

Star Gate 101

Chapter 101: Sunderer of Hundreds (II)

“The scholarly sort!” Mu Sen sighed with emotion. “A fake scholar like Yuan Shuo somehow managed to raise a true scholar! I wonder what Li Hao thinks of his teacher now—his frail and gentle professor has suddenly turned into a demon who kills without blinking!”

He was frantic for Li Hao just thinking about it!

Liu Yan smiled woodenly and quickly changed the topic. “Inspector General, I’d like to retrieve something!”

Cut the crap! You wonder what Li Hao thinks of his teacher now? Don’t even bother wasting time on that! I’m more worried that Yuan Shuo can’t accept his student being a serial killer!

A merry Mu Sen led Liu Yan inside. He loved chit chatting with beautiful women. What a pity that Liu Yan was a rose with thorns. He enjoyed the flirting, but wouldn’t dare to catch anything if she threw herself at him.

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At the same time.

Li Hao traveled straight to the Veteris Institute instead of returning home. His teacher’s was safer at a time like this. If trouble arose when he conducted power into himself, his teacher might have a way to resolve it.

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The Yuan residence.

Yuan Shuo was home; there weren't many supernaturals lingering around Silver City. He killed a few while making a circuit and didn't know if there were more, but if there were, they would soon vanish after learning about the deaths of the others.

There were no protectors standing guard over him anymore. He didn't need them. Hu Hao and Li Meng were preoccupied, in any case. They couldn't wait to start practicing the New Book of Five Styles. Neither did Yuan Shuo want anyone keeping an eye on him, so he sent them all away.

The yard was empty when Li Hao arrived. Despite the presence of lights, it was almost midnight. Silver City had slept much more peacefully over the past two days.

"Teacher!" Li Hao saw Yuan Shuo in the living room. He realized he was hungry when he saw the professor eating—he hadn't eaten anything in twenty-four hours.

"Want some?"

"Thank you, teacher!" Li Hao sat down without another word and dug in, coming up for air when his mouth was smeared with grease.

Yuan Shuo wasn't much better when he ate. Smiling merrily, he looked at his student with rare tenderness. Ah, I've truly gotten old. Now that I'm injured, I should prepare to take off my armor and return to the fields. It's time to raise a student to inherit my banks of knowledge.

He held too many ancient tomes in his mind, ones that he'd destroyed the originals for. It would be an immense pity if they were completely lost after he died. He'd wanted to take a few years to pass on everything he knew to Li Hao. The lad wasn't the heir to his martial dao, but to his knowledge.

He'd taught the New Book of Five Styles to Li Hao just so the boy would be healthier. Who knew that would bizarrely lead him to the martial master path? Yuan Shuo had accepted a student only because of his old injuries, but that somehow facilitated his breakthrough to Dominator of Thousands.

The professor was actually quite satisfied with this student of his; it was a pity he was going to be very busy in the upcoming months. There might not be much free time to impart his learnings to the lad. It was a regretful realization.

“Little Hao!”

“Mm?” Busily munching on a drumstick, Li Hao raised his head.

“Don’t go home for a while.” Yuan Shuo smiled cheerfully. “I’m going to be busy in the days to come and will find some time to teach you at night. You might not have use for this knowledge right now, but they could be immensely useful in the future!”

Take the Incantation of the Blade of Blood, the New Book of Five Styles, the Breathing Method of the Five Styles for example... Many of these stemmed from ancient tomes. He modified them to better suit modern martial masters, and that was only the tip of the iceberg!

He often came across records or descriptions in the past that he attributed to fantasies or speculations of the ancients. But now that he considered them again, was that truly the case?

Yuan Shuo nursed a grand notion of connecting all of those texts together to see if he could forge a new path for martial dao. Although their text was a bit worn down, that didn’t matter! He could reconstruct them inch by inch and revise them bit by bit. The New Book of Five Styles didn’t fully originate from the ruins either. He’d restored it by himself and it proved just fine for cultivation. It simply took a very long time to accomplish.

Li Hao nodded without protest. He always listened to his teacher.

“Then we start tonight...”

“Not tonight!” the young man suddenly interrupted. “I need to absorb mysterious power tonight. I don’t know if you’ve discovered, teacher, but elemental attributes can be separated from the

mysterious power. They can be divided into a ball of attributed energy and a ball of unattributed power! The unattributed strengthens the body while the attributed improves the organs. I'm not entirely sure of this, but when I separated the earth energy before, I enhanced my spleen!"

"Are you sure?" Yuan Shuo started. He truly hadn't realized this!

"Yes! It requires the energy from the little sword though, or else it's impossible!"

"Mysterious power can strengthen the organs?" Yuan Shuo muttered with newfound emphasis. "Martial masters strengthen only the bones and muscle as they progress through Slayer and Sunderer. Only when they reach Dominator do they refresh the blood, which then reciprocates the effects onto the organs! However, it's an extremely long process!"

This was odd, didn't mysterious power devour internal force? He hadn't felt it when absorbing energy, but after it burgeoned in his body, he discovered that it consumed his internal force. But now the lad said it could be used to strengthen the organs? Wasn't this a shortcut? What was the reason behind this? And what was the difference compared to directly absorbing mysterious power? What were the little sword's effects?

A myriad of thoughts sparked in his mind; Yuan Shuo looked toward Li Hao. "Other than the consciousness, the crux of the Dominator level is the strengthening of the organs. Only then is one a walking god! Or else, even poison might kill a Dominator. If the organs are not strong enough, that affects the meridians, bones, and skin. The singular breath of qi that we hold in our bodies is insufficient to strengthen the organs!

"Are you preparing to absorb mysterious power and build up your internals?" he asked again after some thought.

"That's my plan!" Li Hao nodded. "Teacher, I think the effects might be better and more comprehensive if we focus on training the external and internal at the same time! Otherwise, each reverberation of internal force might harm the organs. That's why a lot of martial masters grapple with sustained injuries after a fight."

Almost every martial master carried their share of wounds. Any who were unharmed were walking proof of one thing—they were a fake martial master who did not engage in fights!

“That’s just as well!” Yuan Shuo nodded. “You should absolutely strengthen your organs if you can! We don’t because we don’t have a way. If there is a way, you need to enhance your internals before that sword of yours is depleted!”

“It will prove immensely useful for you in the future if you succeed. My only concern is that there’s too little energy left in the sword.”

He didn’t consider the same possibility for himself. It was more likely that he would exhaust the sword after a tiny amount of strengthening. In that case, it was better for Li Hao to forge solid foundations.

“Stop eating!” Yuan Shuo roughly hauled the young man up when the latter bent down for more food. What are you stuffing your face for?! I wouldn’t have let you eat if I knew you had proper business to take care of!

Li Hao didn’t mind his teacher and continued chewing on his mouthful of chicken. He was satisfied only after swallowing everything in his mouth.

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There was a large training room in Yuan Shuo’s residence. He practiced in the yard when the weather was good, moving indoors when the weather was bad.

“Hurry up and begin! Show me this process!” The professor threw Li Hao onto a seat cushion.

“Teacher!” Li Hao interjected. “Let’s not be in a hurry. I can sense that I’m about to enter Sunderer of Hundreds, but what is that level? What are its characteristics? What do I need to keep an eye out for as I make the breakthrough?”

He didn't know any of this!

Yuan Shuo started, coming back to his senses with a mixture of emotions. Although he'd kept saying that Li Hao would soon progress to Sunderer, it was another thing entirely to actually see his student break through.

When did he ascend to that level?

Yuan Shuo started training as a young boy and became a Slayer when he was a teenager. He crossed into Sunderer in his twenties, reaching peak Sunderer in his forties. He then swept through the martial dao society of Silver Moon and dominated the local scene. The next thirty years were spent on trying to break through to Dominator, and he didn't succeed until recently.

But Li Hao...

The rise of the supernatural was also good for martial masters as they could use mysterious power to more easily strengthen themselves. Numerous thoughts flashed through Yuan Shuo's mind, settling on guilt that he hadn't taught the lad any of this. The final disciple of a Dominator not knowing martial dao? It would be so shameful if word of this got out!

"I mentioned before that Slayer and Sunderer focuses purely on physical strength! Dominator touches on the mental level—what we often refer to as the consciousness! Thus, Dominators are easiest to identify and determine!

"Slayers produce internal force, resonating their meridians and bones in unison. These characteristics represent that you have truly joined the ranks of martial masters! Internal force originates from the daily practice of martial methods and secret arts. We have another avenue now in the form of absorbing unattributed mysterious power. It fortifies the body and swiftly generates internal force. However, this may be a double edged sword, so consider its use wisely!

“Slayer of Tens is the process of strengthening internal force. The stronger internal force is, the stronger the body. This holds true no matter the context!

“Sunderers... are determined through battle. In the past, one was deemed a Sunderer only after defeating a company of one hundred troops on the battlefield! This is less important in modern times as it’s hard to find a company willing to fight you without hot weapons!

“Thus, cultivation level is one thing and actual combat strength is another in our times!”

Li Hao bobbed his head as he listened intently.

“There’s one hallmark of Sunderers, and that is the projection of internal force!”

The young man jerked with surprise.

“Whether it’s mysterious power or internal force, the human body acts as a seal for both of them! When your internal force can reach beyond the body to project outward, protecting oneself and attacking enemies, that means you have reached the Sunderer cultivation level!”

“External projection? Teacher, how is that achieved?”

“It’s a natural reaction from the body, not an action you purposefully undertake. Your internal force will naturally extend outward and break a barrier when you reach Sunderer. All you need is the requisite physique and powerful internal force!”

That sounded easy, but in reality... Well, Li Hao still thought it was very easy. So it’s just external projection! I get it!

“Then there must be a division of strong and weak among Sunderers. How do we determine that?”

“In the traditional martial master world, we divide Sunderers into the initial, mid, late, and peak stage. They correspond to the Crescent, Halfmoon, and Fullmoon of the supernatural Darkmoon. For them, there’s also a Plenilune[1] before they set foot into Sunflare. It should correlate with the peak stage of Sunderers. The moon perfects itself only to wane, a concept that also applies to peak Sunderers! Those who are unable to progress beyond this stage will begin to decline instead!”