

Overlord 1431

Chapter 1431: Four Night Saints

The Righteous Buddhist Sect, a massive sect, used righteous aura and was among the most righteous sects in the world. They had trained countless disciples and were responsible for propagating the teachings of Buddha. Countless vajras and arhats had risen from their ranks. Now that a new entrance to the Devil Domain had formed, the Righteous Buddhist Sect would not stay idle.

After confirming that Xiang Shaoyun wasn't a devil, the abbot hoped that Xiang Shaoyun could participate in the war against the devils. He had not imagined that Xiang Shaoyun would care so little about the invasion.

As far as Xiang Shaoyun was concerned, the war between humanity and the devils wasn't something he alone could change. Only when he reached the very apex of cultivation would he possess the strength to stop the war.

For now, he only wanted to complete his current goals. After getting his family together, his next goal would be to reach the apex of cultivation and protect those he cared about. That was all he wanted. He was no hero, and he definitely did not have the ambition to become a messiah that would save the world.

The abbot did not stop Xiang Shaoyun from leaving. He only sighed inwardly, This crisis concerns all humanity. I guess there is no need for me to put my focus on this one person. Amitabha.

As soon as Xiang Shaoyun left the temple, a group of people started approaching him. With one look, Xiang Shaoyun saw the first prince mounted atop a dragonhorse. Xiang Shaoyun did not try moving away, as he had a feeling that they were here for him.

"Shaoyun, I finally found you!" said the first prince in a cordial manner. He then leaped off his mount, behaving in a manner so humble he was like a different person.

Xiang Shaoyun cupped his hands in greeting and said, "Greetings, first prince. How may I help you?"

"I come bearing good news! Shaoyun, please accept the imperial edict of the Dusk Dynasty!" said the first prince in an excited manner.

Xiang Shaoyun frowned and said, "Just tell me what you need. I'm not a member of your dynasty, so I won't be accepting any of your imperial edicts."

He had already made it clear that he wouldn't join the Dusk Dynasty. A day had barely passed, but they were already issuing him imperial edicts. He was losing his patience with them.

The first prince's expression turned gloomy, and the guard beside the prince shouted, "Audacious! Kneel down and accept the imperial edict!"

Xiang Shaoyun's gaze landed on the guard, and his divine dao eyes shone with a dazzling radiance. A massive pressure struck the guard, sending him flying and coughing up blood.

"I can kneel to the heavens, to the world, and to my parents. Nobody else can make this overlord kneel," replied Xiang Shaoyun with a sonorous voice.

As of this moment, the first prince found himself lacking the courage to even meet Xiang Shaoyun's gaze. A sense of shame rose within him as he started developing a certain hatred for Xiang Shaoyun.

"Xiang Shaoyun, the dynasty decided to bestow upon you a marriage with Princess Huang Xiaoyue. Upon accepting the edict, this matter will be announced to the world. You will then become our dynasty's son-in-law. If you refuse the edict, it will be viewed as a sign of disrespect to our dynasty. Consider your actions carefully," said the first prince loudly.

Xiang Shaoyun roared with laughter as he said, "Haha, it doesn't matter what your emperor has to say concerning my marriage. Only my decision matters in this."

He then ignored the group and spun around. With a flicker, he reached far away as he headed outside the city. He no longer intended to stay in the city. Everyone here seemed to be testing his patience.

Unless a God Realm expert personally made a move, nobody could stop Xiang Shaoyun from leaving.

When the first prince saw Xiang Shaoyun leaving, he couldn't help but curse, "What an arrogant bastard!"

Very few people could show him such disrespect in the Dusk Dynasty. He was naturally furious to be treated with such disrespect by Xiang Shaoyun. But so what if he was angered? With Xiang Shaoyun's strength, neither the first prince nor his people could do anything to Xiang Shaoyun. The first prince could only swallow his anger.

After leaving the city, Xiang Shaoyun slowed down and soared high into the sky. He could sense that the four people tailing him previously had reappeared. High in the sky, he stopped and said, "You have been following me for so long. It's about time for you to show yourself."

Four people stepped out of thin air. Surprisingly, all four looked the same. They were even dressed the same and were all Great Saints. A group like this could not be underestimated no matter where they went. If news that they were going after Xiang Shaoyun together, Xiang Shaoyun's fame would probably be further elevated.

Four Night Saints!

They were the top-tier Saints trained by the Imperial Teacher Residence. They rarely showed themselves and spent most of their time handling the dirty affairs of the Imperial Teacher Residence.

Their current mission was to kill Xiang Shaoyun and avenge Hua Ruren.

"Four Great Saints? I suppose only the imperial clan can send out a group like this," said Xiang Shaoyun.

"You'll have plenty of time to find out in the afterlife. Four Divisions Formation, suppress!" said one of them.

At that command, the four Great Saints released their auras, manifesting a tiger, a dragon, a bird, and a turtle in the air. Space was sealed with the powerful aura surging toward Xiang Shaoyun.

"Yet another rare formation. Interesting," said Xiang Shaoyun with a look of excitement.

During his previous battle in the Righteous Buddhist Sect, he faced the Devil Subduing Formation. Now, he faced the Four Divisions Formation. His battle intent had been thoroughly provoked.

During his battle in the temple, he had only derived some satisfaction in his final exchange with the Devil Subduing Vajra. He had used his devil cultivation for the rest of the battle and hadn't been able to fully satisfy his battle intent. With his god body and second-stage Heaven Battling Realm cultivation, he could easily match Great Saints when utilizing primal inception energy. And now, he wanted to fight to his heart's content against these four.

The four beasts started revolving in the air, creating one phenomenon after another. Four different Great Saint powers pressed on toward Xiang Shaoyun. Soaring dragon, leaping tiger, crying bird, and valiant turtle revolved, creating a four-colored attack that could easily kill peak Great Saints.

The Four Night Saints were actually quadruplets. They were born with interlinked minds, and each cultivated a different power that corresponded to the four divisions of the twenty-eight constellations. The previous imperial teacher had personally trained them, helping them reach the Great Saint Realm and master the Four Divisions Formation. Just the fact that all four were deployed together showed how much they wanted Xiang Shaoyun dead.

Shrouded in a thick layer of primal inception energy, Xiang Shaoyun's divine dao eyes shone. The auras of dragons and tigers surged from his body as his hair whipped about. Gathering his strength in his fist, he threw out an exceptionally destructive punch.

Primal inception energy clashed against the Four Divisions Formation, causing the sky itself to tremble. Space collapsed, and spatial storms wreaked havoc everywhere. This was an extremely dreadful collision, one that could only be described with the term world-shaking. The four divisions connected with the heavens, while the cosmos destroyed the dao!

Chapter 1432: Controlling the Four Night Saints

The Four Night Saints had always maintained a low profile, but they had never failed in any mission before. They had eliminated countless enemies for the Imperial Teacher Residence. Now that they had been assigned to kill Xiang Shaoyun, they utilized the Four Divisions Formation to produce a terrifying attack that could kill even a peak Great Saint.

Of course, Xiang Shaoyun was no longer the same person. With his primal inception energy and Cosmos Dao Destroying Fist, nobody could stop him. Not even the Four Divisions Formation could do much to his fists.

The Four Divisions Formation launched attacks again and again as the Four Night Saints cooperated to flawlessly control the formation, foiling Xiang Shaoyun's attempts at locating their weaknesses.

The longer the battle dragged on, the more ferocious Xiang Shaoyun seemed as he fought with all his strength. His blood started boiling as he grew excited from the battle. Only such a challenge could pressure him, temper his new-gained strength, and help him advance further in his path of cultivation.

Numerous astonishing phenomena manifested in the sky as the four beasts and endless fists clashed against each other. The battle grew more and more intense.

Upon discovering that they wouldn't be able to defeat Xiang Shaoyun quickly, the four finally remembered Meng Youfang's warning that they should never underestimate Xiang Shaoyun. It would seem like Meng Youfang was right.

Four Divisions Resonance!

The four beasts roared at the same time, forming a resonance as their roars became a furious tsunami reaching the very depths of one's heart. This was an unstoppable formless attack.

Xiang Shaoyun felt his blood stirring restlessly and nearly started bleeding from his nose, eyes, lips, tongue, and ears. If it wasn't for the protection of his Nether Soul Dragon Headband, this attack alone was enough to deal him a great injury.

Four Divisions Revolution!

Next, the four beasts started shifting around repeatedly, making it impossible for one to see their exact position. Numerous attacks were unleashed again and again. The coiling dragon appeared unexpectedly, the fierce tiger descended the mountain, the vermilion bird spread its wings, and the black turtle breathed deeply.

This was a terrifying combination attack. It greatly weakened even Xiang Shaoyun's impressive fist intent. Attack after attack struck his body, assaulting him with great pain.

How terrifyingly destructive. This formation is definitely stronger than the Devil Subduing Formation, thought Xiang Shaoyun.

At this point, Xiang Shaoyun naturally couldn't hold back anymore. The energy around him swirled and shifted into the yin and yang energies. The Yin Yang Shield formed around him and deflected the incoming attack, greatly weakening the impact on his body. At the same time, he used his finger as a sword and slashed at the empty air, sending out an indescribable power.

Instant Tempo!

The dao of time was one of the strongest daos in existence. Wherever the finger sword reached, time seemed to stop, emptying the minds of all its targets before striking them.

Whoosh!

The attack struck the Four Night Saints, leaving terrifying sword wounds on their bodies and spilling their blood. That caused them to pause their formation for a split second, an opportunity Xiang Shaoyun grabbed to launch attack after attack at them.

As Time Goes By!

The moment this technique was used, the Four Night Saints sensed their life force and strength weaken. Boundless fear gripped their hearts. Yet another finger sword struck them, leaving even more wounds on their bodies. Even their bones became visible due to the deep wounds. Deep wounds were also visible on their necks. It was clear they had been very close to having their heads cut off.

Time Rewind!

Before they could recover, time changed yet again. They became younger, turning into teenagers and then eventually turning into children. They no longer knew how to react to this kind of attack. At this time, four finger swords flew through the air and cut through their necks, creating four pillars of blood.

"Four Divisions Body Construction!" The Four Night Saints were terrified. They had not expected that Xiang Shaoyun would be so powerful. All four of them roared and attempted to reconnect their severed heads before fleeing.

But how could Xiang Shaoyun give them the chance to do so? With a sneer, he said, "I'm currently lacking quality followers. You guys are perfect."

He then released his Imperial Nether Domain and trapped the Four Night Saints inside. Their bodies and heads were completely suppressed, making it impossible for them to reconnect their severed heads. With their incomplete bodies, they had no way of displaying the strength of Great Saints, much less maintaining the formation.

"Release us, or our master won't spare you! He is a God Realm expert!" threatened Ye Long, one of the Four Night Saints.

"That's right. However strong you are, you won't be able to escape our master. Release us, and we will plea for leniency on your behalf," said Ye Hu.

Ye Qiao said, "You will never be able to imagine what Gods are capable of. Release us, kid!"

Ye Gui said, "Let us go, and this will end here. We will pretend all this never happened."

The four were connected by heart and knew that they wouldn't be able to escape. The only thing they could do was threaten Xiang Shaoyun, hoping that he would release them.

After shackling them with numerous chains, Xiang Shaoyun smiled and said, "I'll be your master soon. Be patient."

He then started chanting the Nether Dragon Soul Curse, sending numerous ancient symbols flying toward their heads.

"Trying to enslave us? Dream on!" Ye Long roared as his powerful saint soul stirred, forcefully shattering the ancient symbols.

"I'm in charge here, not you. Gui Qi, come say hi to our guests," said Xiang Shaoyun with a smirk.

Next, Gui Qi, who had grown even stronger, appeared. The moment he appeared, he attacked Ye Long with his soul attacks. With his head separated from his body, Ye Long's soul had been greatly weakened. With the suppression of the Imperial Nether Domain, he soon failed to withstand Gui Qi's attack. Xiang Shaoyun took this chance to activate the Nether Dragon Soul Curse once again, forcefully branding Ye Long's saint soul with the curse and putting Ye Long under his control.

As for the other three Great Saints, they were completely helpless under Xiang Shaoyun's suppression. Without their bodies, they couldn't even self-detonate. After putting Ye Long under his control, Xiang Shaoyun used his curse against the three remaining Great Saints. After a while, the Four Night Saints had fallen under his control.

Together, the Four Night Saints were as strong as a pseudo-God. Nevertheless, they couldn't escape Xiang Shaoyun's control. Only after branding their souls with his curse did Xiang Shaoyun allow them to reconnect their bodies and heads.

After successfully joining their heads and their bodies, they regained their life force. However, due to their great exhaustion, they needed some time before they could return to their peak strength.

They wanted to escape Xiang Shaoyun's control, but they could no longer hide their intention from Xiang Shaoyun. The moment that thought crossed their minds, Xiang Shaoyun chanted his curse, tormenting them with great pain. Finally, they submitted fully.

"I'm now your master. Tell me, who sent you?" asked Xiang Shaoyun.

"Imperial Teacher Residence," the four answered at the same time.

Chapter 1433: What A Wealthy Son-In-Law

Imperial Teacher Residence! Those three words explained everything. With this information, Xiang Shaoyun would know who the culprit was even if he was a fool.

His eyes flickered murderously as he said, "After killing one person, the big shot behind him will move against me. Looks like everyone thinks that I can be easily bullied. If I don't show them how ruthless I can get, everyone will think that I'm soft."

Xiang Shaoyun did not charge straight to the Imperial Teacher Residence. That was a place protected by God Realm experts. He had to think of a different way to deal them painful damage.

He brought the Four Night Saints back to the ground and allowed them to recover. He then asked about the Imperial Teacher Residence, gaining more understanding of that place before thinking of his next move.

Before long, he learned from the Four Night Saints that the Imperial Teacher Residence possessed a hidden army under the Four Night Saints' control. This army was in charge of assassinating the Imperial Teacher Residence's political enemies in the Dusk Dynasty. Additionally, this army was also in charge of handling all sorts of illegal and shady activities on behalf of the Imperial Teacher Residence, such as plundering the treasures of the imperial palace and selling the Dusk Dynasty's information to other dynasties for massive profit.

This information was enough to destroy the Imperial Teacher Residence's reputation. Xiang Shaoyun was surprised at how treacherous the Imperial Teacher Residence was. They had even betrayed their own dynasty. That was quite an eye-opening thing to learn for Xiang Shaoyun.

"It truly has been hard for the Dusk Dynasty to remain standing with such a big parasite in it," lamented Xiang Shaoyun.

He then thought of an idea. He wanted to expose the Imperial Teacher Residence and make use of the imperial clan to deal with the Imperial Teacher Residence. Having made up his mind, he assigned the Four Night Saints several tasks, preparing to cause some chaos in the Dusk Dynasty.

The Dusk Dynasty had yet to fully suppress the new devil invasion when the emperor learned of the Imperial Teacher Residence's betrayal. Instantly, the Imperial Teacher Residence sank into crisis.

As the second prince was still competing against the first prince, upon learning of the Imperial Teacher Residence's crisis, he had his backers create an even bigger ruckus out of the betrayal. For a moment, the Imperial Teacher Residence seemed on the verge of collapse.

Meanwhile, Xiang Shaoyun returned to the Four Night Saints. He did not pay too much attention to the Dusk Dynasty because he could easily find out what he wanted to know with the Four Night Saints.

Upon arriving at the Fox Range, Hu Detian personally came out to welcome him, accompanied by several fox elders. They gave him an excessively warm welcome.

"Virtuous son-in-law, I heard that you're now ranked first on the Saintly Forest Ranking. Is that true?" asked Hu Detian.

Xiang Shaoyun was surprised to learn that news had spread that fast. He nodded and said, "Yes. You're quite informed, Father-in-Law."

"Haha, we still need to pay some attention to certain news. How could the fox race continue surviving otherwise?" said Hu Detian with a chortle. He then invited Xiang Shaoyun into his cave dwelling.

Xiang Shaoyun was somewhat disappointed to learn that Hu Meihui was still in seclusion, but he didn't feel too bad about it. He moved on to a different topic and mentioned to Hu Detian that he wished to lay out a teleportation formation in the Fox Range to connect the Fox Range with the Ziling Sect.

In the past, Hu Detian would definitely carefully consider such a proposal. But with Xiang Shaoyun's current fame, he agreed unhesitatingly. However, the Fox Range was too far away from the Ziling Sect. Saints would not be enough to fully connect the spatial nodes of the two locations. Moreover, they would also require a massive amount of materials for the endeavor, as they needed a god-grade formation to cover such a long distance.

Hu Detian asked doubtfully, "Virtuous son-in-law, this place is located within the Central Region. It won't be that easy to establish a teleportation formation leading to your place in the Western Desert."

Xiang Shaoyun smiled and said, "Father-in-Law, help me gather some materials. I'll lay out the formation. You don't have to worry about anything else. I can handle the rest of the work."

"Don't tell me you're a formation grandmaster as well?" said Hu Detian.

"You'll know soon," said Xiang Shaoyun.

And thus, Xiang Shaoyun started roaming the 108 mountains in the Fox Range, looking for the perfect location for the teleportation formation. With the divine dao eyes, his eyesight had become incredibly powerful, capable of seeing through everything. He was able to quickly discover a spirit crystal vein in a certain mountain near the fox race's main mountain.

The vein wasn't particularly large, but it contained high-grade spirit crystals. With a wave of his hand, Xiang Shaoyun split the mountain and exposed the vein within. Instead of digging the spirit crystals out, he started laying out the formation near the vein.

This time, he was going to construct something more than a teleportation formation. He aimed to combine the teleportation formation with a spirit gathering formation, turning the area into a blessed land where dense spiritual energy converged. Perhaps one day, the vein would be upgraded into a saint crystal vein that would strengthen the fox race's accumulation.

Hu Detian knew that Xiang Shaoyun was strong, but he had never imagined that Xiang Shaoyun had such good eyes either. Xiang Shaoyun had actually discovered a spirit crystal vein within their territory so quickly. Furthermore, Xiang Shaoyun's formation mastery seemed to be exceptional as well.

Using his finger, Xiang Shaoyun kept drawing on the ground, sending one shining line after another deep into the ground. The lines served as a series of complicated formation lines. Before long, the frame of the teleportation formation was completed. Xiang Shaoyun and Hu Detian only needed to add the required materials to fully complete the formation. After having Hu Detian gather some materials and contributing some materials himself, Xiang Shaoyun finally finished the formation.

When the task was completed, Hu Detian came over and praised, "Virtuous son-in-law, it is truly a surprise that you're so proficient in formations as well. With your mastery, you can be considered a saint formation master." He rubbed his hands and asked, "Will it be possible for you to upgrade our defensive formation as well?"

"Of course," Xiang Shaoyun agreed unhesitatingly.

Hu Detian was overjoyed. He was more and more pleased with this son-in-law. After spending some time, Xiang Shaoyun finished upgrading the defensive formation, doubling its defensive prowess. It was unfortunate that he was limited by the materials he had. Otherwise, he could further upgrade the formation.

"Well done! Thank you, virtuous son-in-law," said Hu Detian joyfully.

The fox elders also thanked Xiang Shaoyun one after another. They were finding Xiang Shaoyun more and more to their liking. They also seemed slightly deferential toward Xiang Shaoyun. After all, a saint formation master was extremely rare.

Xiang Shaoyun waved his hand and said, "It's no trouble at all. I'm going to return to the Ziling Sect. After some time, I will connect the two formations and complete the final step of the formation construction. That way, it will be much easier for us to stay connected to each other."

"That's right. Now that the devils are invading the dominion nearby, nobody knows when the invasion will reach us," said Hu Detian with a worried look.

Chapter 1434: Sandstorm of Despair

The devil invasion was a calamity concerning the entire dominion and every living being in the dominion. Although the humans made up for the main resistance to the invasion, the other races were taking part as well. After all, they were afraid that the humans might not be able to hold on. If that happened, they would suffer as well.

Xiang Shaoyun said to Hu Detian, "Don't worry, Father-in-Law. No matter how strong the devils are, they won't be much upon reaching our territories. I'll try to connect the teleportation formations as soon as possible. The moment your people encounter any danger, you can flee to the Ziling Sect."

"Um. I'll be relying on you, then," said Hu Detian with a nod.

From Hu Detian's expression, Xiang Shaoyun could see that things were getting serious. He wasted no time and hurriedly returned to the Ziling Sect. Instead of traveling in an unhurried manner, he moved as fast as he could, trying to return as quickly as possible.

With the combat strength of a Great Saint, the body of a pseudo-God, and the Sky Measuring Step, each step he took was so wide that it almost seemed like he was measuring the sky. He moved at a speed so fast that his movement could barely be seen.

At the speed Xiang Shaoyun was traveling, he was basically moving as fast as someone traveling with teleportation formations. Nevertheless, he still needed some time to reach his destination since he was traveling through regions. After traveling for about five days, Xiang Shaoyun finally arrived at the Desert of Despair.

The Desert of Despair was located at the border of the Western Desert and Central Region. The vastness of the desert made it impossible for a regular person to cross it, but for someone like Xiang Shaoyun, crossing the desert wasn't an issue.

Xiang Shaoyun's arrival at the Desert of Despair did not signify that he had arrived at the Holy Hall. He had to first take out the token given by the Holy Hall and determine the direction before heading toward the Holy Hall.

Instead of flying in the sky, Xiang Shaoyun was now moving on the ground. He could sense a thick power of earth in the desert, a power he wanted to absorb to enhance his astral cultivation.

"Desert of Despair, the place where the previous Holy Hall was destroyed, forcing them to create a new living place to avoid the desert's invasion. With the dense power of earth here, some natural treasures must have existed here as well," muttered Xiang Shaoyun to himself. At that thought, he activated his divine dao eyes and studied his surroundings while traveling.

While doing so, he did not forget to absorb the ambient earth energy while reciting the Desolation mantra. Massive amounts of earth energy entered his astral cosmos sea before quickly being transformed into primal inception energy.

Xiang Shaoyun knew very well that with his new physique, he did not need to take a roundabout approach before he could create some primal inception energy. His astral cosmos sea had a terrifyingly large storage capacity. Unfortunately, the amount of energy he needed to break through was over 10 times more than what a regular cultivator required. Of course, a bigger accumulation also signified a stronger foundation and combat strength.

As Xiang Shaoyun absorbed the ambient energy, he realized that the earth energy in the desert was different from the earth energy of other places. Traces of an extremely destructive power seemed to be hidden within the earth energy here. To be precise, his body had sensed the destructive power. Only the powers of a God had ever given him such a sensation before.

At that realization, Xiang Shaoyun's eyes flickered, and his pupils shone like the sun and the moon in search of the destructive power's origin. He headed toward the area where the destructive power was the thickest.

With the divine dao eyes, Xiang Shaoyun could see that the earth energy ahead of him was growing more and more berserk. The sandstorm before him seemed to have been affected by the destructive power. Even a Sovereign would be ripped apart by the raging sandstorm ahead of him, and even a Saint would not dare to casually approach such a sandstorm.

A regular person would conclude that the sandstorm was merely a natural calamity, but Xiang Shaoyun was confident that this sandstorm wasn't a naturally occurring phenomenon. Instead, it was formed by some sort of power.

Moving at a rapid speed, Xiang Shaoyun arrived before the terrifying sandstorm. The terrifying tornado of sand seemed to reach straight for the heavens as though it was a roaring yellow dragon.

Xiang Shaoyun stood there silently as he observed the sandstorm. In his eyes, the sandstorm was akin to a supreme expert. With a casual attack, sand filled the world and broke through the sky. Even stars were disintegrated into dust and became a part of the sandstorm, eventually lying on the ground to become a part of the Desert of Despair.

The sandstorm's attack could cause anyone to feel despair; it was an unstoppable attack that could alarm even the heavens. As Xiang Shaoyun observed the sandstorm, he entered a state of contemplation. As time went by, the sandstorm moved nearer and nearer to Xiang Shaoyun. However, he remained still. Finally, he was swallowed by the storm.

Within the sandstorm, Xiang Shaoyun was akin to duckweed without its roots and was blown in all directions by the sandstorm as countless sand particles bombarded his body. Even his god body was injured, showcasing the prowess of the sandstorm.

Fully immersed in the pain, Xiang Shaoyun contemplated the destruction and might of the sandstorm. The boundless earth energy seemed to have fused with wind energy to create a sandstorm of ultimate destruction, reminding him of the dual-energy concepts he had been cultivating recently. The sandstorm before him was none other than an example of a dual-elemental attack.

At that thought, Xiang Shaoyun activated both his earth energy and wind energy and started fusing them with the sandstorm. As his divine dao eyes flickered, he saw through the flow of energy in the sandstorm and brandished his arms. Two different energies started weaving together, attempting to match the sandstorm's tempo. Only upon matching its tempo would he be able to unleash an attack as terrifying as the sandstorm.

With his previous experience in fusing energies and the sandstorm serving as an example, Xiang Shaoyun circulated the earth and wind energies in accordance with the sandstorm and started forming numerous hand seals after many attempts. With earth energy as the main energy and wind energy as the supporting energy, he attempted to fuse his two energies into the sandstorm.

Initially, he kept failing, but after repeated attempts, his energies started fusing into the sandstorm, intensifying it. At the same time, he gained the ability to remain still within the sandstorm, and the damage the sandstorm could deal him decreased.

Slowly, Xiang Shaoyun adapted himself to the power of the sandstorm and eventually found the sandstorm's weakness. He unleashed a duplicate of the sandstorm toward the original sandstorm. The two sandstorms collided and created a massive shockwave that sent him flying far away.

Pu!

A mouthful of blood sprayed from Xiang Shaoyun's mouth. Even with his strength, he failed to fully disperse the sandstorm before him. He had even injured himself.

"What a terrifying remnant of God Realm energy. This technique shall be named the Sandstorm of Despair," muttered Xiang Shaoyun.

Chapter 1435: Sand Essence and Saint Crystal Mine

Sandstorm of Despair! The name might be rather lame, but it was extremely fitting for the technique. At this point, Xiang Shaoyun was already sure that the sandstorm was formed by the remnant power of a God Realm expert. Just from the fact that someone like him who could match a Great Saint in combat had failed to fully disperse the sandstorm, one could see just how powerful the sandstorm was.

In fact, even the entire Desert of Despair might be an area that had become a desert after being ravaged by the power of a God. That was a terrifying thought because the Desert of Despair was as large as several provinces combined. Not even a Great Saint could unleash such extensive destruction upon the world. Only a God would be capable of such a feat.

Of course, Xiang Shaoyun wasn't too bothered about the desert's formation since it was something in the past. It was better for him to put his focus on strengthening himself. One day, he would reach the same height he had reached in his previous life. He might even surpass that height.

Looking at the desert around him and sensing the earth energy around him, he utilized the dual-energy technique he had just learned. The Sandstorm of Despair was released and displayed a power no weaker than his other dual-elemental techniques. The sandstorm tore through the desert.

Xiang Shaoyun started bombarding the thick layer of sand on the ground incessantly, creating numerous waves of sand that spread in all directions. Although his sandstorm wasn't as powerful as the sandstorm he had encountered, it was still powerful enough to threaten any Great Saint in existence.

As someone who had fused nine different energies, Xiang Shaoyun was naturally capable of splitting the nine different energies from his primal inception energy. He could control his energies as easily as his own limbs. One could say that for him, all the battle techniques that required one to combine energy were no longer an issue.

After about an hour of blasting the ground, Xiang Shaoyun reached deep under the ground. He could sense that a treasure was hidden beneath the desert. After countless years of accumulation, the desert had gathered a thick layer of sand.

If it wasn't for the fact that Xiang Shaoyun was already as strong as a Great Saint, he wouldn't have been able to dig so deep into the Desert of Despair. After all, the air was filled with sand at all times, and any hole dug by a regular person would be constantly refilled.

As for Xiang Shaoyun, he had only been able to dig a hole after sealing the surroundings to prevent any sand from interrupting his digging. Deep underground, he found that the sand was far different than the sand above ground. The sand he found underground was a layer of sparkling sand that seemed to have been polished for countless years, leaving only the essence of each sand particle.

As Xiang Shaoyun grabbed a handful of sand, joy covered his eyes, and he muttered, "Sand essence? And so much of it? I'm going to be rich!"

The so-called sand essence was a type of saint-grade material. When used to forge saint-grade weapons, it would help in increasing the quality of the forged weapons. Thus, one could see just how valuable sand essence was. He had discovered quite an amount of sand essence under the ground, enough to further enrich and strengthen the Ziling Sect. After all, apart from forging weapons, sand essence could also be used by earth cultivators to temper their bodies and enhance their defenses.

Xiang Shaoyun started gathering all the sand essence he saw. Each particle was over 100 times heavier than a regular sand particle. Holding a single sand particle felt the same as holding a rock. There was no doubting the quality of these sand essence particles.

After countless years of accumulating in the Desert of Despair, a massive amount of sand essence had gathered. The sand essence had merely remained hidden because it was extremely hard to discover. After gathering thousands of catties of the sand essence, Xiang Shaoyun discovered a saint crystal deposit beneath the sand essence.

He was overwhelmed with joy. Upon reaching the Saint Realm, a cultivator could no longer utilize regular spirit crystals. Only saint crystals would be effective for such cultivators. Xiang Shaoyun might be wealthy, but he still needed more wealth because he had an entire sect to support. Without any hesitation, he started mining the deposit.

The deposit was of excellent quality and could produce mid-grade saint crystals. Moreover, the deposit was massive. Even someone like Xiang Shaoyun would need some time to fully dig it out.

At this time, a group of people arrived before the seal he had placed above ground. This was a group of bandits, the most feared people in the Desert of Despair. This bandit group in particular had a rather aggressive name, the Army of Despair.

There weren't many of them. They only had 49 members, but each of them was no weaker than a Sovereign. Their leader had even reached the Heaven Battling Realm, someone entirely worthy of being the tyrant of a territory. It was quite rare to see such a powerful group of people turning into bandits. Every one of them was mounted on a demonic beast, and their faces were covered by bandanas, revealing only their oppressive eyes. No victim had ever escaped their hunt.

"Leader, this is a seal," said one of them.

The leader had a pair of bright eyes and looked extremely young. Mounted atop a mutated three-eyed wolf and clad in ancient armor while holding a bizarrely shaped saber, he looked incredibly valiant.

"Looks like someone has discovered something good here," said the leader with a sigh.

"Leader, shall we—" asked one of the bandits while making a throat-slitting gesture.

"Do not act rashly. It won't be too late for us to make a move when he's done excavating whatever treasure he found down there. That way, we don't even need to do much ourselves," said the leader.

"That's genius!" the other bandits hurriedly flattered the leader.

However, the leader did not seem affected at all. His choice to become a bandit was, in truth, something against his will. He was merely forced into it due to some circumstances. Who would have known that he was once the youngest leader of a certain powerful organization?

After spending some time, Xiang Shaoyun had finally dug out the entire deposit. After some calculation, he found that he had mined about 280 cubes of crystal, with each cube the equivalent of 1,000 saint crystals. In short, he had gathered 280,000 saint crystals. This was a wealth comparable to how much a tier-7 organization gathered in 100 years.

After putting all the saint crystals away, Xiang Shaoyun looked up and smiled. "Trying to steal the results of my hard work? Dream on."

Xiang Shaoyun had long detected the newcomers, but he did not care. So long as his opponent wasn't a God, he feared nobody. He was in no rush to leave, and he even sat down in meditation. He focused on absorbing all the thick earth energy underground, as he could sense traces of remnant God Realm energy around him. The remnant energy was what had caused the saint crystal deposit to appear here.

The energy of a God was completely different from other energies. A regular person would be incapable of absorbing such energy, but because Xiang Shaoyun had a god body and a corporeal astral cosmos sea, he could absorb all the energy without issue.

Absorbing the little bit of remnant God Realm energy around him granted him the same effect as absorbing a massive amount of saint crystals. His accumulation of primal inception energy greatly increased, and he successfully reached late second-stage Saint Realm.

"Time to leave," said Xiang Shaoyun as he opened his eyes after absorbing all the energy around him.

Chapter 1436: It's Still Not Too Late to Submit

As Xiang Shaoyun withdrew the seal he placed around the area, he soared up from under the ground. The 49 bandits waiting outside had the area surrounded. Among them, eight Heaven Battling Realm experts had even the space sealed, not giving Xiang Shaoyun an opportunity to flee.

Upon landing on the surface of the desert, Xiang Shaoyun looked at the 49 bandits around him. Before his eyes, their bandanas seemed to have ceased to exist as all their faces were revealed fully to him. Not even their leader could escape Xiang Shaoyun's scrutiny.

He was somewhat astonished when he saw the bandit leader. The leader was an extremely handsome young man who did not look older than 30 years old. Of course, the leader was older than he looked, but his youthful appearance proved that he had broken through into the Heaven Battling Realm at a young age, which was how he had maintained his youthful appearance.

Xiang Shaoyun couldn't understand why such a talented young genius would become a bandit. With the bandit leader's strength, he should be able to do well anywhere. While Xiang Shaoyun was studying the bandit leader, the bandit leader was studying Xiang Shaoyun as well. The leader was

also shocked at Xiang Shaoyun's age. After forging his god body, Xiang Shaoyun's entire body had been cleansed, making him look like he was 18. His vibrant life force and powerful god body were incredibly eye-catching.

The leader thought inwardly, This kid probably has quite a background. Too bad he has encountered me.

"Kid, leave everything behind, and your life will be spared," demanded a Saint while pointing at Xiang Shaoyun.

Xiang Shaoyun shook his head and said, "You're not weak. Why did you stoop so low that you became bandits?"

"Hehe. How audacious. You dare insult us?" replied the Saint with a sneer.

"I was merely speaking the truth," said Xiang Shaoyun calmly.

"At times, speaking the truth is the wrong choice. Take this slap to your mouth," said the Saint as he sent a slap toward Xiang Shaoyun.

The attacker was a third-stage Heaven Battling Realm cultivator, with his strength ranked in the middle-lower range among the nine Saints in the bandit group. Even so, his strength was not to be underestimated.

When the palm was about to reach Xiang Shaoyun, an indescribable power emerged from Xiang Shaoyun's body and dissolved the incoming palm attack. The faces of all the bandits twitched at that sight. None of them understood what they had just witnessed. How had their sixth boss's attack been dissolved so easily?

"You're quite capable. Let me capture you first before giving you a real nice treatment," said the Saint before charging Xiang Shaoyun.

At this time, the leader shouted, "Stop!"

The Saint looked at the leader doubtfully and said, "Boss, I can capture him!"

"No you can't!" said the leader firmly. He looked at Xiang Shaoyun and said, "Your distinguished self, you're not weak. As a second-stage Saint, you can crush sixth brother's attack without lifting an arm. You must be a king among Saints capable of fighting beyond your class. Unfortunately, your strength is still not enough against the Army of Despair. Surrender all your belongings, and I'll let you leave. Otherwise, this will be your grave."

The leader was only being so kind because he believed that Xiang Shaoyun was backed by a powerful organization that might be able to cause them some trouble. Thus, he decided to leave Xiang Shaoyun a way out.

A smile formed on Xiang Shaoyun's face as he said, "You look like an ex-military guy. Why don't all of you follow me? I'll give you a chance to start fresh. You'll even get the chance to spread your name throughout the world."

The bandits roared with laughter. That was the funniest joke they had ever heard. Who was their leader? Their leader was one of the top-10 most wanted criminals of the Western Desert. Those on the wanted list were hunted by the various organizations of the Western Desert, including some notorious criminals and ruthless monsters.

Only those with incredible strength would be able to enter the wanted list with rich rewards offered for their heads. For example, the Seven Villains of the Bloodsin City were also on the list, but they weren't even able to get into the top 500 on the list. As for this young bandit leader, he was a top-10 wanted criminal. One could only imagine how strong he was.

The leader looked at Xiang Shaoyun with a toying look in his eyes and said, "Looks like you still don't understand the circumstances you're in. Don't blame me for showing no mercy. Third brother, go. Take him."

At that command, a bulky Saint rode forth on an earth dragon. With a pair of massive axes in his hands, he emanated the aura of a peak sixth-stage Saint and looked incredibly valiant. He was Tie Ta, ranked third in the group.

"Leader, I'm enough to deal with him. Why do we need third brother for this?" asked the sixth brother indignantly.

"Step back!" berated the leader.

The ranked sixth bandit shut his mouth and hurriedly retreated. If the leader was truly angered, things would be bad for him as well.

"Kid, it's still not too late for you to get on your knees and beg for mercy," said Tie Ta.

As an earth cultivator, Tie Ta had great affinity with the ambient energy in his surroundings. The world around him had already fallen under his control. He was confident he could take down Xiang Shaoyun anytime he wanted.

"It's still not too late for you to submit," replied Xiang Shaoyun nonchalantly.

"You're courting death!" Tie Ta roared as an imposing aura erupted from his body. With a wave of his arm, the sand around him formed a massive palm and swatted toward Xiang Shaoyun.

The attack had formed so abruptly that most people wouldn't be able to react to it. The attack was proof of Tie Ta's strength and his exquisite control over the power of earth.

Unfortunately for him, Xiang Shaoyun had long noticed what Tie Ta was doing to their surroundings. After all, Xiang Shaoyun had a deep understanding of the profundity of earth. After forging his god body, his reaction time had also reached an unimaginable level. The moment the palm descended upon him, he slightly moved his feet, harmonized with the world around him, and deprived Tie Ta of his control over the earth energy. With that, the palm of sand crumbled apart.

Tie Ta raised his brow and leaped off his earth dragon before bringing his axes down at Xiang Shaoyun. The attack was incredibly heavy, displaying enough prowess to contend against a regular seventh-stage Saint. Additionally, the attack was also powered by thick axe intent. This attack could instantly reduce even a mountain to dust, let alone a human.

Facing the incoming attack, Xiang Shaoyun stood completely still. In the eyes of the bandits, he seemed to have been petrified by fear. Only the bandit leader furrowed his brows as a solemn look covered his face. As the axes descended, a single finger slowly rose up to meet the axes.

Chapter 1437: Saber of Despair

The single finger was akin to a lofty mountain, pointing straight at the heavens. The axe ray immediately shattered into numerous rays and spread in all directions. As for Tie Ta, he was blasted away by the impact.

Tie Ta was greatly alarmed. With a powerful defensive barrier around his body, his body was akin to an impenetrable fortress. However, that one finger seemed to contain boundless strength, piercing through his impenetrable fortress like it was paper.

Pu!

Before Tie Ta could move aside, a bloody hole opened on his chest, and his figure was sent flying far away. His earth dragon hurriedly rushed over to catch him. As a result, Tie Ta crashed into the earth dragon, causing the earth dragon to wail in pain. The two crashed deep into the desert ground together.

All the bandits were stupefied. The third strongest among them had been defeated with a single finger. Was that young man a human, or was he a monster? The ranked sixth bandit had an ugly expression. He rejoiced that the leader had stopped him earlier, or he would have suffered an even worse fate.

"Leader, let's work together and end him," suggested one of them.

These were all people who threaded on the fine line between life and death all year round. For them, death was nothing. Thus, they showed no fear of the strength Xiang Shaoyun had demonstrated.

"I'll do it," offered a slim man beside the leader.

The man wasn't too tall, and he looked so frail one would have thought he was sick. Mounted on an old horse, he did not look like an expert at all. However, he was actually ranked second in the group. His name was Bing Busi, a seventh-stage Heaven Battling Realm cultivator.

"Busi, you're not his match. I'll do it," said the leader.

Among all his underlings, Bing Busi was the only one who had received special care from the leader because Bing Busi was both strong and intelligent. The leader would have died during a certain past incident if it wasn't for Bing Busi's help.

"Leader, why don't we figure out who he is first? There are people out there that we can't afford to offend," suggested Bing Busi.

The leader thought about it and asked, "Who are you exactly?"

As a second-stage Heaven Battling Realm cultivator, Xiang Shaoyun had defeated a sixth-stage Heaven Battling Realm cultivator with one hit. It was obvious this person had a rather powerful background. Perhaps he was even an ancient cultivator merely hiding his strength.

"You'll know who I am after submitting to me. All of you may come at me together," said Xiang Shaoyun.

He had decided to subdue this group of bandits. He needed more than puppets. Thus, he wanted to make them yield instead of using his curse on them. It was time he grew the Ziling Sect. After saying what he had to say, Xiang Shaoyun stepped forth. He did not intend to waste more time than necessary.

"Then let me see just what you're capable of," said the leader. As he narrowed his eyes, he rode forth on his three-eyed wolf.

As he rode out, the three-eyed wolf opened all three of its eyes. A beam of light instantly shot toward Xiang Shaoyun. That beam of light had the ability to seal the movement of an enemy. The moment one was hit, one would be trapped and become a lamb waiting for slaughter.

One ought to admit that the bandit leader was truly a cautious person. Even with his impressive combat strength, he never underestimated any opponent. The moment he attacked, he used a trump card capable of ending the battle.

What Xiang Shaoyun noticed first was the leader's own attack. A terrifying saber ray was released from the leader's saber, a ray that transformed into a massive sand saber of despair. It was as though the saber was a reflection of the Desert of Despair, allowing one to experience the despair of thirst in a desert.

Saber of Despair!

This was the dao the bandit leader had comprehended all by himself. He was once hunted and forced into the Desert of Despair. Carrying his dying body, he searched for a chance of survival. After crawling in the desert for nine days and nine nights, he finally found a spring. There, he recovered and comprehended the Saber of Despair. From then on, he renamed himself Despair. His power of despair could provoke the most primal sense of despair in any opponent, causing his opponent to turn helpless from fear alone.

However, Xiang Shaoyun was someone with incredible willpower. As someone who had survived death and had tempered his own body with the Limit Stimulation Technique, he faced the sense of despair with indifference. Just as he prepared himself to face the incoming ray, the wolf shot a beam of light at him.

By the time Xiang Shaoyun noticed the beam, he could no longer avoid it. His divine dao eyes flickered as two beams of light shot out from his eyes, blocking the incoming beam. Right at that moment, Despair's saber ray arrived before him. The attack could kill even a Great Saint. No ordinary person could survive such an attack.

After shifting his focus to deal with the wolf's beam attack, how could Xiang Shaoyun deal with the incoming ray attack? With his incredible senses, he did not even need to look at the incoming ray attack. Just from the undulations in the air, he sensed the ray's trajectory. Without any hesitation, he threw a punch at the incoming ray.

Havoc Dance, Havoc Punch!

Havoc Dance was a technique Xiang Shaoyun had created long ago. It was a technique capable of countering an opponent's attack by sensing the attack's weak point.

The fist slammed into the saber ray, shattering it into pieces. He took the chance to take several steps back, giving off an impression that he had been pushed back by Despair. Only Despair himself knew that both his and the wolf's attacks had been countered. This was a combination that had never failed him, one that had slain numerous opponents stronger than him. Thus, he was greatly alarmed when it failed against Xiang Shaoyun.

After seeing that he had successfully pushed Xiang Shaoyun back, he followed the momentum of his berserk saber and pushed forward, unleashing numerous saber rays that filled the area with sand. Visibility in the area dropped as his saber rays all shot toward Xiang Shaoyun's vitals.

An aura of despair flooded the air as the saber rays cut through space itself. As for the surrounding bandits, they had long retreated far away from the battleground. Their leader was too terrifying. None of them wanted to be accidentally hit by a stray attack.

Xiang Shaoyun could sense that Despair was actually strong enough to contend against Great Saints. In fact, Despair did not seem much weaker than Lei Wuqing. This bandit person was actually a battle addict!

"I'll let you have a taste of my new technique," said Xiang Shaoyun as his battle intent soared. As he brandished both his arms, two completely different energies flowed out of his arms.

Sandstorm of Despair!

Chapter 1438: Despair Submits

Once again, Despair encountered despair. The two colliding attacks carried the aura of despair, allowing Despair to feel despair yet again. The Saber of Despair was something he had only comprehended after a near-death experience. When his opponent unleashed the Sandstorm of Despair upon him, all his saber rays were destroyed, and he was dragged high into the sky by the storm. It reminded him of the sandstorm he once encountered in the desert, reminding him of what death felt like.

His mount's strength was lower than his. Thus, the attack caused it to bleed and wail endlessly. If this continued, his mount would eventually die. Despair hurriedly slapped his mount out of the storm. At the same time, he unleashed his third slash.

The third slash was greatly similar to Xiang Shaoyun's Sandstorm of Despair, a type of sandstorm attack Despair had created with a sandstorm as reference. Two attacks collided, filling the sky with sand. Nobody could see clearly what was happening. The only thing they knew was that two attacks were colliding and creating impacts as powerful as the collision of stars that could cause even the sky to crack. All the bandits were dumbstruck.

"What a terrifying young man. He's actually able to even match the leader?"

"He might be an ancient cultivator who only looks young. This is getting troublesome."

"Leader's power of despair is unstoppable. Just keep watching."

"Why don't we lend the leader a hand? That way, victory is guaranteed!"

...

"Cough, cough. Just watch. If even the leader can't defeat this opponent, we won't be able to do much either," said Bing Busi.

He had a feeling that the young man they were facing was the recently famous young king among Saints, Xiang Shaoyun. He hoped that his guess was wrong. Otherwise, things would become really troublesome.

Alas, his guess was right. That young man was none other than Xiang Shaoyun. The Sandstorm of Despair collided with the Saber of Despair repeatedly. The two seemed evenly matched as the battle grew more and more intense. It was as though two Great Saints were battling it out.

"You have comprehended the dao of despair as well? But nobody in this world knows the dao of despair better than me. Die!" The longer the battle dragged on, the crazier Despair seemed. He erupted with all the energy in his stars, releasing a certain power in his body that caused his combat strength to rise further.

Prajna Aura!

Endless Despair!

It was as though the god of war had taken over Despair's body, instantly granting him the combat strength of a Great Saint. His saber ray looked even more stunning, releasing boundless despair that not even a Great Saint could resist. This was the most powerful saber attack he was capable of.

Finally, Xiang Shaoyun's expression turned serious. A firm look covered his eyes as he remained unaffected by the power of despair. The only thing worthy of his attention was the saber ray coming toward him.

"Time to end this," muttered Xiang Shaoyun as his body shone with a nine-colored radiance. The primal inception energy erupted from his body, and a multicolored fist shot forward.

"Nine-colored energy! It's really him!" Bing Busi exclaimed in alarm.

The two attacks collided intensely, sending sand and pebbles in all directions. Even the distant bandits were hit by the sputtering sand. If it wasn't for the Heaven Battling Realm bandits working together to stop the shockwaves, many of the bandits would have been killed.

Xiang Shaoyun's primal inception energy displayed a strength worthy of being the most original of powers. It successfully snatched the upper hand as the fist slammed into Despair's chest, causing Despair's chest to cave in. Despair coughed up a large mouthful of blood.

Despair had been defeated!

Xiang Shaoyun looked at Despair indifferently. At this moment, Despair was supporting himself with his saber, preventing himself from collapsing onto the ground. A look of admiration covered his eyes as he said, "So you're Xiang Shaoyun, ranked first on the Saintly Forest Ranking. This defeat is not surprising at all."

"Are you willing to submit to this overlord and follow this overlord in his battle against the world?" questioned Xiang Shaoyun as his presence turned majestic as though he was the child of heavens.

At this time, the other bandits rushed over. They would not watch on as Despair was killed. A barrage of attacks rained down on Xiang Shaoyun, covering the entire sky above him. Unfortunately for them, Xiang Shaoyun was a king among Saints and could kill even Great Saints. Through the profundity of earth, he fused with the desert. Countless pebbles and grains of sand soared into the sky and formed a curtain, covering himself and Despair from the rain of attacks.

"Scram!" With a wave of his arm, the Sandstorm of Despair reappeared and pressed down on the other bandits.

"Please let them off! I'm willing to submit!" Despair hurriedly shouted, worried that Xiang Shaoyun would kill his brothers.

When Xiang Shaoyun heard his words, he immediately pulled back some of his strength. Even so, the Sandstorm of Despair still continued to wreak havoc, sending the 48 bandits flying. Not one of them could stop this attack.

The 48 bandits sank into total chaos due to the storm. Those below the Heaven Battling Realm were seriously injured. If Xiang Shaoyun hadn't restrained himself, they would have been killed.

Despair had a bitter feeling when he saw the sight of that. He had roamed the Desert of Despair for many years and had never expected to suffer defeat in the hands of a young man.

"Do not feel bad. If you remain loyal to me, not only will you become a Great Saint, you might even be able to enter the Rebirth Realm," said Xiang Shaoyun.

"Despair will be at your command from now on, master," vowed Despair as he dropped to one of his knees.

He knew very well that even now, Xiang Shaoyun was still hiding some strength. On the other hand, he had already used all his strength. He stood no chance against Xiang Shaoyun.

Of course, the main reason he had decided to submit was that he still needed to avenge himself against his enemies of the past. He was unwilling to die before avenging himself. In any case, Xiang Shaoyun was already the strongest in his generation. Perhaps following Xiang Shaoyun wouldn't be that bad a choice.

"Stand up. Just call me overlord from now on. As for your brothers, those willing to follow me may stay. If not, they are free to leave," said Xiang Shaoyun.

"Yes, overlord," replied Despair.

Next, Despair went and gathered his underlings. He first focused on healing the ones seriously injured. He would talk to them after they were done healing.

Xiang Shaoyun did not interfere in what Despair did. Rather, he stood still as though he had become a part of the desert, and he absorbed the earth energy around him incessantly. Thanks to his god body and the Desolation mantra, he had gained the ability to easily enter the human heaven unity state. When Despair saw that, the reverence he felt for Xiang Shaoyun increased.

Chapter 1439: Reunion With Wife and Child

Ultimately, the Army of Despair submitted to Xiang Shaoyun. After all, Despair had a high prestige among the bandit group. If even he had submitted, the others would unhesitatingly submit as well. This was especially true after they learned that Xiang Shaoyun was ranked first on the Saintly Forest Ranking.

This was a young king among Saints. He once slaughtered Great Saints. He was also someone who had fused nine different powers to create a never-before-seen physique, someone with boundless prospects.

"Since you have decided to follow this overlord, you're my brothers from now on. If you work hard enough, I can easily help you grow in strength. You will also enjoy more cultivation resources," said Xiang Shaoyun.

The 49 bandits he had subdued were pretty impressive. With these new members, Ziling Sect would only need a slight additional expansion before they could attempt to advance into a tier-8 organization. He had decided to personally complete the task his father hadn't been able to complete.

"Thank you, overlord," the 49 bandits answered together.

"Good. All of you will still remain under Despair's command. You'll be my personal guards. Apart from me, nobody can command you to do anything," said Xiang Shaoyun.

The 49 bandits were overjoyed to hear that. Since they wouldn't be separated and would remain under Xiang Shaoyun's sole command, they wouldn't need to worry that they would be greatly restricted upon joining Xiang Shaoyun's forces.

Next, Xiang Shaoyun brought all 49 of them toward the Holy Earth Hall.

The Holy Earth Hall was basically an underground city led by the Holy Hall. After the hall master broke through into the Rebirth Realm, the Holy Hall stabilized considerably because their subordinate organizations had all settled down and become even more obedient than before. One could say that the Holy Hall was akin to a newly formed kingdom. With time, they would eventually develop into an imperial dynasty.

When Xiang Shaoyun had been accused of being a devil, Tuoba Wan'er had returned to the Holy Hall with her Tuoba Lingtian. She tried to ask for the hall master's help, but it was unfortunate that the hall master had gone to an unknown location for cultivation purposes. Only a clone was left behind to protect the Holy Hall. The clone alone was not enough to provide Xiang Shaoyun any help.

Thus, Tuoba Wan'er became incomparably anxious. Fortunately, Purple Lightning Marquis had brought news of Xiang Shaoyun to her, finally allowing her to calm down. However, Tuoba Wan'er and Tuoba Ling had also been forced to remain in the Holy Hall. They weren't allowed to return to the Ziling Sect.

Within a courtyard in the Holy Hall was a boy of about five or six years old. Dressed in simple martial attire, he was performing the horse stance. Hanging on both his arms were two buckets of water. Each bucket was 50 catties in weight, a weight enough to crush any boy to death. However, the sturdy boy in the courtyard seemed completely unaffected by the weight. Rather, he looked calm and composed, displaying the presence befitting of a martial artist.

Standing in the corridor connected to the courtyard was a beautiful woman. She was looking at the boy with a gratified look. Beside the woman was a maid who was speaking in a low voice, "The young hall master is truly impressive. He is already a sixth-stage Basic Realm cultivator at such a young age. It won't be long before he reaches an even higher height."

"Um. He is exceptionally talented. Even if he didn't catch up to his father in the future, he wouldn't be weak. But he will have to suffer a lot of hardships when he's young," said the beautiful woman. She was none other than Tuoba Wan'er.

For the past few years, she had been focusing on Tuoba Ling alone. Thus, her own cultivation had not progressed much. She had only managed to reach the eighth-stage Sovereign Realm.

At this time, someone rushed over and said, "Princess, the holy son-in-law has returned."

"The holy son-in-law has returned?" A smile bloomed on Tuoba Wan'er's face. She hurriedly rushed outside the courtyard.

Soon, she saw Xiang Shaoyun coming over with 49 riders behind him. Tears dripped from her eyes as she shouted, "Husband!"

Prior to this, she had thought that Xiang Shaoyun had been killed, and she had been greatly saddened upon hearing this news. Now that Xiang Shaoyun was standing before her yet again, she couldn't help but get emotional.

Xiang Shaoyun dashed forth like a gust of wind and embraced her in his arms. He lightly wiped the tears off her face and said, "Wan'er, it has been hard on you."

He could imagine how worried those who cared about him had been during the time he was being accused of being a devil. Tuoba Wan'er was definitely one of them. After all, she was his wife.

"I'm fine. Everything is fine as long as you're back," said Tuoba Wan'er as she hugged Xiang Shaoyun in a contented manner.

Xiang Shaoyun stroked her hair gently and said, "I'm fine. Let's go in. We will turn into a spectacle if we continue staying here like this."

After having some people arrange the accommodations for the Army of Despair, he returned to the manor with Tuoba Wan'er.

When passing by the courtyard, he saw his son, who was still training hard. A gratified look covered Xiang Shaoyun's face. Just as Tuoba Wan'er was about to call out to their son, Xiang Shaoyun stopped her and said, "Let him train a bit more."

"Are you really that cruel?" said Tuoba Wan'er as she pinched Xiang Shaoyun.

Xiang Shaoyun pretended to be hurt and said, "Ouch! My son is someone whose name will spread throughout the world. If we don't let him build a strong foundation from a young age, how can he inherit the Holy Hall in the future?"

In fact, Xiang Shaoyun was envious of his own child. A tiny boy like that was actually the Holy Hall's young master. With such a powerful organization waiting for him to inherit, he no longer needed to struggle as much as his father.

"Both you and Grandpa are too cruel!" said Tuoba Wan'er, who was still unhappy.

Xiang Shaoyun merely smiled and said nothing. Of course, he wanted his son to train less and live an easy life. But when he thought of the chaos that was about to descend upon the world soon, it was important for his son to also train hard and gain the ability to protect himself.

After about half a day, Tuoba Ling was finally done with his cultivation session. When he saw Xiang Shaoyun, he exclaimed in joy, "Father! You're finally back!"

Xiang Shaoyun gave his son a hug and rubbed his head as he said, "Yeah, your father is back. Your father has missed you greatly."

"You're lying. If you would really miss me, why would you leave for such a long time?" said Tuoba Lingtian with a pout.

"It's my bad. From now on, I'll visit you frequently," said Xiang Shaoyun.

He felt somewhat ashamed. Since Tuoba Lingtian's birth, he had spent way too little time with his own son. Fortunately, Tuoba Wan'er had put a lot of effort into their son, making sure their son wouldn't forget his father. If this was any other child, the child would have forgotten his father already.

"Pinky promise! You can't lie to me!" said Tuoba Lingtian.

Xiang Shaoyun laughed and gave his son a pinky promise. A sense of joy wrapped around his heart as he said, "No matter what, I will protect every single person around me. I won't allow anyone to harm them!"

Chapter 1440: Welcome Back, Young Sect Master

Xiang Shaoyun spent three days at the Holy Hall, accompanying his wife and child. In the meantime, he sent some people back to the Ziling Sect to inform them of his return. He spent the three days in comfort and warmth, enjoying the pleasure of being with his family.

He gave Tuoba Wan'er the nine-petal glaze flower he had purchased. He also gave her some of his other treasures, hoping to help her reach the Heaven Battling Realm as soon as possible. With the devil invasion starting, one would not have the ability to protect oneself without reaching the Heaven Battling Realm.

Additionally, he also used the primal inception energy to cleanse his son's body. The primal inception energy was the origin of all living beings, carrying an inconceivable power that directly pushed Tuoba Lingtian to the Astral Realm after the cleansing. Moreover, this advancement left no side effects and gave him a strong foundation. For Tuoba Lingtian, this was an incredible starting point. A six-year-old Astral Realm cultivator definitely stood a chance to contend against even the most talented cultivators in existence.

With Tuoba Lingtian's innate earth physique and eight stars, even if he wouldn't be as monstrous as Xiang Shaoyun, he would still have incredible accomplishments in the future. Of course, one's physique might determine one's talent, but talent wasn't everything. There were records of cultivators with only one star reaching an extreme height in the path of cultivation. Thus, someone with eight stars definitely had a high chance to go far in the path of cultivation.

After reaching the Astral Realm, Tuoba Lingtian worked even harder in his cultivation. Instead of spending his time indulging in the pleasures of life like other young masters, his goal was to become a great cultivator like his father. That was a belief Tuoba Wan'er had been brainwashing him with. In his mind, his father was the strongest person in existence.

After three days, Xiang Shaoyun left his wife and child at the Holy Hall and departed. Chaos was coming, and the Holy Hall would be a great refuge from all the incoming chaos. With the Army of Despair, he returned to the Ziling Sect. At his arrival, all the higher-ups of the sect came out to welcome him.

The higher-ups included people such as Purple Lightning Marquis, Scarlet Flame Monarch, Devouring Ghost, Green Ghost, Pang Tongyuan, Old Yao, and Qian Furen. These people had all grown to become the pillars of the sect.

As for the sect's younger generation, the key individuals were Lady Shura, Gong Qinyin, Tian Ji, Yao Qian, and a few other Sovereigns. They were slowly catching up to their seniors. Xiang Shaoyun was also astonished to see Liu Yanran in the Ziling Sect as well. She was currently standing beside Gong Qinyin and Lady Shura.

"Welcome back, young sect master," Devouring Ghost took the lead and greeted. Next, everyone else greeted Xiang Shaoyun as well.

"Welcome back, young sect master!"

The voices reverberated endlessly throughout the Ziling Sect, causing even the sky to shake from the sheer power in the voices. Alongside that greeting, a powerful aura soared into the sky, covering the entire sect in some sort of power. This was a type of power that would only manifest when the entire sect was united. The appearance of this power signified that the Ziling Sect now enjoyed the loyalty of its members. Few would even think of rebelling against the sect anymore.

Xiang Shaoyun could feel the incorporeal power adhering to his body. The power gave him the same sensation as what he felt at the Righteous Buddhist Sect. The righteous aura of the Righteous Buddhist Sect belonged to the temple while the power he felt here—an incorporeal power that had taken the form of a flower—seemed to respond to his will. This was the power of devotion and faith.

A pleased smile formed on Xiang Shaoyun's face as he said, "Well done. All of you have done well!"

His voice spread everywhere, entering deep into their mind, planting encouragement and hope in them. A contented smile formed on all their faces. Ten years ago, Xiang Shaoyun had reclaimed the Ziling Sect. After ten years, the sect had finally achieved full unity, gaining the qualifications to try to advance into a tier-8 organization.

Of course, the presence of Purple Lightning Marquis and Scarlet Flame Monarch played a great role in the sect's current progress. Then again, Xiang Shaoyun had also overestimated the two's roles. Sure, they were invaluable to the sect, but he himself played an even greater role in the sect's progress.

When news spread that he was a devil, he had lost the support of the sect members despite his strength to kill Great Saints. But when the gravekeeper elder made an appearance, everyone learned that Xiang Shaoyun had a lord guardian as his master. He was no longer accused of being a devil, and the Ziling Sect members were filled with excitement to learn of his new status. Their reverence for him grew. Eventually, news of Xiang Shaoyun killing even more Saints and becoming number one on the Saintly Forest Ranking caused the reverence to grow even more.

With that, the Ziling Sect members gained so much sense of belonging and identity that the sect finally formed a flower of incorporeal power unique to the sect, gaining the qualifications to attempt to advance into a tier-8 organization.

The moment Xiang Shaoyun returned, he had the various overseers and disciples rewarded. He also increased the support given to the sect members' cultivation, preparing to further increase their cultivation speed.

After all, he was wealthy enough after digging out an entire mid-grade saint crystal mine and looting the various Saints he had killed. He had more than enough wealth to support the expenses of an entire sect.

Qian Furen had also proved his ability to earn wealth. He had run the sect's business very well, earning the sect a decent amount of wealth. Thus, he was promoted and became an even higher-ranked elder in the sect.

Seated atop the main seat in the grand hall, Xiang Shaoyun looked at the key members seated before him. He sighed and said, "This overlord nearly failed to come back. I feel shameful for that."

"What is there to be ashamed of? Who in this world is capable of taking your life?" said Devouring Ghost.

At present, the sect no longer needed the protection of Purple Lightning Marquis and Scarlet Flame Monarch. Devouring Ghost and Green Ghost would do. Although Devouring Ghost had yet to regain his peak strength, he had still reached late-stage Heaven Battling Realm. Cultivating both yin and yang at the same time, he had incredible combat strength.

As for Green Ghost, he had lived for almost 10,000 years and was a peak Great Saint. In fact, he was only half a step away from becoming a God. If it wasn't for the fact that the Ziling Sect still lacked powerful members, Green Ghost and Devouring Ghost could retire behind the scenes.

"Overlord, you have boundless prospects ahead of you. I believe you will lead the Ziling Sect to greatness," said Pang Tongyuan.

After reconstructing his stars, Pang Tongyuan had reached the Sovereign Realm. He also looked almost 10 years younger than before. His growth was all thanks to the Purple Lightning Marquis, who had also helped the other crippled elders regain their strength.

One person after another spoke out to praise Xiang Shaoyun. Of course, some were merely fawning upon him, but most were praising him sincerely. After all, Xiang Shaoyun was a strong cultivator with a powerful backer to boot. Anyone would have to think carefully before making any moves on him.

"Alright, let's move on to the next topic. I am going to award the sect members who had contributed greatly to the sect," said Xiang Shaoyun.

He then took out a decent amount of treasures, giving them away to Pang Tongyuan, Qian Furen, Old Yao, Tian Ji, and the others. The rewards consisted of top-tier sovereign-grade items and even saint-grade items. Everyone was overjoyed, and their loyalty grew even more.