

Unparalleled 701

Chapter 701: Stronghold Seventeen, Views In The Extraterritorial Region, The Barracks Gate

"This is Stronghold Seventeen."

Chu Kuangren observed as the passersby roamed around the streets that were flanked by rows of tenement inns. There were no stark differences between this place and any ordinary city.

However, he mobilized his Emperor Thought and soon noticed something strange about this place.

He realized that this city was not built on any ordinary land, but instead, the entire city was floating in space!

Having made the same observation, Emperor Jin Xuan gave Chu Kuangren a look before the duo dashed into the sky.

When Emperor Jin Xuan and Chu Kuangren approached peak height, they stumbled upon a formless barrier that separated the city from the rest of the universe. As they passed through the barrier, the first thing that greeted Emperor Jin Xuan and Chu Kuangren was the convoluted streams of spiritual qi.

The spiritual qi streams held myriad forms of qi within them. Any ordinary cultivator would struggle to even survive in the middle of the spiritual qi stream, what more to absorb them.

Fortunately, Emperor Jin Xuan and Chu Kuangren were both Emperors who would not be affected by the spiritual qi stream.

The spiritual qi stream was the least of their surprise.

In the midst of the cold, isolated universe, the remarkable stronghold floated below them.

From the inside, the city seemed like it was built just like any others. Yet, from the outside, the city was protected by layers upon layers of fortification that formed a dark enormous fortress wall!

The fortress wall was carved with countless runes. They also noticed that there were several powerful cultivators stationed above these walls.

"So this is Stronghold Seventeen?"

"Wow, what a magnificent city."

"Look, over there."

Emperor Jin Xuan exclaimed as he pointed into the distance.

Chu Kuangren looked over.

In the distance, they saw a planet covered in shades of white and blue. It was the Firmament Star!

The entire Firmament Star was enveloped in a thin layer of golden forcefield, which Daoist runes hovered on its surface. They were designed to protect this planet from danger.

Chu Kuangren inhaled deeply and cast his Emperor Thought as far and wide as it could go. He noticed that apart from Stronghold Seventeen, there were also several other similar strongholds within a billion kilometers radius.

From what Chu Kuangren understood, the great ones of Firmament Star had built a total of eighty-one strongholds to guard its own territory outside of Firmament Star.

“Haha, we’re in the Extraterritorial Region now. I can already feel my heart pumping!” Emperor Jin Xuan exclaimed with excitement.

As he stared at the planet where he was born, the thought of fighting a war for his homeland inspired him to no end.

“Let’s head back.”

Chu Kuangren suggested.

In a flash, he returned to the teleportation camp of Stronghold Seventeen.

“Hey, newcomer.”

A cultivator near the camp noticed Chu Kuangren and Emperor Jin Xuan’s arrival. From their expressions and demeanor, he could tell that they had just arrived from out of the region.

“Yes.” Emperor Jin Xuan nodded.

“Newcomers, please report yourselves at the barracks. Once you’ve obtained your soldier tag, you’ll officially begin your journey here in Stronghold Seventeen. I wish you all the best.”

The cultivator advised kindly.

“Thanks a lot.”

“You’re welcome. See you soon on the battlefield.”

...

Chu Kuangren and Emperor Jin Xuan spent some time strolling around Stronghold Seventeen.

They noticed that not all of the cultivators around here were Emperors. In fact, the Emperors only made up a minority of them.

While there were dozens of millions of cultivators in this stronghold, most of them were from the Honourable Realm and Sage Realm.

These Honorables and Sages were the descendants of cultivators who were stationed in this stronghold during the archaic era. They had spent their entire lives in this stronghold solely dedicated to the cause of defending Firmament Star.

“This is the barracks.”

Chu Kuangren and Emperor Jin Xuan arrived before a giant steel gate.

“Why’s the gate closed?”

Emperor Jin Xuan was puzzled. He straightened his back and yelled, "I am Emperor Jin Xuan, and I've come to register myself. Please open the gate!"

"You're welcome to enter, but you'll have to open this gate on your own."

A voice came from the other side of the gate.

Chu Kuangren and Emperor Jin Xuan could see several cultivators arriving above the wall. Their unusual auras indicated that they were all Emperors.

Those cultivators were staring mischievously at Emperor Jin Xuan.

"I wonder what this new Emperor is made of."

"Hehe, let's see if he manages to move this gate. But look at the person beside him. His aura feels a little peculiar."

"Hm, indeed. I'm surprised I can't tell what realm he's in. Judging from his age, I don't even know if he has ascended into an Emperor."

"I don't know if he's an Emperor, but... I do know he's one handsome-looking person. He's far more attractive than anyone I've ever seen."

An Empress gulped and said.

The remaining Emperors took a closer look at Chu Kuangren and were equally shocked by his extraordinary appearance.

Emperor Jin Xuan was aware that this was a gimmick by the Emperors to test out their newly arrived rookies.

He laughed out loud and rubbed his palms against each other. "Will I have to pay for this gate if it goes down?"

Upon hearing that, the Emperors above the wall smiled mischievously. A thin-looking Emperor answered, "If you manage to destroy it, I'll foot the bill on your behalf."

"Alright, then!" Emperor Jin Xuan let out a low grunt as he activated his Emperor qi and launched a golden fist sign onto the gate.

As the fist sign struck the gate with a boom, the momentum shook a thin layer of dust off the gate. However, the gate remained sealed with layers of Daoist runes and was not even ajar.

"Holy sh*t. How heavy is this gate?!"

Emperor Jin Xuan muttered under his breath.

His fist technique was enough to blow dozens of mountains open, yet it did nothing to move this gate!

"Again!"

Emperor Jin Xuan refocused his Emperor qi as golden Daoist runes began to manifest around his body. Then, he unleashed a violent surge of energies towards the steel gate. "Charging Cavalry Fist!"

With another fist blasted forward, Emperor Jin Xuan used his Emperor qi to send forth a blast of energies that rivaled the combined momentum of ten thousand cavalry armies onto the steel gate. The door buzzed loudly following the successive blasts.

The Emperors above the gate smiled cheekily. They knew Emperor Jin Xuan had used up all of his power.

“He must have just recently ascended into the Initial Emperor Realm. Although I can tell he’s just a Rank One Initial Emperor, his foundations are decent. He possesses a High-grade Emperor Core and wields the Epic Dao. With his potential and enough training, he’ll soon be a formidable soldier of Stronghold Seventeen.”

“Indeed. This will be interesting.”

Down below.

Emperor Jin Xuan was out of breath as he stared at the gate before him with shock. “This gate is too heavily fortified. My Emperor Technique can barely scratch it!”

“How about I give it a try?”

Chu Kuangren chuckled lightly and said.

“Go ahead. I’m at my wit’s end anyway.”

Emperor Jin Xuan was defeated.

His dreams of raining fury over the battlefield were crushed by a steel gate as soon as he arrived. It was not an easy moment to process.

“Hey, the other one’s making his move.”

“Oh, it seems like he’s an Emperor too.”

Only an Emperor would want to give it a go after witnessing the indestructible quality of the steel gate.

The Emperors stared closely at Chu Kuangren, their interests piqued.

Chu Kuangren stepped before the gate and lifted his palm, where his Emperor qi converged within. After that, he gently launched it forward.

Boom!

A shocking explosion ensued!

Chapter 702: Registration, He’s A Hotshot, Three Types Of Armies

Boom!

A loud explosion ensued as the entrance gate to the barracks was blasted into the compound.

In an instant, everyone within the barracks scurried in panic.

“Sh*t, what’s that sound?!”

“What a powerful energy blast. What just happened?”

“Enemy intruder! Enemy intruder!”

No one knew who exactly screamed about an enemy attack.

The entire army within the barracks showed up at the gates, their hands brandished with weapons as they stared deadly at Chu Kuangren and Emperor Jin Xuan.

There were more than a few dozen Emperors within the platoon.

Emperor Jin Xuan could not help but gulp in fear as his Emperor’s body shuddered under the stares of so many pairs of eyes. He had never felt so threatened before.

On the other hand, Chu Kuangren was unfazed.

The only difference was that Chu Kuangren seemed mildly irritated.

“I swear I held back. How’s it that I’ve put a little too much force again...”

When Emperor Jin Xuan heard that, his eyes widened dramatically.

What the f*ck?!

Who the heck was his travel companion?!

The Emperors who were previously teasing the duo were stunned too. They could only stare at Chu Kuangren in disbelief.

Where the hell did this person come from?!

“What are you standing there for? Hurry up and stop the commander!”

An Empress yelled.

The remaining Emperors immediately rushed between the parties and prevented a deadly clash from erupting.

“It’s all just a misunderstanding.”

“Commander, everyone, don’t worry. It’s just a mistake.”

“They’re the rookie Emperors who are here to register. We just wanted to test their powers out by having them get through the gate on their own.”

The thin Emperor hastily explained.

The person in charge of the platoon was a loft, bearded commander. He glared deadly at the thin Emperor and said, “You people sure love to fool around. Now that the gate is destroyed, who’s going to pay for this?!”

The thin Emperor chuckled dryly and said to Chu Kuangren sternly, “That’s right. How could you do this? Who gave you permission to tear down the gate? We’ll let you off the hook since this is your first day here, but no more next time, alright?”

Chu Kuangren looked at him and answered, "You told us that you would foot this bill yourself if we tore it down."

The thin Emperor was stunned. Well, it seemed like Chu Kuangren was not the kind who would play ball.

Growing impatient, the commander stared at the thin Emperor and said, "I'll pay for this door from your paycheck. Mess it up again, and you won't be seeing another paycheck forever."

"Understood." The thin Emperor almost shed a tear.

"And for the rest..."

"Yes, sir!" The remaining Emperors immediately straightened their backs in unison.

"Bring them to the registration counter."

"Understood!"

The Empress approached Chu Kuangren passionately. "Hey, little one. The name's Fei Xue. What's yours?"

"Chu Kuangren."

The commander, who was just about to leave, immediately halted his footsteps and turned around.

A few other Emperors who were tailing him reacted similarly as well.

"So that's Chu Kuangren? The little guy who once stopped the demonic realm from descending upon Firmament Star. I didn't think he'd ascend into an Emperor so quickly."

"I've heard from the other Emperors that he has caused quite a commotion on Firmament Star. He has turned many orthodoxies upside down and even made the God Worshipping Cult suffer a huge loss."

"Well, I've finally managed to put a face to the name."

"Heh, never would I have thought the famed Chu Kuangren would show up at Stronghold Seventeen. He must be the one who destroyed our gate."

"With his abilities, he doesn't look like a newly-ascended Emperor at all. It seems like Stronghold Seventeen is just about to get more happening."

The Emperors chatted.

Emperor Jin Xuan was clueless about the situation.

He had always assumed Chu Kuangren to be just another rookie. Only now was it apparent to him that there was more to Chu Kuangren than meets the eyes.

An effortless palm technique was all it took to destroy the gate.

His name had seemed to arouse quite a discussion too.

"I've long heard about how good-looking you were from my sisters. We were even secretly watching you with our Emperor Thoughts back then. Your reputation precedes you."

Empress Fei Xue exclaimed in awe.

Chu Kuangren was dumbfounded by her remarks.

Was he spied on by a group of Empress back then?

Even while he was showering and sleeping...

Hiss!

Those perverts!

The corner of Chu Kuangren's mouth twitched.

"Come on. Let's get you registered."

Empress Fei Xue chuckled lightly and said.

"Who is he?"

Emperor Jin Xuan muttered under his breath as he stared at Chu Kuangren's back.

The thin Emperor tapped on his shoulder and said, "Didn't you come here with him? Don't you know who he is?"

"I've been meditating behind closed doors before my ascension and have only recently awakened. I have no idea what has happened in the past few years," said Emperor Jin Xuan.

"He's a hotshot amongst the Emperors."

The thin Emperor stroked his chin and said, "Come, let's get you registered too. We'll talk along the way."

...

At the registration counter.

Apart from the mysterious Daoist Celestials, it was compulsory for everyone to register themselves upon arrival at the stronghold.

The registration was seamless. All it required was a drop of blood, and the person would receive a soldier tag and be registered in the records.

Their blood would then be imbued and processed using a strange technique.

If a soldier perished on the battlefield, the stronghold would be alerted because of that blood. This helped in managing and allocating resources on the battlefield.

"Well, it'll be an honor fighting alongside you."

Empress Fei Xue said with a smile.

"That's too high of a compliment, Daoist Sister."

“By the way, since this is your first time here, do you know where you’ll be staying?” Empress Fei Xue asked.

“Is accommodation not included?”

“Well, there are three types of armies in this stronghold. They’re the royal soldiers, mercenaries, and filibusters!” Empress Fei Xue explained.

The royal soldiers were a military unit that comprised of personnel of the command headquarters. They were the strongest amongst all soldiers and in charge of overseeing the entire stronghold. In times of need, the command headquarters could call all reserve royal soldiers to arm.

The mercenaries were soldiers who were attached to several local entities. They were mostly owned by grassroots orthodoxies that had been founded over the years.

The filibusters were those who neither attached themselves to the command headquarters nor the orthodoxies. They were mostly small independent groups of cultivators or lone rangers who would fight the war on their own accords.

“If you wish to access free food and accommodations, just register yourself as a royal soldier,” said Empress Fei Xue.

Chu Kuangren went silent for a while before he answered, “I’ll think about it.”

“Hmm? Do you happen to have an orthodoxy here?”

“Heh, not really.”

Chu Kuangren shook his head and chuckled.

Meanwhile, Emperor Jin Xuan and the thin Emperor had just arrived at the registration counter. Emperor Jin Xuan could only stare at Chu Kuangren in awe.

After hearing a fair amount of stories from the thin Emperor, Emperor Jin Xuan was disturbed.

Emperor Jin Xuan felt like he was insignificant compared to Chu Kuangren.

Chapter 703: Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade, A Jade Pendant, Reminiscing The Past

Chu Kuangren left the barracks after his enrolment.

As for Emperor Jin Xuan, he had decided to enroll as a royal soldier. This was despite the fact that his Emperor status would have easily made him a deputy commander in any orthodoxies within the stronghold.

However, Emperor Jin Xuan insisted on becoming a royal soldier and starting from the bottom. Chu Kuangren did not pose further questions about his decision nor exchange many parting words with Emperor Jin Xuan.

After leaving the barracks, Chu Kuangren roamed around the main streets of the stronghold.

He retrieved a jade pendant and muttered, “Right, I’ve nearly forgotten about this pendant by the Seventh Tormentor. Perhaps this might lead to something worthwhile.”

The pendant was the Seventh Tormentor's gift to Chu Kuangren.

The Seventh Tormentor had close ties with the commodore of Stronghold Seventeen. He had told Chu Kuangren he could seek the commodore's help with this pendant in times of need.

Even though Chu Kuangren did not require help, he decided to pay the commodore a friendly visit.

He came to the command headquarters, which was located right at the center of Stronghold Seventeen and near to the barracks. Fleets of soldiers were stationed around the perimeter, and they were some of the best cultivators around.

The soldiers immediately assessed Chu Kuangren for threat as he approached the headquarters.

Chu Kuangren did not attempt to hide his intention. "My name's Chu Kuangren. I've come to pay the commodore a visit. Would you please notify him?"

"Do you have an official invitation?"

"Not really, but I do have this jade pendant here. The commodore will understand once he sees it," said Chu Kuangren as he revealed his pendant to the guard.

While the guard was hesitant, he still ended up taking the pendant. "Wait here for a moment."

"Understood."

The guard then walked into the headquarters with his pendant.

Before the guard could enter the main hall, he was halted by two other royal soldiers. One of them spoke, "The commodore is currently discussing his affairs with his commanders. No one's allowed to enter for the moment."

With that, the guard stood aside.

In the main hall of the command headquarters.

A middle-aged man in black robes was deliberating on several strategies in the war against the Blood Tribe with his commander. He was the commodore of Stronghold Seventeen, known to most as... Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade.

"The Chaos Emblem on Asteroid Seven of the Extraterritorial Region is almost fully formed. It seems like the Blood Tribe will strike at any moment."

"Okay. Send forth some men to scout the area by then."

"Recently, a small army of Blood Tribe soldiers attempted to infiltrate the stronghold but were intercepted by us in time. Their movements have grown stealthier these days."

"Indeed. We must strengthen our defensive systems..."

Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade spent more than an hour combing through their strategies before the commanders began to leave in succession. It was then when the guard finally entered.

“Commodore, a person who calls himself Chu Kuangren is here to see you. He said you’d understand when you see this pendant.”

The guard showed the pendant to Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade.

The commodore was immediately shocked by the sight of the pendant. “How long has he been waiting for?”

“More than an hour.”

“What? D*mn it. Why didn’t you come in earlier?”

“Commodore, you were discussing some crucial matters with the commanders. I wouldn’t dare to barge into the room like that,” the guard said helplessly.

Upon hearing that, Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade could not stay angry at him. Then, he nervously walked towards the headquarters entrance.

The commanders who had yet to leave were shocked by the commodore’s reaction.

“What kind of person could possibly make the commodore scurry on his feet?”

“Did the guard say... Chu Kuangren? The infamous Chu Kuangren who turned the Firmament Star upside down?”

“Hm. Even if it was Chu Kuangren, the commodore would not react so dramatically. Could there be any other reasons?”

“Is it because of that jade pendant?”

The commanders grew curious and deliberately slowed their footsteps just so they could witness the infamous Chu Kuangren.

Outside the headquarters, Chu Kuangren had been waiting for more than an hour.

He was frowning, his patience already running thin.

“Is the commodore refusing to meet me? That’s fine, but he should at least return the pendant to me,” Chu Kuangren murmured.

It was then when Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade hastily emerged from the headquarters and apologized. “Brother Chu, my apologies. I was discussing some affairs with my commanders. I’m sorry to have made you wait.”

Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade said sincerely.

Chu Kuangren felt it would be rude to react, so he calmed himself and nodded. “No worries, commodore. If your schedule is tight, I can return some other day.”

“Hold on, Brother Chu. Nothing takes precedence over you now. Please, come in,” said Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade.

The royal soldiers nearby were dumbfounded.

Just like his name, Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade was rarely associated with friendliness. In fact, as the commodore of this stronghold, Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade was stern in his governance and rarely wore a smile on his face. How could the unapproachable commodore be so friendly to a youngster?

The more the guards thought about it, the more clueless they were.

Was their commodore possessed?

“Well, in that case, I’m happy to oblige.”

Chu Kuangren hesitated for a moment before following the commodore’s lead into the headquarters.

He also bumped into several commanders on his way into the headquarters, including the bearded and brute-looking commander he met previously.

“Brother Chu, we meet again.”

The brute laughed heartily and said.

“Indeed.”

Chu Kuangren nodded politely. Then, Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade introduced Chu Kuangren to the commanders of Stronghold Seventeen.

Chu Kuangren took a sweeping glance while the Omniscient Spirit began to analyze the commanders.

D*mn it.

All of them were cultivators of the Heavenly Imperial Realm.

“Brother Chu, where did you get this jade pendant from?”

Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade took out the jade pendant and asked cautiously.

“It was a gift from the Seventh Tormentor.”

“Ah, my savior. Do you know where he is?”

Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade lamented and asked.

“He’s guarding the Gods Seal in Firmament Star.”

“I have long heard that the gods are beginning to make a mess. If it weren’t for the constant attacks by the Blood Tribe, I would’ve returned to Firmament Star to fight that battle with him.” Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade snorted.

Then, his expression shifted dramatically. “If I recall correctly, the Seventh Tormentor was heavily injured during the Great Panhuman Revolt. Although countless years have passed, what a terrifying injury it was. Is he okay?”

“Judging from the current situation in Firmament Star, he should be able to manage it.”

Chu Kuangren was aware of the Seventh Tormentor’s injury.

It was an injury caused by one of the gods and incurable even by his superior healing techniques. However, with his remarkable abilities, the Seventh Tormentor would be able to suppress his injuries and heal.

Albeit the entire process would take a long time.

Then, Chu Kuangren had a brief exchange with Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade. From their conversations, Chu Kuangren learned that Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade had participated in the Great Panhuman Revolt too. However, he was not an Emperor back then. Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade was just a dispensable infantry.

In one of the attacks against the gods, Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade nearly perished on the battlefield. If it were not for the Seventh Tormentor, he would be dead now.

Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade would remember that moment for the rest of his life. The jade pendant was an accessory that the Seventh Tormentor always carried with him, and it was imbued with his unique aura.

It was the reason why Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade was so affectionate towards Chu Kuangren. The pendant was a token of friendship between Chu Kuangren and his savior.

Chapter 704: Refining The World Fruit, The Commodore Junior Of The Command Headquarters

“Brother Chu, since it’s your first trip here, you must be unfamiliar with this land. Why not enroll as a royal soldier? With that, I can promote you to a commander position.” Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade offered generously.

The bearded brute was not surprised, but the same could not be said for the rest.

“Commodore, I urge you to think twice about this decision.”

“I agree. We don’t doubt Brother Chu’s abilities, but he doesn’t have any combat experience on the battlefield after all. It’d be hard for him to persuade the rest if he is given the promotion.”

“Indeed.”

The commanders showed resistance towards Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade’s offer.

However, Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade glared coldly at his subordinates. “What’s it now? Do I not have the right to confer commandership on someone?”

“Of course not, but commodore...”

“That’s enough. My decision is final.”

Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade looked at Chu Kuangren, and his expression softened. “Well, Brother Chu, are you willing to accept this position?”

Chu Kuangren gave it some thought and shook his head. Then, he chuckled and said, “I’m not interested in being a commander. Besides, I’ve made the decision to become a filibuster. I feel more at ease being able to roam around.”

The filibusters were the weakest soldiers in the Extraterritorial Region.

However, Chu Kuangren felt there were significant advantages in becoming a filibuster. The lack of restrictions aside, there would be greater mobility that came with moving alone. Moreover, he would be able to amass greater combat experiences and enjoy all of the battle loots for his own.

Of course, such a decision could only be made because of Chu Kuangren's confidence in his own abilities.

"Filibuster? Well, Brother Chu, if you insist, I've no choice but to respect your decision." Despite sounding firm at first, Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade did not persuade Chu Kuangren any further.

At that, Chu Kuangren secretly pouted.

The commodore was so insistent on promoting him.

Yet, he had given up so easily.

Why did he not insist any further?

Chu Kuangren knew Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade was not genuine in offering him the commandership. It was just a test of personality.

Pfft. Chu Kuangren was long used to such trickery.

It did not matter. Chu Kuangren would not have agreed anyway.

"Brother Chu, although you've declined the commandership, I must fulfill my duty of hosting you in this stronghold. While you're here, please make this command headquarters your home," said Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade.

"In that case, thank you so much for your offer."

Chu Kuangren agreed. This would save him the trouble of looking for a new place to stay. Besides, what safer place was there in the stronghold than the command headquarters?

"Guards, please show Chu Kuangren to his residence."

"I shall take my leave then."

Chu Kuangren left.

In the grand hall.

The commanders heaved a sigh of relief after Chu Kuangren declined the commandership. Although they did not resent Chu Kuangren, promoting a newcomer to commander was sure to arouse dissatisfaction amongst other soldiers. It would be a slippery situation to handle.

"Commodore, what would you have done if Chu Kuangren had accepted the offer?" the bearded brute asked.

“Let him be. I’m fine as long as he’s able to manage his subordinates. After all, it doesn’t take much to rescind the offer either,” said Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade indifferently with a commanding look on his face.

...

In a room within the command headquarters.

Chu Kuangren was meditating.

The spiritual powers of the stronghold were largely similar to those of Firmament Star and the Nine Heavens. After all, the spiritual powers that flooded all three locations originated from the same boundless universe.

At that moment, Chu Kuangren retrieved a green fruit.

It was the World Fruit given by the Seventh Tormentor.

“With this World Fruit, I’ll have tasted three out of the Ten Great Spirit Fruits.” Chu Kuangren chuckled.

Few in this world were as lucky as him.

Most would consider themselves enormously lucky to taste even one of them.

No one would have the privilege of eating these fruits as if it was fresh out from a fruit stall, like him.

Munch munch...

It only took a few mouthfuls before the World Fruit ended up inside Chu Kuangren’s belly. He let out a few burps and licked the juice from the corner of his lips. “Its sourness reminds me of a green apple.”

Then, a surge of mythical energies erupted within Chu Kuangren’s body.

Universal Cauldron Physique, activated!

Soon, the energies of the World Fruit were absorbed by Chu Kuangren.

The Ten Great Spirit Fruits each possessed its unique properties.

The White Spiritual Divine Fruit elevated one’s insight, while the Divine Sycamore Fruit increased one’s cultivation level. As for the World Fruit, it was a rich source of universal energy.

Refining its universal energies had greatly deepened and solidified Chu Kuangren’s understanding of the Heavenly Imperial’s miniverse.

Every consumption of the Great Spirit Fruits has been immensely helpful so far.

This made Chu Kuangren rather excited for the rest of the Great Spirit Fruits.

However, he knew coming across the Great Spirit Fruits was a matter of fate too. It was already immensely improbable that he had come across three different fruits.

However, a man could hope.

After all, who could predict how fate would pan out?

On this day.

Chu Kuangren was observing the entire stronghold with his Emperor Thought.

He was hoping to amass some information.

With his Emperor Thought, he could see everything happening outside the headquarters without physically stepping out.

During the process, Chu Kuangren's Emperor Thought would occasionally bump into the Emperor Thoughts of other Emperors. After all, he was not the only Emperor in the stronghold. If this happened, Chu Kuangren would typically exchange a few words of pleasantries before moving on.

Just like how one would wave at their acquaintances on the streets.

Suddenly, Chu Kuangren sensed the convergence of a few Emperor Thoughts around the corner. It seemed like they were talking about something.

If those were unfamiliar Emperor Thoughts, Chu Kuangren would not have interfered.

He would not want to create an awkward situation of injecting himself into a conversation with a group of strangers.

However, two of the Emperor Thoughts were familiar to him. One of them belonged to Empress Fei Xue, while the others belonged to Emperor Jin Xuan.

Should he join them?

"Brother Chu, how have you been?"

While Chu Kuangren was hesitating, Empress Fei Xue's thoughts reached out and greeted him.

"Greetings, Sister Fei Xue."

"We were just talking about something that might interest you. Do you want to join?"

"Oh, what's it about?" Chu Kuangren asked.

"Hah, it's nothing much. It's just that the commodore junior is returning soon. We're just thinking of ways to deal with it."

"Commodore junior? Is he the commodore's son?"

"Not really. The commodore junior is a 'she', and she's not the commodore's daughter either. She's more like his great-granddaughter many generations down the line. Nonetheless, she's the commodore's favorite descendant."

"You see, Brother Chu, the commodore junior is a stellar cultivator. She became a Sage by the age of thirty and an Emperor by the age of forty. As of today, she has reached the Perfected Stage of Emperor Realm, and she's not even fifty. Such talent is undoubtedly one of the best in all of Firmament Star."

"She's that good?"

Chu Kuangren was shocked despite becoming a Heavenly Imperial before the age of thirty himself.

However, it did not stop him from being impressed by the commodore junior's talent. Reaching the Perfected Emperor Realm before the age of fifty was a significant achievement.

"Absolutely. Because of her remarkable talents, the commodore junior has been harsh on herself from a young age. She also has great expectations for other people, especially the soldiers serving under her forefather. Each time the commodore junior returns, she would put our skills to test, and if we fail her expectations, it won't be a pleasant time ahead."

The Emperors were growing anxious.

On the other hand, Chu Kuangren was beginning to look forward to meeting the commodore junior.

Chapter 705: Shang Honghua, Trial, One Technique To Stupefy Everyone

In the command headquarters of Stronghold Seventeen.

Chu Kuangren had learned about the commodore junior during his Emperor Thought conversations with the other Emperors.

Apparently, the commodore junior was once the youngest Emperor of the stronghold. She was one of the very few who possessed the Superb-grade Emperor Core, and she had spent the least amount of time in qualifying herself at the battle leaderboard...

In short, the commodore junior was a reputable figure in the stronghold, and many cultivators held her with the highest regards.

At this moment, Chu Kuangren felt the presence of two distinctive auras approaching his room.

He immediately disconnected his Emperor Thought and went to the door.

Two red-robed ladies with a dark sword strapped to their waists were outside his room. They looked valiant in their poise.

"Brother Chu, the commodore junior wishes to invite you to the main hall."

The ladies were in awe when they first saw Chu Kuangren.

Fortunately, they managed to quickly retain their composure and relay their messages with a straight face.

Chu Kuangren nodded. "Let's go, then."

In the main hall of the command headquarters.

Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade was speaking to a red-clothed lady. Her features were delicate, and her demeanor elegant. Although she seemed like a gentle lady on the surface, one could vaguely pick up on the ferociousness lingering within her aura, like a thorny rose.

She was the commodore junior of the command headquarters, Shang Honghua!

"Hua'er, behave yourself when you meet Chu Kuangren later. Don't make a fool of yourself, alright?" Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade reminded.

“Yes, Forefather. Don’t worry, I know what to do.”

Shang Honghua replied calmly.

Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade did not speak any further.

Soon.

Chu Kuangren and the female bodyguards arrived at the hall.

“Greetings, commodore, commodore junior.”

Chu Kuangren greeted the duo politely with a fist salute.

At one side, Shang Honghua took a peek at Chu Kuangren. Although her countless years on the battlefield had made her resistant to most forms of temptation, she was still moved when she saw Chu Kuangren for the first time. “He does look incredibly charming.”

The female bodyguards behind her were whispering to each other as well.

“D*mn, this man’s way too handsome.”

“I know! Look at his posture, and look at his face! If he weren’t the commodore’s guest, I would’ve kidnapped him to my room.”

“Whew, how I wish to have played around with him.”

“Ahem...”

Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade coughed lightly.

The female bodyguards immediately fell silent.

Shang Honghua scoffed. “How embarrassing.”

She then looked at Chu Kuangren and said, “Brother Chu, I’ve always been curious to find out if you live up to your reputation. Now that I’ve finally seen you, you truly are extraordinary.”

“Commodore junior, you’re too kind.”

Chu Kuangren glanced at Shang Honghua.

It was all he needed to obtain every crucial information about her.

Her reputation preceded her.

In fact, Shang Honghua was more impressive than her reputation suggested. Not only had she attained the Perfected Emperor Realm, but she was a Rank Nine Initial Emperor close to ascending into the Heavenly Imperial Realm.

Chu Kuangren spent some time chatting with Shang Honghua.

“Brother Chu, I’ll be heading to the barracks soon. Would you care to join me?” Shang Honghua asked.

“Sure.” Chu Kuangren did not decline her offer.

The group proceeded into the military barracks.

The soldiers had long heard about Shang Honghua's return and had been ramping up their training regime.

"The commodore junior is here!" The thin Emperor who sat on top of the wall announced.

"Soldiers, fall in!" the bearded commander yelled.

Soon, Shang Honghua, Chu Kuangren, and a few others entered the barracks as the soldiers stood in a straight line.

"Li Youdao, step out!"

Shang Honghua commanded.

The thin Emperor died a little inside. With all his might, he straightened his back and stepped out of formation. "Present!"

"Attack me!" Shang Honghua said.

The thin Emperor did not find her request surprising and immediately launched a palm technique towards Shang Honghua.

As the Emperor qi converged in his hands and Daoist runes manifested around his body, Li Youdao launched a fury of energies that accumulated layers of power in its projectile towards Shang Honghua.

Soon, Shang Honghua parried with a fist technique as well.

In an instant, Li Youdao's Emperor qi, Daoist runes, and his fury of energies dissipated into thin air!

The thin Emperor was blasted a hundred meters away as his body smashed against the gate.

"Just like the last time, you're defeated in one move again. Li Youdao, have you actually been training?"

"Yes, ma'am!" The thin Emperor scurried onto his feet and responded.

"Hmph, make sure you double your training from here onwards!"

Shang Honghua scoffed and continued, "Fei Xue, step out!"

"Present!"

Empress Fei Xue stepped out of formation, feeling a little uneasy.

Then, Shang Honghua struck a fist technique at Empress Fei Xue, which required the latter to use all her strengths to parry the commodore junior's attack.

"Fei Xue, the Redshirt Army still lacks a Deputy Commander. If you're keen, we'll always welcome you," said Shang Honghua.

"Thank you for the opportunity, commodore junior. I'll think about it."

Empress Fei Xue had spent a considerable amount of time in the barracks and had made many friendships over the years. Leaving her troops would not be an easy decision for her.

Shang Honghua continued to test a dozen more candidates.

All of them were soldiers in the Emperor Realm.

Finally, the process began to wear her out. "I'm starting to feel exhausted."

The remaining soldiers who had not been tested heaved a sigh of relief.

'Freedom, at last!'

Shang Honghua then looked towards Chu Kuangren and said, "Brother Chu, if you don't mind, take care of the rest for me."

Chu Kuangren was stunned.

No wonder she was keen on dragging him here.

Shang Honghua was waiting for this moment.

She wanted to test him out!

"Well, isn't that inappropriate?" Chu Kuangren hesitated.

"Nope, it's all good. These maggots will slack off the second they've got the chance to. Just test them however you like. It'll be a great opportunity for you to understand where Stronghold Seventeen stands in terms of power anyway," said Shang Honghua.

"Xie Feng, step out!"

"Present!"

"Show Chu Kuangren what you got."

"Understood."

Xie Feng stepped out of formation and was eager to fight Chu Kuangren. "Brother Chu, it's an honor."

"Brother Chu, be careful of him. Xie Feng is not only a centurion of the army but also an expert who qualifies in the battle leaderboard. Even though his rank isn't too high, don't underestimate him."

Empress Fei Xue reminded Chu Kuangren kindly.

The battle leaderboard was a list that existed in the Extraterritorial Battlefield.

It was a leaderboard that honored not combat strength but combat merits!

The greater one's combat merit, the higher one would soar in the leaderboard!

Typically, combat strength and combat merits would go hand-in-hand. Those who appeared in the leaderboard were rarely weak cultivators.

"After you!" Chu Kuangren said.

Xie Feng attacked.

The moment he unleashed his technique, a cluster of dark typhoons manifested around the field and swarmed towards Chu Kuangren.

Xie Feng was a Rank Seven Initial Emperor!

He was in the Perfected Emperor Realm.

Chu Kuangren summoned a circle of sword qi at his fingertip and effortlessly tore through the dark typhoons around him!

His sword qi circled the battlefield and stopped right before Xie Feng's throat. Xie Feng gulped his fear as his Emperor qi and battle poise instantly dwindled.

He looked at Chu Kuangren in terror.

Xie Feng could observe each of Chu Kuangren's movements clearly.

From the moment he lifted his finger until he unleashed his sword qi.

His sword qi movement even left a clear and straightforward trail behind.

Yet, Xie Feng found it impossible to dodge his attack!

Xie Feng's technique was not the only thing that lost to Chu Kuangren.

In fact, Chu Kuangren had overpowered him in every single aspect!

The rest of the soldiers stared at Chu Kuangren in shock as they struggled to take in the moment. Their gaze was solemn.

One technique was all it took to stupefy everyone!

Chapter 706: Battling Shang Honghua, Have I Not Given Enough Handicap?

"I-I lost!"

Xie Feng gulped, and a layer of fine, cold sweat appeared on his forehead.

He knew.

If Chu Kuangren wanted to, he could very well end his life with the slight touch of a fingertip, and he would have absolutely no power to fight back.

"No way, no way, Centurion Xie Feng is one of the elites on the battle leaderboard. How can he possibly be defeated in just one move?!"

"I-is this for real?"

"My eyes aren't fooling me, are they? What the hell was that sword strike just now?"

"What cultivation realm is this person in?!"

The soldiers in the barracks exclaimed in utter astonishment. Even Shang Honghua and the few female guards behind her were a little surprised.

"I didn't expect this guy to have such strong combat strength."

"No matter what, Xie Feng is still a Perfected Emperor. I'm afraid not even the Commodore Junior can manage that feat."

Just as a female bodyguard said that, she suddenly remembered that Shang Honghua was beside her. As such, she quickly covered her mouth in hindsight.

"This person's strength is indeed extraordinary."

Shang Honghua said with an eagerness for challenge lingering in her eyes.

She recalled that Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade once said that Chu Kuangren was younger than her, but his achievements were no lesser than hers.

For a long time, Shang Honghua had been one of the most outstanding figures among her peers. After all, a fifty-year-old Perfected Emperor was really rare.

Of all the people in the eighty-one strongholds, there were less than a handful of the same generation who could compare with her. Even during ancient times, it would be extremely rare to find a cultivator like her.

Therefore, Shang Honghua had always taken pride in this achievement.

However, when she heard that someone's achievements were not lower than hers and that they were even younger, she could not help but develop an urge to make comparisons.

She wished to find out who, among herself and Chu Kuangren, was the better one!

"Zhang Yi, get out!"

Another emperor was called out by Shang Honghua.

Still, Chu Kuangren beat this guy in one move.

This time, everyone was in an uproar.

There was no need for Shang Honghua to call anyone out anymore. Those chiliarchs and centurions, who have reached the Emperor's Realm among the ranks of the soldiers, went out on their own initiative.

"Let me have a go at your brilliant moves, my Lord."

"Please!"

The Emperor ended up losing in just one move!

"I'm next!"

"It's my turn!"

"Hmph, I don't buy that."

As each Emperor, one after another, lost in the hands of Chu Kuangren in one move, the crowd's murmurs grew.

"Alright. It's time to stop."

At this time, Shang Honghua called the crowd to a halt. She walked up to Chu Kuangren and said calmly, "They've worked you hard enough, Brother Chu."

"Not that I mind it."

"It's my turn to give it a try now."

"Commodore Junior, please."

"Not them, but... you!"

Shang Honghua stared at Chu Kuangren fiercely. A battle intent shot out in her eyes, "I want to challenge Brother Chu's abilities myself!"

She then took out a crimson red spear, whose surface flowed with mysterious Daoist patterns. It appeared dazzling and glorious and exuded a very overbearing aura.

"Brother Chu, come at me with your sword technique."

Deep down, Chu Kuangren sighed.

He had seen this coming.

"I shall humbly accept your spar then."

The Descendant Self Sword automatically unsheathed from Chu Kuangren's waist and landed in his palm.

He thought, 'How many moves would I need to defeat Shang Honghua?'

'One move?'

'Would this be too embarrassing for her?'

Anyhow, he was living in the command headquarters at the moment, so it would not be respectful to defeat her in just one move, more so in front of so many people.

'What about three moves?'

'That still doesn't sound great.'

'How about I give myself a few handicaps?'

While Chu Kuangren was thinking about how to defeat Shang Honghua, his opponent had already stabbed her spear toward him. From this attack, a surge of majestic Emperor's Aura intertwined with Daoist patterns unleashed like thousands of cavalries charging forward, boundless and domineering.

Very few people of the Initial Emperor Realm would be able to stop it.

Chu Kuangren lifted his longsword lightly.

As soon as the sword and the spear clashed with a clang, an explosion occurred in the void!

The sword did not move at all, and Chu Kuangren remained as still as a mountain.

Chu Kuangren blocked this strike with ease, making Shang Honghua narrow her eyes. "There are many people here. You and I will fight in the void!"

Immediately after, the two shuttled into the void.

In the void, among the spear and sword collision, Emperor qi and Daoist patterns erupted in succession. With that, terrifying energy swept across the void!

All the elites of the entire stronghold became aware of the clash.

Streaks after streaks of Emperor Thoughts came to the void to observe the battle. Some Emperors could only tell that it was a close and intense battle.

The Heavenly Imperials, on the other hand, saw some crucial points in the battle.

"The gap between them is way too big."

In the barracks, the Bearded Commander shook his head and said.

He was a Heavenly Imperial.

Hence, he could see how huge the gap was between Chu Kuangren and Shang Honghua. They were not on the same level at all.

Although the two looked like they were fighting fiercely, Chu Kuangren was not, in fact, giving his best at all. It was just an attempt to save his opponent some dignity.

He had given himself so many handicaps that it was almost like fighting a wheelchair-bound.

"That should be enough now."

Amidst the void, Chu Kuangren said to himself.

He and Shang Honghua had already exchanged more than thirty moves.

Not even with the gods did he use so many moves. He knew for sure that he had already saved enough dignity for his opponent.

Thus, he became slightly more serious in his approach.

With the strike of his sword, a flash of sword ray shot across the void, tore the spear shadows in the sky, shattered the Emperor qi, and blasted Shang Honghua backward.

After that, the Descendant Self Sword followed like a shadow, landing on that slender, white neck of his opponent. The victor of this battle suddenly became clear!

Chu Kuangren sheathed the Descendant Self Sword. "Good battle, Commodore Junior."

Shang Honghua's face was so gloomy. She gritted her teeth and glared at Chu Kuangren. "You think I'm a fool now, don't you?"

She gave a cold sneer and then walked out of the void.

Back at the barracks.

“Commodore Junior.”

A few commanders walked up, trying to comfort her.

However, before they could speak, they saw the unpleasant look on her face.

“Go.”

Without a word, she left with a few guards.

Chu Kuangren also walked out of the void.

“So you haven’t been showing us your full strength, Brother Chu.”

“Well played. Even the Commodore Junior is not your opponent.”

“But she seems really upset now.”

“She’s a girl. Just coax her. Besides, with those good looks of yours, it shouldn’t be too difficult, Brother Chu.” The Bearded Commander patted Chu Kuangren on the shoulder, a wise smile etched on his face.

Chu Kuangren looked helplessly at Shang Honghua’s departing figure.

He seemed to have gone overboard.

Had he not given himself enough handicap?

“Brother Chu, come clean with me. Are you already in the Heavenly Imperial Realm?” The Bearded Commander looked at Chu Kuangren and asked solemnly.

“Yeah.” Chu Kuangren did not conceal the truth either as he nodded.

Upon hearing his words, everybody gasped.

How old was he?!

How could he have achieved Heavenly Imperial Realm?!

“I thought the Commodore Junior was already an unprecedented generational talent, but I didn’t expect there would be someone freakier than her.”

Although the Bearded Commander had guessed this fact for a long time, he still could not help but feel a little shocked when he heard Chu Kuangren confessing to it personally.

Then, he laughed, “Very well. Now, my Stronghold Seventeen has one more Heavenly Imperial in our ranks.”

Heavenly Imperials were the backbone of the front line. Every additional Heavenly Imperial would be of great help to a stronghold.

In the command headquarters.

Shang Honghua's expression looked awful.

"D*mn it. D*mn it!"

"This guy really thinks I am a fool. Can't I tell that he's giving me mercy? I, Shang Honghua, have never asked for mercy from anyone!"

Shang Honghua was quite an arrogant person.

Due to her pride, she was very annoyed at Chu Kuangren for giving her mercy. She felt that the other party was underestimating and belittling herself.

"Fighting is something where you have to give your all. I, Shang Honghua, would rather lose thoroughly than accept this such comity."

Shang Honghua gritted her teeth in anger and said.

Chapter 707: Shang Honghua's Expedition, Asteroid Belt Seven, Bunch of Superficial Fools

Chu Kuangren returned to the command headquarters, but Shang Honghua was nowhere to be seen.

However, he saw her two guards.

These two guards were a pair of sisters. One was called Bai Zhongxue, and the other Bai Zhongquan, who both grew up with Shang Honghua since childhood.

Now, they were Shang Honghua's trusted deputies.

"The Commodore Junior is very angry now. I advise you not to show yourself in the next few days," Bai Zhongquan said lightly.

"It's my first time seeing the Commodore Junior this pissed. Honestly, she shouldn't be reacting this way if she had only lost a battle. Brother, what did you do to the Commodore Junior?" Bai Zhongxue asked curiously.

Chu Kuangren shook his head helplessly, unwilling to say more.

He also thought about the matter on the way back.

By then, he already had some guesses as to why Shang Honghua was angry. It seemed like he had made the other party feel ashamed by giving her some mercy.

He did not expect her opponent to be so serious about combat.

Since Shang Honghua was still angry, Chu Kuangren did not wish to disturb her either. How else was he supposed to deal with an angry woman?

He still went about his days like usual. However, since he was now living in the command headquarters, it was inevitable for the two of them to bump into each other occasionally.

Chu Kuangren did not care that Shang Honghua was ignoring him, as long as she did not interfere with his work.

On this day.

Shang Honghua, donned in bright red armor, went to meet with the Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade.

Seeing her getup, Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade knew what she was planning to do. "Where are you going this time?"

Shang Honghua had formed her own Redshirt Army after becoming an Emperor and would go out on an expedition every other time.

It could be said that in just a few years, Shang Honghua had made rapid progress from just entering the Emperor Realm to today's Rank Nine Initial Emperor Realm. Apart from her talent, it was also accredited to her hard work.

"I'm going to the Asteroid Belt Seven."

Shang Honghua said.

Upon hearing this, Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade frowned slightly. "The battle at Asteroid Belt Seven has been perilous recently, and they have the presence of beings of the Heavenly Imperial Realm. Although you're strong, it is still too dangerous to head there."

"I heard that Asteroid Belt Seven has birthed Chaos Emblems. That item is of great use for me to improve my strength, so I wish to go there and try my luck."

"Hua'er, how many people through the ages have done what you did, breaking through from Initial Emperor to Rank Nine Initial Emperor Realm in a short few years? Without the Chaos Emblem, you can still break through to the Heavenly Imperial Realm after a few years of hard work. Regardless, Stronghold Seventeen's leadership will be passed down to you in the future. You don't need to take risks."

Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade persuaded her painstakingly.

"Since there are treasures that can help me breakthrough to the Heavenly Imperial Realm quickly, why should I take the time to work on it?"

"Hua'er, you're being too impatient. I know. You want to avenge Yuan'er and the others. But to give up everything for expeditions like this to look for Opportunities of Fortune to help you achieve a breakthrough... What if something happens to you?"

"I won't get into any trouble!"

Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade was interrupted by Shang Honghua before he could finish his sentence. "I will never rest before I avenge my parents!"

"Grandfather, I can bear with the fact that the Heavenly Dao was imperfect back then, and I couldn't become an Emperor. However, I'm now an Emperor, and the road to cultivation greatness is presented right in front of me. Only by becoming a Heavenly Imperial will I have the opportunity to take revenge. I don't want to wait any longer!" Shang Honghua said in a low tone.

Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade knew Shang Honghua's temperament and that she had already made up her mind about this. No matter how much he tried to convince her otherwise, it would be futile.

Right at this moment.

Chu Kuangren walked in.

Seeing him, Shang Honghua scoffed and replied, "Grandfather, didn't you say that no one over the ages can match my achievements? Don't we have one right here now? One who is even better than me."

Chu Kuangren, who just came in, looked confused.

'What is this situation?'

'They're complimenting me, right?'

'Yes, they are.'

'But why are they complimenting him?'

Those two also sounded a little weird.

"General, I'm here this time to say my goodbye. I've troubled you long enough, and it's about time I go to the Extraterritorial Region."

Chu Kuangren formed a fist salute and said. His reason for coming to the Extraterritorial Region this time was to train and gain more experience. Hence, he should not remain in the command headquarters forever.

"Oh, you came at the right time."

Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade's eyes lit up and said, "Hua'er is just about to go out for an expedition too. Why don't you both go to Asteroid Belt Seven together?"

"No need for that," Shang Honghua said.

"Why? What did I miss?"

Chu Kuangren asked curiously, and Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade briefly told him about the Asteroid Belt Seven.

"With the intense battle there and the birth of the Chaos Emblems, it definitely sounds like a conducive place for my training."

"That's right. With Brother Chu's strength, ordinary places can no longer meet your cultivation needs. Recently, due to the birth of Chaos Emblems in Asteroid Belt Seven, many elites have shown up there, which is just right for you to spar with them." Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade highly recommended Chu Kuangren to go to that place.

Meanwhile, Chu Kuangren also understood why the other party was convincing him. He hesitated for a while but nodded eventually. "I'll go there and have a look."

"All the people who will come with me on this expedition are women. I'm afraid the presence of a man won't be very appropriate," Shang Honghua said gently.

"If you don't agree with it, I will bear the consequences of you hating me because I can go as far as breaking your legs than letting you go to such a dangerous place."

"Grandfather, you..."

Shang Honghua was getting more and more infuriated, so she took a deep breath. "I don't mind bringing him along as long as the others agree as well."

"If you've agreed with it, do you think the others will say no?"

Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade curled his lips into a smirk.

Shang Honghua was left speechless, and she glared at Chu Kuangren. "Assemble at the barracks this afternoon. Latecomers will not be entertained!"

Then, she walked away.

"Brother Chu, I'm sorry to trouble you."

"It is no trouble at all. Either way, I'd still like to go to Asteroid Belt Seven and take a look."

Chu Kuangren smiled faintly.

Chaos Emblem was also a kind of soul emblem but more advanced. A chaotic spirit source was comparable to a thousand imperial spirit sources!

He did not want to miss out on such a treasure.

"In that case, I shall trouble you to take care of Hua'er. I know that this child has a temper, but there is a reason for that. Her parents were killed by the Blood Tribe's Heavenly Imperial several decades ago when she was still a child. Since then, revenge for her parents has become her obsession..."

Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade told Chu Kuangren about Shang Honghua's background.

Shang Honghua's parents were killed in battle. From then on, she became determined to avenge her parents, so she worked hard, day and night, training herself, which developed her current combative and obstinate character.

This story was not new. In fact, it was very cliché.

People like her could be found everywhere in this Extraterritorial Battlefield.

That afternoon.

In the barracks.

Shang Honghua's Redshirt Army had assembled.

Chu Kuangren came as well.

"This time, Brother Chu will join us on our expedition," Shang Honghua said reluctantly to the neatly lined-up Redshirt Army in front of her.

Then, she said again, "Of course, if you don't wish to travel with him, I can report back to my grandfather and ask him to leave."

She looked at everyone expectantly.

She was this close to asking her people to outright reject him.

"What? Brother Chu is coming with us?"

"That's great. Who doesn't like fighting side by side with such a handsome brother?"

"Brother Chu, welcome to the team. I hope that we'll have many fruitful endeavors together."

The Redshirt Army exchanged remarks in excitement.

Shang Honghua's expression did not look too good.

In fact, she cursed in her heart. "What a bunch of superficial fools!"

Chapter 708: The Fourth Transcendent Prize, Timespace Treasure, Legend of the Human King

"Depart!"

Shang Honghua shouted.

She then whipped out a huge, dark warship.

This warship was similar to some of the Fairy boats in Firmament Star, but it was much larger in scale and had a special material that was extremely tough. As such, it could adapt to the mixed spiritual currents in the universe, rendering it multi-functional.

The number seventeen was engraved on the hull of the battleship.

It symbolized that this was Stronghold Seventeen's warship.

One after another, the Redshirt Army quickly rushed onto the battleship, and Chu Kuangren followed too. Accompanied by a roar, light patterns flowed on the bottom of the battleship, bursting out a powerful propelling airflow.

With that, the warship ignited and rose into the air.

Stronghold Seventeen underneath the battleship looked smaller and smaller.

"We're about to break through the Stronghold's barrier. Open up the barrier."

"Barrier opening."

An invisible barrier appeared around the warship.

Soon, everyone penetrated the barrier of Stronghold Seventeen and came into the cold and lonely universe. The surrounding spiritual currents were also isolated by the barriers of the warship, so it did not affect any of its passengers.

"Display the star map and determine the route. Our destination is Asteroid Belt Seven," Shang Honghua said methodically as she stood on a chair.

In front of everyone, a huge starry sky map appeared.

On it, a light spot was moving.

That spot of light was them.

Chu Kuangren looked at the map from the side with interest.

Then, he looked at the boundless universe beyond the warship and then at the shining stars in the distance. Suddenly, deep down, he felt tiny.

Compared to this eternal universe, an Emperor like him was so minute.

Even the whole of Firmament Star was considered insignificant.

Chu Kuangren looked at the star map in front of him and asked curiously, "How wide is the coverage of this star map?"

Shang Honghua did not answer. However, Bai Lixue next to him smiled and said, "This star map was drawn by the great ones of Firmament Star. It roughly covers the range of a light-year radius with Firmament Star as its center."

"A light-year radius?"

"Yes, it's almost nine trillion kilometers."

Chu Kuangren nodded. He did not expect the concept of light-years to exist here too. According to the knowledge he learned in his previous life, a light-year was roughly equivalent to more than nine trillion kilometers.

"We are now roughly one-twentieth light-year away from Asteroid Belt Seven. At the speed of the warship, it will take about seven days to arrive," Bai Lixue said again.

This warship was the highest specification warship in the entire Stronghold Seventeen, and its moving speed was as fast as an Emperor.

There were still seven days to go before they reached their destination. Since Chu Kuangren was not in a hurry, he found an unoccupied room on the battleship to move into.

...

"Congratulations, Host! You've drawn a Transcendent-grade prize, Timespace Treasure!"

Today, Chu Kuangren drew a prize.

This prize made his eyes light up.

Including the Lucky Halo, the Tome of Physiques, and the Omniscient Spirit, this was the fourth Transcendent prize he had obtained!

He opened the inventory and saw that there was a silver-white thing that resembled a compass lying inside. This compass seemed like a circle surrounded by a circle, nested in layers.

Overall, it was composed of nine circles, and in the middle was a white crystal engraved with countless mysterious lines.

Chu Kuangren could only see that the two outermost circles were made up of countless Daoist patterns, while the innermost seven circles were not that clear.

“Take out the Timespace Treasure!”

Once Chu Kuangren had set up heavy layers of restrictions in his surroundings, he took out this treasure. Suddenly, the palm-sized Timeless Treasure appeared in front of him.

“Lil Ai, analyze the Timespace Treasure.”

“Connecting the Universe’s consciousness... Analyzing target...”

In the past, when Chu Kuangren used the Omniscient Spirit to analyze anything and everything, he would quickly get an answer.

It was the same even when analyzing the mysterious Heavenly Punishment Daoist Pattern.

Yet now, he has encountered an error analyzing this Timespace Treasure, and a full hour has since passed.

“When it comes to the laws of time and space, it can’t be fully analyzed.”

“Aren’t you called the Omniscient Spirit?”

Little Ai, the Omniscient Spirit was left speechless.

‘Who knew you would have so many bizarre items on you?’

“I can force the analysis, but the premise is you must have a strong enough cultivation base to support the analysis. Otherwise, your whole person, including soul, body, and cultivation base, will completely collapse. Do you still want to try it?”

Lil Ai said gently.

“Uh, forget it then.”

Chu Kuangren did not want to risk his life to analyze this Timespace Treasure. Following that, he simply refined this Timespace Treasure. Based on his cultivation base, he should not be able to refine treasures that involve laws. However, this was a prize he drew.

In essence, this was his possession.

That was why he could refine it.

Nevertheless, all he had now was ownership over this item.

If he wanted the right to use it, he would have to work hard for it.

Three days later.

Chu Kuangren had simply refined the Timespace Treasure, and just like the Tome of Physiques, this thing had penetrated into the depths of his soul.

After refining the item, he gained some of the Timespace Treasure's abilities.

Timespace Treasure, as the name suggested, was a treasure that harnessed the power of time and space. This timespace energy was one of the most mysterious powers in this vast universe and was almost comparable to soul energy.

The first ability was Time Lock!

Judging by the name itself, one could tell how overpowered this ability was.

Of course, this ability was not without any limitations as it could only freeze time within a certain range, and the effect was situation-dependent.

The second ability was Spatial Transfer!

It could grant one the ability to transfer things from one space to another.

This ability was a little awkward for Chu Kuangren because it overlapped with his Spatial Conveyor Skill.

However, after some research, he found that this skill was not completely useless as it could be used in combination with his Spatial Conveyor Skill, making the skill handier.

At the same time, the skill could also become stronger in power.

In general, the abilities that the Timespace Treasure had shown in these early stages were already benefiting Chu Kuangren greatly.

If he continued extensive research on it, the benefits that this prize could give him would be even greater.

"As expected of a Transcendent-grade prize. Everything about it is so surprising." Chu Kuangren smiled with satisfaction.

He then walked out of the battleship's room and came to the battleship's living room.

Here, he met Shang Honghua.

She was sitting on the soft leather chair with a book in her hand, reading attentively.

Seemingly having noticed Chu Kuangren's arrival, Shang Honghua glanced at him. However, she ignored him after that and continued reading her book.

Chu Kuangren felt a little curious.

According to Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade, Shang Honghua spent almost all of her time on cultivation, expeditions, and battling in order to avenge her parents, leaving little to no time left for other things. In that case, how could she find the time to read a book?

"What book are you reading, Commodore Junior?"

Shang Honghua hesitated for a while, pondering whether to answer Chu Kuangren. In the end, she said calmly, "The Legend of the Human King."

"Legend of the Human King? It's about the Human King."

"Yes."

Chu Kuangren became even more intrigued. "I've heard things about the Human King from a few senior elders, but I never knew someone actually wrote a book about him. Are you very interested in his fables, Commodore Junior?"

"There is no human who isn't fascinated with the Human King. He was a great king. Without him, the human race would still be under the gods' ruling and live life in captivity. He was the first and only one in human history worthy enough to be called the king of humans."

A look of admiration shone through Shang Honghua's eyes.

Chapter 709: First Encounter with the Blood Tribe, First Attempt at Freezing Time

Speaking about the Human King, there was a sense of reverence in Shang Honghua's eyes.

However, the Redshirt guards around were not surprised. Over the years, they had long known that the Human King was Shang Honghua's idol.

After all, Shang Honghua's parents had told her stories about the Human King since she was a child, so she grew up listening to those stories.

In her mind, the Human King had already been deified.

Boom!

Just then, the warship shook violently.

Shang Honghua looked solemn. "What's happening?"

"Commodore Junior, the warship was just struck by an energy attack. Judging from the strength of the energy, it came from... the Blood Tribe!"

Baili Quan said coldly.

Upon hearing this, Shang Honghua's expression turned cold. "Turn on the screen."

A light screen then appeared in front of everyone.

The light screen showed several crimson warships in front of the warship that Shang Honghua and the others were on. The surfaces of these warships were also engraved with various weird patterns, which converged into a totem.

"Oh, this is the warship of the Blood Beast Tribe."

Shang Honghua sneered. The Blood Tribe could be divided into several types — ordinary Blood Tribe people, Blood Beasts, Blood Spirits, and so on.

Now, judging from its appearance, the warship in front of Stronghold Seventeen was undoubtedly the Blood Beast Tribe's warship.

On that Blood Beast warship were several Blood Beasts with a face full of black fur, sharp teeth and claws, and blood-red eyes. They were all staring at the stronghold's warship.

One of them was holding a spear in his hand, and his body emanated with powerful energy fluctuations. Then, he shot out a blood-colored energy attack, which struck hard onto the stronghold's warship.

The stronghold's warship quivered, slowed to a halt, and stopped in the middle of the universe. At that, the Blood Beasts on the opposite side burst into laughter and danced in joy on the deck.

"They look pretty happy."

Shang Honghua sneered before she turned and walked out of the hall.

Chu Kuangren watched for a while and followed curiously. After all, this was his first encounter with the Blood Tribe. Who could blame him for being a little curious?

On the deck of the warship.

Several hundreds of Redshirt guards were ready to embark on their battle.

They looked at the enemy warship not far away coldly, hostility filling their eyes.

"Open the barrier."

Shang Honghua said gently.

An opening was seen opening up in the barrier outside the warship.

Immediately afterward, Shang Honghua's figure flashed. She rushed out of the warship barrier and dashed toward the Blood Beast warship in the vicinity.

"Oh? It's pretty bold of her to charge out just like that."

Chu Kuangren shook his head and smiled.

His figure also turned into a flash as he dashed out of the warship.

While the two of them drifted in space, Shang Honghua locked down on one of the warships. Then, she lifted her majestic spear up high and jabbed it at the warship.

The majestic spear was extremely domineering, emitting Daoist patterns and Emperor qi.

In a blast, the mixture of spiritual currents in the universe instantly exploded!

Waves of rough air currents swept out.

Meanwhile, the shield on the Blood Beast warship also began to crack, inch by inch.

"It's an Emperor-level elite!"

"I can't believe there are Emperor-level elites on this warship."

“Keep your heads up everyone...”

The cultivators of the Blood Beasts plunged into a state of chaos.

One of their own Emperors looked at Shang Honghua grimly with a red spear high in his hand.

Shang Honghua unleashed another attack at the enemies.

Immediately, the barrier on the warship crumbled!

Shang Honghua rushed into the warship and began her rampage on the Blood Beasts. With the spear in her hand, each Blood Beast was easily pulverized and killed.

Only very few Emperors could withstand a few moves with her. However, even the Emperors amongst the Blood Beast Tribe with the highest combat strength were only at the Expert level.

Compared with Shang Honghua’s Perfected level, they were so much worse.

Seeing how his compatriot was murdering lives left, right, and center, Chu Kuangren determined that there was no longer any danger and proceeded to turn his attention away. Just then, a surge of bloody energy hit him.

Chu Kuangren did not even take a second glance at it. He simply struck out a punch and dissipated the bloody energy before locking his eyes on the other warship.

On that warship, one of the Blood Beasts was looking at Chu Kuangren in horror. The spear in his hand was trembling.

He had already used up his maximum strength in that blow earlier.

Despite that, his hit was dropped by Chu Kuangren so effortlessly!

The gap was just too big.

“Go and escape while you can!”

The Blood Beast hurriedly shouted.

The warship was seen turning around, trying to escape. Yet, at this moment, Chu Kuangren had already arrived above the warship and stepped onto its deck.

With an abrupt boom, the warship shook fiercely, the barrier collapsed, and the light patterns covering the entire warship shattered all because of this one step.

Chu Kuangren had arrived on the warship.

A Blood Beast came to him with a weapon, but before it could get close, an invisible force had already crushed it into a blood mist.

Chu Kuangren glanced over at the other Blood Beasts. From these beings, he felt an energy that was different from anything on Firmament Star.

“Lil Ai, analyze it.”

“Omniscient Spirit activated. Connecting to the universe’s consciousness... Connection established. Analyzing target... The Blood Beast Tribe, a race of the Blood Tribe. They come from an advanced life planet called Blood Origin Star...”

A paragraph of information about the Blood Beast Tribe appeared in the mind of Chu Kuangren, giving him a preliminary understanding of the Blood Tribe.

“Kill!”

While Chu Kuangren was analyzing these Blood Beasts, these Blood Beasts launched a brutal barrage of attacks on him.

Of course, these attacks were not effective on him.

His mind power flickered.

Veils of blood mists began bursting open on the battlefield.

“Dark blood energy!”

At this moment, a Blood Beast Emperor roared.

Bloody mists erupted from the dead bodies of those fallen Blood Beasts and gushed frantically toward the Blood Beast Emperor.

With that, the strength of this Blood Beast Emperor started rising steadily.

“Dark blood energy grants the ability to absorb blood from the same race to strengthen one’s own power. Is this the Blood Tribe’s unique divine ability?”

Chu Kuangren had a fascinated look on his face.

In the long battle against the Blood Tribe, this divine ability of the Blood Tribe had made the cultivators of Firmament Star suffer a lot.

Fortunately, this divine ability could only be used by some of the Blood Tribe members with a more prestigious bloodline. Otherwise, the condition in Firmament Star would be more perilous.

The Blood Beast Emperor, who had absorbed the Blood Source Power of the same race, unleashed an even greater power and thrust a spear towards Chu Kuangren.

There was a bloody storm hovering on the spear, which made it extremely powerful.

Nonetheless, Chu Kuangren stretched out his finger and gently tapped on the void.

“Time Lock!”

A strange energy wave arose, and the time within a ten-meter radius of Chu Kuangren suddenly stopped flowing.

Everything became still, and nothing changed.

The same went for that Blood Beast Emperor.

The spear in his hand had frozen in mid-air, and there were no longer any changes on his vicious face. Similarly, his fiery Emperor qi had become still.

Everything was like a painting, frozen in mid-air.

This scene made the Redshirt guards on the warship narrow their eyes in fear. They were all extremely horrified by what they just witnessed. Shocked, Baili Quan exclaimed, "What ability is this?"

"What is this weird feeling that is making me feel out of sync with the rest of time and space? Is this some sort of domain ability?"

"No, it's not. This is way more bizarre."

At this moment, Chu Kuangren was silently timing the clock.

"One second, two seconds..."

While he was counting the seconds, he had already arrived behind the Blood Beast Emperor. After two seconds, the lapse of time returned to normal!

Boom!

The Blood Beast Emperor's spear slammed onto the warship.

There was no figure nor soul in front of him.

He suddenly felt his scalp tingling. As if he was enveloped in some kind of great terror, his whole body trembled incessantly.

"What the hell just happened?!"

Although his consciousness stopped working when the time was suspended, he was still an Emperor. Hence, he could sense something was wrong once he recovered, and it almost scared him shitless.

Unparalleled After Ten Consecutive Draws

Chapter 710: You Killed Yourself, Combat Merit, Battle Leaderboard

"Two seconds!"

"I can pause time in a radius of ten meters, and even if it's a Perfected Emperor, I can still freeze time for two seconds."

"If I have a higher cultivation base, the time could be shortened accordingly. If I encounter a Heavenly Imperial, they might only be frozen for one-tenth of a second."

One second, two seconds, one-tenth of a second...

These did not seem like much of a difference.

However, to an elite like Chu Kuangren, one-tenth of a second was enough to do a lot of things, let alone kill.

This Time Lock ability would become a great weapon for Chu Kuangren. He would be invincible against opponents under the Daoist Celestial Realm within ten meters!

"But it takes quite a lot of effort, and it's not easy to use it continuously during group battles," Chu Kuangren murmured.

Even so, the ability to pause time still had an unimaginably terrifying power. The timespace ability was absolutely incredible.

"What did you do?!"

The Blood Beast Emperor was still in shock.

He still had not realized that he had lost two seconds of time. He just knew he had experienced some kind of great horror just now.

"It's just a little time gimmick."

Chu Kuangren was in a good mood, so he gave a rare explanation.

Anyway, his opponent was already dead to him.

"Time gimmick... You know time techniques! H-how is this possible?!" The Blood Beast Emperor's face was filled with disbelief.

It was public knowledge that mastering time techniques were extremely difficult, and no one in the entire Blood Tribe had heard of anyone who could do that.

Yet now, a mere human of Firmament Star has mastered time techniques!

"D*mn it. Go to hell!"

After experiencing the initial shock, the Blood Beast Emperor roared in fury. Then, he hurled the spear in his hand toward Chu Kuangren, piercing it directly into his opponent's body.

Success!

The Blood Beast Emperor was overjoyed.

However, he then noticed something wrong.

He looked down, and unknowingly, a bloody spear was pierced through his heart. He could not be more familiar with the spear as it was the same weapon he had carried for many years!

Now, this weapon had stabbed him!

"What... what's going on?!"

The Blood Beast Emperor looked puzzled.

He was very sure that he had pierced the spear into the chest of the human before him, yet why was it in his body?

"Feeling surprised?"

Chu Kuangren moved back a couple of steps.

There were no injuries on his body, and in the space where the Blood Beast Emperor's spear pierced into was actually the void in front of him!

The Blood Beast Emperor slowly drew his spear from the void, and the spear in his chest gradually pulled out of his body as well.

"Spatial ability!"

The Blood Beast Emperor seemed to have understood something as he stared daggers into Chu Kuangren's eyes. Not only did his opponent have time abilities but also spatial abilities!

What kind of freak was this guy?

"You're pretty observant." Chu Kuangren nodded a little.

"How on earth did you do it?"

"It's very simple. I put a space transportation channel in front of my chest and then set a connection port behind you. When the spear pierces into the transportation channel in front of me, it comes out from the connection port behind you. This means that... you just killed yourself!"

Chu Kuangren flashed him a gentle smile. This trick was created through the courtesy of his Spatial Conveyor Skill combined with the Spatial Transfer ability of his Timespace Treasure.

It could be realized by the Spatial Conveyor Skill alone as well.

However, it would not be as easy as he just did.

"I killed myself?!"

The Blood Beast Emperor was baffled.

How was that even possible?!

"First, time, and then space... Who the h*ck are you?!"

The Blood Beast Emperor came back to his senses and looked at Chu Kuangren in disbelief, questioning. It was the first time in his life he encountered such a strange cultivator.

"Heh, I'm just an ordinary human cultivator."

Chu Kuangren smiled faintly.

'Ordinary?'

'You call this ordinary?!'

The Blood Beast Emperor almost vomited blood.

"Today's my first time using this Timespace ability and also my first time seeing the Blood Tribe. I was a little excited, so I think I went a little overboard today."

Chu Kuangren laughed.

Then, he pointed out a finger.

Sword qi that lingered at his fingertip penetrated the Blood Beast Emperor's heart. As his Emperor qi surged, the opponent's life functions were completely cut off!

He retained this Blood Beast Emperor's body to the greatest extent.

That was because he still wanted to take it back and study the physique of the Blood Tribe. Perhaps then, he could come up with some methods to deal with the Blood Tribe.

Not far away, Shang Honghua had already wiped out the Blood Beasts in all the remaining warships. She glanced at Chu Kuangren. "You're stronger than me. But why did you take so long to kill a cultivator on one ship?!"

"I was a little too playful and wasted a little time."

Chu Kuangren smiled.

The Redshirt guards who had witnessed how Chu Kuangren slew the Blood Beast Emperor could not help but shudder in fear.

Was he not toying with his victim earlier?

The Blood Beast Emperor did not have any power to fight back against Chu Kuangren at all and was played like a fiddle.

Wait a minute...

What did the Commodore Junior just say?

All of a sudden, everyone came to their senses, thinking of what Shang Honghua said just now. 'Did she say that Chu Kuangren is stronger than her?'

'My goodness. That aggressive and competitive Commodore Junior has willingly admitted that there are others better than her!'

'That is so rare!'

For a while, the eyes of the Redshirt guards moved back and forth between Shang Honghua and Chu Kuangren. They looked somewhat intrigued.

"Truth be told, this little brother and our commodore junior are quite a match."

"They really are."

Shang Honghua listened to the whispers of the Redshirt guards next to her, and her face darkened.

"What are you guys still standing there for? Go and clean up the battlefield!"

"Aye aye!"

The Redshirt guards shut their respective mouths and went to clear the battlefield.

After a while, the useful things on the several Blood Beast warships had been emptied. Even the corpses were not spared.

Chu Kuangren shuddered and looked at the few Redshirt guards not far away from him who were beating the corpses. He asked curiously, "What are they doing?"

"Collecting combat merits."

Baili Xue smiled.

"Combat merit?"

"Yes. The fangs of the Blood Beasts, the blood spirit core of the Blood Spirit Tribe, the wing bones of the ordinary Blood Tribe member are all combat merits," Baili Xue said.

Chu Kuangren pondered.

In a stronghold, the status of a soldier could be seen through combat merits, which naturally, derived from combat.

The more Blood Tribe members they killed, the more combat merits they would gain!

Those things that Bai Lixue mentioned were proof of combat merits.

It could prove that one had killed beings from the Blood Tribe.

"One Honorable equates to one combat merit, and one Sage, ten combat merits. Meanwhile, one Emperor equates to a thousand combat merits!"

"The higher the combat merits, the more respected your status in the stronghold. If you can get yourself on the battle leaderboard, you'll be awarded a medal, and you get to enjoy various special treatments in the stronghold. Our Commodore Junior is ranked twenty-seventh on the Stronghold Seventeen battle leaderboard," Baili Xue explained with a smile.

"How much combat merit does it take for one to be placed on the battle leaderboard?"

Chu Kuangren asked curiously.

"At least one hundred thousand combat merits, I reckon."

"How many combat merits does the Commodore Junior have now?"

"Let me think. The last time she registered, the count was three million and a hundred eighty thousand combat merits." Baili Xue thought for a while and then said.

Chu Kuangren was stunned.

Three million and a hundred eighty thousand combat merits... How many beings from the Blood Tribe did she kill to get there?

No wonder Heavenly Imperial Ghostblade said Shang Honghua's cultivation methods were too radical. From this amount of combat merits alone, he could tell that she had spent the past few years in carnage, and it was a miracle that she still had her sanity.