

## Starlit Path 147

### Chapter 147: Why Has Everyone Reached the Body Treasury Realm?

Luo Yue was stunned. Though Lu was on Lake Island, his voice rang clearly in Luo's ears—a feat akin to the immortals of legend. It deepened Luo's awe for the young master, the one who had brought an end to the era of the Hundred Schools.

“Open the city gates. Let them in. Perhaps I've been too lenient, giving some the wrong impression,” Lu's calm voice echoed in Luo's mind.

Luo opened his mouth but found no words. Still, he followed the order. The gate's bolts were lifted, and the martial artists outside erupted in joy. They surged into the city, scrambling to be first, afraid of losing their chance. From the city walls, Luo watched the swarm, like ants pouring in, his eyes narrowing.

Once all had entered, he ordered the ironclad guards to lock the gates again. The crowd, sensing the shift, fell quiet, unease rippling through them. Luo descended the tower, flanked by Beiluo's elite guards. “Follow me,” he said, his gaze sweeping over the martial artists. Many were desperate or washed-up fighters, their sincerity questionable. Most likely, they saw joining Baiyujing—now at the height of its fame—as a shortcut to glory. A foolish, laughable notion.

With his saber at his side, Luo led them unhurriedly toward Beiluo Lake. The martial artists felt an oppressive aura radiating from him. As they walked the city's main street, Beiluo's residents pointed and whispered, curious about the oddly dressed newcomers. Normally, these martial artists might have taken offense, but in Beiluo, under Baiyujing's shadow, they restrained themselves, their tempers subdued by awe and apprehension.

Soon, Beiluo Lake came into view.

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On Lake Island, in the second-floor pavilion of Baiyujing, Lu paid little heed to the martial artists. He knew most weren't sincere in seeking to join Baiyujing; they merely wanted to ride its fame for their own gain. He summoned Jing Yue.

Jing Yue, who had been cultivating on the island, was startled. With his sword case on his back, he climbed to the pavilion's second floor—his first time there. Since joining Baiyujing, he'd felt invisible to Lu, save for a brief stint cultivating in the Dragon Gate. "Young Master," he said, bowing slightly, his heart racing.

Lu, leaning back in his wheelchair, toyed with a jade chess piece. Though he exuded no pressure, Jing Yue's fear lingered from the moment Lu had once pinned him to the ground with a glance. His toes twitched, an urge to flee rising within him.

"Planning to run? I'm not going to eat you. What's there to fear?" Lu said, glancing at him.

Jing Yue forced a smile. But your temper, Young Master...

One misstep, and he could end up as miserable as Ni Yu. "You once pledged to join Baiyujing, but I haven't acknowledged you yet," Lu continued softly. "Now, here's your chance. A group of martial artists outside claims they want to join us."

Jing Yue's lips curled. "Young Master, don't trust them. True heroes of the martial world, even if they admire Baiyujing, wouldn't beg to join like this. These are likely rogues—outcasts rejected by other sects, hoping to leap to greatness through us."

As one of the Sword Sect's Seven Heroes, Jing Yue had seen the martial world's underbelly. It held both honor and filth, chivalrous knights and shameless opportunists. Lu smiled, the lakeside breeze lifting his hair. "You seem to know them well. Very well, they'll be your test to join Baiyujing. Nie Changqing and Ning Zhao faced disciplined armies of thousands. Your task is simpler: handle these martial artists."

Lu tapped his wheelchair, eyeing Jing Yue. "Succeed, and you'll be a true disciple of Baiyujing. I'll personally teach you the ways of cultivation."

Jing Yue froze, then clenched his fists. "Young Master, I won't let you down." Hesitating, he added, "Must I... kill them all?"

"You have your own measure. Act as you see fit," Lu said, waving him off.

Jing Yue said no more. With his sword case secure, he turned and left. Lu watched his retreating figure. Jing Yue had joined Lake Island early, a stroke of fate. He was an intriguing man, the most cowardly Lu had ever met, always ready to flee at the first sign of trouble. Fear of death was his inner demon.

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Outside the pavilion, Ni Yu, lugging her black cauldron, approached curiously. "What did the Young Master want?" she asked.

Jing Yue glanced at her, his face serious. "To establish my authority."

“You? Establish authority?” Ni Yu eyed him skeptically.

Jing Yue’s robe fluttered as he pointed across the lake. “A thousand martial artists are gathered on the shore. The Young Master tasked me with upholding Baiyujing’s might—fighting them alone.”

“You? You’ll probably run,” Ni Yu teased.

“Care to bet?” Jing Yue shot back. “If I flee, I’ll take your surname and call myself Ni Yue. If I don’t, you owe me fifteen Gathering Qi Pills.”

Ni Yu blinked, surprised by his gravity. This wasn’t the usual playful Jing Yue. Carefully, he pulled out a polished Gathering Qi Pill, wrapped it, and handed it to her. Adjusting the four swords in his case, he stepped onto a small boat, pushed off with the pole, and glided across the shimmering lake.

“He’s pushing himself,” Ning Zhao said, appearing beside Ni Yu. “He knows his flaws and wants to overcome them. Only then will he feel worthy of Baiyujing. The Young Master gave him this chance, and he’s seizing it.”

Ni Yu nodded, lips pursed. “Can he do it, Sister Ning?”

Ning Zhao tucked a strand of hair behind her ear, shaking her head. “Only the Young Master knows.” She patted Ni Yu’s shoulder and walked toward the Dragon Gate, where Nie Changqing, his butcher’s knife at his side, joined her. They nodded to each other and stepped into the gate.

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In West Command, at the Dongyan River's Dragon Gate Secret Realm, the Overlord donned his armor and entered once more. He crossed the terracotta soldier zone, traversed the iron chain bridge, and reached the floating island. Standing at its edge, he gazed at the central palace, its oppressive aura still lingering.

Taking a deep breath, his eyes gleamed. This was his eleventh attempt to reach the palace. He had failed ten times, beaten back by a shadowy figure each time. Yet he refused to yield, rising with unyielding will after every defeat. Now, he felt his bottleneck loosening—a spark of hope, like rain in a parched desert.

“Eleventh time,” he muttered, neck cracking, eyes sharp. He stepped onto the swaying chain bridge, shield raised, its surface dented from past clashes. The abyss yawned below. Two steps in, the oppressive aura intensified. He braced himself, energy swirling from his qi core.

But, to his surprise, the shadow didn't appear. Frowning, he stared at the palace, took a breath, and sprinted across the bridge. Leaping, he landed heavily on the palace floor, panting like a bellows.

Lifting his head, he saw two familiar figures, spiritual energy swirling above them. “Nie Changqing, Ning Zhao!” he murmured.

Nie Changqing, butcher's knife at his side, his white robe billowing. Ning Zhao, in a flowing white dress, gripped her Cicada Wing Sword, her expression grave. Lu had sent them to challenge the palace's master.

Hearing their names, they turned, their Body Treasury Realm auras surging. The Overlord's face shifted. "You've broken through to Body Treasury?!"

Both nodded slightly. "Just entered," they said.

The Overlord's breath quickened, a flash of envy in his eyes. But he relented, recalling the white-robed young master under moonlight, seated in his wheelchair. With such a figure leading Baiyujing, their breakthrough was no surprise.

Suddenly, the chain bridge rattled. A figure in a flowing Taoist robe, wielding a wooden sword, descended gracefully. As he landed, his aura erupted, a faint spiritual vortex above his head.

The Overlord's eyes narrowed. "Li Sansi, the Daoist prodigy? He's reached Body Treasury too?"

He stood dumbfounded. Why has everyone crossed into Body Treasury?