

## Starlit Path 163

Chapter 163: Baiyujing Speaks...

\*Beiluo, Lake Island\*

Lü Dongxuan fidgeted restlessly, the teapot simmering, leaves swirling within, but he had no heart for tea. Though he'd confidently promised to act, he now pondered Lu's intent. This Heavenly Decree was Tianji Pavilion's first major act under Baiyujing, a faction surpassing the Hundred Schools. Every command from Baiyujing would ripple through the world.

By the lakeside, Lü Mudui returned from fishing, a fat fish thrashing in his basket. Lü Dongxuan eyed it, hand on his gold chain, as if struck by inspiration. Lü Mudui, sensing his gaze, suspected he coveted the fish. Decided, Lü Dongxuan headed to the pavilion's second floor.

Lu was arranging a chessboard. Unsurprised by Lü's arrival, he said, "Sit." Lü sat opposite, and Lu floated a chess box to him. Lü suppressed his questions, placing a piece. Lu, chin propped, moved his own, the quiet broken only by pieces clacking.

"Young Master, about the Heavenly Decree..." Lü ventured as a breeze ruffled Lu's white robe.

Lu, leaning back, gave a lazy "Hmm," urging him on.

"Three months of ceasefire? Why three months?" Lü asked, puzzled.

Lu placed a piece. "It halts internal wars. If barbarians invade, crush them." He glanced at Lü. "Your move."

Lü played, asking, "Why three months?"

"You divine fates, don't you? Calculate it," Lu said. "These three months let cultivators focus on training. The world's too restless."

Lü's heart tightened. Did Lu foresee something dire? Swallowing hard, he saw the chess game was already lost. Excusing himself, he left. Lu nodded, turning his chair to gaze at the lake's glowing origin.

Lü, uneasy, sat under a chrysanthemum and used his modified Tianji Divination Technique

. His gold chain's cylinders spun, glowing with golden text. Blood sprayed as he divined—a great calamity loomed. "Prepare the Mysterious Yellow Paper," he told Lü Mudui, who sensed the gravity and fetched it.

Lü Dongxuan drafted the decree himself, Lü Mudui stunned by its audacity. A three-month ceasefire? Would the world obey? Realizing it was Lu's will, and recalling Lü's bloody divination, Lü Mudui understood something big was coming. Lü tied the decree to a spirit-enhanced white pigeon, which soared from the island.

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\*South Command, Nanjiang City\*

Tang Xiansheng, trembling, opened the bloodied box, revealing Tang Baiyun's unblinking head. It rolled free, shocking the kneeling soldier and Tang Yimo, who stared, frowning. "Lord, North Command ambushed us with West Command, wiping out our ten thousand. The Young Master... died," the soldier stammered.

Tang Xiansheng collapsed, clutching his chest, aged in an instant. His meticulous plans had collapsed because of Tang Baiyun's barbarian blunder. "That fool..." he coughed, tears welling. The manor fell silent; South Command's loss crippled their ambitions, leaving only West, North, and Great Zhou to vie for supremacy.

Tang Yimo, cold, demanded, "Where are my mother and sister?" Tang Xiansheng, aged and hollow, replied, "Tang Baiyun likely confined them, fearing you'd threaten his position. Now, you can't." He coughed blood, ordering servants to guide Tang Yimo. At the threshold, Tang Yimo glanced back at the frail Tang Xiansheng, then left.

In a farmhouse outside Nanjiang, Tang Yimo found his mother and sister, safe but confined. Tang Baiyun had meant to use them as leverage, but died too soon. Tang Yimo sighed in relief.

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\*Capital, Zijin Palace\*

Yuwen Xiu paced, snatching a secret report from a eunuch. Reading it, he sank onto the dragon throne, exhaling. Jiang Li lived, and South Command's army was annihilated—a boon for Great Zhou, though Mo Beike had taken Jiang Li. While South Command's fall shifted the balance, Jiang Li's capture was a concern. Still, Yuwen Xiu believed he could ransom him.

He tossed the report down. Outside, the old eunuch knelt, guilty for letting Tang Xiansheng escape. Yuwen Xiu, sighing, spared him. "Feed the black dragon; its appetite's grown," he ordered, retreating to rest. Exhausted, he shed his robe and lay down, but visions of a black dragon's maw jolted him awake, soaked in sweat.

The old eunuch rushed in. "Majesty, Baiyujing's decree!" Yuwen Xiu seized the Mysterious Yellow Paper. "Three-month ceasefire? What's Lu Ping'an planning?" He frowned, rereading. "Will West, North, and South obey? Three months... is something coming?" He saw opportunity for Great Zhou. "But Baiyujing treats imperial authority as nothing."

The eunuch trembled, but Yuwen Xiu waved him off. "Great Zhou... ceases war."

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\*West Command Camp\*

The Overlord, reading the decree, raised a brow. "Baiyujing orders a three-month ceasefire? Why?" He ordered compliance, knowing Baiyujing's might—not just Lu, but Nie Changqing and Ning Zhao, Body Treasury cultivators who could sway wars. Despite Baiyujing's aloofness, all factions watched its moves. The Overlord, having felt Lu's terrifying power, knew he was beyond human.

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\*North Command\*

Tantai Xuan, incredulous, showed the decree to Mo Beike and Mo Ju. “What’s Baiyujing’s game?” Mo Ju fanned silently; Mo Beike rested his eyes. “It means what it says,” Mo Beike said. Tantai grumbled, “They think they can stop the world? Outrageous.” But, alone in his indignation, he sipped tea, muttering, “Though, ‘crush barbarians during the ceasefire’—I like that.” He ordered, “North Command... ceases war.”

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\*South Command\*

In a rain-drenched room, Tang Xiansheng lay ill, the defeat and Tang Baiyun’s death breaking him. A servant read Baiyujing’s decree. He laughed weakly. “Right after my army’s fall, Baiyujing issues this? Had it come sooner... Maybe Lu waited for my defeat.” Bitterly, he ordered, “South Command, cease war.”

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\*The World\*

Baiyujing’s decree spread, mocked by minor factions. Could an obscure power halt the world’s conflicts? Even Great Zhou at its peak couldn’t. Yet, when the capital, West, North, and South Commands complied, the world was stunned.

Baiyujing spoke, and the world obeyed.