

Star Gate 108

Chapter 108: The Dragon Hidden in the Abyss (III)

“Lend me your blade for now.” Yuan Shuo nodded. “You won’t have use for it in the short run since the impact is too violent. Its energy functions the same as mysterious power for you, just a little better. I’ll compensate you with more mysterious power, so let me borrow this for now!”

The stone blade was very useful for him—a key factor in whether or not he could fight Solars.

“Alright!” Li Hao nodded and stabbed forward with the sword.

Pfft!

The small sword seemed to puncture a membrane, revealing the scarlet shadow. It remained unmoving and hovered in the air without struggle. Yuan Shuo took his first clear look at the shadow. The lad’s sword can make these things show themselves!

He walked up for a close inspection, studying it with care and infusing it with a bit of internal force.

“Impressive!” he sighed with appreciation a few moments later. “This is an entity of energy, not a physical entity. It’s made of pure energy. Under normal circumstances, things made of energy are tangible and visible. I didn’t discover this one, however, because there’s a special mental energy inside it!”

“Mental energy?”

“The aura and consciousness that I mentioned!” Yuan Shuo sized it up again and mulled over his words. “Whoever made this is quite the expert! But... it resembles something I once saw in an ancient book.”

“What?”

“Blood shadow puppets!” A light glinted in Yuan Shuo’s eyes. “It’s nothing good and if it really is what’s recorded in the ancient records, it’s very difficult to get rid of. A human being is needed to nurture it and in the end, this thing devours whoever’s commanding it. It absorbs and digests everything about its caretaker. Heh, it’ll be interesting if Ying Hongyue is behind this. Does the guy want to combine all puppets as one?”

“Teacher, do you mean...”

“When these scarlet shadows devour their supernaturals, they grow stronger in the process. They’re filled with the unique energy that we absorbed. Whoever created it might know this too and treat those supernaturals as nourishment!”

The look in Li Hao’s eyes shifted slightly when he understood. Ying Hongyue? Then this meant that the man knew scarlet shadow energy was beneficial to the body. But...

“Do you mean that Ying Hongyue practices martial dao, teacher?” Li Hao quickly asked.

“He used to, but he’s supernatural now. Even so, he was once a veteran martial master, so perhaps he still makes use of martial dao at times. Maybe he has different ideas in mind.”

Both Li Hao and Yuan Shuo had personally experienced the unparalleled benefits of scarlet shadows for martial masters.

“Who cares, this thing is nice!” Yuan Shuo chuckled after further observation. “Though it’s not as strong as the one before, it’s enough for you. You should absorb some after setting foot into Sunderer of Hundreds. This thing fortifies internal force and rivals the effects of mysterious power for supernaturals! I’d love to run into Ying Hongyue and question how he made these. I want to create a bunch to eat as snacks!”

The professor reached forward. As the scarlet shadow was now visible to the naked eye, he could do whatever he wanted with it. Yuan Shuo popped it with a clench, scattering the scarlet energy. It swiftly gathered together again, but the professor kneaded it into a ball.

Smiling, he shoved it into a tiny jug. “Hurry and absorb them, it’s best if you do so before I leave. Their creator might notice otherwise. How many more are there?”

“There’s one more here and two in other areas that I checked out. There’s three at the place where teacher killed the supernaturals...”

Seven total! Li Hao had killed another tiny one before this, which made for eight. The final tally was eight scarlet shadows accompanying ten supernaturals on the mission a few nights ago. Divine Brokensky had brought one and the dead Sunflare didn’t have one. Perhaps he’d gone without because he was Ying Hongyue’s son.

“Good, take them all. Leave one for me to study, you take the rest.”

The smaller scarlet shadows weren’t useful for Yuan Shuo as they weren’t strong. Thus, he was only interested in studying them, not absorbing them. If he could make them as well, would he need to fear a lack of shortcuts for martial masters in the future?

This thing was much more useful than mysterious power!

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Teacher and disciple ran all through the city on this night, working into the wee hours of the morning to collect seven scarlet shadows. Li Hao left one for this teacher and took the rest. There was no time for Yuan Shuo to hold a class tonight. He darted into his study with the shadow to begin his analysis.

Instead of being in a hurry to consume the shadow's energy, Li Hao wanted to see what benefits the cubes of wind and thunder energy would bring him. One cube was a very small amount of power, but he wished to try. If the five elements corresponded to the five organs, what did wind and thunder map to?

He swiftly absorbed thunder energy first, letting thunder and lightning rampage through his body at will. It was indeed worthy of being regarded as the strongest offensive element. Its impact was the most pronounced! Out of all the energies he'd come in contact with, only the blade was a little bit stronger. The rest were slightly removed from these heights.

But as forceful as it was, it didn't seem further distinct from mysterious power. It resulted in the same effects on the body as the others. Thunder energy began dispersing after momentary stimulation of internal force. It didn't summon his supernatural locks.

Plainly, thunder wasn't a good match for Li Hao. It wouldn't push him into making the crossover.

The young man didn't mind. It'd be too easy if one cube was all that it took. He pulled a little on the jade sword to neutralize the thunder. A ball of pure thunder and lightning darted through his body, soundlessly sinking into his bones.

Li Hao blinked. My... bones? A numbing sensation swiftly crawled through his body like a minor electric shock.

"Ah!" he called out softly. The door to the training room slammed open. Yuan Shuo frowned to see his student having moaned with an expression of enjoyment.

"Young man, I understand what you're going through, but this is the training room in your teacher's house! Discard those stray thoughts! You should be either sleeping or training at a time like this, not filling your mind with that kind of mess! If you're really that hungry... figure out a solution yourself!"

"That's not it, teacher, I..."

“That’s good, no need for explanations!” Yuan Shuo waved him off. “I’ve been in your shoes before, I understand! Those who walk the path of martial dao brim with vigor and have greater desire for these things. What I’m most impressed with is that you found release without the aid of supplemental items... What a talent!”

The professor shook his head with admiration. “Ah, to hell with it. I’ve collected a few nice things over the years. Help yourself to the study. The third row of shelves is filled with that kind of material—it’s so much better than relying on your imagination! But damn, kid, you’re really something!”

“That’s not it, teacher, I was training!”

“I understand!” Yuan Shuo nodded. “That’s what I told my teacher when he caught me in the act. I also said I was training! It’s all the same script!”

He turned and left. He knew the drill! That’s how I lied to my teacher when I was young! It is the peak of mortification if a boy is discovered halfway. It’s very normal for him to deny everything.

Li Hao stared, slack jawed, shaking his head wordlessly. Teacher, really... what do I say now? I really was training, what was he thinking of?

“So thunder energy can strengthen bones?” Li Hao couldn’t be bothered with explaining anything. His teacher would understand sooner or later. What could wind do?

Time to keep experimenting!

He quickly absorbed wind power—it was less violent than thunder. It made him feel like he was flying after he absorbed it, like he was floating!

Li Hao used the jade sword to neutralize it once more. Wind energy flurried through his body once it was distilled; the young man... didn't sense anything upon close inspection. But he did feel vaguely different. He brightened when he rose to his feet and moved around.

"Wind energy seems to have made me lighter!" He couldn't point to any specifics; it had simply melded into his body. It didn't improve any singular function, but made him lighter overall. "I'll be faster this way!"

Martial masters focused on speed, strength, and the physique. Such were the core! Wind energy melted right into his body. Perhaps this was what was meant by being as light as a swallow.

He quickly operated the breathing method to practice Birdshot!

Birdshot was the true levitation art of the Five Styles. Li Hao waved his arms around like a bird in flight. He resembled a panicky flapping hen when he tried the art before, but this time he felt differently due to the lightness of his body. He traveled a small distance forward when he waved his hands!

The young man's eyes lit up. Wind energy was wonderful! If he absorbed enough to modify his physique, he might really be able to take to the sky. He'd be able to respond accordingly if he met flying supernaturals.

"Thunder enhances bone, wind lightens the body, and the five elements strengthen the organs..." Li Hao sensed that if he came into his own as a martial master, he would be much more well-rounded than supernaturals. There would be a lot fewer drawbacks for him to deal with. At the very least, he wouldn't be weakened on a rainy day like fire supernaturals were!

The young man was very excited on this night, trying Birdshot again and again. Yuan Shuo shook his head at the sound of his student giving himself a head full of bumps next door. Silly child, you can't use Birdshot yet

Under normal circumstances, Birdshot was a technique that peak Sunderers could barely employ. It utilized the consciousness to fly through the sky, albeit to lesser effect than supernatural flight. It did, however, enable the martial master to flap through several hundred meters before having to land almost immediately.