

Star Gate 18

Chapter 18: A Maddened Liu Long (II)

“It’s not that they don’t care about people dying.” Liu Long shook his head. “It’s that there’s not enough Night Watchers and they’re scattered all over! There are very few assigned to Silver City and they all have their own duties to carry out. They don’t mobilize unless large scale casualties occur. A few deaths that involve a whiff of something preternatural don’t necessarily draw their attention.”

It was Li Hao’s first time hearing someone mention the Night Watchers in earnest. He couldn’t contain his curiosity and asked lowly, “Are there not that many Night Watchers?”

“Correct!” Liu Long nodded. “There’s not that many. We who maintain public security are just the ordinary people at the Inspectorate! The Night Watchers act only when there are no other options available. And another thing—not all people with supernatural ability join the Night Watchers. The Night Watchers is just one of the larger organizations among them.”

Li Hao thought for a moment. “Chief, are supernatural humans born or made?”

“Both!” Liu Long answered with an assessing look. “Are you interested in this field?”

“No.”

“Lies!” Liu Long snorted. “Everyone yearns for mysterious powers when they first hear of the supernaturals. That’s because they are unaware of the danger and esoterica involved. They just know that supernaturals are unfathomable and invincible! Only when one penetrates deep into their ranks does one understand the perils. One might grow to regret their decision, but everyone’s eyes always shine at first.”

There was nothing Li Hao could do but nod in agreement. Anyone would seek to have magical abilities. He did, too.

“But if you barge in knowing nothing, you’ll more than likely die. And let’s say you end up surviving your brash impulses, your life will be all the more difficult for it.

“It so happens that...” Liu Long chuckled. “I actually know a bit about the Night Watchers. I can give you some pointers if you join the enforcement team.”

“So the chief said this much... just to convince me to join the enforcement team?” Li Hao raised an eyebrow. “I’m only a third rank inspector with one year under my belt. I don’t think I’m so valuable that I deserve to have so much information revealed. You’ve even openly talked about the hidden side of our society just to get me to join!”

“Don’t underestimate yourself!” Liu Long’s gaze turned deep. “It’s not as simple as you think. Or you can also view it as killing with a borrowed hand. Your teacher, Professor Yuan Shuo, is a great backer! Bad practices have piled up at the enforcement team, so perhaps it’s time to borrow external force to break them down.

“Your teacher is an ordinary person, but also not entirely. Silver City, the Veteris Institute, and the Night Watchers all rely on him to resolve certain problems.”

Li Hao listened quietly without interjection.

“That’s one reason, the second is that we do need some fresh blood. Being from the Institute, you’re a good choice! Third and very important to me, you’re loyal. At the very least, I can trust you with my back. And fourth, you’ve got brains and an eye for detail. With some training, you can become a capable assistant!”

Li Hao nodded.

“What do you think?” Liu Long smiled. “Are those reasons enough?”

Are those reasons enough?

No way!

They seemed sufficient, but not entirely. Those reasons certainly weren't enough for someone like Liu Long to keep an eye on a regular young man and pull him aside for a prolonged recruitment spiel.

Li Hao carefully considered Liu Long. The deputy chief was looking away, his towering body turned to the sky. He grinned when he felt the weight of Li Hao's regard.

"Little fellow, it's not necessarily a good thing to know too much. I want to help you solve the case and for you to help me. Isn't that enough? Why must you get to the bottom of things?"

Li Hao pursed his lips in silence and muttered, "I want revenge, but I also want to know what I'm getting into. Knowing is better than not knowing! I understand and accept everything the chief has said, but I want to know the truth. I don't want to bumble around in the dark and become an unwitting sacrifice!"

"Ah, you youngsters really can't bide your time," Liu Long chuckled. "Did you take something from the Zhang family home?"

"No? I don't understand."

"Heh!" Liu Long snorted. "The chimney showed marks of being tampered with. Li Hao, I'm a veteran inspector with twenty years of experience. I've been deputy chief for ten years, so you can think of me as incompetent, but not blind! The traces were fresh. What, are you going to say that someone else did it?"

Li Hao's scalp went numb, but he insisted doggedly, "I don't know what you're talking about, chief. I really didn't do anything."

“Doesn’t matter!” Liu Long broke out in a broad grin. “It doesn’t matter even if you took a supernatural item. I don’t care!”

Huh? It was growing harder and harder to make out the kind of person that Liu Long was. What does he mean? Confusion was really starting to set in.

“Let’s lay it all out in the open.” Liu Long continued smiling. “I want you to join us, but I can’t force your transfer because you have a strong backer. Otherwise, you’d already be on the team and not through a friendly invite!”

Li Hao frowned.

“Your teacher has some status, so I can’t do anything to you!” Liu Long recovered his previous imperiousness. “After all this, I just want to say that you’re in a lot of danger. You might be the next victim of self-immolation!”

Thump thump thump!

Li Hao’s heart pounded as the sudden mention was strange. Did Liu Long have something to do with the scarlet shadow?

“Don’t think too much!” Liu Long interrupted his train of thought. “The self-immolation cases aren’t over yet! Supernaturals are involved and they should’ve left a long time ago after killing someone. However, they continued to lay their plans in the city for ten years, possibly even longer! This isn’t death through accident or murder for revenge. This is a targeted killing!

“Their mission may be ongoing and they have a target in their sights. I was wondering who the next one might be. It looks like it might be you!”

Li Hao forced down his agitation. “Why me?”

“Why?” Liu Long grinned. “There are a lot of people with the Li surname, but the most active one recently seems to be you! Of course I’m going to raise your suspicion to the highest degree!”

Li Hao blinked again. The deputy chief... seemed to know the folk song!

“They keep an eye on the Zhang family home for the blade of the Zhangs, don’t they?” The chief’s words nearly caused Li Hao to lose his composure. “And you

have the blade of the Zhangs and sword of the Lis, don’t you?”

While Liu Long’s grin broadened, Li Hao couldn’t find it within him to smile. An icy hand clenched around his heart. This man had figured it all out by himself! He knew everything!

Of course, Li Hao’s report might have provided a certain direction, but Liu Long was extremely terrifying to extrapolate everything in such a short period of time!

“Is it a supernatural treasure?” Liu Long murmured to himself, then quickly shook his head. “Doesn’t matter, not important! Occult items aren’t useful for ordinary people. Their treasures are trash to us, so it doesn’t matter if you took it or not.

“On the contrary, it’s best if you do have it!” he chuckled. “That will one hundred percent make you their next target! How will they possibly give up after so long? They won’t, even if they’ve already attracted attention to themselves! Therefore, you joining us isn’t just to help me, but also to save yourself! You won’t be able to hold off supernaturals by yourself.”

Li Hao wasn’t willing to admit to any of this, but his thoughts were in slight disarray. He tamped down frustration and muttered, “Chief, they seem to have spies in the law enforcement team. You know so much, are you...”

“Heh!” Liu Long snorted with laughter. “Do you suspect me? As you should, but there’s no need. You don’t understand everything I do, but you might in the future.”

“Please speak frankly, chief!” Li Hao murmured.

Liu Long remained silent for a long time before he sighed softly. He quickly returned to normal and spoke with an even tone, but his words made Li Hao shudder.

“Supernaturals are just as you think and you yearn to become extraordinary. So do I! Not only do I yearn for it, but I once almost set foot in that realm. Sadly, I was sent back before finishing the crossover!

“I refuse to accept it, how can I accept it?! They reject me after letting me see another world is out there!

“The chaos in the law enforcement team is partially due to me. When I was firmly rooted in the team, I was diligent and industrious. But ever since being rejected, I am no longer willing to spend the rest of my days in mundane dullness!

“Therefore, less of my heart is in the law enforcement team, which caused it to be infiltrated with all manner of riffraff.”

These words didn’t make Li Hao shudder, the next ones did!

“I am not willing to wallow in mediocrity for the rest of my life, to simply brush shoulders with that mysterious domain. I know a way that will help me set foot in the supernatural world again—killing supernaturals!” The look in Liu Long’s eyes sharpened as killing intent flooded out of him.

“We need to kill a supernatural whose attributes or powers are a good match for us! After their death, their powers are stripped and conducted into our own bodies. If success is not at hand after one try, we try again, then again, and again! We do so until the mysterious powers activate our own supernatural abilities, thereby making us supernaturals as well!

“Supernaturals are far and few in between, each attempt to kill them risks our own life as well! But I will not be ordinary! We’ve killed multiple supernaturals over the past three years, but none of us have ever succeeded in crossing over.”

We??

Li Hao’s thoughts were a complete jumble. Killing supernaturals to become one themselves? He never imagined and couldn’t believe that the law enforcement team was so bold!

Sweat beaded his forehead as he finally understood why Liu Long didn’t care about the problems the young man might bring with him. In fact, the deputy chief actually hoped that Li Hao would attract certain unique characters in coming after him!

Li Hao swallowed noisily. He thought he was bold enough, but today he met someone who was even bolder and crazier!

Liu Long’s laugh was slightly tinged with madness. “What are we afraid of? That’s why I don’t really want the Night Watchers to be involved. As for the danger... With high risk comes great reward! Are we to spend our dwindling lifespans in undistinguished monotony?

“You too, Li Hao! If you want to become supernatural, you might be rejected even if you join the Night Watchers! They give you only one chance to conduct mysterious power into yourself. There’s limited quantities and they will not give you a second chance if you fail. But are you willing to fall back to the commonplace dirt after glimpsing that magical peak??”