

## Star Gate 231

### Chapter 231: Three's Company (III)

“That’s true...” Upon further thought, the Revolution King couldn’t bear to damage the suit of bronze armor either. Metal supernaturals were only good for attacking, they had no other abilities to their name. They suddenly seemed a bit worthless to him.

Of course, the Revolution King didn’t say any of this.

A wild gust of wind swept through the air, sweeping up the tirelessly fighting Bronze Armor. The wind then transformed into chains that locked the soldier into the air! However, the soldier was not attacked while held in the sky. Plainly, the airborne attacks did not target the soldiers.

Bronze Armor continued to struggle, but it was futile. The Revolution King was a peak Solar and carried an origin weapon. He stood at the pinnacle of Silver Moon. A mere centurion in bronze armor would not defy him!

Cut off from its source of energy when separated from the ground, Bronze Armor’s struggles began to weaken. Just when the Revolution King felt that the target was in hand, light erupted from the soldier and it exploded into pieces!

“What?!” gasped the Revolution King. It’d exploded? Self detonation? How was that possible??

In his view, these soldiers simply followed gut instincts from the ancient times. They were long dead and their intelligence scattered with life. It was some final commands that compelled them to follow standing orders and kill trespassers.

How would one self-detonate after being captured and severed from its source of power? And how could such resilient armor break like that?? What was the reason behind all this?

Unless... it wasn't the soldier that'd initiated the self-detonation, but the armor itself that was equipped with special abilities. For instance, it would trigger a self-destruction sequence if it continuously failed to find a source of energy.

The Revolution King cast a quick glance at the Black Armors. He heaved a sigh of relief to see that they were fine.

"The bronze armor is likely higher level equipment," he postulated. "The city lord might not have wanted it to end up in the hands of others and programmed it to self-detonate if it lost its source of energy. The black armor was possibly just standard issue, so it was not programmed in the same way."

He bore a keen eye and quickly determined the reason for the destruction. Now this was a bit of a pity. This meant they could only bring back the sets of black armor. Who knew if they could cancel that command for the bronze armor? It might take venturing into the inner city to do so.

"Milord," asked the metal supernatural Yao Cheng. "The Night Watchers have explored this area many times, so might they own a few sets of black armor? They might have been unwilling to reveal that possession before."

Did the Night Watchers have any? They couldn't possibly have left empty-handed every time they explored. Perhaps they had some, and maybe they'd already raised an army of martial masters in the dark. If that was the case... they'd hidden this trump card well!

This was the other organizations' first time in. If they retreated now, they could leave with almost one hundred sets of black armor when the door opened tonight. While the Night Watchers weren't too strong, they weren't weaklings either. If they came again and again, even just once a month, that made for thirty-six visits in the three years since they'd discovered these ruins.

While such gains may not be on the table each time, they could have more than one thousand sets in storage if they weren't too greedy.

Hearts pounded with alarm at the possibility. Was this the case? If so, the Night Watchers had hidden themselves deeply! Even without sufficient numbers of martial masters to suit up in armor, three years was enough to raise a new crop of martial masters.

“I’m not sure about the Silver Moon Night Watchers...” The Revolution King rummaged through his memories instead of immediately responding. “But the black armor reminds me of something. Apparently, there’s a troop of elite imperial guards in the central region that are heavily armored martial masters! They were active when the imperial family was still conquering the world—they stood invincible against any opponent they met. Do you think that the Skystar imperial family found a set of ruins like these back in the day?”

He suddenly turned his thoughts to the ruling imperial family. They’d risen with extreme speed and swiftly built a large army. The linchpin to their military might were elite imperial guards that could not be matched by anyone else. In that era before the supernatural rose, their martial masters were almost invincible when they put on their armor!

Could it be that this ancient city wasn’t the only one?

If that was the case, then it was a further demonstration of its importance. The explorers didn’t know how many Black Armors there were. If there were a lot, they could slowly whittle away at the soldiers and form a great army themselves.

This was a terrifying existence!

“Forget it, take these sets of armor with us and continue forward.”

“Do we still move on, milord?” someone asked softly. They’d made great gains. Wouldn’t they run into more Black Armors if they continued forward? There were a limited number of them, after all.

“Yao Cheng, take some people and probe ahead. The rest of us will await Red Moon and the others.” The Revolution King thought it over. “Although our harvest is richer if we’re the first ones

in, the danger is much greater as well. A higher price needs to be paid and more will end up dying. This will damage our strength too much, so send some people out as scouts first!”

They had to wrap their heads around some information, at least.

“Remember, try not to use your supernatural abilities. Do not make a sound or cast light. You will attract attention from the Black Armors again. And finally, do not fly. That is the most dangerous action you can take!”

Yao Cheng hesitated, but quickly accepted his orders. Whether it was Black or Bronze Armors, neither could harm him. There wasn't much danger so long as he didn't run around haphazardly and blunder into the inner city.

He waved a hand and quickly walked to the depths of the street with eight other powerhouses. Yao Cheng was very careful in his movements and didn't dare exude too much mysterious power, for fear of arousing a response on a greater scale.

Hong Yitang murmured a few words to his people. A few disengaged from the delegation and walked forward.

The independent supernaturals that'd survived their first engagement looked around the area. Some of them darted out again; the two great organizations did not stop them. The more people who wished to risk themselves for finding the correct route, the better. If it wasn't for the information they'd brought back earlier, the organizations would've all brashly taken to the sky. Who knew how many would die with that action?

So sometimes, these wandering cultivators were still proved to be useful. It didn't matter if they walked away with a few benefits. As rich as one person's harvest may be, they could not compare to the big organizations. Yama had already reaped one hundred sets of black armor from the earlier fight.

Of course, the Revolution King was no fool. He quickly backed out of the plaza with his people staying behind, taking the armor with them. This zone potentially drew more attention from Black Armors if anyone set foot in it. While he wasn't afraid, he didn't know how many of the enemy there were. Would he lose the war of attrition if he didn't kill them all at once?

The streets were quiet once more. However, a few new shadows could be seen shifting through the streets. The two main organizations and independent supernaturals disappeared into an alley. Spearheaded by a Solar, they were a crew of more than twenty.

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The trio had long since shifted from their plaza location. When they returned to their original alleyway, Liu Long heaved an emotional sigh and muttered, "Solars are terrifying indeed!"

He was ever more reverential when he thought of Yuan Shuo. The professor slayed Solars while just being another Dominator. When Liu Long thought of himself, he knew there was no hope for him to battle a Bronze Armor in the same way that the Solar level Yao Cheng had.

When the chains easily caught the Bronze Armor, Liu Long realized that it'd only take a split second before he died to the same attack. The gap between them was too great!

But Yuan Shuo planned on shattering this distance! Liu Long fancied himself on the same level as the professor when he entered Dominator. The more he thought about it now, the more he was mortified. Forget it, there was just too large of a difference between them! Not to mention, Yuan Shuo was a Summoner of Spirit now.

"Let's talk about something else for a second, chief," Li Hao suddenly muttered. "When Yama sent out their scouts, I saw Li Dahu among them!"

As an earth supernatural, it was normal to be tasked for investigation duty. They were more effective against Black Armors if there was a chance encounter. Earth supernaturals could seal off

the ground and cause the soldiers to lose their flow of energy. That left the coast clear for even an initial Sunflare like Li Dahu to eliminate the enemy.

Liu Long inclined his head, but still cautioned, “I see that Yao Cheng is with them as well...”

“Then we follow them and wait for them to split up!” Li Hao whispered. “They can’t stay together forever. They’ll certainly explore different areas so long as danger isn’t imminent. A larger group will attract more attention and whether it’s a supernatural or martial master, who doesn’t want to find treasure by themselves? An entire outer city is open to them right now, do you think they’ll be able to restrain themselves, chief? Will Yao Cheng lead all of them together the entire time?”

No way!

At least, Li Hao didn’t think so.

Liu Long’s eyes darted around as he thought rapidly. “Then let’s follow them!” He nodded.

“It’s too dangerous.” Liu Yan was the one hesitating. “Any fighting that breaks out will immediately attract Black Armors and other powerhouses... Why don’t we wait for Red Moon and the Night Watchers to come as well...”

“We can’t,” Li Hao swiftly interrupted. “There will be people everywhere then, which will make it more dangerous! All we need to do now is keep our movements more contained—they’ll think that their comrades have run into Black Armors! The soldiers are like us and don’t have supernatural ripples emanating from them...”

“It’d be better if we can get three sets of armor and be imposter soldiers!” the young man said sadly, but then brightened. “You know what, why don’t we... actually go get three suits?”

They knew an effective way against the soldiers thanks to the Revolution King! One just needed to sever their connection to the ground. The only difficulty would be opening the suit of armor, but

that didn't matter. They could force their way in. His sword could absolutely create an incision, to say nothing of anything else. It was fine if they damaged the armor a little!

"It may not work..." Liu Long's mind worked rapidly, but he followed Li Hao's reasoning. "Real Black Armors might be able to detect something amiss with us. Otherwise, the Night Watchers could've done the same if they collected any and made it into the inner city uncontested."

Li Hao nodded. There might be some identification mechanisms between the soldiers. But we're not looking to get into the inner city! We just want to pretend to be them and kill people! We don't need to pull the wool over the soldiers.

#### Chapter 232: Three's Company (IV)

"Whatever," Li Hao whispered. "We stand a high chance of success. I've noticed after a few times that it's only one Black Armor patrolling at the back end of the alley, while one comes first at this front end, then the squad of ten! We can remove the two who patrol by themselves and think of a way to get a third suit of armor. There looks to be Black Armors on every street. They're either solo or part of ten!"

Prolonged observation had helped him collect some information. The squads of ten were difficult to manage. It wasn't that they were impossible to fight, but that once the disturbance grew too big, it would bring over a much more sizable company.

The solo Black Armor that came first might be a scout for the rest of the squad. Li Hao didn't really care about the particulars. If the soldiers mobilized en masse, it would likely be for the Yama delegation.

Liu Long quickly came to a decision after thinking it over. "Let's do it!"

Liu Yan wasn't part of the decision-making process at a time like this. Since the two had come to a consensus, they sprang into action. Hunched over, they crept to the back end of the valley and waited for the individually patrolling soldier to pass by. There was already a plan of action when it did.

“Chief, I’ll erupt with the aura of the earth and shake the Black Armor off the ground! Your task is simple—attack fiercely. Throw it up into the air until it loses support from the ground and reverts to being a suit of armor. We win then! We’re not supernaturals, so we don’t have special crowd control skills. It’s all up to you!”

All previous efforts would be in vain if Liu Long let their quarry hit the ground! This would be an immense test of a martial master’s mastery of control.

“I watched Yama’s fight with them earlier. It takes approximately a minute before Black Armors are unable to put up a fight. The squad of ten arrived roughly one minute later. So you have to find a way to keep things moving, chief. Drag it into the alley if possible!”

Liu Long took a deep breath. Hot damn, your requests are getting harder and harder to fulfill! But he still nodded after thinking it over. “Don’t worry!”

Black Armors were just Darkmoon, he was a Dominator. Although it would be difficult, he could still accomplish the task.

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Moments later.

A Black Armor marched their way with resolute steps, mechanically scanning the premises around it. Li Hao activated the aura of earth when it approached the alley. A soundless tremor ran through the ground, but the young man wanted to vomit blood. The ground contained a unique energy that came with a backlash. It nearly shook him to the point of coughing up blood!

However, earlier experimentation told him that he would be able to maintain the operation of his aura under these circumstances.

As expected, Black Armor was jolted off the ground. Liu Long struck like a cheetah, dashing out to punch the soldier up into the air like a missile strike. This required extreme control; the man executed it with trepidation. Thank goodness these soldiers didn’t make a sound! He’d wrapped his

fist with the waves to deaden the sound of impact as much as possible. Neither did he dare take to the air to continue the job. He could only wait for the soldier to fall down before carefully punching it again.

This was similar to preventing a balloon from landing on the floor. He couldn't hit the soldier so hard that it deviated from its original trajectory. If it flew toward the other end of the alley, it would quickly bump into the team of ten.

Liu Long punched rhythmically with great apprehension. As he cocked his hand back for the next blow, Black Armor suddenly struggled off the flight path and redirected itself toward the other end of the alley.

Liu Long jerked with shock and Li Hao rushed forward. The young man punched forward as well, throwing the soldier back to the path they determined for it. Both martial masters were drenched with sweat! The crisp sound of impact from Li Hao's blow traveled a little too far in the quiet streets.

Li Hao swallowed hard. When the soldier next drifted down, Liu Long grabbed it by the head and dragged it into the alley. Heart in his mouth, Li Hao quickly followed his companion. Repositioned inside the alley, the two of them furiously punched the soldier upward.

Time ticked by as Black Armor began to stiffen. The next time it descended, Li Hao and Liu Long grabbed its legs and head, pinning it in place. Both of them froze, waiting for something.

The expected footsteps sounded once more. A small team passed by the alley they were in. The two were soaked with sweat when the soldiers moved away; there was no further movement from their Black Armor.

Li Hao smiled, Liu Long answered with a grin. They'd gotten their first suit of armor!

The young man groped around their battle spoil. This thing seemed to be one solid whole—how did one put it on? There had to be a special way, but this wasn't the time to study the treasure. Li Hao

gripped Stellaris and tried to pinpoint where to make an incision. They needed to be able to wear it properly after he damaged it—it couldn't split open in the middle of battle.

“Go in through the crotch area!” Liu Long whispered. “We'll burrow in from a small hole there. While martial masters aren't in the habit of practicing body contortion, we can do it when the situation calls for it. No one pays attention to the crotch, it's more discreet!”

Cutting an opening in the seams of the crotch and crawling in through there wouldn't be too conspicuous. Thus, Li Hao nodded after some thought. It was a good idea.

He quickly slashed his sword over the armor. There was no questioning Stellaris' keen edge. Armor that Sunflares could not damage quickly gave way to his blade. While Liu Long didn't say anything, his mind swirled with judgment.

This was the true sword of the Lis! Its sharpness knew no bounds!

Li Hao saw a faint glimpse of white bone when he sliced the armor open—it was quickly reduced to dust and vanished inside the armor. He didn't feel much for these ancient soldiers. They faithfully executed their standing orders in an admirable display of professionalism. But sadly, he needed their equipment. There was no time to grieve or honor these ancients.

The young man looked at himself, then at Liu Long. The captain's body shape seemed to fit this suit of armor more.

“Chief, you go in!”

Liu Long cursed under his breath and lifted the suit up. He shoved his head into the crotch area, bones popping and cracking as he did so. He fitted himself inside after a while, but his legs were still exposed outside. He tried withdrawing his legs; it took numerous attempts before he stuffed them into the armor. However, that widened the split in the crotch in the process.

Li Hao took a close look at the armor after Liu Long was fully inside. There weren't any abnormalities to be seen so long as one didn't look at the crotch area. Liu Long had ripped his own pants as he shifted into his equipment. The young man couldn't help but say, "Chief, your legs are kinda pale. They're a bit conspicuous in the dark!"

Since there was an opening in the lower body and they didn't have a way to close it, some flashes of white could be seen from the inner thighs. Liu Long's legs really were a bit pale. The captain cursed lowly, a sound mostly muffled by the armor.

Li Hao ignored him and scuttled over to one of the walls, swiping some black dust from the corner. He quickly ran back to wipe it over Liu Long's legs. That more or less covered the flashes of white.

Liu Long tested his new equipment with a few punches. "The armor is durable, but very agile to control on the inside," he remarked with appreciation. "It's very soft. The ancient civilization was incredible! This doesn't affect martial master prowess at all!"

A solid set of armor was a shackle at times, but this one didn't detract from his movement at all. Liu Long was astonished. This kind of craftsmanship had truly reached its peak in the era of the ancient civilization!

"Stop admiring it, we need to get another!" Li Hao didn't have time to talk about this with the man. Red Moon had entered shortly after Yama. There might be a large crowd of supernaturals here soon, so they needed three suits of armor as quickly as possible.

As for whether or not Yama would pose as Black Armors themselves... They could if they could bring themselves to damage the armor. Not to mention, this equipment didn't seem suited for supernaturals. If that kind of superhuman wore it, it might isolate their mysterious power.

While Li Hao was yet to confirm this theory and wasn't a supernatural himself, he'd noticed that none of the earlier supernatural attacks had pierced through the armor. If it was ineffective from the outside in, would it be effective from the inside out?

It wasn't likely!

Martial masters were the only possible candidates. Of the three great organizations, the strongest martial master that the young man knew was Hong Yitang's daughter. She was a late Sunderer, so he wasn't worried at all about her. The others, including Hong Yitang himself, were all supernaturals.

Therefore, Li Hao wasn't worried about meeting fake Black Armors. If he did, they were looking to die. He had the Dominator Liu Long on his side. Even if they ran into a disguised Solar, that supernatural was just going to their death since the armor restricted supernatural abilities.

The trio began their second hunt. Armed with previous experience, they conducted the second hunt with skill and quickly bagged their second suit of armor. This one went to Liu Yan because it was much shorter. Li Hao was concerned that his calves would remain outside if he tried it on.

The third set was harder to obtain because they needed to visit the street that Yama's scouts were on. They would find the third solo Black Armor there.

Two Black Armors and one young man ran toward the street ahead. Some clangs could be heard in the distance—more supernaturals had likely encountered the soldiers. None of the trio were in the mood to gather information. They needed to disguise themselves first.

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The process for the third suit was full of excitement. Some supernaturals arrived as soon as they immobilized the soldier. Thankfully, the trio ran off too quickly to be seen. The streets were no longer quiet as others had arrived. Plainly, Red Moon had reached this area throughout the course of them handling Black Armors. The bulk of their delegation was yet to convene—these were their scouts.

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Three Black Armors stood on the streets a few minutes later. They seemed a bit awkward and stiff, their footsteps unable to be in unison like regular Black Armors. If one observed them closely, they would discover damage to the crotch area.

However, this was the best disguise that the trio could think of.

A group of three was also a stark contrast to the other soldiers. They were usually one or a team of ten. However, Li Hao was betting on the fact that the other explorers wouldn't notice this peculiarity.

### Chapter 233: Slaying Sunflare (I)

Footsteps sounded on the streets. A supernatural held his breath in a corner, freezing in place. His mysterious power was compressed into his body; not a particle leaked out. Listening intently in the darkness, he sighed with relief when the sound slowly faded away.

Solars easily handled Black Armors, but he couldn't. As a Plenilune, he could summon the wind and rain in the outside world so long as he didn't run afoul of the three great organizations and Night Watchers. Not even the Sword Sect would easily move against a Plenilune.

But here, all of the organizations had sent their elites. More importantly, a group of Sunflares had died as soon as they entered the ancient city. Darkmoons weren't worth anything in comparison.

These Black Armors were easily identifiable as the lowest level soldiers of the ancient city. However, they could still kill Darkmoons or even Sunflares! There were too many restrictions against supernaturals in this place.

A tragic tinge crept into the supernatural's thoughts when his thoughts traveled here. He didn't want to explore anymore, but as a Yama member, there would be nothing but death in store if he dared desert now.

Yama had raised them. Desertion was betrayal. No one who betrayed a large organization ever met with a good end.

The hairs stood on the back of his neck while his thoughts kept him company. A sharp sword stabbed forward in the dark!

Pfft! A head tumbled to the ground. Three Black Armors soundlessly appeared behind him.

The soldiers were accompanied by the sound of footsteps. When the footsteps drifted away, that indicated the soldiers were gone. Anyone who made the observation would draw this conclusion, and this was the proper concept to hold. Black Armors walked on the ground, but these three were fake.

When the footsteps disappeared was when supernaturals were most relaxed. After the fake trio created the sound of footsteps, they quickly silenced it in the darkness. At that time, it was child's play for martial masters to noiselessly approach supernaturals that were doing their best imitation of mundanes.

Everyone knew to not release mysterious power when Black Armors were around. But without their superhuman abilities, supernaturals were just ordinary people. They died to a single sword stroke!

Li Hao didn't recognize his victim. Judging from the apparel, it was someone from Yama. Other than staying away from Night Watchers when he was on the hunt, it didn't matter which of the others he killed. A Plenilune was better than nothing. They might gain fifty cubes from this supernatural—this was no Sunflare, after all. These also weren't ideal circumstances to fully extract mysterious power. It would be a job well done to claim a portion. Thus, he'd get roughly twenty-five cubes from this Plenilune. That amount would be quickly absorbed.

There was no need to clean up the corpse as the city's ground was the best processor. This area would return to what it was before long. Everything and the body would be swallowed whole.

This was a city that ate people! So long as one was not seen committing the deed, the darkness hid many evil and dangerous things.

Moments later, footsteps sounded again. This was the cue for the living to take cover! Their suits of black armor were the best possible protective tool. As for mysterious power, Li Hao absorbed it as they walked. Who cared if some was lost with this crude procedure?

There were supernaturals everywhere, so many for the taking! They could kill another one after digesting this one. There would always be another that came along.

Li Hao bore no goodwill for the major organizations. The same went for Liu Long. Other than the Night Watchers, supernaturals were all heretics in his eyes. They were the source of misfortunes that plagued the world. One dead was one less that roamed the land!

Behind them, the headless body slowly sank into the ground.

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In a location not too far away from Li Hao and the others.

Hu Po—Li Dahu—waited with two Darkmoons. Their expressions grew consecutively darker the longer they waited. Staring at the house ahead of them, they had to conclude that their comrade was dead.

Li Dahu had had three Darkmoons under his command moments ago. He sent one of them into a structure that was possibly a tavern. Instead of a deeper investigation, however, all that came back was a muffled thump and no sign of other movement.

These houses seemed to be monsters that ate people. Anyone who went in never ventured out again.

“Damn it!” Li Dahu cursed, irritated. The guy was dead! This place was too dangerous! They needed to avoid the constantly patrolling Black Armors while exploring the premises. All of the houses were off limits. Whoever entered one disappeared.

Should they turn back now? How would they explain themselves if they did? Was he supposed to report that the houses ate people and... nothing else?

Li Dahu looked in the other direction of the street. There was some faint light to be found there. It might be the inner city that the Night Watchers spoke of if it was brighter there. Maybe they should take a look in that direction?

But what if it was very dangerous?

“Screw it!” he hissed. There was no need to continue to wait, that subordinate was likely dead. The next wave of Black Armors would soon be upon them if they continued to stay here. They were familiar with the patrol schedule by now. A squad of ten would pass by in roughly ten minutes.

Although he and his men were Sunflare, Li Dahu didn’t dare run afoul of these soldiers. He might not be able to defeat ten, and even if he did, he’d attract more soldiers to his position once he utilized his supernatural abilities. He was dead then as well.

What a pity that they hadn’t run into one patrolling alone! He was also very interested in these suits of armor. Unfortunately, the soldiers in this area all moved in packs.

In actuality, there were ones patrolling alone as well. It was just that those that surveyed the immediate three streets had all fallen to Li Hao and his companions. There were certainly more than three streets in this city. The solo Black Armor on the others might’ve been eliminated by others or not discovered yet.

Footsteps sounded at this time. Li Dahu’s ears twitched and he flattened himself to the ground with his two men, retracting his mysterious power into his body. A strange look entered his eyes. There didn’t seem to be that many footsteps.

Indeed, compared to the other teams of Black Armors, they could immediately tell from the echoes that this one was small. The others were easily identifiable as a sizable contingent.

The soldiers slowly came into view through the gloom—it was indeed a small number!

“Three!” muttered the Darkmoon next to Li Dahu. He kept his voice down, but still received a vicious glare for his efforts. They weren’t supposed to talk!

Li Dahu was also surprised. Only three? That meant the Yama scouts faced only three Darkmoon. If there weren’t that many soldiers, then the level of threat they posed would lessen enormously. He was an earth supernatural and thus somewhat effective against these Black Armors. He could put down a layer of stone over the ground beneath their feet. It wouldn’t be a large area, but would be suitable for their purposes.

Three Black Armors!

Li Dahu was tempted. With how few of the soldiers there were, he’d be claiming three suits of armor by himself if he could capture all three. The Revolution King had paid the price of a dozen lives and required the personal efforts of a Solar to obtain roughly eighty. If he could claim three here...

He’d earn significant merit if he offered them up instead of hiding them for himself, wouldn’t he? Perhaps he could reconvene with the main body if he had these three. He wouldn’t have to risk himself in further investigation. And with this level of merit, perhaps he’d be rewarded with an audience with the Revolution King.

Li Dahu had originated as the captain of a security detail. The Qiaos seemed to be in frequent contact with Yama before, but they’d been eliminated in the recent past. Although he was a Sunflare, it felt that something was missing without the Qiaos. That family had been a constant source of money and wealth to trade for mysterious power. Now that he lacked this channel...

Various thoughts tempted Li Dahu, but he kept a firm grip on his desires for now. Let’s keep an eye on them for a bit longer!

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In the distance.

Since Li Hao, Liu Long, and Liu Yan weren't Black Armors, they moved according to instinct. Being martial masters, their eyesight was very keen. They easily caught a glimpse of the three hidden underneath a nearby eave. While they were unmoving, the trio would have to be blind to overlook the three living people.

Liu Long suddenly raised his arm to hold Liu Yan back. However, she hadn't made a move. Liu Long thought that she wouldn't be able to control herself, but she did. After coming to the ancient city, she understood how dangerous this trip was. While she was crazed with hate even as a veteran martial master, it didn't make her stupid. She knew long ago that there was a connection between the Qiaos and Yama, but still controlled herself.

She bided her time even when Qiao Peng continuously harassed her. It was obvious that Liu Long was underestimating her capacity to hold it together!

Li Dahu!

Indeed, they were seeing Li Dahu—also known as Hu Po in the Yama organization. He was who Liu Long and Liu Yan wished most to kill on this expedition.

Liu Yan's footsteps remained as if before. They didn't alter just because she saw her husband's murderer. Liu Long was more at ease to see that she carried on as usual.

The three continued walking like they didn't see the Yama members. Their footsteps marched in unison as they slowly left the others behind. However, the trio soon sensed something different. The Yama members... were following them?

The Night Watcher trio didn't immediately attack because it was harder to eliminate a larger group. It would easily give rise to an undesirably large disturbance. Thus, they chose not to take action even when they saw their targets. Who would've thought that the supernaturals would be so bold as

to follow them instead? The Night Watchers weren't thinking of attacking, but the Yama members were!

How... impressive!

There was another ten soldier squad on this street. Li Hao and the others knew that it would be here soon, so they continued walking without a hint of anything out of the ordinary. Out of sight from their followers, Liu Long made a gesture with his hand.

Do we kill them?

The three were following them! Supernatural levels were easy to identify, not to mention that Li Hao was able to tell with a glance that they were one Sunflare and two Fullmoons. It placed them on similar footing with the trio—one Dominator and two Sunderers.

But the Night Watchers were Black Armors at the moment and their opponents didn't dare employ too much mysterious power. If there were no surprises, it was the trio that occupied more advantages. Their only concern was that the Black Armors behind them would arrive before they had a chance to exterminate the Yama members. That was the real point of trouble. Escape would be nigh impossible once they were embroiled by the ten soldier squad.

#### Chapter 234: Slaying Sunflare (II)

Li Hao was suddenly very regretful that he didn't know how to transmit his voice. His teacher knew! Of that, the young man was well aware of. When he once asked how to learn, his teacher responded that it required fine precision over the aura or for a supernatural to enter the Solar level. Otherwise, one had to speak out loud.

They'd be able to discuss a plan of attack if he knew how to transmit his voice. Although Liu Long was a Dominator, he hadn't mastered the skill as he'd only just grasped the aura. He was yet to comprehend its intricacies. But he was close since he was a Dominator. He'd soon learn the skill that didn't seem very useful, but in actuality was quite handy.

When Liu Long asked if they should kill their followers, the most bloodthirsty Liu Yan responded with a minute gesture—no. However much she burned for revenge, she didn't wish for everyone to act on an impulse. That would expose the trio.

The squad of ten soldiers would be here soon. If it was just one Yama member following them, the trio would be confident of swiftly eliminating that person. But when it came to three, any one of the supernaturals could easily get away if the slightest mishap occurred. Alternatively, large disturbances might echo through the area and drag down the three Night Watchers into danger.

Li Hao focused on thinking things over instead of replying. After a while, he ever-so-slightly pointed at his feet. They couldn't talk and hand gestures weren't universal. This would be a test of their teamwork. If the two of them couldn't understand him, then they would have to give up the opportunity.

Within the armor, Liu Long first thought that the young man meant that he was going to shake the ground through his aura. But Liu Long quickly realized he was wrong. Being the team captain, he swiftly understood Li Hao's meaning.

The supernaturals' first plan of attack against Black Armors is to separate them from their connection with the ground. Earth supernatural Li Dahu will certainly use his abilities to isolate the soldiers. Without energy from the ground, the soldiers will gradually lose their ability to move. So... we'll attack when they think the Black Armors are incapacitated?

Liu Long was no fool. As captain of the Demon Hunters, he'd continuously led with a mixture of vigilance, boldness, and attention to detail. Granted, he was an idiot in Yuan Shuo's eyes, but he grasped the young man's intention!

They should seize the opportunity to ambush Li Dahu!

Immobilized Black Armors would put the three Yama members at ease. At the same time, martial masters were the group with the strongest powers of concealment. This was a marked difference to supernaturals; the latter found it difficult to even play dead. Any powerhouse that drew near a supernatural would sense the vitality of their mysterious power.

Liu Long thought it through and felt this was a very viable tactic. However, he was the same as Li Hao—worried that Liu Yan didn't understand.

If Liu Yan chose to attack the Yama members even when the earth was under the latter's control, then not only would the plan be in shambles, but it would also draw attention from the organization. It might even result in a massive battle that brought unwanted consequences to them.

Gazes from two Black Armors flicked to Liu Yan. Li Hao registered that Liu Long seemed to have understood him. The chief had some skill to his name and could understand the plan. The key was Liu Yan...

It wasn't that he thought women were dumb or that she was a bimbo, but Liu Yan nursed a deep enmity toward Li Dahu. What if rage overcame her reason when the other was close? That would be the greatest trouble of all.

Liu Long had to make another hand gesture when there was no response forthcoming from their third team member. Play dead!

Hand gestures were only useful for short commands. Play dead, ground, earth...

Liu Yan understood the combination. Got it!

However, Li Hao and Liu Long remained concerned. They couldn't afford a misunderstanding at this juncture!

As if she knew that her comrades didn't trust her, a resigned expression crossed Liu Yan's face. Were women just supposed to suffer prejudice like this? She really understood the plan! It was one thing for Liu Long to think of her this way, but Li Hao was a rookie! How dare the little bastard doubt a veteran commissioner inspector??

Aren't we just supposed to play dead and pretend we're immobile when Li Dahu locks the ground away? Do you really think I'm an idiot? And then we take advantage of the opportunity to counterattack. Who wouldn't understand this logic??

While irritated, she also knew that this was no time to be careless. She had to make another gesture. You, shorty! Liu Yan directed this at Li Hao.

The young man understood! So everyone really was on the same page. She wanted him to take care of the shortest of the three. The tallest was Li Dahu—it went without saying that Liu Long would focus on him.

If Li Hao was in charge of the shortest, then the remaining Yama member was naturally in Liu Yan's purview. Once their targets were set and the plan decided, there would be no misunderstandings or extraneous trouble during execution that would result in one of their quarry escaping.

Li Hao and Liu Long finally relaxed upon seeing Liu Yan's last hand gesture. It would be easy for Liu Long to take out Li Dahu. All he needed was to utilize the Nine Forged Force in the ambush and kill the initial Sunflare with one punch. He'd be utter trash if he couldn't manage the deed. A Dominator Yuan Shuo could kill Solars! If Liu Long couldn't kill an initial Sunflare under the cover of a sneak attack, then even Li Hao would think less of him.

Honestly speaking, the Night Watcher trio wasn't afraid of direct frontal combat. But this wasn't the time for it. Li Hao sorely lacked earth energy and one Sunflare could supply roughly three hundred cubes.

The Yama members continued following stealthily behind them. They were quite bold as to keep only a short distance between them and the soldiers. When the footsteps began fading away, Li Dahu muttered, "Those three Black Armors are all Darkmoons! It'll be easy if I spontaneously isolate them from the ground and their energy source. The key thing is, we need to be quick about it! Based on my observations, another team of soldiers will be here shortly. We need to capture these Black Armors before they come. If we do, we can reconvene with the larger group and be much safer in these ruins!"

The two Darkmoon were sorely tempted. This was shaping up to be a very dangerous place. Unfortunately, Darkmoons had no right to offer their opinions in this expedition.

“It shall be as Milord Hu Po says!” the two swiftly responded. So long as their superior could control the three soldiers and prevent them from being reinforced by the city, they were confident of eliminating the three Black Armors. Isolating them for a minute would fully immobilize the soldiers. They could then bring the suits of armor back to their main delegation.

Li Dahu hesitated at this time. Should he send one of them to stand guard? What if they failed to notice the arrival of more Black Armors? But... since the soldiers were accompanied by the sound of footsteps, there didn't seem to be a need for that.

What he should be concerned with was fellow supernaturals blundering in and taking advantage of the situation. But their ripples of power were noticeable, so he only needed to consider the martial masters of the Sword Sect...

The sect's strongest martial master was Hong Yitang's daughter. The man wouldn't send her out as a scout. Any of his other martial masters were initial Sunderer at most. Even if they ambushed him... he was an earth Sunflare. Was he afraid of being attacked by an initial Sunderer?

Li Dahu wanted to snigger at the thought. It wasn't a good idea to be too prudent! This uncharacteristic concern was all thanks to the influence of their environment.

“Then you two need to quickly corral them when we go in a moment. Don't let those Black Armors land outside the range of my control. We'll be in for it then,” he reminded. “Also, make sure they stay within range during that one minute. Don't let them run out of the area!”

They'd learned through previous battles that one minute was the duration it took to immobilize the soldiers. If that wasn't met, it was possible that the suits of armor would retaliate.

“Also, minimize your supernatural ripples to the smallest degree possible. Don’t throw off light or create sound.” He looked at one of them. “You’re a fire supernatural, so your light is the most noticeable in battle. You’re in charge of observing the surroundings!”

“Yes, milord!” The two didn’t dare say much. Fire supernaturals indeed couldn’t behave too wantonly in these battles, not unless they were attacking with the larger delegation. Fire was too blatant in an ambush. The other supernatural was a wind supernatural and wouldn’t stand out too much in the fight to come.

The three caught up with the soldiers after deciding on a course of action. Black Armors didn’t move that quickly, but were very speedy in battle. Although they’d fallen behind, the Yama members soon drew even with the soldiers again. They smiled to see the three Black Armors ahead like the fat sheep they would soon be.

.....

Li Hao and his companions also smiled beneath their visors. They’d thought that the Yama members had given up on the idea when they ceased following the soldiers. Good, they were in pursuit again! This was very good, it wouldn’t waste their discussion.

Whether it was supernaturals or martial masters, they were very decisive once they decided on what to do. The three soldiers were walking when a very faint burst of mysterious power snaked toward them. They reached for their swords at the same time, but their feet seemed to sink into a swamp. Layers of earth energy covered the ground and mired the trio’s feet in something akin to mud.

As for whether or not it would halt the supply of energy—how would the trio know? But they’d seen what Black Armors would do under these circumstances. They struggled to walk through the swamp and pulled out their black swords, waving it around.

The Yama members rushed out of the darkness. Mysterious power emanated from Li Dahu as he grunted, “Hurry and attack them. Exhaust their reserves of energy!”

The wind supernatural released blades of wind, keeping the disturbance to a minimum. Black Armors made no sound to begin with and the Yama members were concerned they'd draw attention if their movements were too big, so they purposefully kept their voices down too.

Li Hao, Liu Long, and Liu Yan struggled fiercely! But they did so with decreasing strength as time went on. Upon seeing that he was almost out of the supernatural swamp, Liu Long began regretting struggling so ferociously. How am I supposed to keep the act up if I walk right out of his control zone?

As much as he regretted his actions, Li Dahu was even more horrified. These Black Armors put up a bigger fight than the soldiers they'd met before. He had experience attacking them, they didn't have so much strength to their name!

They'd almost made a huge blunder! He was forced to increase the amount of mysterious power he was bringing to bear and throw it at the biggest soldier. Was it the bigger the Black Armor, the stronger it was? He'd almost let this one get away!

While Li Dahu was frightened into sweating massively, Liu Long sighed with relief to feel the power increase around him. Damn that was close. We would seriously have a problem on our hands if I managed to walk out. If I somehow stopped moving at the perimeter... Li Dahu's not an idiot.

Thank goodness!

### Chapter 235: Slaying Sunflare (III)

Seeing as it was Liu Long's first time posing as a Black Armor, he now knew how to adjust for more appropriate struggles during their next heist.

Both Liu Long and Li Dahu were immensely stressed by the troublesome situation that could've developed!

The three struggled increasingly weakly as time went on. Blades of wind crashed into them, sending them reeling to and fro. When they eventually sank to the ground, a layer of earth energy enveloped them!

Li Dahu and his men waited for a while, then crowed silently when the soldiers remained unmoving. They'd succeeded, and without fanfare!

Li Dahu grabbed a cage made of earth energy and swiftly dodged to the side. The other two did the same, whereas Li Hao and his comrades stayed motionless.

Footsteps were upon them again. Everyone prayed for these Black Armors to leave as soon as possible. Li Dahu prayed that they wouldn't discover anything amiss. Li Hao's crew prayed for the soldiers to leave quickly. It would be difficult to act otherwise, and impossible once more people were on the scene.

The uniform footsteps drew close as a team of Black Armors swung into view. Li Dahu and his men barely dared to breathe. As the soldiers marched off into the distance, the Yama members were still deathly afraid that the suits of armor would discover some of their brethren had been captured.

Li Dahu exhaled softly when the footsteps traveled away with finality, unable to hide the grin on his face. They'd succeeded! Three sets of black armor... They'd struck it rich!

Even if they turned the sets in to their superiors, this was still a massive mark of merit. One good thing about the bigger organizations was that they normally kept a proper record of deeds and accomplishments. Few would work for them otherwise. Thus, credit usually went where it was due. The only exception was if the achievement was too big for the organization to pay out... That wasn't impossible either.

Subdued on the ground, Li Hao and his comrades didn't need to converse before they attacked at the same time! Liu Long deployed the Nine Forged Force at maximum strength—the sound of waves slapped against the air. Even though a Sunflare like Li Dahu was right in front of him for an ambush, he needed to bring his full strength to bear to avoid mistakes from happening.

Li Hao grabbed Stellaris and stabbed his sword at the wind supernatural shorty. He even utilized the sword aura in his attack! Liu Yan wielded a shortsword and slashed it across the fire supernatural's throat!

The two sides were standing nearly face to face. Li Dahu had even retracted the constraints of earth energy to avoid supernatural ripples from being detected. It was safe to do so as he knew that Black Armors would not return to their previous activity even if they came in contact with the earth now. They would remain inert instead. Of this, they were experienced with.

But he was wrong.

Li Dahu's reactions were better than typical Sunflares as he used to be a martial master. Though he'd only been a Slayer of Tens, that was still sufficient for him to bring a shield of earth to bear when Liu Long's fist crashed toward him.

What the heck is going on? Were the Black Armors coming back to life? But that didn't make any sense. Wait... this is aura enveloping me! This is an ambush!

It was a martial master, one that commanded an aura.

Who??

A Dominator?! Yuan Shuo?

How was that possible? Would Yuan Shuo need to ambush him if the professor wanted to kill him? Who was it?

Li Dahu thought of someone when he sensed the incomparably keen aura of the sword next to him. Li Hao—Yuan Shuo's student! The young man had used a sword when he fought Sun Moxian.

Li Hao... Silver City...

Liu Long!

The Yama member abruptly realized who was punching him. Liu Long!

Impossible!

Absolutely impossible. Liu Long was part of the Night Watcher delegation, which was behind Yama. How could these two be in front of them?

Bam!

A loud collision rang out. Liu Long and Liu Yan couldn't focus on minimizing disruption anymore. There would be greater trouble if they didn't kill their targets as soon as possible. Compared to them, Li Hao had it much easier.

His opponent was just a Darkmoon and he could utilize the aura of the sword. They were in such close quarters that as he wielded Stellaris... one stab immediately ran the other through! When he sliced the small sword across, it sectioned half of his opponent's body away!

Liu Yan likewise slashed across her opponent's throat, but he didn't die. Fire energy erupted and illuminated a small patch of the city. Her second shortsword appeared in her hand and she shoved it into his temple!

Her opponent was eliminated with two strokes, but at the cost of throwing light on the streets and undulations of supernatural ripples! There was also the sound of them fighting... If nothing unexpected happened, then the soldiers that'd just left would soon be by. But Liu Long was yet to finish his fight.

He swung with the mighty layers of the Nine Forged Force and crashed through the shield of earth. Li Hao and Liu Yan could hear the sound of ribs breaking, but Li Dahu was also a ruthless person. Not only did he not dodge when his shield broke, but he thrust his chest forward to take the heavy blow head-on. The enormous force shattered his organs, but he didn't care. He needed the immense momentum behind this punch to help him fly out further!

He might not make it if he escaped under his own impetus. Such was the decisiveness of one who used to be a martial master!

Li Dahu knew that these three were his enemies and wanted to kill him. The soldier on the side was ninety-nine percent Liu Yan. Thus, he chose to suffer a more severe injury to help him escape. He wouldn't die even if all of his organs shattered, but he would absolutely die if caught in a fight with them.

Although Liu Long broke his opponent's rib cage with the first blow and almost ran the man through, he subconsciously realized Li Dahl's merciless intent. Thus, he pulled back for a second blow and layered it with a stickier kind of internal force, but his opponent was already flying backward from the first!

The captain's punch was so heavy that it flung his opponent out a long distance at a high speed. Perhaps the heavily injured Li Dahu might die to the soldiers rushing back to the scene... but what if he didn't?

Indescribably upset, Liu Long could only watch as his second punch missed and his opponent careen backward, leaving his range of attack. Liu Long regretted his actions so immensely that he wanted to vomit blood!

The ground shuddered at this moment and a massive aura of the earth exploded. The floundering Li Dahu sensed a wall behind him a second before he crashed heavily into it!

Impossible!

He'd made a sweep of the area when they were in hiding. There was nothing behind them, there couldn't be a wall stopping him...

Li Hao sweated profusely, a condition hidden by his visor. He'd emergency deployed his second aura and vibrated the ground, shaking force outward to form a wall of air.

Liu Long's second punch arrived at this time and smashed Li Dahu's head. Li Hao stabbed forward and sank his sword into the latter's heart. Liu Yan's twin blades also scythed through the air and slashed across the other's throat.

Li Dahu's eyes stared wide open. Even though his face was misshapen from Liu Long's punch, he still stared fixedly at his killers. He didn't accept this fate! He was a Sunflare! These Silver City guys had never been worthy of consideration! Whether it was Liu Yan or Liu Long, they were all trash! So what of Sunderer??

It'd taken him just a few short years to become a Darkmoon after he joined Yama, then another two to Sunflare. He was an offensive focused heavy earth Sunflare. But here, he didn't even have a chance to showcase his true abilities before someone beat him to death in the unknown street of an ancient city.

He wasn't a Sunflare from those small organizations, he was of the three greats! He was a powerhouse from Yama! He'd defeated the Night Watchers' veteran Sunflare, the one they called Wind Demon Huang Yun!

He had a glorious future ahead of him, and he died today simply because he'd killed an engineer back in the day...

Li Dahu opened his eyes wide, wanting to see the trio clearly before he died. But they didn't grant him his last wish. Liu Yan punched once more, smashing their target's eyeballs to pulp.

"Sorry!" he muttered with annoyance and self-recrimination. He hadn't eliminated their target with one move and almost let Li Dahu get away... As the captain of the Demon Hunters, this was his first time making such a serious mistake. If it hadn't been for Li Hao erupting with the aura of the earth at a critical time, what could've happened if the Yama member had made good his escape? He might die, but there was always a possible other outcome!

Liu Long realized in this moment that he'd overestimated his Nine Forged Force and underestimated the opponent. Li Dahu was harder to kill than regular Sunflares! As Liu Long had

killed Sunflares before, that'd erroneously affected his judgment. Their late target's defenses had been stronger than some mid Sunflares. That'd been a fatal mistake!

"Hurry!" Li Hao didn't have time to spare for this. He waved his sword around to shred the corpse!

Liu Yan also swung both blades at the same time to hack chunks out of the body. Liu Long quickly recovered his composure. This wasn't the moment to discuss their errors. They needed to collect some body pieces and leave with mysterious power. They needed to flee! Footsteps could already be heard!

Black Armors had discovered the abnormalities of this zone!

Liu Yan didn't wallow in the jubilation of taking vengeance. She didn't throw her head back with a long howl. Whoever did so at this moment was an idiot. She hadn't even had the time to throw down a vicious line or two when they killed Li Dahu.

Hacking off chunks, then shoving them into a storage box. The trio abandoned the corpse in the blink of an eye and fled. They vanished on the spot.

A team of Black Armors rushed to the scene a heartbeat later. They sensed the blood and gore in the air and felt the ripples of mysterious power, but a confusing sight greeted their eyes.

Dead!

They paused for a moment before restarting their patrol. Footsteps faded away into the distance.

Other supernaturals approached after a while. The bodies on the ground were almost gone and the blood devoured. There were a few scraps of identifiable clothing left, however. Some frowned at the pieces—a Yama member was among them. Their expression shifted upon taking a closer look!

The organization's hierarchy was very clearly delineated; this was one of the uniforms reserved for Sunflares. Had a Sunflare died?

It was difficult to determine who, but several Darkmoons and a Sunflare had certainly died here. There were only so many Sunflares sent out to scout. They'd know who died when they reconvened with the main delegation.

"Did Black Armors kill them?"

There couldn't be anyone else apart from the soldiers. But... this group had sensed the battle from afar. It didn't feel like the Black Armor style. Not to mention, the soldiers were rather dumb. They couldn't sense anything so long as the disturbance was kept to a minimum, there was no light, and there was an absence of supernatural ripples.

Were the Yama members idiots? Had they attacked the squad of ten themselves?

#### Chapter 236: Slaying Sunflare (IV)

More supernaturals rushed to the scene in short order. Someone knelt for a close look and whispered, "This is strange. These clothes show irregular cuts and damage. Black Armors use swords... Are they not the ones behind this?"

He was examining the late Li Dahu's clothing. It was a portion that Liu Long had punched through, thus leaving a hole. Although the clothes had been hacked to pieces and it looked like a sword had done it, there were certain other traces to be found as well.

Li Hao and his comrades had left in such a hurry that they didn't have time to collect the clothing or create a more realistic aftermath.

Some supernaturals vanished as soon as these words were uttered. No matter if they were true or not, they meant that this place was becoming ever more dangerous. It was fine if this postulation was false, but if true... Didn't that mean there was internal strife between supernaturals?

Who knew how these Yama powerhouses had died? What if some other organizations had purposefully lured the soldiers here? Or perhaps they'd been fighting each other and the Black Armors appeared to kill them all!

The observing Yama powerhouse swiftly left with a piece of clothing. He needed to find Yao Cheng as soon as possible to tell him that someone had died, and possibly not to the soldiers! He'd sensed a hint of lingering aura, so it might be martial masters behind it!

Of course, he couldn't easily voice this aloud. Once he did, the Sword Sect would come under the greatest suspicion. However, this faction always presented a neutral, nonthreatening front. It wasn't a good idea to brashly declare war upon them.

Additionally, they didn't appear to have any martial masters that knew the aura. Hong Yitang once grasped it, but he was a supernatural now.

Quiet gradually returned to the streets.

.....

In the alley from earlier.

Li Hao, Liu Long, and Liu Yan heaved for breath, their hearts still racing.

"I made a severe mistake," Liu Long raised his earlier point again. "These battle spoils have nothing to do with me. That's one point. The other is that I'll be bait from now on, the two of you stay back!"

Li Hao didn't say anything. These were the team rules set by Liu Long himself. The young man wouldn't oppose it if the captain wished to follow them.

Liu Yan was panting as well and grunted, “I have my revenge! I don’t need any rewards either. You can have it all, Li Hao!” Joy and a bit of helplessness crept into her voice. “I killed Li Dahu! I…”

“Revenge your ass!” Li Hao hissed. “Yama is your enemy. They sheltered the Qiaos and Li Dahu despite their crimes. Do you think killing just one Li Dahu is sufficient revenge? You’re so naive!”

Liu Yan’s joy at executing her vengeance immediately vanished. Yama weighed on her like a massive mountain from overhead. That carefree sense was nowhere to be found. Indeed, Yama was the chief offender, but damned if Li Hao wasn’t annoying!

Delivering these words at this time was too much of a blow to her mentality. Liu Yan didn’t know what to say and felt an emptiness in the wake of the joy that vanished. Fine then, pretend I didn’t say anything.

“Keep an eye out for me,” said Li Hao. “I need to absorb some more mysterious power. We collected a bit of earth, wind, and fire this time. What a pity that we haven’t come across any water energy!”

It was getting a bit painful, his kidneys were at too great of a deficit! Of the five elements, he’d absorbed the most of fire and earth energy. Metal and wood lagged far behind, and there wasn’t any water to be had this time. If this continued, his visceral organs would be gravely imbalanced!

A person flashed through his mind—a mid Solar. There would be no more imbalance if he absorbed all of her energy. His kidneys would be the strongest then! A mid Solar would contain at least 1500 cubes of water energy.

The thought left as soon as it formed. That person would not be easy to take down. While a mid Solar might turn into a real pig after playing the pig for too long, their spontaneous reaction time and defensive ability wasn’t something that a Sunderer like him could break. He could try as a Dominator, especially armed with Stellaris and the aura of the sword. He might be able to defeat her then!

A sense of urgency nipped at Li Hao's heels. He would break through as soon as he melded the two auras together. As for five auras? His teacher could have fun with that. He was fine with two. It didn't matter if it was harder to comprehend the aura as a Dominator. He could deal with that when he was a Dominator.

In this environment, his very survival was at stake if he wasn't a Dominator.

Li Hao furiously absorbed their new gains along with dwindling energy from the little sword. He was worried that there wasn't sufficient sword energy for him to advance to Dominator. How was he supposed to replenish it given current circumstances?

Tendrils of mysterious power flowed into his body, bolstering his five visceral organs apart from the kidneys. His heart and spleen, in particular, were noticeably stronger than the others.

.....

At the same time.

Yao Cheng of the Yama organization regarded a scrap of cloth in his hand with an unpleasant expression. "Hu Po is dead!"

Hu Po was a Sunflare that'd crossed over from being a martial master and was quite strong. The organization had placed great value on him as a budding talent in Silver Moon. But now he was dead!

Earth energy was highly useful when it came to the Black Armors. Losing one earth supernatural at this time was a greater loss than two or three fire supernaturals. Fire was too heavily restricted at the moment.

It was because earth energy was so effective that he sent Hu Po out with some men. Yao Cheng estimated that they'd be able to minimize danger within acceptable parameters even if they ran into the soldiers.

But Hu Po had still died!

Yao Cheng glowered. Were Black Armors really behind this? Why didn't that seem to be entirely the case? Hu Po was no idiot. Why would he antagonize a ten soldier squad? Was it that someone didn't want the earth supernatural to live since that gave Yama more chances to capture Black Armors?

"How many are dead?" he asked.

"Uncertain," a subordinate murmured. "Other than confirmation of Hu Po and his men, our uniforms have appeared at other locales as well. There's at least five Darkmoons and one Sunflare that've died!"

Yao Cheng's face darkened. It'd only been how long, but they'd already lost six! This was the least of their losses as well. There were still some groups outside with their current status unknown. If this continued, wouldn't they lose all of their people after exploring the nearby streets?

He'd brought eight with him and was joined by a few more later on. They numbered roughly a dozen. There weren't that many Yama members in the ruins, how was he supposed to explain himself to the Revolution King that he'd lost so many at once?!

He brooded as his thoughts traveled here. "I need to report to the Revolution King. Be careful. Also, we can't be the only ones to scout these streets. It's far more dangerous than we expected, we need to work together with the others!"

The situation couldn't continue as is!

His men didn't have any opinions, so he swiftly vanished on the spot.

.....

Within the darkness.

There was a clearing outside the ancient city where large numbers of supernaturals were gathered. Hu Dingfang swept a look over the surroundings a few times and glowered when he didn't see Li Hao.

When Yama members came forward to demand an explanation as to why the Night Watchers hadn't previously mentioned the soldiers in armor, Hu Dingfang stared coldly at the Revolution King.

"And are you willing to tell me what treasures and dangers that exist in the ruins that Yama has discovered?" he asked frostily. "Is something wrong with your brains or mine?"

"Hu Dingfang, do you really think you're invincible here?" The Revolution King wore an arctic expression on his face. "Do you honestly think a late Solar is on par with a Nova?!"

In terms of strength, Hu Dingfang was a bit weaker than them, but the guy's arrogance knew no bounds! He showed no face to Violet Moon or the Revolution King. Did he think the Night Watchers reigned high and mighty??

Celestial had ever been a mysterious organization and might not participate in this encirclement, but the same might not go for Violet Moon. It would be more than easy for the Revolution King and Violet Moon to move against Hu Dingfang and Hao Lianchuan. Did this guy have a death wish?

"Go ahead, just try!" Hu Dingfang answered calmly. "The Tiger Wings haven't prepared that many city annihilation missiles, just ten. If I don't make it out—if I'm not the first one out of those doors—you can yourselves to eat ten missiles. Don't think too highly of yourself, Revolution. Do you really think I didn't come prepared?"

He glared sharply at them and sneered, “I bet you haven’t the balls to do anything! Or do you think reinforcements from the central region can hold off the missiles for you?”

The Revolution King scowled! Not just him, but so did Violet Moon send a chilly look at Hu Dingfang.

City annihilation missiles!

This was part of the basis for the army’s confidence. These weapons of mass destruction were top secret. Each province only had a few and they were all army property. As capable as the three great organizations were, they weren’t strong enough to infiltrate the higher levels of the military. In fact, the military partnered with the supernatural organizations in some provinces. That was another story entirely.

In Silver City, only the commanders of the three armies could wield city annihilation missiles. Hu Dingfang was one of them as well as the other two commanders. The overall commander-in-chief had such authority as well.

Violet Moon’s indifferent voice cut through the air as soon as Hu Dingfang finished speaking. “So this means that the missiles will be fired if you die in the ruins? We have to ensure your safety as well? How ridiculous!” she snorted. “Let’s see who has the right to command the missiles when you’re not around.”

“My wife!” answered Hu Dingfang. “My wife is wonderful in aspects, but not in keeping the bigger picture in mind! If I die and don’t make it out, she won’t think of the bigger picture. Try her if you don’t believe me!”

The assembly frowned. Who would’ve thought that Hu Dingfang would go to these depths? They said nothing more after thinking it over. If city annihilation missiles were indeed fired, then everyone would die. Violet Moon and the Revolution King stood a chance of survival as they carried origin weapons and held the strength of a peak Solar. They should be fine if they needed to escape at a pivotal moment. At the same time, heavy injuries were inevitable.

However, if everyone they came with died, they wouldn't be able to explain themselves either. They were just the leaders of a branch, not headquarters.

#### Chapter 237: Quietly Causing Trouble (I)

Hu Dingfang snorted and ignored those around him. He swept the surroundings again out of the corner of his eye. There was still no sign of Li Hao and the others. He couldn't help but glance at the structures that seemed like a small town in the distance—the outer city.

Had Li Hao, Liu Long, and Liu Yan blundered into the outer city? That would be very troublesome!

He wouldn't mind heading inside for a look right now if he was here alone. But he'd pledged his support to Hou Xiaochen and there was a band of Night Watchers following him. If he left, Hao Lianchuan wouldn't be able to hold off Red Moon and Yama if the organizations decided to attack the agency.

Frustrated, there was nothing Hu Dingfang could do. Thus, he showed an ever more unfriendly face to Violet Moon and Revolution. If it wasn't for the fact that he was indeed a bit weaker than them... Well, perhaps not, since he was very confident in himself. He was a supernatural who'd crossed over from being a martial master and was well versed in the Five Styles.

The Five Styles weren't a secret art. But under normal circumstances, it was useless without its breathing method. He knew the breathing method, which made the Five Styles highly effective. Thus, he wouldn't be the slightest bit timid if facing any one of them. But both of them together... was likely too much for him.

A figure as fast as the wind darted out of the city at this time. It sped out through the plaza and took to the air without fear when it was clear. Although the figure was a wind Solar, it still didn't dare fly inside the city.

The person quickly landed by the Revolution King and whispered a few words in the man's ear. His lips moved, but no sound emitted.

Everyone looked at Yao Cheng. Nothing flickered across the Revolution King's face, but he cursed inwardly—trash! They were just scouting ahead and knew the soldiers' weaknesses. How were they not trash to still lose a Sunflare?

He flicked a glance at Hong Yitang in the distance, somewhat confused. Hong Yitang used to be a martial master and he still had many martial disciples. They were mostly Slayers or Sunderers, so none of them could possibly be behind Hu Po's death.

Who had done it? Was it really the soldiers?

“Yao Cheng has made a thorough investigation,” he announced. “There are nine streets in the outer city. Each is patrolled by Black Armors to either ten a team or one individual. There are roughly one hundred Black Armors in the outer city and they mobilize swiftly when supernatural ripples flare or a disturbance breaks out. This is just the outer city. The parts closer to the inner city are filled with even more soldiers! Yao Cheng glanced at it from afar. The ones we killed before might come from that area.”

He gave a brief overview of the situation to pull the other organizations to his side. Since the Night Watchers won't tell us this, I will. The secrets that he spoke of were easily obtainable if he was willing to expend the people necessary to plumb their depths.

“My thoughts are to first cleanse the outer city of Black Armors and use it as our base of operations. We can then slowly eliminate the soldiers in the inner city. Only then do we have a chance of accessing it.

“Also, I want to ask the Night Watchers why we can't enter the houses in the outer city? What's inside? Some of our supernaturals entered and they all vanished without a trace!”

“You're asking us?” Hao Lianchuan snorted with laughter. “How would we know? Whoever goes inside the houses dies. Figure it out yourself if you're so capable!”

The Revolution King glowered darkly. Off to the side, Hong Yitang asked a question in the interest of playing peacemaker. “Director Hao, I have a question. Are those soldiers unable to leave the outer city?”

“Correct!” Hao Lianchuan didn’t keep anything from them. “I’m sure you’ve also discovered that the source of their strength is the ground. Their ground is laid to the plaza on the fringes of the outer city. The soldiers lose their source of strength upon exiting the plaza. They go to their deaths then!”

“Then is it possible to lure them to the plaza so we can barrage them from the air? Can we eliminate them bit by bit?” asked Hong Yitang. This was potentially feasible. Being not martial masters, supernaturals could attack from a distance.

Many looked at Hao Lianchuan after this suggestion was raised. Perhaps the Night Watchers had attempted this before. If it was feasible, it could be tried.

Hao Lianchuan thought for a bit when the crowd regarded him. “They won’t respond so long as we don’t enter the outer city. As for attacking from a distance... you’ll have to break their armor. There’s not much use to these actions otherwise! And, they can also retreat! too”

They wouldn’t stand there forever and take a beating like fools.

Frowns spread through the crowd again.

“So this means that they’ll redeploy soldiers from the inner city if we enter the outer city?”

“Not exactly,” Hao Lianchuan laughed. “The soldiers won’t pay attention to us if we don’t make a sound, stay on the ground, or refrain from supernatural abilities. Based on Night Watcher observation, the soldiers only attack those who don’t listen or break their rules. What are the rules? There is a taboo against fighting in both the inner and outer city!”

Muttered curses could be heard through the crowd. A taboo against fighting? None of these supernaturals were here to be tourists. They even wanted to break into the inner city. What was the point of this expedition if fighting wasn’t allowed?

“Will the Black Armors attack us if we draw near them without taking action?” someone asked. “We won’t use supernatural abilities either. Is simply being close to them enough to raise the alarm?”

New possibilities ran through people’s minds. If the soldiers didn’t mind people simply approaching them, then things would be much easier. Whether it was an ambush, sneak attack, or setting up traps—they were all more convenient than killing soldiers outright.

“And if supernaturals can’t conceal themselves, what about martial masters?” the person added.

Hao Lianchuan looked at the speaker—they were from Celestial. The quiet organization had finally raised their voice.

“Supernaturals give off ripples from their mysterious power even when they don’t utilize their abilities. The ripples are very noticeable and the soldiers will treat it as provocation if a supernatural is nearby. They’ll go on the attack!

“Meanwhile, martial masters don’t usually elicit a response. They are attacked only when martial masters proactively attack a soldier. Martial masters excel in close combat, but the black armor provides a highly effective defense. Therefore, we don’t recommend martial masters to approach the soldiers either.”

That’s true, thought the crowd. Martial masters couldn’t seal away the soldiers. Even if one could send a soldier flying with a punch, such a sizable disturbance would raise other attention. The obvious ripples from a supernatural was one of their biggest drawbacks.

“We need to form a plan!” said Revolution. “Surely the Night Watchers didn’t investigate so many times only for the Black Armors. You probably want to make it to the inner city this time since you called for a joint expedition. Are you confident in your chances of success if our losses are too heavy?

“Hao Lianchuan, have the Night Watchers truly not made any preparations for the goal of successfully traversing the outer city and eliminating the soldiers?” Revolution finally asked a key question.

That the Night Watchers had gone to a great deal of effort and even opened up the ruins to other factions was naturally because they wished to enter the inner city. But if the expedition’s losses were too great beforehand, who knew how the unknown dangers in the inner city might be overcome?

Now wasn’t the time to consider the grudges between the various organizations. Everyone wanted to reap some gains after witnessing the durability of the armor. If nothing else, leaving with a hundred sets of armor would make this trip well worth it!

Whether it was supernaturals or martial masters, they were both pragmatic groups of people. If they focused on killing each other right now, that would only benefit those from the central region. In that case, it was better to take what they could for the moment.

Hu Dingfang wouldn’t interfere in this. He was just responsible for protecting the Night Watchers. It was up to the agency itself to decide how matters should be undertaken. He’d known from the second that Hao Lianchuan revealed his knowledge that the Night Watchers wished to enter the inner city.

As expected, Hao Lianchuan chuckled, “The best plan is a war of attrition. Wearing away at the Black Armors is the easiest! As for how many there are...

“There’s about a thousand if we include the ones near the inner city gates. It might be a cohort of one thousand! Well, there’s probably eight hundred left since you captured a hundred.”

No one asked about the other one hundred. Those were most likely in Night Watcher vaults. But eight hundred... was still a massive headache!

That was too many soldiers—it was the equivalent of eight hundred peak Darkmoons. not to mention, there were centurions per one hundred soldiers, so that made for at least eight Sunflares. What if there was another officer that commanded one thousand soldiers? Did that mean there was an undying Solar out there?

Solars weren't intimidating, there were plenty on the scene. But one supplied with unlimited energy and invincible defenses...

"Are there any soldiers above Bronze Armors?" asked Violet Moon.

"We've never seen one!" Hao Lianchuan shook his head. "To be honest, if there's such an existence, our entire delegation would die if the director isn't with us. We wouldn't dare provoke such a being either. But based on this logic, there might be one such personage."

He ended his response on a cautionary note since logically speaking, such a soldier could exist.

"Eight hundred..." murmured a concerned crowd.

"How intelligent are the Black Armors?" Hong Yitang asked. "Will they act together or will individual teams come separately like before?"

"More observation and deduction needs to take place before we have an answer for that!" Hao Lianchuan gave it some thought. "An equivalent number of Black Armors appears each time we enter the city. If we send one or two hundred, that's how many they send. Perhaps that's a sufficient number of soldiers to eliminate the enemy according to their directives!"

"There's one exception, and that's if we're still here after all of the Black and Bronze Armors are dead. They'll send more Black Armors then..."

"We once defeated a dozen of them and stayed in the city. Thirty some Black Armors appeared after a while, and a Bronze Armor. A lot of people died on that expedition!"

“Then what about hunting the soldiers alone?” Hong Yitang continued to ask. “Will it result in their retaliation if we kill Black Armors by ourselves?”

“It depends on the situation. What retaliation is there to be had if you hide your tracks well and evade their pursuit? The soldiers have limited methods to track people down. They might not be able to find you so long as you swiftly make a getaway after you kill a Black Armor!”

The response tempted many in the crowd. Didn’t this mean that they could hunt in the outer city and slowly eliminate the Black Armors? This operation was beyond Darkmoons, but Sunflares and Solars stood a chance.

#### Chapter 238: Quietly Causing Trouble (II)

“Why don’t we have all of the Solars and Sunflares enter the city to stamp out the one hundred soldiers in the outer city?” someone suggested. “We’ll whittle them away bit by bit!”

“Can we use the suits of armor that we’ve collected?” asked another. “If so, our defenses will greatly increase if we wear them...”

No one was able to open the armor in its intended way yet. Sheer violence was the only method to force it open. However, damaged armor saw a great reduction in defensive capability. Yama had reaped the greatest harvest thus far, but they couldn’t bring themselves to damage a single one. That was too much of a waste!

Proposals and suggestions flew one after another in the assembly. It was only the Sunflares and Solars of the bigger factions who spoke. All Darkmoons remained listening silently. There was no place for them at the table!

“What plans do the Night Watchers have?” pivoted one of Celestial’s cloaked members. “We only have three days, that’s not much time. If we don’t leave after three days, we’ll have to wait until next month. Will we make it to then?”

“Plans?” Hao Lianchuan chuckled. “Not really. Sunflares and Solars entering together to kill the outer city guards is a good idea.

“It will be hard for them to react properly if we attack en masse on all nine streets at the same time. We can easily eradicate all one hundred if we’re quick about it and retreat just as swiftly. As for the soldiers by the inner city gate, we can try luring them over in small groups.”

There were nine Solars among the expedition—two with the Night Watchers, one with Red Moon, two from Yama, and two from the Sword Sect. Of course, the last faction proclaimed to only have one Solar. The same went for Celestial. There were two Solars among their delegation, but only one was showing their strength.

If the concealed Zhang Ting was included, there was a very ample contingent of ten Solars on this excavation. If Yuan Shuo hadn’t killed anyone beforehand, he and his two vanquished would’ve made for thirteen Solars.

While this might not be all of Silver Moon’s highest talents, it was more than half at the very least. Yet, there were only seven known Solars at the moment.

The crowd petered out into silence. Could the Night Watchers be trusted? They worried when the agency didn’t say anything, and they worried when the agency did speak of a plan.

Another shriek echoed from the outer city at this time—an area in which Yama was exploring. The Revolution King frowned. Was it more of his men that’d died?

The soldiers of the outer city were out in the open. There wouldn’t be much trouble if one took pains to avoid the Black Armors. How were more people dying?

“Are there other dangers in the outer city apart from the houses and soldiers?” He looked at Hao Lianchuan.

“Yes!” The deputy director didn’t shy away from anything. “There’s also the danger in the sky that you know about. There are also surprises that we’re unable to pinpoint the origin of. Sharp blades

and others often appear, kill someone, and vanish just as spontaneously. They're impossible to defend against!"

"Sharp blades that suddenly appear?" An undercurrent of vigilance ran through the assembly now. Was a mere outer city really this dangerous?"

"We can't continue like this," interrupted the Celestial powerhouse. "Only more will die if we continue the exploration in this vein. There's only two hundred on this trip and we've lost at least forty already. That's one fifth of the expedition!"

Granted, most of the dead were Darkmoons and a few Sunflares. The elite core of the force remained intact.

"I notice that the nine streets aren't arranged in city blocks. They're nine horizontal lines parallel to each other in front of us. The most dangerous one is the street closest to the inner city. We can forgo that one!

"There shouldn't be a problem with eliminating the soldiers on the other eight streets..." continued the Celestial powerhouse. "And it's not that people should get nothing in return for their efforts. Whoever eliminates a soldier owns their armor! The suits of armor are indeed treasure and they already make this excavation worthwhile even if we find nothing else on this trip!"

"I agree." Hao Lianchuan nodded. "But the Revolution King and Violet Moon are the strongest among us. Why don't they be in charge of the two streets closest to the inner city gates? How about it?"

"Doesn't Hu Dingfang fancy himself stronger than everyone?" sneered the Revolution King. "He can go! The Night Watchers need to pay a price if they want to enter the inner city!"

"That's not how to put things," Hao Lianchuan chuckled. "How about this, we'll put two Solars forward and take over two streets. If any faction claims only one street, then they need to be assigned one that's more dangerous!"

“The Night Watchers, Celestial, Yama, Red Moon, and the Sword Sect... Let’s exclude the others from this assignment. That makes for five factions in charge of eight streets. The Night Watchers and Yama will take two and can choose which ones we want. Is there any one out of the other three who is willing to be responsible for two streets? Fielding more Sunflares will do in lieu of another Solar. Battle will be over just as quickly!”

The Revolution King finally didn’t have a dissenting opinion at the latest proposal. This was how things should be! Expending the most effort and being in charge of the most dangerous areas... Who was that big of a fool?? Not to mention, who says that the mysterious Celestial only has one Solar?

Indeed, the cloaked spokesperson of Celestial said slowly, “Then we are willing to take over two streets as well. While we lack sufficient Solars, we do have a few Sunflares. We should be able to handle our part if we exercise more caution!”

Three factions were willing to be responsible for two streets. That left Red Moon—it was impossible for Violet Moon to offer to take two. They’d suffered grave losses on this trip and currently had a severe drop-off in strength after Violet Moon.

Hong Yitang of the Sword Sect kept a startlingly low profile. He was caught in difficult straits, but still nodded, “Alright, I am not as strong as Violet Moon and my faction is a small one. I can be in charge of the third street!”

Everyone abandoned the street closest to the inner city. And plainly, Hong Yitang wished for Violet Moon to volunteer for the second street. The assembly looked at her, a gesture that indicated everyone was in agreement except Red Moon.

The woman frowned. She was a peak thunder Solar and carried an origin weapon on her, so she wasn’t afraid of those soldiers. She was only concerned about drawing masses of Black Armors since her assignment was too close to the inner city.

She didn’t care about Black Armors, but what if there were soldiers stronger than Bronze Armors?

“If an enemy that is beyond your abilities really appears...” offered the Revolution King at this time. “Whether it’s out of our own interests or for a more successful excavation to come, we will not leave you to the wolves!”

The prerequisite was that the enemy was still within the Solar level. If they were above and killed Violet Moon on sight, then all bets were off.

“Fine!” Violet Moon agreed after some consideration. “But I also have a suggestion. Hu Dingfang is in charge of the fourth street, Revolution of the fifth, and is Ding Chen the spokesperson for Celestial at the moment?”

“It is I,” answered the cloaked figure from Celestial. “What an honor it is for the venerable Violet Moon to remember me.”

“You’re in charge of the sixth street, Hao Lianchuan of the seventh, Yao Cheng of the eighth, and the Celestial Sunflares of the ninth...”

This would ensure that the Night Watchers weren’t on the outermost perimeter and couldn’t run away the quickest. Otherwise, she was concerned this may be a trap.

The assembly didn’t object to her arrangements. They were fair. With the course of action decided upon, the group discussed when to make their move. They had to strike together. If one person acted ahead of time, it might lead to a riot from Black Armors in other locales. That would be very troublesome.

After some confirmation, the powerhouses headed for the outer city without further word. It was time to eliminate some Black Armors!

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Li Hao, Liu Long, and Liu Yan were unaware of the developing situation. They were further ignorant that their position was a small alley between the first and second streets.

Li Hao had absorbed a significant amount of mysterious power at this time. His spleen and heart were starting to feel too full. Breaking the balance of the five elements was starting to turn quite uncomfortable.

“It’s been a while,” Liu Long quickly said when he saw the young man stop taking in energy. “The various organizations and Night Watchers might enter this area soon. Cover will be difficult to find then. Exposure is easy when there’s too many people.”

Li Hao nodded; he was concerned about this as well. There were a lot of people on this expedition as well as Solars. The Black Armors weren’t a threat. In fact, the trio was more of a threat since they were wearing armor. He was about to respond when he heard footsteps—the young man snapped his mouth shut.

“There aren’t many Black Armors in the outer city, so the soldiers won’t stop them in any way,” Li Hao said after the footsteps vanished. “We aren’t here to stop them from entering the outer city, nor do we have the strength to. Our most urgent task at hand is to increase our strength and eliminate some enemies!”

He looked at Liu Yan. “Sis Liu, do you think you can swiftly grasp the aura?”

Liu Yan shook her head after a period of silence, disappointing Li Hao. So it would seem that the aura truly was the biggest obstacle that martial masters faced.

“Chief, do you have any room for improvement?”

“I do... but it’ll be hard for me. Your teacher recommended I nurture my kidneys. That requires a lot of water energy and ideally, a blood pearl. We haven’t seen anyone from Red Moon yet and there doesn’t seem to be any water supernaturals around for the killing!”

“There is!” Li Hao grinned. “There’s one, but she’s difficult to kill and perhaps chief might not be bold enough to kill her!”

“Who?”

“Zhang Ting of the Night Watchers...”

Liu Long frowned. Li Hao could sense his disapproval even through the armor. Plainly, the captain thought he’d gone crazy and was willing to kill someone on their own side in pursuit of personal gain. The Night Watchers were their own, no matter how one looked at them.

“Li Hao!”

“Don’t start, chief! It’s not me who wants to kill her, but Director Hou said that we can if we want to. She’s no ordinary Night Watcher either. She’s a mid Solar with an origin weapon!”

Liu Long sucked in a sharp breath. A mid Solar? And with an origin weapon? Was she even possible to kill?

Even if she was a villain, he wasn’t arrogant enough to think that he could kill a mid Solar! His Nine Forged Force at full strength might not break through a Solar’s defenses. He’d brimmed with confidence before, but toned down his high spirits after failing to kill Li Dahu with one punch.

### Chapter 239: Quietly Causing Trouble (III)

“I need water energy and you need water energy, chief,” said Li Hao. “Killing her satisfies both our needs, and more! I have a feeling that if I balance my five elements, I might be able to advance to Dominator...”

He had a hunch that after his five elements were in equilibrium again, his sword and earth auras would improve slightly and even meld together. Sadly, the current imbalance caused his sword aura to veer on the weaker side and the earth aura to be a little too strong. The earth aura was intimately tied to earth energy, so it was affected by his copious absorption of earth energy.

The young man needed a vast sum of water energy to balance it out.

“If she’s a bad guy and Director Hou has given such orders...” Liu Long furrowed his brows. “Then we can kill whoever she is. But, do you think I can manage the deed?”

Not at all!

“We might stand a chance if we ambush her. Her defenses will give you trouble, but if you use my sword and the Nine Forged Force, you might be able to succeed!” Li Hao responded. “We just need the right opportunity and a time when there aren’t other Solars around.

“I’m hoping more now that everyone floods into the city. We’ll be less obvious in the crowd. We’ll be much more conspicuous if everyone waits outside and we continue to be absent or just walk out of the city.”

The young man was beginning to feel caught between a rock and a hard place. It wasn’t a good course of action to remain here indefinitely, and it’d be dangerous if large numbers of Solars came instead. It was fine if they ran into Hao Lianchuan and Hu Dingfang, but if they bumped into anyone else... Li Hao felt that all of them might kill him, even Hong Yitang who seemed quite friendly.

Yuan Shuo had challenged him twice back in the day. The man had been so terrified that he’d shut himself behind closed doors, earning complete and utter humiliation from the martial world. Face was more important than anything for a martial master. Did he really not bear any resentment from that time?

How was that possible??

He just didn’t dare display any dissatisfaction in front of Yuan Shuo on account of how strong the latter was.

Liu Long's expression abruptly shifted as they conversed. Li Hao and Liu Yan immediately fell silent when he pulled on them. The three froze in place and held their breaths.

The team captain exhaled softly after a long moment and muttered, "Don't move, there seems to be powerhouses around..."

He didn't need to say anything as Li Hao had sensed it even earlier! It was just that Liu Long's powers of perception were quite strong and he acted as soon as he sensed something.

Li Hao looked outside their alley, his jaw clenching with annoyance. Solars really were here, and the key thing was, this ball of light was damned huge and... a bit familiar?

Violet Moon? The fuck?

There was more than one Solar—the neighboring streets seemed to host ones as well. They were in trouble now, Solars had come en masse. Li Hao's eyes turned into the best detector under these circumstances. These Solars were so close to him that he could see their balls of light. Each one was so bright that he'd have to be completely blind to not see them.

The one that belonged to Violet Moon halted nearby and stopped moving. The young man guessed that she wanted to hunt down the squad of ten soldiers. Hong Yitang seemed to be on the next street over, possibly conducting his own hunt as well...

So this meant that the Solars wanted to cleanse the outer city of Black Armors? And Violet Moon was assigned closest to the inner city? How had the woman agreed to this arrangement? Her street was very close to the inner city. The trio could see it from the alley and often saw large numbers of Black Armors patrolling the premises. It was an utterly different sight from the rest of the outer city.

Li Hao silently approached the alley entrance that was closer to the inner city. Liu Long and Liu Yan quickly followed behind him. The three gingerly picked their way forward, unwilling to stay in close proximity to the second street. In their eyes, soldiers were better than Violet Moon. Black Armors didn't do anything so long as one didn't antagonize them.

The three carefully evaded several patrol routes when they exited the alley. Security was much heavier here and soldiers often came by.

“It’s too dangerous for us to be here!” Liu Long kept his voice down.

“Better than Violet Moon next door!” Li Hao glanced backward—the woman’s ball of light was still present. “Chief, do you still have Sis Yun Yao’s crystal balls?”

The crystal balls were the supernatural bombs that Yun Yao had invented. They were glass balls that fit into the palm of one’s hand and created an explosion when smashed on the ground. Yun Yao had used many against Red Moon’s people, but to little effect. It couldn’t even kill Darkmoons.

“No!” Liu Long shook his head. He didn’t need such tools after becoming a Dominator, so he didn’t keep any on him. They were too weak!

Li Hao nodded with disappointment, but Liu Yan said, “I have some!”

The young man raised his eyebrows with surprise. You have such a bad relationship with Yun Yao, how do you have any?

“She used them on me all the time when I sparred with her.” Liu Yan couldn’t read the confusion in the young man’s eyes. “So I took some later on. They’re stronger than their earlier iterations—she created stronger ones after crossing over. These can even threaten a Darkmoon’s life...”

Then they were indeed much stronger than before. Li Hao didn’t bother considering whether Liu Yan had stolen or forcefully taken them.

“What do you want with them?” Liu Long whispered.

“How about we throw them at Violet Moon?”

Liu Long’s armor shook as soon as the young man voiced his idea. Li Hao didn’t know if the shaking was from anger or fear—more likely anger.

“Don’t misunderstand,” he grinned. “I want to bury them on the Black Armors’ patrol routes. The balls will explode when the soldiers step on them and the explosion of mysterious power will attract large numbers of Black Armors. If we calculate their positioning right, we won’t have to show our faces to send soldiers converging on Violet Moon. I’m not an idiot—she’ll kill us before we run off if we actually throw them at her.”

The young man glanced at a possible location of the city gates. There were so many Black Armors there, and even some Bronze Armors that could be faintly glimpsed. Their attention would quickly be raised if the crystal balls exploded.

The closer one was to a supernatural, the clearer one sensed supernatural ripples. The soldiers should be able to sense Violet Moon’s existence if they drew near. If ten Black Armors were useless, what about one hundred?

How about several hundred?

It was best if they brought in a Bronze Armor! That would deal a heavy blow to Violet Moon even if she eventually managed to get away.

Liu Yan started fishing through her pockets without a second word. After patting herself for a while, she realized she was poking her armor. She had to retract her hand from the armor and rummage through her pockets. Several glass balls soon emerged through the damaged crotch area of her disguise.

Li Hao stretched out a hand to receive them; there were only eight. He looked at the patrol routes and then at Violet Moon's position. The young man's lips stretched in a smile. Violet Moon hadn't moved all this time—she seemed to be waiting.

Here, have a nice surprise!

Bent at the waist, Li Hao quickly scuttled over. He buried a few crystal balls directly opposite Violet Moon's location, separated by the alley. Based on his experience, a team of soldiers would march by in roughly two minutes and step on these things.

He whirled around and signaled to the other two that they needed to run for their lives. There might be a massive battle here soon. They needed to get out of here as soon as possible, as far away as possible!

With Li Hao's eyes and the audible footsteps of the Black Armors, they could avoid supernaturals and the soldiers. The trio fled, focusing on uninhabited areas. While there were supernatural powerhouses inside the city, no one ran into them. It was hard to discover the trio since they were purposefully avoiding everyone.

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The second street.

Violet Moon waited silently, waiting for the signal that everyone was in place and ready to act. Almost there!

She could already see ten soldiers up ahead. While Black Armors weren't weak, they were easily disposed of for a powerhouse of her level. The hardest part was to keep their armor intact. All of these gains would belong to Red Moon after the fact.

She saw a faint sparkle of starlight outside the city—that was the signal to begin their operation. It wasn't bright, but it was sufficient for all of them to see.

Violet Moon immediately exploded into action and unleashed thunder and lightning! Soldiers were blasted into the air with a soft bam. Rather than one or two, all of them were swiftly flung into the air. Black Armors were too weak when pitted against her.

She continuously released bolts of lightning, preventing the soldiers from landing on the ground. These guys would be done for if she maintained this barrage for a minute!

Violet Moon began decreasing her range of attack so that Black Armors further in the distance wouldn't sense it. It was at this moment that KABOOM!

A massive explosion rang out! A team of patrolling soldiers on the first street were blown sky high. Although none of them were injured, the disturbance was significant and supernatural ripples immense!

That location wasn't too far from the city gates. A Bronze Armor quickly arrived with some Black Armors. The Black Armors didn't sense anything, but the Bronze Armor turned its head in a certain direction...

Across the way, Violet Moon was ashen-faced with dismay. Did the other side have supernaturals? Damn it! And they attacked when she happened to be making her move?! Who was it?! She wanted to kill someone!

A Bronze Armor appeared before she could decide to retreat or wait a few seconds longer for her Black Armors to lose their battle capabilities. She didn't even have time to fly into a rage!

WHAM!

The Bronze Armor slashed its sword down, crashing it into the lightning and sending mysterious power everywhere.

Damn it, I can't stay here any longer! I'll be in bigger trouble if I do!

She was too close to the inner city gate. There were large numbers of Black Armors there—roughly eighty converged on her location in the blink of an eye. Violet Moon had to give up on the Black Armors that were almost hers and run for her life. She didn't dare fly, that was to ask for death.

The soldiers behind her gave chase in a loud clamor. More were redeployed from the inner city gates.

Hong Yitang was wrapping up his operations on the third street, but immediately about-faced and made a run for it. You're such trash, Violet Moon! A peak Solar raising such a large disturbance against a few Black Armors, and leading so many soldiers to us?! Damn!

He had to run too!

Solars utilized high speed even when they couldn't fly. But the Black Armors moved swiftly when they found an enemy inside the city. The

#### Chapter 240: Quietly Causing Trouble (IV)

Violet Moon was cut off from the front and back. She was as strong as the public thought she was and sent the Bronze Armor flying with a clap of thunder, but her scalp crawled with horror when eighty swords flashed at her in the blink of an eye.

She wasn't afraid, but was caught in a difficult situation because these things were undying. She didn't have time to keep them airborne for a full minute. If soldiers continued to increase at this rate, she wouldn't be able to hold them off either.

"Come help me!" She couldn't help herself and roared for reinforcements the next second. If they didn't, she would run in their direction with all of these Black Armors behind her!

And yet, who dared approach her street at this moment?

Off in the distance, the Revolution King eliminated his share of Black Armors and shouted, “Retreat from the outer city. Run!” He wasn’t responding to only Violet Moon, but also the other Yama powerhouses inside the city.

Everyone, run for your lives! Idiot Violet Moon raised such a ruckus just to kill a few Black Armors! They were even seeing some unusual circumstances from the inner city. Perhaps whatever was there sensed Violet Moon’s strength.

A ray of white flashed by the outer city. Something was flying!

This was the expedition’s first time seeing powerhouses in flight inside the ruins. It was a warrior in silver armor! It’d launched off the towering city walls and wielded a silver broadsword. No presence spilled over from its being, but everyone knew that they were in trouble! They’d brought a stronger existence down on their heads, a Silver Armor!

Violet Moon’s expression shifted drastically and she threw caution to the wind. RUMBLE!

Enormous bolts of lightning erupted and blasted Black Armors away. She fled with her full strength, widening her sphere of supernatural influence and attracting more Black Armors to her.

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Li Hao, Liu Long, and Liu Yan had long taken their armor off. The young man sucked in a sharp breath—just look at this show of force! I wanted Violet Moon to suffer a loss, but look at all the Black Armors teeming in the outer city!

We need to make a run for it!

“Do we leave the city or what?” Liu Long was likewise anxious.

Joy blossomed across Li Hao’s face when he scanned the surroundings. “Hurry, we need to follow that person. It’s Director Hao!” He’d located Hao Lianchuan’s ball of light!

Very well, now was a good time to slip out of the city. He wouldn’t dare do so if he didn’t see Hao Lianchuan. But since he had, it was time to leave before considering anything else. The deputy director might even be able to help him since he had his sights set on a certain person.

Liu Long and Liu Yan didn’t question the young man. Some things didn’t need to be asked. Since Li Hao said he saw the deputy director, then he probably did.

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Hao Lianchuan was also fleeing for his life. That damned Violet Moon was seriously good for nothing! It’s just a few Black Armors! Did you blow up their barracks or what? You’ve even drawn out a Silver Armor officer!

He had absolutely no words for the situation!

The number of Black Armors within the city swiftly increased. Ghastly shrieks echoed nearby when they happened across supernaturals yet to fully withdraw. Hao Lianchuan was sprinting full out when his footsteps faltered and his eyes widened.

“You guys...”

“We’re here to support you, director! Let’s get out!”

Bullshit! Why don't you think before lying, huh? What support? I was wondering where you guys had been transported to and thought it might be here, but who would've thought that you'd be completely fine? You even have the effort to spare to locate me. You've really got something up your sleeves!

The outer city was quite dangerous for the Night Watchers, but there wasn't a scratch on these three. In fact, it looked like they'd had a good time of things.

Well, damn!

That was all Hao Lianchuan had time for. He pulled them close to him and cursed as they ran, "Violet Moon is more like Violet Trash! Are all Red Moon members this idiotic? We already told her that that street is close to the inner city, but she went and brought more Black Armors and even a Silver Armor to her!"

Liu Long didn't make a sound. Such a massive disturbance had likely been the last thing on Hao Lianchuan's mind, and he didn't know that it was Li Hao casually placing crystal balls that caused it.

Rumble!!

Explosions rocked the air as thunder and lightning ripped through the void, illuminating the entire outer city. A Silver Armor swung his broadsword in an overhead swing and smashed through the lightning. Hao Lianchuan sucked in a sharp breath from the sight.

"Late to peak Solar... and an undying existence. Violet Moon is in real trouble this time!"

It was fine if the enemy died, but the key point was that this fellow was too strong. They'd have to get past him if they wished to enter the inner city. That would prove difficult.

“You bunch of bastards!” Violet Moon howled. She took to the air, ignoring the potential danger in the sky. Shooting across the firmament, she turned herself in Hong Yitang’s direction. The man widened his eyes, incensed!

BOOM!

White light sparkled in the air and slammed into Violet Moon’s body. Armor encased by thunder and lightning materialized over her body in response. A loud ringing echoed through the void! She tumbled down from the sky, but was still alive as she landed by the sprinting Hong Yitang.

The man didn’t say a word. Neither Solars said anything as they abruptly set a course for Hu Dingfang.

The commander was also in a dead sprint; he raised an internal litany of curses at this development. How had these fellows turned killing a few Black Armors into this absurdity?? They were being forced to bring out their origin weapons!

The ground was covered with Black Armors and dotted with an occasional Bronze Armor centurion. Numerous longswords jabbed for their vital points! And not only that, but another sound broke through the air.

City mechanisms that hadn’t been activated before sprang to life now. Sharp blades zipped through the void, running through a supernatural that hadn’t yet escaped! Even Solars felt the sting of pain when they were hit. The intangible blades that Hao Lianchuan had spoken of were here!

Hao Lianchuan towed the trio in his wake and roared as he ran, “Retreat! Retreat! You’ve turned on those mechanisms!”

He was incredibly frustrated, but thank goodness they weren’t too far from the city perimeter. He could already see the plaza. They’d be safe once they made it out of that area.

Li Hao and the others looked back, seeing the entire city lit up by tremendous power of thunder. Numerous Solars pelted out of the streets. They could stand against one Silver Armor, but there were also eight hundred Black Armors on the streets as well now. The Solars didn't dare meet the enemy in direct combat. That was just a death wish, pure and simple.

Violet Moon was the worst off—she'd been hit by the air restriction. While her origin weapon had defused most of the blow, her hair was disheveled, blood leaked out the corner of her mouth, and she wanted to lose herself in mindless rage. Who was it that'd attacked in that direction?!

Granted, there was no need to investigate anymore since whoever it was must already be dead!

And yet, a knot of fury clogged her heart.

The silver broadsword descended with another enormous bang. Hong Yitang picked up speed since he knew he was weaker than Violet Moon. He bounded forward with a mighty leap and left the sword stroke for his peer.

Violet Moon wanted to smite him down for his impudence, but drawing Hong Yitang into battle now would only mire them both in danger. She had to settle for erupting with lightning to defend against the blow and utilize the momentum to run even faster.

Hu Dingfang howled like a tiger in front of them, forcing the Black Armors back. He churned his legs in the Revolution King's direction. If he was going to suffer, then they might as well all go down together!

.....

Chaos engulfed the outer city! Supernaturals of various organizations rushed toward the plaza, but didn't dare enter it. Worry spread across everyone's faces. Why had the situation gotten to this point?

A ray of light flashed by. Hao Lianchuan had made it back. He threw Li Hao and the others into the crowd. No one had attention to spare for the trio. They craned their necks anxiously at people running out of the city.

“Enter the plaza and deploy your supernatural abilities!” Hao Lianchuan roared. “Lure the Black Armors here so that the Solars have a chance to make it out, or we’re all dead!”

Those outside the plaza could safely make it out of the ruins, but their organizations would have hard questions for them if they lived while their Solars were dead!

People rushed into the plaza and released their powers, attracting countless Black Armors. A horde of soldiers rushed toward the plaza, greatly lessening the pressure on the Solars.

Li Hao and his comrades took advantage of the confusion to witness the grand spectacle. Liu Long looked wordlessly at the young man. Just look at you putting on this great act! You’re so innocent like all of this has nothing to do with you!

No one knew that the young man was behind the pandemonium, and here the lad was, putting on an extreme of concern. What are you concerned about?!

But Li Hao was indeed concerned. What if Violet Moon didn’t die after all this? It would be so lovely if she did! Well, she was in for a world of trouble even if she didn’t die. The massive silver broadsword furiously hacked at the woman. Oh dear, poor Violet Moon!

Li Hao did feel some sympathy for a brief moment. Thank goodness I’m not in the city anymore, or I’d be dead as well.

“AH!!” the woman’s enraged screams rose and fell. She soared into the air again at an extreme speed. Rays of white light immediately converged upon her, forcing her armor to materialize. This time, however, lightning crackled over the treasure as it bore the brunt of the attacks.

She doggedly flew back in the face of such punishment. When Li Hao looked at her, he saw the beast of thunder—the origin weapon—curled up inside her body. It seemed to have consumed a great deal of resources as it was unmoving. Was it about to die?

Violet Moon's ball of light was also smaller than before. She'd expended a lot of energy and suffered immense injuries. Violently heaving for breath, hate glinted out of her eyes. Damn it!

Her origin weapon was heavily damaged, but she wouldn't have made it back if she hadn't flown.

The assembly saw a flash of sword light the next moment; a raging Hong Yitang charged out with a mighty sword slash. The earth shook as the Earthturner Sword demonstrated its might, ramming through the armored soldiers around the man. Hong Yitang crossed one hundred meters with a mighty bound and rushed for the plaza.

Various Solars emerged in bedraggled shape, inwardly cursing up a storm! It was an indescribable mess inside the city!