

Star Gate 28

Chapter 28: To Be A Teacher (II)

“The treasures of the folk song share a common characteristic,” Yuan Shuo continued. “Outsiders are unable to use them. Zhang Yuan was burned alive possibly because his killer wanted to collect his bloodline, soul, or a mental attribute that would enable them to use the blade of the Zhangs!

“I also have a few thoughts about the time interval between cases. It’s very likely due to certain innate limitations of the supernatural methods employed by the killer. Each immolation to extract the victim’s bloodline or soul causes the killer to enter a state of hibernation!

“It’s plain to see that they’re improving though—or rather, the hibernation period is decreasing!”

Li Hao quickly bobbed his head in agreement, despite his teacher being unable to see his response. He was so thoroughly impressed beyond words. His teacher hadn’t known anything beforehand, but deduced so much after seeing the files only yesterday!

Of course, this also had to do with the depth and breadth of his teacher’s knowledge.

“Another thing—they only act on rainy days. This means their abilities are deployed only during rainy weather. They need more than a simple murder—they also need to collect or harvest something from your bodies after killing you.”

Yuan Shuo paused when he reached this point. “Don’t underestimate the one behind the cases. If the first one to die was a member of the Zhengs, this means these plans have been in motion for fifteen years!

“Keep in mind that it’s only been twenty years or so since occult powers have appeared among us. Do you know what this means if the enemy was one then? It means they are a veteran among supernaturals, not a rookie wet behind the ears!

“Of course, it may not be one singular person behind things. Perhaps the initial supernatural who started the cases has left and it’s their faction members or disciples overseeing the situation. It doesn’t seem likely that a powerhouse would remain in Silver City indefinitely.”

Li Hao took another deep breath. He’d already considered his teacher’s latest point, but not to this level of detail. Had Liu Long?

“You may not be able to use the blade of the Zhangs, but you will certainly be able to use the sword of the Lis! It likely laid inert before because the supernatural was yet to be found. This domain should’ve existed in ancient civilizations as well; this is just a reawakening as opposed to a sudden creation. If you are the heir to the sword of the Lis, you’ll be able to activate the sword if you have it.”

“Activate?” The young man finally opened his mouth. The sword of the Lis was both a secret and common knowledge. Anyone who heard the folk song would think of it, but no one knew what it actually was.

Had he activated it through steeping it with water?

“Yes, activate! How would it be easily utilized after lying unused for so many years? I know many ways to activate such treasures, but they’re all too hard for you. The easiest should be using your blood to bind it to you. Of course, the caveat is that the sword really belongs to your family and you didn’t seize it from another.”

“Teacher, I’ve tried that already,” Li Hao chuckled ruefully. “It doesn’t work!”

He’d dripped blood on the pendant before!

“Did you expect anything otherwise? A random drop of blood is useless—do you think randomly spraying blood around is what that method entails?”

“.....”

It... isn't? Li Hao had nothing to say.

“It's not just any ole blood, especially from descendants like you who are unknown generations removed. Your bloodline changed long ago. For you, two kinds of blood can unseal the treasure. The first is your heart's blood and a kind that I don't particularly recommend. It's too damaging, but if you run into life threatening danger and are about to die, you can stab the sword into your heart. Remember not to stab it too deeply and end up killing yourself!”

Li Hao cracked an awkward grin, just listen to what his teacher was saying! ...okay, so this is a very dangerous way.

“The second is to practice the Five Styles, thereby enhancing your physique and bloodline. If you can reach my level, perhaps one drop of blood will be sufficient to activate it!”

A sudden thought struck Li Hao—become a Sunderer of Hundreds? But he was out of time!

The young man thought for a moment before asking, “Teacher, is there any mysterious power associated with these objects?”

“Sometimes, it depends,” Yuan Shuo quickly responded. “You can try absorbing some if yours has any, but it might not have a great effect!”

Li Hao started, might not have a great effect? This was something he held high hopes for!

“Teacher, don't they say that conducting the energy into our bodies will make us supernatural?”

“What?! It's not nearly that simple!” Yuan Shuo hummed over how to explain things. “I'm not too clear on what your state of affairs are, so let me talk about the situation as I know it. Some supernatural objects contain some mysterious energy, but that energy is very weak. If you can

absorb it, it might help with improving your constitution. It's not as useful as you might think, however. It's almost impossible to make the crossover through it alone!"

Disappointment dawned in Li Hao's eyes. Impossible?

"Of course, that isn't set in stone since there's much we don't know about these otherworldly powers. They haven't existed in our society for long, so there aren't that many examples to refer to," Yuan Shuo continued. "Here we come to the crux of what I speak of. Since you probably have one of those things, I'll teach you a breathing method that's not recorded in the New Book of Five Styles!"

"A breathing method?"

"Yes, it's more comprehensive than what you'll find in breathing techniques. I created it after years of integrating knowledge gleaned from various ancient texts. I didn't mention it before because you had no possibility of absorbing mysterious power!" Yuan Shuo chuckled. "You didn't come in contact with the supernatural before, so it wouldn't be of any use. Now, however, I would go to you if you didn't seek me out today.

"I need to teach you the Breathing Method of the Five Styles so you can absorb energy. We generally don't see any in day-to-day life, but you're different. You've possibly already come in contact with it, this is your fortuitous opportunity!"

"Can you absorb it, teacher..."

"Me?" Yuan Shuo's chuckle turned into laughter. "What, you would share it with me? There may not be much power in one supernatural object, it would be a drop in the bucket for me. Let me put it this way, the stronger one is, the harder it is to make the crossover. Our metamorphosis is much harder than normal people's!

“Liu Long bears a high likelihood to ascend, but it’s been unusually difficult for him because his martial dao is strong. It’s actually easier for you because you don’t have a martial foundation. Of course, this also means you’ll be a weaker Starlight once you’re supernatural.”

Enlightenment was at hand for Li Hao, so this was what the process was about!

“Therefore, it’s a good thing if you can absorb even a tiny bit of mysterious power. It’s useless for me and honestly speaking, it may not be a good idea for you to pursue this path. If you don’t make the crossover, it will only serve to strengthen your martial dao and make it harder for you to metamorphose as time goes on.”

“That’s fine!” Li Hao didn’t care—he was curious about only one thing. “Teacher, do I understand correctly that the stronger our martial dao foundations are, the stronger we are after crossing over?”

“No shit! Take me for example, I’m a Sunderer of Hundreds. If I’m the same level as the weakest Starlight after ascension, what would I cross over for? Who knows who’d be the winner if one of them shows up?” That was all Yuan Shuo said about himself before he turned solemn. “Alright, enough of this nonsense and don’t think about me, you’re too weak! Listen to me—I will teach you the Breathing Method of the Five Styles, but teach it to no one else on pain of death! No one! The fruits of my labor over these years are all contained within. Supernaturals have only been around for twenty years and what the Night Watchers have come up with may not rival my creation!

“This is the power of knowledge and really, what the hell do they know about supernatural powers? I may be mundane, but I know that these powers have been around longer than these guys. I read about it forty years ago in various tomes...”

Yuan Shuo heartily complimented himself for a while before returning to the topic at hand and the Breathing Method of the Five Styles. Li Hao listened intently, finding the method very simple!

Although his teacher praised it to the high heavens, the young man felt that it was just a little more sophisticated than a regular breathing technique. Exactly how much more, though, he couldn’t really tell.

What Li Hao didn't know was that, being one of the first to learn about the supernatural world and study it, not only did Yuan Shuo include his own deductions in the method, but he also incorporated vast amounts of ancient knowledge. As simple as the Breathing Method of the Five Styles might sound, it might be the strongest method to draw upon other energy sources in the entire occult domain.

Li Hao adjusted his breathing as he listened to his teacher, changing more than just the rhythm of his breaths. He altered his posture until he resembled a large frog with his belly turned to the sky. It looked incredibly silly.

Suddenly, the inert Stellaris that released mysterious power only when immersed in water sparkled with starlight. A dense current of energy flowed from the jade sword around the young man's neck into his body.

If as before, it would've quickly flowed back out. Instead, he absorbed the vast sum of energy like every single one of his pores was breathing. Countless pores took in mysterious power at a faster rate and greater quantity than could be imagined!

When Yuan Shuo finished speaking and realized that his student was silent on the other end of the communicator, he shook his head.

"That's a young'un for you, they're so impatient. He started cultivating as he was listening, didn't he?"

The little guy probably had obtained a portion of mysterious power! Yuan Shuo chuckled and hung up with a shake of his head. "He's still too young. As shrewd as he looks, he's quite naive! He slipped straight into cultivation without another word and is obviously already absorbing energy. Does this mean the sword of the Lis is on him or possibly next to him?"

"It'd be too obvious if it's next to him... so it's on him?" Yuan Shuo thought for a moment and came to a surprising answer. "Attaboy, the sword of the Lis is more than I thought! I thought it would be a massive sword, but it's that jade pendant!"

Li Hao's scalp would crawl with horror if he was here!

The professor shook his head with amusement after recalling his student's necklace. "Not bad, that sword is not bad at all! I never sensed anything different about it and since it's so small... I wouldn't guess it was the sword of the Lis if I'd never seen it before!

"I wonder how much the kid will glean with the Breathing Method of the Five Styles. The sword may not have much energy left after being sealed away for so many years. He'll cross over if he's lucky, but if he's not, at least he'll reach Slayer of Five... or Six?"

Yuan Shuo made some quick calculations based on his own experience—the degree of certainty was too low. Things were not as simple as they seemed here. A supernatural that existed fifteen years ago would at least be a Sunderer if they hadn't improved at all during this time. They wouldn't be a personage that any regular person could handle.

They might have even advanced beyond that to the equivalent of Dominator of Thousands!

If that was the case, hot weapons were nearly useless. Those powerful enough to kill the enemy would kill the wielder first.

.....

Li Hao was preoccupied with absorbing energy from the sword while his teacher pondered. There was so much, this was much better than steeping the sword in water!

Fully conscious and aware of his surroundings, his heart pounded with shock as he laid on his back. His teacher's breathing method was extraordinary! It really could take in mysterious power, and at an extremely fast pace!

His constitution seemed to be changing and he could vaguely sense the presence of various chains inside his body. They sealed off certain areas, preventing the mysterious power from entering certain core areas—his heart and brain.

“Supernatural locks... plural?” Was this what Liu Yan had mentioned before, the barrier that separated the mundane from the occult? “There’s too much!”

He didn’t have much time to think as he suddenly felt that he’d taken in so much that he was about to explode. This was more than ten cups of sword water!

“I gotta train!” Li Hao bounded up from the floor and smashed his head on the ceiling. Starlight wreathed his body!

Panther’s eyes were wide open next to the young man and it kept licking the air. It abruptly understood something and splayed its limbs upward, adjusting its breathing to be similar to Li Hao’s.

The young man hadn’t concealed the breathing method from the dog; it hadn’t occurred to him to avoid a dog’s gaze. The energy radiating from his body ceased diffusing outward and rushed toward the little black dog.

Panther’s limbs were turned upward as it adjusted its breathing; it began collecting a haze of resplendent light around it as it breathed in and out!

A young man jumped and leapt like a monkey inside the tiny room while a dog laid like a human being, breathing starlight in and out of its nose. The combination made for a terrifying sight!