

Starlit Path 271

Chapter 271: Special Mission, World Fusion

“Special Mission: Receive Tianyuan source, fuse Tianyuan Continent.”

System prompt popped, rotating before Lu.

Lu stunned.

“Special mission?”

Lake Center Island, Lu leaned Thousand Blades—pondered.

Unexpected, yet reasonable.

Receive Tianyuan source?

But shattering—hard, risky.

Fuse continents: complex.

Not dough kneading—worlds merging.

Perhaps only way; Lu initial thought: fuse to save.

Never done—feasibility?

Fail: Five Phoenix wounded.

High risk—hesitant.

But...

Success: huge gains, strength leap.

Qi relies cultivators; fused: more qi.

Strength rise.

Risk-reward proportional.

Key: top mid-martial Tianyuan—boost Five Phoenix to high martial, ultra-fantasy pace.

Tempted.

Risk, but confident: Five Phoenix source mostly Tianyuan-absorbed.

High compatibility.

Foundation confidence.

Mind move.

Entered Preaching Platform.

Thick qi surged; simulated fusion.

Even possible: simulate first.

Consider failures.

...

Lu secluded again; many sensed gravity—important.

Return: oppressive force gone.

Sense-born Sima, Ning Zhao clearest.

Nie Changqing, Mo Tianyu back—Lu secluded.

Nie guessed—guarded island, no disturb.

Found Lü Dongxuan—relayed words.

“What? Seal forbidden?”

Lü surprised.

“Forbidden dangerous—even I barred.”

Nie said.

Lü trusted.

Found Lü Mudui—spread seal.

Mutant pigeon: worldwide fast.

Shock mild—feared forbidden; little impact.

Ning Zhao Lock—challenged Nie.

Ten moves: defeat.

Same Lock—gaps.

“Lock key; Body Storage base, Lock shapes future.”

Nie said.

Martial Emperor challenges insights.

Ning thoughtful.

“Own path crucial...”

“My true sword intent—huge amp.”

“Like Hundred Schools—own roads; Lock core.”

“Clear path: faster growth.”

Nie said.

Shared challenges.

Nie Shuang, Jing Yue listened serious.

“Dad, beyond forbidden: outsider lair?”

Nie Shuang curious.

Nie smiled shake: “Thought so; contact different.”

“Beyond: splendid world—advanced cultivation; invaders too—invaders ‘outsiders’.”

Nie said.

Pavilion.

Many read.

Peaceful.

Strengths leaped—source evolution boosted talent-like.

Lu seclusion: qi denser.

...

Tianyuan Continent.

Sky cracks ferocious—abyss maw teeth.

Swallow world.

Tianyuan anomalies: mountains quake collapse.

Du, Empress to forces.

Ate precious pills—recovered fast.

Not peak: Nascent; mastery > normal.

Pills toxic—now no choice.

Demon unrest: Lion King resealed—quiet.

Good for Du et al.

Plus collapse: overwhelmed.

Felt orb melting.

Three days fleeting.

Oppression heavier.

Du atop Martial Emperor—sky cracks.

Crisis bone-chilling.

Not just.

Daqian: Empress hands clasped, brocade frost, crown gold luxury.

Looked cracks.

Trembled.

Lu: savable, time; block calamity.

Guessed: wanderer invasion.

Lashes: records—sky guests; demons then.

Demons, guests: “outsiders”.

Nascent attendant.

“Order: armies gather—guard palace.”

Said.

Attendant stunned—gravity infected.

Bowed, left.

Soon.

Palace: cultivators.

Nascent arrays.

Martial Emperor same.

Absolute Blade, Tianxu: full war.

Cracks larger—blood sky.

All strong looked.

Heaven Demon Tower.

Resealed Lion King mad laugh.

“End... Tianyuan doom!”

“Wanderers: catastrophe destroy all!”

Laugh echoed; Lu seal nothing—strong wanderers free soon.

New day.

Crack sound.

Then.

Figures shot cracks.

Countless—locusts.

Greed, excitement—dive.

Tianyuan strong sensed.

Martial Emperor.

Du black whipped, spear raised—cold resolve.

“Disciples?!”

Roars.

“Fight!”

Du roared.

No blame—save collapsing: powerless.

Trust Lu—block invaders.

Battle erupted.

Martial Emperor, Daqian, Tianxu, Absolute—frenzied kill.

Bitter Buddha: Yuanshang—spurned.

All due temple.

Monks no defend.

Fought fearless—suicide kills.

Day: battles everywhere.

...

Beiluo.

Lake Center.

Lu opened eyes.

Four days: countless simulations—all fail.

Platform: Five Phoenix + Tianyuan.

Five Phoenix weak—can't receive collapsing; burst.

Both destroy.

Tried abandon Tianyuan parts.

Still no.

No discourage—research; untrod path hard.

“System... world fusion precedent?”

Asked.

Rare: answered.

“Mostly strong swallow weak; weak fuse strong, dominate—no precedent.”

Prompt.

Lu sighed.

Strong easy—compatibility.

Weak limit.

Snake elephant—burst.

Tapped guard.

Expect: weak fuse strong—master upgrade shortcut!

Normal: slow growth—myriad years.

No more tests.

Leaned—lake breeze.

Island view.

Little Yinglong done—salted fish.

Gate: tail lake, stirred vortex.

Fat fish trapped—struggled.

Amused? Toy weak.

Faster—vortex bigger, suction; more fish.

Lu speechless.

Naughty dragon idle.

Raised spirit ring suppress.

Paused.

“Vortex?”

Eyes bright.

Flash mind.

Mind: Platform.

Sat.

Five Phoenix orb.

Touched.

“Source... why sphere?”

Bright.

Misled by others.

Force.

Orb exploded.

Stood shards.

Phoenix swirled—rotated.

Vortex source—center black hole.

Suction.

Simulated collapsing Tianyuan—giant.

Before: Five Phoenix deviated—fail.

Now: hope.

Guided Tianyuan into vortex Five Phoenix.

Careful.

Grave.

Boom!

Tianyuan hit—spun by vortex!

“No collapse!”

Bright!

Simulation—real danger; but success: hope.

Source fused: continents easier.

Hardest: source.

Exited.

Chair left Baiyujing.

Playing Yinglong startled—raised tail, 乖 smile.

Merit.

Patted—flattered.

Chair into Dragon Gate.

South County forbidden—Tianyuan.

Tianyuan: anti-invasion war.

Blood ground.

Lu appear: Du sensed.

Stepped—joy.

“Young Master Lu!”

Means solution!

“Way: try; fail possible—Tianyuan total destroy...”

Looked Du: “Try?”

Du stunned.

Mind blood land—smiled...

“Success or not: destroy anyway. Try?”

“Hope.”

Said.

Artifact contact Empress et al.

Soon: all try.

No choice.

Lu nod—no explain.

Glanced endless invaders.

Collapse: unprotected cake—wanderer meal.

Now weak—Gold Core max; later stronger.

Infant, beyond.

Doom instant.

Lu gamble.

Success: leap, Five Phoenix up.

Fail: wounded.

“City Lord Du.”

Looked.

Du gazed white Lu—daze.

Fate on tribulation thief.

“Speak.”

“Guard seven days.”

Said.

Vanished source space.

Chapter 272: The Seventh Day That Decides Survival

Seven days?

Block for seven days?

Du Longyang watched Lu vanish into the source space, his expression turning grave.

Seven days... long?

Not too long, not too short!

These invading wanderers started as ordinary Foundation Establishment; as time passed, or source collapse accelerated.

Invaders reached Gold Core.

No Nascent Soul yet, but Du knew: inevitable.

Even Infant Transformation, beyond.

Seven days: endless.

“Fine.”

Du eyed Lu’s fade, solemn nod.

Unsure if heard—promise to Lu.

Lu’s identity: guessed, another world’s Kutu—“immortal.”

No need risk for Tianyuan.

Collapse: Lu affected.

Beyond Infant: exposure, crisis.

Outsider fights hard.

He, Tianyuan strong—what excuse flee?

Seven days: life block!

Du back Martial Emperor peak.

Contacted Empress, Tianxu et al.

Gathered.

“Young Master Lu came; block seven days.”

Direct.

“Seven?”

Tianxu: “Trend: sixth day collapse—Infant appear...”

“Seventh: beyond... can’t block.”

Paler.

“Block anyway!”

Empress lips: grave.

Eyes sparkled: “Trust Young Master Lu...”

Tianxu dumbfounded—what?

Block: them, not Lu!

Elbow out.

Du glanced—gripped spear, nod: “Only fight.”

“No Lu: seven anyway. Fight.”

Ye cold, one-arm undiminished.

“Gone.”

Empress waved—sped Daqian front.

Tianxu, Ye silent—left.

Tianyuan five zones: five forces; wanderers knew: conquer five, playground.

...

Tianyuan source space.

Lu not first.

Huge orb cracked—fragile crystal.

Slight force: shatter.

Lu Thousand Blades—glided.

Quiet—eerie.

Shrunk orb—thoughts surged.

Platform countless simulations; real: pressure.

World fate in hands.

70% success; 30% unknown.

Found spot.

Best.

Raised—chessboard.

Eyes: lines; Five Phoenix source.

“Vortex adsorb...”

“First: shatter source!”

Pondered.

Seven: conservative; unknown time.

Fastest simulation standard.

Boom!

Plane Lord: natural link.

Touched vibrant Five Phoenix—hand-built, nothing to glass to mountain.

Tight bond.

Shatter.

Reluctant.

But... good for Five Phoenix.

Boom!

Sense surged—ten Lus.

White—sat ten directions.

Touched.

How shatter?

Solid.

Kutu hid: unbreakable.

Drain forced.

Now: hard.

But creator: means.

Ten sense: strings; odd rhythm plucked.

Buzz...

Waves rippled.

Orb pass, flow.

Thump!

Collide—intenser...

Peak.

Orb exploded!

Bang!

Blast hit ten sense.

Regroup—Lu pale.

...

Meanwhile.

Five Phoenix.

Cultivators panicked.

Sky darkened—ink in water, stirred.

Sudden.

Sima pale—chest, sweat.

Nie, Ning Lock: worst—sense keen.

Then Overlord, Tang peak.

“What?”

“Sky black?”

“Heart panic... locks splitting.”

Chatter.

Pavilion out—books ignored.

Dragon Gate.

Little Yinglong mountain-size, lantern eyes—black clouds.

Dragons oppressed.

Pavilion: Bai Qingniao’s Little Phoenix One peeked—chirp uneasy.

Beasts sense source.

Buzhou.

Zhu Long lashes trembled—worry.

Instant.

Lost—something broke.

All cultivators.

Cultivation end?!

Lake Center.

Nie dragon-slay—sat.

“Young Master... what?”

Sweat, gasp.

World end?!

...

Source.

Lu grave.

Shatter: reaction—cultivation tied.

Raised.

Sense drained—evaporated.

Trigrams—marks to shards.

Net trapped.

Array: shatter key.

Platform origin.

Mystery unexplored.

Stabilize: no issue.

Many tries.

Array aid: steady shards—time drip.

Finally stable.

Five Phoenix: chaotic nebula vortex.

Suction vast.

Exhaled—step one.

Three days.

...

Tianyuan.

Cracks huge.

Day one Lu in: Nascent wanderers.

Day two.

More—forces strained.

Bitter Buddha: monks died, Nascent wounded.

Day three: Nascent peaks—white-hot.

Blood land.

Martial Emperor, Tianxu, Daqian: wounded Nascent.

Du et al. acted—else worse.

Top vs. normal: stabilized.

Day four.

Faces changed.

Infant aura.

Not major forces.

Bitter Buddha—no Infant post-Yuanshang.

Block?

Nearest Du sped.

Arrived...

Temple flat.

Shocking.

Monks sat Buddha array.

Nascent, Gold, Foundation...

Shells—souls burned.

Ruins: charred Infant chest heaved.

Du appeared—spear killed first Infant.

Yuanshang: no fondness.

World spurned.

Yuanshang, Kutu known.

Hated.

Monks no argue.

Act: demon descend, sacrifice.

Sorry: Kutu, Yuanshang—not temple.

...

Lu fused.

Tianyuan cracks spiderweb.

Ten sense: pushed to vortex.

Day five: Tianyuan entered.

Adsorbed.

Rumble...

Repel.

Collide—near explode.

Impact vs. vortex—if ball: pulp.

Vortex hollow—re-suction, absorb.

Lu pale—satisfied.

As simulation.

Suddenly.

Changed.

Strong wanderer sensed—interfered.

Boom!

Near-fused Tianyuan: blasted!

Fragile: quartered!

Mad energy.

...

Tianyuan.

Du et al. shifted.

Looked huge crack.

Faint: eye peered.

Aura owner!

Interfered source!

“Save dying world?!”

Cold beyond.

Tianyuan despair.

Demon Tower.

Lion King ecstatic—beyond Infant!

Collapsed noted!

Day six.

Despair day.

Cracks: six+ Infant.

Du peak—black whipped cold wind.

Grabbed spear—beyond despair.

But...

Not descended—chance!

Promised seven.

No quit!

Life: block.

Daqian: Empress robes—stared.

Tianxu.

Four Gold hags stretcher—coughed, box swords—curved finger one Infant.

“You... come!”

Battle.

Du vs. two—blood peak.

Empress one-vs-two.

Tianxu even.

One-arm Ye waist-slash—knife beyond eye.

Beyond colder.

One more day...

Ants die.

Source his.

Early notice: High Martial Buddha guide.

Came.

Martial Emperor.

Nascent burn—extreme, entangle Infant.

Du roar—spear intent, brow pierce, nail.

Mutant infant burst.

New Infant hid—shocked fearless.

Seventh: terror—world end.

Soup after.

Du scanned weak, dead Nascent.

Spear hand trembled.

Six...

Young Master Lu?

Tomorrow seventh—fail, beyond descend.

Can't block!

All: no!

Time drip.

Tianyuan oppressive.

Cracks bigger—eye brighter.

Finally...

Seventh.

Darkness border swallow land.

Martial Emperor peak.

Du blood-soaked—sat cold wind.

Daqian palace: Empress phoenix throne—hall empty.

Absolute Blade: Ye one-arm whipped—one-hand knife—corpse plain.

Tianxu coughed—dismissed hags.

Rumble!

Eye gone.

Oppression worse.

Two palms crack—pushed sides.

Tore sky...

Huge head drilled.

Du, Empress, Tianxu, Ye—extreme aura—soared.

Killed head.

But...

Owner weird smile.

Mouth—breath.

Sword air, intent.

Boom!

Four top: blood flowers—smashed ground...

Despair.

Too strong...

Beyond Infant.

Too late.

Head lowered.

Weird smile.

Mouth wide—bite.

Suddenly.

Stuck.

Void twist.

White snow figure wheelchair—from source slow.

Blocked huge head.

Chapter 273: Lu · Good-Tempered · Fan

A powerhouse interfering in the source space, disrupting control—this truly exceeded Lu's expectations.

Tianyuan's source, influenced, exploded.

Shattered into four, chaotically flying within Five Phoenix's vortex source, as if to scatter it alive.

Lu's divine sense surged madly; this scenario unencountered in simulations.

Instant crisis.

Mishandle: not just Tianyuan doom, Five Phoenix gravely wounded.

Unwanted.

Lu in Thousand Blades, vortex center; spiritual pressure chessboard floated, eyes lines danced—sense via board controlled quartered Tianyuan.

Vortex unstable; quarters amplified.

Stabilize: find extreme in instability.

No platform simulation.

Direct action.

Error tolerance vital—mistake: abyss.

Two days: mind controlled.

Quartered: four smaller orbs.

Rotation: instability persisted.

Lu's riskiest yet.

Shattering Five Phoenix: gamble.

Merging Tianyuan: tightrope.

Pondered long—ruthless; kicked one orb out.

Three triangular, orbiting vortex.

Most stable.

Life-death seven days.

Pressure firmed will, sense strengthened.

Finally...

Stable.

Lu smiled.

...

Heaven-earth huge head halt.

Terrifying aura.

Beyond Infant—what level? Unknown, but power felt.

Infant: top mid-martial cap.

Break Infant: high martial qualify.

Details unclear.

“Young Master Lu!”

Empress coughed blood, pale—no grace.

Beyond crack breath: irresistible, despair.

True “immortal”!

Despair—Lu appeared.

Head stopped.

“Lu... succeeded?” Du mad joy.

Seventh: no sign—thought fail, death ready.

Lu!

Dark light.

Tianxu, Ye eyes brilliant.

Lu float, Thousand Blades, white 飘—elegant.

Looked sky-cover face, weird smile.

“Interfered source: you?”

Lu to huge head.

Crack torn.

Owner eyes turned—locked Lu.

“World source gone?”

“What did to source?!”

Sharp voice boomed land.

Lu smiled, breeze whipped robes, leaned chair.

“Guess.”

Atmosphere froze.

Huge head eyes killing intent.

Guess?

Guess what!

Sky crack stabilized—hands holding: strained.

Crack healing.

Head mouth roar.

Boom!

Clouds burst.

Deep breath—spit!

Breath: sharpest sword, bombed Lu.

Mind move.

Thousand Blades silver flew—silver lotus bloom front.

Breath hit.

Bang!

Silvers exploded.

Ground pierced, pits.

Beyond Infant.

Silvers return—rain, restacked chair.

Lu calm sky head.

Blocked?!

Head squinted.

Attack suppressed Infant.

Source not gone!

Restabilized?!

“Impossible... collapsing source can't restabilize—how?!”

Asked again.

Lu hands blanket thighs, smile: “Guess again.”

Head raged.

Sick?!

Below.

Empress lashes trembled—laughed.

Young Master... naughty.

Furious yet helpless: refreshing.

Lu: Tianyuan safe.

Relief.

Seven days: toughest.

Waiting doom: madness.

Now: dawn.

“Court death!”

Head roar.

Pushed forward—face changed; crack contracting.

Not withdraw: decapitated.

But intolerable!

Guess...

Twice!

Ant provoke!

Unbearable!

Gamble.

Pay!

Roar!

Mouth energy brewed.

Spit: gold greatsword destruction!

Below.

Lu shifted.

Sword qi: cutting flesh soul!

Sword intent!

Dao realm!

Vs. Nie, Jing: outrageous.

Beyond Infant reason?!

Lu no surrender.

Waited attack.

Strong—admit; source restored: shackles back.

Crack healing: no descent.

Bold idea!

Use crack—sever head!

Raised—chessboard front, piece fell.

Lock unlocked.

Board: orb.

Kicked Tianyuan source!

“Source?!”

Head squinted—greed.

Shocked: Lu shot orb.

Silly?!

Fear dao—bribe?

Head dispersed sword—spoil source: cry.

Purpose: devour.

Dispersed, mouth swallow.

But...

Spit out.

Face black!

Wrong taste!

Orb surface: pale flames.

“Heaven-earth mystic fire?!”

“Backed by high martial?!”

“Damn bald donkey tricked!”

Low roar.

Retreat crack...

Crack seventh ago—not: head stay.

Lu smiled.

Late.

Raised—grip orb.

Boom!

Bone fire surged—burned orb.

Sky fire curtain!

Flames net sky!

Entangled head.

Head roar.

Rapid withdraw—else decapitated!

Now: pit!

Anger provoke.

Head in—orb lure, cut retreat, crack behead!

Audacity!

Scheme!

Extraordinary!

“Open!”

Head roar.

Pores sword qi intent!

But source-fueled fire: too strong!

Intent extinguish no.

Source stable: world recover.

Crack slow heal.

Bit by bit.

Head futile roar.

Pfft!

Neck severed—head cut!

Head eyes wide, fury—stared Lu.

Ant schemed!

Lu calm.

“Your temper poor.”

Shook head.

Not all good-tempered like Lu Ping'an.

Neck blood sprayed.

Splash!

Torrents river—crack cascade.

Ground blood river.

Land dyed.

Head nine heavens smash—"dong"—ground.

Quake.

Cracks mountains.

Empress, Du stunned.

Breath-kill existence.

Head severed?!

Mountain head...

Du speechless.

“Feels revenge...”

Tianxu mouth: “Interfered source—nearly doomed Young Master...”

Empress eyes shine—white snow blood rain unstained Lu, lips: “Young Master... vengeance swift!
Great!”

Tianxu, Du weird gaze.

Serious?

Noble Empress?

Changed.

But relaxed.

Tianyuan calamity passed!

Alive.

Seven losses heavy.

Bitter Buddha near annihilated, forces wounded.

But alive.

Blood surged, area red.

Lu chair descend.

Empress fixed hair—sped Lu.

“Young Master, success?”

Eyed clear Lu.

Lu leaned, tapped guard: “Source stable, but...”

Du, Tianxu stunned.

“Stable not safe...”

“From him: collapse unsavable.”

Lu to all.

“I fused Tianyuan to my world’s—stabilized collapsing.”

Tapped slow.

Tianxu, Du puzzled.

“Fusion step one... step two vital.”

Scanned Tianyuan strong.

“Young Master, speak.”

Du grave.

Lu no immediate—chair, surroundings.

Head blood sea.

Energy dissipated.

“Step two: world migration.”

Lu.

“Tianyuan to my world.”

“Or world fusion.”

Words silenced Du et al.

Fusion: Tianyuan no more.

“Young Master, other choice?”

Du.

Lu nod: “Stay, no fusion.”

“No source: degrade, qi exhaust, cultivators mortal.”

Lu.

No saint—stabilize: utmost.

Leave source? Five Phoenix doomed.

Unwilling.

Tianyuan: fuse or end-law.

Du, Empress, Tianxu top—decide for world.

Normal: little feel.

“Good.”

“Daqian agrees.”

Empress.

No qi, end-law: realm loss, lifespan end, age—unwanted.

“But Daqian retain force.”

Lu nod: natural.

Absolute Blade Ye: “Agree.”

Tianxu, Du surprised—decisive.

“No die... stronger.”

Ye.

Tianxu teeth, flush: “Tianxu agree.”

Lu nod—Du.

“Young Master, three days?”

Du teeth, hands clasped, black whipped peak, blood sea world.

Lu no refuse: “Three; first fuse Daqian, Absolute, Tianxu areas.”

Du smile: “Thanks.”

Lu to Empress, Ye, Tianxu.

Raised.

Qi gathered—three drops.

Threw.

“Fusion start: notify.”

Words—thunder flash, gone.

Reappear: severed head.

Flick—bone fire.

Head burned—fist pearl.

Formed.

Shrill roar.

Blur face pearl.

Mouth—sword qi.

Soul-seizing—Lu dazed, shot.

Slashing Lu.

Chapter 274: Fusion, Tianyuan Domain!

A wisp of sword qi, carrying soul-seizing power.

Lu briefly dazed.

Next: soul-splitting pain erupted, eyes brilliant sharp.

Crack crack...

Silver blades swirled, blocked front.

Wisp hit—terrific boom, blood soil flew, five-li pit.

“Beyond Nascent force?”

Dispersed blades, Lu raised—grabbed fist pearl.

Warm, wisp sword qi surged.

Contained intent.

No probe, no system—beyond Nascent relic, great for future realms.

Stored.

Lu no linger.

Martial Emperor outer, Bodhisattva temple.

Crossed air wall—Five Phoenix.

...

Beiluo, Lake Center Island.

Sky blood faded, oppressive gone.

Nie forehead sweat—gasp.

“Ended?”

Murmured.

Rose, dragon-slay—nine heavens.

Faint unusual—doomsday after: undetected evolution.

Post-evolution: world familiar.

Like...

Martial Emperor.

Nie eyes bright—forbidden feel.

World changed?

Not just Nie.

Ning, Sima sense-born: obvious.

Unknown.

Wait Lu.

But crisis: souls evolved.

Lu from South County—no stop, Dragon Gate island.

Out.

Chasing pigeon watering Little Yinglong sensed—shot.

Shoulder perch.

Rubbed head: “Stronger...”

Lu smiled.

Source evolution: dragons keenest.

Sensed.

Pavilion.

Bai Qingniao bosom Little Phoenix One floated uncontrolled.

Eyes terror.

Wings flap fast.

Bai startled—dropped book, grab.

But saw Lu beckon.

Understood summon.

No mind—flicked One.

One despair to reading Bai—flew Lu.

Abandoned.

Shoulder Yinglong perked—mouth bulge, ready water.

Lu glance—Yinglong gulp, smile.

One pinched neck.

“Hm... stronger, source fusion soul evolution?”

Lu squinted thoughtful.

Five Phoenix break-rebuild + Tianyuan: qualitative leap.

Natives huge change.

No realm surge, but souls varied evolution.

Raised—flicked One head.

Next.

Heat flow.

Clear phoenix cry.

Body grew, flames burn all.

Yinglong stunned.

Chicken to phoenix: impact.

Mouth open—dragon roar.

Lu spirit ring—bound mouth...

Yinglong muffled whine.

Far.

Bai sensed—Lu direction, eyes bright.

Mind Nine Phoenix auto—link clearer.

“Nine Phoenix third change?”

Bai unexpected—One stronger!

“Good.”

Lu smiled.

Sleeve sweep.

One back Bai.

“Books useless—raise chicken key.”

Glanced Bai.

Strength tied chick.

Bai near, Jiang Li book—heard, speechless.

Bai eyes bright—yes, job raise chicken.

Jiang books boring!

Young Master understands!

Soup?

Lu island.

Sima green 飘, oil umbrella An Miaoyu curious Lu.

“Young Master.”

Sima nod.

Lu glance—Sima heart jump, new sense trembled.

Strong!

Terrifying.

Lu stunned—no Lock, sense born.

Even odd aura—like Nie sword, Jing sword.

“Paint intent?”

Lu brow.

Paint derive “intent”?

Promising.

“Qingshan, upstairs drink.”

Glanced Sima.

Stunned.

Invite drink?

Excited—rare honor.

“Thanks Young Master.”

No refuse—up Baiyujing second.

Mysterious first.

Second.

Lu lean rail, breeze white whipped.

Ning white skirt—quiet heat wine, green plums.

Plums roll warm liquid, aroma.

Lu chessboard—Sima opposite, wave—white box float Sima.

“Game?”

To Sima.

Hesitant: “Poor skill, laugh.”

Lu wave: “Not really chess.”

Sima ask.

But...

Lu pinched—central tianyuan.

Boom!

Next: Sima sense sucked board.

Vast mountains rivers.

Lu grave—mysterious state.

Start Five Phoenix-Tianyuan fusion.

World fusion: hard.

Eyes lines—Five Phoenix terrain.

Piece outer endless sea.

Tianyuan vast—no inland.

Ambition.

Five Phoenix fuse others upgrade—prepare.

Build Five Phoenix great world.

Continents “domains”.

Tianyuan: “Tianyuan Domain”.

Five Phoenix center, others orbit.

Plan—simulate.

Time drip.

Sense in board Sima: vast.

Pressure breathless.

No fear—excite.

Vision broadened—world view rare.

Sunk thought—weird enlightenment.

Lu face, Ning ladled warm plum wine beside.

Hot cold.

Untouched.

Day pass, sun west.

Lu opened—mind surge, final: fusion.

...

Tianyuan Continent.

Post-war fatigue.

Demon silent.

Lion King tower—mute, autistic.

Empress palace—gathered survivors, explained.

Nascent source.

Knew loss horror.

Fusion little resist.

Live.

“Majesty...”

“That Young Master Lu... plot?”

“Fuse: second Kutu?”

Nascent female officer.

Others vigilant.

Kutu shadow huge.

Empress palace attire, hands clasped, smile: “Different, Young Master not bald donkey.”

“Trust... fusion better.”

Officers eye—surprise.

Blind trust?

Their Empress?

Daqian prepare.

Tianxu, Absolute prepare—little, no experience.

Store classics.

Martial Emperor.

Du peak sit.

Black whipped.

Three days—one: fusion not bad.

Lu saved—no Lu: doom.

Worse than end?

No resist.

Ponder.

Suddenly.

Eyes condense.

Tianxu message.

Fusion start.

...

Beiluo, Lake Center.

Lu brow tight.

Sense web chessboard.

Eyes lines—huge pressure.

Fusion hard.

Manpower move continent: impossible.

Not stone.

Mind Tianyuan source.

Fused Five Phoenix.

Board: five pieces.

Each trigram glow.

Sleeve—hand board, finger per piece, trigram.

Next.

Eyes lines, sense roll.

Fingers press—slow turn...

Creak...

Friction gear-like.

Lu forehead sweat—strenuous, like pulling world.

Five Phoenix outer sea.

Sea churn, waves hundreds meters.

Sky gloomy—oppressive release.

Sima green stone sea edge.

Gazed endless—despair power, heaven-earth.

Front scroll blank.

Brush ink.

Gazed.

No insight—paint first.

Maybe after.

But pen.

Mind shock.

Looked far.

Huge hand sky—tore crack...

Beyond: boundless world.

Rumble!

Quake, boom.

Waves sky.

“What?!”

Sima stunned.

Crack beyond: sea churn.

Water pour—collide Sima sea.

Fuse.

Deafening—wind whipped robes.

Vast land crack—slow with seas... emerge.

Sima inhale—sat stone scared.

Land... emerge sea?

Faint invisible hands push!

But rose—crack world...

Tremble excite.

Brush blank—want depict shock.

But no pen.

Now.

Lake Center.

Lu forehead sweat, eyes grave.

Five fingers pieces trigram glow odd energy.

Turn—near 180, bones crack.

Oppressive second floor.

Ning heat wine scared still.

First Young Master grave.

Arm twisted pretzel—Ning lips.

But Lu ignore.

Fingers blood beads, near 360.

Beads flow twisted board.

Finally...

Node.

Mind “boom” roar!

Chapter 275: Lu: Dull and Tasteless Cultivation

Boom!

Lu felt his soul transform in that instant.

The roar—like earth collapse, sky fall—shocking.

Probed soul: vortex, like Five Phoenix source.

Points of light spun within.

Unexpected.

No pain—good?

Even: sense stronger, tougher.

“Similar to Five Phoenix source...”

Murmured.

Vortex source caused soul vortex?

Bind Lu to created world.

...

Meanwhile.

Endless sea.

Sima Qingshan robes whipped—pressure, pen to scroll; mind sublimated.

World change: baptism.

Scroll: ink sharp, grand.

Panted.

Eyes red.

Style shift: fine to freehand splash.

Held ink—sprayed scroll crack; robes inked, bold strokes.

Mountains rivers surge sea.

Sea cascade nine heavens.

Shocking.

Finally.

Vast continent quiet on distant sea.

Sima collapsed stone.

Panted.

Eyes bloodshot.

Scroll unfinished—power insufficient.

Trembled pen—titled.

“Genesis Map’... perfect it: paint dao great leap!”

Laughed.

Suddenly.

Eyes bright—stone, sunset fire, sea red glow.

New continent: figures faint far.

Daze—new world?

Sense blurred—conscious return.

Long after: left.

Opened eyes.

Lake Center, Baiyujing second.

Breeze cool sweat.

When: sweat.

Lids lift—Lu leaned chair, bronze cup warm wine.

“Awake?”

Glanced Sima: “Three days: good harvest...”

Sima excited—bowed.

“Thanks Young Master fulfillment.”

Lu wave.

“Cultivation long—don’t waste chance many dream.”

Sima nod.

“Drink.”

Bronze cup—sour sweet.

Good wine.

Drank—down pavilion.

Daze: mind unfinished Genesis Map—perfect: realm rise.

Boom!

Sensed.

Looked: clouds roll nine heavens.

“Gold Core tribulation?”

Sleeve: shook head.

“No Gold Core—Lock.”

Said.

Ignored—thunder gone.

...

Tianyuan Continent.

Fusion start: storm.

Strong eyes wide—sky crack huge.

Thought terror descend.

But power pulled mountains crack.

Bit by bit: endless sea...

Tianyuan sea surged—sky waves!

World to world: wondrous—even Du, Empress daze!

Felt sun moon stars shift, earth move...

Feared issues.

Now: not bad.

Fusion three days.

Third end.

Sunset fire.

Du, Empress, Tianxu shore—glitter sea, daze.

...

Sima left, Lu leaned Thousand Blades.

Ning heated—poured; sensed great deed.

“Cultivate.”

Glanced Ning, smiled.

“Yes.”

Ning bow—left Baiyujing.

Down.

Nie, Ni Yu curious—world change.

Young Master.

“Nothing, Young Master chess with Mr. Sima.”

Breeze hair.

Of course, unsaid: chess special.

Arm blood, 360 twist—unforgettable.

Baiyujing top.

Lu sipped—closed eyes.

Soul evolve: sense masterful, tough vortex.

Sipped warm—exhaled.

System prompt.

“World fusion complete, ‘Tianyuan Domain’ created, special mission done.”

“Rewards: Dao Stele, 2000 assignable, Phoenix Sword ×2.”

Rotated.

Lu stunned.

Simple.

Daily + stele.

No disappoint—expect.

Fewer: higher value.

No probe.

Prompt continued.

“Fusion success, Tianyuan Domain, expand world—Five Phoenix great world path.”

“Detect Tianyuan cultivators, extractable qi.”

“Detecting...”

“Done.”

“Tianyuan Domain: Five Phoenix sub, Infant 4, Nascent 20, Gold 361, Foundation (no), Qi (no)”

“Infant 10000, Nascent 1000, Gold 100; total 96100”

“Duration: 10 months.”

Rows dazzled.

But read: deep breath.

Fortune in danger—true.

Shatter Five Phoenix, fuse Tianyuan: cost risk huge, harvest rich!

Fusion: plane lord rise.

Tianyuan cultivators: leeks.

Post-war numbers—many fallen seven days.

Infant 10000: unexpected.

Lu reserves 2万.

Full: >100000.

Qi Refining 5!

Pity: 10 months buffer, not instant.

But good: stable mastery.

Leaned—urge sneaky laugh.

“Tianyuan Domain...”

Eyes flash.

Tapped guard.

Tianyuan top mid-martial + Five Phoenix.

Five Phoenix lead, Tianyuan stronger...

Conflict easy.

Boost Five Phoenix strong fast.

At least...

Pillar experts.

Fusion broke slow: entry to top mid-martial—need tops!

Pondered—mind move.

Panel.

Host: Lu

Title: Qi Refiner (permanent)

Layer: 4 (20836/100000)

Soul: 1110 (exchange 1000 [sense 10])

Body: 1010 (1010 [blood 8])

Qi: 17790

Liquid: 2

Condense: 4

Pending: 96100 (10 months)

World: Five Phoenix Small World [mid-martial]

Tools: Chessboard, Phoenix ×5

Arts: Yi Heaven, Condense

Assignable: 2083

Observed: pending qi.

World: Five Phoenix Continent → Small World.

Surprise!

Mind back.

Checked reward: Dao Stele.

“Stele [Earth]: aid comprehend perfect dao intent, 108 ≤3rd sequence, mid-martial suit.”

Stunned.

“Sequence dao intent?”

Asked.

“Heaven dao, intent sequences 1-9.”

Recall huge head sword qi—soul cut.

“That sequence?”

Flash thoughtful.

Sequence: high martial key.

Took pearl: "This sequence?"

"6th 'Soul Shock Sword Intent'."

Brow: "Only 6th?"

Wanderer: fair.

Suddenly.

"System, I comprehend too?"

"Host stele: world comprehends—host masters."

Prompt.

Lu complex.

Qi same—leeks...

Qi refiner dull tasteless.

Chin—ponder, no extract stele.

Other use.

Next: Tianyuan issues.

Integrated: equal.

Explain to world.

Tianyuan lead cultivation: stimulate Five Phoenix.

Suddenly eyes condense.

Panel [Mission] flicker dim.

New mission?

...

Demon domain, Heaven Demon Tower.

Lion King felt Lu seal weaken.

Thought millennia dark—moved.

Roar—trigram shattered.

Demon qi sky, clouds遮 day...

Broke free.

Lion armor, tower top—black clouds, qi spread.

Laughed shake heaven.

Free again!

Sense surged.

Beasts demons gather tower.

Myriad converge.

Eyes vicious.

Led myriad—crush domain, reconquer, war humans.

Demons no slaves!

River demon roll.

Suddenly.

Qi torn.

Led out dense.

But Lion stunned.

Domain edge—empty sea...

Daze.

Human lands... gone?

Tianyuan... vanished?

Chapter 276: No More White Jade Capital in the World

Because the Tianyuan Continent had been relocated by Lu into the Five Phoenixes Small World.

But with the Tianyuan origin severed, Lu simply abandoned the Demon Domain.

He had been racking his brains over what to do with it—now, it could fend for itself.

Thus, Lu no longer bothered exerting effort to control the Heavenly Demon Tower.

The tower was a profound-tier treasure; beyond its sturdy defenses, its main purpose was suppressing the Lion Demon King—to prevent him from targeting the powerhouses on Tianyuan Continent.

Now that the entire continent had migrated, even if the Lion Demon King broke free, it hardly mattered... his neighbors were gone.

The raging seas churned, and the salty sea breeze stung the air.

The Lion Demon King fell silent, lifting his head to the dim, oppressive sky, a heavy gloom settling over him.

What had happened?

He knew a supreme powerhouse had invaded Tianyuan Continent, but in the end, that intruder seemed to have fled.

So now...

Where was Tianyuan Continent?

Had it been smashed and sunk by that powerhouse?

The Lion Demon King refused to believe it.

He leaped down, plunging into the ocean.

Boom!

The vast sea exploded outward.

Under normal circumstances, the Lion Demon King would never enter the waters—terrifying creatures lurked in Tianyuan's seas, akin to demons but not quite, yet immensely powerful due to their ancient lifespans.

Take the colossal whale, tens of thousands of meters long, its massive body harboring the force to overturn rivers and seas. Even the Lion Demon King would steer clear.

He generally avoided the ocean.

But now...

He dove in, determined to search for the sunken continent.

Only by seeing the collapsed land with his own eyes would he accept it.

Yet, as he plunged into the abyssal depths, there was still no sign of the fallen continent.

Panic set in.

He sought out that fearsome oceanic giant whale... but it, too, had vanished!

The Lion Demon King streaked through the vast sea, bursting bubbles in his wake.

Boom!

The waters parted.

The Lion Demon King stood atop the Demon Domain's land.

Drenched, water dripped from his lion armor.

At that moment, he was certain: the entire Tianyuan Continent was gone.

He, the Lion Demon King, had become the ruler of this world.

Yet, for some reason, instead of joy, a faint sorrow washed over him.

The Lion Demon King raised a paw—suddenly, his expression shifted.

He sensed the world's energy dissipating.

Degenerating.

His own power was ebbing away.

A chill ran down his spine. He bolted across the Demon Domain's earth, searching for an escape.

But in every direction... endless ocean.

He... had been abandoned.

...

Tianyuan Domain.

Once calm returned, the top powerhouses from various factions gathered.

Du Longyang, the Empress, Young Master Tianxu, and Ye Shoudao—the four peak experts—convened in Martial Emperor City.

"Young Master Lu mentioned the fusion of two worlds. Looking back, it doesn't seem as disastrous as we feared," the Empress said, her eyes gleaming.

Du Longyang nodded slightly. At first, he'd worried the merger would shatter mountains and rivers, unleashing unpredictable catastrophes.

But now, everything was far more stable than imagined.

Even ordinary folk barely noticed the fusion; they thought they still lived in their original world.

"We're in unfamiliar surroundings now. Should we scout the outside?"

"Who knows what strengths lurk in this world, or if dangers await..."

Du Longyang suggested.

Young Master Tianxu, pale-faced and carried on a stretcher, had recalled the four old crones he'd dismissed.

He coughed into a white handkerchief and said, "Let's wait for Brother Lu's word."

"If I'm not mistaken, this world is under Brother Lu's control, much like the Bitter Buddha..."

"In this world, Brother Lu reigns supreme, so we should naturally defer to him."

Young Master Tianxu declared.

Ye Shoudao of the Absolute Blade Sect glanced at him. "Heh."

Typical Tianxu— who'd been yelling that Lu guy's name like a fanatic before?

Now, seamlessly switching to "Brother Lu" without a hint of awkwardness.

"Right, Tianxu has a point. Better not rush out and risk offending Brother Lu."

"But we could disguise ourselves and do some reconnaissance—at least get a feel for this world."

The Empress's eyes lit up as she spoke.

"Besides, our current situation is a boon... The Great Qian Women's Kingdom's territory remains intact, the Demon Domain's threat is gone, and forces like Martial Emperor City and Tianxu Palace endure. This is a fresh start!"

"Disguise ourselves to explore the world?"

Young Master Tianxu's eyes sparkled with interest.

"Great idea!"

Du Longyang and Ye Shoudao exchanged glances, both intrigued.

They chatted idly a bit more, discussed postwar reconstruction, then dispersed.

The Empress returned to the Great Qian Women's Kingdom's palace.

She summoned her attendant, a Nascent Soul realm official. After the brutal seven-day war, fewer than six Nascent Soul experts remained in the kingdom.

At its peak, they'd had over ten!

Of course, that was still better than the original five major forces' Bitter Buddha Temple.

The temple now had zero Nascent Soul cultivators left, only two Golden Core ones—plummeting from top-tier to third-rate.

"Your Majesty."

The attendant bowed before the Empress.

She lounged lazily on her throne, her fair, slender legs crossed and peeking from her opulent robes.

"Huosang, you know the world has just stabilized, and the Great Qian needs reorganization. But as its ruler, I must scout this new world for threats."

"For the coming days, you'll govern in my stead. Don't disappoint me."

The Empress said.

Huosang, startled, bowed deeply: "Your Majesty, you're leaving Tianyuan for the unknown new world?"

"No need to worry—this is Young Master Lu's domain. My journey will be safe."

"Manage Great Qian well. When I return, I expect to see it restored to its former glory."

The Empress continued.

"Can you handle that? I have high hopes for you."

She gazed at Huosang meaningfully.

Succession in the Great Qian Women's Kingdom differed from ordinary nations.

The Empress's mother had been the previous ruler, but not every Empress bore heirs.

Thus, they often used abdication.

"I have every confidence!"

Huosang caught her implication, flames igniting in his eyes.

The Empress smiled behind her hand and dismissed him.

She sat alone in the empty hall.

After a long while, her red lips curved. "Brother Lu?"

"I'm quite looking forward to what Young Master Lu's world is like..."

"Will he become like the Bitter Buddha? Impossible... I can sense it—Young Master Lu cares for the world, unlike that selfish Bitter Buddha. So different."

The Empress murmured with a smile.

Then, her figure vanished, leaving only a lingering fragrance.

One day later.

Outside the Great Qian imperial city.

On the official road where spring warmth melted the snow, greenery flourished.

The Empress, in luxurious red robes and carrying a bundle like an ordinary beauty on a trip, swayed lightly as she departed the city.

She reached the vast sea's edge, where the endless waters gaped like a monstrous maw.

Boarding the wooden boat Huosang had prepared, she sat sideways at the prow.

With a wave of her delicate hand...

A blast of air surged, propelling the boat forward.

It shot toward the sea's far side at breakneck speed.

Not just the Empress.

Ye Shoudao's single empty sleeve flapped in the wind as he stood at the sea's brink. With one step, knife on his back, he walked across the waters on foot.

Each step calmed the roiling waves.

He dressed plainly—Absolute Blade Sect bladesmen favored simple black robes, nothing flashy.

Suddenly, Ye Shoudao halted, gazing into the distant side.

With his eyesight, he easily spotted the scene.

Bells tinkled as four Golden Core crones carried a wooden sedan, leaping wave to wave.

Atop it, Young Master Tianxu—now in festive red robes—lounged comfortably. The crones, mid-leap, scattered flower petals from pouches.

"This is supposed to be a low-key disguise?"

Ye Shoudao's stoic face twitched.

Young Master Tianxu spotted him too, huffed, and directed the crones to veer elsewhere.

Ye Shoudao couldn't fathom the "disguise"—was swapping white for red all it took?

Martial Emperor City.

Du Longyang assembled many disciples.

Inner sect elites, the city's future.

He hid nothing, revealing the world's shift to Ye Qianxun, Feng Yilou, and others.

They weren't fools; they'd suspected. Hearing the city lord confirm it shook them.

Migrating from one world to another...

Truly unimaginable.

"It's a blessing. Without the shift, we'd likely be bones by now."

Du Longyang said.

"Train hard. Though the world changed, Tianyuan is still Tianyuan—little has altered. In fact... can you feel it? The heavens now suit cultivation better than before."

Du Longyang noted.

Feng Yilou nodded. As a Human List genius, his sensitivity was keen.

Du Longyang smiled and continued: "I'll scout the new world. Train well—the future may see you step into it. Don't disgrace Martial Emperor City!"

His tone grew grave.

The disciples' smiles faded.

They'd face the new world someday?

It dawned on them: inevitable, with the worlds fused.

Du Longyang chatted more, then dismissed them.

Leaving a Nascent Soul elder in charge...

He shouldered his long spear, donned plain linen robes and a conical hat, and slipped away from Martial Emperor City under night.

Reaching the sea, he crossed it.

The four Infant Transformation realm experts all ventured across the sea into Five Phoenixes!

The Empress rode her lone boat, channeling cultivation to rocket it forward.

She sat at the prow, breeze tousling her hair.

Suddenly...

Her gaze sharpened, wariness flashing.

She halted the boat abruptly...

A massive shadow had swept beneath the vast sea.

Terrifying aura spread, putting her on high alert.

Boom!

Deep below, thunderous roars echoed.

As if a monstrous beast rampaged.

"This giant whale... it's here too."

The Empress drew a deep breath.

As an Infant Transformation expert, she knew the sea's dread sovereigns.

That whale, alive for untold eons.

Not Infant Transformation, yet surpassing it—stronger!

She frowned. Its presence: boon or bane?

If it attacked the new world, might it anger Brother Lu?

The Empress exhaled.

The shadow below dispersed.

She resumed, accelerating the boat.

...

Beiluo, White Jade Capital.

Lu hadn't expected another task prompt right after completing a special one.

His previous task wasn't done yet.

Still, he adeptly opened the [Tasks] panel.

The system's words popped up.

"Brush off your clothes and depart, hiding merit and fame. Worlds fused successfully—side quest triggered."

"Side Quest: 'Leave only the name of yore; no more White Jade Capital in the world.' Forge a transcendent, otherworldly force, etching a legend of awe in the hearts of all."

Lu stared, stunned.

"What does this mean?"

Transcendent, leaving a legend...

He stroked his chin.

The task was clear: erase White Jade Capital from sight.

But not truly—make it vanish yet persist as myth.

Nonexistent, yet deterring all; even supreme beings would revere the name.

A force beyond the mundane.

Turn White Jade Capital into an "immortal realm"?

Lu sat on the Thousand Blades Chair, fingers tapping the armrest, pondering the quest's intent.

Tianyuan's arrival brought opportunity and challenge to Five Phoenixes Continent.

What matched it there?

Only White Jade Capital.

Lu realized: though transcendent, it overshadowed Five Phoenixes' forces.

With it ahead, others chased shadows, lacking drive.

He exhaled, grasping the purpose.

"Interesting quest. Take it slow..."

Lu smiled.

Suddenly, his mind stirred; lines danced in his eyes. He saw figures racing over the vast sea.

As expected, mere days later.

Du Longyang, the Empress, and the others couldn't wait—leaving Tianyuan for Five Phoenixes.

Lu smacked his lips. When these Infant Transformation experts hit Five Phoenixes and saw its weak cultivators, they'd be dumbfounded.

Hm?

His gaze narrowed, brows furrowing.

He sensed the Empress and company... but beyond them, something terrifying sped from the sea toward Five Phoenixes!

"Infant Transformation? No... If so, it'd yield spiritual energy—but nothing..."

"Not Infant Transformation, yet this aura... What slipped in during fusion?"

"Whatever it is, this aggressive approach."

Lu's eyes squinted.

A cold glint flashed.

"Trouble?"

Chapter 277: Does This Lu Ping'an Seem Easy to Bully?

Beiluo, Lake Heart Island.

As time slipped by, the one-month opening of the library pavilion that Young Master Lu had announced was nearing its end.

More and more figures now sat cross-legged inside, poring over books with utmost focus. Some scholars, originally Confucian readers, swayed as they recited passages aloud, committing them to memory.

Nie Shuang, the big lug, gnawed on a volume too—a fist technique from Martial Emperor City's scripture repository. He disliked weapons; bare-knuckle brawling was his style.

His cultivation had stepped into the Body Storage realm, tempering his physique.

His strength was surging.

Every day after reading, Nie Changqing dragged him off for drills.

As a Heavenly Lock expert, the training was brutal—leaving Nie Shuang sprawled like mud each time.

But his progress was undeniable.

Lü Dongxuan fished from a lone boat on Beiluo Lake, maintaining order in the pavilion.

White Jade Capital's name deterred most trouble.

Still, he watched for petty thieves eyeing the books.

It had happened before.

The Overlord had gone to the Western Mountains' trial tower, honing himself inside. He'd hit a bottleneck that gnawed at him.

Nie Changqing and Ning Zhao's breakthroughs fueled his urgency.

In Body Storage, the Overlord was invincible—his foundation rock-solid—yet Heavenly Lock eluded him.

He didn't know why.

Daily, after the library, he'd seek answers in the tower.

Failure after failure left him lost.

The trial tower's doors creaked open.

Sweat-soaked, the Overlord emerged.

He glanced at the spirit-misted sky, heart heavy.

Another day without breakthrough.

Securing his axe and shield, he headed for the island.

Perhaps...

He needed Young Master Lu's guidance.

Was the demonic path truly harder?

The library held no demonic breakthroughs.

"King of Xiliang heading to the island again?"

Beiluo Lake dock.

Ferry boats now shuttled cultivators to and fro.

An old boatman sipped wine, grinning at the Overlord's approach.

The Overlord's massive frame dipped in nod—they were acquaintances; he crossed daily.

He boarded, settling at the prow.

The old man whooped, grabbing the pole.

"King, fancy a taste of my home-brewed rice wine?"

The Overlord paused, then nodded.

Grinning, the boatman tossed the flask.

The Overlord caught it, uncorked, and gulped.

The boatman poled off, the craft gliding toward the pavilion.

"This time, to the island proper."

Three big swigs later, wiping his mouth, the Overlord told the ferryman.

The old man blinked but asked nothing—he was just a boatman, eking a living in Beiluo.

Yet Beiluo's status meant even its ferrymen commanded respect from worldly experts.

Prime gossip fodder.

"Aye!"

Grinning, he poled hard, veering through lake weeds toward the island.

Ashored, the Overlord paid silver and strode inland.

Nie Shuang punched nearby.

Jing Yue sat lakeside, his Jing Tian sword hovering overhead.

An odd aura clung to him, prickling even the Overlord's hairs.

Ni Yu squatted by her black pot, refining pills earnestly.

Lü Dongxuan and Lü Mu brewed tea; a girl strummed a pipa, notes tinkling like pearls on jade.

She glanced at the Overlord, then resumed.

Lu Changkong and Mo Beike strolled the shore, debating philosophies.

Spotting the Overlord, they looked over.

He and Mo Beike were old acquaintances.

Mo smiled openly; the Overlord's face stayed stony.

He still held no warmth for Mo.

Lu Changkong seemed more down-to-earth lately, chuckling: "Rare for the King of Xiliang to visit. Seeking Fan'er?"

The Overlord nodded.

"Confused. Need Young Master Lu to clear it up."

Lu Changkong likely knew the issue.

But some words worked better from Lu.

Suddenly...

Mist parted from White Jade Capital's pavilions.

Bamboo rustled as Ning Zhao in white glided forth.

"King of Xiliang, the Young Master summons you."

The Overlord blinked.

He eyed the pavilions, squinting, then followed her up.

Mo Beike and Lu Changkong watched him vanish, expressions neutral.

"As cultivation booms, the Overlord grows anxious... stuck, unable to advance. For someone so driven, it's torture."

Mo Beike said.

He knew the Overlord well.

"His path differs from ours..."

Lu Changkong replied.

"No predecessors to follow—he fords the river blind."

"Even Fan'er's way isn't his."

"Confusion's natural."

"Moreover..."

Plucking a skyward chrysanthemum petal, pipa notes in his ears, he sighed faintly: "His biggest barrier is a heart demon."

"It hinders his cultivation."

"Heart demon..."

Mo Beike fell silent—he'd known from the start.

"That old fox Kong Xiu was cunning... laid plans early."

"But his death voided most... The Overlord's knot is the word 'affection.' Youths are like that."

Mo's heavy bags twitched.

...

White Jade Capital Pavilion.

Lu set a chessboard, lines dancing in his eyes as he monitored the vast sea.

That bizarre entity closed on Five Phoenixes' waters fast.

"An oceanic beast?"

Lu mused.

Oceans birthed primal life, vaster than land.

Cultivating sea creatures weren't impossible.

But Five Phoenixes' seas paled against Tianyuan's.

Strong beasts? Maybe. Whale-level? Far off.

Fingers tapped a piece, then placed it.

Footsteps echoed.

Ning Zhao led the Overlord up.

Dazed, he gazed at wheelchair-bound Lu in white, playing chess—like another lifetime.

Lu unchanged: snow-white robes, serene.

But his cultivation... unfathomable.

Before, Lu's presence crushed.

Now? Like a leisurely young lord.

Return to innocence!

The Overlord's heart tightened—only vastly superior strength achieved that.

"Young Master Lu..."

Ning Zhao warmed wine.

Lu eyed the Overlord—long unseen, shrouded in confusion, lost in darkness.

No path ahead.

Lu sighed inwardly. The Overlord's talent was strong; progress once swift.

But founding Xiliang, the Master's death, exposed schemes... he'd faltered.

"Is this the curse of kingship?"

Leaning on his chair, Lu murmured.

Eyes flashing, he saw the Overlord's dragon qi dimmed.

Brows raised.

He'd hoped the Overlord would pillar Five Phoenixes, rival Tianyuan.

Stalled by obsession? Pity.

Lu slapped the chess box.

It floated to the Overlord.

"You're lost."

The Overlord caught it, placed a piece.

Lu responded; they played.

"Young Master Lu, how do I break through? Must I get beaten?"

The Overlord frowned earnestly.

Lu was speechless—what twisted logic?

"You walk the demonic path. Demon is mindset. Is endless slaughter, bloodbaths the only way?"

Sleeves rolled, piece down, Lu eyed him.

He saw the path; no surprise.

Young Master Lu's level? Likely demonic lord tier.

"You don't grasp what demon truly is."

Lu shook his head.

"Remember becoming demon, stepping onto the path?"

The Overlord froze, mind drifting—Wolong Ridge, encircled by tens of thousands, guarding a carriage, sacrificing to demonhood, rivers of blood...

That's when.

Utter exhilaration, soul clarity.

"You have a heart demon. To break through, shatter it. Demonic path suits Heavenly Lock best... but most perilous—one slip, heavenly tribulation reduces you to ash."

"Heart demon... what?"

Fists clenched.

"Don't evade. Demon? Mindset. Shatter chains, unbound, all for your heart's desire—that's demon."

"Demons hold obsessions. They make or break you."

Pieces cluttered the board.

The Overlord stared, piece in hand, nowhere to go.

Dead end.

"Think Heavenly Lock strong?"

"Just entry. True powerhouses... beyond imagination."

"Cultivation: genius or not, unshackle your heart, or trail mediocrity, a stepping stone."

Lu wiped the board clean.

Ning Zhao brought hot wine.

Lu sipped.

The Overlord sat silent, untouched.

Lu didn't disturb.

He favored the Overlord—potential Five Phoenixes pillar, Tianyuan rival.

Wasted on obsession? Shame.

Pure minds suit dao best—no obsessions, swift ascent.

Lu figured he was pure-minded.

Watching the pondering Overlord, he finished his wine, smiling.

"Show you true great cultivation. Might inspire."

The Overlord snapped back, puzzled.

No explanation.

Lu pointed at his brow.

Buzz...

Ripples spread.

The Overlord felt seized, streaking like lightning.

...

Dongyang County.

Red Dragon Gate.

Scorching heat melted earth.

A flame-wreathed dragon species jerked up.

Sharp eyes fixed the gate, flames snorting from nostrils.

Red Dragon—most irascible heavenly dragon.

Suddenly, its expression shifted.

Thunder flickered in the gate.

White-robed Lu on Thousand Blades Chair appeared; little Yinglong on his shoulder, outing-excited.

Spotting Red Dragon, eyes lit.

Flapping chubby wings, he flew before it, puckering for a water arrow.

Red Dragon's massive eye glanced.

The arrow evaporated mid-air.

Little Yinglong's eyes bulged.

Oh no?!

Mouth churning bigger surge.

But Red Dragon straightened, roaring deafeningly.

Terrifying flames erupted.

Engulfing little Yinglong.

Flames cleared.

He exhaled steam, charred and bewildered.

This little red... so feisty!

Big bro's dignity... gone?!

Lu pinched the scruff of the rallying dragonet.

Gently stroked Red Dragon's head.

The Overlord beside: dumbstruck.

One of the eight dragons... Red Dragon?

"Go."

Lu mounted.

Red Dragon soared, fire streak over Dongyang.

Dongyang sea edge.

It circled.

On the beach...

Lu on his chair, chin propped, fingers tapping armrest, waiting.

The Overlord tense.

Distant horizon: thick clouds rolled in.

Oppressive, breathless.

"Young Master Lu, this..."

Lu hushed him—watch.

His gaze pierced: endless sea, massive shadow approaching, waves towering!

"Ancient giant whale."

"Infant Transformation strength, no spirit yield—fine. But charging like it wants trouble..."

"Sensed Five Phoenixes' weakness, come to bully?"

"Think this Lu Ping'an is pushover?"

Lu smirked.

The whale was intelligent, no doubt.

Likely detected fused origins, bold to claim Five Phoenixes as plane lord.

Far off...

Sea exploded.

Huge shadow breached.

Boom!

Colossal body slammed, waves meters high barreling toward Dongyang.

The whale opened maw, eerie roar.

Earth quaked.

Terror aura stormed the sea like floral tempest!

Dongyang walls: citizens panicked—waves would devastate.

The whale sensed Lu.

Under his stare...

This Tianyuan stowaway leaped, hovering, raining seawater!

Huge eyes locked on coastal Lu.

Ten-thousand-meter whale!

Born aloft!

Chapter 278: Steamed, Grilled, Braised... Pick One

The vast sea heaved and crashed, waves thundering skyward.

The colossal whale burst into existence, its surging tides raining down like a storm, whipping up monstrous swells.

A titanic beast!

Blotting out the sun, it radiated utter oppression and terror.

"What... is this?!"

The Overlord's eyes bulged, his breathing labored in disbelief.

He'd never seen such a monster. Roaming Xiliang, he'd wrestled fierce tigers—but even tigers were ants before this!

"An ancient giant whale, alive for tens of thousands of years at least."

Lu said.

The Overlord's heart jolted.

A creature over ten millennia old?!

Cultivation extended life—he knew that. Body Storage granted centuries; Heavenly Lock or Golden Core, a millennium.

But...

Over ten thousand years? He couldn't fathom it.

This... was true great cultivation?!

Young Master Lu said he'd show him the real deal.

In that moment, the Overlord was awed.

Beside Lu, Red Dragon growled, body swelling to ten meters, flames roaring.

Yet before the whale, still minuscule.

Little Yinglong stared blankly at first.

Then roared, enlarging.

Wings spread, bellowing at the beast.

Both sensed hostility—a threat.

As heavenly dragons born in Five Phoenixes, they instinctively repelled this interloper.

The Overlord trembled, gripping his axe, demonic qi swirling.

He could feel tigers, but this whale...

No courage to even try.

Could an ant slay an elephant?

How?

Lu eyed the whale; the whale eyed Lu.

Suddenly...

Lu smiled.

The sky-blocking whale reminded him of a name...

Kun!

"There is a fish in the North Sea, called Kun. The Kun is so huge, one pot... ahem."

Lu coughed lightly.

Gazing at the whale hovering in the heavens.

An idea struck.

Tens of thousands of meters—its back must be vast, enough for all White Jade Capital.

Move White Jade Capital atop it... cruising the seas like mysterious immortal Penglai, birthing endless legends.

Lu fist-smacked his palm.

Thrilling!

Perfect...

This whale was a stowaway. Carrying White Jade Capital? Its toll.

Meanwhile...

Dongyang County drowned in fear.

On the walls...

Soldiers gawked at the sun-eclipsing whale, frozen.

Monster?

One tail swipe could raze a city!

What now?

The prefect raced to the battlements, nearly collapsing at the sight.

Plagued Dongyang—invaded by weird aliens before, now this horror.

His job... too hard.

But he didn't yield.

Roaring orders.

Troops manned walls; all able-bodied men summoned.

Life or death.

Facing the beast, men clutched harpoons, charging out.

Survival demanded the fight!

The prefect led, harpoon raised.

No escape.

Waves would engulf Dongyang.

He was trapped.

But reaching the beach...

People there.

Wheelchair-bound, white robes like snow!

The prefect recalled the legend!

"Lord of White Jade Capital, Lu Ping'an?!"

Stunned, then ecstatic!

"Young Master Lu!"

Heavens spared Dongyang!

Lu sensed the prefect, harpoon-wielding soldiers, civilians.

Face weird.

Harpoons?

Creative.

"Stop them."

"Don't let them near."

Lu said.

The Overlord frowned, nodded.

Retreating explosively, sand blasting, streaking black.

He was shocked—these folk didn't flee but charged with harpoons?

Those toys pierce the whale?

"You... King of Xiliang?!"

The prefect hesitated, then spoke.

The Overlord nodded.

"That beast defies human power. Stay back."

"Why not run? Charging is suicide..."

He eyed the prefect and followers, puzzled.

"Your harpoons won't scratch its hide."

The prefect smiled.

"Run?"

"How? Wives, children, parents in the city—how?"

The Overlord fell silent.

Fear in their eyes, yet harpoons gripped—touched him.

Far off...

The whale roared again.

Gales howled, hurricanes of icy water lashing.

Around Lu, spiritual qi formed an umbrella, repelling the deluge.

Strong whale—not Infant Transformation, but equivalent.

Its bulk: ultimate weapon.

"Tens of thousands of years..."

Lu's eyes gleamed.

Wheelchair slap—one, two, three...

Five Phoenix Plume Swords whistled out, swirling overhead.

He'd reclaimed two more.

Five now.

Not the limit—unknown total.

One: profound-tier.

Five: versatile, fused near earth-tier might!

Lu swept his hand.

Five became fire phoenixes, streaking at the whale.

Mockery in its eyes.

It sensed Lu—mere human, not even Foundation Building. Dare fight?!

Tianyuan sea overlord.

Dreamed of transcendence, shackled by world level.

Buried deep.

But worlds fused; origins shifted—he awoke.

Seized the chaos, breached from Tianyuan.

This world... weak!

Far frailer than Tianyuan.

Opportunity!

No prior ambition—but now, yes.

Fuse worlds; rule it—transcendence no dream.

Raced to Five Phoenixes.

Ignored the plumes.

Plummeted from heavens.

Bulk to pulverize.

Plumes slashed—tough hide, no wound.

Lu raised a brow.

Confident.

Red Dragon charged, flaming meteor.

Size gap: whale unfazed.

Ignorance enraged it.

Lu observed.

Defense exceeded expectations.

Not invincible.

Controlled plumes into one red sword, piercing a spot.

Point breaks plane!

Whale felt mosquito bite.

Near earth-tier burst—pierced skin.

Explosion: roar, blood spray.

Fats clenched the sword.

Lu's brow arched—clever.

Fingers danced.

Plumes split.

Pfft...

Swam in fat...

Pain flooded!

Huge body: cumbersome.

Pros and cons.

Silver blades bloomed from Thousand Blades Chair into lotus.

Lu in white floated up, toward the whale.

Fury in its eyes.

Sea king—when such pain?

Mouth opened, long whine.

Shockwaves at Lu.

White stream lashed.

Lu raised hand—blade wall.

Boom!

Stream pierced, into Lu.

"Hm?"

Surprise.

"Dao Intent?"

Comprehended it...

No wonder overlord—Infant Transformation threat sans realm.

"System, what rank?"

Prompt:

"Fourth-sequence: Soul-Devouring Intent."

Fourth?!

Lu flashed shock.

That near-dooming Tianyuan bighead: sixth.

This whale... fourth!

Lightning-fast.

Lu's soul: whale shadow.

Hundred meters—terrifying vs. his soul.

Direct soul attack!

Soul-Devouring...

Thus?

"Human, die!"

Intent from its soul.

Bit down.

But...

Failed!

Like biting stone—teeth nearly shattered!

Lu's soul: vast vortex, starry specks.

Plain black stele central.

Dao Stele.

Bit it.

Panicked, released.

Stele flashed subtly.

Lu intuited, face odd.

"Soul-Devouring?"

Vortex spun faster.

Familiar suction from Lu's soul.

Pulled in: devoured...

His own intent?!

This human...

How?!

Decisive.

Severed soul sliver—agonized wail.

Swallowed by vortex.

Reality:

Lu opened eyes.

Smirking at whale.

It: humanoid panic on Lu lotus-seated!

Problematic human!

Meanwhile...

Plumes burst out.

Blood geysers.

Wail.

Body crashed into sea, mega-waves.

Waves hit invisible barrier, rebounded.

Tail swing, fled.

Far:

Overlord stunned—this great cultivation battle?

Insane!

Altered beach: his smallness, yearning.

His pursuit!

Whale escaped.

Dived—ocean home.

Glanced: human lotus-floating.

Dreams reignited—leaped, maw to swallow.

But...

Lu unhurried, drew Spirit Pressure Board.

Piece placed.

Clack.

Echoed realms.

Heavenly hand mirrored, smashing whale's head.

Pressure: back to sea.

Lu rapid-placed.

Gossip runes flashed.

Grabbed void.

Sea cubed.

Whale yanked, imprisoned in water block before Lu.

Despair.

What demon?!

"Chance... submit."

Lu said.

No—sea king, 100,000 years—bow to human?

Lu patient: "No? Steamed, grilled, braised... choose."

"Stowaway."

"Toll required."

"I'm Lu Ping'an—good-tempered, but don't bully me. You scared me charging."

Released array.

Whale splashed, dove deep.

Outside terrifying—hide.

But...

Lu placed, runes.

Swam backward—recaptured, suspended.

Lu calm: "One more."

Released again.

Fled madly.

Soon: before Lu.

"Steamed it is."

Whale: ...

Lu exhaled white stream—like its own.

Into whale's mind.

Soul-Devouring exploded...

Terror.

Long whine: plea, submission.

Lu retracted, blades stacked to chair.

"Good."

Submitted—but planned. Human lifespans short.

Strategic—outlast, free again.

Believed possible.

No resistance, floated.

Lu on chair, atop back.

Little Yinglong shoulder-perched, chair rolled smooth.

"Hm, nice."

Satisfied.

As Lu tamed, surveyed...

Distant sea:

Lone boat rocketed forth.

Chapter 279: The Empress Enters Lake Heart Island

The clash between Lu and the giant whale ended swiftly.

At least, for the people of Dongyang County, a great calamity had passed.

The Overlord drew a deep breath. Lu had grown far stronger than before—always mysterious, his power unfathomable.

But the Overlord knew clearly: Lu's strength advanced steadily. The world progressed, and so did Lu.

Only he, the Overlord, stagnated.

This time, Lu brought him to witness a battle of true great cultivation, partly as a warning.

To make him realize he could not continue like this.

The path of cultivation was long. He'd only just stepped onto the ladder—how could he let himself be shackled at the ankles?

He had to break through.

No more evasion; he must face his inner demon head-on.

In the distance...

A lone boat streaked forth, the Empress standing at its prow.

Her dark hair danced; her crimson robes fluttered wildly.

The battle's commotion was immense—an Infant Transformation-level clash. How could the Empress not sense it?

Connecting it to the whale shadow she'd seen earlier, she knew: the whale was causing trouble.

Ruling the Great Qian Women's Kingdom, near the Demon Domain and vast sea, she'd crossed paths with it before.

An abyssal beast of endless ages, legend said a high-martial powerhouse enlightened it by chance, granting eternal life.

Records claimed 100,000 years.

100,000 years...

The Empress couldn't imagine any creature enduring so long!

Thus, when it invaded Five Phoenixes, she grew anxious.

Boom!

She leaped from the boat, robes billowing, treading the air.

But soon, she saw the outcome afar.

The irascible whale floated docilely on the sea; atop its back, white-robed Young Master Lu wheeled leisurely.

The Empress exhaled in relief.

Young Master Lu had handled the whale.

Lu arched a brow at the approaching Empress. She carried a bundle, dressed plainly with light makeup—elegant yet understated.

But her beauty remained captivating and alluring.

"Young Master Lu."

Spotting him, she smiled radiantly.

Rumble!

Below, the whale thundered, body swaying with a fearsome roar.

It sensed an old acquaintance—the Great Qian Empress.

Lu nodded slightly. Her departure from Tianyuan didn't surprise him much.

He hadn't restricted them anyway; Tianyuan and Five Phoenixes were bound to interact eventually.

"Well now, doesn't this whale usually mind its own business with humans? What made it snap this time?"

The Empress lightly stamped her long leg on its back.

Water jets erupted from its blowholes, a pillar soaring skyward, scattering like rain.

Little Yinglong on Lu's shoulder brightened.

A kindred spirit!

This water spout rivaled his own.

"Young Master Lu, how did you tame this whale?"

"It's no weakling—Du Longyang challenged it once and nearly cried."

The Empress raised a fair hand, blocking all the rain.

Lu sat in his wheelchair, chin propped, hand on the armrest.

Glancing at her, he smiled: "Simple. Steamed, grilled, or braised—let it choose."

The Empress was speechless.

Then burst into laughter.

Young Master Lu's humor was ice-cold.

"Du Longyang, Tianxu, and Ye Shoudao should all have left Tianyuan by now, heading here."

The Empress said.

Lu's indifference made her purse her lips.

She surveyed curiously.

"So this is Young Master Lu's world? Not quite what I imagined."

"Oh? How so?"

Lu grew intrigued.

She eyed little Yinglong on his shoulder, then the flaming Red Dragon, sensing the ambient spiritual qi. Shaking her head: "I thought a place nurturing a prodigy like you would be a top mid-martial world, at least on par with Tianyuan. But... it falls short."

"Spiritual qi isn't dense; no powerhouses catch our eye."

The Empress noted.

Lu said nothing.

She spoke truth.

Five Phoenixes lagged behind Tianyuan now.

"To shore."

Lu said.

They left the whale's back for the beach.

The whale lay quietly in the water, subdued.

A 100,000-year-old monster—steady as they come.

Submitted to Lu, but unhurried. Temporary—outlast the human, reclaim sea dominion.

Human spans paled against his.

On the sand, Lu eyed the whale.

Flicked a "Gen" gossip rune.

It flew, merging into the beast.

"Go. I'll summon if needed."

Lu said faintly.

The whale's massive eyes rolled, gazing at Lu.

Complex emotions.

Regret—delivering himself into peril.

Thought this world harmless; met a monster like Lu.

Charged aggressively, ended as a pet...

Tail slammed, waves towering.

Long cry, then dove deep, startling sea life.

Surface calmed, waves receded.

Gentle breeze brought comfort.

"Let's go."

Lu rubbed little Yinglong's head.

Wheelchair spun, rolling inland.

Red Dragon roared, soaring to its gate.

Afar, the Overlord and Dongyang folk gathered.

"Greetings, Young Master Lu!"

The prefect thrilled.

Lu: peerless cultivator, White Jade Capital lord! True mystic—tamed that horror!

The Overlord watched Lu complexly.

Then his eyes sharpened—spotting the Empress.

First glance: stunned by her beauty.

Grace and nobility added allure.

Second: her power—unfathomable, oppressive as the sea, pores tightening.

Terrifyingly strong woman!

Lu exchanged little with Dongyang's people—nodded, a word or two—then left with little Yinglong and the Overlord.

To Red Dragon Gate.

The Empress observed curiously.

"Empress, perfect timing. Something to discuss with you all."

Lu said.

"Young Master Lu, no need for formality. This palace is Ni Chunqiu—call me Chunqiu."

She smiled brightly.

Lu hesitated, then nodded: "Alright."

Her eyes sparkled, smile blooming.

The Overlord beside: held his breath.

Said nothing, asked nothing.

Through the gate, the Empress marveled.

Space-folding—even she was amazed.

"Like a teleportation array."

She said.

"Rumors say high-martial worlds have them—cross hundreds of thousands of li instantly."

"This gate works similarly."

Lu raised a brow.

High-martial teleports?

Suited vast realms—millions of li; one jump hundreds of thousands.

Five Phoenixes smaller; gates sufficed.

Emerging to Lake Heart Island, dense spiritual qi enveloped.

Thicker than Tianyuan.

The Empress stepped on rippling waters, inexplicably at ease. Divine sense swept—many Qi Condensation, some Foundation, few Golden Core.

Overall, not strong.

Confirmed: Lu's world weaker than Tianyuan.

On the island...

Nie Changqing, drilling Nie Shuang, snapped eyes open.

Sharp glint.

Stepped out, appearing on the lake.

"Young Master."

Dragon Slayer at waist, he bowed to Lu.

Then saw the red-robed Empress.

He knew her—Great Qian ruler, Infant Transformation terror.

But...

Here? Lake Heart Island...

She escaped the forbidden domain?

Mind chaos.

The Empress smiled at him—familiar from Martial Emperor City battles.

Talented, Human List potential.

Lu's disciple—explained his prowess.

Her sense swept the island unnoticed.

Ashore.

Skyward chrysanthemums swayed; azure peaches bloomed.

Heart-refreshing—immortal haven.

No wonder denser, comfier qi—thanks to these spirit plants.

Sensing Lu's business...

The Empress excused herself, wandering the island.

Lu let her.

Ni Yu finished refining, eagerly offering fresh Body Tempering Pills like treasure.

First batch drew lightning; subsequent none—easier.

Lu took them, nodded—better quality; her skill improved.

Picked one, eyed the Overlord.

"For you now, minimal effect. Break your demon first—then it'll shine."

Lu said.

The Overlord nodded.

He knew.

Lu waved to distant Lü Dongxuan.

He rushed, gold chain jingling.

"Young Master..."

Eyes expectant—summons meant big moves.

"Announce worldwide: three days hence, White Jade Capital auction. Spirit pills, artifacts, other treasures."

Lu said.

Not just Lü stunned.

Nie Changqing and Overlord too.

Auction?

Why?

Lu short on cash?

Money meant nothing to White Jade Capital.

One call—piles delivered.

But Lu explained not; they couldn't guess.

Wheelchair turned to the pavilion.

Gazing at the lake-floating library: "Month ends. Pavilion closes. Idlers depart."

Voice soft, yet clear to all.

Sima Qingshan bowed with An Miaoyu, left.

Bai Qingniao excitedly dragged Jiang Li and Chi Lian away.

Readers inside jolted.

Reluctant, but replaced books.

Some scholars recited, memorizing more.

Lu waved—doors boomed shut.

Boats rippled out; many gazed back, wistful.

Month too short—barely three books for some.

Over ten thousand volumes—impossible.

"Cultivation endless. Greed chews poorly. Focus one path."

Lu finished, waved.

Boats blasted from the lake.

Silence; pavilion sealed, less clamor.

Lü recovered, prepared without question.

Intuitive—he sensed deeper purpose.

Overlord's eyes flickered, bowed, departed.

Glanced at pill.

Auction might have them?

Deep breath—if so, compete.

But first: breakthrough.

Shatter the demon.

Lu had Ni Yu resume; he returned to the pavilion's second floor.

The Empress curiously watched behind Ni Yu—refining with a black pot? Eye-opening.

Sensed the pot extraordinary—an artifact.

She knew alchemy—prestigious in Tianyuan.

Pot-refining: novel.

During, she advised; Ni Yu enlightened.

Grateful, Ni Yu offered a sugar-coated Qi Gathering Pill.

The Empress popped it—sweetness brightened her eyes.

Women's bonds: simple.

Not disturbing Ni Yu further, she wandered on.

Odd—cultivators weak, yet comfy atmosphere lingered.

Looked up: towering trial tower, noticed upon arrival.

Artifact—stronger than first-grade!

Suddenly...

Intuition.

Breeze.

Figure descended pavilion.

Amid peach petals, the Empress turned—saw Ning Zhao.

White skirt fluttering; calm gaze.

Eyes met—subtle sparks.

Chapter 280: Remodeling White Jade Capital

Beiluo City.

News of Young Master Lu sealing the library pavilion spread like wildfire, soon blanketing the entire city.

Beiluo now teemed with cultivators. As a holy land of cultivation, it drew practitioners from everywhere.

The pavilion and trial tower—treasures aiding progress—lured countless more.

Lu Manor.

Lu Changkong and Mo Beike steeped tea. Emerald leaves with crimson flecks swirled in the purple clay pot, circled, then sank.

"Giant Master, try this brew."

Lu Changkong smiled warmly.

He was skilled; after three rinses, warm liquid rippled in the cups.

Mo Beike's heavy bags twitched.

Sipped—refreshing vigor coursed from mouth to body.

"What... tea is this?"

Mo Beike marveled; never tasted such.

Lu Changkong smiled mysteriously. "Since heaven and earth birthed spiritual qi, the world transformed, birthing cultivators aplenty. But qi doesn't just forge practitioners—it spawns wondrous spirit plants."

"Plants with myriad effects: some for pills, medicine, even delicacies..."

"This is a mutated tea. In my Herbal Records, I named it Crimson Tear Tea."

Mo Beike's eyes lit.

Bags quivered.

He rose, bowing to Lu Changkong. He should have returned to Great Xuan long ago.

But for Herbal Records, he lingered.

He wanted a copy—for Great Xuan Academy's agrarian branch.

No hiding; he voiced it.

Lu Changkong had a volume fetched.

"My overnight transcription. Incomplete, sadly—but sufficient for teaching."

"Soon, I'll wander the world, perfecting it."

Lu Changkong said.

Mo Beike grew solemn.

Shennong tasted herbs—not mere words, but sacrificial spirit.

As they sipped and chatted...

Luo Yue rushed in.

"City Lord."

Lu Changkong eyed him puzzled.

"Young Master bids Tianji Pavilion announce: three days hence, White Jade Capital auction in Beiluo."

Luo Yue said gravely.

Hm?

Both men froze.

"Fan'er... short on funds?"

Lu Changkong asked.

Luo Yue unsure how to reply. Young Master Lu, need money?

World's top cultivator—coin beneath him?

Mo Beike pondered.

Lu's actions: inscrutable. This auction? Extraordinary.

"Did Fan'er say what'll be auctioned?"

Lu Changkong pressed.

Luo Yue nodded: "Spirit pills, artifacts, and some unclear treasures from the Young Master."

Words fell.

Mo Beike and Lu Changkong's eyes sharpened.

...

White Jade Capital's auction news swept the world.

Tianji pigeons sped it.

All factions heard.

Not just cultivators—clans too.

White Jade Capital's sale? No ordinary goods—world-shaking.

Forces mobilized.

Imperial Capital.

Windmist Pavilion.

Now the capital's premier pleasure house—bustling with beauties posing in corridors.

Surface: brothel. Under: Black Dragon Cult lair.

Behind a hidden door: separate courtyard.

Liu Yuanhao sat cross-legged, pale flames coiling. Sparks danced in his eyes.

Neck cracked; mouth opened—pale fire floated, shifting shapes under control.

"Done!"

Joy bloomed.

Bond with flame tighter; tempered third storage.

Via it, he rivaled Body Storage peak.

Suddenly...

Footsteps outside.

A figure entered—black scale on forehead, Qi Core peak, half-step Body Storage.

"What's up?"

Liu Yuanhao's eyes gleamed.

Black Dragon Guards rarely disturbed.

"Three days: White Jade Capital auction... precious pills, artifacts."

"Many speculate more—Young Master Lu of Beiluo may offer greater treasures. We can't guess."

The guard said.

Liu Yuanhao rose, flames dispersing.

Paced slowly.

"White Jade Capital... sudden auction?"

"Their status needs no such."

"But for the world: boon. Pills, artifacts... huge for Black Dragon growth."

Poured tea; cold water boiled in cup.

"Auction in three days?"

Guard nodded.

"Not good news."

Liu Yuanhao set cup down.

Guard blinked, confused.

Fingers tapped table.

Smiled: "Overlord trains in Beiluo... but anxious, stalled in bottleneck."

"Xiliang rests on him..."

"His stagnation: our chance. Auction—he'll push for White Jade pills to break through."

Liu Yuanhao analyzed.

Guard frowned: "Indeed bad for us."

"Plus, Young Master Lu sealed pavilion—Overlord leaving soon."

"We can't wait."

Liu Yuanhao squinted.

"Prepare. Post-auction: strike!"

Guard inhaled, nodded gravely.

Exited swiftly.

Liu Yuanhao sat; flame spun in palm.

"Xiliang Overlord..."

...

"Miss Ni, Young Master summons."

Ning Zhao eyed the Empress, tone even.

Born with soul sense, she felt the Empress's might—unfathomable, breath-stealing.

Besides Young Master, such power?

The Empress smiled.

Golden Core maid...

Poise fitting Lu's station.

Nodded; red skirts swirled, long legs flashed—appeared before pavilions.

Ning Zhao felt pressure.

Led upstairs to second floor.

There...

Lu leaned in wheelchair, setting chess.

The Empress lounged opposite.

No surprise.

World fusion: not simple.

Contact sparks trouble.

"Chess?"

Lu asked.

Eyes brightened.

"Yes."

Lu waved; box flew to her.

Fair fingers placed piece.

Buzz...

Soul senses surged.

Lu calm, placed.

Senses clashed.

More than chess: soul duel.

Ning Zhao aside: terrifying waves stormed the floor.

First time someone lasted so under Young Master's pressure.

Empress placed; face flushed, sweat beaded.

Lu chin-propped, unfazed.

Soul mutated, plus Soul-Devouring Intent—his sense monstrous.

Game ended.

Empress slumped weary.

"No more."

Lu's sense exceeded expectations; stronger than before.

No wonder whale subdued easily.

Lu didn't push; took warm bronze wine from Ning Zhao.

Sipped.

"As you see, Five Phoenixes isn't as strong as imagined... few true powerhouses..."

Lu said.

Empress straightened—main topic.

Sat proper, eyes on him.

"My goal: strengthen Five Phoenixes... focus here."

"Original Tianyuan: now Tianyuan Domain."

Lu stated fact-like, sipped tea.

"Tianyuan Domain..."

Empress squinted. Demoting continent to domain—ambition clear.

"Young Master Lu plans more fusions?"

Lu smiled: "Yes."

No hiding.

Standard growth: Five Phoenixes to high-martial—time unknown.

Fusion: risky shortcut, rewarding.

"But Tianyuan fusion was coincidence!"

Various factors forced it.

"Other worlds may not comply."

Lu played with fire.

Lu chuckled: "Dreams needed. Fitting worlds rare—so maybe not. Just idea."

"Notify Du City Lord etc.: join auction..."

Empress stunned.

Heard of it—thought local.

But them too?

Pills, artifacts?

No—Tianyuan had plenty.

Thus: rarer items?

What?

Curiosity piqued.

"Henceforth, Tianyuan Domain experts in Five Phoenixes: call 'Ancient Tianyuan Clan'."

Lu pondered, said.

"Peaceful coexistence. Tianyuan fused—same world now."

"Pure goal: world growth, break mid-martial shackles to high-martial."

"Infant Transformation: not limit. Breaking mid-martial needs more."

Lu eyed her.

Words fell.

Mouth opened—white stream.

Burst.

Odd aura enveloped; vision blurred.

Next: Lu in her soul.

Terror birthed.

Felt devoured.

Buzz...

Vanished.

Eyes wide, sweat-drenched, panicked.

"What was that?"

Glared resentfully.

No pity—left her wrecked.

"Dao Intent..."

Fingers tapped armrest.

"Heaven's ways sequenced..."

"Knife, sword intents: sequences. Even Du Longyang, Ye Shoudao: threshold only, no comprehension."

"Infant Transformation strong, but growth possible."

"Comprehend sequences next."

Lu said.

Empress pondered—new door opened.

Sequence Dao Intent...

"In high-martial: fundamental."

Lu serious.

Never been—bluff for now.

"Your level: breaking Infant Transformation hard."

"Start with sequences."

Empress eyed Lu: "Auction... related?"

Mysterious smile, noncommittal.

She smiled knowingly.

Heart warmed.

In Tianyuan, Infant Transformation stalled.

Post-ascension scam reveal: directionless with Du etc.

Lu gave path—tempting.

Drew jade token.

Sense infused.

Linked to Du's—alerted soon.

Forged for "Immortal Slaughter Plan"—instant contact.

Lu ignored.

Under resentful gaze, Ning Zhao escorted her down.

Empress gone.

Pavilion quieted.

Lu on Thousand Blades, balcony.

Surveyed island, fingers tapping.

Ning Zhao warmed wine, offered.

Waved off.

Flipped hand—three-legged furnace floated.

Small, yet mountain-heavy.

Ning Zhao blinked: "Young Master?"

Light laugh, flicked furnace— soared.

"Just... facelift for White Jade Capital."

Words fell.

Sky furnace, under soul control...

Inverted.

Rumble!

Origin water cascaded like waterfall from spout!