

Star Odyssey

Chapter 4: Formcast Model

The door of the spacecraft opened with a dull thud, a hand stretching out from within before pausing. A short-haired young man eventually walked out, "Oof, I'm exhausted! I know this is supposed to be a trial, but why do they have to choose such a remote planet and make us fly out on our own?"

The youth stepped out and stretched to get used to his white light armor and combat boots, grabbing a dagger from the spacecraft before putting on what looked like a wristwatch and tapping it once. His gaze quickly hardened as the device emitted a beep, and he turned towards Lu Yin's hiding spot at once, "Who's there?"

Lu Yin immediately ran ten meters away from the factory, just in time to avoid an energy slash that split the entire building in two. The young man flew into the sky and stared down, "Are you a native of this planet?"

Realm of Sky? Lu Yin was surprised.

"I'm speaking to you, can't you hear me?" the youth asked with annoyance, casually sweeping his dagger across the air once more. Lu Yin watched as the aftermath formed a deep crater in the ground, raising clouds of dust.

"You're an alien?" he eventually asked.

The young man smirked and descended to the ground, glancing at his watch before turning back in shock, "Only combat level 8? You shouldn't be able to dodge my attacks at that... Wait, you specialize in body training?"

Lu Yin was confused, "You should be an alien."

The young man frowned, "That is technically true, but we'd prefer you natives call us masters."

"Masters?" Lu Yin frowned.

The young man looked down at him and said, "The Great Yu Empire has been observing your planet for a long time. We have control of it, so we're clearly your masters. Now, do you focus purely on body training? Did you become a Seeker yet, or maybe even a Sentinel?"

"I don't understand what you're saying."

Lu Yin's answer prompted the youth to narrow his gaze. He pondered for a moment before realizing that the natives of the planet couldn't know the different realms of cultivation, his expression turning cold as he glared at Lu Yin, "Attack me. I want to see what you're capable of."

Lu Yin clenched his fists, "Are you sure?"

The young man scoffed, "Do you know who I am? I'm Vesta, the likes of you can't possibly hurt me. Even if you could somehow hide your combat level and were a Sentinel, you still wouldn't be able to compete with me. You get to see just how wide the gap is between us."

"I'll attack, then," Lu Yin pulled out his metal rod, rushing forward as Vesta arrogantly crooked a finger.

The youth dodged his swing with ease, even placing his hands in his pockets, "A planet's natural evolution really does produce a group of brutes. Your attack was swift and decisive and you went for the killing blow immediately. Well, this is fine too. It really is the only way we can make soldiers out of you people."

Lu Yin attacked constantly, his rod releasing thick energy blasts that cracked the ground apart, but Vesta continued to defend with ease. Hands still in his pockets, he even blocked hits with his feet alone as he commented, "Actual combat level is 302, not bad. It isn't easy to become a Seeker in physical body alone, even some Sentinels in my academy struggle to get that far. You're worthy of a chance to follow me. Become my slave, and I'll bring you away to a different sky."

"A different sky?" Lu Yin gasped, his rod still stuck against Vesta's foot.

"Of course. I'm an elite student from the First Military School of the Great Yu Empire, qualified and brave enough to apply for trial by planetary evolution. Once I finish my mission, I will join a higher class. Following me will be the best thing to happen in your life. Of course, that depends on whether there's anyone more qualified than you on this planet; you better pray that isn't the case. Ha!" the youth kicked the rod away.

Lu Yin's expression chilled in the face of Vesta's arrogance, his right palm starting to vibrate as the air rippled around his hand. The alien youth didn't pay any attention at first, but once it caught his eye he was stunned, "Shockwave Palm? How do you—"

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Lu Yin smashed his palm into Vesta's chest, shockwaves exploding from the impact as the youth's white armor fell apart. Vesta spat out a mouthful of blood as he was thrown back, but managed to twist his body in the air and draw his knife in an attempted counter. Palm still buzzing, Lu Yin simply charged in.

"You're no native!" Vesta growled, attempting to stab forward in the face of Lu Yin's continued palm attack, but Lu Yin's entire body disappeared moments before impact and left him striking an afterimage. "Movement skills?" the youth spat out another mouthful, a ring melting apart to form armor that covered his entire body. Bang! Lu Yin's palm struck him in the same spot as before, a faint crack ringing out in response. Although the armor had barely managed to cover him in time, it still wasn't enough. His heart was completely shattered, and his body collapsed into a hole next to the spaceship that was now stained with his blood.

Lu Yin fell nearly to his knees, panting and grimacing in pain. The blood vessels in his right hand had ruptured from forcing use of the Shockwave Palm; if not for the chance to kill Vesta instantly, he wouldn't have risked disabling his arm for this attack. Fortunately, he'd managed to wait the talkative youth out long enough to succeed. Still, two uses of the Shockwave Palm and the Roving Step on top drew everything from his body, leaving him trembling from exhaustion. It took great will to even shuffle over to Vesta's corpse and grab the armor that had returned to ring form. This was a common piece of defensive equipment used by students, and although Vesta's was quite mediocre, it could still protect from an attack in the Realm of Sky.

Besides the ring armor, the device on Vesta's wrist could detect combat level and also held all of Vesta's information, including his location. Lu Yin removed the gadget, disabled its tracking mechanism, and stored it in his cosmic ring before looking at the corpse itself, his gaze landing on the middle finger. He cut the thing off and grabbed a crystal from within.

'It's really here!' Lu Yin was elated as he picked up the crystal; this was the entire reason for his attack on Vesta and why he hadn't used regular energy crystals to cultivate. This was a formcast model, a crystal that condensed from the energy of a true powerhouse that could stimulate one's biology and sunder their limits. It would also allow them to cultivate by absorbing energy from the universe, which was the most effective training method there was. Consuming energy crystals was much inferior and had many drawbacks, not the least of which were the effort to both gather the crystals and break through one's own limits. While the energy from the crystals found in the bodies of mutated beasts was also a form of condensed starforce, the crystals had too many impurities and would cause more harm than good when ingested. People who trained with energy crystals were sometimes called rangers, but many simply called them warslaves.

Lu Yin did indeed come from the skies beyond, but to keep his identity legal he hadn't trained with a formcast model before arriving at Earth. Every formcast user in the universe was required to register themselves in the Great Yu Empire, but the Empire's Youth Council had decreed one exception. Anything obtained during a planetary evolution trial was one's own property; this was an inviolable rule.

"This guy was only a Sentinel, which means this formcast model has been used twice. There's only one chance left. Tch, I'll have to keep looking," Lu Yin mumbled as he

tossed Vesta into the spacecraft, turning to leave. However, a dark silhouette suddenly cast a shadow upon him, warning him of a sudden attack! He turned his body sideways and blocked the attack with an explosive kick, giving himself a chance to back away. The attacker who was in the Realm of Earth also backed up before raising her head, revealing a delicate face.

“Why did you attack me?” Lu Yin asked icily. Even though he hadn’t felt any killing intent from the woman, a sneak attack was just that.

The girl studied the spaceship before turning to focus on him, “I saw you throw the alien’s corpse into the spaceship. Why did you kill that alien? Who are you? Do you know something?”

“Why would I tell you?” Lu Yin sneered.

“Because I’ll make you,” the woman answered, pulling out a dagger and leaping towards him. The weapon emitted waves of cold as it cut through the air. Lu Yin tried to dodge, but her dagger constantly tore through the air and struck towards his vitals. He eventually found the right moment and grabbed her wrist with one hand, using the other to strike her stomach, but she raised her eyebrows and dropped her weapon to block his palm. The temperature plummeted as their hands met.

“Battle technique?” Lu Yin turned solemn; his palm had started to freeze.

“You cannot match me. Answer me now,” the woman commanded as the temperature dropped further.

