

Starlit Path 261

Chapter 261: My Divination Cannot Touch Young Master Lu

The Demon Monkey King stared blankly at the carnage before him.

Blood soaked the oasis soil—his kin's blood, splattered everywhere.

The humans they had saved now wore twisted, frenzied faces as they butchered his people.

For the first time, the Monkey King's heart shattered.

For the first time, he tasted the terror of human nature.

He saw Yali—once kind-eyed, chatting amiably with him—now a monster.

Yali slit a monkey's throat, pried open its skull, and stuffed the bloodied four-sided crystal into his pack.

Rage and hatred exploded within the Demon Monkey King.

A piercing howl tore from his throat.

Ignoring his wounds, he burst from the trees.

Mounted on the Wolf King, wooden spear in hand, he charged the crowd.

Thick demonic qi poured from his body.

The battle drenched the ground in blood. Yali's soldiers fell in droves. These monkeys looked frail, but each packed Qi Core power.

Had they known how to wield it, Yali's army would have been annihilated.

Still, Yali's haul was immense.

Dozens of demon crystals—energy he could absorb, granting godlike strength.

His eyes locked on the Monkey King's crystal.

Its demonic qi was overwhelming; the crystal had to be extraordinary.

With it, Yali could crush that ancient eastern kingdom!

So he led his forces straight for the king.

Kill the leader, and the troop becomes livestock for slaughter.

“Why?!”

The Monkey King roared, carving through foes despite his injuries.

He bared sharp fangs at Yali. “I saved you! Gave you water, food—why betray us?!”

Yali said nothing.

Profit moves hearts.

In these monkeys, he saw wealth. Power.

To rise, one steps over corpses—human or monkey, it matters not.

Yali raised a hand. Archers behind him drew longbows, arrows trained on the king.

“Fire!”

The Marton Kingdom was built on plunder. He’d conquered nations, become king of kings. This monkey realm would fall too.

Monkeys dropped, screeching.

The king finally understood.

Tigers weren’t the oasis’s deadliest beasts. Wolves weren’t.

The humans they rescued were.

Boom!

The king’s eyes blazed red. His mind-crystal shuddered, unleashing torrents of demonic qi.

His scrawny frame swelled to three meters, muscles rippling like iron.

Demonization!

He bellowed like a primordial beast.

One stomp cracked the earth.

His spear whipped out, pinning an archer to the ground.

Yali's heart lurched.

The colossal ape drained his will to fight.

Demonic qi choked the air; his men couldn't even draw blades.

Only now did they grasp: this king rivaled the eastern gods who'd routed them.

The Monkey King tore through ranks like paper.

Marton phalanxes formed, advanced—and shattered like toys.

One punch per soldier, the ground exploding under his fists.

He roared.

Demonic qi blanketed the sky, shrouding the entire Demon Continent.

“Humans deserve death!”

Eight-sided crystals orbited his head, swirling with demonic fury.

Yali stared, greed blazing.

Four-sided crystals were treasures, but eight? No wonder the king was untouchable.

Eight-sided equaled Golden Core.

Even if he couldn't yet wield its full might, slaughtering mortals was child's play.

The king thundered to the central pillar.

Furious fists cracked its surface.

Suddenly, the three-meter ape wrapped arms around it.

Demonic qi surged.

He uprooted the pillar.

Rumble!

The continent quaked.

He swung it like a battering ram, crushing Marton lines.

Countless soldiers vomited blood and died beneath it.

Yali fled.

Half his army lay dead.

The oasis reeked of corpses—human and monkey.

Wolves and beasts joined the fray under the king's command.

Another wave of Marton soldiers fell.

Yali snapped out of his greed.

He couldn't touch the king—not yet.

Thirty four-sided crystals were enough. Dying here made them worthless.

“Retreat!”

He vaulted onto his horse and bellowed.

The routed army bolted into the desert.

The king roared.

Think you can leave?

He hurled the pillar.

It arced like a falling sky-tree, shadow swallowing the fleeing troops.

Sand erupted; hundreds were pulverized.

Yali clutched his crystals and vanished into the dunes.

The king's demonization faded.

He collapsed, coughing blood.

Crawling to a fallen monkey, he cradled the body, staring at the empty skull.

Tears carved through the blood on his face.

He threw back his head and howled.

“From this day forward!”

“Demons and humans—eternal enemies!”

Humans were insatiable greed incarnate.

Blood debt unpaid, war without end!

His roar summoned demonic qi from the heavens, veiling the continent.

Even desert winds carried its biting chill.

...

Beiluo, Lake Center Island.

Lu tapped the Phoenix Feather armguard.

The moment Kong Nanfei formed his Golden Core, Lu felt it.

Surprised, but not shocked. Golden Core suited Kong best.

Righteous qi offered little body tempering; Heavenly Lock would have been brutal.

“Golden Cores are emerging too slowly on Five Phoenix Continent.”

Lu frowned.

Compared to Tianyuan, it lagged. There, Golden Core was mere disciple level.

“Time to rebuild secret realms. Give them opportunities. Accelerate cultivation.”

Constructing realms to nurture geniuses was solid.

Originally, with the world source born, Lu thought prodigies could breakthrough naturally.

Too optimistic.

From Nie Changqing's Heavenly Lock to now, only Kong had reached Golden Core.

Too slow.

Mind sinking into the preaching platform, Lu began crafting a secret realm.

...

Meanwhile, in the imperial capital, undercurrents swirled.

After the Black Dragon Gang swallowed the North Tiger Gang, it became the underground emperor—
now the Black Dragon Cult.

Purple Gold Palace.

Luo Mingsang read the secret report, brows knitting.

“Black Dragon remnants of Great Zhou. Unified the underworld. Plotting restoration...”

She exhaled, rose gracefully, maids trailing.

Outside, an Xiang Family guard stood silently.

“Has King Xiang returned?”

She asked.

He hesitated, then shook his head.

Her eyes dimmed. She gazed at the moon and sighed.

...

Three days—neither long nor short.

They passed in a blink.

Martial Emperor City hummed as usual. Disciples collected resources, cultivated.

But many sensed the shift.

Wind One Tower's human list genius felt it.

Infant Transformation guardians had vanished—quietly dispatched somewhere.

Infant Transformation was the city's true might, its deterrent.

Now gone. And City Lord Du Longyang too.

A storm brewed.

Outside the city, on the ridge.

Before the Bodhisattva Temple.

Blizzard raged, three days of snow blanketing the earth.

Yet a terrifying aura now permeated the air.

Inside the temple, Mo Tianyu and Nie Changqing barely breathed.

Nie's Second Stage Heavenly Lock, nearly ten bones tempered, recognized the power outside.

Du Longyang, Master Yuanshang, the Empress, Tianxu, Absolute Blade...

World-class peak experts.

Seeing them, Nie's heart clenched. The plan was launching.

That audacious plan.

Immortal slaughter.

Immortals existed—yet these madmen would kill them.

Nie inhaled deeply.

He and Mo Tianyu were out of their depth. Stay put.

Ding Jiudeng, now Yuanshang's disciple, was tucked inside too.

Nie eyed the boy curiously—fellow countryman, a pleasant surprise.

Ding greeted them excitedly at first, then froze, enthusiasm fading into blank stares.

Outside.

Five apex powers took positions.

Down the ridge, Martial Emperor City's Infant Transformations sat cross-legged, hands forming seals, array taking shape.

“Ni Chunqiu, prepare!”

Tianxu, Ye Shoudao, Du Longyang, and Yuanshang stood at cardinal points, ten li from the Empress.

She sat before the temple doors.

Crimson robes, golden ornaments, regal and radiant—like a blood-red rose blooming in snow.

Their spiritual voice transmission fluttered her lashes. She opened her eyes.

Pale neck arched, she gazed at the snowy sky.

Silence, save falling flakes.

Her red lips curved. It begins.

Today, she'd see what awaited beyond tribulation and ascension.

She rose.

Waist-length hair danced in the wind.

Eyes on the heavens, she whistled sharply.

The temple shuddered.

Peerless aura erupted skyward, a sword piercing clouds.

Boom!

The firmament cracked, ripples spreading.

Her presence boiled over.

Step by step, she ascended, robes billowing, hair flying—peerless beauty, unmatched grace.

Today, the Empress faced thunder tribulation!

Rumble!

Black clouds rolled in, winds whipping her garments tight, tracing exquisite curves.

It began!

At the four directions, the guardians' eyes sharpened.

They sealed their auras completely, like corpses.

While the Empress soared to meet the storm.

Blinding lightning tore the dark, daylight flashing.

The temple quaked, on the verge of collapse.

Nie, Mo, and the others watched in awe.

“A woman of such stunning splendor... makes me itch to divine her fate.”

Mo Tianyu clutched three copper coins.

Nie glanced at him. "Then divine."

"Divine their plan's success."

"What plan?"

Mo asked curiously.

Nie hesitated, but it had begun. No point hiding.

"Immortal Slaughter Plan."

"They aim to kill the immortals above the heavens."

Nie said, breathing deep.

Even slow-witted Ding Jiudeng gasped.

Mo nearly dropped his coins.

“Insane... slaughter immortals?”

“Immortals aren’t that easy to kill!”

Mo exclaimed.

Nie nodded.

“Madness... the world’s gone mad.”

Mo muttered.

But excitement gleamed in his eyes.

He gripped the coins. The vortex above spun wildly, funneling into them, glowing gold.

He flung them into the tortoise shell; they clinked inside.

His face paled instantly.

“Old Nie! You tricked me! Young Master Lu’s in on the immortal slaughter?!”

“My divination can’t touch Young Master Lu!”

Mo cursed.

Then—spurt!

He vomited blood.

The shell cracked and shattered.

Chapter 262: Divine Spark, Tribulation Ascension

Beiluo, Lake Center Island.

Lu exited the preaching platform, leaned back in the Thousand Blades Chair, and stretched lazily.

A gentle breeze stirred, rustling the two strands of hair dangling over his forehead.

Little Yinglong snoozed atop the Dragon Gate, spiritual rings jingling softly.

On the lake, the book pavilion bustled with figures coming and going.

Lu maneuvered the chair down from the White Jade Capital pavilion, gliding slowly along the lakeshore.

Du Longyang and the others had launched the Immortal Slaughter Plan—Lu knew, so it was time for him to move.

He cared about this plan.

Because the “immortal” they targeted might be Tianyuan Continent’s mysterious “Plane Lord.”

Lu had never met this enigmatic figure.

They seemed to transcend the Tianyuan world entirely.

There had to be secrets there.

Plus, Lu sought ways to strengthen Five Phoenix Continent's people.

Hm?

Suddenly, as he rolled along the shore, Lu frowned.

He rested a hand on the chair, eyes flickering.

Lines danced in his pupils, leaping across mountains and rivers.

He saw the Demon Continent in the endless desert, blood qi soaring to the heavens.

"What happened?"

Lu blinked.

The Demon Continent was newly built—how had it turned into a bloodbath so fast?

Peering closer, he saw the Demon Monkey King cradling a corpse, wailing.

Rumble!

Thick black qi rolled.

The grieving king shuddered, lifted his head toward the demonic clouds.

He dropped to his knees, kowtowing frantically.

“Great and supreme Demon Lord!”

His forehead cracked the oasis sand.

But no matter how he begged, no Demon Lord appeared.

The king felt powerless.

“Please, great Demon Lord, save my people...”

Tears streamed as he recounted everything: rescuing Yali, only for Yali to betray them, slaughter the troop, and steal the cultivation crystals.

Lu listened silently.

He'd created demons to pressure humans and diversify Five Phoenix races.

But...

These naive demons nearly got wiped out.

Understandable—the monkeys had lived carefree on islands, facing wolves and tigers, never humans.

Humans were cunning.

Faced with four-sided crystals, greed bared its fangs.

Yali, fresh from a beating by Great Xuan cultivators at Tianhan Pass, craved power. Demons offered it—he pounced.

The monkey clan was pitiable.

Good thing the king was strong, or the entire demon race might have perished.

Still, a harsh lesson for the innocent demons.

The king knelt.

A cold snort echoed from the heavens.

His body quaked. Mighty as he was—capable of uprooting mountains—the sound left him limp.

The Demon Lord!

The great Demon Lord was furious!

At humans—and at him.

The king knew: this was his fault. Without him, Yali would've died in the desert.

No catastrophe.

He stopped crying.

The Lord's wrath was a reminder: every cause has its effect. This began with him.

He kowtowed solemnly.

Lu offered no reply, withdrawing his will.

The king rose, fur rippling in the wind.

Behind him, surviving monkeys burned with rage and resolve.

He blurred through the jungle, demonic qi cloaking him.

Leaping to the tallest tree, he perched atop and roared.

Every demon in the continent answered.

He ordered burials for the dead.

Then led the troop in crafting weapons—felling trees, sharpening stones into axes and spears.

Preparing to invade Yali's lands.

The king returned to the cracked pillar.

Through the fissures gleamed light—exciting, urgent.

Lu's mind returned.

He sighed in his chair.

Human greed and ugliness exceeded imagination.

From the start, Yali never saw the monkeys as friends—just beasts.

Lu tapped the armguard, frowning.

Should he intervene?

No.

A race grows through trials.

This crucible belonged to the demons.

“But the death penalty can be spared—living punishment cannot.”

“My new demons nearly faced extinction.”

Lu’s face iced over.

Yali needed punishment.

Just punishment—Lu wasn’t petty.

If he were, Yali would already be dead.

...

Meanwhile.

Yali fled the Demon Continent with his battered remnants.

They plunged into the endless desert, but he'd learned: a supply team waited. No more thirst.

He gulped water, eyes gleaming.

From his pouch, he pulled thirty demon crystals.

Faint demonic qi swirled—like the world's most brilliant gems.

A lieutenant with a white blade at his waist approached.

“My king, what are these?”

They'd fought the monkeys but never learned.

"No idea, but the key to transforming Marton's army!"

Yali laughed.

He held one to the sun; it sparkled.

"Shall we name them?"

The lieutenant asked.

Yali glanced, squinted, beard twitching.

"Yes."

"The foundation of Marton's divine army—god-given. Call them... 'Divine Sparks'!"

God-given?

The lieutenant choked on Yali's audacity.

But as lieutenant, his own face was thick.

"Great name! Divine Sparks for Marton's divine legion!"

He beamed.

Yali tossed him a crystal.

"Try fusing it. Draw the power!"

The lieutenant's smile vanished, face paling.

"This..."

He swallowed but couldn't refuse.

Yali was a tyrant—one word, and his head rolled.

He pressed the crystal to his brow—nothing.

Bit it—unbreakable.

Like ice, but how to absorb?

Lu's eyes flickered with lines.

He overheard.

“Divine Sparks?”

“Interesting...”

His face stayed cold.

He flicked the air.

Instantly.

The crystal in the lieutenant's hand plunged into his chest—pfft!

He panicked. It tore through flesh, blood gushing, wrapping the crystal.

It sank in, melting away.

“My king...”

Terror struck—this thing inside him?

Agony ripped through every fiber.

Blood foamed from mouth and nose; he collapsed, convulsing.

Yali's heart jolted.

He flung his crystals to the sand.

The lieutenant's twisted agony terrified him.

He'd thought treasures—now poison.

Lu's punishment.

Want benefits? Pay the price.

Unlike normal cultivation, demon crystal power demanded unbearable pain.

The lieutenant writhed, blood bubbles bursting.

Yali froze in fear.

Far away, Lu flicked again.

A dropped crystal shot toward Yali.

“No... no...”

He recoiled.

But invisible force—inescapable.

Pfft!

It smashed his forehead, burrowing in.

Yali clutched his head, face contorting, roaring on his knees...

Beiluo, Lake Center Island.

The lines in Lu’s eyes faded.

He ignored Yali.

Outcome unknown: endure the fusion pain, live.

Fail—die.

If successful, Yali might become the world's first demon cultivator.

Different from demons: humans cultivating demon methods.

Lu narrowed his eyes, sensing Martial Emperor City's rising aura.

The Immortal Slaughter Plan had begun.

Time to go.

...

Outside Martial Emperor City, ridge Bodhisattva Temple.

Heaven and earth transformed.

Empress Ni Chunqiu's tribulation—thunder punishment like a divine blade cleaving the sky.

Boom!

A roar.

Fearless, crimson robes billowing, she slapped the thunder.

Spiritual qi surged, shattering it.

She crashed before the temple, snow exploding like grains, arrays misting.

She panted.

Inside, Nie Changqing and others held their breath.

Mo Tianyu mourned not his shell—coins intact, fine.

He'd craft another.

“How do they slaughter immortals?”

Mo asked.

Nie stared: “Guess: wait for her ascension. Fly to the immortal realm, invade, kill!”

“Invade the immortal realm?” Mo gasped.

Now he saw true ambition.

Boom boom boom!

Her tribulation shook the world.

Infant Transformation peak—far deadlier than Heavenly Lock.

Du Longyang squinted.

He rose, gripping his spear...

Master Yuanshang drew a nine-ring staff, planting it heavily.

Tianxu spread his palm—tiny swords aligned.

Ye Shoudao gripped his blade with one arm, waiting.

World-class experts, unwilling to be pawns.

They'd flip the board, challenge the player!

Ascension to immortality—a lie!

Boom!

The final thunderbolt fell.

All tensed.

The Empress whistled, red sword manifesting, unleashing sword rain.

Countless blades clashed with thunder.

She was a master swordswoman!

Her intent like autumn rain—persistent.

Bit by bit, she ground the thunder to nothing.

“Ready!”

Du Longyang muttered.

The others grew grave.

Rumble!

Colors shifted; rainbow light bloomed above the temple, source energy pulsing.

Nie, Mo, and others felt minds clear—cultivation doubts dissolving.

They sat, seizing the chance.

Wounded Empress gazed up.

Source light bathed her, healing instantly.

Peak condition restored!

Strange force pulled her skyward.

Ascension!

Her body floated.

Suddenly!

The firmament ripped open a massive rift.

She peered beyond—faintly, a majestic immortal palace!

Vast spiritual qi poured out.

“Immortal realm?!”

She murmured, dazed. A scam?

Immense suction drew her in.

Meanwhile.

Four cardinal points erupted with power.

Du Longyang roared.

Golden radiance burst like a sun; spear intent soared as golden beam.

“Amitabha.”

Yuanshang pressed palms, leaping—a golden Buddha manifesting.

Ye Shoudao bellowed; black blade qi formed a giant sword, carrying him skyward.

Tianxu snarled: “Du Longyang, even now that Lu hasn’t shown—he screwed you!”

But he moved fast.

Palm wave—tiny swords bloomed into a sky-covering blade, rocketing him up.

Four beams pierced the heavens from the ridge.

The Empress vanished into the rift’s immortal realm.

Du Longyang and the others followed.

But...

Beyond the rift.

A colossal hand eclipsed the sky.

It swatted at the four.

Inside the temple.

Meditating Nie Changqing's heart jolted.

He opened his eyes toward the air wall.

It rippled.

Then...

Wheels creaked on the ground.

A white-robed figure in a silver wheelchair rolled slowly into the dilapidated temple.

Chapter 263: The Collapsing Immortal Slaughter Plan

Inside the dilapidated Bodhisattva Temple, silence reigned.

Nie Changqing and Mo Tianyu stared dumbly at the figure rolling out from behind the air wall.

“Young Master!”

“Young Master Lu!”

They spoke in unison, hearts jolting. Lu had truly appeared—not a clone, but his real body!

The Young Master... had left Lake Center Island for this place!

Rare indeed!

Lu sat in the Thousand Blades Chair, white robes pristine. He glanced at Nie and Mo without surprise, nodding slightly.

Outside, terrifying fluctuations surged and thundered.

The sky darkened as if a single palm blotted out the heavens.

“Head back, or stay quiet. Don’t leave the temple.”

Lu said.

Nie nodded—the battle outside was for titans; they couldn’t interfere.

Lu turned to Mo Tianyu: “Don’t divine what you shouldn’t...”

Mo smiled awkwardly.

Of course the enigmatic Young Master Lu had sensed it.

He dared not read Lu’s fate—being planted in the ground like grass still haunted him.

As for Ding Jiudeng inside the temple.

Lu spared him a glance, then ignored him, wheeling out.

Beyond the temple, blizzard howled, winds and snow plunging the world into gloom.

Lu's chair-bound figure faded into the storm.

...

Outside the temple.

A massive rift tore the sky.

The Empress, crimson robes whipping, was sucked into it.

As she vanished inside...

Du Longyang, Master Yuanshang, Tianxu, and Ye Shoudao felt chills—her anguished scream echoed from within.

They struck without hesitation.

They would storm the rift, shatter their pawn destiny.

The Empress had ascended to the “immortal realm.”

They’d seize the chance to uncover its truth!

And why her cries of pain?

The giant palm clashed with their full assaults, shockwaves rippling.

Clouds exploded.

Du Longyang roared, spear blazing like a sun.

Lu emerged from the temple.

Raging snow plastered his robes to his body.

He looked up at the fight.

The four seemed stalled by the palm.

Lines danced in Lu's eyes—it wielded terrifying source power.

No matter their attacks, they couldn't break through.

Ascension was impossibly hard.

The immortal realm a lie? Undeniable now—but what was it?

Lu grew curious.

He raised a hand, tapping the armguard.

Phoenix Feather Sword sliced the void, soaring.

A shrill phoenix cry rang out; crimson fire wings spread like flaming blades.

It slammed the shading palm!

The instant the cry sounded...

Du Longyang's eyes lit.

"Thank you, Young Master Lu!"

Boom!

A feather struck the palm's weak point, blasting a gaping hole.

None were ordinary—they seized it, unleashing heaven-shaking strikes.

Boom!

Energy detonated at the palm's core; the tear widened.

Tianxu, upon Lu's arrival, swallowed his usual barbs and attacked furiously to widen the breach.

He talked big, but feared Lu most.

Lu could possess him unseen—kill him silently.

It was his nightmare.

His taunts? Just bravado.

Face Lu, he fled fastest.

The palm torn, it couldn't block them.

They slipped through.

But the palm's might persisted, crashing down.

Snow trembled.

The temple seemed ready to shatter.

Lu flicked a finger, sending a ripple—the rickety structure turned rock-solid.

Boom!

Explosion erupted.

The palm flattened the land.

The towering ridge became plain—only the temple remained amid the flat path.

The Thousand Blades Chair lifted Lu steadily.

Du Longyang reached the healing rift first, spear in one hand, resolve unbreakable, charging in.

Yuanshang and Ye Shoudao followed.

Tianxu hesitated at the entrance.

Snow drifted lightly.

Lu drifted up on his chair, appearing behind him.

Tianxu turned—pale face whitening further. No hesitation—he dove in.

Lu was speechless.

Was he that scary?

Real body out—he should seem a dashing young gentleman.

Elegant, refined—what was frightening?

Only now did he study the rift.

Beyond: the “immortal realm.” Ascension meant this.

“Such dense source aura...”

“This so-called immortal realm... a source world?”

Lu’s face twisted oddly.

Unlikely—Du Longyang and others had entered the true source world before.

Lu frowned outside the rift, pondering long, undecided.

Finally, he wheeled into it.

Boom!

The moment he entered...

Powerful spiritual sense surged.

“You are another world’s Plane Lord—truly meddling?”

White void surrounded him.

A black silhouette stood before him, voice ethereal.

“Today’s me could be tomorrow’s you...” it continued.

It seemed to bar his path.

Lu smiled. “No, we’re different.”

Spiritual sense stirred—everything tore apart, the scene vanishing.

Lu wheeled through the rift.

Plink.

Like a pebble in water.

Clarity returned.

He found himself on a mirror-like water surface.

Looking down, the lake reflected him.

“This is the immortal realm?”

Lu felt his intelligence insulted.

Far off...

Du Longyang stood on the water, spear in hand, staring around, lost.

Tianxu too.

Yuanshang and Ye Shoudao frowned, deep disappointment in their eyes.

They'd shouted “slaughter immortals,” but harbored hopes for the realm. Now inside, their dreams shattered.

“Where's Empress Ni Chunqiu?”

Tianxu's pale face shifted; he asked.

Du Longyang and others paled—no sign of her on this lake world.

She ascended first—yet vanished.

Unease gripped them.

Lu eyed the lake, curiosity sparking.

“This water... isn't water!”

He said.

He pinched like plucking a flower.

A droplet rippled upward to his palm, evaporating.

“Source power.”

His eyes gleamed strangely.

Liquefied source power?

By now, Lu knew: energy from the world source.

A heavenly treasure.

Boosted strength, aided Dao comprehension.

This entire lake was condensed source!

Mind-boggling.

How many eons accumulated?

Precious? Lu itched to haul the whole lake away.

Swap it with Beiluo Lake.

Suddenly...

Chains clinked in their ears.

Hearts clenched.

They blasted forward, skimming the lake toward misty depths.

For Infant Transformation experts, walking on water was trivial.

Lu pondered hauling the source water home.

Useless here—better nurture Five Phoenix cultivators.

No ideas came; he gave up, wheeling deeper.

Suddenly...

He paused.

Ahead, in the lake's heart, an ancient black iron ship emerged slowly.

Du Longyang and others eyed it warily.

Behind the ship trailed something massive.

Rumble...

Lu focused—it was the source he'd seen in the source space.

A star-like orb, floating, towed by the ship.

Figures flickered aboard.

A red flash—the missing Empress was there.

They exchanged glances.

They'd stormed the "immortal realm" expecting gods, ready to die.

No immortals—just weirdness.

"Board! Ni Chunqiu's on it!"

Du Longyang said.

He stomped the lake, cratering it, leaping aboard.

Yuanshang, Tianxu, Ye Shoudao followed.

Boarding, they froze.

Figures sat cross-legged on deck.

"That's the East Yi ancestor from a thousand years ago."

“That’s Martial Emperor City’s first Martial Emperor!”

“That’s my Bitter Buddha Temple’s Great Buddha!”

Shock hit Du Longyang and the others—these lifeless bodies were legends who’d ascended.

Now incorrupt corpses, adrift on this boundless source lake.

Immortality?

A cruel joke.

Du Longyang stared at the once-glorious first Martial Emperor, eyes reddening.

What horrors had they endured?

Lu boarded leisurely, eyebrow raised at the seated figures.

Each rivaled Du Longyang’s level.

Bodies intact, but souls and cultivation drained dry.

Sucked clean.

Lu eyed the towed source orb.

Star-sized, unusual.

Reminded him of the giant eye atop the source in the world's origin.

Connected, surely.

Du Longyang's group pressed to the stern.

There: the ascended Empress.

But seeing her, eyes shrank, chills racing.

No ascension glory.

She knelt in chains, facing the source orb.

Chains from it pierced her, blood dripping, absorbed—chains twitching alive.

Clank.

She moaned in pain.

Above her head...

Chains coiled her mutated infant, yanking it out.

Power and qi drained wildly into them.

“Immortality... immortality...”

Her phoenix crown lay shattered.

“Cultivated to tribulation, only to become food...” Blood trickled from red lips.

She laughed bitterly.

Ascension’s instant—she’d believed the dream.

Then chains burst from the source, piercing, devouring her years of cultivation.

Far off...

Du Longyang and others iced over.

They’d resisted believing immortality a scam—their dream.

Now brutally crushed.

Du Longyang roared, hurling his spear at the source.

But...

Chains shot out, deflecting it.

He tensed to dodge.

Unexpectedly...

Behind him, Yuanshang appeared, palm slamming his shoulder coldly.

Du Longyang coughed blood, unable to evade—chains pierced him.

He knelt, disbelief flooding his face.

Terrifying suction pulled from the source.

Not just him.

Yuanshang struck Tianxu and Ye Shoudao in their shock—chains impaled them.

Power drained madly.

The twist blindsided all.

Du Longyang's eyes blazed, staring at Yuanshang incredulously.

He'd guarded against Tianxu and Ye—but never the revered master!

The immortal's lapdog was the plan's initiator!

Far off...

The Empress's laugh grew more wretched.

They'd schemed against immortals.

Slaughter them—yet remained pawns.

Yuanshang started the plan.

Yet served the immortal.

They'd followed blindly.

The Immortal Slaughter Plan?

Collapsed in an instant.

Yuanshang pressed palms, face compassionate, smile warm.

He turned slowly.

Toward the ship's far end.

There, Lu in his Thousand Blades Chair—his final target.

He'd lured Lu into the plan at all costs.

Now, he wouldn't let him go.

Chapter 264: You Overturned My Furnace

Master Yuanshang's neck was strung with large prayer beads, his face serene as he pressed his palms together.

This gentle man had orchestrated a deadly trap for Tianyuan Continent's top experts.

Du Longyang, the Empress, Young Master Tianxu—all fell into his calculations.

Even Lu was ensnared.

Not just Lu was stunned; Du Longyang, the Empress, and the others were utterly shocked.

The Empress's phoenix crown lay shattered, hair wild, lips bloodied, laughter desperate.

Du Longyang knelt, a source-energy chain piercing his shoulder. He stared at Yuanshang in confusion.

He'd suspected Tianxu or Ye Shoudao as the immortal's dogs.

Never the deeply hidden, upright Yuanshang.

Why would the pure-hearted master serve the immortal?

Yuanshang bore no immortal mark!

Bitter Buddha Temple suffered most—countless revered monks died horribly upon ascension.

“Amitabha.”

Yuanshang chanted.

No explanation.

Du Longyang smiled bitterly, eyes flashing memories.

Yuanshang, bloodied, had come to Martial Emperor City, showing a Buddhist scripture revealing the “immortal’s” grand conspiracy.

Du doubted at first, but the first Martial Emperor’s records in the scripture pavilion convinced him.

He rallied the Empress, Ye Shoudao, even loathed Tianxu.

United the world's elite to solve it—future generations would fall into the immortal trap upon ascension.

Thus, the Immortal Slaughter Plan.

Yet...

It was all the immortal's game.

They sought to escape being pawns, unaware the escape was part of the board.

Trapped in the game, blind to it.

“What does the immortal want?!”

Du Longyang glared.

“He absorbs our strength, devours our infants—why? To grow stronger? He’s already supreme—what use?”

Yuanshang shook his head.

“This monk knows not.”

He ignored Du, turning to Lu.

“Almsgiver Lu, will you come willingly, or must this monk act?”

Lu leaned in his wheelchair, white robes floating, calm as if the betrayal was expected.

“Indeed, never judge by appearances...”

He smiled.

“The revered may harbor malice; the frail and sleazy may be pure.”

Lu glanced at Yuanshang, then distant Tianxu.

Tianxu, chain-pierced and gasping, shrank under the look.

He always feared Lu irrationally.

“One question.”

Lu said.

“Speak, Almsgiver.”

Yuanshang replied.

Lu raised a hand, pinching—a source droplet floated to his palm.

“Can this young master take some of this source lake?”

Yuanshang blinked—unexpected.

Far off...

Power drained from Du Longyang, the Empress, others.

Cultivation plummeted.

The Empress fell first—pale, lips vivid, demonic beauty.

From Infant Transformation to ordinary Nascent Soul, nearing Golden Core...

The massive source orb was a bottomless pit, devouring relentlessly.

Despair gripped her.

Hope lay with Lu—but could one man turn the tide?

He might not beat Yuanshang, let alone the immortal.

And...

Lu's tie with Du was mere employment.

Would he risk death over artifacts?

No...

She wouldn't, in his place.

"Can I?"

Lu asked seriously.

Yuanshang smiled: "Amitabha."

"Of course. Take freely. With the immortal, the lake is inexhaustible."

Lu raised a brow: "Your words."

He eyed the lake—perfect for secret realm rewards to nurture Golden Cores and Heavenly Locks.

Planned to take some, but Yuanshang's enthusiasm...

Hard to refuse kindness.

Lu flipped his palm.

A three-legged cauldron appeared.

Myriad Methods Furnace!

He released it.

Clang!

It plunged into the lake, sinking.

Gurgle.

A bubble—then a massive vortex swirled where it fell.

Countless source waters surged in.

Yuanshang froze, face twisting...

The waterline dropped...

How much was taken?!

Lu leaned back, unruffled.

Such generosity—how to be rude?

Post-upgrade, the furnace held space, deducing arts and storing items.

Tens of thousands of pavilion books were inside.

Using it for water was overkill, but no choice.

No spatial artifact yet—bend the furnace.

Waterline fell...

Yuanshang's warm smile faded.

He regretted his loose tongue.

"Almsgiver, enough."

Lu smiled: "Almost full."

Yuanshang darkened, gripping his staff.

"Don't toast only to drink forfeit."

Boom!

He stomped the deck.

Invisible wave rippled toward the furnace, aiming to shatter it.

Lu chuckled: “Bald donkey, breaking promises...”

He scooped—the furnace returned, source water pouring in.

Waterline kept dropping...

Aboard...

Tianxu laughed maniacally.

“Lu, well done! Piss off this stinking monk—I’ve hated him forever!”

His realm had fallen to Golden Core.

But he laughed, carefree.

Yuanshang's miss enraged him; he flew, staff swinging at Lu.

Boom!

The furnace rang, blocking.

It plunged back into the lake.

Lu's smile vanished, face cold.

"You overturned my furnace."

Yuanshang frowned, raising a golden alms bowl.

Weaker than the staff, but potent.

Suction erupted, aiming to seal Lu.

"I, Lu Ping'an, am easygoing, but you overturned my furnace..."

“Account for it.”

Lu pressed two fingers on the armguard, flicking.

Crimson flashed—a fire phoenix soared; silver blades stacked into a blooming lotus, shredding the bowl’s light.

The submerged furnace kept absorbing.

Yuanshang fumed—still draining!

Planning to empty the lake!

Spatial artifact!

Unheard of rarity.

Yuanshang chanted.

Golden light burst behind—a great Buddha manifested, palm slamming the silver lotus.

Collision birthed a storm.

Yuanshang retreated a step, grave.

Lu remained leisurely.

Fingers flicking—two more crimson streaks; remaining Phoenix Feather Swords whistled out.

Yuanshang glared, staff in one hand.

“Buddha’s Wrath Finger!”

Roar.

Infinite gold behind—an enraged Buddha face appeared.

A finger swelled hugely, pointing at Lu.

Clang!

It clashed with the swords.

Then—severed!

“This... immortal artifact?!”

Yuanshang bled, horrified.

The swords’ power overwhelmed his secret art.

“Immortal artifact?”

Lu blinked, shaking head: “Who dares claim immortality?”

“Mere Profound-tier spiritual tools.”

Words fell.

Countless silver blades tore the bowl—exploded.

Like a galactic cascade.

Yuanshang roared.

Sword light enveloped; he erupted Infant Transformation power, barely escaping.

Lu's face iced.

“Overturning my furnace—unforgivable.”

He raised a hand, grasping void.

Three Phoenix Feather Swords stacked, clanging into one longsword.

Fiery red glow.

Lu slashed air; Yuanshang raised his staff.

Clang!

Golden staff severed.

Yuanshang coughed blood, staggering back.

Three swords united—peak Profound-tier power.

Not Earth-tier, but beyond the staff.

Yuanshang retreated to the ship's edge.

“Immortal! Save me!”

He wasn't Lu's match—roared at the source orb.

Du Longyang and others glared.

“The immortal’s inside!”

Lu smiled faintly.

“Immortal?”

“Not just anyone qualifies.”

Hum...

The orb trembled.

A chain shot out.

Immense might, spanning the sky, pointing at Lu.

Lu sat calmly.

Mind stirred.

Myriad silver blades returned, stacking before him.

But...

Shockingly.

The chain curved—piercing Yuanshang’s chest...

Pfft!

Blood sprayed; Yuanshang stared incredulously.

He turned painfully to the orb.

“Immortal!”

“Why?!”

No answer—the orb silent, chain draining him.

Lu eyed the orb.

Faintly, a figure lay atop, eye pressed to the surface, staring out—staring at Lu.

Grinning.

Yuanshang fared worse.

Trusting the immortal, he resisted little.

Drainage was unrestrained.

Power flooded the orb.

He withered to a husk, face gaunt, death's aura thick.

Tianxu laughed.

“Deserved!”

“Immortal... bullshit!”

“Call it a demon!”

Du Longyang shook head—reap what you sow.

They knew not why he betrayed, but welcomed this end.

“Young Master Lu!”

Disheveled Empress called.

Lu looked curiously.

Her eyes gleamed: “Shatter the source orb. The immortal devours ascended experts’ power to transform...”

“Break it—halt the transformation! Foil the plot!”

Lu shook head: “Can’t. He hides in the source—world source, toughest thing.”

“Needs Heaven-tier treasure; externally unbreakable.”

Truth—as Plane Lord, Lu knew source hardness.

“Your ‘immortal’ hides there for safety. Breaking it? Impossible.”

“Even your four at peak couldn’t.”

Du Longyang despaired: “No way?”

One-armed Ye Shoudao mirrored misery.

Never imagined dying drained.

“But... there is a way.”

Lu said, idea sparking.

Empress's dim eyes reignited.

"Young Master Lu..."

Du and Tianxu looked hopeful.

The furnace overflowed; Lu regretted not taking all.

He beckoned—nonchalantly stowing it.

Yuanshang, now Golden Core cracking, ignored the theft.

"Young Master Lu, speak—we'll pay any price!"

Du urged.

Lu was their hope.

He waved: "I, Lu Ping'an, am not greedy..."

"This method... retards Tianyuan millennia, even ten thousand years. Willing?"

Stunned silence.

Empress gritted: "The immortal shakes Tianyuan's foundation..."

"Until removed, a sword hangs over us—Tianyuan will crumble!"

Du clenched: "Young Master Lu... do it!"

Tianxu and Ye agreed.

Lu nodded.

Eyed the orb.

The being inside glared ferociously.

Lu smiled.

What for absorbing power? Didn't care.

Mind moved.

He raised hand.

Merged three forbidden domain entrances, linking Five Phoenix source to the giant orb.

Can't break externally.

But... he could siphon the source!

Immortal won't come out? Lu drains.

Until it emerges to stop him!

Chapter 265: Source Shatters, Immortal Emerges!

At Nascent Soul, one senses the source—can even accumulate it.

Du Longyang, the Empress—both knew breaking the source externally was near impossible.

The immortal hid inside for that reason.

When Lu said it couldn't be broken from outside, regret stung, but no shock.

Hoping on Lu was desperate grasping.

Yet he offered another path.

Tianyuan's growth stunted a thousand—even ten thousand years?

To force the immortal out...

Worth it?

To Du Longyang and the others—yes!

The immortal threatened Tianyuan's future. Infant Transformation peaks ascended, only to be schemed against, dying wretchedly before the source.

Immortal lives, Tianyuan dies eventually!

Empress, hair wild, lips vivid, stared at Lu: "Young Master Lu, do it!"

Lu sat in the Thousand Blades Chair, white robes fluttering.

He nodded slightly, eyeing the source orb—seeing the figure glaring back.

Lu knew: that was Tianyuan's Plane Lord.

Tianyuan's storms—Du, Empress, Tianxu—none were the Lord. Lu had wondered where.

Hiding in the source orb.

World source was a plane's foundation.

This Lord was destroying it.

Plus devouring countless experts' power—Lu guessed: sacrificing Tianyuan for breakthrough.

Lu raised a hand.

Mysterious array runes floated around him.

He struck them—forming a familiar array.

Five Phoenix's "startup" fundamental.

First used siphoning a newborn mid-martial world, absorbing source to evolve Five Phoenix.

Then, Lu had limits—newborn source couldn't take much; he took just enough, no root damage.

This time...

Big score.

Three forbidden domain sources merged into a translucent rod—like a straw.

Lu poked it—piercing the source orb.

Clang!

Chains burst from the orb.

Those piercing Du and others whipped at Lu.

He flicked Phoenix Feather Swords, deflecting.

Boom!

The straw struck.

Furious roar echoed faintly.

Du, Empress shuddered—drainage slowed!

Yuanshang fared worse—realm fallen to Foundation, aged drastically.

Cultivation extends life.

Qi Core: ~150 years.

Foundation: ~350.

Golden Core: ~900.

Yuanshang, once Infant Transformation—millennia. Now, lifespan neared end.

From robust monk to frail elder.

He trusted the immortal—yet this end.

Lu linked Five Phoenix source to Tianyuan's.

Tianyuan: top mid-martial, vast source.

Old low-martial Five Phoenix couldn't dare—risk burst.

Now mid-martial too—why fear?

Rumble!

Vast source surged from the orb, racing through the straw.

Lu smiled oddly.

Like diverting one river to another.

Tianyuan's source massive—little visible change.

He waited calmly.

Spiritual pressure chessboard appeared before him.

Leisurely placing pieces.

Crack...

Chains on Du and others shattered.

Du staggered back.

Tianxu, Ye Shoudao followed.

Empress last—worst treated.

She eyed Lu's elegant play, expression complex.

“Young Master Lu... eyed the source long ago?”

Remembered him in the source world—now clear.

But what to say?

Lu absorbed for their sake—to save them.

He smiled, continued chess.

Their realms: Golden Core. Lucky—not Foundation; roots intact.

Time could restore Nascent Soul.

...

Five Phoenix Continent.

As Lu siphoned...

Five Phoenix source exploded in growth—heavens shifted.

Rainbow light bloomed across the sky.

Beiluo, Lake Center Island.

Readers in the pavilion looked up, awed.

Source fluctuations surged—spiritual qi density rose!

Many sat, insights flooding.

Ning Zhao by the lakeshore, white dress fluttering.

Hair twirling, she raised a hand.

Spiritual qi swirled.

Bottleneck loosened with the source evolution.

She gazed skyward.

Arms spread.

Boom!

Black clouds rolled.

Thunder roared within.

Heavenly Lock Tribulation!

Beiluo cultivators trembled, looking her way.

Not just her—many broke through.

Five Phoenix cultivation leaped.

Overlord on the lake, scroll in hand, eyes flickering—confused, lost.

Ning Zhao nearing Heavenly Lock.

He: peak Body Storage, hadn't touched the lock.

Demonic path... this hard?

Slower and slower.

Need more beatings?

Sima Qingshan in green, book in hand, stepped on water.

Gazed at Ning Zhao resonating with heaven.

Inspired.

Brush out, paper floating.

Spiritual qi as ink—painting a grand scroll.

Her tribulation struck—no suspense.

Cicada Wing Sword appeared; she soared, dress dancing, clashing thunder.

Sima splashed ink, strokes divine.

Mind elevated.

Tang Yimo in the pavilion watched—fists clenched.

Envied Sima's insight.

Sat, observing earnestly.

...

Source orb's power drained madly.

Du and others sensed Tianyuan's cultivation environment fading.

Lu's words clear now.

Forcing the immortal: millennium regression.

Source was a world's growth, foundation.

Absorption: decline.

Du silent.

Tianxu, Ye Shoudao speechless.

As Tianyuan's pillars—heavy responsibility.

Strength, duty.

Empress's eyes trembled, pale face fixed on Lu—intrigued.

Lu played chess, controlled array—slow, steady.

Gave adaptation time.

Star-like Tianyuan source shrank.

They felt it.

Yuanshang finally broke free.

But...

Buddhist roots ruined—skeletal, corpse-like.

Foundation realm.

Crawled to Du's leg.

“Save... me...”

Sunken eyes, hoarse.

Du—straightforward—ignored.

Nearly killed by him.

No kindness.

Kicked him away.

Yuanshang crawled to Tianxu—fury; brutal kicks.

Ye Shoudao expressionless—blade fell.

Pfft—one leg severed.

Tianxu's heart jumped.

Ye: ruthless, few words.

Yuanshang's end tragic.

Stopped moving, stared at the source.

Unwilling... eyes closed.

“Stop!”

Heaven-quaking roar!

Lu paused mid-piece.

Smile curved: “Finally.”

Du, Empress, Tianxu—eyes shrank.

Immortal... emerging?!

“Keep sucking... this deity spares you not!”

Cold voice resounded.

Source surface: a face emerged.

Like pressed from inside.

“You threaten me?”

Lu leaned back, brow raised.

“I hate threats most.”

Words fell—he twisted claw-like in void.

Suction surged!

Vortex swirled on the orb.

“Enough! Half the lake gone—now the plane source! Too greedy!”

Orb's figure iced.

Lu frowned: "Slander."

"Lake—that bald donkey let me take. He overturned my furnace—your man. Lake compensates."

"This orb—they told me to suck."

"I, Lu Ping'an, never force."

Orb's shadow raged.

Shameless!

Such rogue?!

Du's mouth twitched—knew it. Stole his tribulation, claimed it veered itself.

Thick-skinned!

Empress's eyes brightened—more fascinated.

Who dared pluck immortal feathers?

Even Du wouldn't.

Lu did—enraging it to impotent fury.

Comforting for her, soured on immortals.

“Immortal!”

Du spoke.

Spear aimed: “Ascension—a colossal lie! Why? Kill Tianyuan's peaks?! Know how rare Infant Transformation is?”

“Deserve ‘immortal’?”

Orb vortexed—Lu’s intensified suction.

The being furious.

How not? In moments...

10% source gone!

Still accelerating.

Robber!

“Silence!”

Rage exploded.

Du’s questions ignited it.

“Frogs in a well—what know you?!”

“This deity has no retreat!”

“Without bearing all pressure... think Tianyuan grew thus?”

“This deity takes what’s due! Your strength, cultivation—mine!”

Cold voice echoed.

Lu, intensifying, frowned.

Eyed the snarling face.

Faintly: “Bearing pressure?”

“If I guess right... you abandon ‘Tianyuan,’ use its source as your transformation cradle. Hatch—break Infant Transformation, mid-martial shackles.”

“But become a wanderer.”

“Yet something drives this gamble—changes wanderer fate. Details unknown.”

Lu said.

More knowledge, deeper guesses than Du, Empress.

They dazed.

Orb’s being laughed coldly—mask torn, embarrassed rage.

“Warned you early... don’t meddle. Same Plane Lords—my today, your tomorrow. Why make it hard!”

“But you... wouldn’t listen!”

Rumble...

“Stop sucking!”

Cold blast.

Then...

Like eggshell cracking.

Crack on the surface.

Lu narrowed eyes.

Mind stirred.

Intensified—vortex spun wildly.

Du, Empress, Tianxu—pupils contracted.

Stared at the fissure.

Finally...

Orb split slowly.

A hand dripping source liquid pressed the crack.

Pushed apart...

A head emerged.

Violent aura spread, filling heaven and earth.

Immortal—born!

Orb's figure stared icily at wheelchair-bound, white-robed Lu—murderous intent.

Grinned...

“This deity said stop...”

“Suck how much—spit it all back later!”

Chapter 266: It's Been a Long Time Since I Met an Opponent Worth Standing For

Beiluo City, once the starting point where Lu forged the plane source, now boasted spiritual qi so dense it was terrifying.

Plants grew wildly lush; many fused with source energy from the changes, gaining sentience—becoming spirit flora.

On Lake Center Island, qi thickened; rainbow clouds cloaked the sky, raining spiritual liquid.

Not Lu's pure essence—mostly water with qi.

But the rain transformed the island's plants.

Skyward chrysanthemums gaped, gulping.

Green peach blossoms bloomed vividly, radiant.

On the island...

Lü Dongxuan strolled hands clasped, rain rejuvenating him—youthful vigor.

He smiled; a Tianji Pigeon perched quietly on his shoulder.

“The Young Master must have done something grand... another evolution.”

His aura grew subtly.

A qi vortex swirled above his head.

In this blessed land, he stepped into Body Storage.

Far off...

Ning Zhao tribulated amid the rain.

Cultivators watched the lightning—never lost awe, though not first time.

She'd endured the second Heavenly Lock.

Third risky, but odds better.

Cicada Wing Sword trembled, cracked—long companion nearing end.

She stroked it gently; blood stained her white dress, but she held.

Realm rising; sword obsolete—she accepted, no regret.

Third thunder brewed.

She planted the sword in ground.

Raised hand, tucked hair, stepped—air waves rippled.

Thunder crashed.

She roared, dress dancing, peerless charge.

Boom!

Invisible blast; rain froze.

Overlord clenched fists.

Sima Qingshan's robes whipped; final stroke—figure in scroll moved like an immortal.

Painting birthed a sage!

He stood frozen.

Mind crystal clear.

Rainbow clouds gathered overhead.

Transformation; golden glint in brow.

“Paint the way: beings, forms, myriad.”

Head up to auspicious clouds.

Mind soared.

Boom!

Mind exploded.

Golden spark lived—he birthed divine sense at Body Storage.

Sense surged: lake ripples, rain in wind, chrysanthemum petals—all vivid.

“Heavenly Lock births sense...”

“I, not in Lock, yet sense born... nothing absolute.”

He smiled, eyes closed.

Far...

Thunder dispersed; Ning Zhao landed, hair flying—evolving.

Clouds sliced; source feedback poured, enveloping her.

Nie Changqing would gape—his feedback paled.

Lu wouldn't surprise: siphoned from Tianyuan orb.

Ning Zhao seized heaven, earth, harmony.

She sat; wounds healed, dishevel ragged no more—immortal air.

Dragon roars faintly behind.

Spine like dragon—shatter the Lock!

Ning Zhao entered Heavenly Lock!

In feedback, lashes trembled; tempered three vertebrae.

Strength skyrocketed.

She stunned herself.

Rumble...

Suddenly.

Thunder gathered anew.

She opened eyes, baffled.

Lock passed—whence this?

All cultivators startled.

“This thunder... Pill Tribulation.”

Jing Yue’s grave voice echoed island-wide.

Lü Dongxuan clutched gold chain, disbelieving.

Overlord stared.

Even forging-obsessed Gongshu Yu emerged.

Under a skyward chrysanthemum...

Jing Yue held Jing Tian Sword, umbrella for Ni Yu.

Ni Yu's chubby face flushed crimson, grave.

Black pot glowed red; pills bounced, clanging.

Thunder hers.

Ning Zhao paled.

What?

“Little Ni, stop!”

Tribulation—with Body Storage entry? Impossible.

“No...”

Qi poured into pot; stubborn shake.

Popped Qi Gathering Pill, restored, continued.

Nie Shuang distant, tense—best friends; worried.

“Little Shuang, come.”

Jing Yue called.

He ran.

Umbrella handed.

“Hold steady—no rain on Little Ni.”

“What will you do?”

“I’m the tester—this tribulation, I block!”

Jing Yue grinned.

Ni Yu couldn’t.

Weakest pill tribulation—still.

“I will.”

Ning Zhao said.

Heavenly Lock—easy vs. pill.

“Young Master said... tribulations scale to person.”

“Your Lock realm—may draw worse...”

Jing Yue drew sword, eyed brewing thunder, smiled.

“Cause bears fruit... I test pills; now fruit.”

Carefully unwrapped bundle, licked a pill, rewrapped.

Boom!

Ni Yu poured qi.

Tribulation peaked—descended.

Jing Yue gripped sword.

Thrust skyward like lake poke.

Sword intent unleashed.

Narrow qi beam clashed thunder!

Boom boom!

Qi scattered.

Eyes focused—hundreds slashes; split thunder.

Lightning exploded around.

Ning Zhao in feedback inhaled—weakest still heaven's wrath.

Long after...

Thunder gone.

Web dispersed.

Jing Yue steamed, smoke from mouth, sword in hand—joyful grin.

Ni Yu finished.

Lid off.

Fragrance burst.

Pills out!

Body Tempering—three!

Chubby hand pinched; two patterns—beaming.

“Young Master, I did it!”

Bounced excited.

“Old Jing, order up!”

Hurled first pill at smoking Jing Yue.

His eyes lit.

Caught—warm pill boiled blood.

Carefully held—no lick.

Swallowed.

...

Crack...

Source fissure widened.

Figure half-emerged.

Lu sat calmly, watching.

“You threaten again.”

Flat.

“Third time...”

“Threaten? So what? You should know—my today, your tomorrow...” Cold: “Why make it hard?!”

Du Longyang, Empress stared.

Suddenly.

Du inhaled: “You...”

“Bitter Buddha Temple founder!”

Empress, Tianxu recognized.

Now clear: why Yuanshang unmarked yet aided.

The “immortal”—Bitter Buddha’s founder, Monk Kutu!

“Didn’t you perish 800 years ago in demon domain uprising?!”

Du incredulous.

Crack...

Source liquid dripped.

Bald man emerged, faint laugh echoing.

“Perish?”

“This deity... undying.”

“Mere demon domain? Start of my plan.”

Kutu said.

“Ruthless! Temple’s great Buddhas—all harmed. Even your own!”

Empress disheveled, chilled.

“For grand ambition, true transcendence... their deaths worth it!”

Kutu fully out.

“Stop sucking!”

Raged at Lu.

Lu had intensified during talk.

He smiled.

Stopped.

Enough—forced the hidden “immortal” out.

Tianyuan source: one-fifth gone.

Kutu not fully free—umbilical cord-like from back.

He walked void in white monk robes—pure.

“You refine all Tianyuan source... experts’ power as catalyst.”

Lu said.

“Success: Tianyuan collapses; you break shackles.”

Stared: “Why?”

Good development... why doom Tianyuan?

Kutu eyed Du, Empress—smiled, no hide.

“Planes have sources; recognition makes Plane Lord... know where sources come?”

To Lu.

Lu chin on hand, pondered.

Hesitant: “Robbed?”

His was...

Kutu paused.

Speechless.

“Sources... from High Martial!”

Du, Empress gasped.

High Martial?!

Lu brow raised—first mention.

Sources beyond low/mid-martial.

“My devotion contacted High Martial Buddha Realm’s True Buddha...”

“Saw my faith, strength—if break Infant Transformation, he takes me to High Martial Buddha Realm! I become High Martial being!”

Kutu excited.

“But too hard...”

Shook head.

“Sought all ways. Didn’t want ruin Tianyuan—no choice. Without source, experts’ power—can’t break!”

“Can’t enter true High Martial Buddha Realm!”

“Miss this... Mid vs. High gap vast. Only there: transcend! True supreme Buddha!”

Eyed Lu, fanatic.

“You’ll face it. Walls everywhere, powerless... path to apex before you—resist temptation?”

Lu chin-propped, frowned, shook.

“Sorry, won’t happen.”

“Want shackles... too hard.”

Maybe post-100 Qi Refinement layers...

But 100 layers—who knows when.

Kutu: “...”

“So you set ascension bureau—laughable lie?”

Empress cold.

Her mother, prior Empress, died ascending.

Hated the architect.

“For your transcendence—ruin Tianyuan, all die for you—heart not ache?”

“Once revered monk—saved from demons. How become this?!”

Fists clenched.

“Source collapse: Nascent Souls don’t die—wanderers...”

“Seize mid/low-martial worlds—live well. Why not?”

Kutu smiled.

“Common folk?”

“Wildfire burns not out; spring wind revives.”

“Beings like weeds—die, new born... worlds vast, folk countless.”

“Care for ants’ lives?”

Palms together.

“Beast!”

Empress cursed.

Kutu unmoved.

Lu listened.

His Plane Lordship... different.

Kutu's gaze shifted to Lu.

Smiled.

"Advised you—didn't want touch Plane Lord. Unknown if High Martial backs you."

"But now—no matter. Advised too much."

"One step away—your power: complete transcendence... rebirth in source."

Aura spread, strengthening.

Umbilical trailed; stepped toward Lu.

Lu calm in chair.

Narrowed eyes.

“Advice?”

“No—threats...”

“I, Lu Ping’an, hate threats most.”

“Threaten? So what? You’re no match—too weak.”

Kutu laughed—sensed Lu’s aura.

Lu smiled, finger tapped Phoenix guard.

Pressed slowly.

Body rose from chair.

White robes shifted to black.

Terrifying aura surged; black qi faintly.

“Long since opponent worth standing...”

“I, Lu Ping’an, treat kindly—but your three threats... intolerable.”

“Hope... you don’t disappoint.”

Chapter 267: Indestructible Demonic Body

Body Tempering Pill—self-explanatory: tempers the physique.

Even creator Ni Yu didn’t fully grasp its effects; she followed Lu’s recipe.

She knew only: far harder than Qi Gathering Pills.

Much effort for three.

Treasured them.

Not ungrateful—Jing Yue blocked her pill tribulation, so first pill his.

Tester's due.

Remaining two? Saved for Young Master's return—merit claim.

Thus, Jing Yue swallowing became the focus.

Even Ning Zhao in source feedback was surprised, curious.

What did Ni Yu's labored pill do?

Jing Yue felt only pain.

Yes.

Had Ni Yu not thrown it, he'd suspect poison.

No melt-in-mouth.

Bit—crunch like candy.

Swallowed.

Soon, stomach a furnace—scorching, radiating heat.

He roared low.

Bones like metal in forge, hammered.

Like Gongshu Yu beating ore.

Boom!

Knelt; skin crimson, steaming.

Heat waves rolled.

Roared; wanted to dig it out.

Long-absent evasion surged.

Crowds watched.

Heart ached—poison's price?

Drew Jing Tian Sword, planted ground; body shook.

Sweat seeped, soaked clothes.

Then—black impurities oozed.

All stunned.

What?

This painful?

Jing Yue gripped sword, bolted island—into lake.

Slashed repeatedly, venting.

At first, ignored.

But...

Overlord, Sima Qingshan, Tang Yimo saw.

Sword power grew!

Faint dragon roars.

Spine like dragon...

Jing Yue gained Heavenly Lock qualification?!

Ning Zhao in feedback shocked.

He was far from breakthrough.

One pill—qualification.

Many pondered—eyes lit.

Even greed, awe.

Body Tempering: tempers flesh; Heavenly Lock needs strong body, tempers spine.

Pill aids Lock impact.

Instant recognition: precious.

No wonder pill tribulation!

Lock impact hard—talent, will needed.

Now—shortcut!

One pill: temper body, charge Lock!

Pop pills to Lock—exhilarating.

Pure pills? Dream. Aid; talent key.

Boom!

Jing Yue suppressed—no tribulation; knew insufficient.

Hold.

Consolidate, strengthen—then cross.

Overlord, Tang Yimo eyed Ni Yu hotly.

Hotter than others—their foundations solid; pill could ease Lock.

Overlord strode waves.

To Ni Yu.

“Master Ni, sell the two?”

Asked.

Ni Yu: alchemist master. Mere maid—but for pills, polite.

Sword flash.

Jing Yue descended—reborn—before Overlord.

Swept Jing Tian; lake split, unhealing.

Overlord halted.

Ni Yu hid pills.

“No sell—wait Young Master.”

Sell?

Short cash? Young Master let her buy herbs freely.

Overlord regretted—no force.

No right.

Baiyujing—absent Young Master, Lock Ning Zhao suppressed him.

Turned, back to pavilion—books.

But couldn't focus.

Lost—surpassed.

Mo Beike held scroll, bags twitched.

Eyed island—sighed.

Baiyujing outpaced Daxuan Academy.

No more reading—many on cultivation methods.

Important, but...

Cared for academy ideology.

Boat to island.

Found Ni Yu.

Sleeves up, bowed.

“Master Ni.”

Wary—bad old man.

Remembered Yin-Yang impostor nearly killed Young Master.

“Not for pills...”

Smiled.

“Seek your alchemy insights. Daxuan head—spread to future generations.”

“Alchemy spreads—you, sage master!”

Serious.

Ni Yu dizzy.

Sage Ni?

Sounded... good?

Mo Beike smiled—to Jing Yue, Gongshu Yu...

“Academy new—cultivation base. True prosperity: diverse—alchemy, arrays, forging...”

“Young Master wants prosperity.”

To all top talents.

Invite as instructors—elevate academy.

“No... praise no.”

“Wait Young Master.”

Snapped from sage lure.

Mo Beike smiled—no rush.

Then...

Lake rippled.

Lu Changkong boated, hands clasped—talked Mo Beike.

Dig son's corner? Stop.

Overlord glanced—no care.

Xiliang vs. Daxuan bet on.

Fancy stuff—beat battle-born Xiang clan?

...

Tianyuan Peak.

Air oppressed.

Du Longyang incredulous—Lu rising from Thousand Blades.

Vast aura spread.

Remembered first meet.

Lu as Tianxu—rose to demon!

Now again.

Rise as Demon Lord.

Lu black robes whipped; qi turned demonic.

Kutu white robes—source orb surged power, supporting.

Transformation incomplete—needed Lu's power to break Infant shackles.

Far...

Du, Empress retreated fast.

Gold Core now—no match; instant death.

Temporary fall—time, energy: restore peak.

Now—watch.

Tianyuan fate in outsider hands.

“Strong!”

Du said.

Ye Shoudao nodded.

“Weird... thought wheelchair pose like Tianxu. Now—suppressant.”

Ye said.

Tianxu unhappy.

“Pose? Style! Gold Core bearers—status symbol!”

Pale flush, glared.

Ye cold smile—ignored.

“Suppress physique...”

Du said.

“Physique?”

Empress curious.

“Yes, Martial Emperor records: geniuses born different—cultivation prodigies.”

“Superhuman body, qi sense acute—cultivation physique.”

Du said.

“Ye, remember that woman...”

Ye fluctuated—nodded.

“Vine Demon Body—fast, gifted. Shunned as demon.”

Du inhaled.

“Young Master Lu—mysterious physique. High Martial all have.”

Empress et al. enlightened.

Watched battle.

Not optimistic.

Kutu absorbed peaks, still siphoning source—beyond normal.

Peak them combined—couldn't.

Lu win?

Unsure.

“Special physique...”

Kutu palms together, narrowed—eyed Lu.

More sure High Martial backed.

Avoided at first.

Now—fight to death.

Lu's power—bonus.

His physique—stronger in High Martial Buddha Realm!

Lu neck twist—demonic qi whirlwind.

Great demon—evil face, black robes oppressive.

Fist clenched, corner up—wicked smile.

Toe void tap.

Myriad silver blades followed.

Boom!

Blades: silver-black lotus.

Thunder bloomed.

Thunder Movement!

Instant beside Kutu.

Kutu gentle smile.

“Special or not—gap remains.”

Sensed Lu weak.

Palm light.

Demon Lu fist met palm—waves rolled.

Kutu eyes fluctuated—odd...

Couldn't pinpoint.

Lu strange.

Black thunder wrapped.

Kutu moved.

White streak.

Lu thunder—black.

White black clashed; explosions...

Level stunned Du, Empress.

Fallen—couldn't track.

Only air fluctuations!

Lu's chair blades, Phoenix Swords—lagged.

Boom!

Both flung.

Demon Lu robes whipped—raised hand.

Boom boom!

Thousand Blades reshaped per will.

Three Phoenix: axe handle.

Myriad silver: blade—great axe.

Demonic dye—world-splitting aura.

As axe formed...

Lake Center Island.

Reading Overlord heart jolted.

Boom!

Hammer to chest.

Vision shifted.

Demonic figure.

“Demon Lord!”

Pupils shrank.

Knelt before demon, shed body...

Now again.

Hum...

Demon Lord axe—like splitting heavens.

Impacted mind.

Fleeting.

Overlord lost.

Demon Lu unaware—axe at Kutu.

Kutu palms—angry.

Bells rang.

Wrathful Vajra!

Golden Buddha giant around.

Demon axe demonic qi hammered—clangs.

“Can’t break ‘Wrathful Vajra’ ...”

Kutu calm in defense—eyed black-robed Lu.

Admitted: aura weak, battle unexpected.

“Eager for your infant...”

“Demon Buddha one; Buddha demon thought, demon Buddha thought...”

“Your infant compatible.”

Anticipated.

Demon Lu whipped.

One hand axe.

Corner up—disdain.

“Infant? Trash... don’t need.”

Kutu blinked—confused.

Words fell.

Pupil black flash.

Palm: “神魔血” drop.

“Indestructible Demonic Body.”

Crushed!

Aura skyrocketed.

Demonic whirlwind.

Body seemed taller.

Blood-fueled—awakened full power.

Axe thrown.

Void exploded—myriad silver, three flame Phoenix...

Clang stacked.

Silver-black giant fist.

Demon Lu raised fist.

Chair-fist followed.

Calm punch at Vajra.

Void fist smashed!

Kutu palms, robes whipped—chant.

Golden Vajra Buddha light.

Boom!

But...

Blood-crush punch.

Buddha-light Vajra face—exploded!

Calm Kutu—no more.

“Impossible?!”

Chapter 268: Dare Kill My Devotee?

God-Demon Blood—exchanged with physique intensity points, same tier as divine sense.

In the Thousand Blades Chair, its effect was subtle.

But rising into “Indestructible Demonic Body”—it shone.

One drop: power far beyond self.

Lu guessed... perhaps Qi Refinement Layer 5 level.

His estimate.

Alone, not strong—like sense.

Paired with Demonic Body: qualitative leap.

Boom!

Heaven-shaking roar.

Buddha-light Wrathful Vajra—face punched by Demon Lord Lu; head exploded, golden shards scattered.

Like flipping fragments.

Kutu within—blasted back, smashed source orb.

Lake waters erupted in waves.

Black iron ship rocked.

Silver blades swirled.

Reformed demonic axe in black-robed Lu's grip.

Far...

Du Longyang et al. hearts jumped—Kutu disadvantaged first.

That punch—any of them: instant death.

Empress disheveled, crown shattered—cared not; lashes trembled at Lu.

“He masters his physique... artifacts unseen, likely beyond first-grade!”

Du said.

Hope stirred.

Lu might win?

Block Kutu—Tianyuan saved.

“Who is he?”

Empress lips parted.

“Truly High Martial backer, as Kutu said?”

Du silent—unknown.

Black iron ship.

Fallen experts' corpses remained.

Kutu rose from orb impact.

Stared Lu—twisted cold from orb spying.

Long after.

Spoke—Lu tougher than thought.

Worthy Plane Lord.

“No need deathmatch. You're not of this world—gain fighting me?”

Kutu said.

Retreating—no fight.

Win: costly.

Black-robed Lu void-stand, axe one-hand—cold gaze.

“What they gave—I double.”

“Artifacts? Pills? All.”

“They have—I have. They lack—I have.”

Palms together, smiled.

Far...

Kutu negotiating—Du faces changed.

Guessed plan.

Feared.

Tie with Lu: interest.

Artifacts, pills hired Lu—higher bid? Side with Kutu?

Betrayal: despair.

Black-robed Lu half-smile.

Realist.

Thus far—world stepping stone to High Martial.

Tempting normally.

But Lu unconventional.

Cared not artifacts.

Cared: threats.

Thrice.

Petty.

No threats—maybe talk. Profit world.

But...

To smile, overture.

Lu: "You threatened me."

Kutu paused.

"Three first-grade artifacts, ten same pills!"

Many slain—had them.

Lu expressionless: "Thrice."

Kutu fists clenched.

Annoyed.

"Nine artifacts, thirty pills!"

Cold.

Lu calm: "Thrice... and drain me."

Kutu: "..."

Sesame-heart?

For grudge?

Reject nine first-grade, thirty pills?

“Toying me?”

Demon Lu wicked: “So what?”

Kutu robes whipped: “Think only you High Martial backed? I too!”

“Deathmatch useless. Not your world—why meddle?”

Cold.

Black-robed Lu wicked gaze.

“Threat... again?”

Words fell.

God-Demon Blood surged—true demon.

Black lightning—vanished.

Reappeared: beside Kutu.

“Court death!”

Kutu eyed approach.

Narrowed.

Chanted mystic sutra—weird ripple.

“Imprison Buddha!”

Palms slammed.

Orb behind.

Chains clanged.

Endless shot—dense, sky-dark.

Center.

Kutu cold smile—chains wrapped, vanished.

Lu sidestep.

Chain whistled—terrifying.

Another fell.

Dodged constantly.

Too many—spiritual.

Like blood-scented cats—pierced at Lu.

Pierced: like Du—drained.

Power to orb—breakthrough aid.

Critical.

Soon.

Chains engulfed Lu.

Body gone.

Countless horizontal—cold.

Far...

Du, Tianxu stunned.

Joy from reject—then full counter.

Engulfed.

Chains: paralyze, drain despair.

“What now?”

Tianxu paler.

Lu lose—all end.

“Act! No wait.”

Du gritted.

Raised spear, Martial Emperor Scripture—golden gleam.

Charged chain mass—roar, thrust.

But...

Clang, sparks—scattered.

Kutu faint laugh deep.

Mocking overreach.

Empress acted.

Gold Core—no shake.

Louder mockery.

Ye, Tianxu too.

No sit—resist.

Louder.

Felt chains pierce Lu.

Doomed.

Source chains—inescapable.

Trapped many.

Intent to drain...

Suddenly.

Kutu face changed.

Drain burst.

Chains: bone-white flame burned along!

Scorch—pain!

“Heavenly Mystic Fire?!”

Roared.

Chains like flame-touched tentacles—retracted.

Exposed center.

Black-robed Lu: Thousand Blades cocoon.

Bone-white flame floated.

Blades spread—demonic axe gripped.

“Pierce”: into flame.

Heavenly Mystic Fire—High Martial product, potent.

Xirong king couldn't wield.

Lu strong sense—formidable.

Demon aura fit bone fire.

Flame: chains fled.

“Heavenly Mystic Fire? How?!”

Kutu heart shrank—horror.

High Martial only—why Lu?

Moment seen.

Lu extraordinary—nobler than thought.

Gifted High Martial fire—favored.

Destined High Martial.

Kutu fear—jealous rage.

He fought life—can't enter.

This man: qualification!

Unwilling.

Lightning flashed.

Lu palm fire, axe grip.

Before endless chains.

Raised.

Exposed Kutu—ferocious.

Unwilling stare.

Jealous.

Life sad—some lifelong unreachable; others born done.

Heights: below another's cry-start.

"No wonder fearless, meddle..."

"No fear my High Martial Buddha backer!"

"Confident they dare not touch..."

"Hahaha... pathetic!"

"Thought ordinary Plane Lord—laughable!"

Kutu manic laugh.

Umbilical to orb floated.

“Should stop early! No ties to Tianyuan!”

“Today’s fruit from past cause...”

“Unwilling...” Kutu said.

Black-robed Lu whipped calm: “I am ordinary Plane Lord.”

Kutu disbelieved.

Ordinary: many first-grade, axe beyond.

Ordinary: physique.

Ordinary: High Martial fire.

Reject not grudge—temptation insufficient.

No explain—Kutu obsessed.

“What for?”

“High Martial worth abandon, betray Tianyuan?”

Lu asked.

“For?”

Kutu laughed: “Infant Transformation: 5000 years. End: dust, even Plane Lord. High Martial... immortality!”

“Death despair—you destined, don’t understand!”

End: unwilling.

Lu no more words.

Immortality?

High Martial cruel—live long?

Raised demonic axe.

Pointed Kutu.

Next: slashed.

Rumble!

Orb quaked.

Far...

Du, Empress complex.

Kutu lost—relief, helplessness.

Axe gleam neared.

Kutu no dodge.

Unwilling jealous stare.

“Lost...”

“But loss: Tianyuan buries with!”

Laughed.

Boom!

Axe not near.

Body swelled—exploded!

With: orb dense cracks...

Lu face shifted.

Decisive madness—stunned.

More: sense annihilation.

Mystic mark triggered.

Lu head up.

Sky: giant Buddha shadow!

“Dare kill my devotee?!”

Deafening.

Storm change.

Orb cracked faster.

Terrifying waves.

Voice fell.

Buddha eyes locked black-robed Lu.

Sky-covering Buddha palm.

Descended.

Slammed Lu.

Chapter 269: This Young Master Remembers You

Kutu's choice exceeded Lu's expectations.

In the final moment, he detonated the mark left by the High Martial Buddha Realm expert in his mind.

His resolve and decisiveness were chilling.

Exploding his divine sense cracked the Tianyuan source surface countless times—dooming the continent to burial.

Black-robed Lu looked skyward; faintly, a great Buddha spanned heaven and earth.

Terrifying pressure—suffocating.

One palm: world-ending.

“High Martial expert...”

Lu grave.

Merely a strand via mark—yet this level!

Pressure felt.

He stepped back, sat slowly.

Demonic axe scattered—myriad silver danced.

Black robes reverted white.

Void-sat; Phoenix Swords, silver blades stacked—blooming lotus, array runes.

Spiritual pressure chessboard before.

Chess box floated.

Sense surged.

Pieces fell crisp.

Against Buddha shadow's palm.

Lu played.

Boom!

Palm crashed.

Lotus of swords/blades held—storms swept, source collapsing!

Shoo shoo!

White blades rained, riddling black iron ship.

Lu white robes whipped, clung tight.

Ten sense strands max—amplified chessboard: great net.

Clashed palm!

Bang!!!

Explosion surged.

Source lake blasted—towering waves.

Space rumbled—crumbling.

Far...

Du Longyang, Empress breathless—twists rapid.

Kutu advantaged—self-destruct, source cracking, summoned supreme terror.

Undoubtedly High Martial.

Lu block?

No one sure.

Du, Empress sighed.

Tianyuan peaks—now ants to true power.

Disposable.

“Young Master Lu...”

Empress murmured.

Du sighed.

Hired big—win alive? Double price.

But no more first-grade artifacts.

Source roared—cracks widened; top mid-martial Tianyuan: low-martial decay...

No time care.

Stared giant ancient Buddha—palm mighty.

“High Martial, beyond Nascent Soul!”

Du inhaled.

Palm hit Lu—ship shattered.

Silver returned—Thousand Blades Chair; Lu white, seated.

Breeze-like.

Palm dispersed.

Buddha glared—memorizing Lu.

Lu fearless—met gaze, cold.

This Buddha... remembered.

Mark strand—distant; rules reject stay.

Vast sutras, bells ceased.

Buddha faded.

Pressure gone.

Lu in chair; chessboard dim—frowned.

“High Martial Buddha Realm.”

“This young master... remembers you.”

Stored board; tapped Phoenix guard.

Eyed cracked source—faint smile.

“Hiding?”

Said.

Du et al. startled.

Lu raised hand—flicked guard...

Three Phoenix: fire phoenixes to orb.

Screech!

Orb.

Tiny weird infant fled—monk, third eye: evil three-eyed.

Infant Transformation infant!

Normal: self-copy; Transformation: mutated, amplified.

Kutu's.

Still alive?!

Du faces changed—sly!

Grand words, decisive.

Buddha shadow, world palm.

All act.

“Why alive?!”

Kutu infant stunned—strand sense.

Sense intact, infant: rebirth.

Plan good, act true.

Misjudged Lu—survived High Martial palm.

“This world limited... mid-martial cap Infant extreme. High Martial descent—no break cap. Palm strong, but Infant level.”

Lu said.

Implied: same level—kill him? Why?

Buddha palm stronger—mastery gap.

No cap break—no break.

Lu minor loss—palm death? Dream.

His temper: Buddha remembered.

Infant flee.

But.

Phoenix shot—triangle block.

Carried infant float.

Far...

Du, Empress sped.

Complex eyes on three-eyed infant.

Tianxu raised—small sword grew, hovered.

Ye cold stare.

Tianyuan peaks encircled “immortal”.

Infant struggled—failed; shrill.

Sharp laugh.

Swept Du, Empress—gleeful: “Don’t victor pose!”

“Soul gone, source cracking... Tianyuan quake, seas swallow, demon domain unseal... unstoppable! Doom!”

Laughed.

Du fists: “Heart... vicious!”

“Vicious?”

Half-smile.

“No source: low-martial, realms Foundation... unprotected: wanderers’ feast.”

“Wanderers come—hell; fallen you block not!”

“All die!”

“Better my funeral than slaughter, enslave!”

Said.

“Madman!”

Empress cursed.

Even Tianxu—vicious!

Lives nothing.

Infant laughed.

Triumph.

Controlled—even failed.

Lu in chair, chin-propped—bored at clamor.

Raised finger.

Slight slash.

Phoenix red—swept infant.

Vs. true body: weak child.

Lu slaughter: easy.

Pfft!

Head flew—laugh cut.

Sense strand—Phoenix annihilated.

Shrill unwilling—Kutu gone from Tianyuan.

Immortal slaying: complete.

Du silent—glanced Lu, decisive chill.

Empress eyes shone—such power, unmoved kill.

Tianxu heart cold.

Body occupied once—knew extraordinary.

Kutu extinguished—infant pure energy, dispersed.

Lu leaned—yawn.

Done... depart.

Eager Five Phoenix.

Absorbed much Tianyuan source—burst?

World impact.

Handle.

But.

Du called.

Complex.

Lu in chair—puzzled, eyed cracked source.

Du knelt.

“Young Master Lu... save Tianyuan!”

Lu stunned—Martial Emperor City Lord, top spear—kneel.

Empress disheveled—no grace.

Knelt.

“Young Master Lu... save Tianyuan!”

Serious.

Tianxu, Ye hesitated—knelt.

Kutu no bluff.

Source expert: Lu.

Only savior.

...

Beiluo, Lake Center Island.

All sensed unusual.

Sky: vast orb floated.

Unknown source—but profound; minds clear, insights.

Many broke: Qi Core peak to Body Storage—auras soared.

Body peak to Gold Core/Lock: harder.

Lu Changkong chatted Mo Beike lakeside.

Mo sensed change.

“City Lord views on Daxuan Academy?”

Curious.

Lu hands clasped, warm smile.

“Fan’er approves. True—early cultivation groping.”

“Now paths carved.”

Pointed ink-painting Sima: “Painting way—unique, untrod.”

Tang Yimo: “Body.”

Ni Yu, Jing Yue, Gongshu Yu...

All unconventional.

“Juizi right—like Hundred Schools contention.”

“Academy fits collision—Fan’er’s reason.”

Mo thoughtful—nodded.

Recorded ways—invited lecturers.

Many refused.

Lu words affirmed—persist.

Lu patted shoulder.

“Thorny path from start.”

Mo bags twitched.

Smiled: “Someone must. If Kong Xiu lived... he’d teach—loved it.”

Rumble!

Sky rainbow vivid.

Little Yinglong on Dragon Gate—head up, wings spread, grew; yellow scales noble.

Roared.

Scales energy surged.

Not just.

Gate: roars.

Island stunned.

Buzhou Peak.

Zhu Long legs hugged on bluestone.

Lashes trembled—eyes snapped open.

Roar!

Peak: girl gone.

Coiled candle dragon.

Girl face—black-white eyes: sun-moon.

Raised—gulped rainbow source.

Tailing, Wentian Peak.

Daxuan children pointed sky—excited.

Dantai Xuanzong plain robes—out.

Looked.

Qi mist.

Azure dragon soared!

World sensed Five Phoenix evolution.

...

Tianyuan Continent.

Demon Domain!

Thick demon qi swept.

Rivers churned.

Jubilant laugh—ground demons head up, qi spurts, excited howls.

Ghost cries.

Heaven Demon Tower.

Qi funnel top.

Invisible chains faint.

Suddenly.

Chains snapped inch by inch.

Tower shook.

Heaven-shaking lion roar.

Lion Demon King broke seal!

Huge lion atop—roar shook domain.

Demons knelt.

Starved, sealed ages.

King free!

“Seal break: human extinction!”

Roared.

Leapt—human form, cold lion armor.

Demons howled—black army to border.

Border.

Daqian women's walls.

Cultivators paled—pressure.

Looked.

Demon direction: black horizontal.

Lion King stepped void.

Laughed.

Source collapse—demon world soon.

Stared walls.

Raised hand—demons ready.

Suddenly.

Sensed.

Head up.

Sky tore.

Empress disheveled, red robes—floated out.

Then Du, Tianxu, Ye.

Wheelchair white-robed Lu.

Lion King froze.

Glanced Empress, Du—no big.

Drained: Gold Core.

But...

Lu's familiar face—mane exploded!

Chapter 270: If You've Got the Guts, Don't Use Artifacts!

Why was that wheelchair guy here?

That was the Lion Demon King's biggest doubt.

Mane exploded—first reaction.

Rarely broke the Heaven Demon Tower seal, just out—met Lu?

Lu strong? No direct clash, but sense once nearly suppressed by Lu.

Luckily severed intruding strand—escaped.

Lu mildly surprised.

Lion Demon King?

The one whose consciousness visited Lake Center Island?

Lu lips curled—old demon acquaintance.

Du Longyang, Empress tensed.

Never thought sealed Lion King broke free.

Indeed, as Kutu dying words: source shatter caused anomalies.

Quakes, seas surge, demon domain unsealed.

Before, no tension—but drained, realms fallen.

Face Lion King—how fight?

Empress less worried.

Lu here.

And sensed Lion King's odd gaze at Lu.

Woman's intuition.

Story between.

Daqian border.

Lion King face changed—sense surged.

Demons got order.

Moment prior: attack humans.

Now...

Retreat!

“Flee!”

Low roar.

Years ago Kutu found him—plotted much.

Sensed source change—thought Kutu succeeded, tried break—did.

But Du, Empress alive—plus Lu.

Awkward.

Mane flared.

Just unsealed—not peak; wheelchair white youth—bad end.

No hesitate—withdrew.

Demons dumbfounded—king blasted light far, speechless.

Waited ages.

Suppressed long.

Thought rise under king.

But...

Attack eve...

King chickened, fled?

Hm?

Lu blinked.

Smiled, raised hand—flicked guard.

Whistle.

Phoenix Sword crossed sky—fire phoenix wings.

Covered Lion King.

Lu white whipped.

Mind move—spiritual pressure chessboard emerged.

Dim—damaged blocking High Martial Buddha palm.

Pinched piece.

Five continuous.

Buzz...

Fleeing Lion King—world bright.

Crisscross lines below.

“This...”

Square light board enveloped.

Five pieces descended.

Lion King erupted power—clashed.

But stacking—immobile...

“If you’ve got guts, don’t use artifacts!”

Angry roar.

Just broke tower—weakest; artifacts sealed.

Vs. artifact-laden Lu—how?

Terrifying pressure—pinned.

Phoenix whistled.

Rushed board—slashed.

Slashed—coughed blood, nearly halved; most tragic post-unseal king.

Du et al. relaxed.

Fresh unsealed—no match.

Beating.

Lion King wailed, bled on board—pitiful.

Escaped board—rolled crawled back tower, hid.

Heaven Demon Tower spiritual tool—high grade; suppress and defend.

Demons silent.

Qi army hesitated—withdrew to domain.

King fled—fight what.

Eyed tower-hid Lion King.

Lu smiled.

“No spiritual tool? Fine, as wished.”

Raised hand—void claw; sense surged, odd array runes.

Eight Trigrams fell atop tower.

Inside.

Lion King despair.

“Damn...”

“This guy array master?!”

“Let me out...”

Despair roar—hit tower; seal stronger.

Daqian strong silent—cheered.

Women, but soldiers—guarded border.

Knew breach: catastrophe.

Several Nascent Soul generals floated.

Heroines.

“Majesty.”

To Empress—bowed.

Shocked: Empress Gold Core.

Ascension scam?

Nascent knew plan vaguely.

“Thanks Young Master Lu...”

Empress bowed—eyes brilliant.

Lu leaned—waved.

“Tianyuan source shattering—repair near impossible.”

Lu said.

“Your great calamity just begins.”

Empress grave.

“Young Master, source knowledge rivals Kutu—aid Tianyuan?”

Du: “First-grade artifacts low, but my spear first-grade—trade aid.”

Tianxu reluctant—beckoned; wood box, three-four small swords.

“My flying sword set—trade.”

Ye drew one-arm knife: “My blade first-grade—trade.”

Decisive.

Lu waved.

Not interested—not collector.

“Way exists, needs time.”

“First withstand coming calamity.”

Said.

No more—mind move; vanished sky.

Du et al. silent.

Looked sky.

When: blood-colored, oppressive.

Empress deep gaze at departing Lu.

Trust—so guard...

Guard calamity, await Lu.

Martial Emperor City outer.

Snowy dilapidated Bodhisattva temple.

Nie Changqing, Mo Tianyu, Ding Jiudeng waited.

Blood sky—oppressed.

Suddenly.

Snow—wheelchair creaked.

Lu from snow.

“Return, forbid forbidden zone.”

Said.

Nie stunned.

“Young Master, why?”

Lu no explain.

They crossed air wall—left Tianyuan.

Lu glanced restless city, blood sky.

Left.

...

Beiluo, Lake Center Island.

Lu from forbidden—thunder fast, gone.

Entered Dragon Gate—Yinglong Gate out.

Out: source nearly crushing.

Lips twitched.

“Overate...”

Absorbed much Tianyuan—Five Phoenix rapid.

Cultivators boosted by source evolution.

Body Storage surged.

Lu sensed: spirit qi reserves exploded.

Qi Core rapid too.

“Too fast... no forcing growth.”

Muttered.

Fast: much qi, but weaker realms.

Overlord-era Body Storage > now.

Ning Zhao Lock.

Lu feedback—qi surge.

From gate: Yinglong on gate, wings spread, howl—cut.

Shrank, excited to Lu.

Lu patted head.

Yinglong evolved—stronger.

Source ties plane level—stronger source, higher plane.

Not just: Candle, Azure, Red dragons evolving.

Lu frowned—later pressure, temper floaty strength.

“Young Master!”

Ning Zhao sensed.

Rose, looked gate.

Sima too.

Lu from misty gate—many saw.

“Young Master Lu!”

“Back!”

“Really!”

Pavilion front—joy.

Asked anomalies.

Lu no explain—hard.

Island: Lu Changkong saw—nod.

“Safe return good.”

Unknown what Lu did.

But heart-jump—dangerous.

Safe: peace.

“Eh?”

“Dad, what you up to?”

Lu brow—surprised.

Lu Changkong stunned.

“World change: plants spirited. Idle—tinker herbs, compile ‘Hundred Herbs Record’.”

Said.

Lu smiled: "Fine."

"But careful—some herbs no eat..."

Lu Changkong embarrassed.

Caught.

Mo Beike eyed Lu—hesitant.

Lu raised—stopped.

"Juizi, know question... attitude after Daxuan vs. Xiliang bet."

Mo sighed.

Wanted lure Lu lecturer.

Unlikely—status.

“Young Master!”

Ni Yu ran—chubby cheeks jiggled.

Excited clutched pills.

“Body Tempering... done!”

Treasure to Lu—cloth-wrapped.

Lu took—glanced.

“Quality bit low, keep trying.”

“But good—progress; promised gift no less.”

Ni Yu from down—joy.

Held two—silly grin.

Lu ignored others.

Important matters.

Back Baiyujing second floor—mist cloaked.

Mind surged.

Source space.

Orb ballooned 10x—mighty waves.

Near mid-mid-martial.

But experts mismatched.

Growth from Tianyuan absorb.

Lu raised—touched.

Sense surged.

Mini Lus floated—orb.

Bees: patch.

Wild growth, near-collapse—stabilized.

Lu control: no chaotic release, anomalies gone.

Enhancements remain.

Baiyujing top.

Lu leaned—exhaled.

Tapped guard.

Serious: Tianyuan issue.

Kutu soul blast—cracks dense; collapse.

As said: mid-martial root—collapse: realms fall...

Wanderer invasion.

How handle?

Idea—but hard.

Check system better.

If Du, Empress knew “immortal slaying” dooms—still?

“System, Tianyuan source... savable?”

Asked.

No hope—just try.

But.

Prompt popped.