

## Star Gate 651

### Chapter 651: Paper Tiger (I)

At this moment, in the Colosseum.

“Something seems to have happened at Four Seas Island.” Wu Yong frowned and looked at Liu Sha. “The lines of communication are not clear. Many have told me that they can’t get in touch with their family. We received a message from the island moments ago, but no one responds to further contact...”

“Can something have happened?” Liu Sha furrowed her brows as well.

Wu Yong started, then looked at Liu Sha with some... disbelief. “Do you think... Demon Sword...” he transmitted.

“Would... would he dare?” Her eyes widened.

He absolutely would! Whether it was attacking the Colosseum or the Four Seas Company, it was all the same. So why wouldn’t he?

Wu Yong swallowed hard. If things were progressing according to his guesses... then... they were in great trouble! Although there were a lot of Novas at the Four Seas Company, Demon Sword wasn’t weak...

He frowned anew after further thought. There were so many people on the island, couldn’t any of them get away and fire off a message? Perhaps he was just thinking too much.

“Tell the minister that I’m going to take a look at the island. Stay on guard at the Colosseum, be careful of this being a diversion...”

“You’re going alone?”

“Mmhmm!” Wu Yong nodded. “I’ll go alone and take... that... with me. You keep the energy bombs. That gives us both a certain degree of self-defense.”

“Alright!” The two discussed for a while before Wu Yong left with two Novas. Although he was concerned that this was a tactic to lure him out, he was also deeply afraid that something had gone wrong at Four Seas Island. They would be in grave trouble then as there were many treasures on the island and the descendants of many noble figures.

His head would roll if they all died! Not even the minister would be able to save him then!

Liu Sha quickly reported the latest developments after Wu Yong left. Minister Liu’s response returned shortly. “Go with Wu Yong, don’t set out on your own!”

Minister Liu was quite irked. Of course they had to move as a team at a time like this! Were they insistent on giving the enemy the chance to take them out separately? These two were complete idiots!

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The minister frowned in his office at the Ministry of Finance, contemplating whether or not Li Hao was behind the irregularity. Did the young man have the boldness and the ability to deliver such a blow to the Four Seas Island, to the point in which no word could get out?

That’s only possible if he has help, and exceedingly powerful help. It’s not feasible otherwise...

He swiftly gave orders for people to keep an eye on Hou Xiaochen. He wasn’t the one making a move, was he?

The minister's men quickly reported back that Hou Xiaochen was still at Night Watcher headquarters. That put Minister Liu more at ease.

"It should be fine..." He heaved a long sigh, whether out of self-comfort or true belief. Faint unease still pricked at him.

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In the darkness.

A massive flying ship traveled through the air. Thousands of people were imprisoned in the hold. Two ashen-faced Novas watched as Li Hao's internal force sank into their bodies and slowly reached their hearts. Despair and fury filled their eyes.

The young man didn't care about that. He was very calm and painstakingly wrapped their organs with his internal force. Hard at work, he was very gentle and tender.

People said that men hard at work were the most handsome, but that was the furthest thought from the Novas' minds. They felt only terror. Their hearts were clenched tight, as if explosion was possible at any moment.

"Don't move!" Li Hao frowned slightly with a soft rebuke. "Mysterious power is unstable. Although internal force is stable, shifting about randomly might cause mysterious power to leak out and collide with internal force. Your organs will explode from the clash!"

"You know just as well that mysterious power is unstable..." Mu Xiaorong was pale. "We're already your prisoners! This will easily cause our hearts to be accidentally blown up!"

"It won't." Li Hao grinned brilliantly. "I keep my actions within the proper limits of behavior. You don't have to worry about your heart exploding so long as you don't bring more than the force of a

Solar to bear. I'm not fully in control of you either, I just don't want some unpleasanties to happen. Do you understand?"

Mu Xiaorong set her jaw and didn't say anything else. Li Hao was openly flying them back to Skystar City. This would easily arouse backlash from the Ministry of Finance. When battle was joined... the circumstances would be very dangerous for them.

"What do you want to do, Commander Li?" Mu Xiaorong tamped down the fear in her heart. "There's no need for this since you won't be killing us. We'll cooperate and might even be able to help if you encounter danger."

"Oh no, that's fine!" Li Hao declined the offer with a smiling shake of his head. "You're far too noble for that, I couldn't bear to let you be so tired."

Mu Xiaorong was rendered speechless. Li Hao looked outside the ship. They would finish crossing the Skystar Sea soon. The royal city would be at hand after another uninhabited expanse past the sea. Would the Ministry of Finance send anyone?

"You have a lofty status." He smiled at Mu Xiaorong. "You will stand at the ship's bow. If there's anyone from the Ministry of Finance or government present, they won't dare attack you on sight. The nine ministers are too noble for anyone to harm their children. What do you think?"

Mu Xiaorong paled again.

Li Hao looked into the distance and saw balls of light swiftly approaching. He picked up Mu Xiaorong with a pinch and threw her to the front of the ship. "I'm giving you an order, not making a request! Think on it yourself how you can best prevent those coming from attacking you or the ship."

He then looked back at the trembling nobles in the ship's hold. "All descendants of deputy directors and above, as well as members of the royal family, shall approach the front. Carry on enjoying yourselves as you did before!"

No one in the group dared move. They knew that it would be very dangerous at the ship's bow, that people might die.

"That was the first time." Li Hao grinned. "I don't like repeating myself, so you have one more chance..."

A rustle stirred the crowd as one, two people walked out... They shook violently, but they didn't dare delay their actions. They knew how dangerous and ruthless the person in front of them was. The thousands of corpses on the island bore testament to that.

Novas that were normally eminent beings were paper tigers to their attackers. They were killed instantly; the captives still didn't know how many powerhouses they faced. Only Southern Fist was familiar to them, they didn't recognize the rest.

Approximately twenty people walked to the front of the ship. They were as quiet as mice. Li Hao was quite displeased at that and manifested a massive mysterious power stone to illuminate the ship.

"Come, carry on like you did on the island!" he commanded coolly. "Don't men and women like to have fun with each other? Show me that fun! Whether you kiss or engage in other actions, move yourselves! Let people know that you're having fun here!"

The group continued to tremble. Mu Xiaorong glared lividly at Li Hao, he looked back just as viciously at her.

"I don't want to kill those of the nine ministries, but don't force my hand! I won't be able to guarantee how many survive in the times to come otherwise! Don't think that I'll be in any trouble after I kill you. There are too many who want to kill me—because of that, I don't care if I offend a few more!"

The prisoners moved to stiff action. Some conversed in low voices with those next to them, others played games with those they knew. Some shakily wrapped their arms around their partners to kiss...

Although they were enjoying themselves, all of them shook uncontrollably. They feared Li Hao. As arrogant as they were, that was under the auspices of their background. Now that they faced someone who didn't care about their identity, there was nothing they could do but submit.

Li Hao looked into the distance once more. There were too many lights from Skystar City in the darkness, so he couldn't make out the balls of light too clearly. He decreased his speed as he wasn't prepared to enter the city. That would give the enemy more time to exit the city, which would make their balls of light more apparent.

A massive ball of light approached from a distance; there were two smaller balls of light next to it. Three Novas! Someone was coming.

Not only that, but Li Hao abruptly jerked his head back to see a fourth, prominent ball of light following the first three. It slowed as it approached.

The young man raised an eyebrow. A metamorphosis expert was following behind the trio of one metamorphosis expert and two peaks Novas. The first three were likely Wu Yong and his men, so who was the fourth?

Friend or foe?

Most likely foe.

It looked like they'd discovered something and were following him. Neither He Yong, Yang Shan, or the hidden Qin Lian had raised the alarm. The others were less than five kilometers away, which indicated superior powers of concealment.

Dark supernaturals? Assassins? Celestial!

Li Hao swiftly came to the conclusion that the onlookers were likely from Celestial. Only someone like that could evade He Yong and the others. His people followed from the shadows, but hadn't discovered this group. To powerhouses, five thousand meters was a short distance.

Would just one metamorphosis expert dare come by themselves? The enemy should know that he wasn't an easy target. Three metamorphoses chasing him in the east last time failed to succeed. These guys wouldn't be that dumb.

"Therefore... that they're here... and guess that I'm here... means that they can't possibly think one metamorphosis is all that it'll take."

There must be an ace up their sleeves. What was it? An energy bomb or something else?

There had to be something. These metamorphoses wouldn't be so bold otherwise. Various thoughts rose in Li Hao's mind and he walked up the ship's bow before gradually vanishing from sight like he'd gone invisible. Mu Xiarong and the others gaped—Li Hao had run away!

Or rather, he was using them as bait and hiding in the darkness. What should they do?

"He's gone, should we run for it?" Mu Xiaorong transmitted to the North Sea Nova.

The latter ignored her and looked at the young man next to him. The young man shook his head ruefully. These royal city nobles didn't know anything. They lacked understanding of how savage these northern barbarians could be!

As a North Sea pirate, he knew what Li Hao and these Silver Moon martial masters represented in the north. They would rather be a shattered vessel of jade than an unbroken piece of pottery. If they didn't listen to Li Hao and help kill enemies, none of them would survive. Someone like Li Hao would certainly kill them at crucial moments and run off.

Flee?

That was the dumbest decision possible. It was better to wait for a glimmer of hope to arrive.

## Chapter 652: Paper Tiger (II)

“There’s three incoming and another metamorphosis following them. Circle carefully toward them, He Yong. You go too, Panther!” Li Hao melted into the darkness and transmitted his instructions through the armor. He could direct He Yong, but he couldn’t direct the dog. That was fine—Panther followed Qin Lian at the moment. She was the weakest link, which meant that He Yong, Qin Lian, and Panther would head over together.

“Be careful of any trump cards up their sleeves. They might be able to instantly kill a metamorphosis expert. He Yong can take the lead. If they’ve guessed that I’m here, they’ll definitely be prepared. They won’t send just one metamorphosis against me...”

“What about you?” He Yong’s voice carried through the armor. “Someone seems to be coming from up ahead...”

“It’s fine! Whether it’s the three great organizations or someone else, they’ll all be wary of the nine ministries. They won’t easily attack once they see all the descendants of the nine ministries on the ship.”

He Yong sped through the darkness, headed for the direction that Li Hao had pointed out.

“What about me, Commander Li?” asked Yang Shan.

“You’ll be in charge of martial masters that may come our way.”

“But...”



“Execute your orders!”

Yang Shan didn't dare ask further; he'd truly gotten to know Li Hao this time. The young man was a vicious sort and stronger than rumored to be. He hadn't expended much energy to kill a peak Nova. Perhaps it really would take an Arcanus to contend with him...

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Wu Yong was in a hurry, but slowed down throughout the course of his flight. His transmission pendant buzzed with numerous messages. He scanned them quickly and identified some important ones. One came from the minister, telling him to slow down. Liu Sha had been sent to join him.

Another message came from an assassin, saying that he'd discovered a ship flying out from Four Seas Island. It seemed to be filled with nobles. The killer was following it. Additionally, people were on their way to the island. There would be news soon from their investigation.

Wu Yong heaved a sigh of relief. This was good. He looked at the two Novas next to him. “We can slow down, there's no rush.”

The two blinked. You were the one in a hurry earlier, but now you're the one not in a hurry... Granted, they were in no position to contradict Wu Yong. So they would slow down.

The three adjusted their speed; they could discern some of the situation outside the city by now. There seemed to be a flying ship in the distance filled with young men and women enjoying themselves. They saw people playing drinking games and kissing out in the open...

“And we thought something had happened!” One of the Novas breathed out with a low curse. “That they'd all died or something. They seem perfectly fine!”

Wu Yong also frowned. Were they all fine? He caught sight of someone important—the one from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. They were only a few thousand meters apart. He sent a message to her transmission pendant, but she didn't react. Had she not seen it, or was there another reason...?

After thinking it over, Wu Yong messaged some others he recognized on the ship. All of the attempts went unanswered. This was becoming uncanny.

“Be careful, there's something wrong about these people...” he transmitted to those beside him.

The two Novas snapped to attention. Something wrong? The trio fell silent and proceeded cautiously, covering their tracks to gradually approach the ship.

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The three big balls of light were simply too noticeable to Li Hao. However, he didn't spring into action just yet. The only thing he did was infuse vast quantities of internal force into the Windchaser Boots beneath his feet. The boots were critical for escape, but also immensely useful for killing. The saying that all martial methods were confounded by speed wasn't necessarily accurate, but it was quite appropriate at times.

If the young man exploded with everything he had, he could instantly cover three thousand meters. Granted, he couldn't maintain that kind of state for long. He'd utilized the boots three times in a row when being chased by Xu Qing before having to rest, recover, then go on the run again.

“Four thousand meters...” Li Hao waited silently in the darkness, unmoving.

Thirty-five hundred... He was still unmoving. In the next moment, he messaged He Yong, “Action!”

A massive boom sounded in the distance! He Yong struck with his fist and raised a collision that rang through heaven and earth.

“How dare a Celestial killer attack personages of the nine ministries!” He Yong roared in all directions.

BOOM!

His fists dominated the world! It was the only thing that existed beneath the heavens! In the darkness, a dog morphed into a golden color and moved soundlessly, viciously slashing its paw at the black-robed powerhouse!

Bam!

Loud explosions continued to echo. Wu Yong and his men swiftly looked in the relevant direction.

“Hurry and go help...” Wu Yong transmitted to his men.

“Sir, is... that... He Yong?”

Help? He Yong was a royal powerhouse and hollering that he was handling a Celestial killer. How could they help?

Wu Yong cursed to himself! They would have to help by accident. As he thought, something unwished for had developed. He Yong’s presence here likely meant he was working in conjunction with Li Hao.

Where was Li Hao?

A ripple undulated through the void and silver armor appeared in front of him.

So fast!

No, it wasn't speed. It was like he'd teleported right in front of the three. The young man threw something down and vanished without a look back.

Wu Yong didn't have time to react before subconsciously realizing something. He didn't even have time to retrieve the Arcanus talisman before his eyes widened with dismay. There was no time to warn his men, he had to run for it!

KABOOM!

An ear-splitting detonation ripped through the air, shaking even Skystar City in its wake. It came from an energy bomb designed for metamorphosis experts. Just one alone could very possibly blow up a metamorphosis supernatural, depending on their strength. The stronger ones could still get away, but injury was inevitable.

The two peak Novas were blasted out of their positions in the sky. One of them was unlucky enough that their head was blown straight to bits. The other shouted with alarm and fled, paying the price of both legs being obliterated to get away.

Wu Yong likewise snarled with fury and raced through the air.

Kaboom!

A massive energy pulse exploded behind him and churned through the sky. A formidable presence erupted from Wu Yong's body in response. The tremendous impact sent him flying backward through the air as he vomited blood, but gratification shone at the corner of his eye. He was only injured and his organs shaken up...

Pfft!

A sword stabbed through the sky! It came with perfect timing—Wu Yong punched out with a howl. “I am the president of the Four Seas Company, the nine ministries will show you no mercy if you dare harm me...”

He wanted to scare Li Hao into retreat; he knew it was the young man. So long as Li Hao hesitated, so long as he felt that he couldn’t kill Wu Yong out in the open, the latter would have the chance to take out the Arcanus talisman and kill Li Hao.

However, this was precisely the opening that the young man wanted to make use of. His longsword jabbed forward without a sound!

An arm flew through the air. Wu Yong’s expression shifted drastically as there was a storage ring attached to the arm. His other arm hastily flailed after the severed one.

That bastard Li Hao! He’d suddenly broken through the air with the Windchaser Boots! Wu Yong greatly regretted forgetting that the young man had that treasure and could bring it to bear to great effect. The key question was, where did the guy’s energy bomb come from?

He didn’t have time to think; Liu Sha was almost upon them from the rear. He couldn’t allow Li Hao to dictate the pace of the engagement. Wu Yong resolutely gave up on his storage ring when his thoughts traveled here and instantly backed away, turning to flee.

Li Hao connected with empty air as his target retracted an arm the moment he would’ve struck. The young man was rather surprised and grabbed the falling arm. He looked at the fleeing Wu Yong, smiling at the metamorphosis expert. He’s capable enough to make this decision at this time! Li Hao’s five supernatural locks partially snapped into half in the next moment and a powerful presence barreled out of his body.

The young man clutched the severed arm and activated the Windchaser Boots again, instantly breaking through and striking with his sword. He settled back on his feet, activated the boots again, and struck again! He didn't care how Wu Yong was, simply striking again and again.

Pfft!

The longsword sank into the other's body, but Li Hao immediately backed away. The Windchaser Boots repeatedly flared to life. Wu Yong cried out with agony and wanted to erupt with fury, but his blows couldn't find their target!

The boots flared so Li Hao could deliver another stroke! His blows were coming with increasing speed. Wu Yong seemed to see a ferocious tiger leaping at him, wanting to rip his heart out with a claw. He wasn't dead and vomited blood with disbelief.

"You're... not... peak Nova..." The young man was absolutely not just a peak Nova! Their intelligence was wrong, dead wrong! Li Hao was stronger than him! Wu Yong didn't know if it was a delusion or not, but he felt that he wouldn't be able to match Li Hao even if he was in prime condition. Not only was the young man strong when it came to battle strength, but he was equipped with the heritage weapons.

Nova?

Li Hao had never thought he was a Nova, he was a martial master. Martial masters were different from supernaturals. He pierced through Wu Yong's head without another word; the man stared wide-eyed back at him. This was the first metamorphosis expert that Li Hao had killed by himself.

The heavily injured peak Nova missing his legs looked on with horror. "Liu Sha..." Hope flared in his heart. Liu Sha was here! She was right there in the distance with a few more Novas. Liu Sha was here, he didn't need to die!

Chapter 653: Paper Tiger (III)

Wu Yong was dead!

Everyone had underestimated Li Hao and his true battle strength. They all thought that it was the young man's heritage weapon that was the key factor, as well as Silver Moon's support. In many people's eyes, Li Hao himself couldn't compare to a metamorphosis expert.

But... was that really the case?

Li Hao rifled through Wu Yong's storage ring. He smiled when he found something that looked like a crystal floating up to him. He could sense that it was similar to the core origin talisman that the little tree had given to him. It differed in the sense that a supernatural presence emanated from it instead of core origin.

How brutal is the destructive force of an Arcanus talisman?

Who knew how powerful it was? He'd know if he tried it. Li Hao shot through the void without hesitation. This battle utilizing the Windchaser Boots was becoming a very meaningful one. He immediately crossed three thousand meters, then another set of three thousand meters...

Liu Sha and the others were six thousand meters out. The woman's jaw dropped when Li Hao suddenly appeared in front of them. She'd caught vague glimpses of the battle ahead, but the young man was here before she had a chance to rush over!

She immediately took out an energy bomb without another word, then three more after a split second of hesitation. Though they were ready for use, she dithered over whether to throw them out. These items were too powerful and they were still close to the city gates.

It hadn't been long since Wu Yong departed the city, so she was still within its sphere of influence. Creating such a massive explosion nearby might bring down great trouble on her head. She also wouldn't be able to explain herself if she killed large numbers of city defenders and civilians.

Li Hao tossed out the crystalline item as she hesitated, then vanished. While Liu Sha and the others felt that the young man would hesitate, he did not at all. There were no civilians nearby, just plenty

of city defenders. He didn't care about their deaths! Li Hao would only feel the pity of letting survivors get away even if he killed nine out of ten officials and soldiers in Skystar City.

A surge of metal and fire energy entangled in the air, ripping through the void! Eyes wide with horror, Liu Sha quickly threw out her energy bombs!

KABOOM!

A tidal wave of power flattened all nearby structures. Nearly one hundred city defenders near the city gates were spontaneously annihilated. The ground split open as the terrible force spread in all directions.

"Ah!!" Ghastly shrieks filled the air as two surges of power barreled into the Novas next to Liu Sha. It was like they were standing in the sun!

"Skystar Vice Commander Li Hao of the Night Watchers is enforcing the law on the premises and killing evil supernaturals! Liu Sha of the Skystar Colosseum wantonly kills innocents and slaughters the city defenders. She wields energy bombs and Arcanus talismans. The Night Watchers will certainly trace them to their origins!" Li Hao's voice sounded like he was the devil himself.

His ringing rebuke echoed through the city, but the massive metropolis was quiet. Deathly quiet!

BOOM!

Sword light radiated the earth—Li Hao was too fast and appeared before Liu Sha had the chance to retreat. Thankfully, the power behind the Arcanus talisman had been greatly negated by the energy bombs. Although she was gravely injured, she still had the ability to fight and swiftly retrieved the remaining nine energy bombs.

She might go down with Li Hao if she threw them out when the young man was so close by, but what was she hesitating for at this stage?! They could just die together!



A gigantic fist arrived before Li Hao did and punched through the sky behind Liu Sha. Another enormous blade fell down from the side while Li Hao's sword pierced through the void. Had the woman forgotten about He Yong and the others?

He Yong even appeared in front of Li Hao, blazing with a formidable presence in a desire to block the blast from the energy bombs for the young man. He might not die, and Li Hao had paid for his life!

He Yong was extremely fast, but Li Hao was even faster. He shot through the void and immediately appeared in front of Liu Sha. There was a massive hole in her chest, but she grit her teeth and sneered coldly. She'd thrown out the energy bombs!

Let's all die together!

Li Hao was so incredibly strong, as were He Yong and the rest! But she'd activated the nine energy bombs and thrown them out! She could already foresee how they would explode. Not only did Li Hao fail to run away, but he suddenly approached her instead. Too bad that you're too late!

The young man didn't care about that. He could sense the surge in unstable energy, but he wanted to give a certain idea a try. A massive suction force erupted from Stellaris as he called out, "Panther!"

The dog looked on wordlessly in the darkness and opened its mouth, devouring everything in its path. Sword and dog swallowed all of the energy in the void. Liu Sha watched with an open mouth—the bombs... didn't explode!

Yang Shan flicked a glance to the side, prompting a sharp sword to jab through the void. It pierced through Liu Sha's head with a soft squelch. Qin Lian materialized in the gloom. She hadn't appeared that many times tonight, but showed herself in this moment to claim a head. She'd killed a metamorphosis expert!

Although her target had been gravely wounded and on the verge of death, they still needed to accomplish a deed or two. They needed to let Li Hao know that they could pull their weight!

Yang Shan vanished with a shout, “Vice Commander Li Hao of the Skystar Office is enforcing the law! All irrelevant personnel are to withdraw from the premises! Wu Yong of the Four Seas Company and Liu Sha of the Skystar Colosseum colluded with pirates and monster spirits, feeding humans to the monster spirits! Their crimes are too wicked to be pardoned and their evils stink to the heavens! They have been executed! Liu Sha attempted to destroy Skystar City with energy bombs, but the vice commander stopped her in time! Everyone is to take shelter to avoid accidental injury!”

His voice rang through the land! It was easy to imagine just how loud a metamorphosis expert could be at full volume.

Stellaris furiously exploded with suction force as it digested a domineering surge of energy. Panther hiccuped and bubbled with energy. Unstable force rioted within its body, but was instantly absorbed.

The Monster Spirit Envoy was known for its ability to devour back in the day. It could swallow any type of energy, so long as the food didn’t exceed its limits by too much. Hence, all of this was a delicacy for a descendant of its bloodline.

Skystar City was eerily quiet.

“Display the information!” He Yong’s voice rang out; many heard him. A myriad of footsteps sounded on the street as a vast quantity of fliers were disseminated. They rained down on the capital city before He Yong roared again, “Turn it on!”

In the old pub that he frequented, the boss hauled out a massive machine when he heard the instruction and aimed it at the sky. An enormous projection screen appeared in the air. A grinning He Yong looked at Li Hao and raised one eyebrow. Not bad, right?

The young man wanted him to publicize what they’d collected so that the entire city would know of the crimes of the Four Seas Company. He’d done so much more than Li Hao thought. An image appeared on the massive projection screen—a big bird!

“No no no, I don’t eat people. It’s just food that the Four Seas Company supplies...”

Li Hao broke through the ground with a stomp and revealed large quantities of human bones, as well as numerous living women and children. “This is what you eat?”

“Yes, this trash...”

A powerful force swept through the air as the conversation continued, splitting the screen with a loud crack. However, the scenes it depicted were already committed to heart by many. The monster spirits ate people, and many of them came from the Four Seas Company!

“Well done, Li Hao,” a voice traveled in from the distance. “But some things shouldn’t be revealed, it wouldn’t be good to scare the people...”

“The Four Seas Company comes under the Ministry of Finance, I can understand it if the minister is heartbroken by his subordinates’ evil deeds. But it should be up to the people to pass judgment, so that they will know that there is still justice and righteousness in this world!

“Night Watchers, clean up the Colosseum!” Li Hao’s voice boomed in the four corners of the city. “Kill all those who dare resist!”

“Kill!” His command was answered by a loud yell in the distance. Golden Spear charged out with a large contingent of Silver Moon Guards!

Another person suddenly appeared next to Li Hao. Minister Liu strode through the air like a breeze of fresh air. The young man looked expressionlessly at him. Minister Liu looked around the surroundings and then at He Yong. He nodded with a smile. “Well done, Li Hao, well done indeed!”

“I’m just alright!”

“But you know?” chuckled the minister. “Winning the people’s heart means nothing at all!” he transmitted this part as he simply looked at Li Hao with a smile on his face. Are you trying to instigate action from the people? You have to keep in mind that they’re nothing. They can achieve nothing. So what if they knew about the gossip?

“I am Liu Yunqing,” the minister’s voice suddenly rang out. “The Four Seas Company colluded with pirates and slaughtered innocents. This devastates our heart! The Ministry of Finance cannot deny our responsibility, so we will listen to the Skystar Commander of the Night Watchers from the Ministry of the Inspectorate in all things.

“Vice Commander Li Hao’s battle strength reigns supreme—he killed a metamorphosis expert in the blink of an eye. Southern Fist He Yong’s bravery is unmatched. I am ashamed of this development and hopes for the nine ministries to bestow merits and accolades upon these heroes. They have eliminated a great pestilence for the dynasty today!”

He vanished after these words.

“The Skystar Commander of the Night Watchers from the Ministry of the Inspectorate opens its office today!” Li Hao announced once the man was gone. “Those who have suffered injustices can head to the Nine Dragons Street to file a report at the Night Watcher headquarters. Those who have conspired with Wu Yong and Liu Sha are hereby encouraged to turn yourselves in! I have killed a dozen Novas today and three metamorphosis experts. I can demand an explanation for the side of justice for all those in Skystar unless it is an Arcanus who stands in my way!

“Justice lives in the people’s hearts. If a crime involves major officials of the Ministry of Finance, I am sadly unable to address it. I would then invite the inspector general of the Inspectorate, Director Yao Si of the Night Watchers, and Deputy Director Hou Xiaochen of the Night Watchers to take action and cleanse the land of unwanted elements! Please return clear skies to our home!

“Additionally, this vice commander has captured thousands of people from Four Seas Island. Among them is the grandson of the greatest pirate of the North Sea, descendants of various ministers, and others. I will not be partial to anyone and will fully investigate every crime to its source. We will see if the Four Seas Company has committed more crimes, if they have brutalized citizens, and if they have supplied humans as food for monster spirits. The Four Seas Company

could also colluded with the three evil organizations! Southern Fist He Yong killed a Celestial metamorphosis expert. I look to the royal family to shelter him so that he will not be assassinated by the three evil organizations!”

#### Chapter 654: To Make Known First (I)

Though Li Hao’s voice rang through the city, an unearthly silence answered him. He’d flung back the covers today to expose the depravity of the dynasty’s upper echelon, shaking the heavens! The young man’s gesture was immensely unwise, but he continued to wear a smile on his face.

His smile was cool, indifferent. He wasn’t afraid of others knowing what he’d done. What are you afraid of, since you don’t care about the people?

An incomparably majestic voice rang out from the palace that’d lain still for a very long time. “Li Hao of the Skystar Commander Office should be richly rewarded for excising this tumor! The royal family has no treasures to reward since we have long retreated behind the curtains. We hereby bestow Li Hao with the position of Skystar Duke, a nominal honor to indicate our sentiments!

“We also reward the young man with his own complex and look to Vice Commander Li to redouble his efforts on behalf of the people. Please return clear skies to the dynasty!”

Those in the city rustled with astonishment. The royal family! For someone’s voice to be heard throughout the entire city meant that he was an ultimate powerhouse—who? The Skystar King?

It was then that the shocked populace recalled that they still had an emperor! [1]

Those of the nine ministries listened to the announcement with grave expressions. Li Hao, you should know that your judgment of the ministries today gives the royal family an enormous opportunity. They couldn’t help but take it! You’re seriously a troublemaker!

.....

At the same time.

Hou Xiaochen also sighed. I knew that you didn't leave, but I didn't think that you'd be this ruthless! You've ripped off the coverings of the nine ministries in one go! The royal family rose out of the water because they saw a chance to. How are you going to proceed next, Li Hao... The tempests to come are going to be even bigger! I may not be able to keep them contained!

.....

The subject of all these thoughts, Li Hao, didn't make a sound from where he stood in the distant sky. He neither expressed gratitude for the royal favor nor declined it. The Skystar Duke? Who wanted that position? Skystar was the name of the dynasty. Naming him the Skystar Duke... The royal family wanted nothing more than his death, didn't they??

The nine ministries would be at odds with him so long as this position existed!

The young man suddenly smiled when his thoughts traveled here. That wouldn't be bad either. Let's all have some fun together. He looked at He Yong with a smile. "C'mon, let's go check out the Skystar Colosseum. Take those guys with us. Kill whoever tries to rescue any of them!"

"Understood!" He Yong grinned radiantly. Li Hao was... really vicious. He was going straight against the nine ministries!

On one hand, it wasn't all of the nine ministries, just the Ministry of Finance that he'd irreparably broken relations with. There might be many dangers to come, but wasn't opportunity found in danger?

He Yong was in quite a good mood as he turned over those thoughts. As for exposing himself... he'd done so for some very decent benefits. What was the harm in that, then? He didn't hide himself so he could become weaker. If it would help him grow stronger, then he could expose himself.

.....

Li Hao's name was known throughout Skystar City by now. Demon Sword Li Hao!

This was a terrifying guy who'd killed multiple metamorphoses and taken down the Four Seas Company and Skystar Colosseum in his first couple of days at the royal city! The Lius truly had many reasons to cry this time.

.....

The young man was well and truly known throughout the capital city. The tens of millions of denizens of Skystar City all knew of Night Watcher Li Hao of the Skystar Commander Office. Although they weren't familiar with the agency, everyone committed the name to memory. The long-vanished royal family had also spoken and decreed him to be the Skystar Duke.

Such titles were worthless now. Even the royal family was worthless, not to mention a duke. But in these eighty years, the royal family had bestowed exceedingly few titles. Thus, bequeathing Li Hao with a title and a manor raised an incredible uproar.

.....

The Inspectorate.

The inspector general, also the minister of the ministry, strolled in with his customary leisurely gait. He was late. He ignored the looks of fear and consternation below and looked outside, sinking into deep thought.

Li Hao!

The lad had first taken down the Four Seas Company, instantly killed Liu Sha, and was now up against the Skystar Colosseum. He'd spontaneously killed three metamorphosis experts and a dozen Novas. And if that wasn't enough, he'd also seized the Arcanus talisman created by the last Minister

of Finance. It looked like that ministry was going to eat a heavy loss this time. Their minister had paid an enormous price to detonate his family's own energy bombs. What a waste!

"The energy bombs were negated... What a scary kid!"

That sword was very uncommon, as was the dog. Multiple energy bombs likely represented the foundations of Liu family wealth. They'd all been devoured and Li Hao took on Liu Sha in frontal combat! Although he wasn't the one to kill her, it was sufficient to prove that he had metamorphosis battle strength.

That was even more frightening!

The inspector general turned to the palace, then beyond the Avenues of the Nine Ministries. A raucous din spontaneously exploded there. The heavens were shaking!

No one thought that such an enormous show would occur at Skystar City today, that the new Skystar commander would be so bold. Everyone meant Li Hao with that title, not Hou Xiaochen. Hou Xiaochen was overlooked by many at this point now. They cared only about Li Hao, even though he was just a vice commander.

"Inspector General..." Someone looked at the man; he looked back at them and suddenly grinned.

"Let's pay the Ministry of Finance a visit!"

"For what?"

"For a bite to eat!" sneered the inspector general. "One of his factions colluded with pirates and brutalized his own race to feed humans to monster spirits. Does Liu Yunqing think he'll smooth things over so easily?"



He headed straight for the Ministry of Finance—he wasn't the only one. Members of the other eight ministries were all charging there. Since something they could all make use of had been publicly revealed, then they could only tender their apologies. The Ministry of Finance was so rich that it was overflowing. As much of a nuisance Li Hao was, the Lius had to pay in blood first to pacify the events that'd just taken place!

.....

Within the Ministry of Finance.

The smile dropped off of Minister Liu's face. A cough sounded in his ears moments later.

“Ai! To think that... very well, it seems that this is to be our fate. Although I didn't expect that this would be the result, we should've been ready for failure. This is just as well, we can lay low and bide our time for a while to come. Other than the business of collecting taxes, they can take anything they want from the ministry.”

“Father!” Minister Liu set his jaw. “Are we losing them all, just like that?”

“Where there are losses, there are gains. This may not be bad,” the old man's voice sounded again. “With the situation as it is, Li Hao and that Silver Moon gang are in their peak. It is good that we have suffered such a heavy loss. Since the royal family has surfaced, let them fight! Other than the business of collecting tax revenue, we can lose the rest. All of the merchant companies with the Four Seas Company, the Colosseum, and the industries in Skystar City. Give them all up!

“If they continue to go after us, then relinquish the second rank ruins that we have.”

Minister Liu's expression shifted drastically and he tamped down the shock in his heart. “Father, we've just temporarily lost the advantage,” he murmured. “It is indeed difficult to accept the death of two metamorphosis experts, but...”

He abruptly deflated as he thought more, then nodded. “Alright then, I understand! Li Hao is a guy who doesn’t play by the rules. The Ministry of Finance does need to lay low for a period of time to offset the effects of these events. Li Hao... doesn’t seem to have any scandals to his name yet. The nine ministries and the royal family certainly wouldn’t turn on each other...”

The minister smiled ruefully. No one typically publicized such deeds because there wasn’t a fully clean institution out there. Hence, no one would dare rip off the covers like this! Everyone was the same, but Li Hao dared take such action. If they exposed the Inspectorate’s scandals in order to strike back at him, that would be creating a laughingstock out of themselves.

Would Li Hao care about that?

Not at all!

The more that they threw out, the more excited he would become. One who watches the show loves it when it grows grander. There was nothing that one could pick at him since he’d just emerged on the scene. Just try finding a blemish on his record!

“Heh heh...” the minister suddenly sneered. “All of them just want to watch the show, but they fail to consider where Li Hao is from. He’s a barbarian from Silver Moon! They might be just spinning a cocoon around themselves since all of us have some shit beneath our asses!

“Father’s right, we’ll batten down the hatches for a bit since we’ve suffered such a great loss. I’d like to see what kind of waves Li Hao can raise!”

Alright then, they wanted a show, did they? And even the royal family wanted a piece of the action? Then, very well, let’s wait and see. Li Hao wasn’t a kind soul; everyone simply kept their eyes on Hou Xiaochen. Who knew if Li Hao would soundlessly advance to the metamorphosis level at some point?

Just wait! No one would be in for a good time if this continued.

The minister sneered again when he sensed that he had visitors. Were they all just so eager? This works, I need some time to stabilize my cultivation level, anyhow.

## Chapter 655: To Make Known First (II)

“There is ample evidence for the crimes committed by Wu Yong of the Four Seas Company,” Minister Liu announced from the lobby without bothering to emerge from the building. “His sins cannot be pardoned and his death well deserved. I bear undeniable responsibility for his actions. Therefore, the Four Seas Company will revert to the government from this day forth! The Skystar Colosseum will no longer be affiliated with the Ministry of Finance—it can be settled as appropriate!

“The Ministry of Finance is the important hub of finance for the dynasty, but I am incompetent and remiss in my discipline. Henceforth, the Ministry of Finance will continue to operate only the business of collecting tax revenue from the provinces. All other associated businesses will cease operations immediately.

“In addition, Li Hao of the Night Watchers from the Inspectorate has accomplished great deeds. The royal family has just made him the Skystar Duke. Thus, I would like to recommend Li Hao be put forth as a deputy director of the Night Watchers. His merits and rank are sufficient, just that his experience is slightly lacking. But in this day and age, we should give some opportunities to the young.

“Therefore, I find the circumstances appropriate to promote him!” Liu Yunqing laughed. “Think it over, Minister Chen! I won’t participate in the particulars.” He paused at this point in his speech. “If everyone is still unsatisfied with these arrangements, then my family is in possession of a set of ruins that might have belonged to a martial university. Those will be made public in compensation. I am not in the best of health these days, so I will not address everyone further.”

Various looks flickered through the eyes of the ministers on the scene. Liu Yunqing was letting everyone step all over him in this matter! He didn’t struggle or strike back, but simply waved the flag of surrender. They also vaguely felt another presence on the scene and understood that perhaps the old minister had spoken.

The older generation of ministers were existences that defined the initial layout of the nine ministries. No matter what the situation was in present day, these were true characters of note back in the day. Having seen more than their share of wiles and double-crosses, they were ready for any sort of development.

“Then we shall not further disturb Minister Liu.” The inspector general smiled. “Rest and recuperate well. We have been colleagues for many years, don’t fall into ill health on account of a few rotten apples.”

“Thank you for your concern,” the minister responded and said no more.

The other ministers laughed and left. That was enough! As for how the spoils would be divvied up, that was up to each ministry’s capabilities. The Ministry of Finance grasped an exceedingly high number of industries. It wasn’t just businesses, but ruins, connections, networks...

The Lius had simply just given up on all of this, other than their control over tax revenues. This was the foundation of their power and authority. As such, that could not be relinquished. If they did, the Ministry of Finance would no longer exist and it would be complete warfare with the Lius. As the situation stood, they’d only relinquished their peripheral industries.

The process had been easier than they anticipated, but those of the other ministries weren’t at ease. With their easy capitulation, the Lius plainly intended to develop Li Hao into a keen blade. He hacked at the Lius today, but what about tomorrow?

.....

As the nine ministries busily transacted with each other, the rest of Skystar City stirred restlessly.

In one of the slums of the royal city, the little girl who’d shown Li Hao around was currently standing very close to the young man. She could clearly make out his form. Slums ringed the outskirts of the dynasty capital. The poor did not have the right to live in the city center.

The little girl had her head tilted to the sky; she watched fearlessly. She was already reduced to such low circumstances, what else was she afraid of? The fights of the strong were the concerns of the strong. She didn’t understand the conflicts of the high and mighty and didn’t care. That was their business.

For the moment, she stared at the sky. Some of the children next to her were scared and someone whispered, “Stop watching, Sis Yu Qi. What if that strong guy senses it?”

“I think I know that person!” the girl responded after a long moment.

“Who?”

“The one in silver armor, that vice commander of the Skystar whatever...”

“Have you seen him before, Sis Yu Qi?”

“Not before, but a few days ago...” the girl replied. “He just said that whoever has grievances can go to him, right?”

“That’s what they all say. Do you actually believe him, big sis?” mumbled a kid next to her. “These big guys are too scary. I think a lot of people died in that huge explosion. There’s also something about Novas and metamorphosis... We’ve heard about these big guys before. He killed the boss of the Four Seas Company and the boss of Skystar Colosseum!”

Those two bosses were very well known. These children running errands and guiding visitors around the city had heard of them. It was proper important personages they spoke of, not some hooligan that they regularly encountered in their neighborhood.

The little girl nodded without saying anything; she continued to look at the sky. Li Hao of the Skystar Commander Office! Demon Sword Li Hao!

She’d heard people mention the name a few days ago—apparently he was a barbarian from the north who massacred people like mowing down grass. But... he was likely the one she’d served before. He’d wanted to go to the Night Watchers to look for someone. She hadn’t known who it was before, but now she did. He’d been most likely looking for the Hou Xiaochen who’d arrived earlier.

All the same, the girl couldn't really believe it. This callous fiend who killed without blinking had ridden her bike to the Night Watcher headquarters!

Yu Qi sank into deep contemplation as she stared at the sky and lowered her head. Li Hao was gone, off to kill more people.

.....

The Skystar Colosseum.

It was eerily quiet. Those who didn't stay quiet were all dead. Golden Spear had arrived with the Silver Moon Guards. They surrounded the Colosseum. Many were on their knees inside the structure and didn't dare get up. Another group of guests were cautiously preparing to leave. Some were conversing with the Silver Moon Guards, resulting in some voices rising in the quiet structure. "What are you doing, I'm of the Skystar administration..."

"We're just here to watch a fight, is that against the law?"

"....." Many wanted to leave as soon as possible. There was also a crowd watching from outside the Colosseum, but they didn't draw near.

There weren't many powerhouses among the Silver Moon Guards, Golden Spear was the only Nova. There were some Solars, but not that many. This level of force was insufficient to maintain order at the Colosseum. However, no one resisted all the same. The boisterous guests knew that a killing fiend was on its way. There were some who wanted to make a run for it, but the heavyweights among the crowd could sense that He Yong was already here.

He Yong landed on the ground and threw a mocking glance at Golden Spear, enraging the man.

“You can all wait for Vice Commander Li to arrive.” A merry He Yong addressed the noisy crowd with indifference. “Stop making a fuss. This is Skystar City, so even the commanders adhere to law and order. If you run off, that would be resisting enforcement! Don’t blame me if you die then.”

Someone presented themselves and took a deep breath before addressing He Yong. “Brother He, I’m just here for the fun and won’t trouble the vice commander. The ninth prince is still waiting for me, so do you think I can go back first?”

“Oi, you’re here too!” He Yong nodded with a smile. “Sure, go ahead!”

The man sagged with relief, but then heard He Yong continue, “I’m just external personal and don’t represent the Night Watchers...”

The man’s footsteps halted and his expression turned stiff. Then what did you say all that for? What do you mean by this?? He wanted to leave, but didn’t dare move anymore.

A massive ship landed heavily at this time. Li Hao looked down at the assembly, resplendent in his suit of silver armor. The premises immediately quieted. He was only looking at them, but exerting great pressure all the same.

The powerhouse conversing with He Yong turned solemn and took half a step back. Screw you, He Yong! When did you start running with that demon of a Li Hao?

The young man simply looked at the gathering of Colosseum employees and guests. Much of the latter looked at the ship, finding familiar faces on it. Some even located family members—brothers, sisters, father and son... Here they were, reunited under such circumstances.

The atmosphere took on an awkward bent.

“Bring them all in!” Li Hao smiled. “The Silver Moon Guards are in charge of booking those who work for the Colosseum, whereas the regular guests can board the ship! I am not heartless. There is no crime for just watching, but we’ll have to trouble you for a bit!”

“As things should be!” An old man walked out of the crowd. “It is right and proper that we adhere to law enforcement efforts. We have no opinions otherwise, Vice Commander Li. I’d just like to ask how long it might take.”

Li Hao smiled very warmly in return. “Just a day if we’re quick about it, or a few days if it takes longer!”

How many days is a few days? Despite the question, the old man didn’t ask it.

Someone approached from the outskirts and transmitted from a distance, “Vice Commander Li, I am Deputy Zhou Qin of the Night Watchers. I saw my son on the ship just now, I wonder if…”

A deputy director outranked Li Hao. The young man tilted his head at the smiling middle-aged man.

“My son just likes to have some fun,” the man transmitted. “He’s not the sort to cause trouble. I’ll give him a stern talking to when we get back.”

Li Hao raised a brow and smiled, replying in turn, “That is just as well. You can take him home as soon as I bring him back to headquarters and make a note on his record.”

“We don’t need to go to so much trouble, vice commander.” Deputy Zhou Qin frowned slightly. “I can take him with me now…”

“There are thousands of people here!” Li Hao answered aloud after a long pause. “All sorts of people, Deputy Zhou. I’m already giving you a lot of face since we’re on the same team. You can have your son back so long as proper procedure is observed and a fine is paid. Why must you insist



on leaving with your son right at this very moment? Are you not showing me face, or do you want to take advantage of this opportunity to step on me and demonstrate your authority?”

### Chapter 656: To Make Known First (III)

Li Hao stalked toward the deputy director, swiftly reinforced by He Yong, Yang Shan, and the others.

“Who are you taking orders from?” Li Hao asked expressionlessly. “Or do you think that because we’re both Night Watchers and that you outrank me, I should give way to you?”

“I already told you that I’ll let him go after we get back. Do you insist otherwise because you think I won’t dare do anything to a superior, or do you think you’re stronger than me?”

Killing intent flared!

Deputy Zhou Qin looked on gravely and took a deep breath. “This is a misunderstanding, I am just concerned about my son. You’ve misunderstood me, vice commander. Since you’ve made it clear, we can discuss this when we get back.”

“Do not be a blade in someone else’s hand so easily.” Li Hao looked meaningfully at him. “A peak Nova is strong, but it also depends on timing and luck! If someone wants me to let someone go, have them come themselves! Don’t hide behind others like a cowardly rat!

“As for you, the Skystar Commander Office should not fall under your purview. I’ll thoroughly look into your son and release him if there are no problems. If there are... you can try and see if you can take someone from Silver Moon martial masters!”

The deputy director turned silent, nodded, and left without a word. He was just here to sound out Li Hao, but the young man proved very resolute. It was his arena tonight. The deputy might easily cause a conflict if he said anything else, and that was not the result that he or the one behind him wanted. They just wanted to probe the young man, but Li Hao’s extreme reaction further demonstrated just how barbarous and unconfined these Silver Moon savages were.

Seeing that even Li Hao's superior had fallen flat on his face, those watching on the outskirts chose to sit on their hands. If Li Hao had agreed to let the deputy's son go, he would be mobbed by people right now. Since he had agreed to let those of the Night Watchers go, why not the others?

But since he'd refused, no one further tested him.

Inside the Colosseum, the noble young masters and misses drooped like they'd suffered a loss in the family. Although nothing may befall them yet, who knew what this killing fiend would do once they were in Night Watcher territory? They smelled the pungent scent drifting from the ship, that didn't mean anything good. It represented that those before them had been terrified out of their wits.

But under Li Hao's watchful gaze, these unbridled nobles docilely walked toward the ship while the Silver Moon Guard corralled those in the Colosseum. No one resisted, the stage was set. The Colosseum lost its ability to resist when Liu Sha was killed and the Novas with her blown to bits.

"Seal off the premises!" Li Hao commanded. "Take everyone back to Night Watcher headquarters. We will not falsely charge anyone or erroneously let any criminals go. All those who have violated Skystar laws will be punished accordingly!"

As he scanned the surroundings, some shuffled a half step back and others remained in place without a change in expression. The young man didn't care about their reaction.

"All those whose friends and family have been taken shall await Night Watcher notification! Our apologies for the inconveniences rendered by tonight's operation. In addition, I was unable to prevent the death of city defenders when the Colosseum boss detonated energy bombs at the city gates. That is my fault! Those city defenders died because of me! Their families can apply for compensation at the Inspectorate or Ministry of Finance. They will be compensated according to the rules of war!"

The ship rose after he concluded his remarks and left the area.

"Vice Commander Li," a voice sounded in Li Hao's ears. "Minister Mu would like to chat with the vice commander tomorrow. Please come to the Mu Manor or Minister of Internal Affairs when you have a moment."

“I will!”

The Internal Affairs representative had transmitted from the dark and didn't show himself. Plainly, the minister wanted to stay in the shadows and avoid clashing with Li Hao, even though his daughter had been taken.

The ship flew through the air and swiftly reached Night Watcher headquarters. There were plenty of people aboard—three thousand at the beginning, now there were four thousand.

The Night Watcher headquarters had erupted to life long ago. It was lit as brightly as day and people busted to and fro. Big Eyes and the other two youngsters were incredibly curious, craning their necks forward as the ship landed with a thud. Li Hao was the first to disembark.

Manager Yu stood at the front of the doors, Hou Xiaochen wasn't present. She smiled at the young man, a smile that quickly turned resigned. You're really something, aren't you! We all thought that you'd run off, but you strike with the fury of thunder and lightning as soon as you appear. A dozen Novas have died tonight—that can only be described as a horrendous loss.

Not only was Manager Yu present, but so was Yao Si's manager. She piped up timidly when she saw Li Hao, “Vice Commander Liu, the director requests your presence when you have a moment...”

“I understand.” Li Hao nodded. He was unfamiliar with the Night Watchers, but whether it was people on duty, carrying out missions, or here to watch the show, they all hastily averted their eyes when they saw Li Hao look over. Only the three youngsters kept curious looks trained on him.

He looked back at them, but didn't address them. Li Hao knew that they were thorns in the sides of the Night Watchers. But so what?

The three were displeased to see Li Hao ignore them.

“Vice Commander Li!” Big Eyes grinned. “We are...”

“I’m busy, we can talk later!” Li Hao answered indifferently with another glance.

Big Eyes flushed with anger, but the young man suddenly sneered, “You live off the fat and oil of the people! You do nothing despite receiving a salary. Perverse geniuses? Thorns in the side of the agency? You’re just a bunch of trash!”

“.....” A hushed silence draped over the scene. The trio’s expressions shifted slightly, but Li Hao continued to look coldly at them.

“What are you looking at me for? I may demand a lot in payment, but I render services that are worthy of my fee! I can absolutely justify my salary and the vows I made when I joined the Inspectorate! You guys... get away from me and don’t let me dig up anything about you. Otherwise, I’ll make sure you get yours!”

The trio’s eyes widened and the rest of the Night Watchers were also shocked. What... was going on? What did Li Hao mean?

The young man ignored them and walked inside the office building.

Big Eyes and her companions stared for a very long time. The girl finally stammered, “Did he... just... yell at us?”

Yes, they’d been yelled at!

“Yep, he did,” Long Blade confirmed with embarrassment.

Spear also sighed. “He doesn’t think much of us.”

Indeed, that was the meaning behind their interaction. The three of them had wanted to greet Li Hao, but he couldn't be bothered with them. What perverse geniuses, what thorns, what geniuses, and what names on the Divine Masters Ranking? He thought nothing of it all, it was all meaningless. He simply felt that these people didn't count as much of true heroes. Hypocritical and false, there was no need to strike up a conversation with them.

"After seeing him dominate all sides tonight, I thought we could be friends. But now... hmph!" Big Eyes complained. They'd been ignored and scoffed at! She was furious!

Her anger soon turned to amusement when she saw someone on the ship. "Hey, Mu Xiaorong, so you've been captured too?"

Mu Xiaorong ignored her.

"Who would've thought I'd see you here?" Big Eyes giggled. "But he's certainly got some nerve to capture even you. Beg me. I'll think of a way to get you out of here if you do..."

A surge of sword intent barreled straight at her; the three jerked with alarm. A longsword brimming with killing intent slammed to the ground in front of them. Color drained from Big Eyes' face.

"Whether it's a joke or sincerity, I will kill whoever dares release a single person that I brought back!" Li Hao's voice rang out.

"I'm joking... really..." Blood welled up in Big Eyes' mouth and she took a few steps back with dejection and shock. "We're at odds with each other, so I saw an opportunity for a joke. I didn't really mean to let her go..."

Spear and Long Blade were likewise astonished. So strong! Not only was Li Hao strong, but he was overbearing. Big Eyes had indeed been joking since she and Mu Xiaorong had feuded with each other for several years. But Li Hao fired a warning shot at the drop of a hat!

Li Hao ignored them; the longsword disappeared. Big Eyes grit her teeth morosely.

Mu Xiaorong sneered jeeringly at her. You asked for it. That guy was cold-blooded to the extreme. The same side? What same side? She could tell that Li Hao didn't see himself as on the same team as the rest of the Night Watchers. His people were likely just the Silver Moon martial masters. Everyone else who wasn't seemed to be a rival to him.

The thousands of people in the ship didn't make a sound. There were still guards on them, even though Li Hao wasn't present. Yang Shan and his wife, as well as He Yong.

He Yong grinned merrily and looked at the three youngsters. "Have Dao Sword come out to fight him. Otherwise... the three of you can give it up. Don't worry, Ole Hou and I won't interfere if Dao Sword fights him, hahaha!"

It'd be fun to just watch a good show.

The trio didn't respond and didn't linger. They scurried away with a pained air. Not only was Li Hao arrogant, but he was also strong to reinforce his words. Fine, they would just take the loss. That lunatic might kill them if they stayed longer.

.....

In the building of director offices.

"What was the point in that," Hou Xiaochen chuckled and shook his head. "They're just three nuisances and haven't done anything bad. They show no mercy when it comes to the three great organizations. There's something off about you."

“I haven’t calmed my killing intent yet.” Li Hao grinned. “I want to kill those people in the ship, but I don’t dare to. So it turns out there are indeed circumstances in which I can’t kill someone... Therefore, I’ll just bully those three kids. It’s no big deal, they’re the ones who ran their mouths.”

“Three kids?” Hou Xiaochen was startled with a laugh. Aren’t you younger than them? “Ai... this is a headache...”

#### Chapter 657: Martial Masters Cultivate the Heart (I)

“I know.” Li Hao nodded. “There’s trouble coming for us, but it’s not that bad. I can tell that whether it’s the nine ministries or royal family, they’re all a bunch of paper tigers. They pose and posture threateningly, but no one dares pay the hefty price needed to kill me when their interests are truly threatened. They can’t bear to spend the resources. It’s similar to when the Night Watchers were established.

“The strength I demonstrated today shows that it will at least take an Arcanus to kill me! But if one comes, there’s still you, Director Hou! They’ll have to reach an agreement first, but that will take time. Do you think I’ll be able to kill that Arcanus during this period of time?”

“You...” Hou Xiaochen roared with laughter. “You are quite interesting. You’re so different from before that I almost think you’re an entirely different person!”

“I don’t want to be so different!” Li Hao shook his head. “But this world tests my bottom line again and again and pushes it further back. I’ve thought things through—if I don’t change, then I won’t be able to solidify my footing. If I do not, then what talk of change is there?”

Hou Xiaochen thought for a bit, then nodded. He looked at the young man in a new light.

“How do you plan on handling those outside?” he asked after a long moment.

“Investigate them. Those without many issues can be released after their family pays their ransom. Those who do have significant problems in their file... can be handed over to the Inspectorate,” Li Hao responded calmly. “They can be let go if the Inspectorate refuses to manage the matter. It’s not like we can actually kill them.”

“Hahaha, very well, this is a good idea!” Hou Xiaochen nodded. “It’s great because if the Inspectorate does let them go, it’s on them...”

“No, I’ll capture them again if the Inspectorate lets them go!” Li Hao shook his head.

Hou Xiaochen blinked, then looked at Li Hao. What did the young man mean?

“I am the vice commander of the Skystar Commander Office!” Li Hao declared calmly. “I have the right to do so! I want Skystar citizens to know that I, Li Hao, am not afraid of strength or authority. I am perfectly daring enough to flip the table!

“Indeed, the people’s heart is useless and worthless, just like Minister Liu said. But I’m thinking that if I can give them a spark of hope... can it burn into a flame? Can it blaze among the plains? How many supernaturals are there in our world and how many mundanes?

“So long as supernaturals have not transcended this way of life, they will still need the crowds whether in terms of rule or intimidation. I wish to light some hope in their hearts...”

Hou Xiaochen was lost in thought and chuckled after a brief pause. He nodded. “That makes sense and it’s quite an... idea that you’ve got there. It’s just that it will be hard for me to hold up my side of things.”

He sighed wearily. What are you up to? I’m suddenly beginning to get scared... Li Hao seemed to have partially lost his mind these days. Who’d filled his thoughts with these concepts?? Was it Hong Yitang or Battle Heaven? Hou Xiaochen would be crushed by the weight of having to clean up after the young man if this continued!

Manager Yu walked in from outside the door, having heard the conversation earlier. She was both stunned and surprised by what she’d heard. “Li Hao... the director will support you wholeheartedly. He holds justice in his heart as well!”



“.....” Hou Xiaochen wanted to roll his eyes. What do you know? All you know is to say stuff like this! It was his first time thinking that Yu Luochoa trusted him entirely too much. Who knew if this was good or bad? She felt that he was almighty and omnipotent... What a helpless predicament!

“Of course, the director is the basis of confidence in all that I do!” Li Hao couldn’t help but laugh as well and nodded. “He said before that he would kill an Arcanus to intimidate everyone. Since one hasn’t appeared this time, I need to find a way to lure them out so we can establish our authority!”

“.....cough cough cough!” Hou Xiaochen’s old ailments struck again as he went into an uncontrollable coughing fit. It was a very long while later before he panted, “No need, things are fine now. You must be tired, Li Hao. You should go back and sleep!”

“I don’t have a place to stay yet, so I’ll bunk in the office for a night. I’ll see where my new manor is tomorrow!”

Hou Xiaochen was incredibly soul weary. Don’t do that, leave now, damn it! Well, he had to leave since the young man wasn’t going to. He rose with a cough.

“Then I’ll leave you to it, some rest will do you some good. I’m going to take a look around and also visit the Inspectorate to report on the Colosseum matter. After all, it has to do with the Skystar Commander Office.” He left without further discussion, at the end of his tether with Li Hao.

The young man didn’t say anything; he sent off Hou Xiaochen with an attentive look. He suddenly laughed and called out, “Someone, come!”

“Do you have any instructions... Commander Li?” Someone gingerly entered the office.

“Go find a place... Nah, the Night Watchers should have a dungeon. Lock all those people in that.”

“Commander... we... do have dungeons...” Color drained from the person’s face. But their capacity is only a few hundred people. There’s...”

Too many people outside!

“Then hold them in offices that no one’s using. They won’t dare run off—it’ll be a death sentence if they do! Also, arrange for the various Skystar news agencies to report on events that happened tonight...”

“Ah... the agencies... don’t know about the particulars... and it’s usually the Ministry of Administration that exercises control over this task...”

“Do the Night Watchers not have any news agencies in their pockets?” Li Hao looked at him.

“We do... but very few...”

“That’s enough!”

“Director Yellow...”

Li Hao interrupted him with a cold look. “Do as I say! If this ruffles Yellow Dragon’s feathers, have him take it up with me!”

The subordinate who’d answered the summons quickly trotted off to carry out his orders. Li Hao’s voice chased him down the hallway.

“Grab any random flier off the streets for what should be reported, make sure their crimes are clearly listed. Also add a word that the supernaturals are in disarray. Superhumans are completely out of control and must be brought to heel. The Skystar Commander Office will take care of these pests!”

The runner stumbled, but didn't dare look back. He hastily nodded before swiftly departing. Li Hao... was too crazy! He couldn't afford to offend this personage. As for Director Yellow... It might even be for the best if the man didn't cause a fuss at the moment. Otherwise, Li Hao could be even more ruthless than Hou Xiaochen. They could reason with Hou Xiaochen for a thing or two, but that was completely impossible with Li Hao.

.....

At the same time.

The director's building.

The old man took a sip of tea and breathed out, murmuring to himself with a smile. "They've ushered a wolf into the house!" He shook his head with amusement. Skystar City would be quite exciting in the days to come.

.....

In Hou Xiaochen's office.

Being a pigeon who occupied the sparrow's nest, Li Hao leaned back in a chair, his thoughts keeping him company. He'd come to Skystar City to see through the heart of certain matters and truths. Perhaps he'd glimpsed some tonight, but they weren't that clear. He was still a bit lost.

However, what he'd seen was enough. Human lives were as worthless as stalks of mustard in this day and age.

Whether it was the nine ministries or three great organizations, they were all the same. There really was no difference between pirates, the nine ministries, or three great organizations. The only difference was that one held the right to rule and the others didn't.

The trading company beneath the Ministry of Finance's banner fed humans to monster spirits! And the key thing was, the monster spirits didn't eat humans to begin with. It was humans themselves who delivered their own kind on a platter and begged the monster spirits to consume them. How base and crude were they?

This was not the time of the ancient civilization in which monster spirits were strong and humans weak. The humans of this era were very strong!

There weren't many notable monster spirits in this time period. Only a few places such as Phoenix Mountain and Sky Roc Mountain were famed for monster spirits. Humanity was stronger than other races as a whole, so there was no need to bow and scrape to monster spirits.

On the contrary, it should be monster spirits cowering before humans. That was what made sense. Unfortunately, humanity was too scattered. Everyone hoped to receive backing from monster spirits, so some bent their heads to curry favor and even offered up their fellow humans on a platter.

"They're all the same." Li Hao wrote down a few things on a sheet of paper. They were truly all the same and wouldn't call each other out for it. That was why no one thought much of the crimes that he'd exposed today—whether mundanes or superhumans.

This was what everyone did, it was all very normal.

Mundanes would likely be furious or grieve for a few moments, and then... be able to do nothing about it. There was nothing that could be done, so what could they do?

Overthrow the nine ministries? Would there be a difference if it was the royal family in charge? How about three great organizations? Life would still continue as is.

The harm wasn't done to the ordinary people, they weren't suffering, so this was all there was to life. It was a helplessness to change their circumstances that led to the sorrow of only being able to wait for powerhouses to conclude their struggles. They could only passively accept a new ruler.

“Apart from being Heaven Favored, mundanes have almost no avenues of improving their lot in life. The academies are monopolized by the powerful, martial masters need money and resources to cultivate, there’s no sect accepting them. Just as the girl said, it’s completely useless to learn anything. This is an era that focuses on strength...”

There was no path available to them. The most tragic of an era was being unable to break through the divisions caused by class. Someone like Li Hao was a complete accident. The reality of the situation was one either had to be a Heaven Favored, or there was absolutely nothing one could do to change their fate.

All of these powerhouses had a great background. There were almost none from purely ordinary origins. Of all the Novas that Li Hao had met before, who came from humble beginnings?

Various thoughts formed in his mind as Li Hao sank deeper into his thoughts. He was considering some matters that he never would’ve before. He felt possessed. Battle Heaven, Hong Yitang, the existences in the realms of illusions—so many things had continuously affected him that he’d unknowingly chosen to set foot into the swamp that was Skystar City.

#### Chapter 658: Martial Masters Cultivate the Heart (II)

The next who comes against me will certainly be an Arcanus!

Li Hao was well aware that nearly all of his trump cards had been exposed after he killed a dozen Novas, broken an Arcanus talisman, and swallowed energy bombs. It would be an Arcanus sent after him next.

While their cultivation levels may be unstable, the masters of those major factions would just stabilize it with Water of Life! Throwing enough Water of Life at a supernatural would eventually produce a stable Arcanus. If one drop wasn’t enough, then ten. These guys might’ve also discovered the existence of plant spirits and even reached agreements with them. Otherwise, would those ruins really hold so much in reserve?

Li Hao had realized that nearly every powerhouse in the world had a few drops. Almost all major factions had stores to draw from.

Various thoughts floated through his mind before a knock rang on the door.

“Enter.”

Yang Shan and Qin Lian walked through the door. Although Yang Shan was a metamorphosis now, he was still very polite to Li Hao.

“Commander Li, everyone’s been arranged for,” he reported with a wide grin. “Ole He says that the royal family has summoned him, so he’s gone back for now and will come find you when he’s free.”

Li Hao inclined his head.

“Commander Li, ah... do you have further instructions for us two?” Yang Shan asked sheepishly, even more polite than before. After all, he addressed a powerhouse in their own right!

Li Hao was not the weakling of their imagination after he killed Wu Yong and suppressed Liu Sha. Rather, he was much stronger than rumor made him out to be. An existence like him, and being young to boot, able to help people improve, and possessing of a major backer...

Li Hao was an excellent thigh for Yang Shan. As a metamorphosis, the man could go out in the world to form his own faction. But then what?

Wait for someone to recruit him or establish something incredible himself?

Whoever thought that would be joking! How was he to fight the three great organizations, nine ministries, and royal family without any trump cards or foundations? Yang Shan was no idiot. Not to mention, his opportunity to become an Arcanus might be found with Li Hao.

The young man glanced at him and smiled. “Don’t be so polite, Senior Yang...” he said slowly.

“No no no, there’s nothing senior about me!” Yang Shan smiled radiantly. “Aren’t we part of the Skystar Commander Office? Just call me Ole Yang or Inspector Yang. It would be too alienating to call me senior.”

“Don’t bend at the waist for something close at hand,” Li Hao said softly after a long look. “It’s hard to straighten up again. Not to mention, the situation may be more complicated than you think and much more dangerous. Today was just a beginning.”

As crude and brash as Yang Shan looked, he was actually a very shrewd character. “Oh no, not at all!” He offered a quick smile. “Who doesn’t bend at the waist these days unless they’re truly invincible? Someone as strong as Director Hou also has to bow his head too! Danger is danger, but opportunities also truly exist. People like us have no way to back out after proceeding down this path! Not to mention, only you would be willing to be hostile toward a preeminent duke on our behalf.”

“Can I really?” Li Hao grinned.

“The situation cannot be changed at this step of the process, so there’s no need to worry!” Yang Shan was wreathed with smiles. “You’re not afraid of the nine ministries, three great organizations, or the seven divine mountains... So how can our Commander Li be afraid of a Tranquil Duke?”

“You’re an interesting one, Senior Yang,” Li Hao burst out laughing. “I see why you’re good friends with Senior Southern Fist!”

Yang Shan beamed radiantly in response.

“Then I will trouble Inspector Yang to accomplish a matter for me.” Li Hao nodded smilingly.

“Please go ahead, commander!” Yang Shan was overjoyed—this meant that Li Hao had agreed to his offer of service! This was wonderful! I can strut around in borrowed glory in the future—ahem, I mean I can openly appear in public and throw hands with the Tranquil Duke! Come beat me, why don’t you! I’ve found a patron!

I had to run and hide everywhere before, now I ain’t afraid of shit! I’ve got a new guy in my corner, someone who dares wage war with the nine ministries! Are you better than the Steadfast Duke, huh?

“I’d like for Inspector Yang to visit the North Sea while there’s still time...”

Yang Shan’s expression shifted slightly.

“Go to the North Sea and find the North Sea King of the Starlight Pirates,” Li Hao explained softly. “Tell him that I have his grandson. Of course, perhaps he knows that already and thinks that a grandson is no one terribly important. Maybe he thinks none of this is important. But we can still try to have him do something for me.”

“Please go ahead, commander,” Yang Shan said nervously.

“I want White Shark’s head!” Li Hao concluded calmly. “I will release his grandson if he delivers White Shark’s head. I’ll also throw in a Nova for free.”

“That’s easy,” Yang Shan heaved a sigh of relief. “It’s no loss to him. White Shark is one of the eight pirate factions of the North Sea and the Starlight Pirates have wanted to absorb them for a while. Killing White Shark is probably already part of their plans!”

Li Hao’s proposed condition wasn’t out of line. As for why he wanted White Shark’s head... There seemed to be bad blood between the two. Yang Shan didn’t care about that. He was deathly afraid that Li Hao would send him to claim the North Sea King’s head instead.



That one was at least a metamorphosis expert, as was Red Beard of the East Sea. Not to mention, North Sea pirates were formidable! They had to be, if they wanted to establish their footing in the north. The north was a more savage region, whereas only the duke's say-so was needed in the East Sea. One had to slowly carve out their territory in the north.

"Mmhmm, that's all. Additionally, go to Liu Long of Silver Moon after you finish with the North Sea King." Li Hao tossed a storage ring to Yang Shan. "Give this to Troop Leader Liu Long and have him get some things for me. He knows what I need, just mention the words 'imperial palace' to him."

Yang Shan was rather curious what the storage ring contained.

"One million mysterious power stones and twenty origin weapons," Li Hao remarked offhandedly. "Senior Yang can also take Senior Qin Lian with you."

Yang Shan swallowed hard. What?! One million mysterious power stones?? Twenty origin weapons?! His scalp ran numb and his heart quailed. He stammered his words out with difficulty. "This... commander... do you... want to switch... this mission... to someone else?"

This was an astronomical figure for anyone! He couldn't imagine how Li Hao had just given this to him after one day of acquaintance. It was terrifying!

It was so shocking that he felt the young man might be testing him. Grave problems might arise if he accepted this mission.

"If a mere million mysterious power stones are enough to tempt you into running away with the goods, then why should I think you would risk your life for me?" Li Hao looked calmly at him. "If you think nothing of this, how much will someone have to pay you in days to come if they wish for you to take my life? Who would be willing to pay so much to bribe you? Is killing me more dangerous or is absconding with my goods more dangerous?"

“You can be the judge of that, senior. So in the meantime, just take the ring. I’m not threatening you—you can leave with Senior Qin Lian.”

“Surely you just, commander!” Qin Lian answered abruptly. “You lack personnel at the moment and I am a dark supernatural. I can complete a task for two for the commander. There’s not much use in Yang Shan staying as we aren’t at war. He won’t be able to accomplish anything if he remains here!” She looked at her husband. “Go complete the important mission that the commander has given you!”

Yang Shan looked at his wife, set his jaw, and nodded. “Don’t worry, commander,” he said in a muffled voice. “Yang Shan will complete the mission. Nothing will be missing from the storage ring unless I die!”

He was still apprehensive as he held one million mysterious power stones and twenty origin weapons in his hands... Li Hao was such a frightening fellow.

Indeed, Yang Shan was fearful of the youngster. They’d only known each other for a day, but Li Hao either truly didn’t care or was testing him with this mission. Yang Shan struggled with himself, but set aside all delusions after a moment. He could not be tempted.

His wife had already betrayed the Tranquil Duke for him. If he offended Li Hao now, it was a great unknown whether or not they’d be able to elude the resulting chase. It also wasn’t a simple matter of mysterious power stones and origin weapons if he wished to become an Arcanus. What good were all the mysterious power stones in the world?

Yang Shan breathed out when his thoughts traveled here, exhaling his greed. That’s right, it’s not like I’ll make it to Arcanus just because I’ve absorbed sufficient energy. It is inferior to the sword energy that Li Hao gives us.

“Then go on and come back soon. I might need people at any time.”

“Alright!” Yang Shan quickly left without a word. He didn’t even have time to say goodbye to his wife.

“Does the commander have other instructions?” Qin Lian asked gently.

“Ask around for me where there are Red Moon powerhouses—the premier kind. It’s best if they’re metamorphosis. Those should exist in the elder’s council or Ancient Guard. If you can’t find anything, then see where Green Moon and Orange Moon are.”

Those two might not have scarlet shadows, but that was fine. They could be traded for ransom!

Would Ying Hongyue buy them back?

He would!

He was a very arrogant, pompous individual who considered himself devoutly loyal. He would save his women if they were captured. The man would likely hand over a metamorphosis scarlet shadow if Li Hao wanted one.

“Understood!” Qin Lian sped out.

As for whether or not she was actually running away with Yang Shan... Li Hao really didn’t care. Yes, it was a very valuable storage ring. But if they took it, then they took it. His gains were enormous after recent operations and the two would be done in the world if they stole it. It would also save him the trouble of constantly having to stay on his guard against them. He was a hyper vigilant person to begin with—he didn’t easily believe that someone would lay down their lives for him.

But if they didn’t take it... then just as he said, others would have to pay an even higher price if they wanted to buy the couple. It would have to be far in excess of this since the two wouldn’t be easily tempted.

Who would offer such high payment for the services of Yang Shan?

### Chapter 659: Martial Masters Cultivate the Heart (III)

After he sent the married couple away, Li Hao took out a few items. The desk was covered in storage rings before long, but he continued to fish out more. He had more than two thousand of these incredibly precious items in front of him at the end. Nearly half of those he'd captured tonight owned one.

The rest didn't because they were either servants or staff. True nobles nearly each had their own. There were so many!

There were also rings that belonged to the Four Seas Company—their heavyweights, metamorphosis, and Novas. Some came from Four Seas Island, others from Skystar Colosseum...

There were too many. Li Hao's head ached as he looked at them. He used to like opening storage rings as each one was a surprise. He'd inspected the ones from the Lu treasury with Yuan Shuo and the rest, but now he faced more than several dozen times what he'd examined before. If he spent three minutes taking inventory of one ring, two thousand rings would equal six thousand minutes...

It would take him four or five days of not eating, drinking, or sleeping to finish it all. Taking inventory also wasn't as simple as just looking at everything, so three minutes might not be enough for one ring.

Li Hao laughed ruefully. Since when did he start fretting over having too many storage rings? He did today!

He picked up the communicator on the desk and didn't care who picked up. "Have Golden Spear and Mu Lin come see me!"

"Yes, right away..."

Li Hao hung up, slightly envious of Ole Hou. How nice it was to have a secretary! A quick word ensured that everything he wanted was arranged for. How tragic his circumstances were, he had to do everything himself! He even had to make his own call for the people he wanted.

.....

Golden Spear and Mu Lin walked in after a few minutes, not surprised to see Li Hao present. They knew where Hou Xiaochen had run off to. The young man looked quite daring in taking over someone else's place!

“Senior Golden Spear, Brother Second Mu...”

Mu Lin smiled awkwardly and Golden Spear inclined his head. The latter seemed to be slightly brooding and appeared thinner than before. He felt older now as repeated shocks had thrown him deeper into low spirits.

The fight of the North Sea, the eastern continent, and now Southern Fist in battle today... All of these Silver Moon martial masters were unequivocally telling him that they were strong, but he was weak.

Seven Swords, Three Spears, Four Blades, Twin Fists... The Three Spears had fallen behind! Therefore, he had almost nothing to say.

“Director Li!” Mu Lin was as cheery as always. “Everyone from the Colosseum has been locked away. Is there anything else?”

“Mm.” Li Hao nodded. “Have the Silver Moon Guards assemble... This place has a campground for troops, does it not?”

“Yes, oh yes. It's right next to us—a huge complex. The lords of Skystar City really know how to have a great time! There's manors like these all over the Avenue of the Nine Ministries and are easily several dozen acres each. It's not a problem to station one thousand people there.”

“Take me to them.”

Mu Lin was startled. What for? To usurp power?

Ahem... I'm really thinking too much. Surely not. Then... what for?

Li Hao didn't explain himself, neither did Golden Spear ask further. The two walked outside with Li Hao. When other Night Watchers saw the young man along the way, they snapped crisp salutes.

“Commander!”

“Greetings to Commander Li!”

“.....” They were all very respectful and dropped the “vice” portion of the young man's honorific. As for Hou Xiaochen, most hailed him Director Hou. The commanders of the five directions were dead in all but name. It was Hou Xiaochen's recent actions and then Li Hao's boldness that made the position known throughout the dynasty again.

Everyone knew that there was a Skystar Commander Office beneath the Night Watchers of the dynasty. And who was its leader? The public believed it to be Li Hao.

The young man held himself aloof and ignored everyone. It ran counter to his usual actions of greeting everyone with a friendly face. There was no need to win over people now. In his current state, he didn't think much of all official personnel in the dynasty capital. They had to know what had been occurring on Four Seas Island, so everyone of this era chose to be blind and deaf.

He didn't like it. Perhaps it was a helpless situation and he shouldn't vent his anger on them. They were very weak and could not withstand the nine ministries. Everyone had their difficulties. Should he expect some Sunflares and Solars to overthrow the nine ministries?

Li Hao understood all this, but the pride of a young man refused to let him forgive these people for the moment.

.....

The young man arrived next door amid a crowd of respectful well-wishers. The yard in the complex was massive as this used to be the residence of a duke. It'd been taken over by the nine ministries and become the campgrounds of the Silver Moon Guards.

The Dominators who refused to accept Li Hao before were completely subdued when they saw the young man again. Even Chen Jin, the heir of Mountain Ax who'd opposed Li Hao before, had nothing to complain about now. There was less hostility from him, just a mixture of inexplicable emotions, sighs, and regrets.

There were numerous second and third generations of the thirty-six heroes among the Guard. Chen Jin counted as a second generation, as did Li Hao. The latter was just so young that he was younger than some third generations. But it was Li Hao who was acknowledged by the entire world as the Demon Sword. He was so strong! So incredibly strong that he could kill metamorphosis experts. There was nothing Chen Jin could do but accept the circumstances.

"Commander Li!" Everyone hailed him by his official title.

"Please don't stand on ceremony." Li Hao smiled. "Just call me by my name or Troop Leader Li. We're all from Silver Moon and colleagues to boot..."

He hadn't thought much of the Silver Moon Guards before, but this was a group of bonafide martial masters compared to whatever else was available in the surroundings. They were the true soldiers of this era. They fought pirates and took forthright action for any slights, then chose to silently guard the province after beating the pirates.

Li Hao hadn't thought much of it before. Wasn't this what should be done? Why should they be complimented for carrying out their duties?

But today, he smiled. They were worthy of praise. In an age like this, rare were those willing to truly face the pirates and safeguard their homeland. Much of his original anger had dissipated throughout the course of his travels.

These people had openly challenged him before and readily spoke of their enmity toward him. Compared to them, it was the smiling tigers that were the nine ministries that disgusted him. They tried to cheat or outwit each other, showing him smiles and friendliness, but wanting nothing more than to take his life whenever possible.

"I wouldn't dare," Chen Jin sighed with a blend of emotions. "Let us call you commander. Us Silver Moon martial masters stick to our hierarchies. We elevate those who are strong or ruthless, not to mention that your position is high to begin with as the direct disciple of the Five Styles King. You are the final disciple of the greatest among the thirty-six—we do not measure up to you to begin with."

"You're exaggerating," Li Hao broke out in laughter.

"I mean it, that's how things should be in the first place." Chen Jin didn't mind the nature of what he was saying and mentioned with regret, "What a pity that my master died to your master. Otherwise, my master... ai!"

He sighed with some regret. Mountain Ax had been one of the thirty-six, but he was dead. Those that Yuan Shuo killed were strong; their deaths usually came about as a result of being unable to pull his blows. This indirectly proved that Mountain Ax was very strong. What a pity that he'd died too early!

Li Hao found himself in awkward straits. Now that he knew more Silver Moon martial masters, things were sometimes difficult to navigate for him. He wouldn't mind in times past as it was just another name that he didn't recognize, but as more martial masters came out of the woodwork, he realized that as ornery as this group of people sometimes were, they were mostly honest and frank. At the very least, they were much better than the rest.



“Alright now, these are all trifling matters,” Golden Spear announced faintly. “A bunch of Silver Moon martial masters died from various fights back in the day. Even I killed my fair share. Challenge him for revenge if you have the ability to. If not, shut up and don’t mention it.”

The Guard were silent. Li Hao coughed dryly after a moment. There were a lot of people gathered at almost one thousand strong.

“I have a few storage rings here that need to be examined. I’d like everyone to help. Put the mysterious power stones, Water of Life, origin weapons, and the like in separate piles. Categorize the rest of the knick knacks for me in another system...”

The Guards stared wordlessly at him, as did Golden Spear!

Are you kidding me? This is what you disturbed everyone for?

He snapped his mouth shut in the next moment as Li Hao unreeled strings that held thousands of storage rings. Jaws dropped, eyes bugged out of their heads—martial masters could barely make sense of what they were seeing.

Golden Spear gaped as well. Thank... heavens I didn’t say anything or I’d be mortified right now. The young man did indeed need help from others. How long would it take for him to organize all of this on his own? A thousand helpers meant that one person needed to be in charge of just a few each. But since when were storage rings confiscated from criminals measured in units of thousands?

“Are you... not going to return these rings?” he couldn’t help but say. Golden Spear knew where these items had come from. He just hadn’t thought that Li Hao would claim them all.

“Return them?” Li Hao laughed. “There are no good people on Four Seas Island, why return them? There aren’t that many with the Colosseum either. How does anyone think of getting their ring back after it’s come into my possession? It’s already a show of mercy that they’ve come back alive!

“That... would... offend too many people,” Golden Spear questioned haltingly.

“Offend too many?” Li Hao sneered; he’d suddenly understood something. “I have my sword in hand, why would I be afraid of them? Silver Moon martial masters are forged through fights! Of the thirty-six heroes, Black Widow is held in contempt because she didn’t fight her way through her ranking. She got there by sleeping around! Thinking of this and that, what’s the point of so much thinking??”

#### Chapter 660: Martial Masters Cultivate the Heart (IV)

“I’ve finally seen through the heart of the matter that in this day and age, strength is the only true fundamental in everything! I am fearless and have smashed the terror in my mind. No one can dictate my life. I would not have come to Skystar City if I was afraid!

“Senior Golden Spear, you’re old!” Li Hao looked straight at the man. “None of the thirty-six that I met are afraid! Southern Fist isn’t, Earthturner Sword isn’t, Light Sword isn’t, not even Yu Luochoa shows fear! The only ones afraid are Black Widow and... Golden Spear!”

BOOM!

Spear intent ignited as Golden Spear erupted with rage, suffering, and agitation. He was also slightly on the brink of losing his reason as he could not accept this kind of humiliation! He gnashed his teeth and tightened his fists as he looked at Li Hao. The accumulation of his aggrieved suffering could be fully felt by others in this moment.

“Li Hao...” Golden Spear ground his teeth so hard that his gums nearly bled. “You’re right... Silver Moon martial masters are not afraid! They are not and so am I not. Black Widow... Are you making the analogy that I made it to my position today through Director Hou, just as she did with Ying Hongyue?”

Li Hao didn’t respond. Becoming irrational in his rage, Golden Spear ultimately snorted and stalked off. He knew that the young man was purposefully antagonizing him, but provoked he was all the same. He really was furious!

He didn't care about the stings and taunts from He Yong and the others—alright, fine, he cared about those too. But for a junior such as Li Hao to compare him to someone who'd slept her way to the top and even put them on equal footing, it was cause to make him lose his sanity.

The young man was out of line! He wanted to stab Li Hao to death with one jab!

Golden Spear didn't think much of women like Green Peacock and Black Widow. He didn't find them worthy of being martial masters and considered those women an affront to the rest of his peers. Their positions were the result of their association with Ying Hongyue. He further looked down his nose at women such as the Heartjab Daughter since she came into her fame through maneuvering between men as well.

But for Li Hao to categorize him the same meant that He Yong and the rest possibly did so as well! He was the same as those women to them! In those people's eyes, Golden Spear had no right to hold the women in contempt!

Golden Spear was on the verge of a mental breakdown. He feared that he would lose control if he didn't walk away.

.....

Mu Lin sighed as he looked at Li Hao. "Don't poke him too hard, Boss Golden Spear hasn't been in a right frame of mind lately. He's on the verge of an emotional collapse. I'm worried that he won't be able to cope with what you just said to him!"

"For Golden Spear, if he continues to grapple with his internal demons and fails to surpass himself... he might as well die than be stuck in his condition forever!" Li Hao said with a soft sigh. "Even now, he's not the weakest among the thirty-six, but his mentality is the poorest. From what I know, Berserk Blade and Jadelight Sword are both in better positions than him.

"If this continues, he'd be better off dead. It is a constant torment for a martial master if he is forever unable to break another's will..."

None of the one thousand martial masters standing in front of him denied his words. It was true, perhaps Li Hao was right. For Golden Spear, he'd been the strongest among the Three Spears back in the day. Yuan Shuo had stood at the head of the overall rankings, of that there was no doubt. The second was Sky Sword, but there was some controversy about the third. Some declared it to be Tyrant Blade, others said Northern Fist, and sometimes Golden Spear was put forward as a candidate...

No matter what, the lowest ranking that Golden Spear had stood in those times was number five, and potentially number three. But in this age, Golden Spear was just Golden Spear. He wasn't an inviolable Silver Moon martial master. The difference between him and the rest was too great, a gap that was highlighted as more powerful martial masters appeared out of the woodwork. If this continued, he would completely collapse even if he wasn't killed by another.

Thus, the martial masters present could completely understand his predicament.

"Our ranking officer... ai!" Chen Jin sighed.

"C'mon everyone," Mu Lin called out merrily to break the leaden silence. "Grab a few storage rings each. Don't you dare keep any loot for yourself, do you hear me? Don't embarrass us Silver Moon martial masters or the Silver Moon Guard..."

"Would we ever!" someone snorted with laughter. "The Silver Moon Guards definitely wouldn't, and it depends on who we're talking about for Silver Moon martial masters. Southern Fist apparently committed his fair share of shady deeds like this back in the day."

".....ahem!!" coughed another as they dug their elbow into the first speaker's side. "You idiot, Southern Fist just beat a metamorphosis to death with one punch!"

"....." The first speaker instantly awoke to his senses and laughed dryly. "I'm joking! Senior Southern Fist is amazing and super impressive. I was speaking all nonsense!"

Li Hao wanted to laugh, but contained himself. He Yong didn't seem to have a good reputation anywhere. He sounded more like a gangster... Well, that was also close to the truth.

"Then let's get to work taking an inventory of everything. Help me summarize it, Brother Second Mu. I'm going to meet our director first."

"Don't you worry!" Mu Lin promised. "Nothing will go missing while I'm here. Ah, the storage rings..."

"One each!" Li Hao chuckled. "I have no use for them once they're emptied. Everyone can take one each when we're done!"

The crowd was overjoyed. To them, even a storage ring was a precious treasure. Aside from their centurions and a few half step Dominators, almost no one else possessed one. The ones who did have storage rings received them after coming to Skystar City. Even some of the centurions lacked such equipment in Silver Moon.

Everyone would have one all of a sudden! Greatly invigorated, they roared, "Our thanks to the commander's largesse!"

.....

Next door.

Hou Xiaochen had just come back and blinked when he heard the shouts. He laughed and cursed lowly, "Those ingrates!"

Manager Yu looked at him.

“I’m the principal commander, he’s just a vice commander!” Hou Xiaochen didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. “I’m almost an invisible person these days!”

There was no sight of his office to be seen yet, but the name of Skystar Commander Li Hao was known throughout the world. And now the guy had come to bribe the Silver Moon Guards? What, did he have his eyes set on them as well?

.....

Li Hao wasn’t in the mood to think about those considerations. After leaving behind the storage rings, he trotted straight to Yao Si’s office building. It was only right and proper that he greeted the one in charge since he’d just arrived. They hadn’t officially met before, but he’d known from a glance across a conference room that the man was strong.

The director’s office building.

Secretary Little Ye respectfully led Li Hao in and knocked before entering. She didn’t dare say anything and left very quickly.

“Greetings to the director.” Li Hao was very polite, despite not knowing what he was being polite for. In any case, he was in the director’s territory.

Yao Si smiled from his cup of tea and pointed at a chair. “Have a seat.”

“Thanks!” Li Hao sat down without further ado.

“A young champion.” Yao Si smiled at him. “From the young springs heroes—this has held true since the ancient times. We’re all old compared to you.”

“You praise us too highly, director.”

“Not at all.” Yao Si looked at Li Hao again and didn’t say anything of note. “When the nine ministries wanted to establish the Night Watchers and have the agency oversee all superhumans in the world, as well as handle the ambitious three great organizations, I immediately rose to meet the occasion. I was a Dominator when I accepted this lousy mess.

“But the longer I stayed in this position, the more resigned and anxious I became. There are too many restrictions and too many considerations at hand. There’s too many limitations levied on me to do anything!”

The old man sighed again. “I am old now, and less than the youngsters. I once had the same drive you guys did, but it faded away.” He smiled at Li Hao. “I just wanted to say that when I saw you. How do you view me?”

“Eh?”

“I said, what is your first impression of me?”

“Benevolent, amiable, friendly...” Li Hao answered merrily with a professional smile. It was one he’d perfected after a year at the Inspectorate.

“Too fake, can you say something real?” Yao Si burst out laughing. “At my age, I like to hear youngsters speak from the heart. Don’t worry, I’m not one of the nine ministers. I wouldn’t get mad at you.”

Li Hao thought quietly for a while before laughing as well. “Does the director really want me to?” he whispered.

“Please, go ahead.”

“What you mean by too many restrictions, considerations, and limitations can be summarized as being afraid of death. You choose to quietly quit instead, forgoing your initial aspirations and permitting yourself to be assimilated. You are incompetent and abandon your duties, yet seek to find an excuse for yourself. Sometimes, dereliction of duty is more terrifying than a wrong strategy. At least you’re doing something if you engage with the wrong strategy. Dereliction is doing nothing at all.”

Li Hao was absolutely forthright with his response, possibly because the director’s hypocritical words rubbed him the wrong way. Maybe he was also more confident now since he was stronger. Since the director wanted him to speak his mind, then he would do so to the utmost!

“Look at the sorry state of the Night Watchers! I’d thought that the Silver Moon Night Watchers were pathetic, but compared to the ones here, they’re very diligent in their duties! The real tragedy is that they aren’t paid much for it!

“The Night Watchers are completely without system, guidance, and responsibility. They spend their high salaries gambling and whoring on Four Seas Island, turning a blind eye and deaf ear to monster spirits eating humans. They even hail the pirates walking among them as brothers! Hah!” Li Hao jeered, full of disdain and contempt.

He’d wanted to be more polite at first, but this one seemed to be explaining just how difficult his situation was, how reluctant he was to accept it and how sorrowed he was by it...

Yao Si seemed to be saying that his blood had once flowed just as hotly as Li Hao and he’d stretched himself greatly by accepting a difficult post in the face of danger!