

Re: God of Formation.

#Chapter 101: Plan Goes Wrong. - Read Re: God of Formation. Chapter 101: Plan Goes Wrong.

Chapter 101: Plan Goes Wrong.

Jun Wu and Mei Ling left the City Lord's library when the sun had already dipped beyond the horizon, painting the streets in shades of red and gold before giving way to night.

Jun Wu stared at Mei Ling and asked softly. "If you don't mind, why don't you stay in my mansion?"

She had come from Frostwind City without any family in Mystic City. Thus, he believed it was his duty to look after her.

"I don't want to trouble you further," she said firmly, though her eyes softened when she saw his faint frown.

In the end, she found a modest inn nearby and decided to stay there instead.

They had both agreed to explore the ancient ruin after Jun Wu's open lecture in a few days, and she wanted space to prepare her mind.

Back in his mansion, Jun Wu sat under the pavilion.

The fragrance of freshly cooked dishes drifting up into the cool night air.

A low table was set before him, covered with an array of meals, roasted beast meat, fragrant rice, and delicately prepared vegetables, all arranged with care.

He picked at each dish slowly, savoring every bite with a faint, satisfied smile tugging at his lips.

"Xinyue, your cooking has once again improved," he said warmly, raising his head to meet the shy figure standing a little to the side.

Xinyue's cheeks flushed crimson at his words. She lowered her gaze, her voice barely above a whisper. "Y-Young Master... Do you really like it?"

Jun Wu nodded without hesitation. "Of course, I like it. I can't wait to eat your food every day."

The words lit up her face with a bright smile, one that seemed to chase away the shadows of the night.

She had worked tirelessly to improve her cooking, reading every book she could find whenever she had a spare moment in the store.

Each dish was the result of countless hours of effort and experiments, failures and triumphs.

Now, hearing Jun Wu's sincere compliment, all her struggles felt worthwhile.

Outside the pavilion, Zhang Wei and Mao Yun approached them.

"Uncle Zhang, Uncle Mao," Xinyue greeted them politely, "Would you like to eat as well?"

The two exchanged a glance before shaking their heads.

Mao Yun gave a small bow. "Miss Xinyue, please don't trouble yourself. Besides, we are not hungry."

"Alright," she said softly. "If you change your mind, just let me know." With that, she excused herself, leaving the men to their conversation.

Jun Wu's gaze lingered on her retreating figure for a moment before he turned back. "How is it?" he asked in a low tone.

"Young Master," Mao Yun reported respectfully, "The three clans have not revealed your name."

They had given the three merchant clans a harsh lesson and even set the Gong clan's store ablaze.

Jun Wu had anticipated retaliation and had already devised several countermeasures.

But instead of striking back, the three clan masters had chosen to remain quiet.

Jun Wu's brows furrowed slightly.

"Cunning," he muttered.

Even if they had guessed who was responsible for the Gong clan's destruction, they had decided not to say it aloud.

"What of the other forces?" he asked casually, lifting a piece of soft beast meat with his chopsticks.

He placed it in his mouth, savoring the tender flavor.

It was cooked to perfection, and he couldn't help but nod in appreciation.

"Young Master," Mao Yun continued, "Everyone is merely speculating. Many wonder who destroyed the store, but no one suspects you."

Jun Wu gave a faint smile. "Just as we predicted."

To many, he was only an array master, skilled, yes, but far from someone to be feared on a grand scale. They underestimated him and this was what he was betting on.

His gaze shifted to Zhang Wei. "How are the preparations for the hideout and the tavern?"

"Young Master," Zhang Wei replied, "The tavern's renovation will be completed tomorrow. As for the hideout... we still need another week."

Jun Wu's expression hardened. "Time is not on our side. Speed it up. After the open lecture, we need to act swiftly."

Zhang Wei bowed his head. "I'll see to it immediately."

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Elsewhere in the city, while Jun Wu plotted against his enemies, a shadow crept forward.

A group of men clad in black robes slunk through the streets under the cover of night, their faces hidden beneath their hoods.

Their destination: the Blazing Sun Pavilion.

The pavilion had no guards patrolling its area, which made the intruders' work all too easy.

With practiced ease, they scaled the outer fence and dropped silently into the backyard, moving like hunting wolves.

Their mission was straightforward—steal the array plates and uncover the secrets behind them.

At a silent hand signal from their leader, the five thieves split apart and fanned into different directions.

One by one, they searched every room in the pavilion, but their swift, silent searches yielded nothing.

The leader's brows furrowed beneath his hood.

How is this possible?

They had combed through every corner.

He shook his head, they must have overlooked something.

They tried again, this time searching even more thoroughly, overturning everything.

Yet when the second round of frantic searching ended, they were met with the same result.

Not a single array plate was found.

The five gathered once more, fury flashing in their eyes.

"Burn it down," the leader growled.

If they couldn't retrieve their objective, then they would leave only ruin behind.

This would even please their employer.

They searched for rags or kindling, but to their confusion, there was none to be found.

The pavilion seemed strangely devoid of anything flammable.

"Outside then," the leader snapped coldly. "We'll torch it from there."

Nodding in agreement, the thieves rushed toward the wall. With quick, fluid motions, they scaled over the fence, only to land back inside the courtyard they had just left.

All of them froze.

"What... what just happened?" one thief muttered in disbelief.

They had clearly leapt over the wall, but here they were again, standing in the same backyard.

"I don't believe this," another spat, his voice rising with panic. He sprinted to a distant wall and jumped over it with all his strength.

Whoosh!

Bang!

He landed roughly, just a few paces from where the others stood.

Their eyes widened in horror, hearts thundering like war drums in their chests.

What kind of sorcery was this?

How could they jump the wall, only to reappear where they had started?

Unease twisted in their stomachs, but desperation forced them to cling to stubbornness.

"I don't know what trick this is," the leader barked, his tone heavy and grim, "but we cannot give up. Attack! Destroy everything if we must!"

None of them realized that they had already stepped into an Illusory Array Formation.

Their fate, though they did not yet know it, was sealed the moment they crossed the fence.

Chapter 102: Sleepless Night For The Xie Clan.

"What is taking them so long?"

The Xie Clan Master paced back and forth in his private chamber; his brows knitted in worry.

Tonight, he had sent his most trusted men on a dangerous mission—to steal every last one of the mysterious array plates, and if possible, uncover the secret behind their creation.

His true ambition lay in seizing the entire batch of plates and using them to strengthen his clan.

With such resources, the Xie Clan could rise above their rivals. The idea of auctioning a few of the plates had also crossed his mind.

it would not only earn them vast wealth but also elevate their prestige throughout their city.

But now, hours have passed.

The men had been gone for more than three hours, and there was still no word.

"Could they have been captured?" he muttered, pausing in his steps.

The thought gnawed at him, but he quickly shook his head. "Impossible. I sent the best of the best."

He clenched his fists tightly, as though to force away his unease. Every one of the men he had chosen was a First-Rated Martial Artist.

To ensure the mission's success, he had poured enormous resources into hiring them.

Only two of his clansmen had been included, and their sole purpose was to make sure the hired blades did not double-cross him.

And yet... silence.

The Clan Master's nerves only worsened.

Unable to sit still any longer, he left his room and found several elders gathered outside, their faces mirroring his uneasiness.

"Clan Master..." the First Elder called out, his voice low and uncertain.

The Clan Master understood at once what they were thinking. Though his own heart was sinking, he forced a confident smile onto his face.

"Don't worry. Nothing has gone wrong," he said casually, his voice carrying a veneer of assurance. "I believe something must have simply delayed them."

His words earned a sigh of relief from the elders, but none of them could completely smother the creeping dread that clung to their hearts.

Their instincts whispered that something was amiss, and no amount of empty reassurances could banish it.

Unfortunately for them, none of the Xie clan elders would have a peaceful sleep tonight.

The following day.

The sun rose over the horizon, its golden rays spilling across Mystic City and bathing its streets in light. A new day dawned, bright and full of promise.

Bang! Bang!

A loud banging rattled the gates of a mansion.

Standing outside was a woman of ordinary appearance, but her face was pale and stricken with dread.

Anxiety flickered in her eyes as she hammered on the gate again and again.

Just as she raised her hand for another strike, the gate creaked open. Zhang Wei appeared, his tall frame filling the entrance.

At first, he frowned at the woman, ready to reprimand her for her impatience, until she recognized her.

She was one of the female attendants from the Blazing Sun Pavilion.

"Sir," she blurted, her words tumbling over each other, "May I see the Young Miss—no, the Young Master!"

Zhang Wei studied her carefully, his suspicion sharpening. "Has something happened at the store?"

"Yes, sir," she replied quickly, bowing her head. "That's why I must see the Young Master immediately!"

Without further hesitation, Zhang Wei ushered her into the mansion.

Inside the main hall, Jun Wu and the others listened attentively as the attendant relayed her story.

"So you're saying," Jun Wu repeated slowly, his eyes narrowing, "that there are several men lying helpless on the ground in the backyard of the store?"

"Yes, Young Master," she confirmed with a vigorous nod. "They're still sleeping, as though under some spell."

Jun Wu rose to his feet, his expression calm but his eyes gleaming with interest. "Let's go and see this surprise for ourselves."

Xinyue hurried to his side, her face clouded with confusion.

Why would strangers be sleeping in the backyard of their store?

What kind of situation was this?

Mao Yun and Zhang Wei, however, exchanged knowing looks. They already had an inkling of what had transpired.

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A short while later, the group arrived at the Blazing Sun Pavilion.

In front of the entrance, the remaining three attendants were already waiting nervously.

Jun Wu's sudden appearance on the nearly deserted business street drew little attention; few stores had opened so early.

With long strides, he and his men entered and made their way to the backyard.

As Jun Wu lifted his hand and deactivated the protective formation, the illusion faded away, revealing the several hooded men sprawled across the ground.

His lips curled faintly.

"You may return to your posts," he told the attendants. "I'll handle things here."

"Alright," Xinyue nodded quickly. She beckoned the attendant who had come with them. "Come with me."

Though she said nothing further, her eyes betrayed her realization.

It was obvious now.

These men had tried to steal from the Pavilion the night before and had been caught in the formation Jun Wu had personally laid down.

Whenever Xinyue left the store, she always activated the Illusory Array Formation for protection.

Many outsiders wondered why the Blazing Sun Pavilion employed no guards like other establishments.

They could never have guessed that its defenses were far stronger than any guards.

With the women gone, Jun Wu waved his hand and activated both a Sound Barrier Array and a Concealment Array.

The backyard was now cut off from prying eyes and ears.

Then, he looked at Zhang Wei. "Wake up our guests."

Zhang Wei smirked and obeyed.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

His strikes echoed, jolting the intruders awake.

"Ahhh!" "Ahhh!"

Miserable screams tore from their throats as they sprang upright, their faces twisted in panic.

"What—what happened?!"

"Where are we?!"

Confusion and fear overwhelmed them.

The last thing they remembered was trying to flee the pavilion.

Again and again, they had hurled themselves at the walls, certain they would escape with one more effort.

But each time, they had found themselves back where they started.

After hundreds of futile attempts, exhaustion had consumed them, and they had collapsed into unconsciousness.

This damn place had made them lose their mind.

Now, as their eyes adjusted and they saw the three figures standing before them.

Then, realization struck them.

Their hearts pounded like war drums, their throats dry, their bodies trembling.

They opened their mouths, desperate to explain, to beg, to say something.

But no words came.

For there was only one thought burning in their minds...

They were doomed.

Chapter 103: The Open Lecture

Finally, the long-awaited day of the open lecture arrived.

Mystic City buzzed with an energy it had not seen in years.

From merchants to scholars, from wandering cultivators to curious commoners, people from every walk of life poured into the city.

Many had traveled thousands of miles simply to attend what was said to be the first open lecture of its kind.

Rumors had spread like wildfire over the past week.

Some dismissed the entire open lecture as a waste of time, claiming it would only tarnish the already fragile reputation of the Array Masters' Association.

Others, however, believed this was a rare chance to witness a breakthrough in knowledge, perhaps even to glimpse secrets that could not be found anywhere.

In front of the massive Array Formation Auditorium, a sea of people gathered, pressing forward in a restless tide as they waited their turn to enter.

The building had never hosted such numbers before.

For safety's sake, the City Lord had dispatched an entire team of guards to maintain order.

Yet, even their stern presence could not completely suppress the scuffles that occasionally broke out in the crowd.

Standing at the entrance, several elders from the Array Association gazed at the swelling numbers in open disbelief.

"Why are they still increasing?" one muttered, his eyes wide.

Elder Shen exchanged a glance with the others and saw the same shock mirrored in their faces.

Days ago, they had been bombarded with criticism—most claiming that allowing Jun Wu to host such a significant event was an embarrassment.

Yet here they were, watching thousands of people arrive with each passing hour.

If this continued, the auditorium would be filled to the brim before noon.

"We must report this to the president," Elder Shen declared, her tone urgent. She turned at once, striding away with haste.

The other elders nodded in quick agreement, their hearts pounding with a mixture of relief and excitement.

The auditorium had been open less than two hours, and already it was close to full.

With such momentum, who would dare call this event a failure?

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Inside the president's office, Elder Shen had already delivered the news.

"President, what should we do?" she asked. Her voice carried both urgency and caution.

The president rubbed his temples, a heavy sigh escaping him.

He had been bracing for trouble, but this level of attendance had far exceeded all expectations.

His brow furrowed deeply as he considered the problem.

Should they drive people away?

No, that would be disastrous.

Such an act would stir resentment and paint the association as arrogant.

Right now, when they sought to elevate their status above other associations, they could not afford to alienate the public.

Finally, he admitted, "I... I don't know."

Elder Shen did not look surprised.

She herself had tried to imagine a solution to the overcrowding, but there was no solution.

The turnout was simply beyond their planning.

"There is no helping it," the president said at last, his voice firmer. "Those who are fortunate enough to arrive on time will be allowed into the venue. The rest will simply have to wait outside."

Elder Shen inclined her head. "Understood."

"Send word to the guards," he continued, his tone hardening.

"Increase the security within the venue. I don't want any unforeseen incidents."

"I will see to it immediately." With a respectful bow, she departed to carry out his orders.

Left alone, the president leaned back in his chair, his brows knitted tightly together.

Word had already reached him that some people might attempt to disrupt the lecture.

If Jun Wu were openly challenged in front of such a vast audience, the results could be disastrous.

"What should I do?" he muttered, tapping his fingers rhythmically against the desk.
"Should I forbid any interruptions... or let events unfold naturally?"

After a moment of hesitation, he exhaled slowly.

"Let's see how everything plays out."

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Back at the entrance, another wave of movement rippled through the crowd as students and teachers from the Mystic Path Academy arrived.

With heads held high and steps filled with pride, they marched into the auditorium, their academy robes fluttering as though announcing their superiority to the world.

The guards did not stop them.

No one dared.

Watching their confident figures vanish into the auditorium, those waiting in line clenched their fists in silent envy.

To be a student of the Mystic Path Academy was the dream of countless youths, but only a rare few ever passed their difficult selection.

Minutes later, a stir ran through the crowd once more.

The Gong Clan had arrived.

At once, all chatter quieted, and countless eyes turned to watch.

News of the destruction of their store had already spread across the city, igniting endless speculation.

Yet the clan had remained curiously silent, offering no public response to the insult.

Some believed the Gong Clan already knew the culprit but were too scared to retaliate.

Others scoffed at the idea, insisting the once-prestigious clan had simply grown weak.

Whatever the truth, the fact that their store had been burned to the ground without retaliation had turned them into a laughingstock among the other clans.

Gong Tao was accompanied by three clan elders.

Behind them trailed the younger generation, each one tight-lipped, their eyes fixed forward.

Despite the stares that bore into them from every side, they moved without pause, ignoring the whispers and smirks that followed them.

Soon after, other clans began arriving, one after another, until the streets outside the auditorium.

Among them came the Xie Clan.

The moment they appeared; murmurs spread like ripples across water.

From the clan master down to the youngest elder, each bore heavy dark circles beneath their eyes, their expressions grim and drawn.

It was as though none of them had slept for days.

And in truth, they had not.

Ever since sending their men to infiltrate the Blazing Sun Pavilion, they had lived in torment.

Day after day, they waited for news that never came.

It was as if their hired men had simply vanished into thin air.

That silence weighed heavier on them than anything else.

Though the crowd whispered and stared, the Xie clansmen paid little attention.

Their thoughts were consumed by dread, their steps mechanical.

But soon, the focus shifted.

A new group approached, and their very presence silenced the noise of the street.

The Jun Clan.

At their head walked two elders clad in plain gray robes.

They looked unremarkable, almost like wandering commoners.

Yet the younger generation of the clan walked behind them with visible respect, their eyes lowered, their postures deferential.

When the elders of the Array Association themselves stepped forward to welcome the two gray-robed figures, the onlookers realized the truth.

These two were far from ordinary.

Chapter 104: The Guiding Star

Loud chatter echoed across the grand coliseum, rolling like thunder from every corner.

The excitement was palpable.

Everyone, from commoners to nobles, from martial artists to scholars, was talking about a single event.

The open lecture, hosted by Jun Wu.

Almost all the powerful forces in the Soaring Cloud Region had gathered today.

It was a spectacle without precedent.

Over the centuries, the land had seen countless famous figures, masters who left their names etched into history, and scholars who advanced knowledge by leaps and bounds.

Yet, despite their prestige, none of them had ever gathered *hundreds of thousands of people* for the simple act of listening to them speak.

Today, Jun Wu would be the first.

In the VIP section of the coliseum, the atmosphere was unusually heavy.

The Vice Dean of the Mystic Path Academy sat quietly, his sharp gaze fixed on the stage below.

Beside him was the Vice Dean of Frostwind Academy, equally reserved, as though concealing her thoughts.

Next to them sat two elders from the Jun clan, their plain gray robes giving them the appearance of ordinary men.

Inches away, the elders of the Gong clan sat stiffly, their faces carved from stone.

They betrayed neither anger nor calm, as if they were determined not to reveal their true emotions in such a public setting.

Behind them, two other distinguished figures occupied their seats—the presidents of the Array Association from both Mystic City and Frostwind City.

Further back still sat the clan masters of various powerful houses in the Soaring Cloud Region, each vying silently for influence, their gazes darting like hawks assessing prey.

Despite the chatter in the stands, the chamber where these elites sat was quiet.

Every eye was waiting, every heart braced for the appearance of Jun Wu.

Among the audience, the tension was no less fierce.

The younger generation of both the Gong clan and Jun clan wore equally unsightly expressions.

For once, the two rival clans shared the same enemy.

Their common resentment was focused on one name—Jun Wu.

At the Mystic Path Academy's seating area, many students simmered with anger.

To them, Jun Wu was an arrogant brat, someone who dared to step beyond his place.

Yet mixed among them were others whose eyes gleamed not with hatred but with curiosity.

They were eager to see whether the rumors about his talent were true.

Meanwhile, at the Frostwind Academy's section, the mood was very different.

The students there sat in disciplined silence, their expressions blank and unreadable.

But among them, one middle-aged man stood out.

His brows were tightly knitted, and his sharp eyes gleamed like those of a vulture circling its prey.

He seemed ready to pounce at the slightest opportunity.

Elsewhere among the sea of people, a cloaked figure moved silently. Mei Ling had concealed her identity beneath a plain hood.

She had traveled to Mystic City without anyone knowing, attending the lecture was to satiate the curiosity in her heart.

Her main purpose was the ruin map.

A few seats from her, an elderly man sat with a complicated expression etched on his face.

He was Elder Shi from Silver Star City, a Grade-1 Array Master of considerable renown.

He had looked down on Jun Wu, condemning him that he would never become an array master.

And now, here he was, seated among the crowd, waiting to listen to Jun Wu's lecture.

Elder Shi let out a long sigh and shook his head.

"As long as I stay hidden in this crowd," he muttered to himself, "he'll never know I attended."

Around him, the noise in the stadium began to dim.

With each passing second, people realized the time was drawing near. The restless murmur quieted into anticipation.

Beneath the stadium, a secret underground passage stirred with movement. Jun Wu and his people had arrived.

When the elders guarding the entrance saw him, relief washed across their faces.

His absence for even a moment had made them panic, but now... now the guiding figure of today stood before them.

"Welcome, Young Master," Elder Shen said, her voice bright with a smile.

"Hope I'm not late?" Jun Wu asked with a faint smile.

"Hahaha, Young Master, you jest!" Elder Kang replied warmly. "You are the teacher for today. How could you possibly be late?"

The few remaining elders nodded in agreement, their faces shining with pride.

Jun Wu's gaze softened.

He turned to Xinyue, who stood beside him, and spoke in a tone that was both gentle and commanding. "I trust there is a special place reserved for them?"

Though it sounded like a question, it was clear it was not.

The elders immediately caught the meaning.

"Of course, Young Master," Elder Shen answered quickly. "A special seat has already been prepared."

"Good." Jun Wu nodded. "I'll see you after the lecture."

Xinyue hesitated.

She wanted to say something—perhaps a word of encouragement, perhaps a plea for him to be careful but she was too shy to speak.

Instead, she gave a small nod and allowed herself to be led away to join the audience.

Jun Wu turned back to the elders.

His eyes gleamed with quiet confidence. "Shall we begin?"

At his words, Elder Shen and Elder Kang exchanged glances. Their smiles grew wider, filled with a pride that bordered on reverence.

"Yes, Young Master," they said in unison. "Today, you are going to make history."

Others might still doubt Jun Wu's mastery over array formations, but these elders knew better.

They had seen his genius firsthand.

Together, Elder Shen and Elder Kang ascended to the center of the stadium through the underground passage.

Their sudden appearance drew silence from the crowd.

Instantly, thousands of eyes turned toward them.

Elder Shen raised her hand, her voice ringing out with a clarity that carried to every corner of the arena.

"We welcome everyone to the first-ever open lecture in our region!"

Her words were greeted with an uproar of cheers, but she lifted her hand once again, calling for quiet.

"We all know that without knowledge, our civilization cannot prosper. That is why the sharing of knowledge is essential. For far too long, countless people have struggled in darkness, with no guidance and no clear path forward."

Elder Kang stepped forward, his tone solemn.

"Every profession is vast and difficult to tread alone. Without teachers, without guidance, too many lives have been lost to ignorance. Too many dreams extinguished before they could shine."

"But now," Elder Shen continued, her voice rising with passion, "things are about to change."

"Yes," Elder Kang nodded. "Today marks a turning point."

"Indeed." Elder Shen's eyes swept across the excited crowd.

"A person has stepped forward, a young man willing to bear the torch. To be a light in the darkness. To be a guiding star so that we need not lose ourselves ever again."

"You all know his name," she declared. "And if you do not, then you have surely heard of his works. And if not even that, then you must have heard whispers of the famous Array Plates he created."

Her voice rose an octave, carrying with electrifying force. "An invention that has changed how we perceive the world around us!"

"The Array Plates redefined our understanding of arrays, breaking barriers we thought immovable. They proved that our limitations were never fixed—they were merely waiting for someone bold enough to overcome them."

"Many of you came here today with burning questions in your hearts," Elder Kang added, his tone deep and commanding.

"Questions born from your thirst for knowledge, your desire for guidance. And that is why we are honored to invite this young and talented master to speak before us."

Elder Shen's voice rang out, filled with energy so fierce it set the crowd ablaze with anticipation.

"Everyone...let us welcome *Young Master Jun Wu!*"

Chapter 105: Jun Wu Taking The Podium

Jun Wu stepped out from the underground passage dressed in a plain white robe.

The robe was simple, yet on him it carried a quiet nobility, as though the fabric itself bent to his bearing.

He climbed the podium with ease and grace, every step measured, steady, and dignified.

For many in the audience, this was the first time they had ever laid eyes on him.

His handsome appearance and calm demeanor left them breathless.

The noise that had filled the stadium only moments before vanished.

Tens of thousands of people held their breath, as if afraid the slightest sound might break the moment.

On the stage, Elder Shen and Elder Kang exchanged a knowing glance.

Without a word, they stepped down from the podium, leaving the space entirely to him.

The stage was set.

The air was thick with expectation.

Now, everything was left for Jun Wu to take the bull by the horns.

Under the gaze of tens of thousands, his expression did not falter. He stood tall, his calm composure unshaken, and met the sea of eyes with steady confidence.

His posture, his presence, his quiet authority—these things spoke louder than any words.

Among the Jun clansmen seated in the audience, teeth ground with suppressed envy and hatred.

Jun Zhenya's face twisted into an unsightly grimace.

Beneath her long sleeves, her fist clenched tightly, the nails digging into her palm.

The Gong clan members, for their part, kept their expressions controlled.

Still, their eyes betrayed them.

The cold glint in their glares spoke volumes, screaming their desire to strike him down where he stood.

The students of Mystic Path Academy shifted uneasily.

They had long been told of Jun Wu's arrogance, of his unfounded pride, of how unworthy he was.

Yet what they saw now contradicted those claims.

His noble bearing was not something that could be feigned.

Nobility was written into his body without such a background, no one could fake it.

His appearance alone had won half of them over.

Among the students, Jiang Yawen drew in a sharp breath.

Her eyes sparkled with sudden realization.

She had seen Jun Wu before, yet somehow she had never noticed his presence in this way.

Today, under the grand light of the coliseum, it struck her like lightning.

Jun Wu was breathtakingly handsome.

At the Frostwind Academy's seating area, the reaction was different.

Many of the male students scowled in jealousy at his looks and aura, while the females were unable to hide the stars that glittered in their eyes.

Whispers passed like waves, excitement barely suppressed.

The Xie clan members, however, sat stiff and pale. The mere sight of him made their hearts tremble.

The memory of what had happened the previous night gnawed at them like a relentless vice.

There was no response, only silence, and the silence was more terrifying than any answer.

To see him standing there so calm, so untouchable, was unbearable.

Mei Ling, hidden beneath her hood, watched with unwavering eyes.

On the surface, her expression remained cold, unyielding, as if carved from ice.

Yet anyone close enough to catch the faint gleam in her gaze would have realized the truth—beneath that mask, she was fascinated.

With his appearance alone, Jun Wu had already swayed countless hearts.

Those who had mocked him, those who had spoken venomously against him, now held their tongues.

Their earlier words suddenly seemed hollow.

And yet, not everyone in the audience was convinced. Hidden agendas still lurked, concealed behind polite masks and forced smiles.

All of this, however, meant little to Jun Wu.

His heart was steady.

His purpose was clear.

Today, he would leave a mark on the Soaring Cloud Region that no one could erase.

He stepped forward and spoke. "Hello, everyone."

His voice was soft, almost casual, yet it carried clearly across the coliseum.

It was as though the wind itself carried his words, laying them gently in every ear.

The audience fell into perfect silence, the world reduced to nothing but the sound of his voice and the faint whisper of the breeze.

"You all know my name," he continued calmly. "I won't waste your time with introductions. Instead, let us move straight to the lecture."

The crowd leaned forward, anticipation swelling.

But just as Jun Wu began, a voice cut through the silence like a blade.

"Who gave you the right to lecture us?"

The words came from Bo Qiang, who had stood up abruptly. Every gaze in the coliseum snapped toward him.

He raised a finger and pointed it directly at Jun Wu.

"Everyone claims you created the Array Plate," he sneered, his voice loud and mocking.

"But has anyone actually seen you do it? For all we know, it could be the work of others, while you bask shamelessly in their glory."

He paused, his lips curling in disdain.

"With your age, do you even comprehend the vastness of array formation? I'll give you a piece of advice: step down from that podium and stop dragging the names of array masters into the mud!"

Hiss!

A chorus of sharp intakes of breath echoed throughout the stadium.

Gasps of shock spread like wildfire, leaving wide eyes and murmured disbelief in their wake.

In the Gong clan's section, smiles tugged at the corners of their lips. They had known this was coming.

Bo Qiang was nothing more than a pawn, a sacrificial lamb meant to strike the first blow.

They did not expect him to stop the lecture, but if he could plant seeds of doubt and tarnish Jun Wu's name even slightly, then his purpose would be fulfilled.

In the stands, voices began to rise.

"Right! Has anyone ever actually seen him make an Array Plate?"

"I knew it—it's impossible for a boy his age to craft such a complex design."

"That's right. No matter how talented he is, that invention is too advanced for a mere child."

The tide began to turn. Many who had been impressed moments ago now faltered, leaning toward suspicion.

Yet on the podium, Jun Wu's expression did not change.

He simply stood there, calm and immovable, his gaze locked on Bo Qiang. He gave no sign of anger, no flustered defense.

He merely waited, watching with eyes that seemed to pierce through the man's charade.

In the VIP section, the Frostwind Academy's Vice Dean's face darkened with fury.

She had warned that fool not to cause trouble, yet he dared defy her. Her grip on the armrest tightened until her knuckles turned white.

'Good. Very good,' she thought coldly. 'You actually believe the Gong clan will protect you after this? We will see about that.'

The room's atmosphere thickened. Everyone could sense her rage, but no one dared speak.

Bo Qiang, meanwhile, mistook Jun Wu's silence for weakness.

He thought he was winning.

His plan was simple.

Provoke Jun Wu into an argument, then force him into a contest of array knowledge where he could pry out the secret of the array plates.

But Jun Wu remained still, serene, unshaken.

And then... he spoke.

"Are you speaking for yourself," Jun Wu asked slowly, his voice soft yet carrying to every corner of the stadium, "or for the Frostwind Academy?"

The words were not loud, but the weight behind them fell like thunder.

The entire coliseum froze, stunned by the sharpness of his response and the implication laced within it.

Chapter 106: From Where I Stand... You're Nothing.

Bo Qiang stood frozen.

The air around him seemed to tighten, pressing against his chest like an iron vice.

The smug smile that had previously lit up his face faltered, replaced by a flicker of unease.

Jun Wu's question was simple.

Almost too simple.

Yet, everyone present understood the weight behind it.

The implication was sharp, dangerous, and filled with consequences that Bo Qiang had not prepared for.

He suddenly realized that words spoken carelessly on this stage were no different from stepping into a battlefield without armor.

He swallowed hard.

His false bravado, which had carried him until now, threatened to collapse under the crushing silence that followed Jun Wu's words.

One wrong response, one misplaced answer, and no one... not the Gong clan, not the Frostwind Academy, not even the heavens themselves... would be able to shield him.

Around him, tens of thousands of eyes burned into his back.

Every student from Frostwind Academy had their gaze locked on him, their expressions a mixture of confusion and disbelief.

Most could not understand why one of their own professors would publicly challenge Jun Wu, especially on such a monumental stage.

It made no sense.

Jun Wu had no known enmity with Frostwind Academy.

He had never even set foot in Frostwind City before this gathering.

Why, then, would Bo Qiang, a respected teacher, choose such blatant provocation unless there was more to it?

Inside the VIP chambers, the atmosphere grew tense, as though the air itself had thickened.

One by one, people subtly distanced themselves from the Frostwind academy Vice dean as if she were a raging volcano on the verge of eruption.

The academies had long prided themselves on maintaining neutrality in the region's delicate political landscape.

And yet here, before countless people, a professor of Frostwind Academy was openly undermining that neutrality.

The pressure of the situation crushed down on Bo Qiang like a mountain.

His throat grew dry, and he forcefully swallowed the lump that refused to move.

He knew he had already crossed a line.

His allegiance was no longer to his academy but to the Gong clan, and now, before this sea of eyes, there was no turning back.

"I... I am not speaking for the academy," Bo Qiang finally managed, his voice carrying a false confidence that even he did not believe.

He knew what this meant.

From today onward, his career, his influence, and even his position within Frostwind Academy were finished.

But he told himself it was worth it.

As long as he could fulfill the Gong clan's orders and tarnish Jun Wu's name, everything else could be sacrificed.

The crowd erupted into murmurs.

A professor in the robes of Frostwind Academy openly declaring that he acted without the authority of his academy.

It was unheard of.

Many students frowned deeply, their expressions sour.

Their pride as members of the Frostwind academy had just been dragged through the mud.

Jun Wu remained calm, his demeanor unchanged.

"Alright," he said lightly, nodding as though Bo Qiang's confession confirmed what he already knew.

"Then tell me... are you speaking for the Array Association of Frostwind City?"

Once again, the crowd drew in sharp breaths.

The tension tightened.

Jun Wu's words were simple, but every question he asked was like a blade with two edges, cutting no matter how one responded.

Anyone could see it.

Bo Qiang had stepped into a trap laid out in plain sight.

If Jun Wu had been rattled, if he had been lured into an argument, Bo Qiang might have stood a chance to redirect the narrative.

But now, Jun Wu held all the power.

On this stage, before tens of thousands of people, the difference in their standing was clear.

In the audience, array masters from Frostwind City all turned their gazes toward Bo Qiang.

Their expressions were unfriendly, their eyes sharp as knives.

He felt each glance pierce into his skin, cold and merciless.

One wrong word and their wrath would consume him whole.

Bo Qiang's entire body shuddered.

His skin crawled, his hair stood on end.

This was not how it was supposed to be.

He had expected Jun Wu to lash out, to lose control, to reveal himself as immature.

Instead, Jun Wu remained composed, noble, untouchable.

"This... this isn't supposed to happen," he whispered to himself, gripping the hem of his robe tightly.

His knuckles turned white as he fought the tremor in his hands.

Forcing himself to breathe, he finally managed to squeeze out the words.

"No... I am not speaking for them either. I am alone." His voice trembled despite his best efforts to steady it.

The moment the words left his lips, his face twisted with bitterness.

He hated himself.

He knew he had just sealed his fate.

With that single response, the curtain had closed on his little performance.

Jun Wu shook his head slowly, as though already losing interest.

His voice remained calm, but his words carried the weight of thunder. "If you represented Frostwind Academy, I would have answered you seriously. If you had the backing of the Array Association, I would have considered your words out of respect for the array masters."

He paused, letting the silence stretch unbearably before continuing.

"But you are not. You have neither authority nor standing. So tell me, what are you?"

Bo Qiang's lips trembled. "W-What..."

"You are nothing," Jun Wu cut him off coldly, his tone like a blade slicing through the man's last defenses.

"From where I stand, you are nothing."

The crowd erupted in gasps.

Jun Wu ignored the broken professor and swept his calm gaze across the stunned audience.

"If you wish to question me or anyone else, then prove yourself equal. For me, create something as powerful as the Array Plates, and then we will speak as equal. Until then..."

His voice rose like a wave crashing over the audience. "What right do ants have to question humans for stepping on them?"

Hiss!

The crude analogy was simple, even brutal, yet its meaning struck deep.

The crowd understood it perfectly.

Inside the VIP chamber, the Vice Dean of Mystic Path Academy leaned back in his chair, a small smile tugging at his lips.

He nodded approvingly.

"Indeed," he murmured. "What right does an ant have to question the footsteps of those above them?"

All around the chamber, people shared similar thoughts.

Whether they liked Jun Wu or not, his authority in this moment was undeniable.

His aura was noble, his words overbearing, and his presence alone made many hesitate before daring to even think of opposing him.

Bo Qiang realized it too late.

His bravado had been nothing but a clown.

The audience had already abandoned him.

Students, teachers, and array masters alike shifted away, leaving him isolated.

He shuddered, the weight of regret eating him alive.

But no one pitied him.

He brought this disgrace upon himself.

On the stage, Jun Wu did not spare him another glance.

He stood tall, commanding, and with an air of complete composure, he began.

"What is array formation?"

The question rolled out across the auditorium like a bell chime.

Instantly, tens of thousands straightened their backs, their breaths held in anticipation.

This was what they had come for.

This was the moment that would prove whether Jun Wu truly deserved to stand at the pinnacle.

Chapter 107: The Lecture That Shook The Sky

The question lingered in the air like a tolling bell, and no one dared to break the silence.

Tens of thousands held their breath, waiting—waiting for Jun Wu to speak, to explain, to unveil the mysteries only he seemed capable of speaking.

Inside the VIP chamber, the atmosphere was equally solemn. Powerful clan leaders, academies, and associations all sat upright, their expressions grave.

They had seen countless prodigies in their time, yet here they were, eager to listen to the words of an eighteen-year-old youth.

Jun Wu stood at the center of the colosseum, utterly calm beneath the weight of thousands of gazes.

His white robe fluttered gently in the breeze, and his bearing radiated an authority that seemed to come not from his age but from something older, grander.

"From my little knowledge," he began, his voice steady, each word carrying across the arena.

"Array Formation is the bridge between human will and the laws of heaven and earth. The world is governed by law. By connecting to and interpreting these laws, we gain the chance to control them."

The crowd listened in rapt silence.

"This," Jun Wu continued, "is why array patterns are crucial. These patterns are a language—patterns with meaning. And, like language, a single pattern can carry multiple meanings depending on its context."

He paused deliberately, allowing his words to settle into the minds of his listeners.

The stillness that followed was so complete it was suffocating.

The colosseum had become a graveyard of silence, and even those who had no knowledge of arrays leaned forward eagerly.

This was not a moment to miss.

To blink too long felt like a crime.

"Before I go further," Jun Wu said at last, "let me correct a common mistake—one that most array masters fail to understand."

The audience froze.

"Why are there so many apprentices who spend years, sometimes their entire lives, and yet never become array masters?" His sharp gaze swept across the rows of students and masters alike.

"The answer is simple. Either they lack talent for the path of arrays, or they took the wrong steps. And let me tell you this—the wrong steps are far more prevalent than the lack of talent."

Murmurs rippled briefly before being smothered by the oppressive quiet once again.

"Becoming an array master is not as simple as memorizing dozens of theories, patterns, and interpretations. Wasting years learning placements and arrangements of nodes is meaningless without the right foundation."

His eyes were firm.

"The will of heaven is firm and absolute. If you do not fulfill certain conditions, no matter how many patterns you memorize, no matter how much you exhaust yourself over node placement, you will never become an array master."

Gasps echoed through the crowd.

Many apprentices instinctively clenched their fists, realizing that Jun Wu was addressing their very struggles.

"So then," Jun Wu asked, his tone sharp, "how does one truly become an array master without wasting precious time and talent?"

He raised a single finger. "First, you must have a firm foundation in martial arts."

He raised another finger. "Second, you must possess a high comprehension."

"Comprehension is straightforward. But what do I mean by a foundation in martial arts?"

He stepped forward, his gaze sweeping over the crowd. "Martial arts are the foundation of everything. How can you learn the secrets of heaven if your body is too weak to withstand them? That is impossible."

"Why is it impossible?" His voice rose, firm and unshakable.

"Because cultivation draws heaven's energy into the body. The stronger the vessel, the more heaven's energy it can contain. The more it can contain, the easier it becomes to perceive the secrets hidden in the laws of heaven and earth."

Hiss!

Gasps resounded like a wave breaking over the colosseum.

Countless eyes widened.

For many present, this was the first time they had ever heard such reasoning, and it shook them to their core.

In the VIP chamber, expressions shifted dramatically.

These leaders knew more than the ordinary people, yet even they found themselves unsettled by Jun Wu's revelation.

The two elders from the Jun clan exchanged subtle glances, their eyes filled with disbelief.

Jun Wu's worth had just soared beyond anything they had ever imagined.

He was no longer just a slightly talented youth with a knack for arrays.

He had become something more, something they could no longer define.

Across the room, the Gong clan elders exchanged their own glances, their expressions grim.

They, too, understood what was happening.

With only a few words, Jun Wu's influence had grown exponentially.

His voice was no longer that of a youth.

To those fanatics who had spent decades studying array formations, Jun Wu no longer seemed human—he was something akin to a deity.

Hidden in the shadows, spies from countless factions stirred nervously.

They scribbled furiously or sent coded messages, rushing to deliver this information to their respective forces.

A storm was forming, and Jun Wu was its center.

But Jun Wu himself remained untouched by all of it.

He continued his lecture without pause.

"I know some of you already understand what I'm saying," he said, his tone patient. "But for those who do not, allow me to explain further."

"What is the difference between a mortal and a rated martial artist?" he asked, his voice echoing across the massive arena.

He paused, letting the question hang. Then, with measured calm, he answered.

"Blood Qi."

"A mortal has blood. But a rated martial artist has *Blood Qi*. That Qi is the difference. And what is Qi? Qi is the energy of heaven and earth. It is what allows us to communicate with the will of heaven."

Roar!

A deafening crack of thunder erupted overhead.

The sudden sound made hearts leap, and heads snapped upward.

The once-pristine white sky had darkened, clouds boiling into existence out of nothingness.

"What's happening?"

"Why is the sky turning black?"

Confusion spread like wildfire.

Whispers became cries, and unease spread among the crowd.

Jun Wu himself looked upward, startled.

He could not understand why the heavens themselves seemed to respond to his words.

Yet in the depths of his heart, he felt it—this was no mere coincidence.

Somehow, his teaching had drawn heaven's attention.

The thought was both terrifying and exhilarating.

His pulse quickened, his blood roared in his ears, but instead of retreating, his resolve only deepened.

He lifted his chin, eyes blazing with determination.

Previously, this lecture was only as a tool to raise his influence in the Soaring Cloud Region, to gain an advantage against his clan.

But now, things have changed.

Now, it felt as though heaven itself was acknowledging him.

Chapter 108: A Legend In Making.

Jun Wu ignored the rumbling sound in the sky and pressed on with the same grave seriousness, though now he poured his very heart and soul into the lecture.

His voice carried not only knowledge but conviction, each word like a hammer striking against stone.

"Since array formation touches upon the secrets of heaven and earth," he declared, his gaze sweeping across the crowd.

"What better tool to use than the rarest gift bestowed by heaven and earth itself—Qi."

The audience trembled.

Watching Jun Wu continue his lecture while the heavens themselves darkened, countless spectators were left dumbfounded.

Their eyes widened, disbelief painted across their faces.

Can't he see the bizarre situation in the sky?

Has he lost his mind?

Inside the VIP chamber, the powerful leaders shifted uneasily in their seats.

Their brows creased as they stared at the rolling darkness overhead.

None of them uttered a word, yet their thoughts spun like a storm.

Such a phenomenon had never happened before.

Not even the ancient Book of History, which records the strange occurrences of countless generations, had spoken of the heavens reacting to a lecture.

Yet here was Jun Wu, continuing with even greater zeal as if nothing was amiss.

Confusion marred the faces of every leader.

The vice deans of both the Mystic Path Academy and the Frostwind Academy exchanged subtle glances, their eyes betraying the same thought.

Whatever caused this thunder... it must be connected to this boy.

And so, rather than interrupt him, they straightened their backs and concentrated on his lecture, unwilling to miss a single word.

Below, Jun Wu's words flowed smoothly like a mountain stream, firm and unyielding.

"Therefore, for anyone who wishes to become an array master, you must first possess a foundation strong enough to house Qi within your body. At the very least, you must step into the realm of a First Rated Martial Artist."

"Hiss!"

The collective intake of cold breaths echoed through the colosseum.

Though the rolling thunder made their skin crawl, not one person dared leave.

Those with sharper insight began to realize that this strange heavenly phenomenon was not meant to harm them.

The heavens were not lashing out—they were responding.

So they forced themselves to remain seated, back straight, ears open, unwilling to miss even half a sentence.

Yet Jun Wu's requirement left many trembling.

Did he truly think becoming a First Rated Martial Artist was so simple?

Among the apprentices, older ones clenched their fists, their hearts filled with unwillingness.

To them, his words were a cruel decree that nullified their years of effort.

Meanwhile, many of the younger apprentices looked as though their very souls had left their bodies.

Most had only reached the Third Rated Martial Artist stage.

If Jun Wu's words were true, then for them, the dream of becoming an array master was forever out of reach.

But Jun Wu's tone did not waver.

He did not pause to comfort, nor did he yield to the crowd's emotions.

His words struck like lightning—direct, merciless, yet filled with truth.

"Although the prerequisite may sound harsh," he said, his voice ringing with certainty, "the reward is immense. If you possess even the smallest spark of talent in array formation, you will be able to become an array master within one to five years."

He raised a single finger. "And for those truly gifted... one year, perhaps two."

Another hiss of disbelief swept through the colosseum.

Gasps, exclamations, even choked laughter rippled across the audience.

Many leapt to their feet without realizing it, their hearts pounding with a mixture of hope and fear.

Too good to be true.

Yet Jun Wu stood as undeniable proof before their eyes.

Generations of apprentices had wasted decades chasing the elusive title of array master.

Yet here was a path, laid bare, promising mastery within five years.

Even in the VIP chamber, the elders who prided themselves on their composure found themselves dazed, their jaws slack.

They stared at the youth on the podium as if seeing him for the first time.

Questions burned on their tongues, but none dared interrupt him.

Jun Wu calmly, his voice rang clear:

"I know many of you do not believe me. But tell me—why would I lie upon such a grand stage? Am I not the perfect example before your very eyes?"

Silence struck the colosseum.

Then came a collective cry of realization.

Indeed, Jun Wu himself had proven it.

He was living proof that what he said was no empty boast.

Excitement erupted like wildfire.

"I can become an array master as long as I reach the First Rated Martial Artist stage. Hahaha! This is incredible news!"

"Ahahaha! I'm already at the High Stage of Second Rated. With just a little effort, I'll break through! Then the gates of array formation will open wide for me!"

Apprentices who had once walked with drooping shoulders now clenched their fists in renewed determination.

Some shouted, some laughed, some even wept openly.

Only an apprentice could truly understand the pain and hopelessness of the path—and now, Jun Wu had offered them light.

Still, not everyone lost themselves in excitement.

Many forced themselves to remain calm, choosing instead to hold their emotions in check while focusing on the lecture.

Jun Wu, however, pressed forward.

"Let me tell you something even greater.... This principle applies to all professions. For a blacksmith to forge a Mortal Grade weapon, he must be attuned to the will of heaven.

For an alchemist to refine a Mortal Grade pill, she too must be attuned. This—this is the open secret that has eluded us all for generations. But today, you finally know the truth."

The audience erupted once more, their hearts pounding wildly.

Jun Wu's lecture was not merely knowledge—it was revelation.

Then, smoothly, he shifted back to his original topic.

"Now, let us return to array patterns. What are they? Array patterns are the very embodiment of energy designed for a specific purpose. They dictate the behavior of an array, giving it forms and meaning."

His words were calm, but the thunder overhead boomed louder than before.

"A single pattern," Jun Wu continued, his voice unwavering even as the heavens rumbled. "Can be interpreted in countless ways. And that... is why the Soaring Cloud Region lags behind. Why?"

His gaze swept the colosseum, piercing, commanding.

"Because nearly every so-called array master in this region has wasted their life studying only a single array pattern."

The words cut like blades, sharper than thunder, and the stadium fell into a silence deeper than before.

Above, the clouds churned darker still, the sky collapsing into a suffocating gloom.

The entire city was thrown into unnatural darkness, shocking citizens and apprentices alike.

It was the first time such a scene had ever unfolded.

And it was far from over.

On the podium, Jun Wu's figure stood tall against the backdrop of chaos, his voice carrying like a beacon through the darkness.

Chapter 109: A Legend Is Born.

The rumbling in the heavens grew fiercer, shaking the ground as though the world itself trembled.

Yet beneath Jun Wu's hypnotic voice, the people inside the vast stadium seemed oblivious to the chaos above.

They were lost, utterly captivated by his teaching.

Even those who had never studied array formation felt as if a veil had been lifted from their minds.

Jun Wu broke down complex theories into simple truths, stripping away the stiffness and mystery that cloaked them.

He explained the principles of patterns and nodes with patient precision, painting them not as rigid, lifeless rules but as living, breathing concepts.

People discovered, many for the first time, that patterns and nodes were not static chains to be memorized.

They were flexible, adaptable, overflowing with endless possibilities.

His words were like rainfall on parched soil.

For an entire hour, Jun Wu's lecture flowed like a clear mountain stream, refreshing hearts that had long grown dry with confusion and futility.

His tone soothed yet inspired, unraveling mysteries and replacing despair with newfound purpose.

Then, without warning, the sky shifted.

From within the seething black clouds, a purple mist slowly seeped out, curling and twisting like smoke from a celestial forge.

The mist spread outward, drifting across the city in a strange, otherworldly wave.

On the bustling streets of Mystic City, people stopped in their tracks.

They tilted their heads upward, eyes wide with alarm.

"What is happening?"

"Why is purple mist falling from the sky?"

"Are we... are we under attack?"

Panic spread like wildfire.

Shouts erupted as families pulled loved ones indoors.

The city, once bustling, dissolved into chaos.

Far away, in a secluded courtyard of the Mystic Path Academy, an elderly man with long gray hair raised his gaze to the heavens.

The mist's faint glow reflected in his eyes, which flickered with an unreadable mix of wonder and dread.

"What is this?" he muttered under his breath, his voice gravelly from age and countless battles.

Complicated emotions flickered across his face, curiosity.

"Is this... the end of our region?"

As an old expert who had witnessed the hidden truths of the world, he knew how fragile safety truly was.

The world was riddled with mysteries that were horrifying.

History had spoken of countless powerful empires and sects that had vanished without warning, swallowed by secrets no one could explain.

Forbidden lands scarred the continents.

Deadly ruins appeared without pattern, swallowing lives whole. It was as though the world itself was preparing, piece by piece, for some great calamity.

And now, the sky wept purple mist.

Back at the stadium, however, the audience remained enthralled by Jun Wu's words.

The storm and the mist were nothing compared to the revelation pouring from his lips.

They did not notice as the purple haze descended gently over the stadium, blanketing the massive arena like a silken shroud.

And when the mist touched them, something miraculous occurred.

Their eyes glazed, expressions softening into vacant trances.

A deep stillness settled over their hearts.

Inside the VIP chamber, the powerful leaders of the region shared equally bewildered looks.

Yet even they had no answer for this sight.

Before they could react, the mist touched their bodies, and they too fell silent.

Their thoughts sharpening, distractions peeling away, as though the fog within their souls had been burned away.

At the center of it all stood Jun Wu.

The mist gathered thickest around him, coiling and twisting like a living thing, until it wrapped him fully within a cocoon of radiant violet light.

His silhouette blurred, only his steady voice continuing to resonate, calm and unwavering.

Outside the stadium, those who failed to hide on time were touched by the mist.

Instead of terror, clarity washed over their minds.

Their breaths steadied, their cultivation techniques stirred instinctively, and energy flowed through them with unprecedented ease.

A single voice cut through the growing awe.

"Quick! Sit and cultivate!"

"This heaven's sent opportunity!"

Like lightning, the call spread.

People rushed into the streets, dropping cross-legged on the cobblestones, abandoning fear in favor of seizing the opportunity.

And then the impossible happened.

Mortals who had never cultivated felt their bodies awaken, their blood stirring with vitality they had never known.

"Hahaha! I can sense it—I can sense my Blood Qi!"

Elsewhere, a trembling man shot to his feet, laughing wildly. "I—I broke through! I've become a Peak Grade Third Rated Martial Artist!"

Another voice, shrill with disbelief, shouted into the air. "Impossible! I've... I've actually become a First Rated Martial Artist!"

Across the city, cries of joy rang out like festival bells.

People embraced, some wept, others laughed like madmen.

For them, this was no curse—it was a blessing.

The purple mist was not destruction.

It was a blessing from heaven.

Inside the Mystic Path Academy, the effect was even more profound.

Students and teachers alike sat upon the ground, cultivating with all their strength.

Breakthroughs exploded one after another, each accompanied by the crackle of surging Qi.

In his secluded courtyard, the gray-haired elder trembled as he felt the change within his own body.

His cultivation, stagnant for decades, was stirring once again.

Even the grievous injury that had plagued him for years eased slightly under the mist's touch.

Then he threw his head back and laughed, his voice booming like thunder.

"Hahaha! Heaven has not forsaken us!"

He turned his gaze toward the stadium, where the mist gathered thickest. His eyes narrowed.

"The stadium..." he whispered. "Could this be the effect of that boy's lecture?"

Shock, awe, and disbelief warred in his heart.

But one truth was clear: something monumental was occurring.

He moved to rush toward the stadium but froze mid-step. His instincts told him—

It was too late.

The mist was already receding.

His brows furrowed deeply as he looked skyward. Slowly, the brilliant purple mist dissipated, scattering like morning dew beneath the sun.

"I see... this is heaven's message," he murmured. "A sign that we have not been abandoned. Perhaps... perhaps we have been walking the wrong path all along. This—this is the true way."

Who could have imagined that a single lecture by a kid would illuminate a path forward during their darkest hours?

Back at the stadium, the audience stirred awake, one by one.

Their eyes, once vacant, blinked with renewed clarity.

"What happened?" someone gasped, looking at their hands. "Wait—my strength... it's increased!"

Another clutched his chest in wonder. "Why do I suddenly understand array theory so clearly? I feel as though I can set up a Grade-1 Array!"

"Strange... I feel no longer suited for array formation. My heart leans toward blacksmithing instead."

"It must have been the purple mist," another whispered, voice trembling. "Yes—it helped us. This... this was a blessing from heaven."

Gradually, a realization spread.

They were no longer the same people who had sat down at the beginning of the lecture.

Their paths were illuminated, their doubts dissolved.

The fog that had once clouded their futures was gone.

And then, as one, they turned their gaze toward the boy stepping forth from the fading purple cocoon.

His figure emerged like dawn breaking through storm clouds.

Eyes widened.

Hearts pounded.

There was no more doubt.

All this happened because of him.

Today, in that stadium, under the witness of heaven and earth, a legend was born.

Chapter 110: Brewing Incoming Storm.

The Mystic City was in upheaval. The mysterious incident had left countless people questioning their eyes and their very understanding of the heavens.

Everywhere, the topic of the purple mist dominated the air.

Streets buzzed with voices, and teahouses overflowed with restless discussions.

Many who were lucky enough to have benefited from the miraculous haze could not contain their excitement.

They told their friends, their families, even strangers, about the sensation of cultivation flowing freely through their meridians, about bottlenecks breaking like thin glass.

Rumors and gossip spread like wildfire, reaching every corner of the city within hours.

While those in the streets celebrated with joy, having already benefited from the blessing, the crowd inside the Array Association Stadium finally came out.

It was then the city at large discovered the true extent of the miracle.

"What?! You broke through two stages in one sitting? How is that possible?!" one man shouted in disbelief.

"You're already preparing to sit for the Array Master examination? Impossible! I've known you for years!" another cried, his face twisted in awe.

"Why do you look so... different? Your aura is completely transformed."

"What do you know?" came the sharp reply of a bystander. "Everyone inside the stadium was touched by heaven's blessing. You can't imagine what it was like."

"Really? Heavens, I shouldn't have missed that lecture..." a man lamented, clutching his head.

"Ha! Mark my words, Young Master Wu has created a legend today. Who would have thought his open lecture would invoke such divine favor?"

Excitement, jealousy, and reverence all intertwined as the story grew wilder with every retelling.

The ordinary people could only sigh at their missed chance.

Meanwhile, Jun Wu had already been escorted back to his mansion under heavy guard.

His status had undergone a transformation overnight.

His influence now surpassed anything a single clan could hope to achieve.

He was no longer just the young master of the Jun clan.

He was a figure the entire city, perhaps even the region held at the highest esteem.

Recognizing this, the City Lord himself had deployed an elite team of guards to stand watch around Jun Wu's mansion.

The once ordinary mansion was now ringed with powerful martial artists whose sharp gazes never wavered, blades and arrows ready for the slightest disturbance.

Mystic City had, in the blink of an eye, transformed into sacred land within the Soaring Cloud Region.

Inside the City Lord's mansion, the atmosphere was heavy.

Gathered within a grand hall sat the Frostwind Academy's Vice Dean, the Vice Dean of Mystic Path Academy, and the heads of several major associations.

Their expressions were solemn, their voices hushed.

The situation was as delicate as it was unprecedented.

Never before in history had an individual invoked a heavenly blessing through something as mundane as a lecture.

Even in the legends of ancient times, there was nothing comparable.

Thus, they knew they must tread carefully.

Whatever the heavens intended, Jun Wu had become a pivotal figure. He might very well be the key to unraveling the mysteries of the world itself.

"What should we do?" the president of the Mystic City Array Association asked, his voice low and grave.

Jun Wu was part of his association, and he felt a fierce responsibility toward him.

From that lecture alone, his own understanding of array formation had leaped forward by bounds he never imagined.

He knew he was only a step away from becoming a true Master.

But Jun Wu was not just a prodigy in arrays anymore—he was their benefactor, their hope, a beacon that could lead the region through its darkest hour.

Therefore, nothing must be allowed to happen to him.

The Alchemy Association president broke the silence. "Can we assign a Master to protect him at all times? An ordinary warrior will be useless if stronger powers move."

"I don't think even a Master Warrior would suffice," the Frostwind Academy Vice Dean countered with a grave shake of her head.

Her sharp eyes swept across the room.

"Do you truly understand the gravity of what just occurred? The heavens recognized his actions and blessed him. Who among us would not covet such a figure for their own region, their own clan? If word spreads, every power under the sky will set their eyes upon Mystic City."

She paused, letting her words sink in. "We must also consider the Jun clan itself, as well as the Gong clan and other hidden clans. The balance of power in the region has already shifted. If we do not act swiftly, we will drown in the storm that is coming."

"So, what should we do?" the Array Association president pressed, his frustration evident. "We cannot waste time dwelling on problems—we must find a solution."

Silence fell again.

The weight of responsibility pressed on their shoulders.

They all knew it: the situation was as dangerous as it was delicate.

What they needed was not just protection but a powerful deterrence, a presence strong enough to make even ambitious enemies hesitate.

"I'll protect him."

The sudden voice from the entrance made everyone's head snap around.

"Dean!"

Both the City Lord and the Vice Dean of Mystic Path Academy leapt to their feet, their faces filled with respect.

For the others present, it was the first time they had laid eyes on the famous Dean of Mystic Path Academy, a figure shrouded in legend.

"Please, sit," the Dean said amicably, his voice carrying both warmth and authority.

The Vice Dean quickly vacated his seat, offering it to him without hesitation.

The Dean took the chair and swept his gaze across the assembly. "Since you all understand the weight of today's event, I will not waste words. We must prepare for the worst."

"The worst?!" someone echoed, brows furrowing as nervous murmurs spread.

"I will not hide the truth from you," the Dean said evenly. "Many believe the Jun clan to be powerful, but in truth, they are merely a Tier-3 force at best."

His words struck like thunder.

"There exist Tier-2 and even Tier-1 forces beyond our region. When news of this blessing spreads, what do you think will happen when such powers turn their eyes here?"

A sharp hiss of breath filled the room.

Cold sweat trickled down spines.

Within the Soaring Cloud Region, the Jun aristocrats were considered uncrowned kings.

But now they learned there were forces far greater, forces that could sweep them aside as if crushing ants.

The Dean did not give them time to recover. "Furthermore, there are ancient, hidden forces lurking within our very borders. Their intentions are unknown, but I assure you, they are anything but good."

"This is a troubled time. If we wish to protect this opportunity, we must be prepared." His gaze fell on the Frostwind Academy Vice Dean.

"I alone am not enough. I must meet with your Dean. I hope the Old Mistress still has the same fierceness when she was still in her youth." His lips curved faintly before he turned to the City Lord.

"Increase the city's defenses to their maximum. Monitor every corner, every person. If you detect the slightest trace of suspicious activity, report it directly to me without delay."

If they wished to change their fate and avoid repeating the mistakes of those who vanished before them, then everything must begin here—with Jun Wu.