

Star Gate 41

Chapter 41: Master and Disciple Ascend in Unison (I)

“Teacher... calm down, calm down! I haven’t told anyone else, I’m the only one who knows. Oh, and a dog knows too!”

“Good!” Yuan Shuo nodded, then found something wrong with the response. I know about it! The kid had just said that he and a dog knows. ...why did that sound like a roundabout insult? “Don’t tell anyone else!” reminded the elderly man. “And you idiot, you shouldn’t have told me either!”

“That won’t do!” Li Hao responded awkwardly. “Teacher, you freely gave me precious knowledge like the New Book of Five Styles and the Breathing Method of the Five Styles. You’ve taken care of me over the years, so I would tell you even if I didn’t tell my own father!”

“Heh!” Yuan Shuo snorted with laughter. “Your father is six feet under, do you want to put me there too?”

“...that’s not what I mean...”

“Enough, I understand your sentiments!” Yuan Shuo looked down at his hand and tossed the jade sword back to the young man. He fell silent for a short while. “I still feel that there’s a limit to this type of mysterious power, so you shouldn’t waste it. Using it on a dog? You’re out of your mind! Do you not want to be human anymore?”

“How do you feel, teacher?”

“Well enough!”

“Then take some more...”

“No need!”

“Teacher, I’m in grave danger!” Li Hao’s wits were sharp and he’d detected the professor’s earlier shock. “As good as the energy is, I’m afraid that I won’t live long enough to use it! At least my survival will be ensured if you ascend to Dominator of Thousands or Starlight!”

“Hide out with me for a year!” Light glinted in Yuan Shuo’s eyes. “If you use that time to absorb more of this energy and focus on your foundations, I guarantee you’ll break through to Sunderer! If you cross over as a Sunderer, you won’t be a weakling even among Night Watchers in a year from now!”

“Teacher, are you sure that it’s worthwhile to take shelter here? If word gets out that the enemy can’t obtain the item, it might attract others or stoke greedy eyes from the Night Watchers!” A ruthless expression dawned on Li Hao’s face. “You said so yourself that this is a precious object. If you think so with your years of archaeological experience, then what about others? The best course of action now is to kill any and all witnesses!”

The young man waved his hands around threateningly and blustered, “Many know about the folk song of the eight families, but they don’t know the specifics. The guy who killed Zhang Yuan might! Silver City is just a tiny dot on the map and supernatural objects aren’t worthy of mention. At the very least, they don’t attract attention from the truly great!

“I don’t have the ability to withstand this kind of enemy! It will be certain protection if teacher can ascend and kill that guy—or is teacher not confident in your chances to cross over or eliminate the enemy?”

“When did you get so ruthless, kid?” Yuan Shuo stared dumbly at his student. “How can you say ‘kill any and all witnesses’ so easily?”

I never taught you that! I taught you to cultivate your moral character, behave ethically, and work hard in your studies. Where did you learn this talk of bloodshed and slaughter from?

“I’ve been at the Inspectorate for a year and seen all manner of cases!” Li Hao creased his eyes with a smile, rather resembling a fox. “I’ve grown used to this after seeing it again and again!”

Yuan Shuo suddenly felt that the Inspectorate was a place that caused harm and misled the younger generation. Just look at Li Hao, he'd strayed from the proper path!

Oh my head, oh my heart! I wanted to raise a good child!

"Teacher, absorb all that you can. You're so strong but you've taken so little. I think I absorbed more than you last night!" Li Hao continued in a distressed tone that bordered on exasperation when Yuan Shuo showed obvious signs of reluctance. "I'd rather this benefit my teacher than an outsider! Please just tell me if you can ascend with more mysterious power. If not, I can try Captain Liu. He might also be very strong if he breaks through—"

"Get outta here with that bullshit!" Yuan Shuo erupted with loud curses. "What does Liu Long have on me?! Even his old man Silver Spear Liu Hao, one of the Three Spears of Silver City back in the day, had to bow and scrape in front of me!"

Li Hao listened quietly to this new piece of gossip. So Liu Long's father was also a martial master, one part of the Three Spears of Silver City? But err... his moniker was also a homophone for lewd. Lewd Spear? That was uhh... less than ideal!

"Very well!" Yuan Shuo brightened. "It's embarrassing to continue avoiding acceptance if you don't care. Give it to me! I'll grab something good for you in compensation once I succeed!"

His eyes were so bright that they could pierce through one's soul!

"If I really recover from my injuries and break through to Dominator of Thousands, I'll win a place for myself beneath the heavens, even if I stay mundane! So they say there's no place for a Dominator after just twenty years? We'll see about that!!"

Yuan Shuo threw all caution to the wind—opportunity and hope were right there for the taking!

“Don’t worry.” He looked at his student with an exceedingly serious expression. “If I really do deplete the sword, I’ll get some of the other families’ weapons for you!”

The professor fully operated the breathing method without another word and summoned a dense oscillation of energy through the air!

“Piss off!” he suddenly shouted furiously. “I’m teaching my student the secret art of the Five Styles. Anyone who dares approach will see for themselves if an old Sunderer still has the ability to kill!”

The abrupt roar quieted down the surroundings. Those who protected him, those who kept him under surveillance, all vanished. No one dared pry into a Sunderer of Hundreds passing on knowledge. Even weaker Night Watchers would be doing nothing but offering their head up on a silver platter if they went against Yuan Shuo.

It was not yet time to dissolve into open hostilities, so everything between heaven and earth quieted down. The tiger may be old, but it remains a force to reckon with!

While Li Hao didn’t catch sight of those hidden in the shadows, his heart surged with emotion. This was his teacher, a leading martial master back in the day! The professor still exerted dominance in all directions when he flared his might.

Dominator of Thousands... Who would win in a contest between Dominator and the scarlet shadow? You must break through, teacher!

That would be his greatest trump card and greatest backer.

.....

The wind whipped and clouds billowed in the small yard. A sick tiger yet commanded fear and respect! Everyone hidden in the surroundings dispersed after Yuan Shuo’s shout. Meanwhile, the elderly man fully drew upon the breathing method.

As a premier martial master, Yuan Shuo suffered no hesitation after coming to a decision. He fully thought things over before taking action, but once he made up his mind, the decisiveness of a veteran martial master was stunning to behold.

Cosmic power surged into the old man's body! Even Li Hao could vaguely pick up the sound of a beating heart. He, too, was agitated and oddly apprehensive.

What was he afraid of?

That there wouldn't be enough cosmic power!

What should he do if his teacher saw no effect after absorbing everything from the sword? How about throwing the stone blade into the mix if the jade sword wasn't enough? Trading two weapons he had no use for for Yuan Shuo's recovery and ascension was a worthwhile transaction!

Otherwise, they would either benefit the scarlet shadow faction or the Night Watchers. That would be the worst outcome, and there was a ninety-nine percent chance that he would enjoy none of the spoils in the event of those occurrences.

.....

Veteris Institute of Silver City.

There was no one within several hundred meters of Yuan Shuo's residence, but two figures appeared on the rooftop of an academic building at this time. One male and one female, their features were indistinct.

“What do you make of this, Hu Hao?” asked the woman. She looked into the distance, but averted her gaze so she wasn’t looking directly at Yuan Shuo. A vague stream of blood and qi hurtled through the yard, one that made her wary of direct observation.

“What do I make of it?” The man’s black uniform lengthened his figure; starlight glimmered in his eyes. “Not much. If Yuan Shuo wishes to teach a secret art of the Five Styles to his disciple, then so be it.”

“Is that all he’s doing?” The woman was highly skeptical. “He’s raised such a fuss. He can teach his student indoors if he wishes too, what’s the point of causing such a ruckus in his yard...”

“To give a demonstration?” the man chuckled. “You know the situation too—a mysterious supernatural seems to have their sights set on his student. Yuan Shuo once dominated the era and cloistered himself after the rise of the supernatural domain. Even his last disciple is now under threat. Perhaps this fuss is to exhibit his might and intimidate the other!”

“Is that possible?” the woman sighed. “His era... is over!”

It was the world of martial masters twenty years ago; modern day society was a far cry from those times. Yuan Shuo had been invincible before and an apex existence among Sunderer of Hundreds. He showed signs of crossing the threshold to Dominator of Thousands. Who didn’t respect such a character?

He remained commanding sufficient authority a few years ago, but all of that ended with the death of a Veteris student last year. Word of his injuries must have made it out—perhaps details of his tattered qi and damaged heart were among them.

Otherwise, regular supernaturals dared not offend a peak Sunderer of Hundreds. That death meant that the enemy no longer feared Yuan Shuo!

A third eye solidified on the woman's forehead, one shut tight. She looked again into the distance with a sudden urge. Yuan Shuo was no longer the Yuan Shuo of old, and she was very interested in a secret art of the Five Styles.

She wanted to open the eye and pierce through the curtain of qi and blood. Was the old professor passing on knowledge or doing other things?

Starlight shimmered over her forehead and the man next to her kept his voice low. "Don't make any brash moves. We're here to protect, not provoke..."

"Don't worry!" The woman couldn't resist her curiosity; the eye on her forehead slowly opened.

"Be careful of the blood and qi..." The man furrowed his brow.

The woman chuckled without a word.