

Starlit Path 160

Chapter 160: Not of Our Kind, Their Hearts Differ—Kill!

Capital, Rainy Night

The battle raged under a relentless downpour, veiling the world in mist. Black Dragon Guards leapt from rooftops, wielding their heavy Li Knives. Infused with spiritual energy, a single slash cleaved a South Command soldier in two, blood staining the ground before rain washed it away. The old eunuch clashed with Tang Yimo, his whisk stirring water into a wall. Though his spiritual energy use was basic, it amplified his strength.

Several Black Dragon Guards charged Tang Yimo, their knives scraping the ground with piercing screeches. Tang Yimo frowned, his spiritual energy spiraling. First Meridian, open. His power, speed, and combat strength doubled, his aura blazing. South Command soldiers, using a simplified Eight Meridians Escaping Armor Demonic Art, erupted similarly.

Tang Yimo vanished, leaving afterimages, too fast for the rain to follow. The eunuch, caught off guard, took a fist to his side, blood spraying as he skidded back, carving a water-filled trench. “Go,” Tang Yimo commanded coldly. His men surged toward the gate, the battle intensifying.

Unnoticed in an alley, a scholar in a white robe, carrying a bookcase and holding an umbrella, watched silently. After a moment, he smiled and stepped forward, his footsteps splashing softly, silencing the world. Heads turned as the scholar, Kong Nanfei, walked calmly through the rain.

The eunuch, rain stinging his face, saw him and cried, “Master Kong, seize this traitor!” Kong, a cultivator who gained the Righteous Spirit Transport Technique from Wolong Ridge, was far stronger than the eunuch or the Black Dragon Guards, who relied on crude methods to gain spiritual energy.

Kong moved swiftly, stepping onto rooftops and settling atop the city gate, umbrella in hand, observing the chaos. Looking at Tang Yimo, he said, "You're Tang Xiansheng's illegitimate son, with little bond. You're a man of destiny. Dying for a traitor like him isn't worth it. Leave him, and you may go."

His voice cut through the rain. Tang Yimo, feeling Kong's pressure as a peak Qi Core cultivator, heard Tang Xiansheng's cough from the carriage. Bound by their deal, he replied, "Sorry." He charged, punching upward, water surging like a crossbow bolt toward Kong.

Kong, unperturbed, recited righteous poetry, his spiritual energy blending with Confucian Righteous Qi, slowing the rain. The water bolt shattered under his invisible force, akin to Lu's spiritual pressure. Tang Yimo and his men froze under the oppressive aura, barely able to move.

"Submit, or not?" Kong asked from the gate.

"No," Tang Yimo replied without hesitation. Black demonic energy swirled as he pushed to open his Second Meridian, a barrier he'd failed to breach before. Today, it was do or die. Kong frowned, reciting louder, his palm gathering rain into a distorted force. As it struck, South Command soldiers collapsed, Black Dragon Guards pinning them with Li Knives.

One guard aimed for Tang Yimo's neck, but he broke free, shattering the knife with a punch, caving the guard's chest. Kong's palm descended, but Tang Yimo, veins bulging, eyes bloodshot, forced a crack in his second meridian. Demonic energy repelled the rain, and his punch shattered Kong's attack into a storm.

Kong's eyes narrowed, impressed. Tang Yimo, seizing the moment, tore into the carriage, grabbing Tang Xiansheng and charging the gate. His leap cracked the gate, but it held. Another knee strike breached it.

Kong's Righteous Qi sent rain arrows, but Tang Yimo roared them away, coughing blood. Carrying Tang Xiansheng, he fled into the night, leaving blood trails.

The eunuch stared at the broken gate, trembling. Kong, still atop, shook his head and descended, vanishing into the streets.

Beiluo, Lake Island

Lu, sipping plum wine, withdrew his gaze. Tang Yimo's partial breach of the second meridian boosted his strength, allowing escape from Kong's full force. "The Eight Meridians relies on mindset and accumulation," Lu mused. "Tang Yimo opened the first easily, but the second, spurred by his father, shows he feels something for him."

The capital's drama ended. Tang Xiansheng's survival hinged on Tang Yimo's breakthrough. Without Kong's intervention, the Black Dragon Guards alone wouldn't have forced such a desperate move. Lu's attention shifted to Beiluo Lake, where a faint glow flickered beneath. "World origin?" he murmured, smiling.

His array was siphoning energy from the mid-martial lord's plane, forming the Five Phoenixes' origin. Low-martial worlds lacked one, and creating it from scratch would take ages. The golden light simplified the process. Lu tapped his chair, floating to the lake's surface. A nail-sized glow pulsed with vast energy. Touching it, a system prompt appeared:

“Congratulations, Host, for forming the world origin prototype. Reward: 100 assignable attribute points, one Heavenly Dao Thunder Tribulation experience.”

Lu raised a brow. “Just a prototype. It’ll take time to fully form.” The Thunder Tribulation intrigued him, but he deferred it, wary of its danger. “Being struck by lightning... sounds thrilling.”

North Command, Narrow Valley

Jiang Li, in armor, stood on a high ledge, his Black Dragon Guards holding the valley’s choke point with Li Knives. Any intruder faced instant death. The terrain favored them, and South Command’s corpses piled high at the entrance. “Tang Xiansheng, still in the capital, dares scheme against me. A life for a life?” Jiang Li mused, eyes narrowed.

South Command’s ten thousand and North Command’s fierce army trapped him, his greatest crisis yet. Closing his eyes, he wondered what General Bai would do, but no answer came. His five thousand remnants couldn’t break out, and the Black Dragon Guards’ spiritual energy would eventually deplete. The valley’s dampness and miasma threatened their survival, though wild beasts and fruits sustained them temporarily.

A scout rushed up. “South Command attacks again!” Jiang Li scoffed, “Tang Baiyun won’t learn. He can’t breach us.” The scout hesitated. “Not their army, but a strange group in black robes and hoods.”

Jiang Li frowned, hurrying to the choke point. He saw figures in black, their sleeves releasing snakes and 蛊 insects, swarming the valley. The Black Dragon Guards, despite their spiritual energy, succumbed—some swelled, others oozed pus, and some died, lips blackened, from snakebites.

Jiang Li's eyes burned. "Southern Barbarian witchcraft?! Damn them! Barbarians in South Command's army? Tang Baiyun—no, Tang Xiansheng—dares ally with barbarians?!" Rage consumed him. The southern barbarians and western Rong were Great Zhou's scourges. General Bai's infamous massacre of 300,000 Rong showed their threat. Now, South Command's betrayal with barbarians was unforgivable.

Drawing General Bai's old short sword, its blade gleaming, Jiang Li roared, "Kill!" His five thousand rallied, ignited by his resolve. The Black Dragon Guards charged from the brush, eyes bloodshot. The barbarians, laughing smugly, released more creatures and fled. Jiang Li, on a boulder, loosed an arrow, pinning a barbarian to the ground through his black robe.

Outside, Tang Baiyun's army charged. In North Command's camp, a scout stumbled in. "South Command sent barbarians using witchcraft, poisoning the Black Dragon Guards, forcing Jiang Li to attack!"

Silence fell. Tantai Xuan seized the scout. "Is this true?!" The scout nodded, pale. "Tang Baiyun dares use barbarians to kill Jiang Li? A hero like him, dying to savages?" Tantai roared, "I fought the Rong to death, and South Command allies with barbarians against our hero!"

His war robe flared as he slashed a table corner with his saber. "To hell with alliances! Tang Baiyun, you dog! All generals, hear me: 'Not of our kind, their hearts differ—kill!'"