

Starlit Path 88

Chapter 88: You Come from Beiluo's White Jade Pavilion?

Rain poured in torrents, heavy droplets blurring the world into a misty veil. Atop the Mechanism City, Warlord Xiang Shaoyun stood with axe and shield on his back, rain streaming from his hair, brows, and chin. On the iron chain, Mo Liuqi's slender figure stood, his silver scissors spinning beside his cheek, scattering raindrops. Water pooled at his chin, his furious roar still echoing through the cliffs.

"A cultivator..." Xiang Shaoyun exhaled, his hand gripping his axe. Even he, the Warlord, dared not underestimate a cultivator. Wolong Ridge had taught him their strength. "The Mohists secretly trained a cultivator?" he mused, frowning.

Mo Liuqi stepped forward on the chain, his scissors gleaming like stars in the night. The Mohists, cold and emotionless, suppressed sentiment in their assassins, as feelings bred flaws and failed missions. The Mechanism City was a place many, like Mo Yihen, yearned to escape, dreaming of a quiet life after their final task. For Mo Liuqi, the Mohists offered no warmth—only Azhu and Mo Yihen had.

Xi Liang warriors charged him, swords flashing, but Xiang Shaoyun raised a hand, halting them. He wanted no interference in a cultivator's duel. His blood stirred with excitement, eager for his first clash with one.

Mo Liuqi's heart grew cold, mirroring the rain-soaked silence. He had loathed Mo Yihen's emotionless facade, yet now he became what he despised. Ten zhang separated him from Xiang Shaoyun—the perfect range for his intent-driven scissors to strike from any angle.

He stood still, a statue under the rain, water splashing off his skin, blurring his form. A tearing sound erupted, like a meteor slicing the night, splitting raindrops. Xiang Shaoyun, eyes narrowed, swung his axe, demonic qi swirling. A sharp clang rang out, like thunder, as the scissors were knocked away, spinning wildly.

Mo Liuqi's gaze locked on, spiritual energy shrouding him, blurring his face. He gestured, and the scissors struck again. Xiang Shaoyun's axe slashed, sending them flying dozens of meters. The rain masked their path, making them elusive.

Mo Liuqi knew the Warlord's strength far surpassed his own. His only hope was his spirit-enhanced Intent-Driven Scissors. This was a clash of a ranged cultivator against a melee one. Drawing on memories of Nie Changqing's blade control and Ning Zhao's spiritual pressure from Lakeheart Island, he fought on. Lu had called him a genius for mastering intent-driven control without spiritual energy—a rare talent.

Xiang Shaoyun felt the pressure, the scissors a constant threat despite his demonic qi. "Tch!" Mo Liuqi clapped his hands, shouting softly. The sound, drowned by rain, pierced time and space, exploding in Xiang Shaoyun's ears.

The scissors split, bypassing the axe, aiming for his throat and heart. Xiang Shaoyun roared, his axe snapping back to block, deflecting them. "Interesting..." he said. "You're not Mohist-trained. They couldn't produce a cultivator like you."

The probing was over; the duel would end. Mo Liuqi impressed but disappointed compared to Ning Zhao or Nie Changqing. Demonic qi surged, halting the rain midair. Xiang Shaoyun lunged, axe raised, leaping onto the chain, which swayed violently. Mo Liuqi, unrelenting, sent his scissors flying, each attempt failing but undeterred.

Xiang Shaoyun charged like a predatory wolf, the pressure crushing. Mo Liuqi's hair whipped, his heart gripped by fear. The Warlord was too strong—perhaps only Young Master Lu could subdue him. Rain stung his face as he closed his eyes, channeling spiritual energy into a compressive spiritual pressure.

The axe stopped an inch from his forehead, rain dripping from its edge. “Nie Changqing’s blade control, Ning Zhao’s spiritual pressure... You come from Beiluo’s White Jade Pavilion?” Xiang Shaoyun’s voice carried a wild edge.

Mo Liuqi’s pressure barely fazed him, but the technique marked him as White Jade Pavilion’s. If he was a Mohist assassin, Xiang Shaoyun would have killed him. But tied to White Jade Pavilion’s mysterious Young Master Lu, whose strength was unfathomable, he hesitated. Lu, with Nie Changqing as his coachman and Ning Zhao as his maid, was a force he wasn’t ready to cross.

Mo Liuqi didn’t answer or deny. He had come to bid Azhu farewell before joining White Jade Pavilion, so the claim wasn’t false. But the farewell had become eternal. “I know what you hate,” Xiang Shaoyun said. “But this is a clash of sides. I live, so they die. Leave—I’ll give Young Master Lu this courtesy.”

Xiang Shaoyun stood, towering like a demon. Mo Liuqi, head bowed, rain dripping from his hair, said nothing defiant. He grabbed his scissors, turned, and walked away, trembling under the rain’s lash. He was too weak. He had to grow stronger.

Xiang Shaoyun watched, indifferent. Releasing a tiger? Beyond honoring Lu, he needed pressure to fuel his growth. Mo Liuqi was a mere interlude. Raising his axe, he roared, leading his warriors into the city through the rain.

Beiluo, Lakeheart Island.

Lu withdrew his focus. Mo Liuqi's defeat was expected; a victory would have been shocking. The demonized Warlord, with nine-stage demonic qi, outmatched even Ning Zhao. "Interesting... sparing Mo Liuqi as a whetstone?" Lu swirled his wine, smiling. Azhu's death was unforeseen, but the world wasn't a fairy tale—happy endings were rare.

Sipping plum wine, he pondered the Dragon Breeding Ground and elevating White Jade Pavilion to a transcendent force. Wolong Ridge had given it some renown, but it needed a final push to surpass the Hundred Schools.

Cheers and incessant farting interrupted his thoughts. Turning, he saw Ni Yu and Jing Yue by the pot, where steaming, round pills like sugar beans glowed.