

Star Gate 52

Chapter 52: Displaying Just A Small Portion of One's Talent

Li Hao was much calmer after he gifted the stone blade to his teacher. He'd done everything he should and this was all he could do. It was now up to Liu Long to manage the Night Watchers. The current situation was murky to him after exposing Wang Ming's identity—Liu Long undoubtedly knew how to respond.

“Now both teacher and Liu Long know that the scarlet shadow is invisible!”

Was there anything that he hadn't said?

Li Hao scanned all the details he knew. Ah, yes, there was one thing. I can see the shadow... that wasn't important anymore. He didn't need to reveal everything about himself. It might prove useful that no one knew he could see the shadow. It might not be of any use if others knew that he could.

“I'm going to focus on improving over the next couple of days!”

There wasn't enough time to advance further in his cultivation. Otherwise, Li Hao would rather continue training on his own and personally kill the scarlet shadow.

Time was not on his side.

Having made his preparations, all that was left was to improve his skills over the next few days. He was yet to spar with anyone since crossing into Slayer of Tens. It was time to add a meaningful battle to his roster of experience.

According to his teacher, this level of martial master was just for show and didn't possess actual skill to their name. All they could do was run a little faster and punch a little harder than others.

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Another quiet night passed.

July 15.

Inspectorate, the basement, Demon Hunter headquarters.

Li Hao arrived very early this day and wasn't in the mood to dance around sensitive topics with Wang Ming. Therefore, he shifted to the team's basement to practice the New Book of Five Styles. There was no fear of disturbing the auntie downstairs here.

Boxing techniques, claw methods, Bear Hug, Tiger Pounce...

Li Hao was attempting to use all five styles in conjunction. Tiger, bear, deer, ape, and fowl. The young man moved awkwardly and his limbs were ungainly as he cycled through gestures. Sometimes he lay prone on the ground, other times he leapt upward like a wild beast.

The fowl style was the hardest to practice out of the five. It centered on being nimble and light-footed—a leverage point to launch oneself into the air was key. This was very difficult for a novice like Li Hao to grasp. He fell straight to the ground upon several abortive attempts to soar into the sky. It was less useful than the ape style for the moment.

He decisively gave up the fowl style after a few tries that went nowhere, deciding to focus on his most practiced ape style.

Someone entered the fitness area while he was deep in practice—the enormously muscular Chen Jian pushed open the door. Blinking sleep out of his eyes, the honest man paused with surprise when he saw the young man.

“You’re here early, Li Hao.” Though Chen Jian hadn’t slept well last night, he was still the first one to the basement today. The newest member of the team arriving earlier than him was quite unexpected. On the other hand, he wasn’t that worried about the mission to protect Li Hao since the chief was overseeing that.

“Brother Jian!” Li Hao panted and smiled. “Brother Jian, are you interested in sparring with me again?”

“Oh?” Chen Jian raised an eyebrow. It’d be understandable if the young man didn’t wish to ever exchange blows after last time’s defeat. But he was the one to bring it up first?

“You want to practice with me?” the chubby man chuckled kindly. “I’m not versed in offense because I specialize in defense. How about this, I’ll just defend and be a practice opponent for you!”

Li Hao grinned delightedly. A human shield like Chen Jian was most welcome for a rookie like him. A living person was different from a stationary target, after all. Not to mention, Chen Jian was an incredibly strong martial master. It was much better to train with him than to train alone.

“Brother Jian, I absorbed some mysterious power yesterday…”

“No worries!” Chen Jian smiled broadly with an inward eye roll. I know that! Of course I know you received two cubes of power yesterday. The key thing is… you’re also aware that you just took them in. Mysterious power isn’t digested within a single day, it takes a long period of time.

And although you have some foundations, they’re really not worth much. You’re just a little bit stronger than ordinary people, but can’t withstand a single blow from true martial masters!

I’m a shield, how can you possibly hurt me?

Li Hao happily paused his routine. “Then... I shan’t stand on ceremony. Brother Jian, please guide me!”

“Hit me however you like. I won’t return blows, but I’ll evade and dodge. That’s also the basic instinct of defense, after all.”

“Understood!” The young man was delighted. This was even better. If not, it’d be more productive for him to punch a piece of metal.

The two settled into fighting stances without further ado. Li Hao pounced like a tiger and deployed the tiger style. Hands curved like claws, he flung himself at Chen Jian’s arms, wanting to pin them to his opponent’s side.

As rotund as Chen Jian was, he was exceedingly agile and slightly shifted his feet to dodge three inches to the right. He needed no other major movements to ensure that Li Hao’s hand closed on empty air.

However, Chen Jian blinked after his successful evasion. The young man’s hand whistled through the air despite missing its mark. His claw attack broke through the air? He’s improved that much?

Li Hao followed through on his momentum and sprawled on the ground. He plastered his limbs to the floor and pushed up with his feet, exploding upward like a deer. Deer were lithe, fleet-footed creatures of tranquility that erupted with an extremity when they encountered danger!

“Huh...” Chen Jian shifted again to avoid the second attack, but he wasn’t fast enough to put himself out of Li Hao’s way this time. Since he couldn’t dodge the young man’s leg, he would defend against it!

BAM!

A loud collision rang out as Li Hao used another point of leverage in the air to refocus his strength in his arms. He was a ferocious tiger out of the mountains! Both hands clenched into fists, he descended from the sky to smash his opponent!

Bam!

Chen Jian took a step backward while Li Hao was likewise thrown back from the immense recoil. But at the same time, the young man turned himself so that he swung through the air like a monkey. The change sent him swiftly swinging back, his hands once more curved into claws to rip into his opponent!

Astonishment seized Chen Jian—Li Hao had made him take a step back! His arms were even slightly numb!

The shock broke his concentration; he just sparred with the young man two days ago. At that time, he sent Li Hao flying with a single slap, so how could the other be beating him back today?!

Unfortunately, this kind of shock was most inopportune. Li Hao came swimming back through the air against all expectations and grabbed Chen Jian's arms with both hands. A cutting strength traveled from them and ripped the portly man's sleeves to pieces!

Clang!

The ear-piercing screech of metal grating on metal rang out. Li Hao scratched ten bloody marks on his opponent's arms, but his fingernails lifted slightly as a result.

"Ouch!" Chen Jian was truly taken aback. Unfortunately, he wasn't at liberty to ask for details as they were in the middle of a fight. He'd said he would only defend; he wasn't planning on going back on his word. Seeing Li Hao close in for another claw attack, he shook his arms to throw the young man off, then crossed them in front of his chest to block a wild flurry of punches.

What happened next made him doubt his hearing.

Whoosh whoosh whoosh! rang a series of bones and meridians humming in unison. Li Hao's leg whipped into his line of sight, snapping ruthlessly through the air!

"The hell?!" Chen Jian could no longer contain himself. The fuck?? Slayer of Tens! Are you kidding me?! Kid was trash Slayer of Five two days ago, but now he's a full Slayer? Are you kidding??

Chen Jian was only a Slayer himself. Although he wasn't a novice to the level, it still hurt to be kicked by another peer while in a defenseless state.

Li Hao brought out his full force only now, so Chen Jian answered in kind without another word. He balled his right hand into a fist and punched the bottom of Li Hao's foot. Forget only defending, he wasn't going to play by those rules anymore! While he wouldn't suffer much injury if Li Hao kicked him, it would still bring him a world of pain.

Bam!

Another loud collision rang out as Li Hao wore Inspectorate-issued leather boots. They were very durable and tough. His kick happened to connect with Chen Jian's fist—another extremely hard object.

Crunch!

Li Hao's foot fractured, but he carried on like nothing was amiss. He used his opponent's fist as a leverage point to push off and swing like an ape. It was all he needed to spin himself around.

Outsiders would think that Chen Jian had grabbed Li Hao's foot and was whirling him around. The truth was the entire opposite. Chen Jian felt that the young man had grabbed his fist—they were stuck together!

Li Hao used the fist as a fulcrum for a full revolution before kicking off and kicking madly with both feet!

Pop pop pop!

Explosions continuously sounded in the air as Chen Jian looked on gravely. He covered his head with both hands and crouched protectively over his vital parts, getting a punch in whenever there was a chance.

The two exchanged blows in earnest, commencing an enormous battle in the fitness area. When Chen Jian evaded Li Hao's next weighty kick, the young man's foot slammed into the wall and created a massive hole.

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As the two sparred in the fitness area, others watched with jaws agape at the door. A flabbergasted Liu Yan turned to look at Liu Long. Liu Long was also dumbstruck and his eyes slightly unfocused.

"It's my first time... seeing such incredible results with mysterious power!" he muttered after a long time. There was nothing else he could say.

All of them had seen the young man's capabilities for themselves two days ago. He'd improved some after absorbing mysterious power yesterday—managing to land a kick on Liu Yan. But Li Hao today? If Liu Long wasn't absolutely sure of the date, he'd think he was seeing Li Hao again after a few years.

The lad was Slayer of Tens after a single night!

While he was young and looked like he lacked experience, his opponent was the perfect candidate for the purpose. A shield that wasn't adept at offense was an ideal backdrop to fully display Li Hao's strength.

Liu Yan rolled her eyes. Oh screw you! It's not like we haven't absorbed mysterious power before—when has it ever seen such great effect? If becoming Slayer of Tens was possible with just two cubes, then there might not be Starlight to be found among the Night Watchers.

Slayers ascended as Darkmoon!

Therefore, the organization also wished for martial masters with some basic foundations to join them. Inducting mysterious power into them would create new Darkmoons. Meanwhile, Sunderers of Hundreds found it too difficult to cross over. If someone like Liu Long could easily ascend, the Night Watchers would treat him as their greatest treasure.

They were disappointed in Liu Long after he proved unable to cross over with a significant quantity of energy. The group threw in the towel and sent him away. He was a guest that continuously failed to metamorphose and the Night Watchers was not a welcoming place for martial masters. Thus, Liu Long chose to return to Silver City.

Slayer of Tens was the organization's preferred group to recruit from. Sadly, the path of martial masters was difficult to walk and those who successfully reached that level were often mature in age. And with the development of the supernatural field, many were those who couldn't endure the rigors of training and wished to cross over as soon as possible. Few could calm their hearts enough to train.