

## Star Gate 261

### Chapter 261: Reawakening (II)

Violet Moon looked at Hong Yitang, Hong Yitang looked at Violet Moon. Seeing that the woman showed no signs of moving after a long while, the sword master understood that she wanted him to go first.

Oh, now you want to let me have first crack?

Hong Yitang sighed without a word. He gently pushed off the ground and bounded upwards. Violet Moon followed him up only after seeing the man take the lead.

A city wall of one hundred meters was nothing to Solars when there was no flight restriction. The two quickly climbed in the air. Just when Hong Yitang was about to reach the top of the city walls... wham!

A broadsword cut down from the sky! A Silver Armor looked down with extreme fury while some Black Armors appeared over the city walls. There weren't that many of the latter and they pulled out longbows. Humm!

A dozen arrows shot at the two Solars!

The silver broadsword slammed down in a massive collision and knocked Hong Yitang out of the sky. Violet Moon erupted with thunder and lightning, smiting the Silver Armor with a bolt of lightning.

Sizzling with electricity, the Silver Armor swayed slightly from the immense blow. Violet Moon snorted, "Hong Yitang, get rid of those soldiers!"

The archers on the walls weren't a large threat by themselves, but they were still a certain annoyance when they fired off a volley of arrows.

Hong Yitang promptly leapt upward and condensed a longsword of yellowish-brown energy in his hand. He struck with the blade!

Bam!

The nearest Black Armor was sliced clean through—there was no room to spare for preserving the suits of armor at this stage. He just needed to eliminate them from the fight. It was highly feasible for a Solar to destroy Black Armors. Bronze Armors presented more of a challenge, and the use of an origin weapon was required for the Silver Armor.

“Lure it down here!” someone transmitted. Violet Moon and Hong Yitang weren’t able to deal with the Silver Armor by themselves. They stood a chance only if they enticed the enemy to land on the ground.

Do you think I don’t want to? Violet Moon cursed inwardly. This high ranking officer was plainly no fool—it seemed to retain a bit of consciousness and refused to move from the wall. The two exchanged a dozen blows by the edge of the city walls—she was unable to set foot on them no matter what she tried.

Hong Yitang had a much easier time of things. He slashed again and again, sweeping Black Armors off the ramparts.

Bam bam bam!

The soldiers crashed onto the ground with loud thuds, enraging the Silver Armor. It roared hoarsely and laid around with its broadsword. The frenzied rampage shook Violet Moon’s very organs. No matter how it raged, however, it wasn’t an easy task for it to defeat the flying Violet Moon.

Seeing that the Silver Armor wouldn’t be lured down from the walls, the Solars on the ground attacked as well. They couldn’t fly, but they could send decent attacks through the air. Supernatural abilities erupted with loud roars!

The Silver Armor was suppressed to the point where it couldn't look out over the city walls.

"Hong Yitang, take a look over the walls!" cried the Solars after they kept the soldier down. What did the inner city look like?

Hong Yitang was very curious as well! He only dared act on his impulses after seeing that there was no possibility for the Silver Armor to maneuver around. Sweeping another Black Armor off the ramparts, he kicked off the city walls and made use of leverage to throw himself higher into the air. He saw inside the city!

Light!

Indeed, there was light inside the city. Everyone had thought that before, but Hong Yitang saw clearly in this moment.

It wasn't that there was illumination in the city, but that radiance from a pagoda-like structure in the center enveloped the entire city. It was dim and soft, the intensity of street lamps at night. A turtle seemed crouched on top of the pagoda.

A turtle...

The dim and soft source of light seemed to come from that. The entire city was quiet without a sound, yet the structures remained. Hong Yitang saw numerous buildings, streets, and architecture that he didn't recognize. It was antique, quaint, and home to some unique items.

He saw something like a plane parked in a certain area. He glimpsed many other things in this moment, but none of it was key. What was more pressing was if there were other soldiers in the city. Was the army of one thousand its only troops?

He swept a glance over the city, noting rivers, lakes, and everything but people. There was no sign of the soldiers that patrolled in the outer city—not a single one!

There was only this isolated army in the city!

Hong Yitang grasped a motion in this moment—this lone army had been left behind, tasked to defend this city called Battle Haven. Had its people met strong foes? Had the denizens migrated elsewhere? Or had they encountered natural disaster?

No matter what it was, everyone within the city had left. There might've been a massive army camped here in its time; only one thousand troops were left when the dust settled. And here they were, faithfully adhering to their orders millions upon millions of years later. They held fast against all comers!

Not even Hong Yitang could describe what he felt—this army was almost completely annihilated! There were only very few Black Armors left on the walls, and he was one of the butchers.

One Silver Armor and several dozen Black Armors were all that was left of the ancient city.

“Hong Yitang!”

The man landed and responded, “It’s empty inside the city! There’s nothing inside but a pagoda with a turtle crouched on top of it. Only the Silver Armor and a few dozen Black Armors guard it.”

The crowd rejoiced at his report!

Really? This was fantastic news! They were highly worried that tens of thousands of troops would be waiting in formation after they broke down the city gates. There would be no course of action but to flee if that was the case. They’d have to worry about these guys rushing out of the city too.

Elation overtook the assembly when they heard that these were all the soldiers that were left. Endless treasure awaited them inside the city!

“Violet Moon, pull it down from the wall!” yelled the Revolution King. “It’s smooth sailing after we eliminate it! Help her, Hong Yitang!”

Who was afraid of a lone Silver Armor? Even Hao Lianchuan and Hu Dingfang were moved. A defensive origin weapon! Was it the turtle? Very possibly!

Both offense and defense were at hand once they laid hands on the treasure and enveloped White Moon City with it! They could seal off the provincial capital just like these ruins and leave only a tiny opening. Defending just that opening would be the easiest task. If not, they could lob a few city annihilation missiles at the entrance. Let’s see who dares barge in then!

The Night Watchers would be impossible to defeat in Silver Moon!

There must also be something very special about this origin weapon for it to be self-sufficient millions of years later. It could still fully operate a city’s defenses—which was why they wanted it so ardently.

Many origin weapons needed to be maintained and brought back to good condition. So many were decayed to the point of ruin after being buried for so many years.

Rumble!!

Solars attacked again and again.

“Everyone who’s gone through the second passageway, get up there!” Hao Lianchuan roared. “Help them eliminate the Black Armors and find a way to mob that Silver Armor!”

Some looked at their faction leader—damned if the Night Watchers weren’t a scheming bunch! None of them had taken the second passageway. Wasn’t this making others risk their lives instead?

“Get up there!” Ding Chen echoed. The Revolution King waved a hand as well—go! It wasn’t too dangerous, and did the Night Watchers think that just because they had the most survivors at the moment, that that would still be the case when they left on the third day?

All of the other delegations were dead apart from the Solars, did Hao Lianchuan think that calm heads would prevail then? Or did he think the Night Watchers were all powerful and undying? Was the man even thinking at all?

The Revolution King was quickly losing all of his reservations. So many of his people had died, it didn’t matter if the last three did as well. He’d operate with complete impunity by himself then! Anyone who pissed them off would see the execution of every one of their people below Solar! Whichever delegation was the largest now would draw the greatest wariness.

Such were the Revolution King’s thoughts, ones possibly mirrored by others. Regardless, the powerhouses that’d passed through the second passageway were directed to go up the wall. One hundred meters wasn’t too tall for a Sunflare either. They bounded upward and charged up the wall.

The Silver Armor howled with fury on the ramparts! Its voice suddenly seemed much clearer than before. The last defenders! Perhaps Hong Yitang’s speculations were right. This was a lone army left behind to guard the city.

Wrathful bitterness filled the Silver Armor’s howls as his men died around him. Perhaps he was dead long ago; only an empty shell with some lingering consciousness propelled the armor. His bones were rotten after so many years, but it was this army that loyally defended the ancient city after their deaths and maintained their organizational system.

It must have been such a magnificent army back in the day, so the Silver Armor did not accept these circumstances! Would these ants have dared run afoul of Battle Heaven in the city’s prime, its days of glory?

This city once towered beneath the heavens and an unparalleled powerhouse broke through the void to bestow it a name—Battle Heaven!

The heavens could be marched on!

Its army raised their swords against the firmament, ruled the era, and protected the age...

The Silver Armor's memories seem to awaken—light gleamed out of empty sockets behind the visor. The waving broadsword slowed, as if the soldier clearly saw the intruders only now.

Ants!

A bunch of weaklings had obliterated the Battle Heaven Army that he was so proud of! It didn't matter that he was part of the most insignificant city guard division of the army, grief and fury assailed him!

He looked down over the city walls, giving pause to the expedition team. That was... a sentient look! The soldiers did not have those as they were all puppets. When they were defeated and their armor opened, the only thing that remained were bones that quickly turned to dust. But right now, they sensed a look of fury, contempt, and sorrow!

Was he alive?? That was impossible! Who could survive for so long?!

In the annals of the Skystar Dynasty, the ancient civilization wasn't a reference to the period within the past seventeen hundred years. History existed before the Star era calendar, but that also didn't refer to the ancient civilization. The history right before the Star era was a period of time that'd been toppled and their ruins were called ancient buildings, nothing more formal.

The ancient civilization ran far beyond three thousand years in the past, but no one could live so long if they only started counting from three thousand years ago!

“Do you... wish to enter the city?”

## Chapter 262: Reawakening (III)

What?!

The crowd reeled with shock. The Silver Armor had spoken! While his intonation was off and the language different, his words seem to be conveyed on a mental level. It wasn't true speech, so they could understand him.

This was unbelievable!

The Silver Armor stepped through the air and returned to the ramparts. He looked out over a dazed group; even Violet Moon shuddered with horror and quickly withdrew. The soldier bestowed an imperial gaze upon his audience. Despite knowing that the moment he regained consciousness was the moment that his essence would start to fade away, he was still very happy.

Even if his awakening was due to this handful of trash harassing him and killing his troops.

"Has His Imperial Majesty returned?" The Silver Armor turned downcast when blank looks answered him from below. "It looks like... he has not... That follows as Battle Heaven has been abandoned..."

"Has the Human King not returned either?"

There was still ringing silence.

"The Human King cannot possibly fail!" The Silver Armor's sorrow deepened. Impossible! That was an invincible liege he spoke of, the overlord of the unbounded land, the sovereign who'd conquered the world!



“Is this world... still that world?” murmured the Silver Armor as he tilted his head to the sky. When he next gazed at those beneath, he laughed soundlessly at the looks of shock. “How weak, how very weak! Has the path of energy awakened once more? But... there is no future in this path!”

He seemed to be jeering about matters that had nothing to do with him, but shocked dismay blossomed on the faces of the expedition team.

The path of energy? The supernatural world?

The Silver Armor looked again and seemed to see something—he saw Liu Long, Li Hao, Liu Yan, and a few other martial masters...

“So... this world... is still that world...” He looked back at the cosmos with defiance and anger. “That invincible existence will not abandon us! The Battle Heaven Army will bring the fight to the firmament and return with glory holding the heads of our enemies!

“You weaklings encroach upon Battle Heaven, but considering that you are all from the human race...”

The soldier suddenly fell silent. The human race! What nostalgia that evoked... What did the world look like now?

He’d wanted to use this moment to obliterate the intruders. He could do so because the defensive system still operated! But the urge faded away when he looked at the empty city. Battle Heaven was... no more!

The city that I defend is... gone!

Is a city still a city when there are no people?

Downcast and lost, the Silver Armor laughed—or was he crying instead? Clad in armor, longsword in hand, he looked up at a sky that was devoid of anything to see. Yet he seemed to glimpse something—the enemy, that endless enmity.

“You... are on your own! The human race... human race...” The Silver Armor looked up with infinite sorrow and unbounded despondency. He turned back to the few remaining Black Armors by his side. This was no longer his era! It no longer belonged to him.

Based on prior preferences, he would have annihilated these intruders for their temerity. That was what the Battle Heaven Army would do. But when he saw martial masters and cultivators among the crowd... his heart softened. Even though the organ had long since decayed.

The human race!

As irritating as the path of energy was, wasn't that also part of the human race?

This world and this time is no longer mine. What need is there to kill the humans of this era? Did we not once explore the primordial ruins of our time as well?

“Where are the troops of Battle Heaven?!” A roar rang throughout the ancient city!

Figures materialized in the outer city, as did two Bronze Armors. The call seemed to rouse their sentience. The Black Armors that'd lost everything in falling outside the city confines also trembled.

The Battle Heaven Army is here!

“Everyone, our era... is over!” shouted the Silver Armor with pain and grief. “The Human King did not return and His Imperial Majesty is yet gone. But enemies still walk the world! Are you willing to march on the firmaments with me once again?!”

“We are!” The entire city seemed to shake! Battle Armors that’d yet to die appeared one after another, recreating scenes of time past!

Li Hao and the others on the ground were slack jawed with shock. What... what was this? The city was coming alive!

“We fight!”

“We fight!”

“We fight!” Roars that seemed to hail straight from the ancient past rang throughout the city.

The Silver Armor could already feel it—his soul was extinguishing and his consciousness was fading away. The power of time and traces of years gone by swiftly accelerated his progress to death.

“If you see the Human King or His Imperial Majesty... Tell them... tell them that we still fight!” The cry reverberated in the crowd’s hearts. The Silver Armor pointed his sword at the sky and shouted, “We fight once more for the human race!”

“Kill!”

“Kill!” These armored soldiers seemed to be alive again as they raised their longswords and charged at the sky, even though there was nothing there. The Silver Armor began crumbling to pieces, as did the Black and Bronze Armors...

Li Hao and the rest could not understand the scene, they really couldn’t! The Silver Armor officer seemed to have been resurrected and then... did not retaliate against Violet Moon and the others. He

didn't kill them or attack any of the intruders. Instead, he raised his sword and rushed at the empty sky.

Who did they fight? Where was their enemy? What were they doing in their last moments?

Fear, horror, shock... All sorts of emotion wrapped around the expedition, including Li Hao. He focused on who the Human King or Imperial Majesty might be. Was it the figure that he'd seen writing the name of the city? Was his own ancestor, the swordsman who'd severed the self, once part of their august ranks?

Who did the Silver Armor advance upon? Who did he fight for? The human race? ...humans? So were there other races? Did existences like Black Panther count as monster spirits? Were they the enemy?

Countless notions floated into Li Hao's mind as he stared dumbly at the soldier threatening the heavens. The young man was dumbfounded, he was lost.

Figures advanced through the air as they continued upward. They leapt, flew, and soared! Their swords waved as they charged the skies with unbridled killing intent! If these warriors had done so from the very beginning, less than ten from the expedition team would remain standing here today!

So powerful!

The outsiders finally sensed how powerful these soldiers were. Even the Black Armors had been powerhouses once. Li Hao felt that they were once martial masters and not Sunderers... but possibly Dominators!

Dominators as ordinary soldiers? The young man could barely contain his amazement. Had these soldiers declined to mere shadows of themselves after countless eons? Were they so much more in their heyday?

He remembered the look of contempt, disdain, and scorn from the Silver Amor. It was like the soldier had been looking upon ants, even when he gazed upon the Solars. Perhaps Solars were indeed just ants in his eyes, and he'd just been a higher ranking officer back in his day!

The Silver Armor in the sky emitted one final howl. "We congratulate the human race with the blood of the enemy!"

Kill!

Accompanied by boundless killing intent, Black Armors crumbled away as their sword qi shot into the clouds. Their qi shook heaven and earth!

Boom!

The Silver Armor rushed into the endless darkness with a loud rumble and vanished from sight. Only Li Hao saw that he fully crumbled away at the last possible second!

Dead!

Perhaps they died countless years ago, but he was fully dead in this moment.

The expedition was rooted to the spot. Hu Dingfang, a commander in the army, had nothing but shellshock as a descriptor for his mental state.

"What... kind of army... was this..." He couldn't imagine! Just what kind of army had they been to wave their swords at the sky after so many eras and threaten an unknown enemy? They'd erupted with everything they possessed just for that final stroke!

As a commander, he was all too aware that such an army could not be overcome. They were invincible! For morale to still remain after millions of years later... Was this possible in the earthly domain?

Everyone was quiet in front of the inner city gates. Although the army was annihilated, no one was all that happy. The various powerhouses wore solemn expressions. After a long while, the Revolution King asked, "What... cultivation level was he?"

He didn't know! The strength that the Silver Armor had brought to bear at the very end might be even stronger than a few Novas! Was that possible?

"Nova?" Hong Yitang swallowed hard. "Pro... probably?"

If that was the case, what of even higher ranking officers in those times? Their deputies? And their commander-in-chief? Just how strong were the powerhouses of the ancient era??

The scene had been unfathomable, and it'd resulted simply from a trace of consciousness left behind by an officer in command of thousands.

Was he really of the Nova level? He could be stronger!

Everyone committed an ancient military designation to memory—the Battle Heaven Army! A collection of troops who still advanced on the cosmos millions of years later.

Li Hao stared dumbly at the sky, thinking of the sword of his memories, the blow from the Silver Armor, and the move from the Black Armors...

The one from his ancestor had been hazy and appeared far away, but the one from the soldiers seemed to be fully grasped in hand. This was also a type of aura, one that forged ahead without looking back!

That was how a sword should be used.

The sword stroke that severed the heavens and the self was far removed from Li Hao, whereas the one in front of him was possibly the one that he should be pursuing. Even the one from the Black Armors seemed stronger than the one that Li Hao could bring to bear. This was a sword derived from fire and blood!

Killing intent of blood and qi. Was a swordsman that did not kill still a swordsman?

The young man turned over his reflections, whereupon someone broke the silence with an inappropriate question. “If he’s gone... and the sword’s gone... how are we supposed to enter the city?”

#### Chapter 263: Reawakening (IV)

Although flabbergasted, the group came back to their senses. The soldiers were gone, they weren’t alive, they were just ancients!

In fact, they weren’t even ancients. They were characters outside the records of history, hailing from a civilization before the dawn of written time.

They weren’t living, so what the expedition needed to consider now was that the sword was gone. The potential key to the gates had self-destructed in the void along with the final blow from the Silver Armor. How were they to access the inner city now? Were those who’d taken the second passageway able to fly right over the walls, and those who hadn’t just out of luck?

Excitement gleamed in Violet Moon’s eyes. The stronger that army was, the more agitated she became. This indicated that there was treasure inside the city, and incomparably precious treasure. How could an ancient city that harbored such an army not have any treasure in its vaults?

And, she could fly!

Hong Yitang could also fly, but was he a match for her?

People surrounded her as her thoughts ran wild—Hu Dingfang, the Revolution King, and Ding Cheng! Meanwhile, Hao Lianchuan and Kong Qi silently closed in on Hong Yitang. They put the Silver Armor out of mind as they'd realized that the city gates could not be opened. In that case, these guys that could fly would not be permitted to be first into the city!

What if they activated some traps or mechanisms in the city that caused the death of the rest? Who knew??

“Don't be like this!” Hong Yitang poured out his grievances. “My wife and daughter are here. How would I leave them behind?”

What were these guys staring at him for??

Violet Moon scanned the people around her with a disquieting look. Both the Revolution King and Hu Dingfang were very strong; they matched her. And since Ding Chen could lead the Celestial delegation, that meant he was no slouch either.

The three stared intently at her, she would suffer their combined wrath if she dared fly over!

The situation had swiftly turned on its head. The Night Watchers and powerhouses that hadn't taken the second passageway surrounded those who had. No one was going in!

There were plenty of survivors from the second passage, particularly from Red Moon. They'd sent the most members in. There were also those from Yama, but the expedition team was less worried since their leader hadn't gone inside. The only one to worry about was Red Moon.

That organization's survivors groaned inwardly! There weren't that many of them—the Night Watchers were the biggest delegation left, but none of them had braved the ancient house.



“There’s no need for this...” Violet Moon took a deep breath. “We took our fair share of risk when we tried the second passageway. If this isn’t to your liking, all of you can try that path as well!”

“We can!” the Revolution King responded calmly. “But you’ll come out of the city with us and walk it again as well...”

“Piss off!” Violet Moon snorted. “Who do you think you are, Revolution? On what basis do you have the right to demand that?”

She’d almost died last time, and now they wanted her to try again? Was she crazy or them? In that case, she might as well throw caution to the wind. She might be able to make a getaway if she launched herself over the walls and entered the city directly.

“You don’t have to go in...” The Revolution King frowned. “But you can’t enter the inner city by yourself!”

“And what do you want?” Violet Moon demanded coldly.

The Revolution King looked at Hong Yitang instead of answering. “How tall is the pagoda inside the city?”

“Roughly... one hundred meters? It’s about the same height as the walls.”

The group sank into deep thought. That meant they did all have to try the second passageway if they wanted a chance at the treasure. Otherwise, were they to watch others take the treasure from right beneath their nose since they couldn’t fly?

“Is there a flight restriction inside the city?”

No one could answer that question. It was best if there wasn't, but if there was... they had to take the second passageway.

“Why don't we send someone in first and have them open the gates...” Ding Chen raised.

Who? Violet Moon and her organization were out of the question; only weaklings were permitted inside so that treasure couldn't be claimed. No matter how many valuables existed inside the city, one would find it difficult to retain their gains if they lacked sufficient strength to.

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A loud hubbub rose as the group argued. Li Hao ignored them and refrained from pressuring the powerhouses that could fly. He was still looking up at the sky, the Silver Armor's words echoing in his ears and his mind replaying their last scene of rushing to the firmament with their swords upraised.

What the young man had witnessed completely overwhelmed him! He'd never experienced such sensations before in his limited life—this kind of unbounded faith and supreme confidence. The soldiers' resolution did not waver even in the face of despair. They firmly believed that they would win!

They believed that their king and their emperor would return. They would not be abandoned! They believed that the enemy could be overcome, that no matter how negligible their attack was, they wished to demonstrate their might to the enemy. The human race was not to be insulted!

“The Incantation of the Blade of Blood...” Li Hao murmured. He seemed to understand why such a method existed in the ancient civilization, why they'd invented a secret art that took the enemy down with the wielder.

These powerhouses did not care about their own survival when they marched on the heavens. They only cared if they could cut down the enemy.

What kind of person, item, or goal was it that inspired such commitment from you? They couldn't even be bothered to cleanse their city of intruders, even when the intruders trespassed on their homes. Their initial fury was because someone had the temerity to run afoul of them, but that dwindled away to indifference. When the Silver Armor looked at them, it'd felt that there was something different in his gaze—particularly when he looked at Li Hao's group.

Gratification? Happiness? Or something else?

It was hard for the young man to judge, but he knew that the soldier had set aside his killing intent. That final blow before his death might not have been able to exterminate the entire delegation, but killing a few Solars was absolutely within his grasp.

Was it because we're also humans? So it's a race thing?

It was Li Hao's first time experiencing such interesting emotions. So it turned out he evoked appreciation and pity by virtue of being human, and even offered comfort!

But there were humans everywhere beneath the heavens. Humans killing humans was the mainstream. Who did they kill, if not humans?

"The path of energy, martial dao..." Li Hao's thoughts wandered off. Faith!

He knew what he lacked compared to the veteran martial masters and the soldiers that marched on the heavens. Faith! They have it, what about me? Who does my sword fight for? Why does my sword kill? Is it for survival?

Thoughts ran quickly through his mind and caused his emotions to swell. Perhaps he was finally embarking on the true path of martial masters—martial dao!

He hadn't understood before, he really hadn't. There weren't any treasures involved in the scene that he'd witnessed and there wasn't anything else to gain. He simply witnessed the final sword stroke

from the soldiers, but it seemed more thrilling than the breakthrough to Dominator. The treasures inside the city and defensive origin weapon... Those were all external objects!

A martial master's strength came from the self. Martial dao's strength derived from invincibility!

Of course, he wavered a little at the last second. You guys can give me all of those treasures...

.....

The uproar beside the young man continued as he contemplated the meaning of life. Li Hao tilted his head for a look. The Solars were still conflicted over who should enter first and if they should try the second passageway.

"With how the situation is, let's all go through the second passageway. But we won't force anyone. I propose that Revolution, Hu Dingfang, and Ding Chen should try. The rest can go without!"

Why these three?

It was tough for one person from the Night Watchers, Yama, and Celestial to enjoy such immunity in the city. The Sword Sect and Red Moon already had their people. To put it bluntly, the Night Watchers and Celestial would still have Solars overseeing the situation even if all three died. The premises wouldn't dissolve into complete chaos.

Hu Dingfang didn't protest the arrangement. He was indeed more suited to take the passageway. Being a martial master to begin with, he was stronger and didn't carry an origin weapon. He knew that the Flaming Phoenix Spear was with Hao Lianchuan. If Hao Lianchuan died in there, the origin weapon might be lost, never to be recovered.

The Revolution King had to make the attempt since he wanted the treasure. It only affected him if he survived or not. The remaining three Yama Sunflares were on their own.

“Swordmaster Hong, it is difficult for you to vie with Violet Moon since you are less than her.” Hao Lianchuan looked at Hong Yitang. “Why don’t you and your wife, the Celestial powerhouse, and I jointly restrain Violet Moon until the others return?”

Hong Yitang nodded, he had no objection. It was too dangerous to enter the city alone with Violet Moon. It was one thing to fish in troubled waters, but it was too risky if he was to fight this woman alone.

The rest had no further opinions when they discussed the arrangements. Even the Revolution King was very confident. Although Yao Cheng had died inside, Violet Moon and Hong Yitang had made it out. While Violet Moon suffered further injuries, her Armor of the Thunder God had been damaged before this. He held more of an advantage compared to her.

Hao Lianchuan glanced at the Night Watchers, then at the powerhouses of the various factions. “I recommend the rest of you to leave at midnight tonight! I think it will be very dangerous for you to continue remaining in the ruins!” He turned back to the Night Watchers before anyone had time to say anything. “Ole Zhou, leave with a portion of people and take the Black Armors back. I won’t force anyone to leave or stay, I can’t rob you of your opportunities, after all! Perhaps your fortune awaits inside the city. I won’t stop anyone from taking the second passageway either, just that everyone needs to be responsible for their own life!”

He didn’t make a unilateral decision since all supernaturals dreamed of ascending to the heavens with one step. They wished to obtain that ultimate treasure and become an unparalleled powerhouse—the Night Watchers were no exception!

Staying behind meant being prepared to die.

The crowd rustled as people weighed up the decision. Did they leave, or did they stay?

Li Hao looked at Liu Yan and Liu Long. The team captain frowned and looked back at the young man.

“I won’t be leaving,” Li Hao said softly. “I might be in a world of trouble if I leave now. I’ll go when General Hu and Director Hao leave. They’re two Solars, at the very least.”

Who knew how many people waited for him outside if he left now? Not to mention... he didn’t want to leave. He had some thoughts about the treasure, but not much. He wanted to study the two characters more after everyone entered the city.

In his eyes, the writing was far better than any treasure, so he was ready with his excuses.

#### Chapter 264: City Gates Open (I)

When Hao Lianchuan looked at the trio, Li Hao said, “Director... You guys should do whatever you want. The rest of you don’t need to pay attention to me either. I won’t be going through the second passageway and I won’t be entering the city. I’ll just wait here for you, is that alright?”

The crowd blinked. What was Li Hao staying for, if he didn’t want to enter the city? Enlightenment was quickly forthcoming.

“Director Hou’s outside, no one will dare touch you!” Hao Lianchuan explained.

“I’m not familiar with Director Hou, I’m more familiar with Director Hao.” Li Hao smiled. “If there’s anyone who I can rely on in the Night Watchers, it would be Director Hao!” The young man then turned to Hu Dingfang. “General Hu brims with a just air and is incredibly strong. I feel more at ease when I’m with the two of you!”

These words scratched an itch in Hao Lianchuan and Hu Dingfang’s heart. Although the young man wasn’t necessarily being sincere, they were so wonderful to hear!

“Then I’ll stay here to protect Li Hao,” Liu Long offered. “Liu Yan, you should leave with Director Zhou and the others!”

The woman wasn't strong enough, so it would be too dangerous if she continued to remain.

Liu Yan didn't protest or put on a show of sticking with them through life or death. That would only drag her comrades down instead. She quickly nodded, glanced at Liu Long and Li Hao, and softly said, "Then I'll head out at midnight!"

Wang Ming sidled up to them with a chuckle. "Li Hao, I'll be staying as well, I'll protect you! Do you think I should try the second passageway?"

He was contemplating his next course of action. Although he'd set foot into Sunflare at a very young age, he hadn't been able to do much on this excavation. Hence, he was a bit dissatisfied at how things had turned out. but it was indeed too dangerous to enter the inner city if he couldn't fly. Even escape would be hard then.

"You should do as you wish." Li Hao flicked a glance at him. "But it's very dangerous, so you need to think over it carefully."

Wang Ming started agonizing over his decision again and didn't say anything. The various other factions were also deep in discussion. A certain portion of them needed to leave with the Black Armors. Their gains had been significant, even with the remaining Black Armors destroying themselves in the army's final eruption.

The Black Armors that'd been captured earlier had long been scrubbed of any lingering consciousness. These soldiers had been dead for countless years.

Anyone who left tonight would be leaving on the second day. Their factions should've sent more representatives to Silver Moon during this time. They wouldn't be emerging to fight a lone fight.

All sides quickly reached a decision. Not all of the Night Watchers decided to depart—a portion chose to stay. Two Sunflares remained, as did Wang Ming, making for three Sunflares.

Peak Sunflare Director Zhou of the metal attribute stayed, as did mid Sunflare Zhao Huan of the earth attribute, and Wang Ming. Director Zhou could even offer some resistance against a Solar at

critical moments. Zhao Huan's presence was likely a contingency against further existences like the Battle Heaven Army. She could isolate threats from the earth at any time and even try to move through it.

Apart from Wang Ming, the two stayed behind with specific purposes. They might have discussed their movements with Hao Lianchuan.

As for Darkmoons, Li Hao didn't even need to look to know that Zhang Ting was remaining behind. How could she not when something this momentous was at stake?

Whether as a scout or an agent from the central region, these ancient ruins were far beyond the imagination. Even if she didn't vie for the treasures herself, she had to stay behind to observe who ultimately claimed what items. All of this needed to go into her report.

A portion of Darkmoons chose to stay in addition to Zhang Ting. With great danger came great opportunity—everyone was well aware of that. What they didn't know was the second line of that saying—one needed great strength to claim great opportunity!

Hao Lianchuan didn't try to persuade them otherwise. Robbing someone of their opportunities was as heinous as killing one's parents. He would not stop them when they did not care about their own survival.

What was surprising from the Sword Sect side was that everyone, except Hong Yitang, chose to retreat! Even his Solar-level wife!

Li Hao understood after thinking it through. The Sword Sect was not subordinate to any other faction. If no Solars left with the rest, they would be sitting ducks with their bounty of Black Armors!

If worst came to worst, his wife could choose to swear allegiance to a particular faction. A Solar still possessed certain status whether in Silver Moon or the central region.



One had to say, Hong Yitang was a man of certain vision to send out his wife with the rest of his organization before entering the city. The Sword Sect would not fall here even if he did. If the situation was handled with a deft hand, they could sell the Black Armors to the three great organizations or Night Watchers if the loot proved impossible to retain. That would result in a sizable sum of mysterious power, assuming they could hang onto that as well.

Everyone below Sunflare on the Red Moon side withdrew. All four of their Sunflares remained.

Only one Yama member left with Black Armors, the remaining two elected to stay.

Out of the thirteen remaining Celestial powerhouses, six decided to depart at midnight. The remaining seven were all Sunflares—a powerful group. It was plain to see that Celestial still bore certain ambitions for this expedition. Their Solars were not the most powerful, but they were a force to be reckoned with when the seven Sunflares were added to the mix!

And so, the discussion concluded. Two Solars, three Sunflares, and five Darkmoons stayed for the Night Watchers. Combined with Li Hao and Liu Long, they had the largest remaining delegation of twelve members.

Nine remained for Celestial. Altogether, Red Moon, Yama, and the Sword Sect also amounted to nine. Only Hong Yitang remained of the Sword Sect. There was thirty left for the expedition; the rest were all departing.

Hao Lianchuan glanced at the Darkmoons in his delegation. To be honest, these people were either truly greedy beyond belief or pawns and spies of others to be staying at this stage. They wouldn't want to leave before the dust settled.

Just look at the three greats—they only dared let Sunflares remain! The Night Watchers, however, had five Darkmoons still eager to explore. Setting Zhang Ting aside, Hao Lianchuan knew that one of the other four was another faction's agent. He wasn't sure which one, but it might have to do with the government. They might be from the Ministry of Administration!

Thus, he didn't care about the Darkmoons remaining behind. They would walk the path they chose, and it was no one's fault but theirs if they died!

It was apparent from the Sword Sect sending out even one of their Solars that the matters to come would be very dangerous. Those in the know were aware that once treasure truly appeared, the Solars would engage in a tremendous battle. Whoever dared stay behind was willing to risk their lives!

Hao Lianchuan wasn't worried about anyone else but Li Hao. The young man was... a little too weak. He said that exiting the ruins was dangerous, but Hao Lianchuan felt that any danger would be mitigated by Hou Xiaochen's presence. It was more dangerous to remain inside!

.....

A frowning Hao Lianchuan approached Li Hao when everyone was preoccupied elsewhere. "You should leave tonight," he murmured lowly. "Don't worry, Director Hou can protect you. If he can't handle a little trouble like this, then all of Silver Moon would've been overrun long ago!"

"I can't, I'm not familiar with him! I trust only Director Hao among the Night Watchers," Li Hao repeated firmly. "I won't enter the city! You guys fight over your stuff and I'll wait at the city gates. I'll hide if a Solar does come out. They won't waste time searching for a martial master. I'll be very safe unless both Director Hao and General Hu are dead!"

The young man made certain sense, but his words weren't easy on the ear. You're the one dying, alright? Not us!

Hao Lianchuan gave up speaking sense to Li Hao and looked at Liu Long. The man was a Dominator; he'd be able to keep himself safe so long as he didn't involve himself with the Solars. Those remaining were likely all entering the city, so he wasn't in much danger if he didn't go in.

Nodding, Hao Lianchuan said nothing else. Those departing were readying to leave whereas he had his mission as well. He, Hong Yitang, and Kong Qi were in charge of keeping an eye on Violet

Moon and preventing her from entering the city. Hu Dingfang and the others prepared themselves for the second passageway.

.....

Most of the remaining expedition team left for the ancient house, but Li Hao stayed. Liu Long departed with them as well—he wasn't permitted to stay behind as he'd been through the second passageway before. The group was worried he'd enter the city himself. Li Hao didn't matter, he hadn't gone the alternative way. He wouldn't be able to fly in even if he had the opportunity to.

Apart from Li Hao, some supernaturals who hadn't attempted the second passageway also remained, including Wang Ming!

The handsome supernatural hemmed and hawed, a little dejected at where he was. "Li Hao, do you think I should give it a try? Director Hao said I shouldn't, that my rate of survival is one percent since I've just ascended and my mysterious power is unstable."

"That's for your own good!" Li Hao was in full agreement. He'd come to understand the mechanism behind the ancient house—the stronger a supernatural was, the more mysterious power they leaked, which made it more dangerous!

The experts could defend themselves, but Wang Ming had just ascended and his power levels fluctuated. He wasn't the strongest either, so he'd be dead without a doubt. Yao Cheng must have emanated too much power after he was injured and weakened by his wounds, which led to his death during the attempt.

"Sis Zhang, how come you're staying as well?" Li Hao looked at Zhang Ting standing beside them.

"I'm not entering the city either." She smiled warmly. "I'm staying because my water energy is good for healing, not battle. I can treat some life-threatening injuries at a crucial moment. After all, those who don't leave tonight must wait until tomorrow night. Some wounds can be fatal if they're not addressed in time..."

“So I’ll be waiting outside the city with you guys,” she concluded softly.

“A healer?” Wang Ming’s interest was piqued. “And I wondered why you were staying, Sis Zhang! You’re a real one, alright! I suffered some scrapes earlier, can you look at them for me?”

It was a good idea to have a doctor stay behind. Just as she said, if someone’s life was in danger and the doors to the ruins wouldn’t open for a while, having a doctor on site would ensure that the patient wouldn’t die too quickly.

Her presence rather made sense.

## Chapter 265: City Gates Open (II)

“Sis Zhang, don’t us Night Watchers have any Sunflare level healers?” Li Hao smiled.

“No.” Zhang Ting shook her head. “Healers are actually very special and very rare! Wood, light, and water attributes are suited for healing, particularly the life attribute—that’s a mutation from the wood attribute. But there aren’t many in even the central region, to say nothing of Silver Moon.

“Light Island had a few light attributes—they recruited most of the light attributes in Silver Moon. Thus, most organizations mainly focus on water attributes as their healers!

“Yet water can also attack, so most supernaturals of this attribute choose to focus on offense instead of healing.”

“The life attribute... So this also exists as well. I’ve learned something new today!” Li Hao nodded. “Then you need to be careful, Sis Zhang. You should stay close to us since you don’t have much offensive capabilities. My chief is really powerful, he’s a Dominator!

“Dominators are all very strong,” chuckled the young man. “With him here, no one will dare make trouble for us as long as we don’t enter the city for the treasure.”

A Dominator!

Liu Long remained quiet off to the side.

“Congratulations to Director Liu.” Zhang Ting nodded with a strange look on her face. “To think that you ultimately made the breakthrough in the end! I once heard of your name in White Moon City, that you would hold a city by yourself...”

This was a famous saying that originated from Liu Long. White Moon City wanted him to join the Night Watchers, but he refused and insisted on returning to Silver City. That was when he voiced the heroic sentiment of defending an entire city by himself. Silver City would not fall so long as he lived!

He’d just been a Sunderer then. Now that he was a Dominator and thought back to those days... The man shook his head; there was nothing more to say. One man holding down a city had been words spoken in the heat of the moment! As the supernatural world grew stronger—as evident by the common sight of Solars on this expedition—it was laughable to think that one person could protect a city by themselves.

He didn’t mind Li Hao exposing him as a Dominator. The kid was diabolical! Everyone’s attention would naturally be on him after he became a Dominator. Who would care about a sickly Sunderer? Li Hao’s face was still frighteningly pale. Perhaps he was really injured, but... Liu Long suspected that he wasn’t.

He also knew about Zhang Ting—a mid Solar of the water attribute! Li Hao had had his eyes on her for a while, but then seemed to give up. But now that the woman didn’t leave and was actually sticking close to them instead... Liu Long would twist off his head and give it to the lad if the latter still wasn’t thinking about it!

“Sis Zhang, do you know that Ole Wang’s become a Sunflare?” Li Hao continued.

“I do, everyone does. He’s the youngest Sunflare in all of Silver Moon!” Zhang Ting smiled.

“Don’t say that, I’m not young, I’m already twenty!” Wang Ming roared with laughter and put on a modest air. “There are twenty-year-old Solars in the central region!”

He continued laughing, these words were so easy on the ear! He didn’t know Sis Zhang that well, but her words were quite soothing. What a pity that she was a bit too old and showing it. He’d talk to her some more otherwise.

Someone on the side looked at them as they chatted—one of the remaining Yama Sunflare. The man bore a few scars on his face and glanced sharply at Liu Long. “You’re a Dominator, Liu Long?”

The team captain looked back at him, not recognizing the stranger and not wanting to respond to him.

“You’re the one who killed Hu Po, aren’t you?” The man remained staring coldly at him. “You guys had already disappeared at that time and entered the city. So was Hu Po in the city. There were signs of punches on his clothing—we wondered if someone from the Sword Sect was behind it. Now it looks like you killed him to get revenge for that bitch Liu Yan!”

“So what if I did?” Liu Long flicked a dismissive glance at the speaker. He could be bothered to deny his involvement at this stage. This person might have something to do with Li Dahu.

“So it was you!” sneered the scarred Sunflare. “Liu Long I’ll have you know that Hu Po followed by my side after joining Yama. I raised him from nothing...”

Liu Long stared coldly at him. This man was very strong! He looked to be late or even peak Sunflare, but was Liu Long afraid?

“So what?” cursed Wang Ming before Liu Long had a chance to respond. “Do we need your permission to kill a wanted criminal? There’s barely anyone left in Yama and your Revolution King might not make it back out alive. Want to take a chance that you won’t leave alive either if you have a bone to pick?”

He was afraid of nothing at this stage. Yama had suffered immensely on this expedition. Weren't there Night Watcher Solars to neutralize the Revolution King? And they only had two Sunflares remaining.

If it came down to a fight, what was left of the Night Watcher contingent could more than handle the organization. Of course, he himself wouldn't be able to stand against the speaker, but Liu Long was a Dominator! The two of them together was more than adequate!

The Yama powerhouse sneered, but said nothing more. Liu Long! That bastard had indeed killed Hu Po! Being a heavy earth Sunflare, Hu Po was dominating when he fought. It was an extreme pity that he'd died so quickly in the outer city.

Li Hao listened quietly to their exchange. He sometimes looked at the city gates or at the end of the streets to see if those who'd taken the second passageway had returned. Hu Dingfang was attempting it this time, as was the metal attribute Director Zhou. I wonder if they'll come back safely...

The young man coughed up some blood, prompting Zhang Ting to say, "Are you alright, Li Hao? Do you want me to take a look..."

"That's alright!" Li Hao shook his head with a smile. "A martial master's body can not easily be examined by others. Teacher says that might easily expose some secret arts, so my apologies!"

"I understand, I'm just worried that your injuries are too severe..."

"It's fine!" Li Hao took out the final blood pearl. "This is a healing panacea! I should be fine after taking this blood pearl."

He swallowed it without further ado. Power from the scarlet shadow agitated through him, absorbed by his organs and the rest of his body. He'd taken three Sunflare blood pearls in quick succession, replenishing his stock of internal force that was unstable after crossing into Dominator.

Zhang Ting noted the healthy flush that returned to his cheeks and asked when the young man opened his eyes, “Are they that effective?”

“Very!” Li Hao nodded. “They’re a priceless treasure when paired with the Breathing Method of the Five Styles. What a pity that I can’t teach the breathing method to others, or I’d teach it to whoever wants to learn it. My teacher won’t allow me!”

He sighed and shook his head. “This is one of the drawbacks of the martial world. Everything is jealously hoarded, causing many precious arts to be lost in time!”

Zhang Ting flared with desire—the Breathing Method of the Five Styles! What a pity that only Li Hao and Yuan Shuo knew of it. As for Chen Yuhua... no one would consider her part the equation. She’d vanished for many years and had been thrown out early on. Zhang Ting also knew that she’d joined the Tiger Wings, which made her difficult to access once she was part of the army.

With how strong Yuan Shuo was these days, Li Hao was the best point of attack if one wanted the breathing method.

A loud clamor sounded from the distance as they chatted. The group that’d tried the second passageway was returning.

Li Hao relaxed when he saw Hu Dingfang. It wasn’t that he cared so much for the man, but that the situation would truly be dangerous if he died. The Night Watchers possessed additional confidence so long as he lived.

Hu Dingfang’s expression was as usual—nothing could be read from it. Upon closer observation, however, Li Hao could tell that his ball of light was much smaller. The same went for the Revolution King, and the origin weapon in his body seemed to be damaged.

It was mid Solar Ding Chen who hadn’t suffered much. He was like Hong Yitang from the first attempt, and there was also an origin weapon inside his body! It wasn’t that strong, just on par with



Zhang Ting and a far cry from the Flaming Phoenix Spear. So Celestial had brought an origin weapon on this expedition as well!

No one could see as clearly as Li Hao; there would be no secrets hidden from the young man's eyes. He could fully read who was injured and whose strength had been reduced. All of the Solars that made the attempt had come out alive. The only Solar to enter had been Director Zhou and he... seemed fine.

Peak Sunflare was neither that strong nor weak. The director had lingered at this cultivation level for many years and maintained good control over his abilities. Someone like him was the safest. Those who'd emerged unharmed from the second passageway before were mostly like him, stuck at the peak of their cultivation level for a while.

A mid Sunflare like Zhao Huan did not attempt the passageway.

.....

The crowd gathered once more. They still numbered thirty—no one had died during this attempt. Instead of being in a hurry to enter the city, they started waiting.

What were they waiting for?

For the doors to the ruins to open so that those who wanted to leave could depart. The other layer of meaning was that the next time the doors opened would be tomorrow night. One day was sufficient for people to mob anyone who accidentally laid their hands on treasure!

Otherwise, it was exceedingly easy for someone to escape even if the doors were open for a split second. These Solars had carefully calculated everything.

There was a period of time before the doors opened, so Hao Lianchuan struck up a conversation.

“Everyone, do you have any thoughts or clues about the imperial majesty and Human King that the soldiers spoke of earlier?”

No one answered him.

“The three great organizations have different intelligence, as do the Night Watchers.” Hao Lianchuan remained smiling. “Why don’t we share them with each other? It all has to do with the ancient civilization, so isn’t it good to know more about it?”

“The Night Watchers do know a little,” he offered. “Based on the ancient records that we’ve obtained, there did seem to be either someone or a title called the Human King in the ancient civilization. As the moniker indicates, he was king of the human race! It might not have been one person—it could’ve been passed down through the generations. The Skystar King of the current dynasty, for example, can also be called the Human King...”

The Revolution King jeered as soon as this was suggested, “The Skystar King as the Human King?” Sarcasm was thick in his voice. “A royal family without any tangible authority is worthy of being called the Human King? Do you know what that title entails? The ancient record speaks of the the Human King ruling over whatever he stood on, whether the cosmos, oceans, or even the universe! Perhaps they exaggerated, but according to written fragments, whatever he saw was either his or soon to be his. Can the current Skystar King begin to compare to such an august personage?”

He sniffed derisively!

### Chapter 266: City Gates Open (III)

“Forget about the Skystar King,” added Violet Moon. “And don’t bother mentioning the current one. If we have to hail someone as the Human King, then perhaps the one who founded the dynasty hundreds of years ago can barely qualify!”

The one who established the Skystar Dynasty might possess some right to be the Human King. The one of their generation was just a figurehead. No one thought anything of the royal family since all authority was in the hands of the nine ministries.

Hu Dingfang swept them a glance, but said nothing. Logically speaking, he should be in a towering rage. He was a commander in the dynasty's army, after all. But... there was no point in that sort of reaction.

Being a border province, Silver Moon didn't regard the royal family or nine ministries with much reverence. They were self-sufficient—very little help was forthcoming from the central region. They even had to divert some people and resources to reinforce the central region at times instead. Even someone in the army like Hu Dingfang didn't like the central region all that much.

Compared to the Human King... this group was much more interested in discussing the Skystar Dynasty. The ancient civilization was done and dusted, who cared about it? They also possessed so little information that no one was really willing to publicly share what they knew.

Debates quickly broke out regarding the dynasty's current condition. Li Hao wasn't interested. All of these people were wily old foxes. There wasn't much substance to their words, just ambiguous nonsense.

He turned his attention to the two characters over the city gates, undergoing a type of mental tempering. In contrast to his first glance that filled his eyes with blood, he could just barely endure the strain on his consciousness this time. What came into view was still the back of a figure that could barely be glimpsed!

The young man didn't dare look at the figure for long, he kept his eyes on the blade at the person's waist. He could make out the blade's intent even though it remained sheathed and at rest. Unbounded intent to exterminate enemies!

Heaven and earth crumbled when it made itself known, the firmament shattered! This was apparent even when the figure did not actively wield the blade.

The last time Li Hao witnessed a sword severing immortality, it enabled him to understand the aura of the sword. This time, he observed not to comprehend the aura of the blade, but to see if he could enhance his sword aura and strengthen it!

Whether it was the blade or sword, both were weapons of slaughter. Their essence was the same, but that sword stroke had been a decisive severing of the self. One either lived or died when it was deployed, and blood must be shed when it was drawn. This blade, however, came with more hints of domination!

All soldiers and citizens will bow their heads before the blade! Life kneels in worship when the blade is drawn!

This was the kind of sensation it imparted. Li Hao didn't know if his perception was correct, but he was willing to think of it in this manner. Perhaps he would have more direct insights if he was closer to the characters.

Imperceptible changes had already filtered into his sword aura. His notions of martial dao were not yet fixed in a final pattern, so anything newly observed resulted in more knowledge and reflections. He drank in everything he could, distilling the essence from his experiences so that he might be able to tread his own path.

After a while, Li Hao closed his eyes and thought back to the stroke from the Silver Armor. That was even more direct since he'd observed it with his own eyes! The other moves were too far away and too overpowering, they stood at a level beyond his current comprehension. He could only scratch the surface of what they entailed.

The Silver Armor's blow, however, left a deep impression on him! There was no sense of the self in that stroke and the wielder lived to die!

He ignored all of the discourse and distraction around him. None of these people were martial masters, they wouldn't understand. Just the Silver Armor's final strike was enough to contemplate for a lifetime. What origin weapon could hope to measure up to that?

Liu Long didn't use weapons—or rather, he didn't use a sword—possibly because he didn't have a deep enough understanding of them. Li Hao kept musing over them because he counted as half a swordsman.

His internal force shaped into a sword inside his body, sword aura wrapped around it!

As his sword aura and internal force progressed to becoming one; the earth aura locked inside his visceral organs shifted with agitation. Li Hao suddenly wanted to draw his sword and leap into battle! He wanted to try that move out for himself!

What move?

The one that the Silver Armor had brought to bear against the heavens! Sadly, there were too many people around him at the moment, so he suppressed the urge.

.....

In the distance.

Hong Yitang suddenly looked at Li Hao with surprise. Were his senses... mistaken? The young man carried his Earthturner Sword. Having wielded it for so many years, Hong Yitang was highly proficient with it. He could even weakly sense it when they were in such close quarters. Just now, he suddenly felt that his former sword stirred with the desire to act of its own accord. That tiny bit of sword intent was immensely different to someone who'd once grasped the sword aura as him.

Baffled, he glanced at Li Hao. He'd gifted his prized sword to the young man for a variety of reasons. First, Li Hao's teacher was Yuan Shuo, first among martial masters. While there was no way back for Hong Yitang, his daughter was a martial master. This was both an investment and an olive branch. They were all part of the Silver Moon martial world. What if his daughter could set foot into Summoner of Spirit?

Second, Li Hao had hopes of ascending to Dominator since he'd cut down Sun Moxian. Hong Yitang thought rather highly of a Dominator who was the disciple of a Summoner. The caveat was that the young man didn't die an early death.

Third, the Sword Sect was based in Silver Moon, after all. The province still answered to the central government, which made people like Hao Lianchuan, Hou Xiaochen, and Hu Dingfang the true overlords of the province!

Li Hao... seemed to be on good terms with Hao Lianchuan. Hong Yitang knew a little of what'd gone on behind the scenes with Hu Dingfang—the man counted as a partial disciple, even if Yuan Shuo would never admit to it!

It was important to be on good terms with Li Hao if one was to operate in Silver Moon. All of this culminated in why Hong Yitang had gifted his precious sword to the young man.

But for the moment, he was confused. Was this sword intent coming from Li Hao? It'd been a fleeting moment of tyranny, bloodthirstiness, and resolution. Would this come from a young martial master without much experience to speak of?

As he looked at Li Hao, the young man happened to look his way as well. Li Hao blinked and smiled a friendly, kind smile.

Hong Yitang shifted slightly and also smiled back without saying anything.

.....

Time passed bit by bit. After an unknown interval, a hubbub of shrill cries traveled back to those at the inner gates. Li Hao didn't know what was happening, but judging from the reactions of the group, it was signals from those who'd left earlier. Those people had exited the ruins!

The Solars immediately stood up.

“Everyone, you should head inside first and try to open the city gates. It's best if we can open them. If not, we'll wait for you outside!”

Those due to head inside didn't respond. They didn't care if the city gates could be opened anymore or not. It was best if they could—otherwise, those waiting outside would happen onto some easy gains if they fought inside.

Hu Dingfang, Violet Moon, the Revolution King, Ding Chen, and Hong Yitang soared into the air and over the city walls. Hao Lianchuan and Kong Qi waited silently outside. Everyone looked at the massive gates. Could they be opened?

If they could, then those who hadn't taken the second passageway also had the chance to enter the city for a look around. Perhaps there were treasures that'd been left behind?

A loud rumbling came from the massive city gates after a long while. The tightly shut gates started to move to both sides. They were opening!

Hao Lianchuan and the rest rejoiced, it was finally open!

RUMBLE!

Gates that had been sealed for nigh eternity were open once more.

.....

At the same time.

The inner city.

The crouching turtle atop the pagoda seemed to open its eyes when the gates were opened. The gates to Battle Heaven were... open! In times gone by, the gates had always opened to a hubbub of activity and voices as people bustled in and out. Now after millions of years, the city was the same, but everything else was gone.

.....

There was another structure next to the pagoda. It wasn't very tall, but it occupied a lot of land. There was a massive throne inside the structure upon which sat a person—or rather, a suit of armor.

A Gold Armor!

It sat without moving, but held something in its hands. The item appeared to be a turtle shell, one that exuded a faint glow. It seemed to be the core of the ancient city. It enveloped and protected the city, enabling it to stand for millions of years. Energy circulated through the turtle shell as if the stars and moon. It was extraordinarily captivating.

The shell trembled for a split second when the gates opened, then quickly quieted down. It seemed to be identifying and also expectant for something.

The Gold Armor remained unmoving, a desolate silence the only thing emanating from it.

.....

Elated jubilation rang outside the city! The inner city was finally accessible!

Numerous figures sped inside as soon as the gates opened, including Hao Lianchuan. He was also excited as the Night Watchers had tried numerous ways but failed to enter the inner city. It was finally open in front of him!



“Everyone, Li Hao, be careful...” He ran off after these words. He didn’t factor in Zhang Ting’s presence; she wouldn’t voluntarily expose herself. She was just here as an observer, provided that Li Hao didn’t provoke her first.

He... probably wouldn’t, right? There were no more Silver or Black Armors, so what would he start a fight with her for?

.....

A group of people rushed into the city, setting their sights on the pagoda near the city center. They couldn’t contain themselves and ran in before the gates were fully open. Those who could fly took directly to the air.

Only eight people out of thirty were left outside in the blink of an eye. Wang Ming wanted to charge as well... but saw that Li Hao and Liu Long weren’t moving!

“Are you guys really not going inside?” he asked urgently. There was treasure strewn throughout the city! They could visit some of the ancient houses, if not the pagoda. Perhaps there were open treasures! Maybe there were armories to explore!

Indeed, armories. Those suits of armor didn’t appear out of nowhere, did they? Even the Black Armors were a valuable treasure! What if there were Bronze or Silver Armors in storage, or even a Gold Armor? They’d be so rich!

They didn’t have to fight the exalted personages for the origin weapon, just picking up the scraps was enough for them to live a carefree life of ease!

Chapter 267: Three Warriors Slaying A Solar (I)

“It’s too dangerous inside the city,” Li Hao said softly as he stood at the city gates. “We can just wait here, what’s the rush?”

The Yama Sunflare next to them hadn't gone inside either. He looked quietly at them, frowning when Li Hao and Wang Ming showed no signs of moving. He'd wanted to wait for everyone to leave so he could attack Liu Long...

But now? Forget it! There was no time to waste, treasure awaited! He rushed inside with a snort. He could come back later to take them to task for their crimes.

Over on the Night Watcher side, the Darkmoons that'd stayed behind also stirred restlessly. They didn't have to go fight for treasure either. Surely they could just walk around and take a look inside? Wouldn't it be very odd to remain in the ruins and not visit the inner city?

Thus, they took their leave of Wang Ming and the others before filing into the city themselves.

Only familiar faces were left in the blink of an eye. Li Hao looked at Zhang Ting. "Is Sis Zhang not going to look around?"

"I'm in charge of healing and I'm a Darkmoon." Zhang Ting shook her head. "I'll be in grave trouble if I come across other people. Not to mention, I can't fly since I didn't go through the second passageway..."

She was fine just watching from the city gates. Of course, if a fight broke out and left both sides heavily injured, she couldn't be blamed for attacking a hapless Solar that stumbled out then, could she!

Standing by a tree stump to await the hare that would show up was also a good course of action. It was at this time that the young man sighed!

"What is it?" Zhang Ting found his reaction odd.

Li Hao shook his head. Nothing, just... what are you doing here when everyone else has left? To be honest, he had no interest in attacking a Solar after depleting the sword energy; it was too dangerous! But... can I get in the mood to observe those two characters if you don't leave?

He'd already urged her to go, so why wasn't she leaving? Mid Solar was very strong, but playing the pig for so long would really turn one into a pig!

Li Hao looked at the inner city; the vast premises quickly swallowed less than thirty people. This wasn't a small metropolis as it could hold at least one million denizens back in its day. Although the expedition team could glimpse the towering pagoda from the gates, it should be at least twenty kilometers away from them. Even Solars would take a while to reach it.

The young man gazed silently into the inner city.

"Are we really going to just stay outside?" Wang Ming asked anxiously. "Li Hao, the city's huge. We can go to a more remote location if you're scared. It's such a pity to miss out on this opportunity!"

Hadn't they stayed behind for the potential benefits to be gained? He was going out of his mind with impatience!

"I said that I'm staying just to wait for the director and others." Li Hao frowned. "What are you in a hurry for? Go inside yourself if you're in such a rush!"

"But..." Wang Ming protested with resignation. "Aren't we a team? How can I go if you don't? Not to mention, that Yama fellow has his sights set on us. If I go and he suddenly comes back, will Director Liu be able to handle the situation by himself?"

The handsome supernatural chose this moment to grow a conscience. "Forget it," he sighed. "It's just a... such a damned pity!"

He wouldn't go if these two didn't. Liu Long might not be able to defend himself if the Yama Sunflare came rushing back. Solars weren't interested in petty revenge; thoughts of treasure occupied their minds. But that Sunflare seemed very narrow-minded.

“Treasure isn’t necessarily limited to the city!” Li Hao suddenly said. Everyone looked at him. He tilted his head up at the sky, averting his eyes from the air over the city gates. “I think that... these two characters are quite extraordinary. Do you guys think they’re treasure?”

The group raised their eyes to the “Battle Heaven” characters, not making out anything after close scrutiny. Zhang Ting studied them as well, but didn’t glean anything. They couldn’t read ancient characters and thus didn’t identify particular meaning from them. The writing just appeared to be very natural in a flowy script. But a treasure? They really didn’t think so.

“It’s not like we can fly up for a look either. Forget it... let’s just wait here!” The height of regret draped over Wang Ming.

“That’s not necessarily the case,” Li Hao chuckled. “I feel like this place might not impose the same air restrictions on martial masters! Or rather, the prohibition against flight is applicable to energy ripples only. Otherwise, were people of the ancient civilization all mundanes? Were they punished just because they jumped a bit higher?”

“There were martial masters in the ancient civilization as well. Were they supposed to die just because they flew a bit higher during training? Therefore, I think the flight restriction targets those that exude energy ripples.

“We see tall buildings in the city as well. Did anyone that want to access a floor higher than five meters have to take the second passageway?”

“.....” Wang Ming frowned, then glanced at Li Hao. “So you want to go up for a look?”

“I do.”

“Don’t do anything reckless!” Wang Ming cautioned. This was nonsense, he’d be the death of himself! What was a Sunderer supposed to do against something that not even a Solar could withstand?

“Isn’t Sis Zhang right here?” Li Hao chuckled. “I might only suffer some cuts and scrapes if I’m hit. I’ll be fine after Sis Zhang patches me up!”

“Bullshit!” Wang Ming rolled his eyes. “Sis Zhang is just a Darkmoon—and I’m not looking down on you, Sis Zhang—she won’t be able to do anything about the injuries you’ll receive. What kind of crazy thoughts are you entertaining? You might as well enter the city for a look if this is what you’re going to get up to.”

“Wang Ming’s right,” Zhang Ting interjected. “I don’t think you should try this, it’s too dangerous!”

Instead of responding, Li Hao looked at the city gates once more. He walked a lot closer this time. As he carefully studied the characters in the sky, he had a hunch that there might be unexpected gains if he was to approach them further or even touch them.

It didn’t matter that Wang Ming was by his side—the key was Zhang Ting. It was hard not to grow irritated when she was constantly hovering. A mid Solar with an origin weapon... her defenses would be hard to break. At this stage, Li Hao didn’t want to take any risks that he didn’t have to take.

The gap between them was too great!

If he was Yuan Shuo and had ascended with five melded auras, he’d throw himself into an offensive right now. But he was only a Dominator with two fused auras!

So instead, Li Hao said nothing and continued observing the two characters. Disturbances sounded from the inner city after a while—possibly people fighting again. He ignored it since it had nothing to do with him.

Zhang Ting, on the other hand, looked curiously inside. It was a pity they were too far away, so she couldn’t tell if it was Solars crossing paths or not. But judging from the scale of the disturbance, it was highly likely that Solars were fighting.

“Why don’t you wait outside, Sis Zhang?” Li Hao asked again. “Looks like it’s still a bit dangerous here.”

“Are you not going inside?” asked the woman instead. “I should stay with you if you’re not. I’m a Plenilune, after all, so I should be able to help a little.”

Liu Long frowned. This woman... was sticking by Li Hao no matter what. He knew her identity—a mid Solar possibly carrying an origin weapon. She would be an exceedingly tough nut to crack! He didn’t want to provoke her if possible!

Zhang Ting had indeed made up her mind to stay with the young man. She was very curious about Li Hao at the moment—he said the two characters were special and looked like he wanted to bring them down. Hence, she also wanted to know what made them so special.

Li Hao suddenly relaxed with a smile. “It doesn’t matter if Sis Zhang stays, we’re all on the same side here. I’m going to tell you a secret, Ole Wang. You know how I sprayed my blood over the gates just now?”

“I did, what of it?”

Zhang Ting perked up her ears. Did Li Hao’s blood actually have an effect?

“I already thought those two characters were special at that time.” Li Hao raised his head. “There seemed to be a special ripple coming from it—there might be a concealed treasure tied to my bloodline. Or to be more precise, the eight families of Silver City might truly have something to do with these ruins!

“This city of Battle Heaven could be the home city for the Wang family!”

“Seriously??” Wang Ming sucked in a sharp breath. “I know about the eight families too, but if just one of them has such a massive city and so many strong soldiers... Would you have been a prince in the ancient civilization?”

It was incredible and very likely true since Li Hao spoke of it. But... what was he revealing this for with Zhang Ting present?

Wang Ming suppressed the urge to shake the other young man. Li Hao’s brains were a bit befuddled sometimes. You and me count as fellow disciples and Liu Long’s with us too, but even I’m not too familiar with Zhang Ting. Do you know her well? Do you trust other people that easily? You should’ve just not spoken it at all. What are you doing, spilling your secrets in front of strangers?

And that Zhang Ting should’ve known better and walked off when she realized Li Hao was talking about secret knowledge! Wang Ming kept up an internal litany of grumbles.

It was as if Zhang Ting didn’t hear the young man or see Wang Ming’s expression. She remained quiet, as if she didn’t exist.

Li Hao glanced at Liu Long. The captain was a bit nervous!

Liu Long was truly nervous. When he first broke through to Dominator, he felt that he could take on Solars with aplomb. What’s there to be afraid of? If Yuan Shuo can do it, I can do it! But now, the more he knew, the more timid he became. This also wasn’t an initial Solar they were eyeing up!

He understood the look in Li Hao’s eyes. The young man had made up his mind to eliminate the woman. The problem was... Liu Long was confident, not even with a newly ascended Li Hao by his side. While the young man was slightly stronger than him, there were limits to his strength. Could he break the defenses of a Solar?

Liu Long took a deep breath, drawing an odd look from Wang Ming. What was with the director? He seemed... very nervous!

Zhang Ting also sensed it and looked over. Liu Long seemed extremely nervous as he kept taking large breaths. This wasn't normal. She paid more attention to the man, slightly confused. The possibility of being attacked didn't register to her at all because it didn't make sense. There was no reason for him to attack a Night Watcher if he didn't know her identity. And if he did... why would a Dominator attack a mid Solar?

That made even less sense!

"Chief, are you worried about that guy from Yama?" Li Hao chuckled. "What are you concerned about? I'm also a Sunderer and we have Plenilune Sis Zhang here. Is a Dominator and a Sunflare supposed to be afraid of him?"

#### Chapter 268: Three Warriors Slaying A Solar (II)

"That's right!" Wang Ming nodded. "That Yama guy's not a Solar even if he's a peak Sunflare. We won't be outmatched if we work together! Not to mention, he's got his eyes full of the treasures inside the city right now. Who has the mind to spare for us?"

Liu Long didn't respond; he looked only at Li Hao and waited for the signal.

Starting at some unknown point in time, he felt that it was better for Li Hao to take the lead in things. It was a subconscious shift that may have stemmed from this expedition. The young man could see everything because his eyes were special, which resulted in Li Hao gradually taking the reins of authority. Liu Long liked to listen to his opinions before deciding on anything, a habit that proved to be wise. So many had died in this exploration, but their trio remained safe and sound. Not only did they not encounter any issues, but they reaped plenty of rewards instead.

Late Sunderer Liu Yan obtained her revenge and safely exited the ancient city. She was one of the weaker ones to leave alive. Not many had survived to make it out. Most of those who left earlier were Sunflares or Plenilune, very few Fullmoons counted among their number.

Li Hao pointed the Earthturner Sword at the two characters over the city. "I still want to go up there for a look. Chief, what do you say?"



Liu Long, however, quietly watched the sword. That was the signal. The moment the upraised sword swung down was when the young man wanted him to attack. Now was when the man suppressed his nerves. They had a plan of action against Zhang Ting. All he needed to do was to punch her into the air!

Zhang Ting had not gone through the second passageway—possibly out of worry that she'd be exposed and being afraid of death. This meant that she would be attacked as soon as she was airborne. Powerful city defenses would swiftly obliterate her.

He needed to ensure that he kept her in the air for ten seconds in order for a chance to break the defenses of her origin weapon. That would give them a solid chance to take her out! However, that ten seconds would be an arduous duration.

Hao Lianchuan's suggestion had been to make their attempt in a crowd of Black Armors. But now that there were no soldiers and no danger on the ground below her, Zhang Ting would swiftly land on the ground again. She was no idiot.

It was precisely for this reason that Hao Lianchuan didn't think Li Hao would dare pull on a tiger's whiskers in his absence. At the same time, he didn't know that the young man had set foot into Dominator of Thousands, and with two auras!

While Li Hao did not measure up to his teacher compared to when Yuan Shuo broke through, having just barely locked the earth aura into place and strengthened his organs meant that the young man was much bolder than before. He really did want to take a closer look at those two characters! He also wanted to deploy the sword of his heart—perhaps Zhang Ting was the perfect target to practice on!

Was he supposed to practice on a weakling instead of someone strong? The Silver Armor didn't attack the intruders in his final moments because, after recovering his memories, these people were as if ants to him. They were also human, so he abstained from killing them.

Brandishing their swords at the sky, advancing on the firmament to cut down their enemies—that was what the Battle Heaven Army sought!

Longsword in hand, Li Hao asked, “Chief, what do you think that Silver Armor was thinking about when he waved his sword at the sky?”

“Killing enemies!” Liu Long rumbled with a slight frown.

“That’s right, he wanted to kill enemies!” Gripped by emotion, Li Hao waved his sword around and suddenly brought it down with heavy momentum. “Is that not what we martial masters should do? We brandish our swords in the face of strong foes! Die if we must, but we die without regret!”

BOOM!

The longsword swung down with this highly charged cry. It captured Zhang Ting and Wang Ming’s attention.

Liu Long’s arm writhed as the Nine Forged Force exploded. He erupted like a pouncing tiger and pulled his arm back in an uppercut, wanting to punch Zhang Ting up into the sky! This was his target and goal!

He didn’t expect to kill her with one blow—that was impossible against a mid Solar. If he did, it would only mean that he hit the wrong person. He would’ve probably punched Wang Ming in that case.

Meanwhile, Wang Ming was caught in the throes of Li Hao’s words. His emotions swelled when he heard the cry, a mindstate interrupted by a whistling sound traveling through the air. When he subconsciously turned for a look, the sight was incomprehensible.

His brain literally couldn’t make sense of it!

What’s going on?

Liu Long... wants to attack Zhang Ting? The heck? Surely not... All she did was stay in place when she heard some secrets. As annoying as that is, it's not to the point of murdering her to prevent secrets from getting out, no?

Wang Ming was slightly furious at the overreaction, but that emotion vanished in the next second because Zhang Ting snapped out of her bafflement.

What kind of joke is this? Liu Long... is attacking me? Is he crazy or am I seeing things?

A powerful surge of water energy exploded from her body and enveloped her being, turning into ice energy. It crept toward Liu Long's fist in a massive demonstration of strength. Zhang Ting wasn't a water supernatural—or rather, she wasn't just a water supernatural. She was a powerful ice supernatural!

None of her presence had leaked beyond her body, an indication that her origin weapon possessed strong qualities of concealing the bearer's presence. She was able to display the full limits of her power without telltale signs of how strong she was.

Beside her, Wang Ming felt that even his thoughts were frozen. Liu Long found his fist freezing as well, his aura of the waves turning solid. Leaping waves immediately fell silent and clunked into place as ice cubes.

So strong!

The might of a mid Solar was completely laid out in front of them; Zhang Ting's reaction speed was also quite fast.

Bam!

Liu Long still followed through on his punch, but failed to send his target flying. Zhang Ting's layer of ice shattered as the Nine Forged Force was still a credible threat when used in ambush. Its strength was obvious to see as it broke through a Solar's defenses with one blow!

However, an icy hint flashed over her body and another surge of power emanated outward. The origin weapon!

Glowing, Zhang Ting glared at Liu Long in a frosty look filled with killing intent! How dare he ambush her! She took a slight step backward, an uncomfortable feeling in her chest. The Nine Forged Force was a very strong method. She might have suffered damage to her internal organs if it wasn't for her origin weapon!

Chilly expression on her face, Zhang Ting coalesced a sword of ice in her hand—more accurately, a spike of ice! A weapon shaped like an awl stabbed at Liu Long's eyes. How dare a Dominator not on par with Yuan Shuo ambush her?! Liu Long was asking for nothing more than a painful death!

Just as she was about to viciously end her fellow Night Watcher, the hairs on the back of her neck stood up and cold gripped her body. A streak of sword light rushed into the sky!

Li Hao had soundlessly deployed a sword stroke at some time—this was a move he'd bided his time for a very long while. The sword aura was unquestionably domineering! Not only that, but the earth seemed to shake and seal off the void. A mountain appeared outside of Li Hao's body, one that was locked by chains.

The sword of the mountain peak!

Instead of visualizing the move by the Li family ancestor, Li Hao was thinking of the one from the Silver Armor, to slay enemies! Purely to kill enemies!

Heavy earth energy combined with the Earthturner Sword, as well as the earth armor, creating a combination as if fish in water. Zhang Ting's expression shifted slightly as she sensed the incoming attack and she retracted the ice awl, redirecting it to Li Hao's longsword instead.

There was much more to the young man than met the eye!

Bam!

Liu Long's punch whistled through the air as Li Hao's sword stabbed forward!

Crunch!

The sword sliced through the ice awl; resplendent sword light blinded the eye as the sword stroke followed through.

Pfft! Craaaaack.

The ice that covered Zhang Ting's body completely shattered. A Dominator's ambush—Li Hao's ambush—was more lethal than Liu Long's attack. The sword pierced right through a Solar's defenses.

Clang!

It hit something that gave back great resistance. Bits of pain, fury, and ruthlessness appeared in Zhang Ting's eyes! Fool! Do you think you can kill me like this? You think too little of me and too little of origin weapons!

Her origin weapon manifested from her body; it was a snake of shadow and darkness. The snake of water and shadow transformed into a thin sword that extended from her body. It landed in her hand.

What Li Hao's sword had stabbed into was this snake. The origin weapon! Although the lowest level origin weapon, a gold level was nothing that Li Hao and Liu Long had a hope of breaking.

"You've miscalculated!" snapped out an arctic Zhang Ting who'd recovered her confidence. Two Dominators had ambushed her and Li Hao was so unexpectedly strong that he could break her defenses to the point of stabbing a sword into her body... She had to give it to them, a regular Solar would either be dead or heavily injured at this point.

These two really could kill a Solar with their ambush!

But who was she?

She was from the Night Watcher headquarters, a mid Solar with an important mission on her shoulders. She needed to keep Hou Xiaochen under surveillance and this Shadow Snake Sword had been especially granted to her for presence concealment and defense!

Origin weapons weren't found by the side of the street in the central region. A regular Solar wouldn't dream of obtaining even the lowest level origin weapon, they were mostly reserved for peak Solars. Only existences like Violet Moon had the chance of receiving one.

Violet Moon was equipped with an arcane level Armor of the Thunder God because she was the branch leader for Silver Moon and needed to train new recruits. Otherwise, she would only receive a gold level one at most.

Therefore, Zhang Ting's origin weapon was an exception! Not only did the Shadow Snake Sword block Li Hao's attack, but it also bore a snake flicking its tongue on the tip of the thin sword!

It was dangerous beyond compare, but had the two miscalculated? Did Li Hao not know about the origin weapon?

Of course he did!

Both the young man and Liu Long pushed off from the ground at the same time, leaping into the air. Li Hao could fly just as well despite not having taken the second passageway.

They were going to run!

Zhang Ting snorted derisively and bade her world of ice creep toward the two. So they wanted to run, just like this? In their dreams!

There was no need to show mercy or hide her abilities since she'd made a move. She had to kill them!

#### Chapter 269: Three Warriors Slaying A Solar (III)

Li Hao's internal force and sword aura erupted. He turned back with a sword stroke and shattered the ice blocks coming for him. He seemed to see a snake at this time! A soundless snake bearing down on him, wanting to swallow him whole!

The Shadow Snake Sword!

Li Hao knew this focus was due to the greater threat as posed by him. He was stronger and more lethal compared to Liu Long, so Zhang Ting would choose to kill him first. Therefore, the sword would target him!

This was precisely the moment he was waiting for. He threw out the Earthturner Sword and launched himself at Zhang Ting, ready to take on the Shadow Snake Sword with his bare fists. Zhang Ting almost broke out into laughter, but she didn't have time to laugh!

Liu Long was back and bringing an ax down on her head. Such was the teamwork between martial masters—they hadn't discussed this part beforehand, but Liu Long knew that it was what he should do!

Li Hao would handle the sword while he took on the mid Solar. Waves churned through the area once more as his ax swung down, but they were a little different from before. They were still waves, yet carried a few hints of pressing forward without looking back. Death was as if a return to home!

It was the final strike from the Battle Heaven Army, and it'd unknowingly affected this martial master too at some point in time.

Strike!

Contempt appeared on Zhang Ting's face as an ice awl appeared in her hand once more. She stabbed forward! Do you think you're worthy?

A golden longsword soundlessly burst behind her. A confused Wang Ming still didn't know what was going on, but that didn't prevent him from getting an underhanded move in. He was truly befuddled and only half sober at this stage. A Solar? And not an ordinary one at that. He almost jumped out of his skin to see that Li Hao and Liu Long wanted to kill a Solar!

But... killing a Solar also meant rich pickings!

He'd quickly risen to Sunflare last time they killed a Sunflare together. They were going for a Solar this time... No matter who she was or why she was a Solar, she was no one good if she'd concealed her strength! So who cared! Kill her!

His sword exploded with metallic sparks!

Boom!

Zhang Ting never fathomed that this cowardly little guy, one who'd been terrified out of his senses, would dare ambush her under these circumstances. She was so angry she roared with laughter. Were all of these people crazy?? Even an initial Sunflare dared attack her from the back! He was less than Liu Long!



The golden sword exploded with a loud bang! The ice armor on her back only trembled slightly—there was no sign of any other effect. Such was the difference between the two of them!

Although the initial Sunflare Wang Ming wasn't weak, he was the only one to not break through a mid Solar's defenses compared to Liu Long and Li Hao. He only caused her armor to shake, and that was when his target was in a distracted state.

Shocked surprise filtered into his continued confusion. How was this possible? How had the ice armor not broken? Li Hao had broken it and stabbed his weapon into the enemy's body. Liu Long had broken it and continued through to a bloody blow. Meanwhile... Wang Ming didn't even manage to chip the ice?

"Hmph!" Zhang Ting snorted with a cold look in her eyes, piercing through Liu Long's small ax with her awl. She froze his right hand solid and was about to stab the awl into the man's throat when Wang Ming howled with indignation behind her. The golden longsword didn't explode this time; he jabbed it at the woman's head!

Who's she looking down on, huh??

Hum!!

Metal attribute supernaturals were the strongest when it came to offense, alright. This blow drew a frown from the multitasking Zhang Ting—it actually posed a bit of a threat to her. She couldn't ignore it!

The ice awl didn't have a chance to pierce Liu Long's throat; he'd already shattered the ice covering his fist and backed away. Zhang Ting didn't mind and waved her hand for a second blow. The ice awl swept in a large arc behind her and broke the golden longsword into pieces!

Wang Ming spat out a mouthful of blood, registering the scene with shock and horror...

Li Hao, you damned jerk! flashed through his mind. They were destined to die from this encounter! You guys are crazy to pit yourselves against a Solar! We're all dead meat!

Another shrill sound came from the sky. Li Hao had drawn his sword again in the air, a small sword that wasn't too long! He didn't move it in the style of the Silver Armor's blow, but the one of severing the self. He threw himself at the tiny snake—there seemed to be a real snake hovering over the Shadow Snake Sword. It had eyes and, at the moment, terror filled them!

It seemed to remember something and had forgotten something... A sword!

This sword and its aura...

A person materialized in the snake's scant, eroded memories, one that'd once deployed one such move. It was a lofty existence that one could only raise their head up to! It seemed to recall that august personage in this moment...

"Hiss hiss hiss!" It agitated, but it was too late. Li Hao slashed forward with a grunt.

To sever the self!

He slashed through the snake—or possibly, the shadow of a snake—and cut it clean into two. The shadow immediately dispersed, but the young man's eyes widened with surprise. As the small sword in his hand swallowed the snake; a familiar power burgeoned in the weapon...

Li Hao was surprised, stunned, happy, and euphoric...

Sword energy!

There was no time to think of anything else. A black short sword splintered in the air and fell to the ground with a thud. It lacked the mystical air that wrapped around it moments ago! The tiny snake that'd been cut down seemed to have been its essence. Once dead, this origin weapon that was precious no matter where instantly lost its differentiating qualities.

“Pfft!” Zhang Ting spat out a mouthful of blood, halting in her motions to dispatch Wang Ming. She looked incredulously at Li Hao, unable to believe her eyes. How was this possible?! The Shadow Snake Sword had broken! An origin weapon had broken!

Her eyes gleamed as she zeroed in on the sword in Li Hao's hands—the sword of the Lis!

That had to be the sword of the Lis! She understood now. So the sword of the Lis had always been with Li Hao, not Hou Xiaochen. That made sense. If the Wangs of the eight families were this powerful as to own such a city, then what of the Lis? How could the sword of the Lis be just a simple weapon?

These thoughts had just taken shape when Li Hao launched himself like a bird and slashed with his sword! Six layers of sword light shimmered over it! As he buckled under incredible backlash, something similar to armor materialized over his body. Rather than being an origin weapon, it was his aura!

This was his aura of forging forward without pause, everything was disregarded! The earth aura as defense, the sword aura as offense!

Zhang Ting was still suffering from the recoil of a broken origin weapon. She roared with anger and thrust her palm out with domineering force! The power of ice instantly sealed off all possible paths!

A Dominator like you wants to kill me? Never!!

The destruction of her origin weapon was wholly unexpected and resulted in some injuries, but she quickly recovered. You won't be killing me, Li Hao! I will consign you to death and claim that sword of the Lis!

That sword was possibly an earth level origin weapon, or even a sky level! She'd be able to kill Hu Dingfang and the others with it, claiming the greatest treasures within the city. When she finished with the defensive origin weapon with the city, she'd be able to face Novas with two ultimate origin weapons in hand. This wasn't danger, but opportunity!

Li Hao's sword was ferocious beyond compare and blazed with killing intent. While it was somewhat juvenile, the killing intent was so murderous that it seemed to resonate with the ancient city. It was as if it originated from the dead Battle Heaven Army!

He broke through the ice with one stroke and pierced forward with a loud crunch. Arcing through the void, an arm landed on the ground with a thud.

Zhang Ting's eyes widened. My... my arm! She'd been dismembered by a Dominator! Her remaining hand slapped a palm strike forward and smashed Li Hao's armor of earth aura. The young man spat out a mouthful of blood, his spleen suffering damage as well.

The aura of earth hadn't stopped that blow, but it managed to defuse more than half of the strength behind it! Despite extremely strong defenses, Li Hao's failure to withstand that blow was evidence of the might of mid Solar.

Bam!

Liu Long punched with the full power of the Nine Forged Force. He hit Zhang Ting just as she stumbled from Li Hao's blow and splintered her armor of ice. He slammed so heavily into her back that she vomited a mouthful of blood.

The power of ice crept up his arm and numbed his limb to the point of stiffness. Liu Long frowned at their target's obvious capacity to still attack and defend. Were Solars truly this strong? Two powerful Dominators working in conjunction, a Sunflare, Li Hao's sword aura destroying the origin weapon, and possessing the advantage of an ambush... They were still unable to take down Zhang Ting after repeated exchanges. His arm now seemed to be frozen solid!

BAM!

Another loud rumble rang in the air. The ice armor that Liu Long had just broken through didn't have the time to reform before the terrified Wang Ming coalesced another sword and detonated it in the opening!

Zhang Ting's back was now a gory mess and she glared at him with blood-red eyes. The immense pain coming from her back was sending her into a frenzy. That the trash Wang Ming would be the source of this injury and not Liu Long was the last thing on her mind!

Horror overtook the young supernatural and he quickly backed away. "It... it wasn't me... I just... just subconsciously..."

That was right, he subconsciously captured the proper battle timing. He was a talent indeed! He subconsciously detonated his sword of energy, subconsciously made a move, subconsciously prepared to kill a Solar...

And this was how he so naturally and immeasurably succeeded with an ambush at a critical moment, blowing a massive hole out of a Solar's back.

Neither Li Hao nor Liu Long anticipated this. As such, they were at a loss for words. Yeah he's talent!

"Pfft!" Zhang Ting spewed out fresh blood—possibly both from anger or her injuries. Her arm had been severed, then she suffered one of Liu Long's punches to her back. Those wounds weren't too severe, but then a Sunflare added to the pain and set off fireworks in her back. Her wounds were significant and extended to her organs!

Enraged beyond belief, she slammed her palm at Li Hao again. A world of ice enveloped the young man!

## Chapter 270: Three Warriors Slaying A Solar (IV)

Li Hao was instantly encased in ice. Zhang Ting was putting her life on the line to immobilize the young man! Having been hit a few times and now grievously injured, she might actually fall with eternal bitterness if the battle dragged on and these shameless cretins found another opening!

Kill Li Hao!

He posed too great a threat to her, particularly that sword. It cut through everything and would score a direct hit on her body if he connected again.

Meanwhile, Li Hao attempted something that he hadn't considered and wouldn't have dared try before. It was in the realm of possibility only due to the partial recovery of sword energy. He abruptly roared, disregarding that sound couldn't make it past the ice. A large mountain appeared out of thin air!

A nurtured spirit was emerging from his organ!

He hadn't dared consider this step before because his spleen wasn't strong enough. If he tried this... he could just wait to die of a ruptured spleen. But now that he had some sword energy to play with again, what was he afraid of?

A true warrior bravely tried the unknown. His teacher's fire heart ape had slain the late Solar Sun Yifei as soon as it emerged. Would his mountain of heavy earth not be able to handle a gravely wounded mid Solar when it did the same?

The enormous mountain transformed into a unique sword of heavy earth the moment it materialized. Li Hao slashed forward with it!

BAM!

As the ice shattered, Zhang Ting sensed a mountain bearing down on her. “Summoner of Spirit??” she gasped with disbelief. How was that possible?! How could Li Hao be a Summoner?!

The young man could also sense his strength when the mountain emerged from his organ. He was very, very powerful. The Sword of Mount Tai erupted!

Zhang Ting felt that she was being forced into one place, that unbearable suppression was coming down over her. A broadsword descended from the sky, aimed at cutting her down. She refused to accept this!

“Impossible!!” The power of ice spontaneously erupted and turned the world into one of white. Sealed by ice!

All of this was fake! She didn’t believe that Li Hao was truly a Summoner. If this was real, he would’ve killed her with the first ambush. Why wait until now? This wasn’t real!

Sealed by a million kilometers of ice!

Wham!

The sword crashed through an accumulation of ice when it landed. Every block of ice blew out as powder. Li Hao flushed beet red as blood qi surged in his body. He’d shattered the world of ice with a single sword stroke!

Pfft!

Zhang Ting vomited blood once more, fear finally creeping into her heart. She whirled around, wanting to flee! Being a Solar, none of these people were as fast as her. However, Li Hao frowned slightly and narrowed his eyes.

Damn, she’s tough to take out!

Blood qi surged into his longsword—the Incantation of the Blade of Blood! His sword and earth auras melded into the weapon, as did his blood qi and internal force. He had many more options available now that he could draw on sword energy again.

The decisiveness of a martial master came into play and he chose to close in for the kill. Who knew how many secrets would be revealed if she got away?

Off in the distance, Liu Long also delivered a punch to cut off her avenue of escape. Wang Ming split his golden longsword into tens of thousands of swords and sent them in a fiery barrage at Zhang Ting. He was a fake swordsman as he only knew his move of Heavenly Maids Scattering Blossoms, but the effect from this singular move was usually quite good.

Zhang Ting ignored their counterattacks! She could not slow down even though she was injured. A broadsword bore down on her from behind.

Li Hao set foot into the air like a bird, pouncing on the woman. One step covered dozens of meters; he was faster than one could imagine as he flitted through the air like a sparrow upon the wind and instantly appeared behind Zhang Ting.

Sword qi blazed red as the weapon struck!

Boom!

The ice armor shattered with a massive boom; Zhang Ting kept running. She ran and ran until she split into two! Sectioned down the middle, the two halves continued running for a dozen meters until they collapsed on the ground.

Blood gushed out of Li Hao's mouth when he coughed. His spleen was bleeding profusely! His armor vanished, his longsword vanished, everything vanished. Although color drained from his face, he smiled.



They hadn't punched their opponent into the sky, but two Dominators and one Sunflare had killed a Solar all the same!

Liu Long and Wang Ming rushed over, shock and disbelief writ large over their faces when they saw the scene. They'd won? The battle hadn't lasted that long—less than a minute. They exchanged blows countless times during this minute and nearly died more than a few times. However, the one on the ground in the end was the Solar!

"I... killed a Solar?" Wang Ming murmured. Indeed, he'd been part of that fight. Not only that, but he was the reason for the bloody hole in her back. She might not have been defeated so quickly if it wasn't for this blow.

Thus, Li Hao and Liu Long didn't say anything when he said that he killed a Solar. He could claim that!

This fellow was a frivolous sort in normal times, so his actions today truly surprised the other two. They'd thought that he would run when fighting broke out. Liu Long and Li Hao hadn't cared that this was the most likely outcome. Wang Ming shouldn't add to the trouble, at the very least. It was enough that he wouldn't help the woman.

Who would've thought that he'd attack instead, and with a keen grasp of battle timing? Li Hao suspected that Wang Ming was actually a battle genius, but quickly dismissed the idea when Wang Ming widened his mouth with a foolish grin.

A battle genius... can still be an idiot.

"Whew!" Both Liu Long and Li Hao breathed out at the same time, utterly exhausted!

"Hurry, there's water mysterious power and an origin weapon!" Li Hao called out to Wang Ming as he couldn't walk anymore. Sword energy spread swiftly through his body and he diverted a portion for Liu Long. The captain's arm would be completely crippled soon if no attention was given to it.

If it wasn't for Li Hao obtaining some sword energy after breaking the origin weapon, he'd still wanted to fling the opponent into the air. But they'd killed Zhang Ting all the same without utilizing the city's defenses. At the same time, Li Hao fully understood that he'd probably be dead without sword energy.

Once again, sword energy is the best!

His thoughts turned to the origin weapon. So origin weapons could replenish sword energy? The thought was gone as quickly as it appeared. It would send others into a frenzy if they knew. Who would break an origin weapon on purpose? Whoever thought this way was a heretic and served to be put to death!

"How is it, chief?" Li Hao looked at Liu Long.

"Solars... can be defeated!" A faint smile appeared on the man's aloof face. My Nine Forged Force broke through a Solar's defenses twice!

His confidence was back! The confidence that'd been dented by Yuan Shuo and Li Hao completely returned in full. I, Liu Long, can bypass a Solar's defenses! I'm not as weak as I thought, it's just that the people I've met are too strong. They're crazy!

Wang Ming shrieked with excitement in the distance. So much mysterious power and other treasures! We're rich!

.....

Sword energy surged. A ruptured spleen quickly recovered, as did aura and internal force that'd been depleted.

Whether it was Li Hao or Yuan Shuo, both were wild and violent with sword energy at their disposal. Yuan Shuo kept a low profile without it, and Li Hao was even more reserved without it. The professor couldn't bear to consume its last particles before and ran off after killing a group of Red Moon powerhouses. Given his personality, he would've recovered to full strength had there been enough sword energy and exterminated all of the Celestial and Yama delegations as well!

He was a truly ruthless sort! He ran only because he wasn't strong enough and his injuries were too severe. Would he have stopped at Red Moon otherwise?

As for why he would kill Celestial and Yama... Old Demon Yuan didn't need a reason to kill someone. If he really needed one, then it was that his enemies could be found within these organizations as well!

Indeed, a group of people had left Silver Moon's martial world back in the day. His enemies could also be found in Celestial and Yama, they just didn't live as rich a life as his enemies in Red Moon did.

Li Hao had mostly recovered from his injuries. A majority of sword energy had been replenished after absorbing the tiny snake. It felt similar to the amount that he'd taken in at the stone door. One had to know, the sword energy available at the stone door had been the result of a vast quantity of mysterious power.

Yuan Shuo breaking through to Summoner of Spirit, Li Hao advancing to Dominator, Wang Ming and ascending to Sunflare had all expended the sword energy. The young man further consumed a great deal after needing to recover from sparring with Liu Long everyday. The newly replenished reserves of sword energy were enough for a long time.

However, after he repaired his spleen and casually helped Liu Long as well, Li Hao felt that he'd consumed a large amount again. He needed to use it sparingly! Sword energy was the true hard currency.

A gleeful Wang Ming ran back to them, holding the storage ring that Li Hao had tossed at him. It was a gift from Ding Chen and already held one hundred cubes of fire energy. The remaining four held eight hundred cubes of water—it was completely full!

The handsome supernatural also hauled two incredibly durable pieces of human bone. They contained roughly four hundred cubes of water energy. This was their entire harvest!

Mid Solars contained more mysterious power than this, but this was a unique place and the ground absorbed a portion of energy at a fast pace. Some of it was gone in the blink of an eye, so saving approximately twelve hundred cubes was a decent collection. At least the city didn't take all of it!

Wang Ming held a broken sword in addition to the mysterious power. Although broken, the origin weapon was still a wondrous supernatural object, not to mention this particular weapon functioned to conceal one's presence. Despite being ruined, it still served to suppress his supernatural ripples when Wang Ming carried it.

The origin weapons and mysterious power were the greatest gains. There was a small booklet as well. Zhang Ting hadn't carried too many items on her since she was under cover. Anything like an identification card was out of the question—whoever did that was a fool.

Wang Ming couldn't read the booklet, so he tossed it to Li Hao. "Take a look, what is this? Something like a secret art?"

"No." Li Hao shook his head after perusing it. "It looks like a code for communication. This is a commonly found and very primitive way to exchange messages. Sometimes we can only contact each other through unique methods—we might choose a few numbers that correspond to some words in a book and translate the meaning into words we understand.

"It looks like there's more than just her in Silver Moon!" Li Hao chuckled. Since there was a method of communication, that meant there were certainly others in the province. She was just the strongest one.

Wang Ming finally came back to his senses and looked around strangely. "Ah... who... was she?"

He'd forgotten to ask and simply killed their target! Now he recollected himself, it suddenly struck him that they'd taken out a Night Watcher, right?

Killing their own was a heinous crime!

Li Hao looked at him and grinned broadly. "A Night Watcher!"

Wang Ming coughed violently. "That... that's not true, isn't it? She was so powerful that she must've been an agent from the three great organizations..."