

## **Chapter 161: Opportunity and Crisis**

Master Wusheng had told Lu Yin to contact him before he performed his first lockbreaking attempt. Now that he had obtained his first sourcebox, Lu Yin considered it for a moment before deciding to contact Master Wusheng first.

A while went by, but the gadget was unable to connect to Master Wusheng. Lu Yin canceled the call since the man seemed busy. Since he couldn't contact Master Wusheng, Lu Yin was so impatient that he decided to immediately begin unlocking the sourcebox. He also started recording the scene as he wanted to upload his entire lockbreaking process of the clump of dirt onto his own Sourcebox Catalog channel.

Whenever someone succeeded in a lockbreaking attempt, they were also unlocking a secret of the universe since the sourceboxes were sealed and locked away by the universe. Lockbreakers were the key to unsealing these treasures, so every time someone succeeded, they were also contributing to the Lockbreaker Society; it didn't matter if the lockbreaking attempt was paid for by an outside party or if the Lockbreaker was doing it for themselves. Each successful contribution was graded by stars, and there were many Discerning Junior Lockbreakers who still had zero contributions like Lu Yin. Technically, they were not true Lockbreakers just yet. Only individuals who had successfully unlocked a sourcebox could be considered to be a true Lockbreaker. Even with just one success, that was a one star contribution, and with that single contribution, they would have taken their first step as a true Lockbreaker.

A Lockbreaker with contributions was entirely different from one without any. One could only obtain a contribution by sending in a lockbreaking video. It could be recorded by the individual themselves or by a third-party. Since the sourceboxes were all unique, it was impossible to create a forgery. Generally speaking, if someone paid a Lockbreaker to unlock a sourcebox, then they were allowed to observe the process at the side of the Lockbreaker. It was rather convenient since they could help record the process, and it also removed any possible suspicions since the unsealed object would be handed over to the original owner right after.

If a Lockbreaker secretly hid something that they unlocked, they would face the wrath of the entire Lockbreaker Society. This was one of the professional codes of the Lockbreakers.

Lu Yin had finished preparing everything. He placed a hand on the sourcebox, closed his eyes, and then allowed his star energy to seep out of his body and onto the surface of the item in his hand.

That instant it made contact with the sourcebox, Lu Yin felt stupefied. The various energies that formed the seal covering the treasure were just too complicated, chaotic, and tangled. It wasn't exactly big, but when he observed it with his star energy, it felt as immeasurable as a giant ocean, perhaps even another whole world.

The ambient star energy that permeated the universe could not be seen with the naked eye, but if it condensed far enough to become visible and tangible, then that was an indication that the star energy had been compacted to a terrifying degree. The surface of the sourcebox was exactly like that, and it

was not made up purely of star energy. It was actually a complex mixture of various energies that had strangely reached a tenuous equilibrium.

Bazeer was right; this sourcebox was indeed not dangerous. But as the one unlocking it, Lu Yin had to use his Cosmic Art. Otherwise, it would be as hopeless as an illiterate person trying to operate a spacecraft.

This was the true challenge that a Lockbreaker had to face when unlocking sourceboxes. This sourcebox was of the lowest grade, but it was already so complicated. With this experience, Lu Yin found the complexity of that towering sourcebox in the very first Sourcebox Catalog video that he had watched unfathomable. An amateur could only see the theatrics, but an expert would be able to appreciate the Lockbreaker's true skill.

Lu Yin was helpless in his current state, and he hurriedly activated his Cosmic Art. Eight stars revolved around him and enveloped the sourcebox. Suddenly, the seal on the sourcebox's surface became as clear as day to him. It was still chaotic, like randomly interweaving lines. If he wanted to unlock it, he would have to unravel these complicated lines of energy one by one. He took a deep breath and then started.

Since he could see each individual line of energy, untangling them was more time consuming than difficult. Moreover, each twisted line was composed of materialized energy, and there were an overwhelming number of them.

Five hours quickly passed, and the surface became a little smoother. This was evidence that Lu Yin's lockbreaking attempt was progressing positively. He raised his head and released a pent up breath. He needed at least twenty-some more hours to completely unseal the sourcebox. He grimaced at the thought but soon continued.

Without his Cosmic Art, Lu Yin had no hopes of succeeding. But even with Cosmic Art, he still spent twenty seven hours painstakingly working at the seal before finally succeeding.

When the final layer of thin, materialized energy vanished, an unremarkable piece of grey metal fell onto the ground with a dull thump.

Lu Yin's body swayed and he almost collapsed to the ground. Continually using his Cosmic Art for twenty seven hours had driven him to his limits, and he couldn't take it anymore. Luckily, he had succeeded in the final moment.

He picked up the unidentified grey metal, which seemed to have been a component of some machine once. However, too much time had passed, and the machine had disappeared, only leaving this single piece of metal behind. But since it had withstood the passing of eons, there was no way that this metal was something simple.

Lu Yin stored the metal shard away before activating his gadget and uploading the entire lockbreaking process onto the Sourcebox Catalog for review. With all the pressing concerns completed, he closed his eyes and fell into a long awaited deep slumber.

Time quickly passed, and Lu Yin was awakened by a beep from his gadget. His eyes sparkled when he saw that his lockbreaking video had been reviewed and successfully approved. He had officially obtained

his first shining star on his personal page on the Lockbreaker network. Lu Yin was delighted as this was proof that he was now a real Lockbreaker with contributions; a one-star Discerning Junior Lockbreaker.

The single star seemed so resplendent that it nearly blinded Lu Yin. With this star, his status had just spiked upwards again.

A Lockbreaker's status and contributions were not only important for their status towards outsiders, but it was also important within the Lockbreaker Society itself. A key reason for this was the protection they received. Any Lockbreaker with contributions was invaluable to the society. If such a member was killed, then their killer would face the wrath of the entire Lockbreaker Society. To say that the Lockbreaker Society was just "very protective" was an understatement. And Lu Yin was precisely looking for this sort of overprotective organization. In fact, after he had earned his first star as a Lockbreaker, the Lockbreaker Society had immediately sent its congratulations along with twenty Sourcebox Catalog videos. Each one was done by a fellow Junior Lockbreaker, which suited his skill level and thus were very precious for him.

At that point, Lu Yin received a soft notification; someone else was trying to contact him—Master Wusheng. He accepted the call, and Master Wusheng immediately appeared on the display with a stern expression. "Student Lu Yin, you were too reckless."

Lu Yin smiled. "My apologies, tutor. I couldn't wait."

"Do you know that every lockbreaking process is essentially gambling with your life? Lockbreaking is unlocking the universe's secret treasures and snatching resources from the universe itself. It is a very dangerous matter," Master Wusheng lectured strictly.

Lu Yin replied, "Tutor, that sourcebox had no intrinsic danger."

Master Wusheng snorted disdainfully. "No danger? Who told you that? The person who gave you the sourcebox? What the hell do they know? A sourcebox's danger cannot be understood by simple laymen. The dust sealing the sourcebox's surface starts in equilibrium, but if it is manipulated carelessly, then it can lead to a disastrous chain reaction. Watch the Sourcebox Catalog videos that the Lockbreaker Society sent you and remember these words: Lockbreaking is holding firm to one's determination to risk their life to Lockbreak. That is the Lockbreaker's motto." And with that, he ended the call.

Lu Yin could feel the gravity of Master Wusheng's lecture, and he quickly opened the Sourcebox Catalog video that he had just received from the society.

In the darkness, a young woman was gripping a fist-sized stone with her eyes closed as she began unlocking the sourcebox. That stone was very similar to Lu Yin's sourcebox in that it seemed completely harmless. She spent almost ten hours to barely smooth out the energy sealing the sourcebox. She then rested for a while before continuing. Suddenly, the material on the sourcebox's surface distorted strangely and then violently exploded without any sign, causing the space to distort and nearly collapse. The woman's entire body was swallowed without even a trace being left behind.

Lu Yin's pupils shrank and his scalp turned numb. During her lockbreaking process, the woman in the video had failed to ensure the stability of the energy equilibrium on the sourcebox's surface, which was the underlying reason behind this accident. This was a classic example of a failed attempt.

This video was very similar to Lu Yin's lockbreaking attempt, but the difference lay in that he had succeeded while she had failed. One lived, and the other had died.

The energy on the surface of the sourcebox could be seen as an unconventional ecosphere in a delicate balance. Once that balance was lost, the entire equilibrium would collapse at once, and the resulting explosion of the materialized energy would be undoubtedly terrifying. Even a Limiteer might not be able to withstand it.

Lu Yin's fear of lockbreaking grew even larger after viewing this video. Fortunately, his Cosmic Art had simplified the delicate energy system, or else he would have been in serious danger. He thought about it some more, and then decided to watch the rest of the videos that he had been gifted.

The second, third, and every video up to the seventeenth were all failures. The eighteenth was even more shocking to Lu Yin than the seventeen failures, however.

He saw a pair of hands that seemed to be lockbreaking yet another innocuous sourcebox. After dozens of hours, there was only a thin layer of energy left atop the sourcebox. But then, a strange snake with a bizarre appearance shot out from the sourcebox, past the pair of hands, and plunged into the Lockbreaker's body. There was a tragic cry, and then the scene faded.

Lu Yin's scalp turned numb once again. His view of sourceboxes had been turned upside down yet again. Evidently, what lay inside sourceboxes was not guaranteed to be an inanimate object; it could also be a living creature... Such creatures had purposely sealed themselves, and with the passing of time, had been gradually covered in dust. It was easy to imagine the terrifying power of these primordial creatures from ancient times.

There were a total of twenty Sourcebox Catalog videos, all of them failed lockbreaking attempts, and all of them resulting in the Lockbreaker's death. A cold shiver ran down Lu Yin's back. These cases made him acutely aware of just how dangerous lockbreaking could be. The Lockbreaker Society had sent him these videos the moment he had become a one-starred Lockbreaker both as a gift and as a warning about what being a Lockbreaker truly meant.

More often than not, opening sourceboxes did not lead to marvelous outcomes. Lockbreakers carried a responsibility, and while they could embrace the glory that came with the title, they also faced death with every attempt.

Lu Yin contacted Master Wusheng again.

"Finished?" Master Wusheng stared at Lu Yin through the display solemnly.

Lu Yin's brows knitted together in consternation as he solemnly replied, "Yes."

"Your thoughts?"

Lu Yin muttered underneath his breath for a moment, and then raised his eyes to meet Master Wusheng's gaze. "Intense pressure, but compelling."

Master Wusheng's lips twitched upwards. "Compelling? Few would think that lockbreaking is a compelling profession. The Lockbreaker Society may be made up of hundreds of thousands of

Lockbreakers, but the number who can truly unlock sourceboxes is much lower. And even within that select group, a portion of them have utterly shut lockbreaking out of their lives due to caution. I hope that you don't become someone like that."

Lu Yin's brows rose and he slowly bowed. "Thank you, Tutor, for your guidance."

Master Wusheng nodded and a hint of praise shone out from deep within his eyes. "When you make a lockbreaking attempt, you'll occasionally be able to rely on external objects. There are some mysterious objects in the universe that can greatly aid us Lockbreakers. For example, these—" Master Wusheng took out two dark green leaves and stuck them onto his head. Under Lu Yin's questioning gaze, he continued, explaining, "These leaves focus my thoughts and enhance my reasoning ability. You've successfully completed a lockbreaking attempt, so you should understand why enhancing one's reasoning ability can be very beneficial to the lockbreaking process."

Lu Yin's eyes shone and he immediately nodded; this was something that he had learned the hard way. If his calculating ability had been upgraded by several-fold during his previous lockbreaking attempt, then he might not have needed to waste twenty seven whole hours on it. These types of items were precious treasures that would vastly improve his lockbreaking efficiency.

Master Wusheng saw Lu Yin's longing expression and smiled as he stored the leaves. "Don't look at me like that—I only have two of these leaves. You'll have to work hard to find your own aids. Come to the Lockbreaker Society's headquarters when you are free. There are similar items that you can exchange for here. Of course, they all come at a hefty price." He then abruptly disconnected the call.

## **Chapter 162: Lockbreaking Genius**

Such a pity... Lu Yin thought that he would have been able to wrestle a gift out of Master Wusheng, but it wasn't that important. Even Master Wusheng had said that the price of one would be heavy. Either way, there was no chance that the current him could afford one. It was better for him to return to Astral-10 since he had been away for so long.

He exited out of the Lockbreaker network and suddenly realized that he still had an unopened message. It had actually come from Old Cai of Astral-10.

"Impromptu mission: head to the Umbral Butterfly Weave and obtain the third eye of the Giant Emperor. Immediately return to the academy after completing the mission."

"Giant Emperor? Third eye?" Lu Yin was puzzled by the mission details and immediately looked around the net for any additional information.

He found that the Umbral Butterfly Weave was rather distant from the Frostwave Weave. Specifically, there were another seven weaves between the two of them. This weave was composed of less than a hundred regions and was one size smaller than Frostwave Weave.

And the giant tribe was a primitive race from the Umbral Butterfly Weave. They had powerful members, and had birthed many powerhouses that had freely roamed the universe.

Every member of the giant tribe stood at least a hundred meters tall. All of them had sharp teeth, chubby monkey cheeks, bald heads, and drooping shoulders. Their bodies were shaded green, their eyes

were filled with black threads, and a forest grew on their backs. There were nearly ten million of these creatures and they were all ruled by the Giant Emperor.

Lu Yin continued researching their tribe for a long time, but he could not find any mention of the Giant Emperor's third eye, despite scouring his resources for anything about the emperor. He even examined images of previous Giant Emperors, but none of them had ever had a third eye. Could Old Cai be wrong?

He wanted to contact Old Cai to ask, but then thought that it would be best to take a look first.

The journey from the Frostwave Weave to the Umbral Butterfly Weave would take a month, and Lu Yin planned on spending this time studying his star charts. Besides that, all he could do was roll his die.

Only a few days had passed since he had last rolled the die, and Lu Yin had calculated that not enough time had passed yet for the die to recover. Thus, he simply retrieved a star chart and began studying it while floundering around for that sensation he had felt when the crazy director had simulated the ninth star for him.

After a few days passed, Lu Yin took out the die. It was time to test his luck.

He tapped the die with a finger, and Lu Yin's environment changed after it stopped spinning. He had entered the Time Stop space.

He was rather dejected about this outcome since he was already rather fatigued from the unstimulating, never-changing background of space, but he just couldn't bring himself to use star crystals to change the scenery. Forget it. Three days will pass quickly.

At the end of the third day, Lu Yin exited the space and rolled his die again.

This time he rolled Pilfer and received a bank card, but it wasn't from the Mavis Bank. Lu Yin's lips curled in disdain. Another useless roll.

When Pilfer turned up yet again, Lu Yin sighed, but then he saw a pink female article of clothing land before him. He was stunned. It can do this too?! He gave it no further thought and immediately burned the clothing to ash. If someone saw it, his reputation would be ruined.

So it can even grab women's clothing. Lu Yin sighed and realized that he would truly never be able to roll the die in front of anyone else. He could already imagine the scene that would take place if a female's underwear suddenly appeared in front of him. It would truly cause an uproar

.

He breathed in deeply and tapped on the die again. It stopped spinning and revealed six pips.

Possession. What a mysterious ability. Lu Yin's eyes narrowed as he became incomparably excited; this was a roll that suited him.

Everything changed before Lu Yin's eyes as he transformed into a ball of light that was in the middle of a pitch-black space. There were light balls surrounding him; some were glowing mildly, but others were burning fiercely. Some were big, and some were small. Lu Yin's light ball flew further and further into the darkness. His cosmic ring contained 200,000 crystals, which was more than enough for him to go a long distance.

This time, Lu Yin was not anxious. He wanted to see if he could pick the most suitable person for himself.

As he continued traveling farther out, Lu Yin found that, of the countless light balls surrounding him, some seemed to reject him, while others seemed drawn towards him. He was thinking about the differences when a force suddenly started dragging him in. His face changed drastically. No way! I've already gone through 200,000 crystals? But there was no more time to think, and he instantly charged towards the most attractive light ball by him.

This light ball was much bigger than his own, and it was also bigger than Da Lei's from last time. This should be a Limiteer's light ball, and not a weak one, either.

As Lu Yin charged into the ball of light, his consciousness faded. When he came to his senses, he had become another person—Charon, a genius Lockbreaker.

Lu Yin looked at his hands and then at the mirror in front of him. A handsome man with sharp brows and bright eyes looked back. He was now Charon, a Lockbreaker from the Timor Weave. He had already accumulated five stars of contributions as a Junior Lockbreaker and was just a single step away from becoming an Intermediate Lockbreaker. He was a true genius, and more importantly, he was a student of Astral-6 and was one of the Area Masters of the Dao of Purgatory. In other words, he was someone at the same level as Frankfurt, Spear Mountain's Area Master.

Lu Yin knew that he had won the lottery with this person. Charon was definitely very well suited for him, and he was even a Lockbreaker. It was no wonder why Charon's light had been drawn towards Lu Yin so strongly; there was a certain degree of connection between the two. Even better, Lu Yin now knew how to select the best choice during Possession in the future. He would find the light ball with the greatest attraction for himself, as the person represented by that light would definitely share a key aspect with Lu Yin.

Suddenly, Lu Yin thought of something and quickly checked a star chart. He found that while the Timor Weave wasn't as distant from the Frostwave Weave as the Umbral Butterfly Weave, there was still a substantial distance between the two. Specifically, there were two weaves between Lu Yin's original location and the Possessed Charon. There was no way that his star crystals would last for much longer, so Lu Yin quickly focused on making the best use of his time by reviewing Charon's lockbreaking experiences.

Charon deserved to be a five-starred Lockbreaker genius. He had already unlocked more than twenty sourceboxes. The lockbreaking attempt that had pushed him to five stars had been with a sword-shaped sourcebox.

It had been a Limiteer mission issued by Astral-6, and the issuer had not given very clear instructions. However, the mission to unlock this sword-shaped sourcebox was infamous in Astral-6 as two other Lockbreakers had already perished from trying to unlock this sourcebox. In both cases, those students had been slain by a single strand of a sword aura. This sourcebox had even attracted the attention of an Intermediate Lockbreaker, who had confirmed that it was truly a sourcebox that was within the lockbreaking capabilities of a Junior Lockbreaker, but it was extremely difficult to do so, and success should be rewarded with five stars of contribution.

Charon had spent three days working on the sourcebox before finally succeeding. In fact, he had nearly collapsed at the final juncture before the sourcebox was ultimately unlocked. He then obtained the sword, Unveiled, and shook Astral-6 to its core. He also became the school's number two genius Lockbreaker who was only behind Dao Bo.

Lu Yin reviewed the process of how Charon had unlocked Unveiled and was shocked at Charon's supremely precise control of his star energy. Although this person could not see the tangled energies as clearly as Lu Yin with his Cosmic Art, he instead relied on his familiarity with star energy to forcibly unlock the sourcebox. This was the most common method used among Lockbreakers, and to a certain extent, Lu Yin's Cosmic Art could even be considered cheating. Charon, on the other hand, was a true genius Lockbreaker.

Even just reviewing this process left Lu Yin exhausted and his forehead covered with beads of sweat. He had profited tremendously from Possessing Charon's body and gaining access to his Lockbreaking experience, which was considered valuable in any form.

Lu Yin unsheathed Unveiled with a clang. The blade seemed to come to life. Its main color was silvery-white, but its tip was vibrantly colored with special indistinct patterns that ran down the length of the blade. He casually swung it and left a huge slash across Charon's secret room. Lu Yin was stunned—a Limiteer's private training room would definitely not be made from normal materials, but it had been easily sliced through by this sword. It's too sharp.

The patterns flickering at the sword tip were not simple, either. This was a weapon that had been sealed for quite some time, and it obviously carried a mysterious might with it.

Lu Yin was greedy and he desperately wanted the blade as well as the rest of the riches in Charon's cosmic ring, but in the end, he restrained himself. He had already obtained Charon's lockbreaking experience, and if he completely robbed Charon blind, then Lu Yin's karma would be too heavily tainted. The universe worked in mysterious ways, and while Lu Yin didn't believe in karma, he would not be able to answer to his conscience if he did this, which was also a karma of sorts.

Although Lu Yin no longer desired to plunder Charon's riches, it did not mean that this Possession had run its course in terms of usefulness. Charon, after all, was still a powerhouse of Astral-6 and an Area Master of the Dao of Purgatory who was on the same level as Frankfurt. He could provide Lu Yin with a ready-made backer. Lu Yin pawed through Charon's memories until a strange smile crept across his face. This person was definitely a genius, but he was terrible with managing his emotions. However, this was precisely the sort of person that perfectly suited Lu Yin's current needs.

Lu Yin took out a dozen letters from the corner of his cosmic ring and blinked. "Charon, don't blame me. Your brother doesn't wish to do this, but I have no choice. Bear with this little injustice this time."

After uttering those words, a dragging force appeared and Lu Yin closed his eyes. He then reappeared in that dark space and traversed through a vast, unknown distance to return to King Zishan's palace. He opened his eyes, took out some paper, and immediately began to write.

At the same time, back in the distant Timor Weave, Charon got up from the floor and rubbed his head. What just happened? He had just been lying there a moment ago, but his memory cut off there.



Suddenly, Charon's pupils shrank and his face paled; there were dozens of letters scattered on the ground, the sight of which threw his mind into disarray. His secret had been discovered!

To Charon, he would rather die than have this secret known by someone else. And yet, the letters on the ground clearly showed that his secret had been ruthlessly uncovered.

Charon was covered in sweat, and he started trembling as he picked up the letters. Who could have done this? Who could possibly knock me unconscious without even leaving a trace? This was his most secretive training room, and not a single soul knew anything about it.

At this point, a series of numbers appeared before Charon. It was a gadget number. Charon's face changed as he realized that it could have only been left by the person who had violated his privacy. Is this so that I can contact him? Charon hesitantly activated his gadget.

Back in King Zishan's residence, Lu Yin checked his cosmic ring, and to his dismay, found that there were only around five hundred star crystals left. This one encounter had consumed 200,000 crystals, which was just way too terrifying a rate. However, he had no regrets as Possessing Charon had been completely worth every single one of the 200,000 crystals. These crystals had allowed him to venture all the way into the Timor Weave. Possession had given him a huge surprise, and had also turned him penniless. Lu Yin was simultaneously in pain and euphoria.

It was now time to earn some money. The matter with Xi Yue had gradually quieted down as time passed, and there were no more fools looking for Lu Yin to give them a beating. He was considering how to best find another way to extort money from somewhere when his gadget suddenly beeped. His lips curled up in joy and he happily activated it. A display appeared before him, showing Charon staring at Lu Yin with bloodshot eyes.

Charon was taken aback when he saw Lu Yin. He had originally thought that the person who had pried into his secrets would be at least an Explorer—how could it be this youth who seemed to only be around twenty years old? It was impossible for someone of his age to best Charon.

“Who are you?”

Lu Yin smiled. “You must be the Charon that my uncle spoke about.”

Uncle? Charon's eyes grew bigger and his expression turned vicious even as a trace of fear crept in. “Where's your uncle? I want to see him.”

Lu Yin shrugged casually. “Sorry, but my Uncle's busy and won't meet you. But he told me about some of your matters. How interesting. Haha!”

Charon felt a shiver run down his spine as he stared furiously at Lu Yin. “Who are you?! What do you know?! What do you want?!”

### **Chapter 163: New Mission**

These three consecutive questions were proof of how scared Charon felt. The secret that Lu Yin had discovered was just that shocking. While Charon was a genius, his luck in romance was too poor; he had fallen for a girl, but before he could confess, she had already become his sister-in-law. Even worse, the wedding had taken place the night before he successfully unlocked the sword-shaped sourcebox. It was

precisely this pressure that drove him to muster up the courage and determination to unlock the sword-shaped sourcebox. He had sought death, but had found success instead.

But after becoming a five-star Junior Lockbreaker, Charon had thought things through and no longer wished to die. However, his feelings for that woman had never waned, and writing unsent letters to her was his only means of venting. He wrote them purely for himself and revealed them to no one else. Even the woman herself did not know that her new brother-in-law actually saw her in that kind of light. Charon had locked his feelings away in another world, somewhere hidden far from everyone except himself. This was his greatest secret and he had never shared it with anyone else. But now, Lu Yin also knew about it.

This person is quite emotional, but he just had bad luck. From Lu Yin's perspective, if Charon continued to suppress his emotions in this manner, then it wouldn't take long before he became mentally unstable. Lu Yin may as well allow Charon to release some stress by divulging his secret and allowing Lu Yin to become his confidante. Of course, Charon would have to pay for this "service" in kind, for example, by protecting Lu Yin within the trial zone.

"Brother Charon, those letters were pretty good. You write well," Lu Yin exclaimed.

Charon clenched his fists. His fear had climbed to the point where he had started trembling. "You... What do you want?"

Lu Yin looked at him seriously. "I hear that you're a student from Astral-6, and that you are one of the Area Masters in the Dao of Purgatory."

Charon remained silent.

Lu Yin smiled. "Then it'll be simple. Let's have an exchange. You protect me from any harm in the trial zone, and I'll protect these secrets of yours. No one else will ever find out."

Charon was shocked by Lu Yin's words. "You're also a student of the Astral Combat Academy? Which academy?"

"Astral-10."

Charon was stunned. "Astral-10? That branch still exists?"

Lu Yin grew unhappy. What kind of reaction is that? Astral-10 is surviving and still doing well. This brat must not have returned to Astral-6 for a long time. Clearly, he was not up to date regarding the various events of the past few months. Charon should at least be aware that Astral-10 had been driven to the Outerverse as he was also someone from the Outerverse.

"Just say if you agree." Lu Yin's unhappiness quickly turned to impatience.

Charon's eyes turned cold. "Fine, I agree. What's your name?"

Lu Yin sneered at Charon's cold gaze as he replied, "I suppose that you're thinking about how to best kill me now, right?"

Charon's expression changed as he hurriedly responded, "No, we're all students of the Astral Combat Academy. I can't kill you."

Lu Yin shook his head, still smiling. "I'll urge you to think twice about this. My uncle has a few of your letters. Didn't you notice that you're missing a few? If anything happens to me, then those letters will appear in pristine condition on top of your brother's desk. Oh, that's right, and at Astral-6, where everyone in the Astral Combat Academy will learn about your situation. Think about that."

Charon's scalp turned numb. If such a thing truly happened, then this prestigious life of his would be gone. Although he had never done anything to that woman, if his feelings were exposed, then he would be turned away regardless of where he went in the universe. And what's more, his sister-in-law would be implicated as well. "I, Charon, swear on my honor that I will not do anything to you. However, you must also make a guarantee that your uncle will not publicize my letters." Charon turned eager at that prospect.

Lu Yin smiled. "I guarantee that, as long as I'm fine, you'll be fine as well."

Charon heaved a heavy sigh of relief, and he sounded rather disheartened when he spoke again. "I'm the Area Master of Whitebones Gorge in the Dao of Purgatory. Go directly to the Whitebones Gorge when you reach the Dao of Purgatory. I'll also send down orders that you're under my protection. What's your name?"

"Lu Yin."

Charon nodded and deactivated his gadget. He knew that there was no point in continuing the conversation with Lu Yin; all of his compromising information had already been revealed.

Lu Yin also released a breath and smiled. He had now found his backer, and he was an Area Master no less. This would cause many to think twice before attempting to deal with him. It was a pity; it would have been even better if he had found a Realm Master to back him. Then, no one in the entire trial zone would dare to act against him. An Area Master's influence was not comparable to a Realm Master's, and Charon's deterrence would only intimidate a portion of students.

Lu Yin suddenly recalled Jared, the top person in the Blaze Realm Rankings. After Charon gave his orders, would Jared possibly personally act against Lu Yin?

Lu Yin spent the next two days reviewing his memories of Charon's Lockbreaking experiences. When he opened his eyes again, he relaxed. With Charon's experience added on to his Cosmic Art, Lu Yin was now confident in his abilities to break through to become a five-star Junior Lockbreaker. But even Charon himself had needed some luck to succeed. If Lu Yin wanted to safely and successfully unlock a sourcebox that was as difficult as the sword-shaped one, then he needed to first manifest the ninth star of his Cosmic Art. Once the ninth star appeared, his Cosmic Art and Cosmic Palm technique would undergo huge transformations.

Unfortunately, the ninth star was too difficult to manifest. Even after the crazy director had simulated it and helped him sense the correct feeling, it was still useless. Lu Yin just could not find the key point to developing it. Perhaps he had a better chance out among the stars themselves.

He thought about it, rested for another day, and then headed towards the palace to bid farewell to Undying Yushan.

"You're going to the Umbral Butterfly Weave?" Undying Yushan was astonished by Lu Yin's destination.

Lu Yin replied, "My mentor gave me a mission. I have no choice."

Undying Yushan nodded understandingly. "Then go. Even though it's far, your spacecraft has Astral-10's emblem, so it has the protection of the Astral Combat Academy as well as the Ten Arbiters Council. You shouldn't encounter any danger on the way. But remember to reroute immediately if you see any peculiar astral phenomena. The natural heavenly disasters are terrifying beyond imagination. Even I may not be able to make it through one safely."

Lu Yin acknowledged his warnings. "Understood, Your Majesty."

"Ah, Wendy's back as well. Would you like to meet her?" Undying Yushan asked, looking at Lu Yin.

Lu Yin shook his head. "We've already met by accident."

Undying Yushan nodded. "If that's so, then go. Complete your mission quickly and then return to the Academy. Remember your responsibilities, and also, remember the ring of authority."

Lu Yin acknowledged Undying Yushan's words one more time and then turned to leave.

Undying Yushan refrained from telling Lu Yin that Wendy wished to defuse the conflict between him and Bazeer. Although Undying Yushan had not interacted much with Lu Yin, from what he had seen so far, he knew that the humiliation that Lu Yin had suffered that day would not dissipate until Bazeer died. And in Lu Yin's heart, the matter did not stop at Bazeer, but actually extended all the way to Wendy. Undying Yushan felt an oncoming headache as he considered this matter.

Though Lu Yin was blessed with a unique innate gift, Undying Yushan did not believe for a second that Lu Yin could overtake Wendy. Reality was not a fairy tale, and Wendy had received the teachings of Ten Thousand Swords Peak as well as the attention of the Ten Arbiters. No member of the younger generation in the Outerverse could match her, but this should not be a major roadblock in Lu Yin's life. Only time would be able to slowly heal these wounds.

The scenery quickly slipped away as the Aurora spacecraft broke into the heavens. With a gentle tremble, it returned to its deathly quiet stillness as it sped towards the Umbral Butterfly Weave.

This journey would take a month, and Lu Yin would travel through dozens of wormholes along the way. Without these wormholes, who knew how many months or years it would take to reach the Umbral Butterfly Weave.

Lu Yin retrieved his star chart and shoved aside all distracting thoughts. He immersed himself within his studies and hoped that he would be able to manifest the ninth star soon.

One day after Lu Yin left Zenyu Star, Wendy Yushan checked the Lockbreaker network and was shocked to find that a single, dazzling star had appeared on Lu Yin's profile.

Wendy Yushan was stunned. "That's a fast success." She thought about it a moment and then immediately paid to see Lu Yin's Sourcebox Catalog channel. There was only one Lockbreaking video, which was the video of him unlocking a mud-like sourcebox. Wendy immediately recognized it, as it was the sourcebox that she had sent to the new Lockbreaker.

Wendy only looked away from the screen a long time later. This person had actually succeeded. She had assumed that a newly inducted Lockbreaker would take a minimum of several months to a year before finally succeeding in their first lockbreaking attempt. It looks like this person is a genius at lockbreaking.

“Bazeer, immediately contact the Lockbreaker, Seventh Brother. I need him to know that he will continue to receive goodwill from the Outerverse Youth Council,” Wendy quickly ordered Bazeer.

Bazeer obeyed and immediately tried to contact Lu Yin.

Lu Yin was in the middle of studying his star chart while traveling through outer space when he heard a notification from his gadget. His eyes hardened when he saw that Bazeer was trying to contact him. Then, a smile appeared and he altered his voice through the speech settings. “Yes, Bazeer?”

“Oh, I’m sorry to interrupt, Mr. Seventh Brother. I would like to ask, were you successful in your lockbreaking attempt?” Bazeer’s tone was even more respectful than during the previous call.

Lu Yin grunted and seriously replied, “What, do you want the unsealed item returned to you now?”

“Of course not. Please, don’t be mistaken. We previously said that any item would belong to you once it had been unlocked. This was the decision of the Outerverse Youth Council, as well as Representative Puyu’s decision.”

Lu Yin raised his brows questioningly. “Puyu?”

“Yes, Member Puyu. He is one of the highest ranking members of the Outerverse Youth Council. This is his show of goodwill.”

Lu Yin’s gaze turned chilly. Puyu, huh? It seems that this was the backer behind Bazeer, and he was probably the same person who had ordered Bazeer to humiliate Lu Yin. Lu Yin’s victory over Ghostfire did not justify Bazeer’s actions, and moreover, it was Ghostfire himself who had challenged Lu Yin. In the end, everything seemed to be linked to Puyu, the person who wanted to obtain Wendy Yushan for himself.

Lu Yin analyzed the situation in an instant and without missing a beat, responded, “Got it. Member Puyu. I will remember him as well.”

Bazeer was delighted by Lu Yin’s response, as any Lockbreaker who had made a contribution was a powerful connection that might help him in the future. This Lockbreaker in particular had especially high potential, and he could bestow both him and Puyu with great riches. “If that is so, then I won’t disturb Mister Seventh Brother anymore. All the best in your lockbreaking endeavors.”

Lu Yin grunted and disconnected the call.

Puyu... Lu Yin’s eyes hardened; this person would be troublesome. Puyu was at the same level as Wendy Yushan and was definitely extremely powerful in his own right. If Lu Yin wanted to join the Outerverse Youth Council in the future, then he would definitely clash with Puyu and would need to make preparations.

Travelling through space was an extremely dull affair. And while the starry heavens were beautiful, they hid their own dangers.

Another half month passed, and during that time, Lu Yin's route had been recalculated six times. Each change had been preemptively made to evade danger, but even so, he had been nearly swallowed by a blackhole that had suddenly appeared in front of him at one point.

That moment had been a close call that had greatly frightened Lu Yin. If he had been swallowed, then he would have been dead meat since his spacecraft could not escape the grip of a blackhole yet.

"Danger ahead. Programming a new route. Rerouting successful," a pleasant voice sounded out. Lu Yin was flabbergasted. Another reroute? He wondered what was happening and nonchalantly looked out into the distance. His eyes twitched in shock. There are two people out there?!

### **Chapter 164: All Nine Stars**

In the middle of outer space, two figures were entangled in a bloody battle as their surroundings crumbled all around them. Heavenly bodies were disintegrating left and right, and an indescribably frightening force streaked towards the spacecraft in the distance.

Lu Yin was dumbstruck by this scene, but before he could react or even think, his spacecraft started shaking violently. A bizarre vortex had appeared in the region where the duo were fighting, and the spacecraft could not resist the pulling force as it was being inexorably dragged towards it.

Lu Yin was extremely nervous and felt an impending sense of doom creep over him. He didn't know how strong the two people fighting were, but their every attack could easily shatter his spacecraft. And by the looks of it, neither one seemed to care about his survival.

Bang!

A shockwave exploded in the void of outer space. The ripples of force overwhelmed the safety measures of the spacecraft and nearly knocked Lu Yin out. The surrounding celestial bodies trembled, and it seemed as if they had been pulled one step closer to the two battling cultivators.

The pulling force of the vortex grew even more powerful, and Lu Yin almost felt like he was seeing the birth of a new galaxy. Lu Yin stared at the illusory scene and a feeling of extreme vertigo overcame him, but he quickly recovered. Out of pure coincidence, the eight nearby celestial bodies started orbiting the vortex that was centered on the fight between the two cultivators. As the celestial bodies slowly spun in closer and closer to the vortex, Lu Yin's spacecraft was pulled in and became the ninth body.

In that instant, Lu Yin had an epiphany, reaching some kind of enlightenment. His Cosmic Art unconsciously activated, and the indistinct image of the ninth star appeared.

The celestial bodies ruptured one after the other. The red magma and blue seawater were both scattered into the void of outer space. Following the explosions of the bodies, the void also cracked open. Lu Yin clenched his teeth, and blood even appeared on his lips. He could not escape. Three bodies had already exploded, and the fourth was now sweeping in towards the vortex. His own death was not far away.

As he watched the fourth star explode and the two cultivators still fighting in the center of the chaos, Lu Yin felt a wave of pain and sorrow wash over him. He had manifested the ninth star, but he would not even have a chance to use it once before his death. His Cosmic Art slowly dispersed from his body, and the ninth star broke away from the Cosmic Art the moment it dispersed. This was because Lu Yin had

lost control due to his unstable mental state, causing the perfect star field formed by the nine stars to collapse.

Lu Yin's eyes flashed when he saw the ninth star break away from his Cosmic Art. He suddenly grabbed the spacecraft's controls and personally guided it to purposefully charge towards the center of the vortex at top speed. The spacecraft warned of imminent danger, but Lu Yin disregarded the warning and continued charging forward.

In the center of the chaos, the two people suddenly stopped their fight and stared at the spacecraft in astonishment. They watched with interest, but neither moved to save or block him.

The vortex was pulling everything in towards it, but it was also possible to use its irresistible pull to break away from it. Everything depended on if Lu Yin could find the correct trajectory.

If it had been at any time before now, then Lu Yin would have no chance of carrying out such a feat. However, a few moments ago, he had just observed the movements of the ninth star escaping from his Cosmic Art, and now, he was copying it as he controlled his spacecraft. His Aurora spacecraft borrowed the power of the vortex to break away at the exact same moment that the eighth celestial body exploded, the power propelling it far away.

Behind Lu Yin, the heavenly phenomenon finally exploded and caused space itself to undulate dangerously, but all of this was completely unrelated to Lu Yin now. After he had managed to barely avoid death, he collapsed in exhaustion.

"Position deviated. Reprogramming. Rerouting success."

Lu Yin relaxed and squeezed out a faint smile. He wished that he would never have to experience such a dangerous experience again.

Meanwhile, the battling duo was left stunned in his wake. "I never thought that that brat would actually escape. From the spacecraft's emblem, he should be from Astral-10. I've heard that the academy has been rather busy these days."

"So what? I heard that, this time, they only managed to recruit twelve new students and that a considerable number of them came from the Inniverse as well. Once an order recalling them is issued, that academy will completely collapse."

"If that director regains control, then no one will dare to plot against Astral-10."

"True. Out of the ten directors of the Astral Combat Academy, that old fogey is the most terrifying. If he ever regains his sanity, then no one will dare to provoke his school. It's a pity that doing so is far too difficult, since he touched what he shouldn't have."

"It has nothing to do with us. But when the Astral Combat Tournament begins, let's check it out. That brat must be pretty good since he actually escaped."

"It's probably just luck. At least we didn't have to rescue him."

"Let's continue. I want to see how far you've improved after all these centuries."

"What a joke! When have you ever beaten me?"

“Shameless! I beat you once in the Cosmic Sea.”

“Why don’t you just say you beat me in the Neoverse? Don’t act dumb.”

“Stop bullshitting.”

...

Lu Yin’s spacecraft continued sailing through space steadily. Far in front of him was a giant spacecraft that had strangely stopped in the middle of outer space. From a distance, its sparkling lights seemed splendid, but everything changed when one noticed the blood staining the glass. Countless wails echoed forth from the massive craft as blood spilled out from the cracks in the spacecraft’s hull, adding a macabre element of horror to the originally dark void.

A few hours later, Lu Yin encountered the giant spacecraft and curiously wondered why it had stopped in the heavens.

Lu Yin’s expression quickly changed when he noticed the blood seeping out from the spacecraft. He vigilantly studied the spacecraft to see if there was an issue and was on full alert.

A figure appeared in Lu Yin’s view. It was a woman with long, drooping black and white hair. Shockingly, fresh blood was dripping down from the tips of the hair. She held a red longsword and there were numerous corpses floating beneath her.

Lu Yin was fully aware of the cruelty of the universe, and he ignored the bodies and instead focused on the woman; more specifically, he focused on her hair. It was black and white, which was a distinguishing characteristic of the Daynight clan. When did another member of the Daynight clan come to the Outerverse? This clan really does have its fingers in every pie.

The woman from the Daynight clan seemed to sense Lu Yin’s gaze as she turned around and looked at him with icy-cold eyes. Lu Yin was shocked; how could this gaze be so icy, emotionless, desperate, remorseful, helpless, and yet, contain an irrepressible grief? Those complicated eyes etched themselves deeply into Lu Yin’s heart and would become an unforgettable memory for the rest of his life.

The woman merely glanced at Lu Yin before she silently looked off into the distance as she remained in the spacecraft. No one could guess her thoughts.

At that point, Lu Yin’s spacecraft passed by that giant spacecraft, and he noticed an emblem on the front of the spacecraft. It was an interstellar pirates’ emblem, and it emanated a bloodthirsty aura. It turns out that this spacecraft had originally been full of interstellar pirates.

The Daynight clan was a powerful clan among the entire universe and one of their members would not be a pirate. The only logical explanation, then... Had this woman of the Daynight clan killed all of these pirates? With just a glance, Lu Yin had confirmed that no one else was alive besides that female. Such deep murderous intent.

Lu Yin’s spacecraft quickly left the scene, and soon, he could no longer see that giant spacecraft. However, that Daynight member’s gaze had been engraved deeply into his memory. It was his first time seeing such a complicated expression that mixed both grief and helplessness into a single gaze; the brief experience had shocked him to the core.



He shook his head. In the end, the matter was unrelated to him. He wasn't qualified to meddle with the Daynight clan's matters.

Lu Yin closed his eyes and began to revolve his Cosmic Art once again, as he wanted to quickly stabilize the ninth star and allow his Cosmic Art to reach perfection. It was, after all, a comprehension that he had only achieved after a near-death experience.

As his route had changed continuously throughout the journey, it had taken him a dozen more days than the original estimated time to arrive. After a month, Lu Yin finally reached the Umbral Butterfly Weave.

When Lu Yin arrived at the Umbral Butterfly Weave, Michelle appeared at the entrance of Astral-10's trial zone. After spending two months under Elder Cai's guidance, she was about to achieve her hundredth victory in the ported battle, and she wanted to enter the trial zone as soon as possible.

Of Astral-10's twelve new students, the one with the most victories after Lu Yin was Schutz at 52 victories. Of course, the price he had paid for those wins was steep, as he had racked up 237 defeats. Schutz had challenged the ported battles many more times than anyone else and his match count exceeded Lu Yin's by more than a hundred matches. Schutz had continued to constantly challenge the ported battles long after the rest had stopped. It was no mean feat to obtain fifty two victories, as both luck and battle experience played a huge part in doing so.

Today, Michelle had appeared on the battlefield.

Her previous record was thirteen victories and fifty six defeats.

Michelle entered the range of the teleportation stone and only returned a long time later.

The Trialmaster opened his eyes and calmly stated, "Michelle, seventeen victories to fifty seven defeats."

...

"Michelle, twenty three victories to sixty defeats."

...

"Michelle, thirty nine victories to sixty five defeats."

...

"Michelle, seventy two victories to eighty eight defeats."

...

"Michelle, ninety three victories to ninety eight defeats."

When Michelle stepped out of the range of the teleportation stone after her most recent bout, Silver arrived at the trial zone entrance. He had heard the results announced by the mentor and was astonished. "Is she a genius? She's improved vastly in just two months."

When Michelle returned once again, the Trialmaster opened his eyes and looked at her seriously. "Michelle, ninety nine victories to ninety nine defeats."

"Congratulations, student. Just one more victory," Silver said as he smiled and offered his congratulations.

Michelle looked exhausted. She had spent several days fighting at the trial zone's entrance to attain such results. It was almost too arduous to bear, but it also reflected the mentor's teaching methods. She recalled her past two months of hard work; all of her missions had been specifically designed to double as the most effective training for her. The mentors of Astral-10 were indeed worthy of their positions in the Astral Combat Academy. But now, other doubts had cropped up in Michelle's mind—no mentor in the other academies could get such amazing results. Astral-10's mentors seemed to be different from the other academies' mentors...

She turned to Silver and asked, "Do you want a turn?"

Silver smiled. "I'll wait until your one hundredth victory."

Michelle did not speak any further and stepped into the range of the teleportation stone again.

At the same time, Xia Luo arrived at the trial zone's entrance and glanced at Silver. He then walked to the Trialmaster and spoke to him quietly. The mentor nodded and pointed at the teleportation stone. "Go to the battle arena."

Xia Luo smiled and nodded back. He then walked over to the teleportation stone and patiently waited for Michelle to return.

Not long after, Michelle walked out of the area with an excited expression. The Trialmaster's aged voice rang out. "Michelle, a hundred victories to a hundred defeats."

Xia Luo was astonished and excitedly offered his congratulations.

Michelle suppressed her excitement. She had finally reached a hundred victories! But her elation was quickly dampened when she remembered that Lu Yin had already reached a hundred victories two months ago. Although she was much slower, she felt that she could still catch up. Her innate gift meant that she was destined to have an outstanding future. If her elder sister could reach those heights, then so could she.

Silver was next to step into the teleportation stone's area while Xia Luo looked on from behind, deep in thought.

Not far away, Michelle walked to the Trialmaster and respectfully said, "Mentor, I would like to enter the trial zone."

The mentor nodded. "Sure, go on in."

Michelle was puzzled. "Go in where?"

The mentor pointed behind him and sighed, "Each as clueless as the last."

Michelle stretched out her hand in the exact same way that Lu Yin had done so. Her eyes gleamed before she stepped forward, vanishing.

Xia Luo's eyes shone as he watched. It was time for him to enter the trial zone as well.

Michelle was not completely unfamiliar with the trial zone mountain. She directly entered, closed her eyes, and selected the Dao of Purgatory. It was the same choice that Lu Yin had initially made, but her reception was worlds apart. Lu Yin had been faced with ridicule and attacks when he entered, but Michelle encountered stunned gazes and passionate greetings.

### **Chapter 165: Sword Sect**

Oftentimes, being beautiful would give one an unfair advantage, and Michelle's remarkable appearance dazzled everyone who caught sight of her. Few in the trial zone were willing to let someone stay beside them, but they would make an exception for Michelle.

Michelle looked around and saw that the surroundings were filled with darkness. This was the Dao of Purgatory that her sister, Mira, had mentioned before. It was the gathering grounds for Astral-6's main forces. Michelle turned around and saw a range of towering black mountains off in the distance. If Lu Yin was there, then he would have instantly recognized it as Spear Mountain, where he had perished.

Michelle pondered her options for a moment before heading for Spear Mountain.

As she neared Spear Mountain, she was suddenly attacked by a black shadow. It was extremely fast, and Michelle's expression changed as she instinctively stepped back to avoid its strike. Her eyebrows arched up. "A war spirit?"

Michelle had a much deeper understanding of the trial zones than Lu Yin. She immediately readied herself for battle when she identified the war spirit, already aware that it had no intelligence and would only battle mindlessly.

Suddenly, a sense of fatal crisis washed over her. It was not from the war spirit, and instead came from an entirely different direction. Michelle unconsciously activated her innate gift in response, causing a red lotus to blossom beneath her as she vanished from the spot.

"Eh? A red lotus?" a voice cried out as a few people walked into sight. There were two males and two females, with one of the young males leading. They stared in astonishment as Michelle reappeared in the distance.

Michelle stared at the man in the lead. She sensed an extreme level of danger from him, to the point where her intuition was screaming that the man was strong enough to kill her with a wave of his hand.

The war spirit switched targets and suddenly jumped at the man, but he merely raised his hand and flicked a finger. The space around them flashed with a radiance and the war spirit paused. The entire area then collapsed and vanished along with the war spirit.

Michelle's eyes shrank to pinholes and she retreated a few more steps back. She stared at the man in shock. How terrifying. This man easily tore the void apart just like that. Michelle was completely outclassed.

“Red lotus, I remember that my Astral-6 had a Red Lotus Witchbow. What’s your relationship with her?” The man looked at Michelle inquiringly. Though the question was abrupt, his tone was gentle and there was no feeling of oppression. The three behind him also studied her with curious expressions.

“She’s my elder sister,” Michelle replied.

The man nodded. “No wonder. I’ve seen her. She’s very pretty.” He then smiled at Michelle and said, “My apologies if we disturbed you. I’m Liu Tang, the captain of the spirit hunters.”

Michelle was astounded. The spirit hunters were a specialized team that roamed about, killing war spirits in the trial zone. The purpose of the team was unclear, but it was rumored that they were trying to uncover the truth about the trial zone or comprehending something. No one seemed sure of their exact purpose, but one thing was clear: the spirit hunter team was very powerful.

“I’m Michelle.”

Liu Tang smiled, nodded, and then left without another word.

Michelle watched the other party leave and let out a deep breath. She had never thought that she would meet such a frightening person as soon as she entered the trial zone. Liu Tang. Liu? An ancient surname?

At that moment, another man with gleaming eyes appeared before Michelle. “You must be Michelle.”

Michelle looked warily at the newcomer. He was also very strong and didn’t conceal his might at all; his aura even carried a hint of tyranny within it.

The man smiled as he introduced himself. “I’m Frankfurt, the Area Master of Spear Mountain. I once received Senior Mira’s help in the academy.”

“Hello Senior,” Michelle politely responded.

Frankfurt waved his hand. “There’s no need to be courteous. Senior Mira helped me greatly. Michelle, since you’ve arrived at Spear Mountain, you should spend some time here. You may comprehend some things here.”

Michelle shook her head. “Thank you Senior, but Spear Mountain doesn’t suit me.”

Frankfurt felt that it was a pity. “That’s true. You’re the same as Senior Mira with the innate gift of the red lotus. In the entire Dao of Purgatory, the only area that suits the two of you would probably be the Heavenly Drum.”

Michelle agreed with a soft grunt. The Heavenly Drum was the best training ground in the Dao of Purgatory for someone looking to improve their perception ability, and it was coincidentally the place where the Realm Master of the Dao of Purgatory was based. It was also the only area that suited her.

“Oh yes. Senior, have you heard of someone called Liu Tang?” Michelle suddenly asked. She was very curious about that person; he was also a part of the younger generation, but he was way more powerful than anyone she had ever encountered before.

Upon hearing Liu Tang's name being mentioned, Frankfurt's face changed drastically. "How do you know that name? Did Senior Mira mention him?"

Michelle shook her head. "He was just here."

Frankfurt's face sank. "Those spirit hunter teams don't follow the rules. This is Spear Mountain, my territory." He then turned to Michelle. "Did Liu Tang do anything to you?"

Michelle shook her head again. "Who is he? An Area Master?"

Frankfurt replied, "He's not an Area Master, but he's no weaker than one. He's an Astral-2 student from the Sword Sect."

Michelle's face changed as she blurted out, "The Sword Sect?"

Frankfurt nodded solemnly. "That's right. The family at the head of the Sword Sect is the Liu clan. It's a clan with a unique surname from ancient times and although they have many enemies throughout the universe, they have managed to cow them all. Liu Tang is from that clan, and as you know, one of the members of the Ten Arbiters also has that same last name. They're both from the Sword Sect."

Michelle did not ask any more questions. The Sword Sect represented a great power, and it was no wonder why this "Liu" surname sounded so familiar. Her sister had mentioned that great person in the Ten Arbiters as well; he had levelled an entire weave by himself with just his sword, and he had yet to meet his match amongst the younger generation. Liu Tang and that person were from the same sect, which explained why Liu Tang was so powerful.

Michelle left soon after; Spear Mountain held no attraction for her, and she wanted to head straight towards the most important training ground in the Dao of Purgatory—the Heavenly Drum. The status of the Heavenly Drum could be summarized in a single sentence: whoever occupied the Heavenly Drum was the Realm Master.

Meanwhile, Lu Yin arrived at the Umbral Butterfly Weave. His target for the mission that he had been given, the giant tribe, was on a planet about ten regions away.

A few days later, back within Astral-10's trial zone entrance, Xia Luo achieved his hundredth victory as well, and he followed the Trialzone tutor's instructions to enter the trial zone.

Not long after, Silver similarly achieved a hundred victories and entered the trial zone with his trademark sly smile.

Of the six Daos, Xia Luo chose to enter the Dao of Heaven, which was where the powerhouses of Astral-5 were. He was fortunate and landed not too far from his target destination. After around three hours of traveling, he saw a giant technological construction that appeared to be a spacecraft that had crashed into the ground at an angle. This was the Dao of Heaven's Machinery Burial Mound. The Area Master was Xia Ye.

Silver, on the other hand, sat on the trial zone mountain and looked around him. He saw Michelle and Xia Luo in the distance before sitting down and leaned against the mountain wall himself. "Which one? Hmm, that's right, Astral-4 should be the one occupying the Dao of Slaughter." He closed his eyes, and

when he reopened them, he had reappeared in the Dao of Slaughter. A faint metallic scent of blood filled the air.

“A good place,” Silver sighed as he looked around. He chose a direction and advanced forward, as he had someone he needed to meet up with. “I remember that there’s a training ground in here called the Ice Domain. It should have an Area Master. Interesting, I wonder if I can snatch it up.”

If Lu Yin knew what these three had encountered after entering the trial zone, he would have been deeply depressed. When he had entered, he had immediately faced all sorts of deadly situations before finally dying under Frankfurt’s spear. These three, conversely, had each received treatment better than the last, and they all had the backing of an Area Master. This was simply a matter of fate.

Lu Yin was currently shrouded in a melancholy air. He saw Gigastar Planet ahead, which was his destination, but he couldn’t approach it at all. The Umbral Butterfly Weave wanted to recruit elites to participate in the Astral Combat Tournament, but they needed to first screen them with the Astral Combat Academy’s assessment test, and this was their last desperate attempt to achieve fame through the Astral Combat Tournament. The giant planet in front of Lu Yin was one of the weave’s training grounds, and it had been sealed off, just like Earth had been previously.

Since he couldn’t directly enter the planet, Lu Yin could only find another entry method. He saw that there were some spacecraft entering the training ground from his right hand side, so he immediately maneuvered his spacecraft towards the right side and submitted a request to land as he neared.

His spacecraft was a personal spacecraft that was very small, but it could dock into a giant spacecraft and then land that way.

Typically, giant-sized spacecraft wouldn’t pay attention to a docking request from a personal spacecraft; no one would allow a stranger to enter their homes. But Lu Yin’s luck was pretty good today, and one actually accepted his docking request. He quickly flew towards the spacecraft without sparing a single thought as to the possibility of danger.

Ah Mu’s stress grew as he watched the approaching giant planet grow larger and larger; he was about to be swallowed by his personal gloom and fears. As the only male of the Umbral Butterfly Tribe, he was deep in despair. The Umbral Butterfly Tribe had its own unique ability that was almost at the level of an innate gift, but it was not suitable for a male. Hence, he had been abandoned and there was little likelihood that he would be able to return to the tribe.

Ah Mu hadn’t wanted to participate in the weave trial, but it was possible that some of the members within the Umbral Butterfly Tribe would want to eliminate an aberration like him. Hence, he had been essentially forced to participate. However, he had only just become a Melder and was a far cry from the elites who dared to participate in the weave’s trial. Furthermore, Ah Mu was an intellectual who did not enjoy battle; how was someone like him supposed to complete this trial?

Just as Ah Mu was worrying endlessly about his problems, he unexpectedly received a request to board. He didn’t think any further and immediately consented. This was the Umbral Butterfly Weave and no one would dare to act against a spacecraft from the Umbral Butterfly Tribe! But then, he regretted his decision the same moment he consented. Is my clan planning on eliminating me sooner rather than

later? Ah Mu immediately tried to cancel the docking permission, but it was already too late. That spacecraft was charging towards the larger spacecraft like it was on steroids.

Why are they in such a hurry? Ah Mu's face paled and resigned himself to wait for death.

Lu Yin shut his spacecraft off and walked along the passageway that led to the interior of the giant spacecraft. Strange. There aren't that many people on this spacecraft...

He searched for a while before finally arriving at the command room. There were only a few people there, every one of them with sullen expressions, as if they had just lost their fathers.

"You must have come to kill me. Do it," Ah Mu spoke out.

Lu Yin looked over and saw a pale-faced, skinny young person whose face was filled with both agony and desperation.

"What? You don't want to be seen doing it?" Ah Mu ordered everyone to leave. They had all been sent by the Umbral Butterfly Tribe to serve him. Even though he had been discarded, the Umbral Butterfly Tribe still cared about its appearances, and it put effort so that they wouldn't look like they were bullying the weak.

"It should be fine now. Do it! My death will let many relax," Ah Mu said in a hoarse voice as his eyes dimmed.

Lu Yin furrowed his brows as he approached the sad young man.

As Lu Yin drew closer, Ah Mu's heartbeat quickened. The fear of death overcame his pride, and his shrouded face even paled further. His lips trembled. "Wa- wait. Can you at least tell me who sent you before you kill me?"

Lu Yin sneered as he replied, "Do you really want to die?"

Ah Mu stared at him in surprise. "I don't, but..." He lost his strength and collapsed into his chair before saying, "I can't resist anymore."

"I can spare your life."

Ah Mu's eyes brightened and he stared at Lu Yin. "What? You're not going to kill me?!"

Lu Yin nodded. "Yes, but under one condition."

### **Chapter 166: Umbral Butterfly Tribe**

"What condition?" Ah Mu was moved. No one wanted to die, and he was no exception to this rule. As long as there was a glimmer of hope, he would reach out to grasp it.

"It's simple. Take me along with you," Lu Yin said as he pointed at Gigastar Planet that they were gradually closing in on.

Ah Mu was flabbergasted. "You want to land on Gigastar Planet?"

Lu Yin nodded. "Is there a problem? This is the only condition."

“Didn’t you come to kill me?” Ah Mu lost his voice. He wasn’t foolish, and although he had over-thought things earlier, he was thinking clearly now.

Lu Yin looked at Ah Mu, and his gaze turned cold. “Of course not. But if you don’t take me with you, then I can’t say for sure.”

Ah Mu felt threatened by Lu Yin’s glare and immediately agreed. “Alright, I’ll bring you along. You’re not from the Umbral Butterfly Weave?”

“How did you know?” Lu Yin asked with a curious tone.

“Since the Astral Combat Tournament is coming up, any native of the Umbral Butterfly Weave can participate in the weave’s trials, no questions asked. The only caveat is that you must be of the younger generation. If you can’t enter, then the only possible answer is because you’re not originally from the Umbral Butterfly Weave.”

Lu Yin smiled, but did not respond.

Although Ah Mu had been shunned by his tribe, he was still a genuine member of the Umbral Butterfly Tribe. Their members had a unique status, and he could sweep across the weave with his clan’s prestige, which went to show just how influential the Umbral Butterfly Tribe was. Ah Mu was quickly allowed onto the planet, and no one questioned him taking Lu Yin along.

“Then, can you bring me along with you?” Ah Mu requested before they were about to land on the giant planet.

Lu Yin laughed. “Did you think that I was going to let you go?”

Ah Mu was stumped, but then he laughed in embarrassment. That’s right. I’m a hostage, and he’s afraid that I’ll report him to the supervising authorities once we separate.

“Get in the same spacecraft as me,” Lu Yin ordered firmly.

Ah Mu nodded, sullenly crouched down, and entered the spacecraft. It was a cramped personal spacecraft, so it was fortunate that Ah Mu was skinny. A larger person wouldn’t have been able to squeeze in alongside another person. Lu Yin’s spacecraft was left on Ah Mu’s as it carried the emblem of Astral-10 and was too conspicuous.

The personal spacecraft vibrated as the scenery behind them rapidly shifted. Dozens of spacecraft penetrated through the atmosphere and landed on Gigastar Planet, creating craters and sending shockwaves through the atmosphere on impact.

This scene moved Lu Yin, as he had been a native when he had last participated in a trial. Now, it was the opposite, and he was wearing the cloak of an invader. His mood was understandably complex.

Each person landed at a random location. Lu Yin’s spacecraft crashed into a steep cliff and decimated it, shaking the earth and filling the air with dust.

After the dust and smoke settled, a giant mouth with sharp teeth appeared before them. It savagely bit the hull of the spacecraft as it shrieked loudly.



Lu Yin looked at his gadget and saw that the creature had a power level of 2800. He was shocked. "Even a mere beast is as strong as a Sentinel. Not bad."

Ah Mu, meanwhile, was terrified. "This is the weave's trial. It should be extremely difficult and bloody. Gigastar Planet's also known for being a planet of death in this region. Let's stay in the spacecraft; there shouldn't be any creatures that are strong enough to destroy our spacecraft here."

Lu Yin increased the scanning radius of his gadget. The strongest power level around them was 5900, the same level as a peak Melder. There was nothing close by that posed a threat to him. He thought about it for a moment and then opened the door and unceremoniously tossed Ah Mu out despite his terrified expression. Lu Yin then jumped out and kicked the beast, sending it flying. Its enormous body created shock waves as it sailed through the air before finally landing heavily in a distant part of the forest. Lu Yin was about to say something to Ah Mu, but a sensation that something wasn't right stopped him. He looked back into the distance and his eyes widened; it wasn't a forest, but rather a field of grass.

Lu Yin surveyed his surroundings in surprise. He then flew into the air, and sure enough, the swaying green plants in the distance were actually strands of grass. They hadn't crashed into some precipitous cliff, but rather just an earthen slope. They had landed in the grass, but this grass was excessively large.

Ah Mu grimaced, "You must have noticed it now. This is the planet of the giants, and everything is enlarged here. That wasn't some giant beast that you just kicked, but rather, just a bug. We humans are even smaller than insects here, and we are at the bottom of the food chain."

Lu Yin gasped as he remarked, "The universe is really mysterious and has all sorts of unique planets." He thought back to the description that he had read online about the giants on this planet: "sharp teeth, chubby monkey cheeks, bald heads, and drooping shoulders. Their bodies were shaded green, their eyes were filled with black threads, and a forest grew on their backs."

These giants were not humans, but probably some kind of humanoid beast. But since they were giant humanoids, they had been dubbed "giants."

"Let's wait here until the trial ends. This planet is terrifying and often gives birth to Explorer level powerhouses. This is why multiple Explorers are stationed outside: to suppress them. We won't be able to complete this mission by ourselves," Ah Mu pushed out in a trembling voice, as he was truly frightened.

Lu Yin was curious. "What's the mission?"

Ah Mu was terrified by such a thought. "Killing the Giant Emperor."

Lu Yin's eyes gleamed. "What a coincidence. I wanted to kill the Giant Emperor, too. Let's go."

"Where?" Ah Mu had a bad premonition.

Lu Yin excitedly replied, "To kill the Giant Emperor, of course."

Ah Mu briefly lost strength in his legs. "I won't go! The Giant Emperor is a peak Limiteer and he's likely to break through and become an Explorer. It won't be enough no matter how many people go. I'm not going!"

Lu Yin furiously stared at Ah Mu and raised his voice. "What did you say? Repeat yourself."

Ah Mu pathetically begged, "Please, let me go. I won't go with you! We'll both die if that's the case! Rest assured, I won't tell anyone about you. I swear! Go ahead by yourself."

Lu Yin clenched his fist and carelessly waved it. The air currents stirred by his hand swept across the earth and rent it asunder. As Ah Mu watched the ground split apart, he realized that the fissure was unfathomably deep. Even the void had been distorted from Lu Yin's casual move.

Ah Mu's mouth gaped and he stared blankly ahead. A full minute later, he turned to face Lu Yin and sycophantically schmoozed, "Big brother, let's go hunt the Giant Emperor!"

Lu Yin nodded in satisfaction. "That's better. Remember, listen to me for everything. You can express your opinions, but in the end, I'm the one who will ultimately decide what we do."

Ah Mu forced a smile onto his face. "Yes, yes, everything is as you wish it to be."

Everything on Gigastar Planet was novel to Lu Yin. Over the course of two days, they encountered countless insects, some aggressive and some docile. Lu Yin was like an insect executioner, and he killed so many insects along their way that Ah Mu grew afraid.

As they continued exploring the planet in this manner, they eventually encountered their first giant on their second day.

The giants' overall body shape was like a human's, just as the images online depicted them. Yet they were beasts in all other aspects, especially the living forests on their backs.

"It is said that, when a giant is born, they will plant clay onto the baby's back and raise various plants there. That forest will thicken as they mature. It's mainly used for defensive purposes, as the giants' weak spot is their backs," Ah Mu introduced.

Lu Yin did not care about their weaknesses. It was just a Melder realm giant and could be swatted away like a fly, so he landed in front of the giant without another word. The giant was savage and smelly, with teeth as sharp as any wild beast's.

Lu Yin frowned as he realized that there was no way he could communicate with it. From the dull look in the giant's eyes, it did not seem like it had any intelligence, either.

"You won't be able to communicate with them, as the giants are basically beasts. They'll eat whatever they can get their hands on, and their prowess is purely instinctual. They live their lives completely off of instinct, and even gather in primitive tribes. The strongest in each group is the leader, and the strongest in the entire race is the Giant Emperor. The Giant Emperor is the only one that is intelligent, and all the others act purely off of instinct," Ah Mu explained.

Lu Yin was astonished at Ah Mu's familiarity. "You're quite well informed."

Ah Mu forced a smile onto his face. "I had no choice. Once I discovered that I had no choice but to participate in the weave's trial, I immediately started making preparations. It's actually very safe to stay here, as this grassland is the least dangerous place. I specifically researched it. We--"

Ah Mu did not have the chance to finish speaking before the giant was knocked out by Lu Yin in a single blow. “What did you say?”

“Nothing much, boss. We can continue now,” Ah Mu attentively answered.

Lu Yin grunted. “Since you’ve researched this planet, you should have some understanding of the giant tribes. Lead the way. I want to find the Giant Emperor quickly.”

Ah Mu was feeling miserable. “The Giant Emperor.” Just the mention of those words made him tremble, but this person beside him was even scarier. Lu Yin actually wanted to confront the emperor! Could he actually still be looking to kill him, but with the condition that he needed to make the death look like an accident? That just might be the case.

A few more days passed, and the duo finally left the grasslands. The next biome was a vast forest, where every tree towered into the skies. While Lu Yin was entranced by the novelties of the gigantified forest, several figures approached them from a distance.

Ah Mu unconsciously inched closer toward Lu Yin when he saw them approach.

Lu Yin stared straight ahead at five approaching people—four males and one female. When they saw Lu Yin and Ah Mu, they were puzzled as if they did not expect to meet them here.

“Ah Mu?” The girl was shocked. The other four also stared at Ah Mu with disbelieving expressions.

Ah Mu’s face fell sullen, and he lowered his head.

Lu Yin was curious. “You know them?”

Ah Mu grunted affirmatively, but he didn’t speak.

The woman studied Ah Mu and then looked at Lu Yin with a gaze of ridicule. “Another one who’s trying to curry favor with the Umbral Butterfly Tribe. Unfortunately, he chose the wrong target.”

Lu Yin was puzzled by the woman’s words.

One of the males spoke up as well. “Brother, you must be trying to suck up to the Umbral Butterfly Tribe. Ah Mu is indeed from the Umbral Butterfly Tribe, but he’s the only male in the entire tribe. And he’s an abandoned clansman at that. I urge you to keep your distance. Not only is there a chance of the Umbral Butterfly Tribe blacklisting you, but they might even become hostile.”

And with that, the five people left.

Lu Yin looked at Ah Mu with renewed interest, and his interest towards the Umbral Butterfly Tribe was also piqued. That clan name was shared with the weaver’s name, which clearly illustrated its prestige. Also, it seemed that this Umbral Butterfly Tribe had no males, which was very interesting.

Ah Mu could feel Lu Yin’s interested gaze, and he sullenly explained, “They are fellow students of mine. Although we landed in the same area, no one was willing to team up with me.”

“I don’t care about any of that. Tell me, does this Umbral Butterfly Tribe really have no males? If so, then how do they reproduce?” Lu Yin was very curious.

Lu Yin's question was extremely rude, and if it wasn't Ah Mu but instead someone else from the Umbral Butterfly Tribe, then they would have absolutely taken offense to Lu Yin's words. But Ah Mu was the exception, as he had already been abandoned by the Umbral Butterfly Tribe.

"The Umbral Butterfly Tribe is not a family or a clan in the traditional sense. Their bloodline isn't passed down through normal reproduction methods, as it is actually an inheritance from an ancient powerhouse that can be bestowed. Any female who receives the inheritance will become a member of the Umbral Butterfly Tribe."

### **Chapter 167: Bloodline Propagation**

Lu Yin instantly understood the situation. The Daynight, Mavis, and Phoenix clans all had powerful bloodlines that they had inherited from their ancestors. This inheritance was passed down from generation to generation through their bloodline. Everything was written in the previous generations' genes, and the descendants who inherited those genes would also inherit a strength that surpassed the average person's. This type of inherited strength was similar to an innate gift, and it could also be developed through further cultivation. The Umbral Butterfly Tribe's bloodline held similar traits to the Phoenix clan's undying bird bloodline, but it was nowhere near the level of an Inverse clan.

Many powerhouses would wait until they reached peak strength before they started thinking about having descendants. They did this both to preserve their strength and to allow the next generation to have a better starting point. In this manner, it was possible to birth a strong clan after countless years of repeating this cycle.

"So your Umbral Butterfly Tribe found the bloodline of some ancient powerhouse and then repurposed it into the core inheritance of your tribe. You people aren't even true blood relatives," Lu Yin said.

Ah Mu shook his head. "No, we are blood relatives. In order to inherit the ancient bloodline, all of the blood in our bodies is completely replaced. Everyone in our Umbral Butterfly Tribe is blood related to each other by an equal extent." Then Ah Mu suddenly lowered his head and sadly whispered, "Except for me."

"Why?" Lu Yin was puzzled.

Ah Mu's tone turned dull as he explained, "My mother was chosen to become a member of the tribe. But because of a mistake, she became pregnant with me when she inherited the bloodline. The Umbral Butterfly Tribe only chooses young, pure girls to become their members, but due to a mistake, my mother ended up giving birth to me. That's why I'm the only male in the Umbral Butterfly Tribe, and it's also why I don't have a pure bloodline."

Lu Yin sympathetically patted Ah Mu's shoulder. He could imagine how miserable this fellow's life in the Umbral Butterfly Tribe had been, and how he had been used as a negative example by the tribe. "What happened to your mother?"

"She died not long after she gave birth to me." Ah Mu became even gloomier, clearly not wanting to talk about this matter any further.

Lu Yin did not probe any deeper and instead looked off into the horizon.

After a while, Ah Mu said, "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have bothered you with these irrelevant matters."

Lu Yin quickly changed the topic. "The Umbral Butterfly Tribe must be very strong if this entire weave is named after it."

Ah Mu's gaze shifted and he nodded. "Very strong. We can absorb the power of a plant to strengthen ourselves, which essentially increases our power level. It would be difficult for anyone to win against a member of the Umbral Butterfly Tribe of the same realm. The more plants there are, the stronger we become, and thus, the stronger the Umbral Butterfly Tribe becomes."

"That's cheating," Lu Yin exclaimed in shock.

Ah Mu forced a smile onto his face. "This is the Umbral Butterfly Tribe that rules its eponymous weave. No one dares to refuse our orders here, and not even the several surrounding weaves dare to challenge us." Ah Mu looked at Lu Yin as he continued, saying, "I remember that your spacecraft had Astral-10's emblem. What a coincidence. The strongest member of the Umbral Butterfly Tribe's younger generation, Angie, is in Astral-7. You two are actually fellow students."

Lu Yin's brows arched up. Did I miss something? He had clearly seen a hint of joy in Ah Mu's eyes when he mentioned Lu Yin's supposed misfortune.

Speaking of which, the Astral Combat Academy really had attracted a bunch of freaks. Not only were the young geniuses from the various strong powers and clans in the Inniverse attending, but even the strongest descendents from powers like the Outerverse's Umbral Butterfly Tribe were going. The Outerverse had seventy two weaves, and even though it was difficult to produce freakish geniuses, it was normal for them to have some. These Outerverse geniuses were already a pain to deal with, and after taking the Inniverse geniuses into consideration, it seemed that the Astral Combat Tournament was going to be very lively.

"To be honest, I don't believe that the Umbral Butterfly Tribe's ability to strengthen themselves through absorbing the power of nearby plants is unlimited. If there were no limit, then the tribe would have carved out a place for themselves in the Inniverse," Lu Yin said.

Ah Mu put on a helpless expression. "The facts are what they are. Of course we cannot absorb energy without limit. It's also not possible if the plant is too strong. However, that latter restriction is often not applicable as there are very few plants that are that powerful. And, as the power of the tribe member increases, they will eventually be able to absorb a powerful plant's strength. And so, the potential of every Umbral Butterfly Tribe member will continue to increase as they continue cultivating."

What a troublesome tribe. Lu Yin was left with a deep impression of the Umbral Butterfly Tribe.

About a day later, the duo saw smoke rising above the tall forest. Smoke was a sign of life, so they quickly rushed over.

Before long, they passed through another large forested area and saw that the smoke was from a giant tribe, the sight of which nearly caused Ah Mu to wet himself. Over a dozen giants were dismembering some trial takers, and Lu Yin and Ah Mu had arrived just in time to see a male trial taker being ripped apart limb by limb as his blood splattered across the ground.

He was one of the men that they had bumped into earlier, from the group of four males and the one female. At the moment, only the girl was still alive, and a small giant was toying with her in its hands.

The rest of the group had long since been torn to pieces, their blood staining the ground as a metallic scent filled the air.

Ah Mu was terrified by the grisly scene. His face paled and he trembled in fright.

Lu Yin's eyes turned cold. That small giant was tightly pinching the girl, to the point where she could not make any noise if she wanted to—all she could do was contort her face into tighter and tighter expressions of pain. Just as the small giant was about to exert enough force to cause the girl's body to explode, his head was lopped off. The giant's body slowly toppled over as blood gushed out of its gaping neck like a fountain. Lu Yin momentarily appeared in the sky before he used Flash again, vanishing and reappearing in front of another giant.

The second giant didn't even have a chance to react before its skull was smashed apart by Lu Yin's palm. Its pupils dilated briefly before turning grey, and then it perished.

Roar!

The remaining giants angrily attacked Lu Yin. One was even a Limiteer, and it heavily slapped towards a seemingly empty space in the air. A great shockwave that covered a thousand meters flew forth, even sending Ah Mu stumbling back.

Lu Yin raised his hand, and nine stars appeared around it, although the ninth star's appearance was indistinct. The nine stars of his Cosmic Palm then combined into one and formed a galaxy. The palm then tore through the Limiteer giant's shockwave and crashed into its chest. The void distorted and then collapsed as the Limiteer giant was torn asunder by Lu Yin's lone palm attack. Its blood gushed out towards the distant end of the forest like a tsunami crashing into land as it extinguished the smoking fires.

The last few giants fled in terror, but Lu Yin did not let them off. He used a consecutive series of Flash and palm attacks to kill every last one of them.

Lu Yin could tolerate the weak being killed, but he would not stand for them being toyed with; he felt aggrieved. Humans were the wisest of all creatures. and their dignity should not be trampled upon.

Ah Mu vomited as the stench of blood filled the air, and he did not want to stay a second longer in this area.

Lu Yin stepped over the bloodstained earth, walked towards the girl, and then squatted down beside her. Her injuries were too severe; her body had been nearly crushed apart, and there was no hope of surviving. When she saw Lu Yin, she stuttered in agony, "Ba- Based on the orientation of the houses, you ca- can find the Giant Emperor. He is at the center of all of the tribes. Please, kill me."

Lu Yin waved his hand and ended her suffering.

He then stood up and looked around. The giants' stone houses were enormous and seemed crude. There were numerous white bones laying around haphazardly, and the front doors did not face in a single direction. Instead, they fanned out in an arc. All of the doors were facing towards the southeast. Lu Yin made a quick mental calculation; if the Giant Emperor was at the center and all the other giants were scattered around it in a large circle, then the arc of these stone houses could tell him where the

Giant Emperor was. The giants were not intelligent and largely followed their instincts, so the methods that they used were quite simple.

Ah Mu peeked out from behind a large tree and saw Lu Yin standing on the bloody ground. He resisted his nausea and cried out, "Let's go."

Lu Yin waved to him and then dashed towards the southeast as Ah Mu hurried to keep up.

If Ah Mu had previously wanted to get away from Lu Yin, then right now, any such thoughts had been cast aside. What he had just witnessed was too terrifying; those corpses had once been his fellow students, and their misfortune shocked him to the core. They would never return after dying in such a miserable manner.

A giant pit appeared in another giant tribe in the distance. A spacecraft had landed in the middle of the tribe's settlement, crushing several giants in the process. The trial taker inside stared at the displayed power levels on his gadget in dismay after he realized that there were several giants with the strength of a Limiteer outside. He didn't even dare to open his door.

The giants were also afraid of the spacecraft and didn't approach it either.

Time slowly passed by, and just when the giants were about to dig the spacecraft out, several trial takers appeared from nowhere and killed them all. Anyone who dared to participate in this weave trial was at least at the Melder level, and there was even a Limiteer student in this group. He killed two Limiteer giants himself, and his group destroyed the entire tribe.

However, the trial taker within the spacecraft still did not dare to step out. The others spared a glance of disdain in the spacecraft's direction, glanced at the curve of the stone house's setup, and then flew into the distance.

Gigastar Planet was huge and the giants were just one of the many indigenous races on it. However, all of the trial takers' spacecraft had landed within the giants' territory. The entire area fell into chaos as the giants and trial takers clashed in a frenzied war.

At that moment, the entire giant territory was a mess, and the most central region where the area where the Giant Emperor lived was no exception.

Several unlucky spacecraft had landed right beside the Giant Emperor. Its terrifying peak Limiteer strength and intelligent eyes had nearly scared those trial takers to death. While normal giants were not sapient, the Giant Emperor was. Intelligent and non-intelligent life were two entirely different levels of existence.

The trial takers' spacecraft were very sturdy and even a Limiteer could not destroy one. When they saw the Giant Emperor, those unlucky few immediately decided to not step out until the trial ended.

But they had underestimated the emperor's intelligence. He had picked up one of the spacecraft and shaken it vigorously, pulverizing the trial takers within. This scene had shocked the others senseless, and they immediately ran out of their spacecrafts to escape. However, the emperor had easily chased them all down and killed them with a single slap each.

The Giant Emperor's eyes sparkled as he saw the spacecrafts littered on the ground.

The trial takers' battles were not only against the giants, as they were multiple battles between the trial takers themselves. For example, Ah Mu, who had somehow survived to this point, faced ridicule from every trial taker that he and Lu Yin encountered. Sometimes, they would even face murderous intent. It was a hundred times worse than Lu Yin's trial zone experience back on Earth.

Three trial takers were currently surrounding Ah Mu and Lu Yin. They did not speak, but there was no concealing the cold, murderous gaze in their eyes.

The trio were all Melders, but they could not even match up to Gerbach. Lu Yin was indifferent to the situation, but he was curious as to how Ah Mu had instigated so much raw hatred.

Ah Mu felt agonized when he noticed Lu Yin's curious glance. "I told you—I'm the abnormality of the Umbral Butterfly Tribe. There are many in the tribe who want me gone because they consider me a disgrace."

With a shout, the trio avoided Lu Yin and moved as one to kill Ah Mu.

Ah Mu was very weak, and his power could not compare to Lu Yin's even when his Cosmic Art only had five stars. Ah Mu was just a little stronger than an elite Sentinel of the Great Yu Empire's Yu Academy. There was no way for him to block the trio's attack, so he decided to not resist at all.

The trio's attack was fast, but it was repelled even faster as Lu Yin had easily thrown them aside. "Let's go."

Ah Mu nodded silently.

Over the past ten days, the duo had run into several giant tribes as well as a dozen trial takers who had joined together, just like the teams that had formed from the schools' elites during Earth's trial. Currently, most teams were made up of individuals who were daring enough to challenge the Giant Emperor, and every one of them consisted of powerhouses. Lu Yin had met at least a dozen trial takers who were elite Melders that were at least as strong as the Yu Academy's Hall Masters.

### **Chapter 168: Lu Yin's Backing**

Even though the Umbral Butterfly Weave was a relatively smaller weave, its younger generation's abilities were, overall, greater than the Great Yu Empire's.

This was not something surprising. After all, the Great Yu Empire only controlled a third of the Frostwave Weave. However, if the peak powerhouses of the younger generation were to be compared, then the Umbral Butterfly Weave was definitely lagging behind. A single Wendy Yushan was more than enough to dominate the entire Umbral Butterfly Weave. Lu Yin refused to believe that the Umbral Butterfly Weave had anyone who could contest a monster like Wendy Yushan; there were very few who could compare to her in the entire Outerverse.

"The further we encroach upon the giant tribes' territory, the more Limiteer giants will appear. It seems that the Giant Emperor isn't far away," Lu Yin muttered to himself when he saw four Limiteer realm giant corpses on the path ahead.



Ah Mu was shocked by this sight. "The cultivators who've come this far are really terrifying. They are powerful enough to kill four Limiteer giants."

Lu Yin shook his head. "It is not that impressive. Even though the giants have the strength and star energy of a Limiteer, they can't properly use it. Power level is nothing more than a numerical reading; these giants aren't even as strong as a regular Melder realm student from the Astral Combat Academy."

Ah Mu was stunned speechless. Isn't it a bit too unfair to compare the primitive giants to the students of the Astral Combat Academy!?

After barely travelling past the tribe, Lu Yin's expression suddenly changed. The ground started to rumble, and he quickly took to the sky to see what was happening. What he saw made his face turn pale. "Quick! Fly up! An ant colony is approaching."

Ah Mu was astonished. An ant colony?

"Come into this tree now!" Lu Yin barked.

Ah Mu looked into the distance, and in stark contrast to when he had seen the giants earlier, he felt no fear at the thought of the impending ant colony. Lu Yin assumed that the young man had simply been frozen by fear, and he reached out to grab Ah Mu and drag him into the sky.

"It's fine, the ant colony won't harm me," Ah Mu calmly replied.

Lu Yin stared at Ah Mu like he was an idiot. "They won't hurt you? Are you a queen ant or something?"

Ah Mu laughed as he responded, "It's my innate gift. Ant colonies and other similar creatures won't harm me."

By then, the rumbling sensation coming from the ground had become deafening. In the distance, a huge tree fell over as the ant colony covered the barren earth. After all, this was a planet where everything was gigantified, causing the ants to be even bigger than humans. The majestic colony of ants turned the entire horizon black, sending chills crawling down Lu Yin's spine. He immediately flew into the skies as he could no longer afford to care about Ah Mu; the Umbral Butterfly Tribe male could die if he wished. Though, a part of Lu Yin was also secretly eager to witness Ah Mu's proclaimed innate gift. There were countless innate gifts that had all sorts of fantastical abilities; there was no shortage of strange ones.

When the ant colony arrived, they surged into the forest like a sea of black waves. Lu Yin watched Ah Mu closely; the normally craven man had a completely calm demeanor.

When the ant colony reached Ah Mu, Lu Yin was shocked to see the colony suddenly stop in front of him. They truly did not harm Ah Mu.

The huge ant colony was something that even Lu Yin would find difficult to confront. Even though each ant was individually no stronger than a Sentinel, there were just too many of them. Sometimes, an overwhelming numerical advantage could fundamentally change the army's strength, though creatures like ants did not normally challenge humans.

"Seventh Bro, the ant colony told me that the Giant Emperor has run away. He isn't in the central region anymore," Ah Mu shouted from down below. "Seventh Bro" was the name that Lu Yin had given Ah Mu; he liked to be called Seventh Bro.

Lu Yin was astonished and he flew down until he was about a hundred meters above the ant colony. He looked at Ah Mu with an expression of disbelief. "What did you say? The Giant Emperor escaped?"

Ah Mu reiterated, "The ant colony said that the Giant Emperor escaped a few days ago."

But Lu Yin was unconvinced. "How would the ant colony know? Besides, how can you understand ants?"

"I can understand them because it's part of my innate gift. The Giant Emperor possesses something that is of great importance to the ant colony. More importantly, the ant colony has senses that that object is now in the northwest. Thus, the emperor has definitely escaped," Ah Mu confidently explained.

Lu Yin was at a loss at this development. *Ah Mu* wouldn't make all this up just because he's afraid to go to the central region, right?

Ah Mu knew that Lu Yin was skeptical of this news, so he said, "Seventh Bro, I am telling the truth. Even if we headed to the central region now, it would be pointless. The Giant Emperor is really not there."

Lu Yin made a decision. "Alright, I'll trust you this once. But if I discover that you're lying to me, I will throw you straight into a giant tribe"

Ah Mu was frightened by the threat, and he hurriedly replied, "I am telling the truth! I didn't lie."

Ah Mu's ability to communicate with the ants truly surprised Lu Yin. What shocked him even more was that Ah Mu had managed to convince the ants to bring them there. They no longer had to run along the ground; now, they were able to ride the ants directly to the Giant Emperor.

Lu Yin reevaluated Ah Mu; he was actually a rare talent!

Back at the entrance of Astral-10's trial zone, Darkvoid walked past the Trialmaster and into the realm mountain. He had accumulated a hundred victories, and had thereby accomplished the first task that Shamrock Enterprises had given him.

After sitting down on the realm mountain, Darkvoid chose the Dao of Heaven of the Six Daos without any hesitation. He had been instructed to make this selection by the Shamrock Enterprises as one of the Area Masters within the Dao of Heaven was one of their members.

After Darkvoid's hundred victories, the next to meet that criterion was Hui Daynight. Those from the Daynight clan could be considered absolute talents no matter where they were. With the combination of their natural talents and the Daynight clan's battle techniques, they were virtually undefeatable. And yet in Astral-10, Hui Daynight was considered average at best. This placement would be unthinkable in any other Combat Academy, and the humiliation that Hui Daynight felt due to this placement was not something that others could understand.

Of the Six Daos, Hui Daynight chose to enter the Dao of Slaughter. One of his clan members was an Area Master there, and he intended to surpass the other Astral-10 students to become the strongest. The Daynight clan's members did not fall behind anyone.

There were already six people who had entered the trial zone after Lu Yin left. Except for Lu Yin, everyone who entered the Nine Trial Zones had the backing of an Area Master. Needless to say, having proper backing was very important.

Everything within the Dao of Slaughter was tinged bloody red, and it was blanketed in an oppressive vibe. After Hui Daynight entered the realm, his distinctive black and white hair made everyone steer clear of him. While he was looking for the training ground of his fellow clan member, Tiangkong Daynight, he heard a bit of news that made him unhappy; Area Master Charon from the Dao of Purgatory's Whitebones Gorge had declared that Lu Yin was hereby under his protection.

Lu Yin was the leader of Astral-10, and he was much stronger than Hui Daynight, but he had no backing. He was a target of much scorn within the trial zones, which was also the main reason why Hui Daynight was confident that he would be able to surpass Lu Yin. Aside from his displeasure at hearing the news, Hui Daynight was even more puzzled as to why Charon would send out word that Lu Yin was under his protection.

Hui Daynight quickly found another student in the Dao of Slaughter and demandingly asked, "Tell me. Why does Charon want to protect Lu Yin?"

The student who was stopped saw Hui Daynight's hair, and a glint of fear flashed through his eyes. "I am not sure. Someone said that Charon is Lu Yin's elder brother."

Hui Daynight approached another person and asked the same question, to which the person replied, "I heard that Lu Yin and Charon have been good friends since childhood. Because of their friendship, Charon sent out word that anyone who harms Lu Yin will face his wrath."

"Rumor has it that Lu Yin is a disciple of a superior race in the Innerverse and that Charon is his guardian."

"Lu Yin? Who? The one who took advantage of Xi Yue? That bastard, I'll kill him for daring to take advantage of Xi Yue! What? Charon said that he is under his protection? Oh, there must be some misunderstanding. Lu Yin is an upright man, and he would never take advantage of Xi Yue."

"Lu Yin? He is the son of Kiel Rolf, the chairman of the Lockbreaker Society. Of course Charon is protecting him."

...

Hui Daynight felt his head throb from all the rumors. He heard so many different answers, but not a single one was reliable. However, there was one thing that was certain; Lu Yin was no ordinary Outerverse citizen. Charon was a gifted Lockbreaker and Dao Bo was his backer. Could Dao Bo also be backing Lu Yin?

Hui Daynight's expression turned more sour the more he thought about it. He felt that it would be very difficult to catch up to Lu Yin at this rate and that the man was not some simple character.

Lu Yin, who was currently seated on an ant's back, was not aware that he was once again a hot topic due to Charon's announcement. While the resurgence of his name also came with the old news of him taking advantage of Xi Yue, no one dared to touch Lu Yin now, as they feared Charon's retribution. No matter if it was for good or evil, Lu Yin wouldn't be able to use his old methods of making money anymore.

The ants travelled very quickly, and their backs were so sturdy and comfortable that Lu Yin, who was seated upon one, was about to fall asleep.

After an unknown period of time, he opened his eyes and turned his head around to look behind him. To his surprise, he saw a woman seated on the back of another ant. She had white and black hair that flowed behind her figure, making for a striking image. There was no telling when she had started following them.

Lu Yin's pupils contracted in shock; this woman was the same woman who he had seen in space who, the Daynight clan member who had killed an entire spacecraft of interstellar pirates. What was she doing on this planet?

Furthermore, the woman gave off no aura of any kind. If not for Lu Yin's intuition, he would not have sensed this woman's presence.

"Ah Mu, when did this woman start to follow us?" Lu Yin said with a low growl.

Ah Mu was puzzled. "What woman?"

Lu Yin was speechless; Ah Mu couldn't sense her even though she was this close to them.

Ah Mu turned around to look and was shocked. "Se-Seventh Bro, there is a lady from the Day-Daynight clan right over there."

"I know," Lu Yin said quietly before turning to look at the woman again.

The woman looked up and met Lu Yin's eyes. This time, Lu Yin did not see the depressed and remorseful eyes he had seen in the past; instead he saw a calm and indifference set of eyes.

Ah Mu was badly shaken. The Daynight clan was renowned throughout the entire universe, and they were a powerful clan from the Inniverse. The appearance of any one of their clan members was enough to cause wide scale panic, and he had never imagined that, one day, such a person would sneak up behind him while he slept. The long sword with the red handle frightened him so badly that he almost wet himself.

"Seventh Bro, what should we do? This woman is here to kill us! Let's escape!" Ah Mu said fearfully.

Lu Yin's brows unconsciously knit together. "Ask your ant how she came to be here."

Ah Mu whimpered in acknowledgment and lowered his head to communicate with the ant.

Very soon, Ah Mu raised his head, stole a scared glance behind him, and then softly said, "Seventh Bro, the ant doesn't know either."

Lu Yin's eyes narrowed and his expression turned serious. This woman had perfectly concealed her aura, and her concealment even extended to her power level. She was so stealthy that even the ant below her had not realized that she had gotten on top of it. What a terrifying skill to possess!

Lu Yin was suddenly reminded of a similar experience when he had been cultivating back on Earth. Zhang Dingtian had once been attacked by Silver and almost died. Back then, they had been under the impression that Zhang Dingtian could not sense Silver because Silver had concealed his power level. But

in reality, that was not the truth of the matter. Zhang Dintian possessed the keen intuition of a powerful warrior, but he still had not been able to sense Silver's presence. He had only managed to narrowly escape due to his quick reflexes. Silver had concealed not only his power level at that time, but also his entire being. Just like what this woman was doing right now.

Lu Yin turned around to stare at the woman. "Who are you? Why are you following us?"

The lady from the Daynight clan didn't respond, maintaining her indifferent expression as she sat on the ant without moving.

Lu Yin raised his brows and said, "You're from the Daynight clan. I know Hui Daynight."

The woman still didn't respond. She apathetically continued to stare straight ahead, not caring about Lu Yin or anything else around her.

Lu Yin turned back around. Even though she was ignoring him, he had still ascertained one important thing. Despite her advanced concealment skills, this woman was unable to see through Lu Yin's abilities. Her apathetic response had just confirmed this for Lu Yin.

Lu Yin was confident that only a few Melders were capable of defeating him. He was among the top Melders in the entire universe and not someone to overlook. The woman's indifferent attitude proved that she could not determine Lu Yin's true strength. This suited him just fine since Lu Yin did not want to reveal his strength anyway.

The ant colony continued on their way northwest.

### **Chapter 169: Lu Yin And Zhuo Daynight**

Somewhere in the southeast of Gigastar Planet, a man garbed completely in black stood silently in the center of a giant tribe. He was surrounded by more than a hundred giant corpses, and even the sky seemed to be stained with blood.

A Limiteer giant crouched nearby, looking at the black-garbed man with an expression of abject terror as it quivered with fear. The man raised his head, revealing a pair of scarlet eyes, but an instant later, they had become a normal pair of eyes.

If Lu Yin were present, he would have definitely recognized those scarlet eyes as the same ones in the skull that Silver had once had. No one from Earth would ever fail to recognize those eyes—they were a zombie's eyes.

He walked next to the giant. "Bring. Me. To. The. Giant. Emperor."

The giant shuddered and then obediently laid down, allowing the black-garbed man to climb onto its back. It then immediately sped off towards the northwest.

Above the planet, one of the videos from the monitoring feeds had gone blank. "What happened? Why did the video feed of the giant's headquarters vanish?"

"I'm sorry, sir. The residual shockwaves from the battle must have smashed the monitoring devices apart."

“That’s impossible. Even the Giant Emperor can’t break those monitoring devices. Do you really think that those trial takers could do something like that?”

“I’m sorry. We’ll investigate immediately.”

...

Another five days quickly passed. By then, Lu Yin and Ah Mu had already spent twenty days on the giant planet. They were still riding atop the ants, and the woman from the Daynight clan was still following them for some unknown reason.

A fair distance northwest from Lu Yin’s group lay a large swamp that was home to countless poisonous creatures; just their cries would turn people’s scalps numb. There, the Giant Emperor’s large figure appeared before he leapt into the marsh and gradually sank into its depths.

The commotion startled the swamp creatures, and one after another, strange creatures hissed to express their displeasure. A multi-colored gas spread across the sky, and it took some time before the area returned to its previous state of equilibrium. By then, there were no longer any traces of the Giant Emperor’s besides the large footprints leading to the marsh that betrayed his passage.

When the ant colony arrived, the Giant Emperor’s footprints were still clearly visible. The ants approached the swamp and charged straight in without hesitation. Lu Yin, Ah Mu, and the woman from the Daynight clan, however, did not.

Lu Yin was delighted that they had found the Giant Emperor so easily. He turned to Ah Mu, who seemed slightly depressed.

“What’s wrong?” Lu Yin was baffled. There was a toxic gas in the air, but it shouldn’t be concentrated enough to harm Melders.

Ah Mu forced a smile onto his face and gestured around him. “This is a swamp, and its gases are harmful to plants. Even if we Umbral Butterfly Tribe members don’t use any battle techniques, our bodies are always slowly absorbing the strength of the surrounding plants. This means that we absorb this poisonous gas ten or even a hundred times faster than a normal person.”

Lu Yin felt that this weakness was a bit too glaring. “Are you saying that, if I want to attack the Umbral Butterfly Tribe, I just have to release some poison?”

Ah Mu shook his head. “It’s not that easy. The strongest members of my tribe have cultivated battle techniques that prevent them from being poisoned. I- I haven’t trained enough, which is why I’m so susceptible.”

Lu Yin looked at Ah Mu as he mulled over this new information. Even if the Umbral Butterfly Tribe’s members learned battle techniques that prevented them from being poisoned or fatigued by the environment like how Ah Mu was, they would never be able to escape from their dependence on drawing their strength from plants. If a Umbral Butterfly Tribe member was cut off from the surrounding plants, they would be no different from an average cultivator. It was no wonder that, despite their tribe’s powerful innate gift, the tribe still only operated within the Outerverse; their weakness was too glaring.

“It seems that the Giant Emperor is in that marsh. Ah Mu, you trial takers should have a local network that you can communicate over, right?” Lu Yin asked when he recalled that the trial takers on Earth had had access to one, although there was a two month leniency period before they could look up other peoples’ locations or actually use the network.

“Yes, but I haven’t posted anything there yet,” Ah Mu responded with a puzzled expression.

Lu Yin’s lips rose up mischievously. “Announce the location of the Giant Emperor’s tracks.”

Ah Mu was shocked by the command. “What? Announce where the Giant Emperor’s tracks are?”

Lu Yin nodded and repeated himself. “Announce it. This marsh is dark and convoluted, so it would take us way too long to actually find the Giant Emperor. It’ll be much more efficient if everyone searches together.”

Ah Mu could not understand Lu Yin’s line of reasoning as there was only one Giant Emperor. If everyone knew the location, then would Lu Yin even get a turn to fight it? But this was good news for Ah Mu, as he had never intended to contribute towards the trial’s mission’s completion. If he announced their location, then he would not need to act, could obtain some benefits along the way, and would be able to find safety in numbers.

“Alright, I’ll do it.” Ah Mu was excited to carry out this task and hurriedly activated his gadget.

Suddenly, the woman from the Daynight clan drew her sword and slashed at Ah Mu. Lu Yin’s eyes flashed and he instantly reacted with his Skybeast Claw technique. The 96th form of the Skybeast Claw howled out in a bestial roar that tore through the void, shocking everyone’s mind. Ah Mu was frozen in place while the red longsword and Skybeast Claw clashed in a shower of sparks. A fierce shockwave rippled out and forcefully shoved Ah Mu aside.

Lu Yin and the woman rushed towards each other, and their palms collided. Lu Yin did not hold anything back and had used a Nine Stacks Shockwave Palm, while the Daynight girl’s palm attack was equally terrifying. It illuminated the entire marsh, a hallmark characteristic of the Daynight clan’s battle techniques.

The instant the palms met, the void distinctly shuddered. The ground and air both trembled ominously, and Ah Mu’s heart started pounding violently as he instinctively crouched down. A moment later, the colliding energy dispersed, radiating outwards for 10,000 meters. Everything more than a meter tall was completely pulverized, and the area within that radius was purged clean.

When Ah Mu lifted his head again, his pupils shrank as he stared at the drastically altered surroundings in shock. They had originally been standing beside a marsh with many black plants around them. But now, everything had been completely obliterated, including the hillside. Even the muddy ground had been dried out into a solid sheet of rock.

Lu Yin and the woman from the Daynight clan stood there, facing each other. They had exchanged two blows and had been evenly matched for both. Lu Yin wasn’t bothered by this as he knew that anyone from the Daynight clan should not be underestimated. And this was especially true for this woman since he knew that she had eliminated an entire interstellar pirate spacecraft by herself. Her power clearly exceeded Hui Daynight.

Rather, it was the woman who was indescribably shocked. She had completely disregarded Lu Yin initially, even after she realized that he was from Astral-10. However, those two strikes were hard for her to accept. First, her sword had been blocked by her opponent, and then her palm strike as well. This was a situation that rarely occurred even in the Inniverse; how could Astral-10 have such a person?

“Beauty, you’ve followed us for a while. Suddenly wanting to kill us isn’t very nice.”

The woman’s indifferent gaze never faltered. “I never wanted to kill him. I merely wanted to break his gadget.”

“Why?” Lu Yin asked as he squinted his eyes.

She looked towards the marsh. “The Giant Emperor is mine.”

Lu Yin laughed in response. “Based on what? I’m also here for the Giant Emperor, and every trial taker here is looking for him. It’s impossible to claim him for yourself.”

She stared at Lu Yin, tightened her grip on her red longsword, and then pointed it at Lu Yin. “I don’t need your permission. My next strike will sever your head.”

After saying that, her red blade moved slowly, but a series of afterimages emerged behind it. They followed the longsword, stabbing into the earth until there were countless red swords within a hundred meters of them, each one capable of striking fear in others by themselves.

Lu Yin was stunned when he saw the scene in front of him; this was clearly a domain! When he had Possessed Charon, he had experienced a domain through Charon’s memory. It was an ability that could only be comprehended after one attained absolute control over their star energy. Even Charon had only barely managed to touch on that realm, and he did not completely understand it yet. The ability to form a domain was considered to be on the same level as utilizing battle force, but this woman had actually achieved it.

Everywhere within a hundred meters of the woman was covered with red blades, making for a very intimidating scene. She then retrieved her sword, but this time, Lu Yin felt a sharp sense of grave danger.

Ah Mu continued lying on the ground as he stared into the sky in horror; this woman was just too terrifying! He felt like he was just an ant who could be squashed to death at any moment.

Lu Yin’s face grew serious and he no longer held anything back. An airflow slowly started circulating around his body that caused the void to vibrate. This airflow was transparent, very small, and could hardly be seen. Ah Mu did not pay attention to it, but the woman from the Daynight clan’s face immediately changed. She was in disbelief. “Battle force?”

Lu Yin clenched his fists and then slowly opened them, causing a chain of explosions to ring out in the air. Not many people in the same realm as him could force him to use battle force, and even a Limiteer might not be able to do so. However, this woman had succeeded. Lu Yin didn’t even know her true strength, but since she could activate a domain, she was more than qualified for him to use his battle force.



Ah Mu began trembling even more violently and his fear for the other two cultivators peaked. He really wanted to do nothing more than bury himself underground at this moment.

The phantom swords around them suddenly disappeared and the woman sheathed her red blade.

Lu Yin was astonished and similarly canceled his battle force. "We're not fighting?"

The woman from the Daynight clan evaluated Lu Yin as she remarked, "You hid your true power rather well."

Lu Yin knew that she was referring to his concealing technique.

"I'm Zhuo Daynight," she introduced.

"Lu Yin."

"You're from Astral-10. I've seen your spacecraft."

He nodded. "We met in space earlier."

"I must kill the Giant Emperor. You're from Astral-10, so there's no need for you to complete the Umbral Butterfly Weave's trial. The Giant Emperor is worthless for you." Surprisingly, her tone had gradually turned gentler.

Lu Yin shrugged helplessly. "I'm sorry. I have my own objectives that I must complete as well. If you prefer, we can have a match to decide things. But, forgive my candor, you are not my match."

Zhuo Daynight did not object to Lu Yin's words as she was not able to conjure a true domain. She had only taken the first step, which was to merge with the surroundings. Actually, she couldn't even truly take that step either; she had merely used a battle technique—the White Phantomsword—which could imitate a domain. If she fought against a battle force user, even one at the most rudimentary level, it would be difficult for her to defeat them.

"Ah Mu, announce the Giant Emperor's trail," Lu Yin shouted.

Ah Mu raised his head, looked at Lu Yin, and then at Zhuo Daynight. He gritted his teeth and then published the location of the Giant Emperor's tracks.

Zhuo Daynight's gaze turned cold as she still wanted to stop him. However, against this man in front of her, she was powerless. This was the first time she had ever felt like this against someone of the same rank in the Outerverse. It was not a pleasant feeling.

When the location of the Giant Emperor's tracks was posted on the network, all of the trial takers on Gigastar Planet were shocked. Many were skeptical of the information and suspected that someone was trying to intentionally lure other competitors away, but others believed it since they had nothing better. The Giant Emperor clearly wasn't in the central zone as they had found nothing more than mounds of giant corpses.

Lu Yin also knew that there would be some time before the majority of these trial takers believed the news. He was in no hurry and brought Ah Mu to relax somewhere beside the marsh.

Zhuo Daynight took the incentive to step into the marsh as she wanted to kill the Giant Emperor before the other trial takers arrived.

“Seventh Brother, why aren’t you stopping her?” Ah Mu was puzzled.

Lu Yin lazily replied, “Let her go if she wants to. I’ll naturally stop her if she is really capable of killing the Giant Emperor. I cannot allow anyone to interfere in my business.”

“Business?” Ah Mu could not understand what Lu Yin was talking about at all, and only had a vague feeling that something odd was about to happen.

### **Chapter 170: Money-making Business**

Lu Yin smiled. There was a clear business opportunity before him, which he was desperate to take advantage of. Lu Yin desperately needed more money as he barely had over five-hundred cubes of star crystals left. This wasn’t even close to meeting his needs; at this level, he couldn’t even roll his die, which was a waste of his Innate Gift.

The swampy region grew darker and darker the deeper one ventured into it. Occasionally, the muddy soil would burst open, revealing some kind of disgusting creature wriggling around in it. Flocks of massive, strange black birds also flew across the sky, and whenever they passed by overhead, their formation would cover the sky, making the marsh seem even darker.

Zhuo Daynight was a girl, but she showed no fear towards the bizarre landscape.

While it was true that all of the Daynight clan members were crazy, every one of them was also the cream of the crop. Between their innate talents and the Daynight clan’s powerful battle techniques, it made sense that they were able to stand tall even in the Innderverse.

Zhuo Daynight entered the swamp and tried to follow the trail of footsteps, but they vanished after just a couple steps. Thus, her only option to move forward was to randomly slash out and hope that her attacks would force the Giant Emperor out.

There was a chance of this method working, but the swamp was just too big and she couldn’t keep sending out haphazard slashes forever. So while her method might have been effective, it was not efficient.

Zhuo Daynight continued searching through the swamp for three consecutive days. However, if her progress was tracked from a bird’s eye view, then it would be apparent that she had not even searched through 0.1% of the swamp, much less the whole place. If she were to continue searching through the swamp in this manner, it would take her months to finish. After finally realizing the futility of her efforts, Zhuo Daynight walked out and quietly sat down about a hundred meters away from Lu Yin and Ah Mu.

Lu Yin chuckled. The reason why he had told Ah Mu to publicly reveal the Giant Emperor’s tracks was twofold. He could conduct “business” while also getting others to search for the Giant Emperor for him. The fact that the Giant Emperor had decided to run was proof that it was highly intelligent and that it would not be easily discovered. This meant that they needed more manpower to uncover its hiding spot, and for that to happen, they needed to preserve the footprints as proof that the Giant Emperor was nearby.

If the Giant Emperor knew about Lu Yin's thoughts, it would have definitely been annoyed. The moment a spacecraft landed in front of it, the creature had understood the severity of its situation. There had been Giant Emperors who had become Explorers before, so the creatures were not completely ignorant of the larger universe. It was for this reason that the Giant Emperor had fled as soon as it saw the spacecraft. It wanted to buy itself some more time and push the trial takers to leave. However, now that Lu Yin had publicized the Giant Emperor's whereabouts, it was now doomed.

Seven days later, Lu Yin and Ah Mu were idly grilling some meat while feeling incredibly bored when suddenly, far off in the distance, a group of trial takers appeared.

Lu Yin's eyes lit up. It's starting!

People would start coming one by one, which meant that he was open for business.

The trial takers immediately saw Lu Yin and the others, and they all focused on Ah Mu as he had been the one who released the Giant Emperor's whereabouts.

"Where's the Giant Emperor, Ah Mu?" someone rudely asked.

Ah Mu pointed towards the marshes. "He's in there, but I don't know exactly where."

That person obviously did not believe Ah Mu and was about to say something else, but one of his companions stopped him and gestured in another direction. A few of the other trial takers were staring blankly at Zhuo Daynight, who was quietly standing a little ways away. Everybody from her clan was terrifying, and nobody dared to make a sound.

These trial takers were the elites of the Umbral Butterfly Tribe's younger generation and were all peak Melders. Since they were the first batch to reach the swamp, they were definitely the cream of the crop in this group of trial takers and were about as strong as the hall leaders of the Great Yu Empire's Yu Academy. But in front of the Daynight clan, these students did not dare to act brashly. They knew that the difference between them was just too large.

"The Giant Emperor has already entered the marshes. We don't know his exact location, which is why we made his whereabouts public. I'm well aware that I am incapable of completing the mission anyways," Ah Mu explained.

The thought, He knows himself pretty well, went through all of the trial takers' minds at the same time. They said nothing further and headed deeper into the swamp after checking the footprints.

They were the first group to arrive, but they were certainly not the last. Before much time passed, the next batch arrived and they too quickly entered the swamp to search for the Giant Emperor.

Over the next few days, at least forty trial takers arrived, and all of them promptly rushed into the swamp to search for the Giant Emperor.

To Lu Yin's surprise, the trial takers were all quite strong, at least when compared to the others from the Outerverse. He had seen quite a few Melders who were as powerful as Gerbach, and one of them was even more powerful than Schutz when he had just entered Astral-10. That person was clearly one of the strongest Melders within the Umbral Butterfly Region.

However, these geniuses' strength was ultimately nothing to Lu Yin. His time in Astral-10 had shown him that he was more than strong enough to completely disregard these people.

The swamp started to get lively. There were trial takers everywhere, and the battles never stopped. Most of the fights were between the trial takers and the swamp creatures, but there were some instances of internal strife as well.

At this time, another group of people arrived. This group stood out to Lu Yin because it included two gorgeous girls. They were both very enchanting and had amazing figures that drew the attention of many males.

Ah Mu saw them as well, but he quickly looked down. A bone-deep hatred flashed in his eyes before he suppressed it deep into his heart.

These people went straight to the swamp. The two girls glanced at Ah Mu in disdain, but they did not say a word as they passed by without stopping. Lu Yin noticed Ah Mu's strange behavior, but chose not to bring it up.

The battles between the trial takers and the swamp creatures never ceased. Some time later, the Giant Emperor appeared with a huge roar. He was quite unlucky, as there had been two trial takers battling right above him, and their battle had forced him out.

The swamp trembled, and all the trial takers rushed over to the Giant Emperor.

Zhuo Daynight's eyes lit up and she moved to rush over as well, but she was quickly stopped by Lu Yin. "You can't attack yet."

Zhuo Daynight had a cold look in her eyes. "Are you trying to stop me?"

"Yes." Lu Yin looked up.

Zhuo Daynight was furious and brandished her sword, but a miserable cry at that moment caught Lu Yin's attention, and he immediately rushed into the marshes, completely disregarding Zhuo.

At that moment, about ten trial takers were battling with the Giant Emperor. This was the first time Lu Yin was seeing the Giant Emperor in the flesh. Compared to a regular giant, the Giant Emperor was clearly much larger. More importantly, it had clothes—no, not clothes, but rather a rough leather covering. However, this indicated that the Giant Emperor could feel embarrassment, which was a sign of intelligence.

The Giant Emperor was far more terrifying than a regular giant, and with just one casual smack from its hand, it caused devastation among the swamp. The terrifying shockwaves caused many trial takers to fall into the murky waters. Among the affected trial takers was an unlucky fellow who fell into the swamp headfirst, his feet flailing wildly in the air.

The others immediately retreated when they saw that their attacks had no effect on the Giant Emperor.

The Giant Emperor was furious and had no idea how it had been discovered. It grabbed the poor cultivator who was stuck in the swamp upside down with one of its hands, lifted the man to its head, and then opened its mouth. Such a terrifying scene left many frozen in fear. The man was about to be eaten alive.

“Want a hand, bro?” Lu Yin called out.

No one else reacted, but the poor guy continued screaming for help.

“I can help you, but you need to give me everything in your cosmic ring,” Lu Yin shouted out.

This time, quite a few people looked at him oddly and even Zhuo Daynight shot him a questioning glance. Is this guy asking for a bribe?

“Sure, sure, I’ll give you everything! HELP ME!” The man was close enough that he could count the Giant Emperor’s teeth, and he was so scared that he was about to piss himself.

Lu Yin used Flash to appear right in front of the Giant Emperor. He channeled the power of Nine Stacks through his leg, and with a single kick, he pushed the Giant Emperor’s arm away as nine explosions rang out. The unfortunate trial taker was tossed back into the mud and was even unlucky enough to land headfirst once more.

The Giant Emperor glared at Lu Yin and threw a fist at him. Lu Yin had no interest in going head to head against the Giant Emperor and quickly used Flash to get away. But before he left, he snatched the poor guy from the mud as well. When he used Flash with his entire body, his speed was unbelievable. The Giant Emperor’s attack missed, and the force of his strike left a massive crater in the ground.

Lu Yin tossed the poor guy to the ground. Even now, the man had yet to regain his wits; his eyes were still filled with fear, and he had nearly died from the shock of the experience. His reaction was quite normal as no one wished to die.

Lu Yin crouched in front of the unfortunate fellow and patted his face with a smile. “Alright, I’ve fulfilled my side of the deal. You can give me your cosmic ring now.”

When he finally regained his wits, still huffing and sopping wet, he looked at Lu Yin, gritted his teeth, removed his cosmic ring, and then poured out everything inside. “This is everything I have. Take whatever you want. Take it all.”

He didn’t try to wiggle his way out, as regardless of the fact that he was being blackmailed, Lu Yin had indeed saved his life. A deal was a deal, and the man felt that he had to honor it no matter what.

Lu Yin was quite happy with the contents of the cosmic ring as his haul wasn’t that bad. Those who dared to take part in the weave’s trials were not ordinary elites, and the thousand plus cubes of star crystals was proof that this fellow wasn’t poor. Lu Yin also discovered a Mavis Bank card among the items. “How much does this have?”

The extorted man grew embarrassed. “There’s no money inside. I used everything from that account to prepare for the trials to buy a Melder ring armor and a few-”

“Enough, I don’t have time for this.” Lu Yin did not care for what the man had to say. After going through all of the items, he ended up only taking a few rare metals before finishing the deal.

Back on Earth, Raas and the other trial takers had possessed less than a thousand cubes of star crystals between them, but that was because the grades of the trials were different. The trial on Earth was

supposed to have posed no danger to the trial takers at all. Lu Yin was confident that, if Raas were to participate in a weave's trial, then Sicar would absolutely give his son a cosmic ring stuffed with at least ten-thousand cubes of star crystals.

After one person took the initiative, more would surely follow in their footsteps. Lu Yin soon saved another poor guy who was nearly pulverized by the Giant Emperor. After Lu Yin saved him, the man couldn't move most of his body, and Lu Yin even gave him treatment. That fool ended up giving more than two thousand cubes of star crystals to Lu Yin, which wasn't a bad profit at all.

One, two, three... Lu Yin was like a combat medic and kept saving people from the Giant Emperor. However, he never saved the same person twice since he knew they had nothing of value left. Additionally, those who were saved no longer possessed the courage to attack the Giant Emperor again.

More and more trial takers rushed over from all parts of the swamp to participate in the attack. The two beautiful girls had also arrived and were attacking together. Their combined attack was enough for the Giant Emperor to exhibit some fear.

Lu Yin was surprised to see that the two weren't weak.

"Can I ask something of you, Seven?" Ah Mu asked quietly.

Lu Yin grunted in reply. "Go on."

"D-don't save those two women." Ah Mu sounded depressed.

Lu Yin was confused. "Why not? I need money and they look rich."

Ah Mu gritted his teeth, gave Lu Yin a pleading look, took out his cosmic ring, and then passed it to Lu Yin. "This is everything I have. It's not much, but... Please."

The corner of Lu Yin's lips curled up. "Are they from the Umbral Butterfly Tribe?"

Ah Mu nodded.

Lu Yin nodded as he looked over at the battlefield. "Fine. I won't save them."

"Thank you," Ah Mu answered gratefully.

The Giant Emperor's strength left many of the trial takers quivering. It had the raw power of a peak Limiteer, and it also seemed to be using a battle technique. The reason why it only "seemed" to be using a battle technique was because nobody was sure that it actually had one, but the pattern in his attacks gave off the impression of a battle technique.

Lu Yin stared at the Giant Emperor. He was certain that it knew a battle technique, but was keeping it hidden. Why?

Lu Yin looked up. Is it because of the beings that are watching the battle? This was the tragedy that befell a civilization when they lagged behind; they may gain power, but they would be terrified of displaying it. Earth had been stuck in a similar situation during the trial that Lu Yin had participated in. If he had not gained the title of King Zishan, then everyone on Earth would have long since been turned to dust.

The universe was cruel, and once again, Lu Yin was reminded of how far this saying went.