

Starlit Path 176

Chapter 176: The Transformation of Heaven and Earth

At Beiluo's Lakeheart Island, the moment Lu shattered the world's origin, the entire realm seemed to shift. Above, clouds swirled into a vortex, thundering like war drums before a storm, rippling like waves from a stone cast into a lake.

The Five Phoenixes Continent was a low-martial world, pushed to its limits by Lu's Wolong Ridge and dragon gate transformations, yet still confined by its boundaries. Cultivators could only reach Body Zang, refining their five organs, unable to manifest attribute-based spiritual energy. This was the world's shackle, its barrier.

To elevate the Five Phoenixes to a mid-martial world, Lu had to break these chains. Normally, condensing a world's origin would take centuries, millennia, or even eons—a fleeting moment in a world's evolution. But Lu lacked that time. Instead of dispersing the previous plane lord's lingering consciousness, he used a special array to absorb a third of another mid-martial world's origin. More would have overwhelmed the Five Phoenixes, like overeating.

After condensing the origin, Lu refined its attributes. When released into the sky, it was like a child set free, sparking monumental changes. Lu anticipated this transformation, eager to see if Nie Changqing and others would seize this chance to evolve.

He hadn't intervened during the Five Barbarians' invasion, orchestrated by the wanderers, to temper his people. Pressure forged potential, unlocking growth. The origin's release was his grandest immortal opportunity yet, a gift for all to share.

Little Yinglong, a celestial dragon, sensed the opportunity keenly. Spreading its wings, it grew to ten meters, roaring as it stirred a storm, absorbing the surging spiritual energy. The world's spiritual density boiled, skyrocketing.

Lu, seated in his Thousand Blades Chair, robes billowing, closed his eyes with a faint smile, feeling the Five Phoenixes transform. Behind him, Little Yinglong devoured energy. Island flora—Morning Chrysanthemum, Green Peach—absorbed spiritual energy, gaining sentience. Fish in Beiluo Lake leaped, chasing fleeting opportunities. This was a transformation for all creation.

Ni Yu dropped another sugar-coated pill, stunned. “What... did Young Master do now?” Ning Zhao’s spiritual energy surged, resonating with the change. Seeing Lu, serene and godlike, she trembled. “What are you waiting for? Sit and refine Body Zang!” Lu’s voice boomed like divine thunder.

Ning Zhao sat cross-legged before the pavilion, spiritual energy flooding her, nearly suffocating. Ni Yu and Yi Yue followed, their hearts racing. This was a grand immortal opportunity—a spiritual storm sweeping Beiluo, perhaps all of Zhou. Yi Yue’s once-obscure cultivation method became clear, her mind sharp as energy surged. Ni Yu, under her black wok, glowed as it absorbed energy, channeling it into her. “Like icy watermelon in summer or hotpot in winter... so refreshing!” she thought, face flushed.

As the epicenter, Lakeheart Island brimmed with energy. In Beiluo City, Lu Changkong and Lü Dongxuan, sipping tea, froze. Their eyes met, disbelief mirrored. “Such dense spiritual energy...” Lu Changkong marveled. Lü Dongxuan’s gold chain jangled as he rushed outside. “Young Master’s out! The true cultivator era begins!” he exclaimed, trembling with excitement. At his age, witnessing this was a life without regrets.

Lu Changkong sat, running Earth Treasury Sutra, his mind clear as if enlightened. “Fan’er, what have you done?” he murmured, gazing toward the island.

In the capital, snow buried the Scholar's Pavilion. Kong Nanfei supported Master Kong Xiu as they exited, Mo Tianyu trailing with a pack. A carriage waited, the driver rubbing his hands for warmth. "Master, must you go to Dongyang County?" Kong asked, frowning. Despite holding off the Dongyi, it remained perilous.

"Don't worry about me. Guard the capital," Kong Xiu said, his voice frail. "If His Majesty oversteps, others will handle him. Don't clash with him." He handed Kong two letters. "Send these to West and North Counties via trusted messengers."

Kong's eyes widened at the letters' recipients. "Master..." Kong Xiu patted his shoulder, smiling. "Stay true to Confucianism's heart, unlike your father. You're a good lad." Mo Tianyu, sensing his divination's failure, felt uneasy. Auspicious for the pavilion? Kong urged him to protect Kong Xiu and bring him back.

As the carriage rolled through the snow, Kong Xiu's aged eyes gleamed. Lifting the curtain, snow poured in. A snowflake melted in his palm, and he smiled. "So this was Young Master Lu's true purpose for halting the war three months ago? White Jade Capital... truly embraces the world. I fall short." The Hundred Schools' era had ended. "Even in my twilight, I'll shine like the sun," he murmured. "Pity I can't retire to Lakeheart Island."

In the capital's Imperial Garden, Yuwen Xiu fed raw meat to the black dragon. It suddenly raised its head, eyes gleaming, and roared, shattering the pond's ice. Yuwen Xiu, startled, wondered why it frenzied.

The border counties—South, West, North—felt the transformation most acutely. In South County, the clay figure lost his elegance, his composure shattered. Staring at the rippling sky, he gasped, “World origin? This low-martial world... is ascending to mid-martial!” His body trembled.

South County’s dragon gate quaked, its coiled dragon roaring. A spiritual storm surged, fanning out across the county. Atop Nanjin City, Sima Qingshan’s eyes snapped open, his mind clear as divine whispers echoed. After three months refining his painting in the dragon gate, he broke through to Body Zang, a vortex of energy washing over him.

Tang Yimo, running Eight Meridians Armor Demonic Art, absorbed cooling energy, healing his wounds. Jing Yue, gripping Jingtian Sword, saw a golden spark merge with his sword intent, amplifying it—a thrill like outrunning unbeatable foes. The Dao and Sword Pavilions’ members also transformed, absorbing the energy. The clay figure’s face darkened.

In West County, the evil Buddha and light figure gaped skyward. Atop Hu Rao Pass, Nie Changqing smirked. “So this was Young Master’s plan for the three-month ceasefire?” His Body Zang cultivation neared completion, four energy vortexes forming, the fifth at his heart coalescing. “Girl, seize this chance,” he told Mingyue, whose bloodied fingers resumed playing as she cultivated.

The Overlord, demonic energy swirling, laughed. “Heaven spares Xiliang!” A massive vortex above him drew energy. Lü Mudui and Mo Liuqi meditated, seizing the moment. All cultivators felt the world’s shift, a shared opportunity.

The evil Buddha and light figure, shocked, unleashed their peak Foundation Establishment power, no longer holding back. The Buddha stepped forward, blood and wailing souls surging. But he froze. In the misty energy, a wheelchair-bound figure opened his eyes, gazing at them. A single look snuffed out their courage to act.