

Starlit Path 70

Chapter 70: Beyond Qi Core Lies Body Treasury

Wolong Ridge, Immortal Palace, Rear Chamber

The rear chamber held little beyond burial artifacts, but what drew attention were the dust-covered, ancient sheepskin scrolls on the stone shelf.

Xiang Shaoyun, axe and shield slung across his back, reached for one.

The text was cryptic, indecipherable to him with his limited knowledge of ancient script.

But as he channeled a wisp of spiritual energy from his dantian into the scroll, understanding flooded his mind. The scroll detailed a cultivation technique: Spirit Channeling Sword Manuscript, a method for swordsmen to harness spiritual energy.

Frowning slightly, Xiang Shaoyun turned to Li Sansi, who limped nearby, and tossed him the scroll.

“You’re a swordsman. This suits you. Activate it with spiritual energy.”

Li Sansi caught it, his brows rising. Channeling a wisp of energy, the technique surged into his mind.

As he absorbed it, his eyes blazed with awe, captivated by its profundity.

Xiang Shaoyun took another fragile scroll, channeling energy to reveal Righteous Spirit Channeling Art.

It wasn't ideal for him, but it suited him better than the sword-focused method.

The remaining two scrolls didn't contain cultivation techniques but offensive immortal arts: Sword Control Technique and Sword Flick Technique, both sword-related.

Disappointed, Xiang Shaoyun skimmed them, hoping to glean some insight.

Kong Nanfei, studying the Righteous Spirit Channeling Art, looked puzzled.

"This immortal art... it's oddly similar to my Confucian sect's Blood Shifting Technique

, just far more profound. Could our technique be derived from this ancient immortal art?"

The trio explored the palace further, but soon left.

In the palace's corners, wisps of spiritual energy began coalescing, forming new fiends.

“These fiends are born of spiritual energy. As long as the energy persists, they’ll reform. Killing them grants spiritual energy... This palace could become an ideal cultivation ground in the future,” they mused.

Quickening their pace, they exited the palace.

Outside, the air reeked of blood.

Beyond the five-mile radius, bodies littered the ground, yellow sand stained red.

“Greed blinded someone,” Li Sansi said, gripping his wooden sword and sighing.

They weren’t fools. Mo Shugui’s escape and his revelation about the qi refiner’s core had sparked greed among the lingering forces.

Ning Zhao and Nie Changqing, White Jade Capital’s disciples, had faced a horde of covetous soldiers and cut a bloody path through.

Sunset

The lone boat rocked gently as it reached the shore.

Ning Zhao and Nie Changqing leaped off, their white robes and dress drenched in blood, their eyes glinting with a killing aura.

In the distance, Mo Liuqi, who'd just drawn qi into his body, opened his eyes. Seeing the blood-soaked duo, his nerves tensed.

This much blood, this murderous aura... Did they carve their way through an army?

Nie Shuang and Ni Yu watched from afar, wary of the pair.

Ning Zhao and Nie Changqing calmly wiped the blood from their faces and looked up at the White Jade Capital pavilion's terrace.

Lu's figure appeared behind the wooden railing.

They ascended to the pavilion, standing before Lu, blood still clinging to their clothes.

"Young Master," they said, bowing.

“How’d you end up in such a mess?” Lu asked, his wheelchair turning to face them, one eyebrow raised.

“We secured the ancient qi refiner’s condensed core, but there was a complication on the way back,” Nie Changqing said.

“Someone spilled the news about the core?” Lu leaned back, elbow on the armrest, chin propped, eyes half-lidded.

“Yes,” Nie Changqing nodded.

Ning Zhao pursed her lips, silent.

“And the culprit?” Lu asked.

“Lost an arm but was rescued,” Nie Changqing replied.

“I failed, Young Master. Please punish me,” Ning Zhao said, breaking her silence.

Lu waved dismissively.

“Do I seem like someone who dishes out punishments lightly? My temper’s far too mild for that. Escaped? Fine. Kill them next time you see them.”

In the sunset’s glow, his skin seemed to radiate warmth.

“Yes, sir,” Ning Zhao and Nie Changqing said, relieved.

Ning Zhao unwrapped the silk cloth and handed the condensed core to Lu.

He caught it, tossing it lightly in his hand.

“The ancient qi refiner was the master of the Wolong Ridge secret realm, set there by an immortal. Securing the core isn’t easy—it’s meant for those who personally slay the master. But this qi refiner self-destructed, making the core fair game.”

“When you tackle secret realms in the future, beware of others snatching the prize.”

Ning Zhao and Nie Changqing stared, incredulous.

Such a thing was possible?

“When it comes to immortals, the impossible is commonplace,” Lu said with a faint smile. “Fighting immortals is endlessly fascinating, but you wouldn’t understand the thrill.”

His smile carried layers of meaning.

“Sister Ning, your dantian holds nine wisps, at the peak of the qi core realm. You can now attempt to condense a core. Study this one, or try refining its energy,” Lu said, tossing the core back to her.

Ning Zhao caught it, startled, as if it were a hot coal. Her blood-streaked face showed tension.

“Young Master, this is too precious...”

“Precious to you, perhaps. To me? Not much use,” Lu said, shaking his head.

“Your talent isn’t exceptional. Your dantian caps at nine wisps. Old Nie, on the other hand, can hold twelve. At peak qi core realm, with his knife control, he’d cut you down easily.”

Ning Zhao blinked, stunned.

“Cultivators vary in talent. Some have vast dantians, others narrow ones—a gap set at birth. Take Xiang Shaoyun of West County: a martial prodigy, reaching master level by ten. That’s innate talent,” Lu explained.

“To bridge that gap, Sister Ning, you must work harder than others and break into the next realm faster.”

Ning Zhao and Nie Changqing listened, rapt.

“Young Master... how are cultivator realms divided?” Ning Zhao asked, unable to contain her curiosity. She’d reached peak qi core realm, but what lay beyond?

Nie Changqing leaned in, equally eager.

Lu’s lips curved upward.

His wheelchair turned, facing the sunset’s fading light.

The evening glow draped him like a veil.

“The first realm, Qi Core, involves drawing qi into the body to form a core. It doesn’t grant flight or earth-shattering power, but you can move with qi, rivaling prized steeds, and attack with qi, matching blades and axes. At its peak, you can weave through armies unscathed.”

They nodded. Having just fought through a thousand soldiers, they knew the realm's strength.

But they burned to know what followed.

Lu gazed at the crimson sun, eyes narrowing with a lazy, mysterious smile.

“The second realm, Body Treasury, unlocks the body's hidden treasures. The five organs are the five treasuries. Guide qi through the meridians to temper them. At its peak, you'll manifest elemental spiritual energy, extend your lifespan, and wield unmatched power. A single punch can shatter city walls miles long; one person can repel ten thousand troops with ease.”

Lu's vision for the Body Treasury realm had been woven into the Wolong Ridge secret realm. The qi refiner Jiang Chao fell battling a Body Treasury cultivator in the wilds, dying peacefully despite fighting above his level.

In Lu's design, if someone on the Wuhuang Continent reached the peak of Body Treasury, the world might qualify as mid-martial.

This realm also imbued spiritual energy with attributes—metal, wood, water, fire, earth—tied to the five organs, vastly amplifying destructive power.

“Body Treasury... one person repelling ten thousand?!”

Ning Zhao and Nie Changqing gasped, stunned.

Lu's use of "repel" underscored the realm's dominance.

Nie Changqing trembled, yearning for such power.

"Young Master... are you a Body Treasury cultivator?" Ning Zhao asked, curious.

Lu's strength was undeniable—his spiritual pressure could pin even her, at peak qi core, to the ground.

Lu, still facing the sunset, spoke softly.

"No, I'm not."

A chuckle.

"A mere Body Treasury? I'm not now, and I never will be."