

Apocalypse 1796

Chapter 1796: Join

"In the image was a planet—one Ye Zhongming couldn't describe, for it bore no resemblance to Earth. Nor was it azure-blue. Instead, it was a monochrome expanse of ashen gray-white."

This color, whether to Earthlings or the Ten Thousand Races of the cosmos, symbolized ruin, decay, desolation...

Ye Zhongming didn't understand. They'd spoken of the Slave Race, so why show him a planet?

Was this the Slave Races' homeworld?

Or their stronghold?

"This was once a vibrant planet. From birth to now, only 150 million cosmic years have passed."

Ye Zhongming wasn't sure of the conversion rate between cosmic years and Earth years, but based on hints from Aslan's teachings, he estimated a 3-4x ratio. Even at 5x Earth years, that meant less than a billion years—astonishingly young compared to Earth's 4-5 billion.

"This... was its former state."

The projection shifted. The planet now pulsed with vitality, its surface a seething, vivid crimson that radiated life even from space.

Ye Zhongming nodded. The stark contrast etched into him the cataclysm that must have occurred.

"The cause... was the Slave Race."

The projection changed again. The same planet, but now encased in a cage.

No—not quite.

Ye Zhongming leaned forward (unnecessary, given the hologram's clarity, but instinctive). What wrapped the planet wasn't metal bars, but a fleshy, lattice-like structure resembling a cricket cage—or perhaps a birdcage, given its spherical form.

Through the gaps, the planet's light dimmed visibly.

"Watch from the beginning."

Jikesu wanted this seared into Ye Zhongming's mind.

The scene reset to the planet's vibrant state. Then, from cosmic depths, what seemed like a slow-moving, flesh-toned "cloth" approached.

This time, Ye Zhongming saw it clearly: no mere fabric, but an irregular, pulsing mass of living tissue—a skin-like entity.

It reached the planet, morphed into the cage structure, and began to breathe.

With each expansion-contraction cycle, the planet's vitality waned. Ye Zhongming spotted flares erupting and vanishing—likely volcanic eruptions or continent-scale wildfires.

"One-million-fold acceleration."

Ye Zhongming's blood ran cold. He shut his eyes.

He understood. The 5-minute timelapse he'd just witnessed? In reality, this process took over nine Earth years.

Nine years to strangle a world.

Humanity had ravaged Earth for millennia with billions of participants—yet failed to "kill" it. This Slave Race had achieved it in less than a decade.

The horror was visceral. Imagine such a creature descending upon your world, condemning all life to a countdown measured in years...

Was this the Slave Race?

But... what was it?

"Countless lifeforms exist in the cosmos—so many none can tally them all," Jikesu said quietly. "That some are powerful and aberrant isn't surprising. If the Slave Race—these skin-like, planet-devouring entities—represent destruction's dark aspect, then the Wheel-makers, the so-called 'gods,' embody light and life."

Ye Zhongming opened his mouth to protest, but Jikesu continued:

"I know your objection. Yes, the Wheel-makers' methods are brutal. Their 'selection' is merciless. But compared to these planet-eating abominations?"

Even Ye Zhongming had to concede. Once, he'd despised the Wheels as the root of all suffering. Now, from this vantage, they seemed almost... salvific.

Perhaps "gods" wasn't entirely inappropriate.

"Earth—" Ye Zhongming's breath hitched. "Is it also—?"

The old man nodded. With a tap, the projection changed.

There was Earth.

And wrapped around it—a Slave Race.

Ye Zhongming's vision tinged red. The apocalypse had lasted seven years. If Earth's size were comparable to that dead planet, did that mean only two years remained?

Wait—no. In his past life, he'd survived ten years without planetary collapse. No catastrophic environmental shifts either.

There had to be mitigating factors.

Jikesu confirmed:

"Your homeworld won't perish so quickly. Two reasons."

"But before explaining... I require your agreement."

The old man's tone was polite, but the ultimatum was clear.

Ye Zhongming gestured for him to proceed.

"You are a warrior selected by the Star-Eye Clan, tested and proven. Whatever comes, we ask you to stand with us—even become one of us."

Ye Zhongming exhaled. This was expected. The Wheels recruited soldiers; cooperation was the price of knowledge.

He was grateful, at least, they hadn't outright enslaved him.

"On the condition it harms neither me nor those under my protection... I agree."

Jikesu smiled—genuinely, for the first time—and extended a fist.

"Then welcome... Rookie Ye Zhongming."

Chapter 1797: Competition

"Let's talk as we walk. This way, perhaps you can better understand what I'm saying."

Jikesu was clearly excited by Ye Zhongming's agreement. Given his status, personally recruiting a piece of trash was already unprecedented, and now he was even going to give Ye Zhongming a tour of headquarters.

As one of the most important figures in the Star-Eye Clan, the old man's office was predictably secure and luxurious. Though the final answer wasn't yet known, it was within reach, which put Ye Zhongming at ease and allowed him to focus on the room he was about to leave.

A sense of advanced technology—that was Ye Zhongming's only impression.

Everywhere were structures and devices he'd never seen before, giving the feeling of technology far beyond Earth's current capabilities.

Earlier, Jikesu had mentioned that it was those who controlled the wheel who brought the myriad spacefaring races into the cosmos. Did that mean this technology also originated from the wheel?

If so, if Earth were to gain the status of a spacefaring race, would it also possess such capabilities in the future?

The answer was unknown, but Ye Zhongming felt a thrill of anticipation.

At the door, Jikesu took two metal-textured spheres from an exquisitely designed recess beside the doorway, handed one to Ye Zhongming, and kept the other.

"Press the intersection of the patterns on it and inject a small amount of energy."

Ye Zhongming did as the old man instructed. The sphere instantly transformed. Under Jikesu's steady gaze, he resisted the urge to move as the sphere turned into flowing liquid metal, quickly enveloping everything below Ye Zhongming's knees, including his feet.

This was...?

Seeing Ye Zhongming's confusion, Jikesu laughed heartily, though not unpleasantly.

"This is an auxiliary mobility pod. Try it—you'll get used to it quickly."

The old man activated his own sphere, which likewise turned into liquid metal. Once fully encased, a faint palm-sized light screen projected from it. After tapping a few times, the so-called auxiliary mobility pod emitted an extremely faint vibration and carried the old man forward, quickly accelerating to at least 40 or 50 kilometers per hour.

It couldn't compare to an evolved human's full-speed sprint, but it was far more effortless. The light screen allowed adjustments to speed and elevation, indicating that this device wasn't just for use in modernized headquarters but also in outdoor terrain, with a maximum height of over 100 meters and a top speed exceeding 300 kilometers per hour.

On par with a high-speed train! Ye Zhongming marveled inwardly.

Beyond that, the auxiliary mobility pod had built-in navigation. Once a destination was selected, it could move autonomously toward the target. During this time, the user could utilize other functions, such as note-taking, watching programs, working, or even resting.

The two of them hovered about a dozen centimeters above the ground, moving through this underground palace.

"The reason I said not to rush is that your home planet's situation is somewhat unique—though not singular, as certain planets occasionally encounter this scenario."

Under Jikesu's control, the auxiliary mobility pod projected a light screen in front of them. Ye Zhongming noticed that this screen not only facilitated operation but also blocked wind resistance during movement.

"Do you notice anything?" Jikesu asked.

The Cloud Peak King was no longer as agitated as before. With a calmer mind, he observed that the Slave Race enveloping Earth seemed... weak?

Earlier, Jikesu had shown Ye Zhongming an example where the Slave Race's "bars" were extremely thick—so much so that a planet of that size was fully enclosed by no more than twenty of them. If that planet were the size of Earth, each bar would be as wide as half of China.

But this Slave Race was thin, densely packed with what must have been hundreds of bars, allowing Earth's general outline to remain visible from the outside.

Ye Zhongming wasn't sure if it was his imagination, but his home planet seemed somewhat dim.

"This is a juvenile Slave Race."

Ye Zhongming suddenly felt a sense of luck.

"Generally, the Slave Race assigns younger members to feed on planets with fewer resources and smaller areas."

At these words, Ye Zhongming's expression darkened slightly.

Earth, it seemed, occupied a rather lowly position in the cosmos.

"Heh, don't be disheartened. In times like these, it might well be a blessing."

Ye Zhongming stared at the so-called juvenile Slave Race surrounding Earth and found himself at a loss for words.

"This is the command center of the Silver Mask Warriors, belonging to a madman. You should meet him sometime—he's quite an interesting character."

Passing by a certain area, Jikesu pointed at a large building.

"Juvenile Slave Races are still in the stage of cultivating 'parasites.' While their own energy absorption isn't very fast, they also treat their targets as breeding grounds. This process varies in length, depending mainly on the Slave Race's innate talent. Heh, even these monsters have talent."

Jikesu gave a cold laugh before continuing. "The longer cases might take over a hundred cosmic years, while the shorter ones take decades. Based on our calculations, the one around your home planet will need about forty-seven cosmic years to complete its 'parasite' cultivation before finally draining the planet into a dead star."

"Parasites?" Ye Zhongming didn't quite understand the term.

Not the literal meaning, but what it signified.

"Mhm, parasites. At least half of the Slave Race's terror comes from these disgusting things." Jikesu shook his head. "I'll explain them later—I'll take you to see them. We have specimens here. First, let me explain another reason you didn't sense anything unusual while on your home planet: the wheel."

"The Slave Races wander the cosmos. They have no home planet—or if they do, we don't know." As the two spoke, they had already reached the exterior of the headquarters. The old man intermittently inserted introductions into their conversation to help Ye Zhongming quickly familiarize himself with the Star-Eye Clan.

"The gods who control the wheel seem to know their travel routes in advance. They seek out life-bearing planets along the way that meet the Slave Races' feeding criteria and manifest there, using extreme methods to cultivate warriors and rapidly strengthen them. When the Slave Race arrives, these warriors become the force that resists the parasites spawned by the Slave Race. Of course, the parasites are never fully eradicated—at least, we've never seen a planet achieve that. They can only be depleted, delaying their proliferation and growth in strength."

"Yes, just as you're imagining, the Slave Race absorbs a planet's energy through its parasites. The more numerous and powerful the parasites, the faster the Slave Race absorbs energy—and vice versa."

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"In the universe, planets are as numerous as the cells in a higher lifeform's body. No one knows exactly how many there are, but those capable of producing life—especially intelligent life—are actually quite rare."

"Within a single star sector, even the smaller ones might only have a few such planets. And how big is a small star sector? Let me put it this way: even with the most advanced and fastest spaceship currently available, crossing the smallest star sector would still take several cosmic years."

Jikesu arrived at a slightly more brightly colored building within the headquarters. He swiped his wrist across a wall, causing it to become translucent, revealing a rather cozy lounge inside.

"Don't be surprised. Although the Star-Eye Clan are assassins, killers, and raiders, we can't always remain in that state. Without change, we'd go insane."

Jikesu—through some unknown method—swiped a few more times at a spot in the room, and soon two hot beverages appeared before them.

Ye Zhongming took a tentative sip, and his eyes lit up.

"The universe is full of inexplicable yet ever-present energies and radiation. This drink helps the body resist them."

The two sat facing each other. Occasionally, others would enter the lounge to have a drink or snack. Whenever they saw Jikesu, they would bow respectfully—this Chief Technology Officer held immense prestige within the clan.

Naturally, this also drew more attention to Ye Zhongming, who was sitting with such an important figure. When they noticed he was wearing the garb of a trash novice, many couldn't hide their surprise.

Ye Zhongming cooperatively kept the old man company in conversation. Though Jikesu frequently digressed from the main topic, Ye Zhongming understood this was just his way of fostering a sense of belonging to the Star-Eye Clan and helping him adjust.

"The Slave Race actually moves quite quickly through space—though not absolutely fast. So when it searches for life-bearing planets, its path is somewhat predictable. The gods controlling the wheel arrive one step ahead, making the wheel appear on planets along the Slave Race's trajectory to 'prepare the field' in advance."

"Special drugs will descend upon the planet, screening its lifeforms. Then, using the various items provided by the wheel, they evolve and grow stronger, becoming elite warriors."

Jikesu stretched and drained his drink in one gulp.

"These warriors naturally fight against other lifeforms on their home planet that have also grown powerful due to the drugs, as well as face the parasites scattered by the arriving Slave Race."

"Originally, these parasites had no natural predators. They would run rampant across the planet chosen by the Slave Race, with slaughter and plunder as their only instincts. In such circumstances, the Slave Race grows extremely quickly. Basically, from birth, after wandering space for a time to find a suitable feeding planet, they can reach adulthood in a very short period, then continue drifting through the cosmos, feeding endlessly."

"The warriors created by the wheel, even if unaware of what these parasites truly are, will instinctively resist them. This effectively checks the parasites' numbers and prevents them from growing too powerful too easily."

"With losses balancing gains, your home planet has shown no abnormalities so far."

Ye Zhongming breathed a sigh of relief—the facts aligned with his suspicions.

The Slave Race and the godly race controlling the wheel were locked in this perpetual struggle across various planets, vying for ultimate victory.

"Still, don't relax too much. Though your home planet remains in decent shape for now, those parasites can't be completely eradicated. Even if the first batch dies off for various reasons, a second will emerge. They continue living on your planet, constantly absorbing nutrients. Once they grow powerful enough that none can stop them, that will be the planet's true doomsday."

These words sent a chill down Ye Zhongming's spine. His earlier intuition hadn't been wrong—Earth did seem somewhat dim. Those parasites must have already drained a significant amount of its energy.

Had he not considered this, he might not have noticed anything amiss. But once aware, Ye Zhongming began recalling many things.

Like certain geological changes, or weather anomalies that were once occasional but had become persistent climate patterns...

These were likely all symptoms of Earth losing energy.

"Now that we know all this, the Slave Race shouldn't be too hard to defeat, right?"

Ye Zhongming voiced his question.

This wasn't entirely unreasonable. On Earth, he was accustomed to victory. With Chaameleon, his intelligence network was exceptional. When you understood an enemy this thoroughly, defeating them shouldn't be impossible—at the very least, there should be multiple strategic options.

Which was why Ye Zhongming was stunned when Jikesu, this high-ranking Star-Eye Clan leader, shook his head!

"It's nowhere near that easy!" Jikesu practically sighed.

He pulled up an image of Earth and said gravely, "First, don't let the Slave Race's flabby appearance fool you—they're terrifying creatures. This area is already sizable, but do you see? The surroundings are completely clean, no spacecraft whatsoever. Why? Because they'd be attacked. These damned things seem completely unbound by cosmic laws, striking swiftly and viciously. To this day, no spacecraft or airborne lifeform has withstood even a single lash from them."

The old man grew agitated, miming a whipping motion, then switched the display to show another Slave Race attacking a spacecraft.

The video lasted barely ten seconds, but left Ye Zhongming drenched in cold sweat.

One thing in the footage was familiar to him—a golden battleship!

The same type of craft that had appeared in Earth's skies on the apocalypse's first day also offered as rewards on some level-nine wheels.

A battleship capable of space travel—its value was self-evident.

Now, knowing about the Slave Race and the godly race, Ye Zhongming could guess these golden battleships were likely the vessels that delivered those "drugs."

In the video, one such powerful ship was traveling at full speed through space when a whip-like appendage suddenly struck, blowing it to pieces.

Only after slowing the playback and displaying a full map of the incident's location did Ye Zhongming realize—the attacking Slave Race had been 310,000 kilometers away! Yet from attack initiation to impact, it took only three minutes and twenty-two seconds to cross that distance.

Traversing nearly the Earth-Moon distance in barely a minute...

That was horrifying. No wonder Jikesu said the Slave Race defied cosmic laws.

"We don't know the exact attack range limits of juvenile versus mature Slave Races, because testing it is too costly—we can't afford it. But one thing is certain: our current spacecraft cannot harm them while within their attack range!"

Chapter 1799: Competition (3)

Jikesu's eyes were slightly wider than usual. Clearly, even though he had long known all this, speaking of it again still caused significant emotional fluctuation.

To be honest, Ye Zhongming didn't quite understand this reaction. Even on Earth, there were powerful lifeforms with unbelievable abilities. Like that Sky Tree in his previous life, that covered an entire city - even level nine lifeforms dared not enter its territory.

Even now, Ye Zhongming still didn't understand why that tree was so powerful. He could only guess it might have been a top-tier psychic lifeform, but whether that was actually true, he truly didn't know.

Since they had some understanding, why show such fear? If they couldn't attack the Slave Race, couldn't they just stay far away? Let the wheel makers fight them over planet after planet!

Moreover, the spacefaring races clearly could support planets invaded by the Slave Race through various means, greatly increasing their chances of success.

To put it bluntly - just outlast them. Kill all their parasites, eliminate every batch that appears, and eventually starve the Slave Race to death.

In the beginning, perhaps many cosmic years ago, when the Slave Race first appeared, life in the universe might have been helpless against them, watching as they drained planet after planet. But over time, with the appearance of the wheel, this situation should have eased or even improved.

Yet... Ye Zhongming recalled what Jikesu had said earlier - this artificial fortress was called... Survivor No. 5.

An ominous premonition rose in his heart.

The old man had mentioned there were seven such artificial fortresses...

"So all hope can only rest on the wheel." Jikesu leaned back limply in his chair, turning off the uncomfortable light screen before saying slowly: "The wheel has its rules. What are rules? They're about finding the Slave Race's weaknesses and exploiting them - that's what we call rules."

"Then what are these rules?" Jikesu said with some sarcasm: "Using special technology to project the will of spacefaring races through spokespeople systems onto the Slave Race's target planets, allowing earlier preparation. Secretly giving some things to these proxies as rewards. Yet keeping themselves far away, afraid of being discovered and attacked to death by the Slave Race."

"And then leaving everything to fate."

Jikesu said this last sentence very gloomily, which Ye Zhongming didn't quite understand.

"We can know the Slave Race's path in advance, make preparations early, giving life on target planets time to respond. We can even deliver some things to these target planets. To use a saying from our home planet, we have favorable timing, geographical convenience, and human harmony. So why are you so despondent?"

Jikesu smiled, though it was still a bitter smile, with a trace of relief.

He was pleased that Ye Zhongming had used the word "we."

"Despondent? If you knew that in all our battles against the Slave Race we've never won, only delayed the destruction of target planets, wouldn't you be despondent?"

"Despondent? If you knew finding proxies and delivering supplies consumes massive energy at great cost, wouldn't you be despondent?"

"Despondent? If you knew your home planet would eventually be destroyed, no matter how hard you try to stop it, wouldn't you be despondent?"

Ye Zhongming's mouth opened slightly, his eyes wide.

It had been a long time since he'd been so shocked. Back in the country, nothing had really been worth such surprise.

Favorable timing, geographical convenience, and human harmony - yet not a single victory?

With spokespeople and supplies delivered, they couldn't even save one planet?

What kind of nonsense was this?

"I know you can't understand, but these are the facts."

Jikesu stood up, signaling Ye Zhongming to follow him.

"Come, I'll show you the parasites, and then show you what resources the spacefaring races are competing over internally."

The two reactivated their auxiliary mobility pods and, after entering headquarters, traveled for over ten minutes before reaching a downward passage leading to lower levels.

Originally, Ye Zhongming hadn't seen any guards in this headquarters. But starting from the entrance of this downward passage all the way to the door of a massive structure, guards wearing masks were everywhere - mostly silver-masked, with gold-masked warriors at key positions.

Finally, Ye Zhongming entered this building and was shocked again.

It was extraordinarily large, completely hollow inside, forming a gigantic space where people appeared minuscule, walking on the ground.

The walls and floor were made of artistically crafted unknown materials, with many operation platforms and rest areas designed throughout.

But what shocked Ye Zhongming most wasn't these things, impressive as they were, but rather the countless giant bubbles floating in the upper part of the massive space when he looked up.

They weren't actually bubbles, but Ye Zhongming didn't know what else to call them.

Through these transparent "bubbles," Ye Zhongming could see layers of silvery-gray material inside.

"These..."

Jikesu nodded: "These are the Slave Race's parasites."

Approaching an operation platform, Jikesu summoned a light screen. While operating it, he said to Ye Zhongming, "Over the years, our Star-Eye Clan has collected over 400 types of Slave Race parasites. For 90% of them, we've identified their characteristics - growth methods, life cycles, reproduction rates, combat styles, etc."

As he spoke, one of the large bubbles slowly descended from above. When it reached near ground level, it gradually moved toward the two of them.

Jikesu had it stop in front of them.

Up close, Ye Zhongming could see more clearly. This bubble wasn't too large, about the size of a normal computer desk, oval-shaped, containing a layer of silvery-gray metal-like substance inside.

Under Jikesu's control, the metal inside the bubble slowly opened, revealing a lifeform.

"This is one type of parasite. We call it Rampant Limb." Jikesu pointed at the lifeform: "Strong, fast, cruel, bloodthirsty, omnivorous, short reproductive cycle - one of the most typical Slave Race parasite types."

Jikesu then had several more bubbles descend, explaining each parasite's characteristics to Ye Zhongming one by one, greatly broadening his horizons and opening a door to understanding the Slave Race.

One type Ye Zhongming recognized - those green-skinned monsters. Coincidentally, the Star-Eye Clan called them by nearly the same name.

"The types of parasites are too numerous. Our Star-Eye Clan has only mastered knowledge of a few. Other major clans may know more, but still not all."

"And these metals encasing them are the resources the spacefaring races compete over - Moonspan Gold!"

Chapter 1800: Moonspan Gold and Star-eye Clan's determination

Moonspan Gold?

Ye Zhongming moved closer to examine this metal carefully.

Well, it should be metal, right?

At least visually, it did appear to be a kind of living metal.

The reason for saying this was because the metal wasn't completely static - it swayed slightly like aquatic plants in water.

The movement was extremely subtle, perhaps invisible to ordinary human eyes, but as a level nine evolved, Ye Zhongming could still detect it.

Looking more carefully, he saw the metal wasn't in blocks or strips, but took the form of sharp-tipped cylindrical shapes, like countless miniature sharpened pencils.

"This is a miraculous metal. Its form is nearly immutable - each strand is an independent unit, which we also use as our measurement standard."

"From machines that connect to Slave Race target planets, to equipment that transports items into planets, even to materials for building survivor fortresses - all require this metal. It's undoubtedly the core component."

Jikesu inserted his hand into a groove on the operation platform, withdrawing it with a delicate mechanical arm attached.

Using this arm, Jikesu carefully extracted a single strand of Moonspan Gold and slowly extended it toward Ye Zhongming.

"Don't touch it directly. While not seriously harmful, contact would cause chemical reactions that affect its purity, and its color would stain your skin - very difficult to wash off."

Ye Zhongming observed carefully, then wrapped his hand in clothing before receiving the Moonspan Gold.

Even through the fabric, he could feel a chilling coldness from the metal.

Why did this thing feel like ice?

As a master craftsman, Ye Zhongming was highly sensitive to materials. He regularly worked with top-grade metals like Ghost Metal and Ocean Drill Metal.

But never had any metal given him this... elusive feeling.

It was as if he weren't holding metal, but something alive.

"Surprised by its liveliness?" Jikesu smiled. "It's something with peak activity levels."

Then Jikesu's tone shifted.

"Moonspan Gold is valuable - the foundation of everything. Its preciousness goes without saying. And you, having passed the trash trial to become a novice, will soon face a major test."

Ye Zhongming tried returning the strand to the main cluster. When within about 15 centimeters, a natural magnetic force pulled it back. After a few adjustments, it realigned perfectly with the rest.

Marvelous! That was all Ye Zhongming could say.

Seeing Ye Zhongming's fascination, Jikesu smiled understandingly - everyone reacted this way when first encountering this miraculous metal.

"What major test?" Ye Zhongming asked.

"The Novice Battlefield," Jikesu answered. "Also called the Tournament of Hope."

The Cloud Peak King felt an urge to scratch his head - this sounded like some frustrating childhood competition.

"Time is short. The details will be explained en route. I'll just say two things."

Jikesu returned all the ground-level bubbles overhead before looking solemnly at Ye Zhongming. "You have one day to memorize all the parasite characteristics we've documented, select your equipment, and then depart. During the journey, besides receiving full explanations about the Novice Battlefield, you'll need to familiarize yourself with your teammates and coordinate with them."

Ye Zhongming looked somewhat helplessly at Jikesu.

Did the Star-Eye Clan always spring things on people like this? Just finished the trial, got bombarded with cosmic knowledge about gods and Slave Races, and now immediate departure? Too rushed!

"The Star-Eye Clan is a minor faction among the spacefaring races, struggling for survival. In fact..."

The old man hesitated before continuing bluntly: "We've reached a life-or-death juncture."

Jikesu looked intently at Ye Zhongming. "Though the spacefaring races are a loose alliance, roughly divided into three factions, one principle remains constant across all: the strong prey on the weak."

Ye Zhongming understood - it was the law of the jungle.

"Because all machines and equipment penetrating the Slave Race's blockade to reach target planets are provided by the wheel-making gods as public resources. Each use requires our own Moonspan Gold. And where does Moonspan Gold come from? Correct - extracted from parasite corpses."

"And where do parasites come from? Killed on target planets. By whom? The warriors there. Who do warriors give the corpses to? Naturally to the spacefaring races who aided them."

"The Star-Eye Clan isn't suited for frontal combat. We lack powerful charge skills, exceptionally resilient bodies equivalent to premium armor, and our numbers are few. These limitations greatly constrain our proxy selection."

It made sense - every lifeform has its specialties. Asking a mountain-like brute race to learn Star-Eye assassination techniques would be foolishly inefficient - high effort, low returns, producing ineffective warriors.

Thus, they could only select suitable lifeforms or individual targets.

"Most Slave Race parasites combine agility and strength, with others possessing special abilities. While we can kill them, the cost is high and success rates low."

"We're trapped in a vicious cycle." Jikesu rubbed his head, clearly vexed by this problem.

Trained warriors unsuited against parasites lead to disproportionate costs and meager returns. Fewer returns mean either quantity or quality must suffer in subsequent training, making parasite combat even harder and returns smaller...

Understanding this cycle gave Ye Zhongming a headache too.

"We need a breakthrough, a hope - like you."

"Your admission ticket was stolen." Jikesu's words slightly embarrassed the Cloud Peak King. "But we discovered your Beautiful Celestial Body aligns perfectly with Star-Eye abilities. In all these cosmic years, you're nearly the most ideal candidate we could imagine."

"So we'll spare no effort supporting you, helping you achieve high rankings in the Novice Battlefield, winning more Moonspan Gold and spokespeople quotas for our clan."

"Ye Zhongming of Earth - can I trust you?"

