

Star Gate 45

Chapter 45: Supernatural Levels, Teacher and Disciple Scheme (II)

So what level was the scarlet shadow at?

Thinking back on it, Li Hao didn't recall any mysterious power emanating from the shadow. Did that mean it had no level? That only its master possessed a supernatural level? But I didn't see anyone with it!

No, wait, what about Wang Ming? That one's mysterious power was very bright, brighter than Liu Long's. Could Wang Ming be a Darkmoon? He shouldn't be a Sunflare...

According to what his teacher said, there weren't that many Sunflares in the province. There might be only one in each city, and that didn't include minor ones like Silver City. Sunflares were on the same level as Dominators; he'd just been given a taste of how strong his teacher was. Wang Ming was noticeably weaker.

Wang Ming might be similar to the two outside, a Darkmoon...

So three Darkmoon Night Watchers had come to Silver City. Two stood guard over his teacher and one stayed in the shadows. The organization plainly valued their honorable guest. When his thoughts traveled here, Li Hao quickly raised, "Teacher, a supernatural's arrived in Classified Affairs and he might be a Darkmoon!"

"Eh?" Yuan Shuo blinked. Instead of asking his student how he knew or determined the supernatural's strength, he smiled. "Interesting. Looks like Zhang Yuan's death is a complicated affair. The Night Watchers must be proceeding with such caution because they know that or have even guessed the killer's identity..."

"Teacher, what if my new colleague is one of the people behind Zhang Yuan's death?"

“They shouldn’t be!” Yuan Shuo immediately shook his head. “Do you think just anyone can walk into the Inspectorate? The Inspectorate is able to identify whether or not someone is supernatural. Therefore, at the very least, your inspector general knows about the newcomer. He’s definitely aware! Unless he’s a co-conspirator, the new guy is one hundred percent a Night Watcher!”

Li Hao heaved a slight sigh of relief. That was good. He really was concerned that Wang Ming was from the scarlet shadow faction.

Teacher and disciple chatted for a while longer before Li Hao prepared to leave.

“Make sure to keep the sword safe, if nothing else.” Yuan Shuo solemnly returned the jade sword. It still had reserves of energy after he absorbed so much and broke through Dominator of Thousands—that was incredible. It was a cornucopia!

“Mmhmm.” Li Hao nodded. He fully understood the jade sword’s value now. Actually, he’d known when he absorbed the energy from the Demon Hunters.

“And another thing,” Yuan Shuo said after some thought. “Though I am a Dominator, it remains difficult for me to step into the otherworldly. I lack supernatural energy, and not the kind that you have. Yours isn’t used to enhance battle strength. What you have reinforces the foundations and is a hundred times more precious than the kind I speak of!

“At my level of strength, I need a few hundred, if not one thousand cubes of mysterious energy!”

Li Hao rapidly ran through some calculations. One cube went for a million coins on the black market. If his teacher needed one thousand cubes, how much would that cost?

...one BILLION?!

The young man swallowed hard. Holy shit, that was crazy! And his teacher didn’t have that kind of money, did he? Even though it seemed like he was rich?

A matter that could be resolved with money was easily handled for Yuan Shuo. The crux of the issue was that the Night Watchers would absolutely be aware of such a large transaction, as would all other supernatural organizations.

This was not a feasible path!

The professor looked at Li Hao and intoned, "It's not the right time for me to show myself. I still have rivals out there and though they're not in Silver Moon, they're a force to be reckoned with! We need to keep a low profile for the moment..."

Didn't you just say we'd sweep the land? Li Hao grinned wryly. His teacher's words could never be taken for face value.

"Of course, I'll really be unstoppable if I cross over. You can do whatever you want then! So we just need to stay quiet for a little bit, don't rush!" Yuan Shuo grinned. "Let me take a close look at the crisis at hand. I'll kill them if they're weak, and if they're too strong..."

The grin deepened with mischief. "The Night Watchers can take the fall!"

Interest appeared on Li Hao's face.

"If the ones behind everything are weak enough that I can take them out in one go, I'll kill them without a second thought," Yuan Shuo kept his voice down. "But it'll be dicey if they have anyone beyond Sunflare. Even if I can take on one or two of them, you'll be in grave trouble!"

"Of course, anyone beyond Sunflare won't be in Silver City at the moment. We can kill anyone below that level and pin it on the Night Watchers! That organization has their fair share of experts. Half of the five stronger than me are Night Watchers!"

Li Hao nodded. His teacher had decided to tailor his response according to the type of enemy they faced. Prudence was ideal! There was also another unspoken factor that both of them were well aware of.

Wouldn't a faction that'd laid their plans for so many years and already seized several treasures be constantly growing stronger? Just one jade sword and cosmic power alone was stunning enough. If Yuan Shuo could use it to set foot into Dominator, why couldn't the other reach greater heights?

The two didn't mention it because they were afraid of destroying their confidence. Since Yuan Shuo had deduced that anyone stronger than him wasn't in the city, or even the province, that gave them much more room to flex their muscles.

"Also, your jade pendant is just a pendant!" Yuan Shuo added. "I'll give you a sword before you leave, one that's a supernatural object!" He leered savagely. "No one's ever seen your sword or knows what the sword of the Lis looks like. They all have to take your word for it. What else could a supernatural object carried by a mundane be, if not the sword of the Lis?"

"In that case, we need to choose a decent item—one that isn't scrap metal!" An agonized tone crept into Yuan Shuo's voice. "It's been difficult to collect treasures ever since the Night Watchers kept a close watch on me. Ah, forget it. I collected a fine sword several years ago, it's an absolute treasure!"

"Actually, it's a perfect fit for our purposes! It's also sealed away and doesn't exude any mysterious power. Radiance shimmers within. I found it in a larger ruin and suspect it's a treasure tied to a bloodline legacy."

"Teacher, your sword might be more precious than mine," Li Hao couldn't help but say. "Won't this be a pretty big loss for you?"

He knew that Yuan Shuo intended to palm off a substitute for the real thing. But if the family treasure wasn't as expensive as that sword, that'd be a bad trade!

“Impossible!” The professor shook his head emphatically. It went without saying that Li Hao’s sword was valuable beyond compare. However, he didn’t bother to explain himself. “Take it with you when you leave! You should know how to use it without further guidance from me.

"If the enemy is too strong for me to handle, you can try throwing the sword out. If I or the Night Watchers kill the enemy, you should also throw the sword out. Throw it at the Night Watchers if you can so they take the fall!”

Teacher and disciple quickly settled on their plan. They would kill the enemy if the latter was weak or kill the scouts if they were strong, then dump it all on the Night Watchers’ head. The caveat to this was that the Night Watchers wanted the sword. Otherwise, blame would still land in Li Hao’s lap.

Would the Night Watchers want it?

Given how Yuan Shuo described it, they very likely would. As for whether or not their plan would plague the conscience, Yuan Shuo didn’t feel the slightest bit guilty. To be honest, Li Hao didn’t either. The Night Watchers deserved to be the scapegoat if they took the sword, it wasn’t his fault.

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Teacher and student conversed for almost an hour. When Yuan Shuo took out the sword, he also dyed his hair white. He didn’t want to expose himself for the time being.

The sword that Yuan Shuo spoke of wasn’t too large. Just a bit larger than the jade pendant, it was the size of a dagger and easily identified as a sword. It could be carried on the young man as it fit into a pocket.

Li Hao glanced at it, vaguely identifying a mighty layer of mysterious power brewing inside. He was reluctant to take it as it might be the only treasure of this caliber that his teacher owned. The professor was freely handing it over just to decrease the amount of trouble that Li Hao was in!

“Go home soon!” Yuan Shuo cautioned after wrapping up matters. “Don’t worry too much. I won’t follow you the entire way, but I’ll be there in short order if anything happens! All you need is to survive the first strike!”

Li Hao nodded.

“Improving yourself is crucial!” Yuan Shuo thought for a bit. “You may be a Slayer of Tens, but that doesn’t mean you’re all that impressive. The weak and strong within this level are also clearly delineated. Slayer of Ninety-Nine is still a Slayer of Tens. That’s a bit of an exaggeration, but the gap still exists.”

Yuan Shuo had planned on sending his student away, but stopped the young man again when he considered that Li Hao would likely find it difficult to progress in a short amount of time.

“You’ve never experienced true combat and everything I taught you before was to improve general health. It’s not very useful in fighting, so I’ll shore up your knowledge after this incident!”

There wasn’t enough time to teach the lad anything comprehensive right now. The professor thought for a bit before coming to a decision.

“I’ll teach you a somewhat underhanded offensive technique! It’s easy enough and not part of the Five Styles, but it’ll be useful for ensuring survival!”

Li Hao lit up! Underhanded? Didn’t hear that part! I don’t care, I just want to stay alive.

Yuan Shuo stayed indoors and struck a stance in the hall, presenting a very prim and proper image.

“Martial masters need to draw in close when facing opponents, particularly third rate martial masters like you! You don’t need to learn any strong attack methods because you might not have a chance to use them. If you have the ability to, then you won’t need them. So today, I’ll teach you the Hand That Brings Back Life! It’s a technique that I found in some ancient tomes.”

The Hand That Brings Back Life!

What an upright and honest name—it sounded like a doctor’s skill. But when Yuan Shuo deployed it, Li Hao gained a full understanding of its true meaning. The professor waved his fists around in a mad caper. He only had two hands, yet somehow, a third popped up in the next second!

Yes, three hands!

The third one snatched at Li Hao’s crotch the second it appeared. He didn’t have time to react!

Monkey Stealing Peaches was a move in the ape style, but it wasn’t nearly as bewildering as this one. The opponent sometimes knew that it was meant to attack the private parts as soon as it was deployed. Meanwhile, this one manifested a third hand!

Li Hao paled with horror.

“The key to the Hand That Brings Back Life is in the hand that catches one off guard!” Yuan Shuo grinned broadly and stepped back. “This is a skill of robbers as recorded in bygone records. Unsavory characters also existed in ancient civilizations and they used this technique to steal! I modified it slightly to be one suited for direct ambush!”

Who could guard against an extra hand that suddenly appeared in combat?

“Where did the extra hand come from, teacher?” A baffled Li Hao considered the seemingly simple technique. His teacher only had two hands, how had there been a third one?

“That’s the core of the technique. We only have two hands, the third one is fake!” Yuan Shuo explained the need for confounding falsehood for truth; a game of misdirection with the body was the most difficult part of this technique.

The two made a thorough study, stopping only when Li Hao more or less mastered the move and grasped its core essence.

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When the young man departed the residence, the middle-aged scout who'd stopped him before was no longer present. Li Hao didn't feel eyes on him until he was a bit of a distance away, and he only sensed it because he vaguely caught sight of sparkles of starlight. Supernaturals!

It must be the man on the rooftop from before. The woman was gravely injured after their encounter and wouldn't recover for a while.

Not a flicker of change crossed Li Hao's face; it was as if he hadn't discovered anything. He swiftly vanished into the distance on his bike.

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Hu Hao revealed himself after Li Hao departed. He looked at the young man's back and then at the residence. What had Yuan Shuo taught Li Hao that they'd stayed in there for multiple hours?

"I wonder how Elder Yuan's injuries are doing..." he sighed softly, helplessly. Please don't die, or he and Li Meng would be in for it.