

## Star Gate 39

### Chapter 39: Dominator of Thousands! (I)

Within the small yard.

Li Hao looked on with expectation.

“Do you have any old injuries on you, teacher?”

“Heh!” Yuan Shuo threw his head back with brazen laughter. “Are you joking? Injuries? Me? I was invincible beneath the heavens before the supernatural domain appeared! I am the guest of honor for the Night Watchers after it is part of our world. While that organization can’t be deemed to be the whole of the otherworldly field, they are still the largest faction. So you tell me, who can hurt me?”

“.....”

This wasn’t the answer that Li Hao wanted. He couldn’t help but follow up, “Teacher, Captain Liu says that every Sunderer of Hundreds accumulates various wounds. You were once a premier martial master—are you unable to break through because you’ve collected too many injuries?”

“That’s only for trash like him!”

“.....” Man you’re a tough nut to crack! Li Hao wanted to cry. His teacher was wonderful in all aspects, but he constantly acted tough. This refusal to admit that he was anything less than perfect health was very vexing.

“Then...” The young man changed to a more direct tack. “Teacher, there has to be a reason why you’ve yet to ascend to Starlight, right?”

“Because I’m too strong!” Yuan Shuo suddenly found his student impudent. What did the young man mean by this?? Does he want to poke at my pain points?

Heh! It’s impossible for him to! Of course, it was also pointless to say too much to Li Hao. What could the kid do with the truth?

Li Hao was truly growing frantic. His teacher kept too stiff of an upper lip!

“Teacher, would you have a chance of ascending to Starlight if you fully recovered from your injuries?”

“Is this what you came to me for?”

“Mmhmm.”

“You’ve got too much time on your hands!” Yuan Shuo huffed with resignation. “Don’t think so much. My crossover hasn’t happened for a variety of reasons. External, internal, they’re all there!”

“Can you be more specific, teacher?”

“.....” Yuan Shuo frowned and looked at his pupil for a long while before saying slowly, “I have the Breathing Method of the Five Styles and absorbed some of the mysterious power that the Night Watchers once supplied. But I was too strong then and needed too much energy—this was one of the reasons why I failed.”

Li Hao nodded, so there hadn’t been enough mysterious power for his teacher’s ascension.

“I am old now and my health has declined, that is another reason!”

Li Hao nodded again. So his teacher's constitution was no longer strong enough to withstand the breakthrough to Dominator?

"I made a few powerful enemies back in my day and some are now supernatural. There are even a few who are leaders of supernatural organizations. They've exerted pressure on the Night Watchers, this is a third and external reason!

"As for the fourth..." Yuan Shuo suddenly smiled and looked lazily at the young man. "I don't want to."

"....."

Wat.

What was that supposed to mean?

The first three were understandable, but what was with the fourth reason? The professor didn't want to make the crossover? Did that mean the first three reasons were bullshit and that his teacher could ascend at any time?

Yuan Shuo grinned to see a lost look appear on his student's face. It was always highly entertaining to tease Li Hao. He decided to answer straightforwardly given the mystified state of the young man.

"The first three reasons are valid and the fourth is real enough as well. I did have hope to cross over in the initial years, but I couldn't accept the situation..." A regretful Yuan Shuo shook his head and laughed at himself. "It'd been more than ten years since the supernatural domain appeared and certain 'old friends' were already part of it for more than ten years. There was a gap between me and them. If I chose to break through then, they would certainly give me a 'warm' welcome.

“It’s one thing if I’m mundane, but even the Night Watchers will find it hard to protect me if I’m supernatural. These old friends won’t easily move against me while I am a martial master and neither will they see me as a major enemy...”

Li Hao began to understand. Some reservations prevented his teacher from setting foot in that other world, but wasn’t this also drinking poison to quench his thirst?

All the same, Yuan Shuo wasn’t a cowardly type afraid of getting into trouble. “I was still immensely ambitious a few years ago. My thoughts then were to break through in martial dao first, then make the crossover! I wanted to reach Dominator of Thousands and then become Starlight. That would put me on similar footing with any enemies even though I’m decades late to the game!”

Yuan Shuo suddenly blazed with unbridled pride—he seemed more overweening than Liu Long! He wanted to set foot into the supernatural domain as a Dominator of Thousands, becoming the strongest among Starlight and erasing a gap of decades between him and his “old friends”.

But plainly, he’d failed!

Li Hao frowned. “Teacher, do you mean that you didn’t cross over before because you wouldn’t be able to match your enemies if you did so? That your only option was to reach Dominator before catching up in one fell swoop?”

“Yes!”

“Then... what went wrong?” Li Hao didn’t know how strong that level of martial master was, but he knew that Yuan Shuo had broken through to Sunderer many years ago. If this was his plan back then, that meant he still saw the hope of success.

Why had he given up?

Yes, given up. Li Hao felt that if his teacher wouldn't say these words if he hadn't. At the very least, he wouldn't say that he'd been "still" immensely ambitious a few years ago.

"Heh, yes, something did go wrong," Yuan Shuo chuckled. "But it's just as well, it ended my hopes. I asked the Night Watchers to help me, but none of their methods have succeeded. There's nothing for it but to accept fate!

"It's actually a good thing..." the professor was still chuckling. "I wouldn't be of the mind to accept students if it wasn't for this!"

He was so busy before trying to ascend to Dominator of Thousands. Thus, he didn't take on students for many years. But once his dreams were crushed, he didn't care whether or not he could make the crossover. He completely relinquished the notion when the Night Watchers hemmed and hawed after he asked for help and resources to shore up his body.

All that was left for him now was to live out his days in peace and hole up in the Veteris Institute of Silver City. It was due to this abundance of time that he could teach others. Outsiders wondered why he suddenly accepted students again, the answer was simple—he was bored!

Teaching others was a solid option when a martial master could not achieve breakthroughs in strength and metamorphose. Yuan Shuo had chosen Li Hao because the young man seemed bright enough to comprehend some of his knowledge.

Was he to choose Zhang Yuan if not Li Hao? The former was slow on the uptake!

"Teacher, do you still have a chance to ascend to Dominator of Thousands and make the crossover?"

Yuan Shuo sighed softly. "I know what you're thinking of and that you face danger. But with my half-crippled Sunderer strength... I'm probably less than Liu Long at the moment."

There was nothing else he could say! The once invincible Yuan Shuo, grandmaster of the Five Styles, could only accede to fate and say that he was less than Liu Long.

“What I said before still stands—you can hide out with me if you’re afraid. They won’t easily trespass on my territory because I’m still useful to the Night Watchers and various excavations still need me...”

Li Hao scratched his head, finally displaying the anxiousness of youth.

“Teacher... I...” He didn’t know how to say it. After thinking of a while, he suddenly headed into the house. “Teacher, I got my hands on something good. Try it and see if it works for you!”

“Something good?” Yuan Shuo almost broke into laughter. The kid was fun! What was this he’d found? How good was it?

I’ve seen so many treasures in my lifetime, too many to be recounted. My problems won’t be resolved so easily because they touch upon my core essence!

It hadn’t been that many years—just three, when he ran into misfortune in an ancient ruin. They’d reacted too slowly and many Night Watchers had died while he, a half-step Dominator grandmaster, thoroughly lost all hope of becoming greater.

Otherwise, he might’ve secretly crossed over a long time ago and sought out his “old friends” for a nice conversation or two.

Lost in thought, the professor didn’t mind Li Hao entering the house. He gently rubbed the spot over his heart, thinking back to an injury so severe that his heart had been pierced clean through. He wouldn’t have made it out alive if not for his vigorous life force. He was more than seventy years old, after all. And while he survived, his path as a martial master was forever severed.

Perhaps... I still need to seek out an opportunity to rise to the supernatural field. There might be hope to be found there.

It appeared that he'd given up on the surface, but he hadn't, not really. He still wished to ascend if he could! It was just much harder to with a broken body. The turtle boxing method that his student saw him practicing all the time was precisely what it appeared to be. Turtles possess longevity and good health!

It was a boxing method for good health that he'd reconstructed through perusing numerous ancient tomes. Rather than a bid to improve his battle strength, he practiced it to fortify his body. He wanted to give it another try—whether ascending to the supernatural world or breaking through to Dominator of Thousands!

He had to try again, even upon pain of death, or he'd never be content in life!

There was no need to speak of this to others. Even the Night Watchers thought that he'd given up and weren't willing to give him any precious resources anymore.

If I succeed... hmph!

He'd called the shots and raised wind and rain twenty years ago. Many of the local supernatural kings of their field respectfully hailed him as an elder brother! All of them looked down their noses at him now; he'd have to teach them a good lesson! All these years hiding out in Silver City and depending on the Night Watchers for a gasp at life... harrumph!

Yuan Shuo wandered down memory lane—a rare occurrence of rummaging through history and past glories. As for Li Hao? He knew the place well, he could do whatever he wanted.

The professor leaned back against the chair and let his thoughts run wildly.

The young man came out before long, holding a cup of water.

Yuan Shuo smiled. “There’s water out here, what did you go inside for?”

“Have a sip, teacher.”

The old man blinked and cast a sidelong glance at Li Hao, then at the water. “Did you... poison this? Do you want me dead so you can have my inheritance? I have a will and all of it goes to the Night Watchers. You’re playing with fire if you take it!”

“.....”

His teacher really liked to talk about the most random things sometimes.

“Have a sip, teacher!”