

Starlit Path 211

Chapter 211: Black Dragon's Nanke Dream

Jiang Li stood before Purple Gold Palace, eyeing drifting snow—lost, dazed.

Henceforth, no Great Zhou.

He hated once—not jail, but old soldiers beheaded opening gates for him—hate born.

Now settled—no joy, weary, heart-tired.

Zhou's fall inevitable; without cultivation storm, long gone in momentum.

Perhaps Yuwen Xiu couldn't withstand Zhao Kuo rebellion.

War impacted Jiang Li hugely—cultivators overturned war understanding, Soldier School ideals.

Eyed cold desolate snow.

Post-war, perhaps retire armor fields.

...

Yuwen Xiu sank pool.

Garden silent.

Tantai Xuan eyed blood-rolling pool—no joy.

Dynasty topple sorrowful.

Eyed blade-horse kneeling snow old eunuch—Yuwen Xiu final moment accompanied; luck.

Yuwen Xiu eyes only dragon—Master left, Jiang Li, ministers hearts astray; even Thirteen sought dragon gains.

Yet someone remembered.

"Take eunuch—thick burial."

"Also, fish Zhou emperor corpse—entomb Zhou mausoleum."

Tantai Xuan to soldiers.

Afar.

Overlord Qianqi back—battle ended; no need linger; his matters.

Tantai Xuan eyed departing back—grave.

Zhou fallen—next Daxuan vs Xiliang.

Nation-founding war crueler than anti-Zhou.

Xuanwu guarded Tantai Xuan.

Feared Overlord thunder strike kill.

Now best time.

Overlord too strong—vs dragon seen.

Even Thirteen slaughtered solo.

Dare not underestimate.

Tantai Xuan calm—waved no tension.

Overlord garden exit—snow bluestone steps, paused, twisted to Tantai Xuan.

Faint glance.

Tantai Xuan calm met.

Two new kings.

Moment quiet gaze.

...

Steed galloped—Mo Ju from capital to North County, nonstop day night.

Predicted Zhou short—fall.

Then Daxuan Xiliang clash—equally brutal.

Daxuan seemed strong—Xuanwu, god Jiang Li, Mo Beike...

But strictly, Xiliang stronger.

Because...

Xiliang had Overlord.

Body Storage Overlord.

Mo Ju needed invite counter—aid Daxuan.

Else no chance founding war.

Though Tang Xiansheng sought Tantai Xuan—Mo predicted favor but no South County card vs Xiliang.

Daxuan self-rely.

Snow wind—Mo Ju dizzy.

Day night trek—exhausted, hungry cold.

Finally destination.

Buzhou base.

Heavy snow layers.

Mo Ju dismounted—crane cloak, body chilled; cultivator but not fervent—realm no resist cold hunger.

World Overlord peers few.

Besides enigmatic Baiyujing—jianghu few.

South Tang Yimo one.

Late Master one.

Plus... former Dao Sect first, Li Sansi.

Mo Ju saw Tianhan Pass.

Li late annoyed—one wood sword chased Xirong army.

No doubt strength.

Buzhou—Li not Body Storage in, out yes.

Thus Buzhou find.

Melody悠悠 snow—desolate.

Mo Ju lips twitched—found.

Flute lover, ear-grating—only Li Sansi.

Mo Ju snow waded.

Base.

Green ox coiled bluestone—green Daoist ox back, engrossed flute.

Like gut-wrenching, no confidant ends.

Mo Ju shook cap snow, tidied robes—to Li.

Soon front.

Li sensed—no stop.

Mo Ju no interrupt—waited long, trembling snow.

Long after.

Li ceased—eyes open, half-smile Mo Ju.

"Daxuan strategist Mo Ju."

Li said.

Mo Ju cupped hands—breath hot, bowed.

"Ju greets Daoist Li."

Li eyed trembling yet suave—smiled, tossed wineskin.

"Drink warm."

Mo Ju caught—sip, eyes bright: "Tianhan North Bamboo bamboo leaf green?"

Unexpected recognition.

Sip belly—like furnace—comfort.

"How find me?"

"Matter?"

Li gripped snow wood sword—knocked off.

Mo Ju solemn—eyed Buzhou, pointed.

"Buzhou Li Sansi—deeds famous."

"Daoist fury red face beauty—slew North 30k; Ju absent but heard."

"Thus Buzhou sure find."

Returned skin.

Li stunned—shook head: "No fury beauty—one-sided."

"But purpose guess—Zhou fall, Daxuan Xiliang; no Body Storage... need me vs Overlord?"

Li said.

Mo Ju nodded—solemn.

Step back—hands front, grave bow.

"Aid Daxuan possible—I may not win Overlord, but block no issue."

Li said.

No resist—if Daxuan fall, Buzhou domain Overlord; temper—army assault peak challenge Zhulong.

Reason aid.

Eyes turned Mo Ju.

"But need favor."

Mo Ju unexpected easy agree.

"Daoist speak." Serious.

Li flute gripped—eyed cloud-piercing endless Buzhou.

Smiled.

"Help send thing up peak."

Mo Ju prepared bleed.

Unexpected simple.

"Why not self?"

Mo Ju puzzled.

Li side ox—glanced, face twitched.

"Poor Dao... fears beaten death."

...

Beiluo city.

Lu Changkong hall sat—below Luo Yue, many generals.

Eyed lead clouds—snow cold.

"Ended."

General sighed.

Lu Changkong rose—scholar robes to door, eyed snow.

Scout whipped from outskirts—city to mansion.

Dismounted—rushed hall.

Letter to Lu Changkong.

Hall Luo etc stood—eyed letter.

Lu shook snow—unfolded, slow scan.

"Great Zhou... fallen."

Folded—complex sigh.

Master died Dongyang—predicted.

Kong Xiu pillar—lost, tottering tower; wind topple.

Daxuan Xiliang wind.

Letter to generals.

Lu listless.

Hands back—snow court, vanished.

"Great Zhou... defeated."

"Expected—dynasty gone; we... pained."

"Momentum irreversible—like tiger; unless Young Master transcendent... dynasty no block."

Hall generals sighed.

Letter detailed fall.

Capital street—Overlord slaughtered Thirteen.

Old eunuch died before emperor.

Yuwen Xiu suicide black dragon pool—sank bottom; dynasty decline end.

Brief—yet vivid bloody storm, desperate suicide scene.

Not just Beiluo.

Capital spies—soon spread.

World shock Zhou fall.

...

Beiluo lake.

Misty qi veiled.

Lu wheelchair sat—faint eyed hovering lake motionless black dragon.

Little Yinglong shoulder squat—wings clamped, stared dragon.

Leaned chair—slender fingers tapped red phoenix guard.

Tap—dragon heart thump.

"Devoured 437 cultivators, 895 commons."

Lu eyed dragon—spoke.

"Big appetite."

Dragon eyes fear.

"Fished lake—fated hook; many fish, you emerged, bit straight hook—broad path; yet narrowed."

Lu faint—voice lake.

Qi swirled huge vortex.

"Power births good evil, evil things—I foresaw."

"But you first evil."

"Said wrong path—reforge... now changed."

"Great Zhou existed you, fallen you... bore dynasty fate; thus become dynasty dragon qi, cycle rise fall."

Lu said.

Words fell.

Lake dragon unwilling eyes.

Fake pill—intelligence born; no speech.

Wisdom human no less.

Meaning clear?

Dynasty dragon qi... path severed; ethereal fate exist—resource for world conquest.

He devoured world—world his resource; now he resource for conquest...

Unwilling?

Of course.

Ambition—from myriad fish emerged; leap gate, dragon above!

Roar!

Neck gills opened—shook.

Eyes unwilling.

Bang!

Claw slapped lake—crater.

Scales black qi rolled.

Mouth—hot black flame sprayed.

Target Lu.

Shoulder Yinglong wings opened—water surged spit.

Lu stopped.

Dragon defied judgment.

Rebel fate.

Hot breath—lake steam thick.

But...

Dragon pupils shrank.

Because...

White-robed Lu slow rose wheelchair.

Instant—white to black.

Sit immortal, stand demon.

"Dare fierce me?" Black Lu faint.

Terrifying oppressive—dragon rigid.

Breath neared Lu—dissipated air.

Lu hair wild—lake steps to dragon front.

Eyed.

Slow lifted hand—finger forehead.

Boom!

Countless black lights swept—body streamed.

Huge compressed... compressed...

Finally black carp.

Dragon to carp—instant.

Body carp—but dragon soul floated, black dragon pill Golden Core.

Flick.

Carp fell lake—splash.

Tail flick—free vast Beiluo swim.

Carp to dragon, back carp—like Nanke dream.

Dragon reforged.

Left dragon soul, black dragon pill Golden Core.

Chapter 212: Imperial Dragon Qi, Capital Attribution

Lu calmly eyed the floating dragon pill Golden Core and dragon soul.

Myriad silver blades and phoenix plume swords coalesced into Thousand Blade Chair behind; Lu sat slow—black robes to white.

Lifted hand—pill floated to palm.

Fake pill—not true Golden Core.

Besides reforging black dragon, Lu planned dragon soul to dragon qi—affect dynasty shifts fate means.

Human emperors gather dragon qi cultivate—deter evil filth.

Less influenced by evil.

A cultivation path.

Lu Thousand Blade sat—pill quiet front; wails roars within.

Devoured souls—tempered pill; but souls barred true Golden Core—fake only.

Mind stirred.

Spirit pressure chessboard emerged—before body.

Pill floated.

Lu set game.

No Mountain River, no Storm—chose Yi Heaven Momentum third, Human Realm.

In human world—who lives not hell.

Lu calm—placed pieces.

Black white heavy—fell like shifting mountains.

With placements.

Faint—pill souls resentment purified—black light vanished heaven earth.

Dragon soul wrapped pill—purer under game.

Little Yinglong watched board—bored, wings flapped away.

High sky.

Wings clamped—cannonball dive.

Splash—lake dive.

Fish scattered, gulls flew.

Yinglong excited swam—sought something.

Soon claw pinched black carp—carp terrified tail slapped.

Yinglong disinterested tossed—continued.

Circle no target black scale.

Head surfaced—sprawled gate, pouted squirted arrow—played pigeon joy.

...

Great Zhou fallen.

Former officials no resist—no struggle no flee—all knelt exiting Purple Gold Palace Tantai Xuan.

Tantai Xuan scanned kneeling—brows slight cluster.

Sight fell afar—palace gate lean silver armored Jiang Li.

Overlord exited palace—ignored kneeling.

Hooves slow.

Carriage halted palace front.

From Beiluo Mo Beike lifted curtain—slow out.

Saw Jiang Li, full ground kneeling, standing Overlord Tantai Xuan.

Mo Beike complex eyed Overlord.

Overlord no warmth—glance, Qianqi back—led Xiang army out palace.

Passed Mo Beike—Mo bowed slight.

Overlord nodded—brushed past.

Familiar strangers.

Zhou ministers officials—Overlord lazy handle; deliberate left.

"Ju Zi, returned."

Tantai Xuan steps down—rushed Mo Beike side, supported.

Mo Beike heavy bags twitched—light laugh: "Old man Beiluo trip, chatted much Young Master Lu—missed events."

"Urgent—no wait Ju Zi; launched attack—fortunate won."

Tantai Xuan aided—Yuwen Xiu end taught good aides vital.

Like Zhou—if Master lived—different.

Overlord had Xu Chu Xiang army garrison palace.

Self war chariot to gate—let Xiliang army enter.

Army in—black pressed Xiliang cheered sky.

Overlord dismounted—Qianqi to attendant, rapid to awaited carriage.

Carriage graceful emerged.

Luo Mingsang slow out—eyes soft Overlord.

Overlord no mention letter.

Supported Luo Mingsang—slow imperial street walk.

Promised painted empire... soon.

...

Purple Gold front—Zhou ministers knelt.

Dared not move—no change; fallen ministers awaited fate judgment.

Tantai Xuan aided Mo Beike—slow walk.

"Ju Zi, next how?"

"These Zhou officials handle?"

Mo Beike heavy bags—eyed snow palace, kneeling full—smiled shook head.

"King, old minister suggest—only lead army exit palace."

"Capital matters—no interfere."

"Officials—ignore."

Mo Beike said.

Tantai Xuan stunned.

Unexpected such advice.

"Still old minister knows Overlord—cautious Mo Ju perhaps Yuwen suicide instant exit."

Mo Beike serious.

"Power in strong hands; Daxuan not weak—but strength vs Xiliang inferior."

"If King indulges capital glory power—thinks contest qualification... wrong."

Mo Beike said.

"Daxuan no Overlord peer... clash now—80% defeat; King prisoner—all ambitions smoke."

Afar.

Helmet off Jiang Li—silver spear walked.

"King, Ju Zi right."

"Minister suggest immediate withdraw palace."

Jiang Li said.

Knew decision hard—but only path.

"Conquered palace—Daxuan soldiers lives blood... retreat unwilling!"

Tantai Xuan gritted.

But knew right.

Recalled garden Overlord calm gaze—cold sweat.

Power...

Tantai Xuan sighed.

Eyed behind Xuanwu—gritted: "Organize—withdraw palace!"

Mo Beike eyes flashed—smiled.

Jiang Li deep eyed Tantai Xuan—perhaps not wisest king—but listened, adopted advice, analyzed decided.

Precious.

Overlord even weak—no retreat.

Do it.

Conquered—Xiliang paid much.

Temper—no abandon.

"Of course... before leave, one place."

Mo Beike said.

Tantai Xuan stunned.

Mo Beike eyed snow Purple Gold—inhaled: "Zhou library."

Fear no visit—regret.

...

Daxuan army withdrew.

Before—from Zhou library hauled box box bamboo slips books.

Much—took third.

Then Xuanwu Daxuan exited palace.

Daxuan soldiers unwilling—generals indignant.

Especially Xiliang mocking gazes—humiliation.

But king order—no defy.

Officials knelt palace front ground—snow thick.

Overlord hands back came—settled Luo Mingsang rest.

Handle palace matters.

Tantai Xuan exit—unexpected but expected.

Mo Beike return—correct decision; knew Overlord too.

No retreat—Overlord free hand attack Daxuan main force leave all.

"What took?"

Overlord asked behind Xu Chu.

"Zhou library—much Hundred Schools qi blood methods ideas, Zhou laws etc—five carts."

Overlord smiled.

"Mo Beike idea."

"Knows this king."

Overlord said.

"Remaining library organize—Hundred Schools..."

Paused.

Xu Chu puzzled glance.

Overlord eyed kneeling ministers: "Burn all."

Xu Chu stunned—unexpected.

"No issue—Mo took much; burn rest—statement; said abolish schools—done."

"Library all change cultivation methods; black dragon gate develop."

"Strength fundamental—master power, dynasty stands."

"Know why Daxuan withdrew?"

Overlord smiled.

"Their power weak."

Xu Chu scratched head—nodded.

Brain-twisting—fighting simple.

"King, these Zhou officials?"

Xu Chu asked.

Overlord scanned—sharp cold eyes; kneeling trembled.

"Check—corrupt kill."

"Clean—exile."

Xu Chu frowned: "King, no retain aides plan?"

Overlord lips curled: "No need... if plan—Zhou fall?"

Xu Chu—reasonable; nodded.

"Yes."

Below officials chilled.

"Majesty mercy..."

"Mercy!"

"Willing submit!"

Wails.

Overlord ignored—hands back, turned; burly snow vanished.

Entered Purple Gold—eyed high dragon throne.

Slight frown—turned past to garden black dragon gate.

Than gate—throne less appeal.

...

Daxuan army exited—to one six guard cities Yuan Chi—remote capital, confront.

Actually Daxuan held grudge.

Both entered—why Daxuan exit, Xiliang occupy?

Exit—abandon contest; families powers support Xiliang?

But king decision—no say.

Smart generals guessed.

News spread.

Unexpected—should support occupiers families no immediate decide.

Watched.

No fool—sniffed unusual.

Sure.

Shocking news South County—many families pot exploded.

Tang Xiansheng no found nation—spread favor Daxuan.

World thought Zhou fall—triad.

But...

South abandon—Xiliang Daxuan duel.

Families stunned.

Yuan Chi city.

Tantai Xuan flipped Mo Beike Zhou library books—Hundred Schools culture, Zhou governance laws etc—huge value.

Admired Mo Beike—first thought books.

Fortunate Overlord no value.

Jiang Li no remove silver armor—entered.

Mo Beike chair hot tea—saw Jiang Li stunned, thought—smiled Jiang Li.

Rose cup—hunched out.

Space to Tantai Xuan Jiang Li.

Tantai Xuan sensed—put books, eyed Jiang Li.

"General Jiang, no rest? War hard."

Jiang Li calm—eyed Tantai Xuan, exhaled.

Cupped fists—slight bow: "Thanks King trust."

"Now Zhou fallen—minister weary body mind."

"Minister... retire armor fields."

Chapter 213: First Intimate Brush with Immortal Destiny

Outside the door, a fierce blizzard howled.

Jiang Li stood clad in silver armor, the frozen blood still clinging to its surface. He cupped his hands in respect, bowing low with a solemn expression.

The last time he'd mentioned retiring from the battlefield and returning to the fields, Yuwen Xiu had thrown him straight into prison.

What about this time?

How would Tantai Xuan handle it?

Jiang Li's mind churned with these thoughts.

Tantai Xuan gazed at Jiang Li for a long while before finally breaking into a relaxed smile.

“Brother Jiang, you must be exhausted.”

Tantai Xuan sighed. As an heir to the Military School, Jiang Li had always upheld its glorious traditions, but Tantai Xuan could see through him—the man was inherently lazy at heart. He craved peace and tranquility.

He’d rather sit quietly on a small stool, sipping a bowl of delicious chicken soup.

Yet reality denied him that leisure. He had to become a war god, command vast armies, and fight for the Military School’s honor.

Jiang Li hadn’t expected Tantai Xuan to ask such a question and froze for a moment.

“This subject... is not tired.”

“That’s nonsense. If you’re tired, just say so—there’s no shame in it...”

Tantai Xuan patted Jiang Li’s shoulder and straightened him up from his bow.

“If you want to retire and farm, then do it. This king won’t stop you. That string in your heart has been pulled too tight for too long—it needs to loosen.”

Tantai Xuan spoke earnestly.

“Go on, pack your things and get some proper rest.”

He might look like a rough brute, but Tantai Xuan was surprisingly attentive.

Jiang Li stood stunned, never imagining Tantai Xuan would let him go so easily.

The next conflict was with Xiliang Kingdom, and given Great Xuan’s forces, they’d be utterly crushed. Victory seemed impossible.

Jiang Li’s value in that fight was beyond words. Any other ruler would never willingly let him walk away.

But Tantai Xuan did it anyway.

Not just as a sovereign, but as an old friend.

Jiang Li said nothing. A thousand words dissolved into a single deep bow.

Tantai Xuan smiled.

Jiang Li turned and stepped out of the room. The snow fell cold as crystal, swirling through the air and blurring the world.

Tantai Xuan watched as Jiang Li's figure gradually vanished into the storm.

Not long after, Mo Beike appeared.

"Grandmaster."

Tantai Xuan nodded at the sight of him.

"Is Your Majesty truly letting Jiang Li go?"

"Great Xuan with Jiang Li versus without him—the difference in strength is at least thirty percent," Mo Beike said.

The title of War God was no empty boast.

“What, you think I shouldn’t?” Tantai Xuan glanced at him. “You can’t force a melon to ripen sweetly.”

“This king is already overjoyed that Jiang Li helped us conquer Zhou.”

Mo Beike chuckled, the deep wrinkles on his ravined face twitching.

Beneath his heavy eye bags, his gaze fixed deeply on Tantai Xuan.

“Your Majesty mustn’t lose heart. Ju has been gone so long—he must be out seeking aid for you.”

“Seeking aid?”

Tantai Xuan paused.

He recalled that bloodstained letter and shook his head with a smile.

“Forget it... let him be.”

He'd torn up the letter, but denying any rift would be a lie. During the Zhou campaign... Mo Ju truly hadn't been there.

Perhaps Mo Ju had foreseen something and slipped away quietly.

Thinking of Mo Ju still darkened Tantai Xuan's mood. He'd trusted the man completely—his closest confidant, his strategist, his pillar.

And yet...

Mo Ju turned out to be from the Confucian School, a piece placed by Great Zhou's State Teacher, Kong Xiu.

Though Mo Ju had never acted against him.

It still left a knot in Tantai Xuan's chest.

He hadn't told Mo Beike about Mo Ju's true identity.

"Strength... If this king had the Overlord's power, what would there be to fear?"

Tantai Xuan lamented.

“In this era of cultivators, strength reigns supreme... If this king truly holds power, I’ll proclaim to the world the founding of Great Xuan Academy, letting people specialize in cultivation from childhood.”

“The more powerhouses we nurture, the more secure Great Xuan becomes!”

This was his vision for the future. The age belonged to cultivators; for Great Xuan to endure, it needed more mighty experts to anchor it—even serving in court. Only then could it stand firm in the tide of history.

Tantai Xuan and Mo Beike talked for a long time.

Outside, the snow grew heavier.

...

Jiang Li shed his silver armor.

Without telling a soul, he slung a pack over his shoulder and slipped quietly from the camp.

He leaned against the thick, battle-scarred city wall, its mottled stone whispering tales of countless wars.

He'd joined the army at twelve; now at thirty, eighteen years had vanished on the battlefield. Leaving stirred undeniable reluctance.

Footsteps crunched in the snow.

Jiang Li turned in surprise to see a familiar graceful figure.

Chi Lian stood with her own pack, defiant in the blizzard, snowflakes dotting her long lashes.

"Wherever my lord goes, Chi Lian follows."

Jiang Li smiled. He didn't order her to stay—she'd been his subordinate once, and of all his old troops, only she remained.

"Come on, let's find Qingniao. I miss her chicken soup."

Jiang Li rose from the wall.

Chi Lian's eyes lit up. She swayed forward, her slit skirt revealing glimpses of pale legs.

The two descended the wall under the puzzled stares of the guards.

They melted into the vast white expanse, vanishing beyond Yuan Chi City's gates, trudging north toward Beiluo City.

...

Mount Buzhou.

Mo Ju wore a crane-feather cloak, clutching a jar of Zhuyeqing bamboo liquor in each hand.

He climbed from the base, the peak towering high. It took half a day to reach midway.

But he pressed on. Li Sansi had promised: complete this favor, and he'd aid Great Xuan against the Overlord.

Mo Ju knew it was their only hope.

Seeking a match for the Overlord in White Jade Capital? Unrealistic...

He didn't think he could sway its disciples anyway.

Besides, Tantai Xuan had suffered so much at White Jade Capital's hands—why would they help Great Xuan?

Exhaling a plume of hot breath, Mo Ju continued upward.

At last...

He reached the summit.

It was like stepping into a mortal paradise.

Flowers bloomed in riotous color, spring eternal.

The peak held its own world: winter's barren death at the foot, March's painted beauty above.

A melodious flute drifted through the air.

Mo Ju froze. It was the same tune Li Sansi played, but worlds apart in quality.

If comparing...

Li Sansi's was utter rubbish.

The serene notes calmed the soul, steadying Mo Ju's panting breath. He shook his head involuntarily.

As the piece ended, he spotted a young girl on a bluestone slab.

The air suddenly turned murderous and sharp, an invisible hand clamping his throat.

Cold sweat beaded and trickled down Mo Ju's forehead.

"Y-Young... miss..."

He forced the words out.

The girl turned slowly, revealing a flawless face—skin smooth as blown glass, but eyes tightly shut, as if sealed by some eerie taboo.

Her long lashes quivered.

She seemed about to open them.

Boundless death enveloped Mo Ju; faintly, he sensed a colossal beast staring him down.

Terrifying!

No wonder that coward Li Sansi wouldn't come up—afraid of a beating.

This girl was beyond frightening!

“A friend asked me to bring you two jars of wine. He said he worried you'd get bored without any...”

“That friend also told me to remind you: sip it slowly...”

Mo Ju, suspended in air, blurted out.

But before he finished, the girl deftly popped one jar's seal and downed it in a single gulp.

One jar... one swallow.

Mo Ju gaped.

Are you a walking wine vat?

With the jar emptied, the oppressive force vanished.

Mo Ju exhaled and collapsed onto the peak.

His back was drenched in cold sweat—he couldn't say when.

“You can go. Tell him not to send more. If Dad finds out, he'll get a thrashing.”

The girl's voice was crisp.

Mo Ju blinked. Li Sansi was a Body Storage realm cultivator—what was this “Dad” who could thrash him?

He stood, brushed dust from his cloak, and cupped hands toward Zhulong, who cradled the second jar, her pert nose twitching at the seal.

“Don’t worry, miss. My friend is a top-tier cultivator of our age. If he can’t win a fight, he can at least run.”

Mo Ju laughed.

Zhulong’s closed-eyed face tilted up. Though blind, Mo Ju felt thoroughly scorned.

Her expression screamed “looking at an idiot.”

“If Dad wants to hit him, he couldn’t escape to the ends of the earth.”

Zhulong said.

Then she fell silent.

Hugging the jar, she sat quietly on the bluestone.

Mo Ju swallowed, glancing at the scattered white bones atop the peak. A chill crept up despite the spring warmth.

It should have been idyllic: eternal spring, bluestone, girl—like a scroll painting.

But those bones twisted it into something eerie and horrifying.

Mo Ju didn't linger. He bowed to Zhulong.

Then descended Mount Buzhou.

He started slow, but a ghostly wind at his back quickened his pace—from walk to jog to sprint, cloak flapping.

Zhulong sat serene on the bluestone. The peak bloomed eternal spring, beautiful yet lonely.

She raised a pale hand. From a dark cavern, a peach petal drifted out.

On it: a crystalline blue droplet, pulsing with immense spiritual energy.

Zhulong smiled happily, lips pursed.

She broke the seal, tipping the droplet into the jar.

The mouth glowed faintly; the liquor shimmered.

Zhulong lifted it, ready to chug.

But she reconsidered, sipping daintily on the bluestone.

The petal she tucked into her thick hair, as if smiling at the summit breeze.

...

Beiluo Lake.

Spiritual energy swirled; faint dragon roars echoed low.

Lu sat in his Thousand Blade Chair, finally completing the “Mortal Bureau” on the board. The vengeful souls on the Dragon Pearl Golden Core faded, transcended.

Lu held the pearl. Now it gleamed true gold—a genuine Dragon Pearl Golden Core.

A golden dragon soul hovered around it.

Lines danced in Lu’s eyes. The spiritual pressure board manifested mountains and lakes.

He reached out, plucking the dragon soul like a tea leaf.

Into the board it went.

Roar!

The dragon’s bellow shook the landscape.

“This is imperial dynasty dragon qi. With Great Zhou’s fall, it splits in two: one for Xiliang, one for Great Xuan.”

Lu's white robes fluttered, ethereal as an immortal.

His voice carried strange dao resonance.

Above, the plane's origin flickered faintly.

As if echoing his words.

Boom!

The dragon soul divided into two golden streams of imperial dragon qi, surging into the board and flying toward distant lands.

Lu raised a hand, slender fingers pinching a chess piece.

It fell gently.

Plop.

Like a lock securing the qi.

One locked Xiliang, one Great Xuan.

The final contest over the dragon qi? Lu left that alone.

Dragon qi strife meant dynasty fortune's clash.

This was the temple hall battle of the cultivator era.

...

Boom! Boom! Boom!

That day, heavenly anomalies descended.

Above Yuan Chi City, a golden dragon coiled.

Soldiers gawked skyward at the majestic, powerful, noble beast.

Tantai Xuan and Mo Beike rushed out.

Stunned by the sight.

The dragon circled, then with a piercing cry, dove straight into the shocked Tantai Xuan.

An invisible blast staggered Mo Beike back three or four steps.

“What was that?”

Mo Beike trembled in awe.

He stared at Tantai Xuan, who now exuded an aristocratic aura.

As if... he embodied kingship more than ever.

Tantai Xuan blinked in confusion. Immortal destiny?

Was it?

His first intimate contact with it?!

Golden dragon nobility!

Mo Beike's excitement surged.

He wasn't a diviner, but no qi-gazing was needed—Tantai Xuan glowed with golden light.

Mo Beike knelt in reverent thrill.

Not just him—the entire army in Yuan Chi City bowed.

The Imperial Capital.

Similar phenomena.

The Overlord stood on snow-covered ground, gazing at the writhing golden dragon. It plunged into him, his body flashing gold.

After a long moment, he opened eyes brimming with dominance.

The world seemed vivid in his golden gaze.

“What is this?”

The Overlord raised a hand, uncertain.

Even his Body Storage realm couldn't pierce its mystery.

“Dragon qi...”

He looked toward White Jade Capital, eyes sharpening.

“Lu Ping'an... was this you? All of it?”

Unlike the bewildered Tantai Xuan—never touched by immortal favor—the Overlord mastered power instinctively.

With a thought...

Golden light bloomed behind him, a dragon qi pillar soaring.

Four zhang and five chi tall. Beneath it, his strength edged up slightly.

Not drastic, but real.

...

Beiluo Lake.

Lu smiled, holding the Dragon Pearl Golden Core.

A thought...

Invisible flames spread in his palm—scorching, terrifying.

The core melted.

Lu's spiritual sense surged, following artifact-refining manual techniques. The liquid flowed, soon...

Forming a great seal.

Carved with a soaring golden dragon.

"This is the Emperor Dragon Seal. Only dragon qi activates it. Whoever claims the complete seal claims the world."

Lu intoned grandly.

His finger flicked the Phoenix Feather Guard.

Whoosh—the Phoenix Feather Sword shot out, a sword beam slicing through.

The seal split in two.

Lu flicked them like marbles into the spiritual pressure board. Golden light flashed, vanishing.

Done, Lu stretched, body flashing like thunder, gone.

He reappeared on White Jade Capital's second-floor pavilion, in his wheelchair, listening to snow by the rail.

Far away in Yuan Chi City and the Imperial Capital...

Half a golden dragon seal materialized before Tantai Xuan and the Overlord.

Chapter 214: Heaven and Earth Hold Righteous Qi

"Is this... a seal?"

Tantai Xuan stared at the half-seal floating before him, the golden dragon carved so vividly it seemed ready to soar. His expression shifted.

He grasped it; a warm sensation flowed from the seal.

Though no top cultivator, Tantai Xuan had encountered many. He sensed the immense power within, resonating with the new force in his body.

Undoubtedly a treasure!

“What power is this?”

Tantai Xuan inhaled deeply.

Mo Beike observed the dragon-etched mark—symbol of authority and status.

But the seal was cleaved in half.

Another half existed.

Tantai Xuan eyed the severed seal, speechless...

Too hard; first immortal favor—only half.

Mo Beike pondered, heavy bags twitching, gazing toward Beiluo. A heavy breath escaped.

“All this... Baiyujing’s doing?”

Mo Beike thought.

“Ju Zi, this king feels powerful energy within—legendary immortal fate? Never had before; cannot mobilize...”

Tantai Xuan tried dragon qi; different from spirit qi.

“Congratulations, King.”

Mo Beike smiled, cupped hands.

“For this energy—free time, visit Beiluo.”

Mo Beike’s words sobered Tantai Xuan.

“Beiluo?”

First setback place.

But right—perhaps go.

Tantai Xuan clutched half Imperial Dragon Seal.

After Mo Beike left, Tantai Xuan studied seal and qi.

...

Imperial Capital.

Purple Gold Palace long corridor.

Overlord stood; snow kept distance.

“Dragon qi... dragon seal...”

Eyes brilliant.

Held half seal; vivid gold dragon familiar—fought black dragon.

“Great Zhou’s black dragon?”

Seal missing half.

“Dragon Zhou’s crutch; qi fate... Zhou collapsed, split; this king one, Tantai Xuan one?”

Overlord mind stirred.

Summoned Xiang soldier; probe Tantai Xuan.

Soon.

Soldier returned rapid.

“King! Yuan Chi spies report—North Xuan King half seal too.”

News easy; heaven phenomenon obvious.

Seated Overlord eyes gleamed.

“Indeed... seal Great Zhou imperial court; collapse split.”

“World changed.”

“Jianghu cultivator jianghu; court... cultivator court?”

Overlord murmured.

Cultivator era—oppressive; giant hand sky.

But heart heated.

Dragon qi, seal...

Boost cultivation—craved strength.

Perhaps seize other half.

“Other in Tantai Xuan?”

Overlord lips curled.

Slow paced; burly before palace; eyed snow sky; light exhale.

“Summon.”

Guard rushed.

“Call Commander Xu.”

“Yes.”

Soon burly Xu Chu strode.

“King... what?”

Xu Chu puzzled; organized library books, piled, lit fire—called.

“Go Yuan Chi.”

Xu Chu stunned—ah?

Yuan Chi?

Stimulating?

Daxuan territory; Xiliang commander—meat to mouth?

“Fear? Dare Tantai Xuan kill?”

Overlord smiled.

Indeed no; Xu die—Overlord rage; surging Xiang army flatten Daxuan easy.

“Fear? King, age five bare tiger mouth play—no fear?”

Xu Chu glared.

“Go Yuan Chi; bring banquet invite.”

“Invite North Xuan King Purple Gold; this king gold dragon seal joy; banquet admire.”

Overlord leaned carved door; light laugh.

Plain words—Xu Chu shook.

Gold dragon seal?

“Heard North Xuan half... this king check same.”

Overlord added.

Xu Chu sensed unusual.

“Yes!”

Xu Chu grave cupped.

“Dare?”

Overlord smiled.

“Why not?” Xu Chu chest slap.

Overlord entered study; drafted invite; gave Xu Chu.

Xu Chu strode out capital.

Black mane horse; shed armor; no spiked balls; lone to Yuan Chi.

Snow swallowed figure.

But heart burned.

...

Beiluo, lake heart isle.

Lu railed; breeze gentle; snow fall pleasant.

Before: three orbs floated.

Buddha relic—from monk.

White orb—sealed high martial “bone nether fire”.

Gold orb—blond inheritance.

Three systems; three wanderers.

Joy for Lu; hundred schools contention aid.

Stored orbs; faint west fluctuation—gaze West Mountain “trial tower”; surprised.

Someone broke through.

...

Beiluo, West Mountain.

Trial tower.

Kong Nanfei pu 匍 sat; consciousness shifted vast primal forest.

Masked weird beings attacked.

First uneasy; beings Confucian robes; masks, cold eyes chilling; else like scholars.

Vs Nie Changqing battles.

Kong Nanfei elegant—scholar fight.

Masked recited unknown; sky righteous qi!

Kong stunned; killing intent—countered.

Sat ancient tree.

Winds surged; eyes bright; eloquent.

Righteous qi clash—"qi" duel.

Kong qi pill spirit qi; self-researched; stunned—beings imitated deeper.

Qi righteous fusion.

First losses.

But eyes shone; sensed differences; modified.

Boom!

Righteous fierce fire.

Beings melted.

Silence; Kong insight.

Feet array; mystic stairs to second.

Trial tower...

Lu young master said; no hesitate—second.

Needed answer.

Second perilous—beings stronger.

Battles fused righteous spirit qi; recitation spray substantial; pierce annihilate.

New methods.

Each perilous; excited.

Once lost; tower found Haoran future.

Fourth huge blow.

Five Body Storage “Confucians” verbal attack.

Righteous mountains; heat melted half...

Body melted; death grip heart.

Fourth fail; pu ㊦ sat long.

Insight; absorb qi; vortex temper storage; retry.

Fourth passed.

Fifth.

Instant death; righteous burst melt.

No discourage.

Rest; second try.

Blocked thunder; blood pores.

No quit; tree top immovable.

Held heart righteous; nurtured.

Confucian once scorn—soft, technician.

Sages, Master changed—teachings heart.

Cultivator era—Confucian technician essence; righteous manifest; fusion spirit qi.

Weird like Yin-Yang.

But righteous upright clash.

Kong enlightened; eyes brighter.

Recalled library; Master words—what Confucian; righteous from spells.

Kong tree top; leaves rustle.

Around five black robe; tree tops; masks; eloquent suppress.

Kong ragged blood robes; laughed.

Fearless; recitation heavens.

Righteous mouth spray—substantial sword.

Righteous sword sudden slay five.

Kong melted; vanished forest.

Tower base.

Pu ㊦ Kong top “five” blurred “six”.

Awoke; hearty laugh.

Passed fifth—mutual end.

No time fifth reward “origin insight”.

Body five qi vortex; absorb; faint qi armor.

Around pu ㊦ challenging.

Kong aura solid; heart vortex spin righteous nurtured small sword.

“Haoran Sect, righteous manifest...”

“Foe perish, self gone.”

Kong eyes gleamed; manifest unique; Kong small sword, Meng Haoran spear or book.

Haoran Sect—heart manifest.

Unknown.

Lake isle Lu observed surprised.

“Created path...”

Lu smiled.

Stood Master shoulders; but weed path rare.

Tower insight Kong no continue.

Exited; faces turned.

Aura stronger; gasps.

Eyes sharp; hard gaze.

Meng Haoran ran joy: "Master, breakthrough?"

Kong ragged nodded; took Meng wine; gulped.

Heart joy; vent.

"Good, up isle."

Sudden ear voice.

Sleeve wipe mouth; eyes bright.

Passed fifth; young master gift righteous aid.

Curious.

Wine to Meng; pat head: "Cultivate hard; nine qi pill soon; else lag master."

Hands back; snow; sudden five vortex qi armor; snow no trace; vanished snow.

Left West Mountain; rapid lake isle.

Boarded lone boat; pole hurried.

Afar Baiyujing pavilion.

Base.

Kong sleeve shake; cupped Lu.

"Young Master Lu."

Inhaled; tempered storage five one qi armor; Lu unfathomable.

Terrifying breathless.

Lu Thousand Blade second floor; rail snow.

White wild.

Eyed Kong faint: "Said pass fifth gift."

"Perseverance; mutual end fifth..."

"Young Master overpraise." Kong smiled.

Lu waved: "Promise no break."

"See; once."

Kong body tense; up.

Lu hand air wipe.

Qi compressed paper; slow unfold.

Finger dial guard.

Flame phoenix sword flew; fire tail.

Flame brush.

Lu serious; qi paper, phoenix pen; wrote slow.

Kong up; messy hair waves.

Stared void qi scroll.

Fire feather text.

Kong brows deep furrow.

“Heaven and earth hold righteous qi, manifold assigned forms...”

Chapter 215: Tantai Xuan’s Bold Resolve, Founding the Academy

Spirit qi condensed into paper, phoenix plume sword trailing fire as the brush.

Thus in the void, Lu inscribed a poem.

Each character leaped alive, pupils in Kong Nanfei’s eyes contracting.

At first glance, nothing shocking.

But...

The deeper one gazed, the more heart-shaking—a vast vortex dragged the mind.

Kong Nanfei’s righteous qi surged uncontrollably.

He was horrified; tempered heart storage qi vortex emerged, a milky righteous sword manifesting.

He could not control his righteous qi.

What was this?

What exactly?

Kong trembled.

Unnoticed, Lu finished writing.

The Song of Righteous Qi—gift promised to Kong Nanfei, reward for forging the righteous qi path.

Lu sat atop Baiyujing pavilion, ladling green plum wine.

Void text—visible two quarters only.

After—dissipate.

How much Kong memorized—Lu cared not.

Kong's righteous qi surged; mouth spewed righteous sword.

The text like heavenly scripture, quivering in the firmament.

Kong's qi baptized by scripture.

Black impurities, filth—washed away; righteous qi shrank from fist-thick to finger-thin.

Yet Kong paid no heed—gazed more intently.

He recited with difficulty—each word draining vast energy.

Long after.

Sky Song of Righteous Qi slowly scattered—character by character.

Like post-rain rainbow—brief splendor.

Pfft.

Kong exhausted—coughed heart blood; pale, body shook, collapsed seated.

Then wailed.

Lu startled—why cry?

Song meant for insight; Confucian path inspiration.

Unexpected—Kong like child, sat ground, wept sorrow.

From the depths—grief, regret.

“You never saw this text... never the Song of Righteous Qi... regret...”

Kong wiped tears snot.

Lu understood.

Afar.

Mo Tianyu watched; saw Kong, heard cries.

Saw no word.

Lu for Kong alone.

But guessed—special chance.

Kong cried briefly.

Rose—sleeve wiped tears; sky text gone.

Phoenix sword returned guard.

Kong straightened robes—cupped to Lu: “Thanks Young Master Lu.”

No more.

Turned—strode lake.

Step by step—wandering heart firmed.

Stepped lake surface—no sink; flat ground.

Water exploded.

Little Yinglong surfaced—wings flapped, hovered front.

Mouth water swirled—ready squirt.

Halfway—Lu voice drifted.

“No mischief.”

Yinglong slurped back—tail wagged smug sky.

Like saying—see, no mischief.

Kong ignored—all; figure vanished thick mist.

Exited Beiluo—back West Mountain.

Found Lv Dongxuan before white jade tower, hot tea—asked paper ink.

Kong sat—racked brain write Song; but... forgot every word.

Beiluo, Lu Manor.

Lu Changkong no lake isle—stayed manor; precisely garden.

Green buried thick snow.

Lu Changkong cleared stone bench snow; held peach petal—vivid; blue droplet—spirit liquid.

Compressed spirit qi.

Knew spirit stones; liquid... no.

“Compress qi... Body Storage cannot?”

Lu Changkong marveled.

“Fan’er’s strength... ever opaque.”

No refine liquid.

Paced garden—swept snow flowers.

Content, lazy, nostalgic—strolled manor garden, admired snowscape.

...

Yuan Chi City.

Black mane horse galloped snow plain—snow mud flew.

Wall Xuanwu guard saw horse rider—face changed.

“Xiliang first general, Xu Chu!”

Xuanwu grave.

Why Yuan Chi?

Rushed city lord mansion—Tantai Xuan within.

Tantai Xuan emerged—held half Imperial Dragon Seal.

“Overlord values half gold dragon seal.”

Tantai Xuan smiled.

Mo Beike hunched out.

“Let Xu Chu in.”

Tantai Xuan no block—opened gate.

Xu Chu rode in—burly, fierce bear aura.

Dismounted—saw armored Tantai Xuan, Mo Beike.

Cupped: “Xiliang Xu Chu, greets North Xuan King.”

Tantai Xuan laughed hearty—strode: “Long heard Xiliang fierce Xu Chu; seeing surpasses hearing.”

Mo Beike silent.

Xu Chu familiar—once aided Overlord Xiliang.

Xu Chu scorned Mo Beike—sneered.

Ju Zi so what.

Abandoned Overlord; now Overlord Purple Gold; you Mo Beike outside?

“Under Xiang King order—banquet invite North Xuan King...”

“King chanced gold dragon seal; heard North Xuan one; invites Purple Gold banquet; admire seals together.”

Xu Chu presented Overlord handwritten letter.

Wild domineering script.

Tantai Xuan took—scanned; seemed see Overlord mad face through paper.

“This king has seal; but vs King’s—firefly moon; fear disappoint... no ugly show.”

Tantai Xuan calm smile.

Passed to Mo Beike.

Mo Beike read—heavy bags squinted near vanish.

“Today, general Jiang Li retires; this king grieved; plans Beiluo... cannot attend.”

Tantai Xuan said.

Mo Beike aside squinted smiled.

Tantai Xuan knew advance retreat.

Overlord banquet clearly for other half seal; go—cannot leave capital.

Mo Beike advised no contest, exit capital; return now—fool.

Xu Chu stunned.

Tantai Xuan clear—no go.

Jiang retire surprised; Beiluo excuse blunt—Xu Chu speechless.

Tantai Xuan... this miserable?

Cannot beat Overlord; military god retire—Daxuan tiger broke claw.

Xu Chu hesitated.

But no ordinary.

Up—eyed Tantai Xuan; slight squint, frank smile: “North Xuan no banquet—fine... return explain King; but...”

“King joy gold dragon seal; hope North Xuan lend other; take back; King admire; personally return—how?”

Xu Chu words echoed room.

Instant—air froze.

Outside.

Xuanwu solemn appeared—blades slow unsheathed; cold glint Xu Chu face.

Tantai Xuan smile faded.

Mo Beike quiet aside; heavy bags twitched—unfathomable thoughts.

Xu Chu calm; enemy heartland, hundreds Xuanwu stares—fearless; rolling blade meat.

Overlord sent Xu Chu—anticipated refusal.

Else servant scout suffice; no need first general.

Overlord unmatched; lose Xu Chu heavy blow.

Yet sent... Xu Chu rough but fine; grasped intent.

Air confrontation thick.

Xu Chu faced needles—composed.

Face no red, heart no jump.

Enemy camp—like home garden.

Mo Beike bags twitched—glanced Tantai Xuan; light cough, hoarse voice ready.

But...

Tantai Xuan stopped.

“Commander Xu suggestion good; King admire seal—this king grant.”

Finished—pocket half gold dragon seal.

Mo Beike eyes flashed brilliance.

Unexpected—Tantai Xuan bold.

Xu Chu calm shifted slight.

Felt pressure from Tantai Xuan—qi pill peak.

Tantai Xuan handed seal; faint gold glow body.

Like gold dragon coiled, watched him.

Xu Chu unaware—hand taking seal trembled slight.

“See guest out.”

Tantai Xuan said.

Xuanwu eyes anger entered.

“Please!”

Tantai Xuan personal Xuanwu angry.

Xu Chu bully too much.

Overlord bully too much!

They pitied Tantai Xuan.

Hard-won immortal fate; followed long; knew Tantai Xuan fate path hard...

Xu Chu held seal—heavy thousand jin; shook mind.

Deep eyed Tantai Xuan.

Turned leave.

Entered Yuan Chi easy though enemy.

Now exit with seal... back soaked sweat.

Yuan Chi.

Tantai Xuan up snow sky.

Inhaled deep.

“In this era, true power for voice...”

Tantai Xuan eyes fluctuated.

Fate taken by Xu Chu—calm.

Accustomed.

“Ju Zi...”

“This king planned wait victor—found Daxuan Academy... now cannot.”

“From today, Daxuan at Tailing Ask Heaven Peak base—found Daxuan Academy.”

“Daxuan eight to fifteen children all enter cultivate; graduates qualify court, Xuanwu; cultivation rank—titles treatment...”

Tantai Xuan said.

Words firm; eyed window snow; eyes flame burn.

No repeat his losses on Daxuan posterity.

Cultivator era—cultivator court!

Mo Beike body shook—incredible eyed Tantai Xuan; felt bold again.

Founding academy no easy.

Resources... too much.

Vs Xiliang foe—still decide?

But Mo Beike silent; dare not interfere; cannot judge.

Decision change Daxuan future.

Tantai Xuan exhaled slow.

“Prepare carriage—this king... to Beiluo.”

Tantai Xuan said.

“Yes.”

Attendant hurried.

...

Beiluo, lake heart isle.

Lu sipped light.

Watched Tantai Xuan Overlord post-seal attitudes.

Knew Overlord sent Xu Chu banquet—raised brow surprised.

“Hongmen Banquet?”

Lu smiled.

Coincidence; not true.

Tantai Xuan attend—Daxuan Xiliang contest end early...

No insider Overlord; attend—kill easy.

So no fool—cannot go.

But development interested Lu.

“Refused, gave seal...”

Lu eyes lines danced.

Sipped green plum—dumbfounded laugh.

Immortal fate insulator...

Of course, laugh with—admired Tantai Xuan bold.

Plus decision—most showed resolve.

Eyes fluctuated; sipped—smiled.

“Found Daxuan Academy?”

Chapter 216: Minister Suggests Swift Annihilation of Daxuan

Xu Chu rode his black-mane horse through the blizzard.

From Yuan Chi back to the capital—snow delayed him.

Face grave; first tasted Tantai Xuan’s terror.

Bend or stretch; endure beyond normal—how not fear?

Even immortal fate in hand—calmly offered...

Beyond mortal; fate one step heaven.

Ordinary joy mad; treasure guard; die before yield—many bled, bones cold for fate.

Thus Tantai Xuan bold—Xu Chu heart shook.

Xu Chu spurred; eyed majestic Purple Gold Palace; slow exhale.

Rode capital official road—royal city.

Purple Gold front.

Overlord knife-horse sat threshold; calm eyed distant snow vast; goose snow light; thoughts unknown.

Since royal city master—always Purple Gold.

No seek Luo Mingsang; pretended busy; avoided.

Luo Mingsang no see him.

Overlord shook head; rubbed temples.

Xu Chu returned.

Rapid royal city—Purple Gold.

Saw threshold Overlord—Xu Chu stunned; no banquet prep?

Guessed Tantai Xuan no return.

“Back?”

Overlord eyed Xu Chu; smiled.

Xu Chu slight bow; pocket Tantai Xuan half gold dragon seal.

“King, North Xuan refuse banquet; subordinate said King love seal; thus North Xuan let bring for Majesty admire.”

Xu Chu said.

Overlord face no great surprise.

Mo Beike there—Tantai Xuan no attend.

But Xu Chu brought seal—some surprise; Tantai Xuan truly yield?

Took Xu Chu seal; held warm; carved gold dragon—half.

Overlord took his half.

Joined.

Seams tight—once one; split two.

Overlord body dragon qi surged; wrapped complete seal.

Gold dragon seem alive.

But... calm again.

“No?”

Overlord separated; frowned.

Other seal... not his?

Overlord thoughtful.

“King...”

Xu Chu aside bowed; face tangled; words unsure.

“North Xuan... bend stretch; no ordinary; King beware.”

Xu Chu said.

“Minister thinks—before Daxuan strong... annihilate.”

Xu Chu serious.

Truly; grave.

Feared Tantai Xuan.

Own lord—joy; enemy—nightmare; unrest.

Overlord held seal; eyes flickered; Xu Chu words tempted.

But eyed seal—shook head.

Seal appear strange; behind manipulator?

If annihilate Daxuan army—seal maker act?

Seemed easy kill Tantai Xuan; crush Daxuan.

Actually no.

Plus...

Tang Xiansheng.

South County Tang support Daxuan; South plus Daxuan—Overlord wary.

South no nation; but near.

Battle strong—Tang Yimo.

Thought occupy capital; families attach...

But counties families watch Daxuan Xiliang.

Snow blew; goose vast.

Overlord held two seals; distant sky.

Zhou fallen; world contest darker tides.

...

Capital anti-Zhou end news rapid South County.

Of course.

Also notable—Baiyujing; trial tower... break shackles chance?

Jianghu cultivators stunned.

Vs court; jianghu care cultivation.

Baiyujing authority; trial tower extraordinary.

Tang Yimo hall sat.

Sima Qingshan book box back; behind cheap disciple An Miaoyu.

“Qingshan brother? Leaving?”

Tang Yimo saw box—stunned; rose.

Sima Qingshan smiled: “No endless banquet; continue wander; as Young Master Lu said—paint path insight; roam world; view all draw all.”

“Plus Baiyujing trial tower interest; bottleneck; seek break.”

Sima Qingshan said.

Tang Yimo no persuade.

Sima path different bitter; insight; one paint epiphany soar.

Trial tower interest Tang Yimo.

Break shackles—his?

“Farewell.”

“Brother Tang, later.”

Sima Qingshan cupped.

Behind red cloak An Miaoyu slight curtsy.

Then shoulder left Tang manor; An Miaoyu umbrella; drizzle; figures rain curtain vanish.

Tang Yimo hands back; door stood; pondered long.

Sima Qingshan An Miaoyu left manor—South Jiang city; south.

South Jin city.

South Jin serene; rain hazy; wars washed—still.

Aged story city.

An Miaoyu oil umbrella; eyed mottled old—like scarred strong; stood.

“Master hometown?”

An Miaoyu red lips; curious expect.

Sima Qingshan nostalgic smile; led An Miaoyu in; gate South army saw—smiled; knew.

Once fought side.

In; many greet; rain South Jin desolate.

Blue stone water puddles.

Sima Qingshan led; familiar faces greet.

Some remain; some gone.

War cruel; post-war lingered.

An Miaoyu quiet follow; unhurried.

Sima visited every corner; memories.

Then back mountain; mid height; cliff view South Jin.

Distant—vast battlefield.

“Miaoyu, regret paint sect?”

Sima cliff; qingshan rain wind swayed.

Soft asked.

Behind umbrella; red cloak; rain breeze.

An Miaoyu fair cheeks flushed.

“No regret.”

“Paint sect good.”

Sima smiled.

Box scroll; sudden unfold; float air; took brush; An Miaoyu ground ink.

Sima penned; like rain; ink bloom scroll.

Eyed rain South Jin.

Continued.

Not city—simple small building; rain quiet; below plantain.

Finished.

Sima before building penned.

Plaque four words: Paint Sect · Ink Tower.

An Miaoyu eyes bright; Sima light laugh.

Hand shake.

Scroll brocade shook; rustle.

An Miaoyu saw—mountain flat; ink small tower stood.

“Today—paint sect gate.”

Sima eyed An Miaoyu.

“No despise poor... master poor.”

An Miaoyu lips smile.

“This scroll keep; future you guard.”

Sima said.

Hand call.

Ink tower scroll again; rolled; gave An Miaoyu.

An Miaoyu took; cloth case; inserted; back; lips smile.

Two wordless; down mountain.

Figures drizzle blue stone road drip.

“Master, next where?”

“Miaoyu, world first cultivator force heard?”

“Baiyujing?”

“Yes, next Baiyujing... trial tower.”

“Good.”

...

Beiluo out.

Vast snow plain; two figures trudged.

Jiang Li conical hat; blocked snow; eyed immortal qi Beiluo; deep inhale.

First Beiluo.

Chi Lian familiar; once came.

Snow plain long trails; soon city base.

Gate Luo Cheng saw Chi Lian Jiang Li—stunned; opened.

Jiang Li in; first saw Beiluo prosper.

Beiluo streets carts horses; vendors cries; food scents lanes.

Jiang Li marveled; Baiyujing pure land.

Eyed sky white jade tower; oppressive; mind crack.

Horrified tower.

Jiang Li Chi Lian enter instant—Lu sensed.

Lu no Luo Cheng bring lake isle; self drink; place pieces.

Jiang Li arrive no ripple.

Outside storm military god; Beiluo no special.

Lu chin hand; piece chessboard.

Body momentum.

Chess momentum.

Human Realm harder previous; like hundred human states.

Board end.

Lu leaned Thousand Blade.

Held bronze cup; drank.

Trial tower all effort cultivate.

Kong Nanfei wrote Song; entered; fifth insight remain.

But path special; likely skip attribute qi; righteous attribute.

Saved attribute process.

Thus Lu expect; Kong use insight impact Heaven Lock.

Who first Heaven Lock?

Lu anticipated.

Leaned wheelchair.

Eyed snow sky; squinted.

Mind stirred.

System panel jumped.

Sight shift; odd [Heavenly Dao Thunder Punishment Experience Reward].

Then up; long unused dusty [Preaching Platform].

Refine qi layer four.

Preaching Platform... pull new.

Chapter 217: Why Did You Steal My Heavenly Tribulation?!

Lu's gaze settled on the Preaching Platform entry.

Thoughtful.

After four experiences, he grasped patterns: each qi refinement layer unlocked one pull.

Daily use for arrays, secret realms, derivations—no limit.

Finger tapped phoenix guard.

Pondered—smiled.

No immediate pull.

Shifted to prior reward.

“Heavenly Dao Thunder Punishment once...”

“Thunder as reward—amusing.”

Lu light laugh.

Cautious with punishment; pre-layer four unsafe—unused.

Now layer four—time taste.

Mind stirred—entered reward.

System prompt popped.

“Risk exists; confirm?”

Lu stunned—repeated confirm; dangerous.

But chosen— no retreat.

Confirmed.

Curious why reward; differ from origin rewards?

“Confirm; issuing... countdown 3, 2, 1...”

Prompt text; ticking.

At “1” —

Vision black; vast vortex sucked soul; consciousness yanked endless dark.

“Top mid-martial peak expert tribulation experience.”

Dark prompt.

Darkness cleared; Lu sat bamboo chair; four crones carried; scenery flew; wind howled ears.

Lu brow raised.

Eyed crones—white robes; solemn; leaps wind lightning.

“Top mid-martial?”

Lu murmured.

Four Golden Core chair bearers!

Leap ten li; faster steeds.

But clouds oppressed—giant hand heart grip.

“Plane origin... Heavenly Dao.”

Lu focused.

Up; lines danced eyes; pierced clouds; saw star-vast origin; sun blaze.

Prior orchid Golden Core mid-martial—firefly; this moon!

Vast gap!

Top mid-martial might?

Lu lips curled—interest.

How long make Wuhuang match?

Anticipated.

“Tianxu Prince; world first spear Du Longyang tribulates Martial Emperor City top; experts gather; delay miss spectacle.”

One crone to Lu.

Lu recovered; leaned; light cough.

Faint: "Urging?"

Glanced speaker.

Crone chilled; terrified: "Prince... slave wrong! Mercy!"

Lu taken aback.

Tianxu no saint; bad temper.

"Hurry Martial Emperor City."

Lu said.

"Yes."

Four Golden Cores fearful nod; ghost carry; rapid vanish.

Golden Core bearers—stimulating.

Lu smiled.

Speed extreme; leap ten li; swift flight.

“Real world...”

“Seize body? Temporary...”

Lu pondered chair.

Sensed qi density—near lake isle.

Ordinary spot.

Blessed lands—how fearsome?

Top mid-martial?

Lu thoughtful; reward profound; glimpse top mid.

Thus—high martial?

Lu deep breath.

Wuhuang to high, super fantasy—long road.

As pondered.

Crones sudden stop.

Lu aware; around low peak—not city.

“Prince; Du tribulates; city sealed; cannot enter; view here.”

Crone said.

Lu brow; nod: "Good."

Crone lowered chair.

Lined behind; two suona; one pipa; one sack...

Next.

Suona blew; pipa strummed.

Sack crone scattered petals.

Lu: "..."

Ask system swap role?

But brow focused.

Around terrifying auras burst.

“Haha! Tianxu came; fear Du spear poke?”

“Tianxu Palace Martial Emperor foes; Du success shatter void; Tianxu done.”

“Like Bitter Buddha no grudge.”

Auras surged; soul voices echoed.

Lu chair; eyed around.

West bare monk muscles; fist-beads neck.

East charming noble woman.

North one-arm knife; taller blade... laughed.

Lu wary; strong; without demon—lose.

Interesting.

Lu squinted.

Not just; afar cloud city; experts lurked or stirred.

City wall top.

Black robe spear ground; momentum gathered.

Saw—Lu squinted.

Faint brow small figure palms sky; glare.

Extreme strong!

Rumble!

Sky ink surged.

Thunder brewed; destroy aura.

Origin sun Dao thunder—far stronger Wuhuang nascent.

Lu leaned wood; finger tap guard habit.

Behind crones suona pipa.

Sack petals endless.

“Stop.”

Lu glanced: “Tribulation... serious.”

Lu grave.

Crones froze; music halt.

Sack crone hesitated; clutched petals.

Around tops heard.

One-arm knife “pfft” laughed.

“Tianxu smash...”

“Make Du laugh; thunder kill?”

“Tianxu black heart dirty.”

Experts roared; echo city.

Lu speechless; they sinister.

Martial Emperor top.

Du unmoved.

Sudden eyes open.

Mad hair wild.

Outside laughs abrupt; experts grave stared top.

Lu guessed; post-tribulation war.

But... unrelated then.

“Prince; sword.”

White crone six cm mini sword.

Lu expressionless took; glanced.

Continued city.

Boom!

Thunder denser.

Lu focused: "Beyond attribute; rule trace..."

Analyzed formation.

Crones heard murmur unknown; exchanged odd glances.

Today Tianxu different.

Finger tap.

Air heavier; thunder arcs spread.

Sizzle...

Arc jumped eye; smoke.

Oppression silenced all.

Lu lines analyzed; rare study.

Dissect Dao origin thunder.

Once thought trash reward—now; well used rival thousand points.

Boom!

City top black moved.

Robe wild; spear slow raised sky thunder.

Roar soul; rival thunder.

Clouds split.

Instant day.

Endless thunder sea.

Dense clouds danced.

Du foot wall; spear intent burst; pierce heavens.

Finally.

Clouds shattered.

Experts watched; vertical thunder straight; eye uncatch; air scorched.

But Du blocked.

Qi tide vortex.

Spear met; qi intent hold.

Whump!

Muffled thunder Du.

Du unmoved.

Day dimmed.

Next brewed.

Second fell.

Du robe; spear sky pierce; shadows; one clash!

Silence.

Only Du booms.

Lu finger tap; each thunder primitive stack eyes.

Array combos behind.

“Last!”

East noble woman.

Final brewed.

Du charred tensed; spear; focus; brow small figure.

Last; pass shatter void immortal.

Fail ash.

“Come!”

Du eyes blaze; lone against heaven.

Lu excited.

Last.

Counted: three waves; first mild five; second three... third one.

Triple nine.

But observed; not strongest; combos six eighteen; nine eighty-one!

Rumble!

All breathless.

Last.

Du pass shatter immortal!

Boom!

Sky lit!

Dazzle!

Dragon thunder crashed; straight; Golden Core touch annihilate.

Du spear intent.

Come!

Today city break tribulation!

Immortal!

“Note: Heavenly Dao Thunder Punishment experience begins...”

Sudden.

Watching Lu prompt popped.

Lu stunned.

Afar.

Du aura stalled.

World uproar.

Final thunder...

Detoured!

No city top Du; bent south peak.

World stunned.

Four crones stunned.

Dropped suona pipa; fled.

Sack crone petals scatter...

Four leaped ten li.

But thunder near.

Crones blood cough; wail blasted.

Terror thunder peak Tianxu Prince.

World shocked.

Always beaten Tianxu; last moment stole thunder?!

Bamboo chair.

Lu no slack.

Palms slapped arms; chair exploded.

Lu slow rose peak.

White to black.

Interested eyed thunder.

Hands spread.

Back...

Thousand silver bloomed; phoenix cry...

Demon qi three phoenix swords crossed; rushed sky thunder.

World stunned.

Rose demon Tianxu; hidden deep?!

City top.

Du focused; roar: "Wrong!"

"Not Tianxu! Who?!"

"Why steal my tribulation?!"

Lu black hair; ignored.

Stared thunder; three swords collided.

Terror blaze...

Lit world.

Chapter 218: Little Yinglong, Despairing of Life

Lu never expected the Heavenly Dao Thunder Punishment reward... to unfold like this.

Possessing a top mid-martial powerhouse, watching a tribulation show.

He thought that was it—harvest vast; saw origin mechanics.

Return Wuhuang; derive in Preaching Platform; implement plane origin.

But reward more.

Finale...

Hijacked the tribulator's thunder—onto himself.

Lu speechless.

Only say...

Thrilling play.

Tribulation detour—eye-exploding; never seen.

Heavenly tribulation; utmost yang rigid.

Opposite Tianxu cultivation; incompatible; Tianxu watching Du Longyang already hard...

Now stole Du's tribulation?

Where Du reason?

World shock!

"Not Tianxu!"

Du top Martial Emperor; eyes torch lightning.

Stared black-robed demon Lu.

Phoenix swords three flame blooms; thousand blades dense around.

Demon qi twined silver-black lotus.

Final thunder collided lotus; arcs exploded heavens earth.

Peak flattened; four white crones blood cough blasted; sacrificed Golden Cores resist.

Shocked.

Tianxu this strong?

Hid deep? No wonder eye contact electric—fear?

Boom!

Thunder strong; Lu soul-manifest swords blades not true; strained.

But face unchanged.

Black wild; fist.

Mind stir.

Drop god-demon blood floated palm.

Hair floated; tribulation Dao will devour.

“Detected.”

Lu smiled.

Eyes grave.

Top mid origin—not weak orchid mid.

Prior—entry mid.

Exhale.

Tribulation will—thunder dragon.

Roar.

Waves swept; city walls hit.

City experts array; blocked waves.

Lu crushed blood.

Wondered use; now clear...

Drop stimulates immortal demon body strike.

Scorching heat surged.

Body jade fair.

Fist.

Dragon shattered.

Instant white; all closed eyes.

Some not.

Du top; west monk; east noble; north knife; hidden tops...

Saw thunder.

Tianxu fingers grab.

Dragon shrank snake; soul covered ball.

Tianxu evil curl; mouth; threw ball in.

Tops stunned.

Tribulation... eaten?

Light cleared; clouds slow vanish.

Tianxu smiled.

Step back.

Thousand silver converged wheelchair.

Sat; black faded white.

World silent.

Then...

Boiled.

City Du roared.

“Who?!”

Tianxu?

Daily beaten; knew strength.

Means familiar?

Du spear intent boiled rage peak; tribulation stolen; immortal chance gone.

Resent?

Lu Thousand Blade.

Slow smile.

Finger dial guard; three red shot; phoenix heat extreme.

Board front.

Sleeve clip; placed; black white four each.

Instant silver flash.

Sky silver eight-petal lotus.

Petals runes.

“Qian heaven, Dui lake, Li fire, Zhen thunder, Xun wind, Kan water, Gen mountain, Kun earth...”

Dao chant.

Center three phoenix; lotus heart.

Boom!

Du intent; spear void hole.

World strike lotus.

Du body lotus pressed back.

Before city.

Ground crater lotus pit.

Void.

Silver dispersed.

Tianxu smile vanished; face brush yin pale.

Tianxu gasped; shaky eyes open.

Sudden.

Pillar auras.

West monk; north knife; east woman... city furious Du.

Tianxu instant suppressed immobile.

Du void blasted front.

Eyes fire.

“Return tribulation! Return!”

Du clawed Tianxu mouth mad explode.

Suppressed clawed Tianxu...

Dazed.

...

Beiluo, lake heart isle.

Baiyujing second floor.

Lu slow opened; snow full body thick.

Opened; snow melted.

“Hu...”

Exhale thunder arc; air cracked.

White wild; leaned wheelchair; mouth thunder bead spat.

Spat; weak.

Soul drain; plus drop blood vs top mid fatigue.

“But worth.”

Lu smiled.

Pinched bead.

Thunder dragon origin impact.

“No loss...”

Lu eyes brighter.

Vs visited top mid; Wuhuang weak.

Different levels.

Main origin gap.

Now... bridge.

Slow.

Hand raise call.

Beiluo parted.

Supine lazy lake floating Little Yinglong stunned; water gone; plummeted.

Flapped shrink wings.

Ball smashed bottom; mud splash.

Yinglong mud flapped joy.

Lu speechless kid.

Finger flick; bead bottom.

Hand void grab; runes suppress; like prior plane lord soul.

Same.

Even...

Vs lord soul; dragon better top mid origin link.

Quiet grow Wuhuang origin.

But saw power; low key.

Just stirred storm.

Now touch origin—no good.

Mud playing Yinglong saw suppressed bead struggling dragon; face tight; mud scales flared fierce.

Lu wave.

Parted water crashed.

Yinglong flushed dazed.

Long; surfaced; pout; “squirt” water arrow Lu.

Lu wheelchair; smile.

Hand circle.

Yinglong mouth water ring sealed...

Yinglong panic struggle; giant force huge body—no escape...

Isle.

Master grave; Mo Tianyu divining looked lake waves struggling Yinglong; expressionless.

Days; used Yinglong antics.

First played; face squirts.

Once near pierced frail; near death pain.

No Lu qi heal—join Master.

Sad; Mo Tianyu... worse dragon.

But lose dragon no shame.

Lu Ping'an dragon!

Lake long antics Yinglong despair.

Nostrils huff.

Quit; supine lake float ball drift.

Look...

Despairing life.

Leaned wheelchair Lu satisfied smile.

Mischief; continue...

Checked panel; soul fine; recover.

Demon blood no.

Physique five drops; one used four.

Points irrecoverable; drop less drop.

But least knew use.

Not bad.

Calm lake; poured green plum; Mountain River to Human Realm.

Recover soul.

...

Beiluo out.

Carriage slow; dozen Xuanwu guard; wheels snow furrows.

Curtain lifted.

Goose snow.

Mo Beike thick cloak; bamboo scroll; eyed majestic mystic Beiluo; nostalgic.

“Lu Changkong...”

Tantai Xuan shook; if Lu Changkong no marry mother; now brother-in-law.

Pity...

“Announce; no North Xuan King; Tantai family Tantai Xuan visit.”

Tantai Xuan to mounted Xuanwu.

Guard nod; spurred.

Wall.

Luo Cheng saw carriage; odd face.

North Xuan chase Jiang Li?

Jiang Li just in; Tantai Xuan...

But rapid Lu manor; North Xuan visit inform Lu Changkong.

Manor.

Felt strong qi缠.

Luo Cheng joy; city lord break?

Qi收.

Lu Changkong hands back; robes fur out; sensed Luo Cheng; smiled.

“Little Cheng; what?”

Lu Changkong.

“Sir; North Xuan wall base.”

Luo Cheng cupped.

“North Xuan... Tantai Xuan?”

Lu Changkong stunned.

Nod; wall.

Luo Cheng knife follow curious: "Sir break?"

Lu Changkong smile stroke beard; Lu drop pure; tempered three storages.

One heart; Body Storage full; attribute qualify.

"Ok; small; barely two."

Lu Changkong laugh.

Luo Cheng envy.

Speed... fast!

Sir near full.

He qi pill peak.

Effort!

Luo Cheng thought dazed... recalled wall nun shadow.

Mo Chou Body Storage?

Soon; talent monstrous; easy.

Thought tense urgent.

Lu Changkong fast; steps snow pulled.

Luo Cheng ran keep.

Wall base.

Dragon blood saw Lu Changkong; back step bow.

Lu Changkong nod.

Gate open.

Carriage in; dozen Xuanwu enter Beiluo.

Lu Changkong cold hum.

“My Beiluo; so many guards; fear harm? If kill; not enough.”

Lu Changkong.

Past Tantai Xuan attacked; grudge.

Tantai Xuan lifted; saw Lu Changkong; bitter smile.

“No vs Beiluo; vs Xiliang assassinate...”

Tantai Xuan out; shook robes; beside Lu Changkong.

Eyed long.

Step back cupped.

Lu Changkong knew apology; past Tantai West Commandery; Lu Zhou guard; camps differ.

Lu Changkong hum; Tantai Xuan smile dismiss Xuanwu; shoulder walk.

City; snow light fall.

...

Lake isle.

Lu sensed Tantai Xuan enter.

Brow raise.

No surprise; just lost fate “gold dragon seal”; resent; ordered Daxuan Academy.

Come discuss founding.

But saw reminisce Lu Changkong; Lu smiled.

Mind stir.

Entered [Preaching Platform].

Entered; prompts rolled.

“Ding Jiudeng (pawnshop bald clerk Liangzhou) enters.”

“Liu Yuanhao (Black Dragon Gang young master) enters.”

“Ximen Xianzhi (Sword Sect seven heroes chief) enters.”

Chapter 219: Thirty-Six Preaching Immortal Pearls

Lines of prompt text scrolled before Lu’s eyes.

He raised a brow—newcomers, as expected.

And this batch had intriguing identities.

Mind stirring, his thoughts sank into the Preaching Platform.

...

Spirit qi roiled, forming myriad shapes—roaring dragons, soaring phoenixes, each divine.

At the platform's center, three figures condensed—blurred, faces unclear, but outlines visible.

Ximen Xianzhi bore a sword case with only two blades. As Sword Sect's chief hero, his cultivation long surpassed the sect's divisions, entering cultivator realms.

He scanned surroundings—sudden stranger land; surprise, curiosity.

Originally atop Zhongnan peak, snow-practicing sword; one slash—here.

Ximen Xianzhi pondered.

World transformed; immortal fates frequent; cultivators rampant.

Wolong Ridge fate; eight dragon gates; qi tides—no secret.

Cultivators yearned fate; but chance; effort continued.

Ximen eyed: “Immortal fate site.”

Vast boundless.

Starry night.

Qi misty; hundred forms.

Distant grand array; runes flowed.

Looked side.

Two figures: one bald outline.

Other ordinary.

Rumble!

Heaven quake.

Above; qi converged; figure slow emerged.

Face unclear.

Sat array center; qi swirled robes; immortal air.

Ximen heart shook!

“Immortal?”

Shocked—true immortal? Or pretender?!

Body tense; fingers qi; case swords trembled.

Slight wrong—strike.

Lu array sat; calm eyed three.

Experienced; bland.

First platform excitement; now calm.

Mindset shift.

Perhaps strength.

Ximen Xianzhi—heard.

Zhongnan Sword Pavilion; former seven heroes chief; Li Sansi peer.

But Li Body Storage; faded.

Now platform.

Others puzzled: pawnshop clerk; gang young master...

Platform wilder.

Felt Ximen stir.

Lu glance shift; light raise hand.

Ximen pupils shrank; pressure—no sword draw strength...

Qi pill peak!

True immortal?

“This Preaching Secret Realm; immortal ground; all share fate dew.”

“Remember; no reveal identities; avoid trouble; Dao backlash; eternal nine hells.”

Lu slow; standard intro.

Words fell.

Gang Liu Yuanhao shook.

Fear.

Ximen inhaled; immortal ground?! Preaching realm?

Extraordinary place.

Facing array figure; oppression breathed.

Liu no hesitate; knelt.

To him—array figure legend immortal.

Lu light raise.

All changed; qi roil; pavilions emerged; carved rails; gold eaves; misty qi immortal blessed.

Liu convinced—met immortal!

Not—why?

Black Dragon young master; gang remnants him few thugs.

Great power hoax? No need.

No qualify.

Thus...

Immortal.

Immortal ground—his fate!

Cultivator era; wonders normal.

Liu knelt.

Ximen knelt; no sword; kill effortless.

Bald clerk Ding Jiudeng dazed long; reacted missed Liu excitement; calm knelt slow.

Qi hazy.

Lu smiled.

Newbies savvy.

“Not first; not last; this seat guards; preach myriad; enter fated.”

Lu faint.

Words; hand void grab.

Front pearls.

Gold; dark; white...

Many loaded pearls; fate luck.

Some qi wisp.

Some Buddha relic.

Luck.

“Thirty-six Preaching Immortal Pearls; each fate; yours yours.”

Lu said.

No wait reaction.

Push palm.

Boundless force.

Thirty-six shot rainbow tails; whistled three.

Ximen head up.

Liu boundless joy.

Bald Ding stared.

Pearls flew near.

Ximen eyes rolled; sweat; each fate.

Guess not.

Best... sword fate!

Life sword companion; sword immortal fate!

Sudden.

Hand grab pearl.

Faint...

Light sword...

Dazzle; ninth heaven slash; pre-dawn dark shattered.

Gold hair void; light sword sweep; domineering.

Liu grabbed; treasure; cold hot weird; suffer.

Cold hot same?

Faint dark flame burn.

Bald Ding sat still...

Ximen Liu chosen; Ding calm sat.

Ximen Liu focused.

Extraordinary.

Faced pearls unmoved.

Qi pill peak Ximen unrest; bald calm.

Finally.

Ding reacted.

Preaching pearls?

F*ck?!

Immortal... fate?

Stunned; slow again; two chosen.

Tasteless.

Random grab.

Boom!

Ding ears bell; myriad chants mind.

First no react.

Reacted chants end; great fate; no excite.

Ximen eyed Ding... mindset strong.

Fate no joy; control; not thing joy self sad; extraordinary; steady.

Three chosen.

Remain flew Lu; floated quiet.

Lu mind stir; speechless.

Selective.

Three wanderer inheritances—taken.

But no care.

Inherit pass.

Rot hand useless.

Good; hundred schools livelier.

“Go.”

Lu array slow.

Hand wave; qi waves.

Ximen mouth open; words stripped.

Vision vanish; ejected.

Liu kowtow.

“Thanks exalted immortal fate!”

Lu eyed; no word; Liu “bone nether fire”.

Liu chose fire or fire Liu—unknown.

No reclaim; wave; pressure crushed; vanished.

Finally bald Ding.

Steady batch.

See immortal no excite.

Fate calm.

Saw Ximen Liu crushed; composed.

Mountain steady.

Ding slow; two gone; recalled... first fear.

Past fear phase; tasteless.

Up; frank face Lu.

Lu smile.

True steady.

Then slap.

Heaven palm covered; smashed flat.

Vanished Ding; Lu heart comfort.

Platform calm.

Lu array sat; pinch seal; runes surged.

Bone nether fire template front.

“Heaven earth mystic fire; beyond origin; burn origin.”

Lu pondered.

Researched much; weak mystic.

Derived; strong petal burn mid origin.

Runes twined.

Fingers elf dance.

No create mystic; analyze; man-make fire.

Time needed.

...

Beiluo city.

Tantai Xuan marveled long street.

Once near ruin; now prosper; Beiluo families uprooted Lu; better.

Air dense qi; low cultivation; felt extraordinary.

Lu Changkong hands back; side.

Tantai Xuan felt strong; high cultivator oppression.

“Indeed... power stabilizes Beiluo.”

Tantai Xuan sighed.

“No Baiyujing; no dragon blood...”

“Position; anti-Zhou center... carnage.”

But Lu Ping’an deterred; Xiliang Daxuan Zhou no burn Beiluo.

Fear Baiyujing wrath.

Power deter; Beiluo thrive; people peace.

Tantai Xuan epiphany.

“Cultivator era... strong cultivator vital; top deter; peace.”

Tantai Xuan.

Xiliang better Daxuan.

But no say; lag beaten.

Lu Changkong glanced.

Lord Tantai learn.

“That tower?”

Tantai Xuan distant cloud white jade; surprised.

“Trial tower; Fan’er made; top break shackles.”

“Realms hard; break peril; thus tower; world cultivators; nine qi pill enter.”

Lu Changkong.

No visited; planned post liquid; Tantai came.

“Go?”

Lu Changkong asked.

Tantai Xuan wave; nine qi pill... lifetime no.

Eyed Beiluo lake; expect hope.

“See Ping’an.”

“Found Daxuan Academy; cultivate; Baiyujing master suggestions?”

Tantai Xuan.

Words; Lu Changkong stunned; academy cultivate?

Short; felt unusual ambition.

Sudden.

Breeze; snow paused.

Tantai Xuan locked power.

Next.

Vision swirl; scenery flew.

Clear.

Misty isle.

Clouds desire rain; water birth smoke.

Chrysanthemum sway; peach vivid; purple bamboo rustle.

Picture scroll.

Pavilion tall.

Second floor; white youth wheelchair; rail lean; smile him.

Chapter 220: Sword Maniac, Ximen Xianzhi

South County.

Zhongnan Mountain, Sword Pavilion.

Towering Zhongnan like a sharp sword piercing clouds; peak flat with large bluestone.

Snowflakes fell; entire mountain unsheathed white blade.

Ximen Xianzhi opened eyes.

Body thick snow.

Shook; qi from pill mobilized; meridians cycle; snow scattered.

Sword in snow; cold gleam.

Stood; circulated blood; stiffened body loosened.

Grabbed sword.

Mind sank.

“Immortal fate...”

Gripped; mind heat flow.

White light ball floated mind.

Poked; flood poured.

Long; aura calmed.

“Light...”

Ximen Xianzhi shocked.

“Cultivation system; sword path; but deviant; light sharpness present sword sharpness.”

Sat bluestone.

Ximen Xianzhi; once genius with Overlord Li Sansi; cultivator rise left behind.

Early; Sword Maniac title.

Sword obsessed; more than Sword Saint Hua Dongliu.

Lived name; sword arts divine.

Now light sword inheritance joy; thought sword end; found broad avenue.

Sat bluestone; snow fell.

Ximen entranced; organized mind concepts.

No copy; loved sword; light sword not pure sword...

Gripped; danced bluestone.

Slow; snow fall slowed.

Snow gentle.

Sword light dazzle; burst; sky curtain beam; blinding.

Pavilion.

Hua Dongliu room studied intent; sudden eyes open.

Eyes sharp.

Intent felt sharpness light.

“Xianzhi?”

Stood; qingshan wild; step door auto open.

Peak flat; see who derived sword stirred intent.

Ximen unaware surroundings.

Heart sword sank.

Mind light sword understanding fused own sword.

Qi mobilized; snow halved.

Crack... crack...

Sword cracks; exploded; iron pieces ground.

Ximen trembled.

Hands light condensed; light sword.

Shook; sword left hand; stabbed snow.

Thick snow exploded.

Snow flew.

Light sword cut bluestone; incision.

Ximen shook; sweat beads.

Eyes bright; night moon; hand up void grab.

Pinched light.

Gather light sword!

Snow tofu; fine sword marks.

Ximen mind clear; epiphany.

Head vortex; qi swept.

Broke.

Body Storage!

Commotion; pavilion disciples startled.

Hua Dongliu snow came; back two swords; Chaoju Bitao.

“Indeed Xianzhi... Body Storage!”

Hua old face joy.

Even he qi pill peak.

Ximen entered Body Storage.

Surpassed pavilion master.

Hua sighed; era changed; hundred sons lagged; youth surpassed.

Disciples gathered.

Saw breakthrough; joy.

“Senior Xianzhi broke?”

“Pavilion finally Body Storage!”

“Silent years; senior rise; rival Dao Pavilion Li Sansi Xiliang Overlord?!”

Disciples complex.

Joy envy.

Ximen vortex head; sword case back; gripped hilt dazed.

Hua flat stepped.

Ximen recovered; gripped; bowed Hua.

“Master.”

“Xianzhi Body Storage?”

Hua laughed.

Ximen nod; fate insight; but Body Storage.

“Pavilion hope on you.”

Hua sighed.

“New replace old.”

“Comprehend intent?” Hua asked.

Ximen shook head.

“Hurry; successful swordsman intent essential.”

Hua said.

“Master; light... sword?” Ximen snow stood; snow body; asked.

Hua stunned; stroked beard; saw eyes confusion.

“Sword; all things sword; pluck flower sword; rain drop sword... even this snow.”

Hua said.

Goose snow front.

Hand; pinched; sudden flung.

Snow fly sword; air tear whistle; cut bluestone; long melt.

Ximen eyes brighter.

“Heart sword; all things sword...”

Hua said.

Ximen nod; all sword; light sword.

Light everywhere; sword everywhere.

Ximen found broad; joy.

Hua knew insight; smiled: "Xianzhi; how long no descend?"

Ximen unexpected; cupped: "Near three years."

"Thought longer; master intent decades; disciple decades."

"Closed door no create; era different; intent easier; but closed obstruct derivation."

"Descend."

"Sword confusion? Seek strong; challenge; gain battle."

Hua said.

"Jingyue Beiluo; sword inspire; seek spar."

Jingyue growth beyond expect.

Inspire Ximen.

“Yes.”

Ximen no hesitate; felt closed difficulty.

Path start; no seclusion.

But dazed; Beiluo...

“Go; two swords gift.”

“Body Storage Heaven Lock; sword cultivate strongest; Golden Core no suit; Heaven Lock pavilion master.”

Hua said.

Back swords gave Ximen.

Ximen took; felt different.

Hua laughed.

New old; joy lost.

Turn; hands back; snow; peak vanish.

Ximen gripped Chaoju Bitao; case; bowed vanish direction.

Then flat disciples cupped.

Qingshan swayed; bold steps Zhongnan down.

Beiluo; bold idea.

Challenge... strong.

...

Capital.

Narrow alley.

Figure shaky; blood corner; stood.

Liu Yuanhao swollen head; eyes gleam.

Immortal fate...

Liu fate!

Cultivator era; chaotic capital; Xiliang army order...

Prosper dark jianghu gangs.

Best era.

Liu wiped blood.

Out alley; distant.

Royal city towering.

Sniffed; founded Black Dragon; young master; true helper brother Liu Hao.

Liu Hao?

Once glory; Zhou emperor Black Dragon thirteen first.

Pity; Xiliang Daxuan capital; Liu Hao died Overlord.

Liu escaped; founded.

But hard; no strength; suffered.

Hand open; palm; eyes light: "Fate..."

“Past no qualify seek hidden Black Dragon guards; now qualify; time; gather guards; grow gang...”

“Black Dragon capital first gang!”

Liu fist tight.

Nether white flame fist gaps.

Liu stunned.

Mind; bone nether fire hand surged; twisted face.

...

West Commandery; Liangzhou city.

Southwest West; border Peacock Kingdom.

Liangzhou war ready; Peacock nation; five barbarians.

Liangzhou fortress; alert.

Snow Liangzhou cold.

Yongcheng Pawnshop.

Liangzhou only; motto “no dare not take; only you dare not pawn.”

Boss wealth unknown; rich rival city.

But one clerk.

Threshold Ding Jiudeng opened; dazed long; recalled immortal ground.

Touched bald; earlier fear; dazed long no fear.

Mind chants; faint bald kind; texts flowed.

Ding patted bald; uncomfortable.

Sudden.

Back kick.

“Little Ding; work; monthly feed house; lazy?”

“No work pack roll!”

Behind cursed.

Ding stood; silent long; fearful muffled: “Go now.”

Body burly; bald lantern.

Behind boss; sharp monkey rich old.

Saw work Ding; stroked stubble; smiled.

Hired Ding cheap; feed sleep; wage deduct reasons.

No hit back curse; good.

Boss rubbed hands; eyes greed.

Monthly deal time.

Sharp monkey smiled; greed; success wealth double!

“Little Ding work; boss night check; bad next next wage deduct.”

Boss said.

Hum tune; left pawnshop.

Boss long gone; Ding aware muffled “Oh.”

Action pause; recalled; boss direction: “Boss; next next wage deducted.”

But gone.

Ding touched bald; continued.

Sudden.

Door conical hat veil; face unclear.

“Pawn.”

Voice hoarse.

Long; shop response.

“Coming.”

Ding window; shadow: “Pawn what?”

Figure pocket; silver scissors counter.

“Value?”

Hat said.

Ding reach; no touch; scissors spin float; hat grab; sudden neck; cut skin blood.

Ding no expression.

Hat stunned; clerk... bold.

“Boss where?”

Ding recovered; fear whole; missed fear phase; shiver; panic eyes hat.

“Bo... boss sell goods.”

Ding said.

“Lead.” Hat again.

Words.

Two silver scissors bald.

Ding dazed; recovered missed scare; tasteless; little fear; aware: “Good...”

Hat: “...”

Bold! Steady!

Ding knew boss source.

But no lead; boss bad hit curse deduct.

But...

Gave shelter.

Father died Liangzhou field; alone; no boss wander freeze starve.

Thus Ding hat maze alleys.

Entered; stop; dazed.

Sudden sprint; crisscross run.

Long; back; hat lost; fear pat chest.

Left alley; boss sell place.

Knew; once boss searched officials; followed.

Ding unknown.

Out alley; roof hat sat; black robe; calm watched depart.

...

Beiluo city; vast snow plain.

Goose snow; covered tracks.

Sudden.

Hooves cracked.

Snow raised.

Black mane horizon galloped; mane snow wild.

Back burly sat.

Beiluo wall.

Guards saw snow sprint black mane.

Xiliang breed!

Back figure; guards horrified!

“Ov... Overlord!”

Guards cried.

Wall commotion.

Luo Cheng eyed; face change.

Overlord came?

North Xuan; Xiliang kings...

Daxuan Xiliang lords Beiluo?

Tantai Xuan for Jiang Li; Overlord... for Tantai Xuan?

Luo speechless; self; qi; city gallop.

Beiluo lake isle.

Tantai Xuan just second floor Baiyujing.

Leaned wheelchair Lu; face odd.

Eyed sat Tantai Xuan; smiled: "Overlord Beiluo too."

Words.

Sat Tantai Xuan pupils shrank; butt needles.

Sharp breath.

Overlord... bully too much.