed. The young man looked very nervous. There were only two paths before them: either disperse the ants by killing their queen, or dying by being devoured.

Lu Yin's domain extended to probe beneath the pile of bark, and he saw the queen ant there. This terror ant was dozens of times larger than the ordinary terror ants, and she was even larger than a person. A pair of antennae nervously twitching about as the creature seemed to be trying to detect something. When Lu Yin's domain touched the queen, her antennae rose, and she emitted an odd chirping sound. Suddenly, countless terror ants swarmed over from all directions, clearly intending to protect the queen ant.

Lu Yin used his golden battle force without any restraint. He opened a hand and released a full powered, 350 Stacks Vacuum Palm that was strengthened by his golden battle force.

There was a boom as the void warped and cracked. Shen Hai and the others were all frightened by this attack, as Lu Yin had released an attack that was more powerful than what even some Envoys could achieve.

Naturally, Lu Yin's Vacuum Palm was not something that the terror ants or the queen ant could withstand, but the attack failed. It had been slightly diverted by a scimitar, the weapon that belonged to Cheng Ji.

Seeing his attack foiled, Lu Yin felt that it was both expected and unexpected, as Cheng Ji had revealed himself as the Envoy realm traitor who had been killing squads and hiding terror ants.

There was a scream, and Cheng Ji's entire squad suddenly attacked all of the other people. Shen Hai was enraged, and he shouted, "All of you are traitors!"

Cheng Ji stood some distance away, up in front of the queen ant. Strangely, the surrounding terror ants completely ignored the human's existence. The Envoy stared at Lu Yin. "You're incredibly powerful for your age. I never expected a genius like you to show up, but unfortunately, you'll never get the chance to mature."

Lu Yin and Cheng Ji stared at each other. "How did you hide your cultivation realm from the general?"

Cheng Ji sneered. "Aren't you more surprised by our numbers?"

"What is there to be surprised about? You killed everyone in your squad who wouldn't follow you, and those who chose to become traitors survived. It's normal for such people to work together and deceive others," Lu Yin stated as though such a thing was merely a matter of course.

Cheng Ji nodded and clenched the scimitar in his hand. "That's right, they made the right choice. I can give you the same opportunity as well—kill Shen Hai and his squad and become a traitor under me. I can even let you live a better life than the one you've lived so far. How does that sound?"

Lu Yin arched a brow. "I'm still curious about how you managed to keep yourself hidden from the general."

Cheng Ji laughed. "That's simple enough; I just drained every last bit of stellar energy from my body, absorbed a bit of star energy, and then used some special equipment. Normally, no Envoy would ever deplete their stellar energy due to how hard it is to gather and cultivate it, but that doesn't matter to me. I'll even abandon my cultivation if need be, as my mission is too important! Who would ever suspect someone who uses star energy of being an Envoy? It will take me a long time to recover, but I'm still strong enough to deal with you."

Lu Yin understood that there were thousands of cultivators here who were not at the Envoy realm. What's more, this person had used treasures to hide his strength while also reverting to using star energy instead of stellar energy. Who would check for such odd items? There were just too many people on the battlefield, and it would not be difficult for an Envoy to sneak through if they were willing to employ these methods.

It was precisely to deal with these kinds of experts that Humility's Gate had dispatched so many powerhouses to the battlefield behind the Mother Tree.

"I'll only say it a second time: kill Shen Hai and the others, and I'll accept you as a traitor," Cheng Ji said while looking past Lu Yin and focusing on Shen Hai and the rest of the squad.

Shen Hai and the others were busy fighting against both the terror ants and the traitors who were following Cheng Ji. Everyone heard Cheng Ji's words, and they were all anxiously waiting to hear Lu Yin's response.

Lu Yin sighed. "I suffer from a certain weakness: stubbornness. If I had wanted to become a traitor, I would have done so long ago, and I certainly wouldn't have waited until now. Besides, I can promise that, if I ever become a traitor, I'd receive a position far above yours."

Lu Yin sounded like he was joking, but after speaking, he raised his hand and threw out another Vacuum Palm.

There was a bang before Cheng Ji could even react. Lu Yin's Vacuum Palm struck his blade again, but the weapon was not able to endure the force of a second attack, and it shattered. The Vacuum Palm continued on, slamming into Cheng Ji and knocking him backwards into the queen ant along with the shards of the scimitar.

The queen nervously wriggled her massive body.

Blood trickled from Cheng Ji's mouth as he stared at Lu Yin in shock. "You're courting death!"

With that, the Envoy stepped forward and entered the true universe.

Envoys enjoyed more than just the advantage of suppressing the star energy of everyone with a lower cultivation realm. Another important advantage was that cultivators at the Envoy realm and above could freely enter the true universe. In other words, they could launch their attacks while remaining untouchable to Enlighters and other cultivators who could not even see the true universe.

However, Lu Yin was different. When Cheng Ji entered the true universe, Lu Yin raised his foot and stepped forward as well. His surroundings shimmered as he entered the true universe at the same time as Cheng Ji.

Chapter 1500: The Second Array Base

From the true universe, Shen Hai and the others looked like a group of automatons moving in slow motion. Lu Yin could deal with all of them however he wished. This was the superiority enjoyed by Envoys, and this feeling was inexplicable to those who could not enter the true universe for themselves.

Cheng Ji blankly stared at Lu Yin after seeing the youth enter the true universe in a casual manner. "You-how is this possible?"

A small smile appeared on Lu Yin's lips. "I'm sorry, Envoy, but I killed a powerhouse of your level when I was still a Hunter."

After speaking, Lu Yin attacked with another Vacuum Palm. It was a very powerful and fast technique, and no other attack could fulfill Lu Yin's needs like his Vacuum Palm.

Cheng Ji reflexively dodged the attack, but the Vacuum Palm was just too fast, and he ended up being struck in the shoulder. Still in shock, he pulled out another scimitar from his cosmic ring, and as he flourished the blade, the natural suppression of stellar energy appeared. Lu Yin's star energy was destabilized, but despite that, he still ignored Cheng Ji's attack and pushed his way forward.

With a bang, Cheng Ji's slash was dispersed by the Cloudguard Robes. The Envoy stared at Lu Yin in horror, feeling as though he was looking at a monster in the shape of a human. The Envoy was suddenly reminded of Hua Beibei's words: Lu Yin was the Beastmaster out of everyone in the group.

Lu Yin rushed straight at Cheng Ji and attacked with another palm strike. The pain caused Cheng Ji to grit his teeth, and his expression instantly changed. His pupils fluctuated, and he unleashed a powerful spiritual force attack at Lu Yin. Lu Yin felt his mind jostle for a moment, but that was all. Cheng Ji, on the other hand, was stunned. What had just happened?

Lu Yin grabbed ahold of Cheng Ji with a hand, and said, "Even I feel bad for you. All of your attacks are useless against me."

With that, Lu Yin squeezed hard and crushed Cheng Ji's shoulder. The Envoy let out a cry of pain and swung his scimitar at Lu Yin in an attempt to defend himself. However, all of his efforts were pointless, and Lu Yin kicked the older man out of the true universe and into the back of the queen ant.

Shen Hai and the others had already dealt with the traitors following Cheng Ji, but they were just as confused as Cheng Ji; how was Lu Yin able to enter the true universe and fight against an Envoy? Could the youth also be an Envoy?

While such thoughts swirled through Shen Hai's mind, Cheng Ji suddenly reappeared, and they watched on in shock as he crashed into the queen ant's back in a pathetic manner. The impact caused the Envoy to crush the queen ant's body, and she hissed in pain.

Lu Yin then emerged from the true universe, staring down at Cheng Ji from the sky.

An Envoy's advantages meant nothing to Lu Yin. If they rendered him, an Enlighter, unable to use star energy? Lu Yin would just use the Vacuum Palm anyways. If they entered the intangible true universe? Lu Yin could still see them. If they used an overwhelming spiritual force attack that could instantly kill an Enlighter? Lu Yin's spiritual force was comparable to that of an Envoy.

Lu Yin seemed to be the bane of Cheng Ji's existence. No matter what tactics Cheng Ji employed, he was completely helpless against Lu Yin.

Cheng Ji despaired. He was an almighty Envoy while the other party was nothing more than an Enlighter! How could there be such a large gap in strength between them?

"Just who are you?" Cheng Ji stammered out between mouthfuls of blood. After eventually finishing the question, the Envoy coughed up even more blood. Lu Yin had really not held anything back when kicking the Envoy.

Lu Yin just stared at Cheng Ji. "Just tell me, are there any more traitors?"

Cheng Ji replied with a bitter smile, "You think I'll actually tell you? What a joke!"

Lu Yin raised a finger and gave a light tap. The force from his finger tore open the void with a power that surpassed an Envoy's attack. Just one finger was enough for Lu Yin to deal with a peak Enlighter like Shen Hai.

Lu Yin's simple finger tap shattered both of Cheng Ji's legs.

“Still not talking?” Lu Yin continued his interrogation.

Behind Cheng Ji, the queen ant shrieked in pain, and all of the nearby ants converged upon the area in a frenzy, desperate to kill Lu Yin.

Lu Yin frowned at the sight and tapped his finger again. The force easily tore a hole through the queen ant’s body, ending her life.

As soon as the queen ant died, all of the other ants in the area entered a frenzy and began devouring everything in their vision. Some turned towards Shen Hai and the squad while others turned to leave.

Shen Hai let out a sigh of relief. They had actually managed to survive.

Cheng Ji stared at Lu Yin with growing intensity. “There’s no way you’re an ordinary cultivator. You-you’re from one of the four ruling powers!”

Everyone turned to stare at Lu Yin in puzzlement.

Lu Yin locked eyes with Cheng Ji before raising a hand and attacking once more. With that, Cheng Ji’s life ended.

Cheng Ji had been no different from Guan Tong and the other Redbacks; none of them would ever reveal anything. Even if Cheng Ji had not been an actual Redback, he had still been an incredibly important traitor.

“Hey Beastmaster, that was amazing! As expected of the Beastmaster,” Hua Beibei gushed, though his tone of voice sounded like he was scolding someone.

Lu Yin glanced over at the surviving squad members and asked, “Have all of you forgotten about our mission?”

It was only then that everyone remembered what they were supposed to be doing, and they all hurriedly began eradicating the nearby terror ants.

Lu Yin spent this time submitting a report regarding Cheng Ji to Xia Yan.

Xia Yan quickly sent a reply: ‘Immediately make your way to the second forward basecamp. You are allowed to reveal your status as a colonel, and you can recruit any cultivator you wish in order to form your own troops.’

The second forward basecamp?

Lu Yin called Shen Hai over and asked, “What sort of place is the second forward basecamp?”

Shen Hai was surprised by the question. “That’s the lowest part of the second array base. It’s actually located between the New World and the second array base, and it’s usually overseen by a colonel. They’ll protect that place from the attacking monsters. Why do you ask?”

“Is that place very important?”

“Extremely. It’s one of the most intense locations on the entire battlefield, and according to rumors, it’s overseen by someone known as Colonel Zuo, who’s also recognized as the local general’s second-in-command.”

Lu Yin then softly ordered, “Everybody, follow me to the second forward basecamp. They need backup.”

Everyone else’s faces displayed complete shock when Lu Yin gave out a command. Being sent to the second forward basecamp was not a mission as simple as clearing out terror ants. This new mission meant actively fighting on the main battlefield.

A few people instantly voiced their objections, “Brother Qi, we were given a mission to eliminate terror ants, not fight on the battlefield.”

“I’m sorry, but we have no desire to go to the second forward basecamp.”

“I’m sorry.”

...

Even Shen Hai spoke up, “Ah Qi, we all understand your passion for helping humanity on this battlefield and your desire to do your part in supporting the defense. However, our task is only to clear out the terror ants. We will all be instantly annihilated the moment we step onto the battlefield. We’d be scattered like ash, and we wouldn’t even be able to offer any kind of help.”

No one was willing to travel to the forward basecamp because staying on the trunk of the Mother Tree meant that there was at least a 60% chance of returning alive. However, if they stepped onto the active battlefield, their chances of surviving and returning would drop to under one percent. Going there was equivalent to going to their graves.

Lu Yin understood his companions’ feelings, as no one wanted to race towards their own deaths, and even he was no different. Unfortunately, not moving to the second forward basecamp after receiving Xia Yan’s orders would be blatant insubordination. Xia Yan knew just how important Lu Yin was, but despite that, the general had still sent Lu Yin to reinforce the defenders of the second forward basecamp. This clearly indicated just how dire the situation was on the battlefield.

This was the chief battlefield of the war between humans and the monsters. There was no one who could stay safe from the conflict.

Lu Yin looked around and saw the hesitation, fear, helplessness, confusion, and nervousness in every eye. He sighed and thought, I’m sorry, everyone. “I, Ah Qi, use my rank as a colonel to draft everyone present to move out as reinforcements for the second forward basecamp.”

As Lu Yin spoke, he took out the colonel token that he had received from Xia Yan.

Everyone stared at the token in stunned silence as a whirlwind of emotions raged through their hearts. To think that they had been with a colonel this entire time.

Only powerhouses who had survived through multiple stellar tribulations could hope to earn the rank of a colonel on the battlefield. This rank was only below the generals of the five array bases, and each colonel held the authority to give out commands on the active battlefield. Even a single glance at the

battlefield was enough for anyone to see that all of the colonels were incredible experts, and no one would ever dream that a mere Enlighter could be given such a rank.

Shen Hai was left in a complete daze. The colonel token was genuine.

Lu Yin proceeded to share the orders that he had received from Xia Yan with everyone, and he then repeated, "We will now move out for the second forward basecamp."

Everyone stayed silent and remained rooted in place.

"Do you really want to defy direct orders?" Lu Yin shouted.

One person was no longer able to suppress their frustrations, and they shouted, "The only reason why we came to the battlefield was to deal with the terror ants! It's absurd to demand us to step onto the actual battlefield! We were lied to!"

"That's right! We're not going! We were given a mission to clear out the terror ants. We absolutely refuse to reinforce the second forward basecamp."

"We're not going!"

...

Lu Yin's eyes grew sharp and a deathly chill entered his voice. "You'll be executed for refusing the general's orders."

Everyone visibly paled.

Hua Beibei licked his lips and glanced around. It was time for him to make his escape. He had no desire to step foot onto the actual battlefield, as that was nothing less than a death wish.

Shen Hai sighed. "Everyone, while there is a high probability of all of us dying after we step foot onto the battlefield, any of us who survives will have completely different lives in the future. On the other hand, you all know what fate awaits anyone who refuses to obey direct orders. Even if Ah Qi doesn't kill you himself, you'll suffer an even worse fate when you return to the second array base's headquarters. Even if you make it back to the Perennial World, what sort of life do you imagine will await you there?"

Everyone clenched tight fists. Those who did not fear death had already joined the battlefield, and the fact that these people had opted to take a mission on the Mother Tree's trunk was proof of their fear of the battlefield. Despite that, they were currently being forced to enter the battlefield.

Lu Yin frowned. "This is the last time that I'll repeat myself: follow me to assist the second forward basecamp. Those who defy orders will be immediately killed, and none will be spared."

Everybody felt a shiver travel down their spines. "Understood, Colonel."

Lu Yin caught a glimpse of Hua Beibei's shadow out of the corner of his eye. Unexpectedly, the rascal was actually trying to slip away. Lu Yin glanced sideways at Shen Hai.

The old man looked over at Hua Beibei and shook his head before immediately dragging the young man back.

“Ex- Expert- Oh, no, I mean, Beastmaster Bro! Beastmaster Bro, I’ve helped out a great deal by helping you guys find the queen ant, which saved everyone! Please let me go! I don’t want to go to the battlefield! I’m begging you!” Hua Beibei wailed miserably.

Lu Yin responded completely indifferently, “Those who don’t obey will die.”

Hua Beibei argued, “But I’m from the Celestial Frost Sect!”

“Disobedience means death.” Lu Yin’s voice lacked all emotions. He had met many people like this Hua Beibei before, and Ku Wei was a perfect example. It was best to simply not engage with these kinds of people.

Hua Beibei was terrified to the point where he no longer dared to utter a single word.

It would not be hard for them to find the second forward basecamp, as all they needed to do was travel to the bottom of the second array base.

Lu Yin led his squad back to the second array base. As they traveled, they ran into some terror ant swarms, but all of them were eliminated as the squad passed through. However, they did not make any detours to specifically clear away more terror ants, as the request for reinforcements had specified that there could be no delays.

Regardless of how fast they wanted to arrive, it was impossible for them to quickly travel to the second forward basecamp from where they had been clearing ants on the Mother Tree’s trunk.

After a day of travel, Lu Yin and the others ran into another group of people that was clearly a product of several squads merging together. Their captain was about as powerful as Shen Hai, and they were all thrilled to run into Lu Yin and his troops. The new group suggested uniting together and clearing out the terror ants as a single unit. While this would make it take much longer to complete their quotas of terror ants, it was also much safer.

然而那群人在道出这个提议后，看到的是沈海等人同情的目光。

Alas, right when the suggestion was made, Shen Hai and the others following Lu Yin shot the members of the second group looks of sympathy.

Lu Yin pulled out his colonel token and instantly announced, “By order of the general of the second array base, I’m conscripting all of you to reinforce the second forward basecamp.”

The second group instantly became upset and they adamantly refused to obey the orders. Their captain, whose strength was comparable to Shen Hai’s, also refused to obey. None of these people had ever seen Lu Yin’s strength before, so they were not nearly as polite as Shen Hai and the others. There were even some people who questioned the authenticity of Lu Yin’s colonel token simply because they felt that it was impossible for an Enlightener to be a colonel.

Lu Yin did not utter a word in retort; instead, he struck down the dissidents with a few Vacuum Palms. He intended to force some manners into them through a demonstration of strength.

With that done, no one dared to disobey the orders. Lu Yin was consistent with his policy that 'those who refuse to obey will die,' and his inflexibility scared people since they all felt threatened by the youth.

Thus, Lu Yin's troops grew, and they continued onward towards the second forward basecamp. As they traveled, they continued to clear out the terror ants, and they also forcefully conscripted whatever cultivators they ran into, causing their numbers to further swell.

Directly beneath Lu Yin and his troops, there was a metallic plain formed completely from strange and hard metals. Everyone there had to walk across the metal ground.

This metallic plain was actually the second forward basecamp that they were heading towards.