

Starlit Path 111

Chapter 111: A Defiant Overlord and a Perilous Discovery

“Kill! Slaughter him!” Tantai Xuan slammed the chariot’s armrest, roaring in fury. One man and one horse faced fifty thousand, moving freely, cutting from the edge to his very front. It was a slap to his face, followed by a spit of disdain. Cultivators... unreasonable barbarians! Tantai Xuan had suffered too much at their hands—first Beiluo, then Wolong Ridge, now the Overlord humiliating him.

His roar rallied the Northern County soldiers, who charged anew. The Overlord laughed, wheeling his horse, fighting with exhilarating abandon. Blood-red mist coiled around him as he carved through the army, unstoppable under the crimson moonlight. With a final laugh, he broke free, vanishing into the night. Xu Chu and the Western Liang generals, faces flushed, watched in awe, their blood boiling. Defying an army of tens of thousands—beyond mortal limits!

Hooves thundered as the blood-soaked Overlord returned on his black steed. Xu Chu and the generals knelt, fervent. On horseback, Xiang Shaoyun was weary but relieved, tinged with regret. “So close...” he sighed, shaking his head. Stripping off his armor, blood poured out, his muscular frame scarred. In that battle, he’d nearly touched the Body Zang realm’s threshold, poised to unlock the body’s treasures. Xu Chu sensed a change—the Overlord seemed unburdened, lighter.

“My lord, the Tianji School sent word via pigeons,” Xu Chu said, handing over a xuanhuang paper. Xiang Shaoyun wiped blood from his hands and read it. “Dragon-Rearing Grounds...” His eyes narrowed. To dominate the world, Western Liang needed more than one cultivator. His men must become like him, capable of facing thousands, even tens of thousands. “March to Tong’an at once. Take the city. Then... find the Dragon-Rearing Grounds and seize their fortune!”

On Beiluo's Lakeheart Island, a breeze rippled the water. The Young Lord finished his mountain-and-river chess game, collecting pieces into their box. The Heavenly Strategy

chess manual, a Mysterious Grade low-tier soul-forging technique, honed both his chess skill and soul strength. Its nine games grew progressively harder; he'd mastered the first, the mountain-and-river game, after dozens of attempts. He spared no more thought for the Overlord, though he regretted Xiang Shaoyun's failure to breach the Body Zang barrier.

Suddenly, his hand froze mid-move. His eyes flickered with patterns, piercing thousands of miles to a blurry scene: a figure on a bluestone, watched by a serpent-bodied creature with a human head. "A Dragon-Rearing Ground found so soon?" he murmured, leaning back, hand on chin. "But some of the six remaining grounds are perilous..." The eight dragon types—Torch Dragon, Winged Dragon, Azure Dragon, Black Dragon, Red Dragon, Mirage Dragon, Coiled Dragon, Cloud Dragon—were his creation, a foundation for elevating Wuhuang Continent to a high-martial or even super-fantasy world. Mirage, Coiled, and Cloud Dragons were less dangerous, but the others, especially the Torch Dragon, held terrifying power, beyond Qi Core cultivators. He'd placed their grounds in remote areas, yet one was found. Raising his hand, a bronze cup floated to him. Sipping cold wine, he smiled faintly, anticipating surprises from those who survived.

At Northern County's Tianhan Pass, ancient walls stood under a hooked moon, guarding Great Zhou's northern border for millennia. Beyond lay the endless deserts of the Western Rong, whose armies had bled against the pass but never breached it. The wind was biting. Li Sansi, astride a green ox, his wooden sword at his waist, played a lonely flute, its notes haunting the wilderness. A Daoist prodigy, he rarely returned to the sect, instead roaming the border, slaying Rong soldiers.

"Keep going, old friend. We're near the village under Buzhou Peak," he said, patting the ox's horn after finishing his tune. Buzhou Peak, rich in rare herbs vital for border soldiers, was his goal. Recently, villagers claimed Rong raiders massacred their settlement, chasing survivors into the peak, where a dragon—one eye black, one eye white—killed the pursuers. Li Sansi, recalling Wolong Ridge, set out. With six strands of spiritual energy, his cultivation was slow but steady. He needed a blessed land like Beiluo Lake.

In the moonlight, he reached the village, finding it razed—huts collapsed, corpses piled. Sighing, he'd seen such scenes too often. Dismounting, he dug a pit with an iron spade, buried the bodies, and erected a blank wooden marker. Playing his flute, he moved on, its notes fading into the night.

At Buzhou Peak's base, he gazed up, the peak shrouded in mist, exuding an ineffable terror. Tying his ox to a tree, sensing its fear, he climbed alone, wooden sword in hand. The higher he went, the more oppressive it felt, sweat beading on his brow. Dawn's golden light broke, and he stood on a bluestone, panting, running his Spirit-Channeling Sword Manual. Spiritual energy flowed into him, invigorating his spirit.

Opposite the stone, a dark cave loomed, its entrance littered with skeletal Rong soldiers in armor. He dared not enter, a chilling fear holding him back. Sitting cross-legged, he absorbed the ambient energy, his wooden sword across his lap. Unbeknownst to him, above his head, a childlike face covered in red scales, atop a serpentine body with a swollen belly, watched silently—one eye black, one eye white.