

Starlit Path 55

Chapter 55: The Shadow of the Silver Scissors

“Assassin!”

The moment a silver glint flashed, Lu Changkong, freshly broken through to the second stage of the Qi Core Realm, reacted instantly. His ornate robes billowed as he roared, his voice infused with spiritual energy, booming like a temple bell to deter the sudden attacker.

Nie Changqing’s butcher’s knife was already drawn, spinning rapidly in the air. Ning Zhao’s white skirt swirled as she leaped in front of Lu, her stance protective. Even Ni Yu, weakened from vomiting, clutched the chessboard with a fierce glare. The air crackled with tension, thick with killing intent.

“Get lost!” Lu Changkong growled, his voice a thunderclap.

Mo Liuqi was a professional assassin, but he loathed the act of killing. The stench of blood repulsed him, yet in the martial world, he had no choice. The Mohist School hadn’t trained him to be the world’s second greatest assassin just to sit idle. This mission came directly from that woman, and he couldn’t refuse her.

His mentor, who taught him the art of assassination, had warned that emotions were a liability—they softened the heart and dulled the blade. Mo Liuqi couldn’t comply. His feelings burned fiercer than most, buried deep like a volcano ready to erupt. He harbored a silent love for a woman, suppressed yet overwhelming. That was why he’d never surpass the top assassin, Mo Yihen—he wasn’t emotionless.

He didn't want this mission, didn't dare take it. Assassinating Great Zhou's Imperial Preceptor, a Confucian sage with sage-level strength, was a task even Mo Yihen, the world's top assassin, wouldn't touch. But when she approached him, all his prepared refusals melted into a single soft word: "Alright."

So here he was, prepared to never return. He disliked Beiluo—its eerie aura unnerved him. Yet this city might become his grave. Even in death, his life was never his own. On the donkey cart, he'd pondered much, buying a cheap hairpin at a roadside stall and carving her name into it with his scissors. If he survived, he'd give it to her himself.

Nie Changqing gripped his butcher's knife, his six-resonance vital energy erupting, eyes blazing. Spiritual energy surged from his dantian, coiling around him, forming an invisible blade aura. Lu Changkong, with his second-stage Qi Core, matched the strength of a fifth- or sixth-resonance grandmaster, his hair whipping wildly.

The two stood as a wall before the assassin. The moment the silver scissors appeared, a name flashed in their minds: Mo Liuqi, the Silver Scissors, second greatest assassin in the world. His epithet rang true—Soul-Piercing Scissors strike unseen; Blood-Slaying Path leaves no trace. His skill was second only to Mo Yihen.

Mo Liuqi moved with blinding speed. Disguised as a common driver, feigning a fall, he struck in an instant—a calculated assassination. No grandmaster's explosive aura announced his attack; assassins thrived on silence.

His face cold, eyes locked on the white-haired Preceptor, Mo Liuqi closed the distance. Clang! Clang! His silver scissors tapped Nie Changqing's knife, halting him briefly. Before Nie or Lu Changkong could react, Mo Liuqi slipped past like a shadow, his lightness kung fu ghostly and unpredictable.

Luo Yue snapped to attention, roaring as he reached for his sword, his first-rate martial aura at its peak. But Mo Liuqi, hair fluttering, spun sideways, his foot tapping Luo Yue's drawing hand, forcing the blade back into its sheath. Luo Yue stumbled back, pale, realizing that had Mo Liuqi intended to kill, a flick of those scissors across his throat would've ended him.

Unlike the bloodthirsty Mo Yihen, Mo Liuqi killed only his target. Others were spared.

The Preceptor, white-haired and eyes cloudy, faced the lightning-fast assault with calm. He'd anticipated this—leaving the capital made him a prime target for the Mohists. "Ping'an, be careful," he said gravely, wary of Lu being caught in the crossfire. The Mohist assassins were unmatched, their reputation well-earned.

His robes billowed, righteous aura gathering above him. His voice thundered, the Confucian righteous force forming a crushing pressure to subdue the assassin.

Lu, seated in their wheelchair, propped their chin, expression serene, fingers brushing the wool blanket. A sage-level figure, assassinated so easily? Despite the Preceptor's frail appearance and weak vital energy, his righteous aura could repel armies.

Lu's brow arched, a flicker of surprise crossing their face.

Mo Liuqi's expression was steely. This mission was, as expected, hellishly difficult. The Confucian righteous aura was overwhelming, its pressure so intense he couldn't muster the courage to raise his scissors, nearly forcing him to his knees. Sage-level power.

He inhaled deeply, resolve flashing in his eyes. Landing, he raised his scissors and drove them into his own thigh, tearing a bloody gash. The searing pain dulled his fear, breaking the aura's hold. Like a shadow, he surged forward, teeth gritted, his blue robe plastered to his body by the wind.

Five steps, four, three... He was close enough to see the faint, enigmatic smile on the red-lipped, white-toothed youth in the wheelchair. But Mo Liuqi's focus remained solely on his target.

The Preceptor pushed a palm forward. Boom! Mo Liuqi's face twisted, pupils shrinking as he slammed into an invisible wall, blood spraying from his nose and mouth. With a low growl, he hurled his silver scissors, still wet with his blood, the droplets scattering in the air. Spinning rapidly, they shot toward the Preceptor's face.

The Preceptor tilted his head, the scissors grazing past by a hair's breadth. Lu frowned slightly, plucking a black chess piece from the box.

Mo Liuqi, blood streaking his face, grinned—not in despair, but relief. "A-Zhu, I didn't let you down," he murmured.

His fingers clawed, and the scissors, which had flown past, froze midair. Spinning back with a piercing whistle, they aimed for the Preceptor's nape. Two inches, one, half an inch—the Preceptor stiffened, death's chill enveloping him.

Clink! A clear chime rang out. The scissors halted, their tip half an inch from the Preceptor's nape, blocked by a floating black chess piece. A mere half-inch, yet a world apart.

Mo Liuqi's eyes widened, shifting to the youth in the wheelchair, who looked at him with mild surprise. "Interesting. You've grasped the art of 'guiding the blade with intent' on your own? A fine talent. Impressive."

Lu's lips curved in appreciation. As they spoke, an invisible force swirled around the wheelchair. Raising a hand, Lu delivered a light, distant palm strike. Boom! Mo Liuqi felt his eyes bulge, bile rising. His body crashed to the ground, cracking the stone and spreading fissures. Pinned face-down, he couldn't move.

The invisible pressure, more domineering and oppressive than the Preceptor's righteous aura, was utterly lethal. "A-Zhu, I failed. I met a monster..." Mo Liuqi's final thought flickered before he blacked out.