

Star Gate 66

Chapter 66: Training Forged Force, Darkness Rises (I)

“Unless one’s constitution is strong enough to not care about the redeployment of strength...”

This was likely why Liu Long had passed the Nine Forged Force method to Li Hao. The young man’s physique seemed quite decent, a trait on display before he became a Slayer. His body condition had further improved after the round of new blood.

In his state, Li Hao might avoid the drawback of not being able to move upon utilizing the Nine Forged Force. Even if he moved, he might retain sufficient strength to maintain the method’s operation. The likelihood of backlash hurting him was immensely decreased.

The young man studied the method for a while. Apart from the description and proper way to call upon one’s strength, the crux was a specific breathing technique.

Every secret art came with a unique breathing method that was the core of the method. Different arts had different ways of calling upon one’s strength. If Li Hao tried to use the Breathing Method of the Five Styles to practice the Nine Forged Force, he might splinter his internal force and injure himself instead.

Therefore, the secret art itself wasn’t very valuable—the associated breathing method was of paramount importance. Liu Long had included it with the booklet. A plainly separate piece of paper was included among the yellowing pages.

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Li Hao spent an hour carefully perusing three thousand characters before attempting to practice. He first adjusted his breathing to that of the Nine Forged Force. It was a very different tempo compared to before.

Next to him, Panther stared fixedly at the young man. Li Hao cast a sidelong glance at the little black dog and grinned. The dog wanted to steal some knowledge again!

“You can only sense the difference in breathing and not the change in internal organs. That means you’re learning just the outward signs and not the principle! But you’re just a dog, so that should be enough.”

Panther didn’t mind the remarks and continued observing Li Hao. Gradually, its breathing took on a particular meter. Each breath’s duration was different—not in a disorderly way. Instead of imparting discomfort, it came across as a very rhythmic beat.

Since the dog wished to learn, Li Hao didn’t purposefully quiet his breathing. Outsiders would be hard pressed to detect anything once he toned himself down. He could sense internal force inside his body after adjusting his breathing—a strength different from mysterious power!

Internal force was quite special as it bloomed from the inside, a function of the body’s natural workings. In contrast, mysterious power came from the outside and with a distinct separation that it wasn’t produced by the body.

Internal force originated from the blood, muscles, cells, and bones. It felt like every fiber of the body produced this faint strength. Just like vitality, a healthy body supplied one with more internal force. It was formless, but able to be truly felt.

Internal force flowed through his body like a current. His arm muscles writhed when he directed the current to the arms. Popping sounds rang in the ear when he shook his hands—the resonance of bone and meridian!

Compared to when he first set foot into Slayer of Tens two days ago, Li Hao held a better grasp and understanding of his strength now. A quick shake and outward push of his arms sent Panther flying six meters out until the dog crashed into the wall.

Innocence welled up in the little black dog’s eyes! It wasn’t injured since it was much hardier than ordinary humans after absorbing some blade energy. It even rivaled Slayers! However, that was all it was good for since Panther didn’t know how to call upon its strength.

Li Hao paid the dog no heed and reviewed how it felt to have internal force surge from within. He slammed his palm down on the living room's heavy coffee table. It bore a marble tabletop that his father once carted back from a mountain. After so many years, numerous cracks had developed in it. It didn't react to a light slap from the young man's hand.

After the first layer of force was laid, Li Hao activated a second layer with another writhing of his arm muscles. When he pressed his palm down, the entire coffee table shook!

Thump thump thump!

The coffee table trembled, showing signs of potentially splitting open.

Li Hao continued to adjust his breathing and circulate a third layer from elsewhere in his body. The muscles of his right hand wriggled again, writhing with such pronounced motion that it was a bit terrifying.

This layer of force had some difficulty extending out of his body and the continued motion of his right arm muscles turned into soreness. Li Hao, however, insisted on following his course of action!

This was Forged Force!

What he deployed was too slow for now, the true Nine Forged Force wouldn't be this slow. His second layer of force came noticeably later after his palm strike connected, and his third layer was still stuck in traffic in his arm. If he hemmed and hawed like this when facing an opponent, he'd die before he managed to deploy his third layer.

At the same time, Li Hao was simply unfamiliar with the method since it was his first time employing it. The third layer of force finally traveled down his arm as he continued to focus on it. He smiled when the coffee table shuddered with a slight crack.

Although the process was arduous, it was confirmation that he could learn the method. Granted, what he utilized at the moment was far from Thrice Forged. He wasn't even Once Forged!

A real Thrice Forged was a consecutive deployment of layers of strength with barely a pause in between them. That was a true layering of force.

"The book says that the initial stages of this method are the hardest because they too easily strain the body. I did actually tear some muscles in my upper right arm just now..."

But do I care?

Li Hao smiled. Cosmic power! The energy was perfect for nurturing the body and could neutralize something as violent as mysterious power. Internal force was easily taken care of as it was much milder compared to mysterious power. Thus, cosmic power could easily repair its damage.

Most people might run through the Nine Forged Force once or twice a day when they first started out. That was hardly Li Hao. He circulated the Breathing Method of the Five Styles and absorbed a tiny bit of cosmic power, sending it to his right arm. It instantly repaired torn muscles and left him pain free.

"Nice!" Li Hao once more verified the benefits of this energy. It was wondrous! He didn't need any medicinal supplements to train the Nine Forged Force. When the Liu family members practiced it, they required an additional prescription to nurture the body so their training didn't harm their foundations.

Cosmic power was an untold number of times stronger than that prescription.

"This is fun!" Indeed, the young man found it fun.

Passion and interest were the fuel of cultivation. If one wasn't interested in cultivation, then one would attain no results. Li Hao was immensely interested in the Nine Forged Force as he viewed it as a fun game.

He punched forward, layering his internal force. It took three seconds for the second layer to appear—an interval that was an entire lifetime in actual combat. But as his arms grew accustomed to the strength, his second layer arrived faster and faster.

Two seconds... one second...

It grew hard to improve after he reached one second. That interval was still too long as martial masters could trade several blows within one second. Neither would one's opponent stand still for an entire second after being punched and wait for a second blow.

Punch punch punch!

Li Hao focused only on the Nine Forged Force this evening—it was possibly his fastest and easiest way to improve. He had no fear of injury thanks to cosmic power. He could practice with impunity!

Punch after punch, layer after layer, his training this night probably exceeded a year to even five years of others'. Liu Long's eyeballs would fall out if he saw how Li Hao trained! A regular person's arms would've exploded long ago. Not only did the young man feel fine, but his arm muscles grew noticeably stronger from the effects of cosmic power. They rippled with strength visible to the naked eye.

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Li Hao exulted in training and never grew weary. After repeated punches and palm strikes, he discovered a secret. Well, not entirely a secret, just that his own arms grew stronger the more times he deployed the method.

It wasn't really a secret, simply that regular martial masters could never practice the same way. Whoever tried to do so for a day would cripple themselves, if not end up outright dead.

Li Hao wasn't even inclined to sleep this night. When it was almost dawn, one of his punches sounded twice! There was almost no gap between them; it was as if the two snaps were one.

The young man started. Had he succeeded? No way! He punched the coffee table again—it was pockmarked after a night.

Bam!

The marble split open and the table split into two. The auntie downstairs suddenly roared, “Li Hao, what are you doing now?!”

What was he doing so early in the morning?!

Li Hao was actually being very careful and had placed a rug underneath the table. But his punch splintered the coffee table, rendering the rug useless. He sighed helplessly. His place was so small that there wasn't any place to train and the slightest disturbance caused the auntie downstairs to raise hell at him. Perhaps his own Tiger Roar Through Mountain and Woods improved due to imitating her.

He'd yet to see a bonafide wild tiger, but he'd heard her roar countless times. She was ferocious in arguments throughout the neighborhood and reigned supreme over the other women in Openlight.

Li Hao comforted himself and called out, “The fridge fell over!”

“Your fridge falls over everyday!” came the answering snarl. What, was it made of paper to fall over so many times?!

“I’m getting a new one next month! You can have the old one and sell it for parts if you wish, auntie!”

She immediately quieted down. Not bad! A free refrigerator, one that would fetch a few coins if sold for scrap!

Li Hao ignored the exchange and smiled brilliantly.

Success!

Twice Forged!