

## STAR ODYSSEY

### Chapter 12: Astral-10

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Lu Yin did not know just how far Vesta's scanner could cover, but he knew that ten miles was at least a good possibility. He quickly chased after where he believed the zombie king to be, quickly heading further and further away from the toll station. The zombie horde that had been left behind slowly regained a hint of calmness, most wandering around aimlessly once more. Xu San and the others heaved a sigh of relief.

The stinking trenches meandered into the distance, green eyes occasionally flashing within the patches of grass. Lu Yin constantly checked his watch as he sped along; if he didn't get rid of the zombie king, any troops from Nanjing who passed through this place would be in grave danger in the future. The creature could even spell disaster for all of Nanjing.

He soon started hearing crunches in the distance and followed the source of the sound, coming across a ditch that was emanating a dark red glow. A crimson mist wafted into the moonlight, its red sparkle illuminating the night. Lu Yin soon saw two scarlet eyes, but he had to look away for a moment. Fire crystals! The zombie king was eating fire crystals!

Roar! The long-haired zombie leapt into the sky, clawing towards him with a dark red glow on its arm. The hand radiated a scorching glow, forcing Lu Yin to dodge. The excess energy from the attack burnt a large patch of grass, and moments later a few fire crystals dropped behind the zombie king and shattered to pieces on the ground. The flames quickly started spreading everywhere.

Lu Yin utilized the Roving Step to flash behind the zombie king's back, extracting his rod from its flesh and piercing it into the creature's head. The zombie went rigid for a moment, its body eventually shaking and collapsing to the ground. A dark red glow burst out from within its body, the flames consuming it from the inside out.

Lu Yin would never have expected a zombie to be able to unlock abilities by consuming energy crystals. Only one in ten thousand humans had any endowments at all, but the zombie could just swallow fire crystals and use their energy. Just who was the higher life form?

The zombie king quickly burned down to ashes, the flames slowly dying out. It was only then that he walked over to the ditch where it had been swallowing the crystals, finding a hole at the bottom. He was shocked at a red glow that appeared when he shone a torch down there, but that shock quickly turned to excitement, "A fire crystal deposit!"

Energy crystals were always in demand in the universe. Astral crystals, fire crystals, water crystals, they were all extremely valuable. Lu Yin had never expected to come across a deposit here; even though he didn't know how big it was, it was certainly a treasure trove. He definitely hadn't expected such a reward for killing the zombie king.

Thinking over things, he took out a good number of crystals before sealing the entrance. He then walked all around the area to hide his trail, making sure that others couldn't follow his trail to find it. Just like Xu San, this place was a precious resource for his future.

Just as Lu Yin was about to leave, he noticed another dark red glow under his feet. He bent down and started to dig at the dirt, finding a pair of scarlet eyes. He felt a chill run down his spine as he realized these were artificially constructed, and digging further he found that it was a human head with a sinister smile and scarlet eyes that seemed like they could pierce his very

soul. He felt goosebumps rise up as he almost threw the thing away immediately, but he managed to calm himself down and put the thing in his cosmic ring. It took a while for him to regain his calm; just what the hell was it and why was it here? It was clearly manmade, so someone had to have been here before. It also clearly wasn't just a random piece of craft; it definitely had a purpose.

Exhaling loudly, Lu Yin quickly left. Most of the zombie horde had dispersed by the time he returned, and his soldiers were now holding steadily. An hour later, all of the zombies that still remained had run away. Corpses were piled up outside the toll station, filling the building with a pungent odor that attracted a flood of rats to the area. It was a horrifying sight.

"Brother Lu, where had you gone?" Luo Yi asked in annoyance when she saw him.

Lu Yin replied seriously, "I found a zombie king that was sentient. It was what had brought this horde."

"What? Are you for real?" Luo Yi asked in shock.

"Mm. Report this to the Executioner immediately, the zombies are no longer just a numeric threat. There can be powerhouses amongst them as well; that king killed more than fifty of our troops tonight."

Understanding the gravity of the situation, Luo Yi immediately went away to report.

"Boss, how are you?" Xu San asked. This wasn't out of concern, however, at least not for Lu Yin. Without Lu Yin's presence, Xu San simply had no status in the camp.

"Take care of things for me, I need some rest," Lu Yin waved him off.

"Yes, Boss."

The zombie horde had caused almost a hundred casualties, but everyone had already gotten used to such cruel scenes. An uncountable number of people had perished since the Apocalypse, and most soldiers had been through so many comrades that it barely fazed them. Lying on the roof of the toll station, Lu Yin couldn't help but touch his cosmic ring. The head within left him unable to relax; the materials clearly weren't from Earth. Was it brought along by those students? What kind of student would bring such a thing?

Luo Yi jumped up to the rooftop, her lovely face showed clear signs of exhaustion. She sat by his side, "The Executioner wants to convey this matter to the frontlines as soon as possible; the best outcome would be if we could contact the capital and tell them too."

"The capital?" Lu Yin chuckled, "They should already know about it."

"Huh? Why do you say that?"

"I'm not sure, but here's a guess. If we saw a zombie king here, why wouldn't more have appeared elsewhere?"

Luo Yi hugged her knees, dazedly looking into the distance. The vast night sky was covered in clouds, illuminated only by the light of the moon.

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"When do you think Earth will be peaceful again?" she murmured.

Lu Yin did not respond. Dark nights often left people lonely, and the vulnerable Luo Yi now would be gone come day. Time would not stop on account of one's fears; planetary evolution took a long time, and the trials had only begun. Perhaps only the Seven Sages were privy to this information outside of himself; the students that had just arrived would decide the fate of their world. Vesta and Orton were merely students from ordinary schools of the Great Yu Empire, they were perhaps elites in their own bubbles, but they were nothing compared to those from actual high-tier institutions. An elite from

those places had powerful battle techniques and was leagues ahead of anyone else. They were the main characters in these so-called planetary trials.

As he thought about this, he touched his cosmic ring once more and looked over at Luo Yi, "Go get some rest, I'll keep watch tonight."

Luo Yi nodded and smiled weakly, "You know, something could have happened between us if you said something nice just now."

He smiled back but paid no attention as she departed; he simply wasn't interested.

As Luo Yi left the rooftop, the soldiers around organized their stuff mindlessly while Xu San bawled loudly from afar. Watching it all, Lu Yin took out the watch and turned it on; even though he'd disabled location access on it and didn't dare connect to the universal network at first, he could finally login and have a look now that he was outside Nanjing. This thing had all of the youth's messages and a lot of personal information; it was effectively a proof of identity.

Unfortunately, the gadget simply couldn't connect to the network. While he had expected this to happen, Lu Yin was still disappointed. The students in planetary trials had their gadgets registered to them, and access to the system would be barred once they died. This also meant that people knew about Vesta's demise.

He sighed and looked up towards the sky. He wasn't worried about being exposed as Vesta's killer; planetary trials were extremely important and under the supervision of the Universe Youth Council; no one could interfere with them. To the Great Yu Empire, even a primitive planet that had barely stepped foot into space was still a part of their territory. This trial wasn't just for the students who had arrived; it was for Earth as well. In fact, his killing of Vesta

was more likely to garner praise than any ill consequences; the attention was part of the reason he hadn't hesitated in going for the kill.

Any students that entered Earth would be disallowed from extra-terrestrial communication until the end of the trial. By the same token, those outside could only watch and not speak. Such were these trials of blood and steel; death was anything but uncommon.

Lu Yin found no new notifications on Vesta's screen, but there were a few messages that he had marked and placed on the side.

"Vesta, if you are unable to complete the task within three months, the Council will send in the second batch of students for the trial. Please do your best."

"The Universe Youth Council has ruled to dissolve the Youth Council of the Great Yu Empire, the date of reorganization has not yet been determined."

"The Universe Youth Council has ruled that Astral-10 shall enter Frostwave Weave of the Outerverse, we wish you all the best of luck."

Of the three notifications that had been saved, two were from the Universe Youth Council. Lu Yin was astonished that the Youth Council of the Great Yu Empire was dissolved, but his eyes truly went wide when he read that Astral-10 was about to appear in Frostwave Weave.