

Starlit Path 45

Chapter 45: The Master's Arrival Determines His Unearthing

A thunderous roar erupted!

In the small courtyard, a fierce gale surged out of nowhere.

Stone chairs and tables wobbled under the relentless wind, while the trees, trembling violently, shed leaves that danced chaotically in the air.

His face flushed crimson, eyes narrowed in disbelief, he stood frozen. The figure inside the house, without even showing their face, had unleashed such terrifying power—akin to a deity descending to earth!

The overwhelming pressure made his blood feel as if it were solidifying in his veins. For a fleeting moment, he felt as though he were facing the wrath of a revered sage.

He was no weakling—a seventh-rank grandmaster, a feat remarkable for his age, and the source of his boundless arrogance. Yet, despite his prowess, the palm strike from within the house left him utterly powerless, drowning in despair.

His robes clung tightly to his body, whipped by the wind, and his hair streamed backward. A pale blue aura coalesced into a hand, its middle finger crossed over the index, as if casually making a move in a game of chess.

Boom!

A deafening explosion followed.

His prized wine gourd shattered instantly. Blood sprayed from his nose and mouth. The righteous aura of the Confucian sect, which he prided himself on and used to overpower others, crumbled under that single point of the finger, fragile as paper.

Crack!

An unstoppable force, like a towering mountain, crashed down upon him. His neck bent under the weight.

*Boom!

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An invisible shockwave rippled outward. The ground beneath his feet fractured, and excruciating pain surged through his body. His vision darkened, leaving only a blur of blood and flesh.

In the courtyard, the terrifying pressure finally subsided. The gale slowly died down.

Kneeling on the ground, his face red and contorted, he wailed in despair, “Young Master... I’m on your side!”

The oppressive force in the courtyard vanished abruptly. He felt the crushing weight lift, allowing him to barely raise his head.

Moonlight cast a cold glow over the scene. The courtyard was in disarray—scattered leaves, a toppled stone chair, and more. But what shocked him most was not the chaos—it was the head protruding from the ground at the courtyard’s center.

That head belonged to none other than the Confucian sect’s top disciple, the one who had defeated him with a single move!

At that moment, he looked utterly pathetic. His earlier arrogance and carefree demeanor were gone, reduced to fleeting memories. A divine palm strike had driven him into the earth like a radish, leaving only his head exposed, blood seeping from his body.

Gasping in shock, he trembled. A chill of fear ran through him. Had he not surrendered so decisively, his fate might have been no better than this half-dead figure before him.

The Young Master’s methods were truly unfathomable!

This man was a seventh-rank grandmaster of the Confucian sect, whose words could shift the tides and whose righteous aura shook the world. Yet, this figure, who could stride through the Great Zhou Dynasty unchallenged, had been reduced to a scallion stuck in the ground with a single slap.

She descended gracefully, her icy cicada-wing sword gleaming faintly. She gazed at him without pity or sympathy. He had brought this upon himself. She had warned him, but he, overconfident in his strength, had insisted on divining the Young Master's fate. This was the price of his hubris.

Still, she was slightly surprised. Given the Young Master's petty nature, she had expected him to kill the man outright.

Blood trickled from his mouth and nose, his body buried in the earth with only his head above ground. His consciousness wavered. Someone had asked him if he had ever divined his own fate. Truth be told, before leaving the capital, he had cast a divination for himself. The result? Great fortune.

Recalling that divination now, he felt a surge of bitter irony. Great fortune? What a joke! In that fleeting moment, he had walked the edge of death's door.

Despite the agony coursing through his body, his mind was startlingly clear. He recalled a moment long ago when the National Master, seated in a rocking chair before the library, had spoken to him about life and death with a wistful air. Now, he understood—death was truly terrifying.

He looked toward the dark house. From beginning to end, the figure inside had never appeared, not even showing their face. Three sentences, three moves, and he had been reduced to this state.

He took a deep breath, only to choke on the blood flooding his throat, coughing violently. Could the Young Master of Beiluo truly wield the might of gods and demons?

“Young Master, what should we do with him?” she asked, gripping her cicada-wing sword under the moonlight, her gaze fixed on the house.

He sheathed his sword in its case, his heart pounding with apprehension.

The house was silent, shrouded in inky darkness, not a sliver of light escaping. After a long pause, a faint voice drifted out.

“Kill him.”

The words, light as a breeze, lingered in the courtyard.

Her expression remained unchanged as she nodded, sword in hand. “Understood.”

His face twitched with fear. This was the Confucian sect’s top disciple, the National Master’s apprentice! Could the Young Master really kill him so casually, without fear of the National Master’s wrath?

He opened his mouth to protest but hesitated. What if his words angered the Young Master, who might turn his wrath on him as well? Better to stay silent and safe.

Her white skirt billowed as she raised her cicada-wing sword, her delicate features glowing like porcelain in the moonlight. With a flick of her wrist, she prepared to sever his head like cutting chives.

Suddenly, a hunched shadow landed in the courtyard.

“Young Master, you mustn’t!” Old Huang’s voice, hoarse with urgency, rang out.

Outside the courtyard, the sound of clanking armor approached. Several figures rushed in, entering under the moonlight.

A man in armor, holding a helmet in one hand and resting the other on the hilt of his sword, exuded a stern aura. Another followed closely behind.

Seeing the head protruding from the ground, both men froze in shock. If not for a slight twitch of his neck, they might have thought his head had been severed.

“Sister, hold off,” came the Young Master’s airy voice from within the house. He had sensed the armored man’s approach long before.

“How’s your health, son?” the armored man asked, concern lacing his voice as he looked toward the house.

As for the head buried in the ground, he paid it little mind. If not for the National Master's backing, trespassing into their residence alone would have been enough for the armored man to execute him.

Inside the house, a rustling sound followed. She sheathed her cicada-wing sword and stepped inside. Moments later, she emerged, pushing a wheelchair.

Moonlight bathed the pale, delicate youth in the wheelchair, his lips red and his teeth white, exuding an air of refined frailty.

"No need to worry, Father. I'm in high spirits today, my mind clear and my heart content," the youth said with a faint smile.

In the courtyard, he finally saw the Young Master—the one whose single palm strike had nearly ended him. To his shock, it was this seemingly harmless, wheelchair-bound youth, frail yet beautiful as jade.

The armored man and his son spoke at length under the moonlight, their conversation warm and unhurried. As for the man buried in the ground, he seemed all but forgotten.

"Father, though he is the National Master's top disciple, he disturbed my peace. His crime may not warrant death, but he must face consequences. Let him stay like this for a few days—until the National Master himself comes to retrieve him," the youth said calmly, his tone leaving no room for negotiation.

With that, he signaled for her to wheel him back inside.

The armored man chuckled, casting a bemused glance at the man stuck in the ground like a scallion. Without a word in his defense, he left with his companions, instructing one to relay a message to the carriage driver outside.

In the courtyard, the sword-bearer sighed in relief, quietly pleased with his decision to stay. But then, a faint voice whispered in his ear, resolute and commanding.

“Watch him. If he dies, you’re responsible. If he escapes, you’re responsible. Until the National Master comes for him.”

Inside the room, moonlight spilled through the window, fragmented and soft.

The buried man’s appearance was but a minor interruption to the youth. Tonight, he had more pressing matters.

His mind stirred, and a system panel appeared before his eyes. His gaze settled on the “Preaching Platform” in the permissions tab.

“[Preaching Platform] activated, deducting 1 soul strength...”

A hum resonated. A prompt flashed.

A wisp of light appeared, accompanied by an irresistible pull. When he opened his eyes, he found himself seated at the center of the Preaching Platform's Bagua array, surrounded by viscous spiritual energy flowing gently.

His brow arched slightly.

A new prompt appeared before him.

“Detected: Xiang Shaoyun (Identity: Western County Governor) has reached the second stage of the Qi Dan Realm. 1 wisp of spiritual energy can be claimed. Proceed?”