

Starlit Path 151

Chapter 151: A Taoist from the South, Fingers Forming an Orchid

Xie Yunling's body tensed, a suffocating, icy aura coiling around him.

Who was this black-robed figure?

Appearing behind him without warning, fingers pinched in an orchid gesture resting on his shoulder—he hadn't even reacted. How fast, how powerful must this person be?

As the master of the Dao Pavilion, Xie Yunling was no weakling; he was one of the Hundred Schools' philosophers, after all.

"I hear the Dao Sect has become a force under Bai Yujing... the Dao Pavilion?"

The black-robed figure chuckled, voice hoarse yet laced with a seductive lilt.

It sent chills down Xie Yunling's spine, every hair standing on end.

What kind of monster was this?!

"With your status, getting close to Bai Yujing should be easy..."

From beneath the hood came a teasing tone.

Xie Yunling's pupils contracted.

This person's goal was to target Bai Yujing?

Who in the world dared to move against Bai Yujing?

With Young Master Lu in command, Bai Yujing was the most impregnable fortress under heaven—untouchable even by a thousand armies.

Xie Yunling took a deep breath.

Then, slowly: "What is your purpose in approaching Bai Yujing?"

The thick orchid fingers brushed his shoulder, trailing along his hair to his forehead, pressing onto the crown of his head.

"No need for you to know."

The black-robed figure smiled.

The words had barely left their mouth when Xie Yunling sprang into action. How could he just wait for death?

Spiritual energy surged from his qi core, forming a circular array beneath his feet that spun rapidly, whipping up a fierce gale.

Boom!

The wind slammed into the black-robed figure.

It blew back their hood.

Revealing a savage, ferocious face with a hint of seductive mockery.

Xie Yunling turned, catching the features in the dim candlelight, his heart jolting.

"A barbarian?"

He never imagined the black-robed intruder was a barbarian!

A southern barbarian, plotting against Bai Yujing?

The biggest joke in the world.

"You old fool, your talent for arrays isn't bad. Shame about your cultivation—too low to unleash their full power."

The black-robed figure said.

With a pinch of those orchid fingers, they shattered the array in one strike.

Next, ripples like starlight burst from the barbarian's eyes.

Xie Yunling shuddered, his gaze dimming.

He slumped into the chair, motionless.

The black-robed figure covered their mouth with orchid fingers in a light laugh, then pressed a finger to Xie Yunling's crown—and yanked.

A faint thread of spiritual energy uncoiled from his head, wrapping around the fingers.

A gentle pluck on the thread.

The rigid Xie Yunling stood up.

And walked toward the Dao Sect's mountain gate.

Moonlight spilled down, illuminating his form as he crossed the courtyard, descending the ancient stone steps, slowly making his way down the mountain.

...

Dragon Gate Secret Realm, central palace, long corridor.

The battle exploded in an instant.

Nie Changqing's blade couldn't even breach the ancient Body Repository cultivator's physical defenses.

"Five spiritual energy vortices—he's tempered all five viscera into the Body Repository realm!"

"Be careful."

Nie Changqing whipped his butcher knife in sweeping arcs, unleashing blade qi streams.

Ning Zhao and Li Sansi handled the black shadow.

It moved too fast, dodging and weaving, leaving Li Sansi and Ning Zhao struggling to keep pace.

Overlord rose with his Ganqi axe-shield, glaring at the shadow.

He panted heavily through nose and mouth.

Gripping his long axe, he slammed it against his massive shield.

"Come on!"

Overlord roared.

The black shadow, as if answering his taunt, streaked like dark light straight at him.

Knee raised, it smashed into the shield.

Dong!

The shield dented deeply; Overlord was hurled back several meters along the corridor.

But Ning Zhao and Li Sansi's eyes lit up—they seized the opening.

Diving in, cicada-wing sword and wooden sword flashing, they blocked the shadow's retreat while it pummeled Overlord.

Spiritual energy vortex spun above Ning Zhao's head; qi from her core surged wildly. In a flash, sword light like snow erupted from her buzzing, razor-thin blade, unleashing a barrage of sword blooms.

The shadow's arm took a hit and exploded!

Its defenses paled compared to the ancient Body Repository cultivator's main body.

Li Sansi's wooden sword flicked up; with a "thunk," it pierced the shadow, sending it flying.

In the distance.

Overlord flipped to his feet, wiping blood from his lips, demonic qi coiling around him.

Axe and shield clashed; he swung Ganqi in a frenzy, his roars echoing through the corridor.

"Come on! Again!"

The shadow seemed drawn to Overlord once more, charging, leaping, its remaining arm swinging down at the shield.

The punch cratered the shield with a fist imprint, nearly shattering it.

But...

For Ning Zhao and Li Sansi, another perfect chance.

"This shadow... how much does it hate Overlord?"

Li Sansi clicked his tongue in amazement.

He didn't hesitate: as the shadow's new force waned and old hadn't regenerated, his wooden sword, infused with spiritual energy, whipped out with explosive power, striking the shadow's body.

It flew back.

Ning Zhao struck decisively, her sword severing the shadow's other arm.

The shadow tried to flee.

But Ning Zhao and Li Sansi sealed its paths.

It stopped running, charging madly at Overlord instead, leaping with a sweeping kick.

Overlord roared in fury.

The nerve!

Him again?!

Was he to be bullied just because he was weaker?

Overlord stood his ground, dropping Ganqi, clenching a fist. Muscles bulged, demonic qi raged.

His punch met the shadow's leg.

The shadow wielded Body Repository power; the impact nearly snapped Overlord's arm.

The force sent him staggering back, blood spilling from mouth and nose.

Ning Zhao and Li Sansi closed in, swords piercing the shadow.

It dissolved into black light, vanishing into the air.

Far off.

Nie Changqing was blasted backward.

"Body Repository realm, five viscera tempered—one vortex per organ. Five means all five... it can even spawn attribute spiritual energy."

"This ancient one's tempered all five but hasn't spawned attributes yet. Plus, ages have weakened his qi. We... still have a shot."

"Together!"

Nie Changqing leaned on his butcher knife.

His white robes fluttered; Li Sansi and Ning Zhao erupted with core qi, spiritual energy swirling around them.

Overlord stood, glaring at the towering yet gaunt-faced, green-fanged ancient Body Repository warrior.

The four charged again.

Chains bound the ancient warrior, limiting his agility.

That was Nie Changqing's group's edge.

Dong!

A low growl.

Overlord's body flew back.

The trio pressed the ancient warrior.

Overlord snarled, swinging Ganqi, and plunged back in.

"Focus fire—target one of the five vortices. Break one, and his defense crumbles!"

Nie Changqing's hair whipped as he shouted.

The ancient's defenses were ironclad; attacks rang like metal on metal, leaving only pale scars.

The five linked vortices formed this barrier.

"Overlord!"

Li Sansi had an idea, eyes gleaming.

"Draw his aggro!"

Overlord's face darkened; his axe nearly slipped and hurled at Li Sansi.

"Damn it!"

He cursed under his breath.

But he played the bait, mouth opening, veins bulging on his neck.

Axe in one hand, shield in the other—he banged them together.

Dong dong dong!

Like war drums echoing in the silent corridor.

Murderous light flared in the ancient's eyes; he stared at Overlord, chains rattling.

Next moment.

Dragging chains, the ancient lunged, heavy fist slamming Overlord's shield.

Five viscera tempered—even chained, far beyond Overlord.

One blow.

Overlord nearly blacked out.

The force shattered his shield into fragments.

Axe flew; he soared dozens of meters, coughing blood.

Nie Changqing, Li Sansi, and the others seized the fleeting window.

Li Sansi's wooden sword pressed the ancient's throat.

Ning Zhao thrust into the heart vortex.

Nie Changqing flicked his wrist; the butcher knife spun with a screech, hurling forward to smash the heart vortex.

The vortex slowed, a crack appearing.

"It works!"

Li Sansi exulted.

The ancient roared.

Terrifying aura erupted, blasting the group back.

But they weren't disheartened—they'd found hope, a way to fell this realm's lord.

...

Deep night.

Tang Xiansheng returned to the imperial capital, face stormy.

Rejected by Lu Ping'an without even a meeting—it stung his proud heart with anger.

But Bei Luo's Lu Ping'an carried the arrogance of the world's top cultivator.

Tang Xiansheng had no recourse.

No wonder Yuwen Xiu and Jiang Li hadn't stopped him; they knew his aim in Bei Luo City but didn't care.

Because both knew Lu Ping'an couldn't be swayed by Tang Xiansheng's words.

"Cultivators... above the mundane world?"

In his room, candle flickering.

Tang Xiansheng breathed deep.

He rose, left his quarters, paced until reaching Tang Yimo's door.

Sleeves rolled, he knocked softly.

"Yimo, asleep yet?"

His voice warm, fatherly.

Click.

The door opened.

Tang Yimo emerged in the moonlight.

"What's the matter?"

He glanced at Tang Xiansheng, tone flat.

"Just checking if you're sleeping well. Missing your mother and sister?" Tang Xiansheng smiled.

Tang Yimo said nothing, just stared deeply.

"Chat?"

Tang Xiansheng shook his brocade robe.

Tang Yimo didn't refuse; they stepped out, walking the cold stone path.

Tang Xiansheng's laughter rang out now and then.

In that moment, it felt almost like father and son.

...

Tiangang Mountain, Dao Sect.

Li Sansui emerged from the Dragon Gate; tonight's moon was hazy.

Li Sansi had entered the deepest central palace via the gate—she lacked the qualification but trained hard, hoping to step inside someday.

Exiting to the daoist temple.

Hm?

She frowned slightly.

An unfinished array diagram lay on the table.

The brush tossed haphazardly.

Faintly, Li Sansui sensed something off.

She quickened to the temple door, then the mountain gate, where the little daoist boy sat hugging his broom, staring blankly.

She approached, seeing his entranced state.

Spiritual energy surged; she raised a hand, tapping his brow.

The energy rippled out.

The boy jolted awake.

Instantly, as if grievously wronged, legs buckling, broom failing, he collapsed crying hysterically.

Barbarian!

Orchid fingers, seductive barbarian!

Scared him to death.

"Seen the Venerable?"

Li Sansui asked.

The boy just wailed, trauma overwhelming.

Li Sansui grew anxious, a bad feeling gnawing.

From his state, someone had invaded the Dao Sect, abducting Xie Yunling...

But who besides Bai Yujing's Lu Ping'an could snatch him silently?

And why?

Li Sansui glanced toward Star-Plucking Peak.

Li Sansi was inside—no help.

She entered the temple, grabbed a wooden sword, shouldered her pack, and floated down the mountain.

...

As dawn broke with a fish-belly white in the east.

First sunlight bathed Bei Luo City's walls.

Guards stood ramrod straight, spears gripped, spirits high.

On the silent walls, only ember-crackles from torches in the wind.

Suddenly.

A guard paused.

Gazing at the horizon's glowing end.

A figure approached steadily, unhurried, daoist robes fluttering.

The guard relayed the news.

Luo Yue ascended the wall, frowning into the distance, the silhouette familiar.

One of the philosophers who'd visited Bei Luo days ago.

"Dao Sect philosopher? Back again?"

Luo Yue murmured.

But now the Dao Sect was Bai Yujing's Dao Pavilion.

In short, Bei Luo's ally.

Luo Yue led elite troops down, opening the gate.

The daoist walked the plain, steady, arriving at the city.

Luo Yue smiled, armored forward, cupping hands:

"Senior visiting Bei Luo in the dead of night—to see the Young Master?"

Xie Yunling's face was stiff, eyes fixed ahead.

Hearing Luo Yue, he turned slightly, forcing a rigid smile, raising a hand in orchid fingers—but seeming to recall something, he lowered it.

At that moment.

Bei Luo, lake island.

Lu, mid-Storm Bureau setup, paused with a piece in hand.

He looked toward the city gate, hair stirring, brows arching.

Faintly, he sensed an odd aura.

With a playful smile, he placed the piece—crisp click echoing.

Lu's lips curved up.

