

Star Gate 391

Chapter 391: Luring the Snake Out of the Cave (I)

Li Hao quickly cleared up Hong Qing's confusion. "The formation I'm referring to is the Ten Rings Mountain Seal Formation. It's a very unique army formation dug up from an ancient ruin. Everyone is to use the same breathing method when it's in operation. Internal force from martial masters connects with each other and circulates in a loop. There is a formation master for each one.

"Ten people can share the internal force when the formation is operating, or it can all be concentrated on one person—the formation master. Each formation requires ten people to form a closed loop. If there are a hundred people, then the ten formation masters can form another circulatory loop. The formation master of that version can hold the internal force of a hundred people..."

Expressions shifted when people heard the leader's explanation. An ancient formation! A true ancient formation at that, not one that was meant for support or coordination purposes. This was one that facilitated an exchange of internal force. Being martial masters, the Demon Hunters were no fools and understood what this implied.

"The formation method needs to be kept a secret and cannot be leaked!" Li Hao proclaimed. "The core lies in the breathing method that should be employed at the same time. When it is in play, the attributes of internal force are in alignment and they resonate at the same frequency.

"At that time, a formation made of ten Slayers can absolutely fight a Sunderer. In the same vein, a formation of ten Sunderers stands a chance against a Dominator..."

"Defensive abilities are also enhanced when wearing the black armor. If a hundred person formation can be assembled from a group of Sunderers and their internal force is centered on a Dominator, then you'll definitely be able to challenge someone of a stronger level!"

The caveat was that the center point of the formation was strong enough to withstand so much internal force and could also bring it to bear.

The group's mouths ran dry as they visualized the impressive sight that Li Hao painted.

“Is there really such an ancient formation?” Liu Long couldn't help but ask. “Are there any special requirements for it?”

“Of course. We can't have someone drop the ball and break one of the loops. As long as there's no purposeful sabotage, the others can quickly reconnect the cycle even if one link is defeated.

“Ten people is the optimal number, but it can be done with nine or even a bit less...”

Liu Long looked meaningfully at Li Hao. Can you really just teach others knowledge like this? You'll be in a lot of trouble if any word of this gets out. How long have you known the people in the team? Do you really think they're all loyal to you?

He didn't understand what Li Hao was doing. Although the young man did this in pursuit of strengthening the team, some of these people came from the Sword Sect and others from the Inspectorate. How many were truly of one mind with Li Hao?

“Leader, is this appropriate?” Hong Qing felt compelled to speak up as well. “There are many of us... and I'm not saying that any of us will purposefully leak this knowledge, but what if someone accidentally mentions it in passing? According to what I know, there is no formation like this that currently exists in Silver Moon, right?”

“Even the Silver Moon Guards' Skyjade Formation doesn't seem to work like this. It simply enhances battle strength when everyone is working in tandem, but cannot facilitate internal force connecting together...”

“That's because their formation is a lower level one.” Li Hao nodded. “The Ten Rings Mountain Seal Formation should be a higher level one. As for it leaking to others... I can't control all of you. If it really is leaked to others, I'll just conduct an investigation. Whoever I trace the crime to will suffer my wrath. What else can I do if I can't find them?”

“I can’t jealously hoard all the methods to improve and send all of you to your deaths,” the young man laughed. “Not to mention, this is just a formation. Its key effect lies in utilization by a number of people. One person alone won’t be able to do anything with it. Whether we reap more for our efforts or not depends on everyone, not just me alone. I might be stronger than all of you, but I might need your help if I run into trouble and get caught by it.”

“The Slayers should digest the blood pearls first while the Sunderers listen to the breathing method that I’m about to teach you. This breathing method is called the Mountain Seal Breathing Method. According to ancient records, it comes from a faction called the Blessed Paradise in the ancient civilization.

“My teacher has another explanation when it comes to this faction, that it might not be the name of a single organization. It could be the overall reference for an entire collection of powers. This name appears in many ancient tombs, but it’s not that important.”

Blessed Paradise!

The group made a note of it, but Li Hao was right, it wasn’t that important. It didn’t matter where the method came from, the ancient civilization was long gone. No one really cared what the specifics of society were back in the day.

Li Hao began teaching the breathing method. It wasn’t too hard. In addition to the breathing methods that they had to learn over the course of their cultivation, martial masters were typically aware of other breathing methods to varying degrees. Li Hao knew a few, as did the other martial masters present.

As the young man taught, some people’s breathing began showing signs of change. From this, their abilities of comprehension and intelligence were readily apparent. For example, being Hong Yitang’s daughter, Hong Qing was truly clever. It took her only a short while to effect change in her breathing method and to show slight differences in the projection of her internal force.

Her internal force was as strong as ever—it didn’t show a change in level of strength. But there seemed to be an additional layer of something else there, brought about by the breathing method.

As soon as Hong Qing grasped the method, so did Hong Hao. Then came Li Heng, then Wu Chao, Liu Yan, and Wang Chao...

The six team captains were the first to succeed, followed shortly by the Sword Sect disciples. The martial masters from the Inspectorate were the slowest of the bunch, a clear indication of the gap between the two groups.

The Inspectorate martial masters all hailed from Silver City's Inspectorate. Some started studying martial dao late in life, others were self taught and had an odd collection of knowledge. Yet others followed Wang Henggang and Liu Long in training.

Meanwhile, Hong Yitang had personally selected all of the Sword Sect disciples. They learned very quickly, to say nothing of anything else.

Hong Qing curiously tried out the new breathing method and spontaneously connected with Hong Hao. The internal force fused together! Surprised and stunned, her reaction was masked by her visor. Waves of shock roiled in her heart. How was this possible?! Internal force really could come together??

Sword Sect disciples trained the core Earthturner Sword method. They were of the same discipline and practiced the same method. Other than being individually different, everything else about them was the same, but their internal force never showed signs of linking together. How come this breathing method could accomplish the feat?

Hong Qing did not understand.

The talkative Li Heng understood even less and decided to ask, "Leader, we have fellow disciples among us and utilize the same breathing method. How come we don't see this kind of effect in our own training?"

"I don't know."

The group blinked.

“I really don’t know,” Li Hao laughed. “Perhaps the breathing method of a formation is more unique—why else would it be specially labeled as a formation method? There would be no need to label them differently if they were all interchangeable. Everything would be a formation method if being from the same discipline is all it takes.

“Or perhaps the secrets held within are too high level and our level is currently too low to peer into them. Maybe there really are some different characteristics involved with a formation’s breathing method.”

The group nodded, excitement quickly gripping them again. Everyone tried connecting to each other. The breathing method was just one aspect of the formation.

“Aside from the breathing method, the second most important factor of the Ten Rings Mountain Seal Formation is the position you stand in! Your positions must be precise as this formation is suited for jointly attacking existences stronger than oneself and not against those weaker.

“It is apparent from its name that the formation is a sealed loop. We will encircle the enemy and seal them away to the point where they cannot strike back...” Li Hao explained. This was all recorded in the ancient texts, he’d never tried it before himself.

Yuan Shuo had taught him so much old knowledge he’d yet to sift through and understand. The only thing he could do was remember everything, so that he could share it with someone at an appropriate time.

As he spoke of the formation, he was suddenly reminded of his teacher. Yuan Shuo had dug through so many ancient tomes and knew an exceedingly large number of them. But other than the Five Styles, he seemed to have only studied the Incantation of the Blade of Blood. Was it that he was too lazy to use anything else?

“Team captains, remember what I’ve said and explain it again to those who don’t understand.” Li Hao looked at the assembly. “It’s up to you to decide how to determine positions and utilize the formation.”

With that, he ignored the group and looked at the Slayers. They were still digesting the blood pearls, but efficiency was low since there was no sword energy to help them. Not only that, but their conversion rate was low as well.

Almost all of them were peak Slayers, which meant they were nearly guaranteed ascension with a Darkmoon blood pearl. But if their conversion rate was too low, that would make things difficult.

As Li Hao glanced at the cultivating Slayers, he suddenly took out three mysterious power stones. While they’d killed a fair number of people earlier, they’d only obtained one mysterious power stone. Only the metal Sunflare had one, which meant these three had come from Golden Spear. Few were the Sunflares that possessed this level of treasure.

His movement caught many people’s eyes.

“Mysterious power stones?” someone asked in a low voice when they recognized the item.

“Mhmm, I borrowed them from our ranking officer.” Li Hao nodded. “If we don’t obtain sufficient stones to pay him back, the rest of the black armor will go to the Guards as well. The Sword Sect brought them to us... I’m going to use the Breathing Method of the Five Styles to crush the stones and help you digest the power within the blood pearls. This debt will fall on your heads if we don’t obtain enough mysterious power stones to fill in the hole!”

He crushed the stones, operated the breathing method, and absorbed large currents of energy. He quickly raised a small tide of energy, but that was secondary to his true purpose. Li Hao made use of the disturbance to release a little bit of sword energy and meld it into the other energy. The energy instantly shot toward twenty-nine people.

Those who were having trouble breathing immediately felt a difference when the energy entered their body. The blood energy instantly calmed down!

Joy beamed from their faces as—boom! Someone’s internal force exploded in external projection. The other Sunderers gaped—so this was the Breathing Method of the Five Styles?? It was incredible!

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At the same time, the Breathing Method of the Five Styles was just as ridiculous as it was impressive. It consumed three mysterious power stones in the blink of an eye! That was the equivalent of a thousand cubes of mysterious power, no?

Only rich people could make use of this method!

The appearance of a first Sunderer was quickly followed by a second. The energy contained within three mysterious power stones was very dense. Continuous operation was sufficient to help these Slayers finish digesting their blood pearls.

The energy dissipated after twenty minutes—those who could make use of their gains had done so. Li Hao looked over at the Slayers. Of the twenty-nine martial masters, twenty were from the Sword Sect and nine from the Inspectorate. The difference hadn’t been apparent before he looked. Once he did, he saw that everyone from the sect had broken through.

That was terrifying. Only six of the nine Inspectorate martial masters had succeeded. Three had failed—or rather, they didn’t achieve the state of projecting their internal force. Those three were abjectly depressed for their failure.

They were the only ones to fail out of the twenty-nine martial masters and the opportunity had come at quite a price! One blood pearl and the energy from the mysterious powers meant the equivalent of consuming over one hundred cubes. And yet, they’d failed!

“Leader... we...” The three were beside themselves. Any thoughts they might’ve nursed before faded away, leaving only the notion that we are utter trash. They were older than the Sword Sect

disciples on average, but all of the latter had advanced. One third of the Inspectorate nine had failed—that was too high a rate of failure. It was not three out of twenty-nine.

Wang Henggang's nephew—Wang Chao—regarded the scene with a heavy expression. It was readily apparent the difference in caliber between the people from his uncle and the Sword Sect. Those from the Sword Sect all possessed high potential. Those from the Inspectorate were mediocre in comparison.

Li Hao didn't mind much. That everyone from the Sword Sect had advanced made them stronger than expected, but caliber would not be apparent until half step Dominators grasped the aura. If they couldn't, then there was no further discussion of martial potential needed.

“It's no big deal—it's not like you're walking away empty-handed just because you didn't break through. You're one step away and might succeed by the morning!” Li Hao didn't say much and turned to those who'd advanced. “There's no need to be overly happy even though you've succeeded. We don't have much time left, so hurry and familiarize yourself with your new strength. Have your captains teach you the formation...”

With that, he ignored everyone. The Demon Hunters stirred with activity as a flame lit in people's hearts. The minor goal that Li Hao had mentioned last night was pretty much completed after one day. So it really was no major undertaking for everyone to ascend to Sunderer!

The three who'd failed received general comfort from the rest. They would just try again after this failure. With this time's experience, attaining Sunderer next time would not be that difficult.

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Li Hao breathed out gently when he walked out of the mountain valley and looked into the distance. There seemed to be a massive fissure in the distance, as lit by moonlight. The ground seemed to have split open—Rift Canyon, the geological feature that split north and south Silver Moon.

Liu Long quickly ambled over.

“Do you have any thoughts, chief?” Li Hao laughed softly.

“You’re too wasteful!” That was Liu Long’s chief consideration. The young man had quickly spent all of the blood pearls he collected and another three mysterious power stones. Although he’d also gained quite a bit of mysterious power, Li Hao received almost nothing from this battle. He poured everything back into the team.

“When they’re all stronger as Sunderers and know the formation, each minor team will be able to take on a Sunflare. Ten armored Sunderers to a formation and a late Sunderer as the center point means that each team will be able to kill a Sunflare!

“And thus the feedback cycle is formed. We kill enemies, grow stronger, and soon the Demon Hunters might bring me enough profits!” Li Hao chuckled. “I’ll invest some before they reach late Sunderer. When it comes time to comprehend the aura, there’s no need for further resource consumption if they can’t set foot into half step Dominator...”

“True.” Liu Long nodded. “When do we go back then?”

“When we can’t continue improving or when Red Moon is so alert that they start chasing us,” Li Hao laughed. “We’ll be moving out at night from now on. We’ll rest during the day and practice the formation.”

Liu Long left as he had no further questions, leaving the young man to look into the distance with anticipation. He’d brought out the Demon Hunters with some of his own goals in mind. He wanted to collect sufficient high level blood pearls—Solar at the very least. Nova... was out of his reach for now.

Mysterious power stones were another goal. Only Solars would have those. Thus, they must kill a few Solars this time. He didn’t really care about those below Solar. He might’ve viewed those gains as precious treasure a month ago, but now they were all inconsequential.

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The sky brightened in the blink of an eye. September 16.

The battlefield of last night was long emptied. Wang Ming and the others had driven off in their sports car, heading for the next possible locale with powerhouses.

The Red Moon base was as quiet as usual. A figure in a ghostly mask appeared outside of it after an indeterminate period of time, making some sounds above ground. When no response was forthcoming, it darted beneath.

Hastily scrambling back out moments later, the figure fled the area. It was empty below the ground. It hadn't noticed it at first, but there were clear signs of battle in the area. An accident had occurred and someone had discovered this stronghold!

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Outside White Moon City.

The same manor.

There were a lot more people milling through it now as powerhouses from the north continued to gather in Silver Moon. There were quite a few Solars. As Blue Moon addressed them, the idle Violet Moon standing off to the side suddenly said, "I've just received a report that the base near Skywave Lake has just been destroyed. All of the members have gone missing and there are signs of battle at the scene with blood to be found!"

"There were a lot of people at that base, no?" Blue Moon furrowed his brows.

"Quite a few—four teams worth."

Four teams meant forty supernaturals and four Sunflares. That set Blue Moon on edge, despite receiving aid from all nineteen northern provinces. “So many disappearing together? If I remember correctly, there was a peak Sunflare in residence there. They should be able to hold their own even against a Solar if they worked together!”

His heart ached at the thought of so many supernaturals dying all at once. Who’d done it?? Disappearing meant death, there was no need to harbor hopes of them coming back. That would not be happening.

“The Skywave Lake base wasn’t too far from Rift Canyon,” Violet Moon mused. “The Night Watchers have shown no movement lately. Hao Lianchuan is holed up in White Moon after being injured. Hou Xiaochen won’t take the field against some Darkmoons and Sunflare. According to the report, there is a mess of footprints at the scene. Their number indicates a group of people acting together, but they aren’t too strong...”

There wouldn’t be a group of people if a powerhouse had made a move.

“Is it Celestial or Yama?” asked Violet Moon. Other than those two, there was no other faction in Silver Moon who could send large numbers of people against forty supernaturals. Since the Night Watchers were confirmed to not be involved, they were naturally not in the course of consideration.

A couple Solars from other provinces raged in the hall. “Celestial and Yama have quite the nerve! They can’t wait to pile on the misery when we’re down on our luck. Milord Blue Moon, why don’t we seek out some of their bases and take revenge! They’ll think Red Moon is an easy target if we don’t knock them down a few pegs!”

“That’s right!”

“Should we send someone to Skywave Lake, like those skilled at tracking and tracing? Perhaps they’ll find something. It only happened last night, so it’s not like all the traces are gone yet even if the ones who did it got away!”

Red Moon was immensely fortified by strong forces at the moment. Large numbers of their people had convened in the province, but they'd still lost one of their important strongholds. It infuriated the Solars from various areas; they were already harboring grievances from being targeted by people stronger than them. They'd gathered at Silver Moon to find strength in numbers, so how was this still happening??

Blue Moon also looked on with an unpleasant expression. These people were much too bold. Red Moon was the greatest faction in the province at the moment. No one dared refute an organization with nearly one thousand supernaturals! There were a dozen Solars in this hall alone and more arrived everyday.

Just when he thought that no one would dare provoke them in the short term, reality slapped him upside the head. This was a blatant slap in the face!

“Don't be in a hurry to come to conclusions yet,” Blue Moon took a breath and recovered his calm. “It may not be Celestial and Yama. While the three great organizations are not of one body and mind, this is not the time for open hostilities either. Our enemy is not too weak given that our Skywave Lake base has been destroyed. We must still conduct our investigation. Jin Jiu and Duan Chao, take some supernaturals skilled at tracking to the site...”

“They might have Solars with them if they were able to destroy that base,” said Violet Moon. “And there may be more than one. While our two leaders are Solars, they may not be able to defeat the enemy in an encounter.”

Blue Moon first nodded, then shook his head. “It's just an investigation, there's no need to come in contact with the other if there's real danger. We can't send too many people as Hou Xiaochen and the rest of the four institutions have just met again. I've received word that they'll conduct an even more thorough cleansing over the past two days. Hao Lianchuan, Hu Dingfang, Wang Henggang, and the Silver Moon Guards that we've only heard about before will all be participating. We must be ready.”

The official authorities of Silver Moon were stirring to action once more. If Red Moon sent out too many Solars, they wouldn't have enough capacity left for this battlefield.

Chapter 393: Luring the Snake Out of the Cave (III)

“Then let’s add another,” Violet Moon suggested. “Three Solars should have an easier time of things.”

Blue Moon thought for a bit and nodded in agreement, calling upon another person. “Zheng Ping, you go too!”

A man with nondescript features nodded in the crowd. The others paid more attention to him—he was stronger among his peers as he was a late Solar. The previous two had been initial and mid Solar.

The group looked at Violet Moon, startled that just a few words from her had induced Blue Moon to add more personnel. Blue Moon was a Nova, but it looked like he quite respected Violet Moon. She was just a peak Solar, but he had to show her face when she spoke up.

Three Solars, of which one was a late Solar. Violet Moon had nothing else to say now. These three would be able to overcome their enemies even if they met a peak Solar and would stand a chance of defeating the other. They wouldn’t have much trouble unless they ran into a Nova.

The matter of the Skywave base being destroyed had come to an end. They had much more to do at the moment. Blue Moon had summoned so many powerhouses to Silver Moon not just for the ruins of Battle Heaven, but also the more important task of capturing Li Hao!

“The coordination of the four institutions, the involvement of the Silver Moon Guards, and the fact that Li Hao has gone to the Guards...” Blue Moon’s intelligence reports were thorough enough. “Two transport trucks left the Guards yesterday, some say that it was Li Hao taking his team out for training. But after a thorough investigation through the night, we did not find any traces of the Silver Moon Guards.”

Red Moon attached quite a bit of importance to the occurrence and sent people for a close look. However, the report that came back was that it was two empty cars. Earlier reports indicating that there were occupants in the carriages could not be confirmed.

“We need to continue setting a watch on them,” Blue Moon determined. “And to continue exerting enough pressure on Silver Moon. If the Guards really mobilize, we might be able to draw Li Hao out of the city!”

There were only rumors of the young man setting foot outside the capital with no actual sighting that indicated he was truly out. Therefore, Blue Moon desired to further suppress Silver Moon so that they sent out the Guards. Li Hao would very potentially be with them in that case. Even if he wasn't, Red Moon was confident of destroying the Guards' base as soon as they deployed en masse.

The Guards were located on the northern outskirts of White Moon City, close to the Moon Sea. If they snuck in through the sea, Hou Xiaochen wouldn't be able to react in time if they were fast enough.

A hubbub of conversation broke out. Not many were aware that their main mission was Li Hao instead of Battle Heaven! Although they all knew that the organization highly valued the matter of the eight families, they'd thought that Red Moon's powerhouses were converging for the purposes of the ruins and Hou Xiaochen.

To many people, Li Hao was still the half step Dominator who'd killed Sun Moxian. After all, it'd been less than a month since that fight.

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Evening of September 16.

An abandoned town could be found on the northern side of Rift Canyon. Typically, only sand and dust swept through the area, but there was certain activity to be found there tonight. Some occupants were in town, laughing and chatting as fragrant meat and wine wafted from a blazing bonfire.

It was the same trick as last night, a camp that proclaimed to the entire world that here were rich children out for a lark. Wang Ming's energy ring was particularly eye-catching in the firelight.

“This place is nice, it’s so quiet! There’s a different kind of beauty to it!” he roared with laughter. “We don’t need to worry about safety—who dares provoke us in Silver Moon? We don’t need to be afraid of the three great organizations either, they can’t afford the consequences if they do anything to us!”

“The White Dragons will immediately declare war on us if they so much as touch us! My grandpa is someone they cannot offend!”

His voice was loud and carried far; the three ladies quickly chimed in with agreement. All of them started boasting how much influence they wielded in their families and how great their status was. If anyone dared cross them on this leisure jaunt, those miserable souls were asking for death!

The group of five had conducted themselves in a very flamboyant manner during the day. Anyone in the area would’ve noticed them a long time ago.

Within the darkness.

Li Hao stood on a dilapidated roof and looked around coolly with sharp eyes. There were supernaturals around Wang Ming’s group! However, the young man frowned. These supernaturals looked to be operating solo and weren’t part of the three great organizations. Had they not attracted those of the organizations this time?

Loud shouting started in the distance as some supernaturals could no longer hold it in. They ambushed the group, but Wang Ming and the others quickly noticed them. The two sides were embroiled in a scrappy melee and a supernatural called out, “Work with us, nearby brothers! We’ll take out these fat cats together and split the spoils!”

Some more supernaturals appeared to join the fray. One of them was a Sunflare. Li Hao remained watching silently and didn’t interfere or care about their fight.

“You’ve got some nerve to attack us!” Wang Ming’s voice was furious and brash in the darkness. “I’m going to butcher you all and take your mysterious power!”

RUMBLE!

The sounds of fighting traveled out far. Li Hao’s eyes shifted as he focused in one direction several hundred meters away from the battle site. A small ball of light hovered there, quite noticeable in the darkness.

The young man grinned—now that was more like the three great organizations! As brazen and arrogant as they were, they were cautious in most situations to avoid falling into a trap. The supernaturals first on the scene had been out in the open. That did not jive with the style of the three great organizations, so he’d determined that they were working alone.

What took place now was more their *modus operandi*, so which of the three had come?

Li Hao’s form jumped from place to place as he kept an eye on the proceedings. The ball of light swiftly disappeared after observing the situation for a bit. The young man quickly tracked it through the darkness. He lit up after several thousand meters—so many balls of light!

There were at least twenty of them and no Solars, just Darkmoons and Sunflares. There were no signs of scarlet shadows, so it was probably Celestial or Yama.

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Fighting commenced in earnest after half an hour. The Demon Hunters were much more ferocious tonight and worked in tandem. Although a lot of problems still plagued their coordination, the martial masters were swiftly improving upon them.

Their opponents were people who loved smearing paint on their face—Yama.

Celestial had a fondness for capes, Red Moon liked masks. Only Yama didn't have requirements when it came to outerwear, but they liked putting paint on their faces to indicate how different they were. It was also a sign of their identity—the three great organizations all had their unique characteristics.

Even Liu Long was thick in the middle of things. Yama's supernaturals were of high caliber and they had several Sunflares in the field. It hadn't been long since Liu Long progressed to Dominator, a level that put him on par with Sunflares. Thus, he was part of the fighting to increase his experience battling Sunflares.

The battlefield was slightly chaotic as impacts sounded continuously. Black armor was continuously sent flying, but always swiftly replaced by more. Some of the minor teams were practicing their Ten Rings Mountain Seal Formation; Liu Yan was leading her team in killing a mid Sunflare. Their movements weren't synchronized, but she was able to collect the internal force of ten people after battle had commenced for ten minutes and drive her blades into the enemy's heart.

Hong Qing chose differently from Liu Yan. Her team was also assembled in a formation, but not to concentrate their power on her alone. Ten swordsmen struck at the same time and sent sword qi racing over the scene. The Earthturner Sword was present, churning the skies and overturning the earth!

The ground ruptured from the blow, as did the Sunflare that they'd surrounded!

Sunflare after Sunflare fell as Yama was quickly defeated. The sound of martial masters cheering rose from the crowd. They were so much stronger in their second battle compared to the inaugural one of last night. The team was further elated by the might of the formation!

Morale soared and one of the Slayers that didn't advance last night succeeded over the course of battle.

The slaughter continued for a while, ending when Liu Long erupted with the Nine Forged Force and hacked a late Sunflare to death.

Then it was time for cleanup and mysterious power collection...

The team was old hats at this part of the process. The dead were moved to another locale for burial. After their mysterious power was collected, there was no further use for their bodies. Being exposed one day later would buy the Demon Hunters more time.

“Demon Hunters!” Liu Long growled, raising an answering wave of shouts from the rest.

“Demon Hunters!”

Li Hao’s instructions weren’t needed this time. The team captains directed their teams to retreat and locate a hiding spot for the night. They would strike again tomorrow night.

Significant gains after two big victories buoyed everyone’s spirits. Martial masters were further overjoyed that their minor teams had killed Sunflares by themselves. The saying that martial masters below Dominator were less than supernaturals seemed to have been overturned.

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And so the Demon Hunters became active throughout the land, killing members of the three great organizations. More than one hundred supernaturals were dead or missing after four days, stirring up currents of activity throughout Silver Moon.

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Within a mountain cave.

“Celestial has lost a branch!” Half Mountain declared coldly. “Seventeen supernaturals have gone missing, which means they are probably dead. Not only us, but the same goes for Red Moon and Yama. Intelligence indicates that martial masters may be behind it. That brings one person to mind—Li Hao!”

Celestial had been the first to receive word that Li Hao had left the Silver Moon Guard camp. However, the young man vanished after that.

“Additionally, I’ve received another report having to do with the grandson of the White Dragons vice commander. He and his merry band have been having a ball throughout the province the past couple of days. They are frequently sighted at places close to where the branches disappear!”

Wang Ming and his friends had raised attention from the three great organizations after all, since they were an ostentatious group that happened to show up close to where a base would disappear. It raised the suspicion that they were possibly bait thrown out by others.

Losing more than a hundred supernaturals over four days was an enormous loss for any organization.

Chapter 394: Triple Kill! (I)

After Half Mountain exchanged a few words with the elder, he quickly said, “I’m going to see Blue Moon and the Parity King. Perhaps... it’s really Li Hao and his vanished group of Guards behind all this!”

“What do you wish to do?” the elder asked in a low voice from the shadows.

“Eradicate this troop of missing Guards!” Half Mountain growled. “They’re so lively everyday and go around killing supernaturals like they’re completely insane. I can’t think of anyone else this crazy other than Li Hao. He’s crazy because his teacher is Yuan Shuo—these methods are right out of the old man’s playbook! Slaughter follows wherever he goes. Very few people like him have appeared in Silver Moon in the last couple of years.”

Yuan Shuo!

Indeed, Yuan Shuo was like this as well. He killed wherever he went. He'd crossed the North Sea by now and all of the powerhouses in the central region knew that Yuan Shuo of Silver Moon had arrived to begin his career as a demon!

Yuan Shuo was making his name known throughout the dynasty after walking out of the province. His disciple was unwilling to stay out of the limelight and did his part in leading a group of martial masters on a wild rampage against supernaturals in Silver Moon.

The elder stayed silent in the darkness for a while before saying, "Very well! But don't forget those guys in White Moon City. There has been much movement in the city these days. Be careful of a sudden ambush from Hou Xiaochen!"

"I know." Half Mountain vanished on the spot. It must be Li Hao! That guy was just as crazy as his teacher.

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At the same time.

Hou Xiaochen coughed and looked into the distance. "Are you... going to usher in troubled times by yourself?" he chuckled after a long moment. "What a mad little guy!"

According to the reports he'd received, more than one hundred supernaturals had died over four days. Other than the expedition to Battle Heaven, this was the first time that so many supernaturals had died in such a short period of time in the vast territory of Silver Moon. The key thing was, that fellow's methods were stunning!

He never missed when he struck!

Wang Ming and the others acting as bait were equally brazen. Not only did they follow in Li Hao's wake, but they stayed with the young man all four days.

“There is... no peace to be found in Silver Moon!” Hou Xiaochen sighed. An equilibrium had barely been maintained before, but Li Hao had gone and smashed it to pieces with a single trip. Red Moon would receive word soon, the young man wouldn’t be able to stay hidden forever.

Death would start coming for him next.

“I... can only hold off some of the powerhouses for you, but not all of them...” He shook his head gently and looked at the secret chamber in the back. He could’ve sent Little Yu to help the lad if these were times past. He couldn’t do so now, so Li Hao was on his own.

.....

No one had a quiet night. Li Hao also knew that the real battle was yet to begin. He’d seen traces of Solars over the past couple of days and led the team past them each time. There’d been three sightings—once with three Solars, twice of one Solar. He refrained from action each time.

If he’d done anything, that might scare off the others. He could wait until more people gathered. Hadn’t he done all this killing over the past four days to lure out these people?

“My hands are itching after so many days of no action!” Li Hao laughed and looked at the balls of light in the darkness. The team’s coordination had improved markedly after so many days. He didn’t have much of a chance to make a move.

The opportunity might be here tonight.

“There might be a place for me in Silver Moon after tonight!” Li Hao grinned at the balls of light rising in the distance. He’d purposefully left some clues behind everyday. It looked like the three organizations were about to locate him. They were certainly efficient!

“Six Solars...” The young man looked in the four cardinal directions. They didn’t come from the same direction. It would be difficult to continue concealing the truth about the situation after tonight.

.....

The Demon Hunters had gone on a rampage over the past four days. Was Li Hao unaware of the possibility that the three great organizations would ultimately think of him?

Of course not.

It was impossible to indefinitely conceal the tracks of so many martial masters. It was sufficient to hide them for a few days. He’d also considered the notion that the three great organizations wouldn’t send large sums of powerhouses for him in the beginning. What they sent today, however, would do. Six Solars had come from the various organizations. They were thinking highly of him to do so!

Such a showing of strength could be brought to bear against a Nova, a clear sign of how much importance the other side placed on this. At the same time, Li Hao felt that they didn’t think highly enough of him. Red Moon alone sent several Novas against Yuan Shuo, with some even possibly peak Nova. Orange and Yellow Moon were very possibly peak Nova existences. But not a single Nova had come for him?

Was he that much worse off than his teacher?

Irritation brewed in Li Hao. Who were they looking down on, huh!

.....

At the same time.

In the south.

Three Solars flew through the air. Late Solar Zheng Ping suddenly frowned and looked to the west. “Celestial seems to have sent Half Mountain’s disciple,” he snorted. “He’s sneaking through the air, behaving like a ghost despite being a peak Solar!”

Peak Solar!

Celestial had sent only one person, but this person was incredibly strong. A peak Solar of the dark attribute, he was incredibly talented at covering his tracks. He was revealing traces of his presence because he’d discovered the other Solars. Misunderstandings would easily arise if he fully concealed himself. They were all here for Li Hao, it wouldn’t do if they started fighting among themselves.

Zheng Ping had also sensed the two from Yama on another side. They’d sent a mid Solar and a late Solar.

The three organizations were taking this very seriously indeed. Red Moon’s three Solars were matched by three from their counterparts.

“Be wary of their intentions,” Zheng Ping transmitted. “They may not be here for Li Hao. They may want to take him from us or kill the boy.”

Why else were so many powerhouses being sent against a group of martial masters? Their strongest was just Liu Long and Li Hao, two martial masters who’d just set foot into Dominator. Was there a need for so many heavyweights?

Jin Jiu and Duan Chao nodded solemnly. They weren’t afraid of Li Hao—they really weren’t. Who would be afraid of a martial master who’d been a Dominator for less than a month? They would be Solars for no reason at all if they were.

Yuan Shuo was an exception. He'd bided his time for many years and wasn't a rookie like Li Hao. Even so, he hadn't raised much attention after becoming a Dominator. It wasn't until he reached Summoner that he drew scrutiny again.

Those from Red Moon were more worried that the other two would capture Li Hao or even kill him. That would mark the complete failure of their mission. Capturing Li Hao was their first priority. Death was on the table only if that was completely out of the question. Even if they killed him, they must claim the body. That was Red Moon's bottom line.

Zheng Ping's nondescript features maintained an expressionless face. He scanned the surroundings out of the corner of his eye and transmitted, "According to our reports, Li Hao and his people should be hiding nearby! These martial masters operate at night and rest in the day. If we're attacked, the two of you will hold off Yama and Celestial's people. Only I am needed for Li Hao and his men. We'll retreat as soon as we have him!"

"Understood!" the highly nervous two quickly sent back. Red Moon was sometimes forced into protecting Li Hao.

At the same time, three scarlet shadows soundlessly rushed forward. The three wanted to find Li Hao before the others did and put the young man under control. It was the best outcome if they could quietly settle this issue and take Li Hao back with them.

.....

To the west.

A figure in black wearing a cloak strode over the ground. The corners of its lips turned upward. Zheng Ping? Red Moon had sent three Solars, but their strongest was Zheng Ping. If the figure killed Li Hao after Red Moon took the boy into custody... would Zheng Ping dare fight him?

A smile crossed the young face wearing the cloak before the figure fully vanished. No presence leaked this time. He'd made his greetings, so he could not be accused of striking from the shadows. Perhaps he'd be the one to grab Li Hao first and take him away. The heir to the eight families... How interesting.

.....

In the east.

One of the Solars was naked from the waist up and covered in tattoos. It was a magnificent sight. The other was an incredibly beguiling woman.

She looked in the other two directions for a bit and smiled seductively. "Celestial has sent Yue Pu. That guy's powers of concealment are first class and I hear he assassinated a peak Solar a while back. I wonder if that's true."

"A killer? Assassinate?" sneered the muscular man next to her. "That's because he didn't meet me. He can try ambushing me and see if he breaks my defenses!"

He was an earth supernatural, a late Solar, and one exceedingly skilled at defense. He'd been a martial master before crossing over, but not a very strong one at just peak Slayer. He was very proud to have successfully crossed over.

Supernaturals that had once been martial masters were typically stronger than regular supernaturals. Although the other was a peak Solar, he was not afraid. A peak Solar that could only walk in the shadows had to get past his defenses first.

The woman was a mid Solar and tittered, "That's true, everyone knows that Yama's Iron Wall possesses invincible defenses. There is likely barely anyone stronger than you in this regard among the nineteen northern provinces."

Barely anyone? Iron Wall sneered. Other than the Novas, who had stronger defenses than him? He knew a few peak Solars as well as other earth supernaturals. No one was stronger than him. Therefore, he considered himself the greatest in defense among Solars of the north.

Of course, it would bring some trouble to him if he said this out loud. So he didn't, but he certainly thought this way.

“Let's go and take a look at the kid. He's got some nerve—does he really think he's Yuan Shuo?” Iron Wall coolly called out to his counterpart.

Li Hao... a little guy whose name was lost among the masses. If it wasn't for Yuan Shuo and the eight families, Iron Wall wouldn't bother looking twice at someone like this. The kid had certainly found his balls to eliminate a Yama branch!

Red Moon wouldn't be taking him with them tonight!

Iron Wall didn't think much about the three from Red Moon, but he did pause when it came to Yue Pu from Celestial. He wasn't afraid of being ambushed, just considering the fact that the man was a peak Solar.

Chapter 395: Triple Kill! (II)

Three sides were closing in on their targeted site. They all had clues that pointed to Li Hao most likely hiding within the small mountain ahead of them on this night. The mountain was perfect—it made escape hard. It would be a perfect grave for this team of the Silver Moon Guards.

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The young man in question watched silently, watching three sides rush to him and three massive scarlet shadows soar overhead. All of them were treating him as meat on a chopping block and someone completely blind. Those shadows are huge and there's three of them, do you really think I can't see them?

But six Solars... that made for a lot of pressure. Stellaris manifested over his hand. Li Hao crushed eight mysterious power stones and had the little sword quickly take in the energy. Part of it was diverted into his body. He looked back and smiled at the armored martial masters.

“You’ve all improved a great deal after these days of fighting. However, trouble has come to us as well. Six Solars from the three great organizations are currently rushing us from different directions...”

The crowd shifted with unease. Solars! And six of them!

“I haven’t done much the past couple of days, but have taken a great deal of the gains. Since I am your leader, I cannot take without giving back,” Li Hao chuckled. “They all say that my master Yuan Shuo is the first among martial masters, but my master says that the student eclipsing the master is what he wants. My master made his name through his battle with the Qimei Staff. I wonder if the name of Li Hao will be known throughout the lands after tonight!

“Deputy Liu!” Li Hao called out. Liu Long was also wearing his suit of armor at this time.

“Here!” he swiftly called out.

“The Demon Hunters have a simple mission—watch the show and defend!” Li Hao said calmly. “Stay here and watch the proceedings. The Solars are here first, but that doesn’t mean there won’t be Sunflares to come along. They may be bringing up the rear...”

“We should be able to hold back a Solar if we coordinate our actions and utilize the formation,” Liu Long said hastily. “We won’t be able to kill them, but we’ll have no problem obstructing them. My brothers and sisters, don’t be afraid. We’ve...”

“There’s no need!” Li Hao raised his hand and cut him off with a smile. “Believe me! If I can’t kill these guys, there’s not much point to you guys stopping one of them.”

Could they stop a Solar?

The power of all fifty gathered on Liu Long made it very possible. But was there a need to do so? Who should they stop? The ones traveling alone were peak Solar. A lot of the Demon Hunters would die if the team was to delay them by only a little. The armor wasn't truly invincible, it could just fend off Sunflare attacks.

"It's enough to have such sentiment. I'm glad to see that we are no longer afraid of Solars! Kill any Sunflares that come!" Li Hao took a deep breath and looked into the distance. Who should he target first? Those from Red Moon?

No, they could wait. Red Moon would not brashly move against him. they would keep themselves in check if they attacked him. It was the other two organizations that would aim for his throat as soon as they made a move.

The peak Solar, then?

Li Hao thought for a bit and laughed. That was just as well. One should eliminate the strongest if one was to take action. However, he had to make sure that he wouldn't scare off the others. He wouldn't be able to catch them if they made a run for it. He just needed to commence his moves in closer quarters!

The young man bounded up over the mountain peak when his thoughts traveled here. A few hops and skips sent him through the air like he was flying. He swiftly approached his chosen direction, leaving Liu Long and the others watching ponderously behind him.

Six Solars! Li Hao was out of his mind.

Only now did Liu Long understand why Li Hao hadn't been too bothered with cleaning up the battlefield the past couple of days. He didn't even really conceal his tracks. He'd refused when people suggested sweeping their footprints away.

The young man had said that there was no need. Mmhmm, there indeed was no need as he'd been laying the groundwork for a larger operation.

.....

The earth sword aura and fire tiger aura stirred restlessly within Li Hao's organs. The dot that was the metal aura didn't move. He'd yet to successfully combine the third aura with the rest. In his hand, Stellaris seemed to be longer than before. It was only the length of a pair of chopsticks previously—it would be more accurate to term it a dagger than a sword. It was the length of his forearm now and could be considered a real sword, though it wasn't as long as regular longswords.

The combination of two auras puts me barely on par with a peak Solar. I won't be able to kill them...

He hadn't been able to forcefully kill Huang Jie when they met in the alley. He'd had to utilize the Incantation of the Blade of Blood and rely on support from Hao Lianchuan to pin down the man in order to finish the deed.

Thus, the combination of two auras might help him rival a late Solar's strength. He would have to fuse all three or utilize the Incantation of the Blade of Blood if he wanted to kill a peak Solar.

Li Hao was much stronger in his current condition, his body and blood qi well fortified, his mind intent a noticeable step above his previous high. If he utilized the incantation in his current condition, he could at least ensure a stable footing, even if he couldn't easily kill the target.

If I want to guarantee victory.... I must assimilate all three auras!

A light sparkled in Li Hao's eyes as he continued forward. The third aura that he wanted to fuse together wasn't the metal dot—that was too cutting. He'd turned his sights to the water aura that came after the Nine Forged Force!

What a pity that he couldn't fully deploy the method yet. It'd also only been a short while since he attained the eighth layer. But... he could give it a try. What was there to be concerned about? If he couldn't do it, he would just force the assimilation to take place.

.....

Li Hao moved exceedingly quickly, but quietly. He ran straight for the biggest ball of light and stopped when he was one thousand meters away. The other balls of light in the other directions weren't too far from him.

The young man stopped in the midway point between all parties, waiting quietly. The fierce tiger in his heart snarled and tore at the ground. It dragged the chains around, eager to walk out and witness even better glories.

Nine hundred meters... eight hundred... The biggest ball of light proceeded at a moderate pace, but it was a bit strange. It ran left and right and left again, as if it was playing hide-and-seek by itself.

A dark attribute supernatural! Li Hao remained unmoving, like he was a stone sculpture.

.....

Off in the distance.

Celestial's Yue Pu seemed to see someone ahead. They were like a shadow in the darkness, maybe it was difficult to see them.

Is there... someone ahead? Yue Pu started. Who would come to the wildness in the dead of night? They weren't a supernatural, he didn't feel any energy ripples.

Is it Li Hao? The group of people with Li Hao? Was it them fishing again?

Yue Pu grinned radiantly beneath his outfit. Are these guys addicted to being bait? They'd done so many times over the past couple of days that the three great organizations were aware of their tactics. These people had the same habits and tricks, and they liked repeating themselves.

Did they think of everyone else as idiots?

The more Yue Pu drew closer, the more confused he was. The person up ahead wasn't wearing armor—but that made sense, for bait. His eyesight was fine in the darkness and this person seemed vaguely familiar...

Wait, wasn't that Li Hao?

The three great organizations had records of Li Hao's likeness. Li Hao? What is the boy doing here, and by himself? This was very strange! Did this fellow not know that the three great organizations wanted his head, or was he cultivating here because he thought they wouldn't be able to find him?

.....

The Red Moon contingent was the second to discover Li Hao. Their scarlet shadows had also discovered him here.

"Hurry, Yue Pu's nearby!" Zheng Ping transmitted urgently. The three picked up speed!

Li Hao was out in the wild and standing by himself. Yue Pu was only several hundred meters away from him! The Red Moon trio were dismayed and Zheng Ping quickly instructed, "Send the divine shadows to hold off Yue Pu. Jin Jiu, use yours to get Li Hao!"

Two scarlet shadows dove at Yue Pu to prevent him from doing anything to Li Hao. The other zoomed at the young man.

The trio's movements were big enough that they raised attention from the Yama duo. They'd yet to see Li Hao, but Red Moon's sudden agitation was explanation enough that Li Hao might have been sighted.

The two quickly changed course in the direction that everyone was heading in.

.....

Li Hao raised his head to see a scarlet shadow flying at him. He also saw another two shooting at a cloaked figure.

Yue Pu had wanted to spend more time observing the situation, but he sensed the shadows. The creeping sensation moving towards him alerted him to the fact that Red Moon's blood pearls were nearby.

"Hmph!" he snorted. I wanted to take a look first, but you guys are in such a hurry that you made the first move. Then don't blame me for answering strongly!

He flashed toward Li Hao, prompting dismay from Zheng Ping. Yue Pu was so fast and adeptly concealed that it was difficult to detect the man. He had no choice but to yell, "Li Hao, you need to leave! Celestial's killer is close to you! Abandon resistance and let the divine shadow take you away..."

Now wasn't that laughable? It was a Red Moon member who gave Li Hao a warning at this time. The young man, however, wasn't surprised in the least. This organization was likely the enemy who wanted him alive the most.

He didn't move.

Yue Pu appeared in front of Li Hao, discarding his concealment. What was there to hide? He was a peak Solar, was he afraid of Li Hao picking up on his movement?

He crossed the last several hundred meters like an arrow, even finding the time to rebuff the scarlet shadow for Li Hao. Dark attributed mysterious power exploded over Li Hao's head, shoving back a shadow with a boom.

Regular methods could not be brought to bear against the scarlet shadows, but someone of Yue Pu's level could vaguely sense their existence. Celestial and Yama had certain countermeasures for these entities. These things had to do with a mental level. All the supernatural needed to do was to intermix some mental energy into their mysterious power to effectively hit the shadows.

A loud rumble exploded over Li Hao's head.

"Red Moon wants you so they can skin you alive and extract your bones," Yue Pu said eerily. "Come with me..."

Celestial might not kill you and might even negotiate with Red Moon.

Yue Pu approached the young man to grab him. Mysterious power surged out, forming a massive net to capture Li Hao. Even now, the latter remained unmoving, as if he'd been scared out of his wits.

He might not have this kind of opportunity in the future. Right now, everyone underestimated him.

Chapter 396: Triple Kill! (III)

The peak Solar was standing less than five meters away from a martial master. If Li Hao survived this encounter, likely no Solar would ever dare stand so close to him again. Yue Pu drew closer, almost plastering himself against the young man...

Li Hao moved!

Light flashed in front of Yue Pu's eyes as a domineering mind intent slammed into his brain like a tiger burrowing in. A towering mountain descended in the next moment!

Mind intent!

Sword light streaked out and illuminated the four corners, throwing radiance around the area. Sparks ignited over Stellaris as Li Hao stabbed the sword forward. Soundless, traceless, his mind intent flared to the utmost. Two auras melded together as an impossibly fast sword struck at Yue Pu!

A lost look dawned in the man's eyes before he quickly snapped back to his senses. He roared with fury and clenched his hand into a fist, smashing it at Li Hao's little sword. What was with this kid??

The attack from the mind intent left him mentally off balance. Meanwhile, Li Hao snarled despite rarely speaking in battle, venting the violence in his heart!

“Sever the self!” Sword light cut through the void!

Crunch!

Bones snapped crisply as the little sword sliced past Yue Pu's fist. The bones being cut through emitted a bit of sound before his entire right forearm fell off. The little sword continued onward, cutting through its target's right arm and continuing toward the head.

Yue Pu fully came back to his senses and retreated with a howl. But he was a moment too late as his entire right arm had been split open from the shoulder—the gash ran down to his waist. One third of his body had been cut off!

There was no pain as it'd happened too quickly! Yue Pu saw his right arm and a portion of his right waist drop to the ground. His defenses as a peak Solar were as if paper. They'd been pierced through by a single stroke!

Huang Jie had seen Li Hao kill Yu Xiao at the very least, so he'd given certain respect to the young man. Yue Pu did not have the benefit of such an experience, so his wariness of Li Hao was less than Huang Jie's had been!

Aghast with horror, Yue Pu's left arm became a sword of darkness that he raised against Li Hao! On the other side, the young man was standing almost face to face with his target due to the earlier stroke. His left hand curved into a claw and struck, sinking his fingers deep into the other's left arm and gouging out a bloody hole that could be seen through.

With a grunt, Li Hao closed his hand and crushed the bone underneath. He raised his knee high and shoved it forward!

Bam!

Yue Pu's chest shattered from the blow. Li Hao gripped the little sword with his right hand and made a small flourish to grasp it more tightly, then stabbed it into the other's back.

Yue Pu was utterly baffled and stunned. His eyes happened to meet Li Hao's. Ruthless, merciless, and bloodthirsty! Was this supposed to be a new Dominator? He didn't believe it! He himself was a peak Solar!

The other five Solars shooting his way could see a thing or two, but not clearly. They were just instinctively drawing closer to Li Hao. But the five gained an extraordinarily clear view in the next moment. Li Hao had driven his sword into the other's back and heart. Yue Pu was curled up like a shrimp since all of his organs had been ruptured by Li Hao's knee.

And yet, Li Hao did not stop. His left hand grabbed the other's arm and twisted around it like his arm was an ape's. He quickly made his way to Yue Pu's head and firmly gripped the man's neck. A

quick flex of his hand was followed by the sharp crack of a broken neck. Li Hao's left hand proceeded upward for a quick shake. Yue Pu's head flew off of his neck and landed in a corner of the darkness.

Dead!

The five Solars had almost reached them and were roughly only one hundred meters away from Li Hao. They were struck dumb by what they saw and their bafflement quickly morphed to shock. Yue Pu... was dead!

His head was off his neck. He wouldn't be a Solar if that still wasn't enough to end him. Peak Solar Yue Pu had drawn too close to Li Hao and was promptly killed on the spot. Even the young man felt that it'd happened too quickly. How did the guy dare be face-to-face with him? He really thought nothing of martial masters!

The young man jumped into the air and slashed through the void, hacking a scarlet shadow into two halves. Ignoring the other two scarlet shadows, Li Hao dove at the two Yama representatives like he was a bird. He ignored the Red Moon trio.

Iron Wall's expression shifted drastically while the woman next to him shrieked. A sound wave unfurled through the air, aimed at the young man. Li Hao roared back like the ferocious tiger he was!

“ROAR!!” The sound wave exploded and waves of sound currents undulated in all directions. The mountain rock on the ground exploded into dust.

Li Hao transformed into a tiger of fire and approached the two. Iron Wall shouted, summoning armor of heavy earth onto his body!

BAM!

The armor remained absolutely still after suffering a blow, but Iron Wall vomited blood as his organs were too heavily shaken. There was no time to run since the young man was closing in on them.

“Hurry and help us! This person has become disaster incarnate...” Iron Wall roared.

The Red Moon members hesitated, but that didn't change Li Hao's mind from killing them all tonight. On the other hand, the Yama duo wanted to make sure that Red Moon stayed. Li Hao had been entirely too stunning when he killed Yue Pu. Once the Red Moon members left, both he and the woman beside him would most likely die.

“Hurry, he can't break my defenses that easily. Team up and kill him, or Red Moon remains his biggest enemy...”

Minute changes occurred in the expressions of the three Solars. Zheng Ping grunted and rushed Li Hao; the remaining two scarlet shadows also flew at the young man.

Five Solars! Two of them were late Solars and two mid Solars... And with two scarlet shadows, this level of strength might be able to put up a fight against a Nova.

When the Red Moon trio reacted, their first reaction was that Li Hao had become a calamity. He would be great trouble for them as a second Yuan Shuo! If they didn't take the young man tonight, the organization might suffer from berserk retaliation afterward. They didn't even have time to react to his shocking killing of a peak Solar!

A frosty hint appeared in Li Hao's eyes as he watched three Solars rapidly draw close. The earth powerhouse in front of him possessed formidable defenses while the woman continued to shriek her attacks into being...

Blood qi erupted explosively and shot through the air, dyeing the night sky the color of blood. The Incantation of the Blade of Blood!

Mind intent connected with the little sword, bringing forth the metal sword aura. While Li Hao didn't utilize the combined auras, waves of water rose and fell on his sword!

The Nine Forged Force!

One layer, two layers, three layers... Eight were completed in the blink of an eye. The metal sword aura was most adept at sudden eruptions and breaking through. When combined with mental strength in the Incantation of the Blade of Blood, that put Li Hao at a level thirty percent stronger than the Yue Pu he'd just killed.

"Break!" A sword slashed out, breaking through the world of red in the void. Iron Wall's jaw dropped and his armor of heavy earth broke from one slash! It broke! Defenses that he viewed as invincible had been cut through by one of Li Hao's sword strokes!

"Piss off!" Iron Wall shouted and threw a punch at him. It was as heavy as a mountain as the man was crazed with anger.

Li Hao wants to kill me? Dream on! I just need to hold on for a bit longer so the Red Moon guys have time to come. When that happens, Li Hao's dead without a doubt!

Bastard! Iron Wall threw another punch that was as magnificent as a mountain. Li Hao slashed forward in response, no hesitation or regret in the weapon. The young man didn't show the slightest inclination of backing away.

Li Hao stabbed his sword into Iron Wall's head, taking the full brunt of the punch instead. The blow was immensely domineering. Flesh and blood flew everywhere, bones broke. Their fight was over amid the woman's shrieks.

Iron Wall's head had been run through, whereas a bloody hole appeared in Li Hao's chest. The young man's beating heart could be seen through it, one with some damage to it that was being swiftly healed. The young man's heart had almost been punched through.

There was no longer any seduction to be found in the woman's eyes, just abject fear and horror. It occupied all her thoughts and she stopped shrieking. The only thought on her mind was to run! It didn't matter that the three Red Moon Solars were already here, Iron Wall had been skilled at defense and was a late Solar. He'd been run through all the same, to say nothing of her. She was just a mid Solar and she wasn't skilled at offense. Sound waves were her strongest attack, alongside another ability of creating illusions. However, when she'd tried that, a ferocious tiger had ripped through them before they had a chance to appear!

Therefore, she couldn't bring any of her power to bear as a support Solar. At the same time, how would Li Hao let her get away just because she wanted to? He transformed into a bird and vanished. Charge!

The metal dot coalesced over his arm—the metal sword aura!

Li Hao stabbed his sword forward like a bird pecking food, running his weapon through the back of the woman's head. He instantly smashed all defenses and his internal force surged out. The beautiful head exploded before the shrieks in the air fully dispersed.

Triple kill! Li Hao had completed his third kill in the blink of an eye.

A massive explosion sounded behind him as a surge of domineering metal power flared. The explosion made Li Hao stumble and fall to the ground. He hit it with a tumble much like a monkey would and rolled around a few times on the ground. Although he was covered in blood, he'd evaded the second attack.

Red Moon's Solars had arrived!

Two scarlet shadows darted into his body; he frothed his blood and qi and melted the blood shadows with a muffled snort. When they disintegrated, they emitted piercing noises.

Zheng Ping and the others widened their eyes. The divine shadows were no more, just like that? Too fast, it'd all happened too fast. Iron Wall was already dead when they arrived, while the woman with the moniker of Seduction had her head blown up. Assassin Yue Pu had died before all of them!

It'd been less than ten seconds from beginning to end, but the young man in front of them had killed all of the Solars from Celestial and Yama. The hole remained in his chest; Zheng Ping had created another on his back. One could see clear through Li Hao in a few areas.

However, the young man in front of them remained ruthless! There was only hate in his eyes!

Chapter 397: Known Throughout the Lands (I)

Zheng Ping and the others swallowed hard, only one thought on their minds. If this guy didn't die here tonight, he would be even more of a problem than Yuan Shuo in the future. He was more brutal, so an injured Li Hao was their perfect opportunity to kill him!

“Kill!” They didn't shrink back. As Solars, they understood that attempting to flee would be their death sentence. Everyone had seen what happened to Seduction!

To run was to die. If a martial master caught up to them in close quarters, they wouldn't be able to bring their full strength to bear. Their defenses would be easily punctured and... that would make them sitting ducks.

They needed to kick a dog when it was down and finish the deed!

Thoughts of taking the young man alive were no longer on their mind. This person needed to die; everyone had underestimated him. He was behind tonight's setup as he was ready to kill some Solars.

.....

Li Hao had one knee on the ground. He breathed heavily, the beating of his heart still visible to others. Three Solars swiftly approached him—metal, water, and fire. The young man was very

injured! And though the three Solars were yet to reach him, they'd already sent surges of mysterious power toward him.

There was no thought of fleeing on his mind. Why would he flee? He was here to kill them all so that he could grow stronger! A surge of water ripples burst forward!

The Nine Forged Force!

Boom!

He punched the air and detonated the mysterious power coming for him ahead of the Solars. Li Hao pushed off the ground and soared into the sky, landing with a sword stroke that shook nine provinces!

Solars converged upon him from different directions! The metal attribute was the strongest, the water the weakest. Li Hao ignored the weakest and focused on the metal supernatural. He swung his sword around and ripped through metal mysterious power again. Zheng Ping stumbled in the air while the two continued forward without pause.

No one said a word, there was no need for words. It was a fight to the death. A surge of water energy detonated around him and encased him in a water bubble. Li Hao stabbed at it with his sword and broke through to be faced with a sky of fiery sparks!

These Solars that worked extremely well together could deal greater harm and trouble than the ones from earlier.

Li Hao was in peak battle condition, having called upon the Incantation of the Blade of Blood. And yet, these three Solars still suppressed him to the point where advance was impossible. They also didn't let him land on the ground. He wanted to readjust his position a few times, but they flung him into the air again.

Zheng Ping and the others were extremely solemn. How was this guy still so domineering when he was this injured? It would truly be hard for them to stand against him if he hadn't been injured earlier.

"Hoo..." Panting sounded from all four of them. This kind of high intensity battle was difficult to keep up.

Blood flowed freely from Li Hao; he'd yet to fully digest the power from the scarlet shadow. He'd only absorbed part of it, leaving the rest in his body. It obstructed the operation of his internal force as it'd been a Solar level scarlet shadow, not one of the initial Solar level.

Battle erupted in the distance. The Sunflares of the three great organizations had followed their Solars, but were obstructed by the Demon Hunters. Pitched battle had broken out. Whether it was the three great organizations or Demon Hunters, they fought in silence apart from the explosions of mysterious power or secret arts cutting through the void. Only when they faced death did cries of pain sound.

They were all elites!

Li Hao ignored his team and put Stellaris away. As sharp as the little sword was, it was too short and didn't feel that good in the hand. Other than being sharp, its only useful attribute was sword energy. Thus, it was actually in his way at this time.

When he stowed Stellaris, he balled his fists up for a punch! The tiger style! The tiger roared and snarled; the young man changed his breathing method halfway through deploying his fist. The Nine Forged Force!

Eruption!

Boom!

This punch was much stronger than before. Li Hao broke the water bubble with a punch and jumped out of it. When the water supernatural wanted to trap the young man again, he roared imperiously. A ferocious tiger emerged from its cage!

Overlaid with a tiger form, Li Hao transformed into a tiger and leapt into the air, going higher with each jump!

“He wants to get away!” Zheng Ping shouted. “After him!”

The young man wanted to run!

Run?

How would he ever? He stomped down like Mount Tai coming to rest, crushing mysterious power beneath his foot. The water supernatural’s energy was blasted straight out of existence! He was a mid Solar and vomited blood as Li Hao annihilated his energy. Shock filled his face. How was this possible?!

It felt like the young man was the mountain as he ground to a rest with loud rumbles. The three Solars were immensely concerned and made their moves. They were about to bring defenses to bear against the descending mountain when Li Hao’s foot abruptly exploded, sending metal energy in all directions. It was like a bird’s beak—sharp without parallel—as it pierced through the water supernatural’s defenses. With his foot like a sword, Li Hao caved in the other’s shoulders!

The young man struck while the iron was hot and kicked in a circle with both legs, opening his arms to imitate a bird. He hovered in the sky and oversaw all directions!

Bam bam bam!

A series of explosions echoed, as did the sound of metallic objects. Li Hao was as if a vicious beast that didn’t know the meaning of fatigue. He kicked the weakest fire supernatural away and landed

on the ground, breaking the earth apart beneath his feet. Blood continued to flow from him and dyed the area red. Li Hao's leather boots had disintegrated and revealed the bones of his feet.

"Pfftt!" The young man spat out a mouthful of blood as he panted heavily. The three Solars closed in on him again; everyone bore some injuries.

Li Hao, however, was growing tired. He'd yet to make any progress with the Nine Forged Force and while the books blithely spoke of breaking through in battle... Most battles didn't give one that much time to think and advance. The young man was stumped—he'd wanted to use this opportunity to make a breakthrough and coalesce the water aura. Once his three auras were fused together, it would be easy to kill a few Solars!

But now... reality proved otherwise.

Li Hao spat out more blood and chuckled. Forget it, he wouldn't force the issue. Since he wouldn't progress in the heat of battle, then he would try to assimilate the metal aura to create the metal sword aura!

The metal sword aura was very strong; he'd wanted to strengthen his lungs more before making the attempt, but that was no longer a consideration at this point. If worst came to worst, he'd just cough for a bit like Hou Xiaochen and the others. He'd recover when his organs were in balance and could accommodate the metal sword aura.

A surge of metal strength exploded in his lungs. The supernatural lock rang with sounds of impact and deep grooves were etched on it—it nearly broke! Li Hao didn't care because there happened to be scarlet shadow energy lingering within his body. It rushed into his lungs to strengthen the supernatural lock. He'd been debating what to do with the energy he'd yet to digest!

The marks on the supernatural lock were swiftly erased. Metal power flared from Li Hao, prompting the other Solars to widen their eyes.

“Hurry and kill him!” Zheng Ping roared. The young man seemed to be undergoing a special change.

Li Hao had suffered quite some impact to his lungs and blood sprayed in every direction. He coughed violently.

“Cough cough cough...” Blood trickled out of the corner of his mouth. Melding the metal sword aura was the hardest. It also meant that the metal sword aura represented the extremity of spontaneous eruption. If he was able to turn it into his other auras, Li Hao’s strength would increase greatly.

Stellaris appeared once more to give all of its sword energy to Li Hao. His injuries swiftly healed and ceased worsening. The damage to his organs recovered as well. He ran like a deer, footsteps light and nimble. The young man disappeared beneath Zheng Ping’s sword. The hair rose on the back of the latter’s neck in the next moment!

Li Hao’s mind intent manifested as he thought back to his forefather’s sword stroke!

The aura of three swords!

The metal dot vanished into the tiger’s head—a ferocious tiger emerging from its cage!

Hummm!

The air exploded when Li Hao stabbed his sword forward. Sword qi broke through the void and the ground ruptured. The young man was exceedingly fast. Zheng Ping wanted to evade the sword and was on the verge of succeeding when Li Hao stomped his foot and sent his opponent back in place with a small quake!

Pfft!

The sword pierced through Zheng Ping's back, but Li Hao also suffered attacks from fire and water at the same time. The other two supernaturals didn't care if those of their side fell within their line of fire. They decided to just attack!

Boom!

Explosions rang out. Zheng Ping's eyes widened as flames covered him and water arrows ran him through. He looked in Li Hao's direction with difficulty. The young man had stabbed his short sword into the man's heart! Flames had scoured his face and body to the point of being unrecognizable.

However, Zheng Ping broke out in a grin. He didn't mind that his companions had included him in their attacks. If it was him in their shoes, he would have done the same. He grinned because Li Hao had underestimated the supernatural!

Although the kid had abruptly grown strong enough to the point where he could vanish and reappear behind Zheng Ping, thus stabbing the man through the heart, he was also suffering on his end. Attacks from Solars were not so easily weathered. In his drive to kill Zheng Ping, Li Hao was also gravely injured!

But this was when Zheng Ping jerked with shock!

A unique energy bloomed in Li Hao's body as he took a deep breath. Light flashed across his deeply burned body and while his wounds didn't immediately fully heal, they didn't worsen. There was even new flesh and blood burgeoning in his body.

Sword energy!

Li Hao looked coldly at his target and punched Zheng Ping's head to smithereens.

And what are you looking at? What are you laughing at?? I may not know what you're laughing about, but do you think I can't do anything after just because I'm injured?

The remaining two Solars left without a word when they saw the development. If the gravely wounded Li Hao could instantly recover, then what were they fighting for?

Run!

They didn't run before because the young man was heavily injured. But they'd seen with their own eyes that Li Hao could fully repair his wounds with just a single breath. How were they supposed to fight this?

Li Hao changed his breathing method with another deep breath in, exhaling a breath of sword qi!
The Ghost Shadow Sword!

The sword qi was the extremity of speed and pierced through the void. The water supernatural that'd just taken to the air was run through from behind, stumbled down, and fell to the ground with his mysterious power dispersing.

The initial fire Solar was already in the air and looking to soar to safety. Li Hao unsheathed his sword, the three swords as one!

A cough sounded, as if the signal of death. "Break!" rang out a solemn cry.

I will break your life!

Humm!

Chapter 398: Known Throughout the Lands (II)

Sword qi raced to the heavens and illuminated the land. In this moment, the sword stroke ran through heaven and earth. When it vanished with a boom, the fire Solar in the air stopped and looked down wryly. He exploded with a loud rumble!

The water Solar on the ground was the only one alive; terror gripped him. Dead! They were all dead! Five out of six Solars were dead in the blink of an eye!

“Demon Sword...” murmured the water Solar. This person... was stronger than Yuan Shuo. Compared to when Yuan Shuo killed the Qimei Staff, the current Li Hao was indeed stronger than his teacher.

A ruthless expression dawned on the water Solar’s face; he pounced on Li Hao the moment the young man approached. He wanted to make his last stand—he would grievously injure Li Hao even if he couldn’t kill the young man!

Li Hao stomped on the ground like he was a massive bear and opened his arms wide, permitting the other to leap at him. He wrapped his arms around the other and called upon the bear style, infinitely increasing the strength in his arms.

Bam!

Death through bear hug!

Li Hao’s arms were as if iron bands locking the other in place; he hugged the water Solar to death. The Solar’s arms broke, his rib cage collapsed, and his organs ruptured. His head hung, but he looked at Li Hao out of the corner of his eyes.

Why??

Why was the young man so strong?!

Why could he spontaneously heal from his injuries?

Why?!

He didn't understand any of this and died with great reluctance.

Li Hao wasn't in the mood to guess what the man was thinking. He threw away the water Solar—now a pile of broken bones—and looked around him. Focusing on a bearing below, he leaped into the air and chopped down with his sword!

A terrified supernatural with his mysterious power withdrawn stood unmoving in the void. He'd hoped that the night sky could conceal his movement. However... sword qi came for him the next second!

The supernatural in the sky split apart on the spot!

Li Hao continued when he landed on the ground, jumping back up to descend upon a new spot and causing a partial collapse with a stomp, crushing a Sunflare to a mashed pulp!

The young man still looked elsewhere. A tiger roar shook the land, squeezing someone out from another part of the void. Highly incredulous, they roared, "Impossible!"

This latest was a Celestial killer who wasn't too strong, but possessed a very special ability. He could hide within the darkness and become one with it, making detection impossible. He'd even assassinated a Solar before and was a Celestial genius with high potential and hopes of ascending to Solar or Nova.

He couldn't believe that Li Hao had forced him out of hiding with one roar, but then the young man punched him into bloody pieces without further word.

Impossible? There's a massive sun right in front of me, what isn't possible about that? Figure out how to hide from my eyes first before you guys whine that it's impossible.

He looked in the four directions, finally seeing a lack of balls of light. However, Li Hao knew that some had gotten away earlier. This battle would not remain a secret. He'd sensed a few Sunflares around when he killed Yue Pu—they'd probably fled as soon as they witnessed the young man's terrible might.

With how long the fierce battle took, he had no way of tracking where the Sunflares had gone. It was impossible to cordon off the news. He'd killed these people after taking out the Solars because they stayed to watch until the very end. They courted death!

However, the only ones who got away were those who'd left early. They'd only seen him kill Yue Pu in an ambush, but didn't have an inkling that sword energy could heal injuries or that he had melded three sword auras into one. It put Li Hao more at ease.

They likely didn't see the Incantation of the Blade of Blood being deployed either. Then all was fine.

A team of martial masters in black armor rushed over.

“Supernaturals attacked us on all sides!” Liu Long was drenched in blood. “We killed them, but some hiding in the shadows seem to have gotten away. There were also a few earth supernaturals that fled through the ground. We were unable to catch them.”

Those that they killed were the supernaturals that'd stayed behind. There wasn't anything that the Demon Hunters could do about those who'd run. Everyone looked ardently at Li Hao with traces of passionate worship. One person against six Solars, and he'd killed them all!

Li Hao grinned and raised a hand, waving it around in a clenched fist. “Demon Hunters!”

“Demon Hunters!” answered roars that reverberated through the wilderness! Li Hao would be known through the land after tonight!

Another heavyweight had appeared among martial masters, one that might eclipse Yuan Shuo because Li Hao was so young and his achievements so stunning. He’d fought one against six and killed them all!

Fleeing supernaturals in the distance nearly wet themselves when they heard the roar! Run! Run as fast they could! Li Hao had won! Six Solars and a dozen Sunflares had come from the three great organizations to kill him, but the young man led his people in a victorious fight against them all. Only four had made it out. The rest were buried in this nameless mountain.

.....

In the wilderness.

Killing intent filled the air. They hadn’t battled that many times, but the Demon Hunters appeared particularly berserk at the moment. They were almost fanatic and itched to follow Li Hao to the central region.

This was their leader! Someone who’d killed six Solars by himself in the same battle, and not through accumulated fights! Solars were titans to these people, but a half dozen of them had died here tonight.

“Clean up the corpses and battlefield, be quick about it!” Li Hao coughed. “We need to retreat—I’ll give you ten minutes to go with me. We might really be running for our lives this time. There could be Novas after me soon... Cough cough cough!”

He coughed violently, reminding people of Hou Xiaochen. But when they looked at Li Hao again, they threw thoughts of the director to the back of their mind. So what of Hou Xiaochen? Was he as mighty as Li Hao at the young man’s age?

Not to mention, Hou Xiaochen was Hou Xiaochen, Li Hao was the one who brought them on battles around the province and helped them grow stronger.

The group swiftly spread out and began cleaning up the battlefield. Six Solars and a handful of Sunflares... Their gains were significant after this battle.

Solars typically carried storage rings on them—an immense step up from Sunflares. They also had mysterious power stones, energy rings, and contained at least one thousand cubes of mysterious power within themselves, accessible when they died.

Li Hao waved his hand after ten minutes; fifty-one people swiftly withdrew into the darkness.

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Not long after they left, news began spreading thanks to the escaped supernaturals. The world shook!

.....

A Red Moon base.

Blue Moon briefly lost his train of thought and didn't know what to say to a room full of powerhouses. No one heard the content of his call, so they remained looking at him. Shocked senseless, Blue Moon promptly set Hou Xiaochen aside. It didn't matter if the four institutions sought to suppress them or were doing so as they spoke...

He was very much in a daze.

“Blue Moon!” Violet Moon's voice woke him. “What is it?”

His mouth dry, the man swallowed before saying slowly, “Zheng Ping and the others caught up to Li Hao on the other side of Rift Canyon...”

That was good! The group was confused.

“And then...” Blue Moon smiled bizarrely. “Celestial’s Yue Pu arrived, as did Yama’s Iron Wall and Seduction. The six Solars were going to capture Li Hao together...”

Those assembled waited for the results. Blue Moon sat on a chair and leaned back, breathing out, “But they’re all dead!”

What?! Shock rippled through the assembly.

“How dare Yue Pu and the others ambush Zheng Ping...” It also felt like a bolt from the blue had struck Violet Moon. It was only natural that she thought of this. Internal conflict!

Well, it didn’t really count as internal conflict. All that could be said was that the three great organizations had erupted in quarreling and brought about each other’s deaths.

Blue Moon smiled, as rueful as he could be. “No... Li Hao killed them all!”

“WHAT?!” Now that was truly impossible to believe.

Blue Moon’s smile disappeared and he breathed out softly, holding a fan in his hand. He waved it around, as if pacifying the agitation in his heart. “They’re all dead”, he said when he regained calm. “Li Hao killed Yue Pu at the first opportunity—it didn’t take him long. Large-scale battle brought out after that. Someone said he defeated the defense-focused Iron Wall with one stroke. And then... there is no further information beyond that!”

Blue Moon chuckled. “Everyone says that Yuan Shuo is powerful, that Hou Xiaochen can be scary... But why has no one ever mentioned that Li Hao is also terrifying?”

Had anyone ever said that before?

No.

All that was mentioned when they spoke of Li Hao was “Yuan Shuo’s final disciple” or “the only heir to the eight families”. No one said that Yuan Shuo’s disciple was a powerhouse himself—this battle wouldn’t have turned out like this if they did. The three great organizations had spent six Solars and more than a hundred supernaturals to prove Li Hao’s might.

The entire hall quieted down, so silent that a pin drop could be heard. They were digesting the news, but it was so far-fetched that they could barely believe it. Li Hao... Yuan Shuo’s disciple! He’d barely managed to win against Qimei Staff’s disciple last month. Had he hidden his strength then, or had he improved to such a terrifying degree in less than a month?

He must have concealed his strength!

They didn’t believe that someone could progress from Sunderer to killing six Solars in the span of a month. This kind of strength would place him in the upper echelon of Solars, despite the young man making use of ambushes and everyone underestimating him. Who knew, perhaps he’d be able to fight Novas!

The entire Red Moon organization quieted down to digest the news. Violet Moon did so as well. She was the only one present who’d come in contact with Li Hao for an extended period of time. Had he been so terrifying when they’d traveled to the ruins?

The young man had seemed honest and simple then. Was he truly the same Li Hao that’d killed six Solars tonight?

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A massive wave swept through all of Silver Moon.

The Night Watchers.

Manager Yu was finally out from seclusion; her face was pale. She walked out into frenzied activity as the entire agency was being mobilized.

“Director...” A stupefied Hao Lianchuan stood dumbly, reciting his report like he was a puppet, “Li Hao... Li Hao killed six Solars in the northern area of the province tonight. One peak Solar, two late Solars, two mid Solars, and one initial Solar. The news has spread far and wide and Novas have surfaced in the three great organizations. They seem to be heading toward the northern reaches of the province...”

Chapter 399: Known Throughout the Lands (III)

Hou Xiaochen quietly perused the report. He said softly after a while, “Some of the supernaturals that made it out say Li Hao should be hailed Demon Sword. What do you think?”

What do I think? I don't think anything! Hao Lianchuan stood slack-jawed, not uttering a peep. It wasn't just facing Solars in single combat. If that was the case, he'd seen that before and wouldn't be so taken aback. It was one against six and Li Hao had killed them all! That was most terrifying about everything.

Can Li Hao challenge Novas now? Six Solars working in tandem should be able to fight a Nova, right? There should be no problem, but... Li Hao killed them all.

Regardless of how many accidents or coincidences there might've been in the process, it was undeniable that Li Hao had won.

“Director... do we send reinforcements?” Hao Lianchuan wondered.

“Reinforcements?” Hou Xiaochen laughed with a cough. “Nope! You, on the other hand, should hurry and form a team to sweep the southern part of the province! Not only you, but Little Yu should go as well. I’ll participate when necessary and bring the others back as well. We’ll run through the entire province!”

Reinforcements? That’d just be following the three great organizations. If the four institutions swiftly marched through the southern part of the province, the three great organizations would be too weary to handle everything. Should they continue to hunt Li Hao on the northern side of Rift Canyon, or should they work together to defy the provincial authorities? It would be a choice they would have to make.

This was the best move that Hou Xiaochen could see!

“Have the Guards move out en masse! Li Hao’s Demon Hunters will be known throughout the land after tonight. Even the central region will learn of him and this newly established army unit soon. Golden Spear has bided his time for too long, it’s time to show his face again!”

Hou Xiaochen stood up and smiled to the north. Li Hao! You really are something! I knew that someone who could break my lingering will would not be a simple character. So you did hide most of your strength and erupted with all of it tonight. It looks like you will hide yourself no longer.

Hao Lianchuan quickly left without a word. He needed to contact all relevant parties to commence a massive sweep! They needed to force the three great organizations to keep their elites in the south of Rift Canyon. Otherwise, Li Hao’s people would find it hard to escape.

It was too dangerous to consider a rescue. The three great organizations might have sealed off the canyon area. Anyone who approached would be unexpectedly mired in the situation.

.....

The provincial government.

Director General Zhao coughed weakly beneath the feeble light and smiled at Deputy Zhou. “Yuan Shuo’s disciple... As we expected, like master, like disciple. Yuan Shuo is not one to provoke. If the bloodline of the eight families fully erupts, it will be beyond the capacity of ordinary people to endure...”

He coughed and asked, “What is your grandson being involved for?”

“Him?” Deputy Zhou grinned. “He’s just curious and chafes under strict rules at home, so he went looking for some thrills. Those little guys are probably running as fast as they can back here...”

“The three great organizations are all headed north to hunt Li Hao. Those little guys will be in danger.”

“It’s fine, there should be no issue.” Deputy Zhou shook his head. “I haven’t heard of them being involved tonight. They probably ran off after receiving word ahead of time. Li Hao and the rest are martial masters, so they can hide. The little guys can’t, so they probably started running as soon as the fighting started.”

The director general nodded. Based on Li Hao’s resume, he would consider this point as well. He was someone who acted after planning and wouldn’t let his people be needlessly exposed to die.

“Someone says that Li Hao should be hailed the Demon Sword... what do you think?”

“Demon Sword or not,” Deputy Zhou took a deep breath. “I know that Silver Moon will be the center of attention again after this battle. The master and disciple duo seem greatly fearful that we’ll fall out of the spotlight and keep creating incidents.”

“Indeed, they’re killing people in the north and south. Yuan Shuo killed a peak Solar tonight as well and ran after. He probably thought that would attract some attention, but now no one will notice. They’ll all be focused on his disciple, the little guy who stands at the peak as soon as he emerges!” the director general waxed eloquent. This young man was truly frightening—do you know, Yuan

Shuo? Your student has grown to terrifying heights and his battle accomplishments are starting to surpass yours. You hemmed and hawed for so many days to kill a few Solars, but Li Hao's already taken out eight!

No, wait, maybe more than that.

Zhang Ting was dead and Hao Lianchuan said he wasn't behind it. That left Li Hao, didn't it? So... nine Solars? Were there any more unknown Solars out there?

The master and disciple duo were quiet when they didn't take any action, but when they did, lofty Solars turned into clowns they could eliminate at any time. They'd killed double digits worth of Solars in the blink of an eye!

.....

All factions stirred with shock as news spread madly upon the wind.

Demon Sword Li Hao!

Old Demon Yuan's final disciple killed six Solars in one battle in Silver Moon today. He trod upon the corpses of the three great organizations to make his name known beneath the heavens!

.....

The central region.

The first province beyond the North Sea was called Seashore. The latest news of the day flurried over like a hurricane.

Yuan Shuo had just killed a Solar and was busy running and hiding. His hiding spot was unusual—a Celestial base—so he casually cleaned out the area of supernaturals as well. A mirror next to him abruptly lit up with lines of text.

Busy recovering from his wounds, Yuan Shuo's jaw dropped when he happened to glance at it. Jadelight was also attending to herself and looked at Yuan Shuo when she heard the disturbance. She found him with his mouth wide open and a wooden expression on his face. What was it? Were enemies coming?

She followed his gaze to the text on the mirror.

“Emergency report: Great happenings have taken place in Silver Moon tonight. Li Hao, disciple of Yuan Shuo, fought six Solars alone in the northern region of the province. He killed our powerhouse Yue Pu as well as Jin Jiu, Duan Chao, and Zheng Ping of Red Moon, as well as Iron Wall and Seduction of Yama.

“Silver Moon's level of danger is hereby upgraded. Li Hao's troops of the Demon Hunters are comprised of fifty martial masters. They have killed more than one hundred supernaturals and are a bloodthirsty crew that far exceeds Yuan Shuo!

“Li Hao's level of danger is hereby upgraded, with a recommendation of the Nova rating. If any members accept a mission involving him, it is recommended that mid Novas and above go into the field.”

Wu Hongshan's eyes shot wide open as she whipped her head around to stare dumbly at Yuan Shuo. This... is talking about your student, isn't it? The biddable, mature, and young man of culture Li Hao?

Indeed, that was how Yuan Shuo had always described the boy. It coincided with Wu Hongshan's memory of a refined and elite child who was well-read, obedient, and liked to smile. So... what was this in the mirror? Someone of the same given name and surname? And someone else with the same given name and surname as Yuan Shuo, right?

Fighting six Solars by himself!

Yuan Shuo snapped out of his dazed expression and recovered his cool aplomb. He smiled at seeing Wu Hongshan look at him. “What are you staring at me for?”

“Your disciple?”

“Yes, what about him?”

“Didn’t... you say he’s obedient?”

“Yes, is he not?” Yuan Shuo roared with laughter that petered out as resignation. “Don’t look at me like that, I don’t know how this kid is improving so quickly either. I just know he very quickly became a Dominator and could soon fight Solars. But... but... I don’t have a freaking clue how he can fight six at one time! And win at that!

“The kid’s in deep trouble now,” the old man muttered with resignation. “I finally took the heat off him when I came here, but now he’s gone and brought the spotlight back to him. He’s even more dangerous than me now!”

What the heck did he do that for? Who was covering for who now? Also, how had the kid done it at all?

Yuan Shuo couldn’t wrap his mind around it. He might be able to reach Li Hao’s level in his current condition, but that was with integrating his three auras. When that step was complete, all that was missing was an inability to deploy the Incantation of the Blade of Blood. However, there was no helping that as he lacked sword energy.

If he haphazardly employed it, he would be dead without a doubt since he hadn't had time to obtain scarlet shadows. Therefore, he would not use it without cause.

Even so, Yuan Shuo was already ridiculously strong. He may not be able to stand against Novas, but he fancied himself invincible and a domineering presence among his fellow Solars. His disciple seemed right up there with him!

"Your disciple is incredible!" Wu Hongshan took a deep breath. "But if even Celestial is notifying all of its people, I'm afraid that the entire dynasty will know of your disciple's feats after tonight. That's not good."

"What are you afraid of?" Yuan Shuo didn't mind. What were they afraid of? They'd kill anyone who came! They'd run if they couldn't or acquiesce to fate if they could not.

"Not bad, kid!" he started chuckling. "But your master isn't bad either. I killed a Solar tonight too, that makes for the tenth Solar so far on my trip! Mmhmm, I need to keep this up so that the kid doesn't surpass me. Jadelight, hurry and recover from your wounds. We'll continue killing when you're healed. My disciple is almost catching up to me in terms of the number of Solars killed, but we're the ones running to and fro everyday. Now isn't that embarrassing!"

Wu Hongshan didn't say a word, but the emotion in her heart was hard to calm. Yuan Shuo's student, his youngest disciple, had killed six Solars tonight. It was a tough pill to swallow—she'd just spent hours fighting an initial Solar. It had Yuan Shuo suppressing the other for her to successfully kill the target.

Compared to Li Hao, she felt her cheeks burn with mortification!

.....

All parties reeled with shock as the various great organizations heatedly discussed this topic.

The southern outskirts of Silver Moon.

Southern Fist sighed with great emotion in a large manor. “Damn, he’s something! Thank goodness I didn’t agree to his offer of a spar—I’d be used to wipe the floors if I did!”

It was the same woman next to him as last night, the Heartjab Daughter, now known as Madame Bai. A single woman and man sitting next to each other in the middle of the night... and the woman being married as well... If Li Hao was present, he’d deliver a litany of criticism.

The Heartsick Daughter was likewise astounded, but she quickly came back to her senses. “This Li Hao is indeed a source of surprise! But, truth be told, it involves the Bai family as well, no? Hu Dingfang is his senior brother-in-law. Tell us, Brother He, do you think we can bring Li Hao to our side?”

He Yong leered and looked meaningfully at her. “Don’t even think about it. This kid is more ruthless and merciless than Yuan Shuo. He’s also cold-blooded as well! You’d have to worry about being eaten in return if your recruitment spiel proves unsuccessful.

“I’ve met the kid once and knew from that one meeting that he’s no kind soul. He watched without the slightest flicker of change in his expression when Hou Xiaochen killed Red Hair—he didn’t even blink! He wasn’t distressed at all by the deaths of innumerable powerhouses. It’s best to stay away from these kinds of people if possible!”

Chapter 400: Known Throughout the Lands (IV)

He Yong had seen it clearly that day and followed Li Hao around the subsequent days. The young man wore a smile on his face, but he was even more ruthless and coldhearted than Yuan Shuo when it came down to things. He Yong was well aware of Li Hao’s situation.

He was an orphan with a master on the run and a friend killed by Red Moon last year. Liu Long and the others hadn’t known him for long. The young man was a person without much warmth in his bones. All of his affection was likely centered on Yuan Shuo. It was not a good idea to antagonize the fellow.

Madame Bai inclined her head and didn't repeat the idea of recruiting Li Hao.

"Also, don't let Hu Dingfang and his wife try," Southern Fist warned. "Playing on emotions may not be a good move. That guy reached out to Wang Henggang of the Inspectorate and an unfamiliar Hong Yitang, but didn't go to his senior sister and martial brother-in-law. He might actually nurse the idea to clean house for his master, so be careful."

"Yuan Shuo will keep their relationship in mind, but he won't. Not to mention, there's no relationship between them. It's a very common occurrence for final disciples to do some house cleaning for their masters. You're a martial master too, so you understand!"

The look in Madame Bai's eyes hitched and she nodded, fully dismissing the notion. Indeed, final disciples were sometimes placed more highly than founding disciples. If he really was going to tidy up the discipline, Yuan Shuo might not say anything once he found out. But she still asked, "Does Brother He think he can make it out?"

Could Li Hao escape the encirclement of Novas from the three great organizations?

"It's hard to say!" He Yong intoned. "Only Red Moon has set their hearts against him. Yama and Celestial might not have their Novas continuously chase him down. After all, the ruins of Battle Heaven are about to open and the three great organizations will not let that slip through their fingers. Red Moon probably won't give up—their elders are likely headed that way as we speak. Elder Tidal Wave is traveling over from the three northern provinces."

There was an elder in residence in the three northern provinces before. Being near the sea, he was a water powerhouse. Blue Moon likely wouldn't leave his post even with the elder arriving in the province, he had to stay on guard against Hou Xiaochen. That would leave the elder free to pursue Li Hao.

Half Mountain might be coming from Celestial. As for Yama, it remained unknown if more powerhouses would rush to Silver Moon. Otherwise, the Parity King might not go after the young man. If the Revolution King went, he would be the one dead in an encounter, so he wouldn't go either.

He Yong quickly ran through several possibilities and breathed out with a smile. "Let's keep looking. Additionally... I want to go watch the fun too. I'll be back when the ruins open."

"You're going?" Madame Bai blinked. What are you going for?

"I want to watch the show." A chuckling He Yong walked out of the room. "They won't dare run afoul of me, I represent the royal family, after all..."

He vanished after those words, leaving a Madame Bai with a shifting look in her eyes. Southern Fist had remained here all this time and was suddenly seized by an interest to participate. Nothing... untoward would develop if he went, right?

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The winds were minor on this day. Li Hao's name was known throughout Silver Moon after one night and made its way toward the various corners of Skystar Dynasty. The martial masters of Silver Moon once more stepped into the limelight and the eight families became a point of note again.

A man sitting in the center of a main hall in an enormous mountain palace located in the central region flipped through some reports. He blinked when he looked at a latest report and cursed lowly, "The fuck! My daughter's still there! I thought you'd keep quiet for a while, but damn if you didn't act fast!"

He cursed up a storm in a fit of temper!

Bastard! I thought you'd spend some time training your troops, but you did all this in just a few days??

He vented his anger with a hearty round of cursing and spat at the end for good measure. He pulled a long face as he looked at the bodies littered over the ground. "Are all the Novas dead? I killed

everyone in this massive base and stayed here for another two days, but not a single Nova has come by to assess the situation?”

Sigh. Forget it, let's withdraw. Ying Hongyue's probably in a bad mood after Li Hao's antics, he doesn't have time for me.

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The northern reaches of Silver Moon.

After making a name for himself in that battle, Li Hao was fleeing to the north with his Demon Hunters. They ran four hundred kilometers in one night—this was no exaggeration. They really covered four hundred kilometers, keeping up a fast pace every hour and reaching fifty kilometers an hour at top speed.

On foot!

Some of the martial masters were beyond exhausted. Martial masters were strong enough to maintain this speed for an hour or two. But an entire night? Even some of the late Sunderers were hard pressed to keep up.

And yet, no one said anything.

Some had complained when they traveled through the mountain forests on the first night, finding Li Hao a poor leader. But this time, they all grit their teeth and continued running, even those with aching internal injuries. They'd been won over by the young man in front of them through the span of a few days. This was a real martial master!

With him present, the Demon Hunters would dominate the four corners and hunt down supernaturals, displaying the glories of martial masters once more. Some of them supported each other and a few even carried injured comrades on their backs. They were now brothers-in-arms!

None of them were soldiers, but after consecutive days of fighting, they understood what it meant to be brothers-in-arms.

The heavy black armor was making it difficult to breathe for some, but no one took it off. This was lifesaving equipment. Otherwise, some of them absolutely would've died last night with all the Sunflares that were on the scene.

There were no fatalities thanks to the combination of armor, Liu Long, and formations. Only some people were shaken by mysterious power.

The sky brightened—there was no one present in the desolation around them. Li Hao coughed a few times and raised his hand. The group behind him immediately stopped and looked at him with ardent eyes.

“Do you see the large mountain ahead?” Li Hao chuckled. It looked close at hand, but was quite far away. Although it'd long appeared in front of everyone, it was still very far away despite running after it for a long period of time.

“That mountain is called Ash Mountain!” The young man looked into the distance. “There's a small city there called Silver City! Silver City lies on the border of Silver Moon and the border of the dynasty! Books says that it's another nation after we cross Ash Mountain, one called Great Li!

“Silver City is my home!” Li Hao declared with emotions. “The furthest place I traveled to as a child was Ash Mountain. Today, I bring you there! It is a precipitous place that's long been claimed to be as difficult as scaling the mountains...

“We will head east from Ash Mountain, past the peak and past the range. We will not go north as that is where Great Li is. Although the two nations have stayed out of each other's affairs for one hundred years, we do not know what the situation is in Great Li. We head east, passing through the north of the province until we reach its end and connect with Rift Canyon again. We'll return to the canyon!

“We’ll let them think that we ran away.” Li Hao smirked coolly. “That we ran off to Great Li. But we haven’t! Silver Moon is our land, why should we leave? We’ll rush back from Rift Canyon. As strong as the three great organizations are, they’re nothing after we kill all of their supernaturals!

“We’ll kill our way back and then hunt the demons! Demon Hunters!”

“Demon Hunters!” roared his people in fine fettle. We’re not leaving! We’ll make our way back through Ash Mountain and Rift Canyon, covering the entire province!

Silver Moon was very vast, but they were willing to follow Li Hao and brave the thistles and thorns of the province if for no other reason than the fact that martial masters loved this kind of challenge.

Li Hao laughed and coughed a bit. Liu Long frowned at his reaction. He hadn’t paid attention to the young man’s coughing before, but now he was worried. Li Hao had coughed here or there along the way—were his internal organs damaged?

“Come, let us enter Ash Mountain! There’s a lot of rain in the mountain that can erase our tracks!” Li Hao waved his hand to send his people in at a dead run. Although they didn’t know what the situation inside the mountain might be, they weren’t worried with Li Hao in the lead. The mountain was a bright path that would lead them to renewed heights!

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After running full tilt for more than an hour, Li Hao’s group shifted from precipitous mountain paths into the mountain range of Ash Mountain. Towering trees, birdsong and animal calls, as well as fresh air seemed to bestow them new life.

Dense leaves effectively concealed their footsteps. Liu Long, Li Heng, and the others held a murmured conversation before they caught up to the scouting Li Hao.

“Leader, we have the collection results!”

“Speak.”

“Mysterious power rings in the most at twelve thousand cubes! Most of it comes from the Solars. Apart from their own energy, they also carried some energy rings.”

Six Solars alone had contributed nearly eight thousand cubes. Added to that their energy rings of several hundred cubes each meant that the Solars equated more than ten thousand cubes. The rest had come from the Sunflares. Each person reaped nearly three hundred cubes. Much of the energy had dissipated when Liu Long killed them, so only twelve thousand total cubes were forthcoming from the last fight.

“Twenty-seven mysterious power stones! The Celestial powerhouse carried the most. He had nine pieces whereas Red Moon had the least...”

Li Hao furrowed his brows. That wasn't much! Just twenty-seven? One had to know that he'd crushed eight just to refill the little sword. He'd refilled it again later on for a total of twelve stones, yet they hadn't collected many...

“There are twenty-two energy rings, six storage rings, as well as a few treasures we don't recognize...” Liu Long hesitated. “But there's supernatural ripples over them, so they should be supernatural objects.”

That was quite a lot of energy rings; only Solars would have storage rings. Li Hao made swift mental calculations. He was dissatisfied with these gains. They fell below expectations as he thought these Solars would give him at least forty stones.

What a bunch of poors!

They were worse off than the two Night Watcher Solars!

