

Starlit Path 431

Chapter 431: With the General's Command, I Come to Slay You

No one in the world had expected the first match of the Heaven and Earth Grand Tournament to escalate to this point.

A mere Ninth-grade high-martial world had displayed resilience and miracles that stunned every realm.

In the team battle, every fighter had fought without fear of death. Overlord had crushed his foe with overwhelming dominance. Tang Yimo had burned everything, even his lifespan, in his desperate resolve to kill the enemy.

Every heart trembled.

One had to admit—this was no ordinary Ninth-grade world.

Perhaps it could no longer even be called Ninth-grade.

While its overall strength might not yet reach that level, in terms of individual combat power, the Five Phoenixes seemed inferior to no top Seventh-grade world.

Of course, that was only the initial thought of the spectators.

They had assumed the Five Phoenixes' Saint Lord Lu was merely on par with the Star-Moon Saint Lord.

But when they saw the Upper Realm envoy—who had nearly stepped out of the ancient warship—forced back inside...

They finally understood.

They had been wrong.

Utterly wrong!

Saint Lord Lu had always been a hidden monster!

BOOM!

Terrifying pressure spread endlessly. The entire cyan-brick plaza seemed obliterated.

The ancient warship groaned. Its ancient patterns trembled.

A massive chessboard spanned the sky above the Five Phoenixes like a colossal spiderweb, ensnaring heaven and earth.

Every expert aboard the warships beyond the Five Phoenixes felt their breath catch.

Then—

The world held its breath. Only shock remained.

The Upper Realm envoy... had been suppressed?!

The mysterious, lazy, and noble envoy who had always remained within the ancient warship—
suppressed by raw force!

One piece crushed several golden-body-flower Transcendents.

Another piece suppressed the Upper Realm envoy inside the warship!

Was the envoy weak?

Absolutely not!

Even restricted by the Void Heaven's laws, the envoy was no supreme being.

But to represent the Upper Realm in the lower worlds...

How could he be weak?

He was the face of the Upper Realm!

Dead silence!

Whether from the Five Phoenixes or beyond—utter silence.

Saint Master Tuoba and Saint Master Qingling were speechless.

Venerable Joyous pressed his palms together, face twisted as if in pain.

Saint Lord Lu... what a ruthless man!

The Great Venerable of the Little Thunderclap Buddha World blazed with light—shock and disbelief.

He could not believe Lu Fan dared to strike at the Upper Realm envoy!

The attendant fighting Lu Jiulian faltered.

He had thought it was over.

Once the envoy emerged, he could crush everything with world-ending might.

But reality had slapped him hard.

The envoy... never left the warship!

He had nearly stepped out—only to be forcibly shoved back by Saint Lord Lu.

Utter humiliation!

BOOM!

An explosion!

One attendant's body burst under the "thousandfold spirit pressure"!

Like a fuse—or contagion.

The first golden-body-flower attendant exploded.

Then another... and another...

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Crimson and golden blood mist bloomed across the plaza.

The entire blood-colored battlefield quaked.

The explosion of golden-body-flower Transcendents—how terrifying?!

Hiss...

Gasps of horror rose from every warship and spirit vessel beyond the Five Phoenixes.

Each explosion marked the death of an Upper Realm attendant!

How dare Saint Lord Lu of the Five Phoenixes do something so suicidal?!

This was openly defying the Upper Realm!

The attendant fighting Lu Jiulian trembled.

What a horrifying scene.

His familiar comrades exploding one by one—would he be next?!

“You dare!”

ROAR!

A heaven-shaking roar erupted from the warship, shaking away all dust from the battlefield.

The Upper Realm envoy within was furious.

Utterly enraged.

Who wouldn't be?

He represented the Upper Realm—its dignity and might.

He had finally been about to emerge.

Only to be slapped back inside.

Like squatting to relieve oneself, finally feeling relief—then someone shoving your head down, forcing you to sit back in it.

Utterly humiliating!

And the opponent hadn't even shown himself.

A gentle laugh drifted across the heavens.

Like a refined young man seated in a high tower, casually chatting with the world below.

"You bully my Five Phoenixes—so I bully you. What of it?"

Lu Fan's voice rang across the blood-colored battlefield like thunder from a clear sky.

"Those who offend the Five Phoenixes—what is to be done?"

The calm voice carried boundless confidence.

On the blood-colored battlefield—

Every Five Phoenixes cultivator felt like firecrackers ready to explode!

Scalps tingling, every pore flaring.

Excitement—uncontrollable joy!

Overlord was domineering.

But...

Young Master Lu was more domineering!

“What is to be done?”

The voice asked again, as if questioning every soul in the Five Phoenixes.

“Fight them! Kill them!”

Ning Zhao, peerless and ethereal in her flowing white dress, shouted with iron resolve.

Though her voice was not loud, it rang clear and confident.

As Lu Fan’s maid, she would support her Young Master—never let him be embarrassed.

Her cry ignited a storm!

The new emperor Tantai He leapt from his chair, face red as blood, fists clenched.

“Fight them! Kill them!”

He roared.

The cry spread.

Every Five Phoenixes cultivator’s eyes turned red, chests heaving with surging qi!

“Those who bully the Five Phoenixes—fight them! Kill them!”

Jiang Li stood like an iron-blooded general, voice resounding.

Then—

The hundred thousand troops rose as one, armor clashing, blood qi soaring.

With one heart and one mind, they roared:

“Fight!”

“Kill!”

Cultivators of the Five Phoenixes feared neither death nor battle!

BOOM!

The laws of the Void Heaven seemed to stir, trembling violently.

Ni Yu, black pot on her back, stuffed pills into her mouth with excitement!

Young Master... so domineering!

But this was the Young Master she knew!

Ni Chunqiu's red robes flared as she shouted until her voice grew hoarse, cheeks flushed, eyes dreamy.

Under the united will of a hundred thousand troops and countless cultivators—

Their roar seemed to shatter the heavens.

Fierce aura surged, shaking mountains and rivers.

Venerable Joyous' scalp tingled as he chanted "Amitabha" nonstop to calm his fear.

Tuoba and Qingling trembled uncontrollably!

"Fight them! Kill them!"

Overlord carried Tang Yimo out of the plaza, setting him down on the blood-colored ground.

He turned, eyes blazing like a ferocious beast of the starry skies!

His roar shook the void.

BOOM!

Above the Five Phoenixes' skies—

Dead silence.

Countless eyes from warships, spirit vessels, and beast backs looked down.

The towering figures of Ascended Immortals.

They seemed stunned.

The auras they had projected weakened significantly.

Below—

Qi Liujia, coughing blood that stained his beard red, seized the chance and retreated swiftly.

His eyes blazed with light.

Seeing the united Five Phoenixes, he wiped the blood from his lips, eyes filled with relief and excitement.

“Hahaha...”

A refined young man’s laughter rang through heaven and earth.

Perhaps laughing at the Five Phoenixes’ unity.

Or at the Upper Realm envoy’s humiliation.

The shattered primordial spirits of the attendants shot skyward in terror.

But...

The sound of another piece falling rang out.

The blood-colored battlefield cracked open. Abysses appeared.

The terrified spirits were dragged downward by terrifying force.

Hummm...

A city emerged.

Like the ghostly capital of hell—eerie and sinister.

Countless yin soldiers stood with rusted spears and halberds, gazing outward.

The primordial spirits were pulled in, shredded, annihilated...

BOOM!

They exploded into pure energy, scattering across the Five Phoenixes' heavens and earth.

“Insolence!”

“You dare insult the Upper Realm?!”

The ancient warship trembled violently, as if about to crack.

Finally—

A hand reached out from the cabin door.

Vast aura spread.

The shaking voice struck the soul, suppressing even the united roar of the Five Phoenixes.

...

Lake of Origin, Heart Island.

Lu Fan watched the system prompt flash by and smiled.

He ignored it for now.

The breeze could not calm his surging blood.

His hair fell across the Spirit Pressure Chessboard.

Faces of the Five Phoenixes flashed across it—excitement, joy, pride.

Pride in being part of the Five Phoenixes.

Lu Fan smiled.

Since you take pride in me—how could I disappoint you?

He exhaled.

A spark of light bloomed in his eyes.

A sense of belonging.

This unity of the Five Phoenixes had touched him. A sense of belonging was forming.

Since reincarnating into the Five Phoenixes, Lu Fan had always been a spectator.

Even after building its current cultivation golden age...

He had always felt a barrier, an inability to fully integrate.

But today...

That was changing.

...

Ancient Tomb.

Lu Changkong, experimenting with divine herb cultivation, suddenly felt something.

He looked up, gazing at the blood-red sky beyond the tomb, eyes gleaming.

Lu Fan's transformation seemed to affect him through blood.

"This is my son."

Lu Changkong laughed.

His laughter was free and proud.

In the distance—

Bu Nanxing was horrified.

He hesitated. The Five Phoenixes seemed in grave danger—surrounded by enemies, on the verge of annihilation.

Yet...

The unity of its people made him waver.

Lu Changkong's laughter snapped him out of it. Gritting his teeth, Bu Nanxing decided not to run.

“Little Bu! Bring the last divine herb!”

Lu Changkong’s joyful shout rang out.

Bu Nanxing’s lips twitched. He glanced at Lu Changkong—who had spent a century obsessed with cultivating a divine herb—and thought the man was mad.

Divine herbs grew naturally through heaven and earth.

How could they be artificially cultivated?!

This was a waste of time!

But Bu Nanxing didn’t dare defy him—he feared being poisoned accidentally.

To survive safely, he would obey the old man.

“Coming!”

Bu Nanxing shouted.

Spiritual qi surged as he carefully wrapped the last divine herb—soil and all.

Then he shot forward.

“The last one—Vermilion Cloud Fruit.”

“Success or failure—here it is.”

Lu Changkong’s eyes lit up as he laughed.

He opened his thick stack of bamboo slips, recording in the Hundred Herb Manual.

Then he began fusing the two divine herbs.

Beside the Vermilion Cloud Fruit was a withered, lifeless weed—no divine aura at all.

Bu Nanxing’s lips twitched harder...

This thing becoming a divine herb?

Like a toad turning into a swan!

Impossible!

It had absorbed over a thousand spirit herbs from the tomb...

But could a mishmash become divine?!

BOOM!

Suddenly—

Bu Nanxing froze.

A fragrance wafted past his nose.

The withered weed began to tremble, bursting with dense life force.

Lu Changkong excitedly dripped juice containing the power of time onto it.

The life force boiled like soda water.

The weed straightened like a blade. Its energy transformed wildly.

Overwhelming life force surged forth.

Bu Nanxing nearly choked!

“This...”

He staggered back, trembling.

“This actually... became a divine herb?!”

Lu Changkong laughed heartily.

As the overwhelming life force spread through the tomb...

Deep within—

Ghostly flames ignited.

The ever-burning lamp trembled.

Each flicker was like a powerful heartbeat.

As if a will was awakening.

“Little Bu, catch it! The divine herb... is running!”

Lu Changkong suddenly shouted.

Bu Nanxing’s body shook.

Uncle!

Don't get me killed!

He truly feared grabbing a divine herb and being killed by it!

Throughout history, countless beings had died for divine herbs!

Divine herbs were synonymous with danger!

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The herb, bursting with infinite life force, shot out as a streak of green light.

Bu Nanxing couldn't hold back. His aura erupted—Grand Ability Realm power fully revealed.

He lunged to seize it.

But...

A terrifying suction force erupted from the tomb's depths.

"Damn it!"

"I knew it!"

Bu Nanxing's face changed. He nearly cried.

He knew—getting near a divine herb was dangerous.

He just wanted to survive quietly, but danger always found him!

The divine herb was sucked away.

Deep in the tomb—

A hand reached out.

What a hand!

Pale as snow, bloodless—like carved from ice.

Just one hand evoked visions of mountains of corpses and seas of blood, worlds destroyed.

Draped in a blood-red sleeve like a burial shroud, dripping crimson.

It seized the divine herb.

The herb's overwhelming life force struggled, but was held fast.

“Divine herb...”

A faint fluctuation spread—a soul-level ripple.

Bu Nanxing didn't dare breathe. His heart nearly stopped.

Lu Changkong narrowed his eyes, hair whipping wildly.

“Eight-star divine herb... Nine stars exist, but an eight-star in the Void Heaven is already extraordinary.”

“To think you could cultivate one with human hands...”

“Sir, your talent is unmatched. Gu is convinced.”

“May I borrow this divine herb?”

The voice asked Lu Changkong.

Gu?

Blood-Robed General, Gu Mangran?!

The legendary killer who had drenched the Void in the blood of the Eight Heavens’ coalition?!

The infamous monster?!

Bu Nanxing swallowed hard, nearly screaming, and clamped his hands over his mouth.

Lu Changkong was stunned.

Then, in his simple farmer's robes, he smiled and stroked his beard.

"You may."

"But..."

Lu Changkong's eyes gleamed.

"Speak freely, sir."

The voice replied.

Lu Changkong laughed, pointing at the blood-red sky.

"Someone wants to kill my son. If you act, kill all who stand against him."

Bu Nanxing felt his heart stop.

Uncle is still Uncle...

So domineering?

Those on the blood-colored battlefield—who were they?

From the Eighth, Seventh, and Sixth Heavens—many high-martial worlds, even Sixth and Fifth-grade, plus the Upper Realm envoy!

You say kill, and they die?!

“Saint Lord Lu can handle himself.”

The pale, blood-robed hand’s owner spoke.

Lu Changkong smiled.

“As a father, I just want to help my son. Make it easier for him.”

The owner of the hand sighed regretfully.

“Sir, killing everyone would have dire consequences. Could we... only kill the Upper Realm envoy?”

The voice asked.

Lu Changkong considered, then nodded reluctantly. “Fine.”

The pale hand in blood robes took the divine herb and retreated into the tomb’s depths.

“Thank you, sir.”

Bu Nanxing collapsed to the ground.

He stared dumbly at Lu Changkong.

So...

This old man who nearly poisoned him to death...

Was the father of Saint Lord Lu—the one who crushed Transcendents with chess pieces and dominated the world?!

...

Blood-colored battlefield.

Terrifying rumbles shook the earth.

Countless gazes fell.

From the warships, spirit vessels, and beast backs beyond the Five Phoenixes—Ascended Immortal experts.

The Upper Realm envoy within the ancient warship was about to emerge.

The representative of the Upper Realm's will was finally appearing.

The previous suppression by Lu Fan's chess piece had been an anomaly.

No one believed Saint Lord Lu could truly rival the envoy.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Ascended Immortal wills erupted, as if to welcome the envoy.

Or perhaps to seize the greatest profit in the coming chaos.

At the very least—capture Tang Yimo.

The attendant fighting Lu Jiulian trembled.

Lu Jiulian floated aside, frowning calmly at the ancient warship.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

With the warship at the center, the ground cracked inch by inch.

White robes fluttered like an immortal descending to the mortal world.

The warship's cabin was like a gate to immortality.

An immortal emerged!

Powerful aura spread.

BOOM!

In the Void Heaven, law-blades slashed down, trying to carve out world-shaking might!

From the ancient warship—

A figure appeared. White robes straight, face shrouded in distorting light.

Hands behind his back, fury-born pressure made every soul in the Five Phoenixes struggle to breathe.

The immortal stepped forward, each step shaking the Nine Heavens.

Within the distorting light, his eyes were sharp as swords.

He stared at the Five Phoenixes as if seeing through everything.

“You broke the rules, killed my attendants, disrespected the Upper Realm!”

“Your crimes deserve the Ninth Hell!”

“Saint Lord of the Five Phoenixes—come forth and confess!”

His words fell.

The entire Five Phoenixes seemed ready to shatter under the pressure.

Lake of Origin.

Lu Fan looked up, smile fading.

Killing intent filled his eyes.

“Immortal?”

He sneered.

His hand pressed the armrest.

Phoenix Feather Swords shot skyward.

Nine swords stacked above his head, forming the complete Phoenix Feather Sword.

But just as he prepared to flick the armrest—

His mind stirred.

BOOM!

Across the Five Phoenixes continent—

As if a terrifying beast awakened.

The vast sea churned, raising heaven-shaking waves.

In the Void Heaven, law-blades froze mid-fall...

The ancient tomb's weathered doors slowly opened.

A skeletal daoist in tattered robes, emaciated as if about to fall apart, staggered out.

Rusted sword at his waist.

Ghostly flames danced in his empty sockets.

He raised his head.

The skeleton grinned.

BOOM!

The vast sea rippled.

The daoist raised his sword and shot into the sky.

Blood-colored battlefield.

The immortal who had emerged from the ancient warship was still condemning the heavens, demanding Lu Fan come forth to confess.

But his voice suddenly cut off.

Because...

A blinding sword light tore across the battlefield.

A skeletal old daoist in tattered robes, wielding a rusted sword, charged forth!

BOOM!

Countless laws seemed to transform into sword light.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Laws became swords—all returning to one.

Converging on the rusted sword in the old daoist's hand.

“With the General's command—I come to slay you.”

The old daoist spoke.

PFFT!

His sword swept across.

So fast the Upper Realm immortal still condemning Lu Fan had no time to react.

His head, shrouded in radiant light, was severed.

The sword cut through both flesh and primordial spirit.

One strike.

The Upper Realm envoy who had finally emerged from the ancient warship...

Died.

Died so tragically!

Above the Five Phoenixes' skies—

Ascended Immortals who had stepped half out from warships, spirit vessels, and beast backs—

Felt their hair stand on end and instantly retracted their steps.

“Myriad Swords Return to One! Under the Blood-Robed General... the Sword King!”

“How dare the Blood-Robed General so brazenly kill the Upper Realm envoy?!”

“Catastrophe! True catastrophe!”

Ascended Immortals cried out, on the verge of madness.

Many turned and fled.

That ancient killing god had awakened—they wouldn’t survive a single meal!

They had imagined countless outcomes—even Saint Lord Lu matching the envoy blow for blow.

But never...

The envoy dying so pathetically!

As the envoy perished—

The hovering Dao Derivation Mirror trembled violently.

Suddenly—

A gentle breeze.

A flash of silver.

Beside the trembling mirror, a white-robed youth in a wheelchair appeared.

He reached out and gently grasped the mirror.

The trembling stopped.

The mirror changed hands.

The youth smiled warmly, like fine jade.

He toyed with the Dao Derivation Mirror, looking at the various factions with enthusiastic hospitality.

“Everyone, the Heaven and Earth Grand Tournament isn’t over yet. No need to rush off.”

Chapter 432: The Bottleneck Breaks—Heavenly Tribulation Descends

The Upper Realm envoy... was dead!

Slain on the spot—one sword, head severed!

Even an Ascended Immortal from the Upper Realm had no time to react before flesh and primordial spirit were both cut away.

The corpse fell coldly to the ground like a brilliant flower withering in an instant, landing with a dull thud.

The attendant who had been fighting Lu Jiulian completely lost his mind!

The middle-aged man's eyes were bloodshot. His proud master, the noble Upper Realm envoy, had died just like that!

At this moment, the radiant light around the envoy's severed head finally dispersed. Without power to conceal it, his true appearance was revealed.

Lu Jiulian withdrew his hand and stood calmly. His breathing was steady, his face unchanged—he still had strength to spare against this golden-body and primordial-spirit-flower Transcendent attendant.

The attendant wanted to flee. Lu Jiulian did not stop him.

Because he knew—this attendant would not get far.

After all...

Young Master Lu, with his slightly bad temper, had already appeared.

BOOM!

Above the heavens, every gaze locked in horror on the figure that had appeared beside the Dao Derivation Mirror.

They watched the white-robed youth reach out and seize the mirror.

With the Upper Realm envoy dead, the primordial spirit he had left inside the mirror could not resist Lu Fan. It was forcibly erased, and the mirror changed hands.

At this moment, countless experts finally saw with their own eyes the mysterious Saint Lord Lu of the Five Phoenixes.

The Sword King under the Blood-Robed General had slain the immortal envoy with one strike!

Saint Lord Lu had appeared and seized the treasure mirror with a thought!

If anyone claimed this wasn't planned, they would never believe it.

What were the odds?

The moment the envoy fell, Saint Lord Lu appeared right beside the mirror to take it.

Many Sixth-grade sacred ground and even Fifth-grade experts present hadn't even noticed the mirror in time.

Though not an offensive artifact, the Dao Derivation Mirror's importance was undeniable.

Silence blanketed the world.

Then—uproar!

Though Lu Fan had spoken to keep them, the Upper Realm envoy who had finally emerged from the ancient warship had been beheaded by the Sword King under the Blood-Robed General.

Who would dare stay?

Most experts only glanced at Lu Fan before ignoring him.

What they feared was the skeletal daoist in tattered robes wielding a rusted sword—the Sword King!

“Catastrophe in the Void Heaven! An ancient killer has awakened! Flee!”

“Escape! The Upper Realm envoy is dead, an ancient killer has returned—the Void Heaven will become a bloodbath again!”

“The Sword King has emerged. Can the Piano King, Shadow King, and War King be far behind?! The Blood-Robed General Gu Mangran must have revived!”

No one paid Lu Fan any attention.

Voices filled with terror of the Blood-Robed General rang out.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Warships and spirit vessels crushed the void. Ferocious beasts spread their wings, blotting out the sky.

They fled the Void Heaven in panic and dread.

The emaciated old daoist stood motionless in the void, rusted sword in hand, ghostly flames flickering in his empty sockets. His tattered robes fluttered in the wind as he stared at the fleeing experts and sacred grounds like a dried specimen.

Lu Fan held the Dao Derivation Mirror, expression calm.

He had been ignored, but he didn't mind.

He raised his hand. Array patterns appeared in his palm.

Since you ignore me, don't blame me for being ruthless.

Lu Fan's lips curved slightly.

With a flick of his finger, the array pattern shot out.

“None of you are leaving.”

Seated in the Thousand-Blade Chair, silver blades cascaded like a galactic waterfall—dazzling and peerless.

Hummm...

In an instant—

Mist rose, clouds churned.

A terrifying grand array activated, expanding to cover a hundred thousand li beyond the Five Phoenixes.

Every warship, spirit vessel, and beast was trapped within.

“Saint Lord Lu, how bold!”

“Leave some room for mercy! Don’t push us too far!”

“Damn it! This is an Earth-tier grand array!”

Curses, furious roars, and endless rage exploded from within the mist-shrouded array.

Some experts were horrified, some furious, some twitching with dread.

Who would have thought the oppressed side would turn the tables so completely?

Trapping them and refusing to let them leave!

Even the skeletal daoist was stunned, ghostly flames flickering faster in his sockets.

He opened his mouth as if to speak.

The general’s command had only been to kill the envoy.

And he had used all his strength to do so.

Among the experts present, many were no weaker than the envoy.

Scaring them off was one thing—but Saint Lord Lu wanted to keep them all?

The general had just obtained a divine herb. He still needed time to refine and recover.

Saint Lord Lu, don't be too arrogant...

But in the end, the daoist said nothing.

Clang!

Sword light swept across the sky. Countless sword qi crisscrossed the Void Heaven like flowing starlight.

The daoist stood in the void behind Lu Fan, rusted sword in hand—as if backing him up.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Within the mist array—

Roars rang out endlessly.

Then—

An Ascended Immortal tore through the mist like a true immortal emerging from the sea, shooting away as a streak of cyan light.

“Sword King... Blood-Robed General! Since you have returned, great tribulation awaits!”

“This world no longer has a place for you!”

“Your sins from the past must be repaid!”

BOOM!

Their words thundered.

Yet the Ascended Immortals who spoke did not linger—they fled as streaks of light.

“They escaped?”

Below—

The middle-aged attendant who had emerged from the ancient warship trembled.

The experts from Sixth- and Fifth-grade worlds had fled?!

Abandoning their warships, spirit vessels, and beasts—just running for their lives?!

The attendant's heart panicked. He wanted to flee too—but how?

He stood on the ruined plaza, looking around.

His heart felt gripped by a giant hand.

All around him were Five Phoenixes cultivators and the cold gazes of a hundred thousand troops.

Overlord stood with axe and shield on his back, expression icy.

Lu Jiulian stood calmly, watching him.

The attendant felt as if he had fallen into a pit of vipers.

“I... I am the attendant of the Upper Realm envoy!”

His legs shook as he spoke.

He suddenly looked up at Saint Lord Lu holding the Dao Derivation Mirror.

“Saint Lord Lu! You cannot kill me!”

He roared.

“You killed the Upper Realm envoy! Someone must communicate with the Upper Realm!”

“I... I can speak for you!”

“To avoid great punishment!”

He shouted in terror.

He believed this was his only lifeline.

“Even with the Blood-Robed General backing you?”

“The Five Phoenixes compared to the Upper Realm is like a puddle to an ocean...”

“Let me go! I can beg for mercy from the Upper Realm!”

The auras around him faltered. Overlord, Jiang Li, and the others frowned, looking at Lu Fan.

Indeed—the Upper Realm envoy alone had been like an immortal.

If the Upper Realm truly attacked, what then?

This decision was Lu Fan’s to make.

Lu Fan toyed with the Dao Derivation Mirror, feeling the flowing dao essence within.

The attendant's words made him laugh.

He glanced sideways at the man.

"What are you?"

The attendant's face stiffened.

"Kill him."

Lu Fan said calmly.

This attendant had favored the enemy from the start of the tournament, yet dared speak of fairness?

Lu Fan had placed several pieces on the board—like writing his name in a little black book.

"No!"

The attendant roared in shock. He hadn't expected Lu Fan to disregard the Upper Realm entirely.

BOOM!

His mind trembled. Primordial spirit flower and golden body flower bloomed simultaneously.

His body seemed ready to tear space and flee.

But...

To the Five Phoenixes cultivators, it was only a blur.

The next moment, the skeletal daoist appeared behind him, rusted sword pressed against his neck.

A bone-chilling aura of death spread from the attendant's feet to his entire body.

"Spare—"

PFFT!

The daoist's sword swept across.

The rusted blade looked corroded, but was incomparably sharp.

It sliced through flesh. Blood sprayed.

The attendant's head flew.

Blood qi was sucked into the rusted sword, forming a crimson rainbow that sprayed endlessly...

The sword seemed to have a unique power.

This strike severed not just the body but the primordial spirit's head as well.

The attendant's headless corpse lost all aura and knelt coldly on the ground.

Once untouchable and glorious—he died like the lowliest speck of dust in the Nine Heavens.

Overlord, Jiang Li, Qi Liujia, and the others watched with complex emotions.

Watching this hateful attendant die, they felt a long-suppressed breath finally released.

Lu Fan toyed with the Dao Derivation Mirror, his gaze shifting to the rusted sword in the skeletal daoist's hand.

Hmm...

This sword seemed quite extraordinary.

Perhaps sensing Lu Fan's gaze, the ghostly flames in the daoist's sockets flickered faster.

He subtly hid the sword behind his back, blocking Lu Fan's view.

Lu Fan was amused.

Hiding it? Did Lu Ping'an lack a rusted sword?

His gaze shifted to the grand array.

And the Ascended Immortals who had torn through it and were fleeing into the distance.

Lu Fan's expression grew cold.

"I said the Heaven and Earth Grand Tournament isn't over—and you all just run?!"

His voice thundered.

The grand array began to change.

Countless clouds gathered, forming a massive cloudy hand—like a palm that could cover the heavens.

Ascended Immortals felt their hearts quake.

Only a few from Fifth-grade worlds tore through the array with extreme methods and escaped.

The rest were all dragged back.

Even the Great Venerable of the Little Thunderclap Buddha World, ears twitching, was yanked back by the massive hand.

His heart sank to the bottom.

Saint Lord Lu... had too much ambition!

He wanted to keep all these Ascended Immortals?!

If not for fear of the Blood-Robed General Gu Mangran—that peerless killer—they would have long erupted in world-shaking attacks and crushed this arrogant Lu Fan!

But seeing the skeletal daoist with the rusted sword, their hearts grew cold.

Within the ancient tomb—

Ghostly palaces, dense life essence surging.

The ever-burning lamp flickered.

As if witnessing everything on the blood-colored battlefield, faint laughter drifted from the depths.

“This Young Master Lu...”

The laughter carried appreciation and exhilaration.

Bu Nanxing, sensing everything, trembled in fear.

Saint Lord Lu... still as domineering as ever!

Now not just crushing Transcendents—he was beating Ascended Immortals?!

Lu Changkong laughed heartily.

As expected—Lu Fan was still Lu Fan, petty and vengeful.

...

Within the churning mist array—

Primordial spirit fluctuations surged.

They spread across the heavens.

Unable to break the array, they stopped struggling for now.

They wanted to see what Saint Lord Lu was planning.

He couldn't kill them all—he didn't have the power.

There were many Ascended Immortals present. If truly pushed, they would unite.

Unless the Blood-Robed General truly emerged, a single skeletal Sword King with dried-up life force was no threat.

“The Heaven and Earth Grand Tournament is the grand event of the Nine Heavens. Why rush to leave? How could I, Lu, watch such an event go to waste? Wouldn't that make me a sinner of the Nine Heavens?”

“Now, I hold the Dao Derivation Mirror. So...”

“The Heaven and Earth Grand Tournament continues.”

Lu Fan’s voice rang out.

Within the array, the trapped experts were stunned...

Then dumbfounded.

What?

Continue the tournament?!

It had already devolved into chaos—how could it continue?!

The Great Venerable of the Little Thunderclap Buddha World fell silent, palms pressed together, Buddhist light shining through the mist as he stared at Lu Fan.

He couldn’t understand what Lu Fan wanted.

He had killed the Upper Realm envoy and all the attendants—trampling the Upper Realm’s dignity into the dirt.

Shouldn’t he be sealing the world and preparing for the Upper Realm’s retaliation?

Yet he boldly seized the mirror and wanted to restart the tournament...

What was Lu Ping’an planning?!

Not just the ancient Buddha—none of the sacred ground experts could understand.

Tuoba and Qingling exchanged glances.

Their lips twitched hard.

“It’s said the Dao Derivation Mirror contains countless ownerless origin dao essences. Is Saint Lord Lu planning to use the tournament as an excuse to drain every last strand from the mirror... and fuse it into the Five Phoenixes?!”

The thought grew uncontrollably.

Madman!

Tuoba and Qingling felt ice in their veins.

Lu Ping'an truly was a madman!

Within the array, auras surged.

The skeletal daoist rose into the sky, rusted sword in hand, standing behind Lu Fan.

Lu Fan sat in the Thousand-Blade Chair, stroking the Dao Derivation Mirror.

His gaze pierced the array.

The daoist's presence made every expert's aura falter.

They seethed but dared not speak.

Lu Fan smiled.

His primordial spirit entered the mirror.

Hummm...

The mirror projected strands of origin dao essence.

The phantoms of the Five Phoenixes and Star-Moon reappeared.

“My Five Phoenixes’ little ones barely lost to the Star-Moon Saint Lord. We accept that. But now the Saint Lord is dead—dead men don’t fight. Who will Star-Moon send next?”

“Will you fight?”

“Dare you fight?”

Lu Fan’s voice thundered.

Within the array, clouds churned.

Furious roars rose—clearly from Star-Moon experts pounding their warships.

But no answer came.

Lu Fan was in no rush.

One hand propping his chin, the other toying with the mirror.

Below—

Five Phoenixes cultivators and the hundred thousand troops breathed rapidly, fists clenched, faces flushed with excitement.

Domineering!

This was their Young Master Lu!

Utterly domineering!

The moment Young Master Lu appeared, these once-arrogant outsiders didn't dare speak!

Low roars finally came from the array.

“Star-Moon... surrenders!”

A voice spoke for Star-Moon.

Silence fell across the world.

Lu Fan laughed.

“Surrender?”

“Granted.”

Hummm...

With Star-Moon’s surrender, the twenty staked strands in the mirror were stripped away and fully fused into the Five Phoenixes.

Lu Fan felt it.

The Five Phoenixes' origin began to inscribe dao essence—twenty new strands.

BOOM!

Most importantly—

Lu Fan's eyes blazed with light.

The stele in his soul vortex shone with countless rays, strengthening his soul.

Through the system panel, he saw his Chaos Energy leap from 39 He to 59 He!

And most crucially...

His spiritual energy reserves, stuck at 9,999,999 strands...

Began to loosen!

BOOM!

A vast ripple of energy surged from Lu Fan.

In the Void Heaven—

Terrifying pressure began to gather, accumulated from the Nine Heavens.

“Thunder tribulation!”

Below, Qi Liujia’s eyes narrowed.

“The Five Phoenixes is not yet registered in the High Martial Registry... Adding twenty strands triggers a tribulation penalty!”

Worry filled his face.

Lu Fan, in white robes, looked up at the tribulation gathering above the Nine Heavens.

He was not surprised.

This tribulation was both for the inscribed dao essence...

And for his own breakthrough in Qi Refinement.

Within the array—

Many experts were briefly surprised, then gloated.

Even their laughter rang out unchecked.

Hosting the tournament?

Coveting origin dao essence without being registered—poison!

Tribulation was coming—they couldn't escape it!

Keep acting tough!

Now you've overplayed your hand!

Chapter 433: Qi Refinement Layer 7—Taking Over the Grand Tournament

BOOM!

Terrifying thunder rolled endlessly from the heavens. The laws themselves seemed to tremble, resonating with the thunder.

A strange, oppressive aura permeated the Void Heaven.

The figures trapped within the Heaven-Covering Array looked up at the sky, eyes gleaming.

The surprises in this Heaven and Earth Grand Tournament had come one after another.

A Seventh-grade world, Star-Moon, had actually lost to a Ninth-grade world, the Five Phoenixes. Tang Yimo's Demon Lord silhouette alone had been shocking enough.

Then the ancient killer—the Sword King under the Blood-Robed General—had emerged and beheaded the Upper Realm envoy with a single strike.

Even Ascended Immortals had been stunned.

And now, the Five Phoenixes' Saint Lord had appeared, seized the Dao Derivation Mirror... and triggered heavenly tribulation.

Many watched with schadenfreude, hoping Lu Fan would be struck dead by the lightning.

Of course, they were in no hurry.

Though Lu Fan had trapped them in an Earth-tier grand array, killing them all would not be easy.

Moreover, several Fifth-grade Ascended Immortals had already escaped.

News of everything that had happened in the Void Heaven would soon spread through the Lower Three Heavens.

The Upper Realm would learn of it.

The death of their envoy was no small matter!

The Upper Realm would never let it slide. Powerful experts would descend. Lu Fan's temporary hosting of the tournament wouldn't last long.

BOOM!

In the endless darkness of the Void Heaven, a deep azure abyss seemed to split the sky like an axe blow.

Some faintly saw distant palaces—jade towers, immortal qi swirling, carved railings of jade.

The tribulation actually manifested visions!

Such phenomena only appeared when top-tier special constitutions faced Ascended Immortal tribulations.

Yet now, merely for inscribing dao essence, such visions appeared!

Every cultivator in the Five Phoenixes looked up at the sky.

Their hearts pounded as if ready to burst.

“Is that... the Immortal Realm?”

People murmured.

Even the Ascended Immortals trapped in the array felt their hearts tremble.

The tribulation had come. Wind rose.

Lu Fan's white robes fluttered wildly.

He toyed with the Dao Derivation Mirror, expression calm.

Suddenly—

Figures appeared at the edge of the abyss.

They stood there, emotionless and numb, gazing down.

BOOM!

One figure reached into the abyss, seized an azure thunder dragon, and hurled it downward.

The thunder began as a dragon.

As it descended, it transformed into a sharp azure spear.

The spear fell straight and true, as if piercing the void itself.

Terrifying sonic booms tore at eardrums.

Brilliant light dazzled the eyes!

On the blood-colored battlefield—

Every soul in the Five Phoenixes felt crushing pressure.

Qi Liujia wiped the blood from his beard, face pale.

“This is... tribulation for inscribing dao essence?!”

“Impossible! How can it be this strong?!”

Qi Liuji trembled, his face ashen. He had never imagined tribulation for inscribing dao essence could be this terrifying!

Had the heavens targeted the wrong person?!

Overlord, Lu Jiulian, and the others narrowed their eyes.

The new emperor Tantai He was utterly shocked.

Under such world-ending tribulation, he would be annihilated instantly!

BOOM!

World-shaking rumbles echoed endlessly.

Just as the tribulation spear was about to strike—

Lu Fan moved.

He raised his hand and casually tossed the Dao Derivation Mirror upward.

BOOM!

The thunder spear collided with the mirror.

Countless arcs of lightning crawled across it, spreading like a spiderweb.

This...

Everyone's pupils contracted.

Some even looked dumbfounded.

What the hell?!

He just... threw the mirror?!

That was a Heaven-tier artifact?!

The Ascended Immortals trapped in the array were speechless.

Was Saint Lord Lu trying to use heavenly tribulation to shatter the mirror and seize its origin dao essence?!

BOOM!

The mirror trembled violently.

Then was blasted back.

Lu Fan caught it.

He looked at the smoking but undamaged mirror and sighed regretfully.

“What a pity... it didn’t break.”

He shook his head.

When the system had described the mirror, Lu Fan had this idea. Now he had tested it.

Unfortunately, the mirror held.

This tribulation was still too weak.

The thunder spear continued to fall.

The Spirit Pressure Chessboard appeared before Lu Fan.

He picked up a piece and placed it.

Plop...

The thunder spear was compressed by overwhelming pressure, shrinking into a thunder-compressed chess piece that landed neatly on the board.

Lu Fan toyed with the mirror in one hand, smiling faintly.

In the abyss above the Nine Heavens, the figures seemed enraged by his casual attitude.

Tribulation represented heaven's judgment.

Lu Fan's actions were an insult to the heavens.

BOOM!

One after another, thunder arcs crashed down.

Crackle...

A sea of lightning filled the sky.

Each spear carried world-ending might, chilling to the bone.

Yet Lu Fan's white robes fluttered, hair dancing in the wind.

The Dao Derivation Mirror rested on his knee.

He rolled up his sleeve and placed pieces unhurriedly.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Every thunderbolt was crushed into a chess piece by terrifying spirit pressure, landing steadily on the board.

The scene was dazzlingly cool.

It was as if Young Master Lu was playing chess against the heavens.

What a refined way to transcend tribulation?!

Such terrifying tribulation—yet he handled it so lightly.

The tribulation ended.

A game of chess neared its conclusion.

The shadowy figures in the immortal palaces above the Nine Heavens gradually faded.

Finally, the clouds dispersed. The Void Heaven returned to calm.

Laws rippled outward.

It was over?!

Just like that?

No blood, no desperate struggle.

Only calm composure.

Everyone was stunned, watching the white-robed youth seated on his silver-bladed chair, at a loss for words.

The tribulation had been... too easy.

Qi Liuji's pale face gradually showed shock. Something felt wrong.

Transcending tribulation this easily... perhaps it truly was just for inscribing dao essence.

Lu Fan smiled faintly.

This tribulation had indeed been extraordinary—it was for breaking through to Qi Refinement Layer 7, descending from the Nine Heavens.

But compared to the tribulation when the Five Phoenixes became high-martial, this was nothing.

The tribulation scattered.

The world fell silent.

Of course, this shock was still within acceptable limits.

The Ascended Immortals and other experts trapped in the array had hoped to see Lu Fan bleed under the tribulation.

But they knew he had a high chance of succeeding.

After all, it was merely tribulation for inscribing dao essence.

Yet they thought they had predicted everything.

In reality, they understood nothing.

As the tribulation ended—

A ringing sound exploded in Lu Fan's ears.

Like the grand sound of the Great Dao.

The system panel automatically appeared.

His spiritual energy reserves had broken free, surging upward...

Though not a full century's accumulation, this breakthrough felt exhilarating.

Qi Refinement... Layer 7!

Finally Layer 7!

Light blazed in Lu Fan's eyes, illuminating the entire Void Heaven!

His spiritual energy reserves surpassed ten million strands—and kept rising with his accumulated reserves!

BOOM!

Within Lu Fan, mountains seemed to collapse—energy surging wildly.

Not just Qi Refinement.

His primordial spirit, stuck at 99, finally broke through!

And this breakthrough was a massive leap.

Even Lu Fan himself was slightly surprised.

*Host:

* Lu Fan

Title: Qi Refiner (Permanent)

Qi Refinement Layer: 7

Spiritual Energy Reserves: 21,657,009 / 100,000,000 strands

Primordial Spirit Power: 769 (Yuan)

Chaos Energy: 59 (He)

Lu Fan looked at the system panel and exhaled slowly.

Aside from the dramatically changed panel, there were rewards for reaching Qi Refinement Layer 7.

But for now, Lu Fan did not check them.

As he entered Layer 7, the Five Phoenixes' spiritual energy grew denser, but otherwise saw no major change.

Now a high-martial world, major transformations likely required breakthroughs in origin dao essence inscription.

This was perhaps Lu Fan's least impactful breakthrough to date.

But for his personal strength, the leap was enormous.

He stopped paying attention to the onlookers.

His mind returned.

The Dao Derivation Mirror in his hand glowed, its origin dao essence flowing like water.

Lu Fan frowned slightly.

He needed a way to drain all the origin dao essence from the mirror.

To him, the mirror was useless unless emptied and converted into the Five Phoenixes' dao essence.

A thought.

His finger flicked the armrest.

The next moment—

Phoenix Feather Swords stacked above his head, forming the complete sword.

Rip!

Under his primordial spirit's control, the fiery red tip slashed down, striking the mirror and making it tremble violently.

But when he pulled the sword away—

Not a single crack.

He couldn't break it.

The mirror's durability exceeded his expectations.

Many gazes watched him slashing the mirror with his sword and fell speechless.

Just like when he had used tribulation lightning on it.

What grudge did this man have with the mirror?!

But now they understood—Lu Fan only wanted the origin dao essence inside.

Seeing even Phoenix Feather Sword couldn't shatter it, Lu Fan stopped.

At this moment, the entire Void Heaven was utterly silent.

The experts trapped in the Heaven-Covering Array breathed heavily.

This Heaven and Earth Grand Tournament had completely derailed.

Though Lu Fan claimed he was taking over, who would believe him?

How could the tournament continue?

The skeletal daoist stood behind Lu Fan, rusted sword in hand, ghostly flames flickering in his sockets.

He had come under the Blood-Robed General's command to kill the envoy. Mission complete.

It was time to return to the tomb.

He left quickly, afraid to linger—Lu Fan's gaze on his rusted sword had been too heated.

Lu Fan felt a twinge of regret. As the Five Phoenixes' greatest refiner, he had wanted to study that sword.

Unfortunately, the daoist guarded it closely.

Withdrawing his gaze, Lu Fan held the mirror and looked at the experts from various worlds trapped in the array—warships, spirit vessels, and beasts.

Among them were Ascended Immortals like the Great Venerable of the Buddha World.

They were very well-behaved within the array.

Lu Fan knew what they were waiting for, but he didn't care.

His primordial spirit entered the mirror.

His lips curled.

Thinking of the attendant's earlier talk of "fairness and justice," he found it laughable.

The mirror allowed easy control of the tournament matchups.

The Five Phoenixes facing a Seventh-grade world first had definitely been deliberate.

Lu Fan checked the remaining participant list.

His lips curved into a smile.

...

“Everyone, the dead cannot return, but the Heaven and Earth Grand Tournament originated in the Void Heaven. We must continue its glory.”

“Thus, the tournament will proceed.”

Lu Fan spoke slowly.

Then he raised his hand and dispersed the Heaven-Covering Array.

Warships, spirit vessels, and beasts reappeared.

Saint Master Tuoba, Saint Master Qingling, and Venerable Joyous shivered.

Knowing Lu Fan, they were certain he was up to no good.

“The tournament continues?”

“It’s already chaos—how can it continue?!”

“Continue? Continue my ass! The symbol of fairness—the Upper Realm envoy—is gone. What meaning does this tournament have?!”

Many lower-world experts shouted defiantly.

Many Fifth-grade worlds, including their leading Ascended Immortals, had fled—leaving only scattered Transcendents.

They couldn’t even field full teams—what was the point?

But some Sixth- and Seventh-grade experts’ eyes gleamed.

For them, profit remained.

Lu Fan smiled as if he hadn’t heard the protests.

“Since no one objects, I’ll take that as agreement for me, Lu, to host the rest of the Heaven and Earth Grand Tournament.”

Everyone: "..."

Did this man hear their refusals?!

How could he be so shameless?!

Some Sixth-grade experts didn't mind.

Fight? Fine.

If they faced the Five Phoenixes, they would crush them—make Lu Fan taste defeat.

After all, many Seventh- and Sixth-grade worlds believed themselves no weaker than Star-Moon.

"Then let's begin selecting the next matchup."

Lu Fan spoke.

On the blood-colored battlefield—

The Five Phoenixes side was puzzled, unsure why Lu Fan insisted on continuing.

He raised a hand and tapped the Dao Derivation Mirror.

Ripples spread across its surface.

Two beams of light shot out.

Origin dao essence trembled, coiling like divine dragons within the mirror.

One beam projected the Five Phoenixes.

Again?!

The experts beyond the Five Phoenixes were stunned.

The second phantom soon formed into another world.

Lu Fan sensed his opponent through the mirror and smiled warmly.

“My selection is absolutely fair and just.”

He said earnestly.

Then laughed: “Heaven and Earth Grand Tournament, second match.”

“Void Heaven, Ninth-grade Five Phoenixes Small World...”

“Versus...”

“Blood Evil Heaven, Eighth-grade North Wind Small World.”

Lu Fan’s clear, refined voice rang across the Five Phoenixes.

His gaze shifted to Emperor Tantai He below.

“Emperor, please tidy the battlefield. As host of the Heaven and Earth Grand Tournament, the Five Phoenixes must not lose grace.”

Tantai He’s face flushed red with excitement at being addressed.

He ordered hundreds of iron riders to rush out, using spiritual qi to flatten and restore the plaza into a new arena.

Beyond the Five Phoenixes, aboard a spirit vessel, the experts of the Eighth-grade North Wind World turned ashen.

The Five Phoenixes had defeated a Seventh-grade world!

North Wind was only Eighth-grade—certain defeat!

The surrounding experts realized this too.

“Both sides, take the stage.”

Lu Fan spoke slowly.

Figures shot onto the newly restored plaza.

Jiang Li led Ye Shoudao, Du Longyang, Ni Chunqiu, and Young Master Tianxu.

Their auras blazed with excitement.

Previously oppressed by Star-Moon, now with Young Master Lu backing them...

It was their turn to oppress others!

They were excited, yet also a little wistful.

They had become the very people they once despised most.

The North Wind spirit vessel remained still.

In the Void Heaven—

Lu Fan's eyes narrowed, smile fading.

“You think I’m not qualified to host this tournament?”

“Or that I’m easy to bully?”

BOOM!

He flicked the armrest.

A silver blade flashed, streaking across the sky toward the North Wind vessel.

PFFT!

Aboard the vessel, North Wind’s leader—a half-step Ascended Immortal—exploded, primordial spirit shredded by the silver blade, dying instantly in a cloud of blood mist!

His body fell from the vessel, sliced to pieces by falling law-blades!

Silence.

The North Wind contestants trembled in terror.

Their team battle members finally leapt from the vessel, landing on the plaza to face Jiang Li and the others.

“First match—team battle. Both sides stake ten strands of origin dao essence...”

Lu Fan, seated in the Thousand-Blade Chair, smiled.

The North Wind contestants and experts from surrounding worlds glared.

Wasn't staking voluntary?!

How dare he decide ten strands for them without asking?!

They finally understood—under Lu Fan's control, the Dao Derivation Mirror and the tournament had become a dao essence farm for the Five Phoenixes.

The bullied had become the bullies.

“Heaven and Earth Grand Tournament, second match—begin.”

Lu Fan’s words fell.

The hundred thousand Great Xuan troops roared in excitement, armor clashing.

On the battlefield, before North Wind could even move—

Jiang Li, eyes burning with battle intent, led Ye Shoudao, Du Longyang, and the others like ferocious demons charging forth.

Chapter 434: Ascension—Five Phoenixes Transformed Once More

Pingyang Heaven, bordering the Void Heaven among the Nine Heavens, had gained the advantage in location, timing, and harmony for this Grand Tournament.

Many experts from high-martial worlds within Pingyang Heaven who had failed internal selection gathered at the border to watch the Void Heaven’s matches.

Yet no one had expected the tournament to descend into such chaos.

Terrifying auras crisscrossed the Void Heaven, stirring the sea-like laws into murderous storms.

BOOM!

Experts fled the Void Heaven in fury.

The omnipresent laws forced them to restrain their power, lest they attract the blades of law and be shredded—flesh and primordial spirit alike.

Countless cultivators watching from Pingyang Heaven were horrified.

What had happened?

Why were so many powerhouses suddenly fleeing?

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Once back in Pingyang Heaven, they no longer hid their auras.

“Lu Ping’an of the Five Phoenixes—the Upper Realm envoy is dead! You will die too!”

“The Blood-Robed General has returned! The Void Heaven will change masters! Everyone he killed back then will come for his debt!”

“Hahaha... The Blood-Robed General was hiding in the Five Phoenixes! That world must be destroyed! It will be destroyed!”

In Pingyang Heaven, Ascended Immortals no longer concealed their presence.

Their bodies towered ten thousand zhang, radiating brilliant light.

Like true immortals standing above the heavens.

Countless cultivators in Pingyang Heaven were terrified!

What?

The Blood-Robed General had returned?

Those unaware asked others.

Soon, the name of the ancient killer, the Blood-Robed General, spread once more.

But beyond his return, the most shocking news was—the Upper Realm envoy was dead!

These fleeing experts were Ascended Immortals from Fifth-grade worlds. Though not Saint Lords, their strength was undeniable.

They would not lie!

The Upper Realm envoy had truly perished!

The Heaven and Earth Grand Tournament had fallen into chaos!

BOOM!

Some roared in fury.

But the Void Heaven seemed to come alive. Law-blades slashed through.

The experts turned and fled, streaks of light vanishing into the distance.

In Pingyang Heaven, cultivators trembled.

In moments, news of the tournament's collapse spread like wildfire.

...

PFFT!

Du Longyang's aura pierced the stars. Black robes whipped as his pitch-black Martial Emperor Spear thrust forth, carving a ravine in the earth.

Young Master Tianxu, Ni Chunqiu, and Jiang Li formed the blood-colored war god. Ye Shoudao swung his single arm—myriad blade lights shredding the seasons!

The sole Tribulation Transcendent from North Wind turned ashen.

He had become everyone's target!

Terrifying attacks rained down—he was nearly blown apart!

North Wind was only Eighth-grade. They had no military formation like the Five Phoenixes' monsters to leapfrog realms.

Blood stained the battlefield...

North Wind's team battle contestants surrendered very sensibly.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Jiang Li's strikes cratered the blood-colored ground.

Du Longyang planted his spear. Ye Shoudao chuckled, blade light fading.

The Five Phoenixes won the second match effortlessly.

"Not bad. The Five Phoenixes truly have magnanimous hearts. Once surrender is declared, no further strikes..."

Above the heavens—

Lu Fan leaned on the Thousand-Blade Chair, one hand propping his chin, the other toying with the Dao Derivation Mirror. He smiled lazily.

His words drifted out, pointed and mocking.

Clearly aimed at the late Star-Moon Saint Lord.

“Five Phoenixes versus North Wind—team battle, Five Phoenixes victory.”

Lu Fan announced.

His primordial spirit surged. The mirror stripped ten strands from North Wind and transferred them to the Five Phoenixes.

Beyond the Five Phoenixes, aboard North Wind’s spirit vessel—

Their Saint Lord slammed the railing in grief-stricken.

They had once mocked the Five Phoenixes.

Now they were the joke.

But he could only swallow the loss.

With the Blood-Robed General backing the Five Phoenixes and the unfathomable Lu Ping'an—he dared not act.

“Victory!”

On the blood-colored battlefield, the moment the Five Phoenixes won—

A hundred thousand iron riders clashed armor and roared.

Hot-blooded cries soared to the heavens.

Jiang Li, Du Longyang, and the others descended the plaza.

Cultivators and troops cheered as if to overturn the sky.

They welcomed the victors—those who fought for the Five Phoenixes!

Lu Fan smiled.

His eyes gleamed.

For the individual battles, Overlord took the stage. Lu Fan enthusiastically “helped” North Wind stake another ten strands.

North Wind’s Saint Lord nearly charged out in rage.

But reason held him back.

Compared to the team battle, individual battles were even less suspense-free.

Overlord Xiang Shaoyun—the genius who had comprehended third-sequence Dao Intent, capable of slaying Transcendents, rivaling Upper Realm heaven-defying prodigies.

How could North Wind compare?

Overlord fought two rounds, ending both with two axe swings.

Hummm!

Individual battles concluded. North Wind's twenty staked strands transferred to the Five Phoenixes.

The Five Phoenixes gained another twenty strands.

Total inscribed dao essence: 79!

BOOM!

Above the heavens, thunderclouds gathered again—though weaker this time.

Who was it?

Beyond the Five Phoenixes, experts' expressions turned complex.

This dao essence... came too easily, didn't it?

Lu Fan faced this tribulation as if it were nothing.

The tribulation brewed for a day before descending.

As it fell—

Lu Fan's primordial spirit entered the mirror.

“No need to mind me. The Heaven and Earth Grand Tournament continues...”

He said.

Light flowed from the mirror. Every expert beyond the Five Phoenixes locked their gazes on it.

Finally, the mirror projected an image.

A crab-like small world.

“Pingyang Heaven, Eighth-grade Heavenly Crab Small World.”

Aboard warships and spirit vessels, many eyes lit up.

Saint Master Tuoba’s gaze flickered.

“Heavenly Crab is arguably the weakest world in this tournament.”

If Tuoba’s world faced them, they could easily earn dao essence.

But...

The next moment, Tuoba’s face froze.

Not just him—every expert beyond the Five Phoenixes stiffened.

Even the most composed Saint Lords couldn’t help cursing!

The second beam projected a familiar world.

The Five Phoenixes.

“Shameless!”

“Utterly shameless! Three matches in a row for the Five Phoenixes—why are the last two against the weakest Eighth-grade worlds?!”

“Rigged! Absolutely rigged!”

Experts roared in fury.

Worlds like Heavenly Crab were rare treasures in the tournament—free dao essence, just like the early Five Phoenixes.

BOOM!

Above the heavens, tribulation struck instantly.

The white-robed youth seated in the Thousand-Blade Chair rolled up his sleeve and flicked the armrest.

Phoenix Feather Sword soared!

A true phoenix seemed to spread its wings.

A true phoenix seemed to spread its wings.

A shrill phoenix cry tore the sky!

The tribulation was annihilated.

It even slashed into the clouds, cleaving them apart!

Another domineering way to transcend tribulation.

The clouds dispersed.

Phoenix Feather Sword disassembled into nine swords, floating beside Lu Fan.

He toyed with the Dao Derivation Mirror, looking puzzled at the crowd.

“Any objections?”

The noisy voices quickly quieted.

Those who had raged about rigging shut their mouths.

They finally understood—Lu Fan taking over the tournament was solely to farm dao essence for the Five Phoenixes, to drain the mirror dry!

They were speechless.

Earlier they had mocked the Five Phoenixes.

Now they could no longer laugh.

“Hmph... Once the Eighth-grade worlds are eliminated, the Five Phoenixes will face Seventh- and Sixth-grade worlds again!”

“When Upper Realm experts arrive, everything the Five Phoenixes swallowed will be spat back out!”

“Even if they win everything, ten victories advance to the finals—then they face Upper Realm teams! The Five Phoenixes struggled against Seventh-grade. Against Upper Realm teams? Certain defeat!”

Experts fumed.

They had never encountered such shamelessness.

The grand Heaven and Earth Grand Tournament had become a dao essence farm for the Five Phoenixes.

They were furious and jealous!

Lu Fan ignored their emotions, enthusiastically staking twenty strands for Heavenly Crab.

Heavenly Crab’s Saint Lord could only bleed in silence.

The battle’s outcome was no surprise. Heavenly Crab, even weaker than North Wind, was crushed.

The Five Phoenixes gained another twenty strands!

Total: 99!

Tribulation came again. Lu Fan cleaved it effortlessly.

Many were speechless.

Was this tribulation fake?

The earlier one had been terrifying, stirring law-blades across the Void Heaven.

Now it was like a drizzle.

With 99 strands, the Five Phoenixes teetered on ascension.

100 strands to reach Seventh-grade.

Lu Fan was in no rush. After shattering the tribulation, he selected another weak Eighth-grade world.

He had originally planned to brute-force shatter the mirror, but it was a high-grade Heaven-tier artifact...

Too tough. He couldn't break it yet.

So he settled for boiling the frog slowly.

After another victory...

The Five Phoenixes ascended.

119 strands—Seventh-grade!

BOOM!

Lu Fan's mind was instantly drawn to the origin.

In the vortex origin zone, the galaxy-like origin slowly rotated.

Strands of dao essence inscribed themselves on the three origin orbs.

The origin grew stronger.

Infinite white light filled Lu Fan's eyes.

Origin qi stormed.

Above the Five Phoenixes, radiant clouds bloomed. Countless lights fell. Dense origin qi gathered in the clouds, forming auroras of five colors.

Then—origin rain poured down in a vast deluge.

Spiritual qi grew denser. The Five Phoenixes' land, mountains, lakes, and seas expanded visibly.

Many beings bathed in the rain and broke through bottlenecks.

Even the Great Dao's sound seemed to resonate, as if gods and demons played zithers, filling the air with enlightenment of the Dao.

Before the Dao Stele in the Ninth Prison Secret Realm—

Many cultivators comprehended Dao Intent as if flowers bloomed in their minds.

The dao essence earned through the tournament now fed back to the Five Phoenixes' cultivators.

Under the origin rain—

Cultivators across the Five Phoenixes broke through madly!

On the blood-colored battlefield—

Many sat cross-legged as energy rumbled within them.

The overall cultivation level of the Five Phoenixes leapt forward in quality.

Beyond the Five Phoenixes—

Aboard warships, spirit vessels, and beast backs, experts watched the ascension with complex, envious expressions.

How difficult was ascension for a high-martial world—they knew best.

Why did they participate in the tournament?

To gamble origin dao essence for profit, to increase their world's foundation.

But even participating was difficult and risky.

Yet the Five Phoenixes soared on the wind, fattening absurdly!

But no world could replicate this path.

Even Fifth-grade worlds couldn't.

Perhaps only the Upper Realm, who originally controlled the tournament, could.

The Five Phoenixes had ascended.

Lu Fan, seated in the Thousand-Blade Chair, was in a good mood.

A thought.

He checked the rewards for reaching Qi Refinement Layer 7.

After entering Layer 7, Lu Fan no longer knew how strong he was. The explosive growth in primordial spirit and Chaos Energy made his power hard to gauge.

“A journey of a thousand li begins with a single step. Congratulations, Host, on reaching Qi Refinement Layer 7. Continue striving—life never stops, nor does Qi Refinement.”

“Congratulations, Host, on obtaining rewards: Indestructible Demon Body (Incomplete) ×1, Heavenly Immortal Wine ×1 pot, Random Divine Herb Seed ×1...”

Lu Fan looked at the rewards and paused.

As Qi Refinement layers increased, rewards grew simpler.

Now only three items—even oddities appeared.

Indestructible Demon Body wasn't surprising—he had received fragments before. He only wondered how many pieces remained.

Random divine herb seed—no surprise.

But Heavenly Immortal Wine?

Lu Fan laughed helplessly.

Had the system become a gourmet system?

A thought.

A gilded wine pot floated before him. Just the pot alone seemed extraordinary.

Carved with myriad divine beasts.

Lu Fan's eyes narrowed, feeling vast, mysterious aura.

But he didn't drink. He was still hosting the tournament. If the wine had side effects, things could go wrong.

So he decided to wait until everything was over, return to Lakeheart Island, lean on the railing, and savor the Heavenly Immortal Wine.

He stored the gilded pot.

His mind returned.

119 strands inscribed—Seventh-grade.

From Seventh to Sixth required one thousand strands—a significant leap.

If Lu Fan could drain all the origin dao essence from the mirror, the Five Phoenixes might reach Sixth-grade.

But that was ideal—unlikely.

The rules stated ten victories advanced to the finals.

The Five Phoenixes couldn't fight endlessly in the preliminaries.

Thus, rapid ascension would be difficult in the short term.

So Lu Fan lost interest in continuing to host.

A thought. He transmitted to Qi Liujia.

On the blood-colored battlefield, Qi Liujia vanished in confusion, reappearing beside Lu Fan.

“I give you control of the Dao Derivation Mirror. Host the rest of the tournament...”

“Do as you see fit. Just make sure the Five Phoenixes profit.”

Lu Fan said.

Qi Liujia nodded, still dazed.

“Don’t worry. I’ve got your back.”

Lu Fan, white robes fluttering, patted Qi Liujia’s shoulder.

The next moment—lightning arcs flashed. He vanished.

Aboard the warships around the Five Phoenixes—

Seeing Lu Fan hand tournament control to Qi Liujia, a mere Unity expert, many nearly exploded with rage.

Lu Ping'an truly looked down on them!

But with Lu Fan behind Qi Liujia, many swallowed their anger.

Qi Liujia continued hosting.

He calmed down.

His primordial spirit entered the mirror, arranging matchups based on the remaining worlds.

For the next match, he did not schedule the Five Phoenixes.

He pitted two Sixth-grade worlds against each other.

This stunned the experts beyond the Five Phoenixes.

They had thought they would be ignored.

Now they too had a chance to fight. Qi Liuji's hosting... wasn't bad.

On the blood-colored battlefield—

The new emperor led his officials back to the Great Xuan imperial capital.

Though the tournament was fascinating, he still had a dynasty to govern.

Not just the emperor—many cultivators left as well.

Many sensed the Five Phoenixes' remaining matches would be easy, so they returned to cultivate.

Cultivation was, after all, the priority.

Nie Changqing took Nie Shuang away.

Sima Qingshan left. Bai Qingniao carried her chicks and drifted home.

With no danger left in the tournament, they returned to the Five Phoenixes to cultivate.

...

Pingyang Heaven, Little Thunderclap Buddha World.

Endless Buddhist light shone.

With the Great Venerable trapped in the Void Heaven, the Transcendent left guarding the Buddha World felt constant pressure.

Suddenly—

The venerable striking the wooden fish in the ancient Buddha tower trembled.

He looked up.

Outside the tower, terrifying winds howled.

Above the Little Thunderclap Buddha World, the sky was torn open like an axe had split it in two—brutal, unreasonable.

The Transcendent's body shook.

The wooden fish before him exploded into splinters.

His pupils filled with terror.

Through the massive rift—

He saw only neat, endless ranks of murderous armies, killing intent chilling the soul!

Chapter 435: White Jade Capital Reappears in the World

What are those?

The venerable of the Little Thunderclap Buddha World stared in horror. Not just him—every cultivator in the Buddha World stood frozen, gazing at the massive rift that seemed to tear Pingyang Heaven itself in two.

Beyond the rift—an endless army, armored and disciplined, their terrifying auras shaking the void!

Like heavenly soldiers and generals, every soldier's armor blazed with dazzling splendor. This was a killing army forged for slaughter!

No ordinary high-martial world could produce such a force!

BOOM!

The rift had been opened by a spatial teleportation array. At its edges, the ancient character “行” (March) flowed in array runes.

An Ancient Emperor's mysterious array—touching the secrets of space.

“This is... the Upper Realm's punitive army!”

The venerable inhaled sharply. He rose swiftly, lotus platform blooming beneath his feet, streaking across the sky.

This was a terrifying army. Every soldier's aura seemed to distort the heavens.

Most crucially—the spiritual sense waves from the vast host nearly collapsed the void.

One hundred thousand troops!

One hundred thousand Nascent Divinity Realm experts formed into a punitive army.

Behind them, Unity Realm auras rose one after another—terrifying!

There were Transcendents, Ascended Immortals—even their auras were present.

Behind the army, ancient warships loomed.

At their center—a bronze chariot pulled by dragon-horses with true dragon bloodlines. Beaded curtains of radiant gems hung down, concealing the occupant.

An aura so oppressive it could burst hearts drifted from the chariot.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

The army marched. Pingyang Heaven itself seemed ready to shatter beneath their steps.

The banners they carried bore ancient totems.

The Little Thunderclap venerable's pupils shrank.

“Upper Realm Sacred Clan?!”

His heart skipped. He immediately prostrated himself respectfully.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The army advanced. Countless Buddha towers exploded from the mere shock of their aura.

Compared to this host, the Five Phoenixes' hundred thousand iron riders were like fireflies to the moon.

The venerable guarding the Buddha World pressed his palms together, bowed his head, and stepped aside.

He dared not block the army.

He didn't even dare speak.

Before such a force, even as a Transcendent—he was insignificant.

The army marched straight through. Each step shook the Little Thunderclap Buddha World.

The army was complete—cavalry on towering, ferocious beasts; archers bearing sacred-tier bows glowing with divinity; infantry with long halberds and spears, blades at their waists...

Every soldier stared straight ahead, marching into the void.

Leaving the Buddha World, their terrifying auras no longer concealed—like a tidal wave crashing toward the shore.

The Five Phoenixes were that shore.

Countless experts in Pingyang Heaven paled.

They feared the army might accidentally trample their worlds flat.

The Upper Realm army's might was unstoppable!

Many in Pingyang Heaven understood why this army had come.

Some were surprised.

After all, events in the Void Heaven had only unfolded days ago—yet this army had descended through the Buddha World.

Gathering such a force should have taken far longer.

Clearly...

The Upper Realm had long prepared to conquer the Void Heaven.

...

Five Phoenixes.

After handing the tournament to Qi Liujia, Lu Fan returned to Lakeheart Island. He sat in the pavilion, consolidating his breakthrough.

He needed time to fully master the spiritual energy he had gained through Mysterious Qi Refinement.

Of course, Lu Fan had already guessed what would happen next.

He did not take out the Heavenly Immortal Wine or fuse the Indestructible Demon Body fragment.

The Five Phoenixes had just ascended to Seventh-grade.

So he immersed his mind in the origin space, stabilizing the newly inscribed essence.

...

Five Phoenixes, boundless sea—ancient tomb.

The skeletal daoist returned with rusted sword in hand, vanishing into the tomb.

Bu Nanxing watched the skeleton streak past and shuddered.

One sword had slain the Upper Realm envoy!

This skeleton was no ordinary being!

If it wanted to kill him, a single slash could turn him into swiss cheese.

Bu Nanxing trembled. The outside world was too terrifying.

This tomb was a land of great peril.

He glanced at Lu Changkong, still fiddling with spirit herbs, and felt admiration.

The old man truly was the old man—even in such danger, he remained calm and leisurely.

This was the tomb of the Blood-Robed General!

The ancient monster who had slaughtered countless from the Nine Heavens!

The Sword King returned. The other three skeletons greeted him.

Ghostly flames danced in their sockets as if conversing.

After a long while, they approached the silent palace.

“General.”

“The Sword King’s action will surely draw the attention of the other Eight Heavens. Great calamity approaches.”

Flames flickered in the skeletons’ eyes as primordial spirit fluctuations spread.

The ancient palace doors remained closed.

After a long pause, a cold voice drifted out.

“No matter. The laws of the Void Heaven still linger. They dare not enter.”

“If they truly dare invade... we stop them with all our strength.”

The voice was icy.

The flames in the four skeletons' eyes burned brighter.

After a long moment, they spoke in unison:

“As you command.”

...

Beyond the Void Heaven.

Qi Liujia sat cross-legged in the void.

The Dao Derivation Mirror floated above his head, expression solemn, wrinkled face twitching.

He was quite skilled at controlling the mirror.

After all, Lu Fan had given him a perfect demonstration.

Find weak high-martial worlds as opponents for the Five Phoenixes, then enthusiastically set their stake to ten strands...

Though Qi Liujia felt this was shameless... strangely, it felt good.

“All for the Five Phoenixes to grow stronger.”

Qi Liujia murmured.

Of course, he also arranged matchups for other worlds.

Following Lu Fan’s instructions—strong versus strong. He left their stakes alone.

Thus—

The once-chaotic tournament became orderly again.

Aside from the “connected” Five Phoenixes, other worlds fought fiercely.

Of course, weaker worlds prayed not to face the Five Phoenixes.

After all, ten consecutive victories advanced to the finals—so they still had a chance to avoid them.

Under Qi Liujiá’s hosting, the Five Phoenixes soon achieved five straight victories, gaining another forty strands.

Just as he prepared a sixth straight win—

His expression changed.

A wind blew from Pingyang Heaven.

He sensed terrifying auras—his face paled.

Within the Heaven-Covering Array, figures looked into the distance, eyes gleaming.

Many smirked with schadenfreude.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Deafening rumbles came from Pingyang Heaven.

At the border between the Void Heaven and Pingyang Heaven, the sky seemed pierced.

As if a black cloud rolled forth, auras shaking and distorting the void.

Qi Liujia stood, robes whipping.

“This is... the Upper Realm army!”

His greatest fear had come to pass.

Though the Sword King under the Blood-Robed General had slain the envoy from the ancient warship—

It had been exhilarating for the Five Phoenixes.

But...

It had also planted a massive hidden danger.

The Blood-Robed General Gu Mangran—the ancient killer whose enemies spanned the Nine Heavens.

Now showing signs of return—how could the other Eight Heavens not notice?

They would never allow such a god of death to reemerge. They would send armies to annihilate him.

And the Five Phoenixes... would likely be the sacrifice.

Qi Liuji's back hunched further.

He felt the Five Phoenixes had been swept into a massive storm.

From the moment the ancient tomb appeared, he had sensed crisis. Now it had come true.

On the blood-colored battlefield—

Overlord, Du Longyang, Ye Shoudao, and the others looked up, expressions grave.

Even Ni Yu, constantly popping pills, paused.

They gazed beyond the heavens at the army rolling in from Pingyang Heaven and inhaled sharply.

Oppressive pressure bore down even from afar.

Lu Julian's expression remained unchanged.

Tang Yimo had been brought back to the Five Phoenixes to recover. Under origin qi nourishment, his wounds had mostly healed—only his primordial spirit needed time.

The hundred thousand Great Xuan iron riders stood, staring at the distant army. Despite the terrifying auras, they did not retreat.

“The Upper Realm army has come... The Five Phoenixes are in danger.”

“The Blood-Robed General saved us once, but also brought greater calamity.”

Beyond the Five Phoenixes, experts trapped in the Heaven-Covering Array sneered.

They finally had a chance to mock.

For days, Lu Fan’s control of the tournament had left them stifled.

Watching the Five Phoenixes reap massive profits—they were green with envy!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The army advanced. Beasts roared. Divine light pierced the eyes.

But it was not just the Upper Realm army.

Terrifying rumbles continued.

The teleportation arrays in Pingyang Heaven's Little Thunderclap Buddha World flashed endlessly.

Next—

The Ascended Immortals from Fifth-grade worlds who had fled earlier summoned their own armies.

Vast and endless—far more numerous than the Upper Realm force.

Nascent Soul, Body Integration, Divinity Transformation armies gathered.

Nearly a million strong—hurriedly assembled.

Of course, this ragtag force paled in momentum compared to the Upper Realm army.

Like the ancient war reborn.

Terrifying killing intent emerged.

Beyond the Void Heaven, armies arrayed without end.

Ascended Immortal auras crisscrossed the heavens.

Warships and chariots crushed the void.

Ferocious beasts spread wings, blotting out the sky.

Mysterious, unfathomable powers twisted space.

Every cultivator in the Five Phoenixes paled.

Even those trapped in the Heaven-Covering Array felt dread.

This lineup could annihilate a Fifth-grade world—let alone a newborn Seventh-grade Five Phoenixes.

Of course, most were awed by the Blood-Robed General Gu Mangran.

At the mere mention of his name—

The Upper Realm sent a hundred thousand troops.

Such fear.

BOOM!

An expert stood atop a war chariot and gave the order.

The Upper Realm's hundred thousand troops stepped forward, entering the Void Heaven in unison.

THUD!

The entire Void Heaven seemed to quake violently.

Many marveled at the scale—the Upper Realm had clearly prepared in advance, perfectly assembling a hundred thousand Nascent Divinity experts.

The Void Heaven suppressed Grand Ability experts greatly. With the Upper Realm's power, gathering a hundred thousand Grand Ability experts was possible.

After all, in the ancient war, Grand Ability experts had been like ants.

But with the Void Heaven's laws covering everything, a hundred thousand Grand Ability experts releasing auras simultaneously would instantly trigger the laws and be annihilated.

A hundred thousand Nascent Divinity experts... perfectly skirted the edge of the laws' eruption.

Yet still utterly terrifying.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Countless cold worlds in the Void Heaven shattered.

Countless Void Heaven wanderers screamed in terror, crushed without time to flee.

The army was merciless. They rolled forward. Blood mist bloomed endlessly in the void.

Their target—the Five Phoenixes!

“Amitabha.”

THUD!

Within the Heaven-Covering Array—

The Great Venerable of the Little Thunderclap Buddha World chanted, eyes filled with pity as if seeing the Five Phoenixes' fate.

Mountains crumbling, rivers of blood, all life extinguished.

Thus, at this moment, he released his Ascended Immortal aura and broke free of the array.

His task—to compassionately guide the souls of the Five Phoenixes' dead after its destruction.

Buddhist light swirled. His kasaya fluttered. He even wrapped all experts trapped in the array with his kasaya and carried them out of it.

Expert after expert sneered.

They fled swiftly, unwilling to be caught in the Upper Realm's purge.

...

Five Phoenixes.

Terrifying auras churned beyond the heavens, faces paling.

Cultivators in the Five Phoenixes looked up. Compared to mortals, they saw more clearly.

A hundred thousand terrifying auras—like heavenly soldiers and generals, blood qi soaring, hovering above them, killing intent bearing down like apocalyptic crisis.

Many lips trembled, faces ashen.

Many recalled the war of heavenly demons that had appeared in the Dragon Gate secret realm.

That war—powerhouses falling like rain.

That had been the peak of the Five Phoenixes' cultivation era.

Now it seemed to repeat.

As if history cycled.

...

Lake of Origin, Heart Island.

Lu Fan's mind withdrew from the origin space, returning to his body.

He looked at the terrifying, oppressive scene above the heavens—those hundred thousand Nascent Divinity troops—and felt astonishing even to him.

“They came so quickly. They were clearly prepared long ago.”

Leaning on the Thousand-Blade Chair, fingers tapping lightly.

In truth, from the moment the tournament was set in the Five Phoenixes, Lu Fan had guessed it all.

News of the ancient tomb had surely reached the Upper Realm. Once confirmed as the Blood-Robed General Gu Mangran's tomb—this punitive expedition had been inevitable.

In short—this was bound to happen eventually.

Lu Fan sighed softly.

Of course, he sighed not for the coming calamity.

But because the tournament could no longer continue—he could no longer rapidly gain origin dao essence.

While sighing—

Lu Fan slowly took out the Spirit Pressure Chessboard.

It floated before him, glowing faintly.

He rolled up his sleeve and brushed across the smooth board.

“Since I can’t continue gaining origin dao essence...”

“Then let the killing begin.”

“Again and again—do you truly think Lu Ping’an has a good temper? Easy to bully?”

Lu Fan lifted the lid of the black box.

Rolled up his sleeve, reached in, and picked up a piece.

Then placed it at the center of the board.

Plop!

A crisp sound rang out.

Next instant—

Above the boundless sea, the giant whale and immortal island vanished into thin air.

Only empty waves remained.

...

THUD! THUD! THUD!

The army's unified steps shook the void.

Iron and blood, killing intent soaring.

The Upper Realm experts dared not enter the Void Heaven. They sat aboard their ancient warships, watching everything.

From the luxurious bronze chariot pulled by dragon-horses with true dragon blood, a gaze drifted out.

Move!

Within the Void Heaven—

With every step the hundred thousand troops took, countless cold worlds shattered. Countless wanderers died without time to scream.

In the eyes of these Upper Realm experts, Void Heaven wanderers were like rats in a sewer—killed without blinking.

As they closed in, oppressive pressure made breathing difficult.

THUD!

Finally, as they neared the blood-colored battlefield—

Ten thousand infantry wielding long halberds and spears stepped forward first, pressing toward the Five Phoenixes.

Qi Lujia held the Dao Derivation Mirror, landing on the blood-colored battlefield, face pale and unwilling.

The terrifying pressure from the hundred thousand troops made the battlefield itself seem to crack.

Every soul's blood qi trembled.

But after the initial fear, every cultivator and iron rider of the Five Phoenixes—blood boiling, unyielding, unafraid—erupted with defiance!

Though incomparable to the Upper Realm army—

They did not bow their heads!

Hummm...

Suddenly, everyone in the Five Phoenixes felt the pressure lift.

Then—

They looked up.

Every cultivator in the Five Phoenixes raised their heads in a daze.

Their hearts skipped.

A beast's roar seemed to echo through every corner of the Void Heaven.

Above the Lake of Origin, origin qi surged.

A giant whale—unknown when it had appeared—hovered above everyone, as if teleported.

The world seemed to fall silent in that instant.

Atop the whale's back—an immortal island. Origin qi cascaded like waterfalls.

Pavilions, towers, immortal palaces stood upon it.

A mountain peak soared. A tower floated ethereal.

At the tower's railing—

A white-robed youth, picturesque.

With his power alone, he bore the pressure of a hundred thousand troops for all beings of the Five Phoenixes.

The giant whale carried the immortal island.

A piece fell at the center.

The long-absent White Jade Capital...

Reappeared in the world!

Chapter 436: One Day, We Will Storm the Ninth Heaven

BOOM!

Terrifying auras churned the vast sea, sending up heaven-shaking waves.

The giant whale raised its tail high. The immortal island on its back was shrouded in dense origin qi.

Countless gazes fell upon it—filled with awe!

“White Jade Capital...”

“White Jade Capital has reappeared in the world!”

“Since Young Master Lu took White Jade Capital into seclusion, how long has it been since we last saw it?!”

Cultivators of the Five Phoenixes spoke with complex emotions.

But behind the complexity burned fanaticism and uncontrollable excitement!

To the Five Phoenixes’ cultivators, White Jade Capital was more than an island—it was faith.

Back when the Five Phoenixes was still a low-martial continent, White Jade Capital had descended from the heavens. Young Master Lu, peerless and unmatched, had changed the era.

He had led the world into a golden age of cultivation.

Thus, White Jade Capital was faith to every cultivator.

Though it rarely appeared, though Young Master Lu seldom showed himself—he was forever a legend in their hearts.

And now, when the Five Phoenixes faced conquest from all realms, when crisis loomed—

That once-brilliant island reappeared.

Atop White Jade Capital's tower, the youth sat calmly.

With the island's return, all pressure on the Five Phoenixes vanished completely.

Clearly, the slender youth bore the weight of the hundred thousand troops alone.

"Young Master!"

Ni Yu stuffed a handful of pills into her mouth, eyes rippling with pride.

Ning Zhao's dress fluttered. Her long lashes trembled as she bit her red lips.

Across the Five Phoenixes' mountains and rivers—

Cultivators stood, gazing at the sky.

Nie Changqing's hand gripped Dragon Slayer at his waist, knuckles white.

Sima Qingshan painted in his tower, brush flowing, then looked out the window.

Bai Qingniao sat atop Little Phoenix One, now a fire phoenix, chin raised proudly.

Kong Nanfei drank turbid wine. Seeing this, he recalled the Master who once held off ten thousand alone—sorrow and pride filled him.

Every cultivator in the Five Phoenixes felt excitement and sorrow in that moment.

This was an unprecedented crisis for the Five Phoenixes.

Yet...

No one in the Five Phoenixes was willing to accept it.

Every cultivator clenched their fists, faces twisted with unwilling rage.

What had they done?

Why did all realms seek to conquer them?

They had done nothing but fight with all their strength to win the Grand Tournament.

Was that wrong?

Tang Yimo had fought until unconscious, yet the Star-Moon Saint Lord still tried to kill him after surrender—was their resistance wrong?

Every cultivator in the Five Phoenixes wanted to roar these questions.

But they knew—it was useless.

From the start of the tournament, the Upper Realm had oppressed the Five Phoenixes. Their goal had always been destruction.

The Star-Moon Saint Lord incident had merely torn away their masks!

Sometimes, existence itself was the crime!

Many chests heaved with fury.

It was all because the Five Phoenixes were too weak!

Atop Buzhou Peak—

On the cyan stone, the young girl stood. Wind whipped her hair. Her closed eyes trembled beneath pale lids.

She raised her head as if to see through everything.

As if she saw the white-robed youth standing alone against ten thousand.

...

Ancient Tomb.

Lu Changkong's movements paused. He sighed slowly.

He set down his work and sat on the ground.

Bu Nanxing fell silent.

He understood why Lu Changkong stopped researching divine herbs—his heart was no longer calm.

He looked beyond the tomb at the sky, seeing the terrifying army like black clouds pressing down.

Before the army—

The giant whale carried the immortal island. The white-robed youth sat alone.

That youth was Saint Lord Lu.

Lu Changkong's son.

Bu Nanxing understood the old man's feelings. He thought of his own Saint Lord father...

Which father didn't worry for his son?

Deep in the tomb—

In the first palace, Luo Mingyue, who had received the Piano King inheritance, opened her eyes.

Beside her, the red-skirted skeleton leaned against the city wall, gently stroking an ancient zither.

Feeling Luo Mingyue's gaze, the skeleton looked up and smiled.

Luo Mingyue was dazed—as if seeing a peerless beauty smiling at her.

In the second palace, yellow sand stretched endlessly.

Corpses wrapped in horsehide, battlefield wails.

Yin soldiers stood in neat formation.

The armored skeletal War King stood atop the wall, gazing at his troops.

As if conducting one final muster.

In the third palace—

Mo Liuqi in tight clothing opened his eyes and exhaled.

Behind him, a skeleton lurked in darkness, ghostly flames dancing coldly in its sockets.

In the fourth palace—

Ximen Xianzhi bowed behind the skeletal daoist with the rusted sword, inwardly shocked.

He sensed a terrifying sword intent from this emaciated figure—capable of cleaving anything.

Deep in the palace—

The ever-burning lamp trembled.

“Go... aid Young Master Lu well.”

BOOM!

The words fell.

Four skeletons knelt as one, armor clashing.

...

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Terrifying killing intent surged like a sharp spear ready to pierce everything.

Ten thousand infantry wielding long halberds and spears marched forward—armor clashing, killing intent boiling.

Facing the suddenly appearing whale and immortal island blocking their charge, not one soldier faltered.

The hundred thousand Upper Realm troops all wore bronze masks carved with ferocious totems.

BOOM!

Ten thousand Nascent Divinity infantry charged.

Behind them—archers nocked arrows to sacred-tier greatbows.

As they drew, an aura that could pierce anything erupted.

Even Transcendents would pale before it.

Yet...

The giant whale carried the immortal island.

All was serene.

The white-robed youth sat calmly.

The chessboard before him glowed.

He picked up another white piece.

BOOM!

Suddenly—

The chessboard before him seemed to expand instantly.

Like a domain, it spread, covering the entire Five Phoenixes sky.

Like a heavenly curtain.

The crisscrossing lines on the board rapidly extended.

“Kill!”

The ten thousand infantry roared. Halberds swept. Nascent Divinity auras linked into a rainbow piercing the sun.

Sharp and unstoppable, they slammed into the chessboard as if to shatter it!

The youth smiled faintly.

The piece in his hand slowly fell. White pressed black. His middle finger pushed forward.

Plop!

The moment the piece landed—

Spirit pressure erupted.

Thousandfold spirit pressure—like a storm of wind and rain, mountains and rivers roaring.

Like a gentle breeze passing.

The ten thousand Upper Realm Nascent Divinity troops were swept by the breeze. Ripples passed over every body.

They exploded into clouds of blood mist!

Bronze armor was crushed into scrap by the terrifying pressure!

These were Nascent Divinity experts—no primordial spirits yet.

Wretched soul screams filled the air.

A bloody storm raged in the Void Heaven.

Ten thousand infantry—annihilated in the time it took a piece to fall!

Lu Fan looked up at the scene and smiled warmly.

One hand rolled up his sleeve. The other gently beckoned the floating souls.

As if plucking early spring tea leaves.

He flicked them toward the Five Phoenixes.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The souls became streaks of light, sucked in by terrifying force, falling into the Five Phoenixes.

The Ninth Prison Secret Realm appeared.

Cities rose. Behind them, towering figures like wrathful vajras.

Clanking cold chains shredded the souls that fell into the Five Phoenixes.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

Countless souls became fragments, scattering across the Five Phoenixes' land.

Like fertilizer, strengthening its beings.

Even in killing enemies, Lu Fan never forgot to work for the Five Phoenixes' growth.

The world fell silent.

The Five Phoenixes' Saint Lord was truly extraordinary.

This was the Upper Realm Sacred Clan's merciless punitive army.

Yet the Saint Lord sat calmly in his tower, placing pieces that moved wind and clouds.

In laughter and conversation—annihilation.

On the blood-colored battlefield—

Five Phoenixes cultivators watched, dazzled.

This was Young Master Lu. This was White Jade Capital!

The foremost expert of the era!

Below—

Jiang Li, excited, donned silver armor, representing conquest.

He clenched his fist.

“Kill!”

His roar.

Behind him, the hundred thousand Great Xuan iron riders roared in unison!

“Kill!”

Their voices united as one.

The Upper Realm army’s momentum was overwhelming. The iron riders had been shaken—this was shame!

Young Master Lu had won back their pride. They could not lose it again.

Even if they were ants before the Upper Realm army—many ants could kill an elephant!

“Archers!”

Ten thousand Nascent Divinity infantry crushed by one piece.

The scene was indeed shocking.

Even the Upper Realm army’s commanders fell silent for a moment.

Then—more terrifying roars erupted.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Archers with sacred-tier greatbows locked on with hawk-like eyes—blinding and sharp.

They released their bowstrings.

The sacred bows blazed with dazzling light.

Countless streaks of light tore across the void.

Like shooting stars leaving trails, converging into a river!

Like the Milky Way falling from the Ninth Heaven!

The energy beyond the Five Phoenixes seemed drained. The void itself seemed ready to shatter!

On the blood-colored battlefield—

Qi Liuji's eyes filled with blood.

No mercy, no quarter!

His body trembled with rage. How hard was it for a high-martial world to emerge in the Void Heaven?

Yet all sides sought to eradicate them—even the Upper Realm sent troops!

Though much of it was due to the Blood-Robed General Gu Mangran's tomb—

Trampling the Five Phoenixes was still their goal.

“Why must you drive us to extinction after the Void Heaven has declined for countless ages?!”

Qi Liuji didn't understand. He was unwilling.

He had once tried to build a high-martial world, enduring mockery and resistance, failing due to his own inadequacy. He had accepted it.

But the Five Phoenixes had succeeded, even reaching Seventh-grade—yet the Upper Realm wanted to crush them.

He had always been cautious, wanting the Five Phoenixes to develop quietly.

Now he understood...

Young Master Lu had been right.

Caution changed nothing. Bullies would still bully!

Only resistance—only making them hurt—could earn respect and a moment's peace!

Qi Liujia inhaled deeply. His turbid, aged eyes closed.

When they opened again—

The once-timid gaze was gone. Only killing intent remained!

Countless arrows streaked forth like a waterfall.

The void seemed ready to tear.

The giant whale beneath let out a terrified cry.

Lu Fan raised his hand and gently stroked it.

The whale calmed.

He picked up another piece from the box, movements fluid, arm swinging in an arc.

Plop!

The piece fell.

Terrifying pressure crushed down like mountains and rivers.

The streaking arrows—

Before reaching the whale—

All fell...

Like a raging river suddenly turning, crashing into the endless abyss below!

Though explosions rang endlessly, they harmed neither Lu Fan nor the Five Phoenixes.

They even fell into the boundless abyss, vanishing without trace.

He countered each move.

Effortlessly.

...

Beyond the Void Heaven—

At the border with Pingyang Heaven—

Terrifying auras stood. Some twisted the void. Some collapsed mountains and rivers.

From the luxurious chariot pulled by five true-dragon-blood dragon-horses, faint laughter drifted.

From the ancient warships, sharp gazes shot toward the immortal island blocking ten thousand troops.

Lu Fan casually placing pieces to block the Upper Realm army piqued many experts' interest.

“This is the Saint Lord of the only high-martial world born in the Void Heaven? His cultivation is shrouded in mist—can't see through it.”

“That chessboard is nearly a Heaven-tier artifact... Pity. One man changes nothing.”

“Using a chessboard as a weapon, wanting to become the chess player who controls heaven and earth? Laughable... Not even an Ascended Immortal, and he dares play chess master.”

Sneering voices drifted from the ancient warships.

Experts from Blood Evil Heaven, Yuan Magnetic Heaven, and Pingyang Heaven—even Ascended Immortals—dared not speak.

“No matter. We came for the Blood-Robed General’s tomb. We cannot let Gu Mangran revive.”

“As for the Five Phoenixes—ignoring Upper Realm rules, trampling our Sacred Clan’s dignity... flatten them.”

A calm voice drifted from the dragon-horse chariot.

Laughter immediately rang from the ancient warships.

“As the Young Master commands.”

Next moment, primordial spirit fluctuations spread.

The Ascended Immortals from Yuan Magnetic and Blood Evil Heavens who had summoned armies lit up.

Five true-dragon-blood dragon-horses pulling a chariot—this person's status was far above the previous envoy.

This was a true noble of the Upper Realm Sacred Clan!

Befriending him might earn entry to the Upper Realm—even joining the Sacred Clan!

“Kill! Crush the Five Phoenixes!”

An Ascended Immortal roared.

Under primordial spirit command—the ragtag armies from Blood Evil and Yuan Magnetic Heavens charged.

Vast and endless.

Nascent Soul, Body Integration, Divinity Transformation armies rushed into the Void Heaven.

The laws creaked but did not exceed limits!

A million troops surged like a flood.

The Upper Realm army's beast cavalry masked gazes swept over and actually halted.

The archers drew their bows again.

Terrifying auras crisscrossed—killing intent bared.

A million troops entered, vast and mighty.

Many were shocked but also watched Lu Fan with mocking glee.

This wasn't a million mortals—a million Nascent Soul and Divinity Transformation experts!

Even Ascended Immortals could be swallowed by such a tide.

How would Lu Ping'an deal with this?

The million troops charged neatly through the Void Heaven toward the Five Phoenixes.

Like a heaven-shaking wave.

Lakeheart Island was a lone boat before it—ready to be swallowed and shattered!

Origin qi seemed ready to scatter.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

On the blood-colored battlefield—

No Five Phoenixes cultivator retreated. No fear.

They rose into the air, hovering above the battlefield, standing behind Lakeheart Island.

The hundred thousand Great Xuan iron riders rose too, auras linking into one!

Facing a million troops, they did not retreat.

Ready to live and die with Young Master Lu!

Lu Fan glanced at the people behind him, eyes gleaming strangely.

“Glory of the Five Phoenixes—even before a million troops, not one step back. Life and death together, united as one. Reward: 100 strands of origin dao essence (claimable after the Heaven and Earth Grand Tournament ends)”

Hmm?

Lu Fan saw the flashing prompt and paused.

The tournament... wasn't over?

He turned calmly to the million-strong flood.

White robes fluttering, a mocking smile on his face.

“So many people?”

Lu Fan said softly.

His voice echoed through the Void Heaven, reaching every corner.

This time, he did not place a piece.

He raised his hand.

And snapped his fingers.

A massive sundial appeared, array patterns weaving...

Next moment—

A rolling river of time poured from the sundial, forming a divine dragon that swept out.

It circled, forming a moat around the Five Phoenixes.

Like a city-protecting river.

PFFT! PFFT! PFFT!!!

Figures from Blood Evil and Yuan Magnetic Heavens crashed into the river of time.

Wretched screams rang endlessly.

Those who entered didn't get far before turning to bones—aged to death, decayed...

Even Nascent Divinity experts couldn't last long.

Upper Realm archers fired.

Arrows fell into the river, raising waves.

But when they emerged—covered in rust, powerless, decayed, broken!

The million troops suffered countless casualties in an instant!

“The power of time?!”

“He used the Ancient Emperor’s ‘Lin’ array rune?!”

“Withdraw the armies!”

In Pingyang Heaven, the Ascended Immortals commanding the million troops roared, pupils shrinking.

But...

This time, Lu Fan had no intention of letting them leave.

“You kill when you want, retreat when you want... Do you truly think the Five Phoenixes weak and easy to bully?!”

Lu Fan’s smile vanished.

Coldly spoken.

The sundial fell. Lu Fan slapped it with one palm.

THUD!

Like a heartbeat.

The river of time circling the Five Phoenixes suddenly expanded...

The million coalition troops that had avoided it were swallowed whole!

Wretched screams exploded!

Expert after expert had their lifespan and lives severed by time.

They fell from the river as bones—dead with expressions of terror and despair, floating in the Void Heaven like decayed wood.

The million troops—before even forming a charge—were utterly broken!

Experts from Blood Evil, Pingyang, and Yuan Magnetic Heavens stared in shock, trembling.

The Upper Realm punitive army—

Every member felt their hair stand on end!

Facing the river of time—

They retreated in unison!

The unstoppable army... recoiled!

“Hahahaha...”

On the second-floor balcony of Lakeheart Island—

The white-robed youth’s laughter rang out.

Free and unrestrained.

Like slaps across the faces of the ancient warships crushing Pingyang Heaven and the noble in the luxurious chariot.

They fell silent, but terrifying, furious auras surged.

The river of time flowed quietly.

Separating inside from outside.

The Five Phoenixes cultivators and hundred thousand iron riders floating behind Lu Fan were flushed with excitement, blood boiling.

They had been ready to die.

Yet against a million troops—Young Master Lu alone was enough!

Jiang Li's eyes blazed with uncontainable excitement.

What grace!

Even if greater sieges awaited—

So what?

With Young Master Lu—

The Five Phoenixes' spirit would never die!

Even if weak now—

One day, they would storm the Ninth Heaven!

Jiang Li's aura surged. He roared.

The cultivators and iron riders joined as one:

“With one thought, he slays a million troops!”

“All hail Young Master Lu!”

Chapter 437: The Blood-Robed General Emerges, Imperial Weapon Clears the Path

The silvery-gray river of time was magnificent and mesmerizing.

It wound through the dark Void Heaven, forming a barrier for the Five Phoenixes.

Inside and outside the river, the scenes were worlds apart.

Outside: the experts of Blood Evil Heaven, Pingyang Heaven, and Yuan Magnetic Heaven were alive and vigorous.

Inside: only withered bones remained.

The scene was cruel and spine-chilling.

Compared to the blood flowers that bloomed when Lu Fan first placed his pieces, the slaughter by the river of time seemed peaceful and beautiful.

Yet within that beauty lurked bone-deep terror.

The profound power of time!

In the Void Heaven, bones littered the ground.

Of the million-strong coalition that had charged in, countless had died.

Lu Fan's sudden expansion of the river of time had caught them off guard, enveloping countless experts in helpless terror.

The river flowed quietly. Corpses rose and sank.

Many decayed corpses still reached out, faces frozen in fear and despair.

War was always cruel.

At the border between Pingyang Heaven and the Void Heaven, experts raged.

The ancient warships of the Upper Realm and the noble in the luxurious chariot remained silent.

But the killing intent leaking from the warships revealed their stance.

The Great Venerable of the Little Thunderclap Buddha World did not act. He watched silently, palms pressed together, sighing.

He was somewhat surprised. He had not expected Lu Fan to achieve this.

With the river of time and that mysterious chessboard, he had easily blocked a million troops.

No wonder he could suppress an Ascended Immortal envoy.

But...

That was all.

After all, the envoy had merely been an Ascended Immortal—one of low status in the Upper Realm.

At least compared to the noble in the chariot pulled by five true-dragon-blood dragon-horses, the difference was heaven and earth.

In the Great Venerable's view, everything Lu Fan did for the Five Phoenixes was merely a desperate last stand.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Compared to the chaotic, panicked retreat of the coalition, the Upper Realm army remained calm and disciplined.

Even after losing ten thousand infantry in an instant, they showed no change in expression.

They simply withdrew in orderly fashion as the river of time expanded.

Finally, the river stopped expanding.

The remaining ninety thousand troops halted instantly, standing unmoved in the void.

At the border between Pingyang Heaven and the Void Heaven—

Terrifying auras shot skyward.

“Victory?!”

“Celebrating so soon?”

“What are you celebrating?!”

A furious roar rang out.

At the edge of the Void Heaven, a figure seemed to tower like a mountain, like an ancient god or demon, gazing at the Five Phoenixes.

His sharp, brilliant eyes were like stars in the night—blindingly bright.

His aura was extremely powerful—an old Ascended Immortal from the Upper Realm, and among Ascended Immortals, a top-tier one.

He wore armor that reflected radiant light.

He drew a bow—a golden bow forged as if from molten gold, overflowing with light, its body like two living divine dragons.

Creak... creak...

The bowstring was drawn taut.

An arrow pointed across the Void Heaven at Lu Fan seated on Lakeheart Island.

“One arrow to slay the madman!”

He released.

The arrow shot forth.

His words thundered like rolling thunder. The arrow howled like a starving wolf diving into the Void Heaven.

The arrow aimed straight at Lu Fan.

The laws rang like bells, clear and crisp.

Each law became a sharp blade, ready to slash!

Lu Fan sat calmly in White Jade Capital's tower, leaning on the Thousand-Blade Chair.

His pupils reflected the arrow.

Whoosh!

The sharp arrow ignored the clanging laws and plunged into the river of time.

The river exploded into towering waves.

Yet the arrow's momentum was unstoppable.

It soon shot out the other side, continuing toward Lu Fan.

Lu Fan's eyes flickered.

Then, with calm ease, he raised his hand and lightly pinched the arrow.

It turned to ash and scattered.

“Nothing special.”

Lu Fan said.

Hmm?

Beyond the Void Heaven, the expert narrowed his eyes, uncertainty flashing within.

Even weakened by the river of time, his arrow should not have been caught so easily.

So this Lu Ping’an... at least had Ascended Immortal strength!

After countless ages, the Void Heaven—abandoned by the Upper Realm—had actually produced such an expert.

But he was still puzzled.

In recent centuries, even millennia, no one in the Void Heaven had transcended an Ascended Immortal tribulation.

How had an Ascended Immortal appeared out of nowhere?

But in this battle—he must die!

“Arrogant!”

The expert cursed.

Then turned and bowed slightly toward the luxurious chariot pulled by five dragon-horses.

“Go.”

A calm voice drifted from the chariot.

As if casually sentencing Lu Fan to death.

“Yes!”

Then—like the collapse of the world.

The expert stepped into the Void Heaven.

As he did, the laws within seemed to boil instantly.

Countless law-blades slashed down.

But a treasure above his head glowed, shielding him from the laws' power.

Ascended Immortals could use treasures to resist the laws and enter the Five Phoenixes.

The stronger one was, the greater the pressure from the laws.

Beyond Ascended Immortal—even with treasures, one would be crushed by the laws.

He strode through the void like a god or demon.

The ninety thousand Upper Realm troops parted, making way.

He shot forth like a comet.

Facing the terrifying river of time, he did not dodge.

He charged straight in.

BOOM!

He crashed into the river. Ascended Immortal power unleashed to its limit.

His armor decayed, but with powerful life force, he resisted time's corrosion!

He burst out the other side, eyes blazing.

“As expected, you are no Ancient Emperor. Even if you can wield the ‘Lin’ array rune to control time—so what?”

“Nothing special.”

The Ascended Immortal laughed coldly.

His aura had weakened, his flesh slightly withered, but he still possessed Ascended Immortal power.

He stepped toward the Five Phoenixes, toward the blood-colored battlefield.

On the Five Phoenixes' side, faces changed.

But Lu Fan remained calm, even smiling faintly.

“You have courage.”

Lu Fan said.

Then he leaned on the railing, white robes fluttering in the wind.

He rolled up his sleeve and picked up a piece from the box.

He held the piece, pointing at the Ascended Immortal.

Then slowly moved it horizontally above the board.

“So arrogant... Watch me blow you apart!”

The expert said coldly.

His body accelerated, like a comet crashing toward the Five Phoenixes.

Terrifying pressure bore down, making every Five Phoenixes cultivator inhale sharply.

“Hahahaha...”

Lu Fan laughed.

His laughter rang through heaven and earth.

He slowly lowered the piece, closer and closer to the board.

PFFT!

The powerful Ascended Immortal streaked like a comet.

But as he did, his body gradually bent, kneeling under the pressure.

As if kneeling with the falling piece!

Finally—

Lu Fan placed the piece.

Plop!

The sound of the piece landing was like a heart exploding.

PFFT!

The Ascended Immortal instantly coughed blood—mixed with shattered organs.

His pupils shrank!

Like thunder from a clear sky, like a calm sea suddenly erupting into a heaven-shaking wave.

He suddenly felt terrifying pressure ready to flatten him!

He could no longer resist.

He knelt in the sky.

Knees slammed into the void, sliding through the Void Heaven.

The comet's light faded.

Seeing this—

The world fell utterly silent.

Experts from Blood Evil Heaven, Pingyang Heaven, and Yuan Magnetic Heaven breathed rapidly.

“This...”

This Ascended Immortal was from the Upper Realm!

Far stronger than the previous envoy who hosted the tournament!

Yet he, representing the Upper Realm’s face, knelt before Lu Fan.

What humiliation!

But more than that—shock!

Shock at Lu Fan’s strength.

“This Saint Lord of the Five Phoenixes... what is his true power?”

Many Sixth-grade sacred ground Ascended Immortals spoke uncertainly.

Before, they could guess Lu Fan's strength.

Now—they could not.

This Ascended Immortal who had charged into the Void Heaven had come from the Upper Realm. His mere aura had triggered countless law-blades.

Even weakened by the river of time and suppressed by the Void Heaven—

He should not have been suppressed so easily, forced to kneel!

Lu Fan laughed freely.

He raised his hand. Wine sloshed in his bronze cup.

Quite carefree, like “drink today while we have wine.”

He laughed and drank plum wine.

Then slapped out a palm.

“Good boy.”

BOOM!

Spiritual qi formed a giant palm, patting the kneeling Ascended Immortal’s head.

Immortal pats your crown?

PFFT!

Unfortunately, no longevity was granted...

The Ascended Immortal’s head was smashed!

His primordial spirit shot out, filled with shock and fury.

But Lu Fan’s spiritual qi palm seized the spirit, dragging it toward the Five Phoenixes.

“Since you came, don’t leave.”

The Ascended Immortal’s primordial spirit radiated shock and terror.

It gradually turned into a mountain-sized statue.

BOOM!

The statue crashed into the vast sea, kneeling—becoming an opportunity for the Five Phoenixes’ beings.

An Ascended Immortal statue was far more precious than a normal Grand Ability one.

It could better help Five Phoenixes cultivators comprehend primordial spirits.

This scene stunned everyone.

Gasps of horror rang endlessly.

The ancient warships and luxurious chariot were silent, but the void around them constantly collapsed.

They had not expected Lu Fan to be so domineering, so ferocious.

But even more unbelievable—

Lu Fan sat in the Thousand-Blade Chair, cup in hand, looking at them with a half-smile.

“If you have the guts... come.”

Blatant provocation!

Naked provocation!

The river of time flowed quietly. Law-blades filled the Void Heaven.

These experts truly hesitated.

The atmosphere turned awkward and strange.

Those beyond Ascended Immortal feared the laws and dared not enter.

Even top Ascended Immortals could resist the laws but dared not step in—the corpse of the one who had knelt before Lu Fan was still warm.

The Five Phoenixes cultivators flushed red.

Relief surged in their chests.

So satisfying!

This was White Jade Capital. This was their Young Master Lu!

One man holding the pass—ten thousand cannot pass!

If you have the guts, come!

So brazen and domineering.

Qi Liujia watched in a daze, blood boiling.

He had never imagined someone daring to face Upper Realm experts like this.

“Heh...”

Suddenly, the world fell silent.

From the chariot pulled by true-dragon-blood dragon-horses, a voice drifted out.

The noble within.

“The Void Heaven has produced quite a character.”

“Pity... you think hiding in the Void Heaven makes you safe?”

The faint laughter carried mockery and indifference.

As if Lu Fan were just a jumping cricket in his eyes.

Able to jump for a moment—able to jump forever?

“You wait...”

The sneering voice held no great rage—only pity.

The pity of an ant unaware of its fate, still smug.

Instantly—

The battle stopped.

It fell into a strange state.

The ninety thousand Upper Realm troops stood quietly, bronze masks on, sharp eyes staring at the Five Phoenixes.

This silence was unsettling.

Many Unity and Transcendent experts in the Five Phoenixes felt sweat on their foreheads.

The noble in the chariot was in no hurry, as if waiting for something.

Young Master Lu on White Jade Capital's tower remained calm, drinking his wine.

The river of time flowed, separating the two sides.

But this was clearly the calm before the storm.

When the storm passed, a terrifying tempest capable of overturning the Five Phoenixes would surely descend!

Lu Fan didn't know what they were waiting for.

But he wasn't anxious. Being anxious was useless.

Soldiers to block, water to dam.

Hmm?

Suddenly—

Lu Fan's brows raised.

Lines danced in his eyes. He suddenly sensed a vast aura rising within the Five Phoenixes.

He seemed to understand what they were waiting for.

BOOM!

Suddenly—

Within the Five Phoenixes—

Everything trembled. Terrifying energy rippled outward.

Then, to the world's shock—an ancient tomb rose from the vast sea. A wordless stele wrapped in massive palaces slowly ascended from the Five Phoenixes!

Everyone instinctively looked up at the tomb.

Behind it—a surging sea of blood rolled forth!

As if the tomb was built atop a mountain of corpses and a sea of blood.

Lu Fan narrowed his eyes.

He could feel a terrifying, powerful aura awakening within the tomb.

And it was growing stronger—seemingly about to exceed the Void Heaven’s shackles, yet triggering no law restrictions.

The tomb had been moved into the Five Phoenixes by Lu Fan. Now, as the being within awakened, the tomb detached from the Five Phoenixes.

There had to be a reason.

But Lu Fan quickly understood—the general in the tomb feared the coming battle would shatter mountains, boil seas, and slaughter the Five Phoenixes’ beings!

Thinking this, Lu Fan raised a brow.

In other words... the Blood-Robed General believed these Upper Realm experts had a way to ignore the Void Heaven's laws and kill directly?

Otherwise, hiding in the Five Phoenixes with the laws as protection, the general should have been unshakable.

In the moments Lu Fan pondered—

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The instant the tomb rose from the Five Phoenixes and floated in the sky—

Beyond the Void Heaven—

Terrifying auras shot from the ancient warships.

“This oppressive aura... it truly is the Blood-Robed General Gu Mangran!”

“Terrifying aura awakening in the tomb! Gu Mangran is about to emerge!”

“This is what we were waiting for...”

Cold voices exploded.

The calm aura in the luxurious chariot began to fluctuate.

From calm to volcanic rage.

Experts from Blood Evil Heaven, Pingyang Heaven, and Yuan Magnetic Heaven trembled in terror.

Some were horrified.

The name “Blood-Robed” alone was enough to inspire fear.

From the ancient, luxurious chariot—a cold voice fell.

“The Blood-Robed seeks to emerge—heaven and earth will not allow it.”

“The Void Heaven is dead. Why do you emerge, Blood-Robed?!”

The voice from the luxurious chariot thundered.

Next—

From the ancient warships, figures pushed open heavy cabin doors and stepped out.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Their auras shot skyward, trailing wisps of immortal qi!

Their faces shrouded in mist, unseeable!

Hiss!

Experts from Blood Evil, Pingyang, and Yuan Magnetic Heavens were horrified!

These beings from the ancient warships... were beyond Ascended Immortal!

Pingyang Heaven seemed to collapse. Terrifying auras made all beings tremble and prostrate.

Even the Great Venerable of the Little Thunderclap Buddha World—Pingyang Heaven's only Sixth-grade world's master—bowed in respect.

This was the Upper Realm.

Where experts were as numerous as clouds!

The figures emerging from the Upper Realm's ancient warships had auras too powerful.

Their eyes seemed to shoot light, trying to pierce the heavens and see through the tomb.

Past the countless cities in the blood-sea-tossed tomb—

They saw...

A coffin!

Atop the coffin—a vermilion divine herb swayed in the wind!

The coffin floating in the blood sea suddenly erupted with blinding light.

Experts aboard the ancient warships were blinded, tears of blood streaming, but their auras surged with excitement!

“We see the coffin! A divine herb atop it—the Blood-Robed seeks to revive with it!”

Voices rolled like thunder.

Next—

Every figure from the ancient warships turned toward the luxurious chariot.

“Please, Divine Son, give the order!”

Terrifying voices surged, causing Pingyang Heaven to sink.

From the luxurious chariot, a calm voice drifted out.

“In the past, the Blood-Robed killed countless of our Sacred Clan. Today—how can we let him revive? He must pay blood for blood and fall forever into the Ninth Hell!”

“Bring forth the Imperial Weapon!”

The words fell.

The beaded curtain of the chariot lifted.

Revealing a figure seated within, shrouded in purple qi.

A fiery red three-legged cauldron floated out without smoke or fire.

The towering figures from the ancient warships suddenly released their auras.

Light pillars pierced the heavens.

Three beings beyond Ascended Immortal worked together to carry the three-legged cauldron—one leg each!

Yet the small cauldron was as heavy as a world.

BOOM!

Warships crushed the void.

Under the experts' auras, they carried the cauldron, slowly crashing into the Void Heaven.

Huala la la!

In the Void Heaven, the laws instantly went berserk.

Rifts tore across the sky. Law-blades ten thousand zhang long slashed down!

Yet—

Facing these laws, the lifeless three-legged cauldron carried by the three beyond-Ascended experts erupted with radiant light.

Divine fire poured from the cauldron.

It instantly formed a massive shadow that blotted out the sky, blocking all the laws!

Next—

An expert gave the order.

The ninety thousand Upper Realm troops moved again.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Ancient warships crushed forward.

God-like figures stood atop the heavens. With the Imperial Weapon clearing the path—

Unstoppable, unblockable—

They killed into the Void Heaven!

Chapter 438: With Array to Behold the World, Mountains High and Rivers Long

The imperial weapon clears the path!

Experts from Pingyang Heaven, Blood Evil Heaven, and Yuan Magnetic Heaven were horrified!

Even Ascended Immortals trembled.

That was a true imperial weapon!

Not the fake one Qi Liujia had woven from array runes.

This was the real thing—an Ancient Emperor’s weapon, stained with imperial aura, interwoven with Dao and laws!

“The Upper Realm came prepared!”

“They brought an imperial weapon—the Sacred Clan truly intends to kill the Blood-Robed General!”

“No surprise. How terrifying was the Blood-Robed General? The Ancient Emperor’s greatest general—his blade turned the allied armies of the Eight Heavens into rivers of blood, dyeing the entire Void Heaven crimson.”

Countless Upper Realm Sacred Clan greats had died by his hand.

A man’s name, a tree’s shadow!

The Upper Realm’s grand mobilization to kill him was understandable.

The three-legged cauldron poured out heaven-soaring flames. Crimson fire burned with terrifying heat.

The void itself seemed incinerated into vast abysses.

“Crackle...” The sound of laws burning and shattering sent chills down spines.

The Great Venerable of the Little Thunderclap Buddha World trembled.

Looking at the colossal cauldron that seemed to fill half the Void Heaven, his eyes were filled with disbelief.

“The Five Phoenixes... are finished.”

He murmured.

Then pressed his palms together and fled far away.

Next, the Void Heaven would become a terrifying battlefield of countless deaths.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The world rumbled. Terrifying voids tore open long rifts.

Oppressive aura bore down.

Lu Fan sat on the second-floor balcony of White Jade Capital, brows furrowed.

“This aura... is quite strong.”

Lu Fan said solemnly.

For the first time, he showed gravity.

“That’s... an imperial weapon?”

Lu Fan inhaled deeply.

An Ancient Emperor’s unfathomable weapon?

The giant whale beneath him cried in fear. Even Lu Fan’s soothing could not calm it quickly. Once an imperial weapon appeared, blood was certain to flow!

Behind Lu Fan, the Five Phoenixes cultivators showed fear.

It was an overwhelming might like facing the heavens themselves—despairing, crushing any will to resist.

Qi Liuji’s face was ashen. An imperial weapon had appeared... The Five Phoenixes were truly doomed this time.

Compared to the Upper Realm, the Five Phoenixes were far too weak.

The gap was too vast.

The only one who could speak to the Upper Realm was Young Master Lu.

But one world—how could it rely on Young Master Lu alone?

Qi Liujia's face filled with sorrow.

The Five Phoenixes' spirit was strong, but...

Because they had always been protected by Lu Fan, they had grown too comfortable. Even against strong enemies, Lu Fan bore the burden.

The Five Phoenixes had spirit, but lacked the mad drive to grow stronger.

Qi Liujia's wrinkled face trembled.

He wanted to do something, but... what could he do now?

The three-legged cauldron spanned the Void Heaven, blocking countless laws.

The remaining ninety thousand troops advanced.

As if walking a road paved with stars, they slowly approached the Five Phoenixes.

Even more terrifying—vast figures trailing immortal qi, radiating world-destroying auras.

Upper Realm experts had truly come!

Earlier Lu Fan had said: If you dare, come.

Now—they had come!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Cold continents shattered. Wanderers in the Void Heaven were nearly wiped out.

Many low- and mid-martial worlds collapsed under the army's aura.

This was the tragedy of the weak.

Without strength, they were ants. Giants passing by wouldn't even notice crushing them.

The ancient tomb floated above the Five Phoenixes.

In the blood sea, the coffin rose and fell.

The coffin was tightly sealed. A vermilion divine herb floated above it, endless life force pouring into the coffin.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

The Upper Realm punitive army's steps echoed through the void.

Like an iron flood rolling from afar.

Every cultivator in the Five Phoenixes trembled—this was psychological oppression.

Overlord took down his axe and shield, eyes sharp, killing intent blazing.

Uncontrollable rage burned in his heart.

Facing such bullying—how could Overlord endure it?

Jiang Li raised his hand. The hundred thousand Great Xuan iron riders, ready to die.

They knew facing this army was like mantises trying to stop a chariot, but they would fight.

Of course.

Hope remained in every heart.

Because White Jade Capital still floated.

The white-robed youth in the tower remained unshaken.

There was still hope.

...

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The army advanced like gods and demons crossing the void.

The void exploded everywhere!

Free of law suppression, the Upper Realm army marched unhindered.

They reached the river of time!

The silvery-gray river swept forth.

But a figure shrouded in immortal qi from an ancient warship roared.

The warship crashed into the river.

Radiant light flowed.

Next moment—the river of time was torn apart!

“The Five Phoenixes colluded with the Blood-Robed General—same crime! Exterminate them!”

In Pingyang Heaven—

The Divine Son’s chariot remained still. Dragon-horses snorted white mist.

The Divine Son shrouded in purple qi spoke slowly, sentencing the Five Phoenixes’ fate with one word.

BOOM!

The river of time was violently ripped open!

The three beyond-Ascended experts carrying the imperial weapon had their energy rapidly drained.

They carved a flat path straight into the Void Heaven.

The river of time was breached.

Lu Fan's brows tightened.

He dispersed the "Lin" rune. The river of time flowed back into the sundial, which returned above the Five Phoenixes.

"Kill the Blood-Robed General!"

Someone roared.

The ninety thousand troops moved!

Archers drew sacred greatbows in unison. The sound of space tearing rang out.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

A rain of arrows howled forth.

Behind the archers—cavalry on ferocious beasts charged.

The beasts resembled tiger-lions—ferocious and frenzied!

Beasts armored too—like a terrifying iron flood, wrapped in overwhelming momentum crashing toward the Five Phoenixes!

Oppressive aura—like mountains and rain about to burst.

Like black clouds covering a mountain peak.

Lu Fan sat in White Jade Capital's tower, white robes whipping, black hair flying.

“They really came.”

Lu Fan said.

The army was secondary. The truly terrifying were the Ascended Immortals mixed within.

And the vast figures trailing immortal qi from the ancient warships.

This was an unprecedented crisis.

Though their main target was the tomb and the Blood-Robed within—

The Five Phoenixes could not escape.

Lu Fan sighed softly.

“I, Lu Ping’an, only wanted to play chess, drink wine, watch the world ascend.”

“Why... do you always force me to kill?”

Lu Fan said.

Next, his palms rested on the armrests.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The army had not arrived.

But the rain of arrows came first!

This arrow rain, amplified by the imperial weapon, was far more terrifying!

Like a flooding river pouring down!

Lu Fan grew serious.

His pupils reflected countless lights.

His slender hand slowly swept across.

Whoosh!

White robes flared.

A blast of qi sent silver blades exploding outward.

Huala la!

Silver light stacked like flying swords in a spiral, soaring from beneath Lu Fan.

A storm of silver light met the rain of arrows.

Lu Fan sat in his wheelchair, floating in the void.

He raised his hand and pointed at the arrow rain.

Countless silver blades shot forth.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Silver blades formed a storm. Arrows crashed into it and shattered!

Lu Fan's hair flew. His face was cold—killing intent blazing for the first time.

He rolled up his sleeve and placed a piece.

Plop!

Countless silver blades surged madly.

PFFT! PFFT!

Silver blades rushed into the Upper Realm army, unleashing terrifying slaughter.

Blood mist bloomed one after another.

Archers' heads exploded as blades swept past.

Cavalry charged.

Lu Fan erupted with myriad spirit pressure. Giant chess pieces seemed to fall from the heavens, ready to crush all cavalry!

“The Five Phoenixes’ Saint Lord... truly peerless!”

“But you are only one man. Without you, the Five Phoenixes will fall!”

A leisurely voice rang from an ancient warship.

Not much mockery—even appreciation.

At this moment, Lu Fan alone blocked the Upper Realm army—what grace!

Lu Fan’s brows furrowed.

BOOM!

A mountain-shaking sound.

Next—

Immortal qi erupted from an ancient warship.

An expert from the warship acted personally!

As if a vast sea pressed down—terrifying oppression made faces change.

This was a being beyond Ascended Immortal!

“Come, come... This old man will play with you, junior.”

Laughter shook the Void Heaven.

Then the expert flicked his finger.

Formed seals.

Instantly—

Array runes ballooned from his palm like an inflating sphere.

They formed a dragon head!

The massive dragon head opened its maw and swallowed!

Countless silver blades were devoured in one gulp!

Hmm?

Lu Fan's brows tightened.

Phoenix Feather Sword coiled around him. Nine segments stacked and slashed to shatter the dragon-head array!

But—

Something unexpected happened!

In the void, a massive array rune appeared!

The "Zhe" (Trapped) rune!

An Ancient Emperor's array rune!

Lu Fan's sword struck it—yet sank like a stone into the sea. A vast sensation made his attack lose direction.

“Hahahaha...”

The expert shrouded in immortal qi standing in the void laughed.

“Situ Gui offered the ‘Zhe’ rune—a supreme trapping array. How will you break it?”

The expert chuckled.

Next, he flicked his sleeve and entered the dragon-head array.

In an instant—the Five Phoenixes fell silent.

The giant whale carrying the immortal island vanished!

Along with Young Master Lu—pulled into the dragon-head array by the expert from the ancient warship!

Without Young Master Lu bearing the pressure—

The killing intent and unstoppable might of the Upper Realm army crashed down on the Five Phoenixes like a waterfall!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The entire Five Phoenixes began to tremble. The vast sea seemed to boil.

On the blood-colored battlefield—

Every face paled.

They once again felt the mountain-like pressure—despairing, crushing.

“Trample this world! Breach the ancient tomb!”

From the luxurious chariot—

The Divine Son shrouded in purple qi spoke slowly, as if he had foreseen everything.

So when he had watched Lu Fan's arrogance earlier, he had seen only an ignorant ant jumping about—unworthy of concern.

As for Lu Fan being pulled into the dragon-head array—his fate was obvious.

The Divine Son's eyes narrowed beneath the purple qi.

Visible narrow pupils.

"I requested nine 'Immortal Hosts' from the clan. Three carry the imperial weapon, one draws the unfathomable Five Phoenixes Saint Lord into single combat. The remaining five are enough to breach the tomb and stop the Blood-Robed's revival."

The purple qi around the Divine Son grew denser.

Next, he gave the distant order.

"Kill!"

The three Immortal Hosts could not carry the imperial weapon long.

Once the weapon no longer held open the Void Heaven's laws—

The Immortal Hosts who entered would bleed!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

The army surged like a flood.

Beast cavalry seemed ready to charge onto the blood-colored battlefield.

Immortal Hosts and Ascended Immortals from the ancient warships charged toward the blood-sea-tossed tomb!

BOOM!

An Immortal Host attacked. Heaven-shaking strikes slammed the tomb.

The tomb shook. The blood sea churned.

Suddenly—

Four skeletons appeared atop the tomb's city walls.

One skeleton in a pink dress—though skeletal, it seemed to possess peerless beauty.

One in tattered daoist robes, holding a broken rusted sword.

One in armor, iron and blood.

One pitch-black like a shadow, ready to vanish.

“Be careful!”

“These are the Four Kings under the Blood-Robed General!”

From an ancient warship, an Immortal Host spoke gravely, fear mixed with his warning.

The four skeletons, each with different bearing, ancient and unremarkable.

“Borrow blood to kill enemies.”

Ghostly flames blazed in their sockets.

On the blood-colored battlefield, Jiang Li felt something.

He gritted his teeth!

Slammed his chest. A drop of heart-blood sprayed from his mouth.

BOOM!

The drop of blood shot forth as light.

Within the tomb, atop the city wall—

Luo Mingyue’s red lips bled as she coughed heart-blood.

Ximen Xianzhi controlled a flying sword, piercing his chest, the tip holding a drop of heart-blood.

Mo Liuqi coughed blood too.

Four drops of blood streaked across the sky.

The void rippled.

Then hovered before the four skeletons.

The Immortal Hosts aboard the ancient warships felt their hearts leap.

“Kill! The Four Kings’ life force is depleted—they have not recovered their peak! Kill them now! Breach the tomb!”

BOOM!

Heaven-shaking attacks covered the sky.

Scorching, violent, icy...

All kinds of powers nearly overturned heaven and earth.

Even stronger Dao Intent fluctuations.

Yet the four skeletons' ghostly flames blazed brighter.

The blood returned to position.

Four drops seeped into their withered bones.

Then—the four emaciated skeletons inflated as if filled with air.

As if flesh reborn in an instant!

“Crazy! Burning primordial spirits to regenerate flesh! After this, the Four Kings will vanish from the world!”

An Immortal Host's pupils shrank in disbelief.

These were the Four Kings!

To regain some power, they severed their own future!

The pink-skirted skeleton's flesh returned. The deflated dress filled out.

A woman of extreme beauty—seductive eyes, waterfall-like black hair, jade-like skin, immortal qi swirling around her.

Zither notes rang out.

Her delicate hands played. Notes like urgent rain—storm approaching.

Then like whispers in the ear.

The emaciated daoist filled out too, becoming a robust middle-aged man. From his wide sleeve, a cyan snake shot out—sword light like a rainbow.

The four skeletons borrowed blood to be reborn—as if returning to ancient times in a thought, their magnificent auras reappearing.

PFFT!

Ascended Immortals and Transcendents who followed the attack coughed blood.

They were horrified.

The Immortal Hosts from the ancient warships attacked with thunderous force.

Heaven-tier artifacts shrouded in immortal qi erupted with shocking power!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

As if to flatten the tomb!

Yet all attacks were easily blocked.

...

Blood-colored battlefield.

The flood crashed!

The Upper Realm punitive army finally set foot on the land.

“Kill!”

Without the mysterious Five Phoenixes Saint Lord blocking—

The unstoppable army finally stepped onto this soil.

Five Phoenixes cultivators were silent, but...

They did not retreat. Fire burned in their eyes.

“Where are the Five Phoenixes cultivators?!”

Overlord took down his axe and shield, shooting forth like light to kill into the army.

Jiang Li's silver armor clashed. He raised his spear: "Army, follow me!"

The hundred thousand iron riders linked auras, charging as one!

Du Longyang, Ye Shoudao, Ni Chunqiu, Young Master Tianxu—all charged madly.

This was a war of survival.

Defeat meant only annihilation for the Five Phoenixes!

Qi Liujia's face was sorrowful.

It had come to this.

Perhaps when the Five Phoenixes became high-martial, he should have foreseen it.

Jiang Li led the army crashing into the Upper Realm formation troops.

In an instant—

Over half the hundred thousand Great Xuan iron riders died.

Exploded corpses made the battlefield's sand hot and red.

Seeing this, Qi Liujia laughed sorrowfully.

He looked at the massive dragon head—Lu Fan had been pulled inside.

The giant “Zhe” rune hovered.

His fourth disciple Situ Gui followed the Upper Realm forces like a lackey.

The “Zhe” rune was a supreme trapping array. Young Master Lu was sealed within—unable to break out quickly.

Qi Liujia suddenly laughed miserably.

It turned out... everything was because of him.

He had never imagined the Five Phoenixes' destruction would come from his own Liujia Array Sect's runes.

If Young Master Lu had not been pulled into the dragon head, the Five Phoenixes would still have had a chance.

After all, the Upper Realm's main target was the Blood-Robed General Gu Mangran's tomb.

Qi Liujia's body swayed.

He looked into the distance.

There, Li Sansui in blood-soaked daoist robes, fought bravely.

His gaze softened.

He looked at everyone on the blood-colored battlefield—fearless, unyielding, fighting the Upper Realm army.

He looked at the dying Great Xuan iron riders.

At this moment, Qi Liujia's hunched back straightened.

White hair flew. His eyes blazed!

"Liujia Array Sect—founded by an Ancient Emperor, inheriting the Nine Runes from ancient times. I, Qi Liujia, have been sect master till now—timid, speaking softly, fearing sect and lives lost."

"I, Qi Liujia, am no great man."

"Yet I have caused enemies to use the Nine Runes to invade our Void Heaven!"

Qi Liujia's white hair and coarse robes whipped.

His voice was firm and powerful.

It drew gazes from many on the blood-colored battlefield.

Li Sansui looked at Qi Liujia now, eyes filled with fear.

“Master!”

Qi Liujia looked gently at Li Sansui.

But said nothing.

He only looked guiltily at the dragon head shrouded by the massive “Zhe” rune—where Young Master Lu was trapped.

That “Zhe” rune pierced his eyes with pain.

He knelt toward the dragon-head array.

“Young Master Lu... May the Five Phoenixes prosper forever. One day, stand atop the Ninth Heaven!”

BOOM!

Next moment—

Vast life force erupted from Qi Liujia!

The power of the divine herb!

Back then, Lu Fan had used time power to catalyze a divine herb and saved his life.

But Qi Liujia had stored most of its power. Now...

He ignited it all!

BOOM!

Qi Liujia knelt, but his body cracked with lines.

From the cracks—

Array runes shot skyward!

Hummm...

Countless runes wove together, enveloping the entire blood-colored battlefield!

Myriad lines formed a golden three-legged cauldron!

Imperial Weapon—Myriad Rune Cauldron!

Though only woven from array runes—

Fueled by vast divine herb energy, it erupted with heaven-shaking might!

Compared to last time, when it could only trap enemies—

This Myriad Rune Cauldron burned with myriad killing intent!

Tens of thousands of Upper Realm punitive troops were enveloped!

BOOM!

Array runes sliced through. Beasts turned to bones. Nascent Divinity experts crushed into blood mist...

Even many Grand Ability experts were caught.

Unity Realm experts couldn't escape. Transcendents abandoned flesh. Ascended Immortals fled in panic.

This was the Myriad Rune Cauldron revived by divine herb energy, bearing an Ancient Emperor's aura!

A fleeting brilliance—dazzling and radiant.

The Myriad Rune Cauldron's light blotted out the sky.

Qi Liuji's body was covered in cracks. He stood with hands behind his back, coarse robes whipping.

His primordial spirit had long withered. His flesh was about to shatter.

He floated within the cauldron.

Looking at everyone on the blood-colored battlefield.

Overlord, Jiang Li, Du Longyang, Nie Changqing, Ni Yu...

His gaze was gentle.

“Don’t let Young Master Lu bear everything...”

“You must grow stronger.”

“Take the Five Phoenixes... grow stronger.”

Next moment—

His body blazed like daylight.

“Hahahaha...”

“With array to behold the world, mountains high and rivers long!”

“With this decaying life, I trade for ninety thousand Upper Realm lives—I, Qi Liujia... have not shamed the Liujia Array Sect!”

He recalled his past timidity—only wanting the Five Phoenixes to develop quietly.

Today—he would be bold once.

The old man's body shone with myriad light, laughing as he gazed east—toward the world he once tried to build.

Slowly, his cracked flesh fell apart!

BOOM!

Myriad array runes dispersed.

The blood-colored battlefield was nearly leveled.

The Upper Realm punitive army...

Only bones remained.

Chapter 439: Gauge My Own Strength

Bones littered the ground.

The world fell silent...

The Myriad Rune Cauldron had shattered, yet the dazzling brilliance of its final moment lingered in everyone's mind.

Like a radiant tear through endless darkness.

Qi Liujia—sect leader of the Liujia Array Sect, a complete underdog, a wanderer of the Void Heaven—had, at the moment of the Five Phoenixes' greatest peril, unleashed heaven-shaking might.

As if briefly reviving the will of an Ancient Emperor. It even affected the imperial cauldron carried by three Immortal Hosts above.

Yet...

A moment's splendor was fleeting.

The Myriad Rune Cauldron ultimately dispersed. Qi Liujia's primordial spirit had extinguished—like a sacrifice, dying with generosity.

With his own strength, he had cleared countless obstacles for the Five Phoenixes.

“Master...”

Li Sansui stood dazed on the battlefield. Qi Liujia had perished—body and bones gone.

She stared at the field of bones, body ice-cold.

She had deeply respected the old man. She had often listened to him speak of the Ancient Emperor, of the Liujia Array Sect.

But now...

Her master was dead.

The Five Phoenixes’ cultivators fell silent, looking at the bones, feeling the cruelty of war.

Their hearts trembled.

Overlord felt rage surging within, as if ready to burst from his body.

He slowly closed his eyes.

Qi Liujia's final words had struck him hard.

Work hard to cultivate. Make the Five Phoenixes stronger.

Next moment, Overlord opened his eyes.

He had always pursued strength, but never with such intensity.

If not for their weakness, why would Qi Liujia have needed to sacrifice himself?!

A black-robed figure appeared beside Li Sansui. Li Sansi patted her shoulder, but could find no words of comfort.

What could he say?

Qi Liujia's death was to ease their burden.

All because they were too weak.

All they could do was grow stronger.

That was Qi Liujia's lifelong wish.

Qi Liujia was dead.

Unleashing the Myriad Rune Cauldron required burning his primordial spirit—his soul. Its extinction meant the soul's end.

Thus—

Qi Liujia's death filled every Five Phoenixes heart with inexplicable sorrow.

But alongside sorrow...

A savage force crashed into their minds.

Their desire to grow stronger began to grow wildly.

Though the Five Phoenixes' cultivators had never stopped striving—

With White Jade Capital and Lu Fan present, they felt no pressure. As the Five Phoenixes transformed, they grew stronger with little effort.

Qi Liujia had seen this. He had been dissatisfied but powerless to change it.

Perhaps Young Master Lu knew too, but Qi Liujia understood—Lu Fan would never speak of it. Lu Fan always seemed apart from the world.

Qi Liujia didn't understand why, nor did he pry.

Everyone had secrets.

Especially the unfathomable Young Master Lu.

What Qi Liujia knew was—if the Five Phoenixes continued like this, even under Lu Fan's lead to surpass Fourth or Third-grade, even reaching Second or First-grade—

The people of the Five Phoenixes might become the obstacle holding it back!

Thus, in his final moments, he had spoken his lifelong wish.

The ground was cold with bones.

The Upper Realm's ninety thousand troops had crashed onto the blood-colored battlefield as bones, along with ferocious beast corpses.

Qi Liujia's final brilliance had stunned the world.

Of course, this was also because the army consisted of Nascent Divinity experts and some unlucky Grand Ability ones.

If all had been Grand Ability experts, even igniting divine herb energy, Qi Liujia's Myriad Rune Cauldron could not have caused such terror and awe.

But the battle was not over.

It had only just begun!

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Above the heavens—

After the light faded, figures emerged.

Upper Realm Unity and Transcendent experts stood.

Ascended Immortals floated beyond, expressions complex, lingering fear in their eyes as they gazed at the blood-colored battlefield.

“Kill.”

A calm voice drifted forth.

From the luxurious chariot in Pingyang Heaven—the Divine Son shrouded in purple qi spoke.

BOOM!

Next moment—these experts moved!

They became streaks of light. Without Qi Liujia's obstruction, they crashed onto the blood-colored battlefield.

THUD! THUD! THUD!

Rolling shockwaves scattered. Countless bones rolled across the battlefield.

Grand Ability auras shot skyward, nearly tearing the battlefield apart.

Ascended Immortals hovered beyond, watching coldly.

Qi Liujia's outburst had cleared the Upper Realm's ninety thousand troops, but most casualties were Nascent Divinity experts and some unlucky Grand Ability ones.

Most experts still lived.

But they sensed something different.

The Five Phoenixes' cultivators no longer feared them as before. Instead, they felt soaring killing intent.

Even weak Golden Core cultivators radiated killing intent.

“Fight!”

Jiang Li in silver armor, face ice-cold.

Qi Liujia had been someone he respected. An old man willing to die generously for the Five Phoenixes!

What reason did Jiang Li have to hide behind?!

Young Master Lu had been drawn away—life or death unknown.

Without Young Master Lu, did the Five Phoenixes have no power to resist?!

BOOM!

The blood-soaked Great Xuan iron riders roared.

They might not be strong, only Body Storage Realm cultivators, but at this moment—they feared no battle!

In this moment, Jiang Li gained a special enlightenment.

The army's auras united, forming the blood-colored war god.

Jiang Li's primordial spirit trembled—transforming, condensing a primordial spirit flower!

Beneath his silver armor, he smiled.

Though this breakthrough was a drop in the ocean—

Every bit of strength counted. Victory!

Upper Realm experts attacked coldly, streaking as light.

Terrifying energy slashed out, carving countless ravines across the blood-colored battlefield.

Jiang Li gathered the army's power, fighting several Transcendents to a standstill.

Overlord too battled several Transcendents to madness!

Demonic qi rolled around him, on the verge of breakthrough.

A zither's notes rang out.

Luo Mingyue from the tomb returned. Having inherited the Piano King's legacy, she killed coldly.

Her ten fingers danced. Sound waves trapped and slew Grand Ability experts!

Ximen Xianzhi drifted in.

Having inherited the Sword King's legacy, he slashed—one strike, sword qi like thunder within ten, twenty, thirty zhang!

The Five Phoenixes showed unprecedented resilience.

In the void—

The blood-colored battlefield cracked.

Cultivators from the Five Phoenixes' lands surged forth. The battlefield truly became one of life and death!

Upper Realm experts attacking the Five Phoenixes were stunned.

Experts from Pingyang Heaven who had participated in the tournament were shocked.

They had not expected the Five Phoenixes' resilience to be so terrifying—even stronger than imagined.

BOOM!

On the blood-colored battlefield, one after another peerless Five Phoenixes cultivator displayed their grace.

A white-robed swordsman, Unity Realm, slashed—each strike matching Transcendents, blade cries like mournful dragon roars.

In one corner, a disheveled scholar laughed, walking slowly.

Lotuses seemed to bloom from his mouth, words like pearls, eloquent!

With one aura, he forced several Unity experts back!

His presence like vast mountains.

A young girl sat atop a fire bird resembling a phoenix.

A painter's brush drew scrolls—mountains and rivers suppressing the void.

The number of Grand Ability experts in the Five Phoenixes exceeded expectations.

But so what?

BOOM!

Three Ascended Immortals entered.

Vast auras rolled like waves.

The grieving Five Phoenixes erupted with unimaginable power—but so what?

Ascended Immortals acted. Without Saint Lord Lu—how could the Five Phoenixes resist?

Without Saint Lord Lu—they were nothing.

An Ascended Immortal sat in the void, smiling faintly.

He slapped out a palm.

A terrifying palm covered the sky, making Overlord and others feel ice-cold, as if to crush them into the ground.

Just as they refused to yield—

A cyan lotus quietly bloomed. One petal, two, three...

Nine petals bloomed, each resounding!

Lu Jiulian rose into the sky.

Above his head—primordial spirit flower, golden body flower, and a Dao Intent flower bloomed.

Three flowers gathered atop his head, spinning.

Lu Jiulian, already at the peak of Creation Venerable, in this moment—three flowers gathered, becoming one with heaven and man!

Three flowers atop the head—heaven and man as one!

Lu Jiulian pointed.

He actually repelled an Ascended Immortal's attack.

“Why does he have an extra flower beyond primordial spirit and golden body?”

An Ascended Immortal was puzzled.

Lu Julian displaying Ascended Immortal combat power invigorated the Five Phoenixes!

The three Ascended Immortals unleashed terrifying pressure, as if to crush Lu Julian into the earth.

Awoo!

On the blood-colored battlefield—

Little Yinglong's eyes blazed with rage.

The blood, the bones—his heart trembled.

Old Qi was dead.

The old man who often visited the island and sometimes played with him—was dead!

Ni Yu's eyes were red, constantly stuffing pills into her mouth.

Standing on Little Yinglong's back, fighting Grand Ability experts.

Though Ni Yu's cultivation was weak, her black pot swung dazzlingly.

She had actually condensed a golden body flower. One Grand Ability expert struck by her pot was left dizzy.

Little Yinglong and Ni Yu together roamed the battlefield—comparable to a Transcendent!

But...

There were too many Upper Realm Grand Ability experts.

Little Yinglong bled.

Dragon scales shattered.

Ni Yu's golden body showed cracks, but she paid no heed. Her white dress turned red.

She kept swallowing pills, having Little Yinglong carry her to deliver medicine to wounded Five Phoenixes cultivators.

The once stingy girl was now endlessly generous on the battlefield.

In the distance, Jing Yue's body was blood-soaked.

Leaning on his sword, he tremblingly pulled a pill from his bloodied robes.

He looked—alas, it was crushed.

He smiled.

In the distance—

Ni Yu rode Little Yinglong over.

“Old Jing! Catch!”

Ni Yu flung several pills.

Jing Yue slapped them back with his sword.

“No need. Give to others. I have one.”

He said, then licked the crushed pill he had licked countless times and swallowed it.

BOOM!

Sword intent rolled around him.

One thrust!

A brilliant sword light appeared in the world.

Swordsman!

Master of killing!

Forward without retreat—he slashed a Transcendent, drawing blood.

Sword light faded.

Jing Yue staggered, leaning on his sword, and sat heavily on the ground.

...

Lu Jiulian sat cross-legged in the void.

Newly entered heaven-man realm, holding off three Ascended Immortals.

Cyan lotuses floated in the air—each containing extreme killing intent.

Lu Jiulian's expression was calm, vowing to die rather than retreat.

Though he did not know who he was or where he came from—

He knew the Five Phoenixes had his family.

One cute little disciple—Tang Guo.

The three Ascended Immortals were somewhat uncertain.

Lu Jiulian's resilience exceeded expectations.

The Five Phoenixes had another expert besides Saint Lord Lu.

But still only one. They beckoned.

Three more Ascended Immortals crossed over.

Six joined forces—determined to crush Lu Jiulian.

Killing him would deal a massive blow to the Five Phoenixes' morale!

Suddenly—

The entire blood-colored battlefield fell silent for a moment.

A crimson color appeared.

A crimson dragon soared into the sky. Atop its back, a white-clothed girl stood quietly, eyes closed.

The Ascended Immortals rushing to support against Lu Jiulian felt their hearts leap.

“Those who bully Father—must die!”

Red lips parted. Words spoken.

No one knew what she said.

They just felt it was very domineering.

The girl opened her eyes.

Left eye black, right eye white.

Behind her—a black-white millstone rose.

Da da da da!

The three Ascended Immortals saw only black and white. Their bodies were crushed in the void!

Everyone was horrified.

The Five Phoenixes...

Had another such person!

...

The ancient tomb detached from the Five Phoenixes, floating in the Void Heaven.

Battle ripples spread far.

Four peerless figures guarded the tomb's four sides. Upper Realm Immortal Hosts attacked constantly but always failed.

In truth, the Upper Realm experts knew—the Four Kings had only borrowed blood to regenerate. They were at the end of their strength, barely holding on.

Yet...

They could not break through these four spent forces—these decayed Four Kings!

The Piano King smiled beautifully, gently stroking her ancient zither. Lashes trembled as if lightly powdered. Ten fingers danced—tidal sound waves repelling attacking Immortal Hosts.

“Beings of the ancient era should have perished in time. Why cling to life?!”

An Immortal Host roared.

He raised a palm. Space shook. Immortal qi formed a terrifying whip capable of shattering mountains and rivers.

The handsome daoist Sword King smiled lightly.

As if dancing with his sword, he thrust gently.

The sword hid profound mystery.

The immortal qi whip shattered inch by inch.

THUD! THUD! THUD!

Suddenly—

Every Immortal Host paled.

They heard powerful heartbeats—from deep within the tomb!

The Blood-Robed General was reviving!

The Immortal Hosts panicked. They gritted teeth, taking out treasure after treasure shrouded in immortal qi, unleashing even more terrifying power.

The Void Heaven's space collapsed.

Yet...

They still could not breach the tomb.

But there was progress.

The Piano King's ten fingers bled.

The Sword King's tiger's mouth split.

The War King's armor cracked.

The Shadow King could no longer hide.

But the four smiled at each other and continued guarding.

The Piano King even began to sing. Her faint song echoed between the tomb's palaces.

Accompanied by increasingly powerful heartbeats.

Suddenly—

A zither string snapped. The Piano King's ten fingers bloomed with ten blood flowers. Her aura rapidly declined.

But as it declined—she smiled brilliantly.

“This general... welcomes the General.”

The Sword King leaned on his rusted sword like a withered bamboo.

The rusted sword was covered in cracks like him.

When his last wisp of sword qi faded, life force drained—

A smile appeared on his handsome face.

“This general... welcomes the General.”

The Shadow King and War King—two cold figures—also faded, standing atop the tomb, smiling lightly in welcome.

Suddenly—

A faint sigh drifted from the tomb's depths.

Next moment—

BOOM!

A coffin lid tore through darkness, smashing palace walls, shooting from the depths!

...

Within the dragon head—

The “Zhe” rune hung quietly, trailing strands of light.

Silver blades stacked into the Thousand-Blade Chair. Lu Fan sat upon it, white robes fluttering.

His brows were furrowed. Killing intent blazed in his eyes.

Phoenix Feather Sword hovered around him, releasing rolling aura.

Array runes floated around.

In the distance, a robed figure sat at the bow of an ancient warship—like an immortal, face shrouded, immortal qi coiling like a divine dragon around his body.

The mist concealing his face dispersed, revealing an aged countenance.

The old man smiled faintly at Lu Fan.

Lu Fan looked at him too, expression terrifyingly calm.

The two stared in silence.

Gradually, the atmosphere grew strange.

The old man looked puzzled at Lu Fan. He had not seen the expected fear from this Five Phoenixes Saint Lord.

“You junior... why are you not afraid?”

The old man spoke.

He was an Immortal Host beyond Ascended Immortal—an immortal veteran of the Upper Realm.

Immortal Host realm—only Fifth-grade sacred ground Saint Lords or Fourth-grade worlds could produce.

“Why should I fear you?”

Lu Fan said calmly.

He put away the Spirit Pressure Chessboard, hands slowly resting on the armrests.

He did not know what was happening outside, but his heart suddenly jumped.

He dared not imagine the Five Phoenixes without him.

This time—Lu Fan was truly angry.

“You shouldn’t have pulled me into this array.”

Lu Fan said.

“Oh? You junior... so arrogant.”

The Immortal Host old man laughed.

“What realm are you?”

Lu Fan looked at the calm old man sitting on the warship and asked.

The old man smiled.

This one was scared.

“Above Ascended Immortal—Immortal Host.”

The old man spoke. He was in no rush. Attacking the Blood-Robed General’s tomb was extremely dangerous even with an imperial weapon.

He had unexpectedly been assigned to deal with this Five Phoenixes Saint Lord.

How could he not seize the opportunity?

Ending the fight too soon—once out of the array, the Divine Son would surely send him to attack the tomb.

The Blood-Robed General’s infamous name still made him tremble.

Thus, he was not anxious. He would drag this out with the Five Phoenixes Saint Lord.

When the outside battle was nearly over, he would slap this Saint Lord dead and exit.

“Immortal Host?”

Lu Fan lowered his head, hair falling, pondering the realm.

“You junior, why ask my realm? Afraid?”

The old man said, robes whipping.

“Afraid?”

Lu Fan raised his head. His hands on the armrests slowly pressed down.

Being pulled into this array had been unexpected. Even more unexpected—being suppressed by the “Zhe” rune.

The Nine Runes were Ancient Emperor laws. Even he could not easily break them.

Thus, to escape the array...

He had to kill this old man.

“Not really. Just asking your realm...”

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Demonic qi rolled around Lu Fan.

Next moment—he suddenly stood from the chair.

His eyes turned pitch-black. Demonic qi surged like a roar.

“So I can gauge my own strength.”

“Gauge my strength.”

The words fell.

The old man on the ancient warship’s smile gradually vanished.

“Special... constitution?!”

Next moment—

In his pupils—

Lu Fan's figure became a black streak, instantly crossing the distance.

The Immortal Host old man's neck suddenly tightened. The black shadow grabbed him and slammed him into the cabin!

BOOM!

Terrifying attacks surged within the cabin. The old man's wretched cries rang out.

The ancient warship filled with age-old aura suddenly collapsed, exploding into fragments!

The immortal qi whips that had stood straight around the warship—

Fell limply, scattering.

Chapter 440: Demonized Young Master Lu—One Punch Against the Imperial Weapon

The ancient warship suddenly exploded, shattering from the inside out.

Blood qi mingled with the debris.

Demonic qi surged like a tide.

The Immortal Host expert who had been dragged into the cabin by demonized Lu Fan—no longer breathed.

Tap... tap... tap...

Cold footsteps echoed, as if someone walked through the air.

Black hair vigorous, black robes fluttering.

A figure slowly emerged from the shattered cabin.

He turned his head slightly, as if looking back. His flying eyes were filled with indifference—indifference to the world.

Sitting as an immortal, standing as a demon.

When Lu Fan sat in the Thousand-Blade Chair, the demonic qi he suppressed had been contained.

The moment he stood—it fully erupted.

Lu Fan wasted no time. He could not afford to.

So his first move was a killing blow.

And the Immortal Host...

Was instantly obliterated.

Not even bones remained.

Perhaps the old Immortal Host never imagined that the task he thought easiest would make him the first of all Immortal Hosts to die.

Clang! Clang! Clang!

Silver blades stacked, stained with demonic qi.

Behind Lu Fan, they formed metallic wings—demonic qi-coated wings that unfurled, filled with sharp killing intent.

A shrill phoenix cry rang out.

Even Phoenix Feather Sword was affected by demonized Lu Fan.

It burned with black-red flames. The sword soul roared excitedly.

Master is invincible!

Kill! Kill! Kill!

Lu Fan turned. The ancient warship, riddled with holes, slowly collapsed.

Wisps of immortal qi dissipated.

“Immortal Host...”

Demon Lord Lu Fan’s cold face showed no emotion.

He murmured, brows slightly furrowed.

“Just one punch.”

Lu Fan had truly thrown only one punch—of course, at full power.

Mobilizing all primordial spirit and Chaos Energy.

Terrifying force nearly collapsed the void.

One punch.

The Immortal Host expert couldn’t even scream before being obliterated.

Body and spirit extinguished.

Lu Fan exhaled slowly. Demonic qi coiled endlessly around him.

One Immortal Host was still not enough to gauge his strength.

This time, he did not conceal himself or revert to his white-robed appearance.

He looked beyond the dragon head.

White lines danced in his eyes.

He saw through the array.

He saw Qi Liujia kneeling toward him, divine herb energy pouring from his body.

That was the divine herb Lu Fan had catalyzed with time power to save Qi Liujia.

Though not a true divine herb, it was extraordinary.

It had pulled Qi Liujia back from death.

But Qi Liujia, merely a Unity expert, had only used a tiny fraction.

He had stored the rest...

And now unleashed it all.

BOOM!

Demonic qi shot skyward from Lu Fan.

He became a black streak. Phoenix Feather Sword's black-red flames roared.

He struck the dragon head with terrifying force.

Yet...

The "Zhe" rune flowed, trailing light that blocked Lu Fan.

Outside the array—

Qi Liujia laughed, his body cracking, each crack blooming with radiant light.

Finally...

He became the heaven-shaking Myriad Rune Cauldron.

One cauldron annihilated ninety thousand Upper Realm troops.

His presence swallowed mountains and rivers!

Lu Fan's hair flew. He fell silent.

He could still faintly see the old man smiling as he kowtowed.

Lu Fan's gaze shifted. His mind entered the preaching platform, deducing array-breaking methods over and over.

Immortal Host enemies were easy. Ancient Emperor runes were the problem.

Soon!

Deductions complete.

Lu Fan opened his eyes. Demonic qi surged like waves!

He raised his hand—forming a claw—and grabbed straight at the massive “Zhe” rune.

As if to violently tear it down.

...

PFFT!

In the ancient tomb—

The cold coffin lid shot forth with the weight of a thousand jun.

An Immortal Host's expression changed. He dodged the terrifying lid.

But it did not slow. An Ascended Immortal who failed to evade was caught by the shockwave—body exploding, dying without a scream.

The power in the coffin lid was beyond what Ascended Immortals could withstand!

“He's emerging!”

The five Immortal Hosts attacking the tomb grew solemn.

In Pingyang Heaven—

The Divine Son in the luxurious chariot sat upright.

Purple qi swirled. Sharp eyes stared into the tomb.

The heartbeat grew stronger—like a sleeping lion's furious breathing.

THUD! THUD! THUD!

Every Immortal Host paled.

The three carrying the Ancient Emperor cauldron narrowed their eyes.

A man's name, a tree's shadow.

The Blood-Robed General's name—even in that era, made the Upper Realm Sacred Clan retreat.

Now this great killer was reviving—how could it not shake them?

The ancient tomb floated in the Void Heaven.

Oppressive aura spread.

After a moment's pause, the five Immortal Hosts attacked the tomb madly.

The Four Kings could no longer hold.

One more push—they could breach the tomb and stop the Blood-Robed General’s revival.

“Kill! With all your strength!”

From the luxurious chariot, the Divine Son spoke coldly.

“The Blood-Robed should have died long ago. Why cling to life from ancient times?!”

“Kill!”

CLAP!

The Divine Son seemed to shatter the chariot. His roar rolled like a tidal river.

The five Immortal Hosts became five rainbows, charging again.

Ascended Immortals and Transcendents unleashed world-shaking attacks.

Covering the sky—black and oppressive!

They sought to crush the tomb.

Compared to attacking the Five Phoenixes, breaching the tomb was the Upper Realm's true goal.

Destroying the Five Phoenixes was merely incidental.

Wretched laughter rang from the tomb.

The Piano King smiled beautifully.

Her body suddenly erupted with infinite white light.

With her final life force, she blocked the killing blows for the Blood-Robed General!

The daoist raised his rusted sword. A single aura shook the universe. Laughing boldly, his body erupted with infinite light like the Piano King.

Like a heaven-piercing unsheathed sword—cleaving the firmament.

The Shadow King and War King did the same.

Four beams of light shot skyward from the tomb's four directions.

Dazzling white light illuminated the entire dark Void Heaven.

The five Immortal Hosts were forced back, hovering outside the tomb.

Ascended Immortals and Transcendents hung in the air, wary and stunned.

The light faded. The four beams dispersed.

Atop the city walls—only four skeletons remained.

Completely lifeless.

The Four Kings... were truly dead now.

The five Immortal Hosts inhaled deeply.

Then—hair stood on end. Pores exploded.

A faint sigh of sorrow, regret, and faint anger drifted from the tomb's depths.

THUD! THUD! THUD!

Ancient city gates opened one after another.

In the deepest open gate—a lidless coffin floated quietly.

The five Immortal Hosts felt bone-chilling cold.

They blinked once—the coffin instantly crossed one city wall.

They couldn't help blinking five times—the coffin appeared outside the tomb.

Cold spread from their soles, covering their bodies in an instant.

“Blood... Blood-Robed General Gu Mangran?!”

One Immortal Host stammered in terror.

Just the coffin’s appearance felt like a mountain on their hearts.

The world seemed to fall silent.

Crack... crack...

The sound of bones moving.

As if a skeleton was about to sit up from the coffin.

THUD!

In Pingyang Heaven—

The Divine Son shot upright in the luxurious chariot.

Vast purple qi wrapped his body.

He teleported atop the massive cauldron.

The three Immortal Hosts carried it.

World-ending fire poured from the cauldron.

“Gu Mangran! You killed my Cloud Clan ancestor and slaughtered a million of our clan’s pillars!”

“Blood debt must be paid in blood!”

The Divine Son’s purple-qi-shrouded face shot divine light from his pupils.

He slapped out with a strange arc.

Striking the cauldron carried by the three Immortal Hosts.

THUD!

The cauldron rang deafeningly.

The massive cauldron bearing Ancient Emperor aura began to tilt.

PFFT!

The three Immortal Hosts turned red, coughing blood!

But the cauldron poured.

Like immortal furnace fire toppled—vast flames gushed forth.

The Void Heaven instantly became a sea of fire.

The fire poured like a crimson waterfall straight at the tomb!

“Kill!”

The five Immortal Hosts attacking the tomb roared.

Their robes whipped. Straight immortal qi spread from their feet, shooting into the sky like starlight beams.

Beyond Ascended Immortal—one thought gathers immortal qi. Gathering one strand of true immortal qi makes one's name eternal—Immortal Host!

The five Immortal Hosts used immortal qi as a guide, directing the pouring furnace fire toward the coffin.

To burn the being within to nothingness—cremate and return to heaven!

The Divine Son stepped into the sky, using Ancient Emperor furnace fire to burn the Blood-Robed General!

This scene stunned the world.

Experts from Blood Evil Heaven, Yuan Magnetic Heaven, and Pingyang Heaven were horrified.

What grandeur!

They had even brought out the imperial weapon “Supreme Furnace”!

“You want to kill me. Do your clan elders know?”

A calm voice drifted forth.

Next—

At the edge of the ancient bronze coffin—

A hand appeared, resting on it.

A withered, skin-wrapped-bone hand.

Yet it drew the world’s gaze.

The five Immortal Hosts seemed bathed in furnace fire.

Crack... crack...

The figure in the coffin slowly stood.

Little by little...

Spotless white robes, then thick black hair.

But the face was skin and bones—like a corpse buried countless ages.

Flesh withered.

Yet in the sunken sockets, brilliant light shone.

A divine herb fully absorbed had restored some strength.

Fully recovered—he would surely be handsome and godlike.

Blood-Robed General Gu Mangran!

Why white robes yet called Blood-Robed?

Hands behind his back, he stood in the coffin.

He raised a hand and pointed.

The pouring furnace fire waterfall abruptly halted.

The five Immortal Hosts' pupils shrank.

Vast might bore down. Their heads exploded—including their primordial spirits, shattered!

Five headless Immortal Host corpses knelt in the sea of fire.

Yet the figure in white robes, withered as a corpse, walked past smiling lightly.

He walked past the five kneeling corpses.

Robes fluttering, a drop of blood landed on his white robes—instantly spreading from the hem, dyeing the entire robe blood-red.

“You brought an imperial weapon, but with your strength—you cannot wield it.”

“If your clan elders came personally to wield it against me, perhaps there would be a chance.”

The withered corpse spoke slowly.

His voice was gentle—not like a mass murderer’s words.

Vast power surged.

The furnace fire began flowing back, bit by bit forced into the cauldron.

“How is this possible?!”

The Divine Son who had struck the cauldron to pour fire was horrified, incredulous.

A man buried from ancient times—the Divine Son had thought he had overestimated Gu Mangran, even bringing an imperial weapon.

Yet...

He had still underestimated!

PFFT!

The three Immortal Hosts carrying the “Supreme Furnace” bled from their bodies.

They were nearly crushed by the imperial weapon.

But they had to hold. Without the weapon suppressing the Void Heaven’s laws—

So many Immortal Hosts in the Void Heaven would trigger a “law tide.”

The Divine Son floated in the air, purple-qi-shrouded face staring at the blood-robed figure forcing the fire back.

“Hmph!”

“The imperial weapon may not kill you, but it can still suppress and restrict you.”

“We failed to kill you this time. Next time, my clan elders will personally behead you, murderer!”

The Divine Son said coldly.

His body floated. He flicked his sleeve. Vast purple qi shot skyward.

In Pingyang Heaven—

Five true-dragon-blood dragon-horses pulled the chariot racing forth.

Gu Mangran’s pressure was immense as he approached.

But the Divine Son saw—

Gu Mangran was bearing the imperial weapon’s pressure, walking burdened.

So he would leave. Gu Mangran could not stop him.

And he would leave as a victor.

Gu Mangran's withered face showed faint mockery, calmly watching the Divine Son.

"Cloud Clan... You didn't mention it, I nearly forgot..."

"Wait. One day, I, Gu Mangran, will surely step into the Cloud Clan and slaughter your entire clan—top to bottom—to honor my Four Kings."

Gu Mangran's words were calm, blood robes whipping.

Saying he would massacre your family was as casual as asking for a cup of celebratory wine.

The closer to the imperial weapon, the stronger the pressure.

Dao and laws wove terrifying killing intent.

Dragon-horses neighed.

The Divine Son's eyes blazed with killing intent. Though he had lost several Immortal Hosts this time, he had probed Gu Mangran's current state.

If not for the strange Void Heaven his clan elders were unwilling to risk entering—Gu Mangran would be dead.

He ignored Gu Mangran's words.

After all, the Blood-Robed General had slept too long. His strength was less than a tenth. Without the Void Heaven's protection, if he dared step half a foot out—supreme experts would slay him on the spot!

The Cloud Clan had rested and multiplied for countless ages—now far beyond Gu Mangran's imagination.

If he truly came—

The clan's Sacred Ancestor would ensure he never returned.

With a light sneer—

The Divine Son turned to enter the chariot.

Suddenly—

His body stiffened.

“Leaving?”

“Did I say you could leave?”

A calm voice drifted forth.

Hmm?

The voice made the Divine Son pause.

Gu Mangran, who had forced all the fire back while bearing the imperial weapon’s pressure, blazed with light in his withered sockets.

On the blood-colored battlefield—

The Five Phoenixes cultivators' breathing quickened.

The dragon-head array was torn open.

A wisp of demonic qi escaped.

Soon—myriad demonic qi surged like a tide.

“Young Master Lu!”

The Five Phoenixes cultivators showed excitement.

Pulled into the array by an Immortal Host—Young Master Lu had emerged alive and unharmed so quickly!

Demon Lord Lu Fan's demonic qi soared. Behind him, Thousand-Blade wings of metal burned with black-red flames. Phoenix Feather Sword hovered beside him.

In the world, the Myriad Rune Cauldron's lingering aura made Lu Fan's face grow colder.

He had still been too slow.

The Divine Son turned and saw Lu Fan.

The purple qi around his face rippled.

“You actually walked out alive?”

“You killed an Immortal Host?!”

The Divine Son said in shock.

Lu Fan’s expression was indifferent. His metallic wings suddenly unfurled, whipping up myriad gales.

“I killed so many of my Five Phoenixes. None of you are leaving.”

Demon Lord Lu Fan said.

“I, Lu Ping’an, treat people with sincerity. I never contend with others. But you repeatedly bully me, making the Five Phoenixes bleed...”

“Today, I become a demon. With your blood, I dye the Void Heaven.”

Lu Fan’s words rang firm.

“What are you?”

The Divine Son couldn’t help sneering.

But next moment—his body froze.

Because he found a gale of oppressive wind howling toward him.

Between him and Demon Lord Lu Fan—across vast distance—countless black-robed Lu Fans appeared.

Poses slightly different, but connected, showing Lu Fan charging forward.

One punch—closing in the blink of an eye!

BOOM!

Lu Fan approached. Only afterward did the delayed thunderous boom arrive.

How could he be so fast?!

But to emerge alive from the dragon-head array—he had to have Immortal Host strength!

The Divine Son raged. He turned and punched.

PFFT!

Their fists collided.

The Divine Son's raised arm shattered inch by inch!

The Divine Son beneath purple qi was horrified.

He too had Immortal Host strength—yet one punch shattered his arm?!

What kind of power?!

Demon Lord Lu Fan was indifferent.

His punch shattered the Divine Son's arm. He turned fist to palm, grabbing the purple-qi-shrouded head.

Slammed downward with thunderous momentum!

His knee shot up.

BOOM!

The Divine Son felt his head about to explode. Even his special constitution nearly shattered!

His forehead cracked. Blood sprayed.

The Divine Son bled. Surrounding experts were horrified.

The five dragon-horses neighed, roaring at Lu Fan.

Lu Fan glanced sideways. His silver wings wrapped in black demonic qi swept past.

PFFT!

Five massive heads flew.

The five dragon-horses—beheaded.

The Divine Son's head gripped by Lu Fan let out wretched screams.

Lu Fan's face was expressionless. He flung with force.

The Divine Son's body was hurled.

CLANG!

His body crashed into the massive cauldron.

Lu Fan's silver wings spread. He shot forth again—a line of his afterimages.

All Chaos Energy mobilized. Primordial spirit power fully erupted.

BOOM!

Lu Fan approached the imperial cauldron.

Left hand gripping the Divine Son's head, right hand raised—fist clenched. Terrifying Dao Intent amplified. Fist aura seemed to collapse the Void Heaven.

The Divine Son panicked. Purple qi had scattered. He struggled wildly.

His constitution trembled—suppressed by a top-tier special constitution!

“Who are you?!”

“Who the hell are you?!”

The Divine Son roared wretchedly.

Cold Demon Lord Lu Fan did not answer.

One punch—smashed down.

BOOM!

The Divine Son felt flesh and primordial spirit about to be annihilated!

So without hesitation—he used his life-saving method. His body teleported away.

Lu Fan's punch struck the imperial cauldron!

CLANG! CLANG! CLANG!

The cauldron trembled. Ancient Emperor aura seemed drawn forth.

Punching an imperial weapon...

Who since ancient times dared?!

The cauldron that Gu Mangran had forced back tilted again.

Gu Mangran was helpless, only able to push it back once more.

But his withered eyes blazed.

I hold the imperial weapon for you—you kill freely.

Lu Fan watched the Divine Son flicker several times with mysterious methods, vanishing.

Expressionless, he flicked his finger.

In his palm—the “Zhe” rune shot skyward.

It became a massive dome covering the Void Heaven, blocking all escape routes.

The Divine Son teleported—but crashed into the barrier.

His secret art failed. He could not shift out.

Blood-covered face filled with shock and fury.

This “Zhe” rune was a supreme trapping array—his teleport escape instantly useless.

How had this man mastered it?!

“I said—no one leaves.”

Lu Fan said coldly.

A thought.

Phoenix Feather Sword burning black-red flames, sword soul roaring excitedly.

Shot forth.

PFFT!

PFFT!

PFFT!

Three brilliant blood flowers bloomed.

The three Immortal Hosts carrying the cauldron...

All beheaded.

Without three Immortal Hosts—the imperial weapon “Supreme Furnace” instantly lost power.

From massive form, it shrank to a small cauldron.

And in the Void Heaven—the long-suppressed laws!

Finally surged like an avalanche from mountain peaks piercing the clouds.

Whether Transcendent or Ascended Immortal—as long as not native to the Void Heaven—they were covered by laws.

Flesh shredded, primordial spirits extinguished!

This grand Upper Realm punitive expedition—

In the end, under the “tide of laws,” heads rolled—annihilated.