

Starlit Path 173

Chapter 173: You Dare Try to Convert My White Jade Capital's Sister?

In West County, snowflakes mingled with swirling sand, casting a bleak, murderous aura over the battlefield. Corpses littered the ground—Guifang, Peacock Kingdom, and Xiliang warriors alike—testifying to war's brutality. At the center, three figures stood: the monk, now an evil Buddha with his head twisted 180 degrees, radiating malevolent energy filled with the wails of tortured souls; the golden-haired youth, gripping a radiant light sword, his peak Foundation Establishment power surging; and the Overlord, newly ascended to Body Zang.

The monk's beheading had caught the youth off guard, but it was a minor setback. Though the Overlord had broken through from Qi Condensation to Foundation Establishment, he was still outmatched by their peak prowess—especially the monk, now an evil Buddha with heightened combat strength. The youth glanced at the snowy sky, a flicker of longing in his eyes. To preserve that feeling, he would wield his blade without mercy.

With a stomp, the youth unleashed a torrent of energy, cratering the ground. Each step exploded the earth, propelling him forward. The Overlord, gripping his black axe and blood shield, charged fearlessly. Their clash—light sword against blood shield—shattered the air, the shield nearly splitting with each strike. Newly ascended, the Overlord was pushed back, barely holding his ground.

In the distance, the evil Buddha's rear-facing head grinned wickedly, chanting sutras with red-robed monks. Soul-wrenching wails swept the battlefield, disorienting Xiliang warriors. Even Xiang Family Army cultivators succumbed, some stabbing themselves in anguish as visions of fallen comrades tormented them. The Xiliang forces teetered on collapse.

The Overlord, demonic energy swirling, roared to rouse his men, but it had little effect. The youth seized the moment, his light sword slashing with explosive force. The Overlord abandoned his shield, swinging his axe in a desperate trade of blows. "Who's afraid?" he bellowed. The youth, unwilling to risk injury against a mere native, dodged. The Overlord fought like a mad demon, holding his own despite the odds.

But the evil Buddha's influence strained him. Atop Hu Rao Pass, a bamboo staff tapped lightly. Lü Mudui, in white robes, appeared with Mingyue, the veiled girl clutching her pipa. Hearing the Buddha's chants, Lü Mudui frowned. "Mingyue, can you do it?" he asked.

Her face uncertain but moved by the Xiliang warriors' plight, she nodded. "I'll try my best." Lü Mudui turned to two Xiang Family soldiers. "Protect her." They hesitated but complied, wary of White Jade Capital's authority.

Mingyue leaped to the ramparts, sitting with her pipa. Her delicate fingers strummed, and elegant notes drifted out, easing the soldiers' tormented minds. The Xiang Family soldiers felt relief, their oppressive dread lifting. Lü Mudui smiled. "Who says Tianji Pavilion can't fight? We just wait for the right moment. I scare even myself when I get serious."

Instead of leaping from the wall like the Overlord, he descended steadily, his old bones unsuited for theatrics. Holding a glossy turtle shell with three copper coins, he shook it, the coins clinking as he divined. At the pass's base, he fought, his staff whipping barbarians aside as he moved toward the Overlord, a serene figure in the bloody snow.

On the ramparts, Mingyue's pipa notes, like pearls on a jade plate, slowed the snowfall. The music clashed with the evil Buddha's chants in an invisible, perilous duel. Her fingers bled, cut by the strings, but she played on, her notes countering the Buddha's influence. The Xiang Family Army, freed from torment, gazed at her silhouette, their spirits reignited. "She fights for us—how can we retreat?" they roared, charging with renewed ferocity, reversing their decline.

The Overlord blocked a sword strike, glancing at the ramparts. "Mingsang?" he muttered, then shook his head, emotions complex. "Overlord, I'm here to help," Lü Mudui called, his staff tapping as he sat, coins tumbling in his shell. Divining the youth's moves, he called out flaws and counters. The Overlord's eyes lit up, his demonic energy surging as he pressed the youth back.

The evil Buddha's head tilted, as if seeing the ramparts. Noticing Mingyue's pipa suppressing his chants, he stepped forward, snow scattering. His pace quickened, leaving afterimages as he scaled the ten-meter wall. Mingyue, engrossed in playing, didn't notice, her fingers bleeding, the pipa reeking of blood.

A string snapped, slicing her hand. The guarding soldiers shouted, drawing blades as the evil Buddha's head emerged from the wall's recess, twisting to reveal a blood-smeared, sinister face. "The Buddha says your music disrupts the heart. You must be converted," he intoned.

Before he could act, a white figure shot forward, a foot slamming into his face. The force sent him crashing below, scattering snow and corpses. "Convert? Who are you to touch my White Jade Capital's sister?" a voice rang out.

Mingyue looked up, stunned. "Uncle... Uncle Nie?" Nie Changqing, scruffy with a butcher's knife at his waist, nodded. Drawing the knife, spiritual energy formed a massive blade shadow. "Blade Control!" he shouted, his Body Zang power unleashed, striking the evil Buddha below.

At Beiluo's Lakeheart Island, snow fell gently. Ning Zhao gazed skyward. "It's snowing," she said. Ni Yu, popping a sugar-coated pill, nodded. "Wonder when the young master will emerge," she mumbled, taking another pill. "Three months without food—won't he starve? How can anyone not eat?"

Ning Zhao smiled. "The young master's realm is beyond us. With a single breath, he might forgo mortal sustenance."

“That sounds boring,” Ni Yu said, smacking her lips. “The young master’s a foodie at heart—plum wine, Laba porridge—he loves eating.”

Ning Zhao glanced at Ni Yu’s chubbier cheeks. “The young master’s upstairs. Watch your words.”

Ni Yu grinned, offering a pill. “He’s in seclusion. He can’t hear.” Ning Zhao declined, gripping her Cicada Wing Sword, exhaling mist. A crunch of snow came from behind. A figure in a wheelchair emerged, stopping behind Ni Yu. “Who can’t hear?” Lu asked.

Ni Yu’s face froze, her pill slipping to the ground as she turned, lips trembling, to see the familiar figure.