

Star Gate 65

Chapter 65: The Kind Are Lucky (III)

If the sword stayed with Li Hao, the young man would suffer the greatest degree of attack possible. If the two were separated, Li Hao might only suffer a lesser degree of attack even if he was split up from the rest of the team.

It was a secret that he was a Slayer, so if the enemy underestimated him and sent another Slayer against him, he might be able to turn the tables!

However, would Li Hao be willing to give his family heirloom to an outsider?

Liu Long thought hard about his request—it easily gave the impression that he had designs on the Li inheritance.

“You can have it!” Li Hao fished out the sword and placed it on the table as the chief turned over the ramifications. Liu Long started and looked at the young man with surprise. Li Hao smiled innocently back at him. “Who can I trust, if not chief?”

“Since I’ve joined the team, I am one of you! I understand what you’re thinking, chief. This is all for my own safety, so I should be grateful and not dwell on suspicions! It’s just a sword—it may be treasure, it may be worthless. I can’t use it for the moment and it’s trouble if I keep it on me. In fact, you’ll be assuming greater risk if you take it, chief!”

Even Liu Long was touched by Li Hao’s words! The man could vaguely sense ripples of mysterious power when he looked at the sword. A single glance was all it took to identify that the item was extraordinary. The ripples of power were beyond their normal understanding.

Li Hao had brought out an item like this without hesitation! Liu Long was beginning to wonder if it was appropriate to have the young man serve as bait. It seemed an incredible disservice!

He quickly tamped the thought down, however. Li Hao had to be bait, that was non negotiable.

“Li Hao...” he raised solemnly. “Don’t worry, the sword will remain with me so long as I am alive. If you are the only one alive after this mission, everything that belongs to the Demon Hunters is yours!”

Hot damn! Li Hao inwardly clucked his tongue. It’s all mine, just like that? How did I suddenly make it into the core of the team? I didn’t know Old Liu was this sentimental!

Li Hao viewed himself as a very rational person, which made Liu Long more emotional in contrast. The latter was already making declarations of protecting the sword with his life!

“Chief, we’ll win! Justice always prevails!” Li Hao encouraged. Liu Long said nothing in return. He suddenly fished out a book with yellowing pages and tossed it at the young man.

“Go back and page through it, it might prove useful for you. If not, just use it for leisure reading.” He took the sword and left with large strides.

Liu Yan grabbed the booklet as soon as he left and assessed it with envy. “As I thought, it’s his prized Nine Forged Force. This guy really...” Seeing as Li Hao didn’t understand, she explained further, “This is chief’s secret martial art, Nine Forged Force. As its name indicates, the user can erupt with force that is forged nine times over! It was the secret art that his father once practiced at the peak of his glory. Chief’s father was once a premier martial master of Silver Moon Province!”

Of that, Li Hao knew. Silver Spear!

One of the Three Spears of Silver Moon, they wouldn’t be too weak if even his teacher had mentioned them. They had to be at least premier Sunderers. However, Li Hao was surprised to receive the Nine Forged Force instead of a spear technique, and that it was his so easily.

Martial masters were much more conscientious about their legacy than supernaturals.

“Hold onto it and read it well,” Liu Yan extorted. “This secret art is very strong and rivals your teacher’s New Book of Five Styles! Your teacher’s art is very comprehensive, but its weakness is that it lacks explosive power! The Nine Forged Force is defined by explosiveness. Nine layers of internal force... It’s something that regular people can’t achieve. Neither can their constitution support such an endeavor!”

She sighed with emotion and left. Danger nipped at her heels upon seeing Liu Long leave this behind—extreme danger. Some martial masters were unwilling to pass on their knowledge even upon pain of death. Liu Long had been unwilling before, but he was suddenly bequeathing it to Li Hao? What did this mean?

Did the chief think there was no coming back from this mission?

The booklet suddenly weighed on Li Hao’s hands and heart. He’s giving it to me so easily?

“Nine Forged Force...” A method that excelled in sudden eruptions of strength!

While Li Hao didn’t grasp how precious it was, a method that was Liu Long’s trademark technique would not be too weak. After some thought, the young man grabbed his communicator and dialed a number. As Yuan Shuo’s final disciple, he could not brashly learn another martial master’s legacy.

“Teacher!”

“What is it?” Yuan Shuo sounded tired—possibly having just absorbed energy from the stone blade.

“Have you heard of our chief’s Nine Forged Force?”

“No shit! It’s Silver Spear’s ultimate knowledge—nine stacks of force behind one jab! It’s a decent secret art. Although there are quite a few drawbacks, its explosiveness is unmatched. I wanted to trade it for the New Book of Five Styles once, but the guy wasn’t willing to.

“However, his early death is also tied to it because his body couldn’t endure the burden of nine layers of force. His arms were crippled at an early age and he passed away from sheer depression! If I am to use it, my body’s strong enough that I can bring nine layers of force to bear with one punch. I’ll beat a Sunflare so bad that their own mother won’t recognize them!”

While Yuan Shuo seemed to be dismissing the method, he was actually giving it high praise.

“Um...” Li Hao whispered after some thought. “Our chief has given it to me. Can I learn it?”

“What??” Yuan Shuo paused, then roared, “Of course you learn it! You have a fantastic physique, so of course you’re damned well suited to learn it! And here I was thinking how to find a method more suited for you... this is perfect! Liu Long will be a sick cat in his old age, but you won’t be! Learn it!”

The professor paused with confusion. “Why did he give it to you?”

It’d only been a few days! Was Liu Long an idiot and handing out his family legacy just like that? Was Li Hao so easily fooled? Yuan Shuo had never gotten that impression before!

“I don’t know either,” Li Hao said sheepishly. “I gave the small sword to the captain and he gave me this in return...”

Alright then!

Yuan Shuo knew the story behind the sword and that it was nothing good. Misfortune visited whoever possessed it. So this meant that his disciple had given a source of trouble away and tricked Liu Long into feeling grateful?

Well now... what could he say about that?

“Alright then, read it yourself. It’s not my place to peruse or teach another martial master’s secret art. This one is very suited to you though. You’ll be able to kill regular mid Slayers despite being a novice if you reach Thrice Forged!”

Yuan Shuo truly did hold the method in high regard. Its side effects and backlash on the body wouldn’t be a concern for Li Hao given his command of cosmic power. The professor was also well aware of this.

.....

The Yuan residence.

Yuan Shuo barked with laughter after hanging up and cursed lowly, “To hell with it! How is the kid this lucky??”

He was too damn lucky! All good things found their way to him! Nine Forged Force, eh? Silver Gun you old fart. You never imagined that your secret art would end up in my student’s hands, eh!

.....

Night.

Openlight.

Home.

Li Hao opened the Nine Forged Force booklet. Panther was sprawled on the couch next to him and craned its neck forward for a look. The young man didn't push it away as he didn't think the dog could read. Understanding human speech was one thing, but recognizing text? If Panth could manage that, he'd call the dog his master!

“Martial masters who enter Slayer of Tens see an upwelling of internal force and a ringing accord of bone and meridian. Internal force is limited and scattered throughout the various parts of the human body. Martial masters of the same level will see minute differences between their internal force...”

Liu Long's father had written the booklet—it wasn't the original. It was apparent from the contents that Liu Long's father, Liu Hao, had been a peak Sunderer in his prime. However, Yuan Shuo said that such a mighty martial master had bowed and scraped in front of him! There must be some degree of exaggeration in that recounting.

A peak Sunderer would have rivaled Yuan Shuo back in the day.

Liu Hao was most skilled with offense. A spear was the king of all weapons! Martial masters that employed the spear focused only on attacking. There was no return after they deployed a move.

Liu Hao utilized the Nine Forged Force to bring forth nine layers of force onto his weapon, creating a tremendous reputation for himself in the martial world of Silver Moon. Hailed as Silver Gun Liu Hao, he was one of the Three Spears of Silver Moon back in the day.

There'd been plenty of Sunderers then, so for Liu Hao to create such a name for himself was the surest sign that he was extraordinary. The primary reason for that could be attributed to this method!

He employed the same level of internal force as his peers, but layered it nine times in one blow. While he wasn't perfect on a comprehensive level, his offensive abilities were unmatched among the Three Spears!

As apparent as his strengths were, so were his weaknesses. He lacked speed and physical constitution. Layering force nine times resulted in enormous damage to the body, so Liu Hao's arms were nearly crippled when he reached middle age.

It was one of the reasons why he brought his son to Yuan Shuo when Liu Long was young. The Liu spear technique was widely renowned, but Liu Hao knew that it enacted too high of a toll from the body. Regular martial masters could fight up to seventy years old, but a Liu clan member saw a swift decline after forty. Oftentimes, they were completely disabled.

If it wasn't for Liu Long enhancing his body through absorbing mysterious power, consecutive years of fighting at his age would've likewise consigned him to an ignoble fate.

"Nine layers of force!" Li Hao sighed with appreciation. He didn't quite understand how valuable the art was, but he knew how strong it could be.

It wasn't an empty descriptor. The method focused on utilizing strength and concentrating it in the arms from elsewhere in the body. Layer upon layer of strength built upon themselves, testing one's control and the tenacity of the arms.

"Is Thrice Forged the limit for a Slayer?"

That was what the booklet indicated. Any more beyond that easily resulted in shattered arms and irrevocable damage. When it came to Sunderers, they should not exceed six layers.

Liu Hao once utilized nine layers when he met with a powerful foe. He dispatched the enemy, but also damaged his foundations. His arms were nearly rendered useless and he retired not long thereafter. The Silver Gun of the Three Spears thus vanished from public view and soon departed the world.

"The benefits and detriments of Nine Forged Force are apparent. Once force is layered, I'll have to remain where I am. Moving will disperse the force..."

That was the major drawback! Redirecting the strength of one's body meant locking oneself in place. Moving around then would dismiss the internal force and very likely lead to injury. Therefore, as famous as the method was, quite a few veteran martial masters also knew how intricate it was.