

Starlit Path 66

Chapter 66: The Young Master Lu Finally Makes His Move!

North Luo Lake

Lu's gaze drifted from the spiritual pressure chessboard.

His wheelchair glided smoothly across the terrace, coming to rest by the railing.

Leaning forward, he took in the view.

A gentle breeze stirred the lake, its shimmering surface rippling under golden sunlight that tore through the clouds. Mist wreathed the island, lending it an ethereal, almost immortal air.

Ten skyward chrysanthemums swayed in the wind, absorbing spiritual energy.

Combined with the spiritual energy Lu had previously infused, Lakeheart Island felt like a slice of paradise on earth.

Ni Yu poured a cup of warmed wine.

Lu took it, the warmth seeping through the bronze cup into his palm.

Sipping the plum wine, he said to Ni Yu, "Little Ni, fetch Old Nie and Sister Ning."

"Yes, sir!"

Ni Yu scampered off, her small legs carrying her down the pavilion in a lively blur.

Soon, Lu spotted her darting across the island.

He squinted, the breeze teasing his elegant sideburns, his white robes fluttering lightly.

On the island, Nie Changqing and Ning Zhao sat cross-legged, cultivating, their spiritual energy swirling uncontrollably, exuding a formidable pressure.

In a corner, Yi Yue's face was flushed with effort, struggling to sense qi.

Lu took another sip, his expression thoughtful.

Cultivation, indeed, hinged on talent.

Yi Yue's aptitude was... lacking, requiring far more effort than most.

His gaze shifted to Mo Liuqi, the assassin.

Lu couldn't help but feel a pang for Yi Yue.

Mo Liuqi was already surrounded by swirling spiritual energy, having successfully drawn it into his dantian, stepping into the first stage of the qi core realm.

No surprise, really—he was a genius who'd independently mastered “controlling scissors with intent.”

Soon, Nie Changqing and Ning Zhao arrived gracefully.

“Young Master,” Nie Changqing said, bowing with clasped hands, while Ning Zhao gave a slight curtsy.

Lu, seated in his wheelchair, toyed with the bronze cup. “There's been a change. The Wolong Ridge secret realm has opened earlier than expected...”

Ning Zhao and Nie Changqing's expressions tightened.

The Young Master had tasked them with reaching the ninth stage of the qi core realm before the secret realm opened—a goal they were far from achieving.

“Sister Ning, seventh stage. Old Nie, fifth stage. Not bad, I suppose,” Lu said.

“The early opening is my miscalculation. Since that’s the case, you’ll head to the secret realm now.”

Nie Changqing glanced at Ning Zhao, surprised to learn she’d outpaced him in cultivation.

Still, it made sense—she practiced the Earth Treasury Sutra, a profound immortal technique gifted by Lu, matching his own in potency.

“Young Master, entering the Wolong Ridge secret realm requires a spirit token...” Ning Zhao said, frowning.

“For ordinary folk, perhaps,” Lu replied with a light smile from the terrace railing. “But for disciples of White Jade Capital, no such trinket is needed.”

Both Ning Zhao and Nie Changqing froze, stunned.

“Use your spiritual pressure to break the formation, enter the secret realm, and retrieve the condensed core of the ancient qi refiner buried within. Go swiftly and return.”

Their eyes flashed with awe—Lu, from a hundred miles away, knew the secrets of the realm.

Suppressing their shock, they leaped from the terrace.

Lu sipped the tart plum wine, narrowing his eyes.

“Old Nie, wear white robes,” he called. “From now on, all White Jade Capital disciples walk the world in white.”

“Yes, sir!”

Nie Changqing paused mid-step, nodding, then shot toward the island’s edge.

Using qi to propel a boat, he and Ning Zhao sent it skimming across the lake, kicking up waves like a white dragon.

Reaching the shore, they mounted waiting horses and galloped off.

Watching them depart, Lu tapped the bronze cup lightly.

“Time to wrap this up...”

“Afterward, I’ll announce the first cultivation realm to the world. As for how...”

He rubbed the cup thoughtfully.

“The Tianji Family’s messenger pigeons... not a bad choice.”

Wolong Ridge Secret Realm

Mo Ju supported a trembling Dantai Xuan, whose face was ashen, his eyes brimming with terror.

Once, he’d been a proud figure, bold and unrestrained, pointing defiantly at immortals.

Now, after watching tens of thousands dissolve like snow, erased from existence, that brash confidence—“With ten thousand troops, even an immortal can be slain!”—had crumbled.

Mo Ju sighed, his silk scarf fluttering as he gazed at the palace, bathed in radiant, multicolored light.

His eyes held reverence for the unknown, the ineffable.

Immortal Palace, Middle Chamber

Li Sansi panted heavily, struggling against a lieutenant fiend as powerful as a grandmaster.

Surrounded by swarms of lesser fiends, a single misstep could mean being torn apart.

When Xiang Shaoyun was sent crashing back, their hearts sank.

Xiang Shaoyun, a pinnacle grandmaster, could stand toe-to-toe with the greatest masters of the hundred schools.

Yet, a single move from the withered Taoist in the coffin had sent him flying.

Rubble rolled as Xiang Shaoyun climbed to his feet, staring at the Taoist, Jiang Chao.

“Peak qi core realm... twelve wisps of spiritual energy,” he muttered, gripping his axe and shield, his vital energy surging like a storm.

“Does the capacity for spiritual energy in one’s dantian vary between individuals?”

He frowned, pondering.

“My dantian can hold fifteen wisps... yet this qi refiner, at his peak, holds only twelve. Perhaps that’s the difference in aptitude.”

He turned to Li Sansi, who was being pushed back by a lieutenant’s broadsword. “Li Sansi, how many wisps can your dantian hold?”

Li Sansi’s face darkened.

“Why ask that now? Shouldn’t we focus on breaking through?”

“Answer me,” Xiang Shaoyun pressed.

“Sixteen!” Li Sansi gritted out, only to be sent crashing into a stone wall by a lieutenant’s strike.

Kong Nanfei’s face was pale, his lips dry, as lesser fiends closed in.

Mo Shugui, a long gash across his back, bled freely, leaning on his sword, his breath faint.

They were on the verge of annihilation.

Indeed, only those with the strength to claim it could call it destiny—otherwise, it was a curse.

Rustling came from outside the chamber.

Three other survivors, catching sight of the terrifying lieutenants and the floating Taoist, paled.

They turned and fled.

Having each refined a wisp of spiritual energy in their desperate struggle, they’d gained enough. To linger for more would mean death.

Even titans like Xiang Shaoyun, Li Sansi, and Mo Shugui were battered—why risk it?

Xiang Shaoyun, axe and shield in hand, locked eyes with the withered Taoist.

“Is this the immortal’s design? Spreading spiritual energy to reshape the world?”

In a flash, he pictured an immortal, shrouded in mist, toying with mortals like pieces on a board.

“Immortal!”

Exhaling sharply, he stepped back.

“Li Sansi, Mo Shugui, Kong Nanfei—hold off the Taoist! Leave the rest to me!”

With a roar, he charged to Li Sansi’s side, his axe clashing against a lieutenant’s broadsword in a deafening collision.

Li Sansi caught his intent immediately.

Darting forward, wooden sword scraping the ground, he rushed the Taoist.

Mo Shugui, pale and pained, gripped his sword and followed.

Kong Nanfei, licking his cracked lips, chanted rapidly, summoning Confucian righteous energy.

The Taoist, Jiang Chao, drifted from the coffin, his tattered robes swaying, his green-glowing eyes eerie.

With a wave of his cracked, withered hand, spiritual pressure slammed down.

Li Sansi and the others were thrown back.

Xiang Shaoyun ignored their plight, charging a lieutenant with blazing eyes, his hair whipping wildly.

His towering frame pulsed with power.

Boom, boom, boom!

His vital energy roared like a dragon, resisting the spiritual pressure.

His shield smashed forward, knocking the two-meter-tall lieutenant back, followed by three upward axe strikes—each stronger than the last.

The Overlord's signature move: Three Axe Cleaves!

The lieutenant fell, dissolving into ten wisps of spiritual energy that swirled around Xiang Shaoyun.

His qi core spun, frantically absorbing the energy. His body felt near bursting, his strength surging.

Charging the Taoist, axe and shield in hand, he roared.

The floating Taoist's robes fluttered.

With a wave of his hand, spiritual pressure bore down.

A press, a push.

Xiang Shaoyun, wreathed in spiritual energy, was slapped back by an invisible force, sent tumbling through the air with several more blows.

A brutal thrashing.

He was stunned.

Are cultivators this strong?!

In the chamber, the remaining lesser fiends and the last lieutenant dissolved into spiritual energy, flowing into the Taoist, making him even more formidable.

Floating in the air, he pressed both palms downward.

Boom!

The chamber's floor shattered.

Five Miles Outside Wolong Ridge

Hooves thundered.

Mo Ju's head snapped around, sensing something.

In the distance, two horses galloped, carrying a man in white robes and a woman in a white dress.

"It's her!"

Mo Ju's pupils shrank. He recognized Ning Zhao—the peerless woman who'd stood alone on horseback beneath North Luo's walls.

She was Young Master Lu's attendant!

Did this mean... Young Master Lu of North Luo was finally intervening in this immortal destiny?!

The two rode without pause, charging toward the five-mile mark.

Mo Ju shot to his feet.

"The palace's five-mile radius is sealed without a spirit token!"

Ning Zhao ignored him. Leaping from her horse, she soared forward, entering the five-mile zone.

Her spiritual pressure flared, countering the palace's own, just as Lu had predicted.

Nie Changqing followed, their lightness skills making them seem like exiled immortals gliding across the distance.

They landed before the palace gate.

With a palm strike, the gate creaked open, its ancient sound reverberating.

Standing before the open gate, Ning Zhao's long hair fluttered as she cast a faint glance back at Mo Ju.

That single look left him rooted to the spot, dazed and entranced.