

Starlit Path 381

Chapter 381: Sacrificing the Primordial Spirit, Qi Liuma Suppresses the Mighty!

The Five Phoenixes underwent a seismic transformation—an ascension to a higher plane of existence.

Not only cultivators, but even mortals sensed the heavens themselves shifting.

Even Tantai Xuan, the man utterly cut off from immortal destiny, felt something inside him change.

His Imperial Dragon Qi had grown denser. That realization struck him clearly: the dragon qi of an emperor was tied to the fortunes of the common people.

When the people thrived, so did his power.

This time, the world's metamorphosis had showered unimaginable benefits upon every ordinary soul. Those benefits, in turn, flowed back to him like quiet tributaries feeding a greater river.

Tantai Xuan stood with hands clasped behind his back, eyes narrowed against the icy rain of spiritual energy that lashed his face. Yet no discomfort touched his heart—no trace of envy for those born with immortal affinity, no sorrow for what he lacked.

So this was the simple contentment of one whose heart belonged to the people.

Boom!

Imperial Dragon Qi surged around him. Now, he felt, even if he stood motionless and allowed a Yin Spirit cultivator to strike him, the backlash alone might shatter his attacker.

Tantai Xuan gave a long, profound sigh.

So this was the loneliness at the peak of power—dull, empty, and utterly predictable.

Across the blood-soaked battlefield, silence fell. Everywhere, the sounds of cultivators breaking through their shackles rang out like distant thunder.

Inside the ice pagoda, the sealed Sons and Saintesses of distant holy lands stared in stunned disbelief, their faces twisted with raw envy.

These natives—these dirt-born ants—were reaping the fortune of the world's ascension and stepping into realms the holy children had only dreamed of.

They weren't stupid. They understood: this breakthrough was a gift from the world itself, a reward for every living soul within it.

Watching Overlord, Nie Changqing, and others cross into the Spirit Severing Realm with a single thought, the sealed geniuses nearly went mad with jealousy.

Spirit Severing—that was the realm so many of them had chased for years.

They pressed their faces against the icy walls, trembling, watching the natives of Five Phoenixes bathe in the spiritual rain while the fortune they had come to seize danced just beyond their reach.

On the Golden Body Continent—

Bu Nanxing stood atop a lone peak, dazed.

Because his continent had fused with the origin, it too had become part of the Five Phoenixes Small World. Thus, it basked in the same cascading spiritual rain.

On the vast mountain summit, Bu Nanxing sat obediently, not daring to move a muscle.

Though that terrifying existence—Lord Lu—had vanished, Bu Nanxing still feared that the slightest twitch might draw a palm of annihilation from the void.

He only wanted to survive.

He had underestimated this world once. Never again.

Suddenly, cool droplets of spiritual rain landed on his skin.

He lifted a hand. The liquid seeped into his palm, and his expression turned strange.

This... the fortune wasn't excluding him?

Boom!

Though, as a non-native, he received far less than the true children of Five Phoenixes, it was still fortune all the same.

At the peak of Spirit Refinement, a barrier he had failed to breach for ages suddenly tore like wet paper.

Still sitting in that perfectly obedient posture, he broke through.

From Spirit Refinement, he stepped into Spirit Severing.

Power surged through his body, so euphoric he nearly moaned aloud.

He clapped both hands over his mouth, terrified that any sound might offend the unseen mighty one and earn him a swift, crushing death.

Caution. Steady now.

“Thank you, senior!”

Bu Nanxing dropped to his knees and slammed his forehead against the stone toward the spot where Lord Lu had disappeared. The entire mountain trembled.

He knew this shower of fortune was inextricably tied to Lord Lu’s successful origin ascension.

So he kowtowed, maxing out every ounce of his will to live, hoping to earn a sliver of goodwill.

...

Within the origin space.

Lord Lu exhaled slowly.

The Thousand-Blade Chair unfolded and reformed beneath him. He sat, black robes fading back to pristine white.

Blood stained the white cloth—this tribulation had truly pushed even him to the brink.

He had to admit: of all the tribulations since his debut, this one had been the most perilous. One careless step, and he might have fallen.

Yet the rewards were immense.

By enduring the punishment of the rules, the Five Phoenixes' high martial origin had become legitimate.

Perhaps it would stand as the only true high martial origin in all of Nihility Heaven—the sole high martial world.

That thought alone set his blood aflame with excitement.

And this was only the beginning.

The greatest change came from the world's metamorphosis itself.

The opportunity born from that ascension had triggered a collective leap among Five Phoenixes cultivators—and a portion of that spiritual energy flowed directly back to him as commission.

“Has the world upgrade assessment been completed?”

Lord Lu calmed his joy, eyes narrowing.

He waited.

Yet the system prompt did not appear.

Confusion crept in.

Then, realization struck.

His brows knit. He raised his head, profound gaze seeming to weave lines of fate across his pupils.

“Because of those covetous experts?”

Until those threats were dealt with, the system refused to count the upgrade as complete.

He had to eliminate the mighty ones from other high martial worlds first.

Otherwise, the assessment would remain unfinished, and Five Phoenixes could not yet be considered a true high martial realm.

Lord Lu exhaled.

His body trembled faintly. The blood on his white robes shattered into fine particles and dispersed.

He lifted his chin, expression cold and aloof.

Spotless white once more.

His finger tapped the armrest of the wheelchair—he prepared to leave the origin space.

The origin had expanded vastly, now cradling four supreme mid-tier martial origins in perfect, eternal balance.

There was no longer any need for him to watch it constantly.

Hm?

Just as he moved to depart and deal with the intruders, an unexpected change occurred.

...

In the void.

Mighty experts stepped across the bounds of Nihility Heaven.

Terrifying auras rippled outward, crushing everything in their path. Wandering cultivators caught in the pressure exploded into mist—body and soul obliterated in an instant.

These beings were simply too powerful.

Each carried an invincible bearing, sacred treasures glowing above their heads as they crossed the emptiness.

Brilliant light poured from their bodies; their presence alone inspired dread.

Every one of them had surpassed Spirit Severing.

Wanderers scattered in panic.

“As expected—the great powers of high martial worlds have been watching, hungry for this newborn fortune!”

“None of those mighty ones are simple!”

“Run! Even suppressed by Nihility Heaven’s rules, their battle ripples alone can erase us!”

Even the serpent-tongued beauty and the warrior clad in burning armor fled, abandoning their lifeless continents without a backward glance.

Yet before they vanished, they saw Qi Liuma emerge from his barren continent—alone, standing against the descending experts crowned with sacred treasures.

“What is he doing?”

“Trying to stop them single-handedly? Delusional!”

The beauty shook her head as if watching a fool, then shot away.

The flame-armored expert stared.

“This is the way of Nihility Heaven. The moment a high martial world is born, it becomes meat on the table for the others. Qi Liuma—your flesh and primordial spirit severed, half a foot in the grave—how can you change that?”

He sighed, shook his head, and glanced back at the ever-more radiant Five Phoenixes continent with naked envy.

To witness the birth of a high martial world was an honor, yet reality was cruel.

He had once watched Qi Liuma’s own high martial world collapse.

Those same experts were insatiable thieves.

They would carve up the newborn origin and enslave every talented cultivator.

With a final lament, he exploded into a streak of fire and vanished.

Qi Liuma intended to fight to the death. He would not.

He was already a wanderer—homeless, worldless, faithless.

In his eyes, Qi Liuma's fate was sealed.

Death.

...

Qi Liuma smiled.

His hunched back straightened slightly. Color returned to his withered frame.

His expression was strange—almost demonic—as he gazed at the brilliant figures crossing the void like blazing stars, murder leaking from his grin.

He did not bother hiding his killing intent.

“My friends,” he rasped, voice echoing through the emptiness, “must you be so ruthless? A high martial world is born in Nihility Heaven only once in eons. Why destroy it?”

The wanderers he ignored. The sealed Sons and Saintesses he ignored. Even their Spirit Severing guardians he dismissed.

But these high martial experts—he had no choice but to face them.

“You’re Qi Liuma?”

“So you’re still breathing. You couldn’t protect your own world—yet you stand in our way for another’s?”

One expert spoke from beneath the blinding light of his sacred treasure, voice dripping mockery.

They all knew Qi Liuma. Once, he had left Nihility Heaven, broken through to Body Integration, and earned the title of mighty one.

He returned dreaming of nurturing the only high martial world in Nihility Heaven.

It became the greatest joke.

The rules descended. His flesh and primordial spirit were severed. His world shattered. The nascent pseudo-high martial origin was carved up among them, fueling their own breakthroughs.

To them, Qi Liuma was nothing but a failure.

“Step aside,” one advised coolly. “Your life is already borrowed time. Don’t throw it away.”

Another sneered, “Block us? With what—your life?”

“Your Six Armor Array Sect is dead in all but name. Your precious disciples took the Nine Secret Words with them. Without the Nine Words, what do you have?”

Terrifying auras clashed and wove through the void, making reality tremble.

Their words rang clear, reaching every drifting continent. Mortals inside cowered as though gods argued overhead.

Qi Liuma only smiled.

“Nihilism Heaven needs a high martial world. The glory of the Great Emperor will shine again across the Nine Heavens.”

Word was his Six Armor Array Sect inherited the ancient Emperor Hao’s legacy. Now it was confirmed.

A pity—the emperor had fallen countless ages ago.

Boom!

Behind Qi Liuma, the transforming Five Phoenixes blazed with new splendor.

“Move. We’re short on time and have no interest in chatting.”

“If you survive this day, come visit our sects another time.”

The moment the words fell, sacred treasures flared.

One expert turned into a streak of light, sacred treasure blazing above him, charging straight at Qi Liuma.

He truly didn't see the half-dead man as a threat.

If Qi Liuma still possessed the Nine Secret Words, perhaps they would be wary.

Without them? He was nothing.

Qi Liuma's eyes narrowed. Deep within his pupils, vortices spun.

The instant the expert closed in—

The seemingly rotten log of a man moved.

Terrifying energy erupted from his withered frame. A skeletal hand rose.

Boom!

Void quaked violently.

Two radiant masses collided again and again.

The onlookers watched, certain of Qi Liuma's defeat.

They had carved up his world once. They would do it again.

A blood-curdling scream tore through the emptiness.

Energy ripples surged outward, shattering lesser continents into rivers of blood.

In the void, the charging expert's flesh had vanished completely—only his primordial spirit remained, fleeing beneath the protection of his sacred treasure.

A mass of bloody meat writhed in the distance.

Qi Liuma's withered body devoured it.

White, dead hair fell away; thick black strands grew in their place. Skin like old bark plumped and smoothed.

He had stolen another's flesh to replenish his own.

Qi Liuma threw his head back and laughed, hands behind his back, array patterns swirling around him.

“You court death!”

The remaining experts roared in fury.

Several streaks of light shot forward, intent on tearing him apart.

The fleshless primordial spirit fled Nihility Heaven in bitter resentment, glaring back from beyond the border—he wanted to watch Qi Liuma ripped limb from limb.

Not everyone attacked. A few cautious ones held back; a mysterious array master, even half-dead, still commanded wariness.

Qi Liuma laughed louder.

Flesh reborn, he charged forward and threw a punch.

Array master though he was, he fought with raw physical power.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Yet in the blink of an eye, his newly restored body exploded.

He was no match for their combined might.

Flesh shredded, arms detonated—he staggered backward through the void, every step spraying scalding blood.

“Will you truly trade your life to stop us?”

The watching experts wore complicated expressions.

But they saw he was at his limit.

So they attacked.

If he wished for death, they would grant it.

Dazzling radiance erupted.

In the darkness, the experts struck like blazing stars.

Void itself was punched full of holes.

Qi Liuma coughed blood. His body was ground into bloody mist once more.

Yet black hair tangled with gore danced around him.

BOOM!!!!

An explosion that should not exist in emptiness tore everything apart.

Spherical shockwaves radiated outward.

Countless low martial continents turned to ash. Mid martial worlds collapsed—mountains fell, rivers reversed.

Yet at the center of the blast—

Qi Liuma, flesh flying, threw his head back and laughed toward the heavens.

He looked toward Five Phoenixes.

In the distance, he seemed to see a figure in snow-white robes.

“Bearer of the Emperor’s bloodline... awakener of the ‘Lin’ Secret Word... forger of a true high martial world...”

“Young friend, our acquaintance is shallow, yet you are the hope of Nihility Heaven—the hope to restore Emperor Hao’s glory.”

“A newborn high martial world still needs time to mature. This old man will buy you that time with this broken body.”

“Hahaha...”

“Let me live to see the day a true high martial world rises in Nihility Heaven!”

His laughter rang with exhilaration, hope, and joy.

The next instant—

Rumble!

A terrifying pressure descended—the might of the rules themselves.

Qi Liuma's primordial spirit rose from the ruin of his flesh.

Array patterns blazed around him, as though they had always been etched into the void itself.

“Damn it! The old bastard laid a formation to trap us from the start!”

The experts paled.

Every single one who had been drawn here changed expressions.

The rules became blades, descending from the Ninth Heaven.

Slash after slash carved into Qi Liuma's primordial spirit.

With each cut, his spirit grew fainter—until only a faint silhouette remained.

“Madman!”

“You’ll scatter your soul forever—no rebirth, nothing!”

One expert roared in rage.

Because with every slice, the surrounding array patterns thrummed louder, devouring the power of the rules, growing ever more terrifying.

A true madman.

Using his own primordial spirit as bait to feed on heavenly rules and complete the formation.

He meant to drag them all down with him!

The unique nature of Nihility Heaven chilled their souls.

They tried to flee—streaks of brilliant meteors shooting across the void.

Fast.

But the formation was faster.

Boom!

Amid unwilling screams of despair...

A colossal golden triangular cauldron, woven from array patterns, sealed every last mighty expert within.

Chapter 382: System Upgrade

In the void.

Screams of rage and disbelief tore through the emptiness without pause.

Terrifying shockwaves rippled outward like tidal surges across an endless sea.

Far away, the fleeing wanderers nearly lost their minds. They stared at the colossal triangular cauldron suspended in the void—an artifact forged entirely from array patterns, radiating a majestic, oppressive aura.

“That’s the Myriad Pattern Cauldron?! The weapon of the ancient Emperor Hao recorded in the old texts?!”

The mighty one whose flesh had been stripped, now only a primordial spirit beyond the bounds of Nihility Heaven, felt his soul tremble.

But he quickly realized the truth.

“No... impossible. A half-crippled wreck like Qi Liuma could never wield an Emperor’s weapon!”

“It’s a fake—an imitation woven from array patterns!”

“Just a counterfeit!”

The surrounding wanderers slowed their frantic escape, gaping in stunned silence at the three-legged cauldron rooted immovably in the void.

Its three legs seemed hammered into reality itself. Even gazing upon it stung the eyes with profound mystery.

Within the cauldron, radiant lights burst in every direction—trapped mighty experts hammering desperately against the walls, yet unable to shatter the formation.

Qi Liuma had actually done it.

Alone, he had sealed away the great powers of multiple high martial worlds.

Many were speechless with shock.

Atop the cauldron sat Qi Liuma's mangled, blood-drenched body. His primordial spirit had been utterly extinguished, on the verge of complete dissipation.

He had drawn upon the rules of heaven and earth, sacrificed his spirit, and woven those rules into his array to birth the Myriad Pattern Cauldron—turning it into a cage that not even mighty ones could break.

The plan had been insane. One mistake, and he would have been doomed beyond redemption.

Yet he succeeded.

“What is he trying to achieve?”

“He trapped them, yes—but he can’t kill them. Sooner or later, they’ll break free!”

Some voices trembled with uncertainty.

“He’s buying time for the newborn high martial world,” another answered. “He wants it to grow stronger in the fortune of its ascension, to mature and solidify.”

“But what’s the point? Even if it reaches Ninth Tier high martial, once it loses the protection of world barriers, it won’t stand a chance against so many enraged mighty ones.”

The fleeing wanderers halted, gazing at the towering cauldron in awe.

Regardless, Qi Liuma had succeeded.

His primordial spirit was gone, carved away by the rules. His body withered into a corpse.

He sat cross-legged atop the cauldron like an ancient, mummified guardian, shrouded in the aura of death, facing the direction of the Five Phoenixes.

Some sighed in sorrow.

Once, Qi Liuma had been a peerless genius, radiant and proud.

What a pity...

His dream of forging a high martial world in Nihility Heaven had cost him everything.

The wanderers did not linger. They knew fiercer battles were coming. To stay was to court death.

A newly ascended high martial world was no longer something they could touch. To trespass now would be suicide.

The void fell deathly silent.

No more clamor.

Only the Myriad Pattern Cauldron stood solemnly, its lone withered guardian gazing eternally toward the Five Phoenixes, as if watching clouds gather and part.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Inside the cauldron, deafening impacts resounded.

The trapped mighty ones assaulted the walls with all their fury. Terrifying array patterns rippled in response, drawing blood from their strikes.

Their rage burned hotter than stars.

Beyond Nihility Heaven, the fleshless primordial spirit felt a chill of belated fear.

He had been lucky—only his body destroyed. Had he been sealed inside that nightmare formation, his suffering would have been endless.

“We need someone who can break this array,” he muttered to himself.

And who could break a formation of the Six Armor Array Sect, heirs to Emperor Hao?

Only those who inherited Qi Liuma's Nine Secret Words—his own disciples.

A glint flashed in the spirit's eyes.

“Then I'll drag those traitorous disciples here to undo their master's work.”

With a whisper, his primordial spirit streaked away like wind and vanished.

...

On the blood-colored battlefield, the crimson rain finally ceased.

Ni Chunqiu's red robes fluttered as she emerged from the Heaven-Covering Formation, standing amid swirling mist, gazing into the distance.

She saw the massive three-legged cauldron looming in the void.

All those terrifying auras from before... sealed within.

“That senior bought us time,” she murmured. “He imprisoned the invaders for our sake.”

Whoosh!

Du Longyang and Ye Shoudao rose into the air beside her.

The three had been at the Yang God Realm. Now, thanks to the ascension fortune, they stood half a step into the Primordial Spirit Unity Realm.

Their bodies blazed with divine light, like gods and demons reborn.

“We don’t know why he chose to shield us,” Du Longyang said gravely, “but there’s no doubt—he gave us breathing room.”

Despite their massive leaps in cultivation, none of them felt joy.

The pressure bearing down on them was suffocating.

The enemies were far stronger than any had imagined.

“The world has risen,” Ye Shoudao said coldly, his single arm swaying in the wind. “And now we’re the newcomers—targets for every predator.”

“That’s just how this world works,” Ni Chunqiu said. “If we want respect, we grow stronger. That’s the only way.”

Du Longyang and Ye Shoudao nodded. They understood all too well.

“Mighty ones of high martial worlds...” Du Longyang whispered, staring at the rumbling cauldron. “Primordial Spirit Unity Realm?”

He drew a deep breath, the weight crushing his chest.

The three turned toward the withered figure atop the cauldron and bowed solemnly in respect.

On the battlefield below, excitement still rippled through the ranks. Cultivators who had broken through cheered wildly.

They were stronger now. They had the power to fight.

Ni Chunqiu, Du Longyang, and Ye Shoudao descended and explained what Qi Liuma had done.

The celebration quieted. A heavy dread settled over everyone.

“No one knows how long that formation will hold,” Du Longyang said. “The moment it breaks, those enraged mighty ones will descend upon Five Phoenixes with hellfire.”

“That will be our true tribulation.”

Overlord, Nie Changqing, Kong Nanfei, and others opened their eyes, faces grim.

The pressure was palpable.

“Where is Young Master Lu?” someone asked.

“With him here, we could hold, right? He’s so powerful...”

The speaker was an old Heavenly Origin infant cultivator who had just broken into Yin Spirit Realm, face glowing with pride.

Ni Chunqiu shot him a sharp glare.

“And where do you think our fortune came from?” she snapped. “Brother Lu traded his life for it! If he’s not showing himself, he has his reasons—maybe he’s holding back something far worse!”

Du Longyang nodded. “Young Master Lu carries burdens we can’t even imagine. Those mighty ones... they came for him.”

“In the past, he protected us. Now, it’s our turn to protect him.”

Silence fell across the battlefield.

Ni Yu clutched her little fists, Little Yinglong lounging lazily on her head. She nodded fiercely, eyes shining.

Yes! The Young Master needs protecting too!

The scolded elder flushed with shame.

“This old one spoke out of turn.”

The tension eased, but the world’s transformation continued.

No one lingered long on the battlefield.

“Your Majesty, this general will lead the army and hold the line,” Jiang Li said, silver armor gleaming as he saluted Tantai Xuan.

Tantai Xuan opened his mouth, hesitated—he still feared total annihilation like before—but saw the resolve in Jiang Li’s eyes and sighed.

“Brother Jiang... if danger comes, preserve your life above all else. Only the living can fight on.”

“Understood!”

Jiang Li smiled.

He turned to the Xuanwu Guards and soldiers. “Who will stand with me?”

Weapons raised high, voices roared in unison.

Overlord’s massive frame loomed, demonic aura swirling.

“Where is my Xiang Family Army?!”

Roars answered. The soldiers stepped forward, eyes burning.

“Will you hold this battlefield with me?”

Xu Chu swung his spiked iron ball. Zhao Zixu’s eyes were red with grief and fury—many brothers had fallen.

Both were now at Infant Transformation, one step from Yin Spirit.

“Then stay. Follow General Jiang’s command.”

On the other side, Tang Xiansheng stood tall despite his age, supported by Tang Yimo.

He gave the order. The Southern Prefecture Army would also obey Jiang Li.

Jiang Li’s mastery of military formations could unite an army into a single unstoppable force—a strength they now desperately needed.

The crisis had only grown darker with ascension.

Peace was an illusion. Beneath the calm, doom loomed.

The moment that cauldron shattered, annihilation would follow.

“These enemies are crueler than the Five Barbarians ever were,” Tang Xiansheng said hoarsely. “This is a war of survival—against invaders from beyond the heavens. Defeat means not just death, but enslavement. Our nation destroyed, our people reduced to ash—that is the true nightmare.”

Tantai Xuan clenched his fists, voice trembling with rage.

“Damn it all!”

A new fortress rose on the blood-soaked plain—walls of crimson earth singing a silent dirge of war.

The others returned to the Five Phoenixes continent to cultivate.

The transformed world overflowed with spiritual energy. Everyone felt the change.

News of the returning warriors sparked joyous cheers across the land.

The common people didn't know the full truth. They only knew their heroes had returned alive.

Victory.

Overlord, Nie Changqing, and the others said nothing of the looming threat.

There was no need to spread panic.

In the Nine Prisons Secret Realm, many experts gathered briefly.

Most were now beyond Infant Realm and could no longer enter.

After circling the Dao Stele once, Overlord and the others left, crossing the vast sea to resume secluded cultivation within the immortal ruins.

Ni Chunqiu, Du Longyang, and Ye Shoudao sat before the steles, seeking deeper comprehension of Dao Intent—the only path left to greater power.

Tantai Xuan returned to the Great Xuan Palace to maintain order amid the world-shaking changes.

Pressure hung over every soul like a storm cloud.

After the horrors of the battlefield, everyone understood one truth:

Only strength mattered.

The ice pagoda imprisoning the Sons and Saintesses was pulled into the Five Phoenixes continent.

Their fate as prisoners was sealed.

...

Within the origin space.

Lu stared in faint surprise at the line of text appearing before his eyes.

[Congratulations, Host—World Ascension Assessment Complete...]

He had thought it would take much longer. Yet the moment he prepared to leave, the notification arrived.

Why now?

Seated in the Thousand-Blade Chair, finger tapping the armrest, countless lines danced across his pupils as he gazed outward.

He saw it.

In the void, array patterns linked across the heavens, forming the massive Myriad Pattern Cauldron.

Qi Liuma had sacrificed his primordial spirit, feeding the rules into the formation, granting the cauldron power not even mighty ones could overcome.

Every invader was sealed within.

Qi Liuma's spirit was annihilated. His broken body clung to life only by will, gazing toward Five Phoenixes... as if meeting Lu's eyes across the void.

Lu fell silent.

Was this why the assessment passed? Because Qi Liuma had shouldered the tribulation that should have fallen upon the world?

A long, heavy sigh escaped him.

He didn't fully understand Qi Liuma's desperation.

But Bu Nanxing had once mentioned the old man's past—his failed attempt to forge a high martial world, his dismemberment by the rules, his origin stolen and divided, his body and spirit broken, imprisoned on a dead continent.

Leaning back in his chair, white hair stirring in a gentle breeze that shouldn't exist, Lu's expression grew complex.

Perhaps the old man had placed all his remaining hope in Five Phoenixes.

Without it, Qi Liuma would have withered away in silence, carrying his dreams into the dust.

The successful ascension of the Five Phoenixes origin... in some way, it had fulfilled the old man's dying wish.

Just as emotion stirred in Lu's heart—

Another line of system text rolled across his vision.

[From the ground rises a tower ten thousand zhang tall. Congratulations, Host—Cultivation advanced to Qi Refinement Layer Six. Spiritual Energy Reserves: 1,000,000 strands...]

The long-awaited reward he had been craving finally arrived!

Qi Refinement Layer Six!

A smile tugged at Lu's lips, anticipation lighting his eyes.

What rewards would come this time?

But then—

A deafening roar exploded in his mind.

Like thunder—like a nuclear detonation within his skull.

The system text before him began to fade, dimming into scattered motes of colorful light.

[System Upgrading...]

Chapter 383: System Upgrade Complete — Qi Refinement Layer Six

“System upgrading...”

The line of text flashed once before Lu’s eyes, then vanished into utter silence.

No rewards. No follow-up. Just... nothing. Irresponsible as ever.

“An upgrade?”

Lu’s brow arched. This was a first.

He had never imagined that hitting one million strands of spiritual energy would trigger a full system overhaul.

He frowned, wondering what the new version would even look like.

“Fine, upgrade all you want—but couldn’t you at least hand out the high martial ascension rewards first?”

Lu shook his head and muttered under his breath.

The higher his Qi Refinement layer climbed, the less reliable this system seemed.

With a thought, he checked his condition.

Spiritual energy still responded perfectly. His combat strength had skyrocketed after the breakthrough—one casual punch now carried enough force to birth a terrifying energy storm.

Stepping into the sixth layer with a full million strands had triggered some indescribable metamorphosis.

Compared to before, he was leagues stronger.

“The Preaching Platform is offline...”

That surprised him. The platform he relied on for deductions had gone completely dark, severed from his perception.

Still, overall, the upgrade hadn't crippled him.

Then his brows knitted again.

Hum...

Divine sense surged out like a tidal wave, crushing the void itself with its pressure.

His consciousness had grown monstrously powerful—so much so that it could suppress even Primordial Spirit Unity experts.

“Still no primordial spirit after reaching layer six?”

During the origin fusion and the tribulation of rules, his brow had cracked open; his consciousness had nearly condensed into a true primordial spirit.

Yet he had always fallen just short of that qualitative leap.

Even now, at layer six, nothing.

“Is it because of the upgrade?”

Lu pondered, then relaxed. Maybe the upgrade would bring the change he needed.

He tapped the armrest of the Thousand-Blade Chair and decided to stay put, continuing his seclusion inside the origin space.

He observed the vortex-shaped origin swirling slowly. Now a high martial origin, its energy had become terrifyingly dense.

Suddenly, something caught his attention.

Threads of profound patterns wove through the vortex.

Power that resembled the rules themselves.

“Hm?”

“Grand Dao intents...”

Realization dawned.

Qi Liuma had once explained the strict grading of high martial worlds—from Ninth Tier to First Tier—based on the number of Grand Dao intents the origin could manifest.

“Three thousand” was just a figurative number.

Right now, the Five Phoenixes origin was actively deriving those intents.

One after another, brilliant and gorgeous, they streaked across the darkness like meteors.

“Twenty-nine in total...”

Lu chuckled.

Not many, but not few either. Only twenty-nine people in the entire world had comprehended a Dao intent.

“That puts us at Eighth Tier high martial.”

A bit disappointing.

Yet every single intent was exceptionally strong—Overlord’s even reached third-sequence.

In terms of quality, no ordinary Eighth Tier world could compare.

Lu didn’t dwell on the ranking.

He retrieved the Spiritual Pressure Chessboard from his spatial ring and began placing pieces, idly constructing formations.

Who knew how long the upgrade would take? Rushing wouldn’t help.

Ten days passed in a flash.

On the tenth day, as he arranged a Yin-Yang game, his mind stirred.

A familiar line appeared.

“System upgrade complete. View now?”

Finally.

Lu swept away the floating pieces with a flick of his sleeve, storing them neatly in the box.

Only then did he leisurely inspect the new interface.

Host: Lu

Title: Qi Refiner (Permanent)

Qi Refinement Layer: 6

Spiritual Energy Reserves: 1,521,060 / 10,000,000 strands

Primordial Spirit Power: 99 (yuan)

Chaos Power: 29 (he)

World Rating: Five Phoenixes Small World [High Martial]

Mysterious Qi Refinement: (1,521,060 / 0 strands)

Permissions: [Preaching Platform (Upgraded)], [Spiritual Energy Distribution (Upgraded)]

Lu stared, momentarily stunned.

The panel had changed—simplified, stripped of clutter.

The Dao was simplest at its core.

His title remained “Qi Refiner (Permanent)” —he was never escaping that label, and honestly, he didn’t want to.

His goal was one hundred layers of Qi Refinement. Anything else would be boring.

The old cultivation technique column had become a function: Mysterious Qi Refinement allowed him to manually compress and refine his existing spiritual energy, pushing its intensity far beyond the system's previous automatic limits.

Soul and physique stats were gone, replaced by something that made his breath catch:

Primordial Spirit Power and Chaos Power.

He inhaled sharply, expression turning grave.

The upgrade had finally evolved his consciousness into a true primordial spirit.

That was expected.

What shocked him was the Chaos Power entry.

"Is this the Chaos I think it is?"

His expression turned odd.

He had once used chaos force to forge the Heaven-Covering Sword—its quality and destructive might had far surpassed origin power.

“29 he... exactly the same as the twenty-nine Dao intents. Coincidence?”

Lu narrowed his eyes.

One derived Dao intent, one unit of chaos power?

Leaning back in the chair, he fell into thought.

The appearance of chaos power shocked him more than anything else.

All the old bloodline entries—ancient demon, immortal, etc.—had vanished.

Not truly gone; they had fully assimilated into his body.

He could feel it—his physique had transformed.

A single drop of blood could collapse the void.

His gaze shifted to the world rating.

Five Phoenixes Small World [High Martial]!

His lips curved upward uncontrollably.

From low martial to high martial—what a surreal journey.

Pride and accomplishment swelled in his chest.

“We really did it...”

He shook his head with a wistful smile.

The weak little world of yesterday was now the sole high martial realm in all of Nihility Heaven.

The [Missions] tab was completely gone—only the upgraded Preaching Platform and Spiritual Energy Distribution remained.

Lu didn't check the permissions yet.

Though many old features like the Myriad Law Furnace had disappeared from the main panel, he could still sense and summon them at will.

He waited.

After a long moment, the prompt he had been craving finally arrived.

“From the ground rises a tower ten thousand zhang tall. Congratulations, Host, on reaching Qi Refinement Layer Six. Keep striving—life never stops, neither does Qi Refinement.”

“Rewards: Phoenix Feather Sword ×1 (Final), Phoenix Feather Sword Soul ×1, Random Divine Medicine Seed ×1, Indestructible Demon Body (Fragment) ×1, Token ×1.”

Lu's breathing quickened.

At last.

His eyes narrowed as he scanned the list.

The final Phoenix Feather Sword—complete with a dramatic “(Final)” tag, like the grand finale of a novel.

Then the sword soul.

A random divine medicine seed—upgraded from the old random plant seeds.

Divine medicine!

Even the previous heavenly chrysanthemums had just been fancy weeds. This was on another level entirely.

The next two made his eyes shine.

Indestructible Demon Body (Fragment).

Even with this new piece, it still wasn't complete.

And finally—the mysterious token.

With a thought, it appeared in his palm.

Plain rough iron, ancient and rusted, bearing no markings or aura he could detect.

He played with it for a while, then stored it away.

Buzz...

He fused the new demon body fragment.

Demonic energy erupted like a tidal wave. The Thousand-Blade Chair exploded into silver shards.

Lu stood.

Uncontrollable demonic qi poured out, turning his white robes pitch black—as though they devoured light itself. He became a walking void, exuding terrifying pressure.

“So strong...”

He exhaled sharply.

The raw physical power coursing through him was intoxicating. One punch could shatter a world.

He could barely rein in the demonic qi. Force it down, and the demon body's strength plummeted.

The Indestructible Demon Body demanded freedom—it refused to be caged.

The surging qi even tinged his eyes crimson, birthing an urge to destroy everything.

“Return.”

He raised a hand and slowly clenched his fist.

Clang, clang, clang!

Silver blades tainted with demonic qi danced wildly, then reassembled behind him into the Thousand-Blade Chair.

Lu sat—every inch of the motion laborious.

The moment he was seated, the demonic qi subsided.

Before, he could stand and move freely.

Now, if he stood, the demonic qi would spiral out of control, maddening anything it touched.

Seated, he was an immortal in white.

Standing, a demon in black.

He shook his head with a wry smile.

“This is literally ‘sit like a sage, stand like a devil.’”

Even this incomplete version was tyrannical beyond reason.

A sudden inspiration struck.

“Now that we’re high martial... maybe I can start creating special physiques.”

Saintly physiques, rainbow divine bodies, overlord physiques...

The possibilities made him grin.

With a flick of his fingers, the original eight Phoenix Feather Swords shot out, weaving crimson fire across the sky, scorching the void.

He flicked again.

The ninth and final sword streaked forth and fused with its siblings.

BOOM!

The resulting shockwave nearly cracked the origin space.

Incredible presence!

Then—a proud, disdainful cry echoed in his mind, lofty and aloof.

Lu frowned.

“Phoenix Feather Sword Soul?”

In his soul space, he saw her—no physical form, yet her aura filled the entire realm.

Sensing his gaze, she radiated arrogance.

“Lowly sword master...”

A clear, slightly childish voice rang out.

Lu, seated calmly, tilted his head.

Lowly?

Smack!

He slapped both armrests and slowly stood.

Demonic qi detonated like a nuclear blast.

“Daddy Sword Master!”

The freshly awakened sword soul instantly changed her tune.

Zero integrity.

“Enter the sword.”

Lu sat again, demonic qi vanishing.

The nine swords merged into one. The soul poured inside.

The phoenix-eye ornament on the hilt blazed with blinding light.

[Phoenix Feather Sword (Complete): Lower Heaven-Tier Spiritual Treasure. Limitless might. Can breathe True Phoenix Flame capable of incinerating all things.]

Lu glanced at the description, still annoyed about the “lowly” comment.

“Only Lower Heaven-Tier, and you’re already this cocky?”

Phoenix Feather Sword: “...”

It didn’t dare speak.

This sword master was a little scary.

With a flick, the sword split back into nine blades and merged into the Thousand-Blade Chair.

The sword soul quietly settled into the wheelchair.

Phoenix Feather Sword: “...”

I’m the soul of a Heaven-Tier sword, not a damn wheelchair accessory!

But she didn't dare protest.

She said nothing at all.

...

Outside Nihility Heaven.

A sonic boom tore through the void.

Several figures arrived atop surging energy, gazing into the emptiness.

They saw the massive cauldron floating within, crushing space itself with its presence.

"Eighteen mighty ones from various high martial worlds... all sealed inside that cauldron?"

"The Myriad Pattern Cauldron—Emperor Hao's weapon. Even an array-formed imitation wields supreme power."

A black-robed figure chuckled lightly.

Beside him stood the pale-faced expert whose flesh Qi Liuma had devoured, eyes filled with wariness.

“Qi Liuma is at the end of his rope. The moment the array breaks, he dies. As his prized disciple, you know this formation best. Breaking it... is up to you.”

The black-robed figure remained silent.

Nearby, a beautifully dressed woman in palace robes stared coldly.

“My children are trapped inside that newborn high martial world. A measly new Ninth Tier dares imprison my bloodline? This world will pay.”

The pale man glanced at her fearfully, then flattered, “With the Holy Lord’s wife herself here, a mere newborn high martial realm is doomed. It hasn’t even been registered in the High Martial Records yet—do whatever you wish, Madam.”

The woman’s gorgeous face twisted with killing intent as she snorted.

A Seventh Tier high martial sacred ground’s Holy Lord’s wife—though not the Holy Lord himself, her presence alone was horrifying.

Even peak Qi Liuma, without all Nine Secret Words united, would have been no match.

This world... was finished.

The only downside: there would be less origin to go around.

“Master Zuo Xu, begin,” the woman said coldly to the black-robed man. “You are an array master under my Black-White Sacred Ground. I trust you know where your duty lies.”

Her palace robes fluttered. A black-and-white gem on her slender neck radiated thick yin-yang qi.

She stepped into Nihility Heaven.

BOOM!

The gem shielded her from the rules. She shot forward like a streak of light and appeared before the cauldron.

Cold laughter escaped her lips.

Her aura exploded. The pendant blazed brighter.

Primordial spirit pressure surged skyward.

With one step, she actually crossed over the cauldron itself.

Pfft!

Her face paled; her elegant bun came undone.

“Well played, Qi Liuma...”

Forcing her way past the formation had wounded her—and even lightly damaged her primordial spirit.

She glanced back once at the cauldron, then stepped across the void and appeared outside the Five Phoenixes continent.

BOOM!

Terrifying pressure descended.

The entire world trembled.

On the blood-colored battlefield, Jiang Li in silver armor snapped his head up, battle intent blazing like fire.

“The enemy... has come!”

Meanwhile, the pale man led the black-robed Zuo Xu to the front of the cauldron.

Truthfully, he didn't want to break the array—once freed, those eighteen mighty ones would claim most of the origin.

But without breaking it, he couldn't bypass Qi Liuma's formation.

And without bypassing it, he couldn't touch the newborn high martial origin.

So despite his reluctance, he had dragged Qi Liuma's own disciple here.

Array patterns swirled around Zuo Xu.

He lifted a hand and pulled back his hood, revealing a handsome face.

He looked at the withered old man seated atop the cauldron and smiled faintly.

“Long time no see, Master.”

Chapter 384: My Friend, Are You Also Here for the Fortune?

The blood-colored battlefield was shrouded in a heavy, oppressive silence that made every breath feel labored.

Jiang Li stood atop a mound of crimson earth, silver armor gleaming dully. One hand rested on the hilt of his sword planted in the ground; his tattered scarlet cloak fluttered behind him like a banner of defiance.

There was killing intent in the air, but also a tragic grandeur.

Yet his expression remained calm. He had chosen to guard this battlefield—he had long prepared himself for what was coming.

High above, amid drifting mist, a palace-robed woman hovered in silence.

Jiang Li met her gaze and felt an instinctive terror coil in his gut, the kind that only came from an insurmountable gap in power.

He bit his lip until it bled. The sharp tang of iron filled his mouth and cleared his vision. The fear vanished.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

War drums thundered from within the fortress.

“Prepare for battle!”

Jiang Li’s roar rolled across the plain like a tidal wave.

Roar!

The gates groaned open.

The clank of armor and the disciplined stomp of boots echoed as one.

Three thousand Xuanwu Guards.

Three thousand Xiang Family troops.

Three thousand Southern Prefecture soldiers.

Plus one thousand Heavenly Origin cultivators.

Ten thousand warriors poured out and formed ranks on the blood-soaked plain, spears leveled, battle intent blazing.

Outside the void, the woman's pendant glowed softly, shielding her from Nihility Heaven's rules. A priceless sacred-tier treasure.

She glanced down at the army arrayed before her and sneered in disdain.

"Ants."

To a Body Integration mighty one, Jiang Li was merely Infant Transformation. Even the strongest behind him—Xu Chu, Zhao Zixu—were only Golden Core or Foundation Establishment.

No matter how many, they were insects she could crush with a wave of her hand.

In the cultivation world, strength was absolute. Cruel, but absolute.

“My children’s soul tablets remain intact. They live—imprisoned somewhere in this world...”

Her eyes turned icy.

Those were her precious darlings. She had sent them to plunder the fortune of this newborn high martial world, armed with sacred treasures.

Yet disaster had struck.

“Damn them all!”

“If a single hair on their heads is harmed, I will slaughter every living soul on this continent!”

Murder blazed in her gaze.

Boom!

She moved.

Like a meteor, she plunged toward the Five Phoenixes.

Her pendant could only shield her for so long. She had to act fast.

The Heaven-Covering Formation activated. Mist billowed, turning into an impenetrable fog.

Array patterns writhed like great fish, slamming against her from every direction.

Though they lacked killing power, they frustrated her to the point of spitting blood.

“An Earth-tier formation?!”

“That damned old Qi Liuma!”

Fury exploded within her. She struck out wildly, only to be hurled backward by the rebound.

On the battlefield, Jiang Li exhaled in relief.

“This woman must be the ‘great power’ those Sons and Saintesses spoke of.”

In the distance, Lu Jiulian stood quietly in his green lotus robes.

After the world’s transformation, Lu Jiulian had become even more unfathomable.

“No need to worry,” he said calmly. “The stronger they are, the more restrictions they face. She is powerful, but if she forces her way onto the battlefield, the backlash will be severe.”

“If she stays outside—fine. If she descends... perfect. I’ve been itching for a real fight.”

He smiled at Jiang Li, bright and sunny.

“General Jiang, I’ve always been curious about military formations. Mind if I borrow your army for a test?”

Jiang Li blinked, then felt a spark of excitement.

Even against such a terrifying foe, Lu Jiulian remained utterly composed.

What a monster.

And what a terrifying talent—no bottlenecks, as though the heavens themselves cleared his path.

Borrow the army?

Jiang Li's eyes gleamed.

Boom!

The mist parted as if swept aside by an invisible hand.

The woman blazed with radiant light, beautiful and deadly as a charmed star.

She raised a jade tablet containing a wisp of her children's soul signatures.

First—locate them.

The tablet shattered. Two beams of light shot skyward, piercing straight into the Five Phoenixes continent.

Over the Boundless Sea.

The calm surface suddenly churned.

Outside the floating ice pagoda, the Infant Transformation guards felt their hearts seize.

“Quick! Inform the City Lord!”

One shot toward Martial Emperor City, parting the sea in his wake.

Inside the pagoda—

The despairing Sons and Saintesses jolted.

The burly holy son opened his eyes; twin beams of sharp light locked onto the golden boy and jade girl.

Two jade tablets rose from their bodies, shattered, and sent soul signatures soaring through the tower's seal, tearing the clouds apart.

The golden boy and jade girl—who had been slumped lifelessly on their black-and-white crane—froze, then erupted into ecstatic tears.

“Mother! It's Mother!”

They flew to the top of the tower, pressing their faces against the ice.

“Mother's coming to save us!”

Within the pagoda, a faint projection formed.

The palace-robed woman floated in the void, her pendant glowing azure.

“It really is the Holy Consort of Black-White Sacred Ground...”

Even the drooping immortal crane lifted its head.

“The Holy Consort is a mighty one. With her here, we’re saved...”

“And if I recall correctly, one of Black-White Sacred Ground’s elders is Qi Liuma’s own disciple—a master of the Nine Secret Words.”

Hope reignited in every captive heart.

...

In the void.

Joy flashed across the woman’s face.

Her gaze pierced the battlefield, through mountains and rivers, locking onto the ice pagoda floating above the Boundless Sea.

“My babies are inside!”

“Mother is here!”

She took a deep breath.

“The world’s protective barrier hasn’t fully dissipated yet. Ideally, I should wait... but I can’t!”

Fear gripped her—if the natives harmed her children while she hesitated, she would never forgive herself.

Those twins were her greatest treasure—and the reason the Holy Lord doted on her.

She opened cherry lips and spat out a tiny black sword resting on her tongue.

Whoosh!

The sword shot forth, expanding into a colossal blade that tore the sky.

BOOM!

The Heaven-Covering Formation shuddered violently.

On the battlefield, winds howled and the earth cracked.

The black greatsword plunged down, carving a miles-long chasm.

Jiang Li paled, cold sweat beading on his brow.

Even through the formation, a single strike carried such devastation.

This was the power of a mighty one.

Terrifying.

Lu Jiulian's eyes gleamed.

"A sacred-tier weapon—Earth-tier high-grade, at least."

He laughed lightly, hair whipping in the wind, and shot toward the descending sword.

"You—"

Jiang Li's expression changed. He feared Lu Jiulian was courting death.

But seeing the eager tremble in the man's back, he understood the hunger for battle and did not stop him.

Instead, he raised a fist.

"Form ranks!"

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Drums thundered.

Ten days of refinement had perfected Jiang Li's formations. The army moved as one organism.

Ten thousand cultivators—weakest at Body Storage Realm—charged.

Xu Chu led the vanguard, swinging his spiked iron ball.

Beside him, Zhao Zixu gripped his spear, face cold.

He stared at Lu Jiulian's back with complicated emotions.

Once, they had been peers.

Now, Lu Jiulian was a mountain he could only look up to.

"I'm not jealous. The stronger you are, the safer Five Phoenixes will be. You fight—I'll back you up!"

Zhao Zixu grinned.

BOOM!

The army's collective aura surged, condensing into a terrifying wave of bloodlust and righteous qi that poured into Lu Jiulian at the front.

Lu Jiulian's body shuddered.

He glanced back—ten thousand strands of will braided into a single rope.

A smile curved his lips.

He stepped before the black greatsword.

Lotuses bloomed beneath his feet with every step.

BOOM!

He threw a punch.

The colossal sword was sent flying back toward the void.

In the emptiness, the woman was still marveling at the formation's resilience when her own sword came hurtling back.

And behind it walked a figure in green lotus robes, stepping calmly out of the array.

"Courting death!"

Cold fury flashed across her beautiful face.

“If you hid inside the formation, I might have let you live. But you dare step out?”

“Then die—and vent my anger for my imprisoned children!”

She seized the returning sword.

Demonic beauty twisted into a sneer.

Lu Jiulian ascended step by step on blooming lotuses, eyes blazing.

Righteous qi exploded around him.

His Yang God hovered above his head, sweeping the void with overwhelming presence.

Behind him, the blood-colored will of ten thousand warriors coalesced into a towering phantom that merged with his aura.

...

In the origin space.

Lu, fresh from his system upgrade, narrowed his eyes.

He sensed the disturbance outside.

The woman intrigued him.

“Nice gear. Far better than those eighteen trapped in the cauldron.”

Whether the pendant or the black sword, both were far beyond ordinary Earth-tier treasures.

“Lord Sword Master, shall we strike? With your power guiding me, one slash would kill her! Seventy percent chance!”

The Phoenix Feather Sword Soul vibrated excitedly beneath his seat—she had become very humble after meeting her temperamental owner.

Lu tapped the armrest.

“Fair point. Once the world’s protective barrier fully fades, more trouble will come. Might as well clean house early.”

The sword soul practically cheered.

But just as Lu prepared to move—

His gaze condensed.

Threads danced across his pupils.

He saw Lu Jiulian, carrying the will of ten thousand soldiers, striding out like a war god to meet the Body Integration expert without fear.

“You want to fight?”

Lu smiled, eyes gleaming with interest.

Yang God Realm versus Primordial Spirit Unity Realm.

Now that's exciting.

"Sword Master! Let's go!"

The sword soul quivered eagerly.

"Shut up."

Lu propped his chin lazily.

Phoenix Feather Sword Soul: "..."

What happened to fighting?

Men's words are lies!

Lu ignored the sulking sword soul—he still hadn't forgiven her for calling him "lowly."

If Lu Jiulian wanted battle, let him have it.

So Lu shifted his attention elsewhere.

Something far more interesting had caught his eye.

“Qi Liuma’s disciple...”

A smile tugged at his lips.

According to Bu Nanxing, those disciples had all been plants from high martial sacred grounds, sent to steal the Nine Secret Words and tear the Six Armor Array Sect apart.

No wonder Qi Liuma’s life was so tragic.

His dream of creating a high martial world—shattered.

His sect—dismantled.

Yet the old man had endured on that dead continent, clinging to a faint, impossible hope.

Perhaps Lu should do something for him.

...

“This is the Myriad Pattern Cauldron,” Zuo Xu explained, hands clasped behind his back. “Master derived it from ancient sect records. It cannot fully replicate the ancient Emperor’s weapon, but combined with Nihility Heaven’s rules, trapping these mighty ones is child’s play.”

The pale expert smiled. “Then, Master Zuo—can you break it?”

“Without breaking it, we cannot descend. And if we delay, the Black-White Holy Consort might claim the entire origin for herself...”

Zuo Xu glanced at him and chuckled coldly.

“Difficult. Any other array master would be helpless. Among my fellow disciples, only three could break this—Eldest Brother, Sixth Junior Brother, and me.”

The pale expert’s eyes flickered, but he said nothing.

Zuo Xu paid him no mind and sighed softly.

“Master... why couldn't you just live out your days in peace? Why force yourself into eternal damnation?”

After a long moment, he raised his hand. His black robes billowed.

His eyes blazed.

Array patterns emerged around him, clashing like steel on steel.

“Ha!”

He shouted.

A secret word slowly materialized above his head.

The pale expert retreated, heart pounding with awe and envy.

“The ‘Assemble’ Secret Word of the Nine Secret Words!”

Anything tied to the ancient Emperor Hao was extraordinary.

BOOM!

Deafening rumbles shook the void.

Zuo Xu focused entirely on the cauldron, the word above him glowing brighter.

The pale expert backed away further.

Suddenly, his body stiffened.

Unnoticed, a figure had appeared behind him.

White robes purer than snow. A youth seated calmly in a wheelchair of a thousand blades.

“?”

No aura at all—yet able to stand in Nihility Heaven. No ordinary person.

“Another mighty one drawn by the newborn high martial origin?”

Competition was growing fierce.

But the pale expert rolled his eyes and put on a friendly smile.

“My friend, you’re here for this world’s newborn high martial fortune too, aren’t you?”

Lu blinked—This guy doesn’t recognize me?

He returned an equally warm, sincere smile.

“Indeed.”

“What a coincidence.”

Chapter 385: Lu Jiulian’s Dao Intent

Five Phoenixes Continent.

Three overwhelming auras suddenly flared to life, as if a storm were about to crush the heavens. The oppressive pressure spread across the entire sky.

It was divine sense refined to its utmost limit—one step away from condensing into a true primordial spirit.

Du Longyang, Ye Shoudao, and Ni Chunqiu snapped out of their comprehension before the Dao Stele. Their energies surged as they rose into the void and stared toward the blood-colored battlefield.

“Another enemy.”

Ni Chunqiu, red robes fluttering, spoke gravely.

Du Longyang nodded solemnly. Ye Shoudao’s single arm whipped in the wind; thin lips pressed tight, he did not hesitate—he slung the long blade Gongshu Yu had forged across his back and shot toward the battlefield.

Ni Chunqiu and Du Longyang followed without a word, streaking toward Heaven’s Gate.

In the Northern Prefecture, Tantai Xuan was reviewing memorials when he suddenly shivered. He looked toward the battlefield, worry creasing his brow.

“Old Jiang... you have to survive.”

Mo Beike and Mo Ju entered the hall.

“Your Majesty, do not worry. The man who single-handedly pioneered military formations will not fall so easily,” Mo Beike said with a chuckle, his aged face trembling slightly.

The world’s transformation had breathed new life into him.

“Let’s hope so.”

Tantai Xuan set down the scroll, hands clasped behind his back, and walked slowly to the palace corridor.

Snow fell from the sky, carrying a faint scent of blood.

A flake landed on his palm and melted.

His gaze grew distant.

Though the world had ascended, the shadow of doom still hung over everything—suffocating, despairing.

“Your Majesty, these are the latest reports of anomalies across the realm.”

“Mountain folk accidentally ate rare spirit fruits and broke into Body Storage Realm with a single thought...”

Mo Ju placed the scrolls on the desk.

“This ascension is different from before. The Great Xuan Academies report that countless geniuses have emerged. Some bathed in the spiritual rain and entered Body Storage without ever cultivating. The most monstrous directly reached Body Storage perfection—one step from Golden Core or Heavenlock.”

Mo Beike continued summarizing the changes.

After a long silence, Tantai Xuan sighed.

“The best of times.”

The hall fell quiet.

The age when immortal destiny rained upon the land.

Outside Wolong Ridge, at the Nine Phoenix Institute.

Bai Qingniao leaned against the fence. Nine phoenix chicks bounced and played on the ground.

The Nine Phoenix Transformation circulated slowly in her mind. Vast energy shrouded the entire institute; the spiritual rain had triggered a massive evolution in her chicks.

Little Phoenix One grew ever more majestic. Still chick-sized, but once transformed, it could spit tri-colored flames capable of scorching the void.

“Little Phoenix One, Two, Three... Little Phoenix Nine—hurry and grow strong so I can take you to war.”

“If any of you slack off, the slowest will be plucked and turned into soup!”

Bai Qingniao propped her chin, scattering grain mixed with spirit stone dust.

The newest chick, Little Phoenix Nine, wobbled as it walked. Hearing her threat, it slipped and landed on its rear, staring blankly at its siblings.

BOOM!

The distant thunder in the sky made Bai Qingniao's face tighten. She looked up, gaze piercing the clouds toward the blood-colored battlefield.

"Uncle Jiang... come back alive."

"I'll have chicken soup ready for your triumphant return!"

She clenched her fists.

...

Blood-colored battlefield.

Ten thousand cultivators stood in perfect formation, their collective spirit braided into a single rope that poured into Lu Jiulian.

His aura climbed relentlessly.

Step by step, he walked the void. Energy lotuses bloomed beneath his feet.

“A mere Spirit Severing dares court death?!”

The palace-robed woman stared at the advancing Lu Jiulian with cold disdain.

Spirit Severing meant nothing to her. She was early-stage Body Integration—primordial spirit born, an entirely higher plane. Add her sacred treasures, and even peers feared her.

One move. She was certain one move would end him.

She gripped the Black Heaven Sword, one half of Black-White Sacred Ground’s supreme sacred pair. Its annihilation power was far beyond what Spirit Severing could withstand.

“Kneel.”

Her primordial spirit erupted like a storm. The azure pendant spun, shielding her from Nihility Heaven’s rules.

BOed to crush Lu Jiulian beneath her spirit pressure.

Lu Julian gritted his teeth. The weight was immense.

Primordial spirit power.

Yin Spirit → Yang Spirit → Primordial Unity.

This woman was Primordial Unity.

He refused to buckle.

Behind him, the will of ten thousand soldiers formed a towering war god phantom.

BOOM!

He withstood it.

Step by step, he advanced as if stomping craters into the void.

Power surged through him like a raging river.

“This... is the Dao of Military Formations!”

Wonder flashed in Lu Jiulian’s eyes.

Jiang Li’s path was truly extraordinary.

“Fight!”

He roared and threw a punch. A lotus of pure force bloomed—perfect compression.

“Die!”

The woman was startled that her spirit pressure failed.

No wonder so many holy children had stumbled here—this world birthed true monsters!

Black Heaven Sword swept out. Annihilation sword light tore reality.

Lotuses shattered.

Lu Jiulian coughed blood, staggering.

Crossing realms was brutal.

Even with perfect control and Yang God Realm, the gap to Primordial Unity was a chasm.

He clenched his jaw and met the sword light with disciplined fists.

Behind him, the war god phantom overlapped with his own figure.

He had once been lost.

His cultivation had soared without bottleneck—he seemed born for the Dao.

Yet something always felt missing.

He wanted perfection at every realm.

The more he chased it, the more flaws he sensed.

Now, using the world ascension, he had stepped into Yang God. His mastery seemed innate and flawless.

But he refused to believe he was perfect.

No one was born perfect.

He would find his flaws in true battle.

“This power...”

The woman’s heart trembled as her sword light dispersed.

Blood sprayed from Lu Jiulian, yet his eyes burned brighter.

He was using her as a whetstone.

“Using me to temper yourself?”

She laughed coldly.

An ant dared treat her as a grindstone?

Killing intent flooded her heart.

Before, she had only wanted to vent anger.

Now, she needed him dead. A monster like this on the enemy side could not be allowed to live.

Her pendant spun faster.

Black sword light slashed endlessly, shattering the void.

Wounds multiplied across Lu Jiulian’s body.

Her primordial spirit assaulted his consciousness, trying to crush it.

Ni Chunqiu, Du Longyang, and Ye Shoudao arrived on the battlefield.

They watched in stunned silence as Jiang Li's formation fused ten thousand warriors into one will that flowed into Lu Jiulian.

They did not interfere.

Even as Lu Jiulian bled with every step.

They saw it—he was forging himself against a mighty one.

“Madman.”

Ye Shoudao's evaluation.

The other two said nothing, eyes complicated.

BOOM!

Sword light formed a storm of silent annihilation.

Lu Jiulian clenched his fist.

Energy condensed perfectly—no leakage.

Such control chilled even the woman.

“I must kill him... or I’ll never sleep soundly again!”

She no longer held back.

Brilliant light flashed.

Her palace robes were replaced by gossamer sacred armor—mid-grade Earth-tier!

Another treasure!

Lu Jiulian’s blood-smearred face twisted.

“Mighty ones are even tougher than I thought...”

She became a streak of light—too fast to track.

In an instant, she appeared at his side.

“One move to end you.”

She had no time to waste. Her pendant’s energy was draining.

At first, she had thought Spirit Severing beneath notice.

But this monster, bolstered by ten thousand ants, had withstood her.

“Die!”

Killing intent surged.

Her armor blazed with seven-colored light.

Black Heaven Sword carried her sixth-sequence Dao Intent!

Even among mighty ones, that strike could slay peers.

On the battlefield, Du Longyang and the others paled.

“We’re too late...”

“She’s too strong!”

They prepared to intervene, though they knew their half-step Primordial Unity power might not be enough.

Zhao Zixu coughed blood, eyes red.

Xu Chu roared on one knee.

Jiang Li leaned on his sword, trembling, blood seeping from eyes, nose, and mouth.

Yet he stared unblinking at the void.

Death closed in on Lu Jiulian.

Cold sweat poured.

The enemy was too strong—primordial spirit amplification, endless sacred treasures, sixth-sequence Dao Intent.

Unbeatable.

The war god phantom shattered.

On the battlefield, soldiers coughed blood; some collapsed lifeless.

Lu Jiulian's eyes bled with regret.

Why had he been so arrogant?

He had killed so many with his recklessness!

His heart bled.

“Why... do I have no Dao Intent?!”

For the first time, he felt powerless.

If he had Dao Intent, he could still fight!

“An ant like you deserves Dao Intent?”

The woman sneered.

Her sword fell.

The void collapsed under the pressure. With her Dao Intent, it seemed the sword would bisect Lu Jiulian and the entire battlefield.

Inside the ice pagoda above the Boundless Sea—

The golden boy and jade girl laughed maniacally.

“This idiot thought he could challenge Mother?!”

“Mother is a mighty one!”

Even the burly holy son shook his head.

Lu Jiulian was dead.

“Why... no Dao Intent?!”

Blood rained—remnants of the shattered war god phantom.

It splashed across Lu Jiulian’s face like the blood of fallen soldiers.

He fell into despair.

Lost.

For the first time since he began cultivating, he met a wall.

He teetered on the abyss.

“Bad... Jiulian’s mind is collapsing!”

Jiang Li closed one eye, blood streaming down.

...

Hm?

In the void.

Lu Fan, white robes spotless, chatting amiably with the pale, kidney-deficient mighty one, raised a brow.

He looked past the Myriad Pattern Cauldron.

“Heh... the natives got arrogant. Overestimating themselves.”

“The Holy Consort bore the Holy Lord twins and was gifted countless sacred treasures. Even mid-stage Body Integration experts may not be her match.”

“Where did this kid get the courage?”

“One move—he’s dead.”

The pale expert laughed, commenting while Zuo Xu worked on the array.

Lu Fan glanced at him.

He could feel Lu Jiulian’s despair—the first time the man had ever come so close to breaking.

“To grow stronger, one must first go mad?”

Lu Fan tapped his armrest.

“You want Dao Intent?”

“Then I’ll give it to you.”

Lu Jiulian had never comprehended Dao Intent for a simple reason:

He was born with it.

And not just any—it was extraordinary.

Lu Fan’s mind stirred.

Lines crossed his pupils.

A gentle breeze seemed to pass.

The pale expert shivered for no reason and glanced around.

...

In the midst of battle.

Lu Jiulian's body shook.

The Black Heaven Sword was a hair's breadth from his neck.

Every hair stood like steel needles.

Stars exploded in his mind. Every cell awakened with unimaginable power.

Everything could be destroyed—and reborn.

“Dao Intent...”

His vacant eyes snapped into focus.

Pfft!

Blood sprayed.

The sword carved through half his torso, nearly bisecting him.

Yet the woman's expression changed!

"This..."

Her pupils contracted.

Her sacred high-grade sword—infused with Dao Intent—had been caught!

By a bare, bloody hand.

"How?!"

She was horrified.

A monster!

This was Spirit Severing?!

Lu Jiulian turned.

Terror churned in his eyes.

His divine sense became an ocean vortex.

“Dao Intent...”

“I have it too.”

His voice was hoarse.

“Third-sequence...”

“Annihilation.”

BOOM!

The scattered blood reversed course and blossomed into a crimson lotus in the void!

Lu Jiulian seized the sword embedded in his body with one hand.

With the other—he punched.

The woman could not dodge.

BOOM!

Her sacred armor exploded.

The fist sank deep into her abdomen.

Pfft!

She released the sword. Her body burst into blood mist, flung through the void.

Her primordial spirit trembled; her Dao Intent shattered.

She coughed blood, eyes wide with horror.

Top-grade... third-sequence Dao Intent?!

Crack!

A fracture spider-webbed across her azure pendant.

The blood-colored battlefield fell deathly silent.

Everyone stared in shock.

Inside the ice pagoda—

The twins' laughter died as if strangled.

The burly holy son's aura erupted, blasting nearby holy children away.

In the void—

The pale expert stood frozen.

He had declared Qi Liuma finished—then trapped a bunch of mighty ones.

Now he declared Lu Jiulian dead—only for the Holy Consort to be punched through her sacred armor, pendant cracking?

Was his mouth cursed?!

Lu Fan, smiling warmly, drifted toward Zuo Xu, who was still breaking the array.

The pale expert felt thunderstruck.

He raised a trembling hand and slapped himself.

He seemed to recall saying Zuo Xu would definitely break Qi Liuma's formation...

Chapter 386: Don't Thank This Young Master Just Yet

Nihility Heaven was deathly silent.

Lu Fan's white robes fluttered as he leaned back in the Thousand-Blade Chair, advancing unhurriedly.

His pace was leisurely, yet the pale-faced, kidney-deficient mighty one's expression changed drastically.

“Brother! What are you doing?!”

Seeing Lu approach Zuo Xu, who was focused on breaking the formation, the man panicked.

Zuo Xu's success determined whether the trapped mighty ones could escape and whether they could carve up the newborn high martial origin.

BOOM!

His primordial spirit surged. Terrifying pressure roiled the void.

A Body Integration cultivator possessed a primordial spirit—the equivalent of Lu Fan's Primordial Unity Realm. They were called “mighty ones” precisely because of their overwhelming primordial spirit oppression.

It was similar to Lu Fan's own Spiritual Pressure, but on a higher level: a suppression that higher realms exerted over lower ones.

"Stop!"

The pale expert roared in fury.

Moments ago they had been chatting amiably; now this youth dared interfere with his interests?

BOOM!

A deafening roar shook the void.

Lu Fan's white robes and hair whipped in the wind, but his advance never slowed.

A Body Integration mighty one's primordial spirit oppression piqued his interest.

"So once a primordial spirit forms, it's a new realm entirely."

Lu Fan smiled faintly.

On the upgraded system panel, his Primordial Spirit Power was listed at 99 yuan.

How strong was 99 yuan?

He had no reference point. Aside from the reincarnated venerable from the high martial Buddha world, this was his first true encounter with a mighty one.

“Then let’s test it.”

Lu Fan decided.

He activated his primordial spirit.

Once mere divine sense, it had evolved into a true primordial spirit.

BOOM!

It was as if an ancient demon god had awakened. The void trembled violently; invisible ripples formed a storm.

The pale expert's face twisted in horror.

He felt as though he had slammed into an endless primordial spirit wall.

The pressure nearly stopped his breath.

This aura!

This power!

This youth... was terrifying!

Pfft!

Blood sprayed. His primordial spirit suffered massive damage, as though scorched by flames.

He let out a wretched scream. His freshly restored body exploded.

His nearly extinguished primordial spirit fled in terror, streaking out of Nihilicity Heaven without looking back.

He had to escape!

As far as possible. Nihilicity Heaven was too horrifying!

“This child... could he be from a Seventh Tier or higher high martial world?!”

“His presence rivals a Holy Lord!”

With his primordial spirit crippled, he fled.

Some fortunes were only fortunes if you lived to claim them. Otherwise, they were death warrants.

He abandoned all claim to the Five Phoenixes' origin.

Lu Fan calmly withdrew his gaze.

The man's body destroyed, primordial spirit wounded—he would never dare return.

Lu Fan's attention settled on Zuo Xu, who was wholly focused on dismantling the formation.

Above Zuo Xu's head, the "Assemble" Secret Word hovered, radiating profound fluctuations.

One glance was enough. Lu Fan looked past him to the withered Qi Liuma seated atop the Myriad Pattern Cauldron.

Qi Liuma's essence, energy, and primordial spirit were completely bound to the cauldron. If the formation broke, he would die.

Zuo Xu, who understood the formation best, was fully aware of this.

Yet he still chose to break it.

He was prepared to kill his own master without hesitation.

"What kind of disciples did he raise?"

Lu Fan shook his head, lamenting the coldness of the world.

Whether the giant Ninth Brother or Zuo Xu before him, none seemed to have any affection for Qi Liuma.

The old man was truly pitiful.

“Since you chose to shield Five Phoenixes from calamity, I, Lu Ping’an, am not unreasonable. I’ll save your life.”

His voice was soft, yet it thundered like heavenly decree.

Rules faintly shimmered in the Ninth Heaven.

Zuo Xu, focused on the formation, jolted. Array patterns swirled around him.

He opened his eyes and saw Lu Fan.

A white-robed youth that made his heart tremble.

“Who are you?”

Zuo Xu demanded.

Where was the pale expert?

He stared warily at Lu Fan. The youth seemed harmless, yet an inexplicable dread rose within him.

“Lu Ping’an.”

“Lord of Bai Yujing.”

Lu Fan answered.

Bai Yujing?

Zuo Xu frowned—which high martial sacred ground was that?

But before he could think further, Lu Fan raised a hand.

Hum...

A character condensed from nothing—the Secret Word “Qian.”

“A Secret Word?!”

“No... not one of the Nine Secret Words!”

Zuo Xu’s heart raced, then relaxed when he saw it clearly.

He had thought it was a Nine Secret Word. In his mind, the Nine were supreme. Using some random word against him?

Foolish.

“Don’t interfere with my formation-breaking. Once it’s down, we can all share this newborn high martial origin.”

Zuo Xu said coldly.

His black robes flapped. The “Assemble” word above him trembled.

A beam of light shot out, colliding with Lu Fan's "Qian."

Pfft!

Zuo Xu screamed in agony—a despairing wail of an ant trying to topple a mountain.

His primordial spirit was wounded. He staggered back, blood streaming from his eyes.

"Who... are you?!"

For the first time, he was crushed in a contest of Secret Words.

"A disciple who betrays his master."

Lu Fan said indifferently.

White robes fluttering, he steered the Thousand-Blade Chair closer.

Zuo Xu stared through bloody tears. He had come to break the formation—now he wasn't sure he could even escape.

“Damn it!”

Death loomed.

He formed seals with both hands.

“Rise!”

Like thunder from a clear sky, a killing formation spiraled into existence around him, engulfing Lu Fan.

A formation he was proud of—even late-stage Body Integration experts would suffer inside.

Once it was complete, Zuo Xu turned to flee.

He could break Qi Liuma's formation, but with this monster blocking him, he had no chance.

He had never guessed Lu Fan was the very master of this newborn high martial world.

Wiping blood from his eyes with a handkerchief—

He hadn't finished when his body shook.

Within his killing formation, white robes emerged.

“How?!”

Lu Fan strolled out as if taking a leisurely walk.

Zuo Xu's mind went blank.

Run!

He no longer cared about anything and shot toward the edge of Nihilicity Heaven.

Lu Fan watched calmly.

“You came. Don’t leave.”

He raised a hand and gently pushed.

The palm grew enormous in the void, becoming a heaven-covering hand that reached for Zuo Xu.

Terrifying danger enveloped him. Zuo Xu could not resist.

“Holy Consort! Save me!”

His roar echoed through the void.

Outside Five Phoenixes.

The woman whose sacred armor had been shattered by Lu Jiulian’s punch, coughing blood, paled.

“Zuo Xu still hasn’t broken the formation?”

She, a Body Integration mighty one, stalled by a Spirit Severing cultivator—it was humiliating.

Now something had gone wrong on Zuo Xu's end too.

She turned, her gaze piercing the distance.

She saw Zuo Xu captured by a giant palm.

"Insolence!"

She was furious.

Zuo Xu was Black-White Sacred Ground's most important array master, bearer of the "Assemble" Secret Word. The Holy Lord valued him greatly.

If Zuo Xu died here, the consequences were unthinkable!

Lu Fan glanced at her.

His expression grew cold.

Enough.

It was time to end this.

The system upgrade was complete. Five Phoenixes had fused into a true high martial origin.

The low-key Lu Fan no longer needed to hide.

Two fingers pressed against the armrest and slid.

A phoenix cry resounded through the void.

Blazing flames erupted, distorting the emptiness.

A streak of sword light flashed across the vast distance.

The woman's heart seized.

Death closed in.

Above the blood-colored battlefield, Lu Jiulian, covered in blood, watched the fleeting, world-shaking sword radiance.

A crimson sword soared like a phoenix taking flight.

The woman's shattered armor reformed, thin as cicada wings.

Energy surged, forming a protective barrier.

On the battlefield, Jiang Li looked up with difficulty.

Ni Chunqiu, Ye Shoudao, and Du Longyang exclaimed in joy.

"Young Master Lu!"

"That sword... Phoenix Feather!"

"Brother Lu has made his move!"

The exhausted, blood-soaked soldiers stared in awe at the magnificent scene.

BOOM!

The crimson sword crossed the void and struck the invincible woman.

The Phoenix Feather Sword Soul trembled with excitement.

Her first battle as a complete sword—she had to make it beautiful, to erase her earlier poor impression.

Pfft!

The woman's wretched scream rang out.

Her primordial spirit spread to suppress the sword, but the flames threatened to incinerate it.

Her sacred armor cracked inch by inch.

The sword pierced straight through her.

The terrifying force hurled her toward the blood-colored battlefield.

Smoke and clouds parted before the blade.

She crashed onto the plain, wailing.

BOOM!

Mountains collapsed, rivers reversed.

The battlefield was cleaved in two.

Her pendant shattered. Her primordial spirit burned.

Agonizing pain tore screams from her throat.

Across the Five Phoenixes continent, countless people looked up.

Many felt as though a second sun had risen.

On Mount Tai, in the Great Xuan Palace.

Tantai Xuan stood in the corridor as snow scattered.

He gazed at the falling sun and laughed. The gloom over his heart vanished.

Young Master Lu had returned.

The skies of Five Phoenixes cleared.

BOOM!

The woman, carried by the Phoenix Feather Sword, continued plummeting.

She smashed into the Boundless Sea.

Scorching heat boiled the water, raising thick steam that veiled the surface.

The world's protective barrier, Nihility Heaven's rules, and the sword's murderous intent overwhelmed her.

She lost all strength and sank to the seabed.

At the bottom, her body twisted lifelessly.

The Phoenix Feather Sword blazed even underwater, then split into nine crimson blades that shot skyward.

Only the woman's corpse remained, all life extinguished.

Above the sea, inside the ice pagoda—

The holy sons and saintesses collapsed as the nine swords streaked past.

That had been the Holy Consort of Black-White Sacred Ground—a mighty one armed with countless sacred treasures!

Yet they had just witnessed a single sword pierce and kill her without its master even appearing.

The golden boy and jade girl stared blankly.

Then they pounded the ice walls in despair.

“Mother!”

“Don’t die! Save us!”

Their only hope—gone.

The burly holy son felt ice in his veins.

This newborn high martial world... could kill mighty ones?

...

Silence fell across heaven and earth.

One sword had slain a fully-armed mighty one.

Zuo Xu's heart filled with terror.

He hadn't seen the Holy Consort's fate, but that stunning sword had shattered all his hope.

Pfft!

The heaven-covering palm seized him.

He tried to resist, but with his primordial spirit wounded and endless pressure crushing his body, bones shattered.

"Don't kill me!"

"I'll give you my Secret Word!"

Zuo Xu roared in panic.

A Venerable!

This person was at least Holy Lord level!

Only such a being could kill the Holy Consort with one strike!

Zuo Xu gave up resistance—he only wanted to live.

With a scream as though his soul were torn, he forcibly stripped the “Assemble” Secret Word from himself.

“Senior, this word is tied to the ancient Emperor’s tomb! I offer it—only spare my life!”

Lu Fan raised a brow.

He beckoned.

The Secret Word flew toward him.

Zuo Xu’s face twisted into an obsequious smile.

But the instant the word neared Lu Fan’s hand, madness and murder exploded in Zuo Xu’s eyes.

“DIE!”

His primordial spirit surged.

The “Assemble” word erupted with unparalleled killing intent—ancient Emperor might unfurled!

Zuo Xu trusted no mercy. He refused to become a prisoner.

BOOM!

Terrifying power engulfed Lu Fan.

Zuo Xu laughed maniacally, coughing blood.

He glanced at Qi Liuma atop the cauldron.

“Master! To think you set a trap for your own disciple! You even invited a Venerable to kill me! How ruthless!”

His gaze was venomous ice.

“I’ll be back!”

He spat through clenched teeth. He would return, break the formation, and scatter Qi Liuma’s soul!

BOOM!

He shot away, planning to escape Nihility Heaven.

He had forced the Secret Word to unleash Emperor-level power—he believed it would wound even a Venerable.

It had been his trump card against the Black-White Holy Lord.

Now it was spent.

He fled at top speed.

Then his body froze.

Behind him, the void shattered inch by inch under overwhelming force.

When the dust settled—

He turned and saw...

The raging “Assemble” word floating tamely in the white-robed youth’s palm like an obedient kitten.

“How?!”

Zuo Xu was horrified.

Who was this person that he could control a Nine Secret Word?!

Crackle...

Lightning arced through the void.

The white-robed youth sat in his Thousand-Blade Chair, becoming thunder as he instantly closed the distance.

A casual palm struck out.

Countless strands of spiritual energy condensed into a crystalline giant hand.

It slapped Zuo Xu back into Nihility Heaven.

BAM!

Zuo Xu crashed onto a cold, dead continent.

Knees smashed into the ground, hair disheveled, blood pouring from mouth and nose.

“Your fate will be decided by Qi Liuma, traitor.”

Lu Fan said indifferently, watching Zuo Xu suffer the rules’ blade-like cuts to his primordial spirit.

He stored the “Assemble” word without activating it.

Zuo Xu laughed brokenly in despair.

He had lost.

Qi Liuma had screwed him again.

“You can’t save him... The Myriad Pattern Cauldron guarantees his death!”

“You cannot decide my fate!”

He roared through bloody laughter.

Lu Fan merely glanced at him.

“You don’t know shit.”

The Spiritual Pressure Chessboard appeared before him.

Lines crisscrossed, projecting the Myriad Pattern Cauldron.

Lu Fan's eyes flickered as he searched.

"You'll only kill him faster!"

Zuo Xu kept shouting.

But Lu Fan found what he wanted.

BOOM!

He reached out and picked up a chess piece.

Plop.

The piece fell, shaking heaven and earth.

In the void, a spiritual energy hand formed and placed a piece on the cauldron.

BOOM!

Zuo Xu's laughter grew more manic.

Even a Venerable couldn't reverse fate!

He wanted to watch Lu Fan kill Qi Liuma!

Lu Fan's white robes fluttered, peerless and elegant.

One hand held a glazed, radiant divine medicine seed.

The other formed the "Lin" Secret Word—accelerating time.

Origin qi poured into the seed.

Under accelerated time, it sprouted, grew, and bore a vermilion fruit that swayed with divine light.

An intoxicating fragrance filled the void.

Zuo Xu's laughter died abruptly.

The "Lin" Secret Word?!

And... a divine medicine?!

Lu Fan clawed Qi Liuma's withered body from the cauldron.

Then he forced the divine fruit into the old man's mouth.

The medicine dissolved into boundless life energy.

Color returned to Qi Liuma's corpse-like flesh.

BOOM!

With a flick, Lu Fan shattered the Myriad Pattern Cauldron.

Figures shot out from the top, laughing madly.

The mighty ones who had been sealed inside!

“Qi Liuma, you will die for this!”

Killing intent boiled.

They saw Zuo Xu kneeling in despair on the dead continent.

And Lu Fan in white.

They realized someone had broken the formation to free them.

Then they cupped fists toward Lu Fan with broad smiles.

“Many thanks for freeing us, Your Excellency!”

Leaning back in his Thousand-Blade Chair, Lu Fan gazed at them coolly.

“Don’t thank this young master just yet...”

“Did you really think I released you out of kindness?”

In the void.

The smiles on every mighty one’s face slowly froze.

Chapter 387: Congratulations to the Young Master! Congratulations to Baiyujing!

Golden Body Continent.

Bu Nanxing, who had been sitting cross-legged on a mountain peak stabilizing his breakthrough, slowly opened his eyes.

He glanced into the void and sighed.

“That senior... has finally started the slaughter.”

He shook his head.

He had seen this coming long ago.

Even a cautious survivor like him had nearly been killed. That alone proved how terrifying the senior was.

“I wonder if the Nanshan Sacred Ground sent any mighty ones. Probably not... We have too few at home. My Holy Lord father wouldn't dare risk them in Nihilicity Heaven. One loss and Nanshan's already-bottom high martial ranking would sink forever.”

Bu Nanxing smiled wryly.

“As expected, this world is far too dangerous.”

He stood and looked toward the Five Phoenixes, curiosity flickering in his eyes.

“Just what tier will this newborn high martial world reach? Ninth Tier? Or Eighth?”

He couldn't guess.

Lu Fan was strong—stronger than even his own Holy Lord father.

So Bu Nanxing suspected the Five Phoenixes might become an Eighth Tier high martial world.

“Perhaps the greatest fortune isn’t the newborn origin itself...”

“But this world.”

He murmured.

...

Five Phoenixes Continent.

Wolong Ridge.

Heavenly Secret Peak.

A cold wind swept up withered yellow leaves on the stone steps.

Lü Dongxuan and Lü Mudui sat opposite each other. Between them lay a stone grill; atop it, a fat fish sizzled, oil dripping and hissing.

Lü Dongxuan rubbed his hands, squinting. The thick gold chain around his neck gleamed.

“As expected, the fish from North Luo Lake are the fattest.”

“That Luo Yue kid has good taste. This gift makes me happy.”

The fire roared, heating the stone.

Lü Mudui swallowed hard and brushed sauce over the golden fish.

Suddenly, Lü Dongxuan’s heart stirred. A deafening boom rolled from the heavens.

He clutched his gold chain and narrowed his eyes.

“It’s the Young Master...”

“Young Master? What happened?” Lü Mudui asked curiously.

“The Young Master is doing something big. I can feel it...”

Lü Dongxuan glanced at Lü Mudui, who was wholly focused on the fish, and snorted.

“You’re still too green.”

“How long has it been since Heavenly Secret Pavilion released any earth-shaking news?”

Lü Mudui grinned, showing his gap-toothed smile. “The world just transformed. Everyone’s busy getting stronger. Where would explosive news come from?”

Lü Dongxuan clutched his chain and squinted.

“What is the purpose of Heavenly Secret Pavilion? When the Young Master acts, how can we stay silent?”

“We must let the entire world know—Baiyujing is supreme.”

His words rang with conviction.

Lü Mudui blinked in confusion.

Lü Dongxuan stood and paced the peak.

“I divine. You write.”

His robes fluttered dramatically.

Lü Mudui opened his mouth, then sighed.

“What are you waiting for?!”

Lü Dongxuan roared.

Helpless, Lü Mudui pulled out a brush and a sheet of profound yellow paper.

Satisfied, Lü Dongxuan began.

Whoosh!

He flicked his gold chain.

A grating sound like stone on stone rang out.

Invisible ripples spread in all directions.

“Heaven and earth transformed. Evil demons invaded. The Young Master stood alone against the heavens!”

“In a battle beyond the sky, the firmament changed color, mountains and rivers collapsed. Young Master Lu slew more than eighteen evil mighty ones, shaking the Nine Heavens and Ten Lands!”

“Congratulations to the Young Master! Congratulations to Baiyujing!”

Lü Dongxuan finished, eyes bright and voice resounding.

Lü Mudui’s hand shook.

“Old Lü... you really dare say anything!”

The Young Master had only just killed one woman!

“You just write. When the Young Master acts, the world trembles.”

Lü Dongxuan snorted.

Lü Mudui’s face darkened. “Maybe... shorter? Fewer words?”

Lü Dongxuan stared silently.

Lü Mudui twitched. Fine. You win.

He slapped his chest.

Pfft!

Under the sun, he spat a mouthful of blood. Brush spinning, he dipped it in blood-ink and wrote in flowing strokes across the yellow paper.

Heroic spirit surged from his chest.

Congratulations to Young Master Lu!

Congratulations to Baiyujing!

...

In the void.

Every mighty one's face changed.

What did this mean?

Why did his words sound so malicious?

"Quick... kill Qi Liuma!"

On the cold, dead continent, Zuo Xu snapped out of his shock at the divine medicine.

Divine medicine!

Only Fifth Tier high martial worlds and above could produce it.

Yet this person had one.

With divine medicine—flesh and bones could regrow. Qi Liuma might actually live!

So Zuo Xu shouted.

The mighty ones had just escaped the Myriad Pattern Cauldron. The situation outside was far more complicated than they'd imagined.

“That’s... Master Zuo Xu?!”

“The array master of Black-White Sacred Ground?!”

“Damn it! Zuo Xu is Qi Liuma’s disciple—the Black-White Holy Lord’s pawn to steal the Nine Secret Words! He came to break the formation for us!”

They recognized him.

An array master’s reputation was formidable.

But seeing him now—robes torn, eyes bleeding, primordial spirit burning under the rules...

He had clearly been brutalized!

The mighty ones grew warier.

They stared at Lu Fan, whose strange smile exerted immense pressure.

“You did this?!”

“What do you want by freeing us?”

They demanded cautiously.

“Stop talking! Kill Qi Liuma!”

Zuo Xu nearly coughed blood in rage.

These idiots would die from talking too much!

Kill Qi Liuma first!

“This man wants to save him!”

Zuo Xu’s roar drew attention.

Many primordial spirits swept toward Qi Liuma and paled.

“What?!”

“Qi Liuma’s primordial spirit is reforming? His blood is reviving?”

“Impossible! He was on death’s door!”

Shock rippled through them.

But they weren’t fools.

Their bodies flashed. They shot forward as streaks of light, sacred treasures blazing, aiming to kill Qi Liuma.

Qi Liuma sat atop the cauldron like a fetus brimming with power.

Lu Fan smiled.

“You really don’t take this young master seriously.”

“You still haven’t guessed why I freed you?”

Yet none paid him any heed.

One expert, renowned for speed, appeared beside Qi Liuma.

A sharp spear thrust toward Qi Liuma's face, aiming to pierce his skull and nail his primordial spirit.

But array patterns swirled around Qi Liuma.

The attack missed!

More mighty ones closed in, though some remained wary of Lu Fan.

Origin qi poured down, forming unbreakable array patterns.

One mighty one struck with all his strength—yet failed to breach it!

Their expressions changed.

They realized something was wrong.

“You did this?”

One stared gravely at Lu Fan. They couldn't sense his true aura. His Qi Refinement cultivation was ignored—who had ever seen a Qi Refiner float in Nihility Heaven?

They had just escaped; they didn't know Lu Fan had killed the Holy Consort with one strike.

So although wary, they still had confidence.

Eighteen mighty ones together—unless another Qi Liuma formation trapped them again, they could kill gods and buddhas alike!

On the dead continent below, Zuo Xu spat blood and despaired.

“Run! If you can't kill Qi Liuma, run!”

“The Black-White Holy Consort died by his hand! Spread the news—let the Holy Lord avenge her!”

Zuo Xu's eyes lit up as he roared.

His words exploded like spring thunder.

Every mighty one felt as though lightning had torn through them. Cold sweat poured.

At first, they doubted.

But Zuo Xu's next words shattered their courage.

"This is a Venerable! Comparable to a Holy Lord!"

Zuo Xu screamed, straining his neck.

He wanted them to escape and carry the message.

Venerable? Holy Lord level?!

Every mighty one trembled.

They stared at Lu Fan in disbelief.

The white-robed youth smiled gently—no denial.

“You coveted the newborn origin of Five Phoenixes, treating it as your fortune...”

“This young master is kind-hearted. Five Phoenixes has just entered high martial—I’m in a good mood. I won’t slaughter lightly. I’ll give you a chance.”

Lu Fan laughed warmly, like the boy next door.

“What chance?”

One mighty one asked, heart pounding.

“Since you see Five Phoenixes as fortune, then become fortune for Five Phoenixes—benefit the world.”

Lu Fan said.

Benefit my ass!

Someone moved!

“Fight!”

Truth or lie—they had to act.

BOOM!

Eighteen mighty ones attacked at once—an unprecedented onslaught.

Primordial spirits manifested. Terrifying auras linked endlessly, shaking the void.

Golden spears, ferocious beasts, blade-sharp bodies—all surged toward Lu Fan.

In the void.

Lu Fan sat calmly in his Thousand-Blade Chair, white robes fluttering.

The Spiritual Pressure Chessboard glowed softly.

He lifted a piece and placed it.

Plop.

He focused on the board. Some noticed stars and galaxies shifting upon it.

Pfft!

One mighty one suddenly felt mountains crash down. He was forced to his knees in the starry sky.

His powerful primordial spirit nearly shattered!

BOOM!

The piece fell like a mountain range. The void cracked.

It directly crushed one mighty one's body into bloody mist.

The overwhelming power horrified the rest.

"This strength... truly a Venerable!"

The Body Integration experts panicked. Against a Venerable—the second tier among mighty ones—how could they fight?

“Which sacred ground’s Holy Lord are you?!”

“We have no grudge...”

“This youth is so young yet possesses such heaven-defying cultivation. Could he be a monstrous genius from a Seventh Tier or higher world?!”

They were terrified.

Zuo Xu... had not lied!

Run!

Facing a Venerable, only idiots would fight to the death!

The remaining seventeen instantly scattered like celestial maidens casting flowers, fleeing in all directions.

Lu Fan smiled.

He had chosen to act—did he look like someone who would let them escape?

He didn't think himself invincible across the Nine Heavens.

After all, he was merely a humble sixth-layer Qi Refiner.

“Sword... return.”

From the Thousand-Blade Chair, Lu Fan beckoned slowly.

On the blood-colored battlefield—

Nine streaks of light shot into the sky, tearing the firmament like nine blazing suns wheeling overhead.

Beneath the flames, nine golden crows seemed to soar.

Phoenix Feather Sword—return!

Whoosh!

Guided by the sword soul, the nine blades merged.

Flames scorched the void, forming a true phoenix tail feather that stretched across the heavens.

Dark streams of compressed space appeared.

Terrifying pressure filled the world!

As Lu Fan beckoned, the Phoenix Feather Sword returned from Five Phoenixes.

Unstoppable—every mighty one it passed was locked by its aura.

Now fused with its sword soul, the Phoenix Feather Sword had reached Heaven Tier!

Pfft! Pfft!

Bodies exploded into bloody mist wherever it passed!

The sword aura was unrivaled!

Sacred treasures were drawn in defense—yet shattered all the same!

Seventeen mighty ones lost their bodies in an instant.

Wretched screams filled the void.

“What manner of weapon is this?!”

“It came from that newborn high martial world! This man... is a native of that world?!”

The Phoenix Feather Sword returned.

In the void, plus the one crushed earlier, eighteen clouds of blood mist floated.

Lu Fan sat in his chair, hair dancing in the gentle breeze.

The Phoenix Feather Sword hovered above him, a drop of blood sliding from its tip.

The sword soul radiated delight and flattery.

This battle—exhilarating!

Lu Fan gazed calmly at the eighteen blood clouds.

Because he knew—this was not the end.

BOOM!

Within the blood mist, powerful primordial spirit fluctuations surged.

Eighteen terrified faces formed, then bodies—restored in primordial spirit form.

The moment they reappeared, they fled without hesitation.

But—

Plop.

The clear sound of a chess piece falling rang in their souls like heavenly tribulation.

Lu Fan's primordial spirit swept out.

Crack!

The void seemed to freeze.

Eighteen primordial spirits—already suppressed by Nihility Heaven's rules—were now locked by Lu Fan's spirit.

They could not move.

“Senior... mercy!”

“Lord Venerable, I was wrong! Don't kill me!”

Primordial spirit fluctuations pleaded.

The emotional whiplash nearly broke them.

They had thought freedom meant carving up the newborn origin and ascending to Venerable realm.

Instead, a Venerable had been waiting.

Screams never ceased.

Mighty ones were still human.

The stronger one was, the less one wished to face death.

“Don’t be afraid.”

“I, Lu Ping’an, consider myself quite amiable. I won’t kill you.”

Lu Fan chuckled, leaning back.

Lu Ping'an?

Was that the Venerable's title?

Lu Fan's eyes flickered as he gazed at the trembling primordial spirits.

Five Phoenixes had entered high martial. It was time to upgrade the cultivation grounds for the people.

He moved.

Like thunder, he flashed across the void.

Spiritual energy formed a giant hand that swept through.

Eighteen primordial spirits were captured.

Terror filled their faces.

What... was he going to do to them?

Zuo Xu, crushed deep into the dead continent, sensed Lu Fan leave with the spirits.

Thinking himself overlooked, he prepared to sneak away and report to Black-White Sacred Ground.

But the moment he lifted his head—

He found himself staring straight at Qi Liuma, now brimming with dense life energy.

Qi Liuma's cheek twitched.

The instant Zuo Xu looked up,

He slowly opened his eyes.

Master and disciple locked gazes.

Silence.

An extremely awkward reunion.

...

Blood-colored battlefield.

Cheers exploded!

Every soldier gazed at the peerless white-robed figure in the void, wild with excitement. Even coughing blood, they roared.

“Young Master Lu is invincible!”

“Baiyujing is invincible!”

With Young Master Lu, the skies of Five Phoenixes still stood!

“Brother Lu! Brother Lu!”

Ni Chunqiu screamed hysterically, earning disgusted looks from Du Longyang and Ye Shoudao.

Lu Fan smiled and flicked his finger.

A rain of origin qi fell.

Every cultivator's wounds healed instantly.

Lu Jiulian landed on the battlefield, breathing deeply.

Gazing at the overwhelmingly powerful Lu Fan, admiration filled him.

This—this was the bearing of the truly strong.

Compared to his own sorry struggle against the woman, Lu Jiulian knew his path was still long.

Lu Fan, carrying the eighteen primordial spirits, appeared above Five Phoenixes.

Thunder crackled as he moved through the void.

The sky trembled; rosy clouds flashed.

Above the Boundless Sea.

He raised a hand and pulled.

BOOM!

The earth shook.

The sea churned.

One after another, colossal stone statues rose from the depths—each with a flat platform carved atop its head.

Lu Fan formed array patterns that fell upon the statues.

“These statues will be your new homes.”

He smiled at the captured primordial spirits.

“Don’t worry—you won’t die.”

He grabbed one and flung it.

BOOM!

The primordial spirit merged with a statue. The entire figure radiated primordial spirit aura.

Under the array’s operation, the aura became profound—perfect for Yang God cultivators to comprehend and form their own primordial spirits more easily.

Eighteen primordial spirits were stuffed into eighteen statues.

The Boundless Sea raged with towering waves.

“From today, this place shall be called... Primordial Spirit Platform.”

Lu Fan declared softly.

A land of fortune for Five Phoenixes.

His voice echoed across the entire continent.

At the same moment!

Heavenly Secret Pavilion's announcement spread throughout the world.

In an instant, every cultivator in the land boiled with excitement!

Congratulations to the Young Master!

Congratulations to Baiyujing!

In the void.

Zuo Xu, pretending to be dead on the dead continent, sensed Lu Fan's departure.

Thinking he had escaped notice, he prepared to flee and report back.

But when he raised his head—

He found himself face-to-face with Qi Liuma, now overflowing with life.

Qi Liuma's eyelid twitched.

The moment Zuo Xu looked up,

He slowly opened his eyes.

Master and disciple locked gazes.

Utter silence.

The reunion was exceptionally awkward.

Chapter 388: This Young Master... Has Been Waiting for Him All This Time

Qi Liuma felt as though he had been dreaming for an eternity.

He drifted along the river of time. In one dream, he became nothing but withered bones. In another, he returned to the glorious era of ancient Emperor cultivation.

That was an era that set the heart racing. He met the invincible ancient Emperor—one thought could reverse the galaxy, one punch could boil time itself.

He was thrilled.

Even more thrilling, the ancient Emperor seemed to take a liking to him and fed him a divine herb.

Divine essence flowed, divinity permeated—truly a divine medicine.

The overwhelming energy shattered his dream.

Everything before Qi Liuma's eyes dissolved.

The ancient Emperor in his dream transformed into a figure in white robes, leaving an indelible mark on his mind.

Then he awoke.

He woke with emotions too complex to name.

He... was not dead.

Qi Liuma's eyes were deep and profound. On his weathered face, countless wrinkles crisscrossed like the sharp edges of time.

He saw Zuo Xu kneeling before him on the cold, dead continent.

That familiar face stunned him for a moment.

"Zuo Xu?"

His voice boomed with vitality, startling even himself.

He had drawn upon the rules, laid down the formation, and had his primordial spirit carved away—he should have perished utterly.

Yet now... he felt stronger than ever?

Qi Liuma did not understand.

But he showed no reaction.

He gazed calmly at the blood-soaked, pitiful Zuo Xu, his eyes filled with quiet pressure.

Zuo Xu stared blankly at the awakened Qi Liuma.

Sweat beaded on his bloodstained face.

Blood tears streaked down as his expression turned awkward.

“M-Master...”

Zuo Xu forced the word out.

His smile was uglier than crying.

Master and disciple met again—no joy, only boundless awkwardness.

Only now did Zuo Xu understand.

That terrifying white-robed Venerable had not ignored him while he played dead.

He had planned this all along.

He suspected the Venerable had deliberately placed him here.

When the Venerable said Qi Liuma would decide his fate—it had been literal.

Boiling blood surged in Zuo Xu's chest, rage bubbling.

He wanted to curse.

But the words turned into a powerless spray of blood.

“Old Fifth.”

Divine medicine's immense life force coursed through Qi Liuma's withered body, dragging him back from death's door.

Fifth—Zuo Xu was the fifth of his nine disciples.

“Master... forgive me. This disciple... knows his wrong!”

Zuo Xu gritted his teeth.

He looked utterly wretched—bones shattered, primordial spirit burning under the rules.

Half-dead.

He wanted pity.

Survival was everything.

But Qi Liuma ignored him.

He glanced at the cold, dead continent, then at the empty Myriad Pattern Cauldron.

The mighty ones sealed within were gone.

Lingering blood qi in the void told of exploded bodies.

“A great battle took place here. All the mighty ones... dead?”

Qi Liuma murmured.

Zuo Xu said nothing, trembling harder.

The less Qi Liuma spoke, the more terrified he became.

“No... no shattered primordial spirit signatures. Their primordial spirits escaped?”

Qi Liuma said.

He turned, dry white hair whipping.

He looked toward the Five Phoenixes continent.

His cheek twitched.

Then he exhaled, as though a great burden had lifted.

Everything was getting better.

Hope remained.

But confusion quickly followed.

How?

Eighteen mighty ones breaking free should have been a catastrophe for the newborn high martial Five Phoenixes.

What exactly had happened?

Qi Liuma was baffled.

But he no longer cared.

Five Phoenixes still stood. The only high martial world in Nihility Heaven remained.

That was enough to fill him with joy.

Perhaps the white-robed youth had used some method, or the fully activated “Lin” Secret Word had erupted with overwhelming power and crushed the mighty ones.

Either way, it must have been a bitter fight.

Right now, Qi Liuma’s mind was filled with questions.

Why was he alive?

Why was Zuo Xu kneeling before him?

But in the end... did it matter?

After a long silence, Qi Liuma finally looked at Zuo Xu.

Zuo Xu, trembling, suddenly grew excited.

“Master... spare me!”

He swallowed hard, throat bobbing.

Qi Liuma’s wrinkled face creased into a smile.

“Is the Secret Word still in your possession?”

His voice was hoarse.

Zuo Xu froze.

Then shook his head.

“No... it was... taken.”

Qi Liuma’s brows knitted into a deep frown.

“Oh.”

He said.

“Then what use is sparing you?”

Hope froze on Zuo Xu’s face. His forced smile turned grotesque.

Qi Liuma did not wait for a reply.

His withered, branch-like finger pressed against Zuo Xu’s brow.

BANG!

A bloody hole exploded in Zuo Xu’s forehead. Red and white sprayed from the back of his skull.

Array patterns twisted and strangled.

Zuo Xu's primordial spirit cracked.

He stared blankly at Qi Liuma.

He had never expected such decisiveness...

His already-ruined primordial spirit went out like a candle—only a wisp of smoke remained before vanishing completely.

On the dead continent, Zuo Xu's body knelt, head bowed.

Blood dripped steadily from the hole in his forehead.

As though kneeling in sincere repentance before his master.

Qi Liuma's robes fluttered.

He stood with hands behind his back, gazing at the Myriad Pattern Cauldron.

With a wave, the formation scattered into countless fragments that flowed back into his body.

The terrifying binding formation dissolved into the void.

Qi Liuma coughed, body trembling slightly.

Killing Zuo Xu stirred no great emotion in him.

Cleaning house. Removing a lingering sickness from his heart.

“To think you wasted a divine medicine on this old bones...”

“Young master’s righteousness knows no bounds.”

Qi Liuma’s expression was complex.

He stepped forward and shot away.

But he did not descend upon Five Phoenixes immediately.

The world's protective barrier still lingered.

A mighty one descending would suffer immense backlash and suppression.

He turned. Beside him floated an ordinary-looking youth.

“Greetings, Sect Leader Qi. I have long admired your great name. To meet you today is a true honor.”

The youth smiled warmly—a practiced, disarming smile that evoked no hostility.

Qi Liuma was taken aback, but one did not strike a smiling face.

He nodded slightly.

The youth introduced himself, “I am merely an ordinary holy son of Nanshan Sacred Ground. To meet Sect Leader Qi is the fortune of three lifetimes. To think you single-handedly trapped eighteen mighty ones with a formation—truly astonishing. I am in awe.”

Nanshan Sacred Ground?

A Ninth Tier high martial world, near the bottom of the rankings.

Qi Liuma recalled and smiled politely.

BOOM!

Below, the misty formation parted like the sea cleaved in two.

The array opened.

“Sect Leader Qi, after you.”

Bu Nanxing bowed.

Survival Rule #1: Defer to seniors. Live longer.

Qi Liuma did not refuse and descended onto the blood-colored battlefield.

Bu Nanxing followed.

Every cultivator on the battlefield was overwhelmed with excitement.

“Sect Leader Qi may not know, but earlier, Venerable Lu Ping’an slew eighteen mighty ones with a single ‘Sword Return.’”

Bu Nanxing said.

Qi Liuma’s heart jolted.

“Sword that slew eighteen mighty ones?”

So Lu really had killed them?

Suddenly—

Origin power surged from the battlefield, falling like origin rain.

It washed over Bu Nanxing and Qi Liuma.

“Bathe in the origin rain—cause and effect will not cling.”

Qi Liuma said.

Bu Nanxing did not resist.

With the world’s protective barrier still active, entering without the world lord’s origin rain would invite suppression.

The stronger one was, the worse the backlash.

After the rain, three figures approached from afar.

Three Spirit Severing experts.

A newborn high martial world already producing three Spirit Severing cultivators—unbelievable foundation.

Du Longyang, Ye Shoudao, and Ni Chunqiu.

Jiang Li and Lu Jiulian followed.

“Senior, Brother Lu requests your presence.”

Ni Chunqiu said respectfully after taking a deep breath.

Qi Liuma had sacrificed himself to block eighteen mighty ones for Five Phoenixes. They held him in high esteem.

Without lingering, Qi Liuma and Bu Nanxing followed them into the continent.

Once past the oppressive blood color, magnificent mountains and rivers appeared.

“What a beautiful world.”

Bu Nanxing sighed sincerely.

They flew across the sky.

Over the Boundless Sea.

Suddenly, Qi Liuma's gaze shrank. A chill ran from his soles to his spine.

"This..."

He saw eighteen colossal statues, each as large as a mountain.

Powerful primordial spirit fluctuations wove through the sea.

Yet these fluctuations felt... familiar.

Were these not the eighteen mighty ones?

In the blink of an eye, they had become statues?

"Those who sought to treat Five Phoenixes as fortune had their primordial spirits captured by the Young Master and forged into fortune..."

“The Young Master calls these statues the ‘Primordial Spirit Platform.’ They aid comprehension—the primordial spirit waves help condense one’s own primordial spirit.”

Ni Chunqiu explained.

Qi Liuma’s eyes flickered, then widened in shock.

Bu Nanxing, who had been silent, inhaled sharply—then joy spread across his face.

Eighteen mighty ones’ primordial spirit fluctuations turned into a cultivation ground to help form primordial spirits?

Bu Nanxing had entered Spirit Severing thanks to the fortune on Golden Body Continent.

His next step was to form a primordial spirit and become a true mighty one.

This Primordial Spirit Platform would be of immense help!

“As expected...”

“The true fortune is not the origin—it’s this world!”

Bu Nanxing’s excitement grew.

But he suppressed it. His conviction only strengthened.

They continued onward.

Soon, a giant whale appeared, carrying an immortal island on its back.

BOOM!

Origin qi formed a lake on the island, seven-colored auspicious clouds floating above—truly an immortal realm.

“We’ll stop here. Please ascend on your own.”

Ni Chunqiu, Du Longyang, and the others turned back, each choosing a statue to sit before and comprehend.

All three were at the peak of Yang God, half a step from Primordial Unity.

After the terrifying battle, they understood: only by growing stronger could they share Young Master Lu's burden.

Qi Liuma and Bu Nanxing waited.

Soon, a figure emerged from the misty sea.

Carrying a black pot on her back, white dress fluttering, a chubby little dragon perched on her head.

Ni Yu stepped out of the mist.

"The Young Master invites you."

Her big eyes spun curiously as she sized up Qi Liuma and Bu Nanxing.

It had been a long time since the Young Master allowed anyone on the island.

Qi Liuma and Bu Nanxing stepped onto Lake Heart Isle.

A gentle breeze carried pure origin qi.

Though the island was breathtakingly beautiful, their gazes were drawn to the white-robed figure at the foot of the mountain peak, idly twirling a peach blossom.

“Young Master, I brought them!”

Ni Yu announced excitedly.

“Good. Go refine pills. Become an Earth-tier alchemist soon. Stop playing with Little Yinglong all day.”

Lu Fan glanced at her.

Ni Yu pouted, then carried her pot away to start a fire and refine somewhere on the island.

Qi Liuma and Bu Nanxing were stunned.

Forcing such a young girl to become an Earth-tier alchemist...

That was harsh.

Alchemists were as profound and rare as array masters.

After Ni Yu left,

Lu Fan smiled and waved.

Hum...

The scene shifted.

The three appeared in the Baiyujing pavilion.

The rich scent of plum wine filled the air.

A cup appeared before Qi Liuma and Bu Nanxing, wine rippling gently.

“How do you feel?”

Lu Fan sipped from his bronze cup and asked Qi Liuma.

Qi Liuma knew what he meant.

He set down his cup and prepared to bow deeply.

“This old man has no virtue or ability to deserve Young Master Lu’s life-saving grace. The value of a divine medicine far exceeds this old life.”

Qi Liuma said earnestly.

Bu Nanxing was shocked—Lu Fan had used a divine medicine to save him!

“It was only a divine medicine seed, ripened with the time power of the ‘Lin’ Secret Word. Its effects were greatly reduced. It can revive the dead and regrow flesh, but it cannot fully restore your primordial spirit.”

Lu Fan said.

“This old man is already endlessly grateful...”

Qi Liuma sighed.

Even a seed could grow into true divine medicine.

Only Fifth Tier high martial worlds and above could birth them.

To waste it on a half-dead old man...

What a waste.

Qi Liuma knew his own state—primordial spirit carved away by rules, body decaying. Half a foot in the grave.

“Used is used. Don’t burden yourself.”

Lu Fan waved dismissively and sipped his wine.

“Refine the medicine’s power slowly. As for your primordial spirit—it’s difficult to heal completely. Stay in Five Phoenixes for now. The world can shield you from the rules’ damage. Recover slowly; perhaps you’ll be whole again.”

Lu Fan said.

“Thank you, Young Master.”

Qi Liuma cupped his fists, emotions swirling.

His nose stung.

His early life had been glorious—he inherited the Six Armor Array Sect, achieved Body Integration in Pingyang Heaven, returned to Nihilicity Heaven vowing to forge a high martial world.

His later life—wandering, nearly dead.

Now, to have a home in Five Phoenixes was not bad.

Especially since it was the only high martial world in Nihilicity Heaven.

That moved him most.

In his lifetime, he had lived to see Nihility Heaven birth a high martial world.

His dream fulfilled—no regrets.

Suddenly, Qi Liuma frowned.

A faint sense of crisis stirred.

“Young Master Lu...”

“Five Phoenixes has only just become high martial. Though the mighty ones who coveted the origin have been suppressed, the true calamity has not yet come. You must prepare early.”

Qi Liuma warned gravely.

His concern was valid.

“A world’s protective barrier lasts anywhere from one month to one year after ascending to high martial. Once it fades, the restriction on experts disappears. Terrifying beings will descend. If any bear ill will toward Five Phoenixes, it will be a great disaster.”

Bu Nanxing’s heart jolted.

Yes—this was the true crisis!

Lu Fan’s smile slowly faded.

One hand propped his chin, the other toyed with his cup.

“Hm...”

“That venerable from the high martial Buddha world did say the day Five Phoenixes became high martial would be the day he descended.”

“This young master... has been waiting for him all this time.”

Lu Fan said.

Qi Liuma: "..."

He opened his mouth, then closed it, unsure what to say.

That venerable from the high martial Buddha world was no weakling. Their world was no mere Ninth Tier like Nanshan.

A clash would be dangerous.

So Qi Liuma silently resolved to lay down powerful formations outside Five Phoenixes while the protective barrier still held.

At the very least, it would give Five Phoenixes some defense.

He could not bear to see the only high martial world—the only hope—in Nihility Heaven fall.

Bu Nanxing's teeth ached.

Once the barrier fell, it wouldn't just be that Buddha world venerable.

Countless sacred ground Holy Lords would come.

After all...

Lu Fan had slain the Black-White Holy Consort with one sword.

And the ice pagoda still held many holy sons and saintesses captive.

Five Phoenixes had made enemies of countless sacred grounds the moment it ascended.

Thinking this way, Bu Nanxing suddenly felt...

Five Phoenixes might not be the safest place to lay low.

But sometimes, one had to choose.

“Senior Lu... what do you plan for those captured holy sons and saintesses?”

Bu Nanxing probed carefully.

Lu Fan blinked, then pondered long and sighed.

“I hope... they can be proper tool people.”

Chapter 389: Where Did Young Master Lu Go?

On the island, a gentle breeze blew.

Yet Bu Nanxing inexplicably felt a chill crawl up his spine.

Tool people...

Had he heard that right?!

Bu Nanxing opened his mouth, then silently crushed the thought of leaving this world to continue laying low.

As expected of a senior—terrifying.

If he tried to slip away now, he'd probably be turned into a tool person on the spot.

That meaningful remark was clearly a warning!

Thus, Bu Nanxing solidified his resolve: follow the senior's footsteps and lay low until the end of time!

Lu Fan, naturally, had no idea what was going through Bu Nanxing's mind.

After some more conversation, Lu Fan took out the Spiritual Pressure Chessboard and began placing pieces.

Qi Liuma's mind was entirely occupied with how to lay down formations to protect the Five Phoenixes continent from the impending crisis. The pressure was immense—his primordial spirit was damaged, making formation deployment extremely difficult.

But...

For Five Phoenixes, he had to try.

Perhaps Lu Fan had some trump card.

Still, Qi Liuma prepared for the worst. He had already tasted despair once.

He did not want Lu Fan to follow in his footsteps—that agony of shattered hope.

Qi Liuma left. Bu Nanxing, unable to remain calm in Lu Fan’s presence, departed as well.

Survival Rule #2: Never linger in front of a big shot. What if they suddenly take a dislike to you and swat you dead?

The less you appear before a big shot, the longer you live.

After the two left,

Lu Fan continued his chess game, but his primordial spirit sank into the origin space.

The vortex-shaped Five Phoenixes origin spun quietly. Compared to before, it was now vastly more powerful.

The difference between a high martial origin and a mid martial origin was not just the inscribed Grand Daos—it was a fundamental leap in strength.

As for the “Assemble” Secret Word taken from Zuo Xu, Qi Liuma had not asked about it, so Lu Fan saw no need to mention it.

Perhaps Qi Liuma had tacitly accepted that the Secret Words belonged to Lu Fan now.

After all, Lu Fan could activate them—Qi Liuma could not.

“The Nine Secret Words truly are unique. They share similarities with the array patterns in the Preaching Platform, yet seem to belong to entirely different systems.”

Lu Fan raised his hand.

The “Assemble” Secret Word appeared in his palm.

Array patterns radiated profound mystery, as though trying to devour his primordial spirit.

It clearly required activation. Lu Fan considered it, then decided against it.

He remained cautious.

The last time he activated the “Lin” Secret Word, it had drawn the attention of the ancient Emperor across the river of time—a single glance that had chilled him to the bone.

No ancient Emperor was simple.

Better to be careful.

He put away the “Assemble” word and tapped the armrest of his wheelchair.

Rolling up his sleeves, he picked up a piece and placed it on the board.

Plop.

The clear sound rang out.

Black and white qi flowed across the board.

The Go manual Heavenly Go Momentum was, with Lu Fan’s newfound primordial spirit power, beginning to feel like it had reached a bottleneck.

He had long since perfected the Yin-Yang Game.

The remaining games now seemed transparent to him.

“It seems... it’s time to upgrade Heavenly Go Momentum.”

Lu Fan leaned back comfortably.

With a thought, the Myriad Law Furnace appeared in his hand—a noble golden three-legged cauldron.

He had nearly forgotten about this tool until now.

With another thought, the furnace lid opened, releasing a profound suction.

Lu Fan condensed Heavenly Go Momentum into a book and tossed it inside.

Lines danced in his eyes as primordial spirit power surged.

He rubbed his chin, feeling something was missing.

Then he drew a wisp of chaos power and fed it into the furnace.

BOOM!

A terrifying rumble echoed.

Black tribulation clouds formed in the sky.

This was the Five Phoenixes origin reacting to the dangerous aura—an automated response, like a pre-programmed script.

Qi Liuma and Bu Nanxing, who had just left, looked up in shock.

“Tribulation clouds?”

“Young Master Lu is undergoing tribulation?”

They were stunned—they had only just left!

On Lake Heart Isle, Ni Yu, hard at work refining pills, was unfazed.

This happened so often she was used to the Young Master's antics.

BOOM!

A crimson beam shot skyward.

The black tribulation clouds were cleaved apart.

Indeed, in front of the Young Master, Five Phoenixes' tribulation clouds had no dignity.

The Myriad Law Furnace spun, brilliant flames burning within.

It seemed to be brewing something terrifying.

After a long while...

The lid burst open. A golden sheet of paper shot out, hovering before Lu Fan.

The upgraded Heavenly Go Momentum had transformed completely.

Still titled Heavenly Go Momentum, but the content had undergone a massive change.

“Heavenly Go Momentum... Heaven-Asking Game.”

Lu Fan inhaled deeply.

Excitement surged.

The Spiritual Pressure Chessboard floated before him.

Light flashed in his eyes. He rolled up his sleeves, picked up a white piece.

Closing his eyes, chin raised, he seemed deep in thought.

After a long moment...

He opened his eyes. A sharp glint flashed.

Then he placed the piece.

BOOM!

The single piece falling sounded like a question to the heavens.

An aura slowly spread from Lu Fan.

The Boundless Sea churned.

His spiritual energy grew slightly more refined.

...

The soldiers of the blood-colored battlefield returned.

A triumphant parade.

Jiang Li did not return, but the wounded soldiers were rotated out. Fresh troops took their place, garrisoning the blood-colored city.

The dramatic changes in Five Phoenixes had already ignited a cultivation frenzy.

Qi Liuma left Lake Heart Isle, leisurely flying over the sea.

One part of his mind pondered what formations to lay down; the other admired Five Phoenixes' scenery.

After endless years on a dead continent, everything here felt brimming with life.

Hm?

He suddenly arrived at a certain sea region.

An origin waterfall roared.

Outside it, many cultivators sat cross-legged, spiritual qi swirling around them—none weak.

Qi Liuma even spotted Spirit Refinement cultivators.

“This is...”

His gaze passed the cultivators and fixed on the waterfall.

It seemed to separate a realm unto itself.

“Immortal ruin?”

He overheard conversations and was stunned.

Within the ruin, he sensed a familiar fluctuation.

The “Lin” Secret Word!

The power of time!

Qi Liuma’s eyes flashed with shock.

The fully activated “Lin” Secret Word?

This so-called immortal ruin must have been created by Young Master Lu.

For a moment, he stopped wandering and observed quietly.

After a while, he turned into a streak of light and entered the ruin.

The moment he did, he was utterly shaken.

The sundial overhead, the occasional glimpse of the river of time...

The altered flow of time let him feel the full might of the activated "Lin" Secret Word.

Tears welled in his eyes.

The Six Armor Array Sect... had hope of rising again!

Even if not under him, he was content.

This only strengthened his resolve to protect Five Phoenixes with formations.

The immortal ruin was a true holy land of cultivation—even Qi Liuma had to admit it.

Altered time flow alone was an immense fortune.

And within the ruin were Dao Steles for comprehending Dao Intent.

Seeing them, even a mighty one like Qi Liuma felt like a country bumpkin entering the city.

But that wasn't what moved him most.

What truly stirred his heart...

Was meeting a certain person inside the ruin.

...

Li Sansui, robes fluttering, sat on a green stone.

With the world's transformation, her cultivation had broken through—she had entered Infant Transformation, one step from condensing a Dao lotus and reaching Yin Spirit.

But she was in no hurry.

On the blood-colored battlefield, she had gained profound insights into formations.

She comprehended her own Dao Intent before the Dao Stele.

She had a feeling—she would soon grasp it.

An innate intuition.

Li Sansi, cloaked in black robes, stood far away, his aura restrained.

Suddenly, his eyes narrowed beneath the hood—nervous.

Li Sansui's aura began to change. Profound fluctuations rumbled around her.

The disturbance woke many cultivators.

She was about to comprehend Dao Intent.

Many smiled knowingly.

No jealousy—comprehending Dao Intent required both opportunity and talent.

Across all Five Phoenixes, only twenty-odd people had done so.

Each new one strengthened the world.

After the blood-colored battlefield, Five Phoenixes' cultivators were united in one goal: grow stronger to face the coming crisis.

They were sensitive enough to feel the world's ascension.

They understood—transformation brought both opportunity and danger.

They might face horrors worse than before.

But they could also become far stronger than before!

Many were curious what Li Sansui's Dao Intent would be.

Li Sansui and Li Sansi—the twin stars of the old Philosopher Sect.

They had shone in the Hundred Schools era and continued to dazzle in the age of cultivators.

BOOM!

The origin trembled. Vast spiritual qi swirled.

Above Li Sansui's head, a massive energy vortex formed, devouring power!

"She's breaking through!"

"Li Sansui isn't just comprehending Dao Intent—she's condensing a Dao lotus and charging for Yin Spirit!"

“Insane! Isn’t she afraid of failure?”

Many exclaimed, some worried.

The risk was enormous.

Beneath Li Sansi’s hood, his gaze tightened with concern.

But when array patterns appeared...

A circular formation bloomed beneath Li Sansui, stabilizing everything.

When a spiritual qi lotus blossomed beneath her...

She successfully stepped into Yin Spirit.

And her Dao Intent appeared on the Dao Stele.

“Fourth-sequence—Everchanging Dao Intent.”

As the Dao Intent emerged, the array patterns around her grew ever more mysterious and unpredictable.

BOOM!

Everyone exhaled in relief.

Breakthrough successful, Dao Intent comprehended—perfect.

They returned to their cultivation or comprehension.

Li Sansui was satisfied.

As she stabilized her aura, two figures sped toward her.

One was Li Sansi in black robes.

The other was Luo Cheng, shy and visibly relieved.

He was glad Li Sansui had safely passed the tribulation.

Li Sansui merely nodded at Luo Cheng, who then eagerly resumed cultivating.

Suddenly—

A chill crawled up Li Sansui's spine.

“Little girl, your talent is excellent. Would you like to study array formations with this old man?”

The voice carried delight.

“Who?!”

BOOM!

Li Sansi heard it too. Terrifying aura erupted. Vines lashed the void, on full alert.

“Oh?”

“Special physique...”

An array pattern swirled as if blown by wind.

In the next instant, Li Sansi and Li Sansui found themselves cut off from the surroundings.

An old man in coarse robes stood hunched in the distance, smiling at them.

“Special physiques are indeed rare... but I wasn’t asking you.”

Qi Liuma looked at Li Sansi as though seeing straight through his black robes.

“A mighty one!”

Li Sansi’s vines trembled—overwhelming power.

BOOM!

Qi Liuma appeared before him in an instant, a finger pressing against his brow.

Li Sansi staggered back, only to find the world had changed completely.

Li Sansui's figure had vanished.

He was isolated by a formation.

"This formation..."

Li Sansui felt her hair stand on end. The old man's mastery of arrays utterly crushed hers.

Qi Liuma was truly excited.

Fourth-sequence Everchanging Dao Intent—perfectly suited for arrays.

With proper guidance, she could become a grandmaster of deceptive formations!

Li Sansui recognized the old man.

On the blood-colored battlefield, she had seen him risk his life for Five Phoenixes, laying down a heaven-shaking formation to seal invading mighty ones.

“Senior!”

Li Sansui was somewhat excited.

“Will you study array formations with this old man?”

Qi Liuma asked directly, smiling.

He had taken many disciples before, but all had been forced upon him by high martial sacred grounds to steal the Nine Secret Words.

Ironic—now, when he truly wanted to take a disciple, he had none of the Nine Secret Words to offer as a greeting gift.

But if Li Sansui could inherit his mantle, that would be enough.

Five Phoenixes still faced brutal battles ahead.

When that venerable from the high martial Buddha world descended, it would be a bitter fight.

He might die.

To find a satisfactory successor before his death—to pass on his legacy—was a kind of happiness.

Li Sansui did not hesitate.

Qi Liuma had been willing to give his life for Five Phoenixes.

She had no reason to doubt such a man.

She knelt and kowtowed deeply.

Qi Liuma's wrinkled face creased into a blooming smile. He helped her up, grinning like a flower.

...

After breaking through to Yin Spirit,

Li Sansui stabilized her cultivation in the immortal ruin.

Then she followed Qi Liuma out.

He did not immediately teach her array formations.

Instead, he brought her to the ice pagoda.

Looking at it with an odd expression, Qi Liuma recalled Lu Fan's "tool people" comment and chuckled.

Only someone as ruthless as Young Master Lu would dare capture holy sons and saintesses from various sacred grounds and turn them into tool people.

"You just broke through. Perfect time to use some of the holy sons and saintesses inside as sparring partners."

Qi Liuma said.

With a thought, the pagoda door opened.

The imprisoned holy sons and saintesses inside felt a glimmer of hope.

But Qi Liuma flicked his finger.

Overwhelming pressure crushed them, leaving them gasping.

The current Qi Liuma, partially recovered, was no longer the dying man they had once mocked.

“Qi Liuma?!”

The burly holy son’s eyes narrowed. Qing Ling holy son inhaled sharply.

Qi Liuma lived—the mighty ones had all failed!

Qi Liuma ignored them.

He locked onto a holy son from a Ninth Tier high martial world—weak enough to serve as Li Sansui’s practice partner.

The holy sons and saintesses felt utterly humiliated.

They—proud sons and daughters of sacred grounds—reduced to prisoners.

Now treated like livestock for training!

“We are holy sons and saintesses of sacred grounds! To humiliate us is to humiliate our sacred grounds! The Holy Lords will not forgive you! When they come, rivers of blood will flow!”

The chosen holy son roared.

Qi Liuma’s expression was cold. He slapped out.

Mighty one strength cracked the holy son’s body.

“Prisoners should act like prisoners. Otherwise... die.”

Qi Liuma said.

They were already enemies of countless sacred ground Holy Lords. He no longer cared.

With Qi Liuma overseeing, these captives could not cause trouble.

Sensing the disturbance,

Figures streaked through the sky.

Nie Changqing, Overlord, Kong Nanfei, Jing Yue, and others rushed over excitedly.

Using sacred ground holy sons and saintesses to hone their combat skills? Why not?

The captives in the ice pagoda...

Fully embraced their roles as tool people.

Bu Nanxing, hidden in the shadows, watched the humiliated holy sons and saintesses and shook his head.

How tragic.

Qi Liuma oversaw the pagoda while researching and laying down formations.

...

Lake Heart Isle.

Baiyujing Pavilion.

The new Heaven-Asking Game engrossed Lu Fan daily.

Its difficulty far surpassed the previous games—even the Yin-Yang Game paled in comparison.

In eight days, he had only placed seven or eight pieces.

His primordial spirit felt strained.

His spiritual energy compression had reached an extreme.

Lu Fan felt he had returned to his old salted fish state—playing Go, sipping wine, utterly carefree.

When bored, he brainstormed new cultivation ruins.

Sipping plum wine from his bronze cup during a break...

He suddenly remembered something.

With a thought, the token he received upon reaching Qi Refinement Layer Six appeared in his hand.

An unnamed token. Lu Fan had never figured out its purpose.

But as a reward, it had to be extraordinary.

This breakthrough had been immensely profitable.

Not to mention Five Phoenixes becoming high martial—the boost to his Indestructible Demon Body alone was joyous.

The only mystery was this token.

Rusted iron, utterly ordinary.

Lu Fan frowned. He hadn't examined it closely before.

Now, upon careful inspection, he discovered it was like a bottomless pit—frantically devouring spiritual energy.

Was this how to activate it?

Light flashed in Lu Fan's eyes.

He gripped the token and began pouring spiritual energy into it.

He wanted to see what made this reward special.

Hum...

But as more spiritual energy flowed in, Lu Fan's expression gradually darkened.

Ten strands, one hundred, one thousand...

Ten thousand, one hundred thousand!

The token was insatiable. As it absorbed more, the rust evaporated, faint light and strange fluctuations spreading.

Lu Fan's mouth twitched...

Was this thing going to drain him dry?

When one million strands had been devoured...

BOOM!

An explosion rang in Lu Fan's mind.

Gray-white qi burst from the token, heavy enough to collapse the void.

The gray-white qi enveloped Lu Fan.

In an instant, the world spun. Stars shifted.

Terrifying tearing force threatened to shred his body.

Above Baiyujing Pavilion...

BOOM...

After a deafening roar,

Lu Fan—chair and all—vanished completely.

On Buzhou Peak.

Zhulong, bathing in yin-yang energy, trembled. Her long lashes quivered.

She suddenly opened her eyes uncontrollably.

Left eye black, right eye white—nearly crushing the void.

“Father’s aura... disappeared?!”

Zhulong was shocked.

Above the Boundless Sea.

Qi Liuma, deep in thought designing formations, suddenly paled.

He snapped his eyes open. Terrifying aura erupted.

The surrounding sea exploded into towering waves.

The formation he was designing shattered.

“Young Master Lu’s aura disappeared?!”

“Where did Young Master Lu go?!”

Qi Liuma's aged face filled with horror and panic.

His heart felt clenched by an invisible hand!

His coarse robes flapped as he shot into the sky.

He stood at the pinnacle of Five Phoenixes' heavens, gazing in all directions.

BOOM!

An aura of collapsing heaven and earth spread.

He raised two fingers. Array patterns wrapped them as he wiped his eyes.

The next moment, the scene before him turned his face ashen.

Outside Five Phoenixes, the world's protective barrier...

Like a peeling eggshell, was rapidly flaking and crumbling!

Chapter 390: Tomb of the Ancient Emperor?!

Something terrible has happened!

Something truly catastrophic!

Qi Liuma felt a bone-deep chill as he watched the world's protective barrier around Five Phoenixes rapidly flake and crumble. His body trembled faintly.

Normally, the barrier would take anywhere from one month to a year—or even several years—to fully dissipate.

But now, in less than ten days, it would be completely gone.

The newborn high martial Five Phoenixes would be stripped bare, fully exposed to the eyes of countless high martial worlds.

The venerable from the high martial Buddha world could descend with ease.

The Holy Lords of every sacred ground could arrive just as easily, so long as they blocked Nihility Heaven's rules.

It would be an unimaginable calamity!

Qi Liuma was experienced. Though he had failed to create a high martial world, his theoretical knowledge was profound.

“Normally, during a world’s ascension, the plane lord must never leave the world. The moment they do, exactly this happens.”

“So where... has Young Master Lu gone?”

Qi Liuma took a deep breath, anxiety rising.

He could not bear to watch Nihility Heaven’s only newborn high martial world be destroyed.

His robes flapped violently.

He descended back to the Boundless Sea.

On the sea’s surface, the cultivators who had just finished sparring with the holy sons and saintesses looked at him in confusion.

“Senior, what happened?”

Overlord, his massive body wrapped in demonic qi, axe and shield on his back, asked.

“It’s nothing. No major crisis yet.”

“Continue your cultivation.”

Qi Liuma suppressed his emotions and did not reveal the truth.

Inside the ice pagoda.

The burly holy son seated atop his ferocious beast brightened.

He had never struggled or resisted.

As a prisoner, he was unaccustomed to it, but he knew struggling would only draw the attention of that terrifying existence in this world—and get him killed.

So he waited patiently.

Waited for rescue.

Waited for the Holy Lords of high martial sacred grounds to save him.

And now, he sensed his chance had come.

Qing Ling holy son exchanged a glance with him.

Both smiled.

...

Where exactly had Lu Fan gone?

What was that nameless token?

No one knew.

Even Lu Fan himself was puzzled.

Where had this token taken him?

BOOM!

The terrifying tearing sensation gradually subsided, like a vortex running out of power.

Lu Fan's primordial spirit cleared.

Seated in the Thousand-Blade Chair, white robes fluttering.

He slowly opened his eyes.

Before him floated the token, now radiating brilliant light. The once plain, unremarkable token now gleamed like a supreme treasure.

"Drained a million strands of my spiritual energy. Quite the glutton."

Lu Fan glanced at the token, lips twitching.

Only now did he have the leisure to look around.

He had left Nihility Heaven?

No... he could still sense the void's aura.

But he was far from Five Phoenixes—perhaps in some remote corner of Nihility Heaven.

Beneath his feet was solid ground.

He looked around—a desolate, dead continent. Endless earthen hills and mountains rose and fell. Perhaps eons ago, this had been a dense primordial jungle.

“So where is this?”

Lu Fan was curious.

It looked like a dead continent. Its previous level was unknown.

His gaze swept the land—it was vast. Before its death, it must have been powerful.

At least top-tier mid martial.

Of course, top-tier mid martial meant little to Lu Fan now.

He was, after all, the lord of a high martial world.

“Brought me here because I activated the token?”

Lu Fan pondered.

His primordial spirit surged, striking the token.

Hum...

The token released profound fluctuations.

It turned into a streak of light and shot forward.

BOOM!

The token unleashed terrifying power. Stones flew, the earth tore open in deep gashes.

Lu Fan tapped the armrest. With a thought, Thunder Movement activated.

He became lightning and chased after the token.

Not long after Lu Fan vanished...

Powerful spatial fluctuations rippled here.

Then white light crashed from the sky.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The dead land was blasted with deep craters.

When the light faded, a shocking sight appeared.

A colossal, majestic warship emerged from the white light, landing on the dead continent—utterly out of place.

Nearby, chariots thundered forth from the fading light, figures radiating powerful auras.

Giant birds with wingspans hundreds of li wide, carrying seated figures.

One after another, figures appeared!

They seemed to be adjusting after spatial travel, unsteady.

After a while, they opened their eyes—divine light shooting forth.

The dead continent trembled. Terrifying rumbles rolled, as though the heavens might collapse!

Every aura was heavy and horrifying!

On the warship, a handsome middle-aged man stepped forth—heroic and majestic, clad in glazed armor, crowned with purple gold. His armor radiated divine light, his mere presence seemed to twist the void.

“Holy Lord Beigong!”

Someone spoke gravely, recognizing him.

Holy Lord Beigong stood atop the warship, gaze sweeping with domineering arrogance.

His eyes shifted. As more white lights faded, figures emerged—all cloaked in black or gray robes, concealing their identities and auras.

Hiding their identities to seize fortune?

Such rats had no right!

Terrifying auras clashed across the dead continent, cracking the ground.

These people clearly knew each other—and were deeply wary.

Soon, primordial spirit fluctuations crisscrossed, accompanied by muffled explosions.

“This is Nihility Heaven!”

Someone said.

“As expected. Legend says the ancient Emperor’s tomb lies in Nihility Heaven. This token is the key to opening it... It guided us here. The Emperor’s tomb is about to open! If not the Emperor’s, it must be the tomb of a peak ancient expert.”

Many breathed heavily.

“It must be the Emperor’s tomb opening. Why else would tokens dormant for countless ages suddenly shine and guide us?”

Laughter rang out, filled with eager anticipation.

Holy Lord Beigong stood on the warship, coldly surveying. He flicked his wrist—a token floated before him.

“The ancient Emperor represents an era. His tomb must contain supreme fortune—perhaps even his inheritance. This seat... will not let it go easily.”

Holy Lord Beigong laughed.

He made his bold claim, aura overwhelming—he would claim this fortune.

His arrogance drew smirks from the cloaked figures.

The first bird gets shot. Let Beigong be the target.

Suddenly—

A black-robed figure seated atop a giant bird spoke in a low, grave voice.

“Someone arrived before us... There are lingering spiritual energy fluctuations here.”

The moment he spoke,

Many cloaked figures paled.

“Someone got here first?!”

The crowd grew restless.

They all understood what arriving here meant—they were here to seize fortune.

How could they let someone else claim it first?

Without hesitation, they moved.

Like thunder, they shot across the sky, the void trembling.

Terrifying auras streaked the heavens, shaking the earth.

They drew their tokens, stimulated them with primordial spirit power, and blasted toward the distance.

...

Lu Fan had no idea what was happening after his departure.

He was wholly focused on chasing the token.

He discovered the token was faster than even his full-speed Thunder Movement.

This sparked his competitive spirit.

A streak of white, a streak of lightning—racing across the dead continent.

The further he flew, the more oppressive the atmosphere became, as though heading toward some great terror.

Lu Fan frowned, momentarily hesitant.

But he shook his head.

A token the system listed as a reward could not be ordinary.

He decided to keep going.

BOOM!

Like a meteor streaking through the night.

The sky was gloomy, shrouded in dust-laden clouds—a leaden gray world filled with ruin and death.

Flying over this continent weighed heavily on Lu Fan's heart.

After an unknown time...

The token slowed.

Hm?

Lu Fan grew alert.

The lightning dispersed.

The Thousand-Blade Chair hovered. Lu Fan sat calmly, white robes fluttering.

The token gradually stopped.

Lu Fan frowned, reached out, and grabbed it.

He looked ahead—and his heart jolted.

At the continent's end stood a monument piercing the heavens!

A gravestone!

Yes—a towering gravestone engraved with countless profound patterns of ancient divine beasts, lifelike and radiating terrifying sharpness.

One glance shook Lu Fan's soul. The beasts seemed to come alive, roaring and howling.

“A gravestone?”

Lu Fan narrowed his eyes.

It was strange—no words, no epitaph.

A blank stele!

Let history judge merit and fault.

To dare erect a wordless gravestone—the tomb's owner was no ordinary person.

The tokens must have been drawn here by this stele.

Lu Fan sat in his wheelchair, stroking his chin thoughtfully.

“A great expert's tomb ruin?”

Having created countless ruins himself, Lu Fan felt a sense of familiarity.

“Ruins... are always the most interesting.”

As he pondered,

The token trembled.

A beam of light shot from it, illuminating the gravestone.

The stele shook.

The earth rumbled, dust billowing.

A cold, gloomy palace slowly rose from the ground.

Dead and lifeless—a terrifying necropolis.

Yet behind the wordless stele, the palace stood majestically.

The sight was magnificent.

One had to admit—the ruin was domineering. The palace was grand, ancient architecture simple yet brutal, as though transporting one back to the glorious ancient cultivation era.

It felt less like a tomb and more like a thriving ancient cultivation city.

Lu Fan held the token. Its light dimmed, spiritual energy spent.

Seated in his wheelchair, he floated forward.

The wheels rolled with a soft rasp.

The palace towered, its gates ten thousand zhang high.

Every brick, every stone carried the weight of ages, as though buried since time immemorial.

Lu Fan raised a hand and pressed it against a brick on the gate.

He seemed to feel the palace's loneliness.

"Hm?"

"No spiritual energy fluctuations at all... Is this really a ruin?"

Lu Fan took out the token again.

But it was now dull, lifeless.

He frowned, then pushed harder against the gate.

BOOM!

Lu Fan wasn't sure how much force he unleashed.

But the gate did not budge—not even dust fell.

He... had been rebuffed!

He, Lu Ping'an... rebuffed!

Taking a deep breath,

Lu Fan pressed the token against the wall.

Still no reaction.

The palace was a dead, silent place—no response.

“So... what’s the point of bringing me here?”

To admire the grandeur?

His little Lake Heart Isle was far cozier.

Lu Fan pursed his lips.

Suddenly—

Terrifying auras erupted in the distance.

Lu Fan sensed it and turned.

He seemed to see terrifying experts crossing the void.

Someone was coming!

Lu Fan frowned.

So what if they came? The ruin wouldn't open...

Suddenly, as Lu Fan racked his brain,

A system prompt appeared before his eyes.

This stunned him.

“Rules sever all spiritual energy; in Nihility Heaven, gather Nether Soil.”

“Detected Host encountering a spiritual-energy-depleted ancient tomb ruin. Friendly reminder: Collect over ten ‘Nameless Tokens’ to gain one opportunity to relocate the ancient tomb ruin.”

The prompt vanished.

Lu Fan inhaled deeply.

“One chance to relocate the ancient tomb ruin?”

He asked.

But the system gave no further reply, no matter how he called.

“The ancient tomb ruin cannot open because it is in a rule-bound heaven where spiritual energy is severed. It lacks spiritual energy to activate...”

Lu Fan tried Spiritual Energy Distribution.

But was informed he was outside range.

“No spiritual energy distribution... So to open the ruin, I must relocate it. Where to? Somewhere with spiritual energy... Where has spiritual energy?”

Lu Fan stroked his chin, mind racing.

His eyes suddenly lit up.

“Don’t tell me... I’m supposed to move this ancient tomb ruin to Five Phoenixes?”

“That... wouldn’t be right.”

“I, Lu Ping’an, am an upright man. How could I do something so underhanded?”

Lu Fan frowned.

In the distance—

Terrifying sonic booms swept in.

Next moment, a warship crushed the void as it approached.

The void cracked inch by inch.

Atop the warship stood a majestic, heroic figure, hands behind his back, aura like sharp swords that could cleave the stars.

Lu Fan glanced at him. More powerful auras were closing in from behind.

Holy Lord Beigong naturally saw Lu Fan too.

“Such weak aura... Qi Refinement realm?”

“A Qi Refiner at the Emperor’s tomb?”

Holy Lord Beigong was puzzled.

But no matter how he sensed, Lu Fan remained an ordinary Qi Refiner—not even at the peak.

Suddenly,

Holy Lord Beigong’s eyes lit up. He saw the dull token in Lu Fan’s hand.

He glanced at his own radiant token, then at Lu Fan’s plain one, and smirked.

“Seems a lucky fool who stumbled upon an Emperor tomb key...”

Holy Lord Beigong chuckled.

With his status, he saw through Lu Fan’s bone age—barely a dozen years.

Such a young man had to be Qi Refinement realm.

Even the monstrous geniuses of First or Second Tier high martial worlds couldn’t be this absurd.

So Holy Lord Beigong paid Lu Fan no mind.

Gazing at the magnificent palace, his heart raced.

A suspected ancient Emperor’s tomb!

If he obtained its fortune, he could soar to the heavens!

Next moment, he wasted no words.

“Hand over the token.”

Holy Lord Beigong’s aura exploded!

BOOM!

Energy like a dragon smashed forth, shaking the earth.

He had already claimed Lu Fan’s token as his own—another token meant another share of fortune.

“Hmph!”

“First come, first served. Holy Lord Beigong wants it all? Hardly fair.”

But as Holy Lord Beigong attacked,

A black-robed figure in the distance unleashed a powerful strike—an energy palm shooting toward Holy Lord Beigong.

Another expert appeared, vying for Lu Fan's token.

One after another, terrifying auras locked onto the area.

Killing intent surged like an army of iron and horse.

The atmosphere turned solemn and murderous.

Lu Fan was speechless.

He had done nothing, not even spoken.

Yet they attacked without a word, fighting over his token...

Just because he was nice, he deserved to be bullied?

Give them the token? Could they open the ruin?

Lu Fan shook his head.

He, Lu Ping'an, had always minded his own business.

But these people... went too far.

And if he collected over ten tokens, he could take the entire tomb ruin home.

Lu Fan thought about it...

It seemed... quite a good deal.